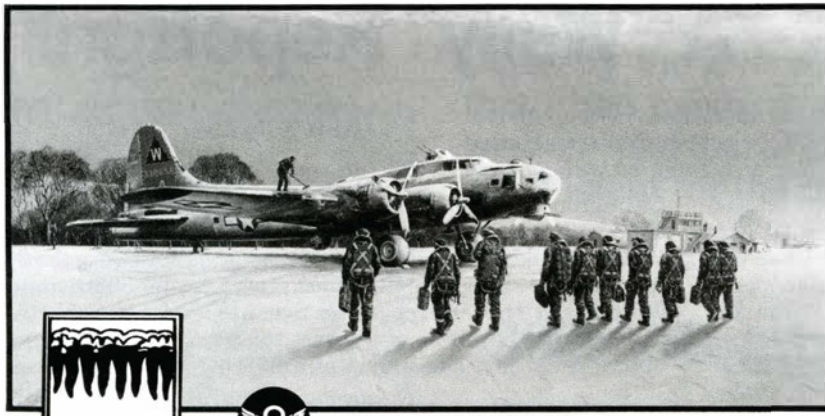




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398th BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION • 8th AIR FORCE • 1st AIR DIVISION • NUTHAMPSTEAD, ENGLAND

VOL. 12 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 1997



### *A Memorial Magic Moment*

ONLY NOW AND AGAIN does a picture appear that completely “tells the story” of an event. In this case, members of the 398th Bomb Group tour party of 1982 raise arms, eyes, and cameras to the sky as Sally B does a fly-past over the Memorial. England’s only flying B-17 was an obvious hit as she joined in the dedication of the 398th Memorial. This dramatic moment was captured on film by Ralph Ambrose, an English Friend who as a youngster “hung around” the base in 1944-45 with buddy Roger Bradley. Both will be at Nuthampstead with next year’s tour party in June 1998.

# A "Wally" Report

Wally Blackwell, president of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association, and his wife, Teedy, attended the opening of the American Air Museum at Duxford, England, (along with

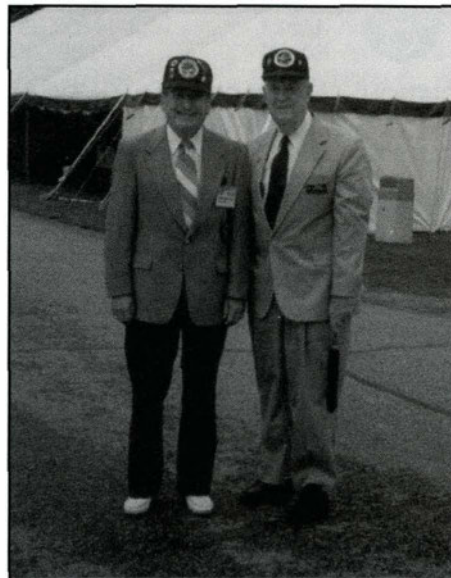
Queen Elizabeth and a few others). They also took time to browse around Station 131 and visit some of the Friends. Following is his "browsing" report:

Teedy and I had a great time on the trip to England beginning July 30. We stayed with Peggy Wells and I had especially arranged for her to accompany us to the August 1 Duxford American Air Museum dedication. The Friends gave me a rousing 73rd birthday party, energetically hosted by Barry Tyler, at the Woodman on July 31, which was also the 53rd anniversary of my first mission. We also got to see the Queen very close up at Duxford. It was also a good air show, and they really put the Sally B through her paces. Lots of acrobatics.

Teedy went "shopping" (what else?) at Saffron-Walden with Peggy and Greta Barker, so I rode around the area with Tony Barker checking on his "cattle," etc. Over hill and dale in his well used Land Rover is real fun, and he seemed satisfied that he had found them all. We stopped by Tony Clark's for coffee. On leaving, Tony B. blithely backed over some of Tony C's fine lawn area (after Beryl reminded him not to) and off through the hedge rows we went. You need a good horn to blow at "strategic" places. Later that day, Geoff Rice came by as planned to tell me all about his and Les Dear's favorite project. Good old fish and chips from Royston that evening!

We went to the rededication memorial service of the 355th Fighter Group at

Litlington on August 3 which included a church service and a memorial site service much like we do. Peggy set it up for me because she knew the 355th has a window in the church near Steeple Morden that might be of interest to the 398th; there is a suggestion of a 398th



ARNIE SCHNEIDER & WALLY BLACKWELL  
At Duxford Museum Opening

window at Anstey. I had a brief chat there with Steve Pena. Steve is still urging us to use the 91st Control Tower Museum for 398th material. I explained our plans for use of both the Hertfordshire County repository and the Heritage Center as our prime facilities. But maybe the best part of the time there was an approved fly-by of Duxford, right down the length of the runway at 300 feet, past the Sally B and the Museum with Mike Graty and his flying machine. Owners Ian and Sandy Johnson treated us at the Woodman on our return.

I was disappointed that I didn't have time to take up Robert Dimsdale's offer for a home visit, but we had a good talk anyway. Our Memorial site is in splendid shape and a US flag was flying prettily at center field in front of the old tower site. We properly disposed of six of our "previously used" flags by burning. Peggy still has five flags in storage to use as will be necessary. Since our burial flag donations seem to be slowing down, we may need to eventually procure additional ones. New flags will very probably last much longer. We took a bus from the airport to Royston where Peggy picked us up. Real convenient. Peggy, Teedy and I went for a snack at the Woodman Monday evening, and who is there but Arnie Schneider and his daughter!

## 398th Tour Memories Abound

### Comstock Led Return To Old Base

#### 1982

The official "Return to Station 131" began in 1982, even though the rumblings about going back to the old base had been heard for a number of years. One group did return under the auspices of the 8th Air Force Historical Association in 1976 and other individuals drifted back alone, some to find their way to the Woodman Inn and others left to wonder whatever became of the tower and the runways.

President Bill Comstock led the 1982 contingent of 66 members in the dedication of the 398th Memorial, which had been several years in developing and financing. The project was led by Bill Comstock, Dick Frazier, Herman Hager, Ed Arbuthnot, Bill Ganz, and our English Friends, Ozzie Osborn and Vic Jenkins.

On September 21, 1982, the Memorial was dedicated amid speeches, music ... and a wind storm that wreaked havoc with the food tent, musicians, officials, Yank visitors, and the 300-odd English Friends who came to enjoy the occasion.

No damage to the Memorial, however. It still stands today and is as beautiful as ever.

#### 1986

"Lest We Forget" was the rallying cry for the 1986 return to Nuthampstead, which coupled Station 131 with a visit to the Normandy beach sites of D-Day.

After a swing through London and a visit to the American Air Force Base at Alconbury, the group descended on Nuthampstead and another Memorial ceremony. This featured the planting of a pair of trees, an ash for the Friends and a maple for the Yanks. Ozzie Osborn did the ceremonial tree honors for the Brits and Phil Stahlman for the 398th.

And then there were small plane flights from the old air field, and, of course, a visit to the American Cemetery at Madingly.

