



384th Bomb Group, Inc. News & Journal



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

August 2022

Will you meet us in D.C. for the 2022 384th Bomb Group reunion?

We'll join the 8th Air Force Historical Society this October in our nation's capital

As we did in 2011, 2016 and 2017, our 384th reunion will be held 19-23 October this year in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society gathering. The 2022 reunion brings us to the nation's capital, a city with much to offer 384th members who are able to participate.

Among the highlights of the five-day event in Washington, D.C. will be a tour of the Smithsonian's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy museum annex at Washington Dulles International Airport. Among its exhibits are the Space Shuttle *Discovery*, the B-29 that dropped the first atom bomb, the *Enola Gay*, and the Gemini 7 space capsule (see picture, below left).

Other tours will visit Arlington National Cemetery and the many monuments on the National Mall, including the World War II memorial (see picture at right).

Our 2021 reunion took us "home" to the roots of the 384th to see our signed wing panel and Col. Nathan H. Mazer Memorial Chapel at Hill Air Force Base, and the museum at the former Wendover Army Air Field in Utah.



photo: Jarek Tuszynski / CC-BY-SA-3.0 & GDFL

In 2023, we plan on a U.K. junket and a return to Grafton Underwood, where we expect to see quite a difference in the clearing and preparation for the museum that the Friends of the 384th are shepherding to completion over the next few years.

In addition to the many 8th AFHS events, **please remember to sign up for the Friday night (21 October) Rendezvous Dinner**, so that we can KEEP THE SHOW ON THE ROAD in a separate space, which will be provided if we have enough 384th registrants (we need at least 20).

We've listed a few more details in the section below, and as well, **please see page 5** for the complete registration form, which we are printing in this edition of the newsletter for your convenience. **We've even filled out the 384th Bomb Group affiliation for you!**

The details on our 2022 reunion (with the 8th Air Force Historical Society)

The 48th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion will take place Wednesday, 19 October through Sunday, 23 October at the Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA.

The deadline to register is Friday, 16 September. Please see page 5 for a registration form that you can mail in, or scan and email.

This year, the 384th will have a hospitality suite. The full schedule is available at the 8th AFHS website (8thAFHS.org). Information there includes registration forms with costs for meals and tour options. **Note: You must be a member of the 8th AFHS to attend this event. Dues are \$40 a year.** The 8th AFHS also recommends booking your hotel first before registering for the reunion. For more information contact Debra Kujawa, Managing Director, at 912-748-8884 or ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org



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2022 Calendar

384th BG 2022 reunion will be held, 19-23 October, Washington, D.C. along with The 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.

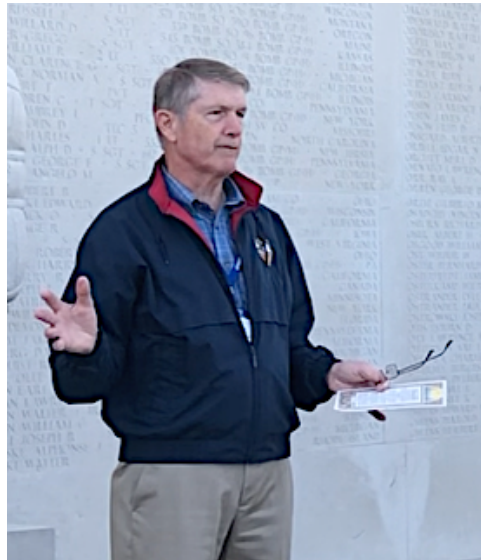
Contact Us

384th President
Frank Alfter
fjalfter@gmail.com

Editor Paul Furiga
paul.furiga@wordwritepr.com
222 Courtney Place
Wexford, PA 15090
412-427-0597

A letter from our president: Hope to see you in D.C.

Fellow 384thers, we are running right up to our next reunion with the 8th Air Force in Arlington, VA from 19 to 23 October, and need to get as many to attend as we can to join the fun. One of the other times we joined in with the 8th AF, we had 55 of our members and were in fact the largest Group represented. I sure would like to see us do that again.



Washington, DC certainly has a lot to offer and if you have not been there, this would be a great opportunity. There will be various tours that include the Smithsonian's Udvar-Hazy Museum, Arlington Cemetery and Memorials, Washington Mall memorials and monuments, and there are many terrific restaurants in Old Town Arlington. Carol and I spent three years exploring many of them, while I was suffering those years in the Pentagon, but honestly, the area is

chock full of interesting things to do and see.

So, please seriously consider attending and getting together again with dear old friends. We will be planning our next adventure, a return to the UK and Grafton Underwood in 2023. And that too, is just around the corner.

Help us **Keep the Show on the Road!**

—Frank Alfter

TAPS

We do our best to keep everyone updated when a 384th veteran flies west. Here are the latest obituaries, as of August 2022.

S. Sgt. Leonard "Len" Estrin, ball turret gunner, 546th squadron, 17 missions (2 March-19 April 1945). Died 28 June 2022, aged 97. In addition to his wartime service with the 384th, Len was a longtime leader in our association and a frequent attendee at reunions and junkets, usually with his wife Helen. The picture at right is of Len and Helen with Sally B at Duxford during our September 2019 junket to England.

Most recently, Len served as a senior vice president on the 384th Bomb Group board.

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), so that we may honor their service and their passing in the newsletter.



August 2022

Firsts, lasts and notables, a select history of 384th aircraft on the website

The 384th Bomb Group website is a fantastic public resource for those affiliated with or interested in the bomb group, and the dedicated volunteers who built and maintain it provide plenty of great content for our newsletter. This month, thanks to **Fred Preller**, we feature images (and short histories) of a few of the notable B-17s that flew with the group during its time at Grafton Underwood. We hope you enjoy – and check out [the comprehensive aircraft histories](#) on the website!

Technically the oldest (and thus first?) B-17 in the 384th inventory was **41-9022**, *Alabama Exterminator II*, the group's only B-17E, which was assigned to exactly one mission (which it did not complete) before becoming the group's weather and utility plane (see picture, right).

Alabama Exterminator came to the group from the 92nd Bomb Group in June 1943 and served with the 384th until being transferred to the Base Air Depot 1 at Burtonwood in July 1944.

What happened to *Alabama Exterminator* after that transfer is unclear.

By far one of the best-known B-17s in the 384th was a "last," not a first. The *Spotted Cow*, formerly *Patches II* (**42-3441**), was the last B-17F to fly a combat mission with the 384th. It arrived at the 547th Squadron on 9 August 1943, flying its first mission on 15 August to Amiens, France (see picture below).

Patches II completed 39 combat missions until 16 June 1944, after which it became a spare until declared "War Weary" on the 6 August 1944 aircraft inventory.

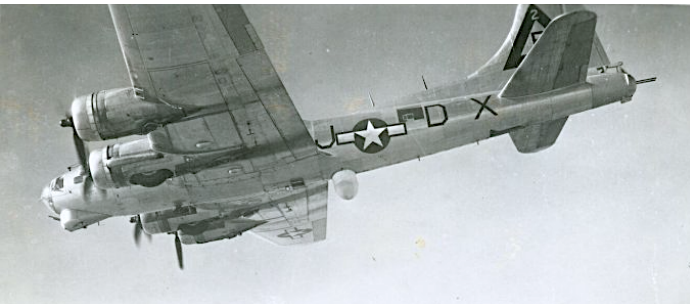


From 19 June 1944 it was relegated to weather and formation assembly duty. It actually survived the war, remaining on the 384th inventory until 6 June 1945. Following its service, it was returned to the U.S. and scrapped.

It's uncertain if 384th mission planners knew that mission #316 on 25 April 1945 would be the group's last, so the honor of leading that trek to the Skoda works in Czechoslovakia fell to an unnamed Vega-built B-17G of the 545th squadron, **44-8789**, a plane that is credited with 11

missions, nearly all of them as a squadron or group lead as it was a PFF (Pathfinder Force) ship (see picture, below).

On the group's final mission, the aircraft commander and group leader was Maj. Dale Hutchinson, who frequently flew as a squadron or group lead.



However, this was the only mission he flew in this particular aircraft, according to group records. This B-17 survived the war and was scrapped in 1947.

Here's one of the few pictures we have of 44-8789 on the website that clearly shows its PFF radome that held its target-seeking radar, which replaced the ball turret on PFF ships.

Grafton Underwood past and present map becomes a museum piece!

Thanks to the 384th Bomb Group leadership, Mel Hubbard's past and present map of Grafton Underwood has been accepted by the Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Ga.

In a letter to Frank Alfter, our president, Vivian Rogers-Price, Ph.D., director of the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center, wrote that the map has been accepted as the Melanie Hubbard Collection.

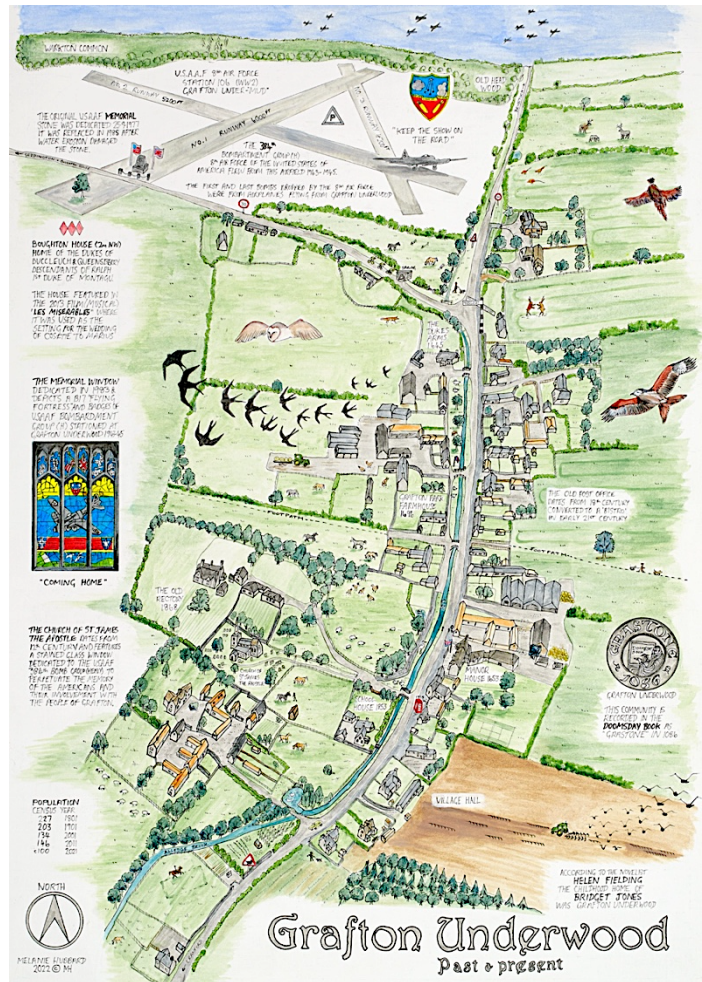
The map "is a treasured addition to this museum's research center," Rogers-Price wrote.

The group is paying to have the map appropriately framed so that it may be properly displayed.

In our June 2022 edition we shared a much larger (and better) version of the map and more about its creation. "My husband Roger and I have no links to the 'Forces' but have lived in Grafton for almost 17 years now and our interest has grown from the place, the history and the people around us. We 'hosted' Rosie McNair for the 2019 reunion, having made contact with her through Matt Smith and Neill Howarth," Mel said then.

As of our June 2022 newsletter Mel had been able to donate £150 towards the museum project (see below).

Mel has also completed a map of Geddington, where 384th personnel frequented the pubs in their down time. Mel will also donate £10 from the sale of each Geddington map to the 384th Bomb group museum project. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of either color A2 map (£75 each), visit Mel on the Internet at [www.Facebook.com/HubbArt](https://www.facebook.com/HubbArt) or email her at hubbwebb@aol.com.



Work continues on site of 384th museum at Grafton Underwood as fundraising grows

In our June 2022 issue, we reported on the success of the U.S. fundraising effort for the museum that the Friends of the 384th



are planning to build at the 384th's former Grafton Underwood home. To date, our initial \$30,000 fundraising goal has been surpassed with donations and pledges of more than \$31,000 recorded.

Meanwhile, planning for the museum and clearing of the site continues with a dedicated corps of volunteers. Thanks to their work, the Operations Building that will be at the core of the planned museum complex has been cleared and secured for eventual restoration into a proper home for the U.K. history of the 384th Bomb Group. As has been the case seemingly around the world, heat and drought have been challenges for the volunteers but they have pressed on. **To donate to the museum effort, see the box on page 6 for details.**

Here's a recent photo of the progress volunteers are making inside the Ops Building. Note that cleaning is well underway, though graffiti from the years since the war is still to be tackled. In recent weeks, the volunteers have focused on exterior clearing as well, despite the summer heat.



