

# Ball of Fire QUARTERLY EXPRESS



NEWSLETTER OF THE 93<sup>rd</sup> BOMB GROUP

2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, Hardwick, England

Vol. 16 No. 3

Winter 2008

## President's Corner

A significant change occurred at the annual business meeting during our 2008 reunion. A slate of officers composed exclusively of 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation members was elected to serve during the next 12 months. An advisory board of 93<sup>rd</sup> veterans composed of Fernley Smith, Charles Sill, and Cal Davidson will provide advice and assistance. Charles Sill will continue to represent the 93<sup>rd</sup> as the Vice President to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division Association. The 2008-2009 officers are:

President	John Marx
President Emeritus	Paul Steichen
Executive Vice President	Gerald Veteto
Secretary/Treasurer	Paul Levine
Associate Secretary/ Treasurer	Jim Guddal
Editor of the Ball of Fire	JoAnne Sargent
Associate Editor of BOF	<i>vacant</i>
Historian	Don Morrison
Associate Historian	<i>vacant</i>

Our members asked the Executive Committee (the officers listed above) to investigate three important topics for consideration at the next business meeting as follows:

1. How do we proceed with fulfilling our objective to "carry on the traditions and memories of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group after the veterans of that war have deceased?" How can the sacrifices and accomplishments of the 93<sup>rd</sup> be presented most effectively to future generations?
2. Where can our veterans deposit their "memorabilia" with confidence that their information

will be available to their descendents and the American people for future generations?

3. How can the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association benefit from a closer relationship with other Bomb Group associations or the Heritage League?

Throughout the next year we will pursue these issues and make recommendations to the membership for consideration.

Many of you know that we received sad news a few days after the reunion as Hearol Veteto unexpectedly folded his wings on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Hearol planned to be at the reunion but was unable to attend. Maxine (wife), Gerald (son), Lisa (daughter-in-law) Jessica and Erin (granddaughters) were present and, although worried about Hearol, took part in all of our activities. Many of you remember the excellent educational programs Hearol provided at our past reunions. With a school teaching heritage firmly entrenched in the family, Gerald was elected as our Executive Vice President with a charge to develop and answer to the first question above.

Fernley Smith and Paul Steichen have capably led the 93<sup>rd</sup> for the last several years as President and Executive Vice President respectively. The member's expectation and hope was that when the time came, Paul Steichen would move into the President's role and carry on the work of the 93<sup>rd</sup>. In the last 18 months, Paul has experienced significant health challenges and has been unable to give his full attention to the 93<sup>rd</sup>. In recognition of his condition

(improving slowly), I accepted the position until Paul is able to resume the President's role. We agreed to retain Paul as our President Emeritus until such time as he can be the President again. In the meantime, Fernley and Paul will continue to provide wise counsel and oversight so that I don't get off track in this new role.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division Association meeting was held at the same time as the 93<sup>rd</sup>'s reunion. Our own, John Lee, was elected 2ADA President. A 93<sup>rd</sup> contingent attended the 2ADA business meeting to express their support for John. The next year will be challenging for the leadership of the 2ADA as they grapple with how best to preserve the legacy of the premier World War II veterans organization!

In addition to our elected officers, we have identified other critical roles and those most suited to fulfill them as follows:

Graphics/Media	Kent Jaquith
Documentary Project	Michael Sellers
Photographer	Bill Sargent
Webmasters	Charles Sill Michael Sellers
Reunion Committee	Joe & Phyllis Duran
	Kent Jaquith
	Fred Weir
	John Marx

The members decided to hold the 2009 Reunion next October in Shreveport, LA where Barksdale AFB is located and where the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group was established in 1942. Our theme, "Back to the Beginning," provides a way to commemorate the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG's journey from Louisiana to Hardwick and home. Watch our web page for details and plan to join us in October 2009.

