



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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**The Bronze Model of a B-17 forever flying proudly at the Air Force Academy in
Colorado Springs**

Article on page 4

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From the President's Desk

Wow, I can't believe my year as president is already over. It was a great year for me and capped by a great reunion in Colorado Springs. It was my fourth reunion and I'm still meeting people. So I'm already looking forward to Savannah and seeing old friends and making new ones. We had a great time on the excursions in Colorado. Even though it was Parent's Weekend at the Academy, Rachell and Joel Rary managed to get us into the parking lot at the Chapel so everybody got an up close look at the Chapel and got to hear the magnificent pipe organ played by the grandson of original member Marvin Peters. What a small world! Then the Academy visitor's center and gift shop before lunch at Garden of the Gods. I took a few pictures and have posted them to our Facebook page and also our social website at www.388thbg.org.

After Friday morning's board meeting, my brother and I went out to the Peterson AFB museum and got a surprisingly thorough tour of the exhibits including a walkthrough of the inside of their EC-121 Lockheed Super Constellation. Back to the hotel, just in time to get on the bus to the Flying W for dinner and a great cowboy music show. Saturday morning was the annual member business meeting. After the meeting, I finally got to the really nice outdoor pool and started to relax as I was down to only a few hours left as president. The docent at the Peterson AFB museum said we couldn't leave Colorado Springs until we'd been to the Flying W and the top of Pikes Peak so off we went. It was a fun drive and only took 4 hours round trip from the hotel (most of which was about 15 miles per hour in first gear) and we were able to make lots of stops for photos and shopping. The formal dinner was great. Ben Forrest, Jr. had gotten his dad to talk a little about his war experiences and that led to conversations with Charles Neff. The fantastic story that came out of that was riveting. Thanks again to Ben Sr. and Charles for sharing their story and Ben Jr. for repeating it for our benefit.

We had flown into Denver and rented a car, so Sunday saw us driving back at a relaxed pace. We took in the Wings over the Rockies Air Museum at what was once Lowry AFB. Three big bombers: a B-18, a B-52 and a B-1 and lots of other fun exhibits including a Star Wars X-wing fighter on loan from Lucas films. I hope those of you who attended the reunion also had time to discover some of the many fabulous attractions of the Centennial State.

Now home and reflecting on the past year, all I can say was it went too fast. I wanted to get challenge coins for the reunion and didn't but we will have them shortly. I circulated a design and got preorders for almost 100 coins. There is a picture of the design on page 05 and I am taking orders now. Cost will be \$7 each plus shipping. My new e-mail is srdirector@388thbg.org. My home address is 4715 W Larchwood Ct, Spokane, WA 99208

Business of the organization goes on but the biggest ongoing expense for the association is in your hands. This newsletter. It is important and well worth its cost but we can economize with your help. It costs the association almost \$1.50 to print and mail it to you. It costs us nothing to e-mail it to you. If you have an e-mail account, please consider getting it that way and printing it yourself.

Finally, thanks. First, to ALL the officers of the Association. They all helped me during my year in office. Second, thanks to Rachell and Joel Rary. They worked their tails off to make sure everybody had a good time. Third, thanks to all of you who have welcomed me to the Association.

Greg



The Lighter Side



On one mission of the 45th Combat Wing, I was the Command Pilot of the 388th, the second of three groups with a General in the lead plane.

Our Instructions for this mission was to turn left after dropping our bombs on the target. After seeing the General turn right, I had to make the decision to either have our group follow him or go the opposite direction.

I made the decision to follow our original orders and directed the pilot to turn left.

Over the radio, we immediately heard the General say "You S.O.B.!"

A week or two later, when we all gathered to review several of the last missions, that same General called out my name and asked that I stand up. I figured I was going to get chewed out in front of everyone.

Instead the General said, "I suppose you expect an apology from me....**Well, this is it! Now sit down!!!**



I hope you are enjoying **The Lighter Side** column, we would love to hear your story. All submissions accepted with enthusiasm. We wish to thank all of you who have contributed to this column. Please send **your** story to the Editor by mail or email, to be published in a future issue of the 388th BG Newsletter. Looking forward to hearing from those of you that promised a story... and have yet submitted one.

In another "senior moment" I seemed to have accidentally erased or just misplaced a couple of items sent in. If you have not seen your submission yet, **please** send it again.

New Members:

Charles T Bagby, nephew of Byron Cook 560th Sqd
Sandra Norrid, daughter of Guy Bollinger 561st Sqd
Vincent Petrosius, son-in-law of Ed Stachyra 560th Sqd
Scott Stachyra, son of Ed Stachyra 560th Sqd

New Life Member formerly Annual Member

James Facos of the 562nd Squadron

Associate Life Members formerly Associate Members

Patrick Nedwick and Phil Turner

Thank you for your donations

General Fund

Francis Ammons	Harlod Bigelow
Dottie Blassdell	Steve & Sophia Butner
Allen Castner	Jim & Joyce Cotton
Henry & Betty Curvat	Wayne Daniels
Tom Dennis Sr	Tom & Barbara Dennis Jr
James Facos	Ben Forrest Jr
Ward Forrest	Joseph & Doris Hild
John & Kathy Ma	Barb ara McAllister
Charles & Marion Meyer	James Morrow
Jan Pack	Brad Price
Greg & Lila Rowling	William Scheppers
Edward Scott	Leslee Sherman
Harry & Dorothy Sprague	George & Gail Staley
Edward Stachyra	David & Esta Stewart
Goran Sundblad	Dick Timberlake
Ken Walker	Christy Wammack

Memorial Fund

Tom Dennis Sr	Tom Dennis Jr
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Project Ultimate Sacrifice

Henry & Betty Curvat	Michael Galgano
Sandra Bollinger Norrid	B John Ross

If I missed anyone that made a donation, my sincere apology.
Please notify me and I will be sure you are included in the next issue.

