

# ***FORTRESS FOR FREEDOM***

## **388th Bombardment Group (H) Association**



**8th Air Force, 3rd Air Division, 45th Combat Wing**  
**Station 136, Knettishall England, 1943–1945**  
**333 Total Missions**



**306 Combat Missions, 19 Aphrodite Missions, 5 Chowhound Missions, 1 POW Mission, 2 Revival Missions**

### **388th Bombardment Group Headquarters**

Station 136 Weather Detachment, Fersfield Air Base (Aphrodite Project), 434th Headquarters Squadron, 860th Squadron, 684th Squadron, 434th Air Service Group, 1211th Quartermaster Company, 1284th Military Police Company, 273rd Medical Dispensary, 1751st Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company, 2019th Engineering and Fire Fighting Platoon, 452nd Sub Depot, 29th Station Complement, 587th Postal Unit, 877th Chemical Company, 214th Finance Detachment  
560th Bombardment Squadron, 561st Bombardment Squadron, 562nd Bombardment Squadron, 563rd Bombardment Squadron

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**Aerial photograph of Knettishall airfield looking south, the bomb dump is bottom left, 13 March 1944. Photograph taken by 7th Photographic Reconnaissance Group, sortie number US/7PH/GP/LOC226. English Heritage (USAAF Photography)**

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**<http://www.388bg.info> (database)**

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## *From the President's Desk*

Hello everyone!

I'm so excited. Our reunion is almost here. There are so many people who have worked so many hours to put together what I'm sure will prove to be an outstanding, first class reunion. For me, the best part is getting all of my 388th family together and reuniting.

The reunion team has put together some, what's sure to be, memorable activities. We have added several events in the Hospitality Suite this year. I hope to see each and every one of you there. If you have any questions or concerns about the reunion activities or logistics, please contact me. It would be my pleasure to help address any issues.

Your board has been making progress on many issues. We are close to launching a new database that will help us keep ourselves organized and keep track of all our members. We have opened and funded an investment account that will fund the Knettishall Memorial in perpetuity. Our social media sites are up and vibrant. You can find us on the web, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Soon we will be selecting a new board of directors. If you have any interest in filling a board position, please let me know. It's been one of my most rewarding experiences.

I'll be out of touch for much of July as my family and I will be traveling through Europe. If you send an email or call, I'll do my best to reply in a timely manner.

I wish you all health and happiness. Hug your loved ones. Stay safe. And, I'll see you in San Diego in September.

So excited,

*Cindy*





## **Thank You**

I was thinking the other day about the journey that the 388BGA has undertaken. To preserve for all time the history, friendships, memories and incidents of the members of the 388th Bombardment Group (H) during WWII. This is the objective or mission statement for the association. As we look over the last 4-5 years it seems that we have done quite well. The Board Of Directors has a monthly conference call to conduct business throughout the year. People are visiting our website where they can purchase items from the PX, you can sign-up for the reunion on line and pay for it with a card at the same time. In the last 2-3 years we have had 4-5 requests for information from individuals in Europe who want to know more about a crash site, a crew or people that their grandfather helped to escape. They can easily get to our historical data site which Dick has created and maintains. He has recently talked with Mighty Eighth Air Force museum in Savannah. They are talking about comparing data bases to clear up any discrepancies. David Miller is maintaining our Facebook site, a Twitter account and Instagram for the association. When he posts a picture of one of our vets doing every day activities such as eating lunch, taking a walk or shopping for groceries we frequently have over 1,000 people view those pictures. Please take a picture of your vet and send it to Dave. Our younger members are into Instagram and Snapchat which I have yet to try. And we have had a steady stream of new members. I believe that the grandchildren and great grandchildren are following our original members. You will hear more about the memorial fund at the reunion. We have more people involved in running the association than we have had in the past. If you have any interest or a little time we would be glad to have the help. Steven Butner and Ruth Castleberry have been working with our old membership list which is over a thousand lines and probably 20 columns wide. They are moving it into a data base. This will make it much easier to keep better and more accurate records. We have also been working on digitizing our corporate records and interviews of the original members like Dick has done with the historical data base so that they will be available for a long, long time. We have several females in key positions on the board and have had two females be president. This helps to keep



## **NEW MEMBERS**

Dennis Lio  
son of Tribune C. Lio  
Eric R. Pickard  
son of Robert E. Pickard  
E. Brian Pickard  
grandson of Robert E. Pickard

## **MEMORIAL FUND**

Shirley Cooperman  
Smash Mouth

## **SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Shirley Cooperman

## **GENERAL FUND**

Smash Mouth

**We are now  
accepting  
credit card  
payments!**

**People can pay reunion  
fees, membership fees,  
make charitable dona-  
tions and much more.**

**A link to this  
can be found on  
[www.388thbga.org](http://www.388thbga.org)  
under the store section.  
See you there!**

## COMING SOON!

Your 388th PX will be available online with many new items at [www.388thbga.org](http://www.388thbga.org) under the store tab.



