



The Battle of the Atlantic

Readers might wonder why an article about WWII anti-submarine warfare (ASW) in the Atlantic Ocean is featured so prominently in a newsletter about a B-24 bombardment group stationed in England.

The first reason is that ASW is a relatively unknown part of Army Air Force (AAF) history. The second is that many future 392nd airmen “got their start” flying ASW patrols and one was even part of a historic first.

This article can only give highlights of ASW efforts in the Atlantic. For more information, see *The Role of the Army Air Corps in Antisubmarine Warfare in World War II* by Maj Manuel T. Torres at <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a157118.pdf> and *Mastering the Patrol: a Look at the Importance of Training For American Pilots in the Battle of the Atlantic* by Ethan M. Feinstein (at <https://openworks.wooster.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://en.wikipedia.org/&httpsredir=1&article=4796&context=independentstudy>). Links to many more sources are also throughout this article.

The USA, Pre-War

Maj Torres notes that America’s “demobilization and isolationist policy” after WWI led to its “almost complete state of unreadiness” prior to WWII. This is “best illustrated,” he writes, “by the lack of naval planning against submarine warfare. From the beginning, the Navy and Army disagreed on the control and use of aircraft. The Navy believed they should operate and control all aircraft operating over the seas; the Army believed it should command and control all aircraft that were land-based, regardless of their operating area. Since both services wanted aircraft, Congress feared a duplication of installations and equipment. To avoid a confrontation, in its Army Appropriations Act of 1920, Congress gave land-based aviation to the Army and sea-based aviation responsibility to the Navy.”

Not addressed was which service was in charge when they operated together. Their 1935 Joint Action Plan

clarified that “the Navy was responsible for all inland and offshore patrols to protect shipping and defend the coastal frontiers; likewise, the Army was held responsible for defense of the coastline... Additionally, the plan allowed for aircraft from either service to support the other service in case of an emergency.”

Britain

Between September 1939 and March 1941 (while the US Navy and Army were still “discussing” the issue), German submarines (U-Boats) relentlessly and successfully attacked merchant shipping to the British Isles.

Britain’s existence depended on its lifeline of food, supplies and essential war materials from around the world. Their loss could badly impede Britain’s ability to fight for its survival.

In early March 1941, a Directive by the Minister of Defence stated bluntly, “We must take the offensive against the U-boat ... wherever we can and whenever we can. The U-boat at sea must be hunted, the U-boat in the building yard or dock must be bombed.”

By the time the US entered the war, RAF’s Coastal Command and small antisubmarine craft had essentially driven U-Boats from the western approaches to Britain.

The Battle of the Atlantic

This ocean battle (waged continually between 1939 and the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945) is often overshadowed by WWII’s land battles in Europe. But, Feinstein explains, it “influenced future operations.... For the Allies, safety in the Atlantic permitted European operations. The Allies needed to transport equipment and soldiers to open a new front in Europe. The Axis powers saw the Atlantic as a way to tie down Allied resources and to prevent a European invasion. The Battle of the Atlantic represented a first line of defense in the war. Whoever controlled the Atlantic had the ability to coordinate more devastating attacks on the other. Thus, the victor in World War II needed to win the

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U-48 was a very successful German U-Boat. In 13 patrols between August 1939 and June 1941 (325 days at sea), it sank 51 ships (306,874 tons) and damaged 3 more (20,480 tons). Photo from <https://uboat.net/boats/u48.htm>.



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FROM THE EDITOR

Short Snorters. During the April Zoom conversation, we briefly discussed *short snorters*. The WWII short snorter was a bank note (or several taped together) that was signed by members of a military unit (i.e., an aircrew) or people the holder met during military service. While it was a wonderful souvenir, the tradition was that if you signed a short snorter and the owner could not produce it when you asked, they owed you a dollar or a drink (but just a *short snort* to minimize the amount of alcohol!).

After the meeting, I looked through my files for an example of a short snorter. The one shown on the right was owned by waist gunner S/Sgt Herman Breithaupt and signed (in descending order) by his aircrew: gunners S/Sgt Donald S. Coday, S/Sgt Dominick R. Adago, Breithaupt, radio operator T/Sgt Ernest C. Betterley, gunner S/Sgt John H. Blekkenk, engineer T/Sgt Robert W. Gerrard, copilot 2/Lt Rolland Grisell, pilot 1/Lt Hubert "Fred" Morefield, and navigator 2/Lt Kenneth S. Kaufman. Only bombardier 2/Lt Ferdinand F. Kuttner's signature is missing.

It was returned to S/Sgt Breithaupt's mother after his death on 9 Apr 1944. On that day, formation assembly for a mission to Tutow, Germany, was done using instruments due to very poor weather conditions. While just 13 miles from Beeston and at about 7,000 feet, Morefield's B-24 (#41-29485) and one from the 389th BG collided.

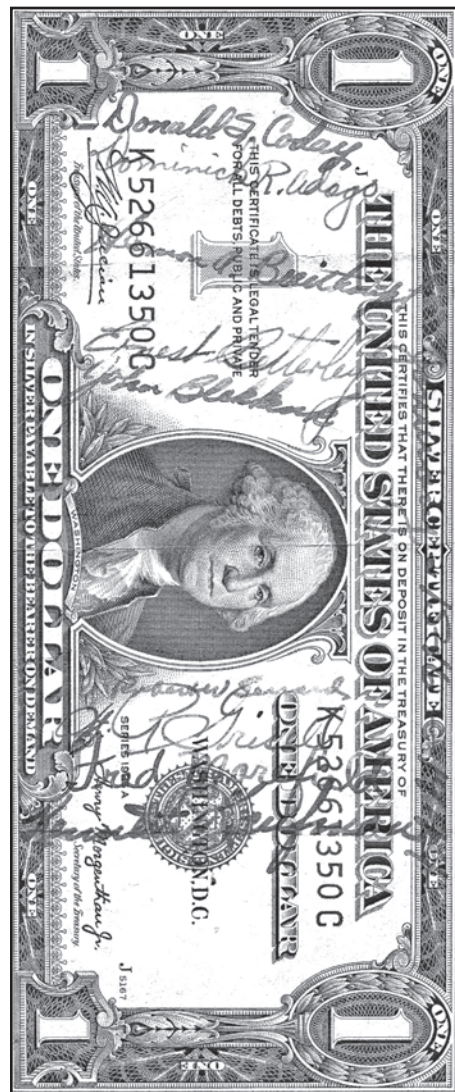
In the 392nd a/c, eight men, including Breithaupt, were killed. Morefield could not remember whether he was thrown from the plane or bailed out, but he had only minor injuries. There is conflicting information about what happened to 2/Lt Kaufman. At the scene, he was initially diagnosed with compound fractures of both legs. When Morefield visited him in the hospital, though, he found that one (or both) of Kaufman's legs had been amputated, perhaps because they had been hit by a propeller.

