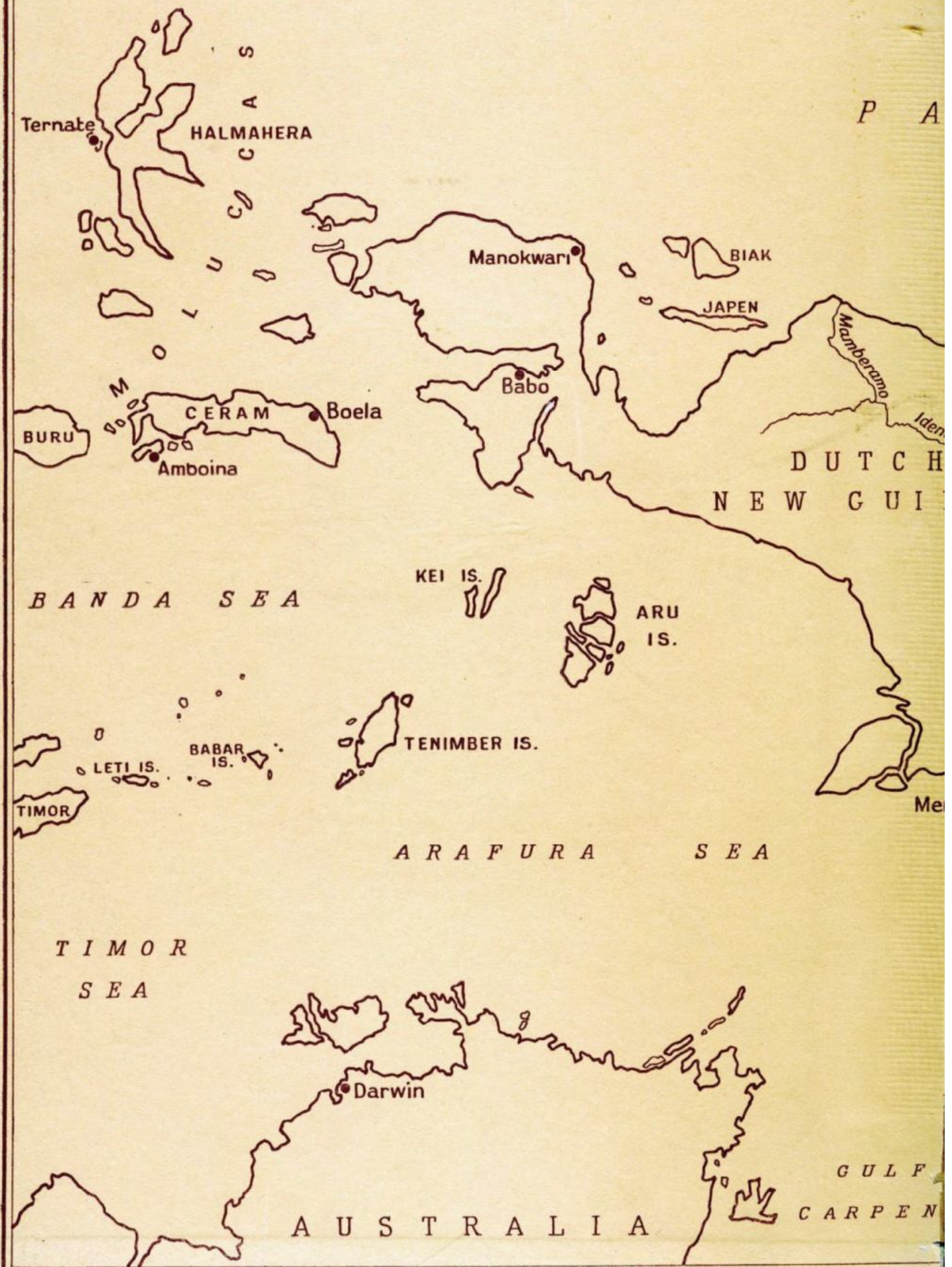


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A.D. O'DONNELL



