

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

NEWS

Volume 32

December 2020



2020 Membership Meeting

Instead of its usual four day gathering, a rendezvous dinner and endless opportunities to socialize, the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association reunion for 2020 consisted of a virtual membership meeting on 25 October.

Despite this new format, 28 members and Friends attended, including several from “across the pond.” Brief biographies of the attendees and their connection to the 392nd BGMA are on pages 7-10.

President Ralph Winter announced that the meeting was being held to fulfill the purpose of the Association as stated in Article 2 of our bylaws. He then called the meeting to order and declared a quorum. Vice President Sue Williams recited the 392nd BG Prayer (on page 12). The Pledge of Allegiance was led on video by Bill McCutcheon's granddaughters, Frances and Hazel Paradis, followed by the *2nd Air Division Fanfare*. It begins with the sound of B-24 engines, segues into the Army Air Corps song, and ends with a rousing version of our national anthem.

Memorial Trustee Report

Ralph welcomed Trustee Henry Dennett who spoke on behalf of Trustees Jill Scott and her son Hugh Scott. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, not much could be done at the Memorial except for regular mowing. With much rain, both the grass and new hedge are growing well!

Installation of the new plaque for the Memorial has been postponed until 392nd BGMA members can be present for a formal dedication.

Henry said that he recently noticed a visitor at the Memorial and stopped to chat with him. During their conversation, the sightseer asked what the Memorial was for and why it was at that location. The conversation led the trustees to realize the Memorial should have a weatherproof information board with facts and photos about the 392nd BG. More information will follow as their ideas coalesce.

Henry said Remembrance Day events would occur on Sunday, 8 November. [See pages 4-5 for photos/details.]

Ralph then greeted Peter Adriaans from the Netherlands. Several years ago, he and his wife Ton adopted the grave of S/Sgt Amos E. Doty (killed in action on 19 May 1944) at Netherlands American Cemetery.

Official Reports

The minutes of the 2019 meeting were approved.

Secretary Debbie Beigh noted that the Association has 222 members and Friends from six countries (the US, the UK, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Germany),

including 14 veterans and 8 widows of veterans. Joining this year were 18 new members.

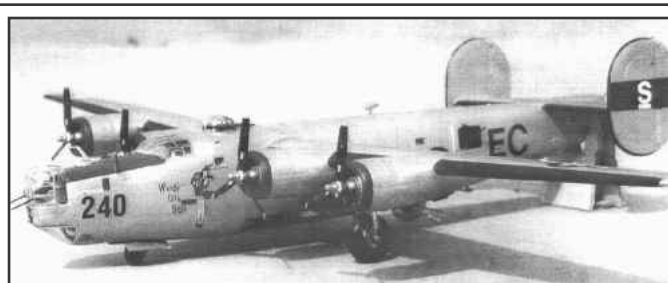
Treasurer Bill McCutcheon gave a brief summary of our financial situation and reminded attendees of our enrollment in the Amazon Smile program.

The idea is simple: visit <https://smile.amazon.com/>. Log in with your Amazon account username and password. If you don't have an Amazon Smile account, create one. Select *392 Bomb Group Memorial Association Inc* as your designated charity. From then on, every eligible purchase results in a donation. It's easy and we all win. Please remember—whenever you shop at Amazon, you must log in using smile.amazon.com instead of just amazon.com to access the program that helps us. Thanks for the support!

Vice President Don Carey read the names of veterans, spouses, and Friends of the Group who had passed away since the last reunion.

B-24 #42-51240, *Windy City Belle*

Ben Jones talked about the history of a model of #42-51240, *Windy City Belle*. It was assembled and painted by a friend of Donald R. Satterthwait, navigator on the 578/9th's Capt Douglas R. Wood crew. (The plane was named in honor of Wood's home town, Chicago.) The model was presented to Satterthwait in 1996 as a 50th wedding anniversary gift. A few years later, he gave it



The model of *Windy City Belle* in 2003. It will soon have a new home at the Ploughshare in Beeston.

to Ernie Barber, 392nd BG archivist extraordinaire. The model was special to Ernie since he had been the plane's crew chief—and took such great care of the aircraft that it flew 57 missions without an abort.

Ernie brought the model to many reunions. When health issues kept him homebound, he carefully touched up its paint and decals and then passed it on to Greg Hatton, who

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Past. A saying often attributed to famed NY Yankees catcher Yogi Berra came to mind recently when I ran across two 392nd BG documents.

The first was a 19 Nov 1943 memo titled *Health of Command*: “1. There has been an alarming increase in respiratory infections on this station. It is directed that commanding officers, airplane commanders and department heads maintain a check of their enlisted men and officers to see that these men live and work under the best possible conditions.

“2. It is thought that contributing factors which need correction and attention are: a. Improper clothing being worn. b. Heavy underwear not being worn. c. Hats not being worn. d. Arctics not being worn. e. Raincoats not being worn in rain. f. Clothing such as jackets, coats, shirts; not buttoned up to maintain proper protection from the cold and wet. g. Irregular hours and dissipation.

“3. A high disease rate is a reflection on the efficiency of any department/command.”

Today, we would add “Not wearing a mask” to the list of contributing factors!

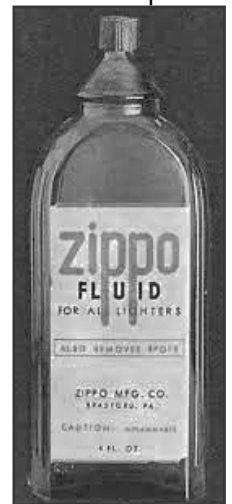
The second is from *Daily Memorandum Number 101*, issued 21 Nov 1943: “3. There is an acute shortage of bottles for dispensing medicines at this station. Because of this shortage, it is necessary for men under treatment for minor ailments to report at Sick Quarters at frequent intervals during the course of the day and evening for medication.

“This results in an inconvenience to the patient, especially during inclement weather, as well as a loss of time at his work.