On line PX

The web page for the on line PX is:
<http://www.cafepress.com/388thbg> . There are many items with the 388th logo available there. If you would like other items let me know and I will see if they can be added. My email is c130d6@comcast.net

Rob Staples



The Bronze Model of a B-17 at the U.S. Air Force Academy

On May 23, 1996, I received a letter from Catherine Parish, of the U.S. Air Force Academy, telling me of the plans to build “A monumental bronze replica of the famous B-17 aircraft which will join four other War birds already in place in the distinguished ‘Study Hall’ Sculpture Garden at the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs. Those planes already in place include the P-38, P-40, PA7, and P-51. The B-17 will have an approximate wing span of 19 feet, and sit upon a beautifully polished granite base. When completed, the plane and base will weigh approximately 3 tons.”

I telephoned Ms Parish, and she told me that if the 388th Bomb Group Association would donate \$450 towards the construction, the name of our group would be put on the plaque that would list the sponsors. I did not know why I received this letter, because I was not an officer of the 388th Bomb Group Association at that time, so I wrote to Bob Simmons telling him of the forthcoming project. He said he would take it up at the next Board meeting.

I heard nothing for a year, so I decided that I would make the donation myself. I telephoned Ms Parish again, and she said that if I acted on my own behalf, she would put the name of the group and of the B-17 that I flew in. So I sent her a personal check for \$450.

When I was elected President in 2001, I suggested that we go to Colorado Springs for one of our reunions, but there seemed to be no interest. When I was elected President again in 2008, I again suggested that we go to the Air Force Academy to see our B-17 model. The Group chose instead to go to Salt Lake City and Lexington, Kentucky.

At last the group chose Colorado Springs for our 2011 meeting, and I was elated that I would finally see the bronze B-17. When we met to tour the Academy, we first went to the chapel of the Academy. As we were leaving, I told our guide that there was a Flying Fortress that I would like to see. She said, “What’s a Flying

Fortress,” and then she added, “We have no time for that because we are on a tight schedule to go to the Garden of the Gods for lunch.”

I was not to be denied. I told her, “Many persons in this group flew B-17s in World War II,” and I told her that, “I am going to find the B-17 statue on my own.” She said that I could not do that, and then she said, “Wait,” as she telephoned someone, and then she added, “You can take twenty minutes to see it.”

As my wife and Jan Pack and I walked towards the Sculpture Garden other people joined us. We first saw a model of the B-29 which was not a part of the original plan, and behind it was the B-17. It was on a tall granite base and seemed to be flying. It was a magnificent replica of the planes we had flown. About a foot above the ground there was the plaque listing the donors. There I found the 388th Bomb Group Association and the name of the Fortress in which I had flown 30 missions—“Wolf Wagon.” I thought to myself that I would send this article to my six grandchildren, and hoped that some day they will visit this place and reflect on what their grandfather had done in World War II.

August Bolino

Navigator, Houghton’s Crew



ROBERT
 8AF HS WISCONSIN CHAPTER
 8AF HS COLORADO CHAPTER
 8AF MEM MUSM FOUND INC
 94 BGMA BURY ST EDMONDS
 388 BG "WOLF WAGON"
 890 BG(H)VA PARHAM FIELD (SQ J)
 447 BGMA RATTLEDEN (SQ K)
 AIR FORCE ESCAPE & EVASION SOC



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING...

By Dick Henggeler, Historian

The United States Military is organized in an order of battle that starts with the President. The following describes 388th position in this chain.

The United States Air Force was not established until after World War II. The 388th was an element of the Air Corps of the United States Army. (Thus their uniform colors were olive green and khaki) The Air Corps was divided up into Air Forces which operated in various theaters. The 8th Air Force was responsible for combat forces (bomber and fighter) that operated out of England.

The 8th Air Force was divided into divisions. The 3rd Bombardment Division had a "square" on the their B-17 tail (the other two divisions had a triangle and circle). The 3rd Division was composed of Combat Wings that included the 45th Combat Wing., The 388th, 96th, and 452nd groups made up the 45th Combat Wing. The 388th Bomb Group marked their aircraft with an "H" in the square.

Finally the 388th had 4 squadrons (560th, 561st, 562nd, and 563rd) each with 9 to 12 combat crews and support personnel.

