



Sgt Cecil McDonald's Record of Station 118

Cecil McDonald was a waist gunner on 2/Lt Howard E. Ebersole's crew in the 578/9th. He got to Station 118 (the USAAF's designation for the 392nd BG's airfield) in early 1945. While he flew just 13 combat missions before the war ended, his archive of 392nd BG activities was massive.

In March 2022, his son Bill shared his father's photos and documents with the 392nd BGMA. He gives credit to his mother, Dorothy L. McDonald, for the careful way she filed and catalogued her husband's military records.

Sgt Cecil L. McDonald

Bill's biography of his father: "Cecil Leland McDonald (1919-1982), the youngest of four sons and member of a Scots-Irish clan with a long history of serving in American conflicts, had been a farmer near Tiline, Kentucky, when he went to Detroit to be with his brothers. Near Detroit he met my mother, Dorothy K. Lorway. They married in 1938 and settled in Mt. Clemens, Michigan, where they had two sons, myself and younger brother Robert L. McDonald.

"Cecil became a milk man for the Borden Company. That Uncle Sam would want a man with two small children hints at the severity of the situation in 1943. He enlisted in the Air Corps and was sent to Keesler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi, after induction. Trained to be a top turret gunner on B-24s, he changed to waist gunner, serving also as part-time engineer on missions.

"He earned the Air Medal, having flown missions between 6 Feb and 17 Apr 1945. He served during the last gasp of the Third Reich, when desperate armed forces hurled everything left in the arsenal at the fly boys. (Flak was one of the first words I learned as a child.) The final entries of the diaries of Joseph Goebbels include frequent mention of the damage inflicted in the air war.

"Cecil shares with us a combat diary, kept in telegram-form, reporting in phrases that echo bursts of gunfire. He is a careful observer, communicating the essentials. Interestingly, in such a taciturn man, he lets his emotions

show: fascinating, beautiful, hate, never thought we would get back, enjoyed the mission(!)

"To me, the son, the most revealing is a phrase that was never on his lips in his lifetime: *We were scared*. Mother said he returned from war 'a different man.' In his casual diary references to accidents, and near accidents, to friends put in mortal danger, one understands that he returned to Michigan altered. One obvious change was loss of hearing in one ear from an Air Force oxygen mask pressure test. The other changes are less obvious, but who was the same after flying through hell?"

Sgt McDonald's Diary

I. Magdeburg, Germany Feb.

6-1945. Two engines out, 20 M before I.P. over target. Alone and back alone. Low on gas, landed at North Pickern [North Pickenham, home of the 492nd BG]. Bombs away 1140 a.m. Flak moderate to light. Landed 4 p.m. Lots of P-51 escorts. Lots of water with two engines out. Glad to see England 22,500 feet. 33 below zero (oil refinery).

II. Magdeburg, Germany Feb.

14-1945. Briefing at 3:30 a.m. Take off delayed til 9 a.m. Bombs away at 12:40. Visual bombing and looked very good. Flak very heavy and accurate. One burst right by the waist window. It looks amusing and very fascinating until it comes too close. Back at 4:30 and had

steak for supper. 24,500 ft. 35 below zero. (marshalling yards)

III. Salzbergen, Germany Feb. 16-1945. Awoke at 6:30, briefing at 7:30. Weather bad. Took off at 11:55. Bombed at 14:25. Very rough mission. Saw a load of bombs drop onto another ship's rudder and stabilizer. One side cut off. They bailed out over England. Bad weather. We landed in France at A-2. Stayed until 19th (good time). Gas leak on way back. (San Quentin—2 ships lost). 22,000 feet. 28 below zero. (marshalling yards)

[McDonald is referring to 1/Lt Albert J. Novik's crew in the

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Cecil McDonald, likely during training



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FROM THE EDITOR

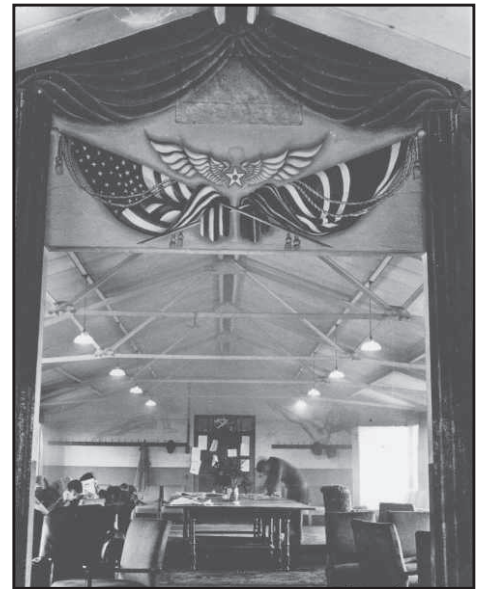
Thank you!!! Members **Bill McDonald** and **Anne Gilbert Brooks** recently shared some of their fathers' photos with me while **Terry Haukom** sent me snapshots from his trip to Wendling in April. Many of Bill's are in this issue; Anne's and Terry's will be in the September issue.

Looking ahead. A future article will focus on the infrastructure of Station 118 and especially its buildings and wall art. Please look through your Crusader's photos from WWII that show wall art, buildings or huts at Wendling. What did your relative convey, in letters home or conversations with you, about their living and working conditions? Please send your photos and recollections to me at dtison5401@aol.com.

