



Ball of Fire

## BALL OF FIRE QUARTERLY EXPRESS

Newsletter of the 93rd Bombardment Group  
2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, Hardwick, England

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### Group President

**Paul R. Steichen**  
1725 Shuey Ave. #105  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
(510) 939-3440

### Vice President, 2ADA

**Alfred Asch**  
6205 Meadow Court  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 881-1376

### V. President Membership

**Floyd H. Mabee**  
28 Hillside Avenue  
Dover, NJ 05801  
(201) 366-5916

## October 10 Dedication Ceremonies. At Arlington Cemetery

### Important Message from Al Asch

There is still time to send in your registration form for the dedication ceremonies to be held at the Arlington National Cemetery 10 October for the dedication of a tree and plaque. Fellows, this may well be the last activity of the 93rd Bomb Group to honor those we lost during WW II. Let's have a good showing.

This updates the instructions included in the last BOF travel. The new terminal at the Washington National Airport has opened. There is a very convenient overhead walkway between the airline counters and the Washington Metro. I know as I used it last week on one of my trips from Michigan. Take the Metro if you can from National Airport to the Walter Reid Medical Center to stay at the Mologne House Hotel. The Metro will cost between \$2.00 and \$3.00. Buy the ticket through the machine at the Metro terminal; have dollar bills and silver coins ready. You will see a fare sign below the attendant's window for the cost to either Takoma or Silver Spring stations. The Metro entrance gate accepts your ticket, opens the gate and returns the ticket on the top of the turnstile. Take the ticket as you will need it when you leave Metro. Take the Yellow Line from the airport as far as Gallery Place, then the Red Line that goes to Wheaton. The first car on the Metro will have a color code above the operator's compartment. It is

easy to travel these routes, I do it every month on my trips between Michigan and Rockville, Md. If you stop at the Takoma station, Walter Reed provides a shuttle service, or a cab is reasonable from the Silver Spring station. I would personally prefer that option. Mologne House Hotel has pick up service on call at 202 726 8700.

David W. Thompson will check you in at the Mologne House Hotel and provide you with schedules and other information. His phone number is 703 354 1952. Martin Furst has agreed to be there as well. If you need help at the airport, Richard Preziose has agreed to provide assistance. His telephone number is 703 569 1513.

The important thing is, let's make a good showing. The dedication activities will be published in subsequent BOF newsletters and I plan to have this information placed on the internet web page sponsored by the Memorial Library in Norwich.

### The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum

I received a copy of a letter Lt. Gen. E. G. Shuler (Buck) sent to Mrs. George S. Brown about the display of General George Brown's 4-star flag in the museum. General Brown was one of the original members of the 93rd; he was Squadron Commander of the 329th. Many of you will remember him, perhaps flew with him in our old D-model B-24's. He became Chief of Staff of the Air Force and was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs

under three Presidents. The following two paragraphs are quoted from General Shuler's letter:

Colonel Alfred Asch has been in contact with the museum for some time working with our staff to ensure the inclusion of the 93rd Bomb Group display case. As work on the case progressed it became obvious that the flag, due to space constraints, could not be included. The flag was placed in our artifacts department until such time as a suitable display area could be found. In the last several months we have expanded our Honoring The Eighth area to include even more cases, and now that we have the extra space we feel the flag belongs in this gallery.

I wish to thank you for this wonderful donation and appreciate your help in making the 93rd Bomb Group display a wonderful success.

Sincerely,

Lt. Gen. E.G. Shuler, USAF, Ret.  
Chairman and CEO

Judge Ben Smith is assisting the 8th Air Force Museum at Savannah, GA to build a display to commemorate the low altitude raid against the oil refineries at Ploesti on August 1, 1943. He asked me to send him pictures, artifacts, etc. suitable for display. Ben's address is P.O. Box, Waycross, GA 31502; Tele: 912 285 8040. If you have items, please contact Judge Smith direct.

### **The Opening of the American Air Museum in Duxford**

Major General Ramsay Potts sent me a copy of dedication remarks he made at the Museum opening on 1 August 1997. He was invited to speak on behalf of the veterans. Many of you will remember Ramsay as one of the original members of the 93rd having been the Squadron Commander of the 330th and later the Group Operations Officer before going to higher headquarters. M.Gen. Potts's speech:

"Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed a signal honor for me to have been invited to speak on behalf of all the veterans here today, especially those who served in England.

In 1942 I came to England as a Pilot with the 93rd Bomb Group, the first B-24 Liberator Group based in England with the 8th Air Force. Later in 1944, I commanded Bomber Groups at bases in Norfolk not far from here; and then later still

became Director of Bomber Operations for the 8th Air Force, commanded by General Jimmy Doolittle.

We thank you, Your Majesty, for opening the American Air Museum in Britain, and we thank our British friends, especially those who brought this Museum to fruition.

Throughout World War II, American airmen received warm and generous support from the English people in the towns and villages near our bases.

