

# 384th BOMB GROUP

## NEWSLETTER

1306 Adams Way  
Beavercreek, OH 45434



### **Message from Your President-**

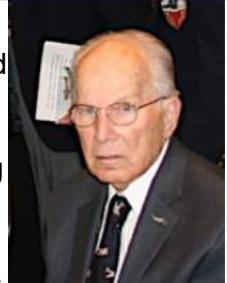
**Peter Bielskis...** We had another great reunion this year in Tucson, Az; we had 10 of my fellow veterans present and got one more new signature on the Wing Panel. During the reunion we went to the Pima Air & Space Museum, touring the 390<sup>th</sup> Museum and saw many different aircraft. Then we traveled to the Sabino Canyon National Park and had a great lunch

with ice cream on the way. At the Saturday evening banquet we had a lot of good food and great camaraderie.

The next reunion will be in St. Louis, MO and we will be doing it as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Reunion. It is planned for 19-23 October 2016 and has many optional tours scheduled. We will have our own hospitality suite (minimum of 50 attendees) and our own banquet, followed the next

evening with the 8<sup>th</sup> AF banquet. It should be great fun to share old stories and listen to new ones, mingling with other fighter and bomber groups.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year with many more! **Peter**



### **Mission to Wendover - Fred Preller**

In early October, Gail and I took a ride out to Wendover Airfield ([www.wendoverairbase.com](http://www.wendoverairbase.com)) to see how the new museum was coming along. For those not familiar with this project, the Historic Wendover Airfield Foundation is renovating the original officer's club building for use as museum display space and for reunions and other gatherings. In fact, they have hosted two reunion groups, the 306th BG "First Over Germany," and the 509th Composite Group, whom you may recall played a significant part in ending the war...

The basic building – which they are naming the "SMsgt. John T. Brinkman Service Club" – is complete, weatherized, and ready for business, although it could use a bit of paint and some finishing inside. Going forward, each bomb group that trained there – all 20 of them – will have a dedicated display area, and the 384th display builders will call on the Group as needed for information, photos, and possibly artifacts. In addition, the 384th donated the stained glass window model seen at the last reunion, and Gail and I brought three stained-glass Triangle-Ps (made by Keith Ellefson, of course) for the museum, that illustrate the evolution of the tail-marking over the duration of the war. These were presented to Jim Petersen, President of the Foundation.

Amazing things are happening at Wendover Airfield – I can't wait to see what progress has been made on my next visit, because the Foundation is really helping to "KEEP THE SHOW ON THE ROAD."



### **Jack Goetz, One Small Town Boy**

Jerry Meehl had been working on a book about Jack for quite some time, and Jack was quite a talker, but the beauty of this book is you can actually see and hear Jack say the words you are reading. Jerry did such a wonderfull job of capturing the essence that is Jack. The first part of the book is about Jack's early years and then on to combat in Europe with the 384th. What I didn't know about Jack would fill a book, and Jerry did just that. Did you know Jack went to the Pacific after his 35 missions with the 384th? Jack was the flight engineer of a B-17 that flew war correspondents around the world to the Pacific. What a story that is. You absolutely must get this book. Jerry Meehl can tell you how to get one.



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



Dec 2015

## HOSPITALITY SUITE



384th troops arrived and began festivities in our hospitality suite, which was conveniently located between two bars. It was so good seeing the 384th family together again... won't be the last time!

Dec 2015



Dec 2015

## SABINO CANYON TOUR



## BANQUET AT THE HOTEL



## PANEL HANDLERS





## Ray Gregori Signs Panel at Tucson Reunion

There were eleven veterans at the Tucson reunion and only one had not previously signed the B-17 wing panel. Mr Gregori's signature put the total number of signatures on the panel at 136. Awesome work by a bunch of people moving this panel around the country to get all these signatures. This panel will be installed at the Wendover Museum until there is no more possibility of further signatures, at which time it will be transferred to the Hill Air Force Base Museum.



## From the Minors to the Majors - the Story of George H. Nieters, Jr, radio operator, 544th Bomb Squadron by Tom Twohill

George was 20 when Pearl Harbor was attacked on 7 Dec 1941 and was infatuated with baseball at the time. He was born in St Louis in 1921 and was an avid fan of the Cardinals, and tried out as a pitcher and was ultimately drafted and signed, but with the Chicago Cubs. Like so many young men of his era, George felt the duty to serve and enlisted in the Army Air Corps in Feb 1942.

