



384th Bomb Group Newsletter

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



Summer 2013



Bill O'Leary Flies Again... Old and Probably Bold As Well!!!!

The B-17 "Nine O Nine" that I flew was here in the San Diego area together with a B-24 and a P-51 on what was billed as The Wings of Freedom Tour. From San Diego the tour continued to North County's Palomar Airport, located in Carlsbad, CA, and was scheduled to be there for three days: May 3rd, 4th and 5th. The following week a friend was visiting the Carlsbad area and noticed a copy of a Community Paper headlining the Wings of Freedom Tour and picked up a copy for me to read. You can't imagine my surprise as I started reading the part dealing with "A Look At A B-17 Pilot from WWII. Meet Captain Jay Walker, United States Army Air

Force, Retired." The article went on: Captain Walker flew the B-17G "Screaming Eagle 007" when he was assigned to the 546th Bomb Squadron, 384th Bomb Group, 8th AF. He flew 30 missions, and after the war, he flew the Collings Foundation's B-17 "Nine.D.Nine" around the country on tour for seven years. Ten years ago he had a series of four strokes within a period of one year; that put an end to his flying career."

After reading the article I called Jay, introduced myself as a fellow 384ther, and had a nice conversation with him. I told him I was going to order a few 384th articles for him (cap, coin, patch) and upon receipt I would be happy to deliver the items to him. Carol wasted no time in complying with my request, and my wife Elsie and I drove to his home in Carlsbad, met Jay and his wife, Teresa, and had a very nice visit with them. Jay was very thankful for the 384th items, and seemed genuinely happy to meet another 384ther. I might add that twenty of the thirty missions

that he flew were in a lead capacity: Squadron, Group and one as Wing Lead Air Commander. The strokes that he suffered years ago has left him relying on a wheelchair for mobility. He currently belongs to a group called "Old Bold Pilot" that meet Wednesday mornings for breakfast. He asked me to join the group. I told him that I qualify for fifty percent of title, and that I'm not sure about the Bold part. After hearing the flying experiences of some of the members, I commented that probably all the members had more time on taxi strips than I have in the air.



FLASHBACK!

The Fortress "Fightin' Hebe" had been afire, the pilot's oxygen system blown away, and four crewmembers had bailed out seconds before the bomber got over the target.

That was the situation 1Lt Gene H. Goodrick, pilot from Etterville, MD, overcame on a recent mission over Germany. He released the bomb load on a Nazi synthetic oil plant

by operating an emergency release, the fire extinguished itself and with the assistance of the remaining crewmembers, Goodrick brought the flak-battered Fort back to base.

It was two minutes before "bombs away" when an ack-ack shell struck the ship underneath the forward section. "It bounced me right out of my seat," the pilot related. "Then I heard a hissing noise behind me and smoke started filling the cockpit."

The bombardier, navigator, engineer, and co-pilot parachuted out the escape hatch, apparently believing the plane was mortally hit. "When they opened the hatch, I think the draft of air put out the fire," Goodrick said.

The four other crewmen who returned with the bomber were TSgt Harold P. Adams and SSgts Frank Stephens, Lee F. Pierce, and Willard L. Clairday.

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!!!!

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



Message from Your President... Len Estrin

Fellow 384thers,

We had a good turnout in San Antonio, and now it's time to see if we muster an even larger group at the Norfolk gathering. The registration forms are already out, and included in this newsletter, 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.

We had very good representation at the Air Force Academy graduation this year in the form of Pete Bielskis (see below). We look forward to this event every year and it is always breathtaking to see all those great, young Americans as they launch into very exciting and rewarding careers in our Air Force.

Also, you'll not want to miss Bill O'Leary's recent B-17 experience on the front page. Do you suppose they signed off on his currency? Oh well, hope to see you all in Norfolk... bring family and friends with you. It's gonna be a wonderful experience... Len Estrin



Pete Bielskis Presents Top Biology Student Award at Air Force Academy Graduation.... Also Pins 2LT Bars on Former Normandy Escort - by son Dennis Bielskis



This year my dad, Pete Bielskis, went to the Air Force Academy for two reasons. The first was to present the top biology student award that was established in 1963, and sponsored by the 384th Bomb Group in memory of their members serving from 1942 to 1945. The second reason was to pin new lieutenant bars on a young lady who was Dad's escort while he was on the Return to Normandy trip in June of 2012.

The winner of the 384th Bomb Group's Biology award was Justin Sleeter from Tijeras, NM. He is planning to be a Doctor and will attend medical school after graduation from the Academy. He was appointed as a 2nd Lt during the graduation ceremony that was held on May 29th 2013. Dad presented the award during the individual awards ceremony held on Monday, May 27th, where several other awards were presented to other Air Force cadets. After the ceremony we were able to meet Justin and his parents, and

also meet the lead instructor of the biology department, Capt Ilea Eskildsen. She knew just where the stained



glass window and the photo of the bomb crew were located. She took photos and forwarded them to me, since we were unable to do a tour as our schedule did not allow.

Dad was invited to the promotion ceremony for Katherine Brock who was the young lady who



escorted Dad to Normandy. Along with Katherine's mother, Dad pinned her lieutenant's bars on her during that ceremony. What an awesome opportunity that was for Dad!

The next day we went to the graduation ceremony in the stadium. It was the most fascinating thing to see 1,027 cadets march into the stadium from the tunnel in one group, making half right and half left turns, and then march right in line to the seats assigned to them. It was like watching a snake work its way across the field. At the end of the ceremony we learned something about the tradition of tossing their hats into the air. Each cadet places the amount of money equivalent to the year of graduation in his or her hat; this year it was \$20.13. After the hats are tossed into the air and land on the ground, children are allowed onto the field to grab a hat and they get to keep the hat and money inside.

While we were touring around we found a B-17 that was doing a fly over along with several P-51 Mustangs. We did a site-seeing mission and looked the aircraft over from front to back. Still can't figure out how my dad was able to fit inside the ball turret.



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

The September 9, 2013 registration deadline for the reunion in Norfolk is almost upon us, so don't forget to get your reunion registration in to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. Please 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 registration forms and payment to them, NOT TO CAROL!! If the attendance numbers in Norfolk are meager, this could be the last reunion for the Group. We had hoped, and have been planning, to have a reunion in 2014 in Dayton and have that wonderful experience of dinner in the museum as the last reunion, but if we do not have the numbers we will have to cancel those plans. We all knew this day was coming but it may be coming far too soon, so we hope you will support the Group and come to the reunion in Norfolk so we can plan a grand final reunion next year.

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 Dan Voiland at DV5656@aol.com or call 603-675-0570



Taps as of Summer 2013

Charles Fleenor Penn Valley, CA



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@tgff.org or call 303-331-1944