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

VOL. 28 NO. 2

FLAK NEWS

APRIL 2013



Left, Ted Johnston, 600<sup>th</sup> SQ pilot, was awarded a French medal of honor on July 28, 2012 at his home in Wesley Gardens by Washington State's Consul Honoraire de France, Jack A. Cowen, a Tukwila Washington resident.

*Photo courtesy of and by Steve Shay for the Highline Times, Washington*

*In our never ending pursuit to provide our membership with interesting 398<sup>th</sup> stories, we found the following article about Ted Johnston, 600<sup>th</sup> SQ pilot, in the July 2012 archives of the Highline Times. The reporter, Steve Shay, kindly gave us permission to reprint his story about Ted and to also use his photos, Steve told us he "would be honored". We at the FLAK NEWS hope you enjoy Steve's article and please join us in congratulating Ted.*

## WWII PILOT TED JOHNSTON AWARDED FRENCH MEDAL OF HONOR

*Story by Steve Shay for the Highline Times*

More than 100 attended a moving award ceremony in Logan Hall, Wesley Gardens in Des Moines Saturday afternoon, July 28, as WWII pilot, Theodore J. Johnston, or "T.J.", 89, also a Boeing employee prior to, and after the war, was officially honored with a medal, the prestigious "Chevalier Légion d'Honneur". Jack A. Cowen, Seattle-based Consul Honoraire de France for the State of Washington, and Tukwila resident, pinned Johnston with the badge.

*Continued on Page 2...*

# TED JOHNSTON AWARDED FRENCH MEDAL OF HONOR

Continued from Page 1...



**Ted J. Johnston**  
Pilot / Flight Commander, 600<sup>th</sup> SQ

Johnston's friend, Paul Beeman hosted. Beeman honored Des Moines resident Janette Swecker, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution who reenacts Betsy Ross in Highline grade schools, for bringing Johnston to Cowan's attention.

In February 1944, Johnston was awarded pilot wings and left for the European Theater to free France. He was assigned to the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force, and then the 398<sup>th</sup> Heavy Bomb Group as a pilot in B-17's. He flew 30 missions over Germany.

He became captain in 1945. He attended St. Martin's University in Olympia, then UW, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in industrial design. He lived 37 years in West Seattle, while working those years in many Boeing departments. Beginning in 1986 he was a docent for the Museum of Flight. He was active with the Fauntleroy Church and West Side Presbyterian Church.

"The French people will never forget what you and all the American Veterans did to restore our freedom," Cowen said as he read an official document. "It is almost impossible for me to imagine how much courage and bravery you must have had to fight with France during World War II, to save, as you did, France and Europe from utter destruction.

Courage and bravery are precisely the qualities that Napoleon wished to reward by the creation of the Legion d'Honneur in 1802 (...)

He continued, "Your decisive contribution to the liberation of France and Europe, and your wish to fight for the human conscious and peace of tomorrow are the reasons the president of the French Republic, Francois Hollande, has decided to award you the highest recognition by the French Government (...). Thanks to you, people of my generation were allowed to grow up in a free country."

"Merci beaucoup," Johnston responded. "I am delighted to receive this award. It's so great and unexpected..."

T.J.'s brother, Norman, and T.J.'s sons, sister, brother, in-laws, two cousins, and nieces attended. A moving tribute by his oldest son was given to his mother and T.J.'s late wife, Dorothy, also a Wesley resident who passed away last year.



**Ted J. Johnston crew – 600<sup>th</sup> SQ**  
Alexandria AAB, Louisiana – August 1944

**Back Row (viewer's left to right):**

1. Sgt. Chas Townsend, Engineer
2. Sgt. Larry Miller, Radio Op
3. Sgt. Andrew Moon, Ball Turret
4. Sgt. Frank Fishbeck, Waist Gunner
5. Sgt. William Howarth, Waist Gunner
6. Sgt. Sigmund Szubka, Tail Gunner

**Front Row (viewer's left to right):**

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. T.J. (Ted) Johnston, Pilot
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Norman Petrocine, Co-Pilot
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Chas Letts, Navigator \*\*\*\*
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Donald Robinson, Bombardier

\*\*\*\* Killed in action Jan. 23, 1945 (on Col. Hunter's crew)

\*Note: All ranks listed above are as of August 1944

## The President's Message:

BY MARILYN GIBB-RICE

President, 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

Great news on our quest to reduce FLAK NEWS costs. As you can see by the following comparison, our efforts have been very successful!

