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

398th Third Generation Assures the 398th BGMA Will Go On



Five of our third-generation members attended the 48th Annual 398th BGMA in Dayton, Ohio this past July. A promising sign that our group will be in good hands as time goes on. Pictured above, left to right, are Colin Colbourn, Beth Howard, Lisa Ann Campbell-Bauer, Alexis Murray and Eliot Murray. Colin is one of our newly elected Board Directors. He is the grandnephew of 1st Lt. Charles E. Howell, Jr., Pilot, 603rd SQ, KIA on 11/21/44. Beth, another newly elected Board Director, is also our Dues Manager and one of our 3rd Generation liaisons. She is the granddaughter of Sgt. Robert L. Howard, BT Gunner, 603rd SQ. Lisa is the granddaughter of Capt. William Pren Campbell, Bombardier, 603rd SQ, KIA on 1/23/45. Alexis and Eliot are both grandchildren of S/Sgt. Cecil R. "Tex" Moore, Tail Gunner, 602nd SQ.

Thank you all for taking part in our Dayton reunion and sharing your ideas. Us 'old-timers' really enjoyed being with you '3rd Gens' and hope to see you again at our September 2023 reunion in Council Bluffs, Iowa!

Our 38th Annual Reunion in Dayton, Ohio

“It was great to see old friends and meet some first-time attendees”

by Mellisa Ledlow

Many WWII memorial organizations have closed up shop due to lack of membership and interest, but NOT the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. Thanks to our hardworking Board and supportive membership, we continue to go on! The Flak News, our website www.398th.org, Facebook Page, the Nuthampstead Air Field Museum, annual USA reunions and biennial UK reunions all serve to tie us together. Our reunion in Dayton Ohio this past July was just the latest example of our determined resilience. Our Veterans will always be honored and never forgotten.

Thirty-four members of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association met in Dayton, Ohio in late July. Those in attendance stayed at the historic Hope Hotel (named for Bob Hope) adjacent to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Upon arrival and throughout the weekend, Ken and Beth Howard, 398th Reunion organizers, greeted members in the Memory Room. The room, which throughout the weekend seemed like our own “living room,” was set up with Jack’s Books (thanks to Lee Anne Bradley), various memorabilia and several photos and refreshments. As always, it was great to see old friends and meet some first-time attendees.

A banquet room, aptly named the “B17 Flying Fortress” room, at the hotel was the sight of the traditional Thursday night Welcome Banquet. On hand with a presentation was Doug Jones, son of Edward Jones, 398th Pilot in the 603rd Squadron. Ed Jones flew 33 missions while serving at Nuthampstead and earned the Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross. Stateside, Ed went on to earn his PhD and had a lengthy career at Cornell University. Doug presented an informative slide show of pages from a scrapbook that Doug’s niece, Ed’s granddaughter, had prepared about her grandfather’s WWII experience. It was heart-warming to see the story of Ed’s WWII experiences from the eyes of a 3rd generation family member.

To end the evening, Marilyn Gibb-Rice, led a fun-filled, but not surprisingly competitive round of 398th and WW II trivia questions. Though there were a couple of challenges, the game ended peacefully and was great fun.

On Friday, most of the group made their way to the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB. The museum dates back to 1923 and is the oldest and largest military aviation museum in the world. The museum’s collection contains many rare and historical aircraft and equipment including some of the Wright Brothers’ experimental craft, Presidential aircraft, an ICBM display and of great interest to the 398th attendees, a very large WWII exhibit. The hangar has the actual Memphis Belle B-17 on display as well as all the renowned fighter planes of both the Allies and Axis campaigns. There are numerous other exhibits of interest as well. Though many in the group had visited the museum on previous trips, no one minded returning and once again enjoying the exceptional exhibits.

During the course of the Reunion, the Board and General Membership conducted their annual meetings. Annual reports and minutes were presented and accepted. Officers and Directors were nominated and voted upon. The Board welcomes two new Directors (from the 3rd Generation), Beth Howard and Colin Colbourn. All others on the Board will remain the same. Plans for the 2023 Reunion were discussed. Ken Howard, Reunion Chairman, has researched several potential locations and, with Board approval, has decided on Omaha, Nebraska for September 2023. Further details will be presented in the January 2023 Flak News and the 398th website.

A Friday night Open Bar led to more visiting, story-telling and even a card game or two!

Saturday was a day of Sight-Seeing on your own with many small groups meeting for lunch.

The Farewell Dinner Saturday night was most enjoyable with two very interesting speakers. Dennis Campbell is the son of Capt. William Pren Campbell, Bombardier on the Gonzalez Crew, 603rd Squadron. William Campbell actually began his military career before war was declared. His experience and expertise as a Bombardier led to many overseas excursions. In 1942, Campbell was in the 19th Bomb Group, 93rd Squadron on the “Suzy-Q” crew that participated in the Java and Dutch Indies Campaigns. The Suzy-Q gained fame for shooting down 26 enemy aircraft in the Pacific. After being transferred to the 398th Bomb Group, 603rd Squadron, Campbell became Bombardier for the Gonzalez Crew. Gonzalez piloted the Lead Plane on its January 23, 1945 mission. The plane was shot down and only Gonzalez survived. Dennis’s Dad and the rest of the crew (including Col. Frank P. Hunter, Commanding Officer of the 398th Bomb Group) perished.



Doug Jones showed a slide presentation about his dad, Lt. Ed Jones, 603rd Pilot

Dayton Reunion continued... more photos on pages 8 and 9!



Dennis Campbell also presented a slide show about his dad, Capt. William Pren Campbell, 603rd Bombardier. Sadly Capt. Campbell was flying with Col Hunter when their plane went down on 1/23/45, Both were KIA.

Dennis had many family photos including he and his older brother fishing and horseback riding with their dad. Dennis's daughter Lisa, assisted with the slide presentation and helped in paying tribute to her grandfather. Campbell is interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Colin Colbourn, another Farewell Dinner speaker, is the great-nephew of Lt. Charles E. Howell, 398th BG Pilot, 603rd Squadron, KIA in November 1944. After obtaining his PhD in Military History and working for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, Colin became involved as Lead Historian of Project Recover. Colin described the mission and purpose of this non-profit organization and his role as Lead Historian of the group. Project Recover, per their website, "is a collaborative effort to enlist 21st-century science and technology in a quest to find and repatriate Americans missing in action since WW II." Colin aids in these searches as he expertly creates detailed databases, using MACR's, photographs, written articles and books and information from locals and families, all of which assist the Project Recover team to find and explore potential crash sites of MIA US military aircraft. The group has primarily, but not exclusively, been exploring under-water crash sites in the Pacific. There are over 72,000 missing aircraft from WW II and it can be a bit like a needle in a haystack. But the Team has discovered 60 aircraft in their efforts and brought home the remains of 15 servicemen—giving great motivation to continue to explore and find more information for the families of the missing

Project Recover is featured in a documentary available for viewing (on You Tube for a small fee), called "To What Remains." Their website is very informative and loaded with photos and details of their missions. Check it out at www.projectrecover.org.



Colin Colbourn (right) talking with his dad, Charles in the Memory Room

Like all past 398th Reunions, this one allowed the exchange of many stories and memories about our veterans and their families. We were delighted to have our dear Chrysta Moore, widow of "Tex" Moore, attend with her son-in-law and two of her grandchildren. The Bob Rowland Family, also had six members in attendance and there were FIVE 3rd Generation attendees (yeah)! The 398th was also able to welcome two first-time attendees! Though it was smaller in size than some past Reunions, the group is still committed and determined to continue to meet and greatly look forward to next year.

Many, many thanks to the Howard Family for organizing and managing another wonderful 398th Reunion. We look forward to many more!

The Dayton Reunion In Pictures

Photos contributed by Mellisa Ledlow and Lee Bradley



Jack's Books were a big hit!

Top row left to right: 1. Dennis Campbell searching for info about his dad. 2. Pete Krause, Colin Colbourn and Jim Ledlow confirming their WWII trivia answers (was it a V1 or V2 rocket that hit Station 131? Hmmm). 3. Scott Welty, son of Robert M. Welty, 603rd Co-Pilot.

Left: Colin Colbourn, one of our newly appointed Board Directors, and sweet Chrysta Moore, widow of Cecil "Tex" Moore.

At the National Museum of the USAF

Bottom row left to right: 1. Ken & Trudy Howard. 2. Tony, John, Tresa and Roberta Rowland. John and Tony are sons of Robert Rowland, 602 BT Gunner. 3. VP Pete Krause, Jim Ledlow, Bob & Cheryl Swearingen... and of course the *Memphis Belle*



The Dayton Reunion in Pictures Continued!



Top row, left to right: 1. Sharon, Contact Mgr & Pete Krause, VP. 2. Cheryl & Bob Swearingen 3. Carolyn Widman, PX Mgr with Bobbi Mier (standing).



The Farewell Dinner



Photo directly below: 1. Dennis Campbell with daughter Lisa Ann Bauer, son and granddaughter of Capt. William Pren Campbell, 603 Bombardier, KIA 1/23/45.

Bottom photo: 1. Joe Mansell and Martha McCombs, son and daughter of Joe K. Mansell, 602 Flight Engineer, proudly pose next to the 398th BG emblem.



Above, middle left photo: 1. Christa Moore (center) with Grandkids Eliot and Alexis Murray.

Photo directly above: Beth Howard, Dues Mgr, Asst. Reunion Coordinator & newly appointed Board Director, with her dad Ken Howard, Reunion Chairman. Doug Jones, son of Ed Jones, 603 Co-Pilot, is center.





Proud to be a part of the 398th

Several of the Dayton Ohio Reunion attendees posed for this group photo at the Farewell Dinner.

Seated Left to Right: Pete Krause, Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Mellisa Ledlow, Sharon Krause, Cheryl Swearingen, Chrysta Moore, Carolyn Widmann, Beth Howard, Trudy Howard.

Middle row: Left to Right: Bobbi Mier, Jim Ledlow, Tresa Rowland, Bob Swearingen, Martha McCombs, Lisa Ann Bauer, Dennis Campbell, Alexis Murray, Nancy Rowland, Roberta Rowland, Tony Rowland.

Back row, left to right: Colin Colbourn, Ken Howard, John Rowland, Joe Mansell, Duane Shively, Patrick Murray, Scott Welty, Lee Bradley, Eliot Murray.