





# 392nd BG Memorial Association

**VOLUME 6** 

DECEMBER, 1990

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear 392 BGMA Member,

At the Board of Directors meeting in Las Vegas in October, we reviewed our member We found a considerable dues status. number of people delinquent for two years and a few dating back to 1987. Printing and postage costs dictate that we cannot continue indefinitely mailing the newsletter to those who are overdue. Some time ago we decided not to incur the expense and labor of mailing out annual dues notices. Instead the address label now shows year thru which dues have been paid. This procedure, announced and put into effect in the May '90 newsletter, may have been overlooked. The '91 dues, now \$12.00, are due January 1. If payment is not received by April 1, 1991, we have little choice but to delete the member from the mailing list. If dues are a hardship, please drop me a note. Your newsletter will continue.

We do not want to lose a single member from our roster and the Newsletter circulation, the all-important tool in perpetuating the memories and comradeship we shared. Rather, our eye is on expansion. A membership committee headed by Art and Teddy Egan has been appointed recently to seek out all those who served at Wendling but are not members of the 392 BGMA. We now have over 700 members on our roster but we're certain there are numbers of veterans "out there" that we should welcome back aboard. You can help by spreading the good word at every opportunity.

Do sit down now and mail your \$12 to our treasurer, Charles Dye, for your '91 dues, even '92 or further along...he would not object to payment in advance. In this

COL. AND MRS. BUSH ALIVE AND WELL IN SAN ANGELO, TEXAS



Col. Joe Bush and wife Bena, shown above on the front porch of their home in San Angelo, Texas, are enjoying a much-deserved and comfortable retirement.

Col. Bush was ground executive officer of the 392nd for its entire life in WW II.

Really put out because he wasn't called up for Operation Desert Sheild, the colonel nevertheless admits to several frailties that accompany his years. However, he still walks several miles a day, and plays golf.

The assignment from which he retired from the Air Force was that of commander of Goodfellow AF base at San Angelo. He then spent some time in the banking business in San Angelo. For a more complete profile, see the Dec. 1986 newsletter.

\* \* \* \*

The Second Bombardment Wing, later the Second Air Division, arrived in England 6 Sept. 1942.

(continued on page 4)

Artists of the 392nd at Wendling were asked to submit their ideas for a Group emblem. We are now all familiar with the winning entry, the Crusader riding a bomb, but who was the artist?

Would that talented fellow, or one of his friends, please step forward so that the Memorial Association can express thanks and give well-deserved credit to him?

Communicate with Birdie Larrick or Jim

Goar.

#### \* \* \* \* 2AD REGIONAL MEETING AT FRENCH LICK, IND.

15 392nd BGMA members and their spouses met at French Lick, Ind. Oct.10-12, with the Midwest regional meeting of the 2AD. John Conrad and Wanda led the delegation, John being the 2AD Group vice-president. Others present were Raymond Bianucci and Pauline, Harold Dunham and Margaret, Howard Ebersole, Jim Goar and Virginia, Earl Hall and Delphine, Edward Popek and Erma, and Cecil Rothrock and Mary.

The region includes the states of Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. It was announced that the 1991 Midwest reunion will be at Lake of the Ozarks, Mo.

\* \* \* \*

#### RETURN TO WENDLING IN 1992

Honoring the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the 8AF in England, the 392nd is planning a Return to Wendling in 1992. Keith and Patty Roberts, who organized the highly successful Return in 1989, state that tentative plans include 4 nights in Kings Lynn and 2 nights in London.

Prices cannot be quoted this early, but their guess would be in the \$1500-1700 range.

The Roberts are contemplating going over on the QE II and flying back. They say that the expense would be considerably more, but the trip on the QE II would be a delight.

If you are interested and want more information, clip out and return the coupon below.

Name		
Address	City	
StateZipPh	one()	
I am interested in going	over on the QE	II YesNo
Mail to 392BG Wendling	Reunion, 26631	Dorothea, Missio
Viejo, CA 92691.		

### A WALK-AWAY CRASH LANDING As told to Jim Goar t Col (Ret ) James Muldoon 5781

By Lt. Col. (Ret.) James Muldoon, 578th

It was the Group's third mission to Berlin, on 9 March, 1944.

