



602



601



603



600

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

VOL. 33 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 2018

## THE NUTHAMPSTEAD AIRFIELD MUSEUM IS A MUST SEE!



**Recent visitors, Sue Jensen (left) and her friend Mary Donnelly (pointing at photo) were thrilled to see Sue's father's crew photo displayed in the museum. Sue's father, Plato Stout, was a bombardier on the Nolan Thompson crew in the 602nd Squadron.**

Across the car park from the Woodman Inn and situated at the edge of the old Station 131 airfield, the museum is dedicated to the United States Army Air Corp 55th Fighter Group, the 398th Bomb Group and the RAF that were stationed there during and after World War II. Numerous items have been donated by our veterans and their families and are on display. The museum is open on the second and last Sunday of every month from April until the end of September or by prior appointment (at least 48 hours' notice) – call Geoff @ 01638 718427.

# Bob Bowen Posthumously Awarded the French Legion of Honor Medal

The following story was extracted from an article written by Fleming Smith of *Online Athens* (Athens, Georgia), his full article was posted online May 28, 2016. Jane Bowen widow of Bob Bowen, pilot with the 602<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, recently submitted the article to the Flak News after she read about other 398<sup>th</sup> BG veterans receiving the highly prestigious French Legion of Honor Medal.

*Bob was also a former Director on the 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA's Board. This is for you, Bob, we miss you.*



**Bob Bowen**  
602<sup>nd</sup> Squadron Pilot

Seventy-one years after the end of World War II, 398<sup>th</sup> BG veteran Bob Bowen, pilot with the 602<sup>nd</sup> SQ, was honored on May 31, 2016 by the French consul general in Atlanta with the Legion of Honor medal.

The Legion of Honor is France's highest honor in recognition of military service, with recipients including U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower, whose military career included service as Supreme Allied Commander in World War II.

Founded by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the National Order of the Legion of Honor recognizes eminent services to the French Republic. Current recipients are designated by French President François Hollande.

*\*\* Editor's note: Emmanuel Macron succeeded Hollande on May 14, 2017, one year after this article was written]*

Bob was presented with the award posthumously. Bob died in 2015 at the age of 93, and his wife, Jane, accepted the medal on his behalf for his role in the liberation of France.

The award was presented by Denis Barbet, the French consul general in Atlanta.

As she prepared to accept the Legion of Honor on her late husband's behalf, Jane Bowen was clearly proud of his service in World War II, down to the earrings she wore - tiny replicas of the B-17 bombers he flew as a first lieutenant in the 8th Air Force.

"I'm sorry he wasn't able to be here to get it, because I think it would have meant a lot to him," she said.

"All together, he flew 35 missions," Jane remembered, adding gratefully that "fortunately, nobody was killed on his planes."

Bob Bowen was stationed in Nuthampstead, England during the war, and in the years after the conflict the Bowens joined the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association, which included other pilots and their families. In 2004, on the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, the Bowens went with the group to Normandy, where Allied forces began the invasion that would end the war in Europe.

"There was a lot of camaraderie there," Jane said. "He never talked about the war until he got with the ones he had been in service with. One time, one daughter asked him, 'What did you do?' He said, 'I flew a plane, I dropped bombs, and I killed people.' He wasn't very happy about it. But it was just something he had to do. And when he got with the people who had been doing the same thing he did, he kind of relaxed about it."

Bob was nominated for the Legion of Honor by Rod Davis of Athens, Georgia, a volunteer with the Witness to War Foundation, which is documenting the stories of World War II combat veterans.

Barbet said, "It is a tremendous honor for me to thank, on behalf of my country, the American veterans who participated in the liberation of France more than 70 years ago. We wish to give these men their due honor and to assure them that the French people have not forgotten their heroic service. We are forever grateful to them."



