

## Where are they now?



### Doug Walker

Howdy All, first off, thanks for keeping me on the Radschool Magazine mailing list. It's a subject of great interest and from time to time something appears in the magazine that is of specific interest.

For the record, let me refresh your memory on me and my interests. My connection to the Radschool came about as a result of research I was doing with organizations that included WWII Coast Watchers in their rosters. The research was focused on possibly finding a Coast Watcher who was in the eastern Province of New Britain in January 1943 with particular emphasis on 5 Jan 43. On that date my father, Brig. Gen. Kenneth N. Walker (right) was lost aboard the B-17F *San Antonio Rose* during a bombing mission of Japanese shipping at Rabaul.



Amazingly, there is in fact no coherent official record of the events prior or during the shoot-down, nor comprehensive after-mission reports or an official assessment by GHQ 5th AF in Brisbane of the event. As Australian historian and author, Michael Claringbould, wrote in *Flightpath*, my father's disappearance remains one of Rabaul's greatest mysteries. To date, the *San Antonio Rose* is the only B-17 lost in New Britain that has not been found. (See [HERE](#) - tb??)

So, we have caste the net widely, exploring all possibilities. The Coast Watchers archives at the Univ. of California at San Diego were checked for possible mention of the loss and subsequently contact was made in Australia in the hopes of finding someone still alive that might have been in the vicinity during that time. No one ever came forward and so I stopped active pursuit. The current issue of Radschool includes a photo that is of interest because radio communications, both open and ULTRA, are sources of possible information. The photo in question is of interest because of the possibility that one of these men might have been active in '43 and might be aware of relevant information. I know it's a long-shot but didn't think it would hurt to ask:

The following photo appeared in a recent edition of the QTC, the newsletter of the Queensland Branch of the Djinnang Association.

**Number 4, RAAF Wireless Unit 1945.**



**Back row L-R:** Sgt Harold Cook, LAC Syd Plumridge, LAC John Milne, Cpl Evan Gwyther, LAC Bill Moulds, LAC Alan Tessier, Sgt Peter North (RAF).

**Mid row L-R:** LAC Bill Loader, LAC Snow Norman, LAC Fred Paine, Sgt Matt Lacey, LAC Kevin Lockhardt, LAC John "Blue" Cutler

**Front row L-R:** Flg Off B Cooper, Flt Lt Alf Davis, Flg Off Bill Henderson (RCAF)

Doug says, I sent a copy of the email I sent to you concerning Wireless Unit Number 4 to my associate, Gene Monihan, who made the observation below. Question: is there any way of finding members of either Wireless Units 1 or 2? If still with us I imagine they're along in years. Still, if you have any thoughts they'd be welcome.

"Doug, Number 4, RAAF Wireless as a unit didn't become a player until December 1944 in Hollandia, then in 1945 onto the Philippines. I doubt the unit would have been involved during our period of interest, but that is not to say some of the members may not have been around much earlier in the war. So, as to their earlier wireless experiences we would be looking for individuals who were assigned to Number 1 and/or 2 Wireless units. These units were active and in the right locations obtaining the type of signals that would be of interest to us".

gm

If anyone can help, please get in touch with us and we'll forward the info onto Doug....tb.

**Peter Tippett.**

WGCDR (Rtd) Kevin Kirk is trying to contact Peter Tippett - ex RAAF Engineer. Kevin was with him at JSSC in 1984 and he was then a WGCDR and posted to AIRENG3 in Air Force Office.

If anyone can help, please get in touch with us and we'll forward the info onto Kevin....tb.

**Greg Ballard**

Reg Wood is trying to contact Greg Ballard listed in the membership list for NSW (his email has bounced – tb) and again if he was in 3 Squadron at Williamtown and Penang from around 1968 - 1969 and comes from Ballina in NSW.

I would like his contact details if he is the one because we were good friends and I went to his wedding, he may have some good reason he doesn't want to contact and that's his call.

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