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

VOL. 24 NO. 3

FLAK NEWS

JULY 2009



The Mighty Eighth:

Plate Reminder of Freedom

The unique plate on Page 1 had been specially commissioned for the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United States of America Eighth Air Force, "The Mighty Eighth," and their entry into the combat in the European theatre of war during World War II.

As well as being an appreciation from Britain for the major part it played in regaining freedom for Europe, the plate is also a dedication to the men that did not return.

The plate was manufactured to order by Royal Worcester Limited in the finest bone china. Twelve different colors were used to achieve the striking commemorative design.

The idea of this commemorative plate and its design is by David Johnson who as a boy in the war years lived on the edge of a World War II airbase in Horham, Suffolk, and watched the daily air base traumas first hand and was known by many of the ground and air crews.

For his contribution since the war David was made a life member of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

The artist, Geoffrey Wheeler, lived next to the Mighty Eighth Headquarters in High Wycombe during the war.

It was decided to give the plate no gold edging, and therefore no boundary, suggesting an endless sky which the Mighty Eighth knew only too well. The numbers of all the flying groups which made up the Mighty Eighth are shown round the rim of the plate and are therefore shown "in the sky" where they belong. These groups were either assigned or attached to the Eighth. It is hoped that Mighty Eighth veterans will proudly enjoy identifying their individual group on the plate.

The Mighty Eighth insignia is in the center of the plate with the two flags of the United States and Great Britain, "Old Glory" and the "Union Jack," without which no plate symbolizing friendship would be complete. Below the insignia, the words "The Mighty Eighth" are written on the famous yellow ribbon. At the bottom of the plate is the "handshake" of friendship together with the dates 1942-1992.

The selection of the B-17 Fortress, B-24 Liberator, P-38 Lightning, P-47 Thunderbolt and the P-51 Mustang was limited by space. It is acknowledged that there were many other types of aircraft used by the Mighty Eighth in the war but it was felt that veterans would not argue with this choice.

These five aircraft, aligned as they are with the five points of the star in the Mighty Eighth's famous emblem, are shown with the three fighters "the three little friends" flying over and protecting the heavy bombers. The bomber crews welcomed the sight of the fighter support but unfortunately was not always available to the flyers; the skies were not always "blue skies."

On the rear of the plate, as well as the Royal Worcester back stamp, are listed the men behind the flying groups, the numbers of the various ground support groups that together with the flying groups formed the Eighth Air Force in Europe. Without the ground support the flyers could not have operated.

The plate is no longer available.

"Subaltern" Relationship:

Study Looks At Foreign Policy

The scholarly presentation by Lynn Marie Alexander in the following pages came along just in time to add a journalistic study to the emotional and artistic rendering to the colorful Royal Worcester plate honoring the Eighth Air Force.

Or better said. The colorful plate came along at just the right time to complement Alexander's "Foreign Policy" study.

Lynn is currently a doctoral student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. After one more year of coursework, she will begin writing her dissertation thesis in August 2010. She also teaches history and political science courses at Johnson County Community College.

Ms. Alexander completed her Master's Degree in Diplomatic Studies from Keele University, Staffordshire, England. She has maintained ties with Britain through friends and trips, while keeping the Anglo-American relationship present in her research.

Her interest in the 398th Bomb Group and the Friends of the 398th began in the spring semester 2007 when assigned to write a paper using original source material.

"The 398th proved to be an amazingly rich source from which to draw. The website, packed with newsletters, personal stories, photos, and records, along with the archives in Pennsylvania and Hertfordshire, are a researcher's dream," she said. "The generous assistance and welcome from Wally Blackwell, Allen Ostrom, Lee Anne Bradley, Malcolm Osborn, Joyce Bend, and Wilfrid Dimsdale facilitated my work, adding depth and richness. All of those associated with the 398th are helping me to craft innovative scholarship, making the case that everyday people are just as effective as formal diplomats in reinforcing and shaping the Anglo-American Special Relationship."

Her visit to Nuthampstead provided further insight as to the importance of "subaltern" relationships as they affected a nation's foreign policy.

Alexander's study of the 398th in England provides a "microcosm" view of the American "occupation" of England during World War II.



For an inspiring story on Americanism ... and one person's reaction to the drama that was "9/11" ... see "Damn You, How Dare You?" on Page 8.

www.398th.org

A Study In US-UK Diplomacy

Foreign Relations On The 398th Level

BY LYNN MARIE ALEXANDER
Independence, Missouri

American troops constituted the largest foreign military presence in English history. Three million American troops passed through Britain between 1942 and 1945. Luckily, it was a largely cooperative engagement with casualties like the fox trot and social decorum merely sitting bruised on the sidelines. This paper explores the everyday exchange between the 398th Bomb Group of the American Eighth Air Force and their hosts at the air base and village of Nuthampstead, East Anglia, England.

In the past two decades, historians of international relations have increasingly sought cultural explanations to augment the existing body of work focusing on geopolitical, economic forces. I submit that the so-called special relationship between Britain and the United States is based in intimate experiences between the citizens of the two countries. This paper will focus on the contribution of everyday people and will show that personal interaction by ordinary citizens also constitutes international relations.

This would include such names as Dimsdale, Barker, Clark, Fox, Mustoe and others whose lives in the community were severely impacted with the construction of this new airfield.

The Westphalian System remains the standard introduction to the study of international relations. This nation-state world view is the foundation for the realist school, which defines global relations as the interaction between sovereign countries governed by no higher authority.

I believe a key to understanding affairs between the two countries lies in the personal interactions between Britons and Americans. Interaction between the citizens of the two countries is rich and ongoing. GIs were replaced by tourists, and privately sponsored cultural exchanges



Col. Frank P.
HUNTER, Jr.

Lt. Col. Earl
BERRYHILL

organizing reunions, raising funds for memorials, and documenting their history. They continue to produce a quarterly newsletter, organize reunions, and host a regularly updated web site — *398th.org*. Its members contributed to an archival depository in both the United States and in Hertfordshire, England.

