

# DIARY WWII

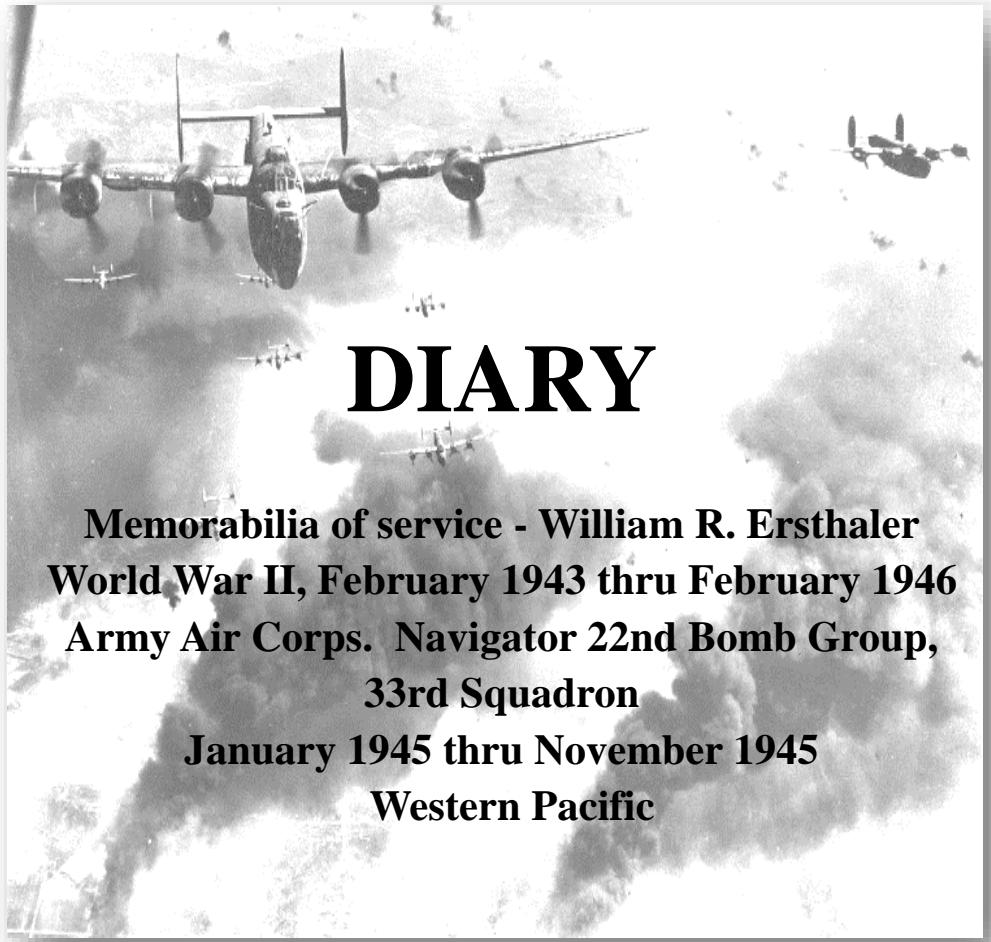
ARMY AIR CORPS - 22<sup>ND</sup> BOMB GROUP

JANUARY 1945 - NOVEMBER 1945

WESTERN PACIFIC

WILLIAM R ERSTHALER

A B-24 NAVIGATOR REMEMBERS



# **DIARY**

**Memorabilia of service - William R. Ersthaler  
World War II, February 1943 thru February 1946  
Army Air Corps. Navigator 22nd Bomb Group,  
33rd Squadron  
January 1945 thru November 1945  
Western Pacific**

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**This diary recounts the activities of my  
assignment with the 22nd Bomber Group  
while serving as a Navigator in the  
Southwest Pacific from 1944 through the  
end of World War II.**

## **Dedication**

This dairy is dedicated to those who returned and those who did not. Also to my daughter, Carol, my son, Paul, and to Mary Suzanne, my wife and companion.

## **Acknowledgements**

Carol Paquette

Joe Paquette

Susan Ersthaler

Paul Ersthaler



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# **FORWARD**

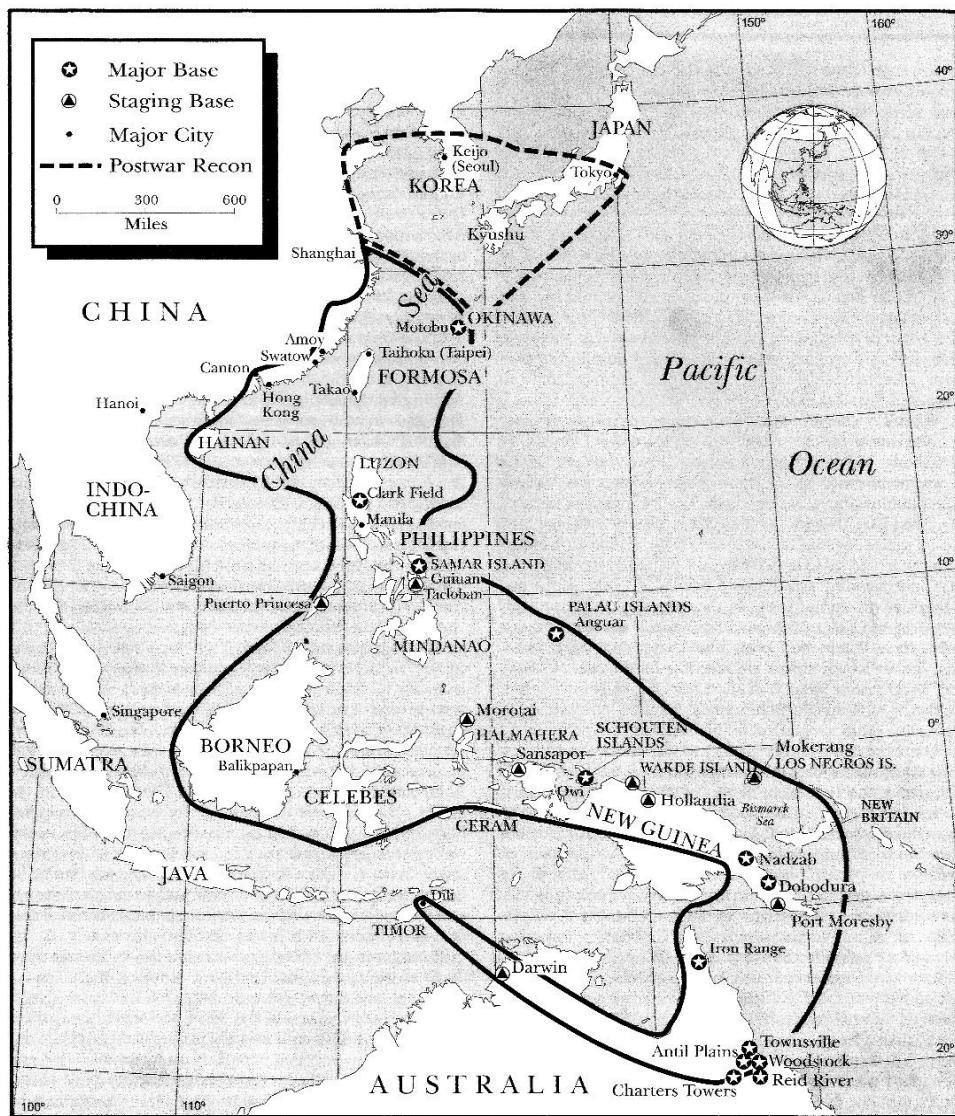
I learned on a visit to see my Dad that he had a dairy which he told me I could read after he was gone. Finding that unacceptable and being persistent, he allowed me to read his dairy each time I went to visit him in Arizona. We would make a trip to the safety deposit, get the diary, I would read it and ask questions. He would make a trip back to the safety deposit box after I left to return it to safe keeping. After three trips, I had finished and was amazed by the story it told. I needed to share it with others. On a recent trip to see my Dad, I carefully carried it to make a photocopy of his priceless dairy. After two hours I had a copy, and my brother and I were off on our own mission. It has been amazing to learn about what my Dad and others experienced. Through the transcribing of this dairy I have learned so much about who my Dad was then and the man he is today. My hero, my Dad. Thank you, Dad, for sharing this with us.

*Carol Paquette*

Freedom should be defined as the result of all the hard work & sacrifice by the men and women in the United States military. Because I am not in your shoes, I will never fully appreciate the sacrifices you made for me, our family, your friends and our country. I am proud of you and of all the unsung heroes who put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms. It was an honor that you entrusted us to publish your diary for many to learn and enjoy. It is my hope that many will read and share your diary to better understand the sacrifices you made for all of us.

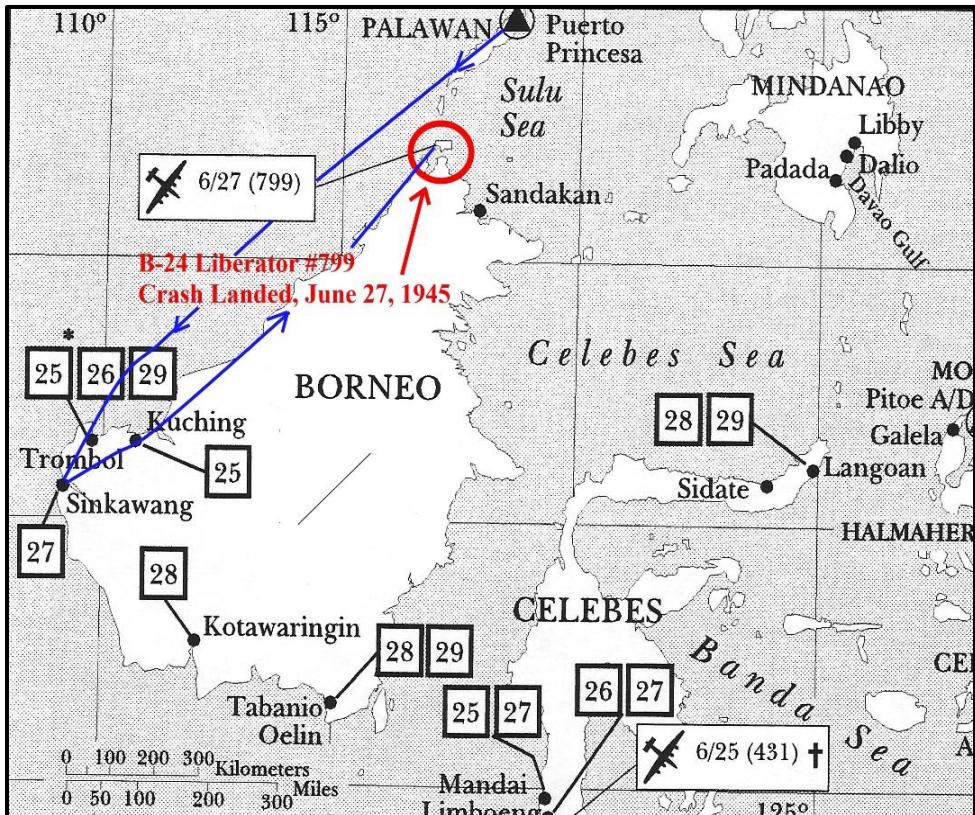
*Paul Ersthaler*





**22<sup>nd</sup> Bomber Group World War II  
Area of Operations: 1942 – 1945  
Western Pacific**





*B-24 Bomber (Ship #799) with engine problems was forced to set down in an open field on the north side of Balambangan Island off the northern tip of Borneo in what is now called Sabah, Malaysia.*

*Reference diary notes dated June 27, 1945.*

*This mission (operating out of Puerto Princesa) was to Sinkawang. Target - Sinkawang Airdrome. Leaving the target, #799 (known as SHITTININIGITTIN) had engine problems upon their return.*



## **January 1, 1945, Monday**

### **Topeka, Kansas**

New Year's today. Spent an exceptionally quiet New Year's Eve. Maybe it was because we knew it would be our last New Year's in the States for some time to come. Resuming processing as we received orders that our A.P.O. would be San Francisco which in turn means the Pacific for our operations. Probably some remote island. Tough ass.

## **January 2, 1945, Tuesday**

An exceptionally cold day here in Topeka, Kansas. Down to zero. Boys are packed and just raring to go. Left Topeka at 2000 on train to West coast. Only eleven crews on this shipment, looks like some special job for us. Then again probably some remote island. Worse things in life I hear; however, can't see my way clear.

## **January 3, 1945, Wednesday**

Ah, once again the beautiful sun of the West - New Mexico - clear blue skies of the West. Exceptionally warm as we take the southern route in toward Frisco. Everyone hoping we pass through Tucson although from all hell that was raised when we left maybe its best we don't. Someday the West will be my home. My thoughts turn to home today for the first time. Been so busy lately that one doesn't have time to recall all the things he misses. Arrived El Paso at 2000 for about one hour.

## **January 4, 1945, Thursday**

Arrived in Tucson at 0900 and stayed for one hour. It was sure a fine feeling returning back to the town. No matter what the fellows said about it, they sure liked it plenty. Really not much to write about today. Very beautiful day - as usual in the West.

## **January 5, 1945, Friday**

Today was probably the most wonderful day I spent in quite a while. Arrived Los Angeles at 0300 and left at 1800. Really raised all hell. Saw Hollywood. Saw how the other half of the world lives, and I like it. I can see why the Californians are proud. Rented a car and Al Knight and Kutsch really showed them the Air Force was in town. Could write a volume and don't want to be prosecuted for our reactions. It's a good thing I'm in the Army as now I see places I've longed to visit, and since I've seen them I'm happy to say I like them.

## **January 6, 1945, Saturday**

We arrived San Francisco at 0900 and after briefly seeing the town we crossed the Golden Gate in route to Hamilton Field A.T.C. (Air Transport Command). As usual, someone fouled up so we had to travel some fifty odd miles to a remote field at Fairfield where we shall depart from - we hope. Yes, I once thought that California would be ideal, but the fog all day - the tons of mud - the rain all makes our stay very pleasant, especially when our barracks are deep in the swamps of the field. Tomorrow we escape from this hole maybe one last visit to the states - San Fran one big night.

## **January 7, 1945, Sunday**

Another beautiful day but as usual the sun is hidden behind fog and mist. Processing and medical - going with the medical is the usual shots, this time plague. A typical Army doing - no one seems to know what the hell we are doing here, and they want to get rid of us as soon as possible as we take up too much room. Dull - dull day today. Missed church again. Each time I want to go something pops up. Still can't get to Frisco.

## **January 8, 1945, Monday**

As usual the sun is hidden behind the fog - mist and rain. Ah! Today we shall go to Frisco. As you were, we have just been told we are restricted as we are leaving tomorrow for Hawaii, and then on to our base. Can't see

how they can possibly take off in weather such as this low. The A.T.C (Air Transport Command) are a bunch of queers. Looks like I've had my last fling in life when we were let out at L.A. Oh well, money is scarce as yet so maybe it's best. This Pacific can sure roll in a hell of a fog, but I still like California no matter how much ribbing I take from Al. Al's got a cold and he's pissed off.

### **January 9, 1945, Tuesday**

Beautiful day here in California - the fog so thick you can slice it on toast and have it for breakfast - or lunch if you prefer. Ah! Yes, it seems that everything is screwed up again - we didn't leave today. Can't figure what the hell the holdup is – well, who gives a good damn. Again, we have passes until the fog clears up so off we venture to Frisco. Great town this Frisco. Only just a bit crowded especially with the seaweed harbors. Really not very much to do and having spent the evening at the International Settlement, once again we returned home. Made a phone call home, and it sure sounded great to hear Mom's voice.

### **January 10, 1945, Wednesday**

Very foggy today, and all planes are still grounded. Nothing to do in this hole, except read books. We just keep sitting around waiting the go signal so we can depart the States. Again, we have passes. Tonight we visit Sacramento. It pays to visit these places as one may someday have another chance, and it's always handy to know a bit about the place you are visiting. Looks as though this fog will never lift. I only hope we are grounded in Hawaii for a couple of days. We should have been overseas already, but this weather has put everything behind time.

### **January 11, 1945, Thursday**

A very strong miracle happened today. The weather has cleared, the sun is out, and the field is awfully busy trying to remove cargo and men to catch up on the long delay. Still no word for us to depart although we have a high priority in shipment. At last a letter today from home dated Jan. 3rd.

It takes a hell of a long time for mail to get to our A.P.O. (Army Post Office) and then out to the further base. Went to Frisco tonight and really enjoyed myself more than before. Knight and Kutsch were high as a kite, but people forgave our actions because we were in the Air Force.

### **January 12, 1945, Friday**

Sky clear as a bell and the beautiful California sun is shining brightly. At last we are going, weighed in our bags, and are now awaiting to board our plane. Received a letter from home and also one from Cal, L.A., and one from Doc. It was sure great to hear from her. We were going to Sacramento tonight, but conditions have changed somewhat because of shipment. Looks like Hawaii will be our first stop - ah! This travel the Army gives one. As usual, the fog just rolled in and you can slice it up for dinner.

### **January 13, 1945, Saturday**

Beautiful today. Fog so thick you can't see across the street, fear of losing oneself if he ventures too far. Still restricted to the field and the fog is gradually lifting. News just came in that we shall leave tonight at 1800. Let's hope we go as this sitting around really gets one down. This is my last lines as we leave the coast of United States aboard a C-54 headed for Hawaii, and then on to Wewak. One cannot express his feelings as he leaves, and he knows he may never see America again. Only those who have left and seen its shores fade away realize that the U.S. is the best place in the world. Yes, I pray to God that I return some day to my home, to Mom, my best girl. They are the things on my mind tonight. This is the saddest and yet the most exciting time in my life.

### **January 14, 1945, Sunday**

#### **Hawaii**

A very beautiful day and here on the broad Pacific Ocean I should say clear night, especially for navigation. The Navigator let me do a bit of work while making the 2,241 mile hop to Hawaii. Didn't do badly for being so long out of practice. Flight was eleven hours and a half long and we

landed at Hickam Field at 1305 G.C.T. (Greenwich Civil Time) or 0505 Honolulu time. The weather is beautiful and a dream that a person can imagine himself living part of. Ports of Hickam and Pearl Harbor are still a bit torn up from Dec. 7, 1941, and from the looks of things as yet, we sure suffered plenty that day. Man it's quite a powerful looking base in all \_\_\_\_\_. Depart Honolulu for Johnson Island at 1120, and in route to Guadalcanal. Mighty large ocean.

## **January 15, 1945, Monday**

### **Dateline Tarara**

We departed Johnson Sunday at 1400 the noon. A very neat, owned island by the Navy, so damn clean and the ocean a very blue all around. Not much to do however, but this is war. Departed at 1530 for Tarawa. We arrived at Tarawa at 2330 and what a plot of ground for all the bitter fighting that was done. It always seemed like a fantastic picture when I saw the newspapers and reels of the battle of Tarawa, but now that I've seen it, things seen are awfully real. Yes, the 2,000 American graves, the Jap pill boxes, and landing barges made it all clear. They, our boys, died so people like us could stop here, refuel and go farther on to the Japan homeland to even up that score. No trees are left standing today from that bitter battle of Tarawa. Departed Tarawa at 0130 Tuesday morning for Guadalcanal. Crossed the dateline and now one day later.

## **January 16, 1945, Tuesday**

### **Guadalcanal**

I am probably all mixed up on the days since the date line but here goes anyway. Traveled all night on the same C-54 and arrived Guadalcanal at 0820 Tuesday morn. Boy what a spot. Its only 0830 and yet it's almost 100 degrees. Sweating to beat hell and yet they say this place is heaven compared to where we are going. As we venture further into the territory that was under fire, more and more traces are seen of the remains of the battles that were fought. Arrived at Biak, Tuesday morning at 1900 and what a hole. Shell holes all over everything, and Japs are still embedded on the

mountains. Stayed on Biak for the night and departed for Nadzab at 0600 Wednesday morning.

### **January 17, 1945, Wednesday**

Arrived in Nadzab at 1400 this noon and talk about heat. My God it's hot. We are now living in a little tent that leaks when it rains. The food is what might be expected anywhere on the islands, but one will eat anything when he's hungry. We began taking Aralen for Malaria and a whole lot of other junk. We are located in a valley and the mountains catch all the rain before it reaches us. The nights are exceptionally cool and the days are terrific. The country looks more like the hills of Pennsylvania. Probably be here a month or so in the tropical jungles - war is hell, must write home tonight if possible.

### **January 18, 1945, Thursday**

Hotter than hell as usual. When one sits still everything is OK, but just walk across the room and you sweat like a mad man. Now comes the bugs. And more bugs than you can shake a stick at -not poison, just annoying as hell, especially the mosquitoes and the grass ticks. Taking my Aralen regularly for Malaria. Haven't done very much today except sack like a mad man. We have a brief training period before combat training consists of bombing Wewak and Rabaul Harbor and a few active minor Jap islands. One thing, the flies are pestering hell out of us. You rub all kinds of repellent on and still they gather. T.S.

### **January 19, 1945, Friday**

Very hot today, but so what, it is every day. We are training to live in the jungles in case we are forced down. We mostly sat on our cots today doing absolutely nothing. Received a lecture on Japs and what to do in case of being forced down. Not much alternative, but we fight like all hell. Guess we won't fly for a week or so. My only hope is that we go to the 5th in the Philippines and not the 13th fighting in Borneo.

## **January 20, 1945, Saturday**

Spent the day in the hottest place I've been. Deep in the jungles learning what to do and what not to do and how to come out alive. Tomorrow we spend the night sleeping there - some fun and all I can say is war is hell. At last a few drops of rain and things here a bit cooled off. I would much rather come down in the water and take my chances of coming back. The jungles are a trap, and it seems to me that nothing could possibly come out alive.

## **January 21, 1945, Sunday**

Very warm and moist today. Today was our day to spend in the jungle and stay overnight in grass houses that we built. I guess there's no place like the jungles. I've often read about the New Guinea and Borneo jungles but never really thought of them as what they actually were. The sound of insects that pester the hell out of you and the many tropical plants that are poison, sticky with thorns. One can find a majority of food from the jungle, but it really has no taste and would only keep one going and that's all. I can possibly see why people die so soon if they haven't the proper materials.

## **In Memoriam** **January 21, 1945**

On the morning of 21 January (1945), Col. Richard W. Robinson, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group Commander, was killed, with a crew of ten, when the plane in which he was flying, crashed on take-off as he was about to lead the Group on the first raid on Formosa from the Philippines. The 26-year old Colonel took part in the first daylight bombing raid on Palau.

*"The weather was overcast and misty due to the intermittent rain the night before. The B-24 taxied to the takeoff position, where he awaited the green light from the control tower. He started down the runway. As the B-24*

*gained speed, it started drifting towards the left, unable to get off the ground. Disaster struck a few seconds later when the aircraft's left wing hit a spinning propeller of one of the parked Corsair fighters. Six feet of the wing and aileron were hewn and thrown into the air. The plane lifted off slightly, only to hit a SeaBee construction vehicle at the east end of the runway, and burst into flames. The inferno set off some of the bombs, nearly collapsing the control tower at mid-field. All crew members were lost."*

The loss of Col. Robinson was a heavy blow to the Group. He was well-liked by his superior officers and the men serving under his lead. Robinson was nicknamed "Red" because of his red hair. "The Red Raiders", came

from the name of Robinson's first plane, *RED RAIDER*, hence the Group gained the nickname "Red Raiders" which became a living memorial to him.



