
New Guinea Log

Frank D. Brumm

WWII

Missions of a B-24 Bomber Crew

Compiled by Stephen K. Brumm

Forward

The following unedited transcription is from the original log of T/Sgt. Frank Duane Brumm. Frank enlisted in the Army Air Force and was sent to the South Pacific where he was assigned to the 5th Air Force, 43rd Bomb Group, 403rd Bomb Squadron. He was a radio operator and gunner on a B-24 Liberator bomber stationed in New Guinea. Frank died on March 28, 1944, after flying 28 combat missions. He and five others (1/Lt. Ervin N. Miskin, pilot, T/Sgt. Royal N. Greiner, engineer, 1/Lt. Charles W. Lankford, co-pilot, 2/Lt. Arthur E. Harris, navigator, T/Sgt. John F. Hewitt) died when the B-24 (J) they were ferrying for repairs crashed in Australia. Frank's last flight left from Dobodura, New Guinea and was headed to Garbutt Field in Townsville, Australia when it encountered a severe storm shortly before reaching its destination. The wreckage of the B-24 (No. 42-47483) was discovered on April 13th, 1944 about twenty-three miles northwest of Townsville, Australia.

Ervin Miskin, Royal Greiner and Frank Brumm were crewmates and volunteered for the flight to Australia. Charles Lankford, Arthur Harris and John Hewitt, also volunteers, were members of other bomber crews. The normal crew size for a B-24 in combat was ten men. The minimum size for a B-24 crew was five men: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, engineer and radio operator.

The New Guinea 'Miskin Crew' identified in the log includes the following individuals:

Miskin, Ervin N.	Pilot
Clark, Hayden P.	Co-pilot
Caudill, Orley D.	Navigator
Greiner, Royal N.	Engineer, Top turret gun
Kehr, Wade T.	Ass't Engineer, Tail gun, Left waist gun
Brumm, Frank D.	Radio Operator, Right waist gunner
Tindall, Wayne H.	Bombardier
Driscoll, Edward P.	Belly turret gun, Tail gun, Ass't R/OP
Prather, James J.	Nose turret gun
Schaffer, Warren	Left waist gun, Belly turret gun

Acknowledgments

A special thanks to Wade T. Kehr, B-24 crew member; Harold D. Hill, nephew of B-24 pilot, Ervin Miskin, and author of "Ervin N. Miskin – Pilot"*; Wanda Miskin Parker, sister of Ervin Miskin and Betty R. Brumm Whiting, sister of Frank D. Brumm. The information, letters, and pictures you shared helped me bring together the events surrounding my Father's World War II experience.

I also want to thank the members of the 43rd Bomb Group Association for welcoming my son Victor and me to your 20th annual reunion held in San Antonio, Texas, August 28 – September 3, 2000. Your willingness to answer our questions and to share your experiences is appreciated.

I thank Shari Brumm, my spouse, for providing me with suggestions and ideas that I incorporated into this writing. Your insights are greatly appreciated and I want to thank you again for your assistance. Thank You!

Steve Brumm

* Mr. Hill gave me permission to copy and share "The Miskin Book" with the Brumm family.

Dedication

I dedicate this writing to the memory of my dad, Frank Duane Brumm. I was ten months old when he died and my brother Frank was not yet born. It is through the contacts and efforts associated with bringing together the elements of his log that I have gotten to know him a bit better.

I also want to dedicate this writing to my mother, Ruth. I cannot imagine the anguish she must have went through as a result of Frank's untimely death.

To Frank's entire family and many friends...for your loss.

And finally to Frank, Dad,... Thank You for keeping a log.

Steve Brumm

Frank Duane Brumm

Born: May 15, 1919, Rochester, Minnesota

Died: March 28, 1944, Townsville, Australia

Parents: Max Rienhart Brumm 12/16/1894 - 09/12/41
Ethel Mae (White) Brumm 12/23/1894 - 10/21/89

Siblings: Maxine Mary Brumm 07/04/16 - 12/18/89
George Bernard Brumm 05/24/18 - 01/31/96
Leonard Raymond Brumm 05/08/24 -
Warren White Brumm 12/22/25 -
Betty Ruth Brumm 07/19/27 -

Spouse: Ruth Evelyn Weiberg (11/09/20-08/09/90); Married: 09/22/40

Children: Stephen Kent Brumm 05/29/43 -
Victor Olaf Brumm 04/21/65 -
Aaron Christopher Brumm 09/07/67 - 08/08/88
Matthew William Brumm 04/27/70 -

Frank Duane Brumm 06/15/44 -
Suzanne Rae (Brumm) Teply 02/15/69 -
Serandan Blaine Teply 03/02/91 -
Meaghan Brett Teply 04/01/93 -
Adrian Aaron Teply 08/11/95 -

Kathryn Michelle Brumm 04/20/85 -

Enlisted: October 01, 1942

Service Branch: Army Air Force

Serial #: 17109864

New Guinea

Oct. 30, 1943:

Left Hamilton Fld at 9:15 Sat evening. Sighted land, part of the Hawaiian chain, at 10:10 Sunday morning Oct 31, 1943. We circled Pearl Harbor, then into Hickam Fld. We landed at Hickam about 11:45. The 1st of Nov we went into town. Greiner and I got our hair cut by a Miss Japanese barber. Got in town too late to go to the beach.

Nov 2nd, 1943:

We were briefed at 4 o'clock AM for our second leg of the trip which was Canton, Isle. We took off at 1620 G.C.T. We passed Palmyarat, our landmark, at 2237 G.C.T. Everything went smoothly and Greiner, Tindall, and myself played poker, in between the times I had to send messages. We landed on Canton Isle at 6:30. Checked in ate chow and went for a swim in the Lagoon. That nite we had to pull a 25 hr. inspection. I went to sleep on the camera hatch.

Nov 3, 1943:

Took off from Canton Isle at 1945 G.C.T. Canton Isle has just one tree on the whole Isle. The runways are all sand as the Isle is composed of. We landed on Nandi Isle about 0130 G.C.T. This was our third stop. It was raining when we landed. Stayed over nite and took off the next morning at 9:28. We still played cards. Land at Plaines des Gaïacs New Cal. Had our best chow here. Late that afternoon went hunting. We chased out one deer. It is very good hunting and fishing there. Some where along the line we crossed the Natl. date line so we lost a day.

Nov 6, 1943:

We were carrying mail also three passengers. We got stuck on runway, which caused a delay of a couple hours. We took off at 9:00 O'clock and arrived at Amberley Fld at 2:20 Sat. The next night we went in to town Ipswich. Here is where we started the headache of learning the Assy money. They say Sidney is modern but the rest of the places I've seen are about 20 years behind times the styles, stores, cars, café, ect.

Nov 8, 1943:

Went to Townsville, Garbutt Field. Left Townsville Nov 10 for Charters Towers by rail arrived at 11 PM. Put on KP the next day. Had more schooling. Flew down to Townsville in a B-25 and brought back a B-24-J, were the first to land a 24 on the field. We had movies every other night and beer once a week.

Nov 26, 1943:

Left Charters Towers in a B-24 with 21 men and baggage. It was a 20-min. hop to Townsville. We bummed around town all day. Nothing exciting. Slept in plane that night because the ants are to bad in the barracks. Picked up Schaffer, which makes crew complete.

Nov 27, 1943:

Left Townsville for Jackson strip, New Guinea. Assigned to the 403rd Bomb Grp 43rd Bomb Sq.

Nov 30, 1943:

Went on first mission. Took off at 7:15 A.M. We were up at 5 A.M. ate chow and went to briefing. We carried 40 - 100 lb. demolition bombs. Our Co pilot Clark wasn't with us. Miskin had to be checked so 1st Lt. Faye went as Pilot and Miskin was Co-pilot. Lt. Royal went along to help Tindall, the bombardier, for this 1st mission. Our target was the runways on Cape Gloucester on New Britain Isle. For the first mission all the crew, on the whole, was pretty cool. There was just a little uneasiness at first but it vanished shortly. There was a large undercast most of the way. We were escorted by P-47's. There was about 31-B-24's on this raid. The fighter cover looked plenty sweet. There were 10 ships from our Sqdrn 403rd. We went over the target but none of our Sqdrn dropped their bombs. We had no interception or AA fire. All quiet. Cape Gloucester is or was supposed to have the best AA Battery in these parts. It still made me think about all the things we were told in Gunnery School as well as in the rest of our training. Gun Pos: Prather - nose turret - Kindall Bombardier and the 2 - 30 Cals in nose - Greiner top turret - Driscoll belly turret - Schaffer left waist gun - myself on right waist gun - and Kehr in the tail gun. We got in 6 hrs and 31 min. combat time.

Dec 1 & 2, 1943:

No missions. Checked radio equipment on assigned ship in mornings. Also teaching Prather equip & code. Attended school or lectures by Comm. Officer 1st Lt. Fish. Started to learn the radar equip. Went to a stage show, up from Sydney, on the evening of the 30th. Dec 1st evening we enlisted men went to the club and had our first drink of hard liquor since the States got feeling good.

Dec 3, 1943:

Up at five this morning for our second mission. Had chow and was briefed went out to the plane and preflighted it and was ready to take off at 7 AM. We had all our own crew this time. We had ship # 905. Carried eight 1000 lb Demo bombs. There was 48 B-24's in this formation. We had a top cover of P-47's about 16. We had weather most of the way a heavy thick undercast. We flew at 12000 ft over. Took off at 7:08. The target was Cape Gloucester again AA positions. I'm positive we hit the AA pos. also the runways. Could hear reports of the bombs at our 12000 altitude. We had light AA at first and after first bombs drooped it ceased. No fighter interceptions. Change in gun pos. Driscoll in tail; Schaffer on belly guns (twin 50's) & Kehr on left waist. We logged 5 hours and 55 min. A total of 12 hours and 25 min. combat time.

