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

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FLAK NEWS

JULY 2018



LEO CROCE TAKES TO THE CO-PILOT'S SEAT ONCE MORE!

Leo above, thrilled to sit in the co-pilot's seat of the "Sally B" at the Duxford Air Festival

Leo Croce, co-pilot with the 602nd Squadron, joined the group of sixteen 398th BGMA members who traveled 'across the pond' to take part in our May 2018 "Journey Back to England" biennial tour. As our only 398th veteran present, Leo was treated like a star by all in attendance, including our UK friends. This was Leo's first 398th BGMA reunion ever, not only overseas but in the US as well. He said this trip was one of the most memorable highlights of his life.

Mellisa Ledlow's tour recap is on page 2 and be sure to read Leo's article on page 8. Event photos are throughout this issue.

Journey Back To England Tour – Recap!

By Mellisa Ledlow

The 2018 Biennial “Journey Back to England” Tour officially began on Friday morning, May 25 in Cambridge, England. The group of sixteen included sons, daughters, in-laws, friends and one 398th Bomb Group veteran. Leo Croce, 602nd Squadron co-pilot, Griffin and Comstock crews, attended his very first 398th event since WWII! Leo’s presence enhanced the reunion for everyone involved as he recalled many stories of 35 missions and his time in Nuthampstead Station 131.

The first organized event for the group was a trip to visit nearby Audley End House and Gardens. Audley End House and Gardens demonstrate the development of a great house (or manor house—think Downton Abbey!) and its landscape over five centuries. Built in the 17th century, the house is one of the most impressive of buildings from that era both in the exterior and interior. The collection of paintings is also notable.

During WWII, like many estates and manor houses, Audley End was appropriated for use by the Allies. The property became headquarters of the Polish Section of the Special Operations Executive. Exiled special-ops troops who volunteered to join the Polish underground movement were trained here before being dropped back into Poland to help the Resistance.

Today, the house and grounds belong to the English Heritage Trust—a charity that manages England’s historic buildings and monuments. Audley is frequently visited by tourists in the Essex area.

On Friday afternoon, a guided walking tour of Cambridge followed the Audley End visit. The guide highlighted points of interest at the famous university and this historic city. The group visited King’s College Chapel and the River Cam and several of its bridges (hence the name Cambridge) bordering the main campus.



Above: Audley End House is a largely early 17th-century country house outside Saffron Walden, Essex. A palace in all but name, it is renowned as one of the finest Jacobean houses in England.



Above: Terry Tucker and cousin Bob Swearingen enjoying a pint at the Eagle. Terry is an engineer for the B-17 “Aluminum Overcast”

The Reunion Group gathered at The Eagle Pub in Cambridge for a casual Friday night pub dinner. The Eagle dates back to 1667 and is owned by one of the University of Cambridge colleges. During WWII, RAF and 8th Air Force officers and airmen were known to frequent The Eagle. These soldiers created a graffiti ceiling, using cigarette lighters and candles, and burned the numbers of their group, outfit or other cartoons overhead. The ceiling remains intact still today. A sharp eye can spot the “398” burned on the ceiling in the 1940’s and a more recent large decal of the 398th’s “Hell from Heaven” emblem on a wall near the bar. Ironically, a group of American Air Force personnel stationed in nearby RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath—including several pilots—introduced themselves and visited with members of the reunion group—particularly with their fellow pilot, Leo. It was a terrific ending to the first day of the Reunion.

Below: At the Eagle Pub, veteran Leo Croce (center) was a big hit with the air personnel from RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath!



Journey Back to England Tour – Recap! *Continued from Page 2*

The 398th Bomb group and the 55th Fighter Group memorials were the site for the Service of Commemoration for their members who lost their lives in WWII. Back in 1982, the 398th Bomb Group erected an official Monument on a strip of property adjacent to the Woodman Inn Pub built on the edge of Station 131. In recent years, a monument dedicated to the men of the 55th Fighter Group was also erected. The Woodman existed even prior to WWII and many veterans have fond memories of “sharing a pint” during their infrequent off-duty time. It is a great spot for the monument as the owners of The Woodman have graciously supported and assisted with any activities associated with the 398th BG and the 55th FG.

