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

VOL. 14 NO. 3

FLAK NEWS

JULY 1999

## **THE FINAL PROJECT? Savannah Memorial Fund Drive To Start**

Almost all the pieces for a 398th Bomb Group "Last Mission Project" are now in place.

The site is there: The Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum.

The plan has been drawn: A smaller sized Memorial than which stands today at Station 131, Nuthampstead.

The designer has been selected: Depue Monument Co., Savannah, GA.

The dedication date has been determined: During the four-day reunion in Savannah, GA., September 20-23, 2000.

The Group approval for the project has been given: At the annual reunion in Harrisburg, PA, 1998.

*Still to come: \$22,000 in contributions.*

"We fully expect this to be our last major undertaking," said 398th President Wally Blackwell.

"It will be a fitting finale to rank right up there with the two fund-raising projects for our Aluminum Overcast, the Memorial stained glass window at Anstey and, of course, the Nuthampstead Memorial.

"All four were wonderfully successful," said Wally. "and surely this final effort will be, too. We can't fail."

Board member Lou Stoffer has been named chairman for the fund drive. Stoffer will make a formal presentation at the annual reunion in Oklahoma City August 25-28, 1999.

A mailing envelope will be available in the October issue of FLAK NEWS, reaching all of the 2,000-plus members of the Association.

"Meanwhile," said Stoffer, "we can begin accepting checks at any time. It would be encouraging for us to have a quick response as we must have the project funds ready by January 1, 2000."

Send contributions to --  
398th Heritage Memorial Fund  
c/o Louis Stoffer  
Centralia, WA 98531-4529

### **BULLETIN**

A very special treat for the men and women going on the "Guthrie Tour" at the Oklahoma City reunion August 25-28, 1999 has been announced by chairman Dick Frazier. This will be a P-51 Mustang Fly-Past especially for the 398th Bomb Group tour members. Piloted by owner Calvin Burgess, the exhibition will take place Saturday afternoon, August 28 at the Guthrie, OK airport.



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## REUNION

The 16th annual reunion of the 398th Bomb Group will be held in Oklahoma City, OK Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, August 25-26-27-28, 1999. Registration forms and activity schedules appeared in the April issue of FLAK NEWS. (There appears to be some connection between Oklahoma City and cowboy hats and boots.)



# Music Will Charm At Reunion

Cowboy hats and cowboy boots might well be topics of conversation (and attire) when the 398th meets in reunion August 25-28 in Oklahoma City, OK.

But those Western "things" will have to share center stage with such All-American "things" as good ole' 40's music and good ol' All-American all-sings.

All this and "Phyl's Toe Tappin' Organ."

Phyllis Rahe, wife of the 602 pilot Max Rahe, will be at the Marriott Hotel with her organ and will entertain during the dinner hours at both the Thursday and Saturday evening banquets. So get ready for such memories as "Smile a While," "Sunrise Serenade," "When The Lights Go On Again," and others.

Then chairman Dick Frazier will form men's and women's choirs and offer such numbers as "White Cliffs of Dover," "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," and "Sentimental Journey."

Some will remember Frazier as the bass player in the combo that played at special gatherings at Nuthampstead in "those days." In the years that followed he had had a long career as a choir and musical director.

Come prepared to sing!

## Lost Your Registration?

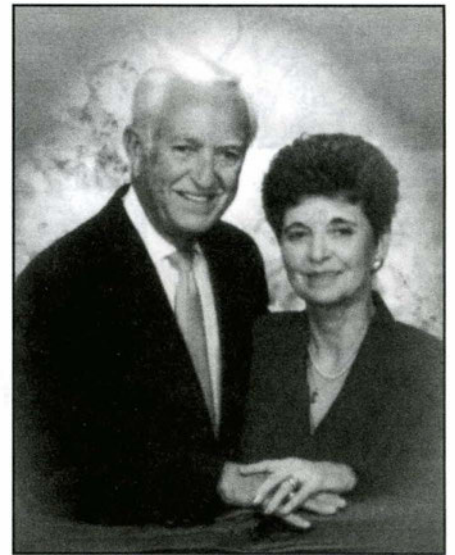
No Reunion Registration Form? Call Dick or Junice Frazier.

## Hotel Reservations

A reminder that reservations at the headquarters Marriott Hotel must be received by August 1 to comply with reunion contract agreements.

## Car Rental Savings

A savings of 10% and more on car rental will be available to those calling Fred Jones Car Rental in Oklahoma City during the reunion. For reservations call



**DICK & JUNICE FRAZIER** of Oklahoma City will be on hand to greet the men and women of the 398th when they arrive at OKC for the annual reunion August 25-28, 1999. They have been "on the job" for almost a year preparing the tours, programs, registrations, banquets and all that goes into a successful reunion.

1-800-456-9288. Identify as being with the 398th Bomb Group.

## Tour Coach Limits

Decisions on how many coaches will be available for reunion tours will be made in early August based on the number of reservations that have been received. There will be limited opportunities for "last minute" tour ticket purchases at the hotel. Send in your reservations "soon-est."

## Golfing Note

Golf tee times starting at 8 AM on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday have been arranged. Golfers must indicate on their reservation forms the days they will be playing and be prepared to leave the Marriott Hotel at 6:30 AM each morning. Restaurant facilities will be available at the Lake Hefner Course.



**THESE SEVEN MEN** of the 398th once lived in the same Nissen hut at Nuthampstead. This past spring, for the third straight year, they got together for a reunion in Orlando, FL. From left to right are Leonard Tebbs, Phil Swan, Howard

Pinner, J.Gordon Blythe, David Swift, Fred Gonzales and Francis Murphy. The happy faces seem to say, "We had a good time, and needless to say, the meeting places were knee deep in war stories."