**Bowen's Crew – 602<sup>nd</sup> SQ – March 12, 1945**

**Front Row (L-R):**

2Lt Robert T. Bowen, Pilot  
F/O E. D. Elwell, Co-Pilot  
2Lt E.F. Doles, Navigator  
S/Sgt D.D. Moss, Togglier

**Back Row (L-R):**

S/Sgt D.J. Ibeling, Radio Op  
Sgt D.E. Dailey, Ball Turret  
S/Sgt E. Adameck, Engineer  
Sgt J.R. Haws, Tail Gunner  
S/Sgt M. Berger, Waist Gunner

# Bombs Away... and don't forget to Say Cheese!

Have you ever wondered who took the 398<sup>th</sup>'s aerial bomb strike photos, crew photos and base photos found in our collection of historical records? Well the following piece is about two of several photographers attached to the 398<sup>th</sup> BG's Photo Section. One of them, T/Sgt. Leo A. Wilcox, was assigned to the 601<sup>st</sup> Squadron. The other, T/Sgt. Charles R. Turner, was assigned to the 602<sup>nd</sup> Squadron. Regarding the aerial strike photos, the Photo Section was key in aiding Intelligence in determining if our bombs hit their targets and destroyed enemy railroad yards, oil refineries and such.

First up, Leo Wilcox. The following excerpts are from Leo's *Timeless Voices* interview conducted on September 5, 2009 at our reunion in Austin, Texas. Parts have been modified for continuity and readability. Go to [www.398th.org](http://www.398th.org) for Leo's complete interview.

"After Basic Training, I was assigned somehow to the 398<sup>th</sup> when it went to Geiger Field. And, whatever we did there I can't remember. From there we went to Rapid City, South Dakota.

When I initially got to Rapid City, for some reason, I was assigned to the 602<sup>nd</sup>. It wasn't too very long before somebody decided that they should split our Photo Section group into the actual squadrons, and I went into the 601<sup>st</sup>. So I was fairly acquainted with the 602 officers, I always remembered Pete Rooney. There were 16 people, four to a squadron in the Photo Section. We all took pictures, we all participated. Some of us were in the darkroom and others of us fixed cameras, and flew, took pictures... anything that would get us out of really hard work [laughs].

## ***But you trained just like the rest of them trained?***

Ah.... No [laughs]. Well that's a little bit facetious, we really didn't. But we did have a great opportunity to almost do anything we wanted to. We were free to move around the base. At that time I was on flying status, so when the 398<sup>th</sup> became a training group for about a year, we were training people so I had quite a few flying hours. That's the way we were compensated, we got flying pay *if* we had the time [flying], which was lot different once we got overseas [limited flying for the photographers]. But being a part of the Photo Section for almost the entire time, we were an entity of our own. I've thought about it since then. It was sort of sad in one way because the number of people we became involved with were limited, particularly overseas. Our function, basically, was the installation of still cameras to take pictures of bomb strikes, to make sure that we hit what we said we hit.

## ***You were deployed to England via ship. Were there others on the ship besides the photographers who were in the 398<sup>th</sup>?***

Oh yeah, yeah. The whole group, the ground personnel... to my understanding we were all transported at the same time. Again the Photo Section was just part of the whole thing... there were armorers, and intelligence, and cooks and you name it. So we traveled as the 398<sup>th</sup> excepting for the air crews, they flew in. Once we got to Nuthampstead, the Photo Section required someplace to work where there was a normally warmer atmosphere... temperature, dust free and so forth. There were two attached Nissan Huts that I think that the 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, who was there before... they supposedly used them for aerial gun photography -you know they had the guns on the wings- projection rooms. And it was nice. They were big and they were clean and we suffered with a lot of linoleum flooring [smiles].



T/Sgt. Leo A. Wilcox, Photographer  
Photo Section Group, 601<sup>st</sup> SQ

But that's the point really where, as I said before, we were sort of apart from the entire Group. Which we thought was okay at the time but afterwards you realize, maybe you did miss something.

## ***Back to the cameras, where did you install them on the B-17's?***

We installed them just behind the bomb bay, there was a camera well. It was stationary, controlled by the bombardier supposedly. We would go out before the missions, sometimes we could get a good breakfast with the crews, and install the cameras. I can't remember whether every plane... I don't believe every plane had cameras. But then when those guys flew their missions and came back, our job was to take the cameras out and take the film back to the lab.

There were people in the darkroom, I mean some of our own section, and we developed and made prints. From that point we flew them, no, didn't fly them, well we were in jeeps and sometimes they flew [laughs] I think to Bassingbourn. Whoever wanted to look at them, that's where we took 'em. That was the specific function of the Photo Section, I guess. The other pictures we took, we took more or less on our own or at the request of one of the officers.

