



1



3



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

VOL. 17 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 2002

## Our Dedicated 2nd Generation:

# YOUNG 'UNS STEP UP

BY WALLY BLACKWELL

President, 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

Have you noticed the growing number of references to "the daughter of" or to "the son of" one of our 398th veterans in recent issues of FLAK NEWS? The more frequent appearance of these few words should make us all thankful.

As the years have gone by and "we" get older, I have occasional thoughts of how all this 398th Association business will eventually end - as we all know it must. However, this is not the time to despair. This is because we have some devoted, tried and true second generation 398ers that have been picking up major responsibilities in running 398th Association activities. I have been working along with these very special 398th members for the past few years. These relationships have given me great encouragement. The expectation of the "end" of the 398th Association may be a bit farther off than I previously imagined.

To name some of these "young 'uns",

*Continued on Page 2*

# The Reunion Flag Was Still There At Portland

It was a powerful rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner, reminiscent of those powerful moments of high altitude action of years gone by.

And, like "the rockets' red glare and bombs bursting in air," the combined voices of over 200 398th members, friends and family rendered "proof through the night that our flag was still there."

It was the opening event of the Farewell Banquet, and the final night of the group's 19th annual reunion, held September 25-28, 2002, in the Portland, Oregon suburb town of Clackamas.

There was no doubt that "our flag was still there" when Lee Anne Bradley, group historian and data coordinator, led the audience in America's National Anthem.

President Wally Blackwell had asked the audience, "would a few of you second generation folks come up to the stage to back up song leader Lee Anne?"

And so they did. Over 30 came forth. They spilled on either side of the stage and they joined Lee Anne and the rest of the audience with a rousing rendition that was truly "star-spangled."

The patriotism and fervor of the 398th is still there, thank you! Even through the second and third generations. And the fourth, if you count Paul Roderick's great-granddaughter, teen-ager Samantha, whose grandmother, Sharon Krause, is Roderick's daughter...and the reunion's chairman.

Sharon reported that the reunion count was 240, an excellent number considering the five and six-hour flight times from the 398th population centers of the East Coast.

(Next year the reunion will be held in Covington, Kentucky).

There was ample opportunity for the

*Continued on Page 3*



SHARON KRAUSE was all smiles after receiving a Waterford glass vase from Wally and Teddy Blackwell for her "well done" job as Portland reunion chairman. Her father, Paul Roderick, contributed the red roses. The smiles on all three confirm that the reunion was a happy and successful affair.

# Membership Likes Our Officers

Unlike many other 8th Air Force bomb group associations who elect new presidents each year, the 398th has gone its own way one more time and elected Wally Blackwell to another term—his sixth.

And he had only one predecessor—Bill Comstock—who served for 20 years until his passing in 1996.

Blackwell, of Rockville, MD, was elected at the annual meeting in Portland last month, along with the following officers—Al Turney, Vallejo, CA, vice president; Bob Bowen, Athens, GA, secretary; and Marilyn Gibb, Colorado Springs, CO, treasurer.

Other positions—

**George Hilliard**, Cincinnati, OH, Unit Contact; **James Haas**, Perry, IA, Dues Manager; **Lee Anne Bradley**, Andover, NJ, Historian and Data Coordinator; **Sharon Krause**, Plymouth, MI, E-mail Manager and Reunion Chair.

**Joe Joseph**, New Smyrna Beach, FL, PX Manager; **Lewis Burke**, Centreville, VA, Director; **Louis Stoffer**, Centralia, WA, Director; **Arnold Schneider**, Jerome, MI, Director; **Keith Anderson**, Issaquah, WA, Director; **Ralph Hall**, New Bedford, MA, Monument Fund Chairman; **Allen Ostrom**, Seattle, WA, Public Relations.

## YOUNG 'UNS STEP UP

*Continued from Page 1*

I refer to Marilyn Gibb, our Treasurer (daughter of Jim Crouch, 601 toggler); Sharon Krause, our Reunion Chair the past two years and 398th E-mail Address Manager (daughter of Paul Roderick, 603 pilot); Lee Anne Bradley, our Group Historian and Data Base Manager (daughter of Frederick Bradley, 601 engineer); Randy Stange, our free lance photographer among other things (son of Ray Stange, 603 navigator) and Dave Jordan, in the process of creating a new 398th Web Page (son of Ed Jordan, 603 pilot). All of the above are presently serving the 398th Association in vital positions.

Then there are additional second generation 398ers that have contributed in other sincere and heartwarming ways. These efforts have included writing for the FLAK NEWS to express their thoughts and appreciation, serving as 398th reunion chair—men, and delivering messages in our reunion programs. I know I will probably miss someone, but I'm thinking of Cate Ludlam, Tom Bewley, Jill Chandler, Nancy Cotter, Karen Neff, Eileen Moore, Mike Ryan, ...plus others with names like Guenther, Kessler, LeDoux, Brass and more.

It is time for us to recognize what has been happening. We have a dedicated group of second generation 398ers to be proud of! I intend to continue encouraging our second and third generation members to get involved in 398th affairs, and give them every opportunity to assume leadership positions in our Association. Our second generation 398ers are an inspiration to work with. We must be hopeful that more of them will be encouraged to keep the spirit of the 398th Bomb Group (H) alive. Please give them all a big "Thank You" whenever you have the opportunity.

## Aluminum Overcast Tour

Oct. 14-17	Santa Maria, CA	Oct. 31-Nov. 4	Long Beach, CA
Oct. 18-20	Van Nuys, CA	Nov. 4-7	Maintenance
Oct. 24	Lancaster, CA	Nov. 7-11	Phoenix, AZ
Oct. 24-28	Riverside, CA	Nov. 11-14	Santa Fe, NM
Oct. 28-31	San Bernardino, CA	Nov. 14-18	Albuquerque, NM

## Kentucky Site For 2003

The Portland reunion of 2002 was still under way when it was announced that the 2003 reunion will be held in the Northern Kentucky city of Covington.

For the "purists," Covington, KY lies across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Ohio, so it is OK to call the 398th reunion site "the Southern side of Cincinnati."

Covington (Cincinnati) is ideally located for reunions, an easy day's drive for the majority of the 398th membership. Thus, the 2003 reunion can be expected to be well-attended.

