



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



NEWSLETTER 92<sup>nd</sup> EDITION  
OCTOBER 2004

**PRESIDENT**

**CHARLES RAUCH**  
2329 PALM TREE DRIVE  
PUNTA GORDA, FL.  
33950-5009  
941-639-6421

**VICE PRESIDENT**

**JIM CHERKAUER**  
114 THORNCLIFF RD.  
KENMORE, NY  
14223-1216  
716-875-4346

**TREASURER**

**WILLIAM H. WILSON**  
P.O. BOX 360  
SNYDER, TX  
79550-0360  
325-573-6351

**SECRETARY**

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

Web site : [www.kensmen.com](http://www.kensmen.com)

.....  
FROM CHARLES RAUCH, PRESIDENT

We have just completed our 24<sup>th</sup> annual reunion and this newsletter has been delayed to November because of "Hurricane Charley" so as to give you the results of the reunion. The reunion was delayed with the close cooperation of the Wyndham Harbour Island Hotel from the original planned date in September to the last week of October.

The Board decided that we should consider down sizing the reunion from a six day event to four days for the 2005 reunion. The 2005 reunion is presently being planned by Arvid Houghlum and Neil Fairbanks and is to be located in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area at a date and place not decided as yet. They are quite familiar with the area as they both live nearby. The air travel in and out of the Minneapolis- St. Paul area should be good as there several national airlines that are active in the area.

We were honored by having the active duty color guard from MacDill AFB present the colors at our reunion. One of the color guard members came back and played "Taps" at the memorial services on Sunday.

We were pleased to have Colonel Stephen P. Howard who is Chief of the Training Division in the Center for Special Operations Knowledge and Futures at the U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill AFB in Florida to address us at the Friday night dinner dance. The talk was very interesting with a question and answer period at the conclusion of the talk.

The reunion was not as large as we had hoped for as many of those registered for the September date could not make the October date because of previous plans. We had 150 members registered for the September date and the rescheduled event number turned out to be 115.

We did have several new members attend for the first time and they all reported that they had a good time and would return next year. Several family members attended the reunion and we were very happy to have them present.

Fred Hagen attended, with his parents, and reported on this recent visit to New Guinea for the recovery of a P-47 which is going to be sent to Australia to be rebuilt. This, along with a second P-47 and two P-38s are also slated for recovery in the near future. The presentation, as usual, was very interesting.

Remember to sent your dues to Bill Wilson if they were not paid in Tampa

Norm Lessard is a naval aviator who had been arranging to bring Art Millard to our reunion from Orlando for day's visit with members he knew from the 43<sup>rd</sup>. Bomb Group; Art's wife died about two month ago and I had hoped that he would make it to our reunion. The message Norm sent explains everything,

"I'm sorry to inform you that Art passed away from lung cancer on Sunday, October 30, at 5:30 AM. As I had said previously, his health had been declining rapidly over the past month and when I saw him last on Friday 10/28, he asked that I pass the word and give his 'final goodbye' his WWII buddies. He was a great guy and we had some great visits over the ten months that I had visited him under the hospice program" Norm

~~~~~

By Andy Anderson

There is a wonderful article in Steven Perrone's book "*Snoopers*" written by Art Millard, former 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron B-24 pilot. The book is still available to those who do not have it.

Another 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group plane has been found in the jungle in New Guinea. It was missing for 61 years before being located this spring. It is B-24D 42-40886. The plane was found in a ravine after going down on a night mission to the Wewak area. The 11 man crew is listed below:

|                |                                         |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Pilot          | 1 <sup>st</sup> . Lt. Richard Heuss     |
| Co-Pilot       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert Miller       |
| Navigator      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert Strechenbach |
| Bombardier     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ed French           |
| Engineer       | T/Sgt. Charles Bode                     |
| Radioman       | S/Sgt. Roy Suribian                     |
| Asst. Eng.     | S/Sgt. Ivan O. Kirkpatrick              |
| Asst. Radio    | S/Sgt. William K. Musgrave              |
| Armorer Gunner | S/Sgt. James T. Moran                   |
| Gunner         | S/Sgt. James B. Moore                   |
| Radar          | S/Sgt. Lucian I. Oliver                 |

JPAC has notified some family members and the remains have been taken to CILHI in Hawaii for the lengthy process of identification and attempting to get DNA from hard to locate family members. I have the e-mail address and mailing address of two family members. They are asking for photos or any other information. The date the plane went down is Nov. 20, 1943 and the plane was a 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron B-24.

