



2021 Reunion in Savannah

Despite pandemic concerns and the need to provide proof of vaccination or a negative Covid test, about 400 people (including 11 veterans) attended the 8th Air Force Historical Society's reunion in Savannah, Georgia. They represented 19 bomb groups, 2 fighter groups, the 7th Photo Reconnaissance Group, the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society, and the Heritage League.

No 392nd BGMA veterans could be there, but 19 of their second-, third-, and fourth-generation relatives were.

Hospitality Suite

Our suite was the location for fun and friendship. It included 392nd BG photo albums, books, PX items for sale, and beverages and snacks to keep us going as we chatted!

Coin collector Ralph Winter also brought an explanation of *How World War II Affected Our Coins and Currency* with albums of each type of US coin in WWII.

The Darnell crew and T/Sgt Nicholas Cennemo

Mark and Janet Stasney attended the 2019 reunion. This time, Mark came with his father's war journal.

Mark, Janet and Annette Tison went through the diary together. Annette helped them understand what navigator 1/Lt Alvin J. Stasney was writing about, the abbreviations and terms he used and the places he mentioned.

1/Lt Stasney mentioned engineer T/Sgt Nicholas Cennemo. He was a member of 1/Lt Joseph F. Darnell Jr's crew throughout their US training and their 12,000-mile journey from AAF Herington Field, Kansas, to England.

On 5 Jan 1944, they arrived in Valley, Wales. On the 7th, they were in line to take off for Watton, Norfolk, when

Cennemo realized he had left his field mess kit behind. He ran to get it as their plane taxied closer and closer to the departure point. Before he got back, the Darnell crew was ordered to take off. They reported Cennemo was not aboard but were told via radio that he would be put on another plane going to Watton and would join them there. So, the Darnell crew took off without him.

T/Sgt Cennemo was placed on B-24 #42-99991, along with its 10 crewmen and their dog Booster. Weather conditions

were poor as they took off, with the north Wales hills shrouded by clouds and rain.

The B-24 flew very low over a nearby town, even clipping the roof of a house and some trees. The pilot tried

desperately to climb, but hit a rocky crag, bounced up for a few hundred feet, then impacted for the last time, at Moelfre, Penmaenmawr, Conwy, Wales.

With fuel pouring out of the ruptured tanks, fire soon erupted. T/Sgt Cennemo, two of the crew and Booster were killed immediately while two crewmen died later.

Booster was buried at the crash site. A memorial to all the casualties was later erected there.

On 13 January, the Darnell crew flew from Watton to the Combat Crew Replacement Center at Cheddington. They were eventually sent to the 392nd BG and another engineer assigned.

1/Lt Stasney completed his first mission on 24 Feb 1944, to Gotha, Germany. It wasn't until two days later that the crew learned that T/Sgt Cennemo had been killed. "The

See REUNION on page 5



Attendees at the 392nd BGMA rendezvous dinner. Standing L-R: Scott Kirkpatrick; Derek and four-month old Elijah Spriggs; Doug Peterson; Debbie Beigh; Don Tison; Ralph Winter; Janet and Mark Stasney; Don Carey; Sue Williams; David Nowack. Seated L-R: Colette Swingle; Laurie Huntley; Teddy Kirkpatrick; Billie Peterson; Annette Tison; Tina Spriggs; Amanda Spriggs; Audrey Carey. Not present: Doug Dovey



392nd BGMA Officers

President

Ralph Winter
2979 Delcourt Dr.
Decatur, GA 30033
(404) 354-7485
rewcts@gmail.com



1st Vice President

Greg Hatton
gregoryhatton1@gmail.com



2nd Vice President

Sue Giesing Williams
7600 Bay Meadow Dr.
Harbor Springs, MI 49740
(231) 242-4622
sneakypie@charter.net



Secretary

Debbie Goar Beigh
6284 Antler Ct.
Zionsville, IN 46077-9089
landline: (317) 873-5586
cell: (317) 250-5586
dbeigh@aol.com



Treasurer / PX Chair

Bill McCutcheon
20620 Milton Ct.
Brookfield, WI 53045
wjmmc392@earthlink.net
(262) 784-5606



News Editor

Annette Tison
9107 Wood Pointe Way
Fairfax Station, VA 22039
dtison5401@aol.com
(703) 690-8540



Directors

Bob Books
Don Carey
John Gilbert
Laurie Huntley
Ben Jones
Ron Pierre
Dennis Rogers

FROM THE EDITOR

Our Veterans. In the last issue, I asked: among our membership, who are veterans? Eight served with the 392nd BG:

Manny Abrams was a lead navigator on Charles A. Neundorf's crew, 579th Sqdn. He flew missions from 16 Jul to 28 Dec 1944.

Joseph M. Cook, who was a copilot in Robert H. Johnson's crew, 578th Sqdn, flew missions from 11 Aug to 7 Oct 1944, when he became a POW.

Gerald Gersten was a 577th Sqdn radio operator in Dale W. Enyart's crew. He flew missions from 3 Oct 1944 to 15 Apr 1945.

John E. Griffin, a pilot in the 576th Sqdn, flew missions from 8 Mar to 17 Apr 1945.

Harvey Naber was a 576th Sqdn waist gunner in Albert W. Evans crew. He flew missions between 15 May and 5 Sep 1944.

John P. Rumancik was tail gunner in the 576th Sqdn's Donald R. MacFarlane crew; his missions were flown between 30 Mar and 17 Apr 1945.

Alfred H. Schumacher was a 577th Sqdn waist gunner on William J. Clower's crew. He flew missions from 24 Dec 1944 to 25 Apr 1945.

