



## 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association "KEN'S MEN"

Willing, Able, Ready

### ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT***

Hello and a Happy 2016 to all of the 43rd Bomb Group and Ken's Men! I know this past year has been eventful for some of you and has brought many changes, not all of which have been good. Once again we must say goodbye and this time to Roger Kettleman, a past President of the 43rd Bomb Group. Roger was President in 2003-2004 and passed away this past July at the age of 93. A long time resident of Las Vegas Nevada, Roger was survived by his wife of 72 years as well as 5 children and 10 grandchildren. It sounds like Roger had a wonderful life, I know he will be missed.

Plans are under way for this year's reunion and after much consideration, the reunion committee has settled on Baltimore, Maryland for 2016. Having this year's reunion out west was a serious consideration but without any volunteers to help with the planning, we had to go with what we could make happen in a timely fashion. Baltimore, MD offers an exciting array of options such as a WWII submarine that we can tour and Aberdeen Proving Grounds. Aberdeen was established in 1917 as part of the Army and served as a research facility during WWII. We feel this is a unique opportunity for all of you ol' WWII Veterans as well as family members to live fire a .50 caliber WWII machine gun. We are working on this possibility so all you gunners out there, get ready! Perhaps we can get Wade Kehr and James Eide to pose for a "then and now" photo? On a personal note, I have fired one of these mounted on a military patrol boat and I can tell you it is not that easy to aim, so this should be fun as well as very educational for the rest of us.

We hope to once again use the Embassy Suites as our home base since they were such a hit last year and, from my perspective, they made things easy. Their breakfast and cocktail hour being included seems to have been a hit, as well as helps to keep costs down. We are in the early planning stages so if any of you have any ideas, now is the time to pass them on and, as we know from last year, the added input from the Anderson family really made the reunion. So please, feel free to contact me with guest speaker suggestions or any useful contacts you may have in the Baltimore area.

2016 Reunion Suggestions to: [slanson1@gmail.com](mailto:slanson1@gmail.com)

On another topic, I am in frequent contact with the author Tom Clavin. As many of you know, he and fellow co-author Bob Drury have both been visitors



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### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**PAST PRESIDENTS**

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2002-2003\*

**Charles Rauch**  
2004-2005

**Jim Cherkauer**  
2006-2007

**James Thompson Jr**  
2008

**Eldon "Bud" Lawson**  
2009-2010\*

**Arvid J. Hougum**  
2011\*

**Robert R. Richardson**  
2012-2013

\* Deceased

## ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT'D)***

and speakers at our reunions in the past while writing their book on the 43rd Bomb Group. I understand the book will be released by Simon and Schuster sometime in 2016. No, this is not a comprehensive book about the history of the 43rd Bomb Group, but about one event, the *Old 666*. I will of course keep you posted and send out a separate email when the book is published.

We are also working hard on keeping your history alive, as always. Progress is being made at George Mason University (GMU) while more information goes into archives and some gets scanned and goes online. It may at times look as if no progress is being made - please know there is a much larger plan that is not always evident. Resources must go into the gathering and scanning of information at this point, not into the presentation. The same goes for our own Ken's Men website, you will be seeing some small changes and additions coming to this site in the future as well. While we try not to sit still, it is also not easy to make progress with so little time, resources and volunteers.

I look forward to seeing you all in Baltimore this year and will get out information as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

***Susan Clark Lanson***  
***President, 43rd Bomb Group Association***

## ***NEW MEMBERS***

**Gayle McCay**, daughter of **George O. Anderson, 403rd Squadron**, is a Lifetime Member. Gayle recently became the Association's Treasurer. She and her husband, Brian, live in Massachusetts.

**Deborah Billington**, from Stamford, Connecticut, is the daughter of **Herb Billington, 65th Squadron**, who recently passed away. Deborah has joined our organization as a way to honor her father's service.

## ***MEMBERSHIP - 43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION***

If you wish to become a Lifetime Member of the Association, there is an application form at the back of this newsletter. You can also download a form by clicking on the following link: <http://www.kensmen.com/membershipform.pdf>

Please send application and payment, made out to '43rd Bomb Group Association', directly to the Treasurer: Gayle McCay, 9 Appletree Lane, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730. We thank you in advance for your consideration in joining this great organization.

***A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the following Ken's Men:***

**Ray Crawford, 63rd**, turned 96 on 2 December

**Chuck Rauch, 63rd**, turned 93 years old on 2 December

**Bob Yeck, 63rd**, turned 95 on 6 December

**Jim Dieffenderfer, 63rd**, was 96 years old this past December 25th

**Jim Thompson, Jr, 63rd**, on 26 January will turn 86 years old (post-WWII era)

**Wade Kehr, 403rd**, will be 92 years on 27 January

**Bill Williams, 63rd**, will be 91 years old on 9 February

**Richard Harthun, 403rd**, on 12 February will be 90 years old

**Bill Jobe, 64th**, will be 92 years old on 27 February

**Bob Richardson, 63rd**, will be 90 on 11 March

**Frank Hohmann, 65th and 403rd**, will be 96 years old this March 24th

*If you know of a Veteran who has an upcoming birthday, please make us aware so we can extend our congratulations and best wishes.*



***FROM FAMILIES & FRIENDS***

**Drew Wesche** - son of **Frederick F Wesche, 64th**

**Clint Frederick** - author of book, 'World War II: A Legacy of Letters - One Soldier's Journey' *Note: A great read; in several instances, Clint's father's experiences on the ground run parallel with 43rd missions*

**Margaret Carol** - her Dad was a good friend of and cousin by marriage to **Morris Rifkin, 63rd**

**Thomas Freeman** - son of **Kenneth R Freeman, 64th** *Note: Ken's older brother, **Aubrey J Freeman, 19th BG**, was taken captive in 1942 and died with more than 680 other prisoners onboard the 'Shinyo Maru' on 7 Sep 1944*

**Eva Schindhelm** - daughter-in law of **Ervin Schindhelm, 64th**

**Patrick O'Leary** - Veteran's Affairs Manager, UPS; seeking details on **Leonard Brown, 63rd**, DOW 6 Jun '45

**Bob Tallitsch** - son of **John Tallitsch, 403rd**

**Debra Collazo** - granddaughter of **Russell Burnett, 64th**

**David Wollin** - son of **Bernard Wollin, 64th**

**Toni Marie Vierra** - granddaughter of **Anthony Vierra, 64th**

**Jim Noonan** - son-in-law of **Elmer J Schwalbach, 65th**

**Barbara Gannon** - daughter of **George T Kisel, 403rd**

**Bill Hart** - nephew of **Ralph Miller Hart, 403rd** (KIA aboard Pride of the Cornhuskers, 7 Sep 1943)

**Janice Veres** - daughter of **Warren D Killion, 403rd** *Note: Janice is receiving help in researching her Dad's service from our Vice President, Nancy Solomon, whose husband Bill was in the 403rd*

## TAPS



**Herbert Billington**  
**65th Squadron**



**Herb Billington**, 94, of Auburndale, FL passed away 18 November 2015. Herb served in the **65<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group** from March 1942 to October 1943. He is survived by his wife of nearly 70 years, Elaine, his daughters Judy McMahan and husband Tom, Deborah Billington, grandson Jeffrey McMahan and wife Heather and his sister Marian McCaslin. The excerpt below, a reformatted version of an original article in the April 21, 2011 Tampa Tribune created as a keepsake for the Billington Family, is a testament to Herb's commitment to his country and his community —

"MacDill Air Force Base has seen a lot of missions over the years, but maybe none was as colorful as the flight of a B-29 Superfortress that took off from MacDill 62 years ago tomorrow.

