

Side A Recollections of Combat Missions Oct. 42 -Oct 43 Martin J Radnik

Here are some of my thoughts and I will try to do it in a chronological way, so that it will make a little sense to all of us. It all started in my case when we graduated 5 days after Pearl Harbor. December 12, 1941 and all orders were cancelled. We were held in a replacement depot. There were many of us that later ended up in the 3rd Group and that is why I am starting back at that ~~know~~ point. We were assigned to the 46th Group which was a cadre at that time that had come from the 3rd group along probably ~~about~~ about the same time the 27th group was sent over to the far east. When we got to Louisville, KY., where the 46 was there were I guess maybe 3 B-18 planes and no A-20s. We were later in January we went out to the West coast and picked up maybe 30 or 40 planes and flew them back. The strange thing about this, we were all trained in single engine planes but we were classified as twin engine pilots and ~~in~~ in my case I had 45 minutes as co-pilot in a B-18 then we were qualified to fly those brand new A-20s actually they were DB-7s that had been assigned to the British I believe, but were given to our group. That's where we started. I had 3 take offs and landings at Las Vegas where the planes were sent because of the shelling on the West Coast of the United States. That happened when we were on the train ~~train~~ going out there. In those days most of our transportation in the states was by train. While we on that train was when we got out cockpit time in the A-20. The senior officers made some cardboard cut outs and drew the instrument panel and we sat in the seat there and we pointed to the instruments and that was our primary check out of a cockpit time in the A-20. From Louisville we went down to Shreveport, La. Barksdale Field. Where we started our formation flying and target ~~in~~ practice and bombing runs and were there for a few months and were sent ~~down~~ down to Galveston, TX. where we did some patrol work out over the gulf of Mexico, supposedly looking for German Submarines. Now I got a story to tell later about German Subs. This was where the exec officer who I had met down in 1965, much later. But right now after we had more practicing down in K Galveston, we were sent out to Blythe, CA., where our group was to practice with General Pattons Tank Corp that was stationed at desert center. It was from there that some of us in August were sent to New Guinea and then in September, there were 19 of us lead by Capt. Ed Larner and Capt. Jimmy Downs. 17 others of us most of us 41-i that went as replacements to the 3rd group which was split between Chartres Towers and in Australia and Port Moresby up in New Guinea. I believe the only squadron that was stationed in New Guinea was the 89th. The 13th and the 90th which were B-25 squadrons then rotated and flew off of I believe 7 mile strip. The 89th was at KelaKela that was right there on the coast just east of Moresby. My first experiences there with the 89th were when we would fly airplanes up to fill in for the planes they had lost in combat. or just flying in adverse conditions. There were no replacements coming from the states so the 8th squadron would replace the planes that were lost. by the 89th and while we were there we would fly missions with them and there pilots would get down on R & R. I don't know where they went, McKay or Brisbane. I don't think anything was set up for them in Sydney at that time. When we left ~~the~~ the states to go there we left from San Francisco and we had all of our flying gear, winter gear. We didn't know where we were going and they didn't tell us and we were all betting it was going to be Alaska. As we went out from the Presidio under the Golden Gate Bridge and joined a convoy ~~for~~ for the first day but during the night our ship the U.S.S. Mt. Vernon left the convoy and headed straight South and in the morning when we woke we were alone going probably ~~30~~ 30 knots per hour in a Southerly direction and then it was sort of known that we were going to New Guinea. We were 10 days aboard with one stop in New Zealand for fresh water. Then a day and a half more to Sydney