Rod Finn, Chairman of the Friends of the 398th, was the Master of Ceremonies for the memorial service. After the National Anthems of the USA and Great Britain, Susan Menard (daughter-in-law of Don Menard) led the Opening Prayer followed by a reading of Ephesians 6:10-17 by Jim Ledlow (son-in-law of Don Menard). 398th family members then placed flowers on the 398th and 55th Memorials followed by Taps and a minute of silence.

The day's program included comments from several attendees including Wilfrid Dimsdale, Past Chairman of the Friends of the 398th. Wilfrid's family still owns the property where the 398th established Station 131 as part of the 8th Air Force. Wilfrid gave insight into how the runways were built (using rubble trucked in from London bombing destruction) and described the beehive of activity with all the Yanks appearing in their tiny, previously quiet village. The Nuthampstead Airfield Museum also received praise from Wilfrid—for the perseverance and hard work that went from a lofty idea to a reality.



Above: Second Generation members, a 398th veteran and a UK friend gather together after laying remembrance flowers on the 398th BG Memorial. Left to Right: Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Pamela Goode, Leo Croce, Lee Anne Bradley, John Goode, Mellisa Ledlow, Cheryl Swearingen, Bob Swearingen, Karen Neff-Evola, Susan Menard, Mark Menard, Elaine Tyler (our UK friend hiding behind the tree!), Jim Ledlow.

Sandy Johnson, of the Johnson family that owns The Woodman Inn, described the history of the pub and its connection to the 398th and 55th. The pub has always welcomed the airmen and kindly continues to do so today, as well as displaying photographs and memorabilia of the 398th BG.

One of the original founders of the Friends of the 398th Bomb Group, Elaine Tyler, gave the background story of the handful of Brits that were determined to honor and remember the sacrifice and help given by the men of the 398th to the United Kingdom. The Friends were key in helping get the American Battle Monuments Commission to approve and facilitate the erection of the 398th and 55th monuments. In addition, the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum would only be an idea on paper if it were not for the selfless devotion of the Friends' time and energy.

The 398th Bomb Group's own Historian, Lee Bradley's remarks were a poignant reminder of the importance of history. Lee encouraged and challenged all present to reiterate to others, especially our younger generations, the significance of what has happened in the past and to remember the contributions of those men and women who fought during WWII.

Journey Back to England Tour – Recap! *Continued from Page 3*

In attendance at the Commemoration Service was World War II veteran Leo Croce, co-pilot in the Griffin and Comstock crews. Leo shared recollections of a few of his 35 missions. On one of Leo's missions, in August 1944, his plane became the first 398th aircraft to land on the European continent after D-Day. And Leo explained another major mission occurred on Christmas Eve 1944. After days of terrible weather, ground forces in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium were in dire conditions, having had no air support. When the weather finally cleared, the 8th Air Force high command called for a maximum effort from all bomb groups. Consequently, to this day, the Christmas Eve mission became the largest air strike in the history of air warfare. The 398th participated by sending 53 B-17's to the aid of the Allies during the Battle of the Bulge.

Leo remains humbled that he survived all 35 missions and like so many other vets, reminded us that those airmen who did not make it back, are the true heroes. It was a real privilege to have Leo and his family at the reunion—to the delight of the other attendees and the many Friends and Brits in attendance at the service.

After Leo's speech, Karen Neff (stepdaughter of William Wells), recited the Closing Prayer. Rod Finn gave Closing Remarks and invited all in attendance to visit the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum.

Initially, the crowd gathered in the Memorial Garden of the museum for a surprise unveiling. After a great deal of fund-raising and work, the museum trustees had erected a beautiful granite monument to the 398th BG and 55th FG. Leo proudly cut the ribbon to reveal this wonderful new feature in the Garden. Afterwards, the Hunter and James buildings were descended upon to check out the fascinating exhibits and displays. Numerous items and memorabilia help any visitor imagine the life of an airman during WWII. The museum is a great tribute to the strength of the 398th Bomb Group, 55th Fighter Group, the 8th Air Force and the English people.



