

August 2015 Update



Dear Thirsty 13th members, relatives, and friends,

In the three months since the last update May 23, 2015, much information has been gained about the U.S. Army Air Corps 13th Troop Carrier Squadron, “the Thirsty 13th.” Highlights include:

- Additional photos of New Caledonia.
- Items from the collections of Eschol Gates, Dick Strand, and Roy Taylor.
- A 16-day, 4,909-mile car trip to Oshkosh, Wis., the National Archives, the Navy Yard, and Quantico Marine base, for additional research, and to spread the squadron story.

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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, sethpw1@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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1. Additional History

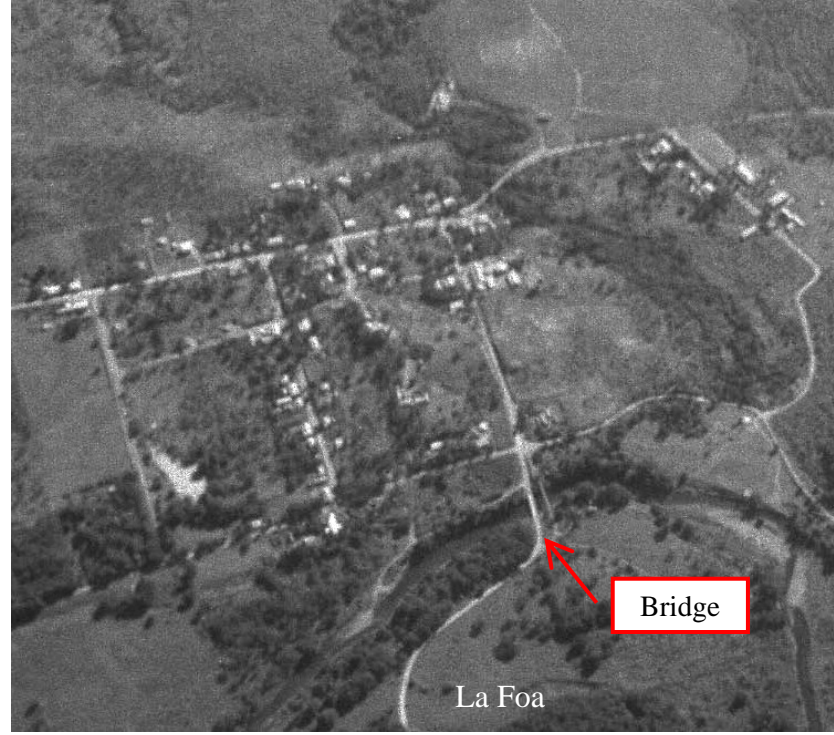
a. 1943: New Caledonia Photos

On June 2, 2015, I received scans of many photos I ordered from the National Archives. On this page are photos of Tontouta Air Base in New Caledonia on April 24, 1943. These show “Kimball Hill,” with its white spot, and the 13th TCS line on the right. The C-47 taxiing above has the jump door out, perhaps to get more air. On the left and right are B-25s.



The photo below shows the large 13th TCS fuel truck, and six C-47s on the 13th TCS line.





