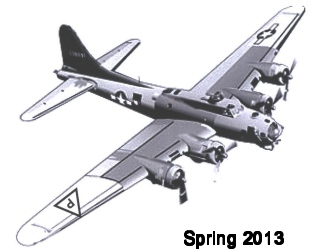




384th Bomb Group Newsletter

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



Spring 2013

Target for the Year... Norfolk, Virginia 10th thru 13th October 2013

Ladies & Gents, the mission of the 384th this fall is to enjoy our old friends in a fabulous hotel on the water in Norfolk, eat some really great seafood (there will be red meat for those who aren't fans of the fish), see the flying B-17,



“Chuckie,” and generally have a great time. You might even call this a shuttle mission, because your Board has already decided the next mission will be to Dayton, OH and the Museum of the United States Air Force. But in the meantime, do enjoy



the gathering and camaraderie in Norfolk.

“Chuckie” is one of only a dozen airworthy B-17s and the only airworthy B-17 Path-



finder in existence. We will be visiting the Military Aviation Museum and get an up close and personal viewing of “Chuckie” on Friday. Watch the arrival of this unique B-17 at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-h_X1YBu5Vs. The music is great as are the video scenes. I am certain we will make some new video and photos with our group of heroes that will undoubtedly be part of Chuckie's story in the near future.

95th Bomb Group Kids By Linda Endris

I had an idea several months ago, but didn't want to pass it on until I saw how it worked. We have had such positive results, that I am ready to share it with you all.

In August I contacted the Principal at St. Barnabas School (where 5 of my grandchildren go) and asked if they would be interested in sending all the veterans in the 95th Bomb Group a card thanking them for their service. They said yes, so I sent them address labels that John Mollison was kind enough to make for me. I offered to send them with my cards so they wouldn't have to pay postage, but the children and teachers all donated stamps so they could send the cards directly. The teachers took the names they were given and researched the 95th Bomb Group and the individual men so they would know a little bit about the men they were writing to and what they

did during World War II.

The results of their efforts have been overwhelming! Many of the veterans wrote back to the children. The kids were absolutely thrilled to hear from the veterans. One veteran sent a check to the classroom to use for books, and another drew a picture of the B-17 and showed where the individual men sat and what they did. One veteran sent a book that he had written about his experiences. Others sent expressions of thanks and the letters brought tears to my eyes. In fact, one teacher told me the staff sat in the lunch room and read letters to each other and it was such an emotional experience for the teachers, as well as the children.

One of the veterans is blind so he had a neighbor read the letter to him and called me. He wants to call the child since he can't see to write, so he is going to call the school one day next week and they are putting him on speaker phone to talk to all the children. I have

heard from several veterans that after they wrote the thank-you notes, the children responded with pictures of their family, stories of what they like to do, etc. so maybe we have a lot of future "pen-pals".

I also heard from the Principal this morning that they would like to "adopt" this group of men and send birthday cards, Christmas cards, etc.

My point in telling you all this is that I am sure most of you have grandchildren who attend school. Maybe you could approach the principal of "your" school and suggest the same thing. Maybe one of you would want to use the widows list. Think of how happy the veterans and widows would be to get pictures and notes from the kids. We were talking about how to reach young people and maybe this could be a start.

ED Note: could be a good project for our Next-Gen folks.... Think about it!
Frank

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



Message from Your President... Len Estrin



Fellow 384thers,

If you were at the 2012 reunion in San Antonio you may have met me. I'm Len Estrin the new president of the 384th, Bill O'Leary certainly did an excellent job for the last two years, and I only hope I can do nearly as well. This is a great opportunity to make your reservation for our 2013 meeting in Norfolk, VA. It is a wonderful place with lots of things to do and see and I am positive you will not want to miss it.

Carol, as usual, has done a superb job of making outstanding Hotel and event arrangements for this gathering, so you won't want to miss it.

We had a good turnout in San Antonio, but we would like an even larger group at the Norfolk gathering. The registration forms are already out, so the earlier you make your reservation, the better. If you need any help at all, please contact me at my E-mail, helestrin@wbhsi.net or contact Carol at fjalfter@gmail.com or 937-306-2142. Let's make Norfolk one of our most memorable reunions.