The tour provided the first meeting between John McCormick and Dave Bancroft, who were the only survivors from their respective planes after they collided on the way to Berlin on February 3, 1945.

The group then boarded their coach for Newhaven and a Channel crossing to Dieppe, France. Here they came across such names as Caen, St. Lo, St. Mere Eglise, St. Marie Dumont, Omaha Beach, Utah, Pointe du Hoc, etc., conjuring up memories of D-Day. There was a visit to the D-Day Museum at St. Mere Eglise and a wine reception at the office of the mayor of St. Marie du Mont. A wreath was laid at the American Memorial at Omaha Beach, a first by an Air Force group.

A visit to Paris to end the tour was more or less uneventful.

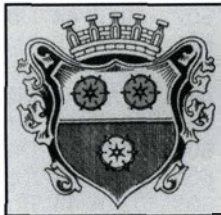
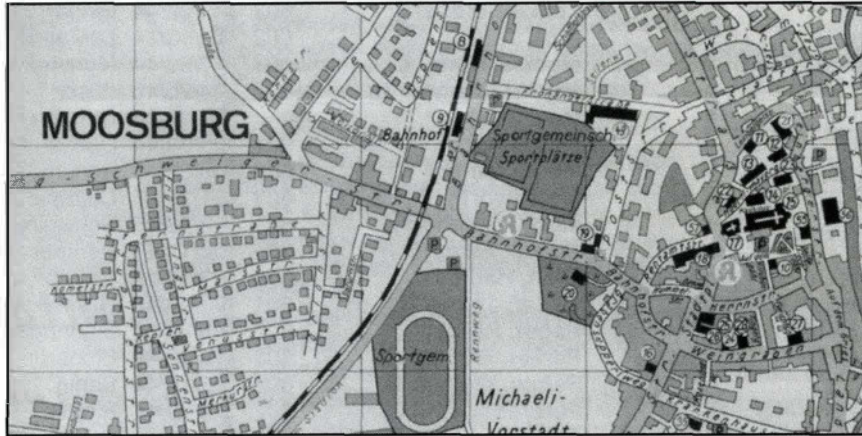
#### 1988

The "Bomb Run Tour" came in 1988 — visits to such interesting places as Cologne, Dusseldorf, Boppard, Luxembourg, Bastogne.

(continued on page 9)

**Because Sam Gailey Asked For It:**

# 1998 Tour Party To Visit Moosburg Stalag VII-a



Stadt Moosburg  
a.d. Isar

When Sam Gailey sent in his registration for the June 1998 tour to Germany and England, he sent along one question —

“Can we possibly pay a visit to Moosburg?”

The question seemed reasonable, in that Moosburg is located a few miles northeast of Munich. And Munich is where the tour will begin.

It seems that Gailey and his John Farmer crew of the 602nd had spent the 1944-45 winter at Moosburg as guests of the Germans, and he surely would like to see that place one more time, under better conditions.

The tour coordinator wrote to the mayor of Moosburg, asking if any remains of the infamous PW camp of World War II were still evident.

Back came an answer from “Hr Schwarz, Stadt Moosburg a.d. Isar.”

Herr Schwarz said that a model of the camp can be seen at their local history museum.

“There are still quite a number of barracks which for the most part have been converted to apartments or workshops. One barrack is still in its original condition,” he said.

The area of the former Stalag VII-a is now known as Neustadt.

And there we’ll go as part of the city tour on June 5, because “Sam Bailey asked for it.”

Gailey’s crew was shot down over Munster on October 28, 1944.

It is also possible that some members of the tour may wish to visit Dachau, also located near Munich.

The tour begins on June 3, 1998, from any of five US cities from which British Airways flies directly to London. These are New York, Washington D.C. (Dulles); Chicago, Los Angeles and Seattle. Connections will be made on arrival in London for Munich.

After three days in Munich the tour will stop at such places as Wurzburg, Rothenburg, Trier, St. Avold, Luxembourg, Cologne and Neuss. Also included in the continent segment will be stops at Remagen, Ardennes, Bastogne, Malmedy and St. Vith. All well known to those who remember World War II.

After two days with our German Friends at Neuss, the tour party will fly from Dusseldorf to London ... and on to Nuthampstead for four days at Station 131.

For reservations or information on the tour contact Barbara Fish, Travel House, Inc., 5042 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. Or call toll-free 1-800-423-5454.

As of FLAK NEWS press time in mid-October the tour count had reached 27, with several more still “on the bubble” in making decisions. Reservations, with a \$300 per person deposit, can be made at any time; full payment will be due no later than February 23, 1998.

Those with confirmed reservations include Wally & Teddy Blackwell, Russ & Millie Reed, Sam Gailey and Marian Lloyd, Jan Kolb, Wilbur & Frances Fisher, Arthur & Phyllis Watson, Bob & Elaine Knowles, Herb & Jule Wilson with daughters Elizabeth Wilson and Lynn Henselman, Danny Leyva, Jack & Alice Lee, Newt Moy, George & Lois Schatz, Willis (Bill) & Ruby Frazier, tour coordinator Allen Ostrom, and travel consultant Barbara Fish.

## Last Time Around For \$5.00 Dues

Every quarter another section of the country gets the privilege of contributing to the operation of the 398th Bomb Group. This time it will be the folks in the Western sector, plus Hawaii and Alaska, who receive the blue dues mailing envelopes.

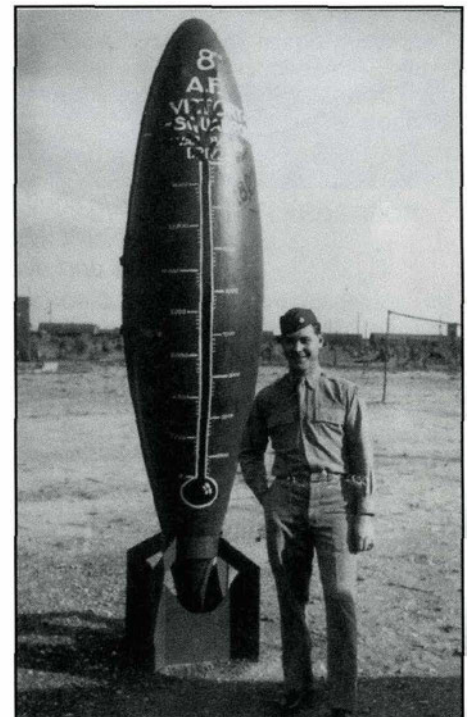
This is the last time the dues will be \$5.00. To accommodate increasing cost of publishing FLAK NEWS, the Board has voted to increase the dues to \$10.00 beginning next year.

Meanwhile, this quarter’s dues notices are included for those living in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Alaska, and Hawaii.

## Woodman ‘B&B’s’ For The 398th

Ian & Sandy Johnson, proprietors of the Woodman Inn at Nuthampstead, have advised the 398th Bomb Group that the Woodman’s three new “bed & breakfast” units have been reserved for the 398th during the group’s tour visit there June 12-13-14-15, 1998.