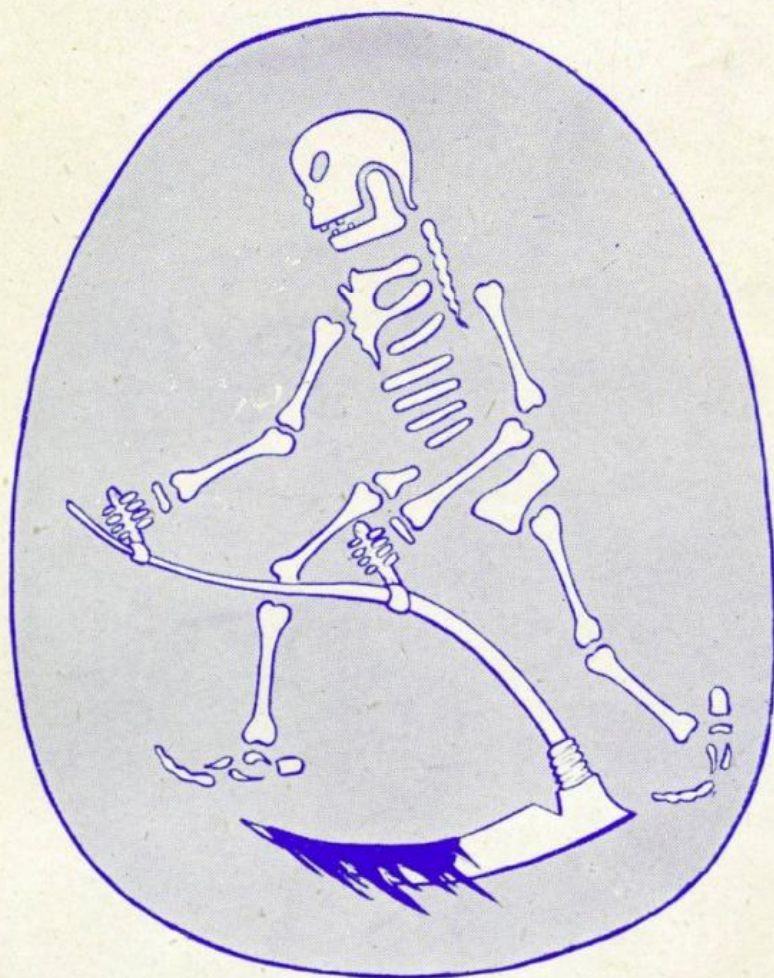


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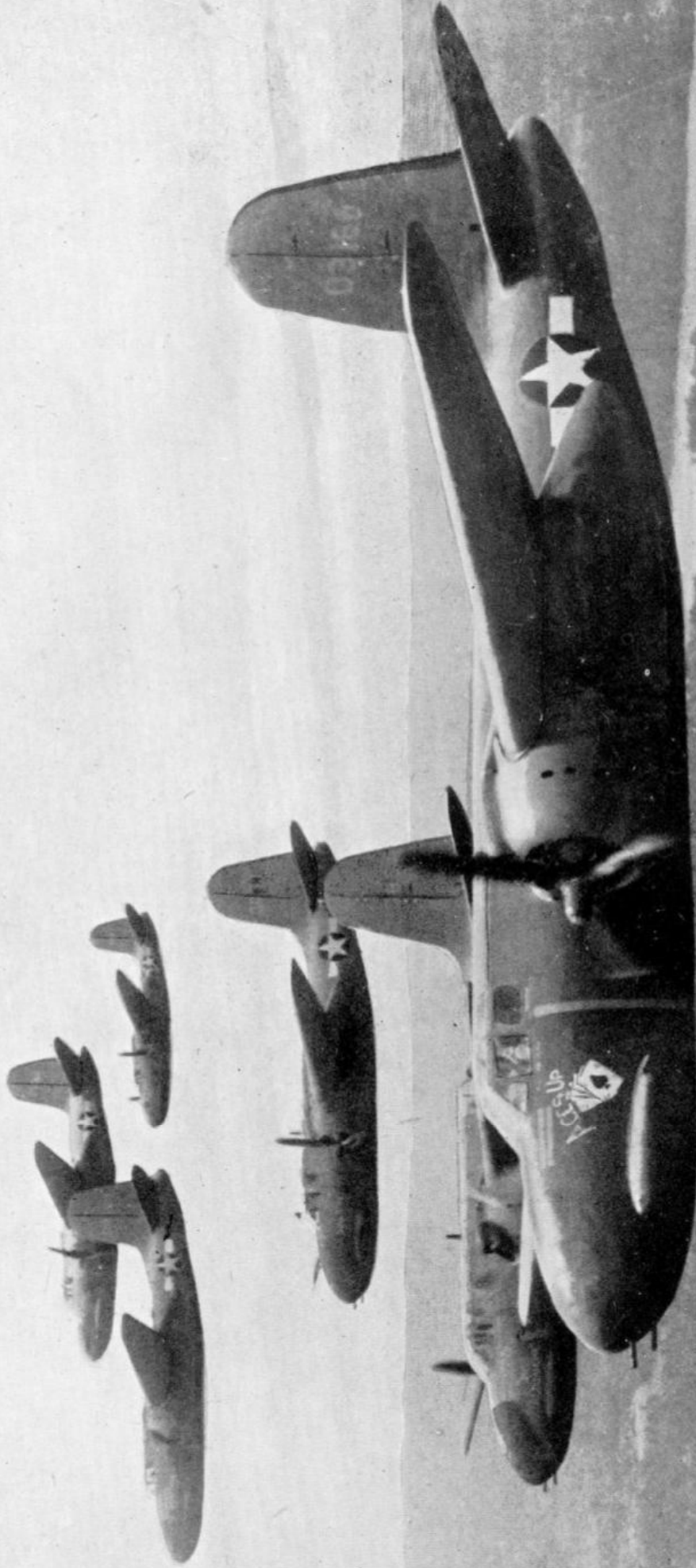
O C E A N







