



602



601



603



600

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

VOL. 13 NO. 3

FLAK NEWS

JULY 1998

## Harrisburg Reunion

It is beginning to look like another "really big one" coming up when members of the 398th Bomb Group come together for the 15th annual reunion.

This will happen August 26-27-28-29, 1998 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

With the membership roster holding at a respectable 2,000 figure, and Contact Officer George Hilliard still bringing in lost souls, a Harrisburg registration of over 400 appears assured.

The Hilton Hotel & Towers is holding a reasonable number of rooms for the 398th, but it is incumbent on each member to register as early as possible. The Hilton is the headquarters hotel. All registration will take place in their Memory Room, along with Joe Joseph's well-stocked PX, banquet reservations desk and video show room.

The Welcome and Farewell banquets will be held at the Hilton.

The backup hotel will be the Econo Lodge, across the Susquehanna River from Harrisburg at Wormleysburg, PA.

All registration and tour information appeared in the April issue of FLAK NEWS.

For extra registration copies and general information, call the Harrisburg reunion chairman, Thomas Bewley, Camp Hill, PA 17001-0372.

## "Your 398th Is In Good Hands"



Bev Wilson, Patty Haas, Cate Ludlam, Randy Stange, Diane Moy, Lynn Henselman.

The "young 'uns" stood before their elders on the memorial at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery. They had been a part of the 398th Bomb Group Germany-England Tour for the better part of two weeks in June 1998.

They had seen their elders present floral tributes at Lorraine in France and Ardennes in Belgium. They had seen them stand quietly and reverently as they remembered fellow crewmen lost in World War II combat a half century before.

And watched them wander about the forest of crosses and Stars of David as they searched out a special place and special name.

Now it came time for six young people to hold a memorial wreath and present it in memory of 398th men buried at Cambridge or whose names are on the Wall of the Missing.

Randy Stange, Bev Wilson, Cate Ludlum, Lynn Henselman, Diane Moy, and Patty Haas, son and daughters of their "elders" on the tour, faced the gathering before them, placed hands on the floral piece. And, as if to say —

"Hey, Dad, your 398th is in good hands."

A reminder that the shadows are lengthening, but a proud, new generation is ready to step in to "Remember the 398th."

It was a "wonderful" tour, as many agreed. Somewhat opposite from 1944-45, when we "started" in England and "finished" in Germany. This time it all began in Munich, today a beautiful, economically prosperous Bavarian city. With the same old "Hofbrauhaus" music and dancing culture known long before (and now after) a man named Hitler began his rise to infamy in this same city.

*Continued on Page 4*

## \$30,000 Fund Raising Project On The Way

A \$30,000 fund raising project, spearheaded by the UK Friends of the 398th, will get underway this fall, according to Friends Chairman Wilfrid Dimsdale and 398th President Wally Blackwell.

The project, under study since 1996, will feature a stained glass window at St. George's Church, Anstey, England. It will feature 398th Bomb Group Fortresses and the names of every serviceman who lost his life while serving at Station 131. See Page 5.



# Clearing & Colder In France

**À l'œuvre depuis deux ans sur la reconstitution du terrain d'aviation de Ploujean, au temps de la guerre 1939-1945, le club de maquettisme compte dans ses rangs un sujet britannique. Membre d'une association d'anciens des bombardiers, il aide le club dans ses recherches historiques. Samedi, présent au 45, rue Jean-Jaurès, avec deux compatriotes, ils ont promis qu'ils mobiliseraient leurs 2 500 collègues lors de leur prochain meeting.**

The 398th Bomb Group logo, "Clearing & Colder," already well known as a B-17 artistic gemstone, is now well known in Morlaix, Brittany, France.

This is thanks to a trio of Friends of the 398th — Roger Bradley, George Aldridge and Ralph Ambrose. The three "Britanniques" had gathered in Morlaix, where Bradley is currently living. It is also the home of the local Morlaix Ploujean airfield, used by the Luftwaffe JG2 in WW II.

Ambrose came not only to visit Bradley and Aldridge, but also to present the local Club de Maquettisme with a research project he had done on the famous German squadron, which the French press covered with news stories and photos.

And then the three "Britanniques," on behalf of the 398th, presented the Club with a copy of "Clearing & Colder."

"Wow! What a story!" said the trio.

**A vision without a task is  
but a dream;  
A task without a vision is  
but drudgery;  
A vision with a task is the  
hope of the world.**



**PHYLLIS BERRY**, widow of Keary Berry, was among the visitors at the Air Force Academy when the bronze B-17 model was dedicated. Phyllis now lives not far from the academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

## DFC SOCIETY REUNION

The annual reunion of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society will be held September 28-29-30, 1998 at the Circus Circus Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

For additional information on the reunion, or joining the Society, contact Alexander D. Ciurczak, Capistrano Beach, CA 92624-1232.

*Eat, Sleep & Play Golf:*

## Golf, Anyone? How About A Week On Maui?

Are there eight (or more) golfers among the 398th membership who would love to spend a week on Maui playing golf?

Consider an eight-day "package" — Five rounds of golf on four different courses, including all green fees and shared cart; seven days at a Kahalui hotel (two per room); shared rental auto for seven days; and one "tourist" day.

This will be strictly a week of eat, sleep and golf, culminating in a final night golf banquet.

The package, not counting airfare, will be \$750 per person. Dates are April 25-May 2, 1999.

Arrangements can be made for individual post-tour extensions.

If interested, please contact Barbara Fish, Travel House, Inc., Seattle, 1-800-423-5454, or FLAK NEWS editor Allen Ostrom.

# Dates Set For Next Reunions

For those who like to plan ahead, they will be interested in knowing that dates, locations, and leaders have been established for the 1999 and 2000 reunions.

(Not to forget that the 1998 reunion will be August 26-29 in Harrisburg, PA.)

Dick Frazier, longtime member of the 398th Board of Directors, and his wife Junice, will be in charge of reunion activities in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 25-28-1999.

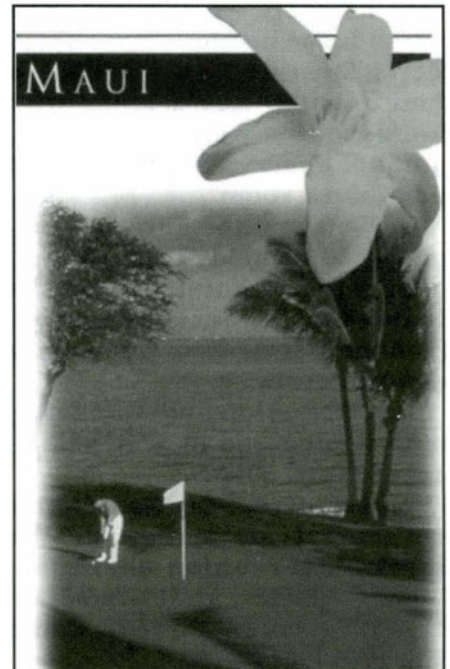
And in the year 2000, the 398th will journey to Savannah, Georgia, to visit that historical city ... and the 8th Air Force Historical Museum. Dates will be September 20-23, 2000. Heading up the reunion will be another second generation member, Marilyn Gibb. She is the daughter of Dorothy and the late Jim Crouch.

