

## SARGENTRIVIA

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Ziegler, Sargent, editor; Agnes W.R. Sargent, assistant editor.

Captain James C. Sargent, formerly of the Army Air Forces, son of Murray Sargent, wrote from New York on March 30th the second instalment of his account of happenings in the Pacific that can now be told: "My last letter, which was published in Sargenttrivia on January 15, 1946, brought you up to date on my travels as far as Noemfoer Island (85 miles west of Biak Island). On this island I was assigned to the 417th Light Bombardment Group and the 473rd Bomb Squadron. My daily routine consisted of briefing and interrogating the pilots and crews on targets in the West New Guinea and East Indies areas which include Ambon, Ceram, Halmaheres and Kai islands. On several occasions I managed to actually participate in these missions. There is really nothing like the thrill one gets when he lies on the floor of an A20, looks out the hatch—which is on the underside of the plane—as the squadron flies over its target well under fifty feet with each plane's six 50 cal. machine guns ablaze. I can certainly say that the tree trunks at that altitude are not visible as such since the plane's speed is something over 300 m.p.h. Usually when making a mission I flew in a B25, which lead the A20s at medium altitude (8000-12000 feet) and which had the only bombsight. The bombardier in the B25 lined up the target in his sights, and when he released his bombs the A20s released theirs. I preferred as a position the spot in the nose with the bombardier, where I could watch him manipulate the dials on the bombsight and could watch the plane line up on the target, about which I had briefed the crews that very morning. The nose of the B25 lead ship is almost entirely of plexiglass, so that one can get a marvelous view of the target. On November 24, 1944, the ground echelon of the 417th Bomb Group boarded a Liberty ship, James Breasted, to sail to the Philippines. Because the ship when we boarded it was very short of water, we had to return to Hollandia which port had complete facilities for watering ships. That harbor was tremendous since it represented the main rear supply depot for the Philippines campaign. There must have been 500 ships anchored in it at the time we arrived there, and there were no blackout regulations so that everything appeared to be afire with lights. I managed to get ashore on two occasions, which was excellent since on board we were only getting two rather poor meals a day and the noonday meals I picked up at Hollandia on those two occasions were most delicious. On November 28th about 5 p.m. we proceeded out of the harbor and joined an 8-knot convoy, which had only one radar ship and several (6) PC escorts, no destroyers. We were then headed almost due north with a plan of keeping clear of Mindinao and then heading due east after passing Palau Island towards Leyte. The trip was uneventful until Dec. 5, 1944, which is a day I shall never forget. The Liberty ship was converted by our group to carry troops, so that it did not have the luxury of tiers of berths. In the holes good old army cots had been put up by each man, while in the boat deck two bunk houses had been erected to house 24 of the officers, the others, except for two, were quartered in some of the private rooms on the boat deck. That conformed fairly well with the Army caste system of which you have probably read so much of late! I was one of the two who had no quarters, but was told I was to sleep on the boat deck—under the stars if you please. That seemed fine to me although I was a little skeptical about the rain situation. However, the first night on board was such a beautiful one that I was convinced that even to think of attempting to rainproof my quarters was ridiculous, so I went to sleep with no protective covering. About 2 a.m. there was apparently a cloud-burst right over my bed, and in less time than I could wake up and dash inside I was soaked. Fortunately the chief engineer, a man of 70 years who had retired from the Coast Guard as a Captain and had volunteered his services to the Merchant Marine when the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor, had a large stateroom & he allowed me to use a bench to sleep on for the remainder of that night. The next day I used three of the four shelter halves I carried with me (a shelter half is half a pup tent) to make a completely waterproof bed, and for the rest of the trip I was not bothered by rain, although on several occasions there was plenty of rain. On December 5, 1944, I had breakfast at about 8:30 a.m.—our kitchens were of the field type and were set up one at each end of the ship (fore and aft as Becca would have me say!). I was sitting on my bunk at 9 a.m. reading the 'Forest and the Fort' when all of a sudden I heard an explosion and realized that somewhere a bomb had gone off. It seems that a Japanese 'Val'—a single engine dive bomber of the German Stuka variety—had come out of a cloud and attacked the Liberty ship which was riding on our starboard side. The bomb had missed, & the Jap plane had flown away without any difficulty, as there wasn't a man in any gun tub and not a shot was fired. This was the beginning of a rather hectic day for this convoy. Thirty minutes later I was sitting on my bunk again looking out over the water and talking with one Paul Dean. About a mile out we saw a plane settle just above the water as it dropped from a low hanging cloud. It seemed to be aiming right at us, and yet we couldn't tell, because it was difficult to compare its motion with anything, in which direction it was going. For fully 15 seconds it came and apparently no one had seen it. Then all of a sudden the 50 cal., 20mm., & the 5 in. & 3 in. guns in our convoy started to go off. I dashed down the ladder to the hole to which I was assigned and yet I could not help but watch this Jap plane as it came closer and closer towards us. The tracer bullets from our convoy seemed to converge right on him and then suddenly he turned to his right & dropped a torpedo. I dashed to the starboard rear of our ship—the opposite side from which the Jap plane was coming—where I watched the torpedo pass 150 feet to our stern and strike a Liberty ship to our starboard stern quarter right amidships. The plane kept right on going and wasn't touched by all the lead we had sent at it. That Liberty ship fell behind, and in short order it went down without any loss of life. It was the first Liberty ship announced sunk in the Philippines campaign. For the remainder of the day at half-hour or hour intervals we were attacked incessantly with and without warning. During another attack, the first warning of which came when the plane was seen diving at our ship, I



dashed down the ladder from the boat deck & headed up the deck where I was stationed when a bomb went off 15 feet off our port forward quarter, the pieces of which cut little holes throughout the forward section of the ship. A piece of this bomb struck my arm at the point where my right sleeve was rolled up into a lump and, though the piece when it hit stung, it did no other damage. I do remember hearing fragments falling all over the deck, but fortunately no one was injured probably because most of them had been able to take cover. It certainly is a helpless feeling to be sitting in the bottom of a hole trying to calm frightened men and listening to the 5" guns or to hear other guns or especially to hear the 20 m.m. or 50 cal. going off all around you, for then you know the Jap plane is coming very close to you. There is nothing one can do but talk and hope, for if the bomb does hit your hole, that's all! The night of Dec. 5 was quiet, and the next morning we had not only air cover but two light cruisers & five destroyers were with us. We pulled into Leyte bay around 11 a.m. and as usual no one seemed even to know who we were or why. The ship was moved hither & yon until finally about 5 p.m. it was decided to unload us. Around 6:30 an L C M approached & the unloading began. Confusion inevitably followed; so that the majority of men unloaded long after dark & did not take any of their gear with them. The evening of the 6th of December Leyte was attacked continuously from darkness on, so that the unloading had to be done without benefit of any lights. I arrived at the beach at 2 a.m. and set up my pup tent, which I shared with another officer, in a Filipino's front yard, a fact I did not discover until the following morning. The second night on Leyte the rain came and then for the following three days it literally poured. Most of the area where we pitched our tents was under water when the sun finally did come out, and most of the men had some kind of cold. Five days after our arrival we managed to get some squad tents, and we quickly assembled these and moved the men from their pup tents. While at Leyte I ran into Philip Graham whom I had known at Harrisburg, and he asked me if I would join him at FEAF (Far Eastern Air Force). He had some very interesting things for me to do, so I agreed and we began the procedure for transfer. My Commanding Officer was still at Noemfoer, so we wired him requesting permission for me to remain at Leyte pending orders for my transfer to FEAF, which orders had been approved at the latter place. At the same time we wired the War Dept. asking for my transfer from the theater back to Washington on paper. Then we waited and by Dec. 17th nothing had happened, so I went with the 417th Bomb Group to Mindoro Island where a garbled cable informed the Group adjutant of my transfer which he decided was a TWX order which compelled me to report back to Leyte immediately. This garbled cable was nothing more than a relay of the permission which had been granted by my commanding officer and was not an order, so that I had really returned to Leyte on my own request. Shortly thereafter orders from the War Dept. transferring me from GHQ to Washington confused my status even more since GHQ then wrote orders transferring me from FEAF to GHQ. Thus at a time when I was still assigned to the 417th Bomb Group which had passed me along illegally and the higher headquarters FEAF & GHQ were transferring me although I had never actually been assigned to them. Eventually—two months later—orders transferring me from the 417th Bomb Group to 5th Bomber Command, to 5th Air Force to FEAF made me retroactively legitimate. \*\*\*"

A sketch of Captain Frederic Homer Sargent Tate of the Air Forces, who was reported by the War Department as having been killed over France September 20, 1944, appeared in Sargenttrivia of December 15, 1944. Alice Sargent Tate, his mother, has supplied ye editor with these further details. "Colonel Tate (his father) wrote me early this month (March) that, after months of search, he had found and interviewed the wing man who flew with Honie on his last mission. The man, A.L. Dentz of Montclair, N.J., said that Honie's engine had been so badly damaged that it 'froze'. Honie was attempting a crash landing. Evidently Honie felt that the terrain was too rugged, so he bailed out at between 800 and 600 feet (plenty of distance). The chute opened partially but did not balloon. Mr. Dentz searched repeatedly that day and several other days, but was unable to find any trace. I still feel that Honie may have been hit and not realized it, and that the chances are the chute had been riddled by machine gun fire which caused its failure to open fully."

Daniel L. Tate, II, son of Alice Sargent Tate, now in his last year at West Point, injured his back again in January and was in a cast for several weeks. He is however now playing tennis and hopes to make the "A" team, which has on its schedule a match with Yale in New Haven in May.

Alice Sargent (Boo) Tate, daughter of Colonel Frederic Homer Sargent, gave this description of her garden on Anastasia Island, about five miles out of the town of Saint Augustine, Fla., on March 25th: "Our garden is flourishing—at the moment we have yellow and blue Dutch iris, calla lilies, several shades of double stock, lots of petunias, plain, ruffled and balcony, phlox, babysbreath, candytuft, ranunculus, snapdragons, verbena, geraniums, nasturtiums, pansies, callendulas—with Easter lilies coming on, plus asters, etc. We still have quite a few sweet peas. The kitchen garden is overflowing with English peas, collards, beets, carrots, onions. The corn is a foot high, we'll soon have broccoli and cauliflower. The strawberries are just beginning to bear well. The lettuce has about gone—our favorite is the Bibb lettuce—if you have never had it you have missed a real treat. It is so tender, so green, so delicious. The average head is six or seven inches in diameter, and resembles in its way of growth a perfect green camellia in full bloom."

Not long after ye editor had started to work in 1903 for Sargent & Company in New Haven he was walking home one afternoon with his father, Henry Bradford Sargent (1851-1927), and his grandfather, Joseph Bradford Sargent (1822-1907). Suddenly the latter said: "This is one of the proudest moments of my life—to be walking home from business with my son on one side and my grandson on the other side, all working in the business." Ye editor had always had great respect for his grandsire, but till that moment had not realized that he had so much sentiment about the business.



Corporal Frederic H. Sargent, III, son of F. Homer Sargent, at last report was on his way back from Europe. He is attached to Company B, 329th Infantry of the 83rd Division.

Sergeant Eleanor Sargent Holland of the WACS, daughter of Rupert Sargent Holland, last reported in these pages in Germany attached to MFA & A (Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives), has returned to this country. On March 30th she received her discharge at Fort Dix. She is at present with her parents at 216 Walnut Ave., Wayne, Pa.

Willard C. Rappleye, Jr., nephew of the Murray Sargents, received on December 13th his discharge as a staff sergeant in the Army, and has returned to Yale for the term which started March 2d. Bill was drafted on January 13, 1943, during his sophomore year at college. His military service has been largely in India. He was elected to the "Yale Daily News", after competition, in his freshman year. The "News" was suspended during the war, but is to resume publication in September. Bill has been elected managing editor. As a partial substitute for the daily the University authorities have been publishing the weekly (recently semi-weekly) "Yale News Digest". Bill is now doing headlines and makeup work on the latter. He is rooming at 1653 Timothy Dwight College (telephone 8-1547), and expects to get his degree in 1947.

#### BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARIES

- April 25 - (10th) John Halsey Buok, III, son of Jean Sargent Buok
- 29 - Captain Frederick Kingsbury Sargent, son of Richard Collier Sargent
- May 3 - (4th) Linda Sargent, daughter of Richard Collier Sargent, Jr.
- (3d) Faith Sargent Lewis, daughter of Wilfred Sargent Lewis
- 5 - Colonel Harry Harland Skerrett, Jr., husband of Sylvia Murray Tilney Skerrett
- 7 - (3d) Sargentrivia
- 8 - (22d) Dorothy Joan Wiser MacDougall, daughter of Dorothy Sargent Wiser
- 9 - Bruce Fenn, 2d, son of Russell Sargent Fenn
- (18th) Michael Motte Grove, son of Barbara Sargent Moorehead
- 12 - Elizabeth Owen Sargent, wife of Thomas Denny Sargent