Above: 398th BG veteran Leo Croce and Nuthampstead Airfield Museum Chairman Harvey Ditchman shake hands after Leo cut the ribbon and revealed the new monument. Museum Trustee Rod Finn looks on.



Above: A close-up of the new monument in the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum Memorial Garden.

After browsing through the museum, the tour group made their way into the Woodman for a good pub lunch. Some were delayed though, by taking a tour of the old airbase in US military jeeps driven by visiting re-enactors. Re-enactors, dressed mostly in Yanks WWII fatigues, love to make appearances and visit at nearby museums and services. The jeep ride was a bit bumpy and windy but was a great way to get a guided tour of the remnants of Station 131.



Above: Veteran Peter McDonough and Mark & Susan Menard enjoyed a tour of Station 131 in a vintage jeep.

Journey Back to England Tour – Recap! *Continued from Page 4*



Above: Brother and sister, Mark Menard and Mellisa Ledlow solemnly look on while Jim Ledlow assists in raising their dad's (Don Menard) flag over the old Station 131 airfield.

One more special ceremony was held that afternoon. The Dimsdale family has been kind enough to allow an American flag to be flown at the sight of the 398th's Control Tower. For veterans and/or their families, the vet's casket flag may be sent or brought to Nuthampstead and flown over the airfield. For veteran Don Menard, his family including daughter, Mellisa and her husband, Jim and Don's son, Mark and his wife, Susan were able to personally deliver Don's flag, per his wishes. A group of Friends and others on the tour drove over to the site and solemnly and quietly witnessed the flag raising. It was a beautiful day and the flag looked terrific waving in the strong breeze. For the Menard's, it was emotional and lovely and a wonderful final tribute to another WWII veteran. *[Don was the radio operator on the Sheely Crew, 603rd SQ.]*

With English weather being abnormally warm and clear on the following Sunday morning, the group headed to St. George's Church in the village of Anstey. Anstey sits at the very end of the main runway of Station 131 and back in October 1944, the very small community was in grave danger of being destroyed by a B-17. Upon take-off, the William C. Meyran crew of the 603rd Squadron immediately had engine trouble. Rather than crash into Anstey and St. George's, the plane nose-dived into a moat right next to the church. Being loaded with bombs, the plane exploded and the entire crew was killed. The village and its residents were spared and unbelievably, only one window was broken at St. George's. The grateful English people have never forgotten. On Memorial Day weekend, every other year, the church dedicates its service to the 398th Bomb Group and especially to those who gave their lives.

Back in 2000, a beautiful stained-glass window was installed in the church. It is filled with planes flying upward representing daylight bombing and planes flying downward representing chaos and violence. But what dominates the window are the butterflies flying upward. And etched on the butterflies wings, are the names of every 398th airman who lost their life. Please look up more details about the window on the 398th website.

After the church service, church parishioners offered coffee, tea and cookies and lots of warm conversation.



Above: Frank Evola and Karen Neff-Evola pose in front of the St. Georges Church in Anstey.

Below: Inside St. Georges; Terry Tucker and Wilfrid Dimsdale, a long time UK Friend of the 398th.



Back to England Again Tour – Recap! *Continued from Page 5*

The next stop for the group was the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. The museum at Duxford is the largest air museum in Britain. Eight separate buildings highlight aviation including modern airspace, the Battle of Britain, Air and Sea and a large American Air Museum, along with several others. The tour group was able to browse through any and all of these buildings but as a bonus, Duxford was hosting their Air Festival that particular Sunday afternoon. The show included a World War I re-enactment of a dogfight using Tiger Moths and bi-planes, a pair of wing walkers and even the French equivalent of the USAF Thunderbirds, the Patrouille de France. There were many wonderful performances by everyone participating, but perhaps the highlight for our group was seeing the beloved B-17, the Sally B do a fly-over. The Brits are every bit as sentimental about the Sally B as the Americans, as she's the only Flying Fortress left still flying in all of Europe. There was still one more surprise to finish off the terrific airshow. A P-51 Mustang flew over an enthusiastic crowd to applause and cheers.