Believe it or not, "new" old photos keep turning up! For example, this 16 May 1944 photo, captioned "ARCH-Combat Officers Club" was in Bill's package. He had no idea that it showed the 392nd BG's Combat Officers Mess with its murals of Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth on the far wall (still so new they were only sketches). He didn't know this is the only documentation of the arch in 392nd BG's archives. He didn't know that this arch was probably painted over after the war and now exists only in this photo.

On the other hand, during his visit to Wendling, Terry captured what the Combat Officers Mess looks like now.

What you have in a photo album or shoe box might be the missing piece needed to identify a building or its wall art. The photo that you've ignored because you didn't know what it was might give all of us fresh insights into our Crusaders' WWII experiences. Please share!



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576th Sqdn, whose plane lost a rudder and left elevator. Crew and pilot bailed out over England. See <https://www.b24.net/MM021645.htm>.]

IV. [Nordhausen, Germany, was briefed, Norheim was the target bombed.]

Feb. 22-1945. Bombed at 7,000 feet and believe me this is too low for comfort in a B-24. Flak was very intense and accurate. They tracked us in a 90 degree turn. Briefed us at 5:20. Saw lots of Germany and, must say, it is a very beautiful country. We bombed railroad centre and did we tear that thing up. I would sure hate to be on the ground. Two boys, Hicks and Noble [578th Sqdn engineer S/Sgt Allen W. Hicks and radio operator Sgt Francis J. Nagle], from our barracks went down. Saw O'Fee's ship go down. [O'Fee's identity is not known. Hicks and Nagle were in 1/Lt Joseph R. Walker's B-24 which, low on fuel, attempted to reach Belgium or France. It crashed at Zoeterwoude, a municipality in the western Netherlands. Hicks, Nagle, and two others were taken prisoner; five evaded, one of whom, S/Sgt John E. McCormick, was killed on 29 Apr 1945 by German soldiers. See <https://www.b24.net/MM022245.htm>.]

V. Aschaffenburg, Germany Feb. 25-1945. Awaken[ed] at 2:30, took off at 8:30. Bombing was visual. No flak at all (no ball). We hit the marshalling yards and smoke rose about 5,000 ft. high. Lost no. 4 engine and came back alone. We now have a lot of 3-engine time. 22,500 feet. 28 below zero. Lots of P-51s. They shot down 8 ME-262's jets. [Note the early reference to German jets.]

VI. Halle, Germany Feb 27-1945. We were after some more oil refineries. The flak was moderate and inaccurate. 30 minutes before IP lost no. 4 engine [and] couldn't keep up with formation, so we salvoed the bombs and returned. 4 P-51s escorted us back. We were lost and they put us back on course. Left us at Brussels, Belgium. We were scared.

VII. Kiel, Germany March 11-1945. Never thought we would get back. There was **See McDONALD on page 3**

President's Corner



As I write this, it's Memorial Day weekend and, like you, my thoughts go to the many veterans who over the years have sacrificed so much, defending not just our democracy, but democracy around the world. The scope of sacrifices ranges from loss of life in battle and accidents during service to the hardships and brutality of POW camps,

to emotional and mental problems after the war. Some found an inner strength that enabled them to return to a normal life in spite of some hidden scars. I also think about spouses, mothers, fathers and others on the home front who also made sacrifices in their own way to support the war effort—women going to work in factories, everyone doing without things because of rationing. It was a generation of Americans like no other and we owe them all a debt of gratitude.

Changing to a lighter subject, even though it's a good ways off I can't help getting excited about the return visit to Wendling and East Anglia next year. Your 392nd BGMA has joined forces with the Heritage League to put together an exciting and memorable trip that will have a good mix of history and fun. The trip is being planned with our younger family members in mind in hopes of kindling an interest in WWII history in general, and the air bases in East Anglia in particular.

There will be three components from which to choose:

1. Optional 392nd BGMA specific activities July 20-22, 2023. These events are of interest to the 392nd BGMA and will include a luncheon with our Friends who reside in the area and are supportive of our efforts and visits to Wendling. This will take place on Saturday before the main tour starts on Sunday. I would suggest a planned arrival in Norwich on Thursday, July 20. We will have another activity on Friday to be determined.

2. Main tour in conjunction with the Heritage League July 23 – 28. Plans for the main tour are still in the preliminary stages, but one thing that is set is a full day devoted to a tour of Wendling, home of the 392nd Bomb Group, that will include some of the buildings and sites that were part of the base. We'll have lunch in one of the pubs frequented by 392nd airmen and have a chance to meet some of the local residents. A few of the other things that are being considered are the Norfolk-Suffolk Museum, a ride on a steam locomotive, Blickling Estate (home of Anne Boleyn), and The Broads, where the airmen went for outdoor recreation. The final day of this tour, Friday, July 28, will be a bus ride to London and a visit to St. Paul's Cathedral followed by a farewell dinner. Most people will stay the night and continue their travels the next day or return home from London.

3. Optional 4-night, 3-day extension to Normandy, France, July 29 – August 2. We are very fortunate that 392nd BGMA member Philip Brazier, a certified tour guide for Normandy, is helping me plan this optional extension

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trip. It will include extensive tours of the Normandy Beaches and cemeteries, museums, the town of Bayeux with its cathedral and tapestry, and Mont-Saint-Michel.

