



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



**NEWSLETTER 93RD EDITION
JANUARY 2005**

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

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403rd Squadron	Joseph W. Snyder	(Serves through 2005)
	William J Solomon	(Serves through 2006)

Your officers listed above, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, with their addresses and phone numbers serve through 2005. New elections will be held in Minnesota at the fall reunion. Those directors whose terms expire in 2005 must be replaced or re-elected in the squadron meetings.

FROM CHARLES RAUCH, PRESIDENT

I have written this message to you prior to the Christmas Holiday Season and I do hope you all have had a chance to enjoy your families and friends from far and close by. Please do not forget our military women and men. They are supporting all of our ideals and I am sure they hold our respects and the flag with the highest esteem. God bless them.

I am proud to have been selected as your President for this coming year of 2005 and will certainly try to serve you well.

The Bomb Group was advised recently that **Doris Butler, Bob Butler's** wife, had passed away on November 24, 2004. This was a surprise, as Doris and Bob had been planning to attend the reunion in Tampa, FL up to a few days before the reunion when they cancelled. Doris and Bob both had been active in 43rd Bomb Group since its inception in 1981 and prior to that with the 403rd Squadron meetings and gatherings. A memorial service was held in Fayetteville, NC on November 28, 2004 and it was asked that in lieu of flowers, a donation be made to the Cumberland County Community Fund at 310 Green St., Suite #100, P. O. Box 2171, Fayetteville, NC 28302. Listed below is the address and e-mail address for those desiring to make a donation or send a sympathy card:

Robert H. Butler
511 Forest Lake Rd.
Fayetteville, NC 28305-5206 RHBDGB@webtv.net is the e-mail address

We were informed recently by **Keith Shaddox** that his dad, **Shad Shaddox** had passed away on Saturday, December 4, 2004 after a short illness as a result of a heart attack and another stroke. We will certainly miss Shad and his wit.

Planning for the 2005 Reunion for Minneapolis- St. Paul is well along with **Arvid Hogleum** and **Neil Fairbanks** making the arrangements. The final dates have not been confirmed at this time, however the middle of September is being considered. The length of the reunion was reduced at the last board meeting from six days to four days. Please start thinking about attending.

Pat and I have been finalizing the final accounting for the Tampa Reunion and the results are looking fairly good but still shows a small loss of less than \$2000. The rescheduling caused by Hurricane Charley hurt us because of reducing the registration fees which were collected for the September date of \$17, 880. This amount was reduced by \$5,821 (approximately 32%) by rescheduling to the October date with the members approval. The food costs were reduced based on the number of members attending but the entertainment, fixed costs and increases to the added expenses remained the same or increased otherwise we would have returned money to the treasury. There were no complaints from the members which gives us a feeling of success.

Please check you dues as they may have expired and also send changes to your phone numbers and addresses to **Bill Wilson** as **Elain** is presently updating the new Roster.

We hope you enjoyed the holidays and wish you a prosperous New Year.

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By Andy Anderson

I failed to congratulate **Pat** and **Chuck Rauch** in the last newsletter for their efforts in arranging a great reunion in Tampa under very trying circumstances. Four hurricanes were four too many! **Helen Green** wrote me a letter on November 17 from Moscow, Idaho which said it best. She wrote, "Another great reunion! It was good see so many faces but we missed many. **Jesse Fulton** (64<sup>th</sup>) and myself (63<sup>rd</sup>) want to thank Pat and Chuck Rauch for their dedicated efforts on the reunion. I have already written them".

I especially enjoyed the Luau on Saturday night and got a bit of eye strain looking at the attractive girls in their grass skirts.

I will now continue with another installment of the diary of **Frances Denault**, of Deerfield Beach, Florida. Frances was a B-17 pilot in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron.