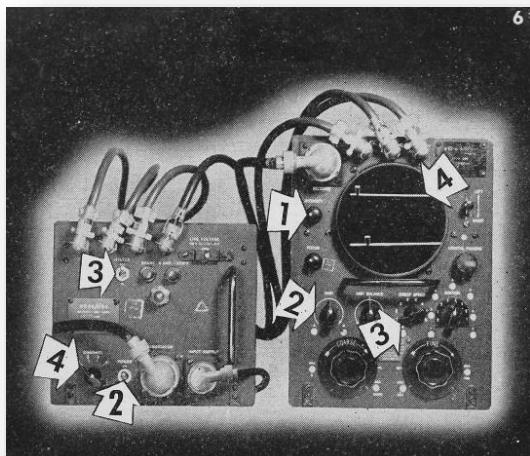
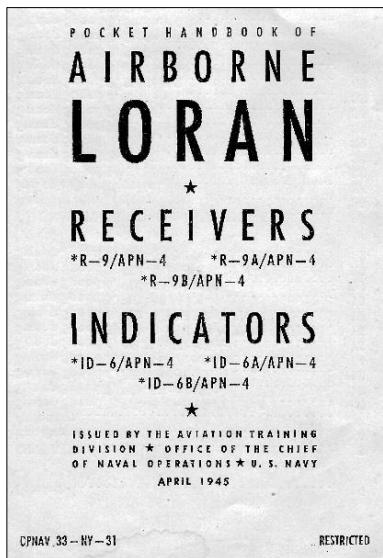
## Red Raiders' Chief Killed in Air Crash

FIFTH AIR FORCE HEAD-  
QUARTERS, Philippines, March 13.  
—(AP)—Col. Richard W. Robinson,  
commander of the famed Red  
Raider's heavy bomber outfit, was  
killed with his 10-man crew in a  
takeoff crash for the first Formosa  
raid of Southwest Pacific land-  
based bombers, it was officially  
disclosed here today.

The crash occurred Jan. 21.  
Robinson, who was 25 years old,  
was credited with more missions  
and more continuous combat flying  
than any bomber pilot in this  
theater.

**January 22, 1945, Monday**

Again it is very warm, however, there are a few clouds above which cools it off a bit. We started school today, the Navigators learning the new systems for Loran, and it sure will be a great help in the coming water crossing. Much rather go to school than sit around doing nothing when we are not flying. Really have no idea when we are leaving here, the sooner the better as that way I'll get my 400 hours and come back. My one hope now is to go into pilot training and fly a single engine. With all the navigation I've had, a bit of water experience maybe I can do good. "When a new day begins another future has started".



*Receiver*

*Indicator*

*LORAN, (long range navigation), was a hyperbolic radio navigation system developed in the U.S. during World War II. It operated at lower frequencies in order to provide improved range up to 1,500 mile (2,400 km) with accuracy of tens of miles. It was first used for ship convoys crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and then by long-range patrol aircraft, but found its main use on ship and aircraft in the Pacific theatre.*

## **January 23, 1945, Tuesday**

Today was a very moist day so naturally the humidity is high as can be. Everything seems to stick on you. Once in a while the sun comes out, and things begin to dry up again. Again school, but there is nothing else to do when one isn't flying. Really isn't much to say as things are very quiet. Again it rained last night so naturally the tent leaked like a sieve. Anyway the water cools you off while you are lying in bed. T.S.

## **January 24, 1945, Wednesday**

Quite warm today as there are very few clouds to hide the sun. Attend school all day studying Loran. It seems to be very important, especially in over-water navigation and when circumstances do not permit other navigation means. Got word today that a C-47 was lost somewhere near Wewak and a new fellow friend of mine - Goldburg and Gedrum were on board. No news of its whereabouts. Wewak is still patrolled by Japs. Hope the recon patrols find them before they are too far gone in the jungles. The sooner I get my missions in the better I'll be, and each chance I receive I'll go up and fly. The hell with everything else.

## **January 25, 1945, Thursday**

Warm today as usual, but that's to be expected in such a place as this. Again school all day, but it's much better than sitting around doing nothing. I'm not the kind who can sleep all day. No news as yet from the aircraft with those friends of mine in it. In a day or so they shall be given up as lost. First the authorities must be dead sure and know who was exactly on the craft. Met with Bruce Gyerman the other day. Sure was good to see someone who you came in the Army with also.

## **January 26, 1945, Friday**

Warm day as usual here at old Nadzab. Really not too much to write down. Tonight those boys on the lost C-47 came in. They made an emergency landing on a strip between here and Biak, because of the weather. They were there three days so naturally were reported lost. Recon

was out looking for them. As usual it rained this evening and what a tropical storm it was. The beds and articles were all piled in the middle of the tent and the sides leaked like a sieve. Lasted for two hours. Any longer our tent would have been washed away. "A man was never so wise as to stop learning".

### **January 27, 1945, Saturday**

Mile day today. From the looks of the sky a storm is brewing up. Tonight we went into the small town of Lea, and having found out how to get in at the permanent officers mess at Lea we had ourselves a hell of a fine dinner. Afterwards we bought out their P.X. and to top it all off there was ice cold water on tap. We caught a ride in a ten ton truck and as you may guess it rained like hell all the way back to Nadzab – 30 miles of rain, beating us to a pulp. Was I wet? Well, then the truck, ran into a ditch and turned over on its side. After a vain attempt it was on the road again. Imagine traveling so far for a good dinner. People back home would think you are crazy.

### **January 28, 1945, Sunday**

Very cloudy today and for a change is quite cool and that's a rare exception around here. Went to chapel this morning and really enjoyed the service very much. No flying today as the field is closed down due to weather. Didn't do very much today, mostly read books and wrote letters until got tired then went over to the P.T. field. I've been working out each day because a day may come to use plenty of strength and energy and I'll be able to put it out. At times might be right, and he who works hard will someday profit.

### **January 29, 1945, Monday**

Very warm today and a few remaining clouds from last night's thunderstorm. Again we are doing absolutely nothing. A few planes took off for Wewak and Rabaul today. Went down today and had a very good workout and felt much better than the rest of the days. Things have really

become boring and one's mind wanders back home to all the things that are dear to having and wonders to himself if he shall ever see them again. 9,800 miles is a long way from home.

### **January 30, 1945, Tuesday**

Quite warm today. Nothing to do but lay on the deck. Went to the show tonight and saw a very good movie "To Have or to Have Not". Everything is quiet today, and it's usually that way around here. Miss home quite a bit when one is so far away it really does no good to think about it.

### **January 31, 1945, Wednesday**

Sun shining all day today. Woke up with a fever this morning and sick in my head and abdomen. Temperature of 103. Can't figure out what is wrong. Took four Aralen tablets today and felt much better. Just hope it's not a touch of Malaria. Didn't want to go on sick call as they may find something wrong. Laid on the rack most of the day. So ends another day in the hole of New Guinea.

## **February 1, 1945, Thursday**

Very fine day today as usual. The food today was, as usual, very bad, and they expect a man to live on this junk. Oh yes, all food is going overseas, but we don't see it. I wish the people back home could see how we live maybe it would impress on their minds and make it clear that life isn't rosy, and that this war's far from over.

## **February 2, 1945, Friday**

Very sunny today and quite warm. Left for Lea at eight this morning and stayed for the entire day. Had a very good meal at the Lea Officers Club. Drank gallons and gallons of fruit juices. Spent the whole day swimming and loafing around. Made an inspection of a Jap troop ship, Mairi Mayo, and saw the remains of what Jolly Rodgers outfit did to land and they sure made a mess of it. Ate supper back at Nadzab and was it sad. Ah well, we are getting used to this slop.

## **February 3, 1945, Saturday**

Another warm day, but it rained quite hard this afternoon so things cooled off a bit. Went hunting for coconuts, but all we found were not ripe as yet. The natives are quite the boys, a little up to date on the laws of exchange. For cigarettes they climb the trees and bring you all the nuts you want, and just try to obtain any without an exchange. The evenings are always so beautiful with the millions of stars out and a moon to shine down upon you. Really makes one lonesome. The stillness of the night, the coolness and freshness all about one gives me time to take inventory of his life.

## **February 4, 1945, Sunday**

Cloudy day today with the sun trying hard to shine through the small openings in the sky. We flew on a Transition Mission today and actually acquired nothing but the coolness and freshness up at 10,000. Flew in our shirt sleeves so you can see how warm it is when we fly here. Poor boys in England freeze when they're on the ground let alone up at 10,000. Attended

chapel this evening, and it really comforts one to go and spend an hour in peace and security. Look forward to it each Sunday. Will probably be leaving old New Guinea very shortly to join the squadron.

*Transition mission: Hours: 2:45*

### **February 5, 1945, Monday**

Very nice day today with plenty of clouds to hide the sun - that hot, damn sun. Laid on my back in the morning and made with the sleep. Flew in the afternoon on a three-ship formation, just a tour of the area. Wasn't much navigating to do, and I logged absolutely nothing. If we keep flying like we have been we'll be out of here in no time. At least it was nice and cool up there in the blue.

*Transition mission: Hours: 2:30*

### **February 6, 1945, Tuesday**

Very clear day today but as usual the clouds are beginning to form from the intense heat. Today is about the hottest day we've had in quite some time. Today we had the ship all to ourselves and really raised hell. Buzzed all the villages in the valley at twenty feet. It's hard to picture a B-24 at twenty feet rolling at 210 speed. Came so close that the prop took a piece of tree off. On the return trip we had a small fire on the flight deck. Al must have touched the wrong electric lead when he put the fuse in. All in all great day. Strike tomorrow.

*Transition mission: Hours: 2:40*

### **February 7, 1945, Wednesday**

Very clear day today with a few cumulus clouds embedded against the blue sky. Today we are supposed to go on a mission but we couldn't get the plane off the ground so back to the sack it meant. Received a whole slew of letters today from the States, and I am telling you is was good to hear from the folks back home. As usual, the food is just as bad as ever, and now it's not only the food situation, but the water is running low because of the lack of rain. Oh well, such is life in the tropics.

## **February 8, 1945, Thursday**

A bit cloudy today, just only over the mountains. Over the bay it's always quite clear. Flew again today but no mission as it was an instrument flight, but we now have our flying done in so it's alright by me if we stop. This afternoon we had an exceptionally good dinner - that is of course taking into consideration that the rest are lousy, but I still wouldn't feed my horse on this rot. So ends another day - come what may or go the days.

## **February 9, 1945, Friday**

Very clear day and, as usual, there are clouds over the mountains. Today we bombed Wewak and it was a picnic. The plane loaded with eight one thousand pounders took off beautifully, and the mission was perfect. Fifty percent of our bombs hit the target. There was no opposition, and we made six runs on the target each time letting one or two bombs away. The mission was five hours long and only at an altitude of 8,000 feet. Hope they are all this easy.

*Transition mission: Hours: 5:10*

## **February 10, 1945, Saturday**

Clouds today with a thin layer of stratus hovering over the entire area. Today we bombed Tabera Andron which is located on the very tip of New Britain near Rabaul. Our bomb load was six one thousand pounders, and the main objective was a runway the Japs are using. The formation was a group, and all let bombs away on lead ship. 100% hits. The mission was mostly flown over water; however, the weather is usually clear over the water while over land cumulus are always hindering. Another successful mission.

*Transition mission: Hours: 6:20*

## **February 11, 1945, Sunday**

### **Nadzab**

Today was rest day for us all, thank gosh. Attended church this morning, and one would be surprised how comforting it is. Just received

news that we are leaving New Guinea and bound for the Philippine Islands to the 22nd Bomber Group, Samar Island. I guess the missions will now become rough, but the sooner I have them in the sooner I go home.

## **February 12, 1945, Monday**

Monday meeting.

## **February 13, 1945, Tuesday**

### **Biak, New Guinea**

Very cloudy day today, but still as hot as usual. We obtained a B-24D to ferry up to Biak, New Guinea. Navigation was very easy piloting and that's all. It was just about a month ago that we were in Biak on our way to Nadzab. After having trouble before take-off we finally made take off at eleven in the morning and arrived at Biak at four in the afternoon. Stayed on Biak for the evening and departed at twelve noon for Peleliu Island on Wednesday.

## **February 14, 1945, Wednesday**

### **Peleliu Island**

Still quite cloudy today, but as usual it's cumulus over the land. We departed Biak to Peleliu Island at twelve noon. Arrived Peleliu Island at four this afternoon. Talk about a beautiful place. This island is built and owned by Navy and Marines, and it really is a place. The best food we've eaten in a long time - ice cream and breaded pork chops plus all the extras. Real whiskey-bourbon and Coke, the first drink since New Year's Eve. Beautiful white coral and sand surrounded by a blue ocean. This is really a large base, mostly a fighter base. Fine sleeping quarters, and they try to make things as comfortable as possible, but that's the Navy - always on the ball.

**February 15, 1945, Thursday**  
**Leyte, Philippines**

Very cloudy day today and the further towards the Philippines we venture the more weather we encounter. Departed Peleliu Island at 0800 and arrived Leyte, Philippine Islands at 1300. Here we are at the war zone, and for the first time we actually realize there is a war on. Tanks, trucks, guns, shell holes, demolished buildings, battleships, and mostly happy, liberated Filipino inhabitants. Our base is just across the bay, but what a time they say we shall have trying to get there. This is the most fouled up place. Everybody is a big wheel, but no one knows a damn thing, but that's typical Army method. Food isn't too bad, and as yet this is still a war zone. Sometimes the roar of guns can be heard in the distance. If only the people back home could see what tortures these people have suffered - but they are too ignorant to notice.

**February 16, 1945, Friday**  
**Samar, Philippines**  
**22nd Bomb Group**

Raining like mad as usual in the Philippines, but who gives a damn. We arrived Samar, Philippines late today and finally assigned to the "Red Raider Group" 33rd Sqd. 22 Bomb Group. All it does is rain, and the mud is terrific. They are very short Navigators, so I guess I'll have my fanny worked off. Conditions are quite bad, but there is a war on and all that rot, so it's just grin and bear it. Not too much to write about today. The food is fairly good, but that's also because we were mixed in with the "Seabees," in other words, the Navy.

**February 17, 1945, Saturday**

As usual large rain storms in spurts, and when it doesn't rain it's terrifically hot. Today we built our own house floor and all. Down here if you don't want to sleep on the ground then you just start building. They are moving the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group up to Clark Field in the next few weeks so nothing can be perfect. Today the rain was on Formosa and the China Coast.

All 24 of war planes returned with no casualties. Bataan is being invaded by Allied troops and things are looking great. Plenty of ack-ack over the target, but the 3rd Fleet is taking care of most of the southern islands of Japan. Too bad we can't carry a few bomb loads on these long hops.

### **February 18, 1945, Sunday**

Very beautiful day today, and for a change it hasn't rained. Again our group went to Formosa and did a bang up job. All of our planes returned; however, the 43rd lost one ship from flack. Attended chapel this morning and it was really swell. Good one finds more comfort in church than anywhere. Each evening we watch our ships come home and count them, always hoping and praying that they are all intact.

### **February 19, 1945, Monday**

#### **Formosa**

Very cloudy today and this getting up at three for briefing gets one down. Target today Taito H/D, Formosa. We flew single ship up and formed a wing at Ryukyu Island where we there made our run on Formosa. High above a welcome sight of P-38 fighter bomber while below our fine Navy "rats" on rescue work. God bless the Navy. As we made our run over Taito they threw everything but garbage cans up at us. Those little black puffs of smoke yet so deadly. Shot our radio antenna off, but no other damage. We dropped 100# frag bombs but sorry to say the target was not destroyed so back we go in a day or so.

*Bombing mission 1, Hours: 11:00, Points: 3, Total hours: 11:00*

### **February 20, 1945, Tuesday**

Very cloudy day today, and as usual the tropical rain came down in torrents. There was no mission today for our group, but again the 43rd Group hammered Formosa. Very little to do this day, but when we do not bomb we just loaf. I doubt very much if people could possibly realize just how tough this war is here in the Pacific theater of operations. We shall be moving up shortly to Clark Field, Manila where we shall begin to pound the

China Coast and send twice as many ferries to Formosa. The 90th, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and 22nd Groups will operate from Clark so the Japs shall begin to see what a hundred plane raids will cost them.

### **February 21, 1945, Wednesday**

A very clear day with a soft breeze blowing in from the ocean making the palm trees sway gently. The mission today was a simple one - a spot full of Japs are holding a valuable sector about twenty miles from Clark Field at which our infantry would like to have very much. So again the 22nd group with light 1000 pounders are going up to clear a part so the American's may advance. The Philippines are almost ours except for the northern lagoon and a few small islands, the old way of starving the Japs out always works. Attended the show "Hell & Pepper" and was an exceptionally swell stage play. More beautiful women than I've seen in a long time - sure makes one think of home.

### **February 22, 1945, Thursday**

Very, very clear day - a wonderful day to bomb the Japs, but what do we do but sit on our asses. There really isn't a thing to do when one is not flying. The natives do your laundry for a price of about one peso. It really is clean - much cleaner than most American laundries can produce. The Navy operates a Pom Pom house up the road, and each day we watch them going to and from about noon time when it is a free hour. Last of the Fifth Group from the 13th are beginning to come in. They shall be operating from Samar after the move. If it takes a fight to win, then battle for all it's worth.

### **February 23, 1945, Friday**

Very nice day today and with nothing to do but loaf. No mission today as the maintenance is installing bomb bay tanks again so it's Formosa tomorrow. Had a lecture on escape & evasion in case we come close to Formosa. Have a couple of new insignia's - first a Chinese flag with code on it stating we are American Airmen and we are to be given all the help

possible. Went for a swim at the beach. After walking out for a mile over coral, which we wore our shoes, we came to the breakers which were eight or nine feet high, and it really was grand - not swimming but being pushed around by the waves. So ends another day - tomorrow Formosa.

### **February 24, 1945, Saturday**

Again a very cloudy day, and we wake in the morning at three A.M. Target for today the Takao railroad and shipping harbor Takao, Formosa. Take off at 0700 hours and fly single ship to rendezvous spot Babuyan Island 220 south miles of Southern Formosa. Made a minute bomb run, but because of under-cast unable to see where they hit and as is usually someone fouled up and only half the ship in formation dropped the bombs, so back over we go. Had a new system of jamming radar guns with trial of some sort. The second time over the under-cast broke and large fires could be seen on the target. Most of the bombs, however, landed in the drink. They threw a bit of flak up at us the second time. Result one ship received a large hole in the bomb bay. Everyone returned. After we left, the 90th, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and 38th went over and blew hell out of them.

*Bombing mission 2, Hours: 10:35, Points: 6, Total hours: 21:35*

### **February 25, 1945, Sunday**

Spurts of rain off and on throughout the day. Today being a rest day as weather clears we do nothing. Attended chapel this morning and it's always welcome and comforting to attend it regularly. Not much to say today as we stayed in our tent all day. Yesterday Japan announced that Formosa was bombed and we lost several heavy bombers - what a crock. All our planes returned without a scratch. So ends another day.

### **February 26, 1945, Monday**

Very nice day today except it keeps raining all the time, but such is life on Samar. Sat on our fannies today as usual when not flying, but what else should one do. Our ships went out of Clark Field and bombed hell out of a port full of Japs that are trapped. If only the people knew just how much

fireworks are taking place on the islands, they would say it's impossible. So ends another day.

## **February 27, 1945, Tuesday**

Very cloudy day and a bad day for bombing but who gives a damn. Target today Palawan Island, Puerto Princesa, a strong Japs ground force area. Within the next few days a task force is going to invade the Palawan Is. and it's our job to blow up their installations so Allied ground forces can take it without too much cost. The 22nd, 90th, 43rd Groups and a squadron of A-20 & D-38 dive bombers will take part of the raid. No flak and no fighters so our bombing was done at 3000. One could feel the concussion of the bombs when they hit (6x1000) as we were so low. Made two bomb runs and the target was 100% destroyed.

*Bombing mission 3, Hours: 6:40, Total hours: 28:15*

## **February 28, 1945, Wednesday**

Very clear day today except for the usual cumulus clouds building over the mountains. Didn't do very much today except lay around. The boys went to the Mindanao to clear the Japs out so Allied troops can land and make a beachhead. Ventured down to the line today to look over a few wrecked B-24's to see if we could use anything off of them - not a thing left on. Here comes our planes and again all have returned. Just heard in my first letter from Gladys that Joe Satauski died in France. I liked Joe a lot - no one ever knew we were good pals, but he rated high in my estimation. God damn this war.

## **March 1, 1945, Thursday**

Arise at three this morning and found our target to be the large city of Tainan, Formosa, an exceptionally strong industrial point. The 19th Group hit Takao, the 90th Group hit Hieto, and by the time we reached our target these two were in flames. We dropped eight - 500 lb. demolitions and were told to destroy the town. The first squadron in, the 408th, took a terrible posting from ack-ack. Our bombs did not let loose the first run, so we made another. This time they let us have it, but God was with us again, not a ship was hit, and the town was a mass of explosions. The ack-ack was very heavy and yesterday I really sweated watching those little puffs exploding all around the ship. No fighter interceptions as our P-47's were high above waiting eagerly for a Zero. The flight was very long but all our ships returned at dark. As we entered the harbor of Tainan the rival destroyers opened up on us and there's nothing can be worse than a rival ack-ack battery. We tried to make it quick, but we made it too quick; that's why we returned for a second view. Leave it to the Red Raiders to always make a second run, we hit it or keep on trying - we've never failed a mission.

More news from Gladys after me getting shot up and trying so hard to return. It's all finished on my part, and I hope I didn't hurt her too much - hearts mend easy.

*Bombing mission 4, Hours: 10:40, Total hours: 38:55*

## **March 2, 1945, Friday**

Today was very cloudy and all it did today was rain like mad. Nice day to suck it up. The squadron was supposed to go on a mission to Formosa, but someone forgot to gas the ships up – result, no mission and ass kicking down on the line all day long. Just received word that Palawan Island has been invaded by Allies. We did a good job that day we hit it, and after we left the MW guns tore hell out of the place. Puerto Princesa was the main objective and another Jap supply line, but the Palawan group are the Yank's once more. Marines are moving in a couple of days to Manila. Happy day. Wrote "Doc" that we are all washed up - I'm awfully sorry.

## **March 3, 1945, Saturday**

Ah, rest day today as usual - quite clear and the boys are making a long haul today. Tainan, Formosa. Johnnie's ship lost an engine over the target and was forced down at Lingayen. Hope everything is OK. Target destroyed at Formosa and again the Japs are slowly being pushed back to where they belong.

## **March 4, 1945, Sunday**

Quite cloudy today but that's nothing new around here. Ferried an advance echelon to Clark to clear our area and begin setting up our new home. Quite a nice looking place at Clark - not much left standing – Zeros, Zekes, and Betty's wrecked and burned all over the area. Hanger's a total wreck. Seems strange you bomb it a month ago and now you are moving in. Saw Manila and its terrible wreckage. The Japs made sure that very little was left for the Yanks. It's flattened out like a pancake. Not far from Clark Field there still is fierce fighting in the hills - the last Japs slowing, being wiped out. So ends another day.