The destination: California. The mission: Fulfill the dying wish of a child with leukemia who had one small request. "He just wanted some watermelon," says Herb Billington, speaking from his home in Polk County. "Back then, they didn't have Florida watermelons in California and the doctors told the boy's parents that he would die before the California melons were ready." ...

Billington was a technical sergeant at MacDill when he read a story in the old Tampa Daily Times about a cargo flight out of Miami that disappeared on its way to deliver watermelons to 4-year-old Ronnie Calvert of Richmond, Calif. "I said to one of the boys, 'Why don't we deliver the melons?'" says Billington, now 89. "We have planes."

But first he had to find the melons. Then get pilots and a crew. And convince the group commander to let him take a B-29, the kind of airplane made famous less than five years earlier by dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

If anyone was up to the task, it was Billington... One newspaper story he's saved tells how Billington helped save the crew of his B-17 in 1943 after a pre-dawn bombing raid. And several newspapers reported how he helped save the pilot and co-pilot of their B-24 Liberator bomber that crashed a few months later in shallow water of the Pacific off their island base of New Guinea. Yet another press account recalls how Billington was on a Liberator flying dangerous skip-bombing missions against Japanese shipping... Billington says he was involved in other amazing flights. ...

... He recalls that shortly after Pearl Harbor, he volunteered to be part of a squadron of three B-17s stationed in New Guinea that were assigned to harass the Japanese during night flights. "They wanted us to keep them awake," he says. "We flew two missions a night." It was so early in the war that the planes didn't have any bombs. "Sometimes, we dropped Coke bottles on them because they made a whistling noise as they fell," he says. ...

... Shortly after Easter, 1949, Billington says he went around MacDill looking for single men without families who might be interested in joining him in his effort to bring watermelons to Ronnie Calvert. "I needed pilots and a crew," he says. He also needed melons. He found farmers ... who were happy to donate the melons and drove about 30 to the base. But Billington still needed to convince the commander of the 306th Bomb Group to let him take a B-29 and enough gas to get to California for a decidedly non-military mission. "I went to him and said I have the melons and the pilot and the crew," says Billington. "I said all I needed was a plane."

The commander, he says, was happy to oblige. "Why don't you make it a training mission?" Billington recalled the commander's response. "The training mission became a mission of mercy." After an eight-hour flight, the B-29 landed at Hamilton Air Force Base. The crew and melons were trucked over to Ronnie Calvert's home 14 miles away.

"The little boy was so happy," says Billington, who posed for a picture with the child sitting on his lap, wearing his aviator cap..."



## **TAPS (cont'd)**



**Robert O Charles**  
**64th Squadron**



CHESNEE, SC-- Robert O. Charles 94, widower of Ruby G. Charles of 1226 Ezell Road went home to be with the Lord, Tuesday, December 15, 2015.

Born April, 29, 1921 in Boiling Springs, SC he was a son of the late Frank Charles and Ellen McArthur Charles. Mr. Charles was the owner of R.O. Charles Construction Company, he proudly served his county in the U.S. Air Force having served in WWII where he received a Purple Heart and was a member of Piedmont Baptist Church.

Those left to cherish his fond and loving memories are his daughter, Brenda A. Graham (Gene); sons, James E. Charles and Randy F. Charles (Patty) all of Chesnee. He is also survived by his loving brother and sister, Jesse Charles (Frances), Julia Hammett (Hunter); 8 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and 4 great-great-grandchildren.

In addition to his wife and parents, he was predeceased by a son Robert 'Bobby' Charles Jr. and a brother Lewis Charles.

Funeral services will be 3:00 p.m. Friday, December 18, 2015 at Piedmont Baptist Church with the Rev. Heyward Calvert and Rev. Darryl Revels officiating. Burial with military honors will follow in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends from 2:00 until 3:00 p.m. Friday at the church prior to the service ...

Lanford-Gwinn Mortuary Woodruff, SC - See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/spartanburg/obituary.aspx?pid=176911461#sthash.TedfRqxQ.dpuf>



**Roger G Kettleison**  
**64th Squadron**



Col. Roger Glenn Kettleison, 93, went home to be with the Lord Monday, July 6, 2015. Roger was born July 25, 1921 in Estherville, Iowa and was a resident of Las Vegas for almost 47 years. After serving our country for 28 years, Col. Kettleison retired from the U.S. Air Force July 31, 1968. Roger received many honors, commendation medals, ribbons and citations, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Silver Star, which he was awarded for heroic achievement under fire. He was a command pilot and test pilot. He also served as a planning and programming officer, logistics staff officer and assistant base commander. His greatest legacy however is his family. He is survived by his wife of 72 years, Audrey Rose, their five children, Karen, Kevin, Kandis, Konnie and Kolin; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren and one on the way. He is also survived by his sisters, Ruth Sunde and Donna Braband. Funeral services will be at 10:40AM Tuesday, July 14 at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Source: <http://obits.dignitymemorial.com/dignity-memorial/obituary.aspx?n=Roger-Kettleison&lc=1012&pid=175227946&uuiid=8cc44e37-8c9a-40c6-aaff-8d633112c416>

*Editor's Note: Roger was active as a leader in the 43rd Bomb Group Association for many years. He served as the Association President in 2002–2003. Previous to that time, he had served as the Vice President and also as the Treasurer.*

## **Memorial Drill Hall Dedicated to SSgt Leonard Brown, 63rd Squadron**

UPS and the Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation Honor a "Ken's Men"

The Association was recently contacted by the Veterans Affairs manager for UPS, Mr Pat O'Leary. A UPS initiative called 'Wishes Delivered' this year involved Hershel "Woody" Williams, a WWII Marine that was awarded the Medal of Honor during the battle for Iwo Jima. A few years ago Woody created a foundation called Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation. One of the Foundation's projects is to install monuments to Gold Star Families throughout the country.