Dates for the reunion will be Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, September 10, 11, 12, and 13, 2003.

The reunion headquarters hotel will be the Radisson Riverfront, 668 West 5th St., Covington, KY 41011.

The Reunion Chairman will again be Sharon Krause, her third such "assignment" in the past three years.

## What About 2004 England Tour?

The memories of England 2002 are still fresh in the minds of the 30 members of the 398th Bomb Group who made the trip, but already there is a buzz going around that centers on the question—

"What about 2004?"

Or, is the group going to continue the every-other-year tour schedule that has been in effect since 1986?

Travel consultant Barbara Fish said—

"Well, I am semi-retired, but..."

Tour coordinator Allen Ostrom said—

"Our British Friends are quite open in their desire for us to come again. They made this quite clear last June. And, there is the aspect of the 60th anniversary of the 398th's arrival at Station 131 in April, 1944, plus the 60th anniversary of D-Day—June 6, 1944.

"All we need in the coming months is the 'count me in' assurances of about 30 members and Barbara and I will start planning," said Ostrom, who has led the last 10 tours.

Will you be there? Call Barbara @ 1-800-423-5454

## New E-mail Address For Krause

E-mail has all kinds of benefits...and some fits.

Witness our E-mail manager, Sharon Krause, who has taken on the task of recording all the E-mail addresses of our 398th Bomb Group membership.

Last January she was forced to change to a new address, as was recorded in the April FLAK NEWS. And now, only months later, another new one. "It's a long story," she said.

If yours has changed, contact Sharon via...E-mail, of course.

## "Out West" Time For 2003 Dues

The 2002 reunion was held "Out West" in the Portland, Oregon area. And now, the "Out West" members will have the first opportunity to break out with the 2003 annual dues for the 398th Bomb Group.

Members living in the following states will see their 2003 Dues "invoice" tucked into their October FLAK NEWS—

Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.

Also—Hawaii and Alaska.

If the dues reminder is missing, it is quite permissible to mail the \$20 dues directly to 398th Bomb Group, c/o Jim Haas, Perry, IA 50220-0163. (Also, any other financial contribution that will help maintain the 398th Association).

# “Patriotism and Fervor” At Portland Reunion

*Continued from Page 1*

members to forget their long flights to the Northwest with a variety of tours and programs. Not to mention banquet meals of Pacific Salmon and Filet Mignon. And for some, memorable flights on a P-51 and Stearman trainer, all at the Evergreen Aviation Museum airfield at nearby McMinnville.

James Yip, who missed becoming a fighter pilot in WW II due to his B-17 navigation skills and (later) a compelling desire to marry his fiancée, Doris. Yip was a popular banquet speaker, sharing his still active fighter pilot instincts with many others of like mind in the room.

Gertrude Neff, who was to turn 80 before returning to Virginia, must surely have stayed in dreamland during her six-hour flight home as she relived her Mustang ride. Including a screaming fly past in front of fellow 398thers.

Also in on the P-51 flights were Keith Anderson, 600 squadron B-17 pilot and brief P-51 pilot in those waning WW II days; Merwin Hornshuh, 601 pilot; Chris Oliva, grandson of 602 pilot Herb Boehme; and Jack Fernandez, friend of Mary Ann Schanzback, whose father was a 603 bombardier.

Mary Ann did her flight in the Stearman, along with Blackwell, 601 pilot; Jack Lee, 603 pilot; Ike Alhadef, 600 pilot; David Mills, 603 pilot; and Randy Stange, son of 603 navigator Ray Stange.

The visit to Evergreen included many an “upward look” at the museum’s centerpiece, the Spruce Goose, the largest airplane ever built (made mostly of birch, maple, poplar and balsa). Nestled behind this giant was another centerpiece—a

B-17—very flyable but for the time being assigned to show space in the huge building. Many 398th members took advantage of the open waist door and toured the Fort’s interior.

The “open door” was offered by Nicole Wahlberg, the museum’s director of special events. She also arranged for the theater forum, where Willis Frazier, 601 operations officer; Stan Lucy, 603 pilot; and George LeDoux held forth with “this is the way it was” presentations before a full theater including 55 seniors from a nearby high school.



LeDoux is the son of Ray LeDoux, who was the navigator on the Larry deLancey “nose blown” of Cologne mission fame. He also spoke at the Farewell Banquet, recounting the many times his father told of this remarkable experience, and the pride his father had in being a part of this crew and the 398th team. The LeDoux’ raised 11 children.

Reunion members at the Welcome Banquet at the Monarch Hotel were given a personal invitation to Evergreen by its president, Bill Schaub. As huge as the museum complex is today, it will continue to grow, encompassing many more acres in the years ahead, according to Schaub.

Schaub also said that the 398th was the very first bomb group to include the Evergreen Museum in its reunion program. He asked reunion coordinator Allen Ostrom why Portland was selected for the reunion. Ostrom responded—

“We chose to see the Evergreen Museum. It just happened to be in Portland.”

Tour busses were busy introducing the

“In every generation the world has produced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America because we are freedom’s home and defender, and the commitment of our fathers is now the calling of our time.”

—GEORGE W. BUSH



**MAJ. CAROL COLEMAN**  
Second Generation Navigator

As indicated in President Bush’s quote, America is “freedom’s home and defender.”

And for 18 years a 398th daughter has been a part of this defense. She is Maj. Carol Coleman, USAF, a navigator and currently also serving as Inspector General at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. Her seven rows of ribbons provide powerful evidence of her worldwide assignments in war-torn areas where America has had a presence.

Carol is the daughter of Dick Hall, navigator on the Henry Rudow crew of the 602nd. Hall and other family members were at the Portland reunion to hear Carol address the gathering.

As one observer said, “our country is in fine shape with defenders like that major.”

visitors to Portland and nearby mountain scapes. There was an all-day excursion to Mt. Hood’s Timberline Lodge at 6,000 feet elevation, where the weather was sunny and warm on tour day but changed to six inches of snow the following day.

