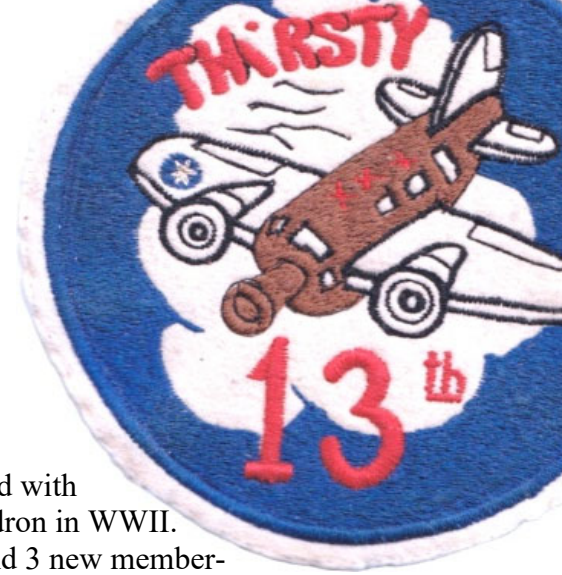


April 2015 Update



Dear Thirsty 13th Members, Relatives, and Friends,

Since the last newsletter in November 2014 we have been blessed with additional information on the history of the 13th Troop Carrier Squadron in WWII. Sadly, we lost 5 members, but have at least 20 still with us, and found 3 new member-families. Click on the hand symbol in the PDF menu to make it easier to scroll down.

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

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

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

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

1. Additional History

a. 1942: Aerial Photos of Nouméa and Dumbéa

In March I hired a researcher to work with the National Archives and find a sequence of aerial photos of New Caledonia, and I received these April 17, 2015. The photos, from April 24, 1943, are great.

Go-Ashore Location

According to Fuselier, on page 183, the 13th TCS ground crew after arriving in New Caledonia boarded a landing craft, which opened onto a beach where they went ashore. They boarded a train next to the beach. The only area with a beach in Nouméa next to the train is shown at right. This is estimated to be the ground crew's go-ashore location. This is probably the beach also referred to by Schmitz on page 266.



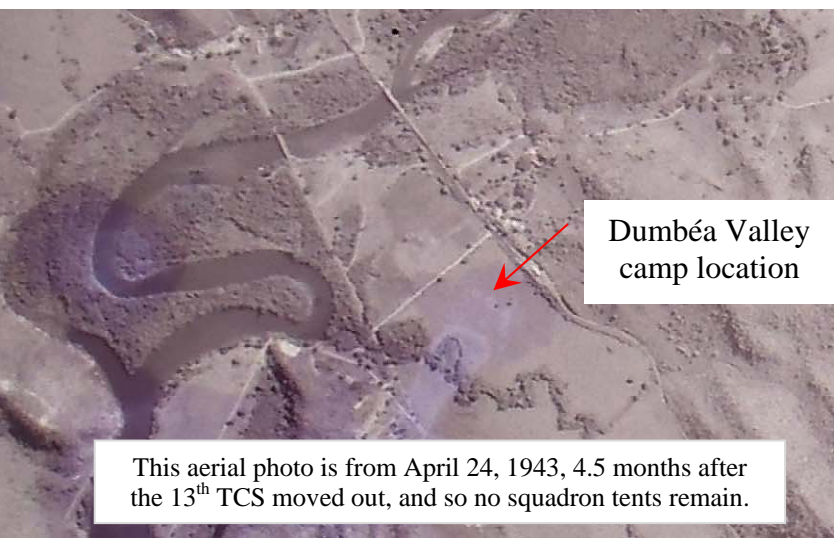
Dumbéa Valley Camp Location

The train the ground crew boarded, pictured on page 183, was on the Nouméa-Païta Railway, and opened December 1914, with 3-foot narrow-gauge tracks, and closed January 1, 1940, due to low ridership. In April 1942 the American 790th Railway Transportation Company reopened it to transport troops and war supplies. It had two tunnels, three bridges, and two stops in Dumbéa.

The ground crew's first overseas camp location was 17 days, November 27 to December 13, in an area the squadron yearbook "Two Years c/o Postmaster" refers to as "Dumbéa Valley." The 169 men listed on page 184, at 4 men per tent, would occupy 42 tents, e.g. 5 rows of 8 tents, and so not a large area. The Dumbéa camp is estimated to be where indicated below based on:

- The train track is outlined in blue below right, and Google Maps has a label for "Station de Dumbéa River," perhaps the old train stop. The 1943 aerial has a station along the track.
- Claude Fuselier, on April 17, 2015, at 94, stated "We got off the train, and we walked a little bit and we set up the camp there. We didn't go too far. There wasn't no road; just a path. It was flat ground there, seemed it was more like a field. The river was a short walk away." *This is the only flat ground around, a short distance from the train, and not down a road.* "The main road went past the temporary camp. We turned left off the main road, a couple blocks down the side road, and then the camp was on the right." *This is estimated in yellow.*
- Goodwin in 2010 said: "Dumbéa was a meadow with a river running through it," *and this area has a small stream through it.* "As you approach the camp [assumed from the north], the river [the big river or stream] was on the right. We were on the east side of the river."

