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

VOL. 28 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 2013



“WHAT A WONDERFUL REUNION!”

Everyone had a ball at the 398th BGMA's 30th annual reunion in Sacramento, California this past September. There were smiles all around as reunion goers enjoyed the beautiful California weather, planned events and the special camaraderie amongst the 17 Veterans who attended. This year was also the 70th anniversary of the forming of the 398th Bomb Group and **Ken Howard**, Reunion Chair, cleverly arranged for a special cake to be presented at the Farewell Banquet on Saturday. The photo above shows 11 of our Vets posing with this custom designed confection which sported the logos of the 8th AF and the 398th BG along with its four squadrons (see page 2 for a close-up of the cake). The happy Veterans in this photo are as follows; Back Row left to right: **Ray Richman, Keith Anderson, Jim White, Robert Dittmer, Russ Currier, Joe Reveman, Fred Parker**. Front Row, seated left to right: **Lew Burke, Dick Martin, Dick Austin, Don Menard**. Additional reunion stories and fun photos follow on the next 5 pages!

The 398th BGMA's 30th ANNUAL REUNION

Fun in the California Sun!

By Marilyn Gibb-Rice

Just under 100 participants were present for the 30th annual 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association reunion held in Sacramento, California. The setting was the Lions Gate Hotel & Conference Center which in the past had been the officer's mess and quarters for the USAF stationed at McClellan. Seventeen veterans were in attendance. Seven widows and several second and third generation members and two fourth generation little ones were also there.

The business meeting held on Thursday was very productive and went smoothly. We are still waiting on our change of IRS filing status and it may be at least another six months before we hear anything from the government. The members present re-elected the current officers by "acclamation." The officers are Marilyn Gibb-Rice, President; Lee Anne Bradley, Vice-President; Karen Neff, Secretary; and Mellisa Ledlow, Treasurer. The Directors re-elected were Arnie Schneider, Joe Mansell, Keith Anderson, and Ray Richman. The appointed managers for the upcoming year are: Sharon Krause, Unit Contact and E-Mail Manager; Ken Howard, Reunion Chair; Dawne Dougherty, Dues Manager; Carolyn Widmann, PX Manager; Geoff Rice, Photo Researcher; Lee Bradley, Historian and Data Coordinator, John Blackwell, Special Projects Manager. The FLAK NEWS committee consists of Ray Richman, Mellisa Ledlow and Lee Bradley.

Our Thursday night banquet began with two of our third generation members, Beth and Brandy Howard leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance followed with the invocation by Dawne Dougherty, widow of 398th veteran, Tom Dougherty. After the usual welcome and introductions, veteran Dean Whitaker provided us with an amusing account of his time while stationed at Nuthampstead. Dorothy Stahlman Ahl read her poem written in memory of her father, Phil Stahlman. The program ended with Geoff Rice updating us on the progress of the new Nuthampstead Airfield Museum.

Continued next page

Ken Howard had this beautiful birthday cake made for the Farewell Dinner. Happy 70th to the 398th Bomb Group!



The handsome bunch of Veterans pictured above attended the Welcome Dinner. Back Row Left to Right: Russ Currier, Ray Richman, Dean Whitaker, Geronimo Terres, Dick Austin, Joe Mansell, Lew Burke, Keith Anderson, Bob Kraft. Seated Left to Right: Dick Martin, Charles Ormsby, Fred Parker, Don Menard, Joe Reveman.

Fun in the California Sun!

Continued from previous page

Since California weather cools off in the evenings, we were able to hold our banquet on Saturday night outside on the lovely patio next to the swimming pool. It was a very nice touch to our Saturday night's program which began with an acoustical guitar version of "America, the Beautiful" performed by veteran Ray Richman's grandson Jordan Higgins. The invocation was given by veteran Keith Anderson. John Franz, representing the Oakland Aviation Museum spoke about keeping the memory alive of our veterans. Afterwards, we had five veterans read various amusing stories from Jack's Books with Jonna Doolittle leading the group reading a letter written by President Roosevelt. Carolyn Widmann presented a plaque for Allen Ostrom, recognizing his years of contributions to the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. Ken Howard received gifts as a thank you for chairing his first of many reunions. The night was topped off with live music by "Sister Swing" who entertained the group with their wonderful renditions of WWII era songs in classic Andrews Sisters style.

