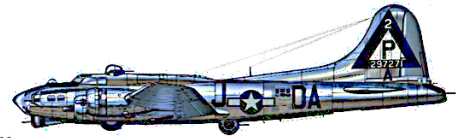




384th Bomb Group, Inc. News & Journal



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

December 2021

Our 2021 reunion returns to Wendover and dedicates Wingy

The bright skies of Utah welcomed the veterans and NexGen members of the 384th Bomb Group who gathered in early October for our 2021 reunion. The three-day visit traced the steps of the group's original and replacement crews, from training at Wendover Field to remembrance at Hill Air Force Base.

The 2021 reunion was special for several reasons, chief among them the formal dedication of the B-17 wing panel signed by so many group veterans over the last several years, many of whom are no longer with us. "Wingy," as the panel has been dubbed, is the centerpiece of an Eighth Air Force exhibit at Hill's museum.



Wingy in its new home at the Hill Air Force Base museum

In addition, Hill houses many remembrances of the 384th, including the Col. Nathan H. Mazer Memorial Chapel, honoring a 384th

legend who made significant contributions to the museum, chapel and Hill. The chapel includes an exact duplicate of a memorial stained glass window donated by the 384th to the Parish Church of St. James the Apostle at Grafton Underwood.

NexGen member Harry de Courcy, who made the trip with his wife and fellow member Nancy Bellovary de Courcy, described the trip on Facebook: "Wendover is one of the last surviving 'expedient' army airfields that was established as the U.S. began to ramp up for World War II. Most were either expanded into real modern Air Force bases post-war or abandoned and razed. As such it provides a window into the kind of facilities where airmen trained. The 384th was formed here and commissioned before going to the 8th Air Force. The 509th Composite Group (which dropped the two atom bombs on Japan) also trained here before moving on to the Marianas, Hiroshima & Nagasaki."



Corrine Samuel, another 384th NexGen member on the trip, wrote on Facebook: "This reunion truly related to our veterans ...walking where they walked at Wendover ... seeing the 384th display at Hill Museum with Wingy as the centerpiece ... viewing the stained glass window in the Mazer Chapel at Hill. Incredible experience!"

Wendover today is a general aviation field. It's also a Utah National Guard training base. During the 384th's visit, a couple of jets from Hill did some low level passes.

Another highlight of the trip was a group dinner that included a tribute to the Missing Man (see picture). The tradition honors those missing in action in the Army Air Forces. The table is round to honor everlasting concern for those who never came home; its white tablecloth symbolizes the purity of motive of those who answered the call to serve; and a single red rose honors the life of each of the missing, tied with a red ribbon, symbolizing the continued effort to find those still missing. A slice of lemon on a plate is a reminder of the bitterness of those captured and missing. A pinch of salt symbolizes the tears of the loved ones of the missing. A Bible symbolizes the strength of faith sustaining those lost. The glass on the table is inverted, because those missing are unable to drink with those at the dinner and the chair is empty because they are missing. **See two full pages of pictures from the reunion on pages 5 and 6.**

384th 2022 REUNION: We will hold our reunion with the 8th Air Force Historical Society in Washington, D.C., 19-23 October. Registration and attendance information will be posted on the 8th Air Force Historical Society website in March. Detailed information for 384th members will be posted as it becomes available.

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2022 Calendar

384th BG 2022 reunion,
October, Washington, D.C.

8th Air Force Historical
Society 2022 Reunion, 19-23
October, Washington, D.C.;
check for details at
<https://www.8thafhs.org/>

On the Internet

384th BG website

*Our internet home, maintained
by Fred Preller and team.*

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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Two 546th Squadron ground crew aboard their bikes pose for a picture in front of a 384th Bomb Group refueling truck on the tarmac at Grafton Underwood.

What made Allied aircraft go faster than the enemy?

The heroes of World War II flew planes, they fought in the trenches, and they fought in the laboratories. Here’s the story of one of those heroes, a chemist at Sun Oil named Tim Palucka, who figured out how to improve the octane of aviation gas.

