368th Fighter Group Association Newsletter
395th, 396th & 397th Fighter Squadrons

March 2008
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2007 Galveston Reunion Recap
By Jo Ann Grace

The 2007 368th Fighter Group Reunion (October 4-8) which was held in Galveston, Texas, was attended by more than 75 people, including 13 veterans. Many of the attendees to the reunion began arriving at the Hotel Galvez on Thursday evening. Veterans, spouses, friends and family members strolled into the hospitality rooms, hosted by Dick Bailey and Esther Andrau, to say hello to familiar faces and meet new ones. Spirits were high in anticipation of a great weekend.

On Friday, the group enjoyed a trip to NASA or sight seeing around Galveston before going to dinner at Guidos. This was everything they said it would be, generous portions of wonderful seafood and an award winning dessert.

Saturday was spent at the Wings Over Houston Air Show—the highlight of the weekend. Our hosts arranged for the bus to drop us off at the volunteer tent where plenty of shady seats, cold drinks and box lunches awaited everyone. Beginning with donuts and coffee, folks settled in for an afternoon of excitement that would include reenactments of Pearl Harbor, strafing and dogfights over Germany, and the flight of P-47 “Tarheel Hal” in formation with an F-4 and an F-15E. Many photos were snapped and a few are here for your enjoyment.

The Banquet was held in the Hotel Galvez. Each table was adorned with lovely centerpieces arranged by Charlotte Goulding. Everyone enjoyed the superb filet dinner, socializing, and photo opportunities. Sincere thanks to Dick and Esther for their organization of another memorable 368th reunion.

Right: Tarheel Hal; F-4, P-47 and F-15E in flight—taken at the Wings Over Houston Air Show.


Photos courtesy Susie Grace.
More photos from the Galveston reunion: Dick Bailey, Susie Grace, and Esther Andrau; Marge Grace and Bernie Cirantino; Melodie and Tim Grace, and Ken Kik.

Directory: An updated directory is in progress. If you have a change of address or know of anyone in the Group who does, please pass any information (and photos) you have to Jo Ann Grace at 1107 Genoa Ln., Carson City, NV, 89706, email: jo_anngrace@hotmail.com or by phone at 775.721.9314 (cell) or 775.884.3747 (home).

Book Update
By Tim Grace

The 368th history book, SECOND TO NONE: THE HISTORY OF THE 368TH FIGHTER GROUP has been a huge success. It has been graciously received by the veterans and their families and I want to thank all of you who have taken the time to write or e-mail with your support, as well as all who contributed stories and pictures. As indicated in the last newsletter, numerous notable historians, scholars and authors, both here and abroad, have sent their appreciation that the 368th’s contribution to our freedom has been documented. The Association has donated books to various military libraries and museum archives so that the Group’s history is available for subsequent generations for research purposes.

We printed 1,000 copies of the book and just over 200 remain. These books can be purchased on our web site: www.368thfightergroup.com. The cost for each book is $29.95 plus $10 shipping. For each additional book add another $2.50 for shipping. I want to take this time to apologize for any delays due to shipping issues. Call me at 253.988.3400 or e-mail me at ahilt7@msn.com. We have decided to protect a small number of copies since folks with direct ties the 368th continue to discover the Association through the web site and we want to have copies available for them.

Hard Cover Books

At the 2006 Dallas reunion, the veterans established a price of $55 for the hard cover version of the book, with an estimated shipping cost of $10. Many of you placed advance orders at that time. We have been fortunate to find a print-on-demand company and ordered 300 copies, of which 104 are already prepaid and will ship once the order is received by our shipper. In Galveston, we revised the price to $50 per copy delivered regardless of the amount purchased. For those who would like a refund on the overpayment, please contact Carl Talbot at 828.494.4600, and he will send a refund to you.