Flak was heavy, and on the bomb run #1 engine was hit and went out. About a minute later another burst silenced #4 engine. We salvoed the bombs and dropped to 15000 feet into a cloud layer, but began to ice up and lost more precious altitude.

Heading for home, we stripped out the aircraft. We broke out of the clouds somewhere near Amsterdam and were hit again with flak, which left #2 engine burning, but still putting out some power.

We limped across the channel, losing altitude and expecting that we might have to ditch, but we had about 700 feet of altitude left when we saw the English coast, near Beccles.

It was foggy and we were looking for anywhere to put down, when we saw what we thought was an airfield. However, as we touched down we saw that it was unfinished, the runway only about 1000 feet long and full of contruction equipment and laborers.

We deliberatly turned off the runway segment into very rough terrain and bounced along shedding an engine and two props until we hit the edge of another runway hard enough to shear off the landing gear. The airplane swerved violently and stopped, broken into three pieces but no fire. We scrambled out through the top hatch and gunners' windows. Nobody was hurt.

The other members of the crew were Otis, co-pilot; Walsh, navigator; Savage, bombardier; De Hoff, radio operator; and J. M. Byrd, Carpenter, Bluejacket, Bednarcik, Svoboda, and Wilk, gunners.

An unfeeling senior Corps of Engineers officer, in charge of building the field, wasn't happy with us for landing on his unfinished field, and reprimanded us for our unmilitary appearance.

(However, this chewing out was cancelled when General Doolittle later awarded Muldoon the DFC for "display of determination, judgment, and skill, resulting in the saving of the lives of the crew and the workmen on the airfield.")

\* \* \* \*

The Eighth Air Force was activated at Savannah, GA on 28 Jan. 1942.

#### BIANUCCI WAS STAGE-STRUCK

Many returning GI's brought back wives, meeting them all sorts of places as they mingled with the British population. But Ray Bianucci swiped his bride right off the stage of the Ambassador Theater in London.



Pauline Bianucci, nee Mabbett, when she was a young actress in London.

After a whirlwind romance, Ray married Pauline Mabbett in England. Ray says that it was the efforts of Major Jack Fritsche, the Group adjutant, that overcame the red tape and made the wedding possible. In 1946, Pauline was able to join Ray in Naperville, III.

Pauline had begun her acting and modeling career as a young girl in London. At 13, she went to Hollywood, doing radio work for characters with a British accent. While in Hollywood, she attended junior high school classes with Judy Garland.

During the war she appeared in London theaters and performed at the Stage Door Canteen in London. She also entertained troops with ENSA, the British version of USO.

She was in London during the Blitz, and with other young members of the theatrical cast would join a team of fire watchers on the roof of the theater.

"Each of us had a bucket of sand, and there were hoses and pails of water on the roof. We were supposed to throw sand over any fires and use the hose and water to try to smother it."

She has been a Naperville resident since 1946, and has retained her ties to Britain, holding a dual U.S./British citizenship. Although only a few cousins remain in England, she corresponds with several former members of the cast of "Sweet and Low", the review she was appearing in when the U.S. Army in the person of Lt. Ray Bianucci invaded the theater.

See Profile in this issue on Ray Bianucci, for "the rest of the story".

\* \* \* \*

#### SWEATING IT OUT - DE-FUSING A BOMB

By Lt. Col. (Ret) Charles E. Dye

To 392nd support personnel, long hours and hard work was a way of life. Heroics came along if your job demanded it.

One day a B-24 returned to base with a 500 pound bomb hung up in the bomb bay.

After all the other a/c had landed, the crew brought this plane in. In spite of a smooth landing, the bomb broke loose as the wheels touched down. It skidded alongside the a/c for a hundred yards or more, then slid onto the sod and came to rest.

As station ammunition officer, I had been notified of the situation and was awaiting the landing with my section chief, T/Sgt. Dick Keathley.

When we approached the bomb, we saw that the tail fin had protected the tail fuse and I was able to remove it without much difficulty.

However, the nose fuse was a different story. It was smashed against the nose of the bomb. Taking a hammer and chisel, I prepared to chisel the fuse loose.

