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

VOL. 25 NO. 2

FLAK NEWS

APRIL 2010



The Ditching

Copyright © 2000 Gil Cohen

# Ditching In North Sea Recalled By 398th Crew

The dramatic front/back aviation “ditching” art on the December issue of *8th Airforce News* brought back stark memories to the Howard Pinner crew of the 603rd Squadron who ditched their B-17 in the North Sea on January 1, 1945.

The ditching art is also included in the book, *Gil Cohen, Aviation Artist*. Cohen has long been identified with 8th Air Force history, and his work has been previously published in FLAK NEWS.

Pinner, his co-pilot, Leonard Tebbs, and engineer-gunner Niilo Isaacson are “still around” to recall spending New Year’s Day,

65 years ago, drifting in the North Sea.

Also clinging to life in the lone life raft were William Jordan, bombardier; James Schofield, radio operator; and Elbert Huey, ball turret. All three are on the current Taps list.

Killed in the watery crash were navigator Warren King, waist gunner John Furrow and tail gunner Glen Cline.

Pinner and Tebbs each received the Distinguished Flying Cross for their flying (and ditching) skills.

*Continued on Page 2*



# 398th Can Check Registry Web Site

BY MARILYN GIBB-RICE  
President, 398th BG Memorial Association

I wish to bring to the attention of all our members, "The World War II Registry of Remembrances." This is a web site that combines four distinct databases that can be searched for names of those whose service and sacrifice helped win World War II.

The web site is [www.wiimemorial.com](http://www.wiimemorial.com).

The databases are:

1. Buried in American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) overseas military cemeteries.
2. Memorialized on ABMC Tablets of the Missing.
3. Listed on official War and Navy Department Killed in Service rosters now held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
4. Honored by public enrollment in the Registry of Remembrances.

The Registry is operated in connection with the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Memorial honors the 16 million who served in the Armed forces and the more than 400,000 who died; and all who supported the war effort.

Any citizen who helped win the war, whether a veteran or someone on the home front is eligible for the Registry. The web site can be used to search for veterans names or add to the Registry the name of a loved one who contributed to the war effort.

Let us do our best to insure that every veteran of the 398th Bomb Group is honored by being listed in the World War II Registry of Remembrances.



MARILYN GIBB-RICE



Copyright © 2000 Gil Cohen

For more information about this painting, *The Ditching*, see the book *Gil Cohen: Aviation Artist* or contact the artist at [gilcoart@verizon.net](mailto:gilcoart@verizon.net).

# Ditching In North Sea Recalled By 398th Crew

(Continued from Page 1)

New Year's Day in 1945 started on schedule with the group heading in a north easterly direction over the North Sea with an ultimate mid-day rendezvous over the German city of Kassel.

Bill Markley of the 600th led the group, followed by Howard Rehme in the 603rd Low Squadron and Merwin Genung of the 601st in the High.

At about 5,000 feet and 150 miles from land, a fire broke out in Pinner's No. 2 engine, with flames stretching 20 feet beyond the wing. Feathering didn't help and neither did the extinguishers.

"Then I tried diving at excessive speed," said the pilot. "Still no luck. So we readied for ditching."

Pinner and Tebbs sent the other crew members to the radio room and quickly the B-17 settled into the waves in what the crew described as a "letter perfect ditching."

## Raft Forcibly Freed By Co-Pilot

The "perfection" didn't include the Fortress, however. The plane broke open at the bomb bay and the North Sea immediately rushed in as the crewmen scrambled to exit out the radio room hatch. Farrow and Cline were engulfed by the water as they popped out. Cline did surface later, but could not reach the lone raft that had been freed by Tebbs.

Navigator King had bailed out from the front hatch as the engine fire raged. He was lost at sea.

Before Isaacson could escape through the break in the waist he pulled the release handles in the radio room to eject the two rubber life rafts which were housed in the upper reaches of the adjoining bomb bay. They should have released, filled automatically with air and deposited on each wing, tethered by a rope. The doors opened but the rafts did not release.

Tebbs, who exited from the cockpit on the right side, moved through the water to the still floating B-17 and pulled at the "stuck" raft. It released and the six crew members climbed aboard. This would include Tebbs, Pinner, Isaacson, Jordan, Schofield and Huey. They tried, but failed to reach Cline before he disappeared under the waves.

The raft on the port side went down with the plane, which sank in minutes.

## Gibson Girl SOS Brought Help

The six floated for several hours with Schofield, the radio operator, working diligently on the Gibson Girl transmitter sending out SOS signals. Isaacson had retrieved the transmitter as it floated in the water.

Soon three P-47's came by and dropped smoke flares to mark their position and later another P-47 dropped a Lindholm rescue dinghy. Shortly before dark an RAF Lancaster dropped a "Flying Ditchman" lifeboat via parachute. All found the lifelines and "jumped" in. Soon a British launch found them and took them to England and ... finally back to Nuthampstead. (The story appears in the 398th book, "Remembrances.")

Pinner's home address is 202 Dogwood Ln, Black Mountain, NC 28711; Tebbs: 5212 Sattler Pl, Sarasota, FL 34232; Isaacson: 3798 County Road 132, Kettle River, MN 55757.

## Some Members Need Reminding

"There are some members who have forgotten their dues responsibilities," said President Marilyn Gibb-Rice, "and they will receive a reminder from 398th Director Lew Burke that they will no longer receive FLAK NEWS unless payment is received.

"We cannot continue sending FLAK NEWS to members who will not help to pay the publishing costs," she added.

Annual dues are \$20.00, covering four issues. See Page 4 for the name and address of the 398th treasurer.

# 398th Reunion Time Coming Up

**Denver Host City September 8-9-10-11**

The twenty-seventh 398th Bomb Group reunion is coming up soon, and some members are wondering out loud —

“How many more?”

That’s a question not to be answered at the moment, but more importantly — “Are you going to Denver?”

And that decision can be made at any time (like now) considering the dates are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, September 8-9-10-11, 2010.

Denver is one of the United States’ most accessible cities, be ye coming via automobile, train or plane. And it is a city that could be well known to many 398th members and friends who did some of their World War II Air Force training in and near Denver.

One likely station might have been Lowry Field, home to many of the schools featuring bombardiers, gunners and photographers. Other training fields were scattered about the city and its environs.

Lowry Field is now known as the home of “Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum,” to be visited on one of the coach tours during the four-day meeting. It will be coupled with a trip to the Rocky Mountain Foothills.

Also on the schedule will be (another) visit to the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. For those who remember the 1986 Reunion, the 398th did visit the Academy and placed a memorial plaque in memory of the group’s killed in action.

