



602



601



603



600

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

VOL. 32 NO. 4

FLAK NEWS

OCTOBER 2017

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO GERTRUDE WELLS NEFF War Widow of Bill Wells, 600th Pilot, KIA April 8, 1945

We would like to thank Gertrude’s daughter, Karen Neff Evola, for generously funding this edition of the Flak News in her Mother’s memory.

Karen’s article, and photos provided by both Karen and her sister Trudie are throughout this issue.



Gertrude enjoying a cup of traditional English tea while visiting London during the 398th BGMA’s Biennial Tour to England in 1996.

Through a daughter's eyes

What the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association meant to my mom...

By Karen Neff Evola

Prelude:

This October Flak News is dedicated in memory of Gertrude Wright Wells Neff as her 95th birthday would have been October 1 of this year. I wanted to share some of my thoughts, feelings and memories through my life, growing up and learning with my mother about the love of her life, Bill Wells and the 398th BGMA.

On March 15, 2017, my Mother, Gertrude Wright Wells Neff passed away peacefully in her sleep at her home in Lexington, VA. Many of you may remember my mother attending past 398th Reunions, up until the Phoenix AZ Reunion in 2007. She stopped attending the reunions just because she did not want to be too far away from her home, where she felt safe, but I digress, this is a story through my eyes of what I believe the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association, meant to my mom. And, as you'll see what it means to me.

In Lexington VA in December of 1942 Lieutenant William Edwin Wells, Jr. attended Special Services School at Washington & Lee University and my mother met him during that time. I remember her telling me that she went out with him and also dated a few other young men at the time but Bill Wells was special. He had a great sense of humor and a great smile and loved to just bite right into ice cream without a care as to how cold it was on his teeth. He had perfect teeth. In memory, I'm not sure how it all went but I guess he was away on a Special Services assignment and she thought she would never hear from him again. But he hadn't forgotten her and called her up and asked her to marry him. She said YES. They were married on August 28, 1943, in El Paso TX. Her wedding photo below speaks for itself.



Bill was stationed in Phoenix AZ for a while and then stationed in Santa Ana CA. Bill also spent time in New Orleans.



Gertrude pregnant with Trudie, May of 1944
Bishops Lodge Santa Fe, NM

September 1, 1944 my sister Gertrude Thornhill Wells (Trudie) was born in Roswell, New Mexico. Mother told me Bill got to see Trudie, be with her and hold her before he was deployed overseas.



Bill Wells holding his baby girl Trudie before being sent overseas to Nuthampstead

Continued on next page...

Through a daughter's eyes

Continued from previous page



This was the last photo taken of Bill Wells with Gertrude and Bill's sister Winnie at dinner before he left for Nuthampstead England.

So as this story goes, First Lieutenant William Edwin Wells, Jr. B-17 Pilot of the 600th Squadron - the 398th Division of the 8th Air Force was killed in action in the service of our country over Derben, Germany April 8th 1945.

From that day, my mom did not know if Bill Wells was alive or missing in action or anything about what had happened. In later months Mother received a telegram, I believe it was late 1945, saying he was missing. She shared the telegram with me, many years later, and I remember thinking how hard that that must have been. But after meeting our veterans through these reunions and through the years, I realized that this generation - *The Greatest Generation* - **did not complain. They just pressed on; and did their job!**

Fast forward to the future –

Years later my mother married my dad and had me in 1960, they divorced in 1966. Mother never remarried as the love of her life was Bill Wells. I knew that, and knew it was heartfelt and bittersweet.

As a side note and as you can see by our birthdays - my sister and I have a 15 year gap between us so occasionally, really most times you will hear each of us say "my" mother as if we were both only children. It was however, always the three of us when I was a little girl.

And now this brings me to what I know in my life to be "An awaking in my mother, which occurred as she found out about the 398th Bomb Group Association". It was 1991 and I can't remember the particulars, as I was 31 and looking for the love of my life and trying to find my way in the world. But I do know that year she found out about the 398th BGMA and attended her first reunion in San Diego, CA. When she came back she seemed to have new hope and peace about her and at the same time an excitement. I remember her telling me about it in the front hall of her home, the home I grew up in. She had met so many of those men who also flew out of Nuthampstead where Bill had flown his last mission. She told me of the most special moment when she met Chaplain James Duvall. He was the Chaplain who prayed over the men before and during their missions.

He told her - "**There are NO Coincidences**". When she told me this story it was just like she had an overwhelming peace about her. There were many tears shed and lots of hugs in the front hall that day. I believe when she met the Chaplain and the other veterans at her first 398th Reunion; a certain amount of closure came into being and she finally found some peace.

Fast forward again - the 398th Reunions were something special to behold! Each year the 398th would plan a reunion - in a different State across the country.

Remember - There are no coincidences!

Mother went to Nashville in 1992 and Trudie attended that reunion with her. That was an exciting reunion - as one of the tours was to the Smyrna Airport where the EAA was offering ground tours and flights up in their B-17 *Aluminum Overcast*. Of course my Mother just had to go for a ride and was just absolutely thrilled. If my memory serves me she met dear friends Barry and Elaine Tyler there. Mother kept in touch with Elaine up until Mother's death last March. She loved Elaine dearly! Thank you Elaine! So the 1993 Reunion was in Buffalo and she went to that as well. My job did not allow me to take a lot of time off, so I had not yet attended a reunion. Trudie was able to go to Tucson in 1994 and also in Charleston SC in 1995. That was when the reunions were scheduled outside the school year and it was easier for her to attend. I remember one story my mother told me was when Trudie was on the plane to a reunion and sat next to Len Streitfeld and he started talking to her and as they talked they spoke about the 398th as he felt a connection with her. He told her of the story about her dad, from his perspective. This story is found in his book "*Hell from Heaven*" and is also on the 398th website at this link:

http://398th.org/History/Veterans/History/Streitfeld/HFH_19450408_Derben.html

My first reunion was in Harrisburg, PA in 1998, and, WOW! It was awesome! I had NO Idea of how meeting this great group of people would affect my life and really, what great things were to come. So this "*my first*" reunion was full of love and excitement and of course tours. There were tours to the Amish Country, Hershey Park, Milton Hershey School and a City Tour of Harrisburg. But, the most special times were the Opening and Closing Banquets which have continued to this day. When registering, you go to the "Memory Room" at the hotel which has been set up with the PX and memorabilia tables to sit at and visit with other 398th family members.

At this point you got your packet with tickets to tours and dinners and your ID badge associating you with whatever squadron you were affiliated with. Then you would pick the tables where you wanted to sit for each banquet. Back in 1998 there were a lot of veterans that would attend. Most of them would be very cautious and some even stoic at times, until they would begin talking, *and* suddenly they would open up, as they would meet fellow soldiers who they served with *across the pond*. During this time, I remember sitting listening to a story that one person told about his plane going down in an apple field in the English countryside and someone had to come find him and got him to safety - the story of this came out and *that* person was sitting there at the table saying oh- that was you?

Continued on page 4...

Through a daughter's eyes

Continued from previous page

This sort of occurrence happened quite often in those days! The "stories" and the "meeting up" and the sharing of these stories; the tears, the love and genuine camaraderie of the young men, who went to England at a young age - teens and twenty year olds - on a mission in the Service - not knowing what was to be. And now, having grown up, grown older, here these men are, attending the reunions and hooking up with their Old Crew- again, it was incredible and a true blessing to be able to witness it all. Sometimes, at these dinners, after the Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag - the emotion was so intense tears would flow, I remember holding my mom's hand and just being so proud to be there for her, in remembrance of Bill Wells.

There were so many other Reunions we attended and looked forward to seeing everyone once again. Mother, Trudie and her husband Hal attended the Savannah Reunion in 2000, and in 2001, I attended the St Paul Reunion after the events of September 11 occurred. That was eerie as I flew from Boston to Minneapolis and the plane was almost empty - there was a 398th veteran on the plane with pins on his hat, and I remember feeling safe with him and his wife on the plane. I met my mom there and that reunion is where I first met Connie and Elliot Novak.

There were many others Mother introduced me to at this reunion, and reunions throughout the years, that she had become close to. Some of them are named here: Margaret Sigsworth, Evelyn Comstock, Mariah Hunter, Hal Weekly, Jeanne and Ray Stange, Ralph Hall, Teedy and Wally Blackwell, Geg and Allen Ostrom, Jane and Bob Bowen, Keith Anderson, Dave Mills, Willetta and Joe Mansell, Rozanne and Joe Joseph, the Stallcups, the Roderick's, Sharon and Pete Krause, the Crouch's, Marilyn and Geoff Rice, Carolyn and Glenn Widmann, Mellisa and Jim Ledlow, Judge Yip and his wife Judy, the Traeder's, Lee Anne Bradley, the Frazier's, the Overbaugh's, and Ralph Ambrose, Peggy Wells, Jean Mustoe, Wilfred Dimsdale from across the pond.

The following year, 2002 in Portland, OR, we had another one of those **"There are NO Coincidences"** moments at the Timberline Lodge as mother and I sat with Bill and Jean Frankhouser we found out that neighbors of theirs in Elizabethtown PA, were good friends of ours, originally from Lexington, VA. On that reunion we toured the Evergreen Air and Space Museum at McMinnville, OR where the "Spruce Goose" was on display. The reunion coordinator had arranged to have a pilot of a P-51 take some of the veteran's up for a short flight around the area. Each took turns - for a small fee - and I remember Mother followed Judge Yip's flight, and I vividly remember the beaming smiles that exuded from both of them.

All these special relationships continued to grow from reunion to reunion; 2003 in Covington, KY, 2004 Falls Church, VA (WWII Memorial Tour), 2005 Overland Park, KS, and 2006 in Livonia, MI.

2007 Phoenix, AZ was my Mother's and my last reunion together. At this point, going forward, she lived the reunions vicariously through me. I continue to this day to attend as I represent the second generation as Secretary of the 398th BGMA.



Gertrude and daughter Karen enjoying the 2006 Livonia MI Reunion together.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention the England trips. Mother went first in 1996, the cover photo by Allen Ostrom is from that tour. She loved those trips, as you can see by the smile on her face while she sipped her English tea.

Those England trips were very special as well; visiting Nuthampstead Air Base and riding on a bus around the land that these young men flew out from. Seeing one of the veteran's flags' being flown to destruction over the base. The Anstey Church special dedication of the stain glass window, which the fallen veteran's name had been etched in, and I remember finding Bill Wells' name at the last minute before the bus left. Going to Duxford where the "Sally B" resides, and visiting the Cambridge American Cemetery. Trudie and I were both able to attend the incredible D-day Celebration in Normandy France in June of 2004.



The section of the Stained Glass Window in St. Georges Church in Anstey showing William Wells' name etched in the glass (left, center). Karen found his name just as the tour bus was about to leave!

Continued on page 10...

A Message from the President

BY MARILYN GIBB-RICE

President, 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association

398th Reunions began in 1976 when a few dozen 398th veterans attending the annual 8th Air Force Historical Society meeting in Dayton, OH decided to organize a 398th BGMA. It was decided at this year's reunion for the 398th to join with the 8th Air Force Historical Society at their reunions beginning next year in 2018. All other aspects of our Bomb Group Association will remain the same - only the reunions will change. The number of people attending this year's reunion was the lowest ever and made it most difficult to meet our obligations with the hotel contract.

The 2018 reunion will be held in Dayton, Ohio from the 10th to the 14th of October. Once we have reunion details, we will be in touch with all of our membership.

Even though our numbers were low at this reunion, it was another great one thanks to Ken, Beth and Brandy Howard. Please see our photos and Mellisa Ledlow's article about this year's reunion on pages 6 through 9.

Another order of business at the reunion was having two members of the 3rd generation joining the board of directors. We welcomed Beth and Brandy Howard to the board. They are the granddaughters of Bob Howard, ball turret gunner on the Donovan Crew, 603rd SQ.

It's not too early to start thinking about the 398th BGMA's biennial trip back to Station 131. Our *Journey Back to England Tour* will be held May 24 – 30, 2018. Cost and itinerary details will be outlined in the January edition of the Flak News.

I know it is a little early, but I would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season.

398th BGMA Officers & Board Members

President

Marilyn Gibb-Rice
12 The Presidents
Beck Row
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk IP28 8HS England
011-44-1638-718-427 (from USA)
President@398th.org

Vice President

Connie Novek
6409 Warrens Way
Wanaque, NJ 07465-1659
973-248-6301
Vp@398th.org

Secretary

Karen Neff
555 Green Hill Rd
Lexington, VA 24450-6742
540-463-1769
Secretary@398th.org

Treasurer

Mellisa Ledlow
16210 Breakwater Path Dr
Houston, TX 77044-1112
281-384-3846
Treasurer@398th.org

Board of Directors

Keith Anderson
12225 Issaquah Hobart Rd
Issaquah, WA 98027-8508
425-392-7431
DirectorKeith@398th.org

Fred Parker
7324 Marvin Rd NE
Olympia, WA 98516-9555
360-491-5497

Ray Richman
825 Morewood Ave, Apt.J
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2900
412-682-1286
DirectorRay@398th.org

Jim White
2030 S Cabrillo Ave, Unit 420
San Pedro, CA 90731-5362
310-427-9200
DirectorJim@398th.org

Unit Contact Manager

Sharon Krause
11690 Paciocco Ct
Plymouth, MI 48170-2870
734-416-5993
UnitManager@398th.org

Reunion Chair

Ken Howard
105 S Knox St, Unit A
Elmwood, IL 61529-9122
309-742-8546
Reunion@398th.org

PX Manager

Carolyn Widmann
6420 Tuscan Road
Paducah, KY 42001
586-770-4747
Carolynwidmann@aol.com

Group Historian / Data Coordinator FLAK NEWS Editor / Webmaster

Lee Anne Bradley
14 Winding Way
Andover, NJ 07821-4034
973-786-7504
GroupHistorian@398th.org

Photo Historian / Researcher

Geoff Rice
12 The Presidents
Beck Row
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk IP28 8HS England
011-44-1638-718-427 (from USA)
Photos@398th.org

Flag Coordinator

Karen Neff
555 Green Hill Rd
Lexington, VA 24450-6742
540-463.1769
FlagCoordinator@398th.org

Special Projects Manager

John Blackwell
38524 Triticum Ln
Lovettsville, VA 20180-1768
540-822-4395
SpecialProjects@398th.org

Assistant Reunion Coordinators / Third Generation Liaisons

Beth Howard
105 S Knox St, Unit A
Elmwood, IL 61529-9122
309-742-8546
Reunion@398th.org

Brandy Howard
105 S Knox St, Unit A
Elmwood, IL 61529-9122
309-742-8546
Reunion@398th.org

Dues / Membership Manager

Dawne Dougherty
951 S 9th St
Harrisburg, OR 97446-9585
541-995-6120
DuesManager@398th.org

The 2017 Salt Lake City Reunion Recap

By Mellisa Ledlow

Nestled at the base of the Wasatch Mountains, Salt Lake City, Utah was the sight of the 34th Annual 398th Bomb Group Reunion August 9-12, 2017. Sixty-two attendees included 2nd, 3rd and even 4th generation family members, other friends and six veterans. Those veterans in attendance were Keith Anderson, Fred Parker, Lou Stoffer, and Jim White, all four from the 600th SQ and Newell Moy and Wesley Eatchel, both from the 603rd SQ.

Early Native American populations and the settlement of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) in 1847 mainly influence Salt Lake City culture. The LDS are credited with organizing the city layout and developing the necessary government systems to make a successful, thriving city. Upon the LDS settlers' arrival, the sight for the religion's Temple was chosen and built (taking 40 years to complete). Since its completion, the Temple has become an icon for the City and serves as its centerpiece.

On the first night of the Reunion gathering, Ken Howard, Reunion Coordinator had arranged for the group to dine at The Roof Restaurant—directly across from the Temple. The Roof Restaurant occupies the top floor of the Joseph Smith Memorial Building—the former Hotel Utah (a building of gorgeous architecture and history). It offers a beautiful view from above of the Temple and the beautiful grounds in Temple Square.



Since he traveled to the reunion by himself, Jim White was completely surprised when his son Jeff showed up at Wednesday's dinner at *The Roof* restaurant. Jim had that big smile on his face for the entire evening!

Thursday, the 398th group was offered a Salt Lake City Deluxe Tour. The tour bus and its guide gave a detailed description of the settlement of the area. Right from the start, in 1847, the LDS community was extremely industrious and got to work planting crops and erecting schools, home and community buildings. The Transcontinental Railroad came through in 1870 and that, along with the discovery of silver and copper mining opportunities led to a large immigration of citizens with diverse cultures and backgrounds. The tour bus traveled through what were once areas of Chinese, Greek, Japanese and European settlers. Like most large cities, these communities have blended in the Salt Lake City area, but many of their churches and restaurants remain significant.

The tour visited Heritage Park, a Living History site that offers visitors a look at life in 19th Century Utah from the Mormon arrival in 1847 to statehood in 1896. The village has original or replica homes and authentic craft demonstrations by working tradesmen and women.

Part of the Thursday sites also included views of historic homes, churches and a pass through the rather large University of Utah campus, home to over 25,000 students. The Utah State Capital Building was the final stop. The building is constructed of granite mined from nearby Little Cottonwood Canyon and the dome is covered in Utah mined copper.

The tour group was returned to the RL Hotel in downtown Salt Lake City, where many headed to the 398th Group Business Meeting (see President's Message, page 5)

That night, the traditional Welcome Banquet was held in one of the hotel ballrooms. Marilyn Gibb-Rice greeted the gathering and proceeded to give a special welcome to the five 398th veterans in attendance. One of the vets, Wesley Eatchel, tail gunner with the 603rd SQ Alfred Warren crew, was attending only his second reunion ever! Wes was presented with the traditional 398th BG medallion designed especially for our veterans.

Marilyn introduced the evening's guest speaker, Steve Snyder. Steve's dad, Lt. Howard Snyder was a B-17 Pilot in the 306th Bomb Group during WWII. Howard Snyder was shot down over Belgium in February, 1944 and evaded capture. Steve Snyder has written a book about his dad and the people and events that allowed him to hide from the Nazis and to then, remarkably, join the French Resistance. Steve was able to trace his father's steps and to actually meet some of the Belgian and French citizens that helped his dad—at great risk to their own lives. Steve's book, "*Shot Down*", has received numerous awards and commendations and also describes the story of the other airmen in Lt. Howard's B-17 that eventful day. Steve Snyder also currently serves as the President of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association.

Early Friday morning, Dawne Dougherty, Willetta Mansell, Chrysta Moore, Connie Novek, Arline Reed and Jeanne Stange gathered for the 4th Annual Widow's Breakfast. Dawne has diligently planned a Widow's Breakfast for the last several years. The group of six Widows gathered in the hotel café and shared stories of family events and updates of their lives. There's a special bond between these ladies and we're sure their veteran husbands would appreciate their friendships.

With another beautiful Utah day on Friday, the 398th Reunion Tour Group headed west of Salt Lake City through the Wasatch Mountains to Park City. Park City was a main hub for events during the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. Many of the facilities are still in use today throughout the area. Utah Olympic Park was the first stop for the group and is the site of the 2002 Olympic Museum as well as a Museum of Skiing History. Just outside the Museum building is the still-used ski jump practice ramps. Outside the museums, ski jumpers are able to use ski jump ramps year-round as the jumpers actually land in a swimming pool at the bottom of the ramp! Many athletes hoping for a spot on the next Winter Olympic team reside in the Park City area to take advantage of the training opportunities available. The US Ski Team headquarters are in Park City, as well as training facilities for other winter sports.

Salt Lake City Reunion Recap

Continued from previous page

Park City's early history and settlement is tied to the discovery of silver, gold and lead in the surrounding mountains. At one time, Park City had the largest silver-mining camp in the United States. Park City's current economy is tied to tourists and skiing with exceptional mountain snow conditions. Aerial trams used to haul ore were converted to chair lifts and underground mining tunnels were used to haul skiers to different mountains. The Main Street in Park City has maintained over 64 Victorian structures listed in the National Historic Register—many of which house high-end stores and restaurants. Several people in the 398th group managed to find an old-fashioned ice cream and chocolate shop to wrap up the tour!

Friday night Happy Hour was back at the RL Hotel. This event, as usual, found many 398th members catching up, reminiscing and telling never-before-heard stories about the Bomb Group, their missions and adventures in Nuthampstead and/or during their training. Veterans, widows, sons and daughters thoroughly enjoyed getting reacquainted and listening to stories about the veterans' time in Nuthampstead, their missions and their families. It's amazing that new information and stories, after all these years, is revealed.

Saturday morning, the 398th tour group headed out to the Great Salt Lake, the largest U.S. lake west of the Mississippi River. The Great Salt Lake is 75 miles long by 28 miles wide, is fed by four rivers, but has no drainage outlet. Evaporation leaves behind high levels of minerals—including salt. Very limited flora and fauna do thrive in the lake area and are the primary food source of millions of migrating birds. The tour guide pointed and shared one of the plants that do grow at the Great Salt Lake—pickle weed. The pickle weed is edible, tastes like pickles and is harvested and used in salads.

The largest island in the Great Salt Lake is Antelope Island. The island, a state park, is home to free-roaming herds of bison, bighorn sheep, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. The island provides spectacular views of Great Salt Lake, the Wasatch Mountains, Salt Lake City skyline, and views of ancient Lake Bonneville. The historic Fielding Garr Ranch is the site of the first permanent residence on the island in 1848 and has the oldest Anglo-built structure in Utah.

The next destination for the tour group was Hill AFB Aerospace Museum near Ogden, Utah. The Museum exhibits more than 90 military aircraft, missiles and aerospace vehicles. Of special interest to the group was the WWII aircraft exhibits. These included the B-17 "Short Bier", a B-24 and B-29 and several fighter planes like the P-51, P-47 and P-38. Newt Moy, a pilot in the 603rd Squadron, found himself surrounded by young cadets from a Civil Air Patrol Group, who were anxious and excited to hear stories from a WWII veteran. He didn't disappoint!

As is tradition, the final evening of the Reunion was the Farewell Banquet back at the hotel. Marilyn recognized the Reunion Chairman, Ken Howard and his daughters, Brandy and Beth. Along with Trudy, Ken's wife, the Howard family have organized and arranged the 398th BGMA Reunions for the last several years. The Salt Lake City Reunion was another great event. The reunion attendees gave a resounding round of applause to thank them for their efforts.



The veteran Q&A session at the Farewell Banquet
Left to right are veterans **Wes Eatchel, Newt Moy, Jim White, Lou Stoffer, Fred Parker and Keith Anderson**

Ann Collins, daughter of Phillip Collins, ball turret gunner of the 601st SQ Marias Crew, gave a tribute to Allen Ostrom, tail gunner for the 603rd SQ Warren Johnson Crew. Allen passed away in April of this year and Ann wanted to give him special recognition for his contributions to the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. Allen was Flak News Editor for many years and his dedication to the Group is greatly appreciated.

The highlight of the Farewell Banquet was the Q&A session with the veterans in attendance. The vets create quite a bit of excitement every time they speak. One by one, they each took a turn with the microphone and shared at least one story or tale of their time in the war. The entire room hung on their every word!

As the evening ended, many warm hugs and promises of "see ya next year!" were shared. The 398th will participate in the 8th Air Force Reunion in Dayton, Ohio in 2018. The hope is our veterans, widows, 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations will join this large group next October. It will be a great opportunity to see old friends... and make new ones!



Five of our lovely widows enjoying Park City, Utah.
Left to right are; **Lydia St. Louis, Arline Reed, Chrysta Moore, Connie Novek and Dawne Dougherty.**

PHOTO OPS AT OUR SALT LAKE CITY REUNION

Reunion photos shown on this page and throughout this issue were contributed by
Mellisa Ledlow, Marilyn Gibb-Rice, Geoff Rice & Lee Anne Bradley



Above: **Mike Macyda, Martha & Lindhe Guarisco, Victoria Macyda.**
Mike's dad was S/Sgt. Frank Macyda, ball turret gunner and Lindhe's dad
was Lt. John B. Guarisco, bombardier.
Both men flew with the J.H. Davis Crew, 601st SQ.



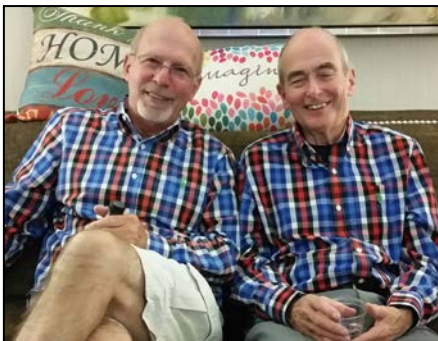
Above:
**Terry St. Louis with his mom, Lydia St. Louis -
son and widow of Terence St. Louis,
ball turret gunner on Ford's Crew, 600th SQ.**



Left: **Bobbi Mier and Loretha
Smith.** Bobbi's uncle was Capt.
Gene L. Douglas, 600th SQ pilot.



Above: **Karen Clement and her mom
Jeanne Stange, widow of
Raymond P Stange, navigator
on the Williams' Crew, 603rd SQ.**



Above: **Pete Krause and Geoff Rice
aka "The Plaid Twins".**
(Pete's the one showing leg – LOL!)



Above: **Scott Welty** taking in
Park City. Scott's dad was
Robert M. Welty, co-pilot with
Tarr's Crew, 603rd SQ.

MORE PHOTO OPS!

“SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR IN DAYTON, OHIO.”



Above: **Carolyn Widmann, Kathy & David Loss.** Carolyn's dad was James C. Crouch, a waist gunner who flew with several 601st SQ crews, including Wally Blackwell's crew. David's dad was Ralph Loss a waist gunner on Campbell's Crew, 601st SQ.



Top Right: **Willetta Mansell, Jeanne Stange, Dawne Dougherty.**

Directly Above: **Trudy & Ken Howard** celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary at the Reunion! **Thanks once again to Ken, our Reunion Coordinator, and his daughters Brandy & Beth for another great reunion!**

Left: **Patricia Pannak** with her dad **Lou Stoffer**, engineer with **Grinter's Crew, 600th SQ**, passing the torch at Olympic Park.

Right: **Mellisa Ledlow** and **Keith Anderson**, a **600th SQ** pilot, share a sweet dance at our Farewell Dinner. Mellisa's dad was **Don Menard**, radio op with **Sheely's Crew, 603rd SQ**.



Through a daughter's eyes

Continued from page 4

Well I could continue on with so many more memories and stories, but I will finish up here.

As I have searched my heart for the words for this article on what the 398th has meant to my mom, it is safe to say that the **398th Website - www.398th.org - is brilliant and allowed me to click my way thru time.** It helped spark my memories from various articles and people from the past.

This organization is blessed with passionate, dedicated and talented second and third generations who truly care about preserving the history of the men of the 398th. I am and continue to be proud and honored to be associated with it. God Bless the 398th.

Former 398th BGMA President Wally Blackwell used to always say "Keep 'em flying" so I will leave with that - and with this, from the ceiling of the Chapel at the Cambridge American Cemetery. The words of the tribute around the perimeter of the mosaic ceiling say so beautifully and fittingly what is felt by so many. Humbled, I gazed upward and read:

"In proud and grateful memory of those men of the U.S. Army Air Force who from these friendly skies flew their final flight and met their God. They knew not the hour, the day, nor the manner of their passing, when far from home they were called to join that heroic band of airmen who had gone before. May they rest in peace." Amen.



Gertrude sitting pretty on a 1946 Buick Special



Group photo in front of the B-17 Sally B during the 2004 "One Last Look" Tour to England.

Gertrude Wells Neff is standing in front, 5th from the left, wearing a dark raincoat. Her daughters are kneeling in the very front row; Trudie is on the far left and Karen, wearing a star and stripes top, is on the far right.

Sadly, many good friends in this photo are no longer with us, but we will always hold them dear in our hearts.

Note: The Sally B was used in the 1990 remake of *Memphis Belle* as one of five flying B-17s needed for various film scenes, and it was used to replicate the real *Memphis Belle* in one scene. Half of the aircraft is still in the *Memphis Belle* livery, which is why you see the *Memphis Belle* nose art in this photo. The other side sports the *Sally B* nose art.

BRIEF – things

2018 Dayton, OH Reunion- Preliminary facts

As Marilyn mentioned in her President's Message on page 5 of this issue, we will be holding our **2018** 398th BGMA Reunion in conjunction with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society's (8th AFHS) Reunion in Dayton, Ohio Wednesday October 10th through Sunday October 14th.

The Board decided at our reunion in Salt Lake City this past August, that due to our declining attendance numbers, this would be our best course of action in order to keep hotel, meal and tour costs reasonably affordable for our members.

We are only participating in the 8AFHS REUNION, we will still be our own entity, the 398th BGMA, in all other aspects.

Ken Howard will continue his role as our Reunion Coordinator and whatever duties that will need to be done with the 8th AFHS, he will handle with assistance from his daughters Beth and Brandy Howard.

We will continue with our own Memory Room and therefore continue to sell our own PX items. Nothing will be merged with the 8th in terms of our merchandise.

We will have at least one 398th Group private dinner, where we will be able to conduct any program or business we want to without disturbing the other groups.

The rest of the program – common 8th AFHS Reunion events (their Gala Dinner, breakfasts, tours, various discussions, and panels) – will be shared by all.

One other fantastic benefit we will see, in addition to our cost savings, is the presence of veterans from a broad range of groups - both bomber and fighter, as well as researchers, historians, webmasters, NexGens and assorted other like-minded folks.

Many of our counterpart BGMAs are going this route as their numbers become smaller. One group who recently decided to participate in the 8th AFHS reunion is the 384th BG.

When the time comes we will instruct you on when and how to register for the **2018** 8th AFHS Annual Reunion. Note; the 8th AFHS Reunions are organized through Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR). They will accept checks or money orders via the US Mail, or if you prefer you may register with them online and pay by credit card.

One last thing, as many in our Group have asked, membership in the Society is highly encouraged but is not required to attend their reunions.

So please, everyone consider coming to our 398th BGMA **2018** Reunion in Dayton Ohio, hosted by the 8th AFHS. We think it will be a very interesting and fun event!

Lee Anne Bradley, Flak News Editor



398th Bomb Group PX

ORDER FORM (The Second Generation)

QTY	ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLOTHING			
All shirts select size:			
	<u> </u> S <u> </u> M <u> </u> L <u> </u> XL <u> </u> XXL		
<u> </u>	T-Shirt, black, "398th BG Flying Fortress"	\$15.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	T-Shirt, navy, with B-17 front view	\$15.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	T-Shirt, white, with Triangle W on front, <i>Clearing and Colder</i> on back	\$15.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	T-Shirt, white, with Group logo on front, Squadron logo on back select: <u> </u> 600 <u> </u> 601 <u> </u> 602 <u> </u> 603	\$25.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Men's Denim Shirt, long sleeve, 398th logo	\$25.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Men's Golf Shirt, coastal blue, embroidered Triangle W	\$25.00	<u> </u>
LAPEL PINS			
<u> </u>	Squadron pin select: <u> </u> 600 <u> </u> 601 <u> </u> 602 <u> </u> 603	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Group pin Hell From Heaven	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Group pin blue with B-17	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	8th Air Force pin	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Silver B-17 pin	\$5.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Cadet pin	\$5.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Air Force 70 th Anniversary pin – Rapid City	\$40.00	<u> </u>
PATCHES			
<u> </u>	Squadron Patch 3" select: <u> </u> 600 <u> </u> 601 <u> </u> 602 <u> </u> 603	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	B-17 Jacket Patch, 4"x3"	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	8th Air Force Patch, 3"	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Group Patch Hell From Heaven, 2½"x3"	\$7.00	<u> </u>
BOOKS, CDs & DVDs Media (includes postage)			
<u> </u>	<i>Fortresses Over Nuthampstead</i> (Bishop)	\$30.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<i>398th History</i> (1946, photocopy)	\$20.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<i>C-Lager</i> (Dorfmeier)	\$20.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<i>Mission Memories</i> (lbeling)	\$8.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<i>Return to Station 131- Memorial Dedication</i> June 2000 - DVD	\$20.00	<u> </u>
PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS			
<u> </u>	<i>Clearing and Colder</i> , 14"x17" canvas print	\$50.00	<u> </u>
MISCELLANEOUS			
<u> </u>	Bumper Sticker (red, white & black)	\$4.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	50 Caliber Bullet Pen (Group Logo)	\$40.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	B17 Scale Model (12.5 in x 9 in)	\$17.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Blue Ballpoint Pen (398th imprint)	\$7.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Coaster (<i>Clearing and Colder</i> imprint)	\$6.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Earrings – clip (Group Logo)	\$11.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Earrings – pierced (Group Logo)	\$11.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	Notecards – B-17 Flying Fortress (set of 10)	\$11.00	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	FLAK NEWS Flash Drive Aug '86 to July'12	\$40.00	<u> </u>

Cost of All Items ordered \$ _____

Postage add \$7.00, \$9.00 if order over \$20.00 \$ _____

Payment in US funds to "398th Bomb Group PX" Total \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone & E-Mail _____

Mail completed order form and check to:

Carolyn Widmann, 6420 Tuscan Road, Paducah, KY 42001-6135

Telephone: 586-770-4747 E-Mail: carolynwidmann@aol.com

398th BOMB GROUP FLAK NEWS

FLAK NEWS

C/O Lee A. Bradley, Editor

14 Winding Way

Andover, NJ 07821

USA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Jim White presents Karen Neff with Richard Taylor's print, "Fortress at Rest"

"In this evocative piece, Richard Taylor recreates a brief moment of reprieve as deep overnight snow temporarily grounds the Mighty Eighth during the bitter winter of 1944. With the morning sunlight glinting across the snow-covered landscape, a B-17G Flying Fortress of the 398th Bomb Group stands quietly near the perimeter of RAF Nuthampstead, awaiting the thaw that will allow the flying to begin again."

One of the highlights at the 398th BGMA 43rd Annual Reunion in Salt Lake City was a chance to own a signed and numbered print by Richard Taylor titled, "Fortress at Rest". This print is also personally signed by three Army Air Force veterans, Jim White – pilot with the 600th SQ being one of them. Jim graciously purchased two of these beautiful prints, one for the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum and another to give to one lucky person who made a donation to the museum during the reunion. Karen Neff Evola, whose story about her mother, Gertrude Wells Neff, is featured in this issue of Flak News happened to be that lucky person! Her name was drawn and she is now the owner of this beautiful fine art print. Congratulations, Karen!

As a side note, Russ Abbey, a longtime UK friend of the 398th BGMA and the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum, is the Director of the Merlin Aviation Art Gallery, 83 Longmeadow, Lode, Cambridgeshire CB25 9HA. Website: <http://merlinaviationart.com> They are one of several art sites selling this print, but we thought we'd give Russ' new business a shout out.