



43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.
"KEN'S MEN"
NEWSLETTER 81st EDITION
JANUARY 2002



PRESIDENT
ROGER G. KETTLESON
109 HUNTLEY ROAD
LAS VEGAS, NV
89145-5115
702-363-2824

VICE PRESIDENT
CHARLES RAUCH
2329 PALM TREE DR.
PUNTA GORDA, FL
33950-5009
941-639-6421

TREASURER
WILLIAM H. WILSON, Jr.
P.O. DRAWER M-360
SNYDER, TX
79550-0360
915-573-6351

SECRETARY
HOWARD K. ANDERSON
6669 SHERBOURNE DR.
LOS ANGELES, CA
90056-2123
310-641-7770

Web site: www.kensmen.com

***** FROM ROGER G. KETTLESON, PRESIDENT *****

Now that the New Year is here and Chuck Rauch as Vice President, Andy Anderson as Secretary, Bill Wilson continuing as Treasurer, and I as President are assuming our duties as officers of the 43rd Bomb Group Association, it is our hope to continue the fine service that the retiring officers have provided the past two years. Their outstanding efforts have established goals of service that are appreciated by all of our members. Max Axelsen has organized, managed and promoted two outstanding reunions. Jim Cherkauer organized and produced an exceptionally informative newsletter each quarter. The newsletter is really the "tie that binds us" from one reunion until the next. I consider the position of Secretary to be the vital link to our continued comradeship of our dedicated "Ken's Men." Bill Wilson continues to keep our financial status in good shape – thanks to his watchful eye. We are grateful that he will continue to do so. These men deserve our sincere thanks for a "Job Well Done."

The Las Vegas Reunion will be from Sunday, Sept. 22, 2002 until noon on Thursday, Sept. 26th or 5 nights at \$59 per night plus tax. For those who wish to extend their visit into the weekend, the rate will be \$59 plus tax for Thursday night, but it will change to \$99 per night plus tax beginning at noon on Friday, Sept. 28th. Currently, plans to date include golf Monday morning (probably at Nellis Air Force Base), the board meeting after lunch and an optional nighttime tour of the "Strip" including a show (probably Follies Bergere) on Monday night. A tour of Hoover Dam, among others, will also be available.

The reunion in Las Vegas is being handled by a contract with a professional reunion management organization with our guidance. Members will register with them, however hotel reservations will be made directly with the Golden Nugget Hotel. More details will be provided in future newsletters. Mark your calendars and do come!

Roger Kettleason

***** FROM WILLIAM H. WILSON, JR., TREASURER *****

**43rd Bomb Group Association
01-01-2001 to 10-01-2001**

Income

Dues	\$ 3,605.00
Life Member	\$ 1,500.00
Donations	\$ 150.00
Interest	\$ 1,740.00
Advance Paid	\$ 12.00

Total	\$ 7,007.00
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Expenses

Printing	\$ 3,242.25
Postage	\$ 849.67
PX Supplies	
Office Supplies	
Telephone	\$ 218.80
Help & Lease Equipment	\$ -
Gifts	\$ 100.00
Advance to Nashville	\$ 1,550.00

Total	\$ 5,960.72
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Profit	\$ 1,046.28
01-01-2001 Starting Balance	\$ 24,716.32
10-01-2001 Balance	\$ 25,762.60
CD Canyon Investment Co.	\$ 30,000.00

Net Worth	\$ 55,762.60
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***** FROM JIM CHERKAUER, EDITOR *****

2001 Reunion Oct. 28th – Nov. 4th at the Radisson Opryland Hotel Nashville, Tennessee

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday Oct. 31, 2001 8 PM Donelson Room

Attendees: Pres. Max M. Axelsen; Vice Pres. Roger G. Kettleon; Treasurer William H. Wilson, Jr; and Secretary Jim Cherkauer

Directors: Charles "Chuck" Rauch 63rd; Joseph Jancosko 64th; Eldon "Bud" Lawson 65th; L. C. "Chalky" White 65th; Joseph W. Snyder 403rd; and Art Durbeck 403rd.

Past Presidents: William H. Wilson, Jr.; James T. Murphy; and Samuel F. Commons

Guests: Edward L. Gammill, Recruitment; Eldon "Bud" Lawson, Historian; Howard "Andy" Anderson; Art Curren; and Kenneth Brown

- A. Meeting called to order at 8:04 PM by Pres. Max Axelsen who led us in a short prayer.
- B. Art Durbeck moved the approval of the 2000 minutes of the Board. Motion carried.
- C. Treasurer's report was presented by Bill Wilson. (See report near beginning of this newsletter.) Bill also reported that CD Canyon Investment Company has asked that we find another investment for this money as the company no longer has need for the money.
A brief discussion followed. Pres. Axelsen indicated that we would invest the money elsewhere. A suggestion was made that we consider the possibility of investing in Federal I Bonds.
- D. Max reported to the Directors present that the terms of Chuck Rauch (63rd) and Chalky White (65th) expired at the end of this year and those squadrons needed to elect directors for those two seats. He also indicated that the director's position held by the late James T. Pettus had to be filled by Headquarters Squadron.
- E. History Book Report. Jim Cherkauer reported that the history of the 22nd Bomb Group has moved into the stage of the production of a photo supplement of over 700 photos and captions produced by Larry Hickey and Don Evans of the 22nd. He passed around a copy of this book that he had received from Don Evans today through Fed Express. Don estimates that the history of the 22nd should be completed sometime in the first half of 2002. Our book is supposed to be next in line by Larry Hickey and that it parallels the 22nd history sufficiently to make writing of the 43rd's history easier than if it stood alone.
Max indicated that he would look into recovering James Pettus' manuscript that James' daughter had mailed to Larry Hickey. It is probably the property of the 43rd and legally belongs to our association and not Larry.
Art Curren indicated that he would like to see us get everything that we could recover from Larry and develop a scrap book instead of a history so that this could be done rather quickly.
- F. Heritage Foundation. Such a foundation recently has been formed and is interested in putting our history on a proposed web site on the Internet. The depth of the history recorded would be dependent upon how much our association would donate to the foundation. This matter is being looked into. The foundation has only recently been formed and its longevity is still very questionable. No decision was made about participating in its proposal.
- G. Secretary/Editor Position. Max reported that Howard "Andy" Anderson has agreed to accept the nomination as Secretary of the Association at the upcoming Group meeting on Saturday. He also pointed out that Andy helped Bob Butler form this association. The new secretary would receive his room free at reunions as well as the registration fee.
Max announced that Tracy Tucciarone, our Web Mistress and Sweetheart of the 43rd, was to be a guest of honor at the reunion this year, but that he has been unable to contact her or her parents. He would keep trying. She had not arrived at the time of this meeting and had made no reservations for a room at the hotel.
- H. The 2002 reunion would be held at the Golden Nugget in downtown Las Vegas from September 22nd through Sept. 26th. Our current V. P. Roger Kettleson and his wife, Audrey, will be our hosts. The reunion is being organized and run by a professional reunion coordinator. Rooms will be \$59 per night. With tax that will come to about \$63 per night. The registration fee has not been determined but probably will run between \$80 and \$85 per person.

- I. Max indicated that the association has to give thought to the future of this organization. How long will it carry on? Will a newsletter be printed even if we no longer have enough able-bodied members to hold a reunion? What will happen to our monetary assets? These are questions that must be addressed in the near future.
- J. Bud Lawson moved that we make Arthur Barret Levin an honorary member of this association. Arthur is the son of Meyer Levin who was the bombardier for Colin Kelly in the 19th Bomb Group when the war came to the Philippines in December 1941. He eventually became a member of the 64th Squadron of the 43rd Bomb Group. He served two tours with the 43rd and was lost in a ditching of a B-17 off the coast of Port Moresby after starting a 3rd tour with the 43rd.
The motion carried unanimously.
- K. New or unfinished Business. Edward Gammill gave a brief summary of what he has been doing on the Internet and our web site in recruiting members to the association. He distributed a sheet showing that he had made 31 contacts with men and women who served in the 43rd during WWII or after that war or others who might be interested in becoming associate members. Some of these did eventually join the association and one or two are attending this reunion – their first with us.
- L. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried. Meeting adjourned at 10 PM.

Minutes of the 43rd Bomb Group Association General Meeting Sat., Nov. 3, 2001 McGavock Room

- A. Meeting called to order by President Max Axelsen at 9:33 AM.
- B. Introduction of other officers: Roger Kettleson, Vice President and Jim Cherkauer, Secretary. Bill Wilson had been called back to Snyder, TX.
Max introduced our reunion host, Bethel Ray.
- C. Max led the group in a short prayer.
- D. Announcements: Photos are to be taken in the Atrium starting at 4:30 PM. These are for the reunion photo album. Please fill out the form before having photo taken. There is no charge for the photo, but if you wish to order the album there is a \$20 charge to be paid at the time the photos are taken.
Guests will be asked to stand to be recognized sometime during dinner tonight.
Checkout time has been moved to 12 Noon on Sunday, but please notify the hotel if you plan to take advantage of that change in time.
Max thanked the women who worked the registration desk: Margaret Axelsen, Rosemary Brown, Anita Cherkauer, Bernie Lee, and Pat Rauch.
- E. Max read a prayer by a Vietnam veteran.
- F. Business: Max read the slate of officers to be presented by the nominations committee. Nominated for President is Roger Kettleson; for Vice President Charles "Chuck" Rauch; for Secretary Howard "Andy" Anderson; and for Treasurer William "Bill" H. Wilson, Jr.

He called for nominations from the floor. Hearing no nominations from the floor, Max declared the slate of officers elected by acclamation for a one-year term.

- G. Max gave a brief review of the situation with regard to our history and Larry Hickey the intended author. We had been informed that our book was a sure thing for publication in 2000. This of course will not happen. Just what is the status of our history remains a mystery. He pointed out that the 22nd Bomb Group had sued Larry and won a \$100,000 settlement along with complete rights to all the work that has been done on their history as well as to any book that Larry might produce for the 22nd. A photo supplement of the 22nd is under production now by Larry with editing and supervision by Don Evans of the 22nd. A copy is on display in the hospital-ity room. Our book supposedly is to follow the 22nd's immediately. Ken Brown asked for a show of hand of all of those who had paid for our history in advance. It was estimated that approximately 25% of those in attendance raised a hand. An attorney has informed Max that we do have legal grounds upon which to sue Larry Hickey. There is serious question about the feasibility of such action at this late date.

- H. Max called on Eldon "Bud" Lawson our Historian to present a review of the situation with regard to archiving our historical materials.

Bud said that he had reduced the list of goals that he had developed on this matter down to two:

1. Finding a repository for our memorabilia and other historical items. He no longer considers the SAC museum in Nebraska as a reliable place to handle this material. He had been referred to the Pima Air and Space Museum, but they have indicated that they are already overloaded with such materials from other groups, but that with an appropriate donation they might be able to accommodate us.
2. Prepare a bibliography of books, magazines, articles, newspaper articles, etc., that mention the 43rd Bomb Group. He needs our help on this. If you know of any such sources, please provide Bud with the source(s). Along with this he would like each of us to write a short history of his service in the 43rd and mail such to him for our historical records. Bud indicated that he would like to have a committee to work with him in gathering and recording these sources for a bibliography.

Roger Kettleison inquired about the materials we had already submitted to the SAC Museum when it was still in Omaha. The answer is that it seems to have disappeared.