### **Did you bring the equipment with you, your cameras and everything for the darkroom?**

That was all part of what the Group provided, I mean the equipment was there. Other people had rifles, we had what we needed to do what job they said we were supposed to do. So personal? There was nothing... well, I did have a 35 millimeter camera with some color film, which was almost unavailable for most of us. I think those 36 exposures lasted me for the whole war. But then I had a lot of black and whites that I could take with Uncle Sam's stuff.

### **So what was a typical day like for you?**

Again, our function was to make sure that if there was a mission to be flown, that the cameras were installed in time for the crews to take off. And after that it was just the normal daily activities I guess.



### **When you flew, where would you ride in the plane?**

Wherever I was able to take what I thought would be a good picture. Usually the waist windows, sometimes through the Bombardier's glass in the nose... but I didn't do *anything* like those people, the combat crews, did. As far as the missions are concerned these guys all knew, okay if we could get through, initially twenty-five missions, we go home. And I believe there were probably crews that were only in England for maybe two months because they made them fly *that* many missions. I think the first mission [actually it was the second mission] the 398<sup>th</sup> flew was to *Berlin* and I can remember the activity was so horrendous... so from that point forward I felt very fortunate that nobody said to *me*, okay it's three o'clock in the morning get up, get showered and we're going to briefing. Those guys did a *really* fantastic job.

### **If you had to load the cameras, were you up that early?**

Oh yeah. But only to get the special breakfast that the flight crews got [laughs]. I think they had the only cooks who knew how to cook powdered eggs.

### **Do you have any other stories you'd like to tell us?**

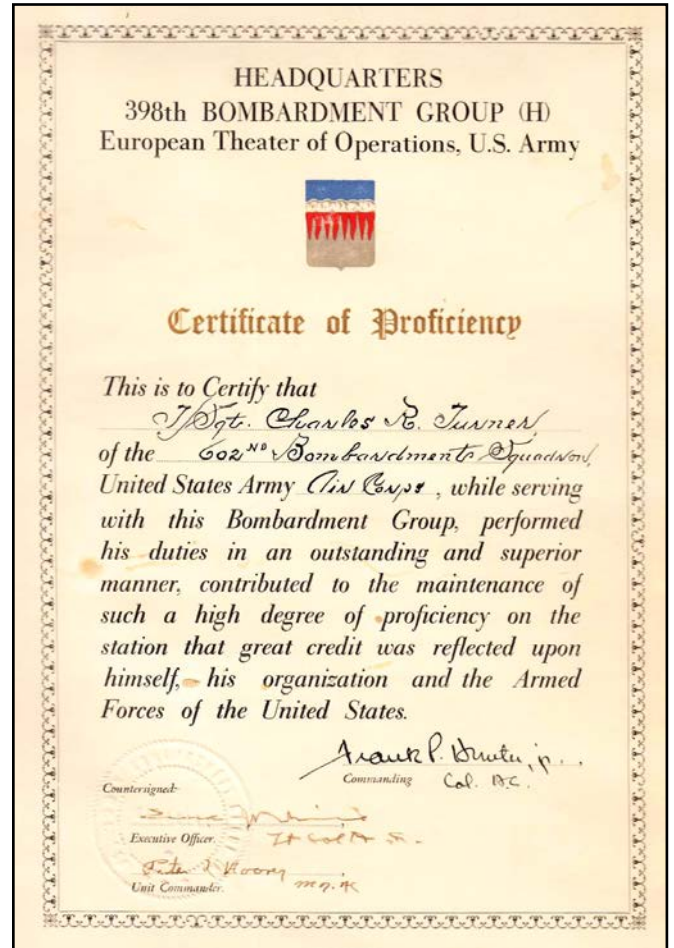
Well, the crews heated their barracks with these little potbellied stoves and burned coal or whatever they could. We had taken over one of the huts, as a dormitory you might say, and it wasn't really too warm. We dried the prints at that time with electric dryers, which contained really big heating elements. So, John, our sergeant in charge of the Photo Section, decided; hey, we can put those dryers to good use. I don't know where he got the stuff but he got these huge brass reflectors. When I say huge they were probably about four feet by three feet, and he mounted three or four of those on the dryers... they must have been thousand-watt heating elements. Those reflectors are what we heated our bunks with. So it was pretty "tough". But they did find out because apparently when we turned it on, all the lights on the Base dimmed [laughs]. Yeah we had it pretty lucky, pretty easy. Never giving it a thought at the time... except maybe, hey those poor guys are burning coal and we're... [laughs]"