"On Feb. 25, 1943 we stayed on alert waiting for the weather to clear up. It was reported that the Japanese were sending a convoy south along the north coast of New Britain under the cover of bad weather. On Feb. 26 we took off about 10 AM and went looking for the convoy along the north coast of New Britain. The weather was very bad and we were unable to find any ships in the area. We bombed the runway at Gasmatta at the western end of New Britain and returned home to Port Moresby. On Feb. 27 and 28 we stayed on alert. The weather was too bad to do anything. A B-24 of the 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group on a reconnaissance mission sighted some ships through a break in the clouds at about 6 PM on the 28<sup>th</sup>. They counted about a dozen ships or more steaming west toward the Bismarck Sea. All units of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group were alerted for possible strikes as soon as the weather permitted. We knew now that the Japanese were sending a major convoy south to supply their troops in New Guinea. On March 2 the weather finally lifted enough for us to take off. At 9 AM the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron headed for the Bismarck Sea. Major Ed Scott, our Squadron Commander as the first off, Harry Staley was next and I was the third one off. The three of us teamed up in a three ship formation with Staley on the right wing and I was on the left wing. The rest of the squadron flew as single ships. We found the convoy in the Bismarck Sea off the coast of Lae. We could see the ships through the clouds. We dropped down below the clouds to 7000 ft. Scott picked out a large transport to make a bomb run on. We were down to 6500 ft. by this time. We made a diagonal run across the ship. We were each carrying four 1000 lb. bombs. About this time enemy fighters started making passes at us from all angles. Between us we dropped twelve 1000 lb. bombs and scored two or three hits. A huge cloud of smoke rose from the ship and there were several explosions. During the bomb run we were hit by some enemy shells. The left windshield was blown out, I was hit in the left arm, and Lt. Anderson, the copilot, was hit in the neck. My Rayband sunglasses saved my eyes as several pieces hit me in the face. Through all of this I kept my eyes glued on Major Scott's plane. After the explosions the ship started to sink. The three of us stayed together and left the area. How we got out of there alive is a mystery to me. After reading Lex McAulay's book, *The Battle of the Bismarck Sea*, I learned that the name of the ship was the Kyokusie Maru. Lex McAulay was an Australian soldier who spent a great deal of time researching Japanese archives after the war. From his book I also learned that the explosions were caused by 2,000 cubic meters of munitions stored in the ship. There were 1200 enemy troops on board and most of them were lost. The ship was burning fiercely when we left the area. The three of us had struck the first blow in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. All four squadrons of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group attacked the convoy, the 63<sup>rd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup> and 403<sup>rd</sup>, hitting and sinking several ships. What happened after that became history.

We returned to Port Moresby and landed safely. Lt. Anderson and I were sent to the base hospital. They patched us up and released us. The airplane was repaired and put back in service. The "Lulu Belle" would fly again! That was the name of our ship. The next morning, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, we took off at 10 AM to attack the convoy with three other ships of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. We found some of the ships just off the coast heading for Lae on north coast of New Guinea. Bill Thompson was leading our formation with Lt. Moore on his right wing and I was on the left wing. Lt. Kirby was in the high rear. Just as we started a bomb run on one of the ships the Japanese fighters hit us. We each dropped four 500 lb. bombs on the ship. We were at 7500 ft. and the bombs straddled the ship. We could not tell if we had any hits. I was too busy flying and watching the Japanese fighters. Two or three of the fighters had smoke streaming out of them so I guess we had some hits. Lt. Thompson then turned left and made a bomb run on Another ship, dropping the remainder of our bombs. Just when we finished our bomb run, Lt. Moore's ship was hit by a Japanese shell of some sort and fire was coming out of bomb bay section. About that time a Japanese fighter came straight in on me. They usually came straight in and then rolled underneath the plane. This one came straight in with no roll. I figured he was going to ram me. At the last second I lifted my right wing and skidded left. There wasn't anybody on my left wing. I figured I'm not going

to heaven this way. I don't know where he went but he missed me. By this time Lt. Moore's crew was bailing out of their ship. As they were floating down in their parachutes, the Japanese shot them down in their parachutes.. This was the type of dirty war it was.