I hope that a lot of our members will be interested in joining us on the tour and that your children and/or grandchildren will want to come along as well. Mark the dates on your calendar. Please bear in mind that these plans are still in the formative stages, but I'll be keeping you updated as the plans unfold and prices are set.

Coming up much sooner is our 392nd BGMA yearly reunion and membership meeting which will be October 19-23, 2022, in Arlington, Virginia. As usual, we will be holding our meeting in conjunction with the annual 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion. Details and how to register are in the March 2022 *News* and at <https://b24.net/reunions.htm>. Few destinations are more interesting and educational than Washington, DC. I hope to see you there.

In the meantime, please try to join in on our quarterly Meet & Greet Zoom meeting that will take place on Sunday, July 24th at 1:30 pm EDT. These informal and casual meetings have proven to be a fun way to get to know each other better and share interesting stories. Be on the lookout for the email invitation in July.

Wishing you a safe, healthy, and enjoyable summer,

Ralph

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so much flak you could walk on it in the air (one little hole). Awoke at 5:30. Briefed at 6:30. Took off 8:30. Went over channel and North Sea. Over land about 20 mins. Lost no. 2 engine. Went over alone. Landed at 3:30. Lost formation. Little friends [P-51s] helped again. 27,000 ft. 41 below zero. (shipyards)

VIII. Berlin-Germany March 18-1945. Big B [Air Force slang for Berlin] Always wanted to go to Berlin. Got my wish and how I wish the Russians would capture [it] so we wouldn't go again. Bombed at 22,500 ft. Visual. Flak heavy and accurate. Pretty city. 2nd Division lost 25 ships. Saw 2 parachutes right in the bombs. One ship shot to pieces right beside us [perhaps the 576th Sqdn's 2/Lt Robert E. Vickers']. Take off 9:30. 33 below (anti-personal raid)

IX. Rheine, Germany March 23-1945. Took off at 8:15 and hit the target at about 11:00. Front line support just over the lines. Very little flak. Had a bombardier today. He flew the nose turret. [Bombardier-togglier S/Sgt Henry B. Greene] rode the waist. Enemy fighters in the air (Bandits). Had new M [model] B-24. Nice. 19,000 feet. 22 below (Marshalling yards)

X. Wesel-Germany March 24-1945. This was a supply mission to Montie's [British Field Marshall Bernard L. Montgomery] troops just over the Rhine. We flew very low all the way. French people waved us on. Horses and cows took off when we went over. We dropped the supplies (gas-TNT-blankets, food) at 30 feet. Almost hit the Rhine River bank as we came back across. Lots of small arm fire.

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News from Across the Pond

Memorial Day 2022. Trustee Jill Scott writes, "It was a sunny morning as Hugh, Henry Dennett, and I drove to Madingley, to attend the annual Memorial Day Service on behalf of the 392nd BGMA. This year the Service was particularly marking the 80th Anniversary of Operation Bolero, the code name for the US military troop build-up in the UK in 1942 (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Bolero.)

"The Service began with a USAF Overflight by a KC-153R from Mildenhall and a F-15E from Lakenheath. Next the arrival of the Official Party led by a Piper in full Highland Dress. Always impressive! The Presentation of Colours, the Invocation and the Welcome followed.

"There were two principal speakers. Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Mrs. Julie Spence, and USAF in Europe-USAfrica, Brigadier General William Marshall. Mrs. Spence particularly concentrated on the sinking of the SS *Coamo* by a torpedo from a German U boat in 1942 with the loss of all 186 of its passengers and crew. A steam passenger ship, she had been chartered by the US Army as a transport ship.

"The Presentation of the Floral Tributes was, as always, a moving occasion. There were 108. The first one laid after the Official Party was by a 98 year old veteran. Closing the service was the Firing of Volleys, Taps, a Benediction and the lone Piper playing a lament as he marched away.

"There was, as always, a 'full house'. It was Hugh's and Henry's first visit, and they were impressed by everything they saw.

"Leaning against some of the graves were photographs of the person buried there. The 'Faces of Cambridge' is an A.B.M.C. at Cambridge legacy project. The aim is to have photographs and, if possible, some biographic details of all those commemorated there. [The 392nd BGMA has contributed many photos to this project!]

"Before making our way back to the car we, and many others, watched the *Sally B* (a Fortress), circle several times low over the site [see the photo on page 12]. A fitting end to the occasion."

Platinum Jubilee. In early June, millions around the world celebrated Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years of service as monarch. Jill said "it was an amazing Platinum Jubilee Celebration long weekend—a tremendous and heartening success. In Beeston's own small way we celebrated with a Street Party on June 5th. The Rector (Rev. Miriam Fife) and I enjoyed judging duties, which included tasting the trifles which had been made to, or as near to, the winning recipe for Jubilee Pudding on a television programme! [To learn more, and see the winning recipe, go to <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-61428970>.]

"It was all great fun. For me, and I am sure for thousands of others across the country and elsewhere, the most heartening aspect has been the warmth of respect, appreciation and in the best sense affection for the Queen that has been demonstrated, not only by the huge crowds in London, but elsewhere in Britain and further afield."

Thank you! 392nd BGMA member Terry Haukom visited Wendling on 7 Apr 2022 with one purpose: to be at the Memorial on what would have been his father's 100th

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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 \$ _____

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birthday. S/Sgt Curtis B. Haukom, a gunner on the 578th's Stroble crew, never told Terry much about his WWII service and he was on a quest to see and learn all he could.

