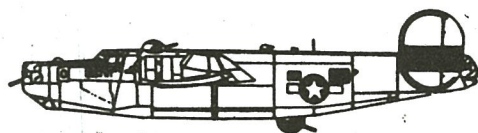


NEWS



392nd BG Memorial Association

VOLUME 21

August 2006

A/C PHOTOS FROM M/SGT BARFIELD'S COLLECTION

2ADA AND 8AFHS SET REUNIONS BACK-TO-BACK

The Second Air Division and the 8AF Historical Society, as usual ignoring the desires of members who wish to attend both reunions, have set their annual reunions within a week of each other and in different parts of the country.

The 8AFHS is meeting at Bossier City, LA. Oct 3-8. Bossier City, a suburb of Shreveport, is the site of Barksdale AF Base, home of Hq. 8AF. The 2ADA reunion is at Falls Church, VA. Oct. 13-16.

The official annual meeting of the 392BMGA will be at 2ADA Falls Church, in accordance with our custom of rotating annual meetings between the two parent organizations.

The 8AFHS reunion will be at the Isle of Capri Hotel in Bossier City. It will be managed by the Barksdale Retiree Activities Office. Persons going to this reunion need to make their reservations with them and separately with the hotel. Costs vary with functions attended.

Full information and reservation forms will be found in the June 2006 issue of the 8AF NEWS, just recently mailed to members of the 8AFHS.

The 2ADA reunion will be at the Fairview Park Marriott, 3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, VA. One price covers both the reunion and the hotel, as follows: Single

room, \$692; Double, \$542 per person; and Triple, \$492 per person.

Full information and reservation forms are contained in the Spring/Summer edition of the 2ADA JOURNAL.

If any Crusader needs copies of the information packets of either reunion, contact the NEWS. The address is 1555 N. Main St., #106, Frankfort, IN 46041. Best telephone connection is the editor's cell phone, 765 652 0941.

D-DAY MESSAGE FROM LUC DEWEZ

Luc, pictured below at a Texas reunion a few years ago, sent us this message on June 7.



Luc Dewez

Dear Boyhood Heroes, Dear Friends:

Yesterday, one of the French speaking TV channel of RTL (34 TV channels and 34 radio stations in 11 countries) aired "Saving Private Ryan". It was quite an appropriate choice for a 6th of June.

Furthermore, the French TV channel "Planete" is broadcasting the BBC documentary, D-Day-6.6.44 all along the month. Personally, I think that the French title gives

more justice to the men and women who were a part of it:

"Jour-J, Leur Jour Le Plus Long" (D-Day, THEIR longest day).

Overseas, (I mean where a part of my heart is) my dear friend and boyhood hero Tommy Shepherd was sad about the lack of reflection on the Event.

So I am glad to say that, despite coverage was not that big over here, D-Day is not forgotten. Americans are not forgotten in Belgium and France.

At 6 AM this morning, on my way to the lab, I stopped the car half a mile away from home.

There, in August 1914, without any artillery support, the French soldiers charged down the slope. It was as hopeless as the charge of Pickett's Virginians at Gettysburg.

But the regiment had been ordered to push the Germans back in the river Sambre "coute que coute" (regardless the cost).

As were all the officers of the 71st Infantry Regiment, young "Sous-Lieutenant" (2nd Lt) Lemercier, 3rd Battalion, 10th Company, was leading his men. He was wounded three times (as Brigadier Lewis Addition Armistead at Gettysburg) before falling mortally wounded.

After the War to End All Wars, Lemercier's parents put down a granite monument to honor their son and the casualties of the 10th Army Corps.

This morning as many other mornings since the 1920s, a mist was hanging over the ground. This veil

Editor's note: M/Sgt Hoyt Barfield was the Group Line Chief, serving under Major Vance Z. Cornelius, Group Engineering Officer. M/Sgt Barfield (Barfly to his intimates) kept personal records of the Group's a/c, including a collection of some 72 photos.

When M/Sgt Barfield passed away March 12, 2003, his widow graciously passed those photos on to the 392 BGMA.

Your editor spent some of his convalescent time from a recent operation collating the collection of 52 photos of a/c and 21 crash photos. To the best of our knowledge, some 12 photos are not in our inventory of photos, including our B-24D assembly ship, pictured below. I remember that in connection with the opening of the new 2ADA Library in Norwich an unsuccessful hunt went on for a photo of the ship, and we failed to query M/Sgt Barfield.



392nd's Assembly Ship
(See Center Spread for Photos)

was the souls of the French who fell in August 1914. But this morning, unlike other morning, I stopped to take pictures.

Incidentally, the biggest French cemetery in Belgium, over 4000

Continued on page 6

1/16/45 MISSION: WEATHER, DISTANCE, FLAK. NO A/C HAD RECOVERED AT WENDLING BY THAT EVENING

30 a/c took off on this long 8.45 hour mission which took the Group over northern Germany to the Dresden area. Heavy fog set in at Wendling shortly after take-off, and the three planes that aborted had to land at other English bases. That evening, none of the others had made it back to Wendling.

At about noon the formation reached the primary target area, only to find it obscured by smoke and low clouds. The lead squadron of 9 a/c elected to attack the aluminum factory at Lauta nearby, and 1/Lt Jay Thornburgh, navigator of the lead a/c, reports that the plant was completely destroyed.

The high squadron was not so lucky with their target, but the low squadron hit industrial facilities at Werminghoff with good results.

So now with bombs away it's a long way from home and there's flak damage to contend with. Bob Vickers' ship with three engines out made it back to France and friendly territory before the crew abandoned ship. All reached the ground safely but with injuries suffered by three crew members. They were Sgt E. H. Markum, Sgt L. W. Damuth, and Sgt. R. Moore.

Lt. Novik's crew bailed out from fuel shortage over St. Maur, and two crew members lost their lives. They were 2/Lt R. M. Fife and S/Sgt R. D. Glass. Bob Vickers' history, The Liberators From Wendling, lists two injuries on the Nehring crew, but does not list their names. Two more ships, short of fuel and with flak damage, crash landed in France with no injuries. They were #480, Lt. Meehan, which landed near Armentiers and #813, Lt. Clower, which went down near Luneville. One ship, #345, Lt. Stoddard, made it back to England and the crew bailed out around Cheddington with the plane crashing near Tuddenham.

