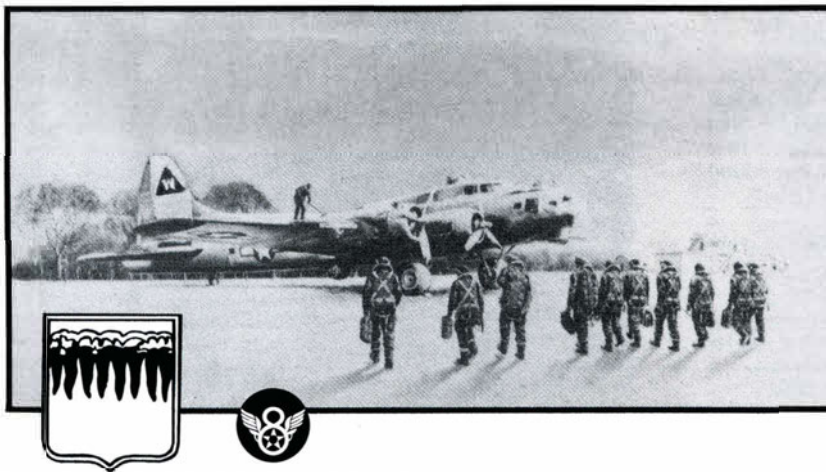




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398TH BOMB. GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION • 8TH AIR FORCE • 1ST AIR DIVISION • NUTHAMPSTEAD, ENGLAND

NO. 1 VOL. 2

FLAK NEWS

NOVEMBER, 1986

Colorado Springs Reunion Sets 398th Record

Group Places Memorial At Academy

It had just about everything—The 398th annual reunion in Colorado Springs Sept. 10-13, 1986.

The most important being the 391 men and women who joined hearts and hands for a few brief days to relive those dramatic days of a period we call our "youth."

It was a new attendance record for sure. The weather in that lovely Rocky Mountain city was nigh perfect, and reunion chairman Dale Brown and Dorothy had the planning and programs neatly in hand.

There was fun, food and good fellowship throughout. But the moment to remember came when we gathered at the cemetery at the Air Force Academy to dedicate a 398th plaque on the Memorial Wall.

Chief of Staff Col. Robert Y. Foerster, in accepting the plaque on behalf of the Academy, delivered high praise to the attending veterans, suggesting it was an honorable and fitting tribute to those who failed to return. And, he said, it was an inspiration to the Cadets of the Academy.

Col. Bill Comstock, Fairfax, VA, president of the 398th association, delivered the dedication address. He cited the contributions and achievements of the 398th during its tenure at Nuthampstead in 1944-45.

SOLEMN MOMENT

The plaque, designed by former 603rd pilot Charles E. King of Pointe Verda Beach, Florida, was placed beside many other such designs on the Memorial Wall. It was a solemn . . . and for many. . . a tearful moment.

There was no lack of fun and laughter time, however, with trips to Pike's Peak, Royal Gorge, Flying W Ranch, Garden of the Gods, Broadmoor, and many other Colorado beauty spots.

Jack Hunter, Kettering, Ohio, represents the only report of note from the golf tournament at Fort Carson, shooting an 84 for low gross. Thanks to Ted Johnston of Seattle for conducting the "tournament" and coming up with the neat prizes (perhaps not all earned, but appreciated.)

The prime gathering place for much of the hanger flying was in Room 232 of the Hilton, with its video cassette showings of "All The

Fine Young Men," "A Queen Dies Hard," "The Last Mission," "Air War Over Europe," "Hot Seat on a Bomber," and "Amazing Stories." All telling the dramatic history of the B-17, its men, and their place in history.

HAIGHT WON MODEL

The precisely marked 398th B-17 model, raffled to the tune of \$334.00 by Tom & Jean Overturf, Tuscon, AZ, was won by David Haight, Montgomery City, MO, a tail-gunner on the Ray Armor crew of the 600th. The model was built by Robert Chapman of Federal Way, WA, a former Air Force major with F4 jet time in Viet Nam.

The special plaque built by Mike Holmberg, Charlotte, N.C., raffled to the tune of \$360.00, was won by Bill Cole, tail-gunner from Greencastle, PA. In an act of of generosity, Bill gave the attractive plaque to Dave Bancroft, another tail-gunner who has experienced a life-long disability as result of his "only survivor" experience on the Perry Powell crew.

Wallis Campbell, Arvada, CO, the group's statistical officer, and the person who had to keep records of such accidents and deaths, was visibly moved by the story as told by Bancroft, Portland, OR, at the opening dinner program. "I was quite shaken at meeting Bancroft," he said. "He was on one of the many MIA reports I had to sign."

Among the many lighter side episodes came when 603 Adujant George Rusniak of Holyoke, MA, rose from the dinner table, pointed his finger at Danny Leyva, the engineer-gunner from Los Angeles and accused him of stealing coal from the 603rd bunker!