Tour members wishing to opt for the Woodman “B&B” rather than a “home stay” accommodation, should advise travel consultant Barbara Fish at 1-800-423-5454.



**TRACY PETERSEN poses with a huge bomb (empty) suggesting that his 601 Squadron had gone “over the top” in an 8th Air Force Victory Bond contest. The late Col. Petersen was generally identified as “the most popular squadron CO.”**

# THE PURPLE HEART

## Men Of The 398th

# WOUNDED IN ACTION

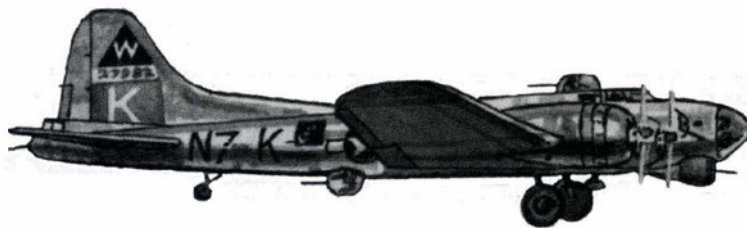
## Medals Awarded

<b>Albright, Franklin, Jr.</b>	602	10/30/44	Munster
<b>Alderson, Richard E.</b>	603	03/02/45	Bohlen
<b>Amabele, Nick R.</b>	601	05/19/44	Berlin
<b>Aukerman, John V.</b>	600	10/02/44	Kassel
<b>Aune, Arnt N.</b>	601	07/20/44	Dessau
<b>Bacon, Adrian S.</b>	601	11/10/44	Cologne
<b>Bonner, Donald C.</b>	601	02/23/45	Schweinfurt
<b>Branum, Charles W.</b>	603	03/10/45	Sinsen
<b>Brown, James R.</b>		03/04/45	Ulm
<b>Bryan, Joseph, Jr.</b>	602	09/14/44	Ostheim
<b>Buck, Edwin N.</b>	602	05/30/44	Dessau
<b>Carbonneau, Francis H.</b>	600	04/08/45	Derben
<b>Carlson, Kenneth G.</b>	603	11/21/44	Merseburg
<b>Chandler, James E.</b>	601	10/10/44	Stuttgart
<b>Colantuicce, George C.</b>	603	11/07/44	Brux, Czech.
<b>Cosco, John P.</b>	602	07/08/44	Humieres
<b>Cowan, Harry E.</b>	601	09/03/44	Saarbrucken
<b>Crawford, Paul F.</b>	603	09/04/44	Peenemunde
<b>Cucco, Joseph F.</b>	601	11/02/44	Merseburg
<b>Fanska, Rudolph R.</b>	601	02/23/45	Schweinfurt
<b>Figueria, Arthur L.</b>	600	09/01/44	Villaroche
<b>Fischer, James N.</b>	601	07/24/44	St. Lo
<b>Fleming, William R.</b>	603	03/02/45	Bohlen
<b>Franceschini, Gino</b>	602	09/08/44	Ludwigshafen
<b>Fritsch, Philip A.</b>	601	07/08/44	Humieres
<b>Gagon, Glen</b>		03/22/45	Dorsten
<b>Gilson, John R.</b>	601	07/31/44	Munich
<b>Gray, Harry E.</b>	602	03/18/45	Berlin
<b>Guild, Herbert D.</b>	601	01/13/45	Germersheim
<b>Gulledge, Thomas B.</b>	601	04/13/45	Neumunster
<b>Haas, James R.</b>	602	09/08/44	Ludwigshafen
<b>Hall, Ralph D.</b>	601	01/10/45	Ostheim
<b>Herrera, Jose E.</b>	600	09/26/44	England
<b>Hobba, William C.</b>	603	01/22/45	Sterkrade
<b>Horvath, Stephen G.</b>	602	07/07/44	Leipzig
<b>Irwin, Victor B.</b>	603	04/08/45	Derben
<b>Jennings, George W.</b>	600	06/25/44	Toulouse
<b>Jensen, Malcolm L.</b>	603	03/18/45	Berlin
<b>Jillie, Don R.</b>	602	02/20/45	Nurnberg
<b>Johnson, Evald A.</b>	601	01/20/45	Mannheim



<b>Jones, William M.</b>	601	04/13/45	Neumunster
<b>Kempner, Saul J.</b>	600	07/08/44	Fresnoy
<b>Kral, George B.</b>	602	01/10/45	Ostheim
<b>Kritz, Arthur</b>	600	09/13/44	LeManoir
<b>Leitner, Lionel J.</b>	602	12/29/44	Bingen
<b>Link, Alex J. Jr.</b>	602	09/13/44	LeManoir
<b>Mackie, Henry L.</b>	603	10/28/44	Munster
<b>Markel, Norman E.</b>	602	04/25/45	Pilsen
<b>May, J.C.</b>		03/22/45	Dorsten
<b>McAllister, John G.</b>	601	05/30/44	Dessau
<b>Menig, John</b>	603	03/02/45	Bohlen
<b>Molesworth, Robert W.</b>	603	01/28/45	Cologne
<b>Moon, Roland F.</b>	601	02/23/45	Schweinfurt
<b>Norris, Edward J.</b>	601	04/13/45	Neumunster
<b>Oien, Hadley J.</b>	600	03/14/45	Osnabruk
<b>Oliver, James C.</b>	601	01/13/45	Germersheim
<b>Paget, Percy</b>	602	09/09/44	Mannheim
<b>Parker, William C.</b>	603	12/29/44	Bingen
<b>Peirce, William B.</b>	602	05/19/44	Berlin
<b>Peterson, Emil O.</b>	602	12/29/44	Bingen
<b>Richardson, Robert A.</b>	603	03/02/45	Bohlen
<b>Rosenzweig, Harold</b>	602	09/08/44	Couvincourt
<b>Scott, Ross F.</b>	601	01/20/45	Mannheim
<b>Sichting, William M.</b>	601	06/13/44	Beauvis
<b>Small, Grant</b>	602	07/29/44	Merseburg
<b>Steele, Edward L.</b>	601	12/29/44	Bingen
<b>Stewart, Edward S.</b>	603	04/08/45	Derben
<b>Stoffer, Louis J.</b>	600	12/24/44	Koblenz
<b>Strombaugh, Charles E.</b>	601	09/06/44	Brandenburg
<b>Suchman, Charles B.</b>	601	07/08/44	Humieres
<b>Tacker, Laurence J.</b>	601	06/20/44	Hamburg
<b>Taylor, Franklin W.</b>	602	06/27/44	Berlin
<b>Triebwasser, Sidney</b>	600	10/12/44	Brux, Czech.
<b>Tueller, Glenn N.</b>	601	12/13/44	Merseburg
<b>Unger, Von B.</b>	601	07/06/44	E'Ecques
<b>Walkup, Charles N.</b>	601	07/20/44	Dessau
<b>Wallace, Robert D.</b>	601	01/20/45	Mannheim
<b>Weisend, Wendell H.</b>	601	06/18/44	Hamburg
<b>White, James L.</b>	600	12/24/44	Koblenz
<b>Wickam, Walter E.</b>	601	10/26/44	Osnabruk

*THIS LIST of men from the 398th who were awarded Purple Hearts for wounds incurred in combat was gleaned from the records sent by members of the Friends of the 398th, Nuthampstead. These records have been placed in three bound volumes and eventually will be forwarded to the 8th AF Heritage Museum, Savannah, Georgia. It should be pointed out that only the names of those men who returned safely from missions are included. Many others wounded in combat and ultimately sent to PW camps do not appear in the records.*



## A Mighty Fortress ...

In life, men experience frustration, fear, courage, joy, and sorrow. All of these were faced by the men of the 398th who supported the Group's mission. Time and again, they were called upon to reach for an inner strength to face the day. The Psalmist wrote that the Lord was his refuge and fortress, his God in whom he trusted. The Flying Fortress we knew well. The Mighty Fortress, whom we call God, gave strength to face those days of conflict, while doing our duty unflinchingly, and still gives it in times of peace.