Plan ahead!



## Dues Time

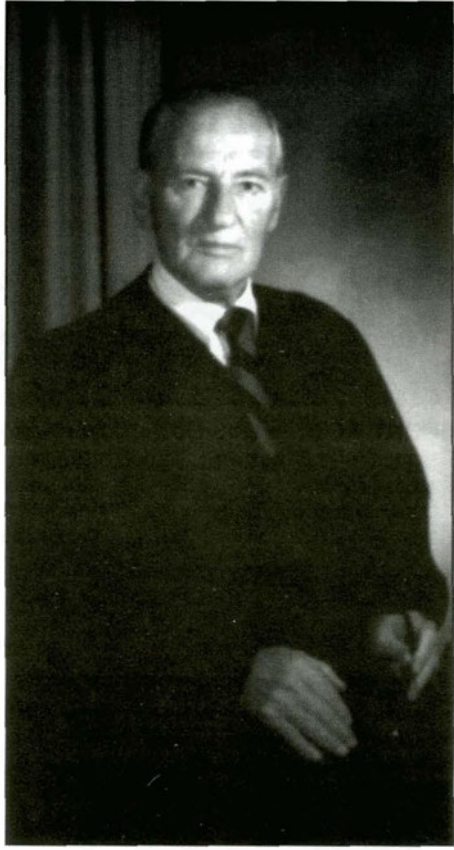
Members living in Texas and six Mid-West states get the honor of paying their 398th Bomb Group \$10.00 dues this quarter. And, of course, contribute to the happiness of treasurer Ralph Hall.

Dues envelopes have been inserted in FLAK NEWS for members living in Texas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Ohio. If your dues notice is missing, Ralph's address is New Bedford, MA 02740-1915.





<b>Personalkarte I: Personelle Angaben</b>		Beschriftung der Erkennungsmarke: Nr. <u>6433</u>	
Kriegsgefangenen-Stammlager:		Lager: <u>Kriegsfig.d.Lw.3</u>	
Name: <u>Kramer</u>	Staatsangehörigkeit: <u>U. S. A.</u>		
Borname: <u>Harvey B.</u>	Dienstgrad: <u>2. Lt.</u>		
Geburtsort und -ort: <u>4.6.16 Massachusetts</u>	Truppenteil: <u>USAAF</u> Komp. ufw.:		
Religion: <u>mos.</u>	Zivilberuf: <u>Ingenieur</u> Berufs-Gr.:		
Motiv des Vaters:	Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatstaates): <u>0 - 704 651</u>		
Familienname der Mutter:	Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum): <u>Berlin 21.6.44</u>		
Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert:			
Lichtbild		Nähere Personalbeschreibung <u>971</u>	
		Besondere Kennzeichen:	
Größe	Haarfarbe		
<u>1,71</u>	<u>dbraun</u>		
Fingerabdruck des rechten (links) Handgelenks	Name und Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person in der Heimat des Kriegsgefangenen		
	<u>Mrs. E. Kramer</u>		
	<u>239 Wells St.</u>		
	<u>Greenfield / Mass.</u>		
	<u>KRAMER, H. B.</u>		



JUDGE HARVEY B. KRAMER

### Harvey Kramer & PW Statistics

Whiling away the days in a German prisoner of war camp during World War II, Lt. Harvey B. Kramer, of Greenfield, MA, kept a journal. It covers his experiences as a navigator aboard a B-17 and then as a prisoner of war. Certain parts are unintelligible, and others were blanked out by someone for military reasons.

The journal was not discovered until Kramer passed away in 1993, when his wife and children found it in a small box, together with an Air medal, a Purple Heart, and some pieces of his parachute left from bailing out over Berlin after his plane was shot down during a raid. He never mentioned the journal, or his medals or other mementos to any of his family or friends.

The journal appears to be an ordinary lined essay book, apparently distributed by the Red Cross in the prison camp. It has the words "Offered By European Student Relief Fund" in English.

Inside the cover, barely legible, is a pencilled list of the crew of Lt. Kramer's B-17. It reads as follows:

- |                  |                    |                   |                     |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1st Pilot .....  | 1st Lt R.L. Rohrer | Asst Eng .....    | Sgt R.G. Green      |
| Co-Pilot .....   | 2nd Lt A.A. Sistik | Waist Gunner .... | Sgt R.D. Montgomery |
| Navigator .....  | 2nd Lt H.B. Kramer | Ball Gunner ..... | Sgt F.K. Henning    |
| Bombardier ..... | 2nd Lt C. Franks   | Tail Gunner ..... | Sgt P.H. Jones      |
| Engineer .....   | Sgt D.A. Chisnell  | Sub Key .....     | 2nd Lt F. Cantrell  |
| Radio Op .....   | Sgt H.G. Cooper    |                   |                     |

### Americans Are Like That

BY JERRY WINER  
Bass River, Massachusetts

When Judge Harvey Kramer retired, the court house staff got together and had a large oil painting of the Judge done by a local artist. It hangs now in the courtroom itself, on the wall facing the current sitting judges, where they must mete out justice daily as though under his constant scrutiny.

Newcomers always remark about the Paul Newman resemblance in the Judge's clear blue eyes and high cheekbones. But the portrait gives no hint of the many times, as he sat hearing cases, he fingered the small scar on his forehead and recalled a day late in June

1944, which he thought might well be his last.

That was the day he bailed out of his stricken B-17 over Berlin, parachuted into a backyard and survived the next 12 months as a German prisoner of war. This was on June 21, 1944.

No one really knows how often the Judge drew on his wartime experiences in counselling clients and in the courtroom, because no one, including his family, was ever aware of their severity until, nearly 50 years later, upon his death, his son was to find a small metal box buried among his belongings.

Continued on Page 8

### Editor 398th Bomb Group Flak News

I read with great interest the numerous stories, articles and news clips about the various missions and remembrances of the 398th Group. Although my late father, Harvey Kramer, rarely spoke with me about his war experiences, I know that the relationships he made during that time, as well as the ordeals which he suffered through, had a profound effect on the rest of his life.

I have enclosed for your information and inclusion in any appropriate memorabilia for the group, a copy of the diary which my father left and was transcribed after he passed away. The diary was discovered in a file cabinet when I was looking for some of his military credentials to prepare an obituary for him. There is an entry "How True" which apparently was written while he was a prisoner of war. This passage seemed particularly meaningful and I read it as part of the eulogy which I delivered at his funeral in May 1993.

The other enclosure, *Americans are Like That*, is an article which was written by my uncle, Jerry Winer, who was my father's brother-in-law, and was particularly close to my father throughout his adult life.

