

# September 2022

## Newsletter



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

On August 26, I reviewed a book I have about the 374<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group and was surprised to find a section about the 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS. The 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS flew to New Caledonia two weeks after we did and seven of their C-47s flew to Guadalcanal in conjunction with us and the Marines. The 374<sup>th</sup> TCG book referenced a book by a 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS pilot, and I ordered it and found many great stories relevant to the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS. Book excerpts are reproduced herein on pages 2 to 7.

The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> had only one fatal accident with passengers. In the book *The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>* on page 271, the passengers are referred to as “13 wounded and 3 others,” plus a doctor. I thought we should learn about them and so found information about them, shown herein on pages 8 to 12.

On September 7, I received a USB drive with photos of our camp area in New Hebrides from my colleague, Ewan Stevenson of Sealark Exploration, Inc., a New Zealand-based search company for servicemembers missing-in-action, from his expedition there July 25, 2022. It is interesting to see what our 1944 camp area looks like today.

In addition, Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> book editor David Colburn shared a fun story.

With best wishes,  
Seth P. Washburne, Squadron Historian  
September 17, 2022

### Contents

<b>1. Additional History</b> .....	2
<b>a. 1942: <i>American Fly-Boy</i> about the 33<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron</b> .....	2
<b>b. 1943: The Seventeen Souls Entrusted to and Lost by the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS</b> .....	8
<b>2. History Related Activities</b> .....	13
<b>a. 1944: Second Overseas Camp in July 2022</b> .....	13
<b>3. Members and Relatives</b> .....	16
<b>a. Lost A Wonderful Person: Stephen Eugene Burris, 1953–2022</b> .....	16
<b>b. Chance meeting of Sons of Pilots Edward Colburn and James Buchen</b> .....	16
<b>4. Conclusions and Thanks</b> .....	16

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, sethpw1@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.

All contents are copyrighted and the property of the originator. No items may be reproduced without permission.

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: *American Fly-Boy* about the 33<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron

On October 4, 1942, the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS departed Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco, to fly to Hawaii and the South Pacific. Exactly two weeks later, on October 18, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron flew the same route to New Caledonia. There, seven of its 13 C-47s were borrowed by the Navy to support the Guadalcanal Campaign.

George Wamsley was a pilot in the 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS and in the group which stayed in New Caledonia and flew to Guadalcanal. He was born in Montana in 1915, and in 1993, at 78 years old, he self-published his early-life and war stories in the book *American Fly-Boy* with the cover above right. He includes excellent insights into what the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS also experienced. I contacted his son, Bill on September 8, and he allowed me to reproduce the excerpts below.

The son of one of our pilots emailed me in June asking if pilots in WWII had a choice of their aircraft assignment, and here Wamsley first explains this. In the book *The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>* on page 37, I note we were given new C-47s to fly to the South Pacific, that had been modified at the Mobile Air Depot, and Wamsley describes some of the modifications made.

**List of Aircraft Preference** (page 52): “About two weeks before our anticipated graduation day from advanced, we were given a questionnaire regarding our preference choices for type of aircraft we would prefer to fly when assigned to a tactical unit. **The Army always wants to know what your choices are so they can assign you to something else.** As far as I know, just about all of our small class of twenty-five or thirty put their choices this way: first choice: fighters; second choice: heavy bombardment; third choice: medium bombardment; others: none.”

**Aircraft Assigned** (page 53): “The graduation ceremonies... The commander made some appropriate remarks and then asked the adjutant to read off the names, with rank and assignments. Prior to my turn, there had been several called with rank of warrant officer and some with rank of second lieutenant, so I had to sweat out fate again.

“Finally, ‘Wamsley, George Walter, Jr., second lieutenant, report to First Troop Carrier Command.’ The base CO pinned on my wings, and I was an officer and a gentleman.

“But what was First Troop Carrier Command? Never had heard of it.”

**Green Card** (page 57): “A pilot qualified for a green clearance card can tell the tower or operations people whether he chooses to fly, or not, in adverse weather. By the time we returned from overseas, we were all green card qualified. And we had learned the hard way.”

**Mobile Depot** (page 60): “A trip to pick up a new airplane from the Mobile, Alabama, Air Depot was another indication of what might be in store. The new planes had a cargo door large enough to accommodate a jeep or a wheeled mortar launcher or to roll out fifty-gallon drums of gasoline, which we did a lot of later on. There were fold-down metal benches that would seat twenty-four butts. A static line ran along the ceiling, which must have meant paratroopers.

“How did we tinkle? A convenient small rubber relief tube was just under each pilot’s seat.

“Another innovative aspect of this aircraft was brackets, just behind the cabin door, that held a weapon clearly marked: ONE ONLY THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN.”

**Sacramento (page 63):** “After fussing and flying formation for a few days around Sacramento, Fresno, and McClellan, the word came to go to Hamilton Field. ‘Send your mother a Western Union, but just tell her you love her. You are on security silence from right now.’”

On *The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>*’s page 39, Zieman said we flew locally at Sacramento, so perhaps to Fresno, too.

**Extra fuel tanks (page 64):** “Somewhere, someone had been experimenting with auxiliary fuel tanks of 100-gallon capacity that were almost leakproof and snubbed to the floor. Place four of these along each side of the cabin and feed a small-bore line to our regular tanks, and all that had to be done was open a valve and the fuel would flow to the wing tanks. That made 1,600 gallons of fuel available [incl. the 800 in the wings], which meant sixteen hours of flying time.

“Just the weight of the fuel and the containers and the cradles was equal to, or more than, the allowable cargo weight according to the technical data we had learned. [Aviation gas weighs 6 pounds/gallon, so 800 gallons was 4,800 pounds, plus the 8 tanks and cradles, which if 50 pounds each would be another 400 pounds, for a total 5,200 pounds added to carry extra fuel.]

“We loaded and loaded until all the space was taken in the cabin but a narrow aisle down the middle to the cockpit.

“Spare engines and radio parts, replacement instruments, ‘no smoking’ signs, one Thompson submachine gun, first-aid kits, a B-4 bag for each crewman’s extra clothing, tool kits, C rations, and other miscellaneous bags, packages, and bundles filled the entire cabin. I took both of my Saint Christopher medals that Aunt Adine had given me as safety insurance before I left Mis-soula. The crew chief found room on his shelf for the case of Ancient Age [bourbon whiskey, a bottle at right], and I hung my .45 pistol and holster on a wire over my head in the cockpit.

“The other significant item added at Sacramento was a daylight navigation aid called a drift meter. Over a large expanse of water, one of us would use the good old drift meter about every twenty minutes and our crab into the wind to compensate would be made. A great navigation aid for daytime. For nighttime, the Saint Christopher medal was called on.”



**Hamilton to Hawaii (p 67):** “At Hamilton Field, a good-looking, young second lieutenant gave us what little information he was privy to.

“The distance from Hamilton to Hickam is right at 2,400 miles. You will be flying individually, not as a formation. Takeoff will be at twenty- to thirty-minute intervals. You will each be assigned an altitude at which to fly. [*He at 8,000 feet. The 13<sup>th</sup> TCS flew in several formations.*]

“The Coast Guard reports no serious weather conditions, but they don’t know beyond 500 miles. There is a radio beam out of Hilo that you might be able to receive an hour or so before you reach the island of Oahu. Maintain Radio Silence.

