FORTRESS FOR FREEDOM

388th Bombardment Group (H) Association

8th Air Force, 3rd Air Division, 45th Combat Wing
Station 136, Knettishall England, 1943–1945
333 Total Missions

306 Combat Missions, 19 Aphrodite Missions, 5 Chowhound Missions, 1 POW Mission, 2 Revival Missions

388th Bombardment Group Headquarters

VOLUME 76 ISSUE NO. 2 WINTER 2020
From the President’s Desk

To our 388th Family,

It has been my great honor to serve the 388th BGA as President for the second time. The close knit environment of our 2019 St. Louis reunion was quite the contrast to our 2020 virtual reunion exercise which could not have been more different. COVID-19 took the people-to-people part of this great organization away from us, but we did manage to keep the ball rolling, albeit with the Herculean efforts of a handful of folks. Thank you, Terry, for spending over 100 hours putting together a great video plus acquiring and sending care packages to all the Vets and Vet widows who desired them. Thank you to our Knettishall Memorial Committee in Coney Weston for their tribute to the 388th. If you haven’t already, I hope you view these two 2020 reunion videos that were lovingly created.

We have maintained good communication with our British supporters and are on track to continue with 388th BGA efforts in the UK. The story of the September 11th hijacking of Flight 93 is that our 388th pilots, along with those flying other aircraft, were able to save many lives. We are also continuing our interactions with Hill Air Force Base, home to the 388th Fighter Wing, with our assistance in updating the 388th Bomb Group display there.

In rounding out 2020, we find ourselves in a nice financial position to pay for those enhancements when we can execute. Our Knettishall Memorial perpetuity fund and Edward Huntingzinger Memorial College Scholarship program are strong.

We will be on the cusp of looking at our next reunion...the board decision to keep Seattle in play gives us time to decide how to move forward. God willing, with a vaccine on the horizon, I would encourage the continuation of the in-person reunions that can only be discussed during the pandemic. Guided by Ben and Sally Hogg, and their team, plus townspople, we continue to be amazed with their dedication to honoring our Vets and their significant efforts organizing live remembrances with videos, as well as photos and stories for us to enjoy.

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On a more personal note, as I reflect on the 388th BGA and how it has affected me through the years, many of you know that I got to know Terry Woodford-Thomas at our annual reunions, as we both frequently accompanied our Dads, tailgunner Charles and ball turret gunner Ben Sr. (Tony). I wonder if we have set a new precedent within our 388th family. (Matchmaking at its best). In case you are wondering, Terry and I finally tied the knot in October this year in a very isolated manner.

But, back to Association business. I’m happy to report that Ruth Castleberry has now taken the reigns, and a more capable and dedicated President, I cannot imagine. Let’s help to make her position as new 388th BGA President a pleasant and enjoyable experience as she guides us into the future. The best of luck, Ruth, I extend my gratitude to all Board Members as well.

I am going to close with great thanks to members of the board and others that dedicate significant time and energy towards staying in touch with our living veterans and their loved ones, and keeping the memories of our Fathers, Uncles, Grandfathers and others in the forefront. We have lost some wonderful people this year, whom we greatly miss. God bless you all as we look forward to 2021. The best of luck, resilient and filled with hope and thanksgiving.

With great love and respect for all of you. Let’s keep this plane flying!!

Ben Forrest Jr.

A Note from The Incoming President

Greetings from the Board of the 388th Bomb Group Association to all our members!

At the Board call in November, we did some planning for the Association and its future. One issue about which we have struggled for the past few months is, how do we have an orderly transition of power when we couldn’t have a 2020 in-person reunion? The Bylaws alone provide for the replacement of the President by the 1st VP each year, and I was elected to that position in 2019; we agreed that that should go ahead and occur. We are now looking for someone who is willing to step up into the rotation and accept the 1st VP position for 2021. If anyone has an interest to learn more about the job, just contact me at 501-472-9068, and leave me a message, as I may not pick up a call from a strange number. Ben Forrest will now rotate into the Sr. Director position, and Kim Klein will no longer hold that title, but will continue to help with the 2021 Reunion.