Dec 4, 1943:

No mission today. Attended a lecture at Comm this morning. Being as how the whole Gp is moving to Dobodura a hundred and some of the ground crews are there so the combat crews have to work on the line when they don't fly. Still making continuous raids on Cape Gloucester. Were told, this morning, there was a big push of some sort on now and they are going to send in landing parties at Cape Gloucester.

This afternoon I got my gas mask also a new pistol. # 1104834. On my pistol belt I carry a pistol, also a hunting knife in my holster, 28 rounds of ammo, a machete, a trench knife, canteen, first aid pouch. Have to get my drugs yet to complete it. I also have a

compass. Also pipe and tobacco. We call it a jungle kit. In case we have to bail out over the jungle.

Dec 5, 1943:

Up this morning at 5 AM again for our third raid. Went down for briefing at 6 AM. The time for take off was set for 7:30 but due to weather conditions we didn't take off until 8:45. Cape Gloucester was our target again. We carried eight 1000 lb Demo bombs. Sort of like those babies. We had had weather all the way. Went on oxygen shortly after takeoff. The sky was about 9 tenths covered with heavy cumulus clouds, over the target about six tenths. We had a top cover of about three sqdns. of P-47's. About an hour or so out Driscoll, tail gunner, got an itchy finger and took a pot shot at a flight of 47's which were coming up at our altitude. I guess he got excited. He should have known better. No damage done thank the lord. Bombs away aprox. 11:20 on the first run on target but we went over again for second run for those who didn't drop their bombs. As close as we could observe our bombs hit within a few yds of target. I spotted what I thought were fourteen ships on ground and a coral reef was a ship which was all burned, all that remained was the hull. We had no interceptions or AA fire. A gravy run. We headed back and ran into worse wea and I had to get a wea report. My first comm. since I've been here. The field closes in fast. We got a break and made it in OK. Landed at 2:35. We had ship # 680 they call it Satins Lady. We have the Owen Stanley Mts. to contend with and they are a constant threat. More planes and personal have been lost by that then in fighting. We are all going to move to Dobodura. We put in 5-hr 50 min. total Combat hours 18 hours 16 min.

We had an alert while the movie was on so that was stopped. It lasted about a half an hour. The sqdn had a gin party last nite so Greiner, Driscoll and I didn't miss it and we got oiled royal. Didn't write to my wife and that always makes me feel bad. She's perfect.

Dec 6, 1943:

Nothing unusual happened today. Still hitting Cape Gloucester. I helped take down tents this morning. Getting almost ready to move. This afternoon, nothing. This evening a movie.

Dec 7-8-9-1943:

Nothing unusual happened most of the Gp has moved to Dobodura. We've been taking down tents and loading planes etc. supposed to fly today but weather was bad. Every thing is down have to eat chow out side. It has been raining pretty heavy the last couple of days. Picked up some books the other fellows left. Haven't read a good Ausy book yet. Gave an Ausy a cot. They have to sleep on the ground.

Dec 10-11-12-1943:

Still tearing things down and loading planes. We acquired a few odds and ends like blankets, books etc. Nothing unusual has happened and won't until we get to Dobo.

Dec 13, 1943:

Had K.P. It was easy. Borrowed a qt. Of Italian wine from the 25th Off. Club. Was pretty good stuff. Still no letter from Ruthie. They had a big raid on Cape Gloucester and Gayamadda. They were intercepted by 6 Zero's. The 38's knocked out 5 and left the last go so

he could tell the story. The Marines are supposed to make a landing some time this week. Heard a great rumor. There is no conformation as yet. Russia is supposed to have declared war on Japan and Turkey on Germany. We all hope it is true. That was supposed to have happened the 12th.

Dec 14, 1943:

Day off today. To begin with I'm writing a letter to my lovely Ruthie. Can hear the planes leaving for the target already. They are using the formation of heavies first (13-24). Bombing followed by 25's for further bombing and strafing also a cover of 38's & 47's.

Dec 15, 1943:

Same thing happened today only more of it. Expect to go over to Dobo tomorrow.

Dec 18, 1943:

Left Jackson Strip for Dobo, landed after dark. The Pilot went on a sight seeing trip because it is only a 45 min trip and it took us over two hrs. Received first letter from home.

Dec 19, 1943:

Had the day off so we started logging logs up from the jungle for our floor. We have to shower and shave in the river. Beautiful. Went swimming twice. Almost got rained out of our tent tonite.

Dec 20, 1943:

Up at 4 AM to go on strike. We took off at 9:50. This is our first mission since Dec 5 and it sure seemed good. Target Cape Gloucester. The Marines & US Regulars have landed there. Did so about the 14th. First good foot hold on New Britain Isle. We carried 6 1000 lb. Demo bombs. Wea was very bad, struck it lucky over target. Break in the clouds so Tindall sent his bombs home, the best bombing of the day. Had a cover of 38's about 18 ships. We made three bomb runs to get rid of all bombs. Landed with four hours & 20 min logged combat time our fourth mission a total of 22 hrs and 38 min. The ship we had was named the Goon. We worked more on our tent floor and then went swimming. Received 9 more letters. Sure makes me happy. Sent Wife \$100 for present.

Dec 21, 1943:

Still building our hut. We got a long way on it. That is all we did all day.

Dec 22, 1943:

Briefing at 5 AM only we didn't wake up till 5:20 and naturally we had to take a few insulting remarks. We had ship #1070 named Miss McCook, a very good ship. We carried 12 - 500 pounders, Demo. Target Cape Gloucester. We took off at 6:50 over target and bombs away at 8:40. We made 2 passes. Tindall is right on the beam he's laying those eggs plenty good. No interception. Had a top cover of P-38's & 47's. Coming in to Dobo I counted 82 US Battle ships, cruisers, and tankers etc. Landed with 3 hours and 35 min. Our

5th mission bringing hours to 24 hrs and 13 min. Made mistake, total combat hours are 26 hrs & 11 min.

Came back, ate dinner called for briefing at 12:30. Same ship. Took off at 13:50. Same target. Logged 3 and 55 min. totaling 30 hrs & 06 min. Our sixth completed mission. This morning had a bad crack up on take off. The plane ahead of us. It was demolished but all crew got out a little shaken another of our lords favors. Marines & infantry expected to take Gloucester by the end of the week. Our Gp is making 24 hour raids. Nuisance raids at night. The ships load up with bombs plus empty bottles and any thing else they can find. It takes them a good four hours to drop everything. No sleepy for Jappy.

Dec 23, 1943:

Day off - worked on hut. Miskin was grounded because of his ear.

Dec 24, 1943:

Extra detail, worked on tent in afternoon. Attended eve show. Thinking of home.

Dec 25, 1943:

Christmas Day. Worked on hut. Had a plenty good chow. Loafed this afternoon. We are supposed to make an airplane landing on Gloucester tomorrow. Progressing very good. Guard duty to nite. Mosquitoes are terrific.

Dec 26, 1943:

Flew to Pt Moresby. Taking 23 men starting furloughs. Logged 2 hrs non-combat time making about 20 hrs. Moved into our tent the 27th. The 29th went to Moresby again. Making 22 hrs. Brought back 50 sacks of Christmas packages. Made the fellows plenty happy.

Dec 30, 1943:

Up at 4:30 AM ate breakfast, briefed and out to the ship at 6:15. Ship #290 named Tailskid Tolly carrying 12-500 pounders. Target was Alexishafen about 30 min from Wewak. It is estimated the Japs have 300 pursuit ships at a base in Wewak. We took off at 6:50. Thick clouds with high ceilings. Had to get above them. Went on oxygen about 7:45. The formation got broken up in the clouds. We almost hit another ship. Going over target we didn't have complete formation. The Ack Ack was heavy at first. Bombs away at 9:20. Our bombs all hit the water. If they would have let us move over to our run he would have made a direct hit. Target were Ack Ack positions. We got three positions and maybe more. Started fires. We try to knock out Ack Ack positions so the 25's can come in for low bombing and strafing. Night fighters went out last night P 70's. We had 2 sqdns of 47's for top cover no plane interception. We landed at 11:25 giving us 5 combat hours. A total of 35 hrs 6 min and our 7th mission.

Taking Gloucester was pretty expensive. They estimated the Marines lost about 2000 men in landings. The Japs were dug in deep and heavily fortified. We also lost a cruiser. They knocked a plane down and it hit the ship full. The number of Jap planes knocked down isn't known. They've taken Gloucester at a cost but are now on the move toward Alexishafen. The 13th Air Force is hitting Rabaul and the Navy is pounding Wewak and

Rabaul. It is slow moving but successful. That jungle fighting is very bad hard to move around in and at places you couldn't see a man 5-ft in front of you.

Dec 31, 1943:

Went to Moresby, picked up two new crews and came back 2-½ hrs non-combat time. New years eve the fellows celebrated it by shooting pistols, machines guns etc and flares. What a noise. Marines took the two runways at Gloucester.