“To alleviate this situation and expedite treatment, it is requested that all organization commanders have a canvass made in their area for empty bottles of from a one to eight ounce capacity (lighter fluid bottles are about the best). [The photo at right shows a four ounce bottle of Zippo light fluid from WWII.]

“An ambulance will be sent around to each orderly room on Sunday, 21 November, 1943, to pick up whatever bottles have been collected.”

How often has the lack of vital equipment and supplies during the pandemic been discussed in our newspapers and on television? Yes, indeed, “it’s like déjà vu all over again.”



Preservation of 392nd BG Archives. According to webmaster Bob Books, “The preservation of our digital archives will focus on 79 missions where casualties were sustained.” At the 2020 membership meeting, he asked for volunteers to form a committee for non-technical help such as which records from the National Archives should be included.

“Another task is to identify sites with a known interest in 8AF history, ask if they would be interested in our archives and, if so, what format would be best for them.”

Bob says, “Several people volunteered immediately after the membership meeting. Ted Dudziak is doing the heavy lifting on the mission summaries and publication, Laurie Huntley is working on the aircraft listings and Mercy Taylor has agreed to be a consultant and technical project developer.

“We still need help writing forwards, assembling indexes and personnel listings, evaluating supplemental stories, and editing. No technical experience required, just some spare time to invest in this project to secure the legacy and history of the 392nd Bomb Group. [If you’d like to volunteer, contact Bob at books@b24.net.]

“The project will result in our archives being placed in military libraries and museums across the United States and England. They will include information about airmen, ground personnel, and Honor Roll listings; all missions and Missing Air Crew Report summaries with Crew Loading Lists; the base, aircraft listings, nose art, and Crusader stories; and documentation about POW camps for airmen including 392nd POW aircrew accounts.”

Gold Star Families Memorial Monument. On Veterans Day 2020, Bob Books saw 91-year old Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Hershel “Woody” Williams unveil a new Gold Star Families Memorial Monument in Pensacola, Florida. It is a tribute to families such as Bob’s who have lost relatives in service to our country. So **See EDITOR on page 6**

President's Corner



In the September *News*, I announced the plans for our annual Membership Meeting and Reunion which took place on Sunday, October 25th using Zoom technology. I thank everyone who attended; your participation and support is greatly appreciated. You can read all about the meeting in the article on pages 1, 5 and 6.

After the business part of the Membership Meeting, for the "Reunion" aspect, the attendees shared some information about each other and we had some informal discussions and chats. It was an interesting and enjoyable time together and allowed us to interact with each other on a broader scale.

It occurred to me that it would be nice to have an informal get-together among our members from time to time. To give this a try, we will have a Zoom Meet & Greet on the third Sunday of each month following the release of the quarterly *News*, so *our first one will be on January 17, 2021*. We'll start the meeting at 1:30pm EST in hopes of getting some participation from our members in Europe and the U.K. where it will be much later, and yet not be too early for our members on the west coast.

Mark your calendars for these events and be on the lookout for your email invitation with the link to join in.

On Thursday, November 12th, the Board of Directors held a Zoom meeting with three representatives from the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Savannah, Georgia—Mr. Scott Loehr, President and CEO of the Museum; Mr. John O'Neill, Chairman of the Board of Directors; and Dr. Harry Friedman, Board of Trustees and Chairman of the B-24 Task Force. Dr. Friedman had contacted me a few months ago as he reached out to B-24 organizations to update them on efforts by the Museum to give greater recognition to the Liberators and the Bomb Groups that flew them.

At present, the most noticeable tribute to the B-24 at the Museum is the forward fuselage of B-24D #42-40506, *Fightin' Sam*, 389th BG. Once on loan from the Imperial War Museum in the UK, it was recently deeded to the 8th Air Force Museum. This act has given impetus to their B-24 expansion plans which will be executed in phases.

Phase One will be to fully restore the fuselage by installing all of the equipment that would have been present when the plane was in action. They will also add a top turret. All the parts needed for the restoration have been located, at a cost of \$25,000. They can acquire the parts and get started on the project with a down payment to the supplier of \$10,000.

Phase Two will be a capital fund raising campaign to build an addition to the museum to house a B-24 exhibit to include a *complete* B-24 airframe. The project is estimated to cost \$12-15 million of which they already have \$4.5 million from a Special Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax referendum

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Farewell to Tom Scott, a Great Friend

It is with deep sadness that we report the death of 392nd BGMA Friend Tom Scott on 12 Nov 2020.

In an email, his widow Jill noted, "He worked closely with Colonel Gilbert and Carroll Cheek over the refurbishment of your Memorial. It was a project he greatly enjoyed being involved in, helping with the re-design, sourcing materials. At the same time he welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate the appreciation felt here for the vital support given by the 392nd and others at a vital time. He remained a founder Trustee here, even if non-active latterly."

Tom's contributions to the 392nd BGMA directly impacted the Memorial as we know it today.

The monument was conceived, designed, and funded by 392nd BG airmen before they returned to the US; it was dedicated on 2 Sep 1945. By 1986, site maintenance funds had run out and the Memorial was showing its age.

This situation was discussed at the 392nd reunion in 1987 and a drive to raise money to refurbish the obelisk and establish a trust fund for its upkeep was approved.

578th Sqdn pilot Carroll Cheek was named Vice President for Memorials and led the entire effort until its successful conclusion. The Scott family donated land adjacent to the memorial site which almost doubled the size of the plot and allowed room for a parking lot. The Scott family also furnished equipment, labor, and material throughout the project.

Under Tom's on-site supervision, the obelisk was refurbished, the grounds re-landscaped, a hedge planted, and a parking lot was added. A formal re-dedication service, attended by 30 veterans, their families, and dozens of locals, was held on 7 Oct 1989.



On 7 Oct 1989, Jill Scott, at far left, and Tom Scott, at far right, admire the newly renovated Memorial.