While waiting for deactivation at Drew Field, Leo tried to snag a U.S. Government camera for himself, like the one he's holding in the photo to the left. In his interview he said; "There was the Speed Graphic Camera, which was the ultimate as far as we were concerned back then... and I tried every which way I could to legally get one. And that was one of the first times I just couldn't understand procedure because I talked to one of the guys and he said 'Nah, we smashed up a bunch of 'em, any camera, anything that was left.' Apparently this was some sort of arrangement with the manufacturers, that you destroy them because they didn't want them to flood the market. Again, that's what we were told. So I came home and bought one."

\*Note: A bit of research confirmed Leo had been told the truth about that. Unfortunately, after the war, the Folmer Graflex Corporation demanded that *no* cameras would be sold off as surplus equipment to the commercial market. The Army was obliged to destroy the surplus cameras and bulldozed some 350,000 cameras into scrap.



T/Sgt. Charles R. Turner  
Photo Section Group, 602<sup>nd</sup> Squadron



## Slipswitch Turner

Charles R. Turner was another one of our 398<sup>th</sup> BG photographers, however he was assigned to the 602<sup>nd</sup> Photo Section Group. T/Sgt. Turner's son, Ward, shared a story with us that his dad had told him; "While at Nuthampstead, Dad got the nickname "Slipswitch" because he came up with a simple device to replace a bomb camera trigger that was failing due to freezing up at high altitudes. He would tie a tongue depressor to the last bomb in the rack and put the depressor between two spring loaded contacts. When the last bomb dropped the switches made contact and the camera took its pictures." Good work Slipswitch, *that* was an ingenious idea!

It's no wonder Charles Turner received both a Certificate of Proficiency [top right photo] and a 1<sup>st</sup> Combat Bombardment Wing Commendation which reads as follows; "*While serving as Photo Laboratory Technician for performing his duties in an outstanding and superior manner which contributed materially to the success of the strategic bombing effort against an enemy of the United States in the European Theater of Operations through his untiring efforts and skill in the maintenance and repair of special cameras.*"



T/Sgt. Turner inspects his Graflex Speed Graphic camera



# From the 398<sup>th</sup> to Hollywood

*Iz Rovinsky and David Swift made it big in the television and motion picture industry*

by Lee Bradley

A few months ago our PX Manager, Carolyn Widman, was contacted via e-mail by Robert Rovinsky. He wanted to know if we still had Cliff Bishop's book *Fortresses Over Nuthampstead* and Allen Ostrom's book *Remembrances* available for purchase. Robert went on to explain that he is the nephew of the late Iz Rovinsky, who was the co-pilot on the John Stevens Crew, 603<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. He further explained "In Hollywood, my uncle was known as Michael Ross. He was the producer of a number of the most important comedy shows on TV, from *All in the Family* to *The Jeffersons* to *Three's Company*."

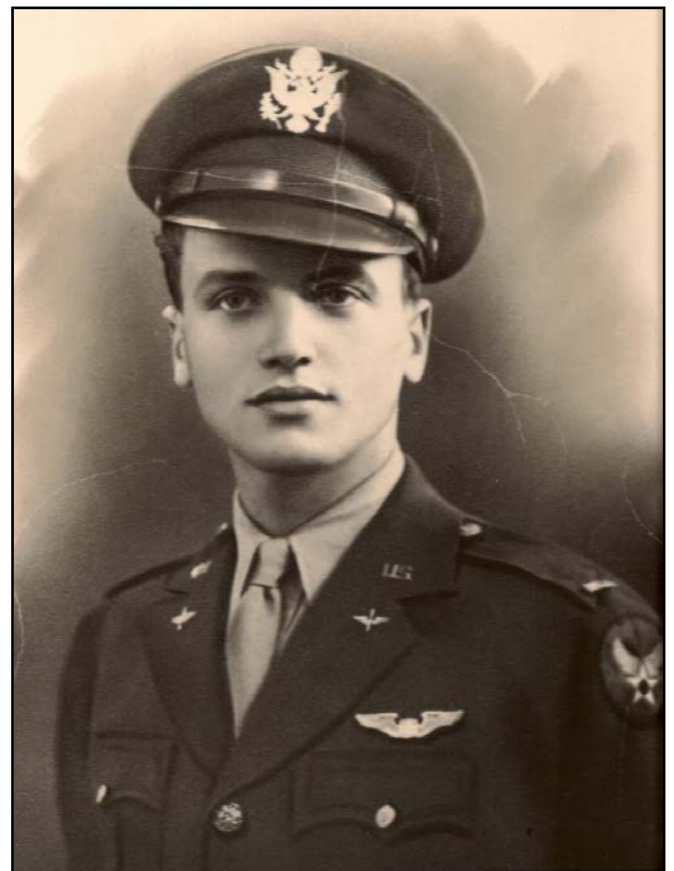
Robert wrote that his uncle passed away some eight years ago. "Whenever I visited him in Los Angeles, our conversations would inevitably touch upon his experiences during the war, about which he spoke only hesitantly. But what he always spoke freely about was the enduring friendships made in those difficult times. I was in touch with Allen Ostrom and Capt. Stevens, but never had the privilege of meeting them in person."

