

NEWS



392nd BG Memorial Association

VOLUME 5

FEBRUARY, 1990

ORLANDO MEETING SET FOR MAY 10, 11, 12

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT GILBERT

Dear 392nd BGMA Member,

At our 392nd membership meeting during the 2AD reunion at Hilton Head in November, it was decided that our next reunion would be in Orlando in May 1990. Among the obvious reasons favoring the location were Walt Disney World and the area attractions. The date also coincides with the arrival of Tom and Jill Scott of Beeston. They are coming as our guests for their very first visit to the United States. Tom and Jill as you know played a vital role in the Wendling Memorial reconstruction and the reunion will afford an opportunity to reciprocate with some old-fashioned American hospitality.

A committee composed of the Gilberts, the Cliff Petersons, the L. D. Robinsons, and the Art Egans, after investigating a number of hotels in the area, has contracted with the Sheraton Plaza in south Orlando for the dates May 10, 11, and 12. The hotel is quite new, located in a large shopping mall, convenient to the airport and is 20 minutes from Disney World. Public transportation is available to all area attractions. Our group rate is \$70 per day. Suitable hotels in or nearer Disney World are available but are far more expensive.

Scheduled activities are being kept to a minimum to allow individual choices for visiting the various attractions. In addition to Disney's EPCOT, Magic Kingdom,

and Walt Disney World Village, now open is the new Disney-MGM Studios and tour. Also, May 1990 is the scheduled opening for Universal Studios' new multi million dollar attraction with tour. If this is not enough, Cape Kennedy and its excellent tour of the missile launch complex is only an hour away on the east coast.

With time at a premium for doing all the foregoing, you may want to come earlier and stay later. The hotel will honor our group rates for three days before and three days after the scheduled dates of May 10, 11, and 12.

Arrangements are being made, with Bob Lane in charge, for a golf tournament on Thursday, the 10th. Details will come later for those signing up.

A welcoming reception will be held Thursday evening, May 10. Friday will be a free day, available for Disney World or whatever. The Saturday schedule will include a membership business meeting in the morning and banquet that evening. The hospitality room opens on Thursday and will feature historian par excellence Ernie Barber's fast growing inventory of photo albums, continuous showing of video tapes, and memorabilia.

The registration fee will include cost of welcoming reception, hospitality room beverages and snacks, coffee, juice and pastry each morning in the hospitality room, and Saturday evening banquet. 392nd

(continued on page 2)

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT GILBERT

(continued from page 1)

registration forms and hotel reservation forms are included elsewhere in this newsletter. Please return the two forms at the earliest possible date, and not later than March 15, to assure room availability and adequate planning by the reunion committee. Be sure to return the hotel reservation form directly to the hotel. Return the 392nd group reservation form and your check to the Winter Park, FL. address on the form.

We have a substantial number of 392nd people on our newsletter mailing list who are members of the 8AF Historical Society or the 2AD Ass'n., plus still others in neither of these categories, all of whom are non-members of the 392nd BG Memorial Ass'n. Some of you may be receiving this newsletter for the first time. We hope you will join your comrades in the 392nd and continue to receive the newsletter. We are reluctant to drop anyone from our rolls but mailing costs are a continuing concern. Just fill out the membership form found elsewhere in this newsletter, and send it with your check to Charles Dye, Treasurer. And if any member because of straitened circumstances is unable to pay, just contact any Director and the matter will be taken care of.

Sincerely,

Laurence G. Gilbert
Lawrence G. Gilbert
President

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The 392nd's first mission was against Abbeyville, France on 9 September 1943.

* * *

The ground echelon departed Alamogoro, N. M. on 18 July, and the air echelon departed Topeka, Kansas during August, 1943. The ground echelon arrived at Wendling 1 August, and the air echelon had all arrived by the 21st.

HAM RADIO NETWORK

A ham radio group covering the 2nd Air Division was organized at the 2AD convention at Hilton Head 2-5 Nov. 1989.

Pat Burns, call letters W6GUE, is the 392nd's representative. His address is 7342 W. 83rd St., Los Angeles CA 90045.

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TWICE-TOLD TALES

Or, the Legends of the 392nd
As told to Jim Goar

By Leroy C. MacTavish

Holmes Alexander, God rest his soul, was a one-of-a-kind character. Older than most of us, the scion of a wealthy Eastern family and already established in civilian life as a writer and journalist, he was the 578th's Intelligence Officer and later the Air Sea Rescue Officer for 2nd Air Division.

Possessor of a mighty thirst, Alex had a firm conviction that if a person were oiled enough, his body was relaxed and couldn't be hurt in the event of a fall.

Alex and I were on leave in Cambridge, and we visited the rooms at the university that Alex had occupied earlier in life as a student.