It has always been puzzling why the German Luftwaffe kept on using 87 octane aviation gasoline while the Americans and British used 100 octane gasoline in their Spitfire fighters and Americans used 130 octane in our P-51s and other fighters. This is the reason:

It seems that the German and British aircraft both used 87 octane gasoline in the first two years of the war. While that was fairly satisfactory in the German Daimler-Benz V-12 engine, it was marginal in the British Rolls-Royce Merlin XX engine in British aircraft. It fouled the spark plugs, caused valves to stick, and made frequent engine repairs necessary.

Then came Lend-Lease and American aircraft began to enter British service in great numbers. If British engines hated 87 octane gasoline, American, General Motors built Allison 1710 engines loathed and despised it. Something had to be done!

Along came an American named Tim Palucka, a chemist for Sun Oil in their Southeast Texas Refinery. Never heard of him? Small wonder, very few people have.

Palucka took a French formula for enhancing the octane of gasoline, invented the “Cracking Tower” and produced 100 octane aviation gasoline. This discovery led to great joy among our English cousins and great distress among the Germans.

A Spitfire fueled with 100 octane gasoline was 34 miles per hour faster at 10,000 feet. The need to replace engines went from every 500 hours of operation to every 1,000 hours. This reduced the cost of British aircraft by 300 pounds sterling – even more when used in four-engine bombers. The Germans couldn’t believe it when Spitfires that couldn’t catch them a year ago started shooting their ME-109 E and G models right out of the sky!

Of course, the matter had to be kept secret. If the Germans found out that it was a French invention, the fear was that they’d simply copy the original French patents.

The American Allison engines improved remarkably with 100 octane gasoline, but did much better when 130 octane gasoline came along in 1944. The 130 octane also improved the performance of the radial engine bombers we produced.

The Germans and Japanese never snapped to the fact that we had reinvented gasoline. Neither did our friends the Russians.

100,000 Americans died in the skies over Europe. Lord only knows what that number would have been without “Super-Gasoline.”

— Thanks to Frank Alfter for sharing this story.

Tireless volunteers ensure progress at Grafton-Underwood museum site

As summer 2021 turned to fall, the hardy band of volunteers working to create a museum in the former operations block building at the Grafton-Underwood home of the 384th have continued to make remarkable progress.

The pictures at right show the outstanding transformation.

At immediate right, the site as seen from a drone showing the changes as clearing continued.

At far right, volunteer Colin Crich donated his labor to fashion secure metal doors preventing access to the ops building, which will protect the group's progress in cleaning up the site and preparing the building for work to come later.

Below, a look at the door in context with the building itself. And a group picture of the volunteers at a recent Saturday work party in November 2021.



Boughton Estates has graciously allowed the group to clear the property in advance of legal and banking approvals. While the paperwork for those legal and banking necessities moves forward, hard work continues at the museum site.

Throughout the year, the group has gathered to clear the area around the building that will be converted to house the museum, and to clear surrounding vegetation so that the ops block can be expanded with the addition of more modern buildings in the same style as the Nissen huts that covered the base during active operations.

As summer turned to fall, a new accessory has showed up at the site: a bonfire to keep volunteers warm during the day!

An excellent way to keep up with the group is to join [Friends of the 384th Group](#) on Facebook, if you do social media. Neill Howarth, one of the leaders of the museum effort, does a great job of thanking all those involved in making this happen.

[Here's a recent drone video of fall colors](#) from Graham Butlin that highlights much of the progress.

If you'd like to support the museum effort financially, please contact Neill Howarth directly at neillhowarth@gmail.com.

— Paul Furiga

384th squadron patches and Challenge Coins

Show your 384th Bomb Group affiliation and remember your 384th service member with 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. Shipping is included in the price. To buy, email Keith Ellefson at 384thbombgroup@troycable.net

A new order of challenge coins has been received and they are now available for purchase from Keith as well. They are \$15 each, domestic U.S. shipping included.



TAPS

We do our best to keep everyone updated when a 384th veteran flies west. Here are the latest obituaries, as of December 2021.

S. Sgt. Leonard Malkiel, ball turret gunner, 547th squadron, 1 mission (20 April 1945), 21 March 1945–end of hostilities. Died 11 September 2021, aged 96.

Lt. Charles Allyn Lewis, pilot, 547th squadron, completed 25 missions, 25 February–25 April 1945. While on his 20th mission, his B-17, “Recall,” collided with another 547th B-17, “Alex,” in bad weather. Three crew bailed out and Lewis crash-landed in Allied-occupied Belgium (all crew survived). All crew from Alex also bailed out and landed in Allied territory. Died 28 September 2021, aged 97.

Edith Nealis, widow of **S. Sgt.**

Leonard Nealis, top turret gunner, 546th squadron, who flew 25 missions, 22 June–5 December 1943, died 29 September 2021, aged 97.

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).

December 2021



Reduce, reuse, recycle: The 384th was doing this 77 years ago!

Combat flight at altitude caused many problems for World War II flyers, and the 384th was no exception. However, the problem of restroom needs and proper aircraft functioning got a rather unusual solution in the 384th.

To prevent air crew from relieving themselves through the bomb bay en route to target (and thus freezing the bomb bay doors shut), the group issued an unusual order: air crew were to collect used fuse cans, put those to (ahem!) proper use at altitude, and then, once returned to base, *recycle and reuse* them. Surely one of the more unusual (and ingenious?) approaches taken by our 384th leaders to keep men and machines functioning at altitude! —Thanks to Fred Preller for this research!

HEADQUARTERS
AAF STATION NO. 106
Office of the Station Commander (F-P-c)
APO 557,
9 April, 1944.

STATION CIRCULAR)
NO.70-10)

ENGINEERING
ELIMINATION OF URINATION IN BOMB BAY

1. In the past a large number of bomb bay door failures have been caused by urination in the bomb bay. To eliminate bomb bay door failures urination will be in cans placed as follows. Combat crews should be careful not to spill urine in bomb bay.
 - a. Three (3) each empty fuse cans with lids or one (1) Hydraulic Fluid Can with lid will be placed in Bombarrier's compartment.
 - b. Three (3) each empty fuse cans with lids or two (2) Hydraulic Fluid Cans with lids will be placed in Pilot's compartment.
 - c. Three (3) each empty fuse cans with lids or two (2) Hydraulic Fluid Cans with lids will be placed in Radio compartment.
 - d. One (1) each empty fuse can with lid or one (1) Hydraulic Fluid can with lid will be placed in tail gunners compartment.
 - e. Crew chief will be instructed to check to see that all cans are in their appropriate places before aircraft takes-off.
 - f. All crew members will be advised to urinate in appropriate places before altitude is reached.
 - g. Crew members will be advised that it is their duty to empty cans after landing. Due to the limited quantity of cans available, cans will not be thrown aboard except in an emergency.
2. The Station Technical Inspector will make periodical inspections to see that the above is carried out.

By order of Colonel SETH:

Our 2021 384th Bomb Group reunion ... in pictures

The photos on these pages are courtesy of two 384th NexGen members, Harry de Courcy and Christopher Wilkinson. Gentlemen, thanks for capturing all these moments for posterity!



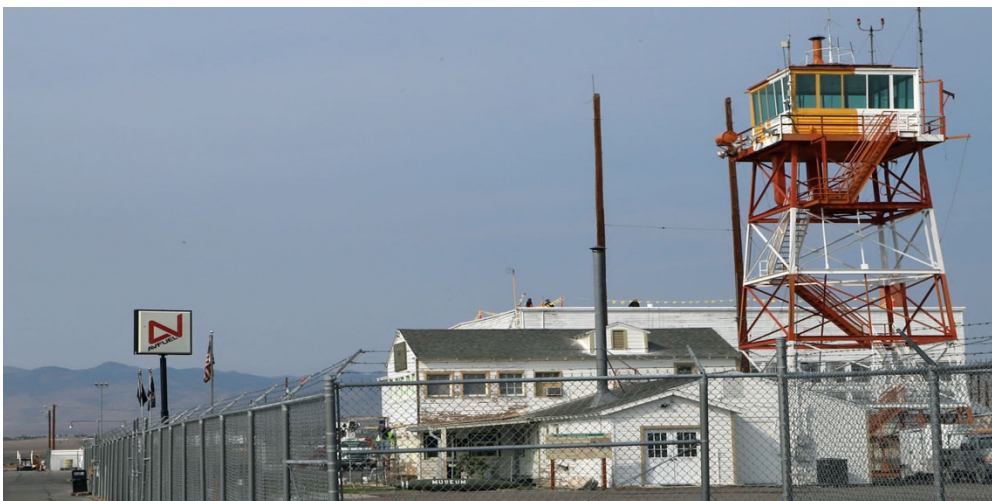
Top row: The reunion group in front of “Wingy” at Hill Air Force Museum (see page 1 story)
Middle row: Cookie Samuels signing KIA book at Wendover; Our vets on the trip Peter Bileitis (center), H.J. Kolinek (right)
Bottom row: NexGen members Nancy Bellovary de Courcy and Amy Meighan; crash fragments from one of our famed B-17s, Fightin’ Hebe.