Jan 1, 1944:

This is a day we won't forget for some time to come and I for one wouldn't want to begin every New Year with a bang like this one turned out to be. We were supposed to go on a strike to Alexishafen but were taken off and put on Recco. We were briefed at 9:45 AM. This was the start of a new Recco run. After briefing went to the ship—No 070 Miss McCook. Started engines at 10:20 and took off at 10:30. Everything in perfect running. After checking into the net I settled back to enjoy the trip and to work the Radar for the first time. Our course covered the Soloman Sea, Rabaul, around Cape Hoskins and back by the way of Gloucester an estimated trip of 7 or 8 hours. We carried 2-1000 pound Demo and 2 40-pound regulars. Also a cameraman. We had 1st Lt. Rice as co-pilot instead of Clark. Coming into Cape Hoskins we spotted a sugar Charlie in the harbor and with reports of very light Ack Ack around we set our course for the ship. About 5 secs before the bombs were to go, all hell broke loose, we were hit almost simultaneously by two bursts of ack ack. One tore a big hole in the horizontal stabilizers and shrapnel went through the tail, later we counted 15 holes, it tore out the hydraulic system of the turret. A 40 mm ack ack exploded in #1 engine starting it on fire. Got the fire out but couldn't feather the engine and it kept windmilling. We released our bombs. I sent SOS told them we were hit and going down. Everyone was praying and excited. We were ready for a crash landing but Miskin pulled it out about 50 ft above water. We couldn't gain any altitude for the drag of # 1 engine. Everyone got control of themselves and doing his duty second nature. I kept sending positions and reports and Greiner tried to transfer the fuel of the # 1 engine tank but it was all going into space. He let out over a hundred gals. Which lightened the ship we gained a little altitude but never above a hundred ft. Greiner had the stuff and Miskin flew out of this world. We were sweating out the gas. I kept sending pos reports and were trying to make Gloucester and beach the ship. After quite a run the gunners spotted some 39's over us which made us feel plenty good we passed Jap ships more sweaten. And then we spotted US ships & PT boats. We made Gloucester and decided to try Finschhafen a half-hour run. The Marines were on Gloucester. We could almost shake hands so it seemed. All we had to do now was land the ship and Miskin did and beautiful. I believe we all thanked our Lord. We were treated perfect. No one was scratched. The sight of the ship made us feel sick. We were put up for the nite and during the nite we had 3 red alerts so all in all we had a day of it. The land front was about ¾ of an hour from us. We landed at four o'clock. 2 hrs of a nite mare. Now we laugh about it but we still feel it and have learned a lot. The Marines made another landing at Saidor. Navy laid down a barrage & smoke screen. B-24's high bombing & 25's low bombing and strafing. The air force is hitting every thing from Alexishafen down. Our eighth mission a total of 40 hrs & 36 min. We were brought back here by air transport today Jan 2.

Jan 4, 1944:

Up at 4:30 AM to go on our ninth mission. Target ack ack posn & supply dumps on Alexishafen. We carried 12-500 pounders. Ship #062 'Flamin Mamie'. Engines started at 655. Take off at 715. We ran into very heavy ack ack over target. They had many new posn. It was plenty rough. One ship had to crash land on the 10 mile strip and three others were hit. Three fellows were wounded. Tindall scored what we think the best bombing of the day with direct hits on supply dumps starting one very large fire and two small ones. We landed at 1205 putting 4 hrs and 55 min of hard earned combat time away making the total of 45 hrs and 31 min. Oh yeah, I got my second hair cut since I left the States. I was about to braid it.

Jan 5 & 6, 1944:

43rd Gp hit Alexishafen on the 5th, the 90th on the 6th. Target ack ack posns.

Jan 7, 1944:

Up for breakfast this morning at 7 AM. Supposedly no flying today. After chow, Kehr saw our names posted for flying. Briefing at 9:15. Target 660 hill New Britain, up from Cape Gloucester. Gun implements & ground troops. Giving the Marines an extra lift. Assigned to ship #062 Flamin Mamie, carrying 12-500 lb. Demo's. Top cover of 2 Sqdns of P47's (calls Parry & Zig Zag). Engines started at 1030 take off 1055. Caudill's Bro is in the Marines who took Gloucester. Made two runs on target hits were poor. No interception or Ack Ack. Caudill thought he saw a Jap transport fly under as we made our run, being a little doubtful the rest of the crew says it was a Catalina. Our destroyers were moving in as we left. Landed at 1433 completing our tenth mission. 1/6th done a total of 49 hours and 31 min. Griner has 49-41 so will take the extra 10 min. Oh yeah, had a shot of whiskey but no gal dishing it out.

Jan 10, 1944:

Up at 530 AM. Briefed at 630 and given leaflets to drop after the bombs. Engines started at 0800 take off at 0810. We're in the second element and ended up in the first. Our target was supplies and ack ack posn on Madang. 30 miles from Alexishafen. Top & close cover of P-38's - (clover & possum) I counted 26 of them. We carried 12-500 lb Demo. Target sighted & turned over to him and before we knew it we were out of formation and heading alone over the target. Got back in formation. Bombs away and leaflets at 1035. One crew dropped their bombs through bombays and had to head for home. The bombing was good as a whole. No ack ack or interception. We found out later that Purdes' crew made the longest bomb run out. Their Bombardier picked his target and the plane was in his hands and come to find they bombed Alexishafen. All in a days work I guess. Landed at 1255 completing our 11th mission and 54 hours & 41 min. A gal gave us ice cream, cookies, and a drink. Plenty good, the ice cream & drink I mean.

Jan 16, 1944:

Engines started at 645. Target Nippo troops at Arawe, N.B. Marines having trouble. Carried 8-1000 pounders. Each crew took an extra man. Sort of an observer. Attack order a top cover 2 sqdns of P-38's - 24 over target first followed by B-25's for low bombing and strafing. Although we went in at 5 to 7 thousand ft. could feel the explosion of our bombs

rocking the ship. After the 25's went through the gd. Troops opened up. The day was a success. Bombs away at 8:35. No interception or Ack Ack landed and engines off at 1025. Our 12th mission. 3hrs 40 min a total of 58-21 combat hours.

Jan 17, 1944:

403rd out on raid to Hansa Bay between Madang and Wewak. I believe it's the start of some plenty rough going. Estimated to have 18 ack ack posns. Attack order of 4-47's to go on up to Wewak to suck Nippo planes up while P-38's follow at a high altitude and behind. 24's bomb at 18000 ft..

Jan 18, 1944:

Up at 430 AM. Target Hansa Bay Ack Ack posns. Fight plan for the day. 64, 65, 403rd, and 90th Sqdns of B-24s. 2 Sqdns of P-47's to go on up to Wewak to intice the Nippos up. 4 sqdn's of P-38s and 2 of P-40s as surprise cover. We took off at 740 carrying 6-1000 pounders over target and bombs away at 1058. Very heavy ack ack but inaccurate but when the 90th, Dear old Jolly Rogers, came over two of the ships were hit by flack. You couldn't see them for the flack. The bombing was poor the same posns that were firing as we went over were still at it after bombs away. We scored probable hits on one posn and two ships in the harbor. While all this was going on the plan worked they sucked up the nippos. We credited with 13 nippos for sure and three probable against two losses of our own altho eight 38s crash landed back here because they were shot up hydraulic systems ect. Our 13th mission, the much dreaded by combat crews, completed with 6 hrs and 15 min logged time a total of 64 hrs & 36 min.

Jan 19, 1944:

The mission was to Wewak the hot spot on Guinea. We sweated the boys out. All came back and no ack ack. No interception. The 38's did a good job. The bombing was good. The ack was heavy.

Jan 23, 1944:

Caring 6-1000 pounders our target was ack ack Posn. on Wewak. It was estimated that they have about 70 heavy ack guns alone not counting medium and light. We had 4 sqdns of P-38s, 2 of 47s & 2 of 40's. We expected trouble. We took off at 715. Over the target and bombs away at 1110 when every thing broke loose. 3 zeros at 3 o'clock was the first news. I watched both sides and Kehr on the camera. Kehr hopped the right waist and started firing. I on the left waiting for it to come up under. Kehr had four passes and I three. I got one probable. Prather in the nose had a good time and probable got his. I saw the 38's knock down 3 and the pilot bail out. The Aussy strafed one of the Japs in his chute. One fellow in the 90th killed & one injured. We thought we only got hit once by machine gunning. There was ack galore, the most I have ever seen. Just as we landed our # 3 engine went out. Landed at 1345. After the inspection of the ship we could hardly believe reports. Not only that hole through the waist but two in the nose, one hit in the left wing gas tank and it is a wonder it didn't burn, one in # 3 engine. We thought something was screwy because it only pulled 20 inches of mercury going over target. The radio equip in the half deck was all shot up. It seems as tho we get hit every time we go out. We must have Gods protection. 50 Jap planes were shot down. We lost 1 P-40 for sure and two had to crash land on the way back but the pilots

are believed to be saved. Those 38 boys really can fight it was a thrill to watch them. We logged 7 hrs & 5 min. totaling it to 71-41.

Jan 25, 1944:

Target Wewak again. Took off at 758 – 3 sqdns of 47's – 2 of 39's – 1 of 40's. Due to weather cond we bombed secondary target Hansa Bay. It turned out to be a rat race the worse bombing run I have ever seen and bombing the same. The 90th did good. No interception and very light ack at first and when we went over there wasn't any. Coming back picked up an SOS from a B-25. Posn Maxwell 30 straight up from Finschhafen. We think he landed ok. Another landed a Finch on one engine. We landed at 1440 logging 7 hours, totaling it to 78-41 hours and our 15th mission.

Feb 1, 1944:

Target was Admiralty Isle. Carrying 8-1000 pounders. 4 sqdns of P-47's cover. Bombs away at 1206 and about 15 min from target. Due to bad wea they let the bombs go in the water. 16th mission, 5 hrs even total 83 hrs 41 min.

Feb 3, 1944:

Wewak was the target. The weather was plenty rough. Our objective were two runway strips. We expected trouble. It was said that they had brought in some more fighters. The bombing was very good and very little ack when we went over. Some of the ships carried 4-2000 pounders and the rest 8-1000 pounders. Strings of bombs down the middle of the runways and strings in the revetments. The interception was there only our fighters didn't let them in. 6 hrs 40 min. total 90 hrs 21 min, 17th mission.

Feb 5, 1944:

Off at 845 for runways on Kavieng on New Ireland. Ran into very bad wea so we bombed Cape Hauskins. The sqdns foolishly circulated over Gasmata and a couple of ship were hit. We logged an even 6 hours a total of 96:21.

Feb 10, 1944:

Target dispersal areas at Wewak. Take off at 815 – 8-1000 lb bombs. Came in to close to target to make the bomb run so had to circle wide over the bay and in the meantime nippos' favorite sons put up a barrage in the opposite direction of us. Coming in on our run they let go and flack was as heavy as rain. Their practice was not in vain for they has our altitude perfect. No planes knocked down there were some injuries. One of our control lines was hit. We didn't drop our bombs – The 90th Gp did and got some good hits. On our way home the formation just wasn't so we made a lone run on #3 target-supply dumps at Madang. Hits were perfect. Landed at 15:15 with 7 hrs & 30 min Combat time a total of 103 hours and 55 min.

