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

VOL. 30 NO. 2

FLAK NEWS

APRIL 2015

A phone call reminder going back 70 years

Story by Barry Schrader for the Daily Chronicle published Feb. 17, 2015 in DeKalb, IL

At exactly 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3, Phyllis McCormick waited in her DeKalb Area Retirement Center apartment, knowing there would be a phone call, something she has been receiving yearly for nearly a decade.

The call came as expected and the man from Ojai, California, was on the line, reminding her once again that exactly 70 years ago to the day and hour her husband was piloting a B-17 bomber over Germany and crashed after a midair collision with another American bomber on the same mission during World War II. There were about 1,000 Allied planes in the air that day on bombing runs over Germany and one false move on the part of a nearby bomber caused both aircraft to plummet to earth.

The caller each year is the brother of another crew member of that B-17 who did not survive. In fact only two members of the nine-man crew parachuted safely into a German farmer's field that day, only to be plucked off the ground by German troops who took them prisoner, eventually being imprisoned near Nuremburg in Stalag XIII.

The second surviving crew member, Bill Logan, was later killed along with several other POWs while being marched across a bridge. Allied fighter planes strafed the bridge, not aware that the men on it were their own. But Phyllis's husband, Lt. Col. John McCormick, lived to tell his story, and died at age 90 in DeKalb in 2008.

Continued on Page 2...



Phyllis McCormick, widow of Lt. John R. McCormick - 602nd Sq, stands in her DeKalb apartment with her late husband's medals and other memorabilia from his military years, framed on the wall behind her.

Photo courtesy of Barry Schrader for the Daily Chronicle



2015 REUNION INFORMATION!

See Page 4 for Hotel and Tour Details
Our 2015 Official Registration Form is opposite Page 4

A phone call reminder going back 70 years *by Barry Schrader of the Daily Chronicle*

Continued from Page 1...



John and Phyllis McCormick pose at the U.S. Army Air Corps training camp in 1943 near Gettysburg, PA.

Phyllis shared that story with me and produced a 30-page neatly-typed narrative her late husband wrote many years after the crash that details events from nearly every day of his crash, captivity and eventual liberation by Gen. George W. Patton and his tank corps.

She had received a telegram, shortly after his plane had gone down, stating that John was missing in action. It was followed by a second telegram that arrived on their wedding anniversary, Feb. 22, saying he was alive but being held by the Germans as a POW.

"That was the greatest anniversary gift I ever had," she exclaimed.

Looking over the personal memoir about his captivity, one realizes how harsh and difficult life was in a prison camp. He had a severe leg injury which he struggled to treat by himself, and luckily for him, he only was held for three months, allowing him to get better medical treatment once he was transported to an Allied hospital in France.

The McCormicks settled down near their hometown of Malta once he was honorably discharged, but when the Korean War needed pilots, John was called back to active duty and commanded the crew of a B-36, then a B-52. He also saw action in the Vietnam War, then retired from the Air Force at the end of 1969.

The wall of her apartment has several framed remembrances of his service; among the dozen medals are a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Over the years she and John attended several reunions of the 398th Bomb Group, most of them stateside.

But once the war records were made available by the U.S. government, they travelled back to Europe and found the field and small German town where he was captured, as well as the Nuthampstead airfield in England, where his bombardment group was based.

There is a museum there now, and John's flight jacket is displayed in it, plus memorabilia of the others who either sacrificed their lives or survived the war that ended almost 70 years ago. *[Please note our museum is currently under construction and not completed yet.]*

Phyllis said they visited that crew member's brother, also a WWII veteran, more than once while they lived in California and have met other times at reunions over the years. Since John's death it is down to only one call a year.

But at age 96, she still remembers every detail about her husband's lengthy service as well as the good times they had as far back as their days at DeKalb High School where he was once president of the DeKalb High band.

They certainly qualify as part of the "greatest generation," as do many others who Tom Brokaw wrote about in his book.