To recap the order of battle

US Army

Army Air Corps

8th Air Force

3rd Bombardment Division

45th Combat Wing

388th Bombardment Group

560th Bomb Squadron

561st Bomb Squadron

562nd Bomb Squadron

563rd Bomb Squadron

CHALLENGE COIN

We are excited to be able to offer a military "Challenge Coin" to you. The tradition of challenge coins is attributed to the Army Air Corps during the First World War. These coins have become very popular with active duty units over the past few years and it seemed like a good idea for us. A challenge coin is a small coin (1 ½ inch diameter) bearing an organization's insignia and carried by the organization's members. In some units, they are used to prove membership when challenged and to enhance morale. In addition, they are also collected by service members.

You may have seen the US Air Force Academy coin for sale in their gift shop (it was \$8.) These coins are also used as a token of thanks. For instance, I will be giving a coin to each of the cadets that performed the posting of the colors at our formal dinner in Colorado Springs. So, buy one for yourself, one for each of your kids and grandkids, a couple to give away. Our initial order will be for 300 coins. We are intending to sell these for \$7 each (plus shipping at cost) with all the profit going to the Project Ultimate Sacrifice extension to our Memorial in Knettishall. If you'd like to preorder a coin (or several) please let me know. An artist's proof is shown. The proof shows 1942 – 1945 (dates organization begins and ends).

This will be changed on the final version to 1943-1945 (time at Knettishall).

Greg Staples (see my contact info on page 2)



“WE LANDED, AND WE LANDED, AND WE LANDED...”

The mission was Berlin, a deep penetration raid on March 29, 1944. This mission was flown approximately 30 days after the initial Berlin raid so the Germans were ready. Due to target conditions, we hit the secondary targets of Tempelhoff airfield, RR station and Bridges.

Bombardier Neff had just completed the bomb release, closed the bomb bay doors and as is procedure turned the aircraft autopilot over to the pilot, Harken. Normally in this situation the pilot would turn the aircraft to head home and descend to avoid flak concentrations focused on their bombing altitude.

Ball turret gunner Forrest was counting bombs, noted bomb bay door closed, and then instead of looking at the ground, he was suddenly looking at the sky. He noted that all four engines were operational. After several subsequent rolls and aircraft going into a steep dive, he asked over the intercom...“What’s going on up there?”

Chuck Neff also observed the aircraft’s continued rolling and entering in a steep dive. He received no response on the intercom when querying the pilot/co-pilot.

While the aircraft continued in a dive and rolling, Chuck decided to grab his ‘walk around’ O2 bottle, charts and climb to the flight deck, having to literally use the bomb site, windows, roof and whatever was available to get to the pilot and co-pilot station. Several times he had to stop because of the G-forces encountered.

Upon arriving on the flight deck, Neff noted the pilot slumped over the controls, severely wounded, the co-pilot also wounded in the arm and leg, requesting assistance to get pilot Harken off the controls. Chuck also noted the engineer gunner, Surrige, unconscious on the deck. Neff unbuckled Harken from his seat, pulled him off and placed his walk around O2 mask on the pilot. By this time Chuck was covered in blood, buckled himself into the pilot’s seat and donned the pilots O-2 mask.

Chuck Neff had never flown an aircraft before.

The co-pilot, Hadley, could not exert enough force to right the aircraft and pull it out of the dive due to his wounded leg and arm. Chuck followed Hadley’s advice and flying lessons, placing his feet on the instrument panel for leverage and following Hadley’s advice to us the stabilizer trim to assist. Chuck had to find the stabilizer wheel!

Finally level, at 9,000ft., after diving from 25,000ft., Chuck turned on the autopilot. He was familiar with the autopilot because he used it remotely from the Bombardiers station to perform bomb runs. They were just SW of Berlin with 5 hours to home through enemy territory.

Chuck cleaned the instrument panel of blood so he could see the instruments he needed. Hadley gave advice of a good cruise power setting for the engines.

Chuck, being the Bombardier, knew exactly where they had been when they dropped the bombs. He had charts that indicated the latest concentrations of flak and fighter opposition. He knew he did not want to go back the way they came. Instead he chose a Northwest heading that would take them to the North Sea, hoping to turn left there and head for England.

The first thing Chuck did was rally effective crew and assign them all duties. Personnel were charged with manning the Chaff deployment, which he would dump if they were being shot at. He assigned others to watch the ground for navigation markers and the North Sea. Others were assigned to watch for enemy aircraft and man guns in the event they were attacked.

Observation by Ball Turret Gunner Forrest at this time: Other B-17’s, also crippled, well above them, being attacked by fighters. Forrest also left the Ball Turret to render assistance up front, finding the very unique situation described above.

Their aircraft, “BORROWED TIME” was never attacked or shot at on the way home.

Chuck, knowing where they had been, needed to know their ground speed and direction to navigate. By triangulating known and other radio stations using the ADF needle,

compass and using a stopwatch, Chuck located their approximate position on the map, and calculated ground speed. He corrected course which did eventually lead them over the North Sea. Because he was over cloud layer Chuck estimated when to turn left for England, hoping to stay over the ocean....also hoping not to be thought of as enemy aircraft inbound.

