

# January 2019 Newsletter



Dear Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> members, relatives, and friends,

Since the newsletter October 13, 2018, I found the daughter of longtime airplane mechanic Elam, who shared his flight record and other items. I ordered aerial images of the coral reef where the Lana T landed, and found images of navigator Saltsman who perished on our first fatal crash. Next we continue the stories from letters by Bill Alexander. Then McCormick’s son shared an original patch from 1945 with a surprising blue border.

I made great progress in identifying members by birthdates, even finding another still-living squadron member, 95 years old, and found relatives of 17 more members.

Seth P. Washburne, Squadron Historian  
January 29, 2019

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>1. Additional History</b> .....   | 2  |
| <b>a. 1942: Items from Robert K. Elam, Crew Chief, 9/25/42–6/19/45</b> .....             | 2  |
| <b>b. 1942: Aerial Images of French Reef, where Petty Landed</b> .....                   | 4  |
| <b>c. 1943: Photos of Navigator Ralph Saltsman</b> .....                                 | 4  |
| <b>d. 1944: Letters from Bill Alexander, Pilot, 12/43–1/45</b> .....                     | 5  |
| <b>e. 1945: Amelang Note about Flight Pay</b> .....                                      | 10 |
| <b>f. 1945: Blue-Bordered Patch of Wayne R. McCormick, Comm. Chief, 6/45–9/45</b> .....  | 10 |
| <b>2. History-Related Activities</b> .....   | 11 |
| <b>a. 1942-1943: Jeep Honoring the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS in New Caledonia</b> .....        | 11 |
| <b>b. 1942-1943: New Caledonia Voters Reject Independence from France</b> .....          | 11 |
| <b>c. 1942-1945: Reproduction Patch</b> .....  | 11 |
| <b>3. Members and Relatives</b> .....  | 12 |
| <b>a. Found Another Living Member: R. Taylor Cloud, Radio Operator, 11/43–8/44</b> ..... | 12 |
| <b>b. Identifying Members and Searching for Relatives</b> .....                          | 12 |
| <b>4. Conclusions</b> .....  | 15 |

This is the newsletter for the U.S. Army Air Corps 13<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 1940-1946, nicknamed “The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>.” 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 13<sup>th</sup>” unless otherwise stated.

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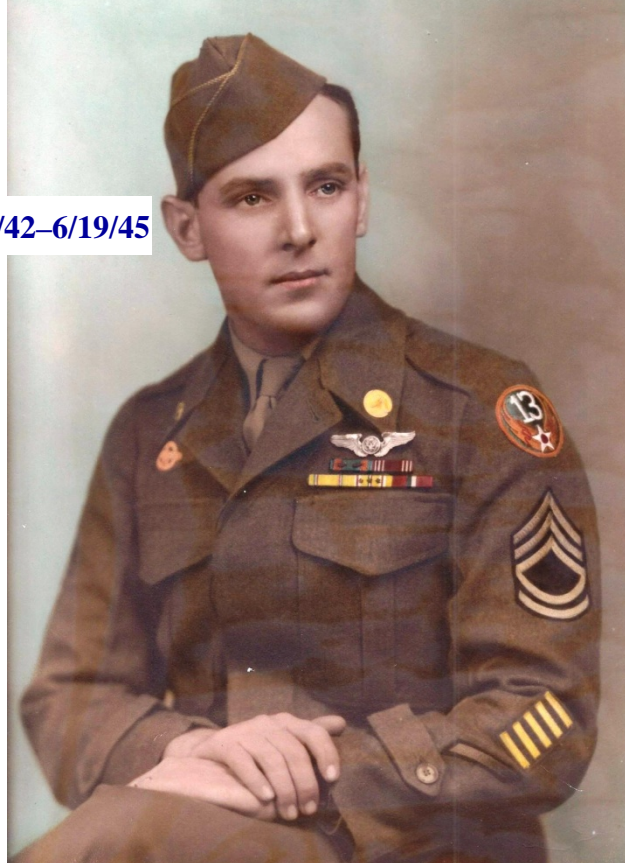
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## 1. Additional History

### a. 1942: Items from Robert K. Elam, Crew Chief, 9/25/42–6/19/45

On December 12, 2018, I tried again to find relatives of our Airplane Mechanic Robert Kenneth Elam, and was thrilled to find his daughter, Deborah. She scanned and emailed me the fine color photo at right of her dad, wearing his aircrew wings, air medal with two oak leaf clusters, good conduct medal, and ribbons for the American and Asiatic Pacific Campaigns (with one silver and two bronze stars), and Philippine Liberation ribbon. He has the shoulder patch for the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force. The gold bars by his elbow indicate rank: 1 for Pvt, 2 Cpl, 3 Sgt, 4 S/Sgt, 5 T/Sgt (as shown for Elam), and 6 for M/Sgt.

Elam was born in 1915, and enlisted in July 1940, when 24. He was from Memphis. He graduated from the Air Corps Technical School at Chanute, Illinois. Several of our members graduated from there, and Elam had photos of it, below. (The 3 hangar buildings still exist, but not the foreground building.)



Chanute began in 1917 as a flight training center for WWI pilots, and in 1921 the Air Service Mechanics School was transferred here from Texas. In 1938 and 1939 the large buildings above left were completed, plus housing for 15,000 soldiers. Elam graduated from here July 18, 1941. He was sent to Turner Field Advanced Flying School in Albany, Ga., and on February 1, 1942, to Moody Field, Valdosta, Ga. presumably to maintain the training aircraft, AT-6s. He returned to Chanute to complete a course on Instruments, March 17, 1942, and returned to Valdosta, Ga.