UPS transported a monument, at no cost, from Georgia to the town of Fairmont, West Virginia where it was installed at the Armed Forces Reserve Center. But, involvement did not stop with moving the monument; UPS also participated in a second tribute - this one to Woody's childhood friend, **SSgt Leonard Brown, 63rd Squadron.**

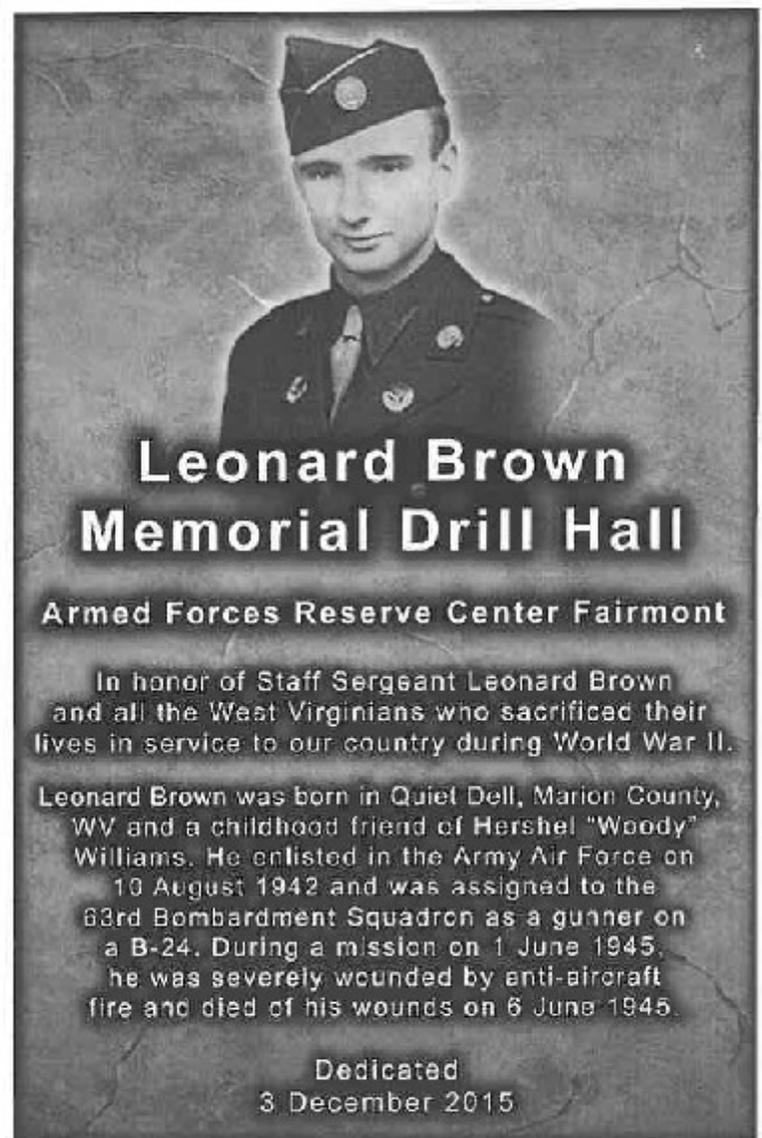
Woody and Leonard grew up in a small farm community just outside of Fairmont where they became close friends. During WWII, Woody went into the Marines and Leonard enlisted in the Army Air Force. Woody earned the Medal of Honor and, when he returned home, the town held a parade and gave him a car. Leonard, though, was killed in 1945 during a mission as a turret gunner on a B-24 and his loss always weighed heavily on Woody's mind. As a part of supporting Woody's efforts, UPS wanted to do something to honor Leonard and his family. They worked with the West Virginia National Guard to obtain permission to name the drill hall inside the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Fairmont after SSgt Brown.

A twist to this story - for the last 70 years, Woody believed that Leonard's plane was shot down and that his body was never recovered. Research by Pat O'Leary led him to the 43rd Bomb Group Association and the details of Leonard's death; his plane was hit and he was severely wounded. Though the pilot was able to land the aircraft, Leonard died of his wounds five days later. He was buried in a military cemetery in the Philippines in June 1945.

Leonard's body was then returned to Fairmont in February 1949 and buried in a local cemetery. Since Woody had left Fairmont not long after the war ended, he lost track of the Brown family and never knew that his friend had made it home.

On Thursday December 3, 2015, Woody walked into the Drill Hall where he was met by Brigadier General Charles Veit, Assistant Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard. BG Veit told Woody he was aware of his childhood friend and that the drill hall was going to be dedicated in memory of Leonard and would now be called the Leonard Brown Memorial Drill Hall. Woody was overwhelmed. In attendance were six members of the Brown family; Woody had not interacted with anyone from the Brown family in over 65 years. Woody was then told that Leonard was not MIA but had actually made it home to Fairmont and was buried in the local cemetery with his family.

**(article continued on next page)**



## Memorial Drill Hall Dedicated to SSgt Leonard Brown, 63rd Squadron (cont'd)

Woody Williams is 92 years old and a true American hero who is determined to honor Gold Star Families. And now he has finally been able to pay his respects at the grave of one of our own, SSgt Leonard Brown.

Watch this beautiful video of Woody and Leonard's story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HiRFwt1Lxg&list=PLxfC-I5NL73VUk5JukBpxR88PIIz7NoVo&index=5>

Please take some time to read more about the Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation:  
<http://www.hwmmohfoundation.org/gold-star-monument.html>



## Maurice 'M R' Jones, 64th Squadron

Survived Japanese Attack on Hickam Field

Your Secretary received a wonderful holiday card from Tanya Williams, daughter of **M R Jones, 64th Squadron**. Tanya relayed a bit about her Dad's military service.

M R, a flight engineer/gunner, was with the 31st Bomb Squadron at Hickam Field in early 1941 as part of a B-17 crew; he was there when Pearl and Hickam were attacked by the Japanese. What remained of the 31st, to include M R and his crew, then flew long range missions from Hawaii over Midway and neighboring islands until late 1942 when they flew a new B-17 to Australia. Once there, they became a part of the 43rd and eventually transitioned to crewing B-24s.

M R returned to the States in late summer 1943 and, after a brief period outside the military, reenlisted and retired from the US Air Force in 1964.

M R's approach to life these days is to "wake up each morning and look around for someone he can help!"