Finally, they spotted the ocean and Chuck descended the aircraft, using the autopilot. By a miracle (sorry, no other exhalation) they found England, by Ipswich, not too far north of Knettishall. Chuck recognized an elevated railway along the coast that was near their base. He descended further and recognized tall building that was lined up on final approach to their base (more miracle). Using the autopilot and with advice from the still conscious co-pilot, Hadley, the aircraft was configured for landing. Landing gear down, flaps deployed and power adjusted for landing speed.

Somehow, Chuck managed all of this during their final approach while maintaining a reasonable glide path to the runway. With Hadley giving advice (as co-pilot, Hadley himself had never landed a B-17!), they continued towards the runway, fired off red signal flares indicating wounded aboard. Chuck made the decision to keep the autopilot engaged till touchdown..."I just flew that airplane into the runway."

Ball Turret gunner Forrest describes the landing humorously as "we landed, and we landed, and we landed..."seven times in all.

Chuck disengaged the autopilot at touchdown and wrestled the aircraft to a successful stop, just off the runway, in the grass (final miracle). Except for the ambulance, the airport was quiet. They were reported missing, having landed 2.5 hours after the balance of the 388th aircraft.

Chuck exited the aircraft first, wanting to direct the ambulance crew to Harken and Hadley. Though uninjured, Neff was covered in blood from his head to his toes...the ambulance crew were hard to convince that he was okay.

There was no debriefing of this incident. They landed so late that the intelligence and support personnel were all off duty. The crew never received credit for this remarkable display of courage, teamwork, fortitude and preparedness...not that any complained about that fact.

This story and others like it need to be passed on to today's generation of combat airmen/women as an example of doing whatever it takes to get the job done.

Chuck Neff and that crew would not be denied. All of the able crew were reassigned another aircraft and were back flying within a week.

This was the fourth mission for Chuck Neff and Ben Forrest. They both were fortunate to survive 30 missions and return home. This author is particularly pleased as Ben Forrest is my Father.



Ben Forrest Jr., Tom Dennis Jr., Chuck Neff and Ben Forrest Sr. (seated). Picture taken at this years 388th Reunion in Colorado Springs.

Editors note: Time is running out. Talk with your Fathers and Grandfathers. Get their stories. They all have them and we need to hear them. Keep the 388th alive!

“Preserved for All Time”

The following described event clearly defines the mission and very reason for the existence of the 388th Bomb Group Association. If not for the hard work and efforts of many, once any of our original members make their last flight, all knowledge, memories, history, and stories they have to share become extinct. Preservation of their Legacy is **OUR** mission!

In April of this year, Nelda Tatum, widow of Assoc. original member Louis Allen, contacted Alan Reese about an article he had written in the Assoc. Newsletter concerning preservation of original A-2 jackets. She had her husband's original A-2 and wished to find a new home for it where it would best commemorate the legacy and history of Louis and those who served during W.W. II. For a 60+ year old jacket, it and the artwork on the jacket, are in amazingly good condition.

Follow-up conversations with Nelda (Rae), Tatum, and feeling as though such a significant piece of history is not to be lost, we began to consider possible options by which the Assoc., could benefit and share the history of the 388th. While the Assoc. is not in the habit of buying artifacts or memorabilia, arrangements were made with Rae to purchase the A-2, along with some other items which will be displayed in the Hospitality room.

The initial thought was to raffle or sell the jacket. Those funds would then be split equally between Rae, who has felt the pinch of the hard economic times compounded by a recent diagnosis of colon cancer and the Association. Thus adding a contribution, to the 388th general fund.

What was to follow is testimony to the mission of the 388th Bomb Group Assoc. A preliminary letter was sent to the Board members and the story was shared with

anyone who would listen, outlining the new found opportunity and seeking suggestions of how best the jacket may be raffled or sold to raise funds. James Morrow, liaison to the Mighty 8th Museum in Savannah, checked to see if there was an A-2 jacket in the 388th's display at the museum. There was not.

Several months later a 388th member and his family, who wishes to remain unnamed, had heard about the jacket, and Rae's personal circumstances. They made an \$800 donation for the A-2 jacket with a request that ½ of the proceeds be donated to Louis's widow in memory of all who served in the 388th Bomb Group. The family further requested that the jacket be donated to the Mighty 8th for our display so that another part of history and the story of the 388th Bomb Group may be **“preserved for all time”**.



On July 29th James Morrow and Henry Curvat, representing the 388th Bomb Group Association, met with Henry Skipper, CEO of the Mighty 8th AF museum, and donated Louis Allen's A-2. It will be placed in the 388th's display. So by the time we gather for next year's reunion it will be properly displayed for all to see along with the ongoing restoration of the City of Savannah!

With commitment and the desire, we can make a difference.



“CITY OF SAVANNAH”
 The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is restoring its B-17 in honor of the B-17 named “City of Savannah.” On December 3, 1944 the aircraft was the 5000th airplane processed through Hunter Army Air Field at Savannah, GA during World War II. It was christened prior to its take-off to England to fly combat missions with the 388th Bomb Group, 563rd Squadron of the 8th Air Force.