Per a September 1990 *News* article by Birdie Schmidt Larrick (the 392nd's Red Cross Program Director), Tom and Jill attended the 392nd BG's reunion in Orlando, Florida, in May 1990—in large part so members could "get to know them." The Scotts "were here to report, counsel, and receive our thanks concerning the rededicated memorial at Wendling."

When Birdie asked why they became involved with the memorial project, Tom answered "that it was something that they could do for a group of Americans to show their appreciation of what the Americans did" during WWII.

Birdie went on, "Tom and Jill were young children then,

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News from Across the Pond

Annual Remembrance Day services were held throughout England on 8 Nov 2020 under strict pandemic protocols.

Trustee Henry Dennett emailed about services at the 392nd BG Memorial: "Sunday 8th was unseasonably warm, bright and sunny as you will see from the images.



"The gathering numbered exactly 30 and all Covid19 precautions were followed. Heather Butcher held a short service with the Last Post being played from a recorded speaker. Two minutes silence followed by the flags being raised again. Wreaths were then laid by representatives from Beeston Parish Council, the local Girl Guides and

392nd BGMA.

"Two prayers were read out and then the American National Anthem was sung. The gathering then dispersed.

"It was very disappointing that it had to be such a short service but as we all know these are strange times we live. However, it did not detract in any way from the solemnity of the occasion."



The photo on the left shows social distancing being practiced. Wreaths are being laid at the Memorial in the photo above. Both show that the hedge is growing nicely!

John Gilbert commemorated the day with services at his home. He followed along as BBC Radio 4 broadcast the National Service of Remembrance and placed a wreath at

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392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your membership status is shown on the mailing label directly after your name; 19 means you need to renew. If you wish to renew, send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Bill McCutcheon, 20620 Milton Ct., Brookfield, WI 53045 or join/ renew on-line at <https://www.b24.net/memorialAssociation.htm>. **LM** means Life Member and **FRIEND** means that you receive the *News* with compliments of the 392nd BGMA.

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 \$ _____

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the flagpole in his front garden, raised and lowered his British and American flags at the proper time and saluted during the two minute silence.

The wreath was inscribed:

392nd Bomb Group
Eighth Air Force Historical
Society
Heritage League of the
Second Air Division (USAAF)
Royal Norfolk & Royal Anglian
Associations

In Remembrance

The BBC Radio 4 announcer noted that this year is the 80th anniversary of the start of the Battle of Britain, the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII, and the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

From Upper Sheringham, Doug Willies wrote, "Glad to report that the weather behaved itself and in spite of everything else, we were able to enjoy our usual Remembrance activities yesterday. Under a blue sky and really very pleasant temperatures for the time of the year, the Service was carried out exclusively outdoors, with the congregation suitably distanced around the village War Memorial.

"Celia and I had ensured that the Memorial for the Colby Waugh crew was neat, tidy and adorned with a fresh ten poppy posy, two fresh US flags and crosses on behalf 'of the folks in the US' and ourselves. So please feel assured that, as ever, they were and are NOT FORGOTTEN.

"Think you would like to know too that the Church bells have finally been refurbished and re-installed (this was in progress I think when you all visited in September 2018). So that's nice and really quite an achievement in view of the fact that it was quite a costly operation!"

The 392nd BGMA greatly appreciates those who so faithfully remember the 392nd BG and its casualties.

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also took it to several reunions.

At last year's meeting, during a discussion of what to do with the 392nd's memorabilia, Greg mentioned the model. The Directors discussed a suitable site for it and they soon agreed that the Ploughshare pub in Beeston would be a perfect home for the plane. Henry Dennett agreed. The only decision left was how to get the plane to England.

As a USAF reservist, Ben flies frequent missions to England. He will bring the model on a future trip and rendezvous with Henry Dennett. Ben will then give Henry the model and Henry will give Ben the plaque that was on the original Memorial [see the March 2020 News]. Upon

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its return to the US, the plaque will be displayed at future reunions.

Ben thanked Henry for his part in these arrangements.

www.b24.net

Per Bob Books, our website is still being updated as new photos and information are submitted. Visitors are from 114 countries with 80% from the US and UK. Our website also has pertinent YouTube videos featuring our veterans; see <https://www.b24.net/Videos.htm> for the list.

An upcoming website project is to post copies of *Target Victory*, a confidential 2nd Air Division publication in WWII.

Research Questions

Our website has a "Contact Us" form where anyone can post questions for our Directors to answer. Annette Tison has responded to about 50 of these queries since the last reunion. She said, "With each reply, I sent a copy of the last newsletter and invited the person to become a member of our Association. I'm happy to say that many of them did.

"Most of the questions were about a loved one's service with the 392nd. For example, the son of pilot 1/Lt Robert K. Crowell asked if his father ever lost two engines. I checked my 392nd BG files and found a diary written by his crew's radio operator, T/Sgt Lee Waggener, and donated to us several years ago by his daughter Sue.

"For the mission to Magdeburg on February 14, 1945, Waggener had written, 'We didn't get all the way today. Our No. 3 and 4 engines were in bad shape—especially No. 4. Manifold pressure kept dropping so we dropped our bombs somewhere around Hanover and limped back alone. We broke out of the clouds over Rotterdam and a couple of flak gunners almost got us. We were at 18,000 and they really had the guns on us; however, our luck held out and they didn't get us. We got the guns and loose equipment out ready to toss into the North Sea, if need be.'

"Thankfully, the crew did make it back to Wendling.

"So, I could answer Mr. Crowell's question in 2020 because of a diary donated to us in 2014. And, with Sue's permission, I emailed him the entire diary. He now has first-hand details of all his father's missions—priceless!

"Our Association is indebted to those who have shared their relatives' stories and photos so that they are available to those seeking information, even years later."

Ralph thanked Bob and Annette for their efforts on behalf of the 392nd and noted "they are the glue that holds the organization together."

New Business

Ralph commented on the cancelled plans for 2020's Victory in Europe activities in the UK and said that installation and dedication of the new plaque for the Memorial will be rescheduled after Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Members will be notified well in advance in hopes that some of us will be able to attend.

