



602



601



603



600

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

VOL. 13 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 1998

New Makeup On 398th Board

Two new names were added to the Board of Directors and three more members were given new assignments at the 398th Bomb Group annual meeting last August in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Lou Stoffer, who served as engineer-gunner on the 600th Don Grinter crew and Keith Anderson, co-pilot on the 600th Gene Douglas crew, became Board members. They replaced Hal Weekley and Ben Core, neither of whom were able to attend the reunion, thus ineligible for re-election.

Both Stoffer and Anderson have long been active in Association affairs and both have made tours back to the old base in England.

Marilyn Gibb, daughter of Dorothy and the late Jim Crouch, was named treasurer, moving over from her previous role on the Monument Fund Committee.

Longtime treasurer Ralph Hall will resume his position as chairman of the monument Fund.

James Haas, bombardier on the 603 Harry Sleamon crew, will become "Dues Manager". He served previously on the Monument Committee. This job, plus that of treasurer, had been handled for the past 13 years by Hall. Ralph chose to "slow down" for health reasons.

Wally Blackwell was again elected president.

A complete listing of all officers, their addresses and phone numbers, appears on Page 3, along with other 398th business news.

Oklahoma City

NEXT YEAR



THOMAS BEWLEY, reunion chairman at the 1998 reunion at Harrisburg, Pa., gets "pinned" with a 600 Squadron patch from Maria Hunter. Bewley also received the A-2 jacket for his work in heading up the highly successful reunion. He is the son of the late James Bewley, 600 Squadron navigator.

398th Reunion At Harrisburg, PA:

It Was A Good One!

The proof was obvious — smiles and happy faces.

The 1998 reunion of the 398th Bomb Group — the 15th annual — was deemed by one and all as a rousing success.

The lobby of the Hilton hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, filled with members checking out and heading for home, seemed to reflect the glow of success.

"We had a great time," was the quote heard most often by the 425 registered members. It was not a reunion of record numbers, remembering the 582 that came to Nashville in 1992.

But considering the fact that the 1998 attendees were dipping back over 55 years to draw on memories and relationships (and more than a few coming with

physical handicaps) the Harrisburg count was outstanding.

Much of the credit for the registration count must go to Contact Officer George Hilliard, who "never sleeps" in his efforts to locate new members. It was the "first time for me" for several previous "lost souls."

(See another story on Page 4 for how George promotes the 398th via the group's web site, plus a list of our men with internet e-mail.)

The Harrisburg reunion might well be called, "star studded," what with famous guests on hand for both hotel banquets. Not to mention a visit from the chairman of the UK Friends of the 398th from

Continued on Page 2

Harrisburg Reunion

Continued from Page 1.

Nuthampstead, England, Wilfrid Dimsdale, plus UK friends, Gordon Aldridge and Geoff Rice.

Dimsdale came to Harrisburg especially to tell the story of the Anstey Window Project and to remind members of its projected dedication on June 11, 2000. (See story and photo on Page 5).

More than a few guests at the Welcome Banquet looked up with raised eyebrows and wonderment when president Wally Blackwell announced —

“And now, a message from the President of the United States!”

Could it be President Clinton coming to speak to us? One of his Cabinet members? White House aide? An Air Force general? Wow!

And in walked President Abraham Lincoln!

The 16th president of the United States, complete with long coat, beard, and stove-pipe hat, walked in among the banquet tables to the surprise and applause of the 384 dinner guests.

He strode to the podium, and for 40 minutes spoke as the man who led the nation during the War Between the States — the Civil War. He told of his youth, his struggle to become an attorney, the highs and lows of his political career, becoming a congressman, his debates with Stephen Douglas, and finally his days in the White House.

His precise presentation held the audience spellbound. They felt for all the world that they were listening to the real Lincoln.

The “real” Lincoln was James Getty, a professional actor from Gettysburg, Pa., well-known in the East for his portrayal of the much loved president.

Getty concluded his presentation by reciting the “Gettysburg Address,” then left the podium with these words —

“Thank you and good night.”

Two days later many of the members were to visit nearby Gettysburg for a day-long tour of the Civil War battlefield, their tour greatly enriched by seeing and hearing “Mr. Lincoln.”

The banquet scene changed at the Farewell Banquet as concert singer/recording artist Diane Susek of nearby York, Pa., was welcomed back as 398th guest for the third time (Richmond 1988 and Buffalo 1993). Susek, popular, talented and beautiful, also displayed her humility with words like, “I am delighted to be in your company,” “you are my heroes,” and “thank you for preserving the freedom of our country.”

And songs like, “I Am Proud To Be An American,” “I Wish You Peace,” “Sound of Music,” “Danny Boy,” “His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” “You Are The Wind Be-



DIANE SUSEK

Thrilled Reunion Guests With Her Voice and Piano Artistry



“ABRAHAM LINCOLN”

Actor James Getty As “President of the United States”

neath My Wings,” and a bevy of 40’s numbers like “Coming In On A Wing And A Prayer,” “I’ll Be Seeing You,” “White Cliffs of Dover,” “We’ll Meet Again,” and more.

At dinner, she made friends with Dimsdale, who told her all about the 12th century church at Anstey and the Year 2000 window dedication honoring the men from the 398th who died while serving at Station 131.

“How I would love to sing for you in that church!” said Susek.

Her’s was not the only reference to “heroes” at the reunion, however.

At the Welcome Banquet, Nancy Stallcup, wife of secretary Harold Stallcup, came to the podium and offered a stirring rendition of “The Gathering of Heroes,” a poem written by former 603 gunner Wesley G. Eatchel of the Alfred Warren crew. For those who did not feel the tears during her recitation, they surely came when she finished. She faced to the right, saluted; faced to the left, saluted.

The Eatchel poem was published in Vol. 12, No. 2, of FLAK NEWS.

There was precious little rest time for the members at the reunion. Besides Gettysburg, there were tours to the Hershey chocolate world; the Amish country of Lancaster County; Harrisburg city tour; Susquehanna River tour; and, for the more adventuresome, golf at nearby Silver Spring Golf Course. (No score cards were turned in.)

Between all this activity there were private meetings with crews, hut mates, longtime friends, new-found friends. The son of a 600 Squadron tail gunner, Dale Cubranish, came from his home in Ohio with family and relatives numbering 15.

The Herb Boehme crew of the 602nd again had the most crew members represented — six.

In the Memory Room, doubling as Joe Joseph’s PX Bazaar, members poured over the documents, photos and memorabilia reminding them of those perilous days of 1944-45.

