



384TH BOMB GROUP

NEWSLETTER

1306 ADAMS WAY
BEAVERCREEK, OH 45434



Happy 2014! It's a new year and we are looking not only back at the great reunion in Norfolk, but now looking forward to getting together one more time in Dayton, Ohio for another really memorable evening at the Air Force Museum. Remember the reunion in 2008? It was so magical and one that left a lasting impression on all those who attended.

It will be even better this time, as we have planned a visit to the Restoration Hangar as well as having access to all the new displays since our last visit. We will also have more time in the Museum store and time for individual visits to the galleries.

In the Restoration Hangar you will see up close and personal THE *Memphis Belle*, a B-17F, plus the only remaining B-17D in the world, the *Swoose*, as well as the newest acquisition, the CV-22 Osprey. There are many other unique aircraft in that hangar for you to enjoy.



At the museum proper in the WW II gallery, we will have cocktails just off the nose of *Shoo-Shoo Baby* before having dinner in the Vietnam and Korea Gallery to the music of the Air Force Band, after which we will have full access to the rest of the Museum. One of the most exciting exhibits is the recently opened Space Shuttle.

Although the AF Museum did not receive one of the three available shuttles after the program was halted, it did get the Shuttle Crew Compartment Trainer that was used by the astronauts to train for space flight. The Museum took that piece of history and built onto it the rest of what would be the Orbital Vehicle, including a Payload Bay with a real satellite and the ability for visitors to actually see into the cockpit and the mid-deck.

We will be staying at the same hotel, the Holiday Inn just off of Colonel Glenn Blvd, which is very close to many restaurants

being convenient to the base and the Museum.

Another great opportunity for the Group will be a trip to Urbana, about a 45-minute bus ride, where they are building, practically from scratch, a new B-17 named *Champaign Lady*.

This is not a restoration, but a new build. The fuselage is nearly complete and the engine

Goodrick Receives DFC



70 YEARS LATE Christy Lehenbauer joined her dad, Gene Goodrick as he received the Distinguished Flying Cross in a ceremony last Nov in Rogers, AR. It's a beautiful medal said Christy, who was responsible for making this event happen. The medal was presented on Gene's 92nd birthday, as Rep. Steve Womack, R-Rogers, pinned the sixth highest honor on his lapel while more than 200 looked on.

"Keep the Show on the Road..."

and other shops, as well as



nacelles are well along the way as is one of the wings. You will really like what you see in this project.



Message from Your President... Len Estrin

Hello Fellow 384thers! We are close to wrapping up plans for the Final Reunion in Dayton, OH, home of the Air Force Museum. The dates have been set for October 16-18. Those who were at the 2008 reunion in Dayton will remember how awesome that evening in the Museum was and will not want to miss this one. Carol has really made this reunion very special, so please be there.



Planes of Fame's Mighty Eighth Salute

This year's theme at Planes of Fame Museum's annual airshow in Southern California will be "A Salute to the Mighty Eighth." The event will be on May 3-4, 2014, from 9am to 4pm at Chino Airport. Airshow info can be found at www.planesoffame.org. Among the aircraft that will fly will be at least one B-17, P-47, P-38s, P-51s, B-25s and an assortment of other WWII vintage aircraft.

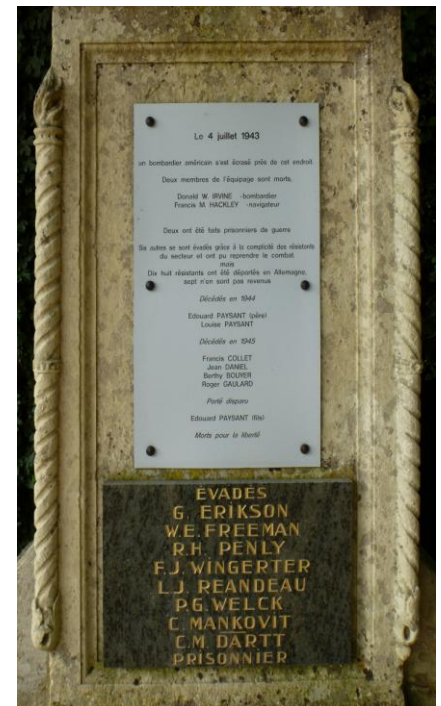
That same weekend, The Collings Foundation B-17G "Nine-O-Nine" will most likely be in the area. Please go to the Collings Foundation website at www.collingsfoundation.org or call 978-562-9182 in April to verify their B-17 schedule before making plans.