*M.R. Jones & Daughter Tanya - Dec 7, 2015*

TO THOSE WHO DIED TO THOSE WHO SURVIVED  
PEARL HARBOR SURVIVORS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER 2  
DEDICATES THIS MEMORIAL TO THE MILITARY  
MEN AND WOMEN SERVING AT STATIONS ON OAHU  
HAWAII DURING THE JAPANESE ATTACK  
DECEMBER 7 1941

## **Jim Cherkauer, 65th Squadron**

Buffalo Honor Flight, 24 October 2015



Jim aboard the flight from Buffalo to Baltimore

Jim Cherkauer, accompanied by son Doug, traveled on Buffalo's Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. in late October. It was a wonderful opportunity and experience for Jim to share with his son as they visited the WWII Memorial along with many other of our Nation's memorials and monuments and, of course, Arlington Cemetery. Jim reports that it went 'fantastically well' and that the homecoming afterward was incredible.



Jim and son, Doug, both native New Yorkers, take a picture at the New York pillar of the WWII Memorial

A group of WWII living historians stopped by the WWII Memorial -

- and took an opportunity to honor Lt RJ Cherkauer's service with this photo



If not familiar with Honor Flight Network, you can read more about their mission here:

<https://www.honorflight.org/>

## ***AN HONORARY KEN'S MEN***

Written with assistance from Frank Hohmann, 65th and 403rd Squadrons



Sgt Alex Kaczmarczyk

In late 1940, a full year before Pearl Harbor, a young man named Alex has already enlisted in the service of his country. He is eventually assigned to the 74<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron in Panama's Canal Zone where he and a flight engineer named Frank become fast friends. Rather than attend formal training, pilot Lt Jay Rousek encourages Alex to learn the flight engineer business on-the-job from Frank.

Together, Frank and Alex crew Lt Rousek's B-17, their early mission being to train pilots on the B-17 in Panama as those pilots come out of twin-engine school. They continue to crew and learn the B-17 together throughout 1941 while now flying U.S. government personnel to various countries in Central and South America. Later in 1941, they are transferred to Guatemala to do surface interdiction of ships transiting the Panama Canal. Immediately after the events at Pearl Harbor, the Rousek crew is administratively transferred to the 19th Bomb Group (the 19th is stationed in the Philippines at that time), yet continue to perform their mission in South America. In July of 1942, the Rousek crew - to include Frank and Alex - is transported back to the States via DC-3.

After B-17 crew training and assignment of B-17F, 41-24448, *'Taxpayer's Pride'*, the crew is ready to deploy, departing the States on 10 August 1942 for the standard island-hopping journey to the Pacific. On the first leg of the trip, Alex becomes ill; after landing at Hickam Field, he is taken to the hospital, diagnosed with severe appendicitis and scheduled for immediate surgery. Given the recovery time necessary, the remainder of the crew continue on, though not before Frank tells Alex to "... just get well and your job is safe with me." *'Taxpayer's Pride'* arrives at Mareeba, Australia on 25 August, where the men are assigned to the 28th Squadron, 19<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.

On 21 October, more than 10 weeks after his surgery and recovery from a follow-on bout of jaundice, Alex is manifested on a B-24 flown by Air Transport Command. This flight's primary mission is to get WWI flying ace *Eddie Rickenbacker* and his military assistant to Australia where they are to provide an assessment of aviation combat operations. It provides the perfect opportunity for Alex to get back to his crew.

Unfortunately, on this flight, the aircrew misses sighting its first stopover at Canton Island; after executing a series of emergency actions to find any possible landing area, they are forced to ditch in the Pacific. Incredibly, all of the men survive the ditching and escape from the sinking B-24, but eight men are now adrift at sea with very little food and no fresh water. Most of these men would remain adrift, surviving for 21 days in the Pacific. Sadly though, on 2 November, twelve weeks after an emergency appendectomy and thirteen days after ditching in the Pacific, Alex dies during the night; at daybreak, he is buried at sea. Sgt Alex Kaczmarczyk, originally a *'Taxpayer's Pride'* crewman, is the only man who will die during this ordeal.

Less than two weeks later, on 13 November, Frank and his crewmates fly their last mission as a part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The 19<sup>th</sup> is rotated home and, rather than depart with them, the crew elect to join the 19<sup>th</sup>'s replacement unit, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group - Ken's Men - where they are assigned to the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

Eddie Rickenbacker, of course, survives his ordeal adrift in the Pacific and, after a short recovery period in Samoa, continues on his way to complete his original mission for the War Department. In early December, he will take some time from his schedule to visit the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron where he will talk to flight engineer SSgt Frank Hohmann and others from the original Rousek crew about the loss of their assistant engineer and friend, Sergeant Alex Kaczmarczyk.

***(article continued on next page)***

## ***AN HONORARY KEN's MEN (cont'd)***

From Frank's memoirs, "Captain Ed. Rickenbacker and entourage came to our tent at Mareeba to meet with all of our crew, to tell us of Alex's loss at sea while trying to catch up with our crew. He explained all the details of Alex's health, eventual passing and the consequences of Alex having drunk seawater while on the life rafts. Captain Rickenbacker was especially congratulatory of Alex's knowledge of the B-17. I was proud at that moment for what the Captain had to say about Alex but very sad of the loss of such a good friend. I meet him in the back roads of my mind often. I dedicate this story to him and all the very fine men that I was privileged to meet and know, so many years ago."

**Sgt Alex T Kaczmarczyk, U.S. Army Air Forces**, is memorialized at the WWII Courts of the Missing—Honolulu.

*Editor's Note: Additional background information for this article was obtained from 'Seven Came Through', written by Captain Edward V Rickenbacker, 1943.*



**Frank Hohmann, 65th and 403rd**, would love to hear from folks in the Association, new and old. He can be reached at [fhohmann88@comcast.net](mailto:fhohmann88@comcast.net)

## ***ALL THE FLOWERS OF TOMORROW ARE IN THE SEEDS OF YESTERDAY***

*- Author Unknown*

Your Secretary received a nice 'thank you' from Matthew Morlok, the gentleman who contributed the pictures and information on the Ken's Men B-10 jacket in our July newsletter. He is hoping he'll hear from a veteran or two - or possibly a family member - regarding this type jacket.