~~~~~

Your editor will now continue with the dairy of Francis P. Denault of Deerfield, Florida. Francis was a B-17 pilot in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron.

"I returned to Mareeba from Cairns on the afternoon of the 5<sup>th</sup>. of Nov. 1942. I had a good time and I hated to go back to Mareeba. On Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> we got up early and flew to Port Moresby. We spent the rest of the day on alert. On Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> we stayed on alert all day. I wanted to take a shower but there was no hot water. I felt so raunchy that I took cold one. I could not stand myself anymore. On Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> we were still on alert and on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> they sent us out looking for a Japanese destroyer near Casmatta. We searched the area but found no destroyer. We dropped our bombs on the radio station at Casmatta and returned home. Surprisingly, we were not jumped by Japanese fighters.

On Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> about 6 of our squadron, including our plane, took off for a bombing mission to Fassi Harbor near Lae on the north coast of New Guinea. It was about 4 AM when we fit the target area. We dropped flares and observed a couple of ships in the harbor. We made a bomb run and dropped six 500lb bombs on the ships. We were at 6000 ft. The antiaircraft fire was heavy but we did not get hit. A fire started in the area of the ships but we could not observe any results due to the darkness. We had to get out of the area as

our time over the target was up. The squadron went over the target in 15 minute intervals. We flew back to Port Moresby, gassed up and returned to Mareeba about 11 AM, cleaned up, and went right to bed.

On Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> we were still on alert. They sent me to Townsville to pick up the payroll. I spent the night in Townsville and flew back the next day, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>. I arrived back in Mareeba about 1 PM and they immediately sent the whole squadron to Port Moresby. We arrived about 6 PM and went right on alert.

On Nov. 15 we took off about 9 PM in 15 minute intervals bombed the harbor at Rabaul, the Japanese Naval base on New Britain. We were at 6000ft. when we entered the harbor and went into a dive to pick up speed. The searchlights were ranging back and forth, trying to find our planes. We bombed the dock area. There seemed some ships in the dock area but it was very dark and hard to make things out. The anti-aircraft fire was heavy, but they never did get us in the searchlights as we were in and out in a hurry, about 210 miles per hour. Several fires were started. We turned west over New Britain and headed for Port Moresby. Luckily, we were not hit. On Nov. 15 and 17 we stayed on alert.

I flew my first 14 missions as copilot with **Bill Thompson** in B-17E #401. On the 17<sup>th</sup> they made me a first pilot in assigned me B-17F #124358. **Capt. Green** had been flying that plane, and he moved into headquarters. The crew got together and named the plane "The Lulu Belle" and painted a big picture of Lulu Belle on the front of the ship.

On Nov. 18, I had hardly taken over when we took off at 8 AM to attack a convoy south of Gasmatta. We found 3 freighters escorted by 2 destroyers. There was an overcast at 8000ft. and we had to stay under the clouds. We observed no fighters but destroyers were firing at us. We bombed one of the ships and observed some near misses. We could not tell if there was any damage. Three other planes from the squadron bombed the ships after we did and said that one of the ships was listing to one side. We returned to Port Moresby and landed about 3 PM. We took off again at 7 PM to attack the same ships. We found the ships heading south towards Buna on the north coast of New Guinea. The clouds were very low and we got down to about 5400 ft. We had six 500 lb. bombs on board with 4 second delay fuses for skip bombing. We picked up the wake of one of the ships and made a ninety degree bombing run. We went over the ship doing 220 mph at 200 ft. We felt that we damaged the ship but could not tell in the darkness. We returned to Port Moresby. The next day, reconnaissance reported the ship sinking. We were given credit for the sinking of the ship. The squadron damaged three ships that night. On Nov. 19, we returned to Mareeba and spent the next three days. I went to church on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We took off for Port Moresby at 7 AM on the 24<sup>th</sup> and went on alert when we arrived. Our troops had the Japanese surrounded at Buna on the north coast of New Guinea. The men were fighting in waist deep water. We took off at 7 PM to search for a convoy in the Vithias Straits south of New Britain heading for Buna. We searched the Vithias Straits south of New Britain heading for Buna. It was dark and difficult to see. We searched from Vithias Straits to Finshafen south of Lae where we found the ships. We were at 7000ft. and dropped flares to light up the place. When we had dropped down to 1000 ft. we could see that someone had hit one of the ships and started a fire. We spotted what looked like two destroyers and make a skip bombing run on one of them at 200ft. We dropped four 500 lb. bombs. We then made a bomb run on the other ship. A fire started on the second ship but we could not determine the damage. They sent up a lot of anti-aircraft fire but we were not hit. The darkness of the night evidently hindered their accuracy, to our advantage. This is why we went out at night. In the daytime we would not be able to get away with these tactics. With one group of B-17s we had to use every trick we could. I must say, I became a good night pilot. The enemy was having trouble supplying their troops in New Guinea. We returned to Port Moresby, landing about 1 AM. I hit the sack right away. I was washed out after 7 hours of night flying. My eyes were burning.

Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> we were on alert all day. We listened to the radio that night when Tokyo Rose made her propaganda report and to our surprise she made a statement that the "Mareeba butchers" were at work again. It was the first time she said anything about the bombers from Mareeba. It was obvious that we were

hurting them. She should call us butchers after what they had been doing! I carried my Colt .45 with me on all missions. I felt that I could not survive as a prisoner. I had too many hereditary problems which I kept to myself. I brainwashed myself to believe that if I was forced down and about to be captured I would kill as many as I could and put the last bullet in my head. Thank God, this situation never happened. We were always flying over enemy territory and the thought ran through my head many times. I had no fear of flying or combat. I was a confident pilot and could handle most any problem pertaining to flying. For the first couple of years in the Southwest Pacific, very few prisoners were taken by the Japanese. They usually tortured their prisoners so much they died anyway. It was as dirty a war that could exist.

November 26, 1942 Thanksgiving in the jungles of New Guinea. No turkey! We were lucky to get anything. The food at Port Moresby worse than bad, if that is possible. Powdered milk, powdered eggs, stale bread and canned mutton that had no taste. We got up at 5 AM and went to briefing. Our troops were pinned down at Buna and wanted us to bomb the Japanese positions. Buna, as I said before, was about 75 to 100 miles north on the north coast of New Guinea. About 6 of us got over the target at 8 AM and watched the 2 engine A-20s hit the target. Then we went in, in 2 ship formations and dropped 6 five hundred bombs each on the Japanese positions from 6000 ft. The antiaircraft fire was heavy. We were hit in the tail and our elevators were damaged but we were able to fly back to Port Moresby. We patched up the elevators and flew back to Mareeba.

On Nov 27 we stayed in Mareeba and worked on the planes. On Dec. 5, 1942 I took off with **Major Ellis** for Brisbane to get parts for the planes. We spent the night in Townsville and then went on to Brisbane the next day. The weather was bad and the parts were not ready. Major Ellis had some business to take care of at headquarters and they had trouble getting some of the parts. That was all right with me. I ate some good meals and put on a few pounds. My favorite breakfast was a small sirloin steak. The trouble was it came with a poached egg on top. They could not understand why I wanted them to hold the egg. They could not understand that I could not eat them. On Dec. 13 we finally got off at Brisbane and returned to Mareeba where we stayed until Dec. 18 when they sent us to Port Moresby to pick up a plane but the plane was not ready and we had to stay overnight. On Dec. 19 the plane was ready and we flew back to Mareeba.