**PONDERING THE FUTURE**

One day, some day, the day will come when FLAK NEWS can no longer be taken for granted as an automatic quarterly delivery to members and friends of the 398th Bomb Group, as has been the case for almost 14 years.

No, Wally, as President, you will not have to start looking for a new scribe. Not to worry, dear friends, your subscriptions are still intact. The filing cabinets still hold many stories and legends of the 398th waiting to be told.

But let's face it, folks, there will come a day of reckoning. At 78, how many more enthusiastic years are there to turn out a top quality product? How many more years can the treasury continue to pay for FLAK NEWS, letterheads, envelopes, stamps, phone calls, etc., with our veterans' names being moved to the Taps list at an alarming rate?

Not to mention the diversion of funds for the Anstey Memorial Window and the proposed Memorial at Savannah?

So much to do and so little time left to do it.

As Treasurer Marilyn Gibb said recently, "We will need to become more creative with our financing."

Meanwhile, lest anyone ponders too much over the questions raised, let it be known that the FLAK NEWS editor is grateful beyond measure for having had the opportunity to put long dormant journalistic skills to use. And to tell the world a little of what the men of the 398th Bomb Group did to make this world a better place for us all.

ALLEN OSTROM  
Editor

**Dues May Be Reunion Topic**

It has been brought up before at previous reunions, and it undoubtedly will come up again at the annual business meeting in Oklahoma City on August 26, 1999.

"It" refers to the 25% of our members who do not contribute to the dues program of \$10.00 per year, but continue to receive FLAK NEWS and other communications.

"If we could cut that figure in half we would be just fine financially," said President Wally Blackwell.

"In the past, the Board has been loathe to drop non-paying members," added Blackwell, "but we have taken note that other bomb group associations have done this. And we may have to face up to it, too."

**Flown To War By Colonel Hunter**

The story of the Witka Tanka Ton is a saga of a South Dakota-christened bomber that helped carry the war to Germany as part of the 398th Bomb Group.

The Witka Tanka Ton received its name at Rapid City from a Sioux Indian chieftain at a ceremony arranged by the Singing Tribe of Wahoo.

The B-17 justified its name, which translated means "the bird that lays big eggs."

Colonel Frank P. Hunter, Jr. flew the ship from Rapid City across the Atlantic.

Colonel Hunter was initiated into the Singing Tribe of Wahoo in Rapid City in the spring of 1943 and was so impressed with the ceremony that he asked permission to have his ship christened.

A little later the Fortress was christened the Witka Tanka Ton by the tribe

before a morning assembly and about 150 residents of Rapid City.

John Colhoff, part Sioux Indian, and curator of the Indian museum, assisted in the ceremony. He intoned the farewell message to the ship, such as is given when Indians go into battle, and offered the Indian prayer to the four winds.

Witka Tanka Ton, B-17 No. 107138, was assigned to the 603rd Bombardment Squadron upon its arrival at Station 131 and given the squadron designation of "N7" and the call letter "T".

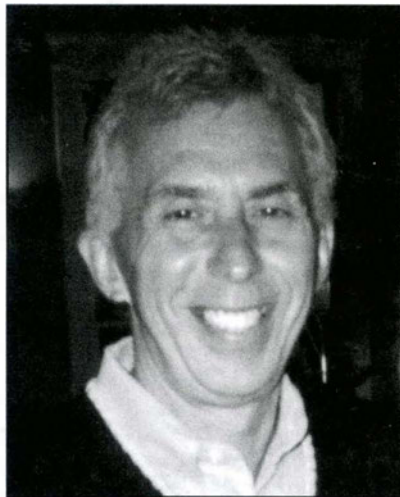
It was never flown in combat by Col. Hunter as it was never modified for PFF (radar) bombing and navigation. It flew one lead mission on May 31 under the command of group operations officer Bob Simeral.

For the period between June 15 and August 5, 1944 it was almost the "personal" airplane of the Francis Farenthold crew. They flew it on 11 of its 45 missions.

The first flight into combat was made by the William Fisher crew, May 12 to Lutzendorf. The last mission of the Witka Tanka Ton came on November 21, 1944. In the first and only time he flew "T 138" Paul Rich and his crew went down after being attacked by FW-190's.

Following are the crews and the dates in 1944 they flew missions in Witka Tanka Ton -

May 12	Fisher	Sept. 5	Howden
May 31	Simeral	Sept. 9	Magnan
June 12	Dwyer	Sept. 10	Howden
June 15	Farenthold	Sept. 12	Mann
June 18	Farenthold	Sept. 13	Newman
June 19	Howden	Sept. 17	J. Johnson
June 20	Foster	Sept. 26	Moore
June 24	Farenthold	Sept. 30	Moore
June 27	Farenthold	Oct. 2	Moore
July 18	Sleamon	Oct. 3	Lee
July 20	Farenthold	Oct. 5	Morrison
July 25	Farenthold	Oct. 6	W. Johnson
July 28	Farenthold	Oct. 7	Tarr
July 29	Lee	Oct. 14	Rusk
July 31	Sleamon	Oct. 15	Hyndman
Aug. 1	Farenthold	Oct. 17	Spangler
Aug. 3	Mann	Oct. 22	Newman
Aug. 4	Darner	Oct. 26	Griffin
Aug. 5	Farenthold	Nov. 4	J. Johnson
Aug. 6	Magnan	Nov. 8	W. Johnson
Aug. 8	Lehner	Nov. 9	Steele
		Nov. 21	Rich



**DON GADDO**

Don Gaddo, who prefers to be known as "an ordinary citizen of the state of North Carolina who had a cousin serve in the 398th during World War II," is coming to Oklahoma City for the 398th reunion not necessarily as a guest speaker, which he will be, but "because I want to be there."

In addition to being the chairman of Greek Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, Don happens to be a gifted writer and he just happens to have written a book entitled "ANGEL: A MIGHTY FORTRESS."

