

November 2014

Update



Dear Thirsty 13th Members, Relatives, and Friends,

There are many new items to share with you since the last update in July 2014. Click the hand symbol above in the PDF menu bar to make it easier to scroll down. This edition includes some exciting current color photos of the first overseas camp in New Caledonia. Please forward this update to your relatives.

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This is the newsletter for the U.S. Army Air Corps 13th Troop Carrier Squadron, 1940-1946, nicknamed “The Thirsty 13th.” This is prepared by Seth P. Washburne, the son of John C. Washburne, navigator 11/42-7/43. Please direct any comments to him at (212) 289-1506, sethpw1@gmail.com, or 5200 Meadowcreek Drive, Apt. 2060, Dallas, TX 75248.

Page numbers referred to are in the book “The Thirsty 13th” unless otherwise stated.

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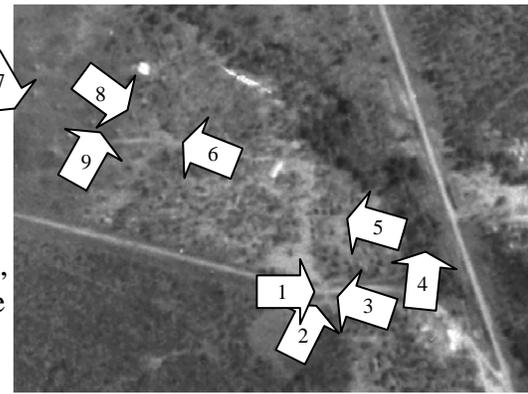
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1. Additional History

a. 1942-1943: Photos of New Caledonia Today

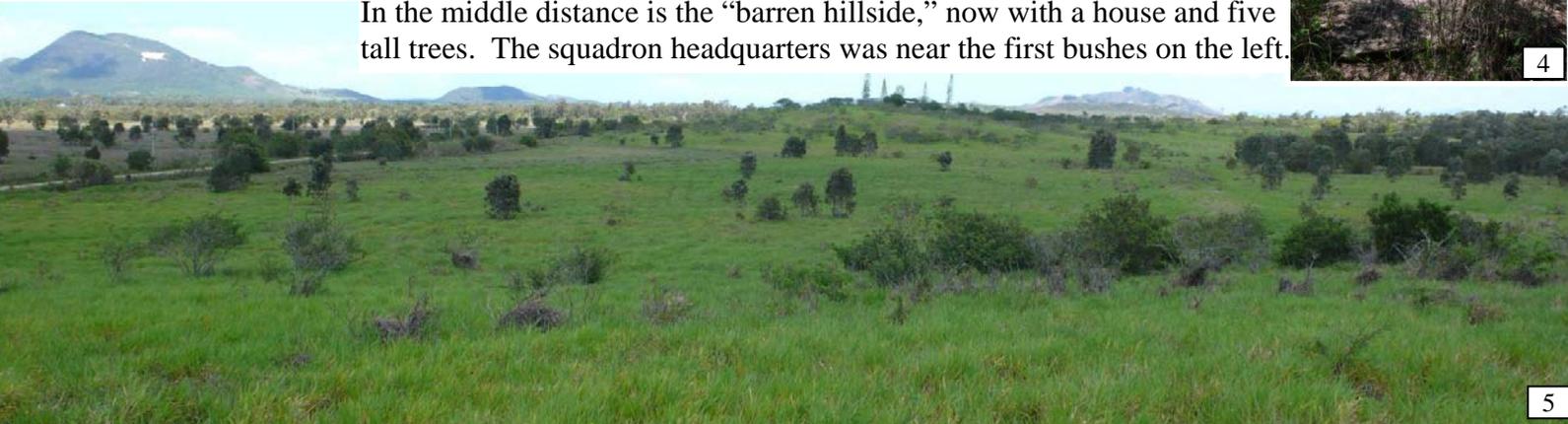
On December 2, 2013, I had an order for the Thirsty 13th book from Eric Gavarone, who worked at Tontouta Airport. I emailed him photos of Tontouta, including a panorama. On September 21, 2014, I received an email from him, noting that he liked the book. Incredibly, Eric also stated he was a hiker, and had color photos identical to those Ummel took on page 254, 71 years ago; had found the exact spot for the Tontouta Panorama on 252-253, and duplicated it today; and on October 25 visited the camp area and took photos. Above is the road next to the camp.



Eric found a cement slab, at right, remaining from under the officers' latrine.

Below is the view from the Officers' Hill, with the road to Kimball Hill on the left.

In the middle distance is the "barren hillside," now with a house and five tall trees. The squadron headquarters was near the first bushes on the left.



