



43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.
"KEN'S MEN"



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*****FROM ROGER KETTLES, PRESIDENT*****

As we approach a new year, we wonder what it will offer. Will we experience the closure of the harmful activities and the return of our service personnel to their families? It is certainly our hope, and may we always remember their sacrificing efforts so that we may continue to enjoy our freedoms.

Helmer Johnson called to advise us that **Art Olmstead** passed away 30 Oct. 2003, at the age of 87. He was a pilot in the 64th Squadron and **Helmer** flew as his copilot. Our condolences were sent to his family. **Linda Kolana**, daughter of **Vincent Stopeznski**, of Hqdrs. Squadron, notified us that her father passed away Sept. 10, 2003. Our sympathy card was sent to his family. **Heidi Yoder** sent a notice that her father, **Carl Yoder**, passed away Nov. 24, 2003. Carl served in the 403rd Squadron. A card reflecting our condolences was also sent to his family.

A letter from **Sally Michaels**, widow of **Cyrus** of Hqdrs. Squadron, said she had quite a few photos and articles that **Cyrus** had accumulated and wished to donate. I advised her to send them to **Eldon (Bud) Lawson**, our historian. She said that she enjoyed the newsletter—it brought back many memories. Bud has voluntarily done a great job of collecting information of the activities of the 43rd Bomb Group.

Being your President has been an honor and I thank the members for the support that I have received. The input of activities of our members to our Secretary, **Andy Anderson**, for inclusion in the Newsletter is necessary to keep our members informed. This is particularly enjoyed by those members who are unable to attend our annual yearly reunions, so keep sending things of interest.

My disappointment is the fact that we haven't been able to bring to publication and distribution the history of our organization. I want the membership to know that **Jim Cherkauer** and **Max Axelsen** have worked very hard to attempt to expedite this action. I'm confident their efforts will continue.

I owe thanks to **Andy Anderson** and **Bill Wilson** for their supportive efforts as Secretary and Treasurer. They have agreed to continue to serve in their capacities in support of **Chuck Rauch**, as President, backed by **Jim Cherkauer** as Vice President supported by our dedicated Secretary and Treasurer. We, the members, need to give them full support to keep the Association active.

This is my last Newsletter contribution as an officer of your association. I want to state as a career military fellow, I served in several military organizations, but my real feeling of friendship and comradeship is for the 43rd Bomb Group fellows that I had the good fortune to serve with in 1942 through 1944.

See you in Tampa, Florida, when we visit **Chuck and Pat Rauch**!

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By Andy Anderson:

**2004 Tampa, Florida reunion information:**

Dates: Monday, September 13 to mid-day on Sunday, September 19.

Location: Wyndham Harbour Island Hotel  
725 S. Harbour Island Boulevard  
Tampa, FL 33602

Rate \$89.00 plus tax. This rate is also good three days before and three days after the reunion for those arriving earlier or staying longer. Mention 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group for this rate.

Phone 1(813) 229-5000

It appears that to participate in the entire reunion one would need to reserve for Sept. 13,14,15,16, 17 & 18 if you can get an afternoon departure by air from Tampa. If you must depart in the A M you would need to book a room for the 19<sup>th</sup> also.

Our new President, **Charles Rauch**, will provide more information about activities in the April Newsletter. We are grateful for his willingness to do the arrangements for us. As usual, the meeting will end after our Memorial Service followed by a breakfast buffet on Sunday, Sept 19. As the schedule stands now, if you wish to delay your arrival so that you arrive just in time for the board meeting you could arrive on the afternoon of the 15<sup>th</sup>.

I have learned that I can fly from Los Angeles to Tampa and return by Southwest Airlines for the same price that I paid for round trip tickets to Corpus Christi even though the distance is much greater to Tampa. I believe the reason is because the population is much greater in the Tampa area with such cities as Clearwater and St. Petersburg using the Tampa airport. I am sure that we will also find that more airlines serve Tampa. Competition is what brings better fares and service.

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I was pleased to learn in Corpus Christi that others are considering offering to host a 2005 reunion. But it is too soon to discuss that at this time.

Your Editor had a lengthy e-mail from **Frank Hohmann**, 65th Squadron flight engineer, to notify me of his new address. It is 1 Pine Shadows, Meadow Lakes, Hightstown, NJ 08502. His phone number remains the same (609) 426-6236. Frank stated that he just spent a 4 months "vacation" in the hospital for a triple by-pass and a follow-up aneurysm repair. He writes, "Virginia and I have finally retired for the last time here at Meadow Lakes, where we have a very nice cottage with a campus of lakes and wooded areas. Every thing and every service we need is provided.

"I am writing my memories of 5 ½ years in the Air Corps/Air Force from 1940 to 1945. With the passing of my trusted good friend, **Alton "Doug" Leaman**, I am the last man of the crew of one of the best pilots, **Col. Jay P. Rousek**. I had the honor to fly as his flight engineer for over 19 months, first flying from Guatemala City to the Galapagos Islands and back from Sep 17th, 1941 to July 22nd, 1942 for a total of 140+ round trips. We were transferred to the 19th Bomb Group in the Philippines Christmas day 1941. We flew to Sacramento to pick up a new B17F ("Taxpayers Pride") and flew it to join the 28th Squadron, 19th Bomb Group at Mareeba, Australia, on August 29th, 1942.

