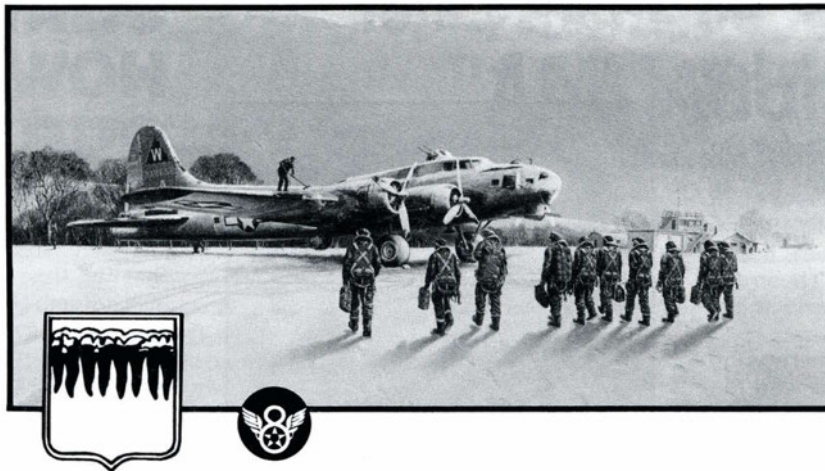




602



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A Message From Merseburg

Dear American Friends:

It is an honour and a pleasure for me, as the president of the Municipal Council of this town, to welcome you to Merseburg. I am glad to see you, and I am glad to meet you on earth and not in the air.

It has been a long and a difficult way, different for both of us, you and us, up to now, until this moment in which we meet to plant a tree together. We both had to learn our lessons by history. And I find it a good symbolic act, that a long time after that terrific war, you came back to this place to plant a tree together with us.

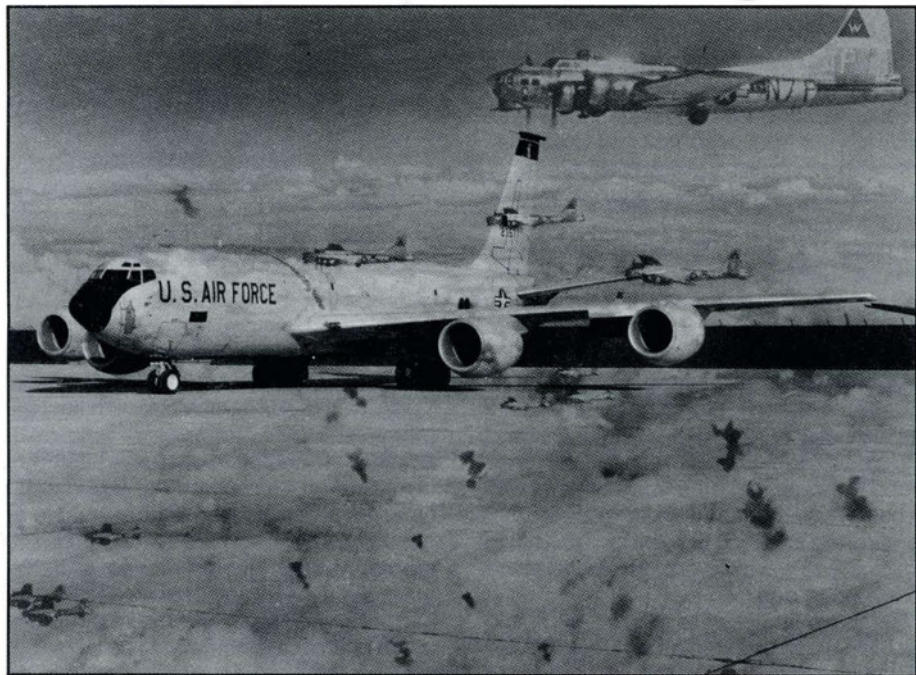
Perhaps you know the famous German folk song of the lime tree: "Am Brunnen vor dem Tore, da steht ein Lindenbaum ..." ("At the fountain in front of the town gate, there is a lime tree, and it was in the shadow of this lime tree that I was dreaming some beautiful dream). Now, there is the gate (not of the town, but the gate of the castle), and there is our common lime tree, in the shadow of which we and our children shall dream the beautiful dream of human understanding. The dream of peace on earth, and the dream, too, of peace between mankind and nature.

Let us hope that our lime tree and the friendship between the nations of this world may thrive.

Once more, I am glad to see you here. Thank you.

Salutation by Dr. Peter Ramm, President of the Municipal Council of Merseburg, June 20, 1992.

The 398th Flies Again!



KC-135 AND 398TH "GHOST SQUADRON"

Air Force Refueling Group At Castle AFB Adopts 398th

Park your rocking chair in the garage and grab an oxygen bottle. The 398th flies again!

Meet the 398th (Air Refueling) Operations Group and its subordinate units — 398th Operational Support Squadron; 330th Flying Training Squadron; and 93rd Air Refueling Squadron.

All this now happening at Castle Air Force Base near Merced, California. It all came together on June 1, 1992 with a change of command ceremony that involved members of the (old) 398th Bomb Group and the very flag that was retired

with the group at the conclusion of World War II.

Bruce Daily, who commanded the 600th Squadron and later served as group operations officer, led the local contingent by carrying the flag that once graced the office of Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr. a half century ago.

Others in the "old" contingent who took part in the California ceremony included Bill & Ada Markley; Dick Griffin; Joe Tolbert; John McCormick; Bob Templeman; and Steve & Estelle Kozak.

Continued On Page 6

NASHVILLE: 50 Years Later

Where Cadet Fell In Love With A B-17

By Paul Roderick

"You are going to be sent to Nashville to the Army Air Corps Classification Center," the Recruiter told me way back in 1942 when I enlisted in the Aviation Cadet program. Nashville — I hardly knew where it was located. As Country Music hadn't been discovered by the USA, that little town was just a small dot on the map.