After 42 years he still remembers!
(But you didn't catch us all, George!)

It was interesting to note that at least 50 members were attending their first reunion.

TWO "CASUALTIES"

One of the few unhappy notes concerned Marge Miles of Winsted, MN, who came down with pneumonia, giving hubby Alex some anxious moments. He still found time to sell all the 50 squadron caps that were available. Marge recovered nicely, by the way.

San Antonio Is Next; "Don't Think, Just GO"

Many thanks for making the Colorado Springs reunion a success. Dorothy and I will always be grateful for your many kind words and deeds, and we will long cherish the wonderful memories.

As for next year in San Antonio, don't just say you will "think" about going. Plan now to "GO." None of us knows how many more years we will be blessed with, so let us all take advantage of every 398th reunion.

Dorothy and I will be in San Antonio next July, and we urge you to give Dallas & Geneva Ebest the same wonderful support you gave us.

DALE BROWN
*Colorado Springs Reunion
Chairman*

The other "toughie" concerned Marqueen Wintersteen. She and Jack were enroute from Danville, PA, stopped to visit relatives in Ohio, fell down some stairs and wound up in the hospital with a very sore back. See you in San Antonio, Marqueen and Jack.

Most members from one crew honors went to Wally Blackwell, 601 pilot from Rockville, MD. He had no less than seven (plus three more guys who said they flew one mission with him.)

Honors for getting shot at most times probably should go to Clyde Welker, Miami. After a tour as 600 pilot, he also got in on both Korea and Viet Nam.

Among the 398th widows who came included Virginia Hager, Margaret Sigsworth, Shirley Moore, Eileen Darner and Frances Bailey Cerovski. The latter came with her son, Wally, (a spittin' image of his crew chief dad) and young Wally's family.

A note from Cheri Bailey—

"You were all so nice to us. We had such a wonderful time. I'm sure you know what it means for Wally to meet someone who knew his father. Thank you."

FLAK NEWS Flies; Editor Says Thanks

Little things mean a lot, even to the Editor. Here are some of the comments received from readers across the country following the first edition of *FLAK NEWS*. Thanks for the kind words, guys. We'll keep trying!

"I thoroughly enjoyed FLAK NEWS. A great idea."

—Daniel J. Moran, Jr., Wallingford, CT

"I received a great thrill reading FLAK NEWS. Brought back a lot of memories."

—John Travesky, Albuquerque, NM

"Good reports from many points in this country and from England, also."

—Ralph Hall, New Bedford, MA

"The data and layout was fantastic. Makes me even more proud to have been a member of the 398th."

—Dana Maryott, Spokane, WA

"The article about Col. Hunter touched me. Looking at the photo of him in FLAK NEWS brought to mind a great many memories. I firmly believe everyone loved him."

—Bob Ross, Freeport, NY

"FLAK NEWS is excellent. One to be proud of."

—H.O. Stallings, Fort Worth, TX

"...enjoyed it very much. Enclosed find my \$15 check as my contribution toward publication and mailing."

—Tone Sistek, Elizabeth City, NC

"What a nice tribute to Col. Hunter. Appreciate having our own printed newsletter."

—George Schatz, Highland Park, IL

"Enjoyed it immensely. Keep it up. Here's a contribution of \$10."

—Clyde Welker, Miami, FL

"It's been a pleasure to read all the happenings that we participated in."

—Albert Chamrad, Lower Burrell, PA

"Fine first edition of FLAK NEWS. A most pleasant surprise, and just what we all have dreamed about."

—Dalton Ebbeson, Wausau, WI

"A real professional job. Keep up the good work."

—Tracy Petersen, Eatonville, WA

"Everything about FLAK NEWS is exceptional. Enclosed is \$25 for publication and mailing. Also, let's remember the great job George Hilliard did with his newsletters in getting the 398th off the ground, 10 years ago."

—William Ganz, Los Angeles, CA

"I like the new newsletter, especially the flight information listings as on the 'collision' mission."