Rupert C. Sutphin was engineer in the 578th Sqdn, A.B. "Ben" Alexander's crew. His missions were between 4 Jun and 31 Dec 1944.

I received just *nine* responses from post-WWII veterans. NONE were from Air Force or Marine Corps veterans! Sea-service veterans outnumbered Army veterans 6-3. If you didn't let me know that you served—and now wish you had—it's not too late. Send me your information and I'll include it in the March 2022 *News*.

US Coast Guard. **Mark Holmes** served in the US Coast Guard from 1971-1979. He writes, "My father, Col. Henry T. Holmes, USAF (Retired), pilot 392nd BG, 577th BS, swore me in on February 25th, 1971, in Connecticut. I served at sea and ashore as a Radioman First Class and worked with one of the early computer systems tracking worldwide merchant shipping to be employed for remote rescues or medical needs."

US Army. **Joel Fleck**, son of 579th Sqdn bombardier Ernest R. Fleck, was in the Army field artillery from 1969 to 1989. He grew up in North Dakota, and Dr. Emil Riha, who served the 392nd BG, was his dentist! Neither his father nor Dr. Riha talked about their wartime experiences with him, except that they were in the same unit.

Jeff Murray is the son of Jack G. Murray, bombardier on the 576th's John Beder crew. He says, "I spent 20 years in the Army, flying helicopters mostly. I spent a year in Vietnam as a Huey gunship pilot for the 281st Assault Helicopter Company which is officially recognized (with plaques at the Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and the Special Ops HQ in nearby Fort Bragg) as the 1st Special Operations helicopter unit in the Army. Our website is www.281st.com."

British Army. **Philip Brazier** tells me, "As a teacher and an Army Reservist, I have been fortunate enough in recent years to combine the two: In 2005, my Army Reserve Brigade sent a platoon/troop's worth of soldiers to accompany the veterans from the British 49th Division (The Polar Bears)—which had been part of 2nd Canadian Army during the NW Europe campaign—on a pilgrimage to the Netherlands for the 60th anniversary of VE Day.

"Memorial Day was spent at wreath-laying ceremonies in and around Arnhem and we then marched with the veterans in Wageningen, where German forces signed the surrender document in 1945, on Liberation Day. What impressed me the most was the size of the crowds. As we marched through the town they got bigger, and bigger and bigger. All generations were there; having been an occupied country, the Dutch really understand the value of freedom/liberty.

"Between 2015 and 2020, I was part of the British Army team that supported the UK Government's Schools Centenary Battlefield Tours (SCBT) to the Western Front. Every high school was able to send a teacher and two students on the tours, and many were able to do so more than once.

"Working alongside academics and Battlefield Guides we spent four days in Belgium

and France, enabling the students and teachers to study and commemorate the First World War and how it affected their local communities. It enabled many myths to be 'busted', debates to be had and a new generation gained an appreciation for their ancestors."

In October, Philip added, "I have news to share. After a number of interviews, online training, multiple briefings, as well as mental gymnastics during the Army Officer Selection Board (AOSB) Senior Soldier **See EDITOR on page 2**

President's Corner



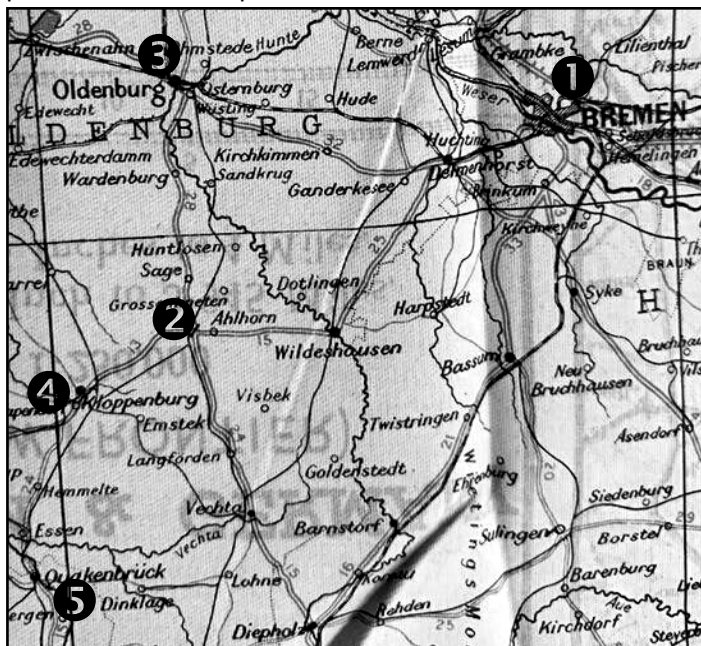
Season's Greetings!

December is a special month for several reasons. We celebrate Christmas and Hanukkah, we remember and honor the veterans of Pearl Harbor—the event that pulled our country and our loved ones into World War II—and we strive for the better self by resolving to “do better” and accomplish goals in the coming New Year.

All are worthy and honorable endeavors.

Annette has given an excellently detailed review of our annual Membership Meeting and Reunion which was held in Savannah in October. I would like to add to that by saying what a warm welcome we received at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force when we visited there. The Birthplace Chapter of the 8th AFHS (Savannah) provided a delicious array of pastries, snacks, coffee and tea—all served on an eclectic collection of fine china. An abundance of guides and docents were onboard to answer questions and offer assistance.

