

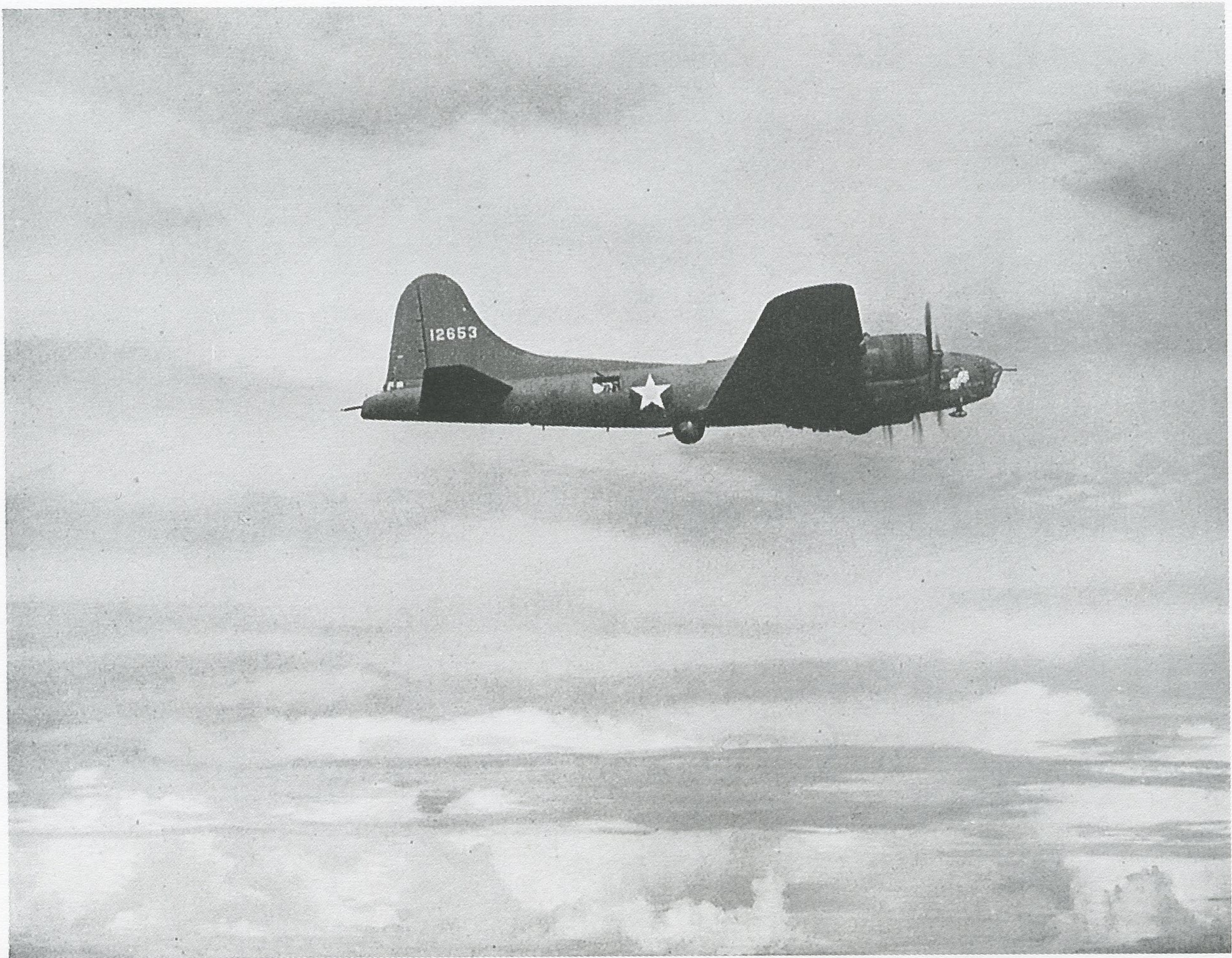
DOWN UNDER



50

Year Special Edition





"A Thing of Beauty"

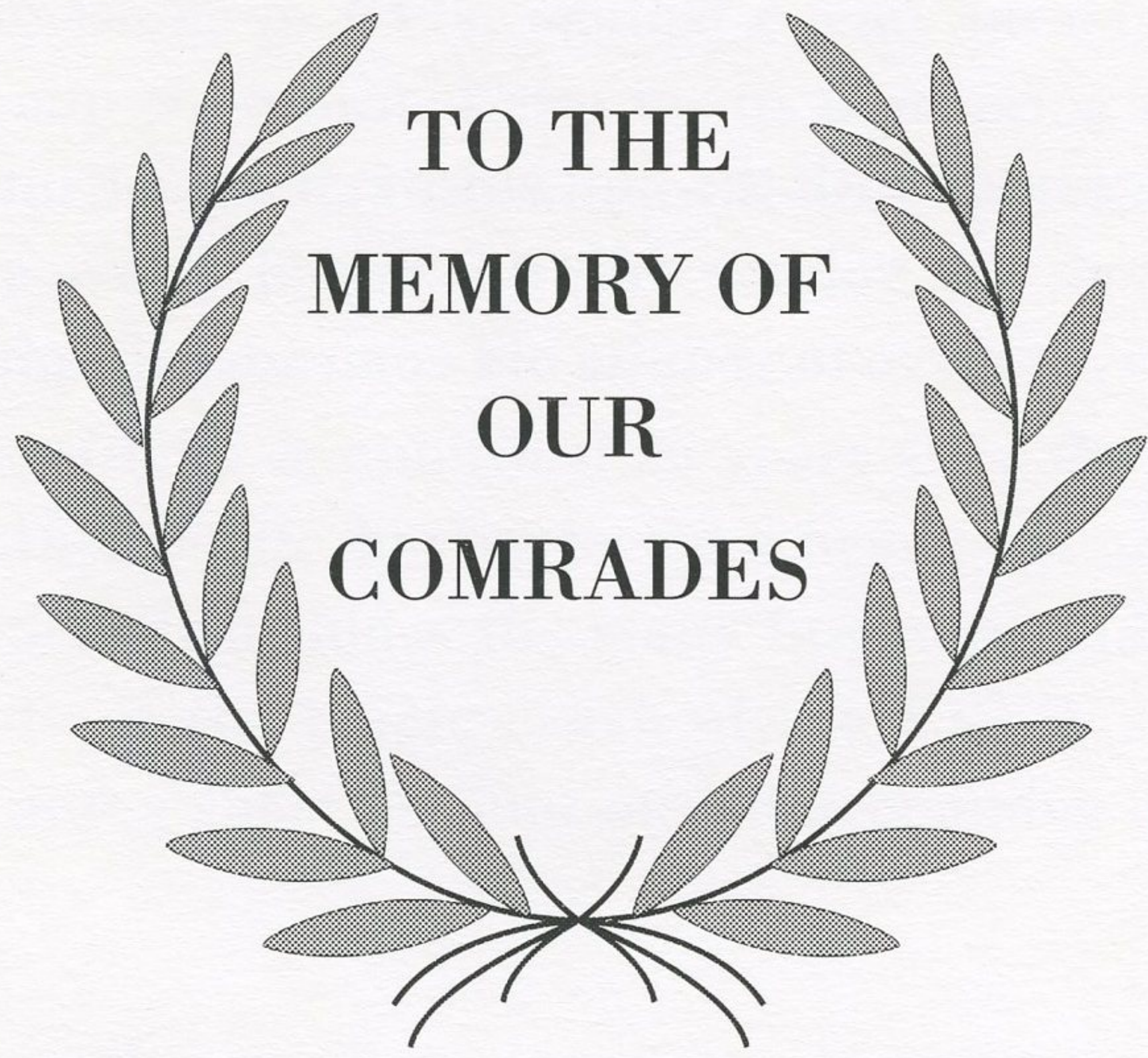
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Year Special Edition



DOWN UNDER

The 43rd Bomb Group in New Guinea and Australia



FOREWORD TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

THIS VOLUME is not intended for the general public, but for the officers and men of the heavy bombardment group with which it deals. The photographs, contributed at the editor's request by members of this group, will serve as a memento of their comrades, as a record of the areas in which they lived and worked, and as a tribute to the Air Force and Bomber Command to which their unit belonged.

An effort was made to include in this album all personnel and all aspects of the unit's activities; and any omissions are deeply regretted. Place-names and dates could not, of course, be mentioned.

For all who have been associated with the unit since it has gone into conflict "down under", and for their loved ones too, this volume will, it is hoped, prove a worthy keepsake. In the days of peace to come, may it serve to reunite old comrades in spirit whenever its pages are turned.

The Editor.

50 YEAR SPECIAL EDITION OF *DOWN UNDER*

Down Under was first published during the Second World War, as a pictorial record of the men and machines of the 43rd Bomb Group, stationed in Australia and New Guinea. At the time the crews, their commanders, and their supporters on the ground, were doing their utmost to counter an immediate and desperate threat. Now, looking back, we can see how the Group played a crucial and heroic role in the success of the Allies in the war against Japan.

The main work of the 43rd when this book was first published consisted of innumerable conventional bombing missions in B17s, against enemy targets in New Guinea and the Pacific. However the Group is renowned also for its pioneering successes with skip bombing, and is equally noteworthy for its little known role in introducing radar assisted bombing late in 1943.

This new edition of *Down Under* is published 50 years after the 43rd Bomb Group set up new bases on islands further north, having levied a heavy toll on the Japanese operations in and around New Guinea. It includes the many fascinating photographs printed in the original. It adds a photo of the tragic crash of the B17 flown by Major Kenneth P. McCullar and his crew, and a short account of radar bombing operations led by Edward W. Scott.

Sadly, a lot of the men—and most of the aircraft—shown in these photos, are with us no longer. It seemed to me that a new edition would be a well-earned testimonial to the courage and dedication of those who have gone. Those who remain pay ongoing tribute to the 43rd Bomb Group's selfless *esprit de corps* in their continued contact with each other and their Organization. Hopefully this book will be an interesting reminder for them of an association in which we can all take pride.

