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

VOL. 2 NO. 2

FLAK NEWS

MAY 1987



SAN ANTONIO **Marriott**[®]
RIVERWALK

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 398TH BOMB GROUP:

The entire staff of the San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk Hotel is anxiously awaiting your arrival for the 1987 Reunion. We are confident you will enjoy our fine city.

Our hotel offers a superb location along the famous Paseo Del Rio. The Riverwalk, as it is more commonly known, offers visitors the chance to experience many unique shops, restaurants and art galleries which line the banks of the San Antonio River. I highly recommend a river taxi ride to experience this unique attraction. Some points of interest within walking distance from our hotel are the Alamo, La Villita, El Mercado and The Institute of Texan Cultures. Without a doubt, you will be very pleased with our location.

The quality of our service is much more important than our location. We have had the opportunity of hosting many military reunions. I think you will find our entire staff to be helpful and courteous at all times. We value your patronage and look forward to serving you.

My sincerest wishes for a successful reunion.

Cordially,
San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk
Stan Moore,
General Manager

San Antonio Awaits 398th

A TEXAS WELCOME AWAITS US!

Dallas and Geneva Ebest, along with their committee members, join the mayor of San Antonio and the general manager of the Riverfront Marriott Hotel in a special invitation to join in the annual reunion festivities of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association!

The 1987 meeting is set for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 22-23-24-25. It is expected to attract at least, if not more, than the 391 who officially registered last September in Colorado Springs.

The registration form and all pertinent information appear on the inside pages of FLAK NEWS. Forms should be returned to the reunion chairman by June 22. The hotel requires its reservations by the same date.

The Marriott is a beautiful, modern hotel situated downtown on the famous Riverwalk. A modern jewel in a city that dates back to the early 1700's. From this setting, the men and women of the 398th will journey out to enjoy the city and surroundings. . . and fellowship with each other.

The Marriott Hotel address is 711 - E. Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX 78205. Phone (512) 224-4555.

Hawaii Calls Editor; Next FLAK NEWS Late

The next "quarterly" edition of FLAK NEWS will not be published until late October or early November due to the editor's consulting job assignment on Maui and Kauai. Honest!

The Building of Group Efficiency: Rare Insight Offered By Stat Officer

BY WALLIS L. CAMPBELL
Arvada, Colorado

398TH BOMB GROUP STATISTICAL OFFICER

Like most B-17 Bomb Groups at the time, the Cadre of the 398th Bomb Group attended the Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics in April 1943, at Orlando, Florida. As the Statistical Officer of the 401st Bomb Group, I attended the May 1943 class. On June 6, 1943, I was transferred to the 398th Bomb Group to fill their requirement for a second Statistical Officer. I succeeded Don Gawthrop as the Group Statistical Officer October 25, 1943. I remained as Group (and A.A.F. Sta. 131) Statistical Officer, until April 23, 1945, when I transferred to the 426th Service Group, to make it possible for our Assistant Statistical Officer, Andrew Holb to become a Captain.

The statistical section of the Army Air Force was set up to provide logistics and counselling to those in command. Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr., (W.P. 1933) the Commanding Officer of the 398th Bomb Group, was quick to take advantage of all the help this offered.

UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

In the Group Statistical Section, during training, we had a chart room in which we kept grafts, charts, and other displays up-to-date showing the status of training, personnel, material, and other factors in such a way that it was possible to keep pretty good track of what was going on in all facets of the Group and Squadrons. There were about 250 square feet of grafts, charts and other displays covering the four walls of the secret statistical room.

Every morning at about 7 A.M. Col. Hunter would come in to see what had happened the day before, and the status of matters in detail. He would usually stay about an hour, carefully going over each chart, graft, and display with us. Usually, we would have investigated to determine reasons or possible excuses for any unexpected or low showing, and could give him the benefit of that information.

Col. Hunter would then leave for his morning conference with the John G. Weibel (later Bruce Daily), Leo W. Killen, Peter J. Rooney, and Judson Gray of the 600th, 601st, 602nd, and 603rd respectively.

In about an hour, the squadron commanders would come into the statistical room wanting to know what the Colonel had seen to be able to pick out the good and weak spots in their training and squadrons. In many cases it was news to them. About half an hour after they left, their various squadron operations officers would appear on the scene for much of the same information.