The other nineteen ships, short of fuel, all found safety at Ninth Air Force bases in France, so that night at Wendling there were only 8 a/c left on the hardstands.

And as things went for the 392nd, maybe that's not too bad. We hit the target, and although we lost 5 B-24's, we lost only two men and had five injured. Around that time in 1945, B-24's were a dime a dozen. Men weren't.

The NEWS thanks Bob Vickers for the information furnished for this story, and Jay Thornburgh for calling it to our attention.

BATTLE ORDER - 16 January Mission (Over the Target)

SC. Aircraft Symbols:

576th - "B"
577th - "W"
578th - "U"
579th - "U"

LEAD SQUADRON

Caldwell - Capt. Hunsaker
U 150 (PFF)

Schuster W+ 901	Twining E 103 (PFF)
Nehring Q+ 647	Stoddard D+ 345
Wade X+ 868	Clower V+ 813
	Decker F+ 223

HIGH SQUADRON

Linzmeier
C 659 (PFF)

Meehan B 480	Smith D 302	Raczko S 409
Ross J 357	Novik G 489	
Blakely L 991	Harcus F 464	

LOW SQUADRON

Eggleston
K 670

Rose L 448	(Abort)	Duff S 240
Tokarsky Y 511	Tays W 313	Garcia V 636
Cerrato Q 772		Vickers U 121



392BGMA ELECTRONIC DIRECTORY CHANGES

We'll print the entire Electronic Directory in the first issue of the year, and in ensuing issues we will print changes as they are reported to us. If you need an Electronic Directory now, let me know- Editor.

Bilz, Jack
Brent, Landon H.
Ehrlich, Lee D.
Ehrlich, Lee D. Fax
Hadley, Leslie R.
Hammond, John
Isakson, Everett
Marcelli, Anthony
Ortiz, David
Willies, Doug & Celia

jjbilz@sbcglobal.net
lhb323@netscape.com
ldc392@hotmail.com
847 715 9343
murles1267@aol.com
johnhammond@wildblue.net
ikandruth@msn.com
am5792000@yahoo.com
do1sd@yahoo.com
dougandcelia@talktalk.net

AIR ANNIVERSARY

Lockheed U-2 flies for the first time-Aug. 4, 1956.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

B-29s made first supply dropping mission in WWII POWs in China-Aug. 27, 1945.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

First "Atlas" intercontinental ballistic missile squadron fully operational-Aug. 30, 1960.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

For the first time a military firearm was discharged from an airplane-Aug. 20, 1910.

392ND GRAVES MARKED ON MEMORIAL DAY

At the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery near St. Louis, MO, there are the graves of 1/Lt Charles R. Rudd, 2/Lt Robert J. Benson, and 2/Lt William A. Spencer. All were KIA Sept. 11, 1944, on a mission to Hanover.

The graves are decorated and a watch maintained each Memorial Day by M/Sgt Allen Holtman, USAF, (Ret). M/Sgt Holtman's service is post- WWII, and his connection with the 392nd is the result of the following enormous combination of circumstances.

A member of the Rudd crew, S/Sgt Odell Dobson, waist gunner, parachuted safely to the ground. He was saved from an angry mob of German civilians by a German nurse, and became POW. Later, the nurse emigrated to the U. S. and became Maria Boyd. Dobson and Boyd met in a chance meeting when doing volunteer flood damage work. (This story has been published in the 392BGMA NEWS)

By a second set of coincidences, M/Sgt Holtman and Maria Boyd met, again while doing volunteer flood work, and since Holtman lives near St. Louis, he took Maria Boyd to the cemetery and the Rudd crew's graves. M/Sgt. Holtman then assured Maria Boyd that he would tend the Rudd crew graves, on a continual basis.

Last Memorial Day, St. Louis TV station KSDK was at the Jefferson Barracks Cemetery and aired the Holtman/392nd story that day. Chuck Mauldin of that station has graciously supplied the NEWS with the accompanying photos. Mr. Mauldin's father served as an infantryman in WWII.

There are two other 392nd graves at Jefferson Barracks, and M/Sgt Holtman also attends to them.

They are: S/Sgt Arthur L. Abshier, 579th, KIA August 2, 1944 when he did not survive the crash landing of his a/c; and 1/Lt William R. Jernigan. He was co-pilot of the

Pardue crew in the 579th. The crew evacuated their a/c over England, returning from the same mission as Abshier's, and Jernigan's parachute failed to open.

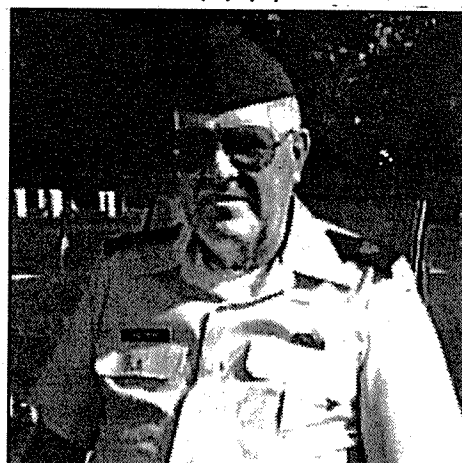


Photo courtesy KSDK-TV, St. Louis
M/Sgt Allen Holtman, USAF (Ret)

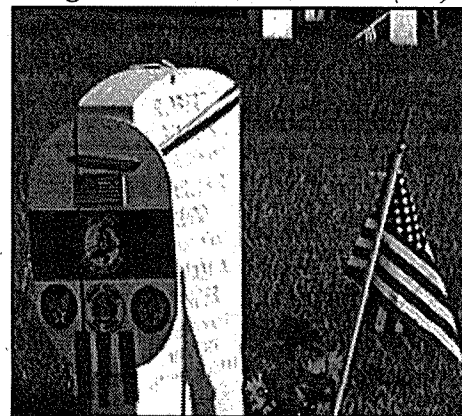


Photo courtesy KSDK-TV, St. Louis
Decorated headstone of graves of
Lts Rudd, Benson, and Spencer.

