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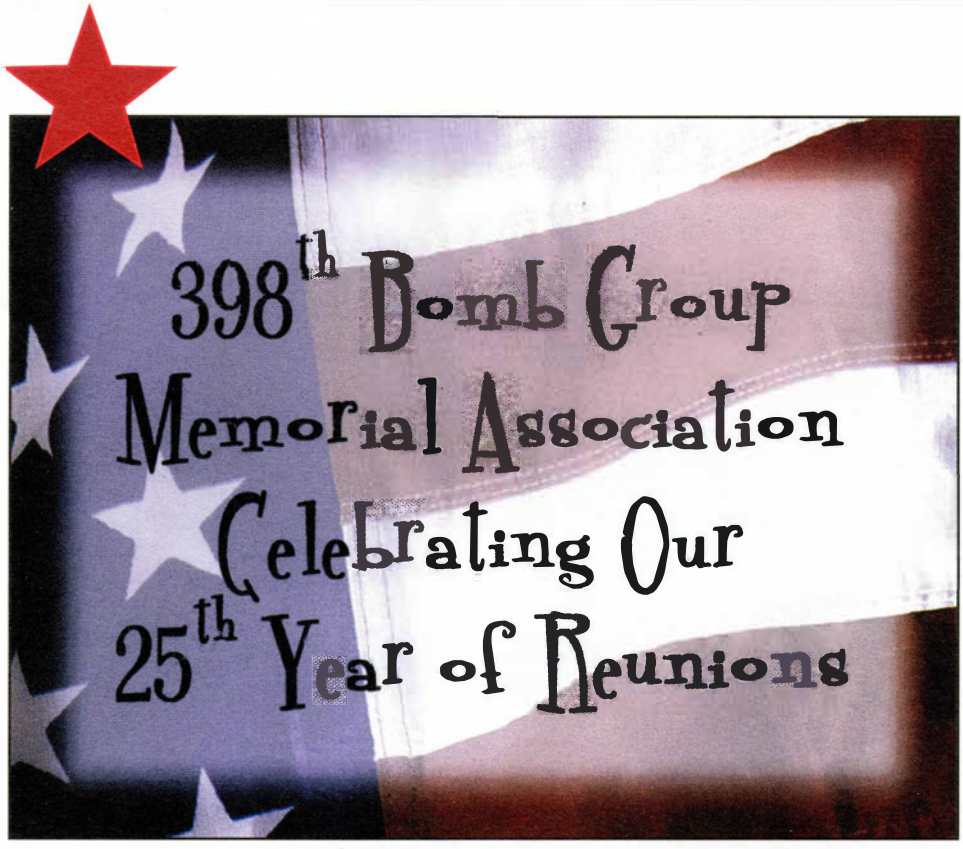
398th BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION • 8th AIR FORCE • 1st AIR DIVISION • NUTHAMPSTEAD, ENGLAND

VOL. 23 NO. 4 FLAK NEWS OCTOBER 2008



Cocoa Beach, Florida, 2008
It Was The Year Of The Hurricane

Rapid City (1984); Seattle (1985); Colorado Springs (1986); San Antonio (1987); Richmond (1988); Dayton (1989); Oshkosh (1990); San Diego (1991); Nashville (1992); Buffalo (1993); Tucson (1994); Charleston (1995); Springfield (1996); Spokane (1997); Harrisburg (1998) Oklahoma City (1999); Savannah (2000); St. Paul (2001); Portland (2002); Covington (2003); Falls Church (2004); Overland Park (2005); Livonia (2006); Phoenix (2007).

2009: Austin, Texas

Reunion 2008:

IT WAS "TOUCH AND GO"

The hurricanes did their thing ... as they always do ... but the men and women of the 398th "dodged a bullet" and held their 25th annual reunion in the heart of hurricane country.

In spite of *Fay, Gustav, Hanna, Ike, Josephine,* etc., no less than 124 members came to Cocoa Beach, Florida, and held forth from September 3 to 6.

Those were the fearless ones, but there were 28 others who opted not to challenge *Fay, Gustav, Hanna, Ike, Josephine,* etc.

Among those who had reasons for cancelling were Don Menard of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, whose house took a hurricane hit from a falling tree and also damaged two cars. And besides, the airport was closed.

His daughter, Mellisa Ledlow, the 398th treasurer, was left to shuttle between her home near Houston and Baton Rouge to care for her parents.

Meanwhile, Sharon Krause was monitoring the hurricane news from her home in Livonia, Michigan. It was her call as reunion chair.

On Labor Day — September 1 — she was still on the phone, in touch with every entity that might affect the reunion — weather, hotel, tours, airlines, etc. Finally, her decision —

"We're going!"

Continued on Page 3

The President's Pages:

PRESIDENT WALLY BLACKWELL "took it easy" at the Cocoa Beach reunion, but he had competent (and glamorous) help. Lending support in the Memory Room were Marilyn Gibb-Rice (vice president); Carolyn Widmann (PX manager); Lee Anne Bradley (historian); and Sharon Krause (reunion chair). Also helping out with podium work was director Lew Burke (also competent, if not glamorous).

OZZIE OSBORN (right) came to the reunion from England to present to the 398th the flag that was flying at the American Military Cemetery at Madingley when Lew Burke (left) and his fellow England Tour travelers visited there last June. Lew accepted the flag and promised to bring it to all future reunions, the next one being in Austin, Texas, September 2009.

Taps List Due Next Issue

The annual Taps list will appear again in the January 2009 issue. This will include the names of all 398th veterans who have passed on since returning from World War II (not KIA).

Names of any deceased veterans previously unpublished should be sent to FLAK NEWS.

"On Behalf Of A Grateful Nation"

"Thank You, Peggy, For Flag Service"

There are times when "the flag must be passed," and for the 398th this occurred last summer at Nuthampstead.

Peggy Wells, who for many years has raised and lowered the memorial flags sent by Veterans' families to be flown "to destruction" on the Tall Pole near the old Station 131 tower, is passing the flag responsibilities to Malcolm Osborn.

PEGGY WELLS
President Says "Well Done"

As president Wally Blackwell said so well, "we will always be indebted to you and your late husband, David, for your long years of service. Thank you!"