Finally, I have included for the group's records, a copy of the prisoner of war identification card which I also found with my father's military records. In addition to these materials, I also have a small piece of the silk parachute which he preserved from his bailout over Germany in June 1944.

Continued on Page 9





**FRONT ROW — Bob Bowen, Howard Traeder, Lowell Culver, Ham Mero, George Cuda, Wally Blackwell, Jim White, Ben Core, Tom Dougherty. BACK ROW — Russ Reed, Bob Hart, John Hiller, Daniel Leyva, Joe Joseph, Ike Alhadeff, George Schatz, Arthur Watson, Vic Jenkins, (Friend of 398th), Newt Moy, John Cosco, Herb Wilson, Charles Sutton, Allen Ostrom, Sam Gailey, and Bill Fisher.**

## THE TOUR

*Continued from Page 1*

The 49 tour members took time to visit one of Hitler's legacies — Dachau. A charming, lovely city ... with a section preserved to remind the world of Germany's darkest hour, the Holocaust.

And Moosburg, also on the outskirts of Munich. This was special for Ike Alhadeff, Sam Gailey, Bob Hart, John Hiller, Russ Reed, and Herb Wilson. All prisoners of war. Moosburg, now a thriving, modern community, still has a few buildings "preserved" from those PW days. As Ike said —

"Looking in from the outside rather than looking out from the inside was an unbelievable experience."

It was not only "Air Force remembrance" time for the tour party, but stops were made at such battle grounds as the Remagen Bridge, which both the Allies and Germans tired unsuccessfully to blow up, only have it fall into the Rhine after six American divisions had successfully crossed over.

The episode is a storied chapter of the 9th U.S. Armored Division. The bridge has been generally forgotten by the Germans, but they do remember the thousands of their own soldiers who died in an Allied PW camp nearby.

Malmedy, and its wall bearing the names of 76 Americans massacred by Nazi Waffen SS troops proved to be a quiet and reflective stop.

It rained during the stop at the Bastogne Memorial in Belgium, but it did afford time to see and understand the battle that was indeed the turning point of the war. Several Belgian artillery troops also were in attendance, their first visit to the museum.

They found it slightly hilarious that Danny Leyva would try (unsuccessfully) to "buy" one of their female members, a pretty soldier named Nancy. (Danny's eye for pretty girls spanned five countries.)

Helen Beatovich Beam, sister of the navigator on Col. Frank P. Hunter's plane shot down over Neuss, presented the wreath at Ardennes, along with Sam Gailey, whose co-pilot was also buried there. Helen was accompanied on the tour by her daughter, Patty Haas, niece of Capt. William J. Beatovich.

Bob Hart and Ham Mero honored the 398th men buried at Lorraine, St. Avold, France.

Waiting for the coach at Ardennes were Manfred König and Alfred Wilms, a pair

*Continued on Page 8*

## Tour Group Says Thanks To Friends

"The mission of our 1998 tour is to say a sincere 'Thank You' to all of you who have worked so diligently to make this return to the old base possible."

So said President Wally Blackwell as he greeted the throng of Friends of the 398th at the Memorial on Saturday, June 13, 1998.

"We especially wish to honor Vic Jenkins and Ozzie Osborn for their efforts in creating this magnificent memorial, and Robert Dimsdale for providing the land on which it sits."

All received special plaques honoring their contributions.

The Rev. Gerald Drew was also praised for his leadership in the Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving Service at Anstey. Plus Friends chairman Wilfrid Dimsdale and officers Barry & Elaine Tyler.

Children from nearby schools offered flowers at the Memorial and Danny Leyva, dressed in his WW II 603 engineer-gunner's uniform, presented the 398th with a floral wreath.

After lunch at the Woodman Inn, Blackwell led a bus tour of the old base, complete with map. See Page 6-7.

Mary Ludlam, British war bride (and widow) of 602 Intelligence clerk Charles Ludlam, brought her late husband's flag to be raised on the Memorial pole in his memory. Later it will "fly to destruction" on the tall pole near the site of the Control Tower.

The flag of the late Fil Arbogast also was presented at the Memorial, sent by his wife, Mabel.

## 2000 England Tour?

A tour to England and the continent in the year 2000 was a topic of conversation during the England portion of the 1998 tour.

The Anstey window project, as explained on Page 5, will be dedicated on June 10, 2000. A 398th participation in the form of a scheduled tour will be discussed at the annual reunion in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, next August.

## Who Was There And Where Did They Go?

### THE LOADING LIST

Ike Alhadeff, Helen Beatovich Beam, Wally & Teedy Blackwell, Robert & Jane Bowen, Ben & Polly Anna Core, John & Rosemary Cosco, Lowell Culver, Bill & Fran Fisher, Sam Gailey & Marian Lloyd, Patty Haas, Bob & Eloise Hart; Lynn Henselman; John & Miriam Hiller, Joe & Rozanne Joseph, Bob & Elaine Knowles, Danny Leyva, Mary Ludlum, Cate Ludlum, Ham & Mary Mero, Newt Moy, Diane Moy, Allen & Geg Ostrom (tour coordinator), Russ & Millie Reed, George & Lois Schatz, Jeanne Stange, Randy Stange, Charles Sutton, Howard & Jane Traeder, Arthur & Phyllis Watson, Herb & June Wilson, Beth Wilson, Barbara Fish, tour counsellor.

Also visiting Station 131 independently during the tour visit were Tom Dougherty, Joe Spechuilli, George Cuda, Leta Seal, and Jim White.

### THE ROUTE OF THE TOUR

**GERMANY**—Munich, Moosburg, Dachau, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Zugspitze (via cable car), Oberammergau, Ettal, Rothenburg, Würzburg, Trier, Neuss, Remagen, Cologne, Düsseldorf.

**FRANCE**—St. Avold (Lorraine American Military Cemetery).

**LUXEMBOURG**—Luxembourg City, Remich (Caves of St. Martin).

**BELGIUM**—Bastogne, Malmedy, Liege (Ardennes American Military Cemetery).

**ENGLAND**—London, Cheshunt, Cambridge, Nuthampstead, Anstey, Madingly (Cambridge American Military Cemetery), Duxford (American Air Museum).



**"IT WILL BE THERE FOR ALL TIME":**

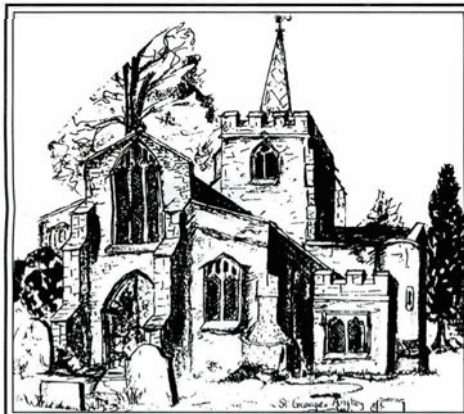
# Memorial Window To Honor 398th Fallen

NUTHAMPSTEAD, England —

In 1086 there was a priest at Anstey, which means that well before 1066, when England was invaded by William the Conqueror there was a Christian community there. The present church dates from the late 12th century, the bulk of the Chancel, North and South Transepts being built around 1300 and part of the Nave being 14th century. The 398th memorial Window, when installed will become part of the fabric of this ancient building and will be there for all time.