This was presented to the Academy commandant by the then president Bill Comstock. The plaque was designed by

## All You Need To Know

All the information needed to get in on the 27th Annual 398th Reunion will be found on the following two pages — Reunion Facts on Page 4 and the required Registration Form on Page 5.

a former 603 Squadron pilot, Charles E. King, who had a distinguished career as an architect.

The 2010 reunion party will visit the plaque site and also the Air Force Chapel.

The 1986 tour party did visit Pike’s Peak. This time it will be the “Garden of the Gods” national landmark.

The “main event,” however, will be highlighted by the various gatherings at the Radisson Denver Hotel. This will include the usual Memory Room to be set up for Registration, Jack’s Books, etc. The hotel will also be the site of the Welcome and Farewell banquets and, of course, the required annual business meetings. Plus a dance.

## “Any Old Navigator” Should Call Bill

**CORRECTION:** The “last living” on the Hollis Dalton crew was not gunner Bill Kanable, as reported in January’s Taps.

It is the “still living” navigator, 90-year-old Bill Schwan of Falconer, New York, and he would like to talk to “any old 398th navigator”.



## Something Special About This Crew

Something special has to be said for the Joe Kaminski crew of the 603rd Squadron.

A \$50.00 memorial gift in memory of top turret gunner Llewellyn Fisher has been sent to Dues Manager Dawne Dougherty by Thurman Gentry, the crew’s tail gunner. Only he and radio operator Loren Longmore are still living.

Since the end of the war the crew met on many occasions at each others’ homes or at a 398th reunion.

All that fellowship by a nine-member crew that came to Station 131 just in time for VE Day.

They did not fly a single mission but still remained a “crew” throughout the ensuing years.

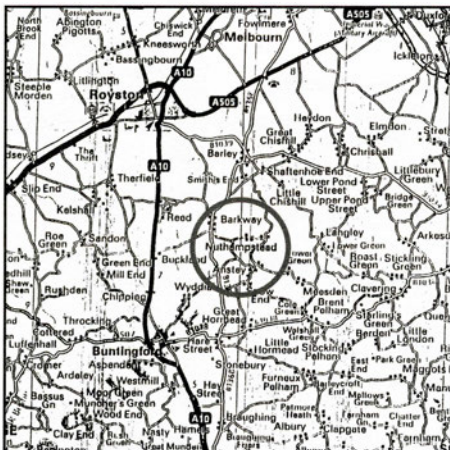
## “Great & Little Chishill, etc.”

# How’s Your Nuthampstead IQ?

What do you remember about Station 131?

Not necessarily what you remember about the base at Nuthampstead, but rather what you remember about the surrounding villages (excluding Royston where the rail line took you to and from London).

An old map pulled from “those days,” revealed the location of little Nuthampstead (without the airfield) and a never-ending number of big and little surrounding communities. Most are still there, albeit their social fabric might have changed since the flood of “townies” from London began descending on tranquil



Hertfordshire.

Here are a few of the communities which might trigger some World War II memories, all within six miles of Nuthampstead —

*Chipping, Berden, Langley, Reed, Wyddial, Hare Street, Buckland, Little Chishill, Great Chishill, Barley, Barkway, Arkesden, Great Hormead, Anstey, Buckland, Clavering, Buntingford, Meesden, Starline’s Green, Little London, Maggot’s End, Stonebury, Throcking, Roast Green, Shaften End.*

Veterans and natives alike, please share your memories with FLAK NEWS.



# The Denver Reunion

September 8-9-10-11, 2010

## REUNION FACTS

### REUNION CHAIR —

Sharon Krause, Plymouth, MI 48170-2870.

### HEADQUARTERS HOTEL —

Radisson Denver Stapleton Plaza, 3333 Quebec St, Denver, CO 80207. Telephone 303-321-3500.

### HOTEL RESERVATIONS —

Toll free 1-800-333-3333. Identify as "398th Bomb Group, Radisson Denver." Special rates are \$85.00 per night. Reservation at Special Rate must be made by August 8, 2010.

### AIRPORT SHUTTLE —

The Radisson Denver Hotel will provide a complimentary shuttle service from the airport to the hotel. Upon arriving, check the Hotel Board and press "Radisson Denver" for pickup.

### REGISTRATION —

Use the Official Registration Form on page 5. Fill in completely, tabulate the cost, enclose the required check, and then mail to Sharon Krause. Sharon will audit the form and then return a copy of the form by return mail.

### BANQUETS —

The two reunion banquets will be held in the Radisson Denver Hotel. Banquet tickets must indicate a specific Table Number, which will be made at the time of Registration.

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## 17 States Poised For 398th Dues Support

No less than 17 states will be involved in this April 2010 issue of FLAK NEWS, meaning that many from the Southwest, plus a few from the South and Mid-West have the honor of sending in their dues for 2010.

Yes, it still takes dollars to keep the 398th engine running.

**Dawne Dougherty**  
**398th BOMB GROUP**  
HARRISBURG OR 97446-9585

And thankfully, all bills are paid and there is hope that the Association will keep functioning for years to come.

Thus, the folks in the following states may send in their \$20 annual dues (plus some extra if so moved) using the pre-addressed envelope.

Give Dawne Dougherty any address or telephone changes and news of the passing of a loved one.

Dues envelopes should be contained in all FLAK NEWS delivered to the following states —

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

Gifts in memory of loved ones will be recognized individually by Dawne in the form of personal letters.

## TOURS

### WEDNESDAY, September 8, 2010 — 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM

This is the "pre-reunion" activity and it consists of a short coach ride to the Adams Mystery Playhouse, there to enjoy a fine dinner and an Interactive Murder Mystery. Others have called this evening "terrific," "excellent," "so much fun," "best mystery dinner show."

### THURSDAY, September 9, 2010 — 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Why go to Denver and not see the city sights? Here is a chance to see all the sights that have made Denver into the Queen City of the Plains. Residences, State Capitol, galleries, U.S. Mint, restaurants, saloons and much more. Back in time for lunch and the afternoon Annual Meeting at the Radisson Hotel.

### FRIDAY, September 10, 2010 — 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

This day begins with a visit to the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. It will include a visit to the Academy Chapel, where a brief memorial service will be held. The group visited the Academy in 1985 to dedicate a bronze plaque in memory of the group's Killed in Action. The coach tour continues on to Old Colorado City with its historic mining history and ... its shopping and restaurants. Then on to the Garden of the Gods and more sights in "Pike's Peak Country." They day will end at the Radisson Hotel, where members may enjoy a complimentary Happy Hour featuring light appetizers, beer and wine.