If your father went over on the 1st boat, this was his first camp. Thank you, Fuselier and Goodwin.



This aerial photo is from April 24, 1943, 4.5 months after the 13th TCS moved out, and so no squadron tents remain.



Ref: Google Maps 2015

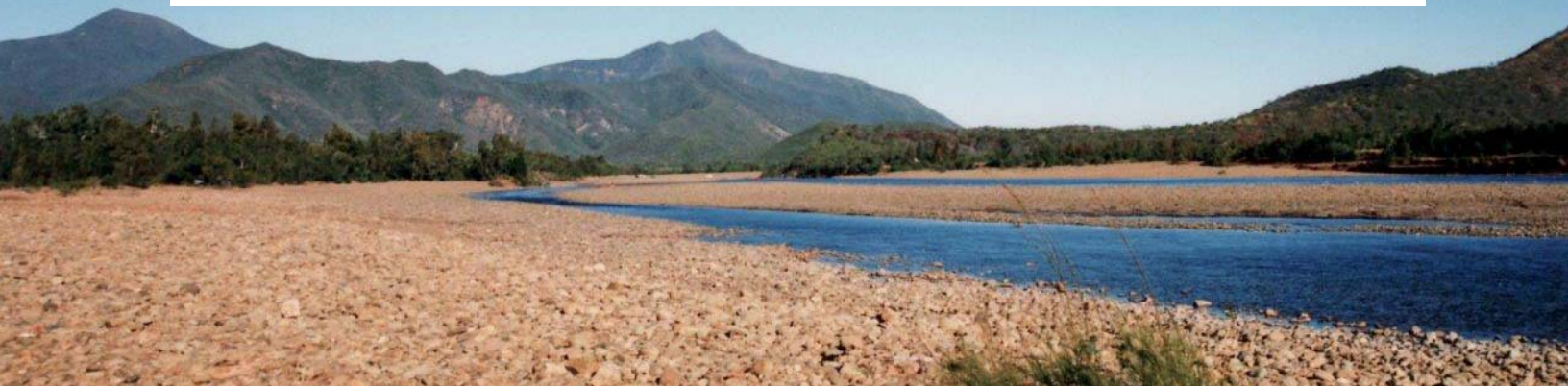


b. 1942-43: Additional Photos of New Caledonia Today

The November 2014 newsletter included 24 absolutely amazing photos of Thirsty 13th sites in New Caledonia in 2014 by Eric Gavarone, for which I have to again say a big thank you to Eric.

On January 16, 2015, a second contact in New Caledonia, Marcel Claude, emailed me photos, some on this page, which are also quite special. Above is the road along the south boundary of the camp, leading west to Kimball Hill, looking probably the same as in 1942, except the power lines.

Below is the Tontouta River, and on the right side is the officers' swimming area (page 236).



Below left is the view, from the mining area, of Thio Pass, page 264, which the 13th TCS flew through. Below right, on the right, is the town of Thio, pages 121 and 246-7.





Left to right: Lt. Col. C.C. Skaates (Grandview, Columbus, Ohio); FRONT ROW: Technical Sgt. George L. Rhodenbaugh (954 Bryden Rd., Columbus, Ohio) (Air Medal); 1st Lt. Robert W. Drake (552 W. Lincoln St., Findlay, Ohio) (Distinguished Flying Cross); Technical Sgt. Bernard J. Stiver (R.R. #1, Germantown, Ohio) (Air Medal); Staff Sgt. Frank T. Mihalega (2605 W. 18th St., Cleveland, Ohio) (DFC); Technical Sgt. Clark B. Ummel (231 Holt St., Dayton, Ohio) (Air Medal) and Lt. Col. St. Elmo P. Tynor (275 S. Pine St., Lima, Ohio). BACK ROW: Staff Sgt. James M. McNeil (R.R. #3, Sidney, Ohio) (Air Medal); Staff Sgt. Fred H. Goldstein (2689 Gridley Road, Shaker Heights, Ohio) (DFC); Technical Sgt. Edward L. Zechar (228 E. Market St., Germantown, Ohio) (Air Medal). Col. Skaates and Col. Tynor, both on the staff of Maj. Gen. Rush B. Lincoln; Commanding General of the Island, congratulate fellow Ohioans who were presented air awards by Gen. Lincoln at a ceremony held at a South Pacific base. The airmen are all members of the ~~13th Troop Carrier Squadron~~ 13th Air Force, which helped to save the Battle of Guadalcanal by ferrying in supplies and ammunition. *Press*

c. 1942-43: Zechar Photo of Ohio Award Recipients

On December 9 the son Tim of original crew chief Zechar emailed me the photo above. This is on July 22, 1943, page 332, when the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal were awarded for the battle of Guadalcanal. Afterwards photos were taken of the men from each state, for the hometown newspapers, and the book includes a similar photo of two men from Texas. The awards were presented in the earlier ceremony by Major General Rush B. Lincoln.