John R. McCormick crew – 602nd SQ Nuthampstead, England – December 26, 1944

Back Row (viewer's left to right):

1. 2nd Lt. John R. McCormick, Pilot
2. 2nd Lt. Ray R. Woltman, Navigator (KIA)
3. 2nd Lt. William Feinstein, Co-Pilot (KIA)
4. S/Sgt. William G. Logan, Toggler (KIA)

Front Row (viewer's left to right):

1. S/Sgt. Reynaldo Garcia, Ball Turret (KIA)
2. Sgt. Charles Fellows, Tail Gunner
3. S/Sgt. Joseph F. Stritch, Radio Op (KIA)
4. Sgt. William F. Garner, Waist Gunner (KIA)
5. S/Sgt. Marvin L. Gooden, Eng/ Top Turret (KIA)

All marked (KIA) were Killed In Action Feb. 3, 1945
Bill Logan survived, only to be killed by US fighter strafing during a POW march shortly after the collision.

*Note: All ranks listed above are as of Dec. 6, 1944
Charles Fellows did not fly with McCormick on Feb 3, 1945

A Message from the President:

BY MARILYN GIBB-RICE

President, 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

It is time to call your attention to the financial situation we are facing. Over the past few years, we have greatly decreased the costs of producing the Flak News. We have also reduced our costs of running this association.

However, in order to carry on, we need our members to pay their annual membership dues and to also continue with additional contributions. We have not had to ask for extra funds since we decreased the Flak News costs in October of 2012, but everyone must keep current with their dues in order for our financial situation to improve.

If you have not already done so, please pay your 2015 dues today!

Thank you

HAVE YOU SENT US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Don't miss out on important 398th announcements! Please send your email address to our Unit Contact Manager, Sharon Krause, at email@398th.org if you haven't already.

Also, if you are about to move, please remember to send us your new home address. We wouldn't want you to miss your next issue of the FLAK NEWS!

IN MEMORIAM

IAN CHARLES JOHNSON

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Ian Charles Johnson. For those who don't know, Ian was the Landlord of The Woodman Inn in Nuthampstead for over 25 years. He had a heart attack in the early hours of March 23, 2015, fought for his life but then peacefully passed away that afternoon, in the company of his much loved wife, Sandy. The support and love the Johnson family have already received from their customers has been overwhelming and very much appreciated in this difficult time.



Ian & Sandy
at The Woodman Inn

God Bless you Scratcher.

The 398th will miss you.

2nd ANNUAL WIDOW'S BREAKFAST



Dawne Dougherty

Heading up the 'Widow's Breakfast' at our
New Orleans Reunion, August 13, 2015

Attention all widows who will be attending this year's reunion in New Orleans!

Come get to know one another or renew friendships at a fun breakfast just for you ladies. It will be held Thursday morning at 7:30 A.M. in the hotel restaurant. Dawne Dougherty, your breakfast hostess, will meet you at the restaurant door and direct you to your table. (Each breakfast attendee pays for her own meal at the restaurant)

Ladies, this is a great way for you to kick off the reunion before the tours. Please come join Dawne for a splendid repast... or at least a cup of coffee and a Danish! ☺

A GATHERING FOR THE 3RD GENERATION

We thought it would be nice if the 3rd Generation 'kids' attending the reunion could have a place to gather and get to know one another. We will be designating a '3G table' at our Friday night 'Happy Hour' where all of you Generation X'ers can meet, hang out and swap amazing stories about your granddads.

THE NEW ORLEANS REUNION

August 12-13-14-15, 2015

Facts

REUNION CHAIR -

Kenneth Howard, IL 61529-9702.

subject: "398th Reunion".

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL -

The Westin New Orleans at Canal Place Hotel,
100 Rue Iberville
New Orleans, LA 70130.

Telephone **800-627-8180**

The entire city is easily accessible from the Westin New Orleans. Walk out the front door and your journey into the French Quarter awaits you. Here you will find blocks and blocks of things to do in New Orleans including restaurants, attractions, history, live music, museums, shopping and more. For complete hotel information go to:

www.westinneworleanscanalplace.com

The hotel offers self-parking for \$18 per day and valet parking \$39 per day. Note: Parking garage clearance is 6'4" and may not accommodate oversized vehicles.