Well, Carolyn thought this information to be VERY interesting and forwarded Robert's email to me. I too thought it very interesting, mainly because we did not have a copy of the Capt. John Steven's Crew photo and I was hoping Robert had one to share. I wrote to him asking about it and he had one!

Along with the photo images, he wrote: "I just found a scanned version of the crew, but I have another one of them in their flight gear, which I'll try to find. My uncle is the second from the left in the back row, and to his left is Capt. Stevens."



**The John Stevens Crew**  
Iz Rovinsky is in the back row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left



**Lt. Isador Rovinsky,**  
Co-Pilot of the John Stevens Crew, 603<sup>rd</sup> SQ

After the initial thrill of obtaining a new crew photo, I began to think about Izzy Rovinsky, aka Michael, Mickey Ross' television career. He is the second 398<sup>th</sup> BG veteran who worked in Hollywood that we know of. The other was David Swift, animator, writer, producer and director for Walt Disney Studios. David was co-pilot with the J.G Blythe Crew, 603<sup>rd</sup> SQ.... hmmm, I see a pattern here, both men were co-pilots with the 603<sup>rd</sup> ! I thought this might make for an interesting article for the Flak News. So following are short bios for each man and a few really fun photos. I hope you all enjoy.

The following excerpts about Iz Rovinsky, aka Michael Ross are from the Los Angeles Times, May 28, 2009

Michael "Mickey" Ross was born in New York August 4, 1919 and called Isadore Rovinsky. As soon as he could understand what it meant to be a writer and a producer he looked back at his natal name and realized that it needed editing. As Mickey Ross he became more succinct, more pronounceable, more mnemonic. But if you accused him of truncating the name to seem less Jewish he bristled. Mickey never lost his pride in his heritage. In his later years he donated an enormous sum -10 million dollars- toward the pursuit of Jewish Studies. However at the end of his life, he might have subtly hinted, it was an expensive search to learn that he might have been comfortable with his given name after all.

Mickey met his future partner, Bernie West, at City College in the mid '30s and they became a stand-up comic team. In the 1950s, Mickey began working at the Green Mansions resort in the Adirondacks, directing the likes of Don Adams, Carl Reiner and Sid Caesar. He had his television debut during that time as director for *The Gary Moore Show*. The partners later worked on *The Martha Raye Show* where they developed a relationship with Norman Lear and Bud Yorkin. A spec script for *All in the Family* in 1971 brought them from New York to L.A. This led to a staff position on *All in the Family* - and eventually, a producing post. This ground-breaking show earned the partners (West and Ross had now teamed up with Don Nicholl) numerous prestigious awards including an Emmy in 1973 for an episode called "The Bunkers and the Swingers". Ross earned credits for 81 *All in the Family* episodes during the 1970's.



*All in the Family* spun off a new comedy series, *The Jeffersons*. The series was based on an upwardly mobile African-American family that lived in a "de-luxe apartment in the sky." Nicholl, Ross and West became 'NRW', and the show became another ground breaker.