I got in 25 missions and received the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster on November 29th, 1942. Our crew voted to join the 65th Squadron, 43rd BG on November 15th, 1942 until February 29, 1943, another 25 missions. I was TDY to the 8th Photo Squadron at 11 mile (Schwimmer Drome) on the Laloki River for the month of March to train two men as flight engineers on the B-17 and got in another 25 missions, all recons, on the north coast of PNG.

Jay Rousek was made CO of the 403rd Squadron and took his crew, all but one, **Sgt. Ralph Thomas**, back with him to Mareeba to help train the B-17 crews in the operation of the B-24. At the end of March, 1943, I also joined **Rousek** at Mareeba where I also helped in the conversion of the 403rd to B-24s and got in another 8 combat missions for a total of 83 missions.

I was the first of my crew to be returned to the States where I rejoined the 19th BG at Pyote, Texas only in the 93rd Squadron as a tech inspector. When the 19th moved to South Bend, Kansas to train in B-29s, I found myself transferred to the 2nd Air Force on flying pay as 2nd Air force tech inspector covering the western states until I was discharged in late 1945. On my discharged date I had the Silver Star pinned on by none other than **Col. A. Keys** of the 19th. But that is another story that needs writing at another time. Cheers, Frank"

Your Editor found **Frank Hohmann's** short military history interesting even though there seems to be an error in dates about when he was transferred overseas. **Frank**, I was in the Galapagos Islands exactly 50 years after you were there. Anne and I flew from Equador on an Elderhostel trip in May of 1992. I believe we landed on the same air strip that you used in 1942. We then boarded a small yacht and went ashore 12 times on 8 different islands to view the unusual creatures that live there such as 500 lb. tortoises, sea going and land iguanas, penguins, albatrosses and other creatures that are found nowhere else on earth. These islands are now all Equador National Park and no one is allowed to land a plane or boat there without the permission of that government.

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It is important for members to note that our Treasurer, **Bill Wilson** has a slight change in address. It is now **PO Box 360** instead of P.O. Drawer M-360. See the addresses in the officers list on the first page of this newsletter. Also his phone number remains the same but his area code has changed to **325** from 915.

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**Jim Cherkauer** sent the following report on a tough mission his 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron flew on May 18, 1945 Clark Field in the Philippines to Tainan , Formosa. I believe the 65<sup>th</sup> lost three B-24s that day, including his own.

"On the night of May 17, 1945, the seven 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron crews scheduled for the May 18th mission were briefed in the usual manner. The target was Tainan, Formosa (now Taiwan). In our briefing we were told that the target was to be aircraft parked in sand bunkered revetments as well as antiaircraft guns and personnel. We were carrying 40 x 100# fragmentation bombs. It was not until sometime later that we found out that the aircraft that we were to destroy were kamakaze planes that would be used in the on going attempts to destroy the American fleet off the coast of Okinawa.

All crews were awakened long before sunrise to prepare for the mission ahead. The 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron was to lead the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group that day and the group was to be the first of three B-24 groups to hit this target. On missions such as this it was common for the group's three day squadrons to put 6 or 7 planes each in the air. The 43<sup>rd</sup> had four squadrons like all the other groups at this stage of the war, but the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron was our Snooper squadron. It was equipped with black B-24s loaded with the latest radar equipment ideal for night bombing. It was used primarily to seek out enemy ships and destroy them.

These missions were flown with each plane flying on its own. The 63<sup>rd</sup> never flew with us on daylight missions nor did their pilots do any formation flying. So our group would have the planes from three squadrons for this mission. These three squadrons were often referred to as the Daylight Squadrons.

After arriving at the flight line and checking out our planes, the pilots were given the go ahead to start their engines. Our crew was assigned to 44-40373 B-24J-160 named PETTY GAL. We had flown this plane on previous missions and found it to be a very nice plane to fly. Our leader, **Lt. John J. Fahey**, taxied out first. He was followed in turn by his right wingman, **Capt. Donald R. Yeaman**, and his left wingman, **Lt. Frank C. Stoll**. The next echelon rolled out in order with its leader **Lt. James J. Franklin** followed by his right wingman, **Lt. Rudolph J. "Jim" Cherkauer** and his left wingman, **Lt. Charles K. Wilt**. Following these six planes was the last and seventh plane from the 65<sup>th</sup> piloted by **Lt. Robert C. Blaney**. The next squadron to get in line for takeoff was the 64<sup>th</sup> followed by the 403<sup>rd</sup>. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group flew from Clark field but the 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group flew from its home base on another island in the Philippines.

Take off on a clear day with the sun not having fully risen went smoothly. All aircraft took off without incident this day and the mission was underway.

