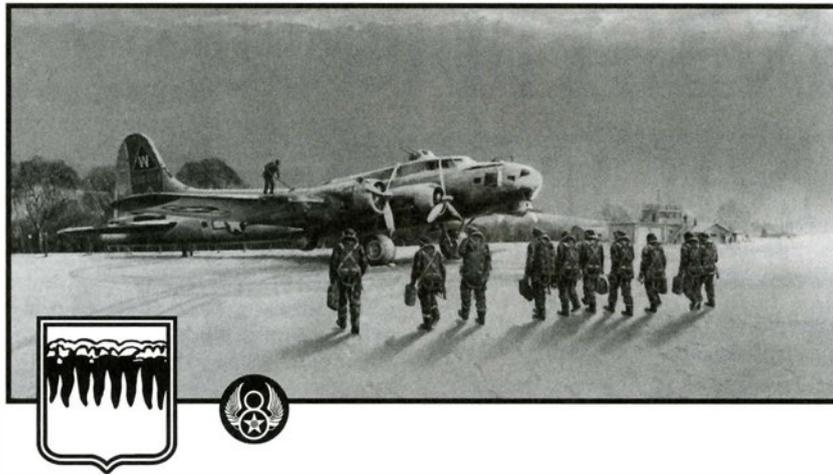




602



601



603



600

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

VOL. 15 NO. 3

FLAK NEWS

JULY 2000



**The Anstey Window**

## *Hearts Touched On 398th Group Tour*

Where does one begin to tell the story bearing the title, "398th Bomb Group Year 2000 England-Continent Tour?"

How does one explain the immensity of a church service in a 12th century building attended by high Church of England dignitaries and an entourage of British royalty? And some 400 visitors from both the nearby farms of Hertfordshire and from across the vast expanse of America?

And all there to pay respects to a few who gave their lives in the name of freedom 55 years ago?

How many in the world today can even find Nuthampstead on the map? Or Anstey, where a stained glass window now bears the names of 398th heroes and has now become a part of the fabric of an ancient building that dates back to William the Conqueror.

Who can measure the tears shed as wives, brothers, sons and

*Continued on Page 3.*



**September Reunion City**

## **ANOTHER "GOOD ONE" FOR SAVANNAH?**

The crystal ball is not a good substitute for facts, but it is beginning to look like the 398th Bomb Group reunion in Savannah, GA September 20-23 is going to be another "good one."

Not that all reunions have not been "good ones," but it is beginning to appear that next month's gathering is going to exceed "official" expectations.

Reunion chairman Marilyn Gibb, who has been monitoring hotel registrations and tour registrations, reports that the group guarantee for Marriott Riverfront Hotel guest rooms will be easily met. And that adjustments in the tour and banquet packages are being adjusted upward.

While the "really big show" doesn't come off until Friday, September 22 (Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum) members seem to be lining up early for such events as the dinner cruise, scheduled for Wednesday evening, September 20.

*Continued on Page 2.*

# SAVANNAH REUNION

(Continued from Page 1.)

(Registrations and hotel forms were in the April issue of FLAK NEWS. For more information, contact chairman Gibb :

This will be the 398th's first visit to Savannah (and the Heritage Museum) so the reunion should "attract a crowd." Gibb suggests that a registration of 400 is "quite possible."

President Wally Blackwell also reminds that many members will want to be on hand for the dedication of the group's new memorial at the museum, and the placement of a pair of stone benches and a tree (see BUSINESS NEWS on page 2).

Gibb also said that the Reunion Registration Packets will be available at the hotel's Plaza Room starting Wednesday morning at 9 AM.

Joe Joseph, the PX impresario, said he and Rozanne also will have their sale items in place at the same time.

Programs for the Thursday and Saturday night banquets at the Marriott Riverfront Hotel are still being formulated. However, already "set" for both evenings is the appearance of "Phyl and Her Toe-Tappin' Organ." Phyllis Rahe returns for an "en-core" appearance following her popular "debut" last year at Oklahoma City. She is the wife of 602 pilot Max Rahe.

It is quite possible that the veterans who were on the June England Tour and sang in Dick Frazier's choir at the Anstey Window Dedication will perform at one of the Savannah banquets.

For members buying tickets for the Thursday "Historic Overview" tour, please note that the tour will be from 9 AM to 10:30 AM (not PM).

Paul Roderick will again be in charge of the banquet reservation system. Members should acquire a table number at the time of registration.

Ladies willing to assist Marilyn Gibb at the Registration table should contact her now by phone.

## Attention Golfers

Savannah reunion golfers are urged to pre-register with Allen Ostrom. Golf dates are Wednesday and Thursday, June 20-21 at Hunter Air Force Base. Also the possibility of a Saturday, June 23 date at another course.

## Note Times For Dinner Cruise

Members signing on for the Wednesday, September 20, Dinner Cruise are reminded that boarding begins at 6 p.m. and the boat departs at 7 p.m. The boat dock is a 20 minute walk from the Marriott Hotel. Cabs are available.

## Coach Pickup At Day's Inn

There will be a coach pickup at Day's Inn for the visit to the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum on Friday, September 22. This will be shortly after 8:30 a.m.

A coach will also pick up members going to Old Fort Jackson on Saturday, September 23. This will be shortly after 9 a.m.

A pickup at Day's Inn for people going to the Heritage Museum on Saturday, September 23 will take place at about 10 a.m.

## Dues Time For Mid-West And Texas

The quarterly dues envelopes for this period have been sent to members living in six Mid-West states — Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Ohio ... and Texas. Dues (and any volunteer contribution) may be sent at any time to manager Jim Haas, Perry, IA 50220-0163.

## 398TH BUSINESS NEWS:

### CASH FLOW SHORTAGE

"A serious event is overtaking us. An analysis of 398th Treasury cash flow shows we may run out of a operating funds before the year is out. This will cause serious difficulties, like not being able to issue a FLAK NEWS. This dollar shortage is due to a combination of many events. We are slowly losing members due to death; loyal membership dues-paying has fallen off sharply; many "members" are neglecting to pay dues altogether; and the costs of our operation, such as those to print and mail the FLAK NEWS, continue to increase.

The \$10 annual due fee no longer covers publishing costs. I thank you for supporting our recent special projects in fine style, BUT it is time for many to "catch up" on their dues paying, and for longtime 398th life members to consider a special FLAK NEWS support contribution. We need to keep the 398th spirit alive for a bit longer! Thank you!"

WALLY BLACKWELL, president

398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

*Ed's Note: President Blackwell, in addressing the 398th cash flow shortage, has dispatched personal letters to all members who have not responded to dues appeals in recent years. And to life members who came in at \$50 to increase their commitment to \$100. Payments may be directed to Dues Manager James Haas, Perry, IA 50220-0163*



Wally Blackwell at Cambridge Cemetery

### TWO BENCHES AND A TREE

As reported by Lou Stoffer, 398th Savannah Monument Fund Manager, we exceeded the necessary cost for the Monument itself and will discuss the use of the additional funds at the Savannah reunion. However, The Museum is in the process of redesigning its Memorial Garden area, and has asked the Bomb Groups to assist in its landscaping plans.