In 1976 NRW acquired an English sitcom, *Man About the House*. Retitled *Three's Company*, it made instant stars of John Ritter, Joyce DeWitt and Suzanne Somers. The show ran for eight seasons. While not a critical success it remains hugely popular in syndication around the world to this day. And Mickey, for all we know, is now booming his instructive mantra to critics: "What do they know from comedy?"



Mickey Ross and actor-comedian John Ritter on the set of *Three's Company*

*Three's Company* spun into *The Ropers*, and *Three's a Crowd* - after which NRW dissolved.

In 2000, his wife Irene died, and Mickey found his interest in the business ebbing. The two original writers on *Three's Company*, George Burditt and myself [Paul Wayne], together with Bernie West, formed a little lunch club that met at a restaurant every Friday. We reminisced, told jokes and amazing anecdotes. Mickey and Bernie insisted on paying. Wouldn't even let us tip. One Friday George said, "We've got to stop meeting like this. Sooner or later we're going to run out of things to reminisce about. I mean how long can these lunches go on?" Mickey said, "As long as we keep picking up the check." You don't meet a man of principle every day. He kept the lunches going even when he suffered those little strokes and could no longer walk out. And the venue changed to his condo. We met for ten years and never repeated a story or a reminiscence. His picking up the tab had nothing to do with it.

Goodbye, old friend, old Michael Mickey Ross.  
Goodbye, Isador Rovinsky.

Paul Wayne and George Burditt

## David Swift, Director, Scriptwriter in TV & Film

The following excerpts are from an article written by Dennis McLellan for the Los Angeles Times, Jan 05, 2002

David Swift, was a writer-director-producer who created Wally Cox's popular *Mr. Peepers* television series in the early 1950s and made his debut as a movie director in 1960 guiding a young Hayley Mills in *Pollyanna*.

Swift's career included stints as an animator at Walt Disney Studios and writing comedy for radio. He wrote and directed *Pollyanna* (for which the 14-year-old Mills received a special Oscar) and Mills' next Disney hit, *The Parent Trap*, in 1961.



David Swift with Mareen O'Hara and Walt Disney on the set of *The Parent Trap*



Director David Swift, Carol Lynley, Jack Lemmon on the set of *Under the Yum Yum Tree*, 1963 (the man in the back is not identified). Photo purchased from Alamy Stock Photos

"He was a very big influence in my life, said Mills. "I think they were the two best movies I did for Disney. He was always relaxed and patient and gentle and sweet. It was very fortunate for me that he was in charge of those two films."

Swift scripted and directed a number of other popular films in the 1960s, including *The Interns*, starring Cliff Robertson, *Love Is a Ball*, starring Glenn Ford, *Under the Yum-Yum Tree* and *Good Neighbor Sam*, both starring Jack Lemmon, and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, starring Robert Morse.

Beginning in 1948, Swift worked extensively in television as a writer and director.

In association with producer Fred Coe, he created *Mr. Peepers* specifically for Wally Cox after seeing him in a *Philco Television Playhouse* drama. The NBC show, in which the low-key actor played a mild-mannered science teacher named Robinson J. Peepers, was broadcast live from New York from 1952 to 1955.

Among the handful of other TV series Swift created are *Grindl*, a 1963 NBC comedy starring Imogene Coca; *Camp Runamuck*, a 1965 comedy; and *Arnie*, a 1970 comedy starring Herschel Bernardi, which ran for two years.

Swift was born in 1919 in Minneapolis, where his father owned a company that made sausage casings. When the Depression hit, his family lost all of its money. Swift, who was always drawing, dropped out of school at 15 and rode freight cars to California with the goal of working for Walt Disney.

Once he arrived in Los Angeles, he worked a variety of odd jobs, including ushering at the Warner Bros. movie theater on Hollywood Boulevard. He began attending art school and going to night school at Hollywood High to learn to type.

Initially hired at the Walt Disney Studio as a \$15-a-week traffic boy, he became a \$20-a-week assistant animator in 1938. By 1942, he had been promoted to animator and worked on such Disney classics as *Dumbo*, *Fantasia*, *Peter Pan*, *Pinocchio* and *Snow White*.

"His career with Disney was unique because there were two distinct phases," said film historian Leonard Maltin, author of *The Disney Films*.

"In the early portion of his career in the '30s, he aspired to be an animator and worked with some of the best. Then he left in the '40s and went on and carved a whole different kind of career and wound up back at Disney, writing and directing two of the best-loved live-action films in the studio's history."





