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

VOL. 11 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 1996



Planning Ahead? Try July 1997 For Next Reunion

For the benefit of those members who like to make their travel plans via the "long range" method, they will be happy to know that next year's reunion will be held in Spokane, Washington, on July 16-17-18-19, 1997.

This will be a summertime meeting, as compared to the "normal" fall settings. Our headquarters hotel will be Cavanaugh's Inn At The Park, just across the river from downtown Spokane. Tours to nearby eastern Washington and northern Idaho attractions are even now being arranged.

For those interested in extending their 1997 reunion travels to the Canadian Rockies they are invited to contact Julie Saucier, Group Coordinators, Spokane, WA 99204.

WALLY BLACKWELL (left) president-elect of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association, receives the gavel of the presidency from vice president Ted Johnston. The ceremony took place at the Farewell Banquet of the annual reunion held September 25-28, 1996, at Springfield, Missouri. Wally was the unanimous choice of the membership to succeed Bill Comstock, who died earlier this year after leading the 398th for 20 years. Johnston was retained as vice president and Harold Stallcup was elected to replace Blackwell as secretary. All other officers and board members were retained.

Not A 398th Project

The recent mailing to 398th members seeking funds to build a bronze B-17 model for the Air Force Academy, headed by "Dale Brown, project manager," was not sanctioned by the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association, it was announced by president Wally Blackwell.

"FAWCHINATE"

New Label By New President

Wally Blackwell told the Farewell Banquet attendees at Springfield, Missouri, of how his grandmother up in New England used the word "fortunate" to describe (1) a lucky encounter, (2) good health, (3) prosperity, (4) etc.

It came out like "fawchinate" when he told it, but all understood the message when the new president of the 398th Bomb Group equated his grandmother's story to the 398th.

"We are 'fawchinate' to have had strong leaders like Bill Comstock and others all these years. Men like George Hilliard, who search for our lost souls and keeps adding new members almost daily. And a membership that supports our reunions, tours, and special projects.

"And we can look back to our combat leaders like Colonel Hunter, Tracy Petersen and others, and consider ourselves fortunate."

And then he added -

"I understand the responsibility and vision of this office and will continue to serve accordingly."

And so began the "reign" of Wally Blackwell. Proud of his 398th heritage and confident of its future.

There were 437 at the reunion, including spouses, children, grandchildren and a variety of friends. This would include "Members" (men who served in the 398th), "Associates" (spouses or blood relatives), and "Auxiliary" (no formal relationship, but interested in 398th heritage and future.)

(Continued on Page 5.)

COLONEL HUNTER AND HIS THESIS ON 398th COMBAT DISCIPLINE

HEADQUARTERS 398th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Commanding Officer
Army Air Base, Rapid City, South Dakota

20 November 1943

SUBJECT: Military Courtesy.

TO : All Officers of the 398th Bomb
Group

1. The problem of military discipline and courtesy has been brought to your attention frequently by various means. You will consider this letter as a direct contact from me to you on the subject.

2. I believe that many young officers do not fully realize the purpose of military discipline, which includes military courtesy, in the Service; and fail to appreciate why we should put so much emphasis upon it. You must realize that discipline is the key factor which decides who will win THE COMBAT BATTLE. Discipline, or lack of discipline that is evident during everyday life, in training, in social off-hours, and in routine work not involving combat, is a definite index of the state of discipline which can be expected when actual combat is faced. Every officer and soldier in the armed forces must be ready to face COMBAT when the proper time arrives, and discipline must be instilled and indoctrinated BEFORE the hour of combat is at hand. The small details of military discipline are indicative of the state of discipline which exists: SALUTING, MILITARY BEARING AND NEATNESS OF DRESS, AND NEVERFAILING ADHERENCE TO THE OFFICER-SOLDIER RELATIONSHIP are these indices to discipline. We must be proficient in these details at all times if we expect to achieve the ultimate degree of COMBAT DISCIPLINE which is necessary for us to win the battles to come.

3. It is an alarming fact that attention to the details of military discipline is much more lacking among our young officers than among soldiers. I have observed far more officers, proportionately, who fail to salute than soldiers; more officers, proportionately, who are sloppy in bearing and in dress than soldiers; and more officers who fail to adhere to the proper relationship between officers and soldiers. I believe that this discrepancy is not intentional on the part of our officers, but is more a lack of the realization on their part of the seriousness of these details. The responsibility for military discipline in all cases lies with the officer. He can never shirk this duty. If an officer fails in this primary duty he not only hurts himself, but he hurts the entire service and impedes the war effort.

4. YOU are charged with a serious responsibility as an officer and you must assume this responsibility. YOU, personally, must salute without fail at all times. Don't AVOID saluting, but rather go out of your way to render a salute or return one. Remember that you will never be wrong in OVER-SALUTING or saluting at the wrong time. YOU, personally, must pay meticulous attention to your bearing and appearance as an officer: keep your uniforms as clean as possible; keep your shoes shined; keep your hair cut; LOOK LIKE AN OFFICER AT ALL TIMES. YOU, personally, must never be guilty of failing to adhere to the relationship which you know must exist between the officer and soldier. Remember that the soldier is your severest critic as an officer and he wants you to be an officer at all times in every sense of the word, and if you fail to meet your responsibilities you will lose the respect, loyalty and admiration of the soldier under you in addition to the censure of your brother officers.

5. Any instance of the failure of an officer to meet these primary duties of an officer is a serious military offense and corrective action will be taken accordingly.

6. YOU as an officer want to see this war won and over in as short a time as possible. YOU, personally, can contribute greatly to this effort if you meet fully your part in instilling DISCIPLINE in yourself and in every soldier with whom you have contact. It is only by YOUR personal effort, and that of all other officers, that this can be done. This is YOUR war, YOUR Army, YOUR Air Force, and YOUR Group, and YOUR performance of duty will prove whether we WIN THIS WAR OR NOT.

7. You will receive two copies of this letter. Keep one copy, marking on it the date and time you received it, return the other copy to me with your signature and the date and time you received it.

Frank P. Hunter, Jr.

1st Ind.

TO: Commanding Officer, 398th Bombardment
Group (H), AAB, Rapid City, South Dakota.