In this photo, on the left and right are colonel's Skaates and Tynor, both also from Ohio, from Lincoln's Island Command. Pictured left to right from the squadron are: Rhodenbaugh, McNeil, Drake, Goldstein, Stiver, Zechar, Mihalega, and Ummel. The censored words at the article bottom appear to be "of the famed 13th Troop Carrier Squadron of the 13th Air Force."

d. 1942-43: Black Cat 13 Nose Art

"Black Cat 13," pictured above, was the right side nose art of "Hitler's Hearse," page 108, one of the first 13 C-47s the 13th TCS flew to the South Pacific. Zechar was the crew chief.

As to the reason for this nose art, according to tattoo-art.com some sailors kept black cats with them at sea to bring them good luck, and according to answers.com other sailors were tattooed with a black cat standing over "13" to protect them. In 1942 a popular tattoo artist "Sailor Jerry" had a shop on Hotel Street in Honolulu, and offered the image at right (ref. sailorjerry.com). The 13th TCS nose art is estimated to have been picked for this good luck and protecting superstition.



e. 1942-44: Additional National Archives Aerial Photos

On March 7, 2015, I obtained from the National Archives Cartographic Division many aerial photos I requested earlier in the year. I believe I searched for these when doing the book, and so am surprised I did not obtain these earlier. I have them now, though, and they reveal some interesting additional details. I accidentally deleted my photo editor last year, and the software is in my storage locker in New Jersey, and so I was not able to adjust the contrast on these yet.

1942-1943: Palikulo Bay Airfield, on Espiritu Santo

During the squadron's first 4-8 months, in the South Pacific, the first stop for almost all flights to Guadalcanal was the Palikulo Bay Airfield (page 150) on Espiritu Santo. The squadron's first flight, page 156, to Guadalcanal landed here on October 10, 1942, and took off around midnight for Guadalcanal. The photo below of the Palikulo Bay airfield is dated October 13, the third day the 13th TCS landed here. The lack of palm tree shadows means this is midday. The 13th TCS on its third day of flights to Guadalcanal would be landing here around now while returning, to unload wounded, before continuing on to New Caledonia.

The airfield was built on a palm tree plantation, as shown. Near the dock is a developed area, at right, perhaps Field Operations. There appear to be 5 C-47s, 12 four-engine bombers, and many smaller aircraft. The "transient camp" (page 149) is estimated to be on the right, near the ocean, because: a) roads lead here but there are no airplanes; b) it is farthest from the airstrip which might be bombed; and c) it would be slightly quieter. Click "CTRL +" to zoom in, and peer into 10/13/42 yourself.





L to R: Lucy Wilson (Chief Nurse), Francis Green, Edna Woods, Ruth Richards, Margaret Snyder, Loretta Ruggillis, Adele Edwards, Helna Ilic, Helen Hunter, Bernice Harrington, Nancy Preston, Sophia Terras, Cora Defibary, Caroline Waddell, Dorothy Sawyer, Marjorie Parsons, Ivane Hold, Ann Margaret McKee, Ada Marie Endress, Kathrine Lopan, Bernadette Yunker, Miriam Lindstedt, Evelyn Ardway, Mary Jane Marrison, Ann Dulasly, Rial Smith.

f. 1944-45: 801st MAES Nurse Hill Photos

The 801st Medical Air Evacuation Squadron was first attached to the 13th TCS, on January 9, 1943 (page 267). After this date, almost every 13th TCS flight that transported wounded carried an 801st nurse. When the 63rd and 64th TCSs (part of the same 403rd Troop Carrier Group as the 13th TCS) arrived in August 1943, the 801st also flew on their planes, and some were assigned to the 433rd TCG, in the Fifth Air Force, in New Guinea. The nurses camped near the squadron at Biak, and, as officers, were invited to 13th TCS Officers Club functions.