More importantly, your Majesty, your Father and Mother, King George and Queen Elizabeth, took a particular interest in us and visited many of our bases, including my own, thereby enhancing the morale of all ranks.

We Americans seem to have center stage here today but I should like to pay a special tribute to the Royal Air Force. The American Air Forces could not have accomplished what they did without unstinting support from the RAF. The RAF gave us our bases and protected them, provided us with communications, furnished us with intelligence about the enemy, and even fished us out of the North Sea when we were forced to crash land in the water.

This was a wartime manifestation of that special relationship between our two countries, which we veterans are determined to strengthen and preserve.

As Secretary Widnall said; "This American Air Museum has attracted widespread support in the United States and especially among those who served in Britain in World War II."

On behalf of all of those veterans, those who are here today, and those who could not join us but wish they were here, I predict a long and flourishing life for our Magnificent Museum.

Thank you, and God bless you, each and every one."

### **Summary History for the 93rd.**

The Air Force Association is sponsoring an Air Force Fifty History Book to be published by the Turner Publishing Company. This stems from the Air Force reunion held April 22-26 in Las Vegas, Nevada to celebrate our 50th anniversary. I have been in contact with the publisher of Turner and he requests I send him two double spaced pages and two pictures to summarize our history. Cal Stewart has authorized our use of *Ted's Travelling Circus* for summary material. Cal is also sending me two



pictures for the article. The material I write will appear in a subsequent issue of the *BOFQE*. My deadline is 15 September 1997.

### **USAF B-24 "Liberator" Memorial**

Neal Sorensen of the Executive Committee of the Second Air Division is acting as the project person to coordinate efforts to have a bronze monument 1/6 the size of the B-24 sculpted and installed at the Air Force Academy. It will be by the famed aviation sculptor, Robert Henderson, who has already sculptured and installed the P-52, P-47, P-40, P-38 and, yes, the B-17 for the Academy. The cost will be about \$175,00. However, the wood mock-up used in the process will be quality grade for installing at a museum; about \$25,000 of the total cost. We should support this project.

As you know, the B-17 continues to receive most of the credit and publicity about WWII, especially about the air war over Europe. It isn't fair to those who flew the B-24, especially those who lost their lives, to be forgotten. The B-24 per se is not important, but the airmen who flew them are! We of the 2ADA are the only ones left to correct this and we don't have much time left to do it.

An article in the August 14, 1997 Wall Street Journal caught my attention. The article was impressions by the author, Mark Yost, about the American Air Museum in Britain which opened August 1 and I quote from his article: "Although dwarfed when next to the B-52, one of the prize pieces is a fully restored B-17G Flying Fortress, the workhorse bomber in Europe during WWII. Also on display is a North American P-51 Mustang, the "Cadillac of the skies." Together these two aircraft broke Hitler's back" end of quote. His only mention of the B-24 quote: "Other aircraft on display include a B-25J Mitchell, a P-47D Thunderbolt and the forward section of a B-24 Liberator" end of quote. **This is totally unacceptable!**

You will recall when the 8th Air Force Museum opened in Savannah, GA a year ago last May, the B-17 was featured and very little about the B-24. General Shuler is correcting this. I believe he has done so well in doing this because of the urging by former B-24 flyers. Doing the project at the Air Force Academy is another part of correcting the misconception that the B-24 did not play an important role in the war, especially the aircrews who flew them and, yes, those who gave their lives in combat to defeat the Axis Powers. Let's support this effort, it is worth doing. The

Monumental Bronze B-24 will be studied for years to come by the Cadet Corps as well as viewed by the many tourists who visit the Academy, thus becoming aware of the role of that lovable old bird and it's crews during WWII. **Please send me your comments.**

### **Memorial Library Web Page (Internet)**

I have interfaced with our librarian at the Memorial Library to participate in the Web Page program for the 93rd. More work is needed, I will keep you advised.

### **Our B-24 "Hells Wench"**

This is the airplane that Lt. Col. Addison Baker and Major John Jerstad used to lead the 93rd over Ploesti on 1 August 1943. The Air National Guard here in Washington has commissioned Mr. Roy Grinnell, a well known aviation artist, to paint a portrait of this airplane leaving the Ploesti target. He asked me for a picture of the nose section to get an exact likeness of the name for the picture. I don't have a picture nor do I remember the airplane. None of the 93rd members I called have anything other than the serial number. I don't believe it was one of the original B-24's, perhaps a replacement. If you have a picture of this B-24 or know how the 93rd came by it, please let me know. I understand the painting will be hung in the Pentagon as Col. Baker received the Congressional Medal of Honor and was a member of the Air National Guard prior to joining the 93rd. John Jerstad also received the Congressional Medal of Honor for the Ploesti raid. As a matter of interest, I have had several contacts with the Jerstad family in the last year as has Rollin Reineck. We may see them at the forthcoming dedication ceremonies.