I remember telling Sgt. Keathley to move back a little. His remark, as I recall, was "Hell, Lieutenant, if that thing goes off a few feet won't make any difference."

After about 15 minutes, which seemed like

After about 15 minutes, which seemed like hours, I was able to free the fuse and remove it from the bomb.

We then picked up the bomb with the bomb service truck and returned it to the bomb dump. It was later inspected and loaded on another mission. The tail fuze was discarded but the detonator was used on a later mission. The nose fuze was picked up by British Bomb Disposal personnel.

At last my hours of bomb disposal training at Aberdeen Proving Ground paid off.

\* \* \* \*

#### B-24 ALL-AMERICAN AT FRENCH LICK

The Collings Foundation's B-24 "All American was at French Lick, Ind. for the Midwest regional meeting of the 2AD. (See related story, this issue.)

Among the crews' names emblazoned on her sides were such 392nd names as Spinelli, Tierney, Shaw, Tennie Peterson, J. F. Thomas, Walker, and Georgia Peach.



Combat configured and shining like new, she evoked many memories from the 2AD veterans who saw her on the hardstand at the little airport in the hills of southern Indiana.

For them, the sign in the front turret said it all.

#### COLOR PHOTOS WANTED

Roger Freeman, that chronicler of the Eighth, is readying a book of color photographs of the WW II era. He needs representation from the 392nd, and will pay all reproduction costs and return the photos or the slides to the sender.

If you have photos that Roger can use. please send them to him at May's Barn, Dedham, Colchester CO7 6EW, England.

#### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT (continued from page 1)

connection, more than 60 of our people are Life Members and we encourage you to consider this one-time payment plan. The Life Member payment schedule is listed elsewhere in this issue.

Thank you for your loyalty and support.

Sincerely,

Lawrence G. Gilbert, President

#### POST-WAR CONTACT WITH COL. RENDLE WHILE ON RESERVE ASSIGNMENT RECALLED BY 578TH'S COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

By Lt. Col. (Ret) Leroy C. MacTavish

I was saddened to read J. D. Long's report of Col. Rendle's last days. would like to report the last time I saw this magnificent commanding officer.

It was in January, 1957, at the Winter Stock Show at Denver. My reserve assignment was at Francis E. Warren AFB at Cheyenne. I was with a group of reservists in uniform who caught an Air Force shuttle bus to Denver.

We were dropped off at the corner of 17th St. and Colfax Avenue, site of the famous Brown Palace Hotel. The air was shattered! "Oh, No! Colonel MacTavish! The Air Force can't be hurting that much!" There stood Col. Rendle, dressed in a light gabardine suit, dark brown piping, a 10 gallon hat, pointed toe snakeskin boots, set off by silver and turquoise jewelry.

The next two hours I spent as his guest in the Ships Tavern, Denver's most famous watering hole, reliving the early days and remembering the great guys and famous events associated with the 392nd. This was a high light for me and I feel sure an enjoyable time for him.

We may have called him "Bull" in his absence but it was Sir to his face.

Twelve Forts bombed the marshalling yards at Rouen in the first operation of the 8

### PX PUT ON HOLD

Charley Dve. 392 BGMA Treasurer, has announced that the association's PX has been temporarily suspended while Corwin and Henriette Thomason move their residence.

In about 30-60 days, the Thomasons will be back in business, and the PX will be re-stocked with caps, jackets, patches, and the like.

Watch these pages for further information.

#### 8AF LAS VEGAS 392nd WAS THERE

L. 8AF Group vice-president Cliff Peterson and wife Mary greet 392nd BGMA attendees.

R. Gil Bambauer and Pat Burns unpack Ernie Barbser's memorabilia.

L. Bob Vickers and President Gilbert presenting a replica of the Group flag to Bill Feder, curator of the Pueblo B-24 Museum.

R. Ben Foote in the memorabilila room with a picture of B-Bar Peter, the Flying Crusader. Ben flew 3 missions as navigator in the old warrior.









Awaiting dinner are Pat McCarthy, Emily Long, Howard Ebersole, and Gil and Martha Bambauer. Foreground: J. D. Long.