Well, I did go to Nashville, and that was the beginning of events that would lead me finally to the 398th. A group of us got off the train there in a heavy downpour of rain that seemed to stay with us for the two months of our stay. That is, it rained until the snow started to fall and Bing Crosby discovered he could make a lot of money by singing "White Christmas." Now, every year during the season, when I hear him still crooning that tune, it all comes back to me.

I remember the tar-papered barracks, with some holes large enough to peer out of, with the wind whistling in.

Shirts that were issued with sleeves long enough for a gorilla. I tried shortening the sleeves with the little sewing kit that somebody in your family thought you needed to take with you. I gave up after the first sleeve, and that shirt was lop-sided for as long as I was a Cadet.

I recall the Mess Hall where fairly good food was destroyed by cooks who cooked as bad as I did close order drill. It was certainly a long way from the old fashioned meals that my Mom cooked for me.

I remember a huge lumber pile that sat off to one side of the Center. Details were called out each morning to visit that pile, and sort and stack that mountain of lumber. We never found out where it came from, or what was to be done with it, but we did discover that by carefully stacking the pieces, one could make a hide-a-way to crawl into and catch a good long nap.

When we finally were allowed to go into the big city, we grabbed at the chance. After all, we were Aviation Cadets, with the nice looking uniform and the wings on our caps. The wild blue yonder was soon to be ours. The problem was that Nashville's main street was only a couple of blocks long and filled with REAL airmen from a close by airbase.

Those events that I mentioned earlier? Another Cadet and I were sitting on the barracks steps when a huge four engine plane flew over. I didn't know a Piper Cub from a P-40, so I asked him what it was, and was informed it was a B-17. From that time, that plane was my choice. Then I was selected, after the battery of tests, to go for pilot training which I was fortunate to complete. The final lucky event was the forming of a large blister on one of my feet which was caused by a G.I. shoe that was made for someone two feet taller and 50 pounds heavier than me. It became infected, I was placed in the hospital, and missed shipping out with my class. Who knows where I would have



PAUL RODERICK
1942 Aviation Cadet

wound up had that not happened. As a result, I was destined to become a member of the 398th, and placed on a crew in the 602nd.

We went to Nuthampstead with the initial group and were the second crew in our squadron to complete our required number of missions. My crew and I have become as close as brothers ever will be, and we are already becoming excited about the '92 reunion. I think Nashville is going to be a great place to visit and this time the food, the barracks, the shirts, and the troops will be much improved. Besides, it'll be too early in the year to hear Bing sing that song — and I won't be homesick.

See you all in Nashville

Crew, Nashville Update

A subsequent dispatch from Roderick, who lives in Palm City, Florida, revealed that the B-17's that caught the fancy of the fledgling Cadet had come from Smyrna, Tennessee, at that time a multi-engine training base.

The location of the Classification Center? Sadly, this old tar-papered Cadet home is now a shopping mall. So what else is new?

Eight of Roderick's crew are current members of the 398th — Roger Harvey, co-pilot; Frank Scribner, navigator; Gerald Monagin, engineer; Richard J. Carter, radio; and gunners Vaughn Erickson, Alfred Serrano and Jerry Amer.

Bombardier John Ward and gunner Joe Barnhard are deceased, as is Harry Houchins, who replaced Ward as bombardier.

CHANGES ON HOW WE PAY OUR DUES

Most of us are at the age where we don't like changes, but there does come a time ...

And our treasurer, Ralph Hall, believes that the time has come for altering the 398th Bomb Group dues policy.

Ralph, who explained all this at the last Board meeting in San Diego, is not advocating a change in "how much," but rather "when."

He has proposed, and the Board approved, a system calling for one quarter of the members to send in their dues at a time, rather than everyone responding at the same time following the usual dues notice in October.

So rather than inundating Ralph and his wife, Marjorie, with an avalanche of mail from throughout the U.S., only the following states will be sent dues notices in OCTOBER:

Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Washington, D.C., and those members living offshore. These states represent about one quarter of the membership.

Then in JANUARY, 1993, the following states will receive their notices:

North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Iowa.

Then in APRIL, 1993:

Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Texas.

Then in JULY, 1993:

Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Alaska and Hawaii.

It should be pointed out that in addition to receiving and recording all the dues checks and monitoring the group finances, Ralph also serves as a "clearing house" for general news items, changes of address, Taps notices, lost soul news and a sundry of other bits and pieces of information.

"This way," said the beleaguered treasurer, "we can spread out the work over a period of a year instead of being overwhelmed during one period."

Ralph, we have heard your cry and we are responding.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ralph wishes to assure members that if they choose to ignore the new plan and send in their dues and general contributions as usual, they will be happily accepted. Still \$5.00 per year.



Nashville Reunion Surprise

ALUMINUM OVERCAST, the EAA B-17 from Oshkosh, Wisconsin and carrying the colors of the 398th Bomb Group, will be at Smyrna, Tennessee Airport (15 miles southeast of Nashville) and available exclusively to the 398th reunion attendees on Sunday, September 20. A free shuttle bus from the Marriott Hotel will be available from 9 AM to 3 PM. The beautifully restored Fortress will be part of a "Young Eagles" promotion by the EAA on Saturday, September 19. Members of the 398th may participate by sharing their B-17 experiences with the "Young Eagles" if they desire. No group-sponsored transportation will be provided on Saturday.

Still Time To Get Grand Ole Opry And Cruise Tickets

At press time, there were still tickets available for both the Grand Ole Opry show as well as both the evening and luncheon cruises on the General Jackson. You may contact Dewey Cook for "last minute" ticket reservations.

Reunion Chairman

THIS IS THE face of Dewey Cook, the reunion chairman for the 1992 meeting September 17-20 in Nashville. Dewey retired from the Air Force after a 25-year career as a gunner on a variety of bombers, including the B-17 on the Art Fritog 600 crew. Dewey's last official assignment was crew chief on the C-5 Galaxy, serving as a Chief Master Sergeant.



DEWEY COOK

REUNION FACTS

WHEN—Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, September 17-18-19-20, 1992.

WHERE—Nashville, Tennessee.

HQ HOTEL—Marriott Hotel, 1 Marriott Dr., Nashville, TN 37210. (615) 889-9300.