LAST SQUADRON TO LEAVE U. S. SUFFERS CRASH AT TOPEKA, THREE CREWMEN KILLED

By Annette Tison, Associate Editor

A brief article in the Feb 1998 NEWS referred to a 392nd crash on 25 August 1943 which killed navigator 2/Lt Thomas Abruzzo. I decided to write a comprehensive article about the incident and obtained the Report of Aircraft Accident, the basis for this story. I learned that not one, but three crewmen were killed in the accident. Their deaths brought to 32 the number of airmen from the 392nd Bomb Group killed while training in the US.

By mid-August 1943, the 579th Sqdn had already arrived at Wendling and the 577th and 578th were on their way. The 576th Sqdn had not yet received its travel orders and was still at Topeka Army Air Base.

On 25 August, 1/Lt Robert McCorkle and his crew lifted off from Topeka AAB at 1814 hours aboard B-24H #42-7528. The aircraft was brand new, with just 16 hours of air time, and the crew was taking it on a calibration and training mission.

The plane climbed very slowly, never more than 500 feet per minute; during the ascent, the interphone system went out. On reaching 2300 feet, copilot 2/Lt William Beaton moved the #3 and #4 toggle switches to synchronize the props but the #4 prop ran away. The throttle was pulled back and that prop was feathered. Then, #3 prop ran away and was also feathered. Although #4 was feathered first, #3 got to the feathered position long before #4.

Losing altitude at 500 to 700 feet per minute, McCorkle ordered the crew to put on their chutes and prepare to jump. By then, however, they were too low to bail out. McCorkle therefore headed for the best landing possibility, a cornfield. He said later that the pilots "didn't have time to think of putting the flaps down which probably would have slowed us down. We left the landing gear up. Before we hit the top of the corn, we lifted the nose high and had all power off. I had the copilot cut all switches. Then everything went pretty fast. We hit the top of the corn. The nose seemed to be dragged

Continued on page 6

IF YOUR MAILING LABEL READS '05: YOU ARE DELINQUENT!

The Board of Directors, faced with declining membership, increased the dues in 2003 by a modest \$3, to \$15. They remain the same for 2006. Also, if you feel that you are in a position to help the Treasury with an extra donation, there is a provision for it below. It is possible that Life Members might feel that the Lord has been good to them and that they have lived beyond their actuarial years and an extra payment might be in order. Your dues status can be found right after your name on the mailing list. If the number is 06 or higher, you're current. LM means Life Member, and Frnd means that you are our guest.

The Board of Directors has ruled that no Crusader will be denied membership because of financial difficulty, so if you are in straitened circumstances check the Hardship Waiver box. Fill out the form and send it now!

Name _____ Ground ☐ Air ☐ Sqdn _____ Assoc ☐

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dues for 2006, \$15

Hardship Waiver ☐

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Age 61-65 \$120 ☐

Age 66-70 \$96 ☐

Age 71 and over \$78 ☐

DONATION

\$ _____

Send with check to Charles Dye, 300 Valencia Drive, SE, Apt. 101, Albuquerque, NM 87108

DO YOU REMEMBER FLYING IN OR MAINTAINING

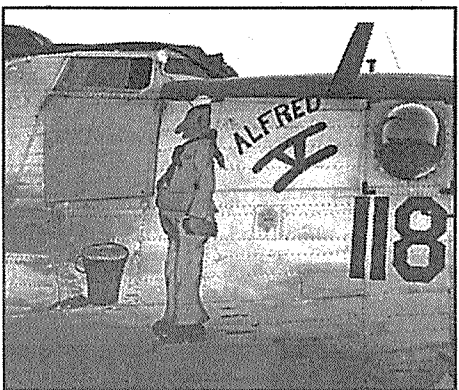
BARFIELD COLLECTION

The first eleven photos pictured: 079, 118, 261, 334, 343, 469, 478, 593, 626, 700, and 966 are to the best of our knowledge new to the 392BGMA's inventory of a/c photos.

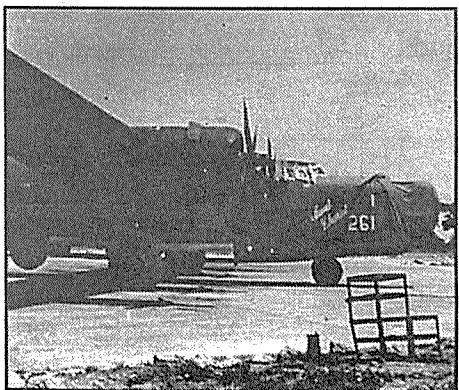
The explanatory notes are taken from the "Wedgeworth list", a list of a/c compiled in 1990 by Quintin Wedgeworth, 578th navigator. Quintin had the assistance of M/Sgt Barfield and also Tom Brittain and Tony North, Brit researchers. Later the list was edited by Col Bob Vickers. The NEWS has felt that the list is as accurate as can be expected after all these years.



079, 577th, Puss 'n Boots. Survived war, returned U.S. Jun 45.



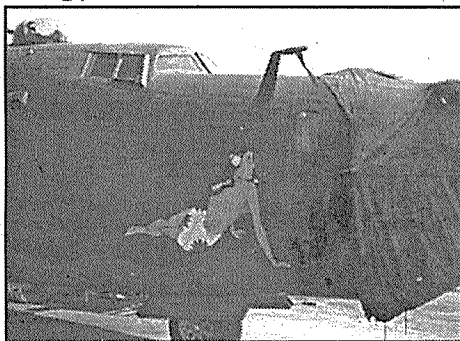
118, 577th, Alfred V, Survived war, returned U.S. Jun 45.



