

#14

# 82ND FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION



## NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 14

AUGUST 1989

### QUEEN MARY REUNION SCHEDULE

#### WEDNESDAY, OCT. 4

CHECK IN — Then, on your own for the balance of the day. I suggest golfers check in today for 9:30 tee off time Thursday morning.

#### THURSDAY, OCT. 5

CHECK IN — Then, on your own to take self-guided tours of the QUEEN MARY and the SPRUCE GOOSE. This tour is included in your room cost, but for those not staying on the QUEEN MARY there will be a reduced rate and tickets may be purchased at check in. LONDON TOWN VILLAGE and SHORELINE VILLAGE will also be open for shops and food.

Our bar and hospitality room will be open, with no charge for snacks and refreshments. A LARGE HOSPITALITY ROOM will be separate from and straight down the hall from the bar. We would appreciate NO SMOKING in the hospitality room — O.K. in the bar area.

Golfers will depart about 9:00 A.M.

#### FRIDAY, OCT. 6

Buses to UNIVERSAL STUDIOS will depart at 9:00 a.m. This will be a full day, so for those people wanting to leave early, we will release buses as they fill. Time and stamina permitting, we will stop by the CHINESE THEATER on Hollywood Blvd. as we return to the QUEEN MARY.

#### SATURDAY, OCT. 7

Buses for the "ultra exclusive" Rodeo Drive shopping area will depart at 9:00 A.M. (I disclaim all responsibility for any overuse of credit cards or divorces brought on by same.) Buses will go from Rodeo Dr. to the "world famous" HOLLYWOOD FARMERS MARKET, where you will be ON YOUR OWN FOR LUNCH and a very interesting stroll through all types of food and souvenir shops. You can eat anything from sandwiches to full meals with costs below \$5.00 and up to ????. The plan is to be back on the QUEEN MARY by 3:00 P.M.

#### BANQUET, 7:00 P.M.

We will be seated by squadrons to facilitate photo taking. Prints will be available Sunday morning so you can place orders. A 13-17 PIECE "1940s" BAND WILL BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 11:00 P.M.

#### SUNDAY, OCT. 8

BRUNCH 9:00 A.M.

BUSES TO AIRPORT WILL BE SCHEDULED WHEN YOU LET ME KNOW YOUR FLIGHT DEPARTURE TIMES.

John Hendrix

## THE 82ND FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION

### — OFFICERS —

**WILL HATTENDORF**  
President  
Sunset Drive, Route 6  
CANTON, GA 30114  
(404) 479-4043

**WILLIAM S. (Bill) HOOPER**  
Vice President  
315 Bowie Street  
LULING, TX 78648  
(512) 875-3272

**ROY E. NORRIS**  
Secretary/Treasurer  
6636 Plantation Way  
CINCINNATI, OH 45224  
(513) 931-2436

\* \* \*

### — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE —

**HARLEY C. VAUGHN**  
Assoc. Past President  
4702 Congressional Drive  
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78413

**JERRY LOEWENBERG — HQ Rep.**  
4917 Ravenswood Drive #1719  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78227  
(512) 674-1555

**RALPH (Monty) POWERS — 95th Ftr. Sq.**  
202 Hillcrest Court  
JONESVILLE, MI 48250  
(517) 849-9114

**WALTER CARLSON — 96th Ftr. Sq.**  
Route 1, Box 33  
URBANA, IL 61801  
(217) 328-1894

**JACK DUNCAN — 97th Ftr. Sq.**  
309 Pecan Drive  
SCHERTZ, TX 78154  
(512) 658-6007

\* \* \*

### — NEWSLETTER EDITOR —

**DICK LINGENFELTER**  
P.O. Box 5541, BOISE, ID 83705  
(208) 344-7742

\* \* \*

### — 1989 CONVENTION CHAIRMAN —

**JOHN C. HENDRIX**  
14708 Bodger Avenue  
HAWTHORNE, CA 90205  
(213) 676-4794

**Sec. / Treas.** *Roy Norris*

Addresses of new members and changes of address for Association members should be forwarded to ROY NORRIS, 6636 PLANTATION WAY, CINCINNATI, OH 45224. If need be, you may phone (513) 931-2436.

I would also appreciate being informed of any illness or death of Association members.

There have been a number of questions about membership and/or dues. The following are excerpts from the By-Laws as amended September 19, 1987:

#### ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

- a. **REGULAR MEMBERS** - Any person who served as a member of the 82nd FIGHTER GROUP during World War II. All regular members who pay voluntary dues (\$15.00 annual) shall be known as Sustaining Regular members. (note: the Sustaining Regular member is entitled to a Membership Roster - Please Request)
- b. **LIFE MEMBERS** - Any Regular Member who pays voluntary dues of \$100 (credit is allowed for prior regular dues paid).
- c. **Associate Members** - Widows of Regular or Life Members are automatically Associate Members. Assoc. Membs can be:

Any other person who did not serve in the 82nd FIGHTER GROUP during WWII, who is a friend of the Association and supports the Purposes and Objectives of the Association, may be approved by the Executive Committee upon recommendation by a Regular or Life Member

No dues are expected from Associate Members.

Associate Members do not have voting rights

\*\* \* \*\*

## **BLACK FEATHER GEORGE**

George Marvin alerts us to a lot of neat things. Recently he relayed a pitch he had received from WORLD WAR II Magazine. It uses the Reader's Digest type come-on with a "place sticker here" bit. This particular one had the famous escape picture (found on page 3 of SDJ II) of Dick Willsie sitting on Dick Andrews in the latter's P-38. The sticker part of the picture was Andrews!