Oct 2011 and Jan 2012: \$6,194.87

Oct 2012 and Jan 2013: \$2,596.67

**SAVINGS: \$3,598.20**

We are very pleased with the new editors, the new printing and mailing company and we hope our membership is as well.

This issue of FLAK NEWS contains the 30th annual reunion information. Along with being our 30th reunion, it is the 70th anniversary of the formation of the 398th Bomb Group. Ken Howard, our new reunion chairperson has planned some exciting and fun tours for our group. Please make plans to join us this September in Sacramento!

## ***DUES REMINDER!!!***

**A reminder to our entire membership that beginning this year, \$20.00 annual dues will be collected every January**

We realize that change is difficult and after so many years of 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA dues being collected quarterly throughout the year, that switching to *everyone* paying in January is a big change. Of course it didn't help that we neglected to print the dues amount in the January issue of FLAK NEWS! Our apologies for that omission and to all of you who called Dawne inquiring as to the amount they should send in.

As it has been in the past, our annual membership dues continue to be the modest cost of \$20.00 per year. Of course Life Memberships are always available for \$100.00.

All members who are current on their dues will receive quarterly issues of the FLAK NEWS and continue to enjoy reading stories about our Veteran heroes and also keep up on 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA news and events, such as our upcoming reunion in Sacramento (see pages 4 & 5 for additional information and the official registration form).

Bottom line, if you have not done so already, please send your 2013 dues check, payable to **398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group** for **\$20.00 Annual** or **\$100.00 Lifetime** to our Dues Manager;

**Dawne Dougherty**  
**Harrisburg, OR 97446-9585**

Please indicate whether you are Veteran, Widow, Blood Relative or Associate, and which Squadron you are associated with. Thank you!

FLAK NEWS special donations are always welcome 😊

## 398<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP INCOME STATEMENT 2012

|          |                          |                    |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Income   |                          |                    |
|          | Dues                     | \$10,004.35        |
|          | PX Sales                 | 4,843.88           |
|          | Miscellaneous Donations  | 801.65             |
|          | Flak News Donations      | 1,575.00           |
|          | Petrocine Donations      | 675.00             |
|          | Comstock Donations       | 1,500.00           |
|          | IRS Filing Donation      | 850.00             |
|          | <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>      | <b>\$20,249.88</b> |
| Expenses |                          |                    |
|          | PX Expenses              | \$2,478.51         |
|          | Postage, Supplies, Phone | 840.66             |
|          | Flak News Printing       | 9397.64            |
|          | Flak News Postage        | 1,258.60           |
|          | Awards, Gifts, Flowers   | 629.98             |
|          | Web Page                 | 146.22             |
|          | Timeless Voices          | 12.79              |
|          | PX Sales                 | 49.20              |
|          | IRS Filing               | 850.00             |
|          | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>    | <b>\$15,565.20</b> |
|          | <b>NET INCOME</b>        | <b>\$ 4,684.68</b> |

## **BALANCE SHEET 12/31/2012**

|             |                                       |                    |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Assets      |                                       |                    |
|             | Wells Fargo Checking                  | \$45,909.07        |
|             | Chase Bank Checking                   | 18,175.63          |
|             | Chase Bank Savings                    | 4,581.05           |
|             | Dues Manager Ending Balance           | 4,750.00           |
|             | PX Checking Balance                   | 7,947.88           |
|             | <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                   | <b>\$81,363.63</b> |
| Liabilities |                                       |                    |
|             | Dedicated Funds Wells Fargo           | \$45,909.07        |
|             | Dedicated Museum Funds                | 4,581.05           |
|             | <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>              | <b>\$50,490.12</b> |
| Equity      |                                       |                    |
|             | Net Income 2012                       | \$ 4,684.68        |
|             | PX Checking Account                   | 7,947.88           |
|             | Retained Earnings                     | 18,577.34          |
|             | <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>                   | <b>\$31,209.90</b> |
|             | <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b> | <b>\$81,363.63</b> |

# THE SACRAMENTO REUNION

September 4-5-6-7, 2013

## Facts

### REUNION CHAIR -

Kenneth Howard, Elmwood, IL 61529-9702.