Others ventured north to Mt. St. Helens in Washington State to hear and see the story of the volcano eruption of 1981. Several members opted for shorter rides to downtown Portland to view the world famous Portland Rose Gardens. The weather was perfect and the roses were in full bloom, thanks to a spectacular

*Continued on Page 8*



**GERTRUDE NEFF** was all smiles after exiting from a P-51 fighter and her 20-minute ride at the Evergreen Aviation Museum near Portland. Gertrude and four others purchased rides in the Mustang as part of their 398th reunion activities. For Gertrude, widow of 600 pilot William Wells, it was her 80th birthday present.

# “Chapel of the Fallen Eagles”

*“In gratitude for the ultimate sacrifice paid by Eighth Air Force personnel in times of war and peace, and in loving remembrance of those who have finished their life’s work, and those who continue to serve our nation today,*

*“WE DEDICATE THIS CHAPEL OF THE FALLEN EAGLES”*

Those words, plus others, were part of the dedication service of The Chapel of the Fallen Eagles at the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA., on May 18, 2002.

Begun in 1999 and designed along the lines of an English country church, the dedication last spring was attended by a host of celebrities, including our own Lou and Betty Stoffer.

It was the Stoffers who guided the 398th in the successful campaign to raise funds for the Savannah memorial, which was dedicated during the 2000 reunion, and just happens to be ideally located only a stone’s throw from the new chapel.

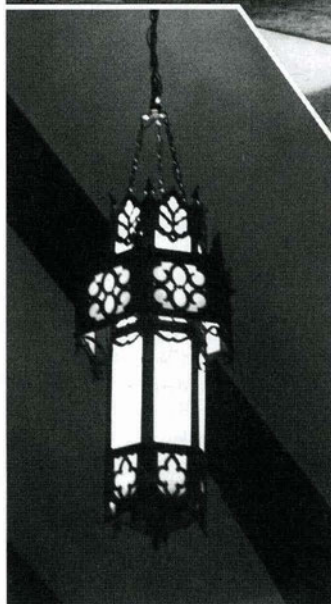
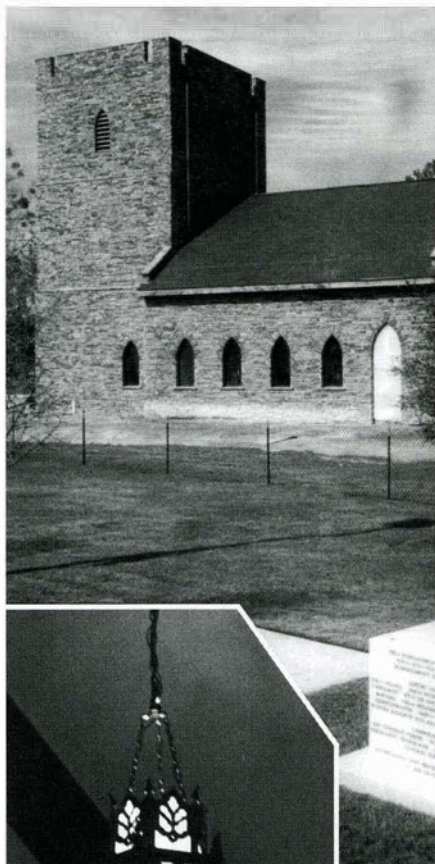
The dedication ceremony was supposed to be held outdoors, but as the appointed hour neared the rains and wind also appeared and all activities were moved into the Museum Rotunda.

This prompted the Stoffers to recall that the 398th dedication in 2000 also was severely threatened by rain and wind, as was the 398th memorial dedication at Nuthampstead in 1982.

Because the 398th memorial dedication was over-subscribed, there was \$1000 available to purchase one of the six chapel chandeliers, four of which are in the sanctuary and two in the foyer. Other bomb groups and individuals contributed stained glass windows, benches and other furniture.

The Memorial Gardens was contributed by the late Charles D. Beard, Jr.

The Chapel is now open daily to the public and available for services and special events.



A Light From The 398th

## New Color Print Has KIA Names, Anstey Window

The double-page color photo of the Anstey window was published in the April, 2000 FLAK NEWS. It also contained the names of every one of the 293 men of the 398th killed in action.

That double-page, 11 x 17 inches in poster form, is now available for mailing in single copy form from Joe Joseph’s PX.

Each print is priced at \$4.00 plus shipping and handling. See the PX form on Page 11. Another new item is an aluminum coaster with the B-17, Aluminum Overcast, in color.

### 398th Remembrance:

I have two Remembrances from my days at Station 131.

The first concerns me and my buddy Cliff Polakowski. We were waiting at the front gate for a truck ride to Royston, when this staff car pulls up and asks us to jump in.

To our surprise, it was Col. Hunter and his driver, Jay Nichols. We were very honored that the colonel would stop for a couple of enlisted men. No wonder he was so admired by everyone.

The other concerns the time a bombardier was checking the bomb bay doors and he mistakenly salvaged a load of 500 pounders. I was one of the men who helped defuse the bombs and clean up the mess.

—WILLIAM TORDOFF, Sarasota, FL  
601st Squadron Armament

# ‘ROCKET’ ACCIDENT REPORT

HEADQUARTERS  
AAF Station 131  
APO 557, U.S. Army

5 February, 1945

REPORT ON AIRCRAFT INCIDENT:  
Aircraft No. 43-39137-H  
Co-Pilot: Schmidt, J.F.

At approximately 23:30 4 February 1945 to 00:23 5 February, 1945 we took off with aircraft 43-37137 of the 600th Squadron to test hop it. We flew out, made a normal pattern and flew over the runway at 1,000 feet to line up the lights. At that time we set the Gyro compass at 0° and then flew a pattern for landing.

We could see a circular pattern of lights, with a funnel shaped set of lights leading to a dual line of straight lights. We made a normal length base leg, based on the position of the lights where the funnel straightened out.

We made radio calls on the downwind, base and final legs. We were making a normal approach at approximately 120 mph IAS, and crossed the outer circle of lights which we thought marked the perimeter track.