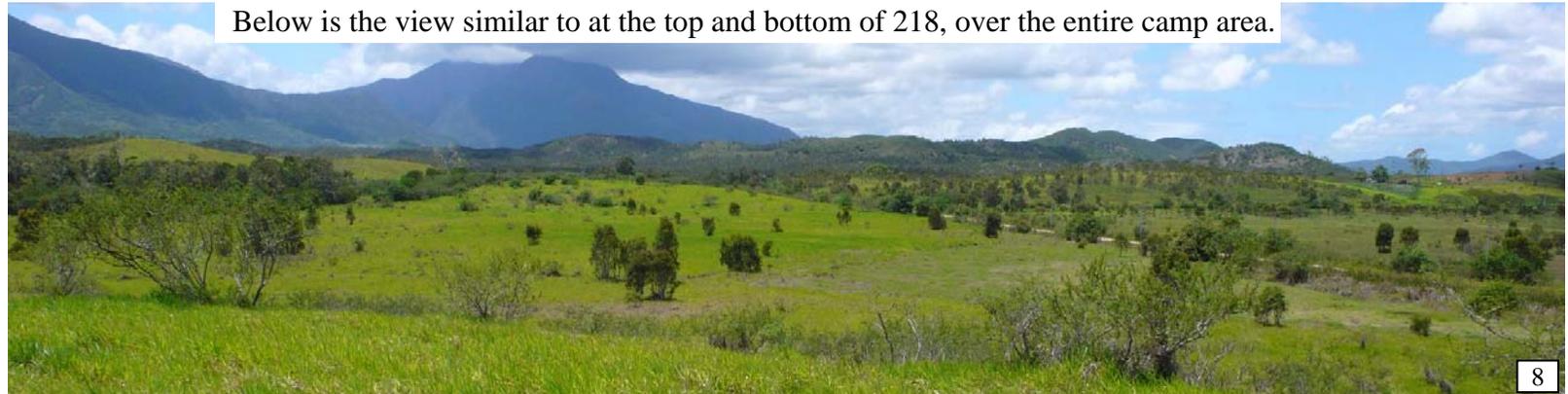


1942-1943: Photos of New Caledonia Today – Barren Hillside

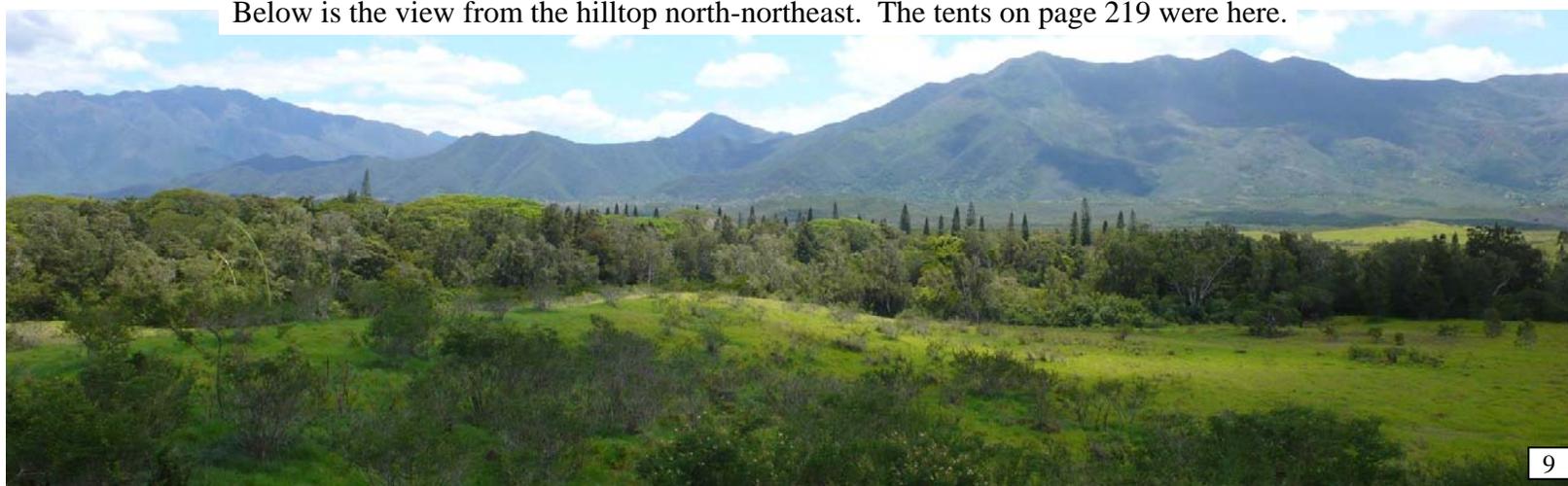
Above is the photo Eric took to duplicate the location on page 217 of the road up the barren hillside. Below is the fence coming up from the road, perhaps with the same posts as on 212-13.



Below is the view similar to at the top and bottom of 218, over the entire camp area.



Below is the view from the hilltop north-northeast. The tents on page 219 were here.





Recreation Sites Today

Eric also emailed me photos he had taken that are almost identical to photos Ummel took in 1943.

From Mt. Koumédio he took the photo above, with Kimball Hill on the left, and Tontouta Airport, identical to Ummel's on page 254, right. He added: "[LaLonde] said you have to struggle through thick jungle and brush, and it is still difficult today." He also took the photo at right, identical to that Ummel took, on page 249, inset (the book photo is reversed).

From Mt. Henriette north of the bridge where they went swimming, he took the photo below right, and later those below, similar to the view on page 236. He noted: "Yes, people and me still swim under the bridge. Every year the river rises near the bridge when the hot season is here. [A] heavy current washes everything."





Tontouta Airport Today

Eric, incredibly, also recreated the panorama of Tontouta Air Base on pages 252-253. He wrote “I had to think a lot for finding the place of the 1943 panorama.” It is amazing that he found the exact location. His photos here are in the same order as on pages 252-253. The road the 13th TCS aircrews and mechanics took to the work areas is still there, outlined here in red. (All of these photos qualify as “Additional History” in that they show the areas in color.)





Aerial Photos of New Caledonia Camp and Airfield

I am running out of superlatives to describe the actions of Eric Gavarone in showing us the world of the Thirsty 13th in New Caledonia as it appears today. On November 19 he emailed me that he flies a Cessna 152 and 172, and flew over the camp to take aerial photos of it. The photo above shows Tontouta Airport, the area where the squadron parked their aircraft, and the location of the first overseas camp from December 1942 to October 1943. There is a road now from the main road to this west side of the airport.

One can see that if an aircraft turned right after takeoff to the southeast, and I believe that was the standard procedure here in 1942-43, it would pass over the squadron camp, as shown at right, in Peters' photo on page 228.

Meade indicated on page 250 that sometimes he would walk from the camp to the airplane area, about 1.5 miles, and it appears to be a nice walk.

In the photo below, the camp is still undeveloped, with little trace of the past.





Thio Pass Today

Eric also flew through Thio Pass, page 264, duplicating, and going in the air, exactly where our fathers – and the Marine flyers and many others – went on their way to and from the war in Guadalcanal. Thanks to him, we can now see what this looks like in color.

Above is the view approaching Thio, almost the identical view on page 121 that greeted Commanding Officer Cullum and others when they first arrived from Fiji. This is also the view every pilot had when returning from Espiritu Santo, and from Guadalcanal until June 1943, when as noted on page 321 they could fly direct back from Guadalcanal.

After turning west, the squadron pilots saw the view below. This shows the pass, and the one-lane road to Thio, page 247. Eric found the exact location of the photo on the bottom right of page 264, and retook this as shown at right.



The view when flying east through the pass, and reaching Thio, for points north, is shown below.
*On behalf of all the Thirsty 13th relatives, a big **THANK YOU** to Eric for all of these amazing photos!*





b. 1943-1944: Espiritu Santo Aerial Photos

When corresponding with Eric (prior section) in New Caledonia he mentioned he would like to get an aerial photo of Luganville, near the second 13th TCS camp, Espiritu Santo (pages 364). I, too, had wanted such a photo, because of the excerpt on page 366 that “Buttons,” as the area was called, “was a city unto itself, with a population of 100,000...there were movie houses, mess halls, ball fields, beer halls, and the longest bar in the Pacific.” Pilot Leonard on page 402 stated “We would go over there to watch movies and get ice cream.”

I contacted the National Archives, and on November 11 obtained photos from two passes over the area October 16, 1943, prior to the squadron moving there November 2, and from three passes December 29, 1943. One of the October 16 passes (photos combined, differing shading) is shown above. Palm tree plantations extend from the 13th TCS camp on page 368 all the way to Luganville, and north. The center of town, shown below, was a large Navy supply base.

Fuselier (Motor Pool, 6/42-9/45): “We [the squadron] would go over once a week to the Navy Base. I think on Wednesday, in the afternoon; a 2.5 ton truck, 15-20 people, would go.

“Most would go over to buy toiletries - soap, shaving cream. And t-shirts - and we’d wear them after work, after we showered, and you could wear them to the mess hall. The army didn’t have t-shirts; they had the regular undershirts [tank-tops]. The Navy had the t-shirt, like an undershirt with short sleeves, and a v-neck. Mostly when we went there that’s what we bought. We called it a Navy store. It was like a Navy PX, a grocery store. I didn’t go that much myself, because they didn’t have much other than toilet articles.