The moment when this most recent initiative for a window to commemorate the 398th BG was re-born, was after the 11:00 a.m. service at Anstey on Sunday, June 16, 1996, when Tony Clark, a past chairman of the UK Friends and Ernest and Ted Brass of the 398th discussed the possibility. The committee of the UK Friends then decided to give the project their full backing, agreeing to fund a design, initiate fund raising and donate a substantial sum toward the project. Due to the courageous initiative of Sir Roger (church warden) and Lady du Boulay, the artist, Patrick Reyntiens was commissioned to produce the design, which was approved by the UK Friends earlier this year. At the same time your President, Wally Blackwell, was kept informed of progress, and eventually got to see it which he then circulated to Directors and some members of the 398th for their opinion which was overwhelmingly favourable. Finally the design was unanimously approved by Anstey Parochial Church Council at their meeting on the 12th April 1998. Thus three major hurdles have been crossed.

To put any sort of memorial in a church in England requires what is called a Faculty which has to be granted by the Diocese, in this case, the Diocese of St. Albans.



## A Window at Anstey

*In memory of the men  
of the 398th Bomb Group,  
United States 8th Air Force  
who gave their lives while  
serving at Station 131,  
Nuthampstead, England,  
in World War II.*

The next and final hurdle is to obtain the approval of the Diocesan Advisory Committee who will then recommend that the Faculty be granted. We would be very surprised if this did not happen.

The 398th leadership has generously given full support and a letter commending the project will be mailed to the membership with a colour picture and explanation of the window later this year. At this stage we think that \$30,000 will have to be raised. The design, which is modern, includes identifiable 398th Fortresses, the 398th Group logo, the squadron badges, and the name of every serviceman who lost his life while serving at Station 131. The design itself will be displayed at Harrisburg in August. A Bank Account has been opened in the United States to receive donations, the details of which are:

**Anstey Memorial Window**  
**Union Bank and Trust Company**  
**PO Box 6155**  
**Lincoln, NE 68506**

A book will be kept in the church, available for inspection with the name of each

donor listed in alphabetical order.

The window chosen faces south and is a perpendicular three-light window measuring 8 feet high by 11 feet wide. For those who know the church it is, when one is standing facing the church door from the outside, the first window on the right.

The project provides an opportunity to create a major work of art as well as a timely and moving memorial. This will be a living and enduring masterpiece worthy of the Sacrifice and worthy of Anstey Church, so intimately bound up with members of one particular crew who lost their lives not fifty yards away, Charles Khourie, Bill Meyran, William Vanderlick, John Baker, Carlton Moore, William Tull, George Barton, Charles Kennedy, Victor Petrauskas, and Melvin Brown on 15th October 1944.

**WILFRID DIMSDALE, Chairman, UK Friends of the 398th**

# Remembering Station 131

By Wally Blackwell

President, 398th Bomb Group Association  
(Written after his first return to  
Nuthampstead in 1986)

We saw so much in those days and now we remember so little.

So when our tour bus arrived at Nuthampstead I wanted to believe I knew where we were. But after being away for so many years I wasn't sure.

But seeing the Woodman Inn helped. They've really fixed up the old place, even a new thatched roof!

Which way was it to the flight line? If it was that way, then my hut was down that other road. And how did all that vehicle traffic ever manage on those narrow roads?

The Service of Remembrance at the Memorial was emotional. All the English folks were so pleasant and interested in making us feel at home. We make lots of new friends. Then we all move down the road to the old field area.

We are going to have a plane ride around the Nuthampstead area. I was lucky to get a ride with Mike Graty in his little two-seater. He takes off to the south on a grassy extension to the old main runway and begins to circle to the right so I could see it all.

The outlines of the three old runways are still there! The roadways still define all the old barracks areas. The base hospital was right there ... and there's the bend in the road where my hut was ... we pass over the main gate area ... the control tower was there ... the 603 plane area, ... the 600 hardstands, the 601st ... and good ol' 30 8064 H was parked right there!

We pass over the south end of the long runway. I look hard. From that spot we went to war.

Mike (an old Lancaster pilot) continues to circle, watching me out of the corner of his eye. I believe he'll keep circling until I finally say thanks, that's enough.

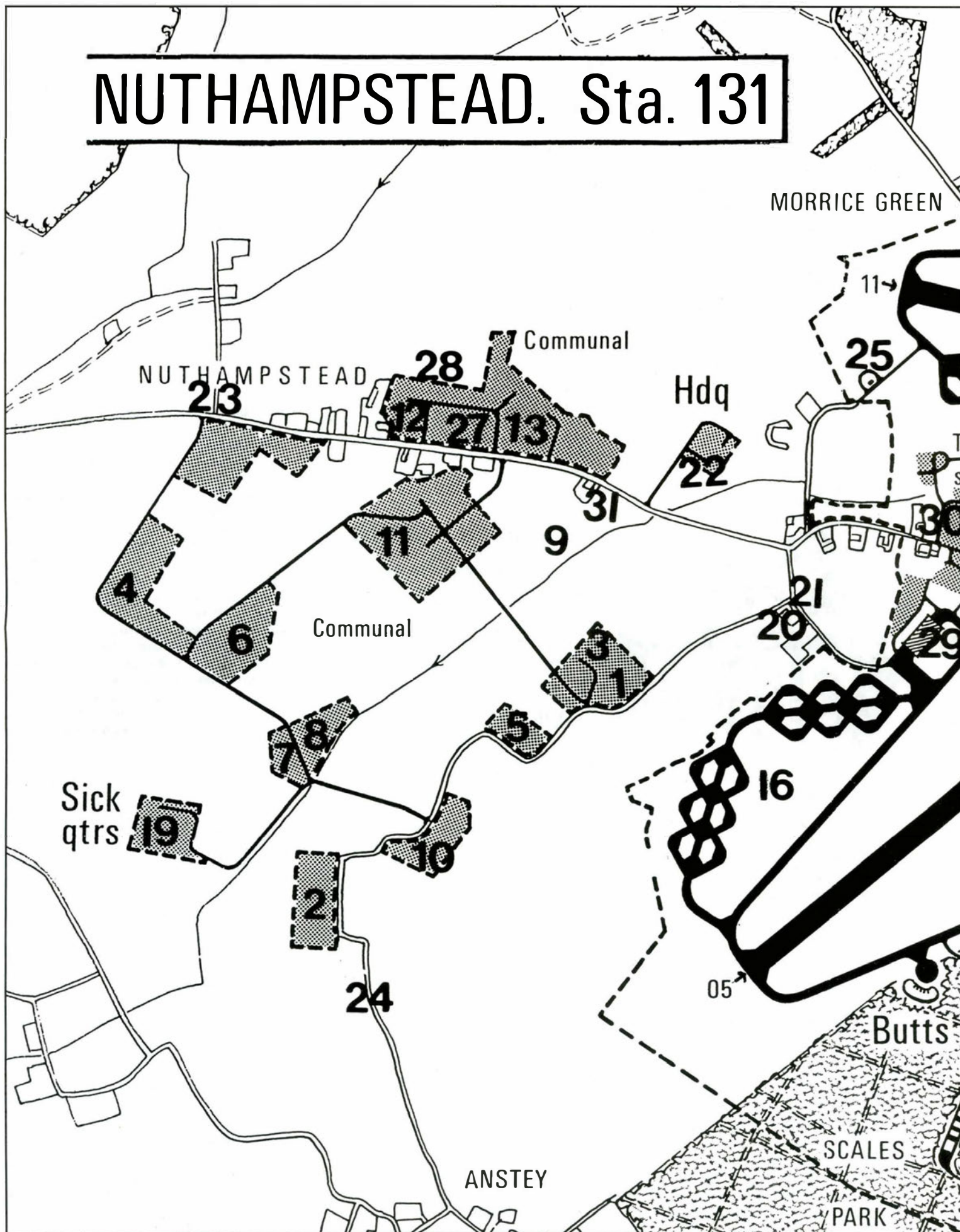
All you got to do is remember a little bit.