Continued on Page 8

Officers Of The 398th

President

Wallace (Wally) Blackwell
Rockville, MD 20850-3067

Vice President

T.J. (Ted) Johnston
Seattle, WA 98146-1747

Secretary

Harold Stallcup
Forest City, NC 28043-3728

Treasurer

Marilyn Gibb
Hudson, FL 34667-3922

Unit Contact

George Hilliard
Cincinnati, OH 45236-2313

Dues Manager

James Haas
Perry, IA 50220-0163

Group Historian

Dallas Ebest
San Antonio, TX 78213-1561

PX Officer

Joe Joseph
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-6168

Board of Directors

James R. (Dick) Frazier
Norman, OK 73069-9612

Louis J. Stoffer
Centralia, WA 98531-4529

Dale Brown
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-2021

Keith Anderson
Issaquah, WA 98027-8508

Public Relations

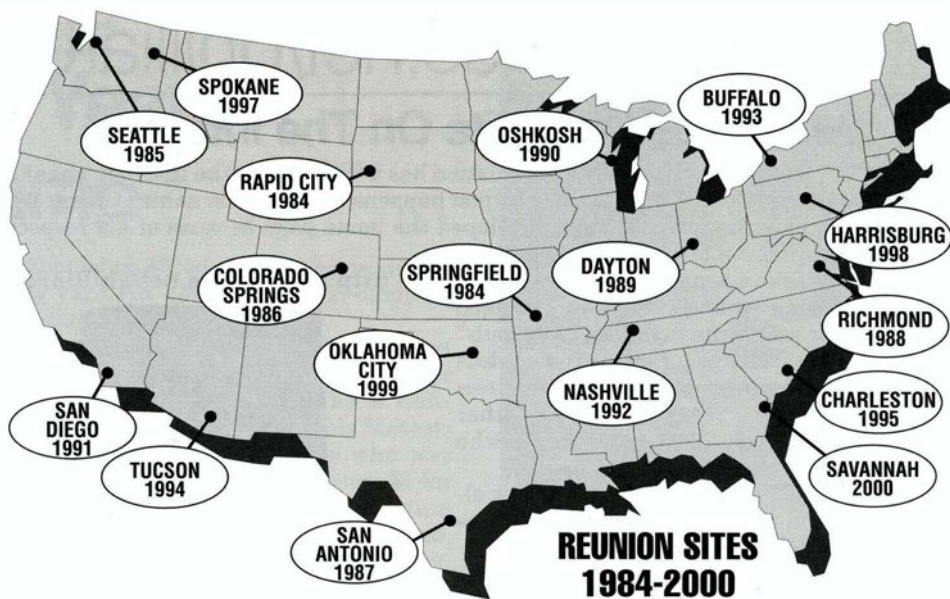
Allen Ostrom
Seattle, WA 98107-3165

Monument Fund

Ralph Hall, Chairman
New Bedford, MA 02740-1915

W.A. McLaughlin
Mineral Wells, TX 76067-2848

Al Turney
Vallejo, CA 94591-6640



398th MEMBERSHIP UPDATED

The accent at the Harrisburg reunion, as has been the case at all previous reunions, was geared heavily toward camaraderie, but there was a business meeting and some minor changes were made in the 398th Bomb Group by-laws.

Some officer changes were made, along with the addition of a new "dues manager," as noted elsewhere.

There was also a notation that as of January 1, 1998, all three membership categories (Veteran, Associate & Auxiliary) would be eligible to vote on corporate business and hold Officer and Board positions.

However, at the business meeting, it

was moved, seconded, and voted to exclude the "Auxiliary" category, (Article II-1-c), leaving only the Veterans (a) and Spouse of Blood Relative (b) categories as voting members.

The honorary (non-voting) membership (II-2) will remain unchanged.

The Deputy program, introduced at Charleston and designed to encourage participation among younger members, was eliminated in favor of a "Special Assignments" program headed up by the president, Wally Blackwell.

The subject of "dissolving" the 398th at some future specific date was brought up and quickly shouted down by the membership.

The By-Laws will be reviewed again at the Oklahoma City reunion, August 25-28, 1999, according to Ted Johnston, vice president.

Funds Needed For Roster

Members receiving their 1999 dues envelopes (starting with this issue) will note an opportunity to donate special funds for an updated Membership Roster. The last one, published in 1995, is now hopelessly outdated. This due to hundreds of address changes, addition of many new members and friends. And, sadly, the transfer of many names to the Taps list.

A new roster will cost about \$4,500. The 398th Board, at the meeting in Harrisburg, voted to publish a new roster as soon as sufficient funds were available. Hence, the appeal for "roster help."

For members not on this quarter's dues list, but who may wish to make an immediate contribution, they can send a check at any time to 398th treasurer Marilyn Gibb, Hudson, FL 34667-3922.

Dues Notices Go Out West

Dues notices for members living in the Western United States, plus Alaska and Hawaii, have been inserted in this issue of FLAK NEWS. These continental states include Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, and Wyoming.

Note that dues checks now will be sent to James Haas, Perry, IA 50220-0163. He is the "dues manager," having taken over this part of the treasurer's job from Ralph Hall. If you live in the aforementioned states and the dues notice is missing, send your check to Haas with an appropriate note.

(And for those who might wish to say "thank you" to Ralph and Marjorie, their address is New Bedford, MA 02740-1915.)

398th Has Web Site On The Internet

The 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association has a Web Site on the Internet, thanks to Contact Officer George R. Hilliard, who just happens to have a son named George M. Hilliard, who just happens to have developed the home page because of his respect for his 603 Squadron father. Both live in Ohio.

As printed in the headline above, the URL is — <http://home.fuse.net/ghilliard/>

All this began when father George asked son George to assist him in finding “lost souls” for the 398th. That program produced dozens of new veteran members who had been “missing” all these years. Plus many other spouses, children, and grandchildren who came on to join the membership ranks.

The “lost soul” searches became the key element in maintaining the membership roster at the 2,000 level.

The home page shows a picture of the Aluminum Overcast in flight, with this comment by the young Hilliard —

“This nation, as well as you and me, owes a great deal to all of the surviving 398th members. They all have a story to tell.”

The home page currently displays three issues of FLAK NEWS, archives material, book listing, Mighty 8th and Friends information.

Hilliard also has an e-mail address, listed below with other 398th members.

