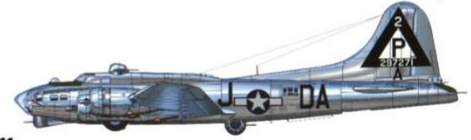




384th Bomb Group, Inc. News & Journal



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

December 2019

Junket XI Debrief: A reunion to remember

If you missed our 11th Junket, you missed a truly exceptional one. Everyone was positively thrilled having Len & Helen Estrin; Henry Kolinek and Henry & Katie Sienkiewicz leading this very special trip back to their World War II roots. It will be difficult to summarize, but here goes...

Arena Travel and our awesome guide, Rick Hobson, made this one we won't soon forget. We cannot possibly thank Rick enough for his humor and expert handling.

Our Friday visit to Thorpe Abbots airfield was grandly hosted by local volunteers and our own Grafton Underwood friends. The tower and some of the outbuildings are examples of what might be possible for us to do at GU. From there we went to Lavenham, an absolutely gorgeous little village, where we enjoyed a traditional afternoon tea at the Swan Hotel.

Saturday at GU was the heart of our trip and the hospitality, a culmination of tremendous preparations beyond our wildest expectations. There were 39 of us, and probably five times that many local friends and hosts. At the 384th BG monument we held a very heartfelt ceremony and our three veterans and Shaye Bureau placed wreaths for each of the four squadrons. We then explored the airfield in jeeps and weapons carriers. From the flight line, we traveled by bus to dinner at the Star Pub in Geddington, a very special place, because we know our dads, uncles and granddads imbibed there during the war.



Henry Kolinek, back at work

Sunday at Duxford we had Gold tickets, which meant we were in a marquee (tent) out of the drizzle and rain that frequented the day. Upon arrival, we managed to get our three veterans on board Sally B, the UK's only flying B-17. It was awesome to see their faces through the Plexiglas, especially Henry Kolinek's in the tail gun position. Closing out the airshow there were about 21 Spitfires and Hurricanes in the air all at once and in fine formation. The sound was incredible!

Our last day began with a visit to Madingley American Cemetery, where we were treated to Bridget Howarth's wonderful voice as she sang Amazing Grace in the chapel... not a dry eye in the entire crowd. Matt Smith read Heritage of Valor in the chapel and Frank Alfter read High Flight at the Wall of the Missing. We placed flags and flowers at each of the 35 graves of 384th airmen buried there, and a wreath at the Wall. It was a very moving visit, surely cherished by all.

Later, many took the opportunity to go punting on the River Cam, while others toured Cambridge independently. A small group – including the Estrins – headed to The Eagle for lunch. When the barman noticed Len was a WWII Veteran, all were immediately whisked into the RAF Bar through a crowd of people who wanted to meet Len & Helen. To say that he got rock star treatment would be an understatement. Later, others – including some punters – stopped in at The Eagle for a late lunch, and our two other veterans got the same treatment. All three added

their names to the walls of the RAF Bar.

Though skies threatened all afternoon, rain held off until we had our farewell dinner at the hotel. Jason Mann presented a plaque made from an oak at GU to the Group. We plan to install it at the Hill Aerospace Museum with our wing panel.

Our departures the next morning saw many hugs and farewells. Many of our group were new, but you would never know it because the camaraderie developed over those few days will now bond us forever.

Our most sincere thanks to all who made this reunion so wonderful, especially Matt Smith, Neill & Bridget Howarth, Kevin Flecknor and all those working to preserve the buildings at Grafton Underwood. All to ***Keep the Show on the Road!***
See pages 5, 6 and 7 for more photos from the junket! — Frank Alfter, President, 384th Bomb Group, Inc.

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2020 Calendar

8th Air Force
Historical Society
2020 Reunion,
October 21-25,
Memphis TN.

2020 384th Bomb
Group Reunion
...TBD

On the Internet

384th BG website
*Our Internet home,
maintained by Fred
Preller.*

384th Facebook page
*A great place where
many of us share our
experiences, photos,
etc. from both sides of
"the pond."*

8th Air Force HS
*The home for the 8th
Air Force Historical
Society online.*

8th AFHS Facebook
*Information, photos,
stories, current events,
pertinent information
relating to "The
Mighty Eighth".*

The Arrowhead Club
*Cindy Bryan's
wonderful and
inspiring blog. Her
father was a crewman
and POW in the
384th.*

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Creating a future for Grafton Underwood

A team of volunteers at Grafton Underwood are trying to save the Operations Block and Norden Bombsight buildings for future use as a memorial to the 384th.



The former Operations Block Building at Grafton Underwood as it now looks

Want to help? At the moment, US financial pledges are needed, to give an indication of support. In the UK, we are gathering financial support, volunteer help, and construction trade skills to put into a plan to present to the landowners, Boughton Estates.

DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY YET! For more information, please contact:

Chris Wilkinson in the US, christopherwilkinson99@gmail.com, or
Neill Howarth in the UK, neillhowarth@gmail.com.

Also please sign our petition to show support. You can find it online at:
<https://www.gopetition.com/petitions/grafton-underwood-airfield.html>

We hope to have more details of the project in our next issue in early 2020! —Neill Howarth

From the editor ...

With this issue, it's my honor to succeed Christopher Wilkinson as editor of this publication. I have large shoes to fill! I also have a couple of "bona fides" that I hope will be useful to the group in continuing to remember all the great men who were part of the 384th during World War II.

My father, Lt. Frank D. Furiga, was a bombardier-navigator in the 547th Squadron. In his retirement, he reconnected with his passion for flying and with his friends in the 384th. Dad was a navigator on his 26th mission when one of the most unusual incidents in group history occurred – flak ignited the pilot's oxygen on the Nov. 30, 1944 mission to Zeitz, Germany aboard *Busy Buzzard*. My dad, bombardier Lt. Jim Cresto, co-pilot Lt. Dale Harlan Peterson and flight engineer Sgt. Jesse McCoy all bailed out the nose hatch, which apparently put out the fire. The plane made it back to Grafton Underwood and pilot Lt. Gene Goodrick earned the Silver Star and ball turret gunner Sgt. Lee Pierce the Distinguished Flying Cross for their efforts. Sadly, McCoy died. Years later, my dad learned his 'chute never opened. The rest who bailed out were POWs.

More relevant to this role, I spent two decades as a reporter and editor at magazines, newspapers, wire services, etc. covering everything from murders to the White House. For the last 20 years, I've owned my own public relations firm. I won't say this is something I can do in my sleep. I will say I feel I can put a lifetime of skills and experiences to good use here. I hope you agree in the months ahead! Have a story idea? My contact information is at the left. — Paul Furiga

Strangers on a Plane — but only until he saw the B-17 pictures!

Our flight from Heathrow to Los Angeles had been airborne for several hours. The meal trays had been cleared away and everyone was settling into their routines for coping with a 12-hour flight. The fellow across the aisle dozily followed some video on his screen while wrapped in a blanket. I decided this would be a good time to draft a short newsletter article about our 384th Bomb Group reunion recently completed in Cambridge, so I hauled out my laptop and started in.

Having done the best I could, I decided it would be a good time for a comfort break. Upon exiting the restroom, the fellow across the aisle from me was looking over the snacks laid out by our flight attendants. He started in, “I hope you won’t be annoyed, but I couldn’t help but notice the B-17Gs on your laptop screen...”

Brad’s father had died when he was one year old. All he knew was what little had been told about him – that he had served in WWII, he had been a flyer, and it might have been in England. After a little discussion – including Brad promising to try locating some “documents” he thought he remembered seeing – we exchanged contact information and went back to our own little worlds for the rest of the flight.

When I got home, I decided to do a little digging myself. Surprisingly, I found nothing on Alvin Beck. Nothing! Fortunately, in a few days Brad dug up some of those documents and sent copies to me. Using his Separation Record and Separation Qualification Record, I got his Name, Rank, and Serial Number, as well as his MOS (1091: B-17 Pilot!), his overseas service dates, and his unit: the 325th Bomb Squadron of the 92nd Bomb Group!

Well, of course that was just the start, and there were more questions. What missions did he fly, what aircraft, and who did he fly with? After a couple of false starts I connected with the 92nd BG via their Facebook group, and my inquiry was immediately welcomed. Rob Hutchings (in the UK) was able to pinpoint some relevant information and send it off to Brad, with the promise of more if his research partner in the US – Candy Kyler Brown – was able to find anything.

So, at that point my involvement with Beck became that of an interested bystander – “My job here is done.” But why did Candy’s name ring a bell? Cindy Bryan identified her as a fellow STALAG Luft IV NexGen, whose father had been a POW with Cindy’s father, who had endured privation, starvation, a deadly winter forced march together. Cindy put us in touch with each other and we exchanged research tips. During the course of our digital chit-chat, Candy mentioned that there were blocks of time – like certain months – for which she had not found mission crew loading lists, especially the one for when her Dad was shot down on 4 February 1944. A quick look on Fold3.com turned up a clear image of the Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) for that loss, with the entire crew on it, which I sent to her right away. The entire MACR runs to 72 images and includes the usual post-war POW questionnaires and translated German documents.

A chance meeting on a plane led to a WWII researcher who regularly helps other 8th AF Next Generation members with their family research and helped her learn something more about her own father. Each of us can make a difference, can help others learn about their family, and grow the network of people involved in preserving the memory of our troops.

— Fred Preller

It was the Best of Times (with a nod to Charles Dickens) ...

As attendees arrived at the DoubleTree Hotel at London Heathrow on Wednesday of Junket XI, it was instantly clear this reunion was going to be special! Strangers gathered and became fast friends by dinner – by the end of the reunion we had



become family, including Rick Hobson, our Arena Travel tour manager (not a guide, as he so often mentioned).

Our three Veterans were hailed at every stop, as they so richly deserved. To a man, they modestly demurred when called heroes, reminding those present that we would visit the real heroes at Cambridge American Cemetery – aka Madingley.

Of particular note was the Grafton Underwood airfield visit. Our English hosts were many, enthusiastic, and ready to do anything to give us a view of places where our fathers, uncles, grandfathers, etc., had lived and served. They also discussed the ideas for conservation and preservation of the airfield, which our Thorpe Abbots visit had brought into focus. Their efforts have already borne fruit, and we should continue to offer encouragement and support. Aside from the activities, the real story has to be that the Group once again came

together as a family, welcoming newfound relatives, with a determination to **Keep the Show on the Road!**— Fred Preller

Squadron patches available again!

A great way to show your 384th Bomb Group affiliation and remember your 384th service member is to purchase a group or squadron patch.

Original WWII Group patches were used as templates to recreate each one as closely as possible in design, size and color. Squadron patches are \$9 each.

Orders of four or more squadron patches are \$8 each.

The 384th Bomb Group patch is \$10. Domestic (US) postage is included. For international orders, postage will apply.

To buy, email Keith Ellefson at 384thbombgroup@troycable.net



Help us find missing issues of this newsletter

As some of you may know, I have been trying to gather a complete set of 384th Bomb Group Association/INC newsletters for several years.

I have several of the pre-2000s newsletters but there are some large gaps in my collection. I call it my collection only because I am the doing the digital collection of newsletter images. Eventually, I want to put what I have on hand into a PDF to share with anyone who has an interest in the post-war history of the 384th Bomb Group.

If you or anyone you know has any old newsletters, association rosters, reunion/junket announcements, etc., contact me via email or Facebook and I will take it from there, round trip shipping if needed and scanning. I do not want to build a collection of paper copies, I only want a digital copy of each item.

Here's a list of newsletter issues that **WE DO** have. Check to see if you have one **NOT LISTED HERE**. I would be most grateful to receive it. You can reach me at 384thbombgroup@troycable.net if you think you've got a missing newsletter.

1968-03 Incorporation Letter	1999-02 Newsletter
1979-11 Newsletter	1999-11 Newsletter
1982-08 Reunion, 8th	2000-01 Newsletter
1984-08 Newsletter	2000-04 Newsletter
1984-10 Reunion 9th	2000-08, Reunion 17th
1984-10 Reunion 9th, Attendance Roster	2000-11 Newsletter
1986-08 Newsletter	2001-05, Gathering, Hill AFB
1986-11 Reunion, 10th	2002-11 Newsletter, Reunion, 18th
1988-03-06 Organization Re-established	2003-09 Newsletter
1988-06 Newsletter	2005-11, Junket X
1988-10 Reunion, 11th	2006-11 Reunion, 20th
1988-11 Newsletter	2007-12 Newsletter
1989-03 Window Dedication Ceremony	2008-03 Newsletter
1989-08 Newsletter	2008-06 Newsletter
1988-09 Window Dedication Program	2008-09 Newsletter
1990-04 Newsletter	2008-12 Newsletter
1990-10 Reunion, 12th	2009-03 Newsletter
1990-12 Newsletter	2009-06 Newsletter
1991-05 Junket VI	2009-10 Newsletter
1991-05 Newsletter	2010-01 Newsletter
1992-03 Information, 50th Ann. Reunion	2010-05 Newsletter
1992-06 50th Anniversary Last Notice	2010-10 Newsletter
1992-11 Newsletter, 50th Ann. Reunion	2011-07 Newsletter
1993 Junket VII Planning document	2011-11 Newsletter
1993-03 Memorial Junket Planning	2012-03 Newsletter
1993-05 Junket VII	2012-08 Newsletter
1993-09 Reunion, 13th	2012-10 Newsletter
1994-02 Newsletter	2013-06 Newsletter
1994-07 Newsletter	2013-11 Newsletter
1994-10 Reunion, 14th	2014-02 Newsletter
1995 Junket VIII, (Unk. Date) Newsletter	2014-06 Newsletter
1995-01 Newsletter, Junket VIII	2014-09 Newsletter
1995-07 Newsletter	2014-12 Newsletter
1996-10, Reunion, 15th	2015-03 Newsletter
1996-12 Newsletter	2015-06 Newsletter
1997-12 Newsletter	2015-09 Newsletter
1998-04 Newsletter	2015-12 Newsletter
1998-06 newsletter	2016-03 Newsletter
1998-09, Reunion 16th	2016-09 Newsletter
1998-12 Newsletter	2016-12 Newsletter

Thanks for your help so that we can *Keep the Show on the Road!*

—Keith Ellefson

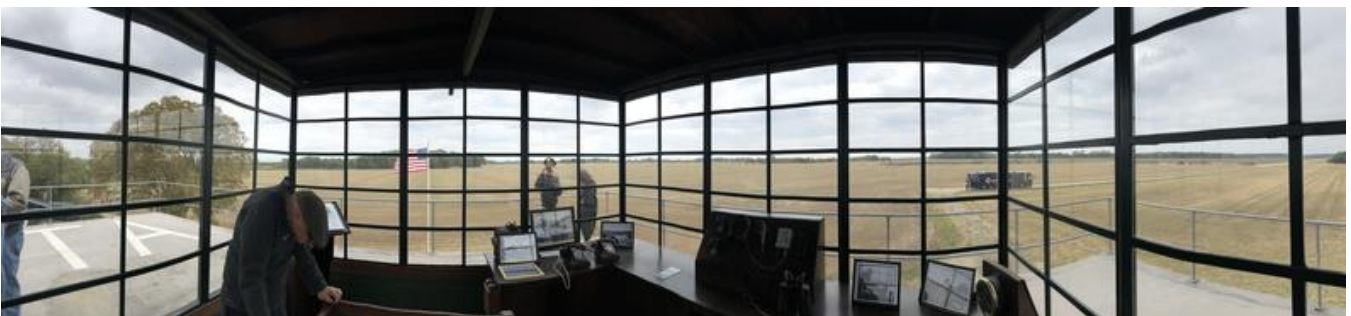
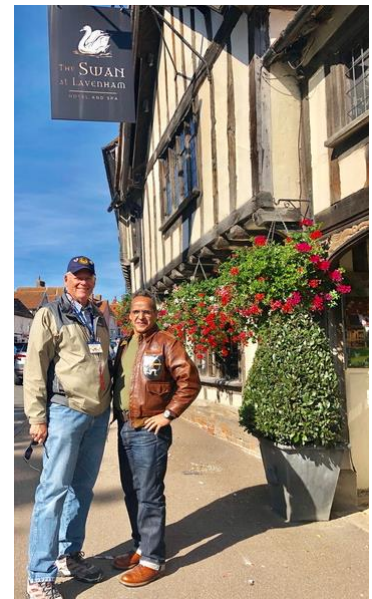
Junket XI: A journey in pictures

Arrival, Thorpe Abbots and Lavenham

While some of our 39 junketeers from the United States arrived a day earlier, our first excursion came Friday, Sept. 20, after we settled in to the DoubleTree Hotel Cambridge Belfry the previous night. We visited one of the best-preserved World War II airfields in the UK, Thorpe Abbots, home to the 100th Bomb Group. A model for our own restoration efforts at Grafton Underwood, TA also figures centrally in the Don Miller Eighth Air Force history, *Masters of the Air*. Recently, Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg confirmed that the book will serve as the inspiration for a miniseries akin to their previous efforts, *Band of Brothers* and *The Pacific*. While those aired on HBO, the new Apple streaming service is to carry the series based on the Eighth Air Force (Thorpe Abbots volunteers confided that all three men – Hanks, Masters and Spielberg have visited the airfield, the latter two in disguise!).



Photos, clockwise from left: female relatives of 384th service members outnumbered men on Junket XI! Top right: Neill Howarth and friend greet us in period garb at Thorpe Abbots. Right, Junketeers Fred Preller and Andy Rivera before tea at the Swan in Lavenham. Bottom, panoramic view from inside the restored Thorp Abbots tower. Left, the sons and grandsons of 384th service members on Junket XI.



Junket XI: A journey in pictures

Grafton Underwood – village and airfield (and Geddington)

The heart of the Junket XI visit was the Saturday, Sept. 21 trip to Grafton Underwood, with a wreath laying ceremony at the memorial, a reception at the village hall after, and then, tours by restored jeeps and military vehicles of the old airfield. We reconnected with history and explored the painstaking work underway by our friends in the U.K. to uncover and preserve the legacy of the 384th Bomb Group and its contribution to world freedom seven decades ago.



Saturday photos, from top left: Our vets took center stage and laid wreaths at the memorial; right, vet Len Estrin at the memorial window in the Church of St. James, Grafton Underwood; below right, Junket XI organizer Matt Smith explains the ongoing work at the airfield to vet Henry Kolinek and his family; below, the historic vehicle caravan on the airfield tour; left, a look at the White Star in Geddington, a pub frequented by the 384th and the historic Eleanor Cross outside its front door.



Junket XI: A journey in pictures

Duxford (hello Sally B!), Maddingley, Cambridge and farewell!

Sunday at Duxford brought us face to face with Sally B and a wonderful experience at the Battle of Britain air show.

Monday began more somberly at Maddingley, where we laid wreaths and remembered the 384th flyers we lost before

heading to the RAF Bar in Cambridge (and punting on the river Cam!). Then it was time for farewells – until next time!



Sunday of Junket XI took us to Duxford to see Sally B, the only flying B-17 in Europe, and her crew (top); to VIP seating for the *Battle of Britain* air show; then to the American Cemetery at Maddingley (below) where we honored 384th members buried there and missing, then headed on to Cambridge to visit the RAF Bar and go punting on the river Cam; that night, we had our farewell dinner at our hotel, where Junket organizer Jason Mann presented the 384th with a plaque made from an oak cut down at the airfield (right) that 384th president Frank Alfter gratefully accepted. We hope it will reside one day soon at the Hill Aerospace Museum in Ogden, UT, along with our wing panel signed by so many veterans. Sadly, so few of our hundreds of pictures would fit in this issue. Please visit our online photo gallery for the trip at:

<https://photos.384thbombgroup.com/index.php/?category/4960>



Know your 384th Bomb Group, Inc. Officers and Board of Directors

Chairman - Peter Bielskis (Veteran)
President - Frank Alfter (NexGen)
Board Member - Len Estrin (Veteran)
Board Member - William O'Leary (Veteran)
Board Member - Dennis Bielskis (NexGen)
Board Member - Chris Wilkinson (NexGen)
Group Treasurer - Carol Alfter (NexGen)

The 384th Bomb Group, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit veterans organization based in Ohio.

Membership includes the Tri-monthly newsletter for \$25 per year, renewed annually in January.

Mail \$25 membership renewal payment to:

Carol Alfter, Treasurer
1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, Ohio 45434

Maintenance Donations for 384th BG Memorial at Grafton Underwood

Kevin Flecknor (with help, especially given his recent health issues) continues to do a super job maintaining the memorial.

He keeps eyes on the Memorial and immediately makes repairs when required. He's a great supporter of the history and honor of the Group. But it does cost money to do some of the work. The Group recognizes and helps support Kevin. Donations can be sent via:

Internet Banking within the U.K.

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

If you wish to send donations via a check, please make these payable to: "384th BG Memorial" and send the check to:

384th BG Memorial
c/o 12 Bowland Drive
Barton Seagrave
Kettering, Northants, NN15-6TX, UK

**384TH BOMB GROUP, INC.
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BEAVERCREEK, OH 45434**



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

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