

# Ball of Fire QUARTERLY EXPRESS



## NEWSLETTER OF THE 93<sup>RD</sup> BOMB GROUP

Vol. 14, No. 3

FALL 2006

### DEDICATED ENGLISH FRIENDS HONORING AND REMEMBERING 93<sup>RD</sup> BOMB GROUP'S SACRIFICES AND LOSSES



*Poppy wreath laid by Normandy Vets  
Bouquet of flowers laid by Mrs. Marion Crummett  
Cross laid by Pearl and David Neale*

When some of the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG travels to England next May to celebrate VE Day 2007, they will be greeted by the best friends a bomb group could have. David and Jean Woodrow, who own the farm that contains the Hardwick Base will be there on May 8<sup>th</sup> when we have a memorial service at Topcroft Church and spend the day on the base. We will visit the remaining runway and our 93<sup>rd</sup> BG Museum. Paul Thrower is the curator of our small but always improving museum and Roger Fenton assists to help keep our museum growing. We are looking forward to seeing Pearl and David Neale again. It's always great to see them! Hopefully they will be with us when we visit Sandringham and also when we go to the Cambridge American Cemetery at Madingley. Colin Mann, an expert on local pubs, has suggested a visit to The Fur and Feather on the Norfolk Broads. Colin has generously offered to pre-test the beer and food to make sure they suit American tastes. I don't have room to mention all our great English friends. May 3<sup>rd</sup> is check in day with planned events beginning on May 4<sup>th</sup> and continuing until May 8<sup>th</sup>. We will be booking our hotel rooms in January, so there is plenty of time to join us. The hotel that we will be staying at is The Nelson in Norwich and they are currently refurbishing all their rooms and upgrading their reservation system. They will stand behind the rate of 49 pounds per person per night that I contracted for last year. If you would like to join us contact me at : paulsteichen@comcast.net or at my address on the Ball of Fire subscription form. By the January issue of the Ball of Fire, all the plans should be firmed up. It's going to be fun! Paul

Fernley Smith unsuccessful in 2<sup>nd</sup> ADA VP bid  
Story in next issue

#### WAYS TO REQUEST MILITARY RECORDS

1. Personnel records, health and medical (including 201's) are available here:  
National Personnel Records Center  
Military Personnel Records Attn: Air Force Reference Br.  
9700 Page Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63132 Website: [www.vetrecs.archives.gov](http://www.vetrecs.archives.gov)
2. Aircraft Accident Reports and Mission Reports (must provide mission date, unit (bomb group and squadron) target and mission number, if known. Microfilm of all Bomb Groups and Bomb Squadrons which may contain aircraft assignments, maintenance records, crash reports, etc Cost now is \$22 per roll. Crew pictures are available too (provide squadron and unit numbers) at \$20 on microfilm  
Dept of the AF  
AF Historical Research Agency (AFHRA)  
600 Chennault Circle  
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6424 Website: [www.au.af.mil/au/afhra](http://www.au.af.mil/au/afhra)
3. If a person was KIA or MIA and body never found, the deceased personnel record can be obtained from:  
Dept of the Army, Personnel and Logistics  
US Total Army Personnel Command  
APC-PED-F  
461 Eisenhower Ave. Room 984, Hoffman Bldg 1  
Alexandria, VA 22332-0405  
Attn: Robert Dickerson, Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Officer  
(you must remember to request this under the Freedom of Information Act)
4. Missing Air Crew Reports, sometimes up to 30 pages, are available. You must Provide MACR number, date of accident possibly the target and plane ID number. There is a \$5 charge  
National Archives at College Park  
Modern Military Records, Textual Ref. Branch  
8601 Adelphi Rd.  
College Park, MD 20704-6001

Also available at: USAF Historian  
500 Duncan Ave.  
Box 94  
Bolling AFB  
Washington DC 20332-1111

Hello Paul,  
Here are my dues for this year. I have also included a donation in the memory of a great man. Al Pezzella-93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group-KIA Ploesti Aug.1,1943-Bombadier *Hells Wench*-RIP.