“The road that passed our camp, it went through the woods, it didn’t travel along the water; you would just see woods on either side. Every now and then there was a clearing.”

Fuselier said he never went here at other times; Windham, Judd and Sackett did not remember going here; it might require a pass to go off base; there were baseball fields in the camp, and it was a long walk (3 miles to the area below), so I now expect the bars and movie houses here were mostly for the Navy, and that other than the weekly truck trip, visits here were rare.





13th TCS Camp Area

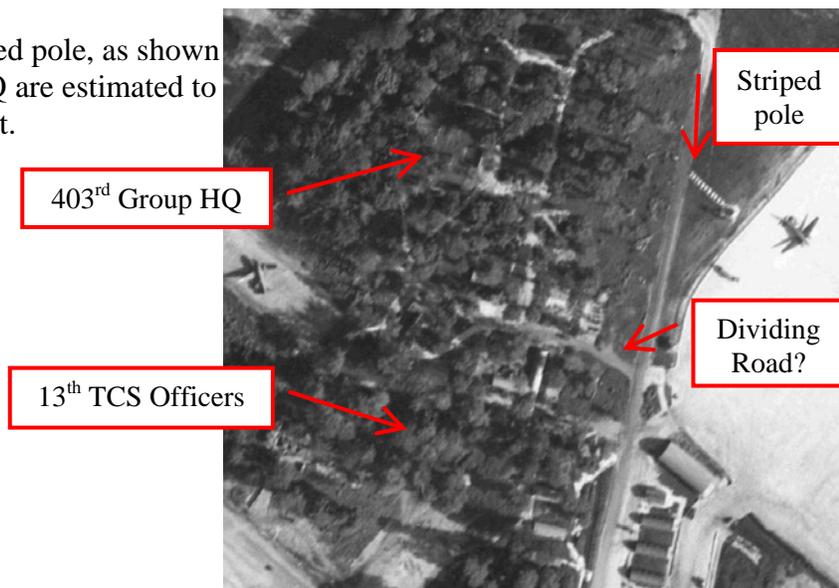
The camp and airfield image on page 413 is from October 14, 1943, before the squadron moved in November 2. Above is the view December 29, 1943, with the 13th TCS here. Notably:

- Aircraft parking areas have been expanded in the areas here labeled A, B, and C. The clearing of C was noted on page 420, and so we now know this was done in Nov-Dec.
- On this day there were 27 B-24 bombers parked around and east of the camp area.
- 13 C-47s are parked on the left of the photo, 1 more in a revetment, and 3 in area B above. The 63rd was based here at this time, and some C-47s may be the 63rd's.
- Due to trees and shadows, it wasn't possible to get more detail on the camp layouts.

The ramp B is impressive, but is assumed to have been for the 403rd Headquarters next to it, and transient aircraft, and rarely used by the squadron, because: a) photos of 13th TCS aircraft show them almost always in the areas around the enlisted men, as described in the book; b) even on this day of overcrowding, the ramp B is being used for only 3 C-47s, and c) Windham stated:

Windham (Motor Pool, 8/42-9/45): "Each plane had its own parking space. All of them parked in the same spot all the time. They never did change them around. Each one of them had their own spot." [Their usual spots are likely those in the book, near the enlisted men.]

Next to the 403rd HQ area was a tall striped pole, as shown at right. The 13th TCS officers' and 403rd HQ are estimated to have been separated by the road noted at right.



c. 1943: Unit Citation Signer Knox had been a Teddy Roosevelt Rough Rider

On September 19, 2014, I was watching the PBS special about the Roosevelts, and the show referred to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. This rang a bell as the signer of the 13th TCS's first Presidential Unit Citation (Navy), on page 294, awarded to all 1942-1943 squadron members, sharing the citation to the Marine Corp 1st Division for Guadalcanal. The PBS show said Knox had been one of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders, in the Battle of San Juan Hill.

d. 1943: Halsey Quote About Eleanor Roosevelt

Halsey said about Eleanor Roosevelt, who the 13th TCS flew on her visit:

"Here is what she did in twelve hours: she inspected two Navy hospitals, took a boat to an officer's rest home and had lunch there, returned and inspected an Army hospital, reviewed the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion (her son Jimmy had been its executive officer), made a speech at a service club, attended a reception, and was guest of honor at a dinner given by General Harmon. When I say that she inspected those hospitals, I don't mean that she shook hands with the chief medical officer, glanced into a sun room and left. I mean that she went into every ward, stopped at every bed, and spoke to every patient: What was his name? How did he feel? Was there anything he needed? Could she take a message home for him? I marveled at her hardihood, both physical and mental. She walked for miles, and she saw patients who were grievously and gruesomely wounded. But I marveled most at their expressions as she leaned over them. It was a sight I will never forget. She alone accomplished more good than any other person who passed through my area." "The suffering of the men," Eleanor said, "left a mark from which I think I shall never be free."

The Wikipedia page on Eleanor Roosevelt has the photo of her in front of the 13th TCS C-47 "Our Eleanor," and so I added a reference footnote to the Wikipedia page: "Washburne, Seth. *The Thirsty 13th: The U.S. Army Air Corps 13th Troop Carrier Squadron*, pp. 354, Thirsty 13th LLC, New York, NY, 2011. [ISBN 978-0-615-39675-0](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9780615396750). Mrs. Roosevelt landed at Tontouta Air Base in New Caledonia, on September 14, 1943, on a four engine LB-30, and transferred to this C-47 to fly 30 miles to the smaller Magenta Aerodrome near the capital of Nouméa to visit a hospital. She made the same flight August 25, 1943, on a C-47 with serial number 41-18582, when she agreed to become an honorary member of the 13th Troop Carrier Squadron, which flew her, and so for this second visit they named this aircraft, 41-19499, "Our Eleanor," with nose art of a globe centered over the Pacific. The official reason for the trip was to inspect Red Cross installations, and so she is wearing the Red Cross uniform." As of November 17, this footnote was still included there. This helps get the squadron mentioned in another place.

e. 1943 – 1946: I Troop Carrier Command

The book on page 16 refers to the formation of the Troop Carrier Command on April 30, 1942, at Stout Field, in Indianapolis, Ind. The full name should included a Roman numeral one in front of this: the "I TCC." This unit drew graduates of the AAF Training Command two-engine flight schools, plus navigators, radio operators, and aerial engineers (crew chiefs) and formed the 5-man crews. It assigned them training in towing gliders, and in drop missions.

f. 1943-1945: LaLonde Diary Additional Quotes

On December 23, 2010, the son, Bob, of 13th TCS Crew Chief LaLonde emailed me entries he had typed up from his father's diary, and these provide eight great quotes in the book. On July 8, 2014, three days after I sent the July update, I was delighted to receive another email from Bob, indicating he recently found the diary, had typed more of it, and wanted to share these, too, with everyone. **These letters include great additional details, below, both about U.S. training and life in the squadron.**

1941-43: LaLonde's U.S. Training

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, letter 4/17/41): "Inducted into the Army, passed examination in Detroit, Board 30. Sent to Livingston, La. Two days and tonight by train, very poor eats. Bread and canned willie [corned-beef hash]. Passed through terribly poor country. Arrived tired and disgusted, slept in tent. **[LaLonde was sent to participate in the Louisiana Maneuvers, a series of U.S. Army exercises involving 400,000 men, Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley.]**

"Started hikes and drilling, much hiking in real mud, lots of snakes here, coral, moccasin, and tarantula spiders the size of a saucer."

