Group

823rd Squadron

71st Squadron

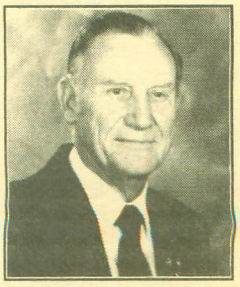
405th Squadron

822nd Squadron

"The Sun Setters"

THE 38TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION (WWII) JANUARY 1993

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



JAMES B. THOREN

Happy New Year to all of us survivors — we survived the war, 50 years more, and the Reunion! For members who were unable to attend the '92 reunion for any reason, you missed a very fine time. President Johnson did an outstanding job — everything went extremely well. Thanks, Ish!

This January issue of the Sun Setter is being sent to everyone on our mailing list — 899, of which 684 are paid members. Please look at your mailing address label which will tell you what we think your status is. If your dues are not paid up, you will not receive future issues and will miss out on information of those with whom you shared a special time of your life and of future activities of the Association. The membership voted to increase the dues to $15 a year to cover costs of producing and mailing "The Sun Setters', Squadron news letters and other expenses. Your officers and Squadron representatives are all volunteers.

Grant Nelson, 822nd, was elected Vice President and Bill McKinstry stayed on as Secretary/Treasurer. Lew Pavel has agreed to continue publishing "The Sun Setters". We owe them special thanks for accepting these positions. Please rack your memory for anything interesting, war related or not, that happened during your 38th war years or subsequent thereto if related to the 38th that Lew can publish for all of us to enjoy.

If you come in contact with anyone that served or is interested in the 38th BG (WWII), have them contact Bill McKinstry, (716) 694-2323 to join us. The 38th History should be finished in '93 for sure. Again, thank you! It is an honor to be your new President.

DUES ARE DUE

— and at Reunion attending members voted an increase from $10 to $15 per year, payable biennially. Spare the Treasurer extra work by mailing in the $5 more a year without a delinquency notice, okay?

UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

Hoyt D. Amos - 405th

I was with the 38th BG when it was formed at Jackson Army Air Base, Miss. in May 41 thru my 50th mission as aerial photo/gunner in late January 44 at 17 - Mile Strip, Port Moresby, New Guinea. I shipped back to the states in Feb. 44 just as the 38th left for its new base at Nadzab. The 405th Sqdn. was the 15th Re-con Sqdn. until we left California Mar. 42 for Patterson Field, Ohio, to cross-train from B-26s to B-25s.

After leaving Patterson, we joined up with the other personnel at Charters towers in 8/42. My first mission was on 9/15/42 — "Bombs Away on Buna Bay" — requiring a landing at Port Moresby to refuel, both going and returning.

Shortly thereafter we moved to Horn Island as an "advance echelon" where I had the first of three narrow encounters with the grim reaper. I was assigned to Lt. Bill Pittman's crew, and to protect our aircraft in case of an alert, we had been instructed to rush to our aircraft for immediate take-off, circle around 20 or 30 miles from the island and after the enemy left, to return and land.

While sitting around our A/C, some of the crew members were charged with checking equipment. The upper gunner asked me to go to Tech Supply and get him a screw driver needed to work on his gun mount. Just as I reached Supply, an alert sounded. I started running back to our plane as it taxied out. The gunner saw me and was holding the rear hatch open. I had closed to 30 feet when the plane picked up speed and I saw I couldn't make it. I watched it turn around at the end of the strip and gun its engine for take-off. To my horror, a BOE Fighter was also taking off on the short strip 90 degress to Lt. Pittman's right. They were on a collision course and at the point they would meet, neither would have reached take-off speed. Lt. Pitman jerked his plane up off the runway and over the BOE Fighter. At 40/50 feet altitude, the left wing dipped and the aircraft nosed down. Pitttman did a slow 350 degree turn holding the aircraft flat and pancaked it in the stumps and brush just off the runway. No one was hurt, but my rear compartment was

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DOWN IN SOUTHEAST CHINA

Jim Powell — 71st

While stationed at Lingayen, Luzon, PI, my 4th mission as engineer/top-turret gunner against the Byoritsu Refinery in Formosa. Our plane collided with the right wing of the lead aircraft at the start of the target run, veered sharplyd own and right under another aircraft which passed within a foot of my top turret, sheared off a foot from the top of one rudder and severely bent the other.