Shuttle service from Louis Armstrong Intl Airport is available for \$20 single trip. Roundtrip fee is \$38. **Contact 504-522-3500. Reservation Required.** For shuttle service from the airport, tickets can be purchased on the ground level at the airport shuttle ticket desk located across from the baggage claim carousels. The hotel is approx. 15 miles from the airport.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS -

No mail-in reservations are required. Telephone the hotel at the above number. Ask for the 398th Bomb Group rate of \$109.00 (+ 22% tax). There is a 72 hour cancellation notice policy.



REGISTRATION -

Use the Official Registration Form on page 5. Fill in completely, itemizing the cost of each tour selected, banquet meals selected, registration fee of \$10 or \$20, and the yearly dues (if applicable). Send the form, with your covering check to Ken Howard. He will return a copy of your form, with accompanying receipt of your funds.

BANQUETS -

The Welcome and Farewell banquets will be held in the hotel ballroom on Thursday, August 13 and Saturday August 15, respectively. Make your table reservations when picking up your Registration Packet.

Tours

WEDNESDAY, August 12, 2015 -

The Steamboat Natchez Dinner/Jazz Cruise Boards at 6:00 PM, - goes to 9:00 PM

Our reunion kicks off with a wonderful dinner cruise on the Mississippi River. The Steamboat Natchez was built in Braithwaite, Louisiana in 1974. The 1200 passenger authentic steamboat began cruising from her new home in the heart of the French Quarter in 1975. The ninth in the lineage of famous steamboats with the name NATCHEZ, her evening Dinner Jazz Cruise features the Grammy nominated Dukes of Dixieland and white tablecloth buffet style dining. The Natchez is docked within 2 blocks walking distance from the hotel. Boards at 6:00 PM sharp!

THURSDAY, August 13, 2015 -

Historian Guided City Tour and Mardi Gras World 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

This will be a fun tour! You will visit many famous spots on The Historian Guided City Tour. Locations on the tour include the **St. Louis Cemetery No. 1** home of the infamous Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau's grave site, the second most visited grave in America. **The French Quarter & Jackson Square** is one of America's oldest and most historically intact neighborhoods, circa 1718. **The Elms Mansion**, a premier example of one the most ornate homes in the city (it was also the old Nazi Consulate where the Germans were caught harboring spies). **The Garden District**, home to the largest collection of antebellum southern mansions in the world and many celebrity homes. **Lafayette Cemetery No. 1**, a beautiful old cemetery featured in movies such as *Double Jeopardy* and *Interview with the Vampire*. **City Park**, one of America's oldest and largest urban parks featuring the largest oak tree grove in the world and the oldest Live Oaks in the world. Last but not least we will visit **Mardi Gras World** where we will see the working warehouse where the floats are made for Mardi Gras parades. Lunch at Magazine Po' Boys included (price does not include purchase of alcohol).

FRIDAY, August 14, 2015 -

The National WWII Museum 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

This museum is a "must see" for anyone visiting New Orleans. It has several permanent galleries, including the Home Front, Planning for D-Day, the D-Day Beaches, and Pacific D-Days galleries. The third floor of the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion includes an observation deck for viewing the hanging aircraft. The second floor has reserved space for visiting exhibits and for special exhibits that change every few months. Lunch on your own at the Museum. Transportation to and from will be available and is included in the price.

SATURDAY, August 15, 2015 -

Plantation Tour 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

We will be visiting the magnificent Oak Alley Plantation with its 28 three century old oak trees lining its entrance and also the Laura Plantation, a great Creole style plantation which is one of the most visited in the south. We include a picnic lunch option at Oak Alley.

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

398th Bomb Group Memorial Association 32nd Annual Reunion

New Orleans, Louisiana • August 12-15, 2015

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2015

NAME _____ WIFE _____ SQUADRON _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE (____) _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP+4 _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

NAMES OF OTHERS IN PARTY,
PLEASE PRINT FOR NAME TAGS _____

WEDNESDAY, August 12 —

Registration	12:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Memory Room		
Board Officers Meeting	2:30 pm to 5:00 pm			
Dinner Cruise aboard the Steamboat Natchez	6:00 pm to 9:00 pm	2 blocks, walking	\$79.00 x _____	\$ _____

STEAMBOAT BOARDS at 6 PM SHARP!