Ralph also said he had gotten an email earlier in the day reporting that John Gilbert, our Director in England, had been hospitalized. On behalf of the entire organization, he sent our best wishes to John for a speedy recovery.

2021 Reunion

The next 392nd BGMA meeting will occur during the 8th

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Air Force Historical Society reunion in Savannah, Georgia, from 27-31 Oct 2021. It will include a visit to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. Details will be provided as soon as they are finalized.

Election of Directors and Officers

Bob Books, chair of the nominating committee, presented the slate of proposed Directors. Among them were three Directors whose terms expire this year—Ben Jones, Bill McCutcheon, and Sue Williams.

Bob noted the Directors had approved the addition of two new members to the Board as allowed by our bylaws. The committee nominated Laurie Huntley and Ron Pierre for the positions. With no nominations from the floor, these five members were approved by acclamation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Officers

Immediately after the membership meeting, the Directors elected these officers: President—Ralph Winter; 1st Vice President—Greg Hatton; 2nd Vice President—Sue Williams; Secretary—Debbie Beigh; Treasurer (and PX manager)—Bill McCutcheon.

Don Carey was thanked for his service as 1st Vice President during 2019.

Afterthoughts

Everyone present agreed that the virtual meeting was not the same as seeing each other in person, but it worked. It was also felt that even if we meet in person next year, we should try and broadcast the membership meeting virtually, not only for members who can't physically attend the reunion, but also to stay in contact with our Trustees.

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far, 76 of these monuments have been dedicated in 49 states and Guam with 72 more in progress. Learn more at <http://www.mohf.org>.



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approved by Chatham County, Georgia, voters.

The Museum has a considerable amount of B-24 memorabilia and archival information, including 392nd BG items. We therefore have a vested interest in seeing that access to and display of this material is made easier for our members and Museum visitors.

It was nice to get this updated information and it will be interesting to see what progress has been made when we visit the Museum during our annual Membership Meeting and Reunion in Savannah next October.

I'd like to reiterate a suggestion for a Christmas gift idea that Bob Books made in his President's Thoughts column a couple of years ago: Signing up a relative to be a member

of the 392nd BGMA would be a great tribute, both honoring your loved one who served in Wendling and preserving his heritage and legacy. Your 392nd BGMA depends on membership dues and gifts to keep the memories alive through our many activities, memorials, publications, and website. Page 4 has all the membership details.

I want to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year! Please stay safe and well.

Ralph

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each having been born in 1935. They remembered what it was like as school children when bombs were dropped. So when Tom first met Carroll Cheek and Col. Gilbert he said, 'Straightway there was a bond between us.' Thus the memorial project had a firm foundation in mutual respect and admiration."

Birdie also noted that "Tom's Norfolk accent was nostalgic to many of us. He grew up in the area at Bradenham, halfway between Wendling and Shipdham... The farm on which he and Jill now live was bought by his grandfather in 1910. They took possession of it in 1968 and moved there in 1975."

On the other hand, Jill grew up in Surrey in South East England and her family didn't get to Norfolk until after the war. She and Tom met when each was chairperson of a group involved with the Parish Council. They were married in 1958.

For decades, Tom, Jill and their son Hugh have carefully administered the funds raised by the 392nd BGMA and ensured the Memorial and grounds remain a visible reminder of the thousands of men who served the Group, their country, and their English ally during wartime. That mission continues, with Jill, Hugh and Henry Dennett, a longtime friend of the Scotts who joined them as a Trustee about six years ago.

392nd BGMA President Ralph Winter says, "Tom's contributions to the memory of those who served in the 392nd Bomb Group are invaluable and will live on as a testament to his dedication to their memorial and his appreciation for their sacrifices."

Simply put, if not for the generosity of Tom Scott and his family—in time, resources, manpower and diligent management of the funds entrusted to their care—the 392nd BG Memorial would not be the splendid site it is today and into the future.

Tom is survived by his widow Jill, son Hugh and daughter Ellena.

Editor's note: The 392nd BGMA will be making a donation in Tom's memory to a charity designated by the family—one which supports dementia research. If you would like to participate in this memorial gift, please send your contribution (payable to 392nd BGMA with *Tom Scott Donation* in the For line) to Bill McCutcheon; 20620 Milton Court; Brookfield, WI 53045, or go to <https://www.b24.net/membership.htm> and use the "Support our Efforts" button. If donating through the website, please follow up with an email to Bill (billm@b24.net) informing him of the donation and that it is intended for the Scott Memorial.

Virtual Reunion Attendees

Peter Adriaans. My wife Ton and I adopted the grave of S/Sgt Amos E. Doty in May 2004. After some time we try to find relatives of Amos. I checked internet and found the web site of the 392nd BGMA. So, we came into contact and I became member of the 392nd BGMA. Unfortunately it was not possible to find any relative of Amos. I know Annette Tison did her best in this. We did find some interesting information of what happened during the flight to Germany on May 19, 1944. Annette also did send me photos of Amos's wife and daughter. In the meantime I built up a small archive on Amos. I still remember my trip in 2009 to Washington, DC, very good. It was one of the most interesting trips I did so far. Certainly the way Annette invited me and showed me around in Washington. I will never forget this trip. Thanks.

Debbie Beigh. My father, then Capt. James V. Goar, was Group Transportation Officer at Wendling. In later years, he served as newsletter editor and president of the 392nd BGMA. When he was newsletter editor, I served as the proofreader, so I learned of the Group and the members before I ever met anyone in person. I was working as a school administrator and was unable to attend any of the reunions.

I retired in 2008 and that year, at the age of 88, my dad decided that he no longer felt comfortable traveling to the reunions by himself. I began attending the reunions as driver, presidential assistant, and companion. My first reunion was in Cincinnati, and we attended every one, with the exception of Omaha (which he could not attend for health reasons), until he passed away in 2017. Attending with my dad was a great joy because we were able to spend time together, just us. As a secondary history teacher, I have always had an interest in WWII, especially the role of the 8th Air Force in the European theater, since my dad was involved. Attending the reunions made history literally come to life, meeting and listening to the stories of the veterans who were there. I stayed involved with the group after my dad's passing, not only to continue his legacy of service, but also because the members I have met have become cherished friends who all share a link to the 392nd Bomb Group.