Many 398th Members Now Have E-mail Addresses

American Center	Pilsen, Czech Republic	<amcenter@mbox.vol.cz>
Keith Anderson	Issaquah, WA	
Ardennes American Cemetery ..	Belgium	
Wally Blackwell	Rockville, MD	
Charles Busbee	Dallas, TX	
Bill Clack	Plano, TX	
Bill Costanzo	Newport News, VA	
Lowell Culver	Plano, TX	
Jane Dixon	Irving, TX	
Wayne Doerstler	Lancaster, PA	
Tom Dougherty	Harrisburg, OR	<da
Rev. James Duvall	Loveland, CO	
George W. (Bill) Engle	Colorado Springs, CO ..	
Wilbur (Bill) Fisher	Mesa, AZ	
Harold Flynt	Jacksonville, FL	
Clarence Franks	Colorado Springs, CO ..	
Marilyn Gibb	Hudson, FL	
Fred Gonzales	Evanston, IL	
Bob Hart	Wilmington, OH	
George M. Hilliard	West Chester, OH	
Marvin Laufer	Buffalo, NY	
Jack Lee	Covina, CA	
Joe Mansell	Humble, TX	
National Archives	College Park, MD	
Steve Pena	Bassingbourn, England ..	
Paul Roderick	Palm City, FL	
Mike Ryan	Fort Washington, MD ...	
Sally B B-17 ...	Bury St. Edmonds, England ...	<sallyb@t
Bruce A. Slasienski	Geneva, Switzerland	
Milton Sharpe	Marietta, GA	
Diane Susek	York, PA	

Aluminum Overcast Schedule On Internet

A link to information on the Aluminum Overcast, the B-17 carrying the colors of the 398th Bomb Group, is available on the Internet —

www.eaa.org

The home page contains such current information as to the Fortress’ schedule of appearances around the country.

Following the current tour in Okla-

homa and Texas, the Aluminum Overcast will return to the “barn” in Oshkosh, Wis. Plans for the next tour have not as yet been finalized, but will be posted on the Web Site as soon as possible.

Information on upcoming tours also may be obtained by calling 1-800-359-6127. The schedule also will be published in the January issue of FLAK NEWS.

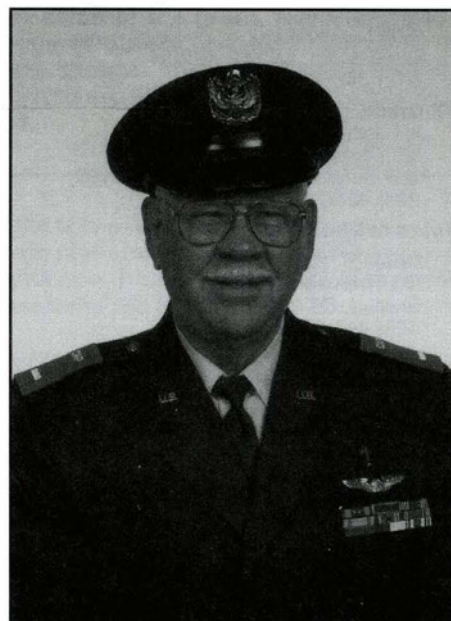
Col. Earl J. Berryhill 1908-1998

Col. Earl J. Berryhill, sometimes known as the City Manager of Station 131 at Nuthampstead, England, died July 29, 1998, in San Antonio at the age of 90.

He was the ground Executive Officer of the 398th Bomb Group and the first person enlisted by commanding officer Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr., when the group was formed in 1943. A stickler for military aplomb, Col. Berryhill played a monumental role in building the 398th into the disciplined fighting machine it became as part of the 8th Air Force in World War II.

Col. Berryhill’s military career spanned 27 years, with many assignments apart from the 398th. He added nine years on the faculty of the Citadel, South Carolina. One of his revolutionary ancestors was Capt. Francis Rosamond, known as the “Swamp Fox” in defending South Carolina from the British.

Berryhill earned 11 military decorations, including the Legion of Merit for his work with the 398th. He was born in the same year (1908) as Col. Hunter, who died on a combat mission to Neuss, Germany, on Jan. 23, 1945. Also born the same year was Chaplain James Duvall, currently living in Colorado.

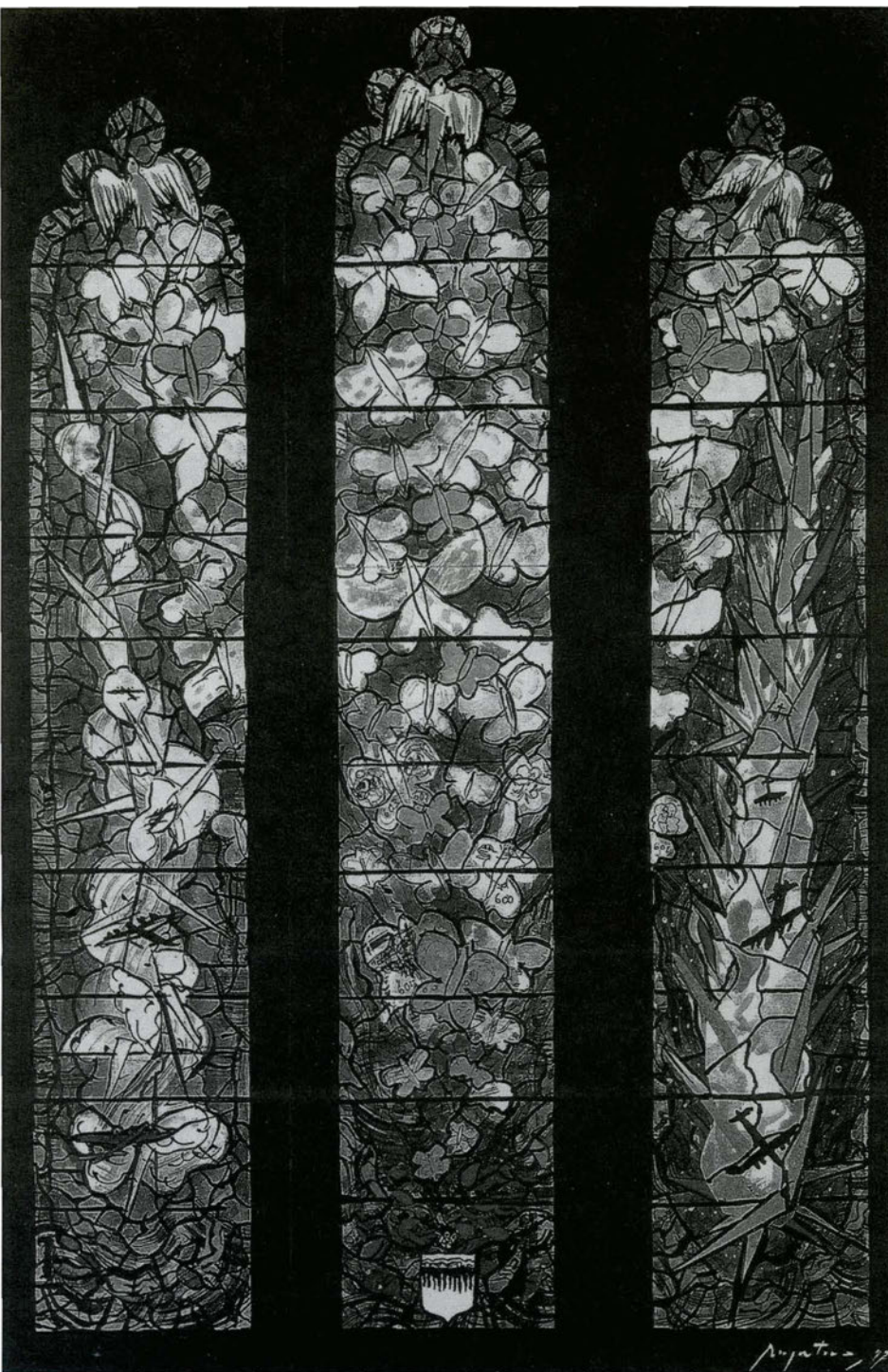


HAROLD FLYNT

Having qualified early on in the prayer business as a tail gunner on the infamous RDX mission with the 601st Squadron, Harold Flynt is still “on the job” in his chosen profession.

