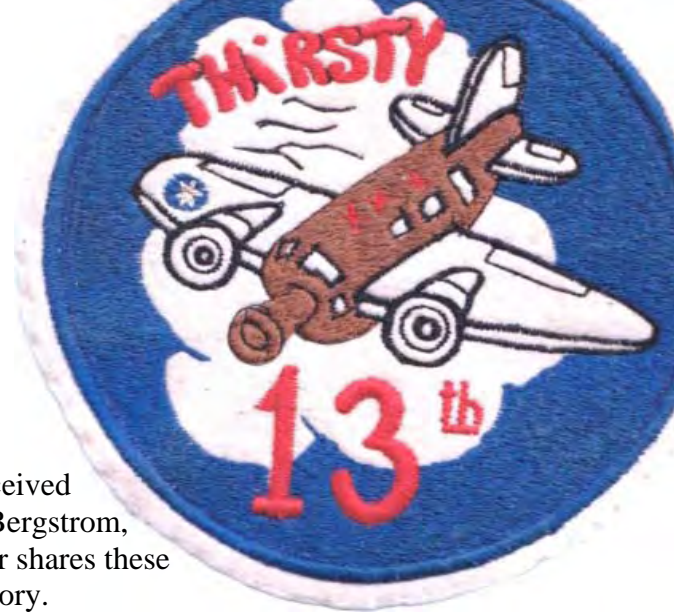


# June 2020 Newsletter



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

While working on the last newsletter, sent May 25, I received a box of original items from the daughter of 1942-43 pilot Bergstrom, and from the son of 1943-45 mechanic LaLonde. This letter shares these items. It is a treat to still be able to add to the squadron history.

With best wishes,

Seth P. Washburne, Squadron Historian  
June 29, 2020

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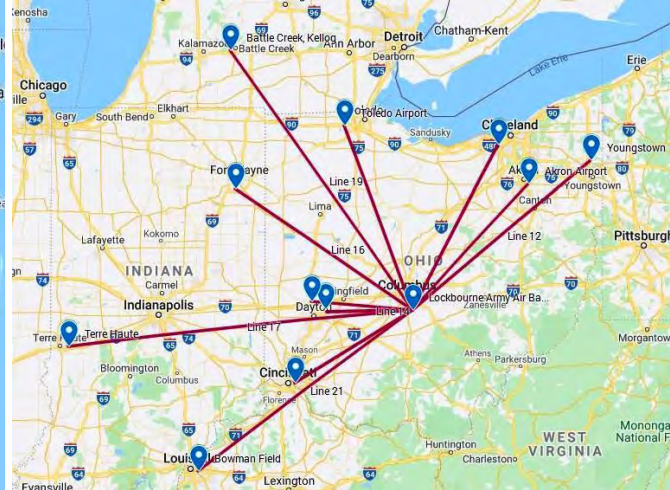
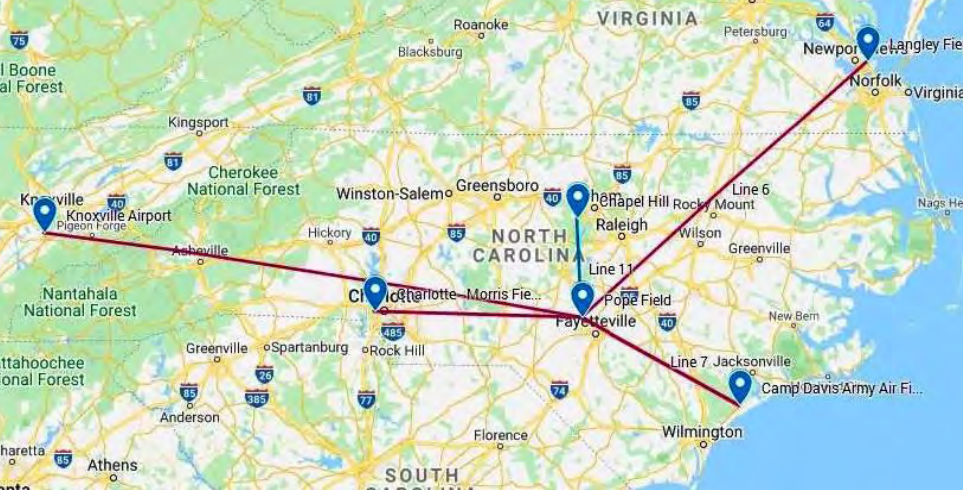
This is the newsletter for the U.S. Army Air Corps 13<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 1940-1946, nicknamed "The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>." This is prepared by Seth P. Washburne, the son of John C. Washburne, navigator 11/42-7/43. Please direct any comments to him at: (212) 289-1506, sethgw1@gmail.com, 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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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. 1942-1943: Items from Don J. Bergstrom, Pilot, 7/10/42-12/10/43