Hope to see you in Norfolk... bring family and friends with you. It's gonna be a wonderful experience... Len Estrin

Commemoration in France By Madame Sally SOREL

On July 4th, 1943, F/O Gordon Erickson's B-17F, serial number 42-29960, was shot down after attacking an aircraft engine factory in Le Mans, France. The aircraft crashed near the small village of Belfonds, France. Of the crew, two were KIA, two were POW, and six evaded capture.

Having erected a memorial honoring this crew, the Belfonds Veterans Association will hold ceremonies of remembrance on Saturday, July 6th, this year. The following message from Mme. Sally Sorel explains the plan:

"Any and all US military, active or retired, vaca-

tioning in France or whatever, are cordially invited and will be housed and fêted by the villagers (including myself!)

"The little town of Belfonds has a steadfast commitment to preserving the memory of the crash and to honoring the memory of all those, both French and American, who lost their lives or fought there."

I urge all readers to reflect upon the deep appreciation these citizens of France have – so many years after WWII – of the price paid for their Freedom, and to think seriously about joining the good citizens of Belfonds, as well as political, military, and religious representatives, in ensuring an appropriate observance in honor of the 70th anniversary of the event. If

you are able to attend, please contact Mme. Sorel directly. However, if you are unable to be there in person, please send a message of greetings and appreciation to the Belfonds Veterans Association, via Mme. Sorel. Mme. Sorel may be contacted by email at: sally.sorel@wanadoo.fr

Or by mail at:

Madame Sally SOREL

Les Feugerets

61250 VINGT HANAPS, FRANCE

Or by telephone at:

011 33 (0)2 33 26 99 56

(6 hrs later than EST)

More Info: To locate and possibly see this location in France, google " St Clair, Belfonds, France zip code 61500. Two of the crew reportedly fell at "Chene d'amour", which I believe is in the nearby village of La Ferrière Béchet. And airman Hackley reportedly landed at "val d'enfer" between Condé le Butor and Clérey church. The last two have been interred in the village of Belfonds.

As for the scheduled events on July 6th 2013:

9:30 Mass at Belfonds Church

11:00 Military Ceremony at the Memorial Site (followed by "un vin d'honneur" at the site)

12:30-12:45—Catered Luncheon at the Community Center in Belfonds (expect to last several hours!)

Dateline...13 April 2013

69 years ago today the 384th Bomb Group took off from Grafton Underwood, UK, Station 106 on a mission to the Ball Bearing Factories at Schweinfurt Germany. On this mission between the time of 13:54 and 13:57, 6 out of 7 B-17s from the 384th Bomb Group, 545th Bomb Squadron were shot down. My Uncle TSgt Joseph Rachunas was a Tailgunner on one of those planes and became a POW at Stalag 17B for the rest of the War. This is Ben's story!!

<http://squawkin-chicken.384thbombgroup.com/page2.html>

sent by Phil Ettl

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 an article about a 70th anniversary commemoration in France, an update on ditching procedures, plus some introductions to some very interesting reading.

Ditching the Fort Revisited

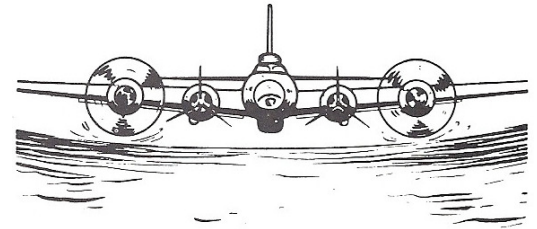
We received very interesting confirmation of published ditching procedures from **Bob Fisher**... My first assignment after commissioning in 1947 was at Eglin with the 3200th Proof Test Group. Our job was to fly aircraft by remote radio control to test the validity of recommended procedures—like gear-up landings, unconventional maneuvers, and of course, ditching, all without risk to life.

Some had other opinions of just how the B-17 should be ditched, such as stalling the plane

and letting it drop in at the lowest speed possible and, I believe, landing with one wing hitting just before the other to act as a "ground loop" on the water. We had extensive photo recording devices at crucial points inside and some outside to capture the resulting data.

