



1943 2018

384th Bomb Group News & Journal



January 2018

"Keep The Show On The Road..."

384th BG Reunion October 18-21, 2018

After some discussion, the Board voted to have our own separate reunion on October 18-21, 2018 at the Holiday Inn Fairborn.

The main advantage to having our own separate reunion in Dayton was that Frank and Carol Alfter, who live nearby, could find quality accommodations at a good price with good restaurant and breakfast service at a good price. Controlling the cost of the reunions has been a priority for the Board. Our reunion will be one week after the 8thAFHS reunion, also in Dayton, so some of us could attend both. The 8thAFHS reunion will also have their reunion in Dayton, OH on October 10-14, 2018 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, downtown Dayton. Our concurrent reunions with the 8thAFHS in the past two years have been a great success for our Group and veterans, so it will most likely be a part of our future again.

So folks, we now have a contract with the Holiday Inn/Fairborn Hotel and dates are set for our 31st reunion. There are many things to see and do related to aviation and history here, but one of the main attractions is the National Museum of the United States Air Force. We'll visit this museum on Friday. The museum will be unveiling the newly restored B-17F Memphis Belle in May. It promises to be a really grand display in the WWII gallery. There is also the 384th Bomb Group Memorial in the AF Museum garden, something we never miss.

On Saturday, we will be taking the group by bus up to Urbana again to see the Champaign Aviation Museum and their B-17G restoration "Champaign Lady". Some of you may remember visiting here in 2014 and what an experience it was for our veterans! The museum staff were really super to our veterans, letting

them sign the interior of their B-17 and crawl into their ball turret. So it should be another memorable time. Progress has been considerable since 2014 and we can still get our folks into the ball turret. Transportation will be provided to the AF Museum and Champaign Lady restoration. So, mark your calendars and plan to join us for another really great reunion. The schedule of events is:

- **Thursday, 18 October**
Arrival Day
Evening Reception
- **Friday, 19 October**
Tour National Museum of the USAF, including B-17F "Memphis Belle".
- **Saturday, 20 October**
Breakfast (included in room rate)
Tour Champaign Aviation Museum, including B-17G "Champaign Lady", B-25 and Dc-3.
- Banquet Dinner
- **Sunday, 21 October**
Departure Day
Breakfast (included in room rate)

We are staying at the same fabulous Holiday Inn/Fairborn Hotel when we had the reunion in Dayton in 2008 and 2014. The contract is signed so you can make reservations at any time until the cutoff on September 20, 2018.

Room rate: \$109/night, breakfast included
Room Reservation:

Holiday Inn Reservations (Group Code "BOM"), or call the front desk at 937-426-7800 and request room block "384th Bomb Group".

Cutoff date for reservations is on September 20, 2018!

**Reservation Information:
Group Code: "BOM"**

**Room Block Reference:
"384th Bomb Group"**

\$109/night, breakfast included.

Reunion Registration is \$175/ person.

**Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn I-675
2800 Presidential Drive
Fairborn, Ohio 45324
United States
Tel: 937-426-7800**



Memphis Belle restoration, Jan. 5, 2018
USAF Photo

THIS ISSUE

A Most Unforgettable Character Page 3

As part of the 75th anniversary of the formation of the Group, we're printing for the first time Col. Budd Peaslee's "A Most Unforgettable Character", describing his first meeting of Maj. William "Pop" Dolan, the Group's Intelligence Officer.

2017 New Orleans Reunion Photos Pages 4-9.

Briefings - 384th News - Page 10

News about the Group and its members.

Taps - Page 10

B-17 Wing Panel Donation to Hill Museum News - Page 11

Board and NexGen members met with Hill Aerospace Museum at Ogden, Utah in January to initiate discussions about donating our B-17 Commemorative Wing Panel, page X.

384th BG Patches for Sale! - Page 11

New 384th Bomb Group and Squadron patches are available for purchase!

384th Bomb Group Memorial at Grafton Underwood Maintenance Donations Page 12

Donation information for the upkeep of the 384th Bomb Group Memorial in Grafton Underwood, England.

