



BREAKOUT AT ST. LO

For its first one hundred missions, the 392nd bombed targets to reduce the Third Reich's ability to wage war: factories, railroads, oil refineries, dockyards, bridges, V-1 and V-2 rocket sites, and airfields.

In mid-1944, though, the emphasis turned to targets in direct support of American ground forces.

Operation Cobra

Weeks after D-Day, General Omar Bradley's army was bogged down in the marshes and dense hedgerows of northern France. In his autobiography, *A General's Life*, he writes of his "new plan for a breakout ... [focusing] on a very narrow front in the St. Lo area.... A key feature of the offensive would be a massive, paralyzing air attack on the Germans in the narrow front." Called Operation Cobra, it was scheduled for 19 July.

As bad weather pushed the start date back, Bradley fine-tuned Cobra. "Its key feature, the saturation bombing of the German concentrations opposite us, was risky... [It] called for pinpoint saturation bombing of a rectangle three and a half miles wide and one and a half miles deep, south of the

St. Lo-Periers road to which [troops of the US Army's VII Corps] would advance prior to the jump-off. There was no room for error; a mistake on the part of the aviators could bring a rain of bombs on our own troops.

"To minimize the chances for error, I proposed a plan whereby our aircraft would approach the rectangle on a course parallel to the east-west St. Lo-Periers road and, of course, south of it. So directed, our planes would not fly over our own troops. Thus, if the aviators dropped bombs long or short of the target area (as they were wont to do), the misdirected bombs would fall on the German side of the ... road, not ours."

Planning Meeting

On 19 July, Army and Air Force representatives met to

discuss the air support Bradley required. According to 8AF's *Report of Operations, 24 and 25 July, 1944* (dated 26 Mar 1945), the Allied Expeditionary Air Force was tasked to "dispatch such forces as would be necessary to saturate this area with instantaneously fused bombs ... within a minimum of time to attain the maximum concentration of firepower immediately before the assault by the ground forces."

To achieve this decisive bombardment, 8AF heavy bombers, 9AF medium bombers, and fighter-bombers from the Second Tactical Air Force would be used, all bombing under visual conditions only.

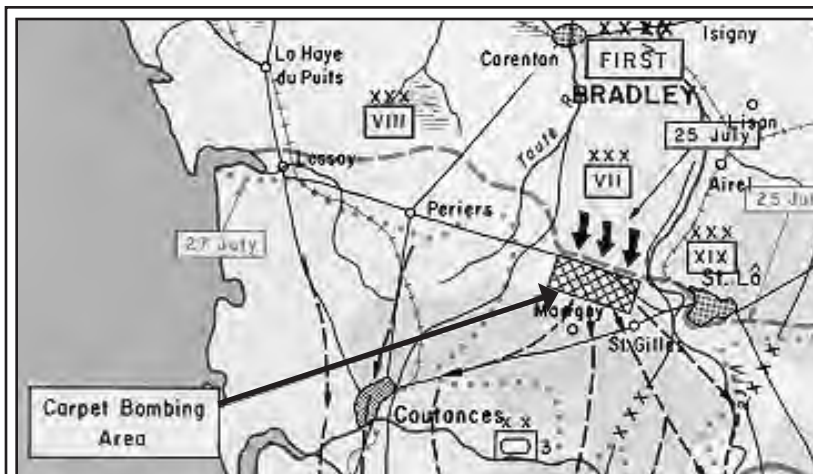
Per the *Report*, "The corollary requirements were discussed at length. Ground

force representatives proposed to withdraw the troops no more than 800 yards from the north boundary of the heavy bomber target area. A counter-proposal for an interval of 3000 yards was made by this Command with the reminder that even this distance would not eliminate the possibility of gross bombing errors. The final decision provided for a 1500-yard withdrawal."

Bradley stressed how

important it was for the bombers to fly parallel to the road. But, he writes, "The airmen raised objections. A parallel approach, they held, would maximize our aircraft's exposure to enemy flak and present the narrowest rather than the widest target, as well as air congestion over the target. I countered that flying parallel to the road would enable our planes to attack out of the rising sun in the morning or the

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This map shows the small area to be bombed by US air forces and the location of American troops on 25 and 27 July 1944. (from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Lo_Breakthrough.jpg)

392nd Reunion: Savannah, 22-26 July

The deadline to register for the reunion is June 20. See <http://www.b24.net/reunion/default.htm> or call Armed Forces Reunions at (757) 625-6401; the hotel is at (912) 233-7722.



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FROM THE EDITOR

Missing No More. The remains of two 579th Sqdn airmen, MIA since 21 July 1944, have recently been identified. During the mission to Oberpfaffenhofen, 2/Lt Richard J. Carey's plane was shot down by fierce and persistent enemy fighter attacks. Waist gunner Sgt Charles R. Marshall and tail gunner Sgt Jerome E. Kiger went down with the ship. No remains were found and their names were engraved on the Wall of the Missing at Epinal American Cemetery in France.

In 2007, Markus M. Mooser discovered plane wreckage in a forest near his home in Starnberg, Germany. By the time he identified the plane as 2/Lt Carey's B-24, he had also found human remains. Markus located relatives of the two men and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command was notified. JPAC excavated the site, brought the remains back to their laboratory in Hawaii, and identified them. The men will be buried near their hometowns, Marshall in Ivel, Kentucky, on 8 June and Kiger in Mannington, West Virginia, on 21 July.

Markus says, "About 6 years ago I found the crash site and my research started. At the first moment I had that feeling that there is more than a lost war aircraft and at the end I am very happy that Jerome and Charles are back home with their families."

Folded Wings. The 392nd BGMA mourns the loss of Carroll Cheek, 578th Sqdn pilot, Director and Memorial Chairman, on May 27. He worked tirelessly to ensure that the 392nd BG's Memorial in Wendling will be maintained in perpetuity.

Follow-Up. 578th pilot Roland Sabourin writes, "In regard to the story *Bail Out and Barbed Wire* in the March newsletter, April 8, 1944 was our first mission and probably our worst for the amount of fighter attacks and flak that we encountered. We shot off a lot of ammo that day. The sky was black from the ack-ack. In arriving back at Wendling the holes were numerous. In addition, one of the fighters that I vividly remember was coming straight at us with his guns blazing away and went under us. Our crew chief, old M/Sgt Art Knipe (from my home town) came into the debriefing room with a 20mm shell that had penetrated the left wing boot and gone into a fuel cell without exploding. I told him to keep it—he found it. That was close."

New Book. At age 95, 579th airman John H. "Jack" Adams Jr. has just published *Lest We Forget: A Navigator's Tale*. Jack writes about his life-long fascination with aviation, flight training, anti-submarine patrols, transfer to the 392nd, becoming a POW on 13 Nov 1943, and his long time in captivity. The book includes many

drawings and writings Jack created while a POW. Copies are available at www.lulu.com and at the reunion.