Feb 11, 1944:

Griener & Driscoll received the first Xmas packages of the crew. Had the crew's picture taken. Caudill was taken off the crew the 18th. We don't like it.

Feb 12, 1944:

Briefed at 6AM. Due to wea the strike was called off. At 9:30 our crew was called up to intel. to go to Recco. We took off at 1030. Wea was bad. Had to go on oxygen right away in order to get over the wea. It took us 2 hrs to get to our starting point, Rook Isl. Our course Rook Isl to 149 ° 55' N long 2 ° 45' E lat. over Djaul Isle to Falmikak Pt. on New Ireland. Passing by Kavieng to observe shipping and other activity. We then cut down to Kimbe Bay, New Britain Isle passing within 100 mi of Rabaul. Nippo runs planes – fighters – from Kavieng to Rabaul. We put two 1000 pounders in target at Talasea and the 2 –100 pounders, meant for a barge, in the water at Cape Haskins. Completed mission landing about 2005 with 8 hrs 40 min. Total combat hours 112 hrs 35 min.

Feb 14, 1944:

Target runways at Kavieng. Took off at 805 AM carrying 6-1000 pounders. Bombs in target at 1205. Ran into light A.A. no interception. Back at 1455 logging 7 more hours a total of 119 hrs 35 min. It is reported that the Nippos are starving on a lot of these Islds plus disease of all kinds.

Feb 16, 1944:

Took off at 7:25. Target Kavieng A/A posns. B-25's went in yesterday after the 24s and six were knocked down, one crashed landed right over the Nippo strip. They got a couple of ships. Today the bombing was good and the 25s followed in again and got some more ships with bombing and strafing. Bombs away at 1055. Saw a 1000 pound hit in an A/A posn. Landed at 1340 with 6 hrs 40 min. Total 126 hrs 15 min and the 22nd mission.

Feb 19, 1944:

Left for furlough. Spent 7 days in Sydney. Got back to Dobo March 6th, 25 hrs flying.

March 7, 1944:

Flying RO for new pilot – Thomas. Dangerous take off almost didn't. Off at 830: Momooa – Admiralty Isle for coastal guns & ground troops. Ship Flying Fannie #780. Pilot turned back for unknown reasons. Got 2 ½ hours noncombat time.

March 8, 1944:

Flying with Thomas again. Took off at 0905, same target. Bombs away at 1205. 6/1000 pounders. Flamin Mammie #062 was the ship. Hit target and strafed. Landed at 1600. Logging 7 hrs & 25 min. my 23rd mission, a total of 133-40 combat hours.

March 11, 1944:

The whole crew got back from leave the day before so we were posted to fly. Sick Time the name of the ship, took off 0855. Target Lorengau strip on the Admiralties. Carried 40-100 pounder incendiary bombs. Bombed at 1800 ft. Bombs away at 1154. And then Miskin had a full day. Supposed to strafe at 2000 ft but we did between 50 and 100 ft for about ¾ an hour. We shot all but about a hundred rounds of ammo. My ears still ring. Landed at 1535 for 7 hrs more and 24th mission a total of 140 hrs 40 min.

March 12, 1944:

We moved to Nadzab. A new Gp started up while we were on leave. The 22nd Bomb Gp.

March 15, 1944:

Target Wewak. Building and Gun posns. 6-1000 pounders. Take off at 0745. Bombs away at 1135 and right afterward we were hit by ack in the bombays, thru the bulkhead just missing Jeeps head by a foot and out thru the top on the left side by the waste window a piece of shrapnel hit Kehr's right arm but didn't go through his electric suit. (Later this evening, Kehr was picking parts of plane from his shoe). The ack was medium but accurate. Target destroyed leaving target with many fires less ack guns. Smokr raising to 5000 ft. Landed at 1225 with 5 hrs and 15 min and my 25th mission, 145 hours and 25 min combat time.

March 18 & 21st:

Target Wewak. Carried 6-1000 pounders ea. time. Ack posns & supplies. 18th Bombed ack posn. 80% bombs on target. Med ack and were hit again. Logged 4-30 hrs. 21st Target small Isl. in Wewak harbor. 403rd bombing poor. 64th & 65th was good. Starting 9 diff. Fires visible for 170 mi. We also had light ack because they flew over. Bust strip at Wewak which was unnecessary. Hit again in left alarion. Logged 5 hrs. Total hours of 155 hrs 25 minutes.

March 22nd

Recco. Up at 2 AM. A 64th ship #090. Take off 430 AM. I couldn't receive ground sta had to return to base. Logged 3 hr 50 min. They gave us different ship also 64th # 428. Took off at 0935. We left our dinner in 090 which we regretted later. All we had was candy and some fruit juice. Recco started from base and took route: Manum Isle up along coast, Cape Girgir to Kairru Isle by Wewak & Aitape harbor where we spotted 7 ships burning, 2 sugar charlies & 5 barges. Hansa bay & Kairru Isl spotted 15 ships & barges. On up the coast into Humboldt Bay & Hollandia harbor. First crew from Sqdn to see Hollandia Harbor. The toughest spot in N. Guinea of Japs. Estimated to have 147 fighters & 90 some bombers. Turning North on up to 0 ° & 6' E & 140 ° 6' S. The high point of Recco. Turning and cutting back to come out at Aitape. Ships still burning and 2 sunk. Bombed buildings on Isle in bay. Our 3-1000 pounders away at 1523 direct hit. Hansa bay next then to base landed at 1750. Recco completed 133%. Recco hours 12 hr 20. Total combat hours 167 hrs 45 minutes and the 28th mission.

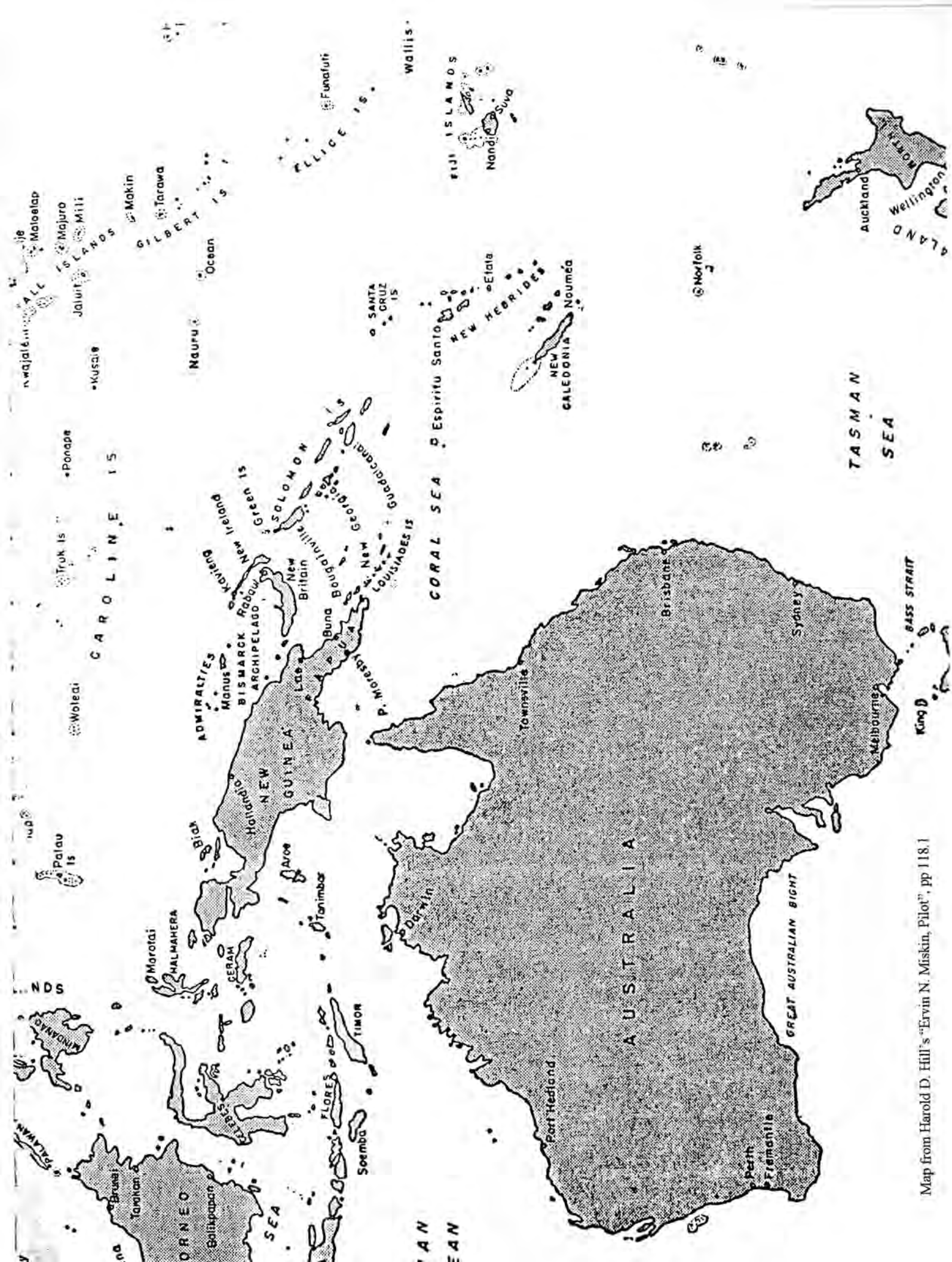
Lt. Thomas and crew cracked up after take off. Bombs exploded when plane hit. They had 6-1000 pounders. A couple of medic officers & some Aussy soldiers were killed by shrapnel when trying to rescue crew.