A highlight of the tour was the items of interest to the 392nd BGMA that Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price had so kindly put on display in the Research Center—many thanks to her for doing that! Of special interest to me was a silk map of the northern part of Germany (pictured below) which shows towns and cities pertinent to my father's last mission on November 13, 1943: ❶ Bremen, the target; ❷ Ahlhorn where the plane went in after being shot down; ❸ Oldenburg where three of the five crew members killed were interred; and ❹ Kloppenburg where, in 2014, I was the guest of Volker Urbansky, a German fellow who excavated the crash site many years later and gave me some pieces of my dad's aircraft. Also shown is the town of ❺ Dinklage where Annette Tison's uncle, 2nd/Lt. Douglas Franke's plane crashed on April 29, 1944.



Our quarterly Meet & Greet will be held via Zoom on Saturday, February 5, 2022 at 1:30pm EST. I highly encourage you to join in if at all possible. We have a fun time chatting, exchanging stories, and just getting to know each other. We've been fortunate enough to have members from the UK and Europe visit as well. An email with the link will be sent a few days in advance. Mark your calendar and Zoom on in!

In closing, I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and Happy New Year.

Ralph

EDITOR from page 2

Entry (SSE) at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), I am not only fully-conversant with more acronyms but I have been selected for a commission.

“All being well—and dependant on military bureaucracy—I'll be promoted to Captain early next year. Only two Royal Engineer Reservists have successfully completed the process this year and it was pretty tough being assessed alongside Regular soldiers.

“Going from SSgt to Captain via Squadron Sergeant Major (SSM) inside 18 months has been ‘emotional’.”

Congratulations, Philip, on this major accomplishment!

US Navy **James Christner** is the cousin of 579th Sqdn radio operator T/Sgt Daniel Connor Jr, killed in action on 20 Feb 1944. He writes, “When his widowed and heart-broken mother received my cousin Dan's remains in March 1948, my father took me to the old farm house where Dan grew up. I remember his flag-draped coffin positioned in the NW corner of the living room. I would have been almost 6. I remember it as my first encounter with death.

“When I went with my father to help mow the grass in the cemetery, I would trim the grass around Dan's grave and wonder about the inscription and abbreviations on his grave marker [A.A.F 8TH A.A. 2ND DIV.]. Thanks to you, I now know!

“As I recall, I was under contract to attend Naval Officer Candidate School (NAVOCS) in Newport, Rhode Island. I arrived for training in the NAVOCS parking lot about 19 November 1967. I got out of my car, went over to the person parked next to me and asked if he knew what we were to do next. He was as clueless as I. A trip to the barber was one of the first items on the agenda!

“Pres. Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not seek reelection on 31 March 1968. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated 4 April and I was commissioned an Ensign on 5 April 1968.

“I was ordered to the Naval Amphibious Base in Little Creek, Virginia, for amphibious warfare training. I was then flown in May to Valletta, Malta, to become Assistant First Lieutenant aboard the USS Rockbridge (APA-228) as it completed a Med cruise before returning to Little Creek for its decommissioning on 29 November 1968. While at anchor off the southern coast of Crete, we received word of the 6 June assassination of Robert F. Kennedy.

“I then transferred to the USS Francis Marion (LPA-

See EDITOR on page 10



News from Across the Pond

Remembrance Sunday, Beeston

The 2021 annual day of commemoration was held on November 14. Memorial Trustee Jill Scott emailed: "For once it was an almost perfect day as regards the weather. No sun, but, and more importantly, no rain and only a light breeze. Such a change from some years! There was a good number of people there. The Reverend Miriam Fife took the service. Modern technology—she has a small sound box and iPad so the Last Post and Reveille were played at the correct times. This also was another pleasant and suitable change.

"The Brownies laid their wreath. One made by them as has become the norm. It does make it much more



Trustee Jill Scott and grandson Rob have just laid wreaths at the 392nd BG Memorial on behalf of the 392nd BGMA and the Beeston Parish Council.

meaningful for them. Grandson Rob (Robert, son Hugh and Suzie's elder son) and I walked up to the Memorial together, and together laid the Parish Council wreath (Rob is a member of the PC, the third generation and the 4th member of the family to be a member!) and I laid your wreath. The last time we did it together Rob may just have been a teenager!

"Everything went well, and as always it was a very moving service.

"As always, before your service we had held one at the church. Scaffolding is still surrounding the tower, so there is still not entry to the church. As last year this service was held entirely outside round the War Memorial. The lack of wind and rain was again appreciated as the church stands exposed on a hill—as you are well aware!

"Every best wish to all the members, Jill"

Remembrance Sunday, Upper Sheringham

Five men from 2/Lt Colby Waugh's crew perished near Upper Sheringham when their plane crashed nearby on 4 Jan 1944. A memorial to them is near the front door to All Saints Parish Church in the village. 392nd BGMA Friends Doug & Celia Willies wrote, "I am so glad and relieved to report that we attended the Remembrance Service at Upper Sheringham on November 14. Things were more-or-less back to normal (from a Covid point of view regarding attendance and precautions) and all went well. We gave the Memorial a 'clean-up' a few days previously, installed the usual posy of poppies, the crosses, renewed the flags and it looked very presentable again in time for Remembrance Day. The weather was again kind, it remained free of rain, we read out the names of the crew and, as ever, they were remembered with gratitude and appreciation."

See NEWS on page 5

392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your membership status is shown on the mailing label directly after your name; 22 and higher means your dues are up-to-date. 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 below. 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 \$ _____

NEWS from page 4

Memorial Trustee Update

From Trustee Henry Dennett in October 2021: "The new hedges are coming along well and we've made arrangements to have some replacements planted this autumn where the odd plant has failed to take. There are some new fences behind the hedges which the Scott family have erected to secure access to their new farm yard. I think they actually set off the hedges."



This photo of the new fence was taken from the parking lot; the Memorial is to the right.