I chose the 398th because of its rich research material. Additionally, the “UK Friends of the 398th” are representative of a larger community of other “UK Friends” of the WW II veterans.

Before moving into the post-war period, it is essential to understand how important everyday conduct of the American GIs was to the Anglo-American WW II military alliance. Churchill, Roosevelt, Marshall and Eisenhower had a delicate problem to solve. How to manage the largest male invasion of foreigners in British history, especially when Britain’s own males were largely elsewhere on several battle fronts? From the beginning, the leaders sought to create virtue out of necessity. Churchill encouraged the showing of American films in order to create a public familiarity with Americans.

Marshall and Eisenhower enforced rules of conduct designed to diminish confrontation and create positive rela-



LYNN ALEXANDER

tions with England’s hosts. From the leadership perspective, they had no choice. America was Britain’s last hope for repelling the Nazi war machine. If they wanted to defeat Hitler, the two societies had to work together. Churchill was the first to recognize this. He is credited with

Col. Hunter Enforced Proper Conduct

popularizing the term “special relationship.” He needed to convince Britons that they should accommodate the American military presence in their country.

Eisenhower also understood. He mandated those close to him treat their British counterparts as equals. He told his staff soon after his arrival in London: “Gentlemen, we have one chance and only one chance of winning this war and that is in complete and unqualified partnership with the British.” On his own admission, he became “a fanatic” on the subject, dealing ruthlessly with any infractions. But the American GIs did pose a challenge. They were a non-professional, newly recruited, civilian army. Indeed, base commanders received frequent reminders to enforce military order and discipline. A memo in the personal papers of Col. Earl Berryhill, the Station 131 Executive Officer, includes a stern warning from his commander, Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr., to enforce proper military conduct. The senior officer explained that discipline is essential for winning the war quickly in order to minimize losses. The American Forces Liaison Division and the British-American Liaison Board instituted formal mechanisms for nurturing rela-

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The President's Page:

Time Out For Lee Anne; Search Continues For Veteran Data

BY MARILYN GIBB-RICE
President, 398th BG Memorial Association

There is no lack of activity at the “presidential palace.” Our current historian, Lee Anne Bradley, has asked to be temporarily replaced as she is swamped at work and does not have the time to answer and research all the inquiries we receive, which are many and varied.

Geoff Rice has agreed to take the position — but only on a temporary basis. He will gladly hand the job back to Lee whenever she feels she is ready. Dave Jordan, our webmaster, has also agreed to help however he can. So hopefully we have the position covered.

Because of this change, Lee shipped “Jack’s Books” to us. While looking through them, we discovered that many of our usual reunion attendees were not in the books. We decided to create and send the questionnaire and a letter to all of the members on our current roster asking for their information.

We mailed 390 letters and within a week we had over 100 responses! We are still getting several a day along with a few phone calls. We would like to ask the rest of you to complete the form and send it along with any other information and pictures that you would like to have included in “Jack’s Books.”

Along with this information, we continue to ask that any historical information, pictures, diaries, paperwork, anything, can be sent to be added to the books and the website. This is the best way we have to record the history of the 398th Bomb Group.

We will continue with the interviews of the veterans in Austin in September. Once we have all of the vets interviewed,



MARILYN GIBB-RICE

we will begin to interview the widows and other family members.

We look forward to seeing as many as possible at the reunion in Austin. No doubt the activities that Sharon has for us will be fun as usual. The 55th Fighter Group will be joining us and we will be looking forward to the stories from the war that they will share.

See you in Austin!

Center Stage For Vets At Austin Reunion

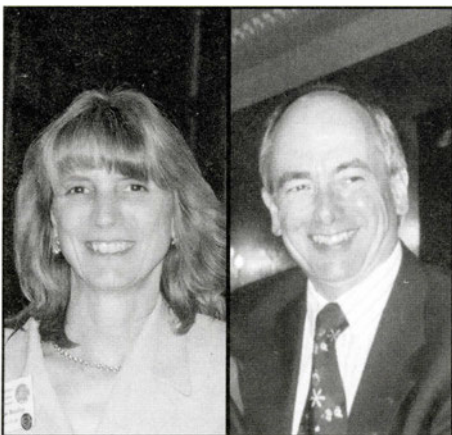
There will be something new and different at the Austin reunion.

First, every member is invited to our general business meeting. This includes the veterans, widows, family members and associates, so please join us.

Immediately following the general business meeting, we will be having “question and answer” session with the veterans. The plan is to have the vets answer our questions about their time in the 398th. These questions could be about their enlistment, training, trip over to England, missions, being shot down, prisoner, or just general information.

Please plan to attend and bring your questions.

— MARILYN GIBB-RICE



Lee Anne
BRADLEY

Geoff
RICE

West Point News:

Bill Scott Now Last of Classmates

(See Page 10 for Photos)

With so many of our veterans moving from here to the hereafter at the rate of a thousand per day, it is easy to overlook those “obit” notices.

The annual FLAK NEWS “Taps” notices each January bear witness to the huge number of “our own” who have gone on since returning home from World War II.

This column, however, is devoted to one of our members who has NOT gone on.

This would be William F. Scott (603rd) of McLean, Virginia, the lone still-living member of the 16 young men who began their military careers as graduates of the United States Military Academy — West Point.

Scott remembers well all his comrades from his 1943 class and one from the Class of 1933 — Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr., the group’s revered commanding officer. Hunter, of course, graduated as an artillery officer, but quickly moved on to get his wings in the Army Air Corps. He lost his life in the skies over Neuss, Germany, on January 23, 1945.

But it was John N. Baker of the 600th, however, who would be the first 398th West Pointer to become a 398th battle casualty. He went down on August 8, 1944, near Caen, France.

Other of Scott’s comrades began and finished their flying careers while still underclassmen, victims of air accidents as they shuttled between their West Point classes and flying schedules at nearby Stewart Field.