The story is gleaned from a 602 squadron crew on which his cousin, Joseph Doglio, and all aboard except Doyle Borchers were killed. It becomes "historical fiction" as the realism of the air war blends with a tale of romance.

Hollywood is already interested.

Meanwhile, Don wants to share his personal feelings on "Democracy, Freedom, Sacrifice, Heroes."

**Dues For Seven States**

Members in six Mid-West states and Texas, comprising about one-fourth of the 2,000 members of the 398th Bomb Group living within the 50 U.S. states, get the privilege of contributing to the dues program this quarter.

Dues notices have been enclosed in FLAK NEWS for members living in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio...and Texas.

# England Going All Out For Year 2000

## Many From 398th Planning Post Tour Visits

While most of the 100-plus 398th Bomb Group members who will be doing the "full tour" to England, Czech Republic and Copenhagen in June 2000, there will be some who will be opting for "England Only".

Both segments, of course, will include the dedication of the Memorial stained glass window at Anstey, Service of Remembrance at the Nuthampstead Memorial, Madingly Cemetery and Duxford (and more), many of the "England Only" folks are already planning some "post-131" visits in England and other parts of Europe.

London, especially, is gearing up for a host of Millennium celebrations, only one of which is The London Eye, as pictured below. While this might be the world's largest "Ferris Wheel," London will also come up with the largest building of its type, the Dome at Greenwich.

The Dome will feature 14 vast themed zones covering all aspects of modern life. And it will be open only during the Year

2000! (This is all explained on the web site [www.dome2000.co.uk](http://www.dome2000.co.uk).)

All these things and not to forget such "standard" tourists sites as the Parliament Buildings, St. Paul's Cathedral (where all 8th Air Force men killed in action are recorded), Tower Bridge, Cutty Sark, Maritime Museum, Hendon Imperial War Museum, Gallery of Modern Art, Cabinet War Rooms, etc., etc.

All these things and not to forget Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Loch Lomond, Stratford-On-Avon, Plymouth, Buckingham Palace, Windsor, etc., etc.

As the "England Only" folks spread out to visit their special places in and around England, the "rest of the tour" will be winging their way to Prague, Czech Republic and then on the nearby Plzen for a five-day experience among the people who remember the 8th Air Force B-17's who came over their city on The Last Mission of World War II. This on April 25, 1945.

More than a few air crew members who

flew that mission will be on the tour, most of them "revisiting" Plzen for the first time in 55 years.

Complete itineraries and reservation applications may be obtained from Barbara Fish. Call toll-free 1-800-423-5454.

The "England Only" portion of the tour (June 7-12) is priced at \$2149 (Newark), \$2299 (Chicago), \$2399 (Seattle), \$2399 (Los Angeles). Flights are via scheduled British Air and prices include deluxe motor coaches, first class hotel, admission to Duxford Imperial War Museum and most meals.

Prices for the "Full Tour" (June 7-20) are \$3795 (Newark), \$3895 (Chicago), and \$3895 (Seattle). Scheduled flights are via SAS and prices include all land costs and most meals.

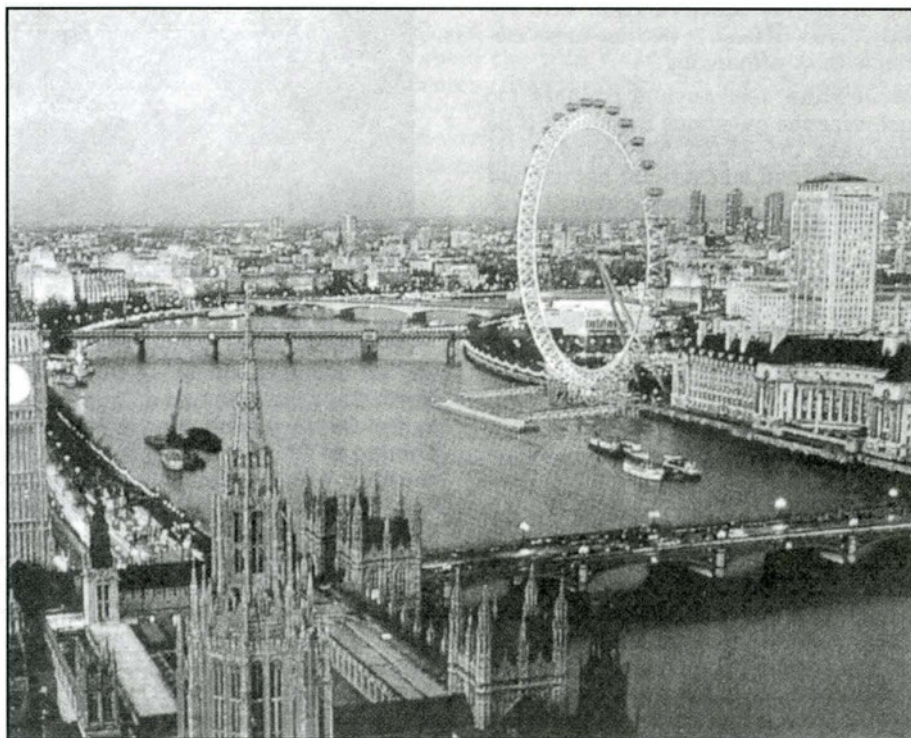
The British Air flights go directly into Heathrow, London. The SAS flights are via Copenhagen with connections to Heathrow, London.

All tour members will meet at Heathrow, London for motor coach connections to the Holiday Inn, Cambridge.



### This Is London

Is there anything that exemplifies London any better than that red, double-decker bus and black taxi? Those double-deckers haven't changed a bit since "those days" of WW II, and a ride in a London cab is still an experience. Especially with a hot-rod cabbie trying to make time between the airport and downtown. The travel brochure says, "London is a bustling, changing and varied metropolis, one of the oldest and most exciting in the world."