### **2008 Reunion Grapevine, Texas**

The 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association conducted its annual reunion from 16 – 20 October 2008 in Grapevine, Texas. More than 50 people gathered and enjoyed the opportunity to renew past friendships. On Thursday, we enjoyed an excellent living history presentation by the Army Air Corps. Accompanied by an extensive collection of uniforms

and memorabilia, Bob Coulter, provided a comprehensive summary of the Army Air Corps during the war. On Friday, we traveled to downtown Dallas to the site of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy who was a WW II veteran and hero in his own right. Recalling the tragic event of Nov 22, 1963 was sobering but important to our understanding that the sacrifices of the Greatest Generation didn't end with the war's end. On Saturday, our focus shifted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> ADA Membership meeting and the election of our own, John Lee as 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division Association President. A strong contingent of 93<sup>rd</sup> BG Reunion attendees was on-hand to support John and congratulate him on his selection.

Colonel Ed Weir, journal keeper and veteran of the 409<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, and Jim Wells, author, joined us to sign their book, "Down to Two Feet Altitude." Ed, Jim and the book proved to be a big hit with our veterans and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation. Information on ordering the book is provided elsewhere in the Ball of Fire. We ended the day with a two-hour dinner serenade by the Alan Glasscock Quartet with a repertoire of WW II era music.

On Sunday, we traveled to Addison, TX to visit the Cavanaugh Flight Museum where one of two flying B-24s is on display between air shows. Previously flying under the name, "Diamond L'il," the B-24A, now known as "Ole 927," is perfectly preserved. Our veterans enjoyed the opportunity to become reacquainted with their plane again. Our final event was the farewell banquet and memorial service to commemorate those who were lost during the war and those who have "folded their wings" since. The giant raffle of door prizes, hosted by Kent Jaquith, was, as always, a popular event as we enjoyed sharing together. Every veteran was presented with a specially made 2009 calendar reflecting war time scenes from the 93<sup>rd</sup>. The 2009 calendar is available from Kent and is advertised elsewhere in the BOFQE.

If you missed this year's reunion, don't miss the next one. We are traveling to Shreveport, Louisiana to revisit the birthplace of the 93<sup>rd</sup>, Barksdale Air Force Base and its 8th Air Force Museum. They have a Consolidated Ford B-24J Liberator on display, the "Louisiana Belle II" and a North American P-51D. The date is not finalized but we plan to meet in October 2009.

### Letters to the Editor

Cal,

Sorry to be behind in responding – I will spare you the details.

Thank you again for the mission log book page. I now have at least the basics of what I need to create the serial number. I have a rough picture of their “D” model nose-art to hazard making a decal. Would you be interested in a scan of it? I could do that pretty easily. My last configuration question is if the aircraft had the belly turret. Given its age (late D?), it almost certainly did.

Regarding submitting an article, I'm not sure what to ask. My quest is to build a 1/48 scale replica of Ray Schnell's aircraft, and I'd be interested in learning about Ray's service, and any photos that might be available of the aircraft he flew. Stories are also precious, so that the family can learn and appreciate his experiences. As I've probably said before, his grown daughters and wife are curious about the things they have, and what it all means. As something of the obsessive airplane-hobby guy, I'm the expert.

Thanks for your help – you are invaluable to families trying to make sense of things.

Karl Cressman  
[CressmanK@us.panasonic.com](mailto:CressmanK@us.panasonic.com)  
248.890.8768 Mobile  
248./447/7214 Office

Dear Paul,

I am following a trail to find information about my cousin who was with Captain Packer's “Yard Bird” crew. His name is Parkman W Davis, 93<sup>rd</sup> BGroup, 329<sup>th</sup> Squadron. He was a bombardier and what I have found is that he bailed out over France April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1943. Vic Walzel who has a WW2 website suggested I contact you to ask if you would post my query in the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG Newsletter.

Jan Hastings  
vt\_winter@yahoo.com

Greetings,

My father was with the 329<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron in North Africa and England (and Ft. Myers, FL where he met my mother). I'd like to receive the newsletter if I may. I'd also like to contact any from the squadron who may have known him. He was a Crew Chief/Tail Gunner, and the aircrafts: Connie, TharSheBlows and Lady Luck were ones he worked on.