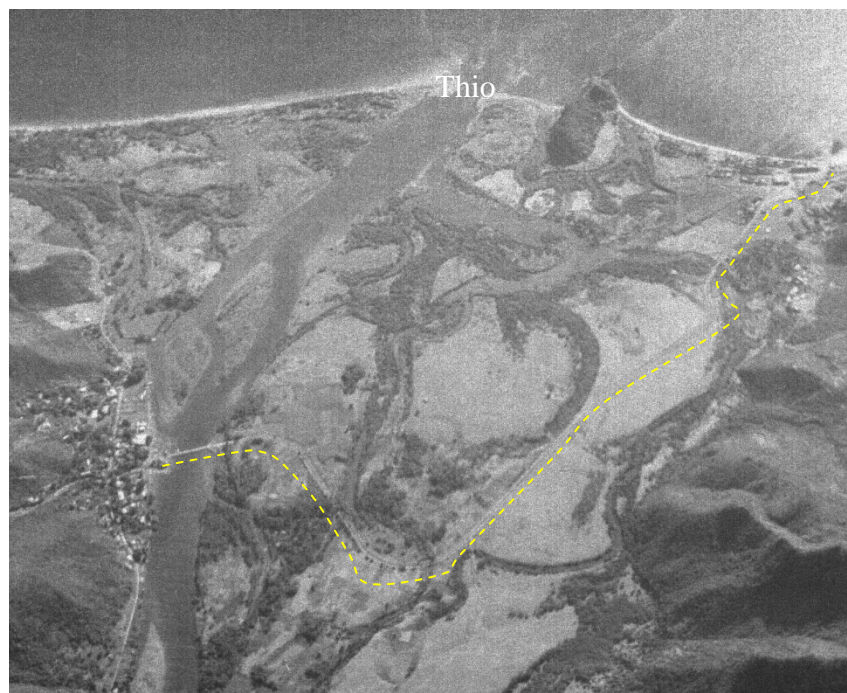
Moindou, La Foa, Boulouparis, and Thio

The squadron yearbook “Two Years c/o Postmaster” noted: “Moindou, Boulouparis, Canala, Thio, and a host of other little villages soon came under the sharp eye of the wandering G.I.’s.” “Weekends were no problem, if the ‘old man’ OK’d a pass. They were usually spent up-island at the restaurant at Moindou.” Moindou, on April 24, 1943, appeared as shown above left, with just a few buildings, but a river and many trees.



Ummel wrote in his diary 7/15/43 (page 247) “Got 3 day pass. Went to La Foa and Boulouparis and Moindou. Stayed all night at Boulouparis. Good dinner. 7/16: Got up and caught ride to Thio.” La Foa is shown above right, also on April 24, 1943, and it, too, was a small town. The road on the left went to Moindou.

Below left is Boulouparis, also with few buildings. Ummel either walked out to the road to Thio, or a vehicle picked him up in town. Below right is Thio, the town mostly on the left. The road to the dock area on the upper right, also on page 246, is outlined in yellow.





b. 1942-45: Items of Operations Sgt. Eschol Gates

Eschol Gates joined the 13th TCS at Lockbourne, Ohio, in September 1942, and was with it through late 1945 in the Philippines, and his scrapbook had many items helpful to the history.

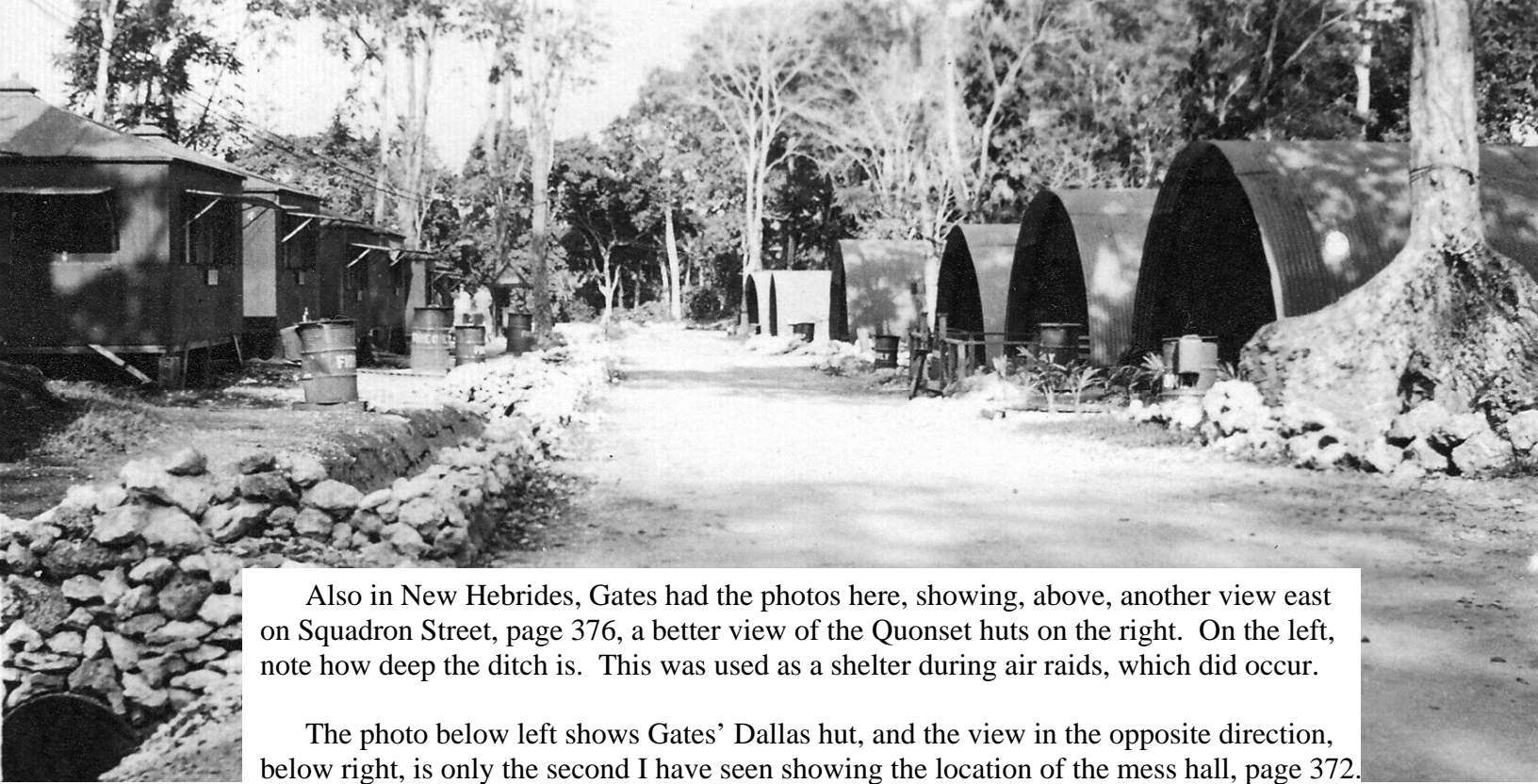
The photos above of Finelli and Doris Thompson are from Camp Stoneman (page 43), the departure point in California for the ground crew. These and other Gates photos are the only ones showing the barracks area. The road, telephone pole and surrounding buildings may be enough to identify the barracks location in photos like that above right (from the National Archives).