**All  
merchandise  
INCLUDES  
postage!**

**we accept:**



"City of Savannah"  
Polo Shirts  
\$31  
"B-17 Flying Fortress"  
WWII Hats  
\$25  
388th Rhinestone Pins  
\$12.75  
B-17 Pins  
\$12.75  
Koozies  
\$3.75  
388th Lanyards  
(not pictured)  
\$2.75  
Bumper Stickers  
\$1.75



**COIN \$8.00 each**  
**KEYCHAIN \$10.00 each**  
**VELVET BOX \$4.00 each**  
**Shipping \$3.00/up to 5 coins**  
**\$8.00 for 6 coins or up to two gift boxes.**

Make checks out to: 388th Bomb Group Assn

Mail to:

Greg Staples

4715 W. Larchwood Court, Spokane, WA 99208

*All profits go to our Memorial in Knettishall.*

the association strong and vibrant. Having more people run the association lightens the work load for everybody. While other associations are fading and going away we remain strong and growing. I want to thank all of the people on the board, the reunion committee, the scholarship fund and the liaisons for all that they have done and continue to do. I believe that our association will be here for decades to come. In other words To preserve for all time the history, friendships, memories and incidents of the members of the 388th Bombardment Group (H) during WWII.

Rick Thompson

# Veterans Needed

Looking for veterans who are willing to be interviewed by 388th Bombardment Group Association Scholarship Program applicants.

**contact:**

**Ruth Castleberry at  
(501) 472-9068**

Please leave your name and phone number so Ruth can match a veteran with a student



## Harpold's Flak

This is a recollection of an event which happened while the Comer Crew-Pappy's Wagon was on assignment at the Knettishall Air Base in England between 18 Aug 1944 and 15 Jan 1945. We were on a bombing mission over Germany. I do not remember the target assignment for that day. We were flying at high altitude, probably at 25,000 feet or higher in a B-17 which was not pressurized. Almost always the temperature would be 40 to 50 degrees below zero.

On this particular mission we had encountered very heavy flak. One of the officers would ask for a crew check every few minutes to make sure that everyone was ok. At this time Harpold (ball turret gunner) did not respond. Gibson (waist gunner) could get no response and the ball turret was not moving. We decided that we had to get Harpold out of the turret right away to assess his situation.

I got a "walk around" bottle of oxygen and crawled from the tail position to the waist section of the aircraft to assist Gibson in getting Harpold out of the turret. We had to hand crank the ball turret to a position where the guns were pointing straight in order to get the turret door up inside the aircraft. After getting the turret door open we had to lift Harpold out. We took him to the radio room which was located just in front of the ball turret. We laid him on the floor and immediately started oxygen to try to revive him.

We were still flying through heavy flak while this was taking place. Before we were able to revive him a piece of flak tore through the plane and went through his shoe heel sideways. We felt sure that he had been hit in the foot, but we did not have time to worry about that wound at the moment.

After Harpold received enough oxygen

to begin to come back to the land of the living, we decided that we had better see how badly wounded his heel was. We removed Harpold's shoe, and to our surprise, there was no blood! He had only a mark on the back of his heel where the flak had scraped his foot as it went by.

Harpold was unaware of any of the events of that day, but he kept the shoe, and brought it to one of the 388th reunions for everyone to see.

Written by David Stewart, Tail Gunner, Comer Crew



**We know that every story  
is different and would like  
to hear from you.**

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR: STEVEN BUTNER**

P.O. Box 270147, Flower Mound, TX 75027

972-591-1726, Newsletter@388thbga.org





## **388<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association Reunion**

**Crowne Plaza San Diego, 9/6/17 – 9/9/17**

We wish to share important information to facilitate the hotel booking process for your upcoming event.

### **MAKING RESERVATIONS:**

A dedicated website is now available for your attendees to book their hotel rooms online. Reservations can be made starting 11/15/16.

### **BOOKING WEBSITE:**

<https://aws.passkey.com/go/a9ede5a5>

(Copy and paste onto web browser)

It is important to share this website with your attendees as soon as possible.