*Transition mission: Hours: 5:30*

## **March 5, 1945, Monday**

Very, very cloudy day today and what weather for a mission, but no one seems to give a damn. Took off at 0815 and flew for one hour on instruments through fog, cumulus clouds, rain and hail. The mission was up near Manila about 30 miles east where the infantry is trying to clear out some Japs who for the past few days have been shelling Manila and surrounding towns. Group went in as staggered echelon at 4500 and dropped 12x500# demolition bombs over entire area. Easy way to fight a war. It's always the bombs that wipe out these Japs who are hidden in the hills. Returned on instruments through several cumulus clouds and tropical rains.

*Bombing mission 5, Hours: 6:25, Total hours: 45:20*

## **March 6, 1945, Tuesday**

Very clear day today and no rain for a change, but no doubt it will begin and when it does it's going to come down in buckets full. The boys went up to the same place as we did yesterday and are really blasting the Japs. Got word from the ground forces that our bombs sure did a hell of a lot of good. Without our bombing they could never have gotten them out for quite some time.

## **March 7, 1945, Wednesday**

Again a beautiful day and still no rain. If it keeps on this place will actually dry out. No mission today, looks like we are leaving for sure in the next few days. So for now we are taking a load of equipment up to Clark. I hope we get a good camp site. Got some new crews in within the last five days - such is life, maybe we won't need 100 points to finish up. Let's hope so. Nothing to write about - five letters from Mary - ten from home - one from Doc. T.S.

## **March 8, 1945, Thursday**

Today a front has moved in and, as usual, the planes are in the air today. Six of them up to Clark Field with more material for the new base. The flight up was flown on instruments and the flight back the same. The weather is very bad, and we are expecting this weather to reach Sumar tomorrow. Clark is the same manner as before - a mass of rain. On the hills the Japs and 4th & 5th Cavalry Division are rising hell. Hills about 30 miles from Manila the Japs are still shelling the city. They are a hard lot to clear out. Not much to say today - just another day.

*Bombing mission 6: Hours: 6:15, Total hours: 51:35*

## **March 9, 1945, Friday**

Very cloudy day today with plenty of rain as usual. No mission today as the base is breaking up. The 19th Squadron is now moved up to Clark, and we are leaving tomorrow. I'll probably be last one out as the Navigators

and first pilot will have to ferry the ships up. Not much doing today - lay on our fannies all day not doing a thing. So ends another day.

### **March 10, 1945, Saturday**

Rain - rain the beautiful rain. Practically all the group has now moved to Manila. The remaining part of the Squadron is freed for ferrying. News from the fronts just received as follows, Iwo Jima is in the Allie's hands and the island is completely under American rule. Mandalay is in British hands and mopping up of few remaining Japs are now in operation. 300 B-29's hit Tokyo and one area of 15 sq. miles is left burning and in ruin.

### **March 11, 1945, Sunday**

Rain today, as usual. Ferried cargo up to Clark and return. Under weather the whole trip, and it was really rough going.

*Transition mission: Hours: 5:00*

### **March 12, 1945, Monday**

Severe tropical storms in locality - again a cargo flight to Clark and return. A regular four hour run and flight back took eight hours. Under weather all the time and had to stay above Samar base until gas became so low that we either had to land or bail out. Visibility not quite 100 yards but in we came at 200 ft. altitude and blind landed safely. Sure glad when summer arrives as the rains stop, and its clear flying weather.

*Transition mission: Hours: 6:20*

### **March 13, 1945, Tuesday**

Very cloudy and as usual raining like mad man. Complete area under water. I have never in my life seen so much rain except in Alabama. Today was F.O. (Field Officer) day.

### **March 14, 1945, Wednesday**

Rain - Rain - rain, so much rain that one needs hip boots to make travel. Made another trip again to Clark with bag and baggage - one of these

months we shall completely have the 22nd Group moved. They had a mission to Formosa today - hit the target and all planes returned safely. Today our group found a grenade under the wheel of the 408th Squadron planes. There are plenty of Japs still in the area.

*Bombing mission 7, Hours 5:00, Total hours: 56:35*

### **March 15, 1945, Thursday**

Today we make another trip to Clark, this time to stay. The area at Samar is practically under a foot of mud. Start the day being in a typhoon belt. Clark is quite nice - very warm and plenty of dust, but our area is a good deal from the strip and quite clean except when a truck drives by. Manila is completely burned down. The other small towns are in quite good shape. It seems the natives always have a cigarette inflation when we come - with a cigarette one can buy almost anything.

*Transition mission, Hours 2:25*

### **March 16, 1945, Friday**

Very clear - dry day today. Mission today to Taihoku, Formosa, Japan's strong point of Formosa. A solid undercover of clouds all the way to Taihoku located at Formosa's northern tip. Target was completely covered with clouds. Radar controlled guns were excellent, and the Japs scored a hit on the 408th Squadron in #2 engine. Smoke was seen and it was finally diminished. No ships went down today. Expected fighters but the 49th Fighter Group of P-38's are our escort, and the Nips are quite afraid of them. A hot spot and I really thought we'd catch, hell - I suppose we will the next time as they weren't expecting us to come that far.

*Bombing mission 8, Hours: 9:25, Total hours: 66:00*

### **March 17, 1945, Saturday**

Very clear day. Ah the natives they are hounding us to death selling their wares namely bananas and watermelons by the car load. We are having a difficult job getting our little future home in order. Things were very poor condition, but with a little effort this area will really look swell. Our main

exchange is cigarettes and if we keep on, we fellows will be buying back the articles that we used for exchange. That's our main trouble, we give too much away for nothing.

### **March 18, 1945, Sunday**

Very beautiful day today, reminds one of Tucson. Today was a ground support mission, and it was a complete failure. It seems the rumor goes that the bombs were dropped in the wrong place and several American troops were killed. No one knows the exact story, but some caught holy hell for this boner. Today we make a wall rack - wonderful thing this bamboo - make almost anything. Attended church tonight, and it was very comforting feeling - it always is.

### **March 19, 1945, Monday**

Not a cloud in the sky and another beautiful day. Today we went to the great city of Angeles and San Fernando. These towns are similar to cheap Mexican towns back in the States – dirty, cow crap all over everything - dirty restaurants and strange looking stores. Town is about 10 miles away and the ride is a dusty one all the way - the first use I've found for the goggles I was issued. Today we were very constructive and built a table - what a table - a good strong gust will blow hell out of everything. Tonight Japs are in the area so we had to sleep with our pistols under our pillows.

### **March 20, 1945, Tuesday**

A bit cloudy today but the sun is beaming brightly as usual. One thing we have is a very good laundry service. These people really make things snow white; however, we furnish the soap but such is life. Again we are very constructive and ventured over to a Jap Zero and ripped out a main fuel cell which we have erected for a wash supply unit. Not bad but now all we have to do is find some way to fill it where is empties. Today another ground support mission, but we dropped 140 tons of bombs in Lingayen Bay - more fish for sale.

## **March 21, 1945, Wednesday**

Very beautiful day today with the sun shining so bright - today we worked like beavers. Dug a hole twelve feet deep and 12 x 12 for the purpose of a drainage for the Officers showers. Today the boys went for the first time to the China coast. They expected plenty of flak and fighters, but all our ships returned safely. The other squadrons had a few ships shot up but no lives or ships lost in the group, for that we can be thankful for. Went swimming today. We found a little pool at Fort Stotsenburg. The Japs sure blasted hell out of a beautiful camp - it was similar to Maxwell Field, a permanent base but now a pile of ruin and dirt.

## **March 22, 1945, Thursday**

Very clear day today - not a cloud in the sky. Today all the excitement was the people trying to sell us watermelons and bananas. The boys went to northern Luzon on a ground support mission - again we screwed up, dropped the bombs somewhere where we weren't supposed to. Great war if one does not weaken. Soaked out in the sun today and took it easy - helped finish our shower room today - what a laugh.

## **March 23, 1945, Friday**

Very beautiful day today - sunshine all day. Went swimming today, and it was really swell getting away from the heat and dirt. This evening there was a bit of sad news, only five planes returned from the raid to Taihoku, Formosa. One of the boys - the best in the squadron with only a couple of missions to go, Jim Felt and Copilot Fisher first mission did not return. Story goes a direct hit between #3-4 engine and the complete wing blew off. Plane was seen turning and twisting on fire towards earth. Some say a chute was seen opening near the ground but it was in Formosa's key town and the heart of the country. Crew counted missing - killed. Strange feeling when only yesterday you joked and ate with him - now it's as if he never lived at all.

## **March 24, 1945, Saturday**

Very clear day today and today another mission – this time to an industrial key point of Takao, Formosa. We were lead squadron of the group, and today we carried 8x1000 trying our best to best to get even for what happened yesterday. Either yesterday they really knocked out the powerhouse that furnishes 80% of Formosa's power so the radar guns could not fire, or else we caught them off guard. There was not one burst of flak, and all our bombs blew the target sky high. Second squadron lost a ship today in the return trip - ran into weather and they say crashed into a mountain inside near Lingayen Gulf.

*Bombing mission 9, Hours 6:30, Total hours: 72:30*

## **March 25, 1945, Sunday**

Very clear day today - sun shine very brightly. Mission today was a ground support but due to weather over the target, the flight did not take off. Loafed in the sun all day today and this evening attended chapel services. Chapel isn't completed yet so we must all sit outside on the ground and attend. It really makes no difference does it as we are there not to just sit in a comfortable place, but to hear the word of God. So ends another day.

## **March 26, 1945, Monday**

It's beauty in the air today. Worked out this afternoon in the pool and loafed in the sunshine all day. This evening we Officers had to lay the cement flooring for our mess hall. What a job - we worked from five till one in the morning hauling, laying, making cement. We can truthfully say I've done more work in this one evening than the natives could do in two weeks. Everyone is very tired out, but the looks of the job can prove we actually worked like beavers.

## **March 27, 1945, Tuesday**

No journal entry

## **March 28, 1945, Wednesday**

No journal entry

## **March 29, 1945, Thursday**

No journal entry

## **March 30, 1945, Friday**

Very clear day today. Mission today was to Matsuyama, Formosa carrying 4500# of frag bombs - target and aircraft dispersal area. Took off at 0815 landed 1715. Our fighter cover all the way to northern Formosa was P-38 "Satan's Angels". The target was completely clear of clouds and as result we ran into loads of flak. About our element there was very little however, #4 ship received three large holes - the 19th, 408th and 2nd really had the books thrown up at them. No ships lost, no one injured, target completely in flames, planes destroyed. We were expecting all hell to break loose. As a whole, it was quite an easy mission. Someday they really are going to let us have it.

*Bombing mission 10, Hours: 8:50, Points: 1, Total points: 20.3 Total hours: 82:30*

## **March 31, 1945, Saturday**

Very warm day today and as usual we loafed. As you were we put in a floor of our house today and what a job -and I must say the job really is a good job for a change. No mission today. M&T, so there is very little to write about. Went to the show tonight and what a lousy picture. I wish to hell Hollywood would show a good picture far from war, we fellows really get sick of that old horse shit.

## **April 1, 1945, Sunday**

Today we had a little rain and it surely helped the dust. Attended church today and it was very comforting, as the end of the week always needs a comforting thought. News today that the missing ship that was reported lost from the 19th Squadron near Leyte, was found and all lives reported saved. Tach's ship is accounted "missing in action".

## **April 2, 1945, Monday**

Very clear today. A little rain, about 2000, but we are expecting the rains and monsoon soon. No mission today, so naturally everyone lays on his ass. We are waiting for some lumber but no luck. The island of \_\_\_\_\_ was attacked by United States infantry supported by 400 ships. Losses were heavy, but island is almost in Allied hands.

## **April 3, 1945, Tuesday**

Very cloudy today and a slight rain at hand. The mission today was really to a bad spot, for the first time, Hong Kong, China. All our ships returned with the following report. Heavy naval flak over target followed by ground phosphoric flak. A few fighters were seen and struck at the 19th Squadron crippling one ship; however, it returned safely. Inestimate number of ships were destroyed in the harbor. Good day today.

## **April 4, 1945, Wednesday**

### **Hone Kong, China**

Very clear today on our mission to Hong Kong, China. The target today was harbor shipping and oil and gasoline refinery. There was very little flak today and no fighters. The target was destroyed completely. Smoke from yesterday's raid could still be seen. The 408th has a ship in China or still missing. Hong Kong is an extremely large port full of Japs, and I am thoroughly convinced that the main battle will not be in Japan but in China.

One of these days things are really going to break loose and our losses will be heavy, but the turning point of the war will be decided. The barrage of flak was terrible – from 28 gun batteries a solid wall of steel.

*Bombing Mission 11, Hours 8:15, Points: 4, Extra Points: 22.1,  
Total hours: 90.45*

### **April 5, 1945, Thursday**

Today a beautiful day here on Luzon. No mission today so we are finishing our house. Flat frame was built today, and we now have a parachute inside to keep out the heat and made a bit more reflection. It was quite a job, but it was well worth the effort as the place is very cozy and comfortable. People now eating from plates. The natives are our mess boys so at least we are treated as officers should be treated. A letter from Gladys. It was so good to receive. I like that girl. Seen the pictures of yesterday's bombing, and we really flattened that place out.

### **April 6, 1945, Friday**

Very beautiful day today. Mission today was hunting shipping along the China coast. Jap Task Force headed north from Hong Kong. Our ships returned after an all-day search without finding the ships. Finally they ended up in a town in central Formosa and got rid of the bomb load. Today we added our so called left wing to the house making it a bit bigger. The area is really beginning to shape up thanks to the work and cooperation to all the fellows.

### **April 7, 1945, Saturday**

Another beautiful sunshine day. I'm always up at the crack of dawn for breakfast. It's always I who arise the rest of the boys up. Today was no mission so we built the other so called wing of our little house. All we need now is screening to complete the job. A B-17 came in from patrol duty all shot to holy hell, so we figure the Japs have still a number of fighters on their strips in northern Luzon. The islands in southern Luzon are practically

all being taken by Allied hands. Burma has fierce battles raging. Hong Kong bombed along with Formosa by the 380th, 43rd, and 90th B.G.

### **April 8, 1945, Sunday**

Today was the day that was set aside for rest. Attended church this morning. Our chapel is really humming. Very pretty and by next Sunday it should be finished. Loafed. Read today and my mind was a thousand miles from the wars. Mostly towards home, to Gladys and Mom. That's a complicated affair. One won't live with the other yet I want both of them. Oh well, let everything balance out for itself--I hope.

### **April 9, 1945, Monday**

Very warm day today. Sky beautiful blue quite similar to southern California. Really wasn't much to do this day. No mission. Planes are all getting fixed for forthcoming raid. Went swimming today, and it sure felt great to begin to work out after a couple of days of loafing. Most of the Filipinos are kept off the area. It seems the V.D. rate is so high that all towns are off limits and the laundry women are only permitted on the area in daytime. We need a little rain as the dust is beginning to become quite thick once again.

### **April 10, 1945, Tuesday**

Very warm day today, and the faint aroma of work is in the area. Today I swung the compass on one of our new ships, and I almost forgotten how. Things turned out pretty good. I lost my first pilot, Skarstedt. He messed up a landing last week, and he's now flying co-pilot. It wasn't his fault, but the wheels happen to see him so he got the ax. Such is life. No mission again today. Fifth Bomber Command better get going or the group will really become lazy.

*Transition mission, Hours 2:15*

## **April 11, 1945, Wednesday**

### **Okayama, Formosa**

Very nice day over Clark Field. Mission today was 8 x 1000 pounders blasting industrial areas in the city of Okayama, Formosa. After leaving the coast of Luzon, there was a continuous undercast and overcast. As we neared the target the formation broke up because of clouds, and when we finally came out at 16000 over Okayama, there was none of our Squadron around so we found two ships of the 408th and one of the 2nd Squadron and made our ETA run our target. Intercepted by one "Tojo" fighter - no ack-ack and no damage done. We came back alone through weather all the way, was a bit off course and glad we broke out in the clear over Luzon. Tagged at least five hours instrument. How rough it is to navigate through weather. All in all, it was really a screwed up mission for the whole group. It's amazing that all our ships returned between formation flying in weather and lone stragglers. Sometimes I wonder.

*Bombing mission 12, Hours: 7:45, Points: 1.2, Total points: 23.3,  
Total hours: 98:30*

## **April 12, 1945, Thursday**

Very warm day today. It seems to be summer beginning although the rainy season has to come as yet. No mission today and today as all others are sack days. That's one place where you can find most of the boys. The area is looking better day by day, when everyone works together things really can be accomplished.

## **April 13, 1945, Friday**

### **President Roosevelt dies**

Exceptionally warm today. Built a horizontal bar so I can work out. I just can't stand laying around on my dead ass. Today we felt bad as we received news that our president died. Many people here hated Roosevelt, but many more thought the world of him. He, in my estimation, was a great man, and his name shall go down in history. The greatest president the world has known. His job was difficult, and I'm very glad that such a man was

our president during time of war. The people don't realize what a great loss the world has been confronted with. A hundred and thirty million people can't be wrong when they chose him as our representative. I hope our next man does half as well.

### April 14, 1945, Saturday

Very cloudy today as usual. Mission today was to Formosa, and it seems the boys screwed up a bit. All our ships returned, thank God. Worked out on the high bar today which gave me a little exercise. All the natives are now kept off the area. Thank God for that. It is very dusty, especially at the strip. The 43rd had a ship come in on a crash landing. It was really shot up very bad although no one was injured. The left wheel collapsed on landing, and the plane splattered all over the runway.



*Though not on this day, some PT (physical training) with the guys.*

**April 15, 1945, Sunday**

**Shinchiku, Formosa**

Beautiful Sunday but it wasn't Sunday for us. It was a very sad day. Mission today was to Shinchiku, Formosa, a hot spot air drome. We really ran into trouble today. As we were on the bomb run a burst of flak broke beneath the wing and fuselage. It burst so close that smoke rose in the bomb bays. As I jumped to reach the fire extinguisher I landed out on the left wing and #3 ship got a direct hit in the bomb bay before it dropped its frag bombs. The ship literally disintegrated in mid-air--the explosion was terrific. Every ship in the Squadron had at least twenty holes from the frag bomb exploding from #3 ship. The plane was blown completely apart - no chutes were seen to open. Ship 119 had an engine shot out and the Squadron dropped back to help it out. Also lost #1 engine and the boys fought for life to keep that plane in the air. They made it to the base - on a prayer. The ship shot down was Hugs. He had 98 points. It wasn't a very pretty sight to see when you know that ten men have just died in front of your very eyes. Let anyone say one damn word to me when I return -"This is the Lord's day."

As I looked out upon our left wing, flak was bursting all around us. All of a sudden there was a blinding flash. I thought for a moment that our ship was hit. It was then I realized the Hug's plane suffered a direct hit in the bomb bays thus exploding the 6,000 pounds of frag bombs and two thousand gallons of gasoline. I can picture the ten men - a horrified expression on their faces. Of course they never felt a thing, but there must have been one instant when they were alive when the explosion came. The nose turret blew away - wings, engines exploded in mid-air, and a gigantic ball of fire was visible. Our ship had thirty holes in it as we were flying wing and the frags blew hell out of everything. It is much better to die in that manner as there was no suffering.

People back home can't possibly picture such a scene. Why must they die? Why must we all die? A sight I never shall forget - never. Wings, engines, rudders, small pieces all afire and falling, tumbling toward the

earth, and in the mess ten mangled bodies. We shall avenge their death by totally destroying the town and airdrome of Shinchiku.

*Bombing mission 13, Hours 9:10, Points: 4.8, Total points: 28.1,  
Total hours: 107:40*

### **April 16, 1945, Monday**

Very warm day today. We are sending out every available ship today. Fifth Bomber Command is going to send out every ship in the 5th until Shinchiku and Matsuyama and Okayama are blown sky high and not one building stands. The 380th, 90th, 43rd and us hit it daily, also the B-25s, A-20s and B-29s. Yesterday the 380th and 43rd lost a ship. In our group three ships were lost. Some day we shall repay that debt in full with interest.

### **April 17, 1945, Tuesday**

Today was a very beautiful day. The mission today was to Shinchiku again to knock out the air drome. The reason the 5th Air Force is throwing everything they can is because the Japs have some source of supply from Formosa and taking all the reserves up to the Ryukyu Island where our ground troops are having a tough time. We made the first run today, and it was so screwed up that we had to make a second run. We found them today. Went in a high altitude and missed most of the ack-ack. We missed the target completely therefore the boys will have to go back. Piss poor mission. As we drew near the bad spot of Shinchiku we could see Archer 1 already over and small puffs of black smoke from ack-ack. The Nips were a bit confused as we went at high altitude, but the day was clear and as we watched the small burst began to climb and soon it had reached our altitude of 16,000. The heavies must now be firing as we are out of range of the mediums. As we went over the target the first time I could see the bursts all around us and below gradually climbing. Someone screwed up so over we went again. I never fear going on a mission until we are over and the flak begins. Then I know it would only take one good burst to snuff out my and the crew's life. We are just like clay pigeons on that bomb run. It only last about 30 seconds, but what an eternity. After bombs away then we are all over the sky. Makes

it very difficult to hit us. Each time we fly over a target where ack-ack is heavy, we lose days out of our lives. Yes you just can't help that worry. I always say if I die, it was God's will.

*Bombing mission 14, Hours 9:05, Points: 2.8, Total points: 30.9,  
Total hours: 116:45*

### **April 18, 1945, Wednesday**

Very warm today. Today's target was Matsayama, Formosa. Each squadron has put about twelve ships in the air and flying at high altitude the Nips are really catching hell. The boys really looked good going out this morning. They have just returned over the field, and all twelve are home safely. Early this morning a P-38 came home from a raid with an engine on fire. The pilot was injured. As he came on his approach he didn't know he had a 500# hang up. As he was over the field the bomb broke away when he pulled the ship up to bail out. The bomb landed on a 43rd Group ship exploding the plane and killing fifteen men. The pilot of the 38 bailed out, and as he came down his chute was on fire. He plunged to his death in the path of an aircraft taking off.

### **April 19, 1945, Thursday**

Very cloudy day today. But very warm and dusty. Mission today was to Shinchiku, Formosa again. Beautiful 8 x 1,000 in a business town. The 90th B.G. was at 9,000 ft. doling single ship guns on the air drome keeping the flak batteries busy while high above the town of Shinchiku the 22nd, 380th, 43rd Bomb Groups layered thousand pounders in the main street. The target was completely covered over so the run was made H2X B-24 (*H2X, a radar system also known as "Mickey Set/Man", is a ground mapping radar used in combat. It was used by the ASAAF during World War II as a navigation system for daylight overcast and night time operations. Several B-24's were outfitted with this system*). There was three bursts of flak and that's all. The 90th really must have taken care of the ack-ack. The enemy ship came up only to obtain our altitude and speed, but he shot away

damn soon when our 51's appeared. Mickey man says 100% hits. The town of Shinchiku and airdrome is completely destroyed, but that doesn't bring Hugs back. #402 holed.

*Bombing mission 15, Hours: 8:40, Points: 2.7, Total hours: 125.25*

### **April 20, 1945, Friday**

Very cloudy and warm day today. M&T today so no flights are out. Read over the A-2 summary results as follows. Two ships from the 380th Group, 531st Squadron were shot down this week by enemy fighters. Two more ships from the 380th Group were lost as they strafed a train. The train was a fake ack-ack battery moving north to Tainan. The 90th and 43rd did quite well; however, the 43rd lost a ship over Shinchiku and had one make a crash landing near the field.