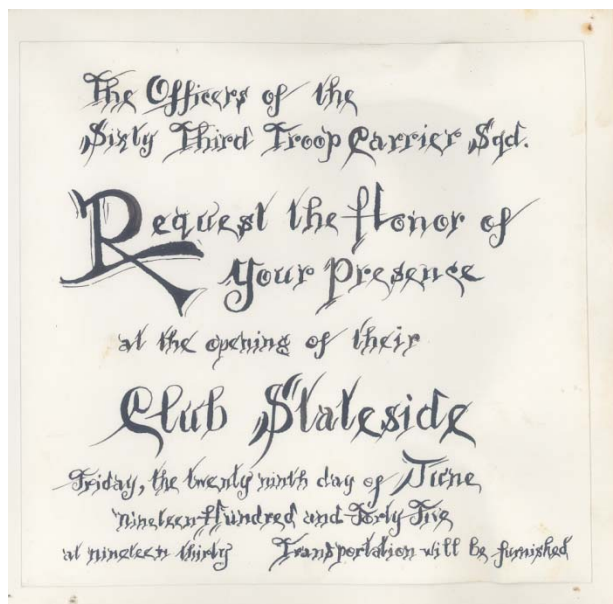
We are fortunate to be in touch with the family 801st MAES nurse, Hazel Hill (Turk), who joined in November 1944. On December 2, 2014, her son emailed me scans of 19 of her photos. Pictured above in September 1944 (before Hill joined) are 26 nurses of the 801st at Guadalcanal. This excludes Mae Olson and Berry Laird shown in the award ceremony in April 1944 on page 441 and also those on 268 so these may have returned to the U.S. by the time of the above photo.

Pictured below at Biak is a C-47 of the 63rd TCS undergoing an inspection – the wing attach angle cover is hanging down for inspection of the bolts. The nose art is “Hamerin’ Hank,” perhaps a reference to the nickname in the 1930s for Detroit Tigers first-baseman Hank Greenberg. Greenberg graduated from US Army Air Force Officer Candidate School, and served 47 months in WWII, in the China-Burma-India Theater scouting locations for B-29 bases. Note the airplane symbol on the nose tip, which I estimate was a response to the 13th TCS’s star (pages 353, 442).





Above is one of the better photos of the Biak movie theater, during a daytime presentation. Note at the bottom of the photo the rocks to keep the barrels from rolling. Below is an invitation "To the Ladies of the 801st Medical Evac. Sqd." from the officers of the 63rd TCS to the opening of their new Club Stateside on Biak Friday, June 29, 1945, at 9:30 p.m., transportation furnished. The 63rd competed with the 13th for the nurse's attention. Hill is pictured below right, on the left.



Thirsty 13th Book Sales December 2013 to March 2015

	Paid		Complimentary				Revenue				Cost at	Gr Prft	Postage			Pack, Ins, Storage				P+PIS	Net Inc.	
	Mb	Un	Mb	Ch	Fr	Wr	Tot	At \$50	Actual	PP	Net	\$23.17		Chgd	Act.	G/L	P/P	Occ	Ins	Sto		Net
Decemb	6	4					10	500	450	-13	437	-232	205	152	-212	-60	17	2	20	45	-144	61
January	1					2	3	50	50	-2	48	-70	-22	18	-15	2		3	20	45	-65	-22
Februar	1						1	50	50		50	-23	27	12	-16	-4	1		20	45	-71	-44
March						1	1	0	0		0	-23	-23		-14	-14	1		20	45	-81	-104
April		1			1	3	5	50	50		50	-116	-66						20	45	-65	-131
May	20		1	16		4	41	1,000	910	-16	894	-950	-56	173	-535	-362	50		19	44	-475	-531
June	39	3		15		2	59	2,100	1,650	-18	1,632	-1,367	265	289	-562	-273	54	1	19	43	-390	-125
July	7						7	350	320		320	-162	158	44	-83	-39	10	7	19	42	-117	41
August	1	6			5	1	13	350	63		63	-301	-238	4	-13	-9	19		18	41	-93	-331
Septem						109	109	0	0		0	-2,526	-2,526		-1,149	-1,149	38	19	17	40	-1,263	-3,788
October								0	0		0		0		-15	-15	2		17	39	-74	-74
Novemb	1					5	6	50	50	-2	48	-139	-91	12	-41	-29	5	4	17	39	-94	-186
Decemb	24	1					25	1,250	1,240	-23	1,217	-579	638	171	-114	57	24	4	17	39	-27	611
January	3	2		1	1	2	9	250	240		240	-209	32	52	-85	-32	12		17	38	-100	-68
Februar	6	3					9	450	305	-7	298	-209	90	35	-41	-6	8	10	17	38	-79	10
March		1			2	2	5	50	50		50	-116	-66	12	-15	-3	3		17	38	-61	-127
Total	109	21	1	32	9	131	303	\$6,500	\$5,579	-82	\$5,347	-7,021	-1,673	973	-2,910	-1,937	246	49	294	669	-3,200	-4,808
	130			173																		

\$42.92 per book sold

2. History-Related Activities

a. Thirsty 13th Book Distribution Update

“The Thirsty 13th” was the product of contributions of an estimated 150 people or families (e.g. photos, stories), so I want to assure everyone I am not getting rich from it, hence above is a summary since the last one in the November 2013 update.