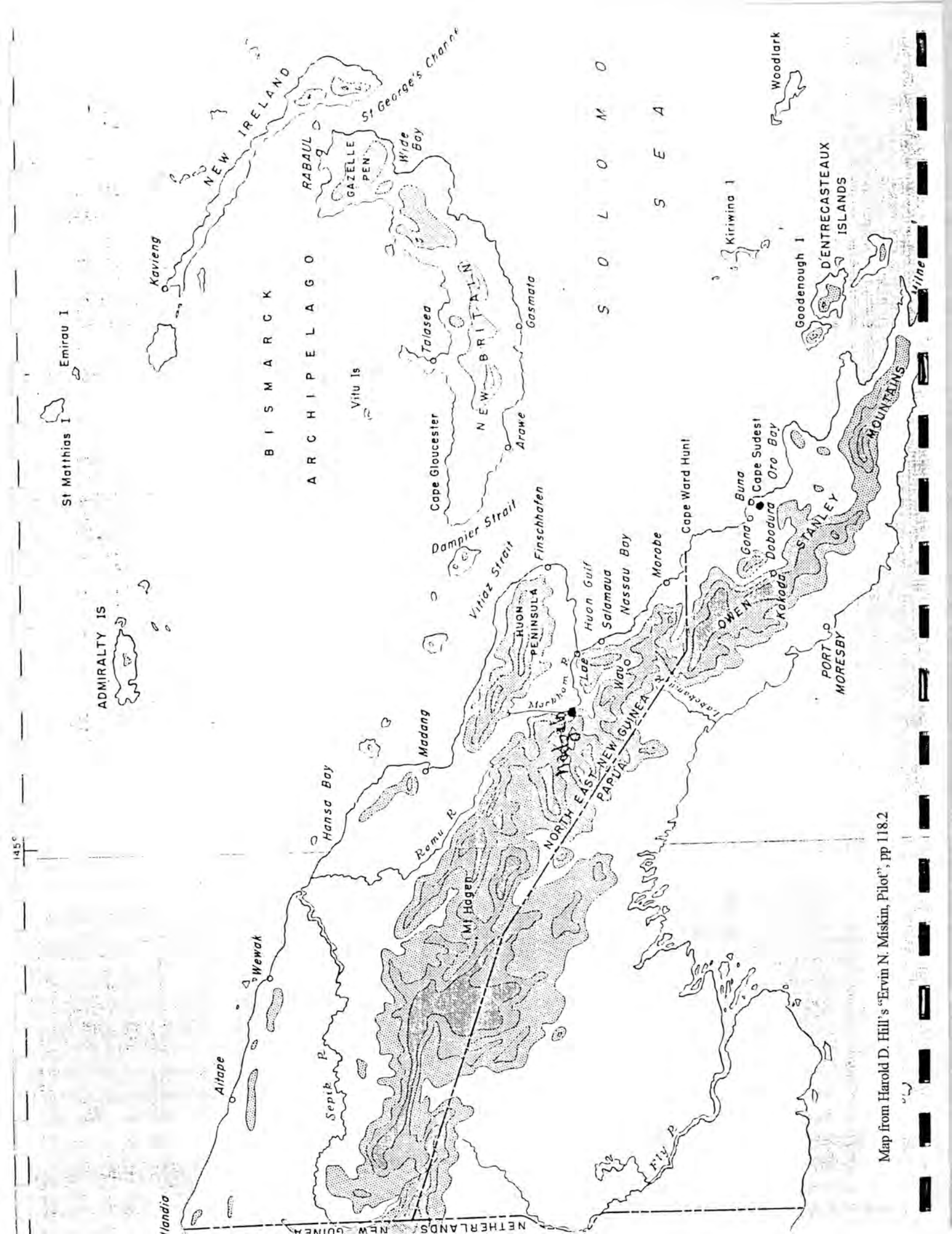
March 23:

415 AM awaken by explosion. A 90th ship hit mountain after take off on Recco. The mountain has already claimed three ships.

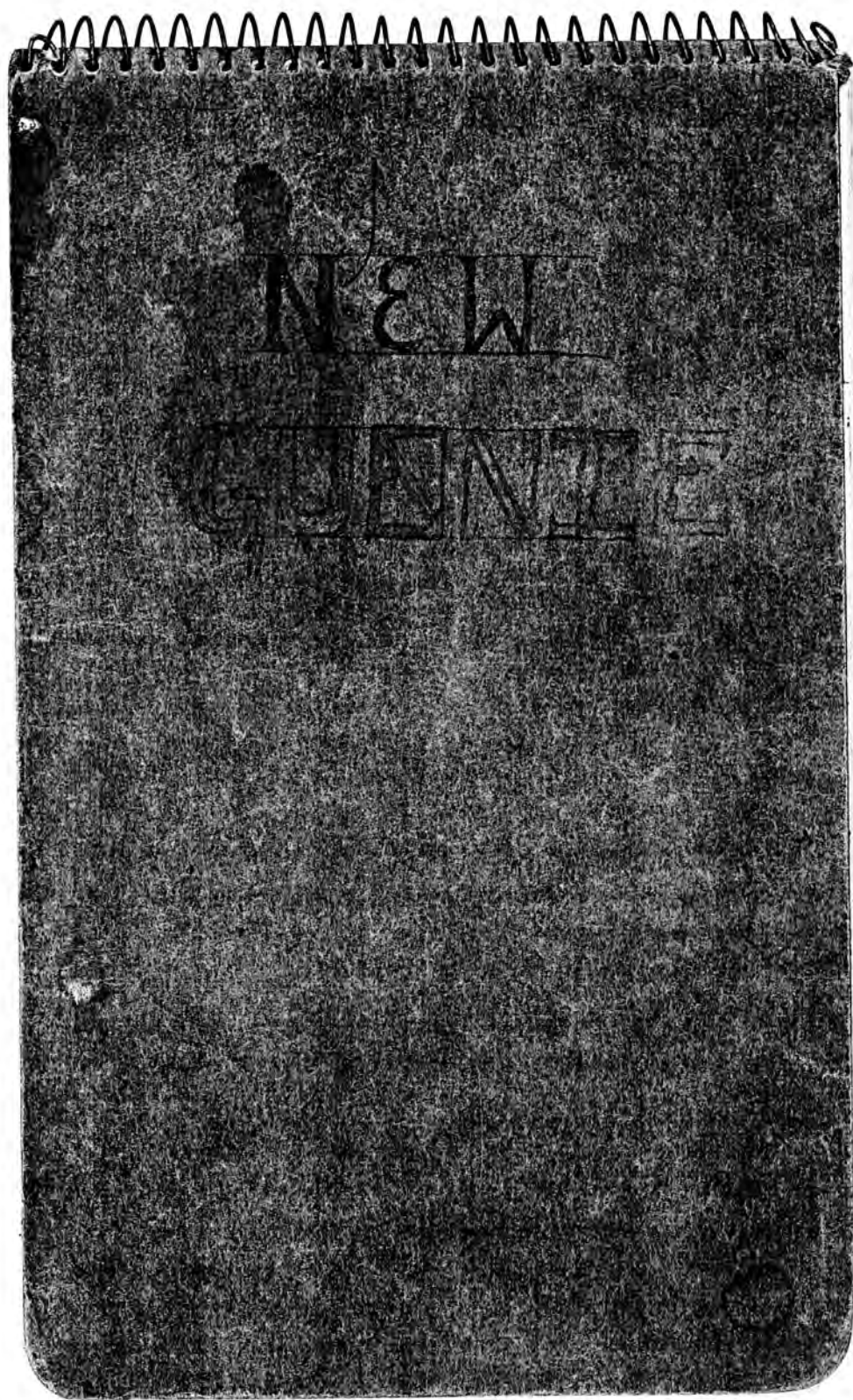
Places

Admiralty Islands
Aitape, New Guinea
Alexishafen, New Guinea
Amberley Field, Brisbane, Australia
Bismarck Archipelago
Bismarck Sea
Canton Island (Kanton, Atoll)
Cape Hoskins, New Britain
Cape Girgir, New Guinea
Charters Towers, Australia
Djaul Island (off New Ireland)
Dobodura, New Guinea
Falmikak PT, New Ireland (page 9) (Feb 12, 1944)
Finschhafen, New Guinea
Gayamadda, ?????? (page 3) (Dec 14, 1943)
Gasmata, New Britain
Gloucester, New Britain
Hamilton Field, California, USA
Hansa Bay, New Guinea
Hawaii
Hickam Field, ?????? Island, Hawaiian Islands
Hollandia (Jayapura), New Guinea
Humboldt Bay, New Guinea
Hoskins, New Britain
Hoskins Bay, New Britain
Ipswich, Australia
Kairu Island (N of Wewak)
Kavieng, New Ireland
Kimbe Bay, New Britain
Lae, New Guinea
Lorengau, Admiralty Island
Madang, New Guinea
Manum Island, New Guinea
Manus Island (part of Admiralty Islands)
Momoaa (Manus?), Admiralty Island (page 10) (Mar 22, 1944)
Nadzab, New Guinea
Nandi (Nadi), Viti Levu, Fiji
New Britain Island
New Guinea
New Hanover Island
New Ireland Island
Owen Stanley Mountains, New Guinea
Palmyrat (Palmyra) (page 1) (Nov 2, 1943)
Pearl Harbour, Oahu, Hawaii
Plaines des Gaiacs, New Caledonia
Port Moresby, New Guinea
Rabaul, New Britain
Rooke (Umboi) Island
Salamaua, New Guinea
Solomon Islands
Sydney, Australia
Talasua, New Britain
Townsville, Queensland, Australia
Wewak, New Guinea





Map from Harold D. Hill's "Ervin N. Miskin, Pilot", pp 118.2



Cover of FRANK'S LOG

Oct. 30, 1943:

Left Hamilton Fld at 9:15^{pm} last evening. Sighted land, part of the Hawaiian chain, at 10:10 Sunday morning Oct 31, 1943. We circled Earl Harbor, then in to Hickam Fld. We landed at Hickam about 11:45. The 1st of Nov we went into Hon. Greiner and I got our hair cut by a Miss Japanese Barber. Got in town to late to go to the beach.