Six veterans present at this year's reunion were interviewed by Marilyn Gibb-Rice for the Timeless Voices Project. They were Richard Austin, Geronimo Terres, Dean Whitaker, Dick Martin, Charles Ormsby and Robert Dittmer. Previously, while in England, Marilyn interviewed Brits, Ian James and Len Howard who related their knowledge of the Searl crew that crashed near Penn on August 12, 1944. Hopefully, these interviews will be available to purchase after Christmas from the PX.



Ken Howard, 398th BGMA Reunion Chairman, did a great job arranging this year's reunion in Sacramento. A big thank you from all of us Ken for a job well done!

"Dear 398th Bomb Group (H),

On behalf of the 163 RW, March ARB, and the California Air National Guard, I wish you all the best as you celebrate your 2013 Reunion. Although I cannot attend this year as I am deployed supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, I wish to bring to you all my congratulations upon your reunion in Sacramento, California. In my place I have sent my wife Eleanor to represent me and our dedication to my 34 years of military service which would have been impossible without the source from my uncle (Lt. Col.) Raymond Richman. His guidance to me for my national service and military excellence has always been my guidepost. And after I met several of you at your reunion in Denver a few years ago, I gained a keen understanding of my uncle's background.

Your training and mission accomplishments with the 8th Air Force in Nuthampstead, England, were nothing short of heroic and remarkable. Every one of your squadrons sacrificed beyond understanding, and those of you that were fortunate to return again served our nation with honor and contributed to our post-war development. To see your children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue with the 398th association reinforces my deep respect for the great men of Nuthampstead who served as the greatest generation.

As I fly in our modern Air Force aircraft that soar through the same skies that the big B-17s with the red W on their tails 69 years ago, I most humbly give thanks to you and your airmen that drew contrails to victory.

My gratitude and blessings to you all.

Colonel Mark Richman
10 EAEF
Ramstein AB, Germany "

A Message from the President

BY MARILYN GIBB-RICE

President, 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

I am pleased to report that we had an extremely enjoyable reunion in Sacramento. The California weather was great, the tours were interesting, the food was excellent and the moods were festive. It was so encouraging having several of the seventeen veterans attend for the first time.

We are thrilled to announce that the 31st annual reunion will be held in Rapid City, South Dakota September 3 - 6, 2014. We are excited to return to the area where the 398th originated and we hope to have a fantastic turnout for this very special reunion.

If you have any questions or comments about the 398th BGMA and would like to contact me, please e-mail me at president@398th.org



The Oakland Aviation Museum Visits the 398th BG Reunion

By Mellisa Ledlow

What a treat we had at the reunion! Two volunteers, John Franz and Mike Finney (both sons of WWII vets), brought a bit of the Oakland Aviation Museum to the site of the 398th gathering at the Lions Gate Hotel. John and Mike brought displays from the Doolittle exhibit and the 8th Air Force Room at the museum, as well as a slew of items from their personal collections. A heated flight suit, various uniforms and extensive collections of patches, brass, clothing and miscellaneous pieces of equipment were displayed in our 'Memory Room' for viewing. Many stories were shared as our vets explained the items to a very attentive younger audience. The 398th is extremely appreciative of John and Mike taking the time to travel to Sacramento -- and we certainly enjoyed them at the Farewell Banquet.

The photos on this page show just a small sampling of what John and Mike brought for us to see.



GOOD STUFF!!

Thank You Oakland Aviation Museum

Above: WWII era posters, newspapers, letters and a copy of "Yank Magazine" on display in the 398th BGMA's reunion Memory Room.

Right: One of several shadow boxes filled with pins, medals, patches and even an original 601st SQ patch!

Above Right: Sharp looking uniforms, crusher caps, oxygen masks and an instrument panel.



THAR'S GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS... And Apparently Motorcycles Too!



Don Menard explains to his new motorcycle friends from the Placerville VFW that he was with the 'Hell From Heaven' group, not the 'Hell's Angels' group!