THE LONDON EYE, located on the Thames River across from the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, is a 450-foot tall observation wheel that will take passengers in enclosed capsules on a 30-minute, 360-degree ride, offering views over a 30-mile radius. It will be ready in time for 398th Bomb Group members opting for the "England Only" portion of the June, 2000 Tour. Special post-tour arrangements must be made to include the "EYE" and other London sights.

## Jack's Books Now on CD Rom

Modern technology has caught up with "Jack's Books."

Those thousands of photographs and bits of personal information compiled over the years by the late Jack Wintersteen, and lovingly placed in six large albums, can now be had in one Compact Disc.

Called a CD Rom, the disc was created after being photographed on 35mm film, thanks to president Wally Blackwell and production friends in Washington, DC.

The actual albums will be presented to the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum when the 398th visits Savannah, GA for the September 20-23, 2000 reunion.

Meanwhile, those folks with CD compatible computers can see all the books in the form of one CD. The cost: \$25.00 each.

Historian Dallas Ebest will accept any and all such orders, as he has the original disc. Copies will be made from that disc and mailed to purchasers. Send your orders to Dallas Ebest, San Antonio, TX 78213-1561.

Expect delivery in about four weeks after ordering.

## AMERICAN INTERNEES IN SWEDEN

BY PÄR HENNINGSSON  
Upsalla, Sweden

*This story by Sweden's Pär Henningsson is a follow-up to the April FLAK NEWS article on Lyman Cranston of the 398th, who was the lone survivor when his B-17 crashed off the coast of Trelleborg, Sweden. —Editor*

During WWII, 1939-1945, a total of 327 aircraft from belligerent countries found their way to Sweden. Most were damaged during missions, some had navigated astray and some brought refugees or deserters.

Of these 327 aircraft, 140 were American, 113 German and 58 British. The most diversions occurred in 1944, when 160 aircraft came to Sweden. During this year the Allied Air Forces bombings of industrial targets in Germany and German held territories were most intensive.

As Sweden had declared neutrality, and did not support any of the belligerent states, a diversion to Sweden meant internment for aircraft as well as crews. Nearly all interned airmen were repatriated before the war's end, after longer or shorter terms of internment.

Sweden had not been at war since 1814. During the seventeenth century Sweden had been one of Europe's most wayfaring "superpowers", with superiority over most of the Baltic states. Slowly the Swedish position weakened, and the country was a military "weak" nation in 1939. With a low population of just over 6 million inhabitants, and an outdated Army as well as Navy and Air Force to protect the long border, Sweden could never have defended itself against one of the "stronger" nations.

The nation was however rich when counting natural resources and industrial products. Ore, steel and the much demanded ball-bearings became "bargaining-chips" when Sweden declared neutrality at the war's start, and continued to stay that way during the whole war.

Historic and economic traditions made Sweden more orientated towards Germany rather than Great Britain.

In 1940, German forces occupied Norway and Denmark. Sweden was isolated from the rest of Europe. An established historic fact is that Germany did not need to occupy Sweden, but could maintain a steady flow of ore, steel and ball-bearings, shipped from Swedish harbors to northern Germany.

It must be said that the general public supported Sweden's occupied neighbors, and the support for the Allied countries steadily increased during the war. When information of German atrocities started becoming public, opinion turned even more. By 1943, not many Swedes dared to support Germany openly.

The first aircraft to divert to Sweden was a Polish RWD 13 with refugees. The second was a German He 60. These two came in September 1939. During 1940 mostly German aircraft came to Sweden. The crew-members were interned at an internment camp in Kronobergshed, a former Army training camp, in southern Sweden.

The first British aircraft to force land in Sweden was a Swordfish Mk 1, in September 1940. It was followed by various Blenheims, Hampden and other medium bombers later that year. The allied fliers were interned in Främby in the county of Dalarna. Internment camps in various villages in Dalarna were to become the ones most used for housing allied airmen.

During the first four years of the war, airmen were repatriated on a basis of "one for one". As one German was sent home, also a Brit was repatriated.

In July 1943, the first USAAF aircraft came to Sweden. It was "Georgia Rebel", a B-17 F from the 381st BG based at Ridgewell, UK. The GR had participated

*Continued on Page 9*

## Many Want 'Belle Moved To Savannah

Don't look now, but there is groundswell developing among some 8th Air Force veterans to move the Memphis Belle to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia.

Or at least get this most famous Fortress on loan so it can be displayed at what has already become "home port" for the 8th Air Force.

The 'Belle has been at Memphis, Tennessee for a number of years, housed on that city's Mud Island. And according to some who feel strongly about the proposed move, "is in a deteriorating condition."

Actually, the Memphis Belle is the property of the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

The Museum at Savannah does not now have a Flying Fortress, which is seen by many to be the symbol of the 8th Air Force. Nor does the Museum have a B-24 Liberator, deemed by those from the 2nd Air Division who flew it, to be equally symbolic.

Members of the Mississippi Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society are among those endorsing the move, and are encouraging others to make their own "Move the 'Belle" wishes known to the AF Museum in Dayton and/or write their congressmen.

## Texas B-24 Soon On Its Way To New UK Home

Duxford's Conservation Manager, Chris Knapp, recently visited Lackland Air Force Base, Texas and surveyed the B-24 which will one day be displayed at Duxford, England. The survey was to get a much clearer picture of the task ahead in restoring the Liberator for the aircraft's arrival later this summer.

It will take at least two years to restore. Though structurally sound, much work needs to be done to bring the Liberator up to exhibition standards.

The operation to bring the B-24 to Duxford began in May when engineers began to dismantle the aircraft along with local Air Force personnel.

The B-24 will be airlifted to Duxford on a C-5 Galaxy and will be officially handed over to The American Air Museum at RAF Mildenhall, the US Air Force's 3rd Air Force headquarters. Restoration will begin soon thereafter.