Nov 2nd, 1943:

We were briefed at 4:00 clock AM for our second leg of the trip which was Canton, Iles. We took off at 1620 S.C.T. We passed Palmyra at, our land mark, at 2237 S.C.T. Everything went smoothly and Greiner, Timpel, and myself played poker, in between the times I had to send messages. We

1st PAGE OF LOG



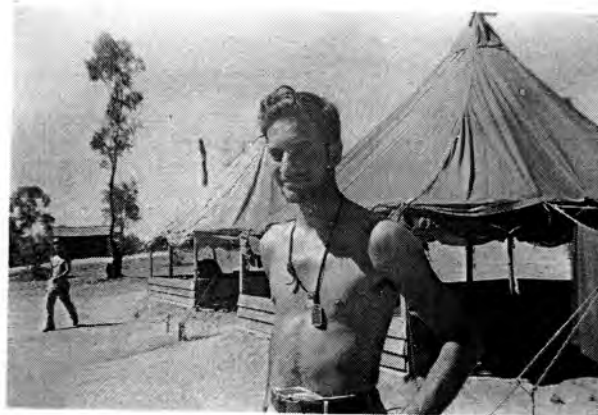
(Photo Courtesy of Wanda Miskin)

Hamilton Field, California - October, 1943
L to R: Brumm, Greiner, Kehr, Prather, Driscoll, Miskin



(Photo Courtesy of Wade T. Kehr)

B-24 with 403rd tail markings 'White tip'



Frank with beard – Port Morseby



Royal Greiner & Frank Brumm



Back, L to R: Prather, Brumm, Greiner
Front, L to R: Schaffer, Driscoll, Kehr

(Photos Courtesy of Wade T. Kehr)

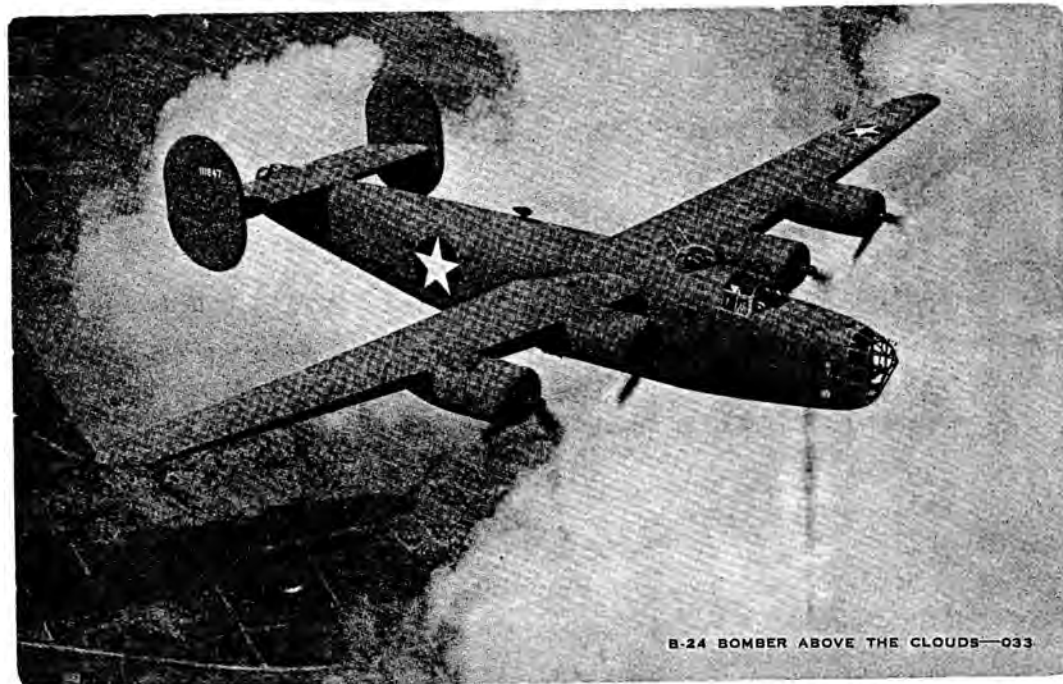
Fortress Gunner Reported Missing in South Pacific

Technical Sergeant Frank D. Brumm, radio-gunner on a Flying Fortress in the New Guinea area, has been missing in action since March 28, his wife and mother, Mrs. Max Brumm, have been informed here. They received a telegram yesterday afternoon from the war department stating that the plane was in flight from New Guinea to Queensland, Australia, when reported missing.

A graduate of Rochester high school, Sergeant Brumm entered service on October 1, 1942, and went overseas just before Thanksgiving last year after being graduated as an aerial gunner at Harlingen army gunnery school, Texas. In the last letter received here by his relatives, written March 9, he stated that he had completed 26 combat missions at that time. His wife is the former Ruth Weiberg, and they have a small son, Steven.



SERGEANT FRANK BRUMM



B-24 BOMBER ABOVE THE CLOUDS—Q33

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

1201

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

MAA200 48 GOVT=WUX WASHINGTON DC 20 345P

1944 APR 20 PM 3 05

MRS ETHEL W BRUMM=

815 SEVENTH ST NORTHWEST ROCHESTER MINN=

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES THAT I TENDER HIS DEEP SYMPATHY TO YOU IN THE LOSS OF YOUR SON TECHNICAL SERGEANT FRANK D BRUMM WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING REPORT NOW RECEIVED STATES THAT HE WAS KILLED TWENTY EIGHT MARCH IN QUEENSLAND IN A PLANE CRASH LETTER FOLLOWS=

DUNLOP ACTING THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

1201

SYMBOLS

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MA347

C612 GOVT DL PD=CHICAGO ILL 14 628P=

1949 MAR 14 PM 7 42

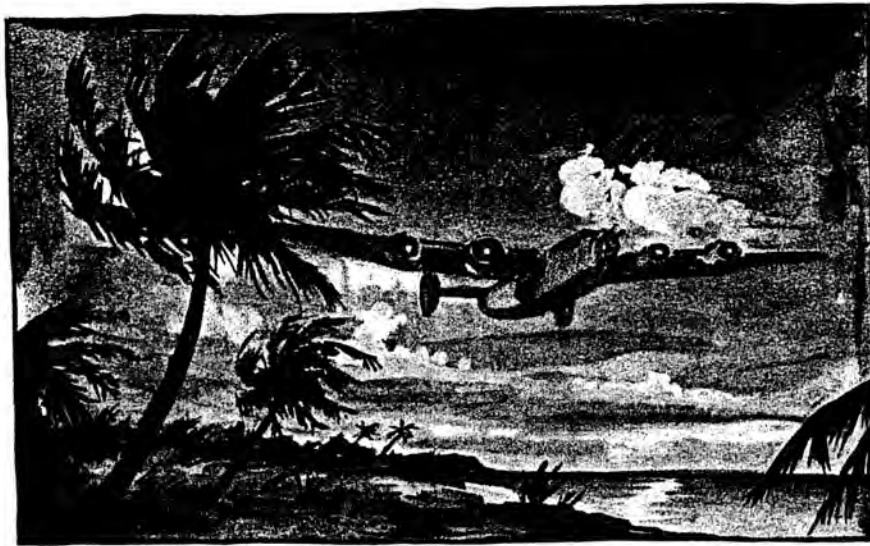
ROBERT RANFRANZ=

106 2 ST NORTHWEST ROCHESTER MINN=

REMAINS OF THE LATE T/SGT FRANK D. BRUMM, SN: 17109864 BEING SHIPPED TO YOU ACCOMPANIED BY MILITARY ESCORT, ON TRAIN NUMBER 515-C&NW RR DUE TO ARRIVE ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA, 7:45 AM, FRIDAY 18 MARCH 1949 REQUEST THAT YOU IMMEDIATELY INFORM THE NEXT OF KIN AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO ACCEPT REMAINS AT STATION UPON ARRIVAL. REFER TO CONTROL NUMBER 23001=

THOS O. CALL MAJOR QMC=

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE



"KEN'S MEN"
45RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

Sincere wishes

for a

Very Merry Christmas

and a

*Most Joyous New Year To Crew:
Eddie. Wade. Warren. Jimmie*

CHRISTMAS CARD TO RUTH 1944
FROM FORMER CREW MEMBERS

WAR DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO QMCMR 293
Brumm, Frank D.
A.S.N. 17 109 864

17 April 1947

Mrs. Ruth W. Brumm
310 - 5th Avenue, Northwest
Rochester, Minnesota

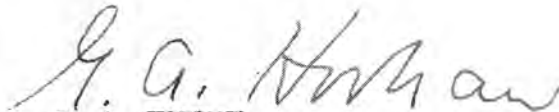
Dear Mrs. Brumm:

Inclosed herewith is a picture of the United States Armed Forces Cemetery Ipswich, Australia, in which your husband, the late Technical Sergeant Frank D. Brumm, is buried.

It is my sincere hope that you may gain some solace from this view of the surroundings in which your loved one rests. As you can see, this is a place of simple dignity, neat and well cared for. Here, assured of continuous care, now rest the remains of a few of those heroic dead who fell together in the service of our country.

This cemetery will be maintained as a temporary resting place until, in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin, all remains are either placed in permanent American cemeteries overseas or returned to the Homeland for final burial.

Sincerely yours,



G. A. HORKAN
Brigadier General, QMC
Chief, Memorial Division





In Remembrance

The Twenty-Third Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
 He leadeth me beside the still waters.
 He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the
 paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
 shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
 For thou art with me; thy rod and
 thy staff they comfort me.
 Thou preparest a table before me in the
 presence of mine enemies:
 thou anointest my head with oil;
 my cup runneth over.
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
 me all the days of my life:
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

pallbearers

Harold Brumm
 Clair Robinson
 Richard White

Gordon Brumm
 Norman Robinson
 Glenn White

In Memory of

U. Sgt. Frank D. Brumm, AAF

Born

Clustad County, Minnesota
 May 15, 1919

Date of Death

Reported killed in action March 28, 1944,
 in Queensland, Australia, at the age of 25.

