



384th Bomb Group Newsletter

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



Fall 2013

Norfolk a Qualified Success...

Hopefully all attendees at the 2013 Reunion in Norfolk, Virginia enjoyed it as much as Carol and I did. We were a much smaller group than we had hoped for, being on the East Coast, and the Virginia Aviation Museum sold their flying B-17 before we could get there.

But other than that, we feel it was a pretty nice get together. There seemed to be plenty to do, from seeing the Battleship USS Wisconsin, to visiting the Gen MacArthur Museum to enjoying the numerous seafood restaurants.... Even if the weather was very English!

We did have with us our president, Len & Helen Estrin, Dave & Hedwig Lustig, Jack & Celia Goetz, Henry & Kathleen Sienkiewicz, Bill Wilkens with Sue Hames, and Peter Bielskis.

Altogether we had about 32 people in atten-

Frank Alfter

dance, which is far short of our usual 100-120. The good news is we have many children and grandchildren helping us *Keep the Show on the Road!* Please pass on to all family members that we would



more than welcome them to join us. Dayton may be the last formal reunion, but with the NexGen friendships that developed over the years, we know we can continue to preserve the legacy.



The Importance of Your DD 214... Frank Alfter

We learned the hard way.... and cannot express enough the IMPORTANCE of having your DD 214 form handy. Just this month we buried Carol's dad in Williamsburg, VA, and had been trying since last August to obtain a copy of his DD 214. We wanted to get his uniform prepared for his burial and needed to know what his awards and decorations were to get it right.

The DD 214 is your **Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty** and is extremely important in obtaining your rightful benefits upon death. Without this form, you may not receive any of your funeral, or other benefits that you earned as members of the military.

Carol and I were lucky only because our daughter knew someone at Langley AFB who could make Military Honors possible at his bur-

ial, even without the DD 214. Because he was retired Air Force, received retirement benefits, and also had a military ID card that said he was retired, we were able to go forward with full military honors at his burial.

However, the Veterans Administration requires the DD 214 to authorize such honors for those who served but were not retired. They also require the form for other things such as burial expenses, etc.

The VA operates 131 national cemeteries throughout the United States. The VA honors Veterans, their spouses, and dependents with final resting places in national shrines. Benefits may include burial in a VA national cemetery, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, inscribed headstone or marker, a burial flag, Presidential Memorial Certificate, and other

services. Veterans may be eligible for a headstone, marker, or medallion for placement in private cemeteries worldwide. Some Veterans may also be eligible for burial allowances.

Carol and I cannot stress the importance of having your DD 214 where you can get it at a moment's notice. You can request one from the National Archives & Records Administration by calling (314) 801-0800, or go on-line at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/index.html>. **DO THIS TODAY!**



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



I have now been to the reunions at San Antonio and Norfolk. While the turnout was less than hoped for, the trips and the meals were wonderful. Carol did her usual excellent planning and follow-through at the reunion, and so we had a great time nonetheless. There were many first-hand experiences relayed to us at the reunion, but more of the veterans should document their stories while there is time. The children, grandchildren and other family members would like to know more about them. By the time you receive this I will have been speaking at my great-grandsons school and at an Aero club in my home town. This is just another very personal way to pass on our legacies.

At the board meeting in Norfolk it was decided to have the next reunion at Dayton Ohio. You may recall the excellent, heart-warming experience from that 2008 reunion. The museum there is fabulous and the staff took such great care of our gang that it would be a shame not to meet there just one more time. We are thinking the Dayton reunion may be the last formal get-together for the 384th, with our veteran numbers dwindling so rapidly in recent years. So please do consider coming to Dayton in Oct 2014.

You won't be disappointed. — *Len*

Wing Panel News Chris Wilkinson

Panel News as of 21 Nov 2013:

For those who are not familiar with this project, this is a very large panel from the bottom side of a B-17's wing (see below). We are moving this panel around the country getting 384th veterans' autographs and eventually the panel will be installed in a museum so that all Americans can enjoy the legacy left to us by these heroes.

Two Wing Panel Hosts have volunteered to host our B-17 wing panel in Alabama, Georgia and Flor-

ida. They are Keith Ellefson of Ozark, Alabama and Fred and Gail Preller of Reno, Nevada. Keith Ellefson has volunteered to be the host for Alabama and Georgia.