# COMBAT CREWS GET TOGETHER AGAIN

L. Birdie Schmidt crew: John Kamacho, left waist gunner, wearing his original A-2 jacket, is flanked by Otto Sanders, ball turret gunner on the left and Virgil Dopson, right waist gunner.

R. Frazier crew: Hervey Latour, Lester Frazier, Bob McGrath.

L. Barnes crew: Ray Kopecky, radar operator; Chet Czyzewicz, pilotage navigator; Bill Barnes, pilot; and Jim Braman, waist gunner.

R. Austin crew: Chet Czyzewicz, pilotage navigator; Laurin Austin, pilot, and Jack Bode, gunner.









photos by Egan, Zybort, and Goar

This Eulogy for the 392nd was delivered 2t Cambridge Military Cemetery on Oct. 8, 1989 by Lt. Col. (Ret) Joe Whittaker, WWII 392nd Group and 2nd Air Division Bombardier.

Today we veterans of the 392nd gather to memorialize those who paid the supreme price in order that we might live in freedom.

In September, 1945 we dedicated at Wendling a marble obelisk to our airmen lost in operations in World War II. The brass inscription reads "To the men of USAAF Station 118, who through their efforts, devotion, and duty, aided in bringing victory to the allies in World War II." This week, we rededicated the Wendling memorial.

In June 1963 the Memorial Library at Norwich was dedicated, paying tribute to the 6,000 plus members of the 2nd Air Division who sacrificed their lives in the defense of free men everywhere. The Memorial Room together with the fountain the the courtyard and the Roll of Honor is indeed a unique and treasured living memorial.

In September 1985 a marker and tree were dedicated at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio paying tribute to our 392nd comrades.

We are here today to mourn the loss of loved ones, but much more we have gathered here to celebrate life, a life lived in the world and fondly remembered, and a life eternal in the presence of God in which we believe. To paraphrase: What greater love have we than to give our life for another. Perhaps this can be better understood by changing the preposition "for " to "to" and herein we can perceive life. They indeed gave life to others by courageously bringing freedom to others keeping their own concerns secondary, and giving us the gift of freedom in which we can practice our own personal faith and hope.

So we mourn the loss of our comrades, yes; but more than that we celebrate life; a life lived for and given to others exemplary of our Lord and a life eternal in the presence of God into which they

entered and which we believe and find our hope.

Today reminds all of us that greater love hath no man, than these of the 392nd who gave their lives so that we might live in freedom. They are truly among the greatest Americans of all, because they paid the supreme price in order that we might live in freedom's future.

Let us not forget we have now inherited the right and duty to carry on, so that many precious lives will not have been sacrificed in vain. We have not forgotten those comrades of our youth. They too, like us, were in love with life and enamored of this world when they passed from vibrant life to the eternal rest.

Those of us remaining should remember that humility must ever be a part of him to whom reputation comes through the death of comrades in battle. Forever engraved upon his memory must be the images of the white crosses marking their resting places.

Let us reflect that, but for the Grace of God, we too might have passed on at the same time, and been numbered with those we honor today. While we cannot clearly account for past events, we can resolve to keep the names of our comrades in perpetual memory, in order that they will not be forgotten, and that the principles and benefits for which this great payment was made, will not be lost to future generations.

Let us review these heroic heeds and be thankful we were privileged to be numbered among them. These men accepted fully, without reservations, the great responsibilities and objectives assigned us by our nation in order that all men might remain free, to search for life, liberty, and happiness. Only thus do we justify our claim that we exist to preserve what we love.

Thus today we salute those who never returned from those combat missions and to others who since have gone. May they rest in peace. We of the 392nd Bomb Group, 2nd Air Division, U. S. 8th Air Force who remain, honor them and the noble unit in which they served during World War II.

Some 2000 8AF veterans and their spouses attended the 16th reunion of the Mighty 8th at Las Vegas 30 Sept. - 4 Oct.

The 392nd, with about 100, was well represented.