2018 Reunion Registration Form Page 13

CALENDAR

May 17-19

B-17F "Memphis Belle" Restoration Dedication and Celebration, National Museum of the US Air Force, Dayton, Ohio. Celebration includes 130 historic reenactors, music and two flying B-17Gs, Aluminum Overcast and Yankee Lady.
www.nationalmuseum.af.mil

October 10-14

2018 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion, at Dayton, Ohio.
www.8thAFHS.org

Oct. 17-21

384th Bomb Group Reunion
Dayton, Ohio
www.384thbombgroup.com

October 25-27

2018 2nd Schweinfurt Memorial Assoc Reunion, at Santa Ana, CA.

Editor's Notes

As they say in the Army, never volunteer for anything! So, of course I volunteered to be the new newsletter editor! Frank Alfter has been the editor for many years and has done a wonderful job but he said he needed a break.

It's taken me a very long time to get this edition of my first newsletter prepared and ready for print. I apologize to you all, and I really appreciate your patience waiting. The learning curve has been steep for me, but all the hard work has me better prepared for the next issues. We'll have at least two more issues this year.

So why a newsletter? Do we really need one?

In our age of the internet and instant information, a newsletter sent in the mail might seem quaint and outdated to some of us. Of course, we always provide a digital version on the 384th Bomb Group website. But I think that there are some good reasons for us to keep the print version going. First, there's something tangible and satisfying in having something in your hands to read at your own pace and return to at your leisure.

The newsletter helps to keep us connected. Our members are all over the world and we need the newsletter to help maintain our collective purpose and spirit. For me, the Group's motto "Keep The Show On The Road" is a call to action to keep up that work. Not all of us can go to the reunions to recharge our batteries, make new friends and hear what's new. A printed newsletter gives us the chance to share with those of us that can't go to the reunions. And a printed copy can be shared with others too.

We need to learn. Learning is what keeps it fresh and stimulating. This keeps us inspired and keeps the flame alive. This is a great deal why I agreed to take on the editor job.

The stories of our veterans are at the heart of what we do for the Group. The stories embody the legacy that's been handed down to us and what we need to pass on to our families and friends of the Group. We need to read them and hear them being told, to inspire us and keep the flame burning now and into the future.

This year is the 75th anniversary of the forming the 384th Bomb Group. To help celebrate this milestone, I'll include a story in each of this year's issues about the Group during that first year. In this issue, Budd Peaslee writes about the first day of the Group in 1943 in his story "A Most Unforgettable Character", his character study of Major William "Pop" Dolan. The 384th's stories are part of the legacy that's been handed down to us. We need to hear and read them, so we can learn what they did and why it matters to us now.

Finally, I've tried to inject a bit of color and interest in the look of the newsletter. I'm hoping to create something that we can all enjoy while bringing you informative and inspiring reading. The new and old stories of our veterans and members are why I've added "Journal" as part of the headline. Its our story, and our stories need to be told for new generations to hear. And we have great stories!

Its up to all of us, in many ways big and small, to *Keep The Show On The Road!*

A big "Thank You!" to Frank Alfter for his encouragement and (continuing) help and to every one that sent me ideas, stories, encouragement and photos. Please don't stop! I've said it before and I'll say it again: we have great people in our Group!

Christopher Wilkinson

Contact info:

1645 Ashland Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90405
(310) 866-8457
christopherwilkinson99@gmail.com

"Keep The Show On The Road..."

A Most Unforgettable

Character

Story by Col. Budd Peaslee. Possibly the first time in print, it's printed here with permission of Richard Peaslee.

Pop Dolan was an unforgettable character – the most unforgettable character that I have known. I use the past tense because my association with him is past. As far as I know Pop Dolan still lives and carries on in his inimitable way somewhere among the teeming millions in the great metropolitan area of New York. Pop will never be just one of those teeming millions – he will always stand out wherever he is known whether among the little people or among the tycoons for he is a character.

Twenty-eight years in any profession or simply twenty-eight years of life brings one into direct contact with many characters. Twenty-eight years in the military profession brings one in contact with literally thousands that drift across the horizon endlessly. During the course of the war you get to know them particularly well if you happen to be their commanding officer. Some are brave men, some are drunks, some are born trouble makers, some are mice. Whatever a character is with regards to type you remember him for he is not a non-entity.