*"There is justice in the Grim Reaper's Scythe—"*





# ALTITUDE MINIMUM

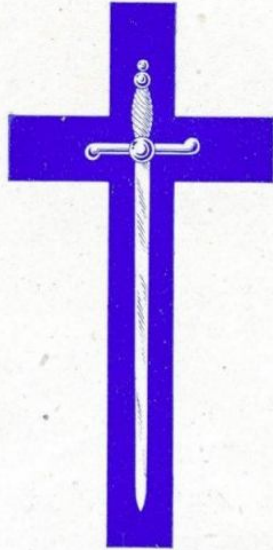
89TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (LIGHT)  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC



AUSTRALIA  
ANGUS AND ROBERTSON LTD  
1945

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Halstead Press Pty Ltd, 9-19 Nickson Street, Sydney*





TO  
THE MEN OF THE 89TH,  
AND TO  
ALL MEN GONE OUT THE HARD WAY





#### AIR STRATEGISTS OF THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

The planners and executors of the air war against Japan are shown here as they met for the first time since Lieut. General Kenney's new air army, "Far East Air Forces", was formed, embracing Major General Ennis C. Whitehead's Fifth Air Force and Major General St. Clair Streett's Thirteenth. *Left to right: General Whitehead, General Kenney, General Streett.*



HEADQUARTERS  
ADVANCE ECHELON  
FIFTH AIR FORCE  
APO 713 UNIT #1

AG 201.22

18 May 1944.

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : All Air Force Units, New Guinea Area.

1. The following radiogram received from the Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, is published for the information of all concerned and is to be posted on all command, wing, group and squadron bulletin boards:

QUOTE WRECKED JAP AIRCRAFT AT HOLLANDIA AND ON TADJI ARE ATTRIBUTED TO THE EFFICIENCY AND THOROUGHNESS WITH WHICH THE FIFTH AIR FORCE IS PERFORMING ITS TASK PD THE IMPOSING LIST OF DESTRUCTION CONTAINED IN YOUR RADIO DATED FOURTEEN MAY SHOWS THE COMPLETENESS OF THE JAP DEFEAT PD CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL CONCERNED FOR A JOB WELL DONE PD ARNOLD UNQUOTE

2. In addition to the above, the undersigned desires to convey his heartiest congratulations to all ranks for the continued success in destroying the enemy.

ENNIS C. WHITEHEAD,  
Major General, United States Army,  
Deputy Air Force Commander.

AG 201.22

1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS, V BOMBER COMMAND, APO 713 Unit #1, 21 May, 1944.

TO: Commanding Officers, all Organizations, this Command.

My own observations show the thoroughness of the destruction at Hollandia. A magnificent job. Congratulations to all officers and men.

J. V. CRABB,  
Colonel, Air Corps,  
Commanding.



## SQUADRON, GROUP, AIR FORCE

FROM the single tactical squadron and its parent group, to the widespread, intricate Force that fought the enemy in the skies above New Guinea and Darwin, drove them to earth, destroyed their airplanes on the ground, sank their shipping and cut their supply lines to provide the opening for the long advances up the New Guinea Coast and along the water avenues to New Britain.

The Grim Reaper left the United States as a unit of four squadrons—the 8th Squadron, the 13th and the 90th, and the 89th. The 8th was the first of the Group to go into action. They had the A-24 . . . against Zeros, and numerical odds that pointed out the end before they went out on their first mission. They fought, but it was the hunting falcon against a slower, heavier bird. It was a quick, savage fight that ended tragically, but served the purpose of slowing the Japanese in their swift, inexorable drive towards Australia. The gentlemen of Nippon were flushed with conquest during the first months of the Southwest Pacific War—with a supreme confidence in their war lords. The allied air forces in the theatre were so short on men and fighting planes that the enemy intelligence must have disbelieved its reports. . . .

