



602



601



603



600

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

VOL. 7 NO. 1

FLAK NEWS

JANUARY 1992

New Relationships With Merseburg:

But Old Memories Still Vivid As Tour Visit Nears

*(See Page 11 For More
Tour Information)*

An airman from another group in the 8th Air Force heard about the 398th tour to England and Germany next June (which will include a visit to Merseburg) and said —

“That’s the last place on earth . . .”

And then in the second breath —

“What a great idea.”

He then he concluded his comments with —

“Somehow your trip puts a fitting ending . . . and maybe a beginning . . . to our relationship with the people of Merseburg.”

(See LETTERS Page 10).

Our friend from the 486th couldn’t have put it more meaningfully. Both from the point of view of having been there himself during those unforgettable days of long ago. And in remembering the people there who endured endless streams of B-17’s droning over their 1,000-year-old city during the long years of World War II.

Could be that both the visitors and hosts, when they meet face to face in June, will say to each other —

“Hey, you’re OK.” Or —

“Ha, Sie Sind OK.”

Meanwhile, history and plain old stark memories still call it — “Merseburg . . . dreaded Merseburg.”

For others, this could be Regensburg, or Schweinfurt, or Berlin, or Cologne, or dozens of other “dreaded” targets. But for the 398th this little suburban city to the west of Leipzig will forever epitomize all that was fearful, and dangerous, and deadly on those combat tours.

Merseburg was usually a 10-hour mission, up to seven hours on oxygen, and fraught with such simple dangers like fatigue, cold, hunger, fear and anoxia. And these compounded by hundreds of 88 and

Continued On Page 6



JACK LEE AND MISS X PILOT’S SEAT

THE REUNION STORY

Sometimes an event can be staged (like a reunion) and the participants can sit down and agree that some one thing or some one person emerged as the “high point” of the event.

Tough to do just that after the 1991 398th Bomb Group reunion last November in San Diego. Jack Lee, in an accompanying article, did very nicely in describing the deep emotional feelings that welled up in his heart.

He could easily be marked by many as being the “high point” of the affair, especially after keeping his banquet listeners in constant laughter with his rapid fire jokes about his time with the 603rd Squad-

ron. Lee came to the reunion complete with his personal B-17 pilot’s seat, saved from Lee’s “Miss X” many years ago by a far-sighted father.

No recount will be attempted of his whimsical presentation. Suffice to say, “he done good.”

And then there was the chaplain, Rev. Jim Duvall. He was asked to talk on “I Remember.” And such a memory he exhibited, all the way from Rapid City to Nuthampstead. He even came up with the names of the five men who were killed at Station 131. “Not all who gave their lives wore silver wings,” he recalled.

Continued On Page 4

“A Glorious, Delirious Moment”

PW’s Had Their Own Flag Day

Archie Paris, a writer for the Summerville, SC Journal-Scene, wrote the following article for his newspaper as part of a series on favorite flag stories. Archie, navigator on the 603 Fred Wismer crew, was shot down over Merseberg on November 21, 1944 and ... “for you the war is over.” His “favorite flag story” took place in a PW camp at Moosburg as American forces liberated the camp.

BY ARCHIE PARIS

In the closing, apocalyptic days of World War II, I was one of thousands of American airmen imprisoned in Stammlager VIIA, a prisoner of war camp operated by the German Wehrmacht. It is located near the town of Moosburg in the Munich area and was originally designated as an internment camp for captured ground forces personnel of the allied nations including the Russians.

During February of 1945, jointly mounted offensives by the Allied in the west and the Russians in the east had prompted the Germans to transfer large groups of their POWs out of liberation’s way. My previous encampment had been Stalag Luft IIIA, a Luftwaffe installation located near Sagan, some 70 miles southeast of Berlin.

The ever burgeoning POW population of Stammlager VIIA was now represented by the many service branches of the multi-national Allied forces. To the credit of the Germans, they managed, for the most part, to assign the polyglot conglomeration to compounds by nationality.

On Tuesday, April 24, 1945, in the quiet hours that followed the 10 P.M. curfew and “lights out”, we heard the first, distant thunder of heavy weapons fire. Each succeeding evening brought a renewed crescendo and by Saturday, the most welcomed rhapsody could be heard throughout the day. The war was coming to Moosburg.

On Sunday morning, April 29, small arms fire crackled about the camp — our liberation was at hand. The Germans gave up all measures of prisoner control and instead gave themselves up to the advancing troops. Some of the more foolhardy offered token resistance and were rewarded with a final solution.

And then it happened.

Someone directed the attention of the reveling POWs in our compound to a flurry of activity taking place at a distant flagpole beyond the perimeter of the camp but with its top half within view. I’m sure the same scene was taking place in the adjacent compounds that also contained Americans.

The swastika centered Nazi flag was being lowered. Immediately, a limp pennant was raised in its place. The sweet spring breezes that coursed through the upper levels of the camp caught its folds and unfurled it.

There they were in the bright sunlight — 48 sparkling white stars nestled in a field of majestic blue, cornered by the shimmering red and white stripes. Every wind-triggered spasmodic tug of the flag seemed to send out the clarion call of, “Welcome back boys, welcome back.”

The sudden, unexpected appearance of that sacred and blessed tri-colored bolt of cloth transfixed the Americans. Spine tingling chills surged upward seeking escape only to be thwarted by stifled throats that at first, produced half-choking sobs.

Youthful but combat-hardened faces struggling to maintain their new found sense of maturity, made weakening attempts to hold back the ever-accumulating wellsprings of tears.

The pent up reservoirs finally burst. Battle tested veterans of the wild, blue yonder wept unabashedly and uncontrollably — not for the liberation itself but for the first unheralded sight of the flag.

It was a glorious, delirious moment that would be etched and forever cached in the deepest recesses of the mind. In future recollections it would provide ever-available sources of warmth and well being. Every liberated American POW — whichever, wherever and whenever the conflict from then till now — must have experienced the same sensation.

During the recent troubled decades of our history, these once forlorn souls must have viewed with agonizing disbelief, painful despair and cold, disdain, “principled” American protesters burning or otherwise desecrating the flag.

In shocked unison, they must have chorused, “How could they, how could they?”



ARCHIE PARIS
Wellsprings Of Tears in PW Camp

I BURNED MY FLAG

I burned my flag today. Yes, Old Glory went up in smoke and fire bringing to an end the 15 years it had served so faithfully on our 20-foot flag pole in our back yard.

But alas, it had begun to show its age. A good bit tattered and its proud colors faded. Its owner recognized such symptoms in himself. Not a whole lot he could do for himself except face the years with dignity ... and try not to pretend “I’m as good as I always was.”

But the flag had pride, and seemed to be calling out, “It’s time for a change.” Time to replace what can’t be cleaned and repaired. Time for a new flag!

And so, down came our old friend for the last time, into our favorite five-gallon all-purpose can. And then the match.