### **PHONE NUMBER:**

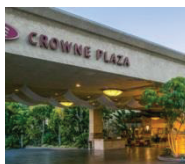
Please ask for the “**388<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association Reunion**” rate when calling. Call in hours are from 7am to 11pm, EST.

**1-888-233-9527**

### **CUTOFF:**

The last day to make reservations will be **8/16/17**. All individual reservations have a 48-Hour cancellation policy.





# The 388th Bomb Group Association

68th Annual Reunion Registration

*San Diego, California*

September 6-10, 2017



CUT-OFF DATE FOR REGISTRATION IS July, 14, 2017

To cancel and receive a full refund, contact Staci Long before the cut-off date of July 14.  
Cancellations received after July 14, but before July 31, will forfeit tour payments and registration fee. No refunds will be made for cancellations received after July 31.

## Thursday, Sep 7

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Join us for a narrated sightseeing tour, exploring the scenic beauty and fascinating history of San Diego's waterfront  
(drinks & snacks available for purchase)



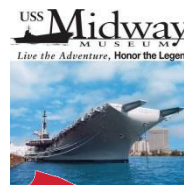
5:15 PM – 9:00 PM

Cheer on the San Diego Padres as they take on the St. Louis Cardinals. We'll have our own hospitality suite with prime viewing for the game – Dinner, drinks & snacks provided

## Friday, Sep 8

8:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Experience the USS Midway Museum – an unforgettable adventure as you walk in the footsteps of 225,000 Midway sailors. Explore more than 60 exhibits with a collection of 29 restored aircraft



11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Following our tour, we'll head to The Fish Market, San Diego's premier destination for seafood and San Diego Bay views. A waterside lunch buffet will be provided



## Saturday, Sep 9

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Business Meeting

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Social/Cocktail Hour

6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Dinner, Raffle, President's Address  
(cash bar open through dinner)

### Reservation form for 388th Bomb Group Association Reunion, September 6-10, 2017

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
GUEST(S): Full names please \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### REGISTRATION FEE REQUIRED FOR ALL ATTENDEES

	<b>\$45.00</b>	X	_____	= \$	_____
<b>Thursday</b> San Diego Bay Tour; Padres Baseball Game/Dinner	<b>\$86.00</b>	X	_____	= \$	_____
<b>Friday</b> USS Midway Tour with Lunch at The Fish Market	<b>\$57.00</b>	X	_____	= \$	_____

TOURS SCHEDULED AFTER JULY 14 ARE SPACE AVAILABLE ONLY

#### Saturday Banquet (includes tax & service charge)

#### Registration Questions Answered:

Cindy Hayes (408) 421-0885  
Kim McDonald (540) 831-0569

Lemon Caper Chicken	<b>\$45.00</b>	X	_____	= \$	_____
Baked Mahi Mahi	<b>\$45.00</b>	X	_____	= \$	_____
Chicken Tenders (kids 10 & under)	<b>\$21.00</b>	X	_____	= \$	_____
<b>MEMORY BOOK</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>	X	_____	= \$	_____
<b>DONATION (optional)</b>			_____	\$	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>				\$	_____

Write check payable to 388th Bomb Group Assn. Mail check and registration form to:  
Staci Long, 1120 Squaw Valley, Rockwall, TX 75087  
(Phone 786-525-7188, Email stacirae@mac.com)

## Donald Sjaardema POW Experience

My name is Donald Sjaardema. I was a Bombar-dier on a B-17, 388th Bomb Group, 561st Squad-ron located in Knettishall, England. I was shot down over Germany and this is my story.

October 6, 1944 was my first mission over Ger-many. (# 207) Our target was Berlin. As we ap-proached our target I could see that the air was very black in front of us with exploding shells and flak. God was with us and brought us through safely. It was scary as I had never seen flak and it seemed so thick.

Our second mission did not go so well. (#208) We had engine trouble shortly after being air-borne and were told to eject our bombs and fuel into the North Sea. I was in the bomb area of the plane replacing the cotter pins when suddenly dirt came into the aircraft from below. We had belly-landed in a farm field in England with a full gas and bomb load and one engine smoking. We ran from the airplane to a nearby farmer's house as fast as we could. The plane later exploded causing damage to 14 farm houses. God sure took care of me that day.