The B-25's went in next. Three ship formations—and three ship flights, carrying an overload of fuel, bombs and ammunition to targets that were at the extreme limit of their range. The squadrons remained on the mainland, and the B-25's had to make the long Coral Sea flight to the staging field at Port Moresby as the first stage of their missions. The ground crews set up skeleton camps near the strip. The crews would stage out of the area on missions without fighter cover, to the north coast targets of Lae and Salamaua, for ten days or a fortnight, before returning to the mainland. It was not an efficient arrangement, but the situation, at that time, did not permit any lessening of the grip upon our own precariously held lines of communication and supply. This was in April of 1942, before the reading public had begun to realize the strategic importance of the half-known islands of the Southwest Pacific. It was the first stage of the holding war. The records of the 3rd Bombardment Group, with their cold, impersonal figures of loss and achievement, do not look at it as an impersonal war. The B-25's fought too many battles with the attacking Zeros, they went through too many curtains of solid ack-ack fire, to regard it with the easily used phrases of dispassionately-composed news articles.

The 3rd has held the distinction, for a long period, of being the most highly decorated unit in the Southwest Pacific. The list of awards, and the actions which justified them, would be a remarkable addition to any album . . . but we do not think in terms of awards, but in terms of results, and the service our Group has given. There is not a single major target in this theatre of New Guinea and its satellite islands that has



not felt the full force of the Grim Reaper's wrath. The historic strikes at Rabaul, Wewak, Hollandia and Bolea will rank high in the formal accounts of aerial warfare, but we will prefer to remember our ships and our commanding officers leading the way across those targets. Major Wilkins, of the 8th Squadron, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour, posthumously. The highest award our nation can give to the fighting man, yet the men and the officers of the Group will first remember him as a man, and then as the pilot who went in with his crew in attack upon a Japanese cruiser in Simpson Harbor, at Rabaul.

The 3rd Group's commanding officers have ranked high in the actions of this war. Colonel Hall, Lt. Colonel Downs, Colonel Henebry and Lt. Colonel Ellis are on record as the leaders of medium and attack bomber flights over the most dangerous targets the theatre has held. It is part of the Grim Reaper's tradition that its commanders take the hard missions. They have never failed the tradition. It carries on into the squadrons, where the squadron commanders lead their own flights across and through the black-webbed lacing of enemy ground fire to reach the targets designated for the day. The 3rd Group began its history during the first World War, but it was in this remote part of the world, against the combined odds of nature, shortage of equipment and personnel, and an implacable and fanatical enemy, that its tradition began to build. It goes through from combat, all the way down to the prosaic building of camps in raw, new territories, to the manner in which the men of the Group accept the denial of the most fundamental advantages of existence.

The roster of the 89th Squadron's commanding officers is a record of the Squadron's combat history. They have all been A-20 men, but they flew B-25's during the first part of the war, and after they advanced to duties in the Group Headquarters Squadron, before the 3rd Group was changed over to attack bombers, they again flew the 25's in combat. Colonel Hall and Major Petrie were the early commanding officers. The command went to Major Clark, Majors Good and Nenneman, then to Major Joe Moore, who turned over the command to Major Dow. They ran their recorded missions up to figures that are difficult to believe, when it is considered that in other theatres, a quarter of the same number of missions was stated as the maximum required before the man was relieved from combat duties. The commanding officers of the 3rd Group and its squadrons do not request relief from combat duties, until the orders are in, from higher authorities, making it mandatory.

The present commanding officer of the 89th Squadron is Captain Walter Heyer. His successor is on the roster of officers who are today taking their ships and their flights on missions across the wide seas, and the mountainous islands of our sector. The Fifth Air Force has expanded, times over again, since it first was organized in Australia. It has needed the experience of the squadron and group men who have flown the hardest and most demanding type of combat. The training fields of the United States have needed that same experience, to prepare the fledglings for their own introduction into the war. To the layman, this will serve as the explanation for the advancement, and the replacement, of commanding officers, and all personnel. The rosters may change, with new names and new ranks, but the basic purpose of the Group and the Squadron's organization will remain the same. The Grim Reaper will not ease the weight of the strikes against his enemy.