E-mail [kenhoward@hotmail.com](mailto:kenhoward@hotmail.com), subject: "398<sup>th</sup> Reunion".

### HEADQUARTERS HOTEL -

Lions Gate Hotel & Conference Center, 3410 Westover St, Sacramento (McClellan), CA 95652.  
Telephone 916-643-6222 or 866-258-5651 (toll free)

The Lions Gate Hotel and Conference Center is located in Sacramento at McClellan Business Park. It blends more than 70 years of military service and history with today's demanding business climate. The Lions Gate Hotel and Conference Center is the ultimate example of the creative re-use of a former U.S. Air Force Base facility.

The hotel offers free parking, and complimentary shuttle from Sacramento Intl Airport upon request. To arrange airport shuttle service call the hotel.

This is a pet friendly hotel for those of you traveling with furry friends. Please contact the hotel for specific details.

### HOTEL RESERVATIONS -

No mail-in reservations are required. Telephone the hotel at the above number. Ask for the 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group rate of \$92.00.



### REGISTRATION -

Use the Official Registration Form on page 5. Fill in completely itemizing the cost of each tour selected, banquet meals selected, registration fee of \$10 or \$20, and the yearly dues (if applicable). Send the form, with your covering check to Kenneth Howard. He will return a copy of your form, with accompanying receipt of your funds.

### BANQUETS -

The Welcome and Farewell banquets will be held in the hotel ballroom on Thursday, September 5, and Saturday September 7, respectively. Make your table reservations when picking up your Registration Packet. All Banquet Tickets must show a Table Number.

## Tours

### THURSDAY, September 5, 2013 -

#### Sacramento "River City" Tour

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Sacramento is deeply rooted in the legacy and legends of the great California Gold Rush which triggered the single greatest peacetime migration in US history. The mark of these prospectors, lawmen, outlaws and visionaries runs throughout the region. Follow in their footsteps and hear the stories of sparkling gold, the transcontinental railroad, and the Pony Express. Also hear tales of the hardships and tragedy of the early pioneers. Drive past the Stanford Mansion, the historic Victorian era Governor's Mansion, Sutter's Fort, and the 40-acre International Gardens with plants and trees from around the world. It also includes an interior tour of the gorgeous Capitol Building that went through an extensive remodeling to bring it back to its 1870's beauty. Also enjoy time in Old Sacramento to have lunch on your own and do some shopping.

### FRIDAY, September 6, 2013 -

#### Coloma Sutter's Sawmill and Gold Bug Mine Tour

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

We will head for Coloma and travel to the Gold Discovery Site where we tour Sutter's Sawmill, museum, and explore outdoor exhibits such as the Chinese Store, Miner's Cabin and equipment. Then depart for downtown Placerville to enjoy some shopping, have lunch on your own, and then depart for Placerville for a visit to the Gold Bug Mine. Placerville is a scenic and charming California gold rush town strategically located in the California Foothills. The prosperity of California's "Gold Country" that drew gold seekers of yesterday is still being discovered today. Take a step back in time when you enter the Gold Bug Mine, a real gold mine from the Gold Rush Days.

### SATURDAY, September 7, 2013 -

#### Wine Excursion to Lodi

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Welcome to Lodi Wine Country! This emerging jewel of California wine is a treat to visit: from its rural atmosphere and relaxed pace to beautiful vineyards and exquisite wines. The unknown fact about Lodi is that it is the largest grape-growing region in the state! Lodi is home to over 60 wineries of "Lodi" labeled wines and thousands of acres of premium grapes. Included in your excursion will be a stop at two local venues for wine tasting, while learning about grape varieties, pest, prohibition, and how to taste wine like an expert. Enjoy lunch on your own in downtown Lodi.



# OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

398th Bomb Group Memorial Association 30th Annual Reunion  
Sacramento, California • September 4-7, 2013

**PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN AUGUST 06, 2013**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ WIFE \_\_\_\_\_ SQUADRON \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF OTHERS IN PARTY,  
PLEASE PRINT FOR NAME TAGS \_\_\_\_\_

## WEDNESDAY, September 4 —

Registration 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Memory Room  
Buffet style dinner at hotel 6:30 PM \$40.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## THURSDAY, September 5 —

Registration 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Memory Room  
Sacramento River City Tour 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM Via coach \$54.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Board Officers Meeting 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
Group Business Meeting 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM  
No Host Bar 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM  
Welcome Banquet 7:00 PM \$45.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Table reservations required)

## FRIDAY, September 6 —

Registration 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Memory Room  
Coloma Sutter's Sawmill and  
Gold Bug Mine Tour 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Via coach \$74.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Lunch on your own.  
Complimentary Happy Hour 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM  
Light appetizers, beer & wine

## SATURDAY, September 7 —

Registration 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Memory Room  
Wine Excursion to Lodi 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM Via coach \$69.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Lunch on your own.  
No Host Bar 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM  
Farewell Banquet 7:00 PM \$55.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Table reservations required)  
Music By 'SISTER SWING' - Web: [www.sisterswing.com](http://www.sisterswing.com)

**Registration Fee**  per person \$10.00,  two or more persons \$20.00 (max) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**2013 Dues** (if applicable) \$20.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Free shuttle service from Sacramento Intl Airport to Hotel and Free Parking* **TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: LIONS GATES HOTEL reservations MUST be made by August 6, 2013.**

I / We will be staying at the :  Lions Gate Hotel and Conference Center  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all that apply:

398<sup>th</sup> Veteran  
 Widow  
 Relative  
 Associate

Please complete form, enclose check, and mail to:

398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Reunion  
Kenneth Howard  
Elmwood, IL 61529

Received \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Kenneth Howard**

A copy of this form will be mailed to registrant upon receipt of check or money order, payable to:  
**398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Reunion.**



**The Veteran that remained behind receives his medallion. Geoff and Marilyn Rice visited George Cuda and presented him with the medallion that other 398th Veterans attending reunions since 2007 have received. George, crew chief in the 600th squadron fell in love and married a lovely English girl and never stepped foot on American soil after the war. George attended many of the memorial services in Nuthampstead proudly wearing his uniform.**

## **A BIG THANK YOU!**

**TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS FOR THEIR GENEROUS 2012 DONATIONS OF \$50 AND ABOVE TO THE FLAK NEWS:**

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Alton R. Andrews   | Robert S. Lucy     |
| Robert M. Blacker  | Walter F. Morris   |
| Donna R. Bortles   | Ken Peirce         |
| George B. Bryan    | Clarence O. Sauer  |
| Malcolm F. Clarke  | Laurence A. Schaal |
| Leo R. Croce       | Janet Sheely       |
| Dorothy Crouch     | Pamela Sirota      |
| Richard B. Fox     | Gerald Souder      |
| James R. Haas      | David E. Spelts    |
| James L. Hurt      | Jeanne Stange      |
| Willie J. Ivy      | Marcia G. Stoetzel |
| Arthur W. Laughlin | Howard F. Traeder  |
| David & Kathy Loss | Bonnie Turner      |

Thank you all for helping to keep the FLAK NEWS going, the greatest bomb group newsletter ever!

## **398<sup>th</sup> BGMA NON-PROFIT STATUS**

**by  
Keith Anderson**

A major project of our Officers and Directors during 2012 was revising our tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code from Veterans Organization to Public Charity Educational Organization and, as reported at the annual meeting in Philadelphia and in the October issue of FLAK NEWS, the required documentation and fee was mailed to the Covington, KY office of IRS on September 3rd. We subsequently received acknowledgement of our submission dated September 19th and this advised that, during an initial review process, applications for exemption are separated into three groups:

1. Those that can be processed immediately based on information submitted,
2. Those that need minor additional information to be resolved and
3. Those that require additional development.