Perhaps his birthday had some peculiar influence on Pop's character, he was born July 4, 1896, at any rate he was the most loyal and truly patriotic man that I have known with an unswerving devotion to duty that continually led him beyond his own immediate sphere. Pop was christened William E. Dolan when he arrived on this planet as the son of a tiller of the soil. I know nothing of his childhood and growth to manhood but whosoever was responsible for his character growth must be justifiably proud whether they remain in this world or have passed to the great beyond.

I met Pop for the first time on New Year's Day of 1943 at an Army Air Base near Wendover, Utah. My orders read to take command of, to organize, to train, to prepare for movement to an overseas theater, the 384th Bomb Group (Heavy), reporting date at Wendover Army Air Base January 1, 1943. I arrived at Wendover late in the afternoon of January 1st to find that the 384th Bomb Group consisted of exactly two people, myself and Captain William E. Dolan, Intelligence Officer. I had been on the practically deserted base only a few minutes and had barely finished signing the register when the 384th Bomb Group (Heavy) reported to me – in person. Captain Dolan was an old man by Air Force standards, just below average in height, and just slightly stocky in build, with a face that fitted his name – Irish as (could be), a somewhat pugnacious face with a grin that wouldn't quite come off even in sleep or when "stood in a corner". He reminded me a little of Old Saint Nick without the whiskers.'

Pop's greeting was completely military, accompanied by a snappy salute. "Colonel, it's a great pleasure to meet you – hope you had a nice trip in from Kansas. I got in at noon, we are going to have a fine group, sir. I'd like to

take you on a tour of the base and show you our set-up." I rocked back a little on my heels – the trip had been miserable. The war time re-tread on my tires had gone off during the preceding afternoon. I had stopped innumerable times to cut off the flapping pieces. I had bucked a blizzard the night before through the Rockies with the only one windshield wiper on the passenger side operating. I was understandably weary and here this guy wants to get on the organization of the group and on New Year's Day. I sized up my Captain mentally – an eager beaver. I would have to cool him off but not today – I was too tired. I would just coast with him today and cool him off at a more appropriate time. I took a tour of the base – I relaxed while he let me in on his plans.

On the days that followed, the group began to assemble and from this took on semblance of order and organization. During that period Pop seemed to be everywhere recommending, advising, and sharing. Everywhere I went checking on a myriad of details, Pop had preceded me – "Captain Dolan recommended we put it here" – Captain Dolan thought this or that should be done. "Captain Dolan, "Captain Dolan", always "Captain Dolan." Surprisingly enough I had not yet found that appropriate occasion to cool him off, and his suggestions, recommendations and assistance to me were most helpful. I would have been a fool to interfere. As training progressed, I began to hear less of him and as we approached our first inspection he stuck completely to his own job, that of organizing and training the Intelligence Section. The inspecting party arrived and inspected. There were many things wrong but not the Intelligence Section. I was complimented on my Intelligence Section. There were features of organization, innovation, planning that showed industry and imagination, they were to be adopted by other groups.

The great day arrived at last, we were pronounced ready. We departed for the European Theater of Operations to take our place in the Eighth Air Force, honored to be chosen to help knock on Hitler's western door. We lunged into combat and our days became full and of all of us, Pops were probably the fullest. His Intelligence Section worried through the nights preparing data for the morning mission, Pop could usually be found in the section day and night. I never once asked for him and found him in the sack. I don't know to this day when he rested. He lost weight but never his buoyancy of spirit. I could never recognize his sustaining power unless it was his religion. He was a devout man that never resorted to profanity nor irritability in a position where profanity and irritability are expected and taken for granted. Pop's men were never subjected to the reprimands and abuses that come almost normally from an over worked, under-rested chief. I do not mean to imply that Pop even remotely approached divinity – he was subject to the human failings that make us all just people. For one thing, he was a magnificent liar, he had no qualms about lying if it would save or help a friend, or if it would make a friend feel good – raise his morale or make him a hero in the eyes of his family. The Irish write much things of by calling it blarney and I doubt if mention is made of these when confronting their other sins. He nearly always had something to say at briefings – he told the crews about the enemy fighters and flak, he told how to evade if they were forced to bail out, above all he called the crews by their

right names. Pop had been in World War I and trained as a pilot with the French. The Old Man was telling the boys and they listened.