Ozzie, who has assumed the role of secretary-treasurer of the Friends in England, told Wally —

"Thank you very much. It is indeed a real honour for me to be able to fly the Veterans' flags.

"I shall involve our chairman, Peter Brooke, of course, and a few others and we shall conduct proper and correct ceremonies.

"Peggy may throw a rose into the fire as she did last time. Such a moving moment."

He was referring to the June 14 ceremony (Page 5). Bob Bowen, 398th secretary, will continue as recipient for the veterans' flags and will ship them to England.

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER was the "hit" song at the Cocoa Beach reunion. It was accomplished on the podium (plus) by the Association's second, third and fourth generations under the guidance of vice president Marilyn Gibb-Rice.

The Reunion, Continued From Page 1

And 124 came to the Cocoa Beach Hilton Hotel which already had taken an earlier hit from Fay, but was essentially ready for the 398th with a spacious Memory Room, a pair of great banquets, restaurant, swimming pool and easy access to the Atlantic Ocean, which remained "nervous" throughout the four days with the hurricanes lurking "out there." Hanna was a major threat until it suddenly veered to the north to visit Georgia and the Carolinas — and beyond.

President Wally Blackwell was there to conduct the business end of the reunion. And receive positive reports from the officers and directors.

"I really enjoy this job," said Wally, as he listened to reports relating to the health and happiness of the Association. Some took note of the fact that many of the other B-17/B-24 groups with whom the 398th flew "back then" have disbanded.

England Friends visitor Malcolm Osborn was a welcome and busy attendee (until he had to race home for family obligations) and he proudly proclaimed —

"The 398th is the only 8th Air Force Group still coming to England on an every-other-year tour and is still holding annual reunions," said Ozzie. Then he reminded one and all of the fabulous tour this past summer.

Ozzie was still on a "natural high" as he took to the banquet podium with Ken and Brandy Howard and effused over the successful tour.

Father Ken and daughter Brandy coordinated the trip on the U.S. side, while Ozzie handled the scheduling in England. (FLAK NEWS July 2008.)

Throughout the reunion there were constant reminders of "England in 2010." (See Page 4.)

SHARON KRAUSE
It Was A "Hurricane Success"

Of great interest to those who contributed to "Timeless Voices" these past few years was the news that there are now 61 "Voices" on the web site — *398th.org*.

Web master Dave Jordan said the site receives some 10,000 "hits" each month, these coming from many parts of the world.

One of the tours did have to be cancelled because of the weather —the World Class cruise to nearby Port Canaveral. The Coast Guard raised the Red Flag as the hurricane winds became threatening.

The NASA Tour, on the same day, was not affected as the 44 lucky ticket recipients made the trip to the Space Center by coach. "It was awesome," they said.

The opening night Dinner Cruise was kind and gentle and offered good sightseeing, good food and good entertainment to set the stage for the coming three days of "reunioning."

José Melendez-Perez was part of that program, having been invited months before by the late Joe Joseph to speak at the Welcome Banquet.

Melendez-Perez thrilled the Welcome Banquet audience with his story of how he confronted one of the potential 9/11 participants and prevented him from adding to the carnage, which he determined might have been the White House.

The podium, for both the Welcome and Farewell Banquets, was "manned" by our

Continued on Page 6

Howards On "Trip Of A Lifetime"

In what must be considered a "trip of a lifetime," no less that five of the late Bob Howard's family will journey to both the Czech Republic and England in March 2009.

Howard, the ex ball turret gunner on the 603 Donovan crew, was on the special Pilsen tour in 1995 when he gave his Air Force uniform to the SLET museum headed by Jaromir Kohout. His previous journey to this land was while on the Last Mission to Pilsen in April 1945.

Next year, the Howard tour will be headed by wife, Helen, sons John and Ken, plus granddaughters Brandy and Beth. There will be a visit to Pilsen to see Howard's jacket (after 14 years), Kohout and his SLET friends and Vladislav Kratky and the Skoda (1945 target) Museum.

The Howard journey will then take them to Nuthampstead, where Helen and her family will raise Bob's flag on the Tall Pole under the guidance of Peggy Wells and Ozzie Osborn. (See Pages 2 and 5.)

BOB & HELEN HOWARD
On The 1995 Pilsen Tour

Ron Setter Passes

An English Friend of the 398th, Ron Setter, died last December, it was announced by Johanna Sienkiewicz, with whom Setter worked in researching the crash of the Charles Searl crew near Penn. It was on the Setter farm that the plane went down with the loss of nine lives. (FLAK NEWS Vol. 4 No. 3.)

ANN COLLINS was a prominent 398th representative at the Air Stars Meeting in Slany, Czech Republic, last June. This photo shows her receiving a jar containing material found at the 1945 crash site where the Donald Christensen plane came down. It was later given to Christensen's son. The Memorial is shown, along with the Czech honor guards.

COLLINS TO LEAD ENGLAND TOUR

Ann Collins, the active and energetic daughter of a 601 Squadron ball turret gunner, has volunteered (again).

Home only a few weeks after her exhaustive, five-week 2008 European tour (Czech Republic, England and Scotland), Collins has offered to coordinate the U.S. side of the plans for the 398th tour to England in 2010.

Malcolm Osborn, as he did this past June, will do likewise in England in 2010. Collins worked closely with Ken and Brandy Howard in making a success of the 2008 tour. She not only was part of the England festivities, but began by representing president Wally Blackwell at the Air Stars Meeting in the Czech Republic, then finishing off her journey with a couple of weeks in Scotland.

Ann works as a senior orthopedic physical therapist in a Sacramento, California, medical center.

Plans for the 2010 tour are underway even now, as Ozzie explained at the Cocoa Beach reunion. Ann will occupy some of her "spare" time this year and next in compiling the list of members at the reunion who expressed such an interest.

MILAN SPINETA

A very busy man, he is the "maestro" behind the successful production of the "Air Stars Meeting" held in Slaný, Czech Republic.

A Day In The Life of Ozzie And Friends

BY MALCOLM OSBORN
Cambridge, England

The telephone rings. It's Sandy from The Woodman. "Ozzie, we have got a Veteran just arrived, would you like to speak to him?" I am at my PC burning photo discs of the English 398th reunion for friends. What a fantastic surprise this call was. So I get to chat with Norman Bond, ex-PFC, 601st Bombardment Squadron Ordnance. Norman is accompanied by his son Rex, and Rex's friend Tim. They have just got the train from London to Royston and a taxi to Nuthampstead for a days trip from their week's stay in the Capital. This is Norman's first visit to 131 since 1945.