Max stated that he had visited the museum this past summer and asked about the plaque that the 43rd had given to it some years back. The response he received was that it was probably stored in a room downstairs. No attempt was made to find it.

- I. Additional Announcements: Max pointed out that Fred Hagen was to have been at this reunion, but he is extremely occupied with preparing to recover the remains of 11 WWII planes found in New Guinea. Fred has severed his relations with restaurateur David Talichett with regard to recovering the *SWAMP GOOSE* in New Guinea and will tackle that task on his own. Fred had wanted to fly a B-17 to Nashville for our reunion, but that did not materialize.

Max reported that the Pettus family had thanked the Group for its flowers sent to them after the death of Jim Pettus. Jim's son, Willie, was to have been at the reunion, but could not make it.

Max had spoken recently, via the telephone, to our Chaplain, Roland Fisher, who is undergoing treatment for cancer and was not able to make it to the reunion. Roland will fax to Max an address for the Memorial service on Sunday.

Tracy Tucciarone, *The Sweetheart of the 43rd*, was to have been our special guest at this reunion but neither she nor her parents, Betty and Francis Tucher, had made an appearance. Max has not

been able to communicate with any of them by telephone. Tracy is also the web mistress of the 43rd's web site.

Lloyd "Breezy" Boren, a former secretary/treasurer of this association, was being married this very day in San Antonio.

Max mentioned the work that Edward L. Gammill is doing with recruitment of new members for the association via the Internet. He has had some good success locating men who have not been heard of since WWII or later but who are still around. He has contacted a fair number of such men. Some have joined us and some are with us today for the first time.

Dayton Blanchard informed the group that the Daedalian Fraternity of Pilots is in the process of amending its bylaws to permit all former pilots to join. He urged those who live near an AF base to do so.

The air show at Pope AFB, Fayetteville, NC, last July was attended by 4 of our members: Bob Richardson, Bob Butler, Ralph Grubb and Wendell Jones. They received royal treatment. The show was sponsored in part by the 43rd Airlift Wing stationed at Pope AFB. The history of the 43rd Bomb Group was recognized with a display in one hanger.

Our association has been invited by the 43rd Airlift Wing to hold its 2003 reunion in Fayetteville. Fort Worth, TX, is also under consideration for that reunion.

The group recognized our host, Bethel Ray, with a rousing ovation.

The 2002 reunion will be in Las Vegas from Sunday, September 22nd until noon on Thursday, September 26th. (See the President's report at the beginning of this newsletter.)

J. The meeting adjourned at 10:31 AM.

Respectfully submitted, *Jim Cherkauer*, Sect. (2001)

Reunion Attendees by Squadron.

Headquarters

Gordon & Betty Bavor
Fred & Maurine McAlister

Charles & Ingrid Farha

63rd Squadron

Chuck & Pat Rauch
Bob & Doris Butler
Edward Gammill
Francis & Pauline Denault
Neal & Rudi Fugate
George & Bertha Burhoe
Scott Baker
Wathen Cody
Marty Zimmerman
Bob & Shirley Richardson
Athill "Irv" W. & Alice Irvine
Steve & Madeline Perrone

Ray & Dorothy Crawford
Lloyd Anderson, Pete (Son) & Debby Anderson
James & Louise Thompson
Roger & Olga Vargas
Jim & Mickey Murphy
Ed & Ginny Pheasant
Francis & Arlene Langland
Mike & Jo Bachi
Edward G. Harris
Jim Dieffenderfer
Tom Dow

64th Squadron

Bob Cooper
Ken & Rosie Brown
Mike & Sally Mitchell (Guests)

Nadeane Fulcomer
Garrett L. & Mary Minnick
Lyle & Betty Heineke

Ed & Lillian Ross
 Falcnor & Goldie Gifford
 Jack Nunnellee
 Art & Dottie Curren
 Joe & Helen Jancosko
 Howard "Andy" & Anne Anderson
 Arthur F. & Bev Mulligan
 Emil & Charley Lange
 Byrle & Dolly Miller
 Ralph Grubb; Dan Grubb
 Joe & Charlotte Howard
 John Kubiak - Son of late Edmund Kubiak
 Charles & Mildred McClenny
 Paul L. Barbus

Roger & Audrey Kettleson
 Paul L. Barbus
 June Panther
 Cletus & Marge Angermeier
 Roy & Louise Bailey
 Russ & Jane Burnett
 Arvid & Clare Houghlum
 Alvin Haas
 Lyle E. & Mary Goldner
 Jim & Boots Rodella & Joyce Rodella
 Frank & Lynn Waysse
 Sam Welborn
 George & Anita Tucholski

65th Squadron

Eldon "Bud" & Betty Joe Lawson
 Bethel F. & Bonnie Ray
 Bill & Mary Lois Wilson
 Dayton & Ann Blanchard
 Bob Claycombe
 Howard A. & Marge Buelow
 Gus Rapisardi
 Sal & Emily Musella
 Francis R. "Randy" Boutwell
 Steve Main
 Betty Bender
 Herbert & Marie Brune
 Ben R. Damron
 James L. Harcrow
 Larry Main

Jim & Anita Cherkauer
 Chalky & Rosemary White
 Don & Betty Marsaglia
 Bill & Mary Myles
 Tom & Kathy Jamison
 James W. Eide
 Dick & Elle Bennett
 Larry Main & Kathy Takacs (Daughter)
 Judy Malley
 Warren Bender
 Sam & Helen Commons
 Oscar Collins
 Arthur "Art" & Jean Byrne
 Brandon Main
 Mike Main

403rd Squadron

Max & Margaret Axelsen
 John McCrum, Jr.
 Joseph & Sally Snyder
 Art & Virginia Durbeck
 Paulette J & Lois Hattenberger
 Paul H. & Carolyn Cober
 Bill & Nancy Solomon
 Malcolm & Mary Obourn
 Ernest & Beth Morgan
 John Crosby
 Neil Fairbanks

John McCrum
 Frank & Peg Drab
 Paul & Gert Pirko
 Phyllis Johnson
 Fred & Janet Lloyd; Rick Lloyd (Son)
 Joe & Clara Gosseaux
 Christopher C. Slone
 Wade & Burnell Kehr
 Paul & Jackie Bauer
 John Kubiak (His father also served with 64th)

The 21st reunion of the 43rd Bomb Group Association was a great success thanks to the careful planning and diligent work of our host **Bethel Ray**, 65th Flight Engineer from Arrington, TN, and his lovely wife, **Bonnie Ray**. The editor noted that both of these wonderful folks were constantly on the go making certain that the arrangements at the hotel moved along according to plans.

Their selections of the musical groups for the Friday night Western Night and the Saturday Dinner/Dance turned out to be especially good. The Saturday night band, The David Ralph Sextet, of Nashville played only numbers of the 40's and WWII era. Their renditions were so good that for the first time in a few years the dance floor was crowded right up to the last note of the evening.

All of us who attended the reunion owe both **Bonnie** and **Bethel** a hearty thank you for all they did in hosting this great reunion.

A contingent of 23 golfers headed off to play at the Springhouse Golf Club of Opyrland early on Thursday. It is a links course and is home of the BellSouth Senior Classic. The weather was perfect. When the players returned to the hotel most seemed to be rather exhausted from the struggle to overcome the difficulties of this tough course. One of the men (name withheld) landed in a sand trap of about 80 yards in length that paralleled the edge of a fairway. He needed 3 strokes to move he ball forward and out of the trap as he headed to the green. As he related the story each of those shots was a good trap shot – the trap was just too long.

Bob Claycombe, 65th Sqdn., won our trophy again. He also won two years ago. **Joe Jancosko**, 64th Sqdn., was closest to the pin on the par 3 hole #3. **Ed Ross**, 64th Sqdn., had the longest drive on the 7th hole. (**Mike Mitchell**, son-in-law of **G. L.** and **Mary Minnick**, was longer but the prize was restricted to the members only as they can't compete with these youngsters. **Mike** did receive recognition for this achievement along with **Chalky White**, 65th Sqdn., for his high score. Both were awarded First Aid Kits.

The only two women playing, **Helen Commons** and **Gertrude Pirko**, each received a golf hat and towel for their participation.

The Bridge Tournament consisting of 3 tables met at 1:00 PM on Thursday and had a good tournament. **Mary Miles** took first place. **Rosemary White** was second while **Arlene Langford** took 3rd. Congratulations **Mary**. All participants enjoyed the afternoon.

On Thursday evening the squadron met for their annual meetings. **Neal Fugate** was elected for a 3-year term as a Director for the 63rd Squadron. **Chalky White** was reelected to another 3-year term as Director from the 65th Squadron. Elected to a 3-year term, as director for Headquarters Squadron, was **Fred McAlister**.

A highlight of the 64th's meeting was the raffle conducted to see who would go home with a beautiful sweatshirt embroidered by **Gladys Rodella**, wife of **Jim Rodella**, Gunner from Pittsburgh, PA, on her very fancy sewing machine. The front of the sweatshirt pictured in full color a B-24 in the Southwest Pacific as well as the 64th Squadron patch. These were the envy of us all when the entire family showed up at the reunion wearing such sweatshirts. The raffle generated \$98 that would be turned over to the 43rd's treasury.

Our Vice President and President elect, **Roger Kettleson** 64th Pilot from Las Vegas, NV, sent our faithful Treasurer, **William H. "Bill" Wilson, Jr.** a check for the \$98 after he returned home from the reunion. **Bill** wrote a thank you to **Gladys** and **Jim**.

After the squadron meetings, the men were invited to join the women for the Ladies Program in the McGavock Room. The entertainer for us at the ladies program was **Al McCree**, known as the "Bald Eagle." **Al** was a 1969 graduate of the Air Force Academy, served as a fighter pilot and retired a Lt. Colonel. He was very witty and played his guitar along with his presentation. He was an excellent comedian and a good singer. His theme was very serious and patriotic yet done in a very cheery manner. He made one proud to be an American. That was his basic theme throughout his program. As far as the editor could tell everyone seemed to be enjoying the evening and appreciating his showing America in its best light. He ended his program by leading us all in a touching rendition of "God Bless America." There were many damp eyes in our group when this song ended.

Friday began with a Continental breakfast in the McGavock Ballroom. Immediately afterward, all who chose to go boarded buses to take them to The Hermitage in suburban Nashville or more precisely in Hermitage, TN. The Hermitage was the estate of the late President Andrew Jackson. The tour of this plantation, the manor and the outlying buildings that made up the entire complex was very interesting and educational. The buildings are kept in A-1 condition and helped the visitor visualize life on a wealthy southern plantation a century and a half ago.

Friday evening a cash bar cocktail party was held in the Atrium of the hotel. Immediately following was the Country/Western dinner/dance. The food was well prepared and deliciously tasteful. The music was provided by a local disk jockey.

Saturday began with an early Country Breakfast Buffet in the McGavock Room. At 9:00 AM the annual Group meeting took place in the McGavock room. [The minutes of this meeting appear earlier in the Newsletter.]

The rest of the day until 5:00 PM was free for attendees to visit with each other or take some short trips around Nashville. The Opryland Hotel ran shuttle buses to various parts of the city on a regular schedule. One made an hourly stop at the Radisson.

