



602



601



603



600

FLAK NEWS:

\$10K Gift To 398th

He parlayed a 2½-year Air Force career into a 30-mission career with the 602nd Squadron of the 398th Bomb Group.

And then he parlayed a 2½-year G.I. Bill scholarship into a 4-year accounting degree at Hardin-Simmons University in Texas, followed by a 35-year career with Shell Oil Company.

All that to introduce Joe K. Mansell to 398th readers as the person who “didn’t want to see our group lose our FLAK NEWS newsletter” and did something superlative about it.

That “something” was a donation of \$10,000 to the 398th treasury, the bellwether donation among many other members and friends who responded to

Continued on Page 4

Reunion Vets: Not So Many As Before

It was another great get-together as the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association held its 28th annual reunion in Branson, Missouri, September 7-10, 2011.

“There wasn’t quite as many as it was a while ago,” are words in the song, “The Battle of New Orleans,” and they could apply to the veterans at the “28th.”

There were only 17, as compared to the 26 last year and the 31 in 2009.

As compared to the 299 in Nashville in 1992.

Regardless of the numbers, reunion chair Sharon Krause saw fit to read the Jill Chandler poem, “Eagle of the Sky,” to all the standing veterans at the Farewell Banquet. This would include a silent rendition to her father, Paul Roderick, who was unable to attend, and even sur-

Members Come Through

The threat of losing FLAK NEWS because of the group’s shortage of funds brought on a wave of contribution in addition to Joe Mansell’s \$10K. See Lew Burke’s “thank you” story on Page 5.

rendered his “Director” title which he had held for several years.

A new “Director” was elected to take his place — Keith Anderson of Issaquah, Washington. He was a pilot in the 600th, as was Roderick in the 602nd.

No new director was named to replace Wilfrid Dimsdale, who resigned his posi-

Continued on Page 4

MUSEUM: Goals Reached

The sights were set at a cool \$30,000 and 131 individual Founder members as initial goals for raising up a Nuthampstead Airfield Museum.

That was in October 2010.

In October 2011 both goals were met.

Treasurer Mellisa Ledlow’s bank balance reached \$31,700 as another 18 members of the 398th Bomb Group contributed enough \$200-each memorials or in honor of loved ones to reach the goal.

There have been 131 individual contributions, all listed in previous FLAK NEWS editions in January, April and July, plus the latest this October.

The proposed museum, near the Woodman Inn, is on property owned by Andrew and Christine Grisbrooke. In due course, the building will be demolished and a new building constructed.

Curator Russ Abbey is already “on the job” collecting memorabilia for display. The open house drew the attention of many locals, who contributed £200 toward the new attraction at Nuthampstead.

While the original goal has been reached, members and friends are invited to “keep giving” in honor or memory of loved ones, or simply to donate to the “Museum Fund.” Contributions can be sent to treasurer Mellisa Ledlow, Houston, TX 77044-1112.

As further goals are formalized, it was always the intent of the trustees to seek out at least an additional \$15,000 for what Abbey calls, “fitting out.”

Meanwhile, discussions will proceed with the Grisbrookes, Abbey and the two

Continued on Page 3



JOE and WILETTA MANSELL
A major 398th gift

A Tale Of Two Cities:

ONE HIT, OTHER HAD "A" MINERAL

It was a dramatic photo that appeared in the July FLAK NEWS — a 398th B-17 with the tail blown off and the pilots realizing that the gunner was simply "shot out" of his turret.

It caught the attention of many, including a German native who ultimately found his way to the U.S. and San Francisco and a career as an industrial architect.

As a youth, Karl Issel had lived in the dual city of Stassfurt-Leopoldshall, some 60 miles south of Derben, which was the 398th target city on April 8, 1945, and where the tail gunner met his demise.

It triggered another story about that day, recalled Issel.

"Our family was living in Leopoldshall, a sister city of Stassfurt. There was a Junkers aircraft manufacturing plant there and our guess was that it was initially the target for the 8th Air Force on April 8.

"But with only a month before surrender it seemed no longer a target of any military consequence, except for the Yalta Agreement which placed our city in the hands of the Russians.

"A plant for fighter planes should not fall into their hands."

History shows that the 94th Wing, directed to bomb Leopoldshall, was redirected "at the last moment" to bomb the rail yards of Halberstadt, instead. Why?

Intelligence from the Operations Log —

"Three squadrons from the 94th group attacked the secondary target (Halberstadt) when the primary target (Leopoldshall) was found to be covered by cloud."

Issel, in researching this episode in the coming years, determined that —

1. The weather that day for perfect. Blue skies.

2. Four days after the attack, American tanks entered the city, encountering only minor resistance from some Hitler youth.

3. On April 17 (a week later), a team of technicians from the Army Manhattan project entered the city (Leopoldshall) and retrieved 1,100 tons of ore from one of the many salt mines in the district. Some of this was in the form of Uranium oxide, the basic material of atomic bombs.

4. The team, led by Lt. Col. John Lansdale, also captured several prominent German atomic scientists.

Issel and his confidants have reasons to believe that the supposed "cloud" over Leopoldshall was not the true cause of changing the target at the last minute.

"What make more sense is the fortuitous confluence of information shared at the right (or very last) moment between two branches of government.

"It prevented the annihilation of Leopoldshall and with it possible usefulness of the uranium by Germany."

Issel had brought this scenario to the attention of the late 398th president, Wally Blackwell, asking if he saw any connection between the 398th mission to Derben and the simultaneous change in the Leopoldshall mission.

"I think you might be far afield about your interpretation of the 8th Air Force intelligence," said Wally. "However, we all know that the official file rarely or never records major blunders or unusual decisions by Group leaders.



Founder List \$31,700

WILLIAM AHERN, in memory of Herbert H. Newman.

MILDRED AUSTIN, in honor of Richard M. Austin.

JAMES BISSEN, in memory of Albert Bissen.

TED BRASS, in memory of Harold D. (Hal) Weekley.

CHRISTINE BROCKMAN, in memory of James W. Brockman.

ANNA MARIE CROCKER, in honor of the "youngest crew."

RUSSELL CURRIER, in honor of Joe Tarr's crew.

SUSAN & ANDY ENGEMAN, in memory of Ernest (Freddie) Engeman.

J. JEFF HOLSTEAD, in honor of James O. Holstead.

ED KEREKIAN, in memory of Floyd Cantrell and Don Honsut.

MARY K. KINSEY, in memory of Florence X. Kowalczyk.

ALICE J. LEE, in memory of John (Jack) Lee.

JOE MANSELL, in honor of Joe and Wiletta Mansell.

PAULA WILL MOYER, in memory of Ralph F. Will.

OLIN H. POWELL, JR., in memory of Olin H. Powell, Sr.

HOWARD RANDALL, in honor of the Randall family.

LORA STIZZO, GAIL BELL and NIECES, in memory of Sidor P. Stizzo.

ELIZABETH (BETH) VOGT, in memory of Carl J. Vogt.



While there appeared no "official" confirmation on the last minute air raid change, Issel uncovered an interview of Brig. Gen. Fred Anderson of the 8th Air Force with a journalist in London in 1952.

