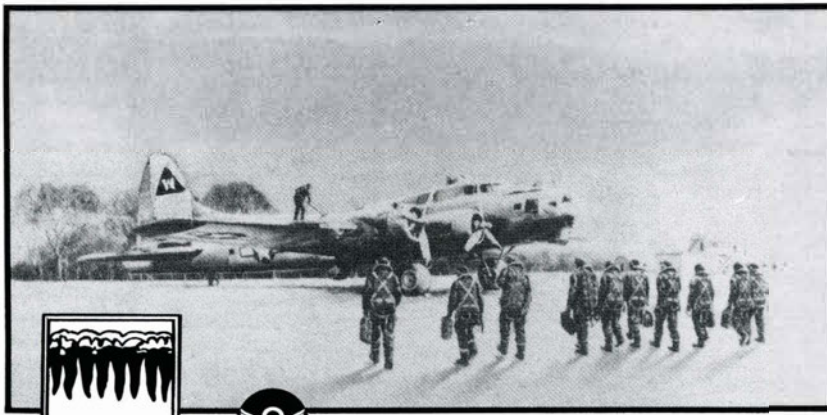




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398TH BOMB. GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION • 8TH AIR FORCE • 1ST AIR DIVISION • NUTHAMPSTEAD, ENGLAND

VOL. 2 NO. 3

FLAK NEWS

JULY 1987

His B-17 Came Home "Screaming In Protest"

Epic Story Of "Nose" Mission

They could hear it before they could see it!

Not all that unusual in those days as the personnel at Station 131 gathered around the tower and scattered hardstands to await the return of the B-17's sent out earlier that morning.

First comes the far off rumble and drone of the Cyclones. Then a spec on the East Anglia horizon. Soon a small cluster indicating the lead squadron. Finally, the group.

Then the counting. 1-2-3-4-5 . . .

But that would have been normal. Today was different!

It was too early for the group to return. "They're 20 minutes early. Can't be the 398th."

They could hear it before they could see it!

Something was coming home. But what?

All eyes turned toward the northeast, aligning with the main runway, each ground guy and stood-down airman straining to make out this "wail of a Banshee," as one called it.

Not like a single B-17 with its characteristic deep roar of the engines blended with four thrashing propellers. This was a howl! Like a powerful wind blowing into a huge whistle.

Then it came into view. It WAS a B-17!

Low and pointing her nose at the 6,000 foot runway, it appeared for all the world to be crawling toward the earth, screaming in protest.

No need for the red flares. All who saw this Fort knew there was death aboard.

"Look at that nose!" they said as all eyes stared in amazement as this single, shattered remnant of a once beautiful airplane glided in



THE CAPTION affixed to the negative of this photo identified the B-17 as having a "damaged nose," which has to be the all-time group understatement. Despite the incredible damage, Larry deLancey and Phil Stahlman of the 601st managed to fly it home from Cologne on Oct. 15, 1944.

(PHOTO BY BOYCE NEEDHAM, 602, BASE PHOTO LAB.)

for an unrealistic "hot" landing. She took all the runway as the "Banshee" noise finally abated, and came to an inglorious stop in the mud just beyond the concrete runway.

Men and machines raced to the now silent and lonely aircraft. The ambulance and medical staff were there first. The fire truck . . . ground and air personnel . . . jeeps, truck, bikes. . .

Out came one of the crew members from the waist door, then another. Strangely quiet. The scene was almost wierd. Men stood by as if in shock, not knowing whether to sing or cry. Either would have been acceptable.

The medics quietly made their way to the nose by way of the waist door as the remainder of the crew began exiting. And to answer the obvious question, "what happened?"

"What happened?" was easy to see. The nose was a scene of utter destruction. It was as



LARRY DELANCEY



PHIL STAHLMAN

though some giant aerial can opener had peeled the nose like an orange, relocating shreds of metal, plexiglass, wires and tubes on the cockpit windshield and even up to the top

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Changes, Changes; FLAK NEWS Early

Rather than delay the August edition of FLAK NEWS until the fall, due to your editor's job requirements in Hawaii, the decision was made to publish early, instead. Hope you don't mind. The next edition will come out in November, as usual.

Fortress Was The “Wailing Banshee”

turret. The left cheek gun hung limp, like a broken arm.

One man pointed to the crease in chin turret. No mistaking that mark! A German 88 anti-aircraft shell had exploded in the lap of the togglier.

This would be George Abbott of Mt. Lebanon, PA. He had been a waist gunner before training to take over the bombardier's role.

Still in the cockpit, physically and emotionally exhausted, were pilot Larry deLancey and co-pilot Phil Stahlman.

Navigator Ray LeDoux finally tapped deLancey on the shoulder and suggested they get out. Engineer turret gunner Ben Ruckel already had made his way to the waist was exiting along with radio operator Wendell Reed, ball turret gunner Al Albro, waist gunner Russell Lachman and tail gunner Herbert Guild.

Stahlman was flying his last scheduled mission as a replacement for regular co-pilot, Grady Cumbie. The latter had been hospitalized the day before with an ear problem. Lachman also was a “sub,” filling in for Abbott in the waist.

Colonel Hunter Was Restrained

DeLancey made it as far as the end of the runway, where he sat down with knees drawn up, arms crossed and head down. The ordeal was over, and now the drama was beginning a mental re-play.

Then a strange scene took place.

Group CO Col. Frank P. Hunter had arrived after viewing the landing from the tower and was about to approach deLancey. He was physically restrained by flight surgeon Dr. Robert Sweet.

“Colonel, that young man doesn't want to talk now. When he is ready you can talk to him, but for now leave him alone.”

Sweet handed pills out to each crew member and told them to go to their huts and sleep.

No dramatics, no cameras, no interviews. Hardly anything like it might have been had this happened in 1987! The crew would depart the next day for “flak leave” to shake off the stress. And then be expected back early in November. (Just in time to resume “normal” activities on a mission to Merseburg!)

Mission No. 98 from Nuthampstead had begun at 0400 that morning of October 15, 1944. It would be Cologne (again), led by CA pilots Robert Templeman of the 602nd, Frank Schofield of the 601st and Charles Khourie of the 603rd.

Tragedy and death appeared quickly and early that day. Templeman and pilot Bill Scott got the 602nd off at the scheduled 0630 hour, but at approximately 0645 Khourie and pilot W.C. Meyran and their entire crew crashed on takeoff in the town of Anstey. All were killed. Schofield and Harold Stallcup followed successfully with the 601st, with deLancey flying on their left wing in the lead element.

The ride to the target was routine, until the flak started becoming “unroutinely” accurate.



UNBELIEVABLE

It was difficult to imagine that this B-17 actually flew from Cologne to Nuthampstead after taking a direct hit from a German 88.

“We were going through heavy flak on the bomb run,” remembered deLancey, who with Stahlman, Ruckel, Lachman and Albro contributed to the mission research.

“I felt the plane begin to lift as the bombs were dropped, then all of a sudden we were rocked by a violent explosion. My first thought — ‘a bomb exploded in the bomb bay’ — was immediately discarded as the top of the nose section peeled back over the cockpit blocking the forward view.”

“It seemed like the whole world exploded in front of us,” added Stahlman. “The instrument panel all but disintegrated and layers of quilted batting exploded in a million pieces. It was like a momentary snowstorm in the cockpit.”

It had been a direct hit in the nose. Killed instantly was the togglier, Abbott. Navigator LeDoux, only three feet behind Abbott, was knocked unconscious for a moment, but miraculously was alive.

Although stunned and bleeding, LeDoux made his way to the cockpit to find the two pilots struggling to maintain control of an airplane that by all rights should have been in its death plunge. LeDoux said there was nothing anyone could do for Abbott, while Ruckel opened the door to the bomb bay and

Landing Made By “Guess And Feel”

signaled to the four crewmen in the radio room that all was OK — for the time being.

The blast had torn away the top and much of the sides of the nose, depositing enough of the metal on the windshield to make it difficult for either of the pilots to see.

“The instrument panel was torn loose and all the flight instruments were inoperative with the exception of the magnetic compass mounted in the panel above the windshield. And its accuracy was questionable. The radio and intercom were gone, the oxygen lines broken, and there was a ruptured hydraulic line under my rudder pedals,” said deLancey.

All this complicated by the sub-zero temperature at 27,000 feet blasting into the cockpit.

“It was apparent that the damage was severe enough that we could not continue to fly in formation or at high altitude. My first concern was to avoid the other aircraft in the formation, and to get clear of the other planes in case we had to bail out.

“We eased out of formation, and at the same time removed our oxygen masks as they were collapsing on our faces as the tanks were empty.”

At this point the formation continued on its

Cockpit Was Breezy At 27,000 Feet

prescribed course for home — a long, slow turn southeast of Cologne and finally westward.

DeLancey and Stahlman turned left, descending rapidly and hoping, they were heading west. (And also, not into the gun sights of German fighters.) Without maps and navigation aids, they had difficulty getting a fix. By this time they were down to 2,000 feet.

“We finally agreed that we were over Belgium and were flying in a southwesternly direction,” said the pilot.

“About this time a pair of P-51's showed up and flew a loose formation on us across Belgium. I often wondered what they thought as they looked at the mess up front.

“We hit the coast right along the Belgium-Holland border, a bit farther north than we had

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FLIGHT FORMATIONS TO COLOGNE, OCT. 15, 1944

LEAD SQUADRON 602		HIGH SQUADRON 603		LOW SQUADRON 601	
TEMPLEMAN Scott		KHOURIE Meyran		SCHOFIELD Stallcup	
Rusk	Hall	Buzza	Stockman	DeLancey	Marias
Boehme	Griffin	Moore	Lehner	Campbell	McCarty
Sheffer	Erlor	Connolly	Zimmerman	Tarr	Johnson
				Powell	Hyndman
				Rolfe	Sitler
					Curtis
					Blackwell
					Newman
	Hancock		Sheeley		Rogers
	VanOpdorp	Farmer	Stevens	Wismer	Taylor
					Morrison



Today's History Lesson And Memory Jogger

For the 398th members returning to England, either on their own or on a group-sponsored tour, they will find a familiar landmark in the town of Barley. In 1944 it was known as the Wagon & Horses and more than a few thirsty ones found it via the back road that cut across the back of the air field. The pub and hostelry is now known as the Fox & Hounds and is

quite famous for the sign that runs across the road showing the hounds chasing the fox. The old Fox and Hounds on High Street burned in 1953, and later the name and the overhead sign moved to the present location. Thanks to Barry and Elaine Taylor for the history and to Boyce Needham for the old photo.

BY MALCOLM (OZZIE) OSBORN Nuthampstead Airfield Research Society

The idea of a memorial to the 398th Bombardment Group (H) had been uppermost in the minds of Vic Jenkins and myself for a number of years.

I remember one hot sunny day when Vic and I paid one of our regular visits to the base, and of course stopped at our favourite pub, the Woodman Inn. Afterwards, a drive onto the old main runway.

Skylarks were hovering on the wing with their melodic song piercing the humid air, disturbed in sound only by the buzz of a passing insect flying a mission of some sorts.

We discussed the idea of persuading the 398th to come over to England for their own reunion. Pipedreams, perhaps, but the more we thought about it the more determined we became. We had already played hosts to those members who came over with the 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion, and remembered the feeling of sadness after they had returned home.

We recalled the way in which the local landowners had opened their homes to our visitors, and how we all had enjoyed the fellowship and friendship during those three days.

We expanded our ideas to encompass the possibility of erecting a memorial to the 398th, something that would convey all of our feelings about . . . and in memory of . . . all those young airmen who took to the sky from Nuthampstead, set course for the enemy's country, and failed to return.

Those brave men died in the wreckage of their aircraft scattered over a foreign soil. Their sacrifice should never be forgotten. A memorial would help achieve this goal.

I wrote a newsletter for distribution at the 8th Air Force Historical Society's reunion in the United States. I tried to plant a seed that hopefully would germinate into a decision to

make a group trip back to Nuthampstead. And further, to subscribe to a memorial to be erected on or near the old base.

Herman Hager had submitted a plan for a stained glass memorial window for the church at Anstey, where a 603rd crew had crashed on take off on Oct. 15, 1944. This proved to be too costly, so we asked for other ideas.

Ed Arbuthnot, a mechanical engineer and former navigator for the 601st, responded with a wonderful B-17 curved tail design. It was accepted by the officers and Hager became the memorial chairman.

With a plan in hand, I started looking around for a suitable company to undertake the construction. Whilst the design was simple in concept, it proved somewhat complex in construction. We contacted all the available companies over here, with the same result. Estimates were all beyond our resources.

Vic and I made more visits to the Woodman Inn, and during one of these trips discussed at length where our proposed memorial should be placed. If, in fact, it was ever built.

We called a meeting of the local landowners and many of them offered possible sites. Finally, we decided on the area across from the Woodman Inn. It was donated by Robert Dimsdale.

And then a major decision. After conferring with a firm of stone masons at Bishops Stortford the decision was made to completely redesign the whole memorial.

After many hours of sketching, Vic and I finally completed the new design and the next day passed them on to a professional draughtsman to review. All this went well, but only to be interrupted by some distressing news.

Herman Hager had died suddenly.

This man had worked unceasingly in the U.S. to raise money for this memorial, to be the

leader of the project which now seemed would be successfully completed.

I had promised him that one day he and I would stand together by the memorial and shake hands after the unveiling. Now he was gone. He would never see the new design.

But surely Herman would have urged us to carry on without hesitation, so we proceeded with a new and grim resolve.

Vic had the drawings made and copies were hurriedly sent to the new memorial chairman, Dick Frazier. And we waited with bated breath for the committee's approval. Very soon we had the green light. "GO!"

Now we got down to the task of negotiating with the stone mason. We obtained forms for applying to build the memorial from the local Planning Authority. There were meetings with Robert Dimsdale, and meetings with the contractor who would install the foundation, the stairs and walkway around the memorial. The frequency of letters and telephone calls increased daily. I was also in touch with Chuck Dryer, living in Norway, as he started to correlate all the information that he had gathered to produce a map of our old base, plus information on the Madingly American Cemetery near Cambridge and the Duxford Imperial War Museum.

Finally, everything came together. The memorial was dedicated at Nuthampstead on Tuesday, Sept. 21, 1982. It was attended by 66 members of the 398th and some 300 English friends and neighbors.

For years to come people will stop and look on the plaques and will know and appreciate all those who served at the Army Air Corps Station 131, Nuthampstead, Hertfordshire, England.

And I will remember to say:

"Herman, old buddy, we finally made it."

News Via Letters To The Editor

"I am submitting a new membership for Norm Markel, who was with me on the Colville crew of the 602nd. The last time I saw him was when our plane blew up over Pilzen, Czechoslovakia 42 years ago. We finally got together and what a night! Hic! Whoopee! So I am buying his first year's membership. I also gave him my 602 cap, so please send me another."

Harry Overbaugh
Sellersville, PA 18960

"I notice you have a video tape available called 'The Last Mission.' This happens to be the title of a book I wrote some years ago, a novel based on my experiences on the Ferguson crew when we were shot down over Pilzen on April 25, 1945."

Harry Mazur
Jamesville, N.Y. 13078

EDITOR'S NOTE: These were notes from two crew members on the last two 398th planes shot down before VE Day. This story will be told in an upcoming issue of FLAK NEWS.

"My wife and I went back to England a few years ago to see the old base, the memorial and the Woodman Inn. Sure brought back some memories. Enclosed is a new address for my buddy Sam Hoekstra. Thanks for the great newsletter."

Rudolph E. Unkel, Jr.
North Merrick, N.Y. 11566

"My photo coverage of Col. Hunter were routine assignments, but I would add that he was a photographer's dream to cover. He was always cooperative and never failed to thank me. At one time I had a photo of Col. Hunter's plane going down, taken by someone else. But I was not satisfied it was his plane, and also did not want to remember Col. Hunter this way so I destroyed it."

Boyce Needham
Nashville, TN 37920

"Thanks for the fine job you are doing on FLAK NEWS. You are getting many of us stirred up. I will be coming to San Antonio along with a couple of other Californians, Jean Miller and Bob Templeman, and maybe Dr. Bob Kelly. We are looking forward to seeing Mrs. Hunter again after these many years."

Col. E. Bruce Dailey
Sacramento, CA 95864

"Please do not ask me to come to San Antonio for the reunion. Art died last January of a heart attack. His last request was to have a Prisoner of War autopsy done — to help other living PW's. We met in San Antonio and the place holds too many wonderful memories. I pray you will have the best reunion you ever had. And please accept this \$50.00 for a lifetime membership. I know Art would have wanted this."

Mrs. Edna Waaramaa
Livingston, CA 95334

"Thank you for sending me your Merseburg story on the Nov. 21 mission. Reading the whole story for the first time after all these years was really mind-boggling. The Missing Air Crew Report has been most enlightening, especially to my family. My son can't get over that all this actually happened to his dad. Thank you."

Jack Madlung
Monticello, IN 47960

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jack was a waist gunner on the Ken Buzza lead crew that was shot down that day, the squadron losing six aircraft and 20 men. Jack reported that Buzza died a few years ago in Florida. The Merseburg mission story will be run in FLAK NEWS some time in the future, complete with formation listings and names of all personnel.

"I finally made a decision as to what to do with my 398th mementos. My A-2 jacket, oxygen mask, wings, blouse and decorations have gone to the National War Planes Museum in Geneseo, N.Y. They were pleased to have these things to go with the restored B-17, 'Fuddy Duddy,' at the museum."

Bill Hineman
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086

"Enclosed please find my \$5.00 registration fee and \$5.00 for FLAK NEWS. I was with the 100th Bomb Group, but you folks from the 398th adopted me at the B-17 celebration in Seattle in 1985 when my 100th did not attend. Please keep me on your mailing list."

Joseph C. Allen
Nampa, ID 83651

"In response to the query about 'Georgia Cracker' in the last issue of FLAK NEWS, I can report that our crew was shot down over Hamburg in this airplane on June 18, 1944. We had a burst of flak between engines three and four. We crash-landed about 20 miles south of Hamburg.

"Ours was one of the four original 'model crews' at Rapid City, our pilot being Willard Hadjes. I was the engineer. We flew a B-17 called 'Tailwind' to England, but in that it was not ready for combat for some reason we were assigned 'Georgia Cracker' for our first mission. It also was the first 398th plane to go into combat for the 398th. I have no idea of where the name actually came from.

"I would enjoy hearing from the rest of my crew as I have lost contact with them over the years.

"By the way, I met Leo Killen briefly at prison camp in Wetzlar, Germany, after which I went to Stalag Luft IV."

John B. Lindsay
Sarasota, FL 33583

"My son turned my name in at your reunion at Colorado Springs, but I must admit I was with the 91st from Bassingbourn, not from your group. However, if you don't mind, here is a \$15.00 check for membership and FLAK NEWS."

Arthur Bunger
Rochelle, IL

"We recently located Nunzio Addabbo in Santa Maria, California. He was the last of the living members of the Sam Palant crew of the 601st. Now we will hold our first-ever crew reunion this August in Rockford, IL. This was the hometown of our co-pilot, Ted Kline, who was killed on the "RDX" mission April 13, 1945 while flying with another crew. Ted's widow Katherine and daughter Lana will be with us. The crew and Kline family recently initiated a program to decorate Ted's grave at the Ardennes cemetery in Belgium."

Paul Brown
Burnsville, MN 55337

EDITOR'S NOTE: Congratulations on the "birdogging" job on Addabbo. However, you neglected to inform the 398th contact officer with Addabbo's address. All newly-found "lost souls" should go to George Hilliard, Cincinnati, OH 45236.

"Many thanks for your assistance in locating my old buddy, Eddie Edwards. You can imagine my feelings the other night when I answered the phone and was greeted by, 'WAIST GUNNER TO RADIO'. . . it was my old buddy from our Mark Turner crew."

Al Bissin
Santa Maria, CA 93454

"Just a short note to comment on the exceptional handling of the 398th treasurer's job by Ralph Hall. As a Board member I appreciate his work and dedication and trust others feel the same way.

"I am still fighting my battle with cancer and at present I am not winning. I have used up options I and II and am now starting option III (cobalt radiation). Perhaps I can't win them all, but this is an important one."

Chuck Dreyer
Katy, TX 77450

"Thank you for shipping the video film, 'All The Fine Young Men.' Actually, I bought it for the benefit of my family, so we can all remember 'Grandfather,' — my Dad, Arthur E. Rose. He was the radio operator on Crew 25 of the 601st, piloted by Bruce Binger. I am sorry to say Dad passed away in 1981. I have talked to both Bruce and the tail-gunner, Clifford Sillin. It is really interesting to talk to people who went through everything with Dad. Well, the kids are home now and I am going to plug in the film."

Byron Rose
Knightsstown, IN 46148

DFC For LeDoux / Abbott Paid It All

estimated. Ray said we were just south of Walcheren Island."

Still in an area of ground fighting, the plane received some small arms fire. This gesture was returned in kind by Albro, shooting from one of the waist guns.

"We might have tried for one of the airfields in France, but having no maps this also was questionable. Besides, the controls and engines seemed to be OK, so I made the decision to try for home.

"Once over England, LeDoux soon picked up landmarks and gave me course corrections taking us directly to Nuthampstead. It was just a great bit of navigation. Ray just stood there on the flight deck and gave us the headings from memory."

Nearing the field, Stahlman let the landing gear down. That was an assurance. But a check of the hydraulic pump sent another spray of oil to the cockpit floor. Probably no brakes!

Nevertheless, a flare from Ruckel's pistol had to announce the "ready or not" landing. No "downwind leg" and "final approach" this time. Straight in!

"The landing was strictly by guess and feel," said deLancey. "Without instruments, I suspect I came in a little hot. Also, I had to lean to the left to see straight ahead. The landing was satisfactory, and I had sufficient braking to slow the plane down some. However, as I neared the taxi-way, I could feel the brakes getting 'soft.' I felt that losing control and blocking the taxi-way would cause more problems than leaving the plane at the end of the runway."

That consideration was for the rest of the group. Soon three squadrons of B-17's would be returning, and they didn't need a derelict airplane blocking the way to their respective hardstands.

Stahlman, supremely thankful that his career with the 398th had come to an end, soon returned home and in due course became a captain with Eastern Air Lines. Retired in 1984, Stahlman said his final Eastern flight "was a bit more routine" than the one 40 years before.

DeLancey and LeDoux received decorations on December 11, 1944 for their parts in the October 15 drama. DeLancey was awarded the Silver Star for his "miraculous feat of flying skill and ability" on behalf of General Doolittle, CO of the Eighth Air Force.

LeDoux, for his "extraordinary navigation skill," received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

DeLancey returned to his native Northwest and picked up a degree in aeronautical engineering from Oregon State University, then joined the Naval Weapons Center in California. He retired as program manager for the Shrike Missile.

LeDoux also found his way back to the Northwest, settling in the quiet town of Woodburn, Oregon and a service position with a Chevrolet agency.

Ruckel lives in Conoga Park, California and Lachman in Ipswich, Mass. Whereabouts unknown include Guild, who came from the Bronx, N.Y. and Reed, from Shelby, Mich.



RAY LEDOUX

GEORGE ABBOTT

Did It Fly, Again?

A number of inquiries were made to determine if B-17 #43-38172 P actually flew combat again. Crew chief Francis Issenmann of Dayton, OH said, "I don't know what happened to it after it left our base." Fred Lang of Macungie, PA, said "it was sent to a major depot for repairs and it was replaced with a new B-17G. I do not recall that the ship ever returned to the 398th."

Another 601 crew chief, Dick Schmidt of Whiting, NJ, said he has seen photos of the plane at the Dayton and Washington, D.C. air museums, but cannot recall that it ever flew again for the 398th. "My own plane was a beat-up B-17 named 'Maxine.' It had over 60 missions by that time and it was all I had to do to keep it flying." Another letter came from Mrs. Jack Brady of Danville, IL, saying that her husband, 601 flight chief, had passed away last year.

"Bomb Run" Cities on Proposed 398th Tour Next Year

The pieces for putting together a 398th group tour to England next year are beginning to fall into place. Your officers and Galaxy Tours are now doing preliminary planning, and expect to have a reasonably firm tour package ready for the San Antonio reunion July 22-25 in San Antonio.

The tour definitely will include London, Nuthampstead, Cambridge and other East Anglia sites special to the 8th Air Force. Consideration also is being given to a post tour to Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg, to include many of the 398th "bomb run" cities like Cologne, and other Rhine-Moselle cities. (This time to include a pleasant boat trip and wine tour.) A visit to the American cemetery at Ardennes also is on the ticket. This is where Col. Frank P. Hunter and many other 398th flyers are buried.

All America 398th; California Is No. 1

Did you ever wonder where all our 398th members come from? What state ranks first in membership? How many states are represented?

Well, guess no more! A tabulation was made at our last FLAK NEWS mailing and the results are in. It appears our Memorial Association is truly All-American. Every state, all 50 of them, plus Washington D.C. are represented in our latest count of 1,139. (And we continue to grow since that figure surfaced.)

California is No. 1 among our membership, that Pacific Coast state being called "home" by no less than 127 members. Texas is next with 79, followed by Florida with 76.

But with such an impressive number coming from the many collective Atlantic states, it is no wonder that the 1988 reunion has been slated for Richmond, Virginia. Those dates are Sept. 21-24, 1988.

No decision has been reached as to the 1989 site. Following is the state tabulation:

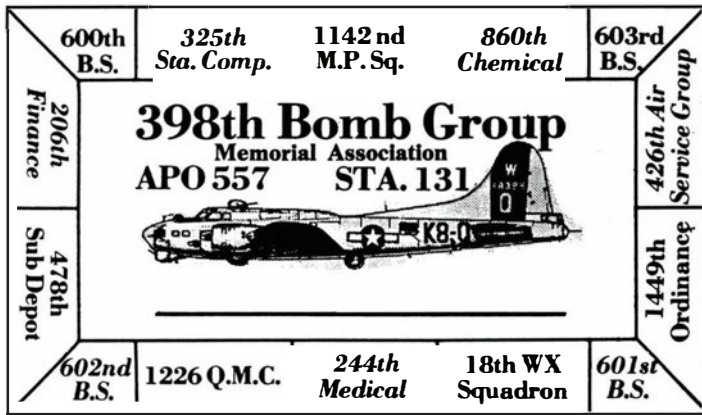
California	127	Connecticut	15
Texas	79	Louisiana	14
Florida	76	Kentucky	12
New York	68	Oklahoma	12
Pennsylvania	59	Georgia	12
Ohio	59	Tennessee	11
Illinois	48	Arkansas	9
Washington	38	So. Carolina	8
New Jersey	34	Idaho	8
Minnesota	30	Montana	7
Iowa	28	Alabama	7
Indiana	25	New Hampshire	7
Michigan	25	So. Dakota	5
Oregon	25	Alaska	4
No. Carolina	25	Utah	4
Colorado	25	Nevada	4
Missouri	24	W. Virginia	4
Wisconsin	23	Hawaii	3
Massachusetts	22	Mississippi	3
Virginia	21	No. Dakota	3
Arizona	19	Vermont	2
Kansas	18	Maine	1
New Mexico	18	Delaware	1
Maryland	17	Wyoming	1
Nebraska	15	Rhode Island	1
		Washington D.C.	1

398th Members Busy At 8th AF Tuscon Reunion

Arizona boasts one of the most active chapters of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, thanks to several members of the 398th.

No less than 80 members were attracted to the group's annual reunion at Davis-Monthan Field in Tuscon to hear Arizona governor Evan Mecham. The governor, a former fighter pilot and a WW II air victim of a German ME 262 jet, pledged that his state "will have a strong military presence."

The reunion was headed up by our own Tom & Jean Overturf, Tom Stitz and Clyde Sebastian. Others attending included Carl & Jeane Stanley, Jerry Fields and Irwin Riley.



Seven B-17's Fly In Honor Of "Star" Memphis Belle

The Memphis Belle of the 91st at Bassingbourn was the first B-17 to complete 25 missions for the 8th Air Force. That was 44 years ago and today she is the second oldest Fortress known to be "alive" someplace in the world. The old F-Model carries a U.S. Army Air Force serial number of 41-24485.

In mid-May, the Belle was honored by thousands of B-17 friends who attended the dedication of her new, permanent pavilion home at Mud Island in Memphis, Tennessee.

Following the dedication, which also was attended by six of the Memphis Belle's crew, an additional 35,000 fans witnessed the formation flying of seven B-17's, the largest gathering of Flying Fortresses since WW II.

Not a bad turnout, considering there are only about 10 B-17's still in flying condition. About 25 others, including the Belle and the venerable Swoose, are in museums in various parts of the world.

The well-known "Sentimental Journey," the most completely refurbished of them all, carrying the Confederate Air Force colors, did not appear in Memphis due to a long-standing commitment on the West Coast.

And the two other flying B-17's had engine difficulties and were not able to appear. So there MIGHT have been 10!

Among the very few 17's still flying in overseas locations include the Sally B, stationed at the Imperial Air Museum at Duxford, England. This is the plane that did a fly-over during the dedication of the memorial at Nuthampstead in 1982.

Following are the seven who flew formation in Memphis at the Memphis Belle ceremony:

NAME	CITY	OWNER	MARKINGS
Chuckie	Fort Worth, TX	Dr. Bill Hospers	486th
Aluminum Overcast	Oshkosh, WI	EEA Museum	1st Div.
Texas Raiders	Houston, TX	Confederate AF	381st
Fuddy Duddy	Geneseo, NY	Nat'l War Plane Mus.	447th
"909"	Stowe, MA	Bob Collings	94th
(No name)	Anaheim, CA	Dave Talliche	100th
Pac. Mus. of Flight	Seattle, WA	Bob Richardson	None

ON TO SAN ANTONIO!

The fourth annual 398th reunion will be held Wednesday-Saturday, July 22-25 at the Marriott Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio, Texas.

A one-day post-reunion trip to visit the Confederate Air Force Museum in Harlingen, Texas, also is planned for Sunday, July 26.

Registration forms appeared in the May issue of FLAK NEWS.

Additional information is available from reunion chairpersons Dallas and Geneva Ebest, San Antonio, TX 78216. Or contact your FLAK NEWS editor, Allen Ostrom, Seattle, WA 98177.

398th BOMB GROUP FLAK NEWS

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