Nine of the eleven men in the 389th BG a/c were killed.

In 2013, Herman's nephew, 392nd BGMA member John G. Breithaupt, shared the short snorter, Herman's journal, and photos of Herman with me. I contacted John recently and asked if he could find any details about the short snorter.

After looking through his uncle's letters home, John thinks that Herman's mother Ida sent him the bill, almost certainly after his arrival in England. In a letter dated 2 Apr 1944, Herman wrote her, "I have received [the two one dollar bills]... I have one of them with our crew's signatures on it, and the other one I gave to our pilot because he didn't have any American money."

John says, "I have been reliving a lot of different feelings and memories while re-researching this family history. My father, Herman's youngest brother, was 14 years old when Herman was killed. It was always tough on my dad, especially as he so loved and looked up to his big brother."



"I traveled to England (and Norwich) in 1994. I did go to Wendling, saw the memorial, walked about 15 miles that day! I saw what I could of the old runways and ate at a pub in Beeston that I believe was there during the war.

"Herman's next younger brother, Robert, served in the Pacific theater as a PT boat gunner and was also a recipient of the Purple Heart. He survived the war and lived a good long life. I never knew much about his war time experience until he passed away as he did not want to talk about it.

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President's Corner



Greetings Crusaders!

The summer heat has made an early entrance into our state—something I witnessed firsthand when I chose to observe Memorial Day by volunteering to help plant 26,000 American Flags at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, Georgia, on Tuesday, May 25th. The temperature was 94° and very humid.

Many volunteers showed up and what we didn't get planted, the next wave of volunteers did on Wednesday.

For more information and photos, please see pages 5 and 12.

And speaking of memorials—as you know, we recently lost Aubrey Burke, one of our beloved veterans. Aubrey's widow, Beverly, has chosen to honor Aubrey while at the same time support efforts that benefit the 392nd BGMA and help keep it the viable organization that he loved so much.

To this end, Beverly has enthusiastically offered to fund an award, to be called *The Aubrey*, to the winner of an essay contest with a WWII theme to be designed and administered by me and some of our other members. We are very excited about this and intend to have the program in place this fall in time for the new school year. I'll keep you posted as the plans unfold.

I hope that many of you are planning to attend our Membership Meeting and Reunion from October 27-31 in Savannah, during which time we will visit the Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

I spoke to Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price (who is in charge of the Roger A. Freeman Research Center at the museum) and told her that we would like to see some photographs, artifacts or other documents that pertain to the 392nd BG and have access to some of the oral histories that feature 392nd BG veterans.

She suggested that I get a list of your requests for any specific items that you know are at the museum and send it to her with enough advance time that she could have them assembled for us. So this is your chance to do that. Please email me before September 15th at rewcts@gmail.com with what you'd like to see and I will submit the list to Vivian. Please put *Archive Request* in the subject field.

Mark your calendars so you can join us for our next Meet & Greet Zoom meeting Sunday, July 25th, at 1:30pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time (EDT) when we get together to chat, visit and get to know each other better. Be on the lookout for the Zoom invitation a few days prior.

In the meantime, best wishes to all of you, be safe and stay healthy.

Ralph



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"I am very proud of my Uncle Herman, especially as we just celebrated Memorial Day. I truly respect and thank the 392nd BGMA for all it does to continue the memory and history of this pivotal time, and of course the memory of those who served, and those who paid the ultimate price for their God and Country."

2021 Reunion. If you want to attend the October 2021 reunion in Savannah, Georgia, please see the details at <https://b24.net/reunions.htm>. Be sure to make your hotel reservations as soon as possible!

Amazon Smile. Amazon Smile is a website that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products as Amazon. The difference is that when someone shops at Amazon Smile using 392 Bomb Group Memorial Association Inc, as their registered charity, the Amazon Foundation donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to our organization. For more information, visit smile.amazon.com. Please keep this in mind the next time you shop on-line!

As of March 2021, we've earned \$21.59 through the Amazon Smile program. Although this might not seem like much, it is basically free money for our cause....

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Battle of the Atlantic."

The German U-Boat

The feared U-Boat (short for Unterseeboot) was more a submersible than a submarine: while it could descend underwater, fire torpedoes and reemerge, it was actually more effective above the water.

While surfaced, its diesel engines could propel a U-Boat at 17 knots—faster than most merchant ships. At the same time, its batteries were recharged and intake and outtake vents were opened to exhaust noxious fumes created by the diesel engines and pull in fresh air.

When the time came to dive, the only oxygen available onboard was what was present when the hatches were closed. This was typically enough for a day or two, but then carbon dioxide levels would get dangerously high, at which point they would have to surface, open their hatches and pull in more fresh air.

Once under water and on battery power, a U-Boat's speed dropped to about three knots and most merchant ships could out-run them. They were also extremely vulnerable due to the limited capacity of their batteries and inability to manufacture oxygen.

Therefore, U-Boats generally spent as much time as they could on the surface. They hunted prey at night by moving ahead of their target(s) on the surface and then submerging to fire their torpedoes.

The initial success of German U-Boats is shown by the nicknames they gave their early operations. *The First Happy Time* was from about June to October 1941 in the North Atlantic and North Sea, when U-Boats easily sank

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News from Across the Pond



Memorial Trustee Jill Scott sent the "briefest of notes to tell you all that both flags at your Memorial are flying at half mast marking the death of Prince Philip The Duke of Edinburgh, and will do so until Sunday, 18th April, the day designated for flags to be raised again."