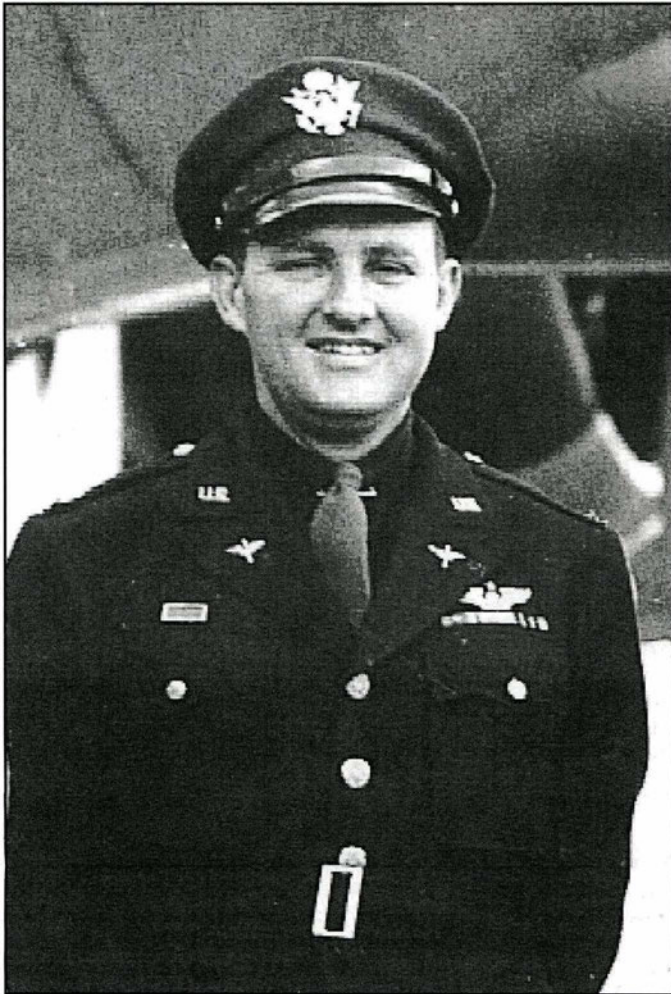
I have read and understood the contents of
basic communication.

SIGNED

DATE _____ TIME _____

“We Must Be Proficient In These Matters At All Times”

398th FLAG PROGRAM AT NUTHAMPSTEAD



COL. FRANK P. HUNTER, JR.
“You are charged with a serious responsibility.”

The flag program begun years ago by the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association and the Friends of the 398th at Nuthampstead has featured no less than 28 flags., it was announced by Wally Blackwell, who has been monitoring the program since its inception.

Given by the widows, each flag has been appropriately flown at the site of the Memorial near the Woodman Inn. And a commemoration certificate and photo sent to each widow.

And as of this past June, of the 28 flags, 21 had been “flown to destruction” on the tall, isolated pole located near the site of the old Station 131 control tower. During the group tour visit in June, eight of the old flags were burned in a proper ceremony. Atop the pole night and day in all weather, the average life span of the flags is about three months.

There are still seven flags available for display, according to Tim Wells of Nuthampstead, who handles the flag program for the Friends. All have been displayed at the Memorial. One flag, that of Julius Cubranich, was returned to the family after being raised at the Memorial.

Flags of the following veterans have either been flown at the airfield site “to destruction” or are awaiting a future assignment —

Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Clarence Ehret | Howard Studor | Vincent Moore |
| Wally Tillman | Warren Johnson | Roy Sheely |
| Paul Rich | Erwin J. Riley | John J. Colwell, Jr. |
| Thomas G. Slawson | Peter Latrenta | Claude Dierolf |
| James Bewley | Raymond Brokaw | Charles Wasserman |
| Carl J. Strickrott | Ralph Coomes | Mark W. Mangan |
| Walter F. Clark | John Bawduniak | William Wells |
| Archie Paris | Alfred Shadroui | Clifton Self |
| | Reuel Myers | |

“THAT’S MY BOY”

Bill Clack, ball turret gunner on the 601 Linn Rogers crew, attended the retirement ceremony of his son, Air Force Colonel Billy S. Clack, and proudly proclaimed —

“That’s my boy.”

And the rest of the men of the 398th said to themselves —

“Has it been so long that we have seen our own children arrive at the retirement age?”

Apparently so, as ol’ Staff Sergeant Bill Clack of World War II days was on hand at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, last July to see Colonel Billy Clack conclude 26 years of Air Force service. And be thoroughly justified in proclaiming —

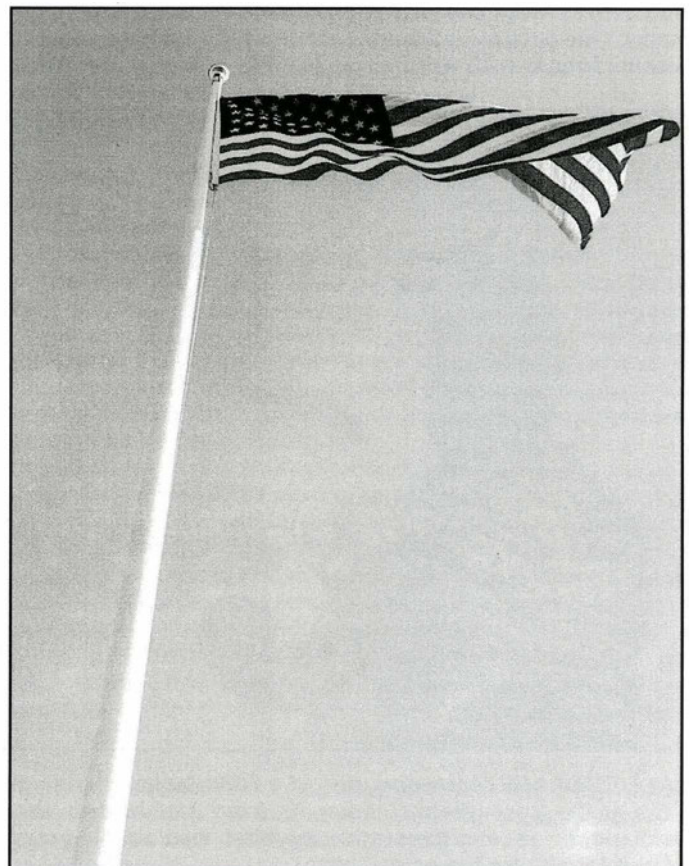
“That’s my boy.”

The “boy” retired as command pilot with 3,300 flying hours, many of those in the F-4 in Viet Nam and others in such craft as the OV-10, F-104G, and F-17.

He retired as Director of Personnel for Air Combat Command.

His decorations include the Legion of Merit; DFC with two clusters; Meritorious Service Medal with three clusters; Air Medal with 12 clusters; and Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

No wonder the former B-17 ball turret gunner was kinda’ proud.



REFLECTIONS FROM STATION 131

BY W.J. KEMP

Hertfordshire, England

I think it is high time I wrote to thank you for that copy of FLAK NEWS. I have read all of it and obviously was aware of the impact of the airfield more now than when it was actually under construction.

It has always been a puzzle to me, and other young boys at our last school years. You see, we went to Barkway to attend wood-work classes once a week and picked up two boys at Nuthampstead each time. This being 1935.

We had heard gossip all that summer that "they" were going to build an aerodrome somewhere near Barkway and often looked out to see if "they" had started construction. Question #1: Who were "they"? And, Question #2: 1935 was five years before the fact? It can only be presumed that it was earmarked for eventual hostilities.

Within a few days of the Americans' arrival at Station 131 the Woodman Inn was drunk dry and the landlord at the time would only accept dollars. I believe many did not know how to handle the English money.

One of the first little details of high finance was the fact that the Yanks would pay an enormous price to us country folk for our old bone shaker pedal cycles, as their transport was at the start non-existent. I am afraid to say that I missed the boat since I did not have a spare bike to sell.

In those days the Beehive and Jolly Butchers were our two local pubs in Hare Street. One particular American whom I became friends with was named Joe. We

shared perhaps a pint or two until one evening, I'm sad to say, he was not there anymore. It was one of those things you accepted. It was war time. Those Forts were always up there somewhere. On early winter mornings, hardly daylight, you could see the red hot exhaust parts glowing as they sat on their tails climbing with a hell-of-a-load up over Brick House Farm, heading out eastwards and returning maybe one or two less later in the day.