On July 27, 1942, Elam had risen to Staff Sergeant, and was transferred to the 61<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Group at Pope Field, which had the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadrons, to their 14<sup>th</sup> TCS while the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS was on the same field. He was transferred to the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS at Lockbourne Army Air Base on September 25, 1942. This was three days after our new C-47s departed to fly to the South Pacific, with 13 crew chiefs, a line chief, and 29 mechanics, 43 mechanics in all. He was one of 19 mechanics to go with the ground crew by ship, being second-highest in rank, so we were still adding to our ranks after the first air crews left.

Overseas, he moved to New Hebrides November 26, 1943, the squadron moving November 2, so perhaps was at Guadalcanal first. He moved to the Admiralties September 21, while other air echelon members moved there August 16.

14<sup>th</sup> TC Sq. Lockbourne AAB Columbus  
Ohio Sept 25 1942  
1. C.O. 13<sup>th</sup> TC Sq. Lockbourne AAB Columbus

NEW HEBRIDES 26 NOV 43  
ADMIRALTY IS 21 SEPT 44  
ADMIRALTY IS 21 SEPT 44





### b. 1942: Aerial Images of French Reef, where Petty Landed

Last July our colleague in New Caledonia, Marcel Claude, emailed me that when I previously obtained scans of aerial photos of French Reef, upon which Petty made an emergency landing, I missed some other views of it. In December I ordered scans from the National Archives of the correct images, from a contractor, and he emailed me the scans on December 19. The challenge was then to find the C-47 Lana T.

Commander Fox of the rescue ship, on the book's page 770, wrote the C-47 and a PBY rescue plane were found "close together on the end of French Reef," and in 2014 the engines for the PBY were found near the arrow at right. Randolph Pate (on page 766) wrote that the rescue PBYs' rubber life rafts had to go about 400 yards to the plane, and the photo on page 772 shows the PBY is about 100 yards from the reef, so the plane would be 300 yards in, near the middle of the reef. A photo on page 177 shows the right side of the plane shaded, and the sun was from the north, so the plane was facing east.

The above right image is of a high resolution, and I searched all over the reef, but found no trace of the Lana T, or the PBY. The Lana T landed here October 20, 1942, and the images are from May 14, 1943, just seven months later. A storm struck New Caledonia in January 1943, but the PBY engines had moved little in 72 years, and were outside the reef, so the Lana T should have moved even less, and its tail wheel was tied to a coral head. It may be best to scuba dive the reef.

### c. 1943: Photos of Navigator Ralph Saltsman

Saltsman was the navigator on the squadron's first fatal plane crash, January 13, 1943, as described on the book's page 271. The book has photos of the crew's Allen, Nelson, Rinaldi, and Stratton, but I have never had a photo of navigator Saltsman. On January 3, 2019, I found the draft registration card at right on Ancestry, naming his friend David Alpert as a contact, and was amazed to find his son, Brian, and within hours Brian emailed me the photos below. A big thank you to Brian for sharing these.

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| SERIAL NUMBER<br>7   | 1. NAME (Print)<br>RALPH LEWIS SALTSMAN | ORDER NUMBER<br>1355                      |
| 2. ADDRESS (Print)<br>1614 MALCOLM W. LOS ANGELES CALIF.                   |   |   |
| 3. TELEPHONE<br>LOS ANGELES  | 4. AGE IN YEARS<br>25                   | 5. PLACE OF BIRTH<br>PALM BEACH           |
| 6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP<br>U.S.A.  | 7. DATE OF BIRTH<br>Nov. 28, 1914       | 8. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON<br>FRIEND  |
| 9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON<br>4160 MANDALAY DR. LOS ANGELES CALIF.          |   |   |
| 10. EMPLOYER'S NAME<br>STUDENT U.C.L.A.                                    |   |   |
| 11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS<br>403 HILGARD AVE. LOS ANGELES CALIF. |   |   |
| I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.        |   |   |
| REGISTRATION CARD<br>D. S. S. FORM 1                                       |   | 18-37108<br>Ralph Saltsman<br>(Signature) |

Saltsman grew up on a farm 60 miles northwest of Albany, on a road between St. Johnsville and Stone Arabia, NY. His friend from community college, David, moved to California to attend UCLA for \$50 a semester. Saltsman followed him, and graduated in 1941. He enlisted in the Army, and trained at Kelly Field from September 1941 until July 1942. An article said he had sent home "a number of letters." Saltsman was one of the first 13 navigators, including my dad. He married David's sister before going overseas. I continue to try to find his nieces and nephews.



#### d. 1944: Letters from Bill Alexander, Pilot, 12/43–1/45

The October 2018 letter included excerpts from letters Bill Alexander wrote to his wife, which I scanned in Thornton, Colo., September 19. That newsletter had letters from 12/43 to 8/44, and this is the remaining letters, from 8/44 to 1/45, with more great details.



8/11/44 [at Espiritu Santo] – I saw Bob Hope’s show. There was Jerry Colonna, who was the best part of it, and another guy besides Bob himself. It was raining when the show first started, so we waited till it stopped before we went over. Bob and Jerry put on a couple of skits, and then Frances Langford sang a couple of songs. The boys sure gave her a rousing welcome.

After a few more jokes, some of them pretty raw, Bob introduced Patsy Thomas. She was dressed in a very tight fitting black swim suit, with the top made like a strapless evening gown, and she had a very pretty figure [page 457, and at left]. Boy, what a pair of legs.

When she first came on the stage, everyone got so quiet you could have heard a pin drop, for what seemed a full minute. The boys weren’t expecting anything like that, and it was quite a shock. When they came back to their senses, they cheered her so loudly it was deafening. Then Bob said there were doctors in the audience for those who needed smelling salts and morphine. She sang several songs, and sang them prettier than Frances Langford had sang hers.