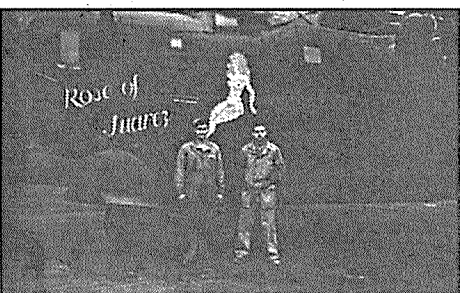
261, 579th, Sweet Chariot, Crashed Jun 4, 44, UK, (crew bailout)



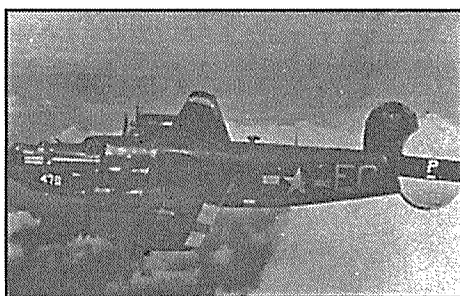
334, Patches. Transferred Feb 44 to 93rd BG. (Pictured with T/Sgt Tom Horn, leading NCO Grp Armament.)



343, 579th, Tondelayo, Interned June 20, 1944, Sweden, Politz mission (Bell)



469, 579th, Rose of Juarez. Crash landed Apr 8, 1944, Wendling.



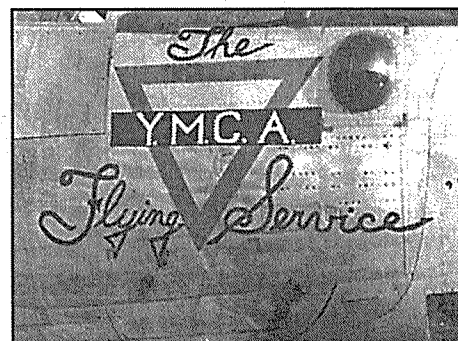
478, 578th, Flying Crusader, Crash landed Oct. 9, 44, UK. (Alexander) *This a/c is the subject of our 20 x 22 print by Frederick Searle.*



593, 579th, Lady Diana, MIA Sept 44, Hannover mission (Haines).



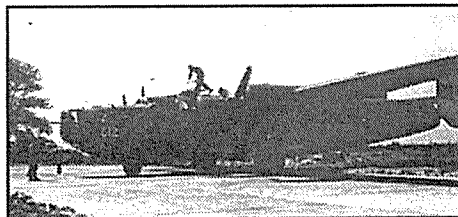
626, 579th, Liberty Belle, MIA Dec 13, 1943, Kiel mission (Rogillo).



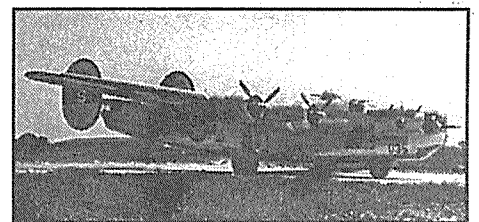
700, 577th, The YMCA Flying Service, transferred Feb. 45 to 492nd BG.



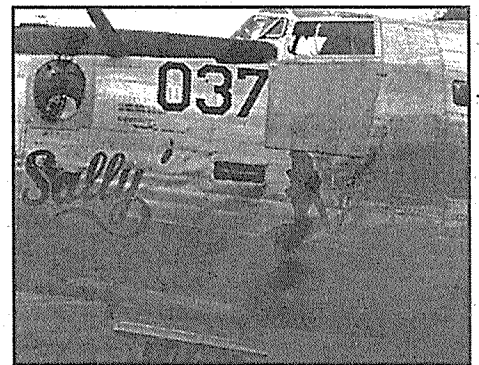
966, 578th, Madame Shoo-Shoo, MIA Oct 7, 1944, Kassel mission. (Johnson).



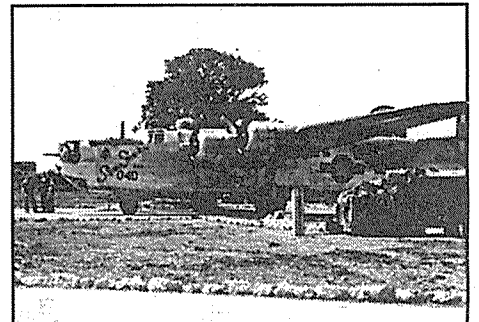
012, 577th, Trips Daily. MIA Dec. 2, 1944, Bingen mission, (Buass).



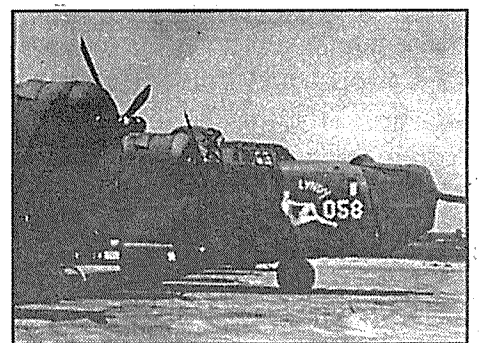
035, 579th, Call Me Later. Crash landed at Wendling June 29, 1944.



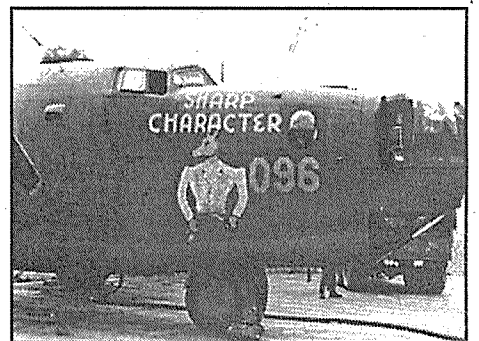
037, 579th, Sally. Crash landed Frettenham, UK, June 29, 1944.



040, 577th, Silver Streak. Survived war, returned U.S. June 1945.

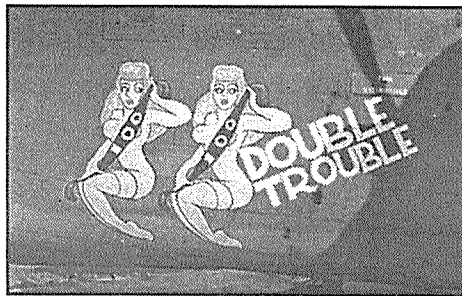


058, 577th, Lyndy. Transferred July 1944 to 453rd BG.