There's a plan a-foot for 384th Bomb Group, Inc. NexGen members Keith Ellefson, Fred Preller and Chris Wilkinson to attend the Planes of Fame airshow on Saturday. Any Veteran or NexGen member interested in connecting with this inauspicious crew so they can link up at the airshow may contact Fred Preller at 469-338-1397 or his email at f3red@preller.us and Chris Wilkinson at 310-866-1397 or christopherwilkinson99@gmail.com.

If veterans are interested in visiting the Collings Foundation B-17 on Sun, May 4 (if it is available), a car pool arrangement could be organized by Chris Wilkinson for them to attend this event

Monument to the Gordon Erickson Crew by Fred Preller

You may recall from the Spring 2013 newsletter that villagers in Belfonds, France, long ago erected a monument to the Gordon Erickson crew, which crashed nearby on the Fourth of July 1943, and that they hold memorial observances each year. Our faithful correspondent Mme. Sally Sorel reports that the monument is showing signs of its age, and an effort is underway to restore it. In addition, the village government will use this opportunity to revise the inscriptions on the tablets for increased clarity, and to correct errors that have recently come to light using information now available from the 384th website. Mme. Sorel will continue to keep us posted, and extends an invitation to all for this year's ceremony, to be held 5 July at 4:00 PM. Further information will be made available as it is received. 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 post at Madame Sally Sorel, Les Feugerets, 61250 VINGT HANAPS, FRANCE



B-17 "All American"

On 1 Feb 1943, a mid-air collision between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WW II. An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot, then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a Fortress named *All American*, piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron. When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress was completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through connected only at two small parts of the frame, and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged. There was also a hole in the top that was over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest; the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.



All the control cables were severed, except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft miraculously still flew!

The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off.

While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.



When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they

tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position. Turns had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home.

For a brief time, two more Me-109s attacked the *All American*. Despite the extensive damage, all of the gunners were able to respond and soon drove off the fighters. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the *All American* as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures shown. Lt. Bragg signaled that 5 parachutes had been "used" so five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane to land it.

Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal



roll-out on its landing gear. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed.

Wing Panel News... by Chris Wilkinson

The Group's B 17 Wing Panel

had a very successful run, meeting 17 veterans in the Southeast U.S. between Dec and Feb. Hosting was carried out by Keith Ellefson of Alabama and Fred Preller of Nevada. Keith was ably assisted by Mike Jerrel, and Fred by Sal Scalia. Fred flew across the country to pick up the panel from Keith in Alabama so he could drive the panel all over Florida to meet 10 veterans. It was a huge job but he made an awesome difference to these men and their families. Keith also had a great time meeting 7 other veterans, including nearby vets such as Ozzie Osepchok or difficult-to-reach veterans in Florida and Georgia such as Walter "Big Dog" Harvey, Oscar Gore and James

Armstrong.

The panel was with Ray Moore of Inman, SC until late Feb to meet 4 more veterans, including locals Wallace Storey and Joseph Clemis. Ray was attempting to meet Earl Baker and Robert Charles Birney in Virginia as well. After Ray, the panel travels in March to Amy Meighan in Ogden, UT to meet with Olen "Reb" Grant and Mark B. Calnon in Idaho. The plan is to get it to Arizona after that. There are more East Coast and Midwest veterans who have recently expressed interest in signing, so there's more work to do!

