

82ND FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION



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NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 2

JUNE 1985

"THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER"

We had a meeting last week in San Antonio to discuss plans and preparations for our '85 Reunion. Chairman Tom Kelly has everything going well and from the number of responses he has received, we are going to exceed all previous attendance records. This is great!!! I am also glad to see that some of the members who have signed up are "first timers". We certainly welcome you and for your benefit I want to explain the major goals of our Reunion.

1. We gather to enjoy each other with a renewal of old friendships.

2. Meet others of the Association whose tour with the 82nd came before or after ours, and to make new friends.

3. We schedule our activities so we can mix and mingle and enjoy each other's company. There are no boring speeches to spoil the fun. Our programs are designed for entertainment only.

4. We strive to keep the costs down by using Association funds as appropriate and military facilities where possible.

With a gala occasion waiting for you, how can you stay at home and miss it???

See you in San Antonio . . . You'all come . .

P.S. Girls, you will love the hotel and especially its proximity to the shopping areas!!!

"COMMENTS FROM THE EDITOR"

The response to the first issue of the 82nd Fighter Group Association Newsletter was most gratifying and encouraging. We were surprised and elated by the numerous letters and telephone calls from the membership expressing their appreciation for our efforts and we want to thank all of the folks who were so gracious.

Also, the response to our request for material to print in the Newsletter has been overwhelming. To all of you who sent in material, including photographs, we are deeply indebted. Unfortunately, there just wasn't enough space in this issue to include all the material that was submitted. The ground rule that we used was to select material on the basis of broad general interest and when we received it. Frankly, it was difficult to read some of the handwriting and unless we could decipher it, we gave up. Finally, some of you ignored the admonition in the last Newsletter as to who to send the Newsletter material to. Some material was sent to Harley Vaughn and Jerry Loewenberg, which necessitated them sending the letters and photographs on to us and which consequently caused a delay in receiving your material.

This doesn't mean that we are no longer soliciting photos, anecdotes, stories or recollections of days gone by in which we all took part. On the contrary, we strongly urge you to dig back in the old foot lockers or archives and share some of the special memories with your fellow members. Any items you send in that you wish returned will be sent back to you as soon as we are able to make copies

82ND FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Editor and Publisher: Paul F. Jorgensen, 848 E. Andover Drive, Burbank, CA. 91504

"LETTERS FROM THE MEMBERS"

From Ted Latta, 29021 Brittany Ct., Roseville, MI 48066:

Dear Paul:

February 26, 1985

I want to offer my thanks to you and your wife Betty on the publishing of the 82nd Fighter Group Association Newsletter. I thought this first effort was great and was very professionally done. I am all ready looking forward to receiving my next issue.

I myself have been involved in publishing a couple of newsletters so I can appreciate the work involved.

I plan real soon to go over my photos and try to pick out a couple for publication. At one time I was Crew Chief on BF the 96th's Droopsnoot, and I have a couple of shots done by the 1st Combat Camera Unit that could be used. Now that we here in the Detroit area are coming out from under a couple feet of snow, I'll have time to dig those photos out and have copies made.

My wife and I have both enjoyed the past reunions very much and are both looking forward to the one in San Antonio. We both feel that I was privileged to have served in a wonderful outfit, made up of a lot of nice people. Now that Dorothy has met my old buddies and their wives we feel that we have made a number of wonderful new friendships.

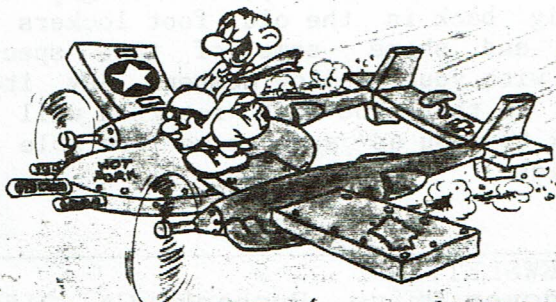
I'll just say again that the newsletter was the best I have read and you both deserve the congratulations of your readers.

Please keep up the good work and we will see you in San Antonio.

Sincerely yours,

Ted Latta

PIGGY BACK FRATERNITY
BE IT KNOWN THAT *F.L. Montgomery*
IS A SHORT PORKER IN GOOD STANDING.



PILOTED BY *1st. Shepard* DATE *Nov. 15, 1943*

From Fred Montgomery, #61 Mesa Verde Park, 3003 Hualapai Mountain Road, Kingman, AZ 86401:

Dear Paul:

February 11, 1985

Please accept plaudits, paeans and a BIG HAND for Number 1. It's a winner and will get better and better if you get the necessary input.