How they flew must have been a miracle. It was nothing new to see the sky right through the fuselage and wings, or one engine shot up. Anyway, the next day they were up again in strength. It seemed as though there was no end to their resources.

I remember too, within two or three days of peace being declared in Europe, the powers that be invited all us locals onto the airfield, and gave us a free hand to actually gather in the station briefing room and take us through procedures before letting us climb aboard those Forts we had so admired from the ground as they set off on their missions. It was unique, really, because the rest of the states were really still operational. VJ Day was still a long way off. The 398th was still under orders as they say.

I was up to the old base a few days ago taking spares to Tylers Works and spent a few minutes reflecting about those chaps that were stationed there, and those whose last mission never to see these fields again.

These same old fields that I am looking at now after all these years would not

have been possible but for those like them who served and died. Life would have been much different for us if it had not been for them.

Air Raid Reminder

The writer of the above article, W.J. Kemp, used to live in the air raid warden's shack on what ultimately became Station 131. While visiting on the old base with members of the 1996 England tour party, Kemp pulled out his World War II Air Raid Precaution whistle and presented it to the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association.

It still works!

The distinctive, ear-piercing "run-for-the-shelter" sound provided a stark reminder of how it was for the civilians during those long years of German bombing attacks. And for the Yanks who were caught in the raids while on leave in London.

Guidelines Set For 398th Giving

Guidelines for membership giving under the auspices of the 398th Bomb Group were established by the Board at the annual reunion at Springfield, Missouri.

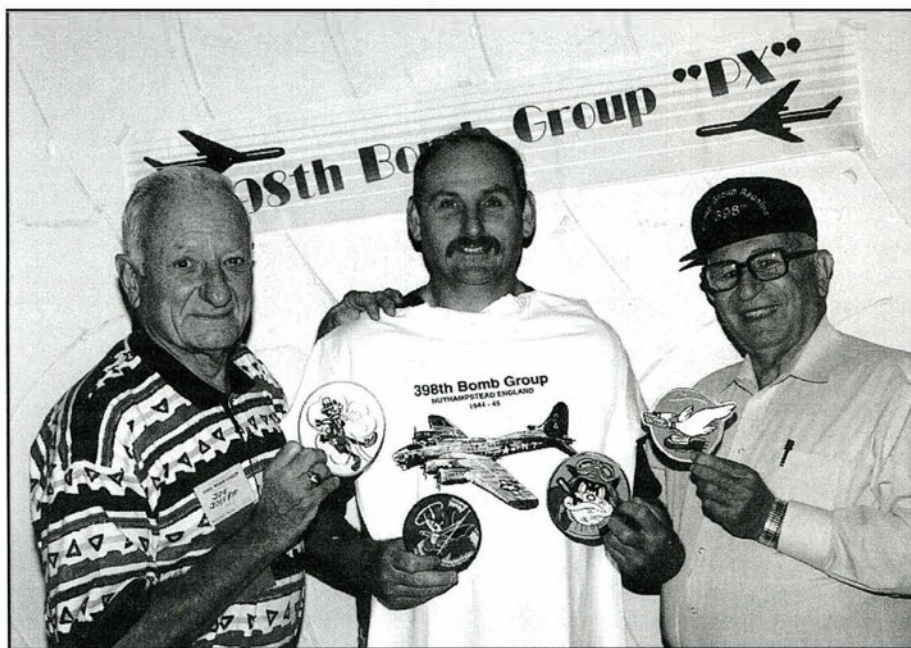
This was in response to such general questions as "What groups should we support?" and "What will we do with our records and memorabilia?"

Also, the Board mandated that all requests for solicitation of funds from the group must be approved by the Board and membership at an official meeting.

As for suggested personal financial support and repositories for records, and other archival materials, the Board established these recommendations—

1. The 398th Association (FLAK NEWS, Memorial Fund, etc.)
2. Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum, Savannah, Georgia.
3. 8th Air Force Historical Society Memorial Museum Foundation, Archives, Penn State University.
4. US Air Force Memorial, Washington, DC. (Construction to begin in 1997.)
5. The Aluminum Overcast B-17 (EAA, Oshkosh, Wisconsin).
6. American Air Museum in Britain, Duxford Imperial War Museum, England.
7. The Hertfordshire Record Center, Hertford, England. (Story on Page 8.)
8. St. George's Parish Church at Anstey, England.

Willis (Bill) Frazier, 398th Historian, will maintain an accounting of members' contributions. Wilfrid Dimsdale will record contributions given in England.



DALE CUBRANICH (center), son of a 600th squadron tail gunner, got the full sales pitch at the Springfield reunion PX from Joe Joseph and Dewey Cook. Dale, an enthusiastic second generation member, was a willing customer and proved to be a "soft touch" for the sales "blitz."

Monagins Prepared For Their Guests

(Continued from Page 1.)

Some 200 members attended the annual business meeting, where the elections were held. And a great presentation made on the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum by group historian Willis (Bill) Frazier. (See photo on Page 5.)

Reunion chairman Jerry Monagin and his co-chairman, Pauline (and their many helpers) were well prepared for their guests as they entered the Atrium of the Clarion Hotel. Packets with information and tour tickets were waiting as well as tables for hanger talk, a television set showing 8th Air Force combat films, and ...

Joe and Rozeann Joseph's well-stocked PX.

Big sellers early in the week were jackets, sweat shirts and umbrellas as most of Missouri was inundated with rain, lit up by lightning and bombarded with thunder. Members coming by auto experienced driving difficulty in maneuvering toward Springfield. Many flights were delayed by the storm. At least two members, Hal Lamb and Bob Steele, grounded in Memphis, came the final 300 miles by chartered bus.

Evelyn Comstock, at a 398th reunion for the first time without husband Bill, listened to board member Dick Frazier eulogize her late husband. Dick recalled the many areas of leadership Bill provided in his 20 years as president. The memorial at Nuthampstead and purchasing of the property from the Dimsdales; the two fund-raising to refurbish the Aluminum Overcast; support for the CAF

B-17, Sentimental Journey; the history book "Remembrances;" the Monument Fund to insure perpetual maintenance for the Nuthampstead memorial; tours to England, Scotland, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland; and the group's newsletter, FLAK NEWS.

Evelyn was then called to the podium to receive a special memento – a bound volume containing every issue of FLAK NEWS published for the last 10 years.

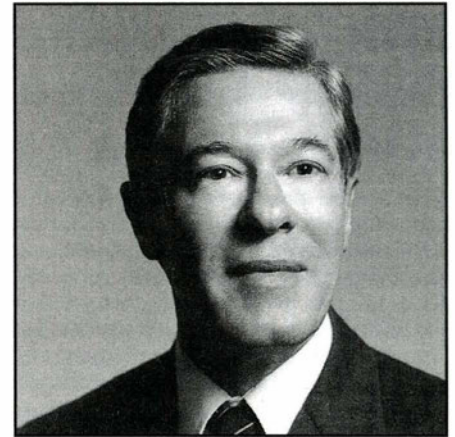
The group voted to contribute \$1,000 to the Bill Comstock Scholarship Fund, initiated by Evelyn shortly after Bill's passing. Members may contribute further by sending their checks to treasurer Ralph Hall, New Bedford, MA 02740-1915.

The Herb Boehme crew of the 602nd was once again the winner of the most-crew-members-at-the-reunion contest: seven. Along with pilot Boehme, there were Bob Blacker, co-pilot; James Yip, navigator; Steve Horvath, bombardier; Bob Knowles, radio operator; and gunners Bob Rowland and Phil Sorensen. Engineer Norbert Green and gunner Ray Jendrezai are deceased. Gunner Jack Withrow was killed while flying with another crew.

Three days of golf were scheduled at Springfield, but the rain, lightning and thunder demolished the planning. Five fearless golfers did venture out and declared themselves "co-champions of the 398th reunion." These were Ike Alhadeff, Jim Bailey, Mel Pawlowski, Earl Cornett and Allen Ostrom.

(Continued on page 8.)

\$20,000 Gift Came From Bob Wiggins



BOB WIGGINS

It was supposed to be an anonymous gift to the 398th Bomb Group Monument Fund, but with his passing this past summer, it can now be told that the \$20,000 gift received by the group came from Robert E. (Bob) Wiggins, Jr.

Wiggins, a navigator/bombardier on the Tom Matthews crew of the 600th Squadron, had been serving on the board as chairman of the Monument Fund. W.A. (Mac) McLaughlin, who was named to take Wiggins' place as chairman, made the announcement at the Springfield reunion.

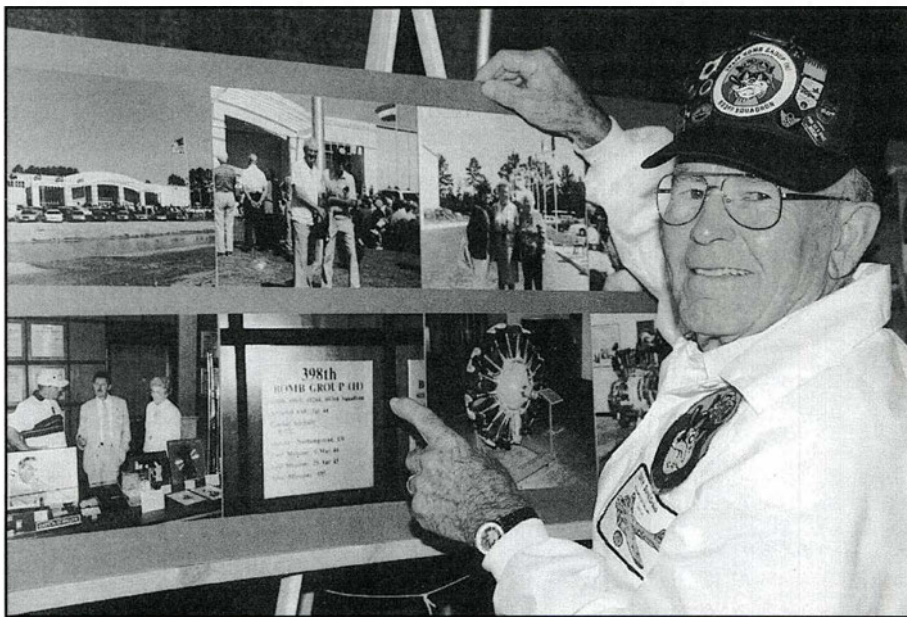
Wiggins, who served as the reunion chairman at Richmond in 1988, observed three years ago that the Monument Fund's then balance of \$30,000 was too low to perpetually support the upkeep of the memorial at Station 131. He solved the problem by donating an additional \$20,000. The fund, invested in the bond market, provides for the care and maintenance, administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission. The ABMC relationship with the 398th was set up by Bill Comstock before his passing earlier this year.

Wiggins is survived by his wife, Mildred, of Richmond, Virginia.

Moving?

FLAK NEWS "subscribers" continue to do pretty good on keeping the circulation department advised on address changes. But some do not, and the Post Office responds with additional charges for forwarding ... or advising us that they have "no forwarding address." And they charge us for that notice, too.

So please, folks, help us hold down these costs by sending us a change of address card when you are ready to move. Send BEFORE you move, rather than AFTER.



GEORGE HILLIARD, 398th Contact Officer, looks over the photographic display of the 8th Air Force Heritage Center. The display was a creation of Willis (Bill) Frazier, group historian, and was exhibited at Springfield, Missouri, during the annual reunion. The 398th board discussed the possibility of having a future reunion at Savannah after the 1997 meeting in Spokane, Washington, and the 1998 meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

“Two United States Air Force attacks of April 9 and May 29, 1944, gave residents of Poznan hope and faith in near victory. Poland was fifth year under German occupation at the time. For Germans the attack was a terrible blow.”

Those were the words of Michal Mucha, a contemporary contributing author for Polish aviation magazines. And a recent “subscriber” to FLAK NEWS.

Mucha has been researching those World War II bombing attacks on his hometown of Poznan, known to the 8th Air Force by its German name of Posen.

The men of the 398th knew it as Posen on May 29, and they also remember it as the longest bombing raid of the air war at the time — 10½ hours.

Mucha, in his research, was looking to put American names and faces to go with the cold statistics he had gleaned from his local sources. FLAK NEWS was happy to send him the names of every 398th airman on that memorable mission, and the formations as led by 600 Squadron commanding officer Bruce Daily.

The 398th was part of a three-wing 8th AF attack on the Foch-Wulf plant on the outskirts of Poznan, and other factory and rail installations in and near the city.

A mixture of all four squadrons took part, numbering 21 crews.

Lewis Chase was the pilot in the lead 600 aircraft with group leader Daily.

Daily remembers the mission as the

longest of the war at that time, the beginning of many other subsequent deep penetration journeys in the months to come.

“We were able to do this because we could descend to 10,000 feet for our return,” he said. The trip home took the bombers over the Baltic Sea, across the neck of Denmark, and then the long haul home over the North Sea.

Even so, many ships had to set down on other fields north and east of Station 131 because of near-empty fuel tanks.

Joe Roberge, navigator on the Leroy Darner crew, remembers watching the tanker crew filling his 601 B-17 tanks upon returning.

“All tanks held 2,780 gallons and they pumped in 2,730.”

There were no losses on the mission, although ME-109 fighters did attack another group in the wing between Posen and the Baltic. The 398th arrived on the target scene after 91 B-17s from the 41st Wing had dropped on the aircraft plant and airfield at Krzesiny, on the outskirts of the city.

One 398th squadron zeroed in on the city’s marshalling yards, wiping out dozens of rail cars. The others unloaded on

FORMATIONS

Mission No. 16
POZNAN, POLAND

LEAD SQUADRON (600)

DAILY

Chase

Elwood		Ford
	Lowe, J.D.	
Alhadeff		Rice

HIGH SQUADRON (603)

Davidson

Engel		Latson
-------	--	--------

Cullinan

Novak		Farenthold
-------	--	------------

LOW SQUADRON (601)

Griffin

Darner		Fairbanks
--------	--	-----------

Scott, E.D.

Rudrud		Ryan
--------	--	------

LOW-LOW SQUADRON (601)

Genung

Halter		Farnsworth
--------	--	------------

Briefing	0500
Station Time	0700
Start Engines	0740
Taxi Time	0750
Take Off	0810
Last Take Off	0930
ETR	1935
Time On Oxygen	6:00



THIS WAS THE LEAD CREW on the 398th Bomb Group mission to Posan (Poznan) Poland on May 29, 1944. It was led by the then 600th Squadron CO, Bruce Daily (far left, back row). Others are Milton Richmond, bombardier; Martin Kramer, radio operator; Herbert Smith, regular co-pilot but flying as tail gunner/observer this day; Tony Adams, navigator; and James Bewley, navigator. Front row, left to right, are Lewis Chase, pilot; Frank Kremmec, engineer-gunner; Earl Brunke, waist gunner; and Joe Conti, waist gunner. Not in the photo is Jack Behr, ball turret gunner.

the Foch-Wulf plant, rendering it 85% destroyed. Researcher Mucha said this included hangers, workshops, supply warehouses, assembly buildings, fuel and oil tanks.

Some 7,000 workers, mostly Poles, worked at the plant. It was never rebuilt.

A total of 120 buildings in Posen were destroyed in the May 29, 1944, raid. This included some buildings of German administration and Posen’s zoo. Killed at the zoo were one tiger and two leopards.

“398th Bomb Group REMEMBRANCES” Available

Two dozen copies of “398th Bomb Group REMEMBRANCES” have been located by the printer, Vanguard Press of Seattle, and donated to the group. The book has been out of print for over two years.

Members wishing to purchase a copy may send a check for \$22.00 to Ralph Hall, treasurer, 398th Bomb Group, New Bedford, MA 02740-1915. Orders will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Loading List For Posen Mission

May 29, 1944

A/C 42-107114-L
 CA Bruce Daily
 P Lewis Chase
 N James Bewley
 B H.B. Richmond
 N A.H. Adams
 ETG Frank Kremmec
 RO Martin Kramer
 BTG Jack Behr
 WG Earl Brunke
 NG Joseph Conti
 TG/OBS Herbert Smith

A/C 42-102467-J
 P Earle Ford
 CP D.J. Skjod
 N Randy Anderson
 B H.E. Gerloff
 ETG D.E. Borts
 RO B.J. McMillan
 BTG R.L. Goren
 WG C.E. Maloney
 TG Charles Derderian

A/C 42-107191-K
 P Ken Elwood
 CP John Hutchinson
 N Stanley Alpert
 B George Schatz
 ETG Dewey Burt
 RO William Hanna
 BTG Arthur Figueira
 WG James Leahy
 TG William Rabada

A/C 42-102487-F
 P J.D. Lowe
 CP Ned Shott
 N Gaspera Micelli
 B Bobby Allen
 ETG Preston Morrison
 RO Jose Herrera
 BTG Michael Margosian
 WG Henry Henagan
 TG George Jennings

A/C 42-97249-P
 P Ike Alhadeff
 CP John Sigsworth
 N Clarence Evans
 B Paul Foster
 ETG Martin Chavez
 RO Orville Elsrod
 BTG Jack Hill
 WG Dave Walker
 TG Nathan Mirrel

A/C 42-102600-Z
 P John Rice
 CP Clinton Clifton
 N D. Van Dyke
 B Max Raithel
 ETG Sidney Triebwasser
 RO Edward Richey
 BTG Leo Lorenzo
 WG John Kolafa
 TG Wilmuth Holmberg

A/C 42-107080-S
 P Don Griffin
 CP Ralph Anderson
 N Philip Trenkle
 B Steve Kiacz
 ETG Leon Loret
 RO Octavus Gallardo
 BTG Edward Hoag
 WG William Thompson
 TG John Bradley

A/C 42-102596-N
 P Leroy Darner
 CP Richard Alder
 N Joseph Roberge
 B Harold Reeves
 ETG Richard Carrigg
 RO Robert Doran
 BTG Ambrose Gerstner
 WG George Nison
 TG Ray Smith

A/C 42-97394-P
 P E.J.L. Fairbanks
 CP Gerald Skow
 N Charles Gunn
 B Lionel Lancaster
 ETG James Cagle
 RO Machen Moore
 BTG Daniel Connor
 WG William Stichter
 TG Joseph Hauldren

A/C 42-107094-M
 P Ernest Scott
 CP Dallas Hawkins
 N John Loomis
 B V.F. Mitchell
 ETG Gordon Sudborough
 RO James Smith
 BTG Gregory Gronicki
 WG Murdic Hancock
 TG Val Brewer

A/C 42-102511-P
 P Norman Rudrud
 CP William Ganz
 N Harold Rozenzweig
 B Edwin Brown
 ETG Walter Kerr
 RO B.C. Cooper
 BTG Milford Pinson
 WG G.H. Cooper
 TG Al Breault

A/C 42-97387-H
 P Joseph Ryan
 CP Leroy Test
 N Carol Foster
 B Chambers Adams
 ETG Joseph Cowley
 RO Lloyd Stovall
 BTG William Coombs
 WG Sam Devans
 TG Ray Keene

A/C 42-102469-Q
 P James Davidson
 CP Clarence King
 N Henry Timbrook
 B Eugene Stevens
 ETG Virgil Bryan
 RO Gordon Fedder
 BTG Charles Michael
 WG Joseph Howard
 TG John Gaynor

A/C 42-97317-P
 P William Engel
 CP Warren Wright
 N Charles Edick
 B Roy Wilkins
 ETG Lonnie Mason
 RO Eli Badovinac
 BTG Lawrence Mclver
 WG Paul Crawford
 TG Daniel Naragon

A/C 42-102476-B
 P Harvey Latson
 CP Robert Ullom
 N Joseph Aceto
 B Charles Walbauer
 ETG Donald Vredenberg
 RO Charles Feummeler
 BTG Angelo Mortorello
 WG John Harbit
 TG Douglas Lundy

A/C 42-102553-K
 P Stephen Cullinan
 CP John Hobbs
 N Lloyd Sundheim
 B Walter Marsh
 ETG Bernard Mendes
 TO Harold Butler
 BTG Ellsworth Wright
 WG Lewis Puthoff
 TG Florence Kowalczyk

A/C 42-102579-C
 P Jack Novak
 CP Ray Winkler
 N John Beck
 B Julius Gurney
 ETG Hannibal Fowler
 RO Leonard Nance
 BTG Brooks Atchison
 WG Charles Merchant
 TG Joseph McNally

A/C 42-102562-G
 P Francis Farenthold
 CP William Wright
 N Paul Heitman
 B Dana Maryott
 ETG Joseph Ariotti
 RO James Perry
 BTG Arthur Armstrong
 WG William Farrell
 TG Oscar Beatty

A/C 42-102565-M
 P Merwyn Genung
 CP John Falkenbach
 N Arthur Merkin
 B Oliver Anderson
 ETG Robert Pfeiffer
 RO Clifford Markland
 BTG John Duff
 WG William Sighting
 TG Chilton Jorgenson

A/C 42-102516-H
 P Ralph Halter
 CP Richard Sherman
 N Robert Bunning
 B Arthur Harris
 ETG Clinton Loveland
 RO Howard Goesel
 BTG Lester Wroe
 WG Sidney Dvorak
 TG John Burns

A/C 42-97338-C
 P Dexter Farnsworth
 CP Robert Wurth
 N Lawrence Tacker
 B Thomas Upmeier
 ETG Claude Bailey
 RO Robert Jacobs
 BTG Robert Arnold
 WG Joseph Augustine
 TG Charles Colvin

What Happened To The Posen Mission B-17's?

The Posen mission on May 29, 1944, was No. 16 for the 398th, and was flown by the group's original crews and planes.

Of the 21 Fortresses on this mission, 11 were destined to be shot down before war's end. Four more crashed in England, either on the way to a mission, returning from one, or involved in a landing accident. Two landed on the continent and later returned to action and four others survived and were flown home after the war ... later to be destroyed by the cutting torch.

Following are the Posen planes that were ultimately shot down, the name of the crew, date, target, and nose art name.

- 42-102467 J—Alhadeff, Aug. 6, 1944 (Brandenburg)
- 42-102600 Z—Wismer, Nov. 21, 1944 (Merseburg) Zoomeriago
- 42-97394 P—Blackwell, Aug. 8, 1944 (Cauvincourt) Kentucky Colonel
- 42-102511 P—Hawkins, July 19, 1944 (Lechfeld)
- 42-97387 H—Powell, Feb. 3, 1945 (Berlin) Maude & Marie
- 42-97317 P—Christensen, Mar. 2, 1945 (Bohlen) Little Max
- 42-102476 B—Lovelace, July 16, 1944 (Munich)
- 42-102579 C—Dwyer, July 28, 1944 (Merseburg) Stinker
- 42-102562 G—Campbell, Nov. 2, 1944 (Merseburg) Knockout
- 42-102565 M—Zimmer, Nov. 26, 1944 (Misburg) Blondie
- 42-102516 H—Weekley, Aug. 13, 1944 (LeManoir)

Following are the Posen planes which crashed in England, before or after a combat mission.

- 42-107114 L—Douglas, July 4, 1944
- 42-107191 K—Searl, Aug. 12, 1944
- 42-107094 M—E.D. Scott, Oct. 5, 1944
- 42-102553 K—Newman, July 29, 1944 (hit tractor)

Following are the Posen planes that landed on the continent, but later returned to action.

- 42-97338 C—Farnsworth Ugly Duckling
- 42-102469 C—Overton

Following are the Posen planes that survived the war and were flown home ... to be destroyed.

- 42-102478 F
- 42-97249 P How Was It Well
- 42-107080 S
- 42-102596 N

REUNION

(Continued from Page 5.)

The story of "VAT 69" was again resurrected, thanks to the irrepressible Jim Spicer of Hitchin, England. He induced the Scottish distillery to provide a half case of VAT 69 for last June's tour activities. Three bottles were shared by the English hosts and American guests, and three came back to the U.S.

One of these was consumed at the reunion and two were transported to Leo Lorenzo of Jacksonville, Florida. He was the ball turret gunner of the 600 John Rice crew that painted "VAT 69" on the nose of the plane they flew to England. It went to another group and flew 100 mission, for which the crew received a case of VAT 69.

Harold Clyne volunteered to transport the two bottles to Lorenzo to make up for the bottles he didn't receive in 1944.

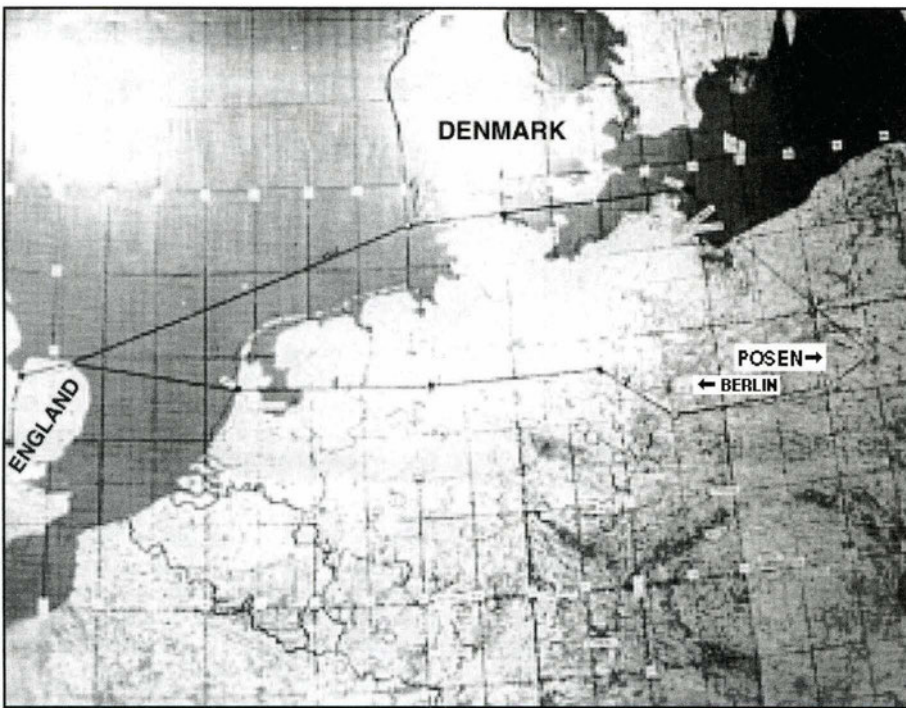
Most of the members took in one or more of the scheduled tours — Precious Moments, Bass Pro Shop, Branson Excursion, Silver Dollar City and the Antique Tour.

And it took a string of coaches to transport over 300 to Branson to see either the Lawrence Welk Show or Andy Williams Show. During the week many others opted to make their own way to Branson to see their choice of entertainment. There was something for everyone at Branson ... and at the 13th annual 398th reunion at nearby Springfield.

This would have to include the master guitarist, Jerry Dykes, who entertained at the Farewell Banquet. His variety program of guitar and vocals was "right on" for his audience with a little Johnny Cash and Glen Campbell, plus his own renditions, including "I'm just an old chunk of coal, but I'll be a diamond one day."



TINA BURKE



THE YARN SHOWS THE ROUTE TO POSEN

398th Documents Now At Hertford Record Center

"One of the more interesting accession of records received in the Record Office during 1996 was deposited by members of the American 398th Bomb Group, accompanied by their British 'Friends of the 398th'."

That statement was issued by Kate Thompson, director of the Hertfordshire Record Office at Hertford, England. Wally Blackwell and Allen Ostrom of the 398th, accompanied by Wilfrid Dimsdale of Meesden, Buntingford, deposited no less than five boxes of historical documents featuring the life and times of Station 131, Nuthampstead during World War II.

The deposit at the county seat of Hertfordshire (about 10 miles south of Nuthampstead) was made in concert with the 398th's "Giving Plan" as described on Page 4. The five boxes included photographs, contemporary diaries, published and unpublished memoirs, official mission reports and station logs.

Material included contributions by 398th members Harry Nelson, Jr., Ed Arbuthnot, Leonard Streitfeld, Larry Miller, C.F.M. Bailey, Norma Smith Engle, Alan Arlin, Allen Ostrom, and the "SOP" documents prepared by Bruce Daily and group operations.

Miss Thompson says all these are available for viewing at the Record Center. The 398th Bomb Group reference number is Acc 3150.

"Telephone in advance to let us know of your visit." (Hertford 555105.)

Aluminum Overcast Tours In Limbo

The major part of the Aluminum Overcast's Eastern fall tour had to be cancelled, it was announced by Greg Anderson of the sponsoring EAA of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. And the planned Western tour next year has been placed in limbo. This was to include Spokane, site of the 398th's July 1997 reunion.

New regulations by the FAA, resulting from the Valu-Jet crash in Florida, plus the current political overtones, has resulted in confusion regarding certification of WW II type planes to carry passengers.

"We felt it prudent to bring the Aluminum Overcast back to Oshkosh until the FAA gives us the proper sanction.

"The first consideration for rescheduling, when and if FAA clearance is given, will be for the eastern states whose tours were cancelled," said Anderson.

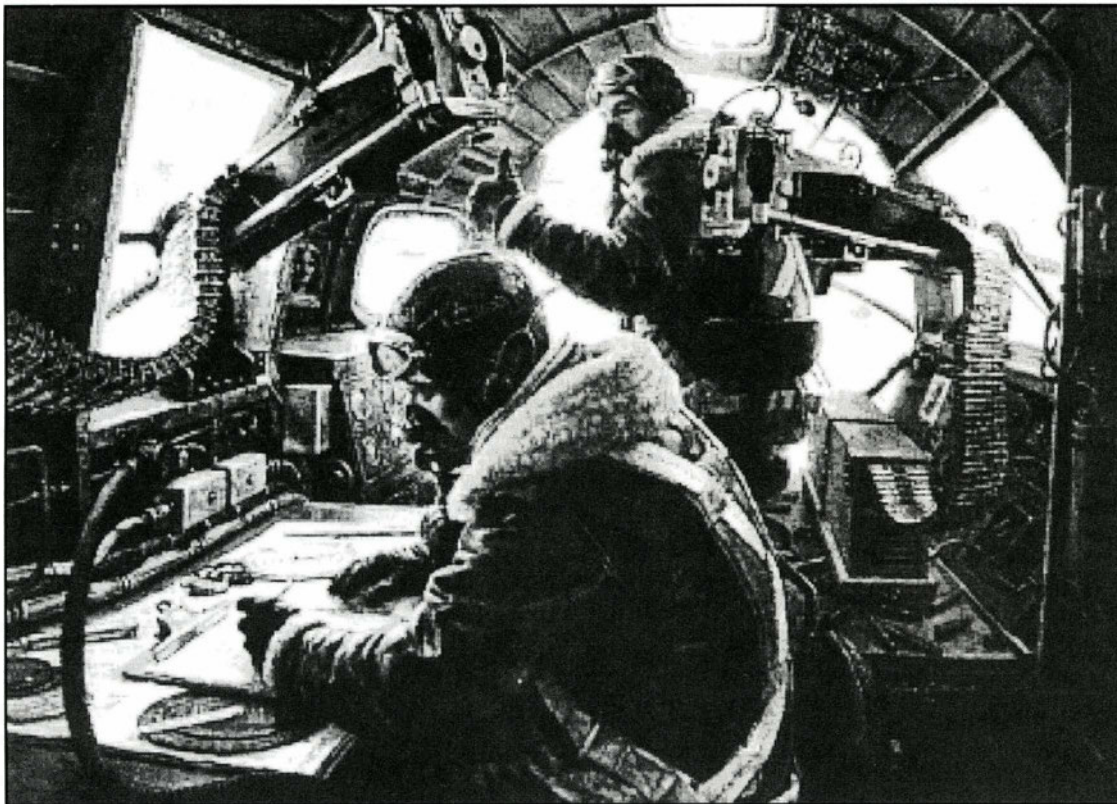
England Tour For '98?

Planning for an England tour in 1998 was approved by the 398th Bomb Group Board at the Springfield reunion. The Friends of the 398th at Nuthampstead also have selected Saturday, June 13, 1998, as the date of their next service at the Memorial.

Tour coordinator Allen Ostrom indicated that the proposed tour might begin in Munich, Germany, ultimately connecting with England via the Channel Tunnel.

Meanwhile, there could well be individual 398th members who will opt to attend the opening of the American Air Museum at Duxford, England, next May or June 1997.

Further details will be published in the January issue of FLAK NEWS.



THIS GREAT SKETCH by artist Gil Cohen depicts a B-17 navigator and bombardier at their stations just after bombs away, indicated by the bombardier's "thumbs up" signal. This artist's rendering of the Fortress' battle station is available in a full-color, 31x24 limited edition print, signed and numbered by the artist. The price is \$125, and available from Spofford House, PO Box 1, Spofford, NH 03462.

Pinner Crew Had Interesting Sojourn

(Continued from Page 9.)

Since I was on this equipment and not on the intercom, I didn't know how badly we were hit.

Several large chunks of flak just missed my right foot, than angled up and across the aircraft, cutting through the oxygen lines just above and in front of the radio operator. I was helping the radio operator hook up to the long extension hose that was on my side, when I noticed the guys in the rear were standing at the door to possibly bail out.

Later, the tail, waist and ball gunner came to the radio room area to get in crash position.

Wanting to know more of what was happening, I crawled back to the waist where I could hook into the aircraft communication system.

Then I noticed the red flares coming up at us, and am happy to this day that Howard Pinner and Leonard Tebbs got us down safely.

We learned that the cinder strip that our plane plowed up was used mainly for their old open cockpit observation planes. This strip was only 500 to 600 feet long.

I became a commercial pilot and flight instructor after the war, and I often think back and wonder how the pilots kept the plane flying and how we ever walked away from it.

We were kept in an old boarded up house a quarter mile or so outside the little town of Kutno. A guard sat at the

front and back door area. They looked like they hoped we would try to leave.

The guards would walk us twice a day into town to a kind of mess hall. We ate whatever they had to eat. One morning there was a dead horse laying along side this mud road. That evening we had a soup with meat in it. We might have all wondered what we were eating, but we all thought it was good, whatever it was.

Niilo Isaacson, the engineer, and I got out to the plane and decided to count the holes. There were so many that we worked together. While one pointed the other counted. In checking the plane we counted where the flak went in and on the opposite side where it came out. There were 250 holes and there might have been a few more where the belly was, but it was too close to the ground to see. It's hard to believe that no one got hurt with that many holes in the plane.

The engineer and I got the inner tube out of the tail wheel. Hoping to get it fixed, we walked about a mile over to a railroad track. The track was built up on a dirt ridge about five or six feet high. The soldiers had cut holes into the sides of the embankment for some of their living quarters. Fires were being built in some of the holes. These soldiers were not the front line troops, so they were not going anywhere fast. The one group of soldiers had some thick rubber and tried to fix the tube by melting the rubber and letting it drip into the hole of the tube.

Not too good of an idea, but we let them try.

I've often wondered what the Poles and Russians ever did with a badly shot up B-17?