We were further advised that, if our application falls in the first or second group, we will receive a determination letter stating we are exempt from Federal income tax or a request for information via phone, fax, or letter and that we can expect to be contacted within approximately 90 days. No further word was received within 90 days so the Covington office was contacted (after negotiating a long menu of telephone prompts and waiting through more than 30 minutes of soothing music) and we learned that our application has been placed in Group 2. Subsequent monthly telephone calls produced the additional news that, as expected, applications are processed in the order received and that, as of mid-March (2013), those applications received during March 2012 were being assigned – so much for the efficiency of Federal bureaucracy!

We will continue monthly status requests and still have some faint hope that we will receive a favorable determination in time to announce at the Sacramento membership meeting. Meanwhile, we continue to file as a tax-exempt Veterans Organization.

### **2012 TAPS CORRECTIONS & ADDITIONS**

Our apologies for the following errors and omissions in the TAPS list printed in the January issue of FLAK NEWS:

#### **Spelling Corrections**

Manos, Menelaus John (*not Menelaws*)  
Vogt, Carl J. (*not Charles*)

#### **2012 Additions**

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Erickson, Vaughn M. | Peirce, William Burke   |
| Kuchta, Robert John | Taylor, George A.       |
| Martin, William W.  | Windmueller, Richard R. |
| Moss, Donald D.     |                         |

# “MY THANKS TO DAD, HIS CREW AND TO ALL VETERANS”

## A Personal Testimony to Albert L. Chamrad from His Daughter

By  
Carol Ann Szafranski

I don't remember my Dad talking much about WWII when I was a little girl. But over the past years my Dad has talked a lot more about his life in the Air Force, his friends and crew and what they faced together through a very difficult time in this period of history.

The feeling that he carries in his heart for our Veterans, our Country, our Flag and what it stands for just radiates outward and you cannot help but be touched by that feeling. He is the most patriotic man that I know. He has marched in every Veterans Day parade since its inception; only missing one while he was in the hospital. He volunteers and is on the council to help the retired Veterans. He is always at the forefront for those in need of help and his determination and perseverance to get things done is an inspiration to all who know him. My Dad, who will be 88 this year, goes to the gym almost every day, volunteers at the local hospital, is on different boards serving the community and is always standing up for Veterans rights in this country.

I love him because I have had the privilege of being his daughter for 62 years and seeing firsthand the wonderful man that he is; others love him because he is a man that stands out in a crowd as he is caring, loving, trustworthy and honest. Attributes that are hard to find in today's world.

So I want to say thank you to my Dad, his crew and all the Veterans from all the wars past and present for their determination and perseverance in protecting and fighting for our freedoms.

**Al Chamrad  
1946 after  
Memorial Day  
service.**



### *Facts:*

My Dad, Albert L. Chamrad, was sworn in on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1943 as an Air Cadet – he was 17 years old.

His Basic Training was in Greensboro, North Carolina

Their crew was formed in Tampa Florida – Drew Field

My Dad's crew was called the 'Bornstedt Crew' of the 601<sup>st</sup> Squadron, and my Dad was their tail gunner. They flew 35 missions together.

Their plane was called The Oregon Queen, named after the pilot's wife.

First Mission December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Christmas Eve over Koblenz, Germany. After that mission they were on their way back to the airfield but the weather got so bad and their fuel was running low so they had to stop at another airfield along the way. My Dad told me he just remembers how very cold everyone was and how hard it was snowing.

Their last mission together was April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945 over Regensburg, Germany



### **The John Bornstedt Crew 601<sup>st</sup> SQ**

#### ***Back Row (viewer's left to right):***

Al Chamrad, Tail Gunner  
Bob Bonasch, Ball Turret  
Libero Fattorini, Radio Op  
Leroy Pryor, Waist Gunner  
Claude Stanbrough, Eng.

#### ***Front Row (viewer's left to right):***

Harrie Bragg, Bombardier  
Claude Dierolf, Navigator  
Dewey Coe, Co-Pilot  
John Bornstedt, Pilot

In the never ending pursuit of crew identification we present...

