

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

NEWS

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OMAHA REUNION

With 37 Bomb and Fighter Groups represented, the 8th Air Force Historical Society met in Omaha, Nebraska, from 14-18 Oct 2015. The role of 8AF during the Cold War, when it was part of Strategic Air Command, was highlighted. As always, the 392nd BG was one of the larger Groups, with 38 attendees, including six veterans.

392nd Information

Vice-President Bob Books led the membership meeting since President Jim Goar was unable to attend.

Secretary-Treasurer Annette Tison advised that our organization is strong, both numerically and financially. We have 297 members: 91 are veterans, 45 are Friends (who receive the *News* as a courtesy), and 161 are relatives, researchers, and other interested persons. About 63 percent get the *News* in the print version. Only half pay dues (the others are Life Members, Friends, or in financial hardship) but these fees, coupled with many donations, have resulted in a net income so far this year.

John Gilbert expressed his joy at attending the reunion from England and says he considers 392nd BG members as "very dear friends." He described what he does for visitors to Wendling—there were four this year—with details of where he takes them and what they can still see there.

Joining us from Belgium was 392nd Friend and researcher Luc Dewez.

Bob described the 392nd BGMA's close relationship with 8AFHS: Bob Vickers helped establish it, Charles Dye has served as its President, and David Nowack is the current President.

Reelected to the 392nd's Board of Directors were Wally

Blackburn, Jack Rotzien, Bob Books and Annette Tison. It was later learned that Wally was unable to serve so the Board named Gold Star son Ralph Winter to take his place. His father, 579th pilot 2/Lt Ralph E. Lamma, was killed in action on 13 Nov 1943.

Bob advised that www.b24.net gets 1,000 visits per day. He gave a history of the website, noting that it is based on 1990s technology and formatted for viewing on desktop computers. The trend had been toward smaller devices (cell phones) but now larger devices (tablets) seem to be more prevalent. Bob will defer action to reconfigure the website until it

becomes clearer what size devices are most often used to access our site.

Greg Hatton, our POW expert, pointed out that www.b24.net is a key source of information and photos for authors, film makers, and other historians. They are provided at no charge as long as the website is given credit.

Char Heim, daughter of Group Ammunition Officer Charles



Standing L-R: Charles Dye, Harvey Naber, Oak Mackey. Sitting L-R: Aubrey Burke, Will Davis, Bob Harned.

Dye, volunteered to write condolence letters and provide a column to replace Tom Perry's Chaplain's Corner. Her offer was quickly accepted and her debut entry is on page 12.

During the rendezvous dinner, Bob Books presented the President's Award on behalf of Jim Goar to Donna Lee for "extraordinarily meritorious achievements while coordinating 392nd BGMA reunions." During her time with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., she has planned and executed 21 reunions for 8AFHS, always ensuring the 392nd BGMA was well taken care of.

Crusaders sang "Happy Birthday" to 465th Sub Depot

See REUNION on page 4



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FROM THE EDITOR

Remembrance Day in England. Photos of the wreath-laying ceremony at the 392nd BG Memorial in Wendling are on page 12.

In Sheringham, Norfolk, Doug and Celia Willies “read out the names & laid the posy of poppies” in honor of the five casualties from the 578th’s 2/Lt Colby Waugh crew when their plane crashed nearby on 4 Jan 1944.

In Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, there was a large gathering to honor 577th pilot 2/Lt John D. Ellis and crew, all killed in a crash there on 12 Aug 1944. 392nd BGMA member David Parnell laid a wreath on the Group’s behalf.

Veterans Day. In Crosby, Texas, five veterans meet twice monthly to “chew the fat and tell lies and war stories.” This Veterans Day, four of them honored their comrade, 579th navigator Alvin Stasney, with a special gift.

During a ceremony at Sacred Heart School, they presented Alvin with a model B-24 painted as his plane, #42-109789, Mairzy Doats, that was mounted on a base in which a 392nd BG challenge coin was embedded. He was speechless!

Alvin was born and raised in Crosby; after the war, he returned home for good. He says he often thinks of his days during that terrible time. The first mission for which he received combat credit—and of which he is particularly proud—was the mission to Gotha, Germany, on 24 Feb 1944 for which the 392nd was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. He also flew the Friedrichshafen raid on 18 Mar 1944, the bloodiest day for the 392nd. His 30th and last mission was on 30 May 1944.



L-R in this photo taken by son Mark Stasney: Bob Ledvina, USN (who made the walnut base); Dennis Baumbach, USA (who put together and painted the model); Alvin J. Stasney, USAAF; Jim Clare, USAF; and Frank Huffstetler, USN.