The Aubrey Essay Contest

In November, Philip Brazier spoke to Year Nine students at Dereham Neatherd high school and at Wymondham College about the Aubrey Essay Contest. He reminds us that Wymondham was site of the 77th / 231st USAAF Base Hospital, where very sick or badly injured Crusaders were sent for treatment.



Philip Brazier (at upper right) tells Year Nine students at Dereham Neatherd high school about the 392nd BG's service in WWII and the Aubrey Essay Contest.

North Tuddenham

Pat Baldwin emailed that she was recently walking her dog near the memorial to 2/Lt Louis F. Bass and crew, who crashed nearby on 21 Apr 1944 with eight of the ten men aboard killed. Upon meeting another dog walker, they began chatting. It turns out he was a young lad during the war and "was very keen to tell me how the crew that crashed here spent a lot of time with the girls here and in the next village and that there were a lot of tears for them."

REUNION from page 1

whole crew took it hard, he was a swell fellow."

Over the years, Stasney often told his son that this severe

mission rattled him. He had lost a crewman before even being assigned to a bomb group and on his first combat mission, seven crews did not return. He said he was in the bar at the officer's club that night trying to forget the day when 579th Sqdn veteran pilot Capt Everhart (who had also flown that mission) sat next to him. "Alvin," he told me, "if you made it through the mission today, you will make them all."

While that held true for Stasney, Everhart became a POW on 22 Apr 1944, a mission that Stasney also flew...

Presentations

Of particular interest was the Zoom discussion with UK speakers. Emily Charles is the curator of the American Air Museum, part of Imperial War Museum Duxford. She is responsible for the largest collection of American military aircraft outside the USA. In 2014, she developed <https://www.americanairmuseum.com/>, an interactive crowd-sourced archive of the air war.

Emily used the story of 579th Sqdn tail gunner S/Sgt William C. McGinley to show how their collection has grown since the AAM opened in 1997. Shot down on 29 Jan 1944, he was reported killed in action and his mother received the dreaded telegram announcing his death.

Instead, he evaded capture with the help of many Belgian and French resistance members and returned to Allied control in September 1944. Much of his memorabilia was donated to the AAM, including the Purple Heart his family was given after his "death" as well as the telegram announcing he was alive.

Emily continues to search for other stories of American airmen and encouraged attendees to help update AAM's website to make it even more comprehensive.

Suzie Harrison is an interpretive guide at Cambridge American Cemetery. She spoke of the years-long effort behind the 2017 "Faces of Cambridge" project which attempted to obtain a photo of every person buried at the Cemetery or listed on its Wall of the Missing. More than 7,000 photos (out of the 8,938 people buried there or honored on the Wall) have been collected so far. These photos will be displayed again during Memorial Day 2022 commemorations.

Business Meeting

Present at the 392nd BGMA's 2021 business meeting were ten members attending in person and six via Zoom.

Sue Williams read the 392nd BGMA Prayer, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the *Second Air Division Fanfare*.

Committee Reports

Because of time constraints, it was approved that the minutes of the 2020 virtual reunion would be emailed to all members, with any corrections to be reported by email.

Treasurer Bill McCutcheon shared his report via Zoom. Bottom line: the 392nd BGMA is in a good financial position. His report was approved.

Don Carey read the names of the eleven Members and Friends whose deaths have been reported since the last reunion.

Secretary Debbie Beigh advised we have 217 Members and Friends, including nine veterans and seven widows

See REUNION on page 6

REUNION from page 5

of veterans. We are an international organization with Members/Friends in six countries: the US, the UK, France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Nineteen new members joined this year.

In regard to delivering the B-24 model to the Ploughshare in Beeston, Greg Hatton is constructing a packing case for it and Ben Jones will transport and deliver it the next time he has a military flight to England.

Bob Books reported that conversion of just the most important aspects of our website to pdf files will result in about 1,500 pages of documentation of 392nd BG history and the POW experience in Europe. How to edit them into book form, how many volumes would be required, and other technical issues remain.

Bob noted that about 500 websites use www.b24.net as a link or a reference and users in over 100 countries have visited it in the past six months. Mark Naber, via Zoom, noted that when he began to search for information about the 392nd BG service of his father (576th waist gunner Sgt Harvey W. Naber), he found our website and information about the mission on 29 May 1944 when Harvey's crew crashed near Sporle (about 7 miles from the base) due to battle damage—including a photo of the wrecked plane. Mark was able to visit that site just one day short of the 75th anniversary of the crash.

Mark also reported that Harvey will turn 103 in November [happy birthday, Harvey!!!!!!] and only stopped driving earlier this year.

Old Business

Plans to install and dedicate the new Memorial plaque this year were canceled due to the pandemic. Ralph has now asked the Trustees to install the plaque at their convenience; it will be dedicated when 392nd BGMA members are permitted to easily travel to England again.

Creation and installation of an information board at the Memorial about the 392nd BG was also sidelined by the pandemic. The Trustees will move forward with this idea when possible.

New Business

Annette Tison updated attendees on the Aubrey Essay Contest. The committee members are Ralph Winter, Debbie Beigh, Sue Williams, George Abbott White, Margaret Taylor, Philip Brazier, Mac Cassell, David Brooks, Ron Pierre and herself. Philip and Margaret are our English representatives. Philip is a teacher and military historian who lives near the 392nd BG Memorial and Margaret is the head of a high school history department in Norwich.

ALL the committee members collaborated to create the rules and structure of the contest and ALL will be involved in judging the essays.

Sue, George and David worked hard to create suitable essay topics and they, Mac, Debbie, Philip and Margaret honed the grading & judging criteria.