## I wonder —

- Where all the gasoline, bombs, etc. we used came from?
- And the food to feed us all?
- Why the fish & chips we bought at 10 PM through the little lighted window in Royston tasted so good (on the way to the base in the back of a GI truck?)
- Whatever became of Esmee Barnes? She danced so beautifully at those afternoon tea parties in Hertford.
- Who it was that fell into the mud going over the ditch on the way to the hut at midnight (after the 100th mission party?)



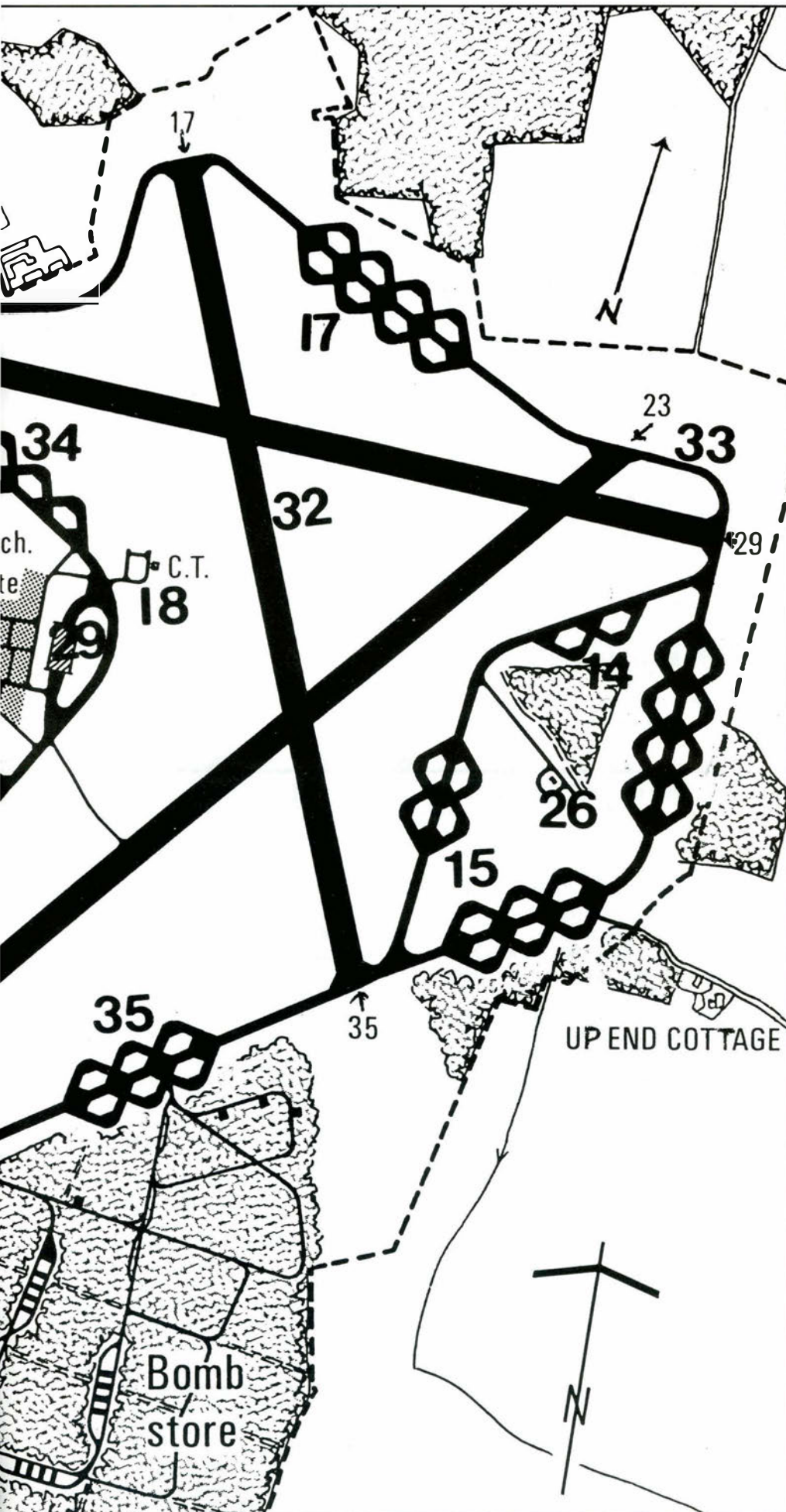
# NUTHAMPSTEAD. Sta. 131





# THIS IS THE WAY IT WAS

*(After several expeditions around the old base while on previous tours, Wally Blackwell has identified many of the buildings and areas as existed and were utilized in WW II. Also, see his story on Page 5).*



1. 600 Officers housing.
2. 600 Enlisted housing.
3. 601 Officers housing.
4. 601 Enlisted housing.
5. 602 Officers housing.
6. 602 Enlisted housing.
7. 603 Officers housing.
8. 603 Enlisted housing.
9. Officers Club.
10. Combat Mess.
11. Ground Mess.
12. Red Cross.
13. Theater.
14. 600 Dispersal area.
15. 601 Dispersal area.
16. 602 Dispersal area.
17. 603 Dispersal area.
18. Control Tower.
19. Hospital.
20. Woodman Pub.
21. 398th Memorial.
22. 398th Headquarters.
23. Main Gate.
24. Back Gate.
25. Fuel Storage.
26. Fuel Storage/generators.
27. Post Exchange.
28. Barber Shop.
29. T-1 Hangers.
30. Ground Combat activities.
31. R.C. Church.
32. New flagpole.
33. New small plane hanger.
34. Visitor parking.
35. Transient parking.