“We had no navigator. There was evidently a list of crews, which I first saw in 1998.

“Because of the extreme overweight, I wanted as much runway as possible, so I got as far as possible to the starting end. I think the tail wheel must have hung over the runway.

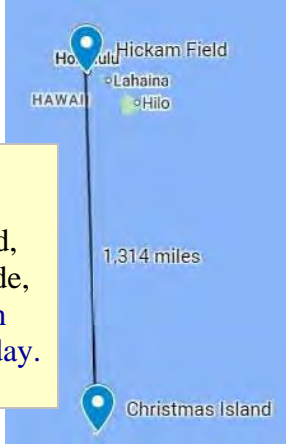
“We didn’t see any other airplane, hear any radio chatter, or even see any ships afloat.

“Our radio operator picked up Hilo’s A-quadrant signal. In Morse code, the A-quadrant is a dot-dash, dot-dash. The N-quadrant is dash-dot, dash-dot. By slightly overlapping those two signals, the sound would be a steady sound, hence it was referred to as the beam.

“Not long after that, three fighter planes from Hickam came out to look us over.

“After an elapsed time of fifteen hours and forty-five minutes, we finally touched down at Hickam Field. We had fifteen minutes of fuel left over. That was ok by me.

“Somewhere along the line, four of the eight extra fuel tanks in the cabin were removed. It was probably done at Hickam.”



**To Christmas Island** (page 70): “I had never heard of Christmas Island when somebody said, ‘That’s where you are headed on the next leg of your journey.’ As small as it was, there was no point in giving us a map of the island, because if you can find the island, you can see the strip, since they are almost the same size. Somebody gave us the longitude, latitude, and the nautical miles as well as the magnetic heading. We logged nine hours on that leg; thus, I presume it was about 1,500 miles. The drift meter got plenty of use that day. “In this area, there was no information about current weather conditions.”

**New Caledonia 10/25/42** (page 78): “Seven planes and seven crews did not depart from Plaine des Gaiacs, PDG [to Port Moresby, New Guinea, the 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS’s destination]. Instead, they were stolen, expropriated, or commandeered by that other branch of the service, the Navy, and that by the man himself, Bull Halsey. He had immediate use for us. He grounded the six planes from our squadron that were [already] at PDG. My Form 5 records show I stayed overnight [at Tontouta] and then went up and joined our guys in the mud of PDG the following day, October 25, 1942.” [and Wamsley’s C-47, too, was borrowed.]

“Six of our planes had scooted out of PDG early enough so that Halsey’s commandeering message didn’t catch them.” [This explains why only 7 C-47s were borrowed.]

**Plaine des Gaiacs** (page 79, the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS’s first overseas base for the air echelon from October 9 to December 14, 1942): “The runways were wet, sticky, slippery red mud most of the time. Army engineers were trying to build a quality runway while keeping the strip open for transient aircraft. There was only a makeshift tower, with very few taxiways and minimal accommodations for planes and crew. And very little military coordination.

“Part of the problem, in retrospect, was that the war was not going too well for our side and was not very far away. The Japanese had significant forces in the Solomons to the north and New Guinea to the northwest, and major facilities in New Britain, while our good old Navy was not yet recovered from Pearl Harbor. Besides, from a political standpoint, this war in the Pacific was still a second-rate war. Congress and the military were still committed to the European theater of operations.

“We were now seven crews without a commanding officer, with no ground echelon. We were fed by some kind of base facility, by furnishing our own mess kit or by the engineers who were also building roads, buildings, and an airport.”

**33<sup>rd</sup> First Flight to Guadalcanal** (page 86): “The weather [~10/27/42] was perfect for flying and clear enough that we found San Cristobal after an hour or so. We proceeded up the northern shoreline [the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS took the southern] until we ran out of island to follow. We moved on over water, nudging left just a little, which was expected to give us sight of Guadalcanal after about an hour. Sure enough, just like the man said, there it was. We went up along the shoreline, about a half-mile out over the water and probably 1,000 feet above. We started looking for Henderson Field right away, even though we were told it would be about 200 miles further on.

“Our anxiety grew, and we moved in a bit closer to shore. As we neared the shore, some strange red lights seemed to be coming up toward us at intervals of about a second or two. Some of those red lights came closer and some even went on by in front of us and overhead. Then we realized that we were being machine-gunned. Every fifth bullet was a tracer.

“I headed out into the ocean right then! I didn’t know how far those guns could reach. Just to be sure, I added about two extra miles, which put us out about four or five miles. Our eyesight got better. If Henderson Field was along that shore, we’d sure as heck find it. [His path, below.]



“Before our ETA was up, I decided to talk to Cactus Tower. By now I really wanted to know if we had friends down there. On the suggested frequency in a clear, calm (with maybe a little swagger) voice I called ‘Cactus Tower, this is Army 634. Over.’ Deadly quiet. Silence. Maybe a little louder and more demanding could help. ‘Cactus Tower. This is Army 634. Come in.’ Nothing. I’d wait a bit. Then, ‘Cactus Tower to unknown ship. Wait.’ came over the speaker.

“I wasn’t too interested in waiting; therefore, I soon came back ‘Cactus Tower. This is Army 634. What is the condition of your field?’ **But by this time my voice was much less macho and about an octave higher.** Still no response. Finally, he came back with ‘This is Cactus Tower to unknown ship...wait.’

“Now we had spotted the airstrip. It was not far in from the shore, but no planes were visible in the air or on the ground. **I have no idea how high-pitched my voice was, but it was probably a squeal and I called out. ‘This is Army 634! We must know the condition of your field!’**

“Nothing. We’d made a couple of circles out over the water, and time was marching on. I could see just a little action down on the strip, a few jeeps and trucks, and by now I could pick out some F-4 planes backed in under the trees. All seemed quiet. No hand-to-hand battles on the strip, no bombs bursting in air, no machine-gun tracers. So, one last try. ‘Cactus Tower. This is Army 634, preparing to land.’ I thought that was pretty good, but it evidently didn’t impress Cactus Tower. No response.

“The wind normally comes in from the water, which means that we would want to touch down at the far end of the field and roll to a stop at the end closest to the water. I started a conventional landing approach as taught in flight school: go downwind... [etc.]

“**We were flying over manned machine-gun emplacements that were pointed at the field. They appeared to turn around and point at us, but no one fired.** After landing and rolling to a stop and snuggling up to the trees, we were greeted by a big he-man husky Marine. I asked him:

“‘Hey, who’s in those foxholes up there?’

“‘That line of them close to the field are ours, and those about a mile back are theirs.’

“A friendly-type Marine led us down a path through the woods about 100 yards off the strip to a lone tent that had about ten folding canvas cots. Just outside the flap was a slit trench that would hold about ten guys. He warned us about no lights, no matches, and no walking around.