The first column shows members purchased 109 books, mostly in May-June 2014 when I sought to reach those who had yet to buy a book, and also in December 2014, following the last newsletter. People unrelated to the squadron purchased 21 books.

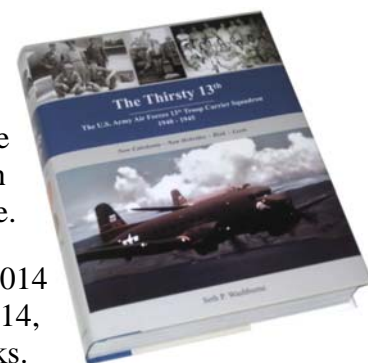
Complimentary books are mostly 32 in May-June 2014 to families which could not afford one at the time. Friends of mine received 9. “Workers” are anyone who can help spread the squadron story, and received 131 books, and are mostly 96 books donated to two museums in New Caledonia in September, and 18 sent to military bases in September and November 2014. A total of 303 books were distributed. The warehouse and I have left 1,416 books.

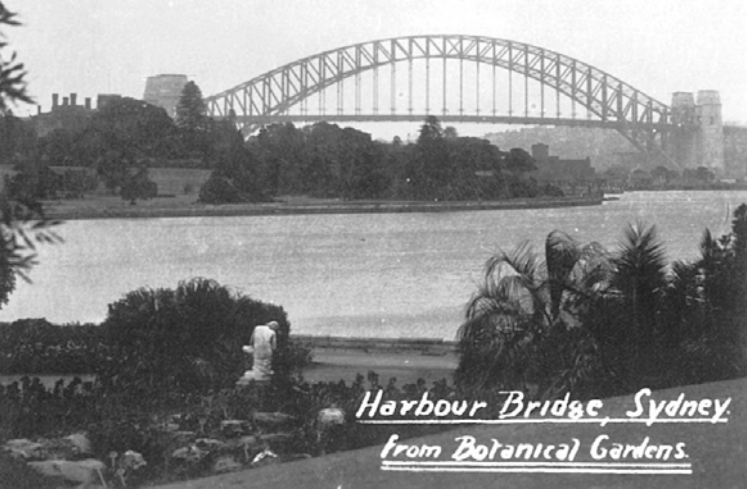
The second section shows average paid revenue per book was \$43, less PayPal fees. The average cost of printing the books, the cost of goods sold, was \$23.17 each, \$7,021, and in months when there were no complimentary books, like February 2014, we covered this, but in others did not. I often lose money on postage, especially after the warehouse “Pick and Pack” and “Occasional” fees (e.g. address corrections). Then there are warehouse charges for insurance and storage, which have come down from \$65 to \$55 per month with the fewer books.

Overall this was a loss of \$4,808, but \$3,700 of this is the books sent to New Caledonia, to help support Fortunes de Mer Calédoniennes, and they made the incredible discovery of the engines on a reef for the PBY plane that rescued Petty. Other books went to USAF libraries.

The book is now in Maine (the Washburn-Norlands library), so we need West Virginia and Alaska to have all 50 states. Another highlight is that several researchers purchased the book.

The daughter of Petty, Katherine, sent me \$100 for one book, to include a \$38 tip, and the son Lew of Harmon included a \$32 tip, as did the son of nurse Hill-Turk – thank you for these.





b. Visit to Sydney

A friend wanted to visit Australia with me February 14-22, 2015, and I visited several 13th TCS rest leave sites (page 309-312).

The view in the postcard above left of the Harbor Bridge from the Botanical Gardens now includes the Sydney Opera House, above right (Internet photo). The garden, at right, is quite beautiful.



The façade of the officers' residence, the Australia Hotel, below far left, was on Castlereagh Street, as shown by the blue box below, not on Martin Place, as stated on page 309. In the 1920s an extension was constructed to the north, shown in red, and second in the 3rd photo below, and this extension is what was 9 Martin Place. In 1971 these buildings were torn down to build the MLC center, 4th below, which at 748 feet was the tallest building outside of North America when completed. Martin Place is now a pedestrian-only street, far right, and quite nice. Two blocks west of Castlereagh Street is George Street, and had and still has the Queen Victoria Building shopping mall. I expect, to the airmen on rest leave, Sydney felt just like New York or Chicago.