\*\* \* \*\*

# For Us To Remember

## UNDIMMED

I can believe that suns will cool  
And planets change their courses

That unborn stars will rise and fade  
And even seasons be reversed;

That seeds may never come to flower  
And strange mutations may appear;

That stones will crumble to dust  
And mountains be eroded by eons of  
time;

That winds and tides may alter  
And earthly contours be erased;

But this I cannot and will not say  
That death shall ever triumph  
Over love; nor memories,

However bittersweet, of one now gone  
Shall lose their fragrance

Frances P. Reid

\* \*\*\* \*

## JACK W. FURR

Jack passed away with lung cancer on  
Nov. 18, 1988.

Jack was a flight chief in the 96th's  
Armament Section.

Reuben Koivuniemi had sent a letter  
to Jack to notify him of Harold  
Kroeger's death and Jack's daughter-  
in-law called Koiv. to tell him of  
Jack's passing.

Jack had been located for the Asso-  
ciation by T.O. Spence about three  
years ago.

\*\* \*\* \*

## HAROLD KROEGER

Harold passed away on Feb. 10, 1989.  
He came down with pneumonia complica-  
ted by acute leukemia which did not  
respond to treatment.

Harold was an armorer in the 96th  
Squadron.

He is survived by his wife Catherine  
and four children.

\*\* \*\* \*

## ELIZABETH BEAN POWERS

Betty died Sunday July 30, 1989.  
She had lost her nine month battle  
with an inoperable brain tumor.

She was the wife of Ralph "Monty"  
Powers Jr. and had attended the Boise  
and Dayton Reunions.

In addition to Monty (95th Squadron  
Rep) Betty is survived by daughters  
Ruth and Mary, son Paul and five  
grandchildren

\*\* \*\* \*

## DALE "Robbie" ROBINETTE

Dale died Feb. 28, 1989 from lung  
cancer.

A radioman with the 95th Squadron,  
Dale left the group early in '45 to  
finish the war as a gunner with one  
of the B-17 units in Italy.

Fred Bingham, Bill Bridgeman and  
Olen Medley were instrumental in  
locating Robbie for the Associa-  
tion.

Before moving to Alabama, Dale had  
worked as a deputy sheriff in Okla-  
home.

He is survived by his wife Olga and a  
son.

\*\* \*\* \*

(note: Frances Reid, was our  
daughter Peggy's high school English  
teacher. This poem was found among  
Peggy's things after her death and  
was read at her funeral service. We  
wanted to share this part of us with  
you.

-- Jo Ann and Dick

## ESCAPERS & EVADERS

Claude Murray, of Air Forces Escape  
& Evaders Society, is looking for any infor-  
mation which may assist him in locating  
downed pilots who have escaped after being  
captured or who have evaded capture. A  
goal is reunite such people with those  
who befriended them. Claude's address  
is: 16810 Boswall Blvd., Sun City, AZ 85351.  
Claude was an evader himself and was also  
a P-38 pilot.

\*\* \* \*\*

# remembrances

*(Continuing Our Series of  
Missing Air Crewmen Reports)*

## LOUIS C. CHAMPION

1st Lt. 96th Fighter Squadron  
Killed in Action, Feb. 25, 1944

This mission (#628) was to provide withdrawal support - along with the 1st and the 14th Groups - for B-24s attacking Regensburg. It turned out to be the last day of the 15th AF's participation in operation ARGUMENT, better known as the "Big Week".

As the 82nd formation flew up the Adriatic toward the rendezvous point (near Salzburg) it encountered extremely bad weather - solid overcast down to 1,000 feet resulting in very poor visibility. Flights became separated and some were forced to turn back, including the one Lt. Champion was in.

Following is the statement of 1st Lt. Andrew J. Trammell, a witness:

I was flying #4 man in Capt. Isaacson's flight on Champion's wing. Because of the low ceiling, about 1,000 to 2,000 ft. with intermittent rain squalls we were proceeding on the deck up the Adriatic. About 20 minutes off the Italian coast our flight made a 180° turn with the other flight in the section following. After about 2 minutes the flight leader made another 180° turn to put him back on course. However, all the other aircraft were out of sight and after proceeding on course for a minute or two (flight leader) made another 180° to return to base. I heard nothing distinct on the radio at this time.

"I figured out an ETA to hit the Italian coast at 1226. At 1225 we ran into a solid bank of fog. The flight leader went into a climbing turn to the right. We were going about 250 mph at the time at about 500' (off the water). The cloud was of such thick density that I immediately lost sight of the other

three aircraft (in my element) and so I choked my throttles back to keep from over-running Lt. Champion. As I decreased altitude and levelled out at about 300' I caught a momentary glimpse of the water. At the same instant a P-38 passed in front of my left wing heading straight down. The canopy was faced to me and was closed and it hit (the water) and passed out of sight under my wing at the same time. There was no chance for the pilot to escape alive.

I called Capt. Isaacson on chan. B and told him that Champion went into the drink. There was no reply. At this time I had to go on instruments again so I stopped turning and flew straight - hitting what I thought was the town of Vasto a few seconds later.

This would pinpoint the crash about four miles east of Penna Point or somewhere on a line heading south. While I was finding my way home I tried to reach someone on D channel (to report the accident) but failed. I finally contacted an Englishman on C channel and told him there was an aircraft in the drink about five miles off shore from either Vasto or Termoli. Landed at base at 1310.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Lt. Champion joined the 96th Squadron as a replacement pilot in Sept. of '43. We (of the 96th) remember him as the son of Arthur Champion - the developer of the famous spark-plug. Before Lt. Champion's loss, his dad had visited him soon after our arrival at Foggia 11. The elder Champion was travelling as the factory rep for AC Sparkplugs (which he also developed).*

## P L E A S E

*We would like some feed-back from you  
Regarding the continuation of the  
MACR Series*

\*

*This is YOUR Newsletter and it should  
Fill your needs*

\*

DOUGLAS E. CRICHTON MACR

1st Lt., 96th Fighter Squadron  
Killed in Action July 3, 1943  
Flying P-38G, #42-12830

This mission, flown from Marylebone Airdrome, was the Group's 264th - an escort of 310th BG B-25s to Milis A/D, Sardinia. Lt. Crichton led one of the 96th's three flights that day; Lt. Col. Young was leading both the squadron and the group. As the P-38 escort passed over the target with the bombers a few minutes before 1 PM, very intense anti-aircraft fire was encountered.

