



384th Bomb Group Newsletter

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



March 2009

Savannah Here We Come!

Mark your calendars and fill out the registration form included in this Newsletter on page 5. We are all gathering at Savannah September 10, 11, and 12th this year. We purposefully made this a relaxing time together, without all the trips and getting on and off of buses all day long. We want y'all to have a very restful gathering and spend a lot of time with each other basking in the hospitality of this wonderful southern town. **Registration is just \$65 per person.**

There are lots of things you can do and you will have time to do whatever you want. We have only three things on the firm agenda, and they are the lunch and visit at the 8th AF Museum (about half a day), dinner at Paula Deen's, both on Friday, and our own banquet at the hotel on Saturday evening.

The hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn Midtown at 5711 Abercorn St, Savannah (912-652-9300) located across from Hunter Army Air Field. The rate for the 384th is \$109 per night, which is good for two days before and two days after our Gathering. To get this rate, please let them know you are with the



384th Bomb Group.

Our visit to the 8th AF Museum on Friday will begin with a quick bus ride from the hotel to the Museum in Pooler, Georgia, just up I-95. You will have time for lunch (on your own), a Remembrance Service in the Museum Chapel between 1 and 2 pm, and a self-guided or guided tour of the museum. Following this we will



Aces and Ates

by Edward McDonald

During World War II I was a tail gunner on a B-17 named *Aces and Ates*. I crashed twice before getting into combat. The first time, we were attempting to fly to England, were off course and crashed in Iceland. The B-17 with just 25 hours flying time was creamed, but there were no injuries.

Crash two was in England as airspeed was called out and my co-pilot was practicing landings. We landed hard, spinning the plane around, but again, no injuries.

I flew 31 missions over Europe with my first mission on 27 March 1944. Missions 1 through 16 were to France and Germany, including Berlin. During these missions we incurred a minimum number of flak

holes in our plane.

Mission 17 was on D-Day and what a sight that was. Mission 22 was over Hamburg and a large piece of flak severed off the throttles and hit my pilot. Lt Edward Thoma, killing him instantly and wounding the co-pilot. The top turret gunner helped the co-pilot fly the B-17 back to England, bouncing twice during landing.

On mission 24 a burst of flak came through the tail section hitting me in the eyelid. My flak jacket saved my shoulder (bruises) and my chest parachute saved me from serious wounds, but it was full of holes. I would not be here if I had to bail out. I still have part of my chute.

When I was in the hospital the crew finished their tour. By mission 26 *Aces and Ates* had been repaired. On that mission we were flying over Munich

board buses for The Lady & Sons Restaurant for a 4:45 arrival time.

Paula Deen is a nationally renown Food Network TV personality who specializes in down home southern cooking (The gals all know her). Our reservation is limited to just 100 people. The buffet price is \$25.65, which includes tax and gratuity, and a non-alcohol beverage. This promises to be a really great meal, and you won't want to miss this. Carol and Irene said they weren't going to Savannah unless we went to Paula Deen's restaurant. Participation in this event will be limited to the first 100 who submit a paid registration.

We are planning a banquet in the hotel for Saturday evening, which should be relaxing and enjoyable for everyone.

Sunday will be departure day for most folks. The breakfast buffet is optional at an additional charge of \$12 per person for those who will be departing later in the day. We hope most of you, if not all of you will join us for breakfast and prayer this last morning of the gathering.

and I was the tail gunner on the lead plane. To my right a new crew was on *Aces and Ates*. I couldn't believe what I saw when *Aces and Ates* burst into flames and went down. I counted six chutes.

At a reunion I met five ex-prisoners of war who were on *Aces and Ates* that day. Many war stories were told and later I visited Lt Thoma's parents in Bethlehem, PA. That was the toughest mission of all.



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



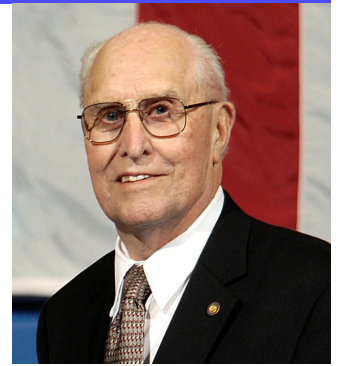
Reflections from Your New President

Fellow members of the 384th Bomb Group, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to let you all know that Lloyd Whitlow resigned as President of the Board of Directors for the 384th Bomb Group, Inc. With Lloyd's resignation, and the deaths of both Ted and Margaret Rothschild, your Board of Directors met in San Antonio, TX, in Jan 2009, to seat a new President and to fill any other vacancies on the Board. Lloyd's resignation and the death of Ted Rothschild do not alter or change the 384th Bomb Group as an entity, we remain the same. As your duly elected

President, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the current members of the Board will "Keep the Show on the Road" as we look forward to the Gathering in Savannah in Sept 2009 and the Junket to England in 2010. As you can see from reading the TAPS section of this newsletter, our numbers may be decreasing, but our enthusiasm certainly is not! Our 384th Veterans are dedicated to "Keeping the Show on the Road" and with the help of the NextGen our Group will continue to grow. I hope you will all consider coming to Savannah for the Gathering

this year. We do **not** have a hectic schedule planned so there will be more time to just sit and reminisce or to sight-see on your own. I would like to thank all of you for your continued support of the Group and for your Board of Directors.

Don Thompson
President
384th Bomb Group, Inc.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance brought forward: \$29,718.22

Income: \$272.15 minus Expenses \$150.00 = \$29,840.37

Quentin Bland Fund has \$385.00

SHE'S HERE!... AT THE 8TH AF MUSEUM IN SAVANNAH

On January 8, 2009 the Museum received four trucks with all the parts of our B-17. January 14, 2009 the final truck with the fuselage arrived. Years of hard work, determination, and patience paid off and the Museum now has its very own World War II Flying Fortress B-17 Bomber. The restoration is happening inside the Combat Gallery. This will be a great opportunity for everyone to see our great ship at the Museum, and so you won't want to miss out on seeing this beauty before she is fully restored.

Submitted by Vern Arnold



MESSAGE TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Lloyd Whitlow resigned from the Board in Nov 2008. Ted Rothschild died in Dec 2008. Per the Bylaws, all documents and funds in Ted's possession should have been sent to Carol Alfter when Ted died. At Lloyd's request, Margaret Rothschild's brother mailed, to Lloyd, seven boxes of 384th documents, including the banner (\$214 total in postage). Lloyd has mailed to Carol the bank books and some documents contained in Ted's briefcase, as well as the Group banner. Carol has managed to close the **savings** account and secure those Group funds (\$20,576.68 now in a CD). Lloyd and Ted were both on the **checking** account and, as the sole survivor on the account, only Lloyd can close the account (\$2,855.45 per the bank statement dated Jan 7, 2009). Lloyd has promised to close the FL checking account soon. He has not communicated with anyone on the Board as to when the Board might expect to receive the seven boxes of documentation currently in his possession, or close the account.

Fiscal Facts

Christmas and January came and went and we have collected dues from a whopping 277 members. We sent newsletters to nearly 500, so there are probably still some who need this reminder to pay their dues for the year. Your Group membership DUES are still just a measly **\$25**.

In an effort to cut costs, your Board

has decided that only members who are current with their dues will receive these wonderful newsletters... Hence..... **NO DUES... NO NEWS!**

This is your last newsletter if you have not paid your dues. We know you would like to keep up with the

goings-on in the 384th and this newsletter is one great way to do that, but it also shows you care about supporting your Bomb Group when you pay your dues.

Please send your dues check made payable to the 384th Bomb Group, to Carol Alfter (Treasurer) at 1306 Adams Way, Beaver Creek, OH 45434.

When you send in your dues, please make sure we have your correct mailing address, phone number and e-mail address, if you have one. That way we can keep everyone better informed about the Gathering in Savannah in 2009 and the Junket to

England in 2010.

The planning committee is currently working on an agenda and hotel for the Gathering in Savannah and that information will be included in this newsletter. Savannah promises to be a really great gathering, so please plan now by filling out the registration form included in this newsletter and mail soon. All information is included on the registration form.



Your Combat Stories

Did you ever wonder where the material comes from in putting together a newsletter such as this one? Well, the best ones come from you, the membership. This is your forum for sharing your experiences with the rest of us. Everyone has a story to tell, and not all of them may seem exciting or important to the overall objectives of the war. But, everyone of you who were in the 384th in England during the War contributed very important pieces to that total victory. As your editor, I am asking you to send me your stories so that we can share your wartime doings with those of us who can only read about them. There are many stories, some funny, others heart rendering, and many that are true lessons in history. Please send your stories and photos, if you have them, and I promise to publish them in these pages.

Frank

From Alvin Gapezynski

We as a crew checked in at the 384th Bomb Group, 547th Squadron, in March 1945. Our crew was piloted by Lt William Pinson and Lt Ben Miller (co-pilot). Lt A. R. Huebsch was navigator, Lt Charles Ilsey bombardier, Sgt Rose flight engineer, Sgt Al Gapezynski radio, Sgt H. R. Logan ball, Sgt Charles Pielrofarte tail, Sgt William Pittman waist.

We did fly 8 missions as a crew, with the exception of the waist gunner, Sgt Pittman, who was assigned to a different status.

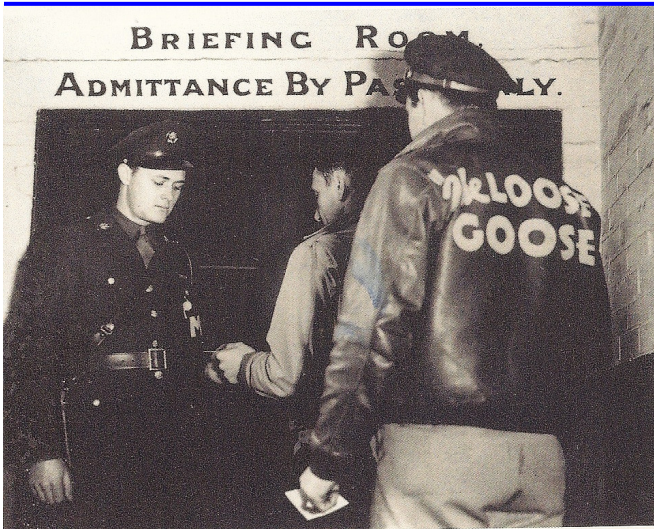
The morning of April 26 or 27 we as a crew went for

briefing and were to fly our 9th mission to Kiel, as the Russians were pinned down by German artillery. But, we had to be there by noon that day as Gen Patton's forces were moving in at great speed. As co-pilot B. Miller was not aboard, we acquired a new one in place of him (the name at this time is unknown to me). We were first or second on take-off on that dark morning. With a full bomb load we were to go at a speed of 110-115, but the engines mused and we could only maintain a speed of 95. We did get off the ground, but hit something as we heard a crash. The pilot thought we hit a church steeple (later it was determined to be trees that we hit). We could not gain altitude, the plane was full of smoke, and the

pilot gave us the option of riding it out or bailing out. He didn't want to jettison the bombs, as they may kill civilians, but we stayed with the ship. After 3 passes at the field, coming in sideways, we landed all okay. I took out some wood from the wings to send home. The cowls were damaged as was the belly section.

After all, our flight and the whole mission was aborted, but we all thanked God and our pilot to be here. This was to have been the last mission of World War II.

Shortly after, we all moved to Istres, France and flew the Green Project. We left there in the early part of March 1946.



Would you believe the MP checking IDs at the Briefing is none other than Ed Barnes' brother Everett.... Small world! You can see more 384th members in the book Bombers—*The Aircrew Experience* by Philip Kaplan



The wreckage of Big Stupe V just outside the village of Rambucourt, France, 13 April 1944
Staff Sergeant Glen E. Alfter as photographed by his German captors for his POW ID

DUES REMINDER

Please remember that membership dues are payable at the first of every year. In 2008, we received over 200 checks, but that is not even half of the 500 newsletters we send out every quarter. This year we have received dues from nearly 300 members, so we are in much better shape financially. Thanks so much to those who have paid!!

We have nice, new membership cards that will please anyone you show it to.

Please make your checks out to the 384th Bomb Group, Inc. and send to:

384th BOMB GROUP, INC.
CAROL ALFTER
1306 ADAMS WAY
BEAVERCREEK, OH 45434



Who is this masked lady???



Don Thompson, Vern Arnold, Ed Barnes & Joe Carnes

The Perfect B-17 Pilot

By Maxine Van der Haeghen

My husband of 63 1/2 years, Joe Van der Haeghen, died early in the morning of January 1, 2009. He was 91 1/2 years of age... and lived it to the fullest! He had been a member of the 384th Bomb Group as long as I remember. The first reunion we attended was in Denver in 1978, unless there was one in San Francisco before that! Anyway, we enjoyed every reunion we attended!

Joe was the "perfect" B-17 pilot! He earned his wings at Roswell, New Mexico, on January 2, 1943 and landed at Grafton Underwood, England on June 6, 1943. He was a member of the 545th Bombardment Squadron of the 384th Bombardment Group (H). He began his missions as co-pilot of the "Doris Mae" until the August 17th raid on Schweinfurt. During that raid they lost 600 men and 60 planes. Five planes returned, but Joe's was the only one in his original squadron, so he became a 1st pilot. On their September 27 mission over Germany he lost three engines and for a while was flying on one engine, which is "impossible" for a B-17! Finally one engine kicked back in and they made it home very slowly, but safely.

He completed his 25 missions on December 31, 1943

and there never were any casualties to his crew on any of his missions!

Citation to accompany the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross dated 2 October 1943, for extraordinary achievement while serving as Pilot on a B-17F airplane on a bombing mission over Germany 27 September 1943. Thirty minutes before reaching the target the No. 2 supercharger on Lt. Vander-Haeghen's airplane went out of commission. Ten minutes before reaching the target the No. 4 engine went out and could not be feathered. As this windmilling engine was causing a drag on the airplane combined with the lack of power from the No. 2 engine, Lt Vander-Haeghen was forced to fall back in the formation. Realizing that the safety of his airplane depended on him staying in the formation, he tried to open his bomb bay doors to salvo his bombs. The bomb bay doors would not open mechanically and he pulled his emergency release but only one door opened. He salvoed his bombs and the weight of the falling bombs opened the other door. The bomb bay doors remained open and could not be

shut. While trying to get back into formation, enemy fighters succeeded in seriously damaging the No. 1 engine. No. 2 engine suffered further lack of power when hit by flak. Realizing that his only means of returning safely to the base remained in him seeking the low cloud cover and also at low altitude he would regain the power of the No. 2 engine, as the supercharger would not be needed, Lt Vander-Haeghen displayed skillful airmanship and courage dived his plane into the clouds which were at 4,000 feet. With the interphone system and command and VHF radio out of commission and realizing that it was impossible to ditch his airplane successfully as the bomb bay doors remained open, Lt Vander-Haeghen skillfully nursed his crippled airplane home at 120 miles an hour, flying on instruments and with two engines out of commission.

Signed by J.K. Lacey, Colonel, Air Corps, Commanding

Honoring William J. Shade A True American Hero

Congressional Record, Vol 141, No. 52
Dated March 21, 1995

Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr Holden:

Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to honor a member of a World War II B-17 bomber crew for an act of heroism that, until now, has gone unrecognized. His name is William J. Shade, of Fleetwood, PA, and he was a technical sergeant in World War II. He has been awarded three Oak Leaf Clusters and one Air Medal.

William J. Shade was a radio operator and gunner with the 545th Bomb Squadron, based in England during the war. He entered the service in November of 1942.

The accounts of William Shade's heroic act are taken from crew members who were saved by his bravery. These men would not have survived the mission were it not for Mr Shade's actions.

On March 3, 1944, the 545th Bomb Squadron of the 384th Bomb Group based at Grafton Underwood in England was dispatched on a mission over Berlin.

The crew had been briefed to expect less than perfect weather over the target. However, the briefing officer believed that the crew could fly above the weather somewhere between 20 or 25 thousand feet. As the mission progressed it became apparent that the bomber was not going to find weather good enough to

maintain formation and bomb their target.

Approximately two thirds of the way to Berlin, the mission was recalled and the B-17 was told to return to England.

Shortly after the bomber had completed its turn to proceed to their base in England, Sergeant "Chick" Metz, the ball turret gunner, requested permission to leave his battle station for a short time.

At this time, the plane was still flying at 25,000 feet. A few seconds later the oxygen control officer, Lieutenant Betalotti checked to see if Sergeant Metz had returned to his battle station, but he did not answer.

After a few more seconds he was again called and still did not answer. One of the waist gunners, Sergeant Alfter, went to check on him.

Sergeant Alfter reported that Sergeant Metz was apparently unconscious and would need some help. About the same time Sergeant Alfter lost consciousness because of lack of oxygen.. A third person, gunner, Sergeant Gatzman, proceeded to the access door of the ball turret to give Sergeant Metz and Sergeant Alfter aid, but he too passed out.

Then Sergeant William Shade, looked through the door of the radio room, saw and recognized the seriousness of the situation for the three unconscious gunners, and began to take immediate action.

With no regard for his own personal safety, Sergeant Shade disconnected his own oxygen, and made it to the location of a walk-around oxygen bottle,

which was very small and had only a few minutes of oxygen left. He was able to connect the ball turret gunner's normal oxygen supply and then was able to connect Sergeant Alfter's and Sergeant Gatzman's supply. All three gunners regained consciousness within a few moments and suffered no permanent mental effects. If it had not been for Sergeant William Shade's quick action under pressure, the three crew members would not have survived.