Philip Brazier, who lives near the Memorial, kindly took this photo for us.

John Gilbert, our

Director in England, advises that his doctors are still running tests and procedures but he is able to get around much better now.

In the photo at the right, he had also lowered the flags in his front garden to half mast in honor of Prince Philip.

During a trip to England in November 2020, Director Ben Jones took a lovely color photo of the Memorial at sunset.



I didn't include it in the *News* as a black and white version wouldn't do it justice. It is perfect, though, for showing the location of the seven-house Hamptons development that Philip Brazier mentioned during the April Zoom meeting. Advertised as an "exclusive new development in a delightful rural location," it is literally across Dereham Rd. from the Memorial.

Philip took a photo of the developer's sign, which calls its houses "Exclusive," "High Quality," and "Family-sized." He rightly points out that this is "A contrast from the Nissen/Quonset huts that used to be nearby. Live the dream..."

We regret that "progress" is forever altering the landscape that the 392nd BG's airmen knew so well. The Memorial, however, will forever be a tribute to their service to our two countries during their most perilous time.

We thank our Trustees for all they do to keep the Memorial looking so magnificent and those who so faithfully gather there during Remembrance Day services each November.



392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your membership status is shown on the mailing label directly after your name; 21 and higher means your dues are up-to-date. If you wish to renew, send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Bill McCutcheon, 20620 Milton Ct., Brookfield, WI 53045 or join/ renew on-line at <https://www.b24.net/memorialAssociation.htm>. **LM** means Life Member and **FRIEND** means that you receive the *News* with compliments of the 392nd BGMA.

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

Name _____ Ground [] Air [] Sqdn/Unit _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

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

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

Hardship Waiver []

DONATION \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Zoom Get-Together

The April 2021 Zoom meeting of members and friends had 19 attendees, including six first-timers.

President Ralph Winter opened the meeting with an update on how John Gilbert is doing. We were all pleased that John's health is improving!

Philip Brazier spoke movingly of Prince Philip's faithful service to his country and Queen.

Ralph showed a video (<https://www.mightyeighth.org/flagsforthe fallen>) prepared by the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. It describes the role of the 8th AF and the vital part it played in the liberation of Europe. Victory was achieved, but at the cost of over 26,000 lives of 8AF servicemen and women—the highest casualty rate of any US military organization in WWII.

The video announced a unique opportunity to help commemorate both those lives and the 25th anniversary of the Museum. From 27-31 May 2021, 26,000 flags (with just 48 stars, "the symbol of the nation under which the Mighty Eighth's fallen airmen fought and died") would be displayed outside the Museum.



[Ralph participated in the event and placed more than 100 American flags in the Memorial Garden at the Museum. The small section of flags shown in the top photo conveys both the magnitude of the effort and the loss each flag represents. In the photo at the left, Ralph is placing flags at the 392nd BG's 3/4 scale replica of the Memorial

at Wendling.]

A conversation about the Museum and our scheduled reunion in Savannah in October 2021 followed. Ralph had recently met with Museum Chief Executive Officer Scott Loehr and Research Center Director Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price. Scott reiterated his determination to add more "B-24 presence" to the Museum.

Ralph, the representative of the Metropolitan Coin Club of Atlanta on the board of the Georgia Numismatic

Association, began a discussion of American coinage and currency throughout WWII. (Did you know that US mints have been making coins for foreign governments since authorized by Congress in 1874? And, that during WWII, our mints struck coins for dozens of foreign governments? To learn more, see <https://www.usmint.gov/learn/history/historical-documents/wartime-contribution-to-foreign-coinage!>)

When the conversation moved on, Doug Dovey mentioned a YouTube video showing the Collings Foundation's B-24, *Witchcraft*, in flight on 2 Feb 2019. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcZmiFMIR3g>, it shows the various crew positions (except, oddly, the navigator's).

Ben Jones reported that during a recent trip to England, he picked up the plaque from the original 392nd BG memorial and brought it to the US.

He also reminded us that *Masters of the Air*, a large-budget movie centered on the 100th BG during WWII, should begin filming this year. When it is released, Ben expects it will unleash a "tsunami of interest" in the air war that we should begin preparing for. Philip Brazier suggested, for example, that a pamphlet could be printed about the history of the 392nd BG that could be made available at the Ploughshare. More details will follow!

First-Timers

Pat Keeley is not related to anyone in the 392nd, but is very interested in the 8AF. He's the president of the New York State Southern Wings Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society and a past board member of the 8AFHS.

Tom Miller, son of 576th pilot Capt Henry W. Miller, writes, "My connection with the 392nd BGMA to date has been a profound journey to discover, understand and reflect on my father's contribution as a B-24 pilot and other roles during WWII. My Dad did not talk about the war with me, which I understand was not uncommon for many WWII veterans. At the time of his passing in 1995, I only knew that he was a war hero, flew B-24 bombers and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. I remember as a young boy being shown his medals at my grandmother's, but was given little context.

"The start of this journey was a Google search on B-24s, which brought me to www.b24.net. There was a drop down that listed posted testimonials from the veterans. I can't express the emotions I felt when I found one titled *26 Trips to Hell*, the combat diary of his tail gunner, Theodore Rausch. What a gift this was and it put me on a path to learning much more with tremendous research and support from Annette Tison.

"I also learned my Dad flew another 11 missions with the 392nd BG after his "26 trips to Hell," mostly as the 576th Sqdn Operations Officer. He later became Asst Group Operations Officer and in March 1945, Station Gunnery Officer. Annette graciously sent *News* articles including *Anatomy of a Mission*, *The Other Airmen*, and *Gotha*, the 392nd's historic 41st combat mission to Gotha, Germany, for which it was awarded the Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation. Dad flew that mission!

"In addition, Dad was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for the mission on January 4, 1944 to Keil, Germany.

