

November 2017

2nd Newsletter



Dear Thirsty 13th members, relatives, and friends,

In this letter I estimate the location of the 1942 ground crew's barracks at Camp Stoneman, and how they transferred to the ship to sail for New Caledonia. I correct the location of Farm 7, and the son of Nathan Noto shared photos.

Thank you for your interest in The Thirsty 13th.

Seth P. Washburne, Squadron Historian
November 7, 2017

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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, sethgw1@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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Please click the hand symbol to make it easier to scroll down.



1. Additional History

a. 1942: Camp Stoneman Barracks Area, and Move to the Klipfontein

If your relative is one of the 169 ground crew from 1942 on page 184, then, as noted on page 42, from October 10 to November 1, 1942, he was at Camp Stoneman, in Pittsburg, Calif. I have wanted to determine the barracks location, and to determine where the train was, to which Samiran refers on page 126. In July 2015 in Peoria, Ill., I scanned the first two photos above, of Finelli and Gates, shared with us by the daughter, Bobby, of Eschol N. Gates, in operations, and was excited that these might offer clues. The angle of the shadows indicates this view is to the northwest.

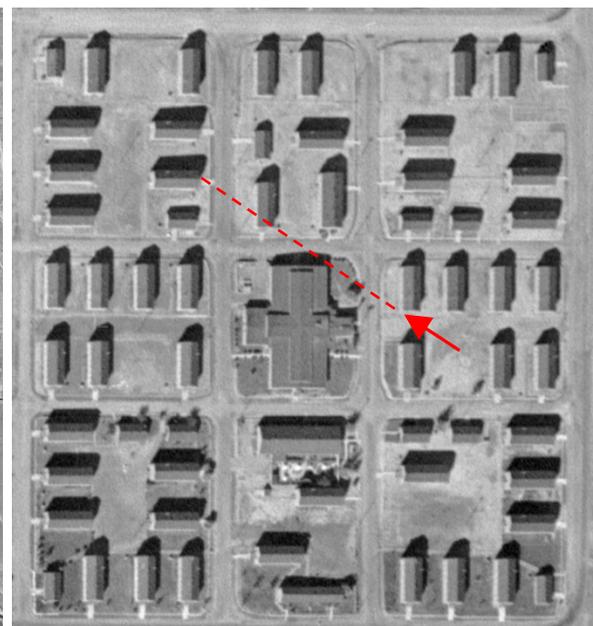
On October 2, I emailed the National Archives in College Park, Md., and on November 3 received aerial photos from three dates. The 13th TCS was here in October 1942, and there were no images before 1947. That above right is from March 21, 1951, and the camp is outlined.

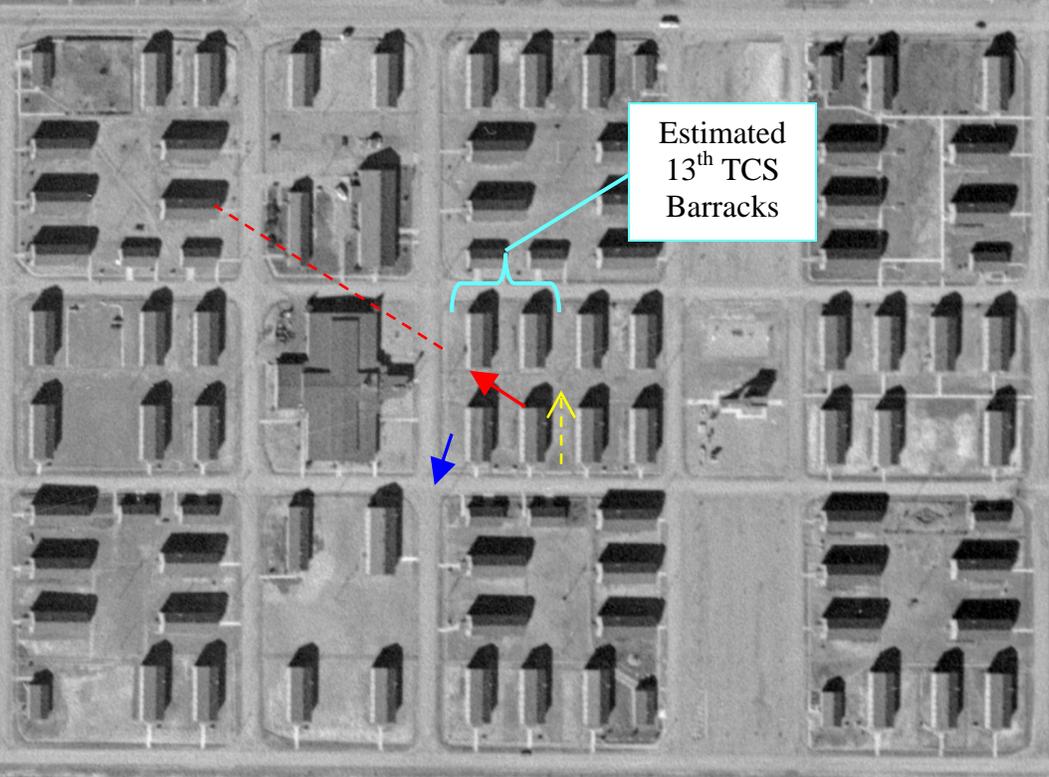
The aerial photo below is from October 11, 1947, and there are 7 areas, outlined in blue, each of 9 blocks, each with a central building, with a red dot, estimated to be a mess hall. Below right is the 4th square, and the central building has a raised roof (clerestory), consistent with the image, also right. The views above are estimated in the direction of the red arrow, below right.