After his post-war ministerial career, Rev. Flynt continued his ministry in the Civil Air Patrol, serving as chaplain in the USAF Auxiliary in Jacksonville, FL.

Rev. Flynt was the tail gunner on the Bob Starkey crew, one of the few 601 planes that limped home following the RDX bomb explosion during the Neumünster mission on April 13, 1945.



THE WINDOW AT ANSTEY

This is the artist's rendering of the stained glass window to be built and installed at St. George's Church, Anstey. The names of all men who lost their lives while serving with the 398 Bomb Group will appear in one of the three sections.

The left section depicts the Old Testament Exodus Pillar of Smoke which led the Israelites by day, while the right section depicts the Pillar of Fire which led them by night.

B-17's, identifiably the 398th with their Triangle W and red tail and wing tips, provide a moving evocation of daylight bombing. The same aircraft can be seen in the right panel descending out of the pillar of fire as night falls.

The center section is taken up with an ever-expanding moving mass of butterflies. The butterflies are symbols of the flight and transformation of the soul after death. Some of the butterflies will be imprinted with the logos of the four squadrons. Most butterflies are silvery white, in contrast to the dramatic reds, blue, and greens at the bottom of the Red Sea. But a selection will have wings stained golden yellow. The distribution of these golden-winged butterflies up and across all three lights can be seen as an unobtrusive representations of The Cross.

Anstey Window:

It's A Go!

The Memorial stained glass window project at St. George's Church at Anstey has been declared a rousing success.

Enough money has been raised in a little more than a month's time to ensure a successful completion by the dedication date, June 11, 2000.

UK Friends chairman Wilfrid Dimsdale said that the fund has reached almost \$20,000, with contributions still coming in.

"The 398th has risen to the challenge," he said, "just as they did all those long years ago. We are so very proud to have been associated with such a magnificent response."

Money over and above that required for the window will be put toward protecting the window from the outside, refurbishing the exterior masonry, and creating the inscription book which will be maintained and exhibited in the church.

Where To Send Contributions

The special mailing for contributions to the Anstey window project went out in mid-August to all 398th members and friends at home and abroad. In the event this mailing was not received, checks may be made out to "398th. Names of all contributors will be recorded in a Memorial Book at St. George's Church, Anstey, England. And all will receive a personal letter acknowledging their gift.

Going To England In 2000? Time To Call Now

Have you already determined that you will go to England in June 2000 for the dedication of the Anstey Memorial Window?

Wonderful! You will be part of a large contingent, unquestionably the largest 398th group to descend on Britain since 1944.

But we need to know of your plans now, so we can undertake on such details as hotels, transportation, etc. Not to mention letting our British Friends in on the size of our party.

So even if you are not positive today, but are entertaining 2000 tour thoughts, call Barbara Fish and get you name on the list. Toll-free 1-800-423-5454.

Initial planning calls for a six-day stay in England (Cambridge) starting on June 7, followed by seven days in the Czech Republic and Germany, then con-cluding with two days in Copenhagen.

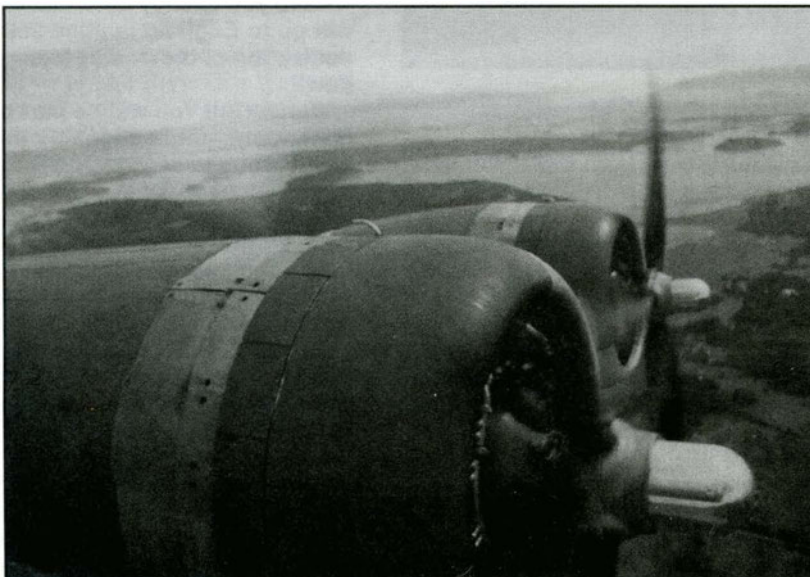


SPECTACULAR!

Nothing quite like
the view from the nose.

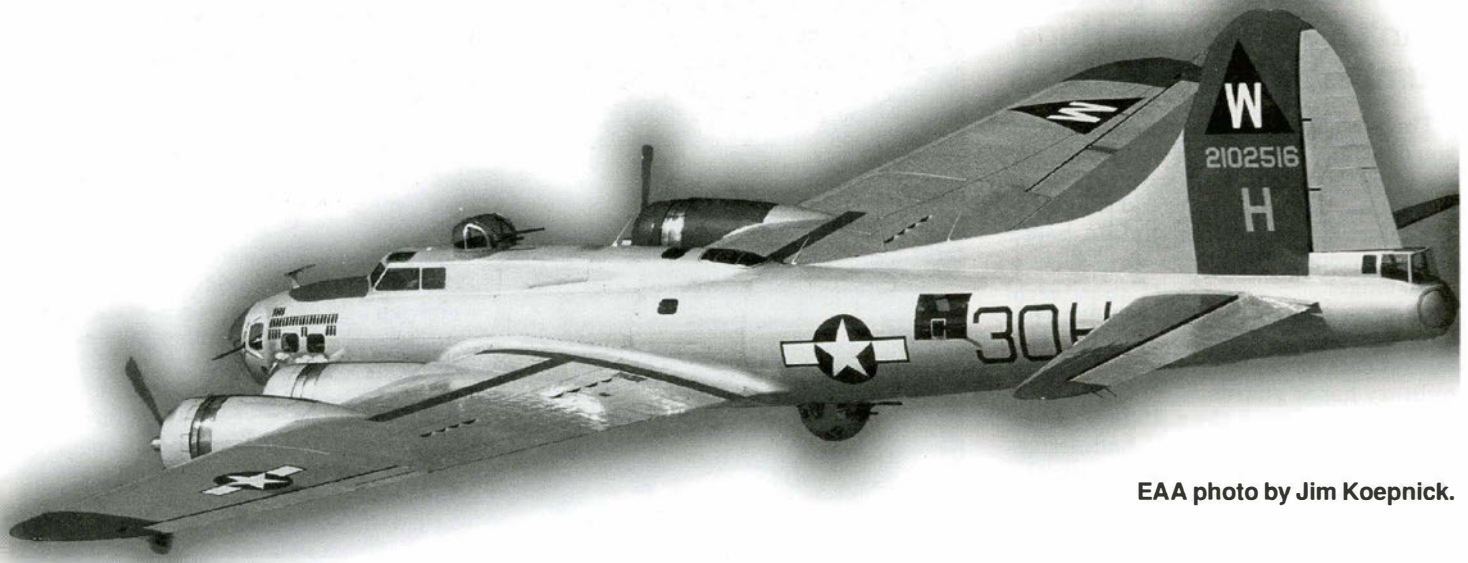
BREATHTAKING!