Anderson gave a vivid description of the city (Halberstadt) being leveled by the bombers after the decision to "abort" the raid on Leopoldshall. Nothing more.

Issel may be remembered as the translator of the FLAK NEWS article called "The Clay Pit" written by his German friend Kurt Hesse. It told of Germany's anti-aircraft guns being manned by teens and pre-teens in the final days of the war. Especially in the Merseburg region.

Issel and Hesse were fellow students in Western Germany prior to Issel's departure to America.



131 Museum Goals Reached

(Continued from Page 1)

other trustees, Marilyn Gibb-Rice and Geoff Rice, as to the time line for the new construction.

Also, meanwhile, the list of personal contributors to the Museum “artifacts” continues to grow. A great variety of pieces have been received in recent weeks from the following members and friends —

Ronald Dacon, George Schatz, Phyllis McCormick, Irma Schweiterman, Allen Ostrom, Bernard Kuse, Marji Miller, Bob Bowen, Elaine Tyler (see column on Page 7), Johanna Sienkiewicz, Paul Droy, Evelyn Comstock Rhodes, and Ken Peirce.

The Museum trustees continued their promotional activities in October with RAF Air Vice Marshall Alan Merriman presenting a talk at the Woodman Inn.

AVM Merriman came on the scene after the “Battle of Britain” WW II days, but rather did his flying in the jet age.

His talk was entitled, “Personal Highlights of Flight Testing Fast Aircraft.”

Some Nuthampstead members visited Mildenhall this past summer. (See Page 11.)



ANDREW GRISBROOKE (left) president of the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum, and Russ Abbey, curator, show off some of the items collected for display for the museum that will be built at Station 131.

Financial News Is Good But Dues Are Still Needed To Stay Operational

This edition of FLAK NEWS is filled with good news that enough monies have been received for the Nuthampstead Museum, and ...

For the continuance of FLAK NEWS on a quarterly basis.

Thanks to all for that ... and a reminder that we still work according to something called Dues.

So now it's time for all the good folks living “Out West” to be reminded that this quarter of the annual dues must come from them.

Members living in the following states are reminded via the enclosed self-addressed dues envelope that their portion is still the same — \$20.

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

If the envelope is missing, simply mail another with your dues to Dawne Dougherty, Harrisburg, OR 97446-9585.

Any and all “extras” above the \$20 dues minimum is always well-received by Dawne ... and the others who monitor the group's financial condition.



**Air Vice Marshall
ALAN MERRIMAN**

Another Flag At Nuthampstead

Ralph McIntyre, a 601 lead navigator who passed away in 2010, had his casket flag flown on the tall pole at Nuthampstead last summer, bringing to 62 the number of flags that have been flown there the past 20 years.

His three children, H. Ralph McIntyre, Cynthia Drolshagen and Diana O'Donnell, had the flag returned to them at the Branson after “flying” for two months on the old runway.

Hospital Visit For Editor

If your October FLAK NEWS was a bit late, blame it on the editor.

Allen Ostrom took an unexpected visit to the hospital, there to discover that his heart was “out of rhythm” and an artery was “a bit clogged.”

One doctor ministered to the artery and another installed a pacemaker/defibrillator.

Back to work ...

Big Taps List Coming Up

It began with only a few names 25 years ago, but the 398th Taps list has grown to cover almost five pages in FLAK NEWS.

The next issue will be published in January. Persons wishing to see the name of a deceased loved one not previously listed should advise FLAK NEWS or Dues Manager Dawne Dougherty.

“Eagles of The Sky” Fewer at Branson

(Continued from Page 1)

tion prior to the reunion, because of family and business constraints, according to president Marilyn Gibb-Rice.

All other officers were retained via “acclamation” — Marilyn Gibb-Rice, president; Lee Anne Bradley, VP; Mellisa Ledlow, treasurer; Karen Neff, secretary; Lew Burke, director; Joe Mansell, director; Arnie Schneider, director; Sharon Krause, reunion chair (although she will pass on the job to Ken Howard after the 2012 reunion in Philadelphia); Dawne Dougherty, dues manager; Carolyn Widmann, PX manager; Ken Peirce, Memorial Fund chair; Geoff Rice, photo researcher; and Allen Ostrom, FLAK NEWS editor.

The reunion was held without Neff, whose position with FEMA prevented her from attending. Neff had her hands full with FEMA duties following the devastation rendered by Hurricane Irene on the East Coast in early September. She lives in Virginia.

A new face came on the scene unexpectedly with the arrival of Capt. Tim Trautman, who assumed the role of Webmaster of www.398th.org. He replaced Dave Jordan, who started the web site several years ago. (See Page 8.)

Capt. Trautman (USAF) is with the 970th Airborne Control Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma City,

Sentiments Flow Freely At Reunion

Oklahoma. He “works” as an “air battle manager” on an E-3 (specially equipped Boeing 737). His “work” area is over Afghanistan, etc.

Troutman is the grandson of 601 pilot William H. Costanzo.

The Radisson Hotel was “home” for the 112 reunion members and proved to be very friendly to the 398th ... and the military in general. Witness the names of the various meeting rooms — Allegiance, Freedom, Glory, Independence, Liberty, Patriot and Unity.

The 398th flag was in full bloom as the group honored God and Country with a “crowd” of second and third generation members singing “America” to the music of trumpet man Rick Seals.

Seals’ 40’s band played great 40’s music at the Farewell Banquet, also honoring a couple of dozen ladies who came for the “Hat Parade.” The hats were big and small and created a gala atmosphere for the evening ... much to the smiles and joy of Carolyn Widmann, who created the festive evening.

Also festive, in a British sort of way, was the “Churchill” presentation by Lew Burke. He read portions of Churchill’s

The Reunion Veterans

Keith Anderson, Issaquah, WA
Bob Bowen, Athens, GA
Lew Burke, Centreville, VA
Jack Dodson, Amarillo, TX
Dallas Ebest, San Antonio, TX
Bob Gatton, Paducah, KY
Jim Haas, Perry, IA
Bernard Kuse, Sherman, TX
Joe Mansell, Humble, TX
Don Menard, Baton Rouge, LA
Ray Moore, Aurora, IL
Allen Ostrom, Seattle, WA
Fred Parker, Olympia, WA
Joe Reveman, New York, NY
Ray Richman, Pittsburgh, PA
Arnie Schneider, Jerome, MI
Jim White, San Pedro, CA

speeches at the time he became Prime Minister of England at the outset of World War II. These to include his memorable, “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat,” “Finest Hour,” and tribute to the RAF and the Battle of Britain —

“Never in the history of human conflict have so many owed so much to so few.”

Keith Anderson provided the historical context for “Winston’s” speeches.

Ken Peirce, a second generation, read navigator Stephen Quinn’s poem, “30,000 Feet.” A 1944 brush with death over Cologne. Fred Parker, engineer gunner on the 600 Ballard crew, provided the flight surgeon’s official account of the dramatic event.