The 392nd BGMA Board of Directors met, and among other business:

- 1. Appointed Dave Greene to be assistant secretary. (See profile, this issue.)
- 2. Decided that the 2 AD meeting at Dearborn July 4 will be the official meeting of the 392nd for 1991.
- 3. There will be a "stand-alone" meeting of the 392nd in 1992, at Pueblo, CO or Dayton, O., the exact site to be decided at Dearborn.
- 4. Encouraged Keith and Patty Roberts to organize a 392nd Return To Wendling in 1992. (See related story, this issue)

Officials of the 8th AF have furnished a list of the attendees. Unfortunately, no first names or spouses names were given. The list follows:

A. Albino, A. Alexander, L. Austin, G. Bambauer, W. Barnes, S. Beaton, R. Berthiaume, J. Bode, J. Braman, P. Burns, C. Czyzewicz, V. Dopson, J. Donnelly, C. Dye, H. Ebersole, A, Egan, W. Feder, B. Foote, L. Frazier, L. Gilbert, J. Goar, G. Gordon, D. Greene, D. Johnson, J. Kamacho, T. Kirkwood, R. Kopecky, J. Landers, H. Latour.

Also, J. Long, O. Mackey, J. Malloy, P. McCarthy, R. McGrath, W. Miller, L. Myers, L. Neilson, C. Peterson, B. Prost, K. Roberts, C. Russell, O. Sanders, W, Seyfried, J. Smith, J. Teufel, J. Thomas, C. Thomason, K. Timmons, C. Trautmann, R. Vickers, F. Wald, L. Waldo, Q. Wedgeworth, and S. Zybort.

\* \* \* \*

#### PROFILE

Lt. Col. (Ret) David A. Greene was a navigator on the Norbert Wick and Chuck Smith crews in the 579th. He joined the Group at Wendling 1 June 1944 and flew his 30th mission on 7 Jan. 1945.

After garnering a BS degree from New York University and a law degree from Brooklyn Law School, he practiced law from 1951 to the present. He is now doing volunteer work with the A. F. A.

He was recalled during the Vietnam war and flew with MAC.

He and wife Renee have 4 daughters, I son, and I grandson. They live at 73 Steven Place, Hauppauge, NY 11788.

Dave was appointed assistant secretary of the 392 BGMA at the Las Vegas convention in October. President Gilbert reports that in a meeting with the Beeston Parish Council in September, Carroll Cheek, Memorial Committee chairman, negotiated an agreement clearing the title to the memorial property and transferring title to the Beeston Parish. Establishing clear title to the land was a condition laid down by the American Battle Monuments Commission prior to that agency assuming responsibility and entering into a perpetual maintenance agreement with the 392 BGMA and Beeston Parish.

An early visit to the Washington headquarters of the Battle Monuments Commission is planned by Carroll Cheek and Lawrence Gilbcert to draft a final agreement implementing the perpetual care program and committing the necessary funds in trust to that agency. \$50,000 has been set aside for this purpose from the balance of funds remaining in the Memorial Fund. The 392nd Group representatives will make every effort to insure that the actual care and maintenance work be contracted locally under the immediate supervision of our friends in Beeston. Overall supervisory responsibility we anticipate will be retained by the Battle Monuments Commission.

\* \* \* \*

#### PROFILE

Lt. Ray Bianucci was a H2X "Mickey" radar maintenance officer at Wendling, joining the Group in 1944.

After the war he was involved in several communications projects, separating from the Service in 1948 as captain.

In civilian life, he was in the food and entertainment business in his hometown of Naperville, III. He also was in oil and gas well exploration, and ran a sport fishing operation in Montego Bay, Jamaica, W. I.

He and wife Pauline (see related story, this issue) have one son, and live at 526 S. Webster, Naperville, IL 60540.

\* \* \* \*

The first units of the Eighth Air Force arrived in England 12 May 1942.

\* \* \* \*

The first escort of bombers by Thunderbolt fighters was on 4 May, 1943, when the P-47's supported 65 Forts in an attack on Antwerp.

## CELEBRATE YOU LUCKY BASTARD.

taken part in many aerial assaults against Nazi Germany and having successfully returned from each mission in spite of flak, fighters and foul weather, has been unanimously elected a member of the LUCKY BASTARD CLUB. To him and to all the intrepid and fortunate members of this exclusive organization, this verse is dedicated.