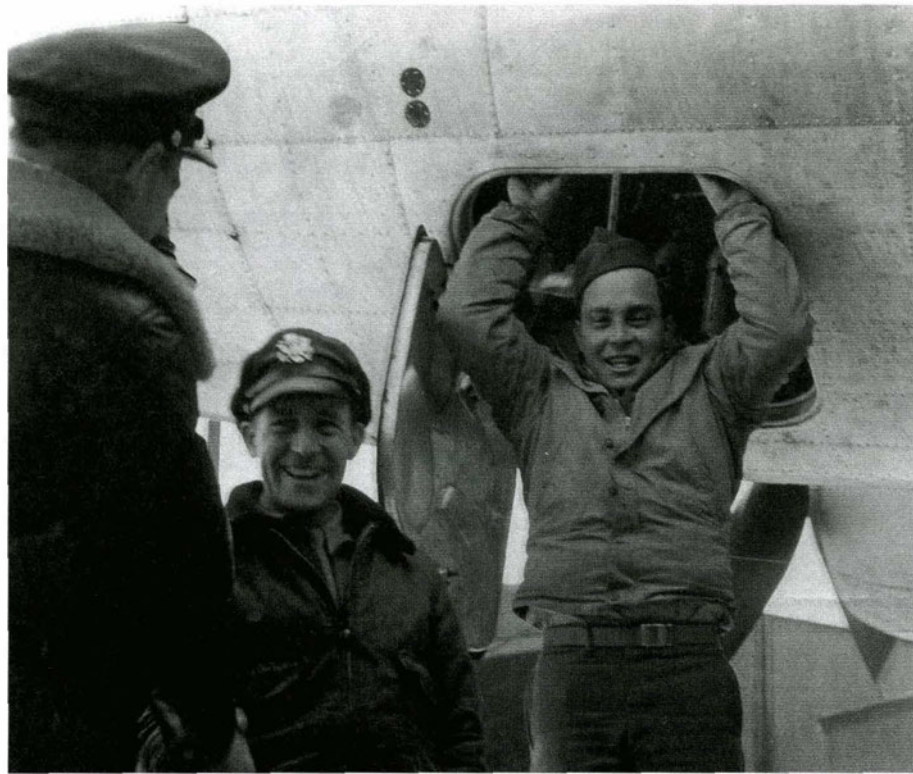
We passed the straightening of the funnel, and thought we were looking for the runway, which we thought was beneath us. We could see nothing on the ground, and we were lined up with a 0° heading on the Gyro and also with the two lines of lights.

I was looking for the runway when I saw ground under us, but it was too late to go around as the aircraft had already struck and was on the ground rolling.

The aircraft came to a stop (the switches had all been cut) and we left the aircraft as soon as possible, fearing fire. No one was injured.

JOHN F. SCHMIDT  
2nd Lt., Air Corps  
Co-Pilot, 602nd Squadron

# 'ROCKET' LETTERS



**CAPT. RICHARD HOLUB (center) and his co-pilot, M/S Raymond Kirkpatrick, are congratulated by a Strategic Air Depot engineering officer after flying a grounded 398th B-17 out of a barley field with six rockets under each wing. It was the first and last time for such an endeavor in the 8th Air Force, but Gen. Jimmy Doolittle had envisioned "rocket assist take offs" on other B-17's when and if they were moved to the Pacific for action against the Japanese.**



**GEOFF RICE (left) watches as Peggy Wells points in the direction the B-17 "rocket assist take off" route from her Gypsy Farm in 1945. Geoff and Peggy visited the site during last June's 398th England tour. Peggy was there for the whole operation, while Geoff (and Les Dear) have been actively researching 398th history, including the rocket chapter.**

## 398th To Give \$5,000 To Mighty Eighth

The Board officers of the 398th Bomb Group, meeting in Portland last month, voted unanimously to present a \$5,000 donation to the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA. President Wally Blackwell noted that only 30

current members support the museum individually, so it seemed prudent to that the 398th lend support corporately. The \$5,000 will come from earnings gained from the Monument Fund, currently at \$77,000.

"Thank you for the copies of your July 398th Bomb Group FLAK NEWS. The entire issue on the rocket take off was very interesting and well done. I especially enjoyed those additional articles on your group's return to England and the relations you have with your British friends.

"And thank you for the photo of the barley field as it looks today. Could that be the "DREM" funnel light pole, still there after 57 years? (See photo).

"The B-17 'buzz' job surely was a grand touch.

"I am enclosing four Glenn Miller CD's for your enjoyment, perhaps at your reunions. My grandson enhanced the original set, removing much of the scratchy, background noises. I hope you find them pleasant and useful.

"I only wish my co-pilot, Master Sergeant Raymond Kirkpatrick, was still alive to read and enjoy your story.

"All the best to the 398th Bomb Group."

*Richard C. Holub, Grass Valley, CA  
95945*

*Ed's Note—Richard Holub was the pilot who offered the rocket assist idea and ultimately flew the grounded 398th B-17 out from its barley field landing site.*

# FlyPast

"Mark Nicholls has passed on your superb FLAK NEWS of July, 2002. I am one of the few in a position to know just how much effort and energy goes into producing a newsletter like yours. You produce a fine product!

"Needless to say, the material on the rocket-assisted-take-off was spellbinding and I wonder if it would be possible to use this material in a forthcoming FLY PAST?"

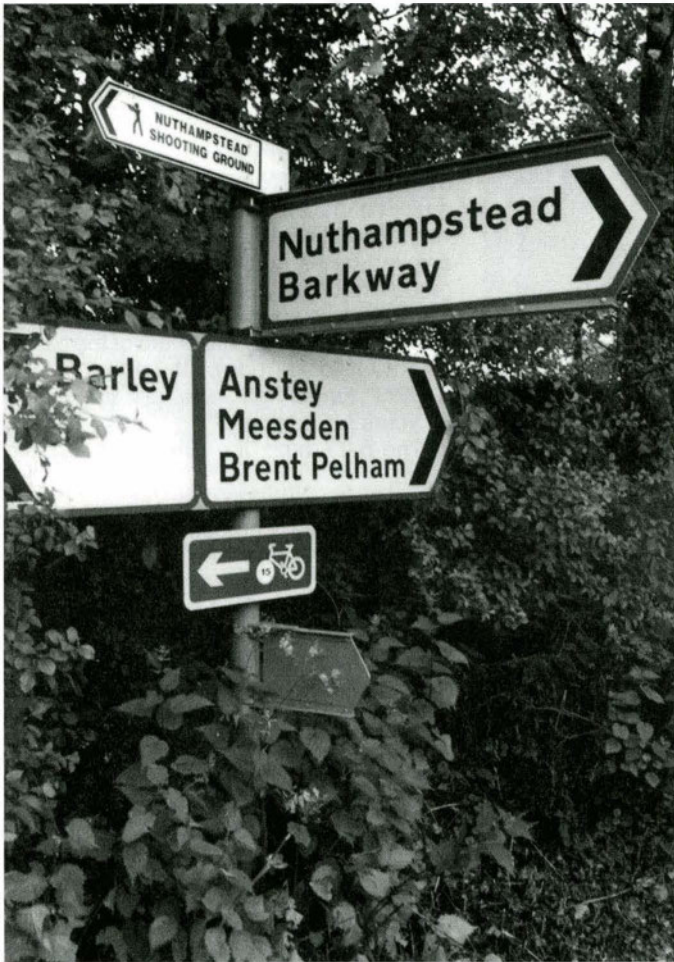
*Ken Ellis, editor, FLY PAST Magazine,  
PO Box 100, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9  
1ZQ, England.*