On March 21, 2020, I received a large box of the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> items to scan from the daughter of one of our first 26 pilots, Bergstrom, pictured at right in pilot school.

Bergstrom joined the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS July 10, 1942, and had a Form 5 log of his flights in the U.S., first from Pope Field, NC. These are mapped above left, with red lines, to Knoxville, Charlotte, Camp Davis, and Langley. He also had many local flights, perhaps to Chapel Hill, the blue line. On August 8, 1942, he moved with the squadron to Lockbourne Army Air Base, southeast of Columbus, OH.



Bergstrom's flights from LAAB are mapped above right. He also flew to "S.Lus.," which may be St. Louis. He made longer flights: a) 8/22 to Maxwell Field, AL, and Mobile, b) 8/24 to Pope Field, and c) 9/15-16 to Wichita. For 8/26 he logged Cochran and Douglas, which may be Cochran Field in Macon, GA, and Douglas Field in Douglas, GA.

Bergstrom's items included a Christmas card and letter from his mother, in Green Bay, Wis:

Bergstrom Letter from Mother, 10/31/42: "I received word from the government that you have arrived safely at your destination. Thank God for that, but we do not know where. I really got a bad turn yesterday, as I received your 'Last Will and Testament.' It came as quite a shock to me, but today I can think more clearly about it.

We have already mailed you your Christmas packages. You are also supposed to get a box from the American Legion, as everyone donated money, so all you boys can get packages.

You will have to forgive us for not sending a lot of gifts, as we really don't know what to send and the packaging is so limited.

Well done, old boy, keep 'em flying, and be good, and take of your own sweet self. We'll all be thinking about you all the time.

Love always, your Mom.

*Though Uncle Sam has "adopted" you,  
Don't forget you've a family back home, too.*

*And we're joining in, the same old way,  
With love and good wishes*

*for you, Christmas Day,*

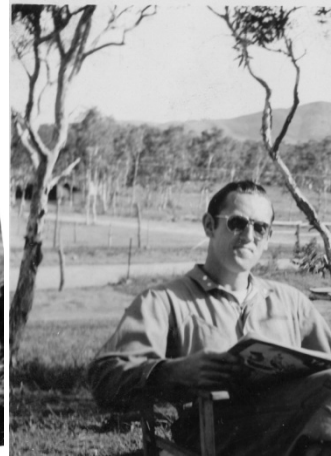
*With loads of love, Mom & Dad '42*



*Though Uncle Sam  
has "adopted" you,  
Don't forget you've a family  
back home too,  
And we're joining in,  
the same old way,  
With love and good wishes  
for you, Christmas Day.*

*With loads of love  
Mom and Dad  
'42*





### New Caledonia Camp Photos

Bergstrom had the photos above, of pilot "Bobby" Bruce and Bergstrom, Bernard, and Bergstrom again. This is from the officers' hill, at the yellow circle at left, on the book's pg. 188. This estimated to be to where the staff sergeant pilots moved after commissioned. Across the road was a volleyball net (behind Bruce), and basketball backboard, perhaps for another unit. Our entrance is to the right of the red arrow top right. At left are perhaps a movie screen for the other unit, and a guard booth at our entrance. At right is Bergstrom.