He found the kindness of strangers. After paying his respects at the 392nd BG Memorial, Terry drove down a nearby road, hoping it would lead to a WWII-era building. Instead, it was the driveway to **Derek "Del" Burney's** house. He promptly offered to show Terry the area. Over the course of several hours, Del drove Terry around the perimeter track of the airfield, to Beeston St. Mary the Virgin church, and finally to the Ploughshare with its 392nd Crusader Bar.

Terry had brought a new American flag for the Memorial in the event the one flying was in poor condition. It wasn't, so he left his at the Ploughshare to be used when needed.

While driving down a different road, Terry encountered **David Coleman**. When he learned why Terry was there, he promptly stopped what he was doing and took Terry to the building that housed the Combat Officers Mess, which he owns. Its murals always amaze!

In his travels, Terry also saw a surviving WWII Nissen hut.

Terry will be forever grateful to these two men who showed him traces of his father's WWII past that he would not have found on his own.

The 392nd BGMA also thanks Del, David, and the countless other English friends who have shown veterans and loved ones around Wendling and Beeston in the decades since the Group flew back home.

Book Recommendation. English member Philip Brazier recently reviewed the book *World War II Infographics* at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1563692720350729/search/?q=philip%20brazier>. He says "it thoroughly analyzed the 392nd BG's mission on 18 Mar 1944 in new and interesting ways. Since that mission resulted in the greatest loss of men and planes in the 392nd BG's illustrious service, the book is definitely worth a good read!"

Zoom Get-Together

Sixteen people joined us on 16 Apr 2022 for our quarterly Meet & Greet session via Zoom. Most of the conversation was about our July 2023 get-together in Norfolk, England. Ralph's column on page 3 highlights the major points discussed. Heritage League planners are aiming to make the itinerary "kid friendly" and purposely scheduled the trip during summer holidays in order that children/grandchildren can come.

We will publish details as soon as they are finalized. Only a limited number of hotel rooms will be available, so if you wish to attend, please reserve your room(s) promptly!

Ralph noted that the new plaque will likely have been installed on the Memorial by then, but it will be blessed/dedicated during our visit. Ralph thanked our Trustees for the fine care they take of the Memorial.

First-Timers

Two members, new this year, joined us. **Jerry Kenney's** father was a first cousin of 578th Sqdn bombardier/togglier

S/Sgt Donald A. Kight. On 14 Apr 1945, there was a pre-dawn take-off to eliminate pockets of resistance at Bordeaux-Pt. De Lusac, France. Kight's plane had just cleared the runway when it apparently stalled. With a full bomb and gas load, pilot 2/Lt Charles W. Warner was simply unable to recover before the plane crashed.

Seven of the eight men aboard were killed outright. S/Sgt Kight suffered third degree burns, but survived the crash. (578th Sqdn Commanding Officer Maj George C. Player Jr may have aided in his rescue, as he was later awarded the Soldier's Medal for "heroism displayed at the scene of an airplane crash in England, 14 Apr 1945." S/Sgt Kight was taken to hospital, where he died on 29 May 1945, the last 392nd BG casualty of the war.

Jerry left the meeting early due to a previous commitment, but said in a later email, "At the time of *JC Poolhall's* crash, my Dad and his twin brother were paratroopers in the 101st Airborne Div, 506 PIR, 3rd BN, HQ Co.—the same regiment as Easy Company of *Band of Brothers* fame. Dad and Harold had jumped into Normandy the night before D Day and saw a lot of combat in the ensuing months.

"Dad volunteered himself and Harold for the Airborne after he failed the eye exam needed to qualify for pilot training. As dangerous as being a paratrooper was, I think flying in the Air Corps was worse.

"God bless all of those heroes."

Bill McDonald is the son of 578/9th waist gunner Sgt Cecil L. McDonald, who is highlighted in this issue.

Bill had recently mailed many of his father's items and photos to 392nd BG historian Annette Tison, who showed several of them to the Zoomers.

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Saw the battle at first hand (rough). Enjoyed this mission better than any (Good pilot) [referring to 2/Lt Howard R. Ebersole].

XI. Bayreuth-Germany April 8-1945. We flew deputy lead and Lt. Ebersole really done a good job. We hit an ordnance depot and it really popped. Briefed at 6:30, bombed at 12:03. It was visual. No flak at all but a smoke bomb bursted in the bomb bay and [I] thought I would suffocate but it soon cleared away. 19,000 ft. 27 below. Landed at 14:43.

XII. Royan, France April 15-1945. We flew lead for the 576th Bomb Squadron and were the only ones to hit the target. We had the new jelly gas bombs [napalm]. The target was visual and we sure spread a lot of fire. About 130,000 Germans still in a pocket sure caught hell. Briefed at 1:00 a.m. and took off at 6:05. Landed at 14:00. 15,000 feet. 11 below. Not much flak.

XIII. Beroun, Czechoslovakia April 17-1945 [Sgt McDonald's last mission]. We went for railroad yards and got them. Flew over [Nuremberg] and the front lines. Sure saw a lot of fighting. I rode 8 solid hours in [a] Martin Turret (rough). Awoke at 6 a.m., took off at 9. Bombed at

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15:00, landed at 18:50. Blew out tire on take off (exciting). Flew deputy group lead. 12,500 feet. 17 below. Weak opposition. Visual.