It was there that ~~we~~ we had an incident when the ship pulled into the harbor was under the Sydney Harbor Bridge and waiting for the pilot to come out and guide us in and we were practically dead in the water and a cross wind took the ship right over into some jettys and piers and it was a chaotic time there. The Airforce Officers were disembarked at that point and went in to a race course and we were bivouaced out in the pasture land of this race course. It was in the early days of the war and hardly mess provisions were there for us. We were only in Sydney a day or 2 and we got on the train and started a long slow trip up to Townswilly and then into Chartres Towers. Along with this tape I'm sending the orders that we had cut for us listing the pilots. There were 2 crew chiefs that were assigned to the 3rd group. I will make some notes on that to the dispersion of the pilots and to what squadrons they were assigned. When we first flew planes up to New Guinea--time I got my first missions in that was in November 1942 and my first mission was with K Ed Larner over Buna New Guinea and we bombed and strafed a Coconut Grove there. I don't have any written records of that, I just remember it because everyone remembers their first mission at least. The fellows that we replaced were the ones that came down from the Phillipines and the Malay States. The fellows that were assigned to the 27th group, I never did get to know any but I recognize the names and they are listed along with this letter that is going to come with this tape. I believe Webster got to know some of the fellows a lot better than I did. He may have some comments on any of the things they did. We did meet the guys that were from the class of 41A that probably went over there with Wilkens. There was John Hill and Don Anderson and Phinnley McGilvery to name a few of them. My first impression there when we arrived in Chartres Towers was there were no pilots in the squadron at all because all of them were down in town in the officers club there so we didn't meet them until, it was a strange meeting. That first night we were pretty tired, I was, and had gone to bed about 11:30 something like that and had just fallen asleep when the lights went on again in the parentental tent that we were staying in and all these guys were shouting having, they were kissing us and whatever. They were hollering Lucky Pierre, Lucky Pierre. These were the guys that were going home and we were replacing them and they were in good spirits. In the time between October when we arrived and it was in January when our 8th squadron moved up to New Guinea. While our planes were assigned to the 89th. I think we had about 6 planes left. So they weren't doing us any good down in Chartres Towers and the war was using up what the 89th had so all the planes were assigned to them so we moved up. I have it on my notes here that we went up to Moresby in January 1943. I had an assignment as a train officer and when we loaded everything on the trains and went into Townsville and loaded on to a victory ship and I think that move probably took us 2 weeks before we had everybody up there. Then all our squadron worked with the 89th until we were scheduled to go over to Dobadura. During those months there our ground troops had taken over that area and a big airstrip was to be built there at Dobo and I think we started moving up there in April. We moved across the Owen Stanley. The move from Port Moresby to Dobadura was entirely different from the one from Townsville up to Port Moresby. It was all done with transports or with our own bombays in the A-20s of the 89th. I believe the 89th squadron in total moved over the mountains before the 8th squadron did and I remember that think the officers of the 8th were the last ones to leave the Port Moresby area. I was a part of the clean up crew at that time. I remember distinctly because it during that time that the last big Japanese airraid took place at Moresby. We had already cut our communications with task force and our officer bivouac are was more or less isolated from any communications of the task force. It was one morning I believe when 27 Jap bombers were coming over they must have been maybe between 15,000' maybe a little higher. They were above the clouds and they came roaring in from the Northwest and we could

see them through the broken clouds. There was just Don Anderson and myself the only 2 I can remember officers and when we heard this roar of planes we ran out of our tents and got close to our slit trenches. We could see this large number of planes coming. There were 9 that split off from the main body and they swung over toward Kela-Kela airstrip. Although they weren't going for the field itself they were going for a fuel dump that was just a little to the North of the strip and then they did that we got down in the slit trenches and the bombs started falling and they were pretty accurate. They hit the oil drums and the trucks that were out in this fuel dispersal area. After they had passed over we looked up and there was a pretty big fire works display. The 55 gallon drums were exploding and flying through the air and trucks going all direction. That was the only big airraid that I had ever been a part of or been a target of though we did get some air raids later on over in Dobadura but they were by single planes close to us and the others were intercepted around Orro Bay and didn't get over to the airstrip at all. There was one time there don't remember the date, that a big group of bombers coming down from Rabaul were intercepted by our fighters and we had a front row seat to see all of this air battle that went on at Orro Bay which was some 15-20 miles to our Northeast. Getting back to the move to the Dobadura from Port Moresby. Seeing that we were the last to move out ~~from~~ of our encampment area there. Adjunt John Carrol was very frugal man in knowing that there would not be any lumber on the other side of the mountains dismantled the 8 Cedar latrine that we had used very comfortably at Moresby. It was a beautiful latrine, it was open face and we overlooked the Coral Sea and many thoughts were passed between all of the philosophers along that bench. Of course had to pull his rank on the pilots when he wanted that thing loaded on a transport plane. But he got to be known as the first white man to fly a latrine over the Owen Stanley Mountains. My last few in A-20s were flown out of Dobo with the 89th squadron and it was during that month of May that we received B-25s and we started practicing strafing and bombing and formation flying with the B-25s. We did get a lot of new pilots that were B-25 pilots but the ones that were in the 8th at that time were all A-20 pilots. One of the things that happened in those months I believe it was in April before we got to Dobo that Maj. Ellison he was CO of the 8th squadron was relieved of duty. He had a problem he never flew a mission that I remember. He was assigned to duty down in Australia and he had his own problems then coming up. Jimmy Downs was promoted to the squadron Commander's position and was given a majority at that time. I believe that was when Ray Wilkens came back from the 89th squadron. He had been with them since all the A-24 missions depleted the 8th squadron of planes. I did not know Ray toowell although I had flown a mission with him. I went out one time, we were still stationed at Moresby and I believe we went out with 500 pound bombs looking for some shipping that was reported to be going from Fenchaven to Ley. It was in the afternoon and we got out there and we couldn't find any shipping and we weren't going to drop our rare 500 pounds on an airdrome when they were too valuable to be used on shipping. We tried to get back to Port Moresby with our bombs and I remember Ray and I getting up to 23,000' over the mountains and we were on oxygen and couldn't climb another foot and without going through clouds, we decided we would go back to get down ~~to~~ to Dobadura, at that time it was used for emergency landing and we landed there that night and flew a mission in the morning. Again with different bombs. It was strange to land with 2 bombs. We had never done that one before. I believe I mentioned that during the month of May we received our B-25s and we were getting settled into the jungle camp area. It was being built up, we had our cement slab in for our mess hall and got that all screened in before we got our showers installed which consisted of a cement slab with overhead pipes

with a few shower heads. We took our baths down in the river where our camp was and it was right along that river that our officers club was being built by a native crew, that the Aussies had brought over from Moresby. It was at that site that we had a little pier out over the water where I remember in the evenings Jack Taylor would sit out there and exchange news from home or anywhere else. Jack was in the 89th and their camp was right adjacent to ours there. It was a common meeting ground for 41-i fellows had been friends for some months. It was there that the officers club was built. The amenities were a neon sign tropical Paradise and we had 4 refrigerators that had been allotted to our dispensary ~~for our medicines~~ for our medicines but they were commandeered for our officers club. If you got down there early enough in the evening you managed to get an ice cube in a drink. The other two assets we had were 2 flush toilets. Of course we had to wait until our water system was put in with our big chlorinated tanks and our shower system but having facilities like that, we always felt that that was an asset to our invitation to any of our guests that we might entice over to our club. As far as the combat was concerned in those months of June and July mainly barge hunts along the Southern coast of New Britain between ~~Java~~ ^{Form} and Ley and then around then around to the Northern coast of New Guinea all the way over to ~~Med~~ Medang and then across to the Rook Islands to Cape Gloucester and then along the Northern coast of New Britain about half way to Rabaul. The Japanese were supplying with barges from shipping that came as far down as Wewak. I believe our barge hunts were successful in cutting off supplies. In August that we flew big missions to Wewak, I believe they were on the 17 & 18 of August. They were at least the first one was lead by Col. Hall. We caught many planes on the ground there but that one took off from Port Moresby. We went back to Port Moresby for that. It was during that period when Jimmy Downs was promoted from Squadron Commander ~~to~~ and he went up into group as group operations officer and Maj. Wilkens was promoted from Capt. to become CO of the 8th squadron. In September I flew 5 missions in combat and I did go down on short leave, 4 or 5 day period down to Brisbane and back up to Cairns to pick up supplies. It was the one and only time that I was privileged to fly our B-25 supply ship called "Fat Cat" It was a B-25 that was condemned for combat and it was made into a transport and all the bomb ~~rack~~ racks and all the armor plate was taken out of the plane, all of the armament. The rear top turret was eliminated. All the paint was stripped off and it was a beautiful plane to fly. It had some new motors on it and it would ~~not~~ take off and stay right with the fighters if need be. It was going the other direction and we could cruise it down to Australia somewhere between 280 & 300MPH. That is with just a group of fellows going down on leave. It was our commercial transport. It was to thrill to fly a B-25 that maneuvered with such grace. I really enjoyed that ride. Near the end of the month that I had that ~~priv~~ privilege and I remember part of my cargo was extracted for our coke machine and I believe Neon gas for our neon sign. At the time I returned to Dobadura was when we had the grand opening of our officers club. It was quite a bash. We managed to get an orchestra from the engineering division that was stationed around Dobadura, the fellows that were adding to the airstrip putting in the dispersal areas etc. They had a good jazz orchestra and we invited all of the nurses we could locate within 20 miles from Orro Bay and the station hospitals around and the Red Cross girls and we had a grand opening there in September. In the month of October were the first missions to Rabaul. Again it was Col. Hall who came down from task force that lead us on the ~~first~~ first mission. That was October 12. Later on a mission on the 24th that I flew was lead by one who became Lt. Col. Downs and that was the last mission I flew in the B-25s. After that it was the November 2nd debacle that I'm sure that you are getting informatic

on from Bill Webster. I only knew what happened on the ground because at that time I was assigned to operations officer and I was minding the store the day that Wilkens lead our 8th squadron. Before I go into the period before I became squadron CO I would like to talk a little about another mission that was up in the area of Wewak. It was on the 27th of September

Recollections continued Side B. 8th & 89th Squadrons, 3rd attack group Port Moresby and Dobo

there were 3 groups that were to go to Wewak and our main target was the shipping in Victoria Bay. That ~~Day~~ Day Maj. Wilkens lead the 8th squadron and I was in his leading the left element and we had the western most area to cover and as we came in off the land toward the sea we went over a dispersal area, a fuel dump, as it were and strafed and bombed that and I'm sure we started flares in their fuel dumps. Maj. Wilkens then made a right toward a small island right off the coast of Wewak. It was a sort of a crescent shaped island, had a little bay in the pocket of the crescent there where there was an ocean going transport loading off onto a small coastal vessel and he went in there and dropped his bomb and as I was following him up there was a float plane that came around the side of the mountain, it was sort of a volcanic little island, and it that float plane came into my view I turned into it, I would say I was 2 miles away from it, and when he saw me turn into him he made a 360 turn then instead of my following him, I didn't want to separate me from our squadron I completed ~~and~~ a 360 degree turn and came back in and went across the same path that Wilkens had just maneuvered and dropped my bombs on those same 2 ships and there were hits on them. Then as I was down low, I had to pull up to come over this finger of the crescent as it were and I was going at such a speed that I couldn't nose down to strafe whatever shore batteries they had on the South side of the island and in those few moments was when I picked about 20 machine slugs in the plane. There were holes that I could see on the top side of the wings and there was an instant drop in my hydraulic pressure. I immediately got down on the water and I could not see the rest of the entire flight. They had already bombed ~~at~~ their targets and were on the way home and I was off over the water. So I just stayed down and flew home alone. that day and when I got to Dobadura I landed in the direction that we normally didn't. We landed ordinarily we took out from the mountains out over the water but this day I needed a long run to give my gunner a chance to crank down the flaps so I landed from North to South without any hydraulic pressure and everything need a long run. I had about a 10 mile approach there over the ~~and~~ just dragged the plane in and landed it safely/ ~~at~~ It was one of the times that I did get shot up but nobody was injured in our plane that day. The photos that were taken the following day of that area by our observation planes showed that the two ships that were in that harbor were sunk and both Wilkens and I each got credit for sinking a ship. Now I don't know which one got what but both of us had bombed those 2 ships. That's about all of the chronological outline that I have here but I want to take this time and go back to that first mission that I flew with Ed Larner. There were 3 of us and I learned that they were 3 of us, I always thought it was a ~~2~~ 2 man mission. and that's because like I say the first missions a man doesn't see everything that he is supposed to see. The 3 of us were Larner & Jack Taylor and myself. Our target was the Japanese dispersal area that was their materiel supply dump that was in amongst the coconut palms right there at Buna. We were to drop parafrags in there and I think we made 2 passes, I don't recall but I know the first time we went down across there ack-ack was bursting there just oh maybe 150-200' above ground and when I saw that I dropped down to maybe the surface of the trees and later Larner told me that he thought that I had been shot down. He made a right turn and fjo the 2nd pass and of course and when you come back the 2nd time I was back on his wing