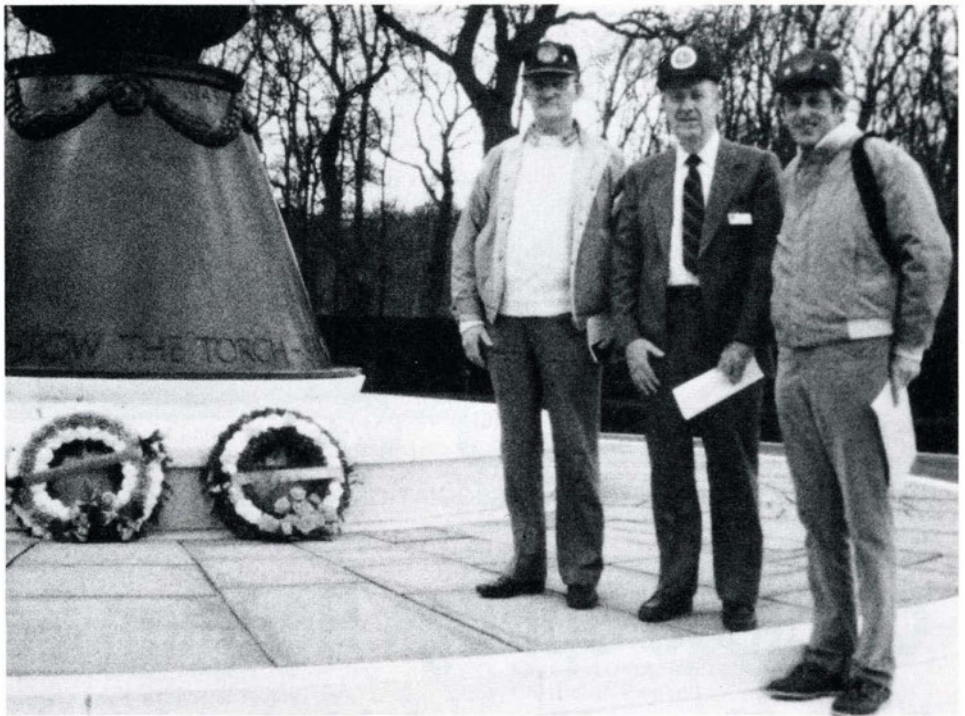
—Ralph Trout, Logan, IA

"Congratulations on a terrific paper."

—J.P. Roberge, Bellport, NY

"...Col. Hunter appeared to be a considerable and thoughtful gentleman. A younger Jimmy Doolittle."

—Bob Cantwell, Perry, MI



RALPH AMBROSE, WALLY BLACKWELL, ROGER BRADLEY

Who Were The Young Men Who Saluted?

The bus was pulling away from the parking lot at Madingly, the American cemetery near Cambridge, where many thousands of 8th Air Force airmen lay peacefully. . . reminiscent of the skies after the battle.

Some in the bus boarded with moist eyes after visiting the starkly beautiful grounds and the magnificent Wall of the Missing. . . and taking part in a memorable ceremony honoring the 398th dead and missing.

And watching the departing bus, each saluting as if honored guests were aboard, were two "younger" men. Too young to be WW II veterans and too old to be children belonging to veterans.

Who were these "young" men? They were seen wandering about the cemetery with the rest of us. And they were also seen the day before during the festivities at Nuthampstead. Sorta mid-40ish wearing 8th Air Force caps.

Wally Blackwell, the former 601st pilot from Maryland, was more inquisitive than the rest of us. He asked, and they replied: "Roger Bradley" and "Ralph Ambrose." A couple of 12-13 year-olds who lived south of the field in a village called Hare Street. They had been sent there from their homes in London during the blitz and they knew Nuthampstead and the airfield intimately.

They sat on haystacks in the nearby fields and watched the planes come and go. They well remember the day Larry DeLancey and Phil Stahlman landed their "nose-blown" 601st Fortress, one of the epic 398th dramas.

Blackwell, in his conversations with them, discovered they have a strong attachment to the 398th, albeit they have not been a part of the Friends of the Eighth contingent. They were delighted to have been able to share a brief time with Blackwell, Ralph Hall and a couple of others. . . older folks now, but young tigers when Bradley and Ambrose were watching from the haystacks.

Bradley operates a chauffeur service in London. Ambrose, who became an American citizen, is an overseas representative for Atlantic Aviation of Delaware. He lives in Welling, near London.

Each made a special effort to be with the visiting 398th bunch on their England-France visit last May. We all felt that Nuthampstead was special. With guys like Roger and Ralph displaying such pride and affection, is it any wonder?

REUNION CHATTER—A neat thank you letter came from Alex Miles, whose wife Marge spent the reunion in bed with pneumonia. . . "the hotel people and all the guys and gals from the 398th were so considerate; Marge is feeling fine now and we're planning on San Antonio". . . there were over 50 first-timers at the reunion, and several more new faces at the 8th Air Force meeting last month in Florida. . . we are growing! . . . that fellow with the van who was so helpful throughout the reunion was Mickey Finn, brother to Dorothy Brown. . . Ostrom's ailing Tempest transmission survived the trip home to Seattle (it's still runnin'). . . notice how many of those macho high-altitude airmen got a little breathless atop 14,000-foot Pike's Peak? . . . the editor would like to hear from the member who gave him a sample lapel pin, and a proposal to make a special 398th design . . . for those who missed the first edition of *FLAK NEWS*, back copies are available from the editor. . . got a name of a 398th friend who is not on the roster? send his name and address to George Hilliard, Cincinnati, OH 45236.