Our next mission was to Cologne. (# 212) We had dropped our bombs on a railroad yard and were on the way back to England when suddenly we were hit by flak. I turned around to talk with the Navigator who sat behind me but he was not there. I noticed that the escape hatch in the floor was open. I wondered where did he go? I called on the internal phone to the pilot but got no answer so I crawled into the cockpit. There was no one there. The plane was flying on automatic pilot. I wondered if I might try to fly it when it suddenly started to weave. I thought I had bet-ter get out while I can. I parachuted out and as I approached the ground, I saw I was moving with the wind and not strait down with the possibility of being slammed against something as I came

down. I prayed to God that He would protect me. I saw I was coming down into a forest and the trees could do a lot of damage to my body as I entered from above. I crossed my arms over my face and crossed my legs and prayed. I landed with the parachute on top of the tree and me dangling about a foot off the ground without a scratch. Then I knew God was with me. He had saved my life and body from injury.

Within minutes a group of farmers with rifles drawn were upon me and escorted me to a small village. They put me on a chair and the whole vil-lage came by to see this American soldier. Some seemed mad at this American. That evening a German army truck came by to pick me up. On the truck was a tarp and they lifted the tarp to show me a dead person. He was our ball turret gunner. I began to see how wonderfully God had protected me. I was driven to a small town and put into a jail cell. I slept on the cement floor totally exhausted. The next morning a soldier took me on a train to Frankfurt where I was put in a solitary cell for 3 days before anyone spoke to me. I was fed bread and hot water through a small door in the door. Finally I was interro-gated and sent by train to a prison camp.

I arrived at Stalag Luft III located at Zagan, Po-land and was placed in a compound inhabited by British airmen. I learned it was the compound where the Great Escape had taken place earlier that year. Food was scarce and consisted mostly of potatoes, turnips, cabbage and bread. The sauerkraut often had maggots in it and bugs in the pea soup. We received portions of Red Cross food parcels which really helped to sustain us. We pooled all our food and one person from our room did all the cooking. We were busy digging new tunnels and trying to out-smart the Ger-man goons. As the war progressed the food sup-ply dwindled. All we thought about was food. We even began to think we could survive on bed





slats.

Near the end of January, 1945 we could hear the Russian guns in the distance. The Germans decided to evacuate the camp. We were given one hour notice to be ready to leave at 8 pm in the evening. We gathered what we could of food and essentials and marched on side roads throughout the night and all the next day in a blizzard with below freezing temperatures. That night we stayed in barns in a small village. The next day we marched again to another small town and slept in a brick factory. In all we marched over 50 miles to Spremberg where we were put in box cars of 50 to a car. We were very concerned because the cars were not marked and subject to strafing by the Allies. We were closely confined in these cars for 3 days and nights as the train took us to a camp outside of Nurnberg with an occasional stop for outside toilet duty.

The camp at Nurnberg was in deplorable condition. Buildings were in disrepair and were filthy beyond description. Bedbugs, lice and fleas ran unchecked. Soon we were all bit up and no adequate facility to shower or clean up or for medical help. There was also a shortage of fuel for heat or cooking. Soon we were stripping the boards off of outside buildings such as the latrine. All that remained were the supporting posts. Then the camp became infected with dysentery and there was no privacy in the latrine. We all lost many pounds in a short period of time. To top it off, Nurnberg was bombed day and night and we were only 6 KM. outside the city. The night flares from the planes were particularly scary. We had triple bunk beds but all spent most of the nights on the bottom bunks in the event of flak coming into the barracks. There were 24 men cramped into small alcoves where we slept, eat and occupied our time. Each barracks housed between 130 and 150 men. Food was short, most were sick and the German guards were occupied with the bombing raids. We were praying for the end to the war. Even here, God sustained us so that

the weather warmed up and we could be in the fresh air and become well again.

At the beginning of April, 1945 the Americans were advancing in Germany and we were looking forward to liberation. The Germans had a different idea and decided to evacuate the camp again. This time we marched to Moosberg which was about 200 Km. away. The civilian population realized that the war was almost over so they were more friendly along the way and we actually ate off the land as we went from village to village sleeping in barns and churches along the way. We probably stunk as we had the same clothes on ever since we left Stalag Luft III arriving in Moosberg, the camp was overflowing with prisoners so large tents were put up and you picked out a spot on the ground. It rained a few times and we found that the water flowed right through the tents. The prisoners had made little blower stoves out of tin cans which we used to heat whatever food we had or could come by. Fortunately, I was only there about two weeks when General Patton came through with his troops and liberated us. About 10 days later we were air lifted out to France where we were rehabilitated before making the journey back home. This was done by ship which took 10 days to cross the Atlantic due to zig-zagging to avoid submarines who may not have known that the war was over.