Photographs for the reunion photo album were taken from about 4:30 PM until the dinner/dance commenced. At 5:00 PM a cash bar cocktail hour was held in the friendly setting of the Atrium. This was followed by the dinner/dance until 10:00 PM.

The dinner/dance opened with the Patriot Battalion Color Guard from Page High presenting the colors in perfect formation and precision. This was followed by a prayer led by our **President Max Axelsen**. Then the eating began in earnest.

After dinner prizes were awarded to the winners in the golf tournament and the bridge tournament. These winners were cited earlier. **Roger Kettleson** presented our outgoing President, **Max Axelsen**, with a check with which **Max** could purchase an A-2 Flight Jacket. The editor was presented with a fully assembled plastic scale model of a B-24 and his wife was given a lovely Waterford Crystal bowl. Both the editor and **Anita** thank the association for these wonderful and thoughtful gifts. The editor will decorate the B-24 as a 43rd plane from the 65th Squadron, The Lucky Dice Sqdn., and he has already selected a place to hang this in his computer room.

Our host and hostess were presented with three beautiful antique gold candlestick holders. In a letter to the editor immediately following the reunion, **Bonnie** and **Bethel** wrote, "We thank the 43rd Group for the beautiful 3 piece antique Gold Candle sticks, they are beautiful and we won't forget the 43rd Group that gave them to us - so sorry that we did not open them for everybody to see them, just too much excitement doing on."

The dance was really well received by our group. The dance floor was crowded all evening until the last notes had been played.

Sunday was a day with a degree of sadness for all as we attendees remembered our lost comrades and said "Goodbye" for another year to so many friends with whom we had spent the past few days.

It began with a Memorial Service for all of those who served in the 43rd and who no longer were with us. **Max Axelsen** greeted everyone present. **Sam Commons** gave the Invocation. This was followed by a fine rendition of "How Great Thou Art" by vocalist, **Nancy Solomon**, and pianist, **Mildred McClenny**.

A representative from each of the squadrons read the names of the 40 men who had made their last flight during the past year or whose passing was learned during the 14 months since the San Antonio reunion. Immediately following this reading a very heart rending playing of taps by David Balph from the hallway outside the assembly room. The softly muted tones filtered into the McGavock Room where nearly 200 people were gathered in reverent silence.

Max read the following Memorial Remembrance faxed to him by our Chaplain **Roland Fisher** who was at home in Oregon undergoing treatment for cancer.

MEMORIES

This past year I often visited a friend, Allen Clatworthy, whom I first met nearly sixty years ago when we were comrades in the 63rd Squadron. We both were pilots, flying radar-equipped B-24s. From 1943 to '45 we shared many things: teaming in two-plane, night attacks on enemy ships out in the Bismarck Sea; scary instrument landings the next morning in fog at Dobodura; the same "lovely, living" tent at dusty Nadzab; the typhus mites and beautiful beaches on Owi Isle; the mud and savage enemy attacks on Leyte; the lousy food during the whole time and enough other experiences in those two years to last as vivid memories for the rest of our lives.

He and I were two of the luckier members of the 43rd. We both survived the war and witnessed the dawn of the new millennium. But then luck ran out for Allen. Two years ago, lung cancer struck, and I watched him go from a robust, ex-B-24 jock, ex-L.A. County sheriff to a near shadow. He lived in a lot of pain but maintained a steady smile and a keen interest in events of the 43rd. The memories we shared those last days clearly helped him. Then two weeks ago he slipped into a coma. A week ago he took off on his last flight.

Two days before, as I sat beside his bed watching him lie still and quiet, Jeanne, his wife, was concerned that, perhaps he was feeling pain and could not tell us. I don't think so. When I spoke, fleeting, subtle expressions on his still face told me his mind was wandering freely through time; that he had gone back to his boyhood and was talking with his folks, was feeling the shock of Pearl Harbor, enjoying the thrills of the first moments at the controls of a Stearman, and a Liberator. When I mentioned the name of his bombardier, Johnny Landt, Al's expressions told he was talking to all his crew as they made a run on an enemy ship in the night. Although his body was still, his mind was scrolling through a vast repertoire of memories – memories that we all share, of our time in war when, in four years, we had a whole lifetime jammed into our very young lives.

World War Two, our war, was a rare event of history that, from a distance looks even larger than it did then. And for those of us that served in the Pacific, in the flood of national emotion following the recent, shocking events of September 11, it poses special significance.

Then, for those of us in the stress of combat, we did not see the big picture. We saw each, small struggle against a fanatic enemy and a hostile environment. We didn't hear the call of history. We heard the sounds of our engines and the voices of our comrades. Those voices sounded confidence and sometimes, fear, and all too often they abruptly were ended, in a place far from home. During those years, seven hundred young voices of the 43rd forever ceased speaking.

But they continue to be heard in our memories. We hear those sounds and those voices as if it were yesterday, frozen in time by the intensity of the experiences we shared. Mention "Queen Mary," and the chatter of a poker game will sound. Mention "Mareeba," and Bob Butler's eyebrows arch. Mention "B-17" and images of kids like Ken McCullar and Bill Benn appear. Mention "skip-bombing" and a young Jim Murphy will show up on our mental screens. Say "C.O.," and Jim Pettus stands before us to brief us on a mission. Utter "kamikaze" and once again I feel the slam of a raging Japanese Irving on the bottom of my B-24 and see the water hurtle at me in the moonlight as I barely pulled *MISS LIBERTY* out of her near fatal dive. Mention any of a few dozen names, and hundreds of sights and scores of voices, again, will spring up in our minds as if it were yesterday.

But it was not yesterday; it was over half a century ago. And in not much more time, those of us who remember those voices, will be gone. There simply won't be anyone left with our memories. But while there may be none left to remember, our remembrances should not disappear from a national recognition of what they mean and the help they can give our nation, now. It is important that all our people remember the voices and deeds of those young men who liberated whole countries from tyranny; who

willingly gave their lives for a future they would never see, fighting an enemy who considered our way of life inferior.

Our war in the Pacific was different from that in most of the other theaters. In Europe we were up against a smart, well-trained and equipped, dedicated enemy, with a culture not much different from ours, in an area that, though large, was small compared to the Pacific war. In the Pacific, we were up against a stubborn, sometimes smart, but always fanatical enemy with a strange culture that viewed the value of life quite differently from the way we did. Our war area was huge, covering vast expanses of ocean and landmasses over both hemispheres. After we were stunned by his initial surprise attack, it took us nearly a year before we blunted his aggressive actions and nearly another three before we drove him back to his homeland. And, although we made him surrender, I am not sure we ever really understood why he was so fanatic.

In the past, as we assembled once a year to renew our comradeship and to relive those memories of so long ago, I think we tended to dwell on small events and to forget just why we did what we did. I think that we tended to forget that no one gave us our freedom. No one gave us our liberty. While their underlying principals were germinated in peaceful actions and distributed in written or spoken words, ultimately they were borne through battle.

On September 11, 2001, we were given a shocking reminder. Again we found ourselves under attack by those who hate America, who hate the great social and scientific accomplishments of a nation of people who are free to think and speak as they wish. We have an enemy who has proved to be more deadly than any we have faced. And this time, the war area is even larger; it circles the whole world and is right here at home.

I do not pretend to understand the mentality of those who seek to destroy us. After I watched the utter horror of the jetliners crashing into the World Trade Towers, I am not sure I can. But I do know that we are faced with a long and difficult war, and that we all are involved. I think of something that Thomas Paine wrote at the end of 1776, the darkest hour in America's struggle for freedom. He penned, "These are the times that try men's souls." That fits now. And I am keenly reminded that the price of liberty includes great sacrifice and endurance.

Sacrifice and endurance: these were the qualities that our comrades of long ago displayed as we faced a similarly vicious, fanatic enemy. Perhaps then, each of us didn't quite see the big picture. But my memories are that what we all did together made the big picture. Our very way of life exists now because the young men of the 43rd, and of all our forces, however restricted each one's view might have been, were all willing to place a higher value on our freedom than on their lives.

To those who paid the greatest price, the highest honor we can accord is to keep alive our memories of them; to hear their voices, to see their smiles, to feel their handshakes, to remember them – not memorialize them – but remember them. And years from now, when we have won this new war, those enjoying freedom, should remember why.

Nancy and Mildred then led us all in a tear filled singing of "God Bless America."

Sam gave the closing prayer.

Immediately afterwards all those in attendance partook of a Farewell Brunch in the McGavock Room. It was so nice to see such a large number of guests of members who had joined us for the dinner/dance last night and/or the Memorial Service and brunch on Sunday Morning.

Bonnie and Bethel Ray had a son and several great-grandchildren with them this Sunday morning.

After the brunch was over it was time for us to bid each other adieu until the next reunion. This is a very sad moment at our annual reunion, as old and new friends have to separate and head to all different parts of the country with the fervent hopes they will meet again at the next reunion.

Bonnie and Bethel send their "Thanks ... to everyone who attended the 43rd Bomb Group reunion at Nashville 2001. We hope everyone enjoyed everything. The reunion was a great challenge and experience for us. My crew Mary, Bill, Harold and Marge were a big help and advisors for us. In this experience we found that the people attending, entertainment, food, hotel personnel, and facility make an enjoyable reunion. Most important are the good people and the entertainment. These two were the very best possible in our humble opinion. We want to thank the ladies that worked so hard at the registration desk. Great Job Ladies. Max did an outstanding job. Thanks Max. Thanks Margaret! I apologize for the "bobble" error of not taking care of the troops at The Hermitage. Sorry folks."

"The LORD willing and the creeks don't rise, we will see you at Vegas. THANKS to All, The GREATEST. The 43rd Bomb Group."

Shortly after the reunion was over **Bethel** took a much needed relaxation stint by sojourning to Kansas with his son, Eddie, to hunt pheasants. We have not heard how they made out, but they did come home safely.

The Color Guard Commander, Lenats Arvin, sent **Bethel** the letter that is quoted below.

We were humbled by your offer of a little extra payment, but we were more than glad to do it for nothing but your smiles and honor. Thank you so much for having us. We miss you and your fellow "Bombers" the very best! Their stories, we have heard most of the night, are inspiring and we only hope to make you proud in years to come! Bless all of you, and we all are proud to have served fellow courageous, military men and women in honoring the U.S. flag and your unit.

The following are some of the news the editor gathered of the reunion as he talked with so many of those who attended the reunion.

We wish **Wendell Jones**, 64th Top Turret Gunner from Raleigh, NC, a speedy and complete recovery from the very bad reaction he had to medication administered following a mild stroke. He was in intensive care during the time of the reunion. His good friend and crewmate, **Ralph Grub**, 64th Tail Gunner from Pulaski, VA, had a copy of Stephen E. Ambrose's book *THE WILD BLUE: THE MEN AND BOYS WHO FLEW B-24s OVER GERMANY*, that he had members sign as a gift for **Wendell**.

Ralph also informed the editor that he and **Wendell** had attended the air show this past July at Pope AFB. This show was sponsored in part by the 43rd Air Lift Wing stationed at Pope but now serving in the mid east. **Robert Richardson**, 63rd Top Turret Gunner from Wilmington, NC, and our founder and past president, **Robert H. Butler**, 63rd Bombardier from Fayetteville, NC, also attended this air show and helped man the table showing the history of the 43rd Bomb Group at the two-day air show in Fayetteville, NC. Ralph said that the show with a simulated ground attack by helicopters, A-10 Warthogs as well as the airdrop of hundreds of paratroopers was awesome.