*Ed's Answer—Please do; the 398th will be honored.*

"With your permission I would like to use from your July FLAK NEWS issue the story of the Rocket Assist Take Off. I think my readers would find it a most interesting event. Always good to read through your efforts."

*Russell Strong, 306th Bomb Group,  
Charlotte, NC 28205*

*Ed's Note - Of course!*



## Highlights From The England 2002 Tour



**OUR BRITISH** Friends of the 398th were at the Memorial Service at Station 131 in force, including their color guard and the school children, who presented flowers at the Memorial in memory of the 398th airmen killed in action.



**President Wa**

*Pi*



Memorial  
Window  
At Anstey

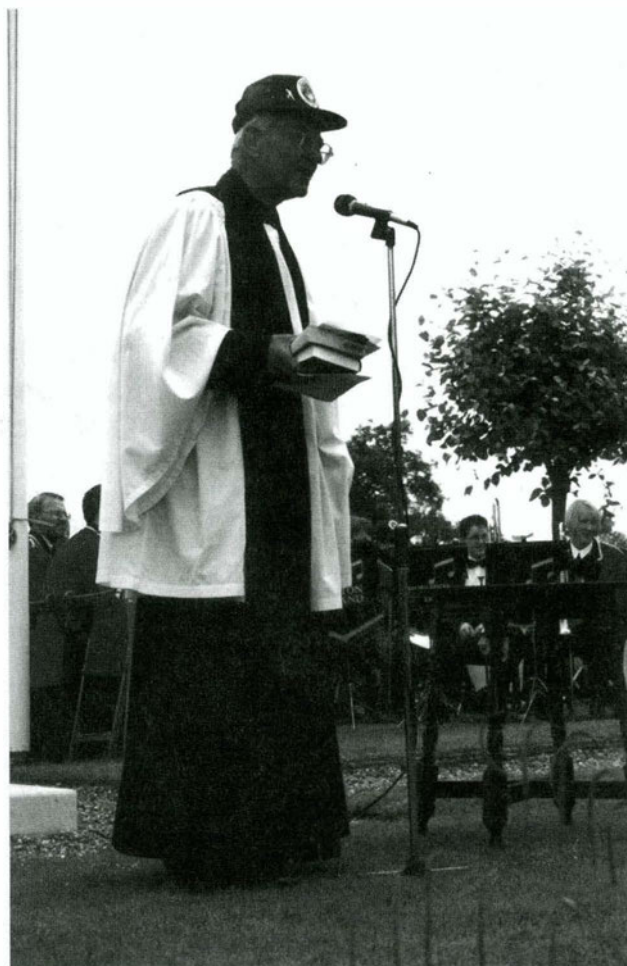


THE WOODMAN INN formed the background for most of the 398th Bomb Group tour party as they witnessed the Memorial Service at Station 131 last June. Note the English St. George's flag, which was seen everywhere during the reunion (and during the World Soccer Championships held the same week).



Wally Blackwell was the 398th speaker at the service.

*Photos By 398th Friend Alfred Wilms, Dusseldorf, Germany*



REV. GERALD DREW, showing off his 398th cap, led the Memorial Service in message and song. In the background is the Royston Band.

## Flight Back Home A Bit Sticky

I was a 19-year-old engineer gunner on the 602 Joe Kaminski crew and my Remembrances concern our trip over on the Il de France, where we first heard the news of President Roosevelt's passing, and the tough time we had getting back home.

We made only a few training flights at Station 131 before the war ended.

Assigned to fly a B-17 back home, we lifted off with a full load of fuel, only to set down at Valley, Wales because of bad weather. A seal in the left landing gear strut ruptured on landing and with only a skeleton ground crew available, our crew did the repairs.

We found a strut replacement, only to discover that it was from an earlier model. It had only one brake drum whereas our plane had two. So we removed the lower portion of the strut, and using the seal from the new strut reinstalled the dual brake section.

All this took place in dense fog which lasted two days. Finally, we took off for home via West Greenland, Iceland, Goose Bay, Labrador and on to New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

- LEWELLYN FISHER, Salem, VA  
602nd Squadron

## New "Trust" Status For Sally B

Sally B, England's only air-worthy B-17, and the one that did a Fly Past over the 398th Bomb Group Memorial last June (thanks to the Friends of the 398th and their Race Nights) is just now beginning its new lease on life as the flag ship of the American Air Museum at Duxford's Imperial War Museum.

The Sally B is now registered with the museum as a "B-17 Charitable Trust," meaning it will qualify for "trust money" but only through proper applications by the "B-17 Preservation" and its Supporters Club, headed by Elly Sallinboe.

Sally B's principal fund-raising for its extensive operations will remain with its Supporter Club, now in their 25th year. The last two years were financially devastating, what with the loss of several hard-to-find Cyclone engines while on a European tour.

Former Fortress airmen are invited to join in supporting Sally B. Send your contributions to B-17 Preservation, PO Box 92, Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk, IP28 8RR, England.

E-mail—sallyb@b17preservation.demon.co.uk



THE GLENN MILLER Control Tower at Clapham, Bedfordshire, a former RAF station, was dedicated on June 2, 2002, amid English and American pageantry.

