

Ball of Fire QUARTERLY EXPRESS



NEWSLETTER OF THE 93rd BOMB GROUP

Vol. 15, No 1

SPRING 2007

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Grass \$ 0

EDITORIAL COMMENT

A few weeks before the 2nd Air Division Assn. convention, last fall, I received a memo that had been circulating. It was a ‘hit’ piece aimed at Alan Senior, who had just gained office and was viewed as a threat by many of the “good ole boys and girl network”. Alan Senior had some new ideas and a different vision than the entrenched leadership of the 2nd ADA. In this he was similar to the 93rd BG’s Fernley Smith who was running for Executive Vice President.

When I read this memo I knew that Fernley was not going to be successful in this environment. New Ideas or vision need not apply! The current 2nd ADA leadership would rather do it their way than the right way.

The 2nd ADA and the 93rd’s relationship to them will be a big topic in our next business meeting in Minneapolis. They seem to be bobbling the handoff to the Heritage League and have a closed mind over better ideas.

But as the saying goes: “their loss is our gain.” My first action as acting president in our business meeting will be to re-nominate Fernley as our group president. Another saying I have always liked is the one: “Living well is the best revenge.” We can’t account for the 2nd ADA’s actions but we can for the 93rd BG. Let’s continue living well in the 93rd Bomb group.

Paul Steichen

Nebraska Making News Nowadays

Bill Kubota’s film, *Most Honorable Son*, will have its world premiere in Lincoln, Nebraska on August 1st, 2007. This film records the wartime experiences of the 93rd BG gunner, Ben Kuroki. Ben along with group historian, Cal Stewart, grew up in Nebraska. Ben’s story has a few extra twists and turns due to the fact that he was a Japanese/American. Many of us saw a preliminary version of the film and can report that it is a good story, well told. Ben and Shige Kuroki along with many Nebraska dignitaries will be in attendance at the Lincoln premiere. Should be a great event for the 93rd BG. More info in upcoming Ball of Fire.

Cal Stewart’s “Ted’s Travelling Circus” has Second Printing

The “Bible” of the 93rd Bomb group has just finished its second printing and is now available. *Ted’s Travelling Circus* is the most complete history of the 93rd BG. You can contact Scott Stewart at scott@npcenter.com to place an order. They are \$79 plus \$10 for shipping.

Mark your calendars: 2007 93rd BG Reunion
Sept. 27-30
Bloomington, MN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hello Paul,
I commanded the 93rd BG for the last 6 months of 1944. I am extremely happy I had this honor.
Colonel Harvey A. Barnard, Jr.
1694 Independence Ave.
Melbourne, FL 32940

Dear Sir,
I am leaving this message to tell you that Sam C. Dunn of Honolulu passed away on December 2nd. His wife,
Alice Dunn

To whom it may concern,
Is there anyone alive in the 409th bomber squadron of the 93rd bomber group that may have known Ken Gordoni? He was my step-uncle.
It would be great to find someone who may have known him or his brothers, Don and Stan, my step-father. Thank you.
Charles K Gordoni
Id: 13124793 Entered the service from: Delaware
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Died: Tuesday, January 04, 1944 Buried at:
Ardennes American Cemetery
Location: Neupre (Neuville-en-Condroz), Belgium
Plot: B Row: 44 Grave: 56
Awards: Air Medal, Purple Heart
Sincerely,
Michaelle Schafer jmgschafer@yahoo.com

Hello Paul,
Here is my subscription and dues. I was in the control tower at Hardwick 44/45 to the end. John
John Cloninger
2042 Courtney Rd.
York, SC 29745

To Paul Steichen,
Looking for information on the B-24 that Lew Brown was the pilot on the 1Aug43 Ploesti raid. Lew said that the B-24 had no name. My late brother, Ples W. Norwood, Jr., flew with Lew Brown on this Raid. Ples finished his 25 required missions and returned home.
Thanks,
Archie J. Norwood ANorwoods@aol.com

Hi Paul,
I am looking for info on my dad's service He (Neil L. Drinkard) was a Radio Operator and door gunner on the Flying Wolves. Any info would be greatly appreciated.