89th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)

3rd BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

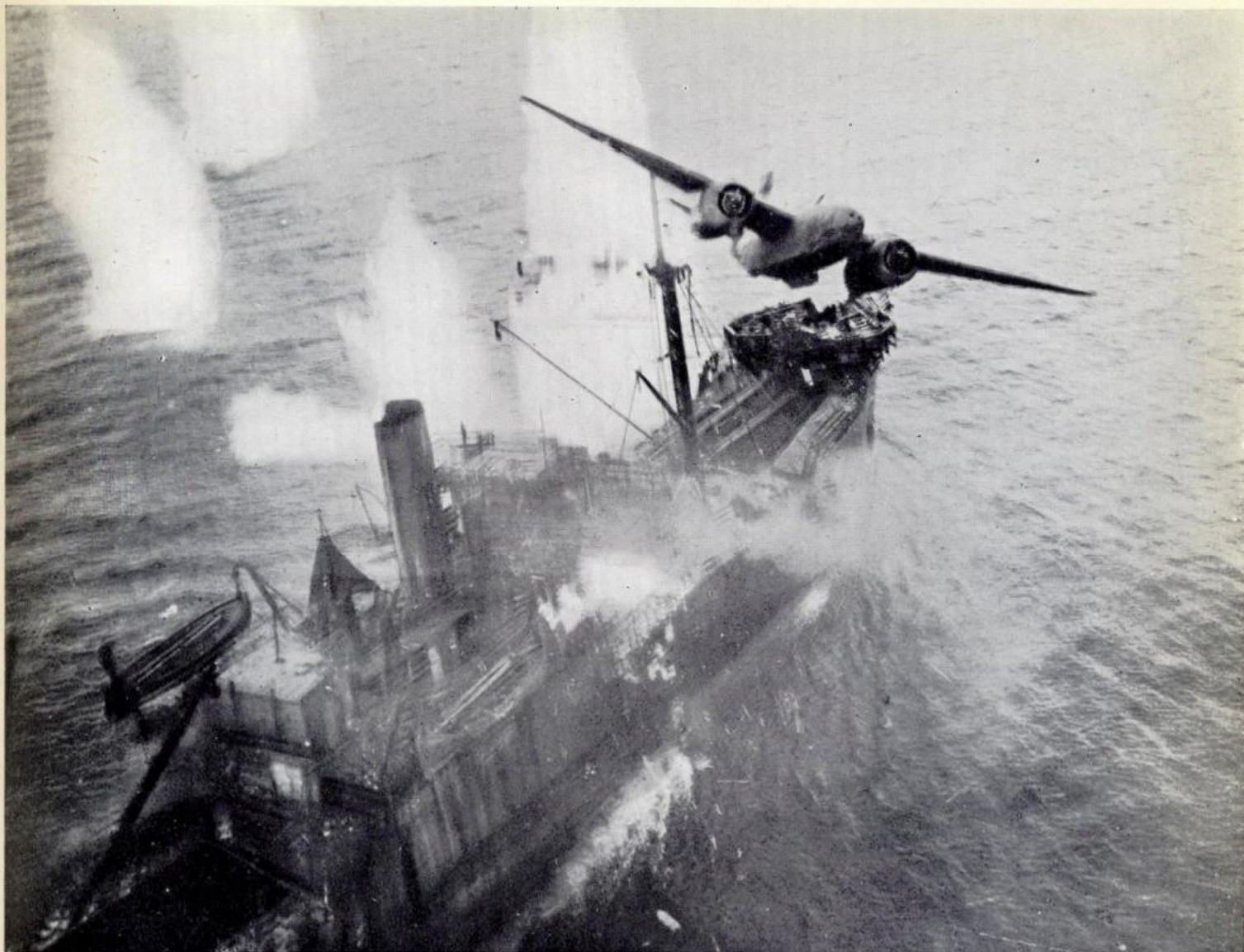
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HONOR ROLL

1ST LT ALBERT F. BURKE, JR. 0-740049  
1ST LT PAUL KENDRACH. 0-431446  
2ND LT CORNELIUS F. O'LEARY. 0-649101  
1ST LT FRANCIS C. PRUITT. 0-442230  
1ST LT TURNER WILLIAMSON. 0-433435  
2ND LT GEORGE Q. LOCKWOOD, JR. 0-747444  
2ND LT JACK HARRIS. 0-672087  
F/O IRA J. WEIDLER. T-186427