Above: The 'Sally B' readies for take-off during the Duxford Air Festival.

The official 2018 American Memorial Day holiday fell on Monday, May 29. Following tradition, the service was held at The Cambridge American Cemetery. The cemetery contains the remains of 3,812 of our war dead and 5,127 names are recorded on the Walls of the Missing. Among those WWII veterans buried here are 17 398th Bomb Group airmen. Every grave was marked with two flags—the UK flag and the American flag. Small bouquets of flowers were also placed at the 398th member's headstones.

After the British and United States National Anthems, remarks were given by several dignitaries including Sir Keith Pearson, representative of the Queen, and Major General Jon Thomas, Commander, HQ USAF in Europe and Africa. The focus of the commentary from the speakers honored those interred and listed on the Wall of the Missing and the parents, widows, children and families of these servicemen who, having made the ultimate sacrifice, did not return home after WWII. It was a poignant reminder to never forget those who died to maintain freedom.



Above: Trustees of the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum Jackie and Andy Green, Harvey Ditchman and Rod Finn join our 2018 398th BG wreath presenter, Leo Croce, for a 'photo op' in front of the Wall of the Missing at the Cambridge American Cemetery.

The Presentation of Floral Tributes then began as 111 representatives of various Bomb Groups, veteran's groups, museums, individuals and many British organizations (all who continue to honor and remember the 8th Air Force's contributions in WWII), lined up in front of the Wall of the Missing. 398th veteran, Leo Croce, laid the group's wreath on the wall along with the other organizations' representatives. This was followed by a moment of silence and a 21-Gun Salute and Taps. Honoring the fallen servicemen with a fly-over, a USAF KC-135R Stratotanker, stationed at RAF Mildenhall, then roared over the cemetery. Coincidentally, the pilot was one of those the reunion group had met at the Eagle Pub in Cambridge on Friday. To close out the memorial service, a solo member of the Royal Scottish Highlanders led the participants out of the ceremony playing a mournful lament on the bagpipes.



Lunch followed the Memorial Day Services at Coton Orchard and Garden Centre. The orchard is one of the last orchards in the Cambridge area and probably the most picturesque. The adjacent café provided a lovely spot to dine on a beautiful and warm afternoon.

Back to England Again Tour – Recap! *Continued from Page 6*

Bletchley Park, the central site for British (and subsequently, Allied) codebreakers during WWII, was visited by the Reunion Tour Group on Tuesday, May 29. The once privately-owned mansion was bought for use by the Secret Intelligence Service in 1938. People of various backgrounds including mathematicians, linguists, chess champions, crossword puzzle solvers, etc. were recruited to help break the Axis-power codes like Enigma and Lorenz ciphers. It's been said that the intelligence produced at Bletchley shortened the war by two to four years.

Our group ventured onto the Bletchley grounds and explored many of the wood Codebreaking Huts. Huts 3 and 6 had been restored back to their WWII days and there we saw the different tasks the Codebreakers and their colleagues tackled on a daily basis. Hut 8 included Alan Turing's office and a number of interactive tables exploring codebreaking techniques. Several of the brick "Blocks" were restored as well. The Block B Museum had a fine collection of original objects, including codebreaking material and cipher machines used during WWII. Then of course the beautiful mansion was a 'must see' on our list. Commander Denniston's Office and the Library were both faithfully recreated as they would have looked during WWII.



Left:
The Mansion at Bletchley Park housed Commander Alastair Denniston's office, head of the Government Code and Cypher School. His office has been faithfully recreated as it had looked during WWII, along with the library which was used as a Naval Intelligence Office.