##### **From the Admiralties**

8/29/44 – I’m ok, I guess, but I’m about to roast. We are living in an old mess hall [in the Admiralties], and this tin roof just pulls the heat right down in, instead of deflecting it.

Our sqdn C.O. doesn’t know how many will be sent home or when, because he turns in a list, and air force hq sends them home when they get ready.

9/5/44 – Today I had four more letters from you. Tomorrow I’m going back down to [Espiritu Santo] where I may get some more from you. While I’m there I’m going to ask the major just when I’ll be coming home. I’m sure he won’t make me stay to make Capt.

I’m glad you got the air medal I sent in August. I almost got the D.F.C. I could have got it by doing the work of looking up all the records myself, and taking them up to the 64<sup>th</sup>, but I figured they should give it to me. Heck, I’m not supposed to do all that. It’s supposed to be an award, not a bargain basement buy. The 64<sup>th</sup> had an award officer who saw to it that the boys got what they had coming, whereas this squadron had one who didn’t see to anything. If this award officer would get off his lazy can, I’d get six oak leaf clusters to the air medal. I may get them, but I wonder. That’s how many I’m due right now. My form five will show what I’ve done over here, and no one can cheat me on that [It showed the Air Medal with 4 OLCs].

9/9/44 – Around 10:00 yesterday morning they scheduled me to go out at noon. We came to an island about half way up here, and just before we went in to land, the hydraulic system blew out a line right next to the hyd. pump, so we had to pump our wheels down, and pump up pressure for the flaps and brakes. We were busy little boys for a while.

It was past supper time, and we had to get the cooks to fix us something, ’cause none of us had dinner. Then I was all over that island trying to find parts for our ship. Finally about 11:00 I gave up, and sent a radio message to the engineering officers to send us parts. This morning some smart marine, who didn’t have the parts we wanted last night, suddenly found them, and brought them over to the ship. So we got our ship fixed and we got out of there.

9/12/44 – When we got in last evening we found orders here for several fellows to go home, and Joe Hendricks was on them. Joe is the second one of the five Rover Boys to get his orders. [they named their tent the Rover Boys Mansion after a book series which preceded, and was by the same author as, the Hardy Boys.] They are thinning out.

The major got his orders to go home yesterday, too. The operations officer is sqdn C.O. now.

9/13/44 – Tonight I went to see a show that I thought might be good – but it wasn't. The show was "Xmas Holiday," a heavy drama, very sad.

9/15/44 – I'm sure glad I don't have hay fever, although I'm getting just a touch of something almost as bad. It's one of the "occupational diseases" of air crews – the common sinus trouble. We have had several fellows go home on medical because of it. It just got so bad they couldn't fly, and they couldn't be cured in this climate, so they had to be sent home. So far mine is only a suspicion, and doesn't really bother me, except that once in a while if I stay **above 10,000 feet** for eight or ten hours I get a dull headache. I think that **flying that high as much as we have to**, and this climate, are the causes. They just don't let fellows fly when they are ill in any way.

Tokyo Rose just signed off her program for "the poor defenseless Yankee soldiers in the South Pacific" by saying "Last night I got mine. My sister got hers, and probably your wife or sweetheart got hers, but what did you get? Good night." Isn't she awful? And she thinks Americans believe her. If she knew how much she entertains us, she probably wouldn't broadcast to us. It's better than a Bob Hope show, and we always get good laughs from what she says.

9/17/44 – Tonight I saw "Bathing Beauty" and I enjoyed it.

Joe (Hendricks) and I came over on the same airplane, and now Joe is going home.

9/18/44 – All this morning I just had to get rid of every bit of extra things that I possibly could, in order to get everything in the number of bags they allowed us. I said I was going to keep your letters till I got home, but Honey, I just couldn't do it, so I read them over very carefully, kept small parts of them, here and there, that I enjoyed most, and I threw the rest of them away. Much as I hated it, it had to be done. They were so precious that I wanted to keep them all, but shipping space is precious, too, so we have to move with the barest necessities. I couldn't have brought them home anyway, cause **we are allowed 50 lbs of baggage going back, and by the time a guy packs his records, and enough clothes to last a couple of weeks, that does it.** I guess you know what a big stack of letters I had. I had every wonderful one of your letters since Jan., and golly there were a lot of them.

9/19/44 – I had the mail run today. No, it isn't the same one I used to dread so much last winter (winter where you are). On that one, we started at 4:30 in the morning, made eighteen landings, and if we hurried like the very dickens we got back about 5:30 that night.

On the one I had today, we make four landings, and don't have to hurry to get back for supper – only I had to make an extra landing today for a major.

9/20/44 – I hope your allotment will carry you over this month. Since Joe is going home, I had to buy his share of the radio. I own 3/5 share of the radio, and I'm going to sell out.

### **On Wakde**

10/5/44 – Well, I can't say much from our little island home, and I do mean little. You can spit across it one way. The runway runs the longest part the island, and the two ends of the runway both run right off in the ocean. There are pretty good winds here, so it's not so hot here as it could be. The heck of it is the mosquito net cuts the breeze out, and we have to sleep under them.

10/6/44 – We have our little home fixed up pretty nice now. We managed to find enough boards to put a floor in, and enough old canvas to cover it. It was a lot of work, but golly it's so much nicer than just base ground in the tent, like some of the fellows have. It feels cleaner. I fixed a rack to hold my mosquito net neatly up out of the way in the day time, and by putting a couple old bomb fin crates together I have a table. All the comforts of home, except one.