— James Duvall, *chaplain*

# The Gathering Of Heroes

By WESLEY G. EATCHEL  
603rd Squadron

Quite passively I keep a vigil of a space once lived in time.  
I gather bits and pieces of the finest of the fine.  
Heroes, if you will, not of their own design,  
but creations now fulfilled like some prophetic sign.

Two score and almost three men gathered in that blue.  
Like eagles they would soar with a target in their view.  
Courageous, fearful, gallant in silver streaks of flight.  
Each pursued a feeling and knew that he was right.

Not all returned to mother nor to laud and praise and cheer.  
For some, a heroes' welcome only angels got to hear.  
And those who made it happen through the maelstrom of that day  
knew well the scene repeated, that would not go away.

For each one served two missions.  
One as silver streaked the blue.  
The other was his conscience,  
that waved a flag of colored hue.

The turret engineer yells they're coming 12 o'clock and flat.  
As the chin begins it's chatter while streaming 50's where they're at.  
No time for praying now that time has surely past.  
The seconds in between us draw on training that was cast.

All 50's spitting steel with tracers now ablaze.  
A bizarre cacophony of atmosphere within seconds of this phase.  
A thunderous explosion rips apart a 17  
and a fighters going down but no parachute is seen.

The pilot then is heard; feather engine No. 1  
and check all positions for damage that's been done.  
The radio man's been hit came a muffled soft reply.  
He's now beyond our help, as is our reason why.

Where are those friendly birds that chase specters from the sky?  
Help is needed badly this we all decry.  
And clouds that formed a nemesis to thwart the well laid plan,  
where are they now when needed, where is our talisman?



Now some walk alone, some hold a sweetheart's hand.  
The glitter may be gone but the memories still command.  
And when the eagles gather to hear the winds of war  
you can see it happening in their eyes just like before.

He flies the canyons of the clouds where surrealistic demons wait,  
only to emerge to those blackened puffs of fate.  
No longer visioned there Mt. Rushmore in the sky,  
or the bridge at Golden Gate nor the Rocky Mountains high.

For those escaping horror to a fallen comrade's time,  
Or the loss of burning engine to a M E 109,  
All but now surrender to a box of intrinsic skill.  
With the hope the hand of God may work their mind set will.

The sudden surging upward as bombs are dropped away.  
The closing of the bomb bay doors incites the get away.  
Eyes that once were fixed upon the terror wrenching scene,  
suddenly react to the gunners chattering demean.

The turret gunner screams he's five o'clock and low.  
While in the waist profanity as the gun spits brass a flow.  
The tail gunner's twins rake the two that flashes by.  
While up front in the nose they watch the planes fall from the sky.

There are no believers though reason makes one question why.  
Your buddy there beside you parts the veil of the sky.  
The feeling of utter helplessness to the gut wrenching sickening wave,  
Is a combination of blood and tears and cordite and trying to be brave.

Just get us home dear lord  
and let our little friends appear.  
Give hope to that feathered prop  
and inflated landing gear.

The Nissen hut grows somber as belongings find their way  
and the kid that's fresh from stateside assumes a vacant bay.  
The war goes on regardless of feelings of the heart.  
The new one's now included with the hope he'll learn his part.

Fifty years and more have faded into grandsons of our time.  
Whose lives seem unaffected in their circles now subline.  
But as the eagles gather to reflect on things that were,  
Heroes are void of conscience knowing war was not a blur.

Pride is each one's mute companion  
as these airmen gather round.  
We're proud to be rubbing shoulders  
where living heroes can be found.

# Heritage Museum: More Than A Building

## A PLACE FOR REMEMBERING

The 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia, is more than a building that houses mementoes and memorabilia.

It is also a place that provides facilities for remembering individuals and crews, be they air or ground.

Like C.C. (Mac) McCoy of Farmer's Branch, Texas —

"I wanted to let you know that I have made a donation in memory of Lt. Francis C. Farenthold of the 603rd Squadron to have his name entered on the "Wall of Valor" at the Heritage Museum.

" 'Buddy' was a dear friend who 'went West' in 1971. He was proud of his service as a B-17 pilot ... and the 398th."

Thus, the name FARENTHOLD will have a place in the museum's Memorial Gardens. It will be on a 4 x 12 tablet on the Wall of Valor ... along with 35 other tablets purchased by other members of the 398th.

The Wall of Valor program is administered for the Heritage Museum by Judge Ben Smith, who served with the 303rd Bomb Group. Contact Smith at

## Ebest New Historian

Dallas Ebest, who kept 603 squadron B-17's running in WW II, has a new job these days — keeping track of 398th Bomb Group history.

President Wally Blackwell named the former crew chief to the group position, replacing Willis (Bill) Frazier.

Frazier opted to step down following the Spokane reunion, saying "there is a time for everything and this is the time to pass the duties to another."

Blackwell told Frazier, "The 398th is truly grateful for your efforts on behalf of the Heritage Museum and your other contributions during your 'tour of Duty'."

Ebest, of San Antonio, also has been assigned a "helper" from the younger generation. Randy Stange, son of the late Ray Stange, will assist Ebest in a "deputy" role.

Dallas and Geneva Ebest served as reunion chairmen for the 1986 meeting in San Antonio.

Among the responsibilities of the group historian will be coordinating the transfer of the group's personnel records to the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum. These were begun many years ago by Jack Wintersteen, who developed the album records with a "museum" thought in mind.

Ebest also will direct some historical records to the Hertfordshire Record Center in England, already the recipient of many 398th books, photos, and memorabilia.

Savannah, GA 31402-1992.

Cost is \$100 each, containing two lines and a maximum of 24 letters.

Also a part of the Memorial Gardens is the Memorial Plaque Program, designed to honor bomber crews, fighter pilots and crews, ground crews or service units. These granite plaques measure either 12 x 24 or 24 x 24. Costs range from \$390 to \$925; depending on size and material selected.

An 8th AF emblem may be added at no charge, or a B-17 drawing at \$39 extra.