Oh, hero of combat, pride of a nation, Bemedalled receiver of high decoration, Object of womanhood's rapturous sighs, Battle-scarred veteran of war in the skies, You've completed your tour with undaunted soul And though flak bursts have threatened your flying control You have flown many missions with highest resolve To stamp out the gangsters, so peace may evolve. You have blasted the Nazi with thousands of tons Of explosive and pulled all the sting from his guns; You have paved the way for the march through the Ruhr And have helped to make freedom and victory sure. Crusader for rightcousness, Gallahad, you Will never receive all the honors you're due, So go home to your whiskey, your women and jive; You're a lucky hastard to be alive.

J. D. Long found this bit of history while cleaning house. He doesn't know the author, but thinks it originated in the 392nd.

Any claims to the authorship of this piece of deathless literature?

\* \* \* \*

#### PROFILE

Sgt. Frederick C. Rodgers was an engine mechanic/ass't crew chief in the 579th Sqdn. He joined the Group at Alamogordo in April, 1943.

Upon discharge, he returned to the Philadelphia Bronze Foundry as a molder. He then attended Temple university and later graduated from Drexel university. He then entered a training program with George Jowitt & Sons Ltd. in Sheffield, England. He returned to the States and started the firm of Jowitt and Rodgers Company, grinding wheel manufacturers. He is now president and director of sales of that company.

He is married to Florence, and they live at 8029 Narvon St., Philadelphia, PA 19136. They have four children and two grandchildren.

#### "THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD GO !"

Hardly a one of us has not thought of that phrase in connection with something that did or did not happen to us during World War II.

Col. Joe Bush, the 392nd's Ground Executive Officer, was Major Bush, Field Artillery, when before war broke out he was transferred to the Air Corps. The Air Corps was long on courage, ability, and the will to fight, but maybe a little short on what senior Army officers called "military courtesy" and it was thought that an infusion of company and field grade officers from the ground branches might supply that "deficiency".

Joe Bush thought at the time that his career had gone completely off track. But it turned out that the organization that he was transferred out of was on Bataan when it surrendered to the Japs, and Joe, had he remained in the Field Artillery, would have spent the war in a Japanese prison camp.



VAN SPORTS THE CRUSADER EMBLEM

The Crusader emblem is a familiar sight in and around Park Falls, Wis., a town near the summer cabin of Bill Cetin.

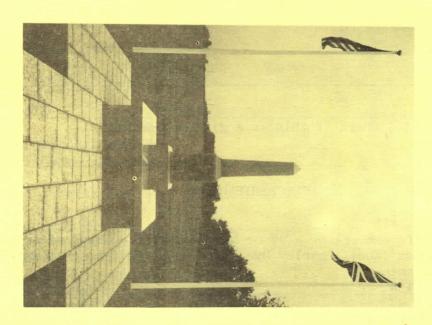
It is also seen near Sturtevant and Kenosha, the homes of Cetin and Cecil Rothrock, respectively. Cetin and Rothrock were on the same crew in the 579th and now live near each other and are fishing buddies.

Cetin and Rothrock are shown above with the van.

Cetin, a horse soldier who became an airman (see Profile, Feb. 88 issue) also is a gifted painter, having done the emblem himself.

	Name	SqdnAssoc
	Street	
	City [ ] check if this is a	gift membership
	MEMBERSHIP	DUES
	Dues for 1991, \$12	
	name on the address label, Charley Dye s Life Membership:	ays you're paid to that date.
	Age 61-65 \$120 Age 66-70 \$ 96	
	Age 71 and over \$78	[
	ORDER FOR PRINT, "FL	YING CRUSADER"
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	Unsigned copy @30, postpaid	
	Send dues and orders, with check, to Charl Albuquerque, N	
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THE REFURBISHED MEMORIAL AT WENDLING





392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association 5 N. Columbia St. Frankfort, IN 46041

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<u>President</u> Lawrence G. Gilbert

<u>Vice-president - Memorial</u> Carroll W. Cheek

Secretary Howard R. Ebersole

Treasurer Charles Dye 7217 Leslynne Dr. Albuquerque, NM 87109

Editors Birdie Larrick Jim Goar FIRST CLASS