We thank all five men for their service to our country!

France Remembers. My son, husband and I visited Paris in late September, when terrorism was far from our minds. We went to all the tourist attractions, including Les Invalides, where Napoleon I is buried. Adjoining his tomb is the Cathedral of Saint-Louis des Invalides. There, a monument in the corner caught my eye. My high school French did not allow me to translate the entire inscription but I could understand enough to know it was important. I later asked my brother, a high school French teacher for 31 years, what it meant. He replied that the large text says “Path of Liberty 1944” and the base announces “Enclosed within this marker are fragments of earth from American cemeteries in France.”

When WWII ended, thousands of US military casualties were disinterred from cemeteries throughout France and reburied in US Military Cemeteries there. Then, after next of kin decided on their final burial locations, many were returned to the US while others were placed in permanent US cemeteries in that country.

The American Battle Monuments Commission administers five WWII cemeteries in France. They contain 30,400 graves (including 70 Crusaders) and list 3,218 names on their Walls of the Missing, for a total of 33,618 Americans. ABMC’s six WWI cemeteries in France have 30,109 graves and 3,846 names on their Walls of the Missing, totaling 33,955. Each year, then, the French honor these 67,573 Americans in addition to their own casualties from those wars. They do indeed remember.



Happy birthday to 392nd BGMA President Jim Goar who turns 96 this month!

Please renew. As the *News* goes to press, 83 memberships expire at the end of December 2015. If the number “15” appears after your name on the mailing label (or you are cited on the email sending the *News*), yours is one of them! Please follow the directions on page 4 and renew now, so you won’t miss an issue.

Happy Holidays! Whether you celebrate Christmas or Hannukah, I hope your holidays are filled with joy and that the new year brings you happiness and above all, good health!

President's Message



Winter made its presence known in the Mid-West the Saturday before Thanksgiving when a generous blanket of snow was spread over the area. Frankfort, Indiana, was no exception when four inches of snow fell in four hours. I was in my car at the time and the visibility was so bad that I was glad for the pilotage

navigation coming from the right-hand seat.

Annabelle and I spent last Summer and Fall with a variety of maladies, none of which were life threatening but were certainly debilitating. When reunion time came around in October, we just didn't have the strength for it. However, we're better now and if the next reunion were next week, I think we could make it.

Annette is covering the reunion; I don't do that any more. But she has sent me her minutes and it's clear that matters were handled in an exemplary fashion. It's one of the pleasures of leadership to see those coming behind you step up and really hit the ball.

I was glad that we were able to express our appreciation to Donna Lee of Armed Forces Reunions for the gracious help she has given us over the years.

When I was in my prime I knocked out copy using the fingers of both hands. Now it's hunt and peck and mighty slow and full of errors. But I'm determined not to give up writing this column; it's my way of keeping in touch with you.

Annabelle and I wish you the Joy and Grace of the Holiday season.

Blue Skies,
Jim Goar

The Duffields' Enduring Legacy

Crusaders who visited Wendling from the 1970s through the early part of the 2000s will remember Denis Duffield. He was delighted to show visitors around and for decades served as the 392nd's point of contact in the area.

Denis passed away in 2005 and sadly, his wife Hilary in July 2015. Daughter Julie Beasley recently wrote about the joys and sorrows of looking through their 392nd BG items.

It has been an emotional time following the loss of Mum, but looking through the memorabilia that Dad collected and reminiscing about the items was truly special. The amount of time Dad spent documenting the items was amazing. He had letters from veterans, photos, newspaper articles and many WWII items that he had been given.

I spent many painstaking hours typing the labels and descriptions for his collection, as he was very particular! Now, I know that time was so worth it as the labels show everyone what the pieces are.

My sister Jayne and I had to go through all Dad's folders and decide what was to happen to them. Luckily, I have a son who is also interested in the 392nd and has a passion for Liberators as I do, so we have kept some memorabilia.

However, we all decided the remainder of the items should not be sold to the highest bidder but should be given to

people who can carry on Dad's infatuation. With this in mind, we have donated a considerable amount to the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich where it will be treasured and preserved forever.

Having spoken to John Gilbert many times, we have also given him several folders, which include photos, newspaper cuttings, letters, newsletters from 1944/45, and mission information which we hope will ensure that the history will be preserved and others will learn about the importance of this history.

I remember vividly going with Dad and meeting returning veterans on several occasions, looking around the huts, looking at the murals, standing on the airfield and listening to stories from many. As a child I wasn't really aware of what Dad's interest was; now I am very aware of why and this continues with me and my family.