### SATURDAY, September 11, 2010 — 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM

This coach tour will be a "double-header" featuring a visit to fabulous Red Rocks Park and Wings Over The Rockies Air and Space Museum. The latter is the site of the old Lowry Air Force Base, which was home to many thousands of young airmen who became bombardiers, aerial gunners and photographers. "Wings" is managed by our old friend of "Aluminum Overcast" fame from Oshkosh, Greg Anderson.

[www.398th.org](http://www.398th.org)

## A Letter From A B-52 Friend

"I want to thank you and compliment you for probably the most moving web page related to WW II that I've ever seen. Anyone who could look at the crew photos of all the brave young men who put themselves in harm's way for our country and not have some patriotic feelings for the U.S.A. would have to be pretty disgraceful. Looking at the crew photos, I was struck by the fact that all of you were just kids.

"Contrast that with the incredible seniority of our B-52 crews that followed you. We had 27 crews, 15 of which were led by Lt. Col. pilots and 12 commanded by Majors. The typical bombardier was a Lt. Col. and many of the navigators were Captains or Majors.

"I was a member of a B-52 crew that flew 161 missions in an air environment much more remote and safer than the one all of you flew in.

"I feel proud to have been one of the thousands of SAC troops to follow in your footsteps, believe me. My hat is off to all of you who flew the B-17, and one of these days, I'm going to get a ride in one when a nearby airshow makes that possible. May God bless all of you, particularly those of you who still survive 'the big one.'"

— Derek H. Detjen

Major, USAF (Ret), Evans (NW Augusta), Georgia

# OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

398th Bomb Group Memorial Association 27th Annual Reunion  
Denver, Colorado September 8-9-10-11, 2010

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN AUGUST 8, 2010

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ WIFE \_\_\_\_\_ SQUADRON \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF OTHERS IN PARTY.  
PLEASE PRINT FOR NAME TAGs \_\_\_\_\_

## WEDNESDAY, September 8 —

Registration 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Memory (Colorado) Room  
Adams Mystery Dinner Show 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM Via Coach \$72.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## THURSDAY, September 9 —

Registration 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM Memory (Colorado) Room  
Denver Mint & City Tour 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM Via coach \$35.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Board Officers Meeting 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Arapahoe A Room  
GROUP BUSINESS MEETING 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Arapahoe B Room  
No Host Bar 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Ballroom Foyer  
Welcome Banquet 7:00 PM Ballroom \$35.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Table reservations required.)

## FRIDAY, September 10 —

Registration 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM Memory (Colorado) Room  
Air Force Academy & Colorado Springs Tour  
(Lunch on your own) 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Via Coach \$55.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Complimentary Happy Hour 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Martini Lounge & Atrium  
Light appetizers, domestic beer and wine.

## SATURDAY, September 11 —

Registration 8:45 AM to 4:00 PM Memory (Colorado) Room  
Wings Over The Rockies Air & Space Museum  
& Rocky Mountain Foothill Tour 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM Via coach \$50.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Box lunch included)  
No Host Bar 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Ballroom Foyer  
Farewell Banquet 7:00 PM Ballroom \$45.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Table reservations required)

**Registration Fee**  per person \$10.00,  two or more persons \$20.00 (max) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**2010 Dues** (if applicable) \$20.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Radisson Denver reservations must be made by August 8, 2010.**

I/We will be staying at the:  Radisson Denver

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all that apply:

- 398th Veteran
- Widow
- Relative
- Associate

**Please complete form, enclose check, and mail to:**

**398th Bomb Group Reunion  
Sharon Krause  
Plymouth, MI 48170-2870**

Received \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Sharon Krause**

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



## Two Pilots And A Ball Turret Gunner:

# Shortage Of Vets On England, Czech Tour

To no one's surprise, the "veteran" class on the June 2010 Tour to Europe is on the diminished side.

After all, it has been 65 years since the gladiators of World War II witnessed their last "flak attack." Thus it is up to the second and third generations to "show the flag" in the Czech Republic and England.

Terrance St. Louis will be the lone veteran flag carrier when he and 12 others arrive in the country that witnessed the final 398th Bomb Group mission, that coming on April 25, 1945, to Pilsen. St. Louis was the ball turret gunner on the Jim Koenig crew of the 600th Squadron.

He will be accompanied by his wife, Lydia; Don Christiansen, his son, Jeff, and brother Steve. It was Christiansen's father, Donald, whose B-17 was shot down by German fighters and crashed at Slany. A memorial ceremony will be held there.

Others heading for the CZ activities are Karen Neff, the 398th secretary, Frank Evola, Ken Howard, Will Mayhall and his wife, Linda Foell; Elaine Tyler and Richard Harris of England and, of course, the tour leader, Ann Collins. It was Ann who organized and assembled the 2010 Tour.

Mayhall's father was the navigator on the Harold Spangler crew of the 603rd and recently contributed \$5,000 to the

398th for the *Timeless Voices* program.

Lew Burke, one of the 398th Directors and co-pilot on the 603 Joe Alwood crew, plus Ted Johnston, 600 pilot, will be the two veterans going to England.

Others are Lew's wife, Lillie; Ted's Seattle friend, Gary Crocker; Teedy, John and Liz Blackwell; plus Neff, Evola and, of course, Ann Collins. Teedy plans to spread some of her late husband's ashes at Station 131.

Malcolm Osborn has been at work arranging a busy program for the Nuthampstead visitors, and has promised "something never seen before" at the Memorial ceremony.

The 131 gathering will be "augmented" by Marilyn and Geoff Rice, who last year took their 398th "presidency" from Colorado Springs, Colorado, to England. The CZ tour is from June 9 through June 13; the England tour is from June 14 through June 20.

## A Nice Letter

"To all of you in your association, my deepest appreciation for an awesome web site. I'm a WW II history 'nut,' and I want to thank you for helping make this country what it is and for your sacrifice. Thank you for sharing."

**Harold B. Bachman, Adrian Michigan**

## New Book:

# "Focus" Tells The Story Of Station 131

The aura and mystique that was "Station 131" some 65-plus years ago remains just that in the year 2010.

Nuthampstead's fascinating transformation from a sleepy farming village to a World War II fighter/bomber base is a story captured in an English-published soft cover book called "Airfield Focus," an ongoing project that intends to cover the history of all the airfield, aerodromes and airports within the U.K.

"Airfield Focus 82: Nuthampstead" is the latest in this endeavor by Graham Simons and co-authored by the 398th's own Malcolm Osborn, whose contribution features many photographs and local history. "Ozzie" has been "at this" since he and the late Vic Jenkins combined to form the "Nuthampstead Airfield Research Society" that ultimately led to the building of the Memorial adjacent to the Woodman Inn.