Philip has reached out to the high schools that serve the Wendling and Beeston areas, told them about the essay contest, and established points of contact with their staff. Margaret has done similar outreach with schools in and around Norwich.

Philip also contacted the American Library in Norwich

(previously named the Second Air Division Memorial Library) and their staff is eager to assist students who need help in their research.

By the time this issue is published, the essay deadline of 15 Dec 2021 will have passed. Each entry represents a teenager who invested time and effort to learn more about the 392nd BG and the landscape, people, and tools that our veterans knew.

The winners will be announced and the cash prizes awarded by 20 Jan 2022.

We are grateful to Beverly Burke who not only had the vision to honor her late husband, Aubrey, but is funding the cash awards!

The 8AFHS has announced that its next reunion will be from 19-23 Oct 2022 in the Washington, DC, area. Current thought among 392nd BGMA Directors is that we will hold the official membership meeting then with the hope of a return to Wendling for the dedication of the new plaque at the memorial and a visit to the base and other points of interest in East Anglia. Details will follow!

Nominating Committee chair Annette Tison presented the slate of proposed Directors—Bob Books, Ralph Winter, Don Carey and herself. All are current directors whose terms expire this year. With no nominations from the floor, these four members were approved by acclamation.

Annette then reminded attendees that the 392nd BGMA is a non-profit organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service under Tax Code Section 501(c)3. As such, costs for attending the reunion in person may be tax deductible for members who itemize, since they are official delegates. However, tax advisors should be consulted for more complete information.

After the meeting was adjourned, Directors present in person or via Zoom re-elected these officers: President, Ralph Winter; 1st Vice President, Greg Hatton; 2nd Vice President, Sue Williams; Secretary, Debbie Beigh; Treasurer, Bill McCutcheon.

National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

Then, most of the reunion attendees headed to "their" Museum, where they were greeted warmly by docents, tour guides, and WWII reenactors.

392nd BG folks made sure to visit the Research Center where Director Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price had several items of 392nd BG memorabilia on display: two original A-2 jackets; the last US flag flown by the 392nd BG at Wendling; an E-6B dead reckoning computer; and a two-sided silk map of "Holland, Belgium (except West Coast), France (North East) and Germany (West & Central)."

We then explored all the Museum has to offer, including the Mission Experience, which uses three short films to show viewers what it was like to fly a bombing mission as a WWII aircrew member in England; seeing the top and ball turrets rotate on the B-17 *City of Savannah*; and

See REUNION on page 7





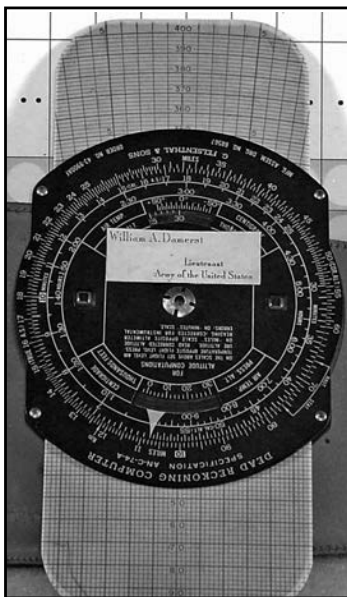
The 392nd BG emblems on the A-2 jackets of 577th Sqdn gunner James B. Freeman (left) and 578/9th bombardier Eldred G. Lassins' (right) are quite different! That may be due to when they flew (Freeman, 21 Feb to 13 Jul 1944, Lassins 8 Aug 1944 to 3 Jan 1945); their squadrons; the design they wanted; or the skill of their artists.



L-R, Doug Peterson, Ralph Winter and Annette Tison examine a two-sided silk map of Europe donated by 578th Sqdn/Group Bombsight Maintenance Officer Joseph Micksch Jr. Ralph and Annette were shocked to learn that Ahlhorn and Dinklage, Germany, where his father and Annette's uncle crashed and were killed, are less than 22 miles apart! Ettenheimmuenster, Germany, where Doug's father became a POW, is shown on the other side of the map.



This 48-star US flag was brought back to the US by Col (Ret.) Lawrence G. Gilbert, last commander of the 392nd BG, when the Group left Wendling in June 1945.



This E-6B Dead Reckoning Computer was used by 576th Sqdn navigator William A. Damerst during his missions from 30 Sep 1944 to 17 Apr 1945. Created for the Army Air Corps in the late 1930s by Naval Reserve pilot Philip Dalton and navigation instructor P.V.H. Weems, over 400,000 of these circular slide rules were manufactured in WWII. It has been called the most successful flight computer ever made.

chatting with authentically uniformed WWII re-enactors.

On display throughout the Memorial Garden are hundreds of memorials for 8AF crews and individuals (including dozens for Crusaders!) purchased by veterans and their families.

The Chapel of the Fallen Eagles was built to resemble the English Gothic-style churches in the villages near 8AF bases. In the Narthex is a bronze plaque of the 392nd BG Prayer, included in every issue of the News on page 12.

Rendezvous Dinner

This gathering of 392nd BG members plus new and old friends was another highlight of the Savannah reunion:

- Teddy Kirkpatrick and his son Scott. Teddy was a waist gunner in the 379th BG, which flew B-17s from Kimbolton, Cambridgeshire. This Group flew 330 combat missions between 29 May 1943 and 25 Apr 1945; Teddy flew 37 between July and October 1944. Since Teddy and Scott were the only ones from his Group at the reunion, they joined our formation!

- Tina Spriggs, daughter of 465th Sub Depot Commander James W. Wall, was accompanied by her son Derek, his wife Amanda and their four-month old son Elijah Spriggs. Tina had attended the Nashville reunion but the others were first-timers!