Later that evening the group gathered at the Cambridge City Centre Hotel's restaurant, "Bull & Bass", for a very memorable Farewell Banquet. Once again, Leo was the star attraction! Geoff and Marilyn had brought along several copies of Leo's WWII photos showing the handsome co-pilot in his leather A-2 jacket and crusher cap. During the cocktail hour, Leo autographed the pictures for everyone. Geoff and Harvey had each brought their art print of "Jet Hunters" purchased from Russ Abbey's Merlin Aviation Art Gallery. "Jet Hunters" is a gorgeous painting by Robert Taylor showing a P-51 'little friend' flying alongside a formation of 398th B-17's. What made the print very special to all was that it depicted the 602nd Squadron, Leo's Squadron! So naturally, Geoff and Harvey had Leo autograph their prints too. After a delicious dinner and good conversation, everyone gathered around Leo for a Q & A session. He also told of his life on base at Station 131, sprinkled with a few hair-raising mission stories. You could hear a pin drop!

It was a terrific reunion, and with a heavy heart we all said our "so longs"... but just until next time when we meet again "across the pond".



Our group at the Farewell Dinner at the Bull & Bass in Cambridge
Standing L to R: Frank Evola, Harvey Ditchman, Geoff Rice, Pamela Goode, Jackie Green, Andy Green, Cheryl Swearingen, Bob Swearingen, Terry Tucker, John Goode.
Kneeling L to R: Peter McDonough, Karen Neff-Evola, Lee Anne Bradley, Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Leo Croce, June Tucker.

A Reunion to Remember

By Leo Croce

This was the first 398th reunion that I ever attended. It had been on my bucket list of things I wanted to do. I noticed that my bucket list gets longer as I grow older and the time to do them gets shorter.

So, thanks to my daughter, Pamela, and her husband, John Goode, I was able to attend the reunion.

I can't even begin to describe the feeling of this memorable event. The American contingent, all second-generation members, and the English people were more cordial and welcoming than anything I could have expected. Unfortunately, I was the only 398th veteran there.

I was treated far beyond what I deserved. Yes! "King for a (few) Days". I was honored to be a part of the important and meaningful ceremonies on the days of the reunion.

Along with the solemn times of our reunion, we also had some lighter moments. One of the fun highlights of our gathering was having dinner at the Eagle Pub in Cambridge. One special room is filled with air force group and squadron patches and emblems, insignias of the military branches, as well as a ceiling decorated similar graffiti artwork. Yes, we saw the "398th" on the ceiling! So some of our boys spent time at this famous pub!



Leo had a great time at the Eagle Pub where he was quick to find not only the "398" on the ceiling of the RAF Bar but also, our 398th Bomb Group decal.

It has been 74 years since I joined other Army Air Force men and women at this very place. We came to this place to join the fight to protect those nations that believed in liberty and freedom, where all men and women are created equal.

It was the greatest conflict with more people in uniform from more countries than the world has ever known or has since experienced. Our America had 16,000,000 people in uniform. That great war soon enveloped our entire globe and before it was over more than 60 million lives were lost.

It was a war we won, but at the priceless cost of many American and English lives. Never forget that freedom is not free.

So it was important that we gathered at Station 131 to remember, to honor and to pray for our comrades from the 398th BG and the 55th Fighter Group who were killed in action.

That ceremony was attended by our American 398th members, Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Geoff Rice, Lee Bradley, Mark and Susan Menard, Jim and Mellisa Ledlow, Karen Neff and her husband Frank, Cheryl and Robert Swearingen, June and Terry Tucker (flight engineer on the Aluminum Overcast), Peter McDonough, my family and an estimated 100 people from the local villages by Nuthampstead. A welcome by Rod Finn of England and comments by our British supporters, started this part of our memorial weekend. I had the opportunity to speak recalling some of the activities and missions of yesteryear.



Leo poses in front of the 398th BG Memorial with his daughter Pam and son-in-law John Goode. John... you really do look like Jimmy Stewart!!