FREDERICK O. BLAIR

THE 43RD BOMB GROUP

THE 43RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY) was activated on 15 Jan 1941 and began training at Langley Field, Va. In February 1942, crews of the 43rd sailed for Australia with a large U.S. force earmarked for operations in the southwest Pacific theater. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had asked General Marshall to send the force urgently aboard the Queen Mary to help counter Japan's devastating southward thrust. The Group was augmented by members of the 19th Bomb Group which had withdrawn from the Philippines.

Soon after reaching Australia, it began operations with B17 aircraft, from bases in Queensland and New Guinea. In 1943 the B17s were used successfully in skip bombing operations, and played a key role in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. Elsewhere they did serious damage to enemy shipping, aircraft and ground installations. From May to September 1943 the Group was progressively reequipped with B24s, and these were the aircraft used for radar bombing.

In 1944 allied advances made it possible to move operations forward to the Schouten Islands, Leyte, and the Philippines, and as the War drew to a close, the Group began to concentrate its missions on airfields and railroads in Japan itself.

The photographs in this book mostly show the crews and B17s of the 63rd, 64th, and 65th and 403rd squadrons during 1942 and 1943 when combat was chiefly in New Guinea and the seas around it.

WARTIME COMMANDERS OF THE 43RD BOMB GROUP

Lt Col Harold D. Smith, 15 Jan 1941

Lt Col Francis B. Valentine, 1 Mar 1941

Maj Conrad H. Diehl Jr, 18 Feb 1942

Col Roger M. Ramey, 21 Oct 1942

Lt Col John A. Roberts, 30 Mar 1943

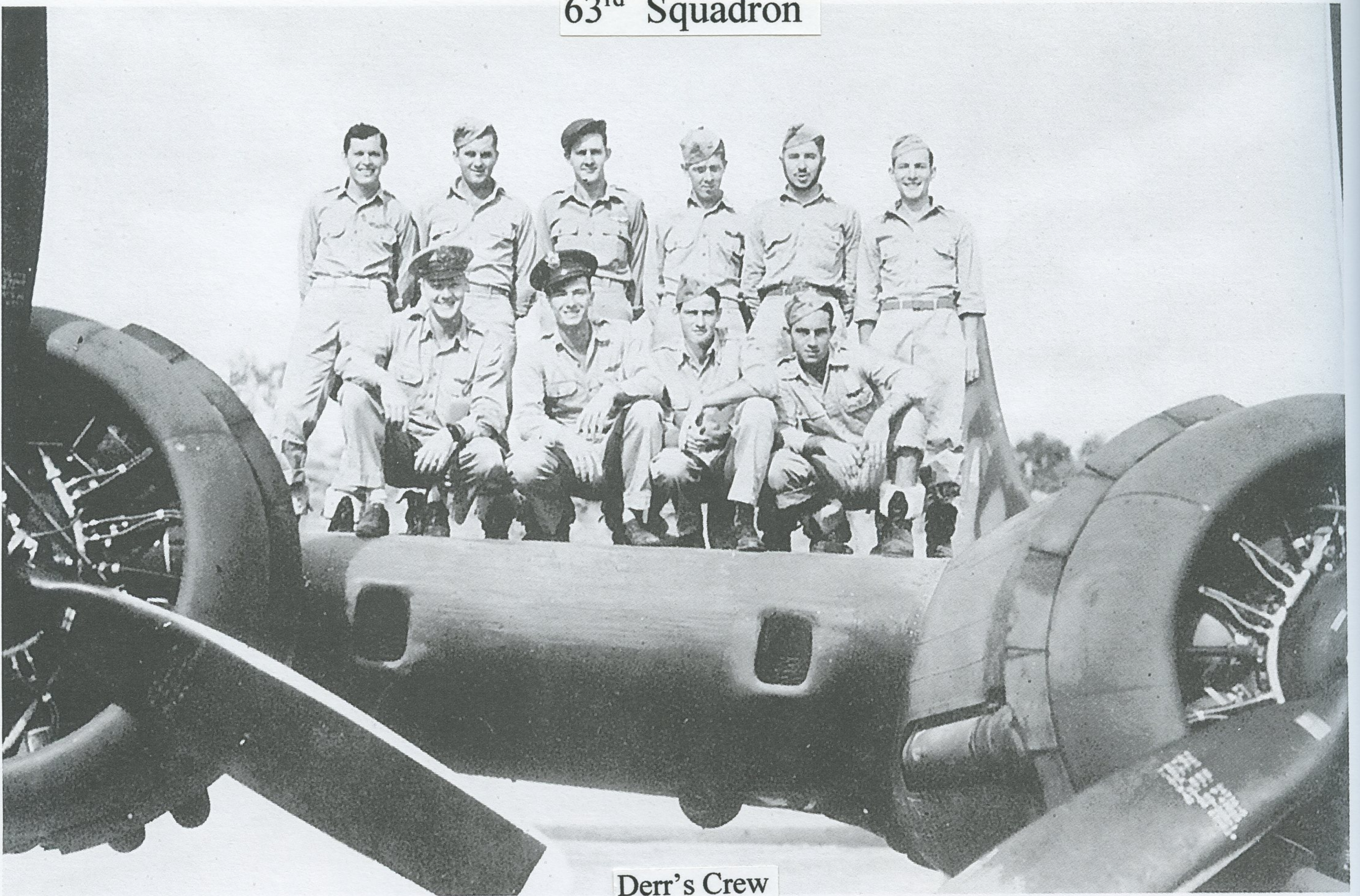
Col Harry J. Hawthorne, 24 May 1943

Lt Col Edward W. Scott Jr, 18 Nov 1943

Col Harry J. Hawthorne, 8 Feb 1944

Col James T. Pettus Jr, 18 Sep 1944

63rd Squadron

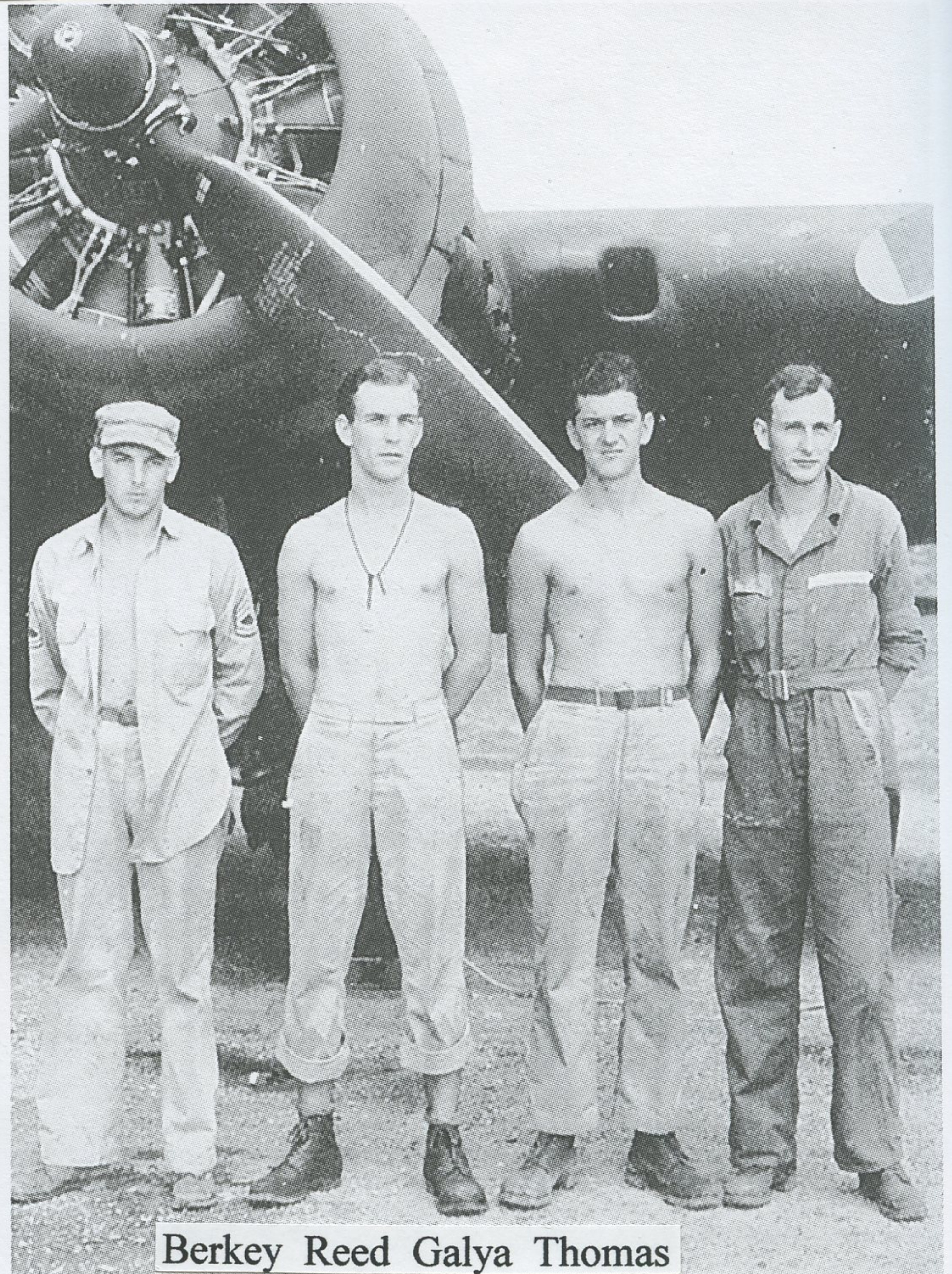


Derr's Crew



Jerry Newman Ambrose Laus Ed Gammill