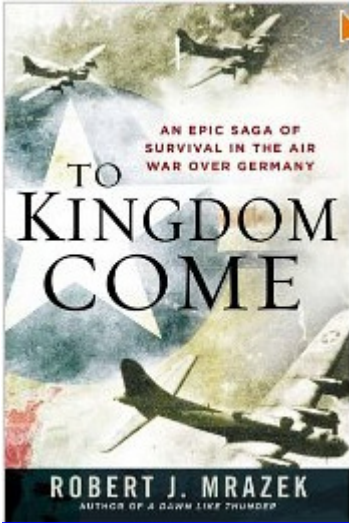
Guess what? The recommended ditching procedure provided in the B-17 operating manual was the very best! The others caused much more damage up to catastrophic...

Recall the procedures printed in the *Summer 2012 Newsletter*.
Frank



The pilot should attempt to set the airplane down in a trough, which is usually cross wind. The two outboard 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.

Trust Those Published Procedures



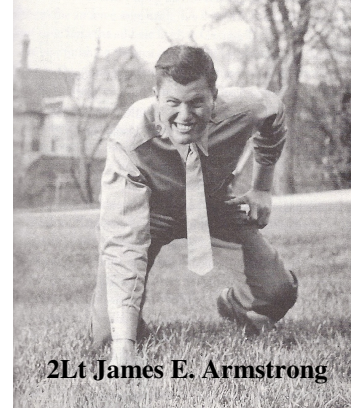
Interesting Reading!

To Kingdom Come, written by Robert J Mrazek is well done after much research about the 6 Sep 43 mission to Stuttgart, Germany. It highlights five crews of which I was one. I was the pilot of the B-17 Yankee Raider (546th Sqdn), which was shot down in Normandy on that Labor Day.

This mission and the 384th are highlighted in the Warriors section

of the book, and begins with information about my crew on page 67. Another very interesting crewmember on Jimmy's crew was Sergeant Olen "Reb" Grant. Reb was one of the waist gunners and provides a real glimpse into what it must have been like in the 384th in the early years.

If you are interested in the story, it may be available through Amazon.com or your local library. It sells for about \$20, depending on



2Lt James E. Armstrong

where you find it. I think you will enjoy the book. *James Armstrong*

Coming to a Book Store Near You...

very soon. Sent in by Chris Wilkerson

David Lustig's new book about his life in the 384th BG, "The I.P." will be published

Military Aviation Museum



RESTRICTED
THEATRE #12 - Bremen, Germany

Used in January 45 issue of *Impact*
Copied 12/14/43 for Major Thompson, AC/AS
Intelligence Information Division.
Released J. La 1/24/44
384th Bomb Group

Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses flying over Bremen, Germany, November 13, 1943.



Boeing B-17
Bomb dropping

A20953

26350A
26350A.C.

Great Conversation Photo

There were quite a few e-mails flying around to discuss what was really happening in the photo above. We left it in a fairly large format so you can decide for yourself what you think was happening.

The photo is clearly marked, "Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses flying over Bremen, Germany, November 13, 1943." But with many of us pointing out the details that we can find in the photo, we believe this was perhaps taken on an aborted mission to Bremen, and that they actually were not flying over Bremen when this picture was shot.

The photo came to us from Chris Wilkerson asking for help: "To my eye, this looks like a Triangle P on the tail. If it is, does anybody know

the story about this photo? Some have bombays open, some don't. White lines look like a scratch on the film, but I see a flare drop in the stick of bombs. Cloud cover is thick..."

Your editor replied, "I believe it is a 384th plane, and it looks like early in the war, since all are F-models. It may be that they are returning from an aborted mission (wx) and this guy is jettisoning his load. I say that because the pattern of bombs seems rather packed and not strung out as if released by intervalometer. Since it's early in the war, with thick undercast, my thought is they didn't have radar and so I believe they did not bomb that day."

Bill O'Leary answered: "Very interesting photo! The drop appears to me to be a salvo of incendiary clusters(?) Too many to be 500 pounders, plus bombs would have tail fins that allow them to drop nose down. Frank may be

correct about the reason for the drop from a single airplane. Chris, if the white line is not a scratch on the film, then we have a real mystery on our hands. I don't understand a "smoke bomb" drop from other than the lead airplane? The date of the photo would probably lead to answers for all our questions."

More information concerning this interesting photo can be found at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/18532986@N07/3831892845/in/set-72157627452695714>.

