



384TH BOMB GROUP

NEWSLETTER

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434

September 2014

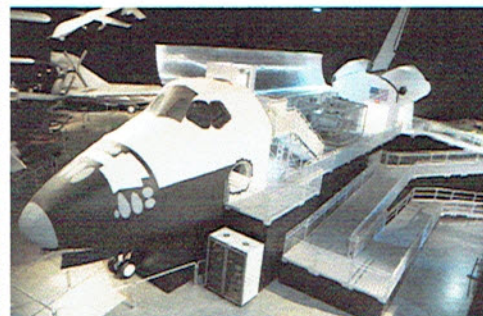


Final Reunion – We are getting mighty close to our Final Reunion here in Dayton and the number of folks signing up is looking very good. Carol and I are really excited about seeing all of you again and we are pulling out all the stops to make this the reunion that you will always remember.

We have lined up some very memorable activities, but not so much to tire you out (remember Washington, DC?). While we are at Urbana looking at the handiwork of a great bunch of volunteers who are putting Champagne Lady together, we are also looking at the possibility of some flying activity at that airfield. It may be another B-17, or it may be a B-25, but we are looking at all possibilities to make the trip up there even more memorable.

Bill Wilkens tells me he knows a lot about B-25s! Does anyone know anything about B-24s? We are still hosting the 93rd Bomb Group at the Museum, so perhaps we may find someone in that gang who knows a bit about the box the B-17 came in. It should be a hugely fun evening with both groups joining together for a little camaraderie and fellowship.

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.



Legacy Data Plates – Pay tribute to a loved one by purchasing a Legacy Data Plate in his or her honor. Stories honoring the heroic actions and dedicated service of veterans, patriots and loved ones are commemorated each May at the Air Force Museum's Wall of Honor Tribute Ceremony. This is an excellent way to memorialize our 384th heroes that will last forever, and be seen by all who visit the AF Museum in Dayton. Currently there are over 700 Data Plates on the wall. Learn more about the program at www.legacydataplates.com. These plates are 4 x 8 inch aviation-grade stainless steel engraved with a message of tribute of your choosing, for only \$250.



"Keep the Show on the Road..."





Spotlight on Preller - Robert Preller served with the 384th Bomb Group (H) during Spring and Summer 1944. He arrived as the copilot of the James A Gibson Crew, on 16 May 1944, and flew 34 combat missions until his combat tour was completed on the 13 Sep mission to Merseburg.

Lt Preller was already a licensed pilot in Jan 1941, so naturally, he was biased in favor of a flying service, avoiding the Navy and an Army foxhole. He was accepted for pilot training and received orders to report for pre-flight training in

Cadet Class 43-J at Santa Ana, CA in Jan 1943. He progressed from there to Primary at Blythe, CA, Basic at Marana, AZ, and Advanced Two Engine at Marfa, TX, where he graduated and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on 3 Nov 1943. His orders were to report to Tampa, FL, for crew formation and B-17 transition.

Soon after arriving in Tampa, he seriously injured his knee, which set him back until the review board signed off on his fitness for flight. Then, back in the personnel pool, he joined a new crew. They trained together and flew a brand-new B-17G to England, arriving in early May 1944, assigned to the 546th Bomb Sqdn on 16 May 1944. They flew their first mission together on 27 May.

Of the few things he did mention about the war, one was that after a few missions he felt the personal protective clothing he was given to wear was not all that necessary. So he decided to wear his regular flight suit (the "green bag") over his uniform and long-johns. After a few missions, it occurred to him that, if the front of the plane got a hole in it there would be a 150 mph, freezing breeze blowing through, which would probably incapacitate him rather quickly. So, he decided it was probably better to wear all the gear!

A few other things did happen - the twinkling of the wing guns as enemy aircraft charged straight at him - and not being able to maneuver to avoid the cannon shells - the flak "box barrage" tactic, where you are flying along and dead ahead you see hundreds of flak shells explode simultaneously. Then another barrage in the same place - and all the while you are flying closer to it. And then another ... and then the next one is behind you. And you keep flying straight and level! He told about seeing a B-17 next to him explode and literally disappear: simply nothing at all left, not even chunks of the engines.

Marion Endelicato (Ralph Meland crew) mentioned that, after being promoted to first pilot, he flew one mission with Lt Preller, all the way to Peenemunde and back on 18 July 1944. He described it as a hard mission because of the length, and the amount of time the crew had to remain on oxygen. And, running low on fuel, they had to land at an RAF base for gas. The crew was fed at the RAF mess while their B-17 was being refueled, then flew home to Grafton Underwood and were able to sleep in their own beds that night.

After he completed his tour, the Army needed him to help train B-17 pilots, so he headed down to Mississippi for duty he described as more hazardous than combat!

544th Squadron B-17 Crash Memorial in England... My name is Richard Butler (r.butler@btinternet.com) and I live in Wargrave, Berkshire, UK. On November 13, 1943 a bomber from the 544th Squadron crashed in/very near to Wargrave. Nine crew were killed and one parachuted to safety. Many details of this crash along with crew names will no doubt be on your website already, thanks to Jim Waldron. Members might like to know that we villagers are unveiling a memorial overlooking the crash site on November 13, 2014 at noon. We expect representatives from the US Embassy to attend as well as our well-known Member of Parliament. If any 544 Sq members happen to be in the UK and would like to attend, please e-mail me for details. Part of the plane was fished out of the River Thames in 2003 and is held by the Wargrave History Society.

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 Sep

Ed Barnes	Plant City, FL
Sue Hames	Hanceville, AL
Cliff McClanahan	Rome, GA
James Sturgess	Endicott, NY

Carol's Notes – Folks, it's decision time for this final reunion. We need to have your registrations in not later than 16 Sep. We have special guests coming who we are sure you will want to meet. Among them is Richard Peaslee to honor his father's significant contributions to the success of the war effort through the 384th Bomb Gp. We will also have Brigadier General McLaughlin speak briefly about his memories of flying with Col Bud Peaslee, and our keynote speaker is Lieutenant General CD Moore who will compare his flying experiences with those of the 384th and aviation changes over the years that you all made possible. We will also get to see the real Memphis Belle in restoration at the museum and see a practically brand new B-17 being built in Urbana, OH. You really won't want to miss this one. We hope to see all of you here in Dayton!



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