Many friendships were made on these visits which carried on for years until Dad passed away. I remember with fondness Herman Garner, John Conrad, J. Fred Thomas, Harold Hutchcroft, Keith Roberts and Bob Vickers, to name just a few.

Jim Goar continued writing to Mum which I know she appreciated and I would like to say a huge thank you to him for allowing me to become a Friend of the 392nd. I would also like to thank John Gilbert for chatting to me enthusiastically in the same way my Dad did. I am grateful that he answered many questions and laid a wreath for Mum at her funeral. I feel I have a firm friend with him who reminds me so much of my Dad.

I am now the proud owner of Dad's A2 jacket which will stay with me forever. The name on the leather patch is "R.L. Egan" [undoubtedly 577th pilot Robert L. Egan].

I hope you all agree that this was the best way to preserve the information that my Dad received from many of your relatives and comrades. I feel that this is a fitting tribute to both my Mum and Dad's love of Wendling and the 392nd.

Editor's note: John Gilbert's son Adrian scanned 248 pages of Denis's collection and John gave them to me at the reunion. They are a treasure! Many of the pictures—including at least 10 crew photos—are completely new to me. More importantly, thanks to Julie's hours of typing for her father, each photo has a label identifying who/what it shows and in most cases, when it was taken.

Some of them appear on page 6.

I recognized familiar faces in one picture and sent it to Sandy and Odie Elden. As a 19-year old Sergeant in the 577th's ordnance section, Sandy helped American Red Cross program director Birdie Schmidt plan and execute the Christmas 1944 party for local village children and residents at Dr. Barnardo's Home for Boys at nearby Lexham Hall. In the process, he became friends with Sid Baker, the only male on the staff. At Sid's invitation, he spent a delightful December afternoon in 1944 with the Home's staff and its 33 boys. Sandy became life-long friends with one of them, Ken Gray (then 14 years old).

In 1996, Sandy and Odie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a trip to Wendling so that she could see for herself all the places Sandy had talked about during their marriage. They were met at the Wendling Memorial by

See DENIS on page 7

REUNION from page 1



Left: Aubrey Burke cuts his birthday cake while wife Beverly looks on. Right: Delighted Donna Lee poses with the 392nd BGMA President's Award, presented to her for all she has done to ensure 392nd BG reunions have been enjoyed so much by Crusader attendees.

machinist Aubrey Burke, who turned 92 that day. Wife Beverly provided birthday cake for everyone to enjoy.

At the 8th AFHS membership meeting, 392nd BGMA Director (and USAF M/Sgt) Ben Jones was elected to the Society's Board of Directors.

8AFHS Gala Banquet

The Gala Banquet opened with the Presentation of Colors by American Legion Omaha Post 1 under Ben's direction.

The traditional candle lighting ceremony featured several Crusaders. Gold Star sons Ron and Dennis Rogers, whose father, 578th pilot 2/Lt Gerald Rogers, was lost on 29 Apr 1944, lit a candle in remembrance of all 8AF personnel killed

in action. 577th pilot William F. Davis, assisted by his wife Dee, lit a candle in recognition of all who became POWs, as he did on 2 Dec 1944.

First Time Attendees

Don Carey and wife Audrey came to learn more about his uncle, 576th pilot 2/Lt Clarence W. Stoltz, who was killed with his crew on 29 May 1944. They brought a photo of the crew and other memorabilia.

Further research revealed the twists of fate: Absent from the Stoltz crew on that fatal mission was tail gunner Sgt Robert J. Courtney, who was recovering from wounds received on May 19. Aboard the plane were substitutes Sgt Willis H. Smith and Sgt Henry R. Timm from the Paroly crew. The other members of the Paroly crew took off on their first mission on May 31, knowing that two men they had trained with for months were already missing in action.

Cynthia Green accompanied father Harvey Naber and brother Mark to her first reunion; Peggy Wilson joined father Aubrey Burke and stepmother Beverly for her first.

Deanna Lemon and husband Zane attended the 392nd's Savannah, Georgia, reunion in 2013. Her uncle was 576th pilot 2/Lt Donald D. Prell, also killed in action on 29 May 1944. Joining Deanna in Omaha were her brothers Richard and Dennis Prell. In a wonderful coincidence, Richard's son Donnie was there, too. Named for his great-uncle, he plays trumpet with the Nebraska Wind Symphony's Swingtones Big Band, which provided the music at the Gala Banquet.

2016 Reunion

The next reunion will be in St. Louis, Missouri, from 19-22 Oct 2016 at the Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel (site of the 2011 reunion). A guest speaker is Dr. Don Miller, author of *Masters of the Air*. Details will be provided in the March 2016 issue. We hope to see you there!