The busses all arrived on time to take members to a number of outings — a City Tour and trip to the College of the Ozarks; the Showboat Branson Belle for a great musical and variety show (and a fine lunch); a theater with a ventriloquist who entertained with a fine guitar and three dogs.

The city tour might have cost some to miss the official Group meeting as only 28 were in attendance, of which 12 were veterans.

A sparkling metal B-17 model was contributed by Bernard Kuse for a raffle, which attracted enough customers to reward the 398th treasury with \$400. It was won in a raffle drawing by Wilma Richman, the wife of former Mess Officer Ray Richman.

Bob Bowen, who had served as secretary for several years, declared in a recited poem that, “I’m drinking from a

Mansell Gives \$10K To 398th

(Continued from Page 1)

the “bleak” treasury outlook that had the future of FLAK NEWS in question.

Mansell and his wife, Wileta, live in Humble, Texas, and have long been active at the reunions and the tours.

In sending off the \$10K check to treasurer Mellisa Ledlow, Mansell noted that his contribution also remembers the five friends who perished when his Lyle Doerr crew went down in the English Channel on December 30, 1944.

These would be pilot Doerr, co-pilot Giles Teague, navigator John Walker, and gunners Joe Bergant and Thomas Fox. Other crew members killed that day were Robert Stewart, Joe Kiska, Joe Gaiser and Hazen Earle, members of the “make-up” crew.

Four from the original Doerr crew had completed their missions — Mansell, George Henrikus, Herbert Bugbee and Landis Frantz.

While on the 1992 England Tour to Merseburg, Mansell took time to honor his comrades by throwing a floral bouquet from the Channel Ferry into the water near to where his friends perished at Beachy Head, off the English coast. (See Page 8.)

In 1994 he and the England tour group met the family of the RAF rescue officer who made a gallant attempt to rescue one of the downed members, and saw a replica of the rescue plane, a “Walrus.”

Mansell has been on the 398th Board as a Director for several years.

saucer because my cup has overflowed.”

Ostrom read from a Gaither gospel song, “Yesterday’s gone and tomorrow may never come, but we have this moment today.”

Peirce, investigating the group’s status with the IRS, informed the Board that the 398th needs to re-write some of the by-laws. Also, to change from 501(c)(19) to 501(c)(3) to continue to assure that donations to the 398th at home and offshore will be legal.

Another 398th son has agreed to support the group in which his father was a 602 squadron pilot.

Keith, son of James Dollar, who flew 32 missions, has agreed to become the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association “registered agent” in the state of Alabama. This is where the original articles and by-laws were incorporated.

Keith Dollar lives in Northport, AL 35473-2764.

"We're Good For Another Year"

FLAK NEWS Support Is "Spectacular"

BY LEW BURKE
Director, 398th BGMA

In the last edition of FLAK NEWS the shaky financial condition of the 398th was attested to. The details surrounding the cost of printing and mailing FLAK NEWS was explained. The importance of the newsletter has never been disputed and this was alluded to by more than one writer. The tireless efforts of Allen Ostrom as editor are known to all. His unselfish commitment to publishing the best possible newsletter has borne fruit.

We may have the best Group newsletter in the 8th Air Force Association. What needs to be said is that spectacular response came in from the calls for financial assistance for FLAK NEWS.

OVER \$17,000 RAISED SINCE THE LAST ISSUE!

We're good for another year!

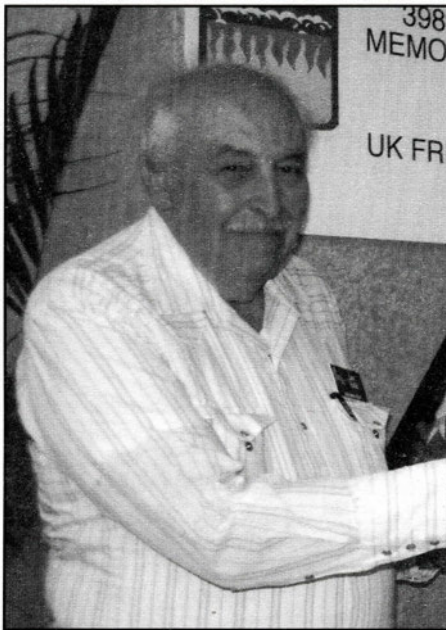
What a pleasant surprise!

We were hoping for several "Hundred Dollar" donations especially from the Life Members. What we got in addition to those that donated a "Hundred" was in some cases "Thousands." Following is a list of those who gave \$50 and those who gave a \$100. Let me comment with special pride and surprise that one member gave a donation of \$10,000. (Yes, that is right, I said "thousand.") See Page 1. Our quiet, no nonsense Director, Joe Mansell, gave the \$10,000 donation.

Can you believe we had two other donations of \$2,500 and \$2,000? William H. Carter with 603 Ordnance, and Mrs. Phyllis McCormick, widow of John McCormick, also get a pat on the back. Gary Alwood gave \$1,000 from the "Alwood Family Trust." To those whose donations were more modest than that, please be assured they are just as useful to the continuation of our FLAK NEWS. There were "tons" of \$10 and \$20 donations.

This co-pilot is especially grateful and appreciative of the \$1,000 from the Alwood Family Trust. Gary and Terry Alwood are the sons of Joseph and Bonnie Alwood. I flew most of my 29 missions as co-pilot for Joe. His family and mine became great friends after the war. We visited back and forth often before Joe and Bonnie passed away. Thanks to you both.

This life member took it upon himself to donate \$100 for FLAK NEWS and challenged other life members in the last edition to match it. I feel like a previous owner of the Washington Redskins when he said he gave the coach an unlimited budget and he exceeded it. The response



LEW BURKE

was fantastic, as you can see. In addition to four very large and much appreciated donations there were the many hundreds, fifties, twenties, tens. In the words of our Treasurer there was a "ton" of twenties and tens. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished by the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association when the Vets and the Second Generation put their mind to it. We can all be proud of ourselves.

And thanks to all for the "10's and 20's."



RUTHANNADOERSTLER's "bells and whistles" jacket was the topic of conversation for Dawne Dougherty and Ken Howard at the Branson reunion.

Donor List

Joe Mansell	\$10,000
William H. Carter	2,500
Phyllis McCormick	2,000
Alwood Family Trust	1,000
Robert M. Blacker	200
Ted Johnston	200
William E. Markham	200
Howard Randall	200
Arlys Steele	200
Doris Yip	200
Joseph A. Tarr	180
Walter F. Morris	120
Keith Anderson	100
Sandra Averhart	100
Norman H. Bond	100
Edward Brass	100
Harold Brown	100
Lew Burke	100
Alexander Cochran	100
Reynold Dacon	100
J.J. Holstead	100
Geraldine Karner	100
JoAnn Ledlow	100
George P. Leung	100
Walter Morris	100
Becky Morrison	100
Charles Morrison	100
Newt Moy	100
O.H. Powell	100
Russell Reed	100
Joseph Roberge	100
Henry J. Rudow	100
Lou Stoffer	100
Joseph Szwiec	100
Joseph A. Tarr	100
Phyllis Veley	100
Bernard White	100
Davis J. Broderick	80
Hal W. Lamb	80
Carl J. Wenning	80
Jesse E. Prugh	60
John Blackwell	50
Jane Dixon	50
George C. Graham	50
Willie J. Ivy	50
Kramer Family	50
Rich Land	50
Sewell MacFerran	50
Dale C. Nicol	50
Fred Parker	50
Laurence A. Schaal	50
Lila Special	50
Lou Stoffer	50
Frank C. Towsley	50
Leo R. Croce	45

"And a ton of 10's and 20's."