The "Focus" book includes the 398th history, featuring stories and photos by Ozzie and USAAF, and also the story of the first tenant of Station 131, the P-38 fighters of the 55th Fighter Group.

Much of the "non combat" history features the construction of the three runways in 1942-43 by 814th and 830th U.S. Engineer (Aviation) Battalions and 346th Engineer Regiment. The staggering amount of material required for the airfield, the (then) accompanying "state of the art" paving machines and equipment, and accompanying battles with rain and mud, is a tribute to the men who did the work — mostly African-Americans.

"Airfield Focus 82" is priced at \$5.95 and is available at GMS McMurray, PA 15317.

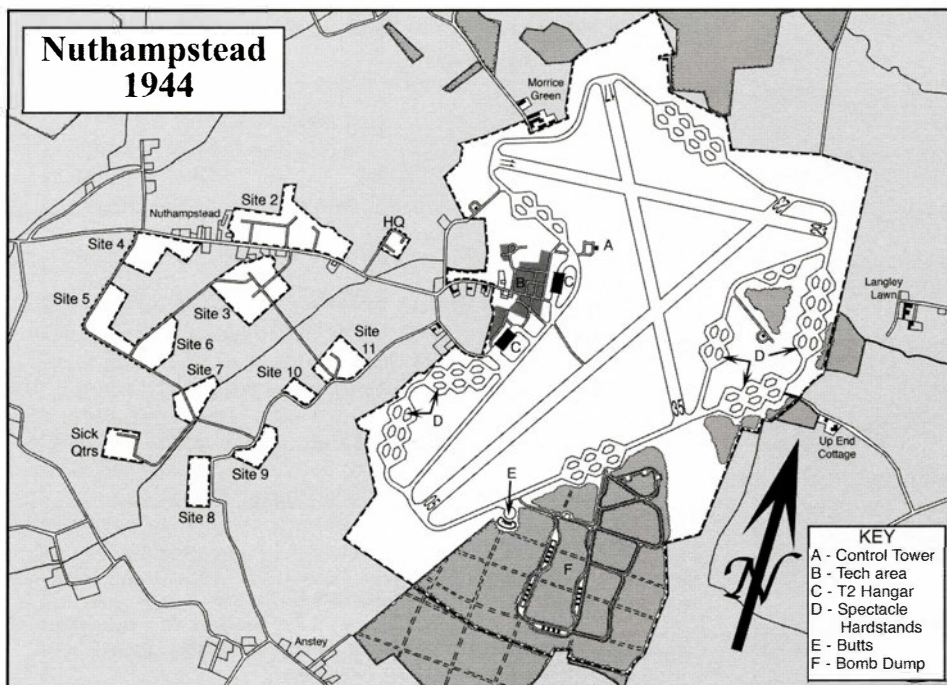
Web site: <http://home.btconnect.com/GMS-ENTERPRISE/focus.html>

## Bench, Trees For Wally Memorial

Friends and loved ones of the late 398th president, Wally Blackwell, contributed \$2140.00 for a memorial at the Mighty Eighth Museum, leaving the specifics up to his widow, Teedy Blackwell.

Teedy made the decision this spring that the money be used to install a bench near the 398th memorial, along with two Savannah holly trees.

Teedy and members of her family will be on the June tour to England.



# B-17 Restoration Project Still Seeking Funds

The 398th is well-respected at the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah, Georgia — corporately as well as individually.

It will be remembered that the 398th met in reunion at the Museum in 2000, at which time the memorial was dedicated, as well as a number of crew memorials.

For those who were not involved in those activities, there is still an opportunity to “get my name in there” by contributing to the Museum’s “B-17 Restoration Project.”

Many dollars are still needed to complete the project which will see a B-17 G restored to combat status and displayed in the Museum’s Combat Gallery.

It is planned that it will be used to further the education of young people so they may experience firsthand what it was like to fly and fight in a World War II heavy bomber.

Also, to be available to all returning veterans and to be a “centerfold” for B-17 reunions.

It can be assumed that “one day” the 398th will make a return trip to the Mighty Eighth Museum.

Meanwhile, individual contributions may be sent to “B-17 Restoration Project,” c/o 8th Air Force Historical Society, PO Box 956, Pooler, GA 31322-0956. All gifts are tax deductible.



*The Ditching* Copyright © 2000 Gil Cohen

Leonard Tebbs, who survived the North Sea ditching (Pages 1-2), participated in a European cruise a few years ago and by chance passed within a few miles of where his crew went down in 1945.

“I took the occasion to go on deck and silently offer a prayer for the three that did not survive the ditching.”



**THIS GIANT** aircraft that travels the world for the Air Force has many distinctive features besides its colossal size. This particular C5, being readied for a flight from the U.S. to Afghanistan, would be flown by an all-female crew — captain, co-pilot, navigator, loadmaster. They operate not from the “cockpit,” but from the “box office.”

## Aluminum Overcast On Tour of West Coast Cities

The Aluminum Overcast continues its 2010 Tour Schedule with visits to 17 West Coast cities during the months of April, May and early June.

As usual, the B-17 will be available for flights in these cities, plus being available for “walk-throughs.”

The pre-book pricing for the flights is \$399 per person. Reservations may be made by calling 1-800-359-6217. Or “online” through [www.b17.org](http://www.b17.org).

Veterans of the 398th are always welcome to join the host EAA officers and crew at each city to lend “I was there” authenticity among the gathering crowds.

The late Lee Test, 602 co-pilot, was one

of those veterans who frequented many Southern California airfields where the Aluminum Overcast was visiting.

The current West Coast Tour is as follows —

Deer Valley, Arizona	April 2-4
Murrieta, California	April 6-7
Torrance, California	April 9-10
Chino, California	April 13-14
Van Nuys, California	April 16-18
Oxnard, California	April 20-21
Santa Barbara, Cal.	April 23-25
Bakersfield, California	April 27-28
Hayward, California	April 30-May 2
Watsonville, California	May 4-5
Napa, California	May 7-9
Chico, California	May 11-12
Sacramento, California	May 14-16
Klamath Falls, Oregon	May 18-19
Portland, Oregon	May 21-23
Seattle, Washington	May 26-31
Logan, Utah	June 3-4
Ogden, Utah	June 5-7

## A Nice Check Of Remembrance

“I am enclosing a check for \$70.00. Please apply \$20.00 for a year’s subscription to FLAK NEWS for my friend, Richard Schiff, who was a caring neighbor of the late Stanley Albert, the navigator on our Elwood crew.

“The other \$50.00 is for a memorial in the name of my only child, Daryl Gilbert, who passed away August 2009.

“Use the money in any way the 398th feels appropriate, although I would think supporting FLAK NEWS would be best for ‘keeping us together.’”

