The D.D. Noordman sawmill in Leiden, Holland was photographed on May 1, 1945 by crews of 388th BG planes 10 miles north of the first Chowhound drop zone in Ypenburg, outside The Hague. Built in 1804, the mill is now a national landmark.
From the President’s Desk

Many ways to preserve the 388th heritage.

As the years pass, the determination to preserve the heritage and history of the 388th Bomb Group takes on a dimension of urgency. We already have a substantial amount of documentation. But hidden in the minds and storages of our Veterans, there exists, without a doubt, a great amount of personal memories, impressions and photographs, that would add to our rich collection. We want to share these memories with you. It would be beneficial to the younger generations that are joining our membership, if you, the Veteran who served, would again search your records and submit items that would be of interest to the entire membership. Bring your items to our next reunion in Kissimmee!

The Air Force Memorial Foundation has recently started a program called the Airmen’s Heritage Archives Project, under the Presidency of Michael M. Dunn, Lt. General, USAF (Ret). They will chronicle the experiences of those who have served in the United States Air Force, collecting written as well as verbal recollections. You can find more information at www.airforcememorial.org, or telephone 703-979-0674. Why not submit your experiences to this project, and further cement the rightful place of the 388th Bombardment Group in the history of the United States Air Force!

I wish you and your families a pleasant summer, and look forward to seeing you in a few months!

George Sundblad

NEW EDITORS: The Tom Dennises. Sr. and Jr. Tom Sr. began his membership with the 388th BG in August 1943 as pilot of a crew, and ended with his discharge from Indian Town Gap Pennsylvania, at war’s end. Tom Jr. joined in New Orleans in Sept. 2007 as an auxiliary, and became immediately active. Our goal and challenge is to do our best to equal the great work done for years by Jan Pack Singer.

Memorial Fund
Christine Calderon Nina Lofdahl Chris and Gerald Siess

In Memory of …
Joe Capraro, by his widow Ann and by Ray and LaVern Rome
Reid Perryman, by his widow Marie
Ralph M. Reese, by his son Allan

Correction
The 2008 Treasurer's Report as printed in the Spring newsletter was missing the ‘08 Ogden Reunion Expenses in the amount of $21,492.42.
Thank You For Your Donations

John H. Anderson      Jack Heinz      Agnes Schultz
Albert Arenowitz      Kermit Lofdahl  Donald Scott
C.E. Beck             Joe and Doris Hild Chester Sharp
Thomas A. Bolan       David & Esta Stewart George Little
Mildred Burda          Barbara McAllister Ruth Taber
Mary Carr             Paul Patten     Carol Walker
Allen Castner          Alan Peeples    Neil Walker
Betty Curvat           Leo Rector     Donald W. Wisser
Marvin Finding         Harold Rosenn   William Worthen

Knettishall Tales

By James Zographos

A Very Unusual Experience

When I returned to my air base for a second tour of duty, I was assigned to Lt. Tom Morrison’s crew as a bombardier. The crew had not flown in combat and I was part of the crew for six missions.

My navigator was an enlisted man by the name of Jack Dempsey. I would be with him in the nose of our airplane.

On one mission, some time between Nov. 25 and Dec. 15, 1944, we had just dropped all of our bombs and were leaving the target area to return to base.

I started to gather my maps and other equipment and looked back at Dempsey. He was leaning against the side of the plane’s nose and it looked like he was just snoozing. I figured that he was just tired and resting.

I returned to packing the rest of my gear and something just made me stop and look back at Dempsey. I then noticed that he was turning blue at the neck below his oxygen mask. I then knew what had happened! He had leaned on his oxygen tube and was getting no oxygen. At our high altitude a crew member without oxygen actually feels that he is sleepy and just dozes off.

I immediately loosed the oxygen tube from his back and started to give him 100% oxygen. I kept slapping his face until he came to and told him that he had almost died on me. He was still in a daze. If my sixth sense had not made me look back that second time, Jack would have died.

In December 1953, I won a two-week trip to California. At the time, I was a pharmacist and store manager for the Liggett Company, which was a chain store entity in the drug trade.

At the hotel where our group of other winners was hosted, we met every night before dinner for a social hour. One night, the host came to me and told me that the bartender assigned to us for this event was almost sure that he knew me. He then asked what had happened! He had leaned on his oxygen tube and was getting no oxygen. At our high altitude a crew member without oxygen actually feels that he is sleepy and just dozes off.

I immediately loosed the oxygen tube from his back and started to give him 100% oxygen. I kept slapping his face until he came to and told him that he had almost died on me. He was still in a daze. If my sixth sense had not made me look back that second time, Jack would have died.

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At the hotel where our group of other winners was hosted, we met every night before dinner for a social hour. One night, the host came to me and told me that the bartender assigned to us for this event was almost sure that he knew me. He asked me to go over and see if this was so.

I did not think it was, because 3,000 miles separated us. We eliminated schooling, etc., and when I asked him about war service, we both hugged each other.

It was none other than Jack Dempsey!

Our host and others were surprised! What a coincidence that, after nine years, we would meet again. When Jack related the incident of the plane and said that if I had not had that sixth sense, it would have been his end. He never dreamed that he would one day again meet the person who saved his life.

Memorial To Get Facelift

After 23 years, the 388th BG Memorial in Coney Weston is in serious need of refurbishing, reports Tony Goff, chair of the Memorial Committee.

Tony has consulted with Perfitts, the stonemasons who created the Memorial back in 1986. They have recommended that, rather than touch up the fading and peeling paint, the surface should be stripped and new paint applied. The cost is expected to be less than $1,000.

The Association Board has authorized the Memorial Committee to proceed with the repairs, and will reimburse all costs.

With the balance in our Memorial Fund down to little over $1,200, the Board is asking all members to consider helping their Memorial by donating what they can to the Fund. Checks for this purpose should be marked “Memorial” in the memo section. As with regular donations, these should be sent to Bit Snead, treasurer, and made payable to 388th BG Association.

Tony anticipates the refurbishment will begin in late June or early July, and will send a report and photos when completed.

Welcome New Members

Tommy Clementzlor, friend of George Sundblad

Ralph E. Henderson, 561st Squadron *
Denise Issac, daughter-in-law of John Parker, 561st Sqd.
Alan Peeples, son of Raymond Peeples, 560th Sqd.
Joel Rary, son-in-law of Bit Snead, 561st Sqd.
Gail Todd, daughter of William Worthen, 562nd Sqd.

* Original 388th BG Man
OPERATION
CHOWHOUND
PART TWO

The 388th BG began its Chowhound missions on May 1 in poor weather. The first mission, to Ypenburg outside The Hague, was a nervous one. Despite German assurances, the truce was not entirely trusted; and so all gun positions were manned. But when no resistance was encountered on the first day, the guns were put away and members of the ground echelon were invited along.

As they approached their “targets,” the planes repositioned from the usual box formation flown during combat and instead flew in a single column of three planes across. To ensure the least potential damage to the food parcels, they flew low to the ground, at an average of 400 feet.

After May 1 all 388th missions were to Schiphol Airport outside Amsterdam. On May 4 the entire 8th AF was grounded due to bad weather.

Statistics for the drops made by the 388th BG were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. Planes</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1 The Hague</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2 Schipol</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3 Schipol</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>73.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5 Schipol</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>73.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6 Schipol</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>371.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Several members of the 388th BG Association provided personal reminiscences, diary notations, and photos for the making of this article. Here are their stories.

Marshal Shirley, Ball Turret Gunner, 560th Sqd
The 388th Bomb Group flew five food missions to Holland on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th of May, 1945. All flights were over the occupied territory under truce conditions. Food was dropped from an altitude of 400 feet at an indicated air speed of 135 mph.

Our crew, Oh Kay, flew on the third mission on May 3 and after more than 63 years, certain memories are retained. I vividly remember coming in low over a field that had been prepared for the drop and seeing people out in the field waiting for the food – a dangerous situation – but, under the circumstances, understandable. The field had been prepared before we came with the words “Thank You, Boys” spelled out with tulips and other flowers. A sight that brought tears and a few words of prayer for these people who were starving but yet enthusiastic enough and thoughtful enough to put on this display.

We flew low over the buildings and we could see scores of people atop the buildings, waving flags and handkerchiefs and celebrating our efforts. Our reward was fulfilled with this sight.

I remember flying over the German gun emplacements and seeing the huge 88mm guns tracking us and we could see the crews manning the guns clearly, knowing that we could be easily shot out of the sky for the least provocation. We were relieved to leave that situation. From my position in the ball turret, I had a bird’s eye view of the whole situation and could clearly see all the activity including seeing three or four men jumping into the canal to retrieve parcels that had gone astray.

It was a day to remember, and of all our 30 missions flown in combat, it stood out to me as being the most memorable. The others, hopefully, would soon be forgotten.

Mervin Fribush, Radio Operator, Nagel Crew, 561st Sqd.
My crew was on two Chowhound missions – one to Amsterdam and the other to The Hague. I remember we had wooden platforms in our bomb bays to hold the food packages – the same ones we used later to take some French prisoners of war from Linz, Austria to Paris.

In the years after the war I had a chance to visit Alaska.
While on the ship I heard some man with a Dutch accent and I asked if he remembered a food drop. He said he was a young kid and remembered running for the food.

I did not have to spend any of my money for beer on the rest of the trip.

**J. Roger Swihart, Intelligence Officer**

I went on the third Chowhound mission, which was to the drop zone at Schiphol Airport which served Amsterdam. Chowhound was the code name for the operation, I suppose to signify the food zone at Schiphol Airport which served Amsterdam. Chowhound was the code name for the operation, I suppose to signify the food area.

The missions were special because they occurred before the end of the war and we were not sure the Germans would hold their fire. We were to go very low and very slow so we were easy targets … so we had some misgivings heading into the drop areas. We were just kids and a little apprehensive – I was 21 and the oldest member on the crew!

What I remember most about the missions were the Dutch people lining the dykes and waving at us. The drop areas were the only places above the water level as they had flooded their country to stymie the Germans.

As we dropped the food, some of the packages burst on hitting the ground and this brought a sense of sadness that we did not get it all delivered intact. But the people on the ground waving to us was the highlight of my entire tour.
dropping food to people who were reportedly starving.

We were in a euphoric mood with the war in Europe about to end and after side and holding that position for several minutes. We were in a few feet of the fuselage of the plane on our starboard drop zone.

On the return flight I can recall "sticking" our right wing tip within a few feet of the fuselage of the plane on our starboard side and holding that position for several minutes. We were in a euphoric mood with the war in Europe about to end and after dropping food to people who were reportedly starving.

WALLACE MILLS, WAIST GUNNER, BARBRE CREW, 560TH SQD.
We flew on May 1st, 1945 to The Hague. In my notes I wrote that the weather was rough. We formed and flew very low – people were waving to us.

May 2nd – To Amsterdam, also a low flight and weather was bad. We flew over German anti-aircraft guns going into the target area, a whole lot in the city, people ran out into the area as we dropped the bundles of food. Four members of our crew were on those missions: Harold Swope, co-pilot; Claude Hampton, toggelier; Marvin Schert, ball turret gunner and myself, waist gunner.

HAROLD SWOPE, CO-PILOT, BARBRE CREW, 560TH SQD.
The Barbre crew flew two Chowhound missions. According to records kept by our navigator, A.B. DeJarnett, these were on May 1 and 3. I don’t recall much about preparations for the missions but I think the pilot, co-pilot, navigator and two or three other crew members went on this missions. Large boxes or bales of K-rations and other foodstuffs were loaded on our plane. I can recall large gallon-size tins of cheese included.

We flew as low and slow over the drop zone as was allowed. We were so many fields of beautiful tulips. We flew over the town to acknowledge their sentiments. I positioned myself in the nose of our plane where I waved a white handkerchief in response to their kind gesture. The people appeared outside their homes waving articles of their attire which would flutter. It was truly a sight to behold and it gave me the satisfaction of knowing our efforts were truly appreciated, making all of the Chowhound missions well worth our effort.

HARRY SPRAGUE, BOMBARDIER, WILSON CREW, 560TH SQD.
On Wednesday, May 2, while some buddies and I were sightseeing in Edinburgh, we got word that Hitler committed suicide and Doenitz was taking over. We caught the train back, stopping at Newcastle, Grantham and Thetford. I had nine letters waiting for me. Boy, was that a booster. It was 0100 before we got to bed then after 2-1/2 hours sleep they got me up to fly a Chow Mission to Amsterdam.

The Germans still occupied parts of Holland but through a truce they agreed they would not fire on us. We flew at 600 feet most of the way, but dropped to about 400 feet as we approached the airport outside Amsterdam. I can remember all the flags flying around the airport and people lined all around the perimeter waving. I opened the bomb bay doors and toggled out the supplies. They hit and bounced down the field and since there were more flights coming I didn’t see the people rush out to gather them. I’m sure some of the stuff broke open but it wouldn’t spoil because there were no perishables or liquids, just stuff like K-rations, etc.

The got me up again at 3:30 a.m. on Friday, May 4 but they scrubbed the mission, at least our portion. On Saturday, May 5, they got me up at 4 a.m. for the last chow mission that I flew with Boyd. He buzzed even lower than the other two. It was a repeat of the other missions with crowds of people around the airport and all the Dutch flags flying. It was hard to realize the dire straits that the Dutch people were in. I can’t remember my emotions at the time other than it felt good to be delivering food for the starving people.

Ralph Kenyon, Co-Pilot, Myrick Crew, 563rd Sqd.
I flew one mission with Operation Chowhound. It was a mission I will never forget; I get goose bumps whenever I think about it.

Prior to the mission, several practice drops were made at our field to see what speed or height would be best to keep from damaging the food. As I recall we went in at 100 to 150 feet, 100 to 112- mph. The food was in small gunny sacks, about the size of 10 lbs. of sugar.

As we crossed the Channel and came to landfall, the levees all were crowded with thousands and thousands of people – men, women and children all waving and shouting, thanking us for coming. A sight I will never get out of my mind.

We made the drop in open fields. A plane ahead of us kicked out a single rack and I saw it hit the ground near a cow. It jumped and ran off, as though thinking “what was that?"

Frank B. Lewis Jr., Ball Turret Gunner, Lucas Crew, 563rd Sqd.
My memory is not as infallible as it once was … May 1945 is a long time gone. My records show that I was on the third Chow-hound mission in B-17 E/210 and again on the sixth mission, delivering C-rations or 10-1 rations.

We flew in low and just above stalling speed. We had covered the bomb bay doors with light plywood in order for the boxes to slide out. We also carried many ground crew members to show them part of the continent.

We arrived lined upon a small airport the directly over the town, dropping our boxes in bunches as we kicked them loose and out. Hundreds of people were on rooftops with flags and clothing waving at us. These people were starving and very happy to see us; quite gratifying to us airmen.

Joe Savadel, Navigator, Lucas Crew, 563rd Sqd.
I was a navigator on John Lucas’s crew. I don’t remember much about those missions. I do remember flying down the runway at Amsterdam, getting ready to drop the supplies, when a red flare went off from the ground about 500 feet ahead. I was scared and not sure what it meant. Apparently it meant nothing since we dropped the food and continued home.

Several years age my wife and I were at a local shopping center here in Delaware. I was standing next to the car when a women came up to us and asked if I had been in the 8th Air Force. She had seen the 8th AF plate on the front of our car. I told her yes and she said she had been a small child in Holland during the war. I told her about the mission dropping the needed food. She remembered that and told us how much all the Dutch appreciated that.

It left me with a great feeling that what we did was still remembered and appreciated.

Frank J. Smith, Waist Gunner, Lucas Crew, 563rd Sqd.
I was on three Chow runs. I was on the John Lucas crew (Jamaica Ginger, which we flew back to the States after 137 missions. We were the last crew to fly it).

We dropped on an old airfield near Amsterdam, this side of The Hague. It was the only place not under water – and we saw a few bomb blast holes. I remember looking down onto German trucks – we were at 500 feet.

Dutch people were all along the dikes, waving flags, sheets – whatever they could get their hands on. We could tell they were very joyous.

I remember one thing. I always had Kelly, our radio operator, to look in on the bomb bay to see it was clear. On one of the flights a 25-lb bag (powdered eggs) had rolled off the top of the load and onto the catwalk. Kelly took it to the back door, caught the eye of a guy on the ground, and pushed it out. The guy had to splash through water to get it. Hope it wasn’t soaked.

It was several years ago but some of that still sticks with you.

Jerry Scanlon, Radio Operator, Pistole Crew, 561st Sqd.
I don’t remember if it was two or three food drops that we, Bob Pistole’s crew, flew to Holland, but I do recall the sense of satisfaction the missions provided.

At the low altitude and speed at which we flew, it was difficult to focus on anything for very long, but I do recall seeing a young German soldier at “parade rest” on a street corner looking up, mouth agape, as we flew over. I believe he was very young as his head seemed lost in his helmet. So many four-engine bombers flying so low overhead must have been an awesome sight and sound! This glimpse could not have lasted much more than a second but has persisted in my memory for more than 63 years.

Most of what I observed was from the left waist window until we were near the drop area at which time I went forward to the rear of the bomb bay and, with the engineer at the other end, ensured that our foodstuffs were all unloaded. My general impression of the people on the ground was of everyone rushing in the same direction, on foot and by bicycle, as we flew overhead.
A few days before the German surrender, we were briefed to fly our first “humanitarian” mission. The first was our “chow” mission to drop food to the people in occupied Holland. Our flight was to be at an altitude of just 200 feet, so each of the hundreds of bombers could drop 600 pounds of food with the least damage to that food. Since we were assigned to be the lead plane for this mission, we were the first to cross the coast of Holland. Looking down all I could see were German soldiers at their gun sights, and we hoped they had gotten the message for their guns to remain silent.

What also amazed me that first day was that although Holland was still occupied by Germans, the streets of Utricht were filled with thousands of Dutch citizens, all waving either Dutch or American flags. The following day the citizens of Utricht had made a sign using white rocks on the airport. It said, “Thank you boys.” At least someone was happy seeing our bombers overhead.

A personal note – after the war I returned to school and eventually became a dentist. Down the hall from my dental practice was a dental lab. In that lab was a Dutch dental technician. He told me that he was there on the ground the first day we dropped the food. It really is a small world.

Bob Slockett, Tail Gunner, Faurot Crew, 560th Sqd.

We went on two mercy missions to Amsterdam and The Hague to drop food to the starving Dutch people before the war ended. The flights were made on May 2 and May 3; the war ended on May 6. We flew over main airports of these two cities at 300 feet or less, indicating 130 mph. We carried a crew chief and first sergeant with us; all the ground personnel were going. No guns were carried.

Lyle K. Vale, Pilot, 561st Sqd.

We flew the first Chowhound mission and did lead a squadron of the 388th that day. For that mission we used six ship formations and went in at 500 feet. The low altitude necessitated the small size squadrons to keep the lower element of three ships off the ground. This mission was scheduled many prior times but then cancelled at the last minute as we were not sure the Germans were going to hold their promise to hold their fire.

For hundreds of miles the Dutch were on house tops waving white flags (bed sheets) on long poles – giving us a welcome that still raises the old “goose bumps” when we think about it. When we actually dropped the food cartons in the middle of a large white circle at the designated airfield, many of the starving Dutch people were out in the circle and we were concerned that they might get hit by falling rations.

Paul Dell, Engineer, Vale Crew, 561st Sqd.

I was flight engineer, top turret gunner on Lt. Kenny Vale’s crew, having flown missions with our nine-man combat crew.

We were briefed to fly from Station 136 to the coast of Holland. I’m not sure at what altitude we crossed the Channel. At the coast, as we approached the German anti-aircraft guns, we were to cross at 500 feet. I can remember looking down from inside of those gun barrels as the German gunners were cranking the gun controls and keeping us in their sights. If I remember it right, we had no ammunition.

Once across the coastal fortification, we descended to 300 feet above the ground. As we flew further inland, we saw barns and
houses standing in dike water up to the middle of the doors and windows. The enemy had destroyed the dikes and most farmland was flooded, contributing to the food shortage. I have read that 2,000 souls were dying from starvation each week.

Our great ground crews had fitted our bomb bays with trap doors that would release like bombs. We carried six huge sacks of food which were stored in the bomb bays. When the doors opened the sacks were released. Though we flew only about 100 feet (or less) above the ground with wheels and flaps down to slow our speed, still some of the sacks spilled open as they hit the ground. Volunteers from the Dutch were standing by ready to scoop up the supplies. (Some time very much later, I met Co. Ari De Jong, his wife and family; and he explained how, as a young teen, he had eaten some of the powered eggs he was supposed to bring in. He foamed at the mouth, got sick, threw up and was incapacitated for days afterward. It seems his system was to used to solid food.)

This was our first trip to Schiphol Airport. We had to see what it was like in Europe. So after the food was dropped, we headed for Amsterdam to see for ourselves what it was like. Since we usually flew our missions at about 30,000 feet in the air, this was different. What a show! What a spectacle! People were in the street dancing. All was total chaos as we flew around a tall steeple whose top was above us. We flew in circles around that steeple and saw the faces of the people as we flew by. Oh, what a day that was! In my mind’s eye, I see it yet today. In all the times that I returned to Schiphol, I have the same rush. It is as marvelous today as it was then.

As these were mercy missions, no guns or other armament were permitted on the planes according to the agreement between the Allies and the Germans. Also, the Dutch people (there were thousands), many of whom held signs made from bed sheets saying “Thanks Yanks” and “Welcome Yanks.” There was a great deal of excitement to the point where some women lifted their skirts over their heads. I guess they were saying thanks, too.

All of the above is the true story of the events as they happened in 1945 and afterwards. I am a thankful survivor of those Horrible-Wonderful days of that year.

**Eugene Yarger, Pilot, 562nd Sqd.**

We were designated as a lead ship on the first Chowhound mission as I had flown some lead aircraft in our bombing missions. Due to the fact the war was still on they declared a truce so the Germans wouldn’t interfere with our mission. They didn’t want us to fly above 50 feet on the way into the drop zone. We left the formation and flew around the drop zone for 30 minutes as a single ship to be sure they weren’t going to fire on us. After 30 minutes we dropped the food and headed for home as a single ship.

On leaving the Amsterdam airport we popped over a ridge and almost hit a V-2 rocket on its launching pad. A lot of Germans were running, thinking we would hit it, but I managed to miss it. We flew directly back to Knettishall and landed.

**Warren Butler, Co-Pilot, DeBruhl Crew, 561st Sqd.**

I have often recalled the two missions we flew on Operation Chowhound. One was to The Hague and the other to Amsterdam. As best I can recall, they were back-to-back. The training was brief – only over two days – and focused on how the food would survive the low level drops.

We were briefed to fly a close formation. Our route was a special one, and we were not to deviate from it. The missions were about four hours long.
White crosses were laid on the fields and the crews’ instructions were to salvo the food on the white crosses. The Dutch people had been instructed to wait until all the planes had cleared the field before attempting to pick up the food. I have a very vivid memory of the Dutch people all waving white towels as the crews flew over.

As a note, a lady in our church is from Amsterdam and as a 12-year-old was one of the many waiting on the ground to pick up the food. She recalls being so hungry that she ate some of the bread and butter before she got home. Her mother was furious with her!

Ralph Simmers, Jr., Co-Pilot, McIntire Crew, 563rd Sqd.

That flight was a long time back. I remember volunteering and the briefing about course and altitude and the altitude we would go in to drop the food. If I remember we went in with wheels and flaps down at about 300 feet. That put the low man in the flight about 150 feet … no room for a mistake!

Our first trip in we were shot at by some small group of Germans who didn’t know the war was over. We had a belt of 50 calibre shells left on board so we fired back. We were told later that we should not have done that, but they did not shoot at us any more.

We went in over a football field to drop the food and I can remember the people lining both sides of the field waving and having big signs thanking us for the food. It was very heart rendering.

My wife and I went back to Europe in 1989 and stopped in Amsterdam to see the tulips in bloom. We asked the owner of this little hotel where we were staying about a tour of the tulip field and surrounding area and if he knew of the field where the food was dropped in 1945. He remembered the area very well. He was a young boy and was there with his mother. He arranged for the tour bus to go by the field, which is a beautiful park now. The bus stopped at the park and the tour guide told everyone about the food drop and that one of the pilots who brought them food was aboard the bus. Back at the hotel the owner was so grateful he would not let us pay for anything.

Alvin Lewis, Waist Gunner, Taylor Crew, 562nd Sqd.

If my memory is correct we flew on missions 308 (May 2) and 311 (May 6). These missions were handled like any other; they were loaded by the ground crews and we were the delivery crews.

The planes made their drops from a very low altitude, between 200 and 500 feet; so low that the last group of planes had to be careful not to hit the church steeples. We could see the smiles on the peoples’ faces, and the German soldiers walking around with their guns and not firing at us because everyone was waiting for the food; all were very hungry. It was very satisfying, knowing that we were helping out people for a change.

Paul Harris, Bombardier, Cleo Seimer Crew, 560th Sqd.

Tuesday, May 1: Briefing at 3 a.m., with alternate rain and snow falling. Seversky, the designer, was in attendance; we were told he designed the bomb bay doors onto which the food cartons were loaded. We were told the Dutch people were starving and a truce had been agreed by the Germans so they would not fire at us. There was a rumor that one group of British planes had attracted some small arms fire. Going in at about 400 feet, we dropped the food on an airfield south of The Hague, while the Dutch people were held back from the drop site by armed German soldiers. As we flew over towns and cities on the way in and out, people were gathering in the streets waving at us. There was still a mixture of rain and snow as we flew back to Knettishall, where we landed at around 11 a.m.

Wednesday, May 2: We were called at 5 a.m. for briefing and took off in a snow storm at 8 a.m. Due to the heavy cloud formations over the English Channel, the Group split up because of poor visibility. We went in at 400 feet and dropped food on an airfield at Amsterdam. Crowds of people waved to us and on the ground were signs reading “Many Thanks.”

As planes ahead of us dropped their loads, one of the boxes tumbled into a canal or stream, and I saw a young boy dive into the water to retrieve it. We flew through rain back to the base, where we landed at 11:30 a.m.

Sunday, May 6: Had briefing at 8:30 a.m. and took off in good weather at 12:30 p.m. We dropped the food on an airfield near Amsterdam where large crowds waved from around the
perimeter of the drop zone. Flags were flying from many buildings as we made our exit, arriving back at the base at 4 p.m.

Years later, in the 1970s, our son was house hunting in Houston, TX, and my wife and I accompanied him and the realtor to look at a home. While they were touring the place, I was talking with the lady of the house who said she was from Holland and had married an American serviceman at war’s end. I told her I had not been to Holland but had flown over some of it as we dropped food in May, 1945. With this the lady grabbed my hand, looked at me through tear-filled eyes, and sobbed, “thank you.” She said the food we had dropped had come at a time when they were starving, and she had never had the opportunity to thank anyone personally for what the U.S. had done for them.

Her heartfelt “thank you” made it all worthwhile.

Editor: We would like to thank all the 388th veterans, their wives and widows, whose efforts in putting their memories on paper, combined with the loan personal photos, diaries and newspaper clippings, made this article possible.

Fifty Years Later
By Paul Dell

In the late winter of 1994, I received a telephone call from Bob Cooperman, informing me that, as a Chowhound participant, I was in invited to the Netherlands in May to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Chowhound food drops. I agreed to go.

In April 1995, we flew from Kennedy Airport in New York to Amsterdam. Then, by military transport, we went to Rotterdam and the Hague and other cities in western Holland. We were booked in fine hostels and were treated royally.

Every morning, we were transported by military open trucks to that city’s public square or garden. Then the burgess, somewhat like our mayors, would give a speech of appreciation and thanks. After that we mingled with the very enthusiastic crowds.

On the second day, we mingled with the people. I was having a conversation with two Dutchman when I noticed a middle-aged lady talking with an older lady and looking my way. The older lady was in a wheelchair. Our eyes met and she smiled and made a small gesture like she would like to talk. I excused myself from the two men and moved toward the two ladies. The younger lady met me halfway. We shook hands and she told me that that was her mother in the wheelchair. She said that her mother did not speak English but she desired to shake my hand. She asked if I would do this for her and I said I certainly would.

As I approached the elderly lady with outstretched hands, she took my hand and feebly pulled me down and gave me a Dutch hug. The younger lady said, “Mother would like me to tell you that your food drops saved our lives; for she was starving and I was a baby in her womb at that time.” That really touched me and still lives in my heart all these years later.

On one of the later days of the celebration, 42 of our 8th Air Force veterans and an equal number of veterans of the British Royal Air Force and their wives were guests of His Royal Highness, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands at Soestdijk Palace. After a social hour or so, we veterans were lined up in front of His Royal Highness’ palace. Then the Prince bestowed on and around our necks a medal struck just for the Chow Hound and Manna appreciation celebration.

That afternoon, we would travel by military open trucks through the city streets. The streets were crowded with people as our convoy passed. People would crowd up to the side of the vehicles just to touch an American ... a very humbling experience.

There were ticker tape parades and confetti floating down from the tall buildings. Experiences of gratitude I shall never forget as long as I live.
Reservation Form for 388th Bomb Group (H) Assn. Reunion, Sept. 2–5, 2009

NAME___________________________________________________________________________________

STREET ADDRESS________________________________________________________________________

CITY_______________________________________  STATE____________   ZIP_______________

TELEPHONE(_____ )__________________________  E-MAIL ADDRESS_____________________________

GUEST(S) First and Last Name(s)_____________________________________________________________

Registration Fee (includes Saturday breakfast) FEE IS REQUIRED FOR ALL ATTENDEES

Registration Fee  (Received before July 1st) $50.00 x ________ = ______________

Registration Fee  (Received after July 1st) $60.00 x ________ = ______________

Thursday  NASA Kennedy Space Center: Tours, Exhibits, Buffet Lunch with an Astronaut

 Adults $62.00 x ________ = ______________

 Children (ages 3 – 11) $45.00 x ________ = ______________

Friday  Fantasy of Flight Museum: Exhibits, Demonstrations, BBQ Lunch at Museum

 Adults $42.00 x ________ = ______________

 Children (ages 6 – 15) $32.00 x ________ = ______________

Saturday Banquet (includes tax, service charges, gratuity)

 Grilled Marinated Chicken Breast $34.00 x ________ = ______________

 Marinated Flat Iron Steak $34.00 x ________ = ______________

Memory Book $14.00 x ________ = ______________

Donation to the 388th BG Assn. General Fund


TOTAL ______________


Make Checks Payable to 388th Bomb Group Assn. Mail reservation form and check to:
Henry and Betty Curvat, 1624 Hammond Blvd., Jacksonville,FL 32221
Telephone: (904) 783-4442           E-mail: Henry@388th-ReunionPlanners.org

To cancel and receive a full refund, contact Henry and Betty Curvat, Reunion Organizers, before the
cut-off date of August 24, 2009. No refunds will be made for cancellations received after August 24.

*Bring your Name Badges from last year's Reunion in Ogden! Let Betty know if you need new ones!

*Suggest a location in the Western United States for our 62nd Reunion in 2011:
**388th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION 60th ANNUAL REUNION**  
Kissimmee, Florida  
September 2 - 5, 2009  
**CUT-OFF DATE FOR REGISTRATION** is August 24, 2009  
Any Reservation Received After 8/24/09 Will Be Accepted on a Space Available Basis

**Thursday, Sept. 3**  
8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
NASA Kennedy Space Center Tour: Includes access to Visitor Complex shows, exhibits, and IMAX films; Bus Tour to Apollo/Saturn V Center; U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame; Shuttle Launch Experience, Lunch with an Astronaut  
**BRING YOUR TICKET TO BOARD THE COACH**

**Friday, Sept. 4**  
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Fantasy of Flight Museum: Includes daily flight demonstrations, flight simulators, BBQ lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
**BRING YOUR TICKET TO BOARD THE COACH**

**Saturday, Sept. 5**  
7:30 a.m. -10:00 a.m.  
Association-Sponsored Breakfast Buffet  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
Annual Business Meeting  
5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.  
Cocktail /Social Hour (Cash Bar will remain open through dinner)  
6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.  
Opening Ceremonies, Dinner, Guest Speaker, Raffle, President’s Address and Passing of the Gavel, Closing Remarks

**The Hospitality Room Daily Schedule Will Be As Follows:**  
**Wednesday–Friday:**  
Open daily until 11 p.m.  
**Saturday:**  
Immediately following the Annual Meeting (approx. noon) to 4 p.m. and after the Banquet to 12:00 midnight

**Westgate Resorts Ramada Gateway Hotel Information**  
The Ramada Gateway is located in Kissimmee just a few short miles from Disney World, SeaWorld, Gatorland, Orlando Premium Outlets, and many other attractions. Parking is complimentary.  

**ROOM RATES:** All 388th BG Assn. members will receive the preferred rate of $53 per night for double occupancy + applicable taxes. The preferred group rate is good for 7 days before and 7 days after the Reunion for early arrival and if you would like to extend your stay.  
To reserve a room online, [www.ramadagateway.com](http://www.ramadagateway.com), select “reservations” from the Hotel's website menu and use 388 as the promo code to receive the 388th BG rates.  
Reservations can also be made by telephone, 1-800-327-9170, between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. EST. Use the rate code, G/388/0901, when making your reservation.  
An upgrade to Plaza Tower Suites on a space available basis ($10 extra, or $63 per night + applicable taxes) can be requested by calling the hotel directly.  

**CUT-OFF DATE:** Friday, August 21 is the cut-off date for guaranteed reservations. After that date, the Ramada will only be able to offer members reservations on a space-and-rate available basis.

**ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (MCO):**  
Mears Motor Shuttle offers transportation between MCO and the Westgate Ramada Gateway Hotel. Use the round-trip coupon, printed in this newsletter, to receive the 388th BG Assn. member discount and present it to the Mears Motor Shuttle at the airport. Make reservations for the shuttle online, [www.mearstransportation.com](http://www.mearstransportation.com) OR call 1-800-759-5219 and use the priority code 349437044. The shuttle may make stops at other hotels along the way. Taxis may cost between $50 and $60.  
All major car rental companies are conveniently located at MCO and it is an easy drive to the Ramada Gateway.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER**  
Detailed information for the Reunion activities and the Thursday and Friday activities will be in your packet, which you will receive upon checking in at our registration table at the hotel. Please take time to read through the information and time schedules and do verify that you and all members of your group have tickets to all the activities for which you reserved. PLEASE BRING YOUR TICKETS TO ALL THE ACTIVITIES.
A convenient and affordable transfer between Orlando International Airport and your hotel.

Instructions:
- Upon your arrival at Orlando International Airport, proceed to one of the Mears Motor Shuttle ticket counters and present this coupon to the Mears Counter Attendant.
- After redeeming your coupon below for a round trip ticket, please present your ticket to the Mears "Starter" located on level one at the curb.
- The starter will then direct you to a designated shuttle servicing the hotel. Our shuttles run 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, departing the curb approximately every 30 minutes providing shuttle service between the airport and your hotel.
- One day prior to your departure, please make a return reservation by calling our reservation number listed below.
- Plan to allow three hours prior to your flight time for your transfer to the airport.
- You can now book online! To receive your online discount, please go to www.mearstransportation.com, click on "Shuttles" in the "Make a Reservation NOW" box and enter your priority code number: 34947044.
- For questions/reservations, please call our toll free number at 1-800-759-8219.
- (If coming from central Florida, please dial (407) 423-6666).
- You must present this coupon for discount.

Mears Motor Shuttle...a great way to start your meeting!

388th Bomb Group Association

Conference Dates: 08/30/09 - 09/08/09  Valid Coupon Dates: 08/27/09 - 09/11/09

$3.00 Discount Off - Regular Round Trip Price: $33.00 per adult
Present this coupon to Mears Motor Shuttle Counter for round trip transportation to and from the Westgate Ramada

SALES # 044  ORDER # 349437

COUNTER COLLECTS PAYMENT
Tickets Must be Purchased Online or at Airport Location for Discount. Gratuity not included.

This coupon is valid for shared ride shuttle service via Mears Motor Shuttle.

Wait time may be incurred at the airport prior to departure.
Each vehicle may make additional hotel stops prior to your destination.

"2ND LEVEL"
"A" TERMINAL: DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM AMERICAN BAGGAGE CLAIM #5
"B" TERMINAL: DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM UNITED BAGGAGE CLAIM #24 OR DELTA BAGGAGE CLAIM #29

THANK YOU FOR USING MEAR'S TRANSPORTATION GROUP
Trip prices subject to change without notice.
Joseph Capraro passed away on February 21, at age 91 in Placentia, CA. Waist gunner on the Ken Larson crew in the 561st Sqd., he flew 31 missions between Nov. 1944 and May 1945 in the planes I’ll Get By and ’Ol’ Faithful.

Born in Lama de Peligni, Italy, Mr. Capraro was four years old when his family immigrated to the United States, settling in Denver, CO. to be near relatives.

After the war, he received his degree in education at the University of Denver, and went on to teach chemistry, physics and aeronautics at the high school level and later at Lowry Air Force Base. He then embarked upon a successful career with Pfizer, Inc. Promotions lead to relocations, first to Walnut Creek, CA in 1959, and then to Placentia, CA two years later. He retired in 1983.

Mr. Capraro was a past president of the 388th BG Association with his wife Ann was a regular attendee at reunions. He was also a contributor to the The 388th Anthology.

Survivors include Ann, his wife of 61 years; daughters Kris, Marcia and Mitzi; son Hal; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Burial, with full military honors, was at Riverside Military Cemetery.

Winton G. Ramsay
Winton G. Ramsay passed away Feb. 14 at his home in Quinby, VA. He was a pilot in the 561st Sqd., flying 34 missions between April and July 1944.

Mr. Ramsay is survived by his wife Betty and three children.

Ralph M. Reese, 89, passed away on May 30. A copilot with the Gauthier crew, 562nd Sqd., he flew 30 missions including several secret missions to supply the French underground. Awards received included the Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross, WW II Victory Medal, Honorable WW II Service lapel button, and EAME Service Medal with three service stars.

Following the war, Mr. Reese raised a family in Laurel Springs and later in Mendham, NJ. He spent a long career as a cost engineer with Allied Chemical Corp. and consultant to ATT Bell Labs. After his retirement, he moved to Sarasota, FL, where he lived for the past 20 years.

Survivors include sons Alan (388th BG Assn. past president and current director) and Ralph Jr.; daughters Kathryn and Lynn; and three grandchildren.

Mr. Reese was laid to rest with military honors at the National Cemetery in Sarasota, FL.

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60th Annual Reunion

This year’s Reunion in Kissimmee promises to be interesting and exciting. The group rate at the Ramada Gateway Hotel will be honored for 7 days before and after the reunion for those wishing to extend their stay. Not only are there exciting activities planned during the Reunion at NASA and at Fantasy of Flight, but other attractions such as Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World are mere minutes from the hotel.

Detailed schedules and tickets for Thursday's NASA Kennedy Space Center activity and Friday's visit to the Fantasy of Flight Museum will be included in your registration packet. At NASA, there will be plenty of wheelchairs available if needed. Upon arrival at the Space Center, the motor coaches drop us off at the Visitor Complex. We gather in front of the NASA logo sign where Chuck Lawsen will take a group photograph. We can spend the morning hours viewing exhibits and shows, testing the full motion space shuttle simulators, going to an IMAX movie, and walking through the Rocket Garden. A highlight for our visit might be our “Lunch with an Astronaut”. After lunch, NASA tour buses take us on a driving tour of the Center, Space Shuttle launch pads, by an 800-lb. eagle’s nest, and drop us off at the Apollo/Saturn V Center. Our last NASA activity destination is the Astronaut Hall of Fame.

There will be squadron number signs posted in the motor coaches for each day’s activity and we ask that you note the number of the coach you board each morning and that you board the same coach to return to the hotel. Taking photographs is permitted anywhere throughout the day.

You will find that the Fantasy of Flight Museum is not the typical walk-through museum. You may choose to sit in the cockpit of a WWII fighter and fly a mission. Take a tour to see how these airplanes are restored. Lunch will be an informal old-fashioned BBQ with hamburgers and hot dogs in the O’Club, where you can dine along the flight line and be surrounded by vintage planes, flight simulators, and other exhibits.

NOTE: There may be opportunity to take a bi-plane ride in a New Standard or the WWII trainer, a Boeing Stearman, for an additional cost. Please send us an e-mail or call if you are interested in the plane ride.

If you are flying into Orlando (MCO) and using the Mears Motor Shuttle to the hotel, be sure you have the discount coupon which is printed in this newsletter. Read their instructions carefully.

Our hosts at all the venues in Kissimmee have been working very hard to make our 60th reunion experience one to enjoy and remember. See you in Kissimmee!

Henry & Betty Curvat
Telephone: (904) 783-4222
E-mail: Henry@388th-ReunionPlanners.org
# 388TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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**IF APPLYING FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:**

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(Please fill in known information above, SQUADRON through POW information, for relative.)

**MAIL TO:** LINDA SOO, SECRETARY
388TH BOMB GROUP ASSN.
3013 MOUNT BAKER CIRCLE
OAK HARBOR, WA  98277

**EMAIL:** linda388@fiddlybits.com