



1st Pursuit Group

1st Fighter News



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Send articles to Bruce Gordon, 105 Broadbill Ct., Georgetown KY 40324
Send dues & change of address to Pete Marty, 504 Southgate Dr., Blacksburg VA 24060-5437



Ironmen in WW II

Jim Graham, Past President of the 1st Fighters and a proud member of the 71st Fighter Squadron, is shown above with two of his crewchiefs and his P-38 fighter. His stories of WW II and the P-38 start on page 4.

This newsletter contains Pete's excellent brochure for the September Reunion. To print the brochure, Print Pages 5-10. Print only Pages 9-10 for the reservations sheet to send back with your check to Pete Marty.

President:

Jim "Raquet" Hardenbrook
 9 Canal Drive Podquoson, VA 23662
 757-850-5581 ejhbrook@me.com

President Emeritus:

Bill "Frito" Lay
 6305 Compass Court, Suffolk, VA 23435
 757-484-1690 laytw@aol.com

Vice President:

Bob Correia
 3 Midway Drive, Warwick, RI 02886-8114
 401-737-3268 robtcorr@verizon.net

Secretary/Treasurer:

Pete "Pistola" Marty
 504 Southgate Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24060-5437
 757-850-5581 1stFighter@Comcast.net

1st Fighter Website: <http://www.1stFighter.com>

Webmaster: Vacant. Volunteers?

Squadron Officers:

27th Pres: Frank "Easy" Pickart 830-755-2292
fpickart@gvvc.com

Sec/Tres: Bob Correia 401-737-3268
robtcorr@verizon.net

71st Pres: Jon "Goldy" Goldenbaum
 PO Box 190 Warner Springs, CA 92086
 Cell: 951-203-0190 Work: 1-800-362-3490
jon@conaircraft.com

94th Pres: James C. "Jumbo" Wray 850-625-7235
Jumbo@knology.net
 VP: Ragin Hause "Rags" 706-265-8393
Rhause01@windstream.net
 Sec/Treas: Bruce Gordon 502-370-5240

Editor: Bruce Gordon brugor@mac.com
 105 Broadbill Ct. Georgetown KY 4032

Note from the Secretary

The 2011 Membership Drive is wrapping up. If you haven't sent in your dues, now is the time. Currently our Membership stands at 300. I want to give a special thanks to those members who contributed to the Heritage Endowment Fund. These contributions enable the Association to continue its work supporting the Wing.

2011 Heritage Endowment Fund Honor Roll

Steve Twombly	Rosalyn Nolen	Richard Follett Sr.
Bill Roege	Charlotte Newman	Arnold Megenity
David Ingleman	Mike Scott	Chuck Wilson
John Delianedis	Cyril Williams	Lee Scott
Bruce Gordon	Bob Riley	Wade Tolliver
Mike Oakes	Bill Goodrich	Bob Correia
Hank Goddard	Jim Hartney	Richard Rice
	Ray Cleary	

Pete

Last Flight of Colonel Frank Lawson

Colonel Frank Lawson enlisted in the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet program at age 18 and one year later was flying P-38 fighters in North Africa and Europe during World War II – 1st Fighter Group/27th Squadron. He was granted an Air Force commission after the War and later served in Korea and Vietnam as a decorated fighter pilot. He had the distinct honor of serving in WWII with both of his brothers – all pilots. Upon returning from assignment in Vietnam as an F-105 pilot he retired and returned to Montgomery, Alabama enjoying another fifteen years in civil aviation as the chief pilot of a local corporation. In his later years he became an outspoken advocate of causes which affected our national interest.

In Memoriam

Charlie McCann	71st
Bill Caughlin	27th
James Franey	71st
Frank Lawson	27th
Clifford Laechelin	27th
Louie Mimms	94th
Roy Silvers	71st

RACQUET'S REMARKS

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since last I updated the members on our Association and all the events we have participated in and/or are planning. First and foremost, Pete Marty and I visited Riverside, CA and The Mission Inn in late January '11 to plan for our next Reunion. We were met there by Jon "Goldy" Goldenbaum, a local and 71st President, who had laid the ground work for our visit, had some great ideas and made our visit most productive. As a result, your Board decided to hold the Reunion at the Mission Inn and take advantage of the Aviation heritage the Inn affords and to introduce the 1st fighter Wing's significant aviation heritage to the Board of the famous "Fliers Wall" located at the Inn. Our efforts to make the "Wall" decision-makers aware of the 1st Fighter Wing heritage and significant aviation accomplishments of past and present members were successful and on 16 March, 2011 I was notified that our efforts would be rewarded by having 1st Fighter Wing selected for inclusion on the Wall.

The ceremony is planned for the morning of Saturday, 17 Sept, at 1000hrs and is planned to recognize all past members, all of who played a significant part in developing the 1st Fighter Wing reputation as the premier Fighter Wing in the USAF. For all of our members, from WWII up through today, this ceremony is for you, recognizes your contributions to the Wing and Nation, and I hope all of you will plan to attend the Reunion and this historically significant Ceremony. See you there!

As I mentioned earlier, your Board has been busy! By far one of the most important recent accomplishments was restoration of the Website. Pete Marty took the initiative to fix the Website and make it functional. Pete worked with Steve "Buick" Olds to safeguard all our historical records while converting to a new, safer, more functional system. It works, it is great, you need to check it out at www.1stfighter.com. We all owe a deep debit of gratitude to Pete for making it happen. Thanx Pete!

I have been honored to be your President since replacing Bill "Frito" Lay when he stepped down after our last reunion at Langley. Unfortunately, Bill's Dad passed away just prior to the conclusion of the reunion and the Association never had a chance to bid Bill and Gayle a formal farewell that both he and Gayle deserved. This past November Peter Marty, my wife Kathy and myself hosted Frito and Gayle for a luncheon at the Langley Officers Club. Your Association presented them with an engraved decanter inscribed with the dates of service as Association President. Thanx for everything Frito!

Early in the year Bubba Parker, 27th President, informed me that he was taking a new position overseas and would no longer be able to perform his duties as Squadron President. After doing a search Bubba and I agreed that we had found a very suitable replacement in Frank Pickart. Frank has agreed to pick up the reins at least thru Bubba's remaining term. Thanx Frank. I am not drawing any conclusions since Bubba's departure but the mid-East has been in a constant state of turmoil since his arrival in the area, I will let you all reach your own conclusions. God-Speed Bubba!

Lastly we have been very active with the Wing since we last got together. I represented the Association in the Wing's Annual Awards Ceremony where the Association presented three awards for the "Expeditionary Airman and Officer" of the year and the "Fighter Pilot" of the year. You can see pictures of the Ceremony on the website, check it out! We have two events forthcoming, one is the 94th Birthday party, planned for Aug 16-20, '11. Jumbo Wray is POC for the Association and should have more info shortly. Also check the website for continuing updates. Also, final paperwork is in ACC staff coordination for approval of a F-22 "Maloney's Pony". It has been a long hard battle but I think we are getting close to approval. Watch the website for updates. Once again, we are planning a great Reunion that will recognize the Wing and all the members of this Association that contributed to making the 1st Wing what it is today!

WW II STORIES BY JIM GRAHAM

A mission to remember

March 31, 1945; 1 FG Mission #1328, a fighter sweep in the Vienna area and rail strafing northwest.

It was my 22nd mission and I was flying "White 2" as wingman to Lt. Norman Crawford. The group encountered a solid overcast en route to the target area, so the three squadrons split formation.

The 71st came down out of the overcast at about 3,000 feet just west of Viener Neustadt and found a spectacular battle going on between the Germans and the Russians. The Russians were driving the Germans out with an intense barrage of all kinds of artillery. When the 71st came out of the clouds both sides decided we were the enemy and directed all sorts of anti-aircraft fire at us. I was flying Crawford's left wing when his left engine erupted in smoke and he veered left and down and was last seen heading east, but to the north of the battle.

The squadron wheeled north and proceeded to sweep the Vienna area and to take up rail strafing toward Prague.

The 27 FS lost two planes and the 94 FS lost Col. Arthur Agan, the 1st Fighter Group commander, who became a prisoner of war until the war ended. Crawford crash-landed behind Russian lines and was later sent by rail car to Yugoslavia where he was handed over to the partisans and then later returned to the squadron.

The mission accounted for one enemy aircraft destroyed, the destruction of 14 locomotives, 26 oil cars, 16 freight cars and two other tank cars. I was credited with one tank car destroyed and two freight cars damaged. It was a lively, but costly mission. Three pilots were shot down or crashed and were killed.

Another loop to remember

In the spring of 1945, I was assigned a shiny new P-38L. What a gem! It was a dream to fly after the old Gs & Js of my early missions. It had the flaps to avoid the compressibility factor in dive bombing, a tail pointed radar to warn of sneaky bandits, and above all, the aileron boost that allowed finger tip rolling!

As I recall, there were a couple of flights to the Naples area to buzz the shuttle boat to Capri that carried pilots and nurses to and fro from rest camp. Riffing the water as we buzzed by and then doing a multi-roll pitch straight up was exhilarating.

Upon return to base one day after a local exercise flight, I felt particularly cocky. The field wasn't busy. It was a fine day and I thought it to be a good time to show off. I asked the tower for a straight-in approach, then I dove in toward the end of the runway and pulled up and over in a loop. I dropped the wheels when gravity took over in the proper direction and lowered flaps.

There were a few moments when I wondered if the landing gear would lock and if I'd judged the right spacing for a landing before the runway ran out. I'm here to tell about it, so I guess it must have worked. I can't recall the comments from the tower, but I judged that they were not favorably impressed.

A flight I'd just as soon forget

After a strafing mission in the Regensburg or Munich, Germany area, one of our planes was hit by flak in the wing and the rubberized fuel tank continued to smolder as the pilot coaxed the plane over the Alps and landed at an emergency base in northern Italy.

As I recall, it was at Rimini and the field was home to a P-47 squadron. After some time, the base repaired the P-38 and notified the 1 FG that it was available to return to duty at our Lake Lesina, Italy base.

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1st Fighter Association Reunion 2011

The Mission Inn, Riverside, California

September 14-18, 2011



The 2011 1st Fighter Association Reunion promises to be one of the best ever as we return to the historic Mission Inn in Riverside, California. The Inn (www.missioninn.com) is a national historic landmark featuring grand archways and flying buttresses leading to secluded outdoor gardens and patios.

As part of the Reunion Activities, the 1st Fighter Wing will be inducted into the Famous Fliers' Wall. The Inn's Fliers' Wall is a tribute to great aviators and aviation organizations including five connected to the 1st Fighter Wing; Frank Andrews, Carl Spaatz, Eddie Rickenbacker, Alexander De Seversky, and Major General Robert Olds (Robin's father). The Inn is located in downtown Riverside, which is a destination itself, featuring a rich blend of history, activity, architecture, and tree lined pedestrian spaces (www.riversidedowntown.org).

Room reservations are to be made directly with the hotel. See the instructions on the back of the sign-up sheet. Room reservations must be made by **Monday, August 15, 2011**. Cancellations must be made 48 hours in advance of arrival date to avoid any penalty billing.

This year we will be offering a "Meal Package" which will cover all reunion meals at the Mission Inn at a discounted price. Payment for reunion events are due by **Monday, August 1, 2011** and should be mailed along with the sign-up sheet to the 1st Fighter Association Secretary/Treasurer.

Wednesday, September 14th



Wednesday is the arrival day for the reunion. For those flying in, the most convenient airport is Ontario International (www.flyontario.com). The Mission Inn offers complimentary round trip shuttle service to Ontario IAP with advance reservations made a minimum of 24 hours prior with the Guest Services Desk (951-784-0300). If you driving, the hotel will provide 1st Fighter registered hotel guests complimentary Self-Parking in their garage on 6th Street, located directly behind the hotel. Valet Parking is available for \$15 per night. Hotel Check-in time is 3pm. Once checked in please join us in 1st Fighter Association Hospitality Room (open 1pm-midnight). There you can pick up the Reunion Itinerary, your name tags, and relax with fellow members at our private bar hosted by the 1st Fighter Association. At 5pm docent tours of the Mission Inn will be available for a small fee. The 1st Fighter Association Executive Council will meet in the evening.

Thursday, September 15th



Thursday opens with an Association Breakfast in the Galleria Ballroom followed by an overview of the reunion activities. We will then have a short business meeting followed by a break out for the Squadron Business Meetings and the election of the Association Officers. There will be two excursions offered:

Planes of Fame Museum

After breakfast we will board busses for our stop at the Planes of Fame Air Museum (www.planesoffame.org) located at Chino Airport where many WWII buildings are still in use. The museum specializes in restoring aircraft to flyable condition. Upon arrival we will eat lunch followed by Docent Led Tours. Our tour will focus on Pre-Cold War aircraft including the 475th Fighter Group's rare P-38 Lightning

Glen Ivy Springs & Spa Excursion (Ladies Only)

After breakfast escape to the Glen Ivy Springs and Spa for a day of pampering and relaxation at this premier spa (www.glenivy.com). Excursion includes roundtrip transportation and lunch at the spa.

After the day's activities we will gather in the Galleria Courtyard for a reception including a cash bar and cheese station. Following the reception we will break up for the Squadron Dinners featuring a Mexican Buffet.

The Hospitality Room will be open following dinner until Midnight and hosted by the 27th.

Friday, September 16th



Friday morning will start off with an available Continental Breakfast in the 1st Fighter Association Hospitality Room. Three excursion options will be offered.

March Field and South Coast Wine Excursion

After the breakfast we will board busses for a trip to Riverside National Cemetery, home of the Medal of Honor Memorial, the Fallen Soldier/Veterans' Memorial, and the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action National Memorial. We will make a short visit to the memorials and take a group photo overlooking March Field. We will then take a windshield tour of March where one of the P-38 squadrons was based, thus the title "Guardians of the Inland Empire". After WWII, March was home to the 1st Fighter Wing flying the F-80. Next is the March Field Air Museum (www.marchfield.org) where we will eat a catered lunch during a presentation about the museum's aircraft. Following a viewing of the museum's collection of mostly Cold War aircraft, we depart for a winery tour, wine tasting and a light fare at one of California's famous South Coast Wineries.

Alternate Excursions:

"Tours of the Town" Excursion

After Breakfast those attending this alternate tour will board buses for an exclusive tour of Riverside. The tour includes lunch. Upon return to the hotel our group will have the option to take the Wine Excursion below.

South Coast Winery Excursion

This excursion option gives you free time in the morning. A bus will depart the hotel in the afternoon for Temecula and join the March Field Excursion for a winery tour, wine tasting and a light fare at one of California's famous South Coast Wineries.

Upon returning to the Mission Inn join Association members in the hospitality room which will be open until midnight and hosted by the 71st.

Saturday, September 17th



Saturday opens with the Famous Fliers' Wall Induction Breakfast in the Galleria Ballroom including a Fliers' Wall historical overview by historian Walter Parks. The Induction Ceremony at the Fliers' Wall follows breakfast in the Galleria Courtyard. Then, we will board buses for a day focused on restored airplanes. Other options include an alternate walking tour of Riverside and High Tea in the Hotel.

Aircraft Restoration and Field Day

After the Induction Ceremony we will board busses for historic Flabob Airport (www.flabob.org). Founded in 1925 as Riverside's first civil airport, Flabob is a paradise for homebuilders, antiquers, and everyone devoted to sport and family aviation. While at Flabob, we will eat a BBQ lunch on the tarmac and view static displays of some truly unique restored aircraft. Biplane and other vintage aircraft flights available for gas only, take the stick again!

Walking Tour of Downtown Riverside and High Tea

After the Induction Ceremony, those attending this alternate tour will enjoy a walk encompassing historic downtown Riverside.

High Tea

This afternoon get together will partake in the unique "High Tea at the Mission Inn".

Saturday culminates with the 1st Fighter Association Banquet and Closing Ceremonies. The Banquet will be preceded by a cocktail reception in the Glenwood Tavern with hors-d'oeuvres and pay as you go cocktails. The Banquet will be held in the Music Room and include an address by a distinguished speaker.

Close out the evening in the hospitality room which will open after the banquet and be hosted by the 94th.

Sunday, September 18th

Before heading home join your fellow members for an available Continental Breakfast in the hospitality room. Check-out time is 12pm.

1st Fighter Association Reunion 2011			
The Mission Inn, Riverside, California			
September 14-18, 2011			
Event (Times Approximate)	Cost	X Attendees	\$
Reunion Registration Fee (Member only)	\$35	N/A	\$35
Discounted Meal Plan (See ROE)*	\$250		
5PM Docent Tour of Mission Inn	\$8		
Wednesday, September 14th			
Hospitality Room Open 1PM to Midnight -Snacks and Refreshments (See ROE)			
Thursday, September 15th			
8AM – 9AM Breakfast in Galleria	\$34		
9:30AM – 4PM Glen Ivy Springs & Spa Excursion (Ladies Only)*	\$75		
11AM – 4PM Planes of Fame Excursion*	\$60		
6PM – 7PM Cocktail Reception in Galleria Courtyard (See ROE)			
7PM – 9PM 27 th , 71 st , and 94 th Squadron Dinners*	\$70		
Hospitality Room Open 9PM to Midnight -Snacks and Refreshments (See ROE)			
Friday, September 16th			
8AM – 9AM Continental Breakfast in Hospitality Room	\$18		
9:30 – 7PM March Field and South Coast Wine Excursion	\$115		
9:30AM – 1:30 PM Riverside Heritage Bus Tour	\$75		
2:30PM – 7PM South Coast Wine Excursion*	\$65		
Hospitality Room Open 7PM to Midnight -Snacks and Refreshments (See ROE)			
Saturday, September 17th			
7AM – 8AM Induction Ceremony Breakfast in Galleria	\$34		
11AM – 4PM Aircraft Restoration and Field Day*	\$55		
11AM – 1PM Historic Downtown Riverside Walking Tour	\$25		
2PM – 3:30PM High Tea at the Mission Inn	\$38		
6PM – 7PM Cocktail Reception in the Glenwood Tavern (See ROE)			
7PM – 9:30PM Banquet and Closing Ceremonies*	\$100		
Hospitality Room Open 9:30PM til? - Snacks and Refreshments (See ROE)			
Sunday, September 18th			
7AM – 10AM Continental Breakfast in Hospitality Room	\$18		
Hotel Check-Out Prior to Noon	N/A		
TOTAL COST :			

Names of Attendees

See Other Side

1st Fighter Association Reunion 2011

The Mission Inn

September 14-18, 2011

Please fill out the registration form on the other side. Mark the number of attendees for each event and then multiply the attendees by the event cost (if you elect the Discounted Meal Plan leave the # of attendees and \$ blocks for individual meals blank). Sum the event costs at the bottom of the page. Mail this form and a check for the total made out to the 1st Fighter Association not later than **August 1st, 2011** to:

1st Fighter Association
Attn: Pete Marty, Secretary/Treasurer
504 Southgate Drive
Blacksburg, VA 20460-5437

Rules of Engagement (ROE):

1. Hotel Reservations are to be made directly with The Mission Inn. Cut-off for our rate is **August 15th**. Call 800-843-7755 or 951-784-300, ext. 850 and ask for the 1st Fighter Association Rate. Reservations can also be made online at www.missioninn.com. Go to Room Reservations and enter your arrival and departure dates. Select "CODE TYPE" under the "GROUP CODE" option and enter the group code of FIRST091411. The following are the contracted room rates for both single and double accommodations:

Deluxe	\$119	Raincross	\$129	Glenwood	\$139
Mission	\$149	Junior Suite	\$169	Presidential Suite	\$500

2. The Discounted Meal Plan includes all Reunion Booked Meals at the Mission Inn with **the only exception being the "High Tea"**.

*Please note any meal restrictions below:

3. Meal Prices include tips, service and event planner fees. Cocktail Receptions are pay-as-you-go for drinks, hors-d'oeuvres are included as part of the meal price.

4. The Host Unit will pick up the first \$500 of the Hospitality Room bar tab. After that it is pay-as-you-go.

5. Excursion pricing is based on a minimum number of participants. If an excursion is cancelled, you will be offered a refund or an alternate excursion.

6. Dress for the Reunion Events is appropriate casual with the exception of the banquet which is Coat and Tie.

Weather Briefing: The September average High Temperature for Riverside is 91 degrees with an average Low Temperature of 60 degrees. Rainfall average is .26 inches.

(Continued from Page 4)

I was called upon to ride in the back of the "piggy-back" P-38 to pick up the repaired plane. It was a beautiful clear morning as I hunched down over the shoulders of the PB P-38. After a bit of paper work, I was taken to the P-38 with the new wing. I did a walk around, and crawled aboard. The engines started flawlessly and sounded like sweet music. After a quick wiggle and visual check of the control surfaces I taxied out in the beautiful sunshine.

I checked in with the tower and started the roll. There was a slight breeze and the left wing dropped slightly, so I put in a tad of aileron to the right. To my consternation, the ship took a dip to the left!

With a tender touch I tried aileron to the left and found a slight roll to the right. Somehow those P-47 mechanics had cross-controlled me! My trip in the sunshine down the Adriatic coast was with extreme concentration and befuddlement. How could this be?!

I informed our tower of my situation and they gave me a straight in approach. This time I made my landing with a minimum of maneuvers. I can't recall the diagnosis of the error in repair, but I believe it was a hydraulic mistake.

Life in tent city

Squadron housing was a double row of pyramidal tents housing four with folding canvas cots and sleeping bags. Upgrading with innovative stoves and wash basins was an ongoing activity when not on flying duty. Belly tank crates were the prime material for making floors and sides for the tents. Packing crates for machine guns were often used for doorways.

The stoves were the most ingenious. A 55-gallon drum was shortened by cutting the middle section out and welding the top and bottom thirds together and adding a hinged door. The chimneys were often 75mm shells welded end-on-end. A burner was made by making an iron pipe closed tube in the form of a "U" on its side with small holes drilled in the inside of the bottom leg. Tubing from wrecked air conditioning units was connected from a tank of aviation gas on a rack on the outside of the tent to the U-tube in the stove. The U-tube was stuffed with steel wool to aid in vaporizing the fuel.

Lighting and regulating the burning aviation gas was a skill to be learned with some hazard. There were occasional fiery events and the flight surgeon was kept quite busy. It is also to be noted that the flight surgeon used a significant amount of grain alcohol in treating burns - at least that was the rationale for ordering supplies. However, most of that alcohol was consumed by weary pilots at the Officer's Club, mixed with fruit juices or, at holiday time, with dried milk and dried eggs for crude Tom & Jerries.

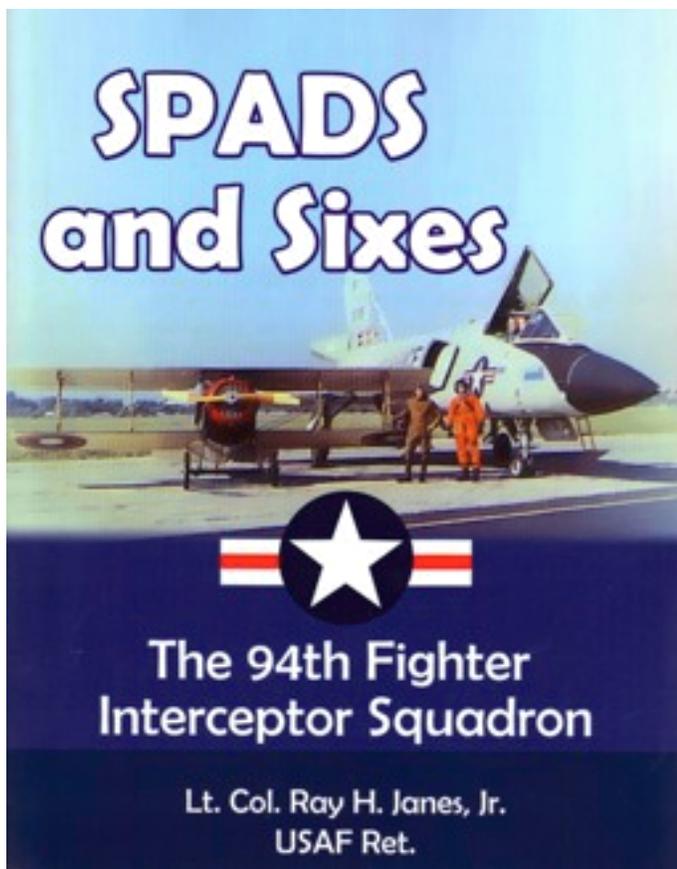
One pair of pilots, obviously from the upper class, decided that tents were below their lifestyle. They built themselves a nice one room home out of tuffa stone, easily cut sandstone that was indigenous to the area. With a fine roof of belly tank sides and a plate glass window from an abandoned control tower, the proud owners decided to have a house warming party for their buddies.

The stone home was replete with a fireplace made from the tuffa stone and outfitted with an aviation gas burner, a la the aforementioned design. As the guests arrived and beers and cocktails were hoisted, the housewarming party began with the lighting of the fireplace. The gathering was greatly impressed!

It seems that the aviation fuel tank behind the house had a slight leak in the tubing connection. Over the hours after filling the tank, the gas drizzled along the tubing to the fireplace of tuffa stone. The porous stone eagerly absorbed the leaking gas. It was a 'housewarming' worthy of great cheers by the gathering and great tears by the owners!

Jim Graham

Editor
First Fighter Group Association
105 Broadbill Ct.
Georgetown, KY 40324



The 94th in the Cold War

“Spads and Sixes” is a new book published by a 94th pilot, L/C Ray Janes. It gives personal stories of the 94th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in the Cold War era, from F-86’s through the F-106. The 94th was based at Selfridge AFB, MI, and deployed to Alaska and Korea to meet changing threats. Well-written and interesting. 258 pages and many photos.

The cover photo shows a Spad VII from WW I, restored and flown by the 1st Fighter Wing, beside an F-106 whose pilot wears a pressure suit used for flights above 50,000 feet. WW I Ace of Aces Eddie Rickenbacker was there in 1967 to see the Spad fly. The Air Force Museum was shocked to hear that we not only restored, but actually flew their aircraft!

\$30 from Ray Janes, 1504 Lynhurst Ln, Denton, TX 76205. janesx2@verizon.net.