## CAF AIRSHO 98

The Confederate Air Force's AIRSHO 98 will be held October 3-4, 1998, at Midland International Airport, located between Midland and Odessa, Texas.

For more information call 1-800-CAF-SHOW.



# THE TOUR

*Continued from Page 4.*

of German Friends of the 398th who had helped arrange the tours to Neuss, Remagen, and Cologne. And to a delightful "Biergarten" dinner on the Rhine.

Because of an Elton John concert in Düsseldorf, and an accompanying traffic jam, König arranged for a "walk on" trip across the Rhine via ferry.

Another tour "extra" on the continent was a visit to the "Caves of St. Martin" (Champagne) at Remich in Luxembourg. This was set up as a surprise by Pär Nilhammer, the very knowledgeable and popular continent tour guide.

"You are the most prompt group I have ever had. Thank you for always being on time and also for sharing your fascinating World War II stories with me."

Kevin Whittaker of the Macclesfield Historical Aviation Society came to Cambridge to present the 398th with Steve Ridgeway's original drawing of "Touching Base." A copy had been presented to Bill Comstock in 1994. Wally Blackwell received the original and will send it along to the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah, Georgia, in time for the group reunion there in 2000.

A "Short Snorter" Belgian bill, signed by William J. Beatovich and given to Danny Leyva before the ill-fated downing of Col. Hunter's lead plane in 1945, was presented to Beatovich's sister, Helen, in a ceremony at Wurzburg. Leyva had kept it all these years, "waiting for this very moment."

Jack and Miriam Hiller had a young, good-looking guest while in Munich and on the Garmisch tour — Maj. Jim Hiller, USAF "software engineer," stationed in Germany.

The new American Museum at Duxford, England, is not only a thing of beauty, but thankfully the roof doesn't leak! The rains came down in torrents during the visit, providing excuses to stay a little longer and enjoy the aircraft exhibits. The static Mary Alice B-17 was there, but the air worthy Sally B was grounded outside, awaiting an engine change.

König led the group to the playground where the 398th tree planted in 1992 is growing tall and healthy. Not far from the Hunter-Gonzales crash site.

A journalist from Düsseldorf came to interview and photograph members. Like many young Americans, the young German was hearing about World War II for the first time. She was genuinely impressed when someone told her about the plaque given by Bill Comstock to the Neuss mayor on the group's first visit in 1988 —

**WE CAME IN OUR YOUTHFUL YEARS TO WAGE WAR. WE RETURN IN OUR ELDER YEARS TO SHARE THE PEACE.**

Thankfully, peace still reigned in 1998.

# Americans Are Like That

*Continued from Page 3.*

In it were an Air Medal, a Purple Heart, several small pieces of a yellowed silk parachute, and a worn, lined composition book apparently distributed by the Red Cross in the POW camps.

Creased from handling, the book contained partially smudged pencil notes the Judge had made during his months in the POW camps about his capture, a terrifying account of a Nazi forced march, and some random thoughts written in the loneliest moments of captivity.

That morning in early June, 1944, he was the navigator, perched together with the bombardier in the crowded nose cone of a B-17 bomber 27,000 feet over Berlin, just as he had been almost daily for the past 45 days since he and his crew had arrived in Scotland.

The visibility was perfect, and only the puffs of exploding German anti-aircraft shells marred the morning. His own duties over for a time, he assisted the bombardier hunched over the bombsight, synchronizing, visually on the target only 90 seconds away.

Suddenly, he was knocked to the floor by a terrific blast, a direct hit on the Number Three engine, which perforated the plexiglass cone with flak and filled the compartment with thick smoke from streams of burning engine oil.

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## Bail Out Was Over Target In Berlin

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In seconds the plane was out of control, and the pilot was warning them to prepare to abandon ship. Unaware that he was bleeding from a bad cut in the forehead, he shed his flak suit, hooked up his chest parachute pack, and when the alarm sounded bailed out the nose hatch into the maelstrom directly over the target. Realizing that, after all the days of bombing raids, his reception on the ground in Berlin would not be a friendly one, he hoped the wind would cause him to drift out of the target area.

But pencilled in 1944 in the POW camp which his family read in the worn copy book for the first time nearly 50 years later—

"I landed in a back yard several blocks west of the target, and was greeted by a civilian wielding a sledge hammer. Fortunately, I rolled with my fall into such an extent that his blow — instead of crushing my already aching and bleeding head — simply glanced off the back of my skull.

"Before he could recover for another swing of his sledge hammer, I was able to free myself of my (parachute) harness, and had grabbed him by the throat. Just at this time, the Police arrived and separated us.

"By this time, the blood from the wound I had received in the air had covered my

eyes and face, so that I had to tear off a strip from my 'chute to stop the flow.

"The Police conducted my on a forced march through the Berlin streets via the kicking and pummeling method to meet two members of the Gestapo who dragged me into an alley for another beating.

"After no food or medical attention for two days, I was placed in solitary near Frankfurt for seven days, interrogated four times by the Gestapo and then taken to Stalag Luft III at Sagan."

After periodic entries through Oct. 31, the diary is silent until Jan. 27, 1945, when he begins some cryptic daily notes about a forced march of American prisoners in the dead of winter from Jan. 27 through Feb. 11, 1945, without winter coats or boots.

*"Jan. 27, 1945, 4:30 a.m.: Began evacuation from Sagan. Reason — Russkies closing in. Rough. 18 kilos march.*

*Jan. 28: 1700 men in a church. Rougher. 18 kilos.*

*Jan. 29: 800 men in a barn. Roughest. 28 kilos.*

*Jan. 30: 800 men in a foundry. 18 kilos.*

*Feb. 1: 90 men in a stable. 10 kilos.*

*Feb. 2-6: 50 men in a box car en route to Munich. Horrible.*

*Feb. 7-10: Snake pit at Mooseburg. 400*

*men in a barrack.*

*Feb. 11: Conditions have improved but rough as the devil.*

In the back, there are some notes titled "How True", which provide some insight into the Judge's thoughts for months at a time ... little tricks of character and manner stand out ... in bold relief. "Every man sees his neighbor as he is, naked in soul, as a child sees his elders with the pitiless white gaze of youth. It is as though each member of the group were isolated from the others by an immensely powerful magnifying glass."

He is gone now, after 15 years as a district court Judge and 25 years as a lawyer in general practice in his hometown, to which he returned after the war and law school.

He built a solid reputation among the townspeople as a leader, always available to listen to their troubles, counsel them wisely, and solve their problems with a minimum of fuss, often with simple common sense, but legally, if necessary.

He met with farmers, shopkeepers, bank presidents and politicians alike, in his office, on the street or in the local diner, always willing to stop and chat, and, if asked, give a few words of advice. But he never talked about the war.

