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# "The Mighty Eighth Reunion Group"

## 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

GREAT ASHFIELD - SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

STATION 155

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# NEWSLETTER

Volume VIII, No. 6

15 January 1981

Editor: John C. Ford

## 385th REUNION - 14-17 MAY 1981

(Page 3 & 4)

### GREETINGS FROM THE PREZ

A New Year and a time for new starts. It is also the year of our bi-annual reunion, but before I move into that subject, may I, on behalf of the Officers of the Association, extend to all of you, the best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year.

The co-hosts for the 1981 reunion have finalized their plans for a great get-together at the Ramada Inn, Miracle Strip East, U. S. Highway 98, Fort Walton Beach, Florida, 32548. Full details for registration and hotel reservations will be found in the centerfold of this Newsletter. After having read all the details attendant to the reunion, I am sure you will be happy to note that Joy Dunlap and Ty Winton have tied up all the loose ends and we anticipate a record-breaking turnout in May 1981.

It is my desire to impress on everyone that many important items will be on the agenda for this event; items which must be resolved. Our cash flow position, threatened by lack of dues payment by many members, rising costs of printing and mailing, and a far more active roll by all members is of paramount importance.

We will be seeking a new Editor for the Newsletter, hopefully a husband and wife team, actively supported by members capable of developing and writing good stories! There is an abundance of talent within this Association and we need your commitment to help keep the Association moving forward.

I have already sent letters to members in all of the States, requesting their personal assistance in getting more members to attend the reunion. Let's join together to make it the biggest and the very best. Plan on getting there early and staying a bit late. Florida is an ideal vacation land and I hope to see you there during the week of 11 May.

Sincerely yours,

Signed: JIM EMMONS

JAMES H. EMMONS  
President

## ENGLAND - EUROPE 1980 — John Ford -2-

In the mysterious game of inflation and all of its side effects, it seemed that the planned trip to England and northern Europe would never get underway. The list of reservations had reached a peak of 99 persons - but it also had dipped to below 50. We had been quoted a land package price of £398 sterling at a time when the pound was quoted at \$2.02 per pound. To take care of any market surge, I had increase the pound value to \$2.15. So much for my brilliant marketing strategy! By the time we were ready to leave for England, the pound was being quoted at \$2.35! And to top this, the oil cartel came through with a fuel price increase that called for a fuel surcharge. Through the generosity of our tour operator, David Wade, we made all the prices fit the operation. David froze his price at \$2.25 per pound, made very few itinerary changes to maintain a super first class trip, while our bank interest, administrative charges and cancellation fees were stretched to their limit to meet the costs. And we were off!

Fifty happy people met that 14 August deadline and gathered together in the lovely old Russell Hotel in London. Our acting courier for the trip was Hugh Downey, well known to many persons who made the trip in 1976. Hugh is actually an assistant to David Wade, but stepped in at the last moment to be with us when personnel problems began plaguing David Wade. Hugh introduced our driver, Trevor Robinson, also with us on the 1976 trip, and then briefed everyone on the itinerary. After a two hour cocktail party and briefing, we broke off into small dinner groups - or - in many cases went off to bed to catch up on the jet lag.



Ginnie Chealander, Paul Schulz, Al Chealander and Harry Schulz have a quick chat.

The following day we left London at 1100 hour and traveled north to Felixstowe, Suffolk, via the ancient Roman city of Colchester, where we stopped for lunch. We arrived at the Orwell Moat House and as soon as the people dropped their luggage in their rooms, they were off to see the sights of an English summer resort. Soon they were streaming back to tell about the bookstore displaying a huge painting of a B-17G landing at Great Ashfield. It turned out to be the work of a Suffolk painter who donated it to the 390th BG Control Tower Museum at Parham, near Framlingham. He first wanted to have all members of the 385th BG, on the trip, to sign their names along the border. This was done at the dinner dance the following night.

Early the following morning, joined now by Ian and Julie McLachlan and their latest family addition (who was christened "Bethan" at our Memorial church in Great Ashfield. Bethan, in Welsh, means Elizabeth), we left for Great Ashfield. On arrival we promptly got lost trying to find the Reception Group gathered on the airfield. With the help of Stewart Evans and John Ellis, we soon reached the site. Rowley and Angela Miles had provided a bar replete with about everything. It was set up in front of the old firehouse located just to the right of the old control tower, opposite old Hangar number one. Only fragments of buildings remain. One thing that remains in my memory is Steve Gotts of FOTE taking one of our men over to the old control tower and kicking a pile of rubble. He then reached down and picked up a 50 caliber shell which he gave to his new friend. To our great surprise, we were joined at the site by Mr. and Mrs. Ty Winton, who were already travel-

ing around England. Then Forrest Poore, with his wife and an old English friend pulled up and he created a sensation when he stepped out of the car and everyone English thought that "J.R." from Dallas had come to visit. Newspaper and TV reporters mingled among English and American friends and WW II vehicles were standing by to take persons on familiarization trips around the field. Roy Baker, who had arranged this treat, was not present due to the death and burial of his father, but we did get a chance to say hello and thank him later in the day. Also on hand to greet us was William and Molly Goodwin and their daughter Carole Donaghy. Ray Rivard, one of our members, is Carole's godfather.