## GLENN MILLER HONORED

A pair of 398th Friends, Ralph Ambrose and Roger Bradley, were on hand for the pageantry when the Twinwood Farm Airfield Control Tower was dedicated on June 2, 2002 at Clapham, Bedfordshire, some 30 miles northwest of Nuthampstead.

The restored RAF tower was the last place the famous US bandleader was seen alive before his fateful flight on a Paris bound Norseman on December 15, 1944. The plane crashed in the English Channel.

Many 398th veterans will remember the Miller band playing at Station 131

on October 2, 1944 in one of the T-2 hangers. The band, on that day, was led by drummer Ray McKinley.

Among the celebrities at the Twinwoods resotation ceremony was retired RAF wing commander J.A.F. Ford, 8th AFHS UK contact Connie Richards, and English singer Beryl Davis.

## REUNION

*Continued from Page 3*

September.

Some came to Oregon and opted to soak up some history by taking in the Oregon Trail Historic Tour. The Oregon Trail ended not far from Clackamas.

Some came from far off England—Barry Tyler and Geoff Rice—to issue an invite to the 398th to come back to Station 131 again in two years (June, 2004).

"This will be your 60th anniversary since coming to Nuthampstead and also the 60th anniversary of D-Day, in which many of you participated," said Tyler.

"We are now in receipt of the late Vic Jenkins historical data and we hope to convert it into CD-Rom form and then turn it over to the Hertford Record Center. We will add it to the photos and records you people have already installed there.

"We Friends of the 398th in Britain needed a project at this time, and this is it," said Rice.

Carl (Bud) Krafft, who was largely responsible for bringing to light the "Rocket Take Off" story (July FLAK NEWS) was a guest speaker at the banquet and joined with Tyler and Rice reminiscing about the Station 131 incident.

Kraft urged his listeners, especially the younger generations, to be responsive to the history created by the "greatest generation" from World War II.



# Ed Norris Was Not Forgotten By Crew

The B-17 was burning following a remarkable wheels up crash landing by pilots Ray Hernden and Lowell Culver of the 601st Squadron.

And the rest of the 601st was in similar bad shape following a disastrous mission to Neumunster on Friday, April 13, 1945.

It was called the "RDX" mission, and all who flew this one have stories to tell.

Ed Norris is one of those, a gunner-turned-Spot Jammer and assigned to any one of several Forts equipped with this "radar spot jamming" electronic equipment.

He rode in the radio room and it was his assignment to tune in on the German radar frequencies and "jam it" before it could feed correct information to the anti-aircraft guns.

For Norris, and all the others in the 601st, it was "all over" when salvoed RDX bombs from one plane kissed and exploded amongst the squadron's 10 planes.

The Hernden-Culver Fort took many hits from the explosion, causing a major fire up front and a major hit to left arm of Norris, his thigh and...his Spot Jamming equipment.

Culver left his co-pilot's seat and responded to radio operator Marshall Nemer's frantic call—

"Ed's been hit. Badly!"

Culver reached the radio room to find Norris' arm dangling from the elbow, with blood everywhere.

Culver stayed long enough to join with Nemer and waist gunner Bill Auten in ministering to Norris, mostly by pumping him full of morphine.

At that point, Norris admits, it was "lights out" for him,

Culver then scurried through a smoke-filled bomb bay and back to the cockpit, there to see Hernden pointing to a fire coming from a hole in the wing.

"We can't bail out," said Culver, "Ed's hurt bad and he'll never survive."

"Pick me a field," said Hernden, as he nosed his plane downward.

Culver found a dark field on his right and slipped the plane from 9,000 feet to about 1,500 feet. There he and Hernden "slid back into our seats and we came in wheels up on this newly plowed field.

"At some point in all this I had managed to open my window and as soon as we stopped all four of us climbed out."

This would include the two pilots plus bombardier Al Campdon and engineer John Becker.

In the back, they quickly popped out of the waist door. These would be tail gunner

Tom Gullede, waist gunner Auten; ball turret gunner Eugene Hiler and the radio operator, Nemer.

Together, they carried Norris safely away from the plane, which by then was burning fiercely and soon exploded.

Norris, on a morphine jag, was certain he had been forgotten.

"Not so," said Auten. "We got him out and in no time units of the 9th US Army were there and he was off to a field hospital.

It was there Norris' dangling left arm was amputated. Later he was transferred to a general hospital in Paris and ultimately shipped home.

"Home" today is 109 Cherry Hill Lane, Broomall, PA 19008-1510. Telephone—610-356-9615.

The B-17 that "starred" in all this excitement was No. 43-38658, only one of 58 Fortresses lost in action during the group's tenure at Station 131.

However, that particular Fort ultimately became the logo of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. It appears on FLAK NEWS, letterhead stationery, envelopes, business cards and on any brochure wanting to be identified with the 398th. It was painted by a Boeing artist in 1985 as part of the B-17's 50th anniversary.



**BARBARA FISH**

Barbara Fish, our tour consultant, came to the Portland reunion with a carousel of color slide memories. Barbara, with husband Rick "at the wheel," presented a slide program entitled, "My Ten Years With The 398th."

Included were memories from her initial tour in 1992 to Merseburg, when tour members visited the Leuna factory, 10 times a target for the 398th in 1944-45.

Her seven tours included the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, Holland, France and, of course, England.

Once more in 2004?

## FLAK NEWS Taps List

FLAK NEWS' annual publication of the 398th Bomb Group "Taps List" will appear in the next issue—January 2003. Now is the time to advise the editor of any late additions—Seattle, WA 98107.



**THE B-24 LIBERATOR**, the "missing piece" at Duxford's American Air Museum in England, is now in place, although still in the process of being restored. "Dugan" joins the B-17, "Mary Alice", as the museum's 8th AF heavy bomber exhibit, along with the operational "Sally B". The latter remains on active flying status. The museum, with its many new displays, was "re-dedicated" last September 27.

# Letters, Letters

"Thanks so much for the FLAK NEWS of April, 2002. Because of your story, I received a telephone call from James Esterbrook, who was my uncle's navigator, one of five (I believe he said) who survived the crash that killed my uncle. He was so nice to call me—he told me so many things I didn't know, and really "filled in the blanks" for me. He had nothing but good things to say about my uncle Bob Lehner.