The Memorial Gardens also has a place for large, free-standing monuments. Additional information on all these may be secured by writing the 8th AF Heritage Museum, PO Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402-1992. Or by calling Debra Smith, Finance Officer, 1-800-421-9238.

The 398th membership, at the annual reunion in Spokane last July, approved a special effort to support the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum. The Board of Directors also approved a motion to hold the 398th annual reunion in Savannah ... in the year 2000.



MEMORIAL GARDENS AT HERITAGE MUSEUM  
A Place for Reflecting, Remembering

## Savannah & Heritage Museum:

## A DESTINATION

There is no doubt among members of the various 8th Air Force units that the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia, has already become a "destination" place for reunions, meetings, dedications, banquets and just plain visiting.

The lineup for visits to the Heritage Museum during the fall months of 1997 reads like tomorrow's strike action against the Third Reich —

305th Bomb Group  
388th Bomb Group  
490th Bomb Group  
450th Squadron (9th AF)  
379th Bomb Group  
2nd Schweinfurt Raid  
364th Fighter Group  
493rd Bomb Group  
356th Fighter Group  
352nd Fighter Group  
361st Fighter Group  
457th Bomb Group  
452nd Bomb Group

436th Fighter Group  
1st Strategic AD  
20th Fighter Group  
487th Bomb Group  
392nd Bomb Group  
389th Bomb Group  
Mississippi Chapter 8th AFHS  
Norway Flyers  
USS Jack Wilke (Navy)  
West Point Class of 1941  
Marine Corps Ball  
Base Air Depot 2

All this adds up to a count of over 5,000 who have or will visit the Museum in a brief, three month period. Some came to just look and reminisce; some came to sign up as members; some came to join their comrades in dedicating monuments, plaques, photos, etc. Most came to join their buddies in their annual reunion get togethers.

Will the 398th join this "destination" pilgrimage?

As they said in the Heritage newsletter —

"You had better hurry to make your reservations at the Heritage Museum. The 398th has already made reservations for the year 2000!"

Stay tuned.

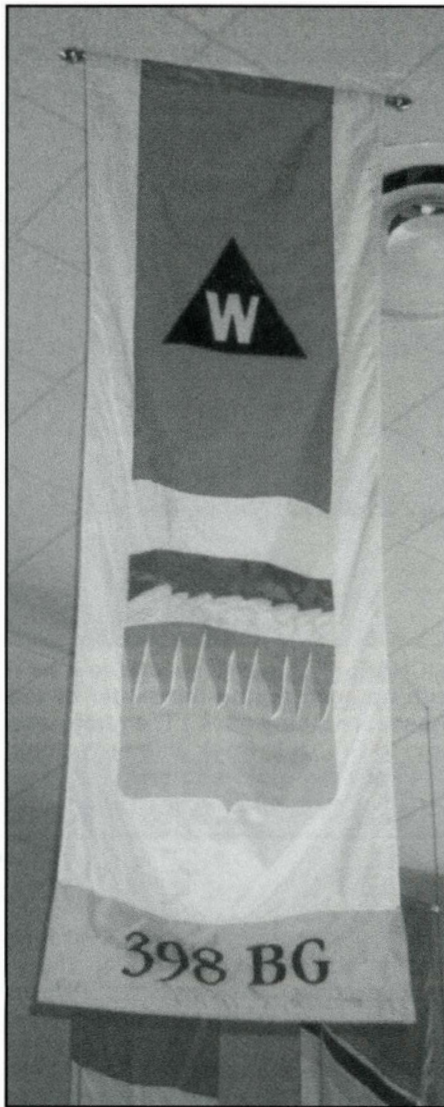
# Never Again An Air War Like The 8th

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the highest levels of United States and British governments and their military advisors determined that the major US effort to save Europe would be through heavy bombardment of the German heartland. With that mission in mind, the Eighth Air Force was formed and began operations in 1942. The Eighth became the largest air force in the history of aviation and was locked in the most dangerous air battle in aviation history. This event will never be replicated. The cost in casualties of the brave young men who were never turned back by enemy action was awesome. Of an estimated 200,000 combat crew personnel, 26,000 were killed; 28,000 became POW's; and 9,000 bombers were shot down by enemy fire. With the inclusion of the ground crews, 350,000 Americans served with the Eighth during World War II.

No other United States military component has such a high percentage of losses. The Eighth Air Force lost 7.42% of its personnel to combat deaths. The Eighth's losses far overshadow the losses of 2.94% for the Marines, 0.88% for the Navy, and 2.08% for the Army. This is not intended to minimize the loss of any service man but only to underscore the risk taken by flying daylight missions over occupied Europe. The Eighth is still an active part of the United States military establishment as it has been since January 28, 1942. Over a million men and women have served with the Eighth since its formation.

The cost of lives in combat, the involvement in four major wars, and 39 years on alert during the Cold War deserve special recognition. That recognition can be no less than a home for the Mighty Eighth in the United States of America. More than 10 million blood relatives reside in the United States with the knowledge that the price has already been paid for such an institution. That price was the life of their child, spouse, sibling, or parent. The cost of construction pales in comparison to the price that has already been paid.

The Heritage Museum will be a memorial and monument to the men who did not return from war and to the survivors who continued to make their contribution in both the public and private sectors of our country. No greater legacy can they leave than a Heritage Museum with the specific mission of nurturing and educating the youth of America. Youth education programs begun at an early age would help to guide and lead them to become productive, patriotic citizens whereby their individual strengths will add to the strength of our nation.



**THE 398th BANNER** flies from the ceiling in the rotunda of the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum in Savannah.



**WALL OF VALOR**

# Museum Has Ongoing Need For Support

The 8th Air Force Heritage Museum is indeed a place for memories and reflection, to which many members will attest.

It is also a place that requires encouragement and support, to which museum president Lewis E. Lyle will attest.

"Your 8th Air Force Museum is now a reality," he said. "You have a magnificent and beautiful facility that is dedicated to honoring those who made our 8th Air Force mighty by their services, sacrifices and contributions.

"We have a wonderful building, but we also recognize that future improvements will never end. And toward that end, we will have an ongoing need for support.

"Here are some ways you can help perpetuate our national treasure and preserve our heritage and story. Each has gift giving tax advantages to our non-profit Heritage Museum organization."

**BECOME A MEMBER** – We now have 5,500 members, but we will need at least 20,000. Urge your friends to become members.

**ENDOWMENT PROGRAM** – Your significant contribution to the endowment program which will soon get under way, will enable the Museum to reach its stated endowment objective of 20 million dollars, become a debt-free, financially independent and ensure its long-term success.

**TAX-FREE GIVING** – Many are taking advantage of tax reduction programs by pledging assets and retaining income from their investment during their lives.

**CONTRIBUTE MEMORABILIA** – Each artifact is catalogued and cared for by our Museum staff. You may possess just the very item we need to complete a specific 8th AF story line.

**MEMORIAL** – There are many opportunities to purchase tablets, plaques and monuments in The Memorial Gardens to remember your own service to your country or your air crew or other unit.