In New Caledonia at the Tontouta Camp, Gates was in the forested area (page 207), and had the tent below left with a wood floor, the first photo of such a structure at this camp. Below right, he had a sharper photo of the Intelligence group than that on page 193, and had the names, titled "S-2 Staff: Capt. Duffy, Lt. Yeomans, Sgt. Oehm, Stg. Gates, Cpl. Goessel, Cpl. Bond, Dec '42 - Aug '43, Fall of '43." "S" stood for Army staff, then 1 for personnel, 2 intelligence and 3 for operations.



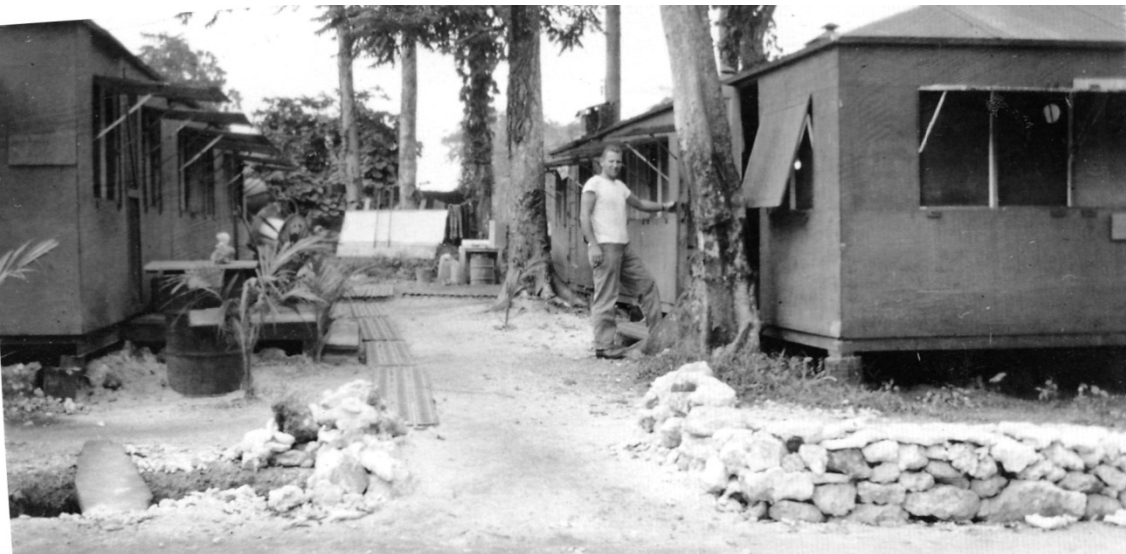
In New Hebrides Gates had the photo below of the area on page 370 by #1, "Main road near camp."