On Dec. 21 I was told that I could take the B-17 "Lulu Belle" and go to Sydney on leave. I did not expect this. I spent the rest of the day getting ready. They must have pulled our name out of a hat. On Dec. 22 we departed, stopping at Brisbane for gasoline. We wanted to have enough for a round trip. We arrived at Ascot Field in Sydney about 3 PM. We secured the plane and went into town. We wanted to stay at the Australia Hotel but there were no rooms. We got rooms at a small hotel for the night. I cleaned up and went to the Australia Hotel for a few beers. I had hardly settled down to enjoy my beer when **Sgt. Wolverton** came in and told me that one of our gunners was in trouble. I have withheld his name in respect of his privacy. He got half smashed and had an argument with an Australian. That wasn't so bad but he pulled a Colt 45 on the man and threatened him. As it was told to me, the place cleared out in a hurry. Fortunately, he did not shoot the gun. The Australian MPs came, arrested him and took him to jail. This happened in a lounge at another hotel. I found out where the jail was and hurried over there. The Australian MPs were very polite but very mad and were going to turn him over to the Joint Allied Command for disciplinary action. I pleaded with the Australians to turn him over to me and I would see that he was reprimanded. I told them that he had been under a lot of pressure and had combat fatigue. They turned me down and would not listen. I kept on pleading and after a while they agreed to release him to me on one condition. He was to stay in jail as long as I was in Sydney. When I left they would bring him out to the plane and turn him over to me. They made it clear they did not want to see him in Sydney again. That was the best I could do for him.

I got up early the next morning and after a good breakfast I got a shave and haircut and went to Mrs. Hays house in Kings Cross at 31 Mona Drive. She was a wonderful lady in her fifties or better, I would guess.

She introduced me to a lot of her friends. I remember one in particular, a girl named Alice Manley who had a nice apartment in Rose Bay, a short distance from Mrs. Hays' house. Her husband was in Singapore when the Japanese captured it. She had not heard from him and did not know if he was a prisoner or not. She was from a wealthy family and you could tell it by the way she lived. She was able to support a maid at the time. She was good company and she showed me around Sydney. Sydney was more modern than the other cities in Australia.

Finally, I had to leave and I started thinking about our gunner in jail. I called the Australian MPs and told them when I was leaving. They said they would bring him to the airport. We were getting ready to leave when they brought him to the plane. I felt sorry for him. He was embarrassed. I said nothing to him at the time and instructed the crew to do the same about the incident. When we got back to Mareeba I talked to him in private. I told him that he almost got himself court-martialed which would ruin his career. I had instructed the men not to take side arms into town. If he had obeyed my order this would not have happened. I said nothing about this incident until this day. I was worried that if this got to headquarters I would be in trouble for not reporting the incident. It was forgotten and we all went back to fighting the war. It was a dull Christmas for him. We arrived back in Mareeba on Dec. 30, 1942 and celebrated New Years, 1943, in Mareeba. We had made a club out of one of the tents. Somebody brought in some liquor and we had a party. This cheered us up a little bit.

On Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> the squadron went to Port Moresby, arriving at 4 PM. On Jan. 8, they sent me out alone to report the weather at Lae. I arrived over Lae at about 4 AM. There were several lights in the harbor and I assumed that they were unloading ships. It was very dark, no moon, but there was no weather. We reported the weather over the target as clear. We dropped six 500lb bombs in the area of the lights and about this time they started shooting at us. We could not tell if we did any damage, but planes that went over the next day said that there was a ship grounded on the beach. We arrived back at Port Moresby as the sun was coming up. We did not get much sleep as they had us up at 4 PM to fly another mission. We took off again and headed for the same place, Lae. We made a bomb run on a large transport just outside the harbor at about 6 PM dropping four 1000lb. bombs. We came very close but could not observe any results. There were several Jap fighters in the area but we were escorted by four P-38 fighters of our own and the Japs were not too aggressive. This was the first time that we had any fighter coverage. I was a good feeling.

On Jan 9, 1943, it was reported that some Jap ships were proceeding south from Finschafen in the direction of Buna. About 6 planes from our squadron took off in 15 minute intervals including yours truly! There were clouds at 5000 ft and we had to stay below the clouds. We located 4 freighters escorted by 2 destroyers. We made a bomb run on one of the freighters at 5000 ft and dropped four 1000 lb. bombs. We had a near miss but could not tell if the ship was damaged. Jap fighters started to attack us but before they could make many attacks we went into the clouds. The destroyers threw up a lot of shells but they were not too accurate. It was getting dark and visibility was poor. We returned to Port Moresby and landed after dark.

