

Ye editors in an issue not so long ago asked our service men and girls to write for this family history on the march about things that can now be told. The first response has come from Captain James C. Sargent, and appears in this issue. It is hoped that Jim's letter will inspire our other veterans to help complete the record. Ziegler Sargent, editor; Agnes W.B. Sargent, assistant editor.

Captain James C. Sargent of the Air Corps, son of Murray Sargent, whose terminal leave expired January 14th, wrote from New York on January 5th about some of the happenings in the Southwest Pacific area that can now be told: " ... The last time I wrote you—that long-winded letter—(November 14, 1944-Ed.) I was stationed with the 417th light bombardment group (A-20) on Noemfoer Island which is just west of Biak Island (about 85 miles actually, and I use the word 'just' because on the many occasions when I had to go from one to the other island I travelled in an A-20, which actually covered the distance in 15 minutes). Before coming to the story from Noemfoer I might put into written form the names of the places I went to, and thus the record will be straight. I left San Francisco on the 22nd of November, 1943, on the 'Sea Snipe', a C-3 (slightly larger than a Liberty ship) with 2500 men and 146 officers. We travelled a southerly course in rather fast time, arriving at Brisbane, Australia, on the 9th of December. Here we stayed until on the morning of the 2nd of January a C-43 took some of us from Brisbane to Townsville, Rockhampton, Cook's Town (all in Australia) and finally at 4 p.m. on that day we landed at Port Moresby, New Guinea. For about three weeks I was assigned to the advanced echelon of the 5th Air Force (at Port Moresby), at which time I was transferred to the 5th Bomber Command and then the 43rd Bomb Group (B24s) at Dobodura, which is a little native village not far from Buna on the northern coast of the New Guinea tail. We stayed at Dobodura until March, when about six officers formed the advanced echelon of the 43rd Bomb Group and moved to Nadzab—25 miles inland from Lae, New Guinea. It was here that I built my 'house on the hill' (see Sargentivia of June 15, 1944-Ed.) with which I had so much fun and relaxation. Somewhere on top of that hill someone some day may find the vestiges of some bachelor buttons I planted there. From Nadzab I went on to that long extended leave to Sydney, Australia; on my return the entire air force command & its subordinates had moved to the Biak Island area—headquarters were located on Owi Island, which is about 1/4 of a mile to the east from Biak. From Noemfoer we boarded a Liberty ship and went first to Hollandia and then in convoy to Leyte, arriving on the 6th of December. But more of the Philippines episodes later. While in New Guinea there were several things which happened which for obvious reasons were not published. I remember one week four B-24s blew up on successive morning take-offs, the explosions of which woke us up—a fine alarm clock to the tune of better than \$100,000 per day. Fortunately most of the men were able to get out of these planes before the explosions, and I mention the incident only to demonstrate in a very small way why we needed so many planes. Against the Japanese we had few losses due to 'enemy action'. For instance when we attacked Hollandia around April of 1944 the attack bombers A-20s and P-38 cover were at maximum range. It had been figured so closely that the Japanese intelligence officers were taken completely by surprise. The Japanese planes were lined up wing tip to wing tip on those runways because it was considered out of the range of either fighters or bombers of the attack type. The Japanese were confident that we would not trust our heavy bombers to an unescorted bomber strike against this base. It was, incidentally, through the efforts of Charles A. Lindbergh that our P-38s were able to cover the tremendous distance between our forward bases & the Japs' rear base. On the first three days that the Hollandia strikes were undertaken all went well, and, as I recall, our total losses were something less than 5 planes out of a total of well over 600 planes participating. On the 4th day, however, the early morning take-off was delayed all of two hours because of fog and low ceilings. The decision to attack Hollandia was nevertheless made, in spite of the fact that the distance was maximum range for many of the planes & in spite of the fact that any delay might mean a night landing on return. The strike itself was most successful, but on the return the planes met a solid front (weather) around & due south of Wewak and Borum. Generally speaking the B-24s which carried navigators were all right. To a lesser degree so were the B-25s. But the A-20s & P-38s were scattered all over New Guinea. Our best forward base was Saidor, and a good 75% of the planes headed toward it. To make matters worse a B-25 & a P-38, both in trouble, landed simultaneously at opposite ends of the only strip on that field. They hit head on in about the center of the runway; during the following few minutes, while all attempts to put out the flames & clear the strip were being made most of the planes then airborne over this strip exhausted their fuel supplies, and their pilots either crash-landed them or just bailed out. Shortly thereafter night fell. At 12 o'clock that night entire squadrons were still missing. One B-24 went that night way down to Goodenough Island—a good 400 miles beyond its base. In fact planes were spread all over New Guinea, and for the next week catalinas (Navy flying boats) did a magnificent job rescuing air force men. The total count was something like 84 planes lost, although fortunately only about 15 pilots did not eventually return to their bases. Incidents like this may help to emphasize the comparative losses due to weather & due to Japanese action in the later stages of the war in the Pacific. Charles Lindbergh arrived in the SWPA area sometime early in 1943, at which time no fighter plane out there could hope to fly a round trip distance of 1000 miles. (Today few of us realize that the P-47, which was one of our finest fighters at the end of the war with ranges up to 2500 miles, in its original form had a range approximately 250 miles.) His one purpose in this area was to teach the pilots of the P-38 fighter how to adjust the mixture within the carburetor so as to consume the smallest amount of gasoline during flight. I remember an experiment or test he conducted with a Major Maguire, who was a squadron leader in one of the squadrons of the 475 fighter group. (Major Maguire, at the time he was shot down over the Philippines, had 38 Japanese

The last action on December 22, 1943, of Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Soranton Tate, Jr., of the Army Air Corps, son of Alice Sargent Tate, was mentioned in Sargentrivia of November 20, 1945 (page 2). Further information is given in a letter to Joe's copilot's mother by a survivor of one of the other B-24s that was also shot down: "As Dick (Captain Richard Mays of Quincy, Ill.) was my operations officer I had cause to pay particular attention as to how he was making out after we had been attacked. As I was bailing out I noticed that Dick's ship had been hit and was afire. This action took place over the Dutch island of Texel, on our way home from the target. I did not see any ohutes leave the plane." Texel is the westernmost of the West Frisian group. The action was over Den Burg, the largest town on the island.

Major Murray Sargent, Jr., of the Army Air Forces, left Washington by plane on January 9th on an official trip to South America. Murray wrote: " *** I am going as a member of General Arnold's (head of Air Forces-Ed.) party to Colombia, Peru and Chile. We will go in a C-54, and are to be guests of the governments concerned. The trip will take nearly a month, and will include stopovers in Miami and Panama, giving me a chance to look up some friends there. I think we will travel altogether about 16,000 miles. I understand we may get some free time in Chile, and that is why I am taking fishing tackle. The trip should prove most interesting in every respect. ***" Ye editors understand that the party totals six and includes Mrs. Arnold and the wife of one of the other officers. Since he has been in the Army Murray has taught himself Spanish so that he speaks it fairly well.

Lieutenant Commander Seaton G. Bailey, U.S.N.R., son of Mary Emma (Tiny) Hammond Bailey, is engaged to be married to Miss Lueta Eubanks, daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. E.P. Eubanks of Newnan, Ga. The marriage is to take place on February 11th at the First Methodist Church in Griffin, Ga. Seaton was separated from the Navy in September and has returned to Griffin, where his fiancée has been living for five or six years.

Lieutenant (j.g.) Caleb Loring, Jr., U.S.N.R., son of Suzanne Bailey Loring, left the "Texas" on October 27th, the day after Navy Day, and returned home for separation from the Navy. He was given 60 days terminal leave which has recently expired. He and his wife, Rosemary, were to start a sort of delayed wedding trip by motor on January 15th, without their two children. They plan to go as far as Georgia to see their Aunt Lollie Hammond and other southern relatives.

Corporal John M Sargent of the Engineers, son of Murray Sargent, received his promotion in December. The following are excerpts from his letters from the Philippines. December 4th: " *** Our food, at times improved, has generally decreased in quality. We do have ice cream now frequently, but fresh meat only occasionally. ***" December 9th: " *** Today I met another of my AST cronies (the one I met on the boat.) We ate again at the Italian Restaurant—macaroni de la Bolognese, which was delectable. Still we have no fresh food and very little gas. These Philippines are stocked too much with unimportant items! ***" December 12th: " *** 54 pointers have left and soon 53. My puny 45 is becoming high score slowly. It is even presumable that I'll get home some day. It has rained all day, and driving is dangerous since the roads slant down to the ditches. Many trucks along the way were stuck in the mud—but nothing so eventful happened to me. The other day I came extremely close to losing my gas tank (4 out of 8 bolts gave way). It is a 40 gallon tank, and so you can imagine how heavy (half full) the thing is. I chained it up and drove 5 miles (to the Motor Pool) at 2 miles an hour (patience!)." December 13th: "Our present job consists of building a laundry in a Nurses' area at, I believe, the 249th General Hosp. This laundry is a prefabricated building 54' long (w/concrete floor). ***"

Lieutenant William M. McCawley, II, for a long period an officer of U.S.S. La Prade, a destroyer escort, last reported in these pages in Japan, has returned home. Sally Fisher McCawley, his wife, recently wrote: "Bill got home in time for Thanksgiving & is out of the Navy & looking for a job. We had a swell Christmas this year."

The annual Christmas Frolic was held at the New Haven Lawn Club on Friday evening, December 28th. 623 tickets were purchased for it. While not a family affair, the "H.B.s" and the Fenns were among the half a dozen families who started the first one in December 1891. It was skipped one year, perhaps also one other. For many years Elizabeth Collier Sargent has been the general manager and Ziegler Sargent and Lawton G. Sargent have been floor managers. Albert Williams told ye editor that he had played music for the Frolic for 45 years annually, first as the only one and latterly with an orchestra. He also said that he believes ye editor has been floor manager during all of that period. Games such as "Drop the Handkerchief", "Potato Races", "Going to Jerusalem", "Batting the Candy Bag", "Magic Carpet" and "Virginia Reel" were alternated with general dancing. About 10:30 after the assembled multitude sang "Auld Lang Syne" the younger and older members departed and left the floor to the "in-betweens" for dancing till midnight. Among the patronesses were Aunt Margaret Sargent, ye assistant editor, Jane and Betty Sargent and Josephine Tilney. The Horace Pettits were on from Philadelphia and Jim and Becky Sargent from New York.

Joseph Bradford Sargent (1822-1907), grandfather of thirty of us, wrote the following letter from New Haven to his wife vacationing at Old Point Comfort, Va., with her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Justus S. Hotchkiss, on March 12, 1882: "Dear Florence: You have no doubt received your chain and lock and your eyeglasses, all of which I sent you a few days since, and you now feel safe as to burglars and blindness. I forgot to tell you what I now tell you, that Mrs. N. J. Hammond resides at No. 158 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, Ga. I received a postal card from Lizzie, mailed at Dalton, Ga., about 75 miles North of Atlanta, on which she wrote that they were well and would arrive in Atlanta in a few hours. They took a sleeping car at Washington for Atlanta as there are no day parlor cars on the road. It is about time to hear from them since arriving at Atlanta. Joe came from New York last evening at 5-30 with Brother George. George and I started for the 8-25 train for him to return to New York, but we were too leisurely in our walk, and got there (to the station) just in time