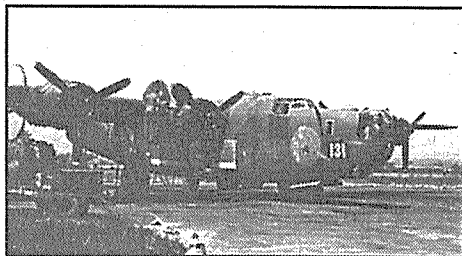


096, 577th, Good Conduct and Sharp Character (had two names). Transferred Aug 9 1944 to 492nd BG.

ONE OF THESE B-24 BOMBERS AT WENDLING?



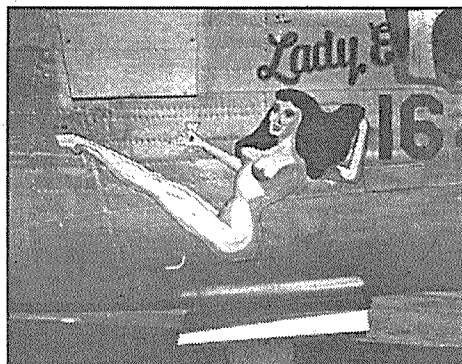
100, 578th, Double Trouble. MIA Apr 29, 1944, Berlin mission (Rogers).



131, 576th, Flying Home. Transferred Nov. 26, 1944 to 446th BG.



151, 576th, Monotonous Maggie. Survived war, returned U.S. June 1945.



164, 577th, Lady Eve. Mid-air collision Jan 28, 1945, Dortmund mission (Dodd).



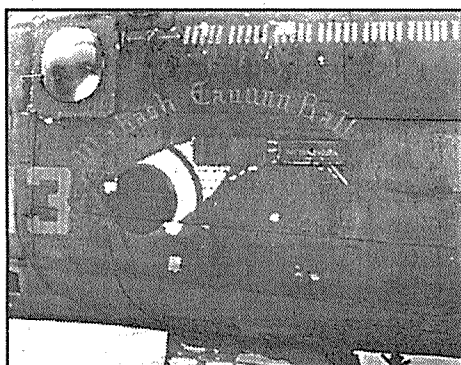
187, 578th, Pallas Athene. War weary, salvaged May 29, 1945, UK.



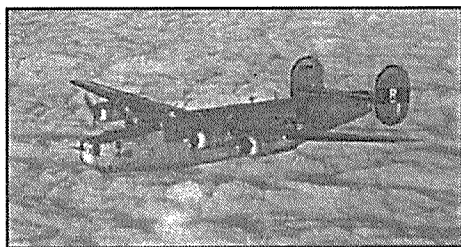
268, 579th, Pleasant Surprise. MIA, crashed Jan 10, 1945, Belgium. (Kaiser).



308, 579th, Our Gal. Transferred Aug. 6, 1944 to 445th BG.



313, 578th, Wabash Cannon Ball. Survived war, returned to U. S. June 1945.



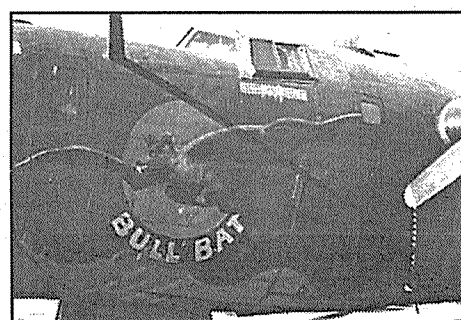
446, 578th, J. C. Poolhall. Crashed on T/O, Wendling, April 15, 1945, Bordeaux Girard Estuary mission. (Warner).



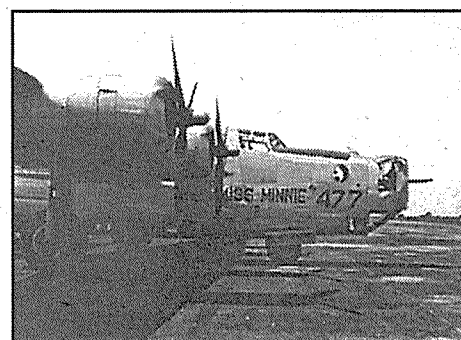
454, 579th, The Wild Hair. Survived war, returned to U. S. June 1945.



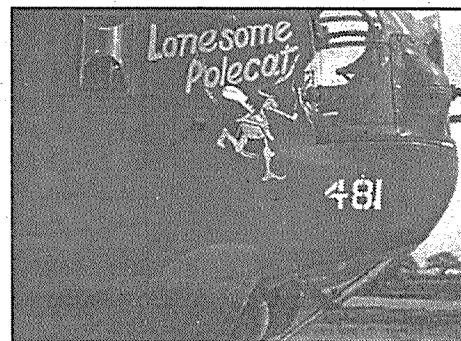
466, 578th, Ford's Folly. MIA Sept 11, 1944, Hannover mission (Rudd).



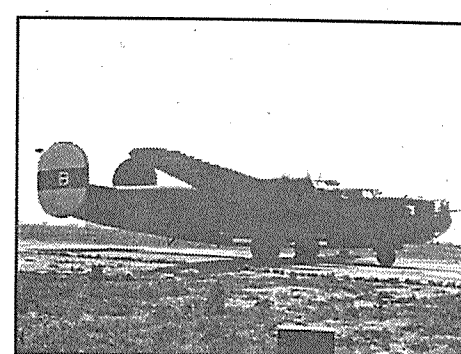
472, 578th, Bull Bat. Survived war, returned to U. S. June 1945.



477, 578th, Miss Minnie II. Survived war, returned to U.S. June 1945.