Cockpit Drama Recalled By Pilot Gonzales

“I Guess This Is It,” He Told Col. Hunter

“I guess this is it!”

These were undoubtedly the last words heard in the cockpit as their B-17 continued its plunge of death toward German earth.

The words were spoken in despair by Lt. Federico Gonzales to the man sitting in the right seat beside him—

This would be Colonel Frank Hunter, co-pilot, Air Commander, commanding officer of the 398th Bomb Group. And leader of the 8th Air Force's 1st Combat Wing strike on the marshalling yards at Neuss, on the outskirts of Dusseldorf. The date: January 23, 1945.

It was about half-way between the IP and the target.

Up to now, the mission had been a piece of cake, to update the “milk run” language of 1945. Yet, to those who had been up there a time or two there was no such thing, regardless of the description. The threat of death was omnipresent, loaded on each B-17 by unseen hands along with the bombs and bullets.

Gonzales, now on his 25th mission, needed only to recall the fate of his original crew, piloted by Charles Khouri. They made it only as far as the end of the Nuthampstead runway on Oct. 15, 1944 before plunging to earth with 10 fatalities.

HUNTER UNEASY

And those who knew him well, as group statistician Wallis Campbell, could sense that Colonel Hunter was uneasy about this trip. The 8th Air Force had recently lost four Division lead planes in a row. On a self-developed rotation schedule, the CO was on his 17th lead mission.

As usual, the weather had been grim and unfriendly. The normal tenseness in getting formed up over the Debbon buncher. Then the cold and the contrails. Thick and persistent.

Once over the continent, the Group quickly came up on the IP, located west of Neuss in Belgium.

About two minutes before bombs away, the first few flak bursts appeared, along with heavier and thicker clouds and contrails at 27,000 feet. Pilots had difficulty maintaining formation as visibility worsened.

As one gunner in the high element wrote in his diary—

“Steadily, the flak became thicker and more accurate. Puffs began appearing off the wing tips and we could hear the shells bursting and the metal spraying off the airplane. We could smell the powder.

“Suddenly, our ship went into a slight bank and I thought we had been hit. I looked to see if we were on fire. We weren't, but the lead ship, with Gonzales and Hunter aboard, had taken a direct hit on their outer wing panel and had gone into a steep dive. They lurched slightly to the left—toward us—then spun off to the right, upside down.”

Jim Armbruster of Murray, Kentucky, riding in the top turret of the deputy lead ship piloted by John E. Smith (now deceased) and C. A. copilot W.F. Scott, McLean, Virginia, had a front-row seat—



LT. FEDERICO GONZALES
1945

“That 88 hit the star decal under the starboard wing and seemed to bend the wing straight up.

Strangely, Gonzales contradicts the eye-witness reports—“I’ll take their word for it,” he said. “But I remember it was the left wing being hit.”

Doug Gidcumb, Harrisburg, Illinois, co-pilot with Staver Hyndman, Cherokee, Iowa, in the slot element, looked up to see the lead ship veer to the right, almost in the path of the deputy. Smith and Scott had to maneuver quickly to avoid a collision with the stricken craft.

Another eye-witness, Warren Vollhaber, of Denver, tail gunner on Lawrence Lipnick's crew flying on Gonzales' left wing, said—

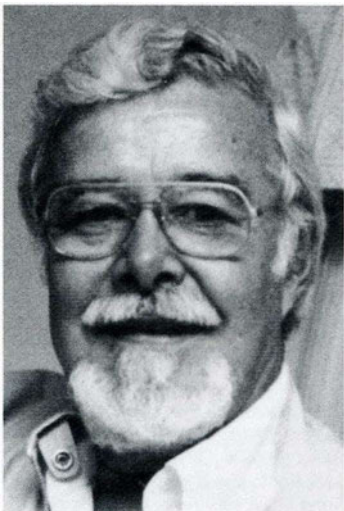
“The ship spun violently two and half times and then disappeared in the clouds below.”

From this point on, only one living soul in that 10-man B-17 can be quoted—

Gonzales.

“We struggled trying to control the spin and give the men time to bail out. Nobody made it, probably because of the tremendous centrifugal force.

“It was here I looked at Colonel Hunter and said, ‘I guess this is it.’”



DR. FEDERICO GONZALES
1968

“Falling Leaf” Story Persists To This Day

“As I unbuckled and reached for my chute I was immediately thrown against the wind-screen, unable to move. My body crimped the oxygen hose against the instrument panel.

“Colonel Hunter was still at the controls as I passed out. It was the last time I saw him alive.”

Here the drama takes on a most intriguing element—the “falling leaf” story.

Reports began drifting in, and they still persist to this day, that the stricken aircraft fell to earth much like a falling leaf in an autumn wind, rather than plummeting and spinning as one would expect of a plane missing most of one wing.