A rare and beautiful view
from the radio room.



POWER!

Those awesome Cyclones and
props provided the distinctive
“sound” of the Fortress.



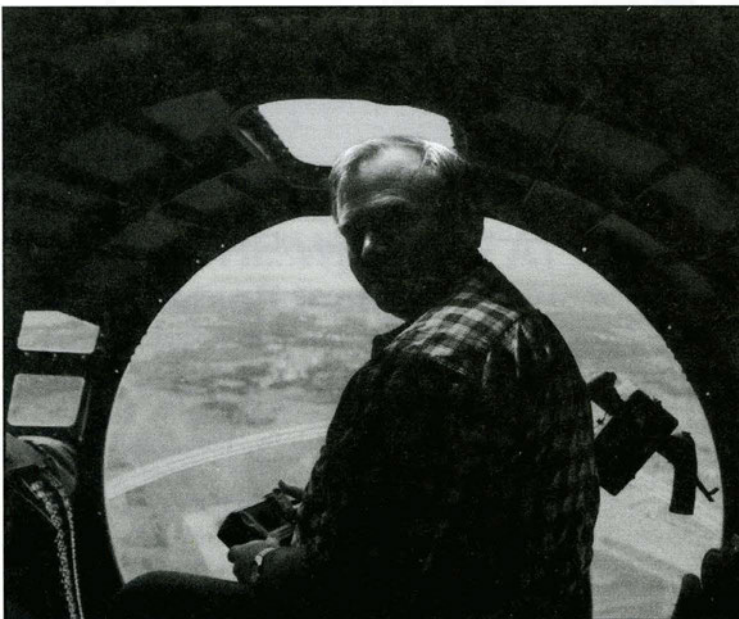
EAA photo by Jim Koepnick.

WHAT A RIDE!

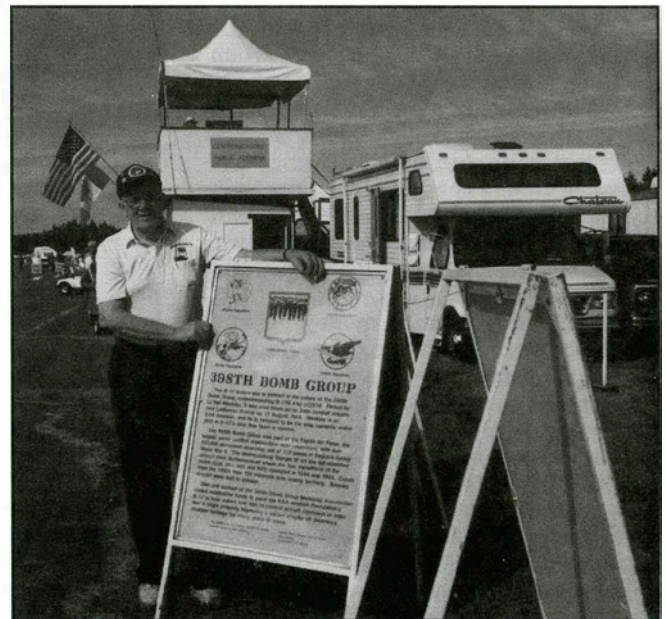
Many members and friends of the 398th have opted for rides aboard the Aluminum Overcast, and most have come away thrilled at the experience. Here are some scenes from aboard the Fortress as it flew over the Pacific Northwest while on its Western tour last summer.



UAL PILOTS Don Taylor and Verne Jobst enjoy their "retirement" work.



DICK CHAPMAN, former Cobra helicopter pilot, thought his ride in the B-17 was "absolutely wonderful."



FLAK NEWS editor Allen Ostrom shows off the sign that gives the 398th credit for its WW II record and help in restoring the Aluminum Overcast.

Downsized U.S. Military Can't Keep Up With Huge Number of Veteran Deaths

There once was a time when, whether you died on the battlefield at 23 or of cancer at 80, whether you were a private or a general, the military would make every effort to send a flag and an honor guard to your graveside.

No longer.

Even as more U.S. veterans die each day than ever before, base closures and budget cuts have brought an end to most military honor guards.

Last year, fewer than 20,000 of the 540,000 veterans who died had active-duty honor guards at their funerals. Hundreds of thousands more were laid to rest with only a tape-recorded rendition of "taps."

Into the breach have stepped veteran volunteers, most of them closer to death than to youth themselves, all determined not to let die a tradition that dates to the Civil War. They come to take care of their own — in the hope someone will do the same for them.

Week in and week out, they drive hundreds of miles from retirement homes to spend hours standing at attention around flag-draped caskets at one funeral after another, often leaning on crutches, canes or each other.

They bury up to 11 of their comrades a day, to the mournful calls of bugles, all to deliver on a promise the military can no longer keep.

They seek donated bullets and buy their own vintage rifles to fire 21-gun salutes.

They stuff their stiff, aging limbs into uniforms they pay for themselves. And they head to the cemeteries.

Mostly in the 70s, they fear their ranks will diminish some day.

"We're all getting ready to see our maker, and most of us were told when we came in that we'd have military honors when we died," said Hal Camp, 80, a World War II veteran. He leads Orange County California's volunteer honor guard — among the first such groups in the nation — at the Riverside National Cemetery, where more veterans were buried last year than at all but one cemetery in the country.

People and so much money," Camp said, "so it's up to the veterans to take care of themselves."