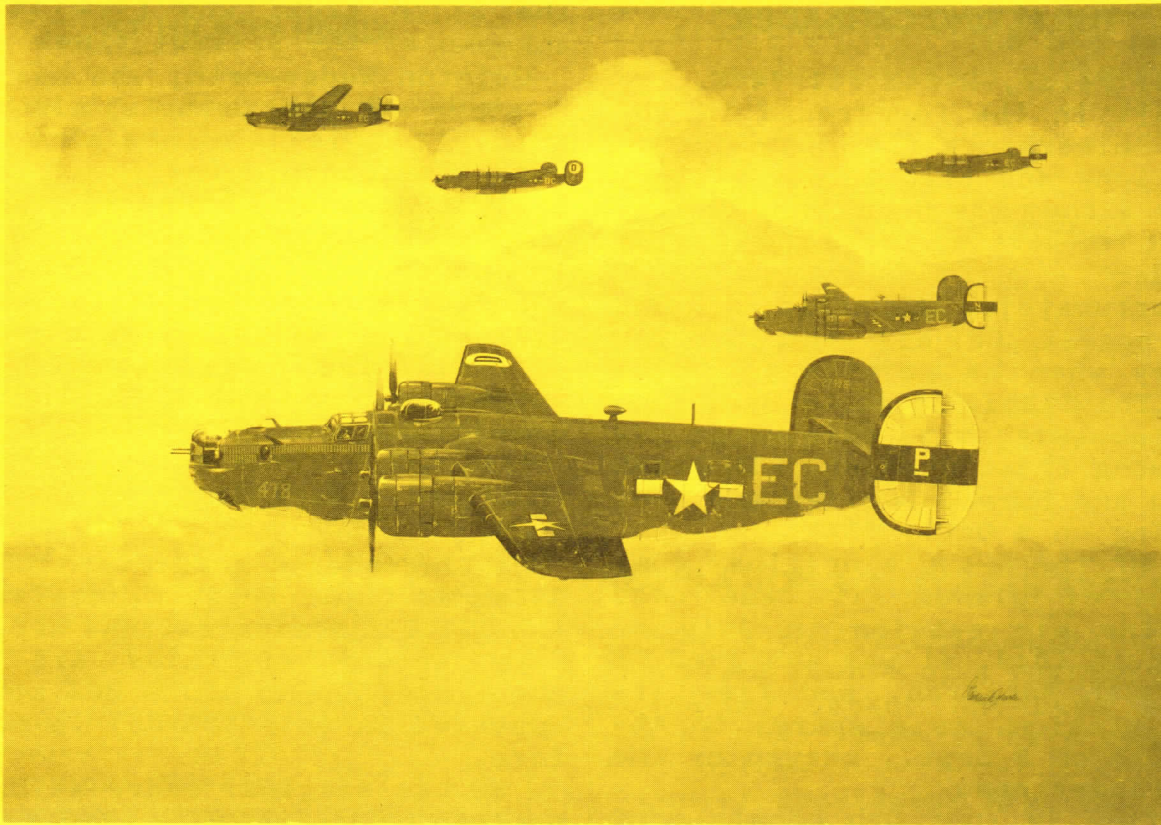
Naturally, the British students living in the rooms were much interested in us Yanks, and soon the bottle of conviviality was out and much conviviality was consumed.

It was then that Alex decided to demonstrate his theory, and he jumped out of the window, which was several feet above the ground. But he didn't reckon on the landing place, which was a glass greenhouse.

But soon here he came climbing up the stairs, his uniform in ribbons and streaming blood from a dozen cuts, but on his feet and proclaiming that his theory was proved, because he had no broken bones.

* * *

PLAN NOW for the 8AF convention at Las Vegas 30 Sept.-4 Oct. The 392nd will be there, in force.



LIBERATORS FROM WENDLING
392nd B-24s En Route to Berlin, 18 March 1945
by Frederick T. Searle

This color print, actual size 20 x 22 inches, has been produced and donated to the Memorial Association by the friends of the 392nd in Norfolk.

Prompted by the interest of Ben Jones in the history of Wendling Airfield, the print was produced by the following in appreciation of the British-American alliance in WWII:

Reproduction of original painting- Frederick T. Searle, Norwich.

Color printing- Green, Wade & Wilson, Ltd., Norwich.

Color separation- A.P.P. (Origination) Ltd., Norwich.

Artwork and Typesetting- Steve Smith Graphics, Norwich.

The artist, Frederick T. Searle, was born in London and studied at Woolwich School of Art and on completion of his studies, he entered the advertising profession, working in London until 1960, when he took up residence in Norfolk.

He has had paintings accepted for hanging at the Royal Academy annual Summer Exhibition and the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolor,

Some of his paintings have been exhibited in several European countries and others have been as far afield as North and Central America.

Thanks to the efforts of J. D. Long and Lou Stephens, a framed copy of the print will be on display at the Air Force museum in Dayton.

It is a limited edition, with 200 signed and 300 unsigned. Since the donors were motivated by the Wendling Memorial, the Board of Directors has determined that the best use of the donation would be to make the print available to the membership, with the money derived from its sale to go toward 392nd memorials. Information on how to order can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

P-BAR PETER "THE FLYING CRUSADER"

P-Bar Peter, B-24H #42-7478, the aircraft in the foreground in the print "Liberators from Wendling", had a long and illustrious history in the 392nd. The Group's title was a part of its name, "The Flying Crusader".

Unfortunately, the artist did not have access to all the Group's history when he painted the picture. The 392nd did go to Berlin on 18 March 1945, but P-Bar Peter was not among those present. It crash landed and burned 2 miles south of Wendling on 9 Oct., 1944.