I couldn't go then, so I called Peter Brooke — and 30 minutes later he was driving them through the bomb dump and up to the old 601st dispersal area.

I got to The Woodman an hour later and Peter passed the visitors over to my care for the rest of the day (thanks Peter).

So I now took them on a grand tour, to Barkers Farm and the old HQ and Ops, then mess hall sites, Red Cross Club, dispersed living sites, Anstey of course, to see the fabulous Memorial Window, Anstey Castle Mound, I also purchased two jars of Nuthampstead honey as souvenirs on the way round.

Norman is a great character, who was with the 398th from its beginning until its end. He probably loaded bombs on Wally's B-17.

Continued on Page 10

THE FLAG FLIES AND THE TEARS ROLL

BY LESLIE ROLFE
Wakefield, England

I travelled to Nuthampstead for the biannual 398th reunion last June. It was a great day, and from an observer's point of view everything went well — the children, ghost crew, the speeches and, of course, the memories tumbling all around.

It must be good to know that the enthusiasm for the 398th Bomb Group is being continued by the children and grandchildren of the original members. Everyone seemed to be having fun.

I took the flag from my late father's casket which I had brought home from Texas two years ago when visiting my half-sister, Glenda Stark.

My intention was to deliver it to Peggy Wells, who would then fly it when an existing flag was in tatters. However, it was decided that as the current flag at the airfield was going to be replaced anyway, it would be more appropriate that it be done by a relevant family member being present.

Are you picking up on what happened next?

So, after the tour of the airfield, Malcolm Osborn and Peggy fitted my father's flag to the clips and let me pull it up the flag pole!

What an emotional moment — flying a flag for man I searched for but never met!

LESLEY ROLFE

I'm afraid the tears were not all internal. Then came the fly past of the P-51 and the whole day became like a dream.

Thank you, Peggy. Thank you, Ozzie. Thank you Glenda. Thank you, 398th!

Ed's Note: Lesley Rolfe's father was James Jay Nichols, a driver for Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr., the group CO. This was established after some years of research, culminating in the discovery of her half-sister in Texas.

Fortresses Over Nuthampstead:

THIS BOOK CONTAINS ALL THE NAMES AND NUMBERS

For some years FLAK NEWS has wanted to publish and serial numbers of all the B-17's flown by the 398th in World War II.

Geoff Rice, our "photo researcher," and compiler of such information (along with Les Dear) has also had this in mind.

However, in analyzing the project in light of available printing space in FLAK NEWS, it has been determined that potential readers would be better served by investing in the book, "Fortresses Over Nuthampstead."

This book, written by England's Cliff Bishop, is available in our PX for $65.00, postage prepaid (see Page 11).

"Fortresses" is a masterpiece of 398th history, and goes far beyond serial numbers and nose art. It contains 171 pages of detail information on each plane from beginning of the war to the end (and for many this would be the scrap heap at Kingman, Arizona.)

Also, there are over 1,300 mentions of 398th personnel, including crew listings for many missions. And 86 nose art listings from "Agony Wagon" to "Zoomeriago."

"Fortresses" is an absolute must for both the veterans and their families. It fills an historical gap as none other.

ALLEN OSTROM
Editor, FLAK NEWS

CAROLYN WIDMANN
"Fortresses" for sale.

Reunion Attendees In Front Of The Warbird Museum

Reunion Veterans Received 398th Medallions

(Continued from Page 3)

vice president, Marilyn Gibb-Rice. First she led the audience in the flag salute. Secondly she led the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner."

For this, she opted to bring on not only the second generation, but the third and fourth as well. Thus, she enlisted some 40 to sing (plus the rest of the audience). The Gibb-Rice "generation gang" gave the Star Spangled Banner a marvelous musical ride. It was a smash hit!

Carolyn Widmann, who operated the PX in the Memory Room, brought on several members of her family to advertise the great variety of shirts, jackets, pins and books available to the membership. "We had a successful sale," she said.

President Blackwell, unable to attend the annual "Air Stars" celebration last June in Slany, Czech Republic, received a volunteer "I'll go" from Ann Collins, daughter of 601 ball turret gunner Phil Collins. Ann (and her 601 shoulder tattoo) ably represented Wally and the 398th. (See Page 4).

Another "great idea" came in the form of the special red-white-blue medallions that were presented to all the veterans who were not at the last reunion in Phoenix. All recipients were given proper hugs and kisses by Marilyn, Carolyn, Sharon and Lee Anne Bradley.

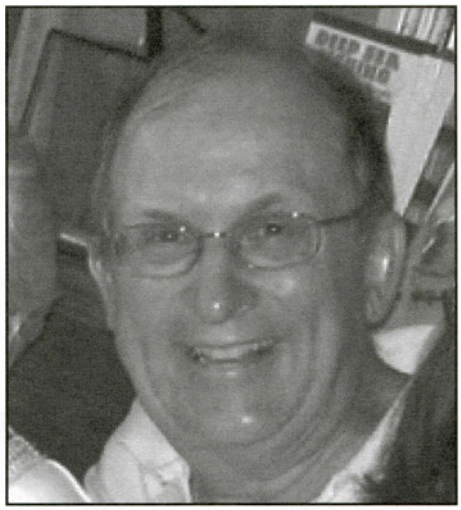
Receiving medallions were — Ray Gainey, Robert Goren, Earl Hofert, Robert Kraft, Newell Moy, Harry Overbaugh, Michael Cingle, Hal Weekley, William Sutton, Norman Bond, Bob Gatton, Ray Talbott, Jerry Sauder.

www.398th.org

Another Day On The Job

I am up to page 320 of 1000 in a very good book on using Dreamweaver® web site design software. I have learned that my 10-year-old methods are falling out of favor with the World Wide Web Consortium that established standards for web pages and web browsers. Without getting into a lot of technical stuff on HTML, and new XHMTL, Unicode encoding and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), I find that some of what I have done might not render in future web browsers a few years down the road as various techniques are made obsolete.