- Doug and Billie Peterson. Doug is the son of 578th pilot Cliff Peterson.

- Debbie Beigh, daughter of Group Transportation Officer Jim Goar.

- Annette and Don Tison. Annette's uncle, 579th navigator Douglas N. Franke, was killed in action on 29 Apr 1944.

- Ralph Winter, son of 579th pilot Ralph E. Lamma, killed in action 13 Nov 1943.

- Mark and Janet Stasney. Mark is the son of 579th navigator Alvin J. Stasney.

- Don Carey, nephew of 576th pilot Clarence W. Stoltz,
See REUNION on page 8

REUNION from page 7

killed in action on 29 May 1944, was accompanied by his wife Audrey and daughter Colette Swingle.

- Sue Williams, daughter of 465th Sub Depot instrument technician Richard L. Giesing.

- David Nowack, 8AF historian and WWII reenactor.

- Laurie Huntley, great-niece of 579th navigator John E. Slowik, killed in action on 18 Mar 1944.

8AFHS General Membership Meeting

Elected to the 8AFHS Board of Directors were Anne Marek, President; Eleesa Faulker, Vice President; Paul W. Tibbets IV, Treasurer; L. Travis Chapin, Secretary; and Mark Klingensmith, Steven R. Snyder and Kevin E. Wilson.

Managing Director/Editor Debra Kujawa stressed that “the story” of the 8th AF is the “important thing” not just “dates, locations, and targets.”

Zooming with Friends

On Saturday afternoon, we Zoomed with friends. A large group joined to chat with John Gilbert. Unfortunately, the internet connection was weak and we were able only to hear, but not see, him. Nonetheless, it was great to learn that John’s medical issues were slowly improving and to hear him tell many of his 392nd BG stories. We hope we can actually see him when we Zoom again on 5 Feb 2022!

Gala Dinner

As always, the Gala Dinner on Saturday night was a great finale to a wonderful reunion. During the Candle Lighting Ceremony, Ralph Winter and LaDonna Meyers (452nd BG) lit a candle as these words were solemnly spoken: “Over seven decades ago, 28 thousand aircrew members of the 8th Air Force sacrificed their lives for a noble endeavor. Their offering preserved freedom for their country and peoples of other nations. Let us now remember those heroes who now silently fly on a more peaceful sortie.”



Ralph Winter and LaDonna Meyers light a candle of remembrance.

Purple Heart Finds a Place of Honor — At Last

By Mark T. Holmes

Member Mark T. Holmes is the son of 577th pilot 1/Lt

Henry T. Holmes. He contacted editor Annette Tison in August 2021 after seeing a feature on WINK-TV, his local channel, about 577th engineer T/Sgt Charles W. Crabbe.

He wrote, “This feature <https://www.winknews.com/2021/07/15/medal-mystery-north-fort-myers-woman-searching-for-family-of-purple-heart-recipient/> may be of interest. Someone in the Fort Myers area had found the Purple Heart belonging to Charles Crabbe and was trying to find the family.



Thanks to the efforts of many people, the name on this Purple Heart (top photo) was recently identified as 577th Sqdn engineer T/Sgt Charles W. Crabbe (left photo), killed in action during the mission to Bingen on 2 Dec 1944.

“T/Sgt Crabbe was KIA on December 2, 1944, just six days after my dad’s last mission with the 577th. After realizing this connection, I offered WINK-TV some information about him and they included me in a news update (<https://www.winknews.com/2021/07/22/community-helps-in-search-for-purple-heart-family/>).

“In this process I learned what a horrifying mission that was to Bingen. Just awful.”

In this article, Mark updates the 392nd BGMA about T/Sgt Crabbe’s Purple Heart.

Bingen

December 2, 1944 was one of “those” days for the 392nd BG, where multiple losses were incurred on a mission to Bingen, Germany. With poor weather over the target, the 577th Sqdn became separated from the rest of the 392nd BG and, after dropping its bombs, was jumped by at least four dozen German fighters. Without friendly

See PURPLE HEART on page 9

PURPLE HEART from page 8

fighter protection, the squadron was on its own against the marauding ME-109s. It was, sadly, a shooting gallery with six of the 577th's nine B-24s shot down in the ensuing fifteen-minute battle.

Newly promoted flight engineer T/Sgt Charles W. Crabbe was killed during the fighter attack. With their B-24 (#42-94961, *Alfred IV*) critically damaged, pilot 1/Lt William F. Davis and the remaining crew bailed out. Navigator 2/Lt Charles E. Astleford was killed after landing, reportedly while attempting to evade German forces on the ground. The others were taken POW.

T/Sgt Crabbe was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart which was later presented to his parents (Charles B. and Dorothy Crabbe) in his hometown of Rockville Centre, New York.

His memory and sacrifice are honored at the Ardennes American Cemetery near Liege, Belgium, where he was buried.

After Dorothy's death in 1959, Crabbe's father married her sister, Gladys. At some point, perhaps after his death in 1966, Gladys moved to Florida. Over the years, T/Sgt Crabbe's Purple Heart was misplaced, evidently slipping inside the cushions of her sofa.

The sofa was eventually sold to a family in the Fort Myers area. They discovered the Purple Heart and put it away for safekeeping.

Eight years later, in 2021, the medal was rediscovered and a concerted attempt was made to locate a family member so that Charles' Purple Heart could find its proper home.

Substantial efforts were made by local TV station WINK and people across the Internet put out the word, but to no avail.

My interest was piqued when I saw the story on Facebook. I could provide WINK with some background information in part because my father, 1/Lt (later Colonel) Henry T. Holmes, also of the 577th BS, had once piloted *Alfred IV* on a mission while their main ship, #42-52415, *Fairy Belle II*, was being repaired.