BACKUP HOTEL—Red Roof Inn, 510 Claridge Dr., Nashville, TN 37214. 1-800-874-9000. Ask for Group No. 206-AF-92261.

CHAIRMAN—Dewey Cook, Fairview, TN 37062.

GOLF—Thursday & Friday, Sept. 17-18 at Two Rivers Golf Club. Meet in Marriott lobby 6:30 AM.

SPECIAL EVENTS—Private 398th exhibit of EAA B-17 "Aluminum Overcast" on Sunday, Sept. 20. (Free bus shuttle.) Grand Ole Opry Show, Sept. 19; General Jackson Dinner Cruise, Sept. 19 & 20; Nashville Bus Tour, Sept. 19; Bar-B-Q Lunch, Sept. 20; Group Banquets, Friday and Sunday nights, Sept. 18 & 20, at Marriott Hotel.

BANQUET RESERVATIONS—Table reservations for the Friday, Sept. 18, and Sunday, Sept. 20 banquets at the Marriott Hotel may be made after registering in the Memory Room.

SPECIAL GUEST—Tommy Garcia, technical advisor for the movie, "Memphis Belle."

THE GERMANY-ENGLAND TOUR

Memorable Experiences Abound for 75

Would that each of the seventy-five 398th Bomb Group members who went on last summer Germany-England Tour had the opportunity to write the "lead" story for this issue of FLAK NEWS.

No single observation from one reporter could possibly capture the essence of the 17-day drama and put it all into a few, choice, introductory words.

If, however, one could probe the mind of each member and ask him or her to list a tour high point, it might just look something like this —

The surprising, emotional greeting of the "Friends of the 398th" as the tour busses arrived at Barkway Village Hall, there to be greeted by the "home stay" hosts.

The official greeting at Leipzig by the deputy burgermeister of Merseburg, who almost broke down in telling of Eastern Germany's 60-year suffering under two dictatorships.

The 1940s dance at High Hall Farm at Anstey, where many of the 600 who came to celebrate the return of the Yanks did so in a variety of WW II uniforms.

Roger Freeman, the 8th Air Force historian and banquet guest speaker, who had planned to leave early but stayed late to enjoy the special relationship that exists between the 398th and their British Friends.

Standing in awe in the Cologne Cathedral, and feeling good about not knocking it down in 1944-45 when most everything in the neighborhood was leveled.

Those private, small plane rides over the old field and looking down on the shadowy outlines of the three runways and remembering how great they looked after one of those long hauls to Merseburg 48 years before.

Singing the German National Anthem in German at the "Boothaus" restaurant in Merseburg (thanks to choir director Dick Frazier.)

Joining Joe Mansell on the stern of the Channel ferry, Prins Filip, and seeing him throw a bouquet of roses into the waters in memory of the five members of his Lyle Doerr crew that perished in those waters in 1944. James Powell also was there, as two of his crew mates also were on the Doerr craft.

Stopping for a coffee break at this quaint, little town of Cheshunt, there to find this quaint, little supermarket with 45 check-out stands!

Sharing the pride and emotions of Danny Leyva and Maurice Fletcher, who presented memorial wreaths at Ardennes American Military Cemetery and at the 398th Memorial.

Enjoying Hank Rudow tell of his private excursion to Duffell, Belgium, where he not only saw where he crash-landed his B-17, but also dug up parts of his Fortress. And where he was a celebrity at the City Hall.

The tree-planting ceremony at the Merseburg Castle, involving city officials, students, educators and a host of newspaper, radio and TV folks.

Marveling at the German-English translation ability of guest Insa Kipping, who added an extra dimension to the tour with her linguistic gifts.

Hearing about the special tour given Ben & Polly Anna Core and Phil & Mabel Arbogast. They were taken to Mucheln, near Merseburg, where their B-17 crashed in 1944, killing pilot Roger Campbell. Their host was Mucheln burgermeister Udo Werzel.

The children of Nuthampstead adding flowers to the Memorial during the inspiring ceremony, then following Dick Frazier as he asked his comrades to stand and share the name of a friend or buddy who didn't make it. "I remember ..."

The Purple Heart presented to Willis (Bill) Frazier following his encounter with a breakfast roll at Ostende, Belgium.

Hearing the members telling about "their" home during the five-day visit to Nuthampstead and the friendships that were made. One of the youngsters at Lowell & Audrey Culver's home sat on Lowell's suitcase on the final day and insisted they stay longer.

Seeing 84-year-old Col. Earl Berryhill carry the wreath to the



398th VISITORS AT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Madingly Memorial in the accompaniment of three of the "kids," — Randy Stange, Carolyn Wyatt and Gail Van Patten.

The presentation of a B-17 propeller, remnant of the V.A. Hansard crash at Reed Hall Farm, and kept all these years by members of the family that farmed there at the time.

The barbeque dinner in the barn at Meesden Bury, home of Friends chairman Wilfred Dimsdale. Complete with a Station 131 slide show by Vic Jenkins.

Seeing tour director Barbara Fish, tall and slender, wiggle her way into the ball turret of the Mary Alice at Duxford.