Oscar Collins, 65th Squadron, gave the editor 2 photos from WWII and the 43rd BG taken on New Guinea so that they could be scanned and added to our web site. The editor has sent scanned copies on to **Tracy Tucciarone**, 43rd Web Mistress from Indianapolis, IN. **Oscar**, he is unable to return the photos as promised since you are not listed in our Roster. Please send this editor your land address. While you are at it, send him all of the pertinent information for the 2002 Roster and the editor will see that our elf, **Elain Pierce**, gets this information.

Our good treasurer and PX proprietor, **William H. "Bill" Wilson**, 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX, brought with him two dozen T-shirts with the words "Proud to be AMERICAN" inscribed over a background of a shield bearing a bald eagle superimposed over an American flag and many stars in the border of the shield. On the left sleeve is the inscription "43RD BOMB GROUP." Needless to say these sold about as fast as the women manning the registration table could unpack them. **Bill** said that he had no idea

how well they would sell, so he was conservative with how many he ordered. **Bill** had mailed to **Bethel** a large number of 2001 reunion caps to be sold at the reunion. These too sold well.

Bill and **Mary Lois** were called back to Texas during the reunion and missed the last couple of days. We trust that all is well with them.

It is important that we give recognition to those unselfish women who voluntarily manned the registration desk for so many hours throughout the reunion. We owe many thanks to these women who gave up many hours when they could have been site seeing or visiting with friends in order to get incoming attendees registered as well as selling them the 2001 reunion caps and T-shirts. They are:

Margaret Axelsen, Rosemary Brown, Anita Cherkauer, Bernie Lee and Pat Rauch.

Hazel Taff of Tallahassee, FL, and widow of the late **Angus Taff**, 64th Pilot, writes that she does enjoy the Newsletters – “Memories are great and make these later years more pleasant.” She says that **Angus** always spoke highly of our late leader, **James Pettus**.

She reports that she has “Been under the weather with her 2nd shoulder replacement and a new pace maker. I’ll be a candidate for ‘parts’ shop with all these new parts.” Keep smiling.

Hazel sends along some bad news. Their son broke his back in a motorcycle accident last January. His recovery is slow and he will never be the same again. We all wish him the best.

She wishes everyone “Best of luck at the reunion. Thought I’d make it once.” They did have reservations to the Kissimmee reunion, but did not make it due to **Angus’** health. Maybe you will get to one yet, **Hazel**.

Richard E. Williams, 403rd Tail Gunner from Rapid City, SD, reports a new phone number. It is 605-721-6706. His address remains unchanged.

He writes that he lost his best friend, Gladys Steadman. She accompanied **Richard** to 5 reunions starting with the Dayton, OH, 1988 and ending with the Cheyenne reunion in 1995. **Richard** thinks some of our members will remember Gladys. In his letter dated Aug. 29, 2001, he states that he is planning on making it to Nashville.

Joining the ranks of Life Members of our association is **Vell Snyder** of Hamilton, OH. She is the widow of the late **Gerald “Jerry” Snyder** a 403rd Radio Operator. She says that **Jerry** enjoyed the reunions very much.

She reports that she is doing all right, but finds life a bit lonely after being so busy carrying for **Jerry** for some time. She does live near her children and grandchildren, which helps a great deal. She tends her flowers and garden and occasionally helps out in a classroom in Hamilton. She sends this message. “Good luck with the reunion this year. Keep up the good work with the Newsletter.”

Although our ranks are thinning more and more each month, we still have new members joining the association. A couple are listed below.

John H. Kubiak, son of the late **Edmund E. Kubiak**, has become an Associate Life Member. **Edmund** served in the 43rd from April 1945 to August 1945 as a radar observer or one who used counter-measures against the enemy’s radar. He is survived by a spouse, **Thelma**. **John** says that his Dad was an aviation enthusiast, a history buff, especially of military history and a collector of military uniforms. **John** has submitted some materials to our web site with regard to radar countermeasures, photos and some of his Dad’s wartime records. [John attended the reunion in Nashville. The editor and his wife both found **John** to be friendly and filled with enthusiasm with regard to the association and the 43rd BG’s participation in WWII as well as great company.]

Here is the vital information regarding **John**. His address is 2125 Aqueduct, Florissant, MO 63033-2838. His phone is 314-831-6684, and his e-mail address is <john.h.kubiak@juno.com>.

Scott M. Baker, an historian and aviation buff with special interest in the SWPA, has joined us as an Associate member. He is currently conducting research for a biography of **Ken McCullar**. He is very anxious to talk to anyone who served with **Ken** in the Southwest Pacific Theater as well as family members and friends who would be willing to share their recollections.

Scott's address and phone number are **21929 Myrtlewood Square, Sterling, VA 20164** and **703-421-2258**. His e-mail address is <yogiboo81@worldnet.att.net>.

Here's another change of address to make in your Rosters folks that **Elmer E. Hansen**, 63rd Pilot, has sent to us. He says that the PO at Thorndale "... is getting modern and up to date." After Sept. 1, 2001, it will no longer honor his old address even though he has not moved. "Out here among the sticks we are always subject to change." He hopes that he will get his Newsletter with the new change. [No matter what they tell you, **Elmer**, the Postal Service sorts by zip only. You can put anything before the correct zip, and it should get to its destination.]

Elmer says that it looks as though someone new will have to come along and finish up our history. "It would certainly be a blessing."

His change of address is **2421 CR 443, Thorndale, TX 76577-2702**.

Emanuel Dalpra, 65th Personnel/Pay from Lafayette, CO, has remitted his 2001-2002 dues to our treasurer. He writes that he enjoys our newsletters as he has so much of interest to read. He was still working on the July edition when he wrote his letter, but would be ready for the October one when it arrives.

He writes, "God Bless all the Group and keep up the 'good work.'"

Henry "Hank" Day, 64th Pilot, has a new address and phone number while he gets his strength back. His daughter, Deborah Sorensen, sent **Bill** a nice letter with the change of address, a map of the area where he now lives as well as a note that **Hank** would like to hear or have a visit from any of our readers.

Hank suffered a stroke shortly before Mother's Day that first left him with a severe case of "expressive aphasia" that made it very difficult to express the right nouns for objects or people. He is improving but not without some frustration as he can't speak as quickly or clearly as he would like, and his short term memory has been affected as well as his ability to read and write.

He had a fall in Corvallis, OR, where he had been living and the medical folks there brushed it off as Alzheimer's. Not at all convinced of that diagnosis, his daughter and nephew took him to a medical clinic in Ft. Lewis, WA, where his condition was diagnosed correctly. Due to his high blood pressure they were not able to do any surgery on the aneurysms in the blood vessels leading to his brain.

Hank spent a month convalescing in the Temporary Living Center at the hospital where Deborah works. Then he moved to an adult foster home where he has excellent conditions for living and recuperating. It is midway between where she works and where she lives in Portland, OR.

He is now using a walker and is on oxygen although he is breathing better. He and Deborah do outings about once a week. In particular he liked the visit to the *Remington and Russell* exhibit at the Portland Art Museum. Another time Deborah pushed his wheel chair several miles over bike paths in Tryon Creek. He really enjoyed that.

He is now using talking books as well as enjoying his Big Band tapes, but Deborah thinks that he is bored and lonely. He stays to himself a good deal. His illness has made him impatient because he can't communicate as he would like and then he thinks others are impatient too.

Deborah says that if any of you decide to write **Hank**, "... please consider sending current pictures of yourself, family, friends activities, etc for a collage. You might consider recording a letter on tape if you'd find it easier to chat. Be sure to speak loudly and as you would in a conversation." Using the telephone is more frustrating for him than fun. His new address and phone number are **4801 SW Jean Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97035** and **503-534-3040**.

Some of our WWII buddies still are only now finding out that our association exists. Over 18 months ago **Donald F. Clark**, 65th Lower Ball Gunner, joined the V.F.W. This was his first connection to any veteran's organization since the war. In their magazine he learned of our association, and a few months later contacted our host for this year's reunion, **Bethel F. Ray**, 65th Flight Engineer from Arrington, TN. **Bethel** mailed him a packet of materials for the reunion and a July 2001 Newsletter, but Donald was unable to attend this year, but he did send **Bill** dues for membership that will be credited for 2002. He hopes that the Good Lord will let him attend our 2002 reunion in Las Vegas.

He has included in his letter a good deal of information that should be of interest to many of our readers. Only half of his crew survived the war. He manned the "suicide turret." Near the end of the war when reporting for a mission briefing, he, the nose gunner, the bombardier, the tail gunner and the waist gunner were excused from the mission. Replacements were assigned for each of these men. That crew never returned.

The roster of his original crew was: Capt. **William Pickens***, Pilot from Lewisburg, TN; 2nd Lt. **Clarence Furman***, Copilot from Punxsutawney, PA; 2nd Lt. **Eugene Ashmore***, Navigator from Greeley, CO; 2nd Lt. **Theodore Newhoff**, Bombardier from New York, NY; S.Sgt. **William Ryan***, Radio Operator from Lowell, MA; S.Sgt. **William Biergel***, Engineer from Feeding Hills, MA; Sgt. **J. C. Clark**, Tail Gunner from Muskogee, OK; Sgt. **Earl G. Beyerle**, Waist Gunner from Atlanta, GA; Sgt. **Joseph Reynolds**, Nose Gunner from Long Island, NY; and Sgt. **Donald Clark**, Harvey, IL, Lower Ball Turret Gunner. * Indicates lost crewmembers.

After being discharged, **Donald** began corresponding with the families of each of his deceased crewmembers. He kept up these contacts, including visits to all except the family of his copilot, until the parents or wives of these men had passed on. His travels took him to Colorado, Tennessee and Massachusetts. He found these visits uplifting to both the families and to himself.

The sister of his navigator is now in her late 80s. **Donald's** family has been guests in her Colorado home on a number of occasions. She has now moved to Illinois, but they keep in touch. His navigator's niece, his sister's daughter, was born just days after **Eugene Ashmore's** death and is now 56 years of age. "We are very close and talk several times a month. I felt like all these families were part of my own family."

Donald is now retired, enjoys life as a short story writer and serves as the commander of his V.F.W. Post.

If any of our readers knows anything about **Theodore Newhoff**, **J. C. Clark**, **Earl G. Beyerle**, or **Joseph Reynolds**, he would appreciate hearing from you.

Here are some vital data: Address 18 Garman Road, Park Forest, IL 60466-1833; Phone 708-481-4957 and FAX 708-481-3288.

Douglas P. Walker, Associate member and son of the late V Bomber Commander Brig. Gen. **Kenneth N. Walker**, has a new address. Get out those pens. P.O. Box 1655, New Canaan, CT 06840. Tel/FAX 203-968-9166.

A memorial service was conducted with full military honors for Gen. **Walker** on December 7, 2001, at 1 P.M. at the Arlington National Cemetery. [Unfortunately, the editor received this announcement too late for the October Newsletter. He did post a notice on our web site in mid October.]