Services from

Zumbro Lutheran Church
 March 18, 1949-- 2:30 p.m.
 Rochester, Minnesota

Clergyman

Rev. Norvald G. Maakestad

Organist

Mrs. N. G. Maakestad
 Songs by Delmar Fisher

Military Honors by
 Whitlock-Sonnenberg Post
 U. H. M. Funeral Escort

Final Resting Place
 Oakwood Cemetery
 Rochester, Minnesota

In Charge of Services

R. C. Ranzanz Mortuary
 Rochester, Minnesota

WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

The inclosed personal documents have been held by military censorship, due to lack of facilities in overseas theaters for their examination, to determine the extent of their content of important military information.

Passage of time has rendered harmless, from a military standpoint, much information which might otherwise have been harmful to our forces had it become known to the enemy. The release of these documents, however, does not constitute authority for the publication of any material taken from them.

These documents are released to your custody with the hope and expectation that you, as a patriotic American, will safeguard them as the personal property of the soldier, to be held from any public release until after cessation of all hostilities.



Received 11/13/00

9201 Linbrooke
San Antonio, TX 78250-5299
November 8, 2000

Mr. Stephen K. Brumm
1339 20th St. NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Dear Mr. Brumm:

My letter is based upon two assumptions: First, that your father was Sgt. Frank D. Brumm who was radioman on the B-24 crew led by Lt. Ervin Miskin, and that you attended the recent reunion of the 43rd Bomb Group Association seeking information about Sgt. Brumm. Although I was unable to attend the reunion, I have read the account of it carefully and find that you and your son were there.

If either assumption is incorrect, please accept my apologies, and toss this letter away. However, I would feel very remiss if I am correct and did not impart to you the information that I am writing to you, in case it has some value to you.

As background, the Miskin crew was organized in the summer of 1943 at Clovis, New Mexico, and I joined it as navigator. We trained at Clovis, Pueblo, Salina, and Topeka and departed there to fly a B-24 to Brisbane, Australia, enroute to the combat zone. Our radioman throughout training was a Sgt. Benninotti.

Our final stop on the mainland was San Francisco where we were required to fly some endurance flights and have work done on the aircraft. Because of an accident in which the radioman was injured, we ^{were} unable to continue on until he was replaced, and Sgt Frank D. Brumm joined us there. You probably have the itinerary, so I won't go into that. As Navigator, I worked with the radioman, Frank, and at required intervals would pass to him a position report or another message which he would radio to whatever base we were in contact with. This was the case when we were flying the pacific and in combat.

After reaching Australia, we trained for a while at Charters Towers, in Northern Australia, and then proceeded to Port Moresby, where we commenced our combat flying. We moved from Port Moresby to Dobodura, which is across the Owen Stanley Mountains, on the shore of the Solomon Sea, and a few weeks later northward to Nadzab, inland from Lae and Salamaua. We were flying combat on a regular schedule-say two or three missions a week or more.

January 1, 1944 was an adventure for all of us, and while we had flown a number of missions and "had the feel of it" we became veterans. Our mission, flying from Dobodura, was a single ship reconaissance, which would be about 12 hours and take us north over the Solomon Sea, to the island of New Britain, across it to the Bismark Sea, northeast to the vicinity of Kavieng,

New Ireland, west to the Admiralty Islands, and then southward to home base at Dobodura. We got only as far as Cape Hoskins, on the north shore of New Britain. We were deep in enemy territory; Cape Hoskins is quite near Rabaul, which was a major Japanese Base at that time.

As we crossed New Britain, to the west of Cape Hoskins, which had an airstrip, we saw a Japanese ship tied up to a wharf, and Lt. Miskin decided to attack it. We flew out over the Bismark Sea far enough to get set up for a bombing run, turned and attacked the ship. As we were about at the bomb release point, a flak battery opened up on us and made a direct hit on the number three engine--the one next to the fuselage on the right side. The engine caught fire, and we took immediate evasive action, including diving to put out the fire, which was successful; however, the pilot was unable to feather the propeller which meant that it became a drag or brake--we had three engines pulling and one braking. Our mission then became to return to friendly territory and land successfully.

Immediately I handed Sgt Brumm a message to base that we had incurred battle damage, the location and that we were making for friendly territory. It developed that there is a long peninsula extending northward from New Britain, just west of Cape Hoskins, and we had descended in our evasive action to an altitude lower than the mountain range on that peninsula, so we had to go northward about 75 miles, away from friendly territory in order to get around it.

We kept home base informed of our position in case we had to ditch; I gave Frank the messages and he radioed them in. We landed at Finschaven where an American fighter base was located, spent the night with them, and the next day the 403rd sent an aircraft to pick us up--our B-24 was unflyable because of the damaged engine---and the aircraft had some 480 holes.

Frank performed most professionally during our crisis, but later, when it was all over, told me that when he heard the flak burst, felt the rather violent maneuvering (a diving turn), and the Bombardier saying that he was salvoing the bombs, as well as the intercom report by the waist gunner calling in an excited voice to the pilot "The number three engine is on fire, the flames are coming past the window!" his first thoughts were of his wife and small son. Enclosed to make the description of the mission more easily visualized, a map is enclosed.

It was an exciting start to the year 1944, and we were increasingly busy over the next few weeks. We moved on from Dobodura to Nadzab without missing missions. I don't recall how many missions we flew, and exactly where, during the next few weeks but certainly it included several to Wewak, Hansa Bay, and the Admiralty Islands. We had a couple of most exciting fights with Japanese fighters, especially over Wewak,

and incurred some battle damage in those, and throughout Sgt Brumm and all of the crew performed well.

In mid-February I was transferred from the Miskin crew, became Squadron Navigator and began flying with the Squadron and Group commanders when they flew, but had one further flight with Frank. This was the ill-fated flight on which they were lost.

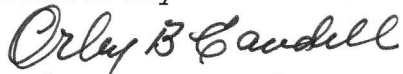
First a word of explanation: A "skeleton crew" consisted of pilot, co-pilot, navigator, engineer and radioman. Rarely would a B-24 fly without at least those crewmen. Lt Miskin and his skeleton crew were to go from Nadzab to Dobodura, ferry a B-24 from that base to Townsville, Australia, and turn that aircraft into the depot for an overhaul. I believe that the aircraft was the same one we had flown on January 1st. Another skeleton crew, on which I was navigator, were to go along and bring back another B-24.

Both crews were ferried to Dobodura from Nadzab, via a transport aircraft. When there were no parachutes for the crew I was with, our pilot decided that we would return to Nadzab rather than fly without them. Lt Miskin and his crew departed for Townsville, and we returned to base only to learn that Lt. Miskin aircraft and crew were missing. They were not found for two or three weeks, with no survivors. Although I do not recall any specific conversation with Sgt Brumm on that occasion, it could be that I was among the last to see them alive.

In the period of time that I flew with Sgt Brumm in combat we probably flew fifteen or twenty missions, on at least two of which we incurred battle damage, experienced flak and fighters opposition; throughout he performed most commendably; his family can be very proud of him and cherish his memory.

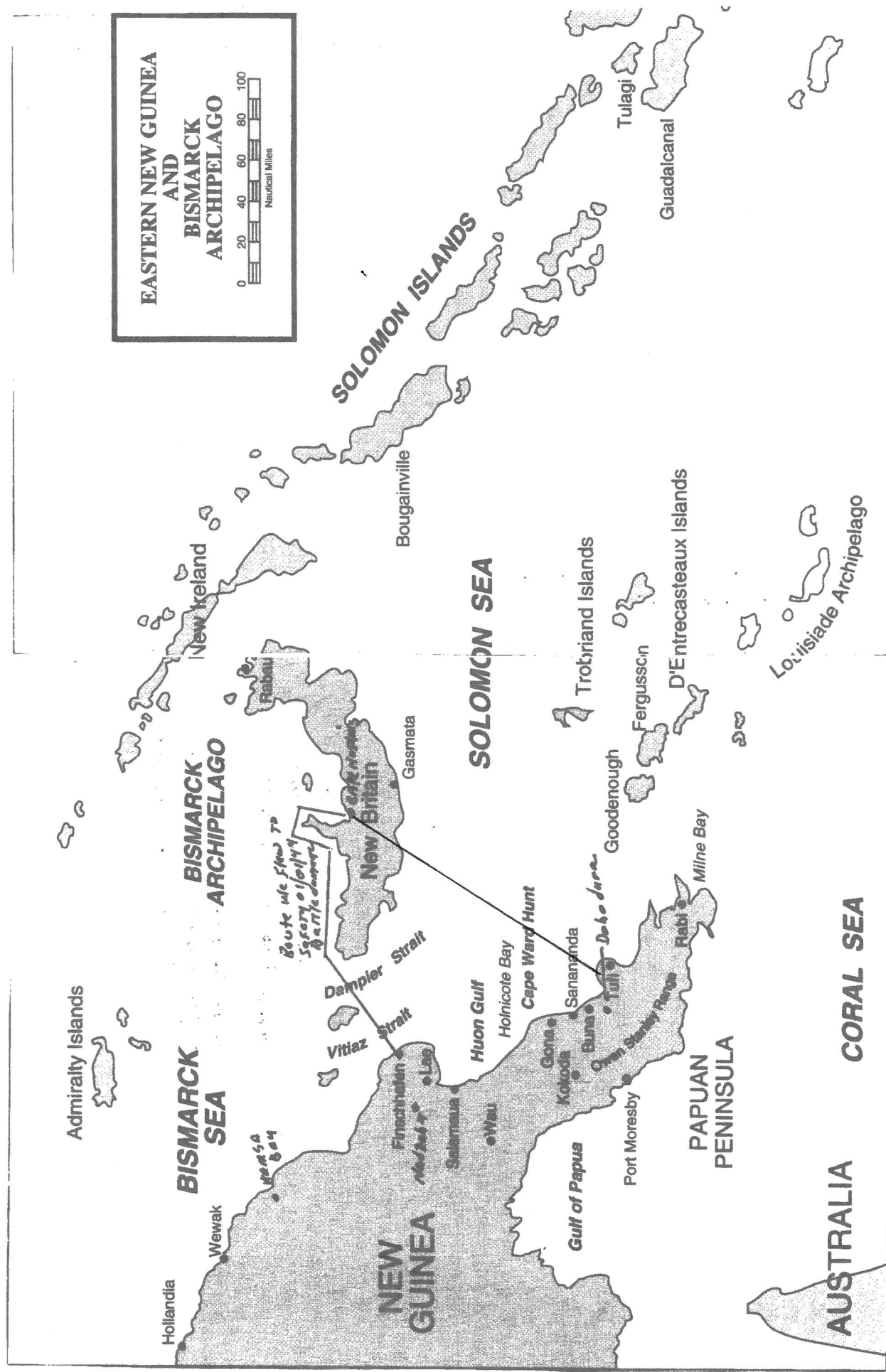
Unfortunately, I neither kept a diary nor my navigators' logs, so there probably is little else that I can add; however, if you have any questions I will try to answer them. In my Air Force career of 28 years, including a combat tour in Korea and a year in Vietnam, those days of World War II, with the closeness of the crews and the experiences that we had are special to remember. I hope that you enjoyed the reunion.

