



384TH BOMB GROUP NEWSLETTER

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434

June 2014



Dayton Reunion – This year is already passing by with the speed of heat and we are gearing up for the reunion here in Dayton. We are seeing a significant number of folks signing up for this special reunion.

As you may have heard, we are sharing the Museum evening event with the 93rd Bomb Group, a B-24 unit, and that should make for a lot of interesting discussions that Friday evening. I am certain there are a few of you who would like to share the greatness of the B-17 with our fellow flyers of the “box the Fortress came in.”

We will have our cocktail hour just off the nose of *Shoo-Shoo Baby*, while our B-24 friends will have theirs next to the Museum’s B-24, *Strawberry Bitch*. We will then be ushered into the next gallery where dinner will be served. Dinner will be accompanied with music by the Air Force Band of Flight, and following dinner, we will have the entire Museum to ourselves (and the 93rd) until 10 PM.

Saturday we will bus up to Urbana, about an hour’s ride, to see the B-17, *Champagne Lady*, which we are building mostly from scratch. Imagine a zero-time B-17!! Our veterans will be asked to autograph the inside of the airframe. This is an airplane you will not want to miss, as most of you will be intimately familiar with her construction and assembly techniques following our visit.

The dates for this final reunion are 16-18 October, so if you haven’t already done so, fill out your registration form (included in this issue) and get it back to Carol soon. The cut-off date for registration is 16 September.



Air Intel Contacts - I am a volunteer at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler (Savannah), GA; also a Marine aviator in Vietnam with 76 combat missions flying from the USS America; a retired CIA officer; and Professor Emeritus of Government from a local university, with books and journal publications on intelligence issues. Please contact me at wijid@comcast.net.

I give this background because I am now researching a book on air intelligence in the 8th AF 1942-1945 and am interested in communicating with anyone who has useful information -- particularly veterans of the Mighty Eighth who can contribute to the topic, even tangentially. Of course, anyone in A-2, regardless of command level, would be most welcomed. Thank you in advance, William J. Daugherty, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Government, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah.

“Keep the Show on the Road...”



Gunnery Trainees Sought – Patricia Richey’s mother, who worked in the Message Center at Buckingham Field in Florida during WW II, read in the Mobile Paper about a Major George E. Cramer who evidently trained at Buckingham. Buckingham was a gunnery school for B-17 crews and Pat’s mother has been trying to find men who trained there. She would like to be able to speak with Major Cramer, or any other WW II veteran who trained in south Florida. Pat’s mom may be reached at 1005 McNeil Ave, Mobile, AL 36609, or by phone at 251-344-2178, or through Pat at bprichey@bellsouth.net.



Photo from Grafton Underwood –

Kevin Fleckner writes: When I work at the 384th Memorial site there are a couple of young lads who own motorcycles and one of them took a photo of his bike with the Memorial and added Sally B flying over. Best wishes from over the pond, Kevin.

A Good WW II Story – From a friend of a friend... Thanks Nell!

Elmer Bendiner was a navigator in a B-17 during WW II. He tells this story of a bombing run over Kassel, Germany, and the unexpected result of a direct hit on their gas tanks.

Our B-17, the *Tondelayo*, was barraged by flak from Nazi anti-aircraft guns. That was typical, but on this particular occasion our gas tanks were hit. Later, as I reflected on the miracle of an 88-millimeter shell piercing the fuel tank without touching off an explosion, our pilot, Bohn Fawkes, told me it was more complicated.

On the morning following the raid, Bohn asked our crew chief for that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck. The crew chief told Bohn that in addition to that shell, another 11 were found in the gas tanks. Eleven unexploded shells where only one was sufficient to blast us out of the sky. It was as if the sea had parted for us. A near miracle, I thought. Even after 35 years, this awesome event leaves me shaken, especially after I heard the rest of the story from Bohn.

He was told that the shells were sent to the armorers to be defused. The armorers told him that Intelligence had picked them up. They couldn’t say why at the time, but Bohn eventually sought out the answer.

Apparently when the armorers opened each of those shells, they found no explosive charge. They were clean as a whistle and just as harmless. Empty? Not all of them! One contained a carefully rolled piece of paper with a scrawled message in Czech. The Intel people scoured our base for a man who could read Czech. Eventually they found one to decipher the note. It was amazing! Translated, the note read, “This is all we can do for you now.”

Using Jewish slave labor is never a good idea!



Air Force Academy News – This year our very own Sheldon Vernon, that is Colonel Vernon, presented the Top Biology Student Award to Cadet First Class Rachel Kennedy. She will begin her medical studies at Pacific Northwest University of Osteopathic Medicine in Yakima, WA in August. We’re counting on Sheldon telling us all about the Academy experience at the Oct reunion here in Dayton.

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

NAME: _____ GUEST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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 PAY-AS-YOU-GO BAR, BREAKFAST BUFFET SAT MORNING, BOXED LUNCH SAT, AND A 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 get your payment and registration form to us on time. Frantic phone calls two days before the event result in telling someone NO, they cannot 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 to stay with them. 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 for one day before and one day after the reunion dates, based on availability. **Deadline for hotel reservations is Sept 16, 2014.** Room cancellations must be made 48 hours out. For shuttle service from the Airport, you need to call the hotel front desk giving the Group name, flight number and time of arrival. **This needs to be done no later than 4 days prior to your arrival.** Upon arrival at the airport, go to the kiosk or to the Charter Van office and let them know you have arrived. Charter Vans will have a list of guests and arrival times. Your shuttle ride will be billed to your hotel room.

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

384TH BOMB GROUP REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

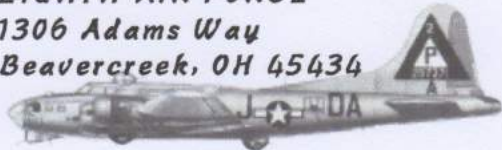
Taps as of June

Art Beese	Temecula, CA
Jack Block	South Bend, IN
Robert Grocki	The Villages, FL
Noal Long	Palm Desert, CA
Joseph Masar	Newton, NJ
Ed McDonald	Upper Darby, PA
Jean Purdy	Croton on Hudson, NY
William Rank	Maple Grove, MN
Don Thompson	Marion, IA



Carol's Notes – Billing the reunion in Dayton as the Final Farewell has confused some of our members. The 384th Bomb Group is not going away! We're calling this the "final farewell" because attendance for the last several reunions has been way down. We have a pretty loyal NexGen following, but we all show up to be with the veterans. We plan these functions for the veterans, and we do understand it may be too difficult to travel and we are truly saddened by this. We hope all of you who are able to travel will come to this reunion in Dayton in October. Get your kids and grandkids to come along with you to carry your bags! While this may be the last formal reunion, I am pretty sure we will get together again when it is time to donate the wing panel to the receiving museum.

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