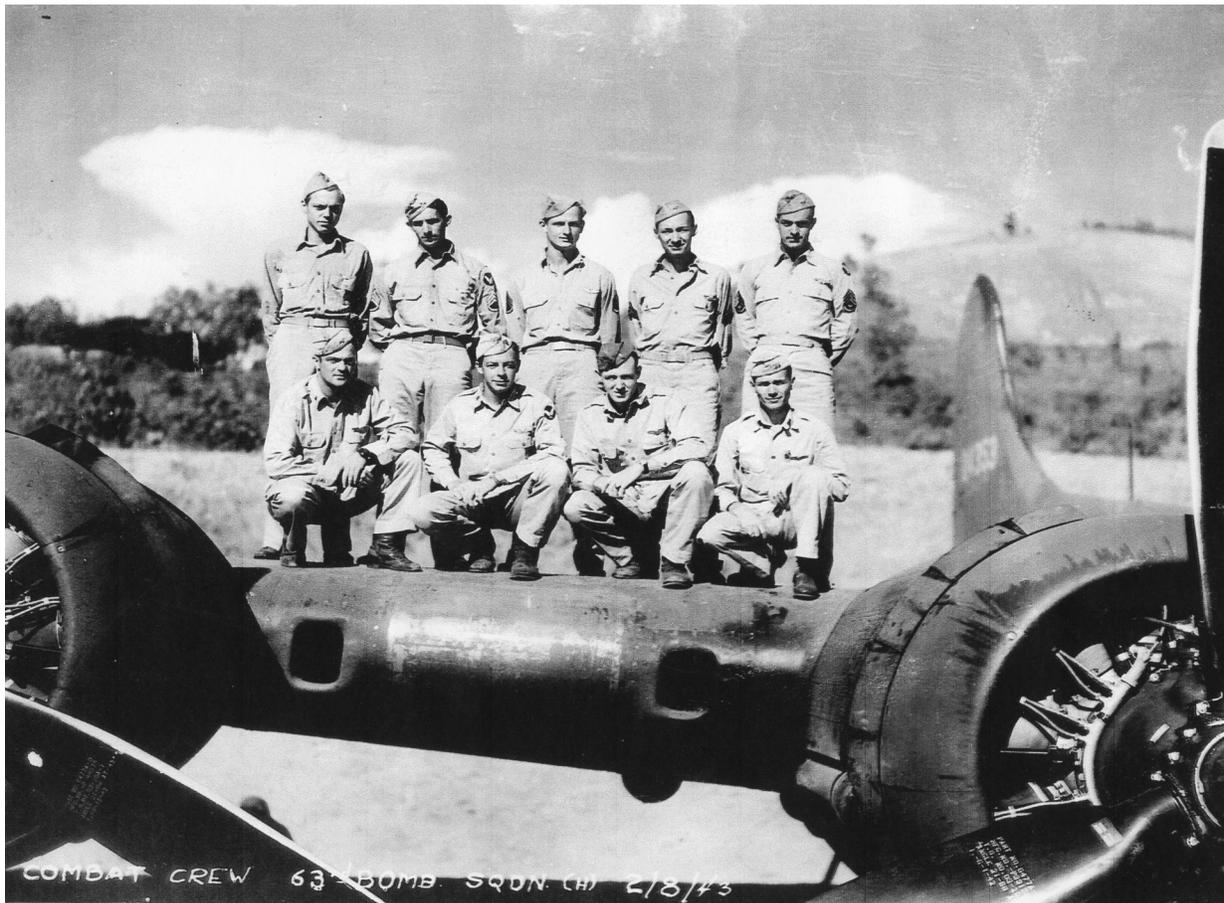
Matthew closed his note with this wonderful story: "In 1944, my Grandfather, Chris, was in Italy, not far from Cassino. My Grandmother, Ruth, was home. She worked every day, putting her earnings in a cast iron teapot. Chris managed to come across a beautiful rose plant, and somehow mailed it to Maryland. Ruth got a telegram, and took the train to Baltimore to pick it up. After the war, Chris came home and the two were married. In four years of war, she saved enough in the teapot to buy a house with cash.

My wife and I now live in that very house. The teapot is still under the sink. And every time I look out of the living room window, I see a beautiful rose plant. The same one that was mailed home from Italy in 1944. It reminds me every day that something beautiful can always be found, no matter how ugly the day may appear."



## ***Folmer J Sogaard and Crew, 63rd Squadron***

Contributed by Jim Dieffenderfer



Taken directly from back of photo -

Front Row, Right to Left: Folmer J Sogaard, Merrill T Ward, William N Ahl, William A Lunsday

Back Row, Right to Left: Charles E Green, Dale W Alton, Charles C Haftman, Sgt Andrew, Alfred F Westphal (radioman was lost on another flight), John F Frazee

This photo was sent to us by **Jim Dieffenderfer, 63rd Squadron** as an opportunity to provide a long awaited addition to the *Down Under* book so many of us have in our possession.

Captain Folmer Sogaard, pilot of B-17 *Fighting Swede*, became the 63rd Squadron Commander on 24 May 1943, after Major Edward W. Scott Jr relinquished command.

This picture of Sogaard's crew was not included when the *Down Under* book was published. But, the picture of the Lt James T Murphy and crew was included - *twice* - on pages 38 and 42 - where, both times, they are the middle crew photo on the page.

Our thanks to Jim for informing everyone of this omission and for also providing an opportunity for any owners of *Down Under* to insert this photo over one of the two Lt Murphy crew pictures.

## *Lt Hugh Papworth and Crew, 64th Squadron*



Lt Milton M Schoonmaker III  
Bombardier/Armament Sup.

Lt Lester L Katzen  
Navigator/Records

Lt Warren C Williams  
Co-Pilot/Logs

Lt Hugh P Papworth  
Pilot-in-Command

Sgt Clifford Stacy  
Ass't Engineer

Sgt Wallace Suarez  
Tail Turret Gunner

TSgt Wayne Smith  
Ass't Engineer/Engines

SSgt Earl Sorensen  
Supervising Engineer

TSgt Floyd Rickard  
Belly Turret/W&B

Sgt Daniel Hopson  
Radio Operator

Your Secretary had a wonderful opportunity recently to chat with **Hugh Papworth, 64th Squadron**, over the phone. Hugh was a pilot from July of 1943 to June of 1944, flying 57 missions. He provided the above photo of his crew.

Two of these men were lost during the war. Lt Katzen, an excellent navigator who just would not let Hugh get lost, was killed on 4 June 1944 along with the entire crew of B-24J 42-109991 flown by Lt Julian Petty. Sgt Suarez, a tail gunner who had already downed multiple Japanese planes, was killed on 2 April 1944 in the crash of B-24D 42-40667 'Frisky'.

Hugh says he had an excellent crew and was proud to have served with them and the 43rd Bomb Group.

### ***Looking for a Copy of 'Down Under'***

Thomas Freeman is the son of **Kenneth R Freeman, 64th Squadron**, who was with the 43<sup>rd</sup> during the B-17 era as a mechanic and crew chief. Thomas has been told that his Dad's records were lost in the 1973 fire in St. Louis. He is wondering if anyone has any recollection of his Dad's service. Additionally, Thomas would be interested in a copy of 'Down Under', either the original or the reprint done in the early 1990s. If anyone can assist him, either with some memory of his Dad's service, or by letting go of an extra copy of 'Down Under', Thomas can be reached at [freetomm@earthlink.net](mailto:freetomm@earthlink.net)

## ***Another 'Down Under' Story***

Like so many of you, your Secretary has a copy (her Dad's copy) of 'Down Under'.