T/SGT ARTHUR G. KELLY. 638962  
T/SGT IVAN M. WRIGHT. 6823767  
SGT HARRY C. YOUNG. 20329562  
S/SGT RICHARD E. CHAPMAN. 20459114  
S/SGT ROGER S. MARTIN. 11014927  
S/SGT ROLAND C. NOYES, JR. 18010733  
M/SGT SHEPHERD G. DECKER. 6810612  
S/SGT LAWRENCE M. GILES. 11014331  
S/SGT OTHA M. PIERCE. 17024312  
S/SGT JOSEPH FOX. 18048416  
PVT 1CL ZANE W. HILL 13031713  
S/SGT FRANK E. TURPIN. 35457254  
S/SGT DONALD L. BRADLEY. 6953407  
S/SGT FRED J. SMITH. 6925240  
S/SGT JOHN C. HUNTER. 34571366  
S/SGT LEO G. SARKISIAN. 31005676  
S/SGT ADOLPHUS T. CLEMENTS. 13034944  
S/SGT CLAIR E. MATTOON, 39176425





## WE CAME IN LOW

THIS is the story of one squadron on active duty in the Southwest Pacific. The 89th Bombardment Squadron (Light), member of the 3rd Bombardment Group (Light), on active duty since January 31, 1942 in the Southwest Pacific Theatre of the Second World War. This volume is not an effort to prove that we were the prime factor in the coming victory. It is too big a war to permit even the nations to reach out for the crimson glory. It was planned to serve as a storehouse for the memory, for all of us who have served with the Squadron. A psychic, apprehensive belief persists that those memories shall be turned, revised, polished and amplified in the years of peace to come. It is so destined by nature, for man's memory is at best like the sands of our own islands, washed forever to infinitesimal change by the sea and the tides.

No album should do more than state facts, and present a picture-record of its men, and the manner in which they fought and worked and lived. War costs lives, and no man or organization can be willing to seize credit and glory after first weighing the cost. The 89th Squadron has Firsts to its credit, but they are in the records and in the cold, factual

