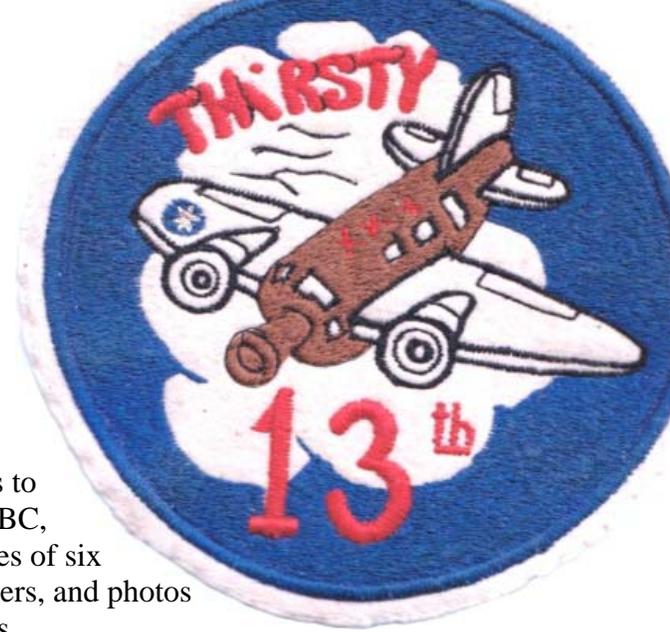


# May 2017 Newsletter



## Western US Scanning Trip

On April 28, 2017, I began a 9-day journey, from Dallas to Las Vegas, San Francisco, Sacramento, Spokane, Kelowna BC, Seattle, and Phoenix. I visited one original member, relatives of six members, and three sites. I scanned hundreds of letters, orders, and photos and heard stories. Included herein are a fraction of the items.

I apologize that this letter is 24 pages and 13 MB, twice as long and twice the size I prefer, but felt it was best to present all of the highlights from this trip at once.

Thank you for your interest in The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>.

Seth P. Washburne, Squadron Historian  
May 30, 2017

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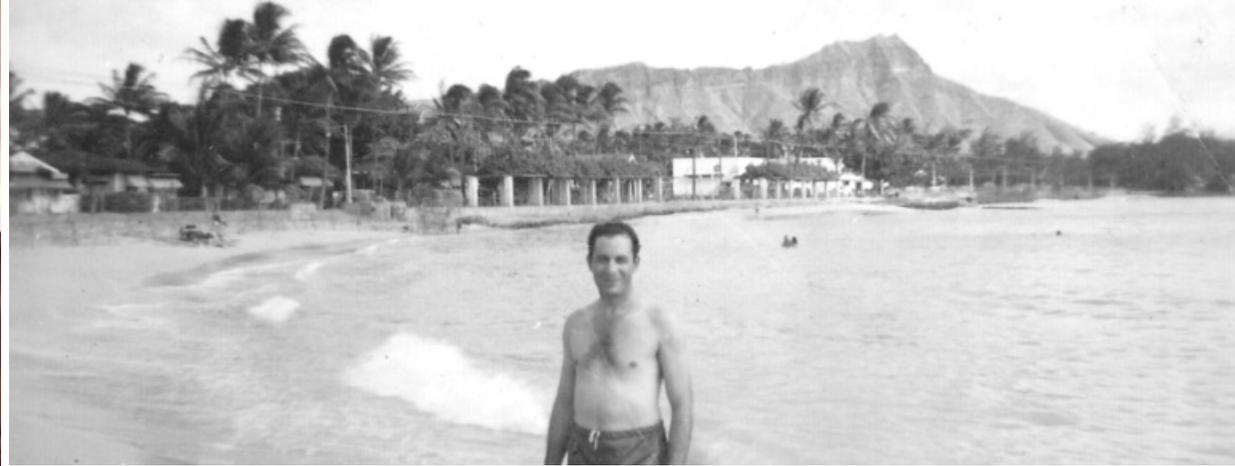
This is the newsletter for the U.S. Army Air Corps 13<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 1940-1946, nicknamed “The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>.” This is prepared by Seth P. Washburne, the son of John C. Washburne, navigator 11/42-7/43. Please direct any comments to him at: (212) 289-1506, sethgw1@gmail.com, or 5200 Meadowcreek Drive, Apt. 2060, Dallas, TX 75248.

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

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To enlarge the PDF to fill the width of your screen, press the CTRL key and “+” at the same time.

Please click the hand symbol to make it easier to scroll down.



## 1. Additional History

### a. 1942-1943: Items of Jack D. Alexander, Pilot, 7/42-12/43

On May 5, 2017, I visited the daughter, Jackie, of 1942-43 pilot Jack Alexander. He was one of the first 10 staff sergeant pilots, and a co-pilot on the first flight to the South Pacific.

Above left is Alexander and his wife, Hazel, for whom he named the right side of his plane "Pudgie" (page 107 in the book), despite her daughter saying she was always very thin. Above is master sergeant Rinaldi on Waikiki. He is not listed on the crews on page 114, but apparently went over with the first planes. This is opposite the Moana Hotel, suggesting the crew may have stayed here. On the left is a barbed wire fence that was set up on the beach to thwart an invasion.

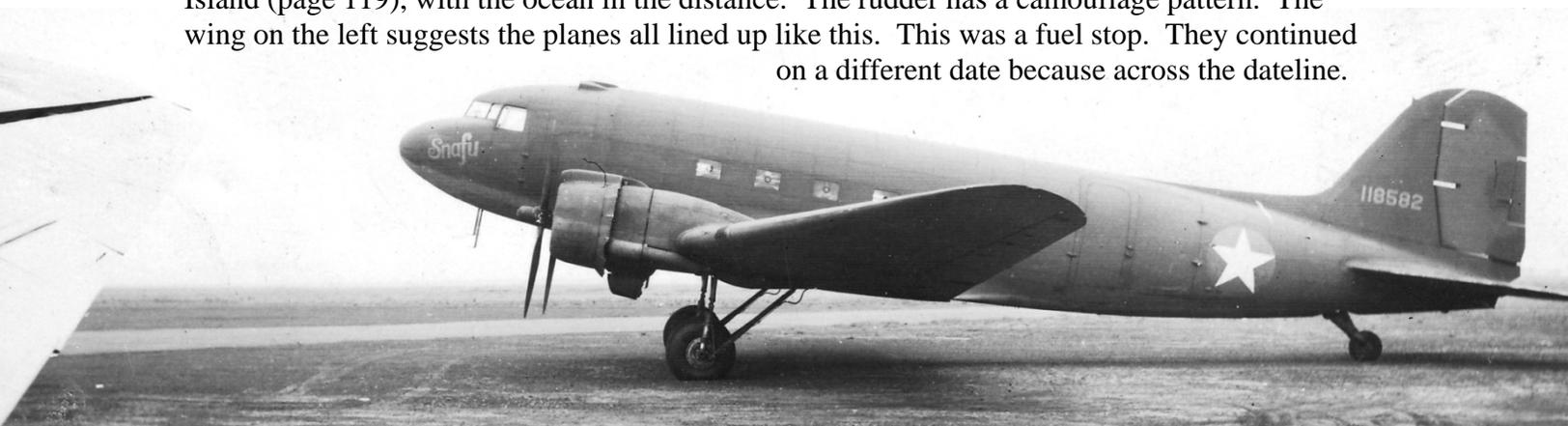
Alexander's flight log for October, at right, lists 107 flight hours. He relocated from the Sacramento Air Depot to Hamilton Field October 1, vs. pilot Bergstrom did on October 2 (page 41).

On October 9 he landed at Plaine des Gaiacs (PDG, page 133), then flew locally 1 week. On the 16<sup>th</sup> he flew south to Tontouta (TAB, page 148), then to New Hebrides (Buttons) for the night. His first landing on Guadalcanal (Cac) was October 17. He returned there October 18, and spent the night October 21. As shown on page 158, Japan sent fighters and bombers to Guadalcanal on these days. His runs which included Guadalcanal were coded as combat time.

He was a co-pilot on the longer flights, but flew left seat in New Caledonia between PDG and TAB. After being in New Caledonia 17 days, he flew to Auckland October 26 for two days.

1	CP	T	1:45	SAD-Hamilton
3	CP	T	1:45	Hamilton-Local
3	CP	A	2:05	Hamilton-Local 1
4	CP	T	14:15	Hamilton-Hickam
6	CP	T	6:30	Hickam-Xmas
7	CP	T	6:00	Xmas-Canton
8	CP	T	8:30	Canton-Mandi
9	CP	T	6:10	Mandi-PDG
13	I	A	1:10	PDG-Local
14	I	T	2:00	PDG-Local
15	P	T	1:30	PDG-Local
16	CP	T-5	1:00	PDG-TAB
16	I	C	3:45	TAB-Buttons
17	CP	C	6:05	Buttons-Cac-Buttons
18	CP	C	7:10	Buttons-Cac-in flight
19	CP	C	6:45	In flight-But-TAB
21	CP	C	6:00	TAB-Buttons-Cactus
22	CP	C	7:40	Cac-But-TAB-PDG
25	P	T	2:00	PDG-TAB-PDG
24	CP	T	1:30	PDG-TAB-PDG
26	CP	T	7:55	PDG-Auckland
28	CP	T	7:30	Auckland-TAB-PDG
29	P	T	1:45	PDG-TAB-PDG

The photo below of Snafu is estimated to be while flying to the South Pacific, on Canton Island (page 119), with the ocean in the distance. The rudder has a camouflage pattern. The wing on the left suggests the planes all lined up like this. This was a fuel stop. They continued on a different date because across the dateline.