Website Update. Webmaster Bob Books reports that as of mid-May, www.b24.net includes 2,532 aircrew names and photos and 3,018 support crew names with 1,295 photos. If a photo of you isn't posted, it means we don't have one. Send your pictures to me by email or postal mail; I'll scan and return them promptly. Identify everyone you can. Remember, *your* photos will help *us* perpetuate the legacy of you and your buddies.

New Name. The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is now the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. Research Center Director Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price says, "We changed the museum's name on March 20th to better emphasize the national and international significance of the 8th Air Force."

PX Update. 392nd BGMA white, short-sleeve polo shirts are again available, in sizes M, L, XL and 2XL. Cost is \$30 for US shipping—but only \$25 if you'll pick it up at the reunion!—or \$40 for overseas mailing. Complete your outfit with a khaki 392nd BGMA ball cap, perfect to wear year-round. Cost is \$25 for US mail or \$35 for international shipment.

PX Chairman Bill McCutcheon recently obtained more copies of Col Bob Vickers' definitive mission history of the 392nd BG, *The Liberators from Wendling*. Cost is \$50 (including US and international postage) or \$35 for pick-up at the reunion. Bob's second book, *The Men and Their Missions; Remembrance of the Missing*, is available under the same terms.

For all PX orders, send your check payable to 392nd BGMA to Annette Tison, 9107 Wood Pointe Way, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. Or, order on-line at <http://www.b24.net/sales/> by credit card or PayPal.



President's Message



The 392nd is blessed by having many Friends, some of whom are the Scotts in Beeston who lovingly take care of the Wendling Memorial; John Gilbert of Cawston who represents us not only at Wendling but in the entire Norwich-King's Lynn area; and M/Sgt Allen Holtman, USAF (ret) of St. Louis, who rain or shine decorates all 19 392nd graves at the Jefferson Barracks cemetery on Memorial Day.

In the early days of the 392BGMA we took pains to establish a relationship with the Beeston School. Toni Weed, whose first marriage's name was Robinson, was an English war bride and as such was just the person to take on this responsibility.

Toni made many personal contacts with the school and together with Beeston resident Wendy Carter and Diane Walthew, a member of the school faculty, worked out of system of student awards involving silver cups with connections to the 392nd.

We have received a recent e-mail from Mr. Chris Perry, Headteacher, of the school. He thanked us for our donations that have been used to bolster up their library. He also reported that in their library they have a memorial wall with plaques and pictures from the 392nd, together with our print of P-Bar.

"I hope that you are reassured that we are doing our best to keep alive the memory of those that helped us through what must have been some very dark years," Mr. Perry said.

In the past few days we have lost two stalwart members: Carroll Cheek, 578th pilot and the father of the Wendling Memorial; and Helen Dye, wife of past president Charles Dye.

Recently we heard a familiar voice when Norma Jean Kopecky called us. She is the widow of Raymond Kopecky, who with John Conrad, Harry Vasconcellos, and Charles Bader were our Mickey navigators. Norma Jean's brother is buried in one of the 19 Jefferson Barracks graves mentioned above.

We just heard that Martha Bambauer, widow of Gil Bambauer, 10 SCS, fell at her retirement home and broke her hip about two weeks ago. She has had a tough time of it, but is now out of the hospital and in a rehab facility.

Brothers and Sisters, we are melting away. Father Time has been touching the shoulders of our members at a regular pace. So Crusaders and 2nd Gens, get it together and make the formation at Savannah July 22-26.

I have a selfish reason for this urgent call: I wish to speak to each and every one of you before it's too late.

Blue Skies, Jim Goar

A HEROIC ENGINEER

On 23 June 1944, the 392nd BG bombed the German airfield and supply/maintenance depot at Laon/Athies, France. The next day, this press release was prepared:

A gasoline-drenched Liberator returned to its base in England last night, its crew members certain that they owe their lives to the heroic action of their engineer, S/Sgt Franklin R. Munden of Ratton, New Mexico. They told of meeting heavy flak on the bomb run which punctured one of the Lib's gas tanks and cut the hose on another. They also

described how a rudder cable severed by a piece of flak whipped out and caught a live frag bomb while it was being dropped during Bombs Away.

"The bomb was fused to go off on contact," explained pilot 2/Lt Robert R. Caldwell. "The frag was hanging in the slip stream with the bomb bay doors open. I was afraid that it would go off any minute by just hitting against the side of the aircraft. The bomb bay was filled with raw gas from the leaking tanks and the fumes were so strong that you couldn't see. I decided that we'd better get rid of that frag bomb if we ever expected to get back to England. So I sent the engineer, S/Sgt Munden, into the bomb bay to see what he could do."

"We were flying at 21,000 feet," 2/Lt Caldwell continues, "and it was 20 below zero. Without thinking of his own safety, S/Sgt Munden removed his electrically heated gloves, his parachute, and his Mae West life preserver. He entered the slippery cat walk with the bomb bay doors open beneath him. Blinded by the gas fumes, he returned to the flight deck and I gave him a pair of goggles. He went back to his job and finally succeeded in getting the frag loose and dropped it. He then used a .50 caliber shell to stop up the severed hose from which the gas was pouring. S/Sgt Munden was drenched with gasoline when he came back to the flight deck. His hands and arms were so badly frozen that he couldn't move them. I gave him a muff and he thawed them out as best he could."

The plane arrived over its home base with the hydraulic lines cut to pieces. When copilot 2/Lt Richard J. Harer couldn't get the nose wheel down, S/Sgt Munden went into action again. Though still suffering from red and blistered frostbitten arms, S/Sgt Munden cranked the wheel down manually, in spite of his painful injuries.

2/Lt Caldwell brought his crippled bomber in for a perfect landing, its crew members more convinced than ever in the invincibility of Liberators and heroic engineers named Munden.

Editor's note: Copilot Dick Harer confirms that S/Sgt Munden had to manually lower the nose wheel. He does not recall any problems with hung up bombs or any engine problems; his attention was on other matters.

Dick says, "Our ship was hit by flak and we lost both lateral and directional flight control, plus hydraulics. The manual pitch control provided by the elevator was still operational, so turning the autopilot on provided complete aircraft control (not to fly close formation, but adequate to return home).

"When we got back to our base, Caldwell flew the aircraft and I controlled the engines. On the final approach to landing, he would fly to the proper touchdown point. As he did so, I was either advancing or retarding the engine throttles to maintain the desired approach speed and constantly calling out our actual airspeed.