We shot down three Japanese fighters that day. It was a vicious encounter. It was reported that there were about 22 ships in the convoy. All but one destroyer was damaged or sunk. The lone destroyer was seen heading northwest in the Bismarck Sea on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March.

Word of the strafing of Lt. Moore's crew reached all of the Fifth Air Force personnel. Every plane that the Fifth could get in the air was sent to attack the convoy. Nothing was left floating and every life boat was strafed and sunk. The water was red with blood and the white sharks had a field day. The Fifth Air Force fighters and B-25s strafed everything they could find. A-20s and a squadron of Australian Beaufighters were sent in to mop up the remains of the convoy. The first days of March, 1943 had seen the first great victory for the U. S. Army Air Force. The victory had been achieved by an Air Force very short of planes and supplies but rich in the attributes of courage and initiative. It was a surface battle fought at sea and won from the air. It was the first battle ever won completely by land based air power. It was the turning point of the South Pacific war. From this point on the Japanese started loosing ground.

General Kenney was to leave for Washington D.C. on March 4, 1943 to ask for more men and supplies. The Allied success could not have come at a better time. He called General MacArthur and reported the Japanese losses; "6 destroyers or light cruisers sunk 2 others damaged, 11 to 14 merchant ships sunk, 2 others damaged and 2 others sunk in Lae harbor. Estimated Japanese personnel losses were as high as 15,000 men. Allied losses amounted to four aircraft lost, two crash landed, 13 men killed and 12 wounded."

General MacArthur sent the following reply, "Please extend to all ranks my gratitude on the magnificent victory. It cannot fail to go down in history as one of the most annihilating combats of all time. My pride and satisfaction in all of you is boundless".

General Kenney composed his own praise: "Congratulations on the stupendous success. Air power has written some important history in the past three days. Tell the whole gang that I am so proud of them I am about to blow a fuse."

On March 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> we were on alert at Port Moresby. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, we went to church and spent the rest of the day writing letters. On March 8<sup>th</sup> we were on alert all day. On March 9<sup>th</sup> we took off on a reconnaissance mission to Vitiaz Straits on the east coast of New Britain, Madang and north coast of New Britain to the Dampier Straits. We flew at about 12,000 ft. and observed no movement of shipping, just one 2 engine Japanese plane in the air. Once again we saw on Japanese fighters and returned safely to Port Moresby.

March 10 through 12 we were on alert. I shared a four man squad tent with Capt. Thompson. It was hot and there was nothing to do. We tried to keep clean and took a shower. At night we would play poker usually in Colonel Ramey's tent. Ramey was the Group Commander. I've seen as much as 1,000 dollars in a pot in one hand. It was all Australian money. They paid us in Australian money, don't ask me why! I remember having four or five hundred dollars in my pocket during a mission. There was no place to put it. One night we were playing cards in Colonel Ramey's tent and it was late. The Colonel liked to bend his elbow quite a bit so he got tired and went to bed. He had the only refrigerator in the camp and he told us to help ourselves to whatever was in the refrigerator. There was about half of a ten pound can of spam in the refrigerator. Capt. Thompson and I made some sandwiches. That spam tasted like steak to me after what we had been eating. When we finished playing cards, Capt. Thompson and I took what was left to our tent and put it in a mess kit. The next morning we ate it for breakfast before it spoiled. It was a lot better than powdered eggs and powdered milk. The bread the Aussies made in Port Moresby was doughy because they did not have enough yeast to make it rise. When I got a chance I would take a jeep a go

down to the Red Cross station in Port Moresby and bum some K rations and cigarettes. As I did not smoke , I would trade the cigarettes for something I could eat.