I mean he knew that I hadn't been shot down. Taylor had picked schrapnel and he later landed at the emergency field that was on the North side of the Owen Stanley Mountains but I didn't learn all of those details until the reunion down in Austin, TX, last year with the 89th squadron. I had always imagined and believed that it was a 2 man mission just Lerner and I because I remember flying back to Port Moresby and it was just Lerner and I so I never realized that Jack had been along on that mission until we got to comparing notes and he remembered it and I said I just didn't remember 3 of us starting out but I only remembered 2 of us getting back. That's what initial combat does to you. You don't observe everything that you should, you just aren't that relaxed. I have another little story to tell about those first missions. It was with a fellow that we had in the 8th squadron. He came to us in the group of B-25 pilots and of course ~~it~~ it was our policy then to have all the newcomers from the states ~~no~~ no matter what their rank was to fly as co-pilot on their first missions so that they would have a little bit more time to look around and feel a little more relaxed. This fellow's name was Heinrick and he flew co-pilot for me and we had a mission to go up to Rook Island I believe and we got up there and ~~we couldn't find anything~~ we couldn't find anything and our secondary target was to get over to Medang and if you notice the contour of New Guinea from those islands over to Medang. We were approaching it from over the water and as we were coming toward Medang evidently they picked us up and started putting some ack-ack up and it was just bursting a few hundred feet off the ground. This fellow had never seen ack-ack before and he tapped me on the shoulder and he says look out for those barrage balloons and of course all they were black puffs of smoke in the air and from a distance he thought they were barrage balloons. We knew different and we turned off and then we hit some other target ~~there~~ that day. We didn't even go into Medang. It was kind of our policy if we couldn't surprise them we didn't want them shooting at us. Another early ~~in~~ mission that I remember was with the 89th squadron and this was out at Port Moresby and it was a 9 plane mission and it was to be over Ley. Now the 89th had been hitting Ley that was one of the Jap strongholds there. Of course the 8th had hit it with A-24s early in the year but this time they were hitting it with low level A-20s and the B-25s from the 13th and the 90th I believe would hit it from a ~~medium~~ medium altitude I suppose around 10,000. I don't know how high they bombed. It was soon after we got there that the ~~A~~ B-25s were converted into strfers and Lerner went over into the 90th squadron and became the CO there. and lead the mission in March against the Japanese Convoy in the Bismarck Sea. But the mission that I am referring to right here is an A-20 mission out of Port Moresby to Ley where they had been strafing at minimum altitude for a number of times and because the Japanese were catching on to that one this ~~mission was~~ mission was to be at 1,200' and when we came in we did go across the target at 1,200' and we had demolition bombs this time. Usually minimum altitude were parafrag bombs but this time they were demolition bombs and because of 1,200' we managed to get across the target without any ack-ack because they had learned to cut their fuses on their shell to explode fairly low to the ground but that is the highest that I ever bombed a target in either A-20s or B-25s. All my other missions were at a minimum altitude and mass level if it was over any ships. Another mission with the 89th and the A-20s was just a 3 man mission and it was again looking for some barges or shipping between Fenchaven and Ley, New Guinea. It was lead by Dixie Dunbar of the 89th. I don't remember what time of day it was but we had gone over and didn't find a thing between Ley & Fenchaven so our secondary target was Salamoau. I remember we did ~~we~~ we were doing a no, no, we were learning these things later on. You never tried to come in low over the water because as we were coming in I would say our level was maybe 500' above the surface of the water as we were approaching Salamoau, the ack-ack started breaking in front of us and if that guy hadn't had an itchy finger I think he would have

knocked all 3 of us down. As we were flying in that ack-ack was breaking at our level and a few hundred' or so in front of us. It was one right after the other and they were always popping in front of us. If he had just waited until we got there I think he would have knocked us down. Three of them was enough for us and Dixie gave us the signal so we turned over the land and we went inland of Salamaou and we got down behind the hills and then we approached Salamaou runway and from the land and we were right down off the trees and that's where we came in strafing and bombing. They already knew we were in the area so we just stayed down low and concentrated on what was known as Mr. McDonald's ack-ack battery and that was a revetment at the point where this little peninsula of Alaamoau joined the land and it was sort of near the end of the runway there and it was a big circular revetment with 3 smaller ones inside and from day to day they would move their gun ~~inside~~ from one to the other. so we didn't know which one of the 3 the gun battery was in but we did ~~pop~~ what we could in that area. I don't claim any kind of result but as soon as we got across that we just got down on the water again and left the vicinity.