### **April 21, 1945, Saturday**

Very beautiful spring day here in Luzon. Again our outfit didn't fly. The 380th, 90th and 43rd are blasting Formosa day after day. They never seem to have any rest. Latest rumor that just came from intelligence is Gen. Arnold is proud of the 5th Air Force and claims it the best Air Force in the world. As a reward the 5th will be the first B-24 and first Air Force to be based on Okinawa and our strikes will take us to the Empire of Japan. What a day that will be when one can watch the 1,000 pounders dropping on Tokyo.

## **April 22, 1945, Sunday**

Beautiful Sunday here in the islands. Attended church this morning, and it really was grand. Our chapel is finally built and is actually very beautiful. I'll have to take some pictures of it. We now have a bell which rings each Sunday morning. The mission today was up Takao Harbor and the boys made 80% hits today. Six planes went out and each dropped 500# frag bombs, a total three tons, 20 tons of bombs. Loafed around today, but that's about all we ever do.



***"This is our new Chapel – we are awfully proud of it as its simplicity and comfort adds something to our Sunday church service."***

## **April 23, 1945, Monday**

Very warm day today. Sun shining very bright. Sure wish it would rain. M&T today for the Group so no flights. Yesterday the 380th Group were the first B-24s to raid south Indo China. The target was shipping. Great

amount of damage was done to the docks along the coast. One large freighter or transport was sunk. B-25s operating from Lingayen smashed shipping in the China Sea and Hong Kong coast.

### **April 24, 1945, Tuesday**

Clear day today. The suns hotter then all hell. Again the squadron has M&T so no mission scheduled. Today we had a large full session regarding our bombing. It seems its piss poor so now bombing tactics and approaches are now being worked out. The 43rd & 90th Bomb Groups raided Matsuyama and Taichu, Formosa bombing tenements and towns, industry. No planes were lost and large amount of damage was done. B-25s from Lingayen blasted shipping along Formosa coast and North China Sea.

### **April 25, 1945, Wednesday**

Today was a grand support mission striking Jap implements in northern Luzon. Ships carried 500# demolitions and 100# frag clusters. Bombing was fair and ships returned in 4 hours. 90th & 43rd again blasted Formosa-Takao-Matsuyama dromes. No ships were lost and damage was intense to Nip dromes. A B-25 was taking off from our new strip when it lost an engine, crashed onto the main road hitting a truck, and exploded in the near field. All occupants of the truck and ship died. The plane dug a furrow three feet deep and at least 100 yards.

### **April 26, 1945, Thursday**

M&T today - what the hell goes on? Today the new 12,000 air strip opened and is really is a beauty. B-29's, B-32's, B-24's will operate from Clark very shortly.

### **April 27, 1945, Friday**

An exceptionally warm day today. Today looks like summer is here in bloom. Again the group has M&T. Guess there is some bad weather in Formosa and North Luzon. Went to the line and aligned drift meter and astro brackets. Some job. Went swimming this afternoon as usual.

## **April 28, 1945, Saturday**

Very warm and dry day today. Mission today was to Heito oil refineries. On the way up there was a solid front and the ships flew instruments all the way up and bombing was really messed up. Ships bombed supposedly on radar, but formations could not be kept in clouds and the result all ships missed the target except Mickie's ship. On the whole the mission was a flop so we are going up again tomorrow. Ack-ack was very accurate and two of the ships were holed. All ships return safely.

## **April 29, 1945, Sunday**

Very cloudy today and due to an awfully large front over the field and extending north to Somara all missions to Formosa, China and North China Sea have been canceled. Our chapel is really quite pretty. It seems when there is a swell chapel to go to more fellows attend. Today was communion - not Lutheran, but I went as it is for the same purpose. For once it has rained a good deal and the dust is beginning to lay down again. On a check up on points up to and including today I find I have: 125.5 hours, 34.1 points, 15 missions.

## **April 30, 1945, Monday**

### **Toshien, Formosa**

Very cloudy day today. The mission today was to Toshien oil storage depot. We carried 12x250 general purpose bombs. The weather was fair with about \_\_\_\_ all the way up. The Squadron decided to use a new approach to go away from the ack-ack, and it really worked out swell. Of course we missed the target so back again we go tomorrow. The 43rd Bomb Group hit another storage depot not far from ours and really hit it good. Smoke columns rose to 8,000 feet, and fire spurted up 1,000 feet. Saw large tank destroyed and several damaged. In our group ship 311 was holed, ack-ack was inaccurate and mild. Newest rumor just came in: we move to Okinawa May 28th.

*Bombing mission 16, Hours 6:40, Total points: 36.4, Total hours: 131.55*

## **May 1, 1945, Tuesday**

Exceptionally warm day today. The mission today was in Northern Formosa, but due to weather being so bad the ships dumped their bombs anywhere they possibly could. Probably plowed up plenty of rice fields for the Formosans. All ships returned. A night mission tonight - the first one to North China - near Shanghai to blow up the American held oil refineries so the Japs will stop shipping oil to the Ryukyus. In the Ryukyus a 100 Jap plane raid was reported. Strange things are happening around here, something in the wind. Payday today which sure helps out, in a very helpful way.

## **May 2, 1945, Wednesday**

### **3 runs ground support**

Very cloudy day today. The mission was a ground support, to help the Infantry clean out a pocketful of Nips embedded on the eastern mountains in southern Luzon up 25 miles northeast of Manila. We made the runs on the target. Work such as this has to be precision bombing as a few yards away from the line were our own American troops. Our bombs have to be accurate, and that is the reason for so many runs - Carried 24x250 frags. Hit target 100%.

*Bombing mission 17, Hours: 2.25, Points: 0.4, Total points: 36.8,  
Total hours: 134.10*

## **May 3, 1945, Thursday**

### **3 runs ground support**

Very clear this morning, but the clouds are already building. The ground forces called up and said our bombing was excellent; however, there are still some Nips dug very deep in the ground and are holding up Allied advances. They recommended one more mission which would destroy them. Mission same place. Carried 24-250 frags. We made 10 runs at 8,000 ft. but due to cloud coverage and fear of misjudging target and hitting our troops, we dropped down to 2,500 ft. and made runs at 190 IAS. This time

every ship in the element hit directly where we suppose to - 100% hit on target.

*Bombing mission 18, Hours: 3.4, Points: .68, Total points: 37.4,  
Total hours: 137.50*

### **May 4, 1945, Friday**

Very beautiful day today so I took off for Manila with the boys. The Japs really did a beautiful job in destroying Manila; however, the people are slowly building the city again. It is very surprising but the Philippine people hid all the reliable articles when the Nips were here, but now everything is out - fountain pens, watches (Bulova) linen sheets, all articles which are extremely hard to obtain in the States but here you can at the same price. Of course all the fine buildings and art works are completely burned down, but the town still goes on. Even the restaurants are in full swing now, almost like civilization.

### **May 5, 1945, Saturday**

Strike today was Amoy Island, China. Boys took off at 0600 hours and all safely returned at 1700. They carried 8x1,000 pounders and struck at vital shipping docks. Jim came up from Mindoro today, and we had a great time together. The 380th has lost quite a few ships on their raids to China, and it worries him quite a bit.

### **May 6, 1945, Sunday**

Today is the day of rest. Attended morning chapel services, and they were very nice. Our church is really becoming a spot of beauty, each Sunday a bit more is added. Soon we shall have it completed. The mission today was to Tainan, southern Formosa. All ships returned safely. The flack was very weak and no fighters. I believe Formosa is now on its last leg. All supply lines are cut off and the Nips are trapped.

## **May 7, 1945, Monday**

### **Germany Surrenders**

Very cloudy day today. Mission today was a ground support to northern Luzon. The town was a sector that was holding up our forces in their advance to the eastern coast of Luzon. We covered 12 X 250 frags - made three runs on target and scored 100% hits. Today one of the days that will live for a long time - at 0241 the German forces in Europe surrendered, and the war is over within England. Iwo Jima has been partly retaken by the Japs. Our forces suffered very heavy and reinforcements are rushed to help. B-25 raided Hong Harbor damaging shipping.

*Bombing mission 19, Hours: 4:05, Points: 0.8, Total points: 38.2,  
Total hours: 141.55*

## **May 8, 1945, Tuesday**

Loaf day.

## **May 9, 1945, Wednesday**

Rained all day today. The mission today was to Canton, China, white cloud air dromes. Last time we went there they shot hell out of us, and we did very little damage.

## **May 10, 1945, Thursday**

Mission today was to Canton, China, air drome. We carried 12x250 lb. frags. Take off at 0800 and as we left the Luzon coast we ran into some very bad weather. I sailed from sea level to 25,000 and extending all the way through Asia into China Sea. We could hardly fly formation, but our squadron managed to arrive at Pratus Reef but was unable to continue in flight. A B-25 was bombing at 100 ft. so he called and told us to turn back. We salvaged bombs in the China Sea. Flew for four hours on instruments. Ships have been struggling in all afternoon. This damn weather.

*Bombing mission 20, Hours: 6:25, Points: 1.2, Total points: 39.7,  
Total hours: 148:20*

## **May 11, 1945, Friday**

Today's mission took us to Toshien, Formosa to destroy barracks and surrounding area. We carried 500# incendiaries. The route up was fair, a bit of weather, and as we neared the target the stratus closed in and the run was made by H2X-B24. As our bombs went away there was a slight break in the sky and the hit was perfect 100%. We also dropped leaflets telling Japan to surrender now while they still have a piece of land left. As we broke away we struggled and four enemy ships came in, but our squadron broke out of the clouds and I guess scared hell out of them. Returning we flew at 600 ft. as the weather was so bad. These tropical frontal storms go as high as 60,000 ft. and extend right down to sea level. We flew for about two hours under severe rains and thunderstorms. The turbulence was fair, but the rain so bad instrument flight had to be flown. One ship in the 408th Squadron ran into trouble. Ack-ack burst close and one gunner was injured and another killed. Our squadron received no flak as we were high today and first ones over. Anyway, it was so cloudy at our altitude they couldn't see us, and we couldn't see the flak burst. The 408th went in below the clouds.

*Bombing mission 21, Hours: 7:45, Points: 1.7, Total points: 41.4,  
Total hours: 156:55*

## **May 12, 1945, Saturday**

Very cloudy and stormy day today. The weather is so bad in South Formosa and East China that today's mission was a ground support. We have had several bad storms today all of which damn near washed our garden away. A ship from the 408th came in yesterday with an engine on fire. As he neared the field he lost another engine. So low to the ground that he hit some telephone wires. That B-24 was a total wreck and the amazing thing it didn't burn and no one out of the crew was injured. You can expect almost anything from a B-24.

## **May 13, 1945, Sunday**

Very cloudy day today. No missions scheduled. Attended chapel this morning, and it feels so good to get away from all the troubles and cares of the world. Our chapel has really become quite a show place. More fellows are attending each Sunday. Sunday is called the day of sack out here. It really takes plenty of energy to move any of these fellows from the sack. Latest report in on missions. Out of 10 B-25s operating from Luzon in three months, 45 have been lost. Not all the crews, but 45 planes.

## **May 14, 1945, Monday**

Mission today was to Hosian, Formosa. Today the mission was worked and entirely new. It was actually planned for a change. All groups in the 5th went after the town. All squadrons went in, in group formation, with groups in trail. All the groups carried the new Napalm bomb. Our group carried 1x500 incendiary. As we approached we could see the town in flames and flattened like a pancake. The weather closed in so we bombed by radar on Toshien town causing minor damage in harbor and to one ship. Ack-ack nil, fighters nil. The city of Hosian was literally flattened here after all the group formations so we never have to return to the target.

*Bombing mission 22, Hours: 7:20, Points: 1.4, Total points: 42.8,  
Total hours: 164:20*

## **May 15, 1945, Tuesday**

Rain all day today without one let up. Mission today was to Shinchiku, Formosa, all our ships returned safely, no ack-ack, no fighters. Wasn't very much doing today. Had a visit from a fellow in the 345th Med Bomber Group, and he really told some tales. On an average they lose two ships per week, one week on the raids to South Indochina they lost twelve ships out of fifteen in one squadron. Flying at fifty feet strafing and ship bombing isn't in my line. We're fighting a war, but I want to live to tell about it.

## **May 16, 1945, Wednesday**

Visit Manila today. Boy what a mess that town is. The docks were totally destroyed. All large buildings were totally taken to the ground. Streets are torn up but still the shops are open. It actually looks like a cheap Mexican town. The Philippine people have no idea the importance of money so they just blast out with any price and the damn soldiers buy the stuff. Cigars were twenty-five pesos a box. The ride was hell all the way in. Rain and the damn native carts make travel difficult. It's amazing how simple these people live. Little care, I often wonder if they know there is a war on.

## **May 17, 1945, Thursday**

Very nice day today. Jim came to see me today. He is on rest leave. They had to bail out near their base after their ship lost three engines. Two of their crew members were killed in the jump. Sure good to see Jim after all we went through. They ran out of gas near Mindoro and they bailed out in the bay. Jim was in the bay for an hour before he was picked up. Had a very good USO show put on by girls who have been interned in Japanese prison camps since 1941. Anything to take away the boredom.

## **May 18, 1945, Friday**

Very warm day today. Things were very quiet today at Clark. Four groups of the Fifth went to Tainan today. The 45th Group had a ship blown up in the air by a direct hit! Another had two engines shot out and it ditched by the rescue sub--nine men were saved. The 380th, 90th and 22nd all bombed the same town with excellent results. Several of our ships were holed, however, all returned safely. They carried the 2,000 lb. general purpose bombs.

## **May 19, 1945, Saturday**

Mission today to northern Formosa towns of Kiirun, which is believed to be shipping supplies to Okinawa and transporting troops off Formosa. Target was warehouses and shipping installations. We carried four x 2,000 lb. busters. The ack-ack was accurate but moderate holing one ship

(#243). Our bombs ran in a line crossing through the target obtaining 100% hits. The mission was quite easy, no fighters. Some were seen near the ground but no interception. What a large explosion those one toners make. Everything blows sky high.

*Bombing mission 23, Hours: 9:15, Points: 2.8, Total points: 45.6,  
Total hours: 173:35*

### **May 20, 1945, Sunday**

Very nice day today. Attended chapel services this morning. I am sure happy that I don't fly on Sundays as that morning comfort makes one relive his life again. No mission today M&T. Most of the day was spent in the well-known sack. Elements of the 345th work group made raids to Tainan and Taito towns strafing rail, harbor and industrial installations. No ships were lost and excellent results were accomplished. P-51 from Iwo Jima, Mullings raided Tokyo and destroyed rail and shipping installations.

### **May 21, 1945, Monday**

Again a beautiful day in Luzon. No mission today as another M&T day. Newest news from Group headquarters. We shall be staging out of Okinawa within one month bombing Japan, Korea and all points north. Doesn't sound any too good to suit me, but at that rate I'll be home in about four months. B-25 group went to Kiirun but target was closed in because of weather so they went. So target was Takao & Tainan, blowing docks and rail centers.

### **May 22, 1945, Tuesday**

Practice group formation for best bombing results and for best fighter ever, went over all the possible formations. Mission today was to Kiirun and Toshien towns. Ack-ack was from light meager to heavy and inaccurate. No fighter interception, target primary closed into Toshien was pattern bombed. The ships destroyed docks, warehouses, railroad installations. The clouds were 10/10 making a complete undercast so the run was cancelled.

## **May 23, 1945, Wednesday**

Group assembly and practiced over a small reef in Subic Bay. Each run was made in a different formation, and each bomb was dropped by different methods. The groups are practicing group formations for pattern bombing. We shall be fighting Japan very soon in the northern China Provence. *Transition mission: Hours: 4:25*

## **May 24, 1945, Thursday**

Very dull day today, but that's how it has been for the past several days. Very much weather at Formosa and China, and that is the reason for no mission. Today's mission was a ground support mission up to Aparri town at northeast Luzon. Target was barracks and an air strip which is believed to be a means of carrying high ranking Jap wheels out of the Philippines to Formosa, so the group literally destroyed the strip and are sending night fighters up to cover the area.

## **May 25, 1945, Friday**

Again a very warm day with M & T. Weather is very bad at Formosa and China so all missions were cancelled. Tonight we sent out a night recon-ship to the China coast. Stone and Skarstdt, pilots. The last report was it was running low on fuel, and it was 140 miles west of Taichu when they said the engines quit and the crew was bailing out. The last heard news from them was about 0200 yesterday day morning. They are reported missing, but the report will not go in yet until word comes from China. There are many safe areas in China so it is a good chance that they are safe.

## **May 26, 1945, Saturday**

Mission today was another ground support to north Luzon. Carried 4 2,000 busters to knock out an air strip which has been used for carrying out ranking Jap officers. Ships made single passes at the target and scored 100% bomb hits. Personally, I think it's a waste of taxpayer money, but

there's nothing else to do while Formosa and China is socked in from weather.

*Bombing mission 24, Hours: 3:40, Points: 0.7, Total points: 46.3,  
Total hours: 177:15*

### **May 27, 1945, Sunday**

Beautiful Sunday. Very hot today, but it really isn't bad when there is nothing to do. Attended church today, and it's so comforting. The mission yesterday was a ground support to Aparri town to bomb underground installations. The weather really must be bad near China and Formosa to keep the 5th and 43rd inactive so long. Still no word from the night recon which Stone and Skarstdt was on. Still hope we hear soon from them.

### **May 28, 1945, Monday**

Very warm day today with very little to do. Mission today was Kiirun, Formosa to destroy shipping docks and harbor installations. The mission was very easy and the squadron obtained 60% bomb hits. A search mission today was flown to Shanghai and into eastern China for the lost crew. The search ship contacted the secret drome of Chang-Ting and they found that the entire crew of Stone were safely in Chinese hands, and it will take several weeks to make their way safely out of enemy territory. So we shall soon expect to see them again, thank God.

### **May 29, 1945, Tuesday**

Today's mission was a recon-weather and search mission around the eastern coast of Formosa, up to south Shanghai and return China coast through Formosa Strait and North China Sea. The weather was fair and the mission very easy. Of course, single ship is always on the alert for fighters as we are easy prey. Carried two navigators, two radio men, two engineers, and three gunners. No bombs and 3,200 gallons of gas. Our main observation was at Wenchow, China, total distance was about 1,600 miles and flying 11:30 hours. Too bad we didn't have bombs as we spotted a

gunboat in the harbor at northwest Formosa. It's a bit on the rough side traveling single ship. On such a mission we took off at 0600 hours and landed at 1755 hours. Spotted one enemy aircraft, two enemy surface vessels, and a probable submarine. The strike mission today was to Kiirun harbor. Ship 317 was holed, the ack-ack heavy and intense to inaccurate. Zero percentage on target due to probable fighter interception. A nose gunner of the Coleman crew was killed today by his own turret. Story says the turret had a malfunction and the sight cradle came down, crushed his skull and killed him. The turret was at a 90 degree heading and could not be brought around and the first time they actually knew he was dead was on the ground.

*Bombing mission 25, Hours: 11:15, Points: 2.2, Total points: 48.4,  
Total hours: 188:30*

### **May 30, 1945, Wednesday**

Very warm day today. Mission today was to Toshien town, Formosa where the ack-ack is heavy as all hell and a rough time was expected. Our planes returned safely, destroying all of the pinpoint target that they went after. Knight returned today. I brought along Ralph Zimmerman of an Engineer battalion and really enjoyed his talk and manner. He's been over here thirty months and doesn't expect to get home until after the war. T.S. Received news that the 380th Jim's outfit will be moving to Okinawa shortly. Rough deal I'd say.

### **May 31, 1945, Thursday**

Very warm day today. Not very much doing today. Mission was Kiirun shipping and installations. Target was 60% destroyed, ack-ack was heavy, intense and accurate. All our ships returned. The 19th squadron had one ship ditch and one crash land at Saaga strip. The pilot and co-pilot of the crashed plane were both wounded, and the bombardier brought the plane home and crash landed it--without causing injury to the crew. The plane that ditched were all picked up by the rescue sub and are safely aboard. No more word has been heard from our last recon ship since May 28.

## **June 1, 1945, Friday**

Mission today was to Takao, Formosa (see photo) to knock out the square of business activities including headquarters and such. The 43rd Group went in to destroy flak batteries and they did an excellent job. The flak was exceptionally thick when they went over; however, when we went over, the flak almost nil. Either they scared hell out of the Nips or really knocked the flak out. Our bombs hung up so we made a single run on Koshun town for general purposes of piss call Charlie. 100% hits our bombs, 60% the groups. Ship 366 was holed. Bomb load 8 x 1,000.

*Bombing mission 26, Hours: 7:45, Points: 2.5, Total points: 50.9,  
Total hours: 195:10*

Checked in operations for correctness--all OK.



***B-24 over Takao, Formosa. June 1945***

## **June 2, 1945, Saturday**

Very rainy day today. Terrific tropical storms all day. The mission today was to the capital of Formosa - Taihoku. The administration buildings were the main target, trying to stop the Japs from functioning if possible, knock out their source of supply and command. Ack-ack was very accurate. Enemy planes were above the formation dropping phosphorous bombs. One ship of the 19th was hit bad and ditched in the sea, rescued. Another ship came back to Laoag and crash landed with pilot and co-pilot injured. All our ships returned safely. Target 50% destroyed.

## **June 3, 1945, Sunday**

Very cloudy day today. Attended church today and was something just to know that war and all the troubles of the world are forgotten when God is around. Mission today was to the power plant in north Formosa, but could not so secondary was Takao. All ships returned safely. Intelligence reported today that on our last mission to Takao we totally destroyed 450 large buildings and warehouses, damaging countless number of buildings within the rail yards and damaging the rail terminal. Word today that Kiirun is completely flattened out, and we may not return there again.

## **June 4, 1945, Monday**

### **Takao**

Very cloudy day. The cumulus clouds have built up to great heights reading as high as 60,000 ft. which makes flying bad, especially trying to stay in formation. Mission today was to Taihoku, but due to it being completely closed in, we bombed the rail and supply depot in Takao. They didn't shoot one burst of ack-ack at us and no fighters. Can't figure these Nips out. One day they shoot piss out of you, the next you don't really care much. Target 70% destroyed. Looks funny to see box cars and train blown sky high into the air. Word received that Takao is completely wiped out. One more target we won't go back to.

*Bombing mission 27, Hours: 7:05, Points: 1.4, Total points: 52.4,  
Total hours: 202:15*

## **June 5, 1945, Tuesday**

A very warm day today. Quite a few clouds high in the sky, but it adds such beauty. Never think there was a war on. Mission today was to (blank space) after an air drome where intelligence believes planes are operating from Formosa. Target was 80% destroyed by our group so we chalk up another victory. Today we laid cement for the Officers Club floor. It's quite a job trying to draw these guys off their back to do anything. Latest rumor - China our next stop. I hope I'll be home by that time.

## **June 6, 1945, Wednesday**

Beautiful rain and the weather is very bad. So today was M&T. Really not much doing on rainy days. We worked on the club today laying cement and minor fixtures. It's amazing just how lazy one can actually become in combat.

## **June 7, 1945 Thursday**

More rain and again all planes are grounded so M&T or, in other words, loaf day. Went and had my teeth x-rayed for faults which there are a few naturally. Our food is really piss poor and it seems there is a lack of vitamins causing a diet deficiency of some sort, these bringing on a certain fungus disease that attacks anywhere especially eyes, ears, and toes. I really get sore at this life. If only we could fly each day, but here we sit loafing. Of course when we do, we fly our ass off.