The last glossy page of this particular book has printed on it "Autographs". Behind that page is a treasure - a series of pages that appear to have been glued in. These pages have over 150 men's signatures and home addresses, most if not all of them from the 64th Squadron. Many of these men signed together as a crew, as if the book (or these separate pages) might have gone from tent to tent for signatures.

Your Secretary will eventually get this posted on the Ken's Men website so that it can be used for research. In the meantime, she'd be interested in knowing if anyone from the 64th Squadron or other squadrons of the 43rd has a 'Down Under' book that also has pages containing signatures at the back.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>City-- State</i>
<i>George H. Joopps</i>	<i>62 Medbury</i>	<i>Detroit, Michigan</i>
<i>Richard D. English</i>	<i>Falls R.D. #1</i>	<i>Penna.</i>
<i>Walter S. Hays</i>	<i>302 Lincoln Ave.</i>	<i>Calistoga, Calif.</i>
<i>Harry E. Fullerton</i>	<i>27 Huse St.</i>	<i>Bath, Maine</i>
<i>Charles C. Giles</i>	<i>404 E 11th St.</i>	<i>Fenton, Mo.</i>
<i>Paul T. Butler</i>	<i>1501 No. Wheeler St.</i>	<i>Plant City, Fla.</i>

## ***Research Being Done in Australia***

Your Secretary received a note from Clinton Bock, who resides in Australia:

"... I have a research website related to ww2 sites in the Northern Territory Australia ... I am currently chasing veteran's contacts or photos relating to the brief stay of the 64th Bomb Squadron at Fenton Field Northern Territory in August/ September 1942. I am trying to track down particularly which aircraft served there and what missions they launched from there -

Please find my current website link to my page on the 64th Squadron at Fenton <http://milepegsnt.com/site/64th-squadron-43rd-bg-usaaf-fenton-field/> Cheers Clint ..."

Your Secretary was able to pull some information from the History of the 43rd Bomb Group (H), Period: 15 January 1941 to 29 February 1944. The Group portion of the document stipulated that the 64th was at Daly Waters and Fenton and finally at Darwin before they moved to Iron Range. While at Fenton in August (1942), the 64th had four planes assigned to it but, after several missions, these planes were sent elsewhere and the Squadron was not active again until October.

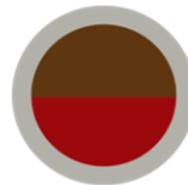
The 64th Squadron portion of this same historical document states that, several days after the relocation to Fenton Field, the last of four B-17s arrived to the Squadron. A small amount of flying time was built up during the few days the planes remained with the Squadron. Upon orders of the Allied Combined Headquarters, Northwestern Area at Darwin, the planes and the two crews attached were sent to take part in the Solomon Island Battle with the 19th Bomb Group, departing 12 August 1942. On 29 August, orders to pack and be ready to move were issued. About a month later, on 25 September, the 64th began its move to Darwin, where they stayed only briefly before moving on to Iron Range.

*Editor's Note: please take some time to browse Clint's website (link above) regarding the 64th Squadron at Fenton Field. Additionally, take a look at the homepage here <http://milepegsnt.com/> which highlights various Service sites throughout the Northern Territories.*

## **2/33 Australian Infantry Battalion & B-24D 'Pride of the Cornhuskers'**

A Follow Up from an Article in our July Newsletter

Provided by Mr Ray Gibson, President of 2/33 Australian Infantry Battalion AIF Association; Ray is a survivor of the incident in which the 403rd's *Pride of the Cornhuskers* crashed into a 2/33 AIF convoy in September '43.



... The 2/33 Australian Infantry Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> Division was loaded on open truck's waiting in convoy at the end of Jackson Airstrip. We were to be transferred to another area where we were to be put on DC3 aircraft and flown to Tsili Tsili ... The troops were to recapture the town of Lae.

Unfortunately for Don Company and some of the C Co, disaster struck. American Liberator Bombers were taking off from Jackson Airfield going on bombing missions at 4am on that morning. One had left the airfield. Then I could hear the roar of engines and I could see these 2 huge lights of an aircraft coming toward the truck; I was half asleep, sitting with my back against the loading board. I was soon wide awake as I could see the plane was not going to leave the ground. The lights kept coming, coming ... fortunately for me the plane's right wing hit a tree of which there were few still standing at the end of the airfield. This impact took the right wing of the Liberator and it swerved left onto the trucks in front of the one I was sitting in.

When the Liberator hit the trucks, all hell broke loose. The men in the trucks were carrying ammunition, hand grenades, mortar bombs for the 2 inch mortars we infantry carried with us in action. The plane was fully loaded with high octane fuel, 3 x 500lb bombs, plus the ammunition that was carried for the use in the armaments the bombers carried. All this, plus the fuel which ignited and flew in a huge ball of flame across 4 truckloads of troops sitting half asleep in pitch black darkness at 4.20 am. Also, the American Liberator crew of, I'm told, 11 perished. Those of the Australians who were able to get away from the burning trucks were themselves alight, clothes and webbing equipment burning on them, many so badly burnt, those of us who were there not harmed did everything we could to get the burning clothes off the few whom we could get near.

For those of us who were to continue on our journey later that morning, we were left stunned in mind of what had happened to so many mates and the crew who never had a chance to escape that inferno. For me now 70 years on, what happened that morning still comes back in my mind to haunt, one of the horrors of war...

As we know the Australian Army had an inquest into the accident as did the American Air Force. To my knowledge these inquests have been printed much later. We were told security at that time was so important at that phase of the war ...

... As was always the case in such emergencies our nurses and doctors were called upon to perform some impossible tasks to save men's lives. In recent years after I retired, I have read many books that have given such glowing reports of how much we owe our nurses and doctors for how they performed to save so many of our wounded and maimed serving personnel.

If any of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG Association members hold any photographs or information about the crash, please contact Mr Matt Sloan ([admin@liberatorcrash.com](mailto:admin@liberatorcrash.com)). Matt has located 4 of the 11 USAAF next-of-kin. We continue to search for the remaining 7 next-of-kin. If you can help, please contact us.