It was our customary practice to fly single file to our designated rendezvous point where we would move into formation and generally be picked up by our fighter escort if we were to have such for the mission. It was a long haul from Clark Field up the valley from Clark Field to Lingayen Gulf on the west coast of central Luzon and northward over the South China Sea to the Pescadores Islands in the Strait of Formosa (Taiwan). All of lanes flew at a leisurely distance keeping within eyesight of at least one other plane. The mission would last close to eight hours if everything went as expected. Flying in this manner we could save on fuel and not be in danger of running low on the return leg of the mission.

All of the Group's planes arrived a bit early at the rendezvous point, but we assembled into formation with the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron in the lead. We did not sight any of the fighters that were to meet us at this place, but this was not unusual. The fighters would probably meet us about half way between the Pescadores Islands and Formosa as they generally did.

**Lt. John Fahey** headed us towards our target. We would come in from the east a few miles south of the target and head northward on our bomb run. At the designated I. P., John would turn the entire formation left and head north toward the target. I recall remarking to **Lt. Larry Macintosh**, my copilot, that John was making an unusually long run to the target. We had been at least five minutes at one altitude, speed, and direction or at least it seemed that way to me. At that moment Larry spotted a Jap plane flying parallel with us about one quarter of a mile off our right wing. He was at our altitude and going at the same airspeed as us. There was no doubt he was radioing to the anti-aircraft personnel our altitude, speed, and direction. Where were our fighters? Generally we would hear them arguing over the radio as to which one would have the honor of shooting down this Jap plane. I heard nothing on the radio. No one spotted any of our fighter planes. We generally had P-51s or P-38s s escort cover on these missions.

We noticed that the flack was very accurate and there were three distinct patterns of ack-ack bursting at our altitude directly in front of Franklin's plane, Wilt's plane and our plane. I heard the tail gunner screaming on the intercom that ack-ack was walking right up on us from the rear. In a split second we felt the plane shudder and smoke was in the bomb bay. At that second we saw Franklin's plane, #358, explode into thousands of pieces. There was not one large piece of the craft that we saw tumble to the ground. We saw no parachutes.

Since smoke was drifting into the cockpit from the bomb bays there was a distinct possibility of a fire in our bomb bay. I decided to drop the bombs using the red handle release on the pilot's right side. I took back control of the plane from the bombardier, **Lt. Dale Witt**. When on a bomb run, he would take

over the handling of the plane as he used the Norden bomb sight. The bombsight with its capability to automatically fly the plane made for more accurate bombing than with the pilot flying the plane at the instant the bombs were released. It was dangerous to release the fragmentation bombs with this emergency release, or so we had been told, but I felt that there was no other option. As I pulled the handle, I noticed that the first three planes in the first echelon had just released their bombs, so ours would be pretty much on target. Our fragmentation bombs were composed of clusters of small bombs. Each cluster was bound together and contained a hand grenade like device in the center. Shortly after the bombs were released, this grenade detonates and sends the bombs scattering over a wide area below. Nothing went wrong and our bombs did not pose a threat any longer to our plane.

In the few seconds while this was taking place, the number one engine caught on fire and it was pouring our black smoke. I told Mac to shut down the engine and feather the prop. As he was doing this we saw the #2 engine in flames and it was not running smoothly. On my orders Mac repeated the steps to shut down #2 engine and feather its prop.

I gingerly turned left out of the formation and headed out to sea where we knew there was to be a submarine and a couple of PB5Y Catalina flying boats which composed our emergency rescue crews. Instantly I switched my radio to an emergency frequency so that I could report our trouble. I heard Charles Wilt screaming over the radio that his plane was not fit to fly much more and he was going to have the crew bail out over the area in which the sub was lying in wait. It was very difficult to follow any conversation on the emergency channel as many pilots were playing the game, "Who Dat Say Who Dat?" Despite my pleas and those of Charles, those pilots refused to get off the air. We both tried the other emergency frequencies and had about the same results, but he did manage to raise the pilots of the two Catalinas. They told him the seas had 25 ft. swells and that it would be difficult for them to land, but that they would land if at all possible. They told Wilt to circle the sub and have the crew parachute out. I could hear Charles tell the Cat pilots that he was circling the sub and the crew was bailing out. They did this and the plane, still on autopilot, headed for Formosa where some of us saw it crash into a mountain.

Meanwhile my crew was reporting to me via intercom. We had two wounded gunners, the nose gunner and left waist gunner. The bombardier said he had been wounded too. On the bomb run he had called me on the intercom to say that he would drop the bombs, but this was a split second after I had dropped them with the emergency release. He had no idea that we thought the bomb bay was on fire and we wanted those bombs out of there.

I asked Mac to make a quick check of the wounded and let me know if we should abandon ship and bail out as Wilt's crew had done. Meanwhile we too were circling above the submarine. Mac called on the intercom and reported two men badly wounded who would not be able to parachute safely. I then informed the crew that I would continue to circle the submarine and anyone who wanted to parachute into the sea was free to do so, but that under no circumstance would I abandon the wounded men. I told them that I would take this plane back to Luzon no matter what. Of course I did not know if I could keep that promise but I sure would try. Every one decided to stay with the plane and said he knew I would get them all home. I suspect that this was what they hoped and fervently prayed for. We headed for home.