When the B-17 returned to the base, one of the crew members mentioned to the debriefing officer that Sergeant William Shade should receive a medal for his actions. The debriefing officer said the least that could be done was to give him a promotion. The officer promoted William Shade to technical sergeant then and there.

Following this extraordinary mission, William Shade and the crew flew 12 more times until their 23rd mission when their B-17 was shot down over France on April 13, 1944. Mr Shade was then arrested and sent to Frankfurt, Germany. He was finally transported by cattle-car to Stalag 17B in Austria, where he was a POW for the remaining 13 months of the war.

Mr Speaker, William Shade may not have received the medal he deserved, but three men have him to thank for saving their lives and it is never too late to recognize this true American hero.

2009 GATHERING, 384TH BOMB GROUP, SAVANNAH, GA.

SEPTEMBER 10, 11 AND 12, 2009

NAME: _____ GUEST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

ADDITIONAL GUEST'S NAME(S): _____

SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

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

REGISTRATION FEE IS \$ 65.00 PAYABLE IN ADVANCE TO: **384TH BOMB GROUP**

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING: _____ X \$65.00 = \$ _____

SUNDAY BREAKFAST: # OF PERSONS: _____ X \$12.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

REMIT TO: **CAROL ALFTER, 1306 ADAMS WAY, BEAVERCREEK, OHIO 45434** (937-306-2142)

The \$65 charge covers two meals (Friday dinner and Saturday banquet). The Group is paying for the transportation and the museum admission fee. **There is a limit of 100 people for the Lady & Sons Restaurant, on Friday, so only the first 100 paid in full registration forms will be guaranteed a spot for that dinner.** Sunday breakfast is an optional meal costing an additional \$12.00 per person.

Make hotel reservations at the Hilton Garden Inn, 5711 Abercorn Street, Savannah, GA 31405, telephone # 877-782-9444. Room rate is \$109.00 plus tax, ask for the 384th Bomb Group rate. Rate is good 2 days prior and 2 days after the event. Room reservations must be made by **July 10, 2009**, as we must release any unreserved rooms back to the hotel on that date. **If you need to cancel a room reservation you must do so 24 hours prior to avoid a cancellation or NO SHOW charge.** There is more than one Hilton Garden Inn in Savannah so make sure you make your reservation at the one on Abercorn Street. The hotel does not have airport shuttle so you will have to use a taxi unless you rent a car. The hotel has free parking.

Since the hotel requires a cutoff date of July 10, 2009, this will be the official cutoff date for registration. NO REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JULY 10, 2009, NONE, NADA, ZIP. So, please don't call to see if we will make an exception to the rule! Registration forms received after July 10, 2009 will be returned. **There will be no refunds after this date.** Once a headcount is given to the hotel for meals the Group is responsible to pay for the meals whether you show up or not.

384th Bomb Group, Inc.

NO DUES... NO NEWS!

Dues Payment Record

Please send a \$25 check payable to the 384th Bomb Group, Inc., to Carol Alfter, 384th Bomb Group, 1306 Adams Way, Beavercreek, OH 45434.

Renew New

Member

Surviving Wife

Associate Mbr

Recommend a new member/assoc mbr with contact info on reverse of this form

(Associate Relationship on back)

NAME: _____ SPOUSE'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

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

TAPS as of March 2009

BAUGHMAN JOHN	Visalia, CA
BLOCK, MARIE	South Bend, IN
CALABRESE, FRED	Harwich, MA
CARMACK, TED	Birmingham, AL
DOWNING, EVERETT	Ocala, FL
GALLOP, WILLIS	
HASLER, LOWELL	Farmington Hills, MI
HOPPEN, JACK	Highlands, NC
KEYSER, WILLIAM	Deltaville, VA
MINTER, LOUIS	Lees Summit, MO
MURCHAN, LARRY	Trumbull, CT
NEEDLEMANN, BEN	Philadelphia, PA
PATTERSON, ROBERT	Alexandria, VA
PATTISON, CARROLL	Joplin, MO
RASMUSEN, BERNARD	Ft Lauderdale, FL
ROBILATTA, ROBERT	Tinley Park, IL
ROTHSCHILD, MARGARET	Boynton Beach, FL
SPANGLER, GEORGE	Sanford, NC
Van der HAEGHEN, JOSEPH	Alamo, CA
VOGT, WILLIAM	Westbury, NY
WARDELL, RUTH	Verona, WI
WARRILOW, DAVID	Ocala, FL
McCLELLAND, GERALD	Murrieta, CA