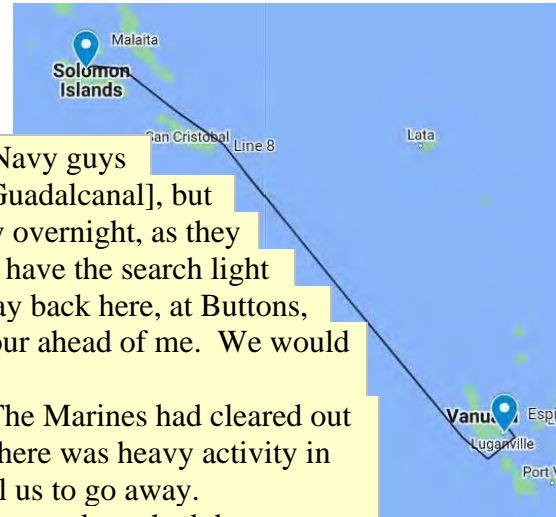
“**‘Snipers show up frequently somewhere within our perimeter,** which incidentally is about two square miles, but mainly they are for harassment and testing our defenses. Don’t fire that pistol,’ he warned me.

“A slow-flying aircraft came cruising over in the middle of the night. We weren’t asleep anyway, but we sure thought we should get in that slit trench. But we didn’t want to be the first ones to hit the dirt, and we couldn’t hear anyone moving around. There wasn’t anyone passing the word to take cover, no air-raided siren.

“We held our ground inside the tent, but we didn’t like it. The plane went back and forth over the field for some time, like an hour, but no bombs were dropped, and no shots were fired from the ground. **This was our introduction to Washing Machine Charlie.**

“Charlie was a devious plan by the Japanese to disrupt our guys on the ground. It didn’t seem to bother the Marines. Once in a while, Charlie would drop a small bomb, but most nights he would just go home after an hour or two over head. When nighttime naval battles were taking place, sometimes as close as four or five miles from the strip, Charlie would not show up.

**First 33<sup>rd</sup> C-47 Lost** (page 90): “When we got back to Buttons the following morning, we found we had lost our first plane. [Wamsley describes a 3 a.m. takeoff from probably Palikulo Bay airfield by his friend, and a wing tip hit a truck, spun the C-47 around and it hit another truck, and then a B-17. The second truck driver died.] Fortunately, all the crew survived.”



**Second 33<sup>rd</sup> C-47 Lost** (page 91): “On November 8 [1942], the Navy guys at Buttons said things were pretty tight at Cactus [Henderson Field, Guadalcanal], but we should take a load anyway. They said Cactus wouldn’t let us stay overnight, as they didn’t want any planes on the strip. The Navy guys also promised to have the search light on and to have a few vehicles with lights along the sides of the runway back here, at Buttons, in case we returned during the night. Hensman took off almost an hour ahead of me. We would both be returning to Buttons around midnight, we thought.

“The formalities of landing at Cactus had been modified some. The Marines had cleared out most of the Japanese between the strip and the water, but not all. If there was heavy activity in the immediate area, they would call us as soon as they saw us and tell us to go away.

“When we got there, we made a straight-in approach from the water and touched down on the very first part of the strip. The Marines waved us to come to one end, and we did.

“Hensman had been there, unloaded, and taken off [at 7:55 p.m.] toward the water. He was shot down by ground fire about the time he reached the shoreline and crashed into the water. I remember it as being only a mile or maybe two miles from the shore at most. There were no survivors. We lost four good people [two staff-sergeant pilots, a mechanic and radio operator].

**Night Search Light on Espiritu Santo** (page 91): “By the time we unloaded, it was almost getting dark. One of the Marines on the unloading detail told me Hensman had made a gradual right turn just after takeoff, and suggested I not make a right turn until after we got over the water. I did him one better. After a maximum climb takeoff, I edged off toward the left and got as high as I could as fast as I could. We saw no indication we were being shot at, so after a few minutes we headed into heavy rain in the direction of Buttons. [His estimated path above right.]

“It was dark. The rain was steady, but the air was not rough. The windshield leaked, so our pant legs got wet, but that didn’t bother us at all. That searchlight [at Espiritu Santo] was a real worry, though. We had no idea whether we were being blown to the left or to the right; thus, when we were about one hour out, we decided to go down low over the water in hope of seeing waves or land. Occasional breaks in the clouds gave us an occasional peak at the water, but we couldn’t see it plain enough through our drift meter to determine any amount of wind effect.

“As we continued to use up our estimated time to the island, I kept feeding in just a little bit of right correction. There was a small mountain, about 3,000 feet high, on the north end of the island [Espiritu Santo], and that was on the left. As we were about 400 to 500 feet above sea level, the danger of getting close to that mountain became more and more apparent. No panic, yet, but plenty uncomfortable. The rain became less severe, but we were still over water, and we estimated our time was running out. It ran out. Still over water. Still no searchlight.

“I decided to overrun the same heading before admitting we were lost. As we edged close to twenty minutes remaining, allocated by guess, we were all four with our noses forward and eyeballs looking harder than we had ever looked before. We had about two hours of fuel left, and no place to go except to that searchlight.

“At ETA plus twenty minutes, we started our search pattern of circling left with gradually increasing circles. We were hoping to see any shoreline for a more favorable place to ditch if necessary or the light beam or anything except the 3,000-foot-high mountain.

“Before we completed the first circle at about 500 feet altitude, there, just outside the window by my left elbow, was that beautiful searchlight. It could hardly be seen in the rain, and I bet only shone through about 1,000 feet of clouds, instead of 20,000, as the guy had told me. But the field was also about twenty minutes or about fifty miles farther than planned, and definitely off to the left some distance. It was a pretty sight at just about midnight.

“Chalk up another for Saint Christopher.”



**The Metal Barracks** (page 80): “The only good thing I can recall happening at PDG took place on a miserable, rainy evening in our warehouse – pardon me, our tin barracks. [*The many barracks are shown above, and the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS air echelon, above, was in one for two weeks.*]

“We had plenty much mud on the floor, some army cots, a few benches, and a couple of tables. The three sixty-watt lamps hanging from the ceiling barely shone through the dust.”

[Bill Henry, a columnist for the Los Angeles Times, returning from Australia to Los Angeles, stopped at PDG for fuel and planned to continue to Fiji, but was socked in with heavy rain.

A captain drove him and eight Navy officers to “one of a series of long, sheet-iron buildings.” A 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS pilot recognized Henry leading to a nice evening and a frontpage LA Times article, included at the end of this letter, on March 23, 1943, about their encounter. This was a night or two before the 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS left New Caledonia, as Bill Henry wrote he saw them take off.]

**The Five 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS C-47s left November 27** (page 96): “I was back on Guadalcanal November 18. In the following week or so we seemed to pick up more rumors that the battle for the Solomons was about over. We also heard rumors that significant reinforcements would be coming into Tontouta and that this might be an auspicious time for our five crews to head for Australia and on to New Guinea to join the rest of our squadron. Because we had no written orders keeping us in the Solomon area, we surely didn’t need any definite orders, verbal or written, in order to sneak off to Brisbane. That’s what we decided we would do just as soon as we were sure that several contingents of reinforcements had arrived in Tontouta.

“We could truly say we had worked alongside such heroes as Halsey, Vandegrift, General Holcomb, and pilots such as Pappy Boyington, Joe Foss, and Indian Joe Bauer (who was shot down and killed in aerial combat over Henderson Field on November 14, 1942).

“Just before the end of November, a sizable contingent of reinforcements began arriving at Tontouta. That was our agreed upon sign to get out of this hellhole. We fueled up and refused to let anyone put supplies aboard. We came from wherever we were to PDG.