Veterans have volunteered to lead military funerals, especially in areas far from military bases, since the Civil War. But only in recent years, they said, that they have been forced to take responsibility for honoring the vast majority of dead comrades.

Ten years ago, most military bases had active-duty servicemen and women whose job was to serve as honor guards.

But in the last decade, 77 of the 495 major military installations on U.S. soil

AFN Radio Program

American Forces Network — With the AEF on the Road to Berlin
On Your Dial

1375 kc. 1402 kc. 1411 kc. 1420 kc. 1447 kc.
218.1m. 213.9m. 212.6m. 211.3m. 207.3m.

Wednesday, Nov. 1, 1944

0755 - Sign On - Program Resume.
0800 - World News.
0805 - Songs by Perry Como.
0825 - Music by Ted Fio Rita.
0900 - Headlines - Combat Diary.
0915 - Personal Album with Helen Ward.
0930 - Jack Parnell's Jazz Men.
1000 - Headlines - Morning After (Mail Call).
1030 - Strike up the Band.
1100 - Headlines - Home News from the USA.
1105 - Duffle Bag.
1200 - News.
1205 - Duffle Bag.
1300 - Headlines - Sports News.
1305 - NBC Symphony.
1400 - Headlines - Visiting Hour.
1500 - Headlines - German Lesson.
1505 - Strike up the Band.
1530 - On the Record.
1630 - Headlines - Johnny Mercer's Music Shop.
1715 - Music by Freddie Martin.
1740 - Melody Roundup.
1755 - American Sports News.
1800 - World News.
1805 - GI Supper Club.
1855 - Mark up the Map.
1900 - Headlines - Home News from the USA.
1905 - Take the Air (Eighth Air Force).
1930 - Bandwagon with Les Brown.
1945 - Strings with Wings.
2000 - Headlines - Combat Diary.
2015 - Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians.
2030 - British Band of the AEF.
2100 - World News.
2105 - Carnival of Music with Alec Templeton.
2130 - Bob Hope with Frances Langford, Joe Collona and Skinnay Ennis.
2200 - Headlines - Ten O'Clock Special.
2300 - Final Edition.
2305 - Sign off until 0755 hours, Thursday, Nov 2.
On the Continent listen to your favorite AEF programs over the
Allied Expeditionary Forces Program:
583 kc. 514m.
Also Shortwave: 6.195 mg. (49m. band)
between 0800 and 1900 hours.

have shut down, dramatically shrinking both the ranks of active-duty military personnel and of honor guard details.

At the same time, the number of dying veterans is climbing — including an estimated 36,000 World War II veteran each month. In 1989, an estimated 456,000 veterans died. In 1999, that number is expected to reach 561,000.

"You want to do it for everybody, you want to do everything you can, but we just can't support it any other way," Army spokeswoman Shari Lawrence said. "We're not hiding anything. We just can't do it anymore. We're trying to work through it any way we can."

Reunion

Continued from Page 2.

Former 398th historian Jack Wintersteen, who lives in Danville, Pa., drove to Harrisburg with three bulky (and priceless) albums filled with personnel papers and photos. He had been collecting these for some 30 years and one day will deliver them to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia. They should be in place when the 398th gathers there in September 2000 for the group's 17th reunion.

The 16th will be held August 25-28, 1999, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Dick Frazier, longtime Board member, and his wife Junice, will head up the reunion.

Please take note that the Fraziers recently moved from their home in Newalla, Oklahoma, to Norman, Oklahoma. Their new address and telephone number appear under "Officers of the 398th" on Page 3.



Ground Crew News:

How To Remove A Stuck Plug

Removing corroded spark plugs stuck tight to their cylinders used to take ten hours. Now it takes five minutes. Credit goes to M/Sgt. Fred Covert, of Corsicana, Texas, Hangar chief at an Air Service Command depot in England.

Covert's method is to concentrate the blast of carbon dioxide from a fire extinguisher onto a small surface, collecting the dry ice crystals in a cardboard box and freezing the plugs until they contract.

Another mechanical speedup developed at this same depot is an electrical test panel board which has advanced the speed of autopilot repair 500 percent. T/Sgt. Ernest G. Robinson, of Canton, Ohio, designed and built it.

Printout Roster

While a new 398th Bomb Group membership roster is not yet available, a printout type roster can be purchased. This list is maintained by Ed Stewart, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334-5348. Cost is \$10 per copy.

Read All About It

Some of the very best information on the surviving B-17's around the world can be found in the Winter issue of Sally B News, published by the B-17 Preservation, PO Box 92, Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk, IP28 8RR, England. (See e-mail address on Page 4.)

WWII Canadian Bomber Crew:

Found After 53 Years In Belgian Swamp

GERAARDSBERGEN, Belgium – Three Canadian crew members of a bomber shot down over Belgium during World War II were laid to rest last November with full military honours. As the final echoes of the Last Post died away, the remains of pilot Wilbur Bentz of Medicine Hat, Alberta, and gunners Fred Roach of Leamington and Clifford Phillips were buried alongside those of the other crew members. They had lain entombed in the fuselage of the Halifax bomber for 53 years.

“This has been overwhelming,” said Roach’s sister Marjorie Wyse. “I knew that it was going to be a special tribute to these lost men. But to finally say good-bye to my lost brother ... has been very, very special.”

The bodies of the three were unearthed in September 1997 by a team from the Belgian Aviation History Association and the Canadian 426 Thunderbird Squadron Association after years of campaigning by Bentz’ nephew Jay Hammond.

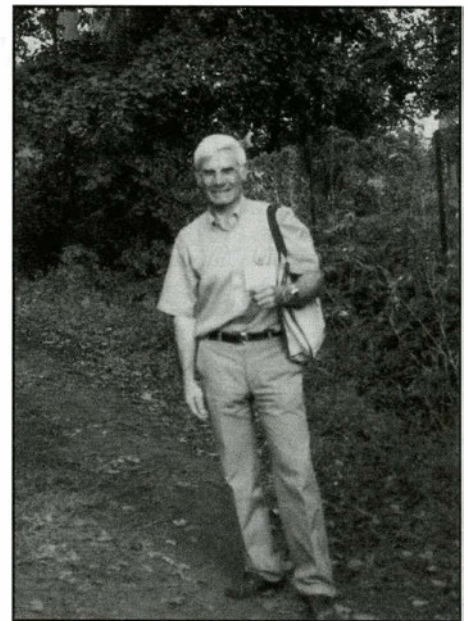
Halifax LW682, call sign “M for Mother,” set out from its base at Linton-on-Ouse in Yorkshire, England, late on the night of May 12, 1944, as part of a

120-bomber Allied raid on rail marshalling yards in Leuven, in Nazi-occupied Belgium.