At this time I asked our navigator, **F.O. Fred T. Williams**, to plot a course for Lingayen air strip where I hoped to make an emergency landing. This was our closest emergency field. (Sometime after the war, I learned that there was a much closer emergency strip at Laoag in Northern Luzon that I had never been told about.) To add to our problems, our compass and several instruments were no longer operational. So we had to do good deal of estimating how we were doing, but we could fly home from Formosa by instinct in this clear weather. Our altimeter was functioning and we could see that we were losing altitude slowly with only two engines operating. I ordered the crew to throw everything they could out of the plane including the waist guns. Meanwhile I sent Mac to take care of the wounded. The crew

went about their tasks quickly and efficiently. They even attempted to chop the tail turret out of the plane with machetes but were unsuccessful. Every man seemed to be calm and in complete control of his emotions. No one was panicky.

When Mac returned after patching up the wounded, he reported that he had done his best. Unfortunately, when he opened the first aid kits, most of the supplies had been stolen from them. He crushed the sulfa tablets that were still in the kits and put the resulting sulfa powder on the wounds of the injured men. They were **Sergeants Schillihan**, nose gunner, and **Will**, waist gunner. **Dale Litt** came to the cockpit to complain that I had dropped the bombs and he wanted to do that. He had a small scratch on his forehead. He said that he had been hit by Plexiglas from the nose turret that was shattered when fragments of Franklin's plane and bombs hit us.

I told Mac that we would try to start up each of the engines that we had shut down—one at a time. Engine #1 started but would not get up to full power by any means, but we were able to keep it going at greatly reduced power. Engine #2 would not start. It was gone. With the two right engines functioning normally #1 working at less than half power, we found that we were able to maintain altitude and even gain some slowly. I did this in the event #1 engine should quit. We could use all of the altitude we could get. This would give us a margin of safety to help us to make it to the emergency field. We had lost altitude since leaving the target. I don't recall, but the mission was probably at 13,500 ft. or a bit less as we generally bombed below 14,000 ft.

With everything under control and going smoothly I was now able to leave my seat and visit with the crew. After talking with each of them and assuring them that we would make it home, I returned to the cockpit. Mac and I were trying to figure where the shrapnel or pieces of Franklin's plane that whizzed through our cockpit had gone. We learned nothing. We figured some had to have hit my helmet as there were three holes in the Plexiglas at the left side of my head. Still my helmet showed no scratches or dents. To this day it has remained a mystery to me. I think God was with me that day. The more we examined what took where we sat, the more we wondered why we were not injured or even dead. The left side of the cockpit had several holes in it other than the Plexiglas by my head, but nowhere could we see where anything went out of the cockpit on the copilot's side. There were no fragments of any bombs or ack-ack on the cockpit floor. It was as if the fragments melted in thin air – sort of eerie too.

When we got near Lingayen, they were waiting for us with trucks along the runway and an ambulance was standing by. Our radio operator had radioed ahead and I was able to contact the tower. I explained that we did not know if our landing gear would work, and that I would lower the wheels before approaching the field for a landing. I also reported that if the gear would work, we would not know if our tires were intact. We had holes everywhere and part of the left vertical stabilizer had been blown away. The wheels came down with absolute precision. There were 8 of us with at least one of us at each window or port in the plane. The tires looked to be okay. Engine # 1 was barely functioning now, but we did not need it. We prepared for an emergency landing. The crew on the ground was ready for us no matter what happened. We came in with full flaps and of prayers. I put the plane down close to the end of the runway and it made a perfect landing. We rolled to a stop with me trying the brakes gingerly until I was sure they were okay. As soon as we stopped rolling, the ground personnel came aboard and took the injured on stretchers to a waiting ambulance. Sgts. Schillihan and Will were rushed to emergency surgery in a small emergency hospital like room near the operations office.

As we were walking around the plane examining the damage to it, Fred said that I had better take my chute off and look at it. It was then that I found that my seat pack parachute, on which I had been sitting, was hit by shrapnel. Since the chute was nylon several panels had been fused together by the heat of the fragment that pierced it, but I did not know this until we were back at Clark Field and I opened the chute to examine the damage. There is no way this chute could have opened had I attempted to bail out.

I knew for certain that God was with me that day. I still have the piece of ack-ack fragment that I cut out of the parachute. It is in one of my WWII scrapbooks.

I had to sign the plane over to the personnel at Lingayen base as a totally disabled craft. I regret to this day that I did not take out the 8-day clock in the pilot's compartment. As soon as I signed the forms a sergeant removed the clock. He said that he had always wanted one, and that every plane that had crash-landed at this field lacked such a clock. It was obvious that those other pilots who had scrapped planes at this field had been quick to remove the clock before turning the plane over to the field personnel.

Once the craft was disposed of officially, I proceeded to the dispensary where the doctor on duty was about to perform surgery on Sgt. Schillian's leg. Most of the crew came in to watch. Schillian had a compound fracture of his leg. You could see the bones sticking out of his leg. The doctor removed the shrapnel. Then he set the leg very carefully and sutured the wound. He said that Mac had done a nice job with what limited supplies we had on the plane. He then patched up Sgt. Will's head wound which was not nearly as serious as we had thought, but the doctor said that Sgt. Will had a concussion and was not to be taken back to Clark Field at this time. He looked at Lt. Litt's forehead and put a bandage on it after applying a dressing. He said that all three men would have to stay at the field hospital at Lingayen Field until he released them. The two wounded sergeants were eventually flown to Manila and then sent back to the states. They had served their tours of duty but that was not the best way to earn a trip home. Dale Litt returned to active duty in a few days.