I'm stripping my precious album of anything that might be of interest If your suggestion box is open, would you entertain the thought of a less tired title for the Newsletter? For instance: "Lightning" or "Lightning Strikes", with appropriate lightning bolts issuing from the 38's nose cannon? Just a thought, but an outstanding publication such as yours, representing the hell-roarin' outfit that it does, should let 'em know in every possible way, that we've still got The Spark, even though it may be a tad less lethal than it was forty years ago.

Seriously, your Newsletter is super, and this reader wishes to offer sincere thanks for service above and beyond. Were it not for the Jorgensen's, Vaughn's, Loewenberg's, et al, the incomparable brotherhood of the 82nd F.G.A. would blow its superchargers and belly in. Keep on scribing and holler if I can help in any way!

Fred L. Montgomery



"TAPS"



FRANK R. SUTTER died in April 1985 in Los Angeles, CA. He was born 65 years ago in Peoria, IL, enlisted in 1941, joined the 96th Fighter Squadron in Glendale, CA and was an aircraft mechanic in the Engineering Section. Left the Air Force in 1945, completed his education in Southern Calif., and became an architect.

He had his own architectural firm in Los Angeles for more than thirty years. He is survived by his wife, Jane, and two daughters.

* * * * *

CARL ADOLPHSON died in November 1984. Carl was the long time adjutant of the 96th.

From Benjamin Samuels, 610 S. Elm Street,
Moorhead, MN 56560:

Dear Paul,

In 1942 I was a recruit transfer from a combined calvary and air station at Harding Field, Baton Rouge, LA. to the 82nd Fighter Interceptor Group. I was assigned to the 97th Squadron in the maintenace section at Muroc Army Air Base, CA. in the Mojave desert.

For those of you who were never stationed at Muroc you can be thankful unless you liked rattlesnakes, and liked to wear your gas mask during the day to keep the blowing sand from cutting your face. Remember checking the landing gear wheelwells each time you left and returned to the aircraft to be sure that no snakes had crawled up inside the well to sleep. We found an old bricklined hole in the ground and it had a rusted ladder leading to the bottom. When shaking the ladder all you could hear was the snake rattles. You can be sure we didn't explore that area again. It was 120 in the shade and no shade, and the runway and parking ramp were so hot that you could fry eggs on them.

The next station for the 97th was at Long Beach, CA. near the Signal Hill oilwells. Long Beach was much nicer than Muroc except for the smell from the oil fields on the hill just outside our main gate. We thought the blowing sand at Muroc was bad but at least you could protect yourself with gas masks. There wasn't any way to fight the oil smell except sleeping.

How about the time we were called out on alert and we were all on the flight line getting the aircraft ready for scramble. After the aircraft departed there was a loud crash and we thought one of our planes had crashed on the runway. Someone said it came from our sleeping hanger and when we checked there was a large hole in the hanger roof. We found out that our own Navy was responsible as they had fired at what they thought was a Jap plane because of the red circle in the star on our planes. The shell went into our hanger roof and the result of this caused the repainting of all stars on the aircraft eliminating the red circle.

I liked working on aircraft and even flying in them. I stayed in the Air Force for 22 years retiring at Davis Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ. in 1968.

Ben Samuels

From Robert C. Congdon, 4103 Oak Terrace
Drive, Lake Worth, FL 33463:

Dear Jerry:

I believe we have another first. On D+1 at Salerno, Italy a group of P-38's were forced to extend the air cover over the beachhead and then landed on a strip being laid down. We who landed there had to refuel each ship from jerry cans (imagine dumping 5 gallon per can). Our claim to fame is that we were the first allied planes to land on free continental Europe soil and then fly a combat mission before going back to Sicily. To my knowledge no other allied aircraft landed on Axis free land on the continent as this was the first invasion. As I recall we were all from the 97th.

Bob Congdon

(Editor's note: I remember, I was there. It was on September 11, 1943, it was my 3rd mission and I was scared stiff).



"ASSOCIATION DUES"

Our By-Laws provide that dues shall be voluntary. As of April 15th, income tax deadline day, 74 members had paid their 1985 Sustaining Memmber dues. No one has ever been billed! Of those who paid, one paid for three years in advance, one paid for two years, and several others added amounts to help pay for the publication of the Newsletter. Many who haven't paid would do so if they were reminded. Okay, this is your reminder. You won't receive a bill.