One of the Group's original complement of planes, it came over with the air echelon in July or August of 1943. It was assigned to the 578th Squadron, and flew its first mission, as a spare, to Abbeyville on 9 Sept., crewed by the Jim Stauder crew.

It flew 79 (per Bob Lane's crew loading book) or 82 (per Hoyt Barfield, Group Line Chief) missions before it crashed. Aborting only 4 times, its combat history is a testimonial to the men of the 578's engineering section.

Its last mission was not operational. It was test-hopped that fateful day to check out a new Mickey set by Ben Alexander, whose crew consisted of co-pilot Presley Broussard, navigator Tom Kirkwood, radio operator Frank Gallo, and engineer Rupert Sutphin. All were unhurt except Gallo, who perished.

Many crews flew the aircraft. Early, the airplane commander was Reade, but the following crews are named as having flown it in combat: Fletcher, Sooy, George, McKee, Cohen, Spears, Waugh, Young, Car-nine, Peterson, Liska, Eisermann, Bridson, Hamblen, Kohl, Maris, Otis, Quinn, W. E. Smith, Muldoon, Johnson, Morefield, Goodwin, and Miller. Twice the 578 Squadron commander was aboard, in the persons of Polking and Player.

It was loaned to the 577th Squadron, which probably accounts for the discrepancy between the 578

Operations book and Hoyt Barfield. The 577th crews who flew it are unknown at the present time.

Quinton Wedgeworth, who has made a study of the Group's aircraft, said, "I think the artist made a fine selection; the vehicle is truly representative, being one of the original "H" models, along with the name".

Editor's note: Ben Alexander has written the full story of the crash of the Flying Crusader, which will appear as he wrote it in the next newsletter.

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PROFILE

A legendary character of the 392nd is Capt. Leroy C. MacTavish, the 578th's communications officer. Many apocryphal tales are told about him, one of which has already appeared in this journal in poetic form.

He was original cadre at Davis-Monthan, joining as a 2nd Lt. He stayed with the Group all the time it was at Wendling, except for a sojourn on the Continent after the invasion, doing his thing as a communications officer.

He entered the service Dec. 9, 1941, and was a communications flight sergeant before he was commissioned.

A poker playing crony of Col. Rendle's, he nevertheless could always be found on or near the flight line, chewing on a cigar and scrounging radio parts.

He stayed in the reserves, and retired as Lt. Col.

In the furniture and carpet business all his life, he still operates a carpet store in Sanford, Fl.

He and wife Mary, a woman of great patience and understanding, live at 205 Oakland Ave., Sanford, FL 32771. They have two daughters and four grandchildren.

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The 392nd BG Memorial Ass'n. as a stand-alone organization was formed at Wichita Oct. 18, 1985 at the 8 AF Historical Society convention.

2 AD REUNION AT HILTON HEAD

A regular membership meeting of the 392nd BG Memorial Ass'n was held 3 Nov. 1989 at the 2 AD convention at Hilton Head, S. C.

The following business was transacted:

John Conrad was re-elected 2 AD vice-president, and Cecil Rothrock was made assistant VP.

The next Memorial Ass'n meeting is scheduled for Orlando May 10-12, 1990. (See story on P. 1 for particulars.) It was thought that this date and place would result in more economical rooms, a concern that has been voiced by some members. Also, this date will coincide with the visit to the States of the Scotts, the Wendling family that has been instrumental in the Memorial renovation project.

The Annual Meeting will be held at Orlando. However, there will also be 392nd meetings held in conjunction with the 2 AD meeting at Norwich 25-31 July and the 8 AF convention 30 Sept.-4 Oct. at Las Vegas.

Other business transacted: Dues were increased from \$10 to \$12 annually. Any dues paid in advance, including Life Membership, will not be subject to the increase.

Any member who would like a Memorial Rededication program should request one from Carrol Cheek at 415 Bayview, Belleair, FL 34616.

It was announced that all the work has been completed on the Memorial, and that, although all the bills are not yet in, it is expected that there are enough funds to cover them. The additional amount needed to fund the perpetual maintenance has not yet been determined.

In accordance with Article 8 of the By-Laws, any member who desires to have his name considered for the Board of Directors positions that will become vacant at the next annual membership meeting must submit his name to the secretary no later than 15 March. Likewise, any

member who wishes to nominate a candidate should send his nomination to the secretary no later than 15 March.

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MRS. FRANCES VICKERS

Mrs. Frances (Jinks) Vickers, wife of Bob Vickers, 578th, died Dec. 10, 1989 at Albuquerque, NM, after a long illness.

Interment was at Santa Fe National cemetery. Survivors are Bob and son Mark.

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REGULATION A-2 JACKETS AVAILABLE

Thanks to the initiative of Stan Zybert, a source of a regulation A-2 leather jacket has been found, and at what seems to be a competitive price.

Cooper Sportswear Mfg. Co., Inc. of 720 Frelinghuysen Ave., Newark, NJ 07114-1378, will allow a member to order direct, and pay by check or Master Card or Visa.

Their stock number is 9104, and they say to order one size larger than your regular coat size. The sizes are in even numbers, both Regular and Long.

The price is \$130 for regular sizes 36-48, and \$137.50 for 38-48 longs. UPS delivery charges are extra.