# ROYAL AIR FORCE



## THE BATTLE

*"Members of the RAF, the fate of ge  
-- WINSTON*

In the summer of 1940, with America still a year Dowding told his Spitfire and Hurricane fighter pil  
"The Battle of Britain is about to begin."

Across the English Channel, Reich Marshal He  
"Phase I of the Battle of Britain has been won."

The Luftwaffe indeed seemed to own the skies i  
bring England to its knees. The prelude to invadir  
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The RAF pilots flew as many as seven sortie  
Stukas, Heinkels, Dorniers, Junkers and Messer:

The scream of the propellers, engines, guns and  
the battles raged over 200 miles of English coast

In August, Phase II was succeeding and Dow  
side, said --

"What we need now is a miracle."

Germany was on the verge of unleashing Phase  
fell on London in September, church bells signal

On September 15, 400 bombers and 700 fight  
RAF. All day the skies were criss-crossed with v  
into the Channel and on the English countryside

On September 17, "Sea Lion" was postponed  
England continued to suffer from night bombin  
*"Never in the history of human endeavor have*





# ROYAL AIR FORCE



## THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

*"Members of the RAF, the fate of generations to come are in your hands."  
-- WINSTON CHURCHILL*

In the summer of 1940, with America still a year away from Pearl Harbor, Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding told his Spitfire and Hurricane fighter pilots --

"The Battle of Britain is about to begin."

Across the English Channel, Reich Marshal Hermann Göring made his own announcement --

"Phase I of the Battle of Britain has been won."

The Luftwaffe indeed seemed to own the skies in July and Göring unleashed Phase II in his attack to bring England to its knees. The prelude to invading the shores of England was to knock out the Radar sites that gave the British defenders an early warning as to where the German air attacks were coming from.

The RAF pilots flew as many as seven sorties a day during the blistering onslaught by Göring's Stukas, Heinkels, Dorniers, Junkers and Messerschmidts.

The scream of the propellers, engines, guns and explosions reached ground level as thunderclaps as the battles raged over 200 miles of English coastline.

In August, Phase II was succeeding and Dowding, always in the belief that God was on England's side, said --

"What we need now is a miracle."

Germany was on the verge of unleashing Phase III, "Sea Lion", the invasion of England. When bombs fell on London in September, church bells signaled the eminent invasion.

On September 15, 400 bombers and 700 fighters of the Luftwaffe attacked, there to be met by the RAF. All day the skies were criss-crossed with vapor trails, the debris of this colossal air battle falling into the Channel and on the English countryside.

On September 17, "Sea Lion" was postponed by Hitler.

England continued to suffer from night bombing raids, but the Battle of Britain had been won.

*"Never in the history of human endeavor have so many owed so much to so few."*

— WINSTON CHURCHILL



# GEORGIA PEACH: Varied Remembrances

I am writing a Dutch book about the history of Grimbergen airfield (6.5 miles NNE of Brussels, Belgium). After the German occupation the airfield used to be a RAF-airfield (B60). According to the story of local people, there were also several US-aircraft based on Grimbergen. However the US Air Force Historical Research Agency could not confirm that Grimbergen was used as an official base by the USAF, they have no information of this airfield.

I found the picture of the "Georgia Peach" in the archives of the Polish RAF-squadrons. This photo is taken on the airfield of Grimbergen, correct date unknown. What was the serial number of this aircraft? Is it possible to tell me something more about the history of this particular aircraft? When did it land on Grimbergen airfield? What about the crew?

According to local people, some parked B17's were destroyed on the airfield during the German operation "Bodenplatte" (1st January 1945). Was this "Georgia Peach" destroyed by German fighters or did it return safely to England before the 1st January 1945? Were other B17's of the 398th Bomb Group destroyed on Grimbergen during "Bodenplatte"?

**Frans Van Humbeek**  
Grimbergen, Belgium



Enclosed herewith please find a copy of a letter that I wrote to Captain Celis (of the Belgian Air Force).

Because Capt. Celis was writing a book about air crews in distress who were shot down over Belgium, he had asked me to give him as much information as possible about my mission which resultant enemy action forced me to land near Brussels. After writing him, he indicated to me that he would devote the contents of my letter to an entire chapter in his book.

The serial number on one of the two planes assigned to me was #7190 (the last four digits). I'm not sure at this point, whether that was the number on my first airplane or the number on the plane that I had to abandon at Grimbergen.

**Glenn Curtis**  
2112 N. 5th St.  
Canon City, CO 81212



Just received a letter from Ray Bowden - a noted British researcher and friend of mine. He is an author of "Plane Names & Fancy Noses. 91st BG" and "Tales to Noses over Berlin". Ray sent me some info about a 390th BG's Fortress called "Georgia Peach". Its picture was published by "FLAK News" of July 1996.

Its serial number was 43-37828 according to Ray. It joined the AAF inventory on May 23, 1944 and was assigned to England on June 29, 1944. Fortress #43-87828 flew with 398th BG and 457th BG. "Georgia Peach" force landed at St. Denis, Belgium, on December 30, 1944 as a result of battle damage and poor weather. Bill McCall was its pilot on the day. The aircraft was caught by Luftwaffe attacks on January 1, 1945 but was repaired. Ultimately returned to USA to be scrapped at Kingman, Arizona.

**Michal Mucha**  
60-603 Puznan, Poland

I believe that the picture in the FLAK News on the Georgia Peach was taken when we landed on Nov. 21, 1944 in Brussels after the Merseberg mission. Hope this helps a little in your research.

**Bob Rebillot**  
Clearwater, FL 33761  
(Linn Rogers crew, 601st)

## The Final Chapter

I have wondered all these years what ever happened to the GEORGIA PEACH (43-37874 W). Evidently it is still where we left it.