The Ebersole crew

Among Cecil's memorabilia was a page from an undated Ford Motor Co. newsletter. It announced *A Ford Crew on a Ford plane* manned with four former employees who were "stationed in Boise, Idaho, waiting for their overseas orders." They were: Lt Howard Ebersole (pilot), "former radio operator in the Marine department at Rouge"; Lt Alben Culp (copilot), "former machine operator at the Memphis branch"; Lt Donald Griffith (bombardier), "former government inspector, Rouge Aircraft building"; and Cpl Harry Lynch (tail gunner), "formerly of the Aircraft building Tool department."

Cecil's photos

A review of the photos shows that many were taken long before Cecil flew his first mission. He likely acquired them as the 392nd BG was "closing down" to return to the US. They are a priceless documentary of the daily lives of thousands of combat and support airmen.

Bill says, "I call the greatest generation the silent generation, because in my experience they didn't talk about the war. In short, I don't know the origin of the 392nd photos but know Dad cherished the group, had an historian's sensibility, and feared the men and missions would be forgotten. After the war, I recall clearly, no one wanted to *relive* it."

Unless otherwise credited, all photos shown below are either from Cecil McDonald's scrapbooks or show items from his memorabilia.

Rabbits and a Monkey

The date on one of Cecil's photos, 10 May 1944, connects it to entries in the 465th Sub Depot's history for that month: "Most of the activity of Sub Depot Supply has been of a routine nature but there has been some unusual activity in the back of the warehouse and also along the side. M/Sgt Murray has purchased some rabbits and according to the latest census, the tribe has increased greatly which called for Maximum Effort on the part of the big black and white Buck Rabbit."

Also in that history entry: "Every dog has its day, but in the case of *Jocko*, the monkey which is Air Corps Supply's mascot, he has had it. Captain Carter purchased him from somebody and at first his presence was a novelty and he was reclassified from civilian to basic. Jocko's aptitude for curiosity soon became apparent. If he wasn't searching for cooties in someone's hair, he was tipping over ink wells to see what was on the bottom, or lifting the receiver off the phone, or biting someone on the hand. He also soon learned to scribble on paper with a pencil, fill a pipe with tobacco and destroy any loose papers that happened to catch his fancy. Jocko had his other qualities, for on closer study he resembled an ETO Happy Soldier and made us think more of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution as advanced in his book, *Origin of the Species*. Now Captain Carter is willing to sell him at any price to any bidder but at the time of this writing, Jocko is very much a member of Air Corps Supply."



Top: L-R 465th Sub Depot M/Sgt John J. Murray, his black and white rabbit, Jocko the monkey, an unidentified man, and 465th Sub Depot Supply Officer 2/Lt Alvin S. Carter. Bottom: Jocko, in a 465th Sub Depot photo. Please note that he's wearing a leash in both!



This photo was taken 13 June 1944. Research reveals that 578th Sqdn pilot 2/Lt William C. Smith (right) is comparing a "king size" fragment of flak that was removed from one of his engines with a similar but smaller memento held by his engineer, T/Sgt Kenneth L. Seaton (left). His piece came right up through the floor to his seat in the top turret. Their B-24 suffered 17 holes from flak during the 12 June 1944 mission to Dreux Airfield, France. Seaton recalled that flak had set their #3 engine on fire, knocked out both their #3 and #4 engines, and hurled right waist gunner S/Sgt William O. McRight to the other side of the bomber. Luckily, no one were injured. It "was a rough one; we were almost positive that our Lib was done ... but we are still here. Haha." Flak over the target, described as "heavy and fairly accurate," damaged 17 of the 392nd's 36 B-24s.

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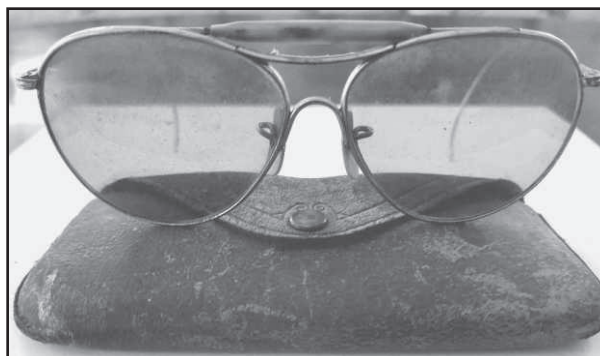
Top: Dated 10-5-44, this photo shows an unidentified GI taking a work break. Based on the equipment in the background, he was probably one of the ground crew. Other photos: GIs share a keg of beer with the men (young and old) who lived nearby.



Per 392nd BG records, B-24s #42-51899 and #42-51519 were not named. These photos, taken in Valley, Wales, prove otherwise. Cecil was aboard #899 in his last mission (17 Apr 1945) and his crew flew it back to the US in June 1945. The top photo shows that #899 had a new name, undoubtedly based on the crew's options for a safe return stateside: they could ditch and bitch, or they could land! The bottom photo, also taken in Valley, reveals that #519 was now named *Lady C*. It also shows many of the other 392nd BG planes that had started their journey home.