**COME AND VISIT** – A visit here is an unforgettable experience. Allow plenty of time, especially if you come here with your unit.

## 398th Directory Available

The 1995 398th Bomb Group roster is in dire need of updating (note all the corrections and additions on Page 12). The prospect of publishing a new directory will be discussed in Harrisburg next August.

Meanwhile, a computer directory with names, addresses, squadron and crew affiliation and telephone number may be purchased at any time for \$10 from Ed Stewart, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334-5348.

## EVOLUTION OF THE AIR FORCE

*From its very beginnings, America's air arm seemed destined for numerous transformations until it finally achieved independence as a separate service. This evolution included name changes as well as insignia changes.*

**Aeronautical Division,  
U.S. Army Signal Corps**  
Aug. 1, 1907-July 18, 1914

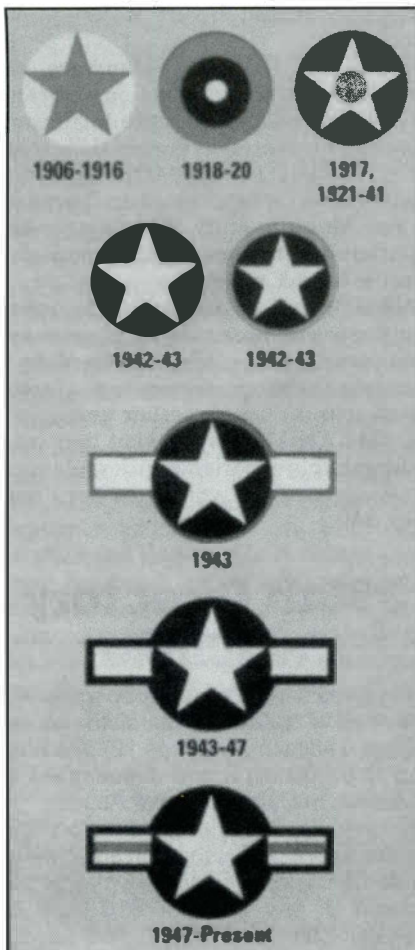
**Aviation Section, U.S. Signal Corps**  
July 18, 1914-May 20, 1918

**Air Service**  
May 21, 1918-July 2, 1926

**Air Corps**  
July 2, 1926-June 20, 1941

**Army Air Forces**  
June 20, 1941-Sept. 18, 1947

**U.S. Air Force**  
Sept. 18, 1947



**MICHAEL BRANCYK** (second row, far right) 601 Squadron Ordnance Officer, poses with his men during the winter of 1944 at Station 131. (Obviously, it was one of those rare sunny days.) The photo was sent to **FLAK NEWS** by Jim Cook, standing next to Brancyk. Cook also sent along a wish that "some of our friends who gave their all were with us today."

### From The Eagle's Nest

## 24-Volt Drill Motor

Did you ever find yourself in a dispersal area or some isolated spot where there was no generator to power your electric repair tools? At the Third Strategic Air Depot the boys have been working with a homemade gadget for the last nine months to help them out on such occasions.

Working on B-24's, they have been using an assembly constructed from salvaged aircraft units. It is a 24-volt drill motor and can be run from the plane's batteries in an emergency, thus expediting rush repairs.

Here are the units they used:

1. A burned out drill motor was disassembled, leaving the handle and trigger assembly intact, along with the gear box chuck assembly on the end of the motor.
2. A motor, usually utilized to drive the fan on a heating unit, was removed from the radio compartment of a salvaged B-24.
3. A suitable pinion gear, manufactured in the machine shop, was used to drive the gearing mechanism on the drill motor gear box.
4. Spacers were then made and fitted in each end of the motor. The three assemblies were bolted together and attached.
5. The motor was then ready to use on Model C-10 energizers (a common airfield unit) or by simply plugging into any 24-volt outlet on the aircraft itself.



AN ME-109, with Swastika on the tail and the nose of a P-47 form the background for four members of a 603 crew that was forced down at St. Trond, Belgium. Waiting for a ride home are Ken Green, Wilbur Lucas, Elton Huey, and Bill Jordan. They were on the Howard Pinner crew of a February 1945 mission.



# PAST 398th TOURS REMEMBERED

*Continued from page 2*

But before the tour group flew to the continent to relive some of those dramatic moments of WW II, it was for our Friends of the 398th at Nuthampstead to lay up more nostalgic moments for the 57 visitors.

The Service of Commemoration at the Memorial, honoring the men of the 398th killed in action, was meaningful and emotional. This time, as the vicar asked for two minutes of silence, there was nothing to be heard save for the birds singing in the distance ... "and the faint and distinctive deep-throated roar of the B-17's as they took off in the morning mist ..."

Perhaps those thoughts were engendered knowing that the plot of ground around the Memorial had been deeded to the 398th by Robert Dimsdale. It is now U.S. property.

The group then flew to Luxembourg, there to start the "Bomb Run" segment of the tour. Tilly Kimmes, who lived through the Battle of the Bulge in Luxembourg, guided the group to such places as Bastogne, Malmady, and Clervaux. She told the 398th airmen that their B-17's sounded like "humming music" when they came on their bomb runs during the war.

Then on to Neuss, where a large gathering of Germans awaited the Yanks. "We will show you where your Colonel Hunter's plane came to rest after the Flak gunners brought it down."

And one of the gunners, Johannes Everding Schultz, was there to return some of Fred Gonzales' parachute, this time in the form of a girl's dress. And pieces of parachute cord for each of the Yank visitors. And Gonzales' silk escape maps. It was all quite unbelievable.

Later to Ardennes cemetery to honor the many men from the 398th buried there, including Colonel Frank P. Hunter, Jr.

As Bill Comstock told the mayor of Neuss, —  
"We came in our youthful years to wage war; we return in our elder years to share the peace."

## 1990

The 1990 tour began in Scotland, some coming early into Prestwick and others coming directly to Edinburgh. For those who had flown across the Atlantic in 1944 and set down in Prestwick there was an abundance of memories at seeing that airfield.

Johnnie Fleming, our 398th Friend living in Kilmarnock, showed off his 8th AF collection at Dean Castle. This included a complete uniform donated by a 398th member.

Then back on the coach to see such sights as Hadrian's Wall, Loch Lomond, Blackpool, Stratford-On-Avon, and Coventry ... and Nuthampstead!

Some 500 were on hand for the 40's dance, the biggest affair to hit this part of England since the days of Station 131. Then there was the Memorial service, the flights, Anstey, Madingly, Duxford, and, of course, adequate time at the Woodman.

One day was devoted to the Searl crew of the 600th who perished in a crash near Penn.

Johanna Sienkiewicz was the inspiration for setting up the program at Penn, the memorial at the little church where the names of the crew members are inscribed in their Remembrance book. And then an inspiring service at the very place of the crash. All precious moments to remember.

## 1992

There were 80 aboard the coaches for the 1992 visit to — of all places — Merseburg. The 398th went there a dozen times at a loss of 10 planes. It was "dreaded Merseburg" then, but the welcome mat was out in 1992. Mayoral greetings, city tour, a tree planting, and even a social greeting and tour by the director of the Leuna plant. All these years later they still knew the exact location of the very bomb that fell on the plant.