Five aircraft did not make it back that night. Three of them – including M for Mother – fell prey to the guns of Luftwaffe ace Martin Drewes in his Messerschmitt BG110 night fighter who was present at the funeral ceremony. M for Mother, its tail in shreds, dived into a swamp near the town of Geraardsbergen, about 30 kilometers southwest of Brussels. German soldiers and French prisoners-of-war pulled five bodies from the wreck before it sank. They are buried in Geraardsbergen cemetery. The crew had been together for about six months, but had only just begun their tour of operations.

The Canadian government provided the \$6,700 cost of the excavation and the remains of the plane will go to the Royal Canadian Air Force Memorial Museum in Trenton, Ontario.

The first five and the last five missions were considered the most dangerous for bomber crews. A normal tour for an allied bomber crew at that state of the war was 30 missions.



MARCEL JANSSENS

The Belgian population showed the world last year that many of their people have not forgotten the Allied air crews who lost their lives in their country in World War II.

Among these was Marcel Janssens, a longtime Friend of the 398th who lives in Berlare, Belgium. He was part of the Belgian Aviation History Society team that recovered the Canadian Halifax bomber from a swamp and later attended the funeral of the three crewmen who had been entombed for 53 years.

Marcel related the heart-tugging story of the sister of the crew’s tail-gunner. She approached the German pilot who had shot down the bomber in 1944 and asked —

“Can I give you a hug?!”

Still Time To Get An A-2

Still wishing you had the ol’ A-2 jacket that you were so proud of back at Nuthampstead?

If it’s long gone but you still have a desire to own one before it’s too late, consider this —

Made-in-the-US A-2 jackets, just like our WW II types, may be purchased for \$189, postpaid and guaranteed. This is the price for sizes 36, 38, 40, 42 & 46. Add \$10 for sizes 48 & 50. (It is wise to order a size larger than normal.) Add \$15 for Long sizes.

Order from Col. Clyde W. Bradley, Jr., Montgomery, AL 36106.

Enclose leather Name Tag information and Wing type (Pilot, Navigator, Gunner, etc.).

For 398th group or squadron patches, see Joe Joseph’s PX listing on Page 11.



Halifax engine recovered after 53 years.

Caterpillar Club Pins Available

Never got your Caterpillar Club pin after bailing out of your B-17? Or lost it and want a replacement? Write to: THE CATERPILLAR CLUB, c/o Switlik Parachute Co., Inc., PO Box 1328, Trenton, NJ 08607. They’ll send you the proper application.

Letters, Letters

"We are all looking forward to the BIG DAY when many of you will return to England to participate in the dedication of the Anstey memorial window. We are grateful to the 398th for the wonderful response. And a special thanks must go to Julian Tyler, who, living in Lincoln, Nebraska, dealt with the mailing, compilation of the list of donors and the banking. And to his father, Barry, who oversaw the whole operation from his home in Anstey. Please let us know if you require additional information on this wonderful project."

Wilfrid Dimsdale, chairman, UK Friends of the 398th, Buntingford, Herts SG9 0AY, England.

"I went to Dulles Airport on the night several members of our group flew to England last June and remembered how exciting it was for Bill and me when we boarded a plane to visit our British friends of the 398th. I couldn't bear to watch them board and say good-bye so I just slipped away. I would like to report that the "first fruits" of the Comstock Scholarship Fund were given last June. There were two recipients from Bill's high school. Thanks to all who gave so generously to the fund."

Evelyn Comstock, Fairfax, VA 22031-2625.

"I just bought a toy — a real, honest-to-goodness Norden bombsight. What a shame Les Veley and Dave Levy are no longer here to twirl the dials and knobs. Now, if you will go out and buy a B-17 to go with my bombsight we can be in business."

"Meanwhile, my sons, Doug and William, and I flew with the Aluminum Overcast at Watsonville, Ca., and later I arranged for my son-in-law and his father to get rides in Hillsboro, Ore. We really have become an Aluminum Overcast family."

Willis Frazier, Sunnyvale, CA 94087-3918.

"So pleased to hear you are making plans for another tour to England and the continent in June 2000. I will be looking forward to it. And I want you to know how much I enjoyed the many stories of the war the men told while on the coach on last summer's tour. It was most fascinating."

Jeanne Stange, Winchester, IL 60154-4915.

"What a great trip. It was hard to sort out any particular highlight there were so many, but the time we spent at Dachau and Moosburg certainly was emotional for me."

Bob Bowen, Athens, GA 30606-4002.

"The tour to England and the continent was absolutely the best. My daughter, Diane, also enjoyed it as she is a history buff. I thought the tour was a highlight, but I really enjoyed seeing the look on our tour guide's face when we revealed that it was our group that bombed Prague instead of Dresden in February of 1945. Pär knew his European history, but had never heard this story."

Newt Moy, Salt Lake City, UT 84103-3250.

"I will always remember the Nuthampstead and Anstey church services. They were so impressive. And my daughters, Lynn and Beth, told me how much it meant to them to hear first hand the many stories told by the veterans."

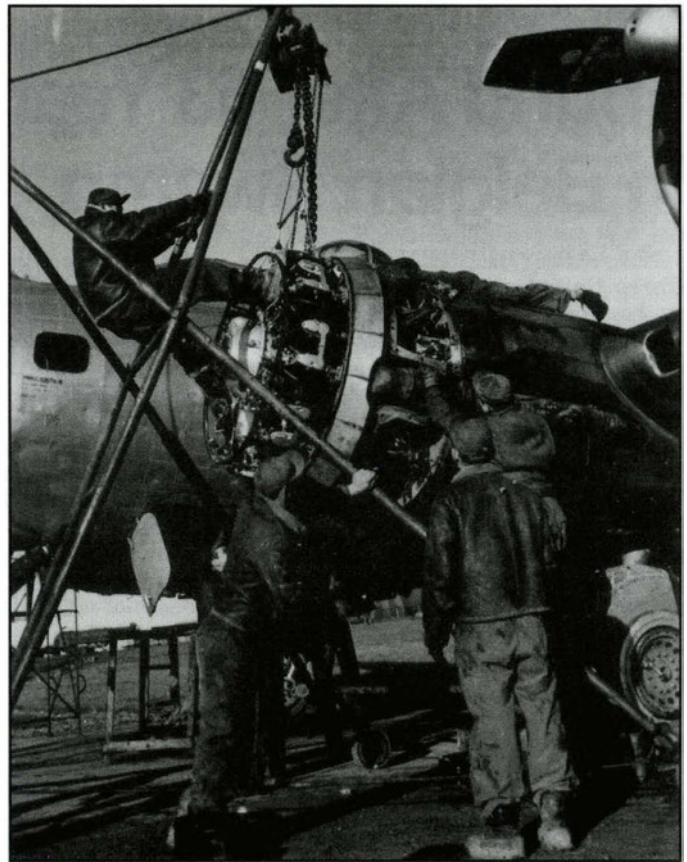
Herb Wilson, Carlisle, PA 17013-7608.