We have had renewed interest from the 388th Fighter Wing Museum at Hill AFB in Utah to expand the exhibit of their roots in the 388th Bomb Squadron, and they are requesting memorabilia, especially enlisted men’s uniforms. If any of you are interested in donating, contact our Historian Dick Henggeler at his number on the list of contacts in this newsletter. We also talked of upgrading our website to have a map of European memorials which garbage and communities have constructed in memory of our heroes, and several board members supported the idea of taking a trip to the British Isles and western Europe to see some of them after COVID. We believe that to accomplish this chore of finding these existing memorials and contacting the local citizens we need a “Memorial Officer” to be a liaison with these sites and the 388th board.

Our ties with the English Knettishall Committee are strengthening and they send a video of their recent Remembrance Day on Sunday Nov. 8th. This is the equivalent of our Veteran’s Day, and it is a very moving presentation. Hopefully it has been linked to our website for you to access.

Another, more immediate way we can keep the 388th memory alive is through our scholarship program. The Memorial Fund is solid right now, and we hope it will continue to thrive through interest earnings. We believe that more emphasis needs to be placed on scholarship opportunities for descendants of individuals who served in the 388th. Please consider making contributions earmarked for the scholarship fund so that we can also grow it up to be self-sufficient.

We are still struggling to deal with the costs of sending the newsletters via snail mail because we had so many veterans/widows who did not respond to our requests to verify their
current addresses. Unless someone notifies us of their passing, they remain on the rolls as active. If you are not a member, please sign up on the back page of the newsletter, and notify us of the passing of anyone who needs to be removed from the list. There will come a day when the newsletter will stop coming to anyone unless they have verified their current address.

We are still making plans to see you in Seattle in 2021.

God bless and keep you!

Ruth Castleberry

The 388th Bomb Group Edward J. Huntzinger College Scholarship Program: One Family’s Experience

Sheer excellence weaves itself through the generations of some families, rendering a beautiful tapestry of time and connection. Here is such an example.

We graciously remember George Ernest Kistner - Great Grandfather to Bailey and Alyssa Gottheiner. Mr. Kistner was part of the 561st Bomb Squadron of the 388th Bomb Group. George served as a B-17 radio operator and gunner while stationed at Knettishall. He served there from April 1944 to January 1945. Beyond his valor and patriotism, which you can read about in his Great Granddaughters essays, George was a talented writer himself. A moving example of his work, titled “Extra Gunner” can be found under the “Sources” section on his information page in the 388th Bomb Group database (www.388bg.com). Bailey and Alyssa used this memoir as one of their sources for their individual 388th BG essays. Irene Kistner, their Great Grandmother and George’s beloved wife, suggested they each apply for the 388th scholarship during their later high school days. And she was quite thrilled when they both won in separate years. In Mrs. Kistner’s words, “I am very proud that their Great Grandfather fought in WWII for our freedom so that we are able to choose how we want to succeed. I am happy that the 388th has provided these scholarships,” said Irene. “These scholarships have allowed my daughters to learn a lot about their Great Grandfather. They saw a heroic side of him that they never knew about. As they entered a new stage of their lives, winning their scholarships bonded Great Grandpa to them in a special way.” His memory now plays an important role in their college education and allowed him to help them and be present in this next phases of their lives” said the girls’ father, Kevin. Their mother, Kelly, who provided the family photographs and quotes used in this article, has also wholly supported her daughters through the scholarship application process. The family lives in Manning, South Carolina.