Follow on line:
http://www.mightyeighth.org/b17_restoration.htm



63rd Reunion

The “*City of Savannah*”
 &
 The *City of Savannah*

THURSDAY:
 Museum Tour

Thur, Fri, Sat:
 At your leisure tour the museum, or take advantage of the unique opportunity to access out-of-print rare books & un-published personal accounts in the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center housed in the museum.



Ghost Adventures



FRIDAY: Dinner Cruise on the River Queen



Tours



River Front Shopping
 Historic Down Town Shopping



SATURDAY: Banquet in the General Lewis E. Lyle Rotunda



Beautiful River Front Views

Memory Found

An identification bracelet he forgot he had ever owned has been returned to former 561st Sqd. togglier Lee Barger, thanks to efforts by the 388th Collection at Hillside Farm.

Amateur metal detector Roger Weston of Carbrooke, Norfolk discovered the bracelet while scanning farmland at the former Station 136 site, and brought it to Collection Curator Dave Sarson. Sarson suggested that, before putting the item on display, they first attempt to return it to its owner.



With help from the Association, Sarson was able to provide contact information for Mr. Barger, who flew 18 missions with the Emery Carlson crew in the spring of 1945, and the id plate was put in the mail.

“I was surprised to find the plate in such good condition after being in the ground for so long,” wrote Mr. Barger, who in turn provided the Collection with a photo of his crew’s enlisted men, as well a combat photo he took from his position in the nose. “I have no memory of the bracelet you found; however, that was sixty five years ago and my memory is not as good as it once was.

“I treasure my time at the airbase and England, and I thank you for bringing back those memories, both good and otherwise.”



Enlisted men of the Emery Carlson crew, l-r: Bob Gurwitz, radio operator; Max Perris, waist gunner; Lee Barger, togglier; Jack Garcia, engineer; Walter Tappan, tail gunner; and Hearl Clayton, ball turret gunner.

Mail Call



FW: Photo for Ficarra Crew More info

Tuesday, August 16, 2011 8:29 AM

From: "anne ficarra" <anneo11@optonline.net>

To: newsletter@388thbg.org

My husband, Virgil Ficarra was in his first year at MIT studying Aeronautical Engineering. He left to join the Air force. He returned after the war to MIT. He then went to Harvard Medical School. He practiced Thoracic Surgery for over thirty years. We have been married for 56 years and he is now 87.

His nickname is Val. We would love to hear from anyone in his crew.

Anne Ficarra



Subject: Photo for Ficarra Crew

Date: 7/25/11 6:54:47 AM

From: "Joe Ficarra"

To: 388bg@comcast.net

Cc: "Ficarra, Anne (Mom)"

388th Bomb Group:

I have some additional info for the site. The attached picture shows the Ficarra Crew. Currently the stock "Photo Not Available" appears on the site under the Crews link. My father, Virgil Ficarra, is shown swatting on the left.

Please let me know if you need anything else to allow you to post the photo.

Thank you,

Joe Ficarra
3 Manning Road
Glen Cove, NY 11542
(516) 671-2316

Honor Flights

During this past several months the newsletter editor has received several emails and regular mail regarding WWII Veterans "Honor Flights" to Washington DC. Because of the personal nature of these trips I will not divulge too much information about what actually takes place on these trips.

The following is an excerpt from the "Hollycreek Village HOA" newsletter by George Pilgrim:

"I would like to express my gratitude to Brookshire Grocery Company for providing us with such an amazing opportunity. Sam Anderson and Rick Ellis, their wives and many other Brookshire Partners who did an amazing job providing us with this profoundly moving experience.

"We will always be grateful for what this group did for us. I for one will NEVER forget it!

God Bless
George Pilgrim"

Brookshire Grocery Company sponsored this:

World War II Hero's Flight

Out of Tyler TX.

There are many such flights available throughout the United States. You can go online to:

WWW.HonorFlight.org to sign up a veteran or to volunteer. The following was copied from this site.

There are other organizations that do similar flights but not for FREE. This is the official site to sign up.

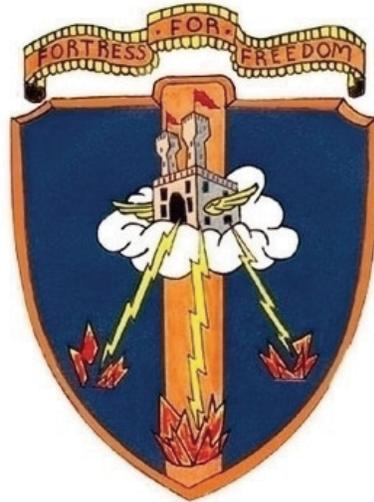
"Honor Flight Network is a non-profit organization created solely to honor America's veterans for all their sacrifices. We transport our heroes to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at **their** memorials. Top priority is given to the senior veterans – World War II survivors, along with those other veterans who may be terminally ill.

"Of all of the wars in recent memory, it was World War II that truly threatened our very existence as a nation—and as a culturally diverse, free society. Now, with over one thousand World War II veterans dying each day, our time to express our thanks to these brave men and women is running out."