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, letter 5/1/41): "Went on two-day maneuvers, slept on ground first time after long hike, had ride in car truck in a blackout, terribly dusty, hot days, black night (no moon), plenty of wood ticks, eat you up. 7 men killed, 4 auto accidents, 3 snake bites. **Killed 3 rattlers, small ones, one tarantula.**"

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, letter estimated 5/41): "Went on a 5 day maneuver, never had regular eats [during these Louisiana Maneuvers the Army developed the C-ration], walked all night and day through a pitch black swamp, followed an old railroad bed and a light wire, built bridges, fell in mud, not a chance to wash, marched for 15 miles, dead tired.

"Got paid \$29.44 after 51 days, broke, had KP on payday - some fun, work, work, work, but really ate my fill for a change. Stayed in camp, shot craps, lost \$5.00, no dice talk my language. Had a sober up hike of 10 miles in the heat for the boys. They sure took it."

(Undated): "Maneuvers #2 – **worst night and day I ever spend in my life**, marching through swamps and in a desert in the day time."

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, letter 1/6/42), at Air Corps Training School, **Chanute Field, IL**: "Here going to school in carburetors; almost finished with school; 3 more phases, then where I don't know. Almost began to like Army life, it's not so bad.

"**Glad I am not in A Company 126 Infantry** [a Michigan Army National Guard unit also on the Louisiana Maneuvers; perhaps his first unit]. **The Air Corp is a lot better.**"

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, letter 2/24/42), at **Daniel Field, Augusta, Ga.:** "Graduated from mechanics school and sent here. A beautiful camp on a hill overlooking Augusta, a fair town with no nightlife, girls, or anything to do. We have about 50 airplanes here of the observation type, a few B-18's also, some Cubs."

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, letter no date), Camp William, Wis.: “Beautiful up here. Lots of trees and nice country. Am working on the line and like it. **Have about 40 airplanes here, all DC-3’s or airlines ships.**

“Finally made First A.M. \$114.00.” [Airplane Mechanic, with the rank of corporal]

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary no date), TWA School, Kansas City, Mo.:
“Been here too long, two weeks, a poor school. We are its first class and a bad set up at the barracks, too many roll calls, etc. KC is a nice town, lots of girls and things to do. Have car now, may get around a little more. Go to school nites and its poor.”

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary 10/15/42), Knob Noster Air Base [70 miles east of Kansas City]: “Made Sgt. Sept. 1st. Here on a new Field, very dusty, working on #4, nice ship, just back from school, not so hot, glad to be working again. Today about 5 PM [C-47] #1 crashed. Think about that, 8 men were killed. “Puts” ship, and he was just relieved.”

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary 12/22/42): Del Valle Air Base, Austin, Texas:

“At new air base, nice, new, and clean.

“Am Crew Chief on the #18 Elsie, a nice C-50 in fair shape, like it a lot, the work is ok.

“Now am a Staff Sgt, would like to make Tech.”

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary 3/1/43): “Made Technical Sgt.”

This advancement in the U.S. during the two years from 4/17/41 to 3/1/43, from private to the top enlisted rank of tech sergeant, was great for LaLonde, but Table of Organization No. 1-317 for all troop carrier squadrons allowed only 16 Aerial Engineers with this rank of Tech Sgt., as shown on page 53, and so LaLonde and others coming in prevented men already overseas in the 13th TCS from getting promoted, as bemoaned by at least one overseas mechanic.

1943-1945: LaLonde Overseas with the Thirsty 13th

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary 11/1/43): “Just moved up to Espiritu Santo [squadron moved 10/23-11/2, page 367]. **Living in a nice cool barracks.**

“Came back from a trip D.S. [Detached Service] at Guadalcanal for 10 days. Flew to Munda or Villia La Villia [Vella Lavella, page 360] twice a day; brought up men and cargo, brought back fighter pilots. Some ships were wrecked, men came in, killed in B 25. Lots of wrecks. Jap planes also. Saw some whales and Jap Zeros in water. Lots of sunken or beached boats. Flew 92 hours combat time this month. Eligible for Air Medal.

“**Rainy season is on, rain all night, drizzle during the day time.**”

(Undated): “**Midnight in New Hebrides. The bats are screeching in the trees.**”

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary 11/26/43): “**Had a nice Thanksgiving dinner. Turkey and all the trimmings.** Had a party seeing the fellows go back to the States, six (6) ships leaving, McNeil going also. [The order for this rotation, on page 408, was dated December 10, two weeks after this party, and so apparently they knew of it in advance.]

“Sweet Leilani needs some new engines; a good crate.

“**We have a new Commanding Officer, H. N. Wilson, a tough mug by first impressions.**” [H.F. Wilson, page 411.]

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary, undated, from Biak): “Had air raids and some holes in the ship [March 22, 1945, page 629]. Wacs on the island, just get in your hair.”

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, letter Saturday, 4/7/45): “Saw a good show tonight then another basketball game. Had a Coke and cigar. Saturday night we had two basketball games, one was a clown game [page 576] all dressed up and playing screwy all time, the other was for the championship of the group [Page 574, the score listed there as 50-55]. We played our officers, and what a game that was. We were tied at 45 at the end, so an extra period was played. We won 50-54, some real shooting, and a large crowd went mad.

“As its Saturday night we have 12 beer chits and an orchestra in the club, so it’s the usual party. Stag except for about a dozen Wacs. Wish you were here so we could have a dance to the nice music that I hear coming over the PA. **Some war we are fighting out here: beer, games, parties, clubs,** and of course the work.

“We have a different type of airplane now [C-46], much bigger, and lots more trouble. So we are really kept busy.

“They have a star of a USO show. Friend of one of the fellows was singing some old favorites, and he's really good. The music really gets me, nice and slow and dreamy. I sit here thinking of how nice it would be if only we were together.”

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary, 8/1/45): “Biak. **745 crashed, saw it.** Foote, Harrington and Masterantonio [Foote, Thompson, and Mastrantonio, page 690; this provides the C-46 number: #44-77745]. Went to funeral [On pg 694 he is the pall bearer on right].

“237 cracked up at Danowan. Both ships in my flight. Prichard feels bad, so do I.”

[This at Tanauan, as described on page 685. He confirms the serial number 43-15237, as estimated on page 685. Interesting that the aircraft, too, were assigned to the Flights A-H.]