"We had a good landing. The B-24 had a one-time emergency pneumatic braking system for use when the hydraulic brakes were inoperative. It worked fine and we came to a stop at the end of the runway. But we had to clear the runway, and we did, even though we knew we would have NO brakes when we released them to clear the runway. When we turned onto the taxiway, we slowly drifted down off the taxiway and then shut down all four engines after we were clear. No further damage was done."

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setting sun in the evening, partly blinding the German flak gunners and minimizing flak risk to our planes. In any case, I said unequivocally [sic] and frankly, I would not agree to bombing on a course perpendicular to the St. Lo-Periers road that would bring the planes over our own troops on the bombing approach."

As described in the *Report*, 8AF thought its position was clear. "Ground force representatives favored an approach parallel to the St. Lo-Periers Road to nullify possible range errors [bomb impacts either before or past the target] but it was pointed out that deflection errors [bomb impacts to the left or right of the target] which could readily result in bombfalls within friendly lines would be highly probable on such an approach as the large force of bombers attempted to concentrate their attack on the one-mile front within the allotted period. Air force officers were firm in their belief that an approach from the north, perpendicular to the road and five-mile front of the target, had definite advantages. Approached in this manner, the St. Lo-Periers Road would afford an outstanding landmark on which to base accurate range sightings and deflection errors would be of no consequence. Furthermore, the bombers would be subjected to a minimum of interference from enemy ground defenses before bomb releases, reducing the hazard of bombs dropping from battle-damaged aircraft."

It was agreed that American artillery would be used to counter German flak. Although it was imperative that the target be properly marked, US artillery would not lay down colored smoke as "it was questionable whether such markers would be visible from bombing altitude" and there was even a risk "they might impair visibilities."

Other decisions made: 1) Ground and air forces would be ready by 21 July though ground forces would delay their

attack up to four days if "weather requirements for the air forces" dictated. 2) Exact day and time for the attack would be determined by the air forces. 3) Half the available fighter-bombers would start the attack, followed 15 minutes later by the heavy bombers. Thirty minutes after the heavies finished bombing, the medium bombers would commence; about 15 minutes after their bomb drop, the remaining fighter-bombers would attack. 4) Ground forces would begin their assault when the heavy bombers finished.

24 July 1944

Heavy rain delayed Operation Cobra for several days. Although the 24 July forecast was for 3/10 low cloud with very poor visibility, 8AF decided the tactical bombing could begin at 10am. Each of its three heavy bomb divisions was tasked to provide 500 a/c. Their objective was "the entire target area" but each unit in the formation was "given Aiming Points or sections to insure complete coverage."

2BD was to bomb first from 15,000 feet, followed five minutes later by 3BD at 15,000 feet, with 1BD finishing up from 16,000 feet. Bomb loads were 100 pound General Purpose/High Explosive (GP/HE) and 120 or 260 pound Fragmentation bombs.

Because of the anticipated cloud cover, 8AF asked that the target be marked with colored smoke. First US Army would therefore lay down red smoke markers "on the northern boundary of the target area at two-minute intervals from zero minus five minutes to zero plus 50 minutes at one-mile intervals. Bombardiers were cautioned that short bombfalls would endanger friendly troops."

Results

A total of 1,586 heavy bombers were dispatched. The 564 2BD ships met 10/10 cloud cover over the target and none attacked the primary. Some planes bombed a railroad

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392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please look at the mailing label. Your membership status is shown directly after your name. "13" means your membership expires in December 2013. LM means Life Member and FRND means that you receive the *News* with compliments of the 392nd BGMA. Send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Annette Tison, 9107 Wood Pointe Way, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. You may also join or renew on-line at <http://www.b24.net/392nd/join.htm>.

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

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

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intersection about 25 miles southwest of the assault area, two aircraft bombed targets of opportunity south of the primary area, and one B-24 released its bombs on allied Airstrip No. 5. (The *Report* says, "This accident was apparently caused by the bombardier striking the toggle switch in a reflex movement when a package of chaff dropped by another aircraft struck the nose turret.") The other planes brought back their bombs.

There were fewer clouds when 482 a/c from 3BD went over the target, but visibility was still "exceedingly poor." Only 35 ships attacked the primary target, even after three bombing runs to ensure it was positively identified. Their release times were thus later than those of the third force. Most 3BD planes returned without bombing.

Cloud conditions had improved by the time 1BD's 540 bombers reached the target area and 317 dropped over 2,800 bombs. Most fell beyond the target area. Unfortunately, 12 planes dropped 473 High Explosive bombs "within friendly lines approximately 2200 yards to the north of the northern boundary of the target."

In all, only 352 bombers actually attacked the primary target, with "a relatively small number...within the immediate confines of the target." While the last formation was still over the target, it was decided that the breakout by ground forces would have to be postponed until the next day.

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In *A War Remembered*, 579th navigator Manny Abrams writes, "On July 24th a 'maximum effort' (translation: as many airworthy B-24s as possible) was scheduled to drop a great tonnage of bombs into that fairly confined area of German resistance. I remember that we did reach the peninsula but we were recalled due to solid undercast. Although we frequently bombed through such a cloud cover, the possibility of any bombing error in close proximity to the Allied line prohibited such a gamble. American GIs were just too close to the target area. The risk was greater than the reward. All planes returned to bases without accomplishing the mission. It would have to wait until another day."

This was the first mission for 576th pilot Wildrick Hart and crew. Wil writes in *The War Years*, "Because of the need for accuracy, the lead ship was assigned 12,000 feet [bombing altitude] instead of the usual 20,000-22,000 feet. The [German] flak gunners got a break because it's a whole lot easier to hit an airplane at 2 miles up than it is at 4 miles up. However, we also got a break on this one. The 392nd was the first Group over the target and the flak guns didn't really get warmed up until the arrival of the Groups behind us."

"We carried a full load of 120-pound frag clusters. Takeoff and climb through the clouds to the assembly point was just like it went in the Link Trainer—strictly routine. When we arrived at the target, it was still covered 10/10 with clouds, so all 48 ships returned to base without releasing any bombs. This was the first time that I had landed a heavily loaded B-24, but everything went OK. At debriefing we were warned not to discuss the mission since, obviously, it would have to be repeated. There was some concern about whether or not we would be credited with a mission since we did not drop any bombs but it turned out that the

rule was—if you get shot at, it's a mission."

It was indeed a total effort for the 392nd which dispatched 48 planes, more than any other Group in the 2BD.