Cecil's Memorabilia

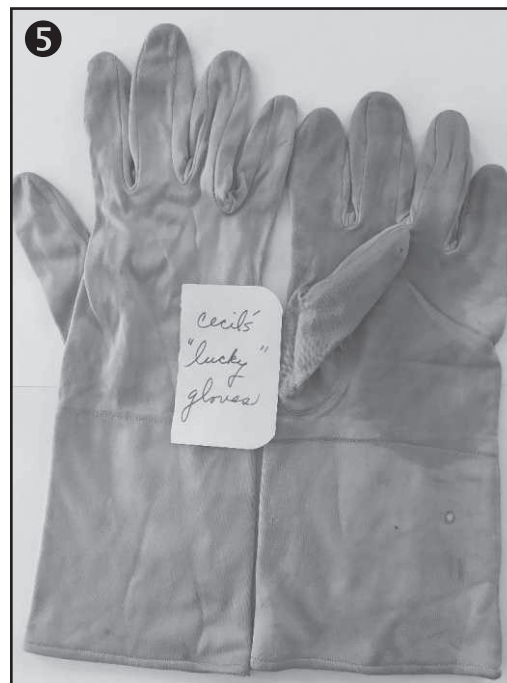
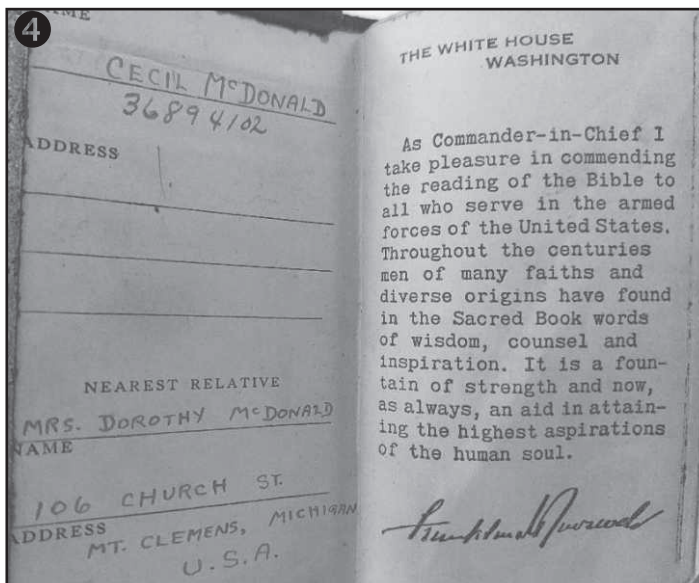
In addition to his photos, Cecil also brought back (or later collected) a lot of WWII memorabilia. His 392nd BG Crusader patch is shown on page 1.



Cecil's aviation sunglasses

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- ❶ A woman's compact in the shape of an AAF cap.
- ❷ A letter opener in the form of an AAF officer's sword.
- ❸ A mass-produced 8AF souvenir of England.
- ❹ Cecil's military pocket-sized Bible.
- ❺ Cecil's "lucky" silk inner flying gloves.

The Jeep

Even before the United States entered WWII, the Army knew its trucks were too big for quick, stealthy movement. A small, multipurpose reconnaissance vehicle was needed.

Specifications sent to U.S. manufacturers in May 1940 requested proposals—and a working prototype in 49 days—for a new vehicle that had to weigh no more than 1,300 pounds (later raised to 2,160 pounds), have a two-meter wheelbase, be four-wheel drive, and able to carry 600 pounds (three men) plus a .30-caliber machine gun.

Only two manufacturers—the American Bantam Co. and Willys-Overland—provided vehicle models. The Army evaluated them at Fort Holabird, near Baltimore, Maryland.

It had been a US Army quartermaster depot during WWI that shipped supplies (including trucks) to US forces. It also had a school to teach soldiers how to drive and repair those vehicles as well as a test track so soldiers could experience driving under the road conditions they would likely encounter.

This course was used to test the new truck models. The 1940 assessment began with a visual inspection of each prototype, followed by a dynamometer test to check engine horsepower. Then came 5,000 miles of normal highway driving with a full payload and towed loads. Soon after was a 1,000-mile cross-country test.

"This was a severe trial that included going through mud holes, up hills with grades of 65%, over large ditches, and around small twisting hills that frequently caused frame distortion," Army historian Herbert R. Rifkin later wrote.

Then the vehicle was driven 1,000 miles on a clay road, followed by 500 miles on a sand course. The last step was 10 hours of driving up a sand grade so steep the vehicle had to travel in its lowest gear at no more than 2 mph.

Finally, each model was disassembled and examined.

Only Bantam's entries met the requirements, but the

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Army was concerned that the small company couldn't manufacture the vehicles in sufficient quantities. Willys and Ford were chosen to build the quarter-ton, 4x4 command reconnaissance vehicle.

Between 1941 and 1945, about 648,000 were made by Willys (at its Toledo plant) and Ford (at five different plants). Both companies used the same design so that all Jeeps would have identical components.

The 1941 patent application said the ¼ ton truck was "a convertible small car body so arranged that a single vehicle may be interchangeably used as a cargo truck, personnel carrier, emergency ambulance, field beds, radio car, trench mortar unit, mobile anti-aircraft machine gun unit, or for other purposes."

American Jeeps were provided to Allies around the world, with 182,500 through Lend-Lease (almost 105,000 to the British Empire and about 50,000 to the Soviet Union). By 1945, U.S. forces had close to one motor truck (Jeeps included) for every four men in the European theater and worldwide it had one vehicle per seven American GIs.

Despite this worldwide popularity, there is no consensus among historians as to how they became known as Jeeps. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willys_MB for several possibilities and more information.