The 398th Official Board has considered and approved the use of some of these additional funds for the installation of two stone benches (\$1,500 each) and one tree (\$500). The benches and the tree will be "clustered in the 398th Monument area." They will be appropriately marked as 398th gifts and hopefully be installed by our September reunion time.

— BLACKWELL

### MEMBERSHIP DATA VOLUNTEER NEEDED

The 398th lost a devoted member when Ed Stewart succumbed to his WWII battle damage some months ago. Ed had faithfully maintained his very useful data file of all available 398ers, describing their crew, crew position, number and when missions were flown, etc. as well as phone numbers and addresses.

We need a dedicated volunteer to receive Ed's already computerized database, install it on his/her home computer and maintain this database. The responsibility of the job includes updating the data information changes for addresses, etc. that would be supplied from time to time by Allen Ostrom. This is a great opportunity for someone that wishes to provide a really valuable 398th service. Please contact me about details and complexity of what is involved.

— BLACKWELL

# WHO CAN COUNT THE TEARS?

## *Emotions Overflow in England, Czech Republic*

*(Continued from Page 1.)*

daughters ... and veterans ... cast eyes on the window bearing the names of loved ones killed in action? Who was able to measure the stir of emotions as the Duke of Gloucester unveiled the window in the company of the Bishop of St. Albans, 398th president Wally Blackwell, Friends chairman Wilfrid Dimsdale, church warden Sir Roger duBoulay, Rector Gerald Drew, and the builders of the window, Patrick and John Rentiens?

The Bishop, Rt. Rev. Christopher Herbert, had set the stage from the lofty and ancient pulpit with a simple, yet powerful message, ending with the words, "the narrow path leads to Christ."

The Duke of Gloucester paid tribute to the 398th men who died, their names now etched in the glass that he would then unveil. At that point the Bishop said—

"I dedicate this window to the glory of God."

To be sure, it was a day to remember. And yet, only one of many days to remember as the tour members and their English Friends of the 398th laid down flowers at the base of their Memorial and heard the names of each and every man who perished read loud and clear to the assemblage by Blackwell, Conrad Samuelson and Peggy Wells.

All that, and a day at Cambridge American Military Cemetery, where no less than seven widows of 398th men presented a floral wreath at the Memorial — Dorothy Borchers, Jeanne Stange, Mary Ludlam, Jean Madlung, Gertrude Wells Neff, Eleanor Siegenthaler and Mary Allen.

All that, and more, and the Year 2000 Tour was only half over.

Yet to come were visits to such world class cities as Prague, Pilsen, Copenhagen, and...

*Litice, Slany, Kovarska, Lidice, Karlovy Vary, Marianske Lazne.*

The Czech Republic opened its arms to the 398th, as it had done on a previous tour visit in 1995. Over 55 Czech cities have and maintain memorials to Americans killed in WWII.

The Allan Ferguson 602 B-17 went down near Litice on the Last Mission (April 25, 1945) and a memorial is there, huddled in the middle of the small community, honoring that crew and others who were killed nearby in crashes or by their German captors.

Jaromir Kohout of Pilsen combined with the surviving members of the Ferguson crew to add a special "desk" to the glass memorial. This plaque bears the names of those who were killed— Ferguson, John Halbert, Howard Feldman, Joseph Huestess, Michael Brennan and Byron Young.

Mayor Karel Dezort welcomed the U.S. visitors amid the strains of the Czech and American national anthems. Tour leader Allen Ostrom presented him with a 398th china plate, courtesy Joe Joseph's PX.

Pär Nilhammer, the Swedish tour guide who speaks five languages and works for Destination Europe of Luxembourg, said— "If I have the opportunity I will bring other tour parties to this place just to show them what you Americans did in World War II and how the Czechs have chosen to honor your deeds."

And that was only one of several memorable stops in the Czech lands.

The Donald Christiansen 603 crew went down at Slany after a mission near Leipzig on March 2, 1945. The lone survivor was tail gunner Selmer Haakenson. The City of Slany built a beautiful memorial there in 1996.

And it was "re-dedicated" on June 17, 2000 in the presence of the 398th tour party, several city officials, Czech Army and Air Force and an honor guard that stood at attention for an hour during the ceremonies.

Said their commanding officer—

"Those boys competed for the honor of serving at this ceremony."

Along with Christensen, the others killed on his crew were William Love, Harry Ostrow, John Gustafson, Robert Dudley, Elmer Gurba, Albert Carlisle and Kenneth Plantz.

A framed picture of the 398th logo, "Clearing and Colder," was presented to the deputy mayor. Inscribed on the picture were the words, "THANK YOU SLANY" next to an American flag; and in Czech, the words, "THANK YOU TO THE PEOPLE OF SLANY FOR ERECTING A MEMORIAL FOR OUR FALLEN COMRADES."

Slany just happens to be the hometown of Jaromir Jagr, a National Hockey League star with the Pittsburgh Penguins. A "JAGR" uniform shirt was presented to tour leader Ostrom by Jagr Fan Club president Milan Spineta, who also acted as ceremonial organizer.

Several gifts earmarked for Haakenson, who was not on the tour, were received by Ostrom, who promised to deliver them to the surviving tail gunner in Sacramento, California.

Ostrom, in receiving the gifts, told the Czech hosts— "Look into our eyes and see the love and affection we Americans have for you."

A fantastic flying display was put on by Martin Stahalik, a two-time world aerobatic champion, also a Slany resident.

And yet, there was more. Kovarska is not a world renowned city, even if located in the ski mountains on the Czech-German border. But it is the home of Jan Zdiarsky, who at the age of 12 decided to build a museum dedicated to the great air battles that took place over his city in WWII. And he did it. First a plaque and B-17 propeller in front of the school and finally an old school house he began filling with bits and pieces of plane wreckage and memorabilia