THURSDAY, August 13 —

Widow's Breakfast hosted by Dawne Dougherty	7:30 am to 8:30 am	Hotel Restaurant - pay there.		
Registration	8:45 am to 4:00 pm	Memory Room		
Historian Guided City Tour & Mardi Gras Tour	9:00 am to 2:00 pm	Via coach	\$95.00 x _____	\$ _____
Lunch at 'Magazine Po' Boys' included				
Group Business Meeting - All are welcome!	3:00 pm to 4:00 pm			
No Host Bar	6:00 pm to 7:00 pm			
Welcome Banquet - Table reservations required	7:00 pm		\$35.00 x _____	\$ _____

FRIDAY, August 14 —

Registration	8:45 am to 4:00 pm	Memory Room		
WWII Museum	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	Transportation Avail.	\$37.00 x _____	\$ _____
Lunch on own at the museum.				
Happy Hour - Appetizers, beer & wine	6:00 pm		\$1.00 x _____	\$ _____

SATURDAY, August 15 —

Registration	8:45 am to 4:00 pm	Memory Room		
Oak Alley Plantation & Laura Plantation	9:00 am to 3:00 pm	Via coach	\$99.00 x _____	\$ _____
Picnic lunch option at Oak Alley				
No Host Bar	6:00 pm to 7:00 pm			
Farewell Banquet - Table reservations required	7:00 pm		\$40.00 x _____	\$ _____
Music by 'THE DOC HOLLIDAY BAND'				

Registration Fee per person \$10.00, two or more persons \$20.00 (max) \$ _____

2015 Dues (if applicable) \$20.00 x _____ \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

NOTE: Westin New Orleans Canal Place Hotel reservations MUST be made by July 15, 2015.

Note: Shuttle service available from Airport \$20 one way, \$38 round trip. Self-parking \$18, Valet \$39 per day

I / We will be staying at the: Westin New Orleans Canal Place Hotel Other _____

Special Dietary Needs: _____

Please check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> 398th Veteran <input type="checkbox"/> Widow <input type="checkbox"/> Relative <input type="checkbox"/> Associate

Please complete form, enclose check, and mail to:

**398th Bomb Group Reunion
Kenneth Howard
Elmwood, IL 61259**

Received \$ _____ Date _____ Kenneth Howard A copy of this form will be mailed to registrant upon receipt of check or money order, payable to: 398th Bomb Group Reunion.

B-17 "Stinker" Wreckage Found in Sweden

By

Ingemar Melin, Aviation Enthusiast from Trelleborg, Sweden

Introduction

Over seventy years ago, on 12 September 1944, the 398th Bomb Group left their base at Nuthampstead, England on a long 10 hour flight to bomb a chemical factory and oil refinery in Brux, Czechoslovakia.

The James Fields' crew, of the 602nd Bomb Squadron, was an element lead in the high group. He reported problems with his supercharger and was falling out of formation but continued on the mission following behind the Bomb Group. He salvoed his bombs, but still fell about five miles behind the formation. As he went over Berlin, Germany, he was told to return to base. The group was hit by fighters and a FW-190 found Field's B-17G, nicknamed "Stinker". His number 1 engine began to windmill, and his number 2 began to fail also. Nuthampstead was over 400 miles to the west, while Sweden was only 120 miles. The decision was made to try to cross the Baltic Sea and reach Sweden. With the Swedish coastline in sight, a ME-109 attacked "Stinker" and brought her down.

Lyman Cranston, Fields' co-pilot, described it in a 1999 Flak News story entitled "All KIA Just Wasn't So" by Allen Ostrom; *"We were immediately on fire and Fields rang the bail-out bell. I got to the front hatch and motioned for White to jump. He said, 'go ahead' and so I jumped. At the same time I hit the water the plane also hit and exploded. It came in on fire at 45 degrees. Nobody still in the plane could have survived that crash."*

Cranston was the only crewmember to survive the mission. James Fields and Navigator Goodrich White's bodies washed ashore. Bombardier Billy Gonser, engineer Edward Mullendore, radio operator Richard Goodman and gunners Marvin Leach, James Somers and George Van Luven are inscribed on the Wall of the Missing at Cambridge, England.

