



# 384th BOMB GROUP

## NEWSLETTER

1306 Adams Way  
Beavercreek, OH 45434



### Message from Your President-

**Peter Bielskis...** Calling all 384thers!

We are approaching the time to register, if you haven't already, for the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in St Louis, where we hope to have the largest turn-out of any groups at that event. Remember, All **WW II Veterans** who register for the reunion and purchase the Option 1 Meal Package, will get a **\$250.00**

**rebate** in the form of a check from the 8th AFHS when they check in at St Louis. That's pretty good incentive for me! We will have a 384th only banquet on Thursday evening, and with enough participation we will also have our own hospitality suite. The big Gala Dinner is Saturday evening where all the fighter and bomber groups get together for one big bash. It should be loads of fun to meet

some of our comrades in arms and hear some of their stories. So, get your registrations in today! Let's show them how the 384th does reunions and takes care of our veterans.

**Peter**



\*\*\* If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact: Debra Kujawa Managing Director, 8th AFHS at 912-748-8884, or by email at: [ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org](mailto:ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org)



Don't forget your **HOTEL RESERVATIONS** at the Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet. Call 314-878-1500 or 888-627-7066 (Reference 'CHALET' and 8th AFHS); Give the Group Name: 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion Dates: 19-23 Oct 2016. Rate: \$109 + tax. Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability. Please note the **Cut off Date** is 15 Sep 2016. Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a **48 hour cancellation** policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax. For GPS purposes, the hotel is located at 191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146.

### Meet Me in St Louis, As Briefed!

by Fred Preller NOTE: This is our last newsletter before registration and hotel deadlines. Please do not delay in making your arrangements to attend!

With our reunion now less than four months away, hopefully you have made your **HOTEL RESERVATION**, but don't forget to send in your reunion **REGISTRATION** also! As of 21 June, only ten 384th members have registered, of whom 3 are WW II veterans. We need at least another 30 of our members to register to ensure we will qualify for our own hospitality room. Note that we will have our "Rendezvous Dinner" in the hospitality room, so we won't be having to scurry around moving our memorabilia from place to place, so we really need at least another 30 to register.

#### IMPORTANT DATES:

- **15 September:** Cut-off date for hotel reservations and reunion registration
- 19 October: Reunion begins
- 20 October: 384th Bomb Group "Rendezvous Dinner" at 7PM
- 23 October: Farewell breakfast

Get all the latest information on reunion registration, hotel reservations, tours and schedule on our website: **384thBombGroup.com** by clicking on the "**8th AFHS 2016 Reunion Info**" link. Additional information tailored to 384th BG members can be found at the "**Read Me**" link just above that link.

**SEE YOU IN ST LOUIS**, as briefed!

**We Need B-17 Panel Host(s)!** Our wing panel will be hosted this summer by Mark Meehl to sign George Schock in Falls City, Nebraska. Afterwards, we'd like to be able to send the panel from Nebraska to another host before or after the reunion in October. We have 3 veterans in Illinois, 1 in Indiana, 1 in Michigan, 1 in Wisconsin and 1 in Minnesota. Please call or email Chris Wilkinson at 310-866-8457 or [christopherwilkinson99@gmail.com](mailto:christopherwilkinson99@gmail.com).

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



## The Story of a P-51 Named "Bad Angel"

Many of us who attended the Reunion in Tucson last year and visited the Pima Air Museum may have seen, but not noticed *Bad Angel's* unique kill placard. Here's the story: Proudly displayed on the fuselage of "Bad Angel" were the markings of the pilot's kills: seven Nazis; one Italian; one Japanese ... AND ONE AMERICAN. Huh?

Lt. Louis Curdes was 22 years old, graduated flight training school and was shipped off to the Mediterranean to fight Nazis in the air over Southern Europe.

He arrived at his 82nd Fighter Group, 95th Fighter Squadron in April 1943 and was assigned a P-38 Lightning. Ten days later he shot down three German Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters. A few weeks later, he downed two more German Bf-109's. In less than a month of combat, Louis was an Ace. During the next three months, Louis shot down an Italian Mc.202 fighter and two more Messerschmitts before his luck ran out. A German fighter shot down his plane on 27 August 1943 over Salerno, Italy. Captured by the Italians, he was sent to a POW camp near Rome. No doubt this is where he thought he would spend the remaining years of the war. It wasn't to be. A few days later, the Italians surrendered. Louis and a few other pilots escaped before the Nazis could take control of the camp.

One might think that such harrowing experiences would have taken the fight out of Louis, yet he volunteered for another combat tour. This time, Uncle Sam sent him to the Philippines where he flew P-51 Mustangs.

Soon after arriving in the Pacific Theater, Louis downed a Mitsubishi reconnaissance plane near Formosa. Now he was one of only three Americans to have kills against all three Axis Powers: Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Up until this point, young Lt. Curdes' combat career had been stellar. His story was about to take a twist so bizarre that it seems like the fictional creation of a Hollywood screenwriter. While attacking the Japanese-held island of Batan, one of Louis' wingmen was shot down. The pilot ditched in the ocean. Circling overhead, Louis could see that his wingman had survived, so he stayed in the area to guide a rescue plane and protect the downed pilot. It wasn't long before he noticed another, larger airplane, wheels down, preparing to land at the Japanese-held airfield on Batan. He moved in to investigate. Much to his surprise the approaching plane was a Douglas C-47 transport with American markings.

He tried to make radio contact, but without success. He maneuvered his Mustang in front of the big transport several times trying to wave it off. The C-47 kept to its landing target.

Lt. Curdes read the daily newspaper accounts of the war, including the viciousness of the Japanese soldiers toward their captives. He knew that whoever was in that American C-47 would be, upon landing, either dead or wish they were. But what could he do? Audaciously, he lined up his P-51 directly behind the transport, carefully sighted one of his .50 caliber machine guns and knocked out one of its two engines. Still the C-47 continued on toward the Batan airfield. Curdes shifted his aim slightly and knocked out the remaining engine, leaving the baffled pilot no choice but to ditch in the ocean.

The big plane came down in one piece about 50 yards from his bobbing wingman. At this point, nightfall and low fuel forced Louis to return to base. The next morning, Louis flew cover for a rescuing PB4 that picked up the downed Mustang pilot and 12 passengers and crew, including two female nurses, from the C-47. All survived.

For shooting down an unarmed American transport plane, Lt. Louis Curdes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Thereafter, on the fuselage of his P-51 "Bad Angel", he proudly displayed the symbols of his kills: seven German, one Italian, one Japanese ... and one American flag.



So, while we are with our new friends at the 8th Air Force Historical Society in St Louis, perhaps it would be interesting to get to know some of the fighter escort gents in the crowd and ask about their support of our 384th missions. Just maybe, just maybe, one or two of them might have been the ones flying cover during some of your missions. This will be the first time for many of us at such a big gathering of 8th Air Force and we should meet and greet as many as we can. And don't forget the other bomb groups. There promises to be many interesting stories and friendships at this one and we hope to tag along for more in the future in our effort to **Keep the Show on the Road!**

Sincerely, *Frank Alfter*

## From Across the Pond...

As many of you know, we have a good friend taking care of our monument at Grafton Underwood. He is Kevin Flecknor and will be at our reunion in St Louis. He has been maintaining the monument site since the start of 2010, and has spent a lot of his own money, but he will tell you he does it all voluntarily and in the mem-ory of our veterans.

He met last January with the County Council and by March they had erected flag

poles for us and laid a proper tarmac layby. The Buccleuch Estates put up some fencing and have now relocated an oak tree for us. Kevin also mows and keeps the vegetation trimmed, taking about 3 1/2 hours each time, but for him it is a labor of love.

When you see Kevin at our reunion in October, be sure to say hello and thank him for all the great work he puts into keeping our 384th monument looking the best it possibly can.

Frank Alfter



Kevin Flecknor caring for our monument



**REGISTRATION FORM**

42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO  
 October 19-23, 2016

<b>CUT-OFF DATE IS September 15, 2016</b>	Price Per	#of People	TOTAL
REGISTRATION FEE	\$ 40	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16	\$ 25	#	\$
MEAL PACKAGES			
#1 Includes 7 hotel meals beginning with breakfast Thursday, Oct 20	\$ 212	#	\$
#2 Includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast Friday, Oct 21	\$ 148	#	\$
Please select your entrée choice for the Gala banquet Saturday, Oct 22:			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce		#	
Pan Seared Salmon w/Balsamic Reduction		#	
SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (If not purchasing a meal package)			
Thursday, Oct 20 — RENDEZVOUS DINNER Chicken Marsala	\$ 46	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21—EVENING DINNER BUFFET Roasted Pork Loin & Grilled Chicken Breast	\$ 46	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22—GALA BANQUET (Please select entrée)			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce	\$ 46	#	\$
Pan Seared Salmon with Balsamic Reduction	\$ 46	#	\$
TOUR OPTIONS:			
Thursday, Oct 20: Military Heritage Tour—INCLUDES BOX LUNCH	\$ 45	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21: Gateway to St. Louis City Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 25	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22: Anheuser-Busch Brewery/Grant's Farm Tour	\$ 37	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): \_\_\_\_\_  
**WWII Veteran** \_\_\_\_\_ BG or FG Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ POW: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd Gen \_\_\_\_\_ Gold Star Family Member \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 SPOUSE or OTHER PERSON attending: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDITIONAL GUESTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DAYTIME PH #: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMERGENCY CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_ PH #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PLEASE INDICATE ANY PHYSICAL OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD: CARD #: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this registration form**, along with check or money order if not using credit card, to:  
**8<sup>th</sup> AFHS, P.O. Box 60369, Savannah, GA 31420-0369**

Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.

# Taps as of June 2016

Marvin Dahlman  
Jean Fernandez  
Clarence Hightshoe  
Roger Wade

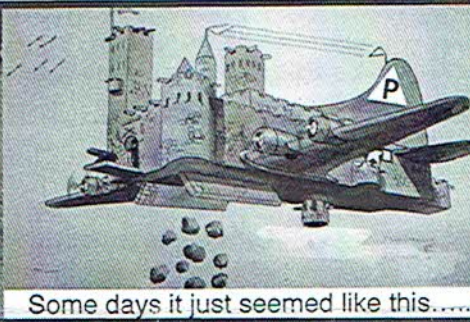
St Louis Park, MN  
North Conway, NH  
Iowa City, IA  
Sarasota Springs, NY



544 Bomb Squadron    545 Bomb Squadron    546 Bomb Squadron    547 Bomb Squadron



Len Estrin at AF Museum  
in June 2016



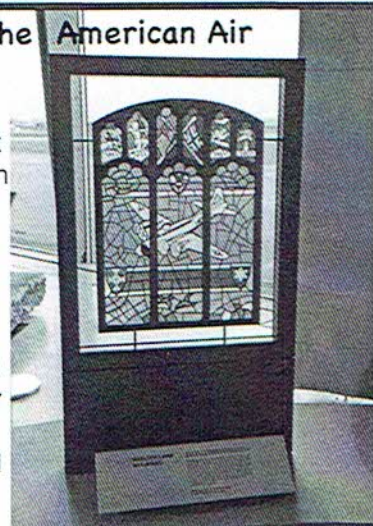
Some days it just seemed like this.....

## The Show is on the Road at the American Air Museum at Duxford, UK

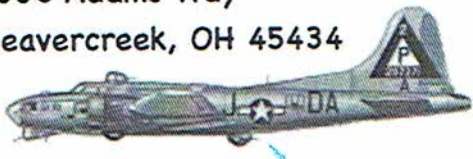
Recently I had the pleasure of chatting with 384th BG veteran Everett "Ev" Barnes of Florida. He and his twin brother, Ed, served as MPs at Grafton Underwood. Ev told me he was a motorcycle patrolman until the day he was riding along one of the infamous narrow lanes around GU and a jeep zoomed out of a side road and put him in the hospital for several weeks! After that, no more motorcycle duty, but he was still fit for other duty and remained with the 384th for the duration.

He mentioned something about a replica window, wondering where it had gotten to. His story is that he and his sons had made it for Quentin Bland, and presented it to him on one of Quentin and Barbara's visits to Florida in the '90s. Apparently Quentin thought it should be shared with a wider audience than just the visitors to his home, and he loaned it to the American Air Museum (AAM) in Duxford.

Fortunately, the window is alive and well, and on prominent display at the AAM (see photo above). Lucy Maxwell of the AAM was kind enough to provide the accompanying photo, to give you a taste of what you will see at the AAM on your next visit! - Fred Preller



**384th BOMB GROUP, INC.**  
**EIGHTH AIR FORCE**  
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Beavercreek, OH 45434



COLUMBUS OH 431

07 JUL 2016 PM 4 L



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

We're on the Web at: [www.384thbombgroup.com](http://www.384thbombgroup.com)