



384th Bomb Group, Inc.

NexGen

Q1 2009

NexGen Newsletter

All Members and Potential Members,

My first newsletter! A bit longer coming than I'd hoped but I wish this to be the first of many!

Oh let me introduce myself to those who don't know me, and fill a few gaps in for those who have! I'm Matt Smith, a 32 year old plane geek!! Let me explain where my enthusiasm for the 384th is from. I was born in Kettering and grew up in the surrounding areas going to school never more than 25 miles away. My family still live there, my first 2 homes with my wife were there and I now live in close proximity to it – sometimes you just can't get away! I have always been aware of various airfields around the area but never really understood their significance. I've also always been what I think is politely described as 'air minded' and I was an air cadet for 5 years and a great follower of airshows at Alconbury, Mildenhall and of course Duxford. These 2 forces came together about 10 years ago when I began to discover a little more of the history of local airfields such as Deenethorpe, Harrington, Kings Cliffe, Polebrook, Molesworth and of course Grafton Underwood. As the estate use the living quarters area of the old airfield as a picnic site I'd been there many times before, and discovered the odd building here and there hidden amongst the trees. Then in a quest to find out more about the airfield I ended up knocking on the Grafton Underwood post office door to introduce myself to Quentin and ask if he "knew anything about the old airfield up the road..." So basically, it's all his fault! I was intrigued by the stories and a considerable tour of the old airfield by Quentin did nothing more than feed the fire so I'm afraid from that day forward I've been hooked, the more I discover the more I want to know. I was fortunate enough to join in some of the activity in the 2005 reunion in England and I think then I passed the point of no return!

So what next for the NexGen?

I think Frank's last newsletter spelled it out pretty clearly that we 'youngsters' should seek to support the group in taking over the reins in any way possible so that the

integrity of the group remains intact.

Just as a reminder, here's what we have for NexGen committee members:

Communications	Fred Preller
Recruiting	Frank Alfter
Reunions	Vickie Huff
Membership/Records	Fred Preller/Isabelle Engels
Education	Steve Gordy

I'm still learning on the job so any gaps you think need filling please shout!

But I also think that the NexGen should attempt to capture and present the memories and experiences of the 384th to prevent them being lost forever. Easier to say than do I would imagine, so I'd like you to throw any and all ideas my way so that we can try and formulate some plans. We have an excellent website and some great talents amongst us and plenty of enquiring minds so I think it's a mission we can accomplish – it may be the only way to “Keep the Show on the Road”.

Some of the ideas that I'd like your feedback on, and future contributions to include these;

Some experiences of 384th members, with an edited content included here and a full version on the web site.

Grafton Underwood Today, again a snapshot included in your newsletter and a more detailed account on the web site.

Warbird News, the last section of this newsletter includes 'warbird news'. I think this is an opportunity to bring together news about aircraft of interest from both sides of the Atlantic. Primarily I guess this will be B-17s but there may well be others you're interested in, or maybe even work on?

21st Reunion.

It seems such a long time ago since I was lucky enough to travel to Dayton. My first time in the States and I thoroughly enjoyed every moment. I thought it was particularly good to see new 384th veterans, even after all this time there are new people to meet and new experiences to hear about which as time marches onward opportunities like these will get fewer and fewer.

22nd Reunion.

I hope to be able to join you in Savannah but at the moment the odds are against me. Fingers crossed! However, I think it would be great to use me / the committee as a sounding board for ideas which we can then forward on to Vicki Huff as commander in

chief reunions!

23rd Reunion.

Are we really that far ahead!? Well now's the time to think of any ideas / requests for what is proposed to be a return to England. This is a great opportunity to capture any ideas or 'would like to do's' via the NexGen team. I'd like to be able to offer my local knowledge to you all if it helps. At this early stage I can only think of UK destination airports – does everyone know that Continental flies from New York into Birmingham daily? That puts you an hour's drive from Grafton, and nowhere near the M25!!

Warbird News.

Some great news! After spending the 2008 display season stuck firmly to the tarmac, and in the process missing the opportunity to have 3 B-17s in the air at Flying Legends, 'Sally B' has 4 engines again and everything looks good for 2009. What fault kept her grounded? Well it transpires the zero hour engine installed as number 1 had a bolt inside an oil line which starved the engine of its oil flow. I guess enough got through to pass ground running tests but once airborne it had to be shut down. Damage was extensive and as it could not be repaired locally, and with no replacement available she spent the summer on Duxford's tarmac.



Keep the Show on the Road!

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