(The above was compiled from the 398th BG website by user 'Beast' in a tribute to ball turret gunner James Somers on www.usmilitaryforum.com)

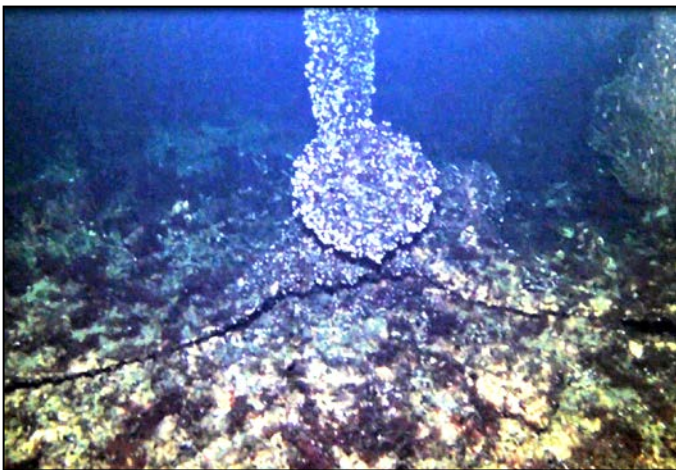


Photo Copyright Skywater Media

One of Stinker's four propeller's found by the dive team in Trelleborg Harbor, Sweden

Ingemar's Story – February 19, 2015

In 1998 I managed to get in touch with the only survivor, the co-pilot Lyman N. Cranston, then living in Melbourne Beach, FL. He shared his story with me, the eventful mission to Brux, Czechoslovakia, the attack of FW-190's near Berlin and the last scary moments when they were downed by a Luftwaffe ME-109 fighter just minutes from the Swedish refuge. It is so sad when thinking of the fact they were just minutes from being over safe territory. "Stinker" had the whole right wing in flames and she made a steep turn just over the Trelleborg Harbor before entering into a dive which brought her and crew to death.

Cranston and Fields managed to bail out during the last seconds, but for James Fields it was a second too late. Due to the low altitude his chute never fully developed so he hit the water hard and was killed instantly. Cranston found himself floating in his Mae West thinking he was going to freeze to death. However after a while, in which Cranston thought was several hours but in fact only about 15 minutes, he was rescued by a Swedish Navy Picket Boat. He was found unhurt, but in shock and very cold. After treatment he was sent to the middle of Sweden for internment until mid-November 1944 when he was repatriated back to England. He became classified as a hardship case and stayed at a calm and quiet place called Näs Herrgårdspensionat owned by a Ms. Hanna Sandberg.

Interesting is after that I had found Lyman Cranston, the news reached the 398th BG Association and my family and I were visited by Mr. Allen Ostrom who was on a European tour. He wanted to write an article about me for a story in your newsletter [Flak News, April 1999]. I worked on this for several years, because I have for a long time been interested in the many USAAF bombers that made forced landings here in the area near the south of Sweden during the wartime years.

So as to what happened last Friday, February 13, 2015. Let's start in January of this year when I was delivering a lecture about B-17 "Stinker" at our local Maritime museum here. This wartime story is always a subject of interest among the older people, but two younger guys were sitting in the last row and I could see they were listening very carefully to my story. What I didn't know then, but know now, is that these guys were very experienced scuba divers specialized in wreck diving. I didn't know them at that moment.

I was told that a few days after my lecture they contacted a fisherman who had got some riveted aluminum parts caught in his fishing net in 1985. He found the pieces on a position that very much corresponded to the spot where "Stinker" went down. He had this position saved very accurately since he absolutely did not want to damage his fishing nets anymore.

Friday the 13th (!) 2015 the two scuba divers **Johan Öhlén** and **Tobias Andersson** went out with their high speed diving boat and anchored at the supposed position. Since Tobias had a bad cold he stayed on deck while Johan dove down by himself. After about 5 minutes Johan broke the surface and told Tobias *"There was nothing down there"*. Then he climbed into the boat, grinned and said: *"Just joking – I FOUND A PROPELLER!!"* Then in spite of his cold, Tobias immediately got into his diving suit, fixed his equipment and hit the water. On the bottom they then found enough evidence for stating this was the last resting place for "Stinker".



A Photomontage of “Stinker” Going Down In Flames

A composite photo by Ingemar Melin

This is a picture which actually is a montage which I made based on eyewitness interviews. It shows how it might have looked when “Stinker” made her last right turn just seconds before she dove into the sea. It also shows how very close it was to the shore line. Maybe 10 seconds after this moment two parachutes were seen, which were Fields and Cranston.