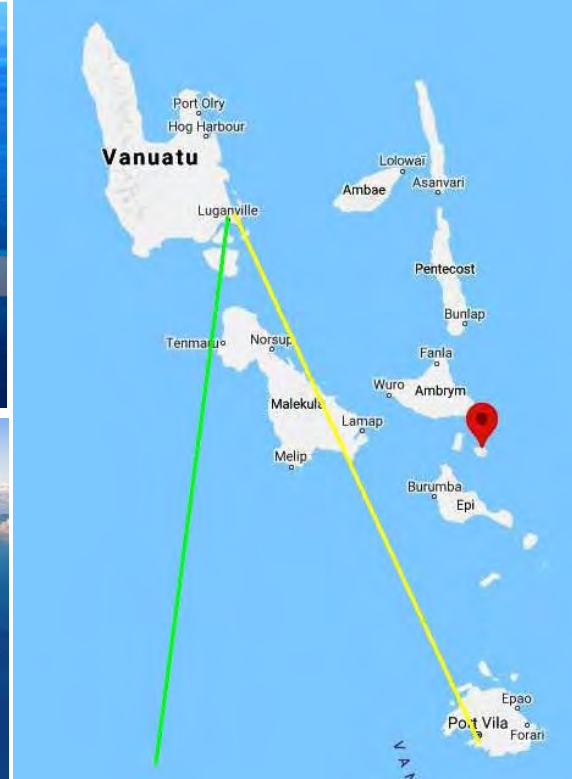


Below are "Richie (Frey?)'s dog Buttons," "Home - Bernard, Bell, Baldry, and Blankinship," and "Apollo Baldry." Baldry was our #1 pilot in 1942-43.



Below are "Junior" and Bell, Farmer and Bernard, and Bernard and Baldry dressed up in the camp.





### Missions

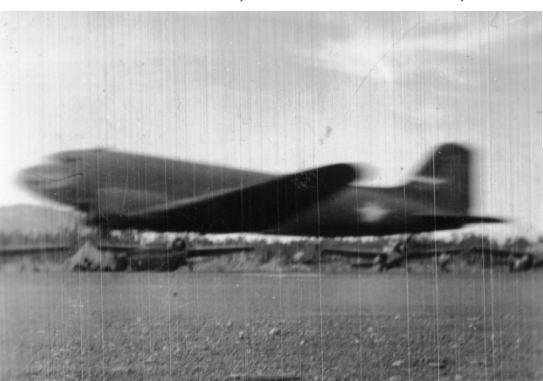
Bergstrom had the photo top left, when flying south from Tontouta, New Caledonia, of the lighthouse by Nouméa. It is shown in color from the other direction (ref: Getty Images). He had the photo above left titled "Lopevi Island with volcano." This is shown in color, located at the red pin above right, and is 4,635 feet high. It is 35 miles east of the flight path from Vila to Pekoia, and 80 miles from the path to Tontouta, so the photo was probably from the yellow path.

Below is Russell Island, and Bergstrom labeled the middle photo "South Field," and the third as "North Field," at the red arrow, maybe our first time there. Russell was code named Ouch, and this is on his Form 5, below, July 30-31, 1943. Russell is 60 miles west of Henderson Field ("Bevy"). He flew the mission to Munda on the book's pages 344-345 in 8/43.



30	BP	T-5		4:20	C-47	3	BEVY-LCL-OUCH-BEVY
31	P	T-5		1:20	C-47	3	BEVY-OUCH-OUCH N.-BV'

Below left is "Airborne, Tontouta." He referred to this C-47, Hitler's Hearse, as "The Hearse," and, as shown below, to Lady Eve as "The Lady." Below is "Rendova Island," then "High stuff."



*"The Lady  
ON VELLA LAVELLA*





**Auckland Flights**

1	11/9/42	5
2	12/3/42	3
3	3/2/43	4
4	3/29/43	5
5	6/5/43	3
6	8/24/43	9
7	11/8/43	12
8	12/3/43	4

**Eight Missions to Auckland**

Bergstrom, in his 14 months in the squadron, had 8 trips to Auckland, listed at right. Six were for 3-5 days, and so were not a usual rest leave. Trips #4 and #8 landed at Norfolk Island both ways, #7 going there, and #5 on the return, and so 3/8 landed at Norfolk Island. For the 3/29 trip, he flew to Sydney 3/31, and to Tontouta 4/2, the first I heard of us flying between Auckland and Sydney. Bergstrom had the image above left titled "Three Kings Islands," the first landmark north of New Zealand, described in my November 2017 letter.