392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please look at the mailing label. Your membership status is shown directly after your name. **"15" means your membership expires THIS MONTH!! Please renew now!** LM means Life Member and FRIEND means that you receive the *News* with compliments of the 392nd BGMA. Send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Annette Tison, 9107 Wood Pointe Way, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. You may also join or renew on-line at <http://www.b24.net/392nd/join.htm>.

The Board of Directors has ruled that no Crusader will be denied membership because of financial difficulty, so if you're in straitened circumstances, check the Hardship Waiver box. If you feel that you can help the 392nd BGMA treasury with a donation, there is a provision for it below.

Name _____ Ground ☐ Air ☐ Sqdn/Unit _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

If a spouse, friend, or relative served in the 392nd, please give us his name and unit: _____

Dues: ☐ \$25/year if you want to receive the *News* by postal mail OR ☐ \$20/year for receipt by email
Please feel free to renew for multiple years! Just let us know what your wishes are.

Hardship Waiver ☐

DONATION \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

I Remember

by 465th Sub Depot machinist Aubrey Burke

In reference to the recent article about “kitchen patrol”: The generic term was “kitchen police.” Typically, the job would include washing dishes (serving trays, cutlery, cups) and pots and pans plus general kitchen and serving area clean-up. It could be used as a low-grade punishment or simply rotated among the lower three grades of enlisted personnel.

In our unit, it was routinely done on a rotational basis. I had the opportunity to participate in the process and the job never was difficult and couldn't really be considered dangerous.

I did find one risk, though. One of the cooks did a great job of baking brownies. I loved brownies. Early on I found myself making frequent trips to honey bucket house after my KP duty. Then I realized it was not good for me to eat so much chocolate.

The mess trays we had then were of a composite material of fibers and resin that could be pressed to shape. There were a lot of people to serve quickly and there might have been some spillover from one compartment to another. The only part of the cuisine that I remember where the cooks deliberately splashed one food on the other was chipped beef on toast (S.O.S.).

The British bread loaf had a tough crust, was shorter and a bit wider than our standard loaf, hard to cut with our regular butcher knives. Early on I was given almost free reign of the machine shop to carry out any of my special projects. One of my first projects was a bread slicing machine for mess hall number two. The bearing/lubrication system was very basic and my KP duty gave me the opportunity to service it. It seized up the day before our departure from Wendling.

My gadget made me a favorite person with the mess hall personnel. Occasionally I would return to my hut with a portion of pork loin. My hutmates and I would enjoy prime pork chops cooked on the top of our coke-enabled heating stove. (Note—we also fueled our stove with discarded bomb rings, three- or four-inch deep and wide bands made up of waxed paper.)

Considering the logistics of providing US military bases with food on a daily basis, I think that we did very well. Admittedly, brussel sprouts did get monotonous. Most everything from the States would be canned, dehydrated or frozen. Frozen could be a problem as evidenced by the 1944 Thanksgiving dinner. Mess hall well decorated. Hospital bed sheets were converted to tablecloths. One problem. Rather than roasted we had turkey à la king. By midnight, honey bucket houses were filled to overflowing. Next day's mission was scrubbed.

On base, civilian personnel enjoyed the same mess privileges that we enlisted people did. As a small bonus many would put a bit of sugar into an envelope and put it in their shirt pocket to take home. To my knowledge no one was ever challenged.

Some of us ground people thought it would be exciting to go on a combat mission. It would've been foolish. We were not trained for it and most likely would have just been in the way. Col Wall issued strict orders against it, saying that the

Wing could get more flying personnel but couldn't get more mechanics.

I was able to go up on occasional B-24 check flights. We were assigned a Noorduyn Norseman, a Canadian bush plane (C-64A), a single-engine utility craft. Ours had an in-line bench seat that would accommodate about seven passengers. We were able to repair a broken wing tip with plywood salvaged from packing boxes. As a reward, a couple of pilots needed some flying time so we took a weekend trip to Glasgow.

Some of the finest music that I have ever heard was when Glenn Miller and his USAF orchestra, including the Boston Pops string section, set up in one of our hangars [on 25 Aug 1944]. Maj Miller was riding in a C-64 when he was lost over the Channel. I always felt it was most appropriate for Col Jimmy Stewart to play the lead in *The Glenn Miller Story*.

I have a vague remembrance of the Red Cross snack bar. It may have been set up more for flying personnel. We were entertained twice, I think, by troupes of chorus girls up from the city. One of those times the returning truck was strafed. I think that the driver was unhurt.