“The next morning, November 28, 1942, bright and early, we took off singly and headed for Brisbane. We presumed the actual line of demarcation between the South Pacific Command under Halsey and South West Pacific Command under General MacArthur would be the halfway line between New Caledonia and Australia. Since we estimated a six-and-a-half-hour flight to Brisbane, that line should be three and a quarter hours out of PDG. When we reached the halfway point and had not been shot down for being AWOL or some other criminal act, we set up a joint holler: ‘So long, Solomons; hello, Brisbane!’

“We presumed we’d get billeted in a nice metropolitan hotel, with baths and food from a menu and handshakes of congratulations from dignitaries for a piece of a job well done. Nope. We landed at Amberly Field [an RAF Airbase 30 miles west of Brisbane] and were told to go right on to Archer Field [10 miles south of Brisbane] and then on to Port Moresby tomorrow morning. So much for the bright lights of a big city outside the combat zone.”

Since at least 2010 I have known that some 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS C-47s joined us in flying supplies to Guadalcanal in 1942, and George Wamsley’s stories provide a great first-hand account about the 33<sup>rd</sup> TCS’s effort, and about the dangers of flying to Guadalcanal. Thank you to George for writing this, and to his son, Bill, for allowing this reprint.

## b. 1943: The Seventeen Souls Entrusted to and Lost by the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS

On January 13, 1943, at 6:30 a.m. or 8:30 a.m., a 13<sup>th</sup> TCS C-47 with a crew of 5, plus 13 wounded, 3 others, and a doctor, 17 passengers, took off from Guadalcanal to Espiritu Santo or Efate in New Hebrides, at right. They were never heard from again.

The pilots were Neal Allen and Louis Nelson, and this is described on the book's page 271. There was a weather front along their route with low ceilings and thunderstorms. The 13<sup>th</sup> TCS had four crashes with fatalities, but only this one fatal crash with passengers.

War deaths are not fun to consider but we owe it to those whose deaths we caused to remember them. On August 29-31 and September 9-11, I looked into the seventeen lives.

The 17 fatalities were six from the Army's 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, ten from the Americal Division, and one doctor from the 801<sup>st</sup> Medical Evacuation Squadron which flew with us. Of the sixteen, excluding the doctor, one report said 13 were wounded and 3 were not.

### Background on the Guadalcanal Campaign

The Guadalcanal Campaign had dates August 7, 1942, through February 9, 1943, six months. The U.S. suffered 7,100 dead and 7,789 wounded. The Japanese suffered 8,500 killed in combat, 10,700 died from wounds, illness, and starvation, and had 10,652 evacuated and 1,000 captured.

The first two months of battles were almost all by the Marine 1<sup>st</sup> Division under General Vandegrift. In October 1942, Army units started relieving the Marine 1<sup>st</sup> Division.

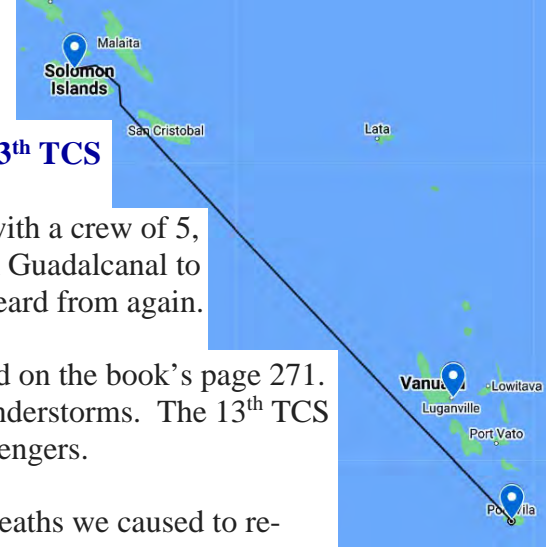
The first Army infantry to see action in World War II was the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the Americal Division, which was activated May 27, 1942, on New Caledonia. Its name is a contraction of "American New Caledonian Division." It consisted of three National Guard units, the:

- 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from North Dakota – ashore October 13, 1942, on Guadalcanal
- 182<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment from Massachusetts – ashore November 12, 1942
- 132<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment from Illinois – ashore December 8, 1942

On December 9, 1942, US Army Major General Alexander Patch succeeded Marine General Vandegrift as commander of Allied forces on Guadalcanal. **Patch was ordered to eliminate all Japanese forces remaining on Guadalcanal.** He believed he needed more troops and so Millard Harmon, who commanded all US Army forces in the South Pacific, ordered the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, in Hawaii enroute to the South Pacific, to go to Guadalcanal. The 25<sup>th</sup> had two units:

- 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment – went ashore December 17, 1942
- 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment – went ashore January 1, 1943

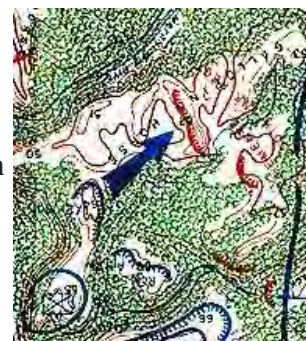
The Marines 2<sup>nd</sup> Division arrived in January 1943 and the US had more than 50,000 men on Guadalcanal. The main areas to be cleared were Mount Austen, and an area west of Henderson Field, the Matanikau River area. The wounded men we flew fought in battles for hills in the Matanikau River area and protected Henderson Field.





## The Battle for the Galloping Horse

On January 10, 3 days before our morning flight, the 25<sup>th</sup> Division's 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the most newly arrived, began the fight to take hills which on a topographical map when viewed upside down as shown at right resembled a Galloping Horse (ref: Wikipedia). This battle continued January 11-12, and concluded January 13, after our C-47 took off that morning. The Japanese had 170 killed, and the Americans less than 100. We flew four wounded of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, who likely fought in this battle.



## The Battle for the Sea Horse

On January 10, the 25<sup>th</sup> Division's 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment began the fight to capture an area which on a topographical map viewed upside down, at right, looked like a sea horse. The hills here were taken on January 11, 2 days before our flight. On January 12, the 35<sup>th</sup> moved west toward the Galloping Horse to support that battle. They secured the area by January 15, with 558 Japanese dead. On January 13 morning, we flew two wounded from the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment who probably fought in these battles.



During these two operations, the Americal Division's three regiments, which had fought for months on Guadalcanal, were assigned to guard the perimeter around Lunga Point, the airfield. We flew 9 men from the Americal Division's infantry units, and one from its medical unit.

Below is a list of the 17 men we transported, and the 17 souls we lost. In November 1943, the Army created the Combat Infantry Badge for any infantryman who fought in active ground combat while assigned to an infantry unit after December 6, 1941. A draft of a letter June 28, 1948, noted that this badge was awarded in 1944 to the 8 men with red stars. One report stated 13 were wounded and 3 were not wounded. This includes 3 officers (other than the doctor). The average age is 25.6. The youngest were 20, 21, and 23. I found photos online of seven of the seventeen.