The pilot maintained control and headed west thru a deep valley toward the South China Sea, guns firing at us from both sides. As we crossed the NE Formosa coastline, the pilot ordered us to prepare to ditch while struggling to maintain flight barely above water, but then gradually gained altitude and headed for an emergency strip in SE China. As we circled thru the mountains, we missed the strip and ran low on fuel. Passing over several Japanese military convoys, we headed away from the main roads, crash-landing, wheels up, on the side of a mountain, skimmed across a shallow river (Fu-t' un CH'i) and nosed into the east bank near the small town of Shaowu in Northwestern Fulkien (now F-jian) Province. The entire crew was shaken up but no one was seriously injured.

All crew members carried small American and Chinese flags with instructions in Chinese to turn crew members over to American authorities for a reward. We were picked up by Chinese guerillas in Japanese occupied territory and taken to a farm building where we were fed sweetened, hard-boiled eggs. We were than picked up by the Mayor of Shaowu, who was also president of a school called the American University. He had lived in San Francisco for 6 years and spoke good English. He invited us to his home to get cleaned up and eat, but as we were preparing to bathe, there was loud banging on the front door and shouts of "Open up". An armed contingent of U.S. Marines quickly loaded us into waiting jeeps, concerned that local informers would reveal our whereabouts to the Japanese. They drove us about 50 miles to their mountain hideaway where they maintained a weather station reporting local weather and other activities to the

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YOUR 1993-94 ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

President ..... James B. Thoren
8110 S. Possession Rd., Clinton, WA 98236
Vice President ..... Grant Nelson
Box 696, Ferndale, WA 98248
Secretary/Treasurer ..... William J. McKinstry
473 Evergreen Drive, Tonawanda, NY 14150
71st Sqdn. Rep. ..... Robert Blair
1280 Elm Street, Denver, CO 80220
71st Sqdn. Alt. ..... Eugene E. Benson
714 Grant Ave., North Mankato, MN 56001
405th Sqdn. Rep. ..... Delbert Campbell
3102 Neilson Drive, Enid, OK 73703
405th Sqdn. Alt. ..... Harlan Denning
5425 Mark Court, Richland, WA 99353
822nd Sqdn. Rep. ..... Jack C. Wallace
101 Castlerock Rd., Oklahoma City, OK 73120
822nd Sqdn. Alt. ..... Andrew A. Rimar
522 Chase Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412
823rd Sqdn. Rep. ..... Dale Hyson
823rd Sqdn. Alt. ..... Orland F. Gage
337 Reservoir Drive, Lewiston, ID 83501
Hdq. Rep. ..... Thomas D. Kirby
P.O. Box 416, Simi Valley, CA 93062
Editor "The Sun Setters".... E. L. (Lew) Pavel
P.O. Box 915204, Longwood, FL 32791

"IN EVER-HONORED MEMORY"

Since the publication of the September 1992 newsletter we have been informed of five veterans of the 38th Bomb Group that have gone to their final resting place:

Garland Elliott ..... (71st)
James E. Reese ..... (71st)
Paul Love ..... (405th)
Lloyd Powell ..... (405th)
William C. Fanning ..... (822nd)

ADDITIONAL LIFE MEMBERS

The Association has gained two new Life Members since the September 1992 listing:

Charles H. Lewis ..... (71st)
George Q. Strand ..... (71st)

Here is the breakdown, by squadron, of the total number of members who have contributed $100 to the Life Membership Fund:

SQDN	HQ	71st	405th	822nd	823rd
	7	37	55	37	35
DEC.	1	4	5	2	1

TOTAL = 161

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES???