Ralph D. Grubb, 64th Tail Gunner from Pulaski, VA, sent the editor a copy of a small booklet that he had misplaced since the 1993 Omaha, NE, reunion. He had shown it to the late Col. **James T. Pettus**, Group CO and Pilot, who at the time remarked that he had never seen it before, but he made a copy of it. It is entitled "KNOW YOUR COMMAND BOMBER - VCB COMMAND." It comes from the Information & Education Section, and was compiled & edited by Public Relations Office for I. & E. Distribution - V Bomber Command. It is a brief history of the V Bomber Command from September 1942 to about mid July 1945. **Ralph** says that it was printed in mid July at Clark Field and that he picked up a copy at 43rd Headquarters. "It is a big story in a small booklet." That is indeed a fact. The

editor regrets that it can't be reproduced here in this volume of the Newsletter due to the fact that this volume featuring a report of the Nashville reunion is already as large as feasible for a newsletter of this nature. He will pass it on to the new secretary/editor and send a copy to our Historian, **Eldon "Bud" Lawson** 65th Bombardier from Bay Village, OH.

M. L. "Shad" Shaddox, 64th Pilot from Parker, CO, has made the long trek from Friendswood, TX, to Colorado along with his son, Keith, and daughter, Cindy. Keith drove a U-Haul and Cindy and Shad rode in the comfort of his Lincoln. Along the way they had a couple of blowouts on the U-Haul, and U-Haul replaced all 4 tires on the rear dual wheels after the second blowout. Of course the gas cap broke on the first fill-up and it took them some time to find a replacement.

Shad reports that the Parker Post Office received something from which mysterious white powder seeped on Friday, Oct. 12th. The FBI was summoned and they evacuated the Post Office. One person was reported to have been taken to the hospital. All tests showed the white powder to be harmless. This Post Office is a couple of blocks from **Shad's** new apartment, which was not completed at that date, so he was still at his son Keith's home.

A later report from **Shad** indicates that he has moved into his new apartment and he even had some snow shortly after his move. He is within walking distance of his son's home. Here are the new data: address - **18249 East Main Street, Apt. 8108, Parker, CO 80134**; phone - **303-840-8435**; and e-mail address - **mlshaddox@quest.net**.

Appearing on your web site on October 5th was a notice that **Harold H. Kahler**, 65th Bombardier from Kaukauna, WI, passed away in late September 2001. His grandson, Jason Kahler, posted the notice, and remarked that his grandfather did not talk about his war experiences, and that he, Jason, was going to ask his granddad some questions but waited too long.

His widow, Donna, survives **Harold**.

More sad news comes from **Barbara Rae** who reports the death of her husband, **James Rae** of Denver, CO, in March 1988. She says that he had been ill for a long time and spent his last two weeks in hospice. She too had not been well and was having a difficult time, but now that she is feeling better she has informed us of **Jim's** death. **Barbara** writes that she enjoys the newsletters even though **Jim** did not share his war experiences with her.

A phone call in mid October from **Helen Green** from Dayton, WA, widow of the late **Frank Green** of the 63rd, related that she and **Robert L. Schultz**, 64th Pilot from Loveland, OH, would not be making it to the reunion after making reservations. **Bob** is suffering from a tumor and is undergoing radiation. She said that he was looking fine despite his illness.

They both wished all a good reunion.

News from our VP **Roger Kettleson**, 64th Pilot from Las Vegas, NV, shortly after the reunion contained the sad news that **Robert** had taken his last flight on November 4th.

Later mail from **Helen** included a more information regarding **Bob** including a copy of his obituary. **Bob** piloted B-17s while in the 43rd and participated in the "Battle of the Bismarck Sea." **Bob** kept on flying after the war and flew 32.5 years for Delta Airlines retiring with the rank of Captain. His favorite hobby was feeding birds and he had several feeders that he tended to right up until he entered Hospice of Cincinnati suffering from acute terminal cancer. He was interred in Wayside Cemetery in Barron, WI with military honors. He was 83 years young.

Helen hopes to make it to Las Vegas for the reunion in September.

Arthur G. Durbeck, 403rd Pilot from Alexandria, VA, has a new phone number. It is **703-548-6092**.

Elain Pierce, the 43rd Elf, informs me that mail to **Faye Holt**, from Lawton, OK, and widow of the late **W-JA Holt** Sgt/Maj in Headquarters Squadron, is failing to reach her, as the address is no longer valid. If anyone out there knows where **Faye** is or what happened to her, please let us know.

Linda Kolano, daughter of **Vincent C. Stopczynski** Headquarters Clerk from Kinston, NY, writes to say that **Vincent** or Pops as she calls him is always excited to receive our newsletters. **Pops** is 81 years young but health reasons prevented him from joining us at Nashville this year.

Linda relays this story from **Vincent**. On August 15, 1945, he was on Ie Shima and was caught up in all of the excitement as we were all awaiting the arrival of the Japanese peace emissaries en route to Manila, Luzon that day. The late Father **Shea**, Headquarters Chaplain, was saying mass using the hood of his Jeep as an altar when another Jeep came speeding up and the driver told Father **Shea** something. Father **Shea** then told all of us the war was over. He never finished the mass, but packed up and followed the other Jeep. **Vincent** told his family of the great happiness that broke out among the GIs on the island that day.

Vincent walks daily at a local mall for his heart and the other walkers are envious that they do not have a group like the 43rd. He mailed our treasurer, **William H. "Bill" Wilson, Jr.**, 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX, and Past President of this association, his check for a 2001 reunion cap that **Bill** mailed to him.

Also writing to **Bill** inquiring about an overseas hat with an emblem of either the 43rd B.G. or the 63rd Squadron is **Paul F. Puchalsky**, 63rd Mechanic from Dover, DE. **Paul** is also looking for a "NOEMFOOR" patch that he is willing to purchase. He included his 2002 dues with his letter.

He tells all attending the Nashville reunion to have "... a good time at the convention."

James P. "Jim" Warren, 65th Flight Engineer from Princeton, NJ, remitted to **Bill** his 2002 dues. He says that the association is really doing a great job, "... and we all are thankful for all your very successful efforts."

After all these many years **Bill Williams**, a Captain in the 63rd Squadron, has found us and is now a new member of this association. **Bill** does not indicate what his duty was while with the 43rd, but he does say that he would like to locate his navigator, **Robert Williams**, who formerly resided in the Los Angeles area.

Bill retired in 1975 after serving as an FBI agent. He was with the 43rd from December 1944 to September 1945. He earned the Silver Star and the Air Medal with 3 clusters. His wife's name is **Judith**. Some of you probably remember **Jim**, so if you do why not give him a call or drop him a letter.

His address is **20925 Indianola Rd. NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370**. His phone is **360-598-4619**.

Charles H. Stenglein, 65th Aerial Photographer, has sent **Bill** a check for his 2002 dues plus a contribution to the association. He writes, "My hearty thanks to all you officers for the great job you're doing."

Charles did not indicate a change of address, but the return address on his envelope and in his letter does not agree with that in our 2000 Roster, so here is what apparently is a new address: **508 Jenny Dr., Nokomis, FL 34275-4147**.

Duane Reed has sent **Bill** his dues for 2002. He enjoys the Newsletter even though he has not seen a name of anyone that he knows.

He writes that he was with the 63rd in the Philippines and on Ie Shima until the war ended. His pilot was **Howard S. Booth Jr.**, 63rd Pilot from Fairfield, CA. **Duane** says that he has been in contact with two other men from that crew but has not heard from any of the others.

Obviously he is receiving our newsletters, but his name does not appear in our 2000 Roster, so here is his current address. **1002 So. Wafer St., Pasadena, TX 77506.**

A short letter from **Caroline F. Bancroft** from Oneida, NY, included a very nice contribution to the association. **Caroline** is the widow of **Harvey G. Bancroft**, 63rd Radio Operator. She appreciates receiving the newsletters since his death in 1996, but has requested that her name be removed from our mailing list. She does however want a record kept of her new address so that it will be known when our history gets published since **Harvey** paid for a copy in advance. [Ed. note. Your new address has been sent to **Larry Hickey** for his records. The association has no record of those who paid in advance for the history. That record is kept by **Larry**. Please send him any changes that may occur in the future.]

Her new address is **103 Old N. Main Street, Oneida, NY 13421.**

Lucy and Reginald Tatro, 65th Radio Operator from Greenfield, MA, report that they are getting prepared to make a 3-month trip to New Zealand in December to visit a son and family. **Lucy** writes that their granddaughter is really excited that they will be there for Christmas.

Lucy had an allergic reaction to medication last June and spent a day in the hospital. They went to Maine to attend her college reunion. Then she again had a reaction to another medicine and spent 4 days getting over that. In preparation for the trip **Reg** was given an echogram and a stress test which he passed. On November 14th, the day this paragraph was being typed, **Lucy** was scheduled to take her echogram and stress test. We trust that you passed that too so you have a go for the N.Z. trip.

They have a new e-mail address. **retatro@crocker.com.**

Before the reunion took place **Arthur D. Byrne**, 65th Intelligence from Knoxville, TN, phoned the editor to find out if **Leland H. Agard III**, Associate member from Savannah, TN, had a new address or phone number. **Art** had been trying to get in touch with **Leland** by phone and e-mail but was told the phone number had been disconnected. The editor had no new information. **Art** and **Leland H. "Herb" Agard II** had spent many months together while **Herb** was CO of the 43rd after the war. The editor joined the 65th while serving as **Herb's** copilot.

A change of telephone number for **Francis Tucher**, 65th Flight Engineer from Indianapolis, IN, explains why **Max Axelsen** could not contact him during our reunion. His new number is **317-357-0750.**

Tom Dow, associate member from Asheboro, NC, and nephew of the late **Alfred**: "**Allie**" **Dow**, has a change of e-mail address. It is **tomtom@rtmc.net.**

Those of you at the reunion should recall that at the dinner/dance each table was set with two bottles of B-17 sauce. Tom, whose uncle flew in B-17s with the 43rd, provided these. Thank you, Tom. He also works closely on B-17 matters with **Janice Olson**, Associate member from Apple Valley, CA. She is our B-17 Lady. Her father, **Chick Olson**, piloted B-17s in the 64th until his untimely death.

Athill W. Irvine, 63rd Radio Operator/Gunner from Winthrop, ME, attended his first reunion in Nashville. After he arrived home he mailed the editor both his land mail addresses so that the Association will have the correct address to which to mail his Newsletter.

These are being passed on to our 43rd Elf so that she can send the Newsletter to the address where he resides at the time of the mailings. Both are listed below:

34 So. Upper Narrows Lane, Winthrop, Me 04364 – his summer address; and

7 Elgin Pl. #411, Dunedin, FL 34698 – his winter address.

Art Curren, Headquarters Bombardier from Port Townsend, WA, is quite concerned that many veterans are not aware that they are eligible for vision rehab, if and when they need it. He sent the following information that the editor feels is worthy of being included in this newsletter.

The VA Vision Rehabilitation Program is available to veterans who have lost their vision for ANY reason. One need only to be "legally blind," not totally blind or sightless. The cause of the impairment does not have to be service connected. Many veterans are receiving rehab for glaucoma, diabetic induced retinopathy and age related macular degeneration. At this time all of these diseases cannot be treated; the best the doctors can do is to slow the progression of these diseases.

There are 7 VA Hospitals around the country that offer Vision Rehab programs. Programs as comprehensive as these are not available in the private sector for any amount of money. These are not medical treatments but rather provide diagnostic testing of abilities; training in all areas of living; and specialized visual aids, i.e., reading machines, computer training and special computer programs for the visually impaired, talking clocks, radios, calculators, etc., for everyday use as well as magnifiers of all types.

To find out more, contact your local area VA Coordinator and ask for the Blind Rehab Coordinator. Art says that he also received hearing aids from the VA arranged by the Audio Coordinator. [The editor was told in mid December that the hearing aid program has been revised or discontinued as of January 1, 2002.]

If you have further questions, Art says to contact him at 360-385-4596.

Stephen Perrone, 63rd Bombardier from Somerdale, NJ, authored a crew memoir that he and the crew of the late **Kent L. Zimmerman**, 63rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX, wrote after he decided that we might never see a copy of our history. He brought some copies to the reunion and mailed one to this editor following the reunion. Due to space limitations in this edition of the Newsletter this book with entries by various crew members on selected missions, etc., is being passed on to the new Secretary/Editor, **Howard "Andy" Anderson**, 64th Radio Operator/Gunner, for consideration for use in a future newsletter(s).

Steve would like some feedback from a listing in the Air Force Historical Records Archive, Maxwell AFB dated January 7, 1945. This particular item took him by surprise.

"On the 7th the 63rd Squadron, old hands at the business, took under its wing ten planes and crews of the 90th Group to initiate them in the intricate technique of blind night bombing. Until the end of the month the two were to fly coordinated missions under our direction. During that period two planes of the 90th failed to return to base and their crews are missing in action."

E-mail from **Tracy Tucciarone**, Sweetheart of the 43rd, arrived after the reunion. She reports that both she and her dad, **Francis Tucher**, 65th Flight Engineer from Indianapolis, TN, had been ill at the time of the reunion. **Tracy** suffered from and was still suffering to a lesser degree an inner ear problem that left her quite nauseous. **Francis** had severe case of shingles that was misdiagnosed until 4 doctors at the VA Hospital made the correct diagnosis. The VA hospital claimed not to have the needed medication for this disease and **Francis** then had to seek a "regular doctor" for a prescription for Lidoderm. This did slowly reduce his excruciating pain. Tracy, we all hope that you are both on the road to full recovery. We missed you folks at the reunion.

S. L. Flinner, 63rd Pilot from Prospect, PA, phoned the editor in mid November inquiring about the reunion and our history book. He purchased 4 books in advance and wondered if he could get his money back upon request. Although we have been told that is the case by the author, **Lawrence J. Hickey** Associate member of this association from Boulder, CO, at least two of our members have indicated to the editor that when they made such a request, they heard nothing from **Larry**.

S. L. stated that he enjoyed the Newsletter and had considered making the Nashville reunion along with **Wilbert H. Householder**, 63rd Navigator from New Brighton, PA, but they did not make it. He is hoping to make it to the Las Vegas reunion in 2002.

Our Chaplain, **Roland T. Fisher** 63rd Pilot from Lake Oswego, OR, sent the editor e-mail reporting that he had a call on his telephone answering machine from **Art Millard**, 63rd Pilot from Longwood, FL. **Art** reported that he and his wife, **Dottie**, were now living in a care center, but he failed to leave for **Roland** an address or phone number. **Roland** has not been able to contact **ART**. The editor searched on the Internet for a phone number or residence for **Art** but to no avail.

In his phone message **Art** told that he had been contacted by **Louise Dorwin**, widow of **Dorwin Wilson**. She wanted to know how she could get on the Association's mailing list as an associate member. When **Roland** called the phone number listed for **Louise** in the 2000 Roster, he was informed that the number was no longer in use.

Again a search on the Internet failed to locate an address or phone number for **Louise**. To complicate matters a bit more, we did not have **Dorwin** listed as deceased.

If any of you out there can shed any light on the locations or phone numbers of **Art** or **Louise**, please contact **Roland** at his address, **1512 Hemlock St, Lake Oswego, OR 97034-6018**, or by phone at **503-636-5798** or via e-mail at **irmrol@email.msn.com**.

A recent change of address arrived with some Christmas mail. **Dorothy M. Edwards**, widow of **Russell H. Edwards**, 63rd Flight Engineer, has moved. Here is her new address: **1380 LaurenBrook Lane NE, Massillon, OH 44646**. Her phone number did not change.

Her grandson Scott is now studying for the ministry at S. B. Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY.

A post card to our Treasurer, **Bill Wilson**, from the American Air Museum in Britain:

Dear AAM Member,

On Behalf of all of us at the American Air Museum in Britain and the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, I write to offer you our deepest sympathy and support following the terrible attacks on your country on Tuesday, September 11.

Our thoughts are with the injured and the families of those killed and missing, and with all the American people.

God Bless America.

Yours very sincerely,
Ted

Another long missing 43rd Tail Gunner has been located via the Internet. Actually his son, **John Wickrykas**, located us and has given his father the gift of a new membership in our association. **Walter J. Wickrykas** (incorrectly spelled Wyierkrykas during his time of service) served in 1943 in the 65th Squadron as a Tail Gunner on *TARGET FOR TONIGHT*. **Walter** flew a total of 13 missions when his tour ended in November 1943 and reached the rank of S/Sgt. Here are the vital data to enter in your Roster. **311 E. New York St., Shenandoah, PA 17976**. His phone is **570-462-3180**. If any of you men remember **Walter** why not drop him a line or give him a ring on the telephone?

Ruby Newman from Pine Grove Mills, PA, widow of the late **Gerald O. Newman**, thanks the Association for faithfully sending her the Newsletter for the past 9 years. She has asked that she be removed

from the mailing list. She does hear from several of **Jerry's** friends during the holidays and really does not know any of the folks in the current newsletters. She writes that they did enjoy the reunions that they attended. Her request will be honored but with regrets.

Writing for **Joseph Kent Milton**, 403rd Armorer/Gunner, his wife, **Elsie**, sent in his dues for 2002-03. She says that they enjoy the Newsletter even though **Kent** does not know too many people mentioned in them. They had planned to make it to Nashville but other circumstances caused them to miss the last reunion.

She says that they are both in good health but aging like all of us, but they are still "... on the go." They send best wishes to all of the staff and officers who keep the members informed as to what is going on.

Ernest N. Morgan, 403rd Pilot from Albuquerque, NM, writes that every time he passed the registration table at the Radisson at this past reunion, no one was manning it. He forgot to pay his dues while there and thus mailed his 2002 dues to **Bill**.

"Beth and I enjoyed the reunion; got together with people we knew before, and met more people we didn't know. Very enjoyable experience. Toured all over Nashville and finally wound up with a ride on the Andrew Jackson boat."

Ernest writes that he appreciates **Bill's** efforts in keeping the group together. "I know that it takes time and work, but maybe seeing all those eighty-year-old people together in that big room singing, makes it worth the effort. I was impressed."

In a short note from **Kenneth H. Gissonne** from Cleveland, OH, along with his 2002 dues, he says that he is sorry that he missed the Nashville reunion but he lost his wife a couple of years ago and then his son just a year ago. That is a heavy burden to carry, **Ken**, but hopefully we will see you in Las Vegas.

We received sad news from **Mary J. Matczak**. Her husband, **Edmund Matczak**, Associate member from Tariffville, CT, passed away on August 22, 2001.

Reyes Sena wife of **Gilbert E. Sena**, 403rd Bombardier, mailed **Bill** 2002 dues. She expressed their sorrow for missing the reunion. "We did get to the one in Colorado Springs [1989] and we enjoyed it very much." **Gilbert** has had two strokes since then. The first was in 1992 and the second, a massive one, occurred on Pearl Harbor Day in 1998. Although he is home with his wife, he has had several setbacks since then and is fed through a tube.

Reyes wrote, "Will you please give our regards to everyone."

Carol A. (Houts) Jenkins of Columbus, OH, wrote **Max** to notify him of the death of her father, **Kenneth O. Houts** 403rd Pilot from Tipp City, OH, on July 18, 2001. "It has only been since his death that we have found out how involved Dad was in this group and how decorated he had been in World War II. I wish that we had known more about his actions, but he didn't seem to want to talk about it very much. I am very proud of my father and I received a flag from Wright-Patterson AFB at his funeral. He will be missed."

Carol's words reflect those of so many sons and daughters whose fathers have chosen not to talk about their experiences while serving in the 43rd. That is a shame as so much history is never recorded but rather is passed on to later generations by word of mouth. Give this some thought if you have not been telling your descendants of your experiences.

Carol had put a notice of **Kenneth's** death on our 43rd web site, and it was from there that the editor first learned of his death in time to include his name to be read at our Memorial service at Nashville.

Peter J. Roberts, Gunner and Associate member from Merriwa, Western Australia, sent **Bill** dues through 2004. He says that it is good to see that **Bill** is still going strong. He cites our anthrax scare in the USA and wonders if anyone could have thought of the situation we are in that touched the entire world.

He is pleased to see "... the 'right' President at the helm." Australia recently had an election and "... Johnny Howard is back. Which will guarantee to give you Guys back up – in what has to be done to Laden and any of evil henchmen that are involved. We were all out here quite deeply moved by what New York copped! I guess that it goes without saying – that the general population has great sympathy for all those of you who have lost Loved ones. We were brothers in arms with you during WWII. More so – There's that bond that exists of Respect, mutual admiration and Mateship – That only a degree of trial and Tribulation – endured and survived together, against a common enemy, can produce."

Pete goes on to say that he has enjoyed reading the last two newsletters. He was especially interested in references to the 22nd Bomb Group's history, the 1986 unedited history by Walt Gaylor and **Larry Hickey's** photo supplement. He wonders if these publications are for general release or are they limited to membership of the 22nd? He would like an address to which he could write to find out about these. [Editor's note. These publications are not for distribution to the general public. The 22nd expects to publish its history within the next several months. This book will be on sale to the general public. The photo supplement will be included entirely within its history. Both of the above mentioned productions were published by the 22nd Bomb Group. **Larry** assembled the photo supplement under the direction of **Don Evans** who serves as the 22^{nd's} legal representative with regard to the publication of their history.]

R. "Bob" A. Sausville, 65th Pilot from Bennington, VT, writes that he does not recognize the group of men shown before B-24 D 065 *GERALDINE* on page 8 of the October 2001 Newsletter, but the photo did bring out this story.

On the 2nd of July 1943 this airplane was picked up at Herrington, KS, by him and his crew and flown on to Fairfield [CA] then to Hickam [HI] on 7 August 1943. At Hickham a leaking fuel cell was replaced before the crew flew the plane on to Nandi [Fiji] then to Amberly and on to Townsville [Australia] on 12 September where they left the aircraft for a nose turret modification.

The crew was then transported to Port Moresby and assigned to the 65th Squadron. **Bob** was assigned to be Assistant Squadron Operation Officer by order #49 dated 10 November 1943. Shortly after and much to their surprise, #065 arrived in the 65th where **Bob** and his crew claimed it as their "personal machine." The crew chief had the nose art painted. It consisted of a large red and white shark's mouth with teeth. The crew chief casually asked **Bob** his wife's name and **Bob** told him **Geraldine**.

Bob became Operations Officer when **Marvin L. Stephens** completed his tour. The Squadron Commander was **Heston McDonnell** who served until 1 August 1944.

Crew photos were taken in 1944 on February 11, 12, 17 and 26. More photos were taken on March 2nd. Among these pictures were the crews of pilots **McDonnell**, **Stephens**, **D. White**, **Harvey**, **Poulson** [**Ralph E.** from Oakhurst, CA], **Carrell** [**Marvin D.** from Houston, TX], **Peterson**, **Miller**, **Floyd**, **Kapitan**, **Carter**, **F. White**, **Eby** and **Casady**. The B-24s used as props in these photos were *STUGOTTS 1st*, *LUCKY LUCILLE* and *GERALDINE*. At the time five Aussie crews were receiving B-24 training with the 65th. On February 11th photos were taken of these crews. **Bob** recalls four of them, the crews of **Rehfisch**, **O'Brion**, **Rayson** and **Jaques**.

Bob writes on to give a brief description of some of these men in the 65th. He is quoted below:

Heston McDonnell; a good man and excellent C.O.

Parker S. Floyd; a pilot's pilot. He wore a B-24 like it was a part of him. I flew my 58th mission with him as his co-pilot just for the enjoyment of the ride.

Joe Esposito [Navigator from Malverne, NY]; a cruel and expert poker player.

Frank White; he carried the B-24 aloft.

Turner (the Burner from Philly, PA); he kept us "easy."

Doc. Gusack [**Milton** the Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD]; he was "The Man." Posted warnings on the bulletin board. On the habit of crewmembers foregoing the latrine at night and urinating in the tent area – "Personnel caught in this unhealthy practice will be subjected to surgical castration, i.e., "cutter balls off." (His words.) [End of direct quotation.]

Bob says that if B-24 D 065 went to the 403rd, it was after he left the 65th. He and the original **Geraldine** are doing well in Vermont and will be celebrating 60 years together in April 2002.

The diary of **Richard Bennett**, 65th Pilot from Fredericksburg, TX, **continued**.

March 2, 1943 – I got up at 3:00 a.m. and went down to Operations all ready to take off. My heart fell a mile when I learned that Hensler was going in my place. I ate breakfast with the crews, went to the briefing, and then back to bed where I slept until noon. Gibbs and Max came in from an overnight recon. Another bunch is going out this afternoon to raid the same convoy. All day our planes have been coming and going. The crews are really getting a workout. Russ and J.K. are down at Thirty-Mile Strip. Our own field was socked in and they couldn't land.

March 3, 1943 – Today has been even more active than yesterday. Planes come in and as soon as they can be refueled and loaded with 1,000-lb bombs, they are off again. All of our group of six are out now. It is only mid-afternoon and I may yet get a chance before it is all over. I'd give anything to be out on this raid, but I guess I'll be getting plenty of action before long. I received my first letter from home today and after reading it, was ready for anything. So far about seven ships have been sunk in the convoy, leaving about ten more; I hope they get them. I guess it is a lot easier to pick them off while they are on the water than to wait until they can dig into the jungle. I can't help but wonder how those fellows would like to be flying their planes over this convoy with ack ack and Zeros thick as flies. I wonder what sort of wages they would ask for that job.

March 4, 1943 – Yesterday was quite a day and today, I thought, would repeat yesterday's action. Again this a.m. I was scheduled to bomb the convoy. However as we were getting ready to go out to our plane, word came that all the ships had been sunk. An armed recon came back and said that the only thing they had seen was a DD listing. They put four 1,000-lb bombs in it and it went to the bottom. All in all, I imagine it must have been quite a blow for the Japs. From what I can gather of the losses, they lost three light cruisers, four or five destroyers and twelve transports. Our own losses: approximately one B-17, one B-25 and three P-38s. Russ Emerick made news in yesterday's raid. Russ, with only ten hours in a B-17 and never having made a landing, set it down at Buna. J.K. was a bombardier on the plane and he testifies to Russ's swell handling of the ship.

March 6, 1943 – Felt much better today. Read a Thorne Smith book, "The Humorous Ghost." It was pretty good. Went over to see Andrews today. His eye, which got shot up over the Lae convoy, is much better. Lewis, who also got shot up over the convoy and managed to get his side shot up, is better, too.

March 9, 1943 – Flew for three hours today swinging a compass.

March 10, 1943 – Today I went up on my first mission. We got up at 5:00 a.m. and took off at 7:00. It was raining when we took off, but as soon as we got into the air we had good weather which remained for the rest of the day. We flew all over the island of New Britain taking pictures of Nip airdromes. We flew at 26,000 feet. I had a heck of a cramp in my stomach from the altitude. The temperature was -22° C and all Hensler and I had on were summer clothes. Total time for the trip was 7:15. We didn't see any Zeros in the air nor did we get any ack ack.

March 11, 1943 – Didn't do much today. Tonight Gibbs and Max are going over Rabaul. We haven't had a raid over there for some time and it looks like we are going to start going over again every night. The Nips haven't been over here for a long while, but I imagine they will be coming over soon now that the moon is getting good.

March 13, 1943 – Today I went up for my second mission, a recon. We flew what seemed to me all over the South Pacific. We took off about 6:00 a.m. and had pretty good weather with broken clouds all day. After taking a few pictures of Jap airdromes located pretty far out, we started back for Moresby. My head was on a swivel the entire trip, for I felt that we were going to run into Zeros. We had just about made up our minds that we wouldn't see anything when bang, just like that, we spotted three Jap destroyers. It was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. They were in perfect V formation and kicking up a wake, which must have been five miles long. We were at 10,000 feet and as soon as we saw the ships, swung around to fly directly over them to take pictures. Our hearts were breaking that we didn't have any bombs. I know we could have sunk one of them, and perhaps two. Apparently they didn't see us or have any idea at all that we were there, for they didn't alter course or shoot at us. It would have been duck soup with bombs. We decided after making the first run and taking a few pictures to try our luck and get some more. So we did a 180-degree turn and headed back over them. Just as we got over them dead center, it happened. At first I thought it was the top turret gunner shooting at Zeros, for I heard a bang, bang, bang, bang that shook the plane just as though one of the guns was being fired. Snapping my head around, I saw four black puffs of smoke at what looked like 30 or 50 yards behind the tail and to the right, but at the perfect altitude. Someone yelled, "That's ack ack, let's get the hell out of here!" It seemed to me that the plane was standing still in the air and all the time those black puffs of smoke, in groups of four, were getting nearer and nearer. That minute or two went by very, very slowly, but finally we got out of range. There wasn't much sense in hanging around, so we took out for home. (Total time 8:30.)

March 22, 1943 – I have not flown for the past week other than to swing a compass a few days ago. Twice during the past week I have been scheduled to go on strike missions, but at the eleventh hour they were both called off. Tonight our squadron is scheduled to go over Vunakanau. This time I do not believe it will be called off. We take off at 1:00 a.m.

March 23, 1943 – I was in a very peeved condition last night. Just as we got to the end of the runway ready to take off, our brakes went out. Hensler yelled, "Brakes, brakes," which seemed very odd to me, because the brakes were on and here we were rolling towards another B-17 with nothing to stop us. The engineer kept pulling the emergency brake handle, but nothing happened. (It seems that he emergency systems never work in an emergency anyway.) In a way luck was with us, for we managed to miss hitting the other plane, although only by a few feet. Hensler cut the engines and we came to rest in a cleared area off the taxi strip, having just missed a pile of stone on one side and a deep ditch on the other side. (I had visions of my head sticking through the windshield, which I admit isn't a nice vision.) All the boys got back safely this a.m. saying it had been a swell show. My pistol was stolen yesterday along with the shoulder holster. (Me thinks there are thieves about.)

March 28, 1943 – Today I went out on my third mission, another recon. We were looking for Jap shipping, but in ten hours flight over the Pacific we didn't see one ship. We flew north to within 25 miles of the equator, but didn't cross it. However the visibility was over 100 miles, so I at least got a look at the Northern Hemisphere. Coming back over the mountains we ran into some pretty tough weather and for awhile I was wondering if that parachute was in good condition.

March 29, 1943 – Spent the morning taxiing planes into the new revetments. It was the first time I had ever taxied a B-17. A little tricky to handle, but nothing too hard.

April 1, 1943 – Fourth mission today, and still a recon. We flew formation with Harcrow up to Kavieng. Capt. Fletcher was to go with us but we lost him over the mountains. Purpose was to shadow a convoy, "Tokyo Express." The harbor was full of boats, thirteen in all. Three DDs, one cruiser, one sub, one 15,000-ton A.K., and other small cargo ships. We left Harcrow at Kavieng and made a search in the waters north of New Britain. We passed a formation of seven Jap bombers, Nell class. We thought for sure they would try to jump us. However, neither side made a move and we went whizzing by. On the way home just outside of Finschhafen we had a Zero pull up on our tail, but he stayed out of range and soon went away. Yesterday while bombing Gasmata, Max made a run and yelled "Bombs away!" to which the tail gunner added, "Bomb-bay tank away!" Seems that Max had pulled the wrong

switches and released the bomb-bay tank instead of the bombs. It must have scared the hell out of those Japs to see that huge thing falling on them, even thought it couldn't do much damage.

April 3, 1943 – Haven't done much the past two days. Worked all afternoon on making a record of my flights on sectional maps.

April 4, 1943 – Was scheduled for a mission, but it was called off at the last minute while we were already starting the plane.

April 6, 1943 – Fifth mission today, armed recon. Took off at 4:30 a.m. Covered Lae, Finschhafen, Gasmata and Wide Bay. Nothing happened at Lae. At Finschhafen we had a lot of light A.A. fired at us, but we were just out of range of it. They only fired a few bursts of heavy and it wasn't close. We saw a plane on the field at Gasmata, so we made a run on it. The bomb fell a little short but may have done some damage. Just then the radio operator called up and said, "Do you know you have a big hole in the wing?" I looked out on the wing and found he made an understatement. There was a huge hole an A.A. shell had gone through. A close one indeed. Then we found a camouflaged barge in Open Bay and dropped three bombs near it, but no direct hits. Then we strafed it. Soon after we saw a Jap bomber about 3,000 feet directly over us. At our own level we would have fought him, but from where we were the best thing to do was take to the clouds. Last but not least, a tire blew out just after we landed.

April 8, 1943 – Sixth mission. Took off at 1:00 a.m. to search for and bomb two destroyers near Lae. We couldn't find them. It was pitch black, what with no moon. Dropped bombs on Lae. Medium A.A.

April 12, 1943 – Still tired from last night's mission, I was awakened again this a.m. at 12:30. We were to bomb a concentration of Jap planes at Rapopo. On the way down to our plane we watched another taking off. It got about 25 feet in the air and burst into flames, rolled over on its side, and crashed at the end of the runway. It was covered in flames and before long the bombs exploded. It was the most heartbreaking thing that I have ever seen. I just learned that Andrews was co-pilot of that plane. My nerves were a bit on edge and more so when just before we took off we discovered a runaway fuel pump, not to mention the fact that just after we took off, in a heavy fog, I found the mixture controls in "lean." Enough in all to make anyone go nuts. It was too light when we got near Rapopo, so we bombed Talasea. This a.m. the Nips came over. The first daylight raid they have made since I've been here. There were two waves of bombers, about fifty in all, flying about 25,000 feet. They had Zero protection and just as they got near the airdrome, the P-38s jumped them. (About twenty P-38s with P-39s down below.) The Nips dropped bombs on Ward Strip and Seventeen-Mile, but I don't know what damage was done. They may come over again tonight, but I doubt if I'll be here as we are scheduled to go out again.

April 14, 1943 – Eighth mission. Ye Gods, but it seems like the 50th. Took off at 7:30 a.m. Carried eight 500-lb bombs. We were to skip bomb a small convoy just north of Madang. Weather over the mountains was bad and 60 miles from the target our Number 4 engine went out. The weather in front of us was socked in so we turned around due to the fact that with one engine out we could hardly maintain straight and level flight. We had to salvo half of our bombs to get back over the mountains.

May 1, 1943 – I haven't made any notes for the past couple of weeks due to the fact that nothing has happened and to the fact that I haven't got around to it. Everything has been the usual routine. Our squadron has done little or no flying these past few weeks. Most of the planes have been out of commission. They are all back in order now and it looks like we'll be doing a lot of flying before long. We may pull a mission before the day is over. Was Airdrome Office last week. Flew practice bombs yesterday for a few hours. White is our new bombardier. Everyone has been fine and we're all looking for a little action soon. I hope we get some new planes from the states. We can sure use them.

May 7, 1943 – Ninth mission. It's been almost three weeks since my last mission. Everyone has been anxious to go out. This morning at 4:00 a.m. the C.Q. woke us up. We didn't stay in bed and groan and grumble like we would have done a month ago when we were scheduled to fly every other day. We took off at 6:15 a.m. Weather over the mountains was good. At Cape Ward Hunt we circled for

the other planes. Ten planes in all were going on the raid. However only seven showed up. (When we got back we learned that the first flight of three planes didn't get off the ground.) In formation, we headed for Long Island where we were to circle for the other three planes. Capt. Zeamer, who was flying lone wolf, joined our formation but other planes didn't show up, so off we went for the target — Madang. Nearing Madang, Zeamer broke off from the formation to fly over and bomb a radio station. Just as he got to the target I saw the air filled with large black puffs of smoke. It was ack ack, and a regular wall of it. Zeamer pulled up into a sharp chandelle, which gave the appearance of his climbing up on the black puffs. By this time Capt. Smith's formation was heading in over the field, so our formation of three broke off and did a wide sweeping turn to allow for a short interval between elements. Coming around, we headed straight over the airdrome at 5,000 feet. Smith's element had already gone over and the air was clear of A.A., but we knew that it wouldn't be that way for long. Hal Slazier, our navigator, called up on the intercom and said, "Hey, aren't you boys getting a bit too eager, going over at this altitude?" I called back and said, "We're following Capt. Cromer, and besides, this way we can get a good look at the airdrome, so I'm happy about the whole thing." Hal said something about "Ya, bomb-happy," but I wasn't listening because just then the fireworks started to go off. I'll say one thing for the Nips; they sure do have good ack ack. It was bursting right on our level, but a little in front of us. (It was no doubt bursting all around us, but I could only see that in front.) I guess they figured we were going a little faster than we were, which was lucky for us. We still weren't over the airdrome and that stuff was getting thicker by the half second. We were on our bombing run, so we couldn't weave or alter course. We just flew straight into the stuff. We could feel the plane bounce and buck from the concussion, and now and then something like the sound of hail when fragments of the A.A. fell on the plane. If I weren't here now I'd have said it was impossible for any plane to fly through that space of bursting shells. Then we were over the target. I saw the other two planes drop their bombs and at the same time White hollered over the phone, "Bombs away!" He didn't have to add, "Let's get the hell out of here!" because he figured we were pretty anxious to do that very thing. With the throttles up to the firewall, we flew straight out towards the sea; the A.A. from the shore batteries was still following us. It wasn't until after we were out of range that I realized that my nerves were tighter than a drum. There were Zeros to look out for and we all felt sure we were going to see them. We were surprised not to find them waiting for us over Madang. Right after we had left the target, White came back to inspect the bomb bay to make sure all the bombs had been released. He reached down behind Hensler and pulled up a handful of silk. Hensler's parachute had sprung open. That's enough to make any man pass out after what he had just been through. However if any of those shells had hit us, I don't think a chute would have done much good. Everyone got back safely. A few men on some of the other planes got slight flesh wounds. Almost all the planes had holes in them of one size or another. This is the best mission I've been on yet, but it sure made me weary.

May 11, 1943 — Tenth mission. Yesterday at 3:30 p.m. Operations said to get ready for a strike taking off at 5:00 p.m. Just before we went down to take off, word came that it was postponed for 1:00 a.m. takeoff because they said the weather would be better at that time. I believe our loading was fourteen 300-lb wire-wrapped daisy cutters, a mean-looking piece of destruction if I ever saw one. Also a cluster of twenty-four incendiaries, about twenty 30-lb frags and a bundle of leaflets to tell the Nips what a raw deal they are getting, that we will help them if they will only start a revolution or some such stuff. We took off on the hour, 1:00 a.m., and headed for the target, Rabaul, Vunakanau. All the way up we kept saying, "Just wait until we see that weatherman again." It was instruments all the time through some pretty rough thunderheads. When our E.T.A. ran out we started looking around for the airdrome but didn't have any idea of which direction it might be in. We kept running into clouds all the time and Number 3 engine was acting up. There was no moon at all and the night was pitch black. Off in the distance a flare went off. We headed for it. Halfway there the flare died out. We continued on our course but could see nothing. But then the [search] lights went on. We must have been five miles or more away, but I would have sworn we were right on the edge of the field. Well, we knew where the target was; now all we had to do was get through these lights. Approaching the field I began to wonder

if it were possible for any plane to get by those lights without getting picked up in them. I have now decided that it isn't possible. It was still as black as ever, but there weren't any clouds in the sky. I couldn't figure out whether this made me happy or unhappy. By now we were nearing the edge of the field and could see about 50 to 100 small fires going. The searchlights were weaving all around, up and down, side to side. All of which led me to believe that they didn't have radar. One light swept right across us. I guess they didn't see us because it kept going. We swung around and made our run over the dispersal area where the planes were parked. We cut back on the engines and made a glide approach from 9,000 feet, leveling off at 7,500 feet. We had just made our breakaway when they picked us up in the lights. There was ample A.A. I could feel it bounce the plane and I knew that now was the time for all good men to get the hell out of there – but fast. Just then the Nips picked up one of the other planes and they had all the lights on him and were sending up everything they had. Everyone returned. Just after we left the target our lights went out and we had the devil's own time trying to see the flight instruments. We make out ok and returned through the same clouds and rain. A Red Cross truck was waiting for us when we got in and gave everyone a Coke.

To be continued.

*****TAPS - LAST ROLL CALL*****

Charles "Chuck" B. Downer 403rd Pilot from Chattsworth, CA, February 2, 2001. Reported by his wife, **Midge**. God Bless.

Kenneth O. Houts 403rd Pilot from Tipp City, TX, June 18, 2001. Reported by his daughter, Carol A. (Houts) Jenkins. God Bless.

Edmund Matczak Associate member from Tarriffville, CT, on August 22, 2001. Reported by his wife, **Mary**. God Bless.

Harold H. Kahler 65th Bombardier from Kaukauna, WI, in late September 2001. Reported by his grandson, Jason. God Bless.

Anthony Pilcavage 64th Line Personnel from Pittston, PA, June 6, 2001. Reported by his nephew, Anthony Pilcavage. God Bless.

James Rae 65th Squadron from Denver, CO, March 1998. Reported by his wife, **Barbara**. God Bless.

Robert L. Schultz 64th Squadron Pilot from Loveland, OH, November 4, 2001. Reported by **Roger Kettleson** and **Helen Green**. God Bless.

Dorwin Wilson 403rd Squadron Pilot from Orlando, FL. Reported by **Roland T. Fisher**. God Bless.

***** QUARTERLY HUMOR *****

During training exercises, the lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another vehicle stuck in the mud with a red-faced colonel at the wheel.

"Your jeep stuck, sir?" asked the lieutenant as he pulled alongside.

"Nope," replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys.

"Yours is."

On some air bases the Air Force is on one side of the field and civilian aircraft use the other side of the field, with the control tower in the middle. One day the tower received a call from an aircraft asking, "What time is it?"

The tower responded, "Who is calling?"

The aircraft replied, "What difference does it make?"

The tower replied, "It makes a lot of difference.

If it an American Airlines flight, it is 3 o'clock.

If it is an Air Force plane, it is 1500 hours.

If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells.

If it is an Army aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3.

If it is a Marine Corps aircraft, it's Thursday afternoon."

Officer: Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?

Soldier: Sure buddy.

Officer: That's no way to address an officer! Now Let's try it again. Soldier do you have change for a dollar?

Soldier: No, SIR!

Here are some direct quotes taken from court recordings and published in the book *Disorder in the Court*

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July 15th.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.

Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five. I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Q: How was your first marriage terminated?

A: By death.

Q: And by whose death was it terminated?

Q: Can you describe the individual?

A: He was about medium height and had a beard.

Q: Was this a male or a female?

Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I send to you?

A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

Q: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it 'till the next morning?

Q: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

A: Yes.

Q: And what were you doing at that time?

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for a blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you be SO sure doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Q: But could the patient still be alive never the less?

A: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere.

Respectively Submitted – Jim Cherkauer, Editor

Editorial. This is the last edition of the Newsletter that this editor will be producing for our Association. It has been a great pleasure to have served this past 5+ years as the secretary/editor of the association. Your help by sending to the editor news items, articles, photos and diaries has helped him immensely in producing the Newsletter. The editor wants to thank all of you for your splendid help and patience as he developed his own style for this Newsletter. He feels sure that you will give our new secretary/editor, **Howard "Andy" Anderson**. Remember without your input, this Newsletter could not exist. May God bless each of you. I thank you from my heart:

Jim Cherkauer

The Newsletter is published 4 times each year – January, April, July and October. If you have any news that you want in the Newsletter, please have it in the editor's hands absolutely no later than the 15th of the month before publication. Late arriving material will be included in the following Newsletter. **PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY. AVOID SENDING MATERIAL AT THE LAST MINUTE IF YOU CAN SEND IT EARLIER - PLEASE.**

Dues (\$15 Per Year or \$100 Life) may be sent directly to **BILL WILSON**, Treasurer, or to **ANDY ANDERSON**, Secretary. (Addresses are at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Make the check out to **43rd Bomb Group Assoc.** Check the mailing label on this edition to find out your status with respect to paid up dues. The Association's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year. You may send E-Mail to the Secretary/Editor at <andyanne@mediaone.net>.

The Post Office department will not forward the Newsletter. If you have a change of address, please send **BILL WILSON** this change as soon as possible.

What a Group The 43rd Fellows. Col Robert Butler got all of this going twenty some years ago. He still keeps a watch over us. Along the line of officers and directors each have done a Super job. Col Max Axelson just completed. A hitch – Good Show Max. New come Roger Kettleson and a good friend, very capable and best of all he has been in the Ford House in Snyder. So stay in good health the best is yet to come. Jim Cherkauer after more than five years is retiring. Lloyd “Breeze” Boren turned in his suite after fifteen years. The secretary job is almost full time. These two have done a GREAT JOB and we all say, “Well done our good and faithful servant”. Our new boy, Howard K. “Andy” Anderson, will do fine. Andy has helped the Association several times over the past twenty years. Welcome Aboard.

We will need to make a new Roster in March. So if you need to make any changes in your address, phone numbers or rank. Now is the time!!! What ever we have the 28th of February is the way it will be.

Thanks, God Bless, and a Healthy and Happy New Year!

Bill, Mary Lois
& The Elf