## DO YOU KNOW THESE MEN?

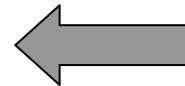


**Unknown crew  
601<sup>st</sup> SQ.**

This training photo is dated  
November 30, 1943.

*Photo submitted by Carl  
Peplow*

**DO YOU KNOW THESE MEN? WE  
NEED YOUR HELP!!**



### **“Hitler’s Headache”**

This photo was  
taken at  
Bradley Field,  
CT when the  
aircraft was  
flown back to  
the States after  
WWII.

By the men’s  
jacket Patches,  
it looks like a  
**600 SQ** crew.

*DO YOU  
RECOGNIZE ANY  
OF THE MEN IN  
THIS PHOTO?*



## **CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE MEN?**

If so, please contact **Geoff Rice** ASAP!  
E-Mail: [crewpictures@398th.org](mailto:crewpictures@398th.org)

# NUTHAMPSTEAD AIRFIELD MUSEUM

## *News from the Trustees*

### **North Hertfordshire District Council Supports the Museum**

At a regular meeting of the North Hertfordshire District Council, the museum project was given official unanimous support. The local parish official who represents Nuthampstead congratulated the Trustees and commented on a worthwhile project for the community together with the continued success of the Woodman Pub as an important local amenity.

### **Long Term Future of the Museum, "Land Grab"**

The security of the museum lies in our hands, or more specifically, our wallets. Andrew Grisbrooke was kind enough to purchase the plot of land from Ian and Sandy Johnson, owners of the Woodman, so we had a place to begin construction on the buildings. Now, in order to secure the long term future of our museum, the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum land must be purchased from Andrew. In order to do this, the museum trustees devised a plan to sell plots of land at \$100 per square. We have named this fund raising effort "Land Grab".

In order to purchase your plots of land, please make checks payable to "398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association" and mail to the 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA Treasurer, Mellisa Ledlow, Houston, TX 77044-1112. Please make a notation that the check is for a "Land Grab" purchase. Also, please note that you can donate or purchase plots by using Pay Pal at the museum's website:

<http://nuthampsteadairfieldmuseum.webs.com>.

### **Donations**

The museum continues to receive donations from members of the 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association. A considerable amount was brought to the reunion in Philadelphia. Our thanks go to the Stahlman Family, George Hentschel, Irma Schwieterman, Dawne Dougherty, Ruthanna Doerstler, Richard Fox, Bobbi Mier, Paul Roderick, Ellen Alexander, Joe & Dot Hauldren, Keith Anderson for donating the Ike Alhadeff papers and to Leo Cunningham gunner on the Donald B. Lowe crew who sent his collection of memorabilia and medals.

Also a special thanks to the Millville Army Airfield Museum, Millville, NJ who kindly donated a jacket from their vast collection of memorabilia.

If you are ever in New Jersey, plan to see the museum where you will receive a warm welcome. The museum has an incredible amount of exhibits all housed in the original wartime buildings on what was known as "America's First Defense Airport".

We were excited to find two small exhibits of two of our 398<sup>th</sup> Veterans who live in the area, one of whom was until recently an active volunteer. Their names are Randy Anderson, Navigator with the 600<sup>th</sup> Squadron's Erle Ford Crew, and William Burke Peirce, Co-Pilot with the 602<sup>nd</sup> Squadron's Franklin Taylor Crew.

Our thanks to Lisa Jester, Executive Director and Joan Legg who both made us welcome during our visits.



Above is a jug (both sides pictured) which George Hentschel donated to the museum. He was given it by the landlord of the Robin Hood pub in Langley (near Nuthampstead) on VE Day; they had run out of glasses so George had to drink from this! Unfortunately the pub closed some years ago and is now a private home.

### **Construction Update**

Last year the trustees and our dedicated group of volunteers were able to erect building one. This year we will finish building one and hopefully erect and complete building two along with the memorial garden. The extremely wet summer and fall of 2012 effectively stopped the building progress. Optimistically, the English weather will be much kinder in 2013.