Sincerely



Orley B. Caudill, Ph.D.
Lt. Colonel, USAF (ret)

**EASTERN NEW GUINEA
AND
BISMARCK
ARCHIPELAGO**



January 17, 2001

Lt. Col. Orley B. Caudill
9201 Linbrooke
San Antonio, TX 78250-5299

Dear Lt. Col. Caudill:

Thank you for your letter. Your assumptions that Frank D. Brumm was my father and that my son and I attended the 43rd Bomb Group reunion are both correct. I must apologize for not responding sooner. I was very surprised to receive your letter and the information you shared in it was amazing. It is one of those letters that one needs to sit down and read and read again.

A series of astonishing events started for me in November 1999 when I visited the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA. I was on a business trip with my wife Shari and mentioned to her that I'd like to visit the museum. We stopped on the last day on our way to the airport. It is a fine museum. There is an extensive library onsite. I asked the librarian what information I would need to start a search for information related to my fathers' war years. He told me the first thing to do is locate the Air Force, Bomb Group and Bomb Squad numbers, which I did.

From there I utilized the Internet. I did a search on B-24 bombers. One of the sites that I located was that of the 43rd Bomb Group Association. It's a great web site. There was information on the then upcoming reunion in San Antonio. I talked to my wife about the reunion and told her I would like to attend and she suggested that I ask our oldest son Victor to go. Vic said, 'Yes!' I then e-mailed Mr. Max Axelson and he sent me information about the reunion.

Vic and I attended the reunion and really enjoyed it. We met many people that were very helpful including Max Axelsen and his wife Margaret, Art Durbeck, Sam Commons, Wendell Jones and Wade Kehr, to name a few. Art Durbeck introduced me to Wade Kehr. Wade and I have corresponded on a number of occasions since the reunion. He has been very helpful.

In addition to corresponding with Wade, I have been in contact with Harold D. Hill, author of the book Ervin N. Miskin; Pilot, Mrs. Wanda Miskin Parker, Ervin Miskin's sister...and then your letter arrived!

A number of unexpected and very memorable events have happened since November 1999: Discovering the 43rd Bomb Group web site; meeting Wade Kehr; receiving the Miskin book; getting a letter from Wanda Miskin Parker and the letter from you. It has been one surprise after another.

Prior to all of this, I really didn't know the circumstance of my fathers' death, other than he was killed in an airplane crash in Australia. Now I know the details and have shared that information with my brother Frank and family members.

Last fall I started to transcribe Frank's New Guinea log. My goal was to create an unedited writing that was easy to read and copy. I decided to expand upon it and added various pieces of information and pictures. I've included a copy of the 'Log' with this letter. The inspiration for creating the expanded version came from Harold D. Hill's 'Miskin Book', my family and a need in me to do it.

Lt. Col. Caudill, thank you for taking the time to write. I really appreciate the information in your letter. It is helpful in that I didn't know my Dad and you and others are making him real for me, for my brother, and for other family members who didn't know him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Brumm".

Stephen K. Brumm
1339 20th Street Northwest
Rochester, MN 55901
(507) 282-8165

Received 1/29/01

9201 Linbrooke
San Antonio, TX 78250-5299
January 26, 2001

Mr. Stephen K. Brumm
1339 20th Street Northwest
Rochester, MN 55901

Dear Steve: (If I may!)

Your letter of the 17th and the log were most welcome; I am delighted that you have been able to learn as much as you have about your father and what happened--you certainly have done a great deal of work since your visit to the Museum in Savannah--and the log is done up beautifully. It brought back a number of experiences which had been filed deeply in my "memory bank." I will keep it with my memorabilia which will be left for our kids and grandchildren. Thank you very much for sending it.

First: Let me say that you and Vic made numerous friends at the reunion; when the newsletter appeared with a note that I was seeking your address several people got in touch with me, including Max Axelson and Raymond and Betty Gates of West Monroe, LA. In addition to your addresses, the Gates were kind enough also to send a very nice photo of you and Vic at the dinner table. My only regret was that we did not meet you so that we could have welcomed you to our home; it is an open invitation should be in the area again. It is great that you are in touch with Wade Kehr, he is a good man.

It gives one a very nostalgic feeling to read Frank's log, and makes me ashamed that I did not keep a diary, or at least bring home my navigation logs. But, I would, at the risk of seeming like "the old veteran airman home from the wars" add a little to what Frank wrote in his log, page eight, about the January 23, 1944, strike on Wewak. We were the lead ship in our squadron, with ships on each wing and another echelon following.

One can hardly describe, and one who hasn't experienced it can hardly comprehend, the tremendous excitement of an aerial battle such as that--and it was small compared to the experiences of the fellows of the Eighth Air Force striking Germany in 1943-44. We were intercepted by about 75 Zeros, and our fighter cover did a great job of protecting us, but quite a number did get through to the Bomber formations.

In such engagements, I served as fire control, positioned between the pilot and copilot, directing the gunners, insofar as possible, as to which enemy fighter to engage. Frank mentions the damage which we sustained, but essentially were unaware of. This will explain where much of it came from, and also show that even in such heated, excited, tense moments a little humor can creep in.

In those days we bombed from about 22,000 feet and had been in the fight for some period of time--say 20 minutes. We were over the water, on the bomb run, and of course a formation of bombers has no choice but fly straight and level, especially during the bomb run. Several enemy fighters had made passes at us, and the gunners had done quite a bit of shooting, enough that the bag which caught the empty cartridges in the turrets were full of brass, and the gunners apparently unaware of that.

About two thousand yards out, possibly a mile, I watched a Zero moving into position to attack us head on. Having learned that if we gave an enemy fighter pilot in that position a "squirt" of fifty calibre fire to let him know that we were waiting for him, sometimes he would change tactics and try something else, (or attack someone else). I wanted to deter him by having him fired on, and the following exchanges ensued:

Caudill: "Nose Turret (Prather): Engage the fighter turning in at twelve o'clock level".

Nose Turret: " I can't, my guns are jammed!"

Caudill: "Top Turret (Greiner): Can you engage the fighter which is approaching from twelve o'clock level?"

Top Turret: "My guns are jammed!"

Caudill: "Waist Gunners, can either of you see the fighter approaching from twelve o'clock level."

Neither could. And the fighter had committed and was coming in head on.

Caudill: "Nose Turret, Can you engage the fighter coming in fast at twelve o'clock?"

Nose Turret: "I'm working Bud, that's all I can do." (but no firing.....")

The fighter came directly in, head on, shooting most of the way, and at about fifty feet in front of us, broke down and to the left. As he did so, I could see his face clearly as he turned his head and looked up at us. He went under the wing, and then the right waist gunner was able to get some good shots on him. His plane began to trail smoke, and we were credited with shooting him down. We were puzzled because it seemed that he had missed us, but in reality he had peppered us with hits in nonvital places, as explained in Frank's Log.

Actually, we were fortunate because later in the war he almost certainly would have rammed us. In retrospect it seemed that he was trying to shoot out our two right engines, a B-24 couldn't survive with only two engines whereas the B-17 "Flying Fortress" could. Had his shooting been only five or six feet to the his

right, and possibly a foot or two higher, he would have killed the front turret gunner, bombardier, pilot and copilot as well as me, and of course the plane would have gone down.

But, the entire incident did not last much longer that it will take you to read this letter. Once he turned in on us, about a mile away, the two planes closed at about 400 miles an hour---our speed 160, his about 250.....at four hundred mph, the one mile distance between us was covered in about six minutes. And exciting it was!

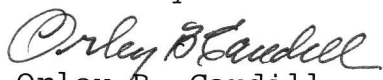
Enclosed is page with two photos, poor reproductions; which I enclose with some trepidation, but you will then have photos of the entire crew with which Frank flew for most of his combat. I am on the right in both photos., the one wearing fleece lined flighting boots in the heart of the tropics! Don Purdy was pilot of the crew I flew with after leaving the Miskin crew and Bill Edwards was co-pilot In the background of the photo with Edwards you can get a good feeling for our living conditions in Nadzab, no floors in the tents. And the place was infested with snakes.....adders... which visited used without invitations!

Finally, in reading your letter it struck me that there almost was a parallel in the lives of our son and you (we have a son and daughter). He will be fifty years of age in June, and came within the slightest margin of having your experience of never knowing his father. Judy and I had been married three months, and she was pregnant, when I left for Korea and was gone 18 months. He was ten months old when we met. It was almost precisely seven years from the time of the Wewak mission when we flew the one which is narrated in the several pages I have included.

I thought it might interest you, no need to save or return it. In that war our organization flew mostly night intruder missions, dive bombing and strafing trains, trucks etc. Of the 55 missions I flew, this was one of only five daylight missions.

Now, with this, I promise: No more war stories. It is great to be in touch with you. You have done a fine job with the LOG; your father would take much satisfaction, if he could know, what you have done. My compliments.

Sincerely


Orley B. Caudill