Hunter and Baker were lost in combat, but three others also perished in air accidents after the war — Kearie Berry of the 603rd in 1962, Harold Woodson of

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THE REUNION

WHEN — September 9-10-11-12, 2009.

WHERE — Austin, Texas.

REUNION CHAIR — Sharon Krause
RESERVATION FORMS — See April FLAK NEWS or online 398th.org/Association/ReunionsandTours/index.html.

HOTEL — Radisson North, 6000 Middle Fiskville Rd., Austin, TX 78752. 1-800-333-3333 (reservations).

RATES — \$99.00 (398th special).

2010 England, Czech Tours In The Plan

It is not quite a year away, but even now some 398th members and friends are looking ahead to June 2010 and a journey "back to the old base," ... and/or a week in the Czech Republic.

Ann Collins will be the tour leader and even now is putting together the itinerary and prices. She says that "all this will be in place by the time we meet at the reunion in Austin in September."

But some facts are already in place, thanks to schedules previously set in both countries.

For instance, the Air Stars Celebration is Slany will be on June 12, also the date for the Christenson memorial ceremony at the same Czech Republic site. This will be part of the Czech tour that will include Prague, Pilsen and other sites, including a ceremony at Litice.

The scene then changes to England for "Ozzie's Adventures" in and around Nuthampstead. This will begin on June 15 and will include ceremonies at the Station 131 Memorial, Anstey St. George's Church, and much more.

Robert's Flag Now Watches Over Peaceful Countryside



BOB HOWARD'S widow, Helen, honored her late husband's memory last March 2009 by taking his casket flag to be flown at Nuthampstead. She also took along her entire family. Left to right are Matt, Brandy, Beth, Trudy, Ken, Helen, Michael and John. The family was given a special tour of the old base by Malcolm Osborn and Peter Brooke. Bob's was the 60th flag to be raised on the "tall pole" by the old tower, and will fly there "until destruction," later to be disposed of in a burning ceremony. Another tour group is even now being gathered for the 2010 Tour to England and Czech Republic. (See Page 10 for Ozzie's story.)

398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

PAST REUNION HISTORY

YEAR	CITY	ATTENDANCE	CHAIRMAN
1984	Rapid City, SD	200 est.	Tamarack Travel
1985	Seattle, WA	300 est.	Tamarack Travel
1986	Colorado Springs, CO	391	Dale Brown
1987	San Antonio, TX	373	Dallas Ebest
1988	Richmond, VA	465	Bob Wiggins
1989	Dayton, OH	522	Bob Hart
1990	Oshkosh, WI	531	Morris Swed
1991	San Diego, CA	467	Bob Hopkins
1992	Nashville, TN	582	Dewey Cook
1993	Buffalo, NY	497	Larry Paul
1994	Tucson, AZ	548	Clyde Sebastian
1995	Charleston, SC	494	Harold Stallcup
1996	Springfield, MO	437	Gerald Monagin
1997	Spokane, WA	236	Lou Stoffer
1998	Harrisburg, PA	425	Tom Bewley
1999	Oklahoma City, OK	297	Dick Frazier
2000	Savannah, GA	480	Marilyn Gibb
2001	St. Paul, MN	271	Sharon Krause
2002	Portland, OR	240	Sharon Krause
2003	Covington, KY	268	Sharon Krause
2004	Falls Church, VA	368	Sharon Krause
2005	Overland Park, KS	201	Sharon Krause
2006	Livonia, MI	171	Sharon Krause
2007	Phoenix, AZ	185	Sharon Krause
2008	Cocoa Beach, FL	124	Sharon Krause
2009	Austin, TX		Sharon Krause

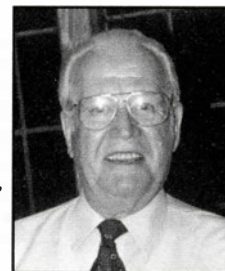
The Early Days

The 398th Association was "born" during a meeting with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society in Dayton, Ohio, in 1976. Bill Comstock was elected president, and remained in that position until his passing in 1996.

The 398th continued to meet with the Society until 1983. From then on the reunions have been held independently in a different city each year.

Nashville, Tennessee, holds the record for best attendance — 582 — in 1992. The smallest was last year in Cocoa Beach, Florida, —124.

1976 Dayton, OH
 1977 St. Louis, MO
 1978 Washington, DC
 1979 Phoenix, AZ
 1980 Orlando, FL
 1981 Mpls/St. Paul, MN
 1982 Cincinnati, OH
 1983 Houston, TX



BILL COMSTOCK



Hap Arnold

H.H. "Hap" Arnold is recognized by all as the father of the US Air Force. He is the only American officer ever promoted to five-star rank in two services — in the Army in 1944 and in the Air Force in 1949.

Arnold graduated from West Point in 1907, the year the Aeronautical Division of the Army Signal Corps was established. He volunteered for aviation and was taught to fly by the Wright brothers. He was an excellent pilot, winning the first-ever Mackay Trophy for outstanding flight in 1912 and again in 1934.

The nickname "Hap" — short for Happy — described Arnold's disposition accurately but he was also tough. Threatened with court-martial for his intense support of Billy Mitchell, Arnold called the Army's bluff and got away with it. In the 1930's, Arnold commanded the First Wing of the GHQ Air Force.

He became Chief of the Air Corps in 1938 and Commanding General of the Army Air Forces when the AAF was formed during World War II. He built it from its small prewar size into a force of almost 2.4 million people and 80,000 aircraft. He helped shape operations in Europe and in the Pacific, and he selected and developed leaders for the AAF. He was the driving force in fielding the B-29 bomber, an aircraft of such strategic importance that Arnold held operational control of it himself until the end of the war.

Arnold's energy and determination were legendary. He demanded — and often got — results that went beyond what might have been reasonably expected. Because of the effectiveness of Arnold's AAF during the war and the support Arnold inspired from Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall and others, the Air Force subsequently became a separate military service.