*George Schatz, Highland Park, Illinois*

## Fortresses of The World

The Aluminum Overcast, one of the very few B-17’s that tours the United States and carries the World War II air war story to many thousands of visitors, is among the 13 B-17’s still flying in the world today.

The total number of Fortresses is 50, made up of those flying, on display, in restoration, or in storage. All these are listed on Pages 8 and 9.

The list, along with serial numbers and brief history, has been compiled by “B-17 Co-op” of Alvin, Texas, headed by Tommy Garcia.

[www.398th.org](http://www.398th.org)



# The B-17's Of The World Today

## 13 Flying, But More In Restoration

Once upon a time the skies were filled with a thousand and more B-17's, all dedicated to a single mission — the defeat of those nations seeking to dominate the world.

Since “those days” of World War II it has been left to a dedicated few to keep the Fortress memory alive. And up front among the “dedicated few” are those associated with “B-17 Co-op” and its tireless and determined leader, Tommy Garcia of Alvin, Texas.

Garcia is a “second generation” B-17 fan who somehow finds the time to keep tabs on all of the world's remaining B-17's, the remnants of those by-gone days.

The Co-op is a voluntary, informal association of persons directly involved with the restoration and preservation of B-17

aircraft. They are dedicated to the accurate preservation of these aircraft and the education of succeeding generations.

All time and materials used are donated in the interest of this cooperative approach to accomplish the collective and individual missions.

Garcia reports that there are 48 B-17's on the current list either flying, on static display, under restoration or reposing somewhere in the world in various parts and pieces.

Garcia can be reached at Alvin, TX 77511- 5836.

Following is the Co-op's current B-17 listing —

## “Aluminum Overcast” Carries 398th Colors

### Flying Status

**“909”** (44-83575) New Smyrna Beach, FL. 91st BG, 8th AF. Collings Foundation.

**Aluminum Overcast** (44-85740) Oshkosh, WI. 398th BG. EAA Aviation Foundation. (See Page 7.)

**Chuckie** (44-8543) Meacham Field, Fort Worth, TX. 486th BG. Vintage Flying Museum. Last of a block of B-17G's converted to Pathfinders.

**Fuddy Duddy** (44-83563) Santa Ana, CA. 447th BG. Martin Aviation. Flew Gen. Ike Eisenhower as a VB-17G.

**Liberty Belle** (44-85734) Tulsa, OK. 390th BG. Liberty Foundation. Formerly had special mount in nose for Pratt & Whitney engine testing. Heavily damaged by tornado 10/1979. Restored back to original four engine configuration.

**Miss Angela** (44-85778) Palm Springs, CA. 34th BG. Palm Springs Air Museum. Formerly used for air rescue from Borinquen AFB in Puerto Rico.

**“Movie” Memphis Belle** (44-83546) Geneseo, NY. 91st BG. Military Air Restoration Corp. Restored as 8th AF B-17F, working bomb system, Norden bombsight with auto-pilot link.

**Sally B** (44-85784) Duxford Airfield, England. 91st BG. B-17 Preservation Ltd.. Flies as a memorial to the 79,000 U.S. airmen who lost their lives in Europe in WW II. Arrived in England from France in 1975.

**Sentimental Journey** (44-83514) Mesa, AZ. 457th BG. CAF, Arizona Wing. Was converted to a fire bomber after WW II and back to military configuration in 1980.

**Texas Raiders** (44-83872) Houston & Midland, TX. 381st BG. CAF, Gulf Coast Wing. Ex-Navy PB-1W 77235 used in aerial mapping of North Sea. Used for Gen. LeMay's retirement.

**The Pink Lady** (44-8846) St. Yan Airport, France. 351st BG. Forteresse Toujours Volante. This aircraft is flown approximately 50 hours per year air shows and commemoration ceremonies with American veterans.

**Thunderbird** (44-85718) Galveston, TX. 303rd BG. Lone Star Flight Museum. Flown from France to USA

**Yankee Lady** (44-85829) Belleville, MI. 381st BG. Yankee Air Force.

### Static Display

**(No name)** (44-83559) Strategic Air Command Museum. 96th BG. Ashland, NE. Converted to drone director in 1947, repainted to 100th Bomb Group as 8th AF ‘King Bee’. Recently restored to original configuration.

**(No name)** (44-83868) Hendon, England. 94th BG. RAF Bomber Command Museum. Former PB-1W & USFS tanker in Calif. Engines swapped with Sally B. Flown to England from USA 1984.

**(No name)** (44-85583) Base Area De Recife, Brazil. unknown. Forca Area Brasilia. Former SB-17G (search & rescue), became gate guardian at Brazilian airbase.

**Boeing Bee** (42-29782) Museum of Flight, Seattle, WA. 91st BG, Olive Drab.

**Bomber Gas Station** (44-85790) Portland, OR. N/A. Bomber Complex, Inc. Punky Scott is Art Lacey's daughter.

**Evergreen Int'l Aviation** (44-83785) McMinnville, OR. 490th BG. Evergreen Aviation Museum. Formerly rigged with ‘sky hook’ and other secrets. Involved in Project ‘Cold Feet’. Aircraft was flying and may again someday. Used in James Bond movie.

**Gremlins Hideout** (44-83863) Eglin AFB, Florida. 388th BG. USAF Armament Museum. A Navy PB-1W Airborne Early Warning (AWACS). Restored as bomber.

**Heaven's Above** (44-83512) Lackland AFB, Texas. 457th BG. USAF History & Tradition Museum.

**Home Sick Angel** (42-3374) Offutt AFB, Nebraska. 388th BG. U.S.A.F.. Gate Guard, SAC HQ, Offutt AFB, Painted as 42-30230

**I'll Be Around** (44-85828) Pima Air Museum, Tucson, Az. 390th BG. 390th Memorial Museum. Last B-17 retired from Government service.

**Mary Alice** (44-83735) Duxford, England. 401st BG. Imperial War Museum & American Air Museum. Used world-wide as executive transport. Retired to War Museum in 1975. Flown to England from France.

**Miss Liberty Belle** (44-83690) Grissom ARB, Indiana. 305th BG. Grissom Air Base Museum. Original Miss Liberty Bell 42-31255 crash landed in England in 1944.

**Picadilly Princess** (44-83542) Polk City, FL. unknown. Fantasy of Flight. Former drone (DB-17G) used in weapons testing.

**Preston's Pride** (44-85738) Tulare, CA. 379th BG. American Veterans Memorial. Was a ‘Mother’ to ‘Baby’ drones used to gather radioactive samples at Eniwetok. Aircraft operator Amvets Post No.56. Last USAF service aircraft used as VIP transport.

