



82ND FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 85

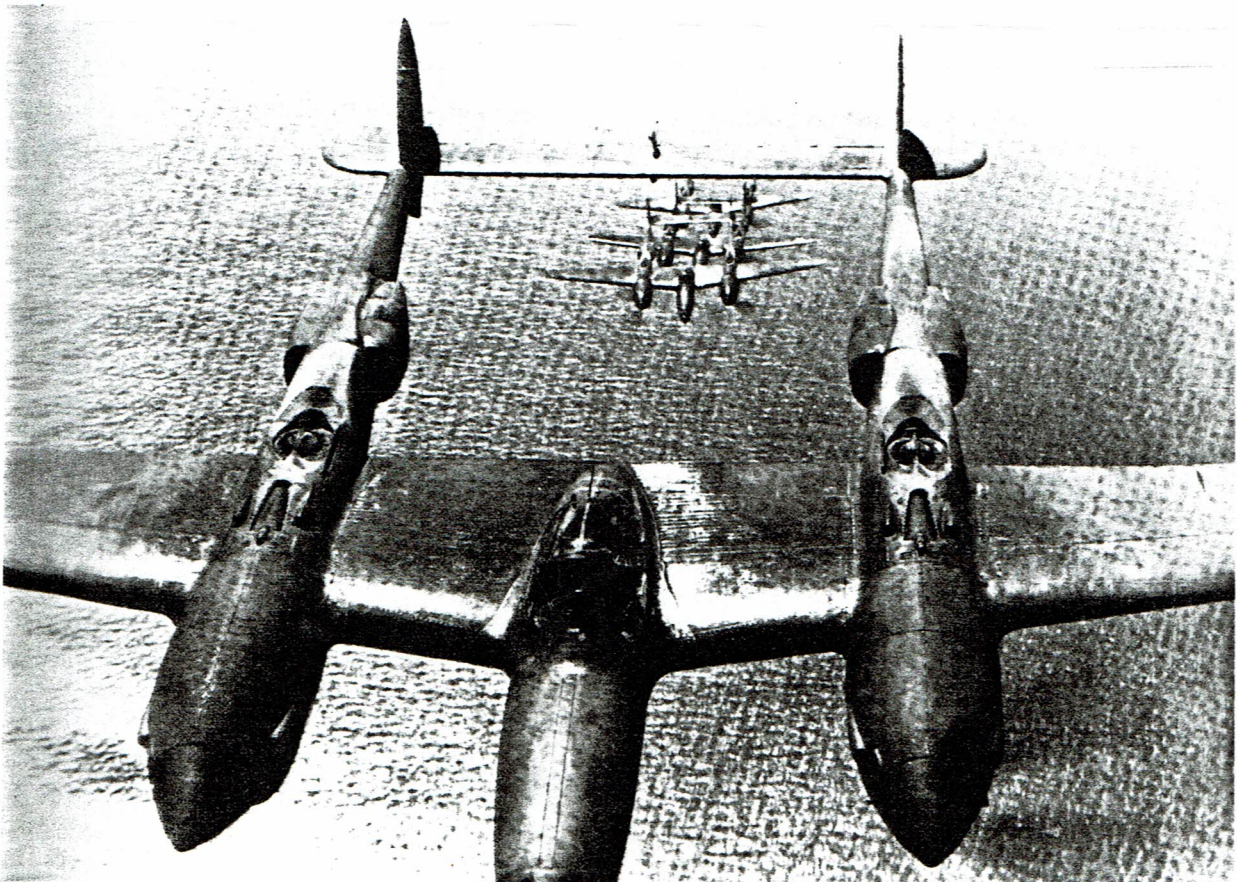
April 2012

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Leo and First Lady, Edie

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Leo A. Fisher

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Ben A. Mason

95TH SQUADRON

Olen L. Medley

96TH SQUADRON

Richard Ostronik

97TH SQUADRON

R.E. 'Dick' Gadbury

NEWSLETTER

H.P. 'Hank' Phillips

Edie and I took a little trip on Wednesday, February 8th to Winslow, AZ. The reason for the trip was two-fold. First, after reading an article in the February issue of The Smithsonian by David Lamb about how he discovered Rt 66 as a hitchhiker, I realized we had something in common. I hitchhiked Rt 66 from Albuquerque, NM to Los Angeles in 1942 on way to Muroc Dry Lake in the Mojave Desert to join the 96th Fighter Squadron of the 82nd Fighter Group. Muroc is now the home of Edwards AFB.

The second reason for the trip was to go to Palm Springs to take my three sisters to dinner for St Valentine's Day. If you ever get to Winslow, stop at the La Posada Hotel on Main Street. It is the last of the famous Fred Harvey Hotels closed in 1957 on US Rt 66 (now US 40). The 53 room hotel is now completely remodeled and the Turquoise Room is regarded as one of the Southwest's top restaurants. From Winslow we passed through Flagstaff, Ash Fork (which has a museum telling all about life on Rt 66), Seligman, Truxton, Valentine, Hackberry and on down to Oatman near the Colorado River.

I want to thank Joel Gray and John Parliman for all the hard work they have put into our upcoming memorial; also Richard Behrends, sculptor and plaque-maker, Dick Ostronik and all the donors so far. I have contacted George Welsh, Curator/Director Air Force Flight Test Center Museum at Edwards. He again said we are welcome there but the museum will not be built for at least two years.

Stay Well,
Leo

p.s. Don't forget your dues

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SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

A touching story from the Palm Springs Reunion

The following was sent by Dave Hanley after the reunion.

Sequence of events: Elbert (Cotton) Creech bought the farm 17 Aug 44. Events described on Page 204 of "Adorimini". I was born 21 Sep 44.

Remains were recovered in 1949 and Lt Creech was buried in Ft Sam Houston cemetery December that year. I was taken to that ceremony and first heard Taps played there. (You do NOT forget). At the San Antonio Reunion, Charley Pinson, Gary Ploesser, Nancy Manduano, Everard Smith and Yours Truly relocated and visited that gravesite. On the "Final Approach" Charley played "Droop Snoot" and went right to the spot, calling the rest of us over.

I was adopted at an early age and never knew what unit my father was in until 2004. Then somebody gave me a helpful hint of Googling his name military style (which I already knew) and following with "MARC". That led me to the 82nd Fighter Group website which let me know that the San Diego reunion was coming right up. I went to said reunion for two days and introduced myself.

Since then I have asked anybody and everybody with a connection to the 95th Squadron if they knew him. George Hayduk (now deceased) and Don Stoutenborough both said the name was vaguely familiar but could not confirm. To be expected after all these years. And I was well resigned to never concluding a 53-year-old search.

Jack Sides usually does not come to these reunions as he has a great deal of difficulty traveling. Only reason he and Judy were at Palm Springs was the fact that a very close friend had miraculously survived a car crash and was recovering, and they just had to visit him. Being that close, they decided to go ahead and attend the banquet.

Since this year there was open seating, the unattached Sides picked an empty table and then Cora and I along with Charley, Gary and Everard decided to join them. In the course of making small talk, Jack inquired what my link to the 82nd was. I told him my father and he apologized for not recognizing the name "Hanley". I then told him I was born "Creech" and

Jack almost came out of his chair.

Judy mentioned that Jack had been talking about the guy named Creech that morning for some unknown reason. Jack stated that he had been trying to remember the first name for some unknown reason and now he remembered it was Elbert, Elbert Creech, a friend with whom he had gone overseas.

Me? By that time I was slightly sub-orbital and still climbing. Rest of that dinner was something of a blur for me. But next day, the whole group seemed to know about what had happened.

And talk about beating the odds. Jack was at the Pentagon after the war, and with Walter Carper researched the names of their pool of replacement P38 pilots. Eighty-two of them (funny number eh?) arrived in Italy early March 1944. By VE Day only 17 were left alive to come home. And by a curious chain of human events, I find what may well be the last of the 17. Are you sure those events are entirely human? Somehow, I sort of doubt it.

BTW, I did three tours in Vietnam and have the scars to show for it. Cora was five and a half when her father was taken away by Japanese and collaborators and never seen again. So, all of us have tasted war to one degree or the other.

War may be a racket but it is an essential racket. Certain factors enable human survival. Chief among these are volition, culture and population density. These factors give us an ironclad guarantee that there will be war. I am so privileged to be the son of two fathers who faced that reality without flinching. (My adoptive father was one of Pershing's Doughboys in the trenches.) I am equally privileged to be married to a woman whose courage never fails her. And am yet further privileged to know the men and women of the 82nd who personify gallantry so well.

Please remember the words of A. E. Housman:

"Those who run away
Only live to die another day.
And towards funerals when they come,
Are not wept as well as some."

Thanks everybody.
Dave

called @ 1 Room with
8/6/12 2 Double ~~Rooms~~ Beds
6:10 pm Marlana Should be no problem -
talked 2 ↑ @

Start calling about available
rm w/ 2 beds
1 day prior

8-6-12

Conf. # 8462 2899

82nd FGA Reunion
Seattle, WA
September 5 - 9, 2012

Location: **Embassy Suites Hotel Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.** Room Rate - \$109 + Tx
Cocktails and snacks provided nightly
Reservations at 425-227-8844 or website

119+Tx

- Wed. Sept 5: **Golf and Reunion Registration.** Dick Ostronik is coordinating the golf. More to follow.
- Thurs. Sept 6: 10:00AM - Private tour of **Boeing Flight Museum.**
Lunch available at the Museum
6:00 - 9:30PM - **Argosy Dinner Cruise** on Elliot Bay { Seattle Waterfront}
- Fri. Sept 7: 9:00AM - **Tour of the Boeing plant** at Everett, home of the 747, 767, 777 and the 787 Dreamliner.
12:00 - Lunch at Mukilteo waterfront
1:30PM - **Paul Allen's Museum** (A personal collection of flyable WW 2 airplanes including a ME 109 with the Daimler Benz engine and the only FW 190 still flying.)
At the hanger next to Paul Allen's Museum, **Bob Hammer**, a Boeing Engineer, has built and sold 4 ME 262's. He has parts to build another and may have something for us to look at.
6PM - Back to the Hotel for a **pizza party.**
- Sat. Sept 8: Morning and afternoon - free time for shopping and side trips.
Possible trip to the Boeing Pilot Training Center and simulators
9AM - **Executive Committee Meeting**
6PM - **Reception and Banquet** with 3 piece band
- Sun. Sept 9 9AM - **Annual Meeting**

Transportation: A **tour bus** will be available for the Thursday and Friday events. The Roalsvigs tell us that Seattle traffic is a bear. A large tour bus will provide comfort, safety and convenience, remove the chance of getting separated, and give us more time to socialize together.

The **hotel van** will shuttle guests to a train for side trips into Seattle.

Optional Trips: The **locks and fish ladders** at Puget Sound
McCord - **largest mall** on the west coast. Walkable from hotel or by hotel shuttle.
Victoria, BC - one day ferry trip for a taste of London
Alaska

Lois and Mel are very eager to share the city they love with you. Lois recommends staying a few days on either end of the reunion to sample what the area offers. The hotel will store your luggage if necessary.

Please complete your **intent form** and **mail it in today.** This is very important to help us fix the costs of the individual events and the transportation. The actual registration form with confirmed prices as well as the cost for golf and club rentals will be in the June newsletter.

Please consider using the tour bus. The cost per ticket will decrease dramatically if the bus is full.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Balances as of 3/31/12

Legal Fund	\$ 1,000.00
Reunion Fund	\$ 2,945.81
Memorial Fund	\$ 2,550.00
Operating Account	\$ 3,627.03
Total	\$10,122.84

Memorial Donors

Bonnie Chapman	Hank Phillips
Roy Elkins	Kathy Rocky
Leo Fisher	Al Schneider
John Kane	Hope Swanson
Katie Kroeger	Lute Thompson

82nd FGA Shoppe: Brian Preiss, son of Sylvia Ostronik, has taken on production and shipping of our Shoppe items. Much thanks to Brian for his help. The tote bags and caps from the Palm Springs reunion are a great example of Brian's work. They are being mailed out April 1. Thanks to those who are expecting merchandise for their patience.

Website News: Much thanks to Matt O'Toole for consulting and designing our new website. His expertise is invaluable. This is a work in progress. New features will be rolled out continuously. Check out the enhancements as of this newsletter www.82ndFighterGroup.org. The website has more flexibility than the newsletter. For instance the full text of both NL#14 from Leo Fisher and of the O-2s from Hank Phillips, while too lengthy (read costly) for the printed newsletter, will be found on the website.

Washington, DC WWII Memorial Tours: Leo Fisher wants WWII vets to know that the **Honor Flight Network** fully pays for WWII and terminally ill vets from all wars to visit the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. They will also supply caretaking and assistance for the trip and the tour as needed. For an application form, contact them at (937) 521-2400 or www.honorflight.org.

Memorial update: The committee has nearly completed a request for proposal to send out to prospective designers. Since funding and plans for a proposed Edwards AFB museum are not firm and, if given the go-ahead may be two years off at the earliest, the committee is also looking at enhancing one of the existing 82nd memorials (The Air Force Museum in Dayton, the memorial garden at the Air Force Academy, or the March Field Air Museum). Speaking of the memorial, Leo Fisher sent some background on the origins of the 82nd at Muroc from Newsletter #14 (August '89) in which then Group Historian, Steve Blake, quoted from the 95th'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 1st Pursuit Group and the 52nd Pursuit Group."

Dues: 2012 dues are payable by March 31.

Check the dues code in the upper right corner of your mailing label. C=Current, D=Due followed by the amount. **Life members frequently inquire why they are asked to pay annual dues.** At the reunion around 2000, it was decided that life members would be encouraged to support the Association with **voluntary** annual contributions in addition to their pre-paid life membership.

Seattle Reunion: Send in your intent form ASAP. It helps us price the events.



First to guess who this is wins an 82nd FGA belt buckle. Call Judy at (352) 341-0890.

KEEPING IN TOUCH Notes from Members

Bill Mason writes his dad is doing o.k., but getting progressively weaker and still lives at home with help during the day. Bill and Pam drove to Houston before Christmas to celebrate **Ben's 100th Birthday**. Their son, Michael, a Combat Medic with the Army's 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y., joined them. They feel blessed and very proud of both Ben and Michael.

Hope Swanson has missed attending the reunions and is looking forward to Seattle and reuniting with old friends. She's trying to get her kids to attend with her. She enjoys the newsletter even though some names are unfamiliar and others are no longer with us. She's going to bring photos of past reunions with her.

Wayne Grover, brother of **Arnold** (see Folded Wings), contacted us for information about those who knew Arnold. He asked in particular for Roy Norris who was Arnold's tent-mate and sent a photo of a P-38 model he placed on Arnold's casket.

Carolyn Hamilton, daughter of **Steven Plutt**, ordered a cap for her dad and conveyed her appreciation to the Association.

Bonnie Chapman tells us she is fine and living in Monterey with her little dog and extends her best wishes to all.

Peggie Palkovic, daughter of **Pidge Roberson** and stepdaughter of **Robert** says her parents always enjoyed the newsletter and the reunions and sends her regards.

Allen R (Bob) Kennedy wrote that he's **Link Jones** vintage, tented with **Fred Wolfe** and **Bull Barber**, is proud of being in the 96th spring and summer of '43 and wonders if the Association will exist when he's no longer here to pay his dues. We sure hope so Bob. We need more participation from the second and third generation to do it.

Katie Kroeger, wife of **Harold**, enjoys reading what the various people and the group are doing.

Al Schneider trained in Muroc and thinks the memorial is a great idea.

Roy Elkins, Associate member and friend of **Richard L Hood**, says he really enjoys the newsletter and asked how **Ben Mason** is doing. See above, Roy.

Steve Harman, son of **Paul** (see Folded Wings) writes his dad loved the reunions. The last the two attended was in Washington, DC and, 'It was great to meet his fellow airmen.'

Hank Phillips sent an article from a recent issue of 'Forward Air Controller' about the use of the Cessna Super Skymaster (aka O-2) in Vietnam with a note that of his 70 combat missions, less than half-dozen were in the O-2. The full article and Hank's note are on the website.

NL #14 submitted by **Leo Fisher** and noted on the Treasurer's Page also had an article on the 'Four Fs' (**Danny Ford, Tony Focareto, Al (Dick) Flick and Leo**) - tent mates from North Africa and Italy.



Memories and relationships are the heart of the 82nd. Send in your anecdotes and photos and we'll be happy to publish them as space allows.



FLY BY OF HONOR



*Missing plane formation for recently departed
Heroes and Courageous Ladies of the 82nd*

William 'Bill' Barr	17Dec11	95th
Arnold Grover	11Aug11	96th
Roswell S Harding	24Oct11	96th
A. Paul Harman	23Feb12	96th