It must be clear that this is a photo montage and not a real photo.

The person I interviewed witnessed the plane on a roof close to the spot where I took the shot. Actually before I could use the photo I had to clean it from all modern stuff such as satellite and TV antennas to make it look like 1944.

Ingemar’s Story - continued from previous page

They then called their friend, **Jan Christensen** who runs Skywater Media, a company with underwater filming. He immediately dropped what he was presently doing, took his gear and jumped into his car. He made that day the first documentation on film. I had a long phone call with Jan on the day after, Saturday the 14th. He sent me the first movie, a 2 minute 30 second clip. I have helped them with identifying some of the parts visible in the clip. There is nothing left of the fuselage, or larger portions of aluminum parts. They have so far found all four of the R-1820 engines, the two main landing gears, one main wing spar, an ammo box, minus the wooden box which means that the 12.7 mm bullets are stacked together. One cylinder-shaped something that we couldn’t identify and a mystic piece of glass.



The Dive Team!

From the left: Johan Öhlén, Tobias Andersson and Jan Christensen, the underwater photographer from Skywater Media.

In the never ending pursuit of crew identification we present...

DO YOU KNOW THESE MEN?



**Dwyer's Crew
603rd SQ**

Photo date: Early 1944

Back Row (L-R):	Front Row (L-R):
Unknown man A	Unknown man 1
W.S. Dwyer, Pilot	Unknown man 2
Unknown man C	Unknown man 3
Unknown man D	Unknown man 4
Unknown man E	Unknown man 5



Crew from 603rd book April 1944 :

2nd Lt. Wilber S. Dwyer, Pilot
2nd Lt. C.A. Williams, Co-Pilot
2nd Lt. J.H. Mutz, Navigator
2nd Lt. R.A. Wooley, Bombardier
S/Sgt. T. Boersma, Eng./TT Gunner
S/Sgt. E. Zoldy, Radio Op
Sgt. W.F. Zawatsky, AAEG
Sgt. L.W. Ford, Gunner
Sgt. R.E. Harrington, Gunner
Cpl. R.N. Hovey, Gunner

**Mystery Men
Probably 603rd SQ
Photo date: 1944 or 1945
Probably Nuthampstead**

Left to Right:

Unknown man 1
Unknown man 2



This crisp photograph was included in the Dacon Photo Collection which was generously donated by Reynold Dacon.

Reynold's Dad was S/Sgt. Charles H. Dacon, a ground crew mechanic with the 603rd Squadron.

**DO YOU RECOGNIZE ANY OF THE MEN
IN THESE TWO PHOTOS?**



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE MEN?

If so, please contact **Geoff Rice** ASAP!
E-Mail: crewpictures@398th.org

NUTHAMPSTEAD AIRFIELD MUSEUM

News from the Trustees



'Building 2' Progress Update

It was a frantic race against Mother Nature to get 'Building 2' buttoned up and weather-tight before the frigid winter weather set in last November. It was a lot of hard work but the Museum team of volunteers managed to get the outside completed before the first snow started to fall. The team then took a well-deserved break during the winter months once the second building had been secured from the weather. They will be back on site when the temperature rises... it's very cold there! Never fear guys, spring is here at last.

November 2014 Let's Raise the Roof!

Photo above: Roofers at work.

Thanks to two very generous donations made to the museum we were able to have the roof completed. First, John Bucher donated the slates for the roof and then Phyllis McCormick donated money to cover the cost of hiring a roofing contractor to install them.

Thank you John and Phyllis!



Early December 2014 Building 2 is Looking Good!

Photo above: The roof is on, the siding is up and the doors are secured. With the outside finished, the Museum volunteers were then able to concentrate on the interior of the building.

Photo to the Left: Hot soup anyone? This is Harvey Ditchman one of our very hard working volunteers.. and apparently 'soup chef du jour'. With no heat in the building hot soup and coffee were a constant must!

Note the neat insulation job, Good work everyone!