General Bradley's Reaction

"Owing to a mixup in the orders, the bad weather and human error," he wrote, "many bombs fell behind our own lines, killing 25 and wounding 131. One reason for the error was that the planes flew a course perpendicular to our lines rather than parallel to it as I had been assured they would. I have seldom been so angry. It was duplicity—a shocking breach of good faith... I launched an immediate investigation to find out why the airmen had bombed on a perpendicular course rather than a parallel one as promised. To my astonishment, the Air Force brass simply lied, claiming they had never agreed to bomb parallel to the road. Not only that, they put me over an impossible barrel. They would not mount a second attack except perpendicularly to the road. Fearing the Germans were onto us, I had no choice but to accept what the airmen offered and we reset the jump-off for the following day, July 25."

The Line of Attack

That evening, 8AF asked its three bomb divisions "whether the experience on this mission dictated a change in the direction of the bombing axis." Per the *Report*, there was "complete agreement" that the perpendicular approach to the Road was "the best direction of attack from the standpoint of safety to ground troops."

In his article, *The Ethics of Operation Cobra and the Normandy Breakout*, Army LtCol James Jay Carafano points out, "A parallel attack was no 'magic bullet' for solving the challenge of bombing in close proximity to ground troops. In fact, with the battlefield totally obscured by smoke, dust and fire there was no guarantee that a parallel approach would have been any more successful in preventing short bombings. In addition, even on a parallel course there was a risk of hitting American troops. If the bombers overshot or undershot the target area, bombs might have landed on U.S. forces holding positions either northeast or northwest of the target area. All the previous Allied experience in air-ground coordination suggested that a parallel approach was not a sufficient precaution to preclude a serious threat from short bombings."

Carafano writes that air commanders concluded "without clearly relaying their final decision to General Bradley" that the perpendicular course "would minimize the time aircraft would be over enemy lines, exposed to anti-aircraft fire. More important, the target box was narrower on the parallel axis. On a parallel approach fewer planes could fit over the target area. It was simple geometry. It would take much longer to complete the bombing on a parallel course. A parallel bombing run would be more like a shifting steady rain, rather than the single powerful strike General Bradley needed. To maximize shock affect and deliver the most bombs in the shortest time, the bombers needed to attack perpendicular to the target."

Carafano says, "Either someone lied or, if both sides are to be believed, each left the July 19 meeting believing exactly opposite thing[s]. Indeed, misperception on both parts may be the answer. The bulk of the evidence suggests that the

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confluence of mismatched personalities, the convoluted relationship between air and ground commanders and the lack of a sound doctrine created a situation in which, at the end of the day, commanders simply failed to understand what each other were doing.”

25 July 1944

8AF sent a teletype at 11:30pm on 24 July to all units who would fly the next day. It emphasized, “Bombardiers will use all available check points to locate targets and insure accuracy of bombers. Some casualties were reported today due to shortages caused by mechanical malfunctions and poor visibility. Formation commanders will endeavor to keep formations closed up and keep bombardier posted as to positions in order to ensure as much as possible that no bombs are dropped short.”

The weather was supposed to be good enough to bomb between 10 and 11am. Mission planners were at first concerned about expected five knot surface winds which might push smoke and dust from bomb bursts north, over the road landmark. The *Report* concluded, though, “that such a wind would have no significant effect.”

For the most part, all facets of the operation were the same as the previous day. However, it was decided that 2BD would send out a weather reconnaissance a/c to report conditions at the target. The air commander would radio 8AF at least two hours before the earliest time-over-target (10am) to recommend whether the mission should proceed, be delayed or be cancelled.

As planes from 2BD (the lead section) were assembling, the weather aircraft radioed that the target was clear for bombing but a middle cloud layer from 14,000 feet up was predicted. Bombers were therefore directed to descend as low as 10,000 feet, if necessary, for bombing. Since the briefed attack altitude was 15-16,000 feet, bombardiers had to recalculate bombsight data while airborne.

The middle cloud layer forced 2BD Libs to bomb between 11,200 and 13,000 feet. Most (539 a/c) dropped at the primary target area, about 733 tons in all. Unfortunately, “there were a number of instances of short bombing. In two cases, units dropped 2800-3000 yards short of the target, well within the lines of friendly troops who had withdrawn 1500 yards... In addition to these gross errors, there were 11 tactical units whose bomb pattern fell in the ‘clear’ area between the north boundary of the target and the line behind which friendly troops were withdrawn.”

While the short bombings were due to bombardier error, the other mistakes were caused by “restricted visibilities due to smoke and haze, the constant lowering of altitude due to middle cloud encountered... and an apparent confusion of red smoke signals with shell bursts and muzzle flashes.”

The second formation (367 B-17s and 108 B-24s from 3BD) generally dropped their bombs between 11,350 and 14,000 feet. Some bombs also fell within friendly lines. The *Report* notes, “These errors were attributed to failure to make positive identification of Aiming Points in the restricted visibilities caused by haze and smoke of previous bursts, the rapid loss of altitude to avoid cloud which caused unit formations to lengthen considerably, and maneuvering to avoid prop wash of preceding units.”

As 1BD ships neared the target, it was difficult to positively identify the aiming points; five units elected not to bomb. However, 481 B-17s did, generally from 11,000 to 13,700 feet. Although a few bombs hit slightly north of the northern boundary, about half of their bombs fell to the south of the target area. Congestion in the air and “identification difficulties” were the cause.

“In summary,” 8AF stated, “1495 bombers attacked the primary target, dropping 2059.7 tons [HE] and 1346.1 tons Fragmentation. The bombing pattern achieved in this operation was on the whole well concentrated and a high degree of saturation was attained within the target area.”

Four B-24s and one B-17 were lost, all due to flak. Two bombers had to be salvaged after take-off or landing accidents and 62 other bombers were battle damaged, 59 by flak.

2nd Bomb Division

2BD sent up 554 aircraft specifically targeted at La Chapellesen Jugar [La Chapelle-en-Jugar], Montrieul [likely Montreuil-sur-Lozon], and Hebecrevon. These objectives were less than four miles apart.

At least one Group in each Wing was loaded with Fragmentation bombs; the others carried General Purpose/ High Explosive bombs.

Per 2BD's *Tactical Report of Mission*, “Three assigned areas were visually attacked with good results by forty-five Squadrons. Two Squadrons bombed short, one due to faulty operation of the bombsight and the other due to a mistaken belief that the target had been positively identified... Moderate and accurate predictor control fire was encountered by all Groups approximately one minute after bombs were released. No AA fire was encountered during the bombing runs... Fighter support was good throughout the mission.”

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At the main briefing, crews were told their target was German troop concentrations west of St. Lo only 1,500 yards south of US troops. A top altitude of 15,000 feet was ordered with bombs set to impact 200 feet apart. Crews were admonished, “Don't bomb short” as bombs released too soon would fall on US soldiers. The 14th CW would lead the 2BD with the 44th at the head of the Wing, the 492nd echeloned left and the 392nd echeloned left and low of the 492nd.

The 392nd again launched 48 planes, exceeded in the 2BD only by the 453rd BG with 51 and the 446th with 49.