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He was flying #42-7598, *The Flak Ducker*, and lost two engines on the right side from fighter attacks. Annette explained 'this would have involved tremendous effort on the pilots' part (after all, there was no power steering on a B-24!), especially to keep the dead weight of the two right engines from pulling the plane down.' Miraculously, he was able to fly the plane back to England.

"So, my father's jaw-dropping contributions to the war efforts were heroic (as were many others of the 392nd).

"Then there is the other half, and why he did not want to talk about the war. Loss of comrades, trauma of combat, perhaps haunting thoughts of killing innocents as a result of the bombing missions. I was told that one of first things he did at the end of the war was to visit the camps as justification for what he had to do.

"Our family recently discovered a large box with my father's war memorabilia. I am going through the pictures, scrapbook and letters to get more insights into my Dad. I am working on a paper to share what I find and reflections on my dad and how he lived his life post-war.

"I am forever grateful to the 392nd BGMA and it was a privilege to participate on the Zoom and receive a warm welcome! In my view, keeping the legacy of the 392nd BG is imperative for others to understand the cost of our freedoms. I am looking forward to getting to know the members and to hear their stories and perspectives."

Doug Peterson "enjoyed seeing everyone on the Zoom meeting. My connection to the 392nd is my father, Clifford Peterson, who was a pilot in the 578th Squadron. He arrived at Wendling in September 1943. Dad was shot down on his 28th mission, March 18 1944 and spent 14 months in Stalag Luft III. After WWII, dad flew B-29s for many missions in the Korean War before he finally retired as a Major in 1955 at MacDill AFB in Tampa, Florida.

"Cliff was very much involved with the 392nd, the 8th Air Force Historical Society and the 2nd Air Division Assn. Hope to see everyone in Savannah, looking forward to it!"

Dave Richards writes, "My dad, S/Sgt Robert H. Richards, was a right waist gunner in a B-24 and flew 20 missions from 7/11/44 until they were shot down on 9/12/44 over Hannover, Germany. (My dad lived in Hanover, Pennsylvania.) He was captured and sent to Stalag-Luft 4.

"He never spoke much about the war until he was older and retired. One day he sat down at a typewriter and started writing a very detailed account of his war experiences. He corresponded with other members of his crew along with fellow POWs to help him with details. Gerald Ralston [waist gunner on the 578th's 2/Lt Harold E. Jones crew, POW on 11 Sep 1944] was his ration sharing buddy in the prison camp.

"Gerald kept a very detailed daily diary of their lives in the camp which he sent to my dad, who added his own comments and included it in his account. I sent the account to Greg Hatton who recently put it on the 392nd website [at <https://www.b24.net/powStoriesRichards-Robert-H-diary.pdf>].

"My dad often spoke of the 392nd and his desire to attend one of their meetings. After his death in 2004, I completely forgot about the group until a little hand-written

note appeared in my mail box from Greg who asked if I had any pictures of him or his crew. This was a very pleasant unexpected surprise.

"I immediately contacted my sister with this exciting news. I had following email contact with both Greg and Annette Tison. They are both great assets to the 392nd. Through emails from Greg, I was able to make personal contact with Kurt Buecheler, the son of Lt. John Buecheler, the pilot of my dad's plane.

"I am very happy to be a new member of the 392nd Bomb Group. I especially enjoyed the recent Zoom meeting."

Lloyd Tate is the son of S/Sgt George Tatelbaum. His involvement with the 392nd BGMA "began around 1997 when I discovered it by searching for B-24 on the internet. At that point I knew nothing about my father's military experience except that he was in the Air Corps and stationed in England. He had shared some stories with my brothers and me from time to time, but we only half listened to the details, I'm afraid. Once I found the 392nd BG Memorial Association, I was able to slowly gather information, and it took another 13 years to gather all the information about his time in the 392nd. He was a tail-gunner in the 392nd, 578th, flew a full complement of 25 bombing missions plus another 70 or so miscellaneous. One highlight for me was getting to speak with the co-pilot of his first crew. It all started with this Association and all the wonderful people there to share information."

Marc Young says, "My Dad, waist gunner S/Sgt Harold M Young, was part of the 578th's 1/Lt James Maris crew and was in-country from April to October 1944. He managed to complete all 30 missions. I've been a member of the B-24 group for over 10 years. Thanks for holding the meeting and the great newsletter you provide."

2022 Reunion

Ralph ended the get-together with the happy news that, circumstances permitting, the 2022 reunion will be in Norfolk, England, with an opportunity to visit what remains of the base. Planning has not yet begun, but details will be published as plans are made. If you have any questions or thoughts that might help in the planning effort, please contact Ralph.

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merchant ships heading to or from England.

The Second Happy Time (also called *The American Shooting Season*) was from about January to August 1942, when U-Boats turned their attention toward shipping to or from the US.

During this period (per https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Happy_Time, U-Boats sank 609 ships totaling 3.1 million tons—about one quarter of all the ships they sank during the entire Second World War. Thousands of lives, mostly merchant mariners, were lost.

During the early months of this phase, the US was woefully unable to detect or attack German U-Boats and had not yet developed strategies to protect merchant ships from them.

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Based on their lessons learned, the British advised the US that merchant ships traveling in groups (convoys) were much safer than ships traveling alone, regardless of whether they had a naval escort; that merchant ships should not use the traditional or obvious shipping lanes; that lighthouses and other navigation markers must be turned off; that blackout conditions had to be enforced for all coastal homes and cities; and that air and sea forces should perform daylight patrols to discourage U-Boat activity.

For a variety of reasons, none of the recommendations were initially implemented by the US; this undoubtedly contributed to early U-Boat successes in the Atlantic war.

AAF Begins ASW

On 8 Dec 1941, 1 Bomber Command (a unit of the First Air Force that had both bombardment and reconnaissance squadrons) began official ASW operations off the east coast. "Ironically," Torres says, "when the Navy pressured the Army to undertake offshore patrol duties, the 1 Bomber Command was stripped of its best-trained units for strategic bombardment missions overseas. In order to fulfill its latest tasking, every available plane in the First Air Force capable of carrying a bomb load was drafted to augment what remained of the command" so about 100 twin-engine aircraft "of various models" were transferred in.