### 13th TCS Non-Member Deaths - in Reverse Order Arrived on Guadalcanal

#	Unit	Rank	Last	First and Middle	Born	Age	Lived in 1942	Ht	Wt	Serial No.
<b>25<sup>th</sup> Division:</b> The 27 <sup>th</sup> arrived Guadalcanal January 1, 1943, the 35 <sup>th</sup> arrived 12/17/42										
1	27th Infantry Regiment	Pvt	* Isom	John P	8/18/17	25.4	Hackleburg AL	not found		6390301
2		Pfc	* Jecker	Joseph Edward, Jr	10/16/22	20.3	Holyoke MA	5'6"	119	11008719
3		Pvt	* Shrewsbury	Ernest F.	2/17/13	29.9	Peach Bottom PA	not found		7020725
4		Pvt	* St. John	Fred Joseph	9/16/18	24.3	Danielson CT	5'3"	125	31023414
5	35th Infantry Regiment	2nd Lt	Asal	Jack Marion, Jr.	1/23/16	27.0	Butte MT	not found		0-416670
6		Pfc	* Bland	Leland Stanford	12/15/21	21.1	Elkview WV	6'2"	144	15019083
<b>Americal Division:</b> The 132 <sup>nd</sup> arrived 12/8/42, the 182 <sup>nd</sup> arrived 11/12/42, the 164 <sup>th</sup> landed 10/13/42										
7	132nd Inf., Ill.	Pfc	Collalti	Robert Frederick	11/1/19	23.2	Stephenson IL	5'3"	126	36030263
8	182nd Inf. Regiment	1st Lt	Crane	Robert S.	1/28/19	24.0	Manchester MA	not found		0-422139
9		Sgt	Scully	Gerald Ward	6/25/18	24.6	Canton MA	5'11"	163	31019440
10	Massachuset.	Pfc	* Cote	Maurice Ferdinand	10/2/15	27.3	Haverhill MA	5'9"	150	31018172
11	164th Infantry Regiment	2nd Lt	Pfaff	Lester Russell	3/10/19	23.9	Valley ND	5'7"	140	01698125
12		Tec 4	Krawczyk	Joe A.	4/2/11	31.8	Fried ND	5'5"	172	20710307
13		Pfc	Sygulla	Alex George	4/3/15	27.8	Golva ND	5'5"	145	37028297
14	North Dakota	Pvt	* Ruth	Harold Charles	12/1/18	24.1	Galt CA	5'8"	142	39082561
15		Pvt	* Sharrock	Jack A.	4/11/21	21.8	Beatrice NE	6'1"	200	20721948
16	101st Medical	Pfc	Champagne	Edward Stephen	10/1/14	28.3	Pawtucket RI	5'8"	157	31037101
17	801st MAES	1st Lt	Hall	Burton Adam	11/28/12	30.1	Philadelphia PA	5'6"	142	0483015

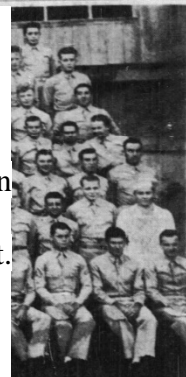
\* Posthumously Awarded the **Combat Infantry Badge** Ave age: 25.6

NEWS OF MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS STATIONED IN HAWAII

**The Seventeen Non-13<sup>th</sup> TCS Lives Lost by the 13<sup>th</sup> TCS**

27<sup>th</sup> Division - 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment – they fought for the area called the Galloping Horse

1. **John P. Isom (8/18/17)** – John, at left, was 25, from just north of Hackleburg, Ala., 100 miles NW of Birmingham, Ala. A newspaper, below, from 1/14/37, stated Isom at 19 was in the Army, at Fort Benning, Ga. An article 9/7/40 had him at Schofield Barracks, Wheeler Field, Hawaii, promoted to corporal with the 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry, and 8/10/41 promoted to sergeant. The photo at left was in a Honolulu paper, above and right, December 6, 1941. I could not determine his relatives.



Mr. John P. Isom, of Fort Benning, Ga., is spending a few days here with home folk.

2. **Joseph Edward Jecker, Jr. (10/16/22)** – Joe was the youngest, at 20 years old, and lived at 7 Myrtle Ave., Holyoke, Mass., far right, an only child. The newspaper near right noted he was missing. His father, Joseph Sr., born 1893, died Dec 21 '43 of a heart attack. His mother, born 1897, died in 1949. His father was the youngest of six children, his mother the oldest of four, so he probably had cousins. **By May 31, 1943, Holyoke had 21 men who had died in WWII.** Jecker is remembered on his parents' tombstone, at right.

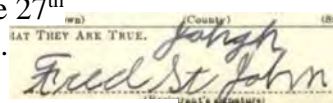
**HOLYOKE SOLDIER MISSING**  
 HOLYOKE — Pvt. Joseph E. Jecker, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Jecker, 7 Myrtle street, is missing in action in the South Pacific, according to a telegram received from the war department Sunday by his family.  
 Pvt. Jecker enlisted in the army June 13, 1941. After a short stay at Ft. Slocum, N. Y., he was sent to Hawaii. He was stationed at Schofield barracks during the Jap attack Dec. 7, 1941 and some time later won his first stripe. The family last heard from him two weeks ago.



3. **Ernest F. Shrewsbury (2/17/13)** – Ernest was 29, born in West Virginia, living in Peach Bottom, Pa., on the Susquehanna, River just north of the Maryland border. He enlisted around Monday, January 15, 1940, eleven months before Pearl Harbor, and was in L company. The 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry was at Wheeler Field when bombed December 7. I identified no relatives.



4. **Fred Joseph St. John (9/16/18)** – Fred was 24, and lived at 28 Mechanic St., Danielson, Conn., 50 miles east of Hartford. In June '41 he was in the 169<sup>th</sup> infantry, Co. L. I found no relatives.



35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment – they fought for the area called the Sea Horse

5. **Jack Marion Asal, Jr. (1/23/16)** – Jack was born in Iowa. An article, with the photo at right, stated he lived in Butte, Mont., from 8 years old, and graduated from Montana State University in Pharmacy. He was a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant officer perhaps in a medical role. His mother had remarried W.S. Hickey and ran the Fox Hotel in Butte, and his father lived in Cascade, Mont., 130 miles NW. He had a sister 8 years younger, Mary Jane, 1924-1975, who married, but I did not note any offspring, or any nephews or nieces for Jack.
6. **Leland Stanford Bland (12/15/21)** – Leland just turned 21. He was from Elkview, W.Va., 15 miles NE of Charleston W.Va., and his prior occupation listed as a farm hand. He was the youngest of eight children, 21 years younger than the oldest.

MONTANA STANDARD, BUTTE,



Private Leland S. Bland, Charleston, W. Va., was reported missing

Americal Division - 132<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment - Illinois

7. **Robert Frederick Collalti (11/1/19)** – Robert was 23, and lived at 329 West Carpenter St., Freeport, Ill., thirty miles west of Rockford, in the house at right. The article below says he had been wounded. His father operated a shoe repair shop in town. He had four older and five younger siblings.



**Robert L. Collalti  
 Now Reported Dead  
 By War Department**

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Collalti, 329 West Carpenter street, received a letter recently from the war department stating that their son, Private, first class, Robert L. Collalti, 22, is now presumed to be dead.