On Jan. 11 I took off on a solo reconnaissance mission to Rabaul. They wanted some pictures of the harbor and the ships that were there. I left Port Moresby at 6 AM and started climbing when I left. I wanted to get as high as I could when I went over Rabaul. At 10,000 ft I passed right over a Japanese plane. Evidently he did not see me. I told the bottom turret gunner, Sgt. Wolverton, to open fire on him. As I passed over him, Wolverton poured several rounds of fifty caliber bullets into the ship. I watched the tracers go into the cockpit of the plane. He was out of sight in few seconds. I'll bet they were a surprised bunch. It was a beautiful clear day. There were no clouds over Rabaul. I could see some over New Britain, to the west. I got the B-17 up to 26,500 ft. That was as high as it would go. My airspeed was about 170mph and I was mushing along. I was drawing 15 inches of supercharger to maintain 30 inches of manifold pressure. The Japanese fighters at that time could not go very high. At least I did not think they could get up that high.

very fast. As I approached the harbor at Rabaul and looked down I could see ships all over the place from small freighters to battleships. It was a magnificent sight but scary and breathtaking. We went right over the middle of the harbor. We took several pictures. Everything was going fine until shells started bursting all around us and I flew right into some puffs of smoke. I thought this is too close. I must change course and get out of there. We had all the pictures we needed. I turned to my left and headed for the clouds over New Britain. About that time there was a loud explosion on my right side. I thought that I had been hit. As I looked to the right, I noticed that the propeller on number 4 engine was slowing down. I looked at the manifold gages and the pressure on number 4 engine dropped to 15 inches. Then it dawned on me that the supercharger on number 4 had blown and we were not hit. I put the nose down and headed for the clouds over New Britain. I flew west on top of the clouds for a while keeping my eyes open for Jap fighters. I figured that if they came after me I would drop down into the clouds. I observed nothing. Instead of turning south to go back to Port Moresby, I flew west over New Britain. I then flew west over the ocean to a point due west of the Jap base of Wewak on the north coast of New Guinea. I then flew down the coast in the direction of Wewak. By this time, I was right near the ground. I figured that if the fighters hit me they would have to come from above, which they did not like to do. It made them more vulnerable to our firepower. I saw a harbor up ahead. It was Wewak and I could see two freighters in the harbor. I had four 500 lb. bombs with instantaneous fuses in the bomb bay. I had no time to climb up to a safe height to drop these bombs. I went over the ships so low I could touch the masts. At that height the bombs would have blown me up with the ships. I noticed a large building on top of a hill about a hundred yards or so inland and headed for the building. I told Wolverton in the bottom gun turret to hit the building with his 2 fifty caliber guns. As I approached the building Japanese came running out. It was obvious that I had surprised them. Wolverton sprayed several rounds of ammunition into the men running from the building. There was a big Japanese flag on top of the building. It must have been a headquarters building. After passing over the place, I went down as low as I could get. I figured that if they are going to come after me they will have a tough time finding me and if they do find me, they will have a tough time making passes. In all my encounters they have attacked from underneath. To my surprise I saw no fighters on the way back. As I approached Lae, I started to climb and headed over the Owen Stanley range and Port Moresby. Headquarters was very happy with the pictures that we took. There were over fifty ships in the harbor of all types. Headquarters figured that the Japanese were preparing for something. I didn't say anything about going over Wewak. I don't think they would have liked it.

After spending Jan 12 through 14 on alert in Port Moresby, the squadron took off on the 15<sup>th</sup> for Rabaul at 1 AM. It was overcast and the weather was bad. There were clouds over the harbor at 6000 ft. and we had trouble finding it. We went over the harbor in 15 minute intervals. As we approached Rabaul they turned on the searchlights. This helped us in locating the harbor and the town. We flew in under the clouds at about 5000 ft. and put the plane in a slight dive to pick up speed while going over the target. The anti-aircraft guns opened up but we were not hit. We went into the clouds and returned to Port Moresby, landing at about 6 AM. We gassed up and returned to Mareeba. On Jan 16 and 17 we stayed in Mareeba. On Sunday, the 18<sup>th</sup> we took off early in the morning to pick up some men who were on leave in Sydney. We arrived late in the afternoon and decided to stay overnight and leave in the morning. Of course, I went to Mrs. Hay's house at 31 Mona Road in Kings Cross. I had bought a steak on the way. She was glad to see me and she cooked the steak for me with a baked potato. We partied that night and my to my surprise we had to stay over another night because of weather. On Jan 20, 1943 we took off from Sydney and landed at Brisbane on the way back to pick up some more people. We stayed in Brisbane. When I went to Amberly Field the next day I found there were too many men who wanted a ride back to Mareeba. I could not take them all. I finally took off with 27 men on board. I instructed the men to get up in the middle of the ship and put all luggage in the bomb bay section. I told them that I did not want anybody in the tail section. I was overloaded and I knew