### **Fundraising Events**

In November we had the pleasure of welcoming back Air Vice Marshall Alan Merriman who gave a most interesting talk on the Hawker Hunter.

Alan Merriman was attached to the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down where he was involved with the testing and development of the Hunter.

We would like to thank Alan Merriman and all of those that attended for their generous support which raised £220 for the museum, and our thanks to Sandy & Stuart at the Woodman for hosting the event. Alan will return this year to give a talk on the English Electric Lightning.

The "Friends" also had a Fundraiser in November. Peter Godfrey gave an instructive and humorous talk on firearms; this was to raise money to provide a lectern which will be located next to the flagpole on the airfield where the Veterans casket flags are flown. Despite fog over most of East Anglia that evening, there was a reasonable attendance and £120 raised. The Friends would like to thank Nicky and Martin Barker for their generosity in hosting this event.

# A REAL HERO

BY  
NUNZIO ADABBO. 601<sup>ST</sup> SQ NAVIGATOR

## The Sam Palant Crew 601<sup>ST</sup> SQ

### **Back Row (viewer's left to right):**

Sgt. Mack Withrow, Eng. Sgt.  
Paul Brown, Radio Sgt.  
Frank Strnad, Waist Gunner  
Sgt. Walter Hall, Ball Turret  
*Unknown man*  
Sgt. Byron Cunningham, Tail G.

### **Front Row (viewer's left to right):**

Lt. Sam Palant, Pilot  
Lt. Ted Kline, Co-Pilot  
F/O Nunzio Addabbo, Navigator  
Lt. Roger Campbell, Bombardier

**This photo of the Palant crew  
was taken during training at  
Alexandria AFB May 23, 1944.**

*Do you recognize the unknown  
man? Contact Geoff Rice!*



This is the story of the heroic deed performed by our tail gunner, Byron Cunningham, on the Friday April 13, 1945 mission that went horribly wrong.

On board the 601 Squadron Sam Palant crew, for this mission, was gunnery officer Lt. Orie J. Hedges, occupying the tail gunner position. He was being checked-out by Sgt. Byron, our regular tail gunner, while Byron manned the right waist gun position.

At 27,000 feet, with the temperature at minus 57 degrees F. and B-17's beginning to explode, burn and spin out of control, without signs of enemy fighters or flak, and our plane in flames, Sam ordered: "bail out".

With a weak voice on the intercom, Lt. Hedges stated he was wounded and couldn't move. Byron removed his chute, grabbed a small oxygen bottle and mask and crawled to the tail. Crawl space with the retracted tail wheel was too small for a flyer wearing a chute. Byron removed the Lt.'s chute, pulled him to the waist position, put his own chute on the wounded Lt. and tied him to the "bail-out" wire. Sgt. Robert R. Sanford, the left waist gunner, pushed Lt. Hedges out, and bailed out behind him, while Byron crawled back to the tail to get the last chute on board. While there he could see the jagged two inch diameter hole in the center of the tail gunner's seat. Byron put on the Lt.'s chute, pulled the release handle on the escape hatch directly under the right-hand elevator, just forward of the tail gunner seat, rolled out and made a delayed jump. Meanwhile, Sam tried diving the plane in an effort to put out the fire. It didn't work, so he put the aircraft on auto-pilot, in a westerly direction and bailed out from the open bomb-bay.

Byron landed in a farm and avoided capture for a day until he got caught by a farmer, carrying a shotgun, riding a bicycle. The farmer brought Byron to a group of farmers who called him various dirty names and a young girl spit in his face. Later, a German command car arrived and Byron was driven to another farmyard where about a hundred German soldiers were resting in a barn. While there he was taken to a farmhouse and interrogated by an old lady who stated she had lived in Illinois and California for many years. Later that day he was taken to a small prison in Hagenow and into a 6 by 10 foot cell. He was later moved to Stalag IV, then to another POW facility. While there he offered a guard one of his American cigarettes to go outside to urinate. He urinated and escaped! Several days later, while asleep in the woods, he was awakened by a police dog and a German soldier aiming a 9mm Luger at his face. Once again, Byron became a POW.