You should direct the order to the attention of Mr. John Bell.

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WENDLING REDEDICATION TAPES NOW AVAILABLE

VHS tapes of the Wendling Rededication are now available. The complete four-hour version which covers not only the rededication ceremony but also the other activities is \$25; and the one-hour version which includes the rededication ceremony only is \$17. Both prices are postpaid.

Send your order and your check to Ernest Barber, R. 1, Box 371-2, Lincolnton, GA 30817.

Name _____ Sqdn _____ Assoc _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
☐ Check if this is a gift membership

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for 1990, \$12 _____
(If a 90 appears after your name on the address label, Charley
Dye says you're paid up for 1990)

Life Membership

Age 61-65 \$120 _____
Age 66-70 \$ 96 _____
Age 71 and over \$78 _____

ORDER FOR PRINT, "FLYING CRUSADER"

Signed copy at \$55, postpaid _____

Unsigned copy at \$30, postpaid _____

(Only one to a member until all have been contacted)

PX ITEMS

Membership Directory, \$2 post paid _____
Black 392nd BG cap w gold braid, \$9 _____
White nylon jacket w/392nd and
Crusader patches, \$20 _____
Book, "Liberators From Wendling", by Col.
Bob Vickers, \$25 _____
Book, "392nd War Stories", by Col. Myron
Keilman, \$20 _____
Add \$1.50 per item for shipping _____

Total _____

Send with check to Charles Dye, Treasurer, Saddle Ridge #832,
Portage, WI 53901

392nd BOMB GROUP REUNION
SHERATON PLAZA HOTEL, ORLANDO, FLORIDA
MAY 10-13, 1990

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, 10 MAY

0900	Golf Tourney
1400-1800	Registration
1300-2200	Hospitality Room
1700-1900	Welcoming Reception

FRIDAY, 11 MAY

0800-1200	Registration
0800-2200	Hospitality Room (Continental Breakfast 0800-1000)
0900-----	MAGIC KINGDOM, EPCOT CENTER, DISNEY MGM STUDIOS,You name it! Scheduled shuttle bus service from hotel.
1000-2200	Shopping, food, entertainment in adjoining large "FLORIDA MALL".

SATURDAY, 12 MAY

0730	Board of Directors Meeting
0800-1800	Hospitality Room (Continental Breakfast 0800-1000)
0945	General Membership Meeting
1130	SEA WORLD (Scheduled shuttle bus from hotel)
1900	GALA BANQUET DINNER

SUNDAY, 13 MAY

0800-1000	Hospitality Room. Continental Breakfast. FAREWELL TIME--"'TILL WE MEET AGAIN".
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PROFILE

T/Sgt. Ronald E. Higdon was engineer-gunner in the 578 Squadron, joining the Group at Wendling 1 May, 1944.

Upon return to civilian life, he farmed for 6 years, was a book-keeper, and then was a petroleum tankwagon agent for Sun Oil. He retired in 1986.

He and wife June have two daughters and three grandchildren, and live at 2610 Bradford Dr., Iowa City IA 52240.

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Cliff Peterson is the 392's representative with the 8 AF Historical Society; and John Conrad is our representative with the 2 AD Ass'n.

B-24 "ALL AMERICAN"

The B-24 "All American", restored to combat configuration by the Collings Foundation, was present and accounted for at the 2 AD convention at Hilton Head 2-5 Nov. 1989.

Many 392nd members contributed to the effort, but four 392nd crews made contributions significant enough to warrant their names being on the side of the A/C, as honorary crews.

392nd crews whose names are emblazoned on the side of the handsome but venerable old warrior are: Shaw, Tennie Peterson, J. F. Thomas, and Georgia Peach.

* * *

TWICE-TOLD TALES

Or, The Legends of the 392nd
As told to Jim Goar

By Joseph Bush

Col. Irvine Rendle, the Group's first commanding officer, was a natural leader of men.

I saw it demonstrated one day in the control tower at Wendling.

It was late in the afternoon of a typical gloomy, dark day, with a very low ceiling. Our aircraft had all returned from the day's mission. We heard the drone of a four-engine plane overhead, and Barney Glettler, the flying control officer, turned to Col. Rendle and said, "There's a B-17 up there, lost, and the pilot is in a panic."

Col. Rendle took the microphone and in a calm, cool voice, gave the B-17 pilot the correct headings and literally talked him down to the runway.

* * *

AIR FORCES ESCAPE AND EVASION SOCIETY

The Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society (AFEES) is looking for members.

To be eligible for membership, one must have been a U. S. airman, and he must have been down behind enemy lines and either evaded capture, or escaped from captivity to return to Allied control. This is not limited to World War II; any such event at any time is qualifying.

The purpose of the organization is to encourage those members who were helped by resistance organizations or patriotic nationals of the countries involved to continue existing relationships, or to renew relationships with those who helped them during their escape or evasion.

For membership, apply to Heyward C. Spinks, P. O. Box 844, Beaufort, SC 29901.

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The 392's last WWII mission, No. 285, was flown 25 April 1945 against the Hallein marshalling yards. (Obersalzburg).