I did have occasional days off, enough for rail travel mostly, to Scotland a few times. London, I think twice. One of the London trips was punctuated by a German V-2 rocket landing a half mile away.

I've always had an interest in architecture. It was a pleasure to be given a tour of the Norwich Cathedral by its dean.

For local entertainment I would ride my bike to a pub a few miles away. After a couple of pints I would pick up the spare violin and fiddle along with them. Couldn't have done it sober.

Except for the uniform and military organization, it was almost like a civilian job. Oddly enough, I was once interviewed for a Purple Heart. The short story: I had acquired a soft woolen regulation British sweater. One of my hutmates borrowed it for a weekend shortly before our departure. By the time we were on the ship I discovered an outbreak of scabies on my wrists. It was down to ship's sick bay for DDT dusting, along with a small contingent of crab lice bearers. We really didn't think that I should receive a citation for being “Wounded in Action.”

Editor's note: The 465th Sub Depot history for July 1944 called the Machine Shop “one of the most important departments in the Sub Depot.”

Fourteen men (including Cpl Aubrey Burke) worked there under the supervision of T/Sgt Walter Tevlin. The shop had “four Turning Lathes, two Drill Presses, one Shaper for plane cutting, one Miller which cuts gears and teeth and angle cutting, one Do-All, for contour-steel cutting, one press, 50 pound pressure, one power hacksaw, which cuts heavy material and one Pedestal Grinder, with which to do their work. This department repairs all kinds of small items which are needed urgently for planes when they are not in stock in Sub Depot Supply. Parts holding a plane on the ground are given priority over all other work. In the past six months, the machine shop has completed approximately 900 work orders.”

What Aubrey and his fellow machinists did on the ground enabled the combat fliers to do their work in the air.

Photos from Denis Duffield's Collection



Living Quarters, location unknown



Preparing to lay a wreath at the Wendling Memorial on 10 June 1992. L-R: Group Transportation Officer Jim Goar, truck driver Al Crafton Jr., tail gunner John Rosenberg and copilot Harold Hutchcroft.



At the Wendling Memorial on 25 May 1987. L-R: pilot J. Fred Thomas, Rev. Donald Munt, navigator John B. Conrad, and Lawrence G. Gilbert, last commander of the 392nd BG.



576th Sqdn tail gunner John P. Rumancik in March 1945. Note his oxygen mask and tube, goggles, Mae West life vest, and parachute harness.



Chaff decorates a Christmas tree at the 392nd, exact location unknown.



392nd BG Headquarters, 1944



Denis Duffield, wearing the A2 jacket given him by Bob Egan.

DENIS from page 3

Sandy's long-time friend. Sandy said this photo brought back many happy memories and thanked Julie for sharing it!

Adrian is scanning other photos from Denis's collection which will undoubtedly appear in future newsletters.



L-R: Ken and Sylvia Gray, Sandy and Odie Elden, and Denis Duffield during a 1996 visit to Wendling.

The 392nd BGMA is grateful to Julie and Adrian for helping us preserve the legacy!!

Red Cross Aero Club

Important news was in Daily Memorandum #121 on 11 Dec 1943: "1. Aero Club. The American Red Cross announces the proposed opening of the Aero Club on 23 December 1943 barring any unforeseen obstacles. The club will be specifically for the use of all enlisted personnel of this station, however, officers may use the library facilities and also use the Club on other occasions as guests of the enlisted men.

"Miss Winifred Small of Austin, Texas, will be Club Director and Miss Birdie Schmidt of Columbus, Ohio, Program Director.

"The Club will have a staff of approximately 25 girls to service it and there will be five rooms, namely, the Snack Bar, Lounge, Library, Games Room and Card Room.

"Due to the numerous problems encountered in opening a Club of this kind it will be impossible for it to be in full swing by Christmas. However, we intend opening it then because we feel that a place should be provided for recreation during the Christmas season. Improvements and polish will come along as we go on. In order to open by then we will appreciate the assistance of any men who would like to help us get the Club started. They may offer their services at the Red Cross office. Since the Club will belong to the men of this station, and we want them to be proud of it, we will appreciate your support and cooperation in helping us operate it."

The Aero Club, ably run by the small Red Cross staff and local women, became an important part of 392nd BG life.

Their efforts were greatly aided by the people they served. Birdie recalled, "Military personnel on the base were very kind to us, as were our English neighbors. For example, the engineers brought a bulldozer and really flattened the ground surrounding the club. Then one of our neighboring farmers plowed and harrowed the ground and sowed grass seed for us. Capt George Cadwalader, of the Quartermaster Corps, helped solve our fuel problems. With M/Sgt "Vic" Vickers on hand, a serious electrical problem wasn't a

problem for very long.