it. Amberly Field was a grass field and not very big. I got to the farthest end of the field and headed into the wind. I opened up the throttles full. As I picked up speed, I kept pulling back on the control wheel to help the ship get off the ground. I did not think I was going to make it and was about to shut down the power when the wheels started to leave the ground. I just cleared the trees at the end of the field. If one of the engines had decided to quit I would have been in trouble. That was the last time I would load a ship that way. We arrived back in Mareeba at about 5 PM.

On Jan 22 we stayed in Mareeba. We were told that we were going to move to Port Moresby permanently. I didn't care for this because the food was not very good. At Mareeba, the food was pretty good. The next six months were like living in hell! The facilities were terrible and the food wasn't fit for a dog. It was thick jungle. The natives in the interior had not seen a white man until about 1932, when the Australians went inland. There were tribes deep inland who still had not seen a white man. We hacked out a landing strip from the jungle and called it "7 Mile" because it was 7 miles inland from Port Moresby. On Jan. 24 the whole 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group moved to Port Moresby.

On Jan. 24, we had hardly settled in when we took off on a bombing mission to Rabaul at 12:30 AM. We arrived over Rabaul just before dawn in single ship attacks. We bombed the town of Rabaul and started several fires as we using incendiary bombs. One of the fires was very large. They sent up a lot of anti-aircraft fire but we were not hit. Because it was still dark, there were no fighters. We returned to Port Moresby

On Jan 25 they sent me on a reconnaissance mission over Buna looking for Japanese ships. I found none and returned to Port Moresby. On Jan. 26 the squadron took off at 12:30 AM for Rabaul. It was very dark but the weather was clear. We bombed the harbor and went over in single ships at 15 minute intervals. The reason for this is to keep them awake for most of the night. We started some fires that were visible for some distance after we left the target area. We returned to Port Moresby, landing about 8 AM.

On Jan 28 to 30 we stood by on alert in Port Moresby. On the 31<sup>st</sup>, the squadron took off in single ships at about 15 minute intervals for Rabaul at 1:30 AM. The searchlights picked us up as we were making a bombing run on the town. We made a diving turn to the left to get out of the searchlights. After we got out of the lights we made another run in the town, dropping the rest of our bombs from about 5000 ft. The anti-aircraft fire was heavy over the target. When we returned to Port Moresby, we discovered that we were hit in the tail section. The damage was minor.

On Feb. 1 and 2 we were on alert in Port Moresby. On Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, I took off at 1:30 PM on a reconnaissance mission to the Rabaul Area. I climbed to about 15,000 ft. The weather and visibility were good with very few clouds. This I did not like and I kept my eyes open looking for Jap fighters. About this time we passed over some sort of Japanese 2 engine ship and I could see the large "rising sun" on the wings. We shot several rounds into the ship and I could see the tracer bullets hitting the ship. He was out of sight in a few seconds. About 40 miles from Rabaul, we sighted a lone destroyer. As we approached the harbor we sighted several ships in the opening of the harbor. I turned south as I did not want to go over the harbor at this altitude. They would be sure to send up fighters after me. The harbor was full of ships from battleships on down. I headed south for New Guinea. From my altitude I could clearly see Guadalcanal to the east. I was expecting to be jumped by Japanese fighters at any time, but it never happened. There might have been some American fighters in the area but I did not see any. We landed at Port Moresby at about 12:30 PM. On Feb. 23 we stood by on alert. On the 24<sup>th</sup> we took off at 1:45 AM for Rabaul. We made a bomb run through the harbor starting at 11,000 ft and ending at 6,000 ft. The anti-aircraft fire was heavy and we were hit in several places.