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By Andy Anderson:

It was quite understandable that the number of ships sunk and enemy troops drowned was somewhat exaggerated by General Kenney in his initial report. In the heat of battle accuracy in reports of participants is difficult to achieve. I have the correct numbers and they still represent a remarkable victory. All eight transports were sunk, four destroyers were sunk and 15 to 20 Japanese planes were shot down. Some 3000 enemy troops were lost.

Two allied bombers and three fighters were shot down.

In the next newsletter I believe I can complete the publication of the balance of **Frances Denault's** diary.

We have a new member whose name is **Buckley Zeigler**. He was in the 63rd Squadron as a nose gunner. His address is 4274 Via Del Villetti Drive, Venice, Florida and the phone number is (941) 496-4113. His wife's name is Mary. His e-mail address is marybuck@aol.com. If any of our members remember him it would be nice if you would contact him and welcome "Buck" into our organization.

I received a phone call from **Thomas G. Daubert** of 1506 1/2 Amado Road, Albuquerque , NM 87104. He requested a new membership application, having lost the one he originally had. I pulled up our web-site and printed out one and sent it to him on December 14. He was in the 63rd Squadron during the Korean war. I believe he mentioned flying in B29s.

We have two new associate members in New Jersey. They are **Alice Mannion Oldfield** and **Regina Oldfield Puzzo**. Alice was a brother to **Cpl. John T. Mannion** who went missing on a 63rd Squadron B-17 on May 8, 1943 and was never found. Regina is Mannion's neice and a daughter of Alice. I have additional information about the lost B-17 including a listing of the complete crew which I will mail to them as soon as this newsletter is completed.

Still another new associate member has sent in dues. He is **Fredrick J. Salek** whose father was **Lt. F.F. Salek** who served with us in the Philippines and Ie Shima. Fredrick did not state what squadron his father served with. He stated that he sent photos to me but my Microsoft Outlook Express program blocked his photos. He would like to hear from anyone who knew his father. His address is 51 Castle Heights Ave. Tarrytown, NY 10591.

With his 2005 dues to Bill Wilson, **Bob Burke** wrote an interesting but brief letter. He stated that he is an active pilot and once built a "Pitt Special" biplane some years ago. He belongs to the Experimental Aircraft Association and is now "into ultralights". Bob was in the 403rd Squadron.

Theodore Romanowski of Whiting, NJ sent in three years of dues. He had this interesting comment "Did you know that **(Art) Durbeck** was picked as Gen. MacArthur's pilot? We hoped that he would accept, but he opted for combat." Ted stated that he likes to read wartime diaries of others in the newsletter. His own first daylight mission to Rabaul Harbor is one that he remembers well.

Bill Jobe of Bremerton, Washington sent his dues to me and I forwarded them to our Treasurer, Bill Wilson. He enclosed an excerpt from his dairy that reads like this, "January 18, 1944—Left Ipswitch

(Brisbane) for Sydney. Arrived at 10:30. Registered at American Red Cross at David Jones' Ltd. On George Street. Began looking for a room or flat. No luck. Met an Aussie soldier at a bar who said he had a rich Auntie who ran a guest house at Mosman. We took the ferry there. Met Mrs. E. Clare and we all played poker for pennies. Drank beer mixed with Sherpes (or something) called 'Shanty'."

Bill swears that her name was really E. Clare and that he did not make that name up.

Since he was in the 64th Squadron (like me) and a radioman (like me), I believe everything Bill says!