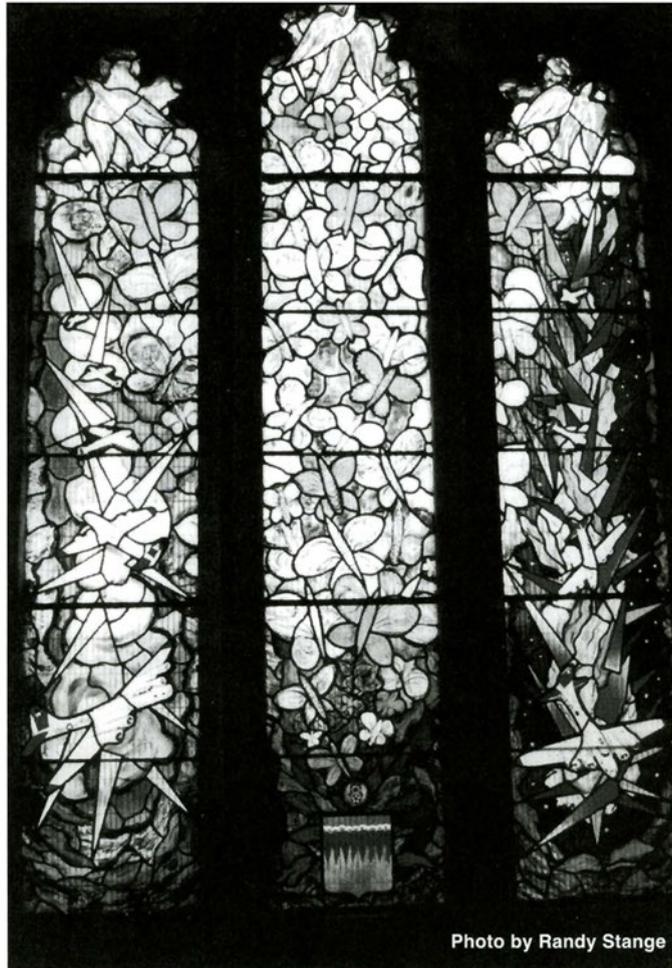


Photo by Randy Stange

YEAR 2000 TOUR ITEM:

## Rector Had A Day To Remember

The happiest man at the Anstey church window dedication must have been Rector Gerald Drew, who for years had preached in the modestly attended St. George church.

And who also holds the title of "Incumbent of the United Benefice of Anstey, Brent Pelham, Meesden and Hormeads with Wyddial." Most of these churches are hidden away among the wheat fields of Hertfordshire.

On June 11, 2000, only months away from his official retirement, Rev. Drew welcomed not only British royalty, the Duke of Gloucester, The Lord Bishop of St. Albans and two busloads of Yanks, but also over 400 more who came from far and near to celebrate the window dedication.

Rev. Drew did not wear his 603 Squadron cap for the occasion, but it is rumored that he did wear his 398th T-shirt under his church vestments.

And one may be certain that he insisted that the Royston Band conclude the musical ceremonies with a rousing rendition of "Dixie." This is in respect to Mrs. Frank P. Hunter, Jr., widow of the late commanding officer of the 398th.

YEAR 2000 TOUR ITEM:

## The Army Attache Had It Right

The Army attache at the U.S. Embassy in Prague, Lt. Col. Scott Salyers, was a Civic Institute guest at the "Prague Mission Seminar" conducted by 398th tour members at the Monestary (the church that was bombed in error on February 14, 1945).

There were many questions posed by the Czechs in attendance. One had to do with the weather on that date. "Could weather have played a part in the mission?"

Col. Salyers immediately volunteered an answer--

"Whether on the ground or in the air, weather always plays a part in war."

The colonel did not know that winds of 100 miles per hour did indeed contribute to sending the group off course that day. (Not to mention malfunctioning radar navigation equipment).

A young American couple visiting the Monestary came into the seminar room and listened to the discussions. Upon leaving as the session broke up, they told the 398th members--

"That was a wonderful presentation. Thank you."



**CZECH SOLDIERS** formed an honor guard during the re-dedication of the memorial honoring members of the Donald Christiansen crew that crashed at Slany, Czech Republic on March 2, 1945. Year 2000 Tour members and Slany officials placed floral pieces following the playing of American and Czech national anthems.

### Prague Mission Seminar

*(Continued from Page 3.)*

found in the area. He joined with Jaromir Kohout of Pilsen and the two created an air museum worthy of any city, anywhere.

Kohout is a welding instructor at the Pilsen Skoda Works and Zdiarsky is a computer graphic artist (and working toward a PhD in water management).

An older man drove two hours to Kovarska to meet with the 398th, there to present his own designed plaque containing a 50 caliber bullet and a B-17 "rate of climb" indicator. These, he said through interpreter Zdiarsky, came from the Christensen plane downed at Slany. Ostrom said he would personally deliver them to Haakenson.

A beautiful "Memory Document" bearing the 398th "Hell from Heaven" logo was presented to each veteran at the Kovarska museum courtesy mayor Milan Duhan and Zdiarsky. The certificate carried the words, "Please accept our best thanks for your duty to our Freedom in WWII."

In exiting Slany on the way back to Pilsen, tour guide Nilhammer detoured the coach to the small city of Lidice, where he told the story of how the Nazis had methodically murdered every citizen and burned the city to the ground in 1942.

This, they claimed, was in retaliation for some Lidice members' participation in the assassination of Heinrich Heydrich, the Nazi's "protector" of Czechoslovakia following the German invasion of 1939. He was known as "Hangman Heydrich."

An additional chapter to this story was seen at a church in Prague, where other Czech Resistance and British intelligence soldiers involved in the assassination had held out against the Germans. They ultimately took their own lives rather

than surrender.

While many members of the tour opted for major shopping in Prague, another group accepted an invitation from Prague's "Civic Institute" to hold a seminar in the very church that was hit by 398th bombs on February 14, 1945. (The target was Dresden, Germany).

Keith Anderson, John Cosco, David Mills and Ostrom took part in the presentation, which was media covered by Radio Free Europe and three Czech television stations.

A book containing mission information, photos and letters from several key members who were on the mission, was presented to the Civic Institute.

The monestary prior, Herr Englehardt (former German anti-aircraft gunner) smilingly posed the question, "Why us?"

Along with other details, the seminar included "Murphy's Law" as the principal reason for missing a target by 75 miles.

On the subject of "targets," Mills was the recipient of a wine-in-the-lap episode at the Hotel School in Marianske Lazne. Students preparing for careers in the hotel industry served the luncheon under the supervision of director Jiri Chum.

One student, Pavel Mach, dropped the wine in Mills' lap in full view of the stern-faced director.

"The boy looked crushed, like his career was over," said Mills.

After the luncheon, Mills gave the still-shocked Pavel his 1945 398th identity card and an autographed air combat photo, signed—

"You would have made a good bombardier."

"I think we saved his career," said Mills (who struggled through two days in Cambridge without his luggage).



**Year 2000 Tour Item:**

Cherie Ross was among the many 398th tour folks mingling with the English “re-enactment group” members gathered around the B-17 at the American Air Museum at Duxford, England last June.