But first —

“Our Father and our God, I thank you for this old flag. I thank you for allowing me to serve it in time of war and peace. I thank you for the country it represents. I recognize that there are those among us who would burn this flag with acts of dishonor and disrespect; may these people instead “humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways and I will hear them from Heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.”

I burned my flag today.

To make way for a new flag.

— ALLEN OSTROM

“The American flag may be mended, dry-cleaned or washed. An old flag, or one with an out-of-date design, may be displayed as long as it is in a respectable condition. When it has become so ragged or badly soiled that it is no longer fit for display, it should be destroyed in some dignified way, preferably by burning.” — THE WORLD BOOK.

Hoelzel Digs Out Old Flimsies To Clarify Long Forgotten Names

Every now and again members ask the FLAK NEWS editor questions like, "Where do you get all your material for the newsletter?" The answer could be something like, "Well, I do collect stuff and I try to keep records," or "Members volunteer information," or "I make a lot of telephone calls," etc.

And sometimes, "I write a lot of letters and ask a lot of questions." And occasionally, these result in return mail, like the one received from Harry Hoelzel of Whittier, California, a pilot with the 600th Squadron.

We asked him a variety of questions about the "Moorhen" parking area at Station 131, the field perimeter taxi routings, etc. The following are his comments.

BY HARRY HOELZEL

I received your letter last week and here are some answers to the questions you asked.

I did not draw in the taxi route on the field plot plan. This was always done by the squadron or group clerk (whoever prepared the "assignment sheet" for that mission). He used either a soft lead pencil or mostly a black stylus marking Crayola.

Runways are always straight and so whatever heading appears at one end is always 180 degrees off what would appear at the other end. Therefore, 050 degrees + 180 degrees = 230 (or 23) degrees heading at the opposite end.

With respect to who was parked at "Moorhen"? In today's vernacular this area would be referred to as the "transient tie-down" area. The square with the "A" in it was the base administrative headquarters building, and the square to the S/W with the letter "P" in it was the tower building.

Usually parked in the "Moorhen" area was the P-47, the A-20, and the Consolidated Aircraft Corp. A-35 that big ugly dive bomber. Today these would be referred to as "executive aircraft", because you may recall Lt. Colonels Ensign and Rooney loved to fly them and occasionally Ensign would monitor the group's form-up at the buncher beacon, and even tail the group to the European coast (then nit-pick the performance at the debriefing or next day's briefing).

Finally, I don't think many squadron or group clerks ever saw the way "Neway" or "Newway" was spelled on the Wing documents.

Back to the field layout again, the area that looks like a keyhole just S/E of "E" was the skeet/trap shooting area. Also, another plane parked at "Moorhen" was that tired and retired B-17E that was the group tow-target plane. I was privileged to fly that one back to the States. As old and dilapidated as it may have appeared, it flew like the wind — 185 MPH with no effort whatsoever (because it had no armor plate and no turrets). It also had no heaters and no auto turbocharger (you had to set the manifold pressure with the spacing 'key'. But this was no problem since we flew below 12,000 feet anyway). Furthermore, the anticipation of going home kept the adrenaline flowing and everyone in good spirits.

I am attaching, for your reading pleasure and amusement, some notes from my May 10 & 13, 1945 diary. I believe these were more or less the last missions flown by the 398th group (non-combat). These were the kinds of missions that for me made it all seem worthwhile and were a joy to fly. I visited the cathedral in Cologne in 1986, which we circled twice at an altitude *below* the cross at the top of the twin steeples on "Rubberneck I" and to my surprise the roof and steeples are still not repaired, and a padre is standing at the door begging for donations to continue the restoration work — which are insufficient to keep up with the deterioration let alone restore anything.

The photo of the Cologne Cathedral as it appeared in 1945 was pictured in the October issue of FLAK NEWS. The devastation around the cathedral was an eye-opener for all of us who had a hand in the bombing of Nazi Germany. Looking from tree-top level was certainly far more dramatic than the view from 27,000 feet.

And our "passengers" for the day were impressed. These were the station's cooks, bakers, mechanics, parachute riggers, drivers, clerks and all the other ground guys who wanted a look-see at what their efforts back on the base had helped accomplish on the continent during our group's 195 combat missions.

Ted Johnston, Hal Weekley On 398th Board

Ted Johnston, who guided much of the monumental logistic work at the 50th anniversary party for the B-17 in Seattle in 1985, is the new vice president of the 398th Bomb Group.

And Hal Weekley, the only WW II B-17 pilot still flying a Fortress, is a new director on the 398th Board.

The two were voted to their respective positions at the San Diego reunion, replacing former VP Art Harris and director Harry Gray. Both had asked to step down after long years of service.

"We are all grateful to Art and Harry for their years of service," said president Bill Comstock. "Harry will continue to provide the mailing labels for FLAK NEWS," added Comstock. "And Harris, with a heavy volunteer schedule in Kiwanis youth work, will contribute expertise in the group's Memorial Fund program."

Johnston held a number of management positions with Boeing and now serves as a docent at the Seattle Museum of Flight. Weekley is the chief pilot for the Aluminum Overcast, B-17 flagship of the Experimental Aviation Association (EAA) of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The 398th membership contributed over \$21,000 to restore and repaint the exterior of the Aluminum Overcast, completed in the color scheme of the 398th Bomb Group.

After being elected to the board at the San Diego business meeting, one member was overheard to say —

"Well, now that we have the chief pilot of Aluminum Overcast on our board, we should be able to get the plane to come to our next meeting down in Nashville.

"And I'll be there to see him cut the grass when he comes in."

Group Memento Still Available

One of the many neat things that have been developed as a "398th Bomb Group memento" is the personalized membership plaque designed by Lloyd Stovall of Atlanta.

These cost \$25 each, measuring 6" x 8". Gold for regular membership and silver for lifetime membership. Send your orders to Ralph Hall, New Bedford, MA 02740.

Tour of the Ruhr

FORMATIONS

May 10, 1945

602 Squadron I		603rd Squadron II		600th Squadron III		601st Squadron IV	
BROWN Elwell		MOY Gieryn		TREVERROW McLean		MILLS Womeldurf	
Wintersteen	Shafer	Greenwalt	Branyon	Hill	Hoelzel	Green	Vallish
Lamiell		Douglas		Maudsley		Starkey	
Godfrey	Heathcote	Leung	Mattson	Eisele	Shimek	Merritt	Lewis



THIS WAS HEADQUARTERS for the 398th Bomb Group reunion Nov. 7-9, 1991 in San Diego. Slightly more posh than HQ at ol' Station 131. Here was registration, the PX, the Memory Room, video center and general gathering place for most of the 476 members and guests. The same sign will be seen next year in Nashville.

IT WAS A GOOD ONE

Continued From Page 1

Duvall was seen all around the Town & Country Hotel during the three-day event. One came to him bearing letters dating back 47 years. "This is the letter you wrote to me after my husband's plane was shot down," said Gertrude Wells Neff.

"And now I finally get a chance to thank you for your kindness."

The Memory Room was always filled with little groups, some re-living a special mission. Comparing notes. Asking questions. Sharing photographs.

Maurice Trokey came over to the chaplain's table at the Welcome Banquet. "This is my first reunion and I don't know a soul. But I remember you."

Bob Uhl tugged at more than a few hearts with stories of his time in prison camp, and how thrilled he and his fellow PW's were each time they looked up and followed group after group of B-17's droning overhead. He struck some responsive chords when he told of a German officer's explanation on how the Nazis came to power.

"We forgot to care."

George Hilliard, everybody's favorite crew chief, represented all the ground support personnel in accepting president Bill Comstock's "Flowers For The Living" award. The entire reunion was dedicated to the "ground guys."

Yes, there was dancing, sing alongs with Dick Frazier and even a barber shop quartet. There were tours to the San Diego Zoo, Wild Animal Park and Sea World. Some went to Tijuana, some went golfing, some

hit the shops, some went swimming in one of the hotel's four pools. And, of course, three great banquets.

Chairman Bob Hopkins had a little something for everybody.

Especially an atmosphere of camaraderie, love and affection that could only be possible among men and women who went through much together and are unwilling to loosen this bond.

Plans Already Underway For Nashville

One reunion has just ended (San Diego) but another reunion is already in the planning stage (Nashville).

The 398th will next meet in the "Grand Ole Opry" city of Nashville, Tennessee on September 18-19-20, 1992.

The host hotel will be the Nashville Marriott near the airport.

And the reunion chairman will be Dewey Cook, who did his tour with the 398th as an engineer turret gunner on the Arthur Fritog crew of the 600th Squadron. Cook remained in the Air Force and retired as chief master sergeant.

Further announcements on the Nashville reunion activities, along with the Official Registration Form, will be published in the April issue of FLAK NEWS.

The Reunion Spirit:

Jack Lee Helps Turn On Many Banquet Smiles

BY JACK LEE

It would be travesty of truth and a blatant lie if I did not plagiarize the words from a recent stage production, and admit I am "One Happy Fella!" following the San Diego Reunion.

I was blessed with a most happy reunion in several ways.

Five of our nine man crew were present. Two of these, the BTG and the radio operator, had not been seen or heard from in 47 years. We had a wonderful time and rebounded our friendship of yore. All agreed we had been a compatible crew, worked well together, and had lots of pleasant memories.

The facility (Town & Country Hotel) was great. The poolside tables just outside the Memory Room provided an ideal setting to sit and chat with our old friends, look through one another's albums, and reminisce.

The evening programs were a good mix of ingredients. I enjoyed Chaplain Duvall's "I Remember" last year, and was pleased to hear some more this year. He is a fine speaker. The S-I-N-G A-L-O-N-G-S were a youth serum.

The food at the dinners was outstanding. Of all the banquets I've attended during my life, the food and service we experienced on Nov. 7, 8, and 9 was far and away the best ever.

Since there are many far more interesting and exciting stories to tell than mine, I was surprised to have been plopped onto the agenda. Nevertheless it gave me the opportunity to indulge in a hobby I haven't exercised since shortly after retiring.

Prior to my part of the agenda on the 8th, I invoked the power of the Three Musketeers of Good Luck, — Preparation, Perspiration, and Prayer; the last of which, is the most powerful.

I wanted to lighten the hearts of those in the audience; and not to offend or embarrass anyone. If that were to occur, I would be richly rewarded. As it turned out, it appears I luckily did and was.

As I stood there making my delivery, my perception based on what I could see and hear, was that I lucked out in my selection of subjects and was hitting responsive chords.

The reception given to me by the more than 400 members of the 398th will long linger in my memory. Their smiles, laughter, and tears of joy, while I was speaking; and the kind words from so many later, were a treasure greater than a rainbow of jewels could buy.

I regret that my confused neurons were not in better working order while still at the podium, for I should have thanked them then and there.

Many, many thanks, for making it all possible.

George's Big Night



GEORGE HILLIARD, forever in the background doing his work on behalf of the 398th Bomb Group, was brought "front and center" with his wife, Elaine, to receive the "Flowers For The Living" Award from President Bill Comstock at the San Diego reunion. Hilliard was honored for his many years as the group's "contact" officer and chief locator of "lost souls."



THE THEME at the San Diego reunion was "Honoring Our Ground Support Personnel." And in honor of the occasion, each member from the ground echelon paraded to the podium and received a specially engraved key ring. Each member, after introducing himself, received his key ring from Ted Johnston (far left), newly elected 398th Bomb Group vice president.

The Reunion Count Was 476

In addition to the 255 members listed here, the San Diego reunion attracted an additional 221 wives, companions and friends for a grand total of 476. Not a threat to the record 531 at Oshkosh last year, but substantially more than predicted by the "experts."

Reunion Attendees

Aasen, Donald
Adams, C.D.
Akins, Kenneth
Albro, Albert
Alfano, John
Alhadeff, Ike
Allare, John
Allen, George
Alpert, Stanley
Alwood, Joseph
Andrews, Alton
Arbogast, Phil
Ashour, D.M.
Auten, William

Baffaro, Lou
Bauhoff, Christian
Berardi, Vincent
Bernard, John
Berryhill, Earl
Berz, Marvin
Bickford, Cleo
Binger, Bruce
Bingham, Hugh
Birch, Oral
Blacker, Robert
Blackwell, Wally
Boehme, Herb
Bourquin, John
Bradford, Oliver
Brass, Jr., Ernest
Brown, Dale
Brown, Paul
Brusch, James
Burke, Lewis
Busbee, Charles
Bussard, James
Butikofer, Merrill

Cameron, Carl
Campbell, Wallis
Canter, Charles
Cantwell, Robert
Carter, Richard
Carter, William
Catterson, Kenneth
Cervoski, Frances
Clack, Bill
Clyne, Harold
Coffee, Marv
Coleman, Winsor
Comstock, William
Conrow, Russell
Cooper, Joseph
Core, Ben
Cosens, Loren
Courtenay, Gordon
Crouch, Dorothy
Crough, Edward
Cucco, Joseph
Cullinan, Stephen
Culver, Lowell
Cunningham, Byron
Currier, Russell

D'Addio, Phil
Daily, Bruce
Darcy, Lawrence
Davis, Elwood
Davis, John
Dean, William
Dell'Aria, Pat
Desh, Herbert
Doerstler, Wayne
Dougherty, A.L.
Durtschi, William
Duvall, James

Ebest, Dallas
Echevarria, Jose
Erickson, Vaughn
Erler, Donald

Fender, Keith
Ferrante, William
Fisher, Bill
Fleming, William
Flood, George
Foster, Carl
France, Charlotte
Franks, Clarence

Frazier, Dick
Frazier, Willis

Ganz, Bill
Gaynor, John
Generaux, Harry
Genung, Merwin
Gomez, Anthony
Gonzales, Fred
Graham O.D., George
Gray, Harry
Griffin, Donald
Griffin, Richard
Grinter, Don

Hagedorn, Hank
Hall, Joe
Hall, Ralph
Hammer, Philip
Harbauer, John
Hardy, John
Harris, Art
Hart, Robert
Harvey, Roger
Hershberger, George
Hilliard, George
Hobbs, John
Hoelzel, Harry
Holmes, Jr., William
Hopkins, Robert
Horvath, Steve
Howden Ross
Hoynes, Earl
Humbert, James
Hunter, John
Hunter, Maria

Ilko, George

Jenkins, James
Jillie, Don
Johanson, Dennis
Johnson, Lawrence
Johnston, Ted
Jones, Edward
Jordan, Jeanne

Kerr, Walter
Kizcz, Steve
Kircher, Carl
Klix, George
Knowles, Bob
Kozak, Stephen
Kraft, Robert
La Coste, Ernie
Lamb, Hal
Laufer, Marvin
Law, Sylvia
Lee, Jack
Lescale, Jr., Henry
Loveless, Jr., Lee (Jay)
Lydic, Eugene

MacKenzie, Bernard
Markham, Bill
Markley, William
Marquez, Pasqual
Marsh, Walt
Martin, William
Martone, Augie
McCann, John
McCormick, John
McDougall, Harry
McGeorge, George
McLaughlin, W.A.
Meador, Olan
Meden, Frank
Menard, Don
Miller, Samuel
Mitchell, Catherine
Monagin, Jerry
Morrison, Bob
Mudge, Wesley
Mueller, Thomas
Murphy, Arthur
Nadel, Saul
Neff, Gertrude W.
Newbrough, Ken
Norton, Lloyd

Ostrom, Allen
O'Sullivan, Francis

Otto, William
Overturf, Thomas

Paget, Percy
Palant, Samuel
Parker, William
Perkins, Guy
Pickett, Paul
Pinner, Howard
Poole, Edward
Prather, Lynn
Pritchard, Dale

Quinn, Stephan

Rahe, Max
Randall, Howard
Reed, Russell
Regello, Theo
Riley, Erwin
Robb, William
Roderick, Paul
Roher, Richard
Ross, Dwight
Ross, Robert
Rowland, Robert
Ruckel, Ben
Rudow, Henry
Runnion, James
Rush, Donald
Rusinak, George
Ryan, John

Schapiro, Joseph
Schneider, Arnold
Scribner, Frank
Sebastian, Clyde
Setter, Ron
Severi, Anthony
Shaw, Albert
Sheely, Jr., Roy
Schultz, Charles
Sigsworth, Marg
Sienkiewicz, Johanna
Skarda, Joe
Small, Walter
Smith, John
Spechuilli, Joe
Stachura, Robert
Stallcup, Harold
Stange, Ray
Steele, Bob
Stitz, Thomas
Stoffer, Louis
Stovall, Lloyd
Sutton, Charles
Swed, Morris
Swift, David
Swjantek, Charles

Tarr, Joe
Taylor, William P.
Test, Roy
Timm, Wilber
Traeder, Howard
Trenkle, Philip
Trigher, Sidney
Trokey, Maurice
Turney, Albert

Uhl, Robert

Vanner, Thomas
Veley, Les
Vollhaber, Warren

Watson, Leland
Webb, John
Weekley, Hal
Weiler, Frank
Welty, Robert
White, Jim
White, Vic
Wilbur, Charles
Wintersteen W. Jack
Wolf, Melvin
Wolford, Jerry
Woolf, Jim

Yip, James

Zeller, Lou
Zins, Samuel
Zozzaro, Michael



When "Merseburg" Meant "Target For Today" For The 398th

of Leipzig, is pictured on left according to despite a half century under Russian domina- ammering by allied bombers in World War city on most occasions when the 398th paid y the petro chemical factory at Leuna. The have seen. The falling smoke bomb on the

far right, actually far from the ground, appears to be heading for the Leuna town center. It can be identified on the atlas as Clara Zetkin Platz. All the bombs actually were ticket- ed for the Leunawerke, indicated by the billows of smoke generated by bombs from another group. Many 398th members will see this area next summer, not from bombsight level, but from their seats on a German tour bus. The strike photo was sent to FLAK NEWS by Jim Hill, Editor of 8th Air Force News.

"Nan-Seven-Mike You Are On Fire!"

Vivid Details of Attack Remain With Reed

BY RUSS REED

Pilot, 603rd Squadron

The early hours of November 2, 1944 didn't start out right. I could have sworn I'd just crawled into the sack when I was being shaken awake. No amount of cussing, fuming and groaning would make the wake-up CQ go away. Something about an R&R crew not getting back didn't help one bit.

Youth won out over sleeplessness and indiscretions and our crew hit the briefing room with everyone else, waiting for the curtain to be pulled and the briefing to start. I realized I had on the new pants bought at the London PX, the crisp green shirt, polished brass and shiny boots of the day before. Hours later when "Jerry" peeled me out of my flying clothes they were impressed.

Merseburg was at the end of the string that day . . . the Leuna oil works. Flak would be heavy, we could expect fighters plus all the other bits and pieces of a mission briefing seemed to thud against my numb brain.

We were to be the last group of the entire 8th Air Force to cross the target, and our 601st squadron would be the last squadron in the bomber string.

When we arrived at our ship, N7M, the crew chief informed me that it had made 58 missions with no aborts and he'd like me to bring it back to him in one piece. Takeoff and assembly all went according to plan and we felt good by the time we received our welcoming flak burst as we hit the European coast.

Though flak was heavy, close to the target, the formations hung together, even after the drop and turn-off the target. As we turned right off the target, the additional flak to our left probably was from the Leipzig area. So far so good. Suddenly, my co-pilot, Dick Wanserski pointed forward and shouted on the interphone . . . "he blew up . . . he vanished."

Then Dick pointed to a hole in our right wing. As an instrument scan showed, No. 1 engine had lost all oil and fuel pressure. Dick punched the feather bottom and shut it down. As I was trying to keep our position information there was a puff of black smoke and a sharp crack from a flak burst outboard of No. 1 engine. One of the feathered blades seemed to fold back over the cowling. Because of the din of battle, I could sense rather than hear or feel pieces of metal hitting the side of the aircraft. As quickly as our hell had started, it quit.

Assessing damage, we had No. 1 shut down, No. 2 only drawing half power, No's. 3 and 4 OK but a significant hole in the right wing. Everyone answered to an interphone check. We were still in business. The controls seemed sloppy so I called George (Barney) Barnum, our tail gunner, for a damage report. Part of the vertical fin was gone, as was a part of the left horizontal stabilizer, but still things didn't look too bad.

Fighters soon joined the action, and we picked up a FW-190 on our tail. Barney waited until he was in range and ran off a short burst. And then both guns jammed. While he was trying to clear and reload another flak burst blew the barrels off and a piece of flak knocked Barney's ammo belt into his lap. He was out of business.

The interphone chatter was broken with "Nan-Seven-Mike you're on fire". Somebody had broken radio silence! After seven of these panic calls, it dawned on me that we were N7M and a quick



RUSS REED

check confirmed we were indeed on fire. The goodies we had been taught plus tricks that were rumored to work weren't working on the fire, but when I dumped the nose for a slip it gave the ball turret gunner, Darrel Thorpe, a chance to open up with a long burst. The shouts of "you got him" were welcome but time had run out.

As I couldn't hear myself on the interphone, I gestured to Dick to get the "bailout" command to the rest of the crew. After engaging the auto pilot . . . it still worked . . . I got out of the seat and headed to the bomb bay which the bombardier had reopened. As I turned back toward the bomb bay, my harness hooked on the bomb bay door handle. By this time Dick was under a full head of steam and he put his large flying boot in my butt and I was free. Just before tumbling out through the open bomb bay doors, I was fascinated by the flames curling into the forward section of the bomb bay from the left wing root.

It seemed forever before I would completely orientate and take stock. The "D" ring was still in my gloved hand, my flak helmet was still in place. I located N7M, still proudly flying, wings level, nose slightly down, blazing away and eventually disappearing. As I floated earthward, I marveled at the deafening silence of parachute travel, not the least concerned that I was descending into the enemy's lap; that my belongings would be divided by those back at the base; and my family would get a MIA telegram.

This reverie was broken by an occasional buzzing or whining noise I'd never experienced before. I eventually figured out there were bullets in the air around me. Seconds after a muzzle flash, from a walled enclosure of buildings, the buzzing was heard again. What a way to go . . . like a bobbing target at a carnival show! Below on the ground was a small circle, growing larger by the minute and moving in the same direction as I was moving. Soon it was obvious that this was my reception committee. My landing wasn't pretty. As I hit the plowed field in the bull's eye of the moving target, I felt something give in my ankle, but I remember no pain at that

moment. As I tried to get up I found myself unceremoniously flat on my back. After the third time, I got the message and stayed down ready to defend myself, but with what. Their threatening gestures and shouts were only for my .45 and knife, neither of which I carried. But my gloves and "D" ring went as souvenirs. By the time the flying boots and flying suit were gone and I was standing there in all my London finery, my Luftwaffe savior arrived. He was an enlisted man from a nearby flak battery.

I had to gather up the parachute and he then pointed me toward the flak battery, but I could hardly bear any weight on the ankle and was in severe pain. Limping along with the parachute made the couple of hundred yards seem like an eternity. Thorpe, the ball turret gunner, was already there. Someone finally made the decision to march us through the fields toward a town. We certainly attracted attention, including one old farmer with a manure fork who dearly wanted to bury that instrument into either one or both of us. At this point I was frightened. Our guard finally had to threaten him and others with his sidearm to allow us to continue. Twenty to thirty minutes later, we joined several other airmen all looking just as forlorn as Darrel and myself. One of these, I later learned, was the "Micky" operator on the aircraft that Dick had seen blow up. Another from that crew had suffered many broken capillaries in the whites of his eyes from the explosion. As we awaited transportation to the local slammer, he would keep his head down until a large crowd of women and children would push fairly close to us, and when a good-sized audience gathered, he suddenly raise his head and stare at the crowd with those blood red eyes and scare the kids.

An old dilapidated truck finally arrived for our transport to the local jail. Even though we probably would have been able to talk to one another, conversation was minimal. The seriousness of our situation had settled in. Sometime late at night a doctor, or someone, looked at my ankle and decided that since I'd hobbled this far I could hobble some more.

My memories of getting from the jail in the Leipzig-Halle area by truck and train to Frankfurt is blurred until our arrival at the bombed-out Frankfurt railroad station. It was too early in the morning for the trolley to Oberusel, the interrogation center, to begin operating, so we were held in a subway-like area. A cleaning crew of about six females arrived to start their day's work, but took time out to fight their own war with us. The harassment made an hour wait seem like forever. The eventual arrival of the trolley was the blessing of the day. Our presence of the trolley, however, caused little or no major concern to the other riders. They were used to Allied POW's on their way to the interrogation center.

Interrogation consisted of many hours and several days in my little white cell with its single light bulb and high windows, and sessions first with the military interrogator then the political interrogator. After several names, rank and serial number encounters, the interrogator got very impatient and read off a partial list of my crew, home base of Nuthampstead, England, what happened to the aircraft, and that I was awfully young (20) to be in command of an aircraft and

Continued On Page 9

FORMATIONS

November 2, 1944

Target: **MERSEBURG, GERMANY**

Lead Squadron — 600

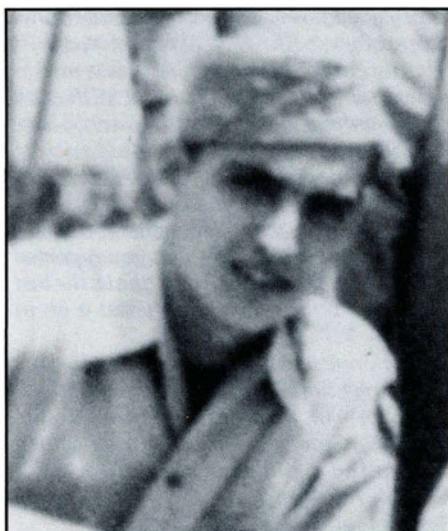
	MARKLEY		
	McLaughlin		
Matthews		PAPPAS	
		Slavin	
Atkins		Zimmer	
Grinter	Dean	Hansard	Johnston
	Cummings		
Johnson		Sponholtz	

Low Squadron — 603

	MAGNAN		
	Buzza		
Lee		Moore	
Hyndman		Stockman	
Spitzer	Tarr	Powell	Gonzales
	Newman		
Wismer		Reed	

High Squadron — 601

	SCOFIELD		
	Stallcup		
Hosman		Stallings	
Campbell		Cucco	
Sitler	Morrison	Rolfe	Hunt
	Rogers		
Curtis		Blackwell	



GEORGE BARNUM

THE EDITOR'S Briefing Room

President **Bill Comstock** and the other 398th officers, including your FLAK NEWS editor, wish to thank all the folks around the country (and offshore) for the many Christmas and New Year's greetings and expressions of thanks ... members of the 1986 tour to England and France were saddened to learn of the passing of **Michel de Vallavielle**, mayor of Ste. Marie-du-Mont and Utah Beach ... another untimely loss was **Sam Huntington**, one of the pilots of Aluminum Overcast, flagship of the EAA Museum at Oshkosh ... the 50th anniversary of the 8th AF's arrival in England is expected to cause a hotel crunch in East Anglia what with so many vets returning ... the 398th travellers will have no problem as they will be welcomed at individual "home stay" residences ... 8th Air Force News featured **Steve Quinn's** great 1944 poem, "Thirty Thousand Feet" in its October 1991 issue ... **Steve** was a 603 navigator ... the 1992 8th AF Historical Society reunion will be held October 6-11 in Louisville, KY ... someone at the San Diego reunion left his grey, Pendleton hat in the Memory Room (size 7 1/4); your FLAK NEWS editor has it ... thanks primarily to "finder-of-lost-souls" **George Hilliard**, the 398th roster continues to grow; one of his latest finds was **Marvin Laufer**, who was pinned with a Silver Star by **Col. Hunter** for action with the 15th Air Force, flew a couple of missions with the 398th and then was shot down over Merseburg ... **Marvin** will be one of our hosts when the group meets in Buffalo in 1993 ... **Comstock** is a hard man to surprise, but he was visably blown away when his fellow officers presented him with a "thank you" plaque featuring an old B-17 manifold pressure gauge ... the reunion featured the ground support echelons, and showing up with nine of the 29 members of their group was the 603rd Ordnance ... **Ken Green**, who along with **Ralph Hall** and **Wally Blackwell** searched for the "buried" B-17, Miss X, in Salem, MA, came up with one of the plane's radio receivers; it was donated to the EAA, to be delivered by **Hal Weekley** ... will one of you armorer experts tell the FLAK NEWS editor the purpose of that little 1/4" x 1" gun bolt? ... and who can provide the details of the story of **Col. Hunter's** crash landing at an English fighter strip? ... "You can't land here," they said; but he did ... **Homer Roades** lives in Houston, TX and **Jack Hudson** in Seabrook, TX and they met by accident at a clinic because **Hudson** had a 398th bumper sticker on his car ... **Sylvia Law** came to the reunion to learn more about the mission that took the lives of her brother, 602 pilot **Lyle Doerr**, and his crew; but just as interested in the proceedings was her husband, **Vern**, who did his WWII stint as a C-47 pilot in the CBI theater ...

"Suddenly, I Felt Very Lonely"

Continued From Page 8

crew. There were a couple of names he did not mention and one that seemed to confuse him. Victor Krizek was an original member of the crew but we had to leave him along the way to England to recover from pneumonia and had only recently caught up and was on his first mission. The interrogator noted a couple of crew missing and asked me to tell their names so he could make sure they weren't shot as spies or if their bodies were recovered, their families could be notified. Refusal to give any additional information at this point irritated him and I was told to expect more solitary. There was one more session at which he seemed very conciliatory and asked one more question.

Could I describe the "H" model modifications on the B-17? When I professed ignorance, I was told that someone as young as I probably wouldn't

be privy to these things anyway. I felt about two feet high at that point and welcomed my little cell.

The next time I was taken out was to a political interrogator. As I arrived at his office, an air raid alert sounded and the windows were shuttered. During his interrogation, we both listened to the drone of the aircraft. When it was evident that the Frankfort area was not the target, he opened the shutters and allowed me to look up into a beautiful clear azure blue sky, filled with B-17's with red wing tips, red horizontal stabilizers and red vertical fins. The first combat wing of the first division was there in full glory. While watching this magnificent spectacle, he mentioned the over-whelming magnitude of our logistics. How could we continue to lose crews and aircraft and still fill the skies with formations like this day after day? The 398th.BG didn't need Russ Reed. Now I was only a number and suddenly I felt very lonely.

398th BOMB GROUP OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
William G. (Bill) Comstock
Fairfax, VA 22031

TREASURER
Ralph Hall
New Bedford, MA 02740

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
William H. Jones
Florence, AL 35630

Dale Brown
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

VICE PRESIDENT
T.J. (Ted) Johnston
Seattle, WA 98146

UNIT CONTACT
George Hilliard
Cincinnati, OH 45236 (513)

Harold D. (Hal) Weekley
Mableton, GA 30059

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Allen Ostrom
Seattle, WA 98177

SECRETARY
Wally Blackwell
Rockville, MD 20850

GROUP HISTORIAN AND
PX Jack Wintersteen
Danville, PA 17821

James R. (Dick) Frazier
Newalla, OK 74857

TAPS: Final Call For 398th Veterans

Adeleman, Milo
 Agnew, Harry
 Alexander, Claude
 Anderson, Emil
 Anderson, Roy L.
 Anderson, William G.
 Andrews, Kenneth E.
 Arlin, Allen A.
 Armstrong, Sidney A.
 Armstrong, Walter G.
 Ashworth, Dean H.
 Atkins, James R.
 Audet, Paul E.
 Aukerman, John V.
 Austad, Kermit

Bagley, Bernard
 Bailey, Ray E.
 Baird, Harold
 Baker, Albert A.
 Baptist, Claude A.
 Barkovich, Fred
 Barnhard, Joseph E.
 Bartimus, Neil R.
 Basco, John J.
 Bash, Claire C.
 Baxter, Richard
 Beatty, Oscar L.
 Beavers, Cecil
 Beckley, Robert J.
 Belcher, Jess
 Bell, Marvin
 Benefiel, Phillip L.
 Bennett, Norville
 Berry, Kearie L.
 Berthoud, Charles
 Bewley, James A.
 Bingle, Henry
 Bird, John C.
 Blanda, Guido
 Blankenship, G.W.
 Bonjani, Bruno
 Bosshart, Herbert
 Bowman, Leonard L.
 Brady, Jack
 Braddock, Heyward M.
 Breault, Al.
 Brewer, Darrell F.
 Breymeyer, Royal
 Briody, J.
 Brown, E. Logan
 Brown, Samuel M.
 Brown, Sidney
 Bushle, Louis
 Butler, John
 Buvinger, David
 Buzza, Kenneth
 Byrne, Felix E.

Callahan, Noel
 Campbell, Van B.
 Campbell, Tom
 Cason, Alfred
 Chesshir, Kenneth
 Chase, Lewis D.
 Christofer, George
 Church, Fred M.
 Churchill, Wesley H.
 Civitarese, William A.
 Clafford, Lloyd
 Clark, Benjamin L.
 Clarke, Walter F.
 Cochran, Curtis
 Coene, William
 Colburn, Warren
 Cole, Harold
 Coleman, George F.
 Colvin, Charles E.
 Colwell, John
 Coombs, William F.
 Coomes, Ralph E.
 Coopet, Joseph L.
 Corcoran, Joseph W.
 Corsuti, Anthony
 Cote, Arthur
 Cowen, Harry
 Cowley, John J.

Cox, Norman
 Crouch, James
 Cummings, D.L.
 Cletcher, James L.
 Dacan, Charles H.
 Dalton, Hal.
 Darnier, Leroy
 Davidoff, Herman
 Delbart, Raymond S.
 Delorier, Joseph
 Devan, Samuel
 Dierolf, Claude E.
 Dippel, Francis
 Douglas, Gene
 Downing, Robert A.
 Dreyer, Charles G.
 Duncan, John W.
 Dunne, Bill
 Dwyer, Jr., William J.

Edgington, Gilbert
 Edwards, John H.
 Ehil, Edward
 Ehret, Clarence
 Elsirod, Orville
 Elwood, Kenneth
 Engard, Robert
 Faber, Herbert G.
 Farenthold, Francis L.
 Farrell, William A.
 Faughn, Joe
 Ferguson, Allen
 Fernandez, Frank
 Fletcher, Richard E.
 Folger, Robert
 Foraker, Kenneth H.
 Francischine, Gino
 Freel, Lawrence A.
 Frew, George
 Fritz, Jack
 Froelich, James S.

Garland, Jack S.
 Gerber, Tom
 Gerloff, Harry
 Gibb, Robert
 Gloor, John
 Godfrey, John
 Goldbach, Ernest
 Grant, Sam
 Green, Norbert
 Greenberg, Abraham I.
 Gresh, Steve
 Griffio, Arthur
 Grossman, M.
 Grothues, Al
 Gruber, Fred
 Gulleddge, Thomas G.

Hager, Herman L.
 Hakomaki, Floyd
 Hancock, William C.
 Hapgood, Alfred
 Hardy, Arnold
 Harmon, Carl H.
 Harrington, Cornelius
 Hartwell, George, W.
 Hatch, Dwight
 Hatcher, Robert
 Hatten, Harold R.
 Hedeen, Melvin
 Heitman, Paul F.
 Herbert, Earl
 Herbert, Robert G.
 Herrera, Pedro
 Hesterly, Kenneth
 Hicinbothem, Franklin
 Hickey, Charles
 Hogrefe, Carl H.
 Holloway, Edwin C.
 Houchins, Harry
 Howard, Grant
 Hreackmack, Joseph
 Hunnicutt, Elzie
 Hunsaker, Edwin F.

Huntington, Sam
 (Associate)
 Hutchinson, John L.
 Hunter, Dr. Lewis G.
 Hyland, Gervase (Gerry)

Isdahl, Chester R.

Jackson, Leroy K.
 Jackson, Paul K.
 Jarman, Gordon
 Jendrezewski, Ray
 Johnson, Gene
 Johnson, Warren
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, Ira
 Jones, William H.
 (Olympia)
 Jordan, Edward
 Jordan, William F.

Kay, Allen
 Kearney, Earl
 Keene, Raymond
 Kelly, Jerome F.
 Kilby, William C.
 Kiser, Kenneth
 Klimaszczski, Victor
 (Klemens)
 Klingenhoffer, John
 Knight, George N.
 Kolb, Kenneth
 Kotte, Norman E.
 Knife, Percy
 (Honorary Member)
 Krause, John J.
 Kroh, Charles H.
 Kuck, Homer R.

Lachman, Russell
 Land, Don
 Lang, Fredrick
 Lassegard, Leroy
 Latrenta, Peter
 LeDoux, Ray J.
 Leemon, Don
 Leonard, Gene
 Levy, David L.
 Linke, Walter J.
 Long, Douglas
 Lowe, Donald B.
 Lowe, Lloyd F.
 Lutz, Joseph

Madden, Edward F.
 Mahlum, Clayton
 Marchbanks Tom.
 Marfilus, Elmer H.
 Massey, Frank
 Matheson, Burton
 Matthews, Tom
 Masters, Marvert
 May, John M.
 Mayers, Joseph W.
 McLaughlin, Ken E. (Bud)
 McLaughlin, Robert J.
 McCoy, Wayne
 McCurdy, Robert G.
 McMenamin, John A.
 Melis, Charles
 Melson, Rufus
 Miller, Lewis M.
 Miller, Paul
 Mills, Richard
 (Rocker)
 Mitchell, George
 Meyers, Russ
 Moore, Randolph
 Moore, Vincent
 Morris, Jr., Stacey
 Moss, Latrelle R.
 Mummert, William S.
 Meyers, Revel J.

Namey, John
 Naragon, Daniel J.
 Nash, George N.

Nelson, Gene
 Nelson, Orville
 Nejascki, Leroy
 Noble, Earl
 Norby, William
 Notarpole, Robert J.

O'Brien, Robert J.
 O'Connell, Danny
 Ongley, Bert
 Overton, Vernon
 Owens, Blaine

Painschab, Joseph H.
 Pappas, Venizelos G.
 Parrish, Lewis E.
 Peach, Tom
 Peek, Kenneth R.
 Perry, Arthur M.
 Peterson, Christian
 Peterson, Raymond
 Pierson, Donald
 Powell, Sam
 Puthoff, Lewis A.
 Pyles, Robert F.
 Pysson, Albert

Radnedge, William B.
 Redican, Francis M.
 Reid, Perry
 Rex, John H.
 Riccio, Michael
 Rich, James T.
 Rickabaugh, Ronald
 Roberts, Jack
 Robinson, Robert
 Rockstroh, Kenneth J.
 Rolles, George
 Rooney, Pete
 Rose, Arthur
 Rosenzweig, Harold
 Rossi, James H.

Sachs, Stanley
 Sawyer, Hiram N.
 Schmidt, Richard H.
 Schneider, John
 Schofield, James
 Scherer, George, J.
 Scott, Ernest D.
 Scott, Jr., Talma A.
 Seaver, Warren
 Selevan, Arthur
 Selgrath, John
 Shadroui, Alfred
 Shaffer, W.A.
 Shaw, Donald
 Shott, Edwin E.
 Sigsworth, John R.
 Simeral, Robert
 Shimek, Albert J.
 Skellinger, Walt.
 Smith, Coy
 Smith, Harold
 Smith, John E.
 Smith, Ralph D.
 Snyder, Frank A.
 Snyder, Harold E.
 Southwick, Earl J.
 Spain, Edwin F.
 Sponholtz, Milo
 Stallings, Harold
 Stanbrough, Claude
 Stankiewicz, Charles
 Stephens, James
 Sticker, Robert F.
 Stormbaugh, C.E.
 Stone, Warren
 Stripling, Aaron M.
 Strnad, Frank
 Struckmeyer, Tom
 Suggett, Walter
 Sullivan, Walter B.
 (Catholic Chaplain)
 Swan, Jr., Neil
 Sweet, Dr. Robert

Taylor, Franklin
 Terbieten, Dr Urban
 Terrion, Leo W.
 Thomas, Henry
 Thompson, Oakley J.
 Thompson, Robert
 Tillman, Wally
 Townsley, Kenneth
 Tracey, Claude W.
 Trotter, Joseph H.
 Troost, H.M.
 Tryon, William V.
 Tucker, Frank
 Turner, Mark

Unkel, Rudolph E.
 Upmeier, Tom

Vanderlick, William
 Vela, George E.
 Vernet, Jr., Waldemar

Waarama, Arthur
 Walkup, Jr., Charles A.
 Wallrath, Raymond

Walter, R.N.
 Waring, Leonard, H.
 Wasserman, Charles
 Wells, Burton B.
 Wells, David
 (Honorary Member)
 White, Victor, H.
 Wickam, James E.
 Wierney, Joseph
 Wilde, George J.
 Williams, Frank J.
 Wilson, William R.
 Wolfe, Leonard
 Woodcock, William
 Woodmansee, D.A.
 Woodruff, Clinton L.
 Woodson, Harold
 Woodson, Woodrow
 Woodring, Dave
 Wright, Ellsworth S.
 Wymer, Kenneth M.

Zagelow, Larry
 Zampetti, Dr. Herman

LETTERS

"My daughter, Carol Hall Coleman, is a captain in the Air Force. (A navigator, like her daddy.) While on TDY last fall in England she took the opportunity of visiting the old base at Nuthampstead. She was greatly impressed as to how much the natives there knew about the 398th and the Triangle W. She even talked to an artist who was doing a series of 8th Air Force WW II paintings and was looking for some special B-17 nose art from our group. I trust FLAK NEWS can take care of him.

"As for me, I was on Hank Rudow's 602 crew and later did a tour in B-29's in Korea. Hank tells me he is going to try to find the location in Belgium where we crash-landed on our 34th mission. He will be on the England-Germany tour next summer."
Dick Hall, Daly City, CA 94015

"My good friend Win Coleman sent me a copy of your FLAK NEWS. I must admit to being envious that the 398th has maintained such a degree of contact with each of its members. Going back to your old base at Nuthampstead should be quite exciting. I often wonder what our 486th base at Sud-bury looks like today.

"And going back to Merseburg, too! My first reaction was the same as you reported among your members. First, 'that's the last place on earth.' And then, 'what a great idea.'

"Our crew went there five times, the last time barely making it back to a fighter base in Belgium on two engines. My hat's off to the 398th. Somehow, your trip puts a fitting ending... and maybe a beginning... to our relationship to the people of Merseburg."

John S. Read, Contoocook, NH 03229.

"Coffee & Cookies at Leuna"

Germans, British Await 398th Tour Party Members

After almost two years of planning, the 1992 tour to Germany & England is just around the corner for several members of the 398th Bomb Group. Dates are June 17 to July 2, 1992.

Packets containing tickets, routings, schedules, SAS travel bags and general tour information will be in the mails shortly after March 1, the absolute deadline for signing on.

Officials in Merseburg, the first stop on the tour, announced that they have arranged special sight-seeing tours, a reception at their famous City Castle, a tree-planting ceremony and, of all things, a coffee and cookie stop in the lunchroom of the Leuna plant that was a popular target for our bombardiers.

Likewise in England, chairman Wilfred Dimsdale and his committee are planning for the "best ever" reception for the travelling party.

As of press time, the party included:

Fil Arbogast & Mabel Wilhelm

William & Jacqueline Auten

Lou & Matea Baffaro

Wally & Teedy Blackwell

William & Norma Carter

Winsor & Joyce Coleman

Bill & Evelyn Comstock

Ben & Polly Anna Core

Dorothy Crouch & Carolyn Wyatt

Lowell & Audrey Culver

Wayne & Ruthanna Doerstler

David & Shirley Edwards

Maurice & Betty Fletcher

Dean & Ruby Foster

Dick & Junice Frazier

Fred & Anne Gonzales

George & Jeanne Graham

Darrell & Monica Graham

Ralph & Marjorie Hall

George & Pearl Hershberger

Harry & Jeanette Hoelzel

James Hotop

Maria Hunter

Joe & Rozanne Joseph

Virgil Kramer

Henry & Lorna Lescale

Daniel Leyva

Jack & Jean Madlung

Joe & Willetta Mansell

Gertrude W. Neff

Elliott & Constance Novek

Allen & Geg Ostrom

James & Juanice Powell

Russ Reed & Helen McMillan

Hank & Louise Rudow

Charles & Leta Seal

Susan Smith

Phil & Margaret Stahlman

Ray & Jeanne Stange

Randy Stange

Charles Sutton

Howard & Jane Traeder

Les Velej

Harold & Billie Weekley

A few "late comers" are expected before deadline time to push the list to about 80.

The tour's Certified Travel Consultant will be Barbara Fish of Travel House, Inc., Seattle.



THE LADIES enjoyed the San Diego reunion, this quartet choosing a visit to the world famous Hotel Coronado. They are Margaret Sigsworth, Frances Weiler, Dorothy Johnston and Geg Ostrom.



THE FLAMINGOS at the San Diego Zoo were the attraction for Betty Mudge and Maria Hunter. Other 398th members visited Sea World and Wild Animal Park.

After 47 Years B-17 Radio Equipment Still Works

Don Menard, who bailed out of his B-17 over Holland in 1944, revisited his Dutch friends last year. Among the highlights of his one-man tour was watching three "elderly" ham operators at a museum in Zevenaar using some of the same radio equipment he used in his Fortress. Following is a narrative of this visit to Holland.

BY DON MENARD

On my recent visit to Zevenaar, Holland, the environs of our crash site on October 28, 1944, I was lodged in a hotel at the nearby town of Oosterbeek in the general vicinity of Arnheim where the failed British airborne invasion "Operation Market Garden" took place in Sept. of 1944.

The Hotel Hartenstein in Oosterbeek served as a division headquarters to Major General R.E. Urquhart, commander of the First British Airborne Division. Since 1978 this building serves as an Airborne Museum with audio-visual presentations

of the First British Airborne Division's role during the joint Allied effort of capturing the bridge at Arnheim along with the American 82nd Airborne in the Nijmegen area and the 101st Airborne in the Eindhoven area. Pictures, weapons, equipment and uniforms of both sides are displayed.

Immediately upon entering this building I was quickly fascinated by a static display of virtually every piece of communication equipment that existed in a B-17 radio room, and even after 47 years it all looked very familiar. After viewing all the displays on the first level, we were led to the basement where all the dioramas are exhibited. Amongst these rooms one had a very familiar sound emanating from it. Morse code.

What I was hearing was a 'ham' radio sequence of messages coming from a BC-391 receiver as used in American aircraft, amongst them the B-17. (I may be a little off on the nomenclature.) In any case there

were three elderly (about our age) ham operators doing their thing on this equipment that is still operational. These were exact copies of what we had seen on the first level on the static display.

It seems that one of these gentlemen is a collector of antique radio and signal equipment and these various items were on loan to the museum. These men all spoke English and they were very fascinated that at one point in time I was a radio-operator of that very equipment as well as ham operator W5LRM after the war.

I was very impressed with this museum. Time did not allow me to visit similar American museums in Holland — the 82nd Airborne in the Nijmegen area and the 101st in the area of Eindhoven. It all was a very nice added touch to the main purpose of my visit to the area, namely spending time with my host research families, the Polmans and the Lusinks.