Also in New Hebrides, Gates had the photos here, showing, above, another view east on Squadron Street, page 376, a better view of the Quonset huts on the right. On the left, note how deep the ditch is. This was used as a shelter during air raids, which did occur.

The photo below left shows Gates' Dallas hut, and the view in the opposite direction, below right, is only the second I have seen showing the location of the mess hall, page 372.



Gates had the photo below of 43-15235, page 451, confirming this serial went with field #27. The nose art, "Lil Joy," is not visible or not added yet. Items are stored on the aft cargo door.





Gates had the photos above of Momote in the Admiralties, page 466. Above left was titled “living quarters in foreground, tech supply in rear,” so he slept at the airfield, but most of the squadron camped elsewhere. This second building may help in finding the location.

The five C-47s in the photo below do not have visible tail numbers to indicate they were of the 13th TCS. The dirt ground suggests this is Morotai (page 494). Prior locations were coral.



From Biak, Gates had had the program at left from a Memorial Day Service May 30, 1945, in the 403rd Group Chapel, page 543. The famous Iwo Jima photo was taken February 23, 1945. Gates had several camp photos, including that below of the entrance area, page 518, with more tents in this area.



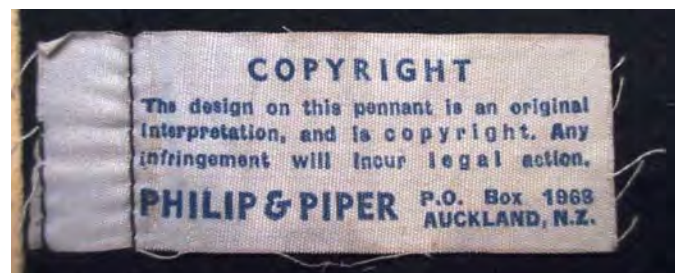
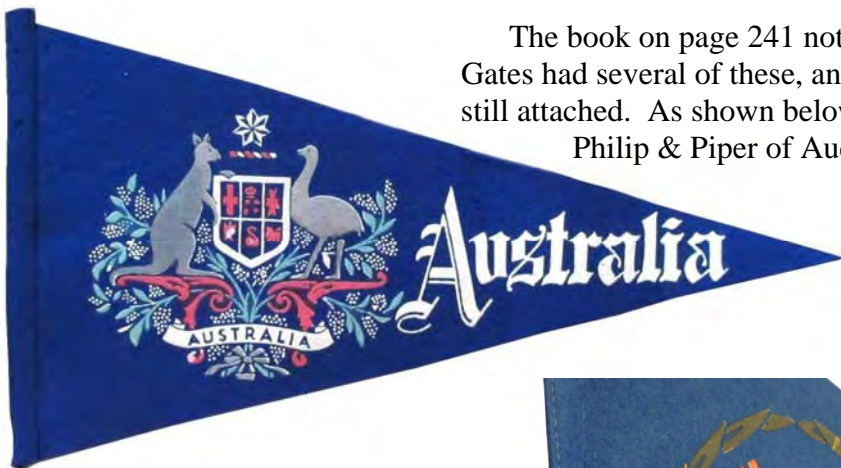


From the Philippines camp, Gates had the photo above, showing the enlisted men's shower and the mess hall, in the location estimated on page 700, the first photo confirming this location.

Gates had the postcard below left from the botanical garden in Mackay, Australia, indicating this was one rest leave attraction. He brought back the beautiful pin below right for his wife.



The book on page 241 notes the men collected colorful pennants, and Gates had several of these, and his included for the first time the labels still attached. As shown below, the label identifies the pennant maker as Philip & Piper of Auckland, NZ. They appear to be out of business.





c. 1943-45: Items of Mechanic Roy C. Taylor

On July 19, 2015, the son Jeff of 13th TCS mechanic Roy C. Taylor emailed me scans of seven of his father's photos.

Above is the view in 1945 of the cathedral at Palo, near Tacloban in Leyte, on page 599. This shows more details of the front, and the roads.

801st MAES Patch

Taylor's photo at right was titled "Mary Elliot, part of Ray Milland's troupe" (also on page 458). This appears to be a club of the 801st Medical Air Evacuation Squadron (MAES), which flew on flights of the 13th TCS and other 403rd squadrons. Their patch is also shown below.