Regards,  
NX43720 Ray Gibson  
President  
2/33 Australian Infantry Battalion AIF Association

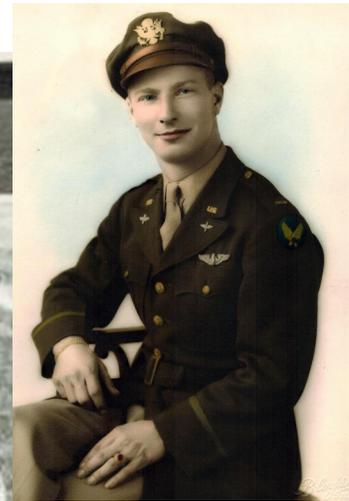
### **Crew - *Pride of the Cornhuskers***

Lt Ralph M. HART  
SSgt Joel L. HERNDON - seeking point of contact  
SSgt John HRYWNAK  
Lt Robert G. McDONALD  
TSgt Charles P. SEIP - seeking point of contact  
TSgt Hyman SILVERSTEIN  
Lt Howard R. THOMAS - seeking point of contact  
Sgt Samuel B. WHITE - seeking point of contact  
SSgt Donald F. WILCOTT - seeking point of contact  
SSgt Samuel M. WILKINSON—seeking point of contact  
FO Howard J. WOOD - seeking point of contact



Nose art from *Pride of the Cornhuskers*, digitally redrawn by Tim Bean, grandson of NX81054 Ron Bean, 2/33 AIF

## Looking for a Lost Crewmate



**Lt Ervin Schindhelm**  
64th Squadron, Bombardier  
Standing at right in crew photo

Eva Schindhelm, daughter-in-law of **Lt Ervin Schindhelm, 64th Squadron**, is looking for information on his service. We believe Erv was with the 64th in 1945. This wonderful crew photo is one of many that has no information on it - Eva would love to know if any of these men are recognized by our members or if you have any remembrances of Erv. You can contact Eva at [dcs.ers@hotmail.com](mailto:dcs.ers@hotmail.com)



We received a note from Toni Marie Vierra, granddaughter of **Anthony (Tony) Joseph Vierra, 64th Squadron**, who spent some time flying B-24 'Bob's Hope'.

Her grandfather's photos were destroyed by water damage and Toni is hoping that someone out there has photos of him or any stories or memories that they would like to share. Anthony sadly passed away in 1969, before Toni was born so any information would be greatly appreciated.

After searching our website, Toni did find her grandfather in one picture. It is from the christening of 'Bob's Hope'; Anthony is second from the right, standing.

If you can provide any information to Toni, please contact her at [tonimarievierra@yahoo.com](mailto:tonimarievierra@yahoo.com)

## ***A Final Resting Place***

### **Zachary Taylor National Cemetery - Louisville, Kentucky**

Zachary Taylor National Cemetery ... was established in 1928 by an act of Congress initiated by the Taylor family to have the government take title to the family burial site where President Zachary Taylor was interred. Two donations of land from the state of Kentucky increased the original half-acre Taylor plot to the national cemetery's present size of 16 acres...

Before his tenure as president, Zachary Taylor was the most popular man in America, a hero of the Mexican-American War. He was born November 24, 1784, to a wealthy planter family. By 1800 his family owned 10,000 acres in Kentucky and a number of slaves. In 1808, he received his first commission as commander of the garrison at Fort Pickering, the site of what is now Memphis, Tenn... Taylor won fame as an "Indian fighter" on the frontier...

In 1845 Texas was granted statehood. Mexico disputed lands along the new state border, and President James K. Polk ordered Taylor and his troops into the contested area. After winning two decisive encounters, Taylor triumphed over overwhelming odds in a battle against the Mexican Gen. Santa Anna at Buena Vista. "Old Rough and Ready" as Taylor was known, became a national hero.

After his victory, clubs sprang to support his presidential candidacy. By then, Taylor was a wealthy slave-owner and the South hoped he would support states' rights and the expansion of slavery into the new areas won from Mexico. The North pointed to his service on the nation's behalf and hoped he would side with the Union. At its 1848 nominating convention, the Whigs named Taylor a candidate for president, and he won the election that November. On July 4, 1850, after attending celebrations in Washington, Taylor contracted a virulent stomach ailment that may have been cholera or typhoid fever, and he died five days later...

The president's remains, and those of his wife, who died in 1852, were initially interred in the Taylor family burying ground. In 1883, the state of Kentucky erected a granite shaft surmounted by a life-size figure of Taylor. The United States erected a new limestone neoclassical-style building with a marble interior 43 years later... Each year on Nov. 24 - Taylor's birth date-military personnel from Fort Knox conduct a wreath-laying ceremony there. Zachary Taylor National Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

From: <http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/zacharytaylor.asp>



Nine men from the **43rd Bomb Group** are casualties of WWII who's remains rest at Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville. Six of nine crewmembers on the 63rd's B-17F 41-24429 'Dumbo' are interred here while their three crewmates are interred in private cemeteries. The 64th Squadron's 'Texas 6', B-17E 41-9207, has three crewmen buried here while one of its crew is buried privately. Five others from 'Texas 6' are today listed on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines and - in some cases - are suspected of having been taken prisoner. SSgt Paul J Cascio, Jr, radio operator on 'Texas 6', was held as a prisoner of war and survived captivity.

#### **63rd Sqdn, B-17F 41-24429, Dumbo, 4 Dec 1942**

Anderson, Lewis A 1Lt  
Conde, Joseph J Pfc  
Hodge, Archibald B SSgt  
Keeley, Richard M Sgt  
Nies, Albert C TSgt  
Schleh, Robert W 2Lt

#### **64th Sqdn, B-17E 41-9207, Texas 6, 1 June 1943**

Bukalski, Bruno B Sgt  
DeVoss, Virgil E SSgt  
Smith, Albert Sgt



### ***REMEMBERING THEIR SACRIFICE***

#### ***Our National Cemeteries -***

#### ***A Sacred Trust***

## ***CORRECTING THE RECORD***

### ***- 70 Years Later***

While researching the 43rd Bomb Group's casualties, your Secretary stumbled upon many interesting issues. One of the more intriguing involved **2Lt Robert E Forrest**, a pilot who was killed in action on 8 March 1943. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) website documented Lt Forrest as having been killed while assigned to the **64th Bomb Squadron, 43rd Bomb Group**. Lt Forrest, though, is buried at the *Normandy American Cemetery* in France. You'd likely wonder, 'how did he end up being buried in Europe ... did his family possibly request that he be buried near a brother or other relative who'd already been buried at Normandy?'

After researching further, the Missing Aircrew Report for the crash in which Lt Forrest was killed shows that he was flying with the **67th Bomb Squadron, 44th Bomb Group**; this unit operated out of Shipham, England during the war. Looking at the grave markers of several crewmembers who were killed in the March 1943 incident, they also depict the 44th Bomb Group as their assigned unit. Additionally, the 44th Bomb Group lists 2Lt Robert E Forrest on its Role of Honor.

