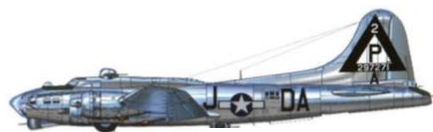




384th Bomb Group Heritage Association News & Journal

384th Bomb Group, Inc.



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

September 2025

29 September is registration deadline for our 2025 reunion – join us!

A "peek" inside the Memphis Belle, visits to B-17 Champaign Lady and other sites

Registration closes in just a few weeks for the 384th Bomb Group Heritage Association reunion so please make your plans soon if you are hoping to join us in Dayton, Ohio.

We are excited for the many opportunities that our time together will offer us! For those keeping score, this is our 35th reunion, in addition to 12 "junkets" to England and Grafton Underwood.

An initial reminder email to all 2025 members went out a few weeks ago, and a second email went out the first week of September to members who haven't responded.

We thank all members who responded to the initial email, including those who are unable to join us.

In addition to the emails to members, we are posting on our Facebook group and have lots of information in this newsletter.

We will be communicating final details to all those registered via email in October. Please stay tuned for any schedule changes and/or additional opportunities we may be able to secure.

Once again, thanks to Carol and Frank Alfter for coordinating this year's event. Carol, a veteran of many reunion planning efforts, graciously came out of planning retirement for this year's get-together. Frank's long relationships with the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force and the Champaign Aviation Museum in Urbana, Ohio will enable our group access to unique B-17 experiences, including the restored *Memphis Belle* at the Air Force museum, and the ongoing restoration of the B-17 *Champaign Lady* at the Urbana museum.

Thanks to Frank's long relationship with the Air Force museum, we will be able to pop a hatch and peek inside the fully restored *Memphis Belle*, an honor not available to most museum visitors. As well, Frank's relationship with the group building *Champaign Lady* will give us special access when we tour that project at the Urbana airport.

Please see page 5 for the registration form and page 6 for the schedule and details!!

The affordable registration price for the reunion is \$280. This per-person fee includes all meals unless otherwise noted. Attendees will pay for hotel rooms directly (see below). We will travel by chartered bus to sites we visit.

Our hotel, formerly **the Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn I-675**, is now a **DoubleTree by Hilton** hotel. The address is: 2800 Presidential Dr., Fairborn, Ohio 45324. And the room rate is \$150/night, breakfast included. **See registration form, p. 5 for more details.**

Reservations: Doubletree by Hilton 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 **29 September 2025.**

— Paul Furiga



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2025 Calendar

Registration for our 2025 reunion **closes 29 September**. Please see the Page 1 story and pages 5 and 6 for details. The reunion will be held 29 October- 2 November in Dayton, Ohio. We have lots of fun activities, and we'll see more than one B-17! The Eighth Air Force Historical Society reunion will be held 1-5 October in Colorado Springs, CO. Visit the 8th AFHS website below for more details.

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."

The Arrowhead Club

Cindy Bryan's wonderful and inspiring blog. Her father was a 384th crewman and POW.

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."

Contact Us

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Embracing and Continuing Our Heritage

I did not serve in the armed forces, but my family's legacy of military service stretches back to at least the 1860s, when my great-great-grandfather Frederick Prella (the final 'r' came later) fought in the German Hanoverian army in the Battle of Langensalza (27 June 1866). He was awarded the medal in the accompanying photo (**right**) for his role in that victory, and soon after resigned from the army and emigrated to the United States. His grandson, my father, was a B-17 Pilot with the 384th/546th squadron, in 1944, as was his brother Gordon with the 95th/335th squadron.

My father-in-law Howie also fought in Europe in WWII, landing a month after D-Day with a heavy artillery unit – 8" guns – and remained there until the end of the war. Also, his son – my brother-in-law Frank – fought in Vietnam.

And now my Grandson Owen plans to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps upon graduation from high school next year. He will follow in the footsteps of his lineal forebears and will serve to defend our Freedoms and our Constitution. Owen has been to the Museum in Grafton Underwood and was impressed with the job they are doing. Neill and gang put a full-court press on him, and in his words "it worked."

Note: Frederick Prella's medal was passed down to my Uncle Fred Preller and then to me. It is a treasured memento of our family's military heritage, which I intend to personally pass on to Owen at the appropriate time.

Let's Keep the Show on the Road – See you all in Dayton!

— Fred Preller



Know your 384th Officers and Board of Directors

Chairman of the Board	Peter Bielskis
President	Fred Preller
Vice President	Chris Wilkinson <i>elected President, 2026-2027</i>
Secretary/Newsletter Editor	Paul Furiga
Treasurer	Ray Lustig
Member	Carol Alfter
Member	Frank Alfter
Member	Dennis Bielskis
Member	Nathan Bosdet
Member	Thomas Swift <i>elected Vice President, 2026-2027</i>

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.

2025 DUES INFORMATION

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025?

Membership year runs January to December, so it's time to join or re-up for 2025!

Please send \$25 annual dues to our treasurer, Ray Lustig, at this address:

Ray Lustig, 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 group activities are financially supported.

Henry Kolinek marks 100 years with multiple celebrations

Recently, S. Sgt. Henry “HJ” Kolinek, tail gunner, 546th squadron marked his 100th birthday (19 August) with multiple surprise celebrations.

The first “surprise,” coordinated by 384th NextGen member Mikayla Leech, involved multiple members of the 384th Bomb Group Heritage Association who sent Mikayla birthday cards that were delivered to HJ on his birthday ([see photo](#)).



In addition to family celebrations and cards from his 384th friends, HJ’s century celebration caught the attention of his local member of Congress, U.S. Rep. Monica De La Cruz in a public celebration that included the unveiling of a portrait of HJ ([see picture right](#)) and also [coverage by the South Texas News, the local paper](#).

In the public ceremony,

Rep. De La Cruz told HJ that he “did what our country asked him to do, and he did not hesitate,” and that “he is an honorable and respected man,” not only for his military service, but for his long history of community service and as a leader in the local business community.

HJ, always humble about his service, told South Texas News reporter Dylan Dozier, “I only did what they asked me to.”

Many thanks to HJ’s daughter Marsha Duniven and her husband Dennis for sharing this story in our Facebook group so that we could share it here too (and also for attending many reunions with HJ, including junkets to England).



— Paul Furiga

Veteran James Kangas also celebrated a century birthday!

We also want to wish a happy 100th Birthday to Sgt. James Kangas! James, known as “Short Round,” during his 384th service, flew a full tour of 35 missions as a ball turret gunner with the 546th squadron, from 12 December 1944 to 25 April 1945, the very last mission flown by the 384th, to the Skoda Armament Works in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

James was a member of the Lt. Raymond D. Cook crew when he arrived at Grafton Underwood.

James also [has a great collection of materials on our website](#), including his memoirs. He turned 100 on 14 August.

James is among seven of our special 384th Bomb Group centenarian veterans (that we know of – do let us know of any others!)

In her original Facebook post with the picture we’ve reprinted here, granddaughter Linda wrote that the family joined “our 100 year young WWII B-17th belly gunner James Kangas celebrating his birthday with three of his grandchildren and two of his great-grandchildren.”



Meet Sgt. Delbert McNasty, one of the 384th's celebrated canines

Sgt. Delbert P. McNasty was an original crewmember of the 384th Bomb Group, 544th Bomb Squadron, and also the group's mascot. He was with the 384th from Salt Lake City, to Wendover, to Scribner, and eventually, at Grafton Underwood.

Delbert (see picture, below) was purchased at a pet shop in Salt Lake City by 384th bombardier, Lt. Robert J. Kennedy and his wife Gloria. They paid \$10 for him, but Delbert would prove to be priceless.



On the flight to England, Delbert flew with Lt. Kennedy, and pilot Lt. Jesse Hausenfluck, and his crew. They were Crew #3 on the 384th's original assignment orders (see picture, below of the crew with Delbert). *Note: both pictures enhanced with Google's Gemini.*

Delbert flew in a parachute bag with an oxygen hose pumping air into the bag. Delbert kept escaping and likely got brain damage from lack of oxygen at high altitudes. This was Delbert's first and only mission, and he did not receive any combat credit. Delbert also was locked in a suitcase for two days when the crew had their layover in Scotland before arriving at Grafton Underwood. It was thought that this and the lack of oxygen at high altitude made Delbert the character that he was.

At Grafton Underwood, Delbert spent time in both the officers' and non-commissioned officers' headquarters. He was even afforded his own private latrine ... the airmen's shoes. He was brought before a court-martial for his shoe-desecrating actions, for violating the

96th Article of War, "committing a public nuisance," but he was found not guilty. He even committed the offense again, while on trial for his court-martial, and he barked the entire time, but he was nonetheless still found not guilty.

When Delbert wasn't spending time with the men, or desecrating shoes, he would invade the mess hall. One mess hall invasion caused tension between the mess officer and Delbert's co-pilot, Lt. Donald MacKenzie. The mess officer threatened to kill Delbert, so MacKenzie pulled out his .45 and threatened to kill the mess officer. Col. Budd Peaslee intervened, and asked the mess officer to overlook Delbert's offense as "they were all under a lot of tension," Delbert included.

Delbert's antics didn't stop there. He also drank a chemically treated footbath, got quilled by a hedgehog, and was even hit by a truck, as another favorite pastime of his was sitting in the middle of the road and not moving, even when two-ton trucks were barreling towards him. The 384th's doctors took care of him, but they said his legs were never straight again afterwards.

When the men would fly missions, Delbert would often herd cows in a nearby field. Once, he herded 30 cows behind the squadron orderly room and kept them there for two hours. After doing his part for his country, Delbert would head to the barracks and wait for his crew to return. When he heard aircraft, he would run to the runway to welcome them home.

On the 5 July 1943, the American flag was raised at Grafton Underwood, and British troops handed the base over to the Americans. Royal Air Force Flt. Lt. Bryan Cooper told Col. Peaslee, "From this base, American bombers struck their first blow against our common enemy. A great tradition of hard-hitting has been built up since then by American units on this field, and I am proud to have the honor of handing over the station to you, Col. Peaslee, under whose leadership the 384th Heavy Bombardment Group has already added new luster to that record, under the severest conditions of aerial warfare." Before Peaslee could respond, Delbert proudly barked his thoughts on the momentous occasion.



After Delbert spoke, Col. Peaslee said, "It is indeed an honor and a privilege to accept this station in the name of my government. On behalf of the members of this station, I wish to express our appreciation for the cooperation and sincere spirit which have always been apparent in the RAF personnel here. These individuals have been of invaluable assistance and will be missed indeed. I am happy to call you friend and ally." Delbert sat proudly, wagging his tail in agreement.

Many believed that tragedy and loss took a toll on Delbert, and that war-weariness was the cause of his erratic behavior. Within the 384th's first few days of combat, they quickly lost over 100 men, 40 from Delbert's squadron, the 544th.

On 17 August 1943, Delbert's original crew was shot down on a mission to Schweinfurt. Lt. Jesse Hausenfluck was piloting Vertical Shaft, when it was shot down by fighters. Lt. Hausenfluck was killed as was co-pilot Lt. MacKenzie. The rest of the crew became prisoners of war. The following day, Delbert moved in with pilot Lt. Thomas Jefferson Estes, and his crew. Sadly, Delbert kept going back to the barracks of Lt. Hausenfluck and his crew to see if his friends had returned. A week later, Delbert was adopted by a woman from the Red Cross and never saw his 384th friends again. Delbert's time at Grafton Underwood was short, but he left a lasting impact on all who knew him.

— Mikayla Leech

REUNION REGISTRATION
384th BOMB GROUP 2025 REUNION
DoubleTree by Hilton Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio
29 October – 2 November

THIS WILL BE OUR 35th REUNION AS A GROUP
(in addition to 12 “Junket” reunions in England)

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 \$280.00. This includes a welcome reception with Taco Bar on Wednesday evening, Pizza & Pasta Party on Thursday evening, box lunch and evening Chicken Dinner on Friday with a pay-as-you-go bar, and Prime Rib Banquet on Saturday evening with a pay-as-you-go bar, as well as a hospitality room for the duration and motor coach transportation to/from all included activities.

For any vegetarian or kid’s meals, please indicate in the “Special Needs” line above. Please select your choice of a turkey, roast beef, or veggie wrap for your box lunch on Friday and indicate by number below how many of each selection you will need.

Turkey_____ Roast beef_____ Veggie_____ (if no choice is indicated you will get turkey)

\$280.00 PER PERSON X _____ PEOPLE ATTENDING = TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone number _____

Mail completed registration form and payment in full in the form of a check or money order made payable to the 384th Bomb Group , to ensure arrival before the deadline of 29 September 2025. Mail to:	RAY LUSTIG, TREASURER 128 ULSTER AVENUE WALDEN, NY 12586-1036
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Reunion registration deadline is 29 Sept 2025. All registration forms with payment in full **MUST be received by mail on or before the registration deadline.** Please submit your reservations well before the deadline as late reservations cannot be accepted. Confirmations will be mailed out.

Hotel Reservations: Doubletree by Hilton reservations (Group Code “BOM”) or call the front desk at 937-426-7800 and request room block “384th Bomb Group.” The hotel address is 2800 Presidential Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324. We have a room rate of \$150 per night. This rate is good three days before and three days after the event based upon availability and includes breakfast. Please make your reservations early so that we can increase our room block count as necessary. **Deadline for hotel reservations is 29 September 2025.** Hotel room cancellations must be done 48 hours out.

Note: This was a **Holiday Inn** that recently became a **DoubleTree by Hilton**.

If you have additional questions, please contact Carol at 937-702-9424, or at fjalfter@gmail.com.

384th BOMB GROUP 2025 REUNION SCHEDULE
DoubleTree by Hilton Dayton Fairborn, Dayton, Ohio
29 October – 2 November

This will be our 35th reunion as a Group since 1968
(in addition to 12 “Junket” reunions in England)

- 7:00 am-11:45 pm Daily: Hospitality Room open in Kitty Hawk
- Wednesday, 29 October – arrival day
 - 5:00-9:00 pm: Taco Buffet
- Thursday, 30 October
 - 6:00-10:00 am: Breakfast (included in room rate)
 - 9:15 am-3:30 pm: National Museum of the USAF, including *Memphis Belle*
 - Lunch: On Your Own
 - 6:00-9:00 pm: Cash Bar, Pizza & Pasta Buffet
- Friday, 31 October
 - 6:00-10:00 am: Breakfast (included in room rate)
 - 9:00-9:30 am: Group Meeting, Kitty Hawk
 - 10:45 am-3:00 pm: Champaign Aviation Museum, including *Champaign Lady*
 - Lunch: Box Lunch on the Bus
 - 6:00-9:00 pm: Cash Bar, Plated Chicken Dinner with Tuscan Cream Sauce
- Saturday, 1 November
 - 7:00-11:00 am: Breakfast (included in room rate)
 - 9:45 am-3:00 pm: Tour Carillon Park
 - Lunch: Restaurants at Carillon – on your own
 - 6:00-9:00 pm: Social hour with cash bar, Gala Banquet – Plated Prime Rib
- Sunday, 2 November – departure day
 - 7:00-11:00 am: Breakfast (included in room rate)

Hotel Address: DoubleTree by Hilton Dayton Fairborn (was Holiday Inn Fairborn until June 2025)
2800 Presidential Drive
Fairborn, OH 45324
United States

Except as noted, all meals, activities, and transportation are included in the registration fee.

Reunion Registration Deadline is 29 September 2025 – registration must be received by then.

Hotel room rate: \$150/night, breakfast included

Hotel Reservations: Reserve your room(s) at Doubletree by Hilton reservations (Group Code “BOM”) or call the front desk at 937-426-7800 and request room block “384th Bomb Group.” The hotel address is 2800 Presidential Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324. The rate is good three days before and three days after the event based upon availability. Please make your reservations early so that we can increase our room block count as necessary. **Deadline for hotel reservations is 29 September 2025.** Hotel room cancellations must be done 48 hours out.

Special thanks to the Greene County Convention and Visitors Bureau for their continued support.

Visitors from “across the pond” made the summer special at G-U

With museum underway, Grafton Underwood visits take on new dimension

Summer visitors to 384th Bomb Group locations in and around Grafton Underwood are always special. Here’s a recap of two trips made by 384th “Next Gen” relatives of vets.

On Monday, 1 September, Sydney and Judy Gordon visited from California. Sydney's uncle was 1st Lt. Sydney R. Jeter Jr., pilot of B-17G #42-31516 June Bug, 546th Bomb Squadron.

June Bug was lost 22 February 1944, when it collided with a 303rd Bomb Group B-17 a few miles from Grafton Underwood, over an area today known as Stanwick Lakes. Of the crew of ten in June Bug, eight died, with a further nine crew of the



303rd BG B-17 also perishing. Unfortunately, Lt. Jeter was one of the 384th crew to perish. June Bug was named after his wife, a name was chosen by the crew.

Joining Sydney and Judy were members of the research team from Stanwick Lakes who have all been fundamental in extensive research behind the incident, and have been generous in sharing this story and records with the 384th Museum.

“We were hosted for a full day ... by Michael Britton (Stanwick Lakes Heritage volunteer) and Keith Andrews (Treasurer for the 384th Bombardment Group Museum project),” Syd said. “In the afternoon, we were joined by Keith Andrews and Dave Norman (384th Museum volunteer) to visit the Grafton-Underwood parish church to see the B-17 memorial stained glass window.

“This was followed by a driving/walking tour of the former Grafton-Underwood airfield site which included former aircraft operations, crew quarters, and base support function locations as well as a tour of the initial facilities being constructed to house the planned 384th Bombardment Group Museum project.”

“We are extremely indebted to Michael, Keith, and all the volunteers who made this a truly memorable experience for us and who are ensuring a lasting tribute to all those who sacrificed so much in the defense of our freedom,” he said. (See photo at left from Stanwick Lakes memorial site.)

In our last issue, we promised you more details about the June visit of Kathy Lev and her husband Bill. Kathy’s grandfather is one of the most talked about 384th officers, “Pop” Dolan, a World War I veteran in his late 40s when he had a role of

S-1 intelligence officer with the 384th. On 5 June, Bill and Kathy toured the museum site, actually standing in her grandfather’s old office (see picture).

Museum president Neill Howarth shared on Facebook that “Looking through the records we could see that the one mission he had taken part in as an observer was in a B-17 piloted by Leif Ostnes and had Theodore Milton as its commander.”

During this visit, Kathy and Bill raised a flag at the museum recently sent by Jeanne Ostnes on behalf of her father. “We thought it would be appropriate to get Kathy to raise this flag ... She and we loved this moment,” Neill said.

“We showed her everywhere that her grandad would’ve been in the operations block and then got to go to the technical site where “Pop” Dolan would have taken part in the debriefing of the crews (these buildings were my workshop in 1987) it was a great thought to think that I spent time working in the same place that “Pop” Dolan had many years before,” Neill wrote.

“We rounded off the rest of the evening with meal at the Red Lion Pub in Cranford, next door to where the former railway station was where Pop Dolan had greeted the first 384th ground crew to arrive at Grafton Underwood in early 1943.”

In addition, Sam Coleman (daughter of the legendary 384th BG historian, Quentin Bland) and Paul Teal helped Bill and Kathy retrace the steps of a 1979 “junket” during which Pop Dolan and others visited two churches in Kettering. At St. Edwards Catholic Church, Pop Dolan presented a silver chalice on that visit; inside he had mounted inside the diamond engagement ring of his late wife. Bill and Kathy also saw the wooden statue of St. Christopher that was paid for by the 384th Officer’s Club. They also visited Kettering Parish Church where Pop Dolan was presented with a specially commissioned painting by Yvonne Worthington.



384th Bomb Group, Inc.
222 Courtney Place
Wexford, PA 15090



"Keep The Show On The Road..."

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

TAPS: Remembering Clinton Lee Henderson

If you know of a 384th Veteran's passing, please write our editor, Paul Furiga (newsletter@384thbombgroup.com or 222 Courtney Place, Wexford, PA 15090), so that we may honor their service and their passing here.

S. Sgt. Clinton Lee Henderson, ball turret gunner, 545th squadron, completed 35 missions from 4 August-9 December 1944. Died 22 July 2025, aged 100, in Austin, Texas. He lived a full life marked by devotion to his family, his country, and his faith. Clinton was a signer of the 384th commemorative wing panel, "Wingy."

After the war, he completed his high school education and was offered a job as an ambulance attendant. When not driving or assisting with patients, he would help prepare bodies for funerals. This led to him enrolling in the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and obtaining his license as a funeral director and embalmer.

Clinton found love with his wife, Lorraine S. Henderson, who predeceased him. They were married 56 years and they raised four children. Later he worked for Whitley Printing, finally retiring at the young age of 82!

Clinton is survived by his children, great grandchildren and great great-granddaughter. Clinton was preceded in death by his loving wife Lorraine as well as two sons.

Clinton's family and friends knew him as a man of great friendliness, humor and kindness. He will be missed tremendously.

