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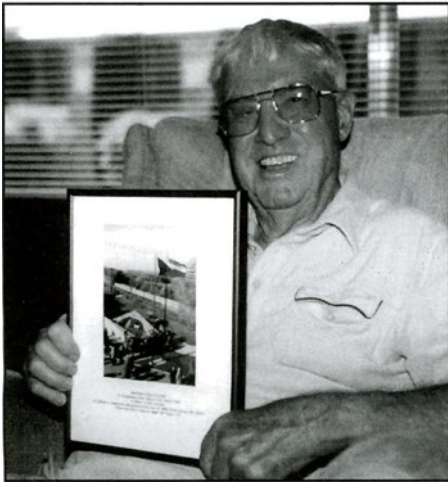
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398th BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION • 8th AIR FORCE • 1st AIR DIVISION • NUTHAMPSTEAD, ENGLAND

VOL. 15 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 2000



SELMER HAAKENSON

## Gunner Had A Day To Remember

Selmer Haakenson was greeted with a big box full of "stuff" sent by people he never knew or saw from the Czech Republic.

"Why me?" he asked. "I didn't do anything."

The deliverer of the "stuff," FLAK NEWS editor Allen Ostrom and wife Geg, had driven from Seattle, Washington to Haakenson's home in Sacramento, CA to carry out a delivery promise made to several people in Slany, Czech Republic while with the Year 2000 Tour last June.

The Czech folks had hoped Selmer and his wife, Jenny, would be in Slany to receive these items, but they were unable to journey there because of ill health. Hence, the surrogate recipient and deliverer.

The "I didn't do anything" comment was met with -

"Selmer, as a tail gunner on the 603 Christensen crew you engaged a flight

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**WELL DONE** - President Wally Blackwell presented Marilyn Gibb (center) and her mother, Dorothy Crouch, with a 1984 vintage photo of the memorial at Nuthampstead for Marilyn's work as Savannah reunion chairman, and for Dorothy's assistance on registration. The photo was taken by David Wells and presented to the 398th at the 1984 reunion in Rapid City.

### **"Last Gem In 398th Memory Crown"**

# 480 AT SAVANNAH

The 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association is not ready to "pack it in," as some groups have done. Witness the 480 who registered for the 17th annual reunion September 20-23, 2000 in Savannah, GA.

It was not a record turnout; that still belongs to Nashville, 1992, at 582. But, considering the longer shadows being cast by the members these days, the 480 number was outstanding.

The big draw at Savannah was not exactly the weather... hot, humid, rainy... but rather the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum and the dedication of the 398th memorial.

The year-long campaign to raise funds for this replica of the memorial at

Nuthampstead was a rousing success, as was the dedication on September 22, 2000.

President Wally Blackwell told the huge gathering at the museum's Rotunda, "we now come to the last gem in the 398th memory crown, adding to our Station 131 memorial and our "personal" B-17, the Aluminum Overcast that carries our group's colors.

"We owe much to those who carried on before us in the building of the England memorial, men like Ozzie Osborn, Vic Jenkins, Chuck Dreyer and Herman Hager.

"And to Hal Weekley, who steered the way for us to become associated with the

*Continued on Page 3*

# 398TH BUSINESS NEWS:

## Heartwarming Fund Appeal

BY WALLY BLACKWELL

President, 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

The response to my alert in the last FLAK NEWS that the 398th was short of the operating funds to fully support the Association in the future was truly heartwarming, but also a bit on the sad side.

A letter was also sent to about 525 398th veterans that had never paid, or were seriously delinquent in annual dues.

Only about one fourth of those responded with payments, but with additional contributions from our faithful regular and life members we received more that \$13,000.

We are all sincerely thankful for that generous group, and I personally thank each one of them. We had two donations of \$1000 each, one of which was from a daughter in memory of her father. What those serious and concerned members have done is much appreciated by all of our dues paying membership.

The 398th General Membership Meeting at the Savannah Reunion approved an annual dues increase to \$20, coupled with the required action that we start removing the many non-paying dues "members" from the FLAK NEWS mailing list beginning February 1, 2001. These actions seem very fair, and should begin to reduce costs and bring our operating funds back to responsible levels for the near future.

## Call For 398th Dues Going Out West

The opportunity to contribute to the 398th financial coffers extends to the members on the West Coast this time, plus those living in Alaska and Hawaii.

So now it is "support" time for Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Colorado and Wyoming (plus Alaska and Hawaii). Dues are \$20 per year or \$100 lifetime.

Individual support for the 398th may be sent by anyone at any time to Dues Manager Jim Haas, Perry, IA 50220-0163.



## PHOTO OF ANSTEY WINDOW GOES TO 8TH MUSEUM

The striking picture of the Anstey stained glass window that hung on the wall behind the stage at the Savannah reunion banquets was given to the 398th by the Friends of the 398th in England.

(It appears behind singer Susanne Fosbrooke on page 4).

It is actually a photographic roll-up special canvas created by Kodak that creates a "printerly" quality. It was produced by Photobition, Washington, DC.

The picture measures about 4x8 feet, and has already been presented to the Mighty 8th Heritage Museum by president Wally Blackwell.

"The Museum was delighted to receive it," said Wally, who turned it over to the Museum's chief historian, Rusty Bloxom, at the conclusion of the reunion.

While there is only one such print of this size, exact duplicates measuring 15x18 inches are available for \$40.00, which includes shipping.

Send your order to Photobition, Washington DC, 4390 Parliament Place, Lanham, MD 20706. Or call Jason Blecher, (301) 459-4500, Ext. 21.

(For the benefit of the technicals, the Anstey print was created on a brand-new Kodak inkjet at a 600 dot per inch resolution. It detracts from the jagged pixelization which is inherent in digital imaging.)

Over and out.

## "It's Absolutely Beautiful"

As promised, the Friends of the 398th in England have come forth with a VHS video covering the entire service of the Anstey Memorial Window dedication.

This took place on Sunday, June 11, 2000.

"And it's absolutely beautiful," according to Joe Joseph, who has placed the 1 hour, 10 minute video on sale in the 398th PX. The price is \$10.00 plus shipping costs (see the PX order form on page 11).

The entire service was covered by several video cameras which caught the inspiring messages of the Duke of Gloucester; the Bishop of St. Albans; Rev. Gerald Drew; Sir Roger DuBoulay; and window architect Patrick Reyntiens.

Also captured was the men's 398th choir under the leadership of Dick Frazier, and the message from the late chaplain, Rev. James Duvall. Plus the pageantry of the Royston Band and choirs. It's a good one!

## Looking Ahead

The 398th has "spread the field" with reunion sites since the first meeting in Rapid City in 1984, ending with last month's 2000 meeting in Savannah, GA.

The membership has indicated no desire to "close down," as some groups have already done, so plans are already under way for the reunion in St. Paul, MN October 3-4-5-6, 2001.

The meeting will be held in the Radisson City Center Hotel.

And yes, the Board's site selection committee is checking out prospective reunion sites for 2002!

## Chairman Needed

The lines are out for a volunteer to be Reunion Chairman at the 2001 St. Paul reunion (ala Marilyn Gibb at Savannah, GA). Call Allen Ostrom.



COL. LEWIS ENSIGN

# ENSIGN, LOWE PASS AWAY

Col. Lewis Ensign, who took over command of the 398th Bomb Group after Col. Frank P. Hunter, Jr., was shot down and killed on January 23, 1945, passed away August 17, 2000 in San Antonio, TX.

Col. Ensign came to Station 131 from the 1st Combat Wing headquarters at Bassingbroune, where he served as Wing Operations Officer. The 1st Combat Wing included the 398th at Nuthampstead, 91st at Bassingbourne and 381st at Ridgewell.

Major General Jessup (Dave) Lowe, who served as a flight leader for Bill Markley's 600th Squadron, also passed away at his home in Tennessee.

Lowe, one of the several West Pointers with the 398th, flew 23 missions as a captain before transferring to London to serve on the 8th Air Force's bomb assessment staff. He went on to many other assignments before retiring as a major general.



THE 398TH MEMORIAL AT THE MIGHTY 8TH MUSEUM

(Continued from Page 1)

EAA and the 'Overcast.

"And just this past summer we dedicated another gem in the crown, the beautiful stained glass Memorial Window at Anstey, for which we are indebted to Sir Roger DuBoulay, Wilfrid Dimsdale and our many UK Friends, including Barry Tyler, who is here today to help us unveil this beautiful monument.

"We are grateful to Lou Stoffer, who carried through with a highly successful funding campaign. And to 603 Navigator Roy Hussey of Savannah, who helped get the project underway and who didn't live to its completion."

New museum president C.T. Roberts, experiencing his first week on the job, welcomed the 398th by announcing that it was the second largest group to visit the Mighty Eighth.

Jim Fogarty, the monument builder, told of the history of the two kinds of stone used in the monument, noting that the black marble on the top side came from Africa and dates back some 80 million years. The lower white marble came from Georgia.

Once outside at the memorial site, Blackwell asked Tyler to assist in the unveiling, along with Evelyn Comstock, Dallas Ebest, Lou Stoffer, Dorothy Crouch and George Hilliard.

"And now, we remember the 293 men who gave their lives while serving with the 398th at Station 131, and also the 1,000 or more of our comrades whose names are recorded on the Taps list.

"We were all as one in our commitment to do our duty in a brave and courageous way. To that purpose, we dedicate this monument."

The four day event was not all Mighty Eighth, however; witness the many tours arranged to view the city of Savannah (between showers left over from Hurricane Gordon). Also, a half-dozen golfers



Photos By Randy Stange

braved the weather the first two days. The third day was called off due to a deluge the evening before.

The two banquets at the Marriott Riverfront Hotel saw "our own" starring as the entertainment (plus another "our own" visitor from London whose contribution is recorded on Page 4).

Dick Frazier called in the Mens Choir for "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Home on the Range." The Ladies Choir contributed "America" and "Don't Sit

Continued on Page 5

# BIG GIFT HONORS PETSKA, 602 PILOT

"I want you to be assured that the children of the men and women who fought in and won World War II are grateful and do not take lightly what was done that we can live in freedom.

"Also, my wife, Sherry, and her mother, Margot, think the world of the 398th and all that you represent."

These quotes from George Middlemas of Chicago, the husband of Sherry and himself the son of a 15th Air Force airman, from a letter addressed to 398th president Wally Blackwell.

All that to say that George Middlemas and his wife, Sherry (daughter of Al Petska) have funded, with over \$150,000, the Albert M. Petska Endowment at Penn State University in order to house and preserve 8th Air Force archives from World War II.

Plus a gift of \$1,000 to the 398th.

The Penn State connection with the 8th Air Force has been in existence for many years, well before the Mighty 8th Heritage Museum in Savannah, where the 398th visited during the reunion last month.

The Albert M. Petska Endowment Fund is in memory of 602 Squadron pilot Al Petska, who flew 35 missions with the likes of such names as Rooney, Comstock, Boswell, Leukhardt, Doerr,

Erler, McCormick, Beam, Hall, Van Opdorp, Andrako, Griffin, Payne, Shaffer, Hershberger and others.

Petska came to the 398th via a circuitous route that first took him to England in 1942, then to North Africa as a B-17 engineer-gunner, back to England, then to the US for Air Corps pilot training, finishing up at Rapid City before heading for Station 131 in 1944.

During his tenure in North Africa he earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart. Back in England briefly, he resumed his romance with an English girl (Margo) from Cheshire, whom he later married when he returned as a 602 Squadron pilot. Petska died in 1993.

George & Sherry Middlemas are "committed to keeping alive the spirit and history of the 8th Air Force WWII archives," hence their endowment to the Penn State facility.

Anyone interested in contributing 398th memorabilia to this project should send to -

*Special Collections  
8th Air Force Archives  
Pattee/Paterna Library  
Penn State University  
University Park, PA 16802  
(Telephone 814-865-0401)*



**SUSANNE FOSBROOKE**

Susanne Fosbrooke of London, England, added a special musical flavor to the reunion festivities last month in Savannah.

Her first song at the Welcome Banquet stirred many a heart as she came on with "The White Cliffs of Dover," the airman's WWII view suggesting "we're almost home."

Others were "As Time Goes By," "Silver Wings in the Moonlight," "Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer," and "We'll Meet Again."

Susanne also teamed up with Joe Joseph and his daughter Linda Davis for a rendition of "Lily Marlene," the song made popular by German soldiers in North Africa. Linda was dressed in the flying suit worn by Joseph during his B-17 tour in North Africa in 1942 before joining the 398th.

Fosbrooke connected with the 398th last year when she was told by a family member that her father was not an RAF airman killed in action, but rather a member of the 398th at Nuthampstead. Her search ended upon learning that he had died in 1998.

She attended the ceremonies in Nuthampstead and Anstey last June, at which time she confided in friends-

"I really feel like I belong."

## New Faces On 398th Board

Several changes in the 398th leadership were made at the annual business meeting in Savannah, GA.

Al Turney, who had been serving on the Memorial Fund committee, is now the new vice-president, replacing Ted Johnston.

Two new directors were voted in - Lew Burke and Arnold Schneider. They replaced Dick Frazier and Dale Brown, both of whom were original Board Members.

Ike Alhadeff and Bob Bowen were named to the Memorial Fund committee under chairman Ralph Hall, replacing new VP Turney and Bill McLaughlin.

The other officers are Wally Blackwell, president; Harold Stallcup, secretary; Marilyn Gibb, treasurer; Lou Stoffer and Keith Anderson, directors; George Hilliard, Unit Contact; Dallas Ebest, Historian; Joe Joseph, PX; and Allen Ostrom, Public Relations.

Burke and Schneider were both 603 copilots, Burke with Joe Alwood and Schneider with Norm Williams. Alhadeff was a 600 pilot, among the first 398th members to be shot down and sent to PW camp. Bowen was a 602 pilot.

A complete roster of all the officers will be published in the January FLAK NEWS.



**LINDA DAVIS, daughter of Joe and Rozanne Joseph, came to the Farewell Banquet dressed in the flying suit worn by Joe during his 1942 B-17 tour in North Africa.**



Photo By Randy Stange

**THE DEDICATION** – President Wally Blackwell (far right) responds to the gathering following the unveiling of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial at the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum last month in Savannah, GA. Participating in the unveiling were (left to right) Barry Tyler of England; Lou Stoffer, chairman of the fund raising project; Dallas Ebest, historian; Evelyn Comstock, widow of Bill Comstock who led the 398th for 20 years; Dorothy Crouch, wife of the late Jim Crouch; and George Hilliard, 398th contact officer. It was to be the last such memorial to be placed at the Heritage Museum.

## “Another Gem In The 398th Crown”

*(Continued from Page 3)*

Under the Apple Tree.” All supported by Phyllis Rahe and her toe tappin’ organ. Phyllis also played during the dinner hour and also for the London visitor.

“Our Own” also included Sharon Krause, Nancy Cotter and Gail Fisher, three second generation women who recited Wesley Eatchel’s “A Gathering of Heroes.” Eatchel was a gunner on the Alfred Warren 603 crew.

“Our Own” also included Geoff Rice of England and Ralph Ambrose, formerly of England, who recited Tony Weston’s great poem written for the Memorial Service last June at Nuthampstead. It was called “292.”

Joe Joseph told about the products in his 398th PX, but was more interested in telling about the powerful emotions he experienced last June when he carried the American flag into St. George’s Church for the window dedication.

Paul Roderick, whose duty during Registration was to arrange proper seating assignments for the banquets (which he did beautifully) contributed a story about his fellow 602 pilot, Roy Leukhardt, whose rise to first lieutenant seemed very slow but suddenly was a captain and group lead pilot... at the age of 19.

Marilyn Gibb didn’t want any “well done” gift for her work as Reunion Chairman, but got one anyway from Wally & Teedy Blackwell.

No crystal vase for her, but rather a vintage photo taken by David Wells of the Nuthampstead memorial and delivered by him to the 1984 reunion in Rapid City.

Marilyn’s father, Jim Crouch, had been at the 1982 dedication and also at Rapid City. Both men died not long afterwards.

The photo was received by Marilyn and her mother, Dorothy Crouch.

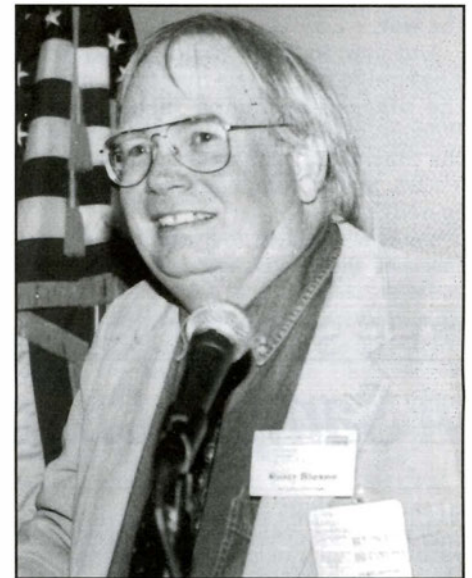
Another of “Our Guys” contributing to the celebration was Don Gaddo, author of “ANGEL: A Mighty Fortress,” a historical fiction story about a 398th crew (see Page 6).

Gaddo told a story entitled, “Grandmother’s Wish.” His closing comments were “may the 398th live forever.”

Mighty Eighth chief librarian Rusty Bloxom reminded his banquet listeners that the museum is a “work in progress” and that 398th members are most welcome to contact the museum to contribute memorabilia, artifacts, documents, books, artwork, films, etc.

(The Anstey stained glass window photo hanging behind him as he spoke, was donated to the museum two days later by president Wally Blackwell).

Members visiting the museum library saw many of the items already contributed by the 398th, including the first volume of FLAK NEWS, a copy of REMEMBRANCES and several videos and books. Also a photo of Larry deLancey’s nose blown B-17.



**RUSTY BLOXOM**  
Mighty Eighth Museum Librarian



**THE 398TH BANNER** flies from the ceiling of the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum Rotunda along with the other bomb groups who made up the 8th Air Force in WWII.

# “There is a land of the living, And a land of the dead, And the bridge is Love...”

The words of Thornton Wilder came to Don Gaddo's mind as he sat in St. George's Church, Anstey, last June and experienced the dedication of the Memorial Window, a beautiful cacophony of color bearing the names of the men who gave their lives while serving with the 398th Bomb Group in World War II.

During the previous year Gaddo had engrossed himself in writing his historical fiction book, ANGEL, A Mighty Fortress, and had become personally consumed with the principal cast of characters, members of a 602 Squadron crew. One of these was his cousin, Joseph Doglio, the navigator, a relative he had only heard of as an 11-year-old boy. Until he attended Doglio's funeral following the war.

And now, in 2000, Gaddo had come to England to see for the first time some of the places mentioned in his book – Woodman Inn, Nuthampstead, Anstey, the Station 131 runways, and others.

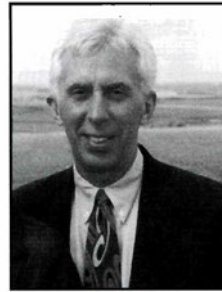
Also, to add build chapters to a sequel to ANGEL.

“As time passes, my mind recalls the faces of those who sat in St. George's

Church. I saw love in every eye, and the words of Wilder were recalled –

*“There is a land of the living, and a land of the dead, and the bridge is love.”*

The second book will bear the title, THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW. The story continues as Gaddo opens a new dimension of the ANGEL crew and what



DON GADDO

the chapters called, “The Dead and the Living: Thoughts of the War Years... and Today.”

ANGEL, A Mighty Fortress, is priced in soft cover at \$17.95 from Don Gaddo, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

affect these men will have on their families and future generations.

Perhaps even more ANGEL books will be forthcoming from the pen of Don Gaddo. But meanwhile, a sample of THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW is presented here in the form of one of

## Book-To-Movie Will Become A 398th Windfall

Don Gaddo spoke at the Farewell Banquet Saturday night in Savannah, an encore to his “greatest generation” speech of a year ago in Oklahoma City.

Yet he made no mention of an offer he had quietly issued to the 398th earlier in the week. He had to be called back to the podium to explain –

A motion picture of his book, ANGEL: A Mighty Fortress, is now in the planning stage. A movie script has been written, production dates and casting are being discussed.

*And, the 398th will receive 2% of the film's gross profits!*

“I may not appear to be excited on the outside, but inside I am quite overwhelmed at the thought of being able to contribute this to the 398th.

“You men have gained your place in American history. I just came along to tell the world about you,” he said.

President Wally Blackwell, on behalf of the Board, thanked Gaddo for his generous contribution.

## “THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW”

# A Sample Chapter From Next ANGEL Book

By Don Gaddo

Briefly, as I leave High Hall Farms, I find myself consumed with emotion. I'm looking at the old people on Wally Blackwell's bus. They are sitting together in total silence. “How long before someone speaks?” I ask myself. What graphic snapshots are being relived in their aged minds?

As I look from the window of the bus, my thoughts return to the stained glass window at St. George's Church. I visualize the names of the brave men from the 398th. The men who gave their lives for our human failures. Mostly I think of my cousin, Second Lieutenant Joseph Doglio. I ask, to no one in particular, what would his life have been had he lived? It is impossible for me to know. What I do know is that on July 19, 1944 at 0955, German time, his life on earth came to a sudden and abrupt end. From that moment on Joseph would become a memory to his family and to his many friends. A memory to Anne Howard.

But what about the living. No doubt there are people who will read this short story and recall the day a messenger brought them the sad news that their father, son, or husband had been killed in action. What was it like at that precise moment? What emotional drama played itself out in a garden, on a street corner, or on the steps of a modest home located in a small town in Anywhere, USA?

I can't imagine a mother receiving the bitter news that the son she so proudly gave birth to some twenty years earlier would not be coming home. No more hugs, no smiles, and no more, “Thanks mom, that was the greatest apple pie I ever had.”

Do the living continue to live or do they go through life knowing that the right side of their heart is forever dead? The left side of the heart continues to function while it's shattered pieces never quite mend. One might ask, who are the living and who

are the dead? Maybe the living are really the dead and the dead are really the living.

I didn't know Joseph Doglio, but I'm overwhelmed with my emotions on this day. What was it like for Aunt Kate? I can't begin to know. I'm just happy she is with him now. I'm happy Uncle Albert has been reunited with his son. As for me, well Joseph, I'm glad I came to the church in Anstey. Somehow you're alive again. You're alive in my heart and in my imagination. You'll never die, Joseph, because you see, the decent things of life never die.

So Joseph, if you, Dallas, Earl, and the Angel crew are hanging around here at Nuthampstead, then take that B-17 Flying Fortress named Angel and put her nose in the air and take her up to heaven. Joseph, take you compass, your protractor, and your charts and set a course for eternity... Soar through the clouds and into the wild blue yonder. That's it, Dallas, give her the gun. Off you go, Angel crew. Follow the navigator's instructions. He has set a course for home.

And, oh yes, Earl, as you follow the homeward course tell the crew to relax. Sit back and listen for the strains of Danny Boy as they are played by a young man and his golden saxophone. Know that the navigator is taking you to a place where the nights are full of stars; where the trees are all greener and when you arrive you will find a place where the sun is eternally brighter. When you land you will notice there are flowers of all colors, a place where there are no more bad dreams and a paradise that provides an understanding that your final destination is a place of eternal peace.

“Oh Danny Boy the pipes are calling...”



**JENNY & SELMER HAAKENSON**  
 Gifts from Czech Republic Friends



**SELMER HAAKENSON**  
 Memories From 1945 Gun Fight

# Gunner Had A Day to Remember

*(Continued from Page 1)*

of FW 190's over eastern Germany, had your B-17 cut in half by 20mm explosions, saw all eight of your comrades killed, managed to bail out just before your tail section hit the ground, lost an eye during the gun fight, and spent months in prison camp and hospitals.

"And not only that, you probably accounted for at least one FW 190 during the gun fight before you got hit. Besides your own B-17, two German fighters also crashed at Slany that day.

"No more talk about 'I didn't do anything,'" said Ostrom.

The Czechs felt so strongly about this event they built a memorial at Slany, not far from where the Christensen plane came down. It was built in 1996 and re-dedicated when the June tour group came to visit.

Among the gifts bestowed on the modest Haakenson was a photo of the memorial (Page 1), a specially crafted quart-sized ceramic pitcher painted with the lettering and marking of the 8th Air Force, tail marking of the Christensen plane and pertinent dates relating to the crash (March 2, 1945). The plane was actually hit over Germany but came to rest in what was then Czechoslovakia.

Also presented was a giant "jug," bearing Haakenson's name, dates, group and squadron marking and a large "DEJ BUH STESTI" which means "God Give You Luck."

It was presented by Milan Spineta, who directed the special Slany ceremony on behalf of the City of Slany. The jug was sponsored by the Jaromir Jagr Fan Club of Slany, which happens to be the home town of the very famous National Hockey League player with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Also given was a colorful figure called "Svejk," said to be a Czech national hero (a very agreeable soldier).

And added to all that, a specially made plaque bearing the "rate of climb" indicator from his plane's cockpit, along with a 50 cal. bullet taken from Haakenson's crashed tail section and a 20mm slug obviously contributed by one of the FW 190's. These came from Czech Jaroslav Markus of Kadan, an eye witness to the crash in 1945.

So even if the Haakensons didn't get to the Czech Republic in 2000, they still had a day to remember.

To make up for another "day to remember" in 1945.

## Reunion Item:

# Thanks To The Helping Hands

It takes many hands to keep a reunion running smoothly, as it did in Savannah.

With 480 members registered, chair Marilyn Gibb needed many helping hands...and she received these from family members Dorothy Crouch, Carolyn Wyatt and Butch Crouch, plus Wayne and Ruthanna Doerstler, Paul and Marge Roderick, Nancy Cotter and Marshall and Nancy Zinter.

Roderick supervised the table reservations for the Thursday and Saturday banquets, assuring easy access and on-time meals.

## Aluminum Overcast:

# FALL SCHEDULE

|                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Bridgeport, CT    | October 5 - 8 |
| New Bedford, MA   | October 8-12  |
| Bedford, MA       | October 12-15 |
| Portsmouth, NH    | October 15-19 |
| Portland, NE      | October 19-22 |
| Albany, NY        | October 22-26 |
| Niagara Falls, NY | October 26-30 |
| Home to Oshkosh   |               |

## **A "Bric-A-Brac" Gem: Historical Anstey Book Available**

Your FLAK NEWS editor, with an assist from Ralph Ambrose, has come into possession of a 1929 vintage book called, "Anstey, A Herfordshire Parish," written by F.R. Williams, former rector at St. George's Church.

The book was provided by W.J. Kemp, of Hare Street, Buntingford.

"I bought it at a bric-a-brac sale at Dassels, Herts, about 1950," explained Kemp, who previously had donated a WWII "air raid precaution" whistle that was subsequently turned over to the Hertfordshire Record Center along with other 398th memorabilia.

With the installation and dedication of the memorial window, adding even more history to the church's 800-year collection, the book is a "natural" for those 398th men and women who savor this intimate relationship with Anstey.

And would enjoy knowing that the parish was once rated at "5 1/2 hides and 11 1/2 plough lands, with 1 plough of meadow and pannage for 62 hogs."

Not to mention that "the population was made up of one priest, eight villanes, ten bordars, nine cottages, and seven bondmen."

This fascinating sidebar to 398th history is available for loan through the FLAK NEWS editor, Seattle, WA 98177-3165.

Eventually, it will be donated to the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah, GA.

### **Book Tells About Ephrata Airfield**

The first official assignment of the 398th Bomb Group to an Army Air Corps field in 1943 was to Ephrata, WA, even though the group as a whole never did occupy this small and slightly primitive air base.

Most of the group came to Spokane's Geiger Field, but some of the early training was at Ephrata, including the crews that were destined to become flight, squadron and group leaders.

An interesting history of this small air base has been written by a local author, Patricia Dunstan, and is available for \$15.25, postpaid. Her address is Ephrata, WA 98823-1925.

The book is called "Certain Lands South-east of Ephrata," and it includes a history of the air base from 1933 to 1999 with recollections from veterans, civilians and townspeople.

In 1996, a plaque was presented to the current operators of the field, the Port of Ephrata, commemorating the 398th's occupancy in 1943. The Ephrata story was told in FLAK NEWS Vol. 11, No. 3.



## **The Swedish Connection**

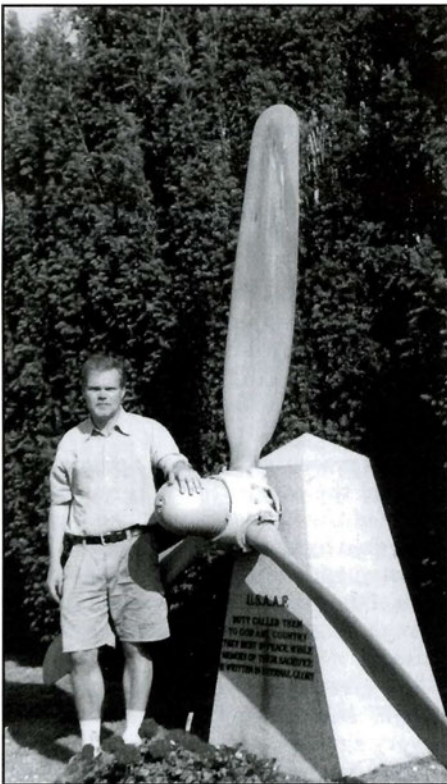
**Many 8th Air force planes landed... or at least made attempts to land... in Sweden during World War II.**

**One of those who came so close and yet so far was the B-17 from the 398th piloted by Jim Fields of the 602nd Squadron (this story was told in Vol. 14, No. 2 of FLAK NEWS).**

**Only co-pilot Lyman Cranston survived the attack of the German ME 109 fighters, one of whom invaded Swedish air space to send the Fort crashing into the Baltic only a few hundred yards off the coast at Trelleborg... and a prospective safe landing nearby.**

**Ingemar Melin, a Trelleborg resident and intense student of the WWII air war, took the FLAK NEWS editor to the crash site last June and pointed to the spot where the Fort came down, well within sight of the local residents (above photo).**

**At left, Melin poses at the American memorial at Malmo, honoring the 40 U.S. airmen killed in Sweden, including eight members of the Fields crew.**



**INGEMAR MELIN**

### **Tyler Solves UK Dues Problem**

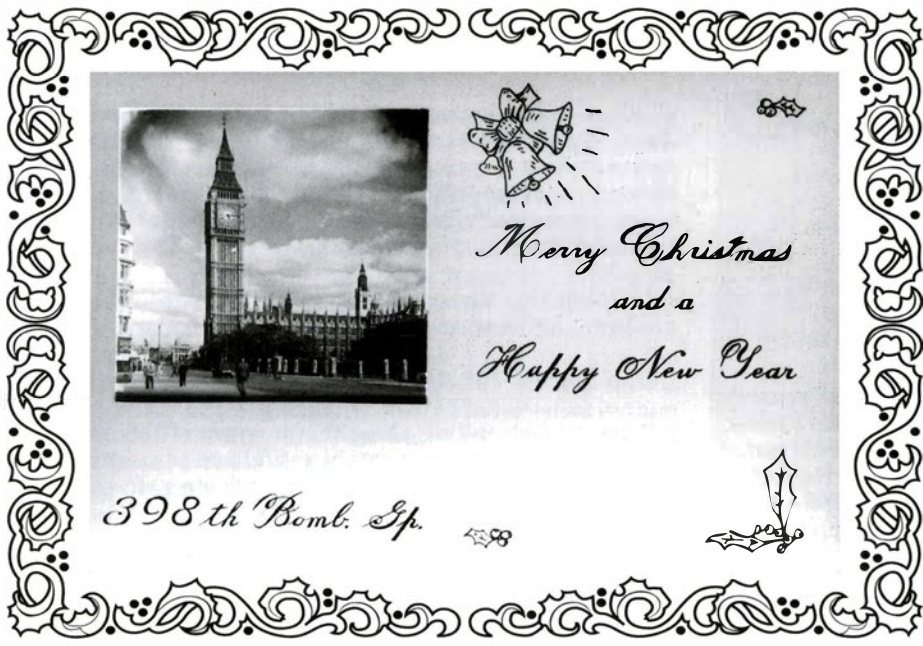
Barry Tyler has come to the rescue of his fellow English Friends who want to contribute to the 398th Dues program, but wish to avoid the Pounds-to-Dollars conversion problem.

The answer – send the £10 annual dues to Barry Tyler, Colts Foot Farm, Anstey, Buntingford, Herts, SG9 0BN, England. Tyler will take care of the conversion and make a deposit to Dues Manager Jim Haas in Iowa.

The UK Friends' opportunity to follow this program will come in the January, 2001 issue of FLAK NEWS.

Thanks, Barry.





# CHRISTMAS EVE - 1944

The door is on the latch tonight,  
The hearth fire is aglow;  
I seem to hear soft passing feet —  
The Christ Child in the snow.  
My heart is open wide tonight,  
For stranger, kith, or kin;  
I would not bar a single door  
Where love might enter in.

*Christmas services 1944, Station 131  
James T. Duvall, Chaplain*



**JOE JOSEPH**

There were many proud Yanks at the Anstey window dedication last June, especially the 398th PX manager, Joe Joseph.

Joe was selected by president Wally Blackwell to carry the American flag into St. George's Church along with a counterpart with the British Union Jack.

No stranger to this type of ceremony, Joe (and his counterpart) carried off their assignments with neatness and dispatch.

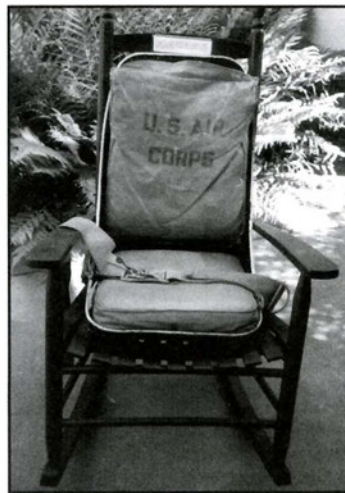
## ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

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## A Very Unusual Rocking Chair

To go with his memory of driving a B-17 before he being authorized to drive a car, Jack Lee, 603 pilot, has fashioned a rocking chair made from the very pilot's seat he occupied on many of his 35 combat missions.

Lee is vague on explaining just how he was able to purloin his old B-17 cockpit bucket, complete with cushions and seat belt, so only he offers a "you don't want to know" response. The chair may be inspected at his home in Covina, California.

# AMERICA: The Good Neighbor



*Widespread but only partial news coverage was given recently to a remarkable editorial broadcast from Toronto by Gordon Sinclair, a Canadian television commentator. What follows is the full text of his trenchant remarks as printed in the Congressional Record:*

"This Canadian thinks it is time to speak up for the Americans as the most generous and possibly the least appreciated people on all the earth. Germany, Japan and, to a lesser extent, Britain and Italy were lifted out of the debris of war by the Americans who poured in billions of dollars and forgave other billions in debts. None of those countries is today paying even the interest on its remaining debts to the United States.

When the franc was in danger of collapsing in 1956, it was the Americans who propped it up, and their reward was to be insulted and swindled on the streets of Paris. I was there. I saw it. When earthquakes hit distant cities, it is the United States that hurries in to help. This spring, 59 American communities were flattened by tornadoes. Nobody helped.

The Marshall Plan and the Truman Policy pumped billions of dollars into discouraged countries. Now newspapers in those countries are writing about the decadent, warmongering Americans. I'd like to see just one of those countries that is gloating over the erosion of the United States dollar build its own airplane. Does any other country in the world have a plane to equal the Boeing Jumbo Jet? Why do all the international lines except Russia fly American planes?

Why does no other land on earth even consider putting a man or woman on the moon? You talk about Japanese technocracy, and you get radios. You talk about German technocracy, and you get automobiles. You talk about American technocracy, and you find men on the moon - not once, but several times - and safely home again.

You talk about scandals, and the Americans put theirs right in the store window for everybody to look at. Even their draft-dodgers are not pursued and hounded. They are here on our streets, and most of them, unless they are breaking Canadian laws, are getting American dollars from ma and pa at home to spend here.

When the railways of France, Germany and India were breaking down through age, it was the Americans who rebuilt them. When the Pennsylvania Railroad and New York Central went broke, nobody lent them an old caboose. Both are still broke.

I can name you 5,000 times when the Americans raced to the help of other people in trouble. Can you name me even one time when someone else raced to the Americans in trouble? I don't think there was outside help even during the San Francisco earthquake.

Our neighbors have faced it alone, and I'm one Canadian who is damned tired of hearing them kicked around. They will come out of this thing with their flag high. And when they do, they are entitled to thumb their nose at the lands that are gloating over their present troubles. I hope Canada is not one of those."

Stand proud, America!

If you want to be defeated – look back.  
If you want to be distracted – look around.  
If you want to be dismayed – look ahead.  
If you want to be delivered – look up.

# Letters, Letters:

"We're still enjoying our memories of the England Tour last June. The memorial service at the base and the window dedication at Anstey were two truly moving experiences. And Tony Weston's poem in tribute to those who we lost was a masterful piece and masterfully rendered. The window at the church is a beautiful thing, a truly fine, creative piece. The artists did us proud.

"All that plus our extra personal tour to Coventry, Stratford-on-Avon and Wales gave us unbelievable memories."

**Bob Bowen, GA 30606-4002**

"Thanks for sending along the program of the Anstey window dedication service. It was beautiful and so meaningful. Jim was so proud to have been asked to contribute a message. Thank you for reading it at the service."

**Marguerite Dwall, Loveland, CO 80538-9948**

"Our entire family was impressed with the Anstey service. Our daughter asked Bishop Christopher Herbert for a copy of his message and he gave her his original. Our five grown children and their families scattered after Anstey and went to Wales, Scotland and Ireland for a look at places new to them.

"The dedication held new meaning for my brother Bob's daughter, who was only two when Bob was killed on a mission to Merseburg."

**Homer & Meg Campbell, Corvallis, OR 97333-1015**

*Ed's Note: A copy of Bishop Herbert's Anstey message can be had by writing to the FLAK NEWS editor.*

"We have got your July FLAK NEWS and it tells us that your group was satisfied with your visit to the Czech Republic."

**Ladislav Piskacek and Ladislav Kohout, Pilsen, Czech Republic**

*Ed's Note: We Yanks could find many more words than "satisfied" to describe our visit, like "wonderful," "great," etc.*

"My friend Art Wilson is doing a history of the airbase at Blythe, CA. He is in need of a copy of the orders that transferred personnel from the 34th Bomb Group to the 398th dated March 1, 1943.

"This was the original cadre. If there is someone out there who can come up with these papers, please send them to me and I'll get them to Wilson. And I'll also have a copy for our records and the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah."

**Dallas Ebest, San Antonio, TX 78213-1561**

*Ed's Note: Dallas is the 398th historian. Please help.*

"I was greatly impressed with the FLAK NEWS coverage of the Year 2000 tour to England and Czech Republic. Thank you for mentioning the "Dixie" rendition at the window service in favor of my grandmother, Maria Hunter. She would have loved to have been there. She is still in good physical condition and I hope to accompany her to the 2001 reunion in St. Paul."

**Hunter F. MacDonald, Seattle, WA 98105-6087**

# BRIEF-things

There were over 80 FLAK NEWS address changes between July and October, and the Post Office charged \$1.36 for each one forwarded and 50¢ for each one returned as undeliverable (only four members saw fit to send in an address change before moving)... for you "look ahead" folks, there is a 2002 Europe Tour in the works... the members on the Year 2000 Tour met many wonderful people in the Czech Republic, including **Jaroslav Kojzar** of Pilsen, the Hotel Central restaurant manager who volunteered to ship those heavy **Selmar Haakenson** gifts back to the US (see story on pages 1 and 7)... also the hotel's **Gabriela Bocanova**, who arranged for those gorgeous floral displays for Litice and Slany... **Gail Fisher** no more than returned home from the June tour but what she contributed two major Travel articles on both Pilsen and Cambridge in the East Valley Tribune (Mesa, AZ); she is the freelance writer daughter of 603 pilot **Bill Fisher** (who already wants to sign up for the 2002 tour)... **Eleanor Siegenthaler** sent along a fine Ormond Beach, FL news story on her tour experiences - ...**Eleanor** was "moved by the warmth of the English people and their fond memories of the airmen who 'gave up so much during the war'"... the news media also did a story on **Sanford Walke**, who worked for Ford from 1941 to 1980, with time out to fly four missions before being shot down with the 601 **George Wilson** crew... the floral wreaths presented at the Nuthampstead service were created by **Billy Nottage**, who picked all the flowers from around the old Station 131 airfield... no rocking chair for **Rosemary Cosco**, wife of ex-602 bombardier **John Cosco**; she's a member of the Tommy Vance Dancers and is tap dancing her way through her senior years; **John** doesn't dance, but you can find him teaching youngsters to read as a Florida Kiwanis volunteer... the A-26 parked by the tower was used by **Col. Ensign** to monitor the group's formation flying, much to the chagrin of the pilots... the late **Dave Lowe** was only one of 16 West Pointers with the 398th, the others being **Col. Hunter, John Baker, Kearie Berry, Harold Bestervelt, Donald Griffin, Selmer Gustaves, Harry Heintzelman, Luther Hough, Harvey Latson, Jack Novak, William Scott, Frank Scofield, Franklin Taylor** and **Harold Woodson**... the "Ye Olde Editor" of the 96th Bomb Group Newsletter is a lady, **Valda Kester**, and she turns out an excellent product... this same 96th has a tough treasurer (pay your dues or no newsletter)... it was a treat seeing (and hearing) second generation women **Sharon Krause, Nancy Cotter** and **Gail Fisher** join in reciting Wes Eatchel's "A Gathering of Heroes" at the reunion; same for **Geoff Rice** and **Ralph Ambrose** who read **Tony Weston's** "292"... Hurricane Gordon loused up several reunion air travel schedules, and the Marriott Hotel front desk loused up a few reservations (we overbooked, they said)... Southridge was a nice golf course, but only half of the 10 registered golfers showed up for their tee times... another no-show was the Mighty 8th Museum bugler, who was to play "Taps" after the memorial unveiling... 602 crew chief **Warren Currie** was at the reunion, still fit at the age of 90... **Peggy Wells** says she still has four US flags ready to raise on the Station 131 tall pole, but will need some more come next year; contact secretary **Harold Stallcup** to donate a casket flag... **Miles Hagen** came from Alaska with the parachute harness that was ripped by a piece of flak; he donated it to the Museum... **Betty Carter** brought back memories of **Kate Smith** with her rendition of "God Bless America at the Farewell Banquet... some of the members viewing the Mighty Eighth "Mission Experience" came away shaken and in tears; it is awesome and very realistic... the Memory Room VHS monitor displayed **Eileen Moore's** video taken on the England/Czech Republic tour plus stills from **Randy Stange's** camera... there was a special plaque created for the late **Ed Stewart**, who maintained a special 398th roster; it will be given to his wife in Florida.

# 398th Bomb Group PX

| Qty.  | CLOTHING   | Cost       | Total |
|---|--|------------|-------|
| ___   | Cap - Fits All Sizes<br>600, 601, 602, 603 Group                 | \$8.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Jackets - Navy, B-17 on Front<br>S, M, L, XL, XXL                | \$25.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | T-Shirts - B-17 on Front<br>Navy - White - S, M, L, XL, XXL      | \$10.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Sweat Shirts - B-17 on Front<br>Navy - White - S, M, L, XL, XXL  | \$15.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Golf Shirts Group Logo on Front<br>Navy or White - M, L, XL, XXL | \$20.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Turtle Neck Shirt - B-17 on Collar<br>White - S, M, L, XL        | \$20.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Children's T- Shirts (White)<br>6-8, 10-12, B-17 on Front        | \$8.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Children's Sweatshirts<br>(Blue or White) M, L - B-17 on Front   | \$10.00 ea | ___   |
| <b>JEWELRY</b>  |  |            |       |
| ___   | Squadron Lapel Pins - 600, 601, 602, 603                         | \$5.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Group Lapel Pin (Hell from Heaven)                               | \$5.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Group Lapel Pin - Special Design                                 | \$5.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | B-17 Lapel Pin (Silver)  | \$2.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | B-17 Earrings (Silver - Pierced only)                            | \$5.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Bolo Ties - Group Logo   | \$4.00 ea  | ___   |
| <b>LOGO PATCHES</b>   |  |            |       |
| ___   | Squadron Patches - 600, 601, 602, 603                            | \$6.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Group Patch ("Hell from Heaven")                                 | \$6.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Jacket Patch - Rectangle B-17                                    | \$4.00 ea  | ___   |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</b>  |  |            |       |
| ___   | Anstey Window Dedication Service<br>VHS Video, 1 hr. 10 min.     | \$10.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Folding Umbrellas<br>Red with White B-17                         | \$18.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Note Paper with B-17 (Packet of 12)                              | \$4.00 pkt | ___   |
| ___   | Tote bag, Navy with White B-17                                   | \$7.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | B-17 Sun Catcher   | \$10.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Beach Towel White with Black B-17                                | \$18.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Golf Towel, White w/Black B-17                                   | \$7.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | 9" Plate with B-17 (398th B.G. colors)                           | \$15.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Christmas Ornament with B-17                                     | \$6.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Coffee Mug with B-17   | \$7.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Ceramic Magnet with B-17   | \$3.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Playing Cards with B-17<br>Single Deck                           | \$7.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Double Deck  | \$12.00 ea | ___   |
| ___   | Photo (Control Tower) Station 131                                | \$2.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Photo (398th Memorial) Post Card                                 | \$2.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Photo (8X10 Aluminum Overcast)                                   | \$2.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | Bumper Sticker (398th Bomb Group)                                | \$1.00 ea  | ___   |
| ___   | License Plate Holder (398th B.G.)                                | \$2.00 ea  | ___   |
| <b>Cost Of Items Ordered</b>  |  | \$         | ___   |
| <b>Delivery And Handing Add \$4.00,<br/>or \$5.00 if Order is Over \$20.00.</b> |  | \$         | ___   |
| <b>Total</b>  |  | \$         | ___   |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to 398th Bomb Group Association PX (US funds).  
Mail to: Joe Joseph  
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168-6168