When I converted our old web pages over to Dreamweaver® a month ago the templates did not come over. I thought my main problem was that I needed to recreate about 40 templates and then re-link about 3000+ pages to them. Now I have become aware that I should also upgrade the pages



DAVE JORDAN

to the new methods. In essence, upgrading our pages from 10-year-old methods of HTML to the latest ways of doing things such that they will be operational for years into the future.

Therefore, I am learning the new CSS language which will allow greater control over the layout of each page, including the addition of navigation bars, better banner display, and layout of the pages. By and large the text (content) doesn't change, but I am still unsure whether I will need to paste into new pages or whether they will get converted to the new ways as I do the new templates.

That's probably more detail than you wanted to hear.

— DAVE JORDAN
Webmaster 398th.org

FLAK NEWS Has Gone To College

Penn State University in University Park, Pennsylvania, maintains a large collection of 8th Air Force history.

And now their archives are recipient of three bound volumes of 398th Bomb Group FLAK NEWS covering the years from 1986 to 2008.

The Penn State archives were begun by Jim Hill, former editor of 8th Air Force News and former teacher at the university. Additional archival encouragement came from George and Sherry Middlemas through their "Albert M. Petska Endowment," which assists in the acquisition of books, papers, memoirs, scrapbooks and photographs.

Petska, deceased, was a pilot in the 602nd Squadron of the 398th. George is

Petska Kin Part of Penn State Program

his son-in-law and Sherry his daughter. Mrs. Margo Petska, his British war bride, still lives in Salem, Oregon.

In a previous year president Wally Blackwell had sent Penn State copies of the book *Remembrances,* produced by FLAK NEWS in 1989.

Paul Dzyak, Jr., of the University's Collections division, said of *Remembrances* —

"I think that the book gets to the heart of what war is really about — death and destruction. Some of the stories gave me chills up my spine and made me realize how difficult those times were.

"I am looking forward to the FLAK NEWS bound volumes. They will make an immediate impact in our 8th library."

(Remembrances is available through the PX, Page 11.)

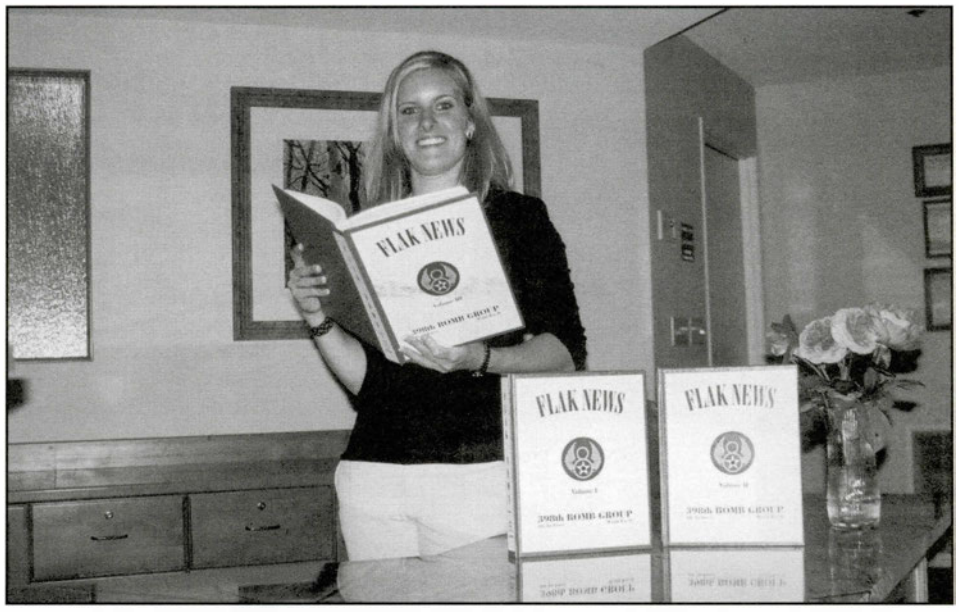
Good Story, But Incorrect Date

The story called, "The Day We Led The Entire Eighth Air Force," was a good one (July 2008) as Keith Anderson did a masterful job in the re-creation of the *July 7, 1944,* mission *(correct date).*

However, in the accompanying formation listings (Page 8), the editor dropped the ball as he failed to catch the *incorrect* mission date *(January* 7, 1944).

It's called a "typo" and the editor apologizes.

Typesetter's Note — I never could keep the "J" months sorted out and there has been absolutely no improvement now that I'm over 60! — DOR.



ALICIA HOSHAUER enjoyed a reading of the three bound volumes of FLAK NEWS that were sent to the 8th Air Force archives at Penn State University. The archives are sustained in part by the daughter and son-in-law of a 602 squadron pilot, Al Petska.

PENNSTATE

1855

Special Collections Library
University Libraries

Pennsylvania State University
125 Paterno Library
University Park, PA 16802

398th Bomb Group Memorial Association:

On behalf of Jim Quigel, the head of Historical Collections and Labor Archives, and myself, we wish to thank you for your donation of the three bound volumes of the 398th Bomb Group newsletter, FLAK NEWS. Thank you also for the page of photos, and the 8th AF pewter stein. They will be added to the collection inventory.

The newsletter volumes will be cataloged and then be found on the Penn State Libraries' catalog, "The CAT." They will be placed in the Eighth Air Force Reading Room with the other cataloged books.

The Eighth Air Force Collection is accessed by greater numbers of researchers every month, comprised of undergraduate students, faculty members, and family members and friends. The newsletters are especially helpful with mission information, individual's recollections and current contact information.

Thank you, again, for donating the items to the archives. Every new item helps researchers better understand the efforts of your generation to win World War II. Good luck with the future issues.

Paul J. Dzyak, Jr.
University Archives Assistant for Sports and Eighth Air Force Curator

Western Flavor For 2009 Dues

The 398th Dues mailing is divided into four parts, this to "spread out" the bookkeeping work of Dues Manager Dawne Dougherty.

Dawne, who lives in Oregon, will have the pleasure of dealing with some of her West Coast friends in this October mailing.

And it will come as the "leader" for the coming year. The Dues notices are new for the coming year, but the $20 Dues remain the same.

Although there was much discussion at the annual meeting concerning the financial condition of the Association, it was decided to "hold the line."

"We are hoping that our members will appreciate the effort we make in keeping our expenses down so we won't have to raise the dues," said president Wally Blackwell.

"We have lost so many members to the Taps list these past few years there are fewer to pay the bills," he added. "We count on those special contributions to keep us in the black."

This quarter's Dues notices have been included to those living in Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Alaska and Hawaii.

Benjamin Foulois

FOULOIS is second from right in this photo of the Wright Flyer at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas.

Benny Foulois is honored today as an aviation pioneer and as the nation's first military pilot, but he was seldom so appreciated during his long career. The outspoken Foulois was free with his criticism and made more than his share of enemies. His achievements were all the more remarkable because he so often had to work against opposition from those he had riled.

Foulois joined the Army as a private, was commissioned in the field during the Philippine insurrection, and was assigned to the Signal Corps because of his interest in aeronautics. He was the Army's first dirigible pilot.

Two other officers soloed in the Wright Flyer before Foulois did, but they returned to duty in their regular branches. Foulois was told to take the aircraft and finish teaching himself to fly. He did this partly by innovation and partly through correspondence with the Wright brothers. Thus Foulois became the Army's first operational pilot, and from late 1909 to early 1911, he was the Aeronautical Division's only pilot.

He organized the Army's first tactical air unit, the 1st Aero Division, and led it in Mexico during the U.S. Pursuit of Pancho Villa in 1916. In World War I he was the chief of air service for the American Expeditionary Force.

Foulois was named Chief of the Air Corps in 1931. He managed to antagonize the General Staff, the War Department, the White House, and Congress. However, during his tour, the Air Corps took a first step toward an independent Air Force with the establishment of the General Headquarters Air Force, and the prototype for the B-17 bomber made its first flight. As Chief, he logged more flying time than most Air Corps line pilots did.

He retired as a major general in December 1935 after 37 years of service. He turned down a chance to return to active duty during World War II because he did not want a desk job. In retirement, he wrote and spoke regularly about airpower. By the time of his death in 1967, he had finally received the widespread esteem and recognition that eluded him earlier.

Billy Mitchell

Billy Mitchell is the most famous military airman in history. Even before his court-martial for insubordination in 1925, he had attracted national attention with advocacy of airpower and his challenges to Army and Navy tradition. More than 80 years later, the controversy continues.

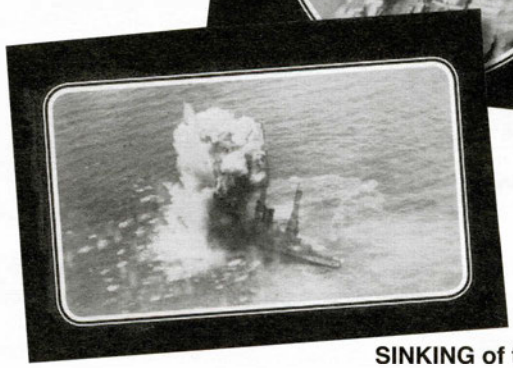
The son of a U.S. Senator, Mitchell joined the Army during the Spanish-American War and was commissioned at age 18. He was an early aviation enthusiast but he did not become a pilot until 1916. Too old for Army flight training at 38, he took private lessons.

In World War I, Mitchell, then a brigadier general, was the U.S. air combat commander. He led 1,500 American and allied aircraft in the Saint Mihiel offensive in 1918, making him history's first joint force air component commander.

In 1921, Mitchell scuttled the Navy's boast that airplanes could not sink battleships when his Martin MB-2 bombers sent the *Ostfriesland,* a former German battleship, to the bottom of the sea. His criticism of the War Department and service leaders intensified, and he was court-martialed in 1925. Rather than accept demotion and suspension, he resigned.

Many regarded Mitchell as a zealot and a fanatic but other airmen loved him. Hap Arnold, one of his foremost supporters, said Mitchell had been "righter than hell." Mitchell died in 1936, but he was awarded a special Congressional Medal of Honor in 1946. Admiration for Mitchell has diminished in today's era of "jointness," but Air Force Academy cadets in the class of 2001 named him as the person they most wanted to emulate.

Mitchell infuriated his adversaries with his uncanny foresight. In 1924, he submitted a report predicting that war in the Pacific would start with a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that would begin at 7:30 a.m., followed by an attack on Clark Field in the Philippines at 10:40 a.m. He later added that this would happen on a Sunday morning. Mitchell was wrong, of course. On Sunday, December 7, 1941, the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor at 7:55 a.m. — almost half an hour later than Mitchell had predicted, and did not hit Clark until 12:35 p.m.



SINKING of the Ostfriesland.

Why The U.S. Needed The Constitution

The "Revolutionary War" began following the Declaration of Independence in July of 1776. It ended with the Paris Peace Treaty in September of 1783. Having fought and won such a long and bloody war to sever the ties to Great Britain the Colonists knew there had to be some form of government for their new country. Four years later, after experimenting with a loose Confederation of the States is was decided that a more formal system of government was desirable. Delegates of the Thirteen States met and produced the Constitution under which our present form of government exists.

These delegates, with memory of the tyranny they had only recently overthrown, were wisely cautious in the power they would concede to a central government. Thus the authority they bestowed on the central government was very limited and clearly and expressly enumerated. It was recognized even at the time this Constitution was agreed to that it needed more specific recognition of the rights of the people of the several States. Therefore, in 1789 twelve amendments were proposed and submitted to the Thirteen States. Ten of these amendments were adopted and are generally referred to as the "Bill of Rights" to the Constitution. Other amendments have been added over the years bringing the total to twenty-seven.

With a memory of the abuse of individual and personal freedom under the reign of Great Britain the "Bill of Rights" amendments attempted to guarantee no such subjugation would or could take place again. Not only did these amendments spell out what could not be done by government to the people, they provided means by which the people could more effectively prevent it. All the Articles are important to a free people but the Second and Tenth seem to spell out the fear that a central government might become too strong and therefore in plain language offered a guarantee to prevent it.

All of us owe a great debt of gratitude not only to the wise Founders of the United States but the patriots that have defended it over the past generations. We will no doubt need to continue to be vigilant to protect what has been bestowed upon us by those who fought in the past two hundred plus years. Also, we need to know the limits government can exert over us. We need to memorize our "rights" as citizens as well as the limited power our elected representatives can exercise.

All potentially new voters should know the "rules of the game." Even in sports there are rules and knowing and abiding by them makes one a good player. Isn't it important to know the rules pertaining to being a citizen of a free nation? Hopefully this booklet will help in the selection of those we will entrust to represent us in the government entities.

This copy of our Constitution is a document of great importance to all of us but it is especially important that new votes should become familiar with it. We veterans of a great, costly and bloody war depend on those who come behind us to see that our others' efforts on behalf of the Country never cease to benefit the United States' citizens.

Presented by Circle B Enterprises, PO Box 220841, Chantilly, VA 20153-0841.

Letters, Letters

"Sixty-three years ago after April 25, 1945, it would not have been a figment of my imagination that I would become an Honorary member of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. I take this in deep gratitude and am deeply touched. I remember all air attacks of the 8th USAF on Škoda Works during the WW II, but especially vividly the day when 378 B-17 bombers dropped their bombs within the Škoda armaments plants complex and on the German military airfield with dozens of fighters. It was the last strategic mission of WW II in Europe.

"I have never talked to a 398th Bomb Group veteran who took delight in the loss of the lives below them, but they had a job to do. These men who flew on these operations are worthy of remembrance and gratitude for the victory over the Nazi regime. In our country there is a proverb, 'There is never an ill wind that doesn't blow some good.' That good is not only invaluable friendships between the 398th Bomb Group veterans and inhabitants of Plzeň, but between Czechs and Americans.

"Dear Mr. Blackwell, dear Mr. Ostrom, dear Ann Collins, and all members of the Association. I'd like to express to all of you once more my hearty thanks."

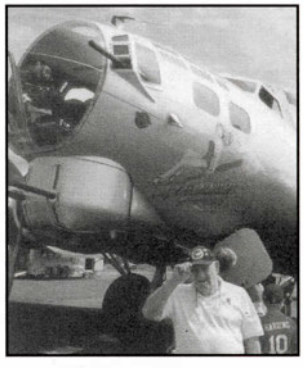
Vladislav Krátký, Škoda Museum, Plzeň

"This to congratulate the 398th web site *(398th.org)* on a truly wonderful, informative and historical site. It brings home in a most compassionate way how your brave American boys fought and died for freedom. I could not but silently smile as I read all the information, thinking how proud your lads would have felt if they could have read it for themselves. I could almost hear the animated comments from the crews and they ribbed one another upon finding a particularly interesting piece of information! God bless every one of them."

Graham Sullivan, London, England

"I feel increasingly grateful and honored that someone cares enough about keeping our Flag flying over our symbolic 'Home.' For those of us who served there, but especially for those lost into the 'empty air,' whose 'home' remains that place of a 'forever memory,' thanks for sharing that message and please convey our collective appreciation to those willing to keep us 'alive.' "

George Schatz, Highland Park, Illinois



PHIL JONES

"We had a visit from the Aluminum Overcast at Mercer County Airport (New Jersey) and I ran into a 600th Squadron tail gunner, Phil Jones. He has great stories about bailing out, being captured, and life as a POW."

Will Mayhall, Okatie, South Carolina

"Oh my gosh, I searched for my Pap's name on *398th.org* and there is this picture. He was Landis Frantz, the belly gunner on the end. He passed away in August of 2001. I just had to e-mail and let you know that I couldn't believe I saw the picture. Thanks for posting it on the web. My pappy lost his entire crew in a mission that he didn't have to go on, and it haunted him the rest of his life. I can't imagine the sacrifice of our vets for our freedom. Thank you!'

Amy (Frantz) Wendt

A Day With Ozzie

(Continued from Page 5)

I got home at 1830 after taking them back to Royston Railway Station for their train back to 'the smoke.'

Days like this are very special indeed.

Had a great day out with Cliff and Stan Bishop whilst Joyce and Marjorie went shopping at Bury St. Edmunds. We first went to Martlesham Heath, one of the most historic airfields in the U.K. now submerged under housing and factory estates. The control tower is preserved as a museum on the top floor, with a children's day nursery underneath (the lease prevents them from being removed apparently).

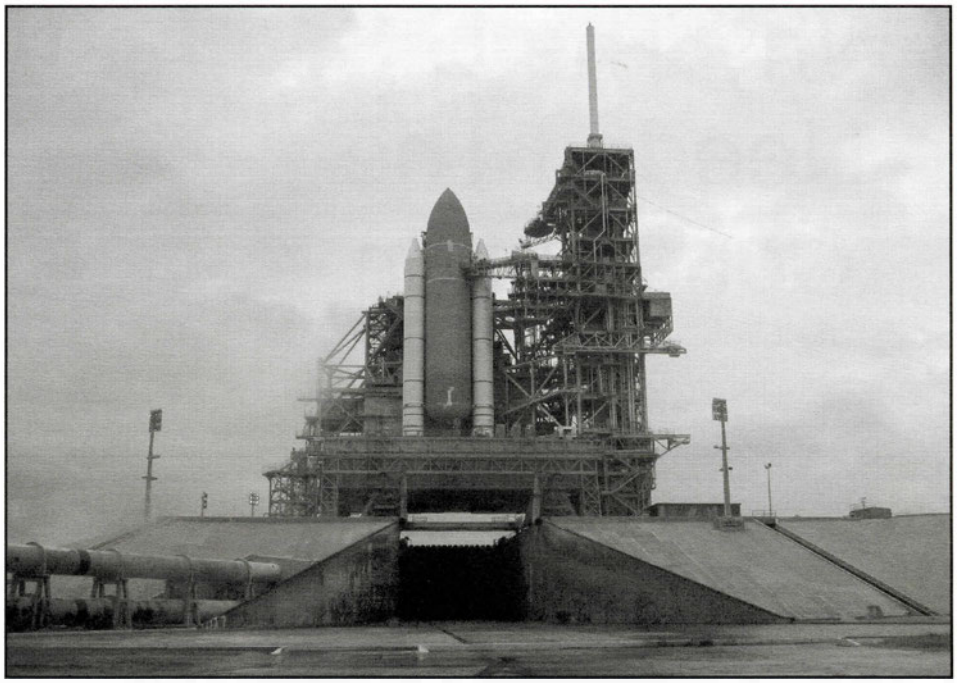
What incongruous surroundings, a control tower in a small field surrounded by a modern housing estate, but remarkably unvandalised or showing any graffiti daubed on it's pristine walls.

We found a piece of old taxiway and runway hidden in the depths of beautiful heathland with a profusion of heather, wild flowers and buddlia. Butterflies, bird song, bright sunshine, then a pint of refreshing bitter in a pub called "The Douglas Bader" named after that old legless Battle of Britain pilot. It was Cliff's 76th birthday yesterday. He really did enjoy it.

Next we visiting Woodbridge — the emergency landing field in WW II — it's single runway was/is three times the width of a normal runway and over two miles long. We confirmed this by driving right along it's centre and measuring with the car's odometer. The USAF took it over in 1951 and stayed until 1993. What a truly historic site — now derelict — but with a modern Army Barracks on one part, thus it's all strictly controlled in terms of access. But, I managed to persuade the 68-year-old lady security guard to let us in and we were there for over an hour until she came looking for us. There was a world famous UFO incident took place just over the back of the East Gate and we drove down there, en route to the end of the runway, but failed to meet any obvious aliens.

The other day B-17G "Liberty Belle" flew over Bar Hill obviously en route to Duxford. She flew right over my house. I was in my upstairs study and dashed down in time to see her heading away. Cliff Bishop called me. He was waiting for brother Stan in Tesco's car park at Bar Hill, before setting off for the Waddington airshow, where the Vulcan landed yesterday. Cliff said he could not believe his ears, then leapt out of his car as the B-17G passed right overhead.

Toodle Pip



— Beez Jordan photo

THIS IS THE Space Shuttle Atlantis, poised for a rescheduled lift off on October 14, 2008. The scene was part of the Space Center tour as enjoyed by 44 members of the 398th Bomb Group Reunion Tour as part of the 2008 reunion held at nearby Cocoa Beach, Florida.

A "Gibson Girl" Memory

May 31, 1946

William F. Jordan
Bombardier, 398th Bomb Group

Dear Mr. Jordan:

The Bendix Aviation Corporation is proud to welcome you into the exclusive Order of Gibson Girls, to which you became eligible through rescue by the Gibson Girl, emergency radio transmitter on January 1, 1945.

We hope that this certificate will not only help you to retain a fond memory for the little yellow-clad Gibson Girl, but also will serve as a friendly symbol of home and battlefront cooperation.

— PACIFIC DIVISION
Bendix Aviation Corporation

Ed's Note: Jordan was on the 603 Pinner crew when they ditched in the North Sea. (See *Remembrances.)*

B-17 Ocean Crossing Told In Journal

The "Friends Journal" is a terrific magazine sponsored by the Air Force Museum Foundation, and dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

And some of that "improvement" is found in several WW II features in the "Summer 2008" issue.

One story is called, "Across the Atlantic Ocean in a B-17 Bomber," and ably written by 398th (600 Squadron) pilot Clarence (Clancy) Hultman of Bristol, Connecticut.

Hultman had the pleasure of buzzing his hometown (Bristol) while on his way to cross the Atlantic and also the pleasure of negotiating a landing at Greenland's "Bluie West One," surrounded by unfriendly glaciers.

His crew went on to fly against the Me-262 jet on one mission and also was on the infamous "RDX" mission. He finished up with the Skoda mission to Pilsen on the last day of the war.

Like others from the 398th, Hultman was ticketed for B-29 work when the Pacific War ended.

BRIEF-things

It is no secret that the Taps list has grown to huge proportions, but it might be longer yet for the fact that we have lost track of many former members who dropped their FLAK NEWS subscriptions ... "if I am still alive, I'll be on the England tour in 2010," is what one 398th member told Ozzie Osborn after hearing of the spectacular tour this year ... ***Lew Lyle's*** name is synonymous with the development of the Mighty Eighth Museum, but his flying heritage goes back to the Pacific War in 1942, and later to England, where he commanded both the 303rd and 379th Fortress groups (and compiled 76 missions) ... a friend named ***"Erik O"*** in Lennik (Belgium) is searching out the details of the ***T.K. Foster*** (603) crash near his hometown, and historian ***Lee Anne Bradley,*** is helping him write a history of the crash that took all nine lives on the crew ... ***George Cuda*** was at the Nuthampstead ceremony wearing his Master Sergeant's jacket (still fits) ... the first and second generations were there, but it was a third generation gal, ***Brandy Howard,*** who put the tour together ... ***Ozzie*** and ***Lee Anne*** paid a post-tour visit to Ridgewell, one of the three bases of the 1st Combat Wing, there to discover the remnants of a bomb shelter and 381st base theater, complete with a sign, "not responsible for cloaks" ... ***Bill Adams,*** our London friend who was so well known and loved for his 8th Air Force school desk carvings, passed away this year; he honored many 398th men with his "specialty" work, some of which is displayed at the Woodman Inn ... a B-17G that had long been relegated to the bone yard, has been purchased by ***Eric Shiffer*** of Urbana, Illinois, and will be restored (wait about five years) ... the E.U. stopped all the DC-3's in England (two) from carrying passengers because they required "escape chutes" (two feet to the ground) and oxygen equipment (at 5,000 feet?) ... ***Dawne Dougherty,*** our Dues Manager, says "I very much enjoy the little notes the members send along with their dues" (she also sends personal letters to families who lost loved ones) ... Hurricane Ike kept treasurer ***Mellisa Ledlow*** grounded in Texas, so the FLAK NEWS editor presented her banquet story about her photographing the Madingley grave of ***V.A. Hansard*** and then promising to visit the daughter he never saw ... ***Lee Anne Bradley*** also had a similar story featuring ***Charles Searl*** and his plane, Tomahawk Warrior ... those "over and above" donations continue to come in, like $100 each from ***George Schatz*** and ***Joe Tola*** ... ***Ann Collins*** carried her "soil extraction" bottle from the ***Christensen*** crash in the Czech Republic to England and Scotland, but she had a bit of a fight to get it on the plane home; luckily, she had an official document explaining that the bottle was "ceremoniously and commissionally extracted from the B-17 bomber accident" ... it's called The Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park, but a pair of 398th's, ***Larry Paul*** and ***Dick Carrigg,*** helped add an 8th Air Force display to the project (plus some additional displays from the Army, Marines and Coast Guard) ... president ***Blackwell*** appointed a new Director to replace the late ***Joe Joseph,*** the "new" man being ***Joe Mansell,*** a veteran of most of the reunions and England tours; in 1992, after the historic Merseberg visit, he had the honor of casting a bouquet of flowers into the Channel near where his ***Doerr*** crew had gone down in 1945 ... the colorful Page 1 display was conceived by the "girls;" the cards appeared on each and every table at both the Welcome and Farewell Banquets as part of the floral displays ... Just Because You Asked — ***Alicia,*** the "bound volumes girl" on page 7, works on the front desk at the FLAK NEWS editor's retirement community north of Seattle ... to those looking for the 398th KIA listing, best to purchase the Anstey Stained Glass booklet from the PX ...

There comes a time when one must take a postion that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him it is right ...

— Martin Luther

398th Bomb Group PX

ORDER FORM (The Second Generation)

QTY	ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL
	CLOTHING		
____	T-Shirt, black, "398th BG Flying Fortress"	$12.00	_____
____	T-Shirt, navy, with B-17 front view	$12.00	_____
____	T-Shirt, gray, with with logo on back	$12.00	_____
____	T-Shirt, olive, with Triangle W	$12.00	_____
____	Denim Shirt, long sleeve, 398th logo (S, M, L, XL XXL, **please indicate size)**	$28.00	_____
____	Golf Shirts, embroidered Triangle W, 60% cotton, 40% poly mesh		
____	Mens, light blue or white, S-XL	$25.00	_____
____	Ladies, light blue, S-XL **(please indicate size & color)**	$25.00	_____
	CAPS		
____	Black, with logo (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	$8.00	_____
	BOOKS (All books postpaid)		
____	Fortresses Over Nuthampstead (Bishop)	$65.00	_____
____	398th History (1946, photo copy)	$20.00	_____
____	"Remembrances" (1989, photo copy, Ostrom)	$30.00	_____
____	"Bird of Prey" (Coffee)	$19.95	_____
____	"Hell From Heaven" (Streitfeld)	$19.95	_____
____	"Last of the B-17 Combat Drivers" (Weekley)	$39.95	_____
____	"The Youngest Crew" (Wagner)	$19.95	_____
____	"WW II Odyssey" (Frankhouser)	$19.00	_____
	JEWELRY		
____	Squadron lapel pins (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	$5.00	_____
____	Group lapel pin (Hell From Heaven)	$5.00	_____
	LOGOS		
____	Squadron Patch (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	$6.00	_____
____	B-17 Jacket Patch (rectangular)	$4.00	_____
____	8th Air Force Patch	$6.00	_____
	PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS		
____	"Clearing & Colder" (8x10)	$10.00	_____
____	"Clearing & Colder" (14x17)	$30.00	_____
____	Anstey Stained Glass Window booklet (11x17 includes list of comrades Killed in Action)	$10.00	_____
____	Aluminum Overcast (8x10)	$2.00	_____
____	"Sunset at Nuthampstead" (8x10)	$7.00	_____
	MISCELLANEOUS		
____	Bumper Sticker (black)	$3.00	_____
____	Blue Ink Pen (398th imprints)	$5.00	_____
____	License Plate Frame (398th imprints)	$5.00	_____
____	Book Marker	$5.00	_____
____	WW II Coloring Book (with crayons)	$4.00	_____
____	Tote Bag (20x15, black, with logo)	$8.00	_____

Cost of Items ordered **$** _____

Delivery and Handling add $4.00 or $5.00 if order is over $20.00 **$** _____

Total $ _____

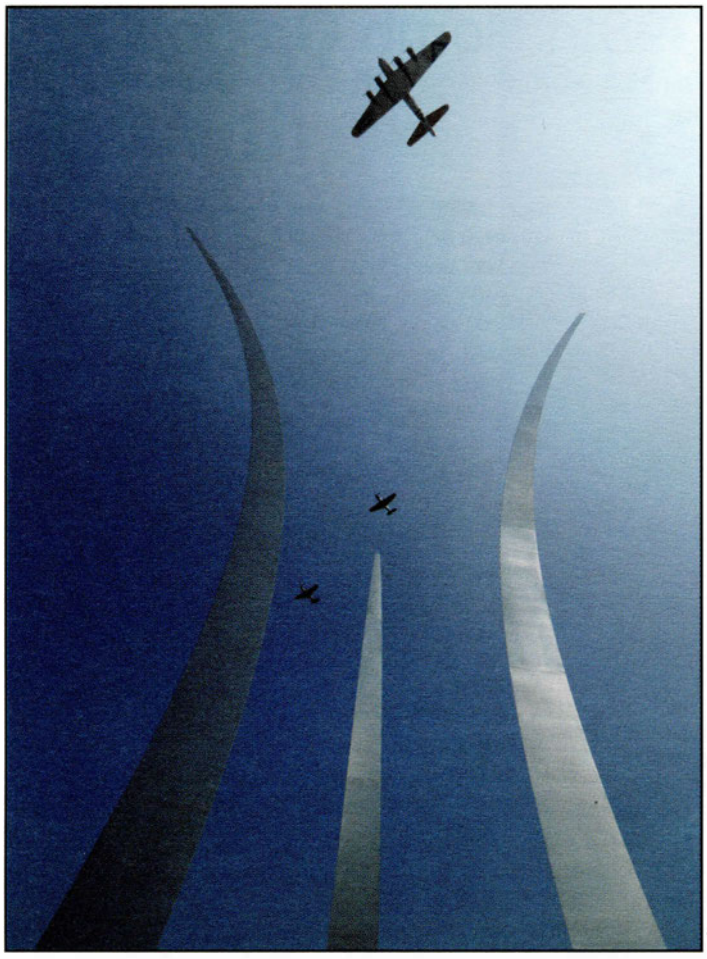
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

Telephone _____

Make check payable to "398th Bomb Group PX." Mail completed order form and check to Carolyn Widmann, Noblesville, IN 46062-7150,



— Andy Morataya
Pentagon Air Force Staff Photographer
THE AIR FORCE MEMORIAL

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