Continued On Page 11

Germany-England Tour Party

Phil & Mabel Arbogast

Bill & Jackie Auten

Lou & Matea Baffaro

Earl Berryhill

Barbara Murray

Wally & Teedy Blackwell

Nick Bur

Bill & Norma Carter

Winsor & Joyce Coleman

Ben & Polly Anna Core

Lowell & Audrey Culver

Dorothy Crouch

Carolyn Wyatt

Wayne & Ruthanna Doerstler

David & Shirley Edwards

Maurice & Betty Fletcher

Dean & Ruby Foster

Dick & Junice Frazier

Willis & Ruby Frazier

George & Jeanne Graham

Ralph & Marjorie Hall

George & Pearl Hershberger

Maria Hunter

Roy Hussey

Ed & Barbara Jones

Virgil Kramer

Daniel Leyva

Jack & Jean Madlung

Joe & Willetta Mansell

Gertrude W. Neff

Elliott & Connie Novek

Allen & Geg Ostrom

James & Jaunice Powell

Russ Reed

Millie McMillan

Hank & Louise Rudow

Chuck Sasse

Joyce Hell

Margaret Sigsworth

Phil & Marge Stahlman

Ray & Jeanne Stange

Randy Stange

Charles Sutton

Howard & Jane Traeder

Les Veley

Gail Van Patten

Hal & Billie Weekley

Barbara Fish, Tour Director

Insa Kipping, Interpreter

Kurt Kleeman, German Guide

Christel Racy, German Guide

Linda Ellis, English Guide

Jim Espizel, English Guide



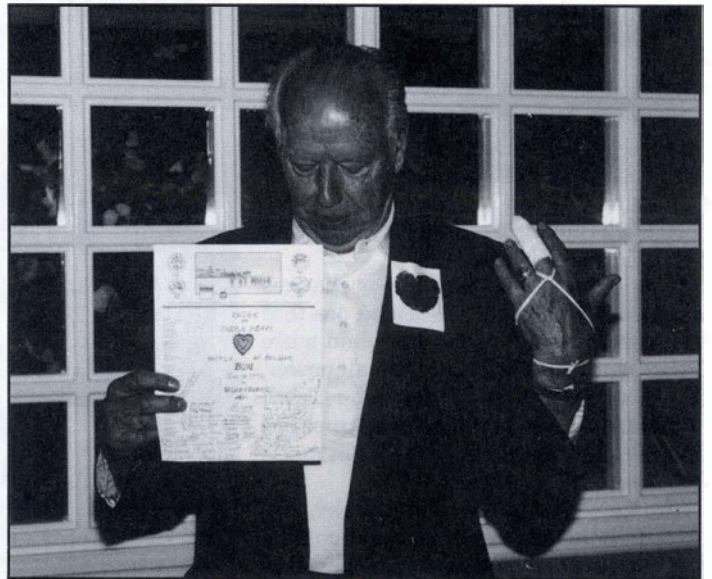
MEMORIAL WREATHS were placed at the Cambridge Military Cemetery by Carolyn Waytt, Col. Earl Berryhill, Gail Van Patten and Randy Stange.



JURGEN KLIETSCH, deputy burgermeister of Merseburg, received this plaque from the 398th after addressing the visitors at the tree-planting ceremony.



THIS TOUR PORTRAIT was taken after a fun lunch stop between Cologne and Dusseldorf. Upper left is Manfred Konig, who arranged the tour activities at Neuss.



WILLIS FRAZIER, who came out second best with a serrated knife in attacking a Belgian bun, admires his Purple Hearts, one created by Teedy Blackwell and another by Jeanne Graham & Polly Anna Core.

Tour Participants Covered Lots of Ground

The 1992 Germany-England tour, June 17 to July 2, began in Frankfurt, the 75 participants flying in from various U.S. cities via Scandinavian Airline System (SAS).

After an overnight in Offenbach, the two coaches proceeded eastward through such cities as Eisenach, Fulda and Erfurt, known to many 398th personnel who parachuted or crashed in this area. Then on to Leipzig, stopping at the venerable and stately Astoria Hotel.

Here the group was greeted by members of the Merseburg "City Hall." Merseburg lies a dozen miles west of Leipzig. The next day the group toured Merseburg Castle and Cathedral, taking part in a tree-planting ceremony. A luncheon was held at the "Boothaus" Restau-

rant, where five boys from Czechoslovakia were guests. They are active in locating crashed Allied aircraft and have found parts from the Allen Ferguson 602 plane that went down over Pilzen on the final mission on April 25, 1945. This story will be told later in FLAK NEWS under the heading, "The Last Mission."

The tour group stopped to visit the birthplace of Martin Luther in Eislaben and then on to Neuss, where Col. Hunter, the group CO, was shot down. A visit was made to the crash site and to the tree that was planted on a previous visit in 1988.

The group also visited Dusseldorf and the famous Cologne Cathedral, with later stops at the Margraten and Ardennes American

cemeteries. Also a very quick stop, due to time restrictions at the Napoleon memorial at Waterloo, Belgium.

A modern ferry took the group from Oostende, Belgium to Dover. After a stop to visit Canterbury Cathedral and overnight at Maidstone the group pushed on to Nuthampstead, where members were dispersed to the many "home stay" locations.

Many activities were held in and around Station 131 during the five-day schedule. The tour concluded in London after a visit to Hendon Museum, St. Paul's, a city tour, and finally a Farewell Banquet at the Tower Hotel.

THE 398th FLIES AGAIN!

Continued From Page 1

Kozak's son, Chip, is with the New Jersey National Guard, serving as check-out pilot on KC-135's, the same aircraft used by the 398th Air Refueling Operations Group.

The new 398th is commanded by Col. Stephen Lorenz, who served previously at Castle AFB. He is an Air Force Academy graduate with a science degree in international affairs. He also has a masters degree in public administration and has completed Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, Air War College and National War College.

Col. Lorenz' new command at Castle AFB will actually function as a detachment under the 340th Air Refueling Wing, Altus AFB, Oklahoma. The "home" unit at Castle will remain the 93rd Bomb Wing with its host functions and B-52 Combat Crew squadron.

The B-52's will operate under the new "Air Combat Crew" umbrella while the air refueling functions will be under the "Air Mobility Command" umbrella.

Now gone from the scene are the old Strategic Air Command (SAC) and Tactical Air Command (TAC) and Military Airlift Command (MAC).

As it was put by the Secretary of the Air Force, Donald B. Rice —

"The outcome of these major changes will be a leaner, meaner Air Force, one that is more efficient in peacetime and more lethal in war. With our global power, friends know that they are not alone. With our global outreach, potential adversaries understand that distance does not mean disinterest."

The Combat Air Command, which will include bombers, command-and-control and intelligence planes, will be based at Langley AFB, Virginia. The headquarters for the Air Mobility Command, including transports and refueling planes, will be at Scott AFB, Illinois.

Another new (old) feature of this reorganization is the shoulder patch adopted by the 398th Operations Support Squadron, and which will be worn by just about every member of the group except those in the 93rd and 330th Squadrons.