Ed Huber



Berkey Reed Galya Thomas

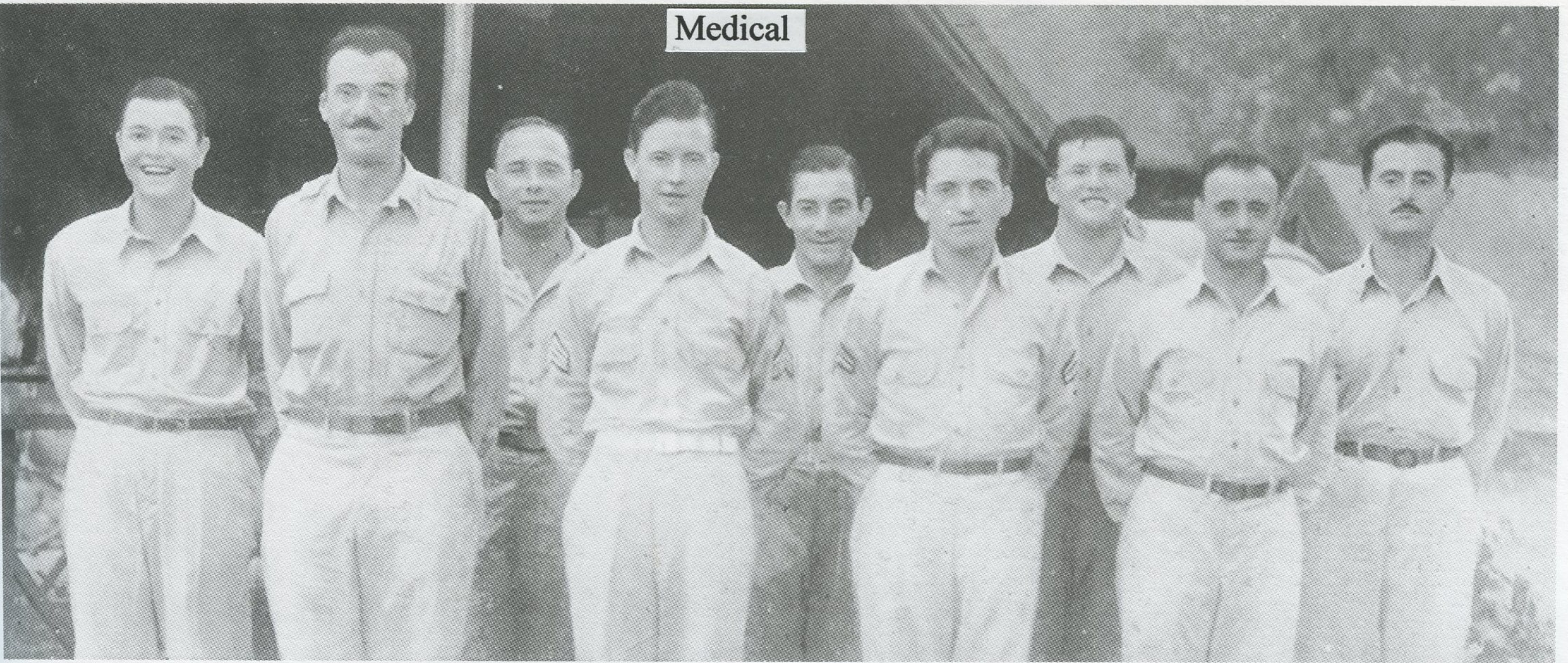


43rd Bomb Group Headquarters

Armament



Medical



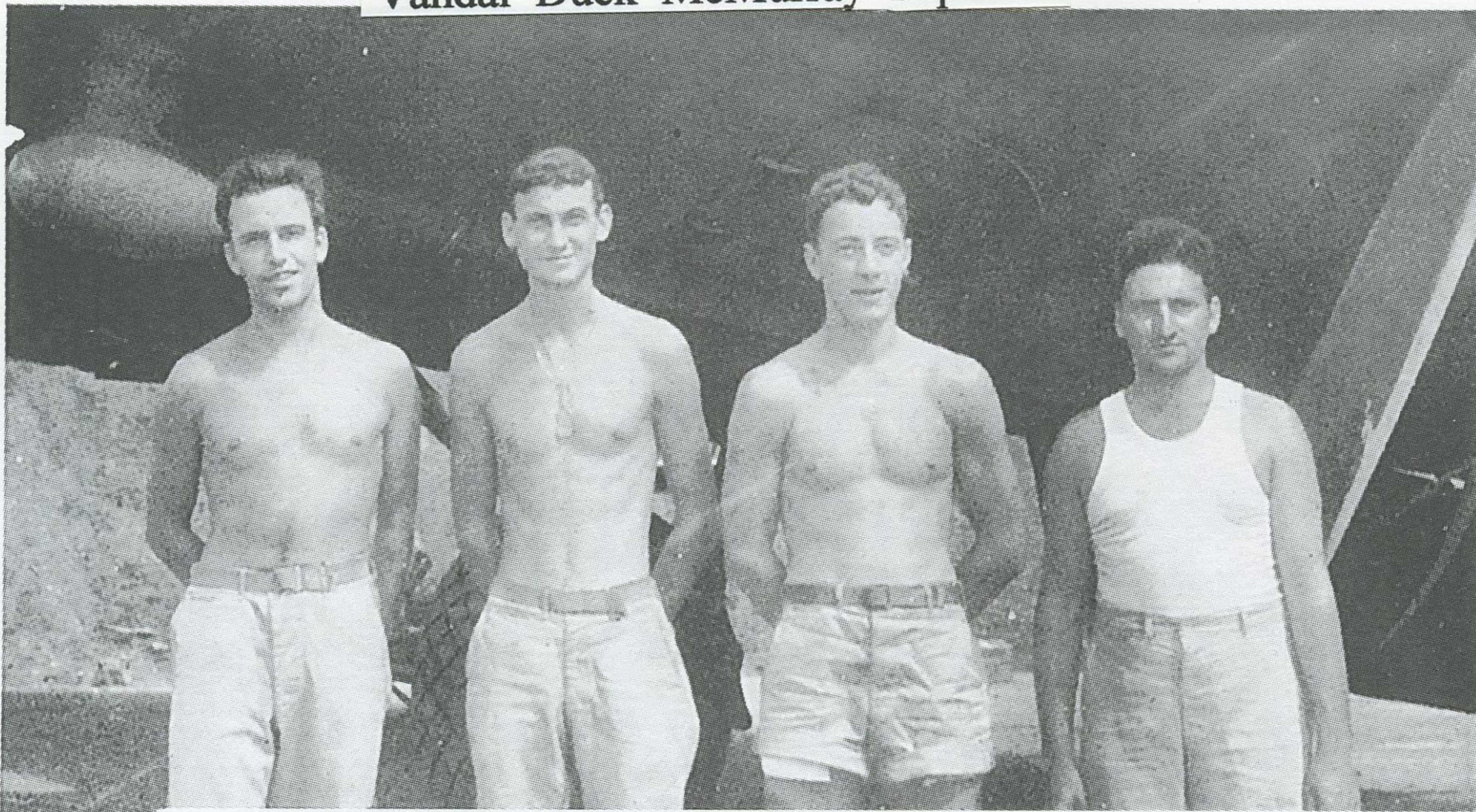
Cooks



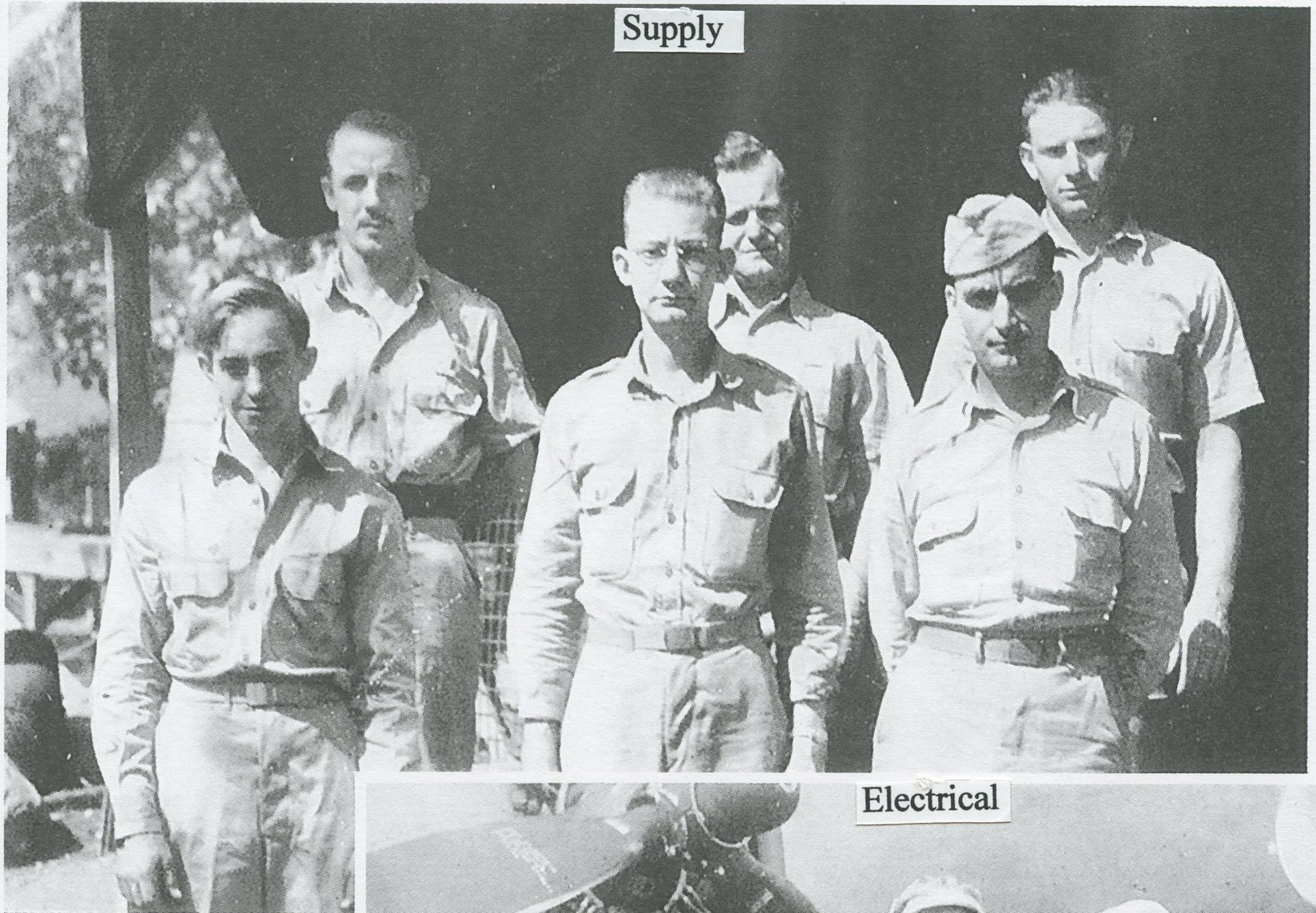
Flight Operations



Vandal Duck McMurray Espinosa



Supply



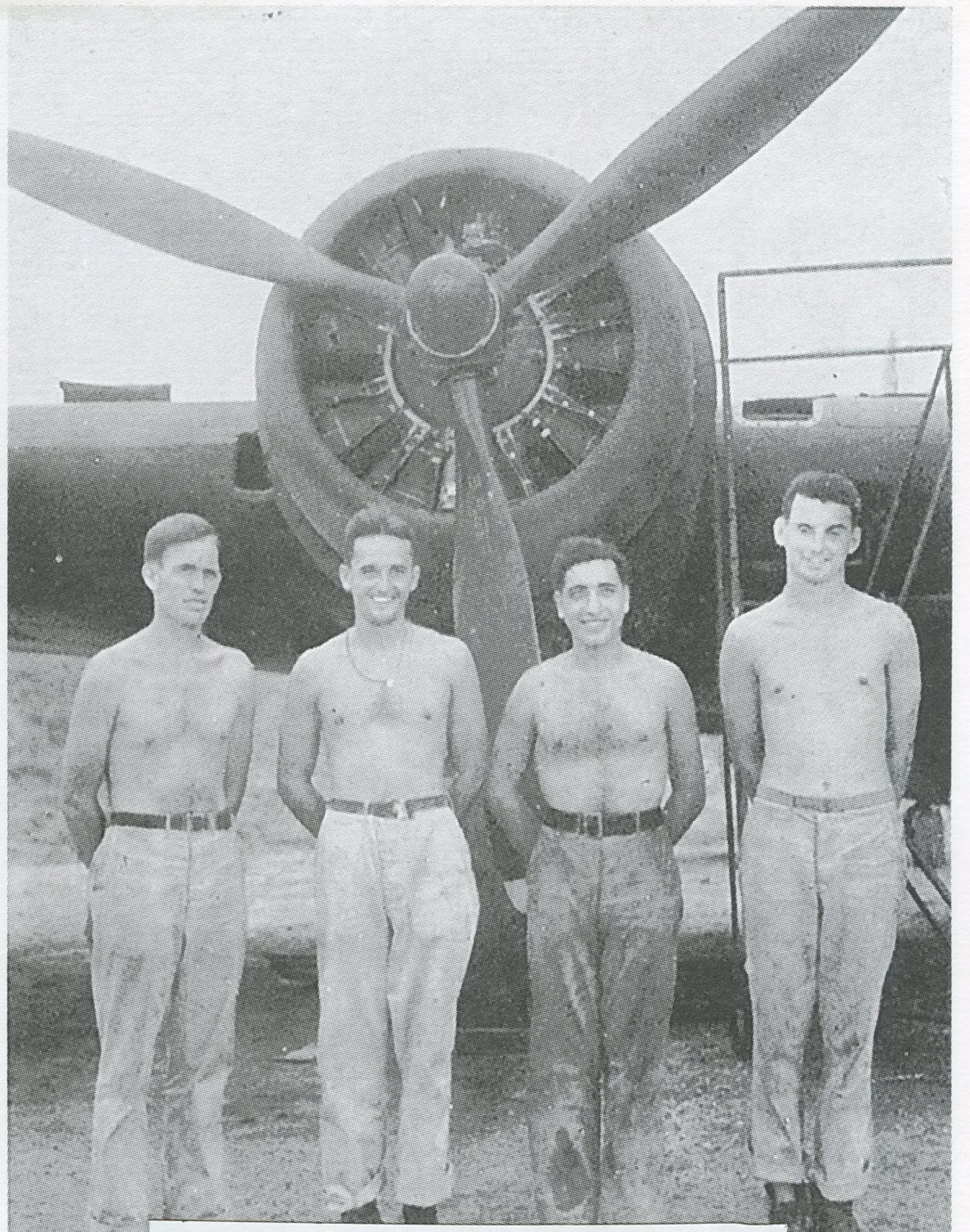
Electrical



"Angie" Angerame "Red" Lawson Stretz

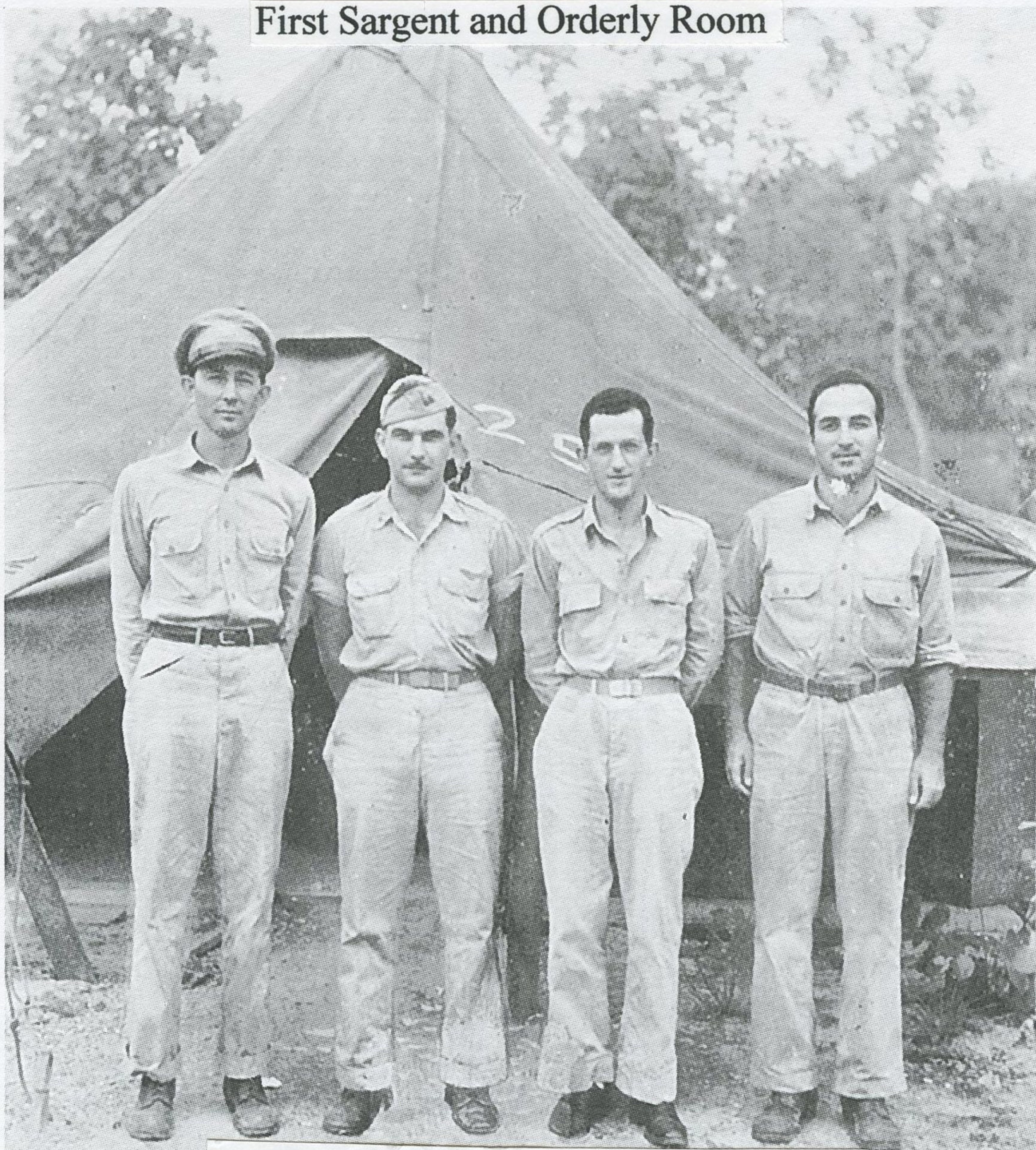


Farrell Scoggs Nyggard Dumka



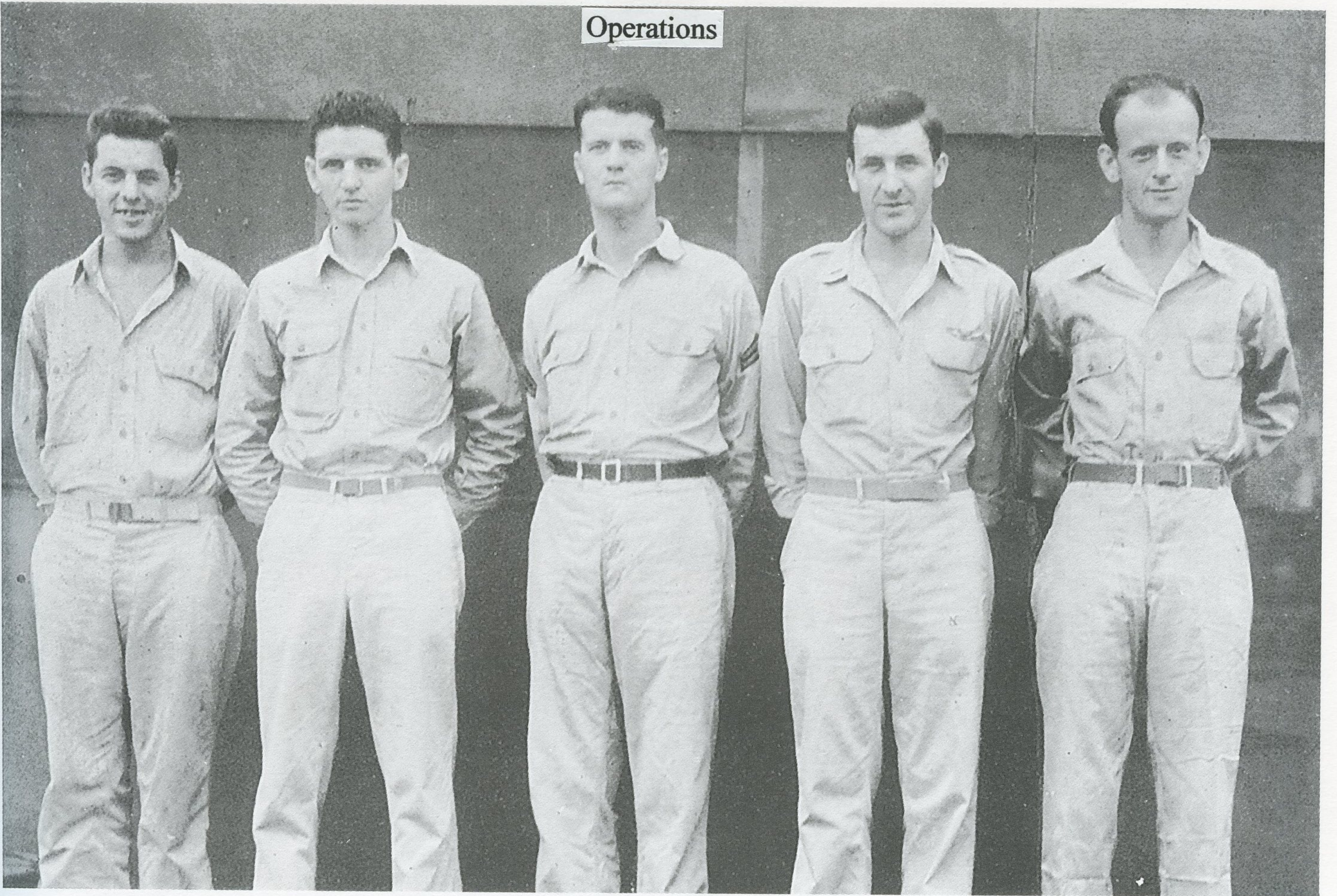