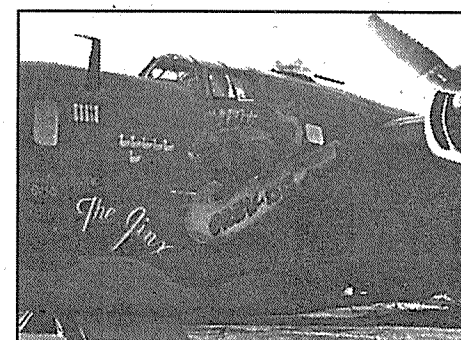
42-7481. Wedgeworth's list has 481 as The Drip, MIA Oct. 4, 1943, North Sea Diversion mission (Feuerstake) This was confirmed by material gathered by the NEWS concerning that mission, in a story published May, 2006. However, "Bits and Pieces", a list compiled by Andrews and others and sponsored by the 8th AF Memorial Museum, has Lonesome Polecat in the 577th. (There were 13 other 8AF aircraft named Lonesome Polecat).



492, 576th, Hell Wagon. Transferred Aug. 25, 1944 to 453rd BG.



495, 579th, Short Snorter II. Survived war, returned to U. S. June 1945.



496, 577th, The Jinx. MIA Feb. 24, 1944, Gotha mission. (Barnett).



505, 577th, Fairy Belle. Crashed April 8, 1944, UK, Brunswick mission, (Anderson).

AIR ANNIVERSARY

8th AF bombers attack Regensburg Messerschmitt works and Schweinfurt ball bearing plants. Lose 60 out of 378 bombers in daylight attack-Aug. 17, 1943.

down and I was more or less blinded by the corn as we started to plow into it."

Gunner S/Sgt Joseph Stephenson got out the waist window; McCorkle, and engineer T/Sgt Paul Hoffman exited via the copilot's window. Navigator 2/Lt Thomas Abruzzo, bombardier 2/Lt Alton Medley, and radio operator T/Sgt Robert Gish, Jr. were pinned on the flight deck by the nose wheel and top turret.

McCorkle ran to the nearest house and called the base for help while the others tried unsuccessfully to get the three trapped crewmen out. Gas was pouring over the #3 engine so Stephenson emptied two of the on-board fire extinguishers on that engine to prevent a fire. (The threat of fire was so great that 2/Lt Beaton later said he and Sgt Stephenson had retrieved a machine gun from the waist as "We had no desire to see our Bombardier burn alive if the ship caught on fire.")

An axe, found at a nearby farmhouse, was used to break the radio man's window in another attempt to reach 2/Lt Medley. 2/Lt Beaton gave him a morphine injection to ease his pain. Medley occasionally asked for water, which McCorkle provided; Medley also told McCorkle that the first thing to have them do was to get the weight off his legs. He was given another shot of morphine shortly before the first military personnel arrived. He died in the hospital the next day. Abruzzo and Gish were killed in the crash.

The landing was made about two miles northwest of LeCompton, Kansas,

AIR ANNIVERSARY

B-29 "Enola Gay" dropped atomic bomb on Hiroshima- Aug. 6, 1945.

—Continued from page 1—

dead, is a couple of miles away from home. Those men fell in August 1914.

Also, the largest British war cemetery in the world, Tyne Cot, is in Belgium too: 11,908 graves and the names of 34,927 soldiers who have no known grave- a continuation of the 54,900 names inscribed on the Menin Gate at Ypres.

In two World Wars, millions of people died.

FREEDOM is not free.

This statement is itself a part of that wonderful word.

FREE Died Our Men-FREE D O M.

Freedom is still something not granted but as many people forget this, it means that D-Days will come back again.

How many D-Days, how many men to pay the price of the foolishness of the others?

To THEM.

To FREEDOM.

To YOU.

Your friend from Belgium,

Luc.

* * * *

at 1825 hours. It was later determined that the distributor valves on the #3 and #4 propellers were loose, which "could cause internal leakage and cause the propellers not to function properly."

Six days later, the eight remaining crews in the 576th Squadron were ordered to depart for Presque Isle, Maine, the first step on their trip to England.

According to co-pilot 2/Lt Beaton, the men aboard #528 were:

1/Lt	McCorkle, Robert D.	Pilot	
2/Lt	Beaton, William O.	Copilot	
2/Lt	Abruzzo, Thomas S.	Navigator	KIA
2/Lt	Medley, Alton C.	Bombardier	KIA
T/Sgt	Hoffman, Paul W.	Engineer	
T/Sgt	Gish, Jr. Robert W.	Radio Operator	KIA
S/Sgt	Stephenson, Joseph W.	Gunner	

The names of the three casualties now appear on the 392nd Bomb Group's Roll of Honor at www.b24.net.

* * * *

AIR ANNIVERSARY

Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki by B-29 "Bock's Car"- Aug. 9, 1945.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

177 B-24s drop 311 tons of bombs from low level on oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania- Aug.1, 1943

PX ITEMS

Anthology, "20 th Century Crusaders".(Hard cover book)	\$36.50 postpaid	\$
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Cap, black, 392 nd Bomb Group w/gold braid, summer,	\$10.50 postpaid	\$
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Jacket, white nylon, w/ 392 Bomb Group and Crusader patches,	\$29.00 postpaid	
(Circle size wanted) M L XL XXL		\$
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Print, "The Flying Crusader", reduced to	\$16.50 postpaid	\$
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DVD, 392 nd 's memorabilia photos,	\$25.00 postpaid	\$
Video, from Albuquerque Reunion Symposium, "The Early Days",	\$17.50 postpaid	\$
Video, Symposium above, "The Ground Support Teams Prepare For A Mission",	\$17.50 postpaid	\$
Video, Symposium above, "The Tough Missions", Pt 1: Bremen, Keil, Gotha, Friedrichshafen both parts	\$27.50pp	\$
Video, Symposium above, "Tough Missions", Pt 2: Politz, Berlin, Bernberg, Bingen, Wesel, both parts	\$27.50 pp.	\$
Video, Symposium above, general scenes from the reunion, 2 parts,	\$27.50 postpaid	\$

Total (Send with check to Charles Dye, 300 Valencia Dr., SE, Apt 101 Albuquerque NM 87108) \$

Book, "After The Liberators, A Father's Last Mission, A Son's Lifelong Journey", by Bill McGuire, son of 579th navigator Bill McGuire Sr., KIA Friedrichshafen mission.
Order direct from publisher, Parkway Publishers: PO Box 3678, Boone, NC 28607, \$20.95 postpaid (Mention 392BGMA newsletter in your letter and you can take 10% off the total bill)

Book, "Joey, Joe, and Joseph" by William A. Damerst, 576th navigator.
Order direct from publisher, Publish America: PO Box 151, Frederick, MD 21705-0151. \$21.95 postpaid

Book, "Stalag 17B, Prisoner of War", by L/C (USAF, Ret) Richard H. Hoffman, ball turret gunner, 579th.
Order from publisher, Xlibris Corp, phone 888 795 4274, or on line at www.xlibris.com/html/bookstores. Also at Amazon.com. No cost figures furnished.