Families and children were always a

*Continued on Page 9*





**HELEN BEAM** (upper left) presented this floral piece at Ardennes Cemetery on behalf of the 398th men buried there, including her brother, navigator William Beatovich.

## KRAMER

*Continued from Page 3.*

Since there are numerous individuals mentioned in his diary who may or may not still be alive, I thought that you may be interested in these materials which may be included, as appropriate, in the 398th records.

I applaud you as well as the other contributors to the current news publications for your efforts in sustaining the memories of events some 50 years ago.

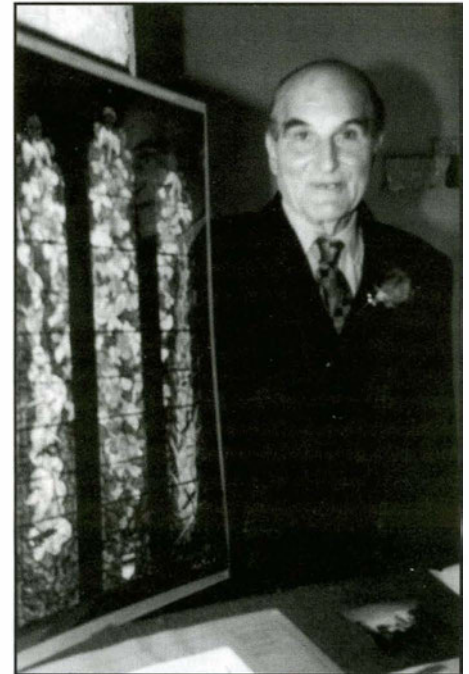
Very truly yours,

**Steven E. Kramer**  
Wellesley Hills, MA 02181-2106

**MARY LUDLUM** (lower left) brought her late husband's flag to Station 131, where it will "fly to destruction" on the tall pole near the old control tower.



**SIR ROGER DU BOULAY** (right) shows off a color print of the stained glass window that will be installed at St. George's Church at Anstey in honor of the 398th Bomb Group. See Page 5.



## AMERICANS

*Continued from Page 8.*

major interest, and as counsel to the Children's Society, the SPCC, he remains today a legend in the group's history.

When he, a lifelong Democrat, was appointed a judge by a Republican Governor, townspeople saw it as a fitting reward to a lifetime of helping other people. That devotion continued during the 15 years he served on the bench, meting out justice leavened with the wisdom of experience, often to children of people with whom he had grown up.

He was essentially just a small-town boy, called by his country when the nation needed him in World War II, and like others, tempered by the war. He never thought about evading his duty or making excuses, but rather flew his bombing missions, survived ordeals others only read about, and returned to raise a family and give a lifetime of service to his community.

He never thought there was anything heroic about his life — Americans are often like that.



**A GRIM REMINDER** of those prisoner of war days was found in the city of Moosburg, near Munich. Still standing amid modern dwellings on a tree-lined street was this barracks that was "home" to John Hiller, Ike Alhadeff, Russ Reed, and Sam Gailey in 1944-45. Bob Hart and Herb Wilson also were PW's and found "flashbacks" as they viewed the old building while on the Germany-England tour.



# Letters, Letters



**RALPH HALL**, the 398th treasurer, does more around his New Bedford, Mass., home beside monitor the 398th treasury. His Shrine Club collects baby booties and bonnets for new babies at local hospitals. He is pictured here about to deliver 1,058 sets, handmade by Grange women of the community. If not booties, Ralph also hustles afghans, eye glasses, dolls and other assorted items for his charity work.



## Aluminum Overcast Fall Schedule

Omaha, NE ..... Sept. 3  
*To be determined* ..... Sept. 6  
 Lincoln, NE ..... Sept. 9  
 Hasting, NE ..... Sept. 13  
 Topeka, KS ..... Sept. 16  
 Bartlesville, OK ..... Sept. 22  
 (*Bartlesville Fly-In*)  
 Oklahoma City, OK ..... Sept. 27  
 Longview, TX ..... Sept. 30  
 (*Possible inspection Oct. 5-8*)  
 Dallas/Fort Worth, TX ..... Oct. 8  
 Houston, TX ..... Oct. 11  
 Abilene, TX ..... Oct. 14  
 Subject to change without notice.  
 Other stops are being considered for the trip home.

"I just received a letter and picture from the Regional Museum at Kutno, Poland. The picture presents a part of radio equipment "liberated" by Poles from the 398th Bomb Group B-17 landed in Kutno on March 15, 1945. It is part of the "GEE" radar installation, according to the noted British researcher, Ray Bowden.

"This is the story of Howard Pinner's crew "visit" to Kutno, according to a resident of the town, Jerzy Szurzec. (FLAK NEWS Vol. 11, No. 4).

"It was a reserve German airfield earlier. It was not adapted to landing so big aircraft, so the bomber's wheels stuck in the ground on landing. Russians dismantled the engines and guns and set guards around the aircraft. In spite of it, the residents of Kutno "liberated" almost all. Panes, seats, fuel tank, radio. Some radio parts were used by staff of Kutno railroad station in 1950's.

"I hope this will be of some interest."

**MIKE MUCHA, Al. Poznan, Poland**

"What a delightful surprise to receive that beautiful Duxford umbrella. I have a sneaky feeling that Wally & Teedy may have played an unseen hand in this as they were at Duxford for the opening of the American museum last summer.

"I was not able to catch up with them during the ceremonies, but I did meet two interesting young men from Pilsen, Czech Republic, Jaromir Kohout and Jan Zdiarski. I remembered them from the FLAK NEWS stories about the Last Mission. They had travelled 33 straight hours to get to Duxford.

"We met many others at the Madingly service, including two who were at the Wash in 1944 and were aware of our work to establish a museum there."

**SONIA GIFKINS, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 0SE, England.**

"I would like to continue receiving FLAK NEWS. I get great admiration of the stories and pictures and it seems to reflect memories of my late husband, Coy Smith. I think I have files on every copy received. I intend to have them available for my grandchildren later when I'm sure they will appreciate them. I do keep up with the news and reunions."

**GEORGIA SMITH, Nashville, TN 37210-3301.**

"Please continue to mail me FLAK NEWS. I enjoy reading about the things the group does. It takes me back to the good old days in England and the closeness among all you men at Nuthampstead and how proud my late husband was to be part of the 398th."

**DOROTHY EHRET JUNKER, St. Louis, MO 63109-1179.**

"Please continue to send me FLAK NEWS. Just because I am a widow I have not lost interest in the 398th. I have always been as enthusiastic about the group as my husband was and I still read the entire newsletter."