Williams Conway Pecoraro Gillis

First Sargent and Orderly Room

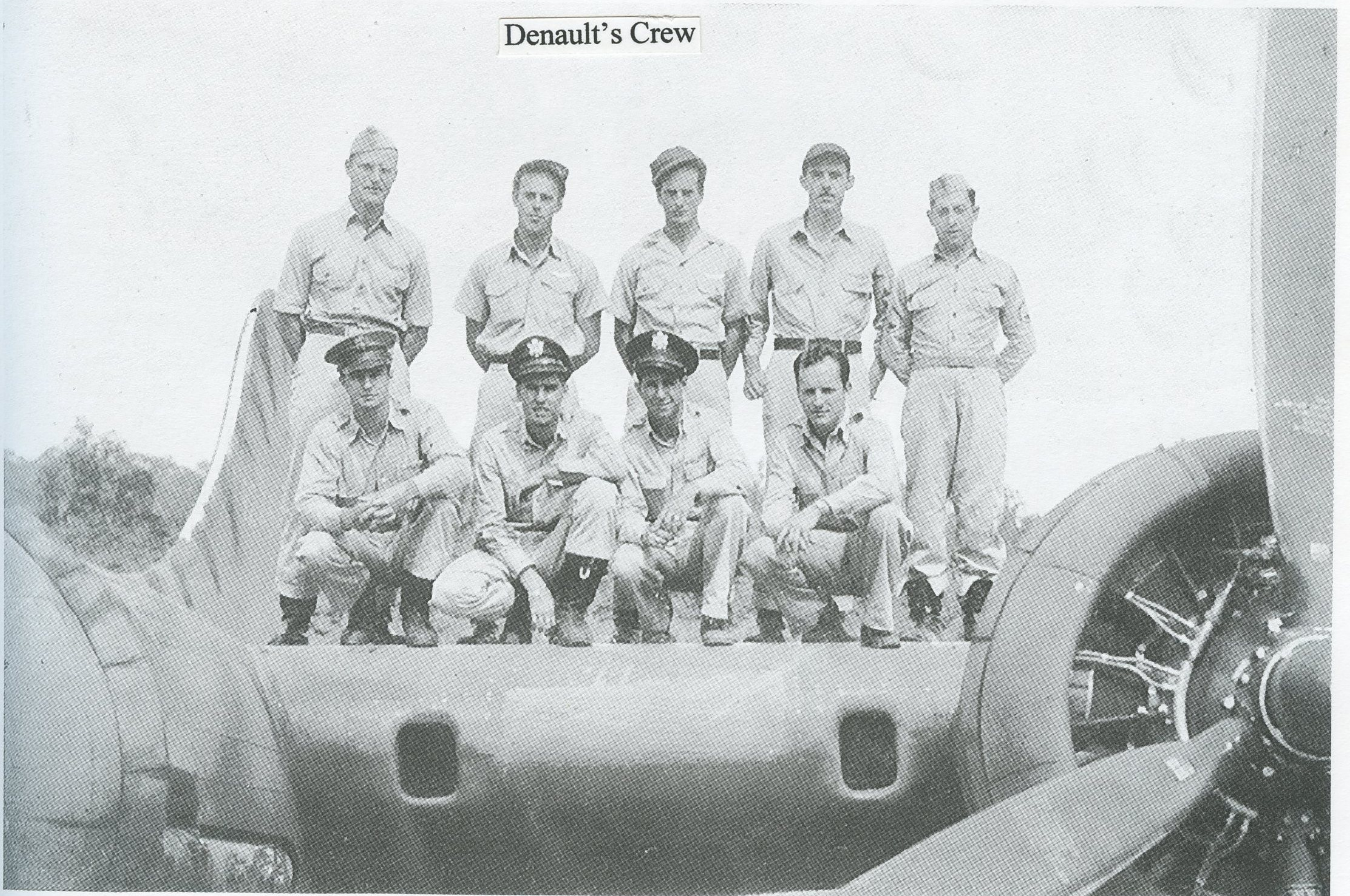


Williams Keatts Stevensons Piedmonte

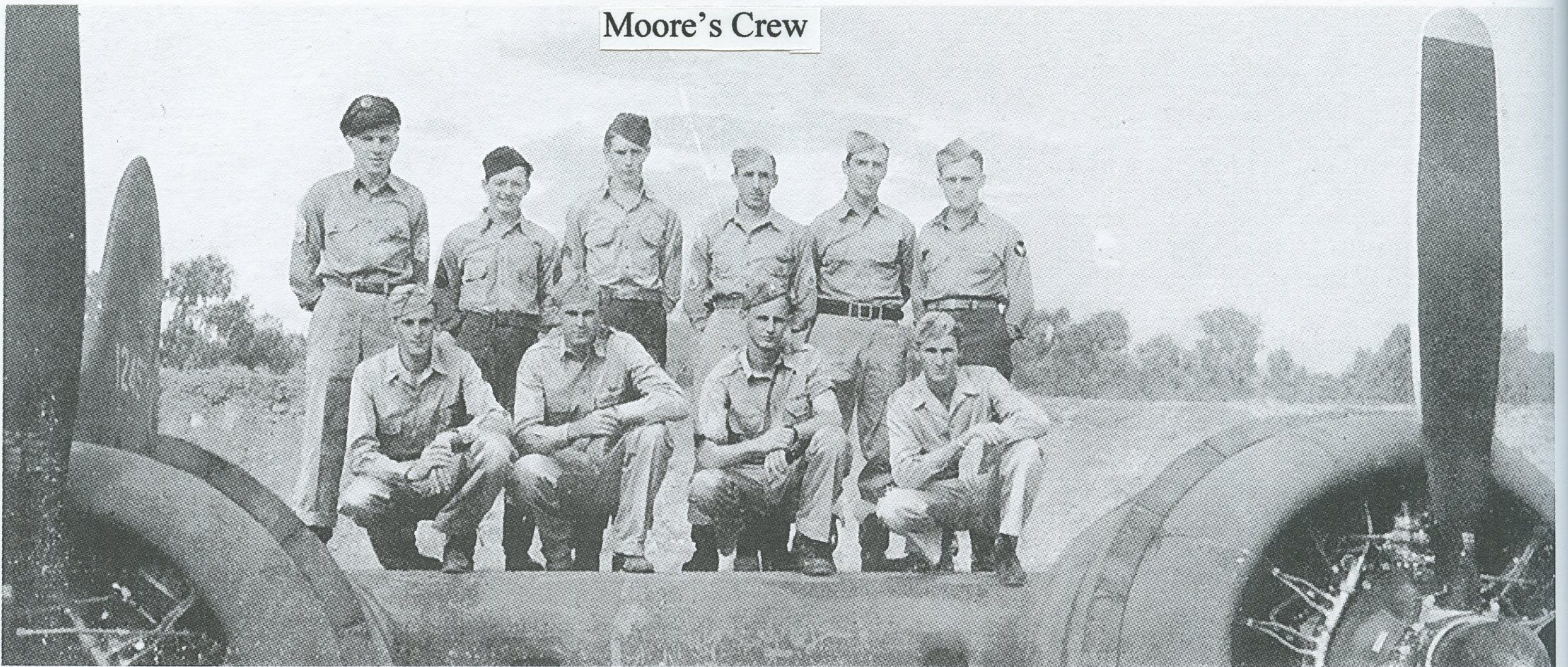
Operations



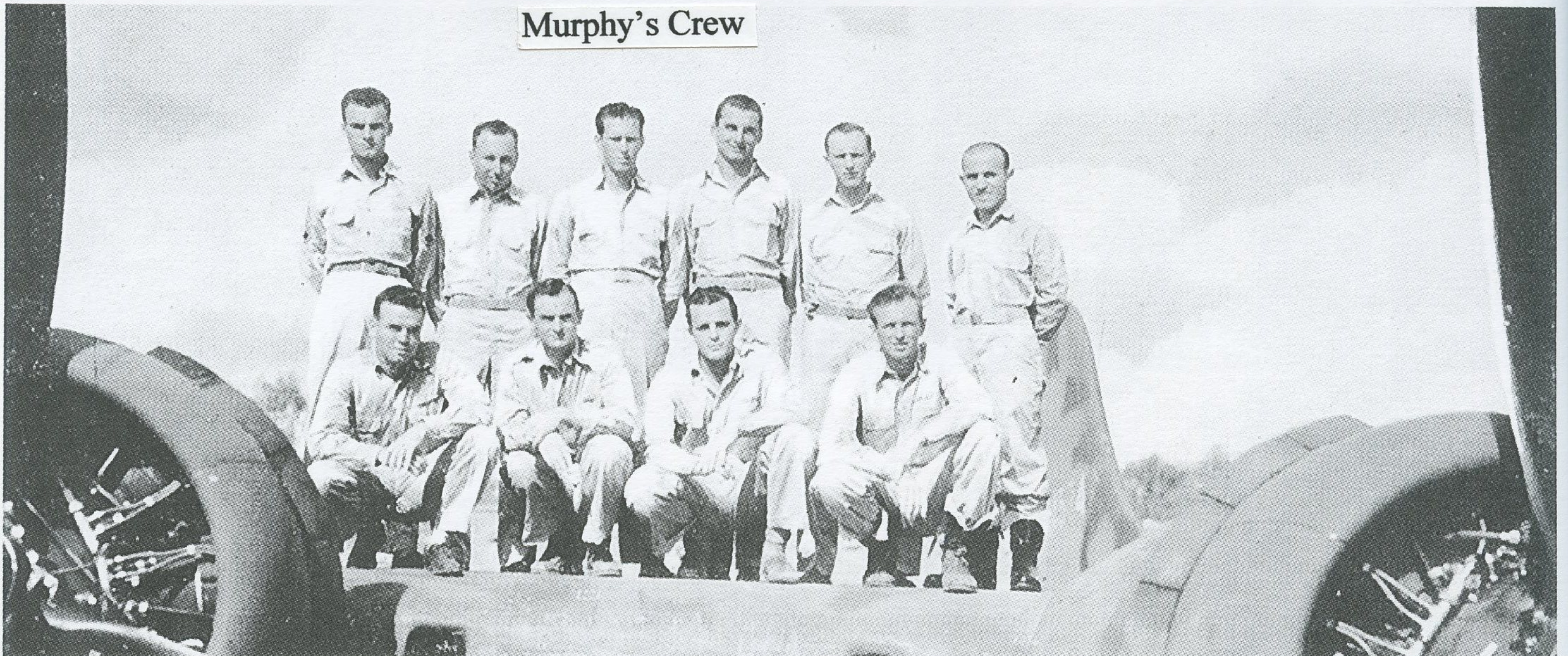
Denault's Crew



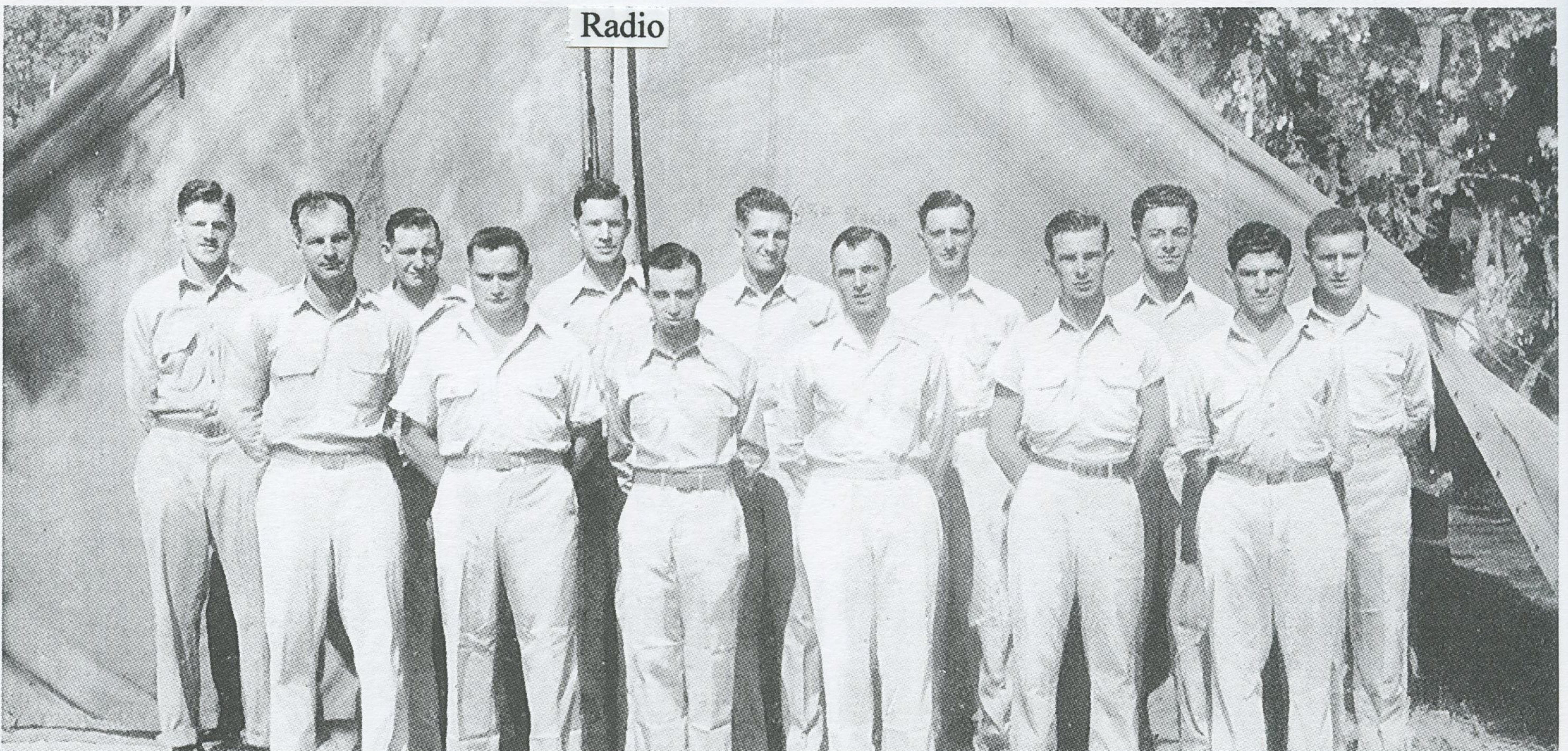
Moore's Crew



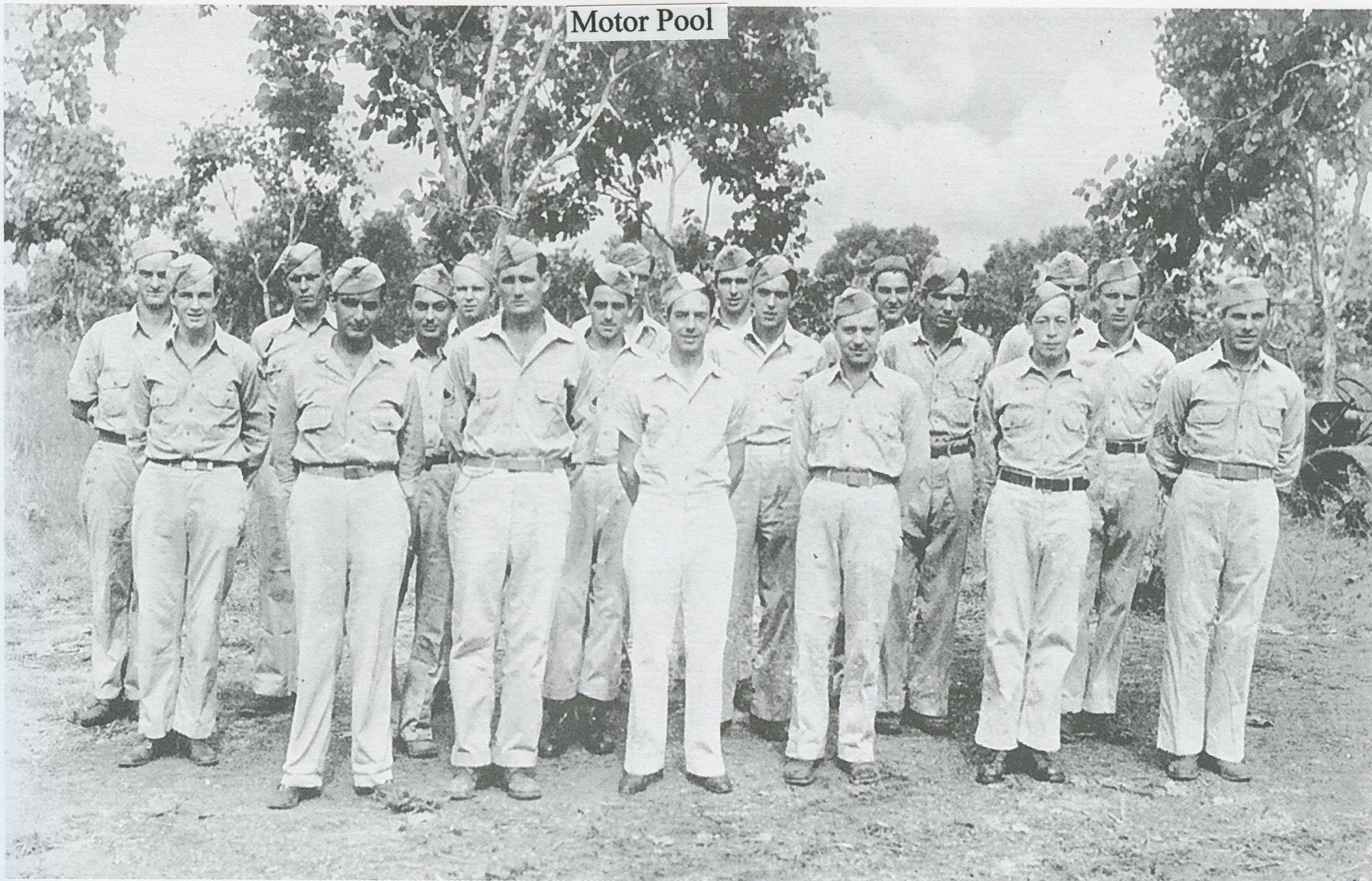
Murphy's Crew



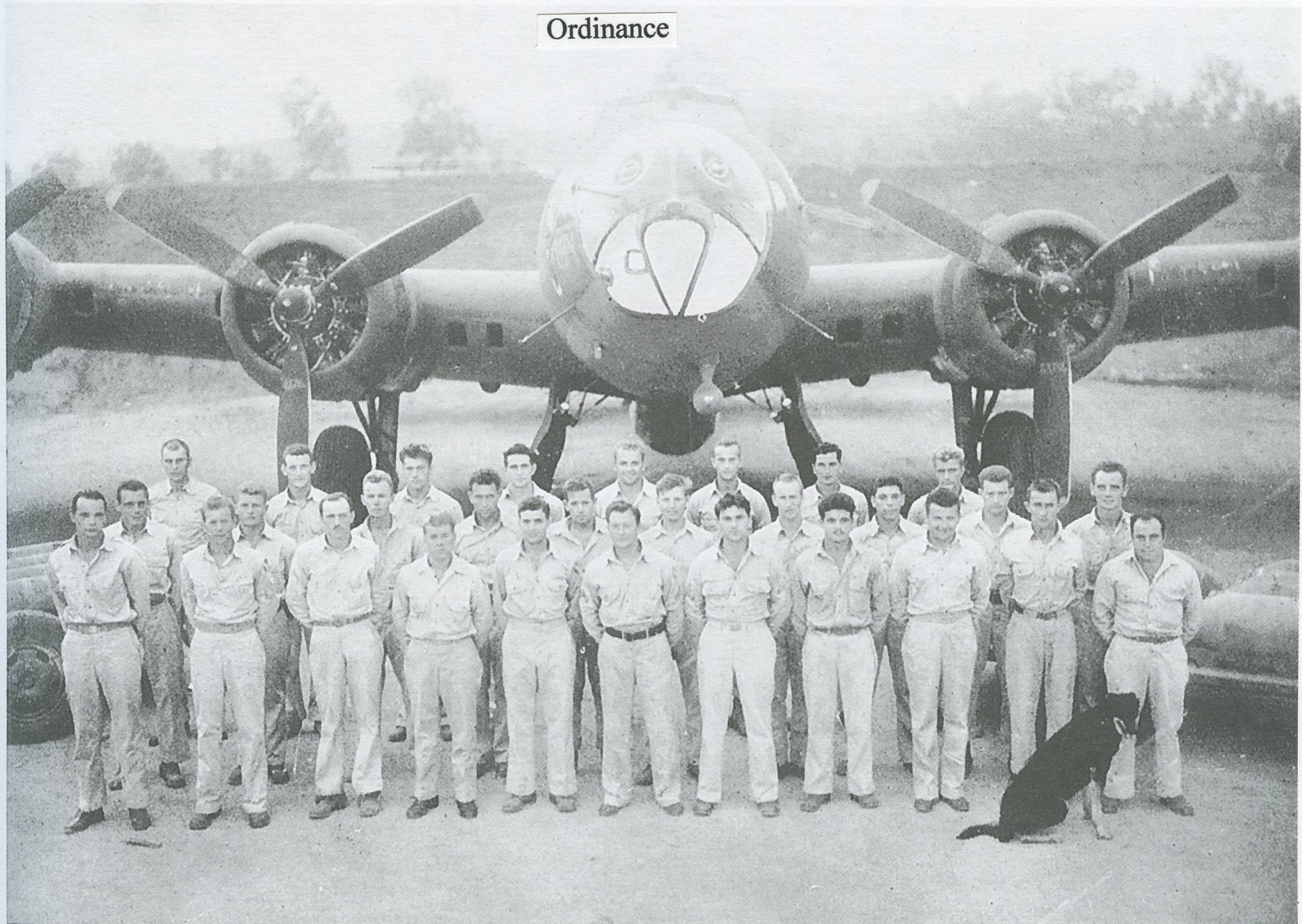
Radio



Motor Pool



Ordinance



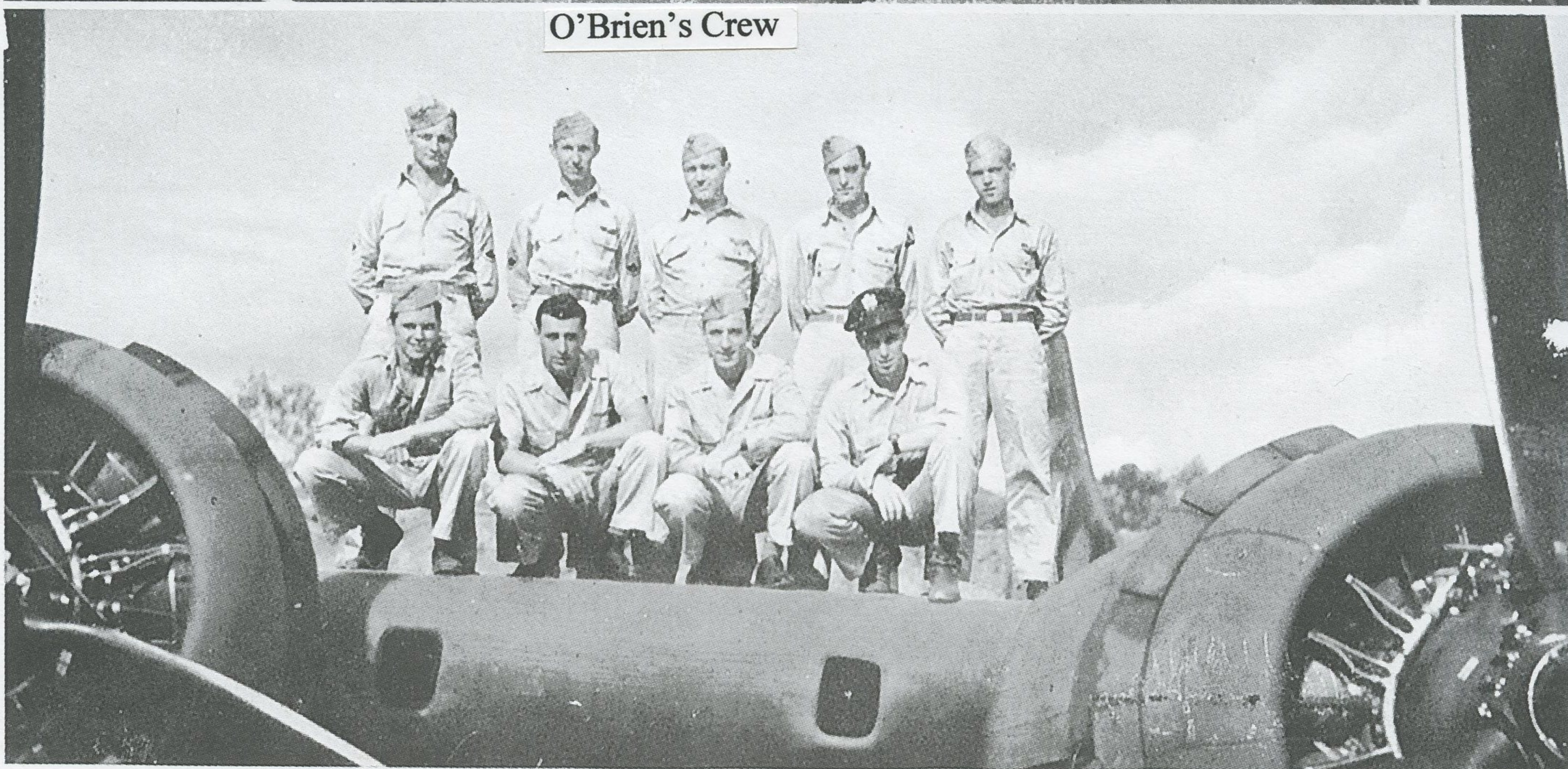
