



# 368th Fighter Group Association Newsletter



## December 2009

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## 2009 Amelia Island Revisited

By Jo Ann Grace

Amelia Island, Florida... what a great destination for the 368th FG Association's 2009 reunion. On Sept. 17-20, 2009, guests enjoyed perfect weather, first class accommodations, a great itinerary, and our distinguished 368th Vets. Did I mention the pirates?



Bill and Cheri Lang (daughter of Bill Wright) organized a wonderful reunion! After the initial meet and greet in the hospitality suite at the Ritz-Carlton on Thursday night, the weekend was in full swing and planned events kept us all entertained and busy. We were all captivated by the history of the island as told by Kevin McCarthy while traveling aboard the "Bald Eagle" from Florida waters to the Georgian shores. Afterwards, many enjoyed the sights and shopping in downtown Fernandina before heading back for the Pirates' Toast in the hotel lobby, the seaside reception, and a sneak preview of the DVD.

Saturday was equally eventful. "Hang at the Hangar" was hosted by the local Civil Air Patrol (CAP), led by Sean McGill. The CAP hosted a small luncheon and three CAP wives dressed as USO girls, serving donuts and coffee. Tim Grace, the Group historian, led a Power Point presentation of the Group's history. The panel of 368th Vets contributed their own personal stories to hold everyone's interest and created a day to remember.

Saturday night was the big event, the banquet. The evening began with a cocktail hour and photo shoot of the Vets. Then we enjoyed a delicious meal, a presentation by Gen. Donald Cherry, and entertainment by the 40s era band. The announcement was made that the 2010 reunion will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, hosted by the Graces (more info on page two).

The weekend concluded with the farewell breakfast on Sunday when we reluctantly said our farewells. This was held in the on-site restaurant, Salt (and they have *many* varieties of salt). Last minute photos, autographs, hugs and farewell wishes were exchanged before everyone departed, heading home to their corners of the country.



From left, back row: Rupert Maxwell, Les Leavoy, Bill Wright, Ted Taubert, Johnny Baer, Al Benton, William Phillips, Billy Dunbar. Front row: Gerald Monaghan, George Sutcliffe, Loyd Baughman, Tote Talbot, Randolph Goulding, Calvin Smith, Wes Metcalf.

Photo courtesy Kenneth Cain

## 2010 Reunion to be held in Phoenix, Arizona

The next 368th FG Association Reunion will be held in sunny Phoenix, Arizona, on Oct. 21-24, 2010. The event will be held at the Embassy Suites and will be hosted by Susie, Jo Ann, Gail and Tim Grace, children of Gerald J. Grace of the 396th FS. Plans are in the works to make this another memorable 368th Reunion. Please mark your calendars and we'll look forward to seeing you in the great southwest. Visit the hotel website for a closer look:

[www.phoenixbiltmore.embassysuites.com](http://www.phoenixbiltmore.embassysuites.com). Rates are \$119 per night, single or double; just men-

tion that you are with the 368th Reunion. Registration fees and excursion information will be updated on the 368th web site ([www.368thfightergroup.com](http://www.368thfightergroup.com)) and in the next newsletter due out in May or June.



## Folded Wings

Herman Baldwin folded his wings on July 20, 2009. His love of flying gave him 29 years of service in the Air Force as a pilot. In addition to his years with the 368th in WWII, he served in Korea and two tours in Vietnam. It was through Herman that the Group found Matt and Lorna Pearce of Legacy Video, who had already produced an outstanding personal history for the Baldwin family, primarily of Herman's years with the 395th FS and his early years of marriage. Herman was very active in and highly respected by his community--Parrish, Florida area. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Lynn, daughter Carolyn, son Gregory, and three grandchildren. (Tim and Jo Ann had the pleasure of meeting Herman's family and viewing the video of which he was so proud.)

Vernon R. Powers died January 17, 2010, at home in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Vern served his country in WWII as a 395th FS Crew Chief for pilot Bob Miller and Walt Scott. Lt. Miller added Vern's wife's name, Ardy, to his Awanda Glen nose art. At the panel discussion Tim hosted in Seattle in 2007, Vern captivated the audience when he shared many of his experiences with the 368th FG. Vern owned and operated several service station businesses in Eau Claire and continued to work through his retirement years. He was an avid sportsman and accomplished skier. Vern is survived by his wife of 67 years, Ardis; four children, four grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews, including Judith Powers--the editor of Tim's book. Vern's brother is married to his wife Ardis' sister, so it is a very close family.

## Ballad of the 368th Fighter Group

By Gerald M. Hanson

These brave young men came from near' every state,  
to save the free world from terror and hate.  
Leaving their loved ones at home to worry and wait,  
they joined the Fighter Group numbered three sixty-eight.

They headed for war with courage and their skills,  
to battle the Axis powers that outlawed freedom and free will.  
Back in the states they prayed to the Almighty up in Heaven,  
He answered their prayers with the P-47.