With some corroborating research by Department of Army Human Resources Command and assistance from the American Battle Monuments Commission, a correction has been made in the ABMC database (see inset) and will also be made on the grave marker at Normandy.

2Lt Robert E Forrest is now rightfully honored as a part of the 44th Bomb Group, *'The Flying Eightballs'*, who - five months after his death - participated in Operation Tidal Wave, the raid on Ploesti.

## **Robert E. Forrest**

Robert E. Forrest  
*Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army Air Forces*  
**67th Bomber Squadron, 44th Bomber Group, Heavy**  
Entered the Service From: Ohio  
Service #: O-727979  
Date of Death: March 08, 1943  
Wars or Conflicts:  
 World War II  
Buried: Plot A Row 8 Grave 16  
[Normandy American Cemetery](#)  
Colleville-sur-Mer, France

## ***From Australia***

One of our Lifetime Members is attempting to locate relatives of the following crew:

B-24D-120-CO Liberator, Serial No 42-40972, 43rd Bomb Group, **63rd Bombardment Squadron** which crashed on 5 November 1943.

1Lt William M Hafner	O-790659	Norfolk, VA	Pilot
2Lt Arthur C Armacost, III	O-801750	Cincinnati, OH	Co-Pilot
2Lt David R Eppright	O-669024	Warrensburg, MO	Navigator
2Lt Charles F Feucht	O-673790	Reynoldsburg, OH	Bombardier
TSgt James G Lascelles	32501454	New York, NY	Engineer
SSgt Wilburn W Rozzell	18129869	Duncan, OK	Ass't Engineer
TSgt Alfred W Hill	38089108	Temple, OK	Radio Operator
SSgt William C Cameron	19174370	Los Angeles, CA	Gunner
TSgt Raymond S Cisneros	38204263	San Antonio, TX	Radar Operator

Attempting to locate any relatives, friends or buddies that may be able to provide stories, photos and/or any further information to assist me in honouring these men through a historically accurate book on this incident.

Please email [Michael.musumeci@bigpond.com](mailto:Michael.musumeci@bigpond.com)

PO Box 597  
Mareeba Queensland  
Australia 4880

## Lovingly Remembered



Steve Miller is the son of **Sidney Miller, 65th Squadron**. Steve's good friend, Michelle, is wearing his newly acquired bomber jacket.

*Provided by Steve Miller*



Stamped with 'Ken's Men' on its outer surface, this ring hangs on Tom Smith's Christmas tree each year in memory of his Uncle, **Lt Francis J Smith, 65th Squadron**. Lt Smith, the ring's original owner, was killed in action on 18 May 1945 over Formosa.



**Clarence 'Tex' Molder, 63rd Squadron** – bomber jacket with ID Tags, Rosary Beads and daughter's baby tooth, carried in his jacket pocket – they remain there today.

*Provided by Mona Borup and Nancy Wright, daughters*



The Bell Of San Michele on Tex's jacket is said to be one of the unusual bells ... it says The "Lucky" Bell rather than "Lucky".



Bracelet made from Aerial Gunner's wings - a Son's commitment to remembering his Dad's service as a gunner with the **65th Squadron**

## ***DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?***



If you did not receive email notice of publication of this Newsletter, we do not have your email address on file. The 43rd is using email more as a means of reaching out, both for notice of Newsletter publication and for Association announcements. Please update your contact information today.

For changes or to be added to our list, email [43bgroup@gmail.com](mailto:43bgroup@gmail.com). Please be sure to include your first and last name in the Subject line of the email.



## **PACIFIC AIR WAR ARCHIVE 43RD BOMB GROUP DURING WORLD WAR II**

***See us at: [www.pacificairwar.org](http://www.pacificairwar.org)***

### ***RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE KEN'S MEN WEBSITE — PLEASE VISIT!***

- **63rd Squadron**, photo of 'Old Baldy', B-17 41-24455, contributed by Lynn Ritger, Living Historian, Old Dominion Squadron of the Airman's Preservation Society [http://kensmen.com/63\\_1-16-16-4.html](http://kensmen.com/63_1-16-16-4.html)
- **403rd Squadron**, a list of all known officers who were attached to the Squadron from January 1944 through November 1945, compiled by Colin Mitchell <http://www.kensmen.com/403rdOfficers.html>
- **403rd Squadron**, a list of combat aircrews that joined the Squadron from January 1944 through November 1945, compiled by Colin Mitchell <http://www.kensmen.com/403rdCombatCrews.html>
- **403rd Squadron**, a list of all known combat photographers attached to the Squadron from January 1944 through November 1945, compiled by Colin Mitchell <http://www.kensmen.com/403rdPhotogunners.html>
- **63rd Squadron**, photo of SSgt E.J. 'Ed' Polaski with crew, contributed by son Roman Polaski [http://kensmen.com/63\\_1-16-16-3.html](http://kensmen.com/63_1-16-16-3.html)
- **64th Squadron**, photo of B-24 42-72769 'Helen's Revenge', piloted by Capt William A Bauder; contributed by Ray Isaacs [http://kensmen.com/64\\_1-16-16-1.html](http://kensmen.com/64_1-16-16-1.html)
- **63rd Squadron**, photo of Folmer Sogaard and crew, contributed by Jim Dieffenderfer [http://kensmen.com/63\\_1-16-16-1.html](http://kensmen.com/63_1-16-16-1.html)

### ***HELP US IN MAKING THIS NEWSLETTER - PROVIDE YOUR STORIES***

This newsletter is published four (4) times a year - mid-month in January, April, July and October. We want this newsletter to be for and about our members and to cover your areas of interest. Please send items for the newsletter to: Louise Terrell, 207 Huron Street, Houghton MI 49931 or via email to: [secretary43bgroup@gmail.com](mailto:secretary43bgroup@gmail.com)

Any material received after the 1st of the month in which the newsletter is being published may not make the upcoming newsletter.



**43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association  
Ken's Men  
Membership Form**



**Mail to:** Gayle McCay  
9 Appletree Lane  
Bedford, MA 01730

**Dues:** \$100.00/Lifetime Membership

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone No.** ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

**If you or your relative are a 'Ken's Men' from WWII:**

**Name of Ken's Men** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Spouse** \_\_\_\_\_

**Duty in the 43rd** \_\_\_\_\_ **Squadron** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are not a 'Ken's Men': Are you related to a Ken's Men, a friend of a Ken's Men, an aviation enthusiast, history buff, or other? What is your interest in the 43rd Bomb Group?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*We welcome your interest in our distinguished organization, its purpose of preserving our unit's history and the spirit of its efforts in attaining victory in the Pacific Theater during WWII. As a member of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association, you will automatically be added to our mailing / email list unless otherwise instructed.*