While en route back to Luzon, we had radioed back to Clark Field and told them of our problems and the fact that we were planning on landing at Lingayen. Shortly after the operation and medical and medical attention to the three men were completed, **Captain Paul Hansen**, our 65<sup>th</sup> C.O., landed in a B-24 to take the remaining crew back to Clark Field. Before we left, we all examined B-24 J-160 44-40373, PETTY GAL, for the last time. We counted several hundred holes in the fuselage, countless more in the wings and tail structure of the plane. We took, with my camera, a few photos and some of us standing by it. Three days later while I was flying a mission Fred Williams went back to Lingayen to visit the wounded crewmen. It was shortly after this that Dale returned to Clark Field and the two sergeants started on their way back to the states.

When back to Clark Field we learned that the two Catalina PB5Ys had managed to land with great difficulty, and they had picked up eight men from Wilt's ten-man crew. Two had not been found. Neither had been wearing a Mae West. We did not have enough for seven crews that day. We were short some and crewmen drew straws to see who would not get one. The copilot, **Lt. Norbert Straeck**, from Buffalo, New York, had volunteered to go without a Mae West, as he was an excellent swimmer. I can't recall which other crew member was not found. The Cat pilots had said that the swells were 25-30 feet in height, and that it was impossible to see someone on the other side of a crest even though that might be only a few yards away. They also said that in that sea, no one would survive long without a Mae West, especially in full flying togs while trying to get out of a parachute harness. The two men were listed as MIA (Missing In Action).

(**Jim Pettus'** manuscript on the B-24 era of the 43<sup>rd</sup> indicates that three men were lost from a crew of 11 men on this mission. This did not jibe with the information in my diary or in the information I typed up after the mission. Jim's manuscript also indicates that there were more wounded men. Again, this does not agree with my information. He provides no names of those KIA or MIA. His manuscript was written decades after the war ended. My diary and short report were written after the mission)"

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Rudolph "Jim" Cherkauer Pilot, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron 43<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group (H)

By Andy Anderson

Thanks, Jim for the nice report. My crew also had to make an emergency landing at the small airfield at

Lingayen but not because of being “shot up”. We barely got the B-24 on the ground after nearly running out of fuel while returning from a mission to Hainan Island off the coast of China. That is a story for another issue of the Newsletter.

The 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group **Jolly Rogers** had their national reunion at Newport Beach, California on August 27-30 2003. It was attended by only 51 persons. They also had a Western “Mini Reunion” in Sacramento and an eastern “Mini Reunion” in Kentucky. Their total attendance at all of their reunions was less than we had at Corpus Christi. Their 2004 national reunion will be held in Danvers, MA. It will be held at the same time we are meeting in Tampa.

**Ed Gammill** sent your editor two different printed versions of how the notes to the bugle call “Taps” came to be written. Although the two versions are vastly different, they both agree that the tune was created in 1862 during the Civil War. And they both list these words to the tune:

“Day is done, Gone the sun,  
From the lakes, From the hills,  
From the sky.  
All is well, Safely rest.  
God is nigh.”

Those were the words sung so beautifully at Corpus Christi. Although the bugle call means, “Lights Out”, it is frequently played at military funerals. To quote from one of the articles, “There is something singularly beautiful and appropriate in the wonderful call. Its strains are melancholy, yet full of rest and peace. Its echoes linger in the heart long after its tones have ceased to vibrate in the air.” Ed wrote, “The mournful sound of Taps always gets to me.” Me too, Ed.

**Bill Wilson** forwarded me a letter from **P.J. Roberts** with a change of address. His street number and name has changed to 19 Hughie Edwards Drive in Meriwa 6030, Western Australia. I marked up my copy of our roster accordingly. He sent copies of some old photos of B-24s that he photographed at Nadzab the end of the war, including “Flaming Mamie” of the 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, “Come and Get It” of the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron and “About Average” which he learned from fellow Aussie, **Steve Birdsall**, was a 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force plane. He also wrote of reading **Steve Perrone’s** book “Snoopers” and “Fortress Against the Sun” which he ordered from Paul Gaudette Books of Tucson. If any of you flew in those old B-24s, I can forward you his copies of photos. He also praised the writing of **Roland Fisher** in the last newsletter.

Two years of dues and a nice letter came from **Bob Burke** of Massachusetts. His letterhead was interesting. It read “Experimental Aircraft Association, Chapter 196, Central Massachusetts”. Bob, you should get to know **Russ Burnett** of Conway, MA. Russ still flies his own plane, a Cherokee. Russ also sent a nice letter telling me about a phone conversation with our founder, **Bob Butler**. He reports Bob to be in good health and planning to attend the Tampa reunion. Russ also had much praise for Bob for starting our association writing, “We’re all grateful for his vision to get our association under way and running many years ago. What a blessing it is when we can get together and renew old memories enriching our lives forever.” Russ also had praise for **Max and Margaret Axelsen** for how well the Corpus Christi reunion was planned. Russ wrote, “It was such a enjoyable event and no hurricane!” Russ recently flew his plane to visit **Roy and Louise Bailey** (64<sup>th</sup>) in Glen Falls, NY.

