



384th Bomb Group Newsletter

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



Summer 2012

Our Air Force Academy Grad!!



It was my privilege to join Len Estrin in representing the 384th Bomb Group at the Individual Awards ceremony at the Air Force Academy this past May. I cannot describe the feeling of pride to fulfill that role, and the humility to stand in witness to the Cadet Wing – over 4,000 strong – committing themselves to the preservation of our Freedom, and of our great country.

It was a great honor to present the award for the Outstanding Cadet in Biology – the 34th sponsored by the 384th – to Cadet First Class (now 2nd Lt.) Matthew L Ward. Matt is a fine young gentleman who heads next to medical school at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Our host at the Academy – as he has been for a number of years – was Colonel John Putnam. Col.



Cadet Ward with Fred Preller & Len

Putnam made certain our comforts were catered for. Captain Dan Pike, a Professor in the Biology Department, saw to our every need, making sure we got to where we needed to be, when we needed to be there. Congratulations and Godspeed to 2Lt Matt Ward!

by Fred Preller

I Remember by Ed Zieba through Jean Zieba

You never met Ozzie, but I know that you would have liked him. He was an 18-year-old teenager who was sent to Grafton Underwood to do a man's job as a ball turret gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress. Ozzie lived in the same barracks at the airdrome that I did. He would probably be classed as a loner and didn't partake in off duty activities, such as football, baseball, card games (such as poker) and when he wasn't flying, he was content to stay in the barracks and write letters home, or read books or listen to the radio. He never went to the villages even though I invited him on numerous occasions.

DATELINE.....MARCH 9, 1944.....

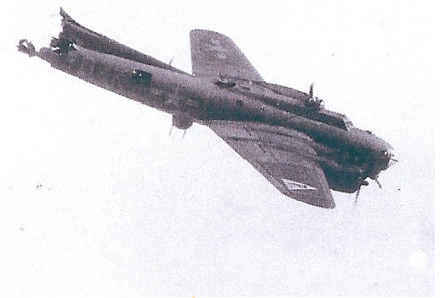
We were alerted the night before that there would be a maximum effort mission the following day. Usually when we were alerted I didn't sleep well, wondering if my crew would be picked to fly. It's 4 am and you hear the jeep drive up to your barracks, the officer of the day would walk

in, switch on the lights, blow that damn whistle and read a list of names of those scheduled to fly. "Breakfast at 5.....Briefing at 6.....Take-off at 7".....he would shout and then he would give another blast of the whistle. (I swore that one day I would shove the whistle right down his throat).

At breakfast I told Ozzie that when he got back from the mission we were going to bicycle to Geddington and I would show him around the most beautiful village in all of England. I told him about the Cross, the Bridge, the Pubs, the beautiful Church and the old headstones, the schoolhouse and the row houses and most of all the wonderful, cordial, friendly people he would meet. Ozzie was reluctant, but he finally consented to go into Geddington with me.

Our target for the day was Berlin. We knew what to expect. Heavy anti-aircraft shelling (flak so thick and heavy that you could practically walk on it), the Luftwaffe was expected to put up all available fighter aircraft to keep us from reaching our target. We knew that we would lose some

bombers, but what happened was the unexpected. Another group of Flying Forts were flying at a higher altitude when they crossed over our formation and released their bombs on our group. Some of the bombs hit the fortress that Ozzie was flying in and cut the plane in half. The Fortress went into a dive and no one saw any parachutes come out. That evening was one of the few that I didn't go into Geddington. Ozzie didn't come back and he would never see the Cross, or the Bridge, or St. Mary Magdalenes, or the Star, or White Hart. Ozzie would never meet my Geddington friends. **OZZIE DIDN'T COME BACK!** *To be continued next Newsletter*



"Keep the Show on the Road...."



