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

VOL. 33 NO. 2

FLAK NEWS

APRIL 2018



## Dick Martin receives France's Highest honor

Last year Richard L. Martin became one of the 398th's latest recipients of the French Legion of Honor Medal

Photos clockwise from right: 1. Frédéric Cholé, Deputy Consul general of France in Chicago, poses with Dick and his wife Wilma. 2. Dick's WWII memorabilia display including a WWII portrait photo of himself. 3. Dick being interviewed by the WTHR news crew and local newspaper press. Dick was a Flight Engineer and Top Turret Gunner in the 603<sup>rd</sup> SQ.

Story continues on Page 2

## **Dick Martin Honored...** *continued from page 1*

On June 13, 2017, our own Richard L. Martin was presented with the French Legion of Honor Medal at VFW Post 1152 in Kokomo, Indiana. Newspaper press and a news crew from WTHR, an NBC affiliate in Indianapolis, were there to record it all. This soundbite was pulled from the interview conducted by WTHR reporter Emily Longnecker: *"This had made my heart full today," Martin said, speaking in front of everyone gathered. "It's something I've never dreamed of when you're in the service, but it does happen and I'm proof of that."* Carolyn Widmann kindly obtained the following transcript of the presentation for us.



*Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité*

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

### **Legion of Honor Ceremony Richard L. Martin – Kokomo, Indiana June 13th, 2017**

Remarks by Frédéric Cholé  
Deputy Consul general of France in Chicago

Dear State, County and City Representatives,  
Dear Veterans organizations Commanders and members,  
Dear Mr. Martin,  
Dear Family and friends,  
Honored veterans and everyone gathered here today,

It is a great honor and privilege to be with you in Kokomo to pay tribute to Mr. Richard Martin, a brave man who was ready to sacrifice his life for France and Western Europe during the Second World War.

I also would like to dedicate this special acknowledgment to all the American soldiers who, like you Mr. Martin, embarked on the difficult and dangerous journey to free a whole continent from intolerance, violence and the tyranny of fascism.

As we are commemorating this year the Centenary of the entry of the U.S into WWI, we also have to remember all those who, a generation earlier, came to save Europe.

But today, we are gathered to pay tribute to Mr. Martin and all the young Americans, who, 73 years ago, put their ideals, their might and their courage to the service of democracy and the dignity of humankind.

From June 6, 1944, they fought bravely, battle after battle, across France and beyond, and like Mr. Martin, they witnessed the worst of the war. Many did not return but they are in our hearts and fortunately, Mr. Martin is here to help us remember.

Twice last century, in 1917 and 1944, American soldiers restored freedom to my country, France. The French people will never forget what they owe America, our steadfast friend, partner and ally. From Lafayette and Yorktown during the American Revolution, to the battlefields of World War I, and the shores of Normandy, our two countries have always stood shoulder-to-shoulder to defend and promote the values of freedom and democracy that are the core of who we are.

On June 6th, 1944, the D-Day landing changed the course of the history of humanity. Victory was still far off and there was much suffering to come. But hope was alive again, at last.

Today, it is that same hope, that same ideal that we owe to those men whom we shall never, can never, forget. To the French people, all veterans are heroes. Their engagement is an example, an obligation for us and for future generations.

There can be no future without memory. The torch they carried so high and so far, the torch of freedom, of dignity, of justice and democracy, still lights our way.

Faced with the uncertainties of a changing world, let us strive to remain loyal to the legacy, the sacrifice and the values of the heroes who liberated France and Western Europe.

The French Legion of Honor shows France's eternal gratitude to all the Veterans and Mr. Richard Martin deserves this prestigious decoration.

Sergeant Martin, you entered active duty in November 1942 at age 20. From November 1944 until May 1945, you participated in four major campaigns: Air Offensive Europe, The Ardennes, the Rhineland and Central Europe.

You were assigned to the 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group of the U.S Air Force where you were an engineer gunner on B-17 Flying Fortresses. Sergeant Martin, you completed a total of 35 combat missions.

In France, you targeted enemy installations and strategic points like cross roads, rail yards and bridges in particular near Metz in the Moselle area, near the German border, where the fighting was raging.

For the excellence of your service during the war, you have received prestigious awards including the Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Thank you for your service, Sir.

I think you deserve a big applause.

Thanks to your courage, to France's American friends and allies, France has been living in peace for seven decades –the longest period of continuous peace in modern French history.

Dear Mr. Martin,

In recognition of your heroic actions, and to show his gratitude, the President of the French Republic nominated you to the Legion of Honor. Created by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, it is the highest honor that France can bestow upon those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France.

I could not be more honored to present the Legion of Honor medal to you today.

So from the bottom of my heart: Thank you.

Now, I will continue in French.

Mr. Martin, au nom du Président de la République Française, je vous fais Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.

Félicitations,  
Congratulations.

## A Message from the President:

**BY MARILYN GIBB-RICE**  
**President, 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association**

Dear Members,

As you are aware, we voted to join with the 8th Air Force Historical Society at their reunion this year. If you are thinking of going, please make your hotel reservation **NOW!** The hotel fills up quickly. You can always cancel if your plans change.

The information about the reunion and instructions on how to register is included in this Flak News. We wanted to make you aware that the Friday night banquet, known as the "Rendezvous Dinner", will be when the 398th will be dining together as a group. We will not know where we will be having our board and general meetings until registration closes in September. We are planning to have the board meeting 8:00 - 9:15 on Friday morning and the general business meeting Saturday morning from 10:30 - 11:30. We will inform you of where our meetings will be held once you arrive at the hotel.

If you register and pay online (note: credit card fee of 3.5%), please make sure you put **398th BG** where it asks for WWII Group Affiliation (Please list BG/FG not BS/FS).

We look forward to seeing you in Dayton in October.

Marilyn

The following article was published May 5, 2017 in *The Chronical*, a publication based in Centralia, Washington.

## WWII Vet Still Carries Sharp Memories of Time Aboard B-17

By Jordan Nailon

**Lou Stoffer was on hand at the Olympia Regional Airport and Olympic Flight Museum last May and told his firsthand WWII accounts to visitors who came to see and fly in *The Aluminum Overcast*, one of the few restored B-17's still flying today.**

**Lou, an Engineer/Top Turret Gunner with the Grinter Crew, was joined by another one of our 398<sup>th</sup> veterans, Fred Parker, who was Tail Gunner on the Ballard Crew. Both men were in the 600<sup>th</sup> Squadron. They relayed their tales to the curious crowds who came out to see the impressive piece of military history up close and personal.**

**Lou, Fred and members of the *The Aluminum Overcast*'s crew were all on hand in order to help communicate what it was like to fly on a bomb loaded B-17 over Europe during wartime.**

During his time aboard a B-17 Flying Fortress, Lou Stoffer managed to survive attacks from Nazi fighter planes and a headlong crash into a dense forest that caused his airplane to erupt in a bomb-laden fireball. Still, he says the scariest part of his run in the 398th Bomb Group was flying through clouds of exploding shrapnel, commonly known as flak, that was launched 6 miles in the air by German ground forces in an effort to tear apart metal and flesh alike.

"I don't know how the pilot put up with all that flak all around us and just missing us," said Stoffer, 92, of Centralia, Washington.

Stoffer was just 19 years old when he was drafted into military service toward the end of World War II. While 73 years have flown by in the interim, he still remembers the harrowing experiences like they happened yesterday.

"When we first got over there the pilot fell off his bicycle and broke his arm and we flew with another pilot for five missions," recalled Stoffer. "On his next mission that pilot was shot down and the whole crew got killed. We really lucked there."

Stoffer served from July 1943 until October 1945 and logged missions in a number of different airplanes during that time. Of course, those changes were made out of necessity rather than convenience once his crew's first plane crashed when it stalled shortly after takeoff.

"We were taking off with a full bomb load and a full gas load and crashed into an oak forest. It killed two guys [S/Sgt. David Flores, Navigator Trainee and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Francis Harrod, Navigator] and sent two of us to the hospital including me and the co-pilot [1<sup>st</sup> Lt. James L. White]," said Stoffer. "It was all on fire when we came down."

Stoffer said that he suffered a separated shoulder during the crash and was the last one out of the burning plane. Moments after he made his exit under the help of his fellow crewmembers who had returned for him, the airplane erupted in a ferocious ball of flame that tore through the forest.

"The people who lived around the airport [Station 131] were amazed that anybody survived it because by the time I got into the ambulance the whole plane blew up," said Stoffer.



This is all that was left of Grinter's B-17 "*Here's Hopin'*" after it crashed on take-off December 24, 1944 (the photo above was taken the next day). In his *Timeless Voices* interview on [www.398th.org](http://www.398th.org), Lou recalled the crash; "We dropped into a bank at the end of the runway losing our gear, bounced into the air, pancaking into the Gypsy Farm Oak Forest, plowing into large trees like they were mere matchsticks. We were on fire after the first bump."

Thanks to a keen eye and some resourcefulness, many of Stoffer's memories are well catalogued in a photo album. That album has been cobbled together with photos he took or accumulated during his service time. The photographs that he took himself were captured via a 35 millimeter black and white camera using bootleg film.

He says that the guns on the bombers were affixed with cameras, and when the roll of film got low, down to about 10 feet or so, the tail end would simply be chopped off so a new roll could be installed.

Somewhere along the way an enterprising film monger realized that those cuttings could be packaged and resold to the enlisted men for personal use. It was a resource that Stoffer utilized well in capturing rare scenes of B-17s flying in formation amid exploding shrapnel, trucks full of German POWs and a bird's eye views of German targets in the moments prior to, during and after the mass bombings delivered by a formation of B-17 Flying Fortresses.

**Story Continued on page 10**

**8<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION  
CROWNE PLAZA DAYTON  
OCTOBER 10-14, 2018**

## **REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Please see the hotel information on page 6 and make your reservations immediately. Once your hotel reservation is confirmed, proceed with the reunion activity registration. See itinerary information on pages 7 and 8 and complete the Registration Form on page 9 noting your event choices and personal information. By "WWII GROUP," we're asking for the group or unit in which you served or are affiliated with (*we have prefilled '398<sup>th</sup> BG' for you on the printed form*). The 8thAFHS uses this information for tallying totals for each group, nametags, and seating arrangements. If you prefer to sit with a different group, please give them that information too. The 8<sup>th</sup>AFHS does *not* need your squadron. **Remit by mail with check or money order payable to Armed Forces Reunions by September 7, 2018.** You may also register and pay by credit card online at: <http://www.8thafhs.org/new/reunions.php> A 3.5% convenience fee will be added to credit card reservations. *Forms received after September 7 will be accepted on a space available basis only.* Hotel reservations should also be made by September 7, but we encourage you to do so much sooner.

## **ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. CANCELLATION POLICY**

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less a \$10 per person processing fee. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$10 processing fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 4:00pm Eastern Time, excluding holidays. Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.

## **8<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY DUES**

Most reunion activity registration forms include a principal attendee and possible guests. Examples include: A WWII Veteran and his wife, a Next Gen Attendee and her son, an 8AF Enthusiast (no relation to a WWII Veteran), etc. *The principal attendee must be a dues paying member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society to attend the reunion,* so at least one person on the registration form must be in good standing as a member of the Society for that person and his/her guests to attend. If the principal attendee is not a member, Dues, \$40 per year, may be paid on the registration form.

## **REGISTRATION FEE**

Everyone is expected to pay the registration fee, \$45 per person, which is *totally* different and separate from Dues.

## **MEAL & TOUR CHOICES**

NEW FOR 2018: There are no meal packages! Because the hotel room rate includes a hot breakfast each morning, there is no need for a meal package. All other hotel meals can be purchased separately and are listed on the registration form.

In addition, tours are listed on the registration form and can be purchased separately. Tours and trips are described on page 8, and prices are listed on the registration form. Driver and Staff gratuities are *not* included in the tour prices. All trips require a minimum of 35 people. Please be at the bus boarding area five minutes prior to the departure time.

**HOTEL INFORMATION**  
**CROWNE PLAZA DAYTON – DAYTON, OH**  
**(937) 224-0800**  
[www.cpdayton.com](http://www.cpdayton.com)

**Location**

33 E. 5th Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402

Ideally located near the Dayton International Airport and situated in the heart of the city, near the Oregon Arts District, guests can enjoy shopping, dining, and entertainment just minutes away.

**Reservation Information**

Please call the phone number above and reference the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society or please go to [www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2018](http://www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2018) and click on the hotel reservation link "**8th AFHS Reunion**" under the "*Reunion Information*" heading. The hotel will allow *no more* than two reservations per call (or click). Reservations should only be made for yourself and/or a family member. Separate names will be required for each room reservation.

**Group Name:** 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society  
**Reunion Dates:** October 10-14, 2018  
**Rate:** \$124 + tax (currently 13.25%) for 1-2 people  
(\$10 add-on per night, per person  
for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> person).

**Rate includes hot breakfast each day.**

Rates will be offered three days before and after official reunion dates, with advanced reservation notice and subject to group block availability.

**Cut-off Date: 09/7/18.** Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

**Cancellation Policy:** All reservations must be accompanied by a credit card guarantee. Reservations can be cancelled up to 6pm on the day of arrival. No shows and late cancellations will be charged.

**Parking & Shuttle Information**

Complimentary airport shuttle service is offered to and from the Dayton International Airport. Call the hotel once your airline ticket is booked to make your shuttle reservation and to obtain more information. The hotel also offers a complimentary shuttle service to the local area. As is the case with all complimentary shuttles, space is limited and considerable wait times may be necessary during busy arrival/departure times. You may want to pay for a taxi instead. The hotel also offers complimentary parking for guests staying at the hotel.

**Wheelchair Rental**

**ScootAround** rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call (888) 441-7575 or visit [www.scootaround.com](http://www.scootaround.com) for details or to make reservations

**Unit Hospitality Rooms & Friday Events**

A limited number of hotel meeting rooms and parlors will be used as hospitality rooms for individual groups, as well as meetings on Friday. Depending on the size of the room and the number registered for Friday's dinner, the same rooms may be used for those dinners. Rooms will be available to set up beginning Wednesday afternoon, and should be vacated by Sunday morning at 10am. Groups are allowed to bring in their own beverages and dry snacks. Ice will be provided. Hospitality Room bars must be closed when Receptions show on the reunion agenda (each evening). Rooms will be assigned based on the size of the group after the cut-off date and may need to be shared if lots of groups are interested. Small groups may need to combine with others for hospitality and/or Friday night's dinners. None of this can be confirmed until we know how many groups would like a hospitality room and how many people register from each group to determine final counts. To be included in group counts, each person must have paid the registration fee and be a dues-paying member of the Society (or the guest of one).

**8<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OCTOBER 10 – 14, 2018  
CROWNE PLAZA – DAYTON, OH**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10**

- 1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration**
- 6:00pm - 7:00pm Welcome Reception with Cash Bar and Snacks, followed by dinner on your own
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm 8th AFHS Board Meeting
- 7:00pm - Until Hospitality Suites open

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11**

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests
- 8:00am - 11:30am **Reunion Registration Open**
- 9:00am - 2:00pm DAYTON CITY TOUR (*description on Page 8*)
- 1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**
- 2:10pm - 2:50pm Curator's Corner
- 3:00pm - 5:00pm Seminar on Crash Site Excavations \*
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm Cash Bar Reception
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Buffet Dinner and World Premiere, "The Cold Blue" by Erik Nelson & Peter Hankoff \*

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12**

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests
- 8:00am - 11:30am **Reunion Registration Open**
- 8:00am - 9:15am Group Meetings
- 9:30am - 2:30pm NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE (*description on Page 8*)
- 1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**
- 3:00pm - 4:30pm Q & A WWII Vets
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm Cash Bar Reception
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Rendezvous Dinners (**\*NOTE: this is when we'll have our 398<sup>th</sup> Group dinner**)

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13**

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests
- 8:30am - 11:30am **Reunion Registration Open**
- 8:45am - 10:15am General Membership Meeting
- 10:30am - 11:30am Heritage League Meeting
- 11:30am - 12:00pm Box lunches available for pick up (**pre-purchase only**)
- 12:00pm - 3:30pm 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Board Meeting
- 12:30pm - 4:45pm CARILLON HISTORICAL PARK / PACKARD MUSEUM (*description on Page 8*)
- 5:00pm - 5:30pm **Reunion Registration Open**
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm Cash Bar Reception
- 6:30pm - 6:45pm WWII Veteran Group Photo (Tentative timing. Please check final schedule for update).
- 7:00pm - 10:00pm Gala Dinner and Program

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14**

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests

**\* SPEAKERS ARE TENTATIVE AT THIS TIME AND WILL BE CONFIRMED PRIOR TO THE REUNION.**

## TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

### DAYTON CITY TOUR

Thursday, October 11

The birthplace of aviation, Dayton was once home to powered flight inventors, Orville and Wilbur Wright. Your guide will narrate the significance of the many interesting sites along this tour, including Oregon District, the city's oldest suburb; the Civil War Monument; the Flyover, an award-winning sculpture of flight; the Korean War State Memorial; and Memorial Hall, where veterans are remembered. Learn the history of the Miami Valley from the first settlers in 1796 to the influence of such entrepreneurs as Patterson, Deeds, Kettering, and Frazee. These notables and others made immense contributions to aviation, the arts, sports, government, and industry. There will be a short stop at the Esther Price Candy Store, now a successful candy distributor, which opened 50 years ago in Mrs. Price's basement. Enjoy lunch on your own at Dayton's upscale shopping and restaurant district, The Greene – featuring Cheesecake Factory, Chipotle, Panera, Subway, and many other dining choices.

**9:00am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel**

**\$38/Person includes bus and guide. Lunch on your own.**

### THURSDAY EVENING BUFFET

Thursday, October 12

A special showing of *"The Cold Blue"*, a documentary by Peter Hankoff and Erik Nelson featuring several 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force veterans. In 1943, William Wyler, one of Hollywood's most renowned and versatile directors, went to Europe to document the Air War in progress. Wyler flew actual combat missions with B-17's --- and one of his three cinematographers was killed during filming. Incredibly, all of the raw color footage Wyler shot for the *"Memphis Belle"* was recently discovered deep in the vaults of the National Archives, and a new film has been constructed out of the material. *"The Cold Blue"* is a meditation on youth, war and trauma, and stands as a tribute to one of the world's great filmmakers, and the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force who flew mission after suicidal mission in the Second World War. Nine of the very few surviving veterans were interviewed in the summer of 2017, and their voices take us through the harrowing world that Wyler and his cameramen captured in that summer of 1943.

***All Trips require a minimum of 35 people.***

***Please be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the published time.***

***Driver and Staff Gratuities are not included in the tour prices.***

### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE US AIR FORCE

Friday, October 12

The United States Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is the oldest and largest military aviation museum in the world. The Museum tells the exciting story of aviation development from the days of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk to the Space Age. More than ten galleries showcase various exhibits including over 300 aircraft and missiles, plus historically interesting aeronautical displays. Exhibits are known to change and move, but lots of planes are on display, such as the P-51, P-47, P-38, B-24, and B-26. The newly refurbished B-17 Memphis Bell, one of the most recognizable symbols of WWII will be on permanent display at the museum. In addition, the Presidential Gallery is located here featuring a collection of presidential aircraft, some of which you can walk through. The museum also features an IMAX theater and flight simulators (admission on your own). Have lunch at your leisure in one of the cafes on the mezzanine or second floor. The buses will shuttle back to the hotel at 12 noon, 1pm, and 2:15pm.

**9:30am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel**

**\$38/Person includes bus and escort.**

**Lunch and IMAX on your own.**

### CARILLON HISTORICAL PARK / PACKARD MUSEUM

Saturday, October 13

Carillon Historical Park celebrates the history of invention, transportation, and pioneer life in Dayton and the Miami Valley. It is home to a variety of collections, which document the area's history. While touring the Park, you may visit Newcom Tavern, Dayton's oldest standing building; view the Wright Flyer III; and board a 1903 Barney & Smith Parlor car. Antique automobiles, a working 1930's Print Shop, and vintage bicycles are some of the other exhibits you will see along the way. Continue the tour and step back in time at America's Packard Museum, where the Packard Motor Car Company comes to life again. Located in the original Packard Dealership Building, which was built in 1917, the museum has officially taken the name of the original dealership - The Citizens Motorcar Company - but has become known as "America's Packard Museum." View the world's largest collection of "Packard only" automobiles in the actual showroom. This unique museum showcases "the world's finest motor car" from its beginnings in 1899 to its demise in 1956.

**Note:** *This tour may be limited to the first 100 people, or different schedules may be followed. A lunch break is not included on this tour, so consider **pre-purchasing the box lunch** to eat before departure.*

**12:30pm board bus, 4:45pm back at hotel**

**\$54/Person includes bus, escort, and admissions.**



**8<sup>th</sup> AFHS ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM – OCTOBER 10 – 14, 2018**

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will participate in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as confirmation. You may also register online and pay by credit card at [www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2018](http://www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2018) (3.5% will be added to total). All registration forms and payments must be received on or before September 7, 2018. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. Your contact information will be shared only with reunion attendees.

**Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.**  
**322 Madison Mews**  
**Norfolk, VA 23510**  
**ATTN: 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS**

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inputted \_\_\_\_\_ Nametag Completed \_\_\_\_\_

**CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/7/18**

	Price Per	# of People	Total
<b><u>DUES</u></b>			
The principal attendee must be a member of the 8AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are not a member, please pay your yearly dues here.	\$40		\$
<b><u>REGISTRATION FEE</u></b>			
Includes meeting expenses and other reunion expenses.	\$45		\$
Reg. Fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel	\$30		\$
<b><u>MEALS</u></b>			
Thursday, 10/11: Dinner Buffet (Chicken w/ Honey Brie Dijon Sauce & London Broil w/ Chimichurri sauce)	\$42		\$
Friday, 10/12: Rendezvous Dinner (Rosemary Lemon Chicken)	\$38		\$
Saturday, 10/13: Box Lunch (sandwich, chips, cookie, water)	\$16		\$
Saturday, 10/13: Banquet (Please select your entrée below)			
Herb-Roasted Prime Rib	\$45		\$
Grilled Salmon w/ Creamy Leek Sauce	\$45		\$
Chef's Choice of Vegetarian Entrée	\$45		\$
<b><u>TOURS</u></b>			
Thursday, 10/11: Dayton City Tour	\$38		\$
Friday, 10/12: National Museum of the US Air Force	\$38		\$
Saturday, 10/13: Carillon Historical Park / Packard Museum	\$54		\$
<b>Total Amount Payable to <u>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</u></b>			\$

Please Print. **If a WWII Veteran is registering on this form, please list his name first.**

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) \_\_\_\_\_

8AF VETERAN     OTHER VETERAN     NEXT GEN     HERITAGE LEAGUE     OTHER

IF A VETERAN, PLEASE CIRCLE: WWII    Cold War Era    Korea    Vietnam    Gulf War    Desert Storm    Iraq    Other \_\_\_\_\_

WWII GROUP AFFILIATION FOR UNIT TOTALS & SEATING ARRANGEMENTS (please list BG/FG, not BS/FS) **398TH BG**

SPOUSE NAME (if attending) \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_  NEXT GEN

PHONE # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_    EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS?  YES  NO **(PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).**

HOTEL RESERVATIONS SHOULD BE CONFIRMED BEFORE SUBMITTING THIS FORM. PLEASE CHECK YOUR CONFIRMED HOTEL:  
 CROWNE PLAZA DAYTON     OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_ PH. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Aside from dangerous takeoffs, explosive cargo, piercing shrapnel and enemy fighter planes, personnel aboard a B-17 had to fight the cold. Flying 6 miles high in an open airplane, Stoffer says the temperature would drop to at least minus 50 degrees F at times.

"The problem with that is that's as low as the thermometer went so it could have been colder," explained Stoffer. He noted that the flight crews were equipped with electric suits in order to keep warm. "You had to have those or you would freeze to death."

Stoffer is a natural storyteller and has quite obviously never shied away from rehashing a good tale for an eager listener. He says he enjoys the opportunity to bring old stories to life for people whenever he can and considers visits from one of the few B-17s that is still able to go airborne as good an opportunity as any to go tripping down memory lane.

"My grandkids all like to show up. They kind of like going there when I'm there and listening to what's going on," said Stoffer, who believes that the firsthand accounts help to make the experience more real for visitors who are trying to get a feel for what life aboard a B-17 in full service was like.

When Stoffer returned home to the Hub City he went straight to work in the family business for Stoffer and Sons Sheet Metal. His father founded the business in 1932. Today he owns the company and his son handles the day-to-day operations.

"I arrived in Centralia the day the war ended in Germany. They closed up all the bars and liquor stores in the city for some odd reason," remembered Stoffer. Lou doesn't drink himself but admitted to helping a fellow serviceman from the 398th find his way to a celebratory bottle on that momentous day.

Stoffer admits that to this day he often goes back to his photo album or sits down to watch a showing of "Memphis Belle," the 1990 Hollywood rendition of life in the tightknit B-17 contingent.

"It does affect you. Really. We lost 293 guys from the 398th," said Stoffer, who flew a full slate of 35 missions before he was sent back home to Centralia. "My only mission that was a milk run, with no flak and no fighters, was my last mission."

\*\*\*\*\*

We thank Jordan Nailon for giving his permission to use excerpts from his article in *The Chronicle* about Lou. Jordan wrote that he has "a deep well of admiration and respect for the men who undertook those missions in their flying fortresses". He also said he would be honored if we mentioned his grandfather in the *Flak News*. We are proud to do so.

Walter Nailon flew 25 missions as an Engineer / Top Turret Gunner with the 96<sup>th</sup> BG, 338 SQ on a B-17 named "Lucky Lady". He flew his missions from May 4, 1943 to September 16, 1943. That included the August 17 mission to Regensburg, Germany, the first shuttle mission of the war.

Photo at right: T/Sgt. Walter Nailon (standing, viewer's far left) and crew with their B-17 F, "Lucky Lady".

One more thing about Lou. He received his French Legion of Honor Medal on June 6, 2017... the same month as Dick Martin! Following is the letter he received along with his medal from the Consulat General De France A San Francisco.



## CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE A SAN FRANCISCO

*Le Consul General*

June 6, 2017

Mr. Louis Stoffer  
Centralia, WA 98531-4529

Dear Mr. Stoffer,

By decree of the President of the Republic of France, you are appointed a Chevalier (Knight) of the National Order of the Legion of Honor.

This award testifies to the President his high esteem for your merits and accomplishments. In particular, it is a sign of France's infinite gratitude and appreciation for your personal and precious contribution to the Allies' decisive role in the liberation of our country during World War II.

The Legion of Honor was created by Napoleon in 1802 to acknowledge services rendered to France by people of exceptional merit. The French people will never forget your courage and devotion to the great cause of freedom.

It is a true pleasure and honor for me to convey our sincere and warm congratulations.

I am enclosing your medal with the present letter.

Once again, please accept my heartfelt congratulations.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel LEBRUN-DAMIENS  
Consul General of France



# BRIEF – things

## 35<sup>th</sup> Annual 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA Reunion together with the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Dayton, OH Reunion - Oct. 10 - 14

Hello all. If you are planning to attend our reunion this October, it is very important that you make your hotel reservations at the Crowne Plaza Dayton **NOW**. We hear the hotel fills up quickly. You can always cancel your reservation prior to your arrival date without being charged. Also, please submit your 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Reunion Registration Form as soon as possible. Their reunion coordinators keep count of how many people from each WWII Group sign up. If the 398<sup>th</sup> BGMA has a good number, we will most likely be assigned a "Hospitality Room" which we can use for our Memory Room, PX, Board Meetings and Rendezvous Dinner on Friday night. The more members of our organization who register and attend the better! Detailed reunion information including the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Reunion Registration form can be found on pages 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. You may register by completing and mailing the registration form on page 9, or register online and pay using a credit card on the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS website: <http://www.8thafhs.org/new/reunions.php>

Will you be joining us on our Biennial overseas trip "Journey Back to England Tour" in May? It is now past the deadline to sign-up with our tour company, but you could still come on your own, join us for the memorial services and tour the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum May 25<sup>th</sup> through the 28<sup>th</sup>. See the January Flak News for the full itinerary and tour descriptions. We hope to see you there!

*Lee Anne Bradley, Flak News Editor*



Cartoon by Bob Stevens

Permission granted by Barbara Stevens to use in the Flak News

# 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group PX

## ORDER FORM

(The Second Generation)

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

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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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## 398th BOMB GROUP FLAK NEWS

### FLAK NEWS

C/O Lee A. Bradley, Editor

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USA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



From page 4. **Lou Stoffer poses for a portrait with a photo album full of memories from his time as an Engineer / Top Turret Gunner with the 398<sup>th</sup> BG, 600<sup>th</sup> SQ.** Photo by Pete Caster, photojournalist. Pete's photos of Lou ran with Jordan Nailon's May 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 story about Lou in The Chronicle, a publication serving Louis County in Washington State.