CAUGHT UP WITH ROONEY

Since the value of the information was only as good as the figures being supplied us by certain squadron clerks, I (being a Kansas C.P.A.) expected that the figures would be jimmied somewhere along the line, and we kept a constant vigil against this probability. Sure enough, the 602nd's flying time figures didn't jibe with the tower by a significant amount on one occasion. The clerk, when confronted, stated that he had to follow orders. The squadron officer informed me that there was nothing that I would be able to do about it. Col. Hunter thought differently. He restricted "Pete" Rooney to the base for a solid week. Everyone got the message, that the only way to make a good showing was to produce. They really worked at it.

Did it pay off? Yes!

After completing training at the Rapid City Army Air Force Base, the 398th Bomb Group joined that Eighth Air Force at Station 131, near Nuthampstead, England. In the Eighth Air Force, when the Group started flying missions, a crewman generally had to fly 25 missions before he could return to the States. At that time, the losses were averaging about 3.3% of the B-17 crews being missing in action (MIA) or killed in action (KIA). That would have meant that about 17.5% of the crews would finish their missions. As the losses per mission dropped later, the number of required missions would be raised. A little at a time, the required missions rose to about 35. I was informed (off the record) that they tried to keep about a 79% average on MIA and KIAs (or, in other words, about 21% would finish their missions and return to the States).

Original 398th Rapid City Crews Beat The Projected Losses

	Total	Group	600th	601st	602nd	603rd
Total Airmen	770	7	196	196	185	185
Reported POWs	39	—	22	13	—	4
Other MIAs	76	3	22	21	5	25
KIAs	14	—	9	3	—	2
Men Lost	129	3	53	37	5	31
Projected 79% Loss	608	6	155	155	146	146
Better than Projected Losses (Men Saved)	479	3	102	118	141	115
Actual Loss % age	16.75%	42.9%	27.04%	18.88%	2.7%	16.67%
% age better than Projected Loss %	78.78%	50%	65.8%	76.13%	96.58%	78.77%

NOTE: Capt. Campbell's casualty statistics, printed above, represent those of the original crews that trained at Rapid City. Final numbers show 75 killed; 275 missing; 195 PW; 32 escapees; 8 rescued at sea; and 44 liberated by Allied troops.

The first five months of combat, the Group's losses per mission, on the average, ran about .69 of 1%, while, we were informed, the Eighth Air Force losses ran about 2.69% per mission. After the first five months, the original crews had pretty much finished their tours, one way or another. It was the duty of the Statistical Section to investigate and give the official reports of all MIAs and KIA's for the air crew personnel. I kept fairly good track of all the original flying personnel that trained with the Group at Rapid City, South Dakota, until Germany was defeated. In some cases we heard that MIA's were POW or KIA's.

There was a rule in effect that when a Group led the Division, the Group Commander, Deputy Commander, Operations Officer, or a Squadron Commander had to fly in the lead plane. Col. Hunter set up a dial and required that each take the task in order, so there was no picking and choosing. I can remember the dread with which Col. Hunter, who was due next, faced that mission after the Division had lost four lead planes in a row.

There was a noticeable relief on his face as that next mission was scrubbed because of weather. Finally the day came, and he broke the jinx. Later, however, on January 23, 1945, his luck ran out, leading the Division on a raid to Neuss.

I believe that there were about 479 men who returned to the States to their families as a result of the leadership and dedication of the 398th Bomb Group's truly great leader, Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr.



MRS. FRANK (MARIA) HUNTER (right) and her daughters, Mrs. Maria Kiser (left) and Mrs. Sarah Gayle Randolph with husband John H. Randolph. Widow of 398th CO, Col. Hunter, Maria will be at the reunion in San Antonio in July.



COL. EARL BERRYHILL

One of the many officers and men of the 398th who make their homes in the 1987 reunion city of San Antonio is Col. Earl Berryhill. The former group executive officer served not only with the 398th, being among the first members of the initial cadre unit in 1943, but had many other assignments during his 31-year Air Force career. Much of his service before and after WWII was in positions of training and education. He was a graduate of Texas A & M, and received masters and doctorate degrees at the University of Philippines and University of Houston. He was on the faculty of The Citadel from 1965 to 1974 following his retirement from the Air Force.

Among the many others who call San Antonio "home" is Col. Lew Ensign, who succeeded Col. Frank Hunter following the latter's death on a bombing mission January 23, 1945.