— Dawne Dougherty

Philadelphia!

Before leaving the 28th annual reunion at Branson, it was announced that the 29th will be held next year in the city of Philadelphia. The dates will be September 5-6-7-8, 2012.

I Never Really Got To Know Him:

Winsor O. Coleman III: A Pilot Who Was A “Splendid Man”

This story was written by John Menig, 86, the last surviving member of the Winsor Coleman crew. It was part of John's assigned task at an Illinois University workshop called, “Writing a Personal History.”

BY JOHN MENIG

Radio Operator, Coleman Crew, 603

Winsor O. Coleman III is not exactly your garden variety handle.

I first encountered the name in Lincoln, Nebraska, while waiting for assignment in September 1944. The name was at the top of a list that included mine. We were to be crew members on a B-17 — Winsor, first pilot and commander — I, his radio operator. I emphasize *his* because from that day on, the names on that list were collectively known as “Coleman's Crew.”

We were to be together for the next six months, barely a blip on the screen of life, but a time I could never exclude from my life. Win was over six feet, blond hair and freckle-faced. He had a nice smile. And he smiled a lot. His home was Providence, Rhode Island, and his family was steeped in New England tradition. Winsor had that rare ability to condescend without being condescending.

Our crew got along splendidly despite the tradition of segregating the officers from the enlisted men. We shared a typical bomber crew camaraderie. Off base we often frequented the same places, eating and drinking together — mostly drinking.

Winsor O. Coleman III would, on at least three notable occasions, prove his mettle as a pilot and a commander.

In December 1944, back in the U.S., we were given a shiny new B-17 to fly to a base in Prestwick, Scotland. The trip proved much more adventurous than any of us anticipated, and we barely escaped a cold water dunking in the North Atlantic. Somehow the much-needed tail wind had diminished, and it fell on Winsor to decide whether to continue the crossing or return to base. He chose to go on, and with the help of the R.A.F., we made it, not to Scotland, but to the closet landfall, an R.A.F. field in Northern Ireland.

Our crew was eventually assigned to the 398th at Nuthampstead. Returning from our sixth mission, Win made a landing there in a fog so thick I could barely see the wing tips. And another at a Lancaster base that was spectacular.

The final time I flew with Winsor O. Coleman was the last time I would ever see him. It was my 11th mission. Our target was a synthetic oil plant near Leipzig, deep in eastern Germany. Our group was attacked by enemy fighters, and our aircraft was left severely damaged. With three of our crew wounded, including myself, and no rudder cables, Win managed, with great physical and mental effort, to fly the 300 miles to safety in Brussels, Belgium. I was whisked away in a “meat wagon,” never to see Winsor again.

Fast forward 50 years.

A Christmas Eve 398th Memory

On this day, December 24, 1944, the Mighty Eighth Air Force launched the biggest air armada ever. Over 2000 bombers clawed their way into freezing fog as they slowly assembled to support the ground troops struggling to hold back the German forces in what became known as “The Battle of the Bulge.”

At Nuthampstead, two B-17G's crashed on take-off and as a result two young American lives were lost on this freezing cold December morning.

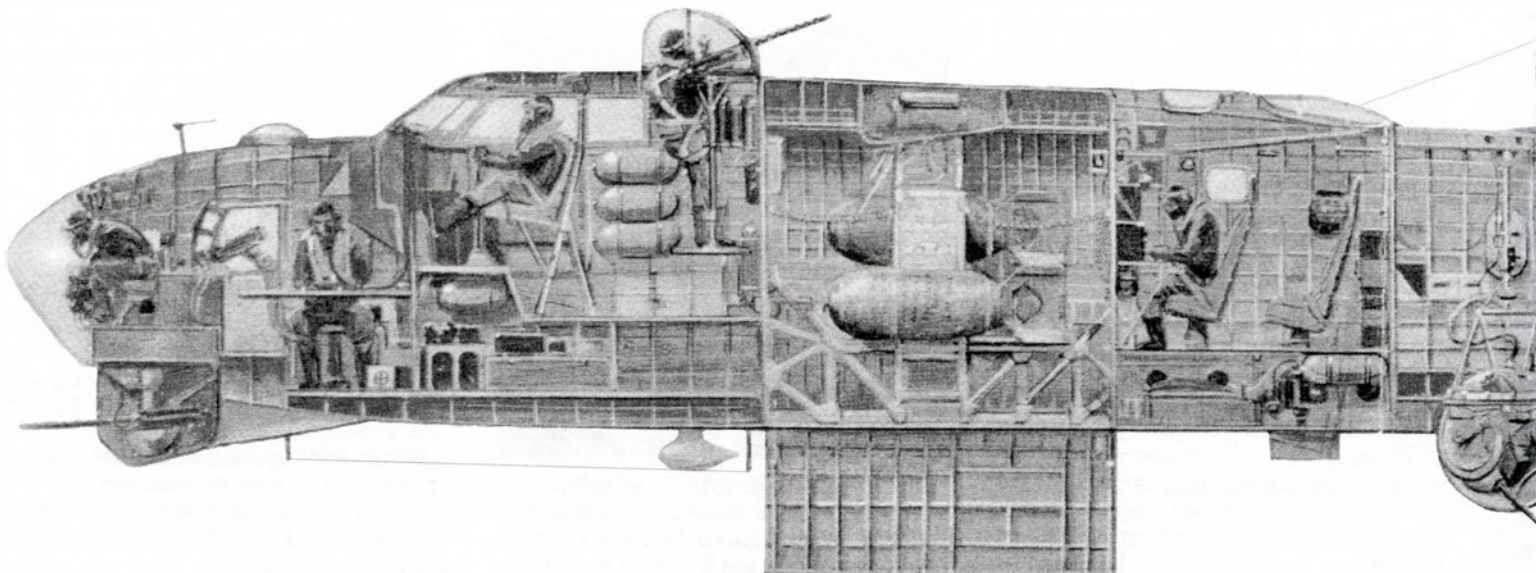
Second Lt. Franklin D. Harrod and S/Sgt. David V. Flores paid the ultimate sacrifice this fateful day.

As we gather with family and friends this Christmas, let us spare a thought for all those who made this day possible.

— Malcolm Osborn

In 1995, my wife and I traveled to England. For me, it was a pilgrimage, revisiting the airfield at Nuthampstead. Old Glory was still flying over the runway. And the Woodman Inn beckoned. Inside, the bartender produced a book signed by airmen who had returned. I could not fail to notice the name Winsor O. Coleman III, along with his U.S. address. Back at our London hotel, I wrote Win a letter and included my phone numbers.