The King's Cross intersection below left is now as in the 2nd photo (Google street view, 84 Darlinghurst Rd), same building on right, with the Kings Cross theater replaced by a Mercure Hotel. There is no more tram, are fewer cars, more trees, and it is quite gentrified. I found Ummel's hotel, right, and below right in Potts Point, which had attractive neighboring buildings.





I visited Bondi Beach, above. It is a big beach, with nice waves, and many surfers. The estimated location of the house rented for 13th TCS officers has the house above right, perhaps a new one, with a café on the first floor. Next time I would like to ask the owner how long it has been there. Perhaps the squadron house was what is now the third one in. The building across the street, right, appears to have been there in 1943.



Back downtown I took the harbor cruise. Below left are my father's photos taken while on rest leave in Sydney in 1942 or 1943, and I found the locations of these. He, too, was on a harbor cruise, at the boat dock at the zoo (first row), and on the boat (in the second row - the point in the right photo is the further point in the left photo).



Manly Beach, which crew chief LaLonde wrote about in his diary October 14, 1944, as shown on page 13 of the November 2014 update, is the eastern most stop on this harbor ferry, and then a walk of a few blocks east from the ferry terminal, shown below, to the beach itself.



3. Members and Relatives

a. Three New Member-Families Found

When researching the book, I tried to find relatives of all 679 members, and tried each on at least three separate occasions, spending from 10 minutes to a few hours on each, and using peoplefinders.com to find names of children, and grandchildren, and searching for contact information for them, too. From time to time I try this again for the relatives of 450 men still not found. On January 21, 2015, I searched and found relatives of two more members:

- **Bradley Grubbs, Crew Chief, 3/41-7/45** (pictured at right) – He was the crew chief on “The Tar Heels,” one of the first 13 C-47s of the 13th TCS to fly to the South Pacific. He flew to Guadalcanal during the most dangerous early days of October 1942. His daughter ordered a book, and wrote: “I am overwhelmed with excitement and only wish Daddy was still with us. You invested a lot of yourself in this project! Daddy did not talk about the war, and I wish I would have prodded him more about it. Daddy died on June 7, 2008.”
- **Eschol Gates, Operations Sergeant, 9/42-9/45.** Eschol was with the squadron for three years, and at all of the overseas bases. His daughter Roberta emailed she has a scrapbook her mother kept.



On February 12, 2015, I received a book order, and replied asking whether I may please learn the source of the buyer’s interest in the squadron, and he replied: “One of my friends is the daughter of Max Schneider, who was a pilot with the group. She was talking about her dad one day, and I said, “What unit was he with?” I Googled and searched and found your book. I gave her the book for her birthday. She was thrilled. The most elegant, excellent and chronologically detailed piece of work I've ever seen. Well done!” I had tried to find Max’s family many times, but could not, so this, too, was a thrill. This gives us also:

- **Max Schneider, Pilot, 8/44-5/45.**

b. Visits

Russ Cole, son of 1942-44 Radio Operator Cole, is a pilot with US Air, and had a layover in Dallas April 4, 2015. I picked him up and we drove to the hangar in Lancaster, Texas, 13 miles south of Dallas. Our fathers probably shared at least one flight together, sitting next to each other as radio operator and navigator, so we duplicated this in the CAF’s R4-D. We then saw “Billie.”





c. Losses in Action

1941-45 Mess Cook Ralph Melton

On April 9, 2015, I received a call from Sherry Vick, the daughter of Ralph Melton, that he passed away that morning, around 7 a.m. PST. Ralph turned 97 on November 10, 2014.

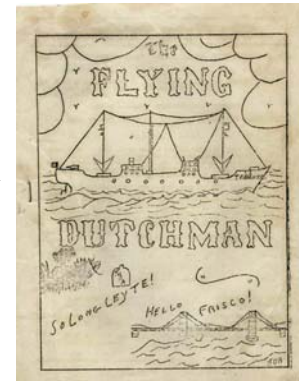
Ralph joined the 13th TCS in August 1941, at Drew Field, while it was still called a “transport” squadron. He returned to the U.S. in September 1945, and ranked #15 of all members by time in the squadron. He was a cook, and stated: “A lot of the guys would tell me ‘I hope you’re on duty today, because then it’s going to be a good meal.’”



The book includes 18 quotes or stories from Ralph, and 14 of his photos, including those on this page. He was the only one who kept the newsletter for the ship going over, for the ship coming back, and the First Year Anniversary party invitation. He also had his Kingdom of Neptune initiation certificate.