Their Place in History

In his memoirs, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, in WWII, wrote that most senior officers regarded the Jeep as one of the five pieces of equipment most vital to success in Africa and Europe. (The others were the bulldozer, the DUKW amphibious truck, 2½ ton trucks, and the Douglas C-47 Skytrain transport airplane.)

The soldiers who drove the Jeep came to love it. In 1943, US war correspondent Ernie Pyle wrote: "Good Lord, I don't think we could continue the war without the Jeep. It does everything. It goes everywhere. It's as faithful as a dog, as strong as a mule, and as agile as a goat. It constantly carries twice what it was designed for, and still keeps going. It doesn't even ride so badly after you get used to it. ... The jeep is a divine instrument of wartime locomotion."

At the 392nd

Jeeps were a part of every-day life at the 392nd BG. They were used to perform regular security patrols of the base, in general, and especially of all parked aircraft; as base defense vehicles; and to move men (and equipment) wherever needed, whether just around the base or to more distant stations.



392nd BG Jeeps got hard use. Here, Group Transportation Officer 2/Lt James V. Goar Jr. (left) supervises as two of his men inspect Jeeps for wear and tear or other safety issues.

In fact, they were so omnipresent that in most 392nd BG photos they merely serve as backdrops. They are rarely mentioned in veterans' accounts.

One exception was 578/9th pilot Bruce McClellan's. In a post-war journal, he wrote, "At twenty-second intervals we line up at the end of the runway and shove the throttles full forward. Fully loaded with fuel and bombs we are at our most vulnerable when we take off, and weather is not always cooperative. Sometimes morning fog is so thick that a jeep must be positioned in the center of the runway facing the planes with headlights on about twenty yards from the takeoff position so that pilots can line their planes up with the runway. The jeep moves out of the way, the engines whine up to maximum performance power, and the pilots take off on a gyrocompass heading. It was a little primitive but seemed to work—most of the time."

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

Nissen and Quonset Huts

The names Nissen and Quonset are often used interchangeably in regard to half-oval metal structures, but their differences are greater than their similarities.

The Nissen Hut

In mid-April 1916, Major Peter Norman Nissen, 29th Company Royal Engineers of the British Army, began to experiment with a new design for military huts. His assigned parameters: the structure had to be built from relatively few (and inexpensive) materials that were easily portable and could be erected quickly by just a few workers.

The concept that would later bear his name was a prefabricated semi-cylindrical structure with an internal framework to which metal sheeting was attached.



Top: LtCol Peter Nissen (left) and one of his huts in 1917. Middle: Two 392nd BG Nissen huts. Bottom: The Station Orderly Section on 20 Feb 1945. The interior framing is clearly visible, as are dormer windows, doors at the back and side, and a stove.

Production began in August 1916, with at least 100,000 made in WWI. Their design meant that as battle lines changed, they could be quickly taken down, packed in a standard Army wagon, moved, and then erected again. It usually took six men about four hours to put one up, but the record was just 1 hour, 27 minutes.



Top: The interior of a 392nd BG Nissen hut being used as a barracks. The men's attire (or lack thereof) shows the photo was taken on a hot day! Note also the one stove, hardly adequate to heat the room completely in cold weather. Bottom: The 465th Sub Depot's Carpenter Shop. Note the size difference in these two Nissen huts! They also illustrate how the low curvature of the hut meant that the inside space was completely useable at ground level.

They were also mass-produced by the thousands in WWII. By then, Nissen huts came in three internal diameters—16, 24 or 30 feet. The bays came in 6 feet lengths, so the completed cylinder's length could be any multiple of 6 feet.

Walls at each end were made from a wooden frame with weatherboards nailed to the outside. Windows and doors could be added to the sides by using specially-formed metal sheets.

Most, if not all, of the curved structures at Station 118 were Nissen huts.

Quonset Huts

In 1941, the George Fuller Co., a major construction firm, was building key facilities for the US Navy at Quonset Point, Rhode Island. Realizing that troops and their supplies would soon have to be transported and then housed/stored around the world, military officials approached

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Fuller's chief engineer Peter Dejongh and architect Otto Brandenberger and tasked them to design a Nissen-hut type structure for US needs.

They had just two specifications: the new huts should be arch shaped, for strength and deflection of shell fragments, and able to be quickly and simply assembled.

The first design used a T-shaped steel and iron arch to which were connected steel and iron frames spaced four feet apart. Stainless steel sheets were then laid across the frames and affixed with nuts and bolts. The sheets were laid in a continuous arch so the walls and roof of the hut became a single structural member.

While the design resembled the Nissen hut's, the Quonset plan included several significant improvements, including interior Masonite lining, insulation, and a plywood floor on a raised metal framework. They were named "Quonset" huts in honor of their place of origin.

The original Quonset design had a 16 by 36-foot footprint, later expanded to a standard 20 by 48-foot general purpose size with some 86 different interior configurations (for barracks, medical facilities, chapels, classrooms, repair and supply functions, offices, mess halls, bakeries, etc.) as well as warehouse styles called Elephant huts.



<http://quonset-hut.blogspot.com/p/morphology.html> says, "*The Elephant Hut* was an enlarged version of the Quonset Hut, with dimensions of 40' x 100'. A construction team of ten men could build one shed in under 300 hours, an impressively small amount of manpower and time considering the building's size. It could also be shipped to any location in 23 crates and took up little room in a ship's cargo hold."