Pop had a remarkable faculty about him that could take away depression and confusion. Simply talking to him made one feel better – he seemed to re-establish your confidence in yourself without really talking about the problem at hand. His mere presence was encouraging to the combat crews who were undergoing terrific pressure, when their chances of survival seemed mathematically nil. When it seemed as though we were being whipped, he retained and passed on to his associates a confidence and will to win that left no doubt as to who was doing what to whom and who didn't like it. When the need was critical he would put that feeling into words. I recommended him several times for promotion and one day he became Major William E. Dolan.

One day he came to my office – he wanted to go on a mission. The day had finally arrived, the occasion was appropriate to cool him off and I clobbered him. I told him "no" – a flat footed "no" embellished in strong words unfit to appear in print, by some pretty solid reasons – he was an old man, this was a young man's war. I needed him where he was, not in a prison camp or buried in a pile of rubble that had once been an airplane. He was doing his duty in his assigned work, his participation in a mission would serve no practical purpose. It was the only time I can recall when he argued my decision. He felt bad, mighty bad, telling these boys about fighters and flak and things he had never seen. He managed a little grin, saluted and departed.

Not long after that I was relieved and somewhere in the succession of group commanders that followed Pop got his wish. I believe he worked a proposition with each successive commanding officer. At any rate, he was eventually awarded the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in aerial flight and is probably the oldest recipient to earn this award in direct combat. He was also awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his extraordinary work in his job as Intelligence Officer as well as numerous Letters of Commendation.

Pop was the eldest and most revered member of the 384th Bomb Group and he was a member of the group the longest – from that New Year's Day in 1943 until it passed into the records at the end of the war. My deputy, Lt. Col. Selden McMillan from Dallas, Texas who was shot down over Hamburg, told me after the war that one of the most vivid memories would be the grinning face of Pop Dolan greeting him on his release from prison camp – obtaining for him the little niceties of life he missed so much during his two years in prison.



384th Bomb Group/8thAFWS 2017 Reunion - New Orleans, LA



384th BG veterans at 2017 reunion, L-R: Henry Sienkiewicz, Don Hilliard, John Defrancesco, Burnia Martin, Len Estrin, David Lustig and Bill Wilkins.



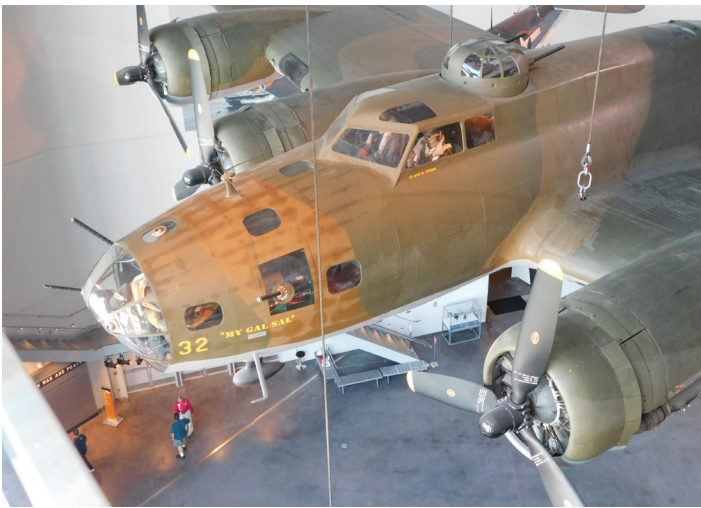
384th Bomb Group/8thAFWS 2017 Reunion - New Orleans, LA



384th Bomb Group/8thAFWS 2017 Reunion - New Orleans, LA



384th Bomb Group/8thAFWS 2017 Reunion - New Orleans, LA



384th Bomb Group/8thAFWS 2017 Reunion - New Orleans, LA



384th Bomb Group/8thAFWS 2017 Reunion - New Orleans, LA



TAPS

Charles Wayne Titsworth, 14 April 2014
Troy Hollar, 21 September 2017
Kenneth Decker, 11 October 2017
Mrs. Alphonse Uriwal, Dec. 2017
Richard S. Humphries, 3 January 2018
Vernon Lee "Billy" Wiley, 22 Jan. 2018
George Garner, 27 January 2018
Carlton V. Phillips, 8 February 2018
James S. Munday (102), 23 Feb. 2018
James G. Schuricht, 2 March 2018
Raymond Patrick Gregori, 2 March 2018