A few weeks passed and I received his call. We talked for an hour and a half. Typically, he was more interested in what I had done with my life than he was with his. He did tell me, though, that he was dealing with melanoma. Four months later, Winsor O. Coleman III passed away. I'm saddened that I never got to really know such a splendid man.



398th Memories From The UK

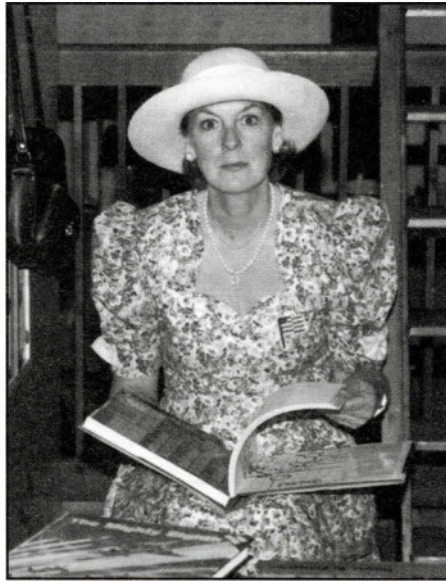
Friends Recall Early Beginnings of 131 Tours

BY ELAINE TYLER
Friend of the 398th
Ovingdean, Sussex, England

My "398th Memories" all started back in early 1980. The Memorial was still in the planning stages but with more and more veterans making a pilgrimage back to their old wartime base, Barry Tyler and I, along with the Barkers, the Wells, and the Clarks met with the idea of forming a welcoming committee that would be on hand to meet those returning. We all put £50 in the kitty to kick off our funding and the U.K. "Friends of the 398th" was born. I was designated Secretary.

Liaising with Malcolm Osborn and Vic Jenkins, whose involvement had started back in the 70s, we decided to hold a '40s dance to raise more funds and it was timed to coincide with the next returning group in September 1982. The dance was held in Clavering Village Hall and turned out to be a great success and thus started the programme of the two-year U.K. reunions (next in 2012).

In 1982 Malcolm and Vic completed the splendid memorial and it was dedicated on 21st September on land given by the Dimsdale family. What a day it turned out to be! All those who attended will never forget the emotion, our pride, the "Hell from Heaven" storm that did its best to wreck everything; then the sky cleared and the B-17 came in flying low overhead, bomb doors open (organised and paid for by Barry). We also held another much larger '40s dance in Barker's Barn, and



ELAINE TYLER
"Honourable Secretary"

with a proper Glen Miller band in uniform, a few Jeeps turned up and everyone dressed up in period dress. It was fantastic. But what hard work.

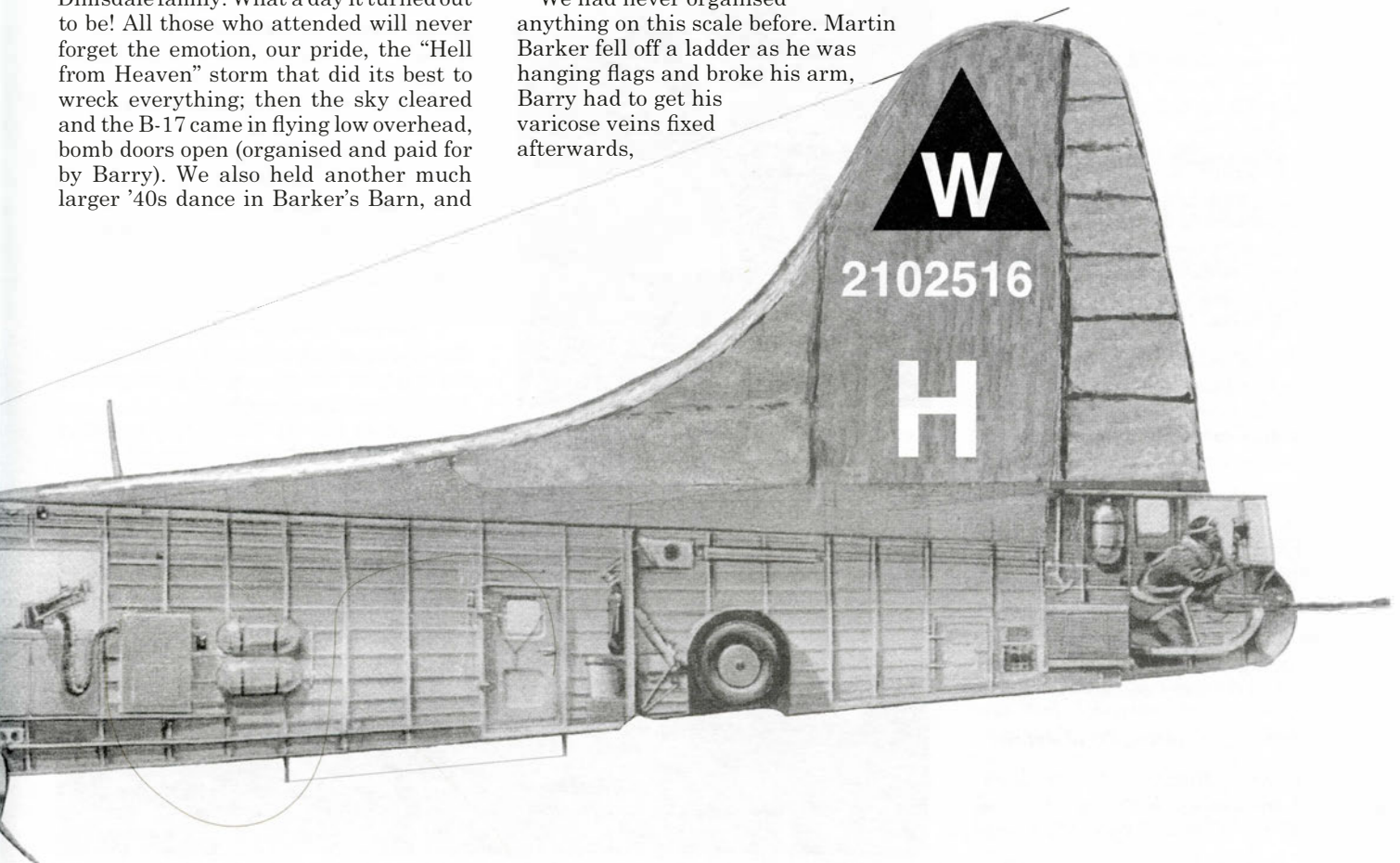
We had never organised anything on this scale before. Martin Barker fell off a ladder as he was hanging flags and broke his arm, Barry had to get his varicose veins fixed afterwards,

the women made mounds of sandwiches and snacks and we were all tired for days afterwards. But it was worth it. The locals, as well as the visitors from the U.S., raved about it for ages afterwards.

This became the blue print for the many U.K. reunions over the years. We became more experienced at the organisation. The dances got bigger and we needed the larger premises at Peter Sapsted's farm in Anstey. We added a Fish & Chip Van, many more military vehicles turned up and Mick and Sue Brown, who always came with WW II vehicles and a uniformed entourage, dressed as MP's on one occasion, boarded the coach at Anstey, declaring "You are all charged with going AWOL since 1945!"