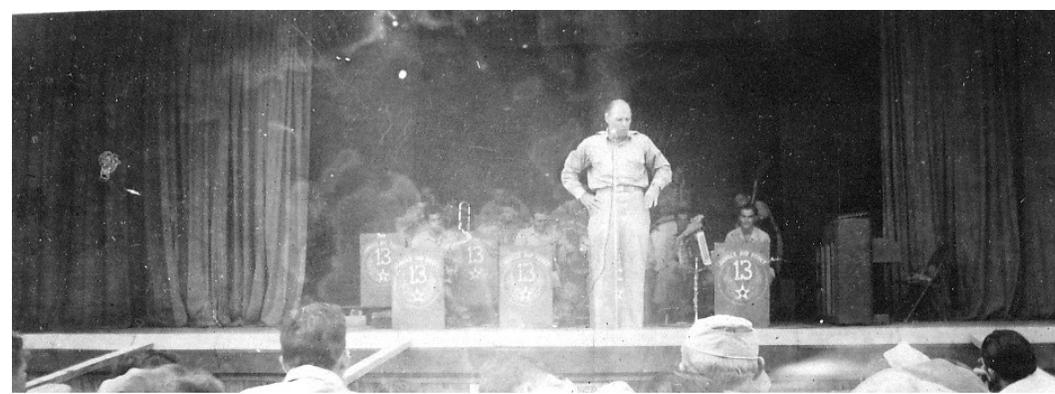
LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary, 9/19/45): “**Here on a Dutch ship *Tabinta*** [page 726] on my way home at last. Out four days now and about 5000 miles from US. Hope to be in USA on 3 October and out of the Army about the 10th. I am pulling guard duty. **79 13th men aboard.** About 1000 men on small ship. Really crowded, but the chow is good. I am over being sick and now I have my sea legs. What a relief.”

[On page 725, 4th paragraph, I noted that in May 1945 96 ground enlisted men had enough points to go home, and that some mechanics left June 25. If 17 left, that would match with the 79 here mentioned on the Tabinta. It appears there may have been few or no 13th TCS officers on board. On page 726 I estimated “Most of the squadron returned on the Tabinta,” so this should be corrected to be most of the original enlisted men still serving.]

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45, diary, no date, estimated late 1945): “Received terminal leave pay of \$600. **Should get a \$500 Michigan bonus.**”

About these letters Bob emailed me July 9: “We had a house in the Traverse City area. After my Dad died, my mother needed to sell the house. We moved everything out, or thought we did anyway. One summer day not long after the sale my wife and I were riding our bikes past the house and we decided to meet the new owners. The lady, after realizing who we were, brought out this box of letters which she said she had found in the attic. And, there they were.” So these letters were almost lost forever.

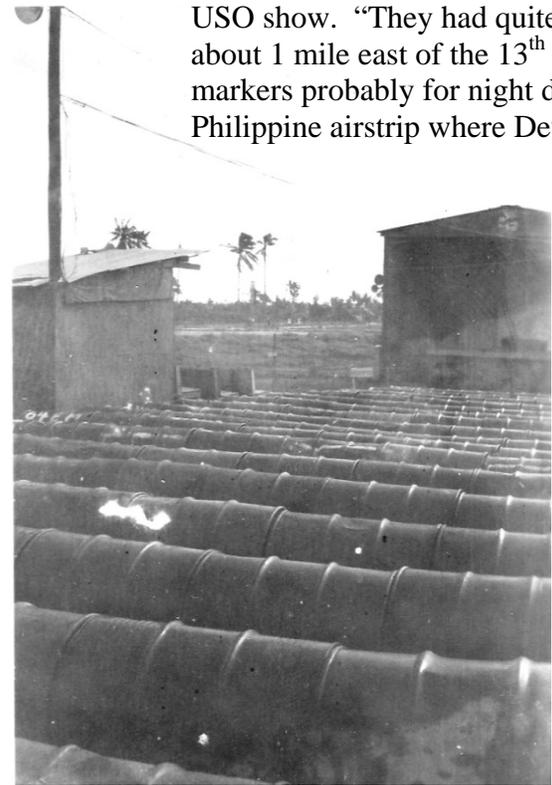
Thank you Bob for sharing these quotes, and so many more.



g. 1945: 64th TCS Crew Chief Photos and Stories

On June 25, Arch Develin, a crew chief in one of the 13th TCS's sister squadrons, the 64th TCS, purchased the book, and mentioned he had some photos. I was back east driving near where he lived in Moorestown, NJ, on August 1, and so stopped by to visit with him, hear some of his stories, and scan his photos.

The photos on this page are from the Philippines. Above left is a "Jungle Air Force 13" band, with Leo Derocher, Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, touring with Bob Hope and Danny Kaye, at a USO show. "They had quite a skit" - Arch. Above right is the view south into the 64th TCS camp, about 1 mile east of the 13th TCS, at Dulag - interesting to me in that it shows the road had white markers probably for night driving. Below left is the 64th TCS theater at Dulag. Others are a Philippine airstrip where Develin landed in C-47 43-49758. The 63rd TCS had 43-49759, page 663.



13th TCS pilot Soderland reviewed the photos on the prior page, and did not recall the Leo Derocher USO show, nor the road markers, so the markers may have been adjacent to only the 64th TCS area. He said the 13th TCS theater was just a screen and coconut tree logs to sit on. He did not see crowds of people come out at landings, usually just a handful. They were not looking for handouts, but instead to trade, e.g. to get a blanket or other items. He found the markings on the plane at right to be odd, because all the C-47s were hospital planes, in that they flew wounded back.



Recollections by the 64th TCS's A. Develin

At right is Seth Washburne visiting Arch Develin August 1, 2014.



Develin (64th TCS Crew Chief, 5?/45 - 46): [Prior to joining:] “I was in Atlantic City for my physical, and I was 8 lbs underweight, so the surgeon told me to buy some bananas, and walk up the boardwalk eating the bananas, and every time I get to a drinking fountain to take a drink. And so I did, and I walked about a mile, and at every fountain you go by, take some water. And when I got back he said “Good.” I had gained the 8 lbs. Then they sent me to Maxwell and weighed-me-in a few days later, and the doctor asked me “Have you been ill?”, because I lost 8 lbs!

“If the plane was older it would be called ‘war weary,’ and it ‘flew on a diagonal,’ meaning the aircraft status form had a diagonal box on it. Some of the older ones never got off the diagonal. We had a war weary.

“[Flying the missions...] You’d get a little tired of [seeing only] water and the weather. Our biggest problem was weather. You’d take off and it was a sunny day, and a half hour later you couldn’t see the wing tips.

“We’d go to Australia to get beer and milk, and fly back at 7,000 feet to keep it cold.

“We weren’t supposed to smoke during takeoff and landing, but when we took off we’d have an Aussie stove with a big flame in back heating the coffee.

“Everyone hated to fly the C-46. It was a big airplane, and there wasn’t enough power. To pull the prop through, we would hit the APU to rotate it. We brought in one once, into the revetment, and it back-fired, and it caught fire and burned to the ground.”

h. 1945: Mt. Mayon in Luzon

Sand (Pilot, 10/44-2/46): “I had never even seen the volcano there [near Clark Air Base, Mt. Pinatubo, low and behind other mountains], and I had flown up that valley to Lingayen.