QUESTIONS RAISED

How could this have happened? Or did it? Who saw it and could verify? Was it aerodynamically possible?

Gonzales himself verifies the source of the story—

“This is what was told me by a PW in the camp at Gernsheim.”

There are those who believe it was Colonel Hunter, by staying at the controls and fighting the violent spin, gained just enough stability to save one life. It was not his own.

“I doubt that the “falling leaf” could have been seen by anyone flying with the Group,” said Gonzales. “This part of the fall I did not see as I have no memory of anything that happened after the first several spins.

Gonzales came to sometime after the crash, still in the cockpit along with Hunter. He was confronted by a German “brownshirt,” who spoke in accented English, “you dirty American dog.”

Although broken and bleeding, Gonzales managed a smile at such a comment, which prompted the German to place a pistol at Gonzales' temple.

“I smiled because the phrase was such a cliché in war movies. This made him very angry.”

Regular German army personnel then arrived and forced the man to withdraw the weapon.

Both pilots were removed from the cockpit and placed on the snow in front of the aircraft, described by the Germans as 90% destroyed. The bombs were still aboard, but there was neither fire nor explosion.

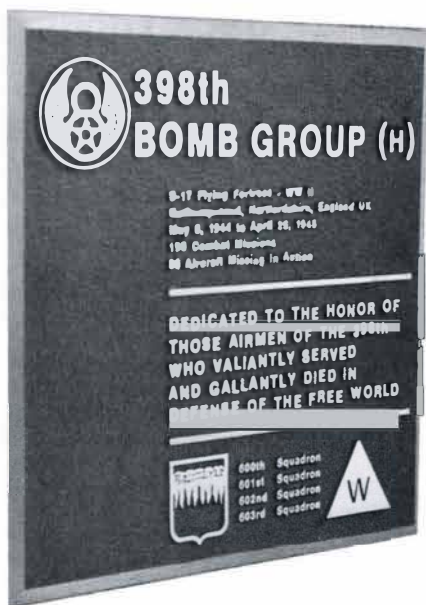
“A German medic placed his finger on our necks, checking for pulses. ‘How is he?’” I asked. “He is dead,” was the reply.

Gonzales was then placed on a makeshift stretcher made from parts of the airplane and carried to a nearby farmhouse.

“The farmer's wife looked frightened when she saw me, as I must have looked pretty bloody. She gave me a cup of coffee and a cigaret.”

At no time did Gonzales see any of the other crew members, but ultimately their names turned up on the German report of downed American airmen.

Continued on Page 6



Comstock Leads Group In Academy Plaque Ceremony

Following is the plaque dedication address given by 398th Bomb Group president Bill Comstock at the Air Force Academy on Thursday, Sept. 11, 1986:

Colonel Foerster, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen—
Today we honor the memory of our fallen comrades, the men who served with us in the 398th during World War II.

For the next few minutes go back with me in time. Go back to 1942-1943-1944-1945. And listen. Listen carefully. You hear the roar of the engines. You feel the adrenalin pumping. The take off. Flight to the target. And then the welcome the enemy has prepared for us. Heavy flak and many fighters.

And so the story goes. We know it so well.

But the questions remain. What purpose did these brave men serve who gave their all? What did they accomplish? What is the result of their sacrifice?

Let me tell you what their legacy is. What their achievements were.

Most people don't know that the Eighth Air Force had the highest number of casualties . . . some 50,000 out of 200,000 people. This was the largest number of casualties of any single fighting unit of comparable size of World War II.

Most people don't know that every member of a bomber crew was a volunteer. No one forced him to fly. It was his decision alone to go into that airplane.

8th AIR FORCE ACTIVE LONG BEFORE D-DAY

We can more fully appreciate this when we remember that the Eighth Air Force was flying missions two years before D-Day in 1944.

There is no doubt among historians that the Eighth Air Force, with its precision daylight bombing, did more to speed the end of the war than any other single event. Our bombing efforts led to General Eisenhower's belief that this truly was the way to reduce ground casualties and destroy the key resources of the enemy.

The German Luftwaffe leadership has told us that their war was over despite the fact they still had planes and pilots. They simply didn't have the fuel because our bombers had destroyed their refineries.

But now, what is the point of all these reflections? Simply stated, the 398th Bomb Group played a most significant role in these developments.

It was the same General Eisenhower, who became President Eisenhower, who convinced President Truman that America should retain a large bomber force to deter the Soviets from further expansion.

It was the same President Eisenhower who predicted that a separate Air Force was vital to our national defense. And in 1947, nearly 40 years ago, saw President Truman sign the legislation creating the United States Air Force. Eisenhower later approved the construction of the Academy at Colorado Springs.



COL. WILLIAM G. COMSTOCK
"Let Me Tell You What Their Legacy Is."