**The shower we had, such as it was, broke down, so now we have to bathe in the ocean. Fortunately the ocean is right behind our tent.** Golly, you've never encountered a problem till you try to get soap to lather in salt water, and when it comes to shaving, that's even worse.

About ten days ago, myself and the navigator came back from a trip, pretty badly in need of a shave. We decided to let [our moustaches] grow, so here we go again.

10/16/44 – Tonight about three or four fellows got together and shaved each other’s heads. Gosh, what a horrible looking crew they are now. And to make the sight even worse, a couple of them have big black moustaches, heavy black eyebrows, and now that white dome.

### **Biak**

10/21/44 – [Major Wilson] and Joe Hendricks left this morning. I’m glad he [Major Wilson] is going home, because I’m glad to see anyone go, but to be honest with you, I’d like to serve the rest of my overseas duty under him. He was a good officer, and a good C.O. He was sent home because he stuck by his own men. A 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. was transferred to the 13<sup>th</sup> from group Hdq so he could be promoted to Capt. Maj. Wilson made it plain the older, more experienced men in the sqdn would get theirs first, and the higher paid help didn’t like it. Politics again, Honey. But Major Wilson can go home with a clear conscience, knowing he stuck by his men, and what he considered fair. He was tops in my book.

10/22/44 – Had to get up at 3:00 this morning, took off from here at 5:00, and landed back here at 7:00 tonight. Most fatiguing. We didn’t get to eat until 7:30. That’s when I discovered today is Sunday. The Chaplain was holding services in the mess hall [at Biak, prior to building the chapel] while we were eating. Nice wasn’t it? A sermon while we ate. I liked it, too.

I’ll have to go out in the jungle tomorrow, and cut some poles to make a frame for our tent.

10/25/44 – The intelligence officers said we can say we are somewhere in the Netherlands East Indies. I’ll be “home alive in forty-five.” See, poetry, and it certainly sounds better than the lines some of these guys are saying: “Golden Gate in forty-eight.” Doesn’t sound like he has much faith in the army, does it?

When I read that Don Wesson was killed in France, I turned cold all over. I guess it just never occurred to me that he would die that way. It just doesn’t seem possible. How is Marie taking it? It does seem unfair, to Don, Marie, and to their baby. I think Don’s case will explain to you better than I could why I didn’t want us to have a baby till I’m home again to stay. *The things that might happen while I’m on the ground are what worry me, not things in the air. I can take care of myself up there, but down here something might happen that I couldn’t avoid.*

10/27/44 – Tonight I went to the Doc to tell him to take me off the rest leave crew. He wasn’t going to take me off, so I made up a quick line. If he wants me to rest, I’ll sleep right here for ten days, and probably be in better shape than if I went to Sydney.

We used to have one trip every once in a while that took fourteen hours to fly, and you ended up where you started. Then there was another one we caught once every six weeks, that was fourteen hours in one direction, with stops along the way, of course.

When I say ten hours, or whatever it is, I mean ten hours in the air, though it might not be all in one flight. When you add the time it takes to make out clearances, manifests, load, unload, get gas, etc., you can understand what I mean by long days. Oh, we get along well for Jr. birdmen.

### **At Noemfoor**

11/1/44 – Right now I’m acting as operations officer while the optns off. is gone. He took my ship back to (censored, the name of what we thought was supposed to be our home base [Biak]), and he won’t be back till about 2:00 this afternoon. I don’t expect any ships in before then, so I guess I’ll have a little time to myself.

[Later] Honey, I see some ships circling the field, and they might be ours, so I better go see.

### **Biak again**

11/21/44 – This morning one of the ships had a combat photographer, and the fifteen other ships were to fly formation, so he could take pictures of them. A Group formation it was, and who do you suppose was leading the whole works? I was! First they bounce my promotion, then they have me lead the group formation when they want pretty pictures of it.

I don't know what they do with those films, but they might send them home for news reels. So if you see a formation of fifteen C47s, led by one that has a picture of a ghost on the nose, and the words "Green Goggled Ghost," that's me.

**Incidentally, if any of your friends wonder if their boys overseas are getting turkey this Thanksgiving, you can answer them the boys are. We (the bunch of us) all had turkey on board today – 37 ½ tons of them. I betcha I can name an island where every man will have all the turkey he can hold, with all the accessories. The "Turkey Train," that's what we were today.**

11/23/44 – I got home in time for the turkey dinner, and oh what a dinner. I ate till I couldn't hold any apple pie, and now I'm as sleepy as can be.

When I came in tonight, who should I find here but Aos and Moyle. They were sent back here to get their rides from here, so now they are sitting here again. I guess things aren't as nice as in the good old days, when the fellows flew ships back. Aos said Hendricks left a couple days ago on a boat, which means there's more weeks before he'll get home. He sure took a beating on his effort to get home. By the time he gets home it will be over three months since he received his first orders. Thank goodness they issue both orders at once now.

12/12/44 – I flew eleven hours yesterday.

### **403<sup>rd</sup> Activation Day Celebration, and Beer Drinking Contest**

12/13/44 – The group declared yesterday "Field Day," in celebrating two years since the group was activated. All ground personnel were given a holiday, and the ships were scheduled to be back here by 1:00 yesterday afternoon. It was competition between sqdns – baseball, football, volleyball, horseshoes, tug of war, etc., and the sqdn with the highest number of points would win a plaque which was made by the Chaplin.

The winner was to be announced at the show last night, where the last event was to be held – the beer drinking contest. The Thirteenth really went en-mass – the sqdn C.O. being the only one who didn't go. When almost everyone was there, in walked the "Chief" (a full Indian [our pilot Groesbeck]) with a big club over his shoulder to insure a fair scoring for the 13<sup>th</sup>. I can't explain it, but that was the funniest sight I have seen in a long time, and I nearly split out a seam.