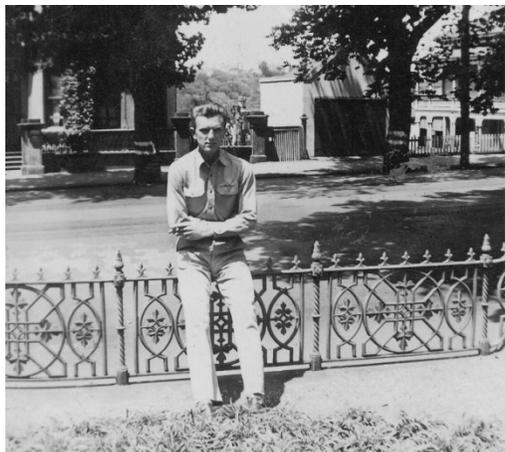
Alexander had the first photo I have seen of original radio operator James Stanley Stratton, above left, on the left, with Watts, at PDG. He flew over on the Lana T.

*Blankinship, Washburn & Jack*

For the first time since October 2010 I found a photo of my dad, John C. Washburne, above center, on the left, with pilots Blankinship and Jack Alexander. My dad was a navigator who joined November 6, 1942, and has a case at his feet with a map rolled up. They don't have patches on their jackets so this is before March 1943, and estimated at Tontouta Air Base. Above right are S/Sgt pilots Farmer and Bernard, their jackets with aircrew wings.

Below are Alexander and Blankinship outside the San Remo Boarding house at 3 Lower Symonds St., Auckland, below right (from the Museum of Auckland, later, without the fence), showing where these enlisted men stayed in Auckland. Bottom left are Vaughn, Bernard and Farmer by the Queen Victoria statue in Albert Park, then Bernard, Merriott and Vaughn at the Royal Hotel on Victoria Street. Pilot Bernard at that time was out-ranked by crew chief Vaughn.

Bottom right are Alexander and pilot Walter L. Conard in Suva, Fiji, in front of the Grand Pacific Hotel. This is "The Suva Hotel" where Moritz went for the dinner (on page 320) celebrating finding lifeboat survivors. It was built in 1914, and is still open today.





**b. 1943-1944: Photos and Stories of Eugene G. Brown, Pilot, 2/43-2/44**

On April 29, 2017 I interviewed pilot Gene Brown and scanned his photos. The book (on page 64) notes the squadron had 10 staff sergeant pilots when it flew overseas, and I was surprised to learn that Brown, too, was a staff sergeant pilot, as was Abernathy. He smiled as he said: “Then they made us flight officers, but no one knew what that was.”

He is shown above left at Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco, from where he departed. Above center is in Hawaii. Above right is estimated as Canton Island (the diagonal line is a crease in the photo), with signs “Officers Quarters” and “Hotel Astor.”

Brown (Pilot, 2/43-2/44): “We got the airplane in Long Beach, met Abernathy, flew to Travis, [then Hamilton], then Hawaii. [When flying to Hawaii] there was a ship approximately midway across the ocean, that you tune your ADF on; make sure you’re on course, make sure your navigator is doing right. You see it, say hello to the ship, call them on the radio. I think there was just one. [We flew at] probably 3 or 4,000 feet is all. [We] could pick it up six or seven hundred miles [away], if you didn’t have much static. [We flew over] alone, just our airplane. We were a replacement; the squadron was already over there.

“[We were] in Hawaii just 24 hours, and out we went. [We stayed] at the Moana Hotel. That used to be a very old...I think now they practically rebuilt the whole hotel. [We did not walk to the Royal Hawaiian], that was too fancy. No, [we did not go swimming or surfing].

“[The photo above center] that’s Moana, under the banyan tree. [The Moana is the oldest hotel on Waikiki, built in 1901. One source says the Navy stayed at the Royal Hawaiian, so it would make sense for the Army to stay at the Moana, the only other hotel then on Waikiki.] [Canton Island] was just a sand strip in the middle of the ocean.

“New Caledonia was like the United States 20 years ago, everything was 20 years behind the states..., cars.... The people were nice. Oh yeah, the people were *very* nice actually.”

Brown had the photo below left escorting a Grumman F4F Wildcat (similar to on page 314). Below center he titled “1<sup>st</sup> house in background is our rest home while on leave, Auckland, 1943,” so one of the buildings is Kia Ora (page 303). Below right he is in the award ceremony on page 332. (He had photos indicating those on the top of page 530 are the 403<sup>rd</sup> officers club at New Hebrides.)



## Flying Beer Back from Australia

Brown (Pilot, 2/43-2/44): “Whoever was on rest leave [to Sydney] would pay to rent an apartment which we kept, and when you came back you would be loaded with beer, and fly as high as you could to keep it cold by the time you got back to the New Hebrides. Always [every trip].

“Seems like there were sixty bottles in a box - big bottles, not little bottles like we have, but quite large bottles of Australian beer. [When it got back to the squadron it was] distributed and drank. We probably had a party that night. There were 60 bottles, so it was all distributed the same night, while it was still cold, to [the enlisted men, too,] everybody, everybody. Just one case for some reason. I don’t recall [bringing back whiskey or harder stuff] at all.” *[Did the men drink harder stuff?]* “Not to my knowledge.

“The ones coming back from New Zealand I think did not bring back anything.”



## Norfolk Island en route to and from New Zealand

Brown (Pilot, 2/43-2/44): “It must have had an ADF. Those navigators with dead reckoning could usually get close enough so you could pick up the ADF. The navigator would be using the ADF, too. It was just a checkpoint along the way.

“With dead reckoning [you get close], then you use the ADF to find it. **You go on over [fly over the top of Norfolk Island, didn’t land there], and pick up a heading for the next leg.**”

## Close Call with an Aircraft Carrier off of New Hebrides

Brown (Pilot, 2/43-2/44): “The only thing I remember about New Hebrides is we used to let down over the reef around the island – the navigator would get you to the reef, and you would drop down, and turn one way or the other, and go on in to the airfield. The one time that scared the heck out of me, this is about 100 feet that I was flying, or 75, and **when I broke out, what do I see but a huge, huge, huge, huge aircraft carrier. I thought ‘Oh no, they are going to shoot me down for sure.’**

“I am going through clouds, low clouds, to follow the reef, to get around the island. You could see straight down, you could see the reef to know where you were, but you could not see ahead very much. All of a sudden what appears right in front of me is this aircraft carrier. I hit that carrier just right, from stern to bow [the Enterprise had an above-water height of 143 feet, about half of which is above the flight deck, so the deck would be ~72 ft].

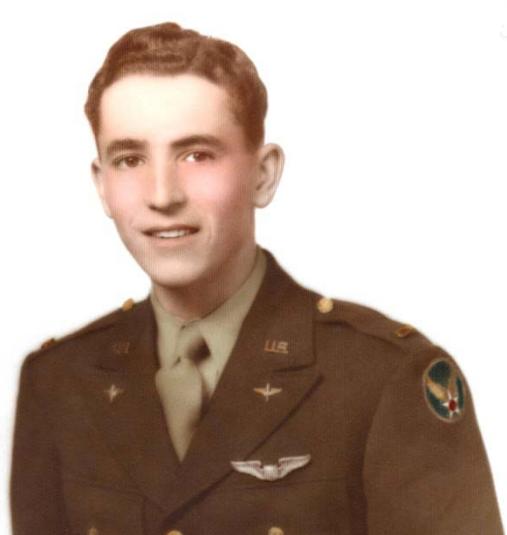
“It scared me for a second. I don’t think they had me on radar, it was so fast.

“We were warned that if we got near a naval ship they would shoot, because they were very wary of the Japs, because they only had a couple of ships out there at that time.

“That was my big experience with the Navy.”

## Fresh Meat on Munda

Brown (Pilot, 2/43-2/44): “They had cattle on Munda, and whenever you get there you get fresh meat for hamburger. We bring in chocolate...milk or something, to trade for hamburger. I just remember Munda had the cows and we would trade cocoa or chocolate to the guys.”



**c. 1944-1945: Items of George W. “Bill” Alexander, Pilot, 1/44-1/45**

On May 1, 2017, I visited the daughter, Cherry, of pilot Bill Alexander. Bill is shown above, first around 1926 on the USS Arizona, upon which his father served, then after getting his wings.

Alexander started out in the 64<sup>th</sup> TCS, and had orders July 12 and 17, 1943, listing all of the original 64<sup>th</sup> TCS aircraft and crews. An order December 20, 1943, moved him and pilots AOs, Hendricks and Moyle from the 64<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS in exchange for Perry D. Manning, Robert P. Johnson, Norman W. Barnes and Robert W. Senteney, who are in no other 13<sup>th</sup> TCS records.

Bill wrote letters to his wife almost every day, and these had many helpful details, below.

Alexander, G.W. (Pilot, 12/43-2/45): 12/23/43 [from Guadalcanal with the 64<sup>th</sup> TCS] “My transfer came through today. The commanding officer [Wilson] of the squadron I’m going to is a West Point man, and that sure suits me to a ‘T.’ I don’t particularly like the Army, but so long as I’m in it I want to be in an outfit that works like the Army should.

1/28/44 [at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides]: “The four of us who were transferred to the 13<sup>th</sup> were sent here to be first pilots, and we were told as soon as we got here that we would be checked out in the manner prescribed by the squadron’s own policy, which is that a pilot has to pass four check rides before he is officially made a first pilot. This evening one of the fellows said my papers were on the Major’s desk for final signature.

“The Major must have signed it right away, because when I walked in the mess hall tonight there was my name on the schedule as ‘first driver.’ You should have heard the other three fellows riding me tonight: ‘Is first driver Alex finished eating? Now have a cigarette. Where are first driver Alex’s bedroom slippers? Here’s a chair for you. Want a coke?’

3/28/44: “When we first came over here the army was giving DFCs to us. Then in November they put out an order ‘no more DFCs for T.C. pilots.’ Today I found out I am short five minutes flying time to get it. If I had flown five minutes more on Nov 12 I’d get it.

“They have an air medal in the orderly room for me, but they won’t give it to me because the major wants me to stand in front of the squadron while he pins it on me, and I haven’t been here on the day the major gives them out. My name was put in for it last Oct., but it just came about six weeks ago. We call it the Buck Rogers Button.

5/5/1944 [TDY on Guadalcanal with 64<sup>th</sup>]: “I went to see ‘Miracle of Morgan’s Creek’ tonight, and that was the craziest thing I ever saw. It rained while we were in the show, so hard that we couldn’t hear the sound part of the time, and then it quit as the show was ending. The clouds moved away and let the moon shine through, just in time to light our way home.

5/13/44: “I read awhile and then went to the QM where I bought some more clothes. The darn things rot out so fast that it keeps a guy broke buying clothes. I still don’t know when I’ll go back to the New Hebrides.

6/3/44 [Espiritu Santo]: “I think I’ve written to you every day the past two months? I’ll try to keep it up, but if they fly everyone as hard as they did last month I won’t be able to.

6/18/44: “The other day I made flight leader. Flight leaders are supposed to be captains, and I’m afraid the major intends to keep me here long enough to make me captain.

7/3/44: “We took our physical exams last night, and I’m healthy enough to stay out here a little while longer. I hope you’ll excuse this scribbling. I’m trying to write this in the air, because from what I’ve heard they have no lights where we’ll be tonight.

7/21/44: “I took two of the boys up this afternoon and let them try their hands at a C47 for a couple hours. Pretty good, too, considering that they never flew a 47 till a day or two ago. The two are twins [pilots James and John Buchen], and I don’t mean maybe.

“It’s sort of distracting to try to give instruction to two fellows that you can’t tell apart.

8/1/44: “My mood tonight probably isn’t helped any by the music they are playing on the phonograph in the next tent. They played “Beautiful Ohio,” which always makes me lonesome. It reminds me of the peaceful quiet life we all used to live before this mess came up.

“I guess you noticed that today is my birthday, and I told you that today is also Aos’s birthday. This morning I was in the latrine (where we get all our news) when still another Lt. said today is his birthday, so that makes three of us in our squadron [Alexander born in 1920, and pilots Aos and Nitrauer in 1921].

8/15/44 [Bougainville]: “When I wrote the other night I said I’d be gone seven days, but the next morning they said “Take everything with you,” so it looks like this is a permanent move. We came to this place, which is about 2 hours from the last place, and stayed here last night. We were supposed to pick up a load here, and go up to what is going to be our base for a while, but the weather closed in, so we’ll be here tonight, too. Part of the air echelon will be where I’m going tomorrow [Admiralties], part on the island I left yesterday [Guadalcanal], and the ground echelon is still at 708 [Espiritu Santo].

8/16/44 [Admiralties] – “Boy what a chaotic day this was. This morning when we took off the air over the runway was rougher than I ever saw it before, anywhere. That was the hardest worked ten seconds I ever put in. I had a new boy as co-pilot, and he didn’t know what to do, and the passengers were scared to death. I wasn’t scared because I was too busy, but if I had to do it again I would be. We had a heck of a time finding holes through the weather, and finally came to a place where there were no holes, and we had to go through it.

“After we got here, a truck brought us to this tent, and before we got here we were soaking wet – baggage and all. The tent isn’t much doing inside either. We’ll be here about ten days, and then move into the place of the bomb group that we are moving, about three miles from here. I have to get up at 5:00 again in the morning.

8/18/44: “I started to write yesterday morning [while flying], but we started running into some bad weather right after I started, so I decided to wait till last night. We absolutely could not find holes in it, so I had to sit up there and fly by instruments. It wasn’t rough, so I didn’t mind so much, but I sure was tired when I got here. I tried to finish your letter last night, but the darn candle kept blowing out about every two minutes, till I finally gave up.

8/22/44: “It is awfully hard to write now. I would take my paper along on my trips, because those are the days I always miss, but the weather is always so nasty, and I’m flying with new co-pilots that I have to watch like a hawk all the time. I think I’m going on a trip tomorrow that will start way before daylight and last till way after dark, so I may be too tired to write when I get in. For now I better go shave and shower, ’cause it’s almost dark.

9/7/44: “This stay over here would be lots easier if everyone knew what the score is [when they would go home]. Tomorrow when I get back up to [Manus] I’m going to tell the flight surgeon not to put me on another rest leave. Personally I don’t care to go.

“I have to get up at 3:30 in the morning, so I better get some sleep. I don’t want to go to sleep tomorrow, and start plowing up mountainsides. I’m not a farmer, you know.

9/27/44: “Today when we went into the field ‘down the line’ for a landing it was raining like the dickens, and we didn’t see the field till we were already over it. I knew which way the wind was from by the waves on the ocean, and I thought I knew about how strong it was, so I made a traffic circle. We had one of the new co-pilots, and he didn’t like the idea of buzzing around on instruments at 300 feet. Anyway, we came around, and when we could see the runway again we were almost to the end of it, and 200 yards to the far right. I wasn’t about to go around, and then have to hunt for it again if I possibly could get in, so I cut the throttles, called for half flaps, and side-slipped to the left to lose that 300 ft. altitude (believe me, you lose it in nothing flat that way) and landed. I scared h—I out of the poor co-pilot when I side slipped (it’s quite a job in a C-47), and then, after as much trouble as we had approaching, I made such a nice landing that he didn’t know when we were on the ground. “I told him that he better not try anything like that till he had about 400 more hours, if he knew what was good for him, though, and he said not to worry about it, he wouldn’t.

10/8/44 [Wakde]: We lost our plaything, namely the P38. The colonel took it up this afternoon, and right after he got off the ground one engine cut out. Before he could get it turned around and headed back to the field the other engine caught fire, so he had to drop it in the drink. From what I heard about the way it hit the water, it’s a wonder he got out of it.

“Well I’m glad we are rid of that 38 without anyone getting seriously hurt. I flew the thing once. P38s are nice ships to fly, but that one was a wreck, and I was afraid someone would get killed in it before it was over.

10/11/44: “So few T.C. pilots come home as Capt., and the captains from bombers and fighters have so much less flying time than I do.

10/13/44: “Yesterday morning I wasn’t on the schedule so I flew a B25 for an hour. So many B25 pilots had told me how hard a B25 is to fly that I was afraid of the darn thing. Well, when I found out cadets were flying B25s in Advanced, I knew it couldn’t be very hard to fly, so I took one out. I’ll admit B-25 pilots have more dangerous work in some ways, but as far as flying the airplane is concerned, it’s nothing compared to what we are flying. As far as landing it is concerned, all you have to do is get it close to the ground. The darn thing practically lands itself then. When I got back yesterday noon they scheduled me to go out at 12:30, which meant an R.O.N. at a place where they have no lights. As a result I didn’t get around to writing until last night. I don’t dare try to write in the airplane, cause with these new pilots we have to watch everything all the time.

10/14/44: “Buzzing around after dark means flying at night, and most of us agree that it is pretty dangerous at times, because the weather gets worse at night over large water areas. That’s why we don’t fly at night if we can get out of it.

10/18/44: “We went on what was supposed to be a one day trip, but we had to circle the field up there for 2 hours and 35 minutes before they could get room on the field for us. Coming back we were abreast of one field when the sun went down so we set ‘er down there. I hear a malicious rumor that we are moving again tomorrow. If this rumor turns out to be true, I’ll want to have everything in one heap so I can shove it on a truck in the morning.

10/20/44 [Biak]: “Oh me, I’m all worn out. All day today I’ve been digging post holes and setting corner posts for our tents. We are making frames [shown on page 10] to set our tents over, so they will be a little higher from the ground, give us a little more overhead.

“They have been holding all our mail over here the past two or three weeks, till after the Philippine invasion started. They do that because so many fellows knew about it that they were afraid it would leak out.

“We started listening to the radio yesterday afternoon, for the news about it, and sure enough last night it came over the radio. Then today’s news bulletin said the troops landed at ten this morning, so apparently someone jumped the gun in telling the news last night.

10/29/44: “Last night I went to see a show – the first one in a long time. The show was just ‘across the hollow and down the road a piece’ [lyrics from a 1940 song ‘Down the Road a Piece’], so Jim and I walked down there. One thing about shows out here, you always have the excitement of finding out what the show is going to be, only after they flash the name of it on the screen. The show was Andy Hardy’s ‘Blonde Trouble,’ and we really enjoyed it.

“Well Hon, I guess we are going to move again [to Noemfoor]. Some big shot says there isn’t enough room on this island [Biak] for all the planes that are here, so someone has to move, and it would be us. It isn’t exactly a move, but it’s just as bad. We are going to operate our ships from another island about 90 or 100 miles from here. We have enough crews that we can rotate them on the other island. Probably be up there a week or so, then come back here when another crew will take the ship back up. After three or four days here we’ll go back up to relieve a crew that has been there a week or so. If and when they move a few outfits out of here we can operate our ships from here again. Personally I don’t see where the heck they are going find room to put our ships on the other island either.

12/7/44 [Biak]: “Somebody said we were supposed to get seven new crews last night, but so far I haven’t seen any strange faces around.

“Excuse me for a minute, Hon. I just saw one of our trucks drive up in front of the orderly room with a lot of people and baggage on it. Be back in a minute.

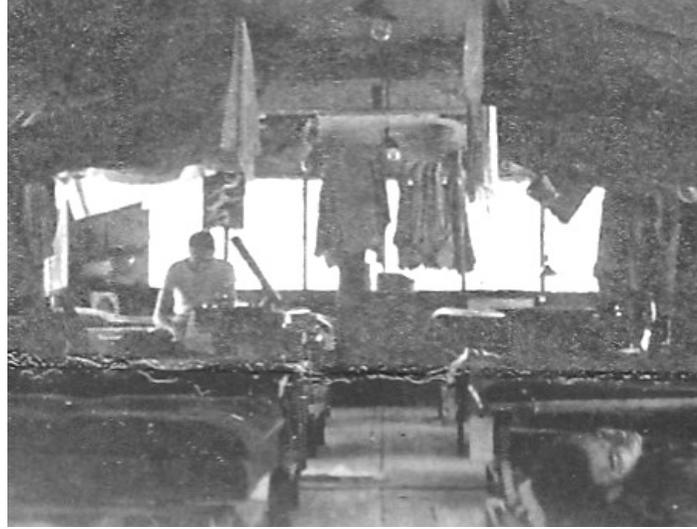
“Well, I really feel better now. Those people were new pilots – ten of them [on page 14 herein], and they said six more are on their way up here. Whoopee!!! Oh boy, if these guys only knew how glad certain people are to see them. Maybe I’ll be home sometime in the next ten months after all. Oh happy day. Honey, I hope you’ll excuse me, I just have to go ask these guys some questions about their training, etc. Can’t resist.

12/18/44: “[A] new navigator moved in with me a while back. He got an old parachute someplace, and has it cut it into sections. He unraveled some of the shroud lines, and made a ‘grass skirt’ for his wife.”

Bill Alexander in these quotes provides great details about the move to Noemfoor, page 499, that air crews rotated there, but still had tents on Biak. It is a coincidence that on the same trip I scanned items of Bridges, who was one of the pilots to arrive December 7, and nice to read Bill Alexander’s reaction when he saw the replacements show up. It is also interesting that the truck drove on to the parade ground to drop the new crews off in front of the orderly room and everyone.

Alexander had FEAF Special Order 24 1/24/45 relieving six members to return to the US, being himself, J.E. Allen, Baxter, Donnelly, Riordan, and Skeens, and orders mentioning F. Gordon, Clawson, and Goldberger. A 4/6/44 order referred to an officer duty I had not heard of before of being the “Unit Awards Officer,” and another had “Unit Weight & Balance Officer.” These were eventually assigned to ground officers.

Bill Alexander’s daughter Cherry had one-third of his letters, and I hope someday to review and scan the other two thirds of his letters which are with her two siblings. Thank you, Bill, for writing such fine details.



**d. 1944-1945: Items of Ralph E. Babcock, Intelligence, 2/44-9/45**

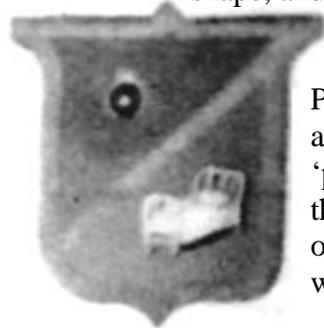
On May 2, 2017 I met the daughter, Barbara of Ralph E. Babcock, and scanned her dad's items. On October 13, 1943, he completed a course for Administrative and Technical Clerks in Fort Logan, Colo. He was sent to Kearns, Utah, the overseas replacement depot for the Pacific, and on January 19, 1944, set sail for New Caledonia on the SS Robin Doncaster.

Babcock had the photos above of his quarters in New Hebrides, being three Dallas-style huts connected together. On the left are bicycles, and beyond these is the parade ground. Above right the inside was arranged to have bunks down the middle.

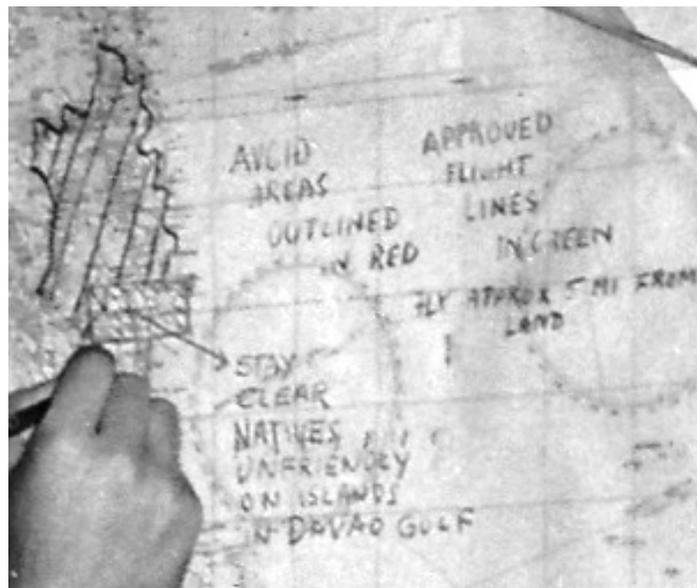
He had many photos from helping set up the Biak camp. One showed the tent frame which created their distinctive shape, and this, with the background removed, is at right.



Babcock at Biak was in tent B1, named Palais Pom Pom, below left, with a coat of arms showing a bed. He wrote: "They think 'pom pom' means women." Perhaps it is from the Australian 'pom,' a pejorative for a person of British descent, because the Australian sun would burn their skin pomegranate red.



He had a sharper photo of the intelligence area at Biak (on page 535). Zooming in on this, below right, one may read the warnings to "Stay clear, natives unfriendly on islands of Davao Gulf," on the east side of Mindanao, and "Fly approx. 5 miles from land" in the Philippines.





**Noemfoor Line**

Babcock had the photo above, sharper than a version I had. I noticed the tent on the left is the same as inset above right (on page 501) at Noemfoor, so this is the parking area at Noemfoor.

**1985 Reunion Attendees List**

The 1985 reunion is on page 753, and Babcock had a list of the attendees, retyped at right in the order of the rosters in the book.

It has been my impression that the airplane mechanics from 1942-43 were the most attune to the reunions, followed by the ground enlisted men, and in 1985 this was the case. At right the men are color-coded by the year they joined the squadron overseas, and the most are from 1942.

Below is a table showing the number of men ever in the squadron by function and year joined, then the number alive in August 1985, and the number who attended this reunion. For the mechanics, there were 74 overseas in 1942, 57 of these were alive in 1985, and 23 attended. By contrast, there were 32 pilots who joined in 1945, 30 of these were alive in 1985, and 0 attended.

I expect this was largely due to the difficulty of keeping track of people from 1945 to 1985. Pilot Soderland who joined in 1945 once told me he always wished they had reunions, and did not know these were held every two years from 1950 to 1999, but it appears few pilots knew of these.

**Thirsty 13th 1985 Reunion Attendees**

By Year Joined: 1940-1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, then Alphabetical

- |                        |                         |                           |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Ground Officers</b> | <b>Pilots</b>           | <b>Airplane Mechanics</b> |
| 1 Cullum, F. W.        | 1 Adams Jr., A. T.      | 1 Allen, Jr., F. S.       |
| 2 Norfleet, M. B.      | 2 Bergstrom, D. J.      | 2 Anacker, V. O.          |
| 3 Ross, F. J.          | 3 Drake, R. W.          | 3 Burden, D. W.           |
|                        | 4 Ecklund, E.           | 4 Cairns, J. J.           |
| <b>Ground Enlisted</b> | 5 Fraser, W. M.         | 5 DiBias, W. A.           |
| 1 Ferguson, J.B. Jr.   | 6 Petty, C. E.          | 6 Fuller, T.C.            |
| 2 Ferguson, M. B.      | 7 Abernathy, F. H.      | 7 Geuther, W. J.          |
| 3 Finelli, D. J., Jr.  | 8 Conard, W. L.         | 8 Harp, P. J.             |
| 4 Labeledz, C. A.      | 9 Leibundguth (Lebund), | 9 Holbrook, J. V.         |
| 5 Lord, F. M.          | 10 Rode, E.             | 10 Johnson, A. K.         |
| 6 Mazzone, G. J.       | 11 Burder, F. H.        | 11 Laming, R. C.          |
| 7 Myres, D. L.         | 12 Drago, A. A.         | 12 Lawyer, R. P.          |
| 8 Pasco, V. F.         | 13 Miller, E. R.        | 13 Mlynek, F. J.          |
| 9 Sidelko, S. W.       | 14 Sterling, R. C.      | 14 Morgan, S. W.          |
| 10 Stiers, B. P.       | 15 Wysong, R. C.        | 15 Morin, R. A.           |
| 11 Weekley, R.B.       |                         | 16 Smith, J.              |
| 12 Wells, R. S.        | <b>Navigators</b>       | 17 Stiver, B. J.          |
| 13 Knoll, L. A.        | 1 Houpt, F. R.          | 18 Tustin, W. W.          |
| 14 Linden, D. F.       | 2 Lippitt, J. P.        | 19 Vallely, B. X.         |
| 15 Markey, D. R.       | 3 Small, P. B.          | 20 Versdahl, O. J.        |
| 16 Babcock, R. E.      |                         | 21 Vestre, E. K.          |
| 17 Benedetto, G. P.    | <b>Radio Operators</b>  | 22 Watkins, J. W.         |
| 18 Davis, A. S.        | 1 Bradford, J. R. Jr.   | 23 Blanco, J. A.          |
| 19 Dean, J. C.         | 2 McCullough, E. L.     | 24 DeLoss, A. D.          |
| 20 Donovan, H. C.      | 3 Kilzer, G. A.         | 25 LaLonde, J. R.         |
| 21 Goodwin, L. E.      | 4 McDaniel, T. D.       | 26 Wentworth, K. E.       |
| 22 Hall, J. H.         | 5 Seeley, E. A.         | 27 Lamb, A. B.            |
|                        | 6 DeClerck, R. R.       |                           |
|                        | 7 Fatula, G. P.         |                           |
|                        | 8 Voorhees, J. B.       |                           |
|                        | 9 Blackwell, W. S.      |                           |
|                        | 10 Ricker, T. L.        |                           |

**Thirsty 13th Members by Specialty and Year Joined; Alive in 1985, and attended 1985 Reunion**

Joined:	1940-1942			1943			1944			1945			Total				
	Ever	Alive	Att'd	Ever	Alive	Att'd	Ever	Alive	Att'd	Ever	Alive	Att'd	Ever	Alive	Att'd	%Ali	%Tot
Ground Off	16	8	2 25%	4	4	1 25%	5	5	0 0%	1	1	0 0%	26	18	3 17%		4%
Ground EM	112	79	12 15%	20	16	3 19%	68	52	6 12%	8	5	0 0%	208	152	21 14%		26%
Pilots	29	21	6 29%	43	33	4 12%	59	46	5 11%	32	30	0 0%	163	130	15 12%		19%
Navigators	13	10	0 0%	24	17	2 12%	11	9	1 11%	16	12	0 0%	64	48	3 6%		4%
Mechanics	74	57	23 40%	18	12	3 25%	33	23	2 9%	9	6	0 0%	134	98	28 29%		35%
Radio Oper	30	20	2 10%	19	9	3 33%	24	18	3 17%	12	10	2 20%	85	57	10 18%		13%
	<b>Total</b>												680	503	80	16%	100%

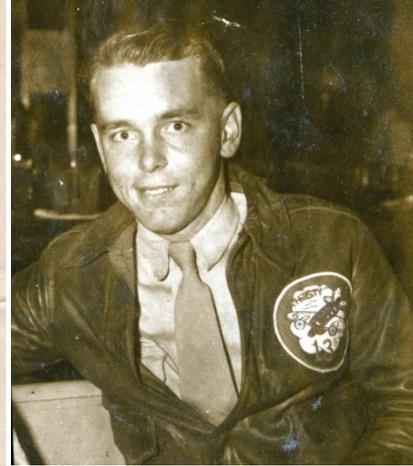


OPERATIONS ORDER)  
NUMBER 1)

HEADQUARTERS,  
403D TROOP CARRIER GROUP, AAF,  
AFO 920,

1. The following named Off and EM will proceed via Darwin and Rockhampton to Sydney 11 February 1945 on or about in C-47B aircraft, Air Corps serial number 43-16303 for the purpose of Air Corps Activities and will return to AFO 920, % Postmaster San Francisco, Cal. not later than 20 February 1945.

PILOT: NASSET, Erling A. Captain, O-740887  
COPILOT: COLBURN, Edward W. 2nd Lt. O-769392  
NAVIGATOR:  
ENGINEER: PETTIS, Newell, L. M./Sgt. 16024843.  
OTHER RADIO OPERATOR: CROCKER, Richard S/Sgt. 6135968  
R. O. OTHER: BRADY, Luther H. Cpl. 18199346



#### e. 1944-1945: Items of Luther H. Brady, Radio Operator, 10/44-10/45

On April 30, 2017 I met with the daughter, Kim, of radio operator Luther Brady. Kim told me her dad was one of five boys, and his mother died when he was two years old. During WWII his father therefore had the opportunity to hold one of his sons back from service, but he didn't, he let all five serve. All five served in the Air Corps, and all came home. It was heroic and patriotic of Brady's father to put all of his children at risk for the county.

Kim emailed me scans of her father's photos in November 2015, and had the two above, first of him with his mechanic July 19, 1945, at Tacloban on Leyte. Kim said he was assigned to the Patient Virgin (on which Arthur Driedger was also a radio operator). Above right is after returning to the U.S., in San Francisco in December 1945.

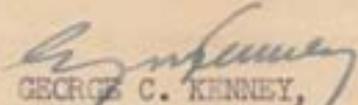
Kim had some documents I wanted to scan, and among these I found the 403<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Group Operations Order #1, above. This sent Nasset (p), Colburn (cp), Pettis (cc), Brady (ro), and Crocker (other) to Sydney February 11, 1945, to return February 20, 1945, on C-47B 43-16303. This was exciting in providing a new C-47 serial number, 43-16303. He may have been assigned to this C-47 in February. We had C-47 43-16307, close in number to #303, and so this may have been in the squadron. Mechanic Pettis was in the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS, and so this, too, would suggest #303 was in the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS. The order is from the 403<sup>rd</sup>, though, and while on a rest leave the men they replace might bring the plane back, and so it may have been from a related squadron, so I will wait to add it, but consider it a possibility.

Brady had a letter, in part below, to his father, from General George C. Kenney, congratulating him on Luther's Air Medal. This is the first such letter I have seen from the Southwest Pacific Area. He also had better versions of a Truman letter and others.

I would like to tell you how genuinely proud I am to have men such as your son in my command, and how gratified I am to know that young Americans with such courage and resourcefulness are fighting our country's battle against the aggressor nations.

You, Mr. Brady, have every reason to share that pride and gratification.

Sincerely,

  
GEORGE C. KENNEY,  
General, United States Army,  
Commander.

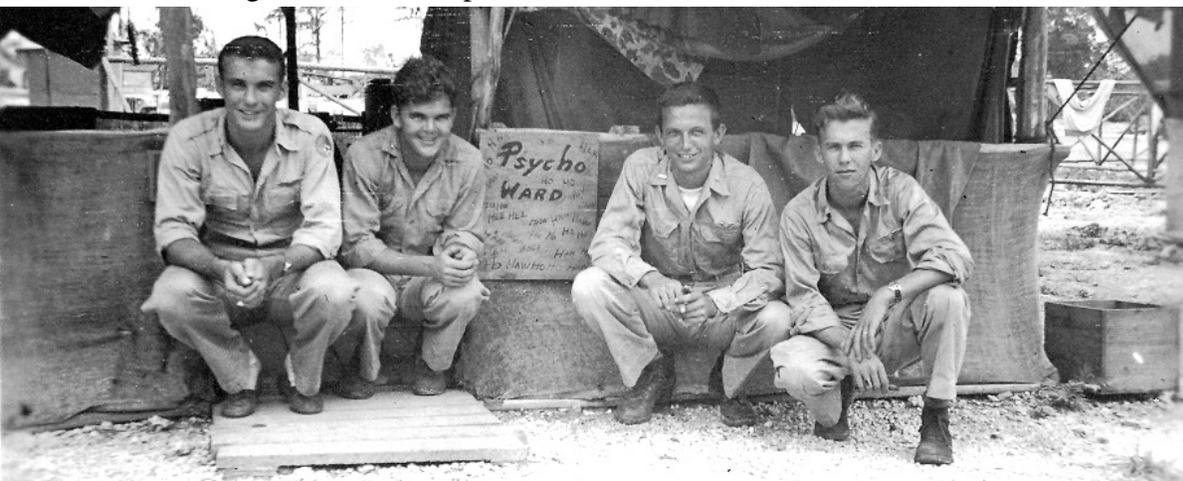
Mr. Edward W. Brady,  
Route 1,



**f. 1944-1945: Items of William R. Foote, Pilot, 12/44-7/45**

Foote is shown above with his daughter, Judy, estimated in July 1944, before going overseas. Above center he is at Biak in 1945, with the lid of his footlocker covered with 20 photos of Judy. Above right he is shaving at Biak. Below right he sent home this skirt which Judy estimated he bought in the Philippines.

Foote is shown 3<sup>rd</sup> below with his tentmates at Biak 3/18/45, the tent having the fun name "Psycho Ward," and "Ho ho, hee hee, haw haw" If you recognize the others, please let me know. The tent seems to be in the last row.



The photos below with Foote are the first I have seen of the west side of the Biak officers' club. Below right Foote appears to hold a wooden cross.



13th TCS Crews formed at Bergstrom Field, Sep 29, 1944, and Joined Dec 7, 1944

	1	2	3	4	5
P	Johnson, H. L.	Bridges, W. K.	Colburn, E. W.	Cowles, G. G.	Harpster, J.W.
CP	Finkbeiner, O. K.	Begg, R. V.	Davenport, G. W.	Domarsky, J. G.	Howard, E.J.
CC	Darling, V.	Aversa, V.	Burdiss, G. H.	Clouse, J. N.	Gornbein, J.
RO	Kosovich, S. S.	Abramowitz, I.	Caldwell, W.	Davis, L. E.	McDonough, R.J.

Additional Aircrews who Joined December 7, 1944

P	Creelman, W.	Freudenthal, E.	RO	Sunderman, L. E.
CC	Bland, J. H.	Bromberg, M. V.	Calvin, A. A.	Gilmore, C. H.
CC	Rodgerson, L.	Sterns, P. L.	Venezia, E.	Vento, J. A.
				Komo, J.
				Zener, B. O.

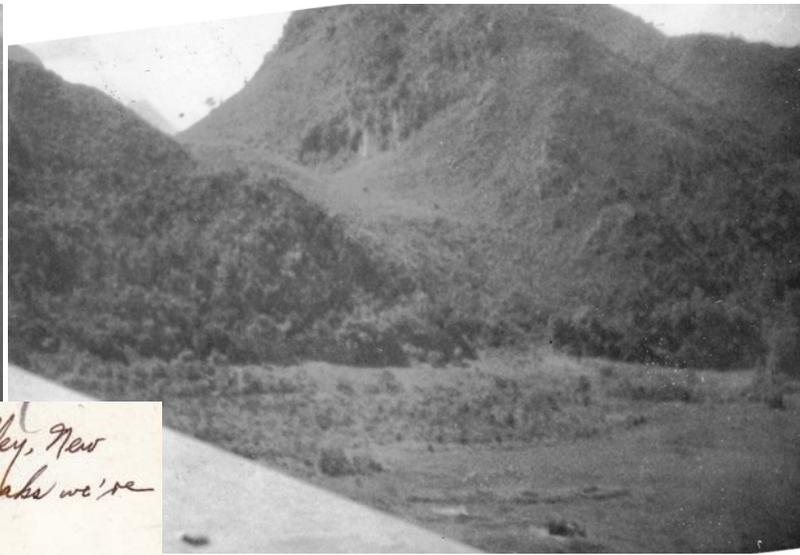
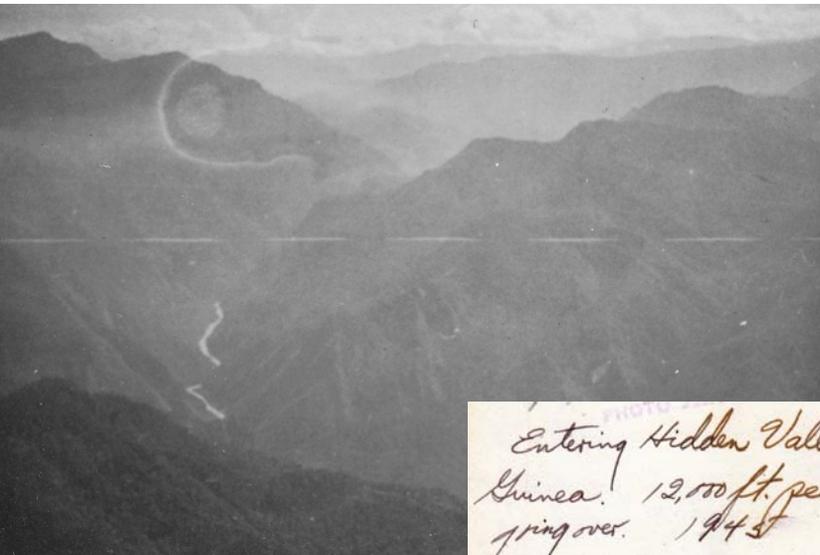


**g. 1944-1945: Items of Walter K. Bridges, Pilot 12/44-12/45**

Bridges had a Bergstrom Field order 237 sending the above top 20 men overseas, and they and the 13 others were assigned to the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS December 7, 1944. Their arrival was described by G.W. Alexander on page 9. Bridges is in the photo above right at Biak, of tentmates Wilkening, Bridges, Rode, and Sackett (same as on page 628). He received the patch at right, with the most aerodynamic nose I've seen.



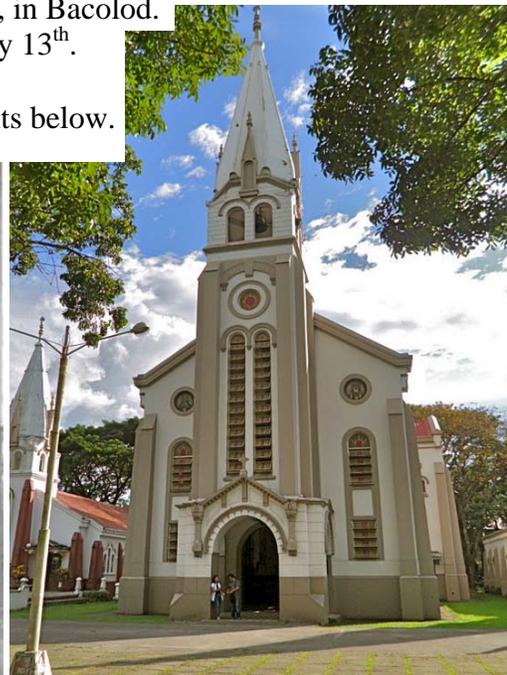
Below left are peaks surrounding the Balim Valley (page 678) in New Guinea, and below right is a view the glider rescue area (on page 683) and a distinctive hill east of it.



*Entering Hidden Valley, New Guinea. 12,000 ft. peaks we're going over. 1945*

Below left he has a 403<sup>rd</sup> C-47 with a new number 43-16220, perhaps of the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS, with paratroopers. The mission is not known. In the last newsletter Begg had a photo of a church in a remote area, and Bridges also had a photo of this, below center, and wrote on the back "Bacolod" Searching online I found this was Sacred Heart Church, or Lupit Church, in Bacolod. It was built in 1939. This provides another location visited by the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>.

Bridges wrote many letters with many helpful insights, with highlights below.



## Walter K. Bridges Letter Excerpts

Bridges (Pilot, 12/44-12/45)

2/21/45: “We had our party again last nite. We had 10 of the girls that were nurses when Bataan fell about 3 years ago. They were prisoners of war, and stopped here on their way home. They were all underweight.

5/13/45: “Our ice box is a regular necessity now, and I don’t see why we were without one for so long. We get fresh meet occasionally from Aust., and bananas from the Philippines. We have some ice cream mix, and all we have to do is add water. We find eggs pretty often, and even tomatoes. For breakfast we had ham and eggs and ice cream. We put a gas stove on a shelf and have a regular kitchenette here.

5/18/45: “Our basketball court has a few low places, so they dumped more coral on it, and it hasn’t packed enough to use. By sweeping off the loose coral after rain beats it down – it gets like cement.

5/29/45: “Finally got by the copilot stage, so from now on I’ll be flying about twice as much, and should get around 100 hours a month.

6/23/45: “One of the better towns I’ve seen is Bacolod on Panay. It seems more like a town than a little village. If sure did have a beautiful church that I took pictures of.

7/2/45: “Had quite a new experience on a paradrop. Had to supply some men right next to the Japs. The Japs only had small arms fire and didn’t hit us. Boy I was getting in and out of a bad place to drop, with hills all around.

9/19/45: “Just got back yesterday from a 3-day rest leave in Manila. I didn’t buy any souvenirs – prices are absurd up there now.

11/6/45: [Re: trip to Japan in photos of Begg’s in last newsletter:] “We were only about 30 miles from Tokyo, and the first after-noon went to Yokohama. This date was Nov. 2 – just one year after leaving San Francisco.

“The second day there we went into Tokyo, and I got a few things there at a department store, saw the Emperors Palace, and took a few pictures of it, too. It sure is a beautiful place.

“We had dinner in the Imperial Hotel, and looked around town. Quite a bit of it was destroyed, but I didn’t see as much as the news spoke about.

11/11/45: “We aren’t having to fly but about half as much as when the war was on. We only have mail runs, passenger courier planes, a few medical evacuations, and haul high point men to separation centers. ATC is behind hauling men into Japan, so we help out by sending a plane or two a day for them.

12/3/45: “I brought back some B-24 crews that are coming into this group to fly the C-54s we are gonna get soon. We are supposed to get one next week, and eventually be all C-54s.”

Bridges had an incredible order, a 403<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Group September 22, 1945, special order transferring out of the squadron most of the men remaining after the original ground crews had sailed. He had another 403<sup>rd</sup> order October 31, 1945, transferring men from the 63<sup>rd</sup> TCS back in. These and a diary used as an address book are described later.

He had HQ FEAF Special Order 343, 12/9/45, assigning Blakeney, Bridges, Colburn, Davenport, Hager, McGee, Johnson, and J.N. Smith to the 138<sup>th</sup> Replacement Battalion, relieving them of service.

Thank you, Walter K. Bridges, for writing these details, and saving such incredible items.



## 2. Members and Relatives

### a. Nine-Day West Coast Scanning Trip

On April 28, 2017, I set out from Dallas on the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> research trip mapped above left. One squadron member and relatives of six more allowed me to visit them, scan and photograph their family treasure photographs and items, and to share them with you.

**1. April 28: Las Vegas.** On this morning I flew to Las Vegas, and was met by the daughter, Judy, above, of pilot Bill Foote. Bill died July 29, 1945, in the crash on page 690, when she was 17 months old. She drove us to an IHOP, and I scanned an album of Bill's items, including the photos on page 13 herein. She never knew how he died and I explained this for the first time for her, her two sons and grandchildren.

Judy had the photo at right (on page 593), when the aircrews were photographed in front of the Biak chapel (on page 544). I estimated these were taken in May 1945, but Bill wrote on the back "February 1945." I assumed men in these photos were in the squadron in May 1945, and so this changed timelines for 20 men.

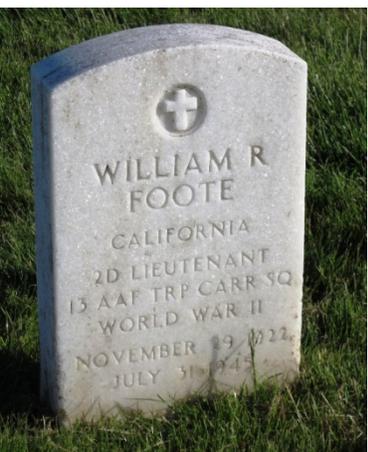


I was so happy when I found her in March, that Bill had a child before he died. She brought her Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> book for me to sign, and I wrote in it "I am so glad that Bill lives on through you and your children." The 20 photos of her in his footlocker (on page 13) reflect how special she and her mother were to him.

**2. April 29: Golden Gate National Cemetery.** Later April 28 Judy drove me back to the airport, and I flew to San Francisco. The next morning I drove to this cemetery, to see graves of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Foote, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Thompson - the pilot-in-command when they hit the ridge, pilot Ernest J. Howard (d.1981), and engineering officer Mahacek (d.1986). I was surprised the graves are knee-high (and learned that they sink and must be raised up from time to time).



I was glad the markers for Foote and Thompson stated the "13<sup>th</sup> AAF TRP CARR SQ." Their markers are in the locations circled below in red.



# Honors To Eugene Brown

An oak leaf cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross and two oak leaf clusters to the Air Medal were awarded to 1st. Lt. Eugene G. Brown, 317 Anderson Avenue.



**3. April 29: Los Gatos, Calif.:** Next I drove 45 minutes south to Los Gatos, an attractive small town southwest of San Jose, to a retirement home, to at 10 a.m. visit pilot Gene Brown, at right. He wore a hat with ribbons for the DFC and Air Medal. He had the newspaper article above left that after he returned to the U.S. he was awarded an oak leaf cluster to the DFC, for 102 hours of combat time, something not in the yearbook "Two Years." This DFC OLC was equivalent to an Air Medal OLC, essentially having the DFC, AM, and 6 OLC, which on page 68 moves him up to a 4-way tie for the second-most honored pilot in the squadron (with Woodall, Lenderman, and Allen; and after #1 Miller and Peters).

Gene joined in February 1943, and on page 68 is the estimated as the 32<sup>nd</sup> pilot in the squadron. He had many helpful stories (on page 4 herein).

**4. April 29: Camp Stoneman, Pittsburgh, Calif:** Late in the day I drove east from San Francisco to Pittsburgh, Calif., site of Camp Stoneman, page 42, where the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS ground crew stayed October 10 to November 1, 1942, before boarding the ship for New Caledonia. I visited the marker, at right. The plaque states: "Camp Stoneman served as a major port for the Pacific Theater from 1942 until 1954, [and] consisted of over 800 buildings on 1,000 acres. Over 30,000 troops could be housed at one time. More than 2.5 million American service personnel passed through"



I have a goal to identify the boundaries of the camp, which buildings the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS stayed in, and the ground they stood on, using distant mountain outlines, but did not have the mountain photos with me, and found many trees blocking the views. I need to find more member photos, so this is a longer term project, but it was nice to get a feel for it. It is 41 miles northeast of San Francisco.



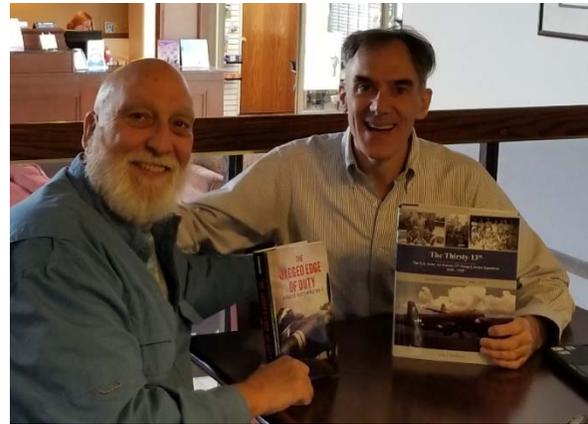
**5. April 30: McClellan Field:** The book on page 41 has the photo below left from September 1942 of 13<sup>th</sup> TCS officers outside the Sacramento Air Depot (McClellan Field) Officers' Club. I have wanted to verify the location, and on the morning of April 30 visited here, at 3410 Westover St., McClellan Park (now an open base). The trellis over the near down spout is gone, there are more trees, and the club now has an extended entrance (at right). It felt good to stand where they stood.



**6. April 30: Davis, Calif:** Later Sunday morning, at 11:05 a.m. I met at her church, after the service, waiting outside for me, the daughter, Kim, of 1944-45 radio operator Luther H. Brady. We drove to a Panera in the center of this college town, and I set up my scanner, and was excited to scan her father's items (on page 12 herein). She treated me to lunch, which was very kind of her. I dropped her off at her home at 2:45 p.m., and signed her book, at right. Then back to San Francisco Airport for a 6 p.m. flight to Salt Lake City, and on to Spokane.

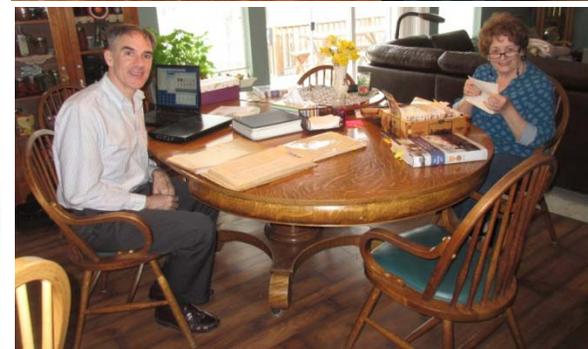


**7. May 1: Spokane, Wash.:** On April 29 I received a reply to my last newsletter from Bob Richardson, whose dad was a navigator in the 64<sup>th</sup> TCS, and in 1943 was the only survivor of a C-47 crash into a hill on Espiritu Santo. One step ahead of all but a few readers, he has visited New Hebrides, finding the wreckage of his dad's plane, and placing a plaque of thanks to the natives who saved his dad's life. I was excited to realize Bob lived in Spokane, and asked if we could meet for breakfast.



Bob's first book, "The Jagged Edge of Duty," was published in April, describing the lives of P-38 pilots in North Africa. I had his book on this trip, and so it was fun to finally meet him.

The main event this day was to visit pilot G.W. Alexander's daughter, Cherry, at right with her husband Dale. Her dad was a top squadron pilot in 1944, and she had perhaps 100 of his letters. Her son who does woodworking as a hobby made one of the most amazing Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>-related items I have ever seen, an incredibly beautiful and well-made box for her dad's letters. The patch on the top is raised about 1/8". I was surprised she also had many of his orders, and first scanned all of these. Cherry and I enjoyed reading through all of the letters, and these provided nine pages single spaced of stories, four included herein starting on page 6. She treated me to two meals, and it was a wonderful visit.





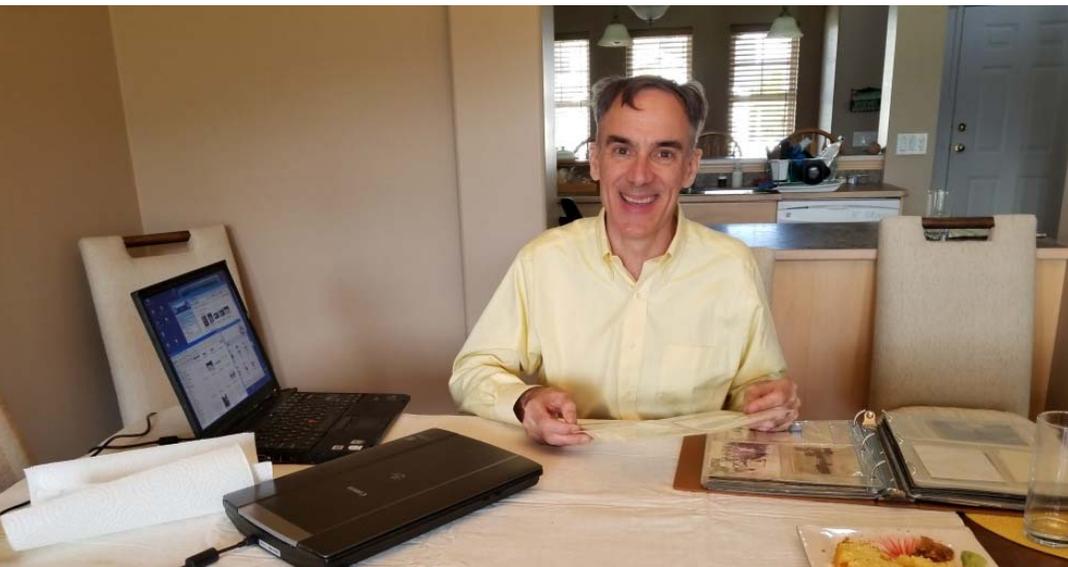
**8. May 2: Kelowna, British Columbia:** This was a day I looked forward to since October 26, 2016, when I first connected with the daughter, Barbara, of Ralph E. Babcock. She was impressed that I found her, thinking she was off the grid. She told me she had a photo album, and so I have dreamed of visiting her in remote Canada.

I rented a car in Spokane, and set out at 8 a.m. for the 5-hour drive to Kelowna. The road detoured on the dirt road above left, and crossed a mountain where I saw snow for the first time in six years. The U.S. border, at right, was the most idyllic I have ever seen.

Although Kelowna is remote, it is a town of 200,000 people. Barbara lived in an amazing area of new roads and houses at the south end of town called Upper Mission, where deer freely stroll, below right. She and her husband Bruce, at right, just like Cherry and Dale in Spokane, were very welcoming and friendly. Then it was time, to fire up the laptop and scanner and get to work.

I couldn't help but reflect on the distance I go to for Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> research, but am convinced this is the right way to do it. I am so thankful for all our fathers who, in addition to serving in the squadron, saved so many helpful items.

Barbara and Bruce, like Cherry and Dale, also insisted I spend the night, which was wonderful of them. After making 100 scans the first day, I woke up early the second day and thought there might be writing I missed on the backs of some photos I did not remove, so removed those, and scanned 50 more items the second day. Barbara and Bruce took me to dinner, too. They were great.





**9. May 3-4: To Gig Harbor, Washington:** Leaving Kelowna, BC, I literally went up to the clouds for the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>, as shown above, crossing a high section of the Coast Mountain Range. It would have been a 6.5 hour drive direct to Gig Harbor, southwest of Seattle, and I detoured over to Vancouver for the night.

On May 4 I continued on to the Seattle area, and, arriving early, visited the Boeing Museum of Flight's Research Center. I learned that many collectors of say 250,000 photos had donated their collections to this museum, and each has perhaps 1,000 photos of C-47s. With several days notice, a researcher could pull the C-47 photos from each collection for me to go through. I am not sure they would have any photos that I have not found, but it might be worth a look someday.

At 4 p.m. I visited the daughter, Jackie, of 1942-43 pilot Jack Alexander. She, too, had a photo album, and many papers to scan. Here, in this house below left, I found for the first time in 6.5 years a photo of my dad. It always amazes me how many treasures are out there.



Jackie had an order, below left, which I had before, for a mission described by Baldry on page 165. My dad and hers are listed next together. I was surprised my dad was a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., outranking Alexander and Baldry, two highly-esteemed pilots, as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts. They were younger, though, starting as staff sgt. pilots, and my dad already served in Europe. She made the observation that the beer bottles on page 399, also below, are arranged in a '13.' It was also great to meet Alexander's grandson and great-grandson at right, and to see them, too, excited to learn about The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>.



JOHN C. WASHEURNE, (O-790107), First Lieutenant, United States Air Corps, navigator. Home Address: 608 Arbor Vitae Road, Winnetka, Illinois.

JACK D. ALEXANDER, (O-2042749), Second Lieutenant, United States Air Corps, co-pilot. Home Address: 3720 South G Street, Washington.

GORDON L. BALDRY, (O-2042750), Second Lieutenant, United States Air Corps, pilot. Home Address: Groton, South Dakota.





**10. May 5: Phoenix, Arizona.** On March 6 I made the first contact ever with the daughter, Kim, of 1944-45 pilot Walter K. Bridges. She said her sister, Chris, in Phoenix, had a briefcase of his items. A day or two before having to book my flights I contacted Kim about visiting Chris, and did not hear back right away, so planned my visit skipping Phoenix. When I heard back from her the day after finalizing everything I started writing an email saying it was too late to include Phoenix, then thought “Heck, I’ll add Chris on at the end of the trip!” Boy, am I glad I did.

I planned another two-flight day, just like the first day stopover in Las Vegas for a few hours on the way to San Francisco, this time flying from Seattle to Phoenix, getting to Chris around 1 p.m., and having to leave by 5 p.m. for a flight home to Dallas. Four hours to scan everything.

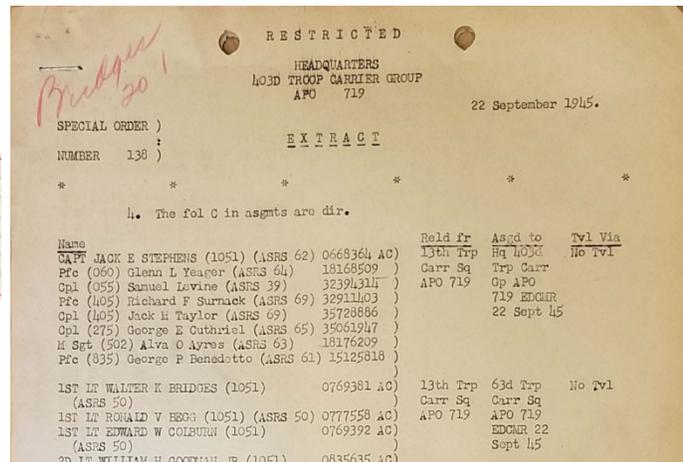
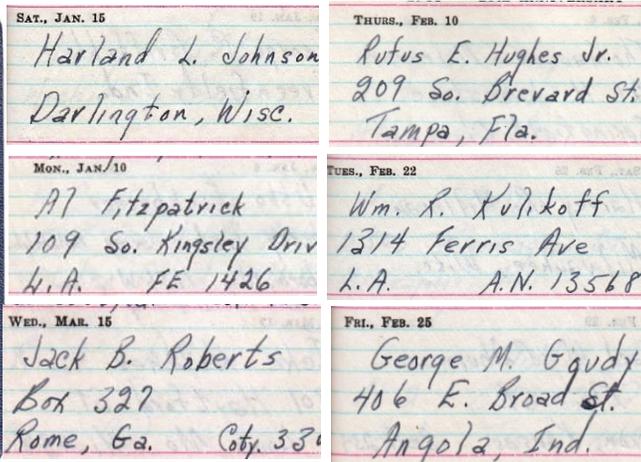
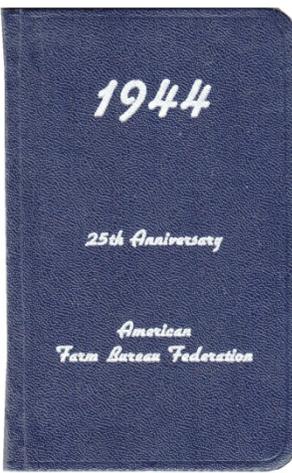
Chris, above left, was great to bring the briefcase to her workplace at an animal hospital, and let me take it away to a scanning place and bring it back later. I found a nearby IHOP, at right, which I have learned is a great place to work, with big tables, good light, and cushioned benches. Opening the briefcase, above, felt like opening a birthday present! It was no less thrilling, as described below.



**b. Walter K. Bridges Diary, Orders**

Walter K. Bridges had the following documents which provided immense help:

- **A Diary** – below left, used as an address book, listing 89 men. This included 3 men impossible to identify (Harland L. Johnson, Albert A. Fitzpatrick, and Jack Roberts); corrected 2 that were estimated by providing middle initials and towns (Hughes and Kulikoff), confirmed estimated Goudy, allowed an estimate for Taylor, and provided addresses for Paul P. Thomas, E. White, and John W. Harpster – now identified.
- **403<sup>rd</sup> TCG Special Order 138, Sep 22, 1945** – The book on page 733 notes that, after the 1942-43 ground crews returned to the U.S., in late September 1945 the remaining squadron members were transferred to the 403<sup>rd</sup>’s other four squadrons. This is that order, extremely helpful, below right in part, and retyped on the next page without the serials and ASRS’s, transferring 207 men out of the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS.





Name		Reid fr	Asgd to	Tvl Via
1ST LT WALTER K BRIDGES (1051) (ASRS 50)	0769381 AC)	13th Trp Carr Sq	63d Trp Carr Sq	No Tvl
1ST LT RONALD V BEGG (1051) (ASRS 50)	0777558 AC)	APO 719	APO 719	
1ST LT EDWARD W COLBURN (1051) (ASRS 50)	0769392 AC)		EDCMR 22 Sept 45	

This 403<sup>rd</sup> TCG Special Order 138, Sep 22, 1945, order provided:

- Serial numbers – which I did not have for 17 enlisted men (plus SO 162 provided 1 and SO 227 3), confirmed 9 I estimated, and confirmed or provided 15 others. Corrected Gilmore’s ASN and changed Venezia’s. Let me identify Friedman with his middle initial and serial number. This order provided serial numbers for 55 officers (but these are not useful for officers), and let me identify Irwin Cohen.
- Middle initials – for four men, George J. Laycock, Richard A. Maginot, Epstein, and Emanuel W. Friedman, allowing me to identify all but Epstein.
- Numbers denoting each man’s role - allowing me to reclassify 21 men; I:
  - Relocated 6 men: Casdia and Sutton from pilot (1051) to navigator (1034), Calvin and Darling from RO to CC, S. Rosen to radio operator from utilities, and H.F. Smith from squadron supply to motor pool.
  - Moved 15 men out of “Enlisted Unspecified” to their actual roles: Cohen, Oliva, Ryan, and Swatzell to airplane mechanic (2750), Bromberg, Gilmore, and Zener to airplane mechanic - ground (747); Barrow to the orderly room, Carlson and Downer to communications, Friedman to radar mechanic-navigation, Gray to parachute rigging, T. Jenkins to mess cook, Langlois and Lewis to duty soldier.
  - Added names for 9 glider pilots and 10 glider mechanics added – none of which I had before.  
*The book on pages 61-62 lists 98 men as “unspecified.” I had this down to 42, and this order removed half of them, getting me down to 21. I am in touch with relatives of 8, so may be able to have roles determined for all but 13 men.*
- Advanced Service Rating Score (ASRS) – this is points toward going home, possibly useful to show when men joined the squadron.
- Confirmed dates for 207 men – for 19 of these I had them going home earlier.
- 73 new names – of 50 enlisted men and 23 officers. My last enlisted men’s roster was from May 15, 1945, and last officers list was the photos in Two Years from February 1945, and this order provided the names of men not on those.
- **403<sup>rd</sup> TCG Special Order 162, Oct 31, 1945** – The book on page 733 notes that on November 1, 1945, the squadron was revived by transferring men back into it from the 63<sup>rd</sup> TCS, and this is the order providing the names. It includes 15 prior 13<sup>th</sup> TCS members: Begg, Blakeney, Bridges, Carpenter, Cernick, Clouse, Colburn, Darling, Edelstein, Goodman, Kane, Kelty, Roberts, Schudt, and Tannery.
- **FEAF SO 343, Dec 9, 1945** – relieving men of duty, including 8 from the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS, providing middle initials and addresses, including for John N. Smith, but he is still not identified.

### c. Latest Dashboard

The latest dashboard is below. I added Frank R. Cooper, III, increasing the total to 680.

Birth dates were found for 7 of the 21 unidentified men, as I identified 8: I. Cohen, Cooper, Epstein, Fitzpatrick, H.Johnson, Laycock, Maginot, and Roberts, and removed 1: James Davis (when Bridges' order had his middle initial as W, not M). **This was a huge 33% of unidentified men being identified or estimated.** The number estimated declined from 15 to 12, as I confirmed Friedman, Goudy, Hughes and Kulkikoff (the latter two being different than estimated), removed Davis, and added Epstein and Laycock.

The number of death dates increased by a net 5, being Cooper, Friedman, Johnson, Maginot, Roberts, and Taylor, and I removed J. Davis. Resting places were found for Cooper, Goudy, Harpster, H.Johnson, Lange, Maginot and Roberts, less J. Davis, Kulikoff and one other, for a net 4.

On May 4, 2017, I received an email from the daughter of John L. Thomas, a crew chief in the squadron 3/45-1/46. She wrote that last Veterans Day her grandson, Brennan, who is 7, inquired where were her dad's medals. She found her dad's Separation Qualification Record and applied to get the medals and ribbons replaced, and in the process noticed his unit name, searched, and found the squadron website. Since 2015 I had tried to find her and her two siblings five times, and on June 6, 2016, had my message to them posted on Ancestry.com in case they ever searched there, so it was great to hear from her. On March 7, 2017, I wrote the daughter-in-law of George J. Schissler, and heard back from her. Schissler and Thomas are the two members for whom the table above shows a new contact was made.

**Members and Families Found (of 680 total)**

Members:	24-Apr		30-May		Add	Need
Birth Date*	659	97%	666	98%	7	14
Death Date***	632	95%	637	96%	5	25
Resting Place**	555	84%	559	84%	4	103
FindaGrave Link**	390	59%	393	59%	3	269
Contact	481	71%	483	71%	2	197
Have Book	459	68%	461	68%	2	219

\* Birth and death dates incl. 12 and 8 best-estimates.

\*\* Percent and Need for 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> exclude 18 known living.

### 77 More Members

Bridges' 403<sup>rd</sup> order #138 added names of 23 officers and 50 enlisted men, and other orders added 4 more, increasing our number of members overseas by 77. These orders provide middle initials and serial numbers, which, for enlisted men lead to birth years, states and counties, and on May 25 I found birth and death dates for 31 of these men, and hope to get through the rest soon. These will be added to the dashboard in the next newsletter.

### d. Closing

For years I have tried to: a) identify all of the men, b) find their relatives, c) send them a book, d) learn if they have any items which would add to the history, and e) visit the relatives to scan items. My main goal is to share the book with them but finding items is an amazing reward. It was also nice to see that the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> lives on in the hearts of the relatives of the members.

Thank you to Gene Brown, and to the relatives of Jack Alexander, Bill Alexander, Ralph Babcock, Luther Brady, Bill Foote, and Walter Bridges, for allowing me to visit them, scan their items, and share these family treasures with you.