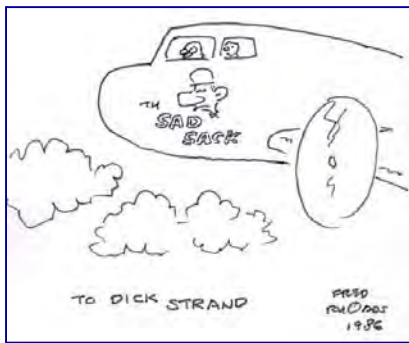




d. 1944-45: Items of Pilot Dick Strand

Above left is Strand and The Sad Sack (page 405). Above right is a good formation flying photo, from the same flight as on page 685. The tail serial number below the 22 is still not readable. The wing in the foreground has an interesting camouflage pattern. Below right are tentmates Johnson, Strand and Jenkins on the horizontal of a C-46 estimated, as #44-77782, a number we had.

Below right are pilots Rice, Strand, Burgess, John Buchen, and Wysong, and navigator Carey, in Feb 1945, estimated at Morotai. Burgess, Buchen, and Wysong stopped here February 16, per the story on page 625, and Rice and Strand may have bumped into them on the way to the shower. Below left are Jenkins and Strand at Biak.



In 1986 Strand met cartoonist Fred Rhoads, who took over the Sad Sack cartoon in the 1950s, and drew the image, left, for him.



Pilot Strand Photos - continued

At right in December 1944, in Sydney, are Jenkins, Strand and Clarence Thompson. All three were tentmates on Biak, in tent D1 on page 528. Sydney was quite a contrast to life on Biak.

Seven months later, July 29, 1945, Thompson was giving C-46 instruction at night to Foote, who is estimated to have been in the left seat, who turned the wrong way and flew into the cliff at Biak, and they died (page 690). This is one of the better photos of Thompson.



Strand's son Ken shared some stories from his father, that he:

- Often flew the plane "The Sad Sack."
- Had a middle initial of "F," not "E," as listed in the book, and so I apologize for that.
- Said he had been scheduled to fly the C-46 the night of the crash, either as the instructor or getting training, but had just gotten back from another mission and so Thompson went.
- Flew some of the Bataan Death March survivors. [These were dispersed to many camps, so it is hard to estimate which ones the 13th TC flew, but prisoners in a camp at Cabanatuan, 35 miles northeast of Clark Field, were liberated January 30, 1945, including 492 Americans. An estimated 212 were flown back to the U.S., the others staying in hospitals until February 11 and then taking the ship General Anderson. The 13th TCS might have flown the 212 around February 1, if they went back by way of Biak.] He said they were ordered to not have any food on board, so got rid of all boxed rations, but the men smelled something like chicken from where one of the boxes had been, so all ran to that side of the plane.

Many thanks to the Strand family for sharing their great photos and stories.

e. 1944: Emirau Landing Photo

Page 433 describes the first landing on Emirau April 29, 1944, after finished by the Seabees. At the National Archives I found the photo below of this event, exactly as described, with 3 F-4U Corsairs, at least two Marine R4Ds, and on the right, also inset, is the 13th TCS's "Mickey McGuire."

Page 433 states the crew chief on this day was Maguire. This is the first evidence he was assigned to "Mickey McGuire," right, supporting the suggestion on pg. 335 he picked the nose art.



Sponsored by ONE Aviation		www.oneaviation.aero	
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	The Rotorcraft Add-On	Kahlhamer, Van Dell	Forum Stage 05 HAI J09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Electrical Systems	Timothy Gauntt	Forum Stage 06 JP Instruments J09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Power Up	Dick Rutan	Forum Mainstage 07 Honda Aircraft J09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	ForeFlight 201 - Advanced	Thomas Daugherty	Forum Stage 08 ForeFlight J09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Fundamentals of Flight	Casey, Coleman	Forum Stage 09 Honda Generators K09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	NTSB-Loss Of Control	Earl Weener Ph.D.	Forum Stage 10 Poly-Fiber K09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Flying Alaska	Anthony Turinsky	Forum Stage 11 Goodyear K09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	3D Printed Molds and Parts	Scott VanderVeen	Composite Workshop K10
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	The Pietenpol Experience	John Hofmann	Workshop Classroom 1 K10
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Building Your Dream Strip	Gary Stevens	Workshop Classroom 2 K10
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Globe-Temco Swift Aircraft	Bo Mabry	Workshop Classroom 3 K10
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Lady Be Good Lost B24 Bomber	Dick Campbell	Vette Theater B08
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Research A Military Unit	Seth Washburne	Hilton Theater B08
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Operation Overflight - Cold War	Gary Powers Jr.	Skyscape Theater B08
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Law Enforcement Use Of UAS	Alan Frazier	FAA Aviation Safety Center J11
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	FMS650 for Experimentals	Ash Vij	Homebuilders Hangar L09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Technical And Flight Test Advice	EAA Technical Counselors	Homebuilders Hangar L09
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	What Is Powered Paragliding	Mike Robinson	Ultralight Forums Tent K18
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	Rotorcraft		Fun Fly Zone K20
12:00 PM - 12:45 PM	Action Camera & Portable Products	Garmin	Garmin Hangar Tent 1 H13
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Looking Back on Walking Away	Chuck Hagerty	EAA Wearhouse J12



