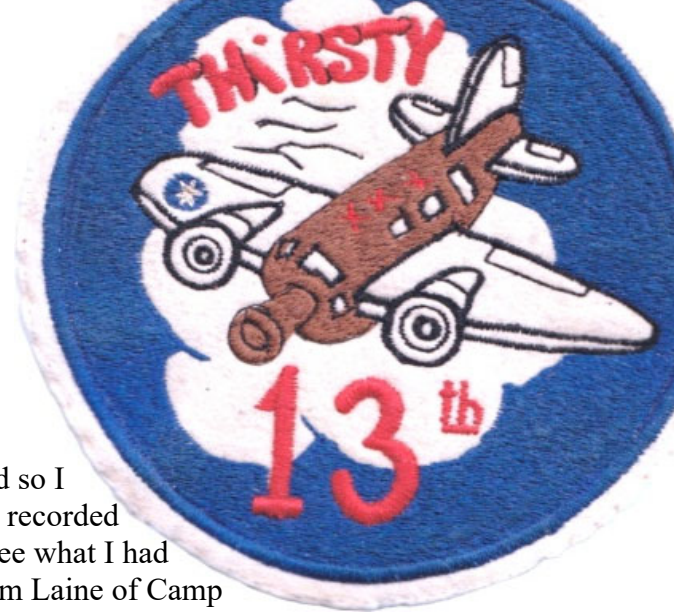


August 2022 Newsletter



Dear Thirsty 13th members, relatives, and friends,

With the June 19 newsletter, Frank Burder’s email failed so I called to check on him June 23 and was happy he was ok. I recorded many stories, on page 4. On July 8, I searched my files to see what I had on LeBlanc to try to find his relatives and found a photo from Laine of Camp Stoneman which confirms that location, on page 2. On July 23, I received an email from the daughter of Moritz inquiring about the squadron patch, and online I found one sold by Dolney’s son. I thought he had no children so made a new effort and connected with 2 of his 3 sons, with stories on page 3. On August 16, J.N. Smith’s son emailed me that his sister shared many photos with him, and he forwarded scans of WWII photos, then mailed me the originals to scan, page 5.

With best wishes,
Seth P. Washburne, Squadron Historian, August 27, 2022

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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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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.



P.F.C. Norman LeBlanc
 Sgt Charles Laine
 Corp Joe Paucek,
 Oct 30, 1942.
 Camp Stoneman
 Calif.

1. Additional History

a. 1942: Camp Stoneman Photos from Laine

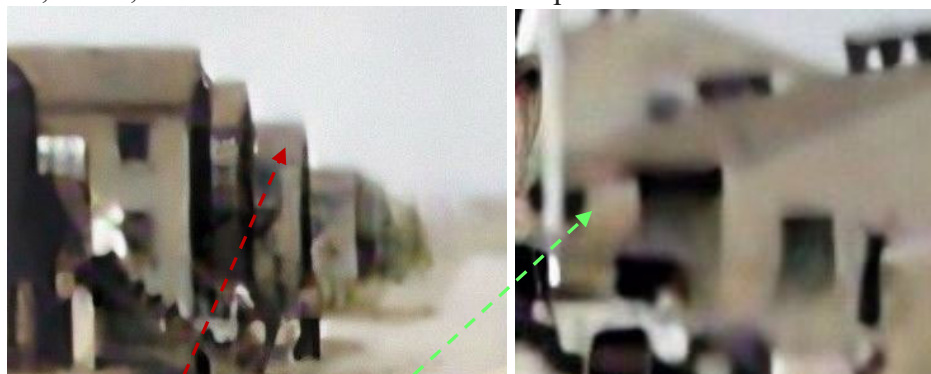
On July 8, I tried again to find relatives of the 168 members for whom I have not contacted a relative and started with Leblanc. I searched my files and was surprised to find the photo above (which I colorized) from Laine, of Leblanc, Laine, and Paucek on 10/30/42 at Camp Stoneman.

In the second November 2017 newsletter, I showed an aerial image of Camp Stoneman from 10/11/47, part of this is below right, and estimated our barracks were where outlined in aqua. The image above is in the direction of the pink arrow, and has two elements, at right, which confirm this location.

On the left are three barracks, outlined in red, the first two close together, as shown in the aerial. On the right is a small building, outlined in green.

Camp Stoneman had seven areas, each centered on a mess hall, and only this area is consistent with our photos. The closest other area, shown below right, differs in these two areas.

Below are Paucek and Leblanc.



Below, another area of the camp had four buildings at the red arrow instead of three and lacked the building at the green arrow.



b. 1942: Stories from Sons of Joseph F. Dolney, Mechanic 6/41-8/43

Dolney (Mechanic, 6/41-8/43, per son Kenneth): “When they loaded the plane to fly to Guadalcanal, they also loaded fuel tanks with the gas to fly back out, because there was no fuel on the island. [in October and November 1942].

“The crew would climb in first, then the loaders would put a torpedo on the plane and anchor it down, and then pack a bunch of small arms ammunition around it.

“The landings at Henderson were tricky. If you came in over the hills you risked being shot by the Japanese, so they landed long, and they ran it out to the end of the strip and had to ground loop it. Or you came in over the water and ground looped it as soon as you could, because the Japanese could hit the south end of the field.

“They sometimes flew without doors because that was extra weight [No one else mentioned this, so perhaps not too often.]

“One story was that they were flying low, and the pilot would see sharks coming, and Dad would sit in the open doorway and use a Tommy Gun on sharks to pass the time.

“He flew with another guy and his nickname was Pasty, his name was Fraser [one of our pilots in 1942-43].

“For a while, [C-47] Chuggar had a purple heart painted just right behind the cockpit window, where it had a shrapnel hit, or something penetrated the skin. They painted a Purple Heart over the patch. The army made them take it off.

“He never talked about it much, only when [having a beer].

“Dad took us [his three children, three boys] for a ride on a C-47 with the Wisconsin Air Guard out at Billie Mitchell Field [Milwaukee Mitchell International now]. He knew someone who knew someone. It was configured in military style with the paratrooper seats.



Dolney (Mechanic, 6/41-8/43, per son Edward): [Dolney is pictured at right from the book’s page 319 in Fiji after his crew was assigned to search for lifeboats and found survivors for two ships.]

“In New Caledonia, a native had a stone axe, and Dad had a survival gear axe which was much better and gave it to the native. The native came back in a week and gave it back.

[Regarding finding the lifeboat survivors:] “He saw a mirror flash [a survival mirror is shown below right, credit Australian War Memorial] on the horizon, but they were already far out, and the pilot said he couldn’t go there. Dad insisted, and they went out to the horizon, and he saw another flash, and had to go out again. They found a large lifeboat a wooden boat, with about 40 or 50 seamen. We used to have a 5” x 7” photo of the men in that boat. No one was waving in the picture, so it must have been taken by another ship that went to get them.

“Later in life, he liked to parachute, and had 300 jumps.”

Thank you, Kenneth, and Edward, for sharing these stories.





c. 1944: Stories from Frank Burder, Pilot, 8/44 -12/44

On June 23, I called and spoke to Frank Burder, one of our last three surviving members. Some of our aircrews landed in Borneo, and I never knew where, and he provided the name.

Burder (Pilot, 7/44-12/44): “Flight officers were short guys, because we looked less impressive. I went overseas with someone the same size as me, and we could wear each other’s clothes. He went to another 403rd unit. John A. Longe from Detroit.

“The crew chief filled out the flight log.

“If I had a co-pilot, I would let him fly and log first pilot time.

“In 1945, I was with the 13th Air Force Fighter Command, and a P-38 went down in Borneo, lost an engine, but landed at Tarakan. This was a very small runway, Tarakan [where the 13th TCS also landed, is shown above in 2012, credit Patrick Kane], one end at the ocean, and the other end had a mountain. You had to land from the ocean to the mountain, because you could not lose altitude fast enough if you came in over the mountain, but when landing toward the mountain you couldn’t go around. At high tide, the water came in and the runway would go underwater. When I got there, I called the tower and asked if it was long enough to land, and they said a C-47 just took off, so I landed.

“I was in a casual camp in Manila when they dropped the bomb in August 1945.

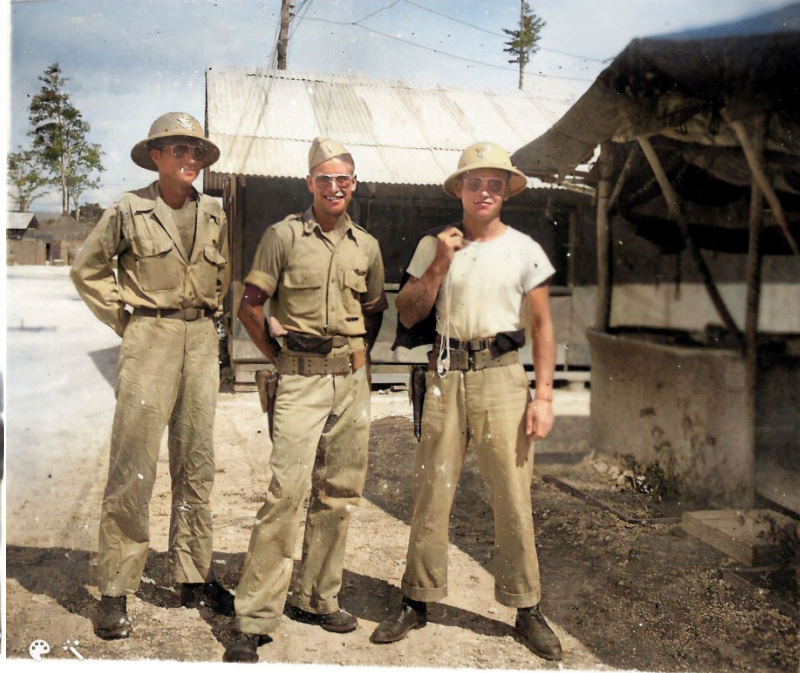
“They gave us the option that if you could form a crew, you could have an airplane and fly home, but I figured I was going to get a war-weary, so took the ship home. The Japs after the war set up a processing plant and turned the old airplanes into beer cans.

“When I came back, I took a class at the General Motors Institute in Detroit in engineering for four years, and Clare Park, the CO in the 13th when I was there, was there taking a dealer management program for 2 years, maybe his dad owned a dealership, and he was there to take a course to learn how to run a dealership. We were not close in the squadron.

“After the war, back in Michigan, I signed up for the reserves. We could fly anything they had there at Selfridge Field, but it was mostly an AT-6. One crashed and killed two pilots, so I stopped going. Finally, because I didn’t answer their mail, I got a letter saying I was being decommissioned. Then the Berlin Airlift happened, and then the Korean War, so it was good I got out when I did.

“Recently the Commemorative Air Force (at) Willow Run flew their C-47 to a nearby airshow. I went with my two boys and grandson, and someone told the pilot I was an ex-C-47 pilot, so they let me come up to the cockpit while we were on the ground and sit in the left seat.”

On July 20, I recorded one hour of stories from Frank, but somehow my recorder did not save it. I hope to try again at some point. Thank you for these stories, Frank.



d. 1945: Photos from John N. Smith, Pilot, 2/7/45 -7/24/45

Above right at Biak is a view east in the front row of the officers' area, of the C.O.'s hut and tent A5. Above left is the view from that tent to the basketball court perhaps on a rainy day. At right is this same tent. Smith's son Michael said his dad is not in these photos. I now estimate that J.N. Smith was in this tent A5. He joined the squadron the same day as McGee, Elwood Anderson, G. Lange, Lindberg, Mariani, and Soderland, some of whom may be tentmates or in these photos.

After five months, Smith was transferred to the XIII Fighter Command at Palawan. The photos at left and below appear to be from Palawan with this next unit. Below right is estimated to be in the Philippines.

Thank you to Smith's son Michael for sharing these.





2. History-Related Activities

a. 1942: Type A-3 Hat

On July 30, Dolney's son Edward called me and told me that reproductions of the Type A-3 hat are sold at website mash-japan-co.jp, and this site has the image above left. He said his dad wore this style of hat (or his original one) for most of his life.

b. 1942: Dolney's Thirsty 13th Patch

Dolney's son Kenneth had his dad's patch, above right. The plane has a straight nose. He wrote: "Mom removed this patch from Dad's jacket after the cuffs wore out and she tossed the A2 in the trash, not knowing that the webbing could be easily replaced. She trimmed off the white felt edge to make it neater before putting it in an envelope in her scrapbook.

c. 1942: DFC Lapel Pin and Air Force Association Pin



Dolney enlisted in 1939 and around 1948 his wife went to an air force base and claimed a lifestyle hardship, not financial, resulting in him having to leave the service. Edward told me: "He wanted to career it. That stuck in his craw. He wore his DFC pin and Air Force Association in the lapel of a blazer he wore to church the rest of his life." Such pins are shown above in near actual size, the DFC pin being 5/8" long.

d. 1942: Lady Eve C-47 in Victory at Sea TV Series

On July 30, Dolney's son Kenneth told me: "In a snippet of footage in the old Victory at Sea series, 'Chuggar' can be seen parked in the background of her sister ship, the 'Lady Eve.'"

Per Wikipedia, "Victory at Sea" was 26 half-hour TV segments broadcast on NBC on Sundays at 3 p.m. from 10/26/52 until 5/3/53. It consisted of black & white footage without sound set to music and a narrator. It was condensed into a colorized film in 1954.