2018 scholarship winner: Bailey Gottheiner

Bailey composed a meaningful, fact-filled essay that reflected on her Great Grandfather, George Kistner’s WWII experience. It was an illuminating and heartfelt piece of writing that the 388th Scholarship Committee deemed first class and worthy of recognition. She was awarded the 388th BG Huntzinger Memorial Scholarship in 2018 based on the merits of her community service, academic excellence, work ethic and writing skills. Bailey is now a senior at Clemson University majoring in Political Science and minoring in Non-Profit Leadership. She spent her freshman year spring break in Washington on a Clemson-sponsored
trip exploring and helping with poverty in the area. She planned to spend her 2020 summer in Washington, DC on an internship, which unfortunately was cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Bailey will graduate in May 2021. Congratulations, Bailey!

2019 scholarship winner: Alyssa Gottheiner

Rising to excellence as well is sister Alyssa who graduated from high school as Valedictorian of her class. She received the President’s Gold Service award and was named the South Carolina Spirit of Community winner for her avid volunteer work. Her essay and community service, academic achievements and diversity of activities also caught the attention of the 388th Scholarship Committee. Alyssa wrote an excellent essay on her Great Grandfather’s service during WWII from her own unique perspective. She was awarded the 388th BG's Huntzinger Memorial Scholarship in 2019. Alyssa is also attending Clemson University using a remote learning platform this year, majoring in business and minoring in health studies. She plans to obtain her masters degree in speech pathology. Way to go, Alyssa!

The 388th BGA Scholarship Committee is proud to assist the grandchildren and great grandchildren of our WWII veterans in their educational goals. Since the College Scholarship Program was established in 2014, scholarship awards of $1000 have been presented to 8 college-bound individuals.

Applications for the 2021 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! 388scholarship@gmail.com or 314-662-5820.

The deadline to submit application and essay is May 31, 2021.
388th Board to Phase Out Mailed Newsletters

After a year-long effort to remove incorrect addresses from our mailing list, we still have about 440 names that we cannot confirm that they are receiving our quarterly issues. Reluctantly, the Board of Directors has determined that we will remove those names from our list at the end of March 2021.

IF YOU ARE A 388th VETERAN, OR THE WIDOW OF ONE, AND YOU STILL WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE A MAILED COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER, PLEASE CONTACT HEIDI MCKINNEY AT Email: hlmhomemade@yahoo.com or phone: 740-858-8501, BY MARCH 31, 2021.
SO THAT YOU CAN STAY ON THE LIST.

If you are not an original veteran, we invite you to become a member by paying the $20.00 annual fee or $75.00 lifetime member fee. If you include an email address for the newsletter it is included free of charge with membership. If you do not have access to email you may obtain mailed copies of the newsletter by paying a membership fee + an $8.00 newsletter mailing fee. Unfortunately the newsletter is only available to members. We want to share our story with our heroes and their families as we try to fulfill our mission of honoring their contribution to our history, and keeping those memories alive.

2020 Virtual Reunion
Reunion Video Links


(Clickable links)

TAPS

Louis F. Giove

Louis, 93, passed away on June 26, 2018 surrounded by his family after a long illness. He was born on November 3, 1924.
Louis was a devoted husband, father and grandfather and is survived by his daughters Linda Campion, and Marianne Vastola, and son-in-law, Tony Vastola. Louis was predeceased by his loving wife, Annette, of 68 years, his daughter, Patricia, and precious granddaughter, Priscilla, whom he greatly missed all these years.
Born in Brooklyn to Maria and Martin Giove, raised in Glendale, NY and was one of 10 children. After marriage in 1949, he moved to Rego Park where he made his home and raised his family. Louis was self-employed, hard-working man running a Fruit & Produce business for most of his life, carrying on the family tradition from Italy. For the remaining years he was employed with Amerford Air Freight at JFK Airport. Upon his retirement, he spent most of his time gliding to his glorious garden and admiring his green lawn he was always so proud of. You could always catch a glimpse of him sitting on the front chair with the garden hose in hand and pulling the occasional weed. Later, when his health and eyesight became restricted, and unable to dabble in the garden, he would sit at the kitchen window pointing out to us a piece of debris that he thinks landed somewhere on the grass. He prided himself with the fact that he thought he had the best lawn on the block!
Louis is a proud World War II Veteran, having served in England and France with the U.S. Army Air Corps, 8th Air Force. 388th Bombardment Group in Knettishall, England.