## **June 8, 1945, Friday**

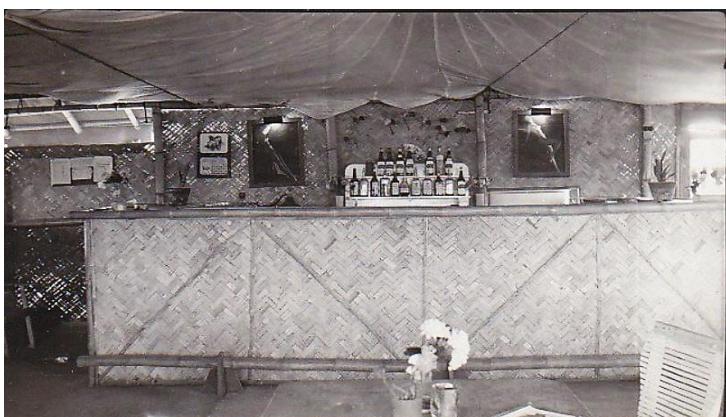
Rain, rain, constantly all day and last night. There must be a permanent front about the place. Again loaf day, but we continued work on the club by laying the rest of the dance floor. Quite a bit to do in it, but we shall claim to have the best club at Clark Field. Of course that lets out the Wheel Club in Fort Stotsenburg. They predict 21 inches of rain this month, we must be all finished as it surely has rained at least twenty in the past three days.

## **June 9, 1945, Saturday**

Again we are having rain. The ceiling is so low that all planes have been grounded and none have ventured into the field. Again we sit on our asses - not even the 25 boys are out and that means the weather really is bad. Our club is coming along just fine, but the only trouble is all the fellows refuse to help out so just a couple of us are working. The big day was card playing. John and the crew went to Toshien and brought up our foot lockers. I can really say they were a welcome sight. Everything intact, most precious article the Kentucky Tavern. Not one bottle broke, and that's an amazing factor.

## **June 10, 1945, Sunday**

Rainy Sunday. Attended church today, our old pastor has gone home, and we have a young Captain for our Chaplain. He is very good. The tone in which he makes his sermon has a realistic voice like our former President Roosevelt. His sermons are excellent, and I do believe the chapel congregation will increase. Continued work on our club, and it should be completed by Wednesday. From the looks of it, the name will be "Auger Inn" and it's claimed to be the best in the Philippines. Now we find we shall move slowly so the big splashes will go on for about four weeks.



***Officers Club (Interior), Clark Field 1945***

## **June 11, 1945, Monday**

Again no missions as weather has stopped practically all operations for the 5th Air Force. The loafing is beginning to tell on the fellows. No flying for so long can bring on a fear that is hard for a fellow to overcome. I would much rather fly each day than to sit around and just wait. Tonight we traveled over to the Stotsenburg Club and drank ourselves silly. Very nice Officers Club and the drinks were the kind put out by the US Army, the so called "Gook" drinks. Need about fifteen to get a buzz on. Oh I can see it now for the night of the opening of our club.

## **June 12, 1945, Tuesday**

At last they flew today. The mission was for shipping in Hong Kong Harbor. It wasn't really for shipping; it was more of a test to see if the new Napalm bomb will ignite water over a large area. What the bomb consists of is a large 55 gallon drum filled with Napalm solution. Outside are wired two hand grenades that are set off on impact. The Napalm solution is supposed to explode and travel in all directions like a spray of burning gas and oil, and anything it touches it will stick to. So far it only works about 50%-and then we missed the boats. Just like frag bombs, spit in the wrong direction and they surely will explode.

## **June 13, 1945, Wednesday**

Mission today was to Takao town. Still experimenting with the Napalm bomb. As usual the mission was a flop. The weather over the target was so bad the Mickey radar ship couldn't even get in. We had to bomb some small town in southern Formosa mostly to get the damn thing out. They really don't work too well. It seems they went out as they hit the water. A 19th ship had one explode in its bays damaging the ship and severely burning the Engineer. The ship was still damaged enough so it couldn't fly. Big party tonight as our club has opened. Looks like all hell is going to break loose.

*Bombing mission 28, Hours: 8:00, Total points: 54, Total hours: 210:15*

## **June 14, 1945, Thursday**

Oh what a day. After last night my head feels like someone has been hitting me with a mallet. The party started out mild at 7 p.m. The dance band came in at eight and played until twelve. Of course each hour the crowd got a little drunker. By the time 11 p.m. rolled around all the nurses were just as high as us. Good group of gals. It's surprising how one can jitterbug when he's drunk. The girls and fellows really enjoyed themselves. Heavy heads today as the party went on all night long. It's a good thing that we didn't have to fly as I doubt any ships would have made a successful mission.

## **June 15, 1945, Friday**

Very clear day today. Not doing very much. Bombing missions today were to Taihoku, Formosa power plant after ack-ack batteries. Ack-ack was light to intense and accurate. Each ship made its own bomb run, and it was reported that two dual purpose guns were knocked out. All ship returned safely. From what we gather, we shall pulling stakes in about nine weeks. Our target will be Japan, and we shall be based in Okinawa. That's the way things are. I'm glad. This place is getting C. S. sleeves rolled down. Saluting over in the fort. We have to go out in the wilds again. The club is quiet tonight - still too many heavy heads. That will teach them. B-24 based in Iwo Jima hit Japan for the first time.

## **June 16, 1945, Saturday**

Beautiful day today. Wonderful day for flying. The mission was to Kiirun, Formosa, shipping installations. Ack-ack was intense but inaccurate bursting far below the ship. The target was fifty percent destroyed causing great damage to the dock, warehouses, and headquarter buildings. All ships returned safely. We are slowly running out of targets in Formosa, and any day now we expect a change in planes and we shall be heading elsewhere. Only 13 square miles left on Okinawa on the defeated Nips. Shortly it shall be ours, and then watch our air power.

## **June 17, 1945, Sunday**

Very beautiful day today. Attended church this morning. The new chaplain is very good. His pleasant voice and interesting sermons result in a good attendance and forthcoming services. The mission today was to Kiirun, Formosa, docks and harbor installations. Ack-ack was heavy and accurate and several ships were holed. Fighter interception encountered. The Nips use fighters to carry a long cable that is draped with explosive charges. Its purpose to entangle the bombers below them and the cable winds around until one of the charges come in contact with the B-24. This is another way that we have to sweat out - these damn Japs always trying something new - that practical but the damn thing works.

## **June 18, 1945, Monday**

Very beautiful day today, and from last night's news the weather at Formosa is perfect. Mission today - commercial and headquarters at Kiirun. The weather was excellent all the way up. The ack-ack over the target was intense and accurate holing ship #1234. Again the fighters were around us dropping cables. One ship of the 19th Squadron was hit, but no damage was done. All our ships returned safely. Ten of them all dropping 8x1,000 pounders. The target was 30% destroyed. It seems we are just wasting bombs and men on targets that are practically neutral.

*Bombing mission 29, Hours: 8:40, Points: 1.7, Total points: 56.7,  
Total hours: 218:55*

*Fighter interception 3 points and flak 1,  
Flak & interception for 5.7 total*

## **June 19, 1945, Tuesday**

Very warm today. The sun is out in full force, quite an intense heat. The mission today was again Kiirun, Formosa. Today was the last bombing, and the town is considered a non-military target-completely destroyed. Quite a blow out today as the boys Skarstdt, Stone and crew walked in after being gone for almost one month. They fought, walked and talked their way out of China - had so many gifts from the Chinese that helped them

that they could not carry them. All lost about 20 pounds from worry and lack of food, but they are safely back. Big blow in the club last night. A happy reunion. Only one casualty, Thomas Warren fell down and split his skull open. Hot shot Rock goes home.

### **June 20, 1945, Wednesday**

Very beautiful day today. Nothing much doing today. Mission today was to Shinchiku, Formosa, to knock out the fighter ships that have been giving us all our trouble. The target was completely closed in and weather was bad. General appearance of a front coming down from China. The target was supposedly destroyed, but that I doubt. No ack-ack and no fighter interception. On the whole the mission was a flop. Night recon to Canton, China for me. How I hate these night recons. Very many heads are heavy today after the big splurge last night- Seems each night a drunk is on.

*Bombing mission 30, Hours: 9:55, Points: 1.9, Total points: 61.6,  
Total hours: 228:50*

### **June 21, 1945, Thursday**

Just returned from the recon. The weather near Syon bad. Storms unfortunately. Canton area clear. The Mickey set went out and also the flux gate compass. We tried desperately to find the target, but after two hours of trolling up and down the China coast we dumped our bombs in the Canton Bay. The compass was way off and my ETA ran out and still no raid. Storms all about us, bearings from Lingayen inaccurate and with the gas gauges reading zero we thought we were to ditch. Finally, the Mickey set caught on, and we picked up the coastline. The tanks were reading empty and if I ever prayed, I did then just keep those engines going till we landed.

### **June 22, 1945, Friday**

Very nice day, a few clouds on high. Mission today was to Shinchiku, Formosa after ack-ack batteries. Our ships were holed but ack-ack was light, inaccurate as the gunners gave up after they found out as soon

as they shot at us we would plant a couple of 1,000 pounders on them. All ships returned safely.

We had a talk from the boys that returned from China. They cannot tell how they escaped but they walked from Chang-Ting to South China and were three hundred miles west. Their lives were almost bought so many times by the Japs, but the Chinese are quite fair to Americans. It was enough job dodging patrols but after the Chinese helpers, they returned home.

Gen. Arnold here today.

## **June 23, 1945, Saturday**

Nothing much doing today as all the ships are getting ready to go to Palawan Island to fly mission and of the same to Borneo. I am one of the crews going down and staging out of Palawan Island. So think last Feb. 27 we bombed the hell out of the airdrome, and now we are going to be based there for a week. The reason is a big Task Force composed of Aussie and American troops are making landings all over Borneo, and the Air Force will soften things up a bit. The 13th is down here but full air strength will be flown. Two Air Forces hitting the Nips. The show should really be a big one, and it should be done in a week.

## **June 24, 1945, Sunday**

### **Palawan Island**

Took off from Clark Sunday morning and arrived Palawan, Puerto Princesa three hours later. I can recall the town and airstrip we bombed once, and now we are landing on the same strip. They say that the heavies really tore the hell out of the town and runway, and it was a striking blow before the invasion. The place reminds one of a tropical island, of course no hula girls, but beautiful white sands along the beach for miles. The island covered with coconut trees; however, it's still in the Pacific and any island in the Pacific you can run straight up. P.S. The tent leaks we are in, but the good food makes up for it. We are guests of 347th Fighter Groups on our stay.

## **June 25, 1945, Monday**

Today's mission was to Kuching air drome, southwest Borneo. This was quite a long mission as it carried us for 12 hours for 1,300 miles. Fighters were believed to be coming from Indo China and landing at these dromes. Near Muri, the B-26's strafed the oil derricks and drums in the early morning. Smoke rose to 6,000 feet and large fires could be seen. Muri is just south of Brunei Bay where fighting is going between Ausies and Nips in Japan. Borneo is just as you picture it, all jungles, swamps and heat. However, because it is a rich in oil source, like Balakchan and Muri, it is a vital link between Japan's supply of oil, so we cut it off.

*Bombing mission 31, Hours: 11:10, Points: 2.2, Total hours: 240:00*

## **June 26, 1945, Tuesday**

Quite a warm day today. The strike today was to Kuching air base. These missions aren't rough, but they are long hauls to make on these war-weary engines. One ship returned today because of mechanical failure. Today one of linesman engineers had been run over by a motor boat which cut such a deep gash from his eye back around his head that you could see inside. They say he has lost the hearing of one ear and that his possibilities of being hospitalized were indefinite. No doubt he will go home and obtain a discharge. Too bad, but maybe it's better that way than getting it in a B-24.

## **June, 27, 1945, Wednesday**

Today's mission was to Sinkawang air drome and to southwest Borneo. We made three runs over the target and as we headed for land, Cape Sirik, we lost #1 engine. Unable to feather it - the prop kept windmilling causing so much drag that we had to pull climb power to keep going in the other three engines. We made Cape Sirik where the Catalina (PBY) was and he followed us all the way. Near Miri we finally succeeded in feathering one and the ship at once became easy to fly with. Short on fuel, we decided we'd try to make the base. #2 had been leaking oil but not too bad. As we drew near Balambangam Island our #2 engine showed signs of missing.

We had thrown everything overboard, and there was nothing left except the crew. We could have made the base if we have had both engines on either side but two on one side - too much. We picked a long level ground to crash land and made our landing. #2 engine by this time had started smoking and burning. The ground in which we landed in was quite soft and as we came in first over the trees, we cut engines and hit the ground like a rocket. The old gear really stood up under the strain, and we finally came to a halt in the far end of the area. The nose gear was bogged under. Japs were on the islands so our main thought was the beach. After all getting down there we find the Cat can't come in closer because of reefs so we had to go back after the rafts. We were able to secure one with oars and the other without. As Sgt. Keling went back after the water oars he was fired upon by machine guns from the far end of the field so back he came and off we shoved in the rafts. Our own planes at this time were strafing the area and the ship we crashed in, until it finally exploded and was destroyed.

The Catalina was five miles out and our raft being first out we had to swim and paddle with shoes for the entire trip. We were afraid if the Nips were there in force we would be strafed from the shoreline. It was a long swim and naturally we lost all of our equipment. We had to get there before dark and far enough from shore so if the Nips came out we would be out of their range of fire.

The time we crashed was at 1607 and we started out in rafts at 1730. We finally made it to Cat at 2030, and it sure was a welcome sight. We were all wet, cold and hungry but glad to be alive and safe. They treated us swell aboard the PBY, and we had a sweat of a take-off. The bay was littered with reefs, and we were afraid we were going to hit one. We finally made take off and landed back at the base at 2215. We were very thankful to be all safe and alive - 10 men all right 6 hours after crashing on a faraway reef. We can thank God. Ship - 799.

*Bombing mission 31, Hours: 15:00, Points: 3.0, Extra pts.: 7.0*

## **June 28, 1945, Thursday**

Very warm day today. Things are really bad for us, all tired out. Didn't go out to bed until twelve o'clock last night. Really didn't realize how far it was out to the Cat, but they say its five miles. About all there is to do is lie in the sack and rest up a bit. After no exercise for weeks and then all of a sudden indulge in high powered work and sweat can really lay a guy under. The mission today was to Trombol air drome and other surrounding territory. One ship returned because of engine trouble. We have no maintenance to speak of, and we keep losing engines on these ships.

## **June 29, 1945, Friday**

Same day. Slept late this morning after a hellish night. What a storm. We had a terrible wind blow in from the ocean and along came a hell of a rain. Old Knight goes to let the flap down and what happens, but the whole damn tent falls in. Sleeping in wet beds and dirt all night pisses one off. Oh well, we can't complain. Mission today was to Kuching again. The last mission, and tomorrow we go home. Be kind of glad to get out of here as the mud, hot sun, salt water can sure make one hate these remote tropical islands.

## **June 30, 1945, Saturday**

Very cloudy day today, and our return trip to Clark is under way. The islands were quite nice, but I much prefer our small house at Clark. Operations have been nil at Clark as the 43rd Group is moving to Okinawa, and we are soon to follow. The 345th Group has already sent advance echelon to the island, and soon operations shall begin in full swing. Jim's outfit is still believed to be in Mindoro, but I haven't heard from him in some time. I hope all is OK. Looked at Bataan and its surrounding territory today. No wonder we left it in '42, such a small island for so large a Jap force.

*Bombing mission 32, Total points to date: 43.8, Total hours: 255:00*

## **July 1, 1945, Sunday**

Another month breezes by. It looks as if there will be no more flying from Clark for quite some time as we are planning our move. Attended church this morning and took part in Lord's Supper. I have so much to be thankful for. Always the words I'll remember "Lo I am with you always." The weather has been fair, but the skyways are very still. The roar of the Seabees can't be heard. The CRTE (Combat Rescue Training Exercise) is moving up here, and that means that our work at Formosa is finished. It's classified a nonmilitary target.

## **July 2, 1945, Monday**

Very dreary day today. Missions were cancelled and M&T day is once again. Good old sack day today, that's about all there actually is to do.

## **July 3, 1945, Tuesday**

No mission again today. M&T. This place can really get a guy down. Our targets are few and far between these days. Tonight a big beer bust is planned so with the ten of us we racked up six cases of beer plus ice. What a wild party - all the way till six in the morning. Today's news delivered was B-25's hit Japan for the first time - also the 37th fighter outfit. Those poor fellers never saw action till now. No doubt they wish they were back here in Clark.

## **July 4, 1945, Wednesday**

My poor miserable head after last night. I have a strange taste in my mouth. Mission today was to Taihoku, Formosa. Ack-ack was heavy and accurate. Gunner in John's ship was wounded and the ship's pilot controls were shot away, so the pilot brought ship in. Plane made an emergency landing at Lingayen. All are safe, only one casualty. Can't figure it out. Formosa is nonmilitary. But somehow they are secretly getting fighters and munitions. Their ack-ack is still just as good as ever. Best ack-ack boys about up there. Night mission tonight.

## **July 5, 1945, Thursday**

### **Wenchow, China**

Night mission last night to bomb the Mako yards run and fly recon up to Wenchow China. The weather was very good and our target was hit with minor results. As we broke away from our target a night fighter made an attack, fired several bursts which were low and nil damage was encountered by either side. No other enemy opposition all the way up or back to Wenchow. The deal on these night interceptors is they can see you and you can't see them unless you fire at them. That's why they don't want us to fire as usually the one ship is a decoy and the others can barely see us when our position is given away. Ship 465.

*Bombing mission 33, Hours: 13:10, Total points: 76.4, Total hours: 268:10*

## **July 6, 1945, Friday**

Mission today was to Tainen, Formosa on barrack and housing facilities. The ack-ack was meager and inaccurate, holing nil ships. The day raid bombed the P and received heavy to moderate flak. The first appearance around Clark was the new A-26 attack. She made her first flight raid to Formosa today with excellent results. They no doubt shall be a prominent plane in tactical warfare and shipping. Most of the light and medium outfits are moved up north. Radio Tokyo last night mentioned 800 planes over Japan yesterday. The day before there were 450 P-51's over Tokyo and over 500 B-29's over the islands. By the time all the B-24's move north there should be 1,000 plane raids.

## **July 7, 1945, Saturday**

Very quiet day today. M&T so nothing but shoot the breeze and make yourself look lazy. Most of the operations from Luzon here at Clark are nil. The 43rd Group is not doing any bombing whatever in Formosa or China, and the advance echelon is already up to Okinawa. It seems each day

a person becomes a little more afraid, knowing that sometime he may die We're really not afraid to die, but the future and life looks so beautiful. Yes, I've learned the one thing that is so difficult to learn, and that is learn how to appreciate life and give thanks for being what you are. Life can be so beautiful if only a person can see the gay side - I'm sorry I can't.

### **July, 8 1945, Sunday**

Church today. Very beautiful Sunday. It's really so nice and freedom like to get away from the cares of the world. I guess if it weren't for each Sunday to look forward to a person would slowly go mad. The mission today was to Formosa.

### **July 9, 1945, Monday**

Mission today was to Okeseki, Formosa, the airdrome parking area. The area had no ack-ack so bomb run was a long one and target was clearly visible. Although it was a perfect bomb run we missed the target 100%. News today from Tokyo. B-29s again raided important cities in north Japan proper and Kyushu Islands. P-51 Mustangs accounted for 35 Jap planes in today's aerial attacks. B-25s again raided shipping in Japan and Hong Kong area, also Korea Sea. Yesterday B-24 struck at Korea for the first time. The wheels are beginning to turn.

*Bombing mission 34, Hours: 9:30, Points: 1.9, Total points: 78.3,  
Total hours: 277:40*

### **July 10, 1945, Tuesday**

Very cloudy day and this evening. We had a small scale typhoon and what a mess. I swear I thought these tents were going to fall apart, but they held together. Maybe it was because we held on to all four corners. The mission today was to Tainan, Formosa, and as usual the target was missed. Ack-ack was moderate to intense. One aircraft of the 19th Squadron was

shot down. Crew was last seen being picked up by a Cat. MacArthur announced the Philippine campaign is closed and final resistance has ceased. Fighters, bombers again raided Japan destroying shipping and aircraft installations. The C.R.T.C. airplanes are moving up here to operate from Clark Field area.

### **July 11, 1945, Wednesday**

Exceptionally warm day. Looks like a lull before the storm. Mission today was to (blank) Formosa, and as usual the target was missed 100%. No ack-ack was encountered, and all ships returned home safely. A severe storm at the area about 1930, another small typhoon. We are now in the month of the hurricane belt, and we can sure feel it. 800 Navy planes today raided Japan proper and attacked shipping and harbor installations. No enemy fighters made interceptions and ack-ack was at a minimum. So far the campaign against the islands of Japan are going along swell. Wait till full strength is reached.

### **July 12, 1945, Thursday**

Very warm day today and as usual another severe storm around 6pm. No mission today as usual operations are practically at a standstill. Yesterday a radar ship that was on a practice bombing mission crashed after take-off. As it reached the end of the strip a TBF pulled out in front and the B-24 pulled up but not high enough and #4 prop hit the TBF which was cut in half by the pilot and the #4 prop brake. As the ship tried to circle for a crash landing it lost altitude and crashed into a concrete telephone pole. Garnett came out uninjured, pilot broken bones, co-pilot concussion and bombardier back broken. What a mess. Plane separated all over hell. I can't see how they ever got out alive.



*B-24 crash landing into a concrete pole. Clark Field, June 12, 1945*

## **July 13, 1945, Friday**

Mission today was to Suo Bay, Formosa after shipping installations in the harbor. No ack-ack and no fighters. Four ships bombed carrying 4x1,000 and really hit the target. It was destroyed 100%, and it's one target we won't have to go back to. Today 1,000 carrier planes raided Japan, 500 B-24s made sweeping attacks in Japan proper, B-24s raged over Kyushu Island destroying shipping and airdromes. B-25s attacked shipping in northwest Pacific and Korean waters. P-38 and P-51s attacked shipping near Tokyo and throughout the islands of Japan itself.

*Bombing mission 35, Hours: 8:30, Points: 1.6, Total points: 40,  
Total hours: 286:10*

## **July 14, 1945, Saturday**

Very cloudy day today and as usual M&T, or loaf day. No missions were flown today. Possible one out of the Fifth Air Force but operations have been at a standstill. Up north raids again harassed the Japan homeland, which carriers, heavy's, mediums took part. Shipping was again struck in the Korean Sea and large amount was destroyed. Air opposition hasn't been bad for the heavies and flak can compare with Tainan and Taihoku, Formosa in their prime when 45-50 dual purpose were shooting at us. The South India British fleet is now operating in Sumatra and South Borneo. Carriers still driving inland and have taken Miri.

## **July 15, 1945, Sunday**

Church today. It seems Sundays are always so welcome as it means a day of peace. Attend communion today for the first time since I've been overseas. A 90th ship ran out of gas and the crew bailed out about 400 miles northwest of Luzon on a return raid from Canton, China. All available rescue craft are searching for the raft with its ten men. Not much news today. The boys that crashed three days ago are going home shortly. Won't fly again they hope.

## **July 16, 1945, Monday**

No mission today except we sent out two search planes to look for the 90th crew went down. Everyone else is loafing--ah what days the M&T days are. Well, the 90th crew has been found except for 5 men. They were picked up by a PB&Y Navy patrol plane about 200 miles southwest of Manila Bay. They were sure lucky, but with these Navy folks always out there you're pretty safe. The patrol ships pull out about six in the morning and return home around seven or eight that night. Long day, but they do a fine job of patrol and battling enemy shipping.