Robert Luise  
1521 Winding Brook Run  
Boothwyn, PA 19061

Paul,  
Sorry to be so late, getting old I guess. Enclosing check. I read about Ramsay Potts in the Ball of Fire. He was my pilot. I was gunner and assistant radio operator. I went to Ploesti with him. He was a great guy and we rated him as the best pilot in the 93<sup>rd</sup>. What you are doing for the Ball of Fire rates you as a great guy too. I have two addresses. Please take note of the times.

Thanks,  
Lou Smith  
Sharon, Massachusetts  
and Highland Beach, Florida

Paul,  
Have memories of your dad. Had lunch with him in WC about a year before he left us. A remarkable man.

Wally Spencer  
745 Summersea Ct  
Englewood, FL 34223

Dear Paul,  
The coloring of the Ball of Fire in this issue really made it outstanding. I joined the 93<sup>rd</sup> at Barksdale Field and still remember my plane. My best GI friend, Guy C. Pannell of Toccoa, GA was the crew chief for many months. We still keep in touch every month. He is now 88 and I am 87. Our minds and memories are still good and we remember those war days of the 40's like they were yesterday. And we certainly enjoy the Ball of Fire.

Garner Pennock  
6415 Purdy Dr.  
Battlecreek, MI 49017

Paul  
I wanted to thank 93<sup>rd</sup> Pilot, Howard Hinchman & his 328th crew for the information on the Nose Art of (HELLS WENCH), which was the Lead ship for the 93<sup>rd</sup> in the low level Ploesti mission 8-1-1943. The groups Commander Lt. Col. Addison Baker & Major John Jerstad were both awarded the Metal of Honor for their Heroism, posthumously. Howard recently provided the only known description of the ship's Nose Art.

In a V-mail dated July 21, 1943 to his family back home Howard wrote, "The first (LIB) that we had, that brought us across the pond we named "OLD BLISTER BUTT" with a pretty girl astride a bomb adorning the starboard side of the ship. The four engines were named respectively Sugar Puss, Kathy, Dudi, & Mary from left to right. I have four married men on my crew & the above nicknames are in order, the navigator, Asst Engineer, co-pilot & radio op's favorite names of their wives. Our new plane the first having been given to another crew is called "HELLS WENCH" with a beautiful Wench in 3/4 full length & a long flowing cape under the influence of the wind, of course the engines have been named as before."

Thanks again, Howard, for keeping our history alive!

Best Regards  
Joe Avendano Duran  
309 E Santa Paula St.  
Santa Paula CA 93060  
[DOGPATCHRAIDER@msn.com](mailto:DOGPATCHRAIDER@msn.com)

Dear Sirs,  
I am a Belgian historian working for the American military cemetery of Henri-Chapelle (near Liège, in Belgium). We are looking for information about a KIA sergeant from the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomber Group buried here. We would like to know more about him as we do only have very few details about him. He is:  
Sergeant Delmont W. Strait  
Service 33397482  
330th Bomber Squadron, 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomber Group, Heavy  
He is from West Virginia  
Died on 21 September 1944  
Do you have more information about him? Or even a crew picture?  
Thank you in advance,  
Bernard Wilkin  
[b\\_wilkin@yahoo.com](mailto:b_wilkin@yahoo.com)

Editor,  
My dad was going through some old photos and showed me an article about his cousin Joe Lemming. It said he was part of Ted's Flying Circus on the Ploesti raid and later transferred as group navigator to the 466th Group.  
Out of curiosity I did a search and found your website. Could you tell me if any of those photos of crews are his plane? My Dad would really like it if I could tell him.  
Incidentally, Joe was killed in a B-36 crash in 1949.  
If you can't tell me, I appreciate the time.  
Thanks  
Ray Lemming  
[xmas52@comcast.net](mailto:xmas52@comcast.net)



*Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die.*

This picture of Frank Goodfriend (singing) was sent in by his son, Richter.

Good Morning,

I have started the project of collecting any data available on my father military time as a gunner in a B-24 during WWII. I found a picture on your website of the crew of the Beaver's Baby. I was hoping to get a crew list to see if the gentleman all the way to the right on the first row was my father. The resemblance is striking. Is there a list of the members from that crew? His name was Robert Edward McManus. He was from Beverly, Massachusetts

In the short time I have spent researching my father's service, I have been blown away by the commitment and caring of those I have reached out to. Thanks so much for your help in this matter.