FLAG DESECRATION BRINGS RESPONSE FROM 392nd MEMBER

The recent Supreme Court ruling allowing the flag to be desecrated as a means of self-expression elicited many responses from 392nd people.

Clarence B. Rich, a 577th navigator who was shot down over France on 23 June 1944, wrote in the Montana MISSOULIAN how he felt, after 70 days of evading, when he found a US armored unit with the American flag painted on its tanks.

He went on to tell what the flag meant to him through school, Kelly Field, and the repatriation process.

Clarence lives at Seeley Lake, MT, and is an outfitter.

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PROFILE

William J. Seyfried was a T/Sgt. flight engineer in the 576th, arriving at Wendling in June, 1944.

He was with United Air Lines for 39 years, starting as a mechanic and progressing through the ranks to flight captain. He retired in 1985.

Married, he has one daughter and one son, and his address is 1547 Queenstown Court, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

* * *

PROFILE

Lt. Vernon Baumgart was a first pilot in the 579 Squadron, arriving at Wendling in Sept. 1943.

He stayed in the Air Force, and was an instructor pilot, motor officer, and operations officer. He had tours at Westover, Clark, P. I., Bolling, Griffis, N. Y., Taipei, and retired in 1963 from Eglin, as Lt. Col.

In 1967, tiring of idleness, he moved to Wisconsin and was in the construction business for two years. He then worked for the Kohler company for eight years, retiring for good in 1977.

He lives with wife Hulda at 3428 Hickory St., Sheboygan, WI 53081, and they have two daughters and a son; and one granddaughter.

WELCOME REMARKS BY CARROLL W. CHEEK, PRESIDING
DEDICATION SERVICES 392nd BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL
WENDLING, NORFOLK COUNTY, EAST ANGLIA, ENGLAND

October 7, 1989

We are gathered here today, many of us on what could be our final mission as veterans of the 392nd Bomb Group, to honor 747 men who were killed in action while serving from this base. Their last living hours on earth were spent in this beautiful countryside near this village of Beeston.

We also honor today all of those who served the allied cause from this base. The Monument and Memorial Grounds we are dedicating today will not only remind us of the cost of freedom but will serve in perpetuity to remind all who follow us that we must forever be vigilant if we are to perpetuate our freedom from those who would deprive us of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The Monument will also be a continuing symbol of the combined will of our countries to fight together if and when we are attacked -- UNITED ALLIES FOREVER, defending each other, and defending freedom whenever it is threatened.

It is my privilege to welcome you, our British and American friends residing in England, on behalf of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association. We especially include in our welcome those who have traveled from as far as Tokyo, Japan and from many sections of the United States. All of you have come to join us here today in this beautiful county of Norfolk, East Anglia, even though most of you were not members of the military cadre occupying this base in World War II. For your interest in our cause, we thank you.

Our Memorial Association was founded as an official veterans organization in 1985 assisted in Washington by United States Representative Ralph Regula and his Washington staff. Congressman Regula in a phone conference with me last week expressed his regrets personally and on behalf of other members of Congress, who could not attend our dedication services. He stated he will be with us in his thoughts during our dedication today, though not here in person. Congressman Regula, and Congressman Oxley, were instrumental in securing representation of the State Department of the United States through the London office of the United States Embassy. A representative of the Embassy will be recognized and subsequently address us today.

In my remarks today, I would be remiss if I did not thank Bob Lane and Colonel "Joe" Bush for their participation in planning this project as members of the Memorial Committee and for their confidence in my carrying out their wishes. We as a committee hope we have fulfilled the intent of our membership to preserve, refurbish, and perpetuate the original Obelisk. The original Obelisk was constructed at the direction and leadership of Colonel Bush immediately following World War II and we have successfully reconstructed the Obelisk and made permanent improvements in a manner which will favorably reflect the quality of performance and dedication to duty of the 392nd Bomb Group. In my humble opinion we were, without question, a superior military unit.

As representative of more than seven hundred association members, I wish to recognize the contribution of the original site of this Monument by Felix M. Garner. We are appreciative and especially thankful to Tom and Jill Scott for their generous contribution of the expanded site which includes the grounds on which we are now seated.

Our Association has perpetuated this recognition by inscriptions on the monument acknowledging the donors of these grounds.

It is appropriate at this time to further recognize the unselfish efforts and devoted attention given by Tom and Jill in the supervision and reconstruction of these Memorial Grounds and Monument and in assisting us in the arrangements for this Dedication Service today. No better friends do we have.

We also recognize Mr. Neville Matthews and his staff for their expertise and excellent construction of our memorial and grounds.

The contribution and interest of the Beeston Parish Council and of the many agencies of the Queen of this great country will never be forgotten by all of us. We are especially grateful to Mrs. Wendy Carter and Mr. David O'Neil who researched the records to determine the necessary tracing of title to the property. To all of you in Britain who so graciously supported our cause by your unselfish assistance, we thank you.