The communication stated that Pfc. Collalti had been wounded in action on Guadalcanal in February, 1943; that he was being taken to a hospital base in the New Hebrides Islands by plane, but that the plane failed to arrive at its destination. In accordance with federal law the date of presumed death was set one year later, as of February, 1943.

Pfc. Collalti entered the service in January, 1942, and for six months was stationed at Camp Forrest, Tenn., before being assigned to overseas duty. He was a former Freeport high school student. His father operates a shoe repair shop on South Van Buren avenue. Pvt. Collalti was awarded the Purple Heart, which was received last week by his parents.

1st Battalion cadet officers are commanding officer, cadet Maj. Theodore R. Laputka, Hazleton, Penn; adjutant, cadet 1st Lieut. Robert S. Crane, Manchester;

**OBE** OCTOBER 25, 1941  
**69 New Second Lieutenants Strengthen Yankee Division**

182nd Infantry Regiment – A Massachusetts National Guard Unit

8. **Robert S. Crane (1/28/19)** – Robert was 23 years old, from Manchester, Mass. A Boston Globe article states Boston University started an Army Reserve Officers Training Corps course during WWI. Crane on 11/4/40 was an adjutant cadet in ROTC. On 6/9/41 he received a certificate Bachelor of Science in Journalism at Boston University, with a commission as a 2nd lieutenant of Infantry in the Officers' Reserve. On 10/8/41 he went on active duty with the 1st Division at Fort Devens, Mass. On 10/24/41, per the article above right, he was transferred to the 26th Infantry Division, and its 182nd Infantry Regiment. On 1/14/42 the 182nd was sent to New Caledonia, nine months before we arrived. His mother lived until 1965; his father until 1975. He had a sister Marjorie (1917-2007) two years older, who lived until 2007.

9. **Gerald Ward Scully (6/25/18)** – Gerald volunteered in February 1941. He lived at 25 Rockland St., Canton, Mass. His father passed away in 1947 at 72. His mother in 1965 applied for the headstone at right for St. Mary's Cemetery in Canton, Mass. She died in 1972. He had a twin sister, Geraldine (1918-2005) who married but had no children.



*Maurice F. Cote*

10. **Maurice Ferdinand Cote (10/2/15)** – Maurice, at left, was 27 years old. He was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge. He lived at 3 Walnut St (no longer there), Haverhill, Mass., 35 miles north of Boston. He was the oldest child. His father passed away in 1957, his mother in 1967. He had brothers Andrew (1917-2007) and John (1924-1995), and sisters Corrinne (1918-2003) and Marguerite (1923-1988), and at least nine nephews and nieces.

164th Infantry Regiment – A North Dakota National Guard Unit

11. **2nd Lt. Lester Russell Pfaff (3/10/19)** – Lester was 23, lived in Valley, North Dakota, 65 miles west of Fargo. He is shown at right. His father passed away in 1955 at 67 and his mother in 1970 at 77. He had brothers Leo (1917-2006) and Wallace (1921-2003), and sister Pearl (1924-2006).



12. **Joseph Adam Krawczyk (4/2/11)** – Joe, at left, was the oldest, at 31.8. Joe was born in Poland, and lived in Fried, North Dakota, 100 miles west of Fargo. He had three brothers and six sisters.



13. **Alex G. Sygulla (4/3/15)** – Alex was 27, from Golva, ND, current population 88, on the border with Montana. His draft registration form is at right. His pre-war occupation was listed as a self-employed farmer. He had three younger brothers: Edward (1916-1991), Anton (1919-1928), and Joseph (1921-2006). No family members have been identified.

SERIAL NUMBER 79	1. NAME (Print) ALEX GEORGE SYGULLA	ORDER NUMBER 56
2. ADDRESS (Print) (Number and street or R. F. D. number) Golva Golden Valley N.DAK.	3. PLACE OF BIRTH (Town) (County) (State) Golva Golden Valley N.DAK.	
3. TELEPHONE	4. AGE IN YEARS 25	5. DATE OF BIRTH MAY 3 1915
6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP USA.	7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS (Mr., Mrs., Miss) (Last) (First) (Middle) GEORGE F. SYGULLA	
8. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON (Number and street or R. F. D. number) Golva Golden Valley N.DAK.	9. EMPLOYER'S NAME SELF	
10. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS (Number and street or R. F. D. number) FARMER Golva Golden Valley N.DAK.	11. I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.	
REGISTRATION CARD 47-20, 21, FORM 1 (over)	10-17108 Alex Sygulla (Registrant's signature)	

14. **Harold Charles Ruth (12/1/18)** – Harold was 24. He was born in Montana, but when he registered for the draft December 16, 1940, was living with his dad (and perhaps mother and brother) in Galt, California, 25 miles south of Sacramento. He had one sibling, a brother, Glen, 3 years younger, who died in 2016 – and was probably missing his brother until 6 years ago. He was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge.

—Associated Press Wirephoto.  
**ARMY REPORTS TWO MISSING**  
 Two northern Californians were listed yesterday, among 110 men, from thirty-five States, reported by the War Department to be missing in action in the Pacific.  
 Private Harold C. Ruth, the address of whose mother, Mrs. Charles Ruth, is listed as Box 486, Route 2, Galt, Sacramento County, was listed missing in the South Pacific.  
 In the southwest Pacific, Sergt. Raymond J. Fennell, Jr., whose

# 3 Local Boys Missing In Action

Three Beatrice youths, two of them brothers, are missing in action as the result of recent army and naval engagements in the Pacific battle area, according to official word reaching their parents over the weekend.

They are Raymond and Jewell Floyd, both shipfitters first class in the navy, sons of George Floyd, 124 South 23rd; and Cpl. Jack A. Sharrock of the army, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ira F.

Sharrock, 818 South 8th. Word from the navy department reached Floyd Saturday afternoon; The Sharrocks were advised in a telegram from the war department Sunday morning.



15. **Jack A. Sharrock (4/11/21)** – Jack was 21. He was from Beatrice, Neb., in the SE corner. His 1939 high school photo is at right. An article Monday, February 8, with the headline above states he lived at 818 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, the house

no longer there. His parents were notified he was missing by telegram on Sunday morning, February 7, and the War Dept release was February 13, 1943.

The article above said in high school he was an outstanding football player. He joined the Nebraska National Guard, and served in Beatrice's Company C. After the unit was mobilized and reached California, he volunteered for overseas duty. He had a sister 14 years older (1907-1992), and nieces Betty (1926-2001) and Donna (1927-1988) and a nephew Richard (1929-1960), 5-8 years younger than him.

## 101<sup>st</sup> Medical Regiment

16. **Edward Stephen Champagne (10/1/14)** – Edward was 28 years old and lived at 59 Blodgett Ave, Pawtucket, RI in the house at right. He was with the 101<sup>st</sup> Medical Regiment and 52<sup>nd</sup> Field Hospital attached to the Americal Division. His parents were Francis R (1884-1951) and Kathrine (1886-1974). He had siblings Mary C. (1915-1988), Paul L (1923-2012), and David (b 11/16/29).