"We count it a blessing to have been on the 1998 tour. Precious memories linger and will remain in our hearts forever."

Hamilton & Mary Mero, Oneida, NY 13421-3634.

"An experience unforgettable. Everyone was happy. Story time was great. The kids were a very special part of the tour."

Helen Beatovich Beam, Seattle, WA 98118-5845.



IT APPEARS to be just another engine change out on the line, but this photo depicts some of the grunt, sweat and tears experienced by the guys who were constantly asked to do "just" one more engine change. These mechanics had the benefit of working in bright sunshine, which was hardly ever the case at Station 131.

"Thanks for making the tour so enjoyable. And so glad to hear that you and Barbara are planning a trip in 2000. We are looking forward to being with you. I have sent a story of the 1998 tour to the Arizona Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Association."

Bill & Fran Fisher, Mesa, AZ 85208-5115.

"Thanks to all of you for what you did in World War II. And for your fine service today."

David J. Brouchoud, New Berlin, WI 53146-4442 (8th AF Associate).

"Thanks for the nice story on the Posen mission (Vol. 11 No. 4) but I must point out that it was not my crew (Lovelace) that lost #42-102476 on July 16, 1944. We went down over Munich on that day in #42-102599. It was the Ray Gallagher crew that went down in 476-B, flown on the Posen mission earlier by the Harvey Latson crew. The tour last June brought back a flood of memories when we toured the Munich area, especially the PW camp at Moosberg."

Bob Hart, Wilmington, OH 45177-1131.

It is comforting to know that our 398th second generation people are becoming involved, like Thomas Bewley being the Harrisburg chairman this year and Marilyn Gibb at Savannah in 2000. I will be visiting family in England this fall and plan to take a nostalgic trip to Nuthampstead. Thanks for keeping us informed about the 398th in FLAK NEWS."

Pamela Sirota, Juniper, FL 33496-2857.

BRIEF-Things

With the passing earlier this year of *Dr. Robert Kelly* (601) all five 398th flight surgeons are gone — *Dr. Herman Zampetti* (Group); *Dr. William Kavanaugh* (602); *Dr. Lewis Hunter* (603); and *Dr. Robert Sweet* (600) ... *Willis Frazier* did a nice job eulogizing *Col. Earl Berryhill* at the reunion, emphasizing that saluting him was his personal, high priority ... the family of *Andrew Pilarcik* says that he is doing OK in a nursing home, and keep sending FLAK NEWS and Life Member *Wallace Hall* is in for a nice "thank you" for his \$100 contribution to FLAK NEWS ... we have several new members in the 398th and they should know that they can contribute to the 8th AF Heritage Museum by sending a check to PO Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402 ... after reading the July story about *Judge Harvey Kramer*, *Mary Wiley* speaks up to encourage the veterans to share their WW II experiences with their children and grandchildren ... *Ken Carlson* recently lost a thumb to cancer, thanks to 20 mm metal pieces embedded in his hand during a FW 190 attack on Nov. 21, 1944 ... *Wilfrid Dimsdale*, the UK Friends chairman/farmer found something in common with the Pennsylvania Amish during the tour to Lancaster County — a broad-brimmed straw hat ... no wonder the hotels like bomb group reunions — at Harrisburg we spent \$71,000 for guest rooms and \$20,000 for banquet meals; all that plus individual restaurant meals and service; add \$17,000 for the Gettysburg, Amish, Hershey, and City tours ... and "young" *Thomas Bewley* had to keep track of and audit all those numbers ... when the reunion golfers passed through the city of Carlisle, Pa., it triggered memories of the great athlete, *Jim Thorpe*, "the Carlisle Indian" ... *Geoff Rice* of England came to Harrisburg to display his photo collection and to join *Howard Traeder* in picking up more data for his ongoing research of 398th B-17 records and memorabilia ... remember the pilot's seat that *Jack Lee* recovered from his old Fortress? It's been converted into a rocking chair! "Very comfortable," says Jack ... President *Dwight Eisenhower* purchased his 189-acre farm in Gettysburg in the 1950's for \$44,000; today that farm is worth \$44,000 per acre ... *Chaplain Dwall* has jumped into modern technology with "e-mail", but along with the FLAK NEWS editor, he also admits, "I'm not sure it's here to stay" ... *Jaromir Kohout*, of Pilsen, Czech Republic, flew to Seattle recently and was given a "Docent" tour of the Museum of Flight by *Ted Johnston*; also greeted by *Keith Anderson*, *Russ Reed*, *Louis Stoffer*, *Ike Alhadeff*, and *Allen Ostrom*; *Jaromir* then went on to Oregon and California to meet with other 8th Air Force contacts (see you in Pilsen on the 398th 2000 tour, *Jaromir*) ... the Star Spangled Banner voice at the Welcome Banquet at Harrisburg belongs to *David Canavan*, son-in-law of the late 601 bombardier, *Les Veley* ... *Jack Hiller* looked like one of those TV golf flacks when he holed out a 104-yard fairway shot at the reunion with "my world famous 7-wood" ... 602 pilot *John McCormick* could be the only 398'er to have gone on to fly the giant B-36 after the war; he took note of a recent B-36 story that described the plane's 10 engines — "six churning and four burning" ... *Marilyn Gibb*, our new treasurer, will also be the chairman at the 2000 reunion in Savannah; and she'll get help from another young'un, *Nancy Cotter*, daughter of *Conrad Sameulson* ... 1989-1999 has been declared "The Year of the B-24, 60th Anniversary" by the 2nd Air Division; your FLAK NEWS will honor the Liberator in the April 1999 issue ... when the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum appealed for books for its library, *Harry Generaux* responded by sending them his Class of 44-B flight training graduation books from Frederick Army Air Field, Okla., and Gibbs Field, Fort Stockton, Texas ... more on the Anstey Window from church warden *Sir Roger duBoulay* — "The Pillar of Cloud will incorporate blues, greens, and silvers adjusted to the somewhat muted colours of the neighboring window; the Pillar of Fire will include hotter colours of scarlet and pink, whilst the central light will be suffused with gold and silver light emerging out of darkness" ...

398th Bomb Group PX

	Qty.	Enter Total Cost
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		\$ _____
Delivery And Handling Add \$3.00, or \$4.00 if Order is Over \$20.00.		\$ _____
	Total	\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Make checks payable to 398th Bomb Group Association PX (US funds).

Mail to: Joe Joseph
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-6168

"The countries of East Anglia, seen from 3,000 feet, still present an impressive sight today. In clear visibility air fields can be seen in every direction, so closely grouped together that their landing circuits must have intermeshed like the wheels of a precision watch."

— ROGER FREEMAN