Highlights from Hill AFB, Wendover and more!

Top row: Cookie Samuels sporting a commemorative shirt with a historic photo that may have been taken right at the spot where she stands in this photo from the visit to Wendover (see page 1 story)

Middle row: The scene at one of the meals during the trip. Lots of laughs, memories made, and memories recalled for our members on the trip and all those who have gone before.

Bottom row: Left, the tower at Wendover, where a fixed base operator serves general aviation flyers. Right, the replica chapel window at Hill.



Apple TV series will honor the Eighth

Masters of the Air shooting proceeds at Abingdon in Oxfordshire

For years, it was merely rumors: Tom Hanks and Stephen Spielberg would continue their efforts to honor World War II veterans with a blockbuster miniseries to follow *Band of Brothers* and *The Pacific*, focused on the Eighth Air Force.

During the 384th's 2019 junket, volunteers at the 100th Bomb Group museum at Thorpe Abbots confided that both men had repeatedly visited the beautifully restored cluster of buildings, including the tower, apparently as research for the series.

During 2021, social media posts and news media reporting confirmed the rumors: Donald L. Miller's *Masters of the Air*, a 672-page chronicle of the 100th, would serve as the basis for what industry experts estimated would be a \$500 million effort. The latest reporting suggests the series will air in 2022 or 2023. [Here's a YouTube interview](#) with Miller about the series.

While there is debate about the accuracy of the filming (and the book), it's clear great attention to detail has been demonstrated, including in the construction of three fiberglass B-17s!

The pictures on this page provide more evidence of the care taken to revive the look and feel of an Eighth Air Force airfield. We'll share periodic updates in the months to come as filming progresses. Some of the photos here were taken by Kevin Flecknor, who maintains the 384th memorial at Grafton-Underwood.



Top right: A tower set at Abingdon, Nissen hut and tent (at rear) with a model of a B-17, Royal Flush, once piloted by Lt. Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal, who will probably figure as a central character in the series. Two of the B-17s have no props; they apparently will be digitally added so that flying scenes can be simulated. **Middle left,** a close-up of Alice from Dallas, a 100th B-17 lost on a 17 August 1943 mission to Regensburg, showing the attention to detail in building the mock-ups. **Middle right,** a nose mock-up for close-up filming. **Bottom left,** a mock-up undergoing conversion to all-metal B-17G status for filming of later group action.

— Paul Furiga

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

Chairman – Peter Bielskis (Veteran)
President – Frank Alfter (NexGen)
Secretary – Carol Alfter
Treasurer – Ray Lustig (NexGen)
Board Member – Len Estrin (Veteran)
Board Member – William O’Leary (Veteran)
Board Member – Dennis Bielskis (NexGen)
Board Member – Paul Furiga (NexGen)
Board Member – Tom Swift (NexGen)
Board Member – Chris Wilkinson (NexGen)

The 384th Bomb Group, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit veterans organization based in Ohio. Membership includes the quarterly newsletter for \$25, renewed yearly in January.

2022 DUES INFORMATION – DETAILS

Our 2022 treasurer is Ray Lustig.

Please send dues to:

Ray Lustig
128 Ulster Avenue
Walden, NY 12586

Questions? Contact Ray at rayl208@aol.com,
rlustig@hvc.nj.com or 914-213-9256.

Thank you for your help in ensuring that the group activities are financially supported.

Maintenance Donations for 384th BG Memorial at Grafton Underwood

Kevin Flecknor (with help, especially given 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 28 Lime Road
Kettering Northamptonshire NN16--9TB

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