**Reluctant Dragon** (44-85599) Dyess AFB, Texas. 96th BG. Texas Museum of Military History. Former Drone DB-17P. Formerly displayed in City Park.

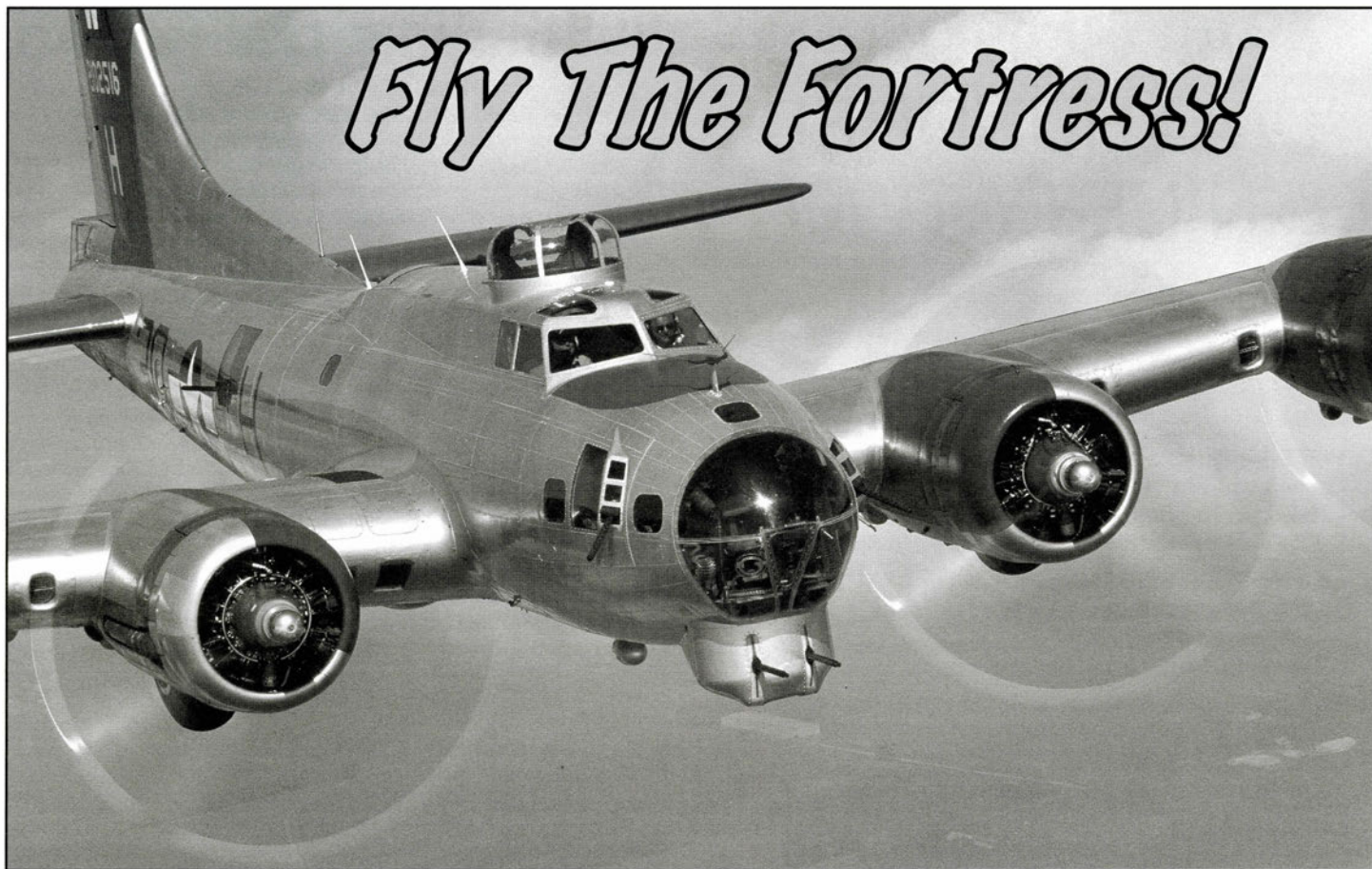
**Return to Glory** (44-6393) March ARB, California. 97th BG. Used by Lt. Gen. Ira Eaker at Bolling Field as VB-17. Rescued U.S. Embassy staff at Nanking, China. Former ‘Starduster’ for General Eaker. New name ‘Return to Glory’.

**Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby** (42-32076) Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. 91st BG. USAF Museum/DRC. Interned in Sweden on 23rd combat mission. Restored and flown to Wright-Patterson AFB first display site. Moving to National Air & Space Museum

**Short Bier** (44-83663) Hill AFB, Utah. 493rd BG. Hill Aerospace Museum.

*Continued on Page 9*





## The B-17 Fortresses Of The World Today

(Continued from Page 8)

**Sleepy Time Gal** (44-83624) Dover AFB, Delaware. 381st BG. USAF Museum/DRC. Former DB-17P drone controller and was designated as MB-17G for missile tests. Displayed with cutaway ball turret. May have been last B17 to drop bombs for the USAF.

**Virgin's Delight** (43-38635) Castle AFB, California. 94th BG. Castle Air Museum. Former test bed for All-Weather electronic gear.

**Yankee Doodle II** (44-83884) Barksdale AFH, Louisiana. 303 BG, 8th AF. 8th Air Force Museum. Named for Gen. Ira Eaker who led first B-17 combat mission on original Yankee Doodle. Trucked to airbase.

### Under Restoration

**(No name)** (41-9210) Payne Field, WA. Flying Heritage Collection. Paul Allen picked up from Whittington

**(No name)** (44-83790) Remote area. N/A. Liberty Foundation. Belly landing in Dec. 1947 on Dyke Lake, Labrador, Canada. Broken aircraft.

**Champaign Lady** (44-85813) N/A. 401th BG. Shiffer Family. Being built from parts of three aircraft.

**City of Savannah** (44-83814) Pooler, GA. 388 BG. Mighty Eighth A.F. Museum. Used for air survey in Canada, returned to U.S. as air tanker for Black Hills Aviation then swapped to NASM Mighty Eighth A.F. Museum. Complete aircraft. Now owned by MEM.

**Desert Rat** (41-2595) Marengo, IL. 97th BG in U.S.. Mike Kellner. Only still existing XC-108A, flew over the 'hump' in WW II

**Memphis Belle** (41-24485) WPAFB National Museum USAF. 91st BG, Olive Drab paint. Memphis Belle Memorial Assn, Inc.. First B-17 to complete 25 ETO combat missions and return to U.S. for war bond tour. Named for Miss Margaret Polk by Lt.

Robert Morgan.