2. History-Related Activities

a. 16-Day Thirsty 13th Promotion and Research Trip

In December 2012 I attended the International Conference of Air Shows (ICAS) annual gathering, and a vendor expert told me the best place to sell the Thirsty 13th book was at the Experimental Aircraft Association's week-long air show in Oshkosh, Wis. On January 13, 2015, I mailed the EAA a copy of the book, and the buyer was impressed and signed me up for their "Author's Corner," to sit at a table and sign copies for 1.5 hours on one day. I offered to also give a presentation "Research a Military Unit." In June I backed out of the book signing because too busy, but still let them sell the book, and thought they were not interested in my presentation.

On July 2 I was surprised to receive an email I was scheduled to speak July 20, as shown above. I thought it would be harder to back out of this, and wanted to go to Peoria, Ill., to meet the daughter, who I found in January, of 1942-45 operations sergeant Gates, and scan his items, plus to visit the book warehouse in Michigan, and go to my storage locker in New Jersey, so decided to embark on the road trip mapped above. While East I decided to look for records of "South Pacific Combat Air Transport (SCAT)" at the National Archives, at the Navy Yard, and at the Marine base in Quantico, Va., because two Marine squadrons were also part of SCAT.

For the return trip, I planned to visit Maxwell AFB, in Montgomery, Ala., for a third time, but found too much information at the Archives, and so spent an extra day there and skipped Maxwell. On the way back to Dallas I decided to stop by New Orleans, to speak to Claude Fuselier in person about the locations in New Caledonia where they first went ashore, and of the Dumbéa camp, two key puzzle pieces. The trip was 16 days, July 18-August 2, 4,990.1 miles.

Trip highlights include:

- **July 19: Met the Gates Family** - I met the daughter "Bobby," at right, of 1942-5 Operations Sgt. Eschol Gates. She had her father's scrapbook, and it provided great information, some on pages 4-7. Bobby's daughters Jonell and Kate joined us, making for an enjoyable afternoon.





13th TCS Promotion and Research Trip – Continued

- July 20: Oshkosh Presentation** – The “Research a Military Unit” presentation during the EAA AirVenture Oshkosh air show was in their main museum building. The theater was small, but an estimated 15 people attended, and several told me the presentation was excellent. One emailed me: *“Truly one of the best lectures I attended during our weeklong visit. I took a ton of notes and your methodology changed the way I am researching my newest book.”* I placed a link to the slides on the squadron website, after the newsletter links.

The book was offered for sale at two locations. In the main “Warehouse” sales area, the book was given top-shelf-honors, and three shelves, as shown below left. It was a thrill to see it on sale publicly. In the Warbirds retail shop, the book was given a full bottom shelf near the front door, as shown below center and right. Someone told me later that all of these were still shrink-wrapped, which may have hurt the sales. I suggested they sell it for “20% off,” \$40. Oshkosh ordered 36 books, which I donated, and sold 12. The manager emailed me this was “very good,” because they usually order only 18 to 24 of each title. She expects it will go in their online offerings, as well as in the holiday catalog. I received four orders online from people who wanted the book, but preferred it be shipped to them.



- July 21: Book Warehouse** – After the 2,308 copies of the book were printed in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in October 2011, they were trucked to Publishers Storage and Shipping Company (PSSC) in Ypsilanti, Mi., from where all orders are shipped. For four years I have wanted to visit PSSC, and finally did, below. The staff is wonderful. One woman packing books told me that of the perhaps 10,000 titles they have there she was particularly attracted to the Thirsty 13th book, so I donated a box of 6 books to employees there.