"The Utilities boys made the slotted cement in-the-ground bike racks for us on an experimental basis. They proved so successful they were built elsewhere on the base. The Ordnance boys contributed bent bomb fins from which floor stand ash trays were made. We couldn't have opened the club each day without the genial dependability of Jim Goar as Transportation Officer. He juggled vehicles and personnel not only to help us get our staff to and from work, but also to help us transport our food and equipment and then set it up outside the debriefing room to serve those returning from missions."

39nd Commander Col Lorin Johnson sent a letter of thanks to Birdie to commemorate the Aero Club's first anniversary. He wrote, "... The citation we [recently] received for 'distinguished and exceptionally outstanding performance of duty' on 200 missions is based upon the individual contribution of every man on the field, and naturally includes the work of you and your staff."



From top: The Red Cross helps entertain ground crew personnel on Christmas Day 1943; the Aero Club staff has set up for a party; the ARC serves donuts and coffee to returning airmen.

COL IRVINE A. RENDLE: THE FIRST COMMANDER

Col Irvine A. "Bo" Rendle took charge of the 392nd in January 1943 when it was just a small cadre, then organized it, grew it, trained it, and led it to the ETO in August 1943.

Born 12 Dec 1909 in Rawlins, Wyoming, he came from a family of pioneer cattle ranchers. He entered Stanford University on 1 Oct 1929 as a transfer student from the University of Nebraska and received an A.B. degree with a major in Political Science on 3 Apr 1931.

Entering the service as a flying cadet in February 1933, he won his wings and a commission in the Army Air Corps Reserve on 20 Feb 1935. He was initially ordered to a year's active duty but was later extended to 20 Aug 1936.

During this time, he served with men who became prominent in the 8th Air Force: his Group Operations Officer was Capt Ira C. Eaker (later the 8th's first Commanding General) while fellow pilot Capt Walter R. Peck commanded the 96th Wing in the 2nd Air Division during the war.

After his active duty ended, Capt Rendle flew the Western Air Express for several months. When the opportunity came in October 1938, he accepted a reduction in rank to Second Lieutenant and returned to the Air Corps, this time in the Regular Army.

He was assigned to March Field, California, and served under LtCol Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, later Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Forces during WWII.

Rendle served successive tours as a fighter, attack and medium bombardment pilot.

By July 1942, he was the CO of the 34th BG, a B-17 unit. He was soon directed by 2nd Air Force to activate the 390th Bomb Group (Heavy). In early February 1943, LtCol Rendle told his four squadron heads that he was being reassigned to command a B-24 group and asked if they would consider transferring with him. Only Capt Lawrence G. Gilbert said yes; he became the 392nd's first Operations Officer—and its last commander.

Col Rendle led the 392nd on eight combat missions, including its first two and its one hundredth (on D-Day).

Transfer

He left the Group on 20 June 1944 to become Chief of Staff of the 14th Combat Wing. Per a 392nd BG-written press release about this move, an unnamed author noted, "As a pilot with more than 11 years' experience—he wears a Command Pilot's wings—Col Rendle had unquestioned respect from his ground and combat crews. As their original CO who took them through the phases in preparation for overseas duty and then led them in battle, he had their loyalty and affection.

"To his men Col Rendle was a 'character', a sobriquet reserved for out-of-the-ordinary individuals with a flair for the different. Anecdotes about the Old Man were numerous. About his bronc-busting days in Wyoming. About the bet he made not to smoke for a year, or maybe two, and thereafter was rarely seen without an unlighted cigar in his mouth. About the wisecracks that broke the tension of many an early morning briefing during the long English winter.

"Arriving in the ETO in the early days where there were hardly enough Libs on hand to make a striking force, when all-the-way fighter escorts were but a dream, the Group had

taken the lead in bombing and had maintained it while the Liberator division built up.

"Now, nearly a year after their first mission, most of the original crews have been replaced by new ones. That there has been no change in the excellent results obtained by the Group, despite the deeper penetration in enemy territory and the growing number of missions the crews tucked under

their belts, is a tribute to the Colonel and his staff."

Post-392nd

Col Rendle was supposed to take command of a new Bomb Wing (the 95th) and be promoted to Brigadier General, but the 95th was never organized. He went back to the 14th Wing as Chief of Staff and then to the 96th CW in the same position.

While on that assignment, he had a narrow escape while flying a P-51. The engine quit on



On 9 Sep 1943 LtCol Irvine A. Rendle (on right) returns from the 392nd BG's first combat mission. Note his unlit cigar.

take-off and he parachuted out at 400 feet.