According to a member of the 822nd who shall remain nameless (he neglected to sign the article), one of the more troubling conditions resulting from the modification of their B-25Gs when the 75 mm cannon was replaced with 50 caliber machine guns was the imbalance of the plane at rest. Wheel chock placement was usually the first act of the ground crew when the plane was parked and engines stopped, but on the modified G, it was necessary to place a long piece of pipe from the tail to the ground to keep the tail from dropping when the engines were stopped. Also, this pipe had to be in place to hold the nose wheel down during munition loading and during engine changes. Weights and measures practices were certainly ignored.

UNFORGETABLE MOMENTS Continued

completely squashed. As it was, our plane became "Tech Supply" for parts for our other aircraft.

The 71st and 405th moved to 14-Mile Strip while the 38th ground troops moved to 30-Mile. My fifth or sixth mission resulted from a report of enemy shipping off NE New Guinea, apparently with reinforcements for Buna or Lae. The 405th sent two B-25s on an armed recon "Search and Destroy" mission. Our pilot was Lt. Brandon and the upper gunner was Jack Allan. We sighted the Jap troop transport several miles off the coast of Buna. Our radio man sent the location and we started our bomb run at 5,000 ft. As soon as I saw the transport in my camera view-finder, I started my recon strip of photographs. Unfortunately the Bombardier pushed the wrong release switch dropping onlyone 300 pound bomb instead of all six at one second intervals. The bomb hit approximately 100 feet in front of the transport. Had the correct switch been pushed, the transport would have been blown to smithereens with at least two or three bombs as direct hits. Lt. Brandon started a 360-degree turn to make another run when all hell broke loose. Our B-25 nosed over and headed straight down to the ocean. I thought we had been hit by the transports heavy ack-ack. I had a chest pack harness on but was sitting on the 'chute. I sailed up to the ceiling and floated around with the K-17 camera, which had come out of its mount, trying to find my chest pack so I could fasten up and bail out. Actually, Lt. Barndon saw a Zero heading right for our nose and instinctively shoved the stick forward into a power drive -- everything that wasn't fastened down floated to the top of the aircraft. We went down from 5,000 feet to around 500 before he and the co-pilot could pul it out of the drive (later admitting they weren't sure they could). He got on interphone to tell us what had happened and that we were surrounded by Zeros.

Unfortunately all the ammunition had come out of the cans and my waist gun had fallen out of its mount. The upper gunner's guns were in operating condition with 50 cal. rounds still in their containers. I remounted my 30 cal. in the rear window mount but could only fire out of right side. The Radio-Gunner was desperately working on his hopelessly jammed bottom turret, but radioed our base we were under fighter attack. Two Zeros came in low on our tail blindspot and the upper gunner yelled that the fixed fire "wobble" scare gun sticking out of the tail did not react to his solenoid switch. I climbedback there and got 20 rounds smoothed out to scare off the Zeros to the left and right of our plane. Back to my rear window, I fired at the one on the right and Allen got the one on the left. Meantime Pilot Brandon dropped the plane to 100 feet over the trees and put the engines in "Hi-Blower". The Zeros could still fly faster, but couldn't turn in toward us without dropping back. I crawled back and got the "wobble" gun firing and we were able to get the Zeros to peel off to the left or right where we could get at them. We sweated out climbing to cross the Owen Stanley Range, with the last two Zeros finally turning back toward Buna. Our other B-25 and its crew were never seen again.

"PAPPY" GUNN - THE LEGEND

Herman E. Baccia — 405th

(Col. Gunn was featured in an earlier "Sun Setter", but concentration on the developmer of the strafer warrants additional coverage — Editor.)

Rumor around the 405th Squadron had it that Col. Gunn got the idea to convert an old B-25C into a bomber/strafer by mounting fixed guns on her forward fuselage. The problems involved were so great they would have discouraged a lesser man, but Pappy's philosophy was that no idea was of any value until put into action, and his private war with the Japanese became an obsession.

With his power of persuasion Gunn garnered a mixed crew of welders, sheet metal workers, armament men and electricians to help with the transition. Time was inshort supply, and screening off a make-shift revetment, the crew went to work on an old Mitchell Genn had scrounged, and after much sweat and hard work the B-25 was rolled out for a test hop. She sat at the end of the runway, engines thundering, struts moving up and down in rhythm with the surge of the props, and a stubble of 50 cal. guns jutting from her nose and more 50s mounted on each side of the fuselage. Guns and a camera were operable by the pilot. When the brakes were released, the B-25 moved down the steel-matted runway, lifted off to climb into the blue. Everything checked out perfectly, including test firing guns.