Message from Your President... Bill O'Leary



In our Spring Newsletter I suggested that we set the first week in September as our personal deadline to arrange for accommodations in San Antonio. And again, I remind you the reason for this request is to allow Carol sufficient time to arrange for additional hotel rooms (wouldn't that be a nice problem), and/or to clear up any other problems that might find their way to the surface. Please submit your completed registration form together with the fee of \$108.00 per person to Carol at the same time that you make room reservations. If you care to jump the gun and make your arrangements before September, you have my word, you will not be penalized.

Also, in the Spring Newsletter I made a strong case for the 384th Vets to officially turn the operation of the Group over to the NexGen, and that transition was planned to take place at this gathering. I'm happy to say that my suggestion was premature in that we have a 384th Veteran who accepted the invitation to become the next president of the Group. His name is Lenard Estrin. Len will be introduced during our San Antonio gathering, and will tell us something about his time in a B-17 ball turret, as well as a few words about life after closing the hatch on the turret for the last time.

See Y'ALL in San Antonio---as we KEEP THE SHOW ON THE ROAD!
Bill



Thank You 384th.... from 2Lt Matt Ward

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to you for sponsoring my "Outstanding Cadet in Biology" Award at the U.S. Air Force Academy this past May. It was really an honor. I am so grateful to be connected in some small way to the men and women of the 384th Bomb Group—they are my heroes.

As I begin my medical school education here in Washington, DC, I will work my hardest to live up to their legacy of sacrifice. Thanks you again for your generous sponsorship!

God Bless, Lt Matthew Ward

Photo Project

Roger Gambhir is a British NexGen member. He has a keen interest in the 384th Bomb Group and helps maintain the grounds around the monument in Grafton Underwood. Roger is interested in obtaining autographed photographs from those who served at Grafton. If you have a war time photograph you would like to sign and send or if you are a NexGen member and would like to send a photo of your parent to Roger he would be very appreciative. His address is: 30 Robin Bailey Way, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 7UP, England.

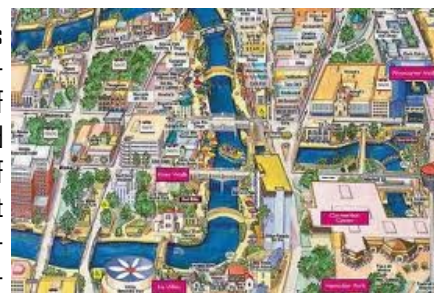


Crew Show at San Antonio.... Briefing at 0700!



Target for 18-21 October

Come on, Y'all, times a-wastin'! That airplane won't fly itself and y'all need to head for the great city of San Antonio. So get you tickets now, reserve those wonderful barracks (better known as the Hyatt Regency), and send your flight plan (reservations) to Carol as soon as you get this. This promises to be one very relaxin' mission (don't suppose any of you ever had one of those out of Grafton Underwood...) and you deserve the very best, so the Intel and Ops folks came up with the best way to see this target and enjoy the camaraderie of close friends and fellow crew members. TWEET! Breakfast when you get there!!!!



We Need Your Stories and Photos !!!

I know you all have a wealth of experiences that we would like to publish so others can enjoy and learn, so PLEASE send us your stories!!!! We are getting some traction with stories and we hope to print as many as we can. Let's share the legacy in stories that will keep forever. This issue includes the interesting Doolittle Reunion at Wright Patterson AFB in April; also a story of Leonard Nealis' missions and how they flew most missions in the same plane.



Reading Eagle: Bill Uhrich

A makeshift radio crafted by Fleetwood native William Shade brought him encouraging news of World War II during the 13 months he was held in the notorious German POW camp Stalag 17.

For 13 months during World War II, Fleetwood native William Shade was held captive in Stalag 17, a German POW camp notorious for its brutal living conditions.

Hidden from the watchful eyes of the German guards, Shade would crawl onto the ceiling boards of his dark, dismal barracks to listen to a radio he had made from fence wire, wood from his bunk and a crystal he bartered from a prison guard.