Then we laid flowers at the impressive granite and marble 398th Memorial remembering our fallen heroes. Lee Bradley, our FLAK NEWS editor, had some kind words to say about my 398th service. She presented me with a booklet which had a complete history detailing each of my 35 missions. President Marilyn Gibb-Rice, along with our American board members placed a ribbon and medal around my neck in honor of my presence at our reunion. I will cherish forever that mission history and my 398th medal.

We then walked over to the museum grounds to cut the ribbon on a new monument designed and built by the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum Trustees for the Memorial Garden. Harvey Ditchman and Geoff Rice led the work on the beautiful memorial. The other Museum Trustees are Rod Finn, Sandy Johnson, Marilyn Gibb-Rice and Andy Green.

Next was the tour of the James and Hunter Building of the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum. It was filled with amazing memorabilia contributed by many of our comrades. The day would not have been complete without lunch and a pint at the Woodman Inn, our old pub!

A Reunion to Remember

Continued from previous page

On that sunny, breezy afternoon, we all gathered at the Station 131 control tower location, now marked by a flag pole. Melissa with her husband Jim Ledlow, and brother, Mark and wife Susan Menard, had the flag from the military burial of their father, Don Menard, who was a POW and survived the war. The flag was raised and fluttered in the breeze as we joined in the prayer, *My Promise*. This was another of those memorable events to be long remembered.

Sunday found us at the morning service at St. George's Anstey. We again experienced that warm welcome from the Reverend and the local parishioners. An emotional time came when we viewed its beautiful and dramatic stained-glass window. Its design included many butterflies, with the names of the members of our Bomber Group who were killed in action.

We, next, spent a busy afternoon at Duxford enjoying the air show. We visited the American Museum and then came that unforgettable and familiar rumble of the motors of the "Sally B" B-17 as it made several low passes for the appreciative crowd. Honored again when the "Sally B" crew invited me aboard that historic plane. I sat in my old co-pilot seat, crawled fore and aft; one could not help but wonder how we all managed to carry out jobs on our missions.

The "Sally B" was the B-17 used in the latest film about the legendary Memphis Belle. The crewmembers each had me sign the inside of their flight jackets, which already had the signatures of the stars of that film. Unbelievable!

Monday was Memorial Day. We all met at the impressive and serene Cambridge American Cemetery. The ceremony was started with a bag piper, presentation of the flags and the singing of the British and American national anthems, followed by welcoming words from the dignitaries present. The rows of white crosses marked the resting place of those killed in action. There was also a long wall that stretched some 200 yards with the names of over 5,000 service men and women missing in action. This cemetery is the only American Cemetery in all of England. There were at least 1,000 people in attendance, sitting alongside a reflecting pond that ran the distance of the wall.



Leo presented a wreath on behalf of the 398th BG at the Cambridge American Cemetery on Memorial Day this year. Joining him here is 398th BGMA Historian Lee Anne Bradley (left) and 398th BGMA President Marilyn Gibb-Rice (right)

At the ceremony, there were 111 military organizations representing several of the 8th AF Bomb groups and Fighter Groups. Each of these groups had a representative lay a wreath at the memorial wall. I had the honor and privilege to place the wreath in memory of our 398th AF heroes of our war. It was a very moving and emotional experience that I will forever remember.

On our last night, our group met for a farewell dinner. I took the opportunity to thank Marilyn and Geoff and Lee Anne and all of the American and British people who made the reunion so memorable. I thanked them not only for me, but for all of our 398th BG Memorial Association members for their dedication to keeping up the awareness of the history and story of that important time in American and British lives.



Leo autographed several WWII vintage photos of himself and a beautiful Robert Taylor print entitled "Jet Hunters" which Marilyn had bought for Geoff, from Merlin Aviation Art, at the Duxford Air Festival.



Leo and his new found friends from the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum, Chariman Harvey Ditchman and Trustee Geoff Rice. Geoff is also our Photo Historian for the 398th BGMA.