In 1988 I remember Larry Delancey and Phil Stahlman meeting together in The Woodman Inn for the first time since the war. They will always be remembered for nursing home the famous B-17 from the Cologne raid in October 1944 with most of the front shot away.

Continued on Page 10



Letters

"It was so sad to think about FLAK NEWS ending. Thank you for the current good news about the new funding. It has been a huge 'binding' together of the Friends with the 398th family. So important in keeping us in touch with one another."

Elaine Tyler, England

"I know that my father, Joe Alwood, would have been first in line to contribute to FLAK NEWS. Here is a check for \$1,000 to be used for the publication of FLAK NEWS."

Gary Alwood, Westlake Village, California

"Here is my \$100 check and my yearly dues. My husband died in 2003, but my son and I enjoy every issue of FLAK NEWS."

Geraldine M. Karner, Arvada, Colorado

"Hope the enclosed check helps keep FLAK NEWS coming. Four issues a year if possible."

Bernie White, Tampa, Florida

"Enclosed you will find my check for \$100 to be used to keep FLAK NEWS coming. Also, thank you for the 'bombers' story in July that had a picture of my husband Les Veley on Page 1."

Phyllis Veley, Albany, New York

"Thanks for reminding me about the dues. Here is \$25 and I will send in my dues to keep getting the newsletter, which I always enjoy."

Thomas Spraker, Virginia

"Happy to learn that FLAK NEWS will continue. This check will help ensure its future. May I recommend a new book called 'Mission to Berlin'? Many mentions of the 398th and of Col. Hunter."

Walter Morris, Florida

"When FLAK NEWS arrives, it brings a smile. I hope this \$2,000 check will help to keep us all smiling."

Phyllis McCormick, Sycamore, Illinois

"I am a 'double' life member, but I want to send this \$100 check to make sure FLAK NEWS continues to print."

Jeff Holstead

"I cherish all the copies of FLAK NEWS and regret losing some of the earlier ones in moving. My father was Raymond Wallrath, and now my son and I cherish each copy."

Carol Smith, Newton, New Jersey

"Thanks for all those 'big money' donations, but remember there was a ton of \$5 and \$10 donations come in for FLAK NEWS."

Dawn Dougherty, Dues Manager, Harrisburg, Oregon

2012 England Tour Set:

WITH A FRENCH FLAVOR

The 2012 398th "England Tour" will have a distinct French flavor, according to Ken Howard.

"Our tour will be from June 14 through June 23, and will include Paris and Normandy," he said.

"However, it will all begin in a London hotel on June 14 and then to Cambridge on the 15th, and on to Nuthampstead, Anstey, Madingley and all the places important to the 398th."

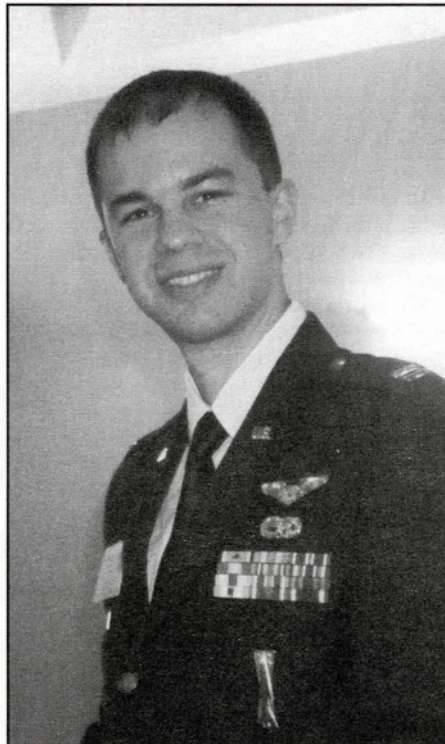
The "bridge" between England and France will come as the tour moves to the Continent via the tunnel beneath the English Channel, commonly called the "Chunnel."

There will be five hotel days in Paris, to include the many sights like the *Louvre* and *Notre Dame*. Also, time for a tour to the Normandy landing sights.

The tour will end on June 22 with a dinner-show at the *Moulin Rouge*. Home on the 23rd.

Cost of the 10-day tour will be \$2975 per person, double occupancy, and \$3822 single. A deposit of \$500 will be required by January 15, 2012.

Howard can be reached by phone at 309-742-8546, and by e-mail at kenhoward@hotmail.com.



TIM TRAUTMAN
398th Webmaster

www.398th.org

New Webmaster Is Captain In The Air Force

The 398th lost an old friend when Dave Jordan stepped down as the director of the group's fine web site, www.398th.org but found a new friend who heard WW II stories from his grandfather, Bill Constanzo.

Tim Trautman is a regular Air Force captain, serving at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He is with the 970th Airborne Control Squadron, and his title when on the job is "air battle manager" and his "job site" is aboard an Air Force E-3A AWACS, also known commercially as the Boeing 707 with dome.

Trautman's area of "battle" is over and above any place where American troops are engaged with the enemy. Like Iraq and Afghanistan (and elsewhere).

Trautman can be reached by e-mail at webmaster@398th.org.



JOE MANSELL threw a floral bouquet into the Channel in 1992 as a remembrance of the 602 Doerr crew. He also gave \$10K to FLAK NEWS.

“IF”

IF you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

— Rudyard Kipling

FLAK NEWS On The Move:

Three Libraries Receive “IV” 398th Bound Volumes

FLAK NEWS has come a long way since 1986, witness the several “Volume IV” bound volumes delivered this summer to museums in Savannah, Georgia; University Park, Pennsylvania; and Hertford, England.

The volumes contain all the FLAK NEWS newsletters published since 1986 through April 2011. They represent the 398th Bomb Group history from the 1944-45 combat days through the ensuing “Association” period.

The Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah, already recipient of three volumes and several historical items contributed over the years — and visited by the reunion in 2000 — received a “IV” to add to their previous editions.

A letter from Henry Skipper, President and CEO, responded for the Mighty Eighth library, where the early books are available, with these remarks —

“Thank you for Volume IV of the 398th FLAK NEWS. As usual, your group has done a magnificent job in putting this together. The 398th should be proud.”

Skipper noted that the books are often requested by visitors to the museum, and are used by young people doing school research.

Another “Volume IV” went to the Hertford (England) Archives and Local Studies (HALS), bringing them “up to date” following previous books and other historical items relating to Station 131. The base at Nuthampstead was the only four-engine bomber base in Hertfordshire. And the closest to London.

The others in the First Combat Wing were the 91st at Bassingbourne (Cambridgeshire) and 381st at Ridgewell (Essex).

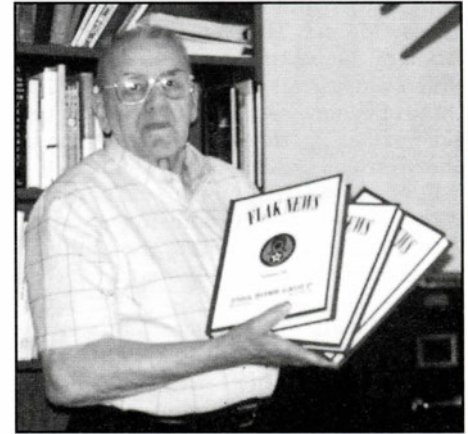
A letter from Susan Flood, HALS Archivist, said —

“Thank you very much indeed for sending Volume IV of FLAK NEWS. It is very generous of the 398th to supply these bound volumes.