The final test day arrived. Gol. Gunn took off alone, climbed to an altitude to cross the pass in the Owen Stanley range, and headed toward Buna — no co-pilot, no navigator, no crew. With the high range behind him, Col. Gunn began a slow descent from 14,000. The air pouring in through the drafty old aircraft as he descended felt good. His head was clear and visibility was limitless, a few thin cumulostratus clouds sailing high above.

After the wrinkled foothills of the range smoothed out, he maintained 2,000 feet until the Buna runway was in sight, then dropped to tree-top level for the approach. Everything had gone well — if his luck would only hold — if he could surprise them —. He cleared the last of the trees, dropped steeply and pulled out at the las second. Before this main gear wheels touched the runway, he was assured of a turkey shoot at least. There were targets aplenty parked to order for what the Colonel had in mind.

As soon as he could without ground-looping, he braked hard to a roll-stop. Keeping his foot on the left brake, he released the right one, gunning a right-to-left circular turn, and activated the camera and the fixed guns as he went. The guns combined to fire approximately 6,000 rounds per minute with a tracer every fifth round and incendiaries interspersed at regular intervals.

The Mitchell revolved around the pivo wheel providing Pappy a ringside view of the

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS

We received so little input for this issue, I had to go back into my files to review materials previously not used because of similarity to other articles recently published. It occured to me members might be interested in how decisions re publication are made.

The problem usually stems from an item about a tough or unusual mission which stimulates other members who participated to relate their experience. No matter how interesting the second story may be, to non-participants it would seem repetitious so we have to pass it over or, at best, use an excerpt in his squadron's column. We do keep these stories in a "hold file" and after a sufficient time lapse and some judicious editing, use it in a later issue.

Let's face it! You guys don't send in enough material to give us a choice. Several fellows mentioned experiences to me at Reunion '92, and I asked them to send them in — haven't received one yet! Can't write? I can!! Jot down the salient details and I'll put them together under your name. "Squibs" are just as welcome as stories" — we need fillers.

And to keep the records straight, send changes of addresses, notices of passing, etc., to the Secretary/Treasurer — NOT the Editor.

SOUTHEAST CHINA Continued

USAAF and the Navy. They were also part of the Air-Ground rescue network responsible for getting downed air crews to safety.

It took an AGAS officer and a Chinese driver/mechanic three days in a 4x4 vehicle driving westward about 800 miles over unpaved roads to the last remaining air field in SE China. We were then flown a hundred miles in a C-47 to 14th AF Hdqtrs. in Kunming, China, arriving 4/2/45.

During the trip, our Chinese driver had to replace the fuel pump diaphragm periodically because the Pine-gas (smelled like turpentine) was very corrosive to rubber. It was carried in a 55-gallon drum in the rear of the 4x4 along with container of gasoline for starting the engine. The roads were very narrow with no guard rails, and periodic flights of Jap planes flew over the roads traveled.

The crew was interrogated about our unfortunate incident at 14th AF HQ, and from Kunming we were flown by B-24 to Leyte in the Phillippines where the officers were further interrogated before our return to active duty at Lingayen.

COMING ATTRACTIONS:

Improved Diet ..... Bill Hanrahan
The Vagaries of a pilot's life ..... Ed Riehl
405th statistical report ..... Ed Brady
Harrods Brewery ..... Harry Rosengard
Vertigo ..... Grant Nelson
USAAF Publicity Ploy Backfire's ... Lew Pavel

We haven't got YOUR article yet!!

DIVINE PROTECTION

(The following report of a mission to Sorong Harbor 6/17/44 (slightly edited) was written by Pilot Bob Richards, 822nd, (a victim of polio in 1950) and passed on by his wife, Margaret, to Paul Popma of the 71st who submitted it for publication.)