He retired with health problems — he had already had four heart attacks — in 1946 and founded the Air Force Association to inform the public about air power. He lived long enough to see the formation of the US Air Force in 1947 and to be appointed by Congress as the first and (so far) only five-star General of the Air Force. Arnold died in 1950.

Curtis LeMay

Jimmy Doolittle said that Curtis LeMay was the best air combat commander ever produced by the United States or any other nation. General Lauris Norstad said that "LeMay is an operator; the rest of us are planners." LeMay was one of a kind.

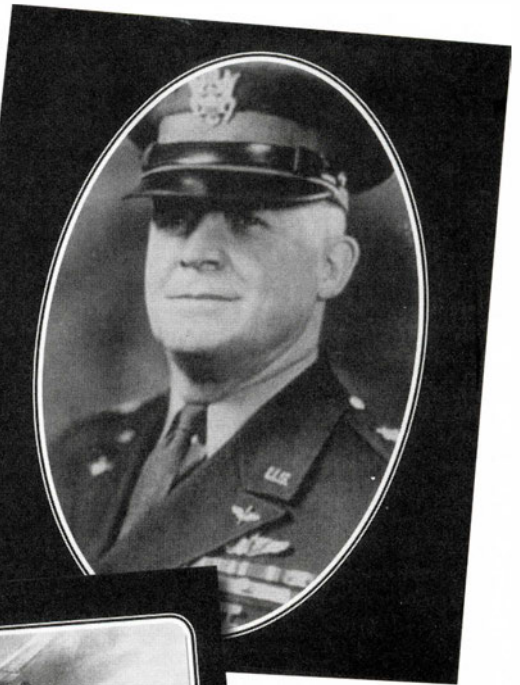
LeMay was commissioned through ROTC and won his wings in 1929. His name would forever be associated with bombers, but LeMay began as a fighter pilot and did not transition into B-17 bombers until 1937. He was assigned to GHQ Air Force where he became triple-rated as a pilot, navigator, and bombardier.

When World War II began, LeMay went to Europe, initially as a group commander in Eighth Air Force, rising to command of a bomb division. He led the toughest missions himself and developed bomber tactics, including the famous "combat box" in which the guns of the B-17's provided maximum protection for the formation. He went from lieutenant colonel to major general in 18 months.

In 1944, Hap Arnold chose LeMay to introduce the B-29 bomber into combat, first in XX Bomber Command in India and China and then, in 1945, in the XXI Bomber Command in the Marianas, where he made the B-29 more effective by introducing new concepts of operation. Eventually, the combination of conventional and atomic bombardment induced the Japanese surrender.

In 1948, Lieutenant General LeMay was recalled from his command in Europe to take over Strategic Air Command, which was in sad shape. LeMay moved the headquarters to Omaha, Nebraska, molded SAC to his exacting standards, and made it into the most potent flying force the world had ever known. As the Cold War intensified, SAC's long-reaching B-52's were the embodiment of strategic deterrence. In 1951, he became the youngest four-star general since Ulysses S. Grant.

LeMay did not leave SAC until 1957, when he became Air Force Vice Chief of Staff. He was named Chief in 1961 and retired in 1965. LeMay's reputation suffered somewhat when he ran for vice president on a fringe party ticket in 1968, but his place in history was secure. He died in 1990.



B-29 bombers drop bombs over Burma.



An alert crew races toward its B-52 bomber.

The 398th And World War II Diplomacy

Friends, Veterans A “Microcosm”

(Continued from Page 3)

tions between American GIs and British civilians.

Follow-up reports indicate many of these relationships continue past the war. Sociologically, the American military's presence in Britain is an incredibly complex event. GIs actions were carefully monitored, and semi-successfully constrained. They were an important element in Anglo-American relations.

The 398th Bomb Group and their U.K. Friends in England provide a microcosm from which to understand contested memory and cultural identification. The Friends the veterans provide another dimension to this interpersonal contact and reflecting a larger cultural and societal phenomenon.

The story of the 398th Memorial Association actually begins in 1971 in England with three English men — Vic Jenkins, Malcolm “Ozzie” Osborn, and John Knight. The three were searching for American military items on Anstey mound, also the site of medieval castle ruins. They learned from the locals that during WW II a fully loaded bomber dramatically crashed on this mound as it attempted take-off. The whole crew perished. On the day of their search, Knight found the back of a man's watch with the name William L. Meyran still legible. Knight soon after moved out-of-country. However Jenkins and Osborn remained dedicated to the mystery. They corresponded with the 8th Air Force historians in Alabama searching for the history of Meyran. They were never able to locate his mother, however the two enthusiasts were hooked by the romance and the mystery. They continued to search for cherished artifacts from the airbase. They also researched and documented the history of base activities and personnel. They happened upon an unexpected source of information at the Woodman Inn, a centuries old pub frequented by the airmen during the war. While enjoying a pint, they noticed business cards tacked to a ceiling beam. They recognized some of the names as 398th veterans. They wrote asking the Americans if they would not mind sharing their stories and photos. Friendships developed from these correspondences.

In short, Jenkins and Osborn became excited experts on the 398th. While they researched and documented the events occurring at Station 131, the veterans who actually served there were not formally chronicling their own history. The Britons were the forerunners in resurrect-



THE WW II ROAD SIGN
“Foreign Policy” Began Here



Malcolm
OSBORN

Vic
JENKINS

ing these events involving the Americans. They named themselves the Nuthampstead Airfield Research Society (NARS). The society's aim was, “Quite simply to record the history of the best group in the mighty 8th, the 398th.” They gave presentations to interested audiences at pubs and village halls, augmenting these talks with an informal newsletter describing their latest discoveries. It must have been odd for the American vets to receive a newsletter from a man who was just a child during the war, had no American relatives, yet was more enthused than they were about documenting 398th history.