Also consistent with the photos above, there are north-south buildings north of the mess hall in 4 of the squares, outlined in yellow. The photo above center has an electrical connection on the building, and other photos show this was on the end of a building, not the side. Only two of the squares have north-south buildings on the east side, at the top of the adjoining square, and these are outlined in pink. Lastly, the images above have a shadow of a telephone pole close-by, and this is not in the image below right, but is in an image on the next page in the 6th square. These two photos are then estimated to have been in the green square, by the barracks in blue.

Railroad
end



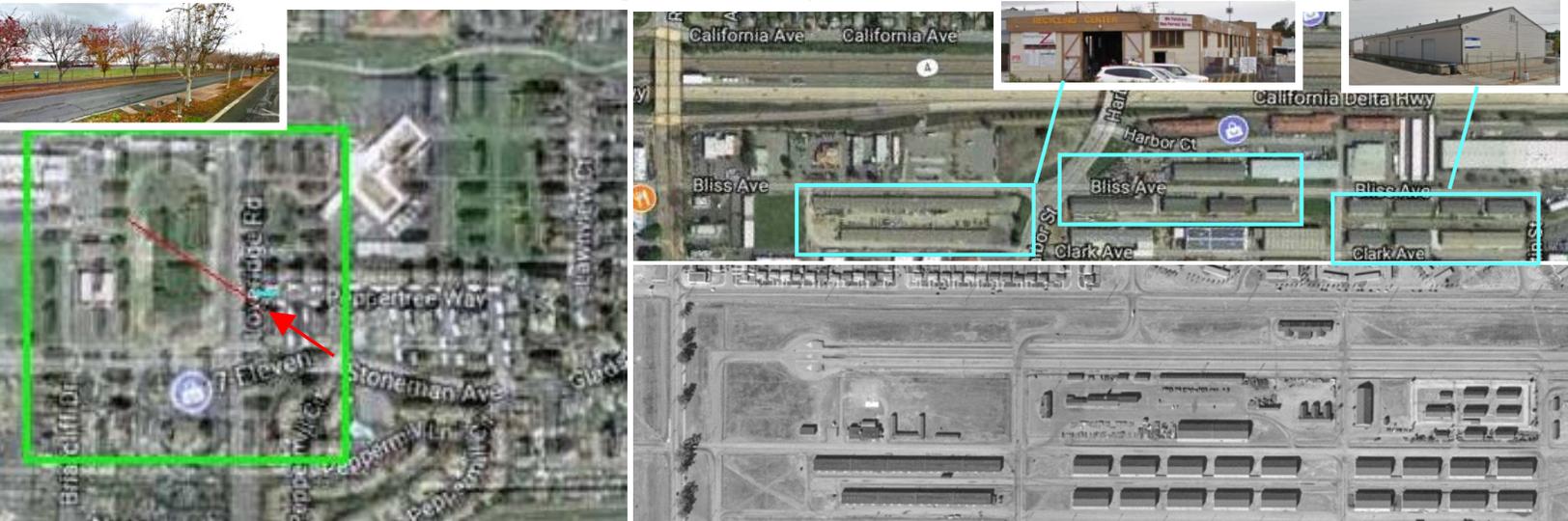


Above is a close-up of the 6th square, and some of that east of it. The Gates photos are in the direction of the red arrow, to the top of the distant building. A telephone pole shadow is visible near the tip of the red arrow, estimated to be the one with a shadow in the photos.

The photo top right is estimated looking east, to the distant buildings of the next square; the fourth square on the prior page had no buildings east of it, again suggesting that was not it. The above aerial has a shadow of a telephone pole by the yellow arrow, estimated that top right. The view above right from p.43 of a building with no upper windows is estimated at the blue arrow.

Website militarymuseum.org/CpStoneman.html states each barracks here held 63 men. The 13th TCS's 169 men would then be in 2-3 buildings. Because the prior photos were in front of the building on the corner, and that above is perhaps by the second building, it is estimated we were in the two noted above, plus one of those south of these or next to them.

Below left is an overlay of Google maps on top of the 1947 image, lining up the Contra Costa Canal in the bottom right corner. The original 9-block square is in green, the barracks underlined in blue, and the photo direction is a red line. The mess hall and buildings north of it would have been where the Black Diamond High School track is now, on the NW corner of Stoneman Avenue and Loveridge Road. The road covers the location of one barracks; the 2017 view is inset. The train track, bottom right, was where the eastbound lanes of the California Delta Highway are now. Track was also between the buildings here, the only ones still standing, many with loading ramps.