General Donaldson, in charge of the United States Cemeteries under the jurisdiction of The American Battle Monuments Commission, had hoped to be here, but unavoidable conflicts prevented his attendance. He is represented today by superintendent Horace Thompson of the Cambridge American Military Cemetery and Memorial. General Donaldson, his staff and the Washington office of The American Battle Monuments Commission directed by General Goodpaster, assisted by General Adams and Colonel Badger have been invaluable in developing and engineering this memorial. The staff of The Battle Monument Commission has visited our site on many occasions. They have provided detailed drawings, professional consultation and encouragement in making this project a reality. We are forever indebted to these gentlemen and their respective staffs. General Donaldson in a phone conference with me stated that although he could not be present in person he was with us today in his thoughts and prayers -- a most considerate comrade-in-arms.

We are honored to have representatives of government and the armed forces join us in our dedication program. Though not addressing us today, Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Webb is here representing Colonel Judd, Commander of the 513th Airborne Command and Control Wing. As our first speaker, it is my honor to present to you Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, of Norfolk, Mr. Timothy Colman.

Representing the mighty Third Air Force is Colonel Edward Chase, Vice Commander.

A leader in this area, the chairman of the Norfolk County Council, Mr. John Birkbeck has graciously accepted our invitation to speak to us today, Mr. Birkbeck.

We are most pleased to have with us today a member of Parliament for North Norfolk, and formerly a member of the R.A.F. during World War II, Mr. Ralph Howell. He has graciously accepted our invitation to speak on behalf of and in place of Mr. Richard Ryder, also a member of Parliament from this district, who was unable to attend, Mr. Howell.

Representing the State Department of the United States as a member of the London office of the United States Embassy is the United States Air Force Attache, Colonel Robert Perry, Colonel Perry.

The introduction of this next speaker is indeed a sincere and personal privilege, as well as an honor. No single person in the United Kingdom has worked with more diligence on this project than Jill Scott. Jill is a Magistrate of the Court, County Commissioner of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, a Deputy Lieutenant for Norfolk for Her Majesty The Queen and in this immediate community, serves and speaks to us today as Chairman of the Beeston Parish Council. It is a pleasure to present to you, my friend and a dear friend of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association, Jill Scott.

There is no greater call to man than to ask him to offer his life for his fellow man. Seven hundred forty-seven men paid the supreme price by giving their lives so we might enjoy the fruits of freedom. Many others, some who are among us today, bought freedom with BLOOD, SUFFERING, ANGUISH and TEARS. Twenty-seven surviving veterans representing our more than seven hundred members of our association and representing further our comrades killed in action and those who survived -- from small communities and from the large cities -- as did our comrades of more than 46 years ago. It is indeed my privilege to present these members of the 392nd Memorial Association, my comrades, to you today. Your program has their names printed in alphabetical roster form and they will now rise as I call their names: Henry W. Allen, William D. Case, Carroll W. Cheek, John B. Conrad, Charles E. Dye, Howard R. Ebersole, Lawrence G. Gilbert, Richard E. Griffin, Albin A. Gusciora, Robert E. Hamill, John C. Henning, Richard C. Hoover, Ben W. Hunsaker, Delmar C. Johnson, Roy Kempfe, Myron Keilman, Birdie Larrick, J.D. Long, Harold N. Longacre, Oak Mackey, John F. Malloy, Keith E. Roberts, Cecil T. Rothrock, Clyde W. Smith, Henry C. Vaughan, Joseph B. Whittaker, Robert A. Wilkins, Leroy C. Mactavish, Jack Urban, Charles D. Martin

To deliver our dedication address today is the President of our Memorial Association, Colonel Lawrence G. Gilbert, now residing in Winter Park, Florida.

Colonel Gilbert survived twenty-six missions, leading combat groups including as many as one hundred ninety-two bombers strong - to targets over occupied Europe while serving on this base.

Colonel Gilbert was many times decorated for his meritorious service to the Allied War of Liberation and for his service to the United States of America.

Colonel Gilbert served as the last commanding officer of this base. His loyalty, friendship, interest in his fellowman and devotion to duty have earned for him the esteem and admiration of those who have served with him and under his command. All who have learned to know him feel life has been enriched by knowing Larry Gilbert. He is a gentleman and a devoted member of the 392nd.

It is my distinct personal privilege to present to you Lawrence G. Gilbert, Colonel, United States Air Force retired, and a cherished friend. Colonel Gilbert -

WREATH LAYING DETAIL

Myron Keilman
J. D. Long

Charles Dye
Cecil Rothrock

CAPTAINS FORMATION

Keith Roberts

Howard Ebersole

DEDICATION SERVICES 392nd BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL

Wendling, Norfolk County, East Anglia, England

October 7, 1989

ADDRESS BY LAWRENCE G. GILBERT

It is an honor for me to represent our 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association and to speak for all the members of the group assigned this base during the war years. We are joined here with a common purpose -- to remember, to respect, and to honor those we left behind. The Memorial we are dedicating today is in proud and grateful memory of the 747 airmen who flew their final flight from these runways and all who served with them at this airfield.

This is a solemn heartfelt occasion for the group of veterans present here who came from all parts of the United States to join in this dedication. These veterans include pilots, navigators, bombardiers, gunners, ground crew chiefs and the various specialists to support 48 four-engine bombers and their crews. There were about 3000 American servicemen assigned this station, equally divided between air crew members and ground support personnel.

We honor also the wives and families of our people, a number of whom are here today, who remained at home doing their part in the war effort plus keeping those so-very-important letters and packages from coming to our troops. We know personally how anxiously our families read the daily news accounts of the massive raids over the continent, apprehensive over the number of planes lost and praying for the safety of their loved ones.