“IT WAS ALL BECAUSE OF A LITTLE RAIN”

By Rick Land

A son's surprising discovery at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Savannah Georgia

The forecast said wind and rain and the darkening clouds we could see bearing down on our hotel room window seemed to agree. The crabbing trip on the May River we had scheduled didn't stand a chance. Luckily the boat captain agreed and refunded our hefty payment... I have to remember to take him up on the trip at some future time. But now it's nearly afternoon ... what to do?

In the “Things to do in Savannah” table book, a local map was found that displayed local activities and tourists spots. Looking for something my wife and I could do on a wet Saturday afternoon a museum seemed the best target.

In the northwest corner I spotted a destination that caught my attention. Out near the airport ... it was the Mighty Eighth Air Museum. Wait a second, wasn't my Dad in the 8th Air Corp? A waist gunner on a B17 that was a casualty of flak and shot down on a bomb run to Munich. Dad bailed out with all but two of the crew and spent until May of '45 as a POW.

It had been several years since I had spent time researching the history of Dad in WW2. When I started I got lucky and got into contact with Lee Bradley [Group Historian] and joined the 398th BGMA. I received the Flak News and gained quite a lot of knowledge about Dad, his crew and the planes he flew aboard.

But I had never heard of this museum. This we had to see... and brother, was it an amazing find!

Put together by the retired commanding general of the 8th, and I imagine a sizeable group of volunteers and a lot of money (all donated), it is truly a 1st class dedication to all members of the 8th Air Corp. A beautiful and huge facility complete with a full size B17, gift shop, library, movies and interactive displays all set on several acres that feature a memorial garden.

If you are lucky, you will have as your partial guide through the beginning exhibits and the “you are there” movie, a volunteer who brings personal recollections and many tidbits of interest.

The majority of your visit will be self-guided ... and you need the time... there is so much to see and read. Very interesting is the exhibit that draws heroic attention to the Belgium and French underground who would help crewman escape and evade capture by the Germans. Truly astounding the danger that these few citizens put themselves and their families in, to aid and abet our downed flyers on their way home...

But what really got me was a display of a patchwork blanket that had been stitched together by a crewman of a downed B17. Reading the display card, it tells the story of Sam B. Miller, a survivor of a B17 shot down on a bomb run to Munich. Injured and hospitalized from a rough parachute landing, Sam constructed the blanket from insignias and unit patches from other POWs he met ... and had kept that blanket all those years. Bright and well kept, the blanket makes a beautiful display and is a valuable piece of history.

At the bottom of that display card were listed the other crewman of that doomed B17; pilot Curtis Lovelace and ball turret gunner Gerard Antaillia who were both killed. Surviving crewmembers who bailed out with Sam were; Robert T. Hart, co-pilot; Robert G. Uhl, navigator; Alton R. Andrews, bombardier; Robert E. Rees, flight engineer; Clifford D. Weatherwax, radioman. But the final name JUMPED (bailed?) out at me ... *DONALD LAND*, waist gunner.

I did a double take and a triple ... that's Dad! Wow, all of a sudden that seemed the reason for our 2 week road trip! We had started in Gettysburg and did the Civil War wander down the Shenandoah to Lynchburg, then Charleston and Fort Sumter. But here in Savannah - in a museum I had not an idea of existing – here was my Dad... and all because of a little rain. Simply amazing.

If ever you find yourself in the Savannah area, do not miss this museum and prepare yourself to spend a full day! See more at their website: www.mightyeighth.org



Curtis Lovelace Crew 600th SQ

Photo Date: Unknown
Probably during training

Back Row (viewer's left to right):

Sgt. Philip A. Fritsch, Waist Gunner
Sgt. Donald I. Land, Waist Gunner
T/Sgt. Robert E. Rees, Eng / Top Turret
T/Sgt. Clifford D. Weatherwax, Radio Op
Sgt. Gerard C. Antaillia, Ball Turret

Front Row (viewer's left to right):

2nd Lt. Alton R. Andrews, Bombardier
2nd Lt. Robert T. Hart, Co-Pilot
Sgt. Samuel B. Miller, Tail Gunner
1st Lt. Curtis D. Lovelace, Pilot (KIA)
2nd Lt. Robert G. Uhl, Navigator

**Note: Fritsch did not fly with Lovelace on the July 16, 1944 mission to Munich.*

Thanks to the late Bob Hart for providing the photo and identifications.