“It will be added to our archive collection. In the meantime it has our “Reference Acc 5122” which you may want to note.

“I do indeed remember the visits of your England Tour Group with affection and am honoured that this office is able to care for the records of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association.”

Another U.S. facility receiving “Volume IV” was the Eighth Air Force Library at Penn State University, located in University Park, Pennsylvania. This library is funded by George and Sherry Middlemas of Chicago, the son-in-law and daughter of the late 602 pilot, Al Petska. His widowed



wife, Margo, is a British war bride.

The Petska Endowment Fund was created with a Middlemas grant of \$135,000, plus a following \$10K. And an additional \$20K by others.

Petska joined the 602nd Squadron at Nuthampstead following an enlisted Army career as a Ranger and later as a B-17 gunner in North Africa. It was during his gunner career he was awarded the Silver Star. He later went to pilot training ... and ultimately Station 131, where he flew 35 missions.

Quintet Funds Bound Volumes Project Plus Shipping Costs

A major aspect of the “Bound Volume” story is that all the production and shipping was accomplished without further “strapping” the 398th limited treasury.

All the necessary funds came from an appeal to a Seattle luncheon group made up of former 398th veterans. No less than \$500 was raised, covering all the expenses, with some left over to ship 17 pounds of 398th/Air Force books from the FLAK NEWS editor to the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum (and returning \$83.93 to the treasurer.)

The contributors were Keith Anderson and Ted Johnston, Seattle; Russ Reed, Port Ludlow; Fred Parker, Olympia; and Lou Stoffer of Centralia, Washington.

Another three-volume set designated for the “398th” is now in the hands of Carolyn Widmann, the PX manager. These books, current to October 2009, will be “brought up to date” later and sent to the Nuthampstead Museum.

FRIENDS OF THE 398th

Elaine's Many Happy Memories

(Continued from Page 7)

We started holding a service in Anstey church as a remembrance to those who lost their lives in the plane crash on the nearby Mound. This led onto the installation of the beautiful memorial window which was unveiled in 2000 by the HRH Duke of Gloucester and dedicated "to the glory of God" by the Right Rev'd. Christopher Herbert, Bishop of St. Albans.

Evelyn and Bill Comstock came to stay with us in 1989 and to represent the Group at the funeral of David Wells. At nearby Duxford they were making the new version of the 'Memphis Belle' film and Bill, standing on the control tower balcony had tears in his eyes as he declared he had not seen so many B-17's together since the wartime years.

In 1992, along with some of you, I attended a function at St. James' Palace in the presence of HRH Duke of York. This was the 50th Anniversary of the arrival of the USAAF 8th & 9th Air Force in the U.K.

In 1994 Bill presented me with a plaque giving me the status of "Honorary Secretary" which I felt very honoured to receive. Sadly a few years later in 1996 Wilfrid and I flew to Washington, DC, to

help in extracting our coach as it stalled precariously on the edge of the mountain road near Mount Rushmore.

David Wells was also on the trip, delighted at being in America and has never parted from his huge Stetson hat.

Over the years the number of Reunions I attended built up —

Nashville, TN, in 1992 — flying the B-17 followed by Allen's headline in FLAK NEWS "Eat your heart out Barry Tyler!"

Buffalo, NY, in 1993 — where Peggy Wells and I marvelled at Niagara Falls.

Tucson, AZ, 1994 — lots of Line Dancing and a visit across the border into Mexico.

Spokane, WA, 1997 — the ride up into the Silver Mountain and the cruise on Lake Cœur d'Alene.

Savannah, GA, 2000 — the dedication of the Memorial at the Savannah Heritage Museum.

Falls Church, VA, 2004 — visiting the WW II Memorial in Washington DC.

Phoenix, AZ, 2007 — my sorrow at the flight in a Harvard (AT-6) being called off because of bad weather!

I visited the Czech Republic twice with

"Beloved Bill" Laid To Rest At Arlington

attend the funeral of beloved Bill at the Arlington Cemetery.

Also in June 1994 Wilfrid Dimsdale and I laid a 398th wreath at Madingley for the 50th Anniversary of D-Day in the presence of our Prime Minister John Major and U.S. President Bill Clinton and their wives. On the 24th I took Bill and Wally and Keith Anderson to record a programme about their wartime memories at Radio Cambridge, which proved to be great fun. I have the recording still.

We decided to instigate the "Home Stay" programme with local Host Families and in 1996 I remember vividly you all arrived from the U.S. and our first stop was Windsor. It coincided with the Queen and Prince Philip attending a function in the Town Hall, and guided by the police to the exact place where she alighted from her car, we had a grandstand view. Afterwards we had a group photo taken around her Rolls Royce, something you all said would never be allowed back in the States. At one point I was stopped by a policeman (and you must remember at that time we were experiencing IRA bombings). "Excuse me," he asked politely, "Why are you all wandering around with a badge marked 398th Bomb Group?"

The first U.S. Reunion Barry and I went to was at Rapid City in 1984 and where we almost suffered our demise on the icy roads. The bus company had to radio for

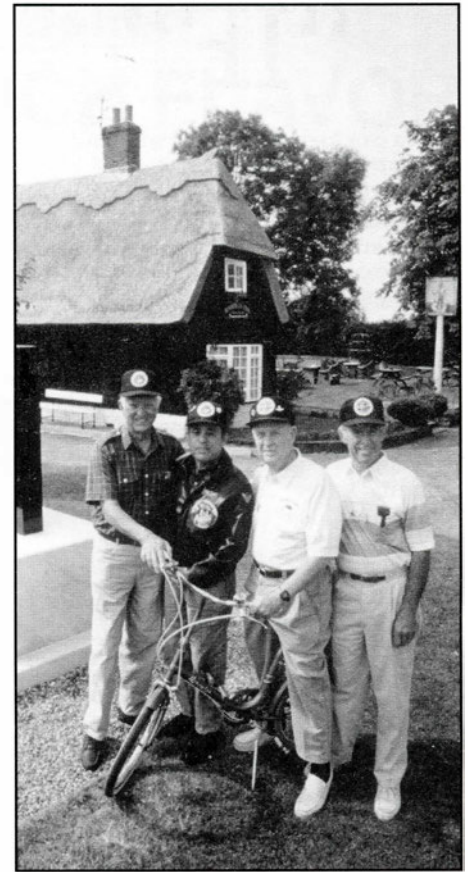
the 398th in 1995 and 2000. The anniversary parade in Pilsen in 1995 marking the end of the war and the anniversary of the founding of the city was particularly memorable. The visit to the Skoda factory and meeting people who had been there when it had been bombed; the women with bunches of lilac that they thrust into the Veteran's hands saying "thank you;" the amazing parade of military vehicles, the image of Allen sitting alone on a huge rostrum waiting to be joined by all the other dignitaries. The "Light and Sound Show" in the evening with the sound of the jack boots on the cobbles and the B-17's flying overhead and then the mammoth firework display.