All 392nd ships were airborne between 0621 and 0701 hours. This time, Manny recalls, “The day was sparkling sunshine, not a cloud in the sky.” For his crew, the mission was “a true ‘milk run’—no flak and no enemy fighters; not much danger.” He remembers, “The target was a few square miles of Norman hedgerow country. The boundary was marked by white sheets laid out in a line. South—the target, north, the Allies.”

In *From Plowboy to Flyboy*, 576th pilot Don Scharf writes, “Even though this was our fifth mission, I don't think any of us knew what was going on. The danger of all of this hadn't begun to sink in yet. The fragmentation bombs we were carrying were particularly nasty things, like huge hand grenades. My most vivid memory of this mission was

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when, just after the bombs had left the planes, I saw some of them bump together and explode in a vicious flash of flame. Not one bit healthy!"

Wil says, "This time the weather was good and everything went off as planned. Over the target I glanced at the altimeter and found us at 10,000 feet because of our low, low left position in the formation. Flak was more intense than yesterday. Apparently some mobile flak guns had moved in overnight. We dropped our 120-pound frags in what was reported to be an excellent pattern."

1/Lt Dewey Gann's Crew

579th gunner Marvin Graham's plane was likely hit by those extra flak guns. Usually the ball turret gunner for pilot 1/Lt Gordon Hammond, he had missed a few missions while recovering from an appendectomy. Most of his crew had already completed their combat tours and gone home. On 25 July, Marvin was flying his last mission, with Gann's crew.

"We went in a low-enough altitude that the Germans could shoot rifles, small arms, and machine guns at us," Marvin says. "We were shot at like we were on a target range." At some point, radio operator T/Sgt John T. Carroll was wounded.

As waist gunner, Marvin was supposed to toss out handfuls of chaff to mislead German flak radar. Faced with this fierce enemy opposition, he expedited the process by picking up the entire box of chaff and throwing it out the window. Judging by the previous day's incident, he was not the only waist gunner to use this technique!

"We were only moments over the German lines but in that short time the Germans shot the whole damn airplane full of holes," Marvin recalls. 1/Lt William A. Stroble, 578th, got a signal from Gann that his controls and hydraulics were shot out and the C-5 (autopilot) was "going bad." 576th pilot 1/Lt Harold F. Johnston reported that Gann had called him on VHF at 1032 hours saying he might have to ditch and had already contacted air sea rescue in case he couldn't make it back to England.

Marvin thought of bailing out over the English Channel. However, when he started putting on his chute, the other men assured him that Gann would get them back home.

Their confidence was well-founded. Gann nursed the crippled plane over the Channel and made an uneventful landing (one of the smoothest Marvin had ever had) at Tangmere, Sussex. A British military ambulance greeted them on the airstrip with a couple shots of scotch.

The 392nd dispatched a plane to pick them up. Aboard was radio operator T/Sgt William Sullivan, the only man in Marvin's original crew still at Wendling. He "started counting the holes," Marvin says, "but gave up at 300."

Interrogation

392nd crews thought their bombing results were good. 576th pilot 1/Lt Robert C. Martin Jr. said his bombs "hit a dump of some kind" and there was a "big explosion" in the target area. 2/Lt Evan L. Williams, also 576, said a few of his bombs "landed among some artillery guns" and the bombing pattern "looked excellent."

Something unusual was reported by 577th pilot 2/Lt John C. Daley. "Single B-17s were in target area with no markings or identification tacking on to various formations. Stayed

with formation for a few minutes and then left formation."

Proof that Gann's crew wasn't the only one to have a rough time, 1/Lt Hubert L. McMillan, 579th, commented, "Navigator wants more flak suits."

Results

In its Telephone Flash Report, the 392nd said it dropped 762 fragmentation bombs (260 pounds each) and 960 120-pound frag clusters on target. Nine a/c had minor battle damage and one [Gann's] would likely have to be salvaged.

The 14CW's *Bombing Analysis* report said the 392nd's 1st squadron "laid down a good pattern 700 yards from center of their assigned area," the 2nd "laid down a good pattern 1500 yards north east of center of their area," and "the 4th squadron laid down a good pattern 1500 yards east of center of area and exactly on the edge of the area."

The 3rd squadron (high right) hit the wrong area but was still within the target zone. (The 392nd later noted that it was "impossible to pick up target until too late to make run in [A, the assigned] area. Lead bombardier oriented himself over eastern part of area B and over C and bombed these areas with [strike photos] showing excellent results.")

A few days later, the 14th CW and 392nd BG received a teletype stating, "Check of strike photos show that low left squadron of 392nd Bomb Group bombs are 500 meters short of bomb line. Interrogation of lead bombardier of that section reveals that constant lowering of altitude because of middle cloud and haze conditions and smoke of previous Group's bombing left lead bombardier with approximately 50 seconds bomb run." Thankfully, these bombs should have been well within the "safe zone" between the target and US troops.

In its *INTOPS SUMMARY* No. 86, 8AF reported, "The major weight of the attack fell within the target area. Assigned area well covered except for SW corner. A number of patterns noted 'over' the target area to the south. Patterns from approximately eight groups fell 'short' north of the target area."

First US Army

After finishing his combat tour, Wil was stationed at a Troop Carrier base. There, he spoke with an officer in the First Army who was in the front lines during the bomb drop on July 25. He told Wil that it was a sight to see. The area was simply saturated with exploding bombs and the ground heaved and boiled as in an earthquake. Even so, there was still plenty of German resistance when US soldiers moved forward.

Bradley writes that on 25 July, "The planes came on schedule: 1,500 heavy bombers, 380 medium bombers and 550 fighter-bombers. In total, these 2,430 aircraft, flying perpendicular to the target, dropped some 4,000 tons of bombs and napalm... To our horror, reports of 'shorts' immediately flooded into my [Command Post].... the final toll was shocking and ghastly: 111 dead, 490 wounded. Among the dead was [Lt. Gen.] Lesley McNair, who had been observing in the front lines..."

McNair was the highest ranking American officer killed in the European Theater of Operations.

Nonetheless, VII Corps rallied and charged ahead. Initial German opposition was "heavy" but proved to be "the valiant and instinctive reaction of a few tough Germans." In fact,

See ST. LO on page 8

ST. LO from page 7

Bradley says, "The bombing had done far more damage [to the Germans] than we could possibly imagine. Official Army historian Martin Blumenson wrote: 'Bombs buried men and equipment, overturned tanks, cut telephone wires, broke radio antennas, sent messengers fleeing for foxholes or the nearest crater. Communications with forward echelons were completely disrupted. The bombardment transformed the main line of resistance ... into a frightening landscape of the moon... No less than a thousand men must have perished in the Cobra bombardment. About one-third of the total number of combat effectives ... were probably killed or wounded, the survivors dazed. Perhaps only a dozen tanks or tank destroyers remained in operation. Three battalion command posts of Panzer Lehr were demolished. The attached parachute regiment virtually vanished. Only local and feeble resistance was possible against attacking American infantrymen.'"