A FEW MORE MEMORIES FROM ENGLAND

Reunion photos shown on this page and throughout this issue were contributed by Mellisa Ledlow, Karen Neff-Evola, Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Geoff Rice & Lee Anne Bradley



Above: Terry Tucker (front) and Cheryl Swearingen (behind Terry) admire the many collections of 398th BG and 55th FG memorabilia displayed in the Hunter and James Buildings at the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum (NAM).



Above: Rodd Finn, Chairman of the Friends of the 398th & NAM Trustee, and Leo Croce out and about on the field of old Station 131.



Above: Leo Croce, Pamela & John Goode took a jeep ride around the old base. Pete McDonough, and Mark & Susan Menard are following in the second jeep. Leo is having a ball!



Above: At some point during WWII, one of our guys burned '398' into the ceiling of the RAF Bar in the Eagle Pub.



Above L to R: Sandy Johnson (Woodman Inn proprietor), Karen Neff-Evola (2nd gen.) and Marianne Gluhosky enjoyed dinner at the Eagle Pub. Marianne and her dad John (seen in the group photo, last page) are our very good UK friends.

BRIEF – things

**35th Annual 398th BGMA Reunion
together with the
8th AFHS Dayton, OH Reunion - Oct. 10 – 14**

*** UPDATE ***

We have been informed by the 8th Air Force Historical Society that their reunion hotel, The Crowne Plaza Hotel (HQ Hotel) has sold out with 230 reservations already made. The 8th AFHS has made arrangements for overflow rooms at the brand new Holiday Inn Express & Suites Dayton Southwest (2410 South Edwin C Moses Blvd, Dayton, OH 45417). For reservations, please go to the Holiday Inn Express Reservations link or call (877) 666-3243 and use code AFR (Air Force Reunion) for the Dayton, Ohio property. If you would like to be placed on a waiting list for possible cancellations at the Crowne Plaza, email Donna at donnalee@afri.com Please include your name, phone no., WWII Group (398th BG), dates needed, bed type (only if absolutely necessary), and whether or not the occupant is a WWII Veteran. WWII Veterans will be accommodated first. At this time, no shuttle service is offered or planned. The Society blocked the overflow hotel and should be contacted directly for other questions. Debra Kujawa can be reached at (912) 748-8884 or: managingdirector@8thafhs.org

Once you have made your hotel reservations you should register for the reunion event as soon as possible. You may register online and pay using a credit card on the 8th AFHS website: <http://www.8thafhs.org/new/reunions.php>

We hope you enjoy this special “Journey Back to England” reunion recap Flak News issue. It truly was a memorable trip and we want to share the experience with our readers by way of wonderful articles written by Mellisa Ledlow and Leo Croce - and by printing several excellent photographs. There are many more photographs that we just did not have room for in this issue. However, they will be posted on our website so please check it often: www.398th.org -Ballpark, they should be up by mid-August (if not sooner).

Also, the 398th BGMA would like to extend our most sincere thanks to Leo Croce, his daughter Pamela Goode and her husband John Goode. Upon their return from the trip, they sent our organization very substantial donations to be used for the publication of the Flak News. Their most generous donations will pay for the next 5 quarters of the Flak News!

Last but not least, a bit of news about the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum. This place is a “Must See”. The Museum Trustees have worked extremely hard to create a successful museum showcasing everything 55th FG and 398th BG. The “James Building” houses 55th FG artifacts, uniforms and the Museum PX. In the “Hunter Building”, 398th uniforms and other memorabilia are on display, all donated from veterans and their families. Recently completed was the Memorial Garden where its new Memorial to both Groups was unveiled during this trip. Next up, the Museum’s final building phase, the Nissen Hut! It will be outfitted to represent the living quarters on Station 131. The museum is taking donations for this project so if you would like to help please send your check, payable to the **398th BGMA**, to our Treasurer, Mellisa Ledlow, 16210 Breakwater Path, Houston, TX 77044-1112. Please note that your donation is for the “NAM Nissen Hut”.