He had the photo above center, of Bergstrom and E Brown, and 2 similar to this, with another angle view of Kia Ora in the background, on the book's page 303. On 8/26 he flew to Rotorua, a park with thermal activity, and had the photo above right (inset in color from the Internet). This is 120 miles south of Auckland, and he logged 3:05 round-trip, so he may have also flown to other areas. During this 8/24/43 trip, on 8/30/43 he bought a "colored English Setter bitch pup," per the receipt at right.

For the December 4, 1943, trip, he had receipt below left, that he stayed at the Waverly Hotel, in Room 54, for 2 nights. This is shown below (from the Internet, from perhaps 1920), at the corner of Queen & Customs streets [it was removed in the early 1960s].

AUCKLAND, N.Z. 4th December to 194

M Lt Bergstrom

DR. TO THE WAVERLEY HOTEL N<sup>o</sup> 5001

Room No. 54 Receipt No.

Date	Bed	Lunch	Dinner	Breakfast	Room
			76		36
			35		126
Board and Rooming					106
Sundries					
TOTAL					

N<sup>o</sup> 5001 Lt Bergstrom 54



Harry Watten,  
Horticulture Keenels,  
218 Greenlane Rd.,  
Epsom,  
Auckland.

Received from Lieut.  
D. J. Bergstrom the sum  
(Ten guineas) £10/10/-  
being payment for Tri  
coloured English Setter  
Bitch pup # Watten  
30/5/43

Guaranteed to replace  
pup if not up to satisfaction  
#W.

**Mount Eden Pioneer Surveyors Memorial Marker** – Bergstrom had the B&W photos below, identifying another site the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> visited, with pilot E Brown navigator RE Johnson, and two friends. The marker's prior plaque has been removed, as shown in the color photo.





**Sydney Flights**  
#3>Brisbane

1	1/7/43	10
2	2/24/43	3
3	3/17/43	4
4	4/22/43	10
5	5/26/43	3
6	7/20/43	3
7	9/27/43	3

**Six Missions to Sydney, one to Brisbane**

Bergstrom had 6 trips to Sydney, and one to Brisbane, listed at right, every month from January to September 1943, except August. Two were 10-day rest leaves. He stayed at the Carlton Hotel, at 56-58 Castlereagh Street, with pilot Baldry. He took the photo above left from the Carlton looking west, of 58-68 King Street, center right (still there), and above right of 58 Elizabeth, also above, titled "Big buildings, too." The Carlton was demolished. Top is Bergstrom with a pipe and phone at the Carlton. This adds a Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> location.

Bergstrom took the photo below left titled "Sydney's not-to-be-photographed bridge." Next is St. Mary's Cathedral in Hyde Park, and the public library. In Hyde Park he saw the Soldier's Memorial, and Captain Cook statue, below. He wrote "Sydney is a city of statues" on that bottom right. He visited Taronga Zoo, and photographed a giraffe, and koala bear.





JOHNSON (Auck.) LTD.  
23 Elliott St. :: Phone 45-568  
AUCKLAND

**Pennant Collection**

In the book on pages 241, 340-343, 358-362, and 364, I show pennants from Cairns, Collart, Larger, Tustin, and Ummel. Bergstrom had the 11 pennants here. One of them had a label on the back, at right, that it was made by Johnson (Auck.) Ltd., 23 Elliot St., Auckland.



## Documents

When I received the box of items from Bergstrom's daughter, Jan, I thought I input all of her dad's flights from his Form 5 into my flight list. Five days after sending out the last newsletter, I was surprised I only input his flights for Oct '42-Jan'43, and not Feb'43-Dec-43. It took 5 hours to input the 11 months February – December 1943. This added details on 24 listings, and added 41 new lines. On 9/15/43 he landed at Guadalcanal's Fighter Strip 2. On 3/14/43, and 4/13/43, he landed at Espiritu Santo's Fighter Strip, presumably Turtle Bay. This may have had the code name Tripoli mentioned in the last newsletter, because he wrote, above right: "Tripoli FS."