Defenderfer's Crew



O'Brien's Crew



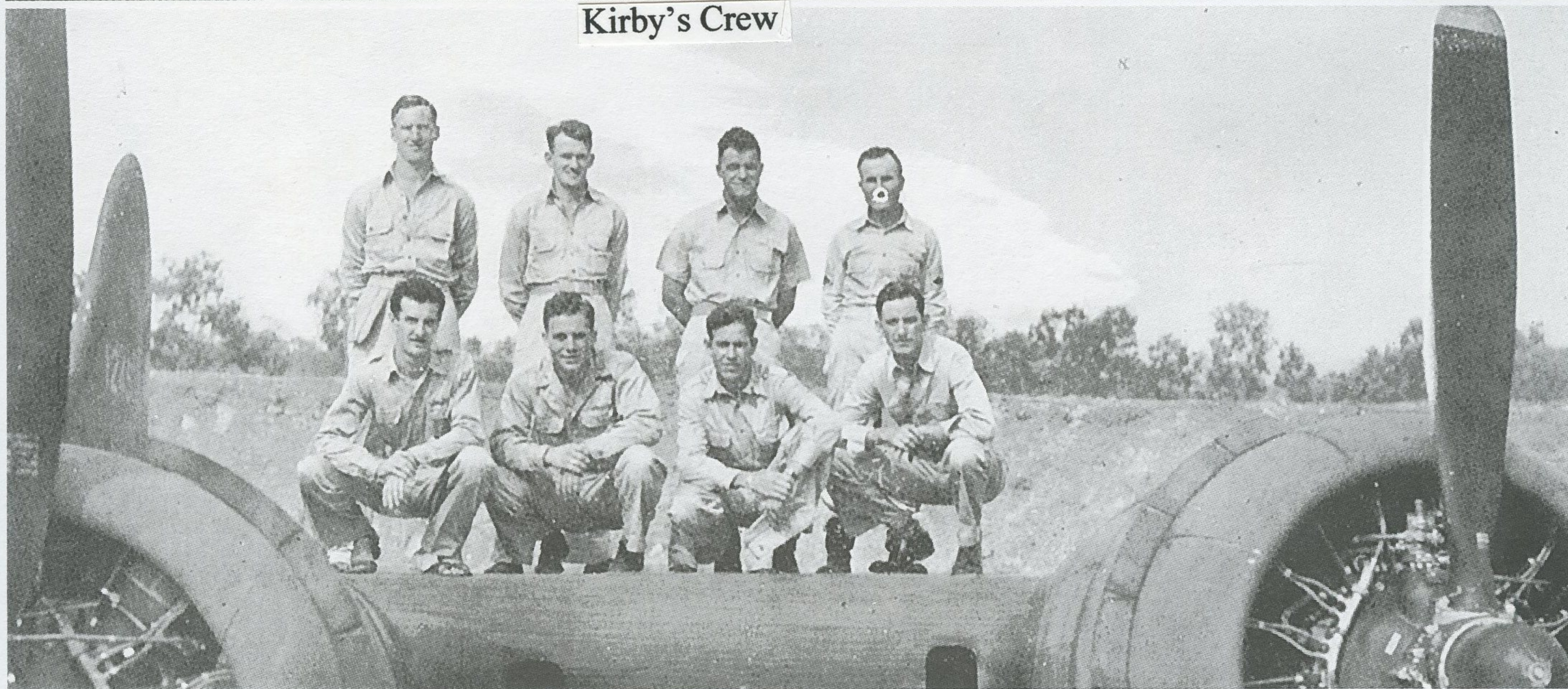
O'Brien's Crew



Trigg's Crew



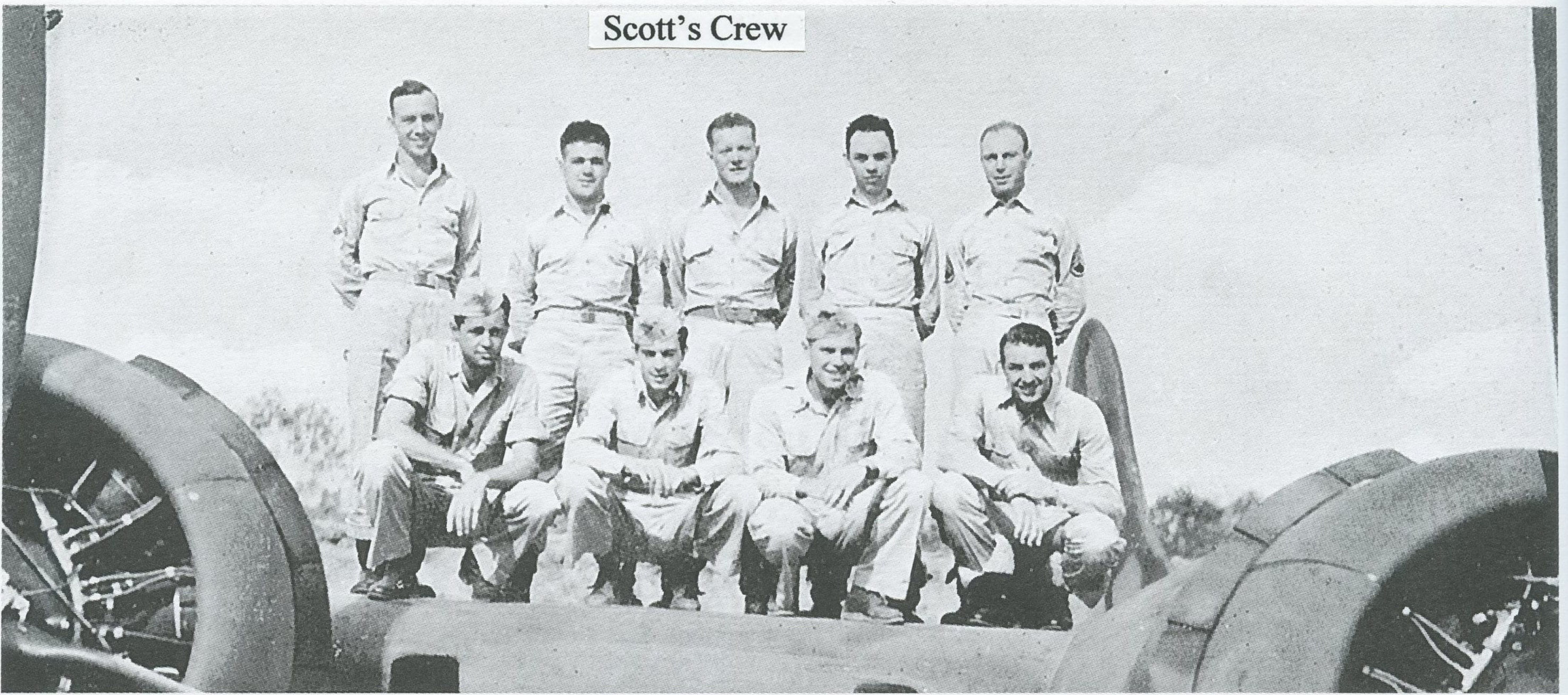
Kirby's Crew



DeWolf's Crew



Scott's Crew



Murphy's Crew



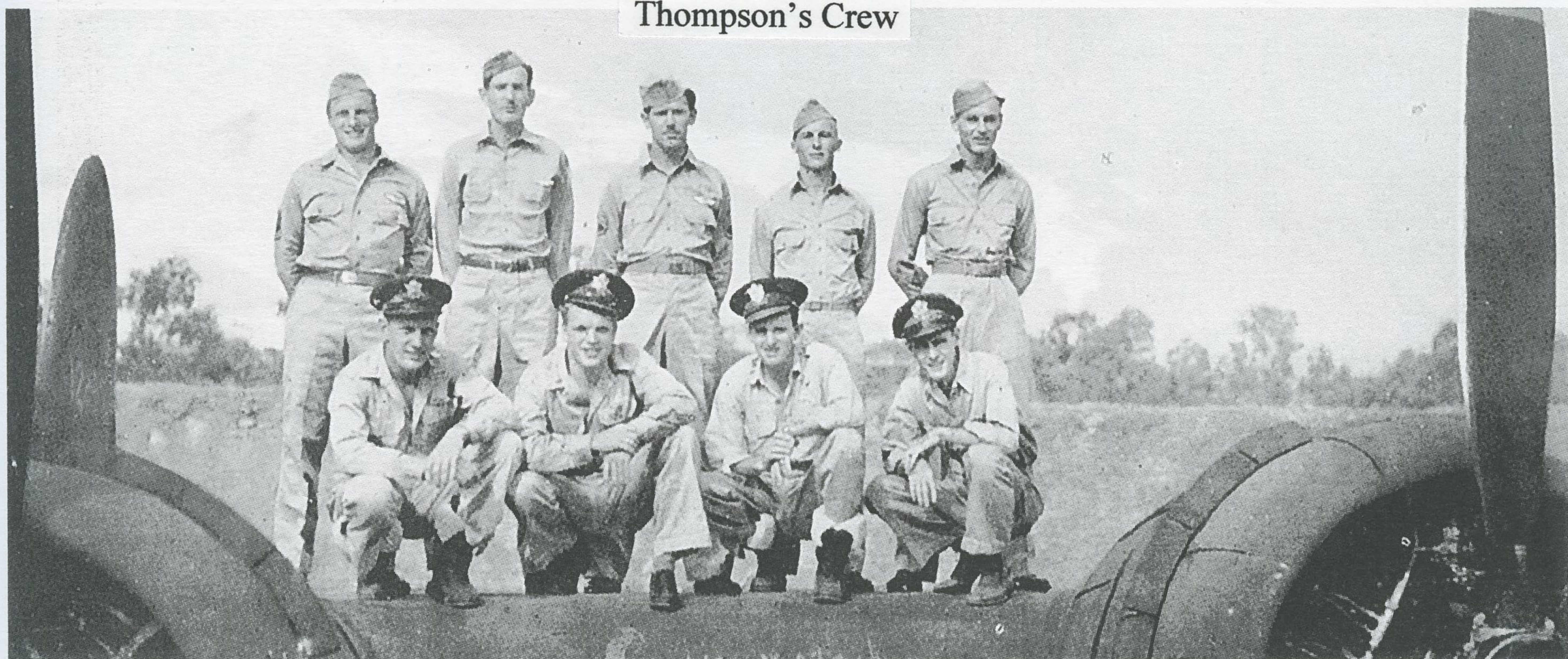
Staley's Crew



O'Brien's Crew



Thompson's Crew



Line Chief, Flight Chiefs and Inspectors





The tragic crash of the 64th squadron B17 captained by Major Ken McCullar. The plane crashed at Seven Mile Airdrome, Jackson Airstrip on 12 April 1943.