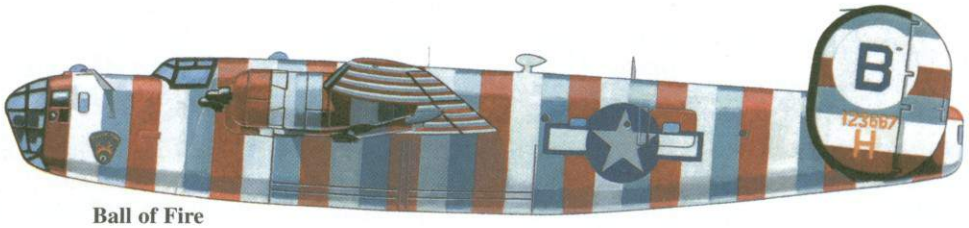

Ball of Fire

BALL OF FIRE QUARTERLY EXPRESS

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

Vol. 7, No. 1 **Spring, 1999**

l/r: front row, Mark Kernan, Farnsworth, Victor Houser, Earl Cochran, Don Nielson; Back row, Frederick Gilbert, Thomas Mitchell, Paul Joseph, Francis McGuire

Tail gunner receives medal 54 years later

by Steven R. Ford
Hilltop Times staff

On Dec. 21, after a 54-year wait, retired Army Col. Grant L. Farnsworth was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in a ceremony at the Officer's Club for his service during WW II. Maj. Gen. Richard Roellig, Ogden ALC Commander, pinned the prestigious medal on the 75 year-old veteran before a small gathering of family and local dignitaries.

Farnsworth, then a Staff Sergeant, was the tail gunner on two different consolidated B-24 bombers that the crew called "Little Joe" after the pilot's infant son. The crew flew 30 missions over war torn Europe, 16 as lead plane, and never lost a crewman. Only the waist gunners were injured. After mission 15, the crew changed planes. The original "Little Joe," tail number 969, was destroyed in an aerial accident over Belgium.

Farnsworth says he got a patriotic surge in December of 1941 after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. He knew that he had to do something to help his country, so he enlisted in the Army Air Corps.

"The extent of the damage I couldn't believe until I saw photos," he said. I had a really hard time handling that. "Then I was a young kid, about 17, and felt I had to do something."

Farnsworth was shipped off to North Dakota for training, and then it was on to England for the real thing.

"We flew 14 missions in the first month, two over Munich. The first time (over Munich), I joked and laughed about it. The second time, I took off my rings and wrote a note to my family. I didn't think I was coming back."

Perhaps it was experience. Perhaps it was a sixth sense, but Farnsworth's gut feeling would prove to be almost too accurate. He and the crew of his B-24 Liberator, very nearly did not return to base that day. In the skies over enemy territory, the odds finally caught up with them. Enemy flak had badly damaged "Little-Joe," knocking out three engines and sending the plane into a nose-dive from three miles up.

"I was praying to God," Farnsworth said. "Everyone had given up. Just at the last possible moment, the pilot threw the throttle forward and it kicked in. We pulled out just in time, but we found ourselves right over an enemy airfield.

"We had all discussed it. If they got one plane in the air, we were going to fight. If they got two planes up, we were going to think about it. If they got three, we were going to surrender." Instead, for whatever reason, the Germans let the plane go.

Continued on Page 2

Pres. 2ADA..... Al Asch
6205 Meadow Court
Rockville, MD 20852
Tel. 301 881 1376

Pres. 93rd BG...Fred Strombom
P.O. Box 646
Ogema, WI 54459
Tel. 715 767 5461

Membership....L.L. Brown
220 Clardy Street
Malvern, AR 72104
Tel. 501 332 3125

Membership..Robert McKeever
329 Rosewood Ave
Winnetka, IL 60093
Tel. 847 446 0205

93rd Historian..Carroll Stewart
7150 Holmes Park Rd. Suite 323
Lincoln, NE 6805-4603
Tel. 402 484 6046

Newsletter Editor..Calvin Davidson
48973 Plate Rd.
Oberlin, OH 44074-9619
Tel. 440 775 1787

Not one enemy plane got off the ground and the bomber was able to limp back to Hardwick Air Base in England. Farnsworth says that while he was never a superstitious man, never carried a good luck charm, whenever a mission was over he was scared to death and very thankful he was down. According to Farnsworth, the first thing a crew did when they were down was count the holes in their plane. Sometimes there were a lot.

"After we got shot down that first time," Farnsworth said, "I had a lot of respect for that plane. It wasn't quite as ugly as I first thought."

Farnsworth describes his seat in the tail turret as being a $100 seat on the fifty-yard line at a football game. The only difference, he said, is that his seat was some 20,000 feet in the air.

"As the tail gunner," he said, "you're completely exposed. And if anything goes wrong, your chances of getting out are nil. The tail gunner has a parachute, but he can't wear it. He has to leave it outside the turret. There used to be an old joke, 'When you get back, change the gas and change the tail gunner.' Not on our plane."

In 30 missions, stuffed into a small gunnery turret at the rear of the plane, Farnsworth was never injured. He could feel flak bursting into black clouds all around him, he said, but he never got hit. During their very last mission, their pilot got hit with flak. But in the tradition of this charmed crew, the shrapnel tore into his uniform along his chest, leaving the pilot shaken but unharmed.

The medal ceremony honoring Farnsworth would never even have happened had it not been for the research efforts of the WWII veteran's 16 year old granddaughter, Jenny. Jenny, now a student at Alpine Life of Learning alternative school in Provo, had been surfing the Internet at the request of her grandfather to find information regarding his old unit, the 330th Bomber Squadron, 93rd Bomb Group. She spent days finding new search routes, running into dead ends and sometimes getting very frustrated, all the while compiling an impressive amount of information.

"He knew I was pretty good with the Internet," she said, "and he just asked me if I would look up some stuff for him. He gave me a lot of names and keywords to use."

Once she gathered the general information for her grandfather, she concentrated on finding the crew from his old plane. Searching online phone directories, she was able to come up with possible candidates.

"My granddaughter helped me with the information and the phone numbers," Farnsworth said. I took it from there. A lot of research and $154 later, I had a few of them (surviving crew members) nailed down."

One of the former crewmen asked Farnsworth if he ever received his Distinguished Flying Cross, a medal the rest of the crew had received 54 years ago, just six months after their tour of duty. When Farnsworth said that be hadn't, a few calls were made to Senator Orin Hatch's office. After cutting through some red tape, Farnsworth was able to stand proudly before those assembled to receive one of the highest commendations awarded by the U.S. Army Air Corps, which later became the U.S. Air Force.

Farnsworth's B-24 was involved in several important missions during his tour of duty, but nothing was as important as lending air support to ground efforts from December 1944 through January 1945. Even 54 years later the Battle of the Bulge cannot be forgotten. German forces in Europe pushed back American and British troops, creating a bulge in the Allied lines. When the smoke finally cleared, the Americans had sustained 81,000 casualties including 19,000 dead, but the great battle did signal the end of the war in Europe. Just four months later, on May 7, 1945, German General Alfred Jodl signed the instrument of unconditional surrender at Allied headquarters in Reims, France.

After leaving the Army in 1945, Farnsworth returned to his home in Utah to complete his studies at the University of Utah, earning a bachelor's degree in social science, and a master's in psychiatric social work. In 1950, with degrees in tow, he enlisted in the Army Reserve and was assigned to the Intelligence branch. At about that

same time, Farnsworth went to work for the Utah State Department of Corrections.

"Every time I had a little time off," Farnsworth said, "the Pentagon would have something for me to do."

He retired from the Army in May 1981, having attained the rank of colonel, and he followed that with a retirement from the Department of Corrections in 1983.

"Then I had to find something to do I to take my mind off things," he said, "which is when I took up art. I started painting and golf, but I never really learned to golf very well."

Having studied with some prominent figures in the local art community, Farnsworth has developed both good technique and a nice collection of work. He says that his painting has developed in phases from still life, to ocean scenery, to landscapes and buildings. He is also an accomplished pianist. He helped put himself through college teaching piano.

When asked what was left for him to do, Farnsworth replied, "Rest. I hope to get back to painting though. I've kind of slowed down a little."

"He's a great guy," his granddaughter said. "He's done a lot. He's done so many neat things."

Ed: This Story reprinted with permission of Stephen R. Ford *and the* Hilltop Times, Hill AFB, Utah

Food for Thought

After the 1998 reunion, Don Morrison of Clinton, Ohio, discussed with your Ball of Fire editor prospects for establishing a successor to the 93rd Bomb Group Association. Such an organization would enable descendants, kin and friends of wartime 93rd-ers to preserve interest in and history of one of World War II's most colorful, famous and efficient military units.

It is the opinion of your editor and others that "When our generation has passed on we would like to have an organization in place to carry on." It is our view such an organization would insure that the 93rd's wartime deeds would not be consigned to the dust bin of history, and the 93rd association would not fade as a "last man's club."

Goals of this organization:

1) Support for the 93rd alumni and its endeavors;
2) Continue to memorialize the 697 men of the 93rd who died for the cause of freedom;
3) Enhance and strengthen ties among member families;
4) Exchange helpful information with other descendants, kin and friends;
5) Press for additional information through research, correspondence, questions, answers.

It is our hope Ted's Travelling Circus veterans still living will relate wartime experiences to their families. We understand even after 50-plus years many memories are still painful.. Succeeding generations will want to know how you lived, loved and dreamed of returning home. For some, those dreams never came true.

Don says his grandfather was 93rd-er Melvin Morrison, who lost three friends when their plane crashed. "When I was a small child, Grandpa Morrison showed me their pictures. I now show them to my family." Donald enjoys his grandfather's recounting visits to Hardwick and nearby vicinities, London pubs and developing close bonds of friendship with comrades and British civilians.

Don suggests the reserve outfit might be designated as the Legacy of the 93rd. He writes: "The Legacy would not glamorize war but help preserve memories of the selfless deeds of men of the Circus.

Editor's note: Similar suggestions have been forthcoming from others. Carroll (Cal) Stewart, who authored the 1996 release, Ted's Travelling Circus, has stated several times he and his wife, Peggy, a 1944 Hardwick American Red Cross girl, have a son, Scott, and a daughter, Suzanne Bolten, who have pledged to help commemorate the Circus. Her sons, Alec and Charles Bolten, grandfather was the late Walter Bolten of St. Louis, a heavy bomber navigator who saw WW II combat with the Royal Canadian Air Force. Scott's address: P.O. Box 83289, Lincoln, NE 68501-0289; Suzanne, 809 East Monroe, Oakland, MO 63122-6327. We would like to hear from other members, like Cal and Peg, and other associate members, like Morrison and anyone with ties to the 93rd who would be willing to help form and be active in such an auxiliary or successor organization. The next article will show the degree of interest Don has shown in the 93rd's history and his extensive on going research.

Researching the 93rd

From the time I was a small child, I have been interested in the 93rd BG activities during the

Second World War. Since my grandfather kept very few photos and records from his service years, I had to learn how to find and use the official government sources to obtain this information. Over the years, I have learned how to find friends, records and photos. I have attended several reunions, and I am frequently asked how I am able to find all of this information. I do not claim to be an expert researcher, but I do know some ways to find missing information. Feel free to call, mail or email me if there are any questions. Here are some highlights of my collections.

Main Research Projects

Hardwick Airbase Photos I have put together a collection of about 50 photos of Hardwick Airbase. These photos range from high altitude to low level. All areas of the base are shown, including the housing area.

93rd BG Aircraft Photos I have borrowed and copied several hundred photos of 93rd BG aircraft. I have put together a list of the planes that flew with the 93rd. I have photos of over 125 airplanes. Some planes I have multiple images, and others I have only a partial view of the plane. I am always looking for new photos to borrow and copy. If you have any photos of airplanes and/or nose art, I would like to hear from you. Diaries also help identify names with serial numbers. Any list or recollections of aircraft names help me greatly.

If you are looking for photos of the airbase or 93rd BG aircraft, please contact me as I may be able to help. I have negatives for all of my photos and can have 4 x 6 prints made for between $.50 and $1.00 depending on the quantity. I supply photos as a courtesy to the members of the 93rd. If you can reimburse my cost I greatly appreciate it, since I am doing this as a hobby.

How To Find The Following Information:
Flight Records

Officer's flight records are available from the National Personnel Records Center at no charge to the veteran or to the next of kin if the veteran is deceased. The following information should be supplied with your request: name, service number, and dates of service. These records are a monthly summary that was prepared for each officer. The flight record card shows location, dates of flights, duration, capacity during flight, and type of aircraft. The flight records also show link trainer time. I have seen pilot and co-pilot flight records, but they claim to have flight record for all flight officers.

Morning Reports

Every morning, each squadron prepared a morning report that listed all members of the squadron that had a change of status. The morning reports are one of the best kept secrets that I have found. The morning reports can provide information on two levels. The primary level is to supply dates when the soldier's status changed. The following information is supplied in these records: date when assigned to squadron, transferred, from duty to sick, from sick to duty, to rest homes and from rest homes. It also shows when a member was MIA/KIA, crashed, or landed at another base. The secondary level of information that can be learned from the records are the names and service numbers of friends. They will not look for friends' names but they will look for events that show the requestor and the friend. For example, you and Joe (don't remember last name) went on leave together in Summer of 1944. You would then ask for the morning report that shows your name going to and from leave during the Summer of 1944. His name, rank and serial number should be shown in the same group as yours. There is a slight charge for these records. If the requested time period is for less than 3 months, they will usually not charge anything. If they do, the cost is usually between $8.00 and $20.00. To obtain a copy of flight records and morning reports, send a letter to:

National Personnel Records Center, NARA
Attention: O.R.
9700 Page Ave
St. Louis, MO 63132
Phone (314) 538-4028

Mission Reports

The actual mission reports for each mission are archived at the National Archives located in College Park, Maryland. I have found that some mission reports are missing for May through July 1944. The contents of the mission reports do vary. Some reports have just a brief summary of the mission, debriefing reports and the loading lists for each squadron. The highest detailed reports have all the information that the short ones have, but also include target photos before and after the mission, detailed notes of the mission, fuel

consumption for each plane, details of the bomb load and a formation diagram. For the missing mission reports, you can request wing and division records for that mission. However, wing and division records will not have the debriefing reports and loading lists. The cost for the mission report varies based on the number of pages. They will copy the entire mission report only. This can be expensive. A complete mission report can cost between $50.00 and $100.00 dollars. If you do the copying yourself, the cost is 10 cents per page.

If you are interested in going to the National Archives, please contact me for the procedures associated with using and copying these records. I have copied all of the 328th BS loading lists and I am working on copying the other squadrons. If you are looking for information on your missions, please send me a list of them or the range of dates. Since I want to have a complete collection of loading lists, I might as well copy missions that somebody else is also looking for. The address for the National Archives is:

National Archives
8701 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740
Attention 2400
Telephone (301) 713-7250

In upcoming issues, I will discuss how to locate friends from the 93rd BG, copies of crash reports, photos, copies of missing aircrew Reports (MARC) and Bomb Group and Bomb Squadron Histories.

Don Morrison
1375 W Comet Rd
Clinton, Oh 44216
Tele. 330 882 2536
email dmorrison@eercorp.com

FUNDS NEEDED FOR OUR MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Additional funds are needed to help construct the new library at Norwich, England of which our Memorial Library will become a part. Our new library will be twice as large as the original 2ADA Memorial Library before it burned to the ground. Please go back to the Winter issue of the 2ADA Journal and read Jordan Uttal's article on the subject. Further, another article by Jordan appears on page 7, of the Spring Journal citing the need for funds. A form appears with the article for our easy use to make our donation. At least $50,000 additional money is needed so please send Jordan whatever you can. We have only a few years left to ensure that our Memorial Library is funded into perpetuity. Seeing our beloved library come into reality should give all of us great satisfaction. It will indeed become a living memorial for those who made the supreme sacrifice of their lives flying from our bases in East Anglia during WWII.

Dear Cal,

Thank you for the information from Charlie Weiss. I have sent to him, and am now sending to you, the information I have compiled about my father, from letters and my own memory. You are free to use it as you wish. Will Paine

My father, Maj. Wilmer H. Paine, was a Flight Surgeon with the 93rd Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force, at Hardwick, England, 1942-45.

He was a physician in Charlottesville, Va., when he was called to active service in June 1941. He was in the first class of the School of Aviation Medicine at Randolph Field, Texas, Jan.- March '42. He was then sent to Shreveport, La., April-May, where the 93rd was being assembled, and on to Fort Myers, Fl., May-August. The unit was the first group of B-24s to be sent to England, late September or early October.

The family traveled with him to Texas, Louisiana and Florida. I was seven years old at the time, but I can remember some of the men we knew in Florida. Next door to our cottage at Ft. Myers Beach lived a young pilot, Ramsey Potts, and his wife. A few years ago I saw a documentary on TV entitled "Utah Man", about a pilot on the Ploesti raid; film produced by Brigham Young University. Ramsey Potts is mentioned in the film.

"Okie" Ratcliff, from West Virginia, was one of the medical orderlies; he played the accordion and led the men in singing. There were a couple of parties at our house. One of their favorite songs went to the tune "The Old Gray Mare":

We don't want to march with the infantry,
Shoot with artillery,
Ride with the cavalry,
We don't want to fly over Germany,
We're in the Medical Corps.
We're in the Medical Corps, etc.

"Okie" Ratcliff and his family visited our home in Charlottesville after the war.

My father's best friend was Ken Cool, later Col. Cool, his commanding officer, later a brigadier general. Ken Cool and his wife visited us after the war. He will be mentioned later in this story.

The unit was at Ft. Myers waiting for their

planes to be delivered. The men kept wondering if the planes would be white, meaning they were going to Russia, or pink, meaning North Africa. In the meantime they flew their few planes for training. The American public was not being told at that time just how very many cargo ships were being sunk by German U- Boats. I never realized this until the last few years. The bomber crews wanted to use their training flights to patrol the coast, but they had no ammunition. One day in July my father flew to Dayton, the Air Corps supply center, for a load of depth charges. Although he was a medical officer, I think he may have been the officer in charge of the trip. The crew arrived in Dayton to discover that there had been a misunderstanding; Dayton hadn't expected them, there were no depth charges available. At last they were given two depth charges. Flying home over the Gulf, the crew spotted a submerged submarine, and dropped both depth charges. I remember them saying, "Our orders were "Shoot first, ask questions later."

I now have only two of my father's letters from overseas, both from late 1942. In October, soon after arriving in England, he told of flying a combat mission over St. Nazaire in France as a waist gunner. He made a total of five combat missions, to be awarded the Air Medal, before the ruling was made forbidding non-combat personnel on combat flights. In the letter he explains, "I felt it was my duty go on a couple to prove to myself and the men who depend on me that I had the guts to go."

In December the group was sent to Libya, near Tobruk, for two weeks temporary duty. Finally, in February, someone decided to forward their Christmas packages to them, but by then the group was on the way back to England. The mail was stopped at Gibraltar and re-routed.

In Libya each man received a German canteen each day containing one liter of water for all purposes, washing and drinking. Naturally, no one shaved. My father's beard began to grow, coming out in all colors, black, blond, white and red. We used to have a snapshot of him on his first leave, sitting on the steps of Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo in his dress uniform, with full beard.

In his letter to me, written two days before Christmas 1942 for a boy not quite eight years old, he tells of flying from Oran to Tobruk during the night of Dec. 17. He saw a dark shadow far below, a ship running without lights; only one or two lights lit on Malta. "Have you ever seen a rainbow in moonlight?" Then he described the spectacular sunrise over the Mediterranean.

There is a part of this story he didn't put in a letter to a small boy, one of the few tragedies he told about after the war. He had flown from England to Gibraltar in one plane, but then changed planes in order to fly with his friend Ken Cool. Over the mountains, only a short distance from their landing site in Libya, the other plane hit the top of the mountain. Apparently the crew interpreted the elevations on the map as feet instead of meters. All aboard were killed. The next day he made the trip to the top of the mountain to recover the bodies.

I don't know very much about his day-to-day life in Hardwick during 1943 and 1944. He used to write about watching the air raids over London. Rather than staying in the air raid shelter, he walked through one of the parks, impressed with the sheer beauty of searchlights and tracer bullets. One night something landed close to him. When he picked it up it was still warm. We used to have this jagged piece of steel. After this, he decided to go to the shelter.

He took seriously the needs of the men for recreation. We still have the silver loving cup won by his team, the "Medics," as runners-up in the 8th Air Force volleyball championship. The cup shows the names of all the men on the team.

Toward the end of the war, one of the local families in Hardwick asked him to deliver their baby. He was so happy for the chance to practice family medicine again.

In the last few weeks of the European war he was no longer needed in England, and volunteered to work at the St. John's Hospital in Paris. He returned to the U.S. in June, I believe on the Queen Mary. He was mustered out in Sioux Falls, S.D. in August.

He practiced medicine in Charlottesville, Va., until he retired. Twice he visited East Anglia. He died in Charlottesville, July 1990, at age 86.

Wilmer H. Paine Jr.
2221 W. Sunset
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Cal,

After 53 years our crew had their first reunion last October. We had planned to get together at The Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, but because of our pilot's illness it was held in Birmingham, Al., his home.

We were able to locate and contact nine of the

ten crew members and six attended the affair. Those in attendance were George Scorey, pilot; Bob Hanslik, navigator; Bob Scheigg, engineer; Orville Myers, waist gunner; Marvin Faith, top turret gunner and Marvin Jonas, nose turret gunner. Four of the wives attended along with George's two sons and his sister in law.

We visited the Southern Museum of Flight in Birmingham, where we were interviewed and photographed by the local TV station. A great time was had by all and the three days we spent together were all too short. It is with great sorrow that I report the passing of George Scorey in Jan. 1999.

Bob Hanslik
875 Eastlawn Dr.
Highland Hts, Ohio 44143

l/r Top: Ray Pricer, R; Robert Scheigg, Eng; Martin Faith, Top Turret; Orville Myers, W.G; Marvin Jonas, Nose Gun; Robert Parmer, Tail Gun; Bottom: Virgil Briggs, Co-P; Ivan Camp, Bomb; Robert Hanslik, Nav; George Scorey, Pilot.

l/r: Marvin Faith, Robert Hanslik, George Scorey, Marvin Jonas, Robert Scheigg, Orville Myers

Dear Cal,

Have just read the winter issue of *BALL OF FIRE*, and the letter from Charles Weiss sure brought back memories of the old base.

This letter is from Dale Olmsted, better known then as Bill. I was the engineer on Capt. Elliot's crew. Only a few of us left now.

We were originally in the 489th BG at Halesworth, transferring at end of 15 Missions to 329th Sq. as lead crew, using GH flying mostly in Latrine Rumor. Now, at this late date, I hope court martial is not in the cards.

We were picked to fly General Leon Johnson to Orleans, France. for what I don't know, but John Foster (Radio) and I picked up some German incendiary bombs, very small things with little tail fins. Looking back now, how risky to bring them on board. As all your readers know we were in strict blackout at night, so we proceeded to throw them up in the air so that they come down on the concrete catching fire. Man did they light up the area outside of the Quonset huts. The O.D. came tearing up, but couldn't find the culprits.

One of the tricks crews would do those days, was to bring flares from the ships and when crews were gone on missions those who were stood down would put a flare in their stove. This would turn stove almost white hot. As crews got wise and would check stove before firing up, some guys would climb on top and let flare down pipe so it was just above sight when checking stove. Another stunt happened as I'm lying on the cot when suddenly the front door opened and a fellow came running in carting a can which turned out to have a hole in it and was filled with gasoline. He ran right thru and out the back door. In just a few seconds here comes a little line of fire in front door and out the back. Always wondered what would happen if that fire caught up with leader.

John and I finish tour around Dec., but John had missed one mission, due to ear or tooth problem. So upon landing I ran like hell and missed being thrown in that water tank but poor John like to froze to death after his last mission he couldn't run fast enough.

Next stunt , which neither John nor I had anything to do with happened New Year's Eve. There were fifty calibers, set in concrete barrels around the field for security. They could be unpinned and swung in a 360 arc. Now one evening some bird pulled the pin and tied trigger down, then charged the gun which started spitting tracers, incendiary and armor piercing bullets in the air. Fortunately the fellow had pinned the gun at a 45° elevation so we had a nice fireworks show. I can image what happened to those barrels.

That's all for now. Just thought a bit of levity

would be the thing to bring to a good paper like the *BOFQE.*

William D. Olmstead
953 Church St.
Cortland, NY 13045

Cal,

Thanks for the info, however when I checked on Current Issue, lo and behold there is February 99. Not the B-24 but a "Lysander", ye ole kite in which I took a big bite out of a potato patch. Needless to say it brought back memories. I did see the B-24 in the February issue and you are right. The tail markings are from the most famous group in the UK.

Earl Hurd (good friend of mine from start-up at Barksdale field) sorry to say he passed away either last year or 1997. At Alconbury, September 1942, the British gave the 93rd a plane so we could tow aerial targets over the North Sea. Earl was given the task as pilot of the Lysander. By the way that is on the cover of the Feb issue of Fly Past, also an article on it inside. Anyway I always flew with him, even at Barksdale in an A-26 and also in a PT-15. Well just to get acquainted with the beast we took the thing up one afternoon. Just after leaving the end of the runway, about 900ft alt. there was a hell of a lot of fire and smoke coming out of the engine. Earl tried to blow out the fire by revving the engine but it only raced like mad high RPMs – No drag on the engine -- No Propeller! Needless to say with such short wings we came down like a rock. Both of us threw the canopy open in order to bail out but we were just too close to the ground to do so. Just when we were about to crash Earl pulled back to at least pancake in. Well in that field we left a couple of landing gear and the plane went straight up in the air about 100 yards and then straight down in the next field! How he managed not to have both legs cut off at the knees I'll never know. Both of us took great bites out of the instrument panel, a messy sight. The gas tank is located between the front and rear cockpit, needless to say we abandoned the craft with utmost speed.

The scene is still most vivid in my mind when the ambulance tried to get to us, not being able to do so, very muddy, the medical corps men came on foot carrying the stretchers. I can still see them to this day, their shoes were about one foot in diameter with English Mud. After hospital checked us for internal injuries and patched up the instrument panel bashes we were released feeling quite fortunate. They never did find the propeller.

There is a side story to this episode. The crew chief assigned to the aircraft looked exactly like the guy in "Laugh-In" program. The guy had tiny eye glasses, saying "Velly interesting", and looked as if he was of the Aryan race. For the next two years I always had my suspicions that he had loosened the hub nut of the propeller as an act of sabotage!

It wasn't until much later after he became a B-24 crew chief and received a Group citation for the most missions without an aborted aircraft, that my suspicions were without merit. I guess he wasn't a spy after all!

Charles J. Weiss
2772 Moran Dr.
Waldorf, MD 20601

Ed: I sent Charlie *the following Web Site address http://www.keymags.co.uk/. It was given to me over our 2ADA amateur radio net. It seems* Duxford Air Museum *has obtained a B-24 from* Lackland Air Force Base, Texas *in trade for a Spitfire V and the above Web Site shows it with the 93rd's tail markings.*

Cal,

I met a fellow recently at a Coast Guard Auxiliary conference who was a B-24 engineer at Old Buck. He had never heard of the Second Air Division Association, which we, of course, find incomprehensible. I gave his name to Evelyn Cohen to recruit.

Last April, three of our four remaining crew met in Savannah. We had hoped that our engineer could make it, but he has been ill for several years and was unable to make the trip from Alabama. Our nose gunner came in from Arizona. He arrived feeling ill, and ended up in the hospital having a gall bladder operation. So that left me and our waist gunner to visit the Mighty Eighth Museum. For those of you who have not gone, go. It is something for all of us to be proud of.

Having just read Charlie Weiss, report on his visit to our old base at Hardwick (Winter 98 Ball of Fire), I am again reminded of how incredibly fortunate we are to have Jean and David Woodrow "looking after things" at Hardwick.

Harold Burks
#1 Loxley Court
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Sir,

I recently received an e-mail from one of your members Re: panda patch for 409th. He very graciously tried to locate a source for me to

purchase one for my soon-to-be 80 year old husband. While unable to do that, he did let us know about the newsletter and sent me a document which I downloaded and then due to my lack of computer ability, was unable to print out. It contained the subscription form. Could I prevail upon you to send one to me? I would be very grateful.

My husband was in the 409th and participated on Operation Tidal Wave in 1943. While I am a second wife and come to his experiences late in his life, I am well acquainted with the bravery and courage of the men who fought in WWII. My grandfather was a retired Rear Admiral who commanded submarines, the USS Sturgeon among them, during the war and was eventually Admiral Lockwood's chief of staff after leaving the Pacific Theatre. I grew up believing in the concepts of duty, honor, and country that men such as my husband and grandfather practiced every day of their lives.

The newsletter will be the next best birthday present that I can give to my husband as I seem unable to locate a panda patch. His was stolen at Fort Sam in 1945, I believe, while he was being processed for discharge. The newsletter is a welcome find. We only recently became acquainted with and joined the 2nd Air Division's Association. Thanking you in advance for your time and patience,

Cindy Goodgion
8806 Pineridge Rd.
San Antonio, Texas 78217-5832

Dear Cal,

Received the *BOFQE* the other day and noticed my membership was due. Enclosing check and story of our 32nd mission on March 23, 1945 over Munster.

We ran into very heavy flak on the bomb run and I noticed the plane on our right wing had been hit hard. Gas was coming out of the left wing and the plane was swaying around a lot. They did get their bombs off and dropped out of formation heading back to England. When we returned we found they had made it back. The waist gunner Pete Trainer, had been killed instantly when an 88M shell went through the waist and hit him between his back and parachute but did not explode. Two other 88 shells went through the plane without exploding and I had never heard of this happening before.

I knew Pete in the states when we were in training at Westover Field. He was a real nice guy. When we arrived at Hardwick I saw him again as his crew and ours were both assigned to the 328th BS. This story appeared in the Fall Journal 1995 and was written by the navigator, Arthur Corbin, and the pilot was Ellis Calfee. If any of his crew are still alive I would like to hear from them.

Richard Trousdale
601 N. Hayden Rd. # 93
Scottsdale, AZ 85257

Dear Cal,

I just received the winter issue of the *BOFQE*. The back page brought back memories of *Miss America*. I was a member of the ground crew on that airplane. One day, I believe in 1944, it failed to return and we were told it had crash landed on the English coast. We never saw it again.

I sure hope you are able to keep the *BOFQE* coming as I enjoy reading about the old times.

Howard Thompson
11524 Love N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Dear Cal,

While visiting our son in France we stayed at an Ibis Hotel in Landernau, in Britanny near Brest. Adjacent to the hotel was the hotel-restaurant de Miscoat where we ate our evening meals. Attached to the restaurant was an exhibition hall where there was a display to honor Allied Airmen of WWII.

In the first part of the display were pictures of the 93rd BG and pictures of some of the crews and their planes. Among the planes noted were *Ball of Fire Jr., Liberty Lass and Missouri Sue.* Planes from the 44th BG mentioned were *Blackbird* and *Yardbird*. Relics from various planes were on display with a few uniforms and parachutes.

We received a formal invitation to attend the ceremonies the following evening but had to decline as our son had made hotel reservations for that evening in Caen.

Some of the names mentioned were Frank Lown, Thad Hawkins, Art Crandall, Clairborn Brooks, Robert Hudspeth, Orval Mickelson, Frank Hodges, Arch Camp and Ronald Nelson. I am also enclosing three photographs I took in 1943 at Hardwick. I hope you can pass them on to the appropriate person or organization. These are the only copies so far as I know. I'm getting up in age and not in the best of health. I was in the 461st sub depot attached to the 93rd BG.

Roy Schulbach
3254 Center St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-4668

Dear Cal:

It was nice talking with you on the telephone in January about joining the 93rd BG after all these years. Our crew flew over to Hardwick, England in the middle of October 1943 as a replacement crew. We flew over in our own B-24 named the Judith Lynn, named after our Pilot's daughter.

Names of the crew were Charles W. Walters, pilot; JM Bickley, co-pilot; Harmon Smith, Jr. Navigator; Jack George, bombardier; Louis E. DelGuidice, radio operator; Carl Hite, engineer; Elmer Kudej, waist gunner; Vincent Sweet; waist gunner; John Stainker, tail gunner.

On the ninth mission to Kiel, Germany, January 4, 1944 after dropping bombs over target we got a direct hit of flak in our bomb-bay area. Our aircraft was twisted and lost one engine. We left formation and came back to the base alone. Our pilot got a promotion for bringing back our aircraft damaged beyond repair.

They assigned us to a B-24 named *"ON THE BALL."* Our tenth mission was on January 7, 1944 to Ludwigshaven, Germany. ME 109s shot us down. No. 2 engine got a direct hit and caught on fire. We had to bail out on the way back over Brou, France. Enclosed is my story of evasion and my membership in the 93rd BG.

I would like a 328th squadron patch. Hope you can locate one for me.

Louis E. DelGuidice
41 Thorpe St.
North Haven, Ct. 06473

Ed: Although this story of evasion was printed in the winter issue of the Journal, I reprint it here for those of our members who do not get the Journal. Does anyone have an extra 328th patch for Louis.*?*

On January 7, 1944, coming back from our 10th mission to Ludwigshaven/Mannheim, we were attacked by ME-109s. Our #2 engine was hit and caught fire. It was about 1:30 PM when I checked the waist section and found that gunners Vincent Sweet, Elmer Kudej, and John Stainker had been killed. The navigator, Harmon Smith, Jr., and bombardier, Jack George, had parachuted from the nose section. Engineer Carl Hite, pilot Charles W. Walters, copilot T.J. Bickley, and I (the radio operator) bailed out too.

We all landed in Brou, France. I parachuted onto a farm where children were working. As they approached me they seemed friendly. They hid me in their farmhouse until the French underground arrived. I was told that two of my crew members, Smith and George, were captured and that they were looking for the rest of us. At about 4:30 PM members of the French underground arrived with civilian clothes and took me by bicycle to the home of Lucienne and Maurice Vouglment. I was taken to a potato warehouse and hidden in a room with sacks of potatoes stacked around me,

At around 10:30 PM the sacks were removed and I was taken to a safe house where I met my pilot and copilot. We traveled from house to house with the underground for two days. At that point engineer Hite and I separated. I stayed with the Milleroux family in Juvisy et Siene. Mr. Milleroux was a chemist. Hite proceeded to Paris to stay with a French doctor. My pilot and copilot stayed about two blocks away from me with a family named Levres. We were told we would be escaping over the Pyrenees mountains. The underground gathered the four of us together, and we traveled for fourteen hours on a German troop train to our destination, which was Toulose, France. There we were turned over to the French Resistance and a group known as the French Maquis. This group was known for sabotaging railway passages that carried German troops. The Resistance told us we had to wait until they had fourteen escapees, because the German ski patrols were in groups of six, so it would be safer if we had a 2 to 1 advantage. We then were armed with hand grenades, pistols, and machine guns. Besides the four of us, there was a Belgian officer, an actress, an elderly English spy, and seven Jews from various countries. It took us four days and three nights to go over the Pyrenees. We were told that when we reached Pau, Spain, we would be picked up by the Spanish patrol. In Pau, Hite and I were picked up and taken to an isolated prison for the criminally insane. Walters and Bickley were kept with the Spanish military police for two weeks. After two days in Pau, Hite and I were handcuffed and walked seven miles to the railroad station. During the walk, we had stones thrown at us and were cursed by the adults. By train we were taken to Zaragossa, Spain, where we were put in solitary confinement. We slept on the floor since there were no beds and no windows, and we were given one meal a day which consisted of soup and bread.

Because of the ill feelings between Spain and the United States over relief supplies, Spain would not voluntarily let the U.S. or the English know that they were holding English or U.S. airmen as prisoners. American and English military attaches

made rounds of all the prisons asking for Allied airmen and requesting their release. We were turned over to the British military attache, who brought us to Madrid, where we were turned over to the American military attache, Colonel Vousland. We were brought back to England by way of the Rock of Gibraltar and taken to London to be debriefed and identified.

General Eisenhower, General Patton, and General Montgomery (who were in London for a joint staff meeting) personally congratulated all of us for escaping. This entire episode took about a month and a half. Oh yes, the code name of our French underground was "Genevieve."

Dear Cal,

I am enclosing a check to keep the BOFQE going. The articles keep my mind refreshed with all the news regarding the 93rd BG and I really enjoy reading all the letters you receive.

It was through you and Dave Thompson that we were able to locate our co-pilot, Larry Markes. Incidently it was Larry who designed our 330th BS insignia. While my wife and I were visiting the 8th Air Force Museum at Savannah we noticed the insignia on a flight jacket that was on display as you came in the front door. Talk about great memories, you sure can get them at the museum.

A few years ago, Dave Thompson and my wife and I flew out to Studio City, CA to celebrate Larry's 75 birthday. We had a great time at his party mixing with his family and friends that were writers and producers for TV shows.

Sam Parisi
495 Exmoor Ter.
Dunedin, FL 34698-7301

Hi Cal,

Here is a something that I have never seen anything written about in either the 2ADA Journal or *BOFQE*.

Sometime during the winter of 1943 or early spring of 1944, a group of us from various crews, both officers and enlisted men, were called to a meeting by S-2. The only other person in this group that I knew was another radio-op named Nelson. Someone from London, as I remember, taught us a code to incorporate into our letters home if we ever became POW's listing anything about German activity. We were not allowed to talk to each other on the base about the code. However we were to write practice letters to a Sgt. at an address in London. I never received a reply and sometime later one of our S-2 officers told me the system was dropped because the Germans had broke the code.

The officer who made the presentation said we could not tell our families of this set up. Some interesting reactions took place when S-2 people came to the homes of some of the POW's families asking to see their son's letters. One family called the FBI!

It was very tricky making the letters look natural and still fit in words and letters at correct intervals. One German censor was supposed to have written a note on the bottom of a letter, "This guy either doesn't know the English language or he's crazy.

I wonder if any of your readers had this experience in other squadrons or groups. I was in the 328th Sq. while flying.

Carmen Fox
5751 W. Smiley Road
Shelby, OH 44875

Editors Comments

For some reason, probably my inaptitude, this issue has given me fits trying to make everything look right. I had hoped to include some pictures taken at the 8th Air Force Museum but lack the space.

In answer to Carmen Fox's letter above, I have in my possession a story from Harold Secor about the British code he used to send messages while a POW. I also wrote and received a reply from Gen. A.P. Clark who said "Although sworn to secrecy for years the story has been printed by some English authors." I will try and include Harold's story in the next issue.

The rest of the Bomerang story will also be in the next issue. I hope to get Walt Stewart to write an epilogue about Bomerang's tour in the states.

Topics to be discussed at our annul meeting in Austin, TX over Memorial week-end will include: putting a 93rd BG Memorial in the Memorial Garden at the 8th Air Force Museum near Savannah, GA and funding for this project, I have pictures of other groups Memorials that I will bring to the meeting: the proposal to form a group of our younger associate members to form an organization to carry on interest in and history of the 93rd BG.

Folded Wings

Howard Busse
Kurt Harris
John E. Pace
Edward S. Powell
George W. Sadler
George W. Scorey
Glen E. Tedford
Raymond C. Wier

Tennessee Rambler: Does anyone have the serial number of this plane or know the crew?

The Ball of Fire Quarterly Express

93rd BOMBARDMENT GROUP

Calvin Davidson, Editor
48973 Plate Rd.
Oberlin, OH 44074
Phone 440 -775-1787

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