I'll take this time to talk about the food supply that we had in that 17 months that I was overseas. In the early days and I consider the early days for me were Oct., Nov., and December of 1942 when we arrived there in Sydney we ~~trained at Chartres Towers and~~ took the train up to Chartres Towers. The unique thing about Australian transportation there were no dining cars on those trains so at meal time we always stopped in a station. Everybody would get off and go into the dining room at the stations and partake of whatever was on the menu that day. Of course for the military we were getting a lot of mutton in Australia. For breakfast we even had mutton sausages, I don't think that was very tasty to American fellows. We were on Australian rations most of the time. The American army hadn't gotten around to give too much in the way of their food. When we got up to Port Moresby it was all Australian rations and of course the first planes that we brought up there exposed us to those meals and it was in November for me. All new comers thought this is pretty good. It consisted of bully beef, Australian Sardines and hard tack and peanut butter. Well the Sardines tasted delicious that first time that you ate them and of course you wondered why all the other guys were staring at you while you were putting these things away along with the hard tack. The next day you realized why they were doing that because you still tasted Sardines and even 2 days later. That was about the last time you ate those Sardines. Then you went over to the bully beef and it was tasty but pretty stringy. Later on, after the first of the year and American bakery was brought in and then you had a ration of fresh bread. That helped immensely. While we were on that Australian food we supplemented it with canned peaches, Squab in aspic and of course these were flown up by the squadrons in these supply planes. Of course there was always cookies from home that the fellows would get and they were all sidpersed within the about one sitting. When we moved over to Dobadura we had access to more American rations. The Port at Orro Bay would get in a supply ~~of~~ ship periodically and there were times when--they made a big mistake one time they unloaded all the fresh eggs at Orro Bay. This was later on when our troops were going up the coast at Soward Salamaou. Some of them were destined for that but everything was unloaded at Orro Bay and they were not going to reload them on the ships and take them up so everybody had about 3 times as many eggs on hand as they were allotted in the manifest. Everybody had as many eggs as they wanted for about 3 days, for breakfast. That was a boon. Another time we had a shipment of fresh potatoes. of course when we got those in we made a meal of fresh potatoes. They were a treat after being on the dehydrated food we had been choking on for months it seemed. I started dating Carrie Gammil whom I later married in the station hospital there and I was kinda

maneuver an invite to come over ~~of~~ for the evening meal and in the station hospital they had more of refrigeration than the squadrons did. They would have fresh meat at the evening meal. Of course if we were given fresh meat we would eat it and we ate it at our noon meal and what was left over was always consumed at the evening meal. The hospital had fresh meat more often than we did. I think we had it probably twice a week. There is one thing I can say about the food at that time, I don't think anybody gained weight in fact if you study any of the pictures after the fellows had been there six months they all looked like baggy clothes on them.

There are a couple more things I could talk about. The first thing I want to talk about is the time Pappy Gunn brought his B-25 with the 75mm cannon in the nose of it. They brought it up to Dobadura and it was the time for testing out and Gunn ~~had~~ wanted flight leaders to go with him and try it out and get the opinion. He came to the 8th squadron and George Schwartz and myself went up with Pappy Gunn and we went along the coast of New Guinea there and he showed us what was to be done and we sat in the pilot's seat and I know in my case that I was making a pass at a big log on the beach, it was somewhere Southeast of Dobadura and I had an opportunity to fire 3 shots with that B-25 with the 75mm cannon. We would back off some distance I would say 2 miles which is the length of a good long runway or 2 short runways and saw this log and this was what I was aiming at and I believe that I was hitting to within 3' of the thing. Of course George Schwartz took his turn. He was accomplishing about the same thing. Our approval of it was that we highly recommended it with Pappy that it would have been an asset to every squadron to have about 4 of those things in there. My belief that if we had had them at that time, going in against would have been a lot easier for us. We could have started firing a lot farther away than we were able to do with our 50 ~~caliber~~ or machine guns. I think it was sometime after that that he went back to the states and got to Wright Field with the engineers down there and they said it can't be done, center of gravity on the plane and this and that and the other thing and shooting the thing was too much of a stress on the plane so I never did see one that was made in production. I know they shortened the nose up on the B-25 and they moved the center of gravity back but I never did see a B-25 with a 75mm cannon in it in combat. It would have been an asset to us. in my opinion.

I have a little correction to make after replaying these to myself. In our raid over Victoria Bay when I talked about a float plane coming around the mountain and it making a 360 degree turn I mean 180 degree turn. because I made the ~~360~~ 360 and after the float plane had turned back and around and of course I didn't want to go chasing it I had the bombs to drop so it was not a 360 degree turn by the float plane. One other thing I want to mention when I returned home from the reunion down in Austin, TX, of the 89th squadron where I learned ~~that the grim reaper~~ of the book "The Grim REapers" that was authored by a Lawrence Cortizi. I sent away for it and and I read it with a critical eye of course and there some discrepancies in there. that I believe should be corrected or not used in anything that you write ^ALarry. I'm sure that your book will be researched with a lot more help from the 8th squadron. I know at the beginning of the war in 1942 when the 8th squadron had only A-24s I believe they were the first of the 3rd group to get into combat. I wasn't there at that time, what I read in Grim REapers had to come from somebody else. There are a few fellows now that we were in contact with I believe I will put them on this list that I am going to send. They may have some good information from the early part of 1942 that they will be able to help you with. I hope maybe to see you before the next 89th squadron reunion which is going to be in Colorado Springs in May 1990 and I will be sure to give you a buzz.