IN MEMORIUM

James Stanley Munday - Pilot on an early replacement crew, assigned on 30 June 1943. He flew two missions before being shot down on 14 July 1943 by fighters after bombing the German airfield at Villacoublay, France. He evaded capture and returned to England. Died 23 Feb. 2016

Troy Hollar - Engineer/Top Turret for his crew when they were assigned on 12 Feb. 1944. They were shot down on their 9th mission over Belgium after bombing Schweinfurt, Germany on 13 April, 1944. Their B-17 exploded after being hit by flak in the left wing. All but three of the crew were KIA. Troy evaded and was hidden by locals. Died 11 October 2017.

Raymond Patrick Gregori - Tail gunner as part of an Original Crew, assigned on 1 Feb 1943. He was severely wounded on his 10th mission during fighter attacks on 12 August 1943. Raymond Gregori passed away on 2 March 2018.

"SILVER STAR. RAYMOND P. GREGORI, 19128120, Staff Sergeant, Army Air Forces, United States Army. For gallantry in action, while serving as tail gunner of a B-17 airplane on a bombing mission over Germany, 12 August 1943. Fifteen minutes prior to reaching the target, Sergeant Gregori was severely wounded by an exploding 20 MM shell burst in the tail compartment of the plane. With complete disregard for his painful wounds, Sergeant Gregori remained at his station fighting off determined enemy attacks until his guns were put out of action. Not once did he indicate that he had been wounded, until the attacks were over, when another member of the crew discovered his condition. The courage, skill and devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Gregori serve as an inspiration to his fellow fliers and reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States."

BRIEFINGS

2017 384th BG/8thAFHS New Orleans Reunion Report

By all accounts, the 384th Bomb Group Reunion with the 8th Air Force Historical Society in New Orleans on September 27 – October 1 was a super success. This was our second year combining our reunion with the 8th Air Force Historical Society, previously in 2016 in St. Louis. The 384th comprised the largest attendees as a group to attend the event with about 75 of us that included eight of our veterans. 384th BG veterans that attended were Burnia Martin, Len Estrin, Henry Sienkiewicz, David Lustig, John DeFrancesca, Bill Wilkins and Peter Bilelskis. As always, we greatly enjoyed their company, revisiting with old friends and making new ones.

The 8th AFHS's well-organized visits to the WWII Museum in downtown New Orleans, City Tour and Plantation Tour made for fascinating learning experiences. Our Group had a nice, large meeting room where we had our own displays and Rendezvous Dinner. Some folks went to Oak Alley Plantation and learned about Southern antebellum society, took the cemetery tours or the trolley to the Garden District or just wandered the French Quarter taking in the sights.

Kenneth Decker Dies

I'm sad to report that Ken Decker passed away on October 11, 2017. He was well known and very well liked by 384th BG veterans in the 1980s and 1990s.

Ken had a strong interest in the history of WWII and the USAAF. He had a regular published newsletter that included his research and stories of the men that fought in WWII.

He wrote and self published the tome-like, comprehensive history of the 384th Bomb Group "Memories of the 384th Bombardment Group (H): Stories of the Men, the Missions and the Machines". According to Ken, many of the photos and stories were supplied by the men of the 384th, by letter or told to him in telephone conversations. His also research covered 2nd Bomb Group, 15th AF; 94th Bomb Group, 8th AF; 10th Tactical Photo Recon, 9th AF; and the 31st Fighter Group 8th/12th/15th AF.

In his dedication of "Memories" he writes, "The writing contained in these pages is dedicated to all who served the 384th Bomb Group (H). Their stories are reproduced here with great pride to have had contact with and made friends with a unique group of people, who have, by their service to the nation and the world shaped the way we all live today. As with all generations, they will eventually all pass into eternity, but their deeds will hopefully live on forever. For those who died in service of their country, they have been remembered as passing in the violence of war, but did so with great dignity and respect."

His memory will live on in the writing, research and friendships he poured into his book "Memories".

384th BG B-17F 42-3455 "Lucky Thirteen" Restoration

384th BG NexGen Member Ray Moore, Jr. of Fletcher, North Carolina has made good progress on his reconstruction of 384th Bomb Group B-17F 42-3455 "Lucky Thirteen" at his shop/hangar in Fletcher, NC. "Lucky Thirteen" was lost on September 6, 1943, but Ray is creating an all new B-17F to flying condition to commemorate 384th crews and the 8th Air Force. Ray's inspiration is through his great uncle Marvin Hudson, a 546th Sq. Line Chief. In addition to his B-17 project, Ray is also assisting in the restoration of B-17G "Liberty Belle" which was tragically lost in a fuel fire about 7 years ago. It is owned by the Liberty Foundation.



B-17F 42-29784 "Smilin' Thru", crashed in England Oct. 14, 1943 after 2nd Schweinfurt mission.

B-17 Wing Panel Donation Meeting with Hill Aerospace Museum at Hill AFB

Three members of the 384th Bomb Group Board of Directors plus two NexGen members traveled to Hill Aerospace Museum at Ogden, Utah in January 2018 to discuss the donation of our B-17 Commemorative Wing Panel to the Museum. Fred Preller, Amy Meighan, Keith Ellefson, Frank Alfter and Christopher Wilkinson met with the Museum's curator and director. Fred Preller was tasked by the Board to be the primary contact for the donation process. During the meeting, John Edwards was also included in a conference call to tap into his vast experience creating museum displays at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA.

The 384th Bomb Group's connections are strong to Hill Aerospace Museum, it's the reason we think it's the right place for the donation. Nate Mazer, a 384th Bomb Group veteran, had been very active in the museum so we want to add to that legacy. The 384th Bomb Group exhibits and memorial, the Nate Mazer Memorial Chapel and the B-17G makes the museum a natural place to create a new 384th Bomb Group exhibit with the wing panel. Nate's daughter Amy Meighan also lives nearby, and her attending the meeting was important to remind the museum of our strong connections.

The meeting was productive and informative for both parties. Everyone from our group pitched in with their ideas and got the discussion rolling. Both the curator and director were very enthusiastic about the donation and appreciative of the work and the spirit of the work the Group had done for its veterans and their families. Both parties feel its the right place for our wing panel. Once the wing is donated, it would become the property of the U.S Air Force and would not be available ever again to travel to meet our veterans. The Board decided to commence the donation process when we realized we could not find more veterans to sign it. It has been signed by 150 veterans of the 384th Bomb Group.

The area designated by the museum for the wing panel display is very close to the B-17G along one wall. Both parties agree that this would make a strong exhibit. The museum currently has three glass display enclosures with memorabilia from three bomb groups here, including the 384th Bomb Group. The museum revealed to us that they are in the preliminary stages of designing a WWII 8th Air Force display in this area. Their idea is to collect the separate bomb group displays into a single cohesive display while explaining the history of the 8th Air Force in Europe. This would include a 384th Bomb Group display and our wing panel.

One concern we had was that combining the three exhibits into one would potentially diminish the story of the panel, or even be confused with the other bomb groups. Since the museum does not have a design for the 8th Air Force display nailed down yet, this will be ongoing discussion about how to best explain the wing panel project and the men who signed it. We presented what we thought would be appropriate for displaying our B-17 wing panel. Of course, money is a major factor in how much is done, how soon, and how embellished the display will be.

At this early stage, the museum is in the process of solidifying their own sources of funding for the 8th Air Force display. The museum indicated that the bomb groups that had current displays could also donate to the nonprofit arm of the museum, the Hill Foundation, who in turn would use the donations towards the design and construction of the new display. The Hill Foundation hasn't created a pathway yet for private donations for the display. When they do, we'll provide that information for our members. At any rate, at this publication date, the museum hasn't provided any additional information about the design of the display, so its still early.

How the museum will display our wing panel and other 384th artifacts is still in the early stages of development at Hill. Our Board did express its concerns and desires and was promised that the museum team would work with us. This was very encouraging. We'll continue to work closely with the Museum and as soon as we have some definitive information about the design and how to donate for it, we will pass it along in future newsletters.

384th Bomb Group Website Updates

Keith Ellefson is looking for old issues of the 384th Bomb Group newsletters from 2001 back to 1988 to place on the 384th Bomb Group website. If you have any, call him at 334-733-4353 or email at 384thbombgroup@centurytel.net to make mailing arrangements. He will scan the originals and return them to you.

If you have photos of your relative and their service in the 384th BG, contact Keith as well.

For the website, Keith Ellefson is updating the individual entries on the 384th Bomb Group using the Special Orders.

The website team are also going through 384th BG Payroll and Morning Reports looking for assignments, transfers and promotions. These were found at the National Personnel Records Center at St. Louis, MO.

This process of reviewing records from other sources can help to fill gaps in the personnel record of the website, especially for support squadrons that provide assistance to the group such as weather, motor pool, military police and maintenance.

The work that goes into the website is a great resource for families that want to learn more about their relatives that served in the Group, and is a resource of research and learning about what happened 75 years

New Group & Squadron Patches for Sale

New Group and Squadron patches have been ordered and are ready for purchase. NexGen member Marc Poole, using 384th BG historical photo references and his artistic talent, created a 384th Bomb Group patch that closely replicates the original in color and shape. He used the same approach when designing the new squadron patches as well. The patches are 100% embroidered and are about 5 inches in diameter are really super. I encourage everyone to get their patches to proudly display or to give to friends & family members.



384th Bomb Group



544 Sq.



545th Sq.



546th Sq.



547th Sq.

- \$9.00 Each - 544th, 545th, 546th and 547th Squadron patches. Four or more are \$8.00 Ea.
- \$10.00 Each - 384th Bomb Group patch (redesigned).
- Please include which patches you want and how many of each in your order.
- Prices include domestic and international postage. No additional postage is required.

Checks made out to **384th Bomb Group, Inc.** can be sent to:

384th Bomb Group, Inc.
1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434.
ATTN: Carol Alfter, Treasurer

You can also order from Keith Ellefson directly by email:
384thbombgroup@centurytel.net

Maintenance Donations Requested for the 384th Bomb Group Memorial at Grafton Underwood, England

The 384th Bomb Group Memorial at Grafton Underwood has been maintained by Kevin Flecknor for many years at his own expense. His work has been weeding, trimming grass, removing brambles, trimming overgrown shrubs, and repairing the fence. Recently, he and Neill Howarth have done this as well as replaced the memorial flags and kept an eye out for vandals and trash pickup. Recently Kevin's health has not allowed him to carry on this work unaided. So a "Community Fund" has been set up to enable Kevin pay workers to continue to the work to high standard set by Kevin.

In 2017, Kevin employed an external contractor Will Addington for the maintenance. Since then, Neill Howarth and other local volunteers have also been helping in order to keep costs as low as possible. However, costs are still being incurred.

After much discussion with the Group, Kevin and Neill decided to set up a "384th Bomb Group Memorial Community Account" with Neill Howarth as Secretary and Kevin Flecknor as Treasurer. This will enable people to contribute if they so wish.

In 2017, Kevin had received a generous grant from the 8th Air Force Historical Society in the USA. Some 384th BG members have already



Removing brambles and overgrowth.



Barbara & Quentin Bland Memorial Tree

contributed. You know who you are and that's how it will remain... Thanks guys....

If you would like to contribute to the upkeep of the Grafton Underwood Memorial, please use one of the following options:

1) Electronic Transfer Payment

Account Name: 384th BG Memorial
 Internet Banking within the UK:
 HSBC
 Sort Code: 40-32-04
 Account No: 91836064
 Internet Banking outside of the UK:
 International Bank Account Number (IBAN)
 GB36HBUK 40320491836064
 Swift Code: MIDLGB22

2) Check by Mail.

Please make payable to: "384th BG Memorial"
 Send to:
 384th BG Memorial
 c/o 12, Bowland Drive
 Barton Seagrave
 Kettering
 Northants
 NN15-6TX
 United Kingdom.



Neill Howarth



Kevin Flecknor

Happy 100th Birthday Col. Robert E. Thacker!

Col. Robert E. Thacker celebrated his 100th birthday on February 21st. His daughter Bobbie organized the event at his home in San Clemente, with over one hundred attending. Col. Thacker was the 384th Bomb Group's Deputy Group Commander from July 1944 to May 1945 and flew at least 28 missions with the 384th BG in addition to 49 missions he flew in the 5th Air Force in '42-'43.