“When we started researching the group's history we never realized just how much sheer hard work lay ahead, how much information would come to light. But we have made excellent progress, and the editor of this newsletter has two four drawer filing cabinets almost filled, to prove the point. Have not received much help from the majority of the association's members, perhaps they are not interested in us or our work, but have gone ahead regardless and have put the whole story together.”

Memorial Was A “Shared Victory”

Osborn and Jenkins recreated the history of the 398th, with or without input from the actual members. However, when the Eighth Air Force Historical Society arranged a reunion in England in 1976, Jenkins and Osborn served as the local guides in Nuthampstead. The two enthusiasts put these connections to good use by promoting the idea of erecting a permanent monument to the 398th. The Englishmen lobbied their American friends who eventually organized the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association in 1976, and then registered as a non-profit organization in 1981. The members of the 398th then embarked on a three-year fund raising campaign to finance the monument.

On September 21, 1982, a grand unveiling ceremony revealed a robust marble memorial commemorating the bomber group. Over 30 WW II veterans and their families joined locals who lived during the war, 398th enthusiasts, and villagers interested in celebrating the memory of a shared victory. They organized a Sunday Service at St. George's Church in Anstey Village (site of the infamous crash). Osborn and Jenkins even enlisted a local farmer with his small plane to fly the veteran airmen over their home base one last time. For some, it became a powerful moment of closure. Lasting friendships developed from this week-long exchange. The 398th vowed to return to Nuthampstead every other year.

Encouraged by the success, the local organizers of the memorial and reunion formally incorporated themselves as the “The English Friends of the 398th.” Their immediate goal was to begin planning for the next reunion. Though members of this group have shifted, the organization remains intact today. The last reunion of the 398th in England was in 2008 with the realization that the few veterans remaining were becoming too frail to make the trip. However, the relations continue, and there are plans for 2010. The English Friends of the 398th play a unique role by providing a path to the past for surviving family members. When children, grandchild, nieces and nephews go to Nuthampstead searching for insight into the seldom discussed personal history of their fathers, grandfathers and uncles, they are greeted by well informed Britons who interpret the experiences of the veterans. While they pride themselves on historical accuracy, they are free to

Continued on Page 9

“Damn You! How Dare You?”

A Memorable Story Recalling “9/11”

BY KIMBERLY AURE
Lynnwood, Washington

Our formidable and powerful nation now stands somehow reduced in its sorrow. Our strength — tested. How do you ask a question for which there is no answer? An acceptable, reasonable or believable answer? A simple non-evasive question —

Why?

We are brothers and sisters, perhaps not by blood. Yet, we all feel this agony. No one holds this grief alone.

It belongs to us all. Not only to those who share our country, but to those who share our earth. This safe haven to many people, many countries.

Has become what? Why are we chastised for our kindness? Killed because we hold pride in our freedom. Perspectives have become blurred.

I do not understand.

My mind cannot seem to grasp this action, and its repercussions. Our virtual quilt of races, day by day, side by side. We relish our emancipation. We appreciate it and respect it. And we will defend it.

For this we are condemned. In watching our buildings crumble, I also watch our lives fall with the debris. None of us will ever be the same. The birds are still singing, but we cannot seem to hear their songs. Regrowth and reconstruction will eventually ease our suffering. But they will only be band-aids on our wounds. Only time will mend and heal us. I am afraid that the amount of time is insurmountable.

Dear God — my heart, my mind, my trust ... all of these are aching. I am scared. Not just of physical war, but of our own personal wars. I think that we are all at war with our own emotions. The uneasiness in our hearts is so prevalent.

I write to “you” now —

Damn you and how dare you!

How dare you take our families and friends. They were not yours to take. Our sense of security has been obscured. You have injured us all. Our young lives, without parents. Our parents, without children. Our aged struggling with memories of familiar tragedies gone by. None of us is immune.

You are weak and cowardly. You are nothing. And I pity your souls, for you *will* feel our pain. Eternity is forever. Your intrusiveness is impermissible and inexcusable.

And it will not be tolerated. There are reasons that we are the strongest nation. A reason that we are strong and withstanding. We are a noble nation that has embraced others with open arms. We have fought to protect other countries in their endeavors for freedom. We have lost our lives to guard and shield these



KIMBERLY AURE

liberties for others. We must now focus on ourselves.

Our patriotism is not broken. We shall remain steadfast.

America with our allies is not alone. You are. I hope that you internalize your actions. Feel the sting from the collective reverberations that you will surely hit you. “For every action there is a counter reaction.”

You *will* feel that reaction. This will not be swept under the proverbial rug.

“You” have taken a toll on our lives. But know this — we will not forget. Our emotional fragility is high. But our strength is boundless. Yet, as humans you have invaded and tested our humanity. Our rage against you has flared up against others. American against American.

Again — how dare you!

We have lost so many lives in this tragedy. And I hold a certain reverence that more will be lost. Men and women fighting back against your lack of valor. This loss in inevitable and sadly, necessary.

You have thrown the first stone. We will now throw back with arms of steel. We are Americans, proud and able. We will not let you be the producer of our anguish and get away with it.

Do not be fooled. We will prevail. I have to quit writing now. My body is tired, my heart is full. I can cry no more tonight. But tomorrow is another day. I can feel my tears building up for the morning. And when the sun peeks through my curtains in those early morning hours ... Again — I will weep.

© 2001, Kimberly Aure
September 12, 2001

About The Author

As with many Americans, Kimberly Aure was stunned by the American tragedy we now call “9/11.”

She penned this story the next day, when her “emotions were raw and her sadness overwhelming.” Time has not changed her feelings, she admitted.

Kimberly is a “novice” writer and the daughter of a Vietnam Marine with two Purple Hearts.

Life Altering Dramas In Annoyances

“When I’m stuck in traffic ...”

“When I miss my elevator ...”

“When I can’t get a cab ...”

