



ADDENDUM

To

MARCH 2020 384th BG NEWSLETTER

As you may know, the June 2020 reunion has been canceled. The decision was made too late to pull reunion information from the newsletter.



384th Bomb Group, Inc. News & Journal



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

February 2020

Friends of 384th in discussions to buy, preserve GU airfield history

After Kettering Borough Council rejected a proposal to convert the former Operations Block (map room) of the 384th Bomb Group into a single-family residence on the site of the former airfield at Grafton-Underwood, the Friends of the 384th Group has entered into discussions with Boughton Estates, the historical airfield owner, to purchase a site there.

This encouraging progress gives hope to the creation of a proper indoor museum preserving the 384th Bomb Group's history at the airfield.

One reason the borough rejected the application was "the existing building and its association with a World War II Airfield ... designated as a 'Historic Monument Asset.' " The borough said this "gives rise to its consideration as a non-designated heritage asset."

Friends of the 384th is leading the effort to preserve the group history at the airfield and has a proposal to Boughton that includes the restoration of the Ops Block building and the siting of several Nissen huts with it (*see the illustration at right*).

The museum has the support of the Grafton Underwood parish council and many others. In the proposal to Boughton, the Friends says it will create "a local tourist attraction, positive PR for Boughton Estates with a display within the museum detailing Boughton's involvement and support to historic value of the local area." For more information, please contact:



- Chris Wilkinson in the US, christopherwilkinson99@gmail.com
- 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>

2020 Reunion is set: June 23-28 at Hill AFB, Ogden, Utah, details inside!

We're pleased to announce that the 384th Bomb Group annual reunion (a Round-Up!) will be Tuesday, June 23 to Sunday, June 28 in Ogden, Utah. **Details of the itinerary are on p. 3. We wanted to get this on your calendar. The reservation form will be mailed soon.** Turn inside for more. Here are highlights of what organizers, led by Amy Meighan (daughter of Col. Nathan H. Mazur), have planned:

- Hilton Garden Inn, Ogden, our hotel
- Wendover airfield tour (original 384th home)
- Wing panel dedication ceremony at Hill AFB Museum
- Hill AFB air show (USAF Thunderbirds!)
- Tour to the Golden Spike National Park and Museum
- Lots of side trips are possible, given our great location



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2020 Calendar

2020 384th Bomb Group
Reunion
June 23-28, 2020

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

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 384th
crewman and POW.*

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FLAK House Corner: Coombe House, Dorsetshire

For U.S. Army Air Force combat air crews in the United Kingdom, home leave was impossible. So the doctors responsible for their well-being believed the next best thing would be rest homes that provided a tranquility, comfort and freedom from military routine (and of course combat stresses). Over the course of the air war, the Eighth Air Force found that this type of rest was best achievable at English country houses or hotels.

Aircrew, at least once during their tour, came for a week away from the horrors of war. After a rest, commanders and medical staff hoped the fliers would return to their units refreshed.

Many 384th crews took these trips, typically after their first 10 missions. Unlike many other activities, rest home trips were often taken as a crew – enlisted and officers together.

On arrival, fliers were provided with civilian clothes. Uniforms were worn only for dinner. Air Service Command supplied an administrative commanding officer, an adjutant and enlisted helpers. A medical officer, rotated each week from operational units, provided emergency care or medical advice.

American Red Cross girls acted as hostesses, supervising recreation and dining. The Red Cross also employed and managed the civilian staff to run the house and maintain the grounds.

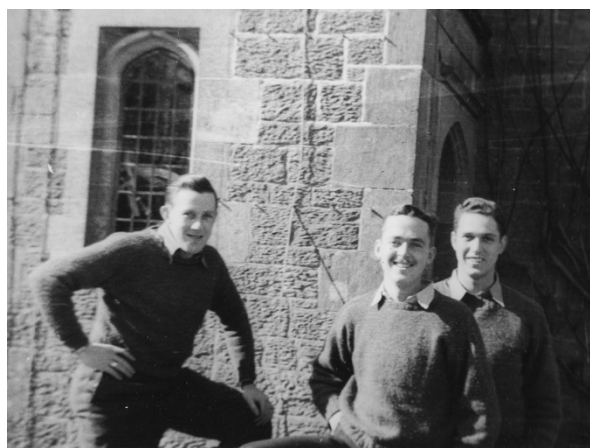
We hope to feature several rest homes over coming issues. This issue, we look at Coombe House in Shaftesbury, Dorsetshire. According to the American Air Museum website:

Coombe House was built in 1886 on a 50 acre site, a mile to the east of Shaftesbury in Dorsetshire. The house and estate became the luxurious Coombe House Hotel early in the 1930s. It was ideally equipped and located to become a USAAF Rest Home.

Coombe House joined the program on 20th September 1943. It was set up to accommodate 50 officers and was allocated to the 2nd Bomb Division.

Soon after the war, Coombe House was sold and became St Mary's, an independent, Roman Catholic School for girls. Nowadays, with many new buildings and facilities added, it houses 325 students, two-thirds of whom are boarders.

—Fred Preller



Members of the Booksa crew at Coombe House: Pilot Lt. Maurice Booksa, co-pilot Lt. Ralph Alloway and bombardier Lt. Donald Ackerson, photo taken March 1944.

Our 32nd annual 384th Bomb Group reunion itinerary takes shape!

Reservation forms for the Round-Up will be mailed soon with final details, cost, etc.

As of press time, here is the official itinerary for our Round-Up, June 23-28, 2020 in Ogden, Utah:

Tuesday, 23 June 2020

Arrival. (Travel options for Salt Lake City (SLC) airport in the box, this page.)

Hilton Garden Inn Hotel (our headquarters)

2271 S. Washington Blvd., Ogden UT 84401

- Reservations Number **1-801-399-2000**
- Rooms are reserved and are priced at \$153 a night including tax.
- On arrival we will have a small buffet and cash bar. The hotel restaurant will also be open and we can gather in the bar as needed.
- Name badges and 384th memorabilia will be available upon arrival.



Wendover Airfield as it looks today.

Wednesday, 24 June 2020 – Wendover Tour

After breakfast at the hotel, our bus leaves at 8am for a 2½ hour ride to Wendover Field, where the 384th was activated on 2 January 1943. On 1 April 1943, flight crews left for Iowa for flight training and ground crews left for England. The Wendover historian will share the story of structures still on the base. We'll have drinks and snacks on the bus.

After the tour we will bus to the Nevada casinos for lunch and fun at the slots, returning about 2-3pm for Ogden. Pay as you go lunch, but if you are gambling drinks are usually on the house. The food at the casinos is pretty good.

Not interested in the tour? We have multiple activities to enjoy. There are small shops, restaurants, theaters and activities in Ogden, a 2-3 block walk (about 5-10 minutes) from the hotel, including historic 25th Street with the original Union Station at the west end of 25th. There will be ample brochures available on the local and state activities.

For these activities and for the day after the Dedication and Museum Tour, the Frontrunner Train Station provides roundtrips between Ogden and Salt Lake City hourly. It's two blocks west of the hotel. Trains run 5am to midnight Monday-Friday. Wait times are 30 minutes in rush hour (morning and evening) and one hour otherwise. It's \$11 round trip from Ogden to Salt Lake City, including the trolleys from Union Station in Salt Lake City into downtown, Tabernacle Square, shops and restaurants, the City Creek Mall and other locations of interest. The trolleys drop you at front doors. Dinner will be on your own.

Thursday, 25 June 2020 – 8th Air Force and 384th Dedication Ceremony, Hill Aerospace Museum

Breakfast at the hotel. Bus will depart the hotel no later than 9:15am. The ride is about 20 minutes.

The museum will conduct the dedication and acknowledge the 384th and our attending members at 10am. After, we can visit the Chapel, which holds the 384th glass window duplicate made by the same artisans that created the window in the Kettering church. Following that visit, return to tour the Hill Aerospace Museum accompanied by a docent or on your own.

At noon or 12:30pm we will return to Ogden. The rest of the day is free time.

Dinner that evening at 6:30pm will be at the Sonora Grill on 24th Street, a primo Mexican restaurant.

Friday, 26 June 2020 – Hill Air Force Base Airshow

Times forthcoming. We hope to have VIP passes. It includes the famous Air Force Thunderbirds and lots of static displays of current aircraft. With the backdrop of the Wasatch Mountains and the Thunderbirds ... it doesn't get any better!!

Saturday, 27 June 2020 – The Out In the Middle of Nowhere Tour to the Golden Spike National Park and Museum

Breakfast at the hotel. Bus leaves at 9:30am. One hour ride to the park, where we will see the original continental railroad beds and maybe even see a jackrabbit or two.

We'll have a tent and tables for a BBQ. The trains will run at 1pm. Visit the museum after the BBQ for its great collection of books, etc., on the Golden Spike. A historian will give a short talk on the history of the site. Return to Ogden about 2pm. Rest up before our last dinner at the hotel.

Sunday, 28 June 2020 – Departure

NOTE: Frontrunner trains do not run on Sunday. Choose from shuttle services in the box at right. — Amy Meighan

SUNDAY RETURN SHUTTLE INFO

EXPRESS SHUTTLE, 801-596-1600:

\$17.50-\$39 a person. Advance reservation costs less. Recommended first choice.

ALPINE SHUTTLE, 801-349-5005:

A limo service. We are working on a deal for the return trip to the airport.

PRICE IS RIGHT Taxi, 801-603-4209:

\$75 a trip, fits up to 6 people and luggage.

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



TAPS

Given the nature of life in this 21st century, we do our best to keep everyone updated when a 384th veteran flies west. Here are the latest obituaries, as of February 2020.

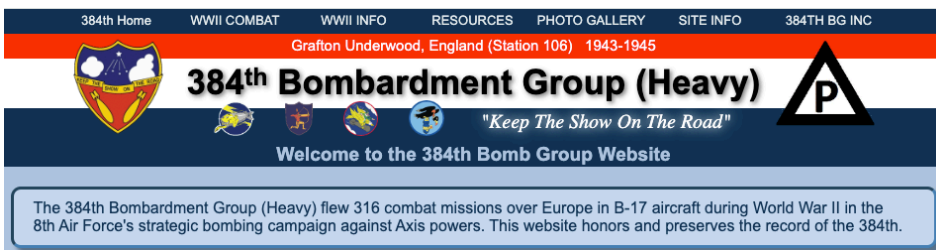
T/Sgt. Charles R. Bobbitt, flight engineer, top turret gunner, 544th squadron, 26 missions, 7 January-11 April, 1945, died 31 July 2019, aged 96.

Marion Butler Chase, Jr., flight engineer, top turret gunner, 544th squadron, 30 missions, 30 August 1944-16 February 1945, aged 95. Member of the same crew (Gilbert M. Stanley) as Noah C. Hickman, when assigned to the 384th (see below).

1st Lt. Fred Guilsome Disney, pilot, 547th squadron, POW on 1st mission, 22 June 1943, died Oct 25, 2019, aged 98.

Noah C. Hickman, radio operator, 544th squadron, 29 missions, 30 August 1944-20 February 1945, died Jan. 17, 2020, aged 95. Member of the same crew (Gilbert M. Stanley) as Marion Butler Chase Jr., when assigned to the 384th (see above).

If you know of a 384th veteran's passing, please write our editor, Paul Furiga (paul.furiga@wordwritepr.com or 222 Courtney Place, Wexford PA 15090).



It's amazing what you can learn online ... at the 384th website

What do the following numbers have in common: 880, 67, 80, 153, 136, 14?

They are the top numbers in some 384th combat statistics gathered from our online database.

- 880 combat crewmembers were POW.
- 67 combat fatalities were crewmembers manning the Waist Gun position (more than all others).
- 80 combat missions flown by T/Sgt Richard C. Hosmer, the most of any 384th crewmember.
- 153 of our aircraft failed to return from a combat mission.
- 136 is the number of credited combat missions that B-17G 42-102518 "Damn Yankee" completed.
- 14 is the number of 384th B-17s – all G models – that qualify as "Century Bombers" with 100 or more missions.

Isn't that interesting?

See these and more on the website: just pull down the "WWII COMBAT" menu topic to "Statistics."

Visit the group website at: <https://384thbombgroup.com/>

— Fred Preller

THIS MONTH IN 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORY

One of the most significant events taking place in the month of February was BIG WEEK, the all out assault on German aircraft production and the Luftwaffe.

On February 19, 1944, a high pressure area appeared to be moving toward central Germany, bringing hopes of good visibility. United States Strategic Air Forces saw this as an opportunity to unleash the long planned series of concentrated attacks against German aircraft factories. General Doolittle also favored fighters being free to attack the Luftwaffe wherever they were found, instead of solely maintaining close protection of the bombers. With this encouraging confluence of command circumstances, the stage was set for BIG WEEK, the long planned series of concentrated attacks.



On February 20, 1944, sixteen combat wings comprised of 1003 bombers, accompanied by 835 fighters, set out from cold and snowy bases in England for 12 targets in Germany. The largest force, 417 1st BD B-17s and 272 2nd BD B-24s sent ten wings into central Germany. This force was most likely to draw fighter opposition, and it was assigned all the long-range fighters, which included 94 P-38s, P-47s with belly tanks and 73 P-51s. This fighter force destroyed 61 enemy aircraft, with 4 of its own lost. 339 1st BD B-17s and 244 2nd B-24s hit Leipzig, Bernberg, Oschersleben, and Gotha with 1,510 tons of bombs. Seven B-17s and 8 B-24s were MIA, while the attackers claimed 50 enemy aircraft. 296 B-17s of the 3rd BD pounded targets on the Baltic Coast, claiming 15 enemy aircraft and losing 6 of their own. The new 401st BG put down the best bomb pattern of the day, hitting several important buildings at one of the Leipzig aircraft plants. BIG WEEK got off to a good start.

Despite poor weather on February 22, 182 1st BD B-17s attacked Aschersleben, Bernberg, and other targets in central Germany with 459 tons of bombs. 74 2nd BD B-24s dropped 208 tons on targets in the Netherlands. Severe weather forced the 3rd BD to abort the mission before the enemy coast. 659 US fighters were dispatched, destroying 59 enemy aircraft, while losing 11 of their own. All bombers were grounded on February 23rd because of poor weather and the need to conduct aircraft maintenance after two days of heavy bombing.

Bombing resumed on February 24th with 295 3rd BD B-17s, hitting Rostock and other targets with 685 tons of bombs. They claimed 23 enemy aircraft but lost 5 bombers. 238 1st BD B-17s hit Schweinfurt, losing 11 bombers and

claiming 10 enemy fighter kills. 213 B-24s also struck Gotha and Eisenach with 488 tons of bombs and claimed 50 enemy kills. Massive fighter support continued with 767 dispatched. These aircraft accounted for 38 enemy kills while losing 10 of their own.

Southern Germany took the brunt of the bombing on February 25th with 685 aircraft dropping 1,702 tons of bombs on Regensburg, Augsburg, Stuttgart and Furth. 31 bombers were lost. 899 fighters were also dispatched that day, some of which came from the IX FC. They destroyed 26 enemy aircraft but 3 US fighters were lost.

The five days of BIG WEEK marked the most concentrated period of operations for Eighth Air Force up to that time. On its opening day, the Eighth mounted its first 1,000-plane raid. It flew 3,300 bomber sorties in those five days. In the view of Roger Freeman, prior to BIG WEEK, the Allied outlook was bleak, and after which the fortunes of the Third Reich were distinctively in decline.

The above story reprinted with permission from February 2020 issue of Contrails, published by the Birthplace (Savannah, Ga.) chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

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

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Board Member - Chris Wilkinson (NexGen)
Group Treasurer - Lynne Milne (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:

Lynne Milne, Treasurer
384th Bomb Group
P.O. Box 2414
Merrifield, VA 22116-2414

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**



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