Book, "Don't Call Me A Hero", by Jim McGregor, pilot, 579th.
Order from Publisher, Willeo Publishing, 702 Foxborough Sq. W, Brentwood, TN 37027. \$19.95 postpaid.

SUDDEN STORM CAUSES CRASH AT ALAMOGORDO: 10 DEAD, 1 SURVIVOR

By Annette Tison, Assistant Editor

While I was researching the Lembright-Kaspervik collision at Alamogordo (Feb 2006 NEWS), ground crew vets Ernie Barber and Tom Perry told me about a 392nd crash there during a terrible thunderstorm. They asked me to investigate, and this is what I learned.

On June 29, 1943, the 577th Sqdn had already returned from their pre-deployment leave; Sgt Wilbur Zimmerman had used the time to get married. Now, his and three other crews were taking up brand-new Liberators on a routine flight to calibrate the instruments.

At about 1547 hours, pilot 2/Lt Leander M. Sherman in B24E #41-28423 radioed the control tower for clearance to land. At the field, ceiling and visibility were unlimited except for a highly localized storm cell about 15 miles to the south.

With permission granted, Sherman approached Runway 3 but overshot the landing and had to go around again. As he did, the storm neared the field and the winds increased from 7 knots to 35 knots with a cross wind on Runway 3. The tower radioed #423 to advise of the wind shift and to divert to Runway 7, but couldn't make contact.

Sherman circled the field twice. Some witnesses thought these were actually attempts to land that were given the red flag. Moments later, the entire base, including the control tower, lost electrical power. Sherman then tried to land on Runway 3. As he lined up, a powerful rain squall moved in and the tower lost visual contact with the ship as well. #423 was enveloped by heavy rain and hail that reduced visibility to less than one hundred feet. With his plane rocked by severe turbulence, 2/Lt Sherman lost control and #423 crashed at 1618 hours about a quarter mile northwest of Runway 25.

Out in the field chasing jackrabbits, ground crew chiefs Ernie Barber and Cleon Barber were heading in because of the rain when they heard the crash. At the site, they saw one of the pilots walking around, still strapped to his seat. As a medic approached, the man collapsed and died.

Tom Perry was at the skeet range with other 576th Sqdn ordnance men when the storm approached. After taking refuge in a nearby equipment shed, he heard what he thought was a tremendous clap of thunder. After the rain let up and he came out of the shed, he saw the burning pieces of a B-24 strewn about 50 or 60 yards away, at right angles to the skeet range. He and his friends tried to drive their bomb service truck to the crash, but the water was too deep. As Perry ran toward the wreck, the water was above his ankles.

An ambulance had arrived but it couldn't get close to the site because of the flood. A doctor grabbed Perry's arm and told him to help load one of the bodies on a stretcher and bring it to the ambulance. To this day, Tom Perry tries not to think about what he saw at the crash site. When he finally got back to the line shack, one of the armorers was crying uncontrollably because he had convinced his close friend, Cpl. Fred Matthews, to go up for a ride that day and he had been killed.

There was only one survivor. Just before the final approach, assistant engineer S/Sgt Jimmie V. Staffiera had been sent back to the waist to make sure the landing gear was down. When the plane impacted, he was apparently thrown out the waist window. In a coma for three days, he was not expected to live and his family was summoned from New Jersey. He held on, though. After several operations and over five months in various hospitals, he was offered a medical discharge. He declined, wanting to complete his military service. He spent the rest of the war at Alamogordo, where he was in charge of the Ground Gunnery Range. He was discharged in 1946.

Now 86, Jimmie Staffiera remembers the turbulence in the air, but not the crash. While he was in the hospital, though, someone brought him a souvenir—a steering wheel from ship #423. It hangs on the wall of his home,

a silent reminder of how lucky he was on June 29, 1943.

Killed in the crash were:

2/Lt Leander M. Sherman, pilot

2/Lt John E. Hennessy, copilot

2/Lt Leonard A. Sundahl, navigator

2/Lt Warren L. Krausse, bombardier

T/Sgt Franklin C. Houseman, engineer

Sgt James H. Supinsky, radio operator

Sgt Wilbur H. Zimmerman, assistant radio operator

Sgt John L. Peterson, gunner

Sgt Roy J.E. Payne, gunner

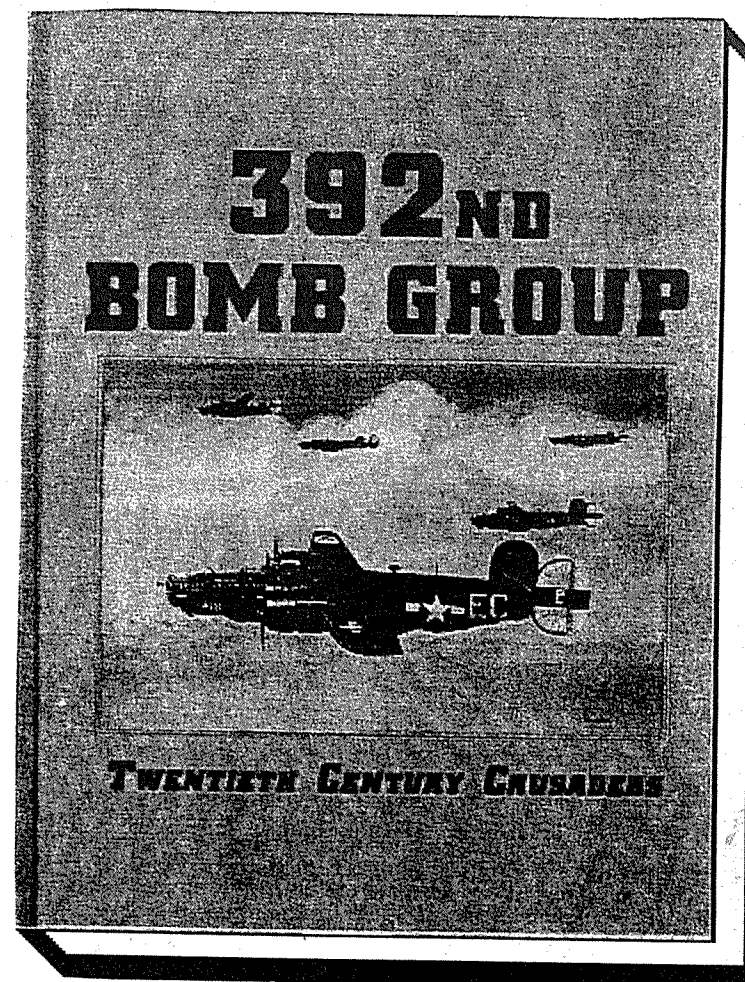
Cpl. Fred D. Matthews, passenger

These names have been added to the 392nd Bomb Group's Roll of Honor at www.b24.net.

* * * *

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All copies will be autographed by Col. Lawrence G. Gilbert, our final Commander.

Order from the PX order blank contained in this newsletter.

Over 100 authors, including Ian Hawkins and Ernie Barber, have contributed to this anthology, edited by Bill and Marge Braddock. There are personal stories of bombing missions, aerial dogfights, air-sea rescues, aircraft crashes, life-saving parachute bail-outs, captures by the enemy, evasions, escapes, resistance-fighters assistance to downed airmen and airmen returning to England.

NEWS



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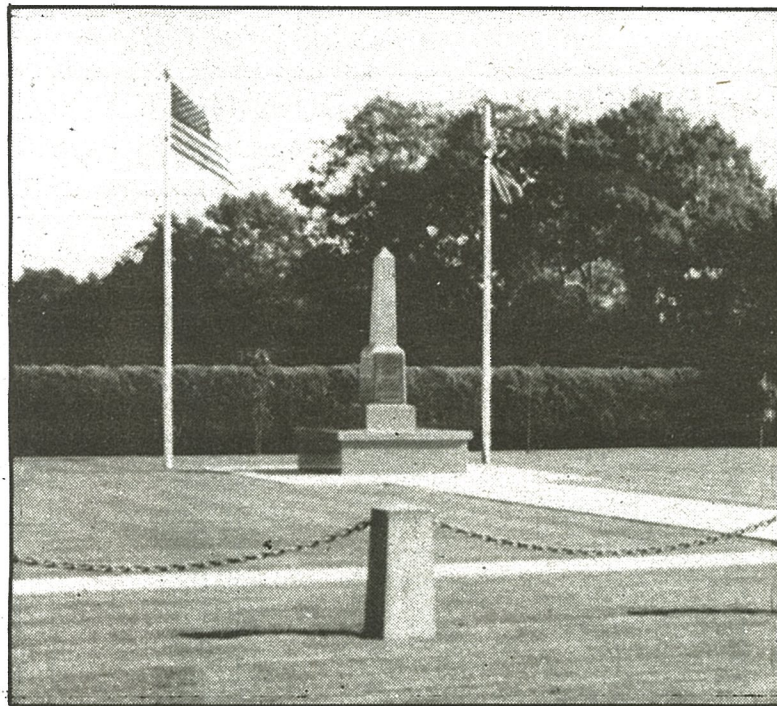
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THE 392nd MEMORIAL AT WENDLING

Almighty God, Who has blessed us with the will and courage to do our duty, we praise You for our comrades whose death kept freedom living. We praise You also for giving us the years we have lived since their departure. We pray that You will strengthen and sustain our devotion to truth and justice, so that we may be faithful beneficiaries of their sacrifice. Continue Your mercy to our comrades; keep them in Your care; and bring us all at last into Your presence there to rejoice eternally. Amen.

-Prayer composed by 576th pilot the Very Reverend Robert C. Martin, retired Dean of the Cathedral at Erie, Pa.

FOLDED WINGS REPORT (PLEASE REPORT ANY DEATH OF SPOUSE AS WELL AS OF MEMBER)

Name of deceased _____ Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors (Send copy of obit from newspaper if possible)

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

[] Record a memorial contribution to 392nd BGMA in my name, check made out to 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Ass'n., enclosed. Send this report to Jim Goar, 1555 N. Main St., #106, Frankfort, IN 46041.

Folded Wings

Gertrude Wozniak, April 3, 2006
widow of Stephen Wozniak, 577

James A. Green, 578, July 23, 2005

Wendell B. Maxfield, 577, Jan. 1, 2006

Philip E. Rose, 578, Apr. 13, 2006

Joseph J. Gurney, 576, Apr. 13, 1992

C. L. Kent, 577, July 28, 2005

J. Fred Thomas, 579, June 15, 2006

Robert O. Hildebrand, 576, June 16, 2006

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But we..shall be
remembered;

We few,
we happy few,
we band of
brothers;

For he to-day
that sheds his
blood with me

Shall be
my brother...

William Shakespeare
Henry V

Chaplain's Corner

By George Barger, Ph. D.
(aka Bombardier, 576/7)

Memory is a sometimes thing. We recall some incidents- persons, events, so very clearly. Others, perhaps to our way of thinking equally important, are remembered only vaguely. Details of one incident get mixed up with those of another, and we even create as from whole cloth a 'memory' of something that never happened. What to do?

Well, memories are intended to be shared. We tell our stories to others and they serve as a kind of reality check. And we share our memories with God, and thank Him that He knows our heart, and remembers us by name.