“When I, et cetera, etc, &c”

All those annoyances, and so many more, have become a part of our demeanor these past years, oftentimes resulting in lapses of patience and courtesy.

There are more illustrations from a variety of people who endured waits, interruptions, accidents of one type or another ... and found their lives severely impacted —

One was stuck in freeway traffic because of a major accident.

One missed his bus.

One couldn’t get his car started.

One returned to his house to answer the telephone.

One had a child to take to school, but who “dawdled.”

One had to stop on his way to pick up donuts for the office.

One had to stop at the drug store for a Band-Aid to ease the pain from a tight-fitting shoe.

One had incorrectly set her alarm clock.

One spilled breakfast food on her clothes and needed to change.

All these people had something in common on one, dramatic day in history:

They all missed the carnage that was to become known as “9/11.”

Letters

"I have great pleasure to greet you cordially and to thank you for sending me the magazine FLAK NEWS. I would like to share with you interesting and exciting experience of April 25, 2009.

"In the internet, the notice has appeared that the airplane B-17 would come on the mentioned day in the afternoon. In our country in these days a film will be shot about a group of black-skin fliers who accompanied the wings of bombers during the 2nd World War and one B-17 was to take part in the film shooting.

"My fellow and me went to the former airport of Pilsen. In the west a big airplane has appeared flying only 400 to 510 yards high with strong hum of engines. We have succeeded in shooting several picture one of which I am sending you. It flew over Pilsen-Litice as commemorative celebration on shooting down B17-G from 398th on April 25, 1945."

Ladislav Kohout, Pilsen, Czech Republic

"I am the daughter (one of six) of Phil Stahlman, who died four years ago. Like many others, I would like to express my sincere thanks and sympathy to the family of Wally Blackwell. I met him several times, especially at the dedication of the Anstey window in 2000. Wally was a good friend of my father. And the heart of the 398th.

Kathy (Stahlman) Zinn, Culpepper, Virginia

"This is to inform you that my husband, Thomas Mueller, passed away on March 19, 2009. He was an armament officer in the 600th Squadron. Would you please include his name in the Taps listing? He loved receiving FLAK NEWS and reading the different articles. As his widow, please keep my name on the mailing list."

Mildred Mueller, Fullerton, California

(The Mueller Taps notice is another "sign of the times" as the average age of the veterans pushes into the late 80's and early 90's. The next Taps listing will be in January 2010. Yes, we will keep you on the mailing list. — Editor.)

"The B-17 photo on Page 1 of the April FLAK NEWS was very touching, especially in the light of the fact that my own father passed away last year. If this print is available, I would love to order one and place it beside my 'Clearing & Colder'."

Nelson Borys, Lees Summit, Missouri

(The photo is copyrighted by Joe Jones, Denver, CO 80220.

— Editor.)

A Study In US-UK Relations:

"I Love Those Old Veterans"

(Continued from Page 7)

romanticize and embellish, making the British once again in control of a past war which they may have lost if it were not for American involvement.

While Station 131 housed about 3,000 men, it must be remembered there were roughly 3 million American military personnel in Britain. The story of the 398th and their "English Friends" is repeated exponentially. One may wonder why such enthusiasm remains into the 21st century. Malcolm Osborn explained his feelings regarding American WW II veterans which I found both interesting and enlightening. He said:

"I do not think they fully realised the effect they had on the English during 1942-45 — an effect so powerful that even today they are remembered with such love and true affection. They [do not] realise that all over East Anglia there are enthusiasts determined to preserve their exploits. Such commitment has been recognised by all of the [Friends] Associations over the last 35 years ... I love all those old veterans, I am in total awe of them. I know we shall never forget what they did for us."

Their importance continues. Today however, the GI veterans embrace a new role as informal diplomat. And, the English tradition of local hospitality remains strong. Children and grandchildren who travel to Nuthampstead know they will be warmly welcomed by the friends of the 398th. With its impressive collection of photos and memorabilia, the Woodman Inn remains the epicenter of 398th memory. In my 2007 visit Osborn enthusiastically provided a tour of the area and

generously shared his research findings. He remains a local expert on all things 398th. And dozens of others on both sides of the Atlantic remain committed to preserving the memory of shared victory.

In this case study, international relations occurs continuously between those on both sides of the Atlantic connected to the 398th Bomb Group. The American GIs stationed in England during the war posed particular management problems for the leadership in both militaries. The commanders understood how valuable positive interactions between the American servicemen and their English hosts could be. And now, decades after the war, American veterans willingly participate in commemorating the shared victory.

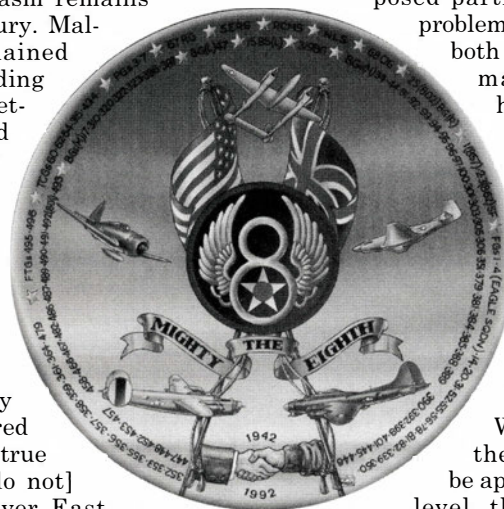
While the impact of their actions may not be apparent at the system level, their everyday lives genuinely reinforce a special relationship. I propose that even today lessons can be learned from this intentional and coordinated policy of cultural interaction. *Military leaders who implement constructive person to person relations also lay positive, sympathetic foundations for generations to come.* The value of the subaltern should not be overlooked in international relations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources —

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<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/speccolls/hcla/eighthairforce/index.html>
<http://www.hertsdirect.org/libslis/heritage1/bombgroup>

D/ENh, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, Hertfordshire, England
FLAK NEWS



Dues Notices For The "Big Seven" States

They are but seven states, but they also represent one quarter of the membership of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. And, as usual, one quarter of membership will be asked this time around to support the Association with their annual dues.