Our 392nd group was a closely-knit unit with a high level of Camaraderie and Esprit de Corps. Teen-age boys under the stress of combat operations in a war theater became men overnight with heavy responsibility and quickly learned how much others depended on them to do their job and do it well. There was a common bond and a common objective--to give our level best to help bring the war to an end at the earliest possible time, to bring peace and a return home to our families.

During the nearly two years our Group was based here, we were blessed with an environment we will never forget--the warmth and hospitality of the British people.

We have always felt fortunate to be assigned to this base in the midst of the Beeston-Wendling Community, where you opened the doors of your homes, shared your table and your friendship and did so much to give our people a true sense of a "HOME AWAY FROM HOME". The cordial feeling we found in the surrounding area complemented in a vital way the fine work of our own Red Cross Unit and Recreation Facility on the Station whose staff included a number of British volunteers from this area. Its American director, Mrs. Birdie Larrick of Columbus, Ohio, is with us today. During her tour here, in recognition of the high esteem in which she was held by our people, one of our B-24's was christened in her honor.

A moment ago I referred to the bonds formed with our British friends some forty four years ago. This relationship has steadily grown stronger over the years as countless numbers of our people testify when they return from a nostalgic visit to this base and parish, renewing old ties with old friends. I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge and express our gratitude for the loving care that the people of the Beeston Parish have given voluntarily to our Memorial Grounds over the years and the arranging of the Memorial Services each Memorial Day and Remembrance Day. And VERY briefly, because they would surely not approve even this brief mention, we owe a heavy debt of gratitude to Tom and Jill Scott for their donation of land for the Memorial Grounds and for their dedicated efforts in supervising the reconstruction of this Memorial. Also, and he too would veto any of these remarks, I want to acknowledge the dedicated effort and vital role played by our Memorial Committee Chairman, Carroll Cheek, major donor, the leader and guiding force in completing this Memorial. Our Group was fortunate indeed to have this veteran step forward and accept this responsibility three years ago and bring this undertaking to its conclusion.

The record shows that during the period our Group was assigned this station, August 1943 until VE Day in May 1945, we flew 285 missions, 185 planes were lost and we suffered 1553 casualties including 747 killed in action. 800 were wounded or became prisoners of war. All these men were heroes in every sense of the word, who answered when their country called. My most vivid memories are of the briefings of the aircrews when the screen was pulled back disclosing a dangerous, deep-penetration target. The tension and apprehension was clearly evident on their faces but when filed out into the pre-dawn darkness to go to their planes, there was a look of grim resoluteness that said this was our job to be done--let's get on with it!

Prime Minister Churchill in referring to the British people in the dark hours in 1940 during the Battle of Britain, used the term "their finest hour". This period the 392nd Bomb Group was engaged in combat from this base was "our finest and proudest hour". The group earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for a hard-fought mission to Gotha, Germany in 1944 in which the target, an aircraft factory, was completely destroyed. Permit me to give an extract from the Official Citation: "The 392nd Bombardment Group, Second Air Division, Eighth Air Force is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy on 26 February 1944. The Unit dispatched thirty-two B-24 type aircraft, the maximum number available, to bomb the most valuable single target in the enemy twin-engine fighter complex, the Messerschmitt aircraft and component factory at Gotha, Germany.

Flying as the lead Group in the division formation. They were attacked by the enemy upon entering the Dutch Coast. In the bitter battle that ensued, the Group was viciously attacked for over two and one-half hours by approximately 150 enemy fighters with cannon and rocket fire and even attempted air-to-air and cable bombing in a vain effort to disrupt the formation. The Group maintained perfect formation, valiantly fought its way through the flak defenses to bomb the target with pin-point accuracy, destroying it. Although seven of their aircraft were lost to the relentless enemy in the battle to and from the target, and an additional thirteen aircraft suffered battle damage, they accounted for the confirmed destruction of 16 enemy fighters. The destruction of this high priority target dealt a serious blow to the German Air Force and was a contributing factor to its impotency in the invasion of continental Europe".

We know if our hearts there were many other missions equally deserving of high recognition. The 392nd Bomb Group was, truly, a distinguished unit and we here today are proud to have been a part of it.

And so, as we dedicate this memorial to these brave men, we trust it will be our legacy for our children and our grandchildren and their grandchildren as well as those of our British countrymen to serve in the years to come as a tribute to the bond that exists between our two countries, to our resolve that nothing is more precious than our freedom, that we are willing to pay the ultimate price if necessary to preserve it against any threat from outside the free world.

I will close with an extract from a Dedication Service by President Eisenhower in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and which is inscribed on the wall at the American Cemetery at Madingley. This wall contains 115 names of 392nd Group people, 45 of whom remain at rest there. "The Americans, whose names here appear, were part of the price that free men for the second time in this century have been forced to pay to defend human liberty and rights. All who shall hereafter live in freedom will be here reminded that to these men and their comrades we owe a debt to be paid with grateful remembrance of their sacrifice and the high resolve that the cause for which they died shall live eternally".