### **Ending Comments**

As you can see, we have a full plate remaining of things to do. You can support me most by attending our dedication ceremonies at the Arlington National Cemetery on 10 October. At least those of us who live in the Washington, D.C. Area and the close-by states of Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland can and should attend. Remember, it is probably our last function of this nature to pay tribute to those we lost in combat. If you need additional application forms, please contact Cal Davidson our newsletter editor. His address and phone number are on the last page.

## 93rd Operations Group

### Lineage and History

#### Lineage

Constituted 93rd Bombardment Group (H)	28 Jan 1942
Activated	1 Mar 1942
Redesignated 93rd Bomb. Group (VH)	Jul 1945
Redesignated 93rd Bomb. Group (M)	May 1948
Inactivated	16 Jun 1952
Redesignated and Activated	
93rd Operations Group	1 Sep 1991
Inactivated	30 Sep 1995
Activated	29 Jan 1996

#### Assignments

Air Force Combat Command	1 Mar 1942
III Bomber Command	6 Mar 1942
1st Bombardment Wing	6 Sep 1942
20th Combat Bombardment Wing	
(later, 20th Bombardment Wing)	13 Sep 1943
Second Air Force	26 Jun 1945
Strategic Air Command	21 Mar 1946
Fifteenth Air Force	31 Mar 1946
93rd Bombardment Wing	
(later, 93rd Bombardment Wing, Medium)	15 Aug 1947
attached to Far East Air Forces, May-Aug	1948
93rd Wing (later, 93rd Bomb Wing)	1 Sep 1991
93rd Air Control Wing	29 Jan 1996

#### Stations

Barksdale Field, Louisiana	11 Mar 1942
Fort Myers, Florida	5 May 1942
Alconbury, England	7 Sep 1942
Hardwick, England	6 Dec 1942
Sioux Falls Army Air Field, South Dakota	Jun 1945
Pratt AAFld, Kansas	24 Jul 1945
Clovis AAFld, New Mexico	13 Dec 1945
Castle Field (later Air Force Base), Cal.	21 Jun 1946
Castle AFB, California	Sep 1991
Robins AFB, Georgia	29 Jan 1996

#### Aircraft

B-24	1942-1945
B-29	1946-1949
B-50	1949-1952
KB-29	1950-1953
KC-97	1953-1957
B-47	1954-1956
B-52	1955-1991
KC-135	1957-1991
E-8C	1996-

### 93rd Bomb Group Operations

The unit was activated on 1 March 1942 at Barksdale Field, Louisiana, as the 93rd Bombardment Group (Heavy), and trained for combat with B-24s. The 93rd transferred to Fort Myers, Florida, on 15 May 1942, and engaged in antisubmarine operations over the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea from May until July. The 93rd then moved to Alconbury, England, over August and September 1942. The group entered combat on 9 October 1942 by attacking steel and engineering works at Lille, France. Until December 1942, the 93rd operated primarily

against submarine pens in the Bay of Biscay.

The 93rd sent a large detachment to North Africa from December 1942 through February 1943. With inadequate supplies and under the most difficult desert conditions, the 93rd struck heavy blows at enemy shipping and communications, earning for the group a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC). The detachment returned to England, in March 1943, and until the end of June bombed engine repair works, harbors, power plants, and other targets in France, the Low Countries, and Germany.

The 93rd sent another detachment to the Mediterranean theater in June 1943 to support the invasion of Sicily, and to participate in the famous low-level attack on enemy oil installations at Ploesti, Romania. On 1 August 1943, having followed another element of the formation along the wrong course to Ploesti, the 93rd hit targets that had been assigned to other groups, but it carried out its bombing of the vital oil installations despite heavy losses inflicted by attacks from the fully-alerted enemy and was awarded a DUC for the operation. The detachment returned to England briefly in August 1943, but after only two missions, was sent back to the Mediterranean to support Fifth Army at Salerno during the invasion of Italy in September 1943.

The detachment rejoined the group in October 1943, and until April 1945 the 93rd bombarded strategic targets such as marshaling yards, aircraft factories, oil refineries, chemical plants, and cities in Germany. The unit took part in many operations including bombing gun emplacements, choke points, and bridges near Cherbourg during the Normandy invasion in June 1944; attacking troop concentrations in northern France during the St Lo breakthrough in July; transporting food, gasoline, water, and other supplies to the Allies advancing across France, from August through September; dropping supplies to airborne troops in Holland on 18 September (Operation Market Garden); striking enemy transportation and other targets during the Battle of the Bulge, December 1944 through January 1945; and flying two missions on 24 March 1945 during the airborne assault across the Rhine, dropping supplies to troops near Wesel and bombing a night-fighter base at Stormede. The unit ceased operations in April 1945, and returned to the U.S. in June 1945.

During the post-war period, the 93rd Bombardment Group (Very Heavy) was moved to Castle Field (later, Castle AFB), California, reequipped with B-29 bombers, and in March 1946 became part of Strategic Air Command (SAC). On 15 August 1947 the group was assigned to the newly established 93rd Bombardment Wing. The group deployed to Okinawa in 1948 becoming the first SAC bomb group to deploy in full strength to the Far East. The group converted to B-50 aircraft in 1949, and deployed to England from December 1951 through March 1952. On returning home, the group was inactivated, effective 16 June 1952.