At this point, the AAF was seriously deficient in ASW operations. Its airmen were neither properly trained nor properly equipped with aircraft and ordnance. This was, in part, because:

- Pre-war planning had never identified ASW as a role for the AAF.
- 1 Bomber Command had lost all but one of its bombardment groups to the European and Pacific war fronts and had gotten two new bombardment groups and two reconnaissance squadrons in early 1942. These replacements were untrained in normal bombardment skills, much less in special tactics required in ASW. The aircrews thus learned most of the new techniques during their patrols.
- Training was inadequate and too short. Due to the urgency of need, there was little time for classroom training. For example, ASW airmen were not instructed in ship recognition so there were incidents of US planes attacking Allied merchant ships.
- Most of the a/c available were not capable of making long-range searches for U-Boats. Of the 122 planes on hand by January 1942, only 67 (B-17s, B-18s, and B-25s) were capable of making adequate patrols. Moreover, the planes suitable for ASW patrols were equipped with demolition bombs rather than depth charges.

Nonetheless, Torres says, by mid-January 1942, 1 Bomber Command "was flying patrols twice a day in the western Atlantic. Three patrols flew from Westover Field in Massachusetts, Mitchel Field in Long Island, New York, and Langley Field in Virginia, to a distance of 600 miles out to sea."

Additional patrols were flown by 1 Air Support Command, a subordinate unit, which "operated during daylight hours and flew up to 40 miles offshore from Portland, Maine, to

Wilmington, North Carolina."

Between January and March 1942, the number of patrol hours flown more than doubled (from 3,134 to 7,247) but so did the tonnage of ships sunk by U-Boats (from 92,955 to 193,478).

On 28 Mar 1942, 1BC was placed under the operational control of the Navy's Eastern Sea Frontier whose territory now extended about 200 miles out to sea.

While the need for more planes to fly more patrols was evident, the Navy and Army disagreed on how these aircraft should be used. The Navy wanted the planes to escort ships and patrol in "generally fixed sectors of coastal waters"—thus, in a defensive role against U-Boats.

The Army, on the other hand, "felt a well coordinated offensive by aircraft and surface craft could drive the submarines from an arena or restrict their operations until the damage from their attacks became negligible." This was "supported by the experience of the RAF's Coastal Command [which said] "that the primary method of defeating the submarine was to seek and strike. To accomplish this, an air force should place its maximum effort in offensive attacks against the submarine while keeping the smallest possible force protecting convoys."

While the USN did agree that grouping merchant ships into convoys made it easier to protect them, it wasn't until May 1942 that enough ships of suitable speed and equipment were available to institute a convoy system. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Atlantic#Growing_American_activity for more information.

U-701

One very accomplished German U-Boat was U-701, with commander Kapitänleutnant Horst Degen and his crew of 42 sailors. In its third war patrol (May through 7 July 1942), U-701 was particularly successful, sinking four ships and damaging five more.

On 28 June, while off the North Carolina coast, U-701 sank the SS William Rockefeller, one of the world's largest tankers, which was carrying 136,000 barrels of fuel oil to New York. Thankfully, all 50 men aboard were rescued.

Over the next few days the U-Boat was hounded by both ASW ships and planes. Constant air patrols forced it to spend daylight hours near the ocean bottom until darkness brought protection from the searching US planes. The worsening state of air circulators and the warm Gulf Stream waters made this extended time underwater almost unbearable for the sailors as air stagnated, carbon dioxide built up, the heat increased, and the crew became sick and lethargic. At the point of desperation and to revive his crew with fresh air, Degen brought U-701 to the surface at about 3pm on July 7 to ventilate his boat.

It was spotted by an ASW crew. Pilot 2/Lt Harry J. Kane, navigator 2/Lt Lynn A. Murray, bombardier Cpl George E. Bellamy, radio operator Cpl Leo P. Flowers, and aerial engineer Cpl Presley C. Broussard were aboard an A-29 Hudson from the 396th Bomb Sqdn, flying from Cunningham Field (near Havelock, North Carolina). It is now the home of Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point.

In a 1981 oral interview (at <https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/text/11234>) Kane remembered that the squadron, perhaps

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13 planes, arrived at Cherry Point on 15 Jun 1942. Then, "We flew from Cherry Point out to Cape Lookout and went out about twenty-five miles.... one patrol would fly ... southwest, to cover or parallel the coast, then we'd go as far down as Charleston. The other patrol would go north, as I recall up to Cape Hatteras and maybe a little bit further north, and then back. But between the two, we about covered the whole North Carolina coast...."

"The missions were usually about five [or] five and a half hours, and as I recall there were three of them each day. And so we covered the area for about sixteen to seventeen hours out of the twenty-four hours. The rest of it was dark, and we didn't have any equipment to find submarines at night. We would go out and fly, and we could hear them talking to each other on the radio in German."

As best he could recall, his orders on 7 Jul 1942 were to patrol at about 100 feet above the water. Instead, he decided to hide in the broken clouds at about 1,200 feet. As they dodged in and out of the clouds, the crew saw something. Thinking it might be a sub, "with the throttle to the airplane pulled back pretty far, so the engine was just idling, I broke out of the clouds, diving down from about fifteen hundred feet."

Almost simultaneously, the U-Boat's lookout spotted the plane and began an emergency dive—but too late. With this proof the object was a U-Boat, "we pushed the throttles all the way forward" and went ... "something like 225 miles an hour" ... to get to it.

At just fifty feet above the barely-visible sub and flying down its length, they dropped their three depth charges, which were set to explode at 25 feet underwater.

At least two of the depth charges were direct hits. **This is the first time in US aviation history that a submarine was sunk by an AAF crew.**

Seven of the U-Boat's sailors were unable to escape. The rest got out while it was sitting on the sea floor—in two groups from two different places in the sub. Kane's crew spotted one group and threw out all their life preservers and their only life raft to them.

Neither group was aware of the other and the Gulf Stream soon separated them. In choppy seas and with little survival gear, many drowned. By the time they were spotted and rescued 49 hours later, there were only seven survivors. They had drifted 65 nautical miles from where their sub had been sunk.