Memories Of A Long Mission

BY NIILU ISAACSON

Flight Engineer, Pinner Crew

I do remember a P-51 flying part way towards Poland with us. And I also remember the Russian women warming water in their mouths to wash their faces in the morning; the pile of German rifles being burned; the grenades being thrown into the pond with water spouts; vodka; the hamburger steaks served at each meal; the Russians playing their accordions and the Cossacks dancing.

We used the sauna steam bath house where the steam generator was in the middle with steam rooms on each side, one for the men, and the other for the women. I remember the dirty outhouses and the bunks with straw that had bed bugs that bit my legs.

I bought some Lucky Strike Green cigarettes in Tehran, Iran, and saw my first camel caravan coming in from the desert. The pyramids in Egypt were very impressive.

BRIEF-things

Willis Frazier not only did the photography for his Mighty Eighth Museum layout at the Springfield reunion, but also fashioned his own display stands and brought them in his car from California ... one of our Friends in England who crews on the B-17, Sally B, tells of the shock that fell upon the WW II aircraft community when no less than three of their planes crashed, killing three airmen ... the downed aircraft were a DeHavilland Venom, P-38 Lightning, and the last flying DeHavilland Mosquito ... **Steve Carter** also wrote of flying with the Sally B crew to the Czech Republic last year to a "wonderful, warm welcome that included president **Vaclav Havel**" ... (the 1995 trip still took nine hours, same as in 1944-45) ... ex-gunner **Anthony Bartusis**, now 85, couldn't golf at the Springfield reunion, but he sent a nephew, **Mel Pawlowski**, to hit for him (he's good) ... **Ralph Hall** did some big shopping at Springfield's Bass Pro Shop, opting for 400 scented rubber worms ... your FLAK NEWS editor has new address which can be found on Page 12; it's condo time after 45 years at the old place ... the good ol' Post Office finally made it difficult enough for FLAK NEWS to seek out professional mailing help after 10 years of relying on volunteers ... the likeable (and pretty) waitress at the Springfield hotel sent a parting compliment to the 398th visitors, "you are all so pleasant" ... **Paul Roderick's** daughter, visiting in England last summer, hired a cab from Cambridge to Nuthampstead (\$80) just to see the Memorial, still bedecked with flowers from the ceremony two days before ... that lovely violinist at the reunion, **Tina Burke**, thanked the reunion leaders for doing the Pledge of Allegiance at dinner; "It was so meaningful compared to how the kids do it these days" ... **Tina's** vocal rendering of "White Cliffs of Dover" touched everyone ... her father was aboard a Coast Guard ship on D-Day ... for the air travellers to next year's reunion, there are five major airlines flying into Spokane, Washington ... would the 398th member who once said he had something to do with developing the smoke bomb please contact the FLAK NEWS editor ... the gavel set presented to **Wally Blackwell** by **Ted Johnson** as a symbol of the 398th presidency was fashioned by school students from nearby Station 131 schools; it was made of oak from Nuthampstead and a chunk of concrete from the old runway; it had been given to **Bill Comstock** many years ago and brought to Springfield by wife **Evelyn** ... **Margie Bawduniak**, widow of the 603 **Sheely** gun-ner, sends a note of thanks for the "In Memory Of" certificate honoring her late husband; she also received a photo of her husband's flag flying over the Memorial at Station 131 ... at least a few of the guys who played in the 398th Band are still around, including **Jim Ladue**, **Dick Frazier** and **Phil Swan**; any others out there? ... a nice letter from **Ruth Gibeau**, telling us she wished to stay on the FLAK NEWS mailing list even though **Ray** has passed on ... the Navy tried to retrieve an old WW II PB2M bomber from the bottom of a lake in Seattle, but only succeeded in busting it up in the process; another vintage loss, like the B-29 that burned in the attempted take off from northern Greenland ... **Frank Morrison**, who came to the Springfield reunion in his WW II uniform, reminds us that he DID NOT go down with the 603 **Ellis** crew back in 1945; though confined to a wheelchair, he's still a proud member of the 398th! ... the twin-engined Mosquito that went down in Britain is remembered as the fastest prop plane of WW II, once flying the Atlantic in 6 hours, 45 minutes; like the P-38, it was used as an unarmed photo reconnaissance plane (plus day-night fighter, bomber and torpedo bomber) ... **Harry Overbaugh** had kept the parachute he bailed out with over Pilsen on the Last Mission, and this year he opted to give it to SLET, the group of young Czechs who research Allied air crashes of WW II; they were "over the moon" with the gift, as the Brits would have said ... **Jerry** and **Pauline Monagin** gave out letter opener souvenirs at the reunion; now they can use theirs to open their "thank you" letters for the great job they did at Springfield ...

398th Bomb Group PX

	Qty.	Enter Total Cost
Cap - Fits All Sizes (Specify Squadron or Group)	_____	\$8.00 each _____
Jackets - Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$25.00 each _____
Golf Shirts - White or Navy Blue (M, L, XL, XXL)	_____	\$20.00 each _____
T-Shirts - Red, White, Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$10.00 each _____
T-Shirts - White, Pink, Blue (Children Sizes 2-4, 6-8, 10-12, 14-16)	_____	\$8.00 each _____
Sweat Shirts - Red, White, Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$15.00 each _____
Sweat Shirts - White, Light Blue (Children Sizes M & L, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$10.00 each _____
Squadron Patches - Specify Squadron	_____	\$7.00 each _____
Group Patch - "Hell From Heaven"	_____	\$6.00 each _____
Jacket Patch - Rectangle B-17	_____	\$4.00 each _____
Squadron Lapel Pins - Specify Squadron	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Group Lapel Pin	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Group Lapel Pin - Special Design	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Bumper Sticker - 398th Bomb Group	_____	\$1.00 each _____
China Plate with B-17 - 9"	_____	\$6.00 each _____
Glass (9 oz.) with B-17	_____	\$6.00 each _____
Membership Plaque - (Specify Regular or Lifetime)	_____	\$25.00 each _____
B-17 Lapel Pin - Specify Silver or Gold	_____	\$5.00 each _____
B-17 Earrings - Specify Silver or Gold (For pierced ears only)	_____	\$9.00 pair _____
Photo (Control Tower) - Station #131	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Photo (398th Memorial) - Post Card Size	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Photo (Aluminum Overcast) - 8"x10" (Latest photo)	_____	\$12.00 each _____
Bolo Ties - Group Logo	_____	\$4.00 each _____
Golf Towels - Group Logo	_____	\$4.00 each _____
Neck Tie - American Flag	_____	\$22.00 each _____
Folding Umbrella - Red with White B-17	_____	\$18.00 each _____
Beach Towel - White with Black B-17	_____	\$18.00 each _____
Barrel Bag with picture of B-17	_____	\$17.00 each _____
Cost Of Items Ordered	_____	\$ _____
Delivery And Handing 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, Defiance, OH 43512-8854

(Orders cannot be filled between November 1 and April 1.)

New Dues Program Notices Due

A newly-designed self-mailer dues notice will be ready for insertion in FLAK NEWS next year. One quarter of the 398th membership will receive their 1997 dues notices in January. These will include the eastern states and off-shore locations. Other members will receive notices in the April, July and October issues. Dues remain at \$5.00 annually or \$50.00 lifetime. There will be provisions for FLAK NEWS and "In Memory Of" contributions.