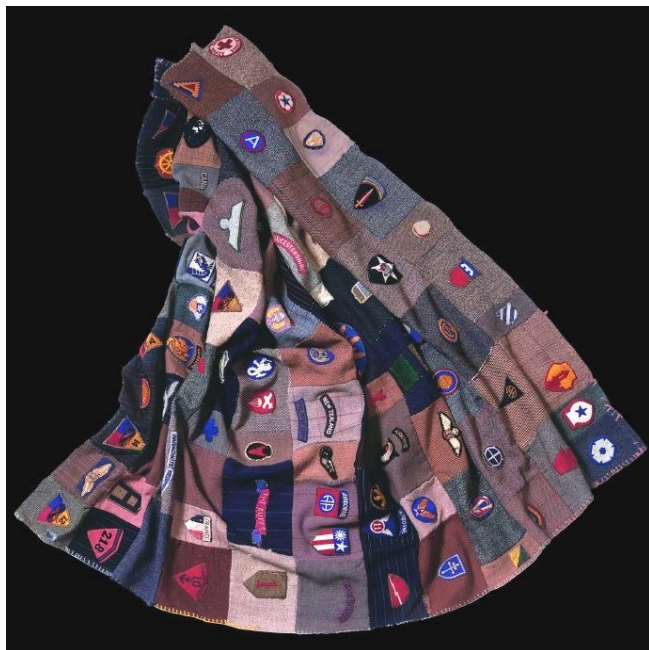
Sam's Blanket

By Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price

From the National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force

On 16 July 1944, the 398th Bomb Group attacked the aircraft engine factory at Munich and lost two B-17s. One of the destroyed B-17s had Samuel Miller flying as tail gunner. He bailed out but upon landing fractured his spine and both ankles. He lay in the Tyrolean Alps near Achenkirk, Austria, for two days until members of the Hitler Youth found him and reported his location to Nazi authorities. Miller became a hospitalized POW, held in the German orthopedic hospital, Reserve-Lazaret Obermassfeld. While recovering from his injuries, Sam created a blanket by collecting military patches and pieces of fabric from people he met in the hospital.

By the time Sam was liberated by Allied Forces in the spring of 1945, he had stitched 121 insignia patches to the fabric pieces to make this 4 1/2 by 6 foot patchwork blanket.



Sam's Blanket is on display in the POW Exhibit Gallery at the Natl. Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. Seeing this display at the museum, Rick Land discovered an unexpected connection to his Dad! Rick's story is on page 10.



398th Bomb Group PX

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(The Second Generation)

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<u> </u>	8th Air Force pin		\$7.00	<u> </u>
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<u> </u>	Squadron Patch 3"		\$7.00	<u> </u>
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<u> </u>	B-17 Jacket Patch, 4"x3"		\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	8th Air Force Patch, 3"		\$7.00	<u> </u>
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<u> </u>	<i>Fortresses Over Nuthampstead</i> (Bishop)		\$30.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<i>398th History</i> (1946, photo copy)		\$20.00	<u> </u>
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<u> </u>	<i>Clearing & Colder</i> , 14"x19"		\$30.00	<u> </u>
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<u> </u>	B17 Scale Model (12.5 in x 9 in)		\$17.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Blue Ballpoint Pen (398th imprint)		\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Challenge Coin (B-17)		\$21.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Coaster (<i>Clearing & Colder</i> imprint)		\$6.00	<u> </u>
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<u> </u>	Earrings – pierced (Group Logo)		\$11.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Notecards – B-17 Flying Fortress (set of 10)		\$11.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	FLAK NEWS Flash Drive Aug '86 to July '12		\$40.00	<u> </u>

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Air Crews Are Vital For Victory

Just As Your Dues Are Vital For The 398th BGMA!

The best way to show your support for the 398th BGMA is to pay your annual membership dues. 2015 dues were due last January and to those who have paid, we thank you very much. However there are still many of you we have not heard from. Please support our great organization by keeping your membership current. Mail your \$20.00 check, made out to the 398th BGMA, to Dawne Dougherty, Harrisburg, OR 97446-9585

The recruitment poster above by artist Ivan Dmitri was issued during WWII