The final mission of the GEORGIA PEACH was March 9, 1945. Our target was Kassel, Germany. As I remember it we dropped our bombs and headed for home. Whether we were hit by flak going in to the target or coming out I do not remember. One of our engines was knocked out but we tried to keep up with the formation. As time went on we developed trouble with another engine and wound up with two feathered props. When a third engine started to act up we found ourselves far behind our squadron and losing altitude fast.

Bob Starkey knew that we were not going to make it home and that he was go-



ing to have to set it down somewhere soon, so he ordered the crew into the radio room to prepare for a crash landing. Since I was the heaviest of anyone on the crew, Donald Butts, our bombardier, ordered me to remove the radio room hatch, which I did immediately and evidently too quickly. I had not opened the door into the waist of the plane before removing the hatch and the slip stream came in, filling the radio room with such pressure it blew me, hatch and all right out through the hole where the hatch had been. My hands were cut by shattered plexiglass.

I don't know how high I went out the top of the plane but vividly remember the hatch being wrested from my hands, taking the trailing antenna with it, skirting the tail of the plane, and disappearing in the distance behind us. I also have a vivid memory of the top of the GEORGIA PEACH, from somewhere up high facing the tail of the plane. When I fell back through the hatch all faces were white but nothing was said until we were on the ground. The general expression seemed to be "Wow! We thought you were gone for good."

We had 10/10ths coverage that day but we broke through the clouds somewhere

*Continued on Page 9.*

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## EPILOGUE

**Your FLAK NEWS editor despaired of trying to establish where the photo of GEORGIA PEACH was taken. No firm and convincing evidence was forthcoming from any source.**

**None of the above stories from the readers are accurate, save for the "The Final Chapter" by Harold Flynt and his does not relate to the snow scene.**

**All this reaffirms the suspicion that memories of 75-80 year old men are not to be trusted.**

**(Your Editor thinks the photo was taken at Nuthampstead).**

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# Georgia Peach

Continued from Page 8

around a thousand feet. About the first thing our pilot saw was an airport runway and we were quickly going to over shoot it. He kicked rudder and laid the plane on its side, side-slipping it down to the runway under him for a perfect three point landing. Up to that point I thought you could only do that with a Piper Cub. We were all impressed with our pilot at that point, if we were not impressed with him before.

We found that the place where we had landed was Liege, Belgium, or somewhere near Liege. It had very recently been liberated but there were still swastikas and pictures of Hitler everywhere. As I remember it we were there for a day or two. We were flown back to England in a converted B-17 with some seats in it. We were taken to Bassingburn, I believe, and then bussed back to Nuthamstead. Somehow the news of our landing did not get back to our base and we were listed as MIA. I remember that all my things had been divided up by the guys in my Nissen hut and I never did get it all back. Since I was born in Savannah, Georgia, I thought it was great being assigned to the GEORGIA PEACH. We flew only five missions with her, the last being March 9, 1945.

**Harold L. Flynt**  
Jacksonville, FL 32210

For what it is worth...re: GEORGIA PEACH -- My "Flimsy" notes shows that on 14 Feb., 1945 we flew N-6821 (601st Sqdn.) on mission to Dresden. Extreme head winds plus battle damage and no fuel left, forced to land at B-53 (Merville). Got stuck in a "Crater-bomb hole" on runway. Airfield had just been "liberated" by our ground forces that morning. Waited for "rescue plane" three days before returning to 398th B.G. WE LEFT THE PLANE THERE...Can't remember if the plane had a name painted on the nose.

**Bill Costanzo**  
Newport News, VA 23606

I viewed with interest the picture and caption of Georgia Peach in the July Flak News.

I was a mechanic, ground crew member on the Aircraft. The Crew Chief as M/Sgt. Edwin M. Wallace of St. Simon's Island, Georgia. The Georgia Peach failed to return from Mission No. 104 to Merseburg on Nov. 2, 1945.

Our replacement A/C was Serial No. 43-38661. This aircraft brought me home June 2-6, 1945. It was piloted by Howard F. Traeder.

**Lloyd G. Norton**  
Hayward, CA 94545

# AMERICAN INTERNEES IN SWEDEN

Continued from Page 5

in a massive raid against southern Norway, been hit by FLAK and turned toward Sweden for safety. When the GR crashed in a bog in western Sweden, piloted by 1st Lt. O.V. Jones and co-piloted by 1st Lt. G.B. McIntosh, it started a new era in Swedish internment history.

During 1943 only seven American aircraft came to Sweden. The boom of force landed aircraft was to start during the spring of 1944. Flying Fortresses and Liberators started coming in large numbers as the Combined Bomber Offensive (CBO) was restarted by USAAF against targets in Germany.

The targets were aircraft industry and fuel plants. The Germans had many of these in northern Germany and Poland. The safest, or least dangerous way of reaching these targets, was to take the route over Denmark and approach over the Baltic Sea. This took the formations very close to Sweden and the USAAF issued maps of southern Sweden to guide damaged aircraft to safety.

Sweden was not prepared for this "invasion" of Americans.

The internment camps had very few restrictions for the internees. There were some guards, and a curfew time of 10:00 PM, but not much more. Some internees even stayed at different Air Force bases and helped the Swedes with the maintenance of the interned aircraft.

The reason for the relatively easy life of the internees was an agreement between the US and Sweden, giving Sweden the right to use nine B-17 Fortresses and convert them to courier planes. Five of these planes were actually converted and used on the route to Prestwick, Scotland. One of the men behind this deal was the American Air Attaché in Stockholm, Lt. Col. Felix Hardison. In his honor the

converted aircraft were named "Airplane Felix".

As mentioned before, the earlier internees from Britain and Germany had been repatriated on a "one for one" basis. With the large number of Americans arriving, this was not possible. "There were not enough Germans!"