We took off from Hollandia with CP Bob Bolger, Stan O'Chelek - Navigator, Sgt. Gay - Gunner, Sgt. Setastion - Radio Gunner, leading the second flight on the 4-hour trip to the target — shipping in Sorong Harbor near Jeffman, New Guinea. As we approached, I put on my steel helmet, offered a silent prayer and "put on my armor of faith". I selected one of two cargo vessels (4000 tons) anchored of the left side of a small island. The first flight had blown up one of them so we came in on the other with guns blazing. As we dropped our bombs and pulled up over the mast, we caught some ground fire from the island and the gunner called informing us our right engine was pouring out oil. I had started to follow the first flight after some barges, flying right on the surface. I checked oil pressure and other instruments and believed I could gain altitude before having to feather the prop.

At 1000 feet the pressure dropped to 20 lbs. and the prop started to run away, so I feathered it. Very shortly Walt Oldham and Jerry Kustage in #246 pulled up on our left wing. It was surely a relief to see them and a comfort to have them stay with us. (Walt and his crew crashed to their death after being hit by a Zero a few days later.)

Pulling 36" and 2250 RPM we managed to hold 150 MPH with one engine and maintain our altitude. As soon as I had the plane well under control, I instinctively thanked God for His help and prayed for its continuance. We were all pretty busy — Bob trying to contact other ships and Gardenia (the Catalina Flying boat standing by), Stan navigating and organizing things for a crash landing, Sebastian maintaining contact with Hollandia radio station, Sgt. Gay jettisoning all unnecessary equipment, and I flying the plane.

We had 350 miles to fly over enemy waters to the small island of Owi where Engineers had started a strip just days before, and we had been briefed we could land there wheels down on a 4000 foot strip. I checked the fuel and found we should have plenty and we could easily make it if our left engine held out and we weren't attacked. I then began to think we should have a common word of prayer. I waited until everything possible had been done and we were all settled down to our long slow flight ahead. I called them to listen in, that I proposed to offer a prayer. In words to this effect, I proceeded:

"Our Father who art in Heaven, we acknowledge thy power and goodness and that thy protecting hand has led us out of a very serious situation. We humbly thank Thee, and beseech Thee to continue to watch over us, and cause that the ship will function properly. We pray that if it be Thy will we shall land safely and unharmed, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

Continued on Column 3

Each man in turn said "Amen", and I thanked them. From then on it was a matter of navigation. Weather was not good and our maps weren't very accurate, but we finally found the little island just off Biak where a terrific ground battle was waging. Walt went ahead and buzzed the strip to clear it of equipment. A storm was approaching and it looked as if it would soon close in, so we made one circle of the island making a regular pattern to help me line up in the event of poor visibility. A lot fo experience in landing with two engines and Heaven-sent confidence helped me make a perfect single engine landing. As we rolled to a stop it began to rain. (15 P-38's came in behind us, the last of them having to make instrument approaches.)

As we emerged from the plane, Stan said "That's really coming in on a wing and a prayer", and Bob remarked, "We certainly had an angel on each wing."

At one point we were a bit undecided as to whether to go on past Owi and try to make it to Wakde. We later learned from the P-38 pilots that the weather was very bad and we probably wouldn't have gotten through safely. We left the plane with the service group and hitched a ride back to Holland on an LST. I am thoroughly convinced our safe arrival without a scratch on any of the crew was due to the protecting arm of the Lord and in answer to our prayer.

(Damage to the airplane included holes through the engine mount, oil line, booster coil, fuel tank and many others. One shot through the tail came within a couple of feet of Sgt. Sebastian who was back at his guns.)

"PAPPY" GUNN Continued

action with tracers hosing into the targets. As he came around the second time, he could see flame and smoke sweeping the line of double-parked fighters. When the explosions began to splash burning gasoline over the fighters, setting fire to those that might have escaped direct hit, Col. Gunn decided it was time to get out. He also became aware that there had been a total lack of return fire as far as he could determine over the thunder of his own guns.