If the patch looks familiar, there is a good reason. It is identical to the original 398th Bomb Group "Hell From Heaven" patch of days gone by.

Lt. Col. John Arsenault, 398th Squadron commander, described it this way in an edition of Castle's "Valley Bomber" newspaper —

"Have you seen a new organizational patch on base recently? No, not the new

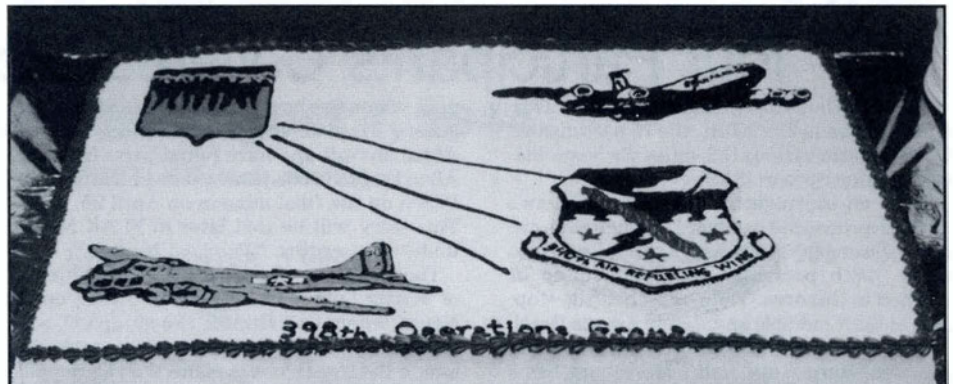
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BRUCE DAILY passes the old 398th flag to Col. Richard W. Salsbury, commander of the 340th Air Refueling Wing, who in turn gave the flag to Col. Stephen Lorenz (right), who assumed command of the 398th Air Refueling Operations Group at Castle AFB, California. Waiting his turn to carry the colors is CMS Ron (Head Boom) Livingston.



HERE IS THE GROUP that represented the 398th Bomb Group at the change of command ceremonies at Castle AFB, Merced, California on June 1, "resurrecting" the 398th as an Air Refueling Operations Group. From left to right are Estelle & Steve Kozak, Bill & Ada Markley, Dick Griffin, Ernie LaCoste, Joe Tolbert, John McCormick, Bob Templeman, and Bruce Daily.



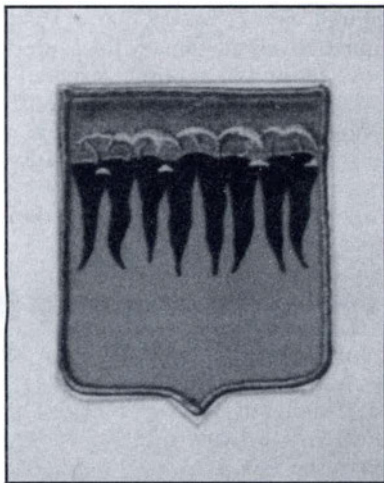
THIS CAKE, served after the change of command ceremony, also served to "connect" the new 398th Air Refueling Group with the parent 340th Wing. And also "connected" the group's KC-135 planes with the old 398th Bomb Group Flying Fortress.



ALAN SMITH greeted the visiting 398th tour party in his beautifully restored World War II Jeep.



WHEN THE ROYSTON BAND played "Dixie" at the luncheon at Anstey, Maria Hunter just had to pick up the baton and take over for a few bars.



Continued From Page 6
AMC or ACC Patches. That bright yellow one with blue trim and red things. They're not hot peppers, teeth roots or a herd of camels in the desert. This is the squadron patch of the newly redesignated 398th Operations Support Squadron."

Col. Arsenault then went on to tell about the original B-17 398th and its role in the 8th Air Force during WW II, closing with these comments —

"So now when you see the brilliantly colored patch worn on some right arms of flight suits, remember the valor of the brave men of the original World War II unit and that the new members of the 398th proudly carry the heritage and honor of defending our country."

The 398th Operations Support Squadron is composed of four flights — Instructional Systems Development; Air Crew Training Devices; Aircrew Scheduling; and Current Operations, which provide flying coordination and support to the KC-135 mission.

And so the new met the old, and each side looked at the other through eyes of pride.

"Off we go into the wild blue yonder..."

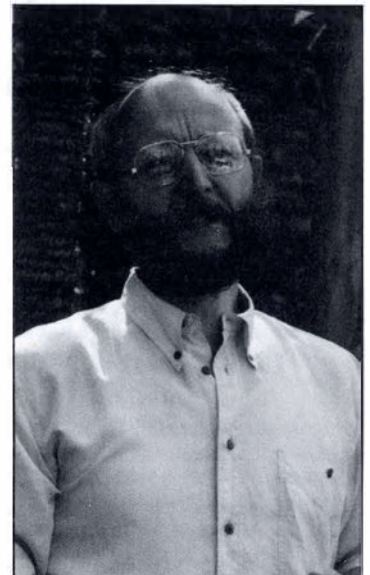


Amerikanische Linde
Tilia americana "Nova"
gestiftet von der 398th B.G.
Memorial Association Seattle U.S.A. /
Nuthampstead, England
Juni 1992

HERE IS the tree that was jointly planted and dedicated by the City of Merseburg and the 398th Bomb Group during the Germany-England tour on June 20 near the entrance to the Merseburg Castle.

Welcome

DR. PETER RAMM (right) greeted the 398th at Merseburg by suggesting he was happy to meet the former American Airmen on the ground, rather than in the air. Dick Frazier reminded Dr. Ramm that "We knew your Luftwaffe pilots and your Flak gunners. It is better to live in peace."



"I Say, There! You Can't Land Here!" "Oh, The Colonel, You Say?"

Their B-17 had been hit "hard and often" over the tank factory target near Paris and now it was touch and go if they could clear the white cliffs of Dover and crash-land on English soil.

There were no longer four healthy cyclones powering their Fortress toward home. They were down to two engines, losing altitude and a third was failing.