The squadron yearbook, Two Years, lists the number of DFCs, Air Medals, and Oak Leaf Clusters for each man, and I have the award orders for many of these, and it is a goal to get all the award orders. Bergstrom had two new ones: USAFISPA General Orders 359, awarding the DFC to Hay, and AM OLC to Bergstrom, Davenport, and Judd, and GO 378, awarding a DFC OLC to Bergstrom, Moritz, and Shook.

In December 1943, the squadron sent six C-47s, each with a 5-man crew, back to the U.S. On December 8, 1943, the day before departure to the U.S., Bergstrom had an Instrument Flying test, with pilot Roger J. Bernard. He passed, and was issued the card at right, shown with both sides. Bergstrom had an order, shown in part below, from Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco, 12/19/43, saying that, having reported in accordance with an order 12/4/43, he would ferry our C-47 41-18578, "Sally," to I ["first"] Troop Carrier Command, at Stout Field, Indianapolis, then go on 25 days leave, before reporting to Miami Beach for redistribution

<p>This is to certify that</p> <p>DON J. BERGSTROM</p> <p>2nd Lieut., A.C. (Name and Rank)</p> <p>AIR CORPS RESERVE OF THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES</p> <p>passed the test in INSTRUMENT FLYING prescribed by W.D., A.A.F. Reg. 50-3</p> <p>APC 708 (Station)</p> <p>December 8, 1943 (Date of Test)</p> <p><i>John P. Remaklus Jr.</i> (Commanding) JOHN P. REMAKLUS JR. Major, Air Corps</p> <p>Form No. 8-B WAR DEPARTMENT</p>	<p>Check Pilot—ROGER J. BERNARD, 1st Lieut., A.C. 12-8-43</p> <p><i>Roger J. Bernard</i> 12-8-43</p>
--	--

Bergstrom was one of our 10 staff-sergeant pilots, who were commissioned overseas. He was awarded the DFC with 1 OLC, and AM with 3 OLCs, and so logged a lot of combat time. His records from Pope and Lockbourne are a big help, as are his many overseas photos. It was great to learn more about him, and add more details to the squadron history.

Thank you to Don Bergstrom for being a pilot in the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS, and to his daughter, Jan, for sharing these items with us.

9. 2ND LT DON J. BERGSTROM, 02042752, AC, having reported ICW Ltr G, HQ USAFISPA, APO 502, dated 4 Dec 1943, for asgmt, is asgd to AAF Redistribution Sta # 2, Miami Beach, Fla. Will ferry aircraft C-47 41-18578 fr this sta to I Tr Car Cmd, Stout Fld, Indianapolis, Ind. Per diem \$7.00 authorized while ferrying aircraft. On the day following day of arrival at Stout Fld, Ind, will proceed to proper sta. A delay enroute of 23 days plus 2 days travel time are authorized. Will be reassgd upon completion of processing at AAFR Sta #2. WP THTPA (Stout Fld, Ind. to Miami Beach, Fla) FSA 1-5250 P 431-01, 02, 03, 07, 08 & 212/40425. Lv address: 718 Hubbard St, Green Bay, Wis. (Auth:Sec 5, WD Cir 127, 1943).



**b. 1943: Letters by Joseph R. LaLonde, Engineer, 6/22/43-9/4/45**

On October 29, 2019, I received a box of original items from the son, Bob, of our aircraft mechanic, Joseph R. LaLonde. I was immersed in preparing the January letter, with the exact roster, and then the May letter, with the flights, but in June finally was able to go over these items. The main item was 123 letters he wrote to his wife, with great excerpts. Bob emailed me write ups of more. Those from 1943 are below. He listed the movies he saw, and these are at right.