REGISTRATION FORM

48th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
October 19-23, 2022

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS September 16, 2022 (NO refunds on cancellations past this date)	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
DUES: The principal attendee <i>MUST</i> be a CURRENT member of the 8th AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are NOT CURRENT, or a member, please pay your yearly dues here:	\$ 40	#	\$
REGISTRATION FEE (non-refundable): EVERY attendee MUST pay registration fee	\$ 45	#	\$
BREAKFAST/BRUNCH BUFFET served 7:45am-8:45am, Thursday-Sunday (Price is \$40 per person per day)			
Thursday: # _____ Friday: # _____ Saturday: # _____ Sunday: # _____	\$ 40	#	\$
DINNERS			
Thursday, Oct 20: Dinner Buffet	\$ 57	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21: Rendezvous Dinners—Roasted Free-Range Chicken & all the trimmings!	\$ 58	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22: GALA Banquet (Please select one entrée per person)			
Grilled Marinated Flank Steak (beef)	\$ 58	#	\$
Pan Seared Herb Crusted Salmon	\$ 58	#	\$
Vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, etc—Please indicate type: Thurs _____ Fri _____ Sat _____	\$ 58	#	\$
TOUR OPTIONS: ALL tours are LUNCH ON YOUR OWN each day			
Thursday, Oct 20: 9am-12pm Steven F Udvar-Hazy Center	\$ 38	#	\$
Thursday, Oct 20: 1:30pm-4:30pm Arlington Cemetery & Monuments	\$ 25	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21: 12:30pm-4:30pm Washington Mall & Memorials	\$ 38	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22: 11:00am-3:30pm Historic Old Town Alexandria, VA	\$ 38	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

Please PRINT. If registering a veteran, please list their name, first. **MAXIMUM of FOUR [4] persons per registration form, please!**

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): _____ WWII VETERAN? _____

BG/FG Affiliation (for Rendezvous Dinner seating) 384th BG Post WWII Veteran: _____ (Branch of Military): _____

SPOUSE or GUEST #1: _____

GUEST #2: _____ GUEST #3: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PH #: _____ EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PH #: _____

PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WILL BE USING A WHEELCHAIR ON TOURS: _____ NEED HYDRAULIC LIFT?: _____

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD —M/C; VISA; or AmEx (a 3% convenience fee will be added):

CARD #: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.

MAIL completed form with check or credit card info to: 8th AFHS ~ 68 Kimberlys Way ~ Jasper, GA 30143-4769

IF paying by credit card, you may SCAN and email form to: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

Know your 384th Bomb Group, Inc. 2022 Officers and Board of Directors

Chairman of the Board	Peter Bielskis
President	Frank Alfter
Senior Vice President	Bill O'Leary
Secretary	Carol Alfter
Treasurer	Ray Lustig
Member at Large	Chris Wilkinson
Member at Large	Dennis Bielskis
Member at Large	Thomas Swift
Member at Large	Fred Preller
Member/Newsletter Editor	Paul Furiga

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

2022 DUES INFORMATION

Our 2022 treasurer is Ray Lustig.

Please send dues to:

Ray Lustig, Treasurer, 384th Bomb Group, Inc.
128 Ulster Avenue
Walden, NY 12586

Questions? Contact Ray at rlustig@hvc.rr.com

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

Here's how to contribute to the 384th Bombardment Group Museum at GU

Now that The Friends of the 384th can receive donations for the 384th Bomb Group Museum, the 384th Bomb Group, Inc. is able to receive, accumulate and segregate donations until such time as it is appropriate to disburse funds to build the Museum.

We encourage all who care about the 384th and the service and sacrifice of those who served to donate. All donations – no matter how large or how small – will help bring this museum to life.

You have two options to contribute: PayPal or personal check.

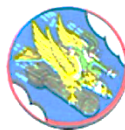
Send via PayPal to Payments@384thBombGroup.com.

Or mail your personal check to our treasurer:

Ray Lustig, Treasurer, 384th Bomb Group, Inc.
128 Ulster Avenue
Walden, NY 12586

Be sure to add a note to your PayPal transaction or the **Memo** line on your check, that the contribution is for the **Museum**.

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



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