This diary will be continued in the next newsletter and will deal with the Battle of The Bismark Sea

~~~~~



At our memorial service in Tampa this listing of the deaths of members was read by squadron members. The listing includes only those who have passed on since the Corpus Christi reunion in 2003.

Hq Squadron     **Phil Welch**

63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron     **Haig Salverson**  
                         **Kenneth Beckstrom**  
                         **David B. Grant**  
                         **Eileen White**, wife of former President George White  
                         **Harvey Bronstein**  
                         **Henry J. Porter**

64<sup>th</sup> Squadron     **Charles J. Albright**  
                         **Henry Joseph Domagalski**  
                         **Clarence Creamer**

65<sup>th</sup> Squadron     **Robert Leff**  
                         **Ben R. Damron**  
                         **Allen Cristman**  
                         **Vernon Fred Gaston**

403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron     **Glenn B. Peltier**  
                         **Damon Copress**  
                         **Robert P. Roth**  
                         **Carl Yoder**

**Bill Soloman** also reported the death of **John Kukuk**. Your secretary's records show that John died 2/28/02 before the 2003 reunion. We failed to report the death of **Andrew Stanko** of the 403<sup>rd</sup>.

~~~~~

**Roland Fisher**, our lay chaplain of Oregon, was unable to attend the Tampa reunion but he sent these words of wisdom, which were read by **Sam Commons**.

**“Warning! Defending freedom can be harmful to your health**

I recently read an article by Walter Olson, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, that discussed the difference between reality and satire in the American legal system. During the last twenty or thirty years I have often wondered and, I confess, have often been more than a little confused as to which is which. About four years ago *The Onion*, America's favorite satirical newspaper, published a piece entitled “Hershey's Ordered to Pay Obese Americans \$135 Billion”. This piece of comic fiction reported that the chocolate company had been sued by state attorney generals over the lack of warnings on its product, over marketing its products to children, and –most insidiously of all—having spiked its products with nuts and crisped rice to keep people addicted. *The Onion* reported that the jury responded with an award of \$135 billion. One of the plaintiffs stated, “This is a vindication for me and all chocolate victims.” The story went on to report that Hersheys was ordered to print warnings on all of its products reading: “The Surgeon General has determined that eating chocolate may lead to being really fat.”



About the same time, an elderly “lady” ordered a cup of hot coffee at McDonald’s, sat down and spilled it on her crotch. She sued and collected an obscene sum. Then the wire services reported that a Mr. Cesar Barber had filed a lawsuit against McDonald’s. (He was soon joined by other plaintiffs suing Wendy’s, Burger King, and other fast food chains.) Mr. Barber had been wandering into McDonald’s for years apparently under the impression they served health food and had been receiving hamburgers and French fries instead of celery stalks. He had no idea you could get fat from such products, and sure enough, he began having heart problems and other medical conditions associated with obesity.

It goes on: A California parking lot owner was sued after a thief broke into the lot, stole a car, drove off at high speed and crashed. The thief’s family sued the lot owner for “making it too easy” to steal a car. On the other side of the country, a woman laid down on subway tracks, was hit by a train, (she was trying to kill herself) survived and was awarded \$14 million by a New York jury.

So,—which is fact and which is fiction? Only *The Onion* article was fiction, a not-so-humorous satire. The rest, as unbelievable as they seem, are fact. At first, most trial lawyers greeted the lawsuit against McDonald’s with incredulity, but was taken very seriously by veterans of the tobacco litigation that had succeeded so well earlier in requiring that warnings be placed on tobacco products so that people would know beforehand the risks that were involved. Then, at least in principal, a person could make the decision to use it or not. So far I have not seen any warning signs on restaurant’s marquees or menus, but they *are* showing sensitivity and are keeping a lot of lawyers busy trying to figure out which way to run and still stay in business in these litigious times. The internet is crowded with dark humor because of the knots people tie themselves into trying to keep from being sued and the crazy warning labels put on their products. Some I’ve seen lately—on a fireplace log, “Caution—combustible—risk of fire.” On a baby stroller, “Warning, remove child before folding.” On a cardboard windshield screen to keep a car from getting too hot in the sun, “Do not drive with sunshield in place.”