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

- April 29 - (2d) Elizabeth Lewis Deming and William Joseph Goeller

Joseph Bradford Sargent (1822-1907) had his difficulties in obtaining sufficient supply of water in the earlier years of the Sargent & Company factory in New Haven. The following account of his experiences was written by his son, Henry Bradford Sargent (1851-1927). "With the expansion of Sargent & Company's business and the need for water service, he finally obtained (about 1869) from the then President (Henry S. Dawson) of the New Haven Water Co., the use of two four inch Water Street connections with the six inch street main, one serving the north side and the other the south side premises of Sargent & Company on Water Street, and representing (by the square of the diameter) thirty-two inches of total available water supply. During a prolonged drought in the early part of an autumn (1871), some inspector reporting hearing waste at night at said plant, the Water Company thereupon replaced these two four inch connections with two one inch, or a reduction to one-sixteenth of the water previously possible in emergency. This was strongly protested by Sargent & Company, but without relief. The Fair Haven Water Co. had petitioned the Legislature for a charter, the names of the petitioners headed by Benjamin Noyes, whose name seemed to weaken the petition; which was rejected. It was therefore easy for the new company, in its second petition for a state charter, to get Mr. Sargent to head the petition, which charter was granted. This was about 1872. The water, however, was to be supplied from the Maltby Lakes located a little beyond the westerly New Haven city line, the pipe lines to pass through the city to carry its water eastward to Fair Haven, which locality its charter authorized it to serve. While this pipe line was building, the New Haven Water Co. obtained an expansion of its charter, with right to supply Fair Haven; so there was no opposition to the later petition (the same year) of the Fair Haven Water Co. to have its charter expanded giving it the added right to supply New Haven. While building its main line through New Haven, arrangements were made to serve those on the way, and many connections were made, largely because of the short supply at the time available in the New Haven Company's reservoirs. Sargent & Company then agreed with the Fair Haven Water Co. to pay the cost of laying an eight inch main on Water Street to its premises and connecting with the Fair Haven Co. water main, to serve Sargent & Company with water from its reservoirs; and when that was finished Sargent & Company replaced the meager connections permitted by the New Haven Water Co. of two inches of water with ample (two six inch) connections (72 inches) with (64 inches) the new eight inch main. (In ratio of the square of the pipe diameter). It later transpired that the New Haven Water Co. needed to make two moves - (1) to raise the Whitneyville dam, which was done twice to its present (1925) height, to impound more water at spring time, in preparation for the scarcity of rain in the early autumn; and (2) to acquire the property of the Fair Haven Water Co. Negotiations were therefore started by the older company with the then President, Mr. C.S. Maltby, of the new company, who, being in another business centered in Baltimore, urged, and officially appointed, Mr. J. B. Sargent (a Fair Haven Water Co. director) to continue the negotiations; which Mr. Sargent was very glad to do, as he was dealing with the same President (Dawson) who had so much reduced said water supply to the hazard of Sargent & Company's manufacturing plant; and as it was again a



period of increasing drought. This sale was consummated June 27, 1876 (the stockholders voting in favor March 1876), a good deal on the Fair Haven Water Company's own terms, because the negotiations lagged, through the arrogant attitude of the New Haven Company's president, which resulted in said company being obliged under the terms to assume \$125,000 of outstanding bonds of the Fair Haven Water Co., to pay over \$200,000 at par of New Haven Water Company's new stock issued for the purpose, and assume many contracts, including that with Sargent & Company, which, though not especially advantageous for said company was, nevertheless, a reasonable, long term (20 years) a generous affair, based upon horse power of boilers in use quarterly, that somewhat made amends for the earlier annoyance with the management of the older company. The last meeting of The Fair Haven Water Co. was held June 29, 1876, when its President was J.B. Sargent; Secretary and Treasurer, Richard F. Lyon; Directors, Caleb S. Maltby, William M. White, John Osborn (who was engineer and Superintendent), John B. Robertson, J.B. Sargent, Charles Fabrique, Dr. F.J. Whittemore, J.J. Phelps. It was also a part of the consolidation agreement that there should be four additional members as the board of directors of the New Haven Water Co. to be taken from the retiring board of The Fair Haven Water Co. directors, which was done; but at the next annual stockholders meeting it was found that none of said new directors were elected, when it was discovered that President Dawson carried in his pocket blank holdover proxies for large shareholders of the New Haven Water Co. - more than enough to outvote the shares held by the new stockholders, from the Fair Haven Water Co. holders, and hence the victory for Dawson. But as a consequence at the next session of the Legislature, a law was passed limiting any stockholders proxy to the succeeding stockholders meeting."

Nathan Sargent (1718-1799), of Leicester, Mass., great grandfather of Homer Earle Sargent (1822-1900) is referred to by Mrs. Clarissa Sargent Gale in a letter written in her 93d year from Atlas, Mich., on June 21, 1880 (she inadvertently dated the letter 1780): "...My Grand father S t, was a Miller, the Mill stood where now there is other Machinery. Esq. Washburn (my Gnd. Father) went to the Mill to buy some corn as it was a very scarce time (& the facilities were not so great as now) Gnd. father Sargent, says have you the money to pay, the reply was yes, then he said go to Worcester, I must keep mine for those who have not the money to pay, that was his character. ..."

Below are pictures, made from photographs taken in 1873, of three of the children of Joseph Bradford Sargent (1822-1907). From left to right: Ellen Page Sargent (1868-1930) at the age of five (in 1908 was married to Bruce Fenn), George Lewis Sargent (1862-1944) at the age of eleven and Russell Sargent (1864-1904) at the age of nine.