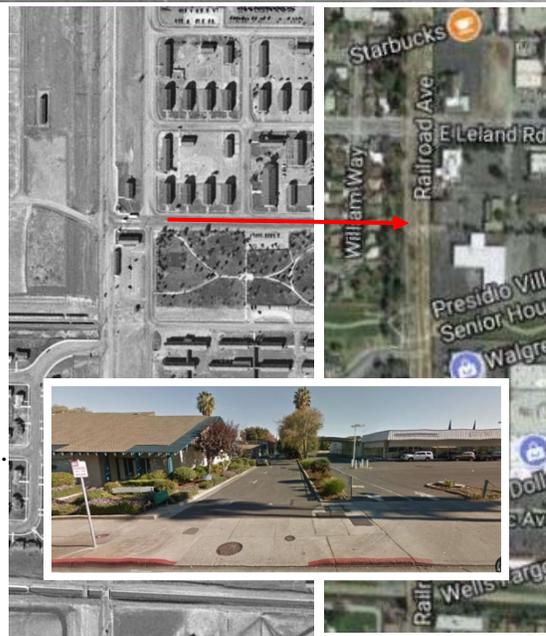




Camp Stoneman Gate 1 Marker

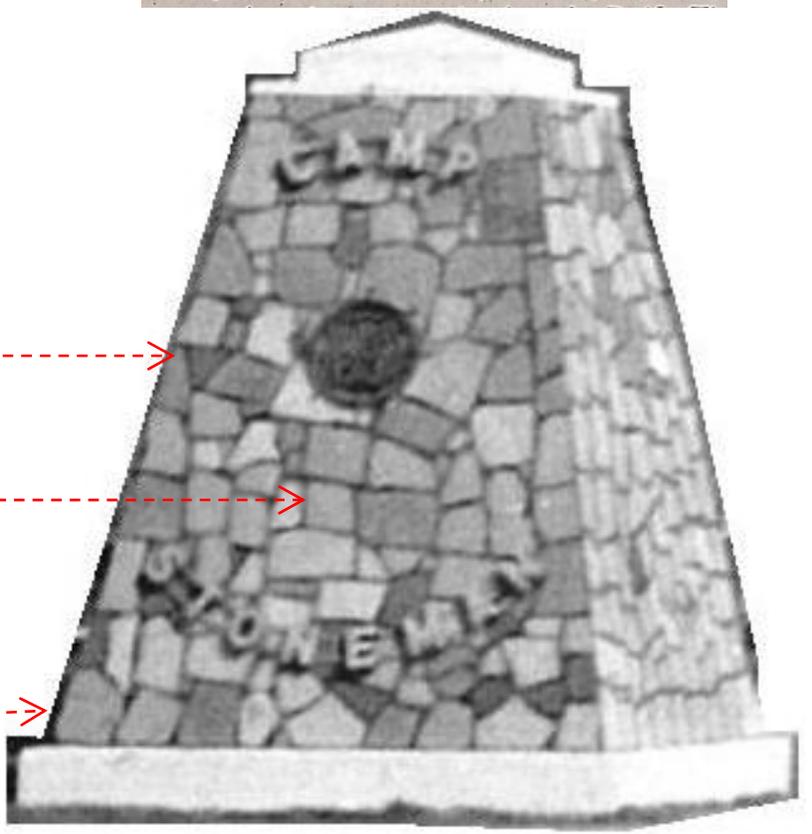
On October 19, 2017, while going over an external drive, I found the photo above titled “Gate 1, looking up Grant Drive.” In the last newsletter I noted Thomas M. Wright had a booklet from Camp Stoneman, which his daughter Karen shared with us, with a map, and estimated Grant Drive was Leland Road, but from the then-and-now images at right, this was south of Leland Road, around 2527 Railroad Ave., the driveways inset at right.

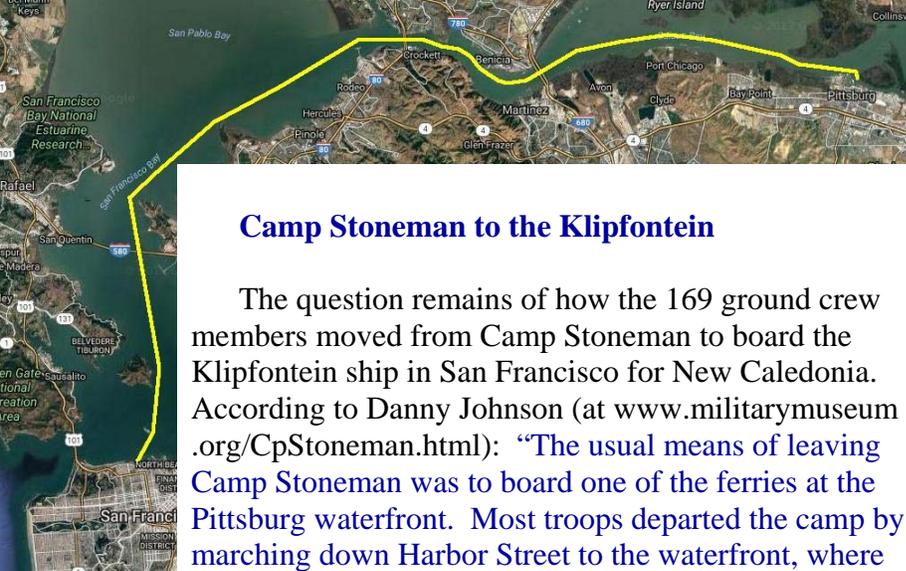
On April 29, 2017, I visited this area, and took the photo below left of a marker in a veterans’ park on Harbor St., 1 block east of here. I was surprised it is the same shape as those above. Comparing stones in each pylon, below right, this is the left marker in the above photo. The letters now are larger, and the center plaque is lower. It is surprising there is no mention near it today that it was at Gate 1.



The squadron arrived by train, but probably passed this when going on hikes, if the marker was here in 1942. The camp opened May 28, 1942. In 1945, our original members returned through Los Angeles, but those who returned through here may have seen this.