Bradley concludes, "Slowly it came to me that Cobra had not failed. It had succeeded; we had broken through." It was "a total and smashing breakin, breakthrough and breakout, a major turning point in the war. Seven agonizing weeks had passed since D-day. All that time, the terrain, the weather and the tenacious German troops had kept us bottled up in the Cotentin Peninsula. But now at last we were moving out at breathtaking speed. One phase of the war on the Continent had ended, another had begun."

US Casualties

Although it is easy to blame US deaths solely on the direction of the air attack (as General Bradley did), there are other factors as well.

General Bradley did not want to cede hard-won ground to the enemy nor give them time to regroup as his troops charged over land they had previously held. Therefore, he proposed a "safety zone" of just 800 yards. The air force—which surely knew more about aerial bombardment than he did—countered with 3,000 yards, noting that "even this distance would not eliminate the possibility of gross bombing errors."

In 1996, 578th pilot Col Bob Vickers thoroughly reviewed a Bomb Fall Plot charted by 8AF to show the impact sites of each Group's bombs. His analysis reveals that of the 15 worst instances of short bombings, only three (by two B-17 and one B-24 group—not the 392nd BG) were 1,500 yards or more from the target area. Had the separation distance originally proposed by 8AF been adopted, US casualties would have been lower.

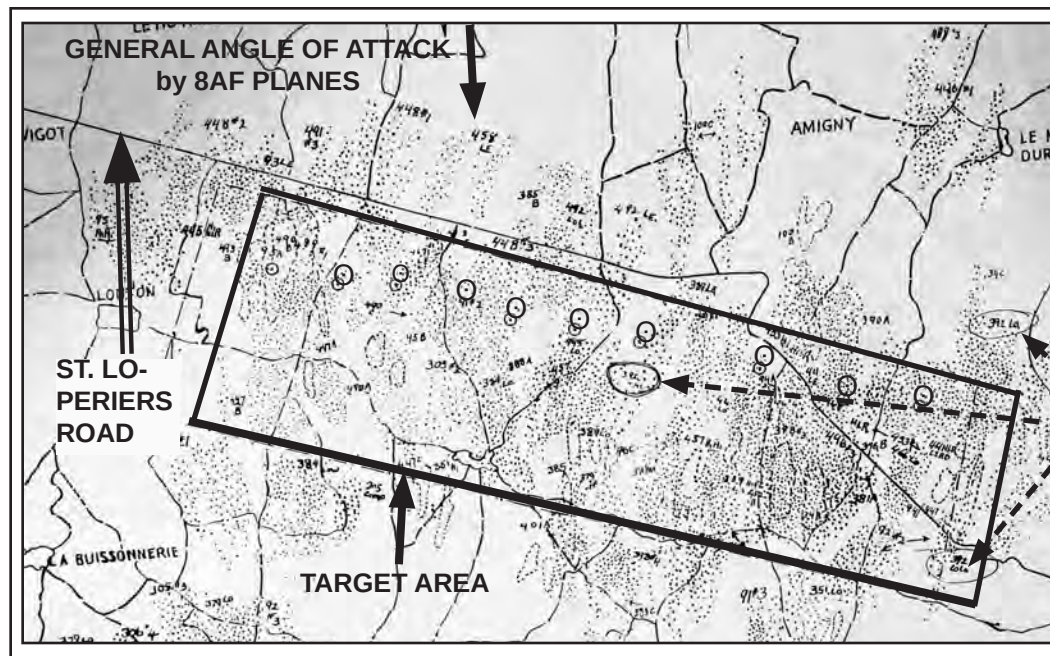
Carafano notes that Army "commanders hadn't ensured that the ground troops were adequately prepared. Even though troops were supposed to withdraw 1,200 [sic] yards from the no bomb line, some units were positioned as close as 800 yards or less. Others pulled back shortly before the air strike, but were not told to dig-in." Even after the casualties on 24 July, "Neither the First U.S. Army nor the VII Corps ordered additional precautions on July 25 or warned units that heavy bombers were flying a perpendicular route and that there was an increased likelihood of short bombings. In fact, the VII Corps issued a message on July 25 at 1:55am reassuring commanders that there would be no bombings north of the road."

Carafano also points out, "The smoke markings actually worsened the situation. When the corps artillery fired red smoke to mark the no bomb line, the smoke clouds drifted north obscuring the line. After the first bombs hit the targets, dust from the explosions mixed with the smoke, further exacerbating the problem.... In fact, all the marking and coordination techniques ... were inadequate..."

In Conclusion

On 24 and 25 July 1944, 1,990 8AF bombers dropped over 4,340 tons of bombs on targets very close to American troops. Regrettably, 136 soldiers were killed and about 620 wounded, yet tens of thousands of US soldiers massed for the breakout were unhurt. The aerial bombardment directly contributed to the breakout at St. Lo. The Army Air Corps had done its job and done it well, under very difficult conditions.

Editor's note: LtCol Carafano's article is available at <http://isme.tamu.edu/JSCOPE00/Carafano00.html>.



This 8AF Bomb Fall Plot shows where its bombs impacted on 25 July 1944. It was provided by Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price from the Allen Blue Collection at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

Impacts sites of GP/HE bombs are shown by dots; frags are marked by circles.

Location of 392nd BG fragmentation bombs. Those near the center were dropped by the high section, on top right by the low section, and bottom right by the low, low section.

○ = assigned Mean Points of Impact for 8AF Groups

Bikes and Pubs

Editor's Note: What follows are anecdotes about bicycles and pubs, and the potential dangers of mixing the two.

The 200th Mission Parties

"One Man's Shining Hour," by **Lawrence G. Gilbert** (reprinted from the November 2001 News). The momentous occasion was the 200th mission celebration [on 8 Dec 1944] when our Group was stood down from combat operations to mark the event. Among the various activities scheduled for the day was a bicycle race around the perimeter/taxiway surrounding the flying field, a distance of about three miles.

Risking ridicule from all quarters, I decided the night before to join the field of racers, hoping to last perhaps half way around the course. To insure I would make it even that far, I enlisted the help of Harold Bandelier, the CO's driver, in a scheme that probably wouldn't fly with the umpire's board of review in any event. Bandelier would obtain a 6x6 truck, loiter at the far side of the field, then when the cyclists came by, pull out and join the column. I would fall in behind the truck and draft in the quieter air, Daytona style.