The pilots, they were dauntless whenever they flew,  
entrusting their safe return to both God and Ground Crew.  
They wreaked havoc and hell from the wild blue yonder,  
flying tight in formation in their trusted fighter/bombers.

When planes didn't return it was part of the high cost,  
the price of our freedom paid, by those injured and lost.  
We thank our Greatest Generation, who fought 'till the war was won,  
like the 368th Fighter Group, it was always "Second to None."

## It's Almost Here, The 368th FG Video History!

SECOND TO NONE: The Video History of the 368th Fighter Group, a two-disk set based on the book by the same name and written by 368th author/historian Dr. Timothy M. Grace. Produced by Legacy Video and narrated by Greg Patterson of our 368th FG Association, Disk One follows the Group's chronological history and legacy while set to period music and utilizing first person accounts, 368th pilots' gun camera footage, hundreds of photos, and authentic color combat action. Disk Two includes personal stories by 368th veterans, HQ and squadron photo galleries, nose art, POWs, a moving tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, reunion photos, and more.

Look for the history to be available about April 1 on the website: [www.368thfightergroup.com](http://www.368thfightergroup.com)



## How to Order the Book

Copies of **SECOND TO NONE: THE HISTORY OF THE 368TH FIGHTER GROUP** are still available. **Hard cover copies are sold out.** To order the soft cover version of the book, go to our web site: [www.368thfightergroup.com](http://www.368thfightergroup.com) and you will be directed to a secure link where you can order by credit card. If you do not have access to a computer, please send checks payable to the 368th FG Book and mail to:

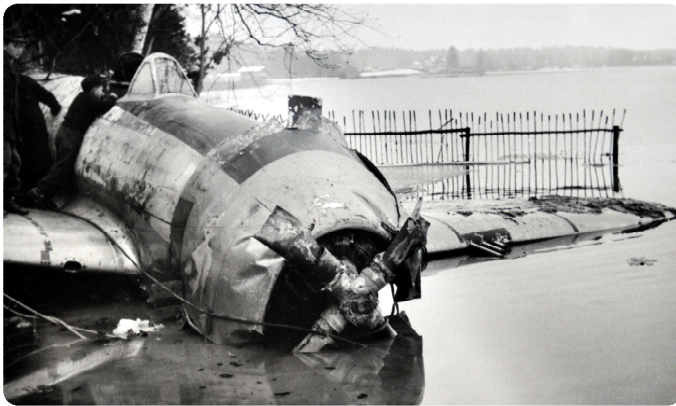
Carl Talbott  
216 Spring View Drive  
Murphy, NC 28906

Soft Cover: \$30.00 + 10.00 shipping (add \$2.50 shipping for each additional copy)

## Flugzeug Classic Features 368th P-47

The February 2009 issue of *Flugzeug Classic* featured an article written by German writer Lino von Gartzen, that included several photos from the recovery of a 368th FG P-47. Lt. Kenneth Wenk of the 397th FS was flying a routine training mission on June 19, 1945 out of Straubing, Germany when he ditched his P-47 into Lake Starnberg, 13 kilometers southwest of Munich. He was not injured and was rescued by two local fishermen.

The magazine article reports that the P-47 sunk into Lake Starnberg and was recovered by a former marine diver. In 1951, with the help of a local fisherman, salvager Heinz R'ssler located Wenk's P-47, which was under only 22 meters of water. At Lino's request, the salvager's widow agreed to give us digital files of two of the many photos that were taken at the time of the salvage. The photos pictured below are now part of the 368th archives.



## 368th FG Web Site

Kenneth Kik continues to update our award winning web site. Thanks to Ken's assimilation of information from interested people and historians both here and abroad, it is recognized as one of the best World War II research sites on the web. If you have any information, pictures, or anything you wish to contribute, Ken can be contacted directly through the web site at: [www.368thfightergroup.com](http://www.368thfightergroup.com).

## Final Note

Please forward address changes, 368th information and photos you'd like to share in the newsletters to Jo Ann Grace at 1107 Genoa Ln., Carson City, NV, 89706, email: [jo\\_anngrace@hotmail.com](mailto:jo_anngrace@hotmail.com) or by phone at 775.721.9314 (cell) or 775.884.3747 (home). If you have any personal stories related to the 368th FG, artifacts or historical photos you would like to place in the 368th FG archives, contact Tim Grace at 253.988.3400, or email at [ahilt7@msn.com](mailto:ahilt7@msn.com). Randolph Goulding can be reached at 770.436.4254 or by email at [rgoulding@charter.net](mailto:rgoulding@charter.net).

## Amelia Island Scrapbook

Photos at right are from the "Hang at the Hangar," one of the events at the 2009 Amelia Island Reunion, courtesy of Susie and Jo Ann Grace.