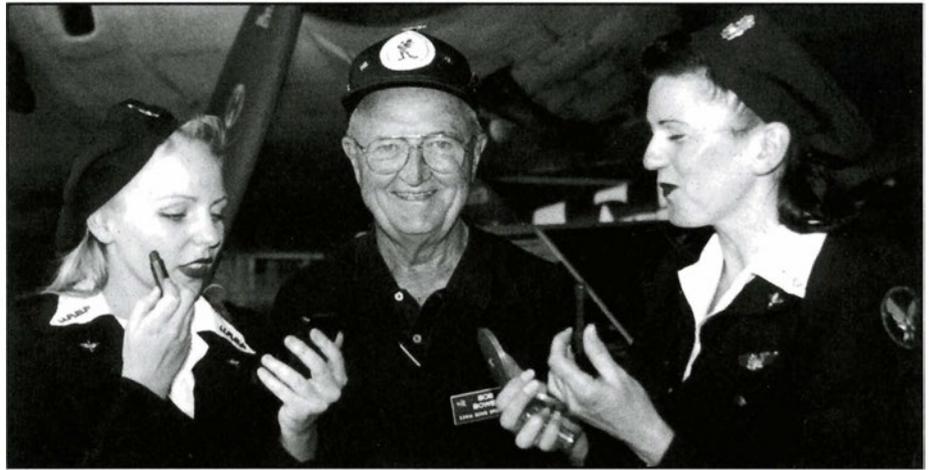
The “re-enactment” men (and women) were dressed in the US air combat dress of WWII, some wearing flak jackets, oxygen masks, fleece jackets, etc.

“That’s how we looked in those days,” was a common comment as the ex-airmen pointed to the young, trim Brits modeling the ancient gear.

A man picked up a chest (parachute) pack from the floor and handed it to the startled Cherie Ross. She looked at it for a brief moment and said —

“My God, that’s the parachute that saved my Dad’s life.”

Later that same day, Cherie, her brother Randy, sister Nancy and mother Jean raised the late Jack Madung’s flag in his memory on the tall pole “out there by the old tower.”



**BOB BOWEN** was the center of attraction for these two British “re-enactment” ladies dressed in US WASP uniforms at the American Air Museum at Duxford. After “loading up” the girls checked out their lipstick on Bob, who was not displeased.



**THESE ARE** two members of the British “re-enactment” group who met with Year 2000 tour members at the American Air Museum at Duxford, England. They are all volunteers who came to rub elbows with the 398th veterans. They donned WWII air crew uniforms to the delight and amazement of the ladies.



**THE SECOND GENERATION** was well represented on the Year 2000 Tour, as witness by this “farewell” photo. Scanning left to right are Mike Ryan, Diane Day, Nancy Cotter, Linda Hayes, William Frazier, Gall Fisher, Gail Rastelli, Cate Ludlam, Randy Stange, Cherie Ross, Eileen Moore, Doug Frazier, Karen Neff, Ken Ludlam, James Hornshuh and Karen Guenther. Missing are Nancy Zeller, Randy Madlung, Bruce Guenther, and Mel Kessler. Did they enjoy the tour? Look at the smiles.

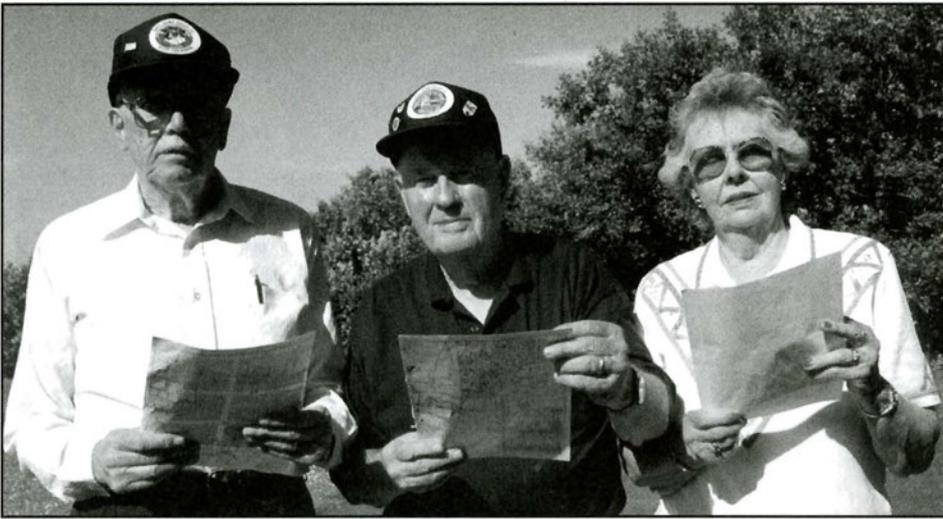
**Year 2000 Tour Item:  
Interpreter Gave  
398th Vet A  
Snappy Retort**

The young, attractive Czech Air Force warrant officer had just finished translating welcoming speeches by Slany, Czech Republic civic officials. And a response by tour leader Allen Ostrom.

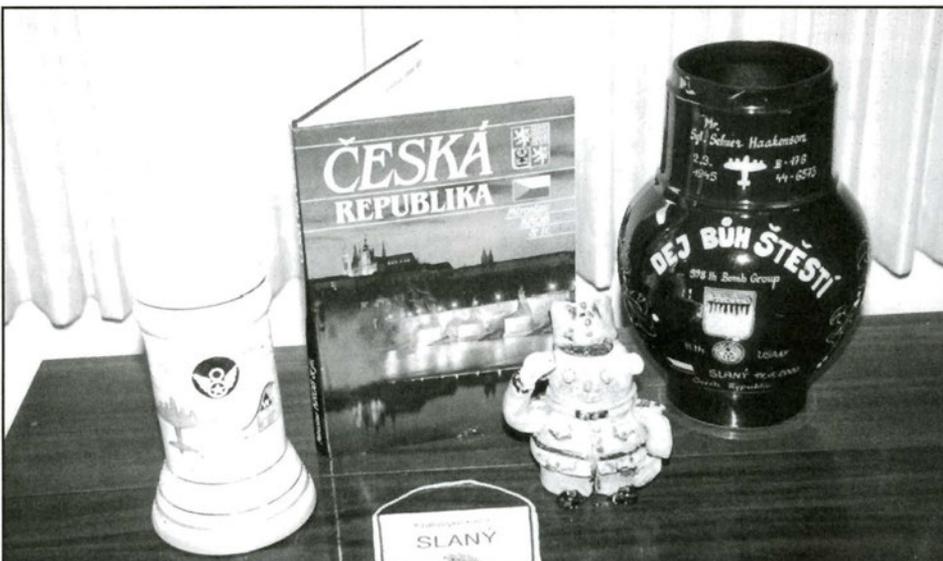
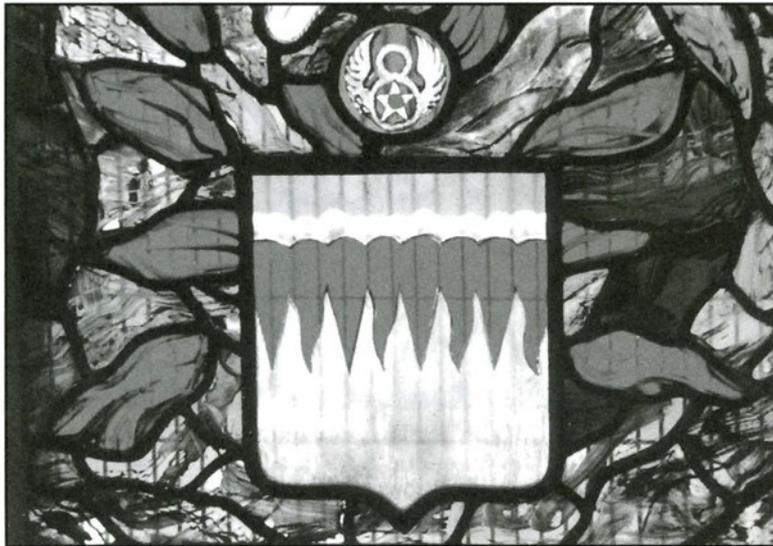
These were followed by floral presentations honoring the memories of the 603 squadron men killed in the crash of their B-17 near the city in 1945.