Camp Stoneman was first opened May 28, 1942,





Camp Stoneman to the Klipfontein

The question remains of how the 169 ground crew members moved from Camp Stoneman to board the Klipfontein ship in San Francisco for New Caledonia. According to Danny Johnson (at www.militarymuseum.org/CpStoneman.html): “The usual means of leaving Camp Stoneman was to board one of the ferries at the Pittsburg waterfront. Most troops departed the camp by marching down Harbor Street to the waterfront, where the Army operated a small ferry fleet.” This walk from the Thirsty 13th barracks is drawn in yellow at right, and was 3.2 miles. On page 126 Samiran said “We had to walk to the train, and the train was not right there,” and he crossed the tracks, so I think he meant to the ferry.

Danny Johnson continues: “It was a 3-4-hour boat ride from Camp Stoneman to San Francisco. The ferries took the troops to Fort Mason, where they boarded ships headed for war.” This path is above. He says the ferry would also sometimes “carry the troops to Pier 15 and 45 on the Embarcadero in San Francisco.”

Online I found the images at right, of men from Camp Stoneman with their barracks bags boarding a river ferry, and of the Yerba Buena ferry, owned by the Army which transported men to and from Camp Stoneman. The use of river ferries is consistent with the article below right from a Camp Stoneman newspaper 12/24/45, I scanned August 22, 2017, from the daughter of Thomas Wright, referring to a ship that sailed from Manila direct to Camp Stoneman’s own dock in Pittsburg, referring to “the old plan of unloading returnees from transports onto river ferries at San Francisco for the trip here.”

Radio operator John Coker in the August 2016 newsletter recalled “We’re getting on the ship; we had to climb up ropes on the side of it to get on in. And it didn’t have an easy ramp to go up. I don’t remember exactly why.” Ropes are used when boarding from another ship, further suggesting they went by ferry and pulled alongside the Klipfontein. Perhaps the dock was busy loading cargo. Below is Fort Mason in 1933, and in 2017. This was the San Francisco Port of Embarkation, and is the estimated departure point for the Klipfontein.

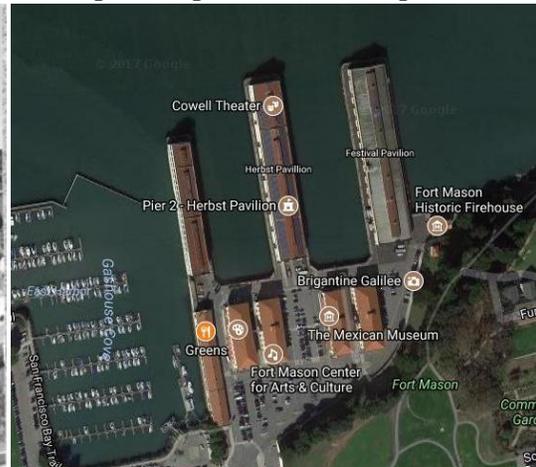


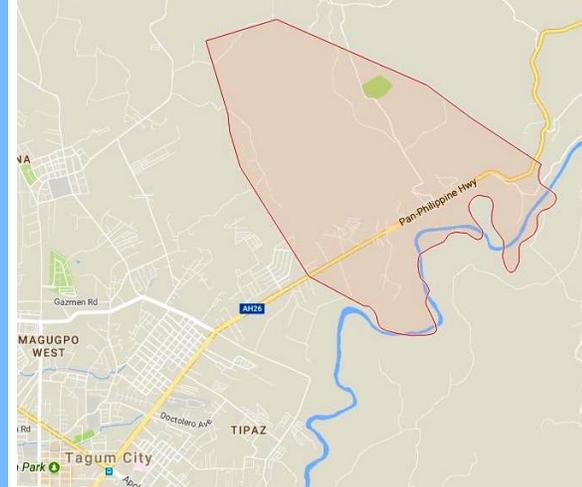
A new expedient toward returning Pacific veterans to their homes as fast as possible was inaugurated at Camp Stoneman (SFPE) last Tuesday, when the troop transport U. S. Carl Effingham steamed up to our docks in Pittsburg direct from Manila.

Carrying 1,718 enlisted men, 10 merchant marines, and 22 officers, this transport was the first to come directly from the Pacific. Wednesday the second transport arrived by direct route, the President Jackson

TO CONTINUE

In the future this practice will be continued, eliminating much wasted time and transportation from the old plan of unloading returnees from transports onto river ferries at San Francisco for the trip here.





b. 1945: Mindanao Landing Strip Farm 7

The book on page 653 quotes a 403rd TCG report saying Farm 7 was “less than 30 kilometers from Davao, and consists of a widened portion of the main highway running north to Davao.” It appears the word “to” should have been “from,” as this was 30 km north of Davao.