## **July 17, 1945, Tuesday**

No mission today as usual. The field is practically closed down because of weather. Sack day today all day. It seems to rain all day long.

First a continuous drizzle of fine rain. Visibility is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile ceiling about 500 ft. to 1,000 ft. News today from Guam states that Nimitz 3rd fleet is 15 miles off Jap homeland shelling the entire coastline from Kyushu to north Japan. Over 1,500 planes again raided Japan again today. Enemy operation is nil. They are holding up for some reason or another. B-25s again raided Korea Sea and blasted ships along the coast from Korea, Japan to South China.

### **July 18, 1945, Wednesday**

Mission today was to Matsuyama, Formosa. Ack-ack was moderate to light, accurate to inaccurate. The weather was piss poor. Stratus clouds and turbulence rain hampering all our operations. Carriers today were within sight of land on Japan's main island and over 1,500 carrier-based planes raided the entire coast. Our operations are practically nil. Friday as we move from here and fly one mission to Japan itself based from Okinawa.

### **July 19, 1945, Thursday**

No mission today as the ships are getting ready for a nice long haul up to Japan itself. Raids again carried out against the islands of the Jap homeland and large fires in Tokyo area and along the shores of Kyushu to Honshu. Over 1,500 carrier planes swarmed over the Jap homeland smashing rail centers and harbor installations. Battleships and destroyers are still waiting outside of the main naval base at Tokyo until the weather clears so the damage can be surveyed. That patrol was done in two days of constant shelling. Many hits again chalked up shipping in the Korean Sea, and along the coastal areas of the Shanghai coast.

### **July 20, 1945, Friday**

Very cloudy day today, and the mission is again cancelled as there is a severe typhoon raging in the Okinawa area, and we are not permitted in the vicinity. News states that there is still 10,000 on Okinawa, Japan, and the American forces are killing 50 to 60 per day. The first fighters from Jap homeland raided Okinawa for the first time in several weeks. Night

fighter's claim kills. The British fleet is on its way to join American fleets in the northwest Pacific.

### **July 21, 1945, Saturday**

No entry in diary for this day.

### **July 22, 1945, Sunday**

Departed Clark early this morning to I.E. Shima where we shall be staging for one raid in the Japanese homeland. What a sight this island is, more airstrips than there is room for freeway area for a total of around 800 fighters and two groups of Seabees. The same day we arrived we watched the planes returning from a raid. 400 P-47, countless numbers of 51s and B-24s. Our living conditions consist of a tent that leaks, a mess hall miles away and everything else that makes one pissed off at the world. The small island of I.E. shows great signs of a bitter flight, a coral island 5 miles NW of Okinawa. It's only two miles long, a mile wide. Only 450 miles from Kyushu South Japan and 500 for Shanghai. Ship 119.

*Bombing mission 36, Hours: 6:05, Points: 1.2, Total points: 81.2,  
Total hours: 292:15*

### **July 23, 1945, Monday**

Today was a sad day in Navy. We find our target is to be the Kure Naval Yards to bomb 2 BBs, 1 carrier and 3 heavy cruisers, which are bottled up at the docks in southern Hinshu by the Navy, but the same are unable to force and come and fight so the A.P.F. is called to bomb them out. The mission was cancelled due to naval operations and weather; however, our force assembled consisted of 250 heavies, 150 fighters. I'm glad we didn't go. Loading over at 10,000 where we should go at 25,000' at 165 when we should go at 220. The higher wheels predicted 25% loses per group, 2 per squadron. Air raid by nights again. What a mess the Nips could make. Over 100 B-24s parked tail to tail.

## **July 24, 1945, Tuesday**

Today's mission was after A/O facilities in Shanghai area. The 5th and the 4th A.F. were out in full, but due to weather, two groups of the 5th did not reach the target. The target was completely socked in and after the lead ships of the groups and squadrons fueling up we had to make another run. All the time the Japs were shooting at us, the second time over really was messed up. Result then, bombs fell in rice fields, and the mission was a complete flop--gas, bombs, men and money all shot in the ass. As usual our fighters didn't show up because of weather. T.S. if we were jumped.

*Bombing mission 37, Hours: 7:45, Points: 1.5, Total points: 83.7,  
Total hours: 300*

## **July 25, 1945, Wednesday**

Today we return home. Back to civilization in Luzon. The weather is very bad but back we come. I'd rather fly through the shit than stay in this hole another day. Talk about mud, this place has really noted for it. All in all the whole show was a flop, and now we find out we didn't go after the BB's and R's because of weather, but the Navy sent TBM's and fighters in, and they accomplished the mission--not a good as 2,000 pounds can do, but a hell of a fine job. Ferry time back 0615.

## **July 26, 1945, Thursday**

Very little doing today. For once the weather is beautiful, about like a mild summer day back home. No mission as most of our operations were cancelled and soon, very soon, we shall begin to move to Okinawa. The Navy announced that over 1,500 carrier-based planes flew formation over Kyushu and Honshu to the large naval base at Kure and destroyed 2 BB's, 1 carrier, 3 HC's, 1 light cruiser. B-29s again raided principal cities in Japan and areas around Tokyo Bay. Navy Libs operating in the North China Sea destroyed shipping in Shanghai area. Results of Tuesday's B-24 raid on Shanghai estimated 48 enemy planes destroyed, countless number of small shipping in the harbor of the Shanghai Bay.

## **July 27, 1945, Friday**

No missions today except for those of the 5th stationed up at Okinawa. Today the U.S. sent Japan its last word before they fall to utter ruin. Japan will surrender unconditionally or she will be totally destroyed. The terms of surrender: all Armies and Navies lay down their arms, Japan's government will be the home islands and that's all. An Allied military government will control the island until the Allies are satisfied with Japan's form of government. She will give over all the land she has taken from China and all other islands that she has acquired since the last war. We're still awaiting Japan's answer. If it's no, the Americans might well show its force to the end of Japan.

## **July 28, 1945, Saturday**

No missions today except these ships that are stationed up at Oki. The group is beginning to move us all. Headquarters are pulling stakes. Very little doing today as the news is very limited as usual. Japan answer was no as we know to the surrender terms the U.S. gave Japan. In turn, it means a lasting war.

## **July 29, 1945, Sunday**

Church this morning. It was swell being able to go again, as we missed a couple of times, including last week. The advance echelon is starting to pack up and begin to move to Okinawa. We were staying behind to fly the ships up. Thank God. The weather has been fine. The sun has been shining extremely bright for the past several days. B-24s attacked an airdrome at northern Kyushu. No escort was had and the planes were jumped by 32 fighters. Seven fighters were shot down and five damaged. One B-24 was reported lost. B-29s again swept principal cities on Honshu.

## **July 30, 1945, Monday**

Very warm today. Still nothing to do. Buildings and such are still being torn down. Very little to write about these days when one isn't flying any missions. Our crew is to fly up and rumor states that we'll probably fly

a mission the day after we arrive at Oki. Our strip isn't finished yet up all the islands, so we first have to wait. We shall be living on the main island, so living conditions should not be too bad, I hope. I wish we would hurry and move. Latest rumor is 40 missions, and one can go home. Sounds good but this asshole 5th probably doesn't enter into it.

### **July 31, 1945, Tuesday**

Beautiful day today. The sun hasn't come out, and a small breeze is blowing, makes one think of springtime back home. Still we are sitting on our fannies and probably shall for a number of days. Tonight we are having a big beer bash. It seems our stock of beer dwindles quite fast, but we have enough for a good buzz on, so here goes.

## **August 1, 1945, Wednesday**

Ah boy, what a night. I'm really soaked. These ponchos are bad, especially when one isn't quite use to them. Old Hereno was really plastered; of course he claims he was dead sober, but we know different. Not much doing today. Tents are being torn down and baggage getting ready for shipment. The manifest for crews flying and for those who are going up by L.S.T. isn't too bad. The area is practically down now. Of course the gooks are here already gathering up the residue of what's left.

## **August 2, 1945, Thursday**

Very miserable day today. Our tent is left standing as it's the largest one in the area. Ten men are in it which helps to reduce the crowd in the club. I left 600 pesos in my footlocker and had to make a trip to Subic Bay to redeem it. What a ride, 65 miles of rocks and holes. Took the entire day. New's says 800 B-29's blast Japan in mighty air blow - 3rd Fleet near Tokyo Harbor blasting submarine base in the bay. Ten subs are said to be destroyed. Many on ground, shelling of Wake Island, air battle over same.

## **August 3, 1945, Friday**

Very warm day today. We are slowly going mad here with absolutely nothing to do but eat and sleep and, of course, write letters. Rumors say that Japan's answer to the surrender terms that America offered is due tomorrow so we shall see what the answer shall be. The water echelon is still in Subic Bay awaiting the S.S.T. We shall probably sit at Clark until Sept 2 for our landing strip on which we shall operate from.

## **August 4, 1945, Saturday**

Very little doing today. Here we sit on our fannies waiting for the strip to open up at Oki. One can slowly go crazy here just sitting around doing nothing, except reading and going to the shows.

## **August 5, 1945, Sunday**

Church today. Feels good to attend chapel. Went to the Naval chapel this morning as ours is not operating. Can't write down anything as we hear very little news. Can't see us sitting here loafing for 25 more days - whow.

## **August 6, 1945, Monday**

Not a damn thing to write about today as usual. All we can do is play volley ball, horse shoes, and anything to keep us from going mad. Well, it really isn't too bad. Gives us a damn good rest which helps a bit, but too much rest makes a person stale. This is a sure way to get a good case of combat fatigue-just sitting here thinking of the future and thinking of home.

## **August 7, 1945, Tuesday**

Very little doing today. Radio broadcasts state a new atomic bomb was just dropped on Japan. The bomb, a 500#, is equivalent to 20,000 tons of explosive. It was dropped from 52,000 feet by a B-29. The smoke had risen to heights of 40,000 feet and observations could not be made. The Japs claim the Americans inhumane and claim we are not fighting fair. Not too much is known about this, but higher ups say that after the bomb explodes and the area has returned to scale, nothing can possibly live for a period of 70 years in that area.

## **August 8, 1945, Wednesday**

Weather is fine today. Hot as hell as usual. More results of the atomic bomb has been recorded. After the explosion, a series of similar explosives reached in unison up to 40,000 feet. A cloud tower was seen before the bomb exploded and after these similar ones, the sky was clear, the clouds dissipated. Reports still come over that the observations cannot be made due to smoke, fire and explosives. The bomb was dropped in a city south east of Kure.

## **August 9, 1945, Thursday**

News today has been excellent. Russia has declared war on Japan and 3,000,000 men have already crossed the Manchurian border. The atomic bomb destroyed 60% or 4 square miles of city, and left the remainder uninhabited. Another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki city and the manufacturing center. Results could not be observed. These ignorant Japs. Can't they see they are finished? Went to Manila today. Had a swell time, at least the place is being built up quite a bit. Things are almost normal. These damn gooks have never had it so good. Prosperity.

## **August 10, 1945, Friday**

Very clear day today. Awfully warm as usual. Well the news this evening states the Japanese will accept the peace treaty, only on one condition. This condition is that the emperor shall remain in command - by taking all orders from supreme Allied commanders. The Allied powers are in a debate as to what the answer shall be. We should know by Saturday noon. Russia has started her high drives into Japanese Manchuria. Outer Mongolia declares war in Japan.

## **August 11, 1945, Saturday**

Today the war is at a standstill. We, the Japanese, and the world are awaiting the United Nations answer. The entire fleet is outside Tokyo Bay at a standstill holding off till news is present. B-29 raids are called off and FEAF are nil. The main question now is will Allied Nations accept, or will a total war be made. I hope and pray this war is finally over with. Latest news from America: the United Nations added 5 annex to the Potsdam treaty, and now the Japanese power is at a debate. America said Japan can keep her emperor under several conditions.

## **August 12, 1945, Sunday**

Well so far, no news of Japan's answer. It's no doubt it will be no. I can't figure the people out who are making up all these rules and such, but the war is still on and lives are being lost. Today our Squadron was sent to

an air drome close by to pick up some paratroopers and ferry them to Okinawa. Rush job for occupation or invasion. The ships were all overloaded, and when Cook's ship took off it never left the runway. 20 paratroopers crammed in it. The strip was 5000 ft. and Cook's ship was a heavy radar job. It plowed into the trees and what not at the end. Cook, Hardly and Gilliam plus 9 trapped. Came out hurt but alive. The rest died in the explosion - trapped in the bomb bays. They knew those ships would be overloaded yet is was so important that those men should go up regardless of who got killed in such a job. Bull shit.

### **August 13, 1945, Monday**

Well today the wheels wised up and brought the troops up here where we can take off on our one 10,000 ft. strip. The trip up to Okinawa was very pleasant - only the poor paratroops were worried from yesterday's experience. I believe there are three divisions based there, and in a short time regardless of peace or war time, boys will be hitting Japan in their jumps. Let's hope it is on the Army of occupation, not otherwise.

### **August 14, 1945, Tuesday**

Last night was a hectic one, especially up in that hell hole called Okinawa. We spent the night sleeping under the wing of our ship, listening to the drone of returning planes and the engines of the bulldozers pushing dirt around in the process of making another strip. I've never seen so many C-46's in my life - at least 200 at this strip and with more constantly coming in with paratroopers aboard. We are supposed to be hauling three full divisions up to Okinawa to invade Japan. Returned at 1200 noon to Clark Field. Well, wild rumors are flying about Japan - will she answer.

### **August 15, 1945, Wednesday**

The world is at peace so Washington DC states. The Japanese must surrender. The American and United Nations are now in the process of signing the surrender terms. This is a great day of rejoicing. No more fear of dying, no more bombs, guns, no more destroying the world. I would

rather have it this way. We know Japan is a treacherous nation. She cannot be trusted, but we are tired of war. We can dominate her on terms of unconditional surrender. I only hope we can begin to spread culture into this world instead of rain and destruction. The Great War is over. I often think that our Lord has given us just one more chance. Can we succeed?

### **August 16, 1945, Thursday**

Well, from all sources the great 5th Air Force and the 22nd Bomber Group will be first to enter Tokyo. We are supposed to ferry troops and be based just outside of Tokyo, Japan. Today the Japanese military leaders will arrive in Manila to sign the treaty with MacArthur. How soon our occupation forces move in is up to how soon the last shot is fired. The Japanese trapped in the hills of remote spots will no doubt take several days to tell them. All Japanese resistance must cease before the war is ended. We shall give the enemy another chance, but this time we shall watch her like a hawk. Never again give her a chance to destroy us.

### **August 17, 1945, Friday**

Nothing doing today. Here we sit  $\frac{1}{3}$  of our group here at Clark,  $\frac{2}{3}$  up somewhere up near Okinawa. God knows that is and FEAF strung out all over the Pacific, so it's quite evident that no one knows much of anything. So far as we gather we shall be here for about 20 more days, then we will be in advanced echelon to enter Japan. Of course all this happens if peace is declared. If not, then we really shall be pissed off. Not much action today. A couple of enemy fighters shot down over Kyushu attaching our recon ship. Russia captured 20,000 prisoners but continues to fight in remote sections.

### **August 18, 1945, Saturday**

Today General MacArthur issued a warning that the Japanese will either be there at Manila or on their way by Sunday night, or peace or no peace, the Japanese Empire will be bombed. The superiors say peace must be signed by Monday or else they will have total warfare and nothing shall

stop them. Japan says she will send representatives tomorrow. The Japanese plane will be meet by 30 P38's which will escort it to I.E. Shima. There it will take a C-46 to Manila. The peace charter will be signed at Manila in old Macarthur (Mac's) headquarters.

### **August 19, 1945, Sunday**

Beautiful Sunday morning. Nothing to do but sit on our cans and hope for the best. The Japanese representatives has arrived in I.E. Shima at 1830 and finished their journey at Clark this evening. Tomorrow morning the conference of peace discussions will begin. Fighting has been nil in all sectors except deep Burma and remote hills of New Guinea. News states that General Wainwright has been found safe and in good condition in a prison camp in Korea. He was rescued by paratroopers and Russian airborne. Russia has ceased its fire temporally until Japan decides.

### **August 20, 1945, Monday**

This morning it's raining like mad. Six ships are in route to Okinawa. Their final destination no one knows. Rumor says to Tokyo if peace is signed immediately. It has rained constantly all day. The news is very light today. The peace conference is still in progress and as yet no news has been put forth stating the results.

### **August 21, 1945, Tuesday**

No news today. The Japs are supposed to be on their way back to Japan. Our six ships left this morning to our new strip at northern Okinawa. News says 100,000 Nips made mass surrender in Manchuria and Korea. Fighting still continues on Burma. Wewak has finally surrendered which closes that New Guinea Campaign. They are starting to put seats and repair racks in the bomb bays. Looks like we'll be dropping or landing in Tokyo one of these days.

## **August 22, 1945, Wednesday**

Well, at least we are up at Okinawa. Of course all week long it hasn't rained, but now that we come, mud up to our necks. What a load 865 took today. Nineteen men and baggage, a Mickey set, and two bomb bay tanks. What a place this strip is. So many damned airplanes that they have to park in the taxi areas. Well, most of the ships have seats in them. Guns are being taken out and the turrets are soon to be removed. What a hole. Oh well, here we are in war zone, looking like pigs in mud swamps. Food piss poor, very little washing utilities. On the whole or in the hole, such a life.

## **August 23, 1945, Thursday**

Not much doing today. Trying our best to get set up. Everything seems to be in quite a mess, but let's hope this is only a temporary camp because of this mud and poor living conditions. The U.S. news states occupation forces will begin to move in Sunday. American forces say that there shall be no fighting, and all enemy forces must have to lay down their arms by Sunday or else bitter consequences shall result. The Navy and Marines are supposed to make the initial landing, secure the strips and facilities, then the paratroopers and land divisions will move in. Went and saw Jim today at Luzon.

## **August 24, 1945, Friday**

Very little doing today. The boys flew back to Clark to pick up a tent so we shall not begin to build or set up shop until they return. We have quite a nice beach here. It's surprising just how beautiful parts of this island can be, and then again other parts I wouldn't crap on. The story seems to be the same these days, and no one seems to know just what the hell is to happen. We can just think and hope.

## **August 25, 1945, Saturday**

Another one of our perfectly dull days. Went swimming this morning. We sent twelve ships out of the group to fly a recon over Japan. The object was to see if they would be fired upon. If they were, they were

to drop their bombs and combat the fighters. The Nips were very quiet and peaceful and not one burst of ack-ack or one fighter was seen. It looks as if the Nips are really finished. Tomorrow is supposed to be the day, but from rumors there won't be much doing. No one seems to know.

### **August 26, 1945, Sunday**

What a dull day. No chapel service this morning. The rest of the boys came up this morning so we shall put our tent. As usual, we have the lowest spot in hell to put it up. No flying and no news to speak of. Ship 538 blew a tire on landing this morning and was totally demolished. One killed, ten injured. Last night a C-46 made a taxi down the runway. A PBY was landing. As a result, a terrific explosion and all personal died in the operation.

### **August 27, 1945, Monday**

This morning at 1 am we had to leave for Clark and pick up more paratroopers and bring them up to Okinawa. After arriving there, tearing around like mad men we have to wait until 7 pm until we could take off. We arrived at Kadena at 2 pm and found out we were supposed to take them to I.E. Shima. So load up again 20 men plus baggage and off we take to I.E. Shima 20 miles away. We finally landed and got to bed at twelve midnight. First time we slept in 36 hours. No food except this noon day's meal. Oh hardships you bastards. You don't know what hardships are.

### **August 28, 1945, Tuesday**

Slept most of the day after two hectic days of running around like mad. News reports say that paratroopers have landed on Japan two days ago. Today intelligence and plans of construction men landed on the air fields in Tokyo. Ships were in fine shape. The Japanese people extremely friendly and willing to help in any way possible. Task for 31 steamed its way into Tokyo Bay after being guided by Japanese officers and a destroyer. Thursday or Friday we are to ferry the infantry up to Japan and land at our next base in Tokyo.

## **August 29, 1945, Wednesday**

Nothing much to do around here. All we are waiting for is V. J. day and then things will start rolling. Men will begin to go home, troops will move into Japan, and the old 22nd will fly boys and baggage into Tokyo and be based there for quite some time. We send a recon out to Tokyo at our base airfield. Really nothing to do around here except wait for orders to move or to ferry troops. The poor old 22nd because it's the oldest out here we get crapped on day and night.

## **August 30, 1945, Thursday**

Very little doing today. Some of the boys are scheduled to go and pick up troops and ferry them up to I.E. then on to Japan. News reports say old Macarthur is in Tokyo and Task Force 31 is harbored in the bay. Talk about heat. The weather has been terrifically hot. If it weren't for the beach, one could slowly go mad. I always thought Okinawa was cool but reports were all screwed up. I wish things would commence rolling so some of us could go home. This waiting around more than anything gives one a good case of combat nerves.

## **August 31, 1945, Friday**

### **Recon Tokyo**

Weather good today up to Tokyo. The B29s did a wonderful job but still Japan had many facilities, railroads and businesses. It's really a fine looking town, residential districts, hotel, and downtown businesses. Very many people all which are riding bikes, looking up with amazement at our 24 flying at 300 feet. Our large Navy sits out in the harbor, battleships, and cruisers. So many of them to show our might. All along the Jap airplane hangars, ship are packed and displayed. Factories have lined up their equipment outside row upon row. All of the Jap war machine is out in the open, and it's amazing to see how much they possess. Street cars, buses, autos were running as usual. The town is still going on.

## **September 1, 1945, Saturday**

As before, people are beginning to filter in from the backlands, returning to their homes. Tokyo an extremely large city, and it's a sight to see the industry which it housed. We saw the Emperor's Palace and the surrounding grounds. I can say now that I've been there. If we'd have gone in one month ago, we'd have gotten shit shelled out of us. Trying to land at "Motobou" at 2300 was impossible. A B-24 carrying 28 men blew a tire on landing, and the gear collapsed. The plane flew all over and exploded making a mess of the runway and killing 14 men.

*Bombing mission 38, time: 15:15, Points: 3, Total points: 86.7, Total hours: 300.15*

## **September 2, 1945, Sunday**

### **V-J Day**

Not much doing today. Church this morning in an improvised chapel, but soon as we move we should be situated with a fine chapel. Everything is quiet and peaceful. A strong breeze blowing in from the beach. It hardly seems possible that the war is over. Now our main worry is when we shall go home. Of course we shall have to move to Tokyo before anything begins to roll. Ube and TEAF line already beginning to move. Ah, today my 1st came through. Orders came out for street military discipline when we arrive in Japan, proper dress, and above all, no fraternization with the Nips.

## **September 3, 1945, Monday**

Today made a drive to Yonton to see Jim. The 380th doesn't seem to be moving to Japan. Rumors say we will leave in 8-12 days for Tokyo. Little did I realize that I would ever see Tokyo. I always thought my only vision of it would be by dropping bombs. Adm. Halsey and Nimitz set foot on Japan for the first time. Troops are beginning to occupy cities in Japan. The 7th Air Force and 13th have already started to disband and are being broken up. The fame 5th will move to Japan and the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the oldest group,

will lead. By the way, conditions in the peacetime Army are worse than combat.