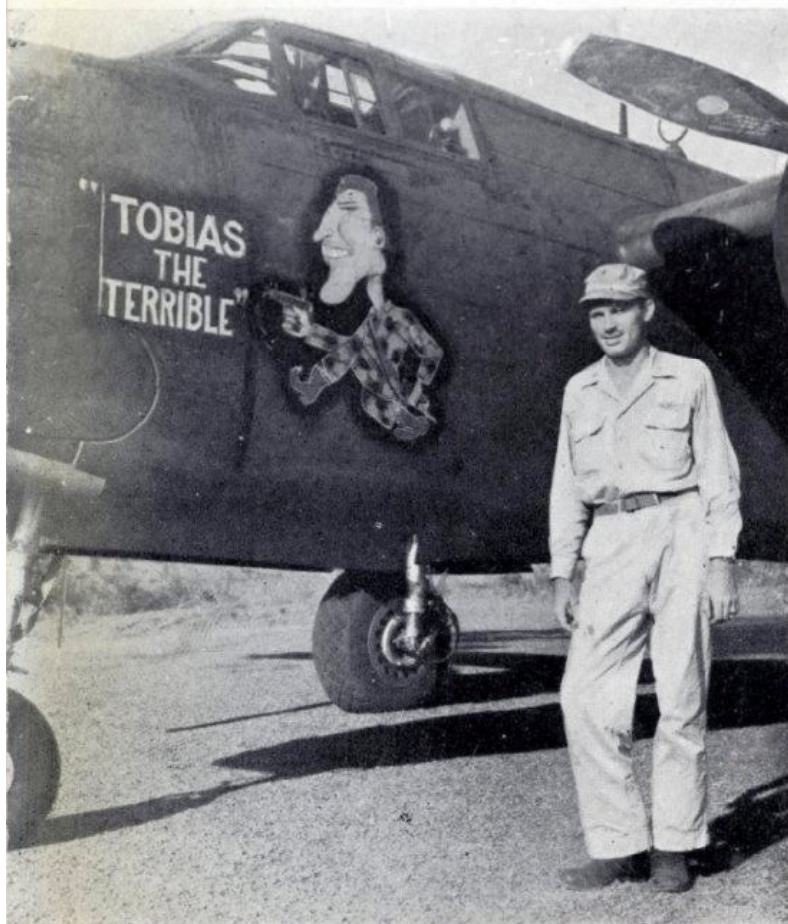




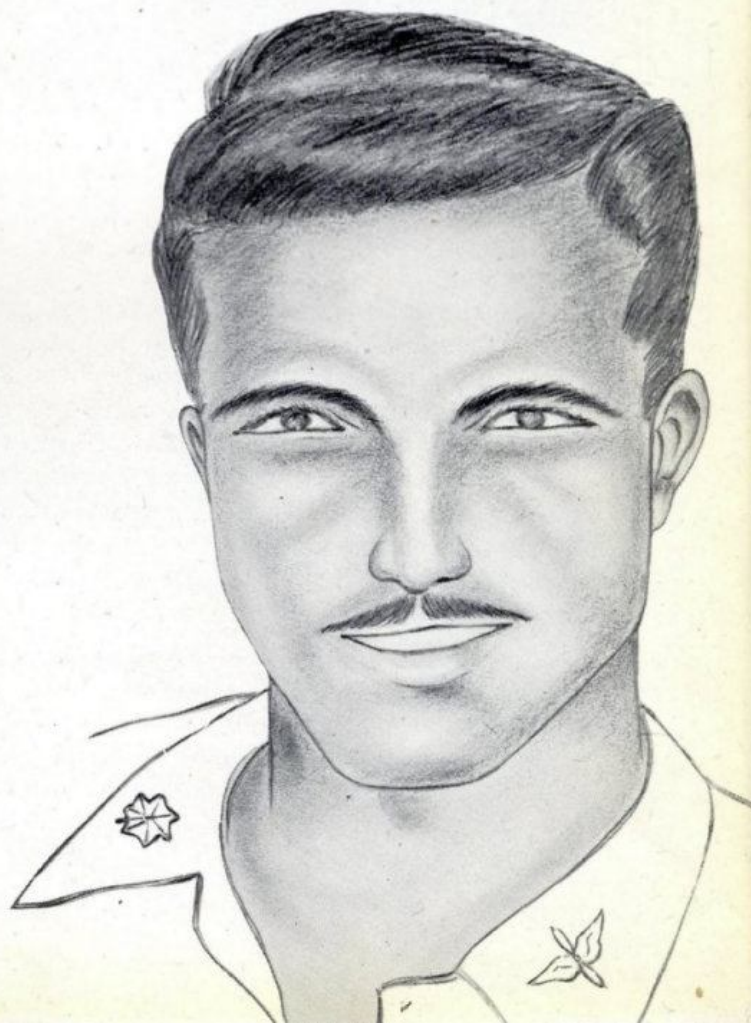
CAPTAIN WALTER HEYER,  
COMMANDING OFFICER