Friday's Reunion tour began at Sutter's Mill (see photo below), the sight of a once-sleepy sawmill on the nearby American River. Gold flakes were found at the mill and led to the infamous California Gold Rush in the 1800's. An unexpected and pleasant surprise for the 398th veterans was an escort from the mill to Placerville, CA. The escort consisted of about a dozen motorcycle riders — all veterans themselves — and members of the Placerville VFW. The "younger" vets really paid tribute to our 398th members. The remainder of the afternoon included a visit to a once-active gold mine and on-site museum. This was a great visit to an area of California known for the Pony Express, stagecoach trails and gold mining.



17 VETERANS ATTENDED THIS YEAR'S REUNION:

Keith Anderson, 600th SQ
 Dick Austin, 602nd SQ
 Lew Burke, 603rd SQ
 Russ Currier, 603rd SQ
 Robert Dittmer, 600th SQ
 Bob Kraft, 602nd SQ
 Joe Mansell, 602nd SQ
 Dick Martin, 602nd SQ
 Don Menard, 603rd SQ
 Charles Ormsby, 603rd SQ
 Bill Parker, 603rd SQ
 Fred Parker, 600th SQ
 Joe Reveman, 601st SQ
 Ray Richman, 600th SQ
 Geronimo Terres, 602nd SQ
 Dean Whitaker, 603rd SQ
 Jim White, 600th SQ

Factoid for the Day...

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD Of the term "SWARM OF BEES"? (aka S.O.B.)

Contributed to www.398th.org by Robert H. Dee, Jr
 Co-Pilot, 601st SQ

A S.O.B. was a shell that the German Flak Batteries shot up in the path of incoming bombers that dispersed small pieces of metal that floated for a while and they would aim their guns at it. The bombers were to fly through the SOB's and get hit by the flak guns targeted at the S.O.B. (the S.O.B.'s must have reflected radar signals from the guns).

Bob added, "the damn things sure worked! They shot down a mess of planes using it". "The flak would come up so thick you could walk on it."



This Bob Stevens Cartoon used with permission from Barbara Stevens

A COLLAGE OF REUNION MEMORIES

Photos of the reunion shown on the next two pages and throughout this issue were contributed by
Mellisa Ledlow, Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Geoff Rice & Lee Anne Bradley



Top: Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Brandy Howard, Veteran Don Menard, Beth Howard, Geoff Rice.

Right: Veteran Bill Parker (left) with wife Carol and Veteran Dick Martin.



Below: Loretta Smith and Bobbi Mier



Left: Sacramento City Tour!

- Left to Right:*
Stephen Howard
Don Menard
Karen Clement
Lillie Burke
Geronimo Terres
Helen Terres
Jeannie Stange
Martha McCombs
Vickie Howard
Helen Howard
Bobbi Mier
Loretta Smith
Lucilla Parker
Irma Schweiterman
Dean Whitaker
Richard Schweiterman
Pat Riley
Bob Kraft
Jim White
Pete Krause
Kneeling in Front:
Ruthanna Doerstler



MORE REUNION MEMORIES!

“WE ALL HAD A VERY GOOD TIME”



Above: Frank Evola & Karen Neff-Evola

Left: Left to Right: Mellisa Ledlow, Pete Krause, Sharon Krause



Right: Mikayla Howard, a 4th generation 398er!



Above: Jonna Doolittle (General Doolittle's granddaughter) and Lew Burke

Below: Oakland Aviation Museum Volunteers John Franz & Mike Finney



Above: Dean Whitaker, Don Menard and Geronimo Terres



Above: Fred Parker and Edie Stauffer. Ray Richman, wife Wilma and family are seated at the table seen in the background



Right: Left to Right: Keith Anderson, Irma Schwieterman & Richard Schwieterman

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

DO YOU KNOW THESE MEN?



**Guys in a Jeep!
601st SQ**

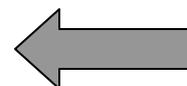
Date: probably 1945

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

Unknown man A
Unknown man B
Unknown man C
Unknown man D

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

Lt. David Mills, Pilot
Unknown man 2
Lt. Tom Marchbanks



**DO YOU RECOGNIZE
THE UNKNOWN MEN?**

**Photo Op!
603rd SQ.**

Photo date:
Probably April - June 1945

(viewer's left to right):

Unknown man A
Unknown man B
Lt. Paul J. Keenan, Pilot
Unknown man E
Lt. Nicholas Bur, Navigator

**These men are most likely all
members of Keenan's crew.**

Photo donated to the
Nuthampstead Air Field
Museum by Paul Keenan's
daughter, Carolyn Kaboord.



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



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE MEN?

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

NUTHAMPSTEAD AIRFIELD MUSEUM

News from the Trustees



Progress on 'Building 2' Update:

Harvey Ditchman and Andrew Grisbrooke were busy during the month of August getting the ground dug and leveled for the base of Building Two. (photo at left) Good weather was definitely an advantage for site access and the two did a great job in preparing the ground for insulation and concrete layers.

A BIG thank you to local company Dig & Dump www.dig-dump.com for their support. Much appreciated!

September 5, 2013

Photo at right: More progress on Building Two! Hardcore compacted, damp proof membrane insulation and steel reinforcing bars on site. Note the new door and finished back of Building One. A big thank you to Harvey and Andrew for their recent efforts in progressing the builds.



THE MUSEUM PLANS



The 398th Officers



Referencing page 6 in the April 2013 FLAK NEWS;

I am happy to see that dear old George Cuda finally got his 398th Vets medallion, albeit in the nursing home. He was always around the Woodman Inn in his uniform jacket and added so much to the reunions every two years at Station 131. He had so many stories to tell about life around Nuthampstead during WW2. God bless him.

Ralph Ambrose
Burke, VA

RAPID CITY in 2014!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The 31st Annual Reunion for the 398th BGMA will be held in Rapid City, South Dakota, September 3 - 6, 2014

2013 DUES REMINDER!

If you have *NOT* paid your dues, this may be your last issue of the FLAK NEWS! Don't let that happen!! In order to continue to receive this publication all dues payments must be current. Dues for EVERY member are to be paid **JANUARY 1st of each year.**

If you have not paid your 2013 dues please do so ASAP. Make your check payable to the "398th BGMA" and mail to our Dues Manager, Dawne Dougherty. Her contact information is directly to the right.

Don't miss out on the FLAK NEWS
PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES!!

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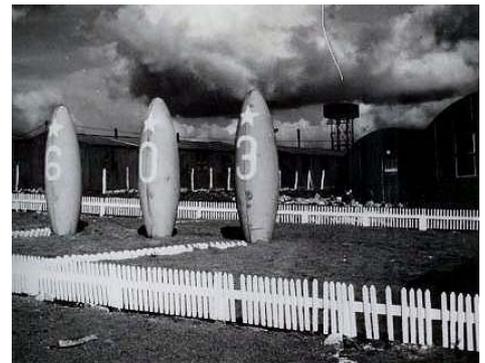
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603rd SQ barracks going for curb appeal

BRIEF - things

SO, our 30th Annual Reunion was a great success and we are now looking forward to the 31st Annual Reunion slated for Rapid City South Dakota in 2014. Our Reunion Chair **Ken Howard** has begun plans for another fun 398th BGMA gathering... **Kathy Odell** tells us she was "very excited to see the article and pictures" about her dad, **Robert Odell** 602nd SQ, in the July FLAK NEWS... If YOU would like to write a story about your favorite Veteran, please do and send it to us!... On the passing of her husband **Col. Hal W. Lamb**, 601st SQ, **Ellie Lamb** wrote; "When I went through his treasures I believe I found every copy of your FLAK NEWS that he had ever received! He treasured them and his memories of the 398th Bomb Group. He was special as were all the 398th... **Ralph Ambrose** said that "July 20, 2013 was like **Lew Burke** Day here in the Old Dominion. First the FLAK NEWS arrived, then after reading 'Freaky Doings in WWII' by Lew Burke, yours truly and wife headed out to attend Lew's '90th birthday celebration!"... That's a lotta Lew!

A Sampling of our PX Merchandise

The holidays are right around the corner... beat the mad rush and purchase your 398th BG gifts now!



Left:
Men's Pullover French Terry Sweatshirt

(but looks great on ladies too!!
...and, it's SO soft)

\$40.00

Right:
Earrings
(pierced & clip pictured)

\$10.00



Above: **Bumper Sticker \$3.00**

Right:
Challenge Coin
(front & back pictured)

\$20.00



398th Bomb Group PX

ORDER FORM

(The Second Generation)

QTY	ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLOTHING			
All shirts select size:			
	___ S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL		
___	T-Shirt, black, "398th BG Flying Fortress"	\$15.00	___
___	T-Shirt, navy, with B-17 front view	\$15.00	___
___	T-Shirt, grey, "30 th Reunion" –lists all reunion sites on back	\$25.00	___
___	T-Shirt, white, with Triangle W on front, Clearing & Colder on back	\$15.00	___
___	T-Shirt, white, with Group logo on front, Squadron logo on back	\$25.00	___
	select: ___600 ___601 ___602 ___603		
___	Men's Denim Shirt, long sleeve, 398th logo	\$25.00	___
___	Men's Golf Shirt, blue, embroidered TriangleW	\$25.00	___
___	Men's Pullover French Terry Sweatshirt – air force blue, embroidered Triangle W	\$40.00	___
LAPEL PINS			
___	Squadron pin	\$6.00	___
	select: ___600 ___601 ___602 ___603		
___	Group pin Hell From Heaven	\$6.00	___
___	Group pin blue with B-17	\$6.00	___
___	8th Air Force pin	\$6.00	___
PATCHES			
___	Squadron Patch 3"	\$6.00	___
	select: ___600 ___601 ___602 ___603		
___	B-17 Jacket Patch, 4"x3"	\$6.00	___
___	8th Air Force Patch, 3"	\$6.00	___
___	Group Patch Hell From Heaven, 2½"x3"	\$6.00	___
BOOKS (books include postage)			
___	Fortresses Over Nuthampstead (Bishop)	\$30.00	___
___	398th History (1946, photo copy)	\$20.00	___
___	Remembrances (Ostrom, 1989, photo copy)	\$30.00	___
___	The Last Mission (Mazur) – audio CD's	\$30.00	___
___	Return to Station 131- Memorial Dedication June 2000 - DVD	\$20.00	___
PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS			
___	Clearing & Colder, 14"x19"	\$30.00	___
___	Clearing & Colder, 14"x17", on canvas	\$50.00	___
___	Anstey Stained Glass Window booklet, 11"x17"	\$10.00	___
___	Sunset at Nuthampstead, 8"x10"	\$7.00	___
MISCELLANEOUS			
___	Bumper Sticker (red, white & black)	\$3.00	___
___	50 Caliber Bullet Pen (Group Logo)	\$40.00	___
___	Blue Ballpoint Pen (398th imprint)	\$6.00	___
___	Challenge Coin (B-17)	\$20.00	___
___	Coaster (Clearing & Colder imprint)	\$5.00	___
___	Earrings – clip (Group Logo)	\$10.00	___
___	Earrings – pierced (Group Logo)	\$10.00	___
TIMELESS VOICES DVD's (DVD's include postage/handling)			
___	Member \$17.00 ea., Non member \$22.00 ea. For information and titles, visit the "Timeless Voices" section at www.398th.org		
___	FLAK NEWS Flash Drive Aug '86 to July '12	\$40.00	___

Cost of All Items ordered \$ _____

Postage/handling add \$7.00, \$9.00 if order over \$20.00 \$ _____

Payment in US funds to "398th Bomb Group PX" Total \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone & E-Mail _____

Mail completed order form and check to:
Carolyn Widmann, Westfield, IN 46062-7150

398th BOMB GROUP FLAK NEWS

FLAK NEWS
C/O Lee A. Bradley
Andover, NJ 07821
USA



To Our American Friends

You may remember me from the last edition [July 2013] of the FLAK NEWS introducing myself as Chairman of the Friends of The 398th BGMA, and sharing with you my memories of my visit to the annual Madingley Memorial Service.

My Next 'pleasurable duty' is to let you know that we are all looking forward to seeing as many of you that can make it to Station 131 here in Nuthampstead for the weekend of June 14th / 15th 2014 for our biennial Memorial Service, in order that we may honour the men of the 398th BG and the 55th FG who flew from Station 131.

From now until then we shall be busy putting together a programme which we hope will come up to, or indeed exceed, the events you have enjoyed in the past. We cannot, however, promise to exceed the wonderful display given by Maurice Hammond in his P51 Mustang in 2012, but we shall do our best. Who knows, maybe he will do the honours again!

Rest assured, myself and committee colleagues are planning events to make your weekend as special as can be and you will be made most welcome by us all.

We look forward to seeing you, our special American friends, in June next year.

Rod Finn