Len
Len Drinkard ldrinkard@neo.rr.com

Dear Paul,
Enclosed is a picture that I took at Fort Meyers, Florida in 1942. Those cowboys found their manhood a few months later. I flew 30 missions with the 328th squadron.

I am 85 years young and very healthy! Hope this note finds you the same.

Sam Delcambre
6606 Daspit Rd. Hwy 86
New Iberia, LA 70563-8945



Cowboys at Ft. Myers

Hello Paul,
I need to let you know that my husband, William N. Schaefer of Le Mars, Iowa died December 27, 2006. He enjoyed reading your paper very much.
Jane Schaefer billjane@lemarscomm.net

Paul,
Just wanted to let you know that Art Welsand, one of our crew members, passed away on Jan 8. Will you let me know the next reunion is and when the next Ball of Fire will be out?

Thanks,
Don Geyer dgeyer2001@aol.com

Dear Paul,

Thanks for your note about the presentation that my son, Gerald and I gave at Savannah. I strongly believe we cannot further our organization nor foster patriotism without programs like this for our young. I would also recommend the VFW's youth organization, The Voice of Democracy, which is specifically for pre- and high school youth.

Although the 93rd people might like to offer their major support to the Air Force Museum, there are areas and people who are not touched by the Museum. The VFW can reach some of these.

Hearol Veteto

hrveteto@earthlink.net

Paul,

I flew as co-pilot on Frank Eiben's plane. We named it: "O Bitch U Airy Mary". Before being assigned this plane, we flew several others in the squadron.

Frank passed away in 2006 and he lived in Norwood, Ohio.

We got flak damage and an engine knocked out over Berlin. Flew back on three. No crew injuries. God was with us! We completed our 35 missions in the winter of 44/45. We were there at the end of the war and flew a plane home

Vern Harriman

121 Balbach Dr.

Buffalo, NY 14225

To Paul Steichen,

My father was 1st Lt. James F Wright and was a member of the 93rd BG in 44 and 45. I am in contact with the last remaining crew member, tail gunner, Cliff Collins. He has advised me that their crew a lead crew and as such did not fly every mission during their tour. I would like to find out everything that is available. He started out with the 329th but was reassigned after about 6 missions to the lead crew program.

Thank you for anything you can add or a source to look for information.

John F Wright wwright9@satx.rr.com

Hi Paul,

This is Bert Karels again. We here in Minn. have had a very long spell of cold weather but it seem it is about to end, next week in the 30's.

The *Snelling Spirit* that I am enclosing is from our very special Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel. My thoughts are that if the Chapel could be included in

the itinerary of the reunion in Minneapolis, it would be enjoyed by our 93rd people. I may be a little late, but it is a thought.

Bert Karels

25992 335th Ave

Henderson, MN 56044

Paul-

My childhood hero was Jake Epting Jr., pilot on *Tupelo Lass*. He yielded his seat to K.O. Dessert on the Ploesti mission. He flew co-pilot there in his own ship with Ben Kuroki in the top turret. I am still trying to document the complete history of Jake Jr.'s 93rd Bomb Group experience. Anyone with details please contact me at: lpscott62@aol.com

I can also be reached at 1-321-266-3831.

Thanks, Leland P Scott

Dear Paul Steichen,

This is to inform you that my husband, Joseph F.

Bradley, passed away on September 20, 2006, one day short of the 62nd anniversary of the *Naughty Nan* mid air collision over Inglemunster, Belgium.

He was a member of the 93rd BG, 328th squadron and 2nd Air division.

My prayers and best wishes are always with the 93rd BG.

Peggy Bradley

175 Courtshire Dr

Brick, NJ 08723

Hi Paul,

After the war, my father who was a pilot of *Wee Willie* in the 93rd, 409th squadron, flew a ground crew around Europe on day. Someone gave him a series of photographs taken on that flight. I have scanned, cleaned them from 60+ years of browning and cracking in my mother's album. I have them on a CD. If you or anyone else connected with the "Ball of Fire" would like a copy, just let me know.

My father, Daniel F Comingore, passed on to me his attraction to airplanes which he continued to fly until 70. I've quit going to the FAA for a medical and bought this J3 a few years ago and now fly under the new "sports" license rules. Hope to continue flying out here in the Oregon desert for many more years.