By the time the Channel white caps were visible, most of the crew was in the radio room waiting for the rush of water that accompanies ditching. Everything that had some obvious weight and could be dumped overboard had been dumped. Even the navigator's brief case.

The first sign that land had been reached came in the form of leaves and branches thrashing and crashing around the fuselage.

"We made it!" said one of the members huddling in the cramped radio quarters. "You hope!" said another.

The "land" that had been reached was a tiny RAF fighter strip on the southeast coast of England. To be sure, the Fort had trimmed a few trees in the process, but they were on the ground. No wheel landing this time. Just bellying in and hoping nothing terrible would happen before coming to a merciful stop.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, the Fortress came to a stop. From the waist door out came Harry Nelson, followed by Keith Anderson, Gil Goldman, Harold Brown, Ken Shutts, Art Nelson Ward, and Jim Basham.

To be met by a "very large RAF officer with a hugh mustache."

"I say there, you can't land here!"

Nelson, the 600th Squadron lead navigator on this mission to Villaroch, France on August 1, 1944, could see they had settled in (just barely) on this tiny airstrip and could tell that this RAF guy was probably quite right.

But as he and the others moved quickly away from their derelict B-17 that was

dripping oil and airplane fuel, Nelson answered —

"Talk to the colonel!"

That stopped the RAF guy...

"Oh, the colonel, you say?"

By this time "the colonel" was exiting from the nose hatch. That would be Frank P. Hunter, Jr., riding as co-pilot, commander of aircraft and Wing leader.

Right behind him came Gene Douglas, the pilot who had averted a risky ditching and instead had negotiated an even riskier wheels-up crash landing on a grassy field built for RAF fighters. The last man out was engineer-turret gunner Al Burke, who had called out the swiftly dropping air speed to Douglas and Hunter as they fought for the last ounce of power to land the crippled bomber.

When it appeared that fire no longer seemed inevitable, the RAF crash crew brought in their truck and winch and proceeded to clear the runway of what now had become a "hazard."

The "hazard" had made this precarious landing with but one engine at full power. And that engine released from its mountings and fell to the ground as the winch took hold.

All this had started earlier that day as the 398th took its position as leader of the First Combat Wing. As told by Brown, the group navigator —

"The weather was good and assembly and route in went as planned. Flak was light as predicted but our lead ship got hit hard and often at the target.

"Goldman, the bombardier, got a good run in and release, but we came off the target with a 500-pounder hung up. Goldman and Burke managed to release it, but meanwhile, we had lost two engines, one being on fire, and the pilots were having control problems.

"About that time Anderson was calling from the tail — 'There's nothing but fire coming past my window.'

"Anderson, our regular co-pilot, was in



GENE DOUGLAS
A Very Skilled Pilot

the tail gun position in place of the regular gunner, either Noel Callihan or Pasqual Marquez. It was customary for Anderson to move to the tail as observer when the colonel was leading the Wing or Division.

"Douglas then dove the plane and managed to control the fire on No. 3. We were at about 11,000 feet at the time and on a course in the general direction of home. Burke, Shutts, Basham, Ward and Anderson stripped the plane of everything movable, including the ball turret, the guns, flak jackets and helmets.

"We continued to lost altitude and we also picked up some flak on the way to the coast. Goldman received a slight head wound from a piece of flak that came through the nose.

"A couple of P-38's picked us up and stayed close until we had England in sight. Needless to say, that was a boost in our morale.

"As we recognized the possibility of ditching, we all moved to the radio room. Very soon we hit the trees and then the ground. And then a big cloud of dirt."

And then the "very large RAF officer with the hugh mustache" —

"I say, there, you can't land here!"

Formations August 1, 1944

TARGET: Villaroch, France

Lead Squadron — 600

HUNTER
Douglas

Ford SIMERAL
 J.D. Lowe

Baker Elwood
Reed Mann Ballard Johnson

 Fisher
Sleaman Magnan

High Squadron — 602

ROONEY
Dunlap

Rudow Hough

Cobb Turner

Driscoll Doerr Boehme Evans

 Clark

 Kaufman
Farenthold Lehner

Low Squadron — 601

PETERSEN
Arlin

Darner Griffin

J.H. Davis Hornshuh

Taylor Stallcup Falkenbach Brown

 Novak

Howden Meyran

BRIEF-things

The Germany-England tour produced many distinguished memories, not the least of which were those that recognized the labors of love offered by the Friends of the 398th in arranging the home stays, the airplane flights, luncheons, dinners, memorial services, transportation, the great 40's dance, slide show, and the countless other "little" things that went into making the tour so memorable ... special thanks to *Wilfred Dimsdale*, who guided the entire event from beginning to end, and even found time to "host" five of the Yank visitors ... a large photo and story of the group visit to the *Col. Hunter/Gonzales* crash site in Neuss appeared in the "Dusseldorfer Stadtpost" ... the caption for the photo reads, "Former air crewmen and relatives look at the cross reminding us of the crash of the U.S. bomber in 1945" ... the group also visited the tree that was planted in the nearby "leisure park" in 1988 ... and a letter from *Dr. Werner Kisan*, including a breakdown of all the bombs that fell on the Leuna plant in 1944-45. This will appear in a future issue of FLAK NEWS ... and a letter from *Johanna Sienkiewicz*, saying her search for the missing crew member on the RAF air sea rescue plane looking for survivors on the *Doerr* crew in the Channel goes on; she thinks he was from Australia, as were the pilot and co-pilot of the "Walrus." ... the latest figures from *Dewey Cook*, Nashville reunion chairman, showed a registration of over 400, with six weeks still to go ... reunion banquet guests, please note that you will be able to reserve specific tables after you register in the Memory Room ... the tour stop at Napoleon's Waterloo was a bit disappointing, what with so little time, but it did give others a chance to visit graves at an unscheduled stop at Margraten ... the long coach rides in Germany were lightened up a good deal with the playing of an incredibly funny Irish tape by *Hal Roach*, called, "Write It Down" ... look for at least one or two English Friends to be with us in Nashville ... a photographer from the Smithsonian spent a great deal of time at Station 131 during the tour visit, and concluded his assignment by "shooting" four of our "most photogenic" members, who turned out to be *Dick Frazier*, *Wally Blackwell*, *Phil Stahlman* and *Danny Leyva* ... Signs of the times in England: a new golf course near Barkway, on the road between Nuthampstead and Royston ... most moved by the 17-day tour experience: *Bill Carter*, who served the 398th in Ordnance ... losing one's freedom in PW camp is a bitter pill to swallow, as *Dale Brown* and many others learned, but losing one's son to kidney failure after a long struggle, as *Dale & Dorothy* learned, is even more difficult ... extra copies of the April FLAK NEWS, with its display of all the 8th AF B-17 units, may be had by writing the editor ... the April mailing, by the way, was the largest in the six-year history of the newsletter (1,741); we are still growing ... PLEASE DEPT: To y'all Snowbirds, please update FLAK NEWS as to your Winter/Summer addresses and the dates you will be at each location ... and y'all who pick up and move for various and sundry reasons, tip us off with a PO change of address penny post card ... *Ralph Ambrose* caught the error in the last issue, the squadron call sign for the 601st should have read NEWWAY, not Kenway (another print shop gremlin) ... *Larry Miller* had such a demand for his book, "The War Years," that he did a reprint and can now offer copies to group members, especially those of the 600th who remember the Ted Johnston crew (\$16) ... *Russ Reed & Millie McMillan* met a young woman at Cheshunt who, upon hearing of Russ' time at Nuthampstead in WW II, said, "My mother told me about you GI's" ... the 398th presented the Duxford Museum a check for \$1,000 for its new 8th Air Force building, and the Friends chipped in with an additional \$400.