Kane said that at first, "nobody would give me credit for sinking the submarine... evidently there's an awful lot of rivalry between the different branches of the service, and I was in the Army Air Corps. Of course I was attached to the Marine Corps because I was at Cherry Point which was a Marine Corps station. The Navy was there and the Navy, to my knowledge, didn't care to say that the ... Army Air Corps had sunk the submarine ... even though I told them that I'd sunk one ... they couldn't believe me. And until they found the seven survivors two days later, they wouldn't."

All five AAF crewmen were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Presley Broussard

In an undated article in *The Times-Picayune*, a New

Orleans, Louisiana newspaper, Broussard—then an Aviation Cadet—recalled that after they dropped their depth charges and saw a geyser of water erupt, "We circled back to see what damage we had done. Foam, ripples and oil slick were where the submarine had been basking. Then we saw men bobbing up out of the water; we counted 25 of them. Our radio operator messaged the base of the sinking, giving the location, and we circled again to drop life vests and a life raft to the survivors. We continued to circle the area until our gasoline supply was low and the men had been separated somewhat by the rough seas."

"Three days later, our squadron commander and the crew were called to tell the story of the sinking to naval officials. We were told that eight survivors had been picked up 50 hours after the sinking. The prisoners were brought in for us to see."

"The captain of the sub, in good English, told us: 'It was a good job you did; you made two direct hits.' He also thanked us for dropping 'the life-saving supplies' " as they had fled the sinking sub without much equipment."

In <https://www.ncpedia.org/history/20th-Century/wwii-uboats>, a website about North Carolina history and particularly *When WWII Was Fought Off NC Beaches*, Broussard's great-nephew wrote that "he was the person who first spotted the U-Boat. The plane was on its way back to base and had very little spare fuel. The captain explained to the crew about their fuel situation and also told them the survivors had no life raft. The crew voted on turning around and dropping their only life raft so the survivors had a better chance to survive. They all took a chance of running out of fuel and going down themselves



The caption to this official US Navy photo (from <https://ww2today.com/9th-july-1942-u-boat-u-701-survivors-rescued-by-us-navy-airship>) says, "Rescue of U-701 Survivors July 9, 1942 Coast Guard PH-2 seaplane lands to rescue U-701 survivors—Navy K-type airship overhead had earlier located survivors and dropped raft and supplies to the survivors."

without their life raft. This was a great example of the hearts of Americans."

Broussard became a copilot and, eventually, a member of

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the 578th's Capt A.B. "Ben" Alexander's crew. Broussard flew 30 missions between June and November 1944.

For more information about U-701, see <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/u/u701-sunk-usarmy-attack-bomber-no9-29-322-unit296bs-7-7-42.html>.



AAF pilot 2/Lt Harry J. Kane is seated next to a badly sunburned Kapitänleutnant Horst Degen. Cpl Presley C. Broussard is believed to be standing second from the right. After he was interrogated, Degen was sent to a POW facility at Camp Blanding, near Starke, Florida, and then to Camp Papago Park near Phoenix, Arizona. He returned to Germany in June 1946.

ASW Tactics and Procedures Improve

The US Navy and Army Air Force gradually developed tactics and strategies to counter the German threat—and eventually had the ships, planes, technology and ordnance to implement them.

It was not immediate, but the military realized the necessity for operations analysis to understand why their ships and planes were having so little success against U-Boats. The Antisubmarine Warfare Operations Research Group (and others) examined and analyzed after-action reports

by ASW crews. Researchers then determined the best altitude and search pattern to use during a patrol, how to best evade detection while dropping down for an attack, best angle of attack, the need for planes to use depth charges rather than conventional bombs (and the depth at which to set them to explode), how to find a U-Boat (using both radar and sonar) and, if the U-Boat was able to submerge, a strategy for finding it again.

Analysis also showed that during the time an ASW crew flew together, they had, on average, just one opportunity to actually attack (and hopefully sink) a U-Boat—so they would not necessarily benefit from “lessons learned” as they flew additional patrols.

This scrutiny led to vast—and constant—improvements in the training curriculum for ASW aircrews, and eventually new ASW crews had the knowledge and tools to be effective on their first patrol. With better training, airmen were able to find more U-Boats, attack them more proficiently, and therefore sink more. Even if they couldn't sink a U-Boat, their presence aloft kept it underwater for longer periods of time, enabling convoys to slip by.

Analysis confirmed that the convoy system was very effective. Escort ships—fast and maneuverable—would provide an even better defensive wall around these convoys. Pre-war planning, however, had focused on “big ships with big guns” so it took time to design and construct these *destroyer escorts*. Once the design was approved, though, construction was rapid and 504 were built between 1943 and the end of the war.

With its high speed and long range, the B-24 was able to patrol large areas of the Atlantic. Coordination improved so once a U-Boat was spotted, the aircrew could contact surface ships or other airplanes to join in the hunt. Eventually, the U-Boat had to surface and could be relatively easy prey for searching ASW planes.

In addition, equipment such as radar and sonar became especially important as U-Boats could now be spotted at night or while submerged. Improved depth charges, coupled with bombsights better designed to zero in on a moving target, were also key to Allied successes.

While German technology also improved, U-Boats

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FOLDED WINGS REPORT

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

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The 392nd BGMA is engaged in a fund-raising effort to financially support our website, www.b24.net. It contains the history of the 392nd Bomb Group. You could make no greater tribute to your loved one than a donation for this living and ongoing memorial to the 392nd. Please send this report, hopefully with your check payable to the 392nd BGMA-Website, but send it with or without it, to: Debbie Beigh, 6284 Antler Ct., Zionsville, IN 46077-9089

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generally stayed as "submersibles" throughout the war, rather than evolving into maneuverable "submarines."

All these ASW improvements meant that U-Boat success against merchant shipping decreased while their losses drastically increased. As a result, they no longer had free rein in the Atlantic. In July 1942, German U-Boats were moved away from the US east coast to the North Atlantic, where they were out of range of land-based ASW planes.