The Official Commercial Airline of the Honor Flight Network

388th Bombardment Group



Annual Memorial

September, 2011

Jack Ashworth – 563rd

James G. Baldock - 561st

Harold Baron – 560th

Albert Bibbens, Jr – 562nd

Robert E. Bradley - 562nd

Peter J. Brennan – 561st

Jack Fanta – 560th

William J Gehring – 563rd

Howard Goines – 562nd

William Gordon Griffiths – 561st

Richard Grumblatt – 560th

Howard Helm – 561st

Richard E. Henne – Ord 505

John Fleming – Air Drome Museum in Prestwick, Scotland

Lester Hess – 561st

John W Hoff – 563rd

Donald Marble – 561st

John D. Pond – 560th

Ray Rome – 562nd

Ralph E. Schaal – 560th

Willis N. Skiff – 560th

Japeth William “Bill” Turley – 563rd

Jack Waldron Jr – 562nd

Albert C. Weidenbusch – 562nd

William B Williams – 563rd

Charles M Zettek – 562nd

To all those we have lost over the years we offer this simple Toast...

"...Until We Meet Again."

Taps



MILTON C. CASEBERE

Milton Carlton Casebere, 90, passed away February 21 at the Aase Haugen Home in Decorah, IA. He was Calvin Samson's navigator in the 561st Sqd., flying 28 missions between February and August 1944 and rising to the rank of Captain.

After leaving the Army Air Corps Mr. Casebere worked at C & N Sales, a family business, until he was recalled for service during the Korean Conflict. During that period he flew an additional 55 missions as navigator-bombardier. He continued with the Air Force Reserve for 22 years, retiring as a Lt. Colonel.

Mr. Casebere is survived by wife Shirley and daughters Susan, Polly and Mary.

WILLIAM J. GEHRING

William J. Gehring of Worthington, OH passed away January 31 at age 87. Engineer/top turret gunner on the Bragg, Hoff and Shumaker crews in the 563rd Sqd., he flew 39 missions between December 1944 and May 1945.

Following the war, Mr. Gehring sold furniture briefly before opening the Sleep Rite Shop, the first bedding-only concept store in Ohio. He later spent more than 30 years with White's Furniture and Sleep Shops, rising to the position of Vice President and General Manager.

Mr. Gehring is survived by Maxine, his wife of 63 years; son Chuck and four grandchildren. Burial was held at St. Joseph Cemetery in Lockbourne, OH.

HOWARD E. GOINES

Howard E. Goines of Napa, CA passed away March 1, 2010 at age 89. Born in Spiro, OK, he moved to California with his wife Elsie in 1946. He was in iron working and then with Dymo Industries until his retirement in 1980.

In addition to his wife of 68 years, Mr. Goines is survived by daughters Nan, Paula and Danna; seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Internment was at Tulocay Cemetery in Napa.

ARTHUR C. GORDON

Arthur Charles "Charlie" Gordon, former 563rd Sqd. pilot, died February 26, 2008 in Lincoln, NE at age 85.

A graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University, he taught high school algebra in Lincoln until his retirement in 1985. He was a member of the American Legion, Lincoln Education and National Education Associations.

Survivors include Betty, his wife of 28 years; daughter Carol; sons Randall and Michael; stepson Randall Grotelueschen; and eight grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Alice.

WILLIAM GORDON GRIFFITH

William Gordon "Grif" Griffith, 89, passed away March 6 in Commerce Township, MI. He had been a 561st Sqd. pilot, flying 35 missions between November 1944 and March 1945, primarily in the aircraft *Weary Wolf*.

Following the war, he entered the dry cleaning business, working in that field until his retirement in 1997.

Mr. Griffith is survived by his wife Helen, five children, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

RICHARD H. GRUMBLATT

Richard Grumblatt died June 4 in Venice, FL at age 88. A 560th Sqd. ball turret gunner flying with the Soldato and Deskin crews, he completed 35 missions between March and August 1944. Awards included the DFC and Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters.

At war's end Mr. Grumblatt returned to college and received a Master's Degree in Social Science from the University of Pittsburgh. For 30 years he taught civics and history at the high school level in Pennsylvania and California before retiring to Florida.

Preceded in death by his wife Eileen, Mr. Grumblatt is survived by his son Douglas. Mr. Grumblatt was buried with military honors at the Erie Cemetery in his hometown of Erie, PA.

SAM F. HARTMAN

Sam Feiss Hartman, MD, passed away in May 18, 2009 in Beaumont, TX at age 92. A veteran of the 96th BG, Dr. Hartman joined the 388th BG Association in 1986.

RALPH E. HENDERSON

Ralph Henderson died August 24, 2009 in Jackson, MI at age 85. He was the ball turret gunner on John Carroll's crew in the 561st Sqd. and had flown 15 missions when his plane was shot down over Munich-Reims on April 9, 1945.

Mr. Henderson is survived by his son Michael.

ROBERT E. HENNE

Robert E. Henne, 88, died January 1, 2010 at his home in North Plainfield, NJ. He was a Staff Sergeant in the 1751st Ordnance and Maintenance Co., and was attached to the 561st Sqd.

Mr. Henne had lived in Plainfield since 1951 and worked as a chief chemical officer at Union Carbide (Bakelite) for 41 years prior to his retirement in 1981.