Fred and Gail Preller will host the panel in Florida around January 15, 2013 after driving the panel from Alabama. They will drive the panel back to Keith Ellefson after getting the signatures in Florida. The panel will then ship to its next host/destination from there.

The panel is being prepared now for shipment from New York to Alabama with Dennis Bielskis organizing the shipment.

There are 8 veterans in Alabama, Georgia and Florida that have agreed to sign the panel. There is one veteran in Florida that is undecided and another that hasn't returned my phone calls or phone messages.

Confirmed Veterans are:

1. Arthur Osepchook - Ozark, Alabama
2. Oscar Gore - Marietta, Georgia

3. Walter E. Ramsay - Edgewater, Florida
4. John J. DeFrancesco - Ocala, Florida
5. Morris Sunshine - Miami Beach, Florida
6. Theodore Gore - Fort Lauderdale, Florida
7. Walter L. Harvey - Jacksonville, Florida
8. Everett Barnes - Cape Coral, Florida
9. Paul Bureau - Ocala, Florida

Not Sure:

10. Stephan S. Bczynski - Marco Island, Florida

No Answer:

11. Edward A. Barnes - Plant City, Florida

I'm trying to contact 384th veteran Olen "Reb" Grant but have been unsuccessful. I know he moved recently from his home in Hot Springs, Arkansas but I haven't found a forwarding address. Here's a recent story about him: <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2012/dec/16/wounded-warrior-rolls-punches/>

If anyone knows of other 384th veterans in these states not on this list, or thinks of veterans who might know of other veterans who aren't members who live in these areas, please contact Keith Ellefson, Fred Preller or me.

Many thanks! *Chris*



Doolittle Raiders Make Final Toast at Air Force Museum on 9 November 2013



There are only 4 of the 80 men left who flew with LtCol Jimmy Doolittle to bomb Japan on 18 April 1942. Among the four of them they decided to do the final toast, but only three were able to travel to Wright Patterson AFB, home of the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

The three were LtCol Richard Cole, 98, Doolittle's co-pilot; LtCol Edward Saylor, 93, engineer-gunner on Crew 15; and SSgt David Thatcher, 92,

engineer-gunner on Crew 7. LtCol Robert Hite, 92, was not able to make the trip to the ceremony.

"Gentlemen, I propose a toast," Cole said. "To the gentlemen we lost on the mission and those who have passed away since. Thank you very

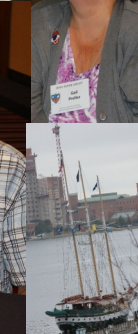
much and may they rest in peace," he ended. The 1896 (the year Doolittle was born) cognac was saved for the occasion after being passed down from Gen Doolittle.

Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen Mark A. Welsh III commented, "Jimmy Doolittle and his Raiders are truly lasting American heroes and they are what America is all about."

Almost Fred's Corner!







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

NEXGEN: Take an active role in 384th NexGen planning for the future. Contact Dan Voland at DV5656@aol.com or call 603-675-0570

Treasurer Tidbits by

OK folks....it's that time of year again. I have not mailed out the dues notices. I will get them out after the first of the year, but you can always send them in now. Dues are still \$25.00, check payable to 384th Bomb Group, Inc., and mail to Carol Alfter, 1306 Adams Way, Beavercreek, Ohio 45434. Every check we get early saves the group postage so get them in the mail! Info on the Dayton reunion should be available for the next newsletter. Our numbers in Norfolk were low and it just gets too hard to plan with a small group so right now the Dayton reunion will most likely be our last formal function. Get your kids to come with you so we can go out with a bang. Many of you have already told me you would come to Dayton so I don't want to see anyone backing out. We will do our best to make it affordable. We may charge a small fee per person to help offset some of the expenses but for the most part the museum fee and transportation will be paid for out of group funds so your registration fee will cover your meals. I hope you all enjoy the holidays with your family and friends and all the best to you in the New Year. On the treasury front, since we are a non-profit organization, and while we have a significant amount in our various accounts, the Board at the Norfolk Reunion decided to donate to two very worthy causes. In the name of the 384th Bomb Group, \$1,000 was donated to Wounded Warriors, and another \$1,000 to Fisher House. You may recall the Fisher House is the military version of Ronald McDonald House, taking care of the families of our hospitalized military personnel. Both really deserving causes. *Carol*



Raymond D. Cook

DuBois, PA

Raymond A. Wardell

Trenton, MI



384th Bomb Group
 Grafton Underwood