Then they got down to the last event, with one officer and one E.M. from each sqdn, and gp hdq. The competitors went up on the stage, and ten bottles of beer were set in front of each man. They were timed, and the man who drank the most in five minutes won. The officer representing the 13<sup>th</sup> was high – all ten bottles down the hatch in less than five minutes, but he spewed and was eliminated. He said he was so full he just couldn't hold it all in him. Next high was the Enlisted man from the 13<sup>th</sup> (naturally), who didn't spew, and thus gave the 13<sup>th</sup> the additional points necessary to place them ahead, and win the plaque for the sqdn.

I looked around after that, and I bet there were 4000 men there. The whole island must have heard about it, and gathered in the hope of getting in on that beer.

Then they had the show "The [Merry] Monohans," [released 9/15/44] with Jack Oakie, Donald O'Connor, those two other gals that always play with him, and whole gang of other pretty girls. It was funny, had some very good dancing. All in all, I think that was the most pleasant evening I've had anywhere since I left the states.

12/19/44 – Well, I'm all set for my next rest leave, Turkish baths, hot showers, good food, swimming, horseback riding, kangaroo hunting, mountain climbing, and shopping for you. I'll be back here the night of Jan 4, providing of course we don't have to stop somewhere along the line with airplane trouble.

"Skinny Do" said the orders went in the 14<sup>th</sup> of this month, and he thinks there were two crews from this squadron, and I'm on one of them. He said he would know for sure in a few days. Those orders should be back here by the 10<sup>th</sup>.



While I'm in Sydney I'm going to get all the liquor I can lay my hands on, and if I am on those orders I'm going to be host at the darndest party this outfit has seen for a day or three. The "Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>" won't be thirsty that night, I betcha!

12/22/44 – I had to get up at 3:00 this morning. We had to fly a lot of instruments coming down today - dust, 10,000 feet in the air, almost like the dust storms at Alliance, Neb. The air was rough as a cobb, and it was quite a tussle to keep the darn plane right side up, so naturally after all the work of getting the ship in here I really dreaded the landing. But I got it down in one piece, no blown tires, no bent landing gear or wings, and no one the worse for wear and tear, except the nurse and the Aussie WAC were both sick as horses. Maybe next time they'll take a boat.

We can't have the apt till tomorrow when the other crew starts back home, but we are going there for supper with the other boys tonight. They know a place where we can get all the fresh meat we want without ration points. I bet those guys gained fifteen pounds since they came down here. I hope I can do the same.

12/23/44 – Well, here we are all set up in our home for the next nine days. It sure is a swell apartment, and I was surprised to find such a nice place in Sydney, after living where I did the last time I was down here, and seeing the parts of Sydney that I did. I'm glad I came now, because I'm sure I can really take life easy now. Louie and I each have our own bedrooms. There is a nice tile bath, a living room with a nice soft divan, two nice chairs, and a radio.

12/26/44 - The other two fellows from the sqdn who came down with Lou and I have an apartment downstairs, so we combined our resources last night [for Christmas dinner]. I'm going down on the beach [Bondi Beach] about 1:30.

12/27/44 – I went down to the beach for a couple of hours. I sure don't like those darn sand fleas, though. Nearly ate me up.

12/31/44 11:58 p.m. – In just about a minute it will be midnight. They are going to ring a gong just when it's midnight (over the radio). There it is – Happy New Year my Angel. Louie is hanging out the window, calling Happy New Year to all the neighbors. Oh, oh, here comes Lt. Ahrens and his girlfriend, and gosh only knows what will happen now.

1/15/45 – I went to see Bob Hope tonight in a Technicolor show "The Princess and the Pirate." It was one of the best he has made.

### **Female Personnel**

1/20/45 – Remember when I was talking about the officers in the squadron building their own club? After we built the club, a few of the officers who knew some nurses wanted to bring them to our club. First the sqdn C.O. had to submit a request to the island commander, describing the recreation building in detail, and stating that all bushes, underbrush, ditches, etc. in the immediate area had been removed. Then the island commander marked it on his map, designated it as a recreational room not off limits to female personnel, and sent back the regulations governing female personnel, for all officers to read.

No officer is allowed to have social connections with enlisted women, and female officers are not allowed to associate with enlisted men. The old army game.

Quarters for female personnel must have fences around them, so covered that they can't be seen through, and guards posted at all times around the fence (tough war for some people).

The woman has to sign out before she leaves the quarters, and state what time she expects to return (not later than midnight), then if she isn't in by then, someone wants to know why.

After dusk, women have to leave their quarters in twos or more, and always with their dates, one of which must be armed with a pistol.

Women aren't allowed to board a ship, boat, or other water craft except in parties, after a permit has been issued, and then they must be chaperoned by an officer from the female M.P.s I've never seen one of those M.P.s, but I can imagine.

The women aren't allowed to leave the main highways, except to go to designated recreation centers. The doc tells me the army has to send pregnant females back to the States, and some of them want to go back bad enough that they just sort of forget certain moral codes. Like all soldiers, they find they aren't quite so patriotic after they discover what life in the tropics really is. It's much harder on women than on men. It all boils down to one thing – the army wants to keep everyone on the job. It's all just plain sense.

Thank you again to George W. Alexander for recording so many details in your letters, and to his daughters, Cherry, Pattie, and Billie for sharing them with us!

**e. 1945: Amelang Note about Flight Pay**

Amelang's daughter, Karen, emailed me a helpful excerpt from one of her dad's letters:

July 15, 1945: "I won't get my July flying pay till Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> now because I didn't get any hours before the 15th. I'll get it next month if I get some hours this month yet. Unless you go 3 months without any hours you still get your flying pay, as long as you average 4 hours each month."