As Dick Frazier said, "We knew your Luftwaffe pilots and your Flak gunners then, but today we came to know you as friends."

On the way to England, another stop at Neuss for a look at the tree that 398th planted in 1988. And a banquet with the German contingent of the "Friends of the 398th." They joined the group for a visit to Ardennes and also led the way on the tour to Cologne.

After all that drama, there was still more to come as the group did another "home stay" at Nuthampstead. Colonel Earl Berryhill was a proud man as he presented a memorial wreath at Madingly.

He also led the group of 80 as they marched to the Memorial ... to the applause of the Friends waiting there.

## 1994

The tour group of 1994 took a roundabout way of getting to Nuthampstead. But the "way" was filled with unbelievable drama.

An RAF crew member (1945) made a heroic effort in the English Channel to save members of the 602 Doerr crew. The 398th wanted to honor him in some way. With the help of Johanna Sienkiewicz and Ron Setter, the RAF airman, his wife, son, and daughter were located. The crew member, Robert Kennedy, unfortunately, had died some years before. However, Mrs. Kennedy and her children came to Southampton and there received a plaque honoring Kennedy, who had retired as an RAF flying officer. It was a moment to remember.



**BILL DEAN, CHARLES SUTTON & KEITH ANDERSON  
Memorial Visit To Crash Site**

Following "tourist" visits to Portsmouth, Beaulieu, Chatsworth House, Stonehenge, Oxford, Salisbury, etc., the tour group found its way to Wildboarclough, a tiny village off a very narrow road. A memorial service was held at the little church honoring five members of the 603rd who perished when their B-17 hit the top of Birchenough Hill. Most of the tour members climbed to the top of the hill, there to view bits and pieces of the Fortress still scattered about.

There was still one more stop before moving on to Nuthampstead — The Wash. It was here that newly arrived 1st Division crews came to hone their shooting skills before moving on to their respective groups for combat action. Brian Clipston and Sonia Gifkin have been working on a Wash museum for several years and were delighted to see the men and women of the 398th.

After the long and scenic tour around England it was good to arrive at Nuthampstead and the "welcome home" by the Friends. It was "home stay" again and the members dispersed to the various hosts' homes. But soon back on the coach to visit Madingly, Duxford, Anstey, Cambridge, Whitehall, the flight line, and, of course, the Memorial and the Woodman.

*(continued on page 10)*



KENSINGTON PALACE

"Having been informed of your visit to this country and your return to the base of Nuthampstead, I wanted to send you all a message of welcome. It is always good to see old friends from across the Atlantic and I do hope that you will rediscover acquaintances and friends that you knew 40 years ago. I also hope that you will enjoy every moment of your stay in this country. I am sure you will receive the warmest hospitality."

CHARLES

# THE "OLD BASE" STILL TOP ATTRACTION

*Continued from page 9.*

It was to be the final visit to Station 131 for Bill Comstock, even then failing in his fight with cancer. It was fitting that he presented the wreath at Madingly. In his message at the 398th memorial, Comstock used the words of Winston Churchill —

"Never have so many owed so much to so few."

Some folks considered how much Comstock had given to so many in the 398th during his 20 years as president.

## 1995

The Last Mission for the 398th came on April 25, 1945, a well-publicized attack on the Skoda Works in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. In that the new Czech Republic was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of VE Day, the 398th decided to participate. This happened in May 1995.

Twenty-one members came to Pilsen, liberated 50 years before by various Army ground units. But the 398th was also there, suggesting to the citizens that "we came from Heaven to liberate you from hell." And happily joined in on the celebration described by Georgie Sullivan as "the most unforgettable and emotional experience we probably will ever have."

"Thank you America" was evidenced everywhere as the Czechs showered their love and affection on the Yanks, especially as they paraded with other U.S. units in Pilsen and Prague.

Harry Gray had the privilege of presenting a special plaque to the mayor of Litice, honoring the men from his 602 Ferguson crew who were killed on the Last Mission.

Danny Leyva, smart in his WW II uniform, carried the 398th banner ... and also led the way in appreciation for the famous Pilsen beer.

## 1996

The 1996 tour was limited to London and Nuthampstead, but nevertheless filled with memories. Even before arriving at the London hotel, the group was treated to an "up close" visit by Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. They just happened to show up in "downtown" Windsor as the men and women of the 398th were sight-seeing. Most were within 20 feet of the royal pair as they arrived in their vintage Rolls Royce.

In London, the Big Event was a visit to the House of Lords. A casual "come by and see me the next time you come to England" was duly accepted two years later. That invitation was rendered by Viscount Richard Long, who just happened to be at Nuthampstead during the group's 1994 visit. He proved to be a gracious host, even offering coffee, tea, and cakes at the House of Lords Thameside dining area.

The service at the Memorial was impressive, especially as the school children paraded by and left flowers at the granite base. And the Kohima Epitaph —

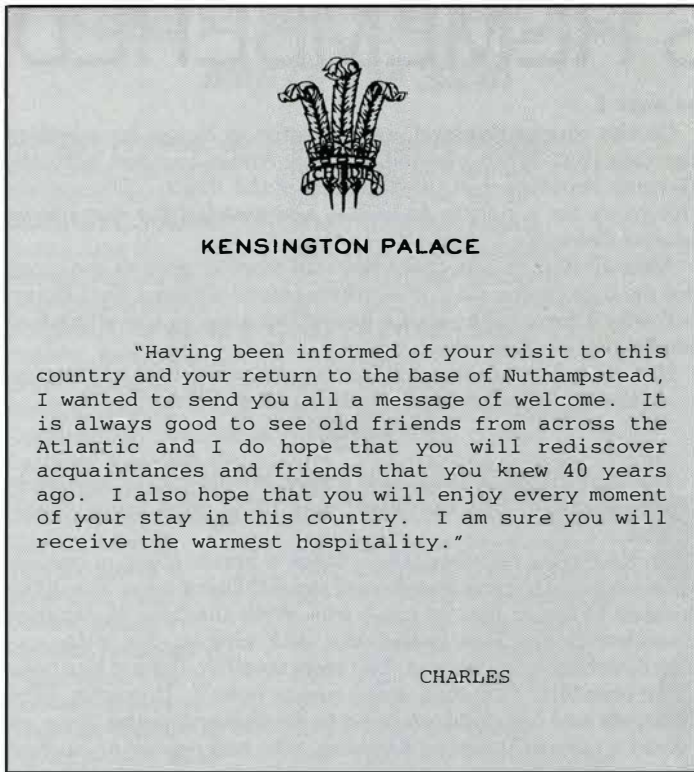
*When you go home, tell them of us and say —  
For your tomorrow we gave our today.*

## Epilog

*Reprinted from FLAK NEWS Vol. 1 No. 1, August 1986*

**"O Yes, we did visit London and Paris, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Picadilly, Westminster Abbey, Tower of London, Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, des Champs Elysees, Arc de Triomphe, Normandy ...**

**"But somehow, after 'sorting it out,' it was a quiet, out-of-the-way, all but unknown, little place called Nuthampstead that was, and still remains, the reason for the whole tour."**



**AMONG THE MANY mementoes brought home from past 398th tours was this greeting from Prince Charles. It was a treasured document in 1986, and even more so today what with the tragic death of Princess Diana.**



## A Few Old Buildings Remain

Station 131 has long since returned to wheat farming, for which it was famous for hundreds of years. But for a brief snippet of time in history it was a part of a colossal "aircraft carrier" that sent bombers into the heartland of Nazi Germany.