Barry Bendel. My uncle Al (Alfred Hersh, 2/Lt, 578th) was a Navigator in the 392nd with 1/Lt Harold Schildknecht's crew. He never spoke about his service, and as far as I know he never participated in any post-war activities. It was only after he passed away that I began to research his history with the 392nd, made more difficult since my aunt did not remember the number of his Bomb Group. At this late date, I would be amazed if anyone is still around who remembers him.

Bob Books. Prior to September 1993, I only knew that my father was a bomber pilot shot down over Germany. The pain of my mother's loss of a husband and my grandparents' loss of a son resulted in not having conversations regarding any details of his service or his death on March 18, 1944.

I didn't know what kind of plane my father flew, the missions he flew, what bomb group or squadron he was assigned to, the base name/location or where he crashed.

I didn't know any of the crew names or that there was a lone survivor. I'm not sure that my family knew much either as most of these facts were not available in 1944.

Then in September 1993, I got a phone call from an Eau Claire, Wisconsin, newspaper reporter who had been trying to find me by calling telephone exchanges and asking Information if they had a Robert Books listed. I was living in Menomonee Falls, about 300 miles from Eau Claire. The reporter had been persistent and finally found me listed after several days of searching.

I remember the call as though it was yesterday. Answering the phone I heard, "Is this Robert Books?" I replied, "Yes." He then asked, "Was your father Dallas Books?" I replied, "Yes." He said a researcher from Pennsylvania, whose uncle was the engineer on my father's plane, had been researching his missions, including visiting the crash site in Germany. I was stunned and almost speechless!

He continued, telling me the Eau Claire newspaper was going to do a front page feature story in the Sunday paper on my father. He asked for permission to give my name to the researcher, who wanted to contact me. I couldn't wait for him to call, so on the following Tuesday, I called him and introduced myself.

That was the beginning of discovering my father's war record from the researcher, **Jim Marsteller** [now 392nd BGMA Director Emeritus]. Carol & I became great friends with Jim and his wife, Karen. They came to Wisconsin in December 1994 to share his wealth of research information and I learned of the 392nd BGMA for the first time.

My first reunions with the 392nd BGMA were with the Second Air Division in Milwaukee in June 1996, then with the 8th AFHS in Orlando that fall. What a profound experience it was to meet the veterans who flew with my father, to hear their stories and to become lifelong friends with so many 2nd generations of the Wendling Crusaders.

Philip Brazier. A 392nd BGMA Friend in Beeston, Philip has an MA in Military History, is a teacher and an Army Reservist with the Royal Engineers. Living amidst 392nd BG history makes him eager to learn more about us. He has worked with the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in the past; he taught local pupils about the 392nd and the other Groups in the 14th Combat Wing as part of the history curriculum. The children's poetry and stories appeared in past editions of the newsletter.

Don and Audrey Carey. Don's connection to the 392nd BGMA is through his deceased uncle, Clarence W. Stoltz, a brother to his mother.

Clarence enlisted in the Army in October 1942 and by February 1944 he had become a 2nd Lieutenant, completed flight training as a pilot, and been assigned to the 392nd BG, 576th Squadron.

On the 29 May 1944 mission to Politz, Poland, his formation was attacked by German fighters near the target. Other air crews reported Clarence's plane slipped out of the formation with no apparent damage but fell to the earth, killing all on board.

After the war his mother requested his body be returned to the United States and he is buried in the Riverside Cemetery at Sterling, Colorado.

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Mike and Kate Cominsky. Mike is the nephew of S/Sgt Marshall Yorra, a waist gunner on 1/Lt Douglas S. Rogillio Jr's crew. While returning from a mission to Kiel, Germany, on 13 Dec 1943, they were forced to ditch. Yorra was one of three men on the crew who did not survive.

Mike and his family traveled to Norfolk in March 2019 and were delighted that John Gilbert showed them around. "Our journey," Mike says, "was all that we hoped it would be and more."

Mike has almost finished a complex research project for the 392nd BGMA. Details on his effort, methodology and results will be in the March 2021 *News*!

Henry Dennett grew up in Lincolnshire, England, and moved to Litcham (about two miles from the Memorial) in 1983. He has lived in Beeston (on property once occupied by the 576th Sqdn) for 9 years.

His father served in the RAF during WWII. After training as a bomb aimer navigator, he completed a combat tour aboard Wellington bombers that flew out of England. In 1943, he was transferred to RAF South East Asia Command and posted to India, where he completed another combat tour aboard B-24 bombers as a navigator and radio operator. The majority of these missions were long range (up to 20 hours) against Japanese forces. Henry says, "Knowing Father flew in Liberators similar to the B-24s at Wendling is very poignant."

These factors aroused Henry's interest in the 392nd. He has been a Trustee of the 392nd Memorial since 2014 and he had a key role in the battle to keep the Ploughshare Pub open.

Doug Dovey. My father Arnold J Dovey, 1st Lt, Mickey radar navigator and Pathfinder crew member, flew missions with the 44th and 392nd BGs while working at 14th Wing Headquarters.

He arrived in England in February 1944. His aircraft was shot down and he bailed out of a 44BG training mission in May 1944. After a hospital recovery, he flew 18 of his 22 missions with the 392nd, usually in lead aircraft at Division and Wing levels. Six of those missions with Maj Harrison S. Cassell Jr's crew in the 579th.

I got involved with the 392nd BGMA while attending an 8th AF Historical Society reunion around 2015.

Thaddeus "Teddy" Dudziak. When I was growing up I knew about my father's older brother, Teddy Dudziak, who died in WWII as a pilot of a bomber. My dad told me that he named me after his brother, so as you can imagine it was a bit of a burden to carry. I was able to get a couple of memorabilia from grandma, mostly related to the aircraft he flew. That was pretty much it.

When my dad died in 2001, I inherited a treasure trove of memorabilia which included Teddy's original flight records. I started an internet search for the Bomb Group in his flight records and that is when I found the 392nd BGMA. It was largely responsible for clarifying many things that dad had mistook about Teddy's service in WWII including his being a pilot on a B-24 and a copilot on a B-17. It also documented how he died during Mission 10 on his crew's second mission to Norway. Further, with Annette Tison's help, she was able to clarify credit for a bombing mission in

his flight record that was not on the 392nd website. Turns out it was canceled.

My connection to the 392nd BGMA has been instrumental in my research on my uncle, 1st Lt Teddy Dudziak and his B-24 crew and encouraged me to continue with my research. I now have two grandsons of which the oldest was named by my son, Theodore (Teddy) Dudziak, so I need to do this for him and the other members of our family.

Joel Fleck. I joined the 392nd BGMA to learn more about my father, bombardier 1/Lt Ernest R. Fleck, who flew his 30 missions in 1944 with the 579th. My wife and I went to England in June 2019 with the Heritage League and we were thrilled to meet John Gilbert and other members and get a tour of the base from which my father flew. Like many in his generation he seldom talked about the war but it was a formative experience for him. Being associated with the 392nd helps us learn more about what he and others experienced. Looking forward to another trip to Norwich.

Char Heim. My dad, Charles Dye, enlisted in the Army at the start of WWII and was stationed at the Wendling Airbase in England where he worked in ordnance.

He has told many stories of John Gilbert, as a youth, riding his bike around the base and interacting with the servicemen.

He and my mother were involved in the 392nd BGMA for decades and over the years he served on the Board as secretary, treasurer and president.

Dad is now 100 years old but is still able to reminisce about his military career and his friends of the 392nd.

Laurie Huntley. I am the great niece of 579th Sqdn Navigator Captain John Slowik, killed in action 18 Mar 1944. I became involved with the 392nd BGMA in 1999 after I came in contact with Captain Slowik's war journal, creating a lifelong passion for travel, uncovering stories and making new friends near and far.

Ben Jones. Growing up in the 70s and 80s a few miles from the former Wendling airfield allowed me the opportunity to enjoy its abandoned and derelict structures. We'd ride our bikes around the taxiways and down the runways, trying to imagine what it was like with B-24s rolling down them instead. Our bikes gave us freedom to explore, just like they gave the GIs 30-40 years before us.

When the vets would visit by the bus load, I would follow the buses on their tours by riding my bike behind them through the narrow lanes and down the taxiways; they nicknamed me *The Kid on the Bike*—and the name stuck!

These vets became great friends and led to many visits with them back in the States. From those early days, I met up with Jim Marsteller, Bob Books and Greg Hatton at a stateside reunion and we founded www.b24.net, right around the same time as Amazon in the early 1990s. From there I became active with the Board, continued attending annual reunions, and served on the Board and as President of the 8th AFHS. It is directly through my association with the 392nd and its veterans that I entered the USAF and am still serving 22 years later. I am often flying over the skies of East Anglia and always reflect on how lucky I am that my missions are now during times of peace in these same skies those young fliers before me flew.

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Cathy Leonard. My connection to the 392nd is through my uncle, J. Thomas (Tommy) Hoover, who was KIA on 8 Oct 1943. Uncle Tommy, Mom's older brother, was part of the 578th Squadron and was the Radio Operator on Aircraft #42-7488, *Hellzadroppin*, when it was shot down.

I have the telegrams to my grandparents informing them of Uncle Tommy being declared missing and then two months later being declared KIA. I have visited his grave in the Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium.

Mom's sister kept a photo of the cemetery and a close-up of Uncle Tommy's headstone in her family room. It was there that I learned his story and decided that I would visit him one day and keep his story alive for my children and grandchildren.

I attended the Norfolk, Virginia, reunion last year with my grandson, Henry, and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone and learning more about the Bomb Group and its history. Thanks for all you do.

Brian Mahoney is Vice President for Volunteers of the Heritage League, successor to the 2nd Air Division Association.

Bill McCutcheon. My father was 576th navigator 1/Lt James McCutcheon. His 392nd combat tour was June-November 1944. He also flew a combat tour in B-29s in Korea and served in the USAF reserves until he retired in 1978. More information about his military career is at <https://www.b24.net/storiesMccutcheon.htm>.

David Nowak. I have no affiliation with anyone who was in the 392nd. I joined at the invitation of Bob Books as a historian of the 8th Air Force and World War II in general.

David Parnell is Trustee, Administrator and Caretaker of the Liberator Memorial to 2/Lt John D. Ellis and crew in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire. The crew crashed there and were killed—likely due to prop wash—on 12 Aug 1944; the Memorial was dedicated in January 2010.

The Memorial is just outside the gate to a school so hundreds of pupils pass it every day. David is delighted that many officials and adults attend annual Remembrance Day services there. However, he is most pleased with the growing number of students who wish to participate!

Ron Pierre. My uncle, 579th Sqdn waist gunner S/Sgt

Martin C. Egler, died following his 21st birthday on 22 Mar 1945 in a tragic accident that enflamed their plane, *I'll Walk Alone*, as it was about to land back on base on his very last mission. My grandmother had already received notice that he would be coming home from his tour of duty, so the devastating shock of his death was enlarged for our family. After 68 years, it was Providence and a privilege for me to be able to learn more about his life and death in 2013, while visiting Beeston after having discovered the 392nd BGMA via an internet search followed by a wonderfully informative telephone conversation with Annette Tison. From that day forward, we've attended every yearly 392nd reunion here in the states, including the September 2018 gathering in England, where I had the privilege of sharing this story with the many local people who were gathered at the Memorial ceremony held by the town of Beeston. The generational participation was overwhelming in so many ways and displayed how appreciative the English people are, after over 77 years, for the sacrifice of the lives of so many young Americans to keep them free from tyranny.