**Blythe's Crew – February 24, 1945**

**Co-Pilot David Swift is in the back row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left**

After flying bomber missions over Germany during World War II as an Air Force pilot, Swift began working as a radio comedy writer for Bing Crosby, Jimmy Durante, Bob Hope, Red Skelton, Danny Thomas and others.

In 1948, he became a dramatist, writing original teleplays for *Hallmark Hall of Fame*, *Kraft Theater*, *Philco Television Playhouse*, *Playhouse 90* and *Studio One*. He later wrote and directed episodes of series such as *The Rifleman* and *Wagon Train*.

After launching *Mr. Peepers*, Swift had mild luck with another situation comedy series, "*Jamie*," starring Brandon de Wilde. Throughout the 1970s, he directed such shows as *Barney Miller*, *Eight Is Enough* and *The Love Boat*. His last television directing assignment was in 1997, but his family said he never stopped writing.

In July, Swift flew to London for a reunion with Mills to record the commentary tracks for a DVD releases of *Pollyanna* and *The Parent Trap*.

"It was just so lovely to rediscover somebody that I was very, very fond of and who I always looked upon as an old friend," Mills said. Swift was a member of the board of directors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

**We have two sidebars to David Swift's story. The first comes from Michael Cingle's *Timeless Voices* interview, which can be heard in its entirety on our website; [www.398th.org](http://www.398th.org). Michael was a Navigator for several 603<sup>rd</sup> Squadron crews. During his video interview he mentioned David;**

"We had a fellow [David Swift, 603<sup>rd</sup> SQ co-pilot / pilot] that used to come in the hut there who knew some of the guys. He worked for Walt Disney, he directed many films... he was

a good artist too. He painted a picture, life size, in the Quonset hut. You could walk in one door and oh in about 20 feet or so, maybe a little longer, he put this life size picture of a girl. And it was supposed to be him down at her feet and he would...[Michael glances up as if he's looking at the picture of the girl] Ha ha ha! It was so comical... but he was good. He was good at drawing."

**Sidebar two is about Dick Frazier, a 602<sup>nd</sup> SQ pilot, who also knew David from their 398<sup>th</sup> BG days. Dick had one of David's cartoons from Nuthampstead and wished to return it to David's widow. The following March 2005 article written by Leonard Jackson and published in *The Oklahoman* [www.newsok.com](http://www.newsok.com) explains the situation.**

## WWII flier tries to return cartoon

A Norman [Oklahoma] man who flew a B-17 Flying Fortress out of England during World War II is looking for the widow of a fellow pilot to give her a 60-year-old gift.

It's a cartoon, one of many her husband drew and posted on the walls of his drab Quonset-hut living quarters at an English air base.

Dick Frazier said he and David Swift of California were both members of the 398th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force. Although they were in different squadrons, their quarters were side by side, so they became well acquainted.

Before his military experience, Swift had been employed by Walt Disney as a cartoonist, Frazier said.

"A Quonset hut was a drab, steel-roofed building designed to provide living facilities for approximately 20 men, he said. "David set about to make his home more livable by drawing cartoons and in such a way as to cover the walls of his hut. When Swift completed his assigned 35 combat missions, he got ready to leave the 398th.

"He could have been returned to the United States but chose to be checked out in the P-51 fighter and flew five missions before going home, Frazier said.

Then, when Swift was actually ready to leave the 398th, he had to clear his area. That meant he needed to turn in any government equipment that had been issued to him, pack his uniforms and leave his area for the use of the next occupant. Clearing the area also meant removing all of the cartoons he had created, Frazier said.

"He was in the process of doing just that when I encountered him tearing down the cartoons, wadding them up and throwing them on the floor, he said, "I asked him if I could have this one and he readily agreed. I obtained a tube, placed the cartoon in it and kept it for 60 years."

Frazier said he learned through a 398th Bomb Group newsletter that Swift died on December 31, 2001. He tried to call Swift's widow at their home in West Los Angeles so he could offer to send the cartoon to her but was unsuccessful. He was never able to contact her.