New Caledonia	
7/17/43	Hello Frisco, Hello
8/22/43	Stage Door Curtain
9/18/43	Paris Honeymoon.
9/20/43	Aerial Gunner
New Hebrides	
11/4/43	Heaven Can Wait
11/28/43	Alaskan Highway
12/12/43	Unholy Partners
12/20/43	China
12/28/43	So this is Washington
1/20/44	Johnny Come Lately.
1/22/44	Coney Island
1/22/44	Destroyer
1/26/44	Fired Wife
1/28/44	Marie Curie
3/10/44	Paris After Dark
4/27/44	Life of Joseph Conrad [?]
5/16/44	The Bridge of San Luis Rey
5/26/44	Broadway Rhythm
5/28/44	Purple Heart
Biak	
2/13/45	Brazil
3/17/45	Hollywood Canteen
4/9/45	Wilson
5/9/45	The Clock
6/16/45	Tonight and Every Night
7/8/45	The Pillow and the Post
7/10/45	Pan Americana
Dulag	
8/20/45	The Big Sleep
8/28/45	Weekend in the Waldorf

LaLonde (Crew Chief, 6/43-9/45):

7/17/43: "We took a regular hop, and on our return we brought back a band that had been playing up there [on Guadalcanal] for some time. They were a regular looking bunch, but they were Artie Shaw and the troupe.

"We had a nice visit on the way back, as there were some fellows from Michigan I got Artie Shaw's and a Commander's signature on my short snorter. I started mine out when we crossed the equator, and all the signatures I have so far are on a dollar bill. I have several different bills now, and hope to get them signed by other short snorters.

"P.S. Did you get my pennant, with the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> insignia?

8/22/43: "I intend to get up early tomorrow [Sunday], and go to Mass, and then I have an inspection to pull, so will be working. I enjoy flying over here. It's so pretty. You could never imagine such pretty islands.

9/3/43: "It's Saturday night, and we were rationed 3 beers, so I am stretching them, only one at a time. They sure are good.

"I have been working on my plane quite a lot lately, fixing it up, and putting a name on it. Here it is: Sweet Leilani [His letter is below left, and he had the image below right in a frame, so this was painted on by LaLonde around this date, 9/3/43]. It looks better on the ship.

"It's quite famous now, as it has carried some famous people. It also set a new squadron record for hours flown in one month. I am quite proud of it.

9/15/43: "The field here is about six miles away from our camp, and we drive to and from in a truck, it helps cool us off. I had a cold (icy) shower, and then a shave, so I feel pretty good.

"I had a wonderful time last night at the U.S.O. show. 'Little Jack Little' and Ray Bolger [the Wizard of Oz Scarecrow] were there in person. They really cracked some funny jokes, and 'Little' played all the latest tunes on his piano. He was great, but Boy Bolger and his clowns were even funnier. It certainly was a great treat for us all.

9/18/43: "We had six beers tonight, and I have several cooling on a homemade cooler. Gasoline drops over the cans, and they cool. We save the gas, and use it over and over.

*I have been working on my plane quite a lot lately, fixing it up and putting a name on it. Here it is*

♫ ♪ W.F.F.T. LEILANI it looks better on the ship. It's quite famous now as it has carried some famous people. It also set a new Squadron record for hrs. flown in one month. I am quite proud of it.



9/21/43: “Yesterday [Monday, 9/20/43] down on the line in front of one of our planes we had our pictures taken in groups from different states [this provides the date of the state photos, described on page 353], so my picture may be in a Michigan paper.

9/22/43: “We played a few games of cards tonight, Casino.

“I have been reading Dorothy Parker, she’s quite a poetess.

9/26/43: “10,000 feet above Pacific –We are bouncing around like a cork in the ocean; it’s pretty rough sometimes. Was up this morning at 3:30 a.m., nice and early. Yesterday at 1:20 a.m. – some time to get up. I am a little sleepy now, as its just 7 a.m. We are nearing an island, one of the prettiest in this section, lots of nice coconut groves, and green trees, it’s really dense, a real jungle. The shores are pretty, sanded beaches, and white waves over coral reefs. We have landed, and are now sitting on a white coral runway with many tall coconut trees all around.

10/11/43: “Tonight we are having a beer party (stag) celebrating our squadron’s year overseas. If the gang lives up to their name, it should really be a party.

10/25/43: “Came back from a detached service at Guadalcanal for 10 days [10/15-22 with Judd, Leibundguth, A.Cohen, and Reddick]. Flew to Munda or Vella LaVella twice a day. Brought up men and cargo; brought back fighter pilots. Some ships were wrecked, men came in, killed in B-25. Lots of wrecks. Jap planes also. Saw Jap Zeros in water, lots of sunken or beached boats.

“We flew close to the water, and I saw many varieties of fish, including some sharks, and at one time I saw three whales. They were huge monstrosities, and blue, and then they dived into the depths. I shall never forget them. Also saw a lot of natives, some fishing, others in canoes. There were about 16 in each canoe. Also saw millions of fish and lots of new islands that were all very pretty. One night we stopped at [a hamburger shop], and had a steak and French fries. Boy, were they good. We were flying from 4 AM till dark each day.

### **New Hebrides**

10/31/43: “I had some nice ice cream and Coke last night at the Navy store. I ate several dishes of ice cream and it was good.

11/3/43: “Just went to breakfast, had some coffee and French toast; pretty good.

11/7/43: “Last night after supper it was nice and cool, as a breeze was blowing off the bay. I lay in a hammock and watched the planes, and saw some cows that were eating the grass on the edges of the jungle, a real domestic sight.

11/14/43: “Just came back from the PX, bought some Tootsie Rolls, and am eating them. I hope you sent me some chocolate, as we don't get any here now. I did have something nice today - a pint of milk was sure good. Came from one of those foreign countries.

“Tomorrow is Sunday, and I am going to mass at 10 o'clock. They have it here in a long low tent, pretty crowded, about 4 miles from where I live. We go there in a truck.

11/18/43: “Yesterday I washed and it was a big job, hung it up today and it rained. The lines broke, so my things were all dirty again, so I rinsed them off and put the clothes away while they were still wet. I hope they don't mold before the sun shines again. It really rains and rains here.

11/20/43: “We are having late supper tonight, and it's a party. We have a swell colored band playing popular tunes, and a real supper, steak, potato patties, corn (good), tea, peaches, bread and butter, cold ham, cheeses, and beer to drink. Boy was it good. I feel fine now. Had three beers, first since I have been here, and the band played some good pieces, and every once in a while we sang a song including our squadron song. We all had a swell time.

11/23/43: “As usual I worked today in the rain on the ship. It keeps me busy. **They also keep us awake here at night when they run up some of the other planes in front of our barracks. We almost got blown away last night. I woke up and found my bed full of coral dust.**

11/23/43: “I hope to go swimming this afternoon in the nearby river [not found yet]. It's quite hot here and my ship is away for a couple of days so maybe I can get a little rest.

11/26/43: “Just came back from getting some ice cream and a Coke, five cents each. Boy, they were good. Nice and cold. It really helped to cool me off as I was so warm. The Navy ice cream parlor is about five Jeep miles from here, and **the line was only two blocks long, so it was not such a long wait tonight**. Sometimes I think the line never ends, it is so long.

“Yesterday was Thanksgiving. We had a nice supper: turkey, potatoes, beans, pumpkin pie, bread and butter, tea and coffee. Then at night a little stag party, seeing some old buddies off.

11/28/43: “Just came home from the show, we built a new one here, seats, screen, booth and everything. The picture was not so good ‘Alaskan Highway,’ but it at least gave us an evening. It's raining out now, really coming down.

12/9/43: “I have been busy today on our engine change, is quite a job. We had a nice supper – lamb and apple pie were the highlights. Then I took your records over to the day room and played them. I then took apart our phonograph and tried to fix it, but to no avail.

12/12/43: “I went to the 10:30 mass this morning in a little church down at the end of the runway. It was in a tent and quite hot.

12/13/43: “I just returned from getting some ice cream and a soda, it sure was good, really hit the spot. There were nine of us that came home in a Jeep, really a crowd.