Now, let's get close to where we are today—here on the grounds of the Air Force Academy. Is there anyone here who really believes that this magnificent institution would be here today if it were not for these events?

The Air Force became co-equal partners in our national survival. And thank God it did!

A GIFT FROM THE HEARTS OF ALL OF US

And I hope that those of you stationed here at the Academy will ponder these words, and realize more fully what these men did and how this institution came about.

And now, in the memory of the men of the 398th Bomb Group, we present this plaque to the United States Air Force Academy. While given in memory of those who died, both on the ground and in the air, it represents a gift from the hearts of all of us. This plaque is a part of us and we are a part of it.

In these brief remarks today I have traced the rationale and logic of the importance we place on this symbol. The Academy, as its permanent custodian, now takes on the responsibility for its preservation. And we pray it accepts the high ideals it represents to us . . . and our nation.

You have our gratitude and we look to you in the future in the same fashion that we honor those whom this plaque represents. May you continue to have the wisdom, faith and courage so well displayed by those we honor. Our trust and our memory is now passed on to you. May God bless you.

Academy Accepts Plaque

"On behalf of General Winfield Scott, superintendent, and the entire Air Force Academy, I am pleased to accept this plaque. It is such a strong reminder of those who have gone before. Your unit and the others here represented surely provide the heritage and foundation for today's Air Force. It is a strong link between the Air Force of the past and the Air Force of the future, which is represented by the Academy cadets here today. Your characteristics of leadership and sacrifice personifies what their training is all about. Thank you."

Colonel Robert Y. Foerster
Chief of Staff
Air Force Academy

Reunion Attendees

Adams, Don
 Albro, Al
 Allare, John
 Allen, Bobby
 Alwood, Joe
 Anderson, Russ
 Arbogast, Phil
 Arbuthnot, Ed
 Armbruster, Jim
 Armor, Ray
 Aune, Arnt

Bacon, Adrian
 Bacon, Gerry
 Baffaro, Lou
 Bailey, Walt
 Bancroft, Dave
 Bankert, Jim
 Bawduniak, John
 Bell, John
 Beil, William
 Berry, Phyllis
 Berz, Marvin
 Binger, Bruce
 Bischoff, Al
 Blackwell, Wally
 Bley, Winston
 Bohn, Jack
 Bornstedt, John
 Brandstatter, Jack
 Brewer, Val
 Brockman, Jim
 Brown, Dale
 Brown, Paul
 Brubaker, Franklin
 Brunsberg, Arnold
 Buehler, Joe
 Burkhart, Bob
 Burke, Lew

Campbell, Wallis
 Catterson, Ken
 Cerovski, Frances
 Clark, Frank
 Clyne, Harold
 Cole, Bill
 Core, Ben
 Colwell, John
 Comstock, Bill
 Conrow, Russ
 Cook, Bill
 Cornett, Earl
 Crouch, Jim
 Cullinan, Steve
 Cunningham, Byron
 Currie, Warren
 Curtis, Glen
 D'Addio, Phil
 Daily, Bruce
 Darcy, Lawrence
 Darner, Eileen
 Davis, Elwood
 Davis, Jack
 Davis, Jerald
 Davis, John
 Deaton, Floyd
 Decker, Gerald
 Dee, Bob
 DeLancey, Larry
 Dixon, Dick
 Dreyer, Chuck
 Duncombe, David

Ebbeson, Dalton
 Ebest, Dallas
 Elsrod, Bill
 Erickson, Vaughn

Faber, Herb
 Fields, Jerry
 Fisher, Bill
 Fleming, Bill
 Foster, Carl
 Fox, Richard
 Franks, Clarence
 Frazier, Dick
 Frazier, Willis

Gailey, Sam
 Gardipee, Bob
 Gibeau, Ray
 Gillis, Bruce
 Gray, Harry

Hager, Virginia
 Haight, David
 Hall, Ralph
 Hancock, Leonard
 Harris, Art
 Hapgood, Alfred
 Heitland, Woodrow
 Hilliard, George
 Hineman, Bill
 Holmberg, Mike
 Hunter, Jack

Jacobus, Fred
 Jadovac, Joe
 Jillie, Don
 Johnston, Ted
 Jones, Edward
 Jones, Georrge
 Joseph, Joe

Keifer, Howard
 Klix, George
 Konopik, Mike
 Kozak, Steve
 Knowles, Robert

Lachmann, Russell
 Lawler, David
 Levy, David
 Lewis, Keith
 Leyva, Daniel
 Loftus, Melvin
 Lorenzo, Leo
 Loveland, Tom
 Loveless, Harold
 Lynch, Floyd