Those "Big Seven" states are Texas, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois. Dues notices in the form of return envelopes should be contained in each FLAK NEWS to these states. If "missing," use your own envelope and send your \$20 to Dues Manager Dawne Dougherty, Harrisburg, OR 97446-9585. Add a note to indicate a change of address or Taps notice. Members also can go the "extra mile" with a special donation to keep the Association in the black.

Last West Pointer

(Continued from Page 4)

the 602nd in 1950 and E.D. Scott of the 602nd, in 1946.

The full list of all the West Pointers who served with the 398th is as follows —

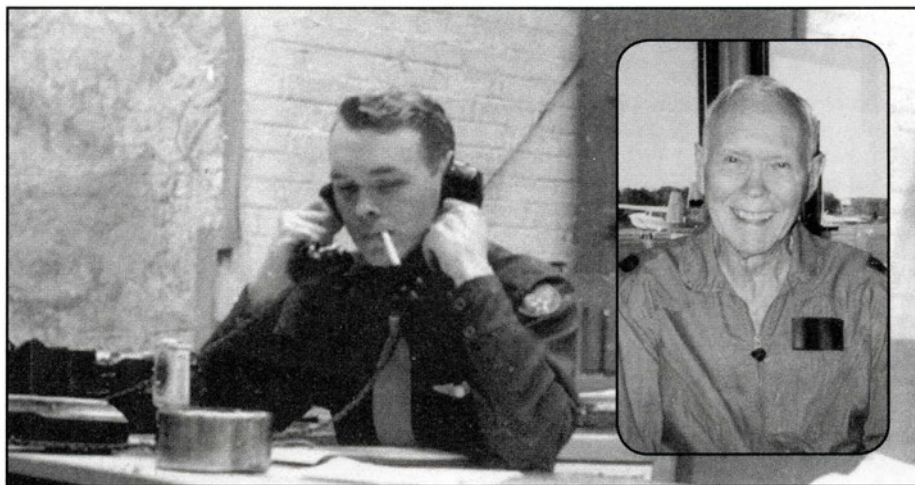
John M. Baker (600)
Kearie Berry (603)
Harold Bestervelt (600)
Don Griffin (601)
Selmar Gustaves (601)
Harry Heintzelman (601)
Luther Hough (602)
Frank P. Hunter, Jr. (HQ)
Harvey Latson (603)
Jessup D. Lowe (600)
Jack Novak (602)
Ernest D. Scott (602)
William Scott (603)
Frank Scofield (601)
Franklin Taylor (602)
Harold Woodson (602)

Scott, now 90, and the last living West Point member, can look back on an Air Force career that others may readily and easily describe as “illustrious.”

He concluded his World War II work with the 398th with a Distinguished Flying Cross, four Air Medals, two European battle stars and was then on his way to train as a B-29 pilot when the Pacific war ended.

By the time he reached age 63, Scott had added additional trinkets to his résumé —

C&S School; Pentagon Intelligence Division; Exchange instructor with the



BILL SCOTT is pictured here as the 603 assistant operations officer in 1944, obviously very busy as he handles two phones and smokes a cigarette (Lucky Strike). At right as he appears today at the age of 90.

RAF, UK; Air Command and Staff; Instructor War College; Air Attache Moscow; Research Associate, University of Pennsylvania; Pentagon (again); Moscow (again); Defense and Air Attache. And finally, a PhD and instructor at the Defense Intelligence College.

Several additional rows of ribbons were added to his original rows with the 398th. He now lives a “retired” life with his wife, Harriet in McLean, Virginia 22101.

This is not to say that the “other” West Point pilots didn’t achieve equivalent distinction during their careers. Skim-ning over the papers provided by Scott

(typed by Harriet) one finds these tokens of interest —

White House Aide, MBS from Columbia, Continental Air Command, Air War College, Silk Purse CTI Group, MBS at Georgetown, HQ 7th Air Force, Deputy Chief of Staff, Corps of Engineers, Air Attache Prague, HQ 13th Air Force, Professor of Aerospace Sciences.

And so much more.

And they all began working on these mountains of credentials as pilots in the 398th Bomb Group. And under the guidance of a West Point artillery officer who decided he would rather fly than walk — Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr.

Just Another Day With Ozzie & Friends

BY MALCOLM OSBORN
Cambridge, England

We drove up to Nuthampstead after a brief stop at the Barker’s Farm, once site of Station Headquarters and Group Operations. On the airfield we met up with Peter Brooke, Chairman of FONA, who joined us for the morning.

Robert Barker had kindly cleared the prickly brambles and shrubs away from the flag pole area and Ken & John Howard, assisted by Peter, pulled the small temporary flag down and then folded it. Then, after carefully unfolding their Father’s flag, Ken and John along with Helen and Peter, attached Robert Howard’s flag and slowly pulled it up into a clear blue sky, where the wind embraced it immediately and the flag proudly flew over Robert’s old airfield in silent tribute. An emotional moment as we all stood together in silence. (See Page 5.)

Also this summer, I had two visits to Grafton Underwood and a fantastic day at Snetterton Heath. I shall be going to Kettering Library one evening soon, with the Grafton guys, to watch a presentation

by a German lady on “The Berlin Airlift” She is part of the Berlin chapter of “The Cold War Museum.”

Anyway, I came back from Snetterton with tons of photographs and a worn out camera. That said, with good guides it is amazing what we can still find out there. It seems to bring the old airfields back to life somehow, if only in my imagination.

The museum at Snetterton is in an original Nissen Hut. The back half was the 96th’s mortuary, the front half an ambulance garage. The idea was to back the ambulance into the hut and remove the bodies without any of the patients in the adjacent base hospital seeing anything. But I guess the guys knew what was happening anyway. If you study the statistics, the 96th lost more ships/B-17’s, pro rata, than any other 8th AAF unit. The museum has been set up as a learning centre rather than a motley collection of bent and twisted aircraft remains dug up from nearby fields. I was really struck by the intelligent way it had been designed and the collection of memorabilia is of the

highest order. It really is most impressive.