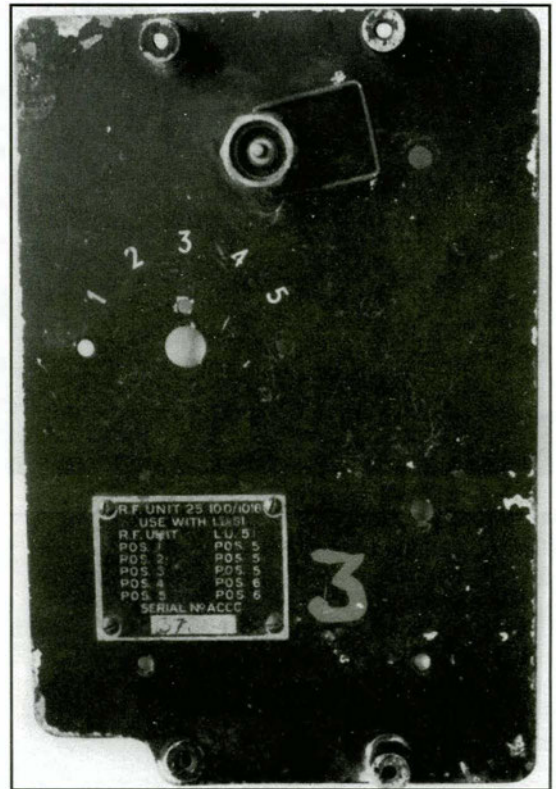
**ADELYN MILLS, Countryside, IL 60525-3507.**

"Thank you for sending me a copy of Larry Paul's war time film shots taken during his time in Nuthampstead. I looked up the current exchange rates and have endorsed a cheque for the amount due."

**RONALD R. RUSSELL, Enfield, Middx. EN1 2HU, England.**

"Thank you for the donation of the book, *Die Ersten und die Letzen*, to the library of the Heritage Museum. It is a welcome companion to our English translation of General Galland's book. The library and archives are growing rapidly. Each item enhances our ability to serve our patrons with their research needs."

**RUSTY BLOXOM, Heritage Museum, PO Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402-1992.**



**GEE BOX PANEL 'Liberated' By Poles**



# BRIEF-things

What's this? The USAF has decreed that the Memphis Belle is the property of the USAF Museum Programs, and will one day move the legendary Fortress from its nice home in Memphis to nearby Millington Naval Air Station ... after 13 years of restoration the Fortress owned by the Seattle Museum of Flight is finally ready for flight (but will probably wind up on display in the Museum) ... FLAK NEWS would like to hear from any of the Station 131 gang who volunteered for infantry duty on the continent at the height of the Battle of the Bulge ... the 94th Bomb Group's final reunion will be held in Seattle, birthplace of the B-17, in October, 1999 ... a reminder that 398th members who choose to be buried with military honors may wish to bequeath their American flags for future display at Station 131, England; contact Secretary *Harold Stallcup*, Forest City, NC 28043 ... the 94th Bomb Group, preparing for their "last hurrah," have trimmed their PX to the bone, but happy to report that *Joe & Rozanne Joseph's* 398th department store is bigger than ever ... of the dozen or so B-17's still flying around the world today, only four actually had combat time — Swoose, Memphis Belle, Shoo Shoo Baby and Return To Glory ... the little community of Arlington, Washington is in competition with the State of Israel to purchase a B-17 recently brought to the US from South America; the last bomb dropped from a B-17 in combat was actually accomplished in Israel in 1967 ... "No. 3 engine missing," said the pilot; "Engine found on right side after brief search," said the Engineer-Gunner ... lifetime member *Joe Roberge* has a memory problem; each year he keeps sending our treasurer \$100 ... the 485th Bomb Group dropped 35 lifetime members from their mailing list for lack of current addresses; the 398th won't let such a thing happen ... he died in 1982, but *Phil Stahlman's* bombardier, *John McAllister*, became a pilot, fought in Viet Nam and Korea and later flew commercial from Taiwan to Saigon; he once rescued a Sabre Jet pilot in Korea in his amphibian Dumbo ... the National Capital Chapter of the 8AFHS recently picked up no less than three FLAK NEWS stories for their War Stories (thank you) ... *Ben Core* reminded the FLAK NEWS editor that Margraten in Holland was omitted from the list of American cemeteries in Europe visited by 398th members on tour ... and *Ed Arbuthnot* sent a note telling that *Ozzie Osborn's* wife had died of leukemia earlier this year (*Ozzie* was the enthusiasm that gave us the memorial in Nuthampstead) ... several more of our Friends of the 398th in England and on the continent have contributed to the dues program, including *Jim Spicer*, the Hitchin used car dealer; *Derek Smith*, crew member on the Sally B; *Rev. Gerald Drew*, vicar at St. George's Church, Anstey; *Peter Dawson* of Little Cokenach; *Bill Bruty* of Bishop's Stortford; *Gordon Aldrich* of Sudbury; *Gerald Garrard* of Oxford; *R.R. Russell* of Enfield; and *E. V. Bevan* of High Wycomb ... Welcome to *Walt Brown* as editor of the 8th AF News; his first issue (Feb. 1998) was a beauty; it contains a story about the B-24 that is most heartwarming (even to us B-17 types) ... the next Society reunion is October 13-18, 1998 in Cherry Hill, New Jersey ... one 398th tail gunner who did his tour between September 1944 and February 1945 discovered that the average time of his missions was 7 hours, 30 minutes; the shortest 4:45 and the longest 10:20 ... *Mike Holmberg* of the 600 *Rice* crew cannot convince one of his fellow gunners that they did NOT get served round (real) eggs on every mission day; Mike insists they got square (powdered) eggs ALL the time ... who's right? ... most of us know how tough it was over Merseburg, but consider the 367 bombers and 111 fighters shot down over Ploiesti, mostly B-24's, including 53 on one low-level raid in 1943 ... *George Grange* passed away last winter, but his wife reports how thrilled he was to see his picture in FLAK NEWS, posing with his 601 armament buddies ("I made the paper") ... prospective candidates for the proposed Maui golf tour should be advised that this is not a Waikiki "sun and sand" kind of visit unless it applies to sunny fairways and sandy sand traps ...

## 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 - White, Navy Blue (S, M, L, XL, XXL, B-17 on Front)	_____	\$10.00 each _____
T-Shirts - White (Children Sizes 2-4, 6-8, 10-12)	_____	\$8.00 each _____
Sweat Shirts - 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	_____	\$6.00 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"	_____	\$15.00 each _____
Glass (9 oz.) with B-17	_____	\$6.00 each _____
B-17 Lapel Pin - Specify Silver or Gold	_____	\$5.00 each _____
Photo (Control Tower) - Station #131	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Photo (398th Memorial) - Post Card Size	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Photo (Aluminum Overcast) - 8"x10" (Latest photo)	_____	\$2.00 each _____
Bolo Ties - 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 _____
B-17 Christmas Ornament	_____	\$6.00 each _____
B-17 Playing Cards (single)	_____	\$7.00 each _____
B-17 Playing Cards (double)	_____	\$12.00 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  
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-6168

**"In warfare, the only thing more expensive than victory, is defeat."**

**—GEN. IRA EAKER**