My dad served at the same time and in the same squadron

as Charles and, in fact, his 35th and last mission with the 577th took place just six days before the horrific losses of December 2nd. What could have been! The mission loading list on www.b24.net for December 2, 1944 sadly shows six aircraft of the 577th MIA, 35 men KIA and 19 captured.

Failing to find any relatives of Charles Crabbe who could receive the medal, WINK-TV personnel, Erin Faith Allen (who works for Purple Hearts Reunited), and Brenda Carlson (who was in possession of the sacred medal), contacted the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH).

They made arrangements to conduct a special ceremony officiated by the Long Island Chapter of the MOPH at Rockville Centre. Ms. Carlson hand-carried the medal from Florida and then formally donated it to the MOPH. The medal then became part of a collection of Purple Hearts and other special tributes maintained in a traveling MOPH Memorial Wall. The Wall is taken all over the US for public view.

With no close relatives to remember him, T/Sgt Crabbe's Purple Heart is now on display to a grateful nation.

Editor's note: On 2 Dec 1944, the 577th Sqdn suffered staggering losses: of its 84 airmen who departed Wendling that morning, only 20 returned there that afternoon. Another



577th Sqdn engineer
T/Sgt Louis F.
Abraham

of its planes received such battle damage that the crew had to land at RAF Manston, whose extra-long, extra-wide runways were essential for crippled planes. That crew, with four men wounded, did not get back to Wendling for two more days.

Engineer T/Sgt Louis F. Abraham was one of the lucky survivors from the 577th Sqdn who landed at Wendling that day. His diary entry for the mission affirms how bad it was:

"Flying today was ... the most disastrous flight this squadron

See PURPLE HEART on page 10

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

EDITOR from page 3

249) where I served as Personnel Officer/Administrative Assistant and Catholic Lay Leader until my release from active duty 10 July 1970.

"By the way, T/Sgt Daniel Connor Jr's older sister, Louise, will be 104 on the 8th of November!"

David Nowack was in the Navy during the Vietnam War.

Annette Tison was commissioned in March 1978. She served 11 years on active duty and 9 years in the Naval Reserve. **Don Tison** (whom she met and married when they were both stationed at US Naval Communication Station United Kingdom in Thurso, Scotland, was commissioned in May 1975. He retired after 23 years on active duty, including aboard submarines, a nuclear cruiser and an amphibious assault ship.

Robert W. Tyler "served in the Navy on active duty from 1951-1953, and two additional years in the Naval Reserve. Most of the active duty was serving on a tanker (USS Platte, AO-24). Our task was to refuel the fleet at sea, mainly off the coast of Korea."

AmazonSmile. As of November 2021, the 392nd BGMA has earned \$56.15 due to purchases via <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=%2F>. Many thanks to those who used the program and designated the 392nd BGMA as their charity!

Membership renewals. If you get a print version of the *News* and see "21" next to your name on the mailing label, then your dues expire this month. Email readers whose dues are expiring this month will be notified by email. In either case, please look at page 4 to learn how to renew!

Happy Holidays! Wishing happy (and safe!) holidays to one and all!

PURPLE HEART from page 9

has had in quite some time & a very close call for my crew.

"We were awakened for briefing this morning at rather an unusual time. As a matter of fact we didn't expect to fly to-day for we were holding our 200th mission party; but somehow our Intelligence officer found out that the Germans were shipping fresh troops to the front lines & our objective was to bomb the marshalling yards in that sector.

"We took off at 9:35 & assembled in formation at 10 thousand feet. From then we headed for Germany, gaining altitude as we went on. We reached the coast of Germany at an altitude of 22 thousand feet. Our escort of two groups of P-51s were already waiting for us as we hit the coast.

"Flak was very scarce & inaccurate all the way in to our IP [the Initial Point, where the formation made its final turn toward the target]. We knew that flak was to be heavy in this sector & drew a conclusion that there must be enemy fighters about. After releasing our bombs, which consisted of 12 five hundred pounders, we ran into bad weather. Our squadron was separated from the rest of the Group & also our fighter cover. We found ourselves flying between two layers of clouds & from out of nowhere came 50 FW-

190s & ME 109s.

"They jumped us, attacking in five plane formation. The ship began shaking & I knew that the gunners were already on them & blazing away. I saw one B-24 blow up in air & another already going down in a spin.

"By this time our fighter escort found them & then began one of the biggest dogfights my eyes have ever witnessed.

"Somehow ten more enemy fighters broke through the fighter cover & came in on us. They made one more pass on us knocking down 6 more B-24s. That left only two of us & we headed for the clouds. For the first time in ages I cried. I bawled like a baby, not from being scared but seeing our buddies who went down. Just four hours before, we were talking about the party & the kind of fun we were going to have & now two of us out of ten came back.

"My pilots' cool heads & my praying to God the night before brought us back safely. After getting back to the barracks the quartermaster was already removing the boys' clothes. I almost cried again then but I fought hard & controlled myself. Right now I'm praying that this is over with so we can all get away from this rotten mess."

Christmas at the 392nd BG



The 10th Station Complement Squadron history for November 1944 describes one aspect of the holidays:

"This month has seen the morale of [Squadron] personnel fluctuate with the rise and fall of Christmas parcels from friends and relatives back in the good old U.S.A.

"One of the big differences this year, however, in the facial and mental expressions of the men as they opened their packages was the whoops of joy and festivity when they would come upon a carton of cigarettes or spare packages of them. Brand and favorite brands of cigarettes were of



This well-decorated Christmas tree somewhere in Station 118 is surrounded with numerous packages from home. Undoubtedly, many included cigarettes!