**See Dick Frazier's David Swift cartoon on Page 11**

## Baby Needs a New Pair of Shoes Department... by Lee Bradley

Periodically I'll surf the internet hoping to find an interesting story or any new nugget of 398<sup>th</sup> BG information for the Flak News. Lo and behold I found our Group mentioned on [www.303rdbg.com](http://www.303rdbg.com) - the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group's website. The 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H) "Hells Angels" flew B-17's out of Molesworth, England from 1942 to 1945. Their motto, *Might in Flight*.

The 303<sup>rd</sup> BGMA has a wonderful website full of articles, historical information and photographs (much like *our* site ☺). One of their main features is titled, "WWII Uniforms and Flight Gear". It shows full color photographs of typical uniforms and gear used by B-17 and B-24 crews. The photos are quite stunning, you should really check it out.

Back to the 398<sup>th</sup> BG mention. Scrolling through the 303<sup>rd</sup> BG's uniforms and gear pages I came across an interesting photograph of a uniform with baby shoes hanging off of a parachute strap. Directly below is the photo and caption.



### "Walking to the plane."

The officer on the left is 100% authentic as he wears a real parachute first aid kit (previously opened unfortunately). He wears a garrison cap and the officer on the right wears a "crusher" cap.

Many of the crew had some sort of small utility bag with a drawstring at the top to carry their flight helmet and O2 masks, displayed in the photo.

The presence of baby shoes is based on three photos I've seen of men holding or wearing them. Shoes displayed in this photo is based on the photo of Saferite's Crew of the 398th BG. (actual crew photo below)

### Saferite's Crew - 602nd SQ

January 22, 1945

Crew Mission No. 5 Sterkrade, Gr.

B-17 flown: 44-8500 K8-F,  
known as *Baby Shoes*

#### Back Row (left to right):

1. 2nd Lt. R.C. Carter, Co-Pilot
2. 2nd Lt. W.A. Saferite, Pilot
3. F/O J.R. Brown, Navigator

#### Front Row (left to right):

1. Sgt. C.W. Goodman, Engineer
2. Sgt. R.G. Thibault, Radio
3. Sgt. J.M. Harmon, Ball Turret
4. Sgt. B.R. Morris, Tail Gunner
5. Sgt. F.C. Lindo, Togglier
6. S/Sgt. J.M. Totter, Waist Gunner



I found one other story regarding baby shoes worn around neck as a good luck charm. Staff Sgt. Paul Miller with the 100<sup>th</sup> BG was a waist gunner on a B-17 unofficially named "*Gail Lynn*", named for his daughter. Gail Lynn was 6 weeks old when Miller left for war. He wore the girl's baby shoes as a lucky charm around his neck and the crew made sure those shoes were with them on all 28 of their missions.

# BRIEF – things

**35<sup>th</sup> Annual 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA Reunion and the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Dayton, OH Reunion - Oct. 10 – 14**

**\* UPDATE \***

Per the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS website; *Online Registration* is now closed. For all of you who have signed up to attend our reunion, we look forward to seeing you in Dayton! Look for photos of the event in the January 2019 Flak News.

From the article on page 9, below is Dick Frazier's original David Swift cartoon, the one David was going to throw out!



Dick brought his rescued David Swift cartoon to the 2005 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA Reunion in Overland Park, Kansas and put it on display in our 'Memory Room' for all to enjoy. Above David's signature on the drawing, Dick wrote: *"One of my friends drew this. It's an early morning scene of the orderly waking guys up for a mission. Cute isn't it?"*

**Heads up, don't forget!  
2019 DUES are due in January!**

Please mail your \$20 Membership Dues  
(or a \$100 for lifetime membership)

Made payable to the 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA, to:

Dawne Dougherty  
951 S 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Harrisburg, OR 97446-9585

**Please help support your 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA**

# 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 <sup>th</sup> 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> (Ibeling)	\$8.00	___
___	<i>Return to Station 131- Memorial Dedication June 2000 - DVD</i>	\$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	___
___	<b>FLAK NEWS Flash Drive</b> 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](mailto: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

Helen, you certainly are a spry little thing!! How the heck did you get up into that B-17?! Which leads to another question... how the heck did you get *out* of it?!

Helen Howard, widow of Robert L. Howard, Ball Turret Gunner on the 603<sup>rd</sup> SQ Donovan Crew, just had to check out the B-17 "Nine-O-Nine" when the *Wings of Freedom Tour* came to Peoria, Illinois last July. Her son Stephen joined her for the fun.