A remarkable letter and four years of dues came from **Gerald Geiger** of Santee, California. He had a massive heart attack followed with cardiac arrest, and two weeks in a coma in August of 2002. He has recovered well, and expects to receive a BA in History from San Diego State this month. Gerald is an associate member and a relative of 63<sup>rd</sup> Bombardier **Walt Binins**. Your editor believes that some guys are just tough!

We have a new associate member at 2240 NW 14<sup>th</sup> Ave, Gainesville, FL 32605. She is **Judy Bousquet** the daughter of **Howard Hovland** aB-24 pilot in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron from May 29, 1945 on through the end of the war. His Squadron commander was **Capt. Earl Butts** and he earned an Air Medal on August 12, 1945 for sinking a 3500 ton Japanese freighter. Her e-mail address is **Judy@ufl.edu** and she invites us to contact her so she can learn more about her father. Her phone number is (352) 373-7527. Judy, since you live only about 120 miles from Tampa, you might wish to join us at the Tampa reunion on the final Saturday and Sunday since you are a working woman. Our new president is hosting the reunion and might remember your father since they served together in the 63<sup>rd</sup>. Also **Steve Perrone's** "Snooper" book will tell you a lot about the activity of the 63<sup>rd</sup>.

A note was sent to Bill Wilson from **Marshall Nelson** of the 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron to inform us of a new address. It is 9413 Aquarius Lane, El Paso Texas 79925. He said that he and his wife missed the reunion in Corpus Christi because of business problems in Illinois but planned on being present at the Tampa reunion.

A short letter to Bill came from **Anthony DeAngelis**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief, with his '04 dues. He wrote, "I think I owe these dues- better pay up—I don't want the Texas Rangers sent to collect! Good news about the reunion in Tampa. We may make it if all goes well! I'm still enjoying Bob Wills and his Texas Play Boys—especially "San Antonio Rose" (is that still the National Anthem of Texas?) Best to all."

With her dues, **Phyllis Johnson**, wrote, "Thank you and all the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group directors and members involved in the reunions. You do a great job" Phyllis lives in Minnesota and is the widow of **Harold**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Crewchief.

**Paul and Jackie Bauer** from Dallas wrote these words to Bill. "Thanks for all your hard work that makes us such a good group. Corpus was another great meeting. We are looking forward to Tampa." Included was dues for '03 and '04.

With a dues check for '04 and '05 came these words from **Charles Reifenberg**, 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron. "Sorry I haven't been able to attend the reunions. I've had a 4 way bypass plus congestive heart failure and pneumonia. But I am slowly improving every day. I really enjoy the newsletters." Hang in there, Charles! It takes a lot to get an Illinois man down!

**Roger Kettleson** forwarded a letter to Bill Wilson from an associate member named **Scott Baker** who lives at 21929 Myrtlewood Square in Sterling, Virginia 20164. Scott wrote, "I am not sure that you remember me, but I attended the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association reunion in Nashville two years ago in Nashville, at which time I was conducting research on a biography of **Ken McCullar**. Unfortunately, since then I have not attended any of the reunions or been in contact with its members, and I wanted to explain why. Shortly after the Nashville reunion in October 2001, the U.S. Government office where I work transferred me to one of the divisions responsible for fighting the war on terrorism. Since then, I have been too busy to continue my writing or research. That does not mean, however, that I have

abandoned either project—only that they are on hold indefinitely. So please inform the membership that the cooperation that they have shown me over the past few years has not been in vain. In addition I am enclosing a check for \$30 to cover two years of membership in the association. If I am incorrect, let me know.

. Many thanks in advance, I look forward to hearing from you. Sincerely yours, **Scott Baker.** ”

Scott's e-mail address is **baker6800@sbcglobal.net**. I am sure he would like us to send him information about Ken McCullar but he might not have time to acknowledge receipt of it.

Actually, Scott, the Nashville reunion was three years ago in the year 2000. How time flies!

Apparently **Ed Gammill** sent a note of condolences to **Charles Parker** after learning of the death of Charles' wife **Beulah**. Charlie lives in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. He wrote, "I read the note Ed Gammill sent, and was glad he sent it. My wife, Beulah, always liked to come to the reunions and she always enjoyed dancing for the guys and girls. Me and Ed go back along way. He is one heck of a nice guy and I thank him for the note. The mountains are beautiful this time of the year."

An e-mail to your Editor arrived from **Gerald Obermeyer**, 403<sup>rd</sup>, from El Paso, Texas. He wrote, "The Milne Bay episode elicits many memories of the high noon strike on so many nice new B-17s and our camp that was in line with the bombing run.

A comment about **Louis Barone** who went to Australia on the Argentina. Initially, he was a crew chief on his favorite aircraft 'STUGGOTS'.

