



384th Bomb Group Newsletter

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



February 2011

SEATTLE In October

Plans are well under way for the 2011 Gathering in Seattle on October 6th through the 9th. The hotel, the Doubletree Guest Suites (a Hilton Honors hotel), has free parking and offers a free shuttle to and from the airport. Hotel registration deadline is Sept 15th for the group rate of \$119.00 for a single or double. Reservations may be made by calling 1-206-575-8220. You must state you are with the 384th Bomb Group to get the group rate. The group rate is good three days before and three days after the event based on availability. As this is a gathering we have kept planned events to a minimum so attendees will have lots of free time to see Seattle, or to sit in the hospitality suite and just visit with other members. This year the banquet will be on Friday evening. This will allow us to do the cruise on Saturday to Tillicum Village for the salmon dinner. This will be a lunch cruise so we will be able to enjoy the scenery on the boat going out and coming back. Cost for the gath-

ering is \$105.00 per person and we are collecting only for the meals. The Board has authorized payment for bus transportation from the hotel to the dock and back again so we will not be passing this cost on to attendees. We must pay for the cruise **IN FULL** thirty days (Sept 6th) prior to the event so all reservations **MUST** be made before that date. **Once we have paid for meals we will not be able to make refunds for any reason. WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THIS DATE AS IT IS SET BY THE CRUISE COMPANY.** Please do not ask for special consideration as we will not be able to comply with any requests. Confirmation will be sent out Sept 10th along with airport shuttle information and driving directions from the airport to the hotel. We are not planning a trip to the Museum of Flight, but it should not be too difficult to get there from the hotel if that is a must see while in Seattle. The hotel is located close to a large shopping mall and there are plenty of restaurants to enjoy. Thanks go out to Tom and Linda

Rollins for wonderful job gathering information for this event. In an effort to keep expenses down we are asking those of you who have your lanyards from Savannah to use this as your name tag in Seattle. Just be sure to indicate when filling out the registration form if you need a name tag or not. If you were in Savannah now is the time to start your quest to find the name tag you know you put safely away. If you are like me you are going to need all this time to find that "safe" place, so start looking now!!



Hill AFB Chapel to be Named After Nate Mazer



The Air Force is naming the World War II chapel at Hill Air Force Base, Utah after Dad on 11 March which would have been his 100th birthday. Imagine working back at the base in the foyer of the 388th Fighter Wing, with F-16s...and loving it...Dad always said never retire and he was right...boring!! Big Dog will be the guest of honor at the naming ceremony. *Amy Meighan*



DOOPS!!!

It has come to our attention that this Gathering in Seattle and the one on Branson fell on Jewish holidays. As a result, some of our members are unable to attend in Seattle for a second year in a row and feel slighted. Please rest assured that this was unintentional and we will endeavor to take precautions in the future to plan around holidays so all may attend 384th Bomb Group functions. Generally we give our selected hotel a time frame of September or October and the hotel comes up with the date where a block of rooms are available and this is how a date is selected.

The people of Grafton Underwood were simply wonderful!! Besides Quentin Bland, who was such a wonderful help to our Group, there was one Anne Bagley. She is deceased now, but for over fifty years she walked from her home about a quarter mile to where the 384th Bomb Group had erected a memorial at a spot where the main runway used to cross the road running northwest out of Grafton and placed flowers in a vase! Of course, we called her "The Flower Lady"! What a neat person! *Vern Arnold, The Old Bombardier*

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



A President's Farewell... Don Thompson

384th Bomb Group Members:

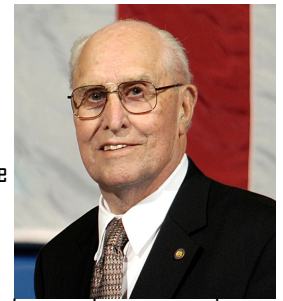
Sixty-eight years ago on 7 Dec 42, I raised my right hand and became a member of the then Army Air Corps, hoping to become a pilot. At that time I had no idea of all the experiences and the people I would get to know. It would take a long time to try to put down all that took place.

It took two years to finish all my training and that of my crew. We got a new B-17 at Savannah, Georgia and flew it to England where we became members of the 384th Bomb Group. My crew was perhaps the last one, or one of the last, to join the Group, but I remember living in a tent for some time.

It was June of 1946 that I finally came back to the States to start civilian life and it was in 1973 that I discovered 384th reunions were being held. I went to my first one in New Orleans. I was elected to the board in 1978, and it has been an honor to be appointed this position. I have been president of the board for the last two years and I will continue to be a member of the organization and will be involved with the activities as my health and age permit. I have been a member of a lot of organizations, but none for as long and none were as enjoyable as the years with the 384th.

Irene and I look forward to seeing all of you at future gatherings. The 384th is in good hands and I know they will *Keep the Show on the Road*. The 384th lives on!

Don



Message from Your New President... Bill O'Leary

384th Bomb Group Members:

First I would like to extend my best wishes to all 384th members and their families for a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Next, I want all to know that I consider it a high honor to have been selected to serve as President of this great organization for the year 2011. Currently, duties of the Group president are limited more to an advisory capacity as opposed to the hands-on approach of years ago when major projects were being planned and implemented. Today the results of those efforts are evident: our memorial monuments and stained glass windows are in place; 384th memorabilia and artifacts are on display in various Air Force museums, as well as at the United States Air Force Academy. We can, therefore, proudly say that our 384th Bomb Group's heritage has been preserved. The level of recurring administrative type tasks remains essentially unchanged and are being very aptly handled by Carol and Frank Alfter.

Our formal Group reunions have been reduced to less costly and informal "gatherings" that appear to be quite popular with the attendees. Time has obviously taken its toll on the number of 384th veterans attending our gatherings. With that in mind, I do not think that it is too soon to start planning for the eventual transfer of command from former residents of Station 106, to the 384th NexGen presiding president. The plan will need to consider the type of ceremony, where it is to take place and the big question---when.

It is also not too soon to be making your plans to attend this year's gathering in Seattle in early October. We shall---Keep the Show on the Road!!

Bill

B-17 Books by Drendel

Lou Drendel wrote:

I am re-writing my "B-17 Walk Around" for Squadron/Signal Publications. The original version was published in 1998. It is now out of print, and Squadron/Signal has committed to all color in all publications. The original version had 1/2 color, 1/2 B&W.

I am hoping that I will be able to find enough original WWII color to fill the book. If you can help, it would be

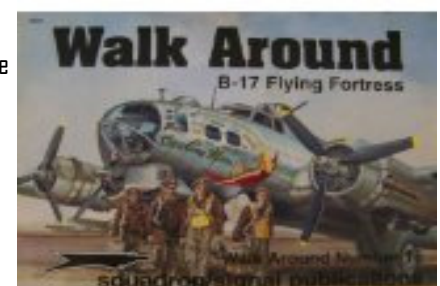
most appreciated and I will make sure the 384th BG association is fully credited for any photos. I can use digital images via e-mail, or if you have original slides/negatives/photos, I can scan them and return them immediately.

Thanks much for any consideration you can give me.

Lou Drendel
429 Nassau St. S.
Venice, FL 34285

941-408-5347
www.aviation-art.net

A very good opportunity to get some of your photos published and saved for posterity! *Frank*



Mission to Plauen by Eugene Spearman

Our 18th mission was to Plauen, Germany. Most of our missions we had all flown together with the same crew that we trained with in Avon Park, FL. Our bombardier, Walter Robitzki, was chosen on this mission to fly with the lead crew and we were given another crewman to be the one to act as the toggler and drop the bombs from our plane.

In early 1945 we didn't have as many German fighters to worry about, but we did have plenty of flak shot at us. Walter's lead plane was also carrying hot cameras so they were expected to leave the formation and get back to England with the bomb damage photos as soon as possible.

After we dropped our bombs we stayed with the formation and started returning to our base at Grafton Underwood, home of the 384th BG.

Our engineer gunner, Joe Clemis, who lives in Sparkingburg, SC, kept a private log of each mission and this is what he said: "No fighter opposition. Rocket almost hit our ship. The force from the explosion rocked our ship. Mission was 10 1/2 hours. 5 hours on oxygen. Weather real bad over base, but visual over target. Saw Paris and Eiffel

Tower, also Brussels, as we descended to a lower elevation."

Our bombardier, Walter Robitzki, and crew were listed as missing and later declared killed in action. I had tried for years to find out what happened, but was unsuccessful. In talks with my pilot, co-pilot and others in the crew, no one knew any more than I did. They just didn't return.

In 1993 when we dedicated the Heritage Museum, I asked a lady employee there if she knew or could help me find out anything about Walter's MIA status. This employee was Mrs Phyllis Dubois from Alysham, Norwich, England. She promised to try and find some information and write me. Later she sent me a casualty report that showed that the B-17, number 44-8008, was sighted over Ostende, Belgium at 11,000 feet at 1655 hours with no apparent damage.

In June 2002, while looking at a webpage on m computer, I noticed an entry asking if anyone had any information about a crew that was MIA

on a mission on 3-19-45. I answered the inquiry thinking that it might be someone who knew something about Walter. I was amazed and tremendously pleased to find that it was Walter's nephew. Needless to say, we have shared pictures, stories, and just chatted back and forth by e-mail and letters and still have lots of catching up to do on events that happened on 3-19-45. I just wish that Walter's mother was still living so I could chat with her.

Eugene Spearman
155 Stage Drive
Saltillo, MS 38866



Pilot of the Squawkin' Chicken, Dewayne "Ben" Bennett.

The Panel is Getting Around, thanks to Chris Wilkinson. Shown is Ben Bennett after signing the B-17 wing panel that was first introduced by Chris at the Branson Gathering last year. If you are interested in helping get 384th veterans' autographs on this panel, please contact Chris at cwilkinson99@hotmail.com, or call him at 310-396-7187.



Dues Are Past Due !!

By now you should have received your dues bill in the mail along with the registration form for the Seattle gathering. **Dues are \$25 and due in January regardless of when you paid in 2010.** In past years we have continued to send out the newsletters whether your dues were current or not. **Due to budget constraints this will be your last newsletter for 2011 unless dues are paid before the April edition. NO DUES.... NO NEWS!!**

We Need Your Stories and Photos !!!

You will notice there were a couple of stories Frank wrote for the last newsletter and not one other story. There were news items and a little about our Branson Gathering and important information about next year's gathering that will be held in Seattle, but no other stories. 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!!!!

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



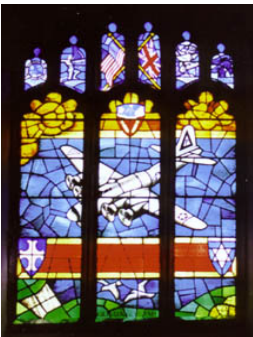
"Keep the Show on the Road...."

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

TAPS as of February 2011

Gordon Dadrill
 Dr. Ernest Lindell
 Teresa Skopek
 John Worley

Littleton, CO
 Moses Lake, WA
 Lindenhurst, NY
 Saint Ann, MD



384th Bomb Group Coins Still Available

Contact Carol or Frank Alfiter at falfiter@att.net, or call 937-306-2142



Available in your language or you by
 R.P. McGraphics
 "Creating Images in the 'Net..."
 www.mcgraphics.com

384th Veteran's Son a Veteran Astronaut

Astronaut John Phillips is by all accounts the grizzled veteran of Discovery's crew, with more time in space under his belt than all of his crewmates put together. As the shuttle's Mission Specialist, Phillips will serve as the main space station robotic arm operator. Phillips was on the International Space Station for six months in 2005 after a short visit during a 2001. He is the son of Carlton Phillips, waist gunner/toggelier, 545th BS, Dec 1943 - Aug 1944.