Following is the summary of the statements of witnesses (1st Lt. Samuel A. Hawes and 1st Lt. Hollis W. Roofner):

"Lt. Crichton was flight leader and was leading flight in evasive action while flying through heavy flak, the flights weaving back and forth. (While) Crichton was crossing above flight led by Lt. Wolfe, his plane suddenly fell away, his right wing striking the right verticle fin of Wolfe's plane, shearing off the fin and about 4 feet off of Crichton's wing; this was at about 12,000 feet. Lt. Crichton went into a tight spin, pulling out at about 6,000 feet; then went into another spin, crashed into the ground and exploded. It is believed that Lt. Crichton's plane had been hit by the intense flak over the target."

\*

\*

Evidently, Lt. Crichton was trying to regain control of his plane, and made no attempt to bail out and crashed close to the southern coast of Sardinia.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

Lt. Doug Crichton's home town was Deer Lodge, Montana and he was one of the 96th Squadron's original S/Sgt. pilots (the last of such to become a casualty). He was very near to completing his 50 mission tour at the time of his death. One of the squadron's most experienced flight leaders, Crichton was credited with two confirmed aerial victories and three probables.



1st Lt. LOUIS C. CHAMPION

Photo courtesy of George P. Brown (96th pilot)



1st Lt. DOUGLAS E. CRICHTON

Photo courtesy of P.D. Rodgers (96th pilot)

HENDRIX NEEDS \$\$\$\$ TOOT SWEET!

BECAUSE OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO  
PROCESS YOUR CHECKS, PLEASE SEND  
JAKE YOUR MONEY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
- LIKE YESTERDAY!

\*

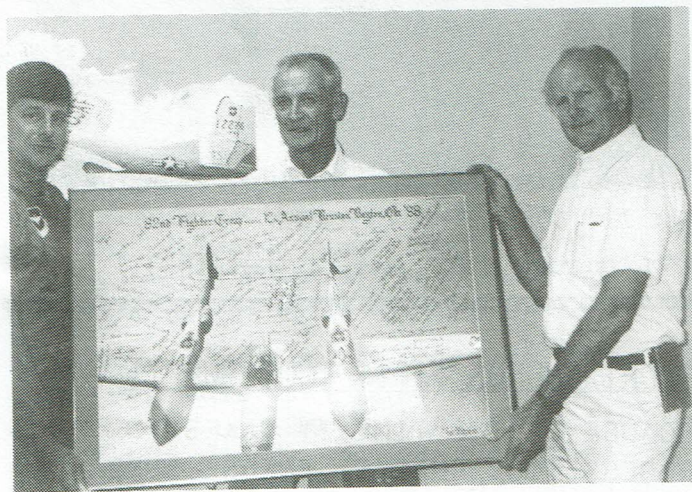
\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*



L to R: Dick Ostronik, Lt. Fernberg  
and Lee Thompson



L to R: Lt. Col. Lynn Eller  
Hugh Lee Thompson  
Dick Ostronik

## COLONEL VRETTOS, THE RED CARPET & D.O.

Fully 189 years ago (at least it seems that long to me) the 82nd FG Assoc. met in Dayton, OH for its annual bash. One of the real nice customs the Assoc. has maintained has been the inviting of active duty people from the 95th FTS at Tyndall AFB in Florida and from the 82nd Flying Training Wing at Williams (hereafter referred to as "Willy") AFB in Arizona. All will remember (especially the ladies) the dash of youth and charm that these young men have added to our meetings.

Col. Jack Vrettos, then C.O. of the 82nd Wing, told those of us gathered at the Saturday Night Banquet that at any time any of us would wish to visit Willie - the Red Carpet would be rolled out!

One of our number, former 96th pilot Dick Ostronik, thought the invitation was a capital idea and decided to take advantage of it. He thought it would be neat, too, if - during the visit - he could make some sort of a presentation to the 82nd Wing which would help the young warriors relate to those that flew before them.

Ostronik then obtained the 18 X 24 in. black & white photo of a flight of P-38s that most of us were able to sign in Dayton. He had the picture nicely framed and, with Sylvia, made arrangements to travel to Willy to make the presentation. With kindness and consideration aforethought, Dick also invited former 95th pilot, Hugh Lee Thompson, to join the party.

When Ostronik and Thompson arrived at Willy there was no RED CARPET! Instead it turned out to be a ho hum day at the office for the Willy Public Affairs Office.

Understand that Dick Ostronik was ticked!

So he fired up his old nasty letter writing machine and sent off a doozy of a letter to Lt. Col. Lynn Ehler, Operations Officer for the 96th Fighter Training Squadron who learned that a tattered and torn old 96th Fighter Pilot could still brandish his scarred and bruised mitts.

Dick sent us a copy of Ehler's reply and we wish we had room to print it. It was certainly a fine letter and it appears that the intersquadron dog fight was over before the crew chiefs could get the wheels unchocked.

We are looking forward to meeting Lt. Col. Ehlers on the Queen.

\*\* \* \*\*

## ROUGH AIR from the "LINK"

This has been a tumultuous year for this old "bod" and the riotous confusion I constantly find myself wallowing in doesn't show much sign of letting up.

One tiny bit of relief showed up this week (of July 17-23) when I cancelled my reservation to attend the annual reunion of the 57th Bomb Wing Association in Salt Lake City (back in the auld days I pulled some duty with the 321st Bomb Group before I was transfered to the 82nd). I'm sure you are all sitting on the edges of your seats to find out why I was going in the first place so I'm not going to keep you in suspense.