After WWII, he was Chief of Staff of the 15th Air Force at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

He retired from the Air Force in 1949, returned to Rawlins and became a rancher. He also was involved in other real estate ventures, among which was the acquisition of a somewhat small and modest ranch which he aptly named the Oleo Ranch (the cheap spread). He was a Director of the Rawlins Federal Savings and Loan Association and a member of the Rawlins-Carbon County Planning and Zoning Commission.

Col Rendle died at the age of 64 in his Rawlins home. His body was cremated and the ashes spread over his ranch.

In a press release written for the 392nd's first anniversary, 1/Lt Donald B. McCammond pointed out, "On that day 12 months or so ago, when the time came for [this] Group to come out of war department top drawers, Washington named Lieutenant Colonel Rendle to lead it. To a large extent, the personality of the Group was decided at the same time. For military units do have personality, generally reflecting that of the commanding officer."

Irvine Rendle was in the right place at the right time with the right skills and his leadership directly led to the 392nd BG's success in battle.

Anecdotes

Group Transportation Officer Jim Goar recalls that Col Rendle "had a presence which brought instant respect from his juniors, both officers and enlisted men. But he also had

See COL RENDLE on page 9

COL RENDLE from page 8

a sense of humor, to which I can attest.

"I was probably one of the most junior second lieutenants in the Group when it fell my duty to accompany the colonel on one of his infrequent barracks inspections.

"I was much in awe of the great man and was trying very hard to be at my best. So I harkened back to the days when I was a drill sergeant, and when I called "Attention," I summoned up the loudest and raspiest voice I could.

"When we left the barracks, the colonel turned to me with a twinkle in his eye and said, 'It's okay to leave the linoleum on the floor, lieutenant.' "

The 576th's Robert Berger recalls, "I was Don Clover's copilot and joined the crew in the States straight out of a P-51 outfit. Our crew had just finished a mission to Helmstedt, our 14th, that day and I was at the Officers Club that evening letting off a little steam. We were not expected to fly the next day and there were only a couple of others at the club. It was about ready to close when Col Rendle walked through. He could see that I was having a good time.

"The next morning at about 4:30am the orderly woke me up to tell me that I was flying copilot with Col Rendle. It was his practice, when not on a mission himself, to go up and stay with the guys until they started out over the Channel.

"I went to the plane, did my check-out and we took off. When the flaps were up and my copilot duties were over I headed for the bomb bay and then back to the oxygen.

"After the Group was formed we headed back for Wendling. I shot five landings for him. When we shut it down he handed me one of those famous cigars, grinned at me and said, 'Lieutenant, always remember that my pilots are ready to fly at any time.' He never mentioned the night before at the club, but I always remembered it and even used the same procedure myself [later in my USAF career]."

On a night following a time when the 392nd had suffered a heavy loss, 577th copilot Hank Vaughan remembered, "I was among others that assembled in a large hangar to hear an address from our leader, Col Rendle.

"As we gathered, the makeshift raised speaker platform was unoccupied. There were none of the conversations, banter or laughter usually found at such a meeting; just a sense of quiet wonderment of why it was being held.

"The more we stood, the quieter it became. The silence became so thick you could almost cut it with a knife.

"Finally, up front a man climbed the few steps and turned facing the assembled men. He was a large man, bareheaded, his black hair and facial features plainly showing his Indian descent. His carriage, demeanor and attire befitted the rank he carried.

"Before speaking, he seemed to look and search out the face of each man. When he spoke his strong booming voice carried the length and breadth of the building.

" 'Men of the 392nd, we have taken one hell of a beating lately.' (pause)

" 'We who are left must accept the duty and sacrifices are required of us.' (pause)

" 'NOBODY QUILTS. NOBODY QUILTS.' (pause)

" 'FOR NO REASON. FOR NO REASON.' "

"He stopped for a few moments to let the impact of his words sink in. There was no cheering or applause from the gathering, just quiet acceptance.

"As he commenced to speak again, his face assumed a more somber look. 'I've got some really bad news from the folks back home.' A grin spread over his face and he went on to say, 'They have informed me that we are using too much toilet paper over here.'

"The tension of the meeting broke and a huge ripple of laughter came forth."

"Moving from the platform, Col Rendle moved through the men, shaking hands with all."

Jim Goar says one incident best shows Col Rendle's personality, leadership acumen and aviation expertise. In fact, he calls it the "most gratifying example of leadership I've ever seen."