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PROFILE

1st Lt. John A. Colvin was a pilot in the 579th, joining the Group early at Davis-Monthan on 7 May, 1943.

For a short period after the war, he served in the Missouri National Guard as Deputy Air Inspector, Wing Hq.

He attended Washington university, and then worked as a sales representative. In 1953 he went into the insurance business as a broker in general casualty, and retired in 1985.

He and wife Mary Ann have one son and three daughters; and six grandchildren. They live at 226 Fawn Meadows Drive, Ballwin, MO 63011.

* * *

PROFILE

Sgt. S. J. Elden was in the 577th Ordnance section, joining the Group at Alamogordo in March, 1943.

After the war, he graduated from Wayne State university law school in 1950 and was assistant city attorney for Ann Arbor, Mich. 1956-66; Municipal judge 1967-68; and District judge 1969 to date.

He and wife Odes live at 1222 Bydding Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, and have two children.

PROFILE

1st Lt. John C. Henning was a pilot, arriving at Wendling in Feb. 1945, as the war was winding down. He was in the 578 Squadron.

He flew Bob Vickers' C-Bar back to the States in May 1945, and was assigned to a B-29 outfit, but when the Japan war ended, he was discharged.

He studied engineering at the university of Cincinnati, and joined the Stearns and Foster company in 1948 and stayed with them until retirement. He was vice-president of corporate engineering when he retired.

Living on a golf course, he plays a lot and also makes and repairs golf clubs. He works on inventions and has been awarded four patents.

He is married to Mary Lou, and they have three sons, one daughter, and two grandsons, all living in the Cincinnati area. Their address is 20 Applewood Drive, Fairfield, O 45014.

* * *

PROFILE

S/Sgt. Leon Arlo Jones was a tail gunner in the 578 and 579 Squadrons, joining the Group at Wendling in November 1944.

After the war, he was three years in the Army reserve and two years in the S. Dakota National Guard.

He earned the B.S. and M.S. degrees, and was a school administrator for 10 years. After that, he was in public relations and insurance sales, and for the past 23 years has been a bank loan officer.

He is married to June, and they have two children and four grandchildren. Their address is PO Box 278, Parkston, SD 57366.

* * *

PROFILE

Lt. Col. (Ret) James M. Buzick was S/Sgt. Buzick, a ball turret gunner in the 577th. An early joiner of the Group, he reported to Alamogordo in April 1943. He was on

the 577th's lead crew, flying most of his missions with Col. Taylor.

He was in the North Dakota Air National Guard from 1949 to 1980, filling many administrative posts, including Base Comptroller and Squadron Commander.

Wife Harriet and he live at 71 South Woodcrest Drive, Fargo, ND 58102, and have five children and five grandchildren.

* * *

PROFILE

T/Sgt. Floyd E. Bull arrived at Wendling Feb. 16, 1944, having been on anti-sub patrol out of Langley Field. He flew 32 missions as radio operator and gunner in the 578th squadron, finishing Sept. 6, 1944 and returning to the States.

After the war, he returned to his pre-war job with the New York State Dept. of Transportation, and retired Dec. 31, 1984 after over 42 years service. Being no couch potato, he now works part time delivering new trucks.

He has four children, and lives with wife Roberta at Circleville, New York, Box 30, 10919.

* * *

PROFILE

M/Sgt. Teddie A. Bailey was a crew chief in the 579th Squadron, joining the Group at Wendling in Sept. 1943.

Staying with aviation in civilian life, he was with the US Army in civil service as an aircraft inspector, traveling the IV and V Army Areas.

He stayed in the Reserves, and retired as M/Sgt.

He is married to Margareta, a Welsh lady, and they live at 5405 N. Wiley Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46226. They have two sons and one grandchild.

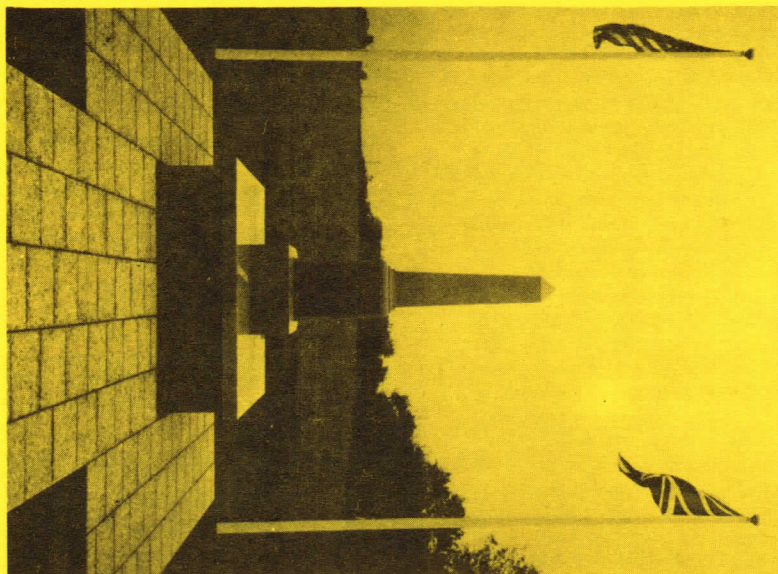
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Harold E. Hickok, 579
Thomas J. Lips

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