If anyone out there has some 384th photos that you would like to have "analyzed" by our veterans and NexGen team, please send them. Or if you know about the photo and its details but want to see if anyone else can figure it out, again, please send. This is one way to find out who is in some of those old photos. *Frank*

384th BOMB GROUP 2013 GATHERING, NORFOLK, VA October 10th through 13th, 2013

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 \$200.00 and includes the welcome reception Thursday evening, museum tour and dinner on Friday and breakfast buffet and dinner on Saturday.

\$200.00 PER PERSON X _____ # PEOPLE ATTENDING: TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Emergency contact _____ Telephone number _____

Please mail completed registration form and payment in the form of a check or money order payable to **ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.**, to Armed Forces Reunion, Inc, 322 Madison Mews, Norfolk, VA 23510, ATTN: 384th Bomb Group. **The cutoff date for registration is September 9, 2013.** Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may register on line and pay by credit card (3% convenience fee will be added to online registrations). All registration forms and payments **MUST be received by mail on or before Sept 9, 2013.** After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not tape or staple your payment to this form.

REGISTER ONLINE AND PAY BY CREDIT CARD AT www.afr-reg.com/384bg2013

OFFICE USE ONLY: Check # _____ Date Received _____ Inputted _____ Name tag done _____

The hotel is the **Sheraton Norfolk Waterside 800-627-8042** or 757-622-6664 at 777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk, VA 23510 and is about 15 min from the Norfolk airport. If you require a handicapped room please make this request when making your reservation. The hotel restaurant is the City Dock and attendees will receive a 15% discount on food and non-alcoholic drinks. Overnight self parking is located at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside for \$5.00 per day. Valet parking is \$22.00 per day. Check in time is 3:00pm and checkout time is noon. The room rate is \$104.00 plus state and local taxes. Reservations must be guaranteed by credit card. Rate will be honored 3 days before and after reunion dates based on availability. **Hotel registration cutoff date is September 9, 2013. A room deposit is refundable if cancelled 72 hours prior to the date of arrival.** A reservation guarantee must provide a credit card number with expiration date to the agent. The following cards are accepted: AMEX, DINERS, VISA MASTER CARD, CARTE BLANCHE and DISCOVER. Airport Connection provides shuttle services to and from the hotel and is located outside baggage claim at the booth marked "Airport Express Shuttle Service." Call 866-823-4626 for reservations or www.jamesrivertrans.com. Green & White, Black & White and Checker Cab service is available for approximately \$25.00. For cab service call 757-855-3333.

If you have any additional questions please contact Armed Forces Reunion at 757-625-6401 or Carol at 937-306-2142, or at fjalfter@gmail.com.

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

You should have all received your dues reminder along with the information for the reunion in Norfolk. You need to be fully aware that we are using a reunion planner for this event and they will be collecting all the registration forms as well as all the money. Send your registrations forms and payment to them, NOT TO CAROL!! Keep in mind that you really need to remember the deadline set by the reunion planner and make their cut-off date. In the past I have been able to accommodate last minute sign-ups but this year that will be out of my hands. In San Antonio attendees asked for more group time and less free time so we have planned accordingly for Norfolk with every effort made to keep it affordable. The hotel is on the water, not the beach. While Frank and I were sitting in their dining room we were able to watch sailors working on the docked ships. It is within walking distance to a museum, and a shopping area is not far away on Granby Street.

Many of you have already paid your dues and returned the form for the new roster. If you have not paid your dues and returned your form please do so soon. For those of you who did not pay dues in 2012, this will be your last newsletter. You will be dropped from the mailing list and will only receive additional newsletters if you pay for 2013.

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR THE ALTFERS: fjalfter@gmail.com



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 Spring 2013

Frank Adams
Elbert Bazhaw
Clyde Carlson
Thomas David
Marion Endelicato
Pearl Nyborg
Wendell Orr
Richard Pechout
Elinor Ruckman
Salvatore Sacco
Henry Ullmer

McKinney, TX
Tuttle, OK
Duluth, GA
Apple Valley, MN
Plattsmouth, NE
Broadhead, WI
Newton Falls, OH
Berlin, CT
Diamondhead, MS
Roseland, NJ
Green Bay, WI



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@tggf.org or call 303-331-1944