Phil Comingore

1273 NE Westview Dr

Madras, OR 97741

Dear Paul,

I enjoyed the writing about Miles League in the last BOFQE. Looking through my uncle's memorabilia, I found an English bill with signatures of many famous 93rd men including League's. It's fun to gradually add faces and info to go with the signatures.

Regards,

Bill Hubbard

2618 E Devon St.
Tucson, AZ 85716

Dear Mr. Steichen,

I am trying to find a crew photo or the missions that Joseph Solano, a 93rd BG airman flew while with the unit. Thus far I have learned from Vic Walzel and Cal Davidson that little is known about Joe's service in the 93rd. His name is spelled incorrectly in Ted's Travelling Circus. I knew Joe before his death a few years ago. We belonged to the same sailing club in Boston, MA. I was hoping you could put a note in your Quarterly newsletter on Joe and some info might surface from someone that flew with him.

Very truly yours,

Jack O'Leary XR_crew@yahoo.com

Paul,

Just a quick note on Luther Bird, who was in last issue's Folded Wings. He was the co-pilot with Ray Martin on the Ploesti mission and was a POW with the rest of the group. I got to know him and he was a great guy.

I also received a call from Dennis Posey, reunion coordinator for the 98th BG, the other day. It seems there is an inquiry about a possible trip to Romania and Ploesti. At this point he is trying to find out who might be interested. He has asked for some type response in writing before he can set up dates, flights, etc. He is thinking now about 7-10 days in the country. I told him I would pass on the information to the group and if anyone is interested they can contact him, Dennis Posey.

dposey@comcast.net phone: (770-509-7734)

Best Regards,

Joe Duran

Dear Sir,

Please know that my husband, Robert Bieber, passed away on June 19, 2006. His plane was shot down on a

mission bombing the Hamburg oil refinery on Jan. 17, 1945. Two of his crew were killed and the others became POW's.

Sherrie Bieber, widow Bieb02@aol.com

Dear Sir,

I am a ground technician at Brest-Guipavas Flying Club in Brittany, France and, for many years, I have had a great passion for everything to do with the Occupation and Liberation of my area of France during the Second World War. As far as aviation is concerned, a few friends and I are trying to find the crash site of every aircraft. I do this for the North West part of Brest, in Brittany, which already represents around two hundred aircraft. For each one our goal is to find the crash site, the date of the crash, the aircraft squadron, type and number, and the name of each crew member.

We often find some remains, sometimes some photos and try to get in touch with veterans or their next of kin in order to obtain exact accounts and photos of the airman, or their aircrafts.

Your 93rd BG plane, *Liberty Lass* crashed in our area on April 16th, 1943. What I am looking for: would any of you have any picture of *Liberty Lass* or its crew or could you put me in contact with any of the survivors or any of their relatives of these brave airmen who lost their lives for my country that day?

It would also be my honour to offer to any veteran or next of kin some tiny remains from the crash.

Many thanks for any help you can give us concerning *Liberty Lass*. Lest we forget.

Gildas Saouzanet gildas4044@free.fr

Hello Paul,

This is Don Whited and I have completed the DVD I mentioned to you. I have added a narration to some film that I shot during the early days of the 93rd BG. Some shot at Barksdale, Fort Myers, and then Alconbury where the King of England visited. Other shots are from Hardwick. If anyone would like a copy they are available for \$10 with \$1 for shipping.

Contact me at:

Donald Whited

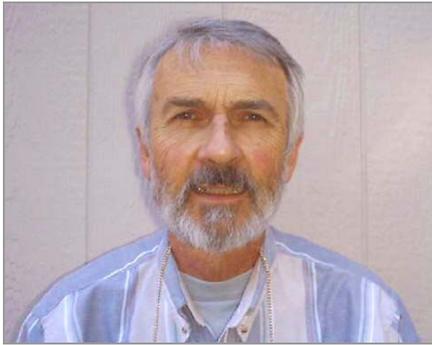
6800 S Granite Ave Apt 630

Tulsa, OK 74136-7018



Second Generation Member

Kent Jaquith



There are two mysteries about Kent Jaquith:

First, are some of the stories that he has told at our banquets, true or are they tall tales? I'll mention the "Baby Fernley meets Charles Lindberg" story and the "Packy Roche and the Tulip" story as mystery stories.