Jim was in the Control Tower on an overcast, late afternoon, after the 392nd had returned from its mission. Suddenly, Flight Control Officer Capt Bernard Glettler turned to Col Rendle and advised of a lost and disoriented B-17 heading toward the North Sea.

Col Rendle took the radio and started talking the pilot down. He directed him to reverse course and then gave compass headings, times, altitudes and speeds until the B-17 was safely landed at Wendling. Col Rendle's calm, concise instructions eased the pilot's nerves and saved that crew.

FOLDED WINGS REPORT

Please report the death of a member or spouse and provide a copy of the newspaper obituary if possible.

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

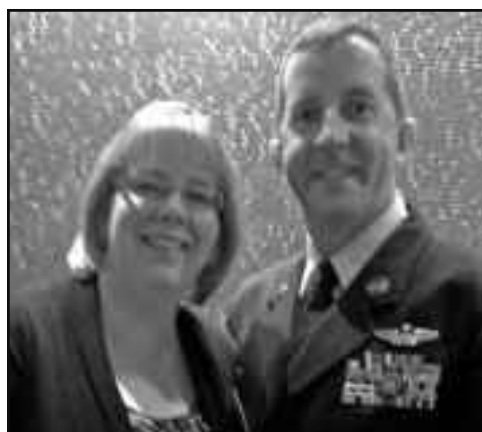
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The 392nd BGMA is engaged in a fund-raising effort to financially support our website, www.b24.net. It contains the history of the 392nd Bomb Group. You could make no greater tribute to your loved one than a donation for this living and ongoing memorial to the 392nd. Please send this report, hopefully with your check payable to the 392nd BGMA-Website, but send it with or without it, to: Annette Tison, 9107 Wood Pointe Way, Fairfax Station, VA 22039

PHOTOS FROM



Bill, Bob and Bob Harned



Krista Nicolaisen and M/Sgt Ben Jones,
USAF



John Gilbert



Bill McCutcheon



Annette Tison



Doug Dovey



David and Lois Nowack



Charles Dye, Doug and Char Heim



Richard and Donnie Prell, Deanna and Zane Lemon, and Dennis Prell



Ralph Winter

THE REUNION



Greg Hatton



Laurie Bedus and Luc Dewez



Oak Mackey



Don and Audrey Carey



Carol and Bob Books



Dennis and Ron Rogers



Aubrey and Beverly Burke, Peggy Wilson



Cynthia Green, Harvey and Mark Naber



Will and Dee Davis

Remembrance Sunday at Wendling.
 Top: Henry D e n n e t t , whose father was an RAF bomber pilot, prepares to lay a wreath on behalf of the Group.
 Bottom: US and UK flags fly proudly over the 392nd BG Memorial while crosses of remembrance line its sides.



CHAR'S CORNER

by Char Heim

I am grateful for the honor of contributing some thoughts to the News. It is humbling to follow the inspiration consistently delivered by Tom Perry on this page.

I am a "Second Gen," my dad, Charles Dye, having served at Wendling, England, in Ground Support. I have felt repeatedly humbled in the presence of the men and women I have met at 392nd reunions who served our great nation with courage and fearlessness. Each is a hero and each is to be honored and esteemed for preserving our freedom.

The term "freedom" seems to be a word that slips easily off the tongue, given the world's current political and ideological challenges. I submit that we need to hold this concept in reverence and be always mindful of those who served so heroically and selflessly to provide us the freedom we too easily take for granted.

When attending the recent 392nd Bomb Group reunion in Omaha, I visited an air museum. I was especially touched by one interpretation of freedom written in an exhibit there—touched enough that I took a moment to record it and am thankful to have an opportunity to share it with you all.

"We must never forget that freedom is never really free; It is the most costly thing in the world—freedom. It is never paid in a lump sum. Installments are due in every generation. All any of us can do is offer the generations that follow a chance for freedom."

May God bless those, past and present, who have kept freedom alive. May we be allowed the privilege of making the continuing sacrifices and installments that will keep our flag flying proudly.

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association
 9107 Wood Pointe Way
 Fairfax Station, VA 22039
 USA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Class Mail

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. — Composed by 576th pilot the late Very Reverend Robert C. Martin, former Dean of the Cathedral at Erie, Pennsylvania.

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

William C. McGinley, 579, October 2, 2015
 Vivian (Teddy) Egan, widow of Arthur J., 579, August 31, 2015
 Raymond H. Kopecky, 579, September 10, 2015
 Joseph F. Berry, 579, April 9, 2014
 Gerald E. Douglass, 578/9, November 27, 2015
 S.J. "Sandy" Elden, 577, December 1, 2015