In August I met John Payne, who as a crew chief landed at “Farm 7,” and so again researched the location. I found an article: “The Untold Story of the Dabaonons’ Valor,” i.e. of the people of Davao (alt. Dabao). It said after Japan took over their city:

“It ignited the spirit of patriotism and thirst for freedom of the Dabaonons. The guerilla soldiers launched attacks to reclaim the towns that were occupied by the Japanese garrisons and controlled the unoccupied territories. The guerilla movement was so effective that in 1944 they were able to establish the civil government of the Free Davao. On January 2, 1945, its seat of government was established at Magugpo, Tagum. This aided in the construction of a landing field for the United States Army’s C-47 cargo planes in Magdum, Tagum, called “Farm 7,” which hastened the delivery of arms and food to the guerilla fighters.”

Tagum is the red marker above left, and Magdum, Tagum, is the area highlighted in red above center. The main road through here is then estimated to have been Farm 7. The current road, below, after rotated horizontal, has a widened area, which looks like it once was a landing strip.

The 13th TCS flew in here in April 1945, and a battle followed, so our supplies supported this battle. The article goes on to say:

“In May 3 to 10, 1945, the Filipino guerillas under the 107th Division of the United States Force in the Philippines (USFIP) fought a ferocious but victorious battle against the advancing Japanese soldiers at Ising River in Carmen. The weary guerrilla fighters stood their ground and defeated the enemy.

“The victory of the Dabaonon warriors was monumental in the liberation of Mindanao. To honor the gallantry of the Dabaonon fighters, the Provincial Government of Davao del Norte built a 30-foot high monument.”

The monument is shown, above right, and it therefore also honors The Thirsty 13th.



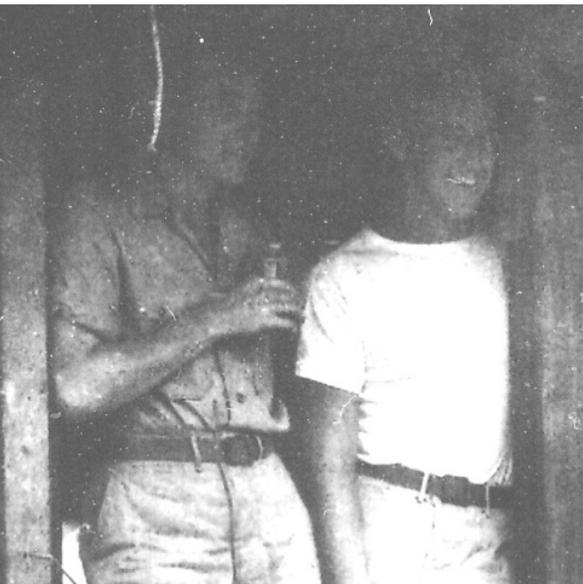


c. 1945: Photos from Nathan Noto, Radar Mechanic, est. 6/45-9/45

On October 28, 2017, the son Nate, of Nathan Noto, a radar mechanic in the squadron, mailed me reproductions of 10 of his father's photos. Those here are from the camp in Dulag on Leyte, in the enlisted men's area on page 702. In the photo above left, the tent, at the top of the stairs, has a gate over the entrance. The cot on the right is raised up so one would sleep above the height of the sides, to enjoy a breeze. The top of the tent has a vent.