Molly Goodwin, Jane Donaghy, Betty Ford, William Goodwin, Carole Donaghy and Emory Ford

Rowley and Angela Miles, host and hostess supreme, seemed to be everywhere filling up the empty glasses, or pushing you toward the bar. The sun was shining and it was a marvelous day for renewing old friendships. When everyone had had their fill, it was off to the Town Hall for a set dinner. John and Lucy Ellis were here overseeing the affair, as were many of the village helpers. The buffet style dinner was a gourmet's delight. We were packed in elbow to elbow with many old friends, including Mother and Dad Barker. At the conclusion of the dinner, Steve Gotts, of Cambridge, put on a superb slide show that included an outstanding display of GI art and aircraft nose painting.

The great surprise, however, was when they passed out a list of Great Ashfield, Norton and Elmswell hosts who had volunteered to take an American family into their homes for a Sunday dinner. Everyone had a place to visit.

We then took off for Felixstowe, where that evening we entertained about thirty guests at a Dinner Dance in the Orwell Moat House. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Roger Freeman, Rowley and Angela Miles, Alfred and Katherine Johnson and John and Peggy Thurlow. Members of FOTE and the 390th BG Memorial Association comprised the balance of the guests.

A fine meal and a good dance band topped off a long to be remembered day.

On Sunday we attended a Memorial Service at All Saints Church, where once again a new group was on hand to greet us. After the service, couples and individuals went off to the home of an English friend to enjoy the warmth of true Suffolk hospitality. Al and Ginnie Chealander and Betty and I were guests of John and Peggy Thurlow. Young James Thurlow and his sister were also present, assisting in the entertainment. John and Peggy have just moved into this lovely 400 year old home, following a great amount of redecorating. Although they have not completed all their planned decorating, it is truly a lovely home to behold. Fine wines, wonderful food and a visit around the property all blended into a great compression of time. It was unbelievable that such a visit could be so short. We all hated to depart and when we arrived at the Church to board the coach for the return to Felixstowe, everyone in the group was "Oohing and Aahing" about their experience.

(Cont'd Pg 5)



*The John Thurlow home in Elmswell. Young James performs on bicycle.*

Monday through the following Wednesday were filled with trips to Bury St. Edmunds, Cambridge, the British Air Museum and the 8th Air Force Historical Society Exhibit at Duxford, the American Memorial Cemetery at Madingly, a wonderful day trip to Norwich, culminating with a trip to Framlingham Castle and an afternoon at Parham's 390th BG Memorial Tower. Here we were guests of the English 390th BG Memorial Association, who entertained us with an aerial display and a Bar-B-Que. The aerial display was originally thought to be some tremendous flying of a Piper Cub, but the men of the 390th prevailed upon the Commander of the 81st TFW to have some A-10 pilots give us a side display as they flew to and from Bentwaters to the target range at the Wash. The Commander also furnished a Liaison Officer at Parham to explain the mission. His father lives just a mile or so from Fred Heiser in Colorado, as he found out when he asked if there was anybody from Colorado with our group. He was really psyched-up, for on the previous day, he had flown the "Sally B", a B-17G, from Coventry to Duxford, and the pilot had allowed him some stick time. He just could'nt get over it. Stew Evans had also been a passenger on the trip and he was as high as a kite as well.

Early Thursday morning we checked out of the Moat House and boarded the bus to the Felixstowe port for the trip to Zeebrugge. We boarded on the coach and then walked up three flights to the deck. When we reached the deck we were greeted by Aubrey Swann and his son, who, having entertained Jerry and Virginia Donnelly and George and Geneva Hruska on the previous Sunday, had decided it would be nice to spend more time with them on the cross channel trip. How does that qualify for warmth and hospitality? A ten hour round trip on the ferry to spend five more hours with newly found friends!



*Jerry and Virginia Donnelly, George and Geneva Hruska pose with Aubrey Swann and son on ferry.*

The channel trip was smooth and we disembarked at Zeebrugge to witness a great traffic jam as stranded motorists from the struck ports in France, were lining up to take the Townsend-Thorenson line ferry back to England. After a long drive across Belgium, we arrived

in Cologne, Germany, for an overnight stay. The hotel was in the immediate rear of the Cathedral and we could look out of our window, far up into the twin spires. In the morning we visited the Cathedral and the shopping center and after a snack for lunch, we headed for Hamburg. After a few lunch stops along the road and a bad taste of German food prices, we all became "snack packers". The German continental breakfast consists of cereals, various types of bread and buns, and a great variety of German sausages. The buns made great sandwiches and everyone seemed to join us on our baggy effort. It was a lot cheaper.