An avid hunter and fisherman, he was a member of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church and a member of V.F.W. Tri-Boro Memorial Post No. 5479.

Mr. Henne is survived by Helen, his wife of 64 years; daughter Kathy, son Michael, and four grandchildren.

Internment was held at Lake Nelson Memorial Park in Piscataway.

JOHN W. HOFF

John W. Hoff, Major General USAF (Ret.), died July 29. The Columbus, IN resident was 89.

A former lead pilot with the 563rd Sqd., General Hoff's career spanned 34 years. He served as the Chief Air Defense and Air Traffic Control Officer for the Caribbean Air Command in the Canal Zone. Other assignments included Commander Bakalar Air Force Base and 434th Troop Carrier Wing; he also participated in the Cuban Crisis during October and November 1962. He was the Commander of the 512th Military Airlift Wing at Fort Worth, TX and Commander Central Air Force Reserve Region, Houston, TX. He retired in 1982.

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Awards included the Legion of Merit, DFC, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, EAME with three Victory Service Stars, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and Command Pilot Wings.

Survivors include his wife Roselyn, son John II, daughter Margaret Clark, two grandsons and two great-grandsons.

Burial was at Garland Brook Cemetery with full military honors conducted by the United States Air Force Honor Guard.

LAWRENCE G. LOCKER

Lawrence G. Locker of Hamburg, NY, died May 16 at age 89. A pilot in the 561st Sqd., he flew 40 missions between August 1944 and January 1945.

Mr. Locker was a retiree of the Ford Stamping Plant in Hamburg.

Preceded in death by his wife Ruth and a daughter, Lorna, he is survived by son Lawrence III, daughter Linda, seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Internment was held at Hillcrest Cemetery.

COLONEL S. NEEDHAM, JR.

Colonel Sawyer "C.S." Needham, Jr. passed away March 22 at the Ben Atchley State Veterans Home in Knoxville, TN. He was 91.

Mr. Needham was a 560th Sqd. pilot who flew 35 missions between November 1944 and March 1945. Recalled into service for the Korean Conflict, he served as wing intelligence officer for the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing. Awards included The Air Medal with six oak leaf clusters, the U.N. Service Medal and Korean Service medal.

Mr. Needham owned and operated Plasti-Fab, a custom sign and display business, for more than 50 years until his retirement in 2009. A member of the Fountain City Lion's Club since 1947, he maintained a perfect attendance record for 61 years, serving in many capacities including president. He was also an active member of the Central Baptist Church of Fountain City for more than 65 years.

Preceded in death by his wife Mary, he is survived by daughter Judy, one grandson and two great-grandsons. Internment with full military honors was held at Highland Memorial Cemetery.

HELEN PILGRIM

Helen "Nellie" Pilgrim, wife of George Pilgrim, passed away March 8 in Tyler, TX. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, she was working in a searchlight factory in 1944 when she met her future husband, who was on leave.

The couple's courtship continued by mail after S/Sgt. Pilgrim, a 561st Sqd. engineer/top turret gunner, returned to the States in July 1945. She accepted his proposal by mail and traveled to St. Louis, MO, where they were married on February 3, 1947.

Mrs. Pilgrim is survived by George, her husband of 64 years; daughters Jaqueline and Hazel, son George; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

JOHN D. POND

John Daniel Pond, 90, of Front Royal, WV, died February 17 at the VA Medical Center in Martinsburg, WV. A 560th Sqd. bombardier with the Simons, Marcus and Lentz crews, he began flying in late September 1943. On March 8, 1944 he became a POW after his plane was shot down on a mission to Berlin. He received two Purple Hearts and the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters.

In 1964 Mr. Pond received his Master's Degree from Madison College and continued a long career as an educator and administrator in the Warren County Schools System. He was a member of Bob Frakes Ex-POW Society and the Front Royal Rotary Club.

Mr. Pond is survived by Daphne, his wife of 65 years; sons J. Daniel and Charles; daughter Jeanne, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Internment with military honors was held at Arlington National Cemetery.

ROSCOE M. SHAFFER

Roscoe Marks "Jim" Shaffer of Bradenton, FL died November 26, 2010 at age 91. He was a member of the 563rd Sqd.

Mr. Shaffer is survived by wife Loraine; daughter Pamela Smith, stepdaughters Bonnie Divine and Jacque Lewis; stepson John Devine; 18 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

He was laid to rest with military honors at Sarasota National Cemetery.

WILLIAM B. WILLIAMS

William Boyce Williams of Hartford, IL, passed away on February 15, four days before his 89th birthday.

The 563rd Sqd. ball turret gunner flew 23 missions as with the Alvin Fehrman crew before their plane was shot down on the March 15, 1945 Oranienburg mission.

He retired in 1981 after 32 years with Shell Oil Co.

Survivors include his wife Nadine, sons Terry and Jerry, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

CHARLES M. ZETTEK

Charles Moran Zettek, considered by many to be the best bombardier in the 388th BG, died on June 17. The Hopkinton, MA resident was 89.