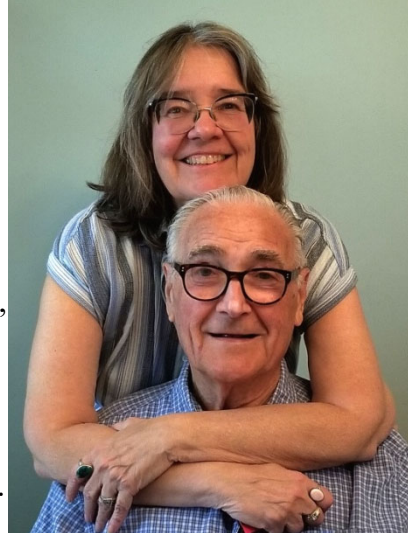
The 26 episodes may all be viewed for free on YouTube. Episode 6, "Guadalcanal," includes C-47 "Lady Eve" at 16:58. A screen shot from this is at right. The pilot is not identifiable. C-47 Chuggar is not visible in this scene.



3. Members and Relatives

a. Lost One of Last Four: George Laycock, Pilot, 6/45-9/45

On June 8, I received an email from the grandson, Todd, of 1945 pilot George Laycock, saying he passed away Memorial Day weekend, May 29, 2022, when 97 years old. He was born 10/7/24, and 21 with us. I enjoyed meeting him, pictured at right with his daughter Phyllis, in Chicago on June 14, 2019.



We have three left: pilots Francis Burder (97, born 12/7/24) and Albert A. Fitzpatrick (97, born 3/25/25) and mechanic Gagliardi (almost 98, born 8/30/24).

b. Connected with the Grand-Niece of Norbert J. Christie, Motor Pool, 2/42-10/44

Norbert J. Christie, pictured at right in September 1943 in New Caledonia, joined the 13th TCS in February 1942, in the Motor Pool, maintaining and driving our trucks. He stayed with us until October 1944, for 2.5 years, and so was one of the main original members. He was from Munger, Mich., near Bay City. He was born 6/14/18, and so was 23 to 26 with us.



I tried on nine occasions from 2015 to 2020 to find a relative. He had two nephews who had passed away and a niece, but I never could find her. In my spreadsheet, at left, he had a red mark meaning no contact, and a black mark meaning I was unlikely to find a relative.

| | Name |
|-----|------------|
| 8 | Last |
| 231 | Automotive |
| 232 | Petry |
| 234 | Myres |
| 235 | Christie |
| 236 | Delaney |
| 237 | Wade |
| 238 | Wilson |
| 240 | Windham |
| 242 | Marceau |
| 244 | Automotive |
| 245 | Price |
| 246 | Chapman |
| 247 | Zdon |

On August 4, I received an email from a Denise who wrote “My great uncle was a member of the Thirsty 13th. His name was Norbert Christie, and he was from Michigan. From what I was told, he died shortly after returning home on an icy highway along with his girlfriend. Very tragic story. I was wondering if you had any other information on him.” It was a thrill to finally connect with a relative of Christie!

On August 12, I emailed Denise 15 documents and a write-up on his service. She has his pennant, at right.



c. Other Activities, Latest Dashboard

On 8/2/22, I sought on Ancestry to find relatives of Clouse, to mail a short snorter with his signature I obtained from Irwin Cohen’s collection in February. I found his daughter.

Our latest dashboard is at right. We added three contacts for Christie, Clouse, and Dolney, one death date, and resting places for Laycock and Abramowitz – kindly shared by his son Moshe. On 8/25 I searched the FindaGrave website for the first time since October 2020 and found graves for 4 others: Beckman, Chambers, Francis, and Levine, and memorial pages for these and 31 others: Barry, Christie, Dammon, DiBias, Elfman, JB Ferguson, Finkbeiner, FJ Foster, Friel, Fuselier, Galant, Hershberg, Lamothe, Laycock, Lund, McDaniel, McNulty, Oehm, Peters, Podolsky, Schissler, Schmitz, Sinclair, Streed, Ulsrud, Watts, Weekley, Weston, Whitehead, Wooldridge and Zarek, added to the Thirsty13th virtual cemetery.

Contacts and Resting Places Found (of 815)

| | 31-Jan-22 | 26-Aug-22 | Add | Need |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----|------|
| Members: | 647 | 78% | 650 | 80% |
| Contacts | 3 | | 3 | 165 |
| Death Dates* | 811 | 100% | 812 | 100% |
| Resting Places* | 751 | 91% | 757 | 93% |
| On FindaGrave** | 558 | 75% | 593 | 80% |
| | | | 35 | 148 |

* Percent and Need exclude 3 living.

** FindaGrave Percent and Need exclude 71 with ashes

4. Conclusions and Thanks

Thank you to Laine for sharing his dad’s photos, to Dolney’s sons for sharing stories, to pilot Burder for sharing stories, and JN Smith’s son Michael for sharing photos. Best wishes, Seth