Magnan, Mark
 Mann, Clifford
 Markham, Bill
 Markley, Bill
 Martin, Bill
 Martone, August
 McLaughlin, Margaret
 McCormick, John
 McMichael, Robert
 McQuitty, Charles
 Menard, Don
 Miles, Alex
 Mills, Dick
 Mitchell, George
 Mitchell, Katherine
 Mongin, Jerry
 Moore, Cecil
 Moore, Shirley
 Morrison, Frank
 Moy, Newt
 Murphy, Arthur

Neely, P.T.
 Nelson, Warren
 Novak, Jack
 Novek, Elliott
 Nulf, Larry

O'Brien, Bob
 Ostrom, Allen
 Overturf, Tom
 Owens, Blaine

Palant, Sam
 Pappas, V.G.
 Perkins, Guy
 Peterson, Paul
 Petska, Al
 Proctor, Reginald

Reed, Russ
 Reeves, Eldon
 Regello, Theo
 Richards, Al
 Richey, Ed
 Robb, Bill
 Robinson, George
 Roderick, Paul
 Ross, Dwight
 Rudow, Henry
 Rudrud, Norm
 Rusniak, George
 Ryan, John

Sammonds, Ronnie
 Samuelson, Conrad
 Sasse, Chuck
 Schapiro, Joseph
 Schuch, Bob
 Sebastian, Clyde
 Sheely, Roy
 Sigsworth, Margaret
 Sillin, James
 Sistek, Tone
 Smith, Harold
 Spear, Russell
 Sowby, Lindsay
 Stahlman, Phil
 Stallcup, Harold
 Stange, Raymond
 Stockman, Al
 Stitz, Tom
 Stoffer, Lou
 Stovall, Lloyd
 Strafford, James

Tacker, Larry
 Taylor, Bill
 Test, Roy
 Thacker, Ike
 Turney, Al

Veley, Les
 Vollhaber, Warren

Walstrom, Jack
 Watson, Arthur
 Watson, Leland
 Welker, Clyde
 Wheeler, Bill
 White, Bernie
 White, Vic
 Wison, Bill
 Wilmer, Bill
 Wroe, Lester

Yarmoski, Frank

Zims, Sam

Jack Davis, "Tour" Completed; Hall, Ebbeson Named

Ralph Hall has been named treasurer and Dr. Dalton Ebbeson secretary of the 398th Bomb Group, in a pair of "last minute" changes by president Bill Comstock.

Jack Davis, who had held both positions for a number of years, and had been re-elected again at the Colorado Springs reunion, asked to be relieved of the jobs due to family responsibilities.

Hall, on the Board of Directors, has been active in matters relating to the Nuthampstead memorial trust fund and maintenance program.

All association financial matters should be directed to Hall, including payment of 1987 dues of \$5.00 annually or \$50.00 lifetime.

Ebbeson, no newcomer to 398th activities, has attended nearly every group function since its inception. The retired dentist takes over the secretary role from his home

Other officers, whose names appeared in the last issue of *FLAK NEWS*, were re-elected at Colorado Springs.

Time to Remember Fellow 398th Men Who Have Departed

While we try diligently to remember those who gave their lives in combat many years ago, we now offer our membership an opportunity to bow their heads in memory of those who made their final landing in more recent years.

The 398th "Taps" list was compiled by contact officer George Hilliard.

Dean Ashworth
 Milo Adleman
 Claude Alexander
 Ray Bailey
 Claude Baptiste
 Jess Belcher
 Norvelle Bennett
 Louis Bushle
 James Briody
 Kearie Berry
 Royal Brey Meyer
 Hayward Braddock
 Guido Blanda
 Jack Brady
 Tom Campbell
 Arthur Cote
 Norman Cox
 Lloyd Clafford
 Anthony Corsuti
 Leroy Darner
 Ray Delbert
 Joseph Delorier
 Robert Engard
 Allen Ferguson
 George Grew
 Gino Francischine
 Fred Gruber
 Robert Gibb
 John Godfrey
 M. Grossman
 Harry Houchins
 Carl Hogrofe
 Herman Hager
 Dr. Lewis Hunter
 Dwight Hatch

Franklin Hicinbothem
 Warren Johnson
 Ed Jordon
 Earl Kearney
 John Krause
 Joseph Lutz
 Rufus (Buddy) Melson
 Gen. Tom Marchbanks
 George Mitchell
 Randolph Moore
 Ken McLaughlin
 Robert McCurdy
 William Norgy
 Leroy Najeski
 Vernon Overton
 Pete Rooney
 James Rossi
 Stanley E. Sachs
 John Schneider
 John E. Smith
 Warren Seaver
 Donald Shaw
 Dr. Robert Sweet
 Robert Simeral
 Howard Scholl
 Coy Smith
 Albert Shimek
 Warren Stone
 Arthur Selevan
 Mark Turner
 Leonard Waring
 George Wilde
 Charles Walkup, Jr.
 D.A. Woodmanese
 Larry Zagelov

Many B-17 Mementos Available

FROM: Museum of Flight, 9404 E. Marginal Way So., Seattle, WA 98108.