12/20/43: “The carpenter built me a place to put my clothes and things today, it's pretty nice.

12/28/43: “Today I had off, so I undertook to do my wash. We have eight gas drums cut in half, with a small gas engine that runs an agitator in the tub, so that it works like a washing machine. I finally got it done, and hung up, had dinner, then went swimming in the afternoon about 12 miles down the road, on a beautiful coral beach, near some small native village. We played ball in the salt water. You could see several small islands nearby. It was real jungle near the shore, and we all had a nice time. When we came home, it rained and I got wet. So did my wash. It is still hanging out, pretty wet. Maybe tomorrow it will be dry.

12/30/43: “Changed the engines on ‘Sweet Leilani,’ and it’s now in good shape. Kelly (asst)

12/31/43: “I will be looking forward to your boxes of stuffed dates and soup.

“I don't care much for prunes. We get them for breakfast here.”

Excerpts from LaLonde’s letters in 1944 and 1945 will be in the next letter.

## **2. History Related Activities**

### **a. New Caledonia Cyclone Damage**

The last newsletter noted a cyclone passed directly over the location of the Lana T, and I expressed optimism that hopefully it did not cause too much damage to the underwater site.

Our colleague in New Zealand, Ewan Stevenson, is a world-class, and world-renowned master of undersea explorations, and also of above ground finding WWII wrecks, and replied to me May 26, with a less optimistic note. He wrote: “The cyclones cause immense damage to shallow sites on exposed reefs. Huge seas, 20 feet high sometimes, sweep over reefs and it’s sad but it does break up and scatter aircraft wrecks. This cyclone also did a lot of damage around Santo.” There may be even less of the Lana T on the reef. (Ewan has website sealark.co.nz)

# The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>

Army Air Corps 13<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 1940 – 1945



## b. Red Circle around Air Corps Star Emblem

In September 2015, I hired RetouchRestore to colorize the Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> website photo, above. There was a circle around the star. I researched the color, and it seemed quite a bright red. It always looks a little odd to me, but that is what I found was correct.

Ewan Stevenson, mentioned in the prior section, sent me a link to his website, Sealark.co.nz, and I read one of his underwater exploration reports, and found the photo above right, of the wing of an R4D (the Marine C-47), which has been underwater for 77 years off of Guadalcanal. To my surprise, it has the same color red. The blue is faded, so perhaps the red faded, too, but the tone of the red is still there, indicating our website photo color is perhaps accurate.

## 3. Members and Relatives

### a. Navigator Hal Richards' (8/43-1/45) Mother Died of Spanish Flu in 1919

In the newsletters I keep the focus on only the squadron, but in my research I learn additional details about the members, which add to the story for me, so I want to share a story about our fourth-longest serving navigator, Hal Richards – that he lost his mother in the last big epidemic.

On March 15, I received an email from the granddaughter, June McNew, of the cousin of the mother of the mother of our navigator Hal Richards, i.e. his 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin. She wrote, in part:

“As a second cousin once removed to Hal Richards, I think I told you of his early history, and with the COVID-19 spread, Hal’s story is even more relevant right now.

“Hal’s mother was May Holcomb, born November 11, 1899, a first cousin to my grandmother. Against her parents’ wishes, 17- or 18-year-old May married Stanley Richards. Family lore says Stanley was in the U.S. military, stationed in Florida. Stanley and May became parents to baby Hal on June 18, 1918. On October 12, 1918, as May and Hal traveled by train from Jacksonville, Florida, to Toccoa, Georgia, May died of influenza—on the train!

“I feel sure the conductor knew where May was to get off the train, so he must have met the family and told them the devastating news. Hal lived with his Holcomb grandparents until he left home to go out on his own. His father, Stanley was visiting at the Holcomb home in Toccoa when Hal was 12 years old, and Stanley died while there.” [so he was an orphan at 12 years old]

## 4. Conclusions

Thank you to Bergstrom’s daughter, Jan, LaLonde’s son, Bob, Ewan Stevenson, and June McNew, for sharing stories and items, advancing the squadron history. With best wishes, Seth