Well, this is now. And whether good or bad, it seems to be the way of life we have chosen. But I can’t help but reflect on how different it is from our life sixty five years ago. Most of us were still in our teens or had just left them. We were still struggling to shake off the paralysis of the Great Depression. We were willing to chance great risk, to make every effort to improve our lives. Then a maniac named Hitler started a fierce military aggression that in two years was joined by Japan on the other side of the world. And our generation faced a whole new set of challenges.

It is somewhat amusing to think what we might have been told were we guided then by the attitudes of today. We might have seen signs. Such as:

Warning!

Joining the service can really change your lifestyle.

Drill sergeants voices can damage your eardrums.

Inoculation needles can cause a pain in your butt.

Army cots can cause lower back pain.

Shaving in cold water can irritate your skin.

Bathing in a river can irritate crocodiles.

Avoid flying on wave tops—salt water is corrosive. ( Special for Jim Murphy)

Do not fly into clouds—they can contain hard mountains.

Flying over enemy anti-aircraft guns can inflame your hemorrhoids.

Crashing in an airplane can cause serious bruises.

Annoying the enemy may cause a violent reaction.

Land on solid terrain—B-17s and B-24s are not designed for water landings.  
Defending Freedom can be hazardous to your health.

So my memory is, back then, these hazards were self evident. But no warnings were voiced. A substantial population of young men who, while aware of the dangers, brushed them side, willingly accepted death or injury and fully engaged these aggressors to a victorious conclusion. In the largest sense, the spirit of the 43<sup>rd</sup>, and their comrades in arms, represented the determination of the American people not to allow tyranny to hold sway over the great cities and homes of our civilization.

In exercising that determination, 700 young men of the 43<sup>rd</sup>, paid the highest price. Others escaped death but had shortened lives from diseases or injury. Some went through years of torture as prisoners of a brutal enemy. Thousands lived through stress and trauma of a war that marked them forever. Every year, fewer are left.

As we stand at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we should think about, and never forget, the cost these young men paid to guarantee our freedom. They willingly accepted a difficult job and asked little in return. For some, their reward was a burial plot in some far off place, or an unknown grave deep in the ocean or unmarked on a high mountain. For others it was the burden of unforgettable memories or the pain of never-healed wounds. For others it was the pain of losing friends or family.

These willing young men paid a price that is, at once, our shining heritage and—our heavy burden.

No one should forget.”

**ROLAND FISHER 63<sup>RD</sup> SQUADRON 43<sup>RD</sup> BOMB GROUP FIFTH AIR FORCE**

~~~~~  
Your Editor obtained a treasurers report from our President in Tampa and will publish it here

**43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association 01-01-2004 to 06-30-2004**

**Income**

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Dues         | \$2,315.00 |
| Life members | 400.00     |
| Donations    | 105.00     |
| Interest     | 760.95     |
| PX           | 10.00      |
| Total        | \$3590.95  |

**Expenses**

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| Printing | \$1,454.58 |
| Postage  | 835.88     |
| Total    | \$2,290.46 |

**Profit.** 1,300.49

**Net**

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 01-01-2004 Starting balance | \$24,009.94      |
| 06-30-2004 Ending balance   | 25,310.43        |
| CD Canyon Investment Co.    | <u>30,000.00</u> |

**Net worth..... \$55,310.43 (Thanks to Bill Wilson, Treasurer)**



Just before this newsletter was sent to press, a phone call came from **Russ Burnett** to inform me that **Arnold Huskins** had died on October 19. Arnold was a 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron Bombardier. Like Russ, he lived in Massachusetts.

This newsletter is published four times each year, **January, April, July, and October** (normally). 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 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association and send to **Bill Wilson**, Treasurer, 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 in which you 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**.

**HELP!!!** I need your thoughts, the reunion are not getting a big attendants anymore. And the treasure has to pick up the lost on the reunions. Is that what you want? The newsletter is still very popular. I wonder if that isn't where the money is better spent. Let me hear from you. I will carry out you wishes. I hope each of you is in fair shape. May God continue to Bless each of YOU.

*Bill Wilson*