1. Video tape of the B-17 50th Anniversary celebration held in Seattle in July 1985. Cost: \$27.20. (Specify VHS or Beta.)

2. Color print (16x22) of "Clearing & Colder," depicting a 398th B-17 on the hard stand. (Used as FLAK NEWS logo, 398th letterheads and business cards.) Cost: \$22.10.

Ask the Museum of Flight for their complete B-17 mail order list.

C-FROM: Allen Ostrom, Seattle, WA 98177.

1. Video tapes of "All the Fine Young Men," and "The Last Mission." (Specify VHS or Beta.) Cost: \$35.00.

2. Caps, baseball type. Basic Navy blue with 4-color squadron patches. (Specify squadron.) Cost: \$6.50.

3. Business cards. Two-color, depicting "Clearing & Colder" print. Indicate name, address, ZIP and phone. Special printing requirements considered. 300 per box. Cost: \$40.00. FROM: Ralph Hall, New Bedford, MA 02740.

1. 398th Memorial Plaque, reproduction of the plaque placed on the wall at the Air Force Academy in September. Designed by 398th pilot Charles E. King. For wall or desk. Cost: \$35.00

FROM: Paul Brown, Burnsville, MN 55337.

1. Audio tape cassette telling the story of the 398th "RDX" mission on April 13, 1945. Cost: \$5.00.

FROM: Robert Chapman, Federal Way, WA 98003.

1. Finely detailed models of the B-17-G, depicting 398th tail and fuselage markings. Specify squadron (and plane serial number and letter is available.) Cost: \$75.00.

FROM: Jack Wintersteen, Danville, PA 17821.

1. Bumper stickers, 398th/8th Air Force. Cost: \$2.00.

2. Jacket patches. Group and squadron. Embroidered, five colors. 4 1/2" to 5 1/5" in diameter. Cost: \$5.00. (Specify squadron.)

3. Life Member ribbons. Cost: FREE.

***All prices include shipping and handling.**

398th Bomb Group Flak News
c/o Allen Ostrom
Seattle, Washington 98177



Cockpit Drama

Continued from Page 3

"Found dead"—

Capt. William Beatovich, navigator; Capt. William Campbell, bombardier; Lt. Ralph H. Lentz, navigator; Lt. Charles R. Letts, "Mickey," navigator; T/Sgt. Howard E. Rogers, engineer; T/Sgt. Robert C. Mayfield, radio operator; William A. Shumate, waist gunner; and Lt. William Butters, the crew's regular copilot flying as tail gunner on the Wing Lead Airplane.

Hunter, Beatovich and Lentz are buried at the American Battle Monuments Cemetery at Ardennes in Belgium. Others were brought back to their home town in the United States.

Mrs. Maria Hunter still resides at Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Gonzales, after being attended by Polish and French doctors at the PW camp at Gernsheim, spent time at an English Hospital and at Brooks General Hospital in San Antonio, recovering from a broken elbow, ankle and several toes.

He resumed his education at St. Louis University, earning a doctorate in bio-physics and has since retired as a professor at Northwestern University near Chicago. He and his wife, Anna Marie, have seven sons and seven grandchildren.

For Colonel Hunter, the mission won for him an oak leaf cluster for his Distinguished Flying Cross, earned as a result of his leadership on 398th missions on June 15 and August 1, 1944.

And a tribute from Gonzales in the form of a letter written by him to Mrs. Hunter on May 15, 1945—

"... I'll give you a few details with hope that you will be comforted in knowing that your husband died like a man, fighting for his country, and with the love and respect of all the men under his command.

"... Allow me to extend my deepest sympathy in the dark hour of your grief. Your husband was a brave man."

Richmond in 1988

Among the business items enacted at Colorado Springs in September was the Board of Directors' decision to hold the 1988 reunion in the city of Richmond, Virginia.

It was pointed out that 43% of the 398th membership lives on the East coast, and that the group has never met in the East.

Previous meetings have been held in Rapid City, Seattle, Colorado Springs (and in San Antonio next July.)

Got A Little Story?

One of our English friends of the 398th is writing a short story which "explains the effect on a rural farming community (Nuthampstead) an American Air Base (Station 131) being built in its midst."

He would like to have stories of a personal nature concerning local inhabitants or situations.

Direct your letters to Anthony Clark, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB 11 4SB, England.

FORMATION 603rd Lead Squadron—Jan. 23, 1945 TARGET: NEUSS

		Hunter Gonzales		
	Lipnick		Scott Smith	
				Spangler
Johnson				
Thomas	Tarr		Stevens	Stockman
		Matthews		
	Hahn		Hyndman	