George was single and had aspirations of flying. He applied for flight training and was assigned to pre-flight training at Kelly Field in San Antonio, Texas. From there it was on to Missouri for advanced training. He did not have the requisite hours to fly solo, which was not unusual as many of those selected already had flight experience. However disappointed George was, he still wanted to fly. He applied for radio and gunnery school, was accepted, and began training at Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

After graduating and achieving the rank of SSgt, he was assigned to Ardmore, Oklahoma where he would meet and join up with his crew to train before shipping overseas. As was customary, his crew was assigned a B-17 to fly overseas so it was on to Manchester, New Hampshire, Reykjavik, Iceland, and then on to Wales. From there they were trucked to Grafton Underwood in Northamptonshire, England. This



would have to fly 35 missions. Soon after arrival, his crew flew familiarization and training missions around the area before they were ready for their first combat experience.

On George's first mission, Lt Lee Dodson took over as pilot, John Proctor flew as co-pilot, and they had a single waist gunner, Fred Luciano. This was the crew for the first 3 missions. On the 4th mission Lt Proctor flew as pilot and had Lt Dale Baker as co-pilot. On 13 Aug, Lt Walter Carlson took the pilot seat and was pilot for the next 14 of 15 missions with Baker as co-pilot.

The radio room was a rough place to ride. The radio operator manned the open hatch gun and, once the target had been passed, checked the bomb bay to ensure all the bombs had cleared the racks. When in trouble, he tuned to the distress frequency on the liaison set and, nearing the coast, sent the "darky-darky" signal - the military equivalent of "Mayday."

In 1942, the radio operator's training was deficient in that some could not send or receive Morse code. But by

1943/44, a weird chatter unfamiliar to many filled the airwaves, and the radio operator's workload increased dramatically. B-17s had three main aircraft communications sets: Command Radio (SCR-274-N) was short range communication with nearby aircraft or ground stations; Liaison Radio (SCR-287-A) provided long-range, two-way voice and Morse code (normally used purely for coded signals); and VHF Command Radio (SCR-522-A) used for verbal communication with bombers and fighters. If an aircraft got into distress, the radioman became a crucial cog in the rescue. He would send out distress signals and position fixes if over the sea. He was also responsible for the Radio Compass (SCR-269-G), used in direction finding with "Bunker" and "Splasher" systems for assembly and in undercast conditions.

Following his 35th mission, George returned to the US in time for Christmas 1944. Germany surrendered in May 1945, but he began B-29 training at Lincoln, Nebraska before Japan surrendered in Aug.

George loved baseball and played in the minor leagues until his enlistment. Following discharge, he continued playing in several city leagues, and considered giving the major leagues another shot, but contemplating marriage and starting a family, he opted for the workforce instead. By all accounts, he was considered an excellent pitcher with major league potential.

But it was just a game. When he enlisted, he entered the "Major League" of his life with the Eighth Air Force and the 384th Bomb Group.

## Taps as of Dec 2015

Clifford Dart  
Roland Dube  
Ceil Goetz  
Betty Harvey  
George Nieters  
Harry Roupe

Dartmouth, MA  
Swampscott, MA  
Fayetteville, PA  
St Augustine, FL  
Monticello, IA  
Washington, PA



### Champaign Lady Update -

Urbana, OH by Frank Alfter.

Work on the horizontal stabilizers is nearing completion. Two of the four engine nacelles are completed and a third is in the jig. The aft spar for one wing is 95% complete. The tail gun compartment is complete and has been fit-checked. One wing tip is nearly done, both bomb bay doors are finished, and all gun placements are built. The navigator/bombardier compartment is now fully appointed, and work is well on the way in the cockpit.



The 384th donation to the Champaign Air Museum goes a long way in keeping this worthy project going, and one day many people will enjoy this magnificent B-17 as she plies the skies of this great nation of ours. Thanks so much!



**Carol's Corner** - DUES are coming due in January, so please don't forget to send in your \$25 to help Keep the Show on the Road and supporting our veterans. As you read earlier in this newsletter, the next reunion will be in St Louis in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society and hence the arrangements will be through their reunion planning team.

More to follow.... KTSOTR-*Carol*

### 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.384thbombgrou.com](http://www.384thbombgrou.com)