Thomas Edward McElherne

Thomas Edward McElherne died on August 27, 2020 after a brave battle with Leukemia. He was born on April 17, 1925 in Faribault, Minnesota to James and Regina (Brauer) McElherne. The youngest of three boys, he spent his early childhood in Red Oak before moving to Ames where he finished high school. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps and as a Sergeant, served as the engineer and gunner on a B-17. On his 23rd mission he was shot down and spent the last months in a German Prisoner of War camp. He returned to Ames, enrolled in Iowa State University, and earned a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering. He started a career with the Iowa Highway Commission, later called the Iowa Department of Transportation. He served in county offices and ended in Ames at headquarters where he held many senior engineering positions.
He married Bonnie Clauson on September 4, 1948 and had two children Jennifer and James. Bonnie died of cancer in 1972. Tom married Frances Ryerson in October 1973 and as a blended family added five children, Janice, Robert, Jean, Michael, and Marlene. It was a testament to him that he earned their love and admiration and was always called Dad. He was known for sending each of his new grand and great grandchildren a welcoming letter to the “clan.”
Tom was a very social and lovable man who made life-long friends. He loved to play cards and golf and served as the second President of the Ballard Golf and Country Club. He wintered in Destin, Florida for many years where his Canadian friends called him Tommy. An active member of the 388th Bomber Group and the Iowa POW chapter, Tom helped and served in many positions and was active in his Presbyte-
On Saturday, December 19, 2020, Charles G Neff, Jr, loving father and grandfather, passed away at the age of 94. Charles, affectionately known as Chuck, Dad, and Papa, was born on March 12, 1926 in Harrisburg, PA to Myrtle (Gift) and Charles G Neff, Sr. In his younger years, he worked in the steel mill with his father – which was clearly a better choice to him than working on the farm. In 1943, he proudly enlisted in the Army Air Corps to help support the US WWII efforts.

Chuck served as a Bombardier with the 563rd Squadron of the 388th Bomb Group stationed in Knettishall, England. From 1943 - 1944, he heroically flew 35 missions including two on D-Day. Chuck earned the rank of 1st Lieutenant and many accommodations including membership in the Dirty Bastard’s Club, a Purple Heart, and a Silver Star. After being honorably discharged from the service, he returned to Pennsylvania and began working for Holland Hitch Co. Soon after, Chuck moved to California to start up the Pacific division of Holland Hitch. He settled in Saratoga where he met and married his first wife, Betty June which ultimately ended in divorce. Together they had two children, Betty Ann and Kathryn.

He remarried in 1979 to his “Pretty Lady” Alena Mae and gained two additional daughters, Cindy (Robert Hayes) and Sandy Morris. Upon retiring from Holland Pacific, Chuck and Alena moved to South Lake Tahoe, NV and made it their “special place.” Chuck loved his family and especially his grandchildren, Jessica Hayes, Stephanie Hayes, Gary Hegarty, and Sam Kellner. He loved the outdoors, traveling, hunting, fishing, boating, and camping. His favorite place in the whole world was South Lake Tahoe. Papa loved to have breakfast for any meal with his grandchildren at his favorite restaurant, the Country Inn. Attending his Bomb Group’s Annual Reunion was always one of the highlights of his year. Chuck’s sense of duty, honor, passion, unique humor, quick wit, and all around joyful spirit will be greatly missed. We lost a star but heaven gained an angel.

Charles was preceded in death by his father, Charles, his mother, Myrtle, his wife, Alena, and his daughter, Betty Ann. He is survived by his daughters, Kathryn, Cindy, and Sandy and his grandchildren, Jessica, Stephanie, Gary, and Sam.