“[But] Everyone knew about Mt. Mayon [pictured below in 2010]. It was in the southern part of Luzon, and it was on the currency. You could see it for 100 miles away, it came right down to the water; it was quite a sight. I landed at the base of it a couple of times [at Legazpi City, below right]. The top it came to a point, and there was no vegetation near the top.”



Clark Air Base - Luzon, Philippines - December 3, 1946

Parade ground

Operations

Fort Stotsenburg

Numerous aircraft

i. 1946: 13th TCS Locations at Clark Field and Nichols Field

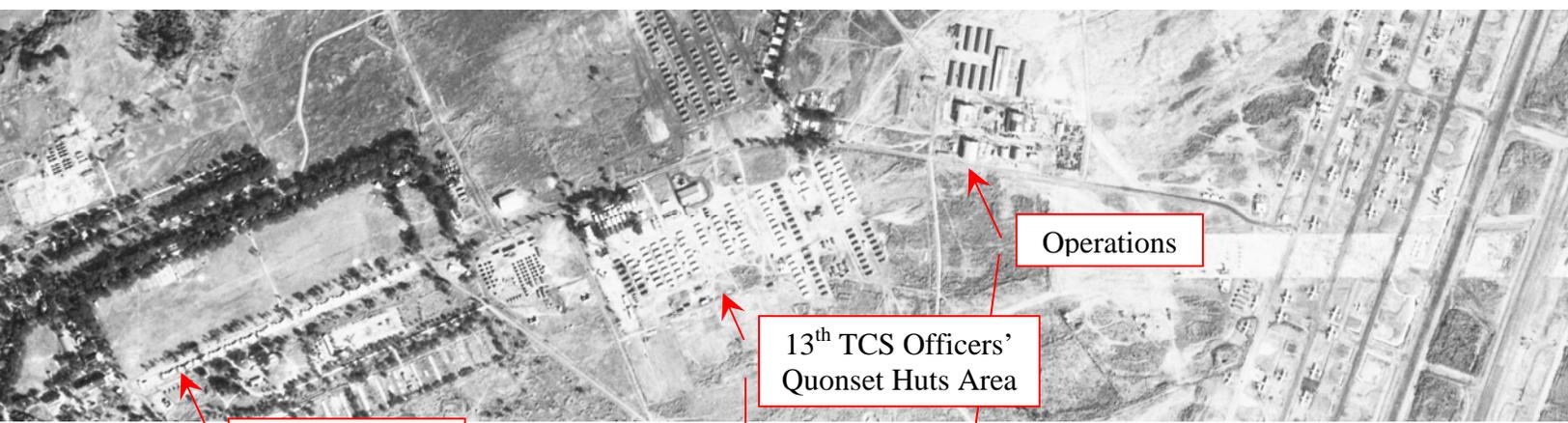
As noted on page 733, the book focused on the original 13th TCS, and so stopped October 31, 1945, when the remaining men and equipment were merged into the 63rd TCS, and that unit renamed the 13th TCS. Yet some men who joined in early 1945, such as pilot Soderland, continued with the squadron well into 1946, so I decided to try and find the squadron barracks and airfield locations at the last two locations, too: Clark Field, to where it moved on January 7, 1946, and Nichols Field, to which it moved June 13, 1946, until inactivated October 15, 1946.

On September 8, 2014, I emailed the National Archives, Cartographic Division, received a reply October 9, ordered the photos the same day, and received them October 28. The best Clark Field photo is above, from December 3, 1946, six months after the squadron left, but probably similar to when the squadron was there (the other photo was from November 12, 1946).

According to Wikipedia, in 1902 American cavalry forces had established quarters near the Angeles railroad station about 50 miles north of Manila. But they found a fertile plain northwest of Angeles, with better grass for their horses, and so in 1903 President Teddy Roosevelt signed an order establishing Fort Stotsenburg there. This eventually became Clark Air Base, but during WWII the original area west of the air field was sometimes still referred to as Fort Stotsenburg.

The parade ground was created at inception, around 1903. The road on the north side of it was named Officers Row. The Commander of the Thirteenth Air Force lived here from July 1946 until Americans vacated the base in 1991, during which time the west end of the Parade Ground was used by the Thirteenth Air Force.

Soderland identified the area on the next page in which, somewhere in this area, were the 13th TCS officers. Officers from other units also lived in this area. It is also shown in 2014.



Soderland (Pilot, 2/45-5/46: “There is a road leading to the west, and the first group of buildings was the air operations, all north of the road; I think [the main Operations building] was the one at the southwest corner. I have a snapshot of the building, and it shows a Japanese Zero parked in front of it [the entrance was on the west side].

“If you continue on west, and south of the road, you come to the main Quonset hut area, a bunch of elongated building sitting at an angle, south of the road. I was in a Quonset hut. There were other units there, in the Quonset huts. I don’t know where the enlisted men were.

“We had nothing to do; we weren’t flying anymore. To get our flight pay we had to fly four hours a month, so we went off to some local field a few miles from Clark Field where we flew L3s (the Grasshopper), and L5s, a little larger, two place.

“It is very possibly there were still 100 of us pilots in the squadron. A small part of them, I would say less than 25%, chose to stay in, and got training, and flew in the C-54s.

“At Clark field, that is where I learned to play bridge. Most of the time we had nothing to do but sit outside our Quonset hut, so most of the time we were inside playing bridge.

“We did walk to the airstrip to look at the airplanes, and I remember looking at the odd airplanes that were parked there, B-29s, and B-17s, not a bunch of them, but one or two.

“We missed the flying; we all missed that. I don’t know if I ever flew off of the field there. My flying was over by the time I got there.

“Adjacent to Clark Field was the old Army Field Fort Stotsenburg, and that is where we would go to swim in the pool. That was the first and only swimming pool I saw out there [in the Pacific]. We would take a jeep, but it was not very far.

“I wouldn’t say we asked for or got a jeep very often, but maybe every couple of weeks, and usually what we did was drive down to Manila, and went to the bars to see the girls.

“As you headed toward Manila, Angeles was the first place you came to, and I do remember stopping there one day on the way to Manila and getting a great steak dinner, in a restaurant run by locals, but the food was provided by the military, so I think you had to be military to eat there.”

Sand (Pilot, 10/44-2/46): That [Clark Field] was the first time I lived in a Quonset hut, and there was one Quonset hut that had a basketball court in it. One had a library in it.

“Our squadron was picked from all the squadrons to start flying just like an airline, and got some C-54s. I flew a little courier, L-5, or some light plane down to Manila, they just put documents in a folder, and I took them down there. There were two fields in Manila [including Nichols], and we used to land at both of them.

“For a while I was assigned to go out and start the planes sitting there. We would run them enough to warm ’em up and recharge the batteries, and check the things you could check while it was just sitting there. But eventually you couldn’t start them anymore.”

The 2014 satellite image shows the parade ground still there, and many of the same roads. Soderland and Sand did not recall which specific Quonset huts the squadron occupied.

Nichols Field

The National Archives photos of Nichols Field were from April and May 1945, one year before the squadron moved there June 13, 1946, so it likely was more developed in mid-1946. Their best aerial photo is below. I am not in touch with any 13th TCS men who were there, so cannot identify the camp or parking areas here.

The 2014 satellite image at right shows the SW runway has been lengthened, the NW runway shortened, and the upper runway removed.



Nichols Field - Luzon, Philippines – May 5, 1945





2. History-Related Activities

a. Second Search for the Lana T

On October 18, 2014, I received an email from Jean-Paul Mugnier of Fortunes de Mer, the New Caledonia association that in May found the PBY engines near the Lana T. He wrote:

“I have just returned from Santo from a trip with 3 FDM friends on Beijaflor catamaran to search for a ship wreck and Lana T C-47 near Grand Passage, a 300 Nm trip from Nouméa. But we aborted our search, passing near the spot of Lana T on the 4 of October, due to strong wind, 25 to 30 kts, and rough seas. It was a pity for all of us. [We instead went] direct to Santo, at another 300 Nm. All my regrets, but we will come back for sure ! - JP Mugnier

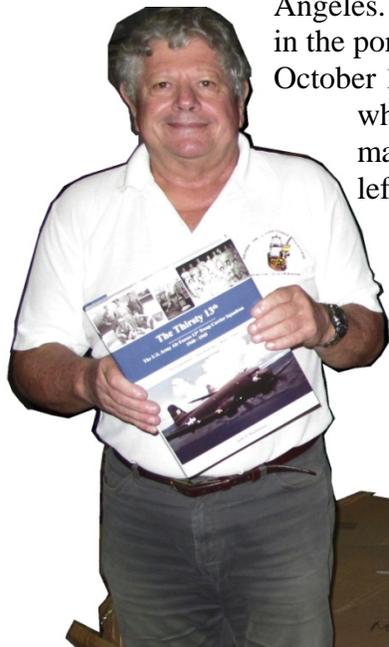
On November 12 he again emailed me with the photo above from October 4, showing a strong wind blowing the tops of the white caps. He stated he hopes to get back as soon as possible, and also that a museum sponsor has a very high definition satellite picture of the reef, and perhaps his associates could spot some remains of the Lana T from this image, too.

b. 96 Books Shipped to New Caledonia

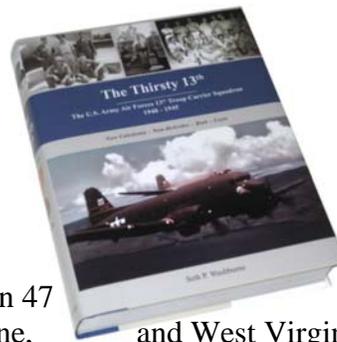
As an expression of thanks to Fortunes de Mer Calédonnie for their wonderful discovery in May 2014 of the engines of the PBY that rescued Thirsty 13th Captain Petty (as described in the July 2014 newsletter), I offered to donate copies of the “The Thirsty 13th” book to their association, to be sold to raise money for future expeditions.



The US Postal Service rate to mail 96 books to New Caledonia was \$3,043, \$32 per book. Instead I found an ocean freight company, and had the warehouse in Michigan prepare the pallet shown above, with 16 boxes of 6 books each, 96 total books. The pallet left Ypsilanti, Michigan, by truck on September 4, to Elk Grove, Illinois. It was put in a container, and this on a ship which sailed from Chicago, out the St. Lawrence Seaway, and through the Panama Canal to Los Angeles. The container was put on another ship, which was delayed due to congestion in the port, and departed around October 4 to Auckland, New Zealand, where it arrived October 18. The books were transferred to a third ship bound for New Caledonia, where they arrived November 5. After being sorted out at the port, and payment made, the books were delivered November 18. Jean-Paul emailed me the photo at left of himself with the book and pallet.



One book sent to New Caledonia August 3, 2013 cost \$56 for shipping, but these 96 were shipped for \$1,039, only \$10.83 per book. This will create a point from where the books may be sold in the Pacific. They are now available at both the Musée Maritime de Nouvelle-Calédonie, 42 Avenue James Cook, and the Musée de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, 14, avenue Paul Doumer, to spread the story of the Thirsty 13th.



c. Thirsty 13th Book Update

Where the Thirsty 13th Story is Told

As shown at right, the Thirsty 13th story is now told in 47 states and the District of Columbia – all but Alaska, Maine, and West Virginia. If you know anyone in these states, please consider sending a book to them!

Almost 25% of the 606 books distributed in the US are in Texas, reflecting that there are many veterans and member families here, plus I have shared the book with many people I meet who help on the restoration projects – keeping a box in the trunk of my car. The book on page 45 shows that in August 1943, the 152 enlisted men were mostly from OH (17), PA (14), MA (11), NC (11), and NY (10), with only 5 from TX, and 2 from CA. Now in 2011-2014, after TX, CA, and FL, the main areas for relatives of the Thirsty 13th are still OH, NY, and PA. The book is in 11 foreign countries, on five continents (excluding Africa), as shown in the table below.

Three sales have occurred on Amazon.com.

d. Distribution to Air Force Airlift Units

The best place to spread the squadron story is the many Air Force libraries around the county, and therefore on September 2, 2014, I called many Air Force libraries, and sent donated books to those listed below, that specialize in troop transport. Maxwell AFB wrote: “This awesome piece of work is a welcome addition...” I plan to send it to the other air force and air national guard locations soon as well.

e. Shipping Cost Reduced

Recently I started using Media Mail, and it is a flat rate of \$5.80 to anywhere in the U.S., and arrives in a few days, about 1-2 days later than UPS. Two books is \$9.02, four books for \$14.50. I thought Media Mail took two weeks and could not be tracked, but it is quick and traceable. I wish I had used this all the time to save us all money, and apologize for using UPS. I also almost always lost money on the prior \$12 for S&H, because UPS averaged \$14.25, \$15.69 with my warehouse’s Pick and Pack fee.

The warehouse charges \$1.44 “pick and pack” fees per book, for \$7.24 total with media mail, and I am going to round this up by \$0.75, so the shipping cost will now be \$8 for one book, \$12 for two, \$16 for 3, \$20 for 4.

Book Distribution

| | |
|-------|-----|
| 1 TX | 145 |
| 2 CA | 64 |
| 3 OH | 50 |
| 4 FL | 39 |
| 5 NY | 27 |
| 6 PA | 25 |
| 7 VA | 16 |
| 8 MN | 15 |
| 9 AZ | 13 |
| 10 MD | 13 |
| 11 NC | 13 |
| 12 OK | 13 |
| 13 GA | 12 |
| 14 IA | 11 |
| 15 NE | 11 |
| 16 CO | 10 |
| 17 MS | 10 |
| 18 IL | 8 |
| 19 MI | 8 |
| 20 TN | 8 |
| 21 AL | 7 |
| 22 MO | 7 |
| 23 NJ | 7 |
| 24 KS | 6 |
| 25 HI | 5 |
| 26 IN | 5 |
| 27 LA | 5 |
| 28 MA | 5 |
| 29 WI | 5 |
| 30 CT | 4 |
| 31 DE | 4 |
| 32 NV | 4 |
| 33 WA | 4 |
| 34 AR | 3 |
| 35 KY | 3 |
| 36 ND | 3 |
| 37 OR | 3 |
| 38 SC | 3 |
| 39 ID | 2 |
| 40 KA | 2 |
| 41 SD | 2 |
| 42 UT | 2 |
| 43 VT | 2 |
| 44 MT | 1 |
| 45 NH | 1 |
| 46 NM | 1 |
| 47 WY | 1 |
| 48 AK | 0 |
| 49 ME | 0 |
| 50 WV | 0 |
| DC | 2 |

Foreign Countries

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| 1 United Kingdom | 19 |
| 2 Venezuela | 4 |
| 3 New Caledonia | 3 |
| 4 Australia | 2 |
| 5 Canada | 2 |
| 6 New Zealand | 2 |
| 7 Germany | 1 |
| 8 Indonesia | 1 |
| 9 Italy | 1 |
| 10 Netherlands | 1 |
| 11 Papua New Guinea | 1 |

Air Force Bases with the Thirsty 13th Book in Their Library

| Library | Base | ST |
|---|------------------------|----|
| Dover AFB Libraries (4) | Dover AFB | DE |
| MacDill AFB Library | * MacDill AFB | FL |
| John L. Throckmorton Library, and the Marquat Memorial Learning Resource Center | * Fort Bragg | NC |
| Muir S. Fairchild Research Information Center | Maxwell AFB | AL |
| ILC | * Wright Patterson AFB | OH |
| Scott AFB Library | Scott AFB | IL |
| Little Rock Air Force Base Library | Little Rock AFB | AR |
| McConnell AFB Library | McConnell AFB | KA |
| Grand Forks AFB Library | Grand Forks AFB | ND |
| 21FSS/FSDL | Peterson AFB | CO |
| Mitchell Memorial Library | Travis AFB | CA |
| 92FSS/FSDL | Fairchild AFB | WA |

* = Thirsty 13th bases



3. Members and Relatives

a. Selling Books at CAF Event August 30 with 1945 13th TCS Pilot Ken Soderland

The Commemorative Air Force – Dallas Wing, has its hangar at Lancaster Airport, in Lancaster, Texas, 14 miles south of Dallas. On August 30 they had their annual “Warbirds on Parade” event, a static display of WWII aircraft, with rides after 4 p.m. This year the crowd at this uncontrolled airport was treated to many low passes by a Nanchang CJ-6 (a 1960s Chinese trainer shown above left) belonging to the Cold War Air Museum, also on the airport, and by T-6s, and other planes. The CAF’s B-24 – the same type of plane that transported the Thirsty 13th’s first mechanics and navigators (pages 123-124) also landed, above right. Note the bucolic setting for this airport. As I did in 2013, I asked if I could set up a table to sell Thirsty 13th books and did so. I offered them at 50% off, \$25, sold six books, and, since the CAF has been helpful to me since I have been based here, I donated 100% of the proceeds, \$150, to their CAF wing.

Thirsty 13th pilot Soderland, who lives in Houston, and contributed greatly to the book, emailed me a week before that he planned to be in the DFW area visiting his daughter, and so I invited him to attend, and help sell books, and his daughter dropped him off there. He is pictured below with his daughter, in front of a Stearman, which he said was the first type of airplane he ever flew, in Army training. This museum also has a BT-13, what Ken flew next in training, and an R4D, similar to a C-47. (My Thirsty 13th polo shirt was a 2011 Christmas gift from Ronn Edwards – thanks again, Ronn)

Ken came over to my hangar here to see the wrecked Billie – the first squadron related person to visit here. He then came by my apartment for a dinner that included corn on the cob, and let me show him some of my computer files for the Thirsty 13th. At 9 p.m. we walked to get snow cones nearby, and then I drove him back to his daughter’s place. It was an enjoyable day.



b. Losses in Action

Arthur R. Driedger, Jr.
August 4, 1921 – September 3, 2014
ONE FOR THE AGES



On September 4, 2014, I was saddened to receive an email from the daughter Carolyn of Thirsty 13th Radio Operator Arthur Driedger, that he passed away September 3, 2014. Art is pictured above around May 1945 at Biak, and in June 2008 when I met him in Reading, Pa.

My own experience with Art is that soon after I started my Thirsty 13th research in May 2008, and bought “Two Years,” I called him and we spoke. He said he planned to attend an air show June 7, 2008, in Reading, Pa., and I was planning to attend this with Thirsty 13th pilot Wib Creelman, who lived in Allentown, Pa., and so we decided to meet there. They were the first two squadron members I met.

Wib and I met Art at the air show, and Art showed me a large notebook full of currency he collected overseas. He graciously handed me a hardcover notebook for me to keep with more than 100 pages of stories he had written in the winter of 1998, and dozens more pages of notes.

I spent about 30 hours scanning all of the pages and creating Microsoft Word files of all the stories, 101 pages single-spaced. At that point I was primarily interested in exactly where the squadron had been, and dates it moved from place to place, and so the stories, because I did not have a framework for them, were of little interest, and I forgot I had them.

In December 2010, after working 7 days a week for 1.5 years on the book and having a framework, I realized I had many facts but wanted more stories, more meat on the bones. I called Art with a question, and he said “Oh, you have this in the write-up I gave you.” I had forgotten about the write-up, and opened it up, and was completely amazed. Now all of the stories made sense. I added 30 more pages to the book when I added Art’s stories. They are incredibly well-written, funny, e.g. those on 453-455, and an enormous treasure.

One coincidence was that Art wrote the story about the first landing on a guerilla strip on page 622, and I noticed similarities with photos Maguire’s family provided, and it turned out these went together. Art didn’t know about the photos, and the Maguire’s didn’t know the story. It was great to put these two together for the first time.

As shown in the July 2014 update, page 19, Art has more references in the book than anyone else, with 76, and Art’s are almost all stories, rather than photos, so are even better. Art also wrote about combat time (page 485), the search for King (page 504), taking a mess cook flying (page 676), the squadron breaking up (page 729), and so much more. I called Art many, many times for more information, and he was always eager to help, very polite, and friendly.

All of the relatives of the Thirsty 13th, and American History itself, owe a HUGE THANK YOU to Arthur Driedger. THANK YOU ART! May every blessing attend you.

d. New Contact

On November 13 I was contacted for the first time by the son of radio operator Paul M. Bruce, who found the website. It is always exciting to get the story to another related family.

4. Conclusions

Once again, through the kindness of others, contributions have been made to add to the history of the U.S. Army 13th Troop Carrier Squadron. The story has continued to spread, to libraries on many military bases, the museums in New Caledonia, and through other venues.

Thank you for your interest in the Thirsty 13th.

Seth P. Washburne
(212) 289-1506
sethpw1@gmail.com

At right: Emboss from John Cairns' reunion stationery:

