

INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between
PL USA Magazine and the
Sport's Greatest Names.

GENE BELL

as interviewed for PL USA by Henry Ellis and Brian Vest

B & H: Since you have been overseas and some readers have not heard anything from you in a while. Would you give us a short recap of the past few months?

Gene: I've been stationed in the Netherlands for the last 18 months at Soesterberg Air Base. Soesterberg is located between Amsterdam and The Hague. My present job is Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of the Base Sports and Fitness Center. I direct and oversee varsity, intramurals, fitness, self-directed and special interest programs. Most importantly, on August 12, I became the father of a healthy baby boy.

B & H: Since Holland is well known for its breads and cheeses, how has your weight been lately. Are you still able to put on and take off weight with relative ease?

Gene: Holland has a smorgasbord of different foods and cultures; this country is truly a melting pot. I can honestly say that I will never see the 181 pound class again.

B & H: Being stationed in Europe and training there, have you had to modify your training routines, and have you learned anything new from observing and training with Europeans?

Gene: Training in Europe for the past year has been great. I have access to many gyms in the local area which are loaded with equipment, dedicated lifters and fitness enthusiasts of all sizes and shapes. The local lifters are very keen on training on the progressive system. I also train at one of the best powerlifting gyms in Holland.

B & H: The gym you train at has several lifters of world caliber. Do you feel any animosity or resentment from these lifters since you are a world champion?

Gene: The lifters at the gym are great guys to lift with. They have been a tremendous support for me since I've been training there.

B & H: Your last major competition was the Mid-Netherlands Open Championship. Tell us a bit about your preparation and totals for the meet, and perhaps you could let us in on some of your short term goals.

Gene: My total was 1918 on five attempts. I felt I overtrained for this event, leaving my best lifts in the gym. My short term goals are to hit the Nationals and World



Gene Bell with a 733 deadlift at the CSC Powerlifting Championships Games in 1993.

B & H: Do you miss the national level meets?

Gene: Competing on the national scene gives me the motivation to really get those lifts going. I always train like a mad-man when planning to lift at the Nationals. I was primed to hit 2000 - 2075 at the '92 Nationals.

B & H: We understand that you are training with a couple of middle-aged novice lifters. Do you have any tips for other lifters in that category that may help them succeed or just stay focused and motivated?

Gene: I guess you are referring to Henry Ellis and Brian Vest, my training partners. Both of these

guys are great training partners and fun to be around. The best advice I can give a novice lifter is to seek a knowledgeable lifter and read every book on powerlifting and weight training. Try and keep an open mind regarding new training ideas. I also give new lifters a copy of PL USA to read to really get them motivated.

B & H: What motivates you to forego aches and pains and continue training?

Gene: I'm a very competitive person in life, and actually in everything I do, especially when I have an interest in it. Setting goals and trying to achieve them, or even exceed them, makes it all worth-

while.

B & H: Do you feel that your military career has helped or hindered your lifting success and what role has being stationed overseas played in this?

Gene: So far it has been a happy balance between lifting and my military career. At times, when duty calls, it is hard to get to the gym or even to some meets. I have had some of my best training on foreign soil.

B & H: Has there been a specific inspiration for you throughout your success, and what do you feel the underlying factor may be?

Gene: I guess the two people who had the biggest impact on my lifting career are my former high school coach, Gary Sanders, and my good friend, Louis Baltz. Success comes in so many forms; in the sport of powerlifting, I would say the factors would be genetics, goal setting, hard training, and the desire to be the best.

B & H: What does your competition schedule for '93 look like and where would you like to go from here with your lifting career? Are there specific records you are looking to break or a special competition you would like to lift in?

Gene: My training is the best it's been in years, so I'm looking at an IPF total record in the 198 lb. class. The only meet I haven't lifted in is the World Games, so I am hoping to get elected to represent the USA there.

B & H: You have prepared for your future by getting your degree and even done some teaching in public schools before you came in the military. Would you like to pass on any words of wisdom to young people who might be looking at powerlifting or some other type of strength activity for their future?

Gene: I would suggest to any young athlete to plan on getting an education or a job skill to allow them to make a living and enjoy life. Remember to train safely and smartly so that you can enjoy your lifting later in life.

B & H: Any last words you would like to pass on to readers and fans of yours in the states?

Gene: I hope the readers find this article enlightening. I've been blessed to meet some people who have become close friends. My stay in the Netherlands has been great for my family, so we plan to be here as long as possible.