8th Air Force Reunion Coming Up In Louisville

The 18th annual reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society will be held in Louisville, Kentucky on October 6-11, 1992, at the Galt House and Galt House East.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 8th Air Force, which was formed in Savannah, GA on January 28, 1942.

Guest of honor at the Louisville 1992 reunion will be England's Air Vice-

Marshall Peter Dodworth.

The 398th operates under the "umbrella" of the 8th AFHS and is always well represented at the annual reunions. For additional information, write to 8th AF Reunion, PO Box 1304, Hallandale, FL 33008-1304.

To join the 8th AFHS, write PO Box 7215, St. Paul, MN 55107.



GEORGE CUDA holds the propeller blade that once belonged on the B-17 flown by the V.A. Hansard crew. Cuda was a 600 Squadron flight chief and remembers the day the plane went down not far from Station 131.



WALLY BLACKWELL prepares to raise the flag that was given in memory of Wally Tillman, 601 Ordnance. Tillman's flag was one of several in recent years which have been raised at the Memorial and later flown to destruction at a taller pole near the location of the old tower. Tim Wells of Nuthampstead supervises the flag program.

PILOTS FLIMSY

1st Combat Wing Buncher Beacons

No.	Location	C/S	Freq.
1	Bassingbourn	8F8	1181
14	Ridgewell	8P8	1040
17	Debden	8U8	1028

Control Towers

Nuthampstead	C/Tower	Moorhen
Bassingbourn	C/Tower	Frontpiece
Ridgewell	C/Tower	Clydesdale

VHF Bomber Call Signs

1st CBW	LDR	Swordfish
40th CBW	LDR	Foxhole
41st CBW	LDR	Cowboy
94th CBW	LDR	Woodcraft

Collective Call Signs

1st DIV	Cutdown
1st CBW	Caddy
40th CBW	Blueyarn
41st CBW	Stadium
94th CBW	Beggarmaid
91st BG	Allenby
381st BG	Petticoat
398th BG	Gelatine

Squadron R/T Call Signs

600th SQD	Maple
601st SQD	Newway
602nd SQD	Enclasp
603rd SQD	Adorn

VHF Ground Stations

1st Div. Control	Cycle	
(on Channel A & B)		
1st CBW Control	Caddy	
(on Channel A)		
Nuthampstead	VHF-DF	Moorhen DF
Deenethorpe	VHF-DV	Silvester DF
Molesworth	VHF-DF	Sabbo DF
Thurleigh	VHF-DF	Subject DF
Glatton	VHF-DF	Nuttree DF

VHF Relay D/C Call Signs

1st Div. Relay A/C	Cycle Relay
(on Channel B)	
FTR-BMR Relay A/C	Colgate Relay

Emergency Landing Fields In The U.K.

WOODBIDGE — 520520N 012430E

You can contact the tower on 6440 KC's on No. 1 transmitter of the command set. The R/T call sign is "Everret". Your radio operator can obtain QDM's from the HF/DF station on 3040 KC's using the call sign 7OU. The field identification letters are WB. There is an emergency homer operating on VHF Channel "D" Air Sea Rescue and 8th AF Fighter Bomber Channel "D". This homer operates from dawn to dusk.

MANSTON — 512045N 012100E

You can contact the tower on 6440 KC's on No. 1 transmitter of the command set. The R/T call sign is "Bluefrock". Your radio operator can obtain QDM's from the HF/DF station on 3260 KC's using the call sign Z80. The field identification letters are MS. There is an emergency homer operating on VHF Channel "D" Air Sea Rescue and 8th AF Fighter Bomber Channel "D". This homer operated from dawn to dusk.



DICK FRAZIER extends his hand, awaiting members of the tour group to respond with the names of former comrades they wished to remember at the Memorial service.



HOWARD TRAEDEER displays a special 398th kneeling pad that was in his pew in St. George's Church in Anstey. It was made by Patricia Hamilton of Anstey.

HAWAII CALLS 398th!

Would you like to spend 10 days in Hawaii with your 398th Bomb Group friends and buddies next winter?

It could happen if you sign on with the FLAK NEWS GROUP TOUR set for February 9 through 18, 1993. In brief, the plan is to spend four days on Waikiki and six days on Kauai.

There will be coach tours to many popular attractions, a free rental car per couple (on Kauai) and time to enjoy individual sightseeing (and golf).