Having Cliff & Stan Bishop alongside me on these visits, plus the local guides, blows my mind with the sheer volume of information being covered all during the day. A relaxing lunch in a local pub near Snetterton was priceless as I listened to these experts recounting all their knowledge. They are in a different league to me and I always learn so very much from them. I always consider myself so fortunate that I have such great buddies to go out foraging around these old airfields, which reek of atmosphere. It is so emotive standing in an old Group HQ building imagining the teleprinters clattering away with tomorrow’s Field Order. Really spine tingling stuff!

Going to open days/shows at Debach, Horham, Rougham and Old Buckenham this summer. Plus we have General Doolittle’s granddaughter coming for a weekend and a welcoming party at Steeple Morden followed by an open day at Bassingbourn.

Toodle Pip for now.

BRIEF-things

The very emotional "9/11" story on Page 8 should beg the question — "Where was I on 9/11? ... or, if you go back that far — "where was I on the day **President Kennedy** was assassinated?" ... or, if you go back to the combat days, "where was I the day **Col. Hunter** was shot down?" ... the Taps Letter on Page 9 should be a reminder that widows are welcome to remain on the FLAK NEWS mailing roster (but that they need to remind the Editor) ... the "Nuthampstead" photo-story on Page 4 should remind families that they, too, can have their veteran's flag hoisted on the tall pole at Station 131 ... speaking of flags reminds that a 398th "Hell From Heaven" banner is still displayed in the city of Pilsen, a left over from the 1995 tour ... among the many new 2009 Taps additions is **Bill Ganz**, who was the man in charge of raising the money in the U.S. for the Nuthampstead memorial ... another who passed on was **Earl Hoefert**, and he was among the many ground crew guys who loved "The Little Engine That Could" (Wright Cyclone R-182097) ... in recalling the radio operator's role in dropping chaff out of the bottom of the Fortresses to confuse the German anti-aircraft gunners, reminds of the former Boeing "tech rep"

Webmaster Needs Volunteers

The 398th Webmaster has a number of combat diaries and video interviews that need to be transcribed into computer and word processing texts. If interested, please contact Dave Jordan at dave@398th.org.

who had his ashes dropped over Seattle from the B-17 Liberty Belle ... and guess who will be aboard the Aluminum Overcast when it visits Virginia in August? The 90-year-old featured on Page 8, **Bill Scott**, the last of 398th West Pointers ... **Jonna Doolittle**, the granddaughter of **General Jimmy**, visited East Anglia last May, and among those hosting her were our own **Malcolm Osborn** and the 355th FG's UK contact, **David Crow** ... **Jonna** also visited the Woodman Inn for dinner and then gave a speech at Madingley on Memorial Day ... The Woodman also hosted no less than 80 British bikers and their Harley Davidsons ... the local folks must have thought the Fortresses had returned ... don't be downcast, you C-students — **General Hap Arnold**, who rose to five stars, almost didn't make it as a West Point cadet ... those internet smarties have come up with some ancient data and photos dating back to the 30's showing that Russia built and flew a 12-engine monster that carried a dozen cannon, all held up by two undercarriages consisting of 12 huge ties on each side ... **Stalin** executed the designer when the plane crashed on its 12th flight ... it was the B-17 "Liberty Belle" that flew over Pilsen and Litice last April 25 (see Letters) in memory of all the crews shot down on that last mission over Czechoslovakia of WW II, including **Allan Ferguson** and **Paul Coville** of the 398th ... (FLAK NEWS will run **Ladislav Kohout's** B-17 photo next time) ... **Ann Collins**, daughter of a ball turret gunner and leader of the upcoming 2010 England/Czech tour, brings her dad's ball turret memories to any B-17 that drops in at Sacramento, most recently the Aluminum Overcast; she's all primed and ready to "show her stuff" at the Slangy Air Stars show in the Czech Republic next year ... **Lynn Alexander's** "diplomatic" story in FLAK NEWS features the 398th, which was one of 41 heavy bomber groups in East Anglia and they all contributed to the "subaltern" relationships that developed between the Americans and British ... patience has again paid off for the Arizona Wing of the CAF; they received their WW II B-25 in parts and pieces 28 years ago (1981) and is now ready to join its B-17 partner, Sentimental Journey, and other War Birds on the flight line; they're all at Falcon Field near Phoenix ...

"Not active trade nor victorious armies, but religion and morality are the safeguards of freedom."
— Robert Payne Smith

398th Bomb Group PX

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(The Second Generation)

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CAPS			
_____	Black, with logo (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	\$12.00	_____
BOOKS (All books postpaid)			
_____	Fortresses Over Nuthampstead (Bishop)	\$65.00	_____
_____	398th History (1946, photo copy)	\$20.00	_____
_____	"Remembrances" (1989, photo copy, Ostrom)	\$30.00	_____
_____	"Bird of Prey" (Coffee)	\$19.95	_____
_____	"Hell From Heaven" (Streitfeld)	\$19.95	_____
_____	"Last of the B-17 Combat Drivers" (Weekley)	\$39.95	_____
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_____	8th Air Force Patch	\$6.00	_____
_____	Group Patch (Hell From Heaven) 2½x3	\$6.00	_____
PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS			
_____	"Clearing & Colder" (14x17)	\$30.00	_____
_____	Anstey Stained Glass Window booklet (11x17 includes list of comrades Killed in Action)	\$10.00	_____
_____	"Sunset at Nuthampstead" (8x10)	\$7.00	_____
TIMELESS VOICES DVD's			
_____	Interviewed 398th Vets	vet \$17.00 non-vet \$22.00	_____
MISCELLANEOUS			
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