Lee Anne Bradley, Flak News Editor

398th Bomb Group PX

ORDER FORM (The Second Generation)

QTY	ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLOTHING			
All shirts select size:			
	___ S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL		
___	T-Shirt, black, “398th BG Flying Fortress”	\$15.00	___
___	T-Shirt, navy, with B-17 front view	\$15.00	___
___	T-Shirt, white, with Triangle W on front, <i>Clearing and Colder</i> on back	\$15.00	___
___	T-Shirt, white, with Group logo on front, Squadron logo on back select: ___ 600 ___ 601 ___ 602 ___ 603	\$25.00	___
___	Men’s Denim Shirt, long sleeve, 398th logo	\$25.00	___
___	Men’s Golf Shirt, coastal blue, embroidered Triangle W	\$25.00	___
LAPEL PINS			
___	Squadron pin select: ___ 600 ___ 601 ___ 602 ___ 603	\$7.00	___
___	Group pin Hell From Heaven	\$7.00	___
___	Group pin blue with B-17	\$7.00	___
___	8th Air Force pin	\$7.00	___
___	Silver B-17 pin	\$5.00	___
___	Cadet pin	\$5.00	___
___	Air Force 70 th Anniversary pin – Rapid City	\$40.00	___
PATCHES			
___	Squadron Patch 3” select: ___ 600 ___ 601 ___ 602 ___ 603	\$7.00	___
___	B-17 Jacket Patch, 4"x3"	\$7.00	___
___	8th Air Force Patch, 3”	\$7.00	___
___	Group Patch Hell From Heaven, 2½"x3"	\$7.00	___
BOOKS, CDs & DVDs Media (includes postage)			
___	<i>Fortresses Over Nuthampstead</i> (Bishop)	\$30.00	___
___	<i>398th History</i> (1946, photocopy)	\$20.00	___
___	<i>C-Lager</i> (Dorfmeier)	\$20.00	___
___	<i>Mission Memories</i> (lbeling)	\$8.00	___
___	<i>Return to Station 131- Memorial Dedication</i> June 2000 - DVD	\$20.00	___
PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS			
___	<i>Clearing and Colder</i> , 14"x17" canvas print	\$50.00	___
MISCELLANEOUS			
___	Bumper Sticker (red, white & black)	\$4.00	___
___	50 Caliber Bullet Pen (Group Logo)	\$40.00	___
___	B17 Scale Model (12.5 in x 9 in)	\$17.00	___
___	Blue Ballpoint Pen (398th imprint)	\$7.00	___
___	Coaster (<i>Clearing and Colder</i> imprint)	\$6.00	___
___	Earrings – clip (Group Logo)	\$11.00	___
___	Earrings – pierced (Group Logo)	\$11.00	___
___	Notecards – B-17 Flying Fortress (set of 10)	\$11.00	___
___	FLAK NEWS Flash Drive Aug '86 to July'12	\$40.00	___

Cost of All Items ordered \$ _____

Postage add \$7.00, \$9.00 if order over \$20.00 \$ _____

Payment in US funds to “398th Bomb Group PX” Total \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone & E-Mail _____

Mail completed order form and check to:
Carolyn Widmann, 6420 Tuscan Road, Paducah, KY 42001-6135
Telephone: 586-770-4747 E-Mail: carolynwidmann@aol.com

398th BOMB GROUP FLAK NEWS

FLAK NEWS

C/O Lee A. Bradley, Editor

14 Winding Way

Andover, NJ 07821

USA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Proudly Representing the 398th BG at The Cambridge American Cemetery. L to R: Karen Neff-Evola, Geoff Rice, Mark Menard, Mellisa Ledlow, Jim Ledlow, Pamela Goode, Lee Anne Bradley (hiding in the back with sunglasses), Jackie Green, Susan Menard, Leo Croce (Marilyn Gibb-Rice is completely hiding behind Leo!), John Goode, Cheryl Swearingen, June Tucker (almost hiding behind Cheryl), Bob Swearingen, Terry Tucker, John Gluhosky.