**My Gal Sal** (41-9032) Blue Ash Airport, Cincinnati, OH. Camouflage top/Gray underside. Ultimate Sacrifice. Ditched on Greenland icecap while being ferried to England. Damaged by high winds during the 53 years on the icecap. Part of the 97th BG.

**Piccadilly Lilly** (44-83387) Los Angeles, CA. 918th BG. Calif. Air Heritage Foundation. Aircraft that started the B17 movement in movies starting with Gregory Peck in 1947 then used in the 1963 TV series.

**Piccadilly Lilly II** (44-83684) Chino, CA. 91st BG. Planes of Fame Museum.

**Suzy Q** (44-83525) Polk City, FL. unknown. Fantasy of Flight. Damaged by 1992 hurricane Andrew. Sent to Kissimmee for restoration. Now back at Polk City.

**Swamp Ghost** (41-2446) Aggiambo Swamp, Papua, New Guinea. 7th & 19th BG's. Unknown. Combat damage forced ditching in swamp 2/23/42.

**Swoose** (40-3097) WPAFB National Museum USAF. 11th BG. Museum USAF. Makeshift damage repair in Pacific led to the name (half swan, half goose) from WWII song. Used by Gen. George Brett. 11th & 19th BG's.

### Storage

**(No name)** (44-8889) Le Bourget, France. Le Bourget Air Museum. Served in French IGN aerial surveys. (Complete aircraft.)

**(No name)** (44-83316) Hulk/major parts. Parts used on Champaign Lady 44-85813.

**(No name)** (44-83718) Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. unknown. Museo Aeronautico. Complete aircraft.

**(No name)** (44-83722). Borrego Springs, CA. Partial airframe. Parts used on Champaign Lady 44-85813.



# “TWO HUNDRED, TWO HUNDRED & NINETY TWO”

BY TONY WESTON  
Nuthampstead, England

Let us take them all in to the room of our hearts,  
Let us tear down the blackout  
And let in the sun  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

Let us take them all in to the room of our hearts,  
These gum-chewing, wise-cracking, jitterbug-boys,  
Let the dancing begin  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

Soon Time, that considers us less than the grass  
Or the parachute down of poplar trees, will take  
The last survivor apart  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

It isn't their money, their style, their looks  
But their hopes and dreams and their gifted lives  
We gladly seized and sadly took  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

A pillar of smoke, a pillar of fire, a Hell  
From Heaven, a turning for home, wind  
Icing through and the spluttering roar  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

The blood round islands of glass on the floor:  
Oh, show me their faces, sing me their names  
Write them in flames,  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

How much did it cost them, how much was it worth,  
This damp little, damn little jewel of green  
Pushing up under the starboard wing?  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

The ploughing thud of the landing gear,  
The engines cut and, those who can,  
Come back to an earth where small birds sing.  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*

Let us take them all in to the room of our hearts,  
These unsung young men,  
*Two hundred, two hundred and ninety two*  
May we never need their like again.

— Tony Weston,  
Royston, Herts, SG8 8LS, England

*“The United States Air Force invited some very ordinary men to do some very extraordinary things, not just once, but time and again. And they indeed were not invited to count the cost.*

*“It is with this thought that I congratulate all of those who contributed to the creation of this window. I hope all who see it will ponder on its significance.”*

— HRH Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester  
Anstey Window Dedication, June 2000

# 398th Financial Report

JANUARY-DECEMBER 31, 2009  
398TH BOMB GROUP (H) MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Income		Current Assets	
Membership Dues	15,050.00	Checking/Savings	
Timeless Voices	200.00	Wells Fargo (formerly	
Memorial Donations	2,607.00	AG Edwards)	39,620.21
FONA	602.57	Chase Bank Checking	2,506.19
	\$18,459.57	Chase Bank Savings	25.09
		Total Checking/Savings	42,151.49
		Total Current Assets	\$35,929.65
Expenses		TOTAL ASSETS	\$35,929.65
Timeless Voices	850.00	Liabilities & Equity	
Flak News	13,279.23	Equity	
Postage & Delivery	2,438.04	Opening Bal Equity	3,903.12
Supplies	352.85	Retained Earnings	38,248.37
Telephone	119.05	Net Income	(6,221.84)
Website maintenance	120.24	Total Equity	\$35,929.65
Memorial at		TOTAL LIABILITY & EQUITY	\$35,929.65
8th AF Museum <sup>1</sup>	2,500.00		
B-17			
Restoration Project <sup>2</sup>	5,000.00		
Bank Fees	22.00		
	\$24,681.41		
Net Income	(\$6,221.84)		

<sup>1</sup>Memorial at 8th AF Museum is in honor of Wally Blackwell. Volunteer donations made in his memory.  
<sup>2</sup>398th BG contribution to Mighty 8th Museum B-17 Restoration Project.



THIS COLORFUL and dramatic stained glass window honors the 292 members of the 398th Bomb Group who were killed in action during World War II. Their names are inscribed in the window at St. George's Church at Anstey, where members of the England tour will visit in June.