As I look back over this experience I am amazed how God took an interest in me and protected me through all these adverse circumstances. And He is still providing all my needs today. Not because I deserve it but because He loved me first. Rom. 8:28. All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Donald Sjaardema of Bradenton, FL now 94 years old. Married to my sweetheart for 71 years. What a blessing after that terrible experience.

9/7/2016



## Gratitude ...

Last month, I received a wonderful surprise in the mail ... here's the note that was included:

To the 388th Bomb Group -

On behalf of all the Smash Mouth personnel (listed below) I would like to donate \$1,000 for each one for a total of \$9,000 - Thank you so much for serving and protecting this great nation -

Sincerely,  
Neil Hennessy

Smash Mouth personnel:

Steve Harwell, Paul DeLisle, Michael Klooster, Randy Cooke, Sam Eigen, Patrick Bojanic, Tod Burr, Doug Swartz, and Ron Xepoleas

Wow! Mr. Hennessy - THANK YOU!

During our last board of directors call, the board voted to place \$3,000 in our general fund to help cover some of the reunion costs and \$6,000 into the Knettishall Memorial fund to help fund the manufacturing and placement of matching benches at the memorial site.

Cindy Hayes

## Watch Us GROW ...



The Facebook page for the 388th Bomb Group Association has evolved into a valuable asset to the 388th and its members. Alan Reese, Cindy Hayes and David Miller handle the posting, publishing and responding to peoples requests. Over the past two years our followers have doubled in number. Several family members have found the 388th Bomb Group through Facebook and provided images and information we can share and use to update the 388th online database. I believe some have also joined the association.

By the numbers:

1,401 people have liked the 388th Face Book Group

1,389 people following the 388th Face Book Group

7-hour response time (Alan, Cindy and David's response to any questions about the Group)

Visit the 388th Bomb Group Association Facebook page at:

[www.facebook.com/388thbga](http://www.facebook.com/388thbga)



# TAPS



## James F. Facos

James Francis "Jim" Facos passed away peacefully at Central Vermont Medical Center on May 14. The longtime Montpelier, VT resident was 92.



Ball turret gunner on Arthur Moreland's crew in the 563rd Sqd., Mr. Facos completed 30 missions between March and June 1944, primarily in the aircraft *The Silver Lady*. Years later, he would draw on his memories to write a novel, *The Silver Lady*. Awards included the DFC, which he received at age 19, and the Air Medal with three oak clusters. Based on his combat record, specifically, operations related to D-Day and the liberation of France, he was recently named Chevalier in the Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur by the President of France.

Following his military service, Mr. Facos graduated from Gates College with an AB in 1949, then attended Florida State University, where he received his MA. In 1959 he accepted a position in the English department at Vermont College and moved to Montpelier with his wife Cleo and their first child. Mr. Facos's career spanned three

decades, first at Vermont College and then at Norwich University. Upon his retirement in 1989, he was conferred the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters and was appointed professor emeritus.

Although he identified himself primarily as a teacher, Mr. Facos was an active writer throughout his life. In addition to *The Silver Lady*, he published *Collected Lyrics*, a book of poetry; numerous short stories and several plays, including "Mountains in My Stride." His papers are housed at Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library.

Memberships included the American Legion, DAV and VFW Post 792; he was also a founding member of the American Air Museum at Duxford, and was a volunteer Red Coat in the ER of Central Vermont Medical Center.

Survivors include Cleo, his wife of 60 years; daughters Theresa "Tina" Casolo and Elizabeth "Joy" Facos, son Anthony "Tony" Facos, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A committal service was held on June 1 at the Vermont Veterans Memorial Center in Randolph Center, VT.



388TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION (THE)  
P.O. BOX 270147  
FLOWER MOUND, TX 75027

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## 388TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Wife/Husband \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft Name \_\_\_\_\_

Pilot \_\_\_\_\_ No. Missions \_\_\_\_\_ POW (Date) \_\_\_\_\_ STALAG LUFT \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Lifetime Membership (\$75.00 onetime payment)

☐ Donation

☐ Annual Dues (\$20.00)

How would you like to receive Newsletter: ☐ Mail ☐ Email

***If paying for an Associate Membership:***

Name of relation who is/was in the 388th \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ (☒ box if you have prior military service.)

*Please fill in known information above, Squadron through POW information, for relative.*

Mail to: Ruth Castleberry, Secretary, 388th Bomb Group Assn., Inc.  
2 Beaver Ridge, Conway, AR 72932-8229 Email: secretary@388thbg.org or rcastleberry.fcds@gmail.com