There was some time ago a question relative to the name 'Rio Rita' on one of the older B-24s of the 403<sup>rd</sup>. I named it. Rio comes from the town in NY where I was born and Rita was a friend of mine. Besides which, it rhymes!"

**Elain Pierce**, "The Elf", is asking if anyone has a new address for **Joe Chepulis** and **Francis Labie**. It appears that our October newsletter was returned to her. She can be reached at **Bill Wilson's** address.

**Ed Gammill** reports that an Aussie named **Damian Waters** has a new book for sale. It is entitled "Mareeba" and is a history of activity in the Mareeba area during World War II. Damian's e-mail address is **cloud9@cyberwizards.com.au** and mailing address is 1/3 Hort Street, Mareeba 4880, Australia. I think postage to Australia is 80c. if you send a letter. We do not know the cost of the book. By the way, Damian has an inquiry on our website asking for the correct e-mail address for **Camille Eaton Romig**. He states that he owes her a book but cannot contact her.

**George Stahl**, 403<sup>rd</sup> B-24 Flight Engineer, who lives at 1075-13 Lancaster Blvd, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-4413 has a self published 65 page book for sale. My check stub reveals that I paid \$16 for it. In my haste to get the October newsletter in the mail to Texas where it is printed and mailed I failed to mention it. To make matters worse, I miss-filed the book before I was finished reading it. I only recently found it. The book is titled "A Monkey Rides My Shoulder". At that price, it is a bargain!

**Roland Fisher**, our Lay Chaplain sent me the words to the invocation he delivered at Corpus Christi after a "flock of guys" asked for a copy of it. It reads like this:

"Dear GOD, we meet today with a dwindling number of our comrades in arms from World War II. We, who survived, came home from that war with a belief that we had seen and conquered the worst forms of evil the world had ever seen, atrocities committed by our enemies. We thought we had brought

lasting peace to the world. But an ally in that war became an enemy and threatened our liberty and security for the next five decades in 'The Cold War'. That war resulted in American blood to continue to be shed in too many foreign lands defending freedom and liberty for the next half century.

Lord, as we gather here today, this great nation is still recovering from the events of September 11, 2001, when evil was thrust upon our own shores by fanatics not governed by your love and mercy. Now we are engaged in a war of terror unlike any we have seen before. We are not just in military combat but we are the object of attacks with horrible weapons that kill innocents as well as combatants.

Dear GOD, we ask for your guidance in this difficult time. Give our leaders the courage and wisdom to make decisions that benefit us and the entire world. Grant us true statesmen who can arise to the needs of our time. Grant that democratic nations will unite the whole world and remove the scourge of terrorism from this wonderful planet you have given us as a home.

As we aging veterans of a war long ago gather with our families to celebrate our fellowship and memories, we ask your blessing upon us. For those who could not be here because of infirmities, we seek your healing hand to ease their pain. For those of us who could be here, we thank thee for enabling us. We pray that this meeting of friends and comrades will add to our effectiveness of heart, mind, and hand in sharing those good things of life and love with others—we pray—with the entire world. AMEN ”

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Taps- Last Roll Call

Eileen Goodwin, widow of **Robert E. Goodwin**, 64th Squadron Reported by her son, Mark. God Bless

Walter S. Lyon, 64th pilot, on June 29, 2003 Reported by his wife, Beverly. God Bless

Edward James Woodison, 64th Radio/Gunner on Oct. 18, 2003 Reported by Roland Fisher God Bless

John A. Kukuk, 403rd Navigator, on Feb. 28, 2002 Reported by his wife, Bess God Bless

Art Olmstead, 64th , on Oct. 3, 2003 reported by **Helmer Johnson** God Bless

Vincent Stopczynski, HQS on Sept. 10, 2003 Reported by his daughter Phyllis God Bless

Carl Yoder, 403rd Squadron on Nov. 24, 2003 Reported by his daughter Heidi God Bless

Aileen White, wife of **George White**, an early President of our association on Dec 14, 2003 God Bless
Reported by **Doris Butler** to **Roger Kettleison**

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The B-24 Liberator Club has changed their name to “**Bomber Legends**”. They are offering a “2004 B-24 Liberator Historic Calendar” for \$10 plus \$2.50 for shipping. Their address is 1672 Main St., Suite E-124 Ramona, CA 92065 –5257. If you mention 43<sup>rd</sup> BG in your order they will send us a check for 50c for each calendar sold. This year some of the calendar is in color, with historic descriptions, and dates of events.

Roland Fisher mailed in an obituary for the Edward "Jim" Woodison listed above in "Taps". In his letter he stated that the deceased had been awarded the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart and several Air Medals. According to Roland, Woodison was a prisoner of war of the Japanese from 4/8/45 to 9/2/45. Roland is asking that we grant his widow, Kathleen, of 9660 S.W. Davies Road, Beaverton, OR 97008, membership in our association. I have forwarded the request to Bill Wilson in Texas where the membership records are kept.

As I write this in December 2003 I have had many reminders that this month is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first manned flight by the Wright brothers. What will planes be like in another 100 years? Will there be any fuel left to power them? I like the idea of Boeing's new 7E7 being built in Everett, Washington. It is designed to use much less fuel, which should reduce the costs incurred by airlines. I am not sure that the new Airbus 550 passenger plane is good idea and I wonder if it will sell. The airlines still have some perfectly good airplanes parked in western deserts that they are not using.

### Quarterly Humor

Subject: Just helping out.

A wife arriving home after a shopping trip was horrified to find her husband in bed with a young, lovely thing. Just as she was about to storm out of the house, her husband stopped her.

"Before you leave," he said, "I want you to hear how this all came about. Driving home, I saw this young girl, looking poor and tired. I offered her a ride. She was hungry, so I brought her home and fed her some of the roast you had forgotten about in the refrigerator. Her shoes were worn out so I gave her a pair of your shoes you didn't wear because they were out of style. She was cold so I gave her that new birthday sweater you never wear because the color did not suit you. Her slacks were worn out so I gave her a pair of yours that you don't fit into anymore. Then, as she was about to leave the house, she paused and asked 'Is there anything else that your wife doesn't use anymore?'"

"....So here we are!"

You can credit (or blame) ED Gammill for this one:

Subject: Towel heads

We have been informed that the Islamic terrorists do not like to be called "Towel Heads." The item they wear on their heads is actually a small sheet. Therefore, from this point forward, please refer to them as "little sheet heads."

Subject: A Jewish meal:

Ariel Sharon came to Washington for meetings with George W. and for a state dinner. Laura Bush decided to bring in a special Kosher chef and have a truly Jewish meal. At the dinner that night, the first course served was matzoh ball soup. George W. looks at this and after learning what it was called, he tells an aide that he can't eat such a gross and strange looking brew. The aide says that Mr. Sharon will be insulted if he does not at least taste it. . Not wanting to cause any trouble (after all he ate a sheep's eye In honor of Arab guests), George W. gingerly lowers his spoon and retrieves a piece of matzoh ball and some broth. He hesitates, then swallows. A big grin appears on his face. He finds that he really likes ti, and digs right in and finishes the whole bowl. "That was delicious," Bush says to Sharon ,"

"Do Jews eat any other part of the matzoh, or just the balls?"

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My friend Sandy Smith in Bridgetown, West Australia sent me this true story.

To Kill an American:

You probably missed it in the rush of news some months ago, but there was actually a report that someone in Pakistan had published in a newspaper an offer of a reward to anyone who killed an American, any American. So an Australian dentist wrote the following to let everyone know what an American is, so that they would know when they found one.

An American is English, or French, or Italian, German, Polish, Russian or Greek. An American may also be Canadian, Mexican, African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Australian, Iranian, Asian, or Arab, or Pakistani, or Afghan. An American may also be a Cherokee, Osage, Blackfoot, Navajo, Apache, Seminole, or any one of the many tribes known as Native Americans.

An American is a Christian, or he could be Jewish, or Buddhist, or Muslim. In fact there are more Muslims in America than in Afghanistan. The only difference is that in America they are free to worship as each one of them chooses. An American is also free to believe in no religion. For that he will answer only to God, not to the government, or to armed thugs claiming to speak for the government and for God. An American is from the most prosperous land in the history of the world. The root of that prosperity can be found in the Declaration of Independence, which recognizes the God given right of each person to the pursuit of happiness.

An American is generous. Americans have helped out just about every other nation in the world in their time of need. When Afghanistan was overrun by the Soviet army 20 years ago Americans came with arms and supplies to help the people win back their country! As of the morning of September 11, Americans had given more than any other nation to the poor in Afghanistan.

Americans welcome the best, the best products, the best books, the best music, the best food, the best athletes. But they also welcome the least.

The national symbol of America, The Statue of Liberty, welcomes your tired, your poor, the wretched refuse of your teeming shores, the homeless, tempest tossed. These are, in fact, the people who built America. Some of them were working in the Twin Towers the morning of September 11, earning a better living for their families. I've been told that the World Trade Center victims were from at least 30 other countries, cultures, and first languages, including those that aided and abetted the terrorists.

So you can try to kill an American if you must. Hitler did. So did General Tojo, and Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung and every other bloodthirsty tyrant in the history of the world. But, in doing so you would just be killing yourself. Because Americans are not a particular people from a particular place; they are the embodiment of the human spirit of freedom. Everyone who holds to that spirit, everywhere, is an American.

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This newsletter is published four times each year, **January, April, July and October**. It is written in the previous month. Avoid sending in material at the last minute, if possible.

Dues are \$15 per year or \$100 for life. Make your check out to the 43rd Bomb Group Association and mail to **Bill Wilson**, Treasurer or **Howard "Andy" Anderson**, Secretary at the address on the first page of this newsletter. Check your address label on the envelope in which you receive this newsletter. It will list the last year you last paid dues.

The Post Office Department will not forward the newsletter. If you change your address or phone number, please send a notice to **Bill Wilson**, Treasurer as soon as possible.

You may send e-mail to the Secretary/Editor to **andyanne@comcast.net**. and to the Treasurer at **Wilsonmotors@hotmail.com**. The end.