*Edward Stephen Champagne*  
(Registrant's signature)

## 801<sup>st</sup> Medical Air Evacuation Squadron

17. **Burton Adam Hall (11/28/12)** – Burton was 30 years old, had graduated from Drexel University's Hahnemann Medical School in 1938, as a doctor. Also in 1938 he married Isabella M. Crowder (1914-1969). They had a son. They lived at 5000 Walnut St., Philadelphia, in the house at right. He was with the 801<sup>st</sup> MAES and is shown at left. He was the first flight surgeon from the School of Air Evacuation lost in action in the South Pacific area.



## Summary

*Burton A. Hall M.D.*  
(Registrant's signature)



The 13<sup>th</sup> TCS from 10/42-10/45 flew 97,174 passengers, including 12,169 evacuees. In January 1943 we flew 501 evacuees, 17 per day. These were our only passenger losses, but they had relatives who grieved for them for the last 79.5 years. They are no longer remembered as only 17 fatalities but now with their background. The first 16 fought in the infantry for the U.S. and us.



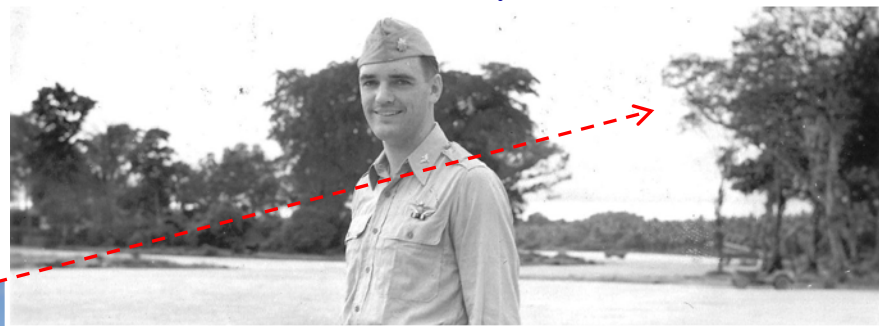
## 2. History Related Activities

### a. 1944: Second Overseas Camp in July 2022

On June 20, my colleague, Ewan Stevenson, who lives in New Zealand and is a director of MIA search company Sealark Exploration Inc., emailed me he planned to be in “Santo,” i.e., Espiritu Santo, in July. Since 2008, I have dreamed of visiting there, to see what our 1943-1944 camp looks like now. Ewan offered to take photos if I could make a screenshot of Google Earth and show where and in which direction I would like a photo, and I emailed him such a screenshot. Ewan visited Santo July 24-August 1, photographed our area on Sunday, July 25, mailed me a USB with the photos, movies, and other items on August 14, and I received this on September 7.

Above is the view across the parade ground to the barracks in 1944 and 2022. In 1944 there were many large trees and no low shrubs, and now there are few tall trees and many low shrubs.

At right and below is the view east on the parade ground. The tree at the red arrow is in the same location in 1944 and 2022 and may be the same tree. In the grass at the blue arrow is a prior road, perhaps aligned with the prior taxiway.





Above is the view east on our Squadron Street in 1944 and 2022, at the same point in the road. The 1944 photo has rocks around a ditch dug for a bomb shelter. I thought the ground was coral, such that this indentation would still be discernible, and asked Ewan to please look for this. Ewan was great to walk back into the brush for about 30 feet on each side of the road but did not find it. The ditch seems to have been dug in dirt and filled in with dirt so is no longer detectable. Most of the tall trees are gone. Below is the view west on this road, now with a few palm trees.

I added Ewan's movies to the [Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup> website](#); #15 is landing at Pekoa, #16 is the parade ground.





The 13<sup>th</sup> TCS from October 1942 until August 1944 made many flights from Vanuatu island Efate to Espiritu Santo. Ewan flew this on July 25, 2022, and took the photo inset above right of the pilots' GPS map, showing that after takeoff this was 116 nm. Above is the view from the red arrow toward Malakula Island. Below is Aore Island, the view to the left when approaching to land to the NE at Pekoa. Below this is the view approaching Pekoa Airfield, the green area.



Sealark Exploration, after years of research by Ewan, found in the Second Channel, the water by the blue arrow, above, using side-scan sonar, a Grumman Wildcat F4F and a Grumman J2F-5 Duck. Below right are Sealark directors Ewan Stevenson, on the left, and CDR. Matt Wray, RNZNR, a commander in the New Zealand Navy Reserves.

A beach at Port Lautour on the south coast of Aore Island



### 3. Members and Relatives

#### a. Lost A Wonderful Person: Stephen Eugene Burris, 1953–2022

In my March 2017 newsletter, I listed 33 officers for whom there was more than one person with same name in the same age range so I could not identify which one was ours. In December 2017, I received an email from Steve Burris, at right, and he wrote that he had created a database of 290,000 Army Air Corps officers in WWII, and had seen my newsletter list, and thought he could help us.



Steve identified many officers who I otherwise may never have identified, which was a thrill. On August 27, I received an email from his brother, Will, that Steve died July 25, 2022. Steve was a wonderful person for whom we all can be very thankful. Godspeed you, Steve.

#### b. Chance meeting of Sons of Pilots Edward Colburn and James Buchen

After the last newsletter, I heard from David Colburn, son of 1944-45 pilot Colburn, and editor of the book “The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>.” David made hundreds of edits to the book’s text and photos. He is now a reporter for a weekly newspaper in Tower, Minnesota. He wrote:



Colburn (Pilot 12/44-9/45) Son David: “On Saturday, June 11, I was over in Cook, Minn., (population 500) covering the annual Timber Days festival. That same day over at Fortune Bay Casino Resort was a vintage foreign car show. I wasn't sure if Jodi, the co-owner of the paper, was going to go to or not, so I hopped in the truck and drove over to Fortune Bay.

“I have three different bags I'll use to carry camera stuff in, depending on what lenses I want to have on hand, and I had a couple bags with me in the truck as I pulled into the Fortune Bay lot and parked. Thought about the black backpack but decided I could get by with the green canvas shoulder bag. It's the one that I sewed one of Dad's Thirteenth Air Force patches on.

“I check out the car show, then go over to the food stand they have set up to grab a brat and a drink. I go over to a table that I set the bag down on and eat while listening to a really awful bluegrass group, then tossed the bag on my shoulder and started walking back to my truck.

“Suddenly, out of nowhere, a guy who looked to be around my age came out of nowhere. He saw the bag sitting on the table and wanted to know why I had a 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force patch on my bag.

“Told him it was because my Dad flew transport planes in the South Pacific during WWII. He replied that his dad and uncle also flew transport planes in the South Pacific during the war. “Their unit was called **The Thirsty 13<sup>th</sup>,**” he said.

“**Wow! Hit me in the head with a 2x4!!!** After I picked myself up off the pavement, I found out he was Daniel Buchen, son of pilot James [pilot 7/44-7/45] and nephew of pilot John [pilot 7/44-7/45, twin brothers], and they were at Biak the same time as Dad!

“Dan lives in St. Paul, Minn., and is part of the car club sponsoring the show. We had a great chat, and he talked a lot about how much he loves your book and how phenomenal it is.

“He was back up this direction for a vacation the first week of August and we got together for coffee - spent nearly two hours chatting. Quite a delightful coincidence - if I hadn't picked that particular bag that afternoon, or if I'd stayed at Timber Days, never would've connected.”

Thanks, David, for sharing this story! An amazing coincidence.