# BRIEF-things

For the World War II B-17 veteran, it will be a touch of pride when he tells his loved ones at the Mighty Eighth Museum — “I flew in a B-17 and I helped restore this one.” ... and time is running out, witness the news from the Tennessee Chapter of the 8th Air Force Association — “We’re shutting down” ... in journalism, “names make news,” and the January FLAK NEWS was right in there with 118 names, plus an additional 1,449 on the annual Taps list ... one of our fellow B-17 bomb group associations, the 401st, was happy to have had a “Succession Plan” in place when their president died suddenly; our presidents, **Bill Comstock** and **Wally Blackwell**, looked ahead long ago and the 398th is “in place” with no less than 50% of the leadership coming from the second generation ... likewise in England, where the early-on Friends like **David Wells**, **Tony Clark**, **Tony Barker**, **Eunice Fox** and others have gone on, newcomers like **Peter Brooke**, **Russ Abbey**, **Malcolm Osborn**, **Dominic Pike** and others are “in place” to carry on “over there” ... the 91st Bomb Group prints its “Ragged Irregular” (like FLAK NEWS), but can also be had “online” for the computer disciples ... A-2 jackets were seen everywhere at Station 131, but did anyone ever see **Col. Hunter** in anything but Class A’s? ... maybe that’s because he was a West Pointer, and a stickler for military discipline (which he enforced through the Group Exec, **Col. Earl Berryhill**) ... and then there was the station truck driver who said, “my brake lights always come on when I see a GI on the road needing a ride” ... those who went to the Czech Republic in 1995 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of VE Day will remember the young college student who was the 398th tour guide: **David Frous** is now a press officer with the Czech Embassy Office in Washington, D.C., following a “foreign” assignment in London (he also added a wife and two children) ... **Stan Lucy**, who flew many, many Air Force planes after his 398th B-17 tour, said that the Martin B-26 was the “widow maker,” but the plane with the “lowest loss-rate” was actually the Douglas A-26, “a real pleasure to fly” ... **Gertrud Peifer**, the grand daughter of the German lady into whose home **Federico Gonzales** was taken when his plane was downed in Neuss in 1945, died last year, according to local historian **Alfred Wilms**, (and interpreter **Lore Pfefferkorn**) ... they also send greetings from **Manfred Konig**, the man who brought the 398th tour party to Neuss in 1988 and 1992 ... he’s the only one left of his 600 crew, but pilot **Ike Alhadeff** found seven other Seattle-area 398th friends to help him celebrate his 94th birthday at a luncheon (and he even picked up the tab) ... **Bernard Kuse** says don’t miss the Buckhorn Saloon for a great dinner during the reunion in Denver ... did you know that Yankee great **Yogi Berra** was in on the Normandy landings? He manned a machine gun aboard the USS Bayfield ... the Mighty Eighth Museum will offer (next January) a three-day “Mission Adventure” that will conclude with a 90-minute ride in the recently restored B-17, Liberty Belle ... your Editor loves to receive letters, but not those that come with “Address Unknown,” “Fee Due 50¢,” “Return To Sender,” “Deceased,” “No Forwarding Address,” etc. ... it should come as no surprise that the Air Force would entrust an all-female crew (Page 7) to deliver costly cargo on a C-5 when you consider that God entrusted women to deliver His priceless children ... the chairman of the new Museum at Station 131, **Andrew Grisbrooke**, and his wife, **Christine**, breed and train Siberian Huskies at their home near the Woodman Inn ... things are really humming along on **398th.org** ... webmaster Dave Jordan reports that the site has had over 3/4 million visits, with the “Fortress” story still very popular world wide with 128,000 hits last winter ... a San Diego area weekly, called **The Paper**, published the entire story as a special World War II feature, and it drew a flurry of calls and comments ... yes, there really was a B-17 H, like the RAF Lancaster that dropped a boat to the Pinner crew after their ditching ... the Boeing B-17 tech manuals make it all look so easy, but in reality ditching represents “minutes and seconds of terror” ...

# 398th Bomb Group PX

## ORDER FORM

(The Second Generation)

QTY	ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL
<b>CLOTHING</b>			
_____	T-Shirt, black, “398th BG Flying Fortress”	\$12.00	_____
_____	T-Shirt, navy, with B-17 front view	\$12.00	_____
_____	T-Shirt, gray, with with logo on back	\$12.00	_____
_____	T-Shirt, white, with Triangle W on front, Clearing & Colder on back	\$15.00	_____
_____	Denim Shirt, long sleeve, 398th logo (S, M, L, XL, XXL, <b>please indicate size for the above</b> )	\$28.00	_____
_____	Men’s Golf Shirt, light blue, embroidered Triangle W, 60% cotton, 40% poly mesh (S, M, L, XL, <b>please indicate size</b> )	\$25.00	_____
_____	Men’s Golf Shirt, navy blue, embroidered Triangle W, 65% poly, 35% cotton (S, M, L, XL, XXXL, <b>please indicate size</b> )	\$25.00	_____
<b>CAPS</b>			
_____	Black, with logo (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	\$8.00	_____
<b>JEWELRY</b>			
_____	Squadron lapel pins (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	\$6.00	_____
_____	Group lapel pin (Hell From Heaven)	\$6.00	_____
_____	Group pin (blue with B-17)	\$6.00	_____
_____	8th Air Force pin	\$6.00	_____
<b>LOGOS</b>			
_____	Squadron Patch 3" (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	\$6.00	_____
_____	B-17 Jacket Patch, 4"x3"	\$6.00	_____
_____	8th Air Force Patch	\$6.00	_____
_____	Group Patch (Hell From Heaven), 2½"x3"	\$6.00	_____
<b>BOOKS (books include postage/handling)</b>			
_____	<i>Fortresses Over Nuthampstead</i> (Bishop)	\$65.00	_____
_____	<i>398th History</i> (1946, photo copy)	\$20.00	_____
_____	<i>Remembrances</i> (Ostrom, 1989, photo copy)	\$30.00	_____
_____	<i>Bird of Prey</i> (Coffee)	\$19.95	_____
_____	<i>Hell From Heaven</i> (Streitfeld)	\$19.95	_____
_____	<i>Last of the B-17 Combat Drivers</i> (Weekley)	\$39.95	_____
_____	<i>The Youngest Crew</i> (Wagner)	\$19.95	_____
_____	<i>WW II Odyssey</i> (Frankhouser)	\$19.00	_____
<b>PHOTOGRAPHS &amp; PRINTS</b>			
_____	<i>Clearing &amp; Colder</i> , 14"x19"	\$30.00	_____
_____	<i>Clearing &amp; Colder</i> , 14"x17", on canvas	\$40.00	_____
_____	<i>Anstey Stained Glass Window</i> booklet, 11"x17" (includes list of comrades Killed in Action)	\$10.00	_____
_____	<i>Sunset at Nuthampstead</i> , 8"x10"	\$7.00	_____
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>			
_____	Bumper Sticker (black)	\$3.00	_____
_____	Blue Ballpoint Pen (398th imprint)	\$5.00	_____
_____	License Plate Frame (398th imprint)	\$5.00	_____
_____	Book Marker	\$5.00	_____
_____	Tote Bag, 20"x15", (black with logo) <b>ON SALE!</b>	\$3.00	_____
<b>TIMELESS VOICES DVD's (DVD's include postage/handling)</b>			
_____	Member \$17.00 ea., Non-member \$22.00 ea. For information and titles, visit the “Timeless Voices” section at <a href="http://www.398th.org">www.398th.org</a>		_____

Cost of items ordered \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Postage/handling add \$5.00, \$6.00 if order over \$20.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment in US funds to “398th Bomb Group PX” Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone & Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed order form and check to Carolyn Widmann, Noblesville, IN 46062-7150.

# 398th BOMB GROUP FLAK NEWS

Telephone 206-367-2099

c/o Allen Ostrom

Seattle WA 98125-6324



## Flare Light of a New Dawn

By Peter Brooke

The flare light of a new dawn is shining brightly over the world today. It is a light of hope and peace, a light that has been longed for by all people everywhere. This light is the result of the efforts of many brave men and women who have fought for freedom and justice. It is a light that will guide us through the darkest of times and bring us to a brighter future.

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**FRIENDS Chairman Peter Brooke and the 398th Memorial at Nuthampstead.**