As the B-25 fuselage paralleled the runway, he released the pivot brake, brought the craft into takeoff position, leveled his throttles and took off down the runway. The Mitchell was gaining speed fast when Col. Gunn idly glanced to his right and saw a small man in fatigue clothes standing transfixed, as if he were seeing something beyond his comprehension, something alien to his own physical world.

Gunn pulled back on the yoke lifting the B-25 over the fringe of trees. At altitude he flattened the B-25 out across the jungle canopy, took a deep breath and muttered, "Mission accomplished!".

(EPILOGUE —So much time has passed, we may never know how much of the above is true. It is worth noting, however, some months after this saga, crews were being equipped with new B-25s, factory-made gun ports in the nose and twin packs sides of the fuselage. Sound familiar?)

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Tom Kirby Representative

MORE MEMORIES, PLEASE!

Tom Kirby - Hdq.

The reunion in San Antonio was a very enjoyable experience. It was good meeting old friends and great to meet new ones. I hope the time spent stimulated enough memories to yield more input for our newsletter — in fact, any input will be appreciated. Unless all of us have lived in a vacuum, 50 years should bring some memories to mind — barracks life in Jackson — the air tragedy over Jackson — when was the documented birth of the 38th BG — who were crew members of the first B-25 to arrive at Jackson — and how many — garrison life during '41 — the turmoil of '42 — these are just a few boosters to get us going down memory lane. While there are enough of us left with memories of our beginnings, let's make a concentrated effort to review our history. As a passing thought, events and accomplishments after our service years would also be interesting. headquarters squadron personnel, let us hear from you!!! Also members of the 69th and 70th squadrons also have a story to tell! Let's make a resolution to do better in 1993.

71st SQUADRON
Robert W. Blair
Eugene Benson
Representatives

No Comment

405th SQUADRON
Delbert Campbell
Haarlan Denning
Representatives

FROM START TO FINISH

Howard E. Alter — 405th

I was involved with the convoy from Langley field to Jackson, MS, when the 405th Squadron was originated. We picked up our B-26's at Martin in Baltimore, MD, flew to Langley Field to train our pilots and maintenance personnel, and then flew back to Jackson.

Our next big operation was after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor when we were sent to Savannah, GA, on 12/7/41 for ten days, and then to coastal patrol over the everglades to 200 miles out to sea. The armament on the *B-26* was a 45-caliber pistol on the hip of our tail gunner. The B-18's were sitting back at the field with two 30-calibre machine guns and two 500 pound bombs. It was our responsibility to radio back to the field if we saw any enemy ships.

In January '42, we shipped out from San Francisco to Melbourne, Australia, and to Ballarat for 5 or 6 months, then Brisbane, and later to Charters Towers. Our air echelon met up with us at Charters Towers with B-25's, not B-26's.

We did some bombing from Charters Towers and Horn Island, and later flew our planes to Brisbane for six weeks to convert our medium bombers to strafers with 50-Calibre machine guns in the nose, and then trained our pilots in skip bombing on the ship hull off Port Moresby.

We were assigned to 30-Mile strip, and there we were surprised by 100-plane air raid. While in Dobadura in eastern New Guinea, we were involved in Bismarck Sea battler where the backbone of the Imperial Navy broken and sent them back from whence they came.

Subsequently we received the B-25G and H, with 75 mm guns in the nose, in time to use in the New Britain campaign.

I left Milne Bay for the States in '44 with 85 points, having served as a M/Sgt. squadron Inspector in the 405th while in New Guinea and Australia.

I worked on B-17s in depot overhaul and on B-29s flight line in Nebraska before being mustered out in 1945.

822nd SQUADRON
Jack C. Wallce
Andrew A. Rimer
Representatives

ANYONE YOU KNOW?

William McKinstry — 822nd

On 5/2/45 a group of A-20 pilots and gunners were transferred into the 38th BG from San Jose, Mindoro. McKinstry does not remember the group's designation but recalls those involved in the transfer were not complete crews. None are listed in the 38th BG roster, and Bill finds it hard to believe none of them survived the war and that all of them would fail to join the 38th association.