He was the pilot among a group of B-17s that flew into Hickam Field at 8am during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. They were on their way to reinforce the USAAC at Clark Field, Manila, Philippines.

Col. Thacker had a successful career in the Air Force, retiring in 1970. He graduated from test pilot school after the war and broke the non-stop, long distance flight record for piston engine aircraft in 1947 with co-plot Lt. John Ard, flying 4,978 miles in a P-82 Twin Mustang from Hickam Field, Hawaii to LaGuardia Airport NYC. This P-82 is currently displayed at the NMUSAF in Dayton, OH. His 384th BG A-2 leather jacket is nearby. He flew B-29s in the Korean War and the Vietnam War flying classified high altitude recon missions.

For his service, his awards include two Silver Stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, ten Air Medals and French Croix de Guerre with Palm.

For more information about Col. Thacker, see his video interview on YouTube: "Col. Robert E. Thacker Interview - Part 1 & Part 2".



Col. Robert Thacker leading his well wishers in his birthday song.

Photo by Jeff Gritchen, Orange County Register



384th BOMB GROUP 2018 REUNION DAYTON, OHIO
October 18th through 21st

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, DINNER AT THE HOTEL ON FRI EVENING WITH A PAY-AS-YOU-GO BAR, 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, 2018.** 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. Calling two days before the event will not get you a reservation and you will not be able to attend. Confirmations will be mailed out

We are staying at the Holiday Inn Fairborn again. This is our third time at this hotel and it seems to work very well for us. Their address is 2800 Presidential Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324, telephone # 937-426-7800. We have a room rate of \$109.00 per night. This rate is good one day before and one day after the event based upon availability. **Deadline for reservations is September 19, 2018.** 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 shuttle (\$30 round 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.



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

Itinerary

384th BOMB GROUP REUNION

Dayton, Ohio
18-21 October 2018

WEDNESDAY 17 Oct

TBD - Board Meeting

THURSDAY 18 Oct

All Day - Check-in at hotel lobby
All Day - **Hospitality Suite is in the Challenger Room**
1800 - 1930 - Welcome Reception in **Challenger/Discovery Room**, with pay-as-you-go bar

FRIDAY 19 Oct

0600 - 1000 - Breakfast Buffet in **Hotel Restaurant**
0800 - 1000 - Free time in **Hospitality Suite**
0930 - Board buses for AF Museum tours
1000 - 1500 - Explore Museum Galleries (Memphis Belle now on display)
Lunch on your own at the Museum Valkyrie or Refueling Cafés
1500 - Buses return everyone to Hotel
1530 - 1800 - Relax at hotel
1600 - 1730 - Board Meeting
1800 - 1900 - Cocktails **Challenger/Discovery Room**
1900 - 2100 - Dinner and pay-as-you-go bar in **Challenger/Discovery Rm**
2100 - 2300 - Nightcap in **Hospitality Suite**

SATURDAY 20 OCT

0700 - 1000 - Breakfast Buffet in **Hotel Restaurant**
0830 - 1145 - Free time at Hotel
1100 - Pick up box lunches before boarding buses
1130 - Buses depart for trip to Urbana, OH (about an hour)
1230 - 1500 - Tour B-17 *Champaign Lady* under construction (several other aircraft, including an operational B-25 and a DC-3 are there)
1500 - Board buses for return to Hotel

1600 - 1800 - Free time at Hotel
1800 - 1900 - Cocktails in **Challenger/Discovery Rm** with pay-as-you-go bar
1900 - 2100 - Dinner Banquet in **Challenger/Discovery Rm**
2100 - 2300 - Nightcap in **Hospitality Suite**

SUNDAY 21 OCT

0700 - 1000 - Breakfast in **Hotel Restaurant**
Farewells all day at Hotel (check out not later than 12:00 noon)



Reproduction of the stained glass window at St. James the Apostle Church, Grafton Underwood, England at the Nate Mazer Memorial Chapel, Hill AFB, Utah.



St. James the Apostle Church, Grafton Underwood, England



The original stained glass window from St. James the Apostle Church, Grafton Underwood England.



384TH BOMB GROUP, INC.
1306 ADAMS WAY
BEAVERCREEK, OH 45434



“Keep The Show On The Road...”

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