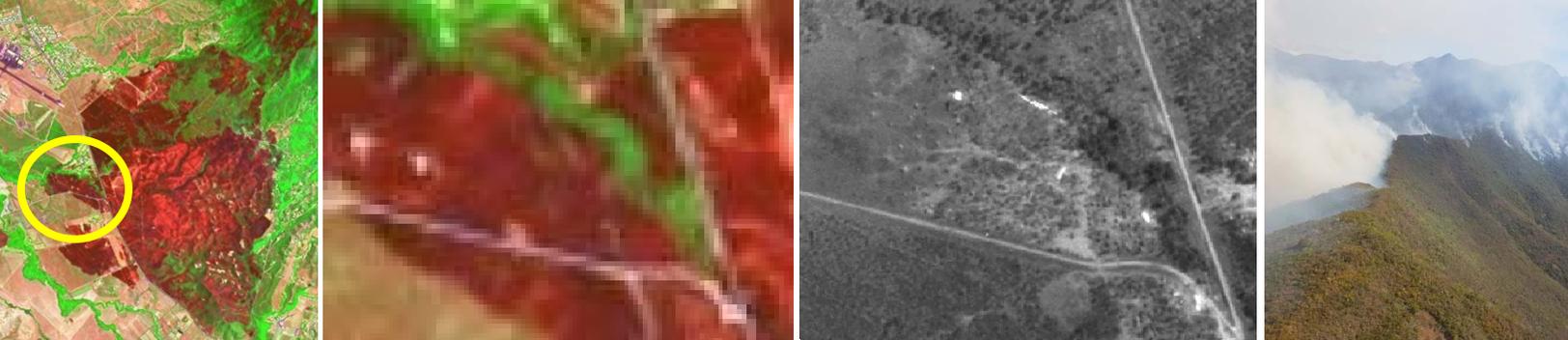
In the photo above right, two of the women are barefoot; there is a stand for boxing practice.

The men are shown up close below left, one enjoying a beverage. In the lower left of the photo, also below, is an empty case of 24 12-oz. cans of Schlitz Beer. Below right are others.



It is nice how Noto took these photos from a lower height. I have a photo of my own dad on one knee to take a photo from the level of someone's midsection, which creates a nice effect. One rarely sees people today taking photos this way.





2. History Related Activities

a. 1942-1943: Fire Burns Grassland of New Caledonia Camp

New Caledonia had a dry winter (our summer), with little rain, so in September set a territory-wide ban on fires. However three teenager arsonists “set huge bush fires” two miles east of the 13th TCS camp, in an area called Bangou, of a local tribe. Due to winds, the fire spread, consuming the large area in red above left, near Tontouta Airport, on the image’s left. Horses, cattle, and sheep perished. The fire jumped the road to the west, and burned the grass covering the entire area of the Thirsty 13th 1942-43 camp, circled, and above center. I had hoped to go over this with a metal detector, but perhaps some artifacts are below the dirt now so were protected. When weather conditions permit, helicopters with water bombers intervene, and there are specialized firemen in the mountains. On November 2 it continued to burn in the mountains, above right. This story and these images are from Marcel Claude.

b. 1945: Dansalan (Marawi City) Damaged

The book on page 647 mentions that, on the Southern Philippines island of Mindanao, the 13th TCS flew into Dansalan, later named Marawi City, on the edge of a large lake, and Driedger noted it had a very beautiful river. It looked like an ideal location, which I hoped to visit someday. A local battle began there on May 23, 2017, and was concluded October 23, 2017, with some of this town damaged.

3. Members and Relatives

a. Found Relatives of Two Members

I have been taking a break from identifying members and finding relatives, believing I have done all I can on this this year, but did retry a previously-found phone number, and was able to find the son of glider mechanic Robert D. McCall, and searched for recently-added Roy Diamond and found his son, for two new contacts. I inquired about letters and photos.

Members and Families Found (of 759 total)

Members [†]	2-Nov		7-Nov		Add	Nd-tot
Birth Date*	739	97%	739	97%	0	20
Death Date***	706	96%	706	96%	0	33
Resting Place**	610	83%	610	83%	0	129
FindaGrave Link**	434	59%	434	59%	0	305
Contact	514	68%	516	68%	2	243
Have Book	484	64%	486	64%	2	273

* Birth and death dates incl. 17 and 13 best-estimates.

** Percent and Need for 2nd-4th exclude 20 living.

4. Closing

For relatives of the 169 ground crew members who took the ship to the South Pacific, and for the squadron history, it is great to close the gap and have estimates of where the barracks at Camp Stoneman was, and how they got to the Klipfontein. It is also good to know more about Farm 7. Noto’s photos provide another view of camp life at Dulag in August-September 1945.

With best wishes, Seth