The Swedish authorities allowed Americans to be repatriated "as soon as possible", meaning when there was a place on one of the courier flights. Some had to stay several months, some could go home pretty soon. As the Swedes only had a few courier aircraft, Americans Air Transport Service, AATS, started courier flights using C-87 Liberator Transport Aircraft. This operation was started in April 1944 and led by Colonel Bernt Balchen. The AATS flew a total of 549 missions to Sweden.

A total of 40 American Airmen were buried in Sweden. Two of these had been killed in accidents during their internment. One drowned during a canoe trip, and one crashed while test flying an aircraft. The remaining 38 died of wounds after arrival, were dead on arrival or were later found at sea. All 40 American casualties were buried in the town of Malmö. 38 of these were moved to Military Cemeteries or private burial places in 1948.

Today there is a monument at the cemetery in Malmö. It consists of a full sized propeller and bears the inscription:

**DUTY CALLED THEM  
TO GOD AND COUNTRY  
THEY REST IN PEACE WHILE  
MEMORY OF THEIR  
SACRIFICE  
IS WRITTEN IN ETERNAL  
GLORY**



**SWEDISH LANDING--This B-17 from the 351st Bomb Group landed in Sweden, but overshot the runway and stopped just short of nearby homes. Note missing portion of starboard wing.**

# Combat Mess Memories

*Ray Rovinsky went on to a long career as a mechanical engineer and college professor, but for a brief time in his youth he served as a "gopher" in the 398th Bomb Group Combat Mess at Station 131. In this article, and others to follow, Rovinsky shares his memories about his days in the Nuthampstead Mess Hall.*

**BY RAY ROVINSKY**  
*Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania*

Back at Rapid City, each squadron had its own mess hall where all enlisted personnel ate their meals. When we arrived at 131, there weren't the necessary mess halls to do the same, so the 603 squadron mess crew was assigned to operate combat mess.

I don't remember who got the others. The Officers' Mess, Consolidated Mess and the Station Compliment groups were assigned to the other crews. We really knew we were overseas and near a combat zone when we first arrived.

The food we received at first appeared to be leftovers or rejects from other units. Sugar, for instance, came in all sorts of containers from cardboard boxes to cans or bags. It was large lumpy crystals and we had to lay it out on a table and beat it with a 2 x 4 to break it up to a usable size. Of course the guys bitched and damned us like we did it on purpose. Soon we got sugar in proper containers and that problem was over with.

We ate out of mess kits for quite a while until Col. Hunter stopped by and saw it. He said he wanted the enlisted flight personnel treated the same as flying officers and we got plates in a hurry. Another thing I remember was the time he came in to have breakfast with the crews before a mission and found the men eating powdered eggs. (The officers got fresh eggs before a mission). Needless to say, the next mission, the enlisted men were eating "fresh eggs". Now, if you're wondering about the quotation marks, they were cold storage eggs and we received many a crate that bore dates as far back as 1942. Actually, there was nothing wrong with them but we occasionally ran into a bad one. We never served them to the crews, we ate those ourselves. As time went on, we got crates with much later dates. Sometimes, it looked like the chickens were laying them on the boat coming over. Some had dates less than 2 weeks old.

We started out only serving combat crews, but a little later, they assigned all non-cons staff Sgt. and up to combat mess halls. Consolidated Mess had twice as many as we did. Later on, they converted one section of the dining hall into the NCO club. That was a pain to us until we got used to it. We had to extend the meal time hours to compensate for the lost seating area.

The menu for each meal was identical to those served at every 8th Air Force facility in the British Isles. This came out of Quartermasters main office and was made up in accordance with what was on hand and what the ships brought in from the states. That's why we served chicken or spaghetti 2 or 3 times in one week and then maybe didn't get it for 2 or 3 weeks. It depended on what was on hand. The nonperishables came in no organized manner and sometimes we were up to the ceiling with canned beans, tomato juice, grapefruit juice, orange juice, etc.

We got 100 lb. bags of potatoes by the truckload. Sometimes we had to unload 40 to 50 bags from one delivery. The truck driver always managed to come at mealtime and one mule would be assigned to unload by himself ("Me!")

We never got fresh milk. The British had a difficult time meeting their own needs. We used powdered milk exclusively. We were blamed for that too.

Bread was delivered several times a day. It was baked by British WAAC equivalents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. One bakery served as many as ten bases. The bread was gray in color because they used unbleached flour which was much better for us anyway. There were no additives, it was real bread.

Meat, fish, etc. was delivered 2 or 3 days before it was served.

# Letters, Letters

"Thank you for sending a copy of your newsletter, FLAK NEWS, and the comments by Renee Nadel on my book and documentary. The response to 'The Greatest Generation' has been overwhelming and most gratifying. All the best."

**Tom Brokaw, NBC News, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10112.**

"I have received a copy of your fine newsletter, FLAK NEWS, and was pleasantly surprised to see a friendly recognition of our old warhorse, the B-24.

"We had our 60th anniversary celebration of the Liberator last May in Austin, and will have another December 9-12, 1999 in San Diego, that to include all operators of the B-24 and PB4Y.

"Again, we are extremely pleased that you devoted a full page of FLAK NEWS to "that other bomber" and helped us to liberate the Liberator from relative obscurity beyond all reasonable judgement. We appreciate your good taste and recognition that we did it together."

**C.N. (Bud) Chamberlain, 2nd Air Division Association, Riverside, CA 92518**

"I used the World War II Veterans poem by Judie Timm in my remarks at a recent patriotic event in Seattle sponsored by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

"Three Washington Tulip Poplar trees were planted by the Society at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, two of which were in memory of my brother, Philip E. Palmer, killed in action with the 381st Bomb Group, England in 1944. Since the audience was World War II related, Judy's poem was appropriate and meaningful. It served as a benediction at this time of remembrances."