One of the 388th BG's original echelon, the 562nd Sqd. lead bombardier flew 26 missions between July 17, 1943 and May 28, 1944 before becoming his squadron's bombardier instructor. He then volunteered for one final lead mission – to Ruhland, Germany (better known as the Poltava mission) on June 21 1944.

A grid bombing system developed by Capt. Zettek in the summer of 1944 was widely used to counteract the effects of target-obscuring haze, both natural and man-made. He was awarded the DFC with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

Raised in San Leandro, CA, Mr. Zettek had studied engineering and architecture prior to enlisting in the Army Air Corps in 1942.

He resumed his education following the war, graduating from Harvard University in 1949 and later earning a Master's Degree in city planning from Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

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After moving to Hopkinton with his wife and child in 1952, Mr. Zettek became planning director for the Worcester, MA Housing Authority. He began tenure with the City of Lowell in 1955, and then returned to Worcester in the mid-1960s as Executive Director of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority. He also served on the Hopkinton Planning Board and the Conservation Commission, among other appointed positions.

A published poet and author of the book *The Ten Most Important Words in Your Life*, he was also awarded a patent for a time-keeping device designed to help maximize self-realization. He was an active member of St. Mark's Church in Southborough for nearly 60 years.

Mr. Zettek is survived by Anne, his wife of 62 years; daughters Anne and Sarah; sons Charles Jr., Michael and Matthew; and eight grandchildren.

Zettek's Grid-Bombing Breakthrough

Charles Zettek had known unparalleled success in the 388th BG. Indeed, in his 27 missions as lead bombardier, he had scored 15 direct hits. But there was one thing even the best of bombardiers could not do – strike a target completely obscured by man-made haze.

Now, as the newly-assigned 562nd Squadron Bombing Officer, the 23-year-old Captain was determined to do something about it.

Zettek remembered all too well his first encounter with German smoke pots when his plane led the October 9, 1943 mission to Gdynia to destroy the cruiser *Nurnberg*. German defenders, alerted to the bombers' approach, lit hundreds of smoke pots, filling the skies above the Polish port with heavy haze. With the target completely obscured, lead pilot Ivan Willson had ordered the group to circle around. On the second run, a small hole in the haze revealed a large, partially camouflaged ship at anchor. Following Zettek's lead, the entire group dropped their bombs on the *Stuttgart* ... a hospital ship.

Smoke pots were not the only type of man-made haze that plagued missions. Smoke from bombs dropped by groups flying ahead in long bomber streams also made it all but impossible to correctly identify targets.

Every bombardier in the Eighth Air Force was familiar with the concept of grid bombing. In theory, an obscured target could be accurately hit by identifying a landmark some distance ahead. Then, factoring ground speed and the distance between the two points, bombs away could be timed to the second. But the theory, so simple on paper, had failed in practice so many times that it was eventually shelved.

In late summer 1944, Zettek began studying the British RAF's Ground Speed-Second Delay Grid. When placed over a map, this Plexiglas grid (not

unlike a thick sheet of see-through graph paper) would accurately chart the distance between checkpoint and target at one inch per 1,000 feet. To the left of its horizontal lines, the distance had been computed into seconds.

Zettek realized that only under certain conditions – the flight path must be a straight line from IP to target, and the ground speed must be estimated exactly – would the grid's time computations work. But more than that was required.

His plan would begin with better S-2 maps showing every checkpoint in a line from the IP to and beyond the target. Mission briefings would be expanded to include discussion of all checkpoints. A longer bomb run would also be needed. As formations approached the IP, the high and low groups would fall in behind the lead.

Lectures on theory, intensified training in map-reading, and several practice missions were required to qualify bombardiers and navigators, who worked as a team.

In the Zettek method on a grid bombing run, the lead bombardier, using the briefed checkpoints, used the vertical hair in the Norden bombsight to track the course, correcting for wind drift and other factors to keep the formation in a true line to target. After reading the sight's tangent and by consulting tables, he determined the exact ground speed to be maintained. As his plane reached the last checkpoint, he made a final synchronization and called out the moment the sight's indices crossed.

Now the navigator took over. With one hand on the toggle switch and the other holding a stopwatch, he began counting seconds at the bombardier's call-out. The number of seconds to bombs away having been pre-determined by the Plexiglas grid (i.e. 10 miles from checkpoint to target + 200 mph ground speed = 34 seconds), he then flipped the



Captain Charles Zettek

switch as the stopwatch hit the magic number.

With his squadron superior's approval, Zettek pitched his idea to Group Command and received permission to do a test program. The results were spectacular – bombing teams in training consistently scored hits within 150 feet of the target on their very first try.

The 388th began using Zettek's technique in early October 1944, and word of the results soon reached the desk of Earl Partridge, Commanding General of the Third Bombardment Division. The General made a point to visit Knettishall, where he met with the young Captain, sat in on one of his lectures, and watched a practice mission.

Before long, lead bombardiers and navigators throughout the Third Division – and eventually the entire Eighth Air Force – were studying the new technique.

And it didn't stop there. In 1951, all Strategic Air Command B-29 and B-51 bombing crews were still being trained in the Zettek Grid Bombing Method.

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