Tom McManus (tmcmanus@cclco.com)

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Dear Sir,

I have just returned from Florence Italy to visit the grave of my uncle. Although I never met him, my Father loved him dearly and spoke often of him. He always wanted to visit the grave but sadly never had the opportunity. I am trying to piece together some information to hand down to my children. My uncle was Nelson R. Collins from Shelbyville Indiana. Originally flew with the RCAF and joined the U.S. forces when we entered the war.

The information I have is that he was in the 330th Bomber, 93rd Heavy. He was an observer and copilot. His pilot of his plane had a last name of Olliffe. He was killed in action Aug 1, 1943. I am assuming he was in the operation Tidal Wave on Ploesti. Would anyone know what the name was of the plane he was on or if there are any other photos? Any information would be appreciated.

Leslie Goodrich (goodrichbuilders@comcast.net or lesgoo@msn.com)

Cal, Thank you so much for taking the time to answer my inquiry. You have my permission to publish my query in the next issue. I would be very interested in knowing if anyone knew my uncle Nelson (Nellie) Collins. I have ordered the book on Ted's as well as the one on Ploesti. After traveling in Italy for the last three weeks, I am totally inspired by the people who still talk about and look so positively upon our forces in WWII, particularly in the small hill towns. I met a British man in a very small village of Montebenichi who was shot down, POW, escaped twice, and was taken in by a family from there. He goes back every year to visit and stay with the family members. The granddaughter of the family who was working in the little osteria we were in introduced us. People still remember and respect all those who served. Visiting the cemetery in Florence was an amazing experience as well. Those who are there rest in peace in a place of beauty. My son lives in Cincinnati and on my next trip down there I will stop at the museum. Thank you so much for your information and best wishes to you.

Leslie Goodrich

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Hello Sir,

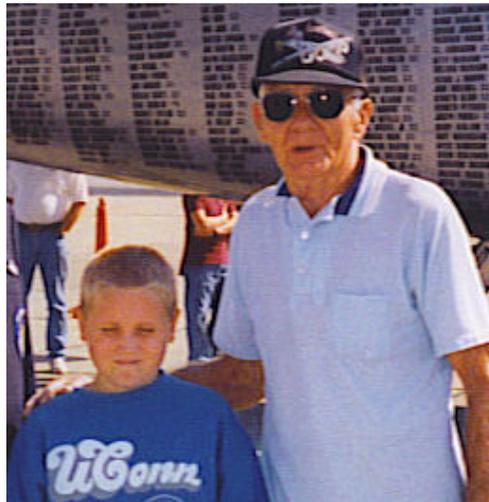
My uncle was C. Willard Brisson and he was killed from friendly fire on March 5th, 1945. I have looked over your website and was hoping you could tell me the name of the plane he was on and if there are any existing pictures of him, his crew or his plane. Ralph Reed was the pilot or co pilot the day he was killed. Thank you for any information and a wonderful website that is dedicated to the 93rd.

Karon Brisson (kdb577@yahoo.com)

Dear Sir,

Searching for information on my Uncle- Frank Goodfriend (first a lieutenant promoted to Captain. Thank you.

DLFMMC@aol.com



Howard Macreading and grandson Scott at B24 air show

Dear Friends,

I am writing to inform you of the passing of my husband Howard S. Macreading. His one wish was to be remembered in the Folded Wings. He died May 9th 2006. He was in the 93rd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force also a member of Ted's Traveling Circus, 391 Circus Club.

Dorothy Macreading  
93 Darrow Drive  
Warwick, RI 02886

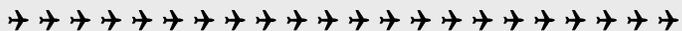
Hello, Paul.

Thanks for your trouble and interest. I really appreciate what you are doing.