Maxine Mashburn Smith

Maxine was a native Californian residing much of her life in Ventura County California, graduating high school in 1939 from Ventura High School. Marrying Lyle in 1939 and settling down in 1955 to a tiny town, still in Ventura County, called Oak View. Here they built their custom home on a bluff with a view of the valley looking over Lake Casitas. Maxine had a long and diverse life; experiencing the devastation of the Great Depression and WW2 as well as the amazing achievements of the first NASA space launches up to the Space Shuttle, television being a thing of the future to HD TV, ice boxes for food storage to double door refrigerators with water and ice dispensing from the door.

The WW2 era was, as can be expected, impactful in ways only that generation can understand. Her husband Lyle enlisted and became an Army Aircorp aviator, B17 pilot, deployed to the European theatre. Maxine attended the 388th Bomb Group annual reunions with Lyle till his passing and then on her own (accompanied by her Granddaughter Sandra in later years).

Before and during the War Maxine and Lyle (and in 1941 with son Kenneth) lived in the Los Angeles area while employed in the aircraft industry and ultimately Lyle going to war.

In 1955 Maxine, Lyle and Kenneth moved to their home in Oak View where they raised their family.

Working as an executive secretary starting with “Vanishing Toon Tool” which became Vetofoffshore and later the private Office Manager for Carl Huntsinger, she worked well into her 70’s. With her involvement in the industry, Maxine became an active member of the Desk and Derrick Club, an organization dedicated to enhance and foster a positive image to the global community by promoting the contribution of the petroleum, energy and allied industries through education by using all resources available. Maxine became club president of her local chapter and was highly involved in annual conventions both in organization and as keynote speaker. Maxine and her high school class were very close and participated in very formal and organized reunions annually, most of which Maxine organized. The reunions were held until the class could no longer muster in 2012. Preceded in death by her parents Joyce Leonard Mashburn and Ethel May (McKinney) Mashburn her husband of 48 years Lester Lyle Smith and her only child (son) Kenneth. Maxine moved with her Grandchildren, to Clovis California where she spent the rest of her life. She made a full and rich life in her new community.

Maxine was a life-long devout Christian and became a member of the Clavis Christian Church, having many friends and prayer partners in her church family.

Maxine is survived by her Grandson David Smith (and his wife Julie, granddaughter-in-law of 40 years) and Granddaughter Sandra Somyak (her husband Mark); Great Grandchildren: Kenneth Smith II (his wife Ally), Victoria Smith, Samantha Sweeney (her husband Mike); as well as Great-Great Grandchildren: Taylor, Hunter, Liam and McKenna. Maxine, our “Grammy” lived within 2 miles of all of the family watching everyone grow up and being a part of their lives as well as being known as “Grammy” to so many extended friends and family! Maxine has gone to be with the rest of her family, met at the gates by her husband and son.

S. E. (Jack) Vann

Jack Vann, age 98, passed away in his home on February 4, 2021. He was born in Jasper, South Carolina to the late Seymore E. and Minnie Viola Miller Vann on July 25, 1922. Jack, along with his brother Guy, were the owners of Vann Lumber Company in Marietta and ultimately Lyle going to war.

Before and during the War Maxine and Lyle (and their home in Oak View where they raised their family.

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Before and during the War Maxine and Lyle (and daughter Jackie Gardner (David). He is fondly remembered by his grandchildren; Jennifer Lorenti (Nic), Joe Vann, Charlie Gardner (Lisa), and great grandchildren; Jackson, Avery, Tiana, Dominic and Luca.

Our father was a proud WW II Veteran assigned to the 388th Bombardment Group.
# 388TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION
## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL

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- New Lifetime Membership ($75.00 one time payment)

**How would you like to receive Newsletter:**
- [ ] Email (FREE)
- [ ] Mail ($8.00 per year)

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**

Mail to: Heidi McKinney, Secretary, 388th Bomb Group Assn., Inc.  
193 Pershing Ave, Portsmouth, OH 45662 Email: secretary@388thbga.org or hlmhomeade@yahoo.com