+++++TAPS—LAST ROLL CALL+++++

Arthur Hane 403rd. Squadron in June of 2003 Maxine is also deceased. Reported by his son God Bless

Leland Mlnarik HQ Squadron June 20, 2004 Reported by his wife, Bernadine God Bless

Howard Shomo 64th Squadron June 4, 2004 Reported by Earl Muncer God Bless

Joseph C. Harvey 403rd Squadron October 13, 2004 Reported by his daughter, Susan Kepich God Bless
His wife Margaret is also deceased

Doris Butler wife of Robert Butler of the 63rd SQ. reported by Wendell Jones God Bless

M. L. "Shad" Shaddox 64th Squadron on Dec. 4, 2004 Reported by his son Keith God Bless

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Alex Wysocki notified your editor by e-mail that he has a new address and phone number. He now lives happily at 2016 Naamans Road, F-1, Wilmington, Delaware 19810. His new phone is (302) 475-3780. Alex states that Delaware is more favorable to senior citizens than where he lived previously in the state of Pennsylvania. Alex has an interesting e-mail address. It is USAAF43rdBG@webtv.

Another new member has signed up with us. He is **Robert P. Mangan** of 4651 Wave Drive, Erie, PA 16505-1313. He was a Flight Engineer in the 403rd Squadron and flew 47 missions. He was in the 43rd from December 1943 until March 10, 1945. His phone is (814) 838-1872.

Bill Wilson forwarded to me a brief letter from **Goldie Barta** after removing \$100 in dues for her husband, **George Barta**. The Bartas now live at 2205 Warren Street, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005-5233. My copy of the 2002 roster had them living in Minnesota. I hope their new address gets listed in the new roster of members being prepared. George was a member of the 403rd Squadron ground crew. Goldie reports that George is not very active these days.

We have another new associate member. He is **Mark Feldbin** of 18 Schryver Court, Kingston, NY 12401. His phone is (845)338-0648. He is the son of **Albert Feldbin**, a who was a Bombardier in the 64th Squadron.

He stated on his application that he is a friend of **Arthur Mulligan** who was once CO of the 64th. **Charles Rauch**, reported a new area code in the phone number of **Everett Lind**. It is (727) now and not (813). Also **Jesse Fulton**'s phone is now (423) 292-7940.

Jack Nunelle now lives at 125 50th Ave. NW, Salem. Oregon 97304. His phone did not change **Jesse Fulton** has a new phone number. It is (423) 292-7940.

Needed! Someone to host a 2006 Group Reunion! We would like to plan reunions two years in advance. San Diego, California would be a wonderful place, but it is a high cost area. Unless we could evict some of the animals from their cages and use the fabulous zoo as hotel, we could not afford that city. But would we be willing to eat the same food as the animals?

San Francisco is also another high cost city. There are plenty of vacant cells at Alcatraz, but I don't think the beds are very comfortable!

Branson, Missouri has been mentioned. Air transportation is not very convenient. Branson has no airport and I would assume that flying into and out of Springfield would not be inexpensive. That airport would still be some 35 or 40 miles from Branson. Other Bomb Group Associations have been having reunions at Branson and most of their members drive some distance to get there. If we had a reunion there I would fly to St. Louis and rent a car. Following the reunion, I would visit relatives in Southern Illinois. Then I would drop off the car at the St. Louis airport and fly back to Los Angeles. This is assuming I still would still be a safe driver two years from now!

Branson has no shortage of hotels and entertainment.

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**Quarterly Humor**

You can thank Helen Green for this:

After Christmas break the teacher asked her small students how they spent their holidays. One small boy's reply went like this:

"We always spend Christmas with Grandpa and Grandma. They use to live here in a big brick house but Grandpa got retarded and moved to Arizona. They live in a place with a lot of retarded people. They live in tin huts. They ride three wheeled tricycles. They go to a to a big building they call a wrecked hall. But if it was wrecked it is fixed now. They play games there and do exercises, but they don't so them very well. There is a swimming pool and they go to it and just stand there in the water with their hats on. I guess they don't know how to swim. My Grandma used to bake cookies and stuff, but I guess she forgot how. Nobody cooks there. They all go to fast food restaurants. As you come into the park there is a doll house with a man sitting in it. He watches all day, so they can't get out without him seeing them. They wear badges with their names on them. I guess they don't know who they are. My Grandma said Grandpa worked hard all his life and earned his retardment. I wish they would move back home, but I guess the man in the dollhouse won't let them out."