"Mr. Esterbrook, who lives in Duluth, MN, is trying to gather papers and pictures he has so he can copy them and send them to me. I guess my uncle was quite a photographer. He also told me that Bob loved to fly, and there was nothing that could have stopped him—he (Bob) said he felt just like a part of the plane when he flew it. I wish so much that I had known him, but thanks to you, and Mr. Esterbrook, I'm learning about him.

"God bless you and all the others who fought (and died) for our freedom."

**Karen Lehner,**  
4152

**Salem, OR 97301-**

"It was a pleasure to host the 398th Bomb Group during your 2002 reunion, and we thoroughly enjoyed your Forum presentation. Over 200 were in attendance, including the school children. I enjoyed working with you and hope you will come and visit us again."

**Nicole Wahlberg, Director of Special Events, Evergreen Aviation Museum, McMinnville, Oregon.**

"FLAK NEWS is always a pleasure to read. The story of the Rocket Assist Take Off is a masterpiece. I suggest Air Force News would be interested, and possibly other magazines. It should be of interest to every reader, especially the pilots of today's jets."

**William F. Scott, VA 22101**

"It goes without saying just how deep my gratitude extends for flying my father's flag at the Nuthampstead Memorial during the recent England Tour. It is a present that is once in a lifetime.

"It was my hope to present this flag back to him for Father's Day, but sadly, my Dad died before this could happen.

"My sister and I grew up hearing the names of his crew and the story of their imprisonment. He was a simple, loving man who had an endless well of patience and willingness to teach. He will be deeply missed."

**Mary Jennifer Smith, Johnstown, OH 43031-9253**

*Ed's Note—Mary Jennifer's father was Forest Smith, engineer-gunner on the Willard Jacobs crew. President Wally Blackwell raised his flag during the tour.*

"I do believe a Flying Fortress, perhaps the Aluminum Overcast, with its four engines and proud red tail, flying somewhat low due to the fog, passed nearly over my house. It was a most impressive and thrilling sight. Certainly a dignified, powerful, yet comforting sound!

"Am I in Seattle or Nuthampstead?"

**David Ruberg, Seattle, WA 98107-1444**

"I can't tell you how impressed I am with your 'Rocket Assist' story in the July issue. It was outstanding. The whole production was so professional and I can't imagine any other newsletter doing a better job.

"Bud Krafft's career and mine crossed both in England during that time and also at Boeing when he was on the BOMARC project and I was working on the development of Ramjet engines."

**Dan Hendricks, Mercer Island, WA 98040**

## The Stallcup Crew: In 601 They Flew; Here's A Poem For The Red, White & Blue

Our crew met in Florida at a base called Avon Park. It was all serious business, definitely not a lark. We flew quite often, learning how to be a team, We improved rapidly and were getting on the "beam". Gunners were Anstadt, Gouveia, Ahlborn and Hatkoff, They were all in their positions soon after takeoff. Harold Loveless was a whiz as our Radio Operator, Bernard Lazier was in the nose, our fine Navigator. Trigher in the top turret was also our Engineer, Duncombe manned the nose guns and was our Bombardier. In the cockpit were Schoen and First Pilot Stallcup, They worked well together and would seldom foul-up.



Near the end of our training Anstadt became ill, He was replaced with Rich and he filled the bill. This change in our crew caused us some delay, We trained another month and then were on our way. We moved to Savannah and received a new airplane. Then on to New Hampshire and from there to Maine. The next day Labrador at a place called Goose Bay. Then headed on to Iceland for an overnight stay. Iceland's night was not dark, as the sun did not set, So we moved on to Great Britain, in the war zone yet. Our base was Nuthampstead, Group 398 of course, Now we were a part of the mighty Eighth Air Force!



The formations we flew required a crew of nine, So one gunner stayed at base to wait for his time. Targets were in Occupied Europe in various places, They ranged from heavy industry to German Air Bases. Squadron lead status came to Stallcup and Loveless, That meant other crew members would get to fly less. When Loveless and Stallcup had completed their tour, Schoen became First Pilot and the crew could fly more. In due time they safely completed their last missions And soon returned home to more pleasant conditions. We are grateful and Blessed to have survived WW-II May God Bless America and the Red, White and Blue!

—HAROLD K. STALLCUP  
Forest City, North Carolina

## Arizona Wing Recognizes History of 398th

A 398th Bomb Group decal adorns the space beneath the cockpit window of the Sentimental Journey, B-17 flagship of the Commemorative Air Force, Mesa, Arizona.

It was positioned there some years ago to recognize a \$1000 gift from the group for care and maintenance of the 'Journey. In their September, 2002 Newsletter, editor Dennis Sturm recognized the 398th with a group history column, recounting the beginning days from early 1943 to the final mission to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, April 1945.

Also included was a re-print from FLAK NEWS on the "Rocket Assist Take Off" story that appeared in the July issue.

An excellent color magazine on the development of the B-17 and explanations of the 10 crew positions has been produced by the Arizona Wing, PO Box 2969, Mesa, AZ 85214.