This is a very limited quantity run and I urge you to place your orders right away. We need to make it available through the web site for easier accessibility. That means the general public can buy it as well. I expect the book to sell out quickly. We can always place an order-by-demand for more at a later date. However, it will be more expensive (about $10 or so) with a smaller order run.

The new version of the book has been improved in many ways. First of all, the index has been expanded to cover the entire book instead of just chapters 1-7. More than 50 new pictures have been added, mostly to replace duplicates. Typos and corrections suggested by readers have been made. The driving force behind these changes has been Jo Ann Grace, who has given of her time to make this happen. We owe her a debt of gratitude for this and for taking over the responsibility of the 368th newsletter and roster duties, formerly handled by Julie Goulding, who passed away in 2005.

The new book will be reviewed this summer in Flight Journal Magazine. I may have it reviewed in World War II Magazine and possibly one or two other publications.

HOW TO ORDER THE BOOK

To order either version of the book, go to our web site 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 your order with a check payable to the 368th FG Book and mail to:

Carl Talbot
216 Spring View Drive
Murphy, NC 28906

Soft Cover: $29.95 + 10.00 shipping (add $2.50 shipping for each additional copy)

Hard Cover: $50.00 per copy, shipping is included.
Exciting Events and the 368th FG

On June 22, 2007, George Sutcliffe, formerly with the 397th FS, appeared on the History Channel program known as DOGFIGHTS. He told about his encounter with a numerically superior number of Me-109s on June 14, 1944. This story is detailed in the book on page 53 and in George’s story beginning on page 264. I was privileged to provide expert commentary on that program. The episode was titled THUNDERBOLTS and is available through their website by entering on your browser: http://www.history.com/minisites/dogfights/.

Last November 3, the Museum of Flight in Seattle held a public panel discussion featuring five of our veterans: Gen. John Baer, George Sutcliffe, Rupert Maxwell, Walter Scott, and Vernon Powers. I moderated the event and presented an overview of the 368th. The veterans shared with the audience personal recollections of their combat days. The 500 people in attendance then gave the men a standing ovation that lasted several minutes. The event was followed by a book signing and autograph session that lasted another 90 minutes. The museum was so thrilled they asked me to bring another five veterans back on October 25 of this year. Scheduled to attend are Robert Gorrell, Marv Rosvold, Irv Ostuw, Homer Hayes, and Sid Horowitz. Once again, I will moderate and provide a power point presentation. The event will be video-taped.

In the summer and fall of this year, two stories will appear in FLIGHT JOURNAL Magazine featuring collaborations between myself with both Walter Scott and George Sutcliffe. Scotty’s story appears in the book on page 423 and George’s story, the same that was featured on the Dogfights episode, appears in chapter 8 on page 264. Some of you may know that last year this magazine published two stories in which I collaborated with Gen. Carlos “Tote” Talbott and Rupert Maxwell. These stories appear in the book on pages 415 and 418, respectively.

On March 29 I will host a public panel discussion about the history of the 368th in Roseville, CA. Invited to attend are local veterans Billy Dunbar and Mac McCarter.

In any event, there is no shortage of stories about the contributions of the 368th FG. There are several magazines that want me to submit further documentation of their accomplishments. I have written a story about the 368th when they were stationed at Greenham Common and Chilbolton, England, that will appear later this year in FLY-PAST Magazine, a British publication. Both of these magazines are available at Borders and Barnes and Noble bookstores. I have also written three other stories, one titled THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE P-47, another titled ACHTLING JABOS, P-47 UNITS OF THE IX Tactical Air Command, and one untitled story about the support units of the 368th which may appear in FLIGHT JOURNAL or other aviation publications later this year or early next year.

Folded Wings

Bernie Cirantineo. Bernie was an armorer with the 397th FS. After the war he was an award winning auto parts salesman. Bernie, who hosted two memorable 368th reunions, was also a Master of the Masonic Lodge he belonged to for 44 years. He and Nancy were married for 59 years.