- **July 21 (continued): Yankee Air Museum** – After visiting PSSC, I stopped by this museum at Willow Run Airport, the prior Ford B-24 plant. I donated 12 books for them to sell. They expressed an interest in selling them when their planes go to air shows, too.

I was interested to see the jig above left which their volunteer “B-24 Bob” built to reconstruct the back of a B-24. A similar jig might work for putting Billie back together.

On July 22 I planned to visit Baer Field, in Fort Wayne, IN, from where most troop carrier crews picked up their C-47s, to see their museum, but this requires two weeks’ notice because on the secure passenger side of the airport, and I called only 1 week ahead of time. I thought the reserve unit there might at least give me a tour of what was the original Army base, but they never returned my calls. Instead I continued east to a storage locker in NJ.

- **July 25: Mid-Atlantic Air Museum** – This museum, in Reading, Pa., fairly close to NYC, had been my first choice in 2009 to where to donate Billie. When I called there in 2009 someone told me they did not want it, but in 2012 I met the longtime Director who said of course they would have wanted it, so I have for 3 years regretted it did not go here. This visit provided some closure, though, as I learned that they have only one hangar, and it is already full, so Billie would have had to have been outside, like their DC-3 above right. It might have been harder to work on Billie here. I donated six books for them to sell.
- **Monday, July 27: National Archives, College Park, MD** – The South Pacific Area to where the 13th TCS was initially assigned was under Navy Command, and the Navy in January 1943 formed South Pacific Combat Air Transport (SCAT), page 265, to schedule flights by the 13th TCS and two Marine squadrons. In August 2013 a colleague in New Zealand told me about “War Diaries” kept by the Marines, that listed all their flights, and I found these online, and since then have wanted to see if SCAT kept a War Diary of the flights it assigned. I have also wanted to see if SCAT had photos of 13th TCS planes.

Rather than drive back to Texas July 25-26, I decided to stay out east to search for SCAT and other items. In “Stillpix” I found the card catalog below, with a card for SCAT, but no items. I found the most SCAT info at Quantico, but no new flight records.





- **Tuesday, July 28: Navy Yard, Washington, DC** – I first went to the photo archives. I gave them a list in advance of items I wanted, and these were pulled, and on the cart on the left above. I scanned ten items, plus 30 photos of the USS Coolidge that hit a mine and sank at Espiritu Santo. I next went to Building 200, the document area, above right, requested boxes, and photographed 33 pages, including some Marine squadron history.
- **Quantico Marine Base** – I was finished at the Navy Yard by 12:30, and drove to the Marine base at Quantico, getting there around 2 p.m. Their records are in the building shown below. I was on the first floor, behind the windows on the right. The staff stayed 30 minutes late to let me scan all I wanted. I photographed 58 pages, and scanned 60 pages, of the SCAT, VMJ-253, -152, and -153 histories.

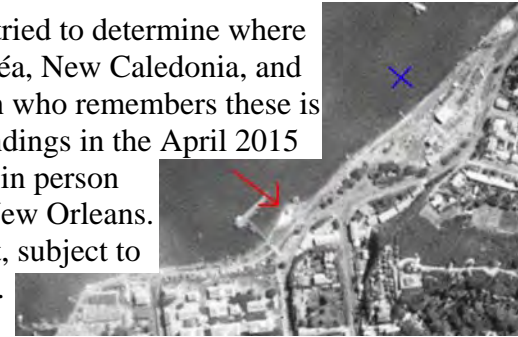


- **Wednesday July 29: National Archives (2nd day)** – I expected to spend all Tuesday at the Navy Yard, and all Wednesday at Quantico, so was excited to have knocked these both off in one day, and to be able to return to the National Archives Wednesday. In my two prior visits here I went only to “Stillpix” on the fifth floor, but on this trip discovered the document area on the 2nd floor, below left. I initially added 14 pages to this update with items about SCAT and the Marines, but will instead share these at a later time.
- **Thursday July 30: National Archives (3rd day)** – I planned Thursday to drive to Montgomery, Ala., to visit Maxwell on Friday, but extended another day at NARA and skipped Maxwell. On my last day, I checked “Movies” on the 4th floor, and went through a card catalog of C-47s in the Pacific, and pulled the movie reels below. I found a movie of Hitler’s Hearse taxiing, and of Sweet Leilani loading, below right. The only way to copy these was with one’s own camera, and this did not turn out well. I hope to return with a better method. I expect they have several more movies of the Thirsty 13th, or related to it.