It Was TRENKLE On Beach Landing

The navigator on the Petersen-Lamb July 8, 1944 beach landing mission (FLAK NEWS, February) was Phil Trenkle, not Art Waarama as reported. A couple of "memory banks" failed in the reporting, and the editor apologizes for the error. Waarama, who died this year, had been shot down leading the group to Berlin on June 21.

The Editor's **BRIEFING ROOM**

Going to England on your own? The folks at Nuthampstead want to see you! Check in at the **Woodman Inn (Ian Johnson)** and he will put you in touch with **David & Peggy Wells**. Then just stand back and wait for the welcome! . . . **Vic Jenkins** continues to be the working historian at Station 131. Recently, he presented a slide show and lecture, and word comes back that "many experiences and facts were exchanged with the audience; the continued interest by old and young people is a great surprise; we again realize the fondness and affection felt towards the American personnel who served here". . . sooooo many members have moved to Florida in recent years, but California still leads all the 50 states in 398th membership. . . and then there is the 398th grandfather (**Claude J. Wilson**) who purchased a \$50.00 life membership for himself, a \$50.00 life associate membership for his daughter, **Valerie Wilson Zecca**, and a life associate membership for his 10-year-old grandson, **Shawn P. Jones** (Wow!). . . **Tony & Beryl Clark** are still trying to compile an "anecdote history" surrounding the Nuthampstead base during the war and are asking for some of our local experiences during the 1944-45 period . . . like the unnamed tail gunner who copped a whole tube of baloney from the Mess Hall, gave it to his girl friend's parents in Stevenage, who couldn't understand how meat could be so tough after cooking it in the oven for an hour! . . . the video story of the group tour to England last year (much of it courtesy of **Barry & Elaine Tyler** of Barkway) will be shown in the memory room at San Antonio; also a special on the Confederate Air Force. . . a note of interest to any of our members who might have retired from the service in 1976 and received a service connected disability: you might qualify for a tax refund. Contact **Bob Hopkins**, San Diego, CA 92111 . . . a note to you members who live in New York City: we are trying to locate **Herbert D. Guild**, a 601 tail gunner who had some interesting experiences while flying with pilot **Larry deLancey**. . . we now have 1,123 on the 398th mailing list, with 19 of those living in England, Germany, Channel Islands, Wales, Switzerland, Spain, Canada, and Mexico . . . some of the retired officers of our group might be interested in checking out San Antonio's Air Force Village during reunion time; **Col. Lewis Ensign** and others will have information in the Marriott Hotel lobby. . . since the February mailing of FLAK NEWS we have made over 70 updates in the mailing list . . . we are coming close to being ready to publish a membership roster for everyone . . . this is the fourth edition of FLAK NEWS, and your editor has a few back copies of all issues available on request. . . in response to several inquiries regarding the "flak photo" that appeared on the blue dues slip in the last issue, the picture was taken by your ex-tail gunner editor on Nov. 21, 1944 on the way to Merseburg; the plane was piloted by **John Stevens** of the 603rd, and that particular flak burst started him on a crash-landing east of Paris. . . if any of you are hoarding any old formation assignment sheets, your editor can use copies for future FLAK NEWS stories. . . **Vic Jenkins**, by the way, has requested that any of us who have slides or photographs that would fit into his slide presentation would do him a great favor by sending any we can spare . . . some of "us guys" who have been either cold or wet all winter are looking forward to San Antonio's guaranteed warmth next July. . . **Norm Rudrud**, who flew 28 big ones, many as lead pilot, had a stroke following the Colorado Springs reunion and is now learning to walk and talk all over again; fly through it, **Norm!** . . . one of our members just can't wait until he finds out how one of those B-17's at Rapid City got its name, "Georgia Cracker" (editor wants to know, too) . . . another hurting airman is **Ray LeDoux**, 601 **deLancey** navigator, hospitalized in Portland from another in a series of strokes. . . **Alex & Marge Miles** of Minnesota say "let it be hot in San Antonio; we'll be there!" . . . **Col. Hal Lamb** (he was second lieutenant back at Rapid) & **Mrs. Lamb** will host a reunion cocktail-buffet Wednesday evening, 7 p.m. July 22 for members of the 601st Squadron. A British double-decker bus will pick up members at the Marriott Hotel for the trip to the Fort Sam Houston Officer's Club.