**f. 1945: Blue-Bordered Patch of Wayne R. McCormick, Comm. Chief, 6/45–9/45**

On December 29, 2018, on Ancestry I found a family tree for Wayne McCormick, and then reached his son, Perry. On January 2, 2019, Perry emailed me a photo of his dad's patch. It had two major differences:

1. **The border is blue, instead of white!**
2. The white part is like burlap or canvas.

I have seen reproduction patches (as on the next page) with blue borders, but always assumed the original patches all had a white border, as shown on the first page herein. This now is an alternative official style, from mid-1945.

Thank you, Perry, for sharing this image!





## 2. History-Related Activities

### a. 1942-1943: Jeep Honoring the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS in New Caledonia

The October newsletter had photos of a jeep under restoration in New Caledonia by Angelo de Bourail, a friend of our colleague in New Caledonia, Marcel Claude. In October Marcel emailed me the photos above of the completed project. Tres belle! Merci, Angelo!

### b. 1942-1943: New Caledonia Voters Reject Independence from France

France claimed New Caledonia in 1853. In 1998, the Nouméa Accord established that a vote for independence would take place by the end of 2018. The territory has a population of 270,000, with 175,000 registered and eligible to vote. Nearly 80% of those eligible voted. This was the first auto-determination vote in a French territory since Djibouti in the Horn of Africa voted for independence in 1977.

The main people wanting independence are the indigenous Kanaks, while the descendants of colonial settlers prefer to be part of France. France provides \$1.5 billion per year to New Caledonia, and the country has 25% of the world's nickel deposits, and is a tourist site.

On November 4, 2018, when asked if they wanted to gain full sovereignty, the vote was 43.6% OUI, and 56.4% NON. The no vote was lower than expected. The 1998 accord provided that in the event of a no vote, two more referendums could be held before 2022.

### c. 1942-1945: Reproduction Patch

On November 9, 2018, the son-in-law, Greg, of supply clerk Herb Larger, emailed me a link to a reproduction of the squadron patch for sale on ebay, at right. This is made by 6thJune1944.com. It is 5.75 inches in diameter. The price is \$60.

The squadron's original patch had a white border, as shown on page 1 herein, but, as shown on the prior page, we did have a blue border on some patches in 1945.

Greg found the patch in the last newsletter, and one many years ago, too. Thank you, Greg.



### 3. Members and Relatives

#### a. Found Another Living Member: R. Taylor Cloud, Radio Operator, 11/43–8/44

For a long time I have struggled to identify a radio operator listed as Robert T. Cloud, who appeared only on an order January 1, 1944. I had his serial number, and that he enlisted in Chicago, but on Ancestry.com there was no death date, and no way to find out more about him. In June 2016 I ordered more than 10,000 pages of orders from the Thirteenth Air Force, Far East Air Force, and USAFISPA, and found an award to him of the Air Medal, with a home address, and name of his mother, but still could not find anything since 1944.

At some point I found a family tree for his father, and on June 5, 2016, contacted the person who created this tree, but they had not logged in more than a year, and maybe many years. I searched again 6/7/17, 11/13/17, and 12/24/17, and on 12/29/18 contacted someone for another tree. On January 9, 2019, I was amazed to receive an Ancestry message:

“I am writing on behalf of my father, R. Taylor Cloud, who was indeed a member of the Thirsty Thirteenth. My father turned 95 this month and had let his Ancestry membership lapse. I happened to be on checking some DNA information and saw your message.”

This was from his daughter, who saw my message from June 5, 2016, 2.5 years before. It was amazing to find another still-living squadron member. I spoke with Taylor by phone January 16, 2019. He transferred to the 63<sup>rd</sup> TCS at some point, but provided many helpful details. He plans to send me some items, and at that time I will share those, and notes from my interview of him.

#### b. Identifying Members and Searching for Relatives

The October 2018 newsletter noted that out of 722 squadron members, I had not reached relatives for 162. I reviewed 39 of these in September, and so in November reviewed 1 more, in December 63 more, and the other 59 in January. These reviews can each take hours, e.g., for mess cook David Sandler, from January 4-6 I spent 20 hours, and still don't have him identified.

#### Found Details for Lowery, Pierce, Abramowitz, and Rosen

For 1940 founding member, mechanic Joseph A. Lowery, I only had an estimated birth year of 1911, and no death date. On January 4, 2019, at 9:25 p.m., I searched Newspapers.com on his brother's name, with the middle initial, “Thomas A. Lowery,” for New York, went through all the results, and found a 1967 article “survived by Thomas A. Lowery.” I excitedly clicked, and was amazed this was for our Joseph Lowery. This also had the cemetery where he is buried. I then searched Ancestry using his death date, and found his exact birth date. I had searched on him at least 8 times in the last three years, so it was a thrill to finally find his details.

For John W. Pierce I had a serial number, which said when he enlisted in January 1942 he was single, and his last education was 4 years of high school. There was one who lived 1915-1964, but that person married in 1938, a 1940 census said he had completed 2 years of college, and his tombstone said nothing about WWII. On January 17, 2019, I tried again, and in reading search results on Newspapers.com found an article about this one's brother, and was elated to read the words below, that the 1915 one was in the Air Corps. On January 18 I tried a phone number for a potential son, and he called me back and said yes, his dad was in the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>! I was thrilled to finally have him identified, and to find his son.