Thanks,  
Mike Weidenbach  
Curator  
Battleship Missouri Memorial  
63 Cowpena St  
Honolulu, HI 9618  
800-455-1600x235

### A Hero's Reunion Documentary

Michael Sellers is producing a documentary called "A Hero's Reunion" about veterans that still attend annual reunions since WWII. He wants to answer the questions: Why these veterans continue to attend and who will preserve their legacy far into the future?

To see current footage and photos, please visit the official website for the documentary at:

[www.aherosreunion.com](http://www.aherosreunion.com)

**UPDATE:** Michael has secured a ride on WITCHCRAFT!! He has asked the Collings Foundation if he can document the organization. They tour the United States with a B-24, B-17, and P-51. The company graciously said he could hop aboard free of charge on the B-24 painted with the WITCHCRAFT nose art (from the 467th BG) in Columbia, SC and fly to their next destination in Savannah, GA. After fully documenting the plane and crew he's moving on to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum for interviews and museum footage.

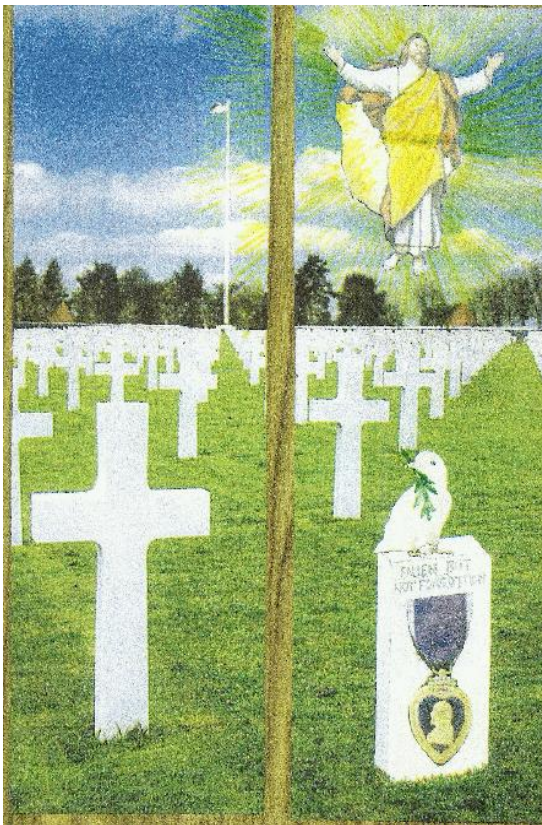
### Folded Wings

**Nelson Bivens** was a member of the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG who passed away on August 17, 2008 in Durand, Michigan. He was a very proud participant of the group.

Sincerely,  
Nora G. Bivens

**Hearol Veteto** was an active member of the group and provided excellent educational programs in our previous reunions. He unexpectedly passed away on October 22, 2008. His son Gerald will continue his father's legacy to help preserve the memories of the 93rd Bomb Group (see [President's Corner](#) for more details).





### **Stained Glass Notes from Kent Jacquith**

Minor changes on the stained glass window design. No name on B-24-D, put 93rd BG tail marking on tail -White Circle with B in center. Replace eagle shield on LH side with the MOH medal and put in DFC medal on RH side, leaving the 93rd BG logo in the center. Lower windows: Put Star of David on one of the grave markers, replace Christ symbol with either an Angle or Holy Spirit Symbol. American flag three times larger. I talked with the artist who is going to build the stained glass windows and he believes the design will be a good representation of our group and appropriate for the chapel.

### **Stained Glass Memorial Project for the 8th AF Museum in Savannah**

This project is to honor the memories of our 93<sup>rd</sup> Airmen. The total cost of this project is \$15,000 for the 3 Stained Glass Elements, including the Top Cathedral shaped window above the door and 2 separate panels in the upper portion of the new fiberglass door. We have placed a down payment of \$2,650 at the museum to get the project started.