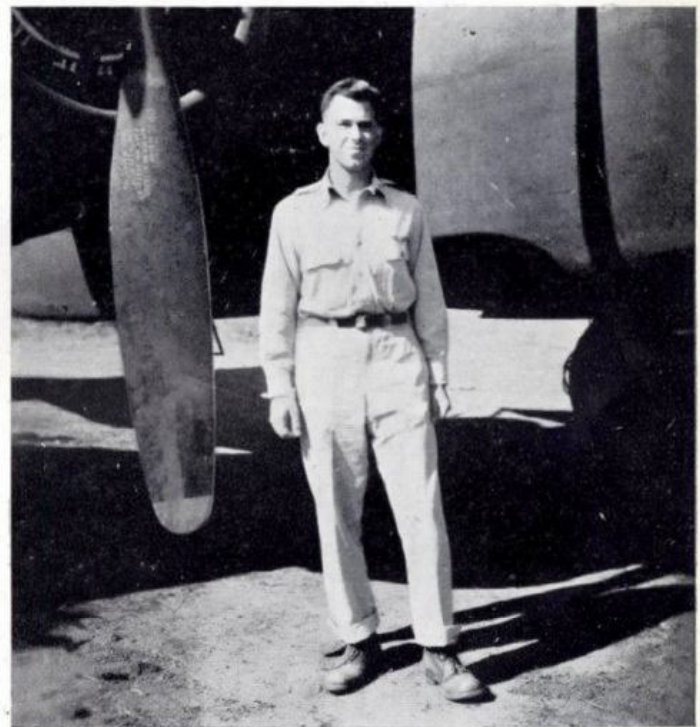
MAJOR ROBERT DOW,  
FORMER COMMANDING OFFICER



CAPTAIN H. B. MONROE, OPERATIONS







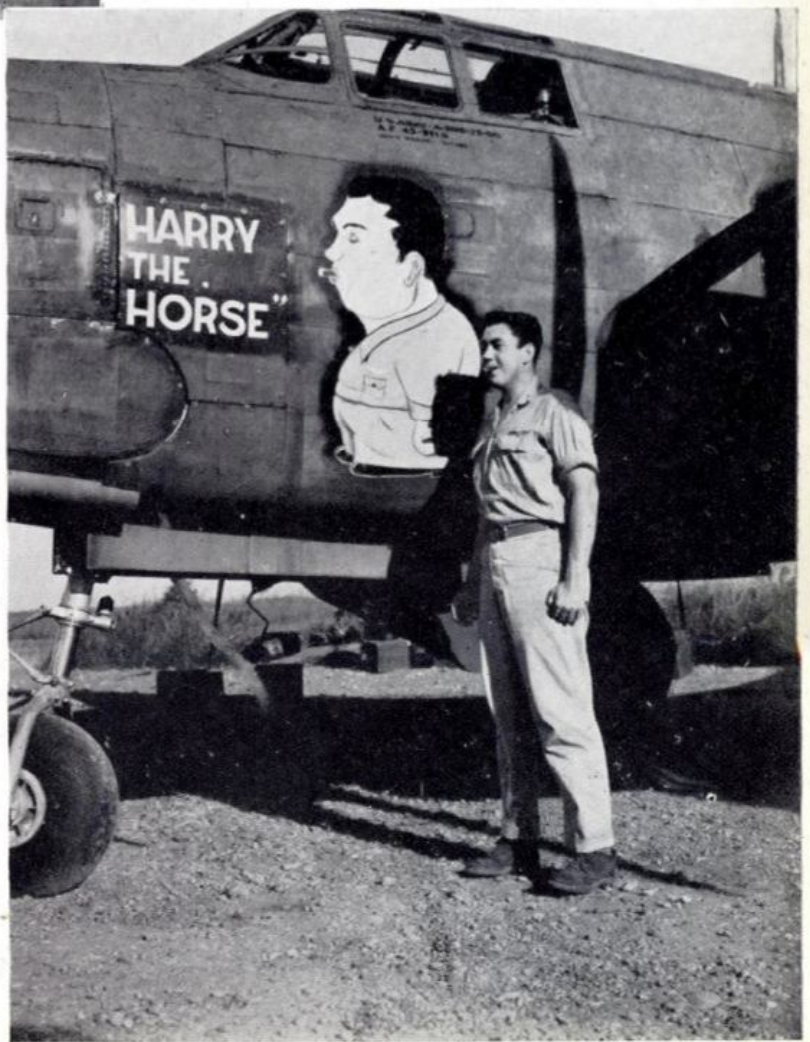
history in the War Department Files. The facts state that we came early and have remained late, and shall remain until the war is won. Nothing else today is of comparable importance.

Of course . . . we were among the first to leave the United States, on January 31, 1942 . . . we were the first squadron to fly the modified A-20's in combat, with four fifties and four thirties firing from the nose . . . we have the longest period of island service over any unit in the Bomb Command of the Fifth Air Force . . . there are other facts, but, as it has been written, the claims must wait until the little brown gentlemen of the Zero-Zeros retire to their narrow islands to revise their dreams of world domination.







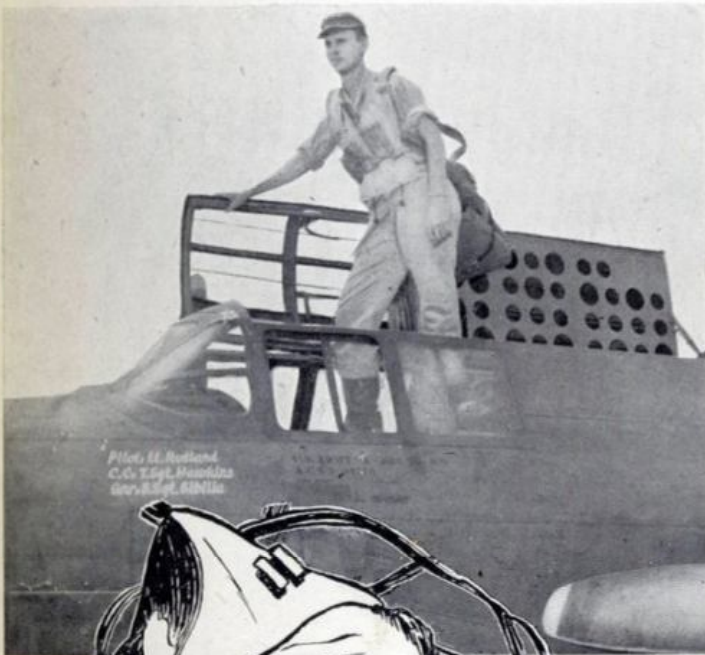






ROBINSON CRUSOE OF THE SEPIK





AND THIS IS THE WAY WE  
ALL WANTED TO  
LOOK—