This one is titled "a dream come true."

One day this guy who's been stranded all alone on a desert island for 10 years is sitting on the beach when a lovely bronzed girl with lovely sun-bleached hair wearing a wet suit and scuba gear emerges from the surf. She approaches the stunned guy and asks, "How long has it been since you've had a cigarette?"

"Ten years!" he said. She unzips a waterproof pocket on her right sleeve and takes out a fresh pack of cigarettes. He takes one, lights it and takes a long drag and says, "Oh, but that's good". Then the girl asks, "How long has it been since you have had a drink?" Trembling, the man says, "Ten long years!" The woman unzips her waterproof pocket on her left sleeve and pulls out a flask of Jack Daniels and hands it to him. The man takes a long swig and says. "Man, that's sweet!"

The woman then starts unzipping the front of her wet suit, looks at him seductively and asks, "And how long has it been since you've played around?"

The man, with tears in his eyes, replies, "Oh, sweet mother of God! Don't tell me you've got golf clubs in there!"

## Quarterly Humor (continued)

While on a road trip an elderly couple stopped at a roadside restaurant for lunch. After finishing the meal, they left the restaurant and resumed the trip. When leaving, the elderly woman unknowingly left her eye-glasses on the table. She didn't miss them until after they had been driving for about twenty minutes. Then, to add to the aggravation, they had to travel quite a distance before they could find a place to turn around in order to return to the restaurant and retrieve her glasses. All the way back the elderly husband became the classic grouchy old man. He fussed and complained and scolded his wife relentlessly during the entire return drive. The more he chided her, the more agitated he became. He just wouldn't let up one minute.

To her relief, they finally arrived at the restaurant. As the woman got out of the car and hurried inside to retrieve her glasses, the old geezer yelled to her,.... "While you're in there you might as well get my hat!"

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When your editor mentioned in the last newsletter that **Frank Dolezal** had written a book and that I would like to have a copy of it, I had assumed that the book was about his experiences in the 43rd Bomb Group in WWII. Instead, the book is about his father's experiences in the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 when he fought with Pancho Villa to bring justice and freedom to the people of Mexico. With the book that Frank sent to me came a great letter and I would like to quote part of it. Frank wrote, "We are fortunate to continue our life long friendships formed in the crucible of war until which time it becomes our time to be called by our Good Lord. In my old age, I've come to realize each generation of free men has to protect their freedom and justice against the forces of tyranny and injustice. My book is about that same eternal struggle for which my father fought.....Some of the problems of nation building in that war long ago relate very well to the problems in Iraq today. It is a beautiful love story with very strong characters who you care about --who built a new nation. The name of my book is "Drums in the Hills." I'm trying to get the interest of a movie producers to make a major motion picture of it. I'm enclosing a copy of it for you to enjoy and to share with friends. Thanks for your interest".

Frank, I will share the book with my son and a neighbor who loves books about history. Thank you very much!

I am looking forward to the Minneapolis- St Paul 2005 reunion which will be near the "Mall of America", the largest indoor shopping mall in the country, I believe. My wife did some of her Christmas shopping in Tampa and I expect she will "improve the economy of Minnesota"!

The newsletter is published 4 times each year: **January, April, July and October**. Dues are \$15 per year and \$100 for life. Make the check out to **43rd Bomb Group Association** and mail to Bill Wilson, Treasurer. You may send e-mail to the Secretary/Editor to andyanne@comcast.net

The Post Office Department will not forward the Newsletter. If you change your address please send your new address to **Bill Wilson, Treasurer** as soon as possible.

I have been asked to inform you of the passing of Kenneth Brown a former pilot in the 64th Squadron from El Paso, TX. His death was January 2, 2005..

I would also like to say thank you to everyone for having patience with me during this very busy time of the year.

Thank you, The Elf