Ralph was one of the first people I contacted in the squadron, back in June 2008. After interviewing him on the phone I asked if he had any photos, and he, or his son Skip or Sherry, immediately put all of his photos in a FedEx envelope and mailed them to me. I felt greatly honored to be trusted like this, and this made me work harder, to live up to the trust he put in me. I called Ralph many times to ask questions, and every time he would sound happy to talk to me, ask how I was doing, and say “I know you are working hard on the book, Seth.” I did not meet him until December 2012, making his encouragement and friendliness even more special.



I eagerly looked forward to visiting Ralph in San Diego after the book was done, but was delayed for a year by problems with the airplane restoration. Finally in December 2012 I went out to see him and thank him in person. It was a thrill for me. Sherry told me his nickname used to be Smiley, and I could see why. Thank you for being such a wonderful person, Ralph.





1942-43 Radio Operator Howard Cole

On February 2, 2015, I received a call from Russ Cole that his father passed away January 31, 2015. He was 95.

Howard Cole was the second Radio Operator assigned to the squadron, in February 1942. The 13 flight crews that made the first flights to the South Pacific, described on page 114, and the next day started flying into Guadalcanal at its most dangerous time, hold a special place of honor in the squadron, and Cole was among them, flying over with pilots Baldry and Davis in Snafu. Cole earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal. Similar to other early aircrews, he returned to the states in 1943, in September.



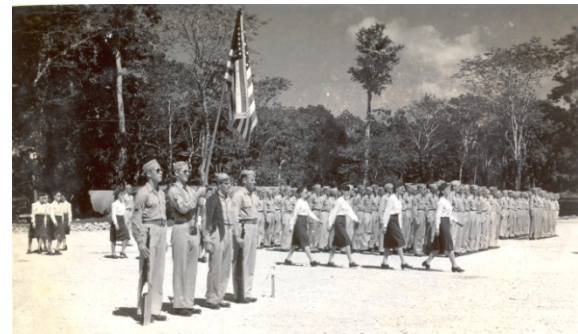
Cole provided 19 wonderful quotes. He contributed the great photos above, of Harp and him in cold-weather gear; the C-47 cargo door area, and Snafu taxiing. On page 109 he identified “Nomad” as being #576, and on 339 lists the nights he was on Guadalcanal when it was bombed.

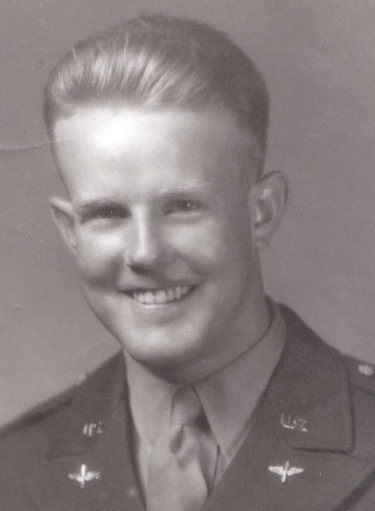
He is one of the few people I never had the opportunity to meet, and I regret this. Thank you Howard Cole, for your service in WWII, and for helping tell the story of the Thirsty 13th.

1943-45 Radio Operator Elbert C. Harmon

On December 10, 2014, I learned that Radio Operator Harmon passed away November 30, 2014. He was 92. He is shown at right on December 6, 2010, when visiting the restoration of Billie in Fort Worth. Harmon contributed greatly to the squadron history, with the photos below: on Munda 9/18/43, page 346, he is on the right; on Wakde near where he rescued another man from drowning, earning the Soldier’s Medal, page 490; and standing on the left in the Honor Guard for the 801st awards, page 441. He kept, and shared, a detailed logbook, on page 436, which is referred to 12 times, and which helped explain combat time.

I always wanted to meet or speak with Harmon, especially as I have lived close by since November 2011, but due to his health issues he was never available. He will forever be a special part of the history, though. [Thank you, Elbert Harmon.](#)





1944-45 Pilot Richard L. Jenkins

After emailing the November 25, 2014, update, I received a reply from the daughter of 1944-45 pilot Jenkins, that he passed away October 9, 2014. He was born February 13, 1921, so was 93.

Dick provided 27 great quotes which enhance the squadron history, e.g. about seeing the Seventh Fleet when taking off from the Admiralties; swiping some of the steaks he delivered to MacArthur; Groesbeck trying to scare the Japanese POWs he was flying by turning off an engine; at Wakde being able to see the lights of the Japanese on New Guinea two miles away, and seeing Harmon rescue a squadron member in the surf; about flying in bad weather; the scene after Biak was bombed; volunteering for a dangerous mission to pick up missionaries at a NE Mindanao airstrip; plus many other stories. He had the photo on pg. 686 of a later model C-47 with field number "22," which was the key to realizing this numbering system repeated itself. Jenkins was the only one who remembered the location of the camp at Noemfoor, and confirmed this in the July 2014 update, only 3 months before his passing. Thankfully he was here for this.

I visited Dick on February 25, 2010, in Wheelersburg, Ohio, on the south border of Ohio, on the Ohio River, looking over at Kentucky, a beautiful part of the country. I picked him up and we drove to dinner with his daughter Vicki and her husband at a pizzeria. He and I returned to his house and I scanned his photos. We wrapped up around 9 p.m., the Winter Olympics were on, with the women's gold medal figure skating final that night, and I asked if I could stay and watch this with him, and he said sure, and it was fun. The photos above are as I left at 10:30 p.m.

Dick's daughter Vicki in her email added: "I just want to thank you for all the hard work you have done, and for including my dad. He really thought a lot of you. Your book is awesome! Thank you again for everything." Below is Jenkins flying a C-46, and in the center with his crew. ***Thank you, Dick, for serving in WWII, and all your help with the story of The Thirsty 13th.***





1944-45 Pilot Graham C. Rice

On April 19, while preparing this update, I received an email from the daughter, Mary Anne, of pilot Graham Rice, that her father passed away peacefully on April 15, 2015. He was 97 years old.

Graham was one of the 30 pilots assigned to the 13th TCS in August 1944. His flight to the South Pacific was described by Driedger on pages 454-455, who wrote: "Rice was an interesting man. He had worked for the government as a ranger, and spent about half his days on horseback and camping out in the southwest in the Navajo Indian Reservation area. He was one of the few white men who knew their language. We got along well together." Creelman noted that while on Biak: "I got night training in the C-46 with Graham Rice. He was a good pilot."



Graham contributed to the squadron history with seven great stories, including one I particularly liked: "In the Admiralties we were in a coconut plantation. They make quite a racket when they fall!" He also noted: "In the Admiralties I visited my brother. He was in the Navy."

Graham gave me one of my biggest thrills when researching the book, when I asked if he had any photos, and he replied that he had a color movie camera with him, and took color movies. Color photos were rare, movies rarer, and color movies almost unheard of. Even the government made mostly only black and white movies. Graham made a copy of his movies and mailed me them on a disk. The clips are short, but include the scenes above, of Graham with a pet monkey in the Biak camp, formation flying, and low flying over the water, in addition to other clips. There is a link to them on the Thirsty 13th website, as movie #7. From the formation flight movie I was able to read the serial number of the plane with field number 29, providing one more serial number, as described on page 452.

On February 12, 2013, I visited Graham in San Jose, California. I was with my niece and so could only spend an hour or so, but enjoyed him. I greatly wish I could have spent several days with Graham, to hear all of his tales from the South Pacific. Thank you, thank you, Graham, for your service in World War II, and your amazing contributions to the history of The Thirsty 13th.



4. Conclusions

During the last five months, we have been blessed with photos from Marcel Claude, items from the family of Zechar, many additional National Archives aerial photos, and many photos from the family of 801st nurse Hazel Hill Turk. In the last 16 months 303 books have been distributed, including 96 to the first overseas distribution point, in New Caledonia. Sydney rest leave spots were explored. Families of three more squadron members learned about the book and ordered it. Sadly, we lost five members, but we can be thankful for the wonderful contributions each made to telling the squadron history for all of their comrades.

Please note: From time to time I learn that only one son or daughter in a family has the book, and their siblings, or nephews and nieces either do not know about it, or do not yet own a copy. I also learn of squadron members with many children and grandchildren, but the family has only one copy of the book.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would be sure your relatives each know about the book. Persons related to the squadron can now pay whatever they wish for the book. I have 1,416 books left, and would like to reduce this as much as possible. Eventually the book will no longer be available, and so this is a good time to be sure everyone you know of who is related to a squadron member has his or her own book.

Thank you for your interest in the Thirsty 13th.

Seth P. Washburne
(212) 289-1506
sethpw1@gmail.com

Parting Thoughts – Thanks received after the last update

Amy G.B.: “Thank you for continuing to send these updates. New Caledonia is one of the places my grandfather spoke of frequently. I loved seeing pictures of where he was during his stay there. Keep up the good work. Granddaddy would be so proud.”

Randy J.: “Thanks for the update! Keep up the good work!”

Bob L.: “Seth, this is just amazing. I wish my father were alive so that he could see this. He would be utterly amazed. I hope all the survivors enjoy reading my Dad's notes.”

Steve M.: “Can’t thank you enough; more great work. It really adds to the history.”

Debra T.O.: “Thank you again for your recent email and photos to supplement your book....so very interesting with great actual then/now photos from Eric G. of New Caledonia! I sure would enjoy planning a trip there someday!! Thanks for all your hard and detailed work.”

Debra P.: “I have very much enjoyed reading this information about the Thirsty 13th.”