### **September 4, 1945, Tuesday**

Nothing much doing today. Always the same rumors about moving but nothing definite. I wish someone would come forth with an idea when the Officers are going home. Today we bitch. The food is piss poor, the sun is blistering hot, and the whole situation on a whole is S.N.A.F.U. They tell us we will live like kings, live in barracks, get ready to go home; of course, it's all rumor and crock of shit. I only hope all the stories are right because living out here after a while can begin to piss one off exceedingly well. Sept. 4, 1937 dad died at 12 noon 8 years ago. Seems like a lifetime has gone by.

### **September 5, 1945, Wednesday**

Oh another day, another dollar; or I should say buck & a half. No news today as usual. It seems as if the world has forgotten us gooks out here in the famed 5th. Today was a beautiful day of rain, and of course all the mud that goes with it. Today Gen. Whithead, Col. Nick, and all the wheels went to Tokyo to look around and see the new home. We received another crew today which makes about 32 in all. A little more crowded so maybe they will start to send us home. What a war. Rough it up and live like a slob, the great ol' B.S.

### **September 6, 1945, Thursday**

Not a damn thing doing today; in fact, nothing for the past three days. Still haven't any good rumors as to when we are going to move or when some of us are going home. Not even a radio playing so we are practically a screwed goose way out here in nowhere. The food has improved very little and living conditions are still in sad shape. Well, once we are up in Tokyo, maybe everything will be much better. The weather has been extremely hot lately. It's beginning to turn fall down in old Tokyo and the winter season will begin soon.

## **September 7, 1945, Friday**

Another perfectly dull day with nothing to do but loaf and hope. Still waiting shipping orders. The weather has been extremely hot, so the only place to go is down to the beach. Spent most of the day doing nothing but lie in the sand. Things are beginning to get packed. Ube has begun to move and the 43rd has already sent ships up to Atsugi. Sometimes I often wonder--are we told that up in Japan there is no gas so flying will be held at a nil--that's good. Rumor says home by Christmas--we hope.

## **September 8, 1945, Saturday**

Nothing doing today. We sent six ships out to Maka to pick up PWs and ferry them on to Manila. Today we have rain and of course all the old fashioned mud to go with it. If it was just mud, but no. This stuff is plain old glue that makes the feet ten pounds heavier. Here we sit doing nothing. Oh well, I guess it won't be too bad. Will be going home someday, and then we can kiss this Pacific goodbye for good. The reason we don't build anything up is because we are expected to move soon--so they say, but still we sit.

## **September 9, 1945, Sunday**

Church today. Chapel is outside under the trees temporarily. A chapel can be made anywhere because it isn't the place you go to, it's the Word that you hear. This evening a ship from the 408th lost an engine on takeoff, spun around in a ground loop and made a terrific mess of the runway. All five crew got out OK before the old 24 exploded. Another ship hung up its jock. Seems we are losing more on accidents than the Group did in actual combat.

## **September 10, 1945, Monday**

“Nothing today”

## **September 11, 1945, Tuesday**

Loaf and loaf.

## **September 12, 1945, Wednesday**

<No entry>

## **September 13, 1945, Thursday**

Made a trip to Clark with P.Ws. They were Japanese who were captured in New Guinea, transferred to Tokyo in '42 to work in the mines. They really had some gut interesting stories to tell. It seems that when American forces began to hit Japan, the Nips would crowd down in the mines with the PWs and hide, afraid of their own shadow. They really didn't look too bad; however, they were really quite bad. After landing we find we have a blown tube and the nose gear is messed up so we RON for a day or so.

## **September 14, 1945, Friday**

Nothing much doing here at Clark. The 13th A. F. have taken over procedurally everything. The field is very full of B-24s and P-38s which were all ready for the big drive and now they are going to be junked. Today the wheel was fixed so we'll leave in the morning. No good rumors as yet.

## **September 15, 1945, Saturday**

Took off from Clark to Oki and everything seems to be OK. Back at Oki we find the 22nd will be disbanded. We are leaving within the next few days to take all the ships to Yonton so the 417 B.G. can move in here. The first typhoon and hurricane warning came through. I guess the old shack will blow away as we don't make any attempt to get busy in it.

## **September 16, 1945, Sunday**

Everything happens in a hurry. Our orders were put through and this morning we are processing. We are taking the ships to the 380th B.G. and from there we are supposed to fly our own ship home. Now all we have to do is sweat out the orders. The tent is tied down, and all our luggage packed safely away. The beginning of the typhoon came at 1200 and just tore hell

out of everything. Winds up to 85 mph and the breakers rolling in at the height of 20-30 ft. I guess I'll stay in the mess hall where it's safe tonight.

### **September 17, 1945, Monday**

Well, all night she blew. The tent has fallen and all night we had no sleep. If this wind and rain doesn't stop soon the whole damn island will be leveled out. All the tents are down, trees are overturned, and the area is entirely flat. We are supposed to leave today, but no soap. Well, the wind has finally died down this noon at 1400. Now all we have to do is straighten out the mess. The hill beneath it, we now live like slops for a day or so. Well, hardships, you bastard.



*Typhoon damage to the barracks & tents; Clark Field, September 1945*

### **September 18, 1945, Tuesday**

The wind has finally calmed down so now we can begin building once again. The news still remains the same. We are still flying home from

Okinawa as soon as the ships have their engines and all needy repairs implemented. Some of the boys left today to stop at Yonton for repairs. Nothing else goes on these days. We just wait for clearances from A.T.C. as they are in complete charge.

### **September 19, 1945, Wednesday**

Well, here we are another day. Another \$9 bucks for doing absolutely nothing. Well now we are already out of the Squadron--lost sheep without a home. The 417 B.G. has taken over completely, and the famed Red Raiders are no longer. Some more ships left today for Yonton. They expect us to be there from one week to two, and then we are on our way.

### **September 20, 1945, Thursday**

This morning we are off to Yonton and have been temporarily reassigned to 380th B.G. I saw Jim today. He lives about 100 yards away. After 8 months we should finally come together. Things are quite a bit better than up north. We have a nice hut, good food, all the comforts of home, except home. I guess we'll be processing up here and leave for Frisco in about two weeks. No other nasty rumors of any type.

### **September 21, 1945, Friday**

Nothing much doing today. Went down to the ship and got things ready for the long flight home. We can't leave until all the P.W.s are taken care of, so that means a matter of two weeks. A.T.C. can't handle all of the traffic so this will take a matter of time. The weather isn't quite so hot here. A good breeze blowing in from the sea. It's quite dusty, but we can't have everything, can we? The living conditions are quite nice, and that makes it bearable for a while, especially when the future of home looks so near.

### **September 22, 1945, Saturday**

Another day, another 9 bucks. Most of our ships are grounded because we don't want to carry P.W.s so we red-lined most of the planes.

Our ship is all ready to go, just give us the gas. Not much doing. Again, one of our tropical fronts has come upon us, and it's slowly beginning to rain so most likely we'll be grounded a few days.

### **September 23, 1945, Sunday**

Attended church this morning after missing so very much. Really felt swell to attend again. Dead Sunday as usual. Tomorrow we fly P.W.s, so may just as well goof off all day today. I guess that's all we do anyways is goof off. It can sure get damn tiresome just sitting on our asses. If only all these P.W.s were finished and A.T.C. gave us clearances, we could be on our way once and for all, and then no more cares or worries about these damn Pacific Islands.

### **September 24, 1945, Monday**

Up at 0300 and went down to the line to ferry P.W.s to Manila. The weather is piss poor but a B-24 will tear right through it. When we came to northern Luzon we lost #1 over Laoag and were thinking of going on, but Al decided that when we lose one engine we always lose another. Sure enough, after feathering #1 we were on final approach and lost #4 so we made an emergency landing at Laoag. What a swell place is R.O.N. Really treat us like kings and we hated to leave it. One of these small transit fields used only for emergency. The 20 P.W.s went in by C-47 to Manila. Another day, another nine bucks.

### **September 25, 1945, Tuesday**

Again, another dull day. I guess A.T.C. is trying their best to clear us out of here, but here we sit still. Went down to the ship today and aligned a few instruments. Just back this morning from Laoag and was rather tired and, of course, it's raining like mad, but that's getting to be a habit around here lately. Weather and mud. How happy we shall be when the time comes for us to leave this hole.

## **September 26, 1945, Wednesday**

Ah, beautiful loaf day. Reason, raining like mad all day long. The mud keeps getting deeper and deeper. Soon it will be above our knees then it's time to take out insurance. Well, good news. Friday 20 ships from the 380th are supposed to leave which puts a great build in morale, especially knowing that someone is getting out of this hole. Well, about two more weeks and goodbye Okinawa and the stinken' Pacific.

## **September 27, 1945, Thursday**

Another perfectly dull day, but that's life in the Far East. Still not a damn bit of news as to when we leave. If only they would say something, but they don't tell a person a thing. Again, it is raining. Seems that's all it does here lately. Between the rain, planes taking off overhead, and the dullness of the place, one could surely go stark raving mad if it wasn't for the hope of going home.

## **September 28, 1945, Friday**

Another one of these dull days. It gets so after one has been over here so long that time means nothing. When a fellow can sit by the hours and do nothing but sit and think and let the hours slide by, then a person can see why time means absolutely nothing. It's just little things like that which a fellow used to worry about, that he doesn't anymore which will make it a little difficult when he's home again. Today it was quite warm and quite often the sun came out which helped dry the joint up, but suppose it will rain again shortly.

## **September 29, 1945, Saturday**

Ah, beautiful Saturday. At least the sun was out all day which enabled us to swing the compass and perform a few instrument calibrations. Yee Gods, another typhoon is brewing. All we have is weather. If A.T.C. is going to wait for good weather to leave, then I'm sure we'll be over here for another year or so. I hope the tent we are in now will stand up under the weather. No news except they say our weight will be 62,000 and only 8 men

and baggage, which means three of our gunners and the bombardier will have to be scragged.

### **September 30, 1945, Sunday**

Attended church today and they really had an interesting chapel service. Nothing else doing today because the sky again looks like a hell of a storm. Just sitting around really drives a guy stark raving mad. If only there was some news as to when we will leave this hole, one wouldn't mind.

## **October 1, 1945, Monday**

Let's see. What did we do today besides loaf? Oh yes, we filled out some forms as to where we want to go, Separation or Distribution Center. Also news today, some of the crews will leave within a couple of days, which really helps cheer up the situation. Well, we are now having a bit of weather. The tail end of a typhoon with this rain and driving wind sure drives one to his room. The food is also sad, but this is the peacetime Army, and we are the forgotten souls in this wide Pacific.

## **October 2, 1945, Tuesday**

Again, another perfectly dull day which adds beauty to our stay here in Oki. Well the other men were supposed to leave today, but A.T.C. has come out with more regulation and with the weather we are grounded. My God, we will never go home if that keeps on. Now they come out with some silly stuff about navigators taking and passing a celestial test so we can do an overwater crossing. Today a strange thing happened. We actually had fresh meat, and these poor cooks really messed up after not having cooked meat for so long. Ah, more rain and mud. Oh for a nice sidewalk.

## **October 3, 1945, Wednesday**

Another day, another \$10. All goes toward the future. Nothing much doing today. A gasoline 100 octane tanker blew up in the harbor today. Boy, that 100 stuff isn't anything to play with as it goes up like nitro. Again rain, mud and wind and more crap from A.T.C. determining our departure. If they keep on, we'll never get home. They say the storm is passed, but the tents are still ripping. Raining like mad but it's still mild. Fresh liver and onions today for chow. I overslept and missed out on the onion - T.S., T.S

## **October 4, 1945, Thursday**

Nothing doing today.

## **October 5, 1945, Friday**

Ye gads. A typhoon is scheduled to hit Okinawa tomorrow. All planes are being shifted so that they face into the wind. Tent buckled down, everything secure.

## **October 6, 1945, Saturday**

Typhoon.

## **October 7, 1945, Sunday**

Typhoon hits. Pilots are turning ships into the wind. Tent is slowly coming apart. Yep, there it goes. So now we just pack up and go over to the gook huts. They are built of mud bricks with trees around them. Our tent has collapsed in all its glory.

## **October 8, 1945, Monday**

Still big winds and lots of damage. Roof of mess hall, storage area all blown off. Several planes damaged - rudders torn etc. Small places suffered most damage.

## **October 9, 1945, Tuesday**

No diary entry made.

## **October 10, 1945, Wednesday**

No diary entry made.

## **October 11, 1945, Thursday**

Here we go again, the damn thing has circled back. TYPHOON.

## **October 12, 1945, Friday**

Settling in after typhoon. Awaiting orders to fly home.

## **October 13, 1945, Saturday**

Since everything was torn down all we can do is wait for repairs, make sure the ship is OK. Eat, drink, and be merry.

## **October 14, 1945, Sunday**

Waiting, ready to go. Was assigned 2243.

## **October 15, 1945, Monday**

Still awaiting clearance to proceed.

## **October 16, 1945, Tuesday**

Still crapping around waiting to go. Ship is now ready. We are all packed and ready.

## **October 17, 1945, Wednesday**

Still waiting the green light.

## **October 18, 1945, Thursday**

Still waiting.

## **October 19, 1945, Friday**

Checking out old 2243 for its final trip home. Damn thing has been shot at so much, not sure it will hold together. Don't understand why we cannot take a new J (B-24J) home, why we have to fly this bag of bolts.

## **October 20, 1945, Saturday**

Took off for Guam this morning. Had trouble with #4. Al said shit, let's rotate it, go down the runway and hope it windmills fast enough to sputter on. MacDonald fooled with it, finally got it running, so off we go into the wild blue yonder.

## **October 21, 1945, Sunday**

Arrive Guam this afternoon. Circled the field and came in very low. Workers at end of runway got the shit scared out of them. All dropped their equipment and ran like hell. We were plenty high, just looked low, about 50 ft. over the ditch they were working on.

## **October 22, 1945, Monday**

We are having some problems with old 2243. Seems the #2 engine wants to act up-on run up small clamp in main. Took off afternoon. Flew all night, arrived Hickam Field next day (Tuesday). Finally close to home - Hawaii. Guess what we got, donuts. Had dinner in Navy Officer Club. Now we know where all the beef was going.

## **October 23, 1945, Tuesday**

Arrived Hawaii this a.m. Old 2243 finally made it. We should rest up a bit then take off to USA. Scheduled for Mather Air Force Base. Landed Hickam Field.

## **October 24, 1945, Wednesday**

Stayed in Hawaii overnight. Scheduled to depart Thursday for States. Had dinner in Air Force Club. That's where all the food is or has been.

## **October 25, 1945, Thursday**

Took off pm for States. About 1 ½ hours out, #4 acted up. Seems a drop in Mag+. So back we came. Reported into Headquarters. that something was wrong with #4. Plane wants to drop a wing and dip to the right.

## **October 26, 1945, Friday**

Checked out old 2243. Seems like it runs ok. Al said let's go. McD said he feels its ok. Repacked and after thorough check, we are ready. Got

about 2 hours out when old 2243 did all kinds of crazy things. Banked by itself, then level, then banked, then lost #2.

### **October 27, 1945, Saturday**

Back in Hawaii. Al told maintenance that old 2243 was slop. Maintenance replaced #4 engine, repaired #3.

### **October 28, 1945, Sunday**

On ground.

### **October 29, 1945, Monday**

Al and Mac flew 2243 on slow flight for engine break in. Al says looks OK; Mac says-who knows?

### **October 30, 1945, Tuesday**

Off we go, god damn. One hour out, there it goes again-yaw to right. Something wrong with controls. Back we came to Hawaii. Al said the hell with it.

### **October 31, 1945, Wednesday**

Al went up again with Mac. Mac did not latch nose gear. When they landed, the damn nose hit the runway and skidded nose first. That took care of old 2243.

## **November 1, 1945, Thursday**

HQ said if we could hitch a ride on a B-29, OK. We could not find one that had any room. After watching them come in from Guam, either with one or two engines out, and watching one go into the drink just short of runway, we said we will ship home.

## **November 2, 1945, Friday**

We were assigned to travel home on the Navy ship, Saratoga Aircraft carrier.

## **November 3, 1945, Saturday**

We are still awaiting orders to board ship.

## **November 4, 1945, Sunday**

Finally we boarded the Saratoga today. Assigned very good quarters. The carrier had all planes removed. Carried 3,000 sailors to go home and 2 Air Force crews.

## **November 5, 1945, Monday**

Left Hawaii today. Food Excellent. Al got sick as hell. Sick all day. Could not take the rolling of the carrier.

## **November 6, 1945, Tuesday**

At sea. Al still sick.

## **November 7, 1945, Wednesday**

At sea. Al sick.

## **November 8, 1945, Thursday**

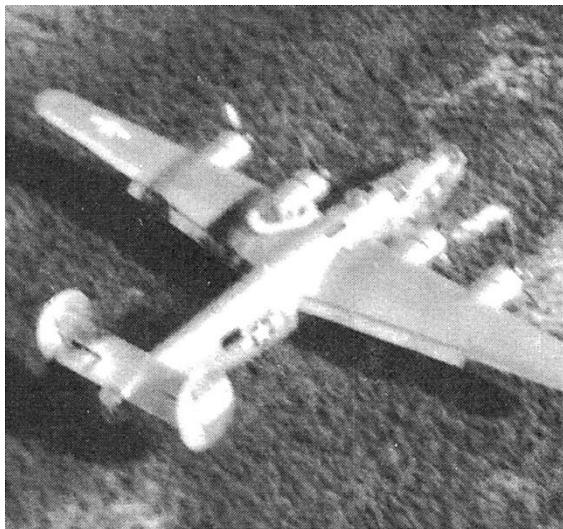
Arrived Golden Gate Bridge. Everyone on the bridge waving at us on the carrier. Docked at Alameda Navy Shipyard.

## **Supplement – June 27, 1945**

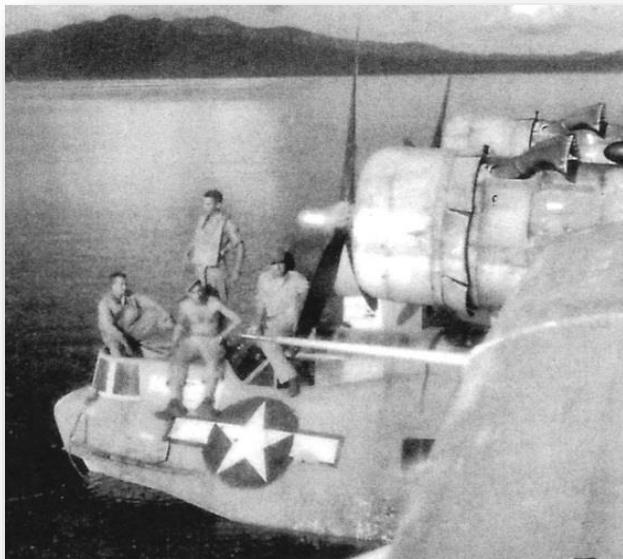
In October 2005, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomber Group celebrated their 56<sup>th</sup> reunion in Tucson, Arizona. At that time, the *Green Valley News & Sun* interviewed me. I was able to share additional details regarding my most memorable mission, #31 (June 27, 1945) as follows:

“The squadron was staging out of Puerto Princesa, which was approximately 1,000 mile from southern Borneo. After dropping their bombs, the 33<sup>rd</sup> squadron started flying home when the No. 1 out-board engine on my ship #799 began to lose oil pressure. To this day I am not sure if the engine malfunctioned or had been hit by flack. As the engine bearings froze and could not be feathered, it began to windmill, thus creating a drag on the plane. Because of the drag, our air speed was reduced to 130 knots. As we (and the crew) approached the oil fields in western Borneo, near Muri, the No. 2 engine began to sputter and oil pressure fell. The No. 2 engine was feathered and again the pilot tried to feather No. 1 and finally succeeded. We now had two engines out and we threw out everything we could get out hands on, including all ammunition, machine guns and more. The air speed dropped to 120 knots and our plane began losing altitude. We estimated that Puerto Princesa was 400 miles away. We contacted an emergency rescue submarine and were eventually picked up by a PBY Catalina of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency Rescue Squadron who caught up with the plane and advised us to head for an island at the northern tip of Borneo for a crash landing. We had a straight approach into a swamp surrounded by jungle and the nose gear collapsed. The landing was very rough, but finally the plane skidded to a stop. The bombardier destroyed the Norden bombsight, and the rest of the crew destroyed all classified documents and codes. We obtained two rafts from the plane. The PBY advised us they were setting down in a bay five miles out and we were to take survivor kits and our revolvers and carbines. We carried the rafts and reached the shore about 6 p.m., always watching for the Japanese who were near the island. The fighters and B-24s strafed the downed B-24, setting it on fire so little would

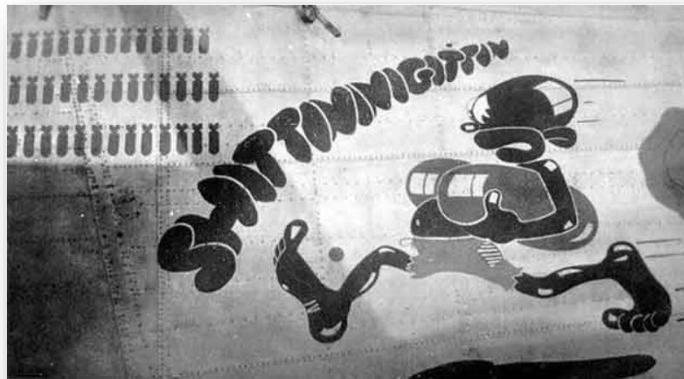
be left for the Japanese. We were eventually safely airlifted to Puerto Princesa. All members of the crew survived."