His brothers are  
John W. Pierce and Linwood  
Pierce, both of United States Air  
Corps,

For 1944 radio operator Irving Abramowitz, I estimated he was one born in 1911, but had no exact birth date, and no death date. On 11/17/17 I spent 5 hours on him, going over the 1940 census and other items based on a 1945 address. On January 10, 2019, I used a National Archives site I use when serial numbers do not appear on ww2enlistment.org, and was amazed to find a result, indicating ours was the one born in 1917. With the year, and him having lived in New York, I was able to quickly find his birth and death dates. I contacted two trees on Ancestry.

For 1944 operations and intelligence clerk George Rosen, when I first started using Ancestry in 2016, I estimated he was one born in 1920, and subsequently tried to find relatives of that one. Sometime between September and December 2018 I looked at the 1940 census on Ancestry for an address on the squadron roster and determined ours was one born in 1924, but still had no death date, and did not take a next step to notice on Ancestry that the 1924 one moved to Florida. If I had, and used SpokeO before April, I could have found him. Sadly, he passed away April 26, 2018. I have now found his family members, but so greatly wish I had found him earlier, as I would have loved to have asked him lots of questions, and heard all of his stories.

### **Changing Estimated to be Confirmed**

I previously had 6 men who were estimated, but confirmed Cloud and Rosen (different than I estimated), and removed Jagger, as described below, for a decline from 6 to only 3 now estimated.

### **Found Exact Birth Dates for 7, and an Exact Death Date for 1**

I previously had 14 men with a birth year, but no date, and one with a death year but no date. On January 6 I found draft registration cards on Ancestry with birth dates for Fister and Copeland. On January 14 I found a family tree for Kolkmeyer with his birth date. Identifying Lowery, Pierce, and Abramowitz gave me three more. I also found McAllister's birth date from a new family tree. I removed Gagliardi. This was a big reduction in birth-years-only, by 8, from 14 to 6. For Friel I had an estimated death year and found his exact date from a new family tree.

### **Moving More New Names from September 1945 off of the Main Roster**

In May 2017 when I found the September 22, 1945, order from Walter Bridges, it listed many men being transferred out of the squadron which I had not heard of before, who I added. Since then I found references to many of these, but for others, I have wondered if they transferred in after the war ended, when other units were closed down, for administrative purposes. Last year I removed 20 glider pilots and mechanics, and 16 others, I estimated joined post-war.

On January 9 I removed 22 more men, for whom there is no other record of them in the squadron: pilots Gandy, Jennison, Lamborn, Matthews, T. Palmer, Pearson, and Peterson; duty soldiers Garner and Jagger; radar mechanics Bromley, Catenza, W.G. Hall, H. Johnson and LaPorte; mechanics Bussler, Cone, Hemstalk, Hill, Willis Miller, Raber, and Tillman; and clerk S. Levine. I added back F. Cooper, Howell, and L. Richard who were on a 1979 reunion list.

I have now taken out 55 men on that September 22, 1945, order, who are not referred to elsewhere. Willis Miller's tombstone says the 550<sup>th</sup> Night Fighter Squadron, part of the Thirteenth Air Force, and Wikipedia says "Combat ending by the end of July, personnel largely demobilized after the end of the war in September," so perhaps many of these men came from that unit.

The squadron's monthly report notes the number of men in the squadron at the end of every month. I am now short 5 officers for August 1945 and 10 enlisted men for July and August 1945, and so may have to add back 15 of those I took out, but want to wait until I determine which ones. If you are related to one of these and have any letters, orders, or photos which may help me learn when they joined the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS, please email these to me.

This reduced the number of squadron members by 19, from 722 to 703. In the table below, to adjust the October 13 totals, I removed from each category: 15, 13, 9, 7, 9, and 6. I reduced the October Find-a-Grave total by another 5, because 5 men had two Find-a-Grave pages.

### Latest Dashboard

The latest dashboard is at right. For birth dates, I removed W. Hall, Haro. Johnson, S. Levine and Gandy, so this falls to 6. Death dates increased by 2 for Lowery and Abramowitz. I found resting places for 12: Carr, Elam, Friedman, Goessel, Gordon, Lowery, Macleod, Pierce, G. Rosen, Small, Tutella, and L. Walsh. Estimates were reduced from 6 to 3.

### Members Identified and Contacts Found (of 703)

| Members <sup>1</sup> : | 13-Oct  | 29-Jan  | Add | Need |
|------------------------|---------|---------|-----|------|
| Birth Date*            | 697 99% | 697 99% | 0   | 6    |
| Death Date***          | 673 98% | 675 99% | 2   | 10   |
| Resting Place**        | 597 87% | 609 89% | 12  | 76   |
| FindaGrave Link**      | 410 60% | 443 65% | 33  | 242  |
| Contact                | 551 78% | 568 81% | 17  | 135  |
| Have Book              | 514 73% | 519 74% | 5   | 184  |

\* Birth and death dates incl. 3 and 3 best-estimates.

\*\* Percent and Need for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> exclude 18 living.

The 6 I have yet to identify, 4 more without death dates (excluding those still living), 6 with a birth year but no exact birth date, and 3 who are best-estimates, are shown below. It is great to have so few left to identify. It is a thrill to find details as I did this month which shorten this list.

### Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> Members Not Identified, or without Death Dates. Birth Dates, or Confirmation

#### Thirsty 13th Members Not Identified by a Date of Birth or Passing

| # | Role           | Last     | First   | MI | Birth | Death | Address                  | City       | ST | ASN      |
|---|----------------|----------|---------|----|-------|-------|--------------------------|------------|----|----------|
| 1 | Ground Officer | McGill   | Charles | C. | n/a   | n/a   |                          |            |    | o-365354 |
| 2 | Pilot          | McClure  | Robert  | G. | n/a   | n/a   |                          | Fort Wayne | IN | T61 241  |
| 3 | "              | Schaefer | George  | E. | n/a   | n/a   |                          |            |    | 442694   |
| 4 | "              | Lucas    | Charles |    | n/a   | n/a   |                          |            |    |          |
| 5 | Crew Chief     | Baker    | Kenneth |    | n/a   | n/a   | 134 W. Court St., Urbana |            | OH |          |
| 6 | Radio Operator | Clark    | Harry   |    | n/a   | n/a   |                          |            |    |          |

#### Members with Dates or Years of Birth, but no Dates of Passing (excluding Still-Living)

|    |                 |         |         |     |         |     |                          |               |    |            |
|----|-----------------|---------|---------|-----|---------|-----|--------------------------|---------------|----|------------|
| 7  | Mess Cook       | Sandler | David   | Leo | 2/12/22 | n/a | 36 So.3rd St., San Diego |               | CA | 39108957   |
| 8  | Navigator       | Kelty   | Thomas  | R.  | 8/8/18  | n/a |                          | Wheeling      | WV | 2210, 3520 |
| 9  | Ground Enlisted | Cohen   | Irwin   |     | 1925    | n/a | 2309 Holland Ave, Bronx  |               | NY | 32889985   |
| 10 | Pilot           | Brown   | Charles | L.  | 1920    | n/a | 605 West 178th St        | New York City | NY | o-796695   |

#### Have Birth Year - Need Birth Date

|    |                |          |                |    |      |          |  |  |    |          |
|----|----------------|----------|----------------|----|------|----------|--|--|----|----------|
| 11 | Pilot          | Brown    | Garnet Quilian |    | 1922 | 11/11/44 |  |  | GA | 834559   |
| 12 | "              | King     | Emerson        | P. | 1920 | 11/11/44 |  |  | NY | 669736   |
| 13 | Line Chief     | Rinaldi  | John Jr.       | F. | 1911 | 1/13/43  |  |  | NY | 06718475 |
| 14 | Radio Operator | Stratton | James Stanley  |    | 1919 | 1/13/43  |  |  | MS | 20427911 |

#### Members with Estimated Dates (might be another person)

|    |           |          |              |    |         |         |                                     |         |    |         |
|----|-----------|----------|--------------|----|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|----|---------|
| 15 | Operatons | Chambers | Frank "Buck" |    | 2/12/21 | 1/7/78  | (not the one on Ancestry born 1923) |         |    |         |
| 16 | Pilot     | Franz    |              |    | 3/2/20  | 5/25/08 |                                     |         |    |         |
| 17 | Navigator | Thomas   | Paul         | P. | 5/27/22 | 6/21/92 | 13416 Chelsea                       | Detroit | MI | T135986 |

In the table on the prior page, pilots and navigators are in red, because I may get flight school or navigator school records someday which help identify them. Airplane mechanics and radio operators are in blue, because I might get mechanic and radio school records identifying them. The other four, McGill, Sandler, Cohen, and Chambers may be harder to identify. Perhaps someone will have an order listing Chambers, providing a serial number, which leads to his enlistment details. Perhaps more information will be added to Ancestry.com someday.

### Find-a-Grave Web Pages

On January 7 I searched Find-a-Grave for 208 men and found pages for 33: Amelang, Angelette, Baker, Beacorn, Benedetto, P. Bruce, Clark, Conard, Conn, Davis, Deppe, Franklin, Friedman, Goessl, Gonzalez, Gordon, Hinton, Hulland, Ingalls, Lange, Mastrantonio, G. Rosen, S. Rosen, Scruggs, Sidelko, Small, Smyth, Soderland, Sterling, Thear, Tutella, Valley, Zieman. For our airplane mechanic, Cpl. Aubrey Angelette, it was great to see that, despite staying in the Air Force, becoming an officer, and rising to Captain, on his grave marker, below, he wanted to be remembered for in the “13<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, WWII.”

### Contacting Relatives of More Members for the First Time

I was amazed to find relatives of 17 more members, taking us to 81%:



Earnest D. Belto  
Charles E. Byers  
John E. Carr  
R. Taylor Cloud  
Frank R. Cooper  
Robert K. Elam

Louis A. Flynn  
Raymond C. Forste  
Harland L. Johnson  
Vincent R. Kelley  
John D. Macleod  
William H. McClendon

Wayne R. McCormick  
John W. Pierce  
George J. Rosen  
James W. Taylor  
Lawrence P. Walsh

As shown at right, for the 135 squadron members for whom I have not contacted a relative, 6 are not yet identified, I will try again in a year for 21, and for 65 I estimate I will never find a relative, but I contacted someone for 43. This could be a message to a distant cousin on Ancestry, or message left. “Very unlikely” had been 88, so it was amazing to find leads for 23 men. It can take a while to get replies, but these provide hope for more contacts.

|                 |     |     |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Not identified  | 6   | 1%  |
| Try again later | 21  | 3%  |
| Pending         | 43  | 6%  |
| Very unlikely   | 65  | 9%  |
| Not Contacted   | 135 | 19% |

### 4. Conclusions

Thank you to Elam’s daughter, Deborah, for sharing his logbook and other items. Thank you to McCormick’s son Perry for the incredible image of a squadron patch with a blue border. Thank you again to the daughter, Billie, of Bill Alexander, for sharing his letters, and to Amelang’s daughter Karen, Larger’s son-in-law Greg, and to Marcel in New Caledonia for sharing items.

It was great to find another still-living member in Taylor Cloud. Also great to convert four men from estimated to exact, find exact birth dates for 7, learn 12 more final resting places, find 33 Find-a-Grave pages, and make contact with relatives of 17 more squadron members.

With best wishes, Seth