The news that crackled from the crude receiver held promise. The Allies were winning, and the broadcasts gave the prisoners hope that they might soon return home to their wives and children.

The radio and a few other prison camp artifacts that belonged to Shade, who died in 2006, were donated to the Fleetwood Area Historical Society by his seven children, and have been put on display at the organization's museum.



"I think many of our local residents who are old enough to remember the war are going to be very excited about seeing this display because it's a one-of-a-kind thing," said Robert Knoll, vice president of the society.

Also part of the display is a cup with a handle Shade made from a margarine can and spare metal scraps, which the guards filled with hot water twice a day to go along with a small meal of wormy meat or rutabagas. He also made a tin cigarette holder, all without the help of soldering tools.

Shade's children donated telegrams, too, regretful notes from the secretary of war informing Shade's wife that her husband was missing in action and later that he had been confirmed to be a POW.

Shade, who was an Army Air Forces radioman and gunner, went on 23 missions before his B-17 was shot down in April 1944. Shade and 3 of his crew were captured and sent to Stalag 17 in Austria, where they lived among 4,000 other POWs.

Knoll said it's thought that the character who made a radio from spare parts in the 1954 film "Stalag 17" was inspired by Shade.

VOLUNTEERS KEEP 384th MEMORIAL GROUNDS BEAUTIFUL



Without a doubt, the area surrounding the memorial looks great, primarily due to the efforts of two volunteers, Kevin "Sid" Fleckner (top left) and Roger Gambhir (top right). These guys just started doing this without any fanfare. Kevin is from the local area, but Roger drives down from Nottingham to pitch in! These guys have a keen interest in the Eighth Air Force, and appreciate what it accomplished. They choose to show their appreciation by, among other things, keeping the 384th Memorial Grounds looking good.

"The radio, for me, exhibited a great deal of knowledge and ingenuity by Bill," Knoll said. "It's amazing when you think of the conditions under which these things were made."

Shade would later tell his children that prisoners at Stalag 17 slept four to a thin flea-infested mattress filled with straw. The prisoners sometimes ate mice and birds to take the edge off their gnawing hunger. The American Red Cross sent goods to the men, but most of the time the items were stolen by the guards.

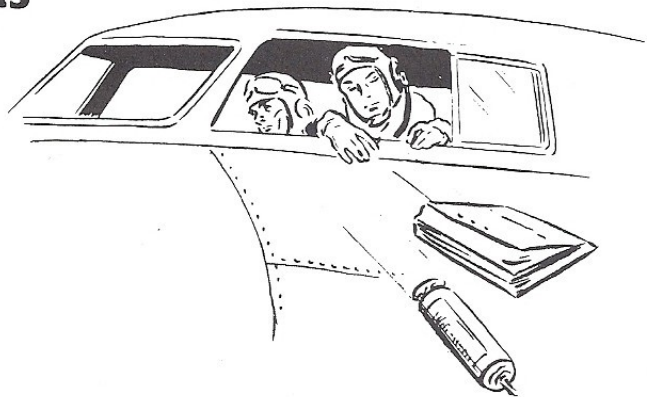
When the Germans got word in May 1945 that the Russians were approaching Stalag 17, Shade and the other prisoners were forced to march 300 miles across Austria. The Germans eventually

surrendered when they ran into American lines by accident, and the prisoners who survived the trek were liberated.

The display also features a 1995 photograph of Shade and his family in Washington, DC, where he was honored on the floor of the House of Representatives for saving the lives of crew members who passed out from lack of oxygen during a 3 March 1944 mission to Berlin.