Stephen Halpin. Steve flew 53 combat missions with the 397th FS. After the war, Steve was a distinguished special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigations for 23 years. Steve and Natalie were married for 47 years. From Isaiah:

I have fought the good fight
I have finished the race
I have kept the faith

Ralph W. Scott. Ralph was a pilot with the 396th FS. He passed away in August 2007.

Edgar Robert Baker. Edgar was a pilot with the 397th FS. The Charlotte native, who attended several 368th reunions, passed away in April 2007.

Peggy Kik. Our condolences to Ken Kik and his family at the passing of his wife Peggy last September. Peggy was very supportive of the 368th FG and even provided technical support in the early days of the first book.

Memorialized: Norman Langmaid

Richard Shover and his wife Pat accompanied George Sutcliffe to France in 2005, where Richard’s cousin and George’s best friend Norman, was laid to rest and memorialized after being shot down and killed on June 7, 1944. Richard created a moving history book about his cousin that aptly captures his personality. The book has been placed in the archives of the Coleville Cemetery where he is buried and is used by docents at the visitor center. Richard also gave copies to eyewitnesses to Lt. Langmaid’s crash. As George Sutcliffe once said of his friend, “Norman will be forever young as he sleeps beneath the hallowed ground overlooking the beaches of Normandy.”
Finis of Morgan le Fey
By Norman Langmaid (b-12/7/1922; d-6/7/1944)

If I could only catch,  Oh this Morgan le Fey is a man,
The Frenchmen’s knack,  Who got a great tan,
Of rolling his rs, rs, rs,  From the sun of the Caribbean,
I would be lifted to the stars,  Where he see’in,
From the top of the haystack.  How many ships to Davy Jones locker he could ban.

Maybe you think this is funny,  But one day the King’s men caught,
But let me tell you it tastes like honey,  Him and brought,
To catch a snack,  Him to Plymouth port,
On top of the haystack,  Where they put him among his sort,
Underneath the sky so sunny.  And where he is now nought.

But to the Frenchmen I must say,  For they hung Morgan le Fey,
That his language is gay,  From the yardarm this day,
That I hear this day,  Where he kicked his last,
(On top of the bay),  (I saw the glass,
From the mouth of Morgan le Fey.  From the top of the hay).

Joseph J. Hanson receives Purple Heart

On January 6, 1944, a German mine exploded in the 395th FS area, killing two men and injuring several others, including crew chief S/Sgt. Hanson. After many years of loving pursuit by his family, not to mention a delay of 63 years, New York Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy proudly awarded the Purple Heart to J. J. Hanson on March 18, 2008. Many members of the Hanson family were on hand for this event.

A few years ago, Lt. Richard Kik’s family helped him secure his Silver Star after a similar oversight. Since we have most of the Group’s documents, do not hesitate to contact myself or 368th web site creator Ken Kik, if an oversight by the military needs to be corrected.

We hope to see you at the Nashville reunion in September!
Respectfully, Tim Grace

2008 Reunion
September 25 - 28 at Opryland, Nashville, Tenn.


Group rate is $155/night (usually $240). It’s a big hotel but the rooms will be in the same area along with the hospitality suite.

Guests wanting to stay until Monday will be able to stay at the reduced group rate. Reservations can be made by calling 615.883.2211 and identifying themselves as part of the World War II 368th Fighter Group Reunion. Reservations need to be made by August 26th.

Proposed itinerary:
Thursday: Check- in, hospitality suite with food and drink. Hospitality suite comes complete with a wet bar area, refrigerator and a great flat panel Plasma TV we can use for a photo show or films.
Friday: Downtown - Country Music Hall of Fame, Grand Ole Opry Show (Opryland complex)
Saturday: General Jackson Mid-day cruise with lunch (docks at Opryland), shopping at Opry Mills (next to Opryland), Banquet at the hotel (Big Band theme)
Sunday: Brunch (8-10 a.m.); possible Hermitage trip for those staying through Monday.