Art Ferwerda  
Rm 224  
197 Cahill Cross Rd.  
West Milford, NJ 07480

## FOLDED WINGS

<b>Eugene Garner</b>	<b>Howard Macreading</b>
<b>Joseph W. Thorley</b>	<b>Louis Bargout</b>
<b>Elmer Pearson</b>	<b>John Neast</b>
<b>Herb Paustian</b>	



Due to a computer problem, some of the names for folded wings might have been lost. If you know of any missing, please contact me. Sorry, Paul.

Ball of Fire now available via e-mail. You get an all-color edition and save the 93rd Bomb Group mailing expenses. To receive your Ball of Fire this way, contact Paul Steichen at paulsteichen@comcast.net.

# A Tribute to Uncle Bill

BY CAROL LOZOWSKI GERARD (AM 93RD)



**1ST LT. WILLIAM LOZOWSKI, PILOT**

As I was growing up, I had always heard the most interesting things about my uncle, Bill Lozowski. I had never known him, as I was just seven months old when he died. There had always been questions concerning the deaths of him and his crew members while on a bombing mission over Germany, February 3, 1945.

About eighteen years ago, I came across a list of government addresses that could possibly shed some light on those fateful circumstances. Much to my amazement, one source led to another and the project began to snowball. My quest for information ended up filling two large books. These books will eventually be turned over to Bill's son, as it is his heritage, and I hope they will be passed on to future generations.

Bill worked at AMPCO Metal while living in Milwaukee before entering the service in 1942. He wanted to fly, and graduated as a B-24 Liberator pilot while stationed in Fort Worth, Texas. While in training, he met Iris Thompson of Waco, and they were married on July 9, 1944.

In August of that year, Bill and his crew were sent to the European Theater. They made their home at Hardwick Airdrome in East Anglia, England. They were now part of the 8th Air Force, 93rd Bomb Group, 328th Squadron.

After many successful bombing missions, Bill and his crew were sent to a magnificent mansion called "Tiverton Manor" for R&R. They were treated royally and the amenities were wonderful, but Bill wrote home to say he was anxious to return to Hardwick to complete his required missions. He looked forward to returning home, as he and Iris were expecting their first child in April.

With only five more missions to complete, while on their 30th bomb run they developed



**Bill Lozowski Crew. Standing (L-R): Frank Glut, co-pilot (KIA), Bill Lozowski, pilot (KIA), Mickey Schleicher, bombardier; Anthony Marulli, navigator (KIA). Kneeling (L-R): John Coradetti, nose gunner; Cornelius Carter, tail gunner (KIA); Seymour Weisman, engineer; Paul Colby, radio (KIA); James Seger, waist gunner (KIA).**

engine problems and had to leave their formation. Frank Glut, co-pilot, shut off the engine, but too much oil had been lost and the prop would not feather. This windmilling caused a drag and they began to lose altitude rapidly. Suddenly, they took a hit from flak and the order to bail out was given. Three of the crew managed to bail out safely. They were: Seymour Weisman, engineer; Mickey Schleicher, bombardier; and John Coradetti, nose gunner. There were wounded aboard, and tail gunner Cornelius Carter, radio operator Paul Colby, and waist gunner James Seger were found in the aft section of the bomber. Bill, Frank Glut, and navigator Anthony Marulli were too close to the ground for their parachutes to deploy. They died upon impact in a farmer's plowed field. The deceased were buried in the township of Bente. Later they were temporarily buried in Belgium, and finally laid permanently to rest back home.

The survivors were interrogated and made POWs for the duration of the war.

In my search for information I have made wonderful friendships. Survivors Weisman and Schleicher provided me with their excellent recollections. I had not been able to locate John Coradetti, and found out he had passed away some years before. I am eternally indebted to Dr. Volkmar Wilckens, a German who was a flak battery helper in his early teens during the war. He is writing a book on the war from a German perspective. A pilot, he located the exact site of the crash and photographed it from the air as well as ground level. He took pictures of and interviewed people who remembered the crash. A farmer named Meyer pro-

vided Wilckens with a metal piece of a flak jacket retrieved from the plane. That piece is now in my possession and I have had it silver-plated and a hole bored into it. I wear it as a pendant as a remembrance of those who served and gave their lives for our country. Julia Glut, the co-pilot's widow, learned that in the wreckage a pair of baby shoes had been found. She knew that Frank had always taken them along with him on missions for good luck, as they belonged to their son Donald.

I still continue to receive information about Bill and his military record. Clarence Barton, a 2ADA member, recently sent me many interesting items that have now become a part of my book. It turns out that Clarence, also a pilot, flew many missions together with my uncle. Clarence's name was written on Bill's missing air crew report, as he gave the position of Bill's plane when they were last seen.

It has been a source of comfort to me to know that my father, Joseph (Bill's brother) knew as much as possible about Bill's last flight not long before he died. He was very happy to have met Mickey Schleicher, one of the last to see Bill alive. Mickey very kindly presented my father with some of the very medals he earned while serving with the 8th Air Force.

I hope some day to visit the site in Germany where all those fine young men met their fate, and to lay flowers in their memory.

I know that Uncle Bill, had he survived the war, would be a member of the various groups he was associated with, as he loved to fly and was so proud to be in the Air Force. I am here to represent him. ■



## SAVANNAH STORY

Savannah was all we expected when we selected it pool side at our hotel in San Diego—Hot! Hot! Humid! Hot! Thankfully, the air conditioning worked in the Hospitality room and the pool beckoned to young and old to enjoy its welcome relief. The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum demonstrated the meaning of 'Southern Hospitality' by their friendly helpful courtesy and practical extension of the lunch hours on Saturday. The highlight was the Heritage League Memorial Chapel service. The sacrifice of our lost comrades and family members was recognized and remembered in the music, words and scripture. The trolley tour and riverboat cruise provided ample opportunity to appreciate the Savannah story as we heard about Pirates, container ships, dredging, Sherman giving Savannah as a Christmas gift to Abraham Lincoln, and moss-covered trees lining city squares. The best part of the reunion was listening to friends tell their stories—many from the days at Hardwick but some from exotic places the war carried our veterans: Africa, France, Germany, Italy and so on. On a personal note; Doug Garner put me in touch with the sister of my Uncle's co-pilot, R.K.Locker. I plan to meet her in a few weeks at her home near Huntsville, AL. Already we have shared by phone. The work of the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG continues. Our task to advance the memory of the brave deeds and sacrifices by this group of Americans will continue to make a valuable living memorial for future generations. Already the planning has begun for next year's reunion. The member's decision to focus on Minneapolis-St. Paul as our next reunion site is now bearing fruit as we line up another great reunion for fall 2007.

John Marx

## Notes from the Reunion

At every reunion, there are certain events and people that stand out. Savannah had many of them for me.

The entry of Al and Naomi Asch into the hospitality room was greeted with applause. Al missed the San Diego reunion with health problems. With son, David as the designated driver of Naomi's wheelchair, it was great to see the Asch's back.

Hearol and Gerald Veteto's educational program was fun and well presented. We hope to make this program as a regular feature of our reunions.

We had good representation from England at Savannah. Colin Mann came as the guest of the 93<sup>rd</sup>. Colin was given a plaque thanking him for his service to American Air Force Vets and families who visit Norwich. The award was given by Brian Mahoney of the Heritage League. Wendy Anniston (2<sup>nd</sup> generation member) brought her friend, Jackie Sowards with her. We should see all of them next VE Day in England.

Fernley Smith was given membership to the group, Veterans of Underage Military Service. Fernley joined the Army Air Corp as a 16 year old. Kent Jaquith arranged to have the VUMS deliver Fernley's membership at our banquet. Kent also told a story about "Baby Fernley" meeting Charles Lindberg. I'm not sure if that story is fact or fiction.

Dr. Walter Brown, our speaker at the banquet was given gifts for the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Museum by two of the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG. Lou Delguidice gave some literature detailing his evading and escaping of the Nazis after being shot down. Will Paine gave a copy of "Flight Surgeon." It is the story of his father, Wilmer (Doc) Paine.

Michael Sellers showed a film he made from the 2001 Norwich library dedication. He was with his grandparents, John and Bee Sullivan. He added some historical content and a soundtrack and came up with a fine film. It was well received.

John and Rayann Marx's granddaughter, Emma enjoyed delivering the raffle prizes and many are still laughing at her "Wisconsin handshake" joke.

Mary Ann Neuman, for a change, didn't win all the good prizes in the raffle. My sister, Mary Yamamoto won a B-24 model. I had two other sisters attend, Susan Steichen and Julie Mathews.

Packy Roche had his clan with him. Spanning four generations. Jim Guddal brought up Minneapolis/ St. Paul as a possible reunion site. Jim then turned up the Minnesotan charm and it now looks like our next reunion will be in the shadow of The Mall of America.

I'm sure I forgot to mention some great moments from this reunion and pictures will jog my memory at a later date.

Many thanks to John Marx, Joe and Phyllis and all those who helped with this great reunion.

Paul Steichen

### 2007 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Reunion Set for Minneapolis

The 2007 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group reunion will be held in Bloomington, Minnesota from September 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. The Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, Minneapolis South will host the 93<sup>rd</sup> in first class style. (Full story and details in January Ball of Fire issue.)

#### "A Trip to Norwich"

Thank you to everyone who watched the documentary film "A Trip to Norwich" at the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG Reunion in Savannah 2006. It was a pleasure to have such a great crowd. If any one would like their own DVD copy free of charge, please send me an e-mail at mtsellers@mac.com. I would appreciate it if you would provide your name, address and telephone number.

Michael Sellers (917-975-7162)

21 March 1945

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

1<sup>st</sup> LT. ROBERT P. BARTHLEMESS, 0768411, completed an operational tour of duty over Germany and enemy-occupied Europe on 8 March, 1945, during which time he participated in forty-five (45) bombing missions as a Pilot. His general performance of duty while a member of my command has been of an excellent nature. His courage, devotion to duty, attitude and soldierly conduct has been exemplary. LIEUTENANT BARTHLEMESS has been awarded the Air Medal, six (6) Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

I recommend that LIEUTENANT BARTHLEMESS be returned to the Zone of the Interior to serve as a Pilot Instructor.

I am pleased to commend LIEUTENANT BARTHLEMESS and to have had him as a member of my command. Any consideration that is shown to him will be appreciated.

W.R. Robertson  
Colonel, Air Corps,  
Commanding

1	ROSTOCK	4 AUG 44
2	KIEL	6 AUG 44
3	CLASTRES	8 AUG 44
4	COULOWMIERS	11 AUG 44
5	LAON-COUVRAN	12 AUG 44
6	WITTAUNDFAFEN	15 AUG 44
7	MAGDEBURG	16 AUG 44
8	WAGGUN	24 AUG 44
9	LIEGE	25 AUG 44
10	HEIL BRONN	10 SEP 44
11	MAGDEBURG	11 SEP 44
12	HEMMINGSTEDD	12 SEP 44
13	KASSEL	22 SEP 44
14	HAMM	30 SEP 44
15	HAMM	2 OCT 44
16	LIPPSTADT	5 OCT 44
17	HAMBURG	6 OCT 44
18	KOBLENZ	9 OCT 44
19	KAISERSLAUTERN	14 OCT 44
20	COLOGNE	17 OCT 44
21	GUSTAVSBURG	19 OCT 44
22	HAMM	22 OCT 44
23	HAMBURG	30 OCT 44
24	MINDEN	6 NOV 44
25	RHEINE	8 NOV 44
26	FORT L'ASINE	9 NOV 44
27	ESCHWEILER	16 NOV 44
28	BINGERBRUCK	25 NOV 44
29	HANAU	11 DEC 44
30	HANAU	12 DEC 44
31	AHRWEILER	24 DEC 44
32	HALLSCHLAG	25 DEC 44
33	HEINBACH	29 DEC 44
34	MECHNICH	30 DEC 44
35	EUSKIRCHEN	31 DEC 44
36	COBLENZ	6 JAN 45
37	OUDLER	8 JAN 45
38	MUNSTER	29 JAN 45
39	MAGDEBURG	3 FEB 45
40	MAGDEBURG	9 FEB 45
41	SIEGEN	19 FEB 45
42	NUREMBURG	21 FEB 45
43	SUHLUCHTERN	23 FEB 45
44	BERLIN	26 FEB 45
45	BETZDORF	8 MAR 45

## As I Saw It

The following is Bert Alexander's "desert experience"

Here is my story. On the night return from the June 9, 1943 raid on Comiso Airdrome in Sicily, We were unsure when *Big Job* crossed the African coast and the time for us to begin looking for the single line of flare pots marking the landing field at Benghazi. The radio beacon was a command transmitter with perhaps a ten mile range and it gave an unreliable signal. By the time the navigator, Milo Rasmussen gave up trying to get a celestial fix, the plane was too far inland to pick up any signal from the beacon. Unsure of our position, Pilot McKelvey set up maximum cruise control to conserve gas and ordered Radio Operator McDermott to send out a SOS. A DF station responded with a bearing that we took, with no idea how far we were from the coast. We were worried that we might over fly the coast and have to bail out over water. We were all prepared for bailout as the red fuel warning light came on, McKelvey ordered "Bailout" and began to feather the fuel starved engines as they failed. He was feathering the last engine and trimming *Big Job* for a straight ahead glide as I left the cockpit to bailout the Bombay at 6000 feet. It was 2:40 the morning of July 10, 1943.

My chute opened with a jerk and as I floated down, my flashlight showed only a black void. I was unprepared for landing and hit the ground like a sack of potatoes. My only injury was a small cut on my left knee. Stumbling over the black lava rocks I found McDermott. He, too, had hit hard but was uninjured. The going was so rough; we wrapped up our chutes and waited for morning to pick our way out of the jumble of black lava rocks. Surveying our position, we were surrounded by low hills of jagged lava rock that slopped down to a thin crust of lava cinders which broke through with every step to reveal the sand below. A perfect picture of Hell. Nearby was a dry lake bed extending into the distance. We later learned that Lt Stewart had proposed landing on the dry lake bed to pick us up. But since the ground party was already on the way the "brass" decided the threat of losing a plane was too great a risk to take.

Since our bearing from the DF station was toward the northeast, McDermott and I continued in that direction. We found the wreckage of the plane and a note left by Pilot F/O McKelvey and Engineer T/Sgt Greathouse. They had survived the bailout and were preceding northerly. McDermott and I followed their tracks for awhile but when we reached a camel trail heading in a westerly direction, their tracks turned down the trail. Mc Dermott and I discussed following them but since "northeast" was impressed on our minds, we struck out over the tactless desert. We were suffering severely from the heat and thirst. It was already difficult to hold on to a thought, so before we would lie down to rest in the shade of an overhanging rock or crevice, we would draw an arrow in the sand to remind us of our direction.

On Sunday, July 11, probably 20 miles from our bailout point, Mc Dermott spotted something white on the top of a low hill. We were making our way over to it when the most beautiful sight appeared---A B-24 from the 93<sup>rd</sup>! The *Jersey Bounce* swooped over us and dropped a bag of supplies between us to make sure we saw the others. Mc Dermott and I scooped it up and carried it to the parachute canopy draped over the rocks. There we found Rasmussen and Renk. On bailout, Rasmussen suffered a back injury, barely able to move and Renk had a gaping hole in his thigh. That first drop provided food, water, and first aid. Since the airplane had now found us, we decided to stay together. It was obvious that the coast was not "just over the next hill" and we were all too exhausted to travel any further.

Planes from the 93<sup>rd</sup> would come over almost every day and drop supplies and first aid kits. The first aid kits provided sulfa for Renk's wound and were a god-send but the morphine we left alone. The supply planes would snap the parachute harness around a 5 gallon can of water and throw the chute out on a static line. However the can was not tied in securely and nearly every can popped out of the harness when the chute opened. It was heart-breaking to see the can hit the desert and explode in a spray, leaving only a damp hole. As a consequence, we were always short of water. Our days were spent trying to beat the blazing heat of 130 degrees, praying to God with promises that we hoped to be able to keep and scrambling to rescue what water that had survived the drop. Notes dropped with the drop gave encouragement that help was on the way and the latest progress of the war. One day a British twin engine bomber buzzed us, wheeled around and precisely dropped a bundle of

(continued next page)

canteens to hit just below the crest of the hill to break the fall and roll to the bottom with barely scratched. We drank well that day. One day an Arab with a camel passed within a mile of our camp. We decided not to hail him since we had no arms for protection and that we could wait for the rescue team. Each time that a plane came over to drop supplies, they would scour the surrounding terrain for any sign for the two crewmen still unaccounted for with no success. When the rescue party came in they too and found only a parachute and a Mae West whose position had been marked by the supply planes.

On July 19<sup>th</sup>, the tenth day of our "desert experience", a British army patrol composed of British army officers and Sudanese troops rolled over the hill to pick up our party of four. A detachment had been sent to pick up the other party(Street and Magee). They soon joined us.

On our way back to the desert patrol base camp, we came to an Arab family camp consisting of a couple of tents, camels and goats. The women and children peered cautiously from behind the wall curtains. The father and son came out to greet us with solemn handshakes all around. With a sign and a word the father sent a youngster scurrying back to the tent, who soon reappeared with a bowl. Father tipped the bowl to his lips and took a sip, then passed it to the British Captain who sipped and ceremoniously passed it to his Lieutenant, who passed it to me. I came face to face with a bowl of fermented goat's milk. Minding protocol, I sipped and passed it to Rasmussen. I'm not sure he observed protocol but quickly passed it on. I thought it wasn't bad---like strong yogurt. As it got to the sons, they drank deeply and sent the empty bowl back to the tent.

The desert patrol base camp was simply a gathering of trucks around the fire where they were preparing supper of bully (corned) beef and onions cooked in olive oil. The Captain remarked that he had been on desert patrol for seven years and the supper was always bully beef and onions. "Tired of it?" "No, it kind of adds a bit of stability in our duty". Next day on our way to a prepared landing ground, we passed by a Miles Master airplane that had been used to help chart a course through the rough terrain. It had cracked up on landing and would be abandoned.

The "prepared landing ground" was simply a section of the Libyan desert cleared of rocks, where a British Wellington bomber was waiting for us. We said "thanks" and "goodbye" to our desert patrol and boarded the plane for the flight to the hospital. All of those rescued, except myself, were "rarin' to go" back to the squadron after a few days in the hospital. I had suffered burns to my esophagus from over chlorinated water and could not swallow solid food and had to stay in the hospital for a full ten days.

On my return to the 330<sup>th</sup> squadron, every thing was abuzz with plans for the super-secret" big mission." Because Major Potts and the flight surgeon would not clear me for flying, I watched the planes take off for Ploesti. Probably saved my life. But that is another story. Bert Alexander

*Crew of Big Job*

<i>William W McKelvey</i>	<i>Pilot</i>	<i>Thomas F McDermott</i>	<i>Radio</i>
<i>Bert F Alexander</i>	<i>Co-pilot</i>	<i>Elmer Renk</i>	<i>Top Turret</i>
<i>Milo Rasmussen</i>	<i>Navigator</i>	<i>Royce Magee</i>	<i>Waist Gunner</i>
<i>Oscar Street</i>	<i>Bombardier</i>	<i>Dale Wilson</i>	<i>Waist Gunner</i>
<i>Vincent Greathouse</i>	<i>Flight Engineer</i>	<i>John Gomez</i>	<i>Tail Gunner</i>

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- Kent Jaquith: A Man of Mystery  
(*Sorry, ran out of room in this issue*)
- The *Greyhound* and Crew
- Jim Guddal, Our Man in Minnesota Details  
Reunion Train Trip
- Walter Stewart and "The Saga of *Utah Man*"
- Grass Taking Over Hardwick Museum Due to  
Riding Lawnmower Breakdown, Fundraising  
Campaign for 93<sup>rd</sup> BG Museum to be Announced

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*Don Morrison's book on the 93<sup>rd</sup> BG due out in December/January.*

**The Ball of Fire Quarterly Express  
93<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group**

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