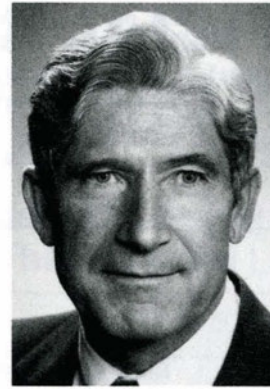
FOURTH ANNUAL REUNION

San Antonio, Texas

July 22-23-24-25, 1987

For your hotel reservations at the Marriott Hotel use the enclosed mailer/envelope. Send directly to the hotel. The form should be received by the Marriott no later than June 22 to qualify for reserved rooms and special rates.

For official registration, including schedules and costs, use the opposite side of this page. Enclose your check or money order equal to the self-tabulated total. You will receive a receipted copy of the entire page by return mail. Members are urged to mail in their forms no later than June 22.



GENERAL STRAW



ROBERT GAYLOR

Special Guests To Be 398th Reunion Speakers

In addition to the "guests of honor" represented by our own membership, a pair of hometown stars have been invited to the 398th banquets as guests.

The featured speaker July 25 will be the nationally known Management Development Specialist for U.S.A.A., Mr. Robert Gaylor.

Gaylor is both dynamic and humorous, and draws upon 31 years of Air Force service as Chief Master Sergeant. His talk on "high tech" is both hilarious and inspiring.

At the Bar-B-Que banquet July 23 we will hear from Gen. Paul Straw, former 351st B-17 and Korean jet fighter pilot, and commander of the Texas Air National Guard. "A Kansan by birth, Texan by choice, banker by profession and fighter pilot by impossible dream come true."

Members Can Sign On For Trip To Visit "Ghost Squadron"

The Confederate Air Force's "home port" of Harlingen, Texas is an hour's flying time south of San Antonio, via Southwest Air Lines. The CAF "Ghost Squadron" includes virtually a complete collection of World War II aircraft, most in flying condition.

Members may visit Harlingen and its fantastic museum by signing on for a "post reunion" trip on Sunday, July 26, returning to San Antonio the same evening. For reservations, contact the Delta tour agency.



DELTA NAMED OFFICIAL AIRLINE

Delta Airlines has been named the official airline carrier for the 398th Bomb Group reunion in San Antonio, the arrangement being negotiated by president Bill Comstock. Substantial air travel discounts may be enjoyed by members who identify themselves as being from the 398th. For complete reservations, members may call toll free 1-800-533-8844. Ask for Dana Firth. (In Virginia, call (703) 998-0777.)

FOR GOLFERS ONLY:

I will play golf Wednesday morning, July 22 YES NO

I will play golf Thursday morning, July 23 YES NO

Golfers, check in with Hal Lamb Tuesday evening, 8 p.m. in the Memory Room for starting times.

I am interested in a group tour to England in 1988 YES NO



If you are NOT staying at the Marriott Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio, please indicate where you will be staying or how you can be reached.

USE SCISSORS TO CLIP ALONG THE DOTTED LINE

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

398th Bomb Group Memorial Association Fourth Annual Reunion
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS JULY 22-25, 1987

NAME _____ WIFE _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE () _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

NAMES OF OTHERS IN PARTY. PLEASE PRINT FOR NAME TAGS

ITINERARY AND COSTS

Registration fee.....\$10.00 per person x _____ \$ _____

Wednesday, July 22:

Optional golf tournament, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Registration, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Travis Room, 2nd level. Memory Room open from 10 a.m. to 12 midnight, Travis Room. (PX sales, video, memorabilia)

Officer's luncheon & meeting, 1 p.m., Bonham Room. No organized group activity, but time for crew get-togethers, walking tours, Riverwalk boat rides, visit to the Alamo, El Mercado, shopping, swimming, etc.

Special 601 Squadron party, 7 p.m., Fort Sam Houston, hosted by Col. Hal Lamb.

Thursday, July 23:

Registration 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Travis Room.

Golf tournament, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Memory Room open from 9 a.m. to 12 midnight.

Welcome luncheon & business meeting, 1 p.m., Marriott Hotel Ballroom. \$14.50 x _____ \$ _____

Ladies only Mirasol style show, 2:30 p.m. (free)

Bar-B-Que Banquet, Aggie (A&M) Park, 7 p.m.....\$11.50 x _____ \$ _____

(Car pools will leave hotel starting at 6:15 p.m.)