Back in January the phone rang and a guy says, "Dick, you won't remember me but my name is Milt McCurry and I was a pilot in the 448th back in North Africa when you were with us." I broke in to say that I certainly did remember him because "you racked me to attention once for not saluting and you also gave me my first ride in a B-25".

Milt then proceeded to give me a direct order to make myself visible at said reunion. This was no problem since SLC is only 350 miles down the road and besides I was anxious to meet Paul Peck who has been doing a masterful job in editing the 57th Wing's newsletter.

In the meantime (a very handy expression for those of us who do a lot of copping out) all sorts of minor crises began to descend on my poor brow and I began to wish I hadn't committed myself to gallop off across the desert to SLC.

Enter telephone again (ring ring) "Dick, this is Milt again, old buddy (his version of a "retirement salute"). Sorry to disappoint you but I just had some minor surgery and doc said SLC is definitely out!"

The upshot of all this is that I have not only saved a hundred bucks but I'm able to get an early start on the August newsletter and that's also money in the bank.

I've received a lot of great mail from you guys since March and space constraints will require some editing but I want to emphasize the importance of your letters and your telephone calls. They are the

fodder that keep this old cow of a newsletter going. Please, please, please - if you think of something that you feel should be included in the newsletter - don't hesitate - sit right down and write me a note about it. Especially if you have learned about an illness or a death.

Have had two visitors from outer space (anyplace beyond a 100-mile radius of Boise) since March. First, Chuck Luke (97th pilot) and his wife stopped by for an evening visit and reminiscing. They hope to get to the Queen for their very first reunion.

Bud Strozier was in Boise for a couple of weeks in April while visiting his daughter. We managed to get in two rounds of golf. I salute (not a McCurry type) anyone with the patience to wait out a duffer who couldn't hit a green the size of our Souk el Arba runways.

Just a couple of days ago Jo Ann & I rendezvood with Ken and Betty Herrick at Red Fish Lake in Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains - truly the most beautiful spot on earth. They had been dallying at Sun Valley to get out of sweltering north Texas, y'all.

And this is "Bye, Y'all" for another shaky "Rough Air" column.

\*\* \* \*\*

## THE PEREGRINE FUND

During our Boise Reunion two representatives from the nearby World Center For Birds of Prey gave a presentation for our attendees - and considerable interest was generated in the world-wide plight of these marvelous flyers in light of their numbers having been decimated drastically by their consumption of poisons (2,4-D, etc.) eaten by their prey. The bird's progeny would then die because shells wouldn't develop. The WCBP has been working to bring these birds back to their rightful place in our environment.

If you are interested in participating in any way, the address is:

THE PEREGRINE FUND  
World Center For Birds of Prey  
5666 West Flying Hawk Lane  
BOISE, IDAHO 83709

Note: This is an unsolicited pitch!

\*\* \* \*\*

# MAIL BAG

FROM STEVE BLAKE

In the next newsletter please inform the membership that I will be at the Queen Mary Reunion and will advise them in person as to the history's progress and the current situation. Hopefully, I will be able to say a few words at the Business Meeting.

Also, will you make another (my last) plea for more photos for the history? We have several hundred and many are real good - but I know there are many other great photos in the possession of various 82nd veterans that would add immeasurably to the history - their history. If they have extra prints I could keep, or negatives I could borrow, that would be great. If, as in most cases, the prints are One-of-a-kind, I can make copy negs and then return the originals to their owners pronto. Also, I need as much information as possible with each picture: date, location, people idents, and other objects visible.

\* \* \*

FROM BRUCE TYSON DARLING

I understand you have a line on my great granddaddy, Jerry Loewenberg. Tell him that even though I only arrived on this here globe last April I'm already a pretty precocious kid. Tell him I want to hear about all of his great WWII exploits -- how he shot down all those Dorniers, Macchis, ME 109s, FW 190s and assorted mouthy privates. He's something else, that boy!

\* \* \*

FROM ROBERT M. GONGOS

It sure brought back a lot of memories reading through the literature you sent out to me.

It sure was a shock to hear about T.D Allen and Dale Daniels. I had hoped to meet up with them some day.

After leaving the service in '45 I signed on with the Ohio National Guard and was called to active duty in 1950 and flew 94 missions in Korea as a gunner on a B-26!

Finished my military career in SAC and started to work for Standard Oil in '53. Retired in '83.

If you have any information about Mike Hormel, I sure would like to have it. Mike and I crewed the B-25.

Thanks for locating me and bringing back all those memories of the 96th in the Big War. Tell all the boys "Congo" is still the same - just a bit older.

\* \* \*

FROM RUTH KELLER

(Widow of Jack Keller, 95th Flight Chief)

The Queen Mary Reunion was one that Jack wanted to attend very much. I plan to come for him and to bring our two children, Mary Lee Addis and Jack Jr.

Jack looked forward to each of the Reunions we were both able to attend. The first one was at Corpus Christi and he saw many of his buddies he had spent nearly three years with overseas during WWII.

Not much has ever been mentioned (we are trying Ruth) about the men who kept the planes flying. Some of these who were in the 95th with Jack were Melvin Mullins, Gayle Hasenplaugh, Jake Hendrix, Dexter Henderson, Robert Adams, Fred Bingham, Bernice Craft, Delbert Elliott, Burl Johnson, Olen Medley, Hugh O'Brien and Ralph Simpson.

Jack entered the old Air Corps on Nov. 6, 1940 as a PFC and retired 28 years later as a CWO-4.

A year after Jack retired from the Air Force he began working for the Texas Employment Commission. He worked there for 16 years and retired again June 1986.

Jack was a fine Christian man, husband and father. He was active in the Baptist Church and was a Deacon. We have three grandchildren who were the apples of their grandfather's eye.

Jack was on his way to the Phillipines when the war broke out. His ship turned around and came back to California and, subsequently, he joined the 95th Squadron at Mines Field.

One thing Jack and I always said to each other, "It doesn't matter where we are stationed - just so long as we are together as a family!"

*Ed's note: The above is adapted from Ruth's 3-page letter. For me it speaks very eloquently about all of the folks who are members of our Association and of the sense of family that runs through it. Thank you Ruth.*

## FROM CATHERINE "KATIE" KROEGER

My husband Harold (see Obits) returned to Effingham, IL after the war and then operated a package store for 37 years before he retired.

We both enjoyed the last two Reunions in Boise and Dayton and were looking forward to the Queen Mary trip and seeing friends again. Hope it turns out well.

Do let me know about the 82nd History Book. My best to all.

\* \* \*

## FROM JERRY LOEWENBERG

Sunday July 16

I called Harley (Vaughn) today and he seemed to be in good spirits. (note: our info is that Harley has prostate cancer) He told me that he had just finished chemotherapy and was now just on pills.

He must be feeling better because he and Vi are flying to Sacramento to spend some time with their daughter.

He and Vi are planning on attending the Queen Mary Reunion - as are Pat and I.

\* \* \*

## FROM RALPH "MONTY" POWERS JR.

Dear Friends,

And so my Betty rests in peace after some nine months of struggle with primary brain tumor. She had no pain from the cancer except the stroke-like paralysis of her right arm and leg. We had never been closer in our 42 years of married life and we cherished each hour we had together. We had lots of love and concern and prayer from family and friends and she and I appreciated all of your notes and calls and prayers.

Betty and I both enjoyed so much the 82nd Reunions and we join to send our very best wishes to you all.

\* \* \*

## FROM PAUL VAN OORDT

Just a note to let you know this old Dutchman hasn't forgotten you and appreciates all you have done for us old jocks.

There was a time when I only wanted to forget anything that had to do with the war and prison camp. As I get older I realize that memories are all we have and all of them are not bad. I had some great friends and some good times and, as memory fades, the things that fade fastest are the bad ones and the mind remembers the many good things.

Won't make to the Queen as we have blown our travel money for the with the purchase of a new car.

Tell all of the gang I said "hello" and that I have some very good memories of those days.

\* \* \*

## FROM CARL WOOD

I went to a Confederate (CAF) Air Show in Madras, Oregon with a neighbor who was an ex P-38 pilot (was shot down over Germany).

Jim Chase really put on a show in a P-38 and it did my heart good to see one fly again. They have a sound all their own - besides being a beauty to see.

I also ran into a crew chief from the 82nd and he said he was with it from one to the end. His name is Charles E. Miller and he was in the 95th.

Didn't make it to Dayton because I was in the hospital with a pulse rate of 152!. Then in Oct. I went in again with a blood pressure of 50/30. They almost lost me that time. The problem was diagnosed as blood poisoning. After eight days in ICU I have been feeling great.

\* \* \*

# Mess Hall Chatter



Clockwise from one o'clock: Danny Ford, Tony Focareto, Al (Dick) Flick and Leo Fisher.

## THE FOUR "FS"

In the November Issue of the Newsletter we had a little blip about the "Four Fs". These were four guys in the 96th who tented together throughout the North African and Italian campaigns. As we noted, they all got together for the first time since the end of hostilities (the World's - not theirs) at the Dayton Reunion.

What we didn't have at the time, friends, was a good picture of the four of them together, so - ta dah - here they are -- all in their smiling faces.

NOW, THE PLOT THICKENS!

Enter Fedele Saccomano now of Geyserville, CA but who had been friends of the 4Fs during their years in the 82nd. He got to chatting with Helen Focareto and she mentioned that Tony had been raised in Akron, OH; whereupon, Sacco said, "That's where I'm from!" Comparing notes, Tony and Fedele discovered they had been in the same second grade classroom together!

Can you imagine that? Friends for three years and neither of them thinking to ask, "Hey Mac, where are you from?"

\*\* \* \*\*

## A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO RUSSIA

This story comes to you via the courtesy of John Hendrix. I can't vouch for the accuracy of the facts or the quotes and you'll have to adapt to your own version.

Harken back to Rumania on the occasion of the heroic rescue of Dick Willsie by Dick (Andy) Andrews and reconstruct the scene if you will. It wasn't exactly like a Sunday afternoon picnic in Griffith Park with curvaceous ladies walking around in briefies. There was a war going on. Trucks full of German troops were roaring down the autobahn toward the foolhardy American pilots - all the while getting filled with Idaho lead; while over-eager Messerschmitts, bent on interrupting the rescue were quickly becoming future pop-casns. It was "slam-dunk" time there for a while.

When the smoke cleared and the Willsie-Andrews cover had split for mother Russia and Willsie had switched his auto-pilot to EAST, he said to his seat cushion, "Andy, hand me the map." "What map?" There was a long pause.

"Didn't you pick up a map of our route to Russia from the briefing room this morning?" "Oh sure, but I threw that out with the parachute; but here's an Oregon Road Map that my daddy never let me use, if that's any help."

Fortunately, Willsie had taken the same trip before and remembered that he turned north when he came to a big river and then turned right when he got to a hill that came down to the river. So he did that and he FOUND the air field and everybody lived happily ever after.

\*\* \* \*\*

## CLEAR THE AIR, BUD

A question was raised recently regarding the origin of the cadre (or cadres) that came together to make up the 82nd FG. One critic felt the identification of one from the 52nd Pursuit Group was in error.

Group Historian Steve Blake cleared the air with the following quote from the 95th Squadron's history: "There (Muroc) on May 6, 1942, 1st Lt. Robert E. Kirtley assumed command and the unit was further supplemented by cadres from the First Pursuit Group and the 52nd Pursuit Group."

Any further questions?

\*\* \* \*\*

## "A GATHERING OF EAGLES"

During the first week of June, retired Brig. Gen. (and former 96th Squadron C.O.) Clayton M. "Ike" Isaacson was inducted into "A Gathering Of Eagles" at Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Alabama.

Ike joined many famous aviators, both in and out of military organizations, who blazed aviation trails or achieved greatness through extraordinary feats of flying or through outstanding leadership efforts.

During his phone call describing the proceedings Ike rattled off so much information that it was difficult to get it all down; but it is our guess that Gabby Gabreski joined him as one of the 20 inductees.

Here are some of the names that rolled over the copper wires: Chuck Yeager, George Vaughn, Ollie Klinker, Dick Asjes, Dave Williams (Schweinfurt Raid), Brigadier Sir John W. Hackett (a British war hero and author - "A Bridge Too Far"), Spaceman Jo Engle and many others.

One of the "others" is one of Ike's former C.O.s (and one of mine, too) Gen. Robert D. Knapp, former Commandant of the 321st Bomb Group and of the 57th Bomb Wing. In my view, Knapp's tour de force has to be the shepherding of the 58 B-25s of the 321st from DeRidder, LA down to Natal, Brazil, over to Liberia, up to Marrakesh and - finally - to Ain M'lila, Algeria to begin combat operations -- WITHOUT LOSING A SINGLE PLANE!

Back in Maxwell AFB Ike, Nana and their two daughters were escorted by two young officers (students at the Air Force Command and Staff School) during the four-day affair. Ike said he was impressed by the quality of the C & S School's student officers.

\*\* \* \*\*

## DISASTER AT BARI

Lee Thompson sent us a startling book entitled "Disaster at Bari". It is an account of a German raid and its horrible results that fell on the harbor just after nightfall on Dec. 2, 1943. The uncontested JU 88s sunk 17 ships which included an ammunition ship or two.

The real disaster was that one of the other 17 was loaded with cannisters of mustard gas that no one knew about. When this

ship caught fire and blew, the best doctors in all of southern Italy were mystified by the thousands of strange injuries (and deaths) which appeared in both civilian and military hospitals in the area.

This is recommended reading for you WWII history buffs.

\*\* \* \*\*

## ACCESS YOUR ALBUMS

Steve Blake is looking for information and/or photos of 96th pilot C.O. Johnson.

He says, "I am preparing a detailed bio on C.O. for the American Fighter Aces Association's magazine. C.O. Johnson flew for the 96th from April through September of 1943 and had four confirmed victories plus several probables and damaged.

He flew another tour in P-38s and then P-51s with the 8th AF during 1944 and then became an ace.

On Sept. 23, 1944 Johnson and his entire flight of Mustangs were bounced and shot down by FW 190s during the Arnhem operation (A Bridge Too Far). C.O. Johnson was killed.

\*\* \* \*\*

## BLANKET ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This editor is blessed by a large group of 82nd Association members who write newsy letters or otherwise send in material for possible inclusion in the newsletter. Such is always appreciated and if it isn't used in a current issue it is properly filed for a later issue.

Please keep the letters coming - they are the rails upon which this old choo choo runs.

Also appreciated - and enjoyed - are the kudos. One of these comes in periodically from a chicken farmer - bartender named George and they are generally accompanied by clippings, articles and other neat things. It's great having friends named George! And Jim! And Charlie! And Jake! And Ken! And Jerry! And Roy! And Curly! And Art! And Fred! And if Fred then Ted! And Ralph! And Harley! And Gina! And Bill! And Monty. And if Monty then Chappie.

Oh heck -- you can find another 1,000 or so in your 82nd roster!

\*\* \* \*\*

## SHNOOKERED SCHNAPPS

It's always nice to have people stop by when they are passing through town. Back in April Chuck (former 97th pilot) and Jan Luke stopped on their way through Boise. Chuck was one of my Link Trainer victims back in Foggia 11 and it was there that we learned we had been at the University of Idaho before the war.

During the evening Chuck told us about a bombing mission to Augsburg, Germany to destroy the Bahnhof (RR Station). He said, "As soon as I had dropped my bombs, I knew I had missed the target and on the way back to Foggia I told myself that some day I was going to get back to Augsburg to see what I had hit.

"Well, as luck would have it, in 1952, with the start up of the Korean conflict, I was called back into the service; but instead of being sent to Korea with the Field Artillery, I wound up in Germany with the occupation forces.

"The first opportunity for a couple of days off, I grabbed a vehicle and motated over to Augsburg to see where my wayward bomb had landed.

"When I got there and saw what I'd done, I said, 'Oh no! It can't be!' But it was. It was the brewery - in shambles!"

\*\* \* \*\*

## PONY ESPRESSO TIME

My apologies to all you guys who received the March Newsletter two, three and four weeks late. Perhaps you never received one at all! If so, let me know as I have a few extra.

I thought I was going to cut a fat hog in the empanage and save the Association a barrel full of bucks by sending the newsletter out on a bulk rate permit. It would have been a good idea if I had wanted delivery in the next century.

So, from now on, all newsletters will arrive on your doorstep by U.S. Mule with JATO!

\*\* \* \*\*

## AND HERE'S A STORY ABOUT A FORMER PRIVATE IN THE U.S. ARMY'S COAST ARTILLERY

I was chatting with a fellow back in June about some other matters when he said he'd soon be driving over Idaho's Lolo Pass on U.S. 12 headed for a small island in Puget Sound where he was to join with some of his former coast artillery comrades for a small reunion.

He said, "I'm looking forward to seeing the beautiful Lolo country again. When I was just out of high school I rode a horse through that area."

I had to ask, "From where to where?"

"From Stockton, California to my home in Mahmonen, North Dakota. It was done on a bet (for my saxophone) and it took me 95 days!"

I guess it wouldn't be appropriate to suggest that Ike should also be inducted into "A Gathering Of Horses"!

-- RL

\*\* \* \*\*

by JOHN HENDRIX

I received a letter from Richard H. Marcus who is writing a book on the 15th AF. He is very interested in the dive bombing of Ploesti on June 10, 1944 and would like to contact anyone who flew that mission or participated in the planning process. He can be contacted at:

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
54702-4004

-- -- -- -- --

Also, someone was looking for the name of the rest camp near Fez, Morocco. According to Dr. C.A. (former 96th Flight Surgeon) Mounce, it was EFRINE.

Last but not least, I am looking for names of any 82nd pilots who were held as POWs. I presently have three names but am sure there were a lot more. These men went through HELL -- let's give them as much recognition as possible.

\* \* \*

## FROM THE TOP DECK OF THE QUEEN MARY

BY JOHN HENDRIX

Looks like I goofed and forgot to give the time of our Business Meeting. It will be Saturday, October 7 between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Thanks to Dick Willsie, we will have Tony Levier as our Guest of Honor at the banquet. Dick is also looking into a possible P-38 "Fly By".

We presently have all contracts locked in, but I need to firm up how many buses to reserve for Universal Studios, Rodeo Drive, and return to Airport. For those who have not responded, please do so by 1 September. Due to the ten (10) working day hold on "out of state" checks, I need your checks no later than 15 September so I can pay all bills prior to or immediately after reunion. Don't forget to firm up your Queen Mary reservations.

I would like to take this time to thank Dick Willsie for all the help he has given me. Also, thanks to all the others who have and are helping or have offered and will be assisting during the reunion. The names are too numerous to list here, but thanks for a lot of help. I really appreciate it. A very special thanks to Dick Lingenfelter and his staff for their patience in getting my items in the newsletters.

Just in case you can't find that sheet we all hate to see — here it is again.

### FEES

BASIC: \$55.00 ea. \_\_\_\_\_ Universal Studios: \$32.50 ea. \_\_\_\_\_  
Sunday Brunch: \$12.00 ea. \_\_\_\_\_ Rodeo Dr. Tour: \$15.00 ea. \_\_\_\_\_  
Golf: with military I.D. Card: \$8.00 ea. \_\_\_\_\_  
Guest (no card): \$18.00 ea. \_\_\_\_\_  
Electric Cart: \$13.00 \_\_\_\_\_

I think I have replied to all questions, but if not call or write:

82ND FTR. GP. ASSOC. REUNION 89  
JOHN HENDRIX, CHAIRMAN  
14708 BODGER AVE.  
HAWTHORNE, CA 90250  
(213) 676-4794

The very large bedroom with private bath and maid's room of the Queen Mary Suite is available. The bedroom has a king size bed and the maid's room has a twin bed. These are on the harbor side and next to the parlors which will be used for the bar. They have a private entrance without going through the bar area. They are available for \$75.00 per night which is a very low price for three people on the harbor side. There is also a large inside room still available for \$72.00. Contact John Hendrix directly for either of these, first come, first served.

82ND FIGHTER GROUP  
OCTOBER 4-8, 1989

Hotel Queen Mary, Long Beach

H O T E L   R E S E R V A T I O N   F O R M

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm DEPARTURE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm  
(Check-in time is 4:00 pm; Check-out time is 12:00 noon)

HOTEL QUEEN MARY

ACCOMMODATIONS REQUESTED: Inside \$72.00 - Landview \$83.00 - Harborview \$92.00

Single with 1 bed \_\_\_\_\_

Double with 1 bed \_\_\_\_\_

Double with 2 beds \_\_\_\_\_

I WILL BE SHARING THE ROOM WITH: \_\_\_\_\_

Reservations must be received by September 6, 1989 in order to be sure that your room request is filled. Reservations received after that date will be on a space available basis. Guarantee your reservation by credit card or a deposit for the first night's room rate. Deposits are refundable if your reservation is cancelled at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

PLEASE GUARANTEE MY ROOM RESERVATION - Deposit Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ AMX, MC, VISA, CB, DE  
Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Hotel Queen Mary  
Pier J, Post Office Box 8  
Long Beach, CA 90801  
ATTN: Reservations

or call (213) 432-6964



## Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays

Dear Friends,

As a newsletter editor and a former reunion host I receive a large volume of material from well meaning hostelries throughout the country and I, flat out, just don't have any time to give them nor am I authorized to do so by the Association. I just have to "round file" the material.

Quite apart from my role in the Association I learned about group rates for vacations in Hawaii through PLEASANT HAWAIIAN HOLIDAYS. The latter is a nation-wide firm that specializes in low cost, packaged vacations in the Islands. The bulk of its business is conducted through local travel firms but they do have a "Group" department.

Jo Ann and I have been planning to visit Hawaii for many years but work and other commitments have always gotten in the way. When I learned about the Group Rate program with PHH it occurred to me that it would be more fun to visit the Islands with people we knew than to hoof it alone. I therefore invited PHH to prepare a proposal for the 82nd Fighter Group and its response certainly seemed attractive.

There are several considerations:

1. This cannot be considered an official Association activity.
2. It will not encumber any Association funds (incl. cost of this page).
3. It will not interfere with the Asheville Reunion.
4. There will be NO 82nd "meetings" in Hawaii.
5. I am not involved, financially, with Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays.
6. I do have an appointment to see my shrink.

PHH's proposal included several alternative packages -- ALL FOR May 9, 1990 departures (note: this is their quiet season and prices and accommodations will be more attractive for us). On the other side of the page I will show only the lowest priced Itinerary. As you will note, it is a three-day package with accommodations at the Sheraton Kaiulani. However, for \$335 more you may stay four additional days at the Royal Lahaina on Maui. This includes a rental car and inter-island flights.

PHH will need to have a firm commitment by Oct. 1 in order to secure air line space and will also need a \$50 per person downy to insure the commitment - so, be advised.

For now, communications should be with me until we reach the minimum number (25) to qualify for the group rate. After that we call in the pros to take us the rest of the way.

- Dick Lingenfelter

See other side for suggested Itinerary & costs.

The prices quoted may change depending upon fluctuation of air fares but the quotes reflect a reasonable estimate. The disparity between the package costs from LA and Newark is simply the difference in air fares. Your cost will depend upon the origin of your beginning and ending flights; i.e., Seattle is \$589/ea., Denver is \$699/ea. and Chicago is \$779/ea.

Hope to see you on the Queen, then in Leiland, then in Asheville.

- Ol' Dick

---

## 82ND GROUP ITINERARY (A) (INCLUDES ALL COSTS FOR THE FOLLOWING MENU FROM DEPARTURE TO DESTINATION & RETURN):

- \* Roundtrip fare via wide-body jet, including meal and beverage service -
- \* Fresh flower lei greeting upon arrival of your transpacific flight -
- \* Roundtrip airport transfers via exclusive motocoach (minimum of 25 passengers arriving on the same flight required). Includes airport and hotel portorage based on two bags (golf bags not included) per person. -
- \* Continental breakfast briefing the morning after arrival. This will be at the Hilton Hawaiian Village-Dome on Oahu -
- \* Full color Memory Album (one per room) -
- \* Pleasant Hawaii Magazine (one per room) -
- \* Dole Cannery Tour (one per room) -
- \* Three nights accommodations at the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani on Oahu -
- \* Services of our Group Specialists on Oahu, and our Tour Counselors at the PLEASANT HAWAIIAN HOLIDAYS' travel desks throughout the Islands -

For May 9, 1990 travel, departing Wednesday:

From Los Angeles via Delta Airlines in Superior Category:

Per Adult, Twin - \$479.00

From Newark via Delta Airlines in Superior Category:

Per Adult, Twin - \$809.00

---

# **T-SHIRT & JACKET SALE**

We still have some T-Shirts and Jackets left and we'd really like to clear out our inventory before we leave for the Queen so we're knocking a buck off of each item: Jackets will be \$15, regular styled T-Shirts will be \$6, and the 96th's Sluggin' Rabbits (4 colors) will be \$9. We have the following sizes & numbers:

### 95th

Jackets - 4 large  
4 medium

T-Shirts- 1 Reg med.  
& 2 lg.

1 Bones med.  
& 2 lg.

### 96th

Jackets - 1 lg.

T-Shirts- 2 lg Reg  
1 Ex lg Reg

4 Ex lg Sluggin' Rabbits  
4 lg " "  
2 med. " "

### 97th

Jackets - 1 med.  
2 sm

T-Shirts- 2 reg med.

H.Q.  
Jackets - 2 ex.  
1g.

SEND DOUGH TO: POOR OLD DICK'S P-38 PX, P.O. Box 5541, Boise, ID 83705



All my lines of "BAND AID" communications have sort of dried up on me. I know there are members of our 82nd family out there who are either ailing, hurting or both. I am a strong believer in ESP (extra sensory perception) and that it transcends distances between members when thoughts of love and concern are sent out on the Heart Wave Network.

Again, our plea is to let us know when you need bouyed up. You may even find cards and letters in your mailbox. Likewise, let us know about your friends.

#### CURRENT INFORMATION:

1. Dorothy & Ted Latta

Ted came up with a pinched cervical nerve that has made life miserable. He needs twenty minutes of traction each day with a 20 pound bag of water; and he must wear a cervical collar for most of the day.

Dorothy has been having her usual problems with her knee and she recently learned she had arthritis of the spine.

2. Jerry & Pat Loewenberg

Pat was planning to attend the QM Reunion with Jerry but a broken foot (sustained several months ago) has failed to respond to treatment.

Jerry still plans to bring his aching back to the QUEEN. Maybe she will fix it, Jerry.

3. Chip Norris (son of Roy & Jo Ann)

Is facing brain surgery in mid-september. Good luck, Chip.

4. Harley Vaughn

Harley had cancer (prostate) surgery a couple of months ago. Has responded perfectly to chemo-therapy & he and Vi will be on the Queen.

## STOP THE PRESSES!    STOP THE PRESSES!

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, AUG. 18, I TOOK THIS NEWSLETTER TO THE PRINTERS. SAT. AM I RECEIVED THE P-38 ASSOCIATION ROSTER IN THE MAIL. IN PERUSING SAME I DISCOVERED FIVE 82ND GUYS WHO WEREN'T ON OUR ROSTER!! I GOT PHONE #S FOR FOUR AND CALLED THEM. THE 5TH HAD NO NUMBER LISTED. SO HERE THEY ARE:

1. ELBERTY, Chas. W. 2718 Maple Ave., Altoona, PA 16601.

Charlie joined the group after we arrived at Foggia. I believe he said he was with the 98th. He couldn't remember names.

2. JACKSON, Chas. D. 349 West Garfield, Glendale, CA 91204.

Chas. was the one that didn't have a ph. #.

3. KINGSLEY, N. John. 3635 W. Berridge, Phoenix, AZ 85019

John was away ahead of me. He is already signed up for the QUEEN MARY bash in October. John was one of the original S/Sgt. Pilots in the 95th before being reassigned to the Pacific out of Mines Field.

Presently, John is Sec./Treas. of the S/Sgt. Pilots Association.

4. SMITH, Francis J., 310 Glen Arbor Terrace, Boynton Beach, FL 33426

"Smitty" was a 97th pilot and completed his SO while the Group was still in Africa. I asked him if he could remember any names.

"No, can't remember a single one." "How about Jorgensen?" "No." "How about Walker?"

"No. Hey wait a minute I think one of my tent mates was Shields." "Hey, we're making progress. How about Taback?" "Yeah, I remember him, by golly."

5. WOLF, Edgar, 623 Society Hill, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

Ed joined the 82nd at Muroc, California and was with it about four months before going to OCS. When I asked him his Squadron # he said he didn't remember that there were squadrons.