Most of those WW II installations are long gone, like the ribbons of concrete runways that ultimately became a part of England's Freeways. Also gone are most of the dozens of buildings and barracks that formed the operational and housing facilities for the men who made up the 398th Bomb Group in 1944-45.

But not every building has disappeared, witness this old brick beauty that was known as the "AA Bombing Teacher." It was located in the Technical Site, or near the Link Trainer Building and Photo Lab.

There are a few other old buildings still standing. Photos of these will be printed in a future issue of FLAK NEWS, courtesy of Geoff Rice and Les Dear, a pair of Friends devoted to recording 398th and 131 history.

# BRIEF-things

Thanks to *Lloyd Stovall* for providing those excellent photos of the Heritage Museum ... and treasurer *Ralph Hall* says thanks to all who chipped in a little extra this year to keep us "afloat" until the new \$10 dues kick in next year ... it's a "quiet" type of remembrance, but our "In Memory Of" program has been used by many to honor a loved one; each receives a special certificate ... one of our clergy members, *Rev. Kenneth Homer* of Baltimore, did a stint with the US forces in Bosnia ... the B-17 Monumental Bronze Dedication was held at the AF Academy on August 22; the plaque reads "Gift of the 305th BG, with assistance from the 91st, 100th, and 398th"; *Al Turney* and *Dale Brown* were there to represent the 398th ... welcome to *Col. Tom Darner*; current AF pilot, son of 601 pilot, *LeRoy Darner* ... a monumental number of folks packed up and moved this past quarter, including our PX impresario, *Joe Joseph* (see new address on bottom of order form ☞ ) ... no specific dates have been established for the 398th reunion in Savannah, Georgia, in the year 2000, but you can kinda' count on the month of October, when it cools off a bit; this provides two full years for individuals, crews, and other units to order up memorials at the Heritage Museum's Memorial Gardens ... *Saul Marias*, who lives in Nassau, Bahamas, is a Lifetime member, but still sent in another \$50 for "the second time around" ... for the "umteenth" time, the *Herb Boehme* crew of the 602nd had the most members at the reunion, including last July in Spokane ... among the first things that *Phyllis Veley* did following the death of her 601 bombardier husband, *Les*, was to arrange to have his casket flag flown at Nuthampstead next summer ... is it true that our president, *Wally Blackwell*, already has set up a committee to celebrate the 100th birthday of the B-17? (it comes up in the year 2035) ... FLAK NEWS editor sends his thanks for all those 50th anniversary cards; he'd like to share them with the many other 398th folks who have hit this milestone (Hawaii was just fine, thank you) ... *Becky Morrison* of Bathgate, North Dakota, another Lifetime member, sent in an extra check for FLAK NEWS because it "reminds me of the precious friends *Russ & I* made at the reunions and on the Scotland-England trip in 1990" ... 600 pilot *Rip Rohrer* recalls dropping 6-day fuse delay bombs on Berlin, and then being transported through the same city six days later on the way to PW camp (yes, he was nervous) ... after taking years to master a new typewriter, *Chaplain Jim Duvall* now is trying to master his new computer ... raising a princely sum for a very special 398th Bomb Group stained glass window at St. George's Church at Anstey is on the agenda for group discussion led by *Ted Brass*, but that project could be moot, however, if one of our members should decide that it is a one-man project ... if the 398th embraces the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum, many thanks must go to *Willis (Bill) Frazier*, who worked long and hard to promote it within our group ... our 398th Friend in Poland, *Michal Mucha*, has been researching the status of the B-17 that *Howard Pinner* set down in Kutno, Poland, then occupied by the Russians; *Mucha* reports that the Kutno mu-seum people have found eye-witnesses to the landing and also part of the plane's radio; the Russians obviously carted off most of *Pinner's* Fort ... an audio tape is available of the great presentation made at the Spokane reunion by *Fred Gonzales*, *John McCormick* and *Dean Whitaker*; it was called "The Other Side of the War"; send \$5 to the FLAK NEWS editor ... *Park Wright* can't make the Germany-England tour next summer, but he will send floral wreaths in memory of three of his crew members who are buried at Lorraine Cemetery, St. Avold, France; in addition, every one of the 18 men from the 398th buried there will have their headstones marked with an American flag the day of the tour visit; this also holds true for Ardennes in Belgium and Cambridge in England, both of which will be visited ...

"I have been driven to my knees many times by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day."

— ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## 398th Bomb Group PX

	<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Enter Total Cost</u>
Cap - Fits All Sizes (Specify Squadron or Group)	_____	\$8.00 each _____
Jackets - Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$25.00 each _____
Golf Shirts - White or Navy Blue (M, L, XL, XXL)	_____	\$20.00 each _____
T-Shirts - White, Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$10.00 each _____
T-Shirts - White (Children Sizes 2-4, 6-8, 10-12)	_____	\$8.00 each _____
Sweat Shirts - White, Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$15.00 each _____
Sweat Shirts - White, Light Blue (Children Sizes M & L, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$10.00 each _____
Squadron Patches - Specify Squadron	_____	\$6.00 each _____
Group Patch - "Hell From Heaven"	_____	\$6.00 each _____
Jacket Patch - Rectangle B-17	_____	\$4.00 each _____
Squadron Lapel Pins - Specify Squadron	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Group Lapel Pin	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Group Lapel Pin - Special Design	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Bumper Sticker - 398th Bomb Group	_____	\$1.00 each _____
China Plate with B-17 - 9"	_____	\$15.00 each _____
Glass (9 oz.) with B-17	_____	\$6.00 each _____
B-17 Lapel Pin - Specify Silver or Gold	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Photo (Control Tower) - Station #131	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Photo (398th Memorial) - Post Card Size	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Photo (Aluminum Overcast) - 8"x10" (Latest photo)	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Bolo Ties - Group Logo	_____	\$4.00 each _____
Neck Tie - American Flag	_____	\$22.00 each _____
Folding Umbrella - Red with White B-17	_____	\$18.00 each _____
Beach Towel - White with Black B-17	_____	\$18.00 each _____
Barrel Bag with picture of B-17	_____	\$17.00 each _____
B-17 Christmas Ornament	_____	\$6.00 each _____
B-17 Playing Cards (single)	_____	\$7.00 each _____
B-17 Playing Cards (double)	_____	\$12.00 each _____

Cost Of Items Ordered \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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Make checks payable to 398th Bomb Group Association PX (US funds).

Mail to: Joe Joseph

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