# BRIEF-things

Our Friend at the Merseburg, Germany, City Hall, **Michael George**, says the remains of an American bomber has been uncovered in a farm field not far from the Leuna factory; he is anxious to know if it was from the 398th as he is aware that our group lost no less than 10 Fortresses on missions to Merseburg (Dreaded Merseburg) but he also remembers a much happier celebration when the 1992 398th tour party visited there and joined the city in planting a memorial Linden tree in the center of town...the U.S. Embassy in Berlin is checking on the "ownership" of the bomber...the 398th (and all the other bomb groups) should pause and render a "high five" to the 96th Bomb Group for its new memorial in England, rising 30 feet above their old base at Snetterton Heath; it's a beauty called "Silver Dream"...all you members who live in the Southwest, be sure to catch the winter schedule of the Aluminum Overcast on Page 2...**Harold Stallcup** is neither too old (80) to write poetry (Page 10) nor to shoot good golf, witness his 76 this year...among the videos seen at the reunion Memory Room was a digital photo/film of the 2002 England tour by **Lt. Col. Mike Ryan**, a 398th son now stationed with the USAF in Paris; he captured the flypast action of the Sally B and the two P-51's over Nuthampstead... **Lynn Wicks** is among the many second generation "kids" who are making sure their dads continue receiving FLAK NEWS ("our family is proud of his service for our freedom")...another proud daughter is **Morgan Shott Gibson**, and she has a snappy CAF B-17 business card to prove it...an American flag that had been flown over the nation's capitol was "dropped off" at the Woodman Inn this year and will be used for special "Friends" ceremonies by owners **Ian and Sandy Johnson**...the Prague street many 398thers marched on in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Czech Republic's Liberation Day in 1995 was among the many inundated by the great European flooding last August, plus the brewery in Pilsen...there was a German farmer plowing the same field that **Ray Hernden** and **Lowell Culver** sat their crippled B-17 down on (see Page 9) and what did the farmer do after the crash landing? He kept right on plowing...former 602 electrical mechanic **Joe Klutzke** (I adjusted the points on the magneto of the B-17) wishes to announce that he won first place at the 1986 Indianapolis State Fair for his restoration of a 1936 WC tractor (he also owns "about" 45 other Allis Chalmers tractors)... **Col. Michael Maher**, the U.S. Air Attaché in London, who was a 398th guest during the England Tour last summer, has a talented Embassy "Medivac Coordinator" wife, **Beth Maher**, BSN, RN, CNA...our German Friend from Dusseldorf, **Alfred Wilms**, speaks little or no English, but his camera does just fine, witness his photo layout on pages 6-7...there has been quite a rash of Taps notices this past year, so look for a longer column listing in the January FLAK NEWS...if you are driving through Paducah, KY in the future you will see a new medical pavilion named in honor of **Marshall Nemer**, local businessman and former 601 radio operator (see story on Page 9)...our Macclesfield, England, Friend, **Kevin Whittaker**, was speaking to a local group about his close relationship with the 398th, and a listener said, "my sis was married to a 602 Yank pilot, **Al Petska**" (Al's daughter and son-in-law actively support the 8th Air Force archives at Penn State University; his British war bride widow lives in Oregon)...a young man pulled up beside **Bob Knowles'** traffic-stalled car on the Pennsylvania freeway..."I saw your bumper sticker and I know somebody in the 398th" he said; Bob asked who that would be and the young man said, "I'm the grandson of **Herb Boehme** of the 602nd," to which **Knowles** responded with utter disbelief..."I was Boehme's radio operator"...**Willis Frazier**, in his Evergreen Museum presentation on squadron operations, admitted he was somewhat of a father figure to the 19 and 20 year-old pilots (at the ripe old age of 24)...among the many young men at the reunion was **Dave Bancroft**, son of the tail-gunner **Bancroft** who survived that mid-air collision on the way to Berlin...the students who came to the 398th Evergreen Forum went back to class with 398th WW II stories and a color photo of the Aluminum Overcast.

# 398th Bomb Group PX

Please circle squadron, size and/or color choices.

Qty.	CLOTHING	Cost	Total
_____	Cap - Fits All Sizes 600, 601, 602, 603, Group	\$8.00 ea	_____
_____	Jackets - Navy, B-17 on Front S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$25.00 ea	_____
_____	T-Shirts - B-17 on Front Navy - White - S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$10.00 ea	_____
_____	Sweat Shirts - B-17 on Front Navy - White - S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$15.00 ea	_____
_____	Golf Shirts Group Logo on Front Navy or White - M, L, XL, XXL	\$20.00 ea	_____
_____	Turtle Neck Shirt - B-17 on Collar White - S, M, L, XL; Navy - S, M; Black - L, XL	\$20.00 ea	_____
<b>CD'S &amp; VIDEOS</b>			
_____	CD Jack's Books	\$25.00 ea	_____
_____	CD FLAK NEWS	\$30.00 ea	_____
_____	Video Anstey Window Dedication	\$10.00 ea	_____
_____	Video Return to Station 131 Memorial and Anstey Window Dedication (video)	\$10.00 ea	_____
_____	(CD-ROM) Statistical History of 398th B.G. Set of 2	\$55.00 set	_____
<b>JEWELRY</b>			
_____	Squadron Lapel Pins - 600, 601, 602, 603	\$5.00 ea	_____
_____	Group Lapel Pin (Hell from Heaven)	\$5.00 ea	_____
_____	Group Lapel Pin - Special Design	\$5.00 ea	_____
_____	B-17 Lapel Pin (Silver)	\$2.00 ea	_____
_____	B-17 Earrings (Silver - Pierced only)	\$5.00 ea	_____
<b>LOGO PATCHES</b>			
_____	Squadron Patches - 600, 601, 602, 603	\$6.00 ea	_____
_____	Group Patch ("Hell from Heaven")	\$6.00 ea	_____
_____	Jacket Patch - Rectangle B-17	\$4.00 ea	_____
_____	8th Air Force	\$4.00 ea	_____
<b>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</b>			
_____	Photo (11x17) Anstey Window with list of 398th Fallen Comrades	\$4.00 ea	_____
_____	Round Coaster with B-17 Aluminum Overcast in color	\$5.00 ea	_____
_____	Folding Umbrellas - Red with White B-17	\$18.00 ea	_____
_____	Note Paper with B-17 (Packet of 12)	\$4.00 pkt	_____
_____	Tote bag, Navy with White B-17	\$7.00 ea	_____
_____	B-17 Sun Catcher	\$10.00 ea	_____
_____	Golf Towel, White w/Black B-17	\$7.00 ea	_____
_____	Ceramic Magnet with B-17	\$3.00 ea	_____
_____	Anstey Window Post Card	\$2.00 ea	_____
_____	Photo (Control Tower) Station 131	\$2.00 ea	_____
_____	Photo (398th Memorial) Post Card	\$2.00 ea	_____
_____	Photo (8X10 Aluminum Overcast)	\$2.00 ea	_____
_____	Bumper Sticker (398th Bomb Group)	\$1.00 ea	_____
_____	License Plate Holder (398th B.G.)	\$2.00 ea	_____
_____	U.S.A.F. B-17 Key Ring	\$5.00 ea	_____

**Cost Of Items Ordered** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Delivery And Handing Add \$4.00,**  
**or \$5.00 if Order is Over \$20.00.** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail to: Joe Joseph

New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-6168