When Bandy appeared on schedule at the rendezvous point, I had advanced from tail-end Charlie of the group of twenty or so, to fifth or sixth place. I started suffering delusions that maybe I had a faint chance to win, place or show. I waved Bandy off to avoid any possible protests being filed with the grievance committee. End of story, almost...I finally overtook the leader, a young, lean, lithe Lieutenant, the armament officer of one of the squadrons, and won by several meters. First prize was two choice bottles of Scotch which I shared with my cheering section at the club that evening.

The rest of the story (from the 577th Sqdn History): "On Dec. 8th the Officers had their 200th mission party; it was

quite similar to the enlisted men's. They also had a bicycle race, our star entrant being [1/Lt Robert C. Turner, 577th Sqdn Technical Supply Officer]. Unfortunately, LtCol Gilbert was a little too fast and Turner came in second. As the bottle of Scotch went to the first place winner the squadron received no consolation from second place."

The Enlisted Men's party on 2 Dec 1944 had also included a bicycle race. "The Squadron had their money on M/Sgt Vergil Pierce to win the race but he had a flat tire about half way around the field. Sabotage is strongly suspected."

579th Sqdn CO Myron Keilman, "I Remember: Going Pubbing" from the March 1982 issue of the *Second Air Division Association Journal*: The English Public Place or Pub has always been the community meeting place of the local gentry. During the years of the Big War our Americans of the Army Air Forces in England learned to know and appreciate English hospitality and kindredship through the pub, whether it was on R&R (rest and recuperation) leave in London, King's Lynn, Edinburgh, etc, etc or in the local communities adjacent to our many air bases.

Pubs are known for their unique names like Lady Guinevere, The White Horse, The Red Rooster, The White Swan, the Plough Share, The Ox Head, and The Red Lion. Now the beer as I remember it, came by the names of stout, mild and bitter, half and half, and nut brown ale. It was served from casks at room temperature. Some of us never developed a taste for it. To say the least, none of it resembled our US of A brands of cold lager, pilsner or bach.

The pubs, depending upon rationed availability, also featured light war-time snacks of sandwiches or fish and chips. The always prominent and well-worn dart board was available for fun and games; the loser bought the beer. The darts were obtained from the innkeeper for a threepence or so.

Of course, the beer was rationed; thus, the pubs closed down at 10pm to conserve beer, electricity, and coke for heating. At closing time—regardless of the activities—the pub keeper would call, "It's time, gentlemen, it's time." With that, everyone "bottomed up," sang "Knees Up, Mother Brown" and filed out.

The most popular "pubbing missions" for our 392nd BG people were the twice-a-week Liberty Runs to King's Lynn.

See BIKES on page 10



The enlisted men's bicycle race on 2 Dec 1944.

FOLDED WINGS REPORT

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

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

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A convoy of four or five 2½ ton trucks with about thirty men each left the base at 6 o'clock in the evening, drove the 20 miles and returned at eleven. Of course, aside from the pubs, the men took advantage of the cinema and the Red Cross canteen with its vaudeville acts, music and dancing.

Some of our combat crews, and two in particular, took advantage of the pubbing opportunities at the crossroad pubs and small communities within a ten mile radius of our Wendling Air Station. If there ever was an art to this business of pubbing, pilots Charlie Neundorf and Eddie White could be classified as artists. From the time these two arrived in England (just in time to fly their first combat missions on D-Day, 6 June 1944) until Eddie completed his last mission on 23 March 1945, they studied, practiced and competed in the ancient art of pubbing.

They and their officer crewmen shared the same Nissen hut. After supper, a watchful eye was kept open for Sgt Sammy Vivian to post the next day's combat alert schedule. They kept their bicycles oiled and tires pumped up so there would be no delay or friction once the war-time demand for their services was not a detriment to their adventures.

Occasions of special celebration, such as the return from an especially tough mission or even a birthday, would trigger both crews to sally forth on their bikes to one or more of their favorite pubs. Can you imagine a gaggle of

reached their primary objective, their pedals fairly flew. They never just "took it easy." It was "full-bore" whether it was daylight or pitch dark, or icy roads with each wheel in separate ruts. They didn't pay any attention to their invited guests—me included. When on their bikes, they raced.

Charlie says that Eddie was a bit devilish. He would try to cut ahead on the turns in the road, but Charlie got even by sliding his bike sideways ahead of Eddie as they arrived back at their Nissen hut and Eddie hit the fence. Devilish?

The White Swan [at Gressenhall] was three miles from Wendling at a crossroad. It was Charlie and Eddie's favorite pub. Mr. Smith and wife were the pub keepers, assisted by son Jeffrey and daughters Vera and Sally. Elderly farmers in the parish were their patrons and came to socialize and play darts. It was here that they took their squadron commander pubbing; it was here that they celebrated the low level re-supply mission to Arnhem (when Charlie led the squadron); it was here they celebrated the hellish mission to Munster and Eddie's near fatal ditching; then Charlie's thirtieth and last mission; and finally Eddie's.

After this evening of hilarity, dart contests and good fellowship, Mr. Smith called his usual, "It's time, gentlemen, it's time." Everyone drank up and sang "Knees up, Mother Brown;" then he brought forth his cache of old Scotch whiskey and shared some with our great pubbers. Both Charlie and Eddie were really happy and carefree, but when back on their bicycles, it was business as usual—racing.

At eleven o'clock at night (even during the March equinox) it is very dark. On the down side of the first hill from the pub, Charlie sensed that Eddie was no longer with him. He stopped peddling and held his breath. There was just the sound of scraping and skidding of a bicycle on the macadam. Braking to a stop and groping his way back up the road, he found Eddie recovering from a headlong spill. The rest of the way home was sober and painful. To this day, Eddie wears the cheekbone scars."

A Pubbing Mission. Anthony Ferdinando, tail gunner on the 576th DePalma crew, says, "A crew member of ours decided that he was going into Wendling to visit a pub, the Plough Share, as I recall. He had used his bicycle as transportation. Later, on his way back to the base he noticed a couple of small lights coming his way. Thinking that they were two bicycles, he decided to go between them. To his chagrin,

it was a jeep with just black-out lights on. His stop was very sudden, to say the least. He had to push the bike back to the base."

In *Above the Clouds at 30 Below*, 578th waist gunner Robert J. Longo writes, "After getting 'tanked up' at the pubs we would be in good spirits riding back to the base. Those English bikes would never steer in a straight line."