Our new courier, who had joined us for the Europe portion of our trip, was John Coventry, an intellectual linguist and a young man of great personal warmth and charm. After we arrived in Hamburg, John and Trevor offered to take anyone on an evening trip to downtown Hamburg. Quite a few made the trip and after singing and scoffing a few at the Zilitteral, a few ventured down the "Boarded" street (The End Zone). Those who made this trip said the scenery was the same all over the world. The following morning, our guide was a former Luftwaffe pilot who had been shot down and sent to Canada as a prisoner of war. He took quite a beating in the kidding department.

On we pressed to Copenhagen, Denmark, where we spent most of our time looking for a restaurant and all ended up at an Italian restaurant on Hans Christian Andersen Square. Our hotel was a converted grainary, beautifully modernized and with many of the huge old beams running through the rooms. There were a lot of lumpy heads in the group. It was on the waterfront. Trips around Copenhagen, to Hamlet's Castle in Elsingor and a trip to Sweden took two days. It was on the latter leg back to Copenhagen that the police handed Trevor a ticket for speeding. He had been hit by the air police helicopter. The fine was the equivalent of \$75.00, which we took up in a collection. The last day we took the long trip across Denmark, passing through Odense, the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen, where we stopped for lunch. Then on to Esbjerg where we boarded the ferry for the long overnight trip to Harwich. We were given our room assignments and boarded. Our ship proved to be the flagship "DANA ANGLIA", two years old and in beautiful condition. Since it was Mary Lyke's birthday and somebody's anniversary, that provided the cause for a party that night. Our group packed the right front portion of the ship's nightclub and a great time was had by all. The entire trip proved to be as smooth as silk.

From Harwich we traveled to London and the Hilton International Hotel. People went flying every which way to get a London bus to Oxford Street and Piccadilly Circus. That evening David Wade brought some of his office staff to join us at a King Charles II dinner at the old Ivory Warehouse at the yacht basin, now called the House of the Company of Trenchermaen, 9 St. Katharine Dock. Dominic Jordan and his sister, Margaret Campo, reigned over our dinner as members of the Court. Everyone had a great time singing, booing and banging on the tables and metalware.

The following day, the group broke up, with many traveling to the US, some off to Poland, others to visit additional places in England and Scotland. Betty and I, having purchased railway tickets in the US, (traveling 1st Class at 2nd Class prices) remained for an additional five weeks, visiting over Scotland and England. It was a grand trip!

### **YOUR \$5.00 DUES ARE NEEDED**

The Association needs your help for funding activities of the group. During a recent audit, it was discovered that less than one third of our membership have paid dues in the last two years. We have 30 life members whose payments have been invested into certificates, and less than 270 persons out of almost 900 members are paying dues. No one has to be reminded that costs are continually spiraling up out of sight, but we are going to have to review our distribution of the Newsletter. One of our members has not only bought a life membership, but has contributed \$370 additionally to help cover "no pays". We are deeply indebted to Bob Valliere and several others who have been generous. Emory and Charlotte Ford, who won \$50 on the European trip, gave it to the Association. Please send your check to John Pettenger right now!



1980 © Heritage Buckles

**UNIT  
BELT  
BUCKLES**



1980 © Heritage Buckles

Paul Schulz, one of our most active members, has designed and is having cast in solid bronze, the above sketched belt buckles. The size will approximate the sketch sizes as shown. The white background will be textured in a grainy, leathery pattern. All that shown in black will be raised and the edge of the oval raised and polished. The 8th insignia will be raised and polished.

All buckles will be polished to jewelry finish on front and back. Each buckle will bear a serial number attesting to a limited production. Satisfaction is guaranteed on every buckle. The price will be approximately \$20 to \$22, including gift boxing and \$2.00 shipping and handling charge. The 385th BGMA Association will receive a 15% royalty of the price on all mail orders, and 15% plus the \$2.00 shipping and handling fee on all buckles sold at the reunion 14 to 17 May 1981.

Paul has started a new company which plans to market custom belt buckles, western metal sculptures and other crafts. His first effort is to help build-up the financial coffers of the 385th BGMA Association. The first casting will run into several hundred dollars, which Paul is investing, and it is necessary that at least 100 buckles be run off to stay within the price limits.

Take a few minutes to order or inquire about the buckles right now! Write to HERITAGE BUCKLES, 2049 Phoebe Drive, Billings, MT 59101. At the same time you can make out your check for Association dues to the "385th BGMA" in the amount of 5.00 and mail it to John Pettenger, 117 Home Park Road, Venice, FL 33595. What could be better than to buckle up your trousers, after you have lightened up the pockets.

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