Until very recently, we've been depending on the membership rolls for finding our veterans. As word has

gotten out, a few non-member 384th veterans have stepped out to express an interest in signing thanks to our members and friends of the Group. One way is that we always ask our veterans if they know other 384th veterans. Another way has been through the 384th Bomb Group Facebook page which reaches people worldwide. Finally, Fred, Keith and Cindy Bryan enlisted the help of local newspapers in Alabama, Georgia and Florida to advertise the signing events in the local areas they were visiting. Each of these has started to pay off in finding non-member veterans and families that wouldn't have otherwise known about the Group's work and the Panel Project.

Monopoly... sent by Bill Wilkens

Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British Airmen became involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the Crown was looking for ways to facilitate their escape.

Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful, accurate map, one showing not only where stuff was, but also showing locations of "safe houses" where a POW could go for food and shelter. Paper maps had some real drawbacks -

they make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear out rapidly, and when wet, they turn to mush.

Someone in MI-5 (like America's OSS) got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched up into tiny wads, and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise whatsoever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great

Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, John Waddington, Ltd.

By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the UK licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly. As it happened, "games and pastimes" was a category of items qualified for insertion into "CARE" packages, dispatched by the International Red Cross to prisoners of war.

Under the strictest secrecy, a group of employees began

384th BOMB GROUP 2014 REUNION DAYTON, OHIO**October 16th through 18th****FINAL FAREWELL**

NAME: _____ GUEST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

ADDITIONAL GUESTS: (please print) _____

SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST 384th BOMB GROUP FUNCTION? YES _____ NO _____

COST PER PERSON IS \$175.00. THIS COVERS A WELCOME RECEPTION ON THURS EVENING WITH A PAY AS YOU GO BAR, BREAKFAST BUFFET FRI MORNING, DINNER AT THE MUSEUM ON FRI EVENING WITH A PAY AS YOU GO BAR, BREAKFAST BUFFET SAT MORNING, BOXED LUNCH SAT, AND THE BANQUET AT THE HOTEL SAT EVENING WITH A PAY AS YOU GO BAR. Please select your choice of a turkey or roast beef wrap for your lunch box. Please indicate by number how many of each selection you will need.

Turkey _____ Roast Beef _____ (if no choice is indicated you will get turkey)

\$175.00 PER PERSON X _____ PEOPLE ATTENDING: TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Emergency Contact _____ Telephone Number _____

Please mail completed registration form and payment in full in the form of a check or money order made payable to the **384th Bomb Group**. Mail to Carol Alfter, 1306 Adams Way, Beavercreek, OH 45434.

Registration deadline is Sept 16, 2014. All registration forms and payment in full **MUST be received by mail on or before the registration deadline.** Please make it easy for me this year and make your reservations by the deadline. It is no fun when I get frantic telephone calls two days before the event and have to tell someone NO they can not attend. Confirmations will be mailed on Sept 22, 2014.

We are staying at the Holiday Inn Fairborn again. It worked out so well the last time we decided don't fix it if it isn't broke! Their address is 2800 Presidential Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324, telephone # 937-431-4612. We have a room rate of \$102.00 per night. This rate is good one day before and one day after the event based upon availability. **Deadline for reservations is September 16, 2014.** Hotel room cancellations must be done 48 hours out. For shuttle service from the Airport you need to call the front desk of the hotel giving the group name, flight number and time of arrival. **This needs to be done no later than four days prior to your arrival.** Upon arrival at the airport go to the kiosk or to the office of Charter Vans and let them know you have arrived. Charter Vans will have a list of guests and arrival times. Your trip will be billed to your hotel room.

If you have any additional questions please contact Carol at 937-306-2142, or at fjalfter@gmail.com.

Monopoly (cont'd)

these maps could be folded into such tiny dots they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add: a playing token containing a magnetic compass, a 2-part metal file that could easily be screwed together, and useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency hidden within the piles of Monopoly money!

British and American aircrews were advised how to identify a "rigged" Monopoly set. Of the estimate 35,000 Allied POWs who successfully escaped, an estimated 1/3 were aided in their escape by these sets.

The story wasn't declassified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's and the firm itself were publicly honored.



Raymond D. Cook *DuBois, PA*

James Gardner
Greenwood, SC



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



[Recipient]

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

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