**Marjorie Palmer Passler, Issaquah, WA 98029-6282.**

"As usual, I enjoyed the latest edition of FLAK NEWS, especially the piece about the USS Wakefield. I didn't go over on the Wakefield, as many from the 398th did, but I did come home on that ship during Christmas of 1944.

"The Wakefield carried Army and Air Force personnel, a crew of Netherland Marines headed for Quantico and German prisoners of war.

"That was a neat story about Lyman Cranston and his survival off the coast of Sweden. Remarkable.

"Looking forward to the reunion in Oklahoma City in August. No tornados, please!"

**Ralph Trout, Logan, IA 51546-1221.**

"Thank you very much indeed for your letter and issues of FLAK NEWS. I am looking forward to being with you for the Memorial Window dedication June 11, 2000 at Anstey. It promises to be an historic occasion. With many thanks and best wishes."

**Rev. Christopher Herbert, Rtd.**  
*(The Bishop of St. Albans, Hertfordshire).*

It came in large boxes and was frozen as hard as a rock. It took 2 or 3 days to thaw. We had large tables covered with galvanized sheets to put the meat on to thaw. As the surface thawed, we had to turn it over and separate the pieces that had thawed. Each block measured about 10 x 12 x 30 inches. There would be 4 to 6 blocks in a box and they were heavy. Very rarely, and I mean very, we got things like mustard, catsup, pickles, and other condiments.

The amount we served was dependent on what we got. Fruit was seldom available. Most of what we got was canned and this usually ended up in pies. Now, coffee and tea was something we had control over, and boy, did we know how to get even with the complainers. (We had our own coffee pot.)

*(Continued in October FLAK NEWS)*

# BRIEF-things

Those first 10 years of FLAK NEWS mailings were accomplished by a dozen or more Seattle-area volunteers using space donated by an air freight company, thus keeping costs at a minimum; loss of the space and subsequent Post Office demands forced a switch to an automated mailing system; same FLAK NEWS, just costlier...the Battle of Britain layout on Pages 6-7 should serve as a reminder that the RAF had 55,000 men killed in action, plus another 8,000 ground crew; the Bomber Command records show that of every 100 men in the RAF 51 were killed in action, 9 killed in crashes, 3 injured in crashes, 12 became prisoners, 1 evaded and only 24 were unharmed....**John Ryan**, the California forensic pathologist and former 602 pilot (no connection) married a New York childhood sweetheart after his wife of 45 years passed on, and has relocated in Florida...How sad: the 94th Bomb Group of the 3rd Division will hold its final reunion in Seattle next October...late comers who wish to contribute to the Anstey Memorial Window can send their contribution to **Julien Tyler**, Lincoln, NE 68506-2305... **Willis & Ruby Frazier** will be in LeHavre, France on August 11 to view the total eclipse of the sun... Hello There: **Bill Frankhouser** and **Bob Knowles** moved to a retirement community in Pennsylvania at the same time, meeting for the first time on an orientation bus ride...the Witka Tanka Ton story will elicit memories from lots of men who did a mission or two in "T-138"; it was your FLAK NEWS editor's sad experience seeing it shot down on its final mission (Merseburg)...take note that the new roster shows two different addresses for a few members -- some who head for the south to escape the winter cold and others to head north to escape the summer heat (both are mailing problems for FLAK NEWS)...as we honor our Killed in Action, we should not forget the 15,330 Air Force men who died in training accidents; **Jim Kiernan** of the 398th might have gone on to become a squadron leader but for his crew's fatal crash at Rapid City...then: -- getting out to a new, hip joint; now: -- getting a new hip joint...OKC reunion chairman Dick Frazier insists his hometown is the best place to purchase cowboy boots, hats, and real steaks...600 waist gunner **Bob Goren** and his wife found their way to Nuthampstead this summer during their England visit and report that the Memorial still engenders tears of emotion and **Ian and Sandy Johnson** are still gracious hosts at the Woodman Inn...also, preparatory work has begun on the Anstey Memorial Window...many thanks to the early birds who contributed to the production of the 1999 membership roster; now it's time for others to pick up the slack for the \$1,000 still needed...English fighter ace **Sir Douglas Bader** flew in both WW I and WW II, and he says the only difference in the dog fighting was that the combat circles were bigger in WW II (he should know)...for the benefit of those hot-rod golfers coming to play the Lake Hefner Golf Course in OKC, the North Course has a Rating of 68.9 and a Slope of 118 from the white tees...last June OKC hosted the Red Earth Festival, a gathering of some 27,000 Indians celebrating American Indian Art & Dance...speaking of "not to forget," let's remember all those who suffered and died in those Nazi death marches across Germany, the most infamous being some 600 miles in 87 days...each Memorial Day in England our Friends of the 398th place a memorial wreath at Madingley in memory of our group's fallen; this year it was done by **Arthur & Yvonne King** and **Gordon Aldridge**...**Harold Stallcup's** interesting FLAK NEWS story called, "Idle Memories," found its way into BULLETIN AIR WAR, a WW II monthly published in Holland...your FLAK NEWS editor, after applying some 20,800 stamps and 10,400 address labels over a 13-year period for our off-shore members and Friends, has finally gone high-tech and this detail is now being accomplished by computer disc equipment...and how about all of "Jack's Books" being filmed and put on CD Rom? (See story on Page 5).

# 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 _____
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T-Shirts - White, Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$10.00 each _____
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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 _____
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<b>Cost Of Items Ordered</b>	\$ _____	
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Make checks payable to 398th Bomb Group Association PX (US funds).  
Mail to: Joe Joseph  
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-6168

Mercy and truth have met together.  
Grim justice and peace have kissed.  
Truth rises from the earth  
And righteousness smiles down from heaven.  
Yes, The Lord pours down his blessings  
On the land and it yields its bountiful crops.  
Justice goes before him  
To make a pathway for his steps.

Psalm 85:10-13