### 4. Conclusions and Thanks

Thank you to George Wamsley's son, Bill, for sharing his dad's stories. Thanks to Ewan Stevenson for photographing our New Hebrides area. With best wishes, Seth – see Appendix



Temperature readings, withheld for 24 hours by wartime restrictions, were reported for March 21 by the Weather Bureau as follows:

Los Angeles	High	Low	Newport	High	Low
San Francisco	64	44	San Diego	61	53
San Jose	63	43	San Jose	61	53
San Bernardino	67	47	San Pedro	64	46
San Gabriel	67	47	San Luis Obispo	65	46
Los Beach	63	49	Santa Barbara	64	48

# Los Angeles Times



**By The Way**  
with  
**BILL HENRY**

**By the Way with Bill Henry, March 23, 1943, the Los Angeles Times:**

Well, sir, what with the rain beating on the tin roof, the native blacks, the bearded and unkempt whites, the oppressive heat and the general air of tropical depression, it was so much like a scene from "Rain" that I found myself looking around for Jeanne Eagels!

**Trouble**—It was down in New Caledonia which, if you'll look on your map, is a long ways from anyplace. We had intended to stop there just long enough to gas up and push off for Fiji. We were going to get home from Australia in 48 hours! Then trouble came—and we were stuck. We huddled miserably in a jeep, oblivious of the pouring rain and the clinging red clay which clutched at the spinning wheels of the jeep, and the runty captain in the jockey cap, jumpers, and beard regaled us with stories of the misery we were going to share with him while he wrestled the jeep up to one of a series of long, sheet-iron buildings.

"You guys," he said, pointing across a stretch of gummy clay, "can stay over there in the Astor—if there aren't any cots, you'll probably have to go back and sleep in the plane."

**Company**—Well, we slipped and slid up the incline and stumbled into the semidarkness of the long building. Rows of cots were down each side, each with its mosquito net overhead and its pile of military equipment alongside. Out in the middle of the floor a dozen nondescript young chaps in dirty dungarees were in a desultory sort of a poker game, using matches for money and arguing in accents that stretched from Georgia to California. They didn't even look up when we entered.

**Familiar**—We looked around and there seemed to be a helmet or a revolver or a dirty shirt on every bed, and as I wandered through the gloom a figure raised up from a cot and, in a tone of obvious skepticism, said to another figure on the next cot, "Hey, Frank, will you look who's here!" it's a small world, all right. Then, turning to me, the voice said, "You are Bill Henry, aren't you? I'm George Schnieters from Bronson Ave. and Loyola—remember? This is my brother Francis. What in the devil brings you to this hell hole?"

**Misery**—They introduced me to Allen Gardener from U.C.L.A., another pilot, and, in the next two or three miserable days, they told how they'd been fighter pilots who had suddenly been switched to transports when transports were needed and how they'd set off for Australia and here—just one jump from their destination—the blankety blank Navy had stopped 'em. They weren't being used to do anything, they weren't going anywhere, this was certainly one hell of a way to fight a war, and particularly this was a hell of a place to fight it.

**Treed**—They were swell kids, all right. They weren't afraid of anything except being bored to death—which was just what was happening. They pumped me about the fighting in New Guinea and I told them about Port Moresby and Darwin and Townsville and Milne Bay and the big trek over the mountains heading toward Buna. And they sat there and nodded their heads and kept saying, "That's where we were bound for—and look where we are now!" They were burned up, all right.

**Freed**—It was a great day when they got orders that half of them could go on to Australia. They matched—Gardener got to go, the Schnieders boys didn't. We all went down to see them off and I went back to the hut and a little later, heard shouts and whoops—one of the planes had come back with motor trouble and the Schnieders boys were to go instead. I was whistling "Off they go into the bright blue yonder" as they shoved off, wondering if they were going to get their chance. Well, I guess they got it.

The wires this week told of "extraordinary heroism in flying unarmed planes into enemy territory in New Guinea, with sorely needed supplies" which brought Distinguished Flying Crosses to Lieuts. Schnieders and Gardener. I guess all they needed was that chance.

Well, sir, what with the rain beating on the tin roof, the native blacks, the bearded and unkempt whites, the oppressive heat and the general air of tropical depression, it was so much like a scene from "Rain" that I found myself looking around for Jeanne Eagels!

**TROUBLE**—It was down in New Caledonia which, if you'll look on your map, is a long ways from anyplace. We had intended to stop there just long enough to gas up and push off for Fiji. We were going to get home from Australia in 48 hours! Then trouble came—and we were stuck. We huddled miserably in a jeep, oblivious of the pouring rain and the clinging red clay which clutched at the spinning wheels of the jeep, and the runty captain in the jockey cap, jumpers and beard regaled us with stories of the misery we were going to share with him while he wrestled the jeep up to one of a series of long, sheet-iron buildings. "You guys," he said, pointing across a stretch of gummy clay, "can stay over there in the Astor—if there aren't any cots, you'll probably have to go back and sleep in the plane."

**COMPANY**—Well, we slipped and slid up the incline and stumbled into the semidarkness of the long building. Rows of cots were down each side, each with its mosquito net overhead and its pile of military equipment alongside. Out in the middle of the floor a dozen nondescript young chaps in dirty dungarees were in a desultory sort of a poker game, using matches for money and arguing in accents that stretched from Georgia to California. They didn't even look up when we entered.

**FAMILIAR**—We looked around and there seemed to be a helmet or a revolver or a dirty shirt on every bed, and as I wandered through the gloom a figure raised up from a cot and, in a tone of obvious skepticism, said to another figure on the next cot, "Hey, Frank, will you look who's here?" It's a small world, all right. Then, turning to me, the voice said, "You are Bill Henry, aren't you? I'm George Schnieters from Bronson Ave. and Loyola—remember? This is my brother Francis. What in the devil brings you to this hell hole!"

**MISERY**—They introduced me to Allen Gardener from U.C.L.A., another pilot, and, in the next two or three miserable days, they told how they'd been fighter pilots who had suddenly been switched to transports when transports were needed and how they'd set off for Australia and here—just one jump from their destination—the blankety blank Navy had stopped 'em. They weren't being used to do anything, they weren't going anywhere, this was certainly one hell of a way to fight a war, and particularly this was a hell of a place to fight it.

**TREED**—They were swell kids, all right. They weren't afraid of anything except being bored to death—which was just what was happening. They pumped me about the fighting in New Guinea and I told them about Port Moresby and Darwin and Townsville and Milne Bay and the big trek over the mountains heading toward Buna. And they sat there and nodded their heads and kept saying, "That's where we were bound for—and look where we are now!" They were burned up, all right.

**FREED**—It was a great day when they got orders that half of them could go on to Australia. They matched—Gardener got to go, the Schnieders boys didn't. We all went down to see them off and I went back to the hut and a little later, heard shouts and whoops—one of the planes had come back with motor trouble and the Schnieders boys were to go instead. I was whistling "Off they go into the bright blue yonder" as they shoved off, wondering if they were going to get their chance. Well, I guess they got it. The wires this week told of "extraordinary heroism in flying unarmed planes into enemy territory in New Guinea with sorely needed supplies" which brought Distinguished Flying Crosses to Lieuts. Schnieders and Gardener. I guess all they needed was that chance.