The group was redesignated and activated at Castle AFB as the 93rd Operations Group on 1 September 1991, as part of the Air Force restructuring program, and oversaw the 93rd Bomb Wing's aerial operations. The unit was inactivated on 30 September 1995, as part of the closure of Castle AFB. The retirement was short however, as the group was activated again on 29 January 1996, at Robins AFB, Georgia. The group again oversees flight operations, this time for the 93rd Air Control Wing.

# 93rd reactivated as the 93rd Air Control Wing

## AT ROBINS AFB, GA

### 93d Air Control Wing

#### Lineage and History

##### Lineage

Established 93d Bombardment Wing, Very Heavy	28 Jul 1947
Organized	15 Aug 1947
Discontinued	12 Jul 1948
Redesignated 93d Bombardment Wing, Medium	12 Jul 1948
Activated	12 Jul 1948
Redesignated 93d Bombardment Wing, Heavy	12 Jul 1948
Redesignated 93d Wing	1 Feb 1955
Redesignated 93d Bomb Wing	1 Sep 1991
Inactivated	1 Jun 1992
Redesignated 93d Air Control Wing	30 Sep 1995
Activated	29 Jan 1996

##### Assignments

Fifteenth Air Force	15 Aug 1947
Fifteenth Air Force (attached to 7th Air Division)	6 Dec 1948
47th Air Division (later, 47th Strategic Aerospace Division; 47th Air Division)	1 Jul 1959
Second Air Force	30 Jun 1971
Fifteenth Air Force	15 Feb 1973
14th Air Division	1 Oct 1976
12th Air Division	1 Oct 1985
Fifteenth Air Force	15 Jul 1988
Twelfth Air Force	1 Jun 1992
Ninth Air Force	29 Jan 1996

##### Aircraft

B-29	1947-1949
B-50	1949-1954
KB-29	1950-1953
KC-97	1953-1957
B-47	1954-1956
B-52	1955-1991
KC-135	1957-1991
E-8C	1996-

## 93rd Bomb Wing Operations

Maintained combat readiness for global strategic bombardment, Aug 1947-Feb 1956. The 93rd Bombardment Group deployed to Okinawa in 1948 becoming the first SAC bomb group to deploy in full strength to the Far East. The Wing began aerial refueling operations in Oct 1950. Deployed its tactical force, augmented by support personnel, to England, Jul 1950-Jan 1951. Deployed the entire 93rd Wing to England, Dec 1951-Mar 1952.

Provided aerial refueling and navigational

assistance for the July 1952 movement of the 31st Fighter-Escort Wing from the United States to Japan, the first jet fighter crossing of the Pacific Ocean.

First SAC Wing to convert to B-52 aircraft, 1955-1956. Became SAC's primary B-52 aircrew training organization, incorporating KC-135 aircrew training in mid-1956. Notable operations include nonstop B-52 flights of some 16,000 miles around North America and to the North Pole in Nov

1956; the first jet aircraft nonstop flight around the world in Jan 1957, with wing B-52s flying 23,574 miles in 45:19 hours; and a nonstop, unrefueled KC-135 flight from Yokota AB Japan to Washington DC, in 13:58 hours in Apr 1958.

Although most of its components were used for aircrew training, after 1956 the wing often maintained one or more of its units in a tactical role with operational commitments. From Apr 1968 to Apr 1974, operated a special B-52 replacement training unit to support SACs B-52 operation in Southeast Asia. Won the SAC Bombing and Navigation Competition and the Fairchild Trophy in 1949, 1952, and 1970 and won the Omaha Trophy as the outstanding wing in SAC for 1970. Continued B-52 and KC-135 aircrew training along with supplying numerous refueling missions.

In Aug 1990 the wing operated an aerial port of embarkation for personnel and equipment deploying to Southwest Asia. In addition to performing aerial refueling, tankers ferried personnel and equipment to forward operating locations, while wing B-52s deployed to worldwide strategic locations including Saudi Arabia. Bombed the Iraqi Republican Guard and targeted Iraqi infrastructures such as chemical weapons, nuclear, and industrial plants, Jan-Feb 1991.

Relieved of its air refueling and KC-135 aircrew training missions in 1992, the wing was inactivated on 30 September 1995, and was redesignated and activated as the 93rd Air Control Wing at Robins AFB, Georgia, on 29 January 1996. The wing was equipped with E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) aircraft.

93d Air Control Wing/HO  
555 Borghese Drive  
Robins AFB, GA 31098-2700

Mr. Davidson

Thank you for your kind letter and the issues of the 93rd BG newsletter. I've talked with our Public Affairs folks and we are going to be sending you copies of our monthly newsletter *The Razor's Edge*. You might find some of the articles useful to your needs.

As the historian for the 93d Air Control Wing it is my responsibility to document our daily activities, and report these events every six months to higher headquarters. Additionally, I provide historical research services for the wing. Most of the data I provide the wing is used for planning purposes, or to validate operations and programs.

When time permits, I also research World War II activities, but unfortunately that is not a priority.

You could help me with a research project I have on-going. I have received a request for a drawing of the 93rd BG World War II patch. In your newsletter you have a small picture of the patch, unfortunately it is too small to see the details. I would greatly appreciate it if you could send me a larger copy of the patch drawing, with the colors written down.

Enclosed with this letter are lineage and honors statements for the units currently assigned to the 93ACW. You will notice right away that the 328th, 329th and 330th Squadrons are not included. I must sadly report these units are currently inactivated. The 93rd BG however, lives on in the guise of the 93d Operations Group, and continues to build on the proud traditions established by men such as yourself. If you have a computer, you can find more information on the wing at WWW.JSTARS.AF.MIL on the world wide web.

Finally, if you do get down this way, please give us a call and we will show you the kind of reception that will make you proud of your organizational descendants. On 15 August we are dedicating the wing theater building to Colonel Lee B. Coats, the first 93d Bombardment Wing commander, and we are also celebrating the 50th Anniversary of both the Wing and the Air Force. If you are down this way, we would be more than happy to have you stop in.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Lee, T/Sgt USAF  
Wing Historian

*Ed: I sent Sgt. Lee a color copy of the 93rd BG patch. I have included the early history of the 93rd for some of our readers who are not familiar with this period of our history. Starting in 1947 the history of the 93rd Bomb Wing, redesignated 93rd Air Control Wing, should be of interest to all. We are indebted to Capt Ed "Tank" McKinzie and T/Sgt Robert E. Lee for sending all the material and adding me to their mailing list of the 93rd ACW's Razor's Edge.*

## Folded Wings

Harry M. Adie  
Roscoe S. Grisham  
Stanley C. Keller  
Joseph P. Obici  
Gomer J. Sneddon

Joseph Buland  
Max L. Huffman  
Olga J. Mora  
W. Donald Reilly  
Edward L. Stephans



Dear Mr. Steichen:

Enclosed is a check for a subscription to the *Ball of Fire Quarterly Express* for myself and a gift subscription for my mother.

My father, Charles D. Lee, Jr., was a 93rd Bomb Group pilot from September 1942 until March 1943. He flew with the 97th Bomb Group (B-17's) from July-September 1942 and was transferred to the 93rd when it arrived at Alconbury. He stayed with the 93rd through its first North Africa deployment (December 1942-February 1943) and was transferred to 8th Air Force Headquarters in approximately March 1943. In April 1944 he was shot down over Hamm, Germany while flying as combat wing leader for the 91st Bomb Group and was a POW until April 1945. He died in 1983.

I would like to ask for a favor. I am attempting to learn details about an operational mission my father flew out of Gambut to "SUSA" on February 24, 1943. At the time he was assigned to the 93rd. His records show the flight time was 10:45 hours. Carroll Stewart's book *Ted's Traveling Circus* and the other resources I have consulted indicate that the 93rd left North Africa for England on the evening of February 23-24, 1943, and do not show any operational missions on February 24, 1943. My father's records indicate he returned from North Africa to England, via Tafaraoui and Gibraltar, on February 25-26, 1943. If any of your readers know anything about this mission, I would like to hear from them.

Charles Dixon Lee, III  
152 Duck Point Lane  
Chapin, SC 29036

Dear Cal,

I received my first issue of *BOFQE*, thanks to Al Asch for giving me your address. I was also able to get the book *Ted's Travelling Circus*. Now I have both that book and the book *Black Sunday*.

I've been trying for the last 4 years to find something on my brother. I'm hoping some of your readers may remember and recognize him. Could this info and picture be put in the next issue of "BOF."

His name was Sgt. John T. Dee. He was the tail-gunner on the Ploesti mission flying with pilot Capt. Hugh Roper in *Exterminator*. John was also stationed at Mac Dill AFB in Tampa in the 44th BG. He trained at Barksdale Field in Louisiana in 1942 and then Ft. Myers, FL where he was put in the 330th BS of the 93rd BG.

John and the crews of *Exterminator* and

*Let Her Rip* are buried together in a common grave at the Jefferson Barracks Cemetery in Missouri.

I am enclosing the picture of John and some of the men. As I said, "I'm hoping someone will recognize someone in it and get in touch with me. John is in the front row kneeling right in the middle. This picture was taken somewhere in England.

I would like to thank all the men on the Ploesti mission and the many missions that followed, for you were truly all heroes.

Donald D. Dee  
P.O. Box 1017  
San Antonio, FL 33576



Dear Cal,

I believe I can identify two of the four people in the top picture on Pg. 5 of the summer issue. I believe they are Capt. Edward McGuire on the right and, second from left, Lt. Joseph Dondero. Joe Dondero came to the 93rd as bombardier on McGuire's crew. He was soon selected as a lead bombardier and flew with Capt. Dolliver's crew which was cited at least twice for outstanding bombing. Of course, everyone who has read the *BOFQE* or Cal Stewart's book has read about McGuire. Sorry, but the other two in the picture did not stir any memories.

As to the *Ball of Fire* colors question, I don't know about the first one, but I do remember well the second *Ball of Fire*. The description of it in Roger Freeman's, *The Mighty Eighth*, is accurate--yellow nose ahead of the cockpit, broad yellow band aft of the wing, outer 15 feet of the wings yellow and 10-ft. wide diagonal yellow band extending from the wing root. It had the normal 93rd yellow and black tail and was marked YM-D. I flew in it a number of times with Lt. (later Capt.) William Engel, an excellent pilot who often volunteered to fly it, especially on "utility" missions around

England. I have a model of it based on some photos which I can no longer locate after several months.

My compliments to you on the continuing excellence of the newsletter, as well as to Paul who also did a great job.

Charles D. Sill  
808 Fernridge Court  
Modesto, CA 95351-4469

Do you know anything about CPL John A. Boersma who served with the 93rd from early January 1945 until March 5, 1945 when he was MIA?

John was a waist gunner and was lost (missing in action) when his B-24 had to ditch in the North Sea. The plane broke apart at the rear of the bomb bay when it hit the water. There were two survivors, the pilot William Beez, and Gerald P. Turner, engineer.

If you have any information about John A. Boersma please contact the following:

Robert Boersma (brother to John)  
739 SE 130th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97233-1611  
503-253-6330

or

Edward Zobac  
Associate Member 2ADA, 445th BG  
2211 Foxboro Drive  
Ft. Wayne, IN 46818-1800  
219-497-0029

Thank you in advance for any help you can give.

*Ed: This notice was posted in the hospitality room at the Irvine convention.*

Friend Cal,

Couple of weeks ago I was all set to write a few words about the picture of the *Flying Wolves* but after reading the comments in the summer issue of the *Ball of Fire* I hesitate to add my two cents worth.

The picture enclosed is Lt. Carter and crew. The picture was made by the photo lab just before we took off for the *Flying Wolves* fiftieth non abort mission. The picture was taken because I heard we were scheduled to fly the plane back to the States for a bond tour. Nothing was done about the tour; if it was true I guess it was scrubbed. We flew that plane three or four missions and on at least one of those our pilot (Lt. Carter) forgot his oxygen mask. He was also suffering combat fatigue. We aborted that mission. could have been the mission in

question I'm a little fuzzy on that. NO FAULT OF THE PLANE. Pilot error!!!

One of our crew members, Harry Albright, may be able to clear this up. One thing I do know, this picture was made in May or June.

Was this gallant old Lady salvaged in the States? Or is it true that it was shot down over England by Spitfires? That would have been a very tragic demise for such a grand old Lady who had given so much to the war effort.

J. L. MOSIER  
403 Crane St.  
Park Hills, MO 63601



*Ed: from l/r top row Albright, Carter, Condon, Adams, Whiteside; bottom row Graham, Keller, Mosier, Korpall*

Dear Cal,

I thought you and others in the group would be interested to learn that some of our old pilots are still flying as pilots. On July 19, 1997, the Washington National Airport had a grand opening of its new terminal. Three vintage aircraft were flown in for static display and walk-thru purposes. One of the old timers, a Martin 404, was piloted by Jack Weiss, a WWII veteran of the 93rd Bomb Group. Jack and I were both assigned as pilots to the 330th Bomb Squadron and flew our combat missions during the late 1943 and early 1944 time period. Jack went on the Ploesti mission with Babe Emmons in *Big Noise*, which he inherited and flew on the rest of his missions. I flew *Big Noise* on one mission to Bremen in December 1943, when he was not available. *Big Noise* was still flying when I was shot down so I'm sure there are others who also flew it on missions. Later, it became interned in Switzerland. After the war, Jack began flying with TWA and spent the last eleven years of his airline career as a Captain in 747s on international flights. Although he is retired from the airlines, he still



keeps current as a pilot by flying the 404 to various exhibitions. He was able to spend two nights at our house and it was great talking over old times with him. I wonder how many of the 93rd BG WWII pilots are still active pilots. Any guess?

Cal, you are doing a very fine job on the *BOFQE*. It is a superb publication. Many thanks for all your efforts.

Dave Thompson  
6471 Woodbridge Road  
Alexandria, VA 22312

Dear Cal,

It is too bad that my husband, Joe A. Buland, did not live quite long enough to see the back cover of the summer issue of *BOFQE*. The photograph of *Sterile Errol* would have brought a smile to his face.

Joe was not the first one to pilot this airplane, but he was the last one. Joe and his crew were shot down over The Netherlands on their way home from Mission #13 on April 8, 1944. I have forgotten just which mission this was, but I'm sure that someone knows. Joe was in the 330th Bomb Squadron, flying out of Norwich, England.

Unfortunately, my dear husband died on May 10, 1997. Anyway, thanks for the memory.

Geraldine Brown Buland  
8555 S. Lewis, #21-A  
Tulsa, OK 74137

Dear Floyd,

I hope this letter finds you in good health.

I hope you don't mind me writing to you and taking up your time, but I'm hoping you can assist me in unraveling a slight mystery concerning 93rd Bomb Group Radar-equipped Lead Ships late in the War.

I know that you flew with the group during its early combat months, but various letters of yours I've read in the 2nd A.D. Journal over the years, lead me to believe that you have done quite a bit of research into the group's planes throughout hostilities.

I'm now in the process of checking out the page-proofs of the forthcoming Hand-Bound Edition of *Liberator Album* and one of the photos in the book is of a Radar-Lead Ship *Unexpected VI* taxiing on the perimeter track.

The plane in question has a checkerboard nose section, the Squadron codes are out of the photo--you are most probably familiar with the photos.

Roger Freeman has always insisted that the nose color is red and black checks, but I have my

doubts because on the black and white point, the shade of the checks matches exactly the shade of the yellow and black Tail of a "Lib" in the background also the lighter shade of the nose color matches the yellow stripe on the lower bomb doors.

I'm well aware that Radar-Lead Ships were concentrated within the 329th Squadron most of the time and they had their noses painted red, but in early 1945 other Squadrons within the Group were equipped with Radar-Lead Ships and I'm almost certain, although I can't prove it, that their noses were painted in other colors than red.

I have a black and white picture of a 328th Squadron Lead-Ship, a B24J-60-CF (44-10508) with the nose-turret removed and an experimental clear-vision nose similar to a B24D, but with a B26 tail gun unit mounted below the bomb-arming panel. This plane also has a checkered nose section which could be yellow and black or even white and black, but certainly not red and black.

John Archer has also just sent me a photo of a crew standing in front of a B24L nose.

This plane carries the 328th insignia under the cockpit side window, is named *All American* and has a checkerboard nose section which looks to me to be Yellow and Black.

Unfortunately, the print is a double-exposure, which makes photo color interpretation most uncertain.

This whole subject has caused me no end of frustration over the last couple of weeks or so as I'm most anxious to get accurate captions to the photos in the book and if you could throw any light on this matter and help me clarify things, I would be most grateful.

Mike Bailey

Dear Cal,

Many thanks for your letter of July 14th concerning checkerboard nose sections.

I was interested to learn that you remember some B24's with black and white checks as I have a photo of B24J-60-CF 44-10508 of the 328th Squadron, a field modified plane with a special clear vision nose section similar to a B24D's, but with less framework and a Bell power-boost turret in the lower nose. This plane has what appears to be black and white checks on the nose. (Picture appeared in Roger Freeman's *Liberator at War*)

I have a sneaking suspicion that the nose of *Unexpected VI* was also yellow and black but I can't prove it.

Thank you for your offer to run my letter in the *BOF* although I guess I wouldn't get any answers before *Liberator Album* goes to press. It would be

interesting to hear if anyone remembers the color of the checkerboard noses. Many thanks, Cal.

Mike Bailey  
91 Waterworks Road  
Norwich, Norfolk  
England NR2 4BD

Dear Cal:

I had written Paul Steichen last fall (my letter published in the winter 96/97 edition of the *BOFQE*) that I enjoyed the series, *Hello Milfoil this is Wee Willie*, and that he would hear further from me after the final installment published in the spring 1997 edition.

That was the 36th mission for Captain McGuire and my 11th. I had flown ten mission as radio operator on Jim Threlkeld's crew. I was awakened at two A.M. that morning and told to report to operations. There I was told that I had volunteered to fly a make-up mission as radio operator on Captain McGuire's crew.

I never knew until I read his story fifty two years later, how he ever got credit for that mission. According to my diary, my story differs somewhat from Captain McGuire's.

I am hopeful that if Captain McGuire sees this that he will contact me at the address above. Thank you and keep up the good work. I look forward to each new edition, getting old I guess.

Arthur J. Quinn  
403 Valleybrook Dr.  
Lancaster, PA 17601

Dear Cal,

On May 20, 1997, the four (known) remaining members of Preziose's crew (crew #94 formed at Davis-Monthan in Aug. 1943) met in Chambersburg, PA, for a day of great reminiscing of our training days and combat tour with the 409th Squadron, 93rd B.G.; the last time the four of us were together.

The enclosed reunion photo shows, L to R: Elden R. Appel, bombardier, 1st Lt. USAF Ret.; John G. Fish, left waist gunner; Richard J. Preziose, pilot, Lt Col USAF Ret; and Donald E. Lance, right waist gunner. Preziose drove from Springfield, VA; Lance from Hendersonville, NC; and Fish from Lancaster, PA.