What is the money for? Well, we have put up a Memorial to the members of the Group at Wright-Patterson AF Base; we publish a Newsletter; a substantial sum is being used this year to defray reunion expense; and there are expenses for postage, printing, and telephone.

We're not broke by any means, but it's nice if everyone shares in our joint effort. If you want to help, you can make out a check for \$15.00, or whatever, payable to the 82nd Fighter Group Association and mail it to Jerry Loewenberg, our Secretary/Treasurer, at 4917 Ravenswood Drive (1719), San Antonio, TX 78227.

From Wallace E. (Uncle Wally) Reyerson, 215
First Ave. NW, Hutchinson, MN 55350:

Dear Jorgy:

February 11, 1985

. . . . I am inclosing a photo of Lloyd Atteberry (we were bunking in the same tent at the time) and another photo of Atteberry, Slick Morgan, Joe Henley, Swede Larson, and Herman Visscher, all original Staff-Sergeant pilots.

Atteberry was MIA on March 22, 1943, but a couple of evenings before that he was engaged in a poker game with five or six of his buddies, sitting on the tent floor, playing on an army blanket for a table. Sitting across from AT was Joe Henley. They were playing draw poker. AT drew five cards, the 3, 4, 6, and 7 of clubs. I was standing behind him watching the game. I did not see what Joe Henley drew, but AT discarded one (1) card and picked up - yes, it was the 5 of clubs.

AT and Joe started betting. AT finally bet two hundred dollars on his hand, Joe said he would "call" but was short in the pot. When Joe showed his hand he had 3 kings and 2 eights, and he was very proud of his full house, but then AT laid down his straight flush.

When AT was MIA, I had the obligation of gathering up his personal effects and shipping them to his folks. Right after AT was missing Joe came to me and reminded me that he had been short in the pot when AT had the straight flush and would pay, on pay day, so I could include it in the "effects" sent home. There wasn't a one of those pilots that you couldn't trust with your life, let alone a few dollars.

I cannot remember the other pilots who were playing in that card game, but possibly Swede Larson or Slick Morgan would know.

Am inclosing a little something for the "pot" to cover some of the expenses of the Newsletter.

Uncle Wally

San Antonio

From Stanley V. Kupcinkas, 14 Dell Avenue,
Worcester, MA 01604:

Dear Editor:

As a former member of the 96th from the beginning I still feel proud to have been associated with a fine group of people.

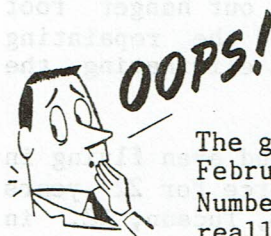
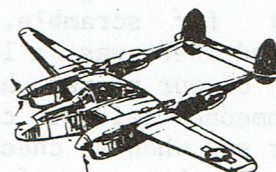
We were the 71st Pursuit Squadron from Selfridge Field, Michigan at the Glendale (Calif.) Air Terminal, which soon after made up the heart of the 96th Squadron.

An interesting event occurred at the Municipal Air Field (Lecce?) in southern Italy. One of our pilots developed engine trouble on take off and in trying to land, just missing the squadron camp area, went into a group of olive trees. A group of us just stood dumbfounded except one. Sgt. Walter Carlson ran to the aircraft and eventually pulled out the pilot, both staggering away just seconds before the aircraft caught fire and was destroyed. No one investigated the accident and it was left to fade away except in the memories of those who witnessed it. I think it would be deserving, at least, to bring it back to light.

I understand that Walter kept in touch with the pilot for quite some time.

Enclosed is an article with pictures from a booklet published by Lockheed at Burbank, CA in 1942.

Stan Kupcinkas



The gremlins did it again. The February 1985 Newsletter was Number 1 not Volume 1. If you really care you can make the change. PFJ.

"DO YOU REMEMBER?"

Sailing late in September 1942 from New York on the big "Queen Mary", 82nd Group men soon had their first experience with the bewildering problems of foreign customs and people when they landed for a short period of additional combat training in Northern Ireland. Principal stumbling blocks were the coinage system, different names for familiar things, and the corner pub, which sold the wallop-packing Irish whiskey.

Though trained, the 82nd Group left Ireland as little more than a fledgling hodgepodge of American kids with dreams of glory in foreign skies. The P-38 itself as an airplane was little known, untried, and something of an ugly duckling even to the men who had created it. But Africa proved the Lightnings to be a weapon of war, and time and experience, plus plenty of hard work, gathered the collection of unknown factors that was the 82nd Fighter Group into a compact whole with a jolt in its punch.

The 82nd pilots took off from England near the end of December 1942, and landed in Africa, completing one of the first long range fighter plane flights in that theatre. On this initial send off, the Group struck its first blow against the Axis and came out a winner. P-38's shot down two JU-88's while over the Bay of Biscay.

An advanced echelon of ground forces flew to Africa as skeleton crews to keep the planes operating until the main body of technical and administrative troops could follow. Faced with the task of maintaining the Group's airplanes at a critical moment in the Tunisian campaign when there were bad shortages of supplies, equipment and men, the ground crews not only achieved their assignment, but set a record for high level aircraft maintenance.

Meanwhile, the main body of the 82nd ground forces were sweating out the trip to Africa via unheated miniature Irish and English passenger trains, and a long ride by boat, their second experience in an Atlantic Ocean convoy, made on a former luxury liner, the "Franconia". After debarking at Oran, the Group encamped on the side of a knoll dubbed by previous American occupants as "Mud Hill" - a name that was painfully appropriate. From Mud Hill the Group entrained in what has whimsically been called in this war and the last as "Forty and Eight".

At last, in February 1943, the main body of the 82nd joined the advanced echelon at Telergma, a little North African whistle stop in eastern Algeria. And by this time, the Group's hell-roaring, recently commissioned staff-sergeant pilots, had already let the Luftwaffe know they were around. The first mission flown by the 82nd from African soil had occurred on Christmas Day, 1942.

(Editors note: The above article has been extracted from the booklet "The 82nd Fighter Group from Muroc to Foggia". If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this booklet, consisting of 22 pages, the Editor will have it reproduced and mailed first class for \$2.50 which is only for my costs).



"OUR LADY LIGHTNING"

From Muroc to Morocco,

She thundered and she screamed,
Our lovely Lady Lightning,
That fighter pilot's dream.

We loved her and we praised her,
And she never let us down,
As through the war-torn skies she led,
The 82nd to renown.

She drove "The Fox" from Africa,
She broke the Duce's nerve,
She raged the length of Italy,
And Ploesti felt her scourge.

Her talents knew no limits,
Bomber escort nonpareil,
With skip bomb, dive bomb, dogfight,
She drove the Axis straight to hell!

But her talent most endearing,
After missions long and "hot",
Was to bring us safely home again,
One mighty engine roaring - and one shot!

No ship was ever like her,
Nor will ever be again,
Our lovely, lethal Lightning,
Thank God we knew her when!

- Fred L. Montgomery -

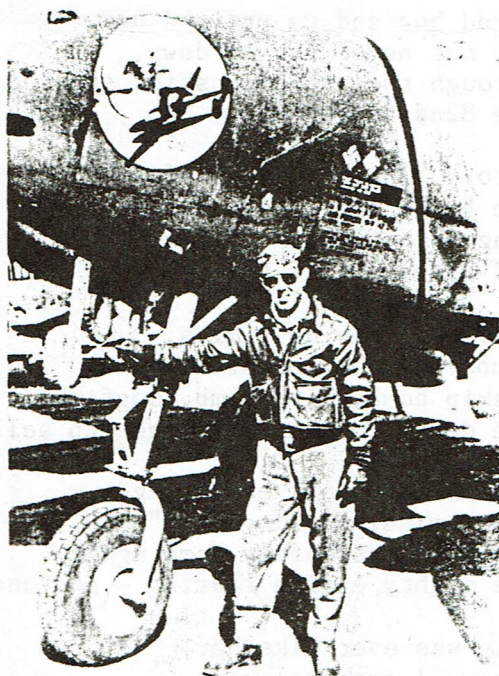
(Written vicariously by one who sat behind you on every mission and who loved that Lady as much as you did).



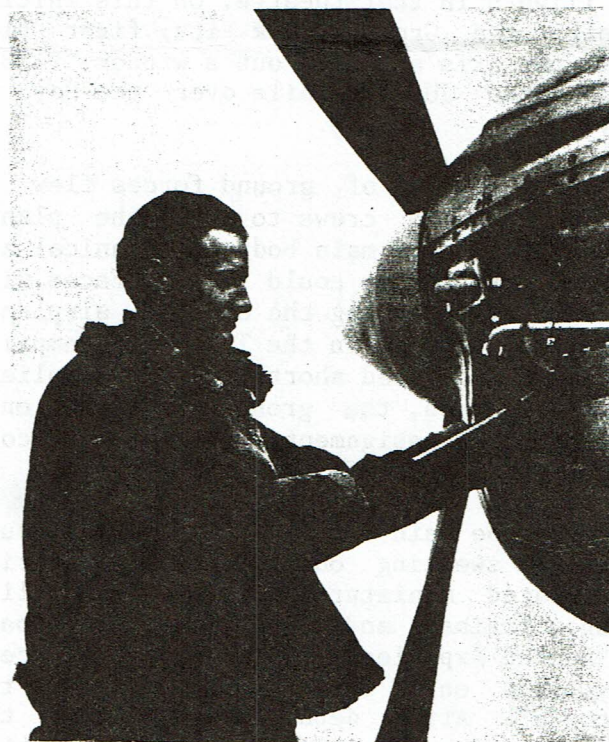
North Africa, July 13, 1943: A group of P-38 pilots who accounted for ten enemy aircraft during a fighter sweep over Sicily. Left to right: 1st Lieutenant William J. Sloan, Flying Officer Frank D. Hurlbut, 1st Lieutenant Edward T. Waters, 1st Lieutenant Lawrence P. Liebers, 2nd Lieutenant L. D. Jones, and 2nd Lieutenant Ward A. Kuentzel. (USAF)



OUR DOG AT FOGGIA?



Harley Vaughn beside the nose of his ship. Vaughn was a seven victory ace with the 82nd Group. [W. Jorda]



S/SGT MERIDITH KINGERY



S/SGT FRED MONTGOMERY



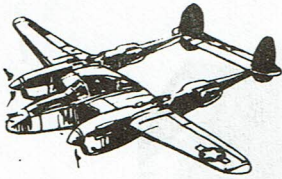
T/SGT JIM BAKER



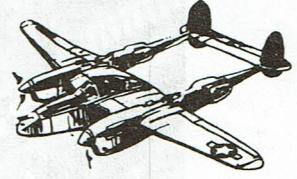
(L to R) HERMAN VISSCHER, SWEDE LARSON, JOE HENLEY, SLICK MORGAN, & LLOYD ATTEBERRY.



"That 50 mission smile"
LT PAUL (JORGY) JORGENSEN



82ND FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION



The reunion this year will be September 19-22 at the Hilton Palacio Del Rio Hotel, located at 200 South Alamo, San Antonio, TX. 78205, telephone (512) 222-1400.

The Reunion Committee, headed by Tom Kelly, is betting its reputation that you will have a great time in the heart of one of the more noted tourist attractions. The Palacio Del Rio Hotel is on the San Antonio River Walk in the very heart of the city within easy walking distance of the Alamo, the historic shrine of Texas; La Villita, a collection of unusual arts and crafts; Commerce street immediately adjacent to the hotel with all kinds of modern Mexican import stores; the Tower of the Americas is just across the Hemisphere Plaza grounds and is a fantastic place to go to wine, dine, or just look while the City of San Antonio rotates around it; and many, many other attractions. Only five minutes away on the 10 cent downtown trolley looking bus is El Mercado, the Mexican market with bargains often better than can be obtained in the border towns. Also, there will be bus tours if you wish to see more of the San Antonio area.

Prices have been held to the 1984 level to the extent that the Executive Committee has agreed to pick up the tab for any excess costs of Association functions that exceed the income. The attendance total will be the determining factor as to whether we break even or not.

A study of both our own and other reunions indicates that the registration of several hundred people in a few hours is one of the greatest problems of the sponsoring groups, and often a source of irritation to the attendees. The recommended solution lies in advanced computer assisted registration, including pre-payments. You can help the Reunion Committee by mailing your 82nd Reunion registration form and your check as soon as possible and in no event later than August 19, 1985. Your money cheerfully refunded on cancellation notification received prior to September 12th; not so cheerfully after that date.

Hotel reservations are to be made directly to the Hilton Palacio Del Rio utilizing the reservation form enclosed in this newsletter. Please note that the hotel reservation deadline is August 19, 1985 and that after that date rooms may not be available at the hotel. During the period of our Reunion, hotel and motel rooms in San Antonio are at a premium, if available at all. So be sure to get your reservation into the hotel before the deadline. (The Reunion Committee will not make hotel reservations).

Also enclosed in this newsletter is a Tour reservation form which is to be submitted directly to the tour operator: Local Arrangements, Inc. They need to know your advance choices and also your checks. (The Reunion Committee will not make reservations for tours).

(continued on next page)