Dennis Rogers. My father, 2/Lt Gerald "Buck" Rogers, was a pilot in the 578th. He had a dozen missions or so flying the *Bad Penny* [#42-94764] but on the fateful day of 29 Apr 1944, he and his crew were assigned to *Double Trouble* [#42-100100], an ominous and troubling omen for the crew.

That mission was into Big B ... Berlin. *Double Trouble* was shot down that morning over Hannover, Germany, with eight of the crew POWs. My father was KIA as was bombardier 2/Lt Fred J. Kane. This was 11 days after I was born. My father's remains were undiscovered for 3½ years until found in a forest near Celle, Germany.

Advancing the time clock some 56 years found me wanting to know who this man was, my father, who gave his life to save his crew. I had little info as my mom wouldn't talk about anything of my father. She passed when I was 30, so I had this missing aspect of who I was.

Along comes the World Wide Web in 1999 which spurred my curiosity to see if any information existed about this WWII pilot—my father, B-24s, 8th AAF, etc.—and to my surprise, put me in touch with Bob Books who invited me to

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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: Debbie Beigh, 6284 Antler Ct., Zionsville, IN 46077-9089

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attend a reunion in Savannah, Georgia, in 2000.

The last 20 years have been a journey filled with the vets at reunions telling their stories into the late night, visiting air museums around the country, sharing my own history with a unique group of 2nd generation people and visiting the air base in Wendling, England, in 2018.

I had always hoped to find someone who knew my father but most of the vets told me they never got very close or personal with other crews as no one knew what tomorrow would bring.

It took me awhile to figure out that my father was just like these surviving vets... a brave, courageous man doing his duty for his country. Now, I'm entering the age that all those vets were when I began this trip and I hope that we can keep their memories and experiences alive. Much work has been done by Bob Books, Annette Tison, Greg Hatton, Ben Jones, Ralph Winter, John Gilbert, and many others to maintain a place where others can see what the 392nd Bomb Group was about. I thank them all for their hard work and may we continue on.

Colette Swingle is the daughter of Don and Audrey Carey, who are featured elsewhere in this article.

Annette and Don Tison. Military orders dated 10 Apr 1944 assigned Annette's uncle, navigator 2/Lt Douglas N. Franke, and his crew to the 392nd. On April 17, their crew photo was taken. They flew combat missions on April 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and were killed in action on the 29th. So, they were at Beeston for 19 days at most.

Thanks to my involvement in the 392nd BGMA, I have an understanding of where Uncle Doug lived for those few days, what his missions were like, and the efforts our country made to bring him home to Minnesota. The more I learned, the more I wanted to share with others, which is why I have been newsletter editor since 2008!

Wendy Vowell is the daughter of Sgt Clayton Vowell, a B-17 waist gunner with the 301st BG in Italy. He was shot down and became a POW on 26 July 1944. A friend of long-time member Laurie Huntley, she joined the 392nd BGMA to learn more about her father's POW experiences.

Sue Williams. My father, Sgt Richard Giesing, was kind enough to give me information about his military service. It began in September 1942 when he was sent to aircraft mechanics school and then for advanced training in instruments.

In December 1943, Dad shipped out from New York. It took 12 days to reach Liverpool, England, where he first learned that he would be stationed with the 465th Sub Depot at Wendling as an airplane instrument technician.

He was there until June 1945. His voyage home, aboard *RMS Queen Mary* with 14,000 GIs, took only four days. He was discharged in October 1945.

I attended several reunions with Dad and am now a member of the 392nd BGMA because I really enjoy spending time with my own 392nd friends!

Ralph Winter. My father, 579th Sqdn pilot 1/Lt Ralph E. Lamma, was killed in action on a bombing raid on the shipyards at Bremen when I was eight months old. When I was four years old my mother married Paul Winter, who legally adopted me and changed my last name. It wasn't

until fairly recently that I decided to find out more about my father and in my research discovered the 392nd BGMA. I joined up and attended the reunion in Savannah in 2013, and have attended every reunion since then. I have had the good fortune to visit Wendling three times.

Being a part of the 392nd BGMA has been a wonderful experience and a true blessing. I consider it a real honor to serve as president of the 392nd BGMA.

Other Directors

Two 392nd BGMA Directors were unable to attend the meeting, but provided input on their 392nd BG connection:

Greg Hatton. My father, Hyman J. Hatton, was a waist gunner on 2/Lt Leo E. Ofenstein's crew in the 576th. He and four others became POWs on 29 Apr 1944; the other five in the crew were killed in action.

He never talked much about his experiences, so I have spent decades trying to uncover "the stories my father never told me." Much of my research is now posted in the POW section of www.b24.net.

My connection to the 392nd BGMA started in 1984, when I reached out to Vitold Krushas, one the 3 living members of the crew. I soon began collaborating with other 392nd veterans about documenting their experiences. Perhaps more importantly, I began to meet the folks who would become the "Second Generation" cadre.

At that time, the founders of the Association had the simple goal of providing a travelling focal point, where members could reminisce. The effort was formal and well organized, as you would expect from a military organization, but it remained humble and inclusive.

I believe that the 392nd BGMA exists today because many others from my generation were welcomed. We had found a place which gave our enthusiasm and talents a place to grow.

John Gilbert probably knows more about the 392nd BG's footprint in Beeston than just about anyone else. When he was a young boy, his home in Norwich was destroyed during a German bombing attack. At the time, his father was helping to build the base, so the entire family moved to Beeston. He spent his childhood talking to the airmen, eating meals with them at the mess halls, and chatting with them when they brought their laundry for his mother to clean.

After the war, many buildings on the base were converted to housing and his family moved into what had once been the Combat Officers Mess. After service in the military, he worked for many years at a cannery that used several of the old buildings. He lives just 20 miles away from it.

As a result, he has a thorough knowledge of the base, then and now, and hundreds of anecdotes. He loves nothing more than showing visitors around and sharing that knowledge. He was named the 392nd's official representative in England in 2007 and elected as a Director in 2010.