The enclosed photo of our complete crew was in the period May - July 1944. L to R, back row are: Staff Sgt Thomas Destasio, tail gunner (deceased); 1st Lt Richard J. Preziose, pilot; 2nd Lt William Parker, navigator; 2nd Lt Elden R. Appel, bombardier; 2nd Lt Frank Wernlien, co-pilot.

L to R, front row are: Staff Sgt Victor Cervantez, nose gunner; Staff Sgt John G. Fish, left waist gunner; Staff Sgt Donald E. Lance, right waist gunner; Tech Sgt Joseph Kwaitkowski, flight engineer and topturret gunner; Tech Sgt William Pugh, radio operator. (Note: 2nd Lt Jimmy Fluhr was our navigator throughout our training phases; however, upon our becoming operational in the 8th, he was assigned to a radar crew, inasmuch as he had received radar navigational training at Langley, our last duty station stateside.)

Your publication of my previous letter to you in the 1996 Spring issue of the *BOFQE* led to our reunion. Thank you!

Elden R. Appel  
820 Menno Village  
Chambersburg, PA 17201-4034



Dear Cal,

Joe Mitchell's letter in the summer edition of the *BOFQE* in regards to 872F the *Flying Wolves* sent me to my dusty old collection of records. I too flew the old B24D on July 21st on what was it's 49th mission and my crew also never aborted. In fact we never aborted in our 27 missions and I credit that to the ground crew.

We had the finest maintenance in the ETO and like Joe said, "We did not have that in the states."

We lost as many crews and ships, due to maintenance, at Westover Field as we did in combat.

However, never aborting did not to my knowledge enter in to being assigned to 872F. As I recall it was a maximum effort mission as was the St. Lo mission. They only brought old *Flying Wolves* out of moth balls when orders came from 2nd Division to put all available aircraft into the air. If I'm not mistaken we did not realize that 872F had the old oil controlled super-chargers until we got out to the plane. We weren't happy to see them since it was going to be an 8 hour mission and I'll wager it was the longest of it's 50 missions

As Joe pointed out the old oil controlled super-chargers could give you trouble, and they kept your co-pilot busy trying to maintain manifold pressure. My co-pilot John Harrington did an excellent job but on a mission of that length problems develop. Several minutes before the I.P. we lost the manifold pressure on the #4 engine, and shortly after that it began to detonate and set up a rough vibration in the right wing. We managed to maintain our position in the formation until bombs away at which time it became necessary to feather #4 resulting in our leaving the formation. Being aware of fighters in the area, we knew that we would be a sitting duck. Fortunately there was a solid undercast at around 18,00 ft. We dropped down into it and our navigator Ray White gave me a heading for England. Once more he was right on the money and after flying in the soup on instruments for three hours we broke out around the English Channel. We did encounter flak somewhere in Germany, we couldn't see it, but we could hear and feel it.

Speaking of my co-pilot, we lost John on our 27th mission. The target was the Hamburg oil refinery. The 93rd led the division that day and we were briefed that there were 480 AA guns at the target. (Since the war it was verified there were 500) We were flying deputy lead on that mission and due to a malfunction of the lead ship's auto pilot we took over lead prior to the I.P. Being the first ship we saw no Ack Ack puffs as it was a clear day with not a cloud in the sky. But about four minutes from the target all hell broke loose. Red puffs all around us and flak tearing through the ship like rain on the roof. My radar navigator Charles Kline said I'm hit and about that time my co-pilot's flak helmet flew off and he fell over towards me. The reason for telling this is that in my opinion he might have survived had he not worn the helmet. The piece of flak entered in under the helmet and ricocheted around doing unbelievable

damage to the top of his head. Without the helmet he might have received a superficial wound of the head. I won't go into detail on the rest of the mission as that's another story.

Cal, as Paul before you, you do a great job. This is the best of all publications. Keep up the good work. You know none of us are getting any younger and it was good to see that Mitchell is still among us. I also heard somewhere that Fred Baccate is still kicking. I know that Vasques is alive in Cal. and I just wonder where the others are from what we called The Big Pilot Hut. Thanks for Mitchell's address. I'm going to drop him a line.

Harry Gruener  
333 Carlisle Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15229-1620

### Editors Comments

Regarding the picture in the upper right hand corner on page 5 of the last issue; this picture did not show up as well as expected. The correct identification from left to right are as follows: Dave Searles-pilot, Dick Glauner-Bombardier, Paul Steichen-Navigator, Don Peterson-co-pilot.

Please note my new telephone area code on the back page. You will also note a fax number that can be used between the hours of 12:00PM and 8:00PM. For those of you who have computers and are on line and using E-mail I can be reached at K8QGC@aol.com .

There is still time for many of you who are within driving distance to make reservations for the Arlington Ceremony. This would be a good time for you to visit the new Air Force Archive building which is located in nearby Silver Springs and do some research.

The picture below is five members of Jack Kerler's crew who have attended several of the last reunions. L/R Kerler, George McNulty, Dick Truesdale, Mo Gozonsky, Paul Meyers







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Calvin Davidson, Editor  
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