Bill has the travel orders listing all pilots and gunners with whom he went overseas, landing at Lae, New Guinea, finally arriving at San Jose, P.I., and would appreciate any information relative to the following pilots and gunners who were transferred:

Allen, Herbert T.
Bufkin, Allan S.
Carlisle, Thomas C.
Cave, Martin T.
Flower, John A.
Haines, Clifford J.
Harris, Billy G.
Hornbeck, Robert F.
Houston, Norman E.
Kent, Paul E.
McCord, Henry E.
Moore, Francis H.
Morris, Rex R.
Payne, Thomas J.
Rebrovich, Arthur J.
Davis, Charles C.
DeYoung, John W.
Diemer, Russell B.
Dunkin, Claude
Frank, Robert E.
Gebolys, Eugene F.
Geldrich, James H.
Gray, Martin A.
Harris, Leroy F.
Hester, Bobby J.
Hunt, Curtis R.
Joslin, Burrel C.
Kehoe, Charles W.
Kersh, Blake F.
Kreel, Stephen
Lawrence, James R.

Akehurst, Louis W
Bucgheit, Edward R.
Cookman, Calvin C.
Cowan, Thinas W.
Davis, Charles C.
Nelson, Robert L.
Nugent, Robert N.
Osborn, Ralph N.
Williamson, Harry S.
Witzel, William C.

823rd SQUADRON
Dale Hyson
Orland F. Gage
Representatives

OFF TO AUSTRALIA

William E. Hanrahan

In June '43 our crew was transferred from Greenville, SC, R.T.U. to Savannah, GA to pick up a new B-25G. Supply issued sidearms, flashlights, cases of batteries, chemical warfare inpregnated clothing, blankets and gas masks. We were LOADED, but by the time we reached Australia everything but sidearms and chem warfare items had disappeared.

Our first stop was Phoenix for fuel where we spent two days for repairs to a primer solenoid. (People should be given medals for living in that heat - our shoes would sink into the asphalt on the streets.) Then on to Hamilton Field where we were immediately dispatched on to Sacramento for 3 days of overseas modification including a bomb bay tank and a fiber compo tank replacing the bottom gun turret.

Back to Hamilton to reload, pick up an ATC navigator, and off to Hawaii - but a broken spring on the prop governor disrupted our plans - any change in altitude or power settings caused the prop to take off and had to be controlled with the feathering button. Not being allowed to land until the 585 gallons of gas in the bomb bay tank was exhausted, we circled San Francisco for hours and watched the fog close over Hamilton, finally managing to land after three or four passes.

That night I met a young lady on the bas and escorted her home. Just as I was settling in for a great evening, James Raine, Bill Hughes and the navigator gleefully banged on her door and announced we were taking off in one hour. Later I learned her father was the engineering officer who diagnosed our problem and got us off to Hawaii.

Take-off was an experience, climbing over the storm dikes at Hamilton in an overloaded B-25. Then the ATC navigator dropped his sextant and we had to bore holes through the skies until we finally picked up the radio beacon on the Hawaii approach. I had exactly 58¢ in my pocket. After a week in Hawaii blowing my $6 per diem, we island-hopped along with the C-47s to Brisbane. (At Nandi a mess sergeant apologized for having only venison steaks for our dinner - they were delicious). Next morning before our takeoff, the air strip crew had to chase deer off the runway with jeeps.

Upon arrival at Eagle Farm, we were met by Colonel Gunn, who invited Jim Raine and me to join him at his apartment for a cold beer. The next morning after a miserably cold night in a barracks, we returned to the hangar and were reloading the 25 men whenthe colonel showed up with 13 additional people and their luggage to board our plane. The takeoff was another experience even without the bomb bay tank (4,000 pounds) since most of our passengers (2,600 pounds) were in the tail of the plane. With full forward elevator trim, we had to hold the control column forward for level flight. Landing at Townsville, the 25 stalled at 160 mph 1[illegible] feet above the runway. I expected the landing gear struts to poke thru the wing but there was no apparent damage, and after dropping our passengers, we proceeded onto Charter's Towers for the formation and training of the 822nd and 823rd Squadrons.