*Photos taken from the PBY (Patrol Bomber) Rescue Catalina that show where the B-24 Bomber #799 came to rest in a swamp surrounded by a jungle, about one mile from the beach.*



*PBY (Patrol Bomber) Rescue Catalina of the Emergency Rescue Squadron waiting for the downed crew to reach the plane. They set down in a bay 5 miles out where it took 4 hours to reach them.*



*This photo illustrates the nose artwork on the side of the B-24 Bomber about the time of the incident. Note the 65 bomb mission markers. This B-24 Bomber (#799) flew over 70 missions.*



*B-24 Bomber crew. This photo was taken at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, September 1944.  
Those rescued were:*

*Top Row, from left*

*2/Lt. Henry J. Kutsch (Bombardier); 2/Lt. William R. Ersthaler (Navigator); Lt. Foley, (Pilot); 2/Lt. Willis S. Knight (co-pilot);*

*Bottom Row, from left*

*Sgt. Hilmer A. Holmes (Waist gunner); Sgt. Jess W. Keling (Ball turret gunner); S/Sgt. Francis J. Leonard (Radio operator); Sgt. Charles J. Williamson (Tail gunner); Sgt. Arthur Call (Nose gunner); S/Sgt. William F. Macdonald (Engineer & turret gunner)*



*Aerial view of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomber Group base and camp at Clark Field during the spring of 1945. On January 31, American forces regained possession of Clark Field after 3 years of Japanese control. However, a few Japanese soldiers still held tough in the nearby mountains, and sometimes sneaked onto base to sabotage American planes.*

*Located about 60 miles north of Manila, Luzon, and Republic of the Philippines.*

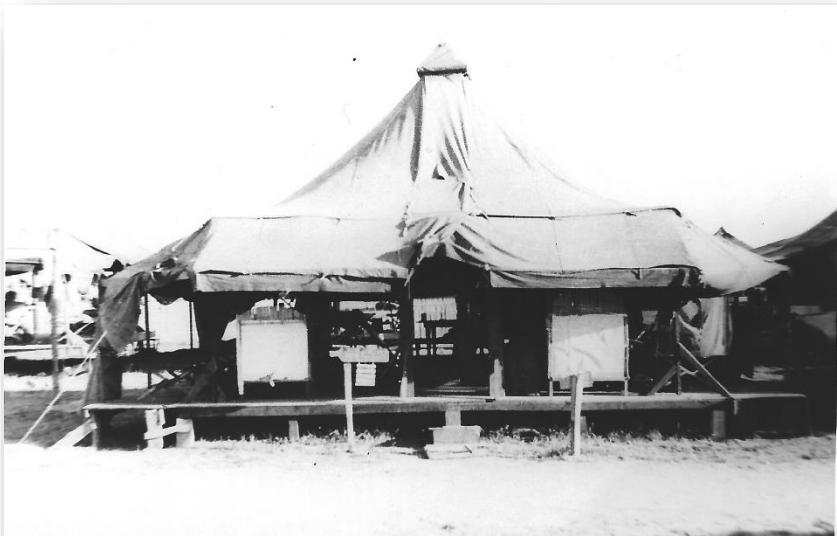


*Clark Field June 1945. Seabee crews are starting to build Quonset huts to replace the tents.*

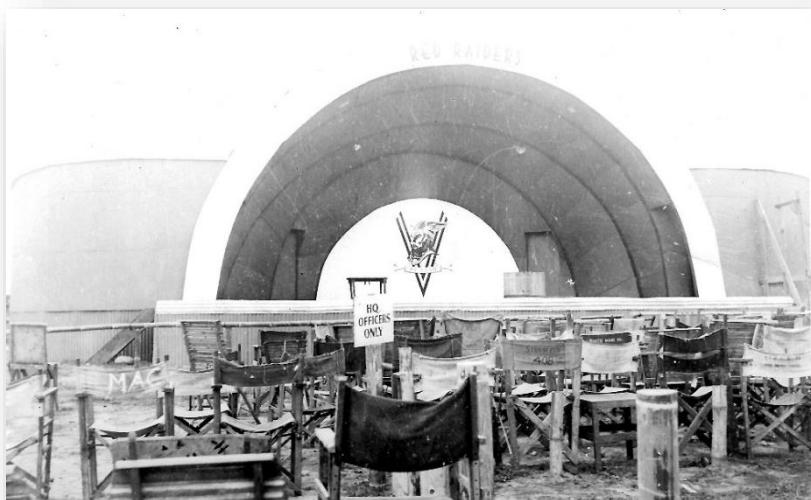
*Mt. Arayat in the background. An extinct volcano approximately 10 miles east of Clark Field.*



***Clark Field air craft control tower, 1945. Used for air strips 1 and 2, and by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomber Group.***



*Barracks at Clark Air Base, 1945*



*Theatre where USO tours were shown.*



*Bill Long, Bill Knight, Bill Ersthaler, Dan Gropen*

*Clark Field, 1945*



*John Long*

*Bill Ersthaler*

*Jack Cook*



*B-24 Liberator & ground crew changing 2 of the engines at Clark Field, 1945*

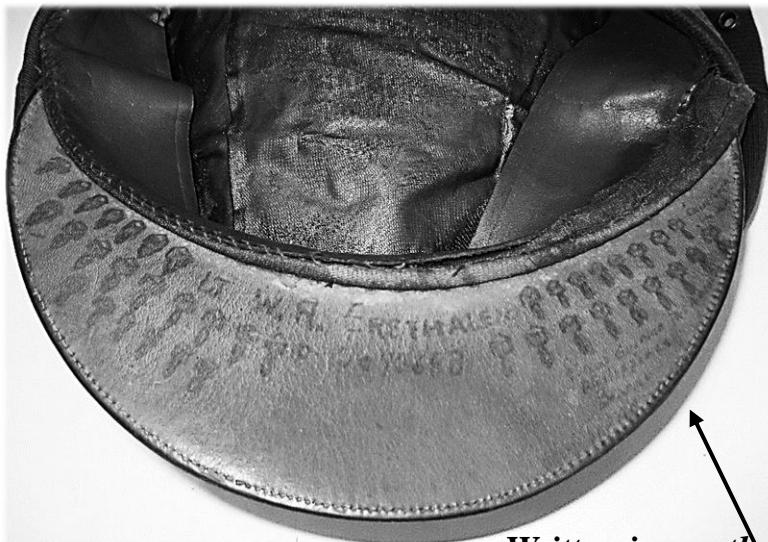


*Clark Field, 1945*





*AAF Officer Hat with  
USAAF Navigator Badge*



*Under the brim of Ersthaler's  
hat are 40 hand drawn bomb  
markings representing each  
mission.*

*Written in are the areas:  
New Guinea,  
Philippines, Borneo,  
Japan, Palawan,  
Okinawa and China*

## **Supplement**

# **B-24 Liberator Description & Statistics**

The Consolidated B-24 Liberator was an American heavy bomber, designed by the Consolidated Aircraft Company of San Diego, California. The term “heavy bomber” was primarily used prior to and during World War II to describe bombers with the largest bomb capacities and longest ranges. Heavy bombers of the WWII era also were distinguished by their heavy defensive armament, for protection from smaller and usually much faster fighter aircraft.

U.S. heavy bomber designs, optimized for formation flying, had upwards of ten machine guns and/or cannons in both powered turrets and manually-operated flexible mounts to deliver the optimal protective arcs of fire. Positions for these guns included tail turrets, side gun ports (typically a window with a .50 caliber machine gun), and dorsal (spine/top of aircraft) and ventral (belly/bottom of aircraft) gun positions with powered turrets. All of these machine guns were designed to enable the crew to defend the aircraft from attacking enemy fighters, especially at times when the bombers were not being escorted by their own fighters. The B-24 Liberator’s mass production was brought into full force by 1943 with the aid of the Ford Motor Company through its newly-constructed Willow Run facility in Michigan, where peak production had reached one B-24 per hour and 650 per month in 1944.



*Ford Motor Company – Willow Run Facility, Michigan*



*Consolidated – Vultee Plant, Fort Worth Texas, 1943*

Other factories soon followed and added to production figures, making the Liberator the most-produced heavy bomber during the war of all time at over 18,400 units, due largely to Henry Ford and the harnessing of American industry. The Liberator still holds the distinction as the most-produced American military aircraft, having been manufactured by Consolidated Vultee, Ford Motor Company, Douglas Aircraft, and North American Aircraft between the years of 1939 and 1945.

The B-24 was used by several Allied air forces and navies and by every branch of the American armed forces during the war, attaining a distinguished war record with its operations in the Western European, Pacific, Mediterranean, and China-Burma-India theaters of operation.

The Liberator was a complicated and advanced machine, leading to prolonged pilot training programs and, on occasion, to severe attrition. Not only was it demanding to fly, even for a fully-qualified pilot, it was eventually cleared to operate at such high weights that takeoffs became dicey even with full power on all engines. Flight stability was marginal, and escape from a stricken machine was extremely difficult once the pilot and co-pilot had let go of the controls.

#### Certified Specifications:

- Top Speed – 295 mph at 25,000 feet with 50,000 lbs.
- Cruise Speed – 158 mph at 5,000 feet with 60,000 lbs.
- Cruise Speed – 150 mph at 25,000 feet with 60,000 lbs.
- Climb to 20,000 ft. in 25.5 minutes (60,000 lbs.)
- Climb to 30,000 ft. in 43 minutes (60,000 lbs.)
- Fuel to climb to 25,000 ft. took 240 gallons
- Distance to climb to 25,000 ft. took 140 miles
- Takeoff distance to clear 50 ft.: 4,250 ft. (60,000 lbs.)
- Empty weight: 36,500 lbs.
- Ramp weight (equipped with oil & crew): 39,175 lbs.
- Maximum takeoff weight: 65,000 lbs.
- Fuel capacity: 3,576 gallons with bomb tanks

### Powerplant:

Four Pratt & Whitney R-1830-65 Twin Wasp fourteen-cylinder air-cooled radial engines with General Electric B-22 turbo-superchargers rated at 1,200 hp at 2,700 rpm for takeoff and maintaining this power as a military rating up to 31,800 feet.

### Performance:

Usual combat operating speed was 180-215 mph at between 10,000 and 25,000 feet. Initial climb rate 1,025 feet per minute. At a takeoff weight of 56,000 pounds, an altitude of 20,000 feet could be reached in 25 minutes. Range and endurance with a 5,000-pound bomb load was 1,700 miles in 7.3 hours at 25,000 feet (all-up weight of 61,500 pounds) with 2,364 gallons of fuel. Landing speed 95 mph (light), 125 mph (loaded).

### Bombs & Arming Them:

The most common bomb load was ten 500 pound bombs or five 1,000 pounders. Fuses were installed in the bombs at the time they were loaded on the aircraft. The bomb shackle that carried the bomb had three points, the end two held the bomb by releasable hooks and, for one common type of bomb fuse, the third held the arming wire. The arming wire was a long wire that was inserted into the fuse. When the bomb was released, the arming wire was retained and thus pulled out of the fuse as the bomb dropped. This then allowed a small propeller, called the arming vane, on the nose fuse to rotate through many turns, somewhere around 260, at which time the propeller would fall away. The fuse, and hence the bomb, was then armed. This design allowed the bomb to be free and clear of the aircraft before it was even armed.

## Crew & Their Duties:

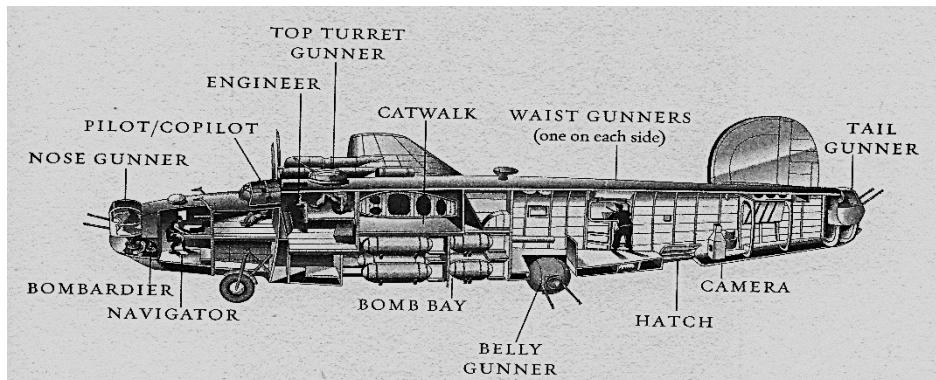
A B-24 carried a crew of eight to ten men (a ten man crew was most common) comprised of both officers and enlisted men.

Officers: Pilot, Co-Pilot, Navigator, Bombardier

Enlisted Men: Top Turret Gunner, Nose Gunner, Tail Gunner, Ball Turret gunner, Left Waist Gunner, Right Waist Gunner.

## Navigator:

The navigator used a combination of dead reckoning (using airspeed and time elapsed between checkpoints to compute position), pilotage (using visible landmarks), radio, and celestial navigation. The B-24 had a small Plexiglas dome just forward of the cockpit through which the navigator could take his readings or "shoot his fixes", however celestial navigation was typically only used when initially delivering the aircraft to its theater of operation. In combat, bombing targets were approached by pilotage.



## *B-24 Liberator Stations*

The navigator was given the important responsibility of getting the crew to the target and back home. This was particularly important of the lead bomber in a given flight group, but all navigators needed exceptional know-how of their position to lead a bomber through, should the aircraft become displaced from his group. The navigator could utilize the forward-mounted Plexiglas dome to get his bearings as well as relying on physical landmarks down below and his training in the fine art of navigation. Essentially, the pilot and navigator needed to maintain a close working partnership to get everyone to the target area and back home. If “cheek” machine guns were fitted on the B-24 Liberator model, the navigator could man one.

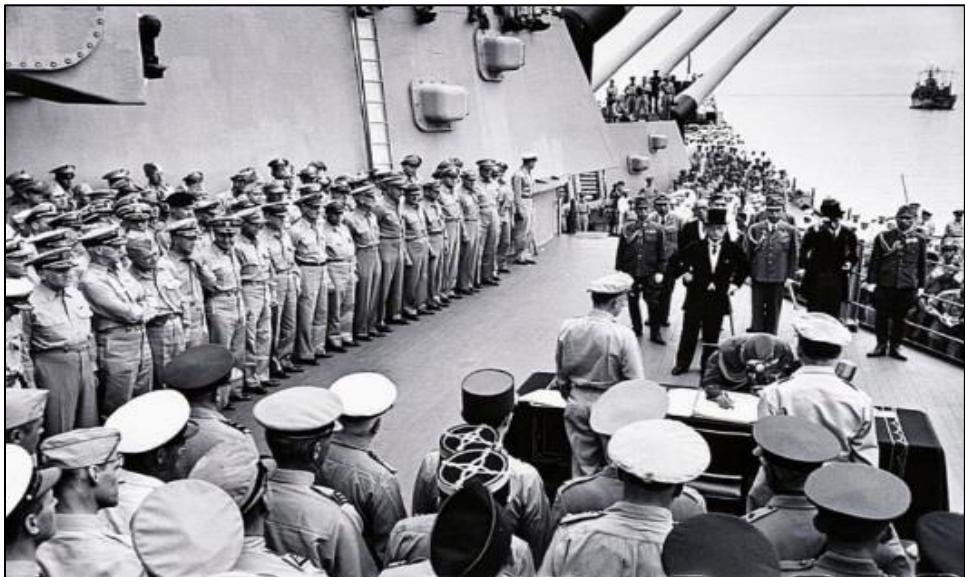
### ***B-24 Liberator Navigator Station***



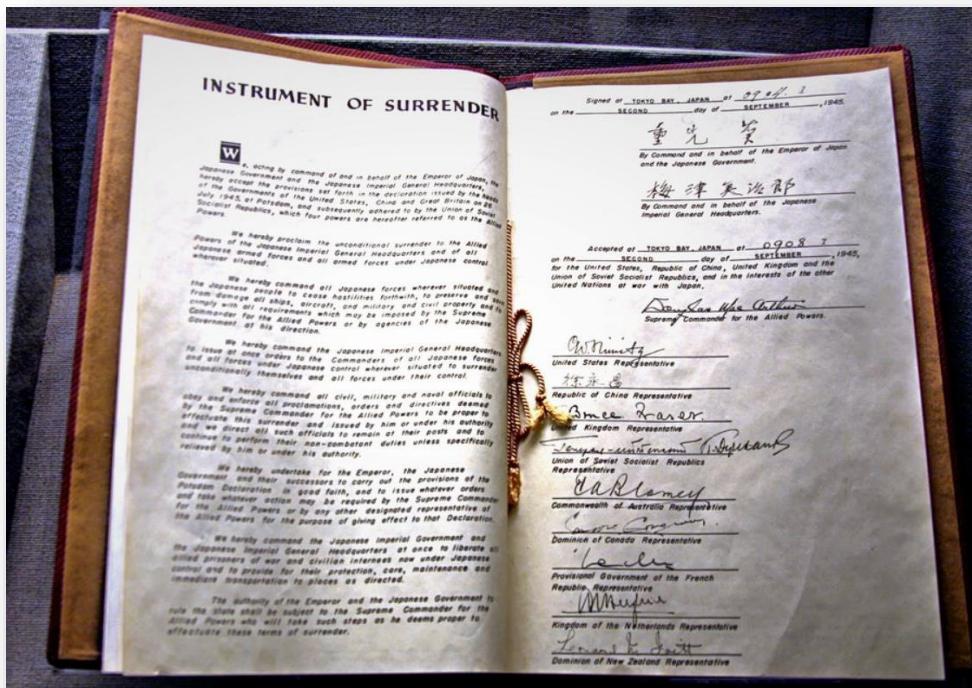
## **V-J Day: September 2, 1945**

The men found it hard to believe. The end of the war had come, and the principals were signing the Articles of Surrender aboard the battleship *Missouri*. General MacArthur had been appointed by the President as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Pacific; in that role, he represented the Allies at the surrender ceremonies. Prince Shigemitsu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed the necessary documents for the Emperor and the Japanese Government. General Yoshijiro Umezo, Chief of the Army General Staff, signed for the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters. General MacArthur then signed as Supreme Commander, with General Wainwright, the hero of Bataan and Corregidor, and General Percival, the British Commander who had surrendered his forces at Singapore, standing at his side. These two generals had been liberated from a prisoner of war camp at Mukden, China, just three days previously, and were flown to Tokyo. Following MacArthur, Admiral Nimitz signed for all the Allied nations, including the U.S.S.R.

The war was now officially over and V-J Day was proclaimed. As MacArthur phrased it, “Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. A great victory has been won...”



**USS Missouri (BB-63) a United States Navy Iowa-class Battleship  
Anchored in Tokyo Bay, 2 September, 1945  
The Missouri is now rests in the heart of Pearl Harbor**



**The Japanese Instrument of Surrender was the written agreement that formalized the surrender of the Empire of Japan, marking the end of World War II. It was signed by representatives from the Empire of Japan, the United States of America, the Republic of China, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Dominion of New Zealand. The signing took place on the deck of USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.**

# Glossary

Ack-ack	Antiaircraft Fire.
AD	Air Drome.
AF	(1) Air Force; (2) Armed Forces.
Air Drome	Landing field for airplanes that has extensive buildings, equipment, shelters, etc.; airport.
Annex	To attach, append, or add. Especially to something larger or more important.
APO	(1) Army Post Office; (2) Air Post Office.
ATC	(1) Air Transport Command; (2) Air Training Command
A/O	Area of Operations, facilities.
BB	Battleship.
Betty's	Japanese attack aircraft.
Aralen	Aralen is an aminoquinoline. It is thought to kill sensitive malaria parasites by stopping normal metabolism inside the parasite.
A-20	Douglas A-20 Havoc was an American attack, light bomber, intruder and night fighter aircraft.
A-26	The Douglas A-26 Invader is a twin-engined light bomber and attack aircraft built by Douglas Aircraft Company during World War II.
B-17	Flying Fortress is a four-engine heavy bomber aircraft
B-24	Consolidated B-24 Liberator was an American heavy bomber.
B-25	North American B-25 Mitchell was an American twin-engined medium bomber.
B-29	Superfortress is a four-engine propeller-driven heavy bomber.
B-32	Consolidated B-32 Dominator was a heavy bomber made for United States Army Air Forces.
C-47	Douglas C-47 Skytrain or Dakota is a military transport aircraft.
C-54	Douglas C-54 Skymaster was a four-engined transport aircraft.
CRTE	Combat Rescue Training Exercise.
C.S.	(1) Chief of Staff; (2) Combat Support.

# Glossary

Drink	Sea or other body of water.
D-38	Dornier 328 is a turboprop-powered commuter airliner.
E.T.A	(1) Estimated time of arrival; (2) Equivalent Target Area
FEAF	Far East Air Force ( <i>FEAF</i> ) was the <i>military</i> aviation organization of the United States <i>Army</i> in the Philippines just prior to and at the beginning of World War II.
Feathered	Feathering an engine is typically done if there is some kind of serious engine problem or an engine fire and the engine must be shut down. "Feathering" means to adjust each blade of the propeller so that it's parallel to the direction of flight, thus reducing drag and preventing the prop from "windmilling" (just spinning in the wind).
Flack	Antiaircraft Fire.
FOB	Forward Operating Base.
F.O.	Field Office.
G.C.T	Greenwich Civil Time.
Gook	Derogatory term for Asians. It was originally predominantly used by the US military during war time, especially during the Korean and Vietnam wars.
H2X	H2X also known as "Mickey Set/Man" is the 1 <sup>st</sup> ground mapping radar to be used in combat. It was used by the USAAF during World War II as a navigation system for daylight overcast and night time operations. Several B-24's were outfitted with this system.
IAS	Indicated Airspeed.
CAT	Rescue, Military, and Civilian SUV amphibious vehicle
L.S.T.	Landing Strip Tank: is a Naval designation for vessels created during World War II to support amphibious operations by carrying vehicles, cargo, and landing troops directly onto an unimproved shore.
Mickey Set	1st ground mapping radar system.
M&T	Maintenance and Test.
MW	Modern Warfare – guns.

# Glossary

PB&Y	Consolidated PBY Catalina was an American flying boat, and later an amphibious aircraft of the 1930s and 1940s produced by Consolidated Aircraft. It was one of the most widely used seaplanes of World War II.
Pill Boxes	Japanese Pillbox is the dug out where they use to shoot from in WWII. ... A World War 2 pillbox was a concrete shelter for machine guns.
PT	(1) Patrol Torpedo Boat; (2) Torpedo Boat.
P.T.	P.T. Training. Physical Training in the field.
POW	Prisoners of War.
PW	Prisoners of War (as used in the diary).
P-38	The Lockheed P-38 Lightning was a World War II American fighter aircraft built by Lockheed. Developed to a United States Army Air Corps requirement, the P-38 had distinctive twin booms and a single.
P-47	Republic P-47 Thunderbolt was one of the largest and heaviest fighter aircraft in history to be powered by a single piston engine. It was heavily armed with eight .50-caliber machine guns, four per wing.
P-51	P-51 Mustang was an American long-range, single-seat fighter and fighter-bomber used during World War II.
Red Raider	Name for the 22 <sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group, 5th Air Force.
RON	Military term meaning: Remain Overnight.
Ship	Plane.
Seabee	Member of the United States Naval Construction Forces. The word "Seabee" comes from initials "CB" which in turn comes from the term Construction Battalions.
S.N.A.F.U.	Term used by military: Situation Normal, All fouled Up.
S.S.T.	Special Surface Target.
Strafed	to rake with fire at close range and destroy what is on the ground (aircraft).
TBM	(1) Torpedo Bomber; (2) Theater Battle Management
TM	Transition Mission. To carry supplies, personnel, reconnaissance, non-bombing.

# Glossary

TS	Tough Shit.
Ube	City located in Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan.
USO	United Service Organization.
V.D.	Stands for Venereal Diseases.
Windmilling	When an airplane engine quits in flight, the airflow from your speed can cause the propeller to continue rotating. This is called windmilling.
Zero's	Japanese fighter plane
Zeke	Japanese aircraft. Aka, Zero.
V-J Day	Victory over Japan Day.



“America's fighting men and women sacrifice much to ensure that our great nation stays free. We owe a debt of gratitude to the soldiers that have paid the ultimate price for this cause, as well as for those who are blessed enough to return from the battlefield unscathed.”

United States House of Representatives, Allen Boyd

“Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service to our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude America will never forget.”

President Harry Truman

# About the Author

William "Bill" Ersthaler was born in 1924, lived in Detroit before the war. He enlisted in 1943, one month before he was scheduled to be drafted. At age 19 he went through Army boot camp and continued onto flight school. In 1944 he joined the 22nd Bomber Group as a navigator and later deployed to the Western Pacific. As a navigator of the B-24, he flew 40 missions in New Guinea, Western Pacific, Formosa, China, Okinawa and the Philippines and crash landed in the northern tip of Borneo. Bill received an Air Metal with Bronze Star, the Philippines Liberation Medal with Bronze Battle Star, American Theater Ribbon, American Theater Ribbon with Silver Battle Star, an Overseas Service Bar and Victory Metal.