Several weeks later, the Germans surrendered. The soldier, along with the dog, who captured Byron was at the POW camp. When the soldier recognized Byron, he walked to him, removed his Luger and handed it to him. Byron kept that Luger in his Big Bear Lake home where he retired after a long career as an Aeronautical Engineer and later as the Sheriff of Big Bear Lake. Byron and I communicated regularly by e-mail, until he died on July 18, 2012.

Lt. Hedges owes his life to Byron and, in my opinion, the Air Force owes Byron the DFC for being a REAL HERO!

# BRIEF - things

Our new FLAK NEWS feature "Do You Know These Men", where we ask for help in identifying unknown members in our crew photos, has proven to be a big success and we thank all who have contacted **Geoff Rice** with positive ID's. For example, in our October 2012 issue, **Ray Ytuarte** identified the man on the far right in the first row of the **Woodmansee Crew** photo as **Harley O. Benningfield**. Thank you Ray!... Attention all Veterans! Would any of you like to share your wartime experiences with our readers? Relatives too, do you have favorite stories regarding YOUR 398<sup>th</sup> hero, like **Carol Ann Szafranski's** story about her dad **Al Chamrad** on page 7 of this issue? If so, please send your submissions to **Lee Anne Bradley** -Historian. Photos are always appreciated too!



"I just wanted to thank whoever created the 398<sup>th</sup> [web] site. My Grandmother was an English Nurse at Nuthampstead during WW2 when she lived in Anstey and she used to tell a lot of stories about those times. I would try to imagine what it was like back then. When I stumbled across your site it brought all my imagined memories from my Grandmother to life...so thank you.  
My Grandmother's name was Lily Chappell (Chappell being her married name). My family used to run the Chequers Pub (in case any of you guys ever went in there)."  
**Jamie Chappel, UK**

## Wings President and CEO Receives Harrison Ford Legacy Award

Our good friend Greg Anderson, President and CEO of Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum in Denver Colorado, received the Harrison Ford Legacy Award from the actor and aviator himself at the Living Legends of Aviation event held in Hollywood on January 18, 2013. He received this award for his outstanding contribution of making the world a better place through aviation.

Congratulations Greg from all of us with the 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA!



**Greg Anderson (L) receives the Harrison Ford Legacy Award from actor and aviator Harrison Ford Photo by Larry Grace**

# 398th Bomb Group PX

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**DUES ARE NOW PAST DUE!! See Article on Page 3**

## ***HOT DRAMA AT THE WOODMAN!***

*Reprinted from the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum Newsletter with kind permission from Andrew Grisbrooke*

A cold night with temperatures below freezing and snow on the ground, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013, high drama at the Woodman Inn!

At around 6 PM, when Manager Stuart Johnson started his evening shift, he astutely sensed that all was not well in the 400 year old chimney and the services of the Fire Brigade were required.

Two appliances from Royston and Buntingford, who are volunteers, attended. One crew tackled the roof, dousing the recently recovered thatch, whilst a ladder was erected to enable a fine spray to be directed over the chimney pot.

The other team went inside the building with a hose – was it going to get soaked and ruined? No.

Firstly they dismantled the fire grate leaving a bare hearth and, using a set of chimney rods, a small hose, a bucket of water and an old fashioned stirrup pump, the lads worked their way upwards.

Fire from the chimney pot turned to steam and, by the time the rod and hose had reached the top of the pot, the fire was out. Did they use more than a bucket of water? – probably not!

The Brigade then cleaned the hearth, put back the grate and removed their protective sheets – a fantastic job done. True professionalism in action!

It has to be noted that, during the incident, certain regulars did not desert their posts – the beer still flowed and the till kept working!



***The Fire Brigade to the Rescue!!***



*Editor's Note:* Andrew mentioned that the Woodman's chimney had caught fire on a previous occasion; he wrote:

"The time before when it caught fire it wasn't as bad but filled the Woodman with smoke to chest height. That time the regulars stayed on in the bar but under the smoke level – that sort of set a precedent for this time!"