He has attended many reunions, both in England and in the US. At the 8AFHS reunion in 2014, he was presented the Roger Freeman Award "with appreciation and recognition for years of dedicated service to honor and preserve the history and legacy of those who served in the 8th Air Force."

Your G.I. Joe at Christmas, 1944

The author of this news article, "For release Dec. 24," was not named, but was likely Capt Donald B. McCammond, 578th Sqdn Intelligence Officer and Station Public Relations Officer.

AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE LIBERATOR STATION: England—Here's what your G.I. Joe will be doing tonight and tomorrow if he's on an Eighth Air Force bomber station.

The program—from Col Lorin L. Johnson's 392nd Bombardment Group and fairly typical—begins Christmas Eve. A Glee club of men and officers is making its debut with selections of popular and semi-classical American songs, later leading a community sing. If he gets hoarse by joining in, Joe can wander over to the snack bar of the Red Cross Aero Club and pick up a coke, coffee and refreshments.

After that's over, he'll probably take off for his barracks and open what remains of his Christmas packages. For the past two months, living quarters have been the location of epicurean orgies supported by donations from the folks back home. Most men, however, have saved some of their gifts for Xmas opening.

At midnight, mass will be held in the station chapel. Then if he is not flying, or does not have to get a Lib in shape for a mission the following morning, Joe can "hit the sack."

Christmas Day, breakfast will be just the same. Fresh eggs that just run out the man ahead [of you in line at the mess hall], hot cakes that... well, anyway, it will be just the same, and powdered eggs do not taste much better even when scrambled for the benefit of 1,000 men.

Christmas services will be held during the morning by both Catholic and protestant chaplains.

Christmas afternoon, Joe and his Olive-Drab associates have planned a party for about 300 British orphans and school children. During the past year or two, Joe has become fairly well acquainted with the communities around the base, and he knows the conditions and circumstances of nearly every family within a 10-mile radius.

When he found two orphanages nearby, he put it down for future reference. On November 31, he hauled out the

reference and kicked in with a portion of his salary. Then with the aid of Miss Birdie Schmidt of Columbus, Ohio, he gathered ice cream, cakes, candy from his post exchange rations and one or two gifts snaffled from the stuff he received from home.

Or he took another pound or two from his pay and searched British shops for a toy, or maybe he made something with the scrap lumber from a bomb box. At any rate, there is a stack of packages, most of them properly wrapped, waiting for distribution on Christmas afternoon.

The kids will have a real, turkey dinner. Joe saw to that. Another contribution to the party fund bought turkeys for the orphanages.

About Joe's own dinner. He may be the guest of a British family. Several weeks before Christmas, the Special Service Officer [Capt Emmett Fore] received invitations from families who wanted to make this holiday—the second over here for most of the 392nd—a little more homelike. Soldiers who wanted to accept let Special Service know and everything was arranged, down to transportation and ration points for an extra and particularly hearty appetite.

The menu for the men staying on the base is traditionally complete. Noodle soup, roast turkey, sage dressing, giblet gravy, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, brussel sprouts, mince and pumpkin pie, bread, butter, coffee, fruit, and hard candy.

Mess halls will be candle lit and decorated with holly out from the hedgerows that line the roads crossing the base. If the day is not white, cotton will be pasted on the windows for effect.

In the evening a variety show will be put on in the Aero Club. As the holiday falls on Monday when the public houses—England's local clubhouses and community centers—begin their weekly ration of mild and bitters, Yank and Tommy can wish each other a "Merry Christmas" at their regular gathering-places.

War may intrude. Joe may have to regulate his schedule by a mission, going out or coming in. About this time last year, he was beginning the attacks on the flying bomb sites in France, and there are still men flying with the 392nd who took part in those missions.

In any case, out on the line working on the Libs, or in the air over Germany, Joe's most fervent wish will be for an end, quickly, with the next Christmas at home.

Editor's note: Miserable weather in December 1944 meant only six missions had been flown between December 1st and 22nd. The weather finally cleared and a mission against the railroad center at Ahrweiler took place on the 23rd.

On the 24th, 47 planes took off. Three squadron-size formations attacked a railroad yard and enemy traffic center at Ruwer while the other two hit a road junction at Pfalzel. All crews returned safely around 4:30pm to enjoy Christmas Eve activities.

On Christmas Day, three squadrons arose for a 4:30am briefing, but the mission was cancelled due to dense fog. A heavy hoar frost then made the 25th and 26th a welcomed and enjoyable "white" Christmas period for all.

When they returned to combat on the 27th, the 392nd BG flew missions for the next eight days.



Santa brings Christmas cheer to British children—and, judging by their smiles, to 392nd BG airmen as well.

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

daughter of Charles E. Dye, 1825th Ordnance Co.

We recently observed the anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. This was a welcome chance to brush up on history.

The attack was a surprise bombing lasting only 1 hour and 15 minutes in the early morning of December 7th, 1941. The bombing killed 2,403 U.S. personnel, including 68 civilians. Nineteen U.S. Navy ships, including 8 battleships, were destroyed or damaged and our Pacific Fleet was crippled.

"Pearl Harbor" was pivotal in WWII history, but not in the way expected by the Japanese. The attack was meant to shake the resolve of America and prevent American interference in the Pacific War. Instead, American patriotism prevailed as men and women volunteered to defend U.S. values at home and abroad.

So many WWII veterans don't talk much about their wartime experiences. When stories are shared, their sacrifices and hardships often seem down played. They are the silent heroes.

As you celebrate the holidays, remember that the freedom to so do and the prevailing system of democracy we have is a direct result of the actions of all our veterans. Let's not lose the vision that guided their historic efforts.

Best wishes for happiness, health and hope as we enter 2021.



**THE 392ND MEMORIAL
AT WENDLING**

(photographed by Ben Jones at sunset on 23 Nov 2020)

**But we...shall be remember'd;
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*

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Assoc.
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∞

Tom Scott, Friend, November 12, 2020
Echo M. Nielson, spouse of Larry, Associate, June 24, 2020
Asahel "Howdy" Thornton, 577, September 8, 2020