As of Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup> we have collected **\$8,350**  
 8<sup>th</sup> AF Museum \$2,850  
 93<sup>rd</sup> Account \$5,500

Please make checks payable to:  
**93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group**

Mail checks to:  
**Paul Levine**  
**6530 N. Christiana Ave**  
**Lincolnwood, IL 60712**

Paul's phone number is 847-676-1593 and his email is [omahadd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:omahadd@sbcglobal.net). To donate by credit card to the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Project, please call the 8<sup>th</sup> AF Museum at (912) 748-8888. *Please talk to as many military, former military and veterans you know who may wish to donate to our project. Paul can send you a donation form if you need it or need to pass it on.*

### Down to Two Feet Altitude

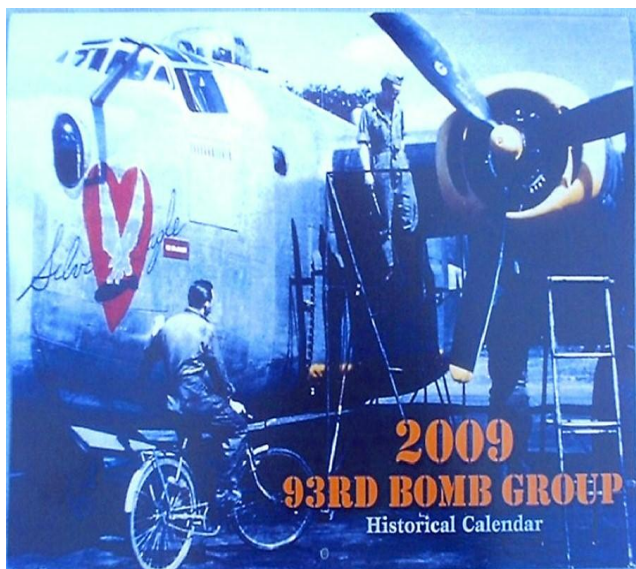
"Down to Two Feet Altitude" is an eyewitness account of the early U.S. Army Air Corps heavy bomber campaign over Europe and North Africa in WWII, as told through the eyes of a B-24 Liberator bomber navigator, Edward "Red" Weir, who faithfully logged entries into his personal war diary between 1942 – 1943, documenting his 25 combat missions. His last mission was the daring low-level raid on Hitler's "gas station," the huge oil refinery complex at

Ploesti, Romania, on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943.

That raid holds the distinction to this day of being one of the most highly decorated single battles, per capita, of all the branches of U.S. military service in the nation's history of warfare.

To order send a check or money order for \$26.95 (\$21.95 for the book; \$5.00 for S & H) to James A. Wells, P.O. Box 1053, Denton, TX 76202, or contact the author at [jwintex@yahoo.com](mailto:jwintex@yahoo.com).

### 2009 - 93rd Bomb Group Historical Calendar



*Calendars are available now* to the 93rd Bomb Group Veterans and members. There are pictures of crews, B-24s, and events that you may have been part of during WWII. You and your crew may be pictured along with people you may have known. Much effort and expense have been put into this exclusive 93rd Bomb Group Calendar for everyone to enjoy.

Please make check payable to:  
**Kent Jaquith**

Each calendar is **\$18.75**  
(13.95 plus priority shipping \$4.80)

Mail checks and your information to:  
**Kent Jaquith**  
**2633 SW Obsidian Ave. #15**  
**Redmond, OR. 97756**

To contact Kent call 541-923-4319

### 2009 REUNION NEWS FROM JOHN MARX

John spoke with the 2nd Bomb Wing Public Affairs at Barksdale AFB and confirmed our reunion for 15 - 18 October 2009. The date is tentative so if anyone has an objection please let him know. The alternative dates are 22 - 25 October 2009. His contact information: cell 412-317-1909 and email address is: [marxj@genco.com](mailto:marxj@genco.com)



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Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the  
93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group

Mail to:  
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93rd BG  
P.O. Box 47336  
Plymouth MN 55447

**Dallas TX Reunion October 2008**