From Memories of Twining's Crew: 578/9 engineer Frank Hostetter and gunner Roy Grimm went to the hospital to visit tail gunner John Largen, who had been wounded by flak during the mission to Misberg on 4 Nov 1944. "He was

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1825th Ordnance Co. men in front of The White Swan pub at Gressenhall, about two miles from the base: PFC Edgar J. Lucas, Quartermaster Supply Technician; T/Sgt Dick N. Keathley, Ammunition Section Chief; T/5 Francis J. Herman, Munitions Worker; 1/Sgt Vernon L. Olson; Sgt Charles A. Kalschultz, Ordnance Section Crew Chief; and T/4 William J. Tackorius, Munitions Worker. The name of the lad is not known.

eighteen bike riders charging down those narrow Norfolk roads, in daylight or dark? What a panic it would be when they stormed through the blackout curtain into the dimly lit hallows of an unsuspecting pub!

No, I can assure you it was not like a Hell's Angels act—it was more like a Wild West scenario where the cowboys came to town after months on the trail and stormed the Longhorn Saloon. Nevertheless, these Yanks were totally accepted and—I dare say—appreciated.

Charlie and Eddie were great competitors. Each thought he could ride his bike faster and further than the other. From the time they checked out through the guard gate until they

BIKES from page 10

telling us about the people in the ward and one comment was that about half of the patients were there as a result of bicycle accidents. Some had crashed while flying formation on bicycles going back to the barracks after a night of pubbing. Others had just gotten under the weather and run into ditches or something and ended up in the hospital."

Frank recalls, "One snowy night, navigator Leonard Bertoli



An orderly checks that these bikes were properly registered with the Provost's office; he also looks for "lost" bikes.

came to our barracks with a small keg of beer which he had 'borrowed' from the Officer's Club. He had carried this keg through the snow on the handlebar of his bicycle and how he managed to get to our barracks is a mystery. We all helped dispose of the contents. The next day Bertoli had a change of heart and paid for the beer."

Jack C. Adamson's Story. Jack was bombardier on the Demers crew, 576th. "One afternoon, after leaving the Officers Club, I hopped on my bike and headed for the 576th squadron living area. If my memory serves me correctly, this route took me directly past the bus stop on the corner of the street a short distance from the club. As I neared the area I recognized a friend of mine waiting, with numerous other personnel, for the local to Wendling. I yelled to him to pick up a certain item for me at one of the local shops and while engrossed in this running conversation, I turned right at the corner onto my street, but inadvertently crossed from the left lane to the right lane. The next thing I knew, I was ass over tin cup, up in the air, down on the ground, entangled in my bike, someone else's bike, someone else's arms and legs.

"Slowly I opened one eye and the first thing I saw were railroad tracks; not the kind that trains run on, but the kind on an officer's tunic. Being a lowly 2nd Lt., I realized a hasty retreat from this combat engagement was my only salvation. I asked him if he was injured and the reply I received was a cross between the roar of a B-24 taking off and a .50 caliber machine gun running wild. Needless to say, I picked up the bike and took off amid roars of laughter from the bystanders.

"The next day, I found my victim to be one Capt Charles Neff, Flight Commander, 576th Squadron. You might say I avoided said Captain like the plague for the rest of my stay at the 392nd BG."

578th history for October 1944: "Bicycle difficulties are

not news in the ETO, but the mishaps of Sergeants George W. Kent and Robert C. McAleer during the past month were unusual. Riding back to the Squadron area from the line, Sgt Kent hit a hole in the road. The bicycle split, or broke, right in two, with Kent vainly trying to hang on to both halves, like a man with one foot on shore and the other in a rowboat moving slowly out to sea. A little later Sgt McAleer left the orderly room and leaped on his bike with a flying start. The movement was grace itself, but the results were novel. The front wheel took off from the frame, or vice versa. McAleer was left with a rear wheel, handle bars and a front wheel fork. No serious injuries in either case."

577th Executive Officer Maj Bob Lane. Not all bike accidents resulted in an amusing story. One evening in October 1943, then 1/Lt Lane was returning to the base when all the lights suddenly went out. He crashed into the side of what might have been a bunker. He landed in the rocky soil and wasn't found until early morning. He was transported to the nearest medical facility with a concussion, separated shoulder and missing teeth; he also needed surgery to repair his upper lip.

John Gilbert, the 392nd's Director in England, says that with so many pubs so close together, airmen sometimes forgot where they left their bikes. They would then either walk back to the base or "borrow" someone else's bicycle. A thriving local business in recovering "lost" American bicycles soon developed. The bikes were generally "found" very quickly after notice of a reward (a pint or two of beer) was posted in the pubs.



Top photo: These 579th Sqdn airmen from Capt Harrison Cassell's crew form Squadrons 1 and 2 of "The Pub Finders." They are likely on their way to a suitable target. Bottom photo: Mission accomplished! Bombsight mechanics (L-R) S/Sgt George Pearson, S/Sgt Bart Harris and Sgt Lynd Tillyer at The Good Woman pub in Necton, about six miles from Station 118.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Tom Perry, 576th Sqdn Armorer

I have been thinking about life and death because more and more of us have been reported to have folded their wings. Here are some verses from The Bible that are both reassuring and comforting to me as I am approaching that day. I want to share them with you who are survivors:

John 14:6. Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me."

Matthew 11:28. "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

John 11:25-26. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

Ephesians 2:8-9. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

John 6:47. Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life."

1st John 5:13. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."



**THE 392ND MEMORIAL
AT WENDLING**

But we...shall be remember'd;



**We few, we happy few,
we band of brothers.**



**For he to-day that sheds
his blood with me
Shall be my brother...**

William Shakespeare
Henry V

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

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Almighty God, Who has blessed us with the will and courage to do our duty, we praise You for our comrades whose death kept freedom living. We praise You also for giving us the years we have lived since their departure. We pray that You will strengthen and sustain our devotion to truth and justice, so that we may be faithful beneficiaries of their sacrifice. Continue Your mercy to our comrades; keep them in Your care; and bring us all at last into Your presence there to rejoice Eternally. Amen. — Composed by 576th pilot the late Very Reverend Robert C. Martin, former Dean of the Cathedral at Erie, Pennsylvania.

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

Eugene Gorman, 577, February 15, 2013
Louis M. Stephens, 578, March 31, 2013
John M. Bender, 577, February 25, 2013
Mathew J. Ansbro, 578, April 13, 2013
George E. Pearson, 465th Sub Depot, March 18, 2013
Peter S. Baxter Jr., 579, September 2, 2012
Lawrence C. Hildebrand, 576, May 1, 2013
John A. Kamacho, 576, July 8, 2012
Robert C. Lory, 579, April 18, 2013
Christino M. Marquez, 1825th Ordnance, February 16, 2010
Lonard E. Neel, 578, April 1, 2013
William J. Scott Sr., 577, April 7, 2010
Carroll W. Cheek, 578, May 27, 2013
Helen Dye, spouse of Charles,
1825th Ordnance Co., June 6, 2013