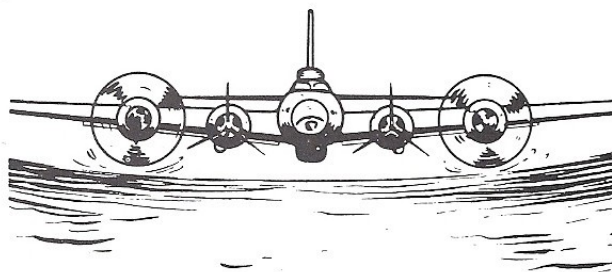
Shade's son, James, who lives in Rockland Township, decided to lend his father's items to the Historical Society after a chance meeting with a museum trustee. The trustee suggested that it would be best if William Shade's belongings were displayed in his hometown of Fleetwood. James Shade agreed.

13



Be sure all emergency equipment is in the radio compartment. Throw overboard any equipment that might come loose.

16



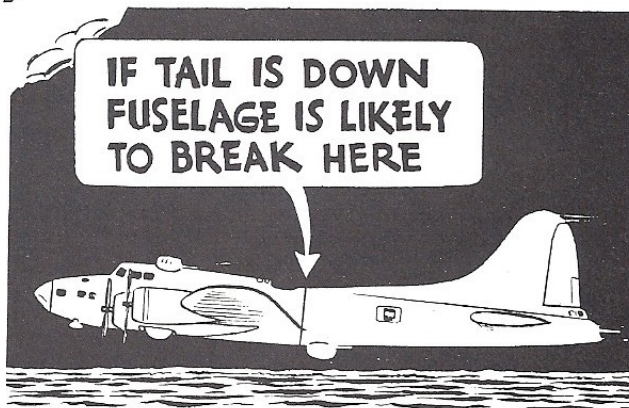
The pilot should attempt to set the airplane down in a trough, which is usually cross wind. The two out-board engines are used for control and to flatten the approach. The landing gear should be up, the flaps lowered medium, and the ignition switches cut a foot or so above the water.

14



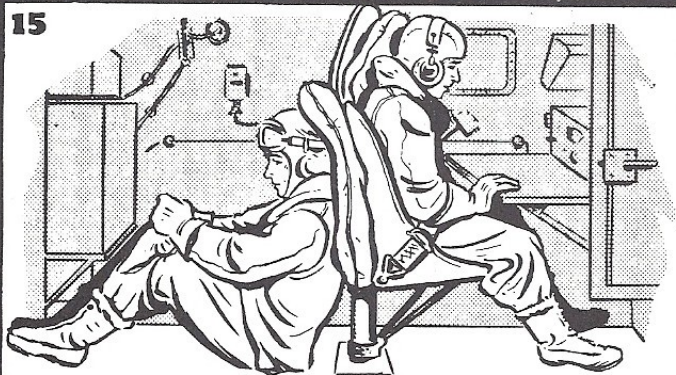
Remove cushions from seats for head protection and take crash positions. Do not take a position in the center of the compartment as ball turret upper structure makes this unsafe. Brace head against solid structure, if possible. Do not leave these positions until plane has come to rest as there will probably be more than one shock.

17



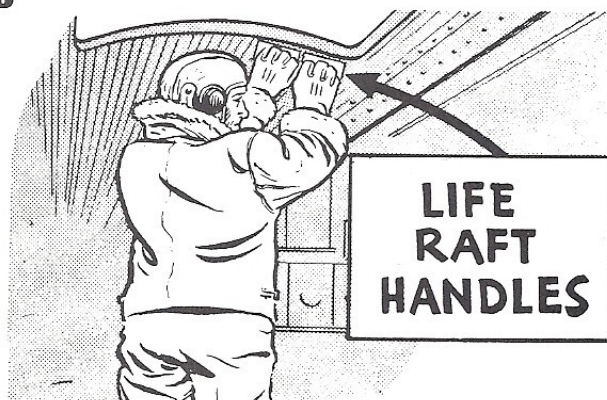
The water should be touched at about 90 mph. Come in as level as possible.

15



All members should have life vests on, parachutes removed, and should have on all extra clothing to be worn on rafts. At night, turn off all bright internal lights and use only the amber lamps.

18



As soon as the airplane has come to rest the pre-designated member will pull the life raft handles.