- Aug 1: New Orleans and Claude Fuselier** – Earlier in 2015 I tried to determine where the ground crew went ashore after they got off the ship in Nouméa, New Caledonia, and the location of the temporary camp in Dumbéa. The only person who remembers these is Claude Fuselier. We spoke on the phone, and I presented the findings in the April 2015 update on page 2. I thought it would be helpful to also sit down in person with Claude, so, when returning from DC to Dallas stopped in New Orleans. The go-ashore location is now estimated at the red arrow at right, subject to finding a fountain. The Dumbéa location was mostly confirmed.
- WWII Museum** – In New Orleans I first visited the National WWII Museum, opened in 2000. The entrance above left has a C-47 suspended from the ceiling, a big “wow” factor. It was initially the National D-Day Museum, focused on the Normandy invasion, due to the role of the locally-made Higgins boat, a landing craft, but has added a section about the Pacific War in its main building, and will open a new floor about the Pacific War soon. Similar to the Fredericksburg, Texas, Museum of the Pacific War, it focuses mostly on the infantry, and appeared to have nothing yet about Pacific troop carrier squadrons.



b. Third Search for the Lana T

Jean-Paul Mugnier and Fortunes de Mer in New Caledonia made the excellent find of the PBY engines near the Lana T on May 3, 2014. They returned to that location a second time last fall, but emailed me: “We aborted our search, passing near the spot of Lana T on October 4, due to strong wind, 25 to 30 knots, and rough seas.” On August 16, 2015, Jean-Paul emailed me:

“Good news, we plan to get to the Lana T wreck site around October 10, to discover her remains, if the weather is somewhat finer than on October 1942 or last year. The trip will be the same as in 2014 [mapped below right]: Nouméa, Grand Passage [the red peg] then Santo, with Beijaflore Philippe Houdret's catamaran, and return by plane with about the same team. We hope to be assisted by a French Navy Guardian [Dassault HU-25A used by Coast Guards, below left, with an observation window] which would overfly the wreck location. The Lana T is here or has been scrapped for aluminum with the PBY nearby in the sixties.”

We are fortunate that the Lana T, at the red circle at right, is on their course. They are looking for many shipwrecks, too. We wish them a safe trip, good weather, and thank them for including the Lana T.



3. Members and Relatives

a. New Squadron Member Family Added

On June 19, 2015, I was excited to see a book order from a Nina Strand, and immediately recognized her last name, as related to 13th TCS pilot Strand. I was not able to find his family, so was thrilled that they found me. Their family ordered three books. Nina's brother-in-law, John, scanned his father's photos, and emailed me the images, some shown starting on page 9.

b. Applause for a WWII Pilot

Hank Zarek wrote May 28, about the day after Memorial Day when he and his wife Bonnie boarded a twin-engine Bombardier Q400 airplane, from Providence, RI, to Newark, NJ (to connect to Tampa). He wrote:

“As we boarded the plane, I asked the male steward if could take a look into the pilot's cabin, so he asks the pilot, and I stepped in, introduced myself as a World War II troop-carrier pilot, who served from New Guinea to Okinawa, getting ready for our invasion of Japan. Fifteen minutes shooting the bull, and back to my seat. Halfway to Newark the Captain announced “We have a World War II pilot onboard,” and all the passengers applauded. “I was asked to delay my departure from the aircraft, because the Captain wanted a photo. What a surprise.”

Well-earned, Hank, and around Memorial Day. We, too, applaud you.



4. Conclusions

We were again blessed with a great deal of new information about the 13th TCS. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and to everyone who took a new interest in The Thirsty 13th.

Seth P. Washburne
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Thanks received after the last update

R. C.: “Another outstanding update to your project!”

M. Fi.: “Great stuff, Seth. Appreciate your efforts and updates.”

M. Fa.: “Thank you, Seth, for all of the work you do. The personality of the 13th was very special. You have captured that very well, and let us share in their efforts and Spirit. The men of the 13th would be Honored, Proud and Humbled by your preservation of their Service. Your work is a great Legacy. I know they would Salute you!” [Thanks, Mike! I return their salute.]

B. L.: “Terrific update. You are really good at this.”