Second, how do you pronounce his last name? This, I can answer it's :(Jake- with.) Kent is a designer by education and has used his talents to create memorable placemats, centerpieces, and door prizes for our last night banquet at the reunions. He has also been an Emcee for the banquet, which is where the mysterious stories come in.

Kent's uncle, 1st Lt. Jack H Roach, was a Bombardier with the 328th. He was KIA on Dec.22, 1943 on a mission to Osnabruck, Germany along with two of his crew. The rest of the crew got out of their B-24 before it exploded and became POWs for the remainder of the war. In 1985, Kent began looking for his uncle's surviving crewmates and in 1988 he met them at a 2nd ADA meeting.

Kent currently is in the antique car business and has been so for over 25 years. He also specializes in rebuilding vacuum windshield wiper motors. This is a rare skill and there are few people world wide doing this work.

When we see Kent at the Minneapolis Reunion, we can ask him about his mystery stories. But there is no mystery that Kent Jaquith has added a lot to the 93rd BG and we salute him for his contributions.

Reunion 2007 News

For those of you planning to attend the Sept. 2007 reunion in the Twin Cities Minnesota, here's some info regarding the Sheraton Hotel & Resort where we will be staying. First of all, it is an excellent venue with many upgraded rooms. I have seen them. The Bloomington MN **location** at Hwys 100 and 494 is only a few miles from the international airport and even closer to the Mall of America. There is room for **RV parking** and plenty of **special needs** spaces too. **The food** is excellent! This author has had several meals there in different kinds of settings. Your stay will include hot continental breakfasts. The hotel has a **full service restaurant**, a coffee shop, a large gift shop and the **centrally placed bar** also has a food menu. Their hours are very convenient for the early riser or the night owl. (There are also at least 5 other eating places just outside the hotel, all within a short walk. The Sheraton even has a **Comedy Cabaret** on Friday and Saturday nites. The **meeting rooms** are spacious and very close to rest rooms, elevators and escalators. You asked for and you will get several **quiet places to relax and talk to your friends.**

For your **room choice**, there are a couple of options to suit your needs, especially if you are bringing additional family. Ask the Hotel about them when you make your reservations. For more info, try sheraton.com/minneapolisouth on the internet or call 800.325.3535.

Getting around: Great News! Complimentary transportation service is available to the airport and the MOA 7 days a week.

Saturday Nite Live in the "**gorgeous ballroom**" with the Roseville Swing Band will be a treat! Bring your dancing shoes or be prepared to relax and listen to great music.

This will be a great time! See you here!

Jim Guddal, ground crew

Folded Wings

Robert Bieber
Art Welsand
Sam Dunn

Joseph Bradley
William Schaefer
Jacob Smart



This photo is courtesy of *Ted's Travelling Circus*
 Foreground trio-Hugh Roper, unidentified, William
 McKelvey; at table-John (Babe) Emmons (back to camera),
 Packy Roche, John Lentz, Walt Stewart

Walt Stewart and William McKelvey shared a relaxed moment in this photo at left. They also shared pivotal roles in the desert bailout of the *Big Job* crew and the almost miraculous rescue of most of the crew members. Bert Alexander detailed his memories of these events in a previous *Ball of Fire*. Pilot McKelvey led the bailout of the plane over the vast wastelands of the African desert and Pilot Stewart was flying *Jersey Bounce* when he spotted a parachute. Walt began the rescue with a “needle in the haystack” sighting.

Later, Walt Stewart became the pilot of *Utah Man*. A few years ago, a film, *Wing & A Prayer: The Saga of Utah Man* was produced. Walt’s friendship with Hugh Roper was highlighted. Unfortunately they both did not return from Ploesti. If you get a chance to see *The Saga of Utah Man* you will see one of the best films on the 93rd BG’s Ploesti experience and one of the best I have seen for recording the human side of War. One of the best World War II films ever made.

InsideNextIssue:

- Lew Brown and his B-24
- Jim Soper: Riding to Romance
- Excerpts from *My Journal* by Bill Neuman
- The Story of *Abel Mable*

The Ball of Fire Quarterly Express 93rd Bombardment Group

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