With Connie and Elliot Novek, Barbara Fish and I visited the Jewish Cemetery in Prague and the chapel with all the names on the walls of those who had been shipped off to the death camps. How especially sad we felt when we found the names of some of Connie's relatives.

I really could go on and on ...

I look back and say a huge thank you to you all for the happiness, the special memories and experience and above all the wonderful friendships and special people I have met that have bonded me to the 398th family. It all stemmed from a small group, many years ago, deciding to form the "Friends of the 398th."

Thank God we did.



WOODMAN MEMORIES
Dick Frazier, Danny Leyva,
Wally Blackwell, Phil Stahlman

Quotable Quotes

"The only function of Economic Forecasting is to make astrology look respectable."

— John Kenneth Galbraith

"You are young and useful at any age if you are still planning for the future."

"There is nothing more heart-rending than a great idea whose time has not yet come."

"Instead of complaining that we don't get what we want, we should be grateful that we don't get what we deserve."

"Retentive memory may be a good thing, but the ability to forget is the mark of true greatness."

"Time heals almost everything. Give time time."

PX Shopping For Christmas

Christmas is just around the corner, but still not too early to do some shopping at the 398th (second generation) PX.

For that veteran (or second generation) there is a variety of clothing, patches, books, jewelry, photographs, etc.

Carolyn Widmann will make every effort to deliver by Christmas, "But please don't wait until the last minute."

It's all there for shopping by mail, telephone or e-mail. See Page 11.

BRIEF-things

It can be said, "we must be doing something right," when we see such monumental support from our members in supporting FLAK NEWS financially and the Nuthampstead Museum all at the same time ... that calls for one, big "congratulations!" ... **Tony Gomez** of the 602nd was a cook at the Officers Mess, and he recently discovered that his photo was in the book, *REMEMBRANCES*, and fired off an order from the PX ... **Conrad Samuelson**, 603 Intelligence, died this year, but he lived to see his granddaughter become of mother, hence a fourth generation and another sign that we'uns are getting up there ... someone said, on hearing that the 2012 reunion will be in Philadelphia, "let's go with our A-2 jackets and pose by the Liberty Bell" ... there were no less than six "Taylors" in the 398th — three pilots, a bombardier, togglier and aircraft mechanic ... the records show that leading the group and squadron was no safe bet on the missions; no less than nine "leads" were shot down ... **Vaughn Erickson's** son-in-law, **George Cruz**, retired as "chief master sergeant" recently and was once honored as "airman of the year" ... "FLAK NEWS" was coined by the Editor in 1986, "FLAK" name coming from "an anti-aircraft canon that shoots at flyers" ... the few B-17's still flying following the fire that destroyed the Liberty Belle last spring are all having their fuel systems inspected ... for those airmen who had "Berlin" on their mission list there is a fine book by **Robert F. Dorr** called, "Mission to Berlin" at the book stores with many mentions of the 398th ... the many friends of the late **George Hilliard** should know that his lovely wife, **Elaine**, is alive and well in Ohio ... the dramatic cutaway B-17 print on Pages 6-7 was done by a Boeing artist many years ago, but some late artistic "touch-up" for FLAK NEWS was accomplished by **Jim LaFran**, who did his Pacific WW II war in a Navy F6-F Hellcat ... **Phyllis McCormick**, who gave \$2K to FLAK NEWS, remembers her husband, **John**, telling her that his B-36 from the Korean war, carried 10 times the ordnance than his 602 B-17 ... **Jeanne Stange**, a faithful widow at the reunion, is now in her 47th year as a Girl Scout leader ... an emotional visit was held at the Branson Memory Room when the son of pilot **Nolan Thompson** introduced himself to **Connie Novak**, whose husband was **Thompson's** radio operator ... an excellent DVD was produced by **Joe Reveman**, crew member on the **Howard Traeder** crew; **Ann Collins** revealed that her brother (years ago) lost their dad's A-2 jacket in a poker game (**Ann** replaced it recently with a new A-2 jacket) ... it's always nice to discover something about a crew member's life work; **Jack Dodson** of Amarillo, Texas, was a "master carpenter" ... **Jim** and **Mellisa's** daughter, **Carolyn**, had a very BIG summer, seeing the Pope in Spain, the Barth (PW) Museum in Germany and finally settling in for international school in Florence, Italy ... **Lee Anne Bradley's** huge hat, worn at the banquet "hat parade" was not the best for dancing, so she had to doff it ... **Mark Schlotzhauer** was not known to the 398th at the Branson Belle dinner-show, but he revealed himself as being "thankful for the sacrifices of those that protect and guard our freedom."; he and his wife and parents shook hands with his "heroes" ...



— Photo by Richard Flagg

THE CREW OF A KC 135 Stratotanker at Mildenhall, England, recently hosted members and friends of the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum.

398th Bomb Group PX

This form can be downloaded and filled in from www.398th.org.

ORDER FORM (The Second Generation)

QTY	ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLOTHING			
_____	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, please indicate size _____)	\$28.00	_____
_____	Men's Golf Shirt, light blue, embroidered Triangle W, 60% cotton, 40% poly mesh (S, M, L, XL, please indicate size _____)	\$25.00	_____
_____	Men's Golf Shirt, navy blue, embroidered Triangle W, 65% poly, 35% cotton (S, M, L, XL, XXXL, please indicate size _____)	\$25.00	_____
CAPS			
_____	Black, with logo (indicate 600, 601, 602, 603)	\$8.00	_____
JEWELRY			
_____	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	_____
LOGOS			
_____	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	_____
BOOKS (books include postage/handling)			
_____	<i>Fortresses Over Nuthampstead</i> (Bishop)	\$30.00	_____
_____	<i>398th History</i> (1946, photo copy)	\$20.00	_____
_____	<i>Remembrances</i> (Ostrom, 1989, photo copy)	\$30.00	_____
_____	<i>Hell From Heaven</i> (Streitfeld)	\$19.95	_____
_____	<i>WW II Odyssey</i> (Frankhouser)	\$19.00	_____
PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS			
_____	<i>Clearing & Colder</i> , 14"x19"	\$30.00	_____
_____	<i>Clearing & 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	_____
MISCELLANEOUS			
_____	Bumper Sticker (red, white & blue)	\$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) ON SALE!	\$3.00	_____
_____	2011 Station 131 Nuthampstead Airfield Museum Calendar (postage included) ON SALE!	\$8.00	_____
TIMELESS VOICES DVD's (DVD's include postage/handling)			
_____	Member \$17.00 ea., Non-member \$22.00 ea. For information and titles, visit the "Timeless Voices" section at www.398th.org		_____

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 \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone&E-mail _____

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



THIS IS the officer's jacket worn by the late 603 pilot, Capt. Victor Stoll. Note the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and European Campaign medals. And the Veteran patch. The jacket is now at the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum.