Gratitude for the Greatest

Stephanie Hayes
Professor Collins
RHET 361-01
November 2, 2018

War memorials from World War II can be found all across the nation for civilians to give thanks and pay tribute to The Greatest Generation. It is understood across generations that without their sacrifices, we would not have what we are able to have today. Without them, we would not be a free nation. This generation represents all that America stands for – strength, perseverance, and justice. According to Erika Doss, (continued page 4)
From the President’s Desk

Today is Election Day!

It was my first opportunity to vote as a Washington State resident and my first experience using a ballot drop box – exciting stuff! During my drive to city hall and as I watched voter after voter walk to the ballot box and drop their envelope, I couldn’t help but feel a bit emotional. How truly blessed we’ve been to live in a country, protected and defended by our courageous Veterans so that we have the incredible right to vote for our Representatives. This afternoon, as I write this letter and prepare to watch the results of our country exercising those rights, I want to say a sincere thank you to all those in our membership who have served, or are currently serving, to uphold our Country’s freedoms. I am honored to represent the Association as your President this year and vow to serve our membership to the very best of my ability, upholding the legacy of our 388th Bomb Group members, and helping to guide decisions for the progression of our programs and projects.

I’d also like to thank Rick Thompson for his tremendous service as President last year. He wore many hats with our open Board positions and his continued service as acting Treasurer this year and has been a help to our progress on the financial side. We’ve also had a change to our BoD - Tony Smith has retired as our 2nd VP, so please join me in thanking him for his years of service on our Board of Directors. In his stead, we’re welcoming Cindy Hayes back to the Board to fill the 2nd Vice President seat. On that note, thank you to an outstanding Board of Directors, Officers, and Reunion Team – each of you inspires me to be better everyday and I’m so thrilled to be working with such an amazing team!

This year is already stacking up to be a spectacular one: Plans are underway for another fantastic Reunion, this time in St. Louis, MO. Our Knettishall Memorial Fund is going strong, and our Scholarship Fund is growing, allowing us to offer additional financial aid to the Scholarship winners. We’ve also added to our 2nd Vice
President position the role of Social Media Officer to oversee and heighten our media presence and communication. These are just a few of the projects we'll be working on this upcoming year, with many more updates and additional projects to come.

I'm looking forward to sharing the progress of the Association’s ventures with you as the year goes on! In the meantime, we're always eager to hear from our members, so please feel free to reach out to us and let us know how you're doing. Let's make it a great year!

Take care of yourselves and one another,

Kim

Correction to Minutes September 2017

I have been notified that an error occurred in my Sept, 2017 recording of the Knettishall Memorial Committee's list of English Committee Members. It was long-time member Tony Goff who stepped down from the Committee after many years of faithful service to our veterans. I apologize to any distress this may have caused Mr. Goff and the other members of the Knettishall Committee.

Ruth Castleberry, Secretary
COMING SOON!
Your 388th PX will be available online with many new items at www.388thbga.org under the store tab.

All merchandise INCLUDES postage!

“City of Savannah” Polo Shirts $31
“B-17 Flying Fortress” WWII Hats $25
388th Rhinestone Pins $12.75
B-17 Pins $12.75
Koozies $3.75
388th Lanyards (not pictured) $2.75
Bumper Stickers $1.75

“The purpose of war memorials is to honor soldier dead and to acknowledge social debt: thanks are expressed to those who died for a nation, on behalf of a cause” (Doss, 2012, p. 190). While the most well known WWII memorials are on behalf of everyone who fought in the war, there are also more specific memorials for certain groups within the U.S. forces. In the small village of Coney Weston, England at the Knettishall airfield, there is a memorial for the 388th Bombardment Group, who was in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 8th Air Force, 3rd Air Division, and 45th Combat Wing. The 388th consists of the 560th, 561st, 562nd, and 563rd squadrons (388th BG (H), 2018). Most war memorials have a threefold purpose of gratitude, remembrance, and inspiration, which can be found at this memorial (Doss, 2012, p.192). The 388th Bomb Group memorial in Knettishall connects the community by revealing similar feelings of gratitude among its residence. This gratitude is found through the creation and purpose of the memorial, individual community members’ interactions with it, and how it influences the community as a whole.

The memorial was dedicated in 1986 by the 388th Bomb Group Association and the people of Coney Weston and other nearby towns to commemorate the 388th members of the Air Force who were based in Knettishall throughout WWII. The 388th’s legacy is a very important part of this small town’s history. The memorial was designed by John J. Ryan who is a member of the 388th Bomb Group Association. The association’s mission is “To preserve for all time the history, friendships, memories and incidents of the members of the
Community members of Coney Weston show gratitude to the 388th by personally interacting with the memorial and working to preserve the group’s history. Doss explains that “Giving thanks in America … is historically associated with social consensus and political obligation” (Doss 195). People in this village not only feel obligated to pay their respects to the men who protected them all those years back, but they find joy and excitement in remembering and preserving their history. As town resident Keith Taylor claims, “There is a job to be done by we survivors before personal memories of history are lost” (K. Taylor, personal communication, November 1, 2018). As The Greatest Generation is getting older and few vets are still alive, it is crucial now more than ever to continue telling the stories of the past to keep their memories alive in younger generations, especially in this town where the 388th had such a big presence. Soon, no one who was alive during WWII will remain to recount their personal experiences. Citizens are able to connect to the memorial in personal ways, with its location being a pace where they can go to reflect. Recently, the retired first president of the Knettishall Committee Tony Goff visited the memorial to pay tribute to a veteran he knew who had passed away. He said, “I’ve not had a chance to get the jeep out for a while, so I took the opportunity to drive up to the airfield to say goodbye to Woody” (T. Goff, personal communication, September 16, 2018). The memorial serves as a memory marker and a place of deeper connection for many individuals of the community. It’s somewhere they can go whenever they need grounding.

Gratitude brings the whole community of Coney Weston together because it drives their collective effort in honoring the 388th as part of the town’s history. In May of 2018 the 388th Bomb Group Association planned a trip to Knettishall with the help of Deborah Sarson, the chairwoman of the Knettishall Committee. Two veterans and four other members of the group flew to England for the trip. The people of Coney Weston were incredibly kind and welcoming to the whole group, making sure that every aspect of the trip was taken care of. The day that the members of the 388th Bombardment Group (H) during World War II” (About Us, 2018, par. 1). The memorial in Knettishall consists of three black marble slabs, with a B-17 “breaking the chains of tyranny” and the group motto “Fortress for Freedom” engraved on the center marble piece. The two outer pieces say “In freedom they lived… for freedom they died” along with a list of the names of all the members who died in the war. On the ground in front of the marble walls there is a plaque with a map of Knettishall airfield and its runways (Museums & Monuments, 2018). The memorial paints these WWII airmen as heroes who risked everything to fight for the nation’s freedom. Just as Susan Sontag argues, “The memory of war … like all memory, is mostly local,” which is clearly expressed by the dedication of the people in Coney Weston to commemorate these airmen (Sontag, 2003, p. 29). The memorial is open and accessible to the public at any time, so villagers are welcome to come and go as they please.
the 388th BGA visited the memorial, the townspeople of Coney Weston organized a dinner and presentation for the group in Coney Weston Hall. A group of village women came together to make all the food for more than 100 people who attended the event for the veterans of the 388th. Doss says, “In a modern era of capitalist market economics and nation-states, however, gratitude is especially understood as a fundamental condition of the social contract, an important agent in social goodwill and civil order. Gratitude is thus perceived within relationships of reciprocity: of benefits given and received” (Doss 194). The townspeople of Coney Weston were thrilled to organize, show up, and contribute to this special event for two of the men who protected their village all those years ago. In their minds, this was the least they could do to give back to these great men and their families. Additionally, town resident Chris Flood notes that, “We are doing our bit to enhance awareness of the 388th by organising a Remembrance Walk around the airfield on November 10th to look at sites of interest.” He expressed his concerns that newcomers and children born after WWII will not be able to truly comprehend the extent of the airfield and the impact the war years have had on everyone. There is so much more to it than “the just recognition of the huge sacrifice of those lost and of those who survived the horrors of those days” (C.Flood, personal communication, November 1, 2018).

The 388th Bomb Group memorial in Knettishall connects members of the community by creating a common ground of remembrance and gratitude for the 388th airmen of WWII. This place of commemoration affects individuals as well as the entire Coney Weston village as a whole. Individuals show gratitude to the 388th by personally interacting with the memorial and spreading awareness of its importance. Through strong feelings to show gratitude to the 388th, the whole Coney Weston community has come together to preserve and honor the group as an essential part of the town’s history.
Applications for the 2019 388th-Bombardment Group Association Scholarship Program are now being accepted.

If you are 16-20 years old, related to a 388th BG Veteran and/or Association member, and in the college selection process, or in your first year in college, you are eligible to receive a $1,000 scholarship. We support and encourage you to embrace your future, wherever it takes you.

The awardee selection is based upon an essay you submit on:

“The 388th: Past and Present- Answering Our Nation’s Call.”

Essays will be reviewed and judged by a selection committee that includes WWII 388th veterans, 388th association members, active and retired military personnel and history teachers.

Contact Terry Woodford-Thomas for information and an application today! tthomas@danforthcenter.org or 314-587-1436.

The deadline to submit application and essay is May 31, 2019.
How Many 388th BGA Veterans Are Left?

Recently, I received a note from one of our original members who inquired as to how many of his brothers-in-arms were still with us. I did a sort on the old data base from my early days as secretary and provided him with a quick answer. I was asked virtually the same question during the recent reunion in Dayton, and promised to write a short article for the newsletter to provide everyone with the answer.

When I took over as Secretary, we had 370 original members listed in the old data base as Active. Over the past two years our numbers have declined, as we would expect. The 560th Squadron had 94 members in 2016; we now have 83 still listed as active. The 561st had 73 when I assumed my duties; today we have 64. The 562nd had 90 then and 73 are currently active; while the 563rd had 80 in the fall of 2016, and has 70 on the active list now. In addition, we have 8 veterans who served in two squadrons, and all of them are still active; 15 ground crew, and 8 members for whom I cannot locate assignment information. Today, overall we have 322 original veterans still on the Active list.

Of those that I have had to move to the Inactive status, 23 were listed as deceased. A few of those had actually passed away as early as 1992, but somehow we didn't get the information, or at least didn't get it into our records. Most, sadly, have taken flight since I took office. Nearly as many, though, (21) were listed as Inactive because we have had mail returned or notified by the Post Office that the mail is no longer deliverable. That may simply mean that living arrangements had to be changed and we did not get notified of new addresses. Additionally we have 11 who are in the Inactive category, but there is no reason listed.

I also did a sort to identify our WWII veteran widows. On the first sort, I only produced a list of 13 widows listed as Active, which I knew had to be an operator error. As I worked through the data base I found 253 names on the 2016 list. Sadly, 85 of them are now inactive, but most of those (46) have been lost to us due to mail being returned. Hopefully, they too have simply moved into other quarters, and forgot to send us a notice of their new addresses. Additionally 21 are listed as deceased, and 11 were moved onto the inactive rolls with no reason noted. Not entirely surprisingly, 7 have requested that their names be removed after their husbands died. This leaves us with 168 widows on the Active list today.

We would love to hear from our widows/wives of tales from the home front. Please share your stories with us for the newsletter, so that we will all have an appreciation for your sacrifices. Likewise, if we have any second generation members who are old enough to have memories of being without your dads while they served, or who want to share memories of their homecomings, please let us know.

If you need to update your contact data—address, phone number, etc., please let me know—

Ruth Castleberry
2 Beaver Ridge Rd.
Conway, AR 72032
Email: rcastleberry.fcdis@gmail.com.
Phone # 501-472-9068
(leave me a message if necessary).
Minutes of the 388th Bombardment Group (H) Association  
69th Annual Meeting of the General Membership  
August 4, 2018

1. **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by President Rick Thompson at 10:07 a.m.

2. **2017 Annual Meeting Minutes** - Attendees were provided with a written copy of the 2017 minutes, a draft of which has already appeared in the newsletter. Beau Jory Vanderburg made a motion to approve the 2017 minutes of the general membership meeting; the motion was seconded by John Boyer, and the minutes were adopted by the membership.

3. **Ratification of the Treasurer’s Report** - Rick Thompson explained that since he had assumed the responsibilities of the Treasurer, he could report that at the end of last fiscal year the Association had assets of approximately $52,000. Our balance is now approximately $65,000. He will place a more detailed report in the newsletter. Christy Wammack made the motion to accept the report; John Boyer seconded, and the members accepted the information provided.

4. **President’s Comments** - Rick Thompson welcomed both our faithful veterans, and those who were new and/or returning after a long absence. He indicated that after reviewing the minutes as to the officers who were authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Association, that he would be providing debit cards with spending limits to PX Director Christy Wammack, Newsletter Editor Steve Butner, and Secretary Ruth Castleberry to facilitate their ability to conduct the business of the Association. Ruth has already been provided with the ability to make deposits directly into the Association’s account to process dues payments and donations more efficiently.

5. **Officer’s Report** - Secretary Ruth Castleberry reported on a busy year, and provided a written report to the membership of the actions which the board was requesting the membership to ratify, which is attached to these minutes. Jack Vann moved that the Association accept the report and ratify the actions that the board has taken throughout the year; Paul Castleberry seconded and the motion was passed.

Terry Woodford-Thomas reported for the Scholarship Committee that this year’s winner is Bailey Gottheiner, great-granddaughter of T/Sgt. George Kistner, waist gunner/radio operator of the 561st Squadron of the 388th Bomb Group. Her essay will be published in an upcoming newsletter, and copies were made available at the meeting for those who wanted one. There was discussion about increasing the amount of the scholarship award, since $1,000 doesn’t go very far these days, and possibly of expanding eligibility to include descendants of the 388th Fighter Group. President Thompson indicated that the board would continue to work on recommendations for future consideration.

Ben Forrest Jr. reported on the Morgan Stanley Fund. The account manager is providing his services for free to honor our veterans. We invested $30,000 last year; we have had approximately $12,000 in donations, and $6,800 in earnings. These funds will be invested to support the Knettishall Memorial, and we are very close to our goal of having the Memorial Fund to the $50,000 level which would make the fund self-sustaining. Our Edward J. Huntsinger Memorial Scholarship funds currently have a balance of $4,400 (prior to awarding our 2018 winner her $1,000 scholarship). We will continue to solicit donations to fund both efforts of the Association. Paul Castleberry made the motion to accept the report on the Morgan Stanley Fund; David Stewart seconded, and the report was accepted by the membership.
6. Old Business – Rick reported that the 2019 Reunion will be in St. Louis in Labor Day. The Board made this decision due to the fact that we should already be well into planning for next year’s reunion, and to get us back on track of a three-year planning cycle.

7. New Business – Rick then asked for suggestions about the 2020 Reunion site. Among the cities mentioned were Bedford, PA (because it was the site of the earliest 388th BGA Reunions), Bossier City, LA (site of the 8th Air Force Museum), Abilene, TX (site of Dyess AFB, which has a static B-17 among its museum displays); and Seattle, WA (site of McCoy AFB, and home of Boeing Industries). After members lobbied for their choice, a vote was taken. Abilene, TX was the winner, with Seattle coming in second.

8. Election of Officers – Rick reported that Henry Curvat, James Zographos, Dick Henningeler, Steve Butner, and Ruth Castleberry will be willing to continue to serve the Association. Kim McDonald (currently 1st VP) will assume the Presidency, so we will need a new person to fill that role, and the Treasurer and Parliamentarian positions are currently vacant. Ben Forrest, Jr. was nominated from the floor to become First Vice President, and Rick Thompson was nominated to serve as Treasurer. No one appeared to be interested in the Parliamentarian position, but Rick indicated that he thought we could function like we have been since the position was vacated. Donna Smith moved that this slate be elected to serve the Association in 2019; Jack Vann seconded, and the new board was elected.

9. Other Business – Mr. August Bolino indicated that he brought some copies of his latest book to sell to anyone who wanted a copy. He said that the proceeds from the sale of the book The Eighth Air Force Won the War would go to Fisher House to help homeless veterans.

Terry-Woodford Thomas, Ben Forrest, Jr. and Cindy Hayes reported on the group’s trip to Knettishall this May. The Memorial Committee would like to purchase polished concrete benches so that visitors to the Memorial have a place to sit. Other plans include some type of visitors log for people to sign in, and information on our website, should any one wish to contact us. Ben indicated that Tony Goff who has served on the Knettishall Memorial Committee in England has stepped down, and that Ben Hogg will be replacing him. His wife Sally will be replacing Deb Sarson, another long time member, who will be leaving to go to New Zealand soon. Ben moved, and John Boyer seconded, that the Association send an official “Thank you” to English Committee members, and the membership concurred.

Terry reported that we have finally made contact with Colin Davy, the reclusive owner of the land on which the Memorial now sits. Paul Castleberry asked if we needed to concentrate our efforts on acquiring control of the property rather than improving the site if the owner could simply bulldoze it someday. Terry indicated that we do have a “Deed of Understanding” with Mr. Davy about the land and it use, but he has indicated that he might want to give us the corner. Getting that accomplished may take more than one face-to-face visit with Mr. Davy. She did say, however, that he is trying to preserve the airstrip, and has made the old officers’ quarters into his home. She said that he is trying to protect the land from looters, and the townspeople will also protect it. Ben felt that we just need to continue to build that relationship and work on the transfer of ownership.

Mr. Charles Woodford made the motion that we double the amount of the Huntsinger Scholarship to $2,000 and make it retroactive to the winner of this year’s competition. Terry Woodford-Thomas seconded. Ben volunteered to donate $2,000 into the scholarship funds. After some discussion, John Boyer offered an amendment to the motion that we make it $2,000 only for 2018, and discuss it again next year. Christy Wammack seconded, and the amended motion carried. The board members will consider Mr. Woodford’s recommendation to increase the scholarship amount and develop Guideline for the membership to ratify at the 2019 Annual Meeting. Members were encouraged to re-
member the Association in their estate planning and consider making gifts to the Scholarship Fund to help it get to a more stable fund. Ben did remind the membership that the current Investment Fund Guidelines approved by the membership last year calls for capping the Knettishall Memorial Fund at $50,000 and then transferring money into the Scholarship fund. Greg Staples recommended that this be tabled until next year to allow the board to develop guidelines for the Scholarship.

10. Adjournment – Charles Woodford made the motion to adjourn, and Christy Wammack seconded. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Memorial to 388th Bomb Group (H) at Knottishall Airfield, Coney Weston.

Thoughts of Coney Weston schoolboy, Keith Taylor

A background to these notes, made in November 2018:- I was born at Swan Lane, then Barningham, in June 1932 and lived there till 1959. Later, marrying, moved away from the area until returning to live about 18 miles away in 1988. I was at Coney Weston school till 1943 then went on to school at Bury St. Edmunds, long travel and schooldays. I remember over the early war years, military and aerial activity, walking, cycling locally to crash sites and aware of enemy bombing and over-flying. Visits by those from blitzed areas. Then the intense activity to build an airfield over farmland and as well as felling, reducing tree heights in approach areas. Then in mid 1943 the “Friendly Invasion”, walking around hutted sites, hearing strange accents, gazing over the hedge at close quarters to the first B17s, unaware really of the impact of serious losses, watching take offs and landings, even going onto dispersals and getting aboard war ready aircraft to be quite quickly hussled off! Until 2018 I had not attended any of the more intimate visits by Veterans and families. Over the years tho’, I was at the Memorial Dedication in 1986, events in 1992 and 2003 and then for the Extention Wings. Frequent visits to the area take me past the Memorial, former H.Q. cross roads site.

So now to offer something for Steph’s paper and which I do not find easy to express:- Coney Weston is the hub of several villages concerned. It is true that the local care and appreciation of the Memorial brings people together as do commemorative events attended by many, but I am slightly uneasy to try to judge whether among newcomers it does other than to serve to bring to their attention the history of the former airfield and its true significance. I hope and believe that continued efforts by present and future worthy custodians will be made to broaden education.

I believe the purpose of The Memorial is to record for all time the huge sacrifice made by so many, dead, physically wounded or traumatised, for the freedom of the world from unspeakable tyranny. That is what it means to me, both for the personnel of the 388th but also as a wider reminder.

Now, gratitude, remembrance, inspiration ? The first two certainly that when the need came there were those who rose to the occasion, so many giving their “today for our tomorrow”. The words “Lest we Forget” are on a plaque in the R.A.F. Memorial Flight’s airworthy Lancaster bomber. As to inspiration, I feel perhaps that’s for others younger than my 86+ years to say.

To close, I’ve remembered many things and over the years have read a great deal of those times and particularly of the endeavours of both the U.S. 8th Air Force and of the Royal Air Force. I object strongly to those who would re-write History and who offer judgment against the activi-
ties of our joint bomber offensive. This was without doubt right at the time and a very significant factor essential to aid the ground campaign. These forces of our two great nations made huge sacrifices using the methods available and developing hugely over the war years. I would quote the words of Air Marshall Sir Arthur Harris R.A.F., after referring to the earlier Nazi bombing blitz atrocities- “..... They sowed the wind and now they are going to reap the whirlwind.” They surely did!

388th Memorial Notes

Tony Goff
Market Weston

My background is one of someone not enthused by toy soldiers or WW2 but, having been born in 1956 with a former RAF Air Sea Rescue pilot as a dad who used old wartime U.S. army trucks with just a hint of ‘30s art deco auto styling (that I did become enthused by!) in his business, I was aware of the ‘basic plot’ of the war and the part played by American industry in providing the machinery of war.

Some 30 years ago having just moved to the Knettishall area I acquired a WW2 GMC truck of the kind my dad used and promptly discovered the Hillside Collection just up the road. So the truck became a 388th BG vehicle and attended the regular open days. This resulted in meeting visiting veterans and conveying some around the locality, and an interest developed in how the USAAF became established and organised in our country, and in the individual experiences of these American visitors.

In my view the 388th Association is firmly to blame for my now out-of control collection of USAAF airfield vehicles, many still awaiting restoration......

In 1996 I was asked to re-form the Memorial Committee (the two stalwarts having both passed away), which led me to the design and installation of the extension wing stones.

How has it / does it bring members of the community together?

The Memorial acts more as a focal point for remembrance by individuals and discrete groups rather than directly uniting the community.

But certainly whenever formal public events have been held (e.g. dedication in 1986, dedication of wing stones in 2012, veterans group visits, the annual Service of Remembrance on Armistice Day) the Memorial has a significant bonding effect on the local community, in that it turns out in force to share in remembering / thinking about past times and people.

It is interesting to reflect that what seems to bring the community together perhaps more than the Memorial itself has been the opportunity for personal interaction with veterans or family members who have a direct connection with the group represented by the Memorial. But then without the Memorial these events and opportunities would probably have been much fewer, if any.

This coming together of members of the community is in effect a measure of their healthy and on-going respect, both for those who died in the line of duty and for all those who served with the 388th at Knettishall.

The Memorial is apolitical. It transcends the rights, wrongs and questionable deeds that both sides may have committed, nor does it encourage the judging by today’s standards of past deeds, but instead allows visitors to focus solely on the sacrifices made by those directly involved in conflict.

The Memorial acts as a kind of time conduit, connecting anyone interested enough to investigate the Memorial with a past time and people that / who should not be forgotten - a time and
people that / who otherwise would remain unseen to them.

The quiet location of the Memorial and overall effect of the design provide an air of peace – almost serenity, encouraging those passers-by who discover it by chance to stop a while and investigate further.

What does the memorial mean to you? / what do you believe its purpose is? / Could you describe any feelings of gratitude, remembrance, and/or inspiration that you get from this memorial?

I believe the Memorial was intended to be an enduring physical manifestation of the feelings of surviving comrades and relatives toward those who died, with the intent that these men should not be forgotten.

Over time it has come to be regarded by the local community as more than that, it has become a tribute to all those who served at Station 136 in the line of duty - to borrow Keith’s words:

“to record for all time the huge sacrifice made by so many, dead, physically wounded or traumatised, for the freedom of the world from unspeakable tyranny”.

It is difficult not to sense something when one visits and spends a few quiet moments in contemplation. I know this sounds strange, but it is almost as if the visitor - who is in all likelihood disconnected from both those memorialised and the era - is able to share some small part of the emotions of those survivors and families who created the Memorial.

The Memorial is very effective at enticing passers-by to take a closer look, thereby focusing the onlooker’s mind on the sacrifices made in WW2 by American servicemen. This will naturally engender feelings of gratitude and remembrance.

It is noticeable that the wing stones, personalising and putting a large abstract number into context, have made a significant contribution in this respect, and reinforce the emphasis on remembering those who died. Passers-by who might have regarded the large number on the main stone defining the number of casualties as a statistic, however tragic, are now often seen paying close attention to individual names, even though they know nothing about them.

Which prompts another question – Is there anything else we could / should do to tell the story of these men whose names appear on the Memorial?

We are soon to enter a new era where there will be nobody left to tell it as it was, and to the extent that collectively we have short memories and lessons learnt from past conflicts tend to be easily forgotten once that generation passes, I believe that the Memorial will be able to play a leading role in focusing peoples’ minds. Future organised events and education opportunities could use the Memorial instead of direct contact with veterans as the focal point.

Is there a way to tell each individual’s story explaining their place on the Memorial, which would demonstrate the close bond between all who served, as well as the horror of war. Have a quick read of the attached short descriptions of how a handful of these men met their end (these were used in the extension dedication service, provided for us by an Association member - some other stories were left out, being considered too graphic to relate).

Now imagine a story for each and every name appearing on the stones……

Is this something we should do, or leave instead to the imagination of those who look and wonder about all those names?

Best,

Tony
David Woodford

Charles Albert Woodford, beloved member of the 388th Bombardment Group Association, died on Aug. 26, 2018 in Belleville, Illinois. He was 96. In his youth—

TAPS

David F. Stewart

David F. Stewart was born January 9, 1925 in Brown County, Texas to Maud (Coppic) and George Locke Stewart. He attended the Blanket, Texas school system, and graduated in 1941.

David served as a tail gunner on the Comer crew with the 388th Bombardment Group at Knettishall, and flew 33 missions in 1943-44. The great miracle of that crew was, that although they flew 18 different airplanes to complete those missions, none of the crew members suffered a wound which drew blood during any of their flights.

After being discharged from the US Army Air Corps he returned to Brown County and attended Howard Payne College in Brownwood, Texas. He met the love of his life there and married Esta Davis on June 22, 1946. Together they had three children—Frances (Paul Ammons), Ruth (Paul Castleberry) and Wayne (Ronda). They were married 69 years and 11 + months. They were also survived by 6 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

After graduating from Howard Payne in 1951, David went to work for William Cameron Co., and moved to Waco in 1953 to join their auditing crew. The company was bought and sold many times, and David worked for the new corporations, ending his career with Lowe’s in 1987. After his retirement, David and Esta restored two family cemeteries in which their grandparents and great-grandparents were buried. They were able to obtain Texas Historic Placards for both of them.

He served as an elder of the Lake Shore Drive Church of Christ in Waco, Texas, and was a beloved senior member. David passed away October 21, 2018, after a fall and brief illness. His service and interment was October 25, 2018.

Marvin W. Peters

Marvin W. Peters, 94, passed away November 10, 2017 at his home in Longmont, CO.

In the spring and summer of 1944, Marvin served in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a ball turret gunner on B-17 aircraft with the 388th Bomb Group. He successfully completed flying 35 missions in the European Theater of Operations. Among his missions were two flown on D-Day in support of invasion forces on the ground, as well as three low altitude flights dropping supplies to French underground resistance fighters. Among his decorations were the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal and the Air Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters.


He was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and the American Legion Post 32. Marvin enjoyed woodworking and fishing and he was a volunteer with the Longmont Police Dept., the OUR Center, and the Longmont Public Library.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William and Clara Peters, his sister, LaVerne Schultze, and wife Ruth. Marvin is survived by one brother, four children, eight grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. Internment was held November 17 at Foothills Gardens of Memory in Longmont, CO.

Charles Woodford

Charles Albert Woodford, beloved member of the 388th Bombardment Group Association, died on Aug. 26, 2018 in Belleville, Illinois. He was 96. In his youth—
ful years, Charles dreamed of flying in airplanes. His first airplane ride was in a Ford Tri-Motor, over his farming hometown in Iowa in which he paid for his ticket by raising and showing his sheep at the county fair. After high school, Charles worked in the experimental aircraft department of Hughes Aircraft in California. In 1942 as the Mighty Eighth Air Force became operation-ready for combat in World War II, he enlisted in the Army Air Corp to serve his country, and reported to Fort MacArthur near Los Angeles. Charles received his basic training at Kearns (Salt Lake City), Utah and armorer training at Lowry Field, Colorado. At Fort Myers, Florida, he attended gunnery school and then transferred to Moses Lake, Washington where he joined his B-17 crew. They trained together at Walla Walla, WA. He was fondly known as “Woody”. Charles became attached to the 388th Bombardment Group (H) at RAF Knettishall where he was designated as a tail gunner on the B-17G Flying Fortress, Lady Lillian. In November 1943 on his 11th mission over Germany, he was seriously injured when his plane took bad enemy flak. He made it back to base alive but his hospital stay in England lasted until summer 1944. A double Purple Heart recipient, Charles was honorably discharged from the military in 1945, having served three years in the Army Air Corp during WWII. He was the last surviving member of his original crew piloted by Hal Poland in the B-17G Lady Lillian with the 561st squadron.

Charles was united in heart and spirit with Phyllis Nadine Bondhus of Oskaloosa, IA on April 29, 1946 in a blessed marriage that lasted 56 years. He went to Iowa State University on the GI Bill and transferred to Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology in Tulsa, OK where he trained in aircraft and engine mechanics. He worked at the Middletown Army Material Air Base in Pennsylvania in air support for the federal government before coming to Scott Air Force Base in 1950 in an aviation career that lasted 29 years. He served as a flight mechanical engineer, plane inspector and a financial manager at the base. Charles also worked with the DODs Defense Communication Agency; in the Defense Commercial Communications Office (DECCO); and the Air Mobility Command within the USAF 3310th. After retiring from civil service, he was an Air Traffic Controller at Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology. Charles and his wife, Phyllis, avid high school sports fans, started the Belleville East Lancer Booster Club. Both were inducted into the Belleville East Hall of Fame and the football stadium at Belleville East is named for Charles Woodford. The Woodfords were devoted members of Union United Methodist Church where Charles sang with the church choir for 60 years, and as a team with Phyllis, volunteered each summer for 19 years with the U.S. Forest Service in Virginia, West Virginia and Montana. His loyalty and service to his country and community ran deep.

An active man always, he was a member of the American Legion, the Belleville News Democrat Advisory Board, the Turkey Hill Grange, volunteered as a docent on weekends at Cahokia Mounds Historical Site and went to every airshow and air museum possible. Among many tributes to his fine character, Charles was given a Citizens of Character Award in 2016. Belleville mayor Mark W. Eckert read a public proclamation for Charlie Woodford in recognition of his dedicated service to the Belleville community on December 18, 2017. Charles was able to make the trip to England and visited The Swan, Coney Weston, the 388th Memorial and Knettishall in May 2018 with other members of the 388th BG Association. With veteran Chuck Neff, he laid a wreath on behalf of the 388th at the Memorial Day Services at the Cambridge American Cemetery. Charles Woodford's resting place is now beside his wife at Lakeview Memorial Gardens, near Belleville. Charles Woodford will be remembered for his enthusiasm for all things aviation, his high spirit, generosity, kindness, humor, deep faith, patriotism, joy for life, love of family and friends, and finally, as a budding poker player at recent 388th reunions.
388TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL

Date _____________ Name ____________________________________________________________
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Pilot ____________No. Missions ______________ POW (Date) ______STALAG LUFT _________________

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Name of relation who is/was in the 388th _________________ Relationship to you___________
☐ (☑ box if you have prior military service.)

Please fill in known information above, Squadron through POW information, for relative.

RENEWAL and DONATIONS: ☐ Annual Dues ($20.00) ☐ Donation

UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION (make changes above for update) ☐ Address ☐ Email ☐ Phone

Mail to: Ruth Castleberry, Secretary, 388th Bomb Group Assn., Inc.
2 Beaver Ridge, Conway, AR 72032-8229 Email: secretary@388thbga.org or rcastleberry.fcds@gmail.com