May - December 1942

In early summer 1942, the first duty station for newly commissioned 2/Lt Jack Adams was the 6th Antisubmarine Sqdn, flying ASW patrols out of Westover Field in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts.

In his memoir, *Lest We Forget: A Navigator's Tale*, he recalled that from May to December 1942 he flew in two-engine B-25 Mitchell bombers. "...as a rule," he wrote, "our patrols were routine, tedious, and 'dull as dishwater.'"

Finally, he said, USAAF began replacing the B-25 bombers with "four-engine B-24 heavy bombers... [Although] designed for and assigned to destroying ground targets... in flying against submarines it was no problem to load half the plane's capacity [in one bomb bay] with fuel, which gave them enormous range compared to anything they'd been using previously. It also gave them significantly greater load capacity [in their second bomb bay], which added to their capability to act as highly effective offensive weapons."

In mid-December 1942, he and others in the 6th A/S Sqdn were sent to Langley Field, Virginia, for training in B-24 operations and their 10-man crews.

With the transition to B-24s complete, the 6th moved to Gander, Newfoundland, and regularly flew 10 to 12 hour ASW patrols.

On 15 Oct 1942, the Army Air Forces Antisubmarine Command (AAFAC) was activated, comprised of the same operational squadrons and equipment as 1 Bomber Command. It quickly placed the squadrons into two Wings, the 25th and 26th A/S Wings, based in New York and Miami, respectively. The 25th controlled squadrons stationed between Jacksonville, Florida, and Manchester, New Hampshire, while the 26th was in charge of squadrons between Lantana, Florida and New Orleans, Louisiana.

By year's end, AAFAC was permitted to patrol "wherever submarines might be operating against the allies" and its arsenal now included B-24s, as their long range enabled them to reach areas heretofore not covered by ASW a/c.

American ASW Efforts Move to England

In late November 1942, US B-24s and crews assumed duty at Royal Air Force (RAF) St. Eval, Cornwall, flying as the 1st Antisubmarine (A/S) Sqdn. The 2nd A/S Sqdn arrived in January 1943. Together, they formed the 1st Antisubmarine Group (Provisional). It was part of USAAF's England-based VIII Bomber Command administratively but took operational direction from RAF Coastal Command's No. 19 Group.

The Libs' great range, speed, and high ordnance payload meant they were ideal for flying patrols of 10 and 11 hours to the Bay of Biscay and back.

Many U-Boats moved through the 300- by 120-mile Bay,

off the western coast of France and the northern coast of Spain, while en route to or returning from their patrol areas. It was a good hunting ground for ASW aircraft.

But, they also faced a new threat from Germany's highly capable Junkers Ju-88 heavy fighters. In September 1942, these a/c had begun flying missions from bases in France in support of U-Boat operations and against Allied ASW efforts.

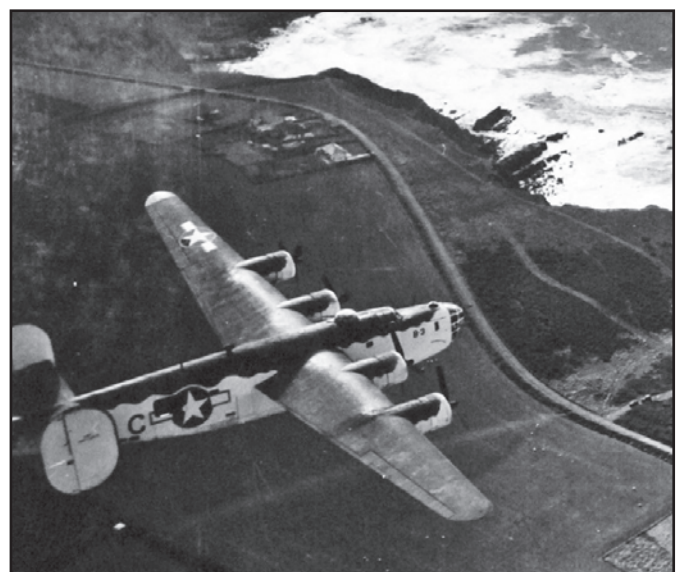
From 6-15 Feb 1943, US Libs joined their RAF counterparts in Operation Gondola. According to <https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/2018/12/15/sub-hunters-over-the-bay-of-biscay/>, "During this 10-day surge Allied patrol planes logged 2,260 hours over the bay, resulting in 18 sightings and seven attacks. American B-24s accounted for 72 percent of all U-Boat detections and 57 percent of attacks made..."

In March 1943, however, the 1st and 2nd A/S Sqdns were transferred to Morocco, where the need, in US eyes, was greater. They never returned to England.

In June 1943, AAF Commanding General Hap Arnold agreed that the Navy would take over aerial ASW tasking once it had the men and planes to do so.

US Navy Liberators

The US Navy soon realized that the B-24 Liberator was an ideal aircraft for its own purposes. Their PB4Y-1 began



This photo shows a USN PB4Y-1 version of a B-24 Liberator. The original caption says, "Flying low over the indented coast of England, a PB4Y Liberator ... heads out over the channel for its patrol run. It will be 12 hours before the giant plane returns over the English coast, and within the 12 hours may well be included bombing, strafing, and combat with German fighters." Photo from <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/wwii/wwii-atlantic/battle-of-the-atlantic/aviation/pb4y-1/80-g-44613.html>.

service in 1942 and was used for ASW work in the Atlantic and Pacific as well as for anti-ship patrols and photographic reconnaissance in the Pacific. A total of 976 were built.

In 1943, tests began on the Privateer version, PB4Y-2.

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The Privateer was externally similar to the Liberator, but the fuselage was longer to accommodate a flight engineer's station and it had a tall single vertical stabilizer instead of the AAF B-24's twin tail configuration.



The Navy's PB4Y-2, Privateer, was made by Consolidated Aircraft. Eventually the Navy took delivery of 739 Privateers. Some saw service in early 1945 in Navy Patrol Bomber Squadrons, but most served after the war. Photo from https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Consolidated_PB4Y-2_Privateer.