See CHRISTMAS on page 11

CHRISTMAS from page 10

no object as it is now an impossibility for a ground crew member to purchase fags through the Post Exchange and the English type of cigarette are definitely not up to the standards of Camels or Chesterfields or the likes. In fact if the boys went to town and spent a half crown a pack for Players or Woodbines they would be dead broke in no time.

"This situation of 'no smokes' for the ground crew men is really becoming acute. It is fairly difficult for a man who has smoked for the past 20 years or less to just all of a sudden stop smoking and break away from the nicotine habit (although there is no doubt that is the best road to long wind and good health). Some of the more heavy type of smokers are already showing their nerves etc because of the lack of a weed. At any rate this cigarette shortage has really brought out the pipes and all types, varieties and models are floating around the station.

"It is a common sight now to see a man riding a bicycle in a cloud of blue smoke with a pipe clenched firmly between his teeth. It is a wonder that some of the enlisted personnel haven't landed in the hospital due to sighting an officer at the last moment and then saluting with the right hand and grabbing his pipe from his mouth with the left hand while the bicycle rolls merrily along its way caring neither for the officer or the enlisted man and his pipe.

"The two men from the 10th who are assigned to the Station Post Exchange have really put in a trying period of time listening to the complaints of the men due to the cigarette shortage. About the only answer they have is to tell the beefers to go see the Chaplain and as an oddity the Chaplain is the Post Exchange Officer..."

Cpl Charles McEver and Pfc Frank Christian were those harassed Post Exchange workers. "Charlie vows that if he ever hears the name 'Camels' or 'Luckies' on civvy street he will haul off and maim the offender. It seems that these two very difficult brands of cigarettes are the most wanted by enlisted men of this base. It's rough in the ETO."

The January 1945 history brought the happy news that "cigarette rations were increased from the five pack-a-week plan to the old seven-pack plan."

The 578th Sqdn history for November 1944 noted that Technical Supply Officer 1/Lt Robert C. Williams had



This 1 Dec 1944 photo almost certainly shows 1/Lt Williams' device, as it is captioned, "GI's Roll Their Own."

constructed a cigarette roller "as a contribution toward eliminating the butt shortage."

Cigarettes were part of parties and celebrations since the earliest days in Wendling. The 465th Sub Depot history notes that on Christmas Day 1943, "The turkey dinner was served in the elaborately-decorated mess hall on which each table was a burning candle and Christmas tree, mimeographed menu, candy and cigarettes."

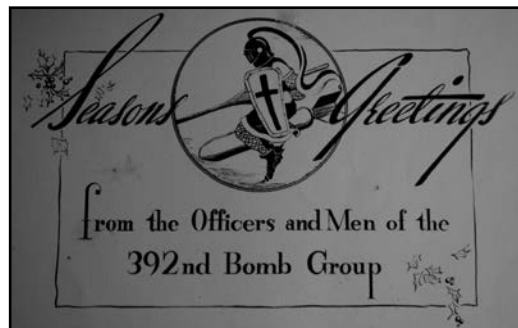


Christmas Day dinner 1943 at Mess Hall No. 2.

According to the menu for Mess Hall No. 2, that dinner for the enlisted men consisted of flavored fruit punch; turkey rice soup with croutons; fruit salad; roast tom turkey served with giblet gravy and bread dressing or Virginia baked ham with applesauce and snowflake potatoes; buttered peas, buttered corn, cranberry sauce, assorted hot rolls with butter and jelly; assorted pickles; pumpkin pie; apple pie with cheese; spice cake; cookies; candy; coffee with cream; and cigarettes.

Similar decorations and food were found at the Combat Officers Mess. 579th Sqdn pilot 1/Lt Harrison Cassell wrote in his journal that day, "We had our club decorated with Holly, which is quite plentiful around here. Also some pine trees. Had turkey for supper with fruit cocktail, mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, cookies and pineapple pie. They gave us all a package of cig's and then charged us 5 shillings when we went out the door."

Histories for both the 1825th Ordnance Company and the 1217th Quartermaster Service Company mention parties where cigarettes were served as part of the refreshments.



IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

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

Happy Holidays and a special thank you to those who continue to support this organization. It provides an opportunity for fellowship, education, sharing of memories and community. We need this positivity during difficult times.

As we close out 2021, it is unfortunately not with unity or tolerance, either in America or globally. It has been a year of partisanship, anger, violence, illness, loss and grief. The concept of freedom and personal rights is forefront but skewed. There is no guaranteed freedom or right to harm, jeopardize, threaten or dismiss another person. We are a global community with common goals to succeed, be well and show respect.

This organization preserves the past. Hopefully we can remember what was lost and gained in the past and begin again to value and respect each other.

History shows that we have done this before, so it is attainable. History also shows that something good can come from something bad. As Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer puts it, "I come from a people who gave the Ten Commandments to the world. Time has come to strengthen them by three additional ones, which we ought to adopt and commit ourselves to: thou shall not be a perpetrator; thou shall not be a victim; and thou shall never, but never, be a bystander."

We can be strong, free, and united with self-destiny. May we choose our on-going path with courage, conscience and care.

Please stay safe, respectful, open-minded and happy.
God's Blessings to all.



The replica of the 392nd BG Memorial at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

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
at last into Your presence there
to rejoice eternally. Amen

~ Very Reverend Robert C. Martin

392nd BG Pilot

Dean of the Cathedral, Ret.

Erie, Pennsylvania

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

William V. Trask, 577, November 2, 2021
Wanda Tuchel, widow of Robert H. Tuchel, 579/7,
December 8, 2021