Forced Descent at Sea

Do you remember your training as a new Flying Fort crew member?

As a crewman about to enter combat, there were more than the Hun that could kill you. There was that often hazardous crossing of the English

Channel. Ditching is primarily the art of getting a big, fast plane on the water in one piece. Good ditching will bring the plane down with only slight damage and without injury to the crew. A well-drilled crew can get out of the plane and be afloat in the water in 40 seconds. F. Alfter

384TH BOMB GROUP 2011 GATHERING, SAN ANTONIO, TX
October 18th through 21st, 2012

NAME: _____ GUEST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

ADDITIONAL GUEST'S NAME(S): _____

SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST 384th BOMB GROUP FUNCTION? YES _____ NO: _____

COST PER PERSON IS \$108.00. This covers the reception on Thursday and the banquet on Saturday evening.

\$108.00 PER PERSON X _____ PEOPLE ATTENDING: TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

I have my name tag and lanyard: YES _____ NO _____

I need name tags for: _____

Please mail your completed registration form and payment in full, payable to the **384th Bomb Group, Inc.**, to Carol Alfter, 1306 Adams Way, Beavercreek, OH 45434, **TO BE RECEIVED** not later than **SEPTEMBER 27, 2012. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE REGISTRATIONS!** If you have any questions, call Carol at 937-306-2142 or email at falfter@att.net. Confirmation of registration will be sent on October 1, 2012.

The selected hotel is the Hyatt Regency San Antonio, 123 Losoya Street, San Antonio, TX 78205, telephone number 210-451-6420. Please call the hotel and state you are with the 384th Bomb Group to get the group rate of \$119.00 for a single or double room. Triple rate is \$144.00, quad rate is \$169.00. **ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY SEPTEMBER 27, 2012 IN ORDER TO GET THE GROUP RATE.**

Please list additional guests with their names as you wish them to appear on their name tags.

384th BOMB GROUP, INC.
EIGHTH AIR FORCE
1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



"Keep the Show on the Road...."

We're on the Web at: www.384thbombgroup.com

Treasurer Tidbits by Carol In support of the wing panel project donations were collected and earmarked for the Planes of Fame Air Museum in Chino, CA. The 384th Bomb Group is now a silver level sponsor of the B-17, *Piccadilly Lilly II*, and the name of our organization will be placed on the bomb in the bomb bay as a silver sponsor. Upon completion of the restoration this B-17G will be a true to life tribute to our country's military veterans and civilians who sacrificed to preserve the freedom we hold so dear. Thousands will see this B-17 on display. With the Planes of Fame's history of air show participation *Piccadilly Lilly II* will undoubtedly fly to other locations where many more people will appreciate the freedom she represents.

A donation was also made to the church in Grafton Underwood. Their treasurer, John Hainsworth wrote: "We have several plans in the making for enhancing our lovely church, such as constructing a new altar, adding new seating and making a new vestry. Your donation will go specifically towards these improvements rather than just getting absorbed in the general running costs. A suitable plaque will be mounted in recognition of your support and in the memory of Barbara and Quentin Bland's liaison with yourselves."

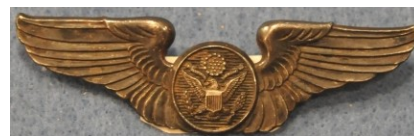


NEXGEN: Take an active role in 384th NexGen planning for the future. Contact Fred Preller at f3red@preller.us or call 469-338-1397 to participate.

TAPS as of Summer 2012

Sam Arauz
John D. Betolatti
Dewey Brown
Joseph S. Gary
Robert Welky

Havertown, PA
Connecticut
Austin, TX
LaQuinta, CA
Charlotte, NC



Bill Shade's Wings (See page 3)



384th Bomb Group
Grafton Underwood



England Bound?

If you know any veteran who served with the 8th Air Force during WW II who would be interested in returning, please have them contact Timothy Davis at timothy_davis@tgdf.org or call 303-331-1944