Have Car Can take () passengers Need ride for ()

Friday, July 24:

Breakfast at Marriott Hotel Ballroom, 6 to 7:30 a.m.....\$9.75 x _____ \$ _____

Lackland Air Force Base Tour. Busses leave 7:45 a.m. Tour of base, officers' graduation ceremony, static display of WW II aircraft, lunch at Officers' Club.....\$15.00 x _____ \$ _____

Officers' meeting, 3 p.m. Memory Room open from 3 p.m. to 12 midnight.

No organized evening group activity, but many opportunities to enjoy the Riverwalk shops and restaurants.

Saturday, July 25:

Breakfast in the Marriott Ballroom, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.....\$9.75 x _____ \$ _____

Bus tour of San Antonio—Sunken Gardens, Brackenridge Park, Botanical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Mission San Jose, lunch at Lone Star Brewery.....\$14.50 x _____ \$ _____

Memory Room open from 3 p.m. to 12 midnight. Free time 3 to 6 p.m.

No host cocktail hour 6 to 7 p.m. Marriott Hotel.

Banquet Dinner-Dance, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., Marriott Hotel Ballroom

(Forties music by Rudy Carrasco).....\$25.00 x _____ \$ _____

Sunday, July 26:

Breakfast at Marriott Hotel Ballroom, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.....\$9.75 x _____ \$ _____

Memory Room open from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Check out 12 noon.

Optional post reunion tour via Southwest Airlines to Harlingen, Texas to visit the Confederate Air Force Museum and displays. Call Delta agency (Dana Firth) for details.

1987 398th Memorial Association dues (if applicable).....\$5.00 \$ _____

Please complete form and mail to:

398th Bomb Group Reunion
c/o Dallas Ebest
San Antonio, TX 78216

Received \$ _____ Date _____

Dallas/Geneva Ebest (signed)

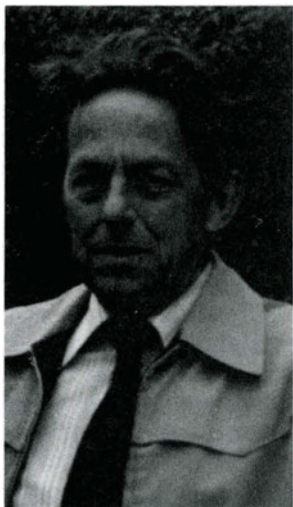
A copy of this form will be mailed to registrants upon receipt of check or money order, payable to "398th Bomb Group Reunion."

TOTAL \$ _____



Seven Group Staffers & One Small Puppy

Some of the 398th Group staff took advantage of a quiet moment at Nuthampstead in the summer of 1944 to pose for the cameraman. The distinguished gentlemen are (left to right, front row) Harold Brown, group navigator; Bill Holmes, special services; and Carl Cameron, group communications. Back row—Walter Duke, Red Cross; Cy Schultz, communications; Rev. James Duvall, chaplain; and Matthew (Johnny) Meyer, intelligence. Holmes, a former tough University of Washington football player, was no match for the puppy. Holmes lives in Tacoma, WA; Cameron in Tuscon, AZ; Rev. Duvall in San Pedro, CA; and Meyer in New York City.



VIC JENKINS

Working Historian At Station 131

398th Bomb Group FLAK NEWS
c/o Allen Ostrom
Seattle, WA 98177

Sorry About That, Ralph (Well, Not Really)

TO THE EDITOR
FLAK NEWS

I WISH YOU WOULD PUT SOME KIND WORDS IN THE NEXT EDITION OF FLAK NEWS REGARDING DUES AND DONATIONS. I WORKED 4-6 HOURS EVERY DAY ON THEM AND STILL THEY COME! THE MAILMAN WANTS TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON! HE FILLS MY MAIL BOX EVERY DAY. IT WILL TAKE ME WEEKS TO GET OUT FROM UNDER, IF THEN.

—RALPH HALL
398th Treasurer

Dues Help 8th, 398th

While our 398th treasurer says “thanks” for the fine response to our appeal for 1987 dues and special funds, we are reminded by George Hilliard that we can also help our “parent” organization, 8th Air Force Historical Society, by sending in our \$10.00 annual dues to Aida Kaye, Miami, FL 33162.

The 398th receives a rebate on behalf of all members who attend the annual 8th AFHS convention, scheduled this year for Pittsburgh, PA, October 14-18.