One of the 398th veterans took it upon himself to compliment the warrant officer on her articulate performance. “How about coming to America with us?” the veteran asked with a twinkle in his eye.

Came a quick response -  
“That is not possible. I am very Czech.”



**THE NAMES** of every 398th man killed in action during the group's stay at Station 131 during WW II were read at the Service of Commemoration by Conrad Samuelson, representing the ground echelon; Wally Blackwell, representing the air crews; and Peggy Wells, representing the English Friends of the 398th.



**THE CITY OF SLANY** and Jaromir Jagr Fan Club combined to present these gifts to the lone survivor of the 603 Christensen crew that came down near their city. The gifts are earmarked for Selmer Haakenson and will be delivered to him at this home in Sacramento. "Dej Buh Stesti" on the big jug means "God Gives Luck." Jagr, a National Hockey League star with Pittsburgh, is from Slany, Czech Republic.



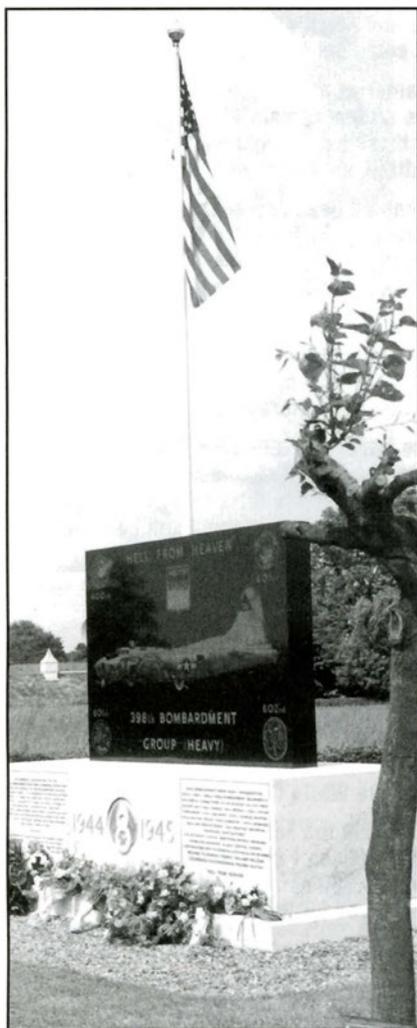
**THIS IS WHAT** the 398th Bomb Group memorial Heritage Museum at Savannah, Georgia. Final year, the memorial will be dedicated on Friday, day reunion activities at Savannah.



**THIS IS** the memorial honoring the US airmen killed during WW II near Litice, Czech Republic, including members of the 602 Ferguson crew. A ceremony was held at this site during the tour visit.



will look like when installed at the Mighty Eighth  
 ced by members and friends of the 398th last  
 eptember 22, 2000, as part of the group's four-



**THE MEMORIAL** at Nuthampstead was  
 much photographed during the England  
 Tour, especially after the children placed  
 their flowers at the base of the memo-  
 rial.

# 292

## *Two Hundred, Two Hundred Ninety Two*

**BY TONY WESTON**  
*Nuthampstead, England*

Let us take them all in to the room of our hearts,  
 Let us tear down the blackout  
 And let in the sun

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

Let us take them all in to the room of your hearts,  
 These gum-chewing, wise-cracking, jitterbug-boys,  
 Let the dancing begin

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

Soon Time, that considers us less than the grass  
 Or the parachute down of poplar trees, will take  
 The last survivor apart

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

It isn't their money, their style, their looks,  
 But their hopes and dreams and their gifted lives  
 We gladly seized and sadly took

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

A pillar of smoke, a pillar of fire, a Hell  
 From Heaven, a turning for home, wind  
 Icing through and the spluttering roar

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

The blood round islands of glass on the floor:  
 Oh, show me their faces, sing me their names  
 Write them in flames,

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

How much did it cost them, how much was it worth,  
 This damp little, damn little jewel of green  
 Pushing up under the starboard wing?

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

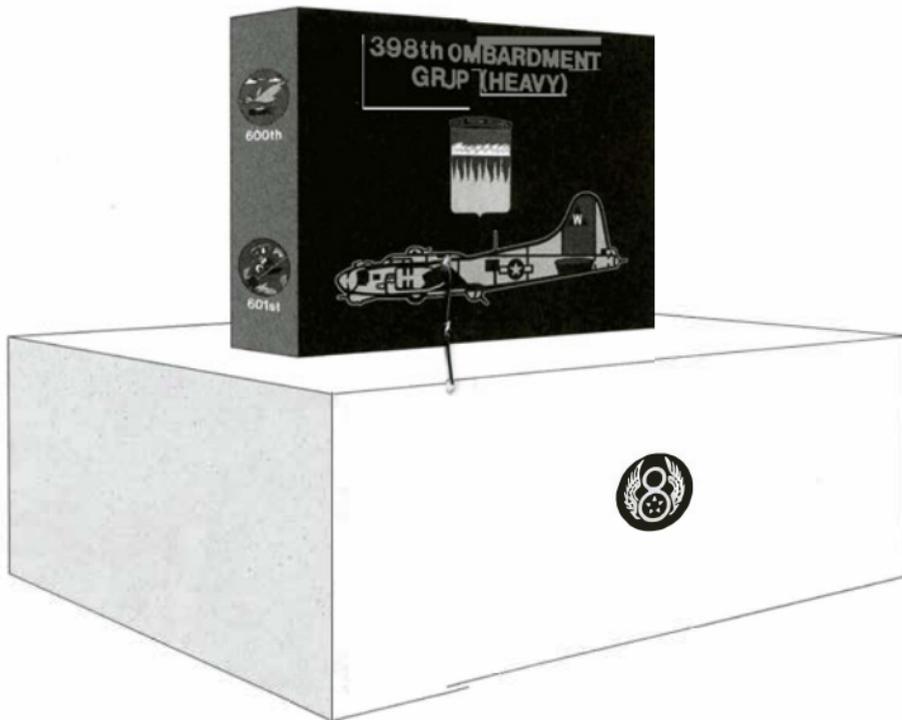
The ploughing thud of the landing gear,  
 The engines cut and, those who can,  
 Come back to an earth where small birds sing.

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

Let us take them all in to the room of our hearts,  
 These unsung young men,

*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

May we never need their like again.



**THIS IS WHAT the 398th Bomb Group memorial will look like when installed at the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum at Savannah, Georgia. Financed by members and friends of the 398th last year, the memorial will be dedicated on Friday, September 22, 2000, as part of the group's four-day reunion activities at Savannah.**

# NO MORE: *Gunner's Memories Still Linger*

The Eighth Air Force said  
It has never been done before  
But we will bomb in daylight  
To help shorten the war

So high in the skies over Germany  
They would see us coming  
And that was the start  
Of broad daylight precision bombing

High in the skies over Germany  
The 398th Bomb Group flew  
In B-17 Flying Fortresses  
Ten men to each crew

In the early hours of the morning  
The wake up call came  
Come on guys, wake up  
You're going back up for more of the same

We hurried to breakfast  
Hoping for fresh eggs and ham  
But always settled for the standby  
Powdered eggs and Spam

Then came the briefing  
That you hoped they wouldn't say  
That dreaded Merseburg Germany  
Was the target for today

The curtain on the map is drawn  
And you hear the briefing officer say  
Yes, gentlemen, Merseburg Germany  
Is the target for today

But Merseburg, Berlin or Dresden  
It really didn't matter where  
We knew the Flak and Luftwaffe  
Were always waiting for us there

Pick up your Mae-West  
Flak jacket and heated suit  
But most of all don't forget  
your beloved parachute

With four engines roaring  
You take off down the runway  
With the hope and prayers  
You'll come back one more day

For good luck you carry  
A four leaf clover  
And as you climb higher  
You lose sight of the White Cliffs of Dover

We flew in tight formations  
Leaving contrails behind  
Even tho we were five miles high  
We were not too hard to find

You keep flying forward  
In temperatures of 40 and 50 below  
Knowing that for mission completed  
There are still eight hours to go

While on the bomb run  
No evasive action or sway  
Just keep flying straight on course  
Until it is bombs away

The flak is so heavy  
That it blots out the sun  
But you keep flying forward  
Until you complete your bomb run

After bombs away  
Your mission is only half over  
And your next goal is  
To again sight the White Cliffs of Dover

Then came the Foche Wolfs and  
Messerschmitts  
At eleven and twelve o'clock high  
With all their guns blazing  
Trying to knock us down from the sky

You see a Flying Fort  
Going down on the right  
But no parachutes seen  
As it disappears out of sight

You see another Fort  
Burst out into flames  
With the pilot desperately trying  
To control his plane

Come on guys bail out  
Before its too late  
Then a thunderous explosion  
Sending one more crew to its fate

We couldn't get away from the Flak  
No matter how hard we tried  
But at 30,000 feet high  
There is no place to hide

Tired and weary  
You return to your base  
And your faithful ground crew  
Who gives you one more embrace

One more successful landing  
One more day alive  
One more completed mission  
Help me Lord, to complete twenty five

A shot of Scotch and interrogation  
Would end our long day  
But weather permitting  
We would go up again the next day

The skies over Germany  
Are now peaceful and serene  
Gone are the B-17 bomber formations  
Never again to be seen

No more contrails  
Decorating the sky  
No more Foche Wolfs and Messerschmitts  
At twelve o'clock high

No more flying in temperatures  
Of 40 and 50 below  
No more sweating out missions  
Of 8 or 9 hours to go

No more Flying Forts  
Going down in flames  
No more counting of parachutes  
Leaving their plane

No more Flak litters  
The sky  
No more devastation  
From high in the sky

No more bombing runs  
To the Ruhr Valley  
Where the Flak was so heavy  
We called it Flak Alley

No more sweating it out  
Till you see your Bomb load  
No more seeing Forts  
Burning up and explode

No more P.F.F. planes  
Scattering tin foil in the sky  
No more ME 109s  
Coming in on the sly

No more scanning the sky  
No more waiting in vain  
For that one more plane  
That never came

No more Flak fills the skies  
That we had to fly thru  
But there was no turning back  
So that's what we had to do

No more crossing over  
The treacherous frigid North Sea  
No more bombing the V-2 rockets  
At Peenemunde

No more sweating out your last mission  
Hoping it's a so called milk run  
No more waiting for the Luftwaffe  
To come out of the sun

Memories and ghosts  
Are all that remain  
Of those hard fought battles in the sky  
Battles, never to be seen again

It has all been erased  
Forever gone from the sky  
For the skies do not talk  
Of those times gone by

It has been forgotten by most  
Who don't seem to care  
But never by you  
Because you were there

The price paid for daylight bombing  
Was heavy indeed  
But we proved to the world  
That broad daylight precision bombing did  
succeed

However high the cost  
Neither the Luftwaffe or the Flak  
No matter how hard they tried  
Ever once made us turn back

The battle for control of the skies  
Was finally over  
And the blue birds again fly  
Over the White Cliffs of Dover

Way up in the heavens  
A B-17 Flying Fortress still flies  
With 26,000 names of the young men  
That made the supreme sacrifice

No more fish and chips  
At Picadilly Square  
No more mild and bitter  
At the Pub named the White Bear

And so it is with some sadness  
And also with much sorrow  
That I end these verses with the slogan  
"Gunner today Goner tomorrow"

## “No More” Author Found In L.A.

The poem, “No More,” came to the FLAK NEWS office anonymously. The only clue was the postmark, “Los Angeles.”

With a bit of research, the search narrowed to some veteran air crew member who had seen a lot of war.

Narrowing the search further, the name, “Pazquel Marquez” appeared as the likely poet “culprit.”

Confronted with the “evidence,” Marquez admitted to being the “anonymous” writer of “No More,” and gave his permission to publish his poem in FLAK NEWS.

Marquez’ credentials as a 398th air gunner were not come by easily, but rather via the long haul and with elite crews. He was a tail gunner on the 600 Squadron Gene Douglas crew, occasionally giving up his seat to a pilot-officer when Col. Frank P. Hunter was aboard as group/wing/division leader. He completed 28 missions.

Marquez was one of the very first enlisted

men to join the 398th after graduating from the Laredo, TX Gunnery School and subsequent assignments at Salt Lake, UT; Blythe, CA; Orlando, FL; Ephrata, WA; Spokane, WA and Rapid City, ND. He hooked up with the pilot Gene Douglas in Ephrata and was with him until Douglas went down over Misburg in November, 1944, flying as group commander with the Charles Zimmer crew.

He finished up his tour with Keith Anderson, who took over Douglas’ crew.

Marquez, who had “been there, done that,” with the 398th, came home to Los Angeles and never set foot in an airplane again.

Among the other air crew members that Marquez flew with during his stint were Bruce Daily, 600 Squadron CO; Harry Nelson, Tony Adams, Gil Goldman, Ken Shutts, Noel Callihan, Jim Basham, Art Ward, and Alfred Burke.



PASQUEL MARQUEZ

## Year 2000 Tour Item: Grounded In The Final Hours

Talk about last-minute tough luck, ask Charles Hough of Seattle.

Charles was among the very first to sign on for the Year 2000 Tour. With bags packed and only hours away from the flight to England, he visited his doctor to check on a nagging cough. After the exam, his doctor suggested he not take a chance on such a trip. “You have some complications,” he was told.

So instead of England, Czech Republic and Denmark, Charles spent his tour time in a hospital.

“When’s the next tour?” he asked.

## Looking Ahead To St. Paul

OK, so we haven’t been to the Year 2000 reunion in Savannah, yet. That’s no excuse for not Planning Ahead. And that’s what the Reunion Committee has accomplished even while putting together the 2000 meeting in Savannah September 20-23.

Big gatherings like the 398th reunion require lots of lead time, especially if they want to reserve a top hotel in the “right” city in the “right” part of America.

Looking ahead to 2001, the committee set its sights on an “upper Mid-West location, an easily-accessed city with a downtown location, and with the right price.”

The decision:

*St. Paul, Minnesota, October 3-4-5-6, 2001.*

We’ll be headquartered at the downtown Raddisson Inn.

Mark your 2001 calendar now. But meantime, next up is Savannah, GA, featuring the dedication of the 398th Bomb Group memorial.

## Year 2000 Tour Item: She Still Has An Eye For Pilots

Czech pilot Martin Stahalik had just landed his Russian built aerobatic plane at the Slany, Czech Republic airfield in preparation for a performance honoring the 398th tour visitors.

Noting the pilot as he emerged from the cockpit, the eighty-something wife of retired Czech RAF Spitfire pilot Gen. Maj. Frantisek Perina (14 WWII kills) motioned to her 86-year-old husband and said--

“Never mind the plane. I want to meet that good-looking pilot.”

## Muspratt, Penn Vicar, Dead at 93

Rev. Oscar Muspratt, former vicar of Penn Church, Buckinghamshire, England, died March 8, 2000, at the age of 93.

While only one of many, many vicars to serve the Penn Church during its 900 year history, Rev. Muspratt will be remembered as the one who went directly to Gen. Jimmy Doolittle at 8th Air Force Headquarters to seek names.

These would be the names of the nine members of a 398th crew that perished near his church in 1944. He wanted to honor the men and to write to their relatives in the United States. Gen. Doolittle obliged and Rev. Muspratt followed through not only with the letters, but also had their names inscribed on the church’s “Book of Honour.”

In 1990, the 398th Tour to England and Scotland visited Penn, and Rev. Muspratt, and saw not only the venerable book, but also a row of American flags representing each of the deceased crew members. The tour also took in the very location where Charles Searl’s B-17 and crew crashed at a place known as Lude Farm.

Ron Setter was a boy of 12 living on the farm at the time and he vividly recalled being thrown from his bed when the plane and all its bombs exploded some two hundred yards from his home.

Ron, Peter Halliday and Johanna Sienkiewicz combined to arrange for the 398th travel party to visit Penn. They were part of the Chiltern Historical Aircraft Preservation Group, and combined to do the research on the Searl crash.

Rev. Muspratt, the 55th in an ecclesiastical lineage dating back to 1349, connected the little town of Penn with William Penn, founder of the state of Pennsylvania. He wrote --

“If the Tomahawk Warriors (name of the Searl B-17) perished defending a church and a parish descended from a founder of the great democracy which, at the time America was itself defending in war, then, don’t you see, the Tomahawk Warriors sacrificed their lives defending an American shrine.

“My church was the shrine, right here, in the hinterland of England.”

## Year 2000 Tour Item: A Travel Coup

A Tip of the 398th Tour Cap has to go to travel consultant Barbara Fish, who managed to get 105 members to England on time despite having to ticket them from nine different US cities, one from Canada, and one from Moscow. And all the time making connections in four different European airports.

(After seeing the last member off for home, Barbara met her husband in London and then sailed for New York on the Queen Elizabeth II.)



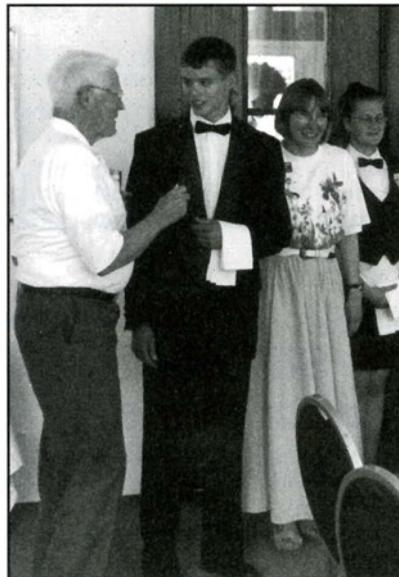
THE YEAR 2000 TOUR veterans joined with the British "re-enactment" volunteers in WWII uniforms for a photo with Britain's only flying B-17, Sally B (still sporting Memphis Belle filming nose art). This took place at the Duxford Imperial War Museum.



THE CZECHS at Slany chose to welcome the 398th tour members at their ornate and gilded city hall chapel. They were greeted by the deputy mayor, a US Embassy officer, interpreter and many cameramen. Responding to the impressive welcome is tour leader Allen Ostrom (white jacket).



PAUL DROY (right) had a "WELCOME BACK 398TH" sign on his Jeep when the Year 2000 Tour group arrived in England. Here he poses with Chuck Sasse and Reva Swanson.



DAVID MILLS (left) presents Hotel School student Pavel Mach with his 398th ID following lunch in Marianske Lazne. (See Tour story). At right is travel consultant Barbara Fish and one of Pavel's fellow students.

## LETTERS:

"The box of air combat video tapes have been received. Thank you. Our staff and visitors are looking forward to viewing them and having them available as part of our growing library.

"Also, the three volumes of 398th history have been well-received. A gentleman and his wife from the 398th were here for a couple of hours going over the vast amounts of information.

"Your members coming to the Museum in September will appreciate having these available. Thank you for your contributions to the library."

*Rusty Bloxom, Historian/Librarian, Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum, PO Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402*

"Many thanks to Barb and Allen for leading us on that great tour. It was a hectic schedule, but well-planned and enjoyable. I was overwhelmed by the show of affection by our Czech friends. Unbelievable after 55 years."

*David Mills, Norwalk, CT 06850-1515*

"Maryanne and I are delighted that we made the trip to England. The total gathering was fabulous. Our friends in England were so great. It was like a family get-together. We want to thank all those involved for such a wonderful time. We plan to see you in Savannah. Thanks again."

*John & Maryanne Hobbs, Sun City, AZ 85375-6681*

"Thanks again for a great trip. It had a lot of meaning for our children. Just hope they are able to go back some day and relive some of it. I know it did for some of the other families."

*Jean Madlung, Monticello, IN 47960-2375*

# BRIEF-things

For 15 years your editor resisted previous "pay-dues-or-no-FLAK NEWS" proposals, but now it may be time as the Board will look at this again in Savannah, or possibly reducing the 12-page format (when you're low on gas, better look for a place to land) ... no matter what the Board decides, we must all be grateful for the many guys who over the years chipped in over and above to keep FLAK NEWS in the proper formation ... proud of his country, and the 398th, 601 gunner **George D. Jones** lived to see his three grandsons opt to make the military their careers; all three spoke on "Reflections" at their grandfather's funeral in San Angelo, TX ... 754 members of the 94th Bomb Group said their final reunion good-byes last summer in Seattle ... **Harry Gray**, who served the 398th as a gunner and later as an Association officer, joined the "re-married" ranks this year after being widowed for several years (welcome, **Bonnie**) ... **Sandra Averhart**, niece of KIA navigator **William Baker**, went to Station 131 last year and was taken by **Wilfrid Dimsdale** to the very site at Reed where her uncle's plane crashed; "I stood aside for a moment and had a little cry" ... with next year's reunion scheduled for early October 2001 in St. Paul, MN, there should be many opportunities for members to go "leaf looking" while driving to and from the reunion city ... **Bill McLaughlin** and his wife, **Cathy**, were last minute Year 2000 Tour scratches due to **Bill's** heart condition ... the FLAK NEWS' mailing system can't separate the dues notices, so the "lifetime" members also get regular notices (sorry 'bout that, you lifetimers" ... but we're also delighted that many of the lifers contribute annually, anyway ... in reading several other 8th AF newsletters, it is interesting to note that most of them methodically remind their readers to pay their dues (and to send their editors changes of address) ... **Earl Hofert**, 603 airplane mechanic, and Friends chairman **Wilfrid Dimsdale** presented wreaths at the Nuthampstead memorial, along with a line of youngsters from Anstey school, who marched up smartly and laid down flowers ... the Royston Crow (newspaper) did a superb job of covering the Memorial Window dedication with a pair of full color pages ... in on picture stood a proud **Joe Joseph**, the 398th flag bearer ... it took 12 minutes at the service to read the names of all the 398th killed in action ... they sure have some spiffy "roadside rests" in England, complete with shops, restaurants and a booth selling a variety of cell phones ... **Don Gaddo**, who wrote "ANGEL, A Mighty Fortress," how has a sequel on the way; he was in England with the tour, soaking up atmosphere (and probably enough material for several more ANGEL books) ... thanks to **Randy Stange** for supplying some of the Tour art for FLAK NEWS ... U.S. air attache in England, **Col. Michael T. Maher**, came to the window dedication (and following lunch) and followed up with a great talk honoring the men who served in the 9th AF during WW II ... **Barry Tyler** didn't "find" the old Red Cross "Club Mobile," ("I built it," he said) ... more than a few on the England-Czech Republic Tour opted to extend their European visits with trips to other countries ... nobody needed either a doctor or attorney on the tour, but the 398th was ready with **Bill Cole**, who is both surgeon and lawyer ... the prior at the Prague monastery said the Russian Communists did more damage to the church after the war than the 398th bombardiers did in 1945 ... the director of the Skoda Museum in Pilsen was delighted to receive CD's of Jack's Books and FLAK NEWS ... **Marco**, the coach driver on the Czech tour, provided a lesson in classic driving when he was mistakenly directed onto a steep, hillside, dead-end road in Karlovy Vary; residents had never seen a coach on this road and were fascinated to watch him back out of a difficult situation (his 35 passengers gave him a lusty applause) ... on the Czech tour, **Mary Mero** said, "the sights, scenes and surprises were wonderful; and especially that communication of love that is universal regardless of language" ...

# 398th Bomb Group PX

Qty.	CLOTHING	Cost	Total
___	Cap - Fits All Sizes	\$8.00 ea	___
___	600, 601, 602, 603 Group		
___	Jackets - Navy, B-17 on Front	\$25.00 ea	___
___	S, M, L, XL, XXL		
___	T-Shirts - B-17 on Front	\$10.00 ea	___
___	Navy - White - S, M, L, XL, XXL		
___	Sweat Shirts - B-17 on Front	\$15.00 ea	___
___	Navy - White - S, M, L, XL, XXL		
___	Golf Shirts Group Logo on Front	\$20.00 ea	___
___	Navy or White - M, L, XL, XXL		
___	Turtle Neck Shirt - B-17 on Collar	\$20.00 ea	___
___	White - S, M, L, XL		
___	Children's T- Shirts (White)	\$8.00 ea	___
___	6-8, 10-12, B-17 on Front		
___	Children's Sweatshirts	\$10.00 ea	___
___	(Blue or White) M, L - B-17 on Front		
<b>JEWELRY</b>			
___	Squadron Lapel Pins - 600, 601, 602, 603	\$5.00 ea	___
___	Group Lapel Pin (Hell from Heaven)	\$5.00 ea	___
___	Group Lapel Pin - Special Design	\$5.00 ea	___
___	B-17 Lapel Pin (Silver)	\$2.00 ea	___
___	B-17 Earrings (Silver - Pierced only)	\$5.00 ea	___
___	Bolo Ties - Group Logo	\$4.00 ea	___
<b>LOGO PATCHES</b>			
___	Squadron Patches - 600, 601, 602, 603	\$6.00 ea	___
___	Group Patch ("Hell from Heaven")	\$6.00 ea	___
___	Jacket Patch - Rectangle B-17	\$4.00 ea	___
<b>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</b>			
___	Folding Umbrellas	\$18.00 ea	___
___	Red with White B-17		
___	Note Paper with B-17 (Packet of 12)	\$4.00 pkt	___
___	Tote bag, Navy with White B-17	\$7.00 ea	___
___	Beach Towel White with Black B-17	\$18.00 ea	___
___	Golf Towel, White w/Black B-17	\$7.00 ea	___
___	9" Plate with B-17 (398th B.G. colors)	\$15.00 ea	___
___	Christmas Ornament with B-17	\$6.00 ea	___
___	Coffee Mug with B-17	\$7.00 ea	___
___	Ceramic Magnet with B-17	\$3.00 ea	___
___	Playing Cards with B-17		
___	Single Deck	\$7.00 ea	___
___	Double Deck	\$12.00 ea	___
___	Photo (Control Tower) Station 131	\$2.00 ea	___
___	Photo (398th Memorial) Post Card	\$2.00 ea	___
___	Photo (8X10 Aluminum Overcast)	\$2.00 ea	___
___	Bumper Sticker (398th Bomb Group)	\$1.00 ea	___
___	License Plate Holder (398th B.G.)	\$2.00 ea	___

Cost Of Items Ordered \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Delivery And Handling Add \$3.00, \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 or \$4.00 if Order is Over \$20.00. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to 398th Bomb Group Association PX (US funds).  
 Mail to: Joe Joseph  
 New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-6168