On 8 Jul 1943 the US 479th Antisubmarine Group (the 4th, 6th, 19th, and 22nd A/S Sqdns) was activated and arrived at St. Eval. It conducted ASW operations until moving to RAF Dunkeswell in Devon on 6 August.

Navy Liberators (PB4Y-1s) arrived in St. Eval on 17 Aug 1943 and after two weeks ASW training, also relocated to RAF Dunkeswell, which became the center of US antisubmarine activity in Britain for the rest of the war.

The 479th ceased ASW operations in August and turned over its Libs, redesignated as PB4Ys, to the Navy. In October, the USN took over American ASW duties.

The 479th was disbanded on 11 Nov 1943. During four months of service, it lost four B-24s crews. Its gunners claimed five German warplanes.

479th A/S Group → 8AF → 2AD → 392nd BG

479th airmen and their ground support crews were transferred to 8AF and then distributed among its Groups, including the 392nd. Since they had flown under combat conditions and faced enemy fighters, the fliers were given combat mission credits for their ASW service. The exact formula for how ASW patrols were re-calculated into combat mission credits is not (yet) known.

In the 392nd BG archives are three letters stating the number of combat missions that 39 former 479th A/S Group airmen were to be credited with. The ranks given below are per the letters. Names underlined were later killed in action; italics indicate the man became a POW.

21 Oct 1943, from the 6th Antisubmarine Sqdn

16 missions: 2/Lt John A. Adams, 2/Lt Duane E. Freeborn, S/Sgt Clifford C. Northcutt

15 missions: 1/Lt Edward F. Witsell, 1/Lt Howard P. Hall, 2/Lt Ralph E. Lamma, T/Sgt Earl D. Owen, T/Sgt Richard J. Fearon, T/Sgt William F. Murphy, TSgt William R. Cauble, S/Sgt Ralph Lanier, S/Sgt George F. Heckendorn, S/Sgt Charles E. O'Reilly, S/Sgt Olin D. Castle, Sgt Frank A. Wind Jr, Sgt Claude F. Murray

12 missions: 2/Lt Nicholas B. Robson, 2/Lt Gordon F.

Voght, 2/Lt Leonard D. Culbertson, S/Sgt George W. Bacon
10 missions: 2/Lt John W. Detrick, T/Sgt Harold Davis, S/Sgt Arch W. Nelson, Sgt William F. Dill, Sgt Robert D. Harvey

5 missions: T/Sgt William E. Andrews

2 missions: 2/Lt Jack F. Chatten, S/Sgt J.R. Ross

5 Dec 1943, from the 4th Antisubmarine Sqdn

7 missions: S/Sgt Nixon J.E. Jones Jr., Sgt Lewis J. Martin

6 missions: S/Sgt George E. Whitlock

10 Dec 1943, from the 19th Antisubmarine Sqdn (the number of credits, per the letter, was "based on a study made of the degree of operational exhaustion of flight members now assigned to the 2nd Bomb Division"):

20 missions. Sgt Lino A. Pierelli

18 missions: S/Sgt J.D. Warren

15 missions: 1/Lt Joseph D. Connolly, 2/Lt William R. Haenzi (who completed his combat tour, returned to the US, and was killed on 5 Mar 1945 in a collision at Kissimmee Army Air Field), S/Sgt Carl B. White, Sgt Roy E. Welch

3 missions: 2/Lt George E. Graham, Cpl Alex D. Blanc

In summary

Feinstein notes, "... the Germans focused on economically strangling the Allies by sinking their merchant ships in the Atlantic. The struggle to command the Atlantic pushed the Axis and Allied powers into an ever evolving game of cat and mouse, where German submersibles stalked and later fled from the American forces. This took both the Allies and Axis forces all across the Atlantic Ocean... The Atlantic Ocean represented an important stepping-stone for the Allies to end the war. The Allies needed full control of the Atlantic to organize the invasion of Europe, while the Germans saw the Atlantic as a barrier protecting Germany's Western flank. The need for both the Allies and Axis powers to control the Atlantic caused the conflict to rage from the beginning of World War II in 1939 until the German surrender in 1945."

He also refers to historian Samuel Morison, whose book *The Battle of the Atlantic* examined that long and costly fight. Morison, said Feinstein, "explained that no 'one' answer could describe how the Allies won. Instead, he writes that we must look to several different reasons that together, pushed the German U-Boats back. These reasons included better technology, tactics, resources and training. He then builds a connection between all of the aspects above, explaining, 'Coastal convoys were impossible without more escorts and patrol planes; ships were ineffective without proper detection devices and offensive weapons; these in turn needed operators trained in special schools...'"

<https://uboot.net/allies/aircraft/forces.htm> notes that 159 U-Boats were sunk by US air forces of the Army and Navy. In its relatively short involvement in ASW, the Army Air Force had a key role and did it very well.

Editor's note: A very short video of B-24s flying ASW patrols in May 1943 can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4L2cMVwKpm8>.

Links to information about all the Army Air Force antisubmarine squadrons is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Antisubmarine_squadrons_of_the_United_States_Army_Air_Forces.

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

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

My dad, a proud veteran and a long time member/contributor of this 392nd Memorial Association, passed away recently. His life of 100+ years was one of honor, service and love.

Death and loss are an unpleasant part of life that we all experience and must accept. But that moment of needing a conversation with someone you love, who is no longer here, is heartbreaking.

Dad served his country proudly in WWII, the Korean War and the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was part of The Greatest Generation; a humble generation with extraordinary values, faith and dignity.

We are losing that generation as the years move on. Let us not lose the principles these men and women lived by and fought for—freedom, unity, morality.

The “Next Generation” and those after us have a monumental duty to carry on the mission of these warriors. They were not just warriors on the battlefield and in the skies, but continued to battle at home to preserve what they had accomplished and to guide their families to live by their courageous examples.

Special gratitude and affection to dad's many 392nd and 8th Air Force friends who expressed their sympathy and shared their fond memories of him.

God's Blessings.



**The 392nd BG Memorial
at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth
Air Force, Memorial Day 2021**

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Class Mail

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

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

Betty Engle, Associate, April 25, 2021