During WWII, the Quonset design evolved through five different models, each one becoming cheaper and/or more adaptable. The final, and most widely used variant, employed lighter-weight materials such as half-inch plywood and a lighter-gauge galvanized siding, with factory-curved panels only along the ridge line; the rest of the panels were shipped flat. This change meant that there was no longer lost floor space due to the curvature of the arch.

Eventually, between 150,000 and 170,000 Quonset huts were built.

Summary

Nissen and Quonset huts housed people and supplies



The difference in curvatures between a 392nd BG Nissen hut (top) and a Quonset hut (bottom) is the easiest way to tell them apart.

around the globe in WWII. When the war ended, excess military huts were sold to civilians or organizations and repurposed. Many were used by colleges and universities as housing and classrooms for the large influx of veterans attending under the GI Bill; others were adapted for use as churches, supermarkets, barns or farm storage structures, retail spaces, restaurants, garages, and industrial buildings.

These shelters, iconic emblems of two world wars, proved useful for decades—and the designs for Nissen and Quonset huts are now reappearing as modern "tiny houses" and garden sheds.

Editor's note: For much more information, see https://web.mst.edu/~rogersda/umrcourses/ge342/quonset_huts-revised.pdf, <http://varnumcontinentals.org/2016/04/the-quonset-hut-a-rhode-island-original/>, <https://nissens.co.uk/> and <https://390th.org/anatomy-of-a-bomber-base-nissen-hut/>.



This photo of a long-abandoned 392nd BG Nissen hut was taken by Terry Haukom in early April 2022. The building is definitely showing its age, but it is still standing—pretty remarkable for a 75+ year old structure intended for temporary use!

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

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

On the evening of May 24th, I sat down next to my husband to watch the national news. I was immediately confused as the news anchor was detailing a mass shooting in the U.S. I looked at Doug and asked if this was a repeat since we were still horrified about last week's mass shooting at a grocery store. No, I realized, this news story was live and described yet another shooting massacre in our country.

There is so much to say, yet I find myself speechless. Such tragedies are, unfortunately, happening worldwide.

It is said that we learn from our mistakes; that we learn from history. Since the purpose of our organization is World War II history, let's see what we may have learned from that conflict and if we are applying those lessons in real time.

World War II provided two contradictory lessons:

1. War is to be avoided at all cost.
2. Democracies need to be ready to resist aggression.

Does the world retain these lessons or do they have to be retaught?

Images we see coming from the unprovoked Russian aggression toward Ukraine are certainly reminiscent of World War II: the massacre of innocents; war machines rumbling down previously peaceful streets; rubble replacing homes, hospitals, schools; POWs in custody; and one man's need to acquire power and property at any cost.

Europe is threatened again and domestically we all fight our own battles against racism, politics, terrorism, hate and stupidity. How have we evolved since we achieved peace in Europe so many decades ago? Have we ever achieved peace and equality at home?

My first grandbaby was born in April. She is a blank slate now. She is so innocent, so content, so curious to learn her world. As I hold her, I wonder what will become her prejudices, what doctrines will guide her, what politics will she embrace and who will influence her beliefs?

The responsibility to influence her generation is ours as we represent the presiding generation (the elders). Are we able to provide a peaceful world for this peaceful baby? Can we show her a world of equality, neutrality, tolerance and love? Can we teach her politics that are equitable and make her understand that Political Leaders often have ambitions far beyond their actual capabilities and we need to resist their misguidance?

How can we teach and role model peace, equality and kindness when much of the world does not live that concept? What ideologies are we promoting for this youngest generations who one day will be guiding the world—either peacefully or tumultuously?

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Assoc.
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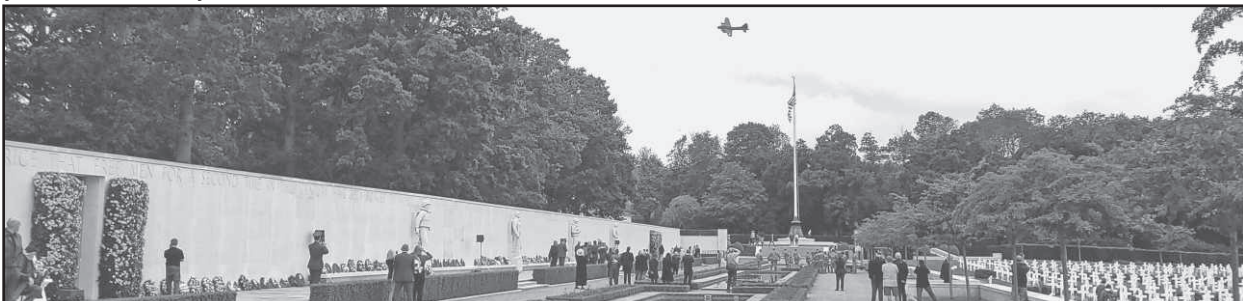
Almighty God, Who has blessed us with the will and courage to do our duty, we praise You for our comrades whose death kept freedom living. We praise You also for giving us the years we have lived since their departure. We pray that You will strengthen and sustain our devotion to truth and justice, so 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∞

Lucy Fenton, widow of John S. Fenton, 576th,
March 22, 2022

Joseph M. Cook, 578th, March 14, 2022

John E. Griffin, 576th, April 29, 2022



On Memorial Day 2022, the B-17 *Sally B* flies over Cambridge American Cemetery in England. To the left are floral wreaths placed before 5,127 names on the Walls of the Missing and to the right, 3,811 burials.