Transportation will be via scheduled Northwest Air Lines (via Seattle). The group will be housed at the Ilikai Hotel on Oahu and at the Waihoai Hotel, Poipu Beach, Kauai, both first-class facilities.

The tour has been priced at \$1599 per person and will be handled by Travel House, Inc., 5042 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. Telephone toll free 1-800-423-5454. Ask for Barbara Fish. She will send you a brochure covering all the details. A minimum of 20 persons is required for this special package.

More On The Tour

Continued From Page 4

Moving from Western to Eastern Germany and noting the poorer condition of the roads, buildings and houses. And all of a sudden, a sparkling, modern shopping center on the outskirts of Merseburg.

Hearing the ancient bells of St. George's Church at Anstey and crowding into the sanctuary with the local worshippers. Closing with "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Dixie!" When the Royston Band played "Dixie" again during the luncheon on the adjoining lawn, guess who grabbed the leader's baton and took over? (Maria Hunter for North Carolina!)

Joining Gertrude Wells Neff as she raised her husband's flag on the giant pole up near the old tower, and knowing it will fly there "to destruction."

And surely, listening to Dick & Junice Frazier, Wally & Teedy Blackwell and Maria Hunter tell about their visit to St. James Palace, where they were 398th Bomb Group representatives at the "British and American Forces Dining Club" banquet. And who was there to represent the Royal family? Prince Andrew!

Representing the "Friends" at the Palace were Wilfred Dimsdale, Peggy Wells and Elaine Tyler. And most certainly these three "qualified" for the invitation for the work they did in preparing for the 398th "friendly invasion."

Missing President & Evelyn Comstock on the tour; due to the press of business at Bill's firm ... and the death of Evelyn's mother.

Appreciating the "substitute" role of Dick Frazier as official 398th representative. And noting that he was called on to speak at six different functions (plus leading the group singing, which included "America the Beautiful" at the Ardennes Cemetery.)

Just being at the Leunawerke on ground level and recognizing the immensity of the plant. And not only hearing about the bomb fall during WW II, but actually seeing the statistics.

Appreciating the wit of Insa Kipping who, after listening to an extensive report by the Leuna manager, translated his message by opening with the words, "In brief ..."

Taking note of the many men and women who were seen looking for specific names on crosses as the group visited Margraten, Ardennes and Madingley. A special ceremony was held at the burial site of Col. Frank P. Hunter.

Enjoying another visit at Neuss, Germany, with friends made during the 1988 visit. Manfred Koning, Gertrud Peiffer and others missed Fred Gonzales, who had to cancel at the last moment due to an operation (very successful).

Trying to understand five Czechoslovakian young men who drove to Leipzig to meet with the tour members. The five are members of SLET, a group which searches for (and finds) parts of crashed WW II planes. Their story will be told in a future issue of FLAK NEWS.

Appreciating Linda Ellis, who handled the English part of the tour. And who on the final night admitted she was in a "family way." Linda, who teaches French to young kids, was responsible for ordering the three French Service dinners enjoyed in England.

Learning that Dean Foster's health was questionable before the tour but who insisted on "flying the mission."

Finding that many 8th Air Force buffs know about the famous mission that took out the nose of the Larry deLancey/Phil Stahlman B-17 over Cologne. Phil signed his name many times beside the photo in REMEMBRANCES.

A post-tour task will be to attempt to find American school children who wish to correspond with the Merseburg kids who took part in the tree-planting ceremony.

And sending a "thank you" note to Lothar Pannebacker, the Merseburg tourism director who so beautifully handled the logistics for the memorable meeting between the 398th and the people of Merseburg.

And trying to understand why Bill Adams of London chose to do a special carving for the Tour Coordinator and present it on the final evening.

And ... in recalling those fabulous meals aboard the SAS 767's, also remembering those 10-hour missions to Merseburg when the "menu" was one candy bar and a pack of gum.

Paget Recalls Sticky Bomb Release

Curiosity Leads To The Uncovering Of “Togglier Story”

A tidbit of information, some old fashioned curiosity, and a little research ...

Unconnected, these elements usually die a natural death, but collectively they can give birth to a “good story.”

It all started 48 years ago when one of our 602 aircraft was hit over the target at Kassel. Which in itself should constitute a story of major proportions.

But at that time — March 9, 1945 — it was just one more heavy bomber to be listed under “Missing Air Crew Report.” As the years rolled on and the survivors went their separate ways in the post-war years, who remembered and who cared?

And then, 48 years later, a query came to our UK “Friends of the 398th” at Nuthampstead via a “Friend of the 91st” at Bassingbourn.

“One of our Yanks,” said the letter, “wants to know what happened to B-17 No. 42-97810. He said he flew it over from the states and it was assigned to the 398th.”

The query was passed along to FLAK NEWS. A look into the records uncovered part of the story. It was piloted by William Jacobs and Henry Hardenburg. Gene Clinesmith was the navigator and Percy Paget the togglier. Engineer was Forest Smith, radio man John Lamar. Gunners were Geronimo Terres, William Motter and Carl Poston.

From this point, let Paget tell the rest of the story —

“I had flown this aircraft before on two previous occasions. I remember because it was the only aircraft in the 602nd Squadron with a manual emergency bomb release. I was on the Bill Comstock crew at the time.

“When the plane received two direct hits, I tried to jettison the bombs the usual way with the electrical bomb release. When this didn’t work, I pulled the emergency cable. And this didn’t work, either. Then I braced myself and with two hands

pulled the cable right out of its housing. Then the bombs released.

“The engine that was hit, No. 3, was windmilling and apparently could not be feathered. It finally shook itself loose from the mountings and fell to the earth.

“When we knew we were going to crash land I told the navigator, Gene Clinesmith, that we should go back into the radio room. He never left. Later, we learned that he had gotten up on the navigator’s table and was crushed as we crash landed. He died during that night in a local jail.”

All surviving members spent the remainder of the war in PW camp.

In addition to Paget, Hardenburg, Smith and Terres are members of the 398th Association.

All that, just because somebody asked.

Thank you, Percy, for those “togglier insights.”

