

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

NEWS

Volume 25

March 2010



REUNIONS IN 2010 for 392nd BGMA

Official Reunion at "Thunder over Michigan" Air Show

The 392nd BGMA will hold its official 2010 reunion in Detroit from 5-9 August as part of the "Thunder over Michigan" air show. Organizers are expecting to have eight to ten B-17s, two flyable B-24s, twelve P-51s, a flying ME-262, an ME-109, a B-25 Mitchell, a C-47 Skytrain, a PT-17 Stearman, and other WWII aircraft on display. The F/A-18F Super Hornet will be shown off by a demonstration team from Naval Air Station, Oceana, Virginia.

The Board of Directors felt that the opportunity to see all these aircraft together was just too good to pass up. This is not an 8th Air Force Historical Society (8AFHS) reunion, but rather an event sponsored by the 8th; therefore, you do not need to be a member of the Historical Society to attend.

Registered 8AFHS attendees staying at our hotel within our room block will have preferential (back door) motor coach transportation to and from the air show with delivery to a private tented seating and viewing area at center stage and free access to several B-17s offering "walk throughs." Admission will include lunch, transportation, center stage seating, as well as dinner Saturday, followed by a symposium Saturday night. Optional tours will be available on Friday and Sunday.

The host hotel is the Crowne Plaza Detroit Metro Airport with complimentary airport shuttle, free parking for those driving in, and a room rate of \$89 per night plus tax. As always, the 392nd will have its own hospitality room with lots of memorabilia, food and drink. There will also be a fully stocked 8th Air Force communal hospitality room.

Since the air show is billed as "the largest gathering of heavy bombers in the world," attendance is expected to be high. Hotel reservations may be cancelled without penalty up to the day before arrival. *If in doubt, make your hotel reservations now and cancel later.*

More information and the reunion registration form are on pages 4-6.

8AFHS reunion in Tucson

The official 8AFHS reunion will be held in Tucson, Arizona, from 21-25 July 2010. A highlight will be a visit to the Pima Air Museum and a drive-through tour of the "boneyard," home to over 4,000 military aircraft and often referred to as the world's third largest air force. For complete information and the registration form, see pages 8-9.

2ADA Reunion

Oak Mackey, our Vice President for the 2nd Air Division Association (2ADA), says its reunion will be in New Orleans from 10-13 September at the Omni Royal Orleans Hotel. Details and registration forms will be in the June 2010 News.

A Last Salute to Bob Vickers

by Annette Tison

On 28 Jan 2010, 578th Sqdn pilot Bob Vickers lost his long battle with cancer. He leaves behind a legacy of service.

...to his country—32 years of continuous active military duty including 30 combat missions with the 392nd BG as well as the Berlin Airlift, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War. When he retired from the Air Force, he had over 10,000 flight hours.

...to the 392nd. He published *The Liberators from Wendling* in 1977 with a second printing in 1987. It details the combat history of the 392nd with excerpts from unit diaries and is supplemented by many photos. In 1996, he published *Remembrance of the Missing: The Men and Their Missions*. As the title suggests, this book focused on Crusaders who did not return from a mission, whether due to death, capture, internment in a neutral country, or evasion.

When the 392nd BG's website was established in 1999, he graciously allowed his works to be posted in this new format. They form the backbone of www.b24.net.

He was also a member of our Board of Directors.

...to the 8th Air Force Historical Society. He was a charter member and served as a Director for 13 years and President for two years.

...to the American Air Museum (AAM) in Duxford, England. As a Trustee, he worked for many years to locate a B-24 for display at the Museum. That B-24 is now fittingly painted as Bob's 578th Sqdn plane, #44-50493, Dugan. He was also Co-Chairman of the AAM's Legacy Society.

Navigator Keith Roberts summed up his pilot's life with these words: "He was a flier and flew every airplane in the Air Force inventory during his time in service. He was a hero and flew combat missions throughout his military career. He was a leader in many capacities. He was a caring family man. He was a loyal and faithful friend. And finally, he enjoyed life. He lived throttles all the way forward, full throttle, all out."

No wonder he accomplished so much.



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Jim Goar

FROM THE EDITOR

Bob Vickers. The 392nd has lost a friend and premier historian. I refer to Bob's books almost every day—more evidence of his lasting impact on the 392nd.

#41-29448, Carol Ann. F/O George W. Richert, navigator on the Niederriter



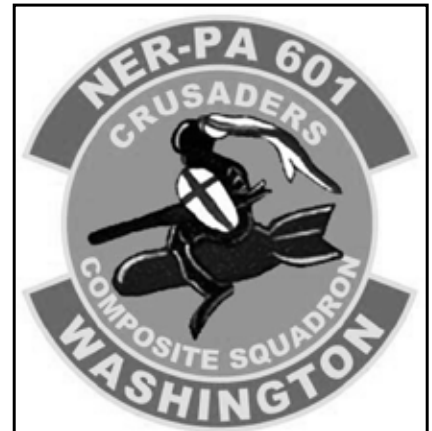
crew, frequently flew on #448. When his daughter was born in November 1944, he told his wife to name her Carol Ann. (That decision, he later told his daughter, was a "no brainer.") Carol Ann was thrilled to find a photo on our website of her father and crew in front of "her" airplane. She

says, "I want to thank you and your team for the dedication in creating this site. I am pleased to see my children so energized about their grandfather and the 579th Squadron. I have shared with them many times about my father's military service to our country but it didn't hit home until they saw the website. I'm very appreciative of this—it now can be passed to the next generation." She recently joined the 392nd BGMA.

One question remains. Carol Ann Richert was named for the plane, but who was the plane named for?

In this photo of the Niederriter crew and #448, F/O Richert is standing second from the left.

Crusader Emblem Lives On. Ed Silassy, grandson of T/Sgt Robert N. Burns, is Aerospace Education Officer and Deputy Commander for Cadets for Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Composite Squadron 601 in Washington, PA. When his unit wanted to create a squadron patch, he suggested the 392nd's Crusader emblem. After he described his grandfather's service with the 392nd and



what the Group accomplished in WWII, the 19 Cadets and 18 Senior members voted overwhelmingly to adopt the symbol as their own. The wing commander approved the idea.

Silassy says, "The cadets have really taken a liking to the emblem. They used to say they were from the Washington Composite Squadron; now they say they are Crusaders."

He has offered to provide a full-color patch to any 392nd veteran who wants one; if you're interested, please let me know.

The Civil Air Patrol was formed on 1 Dec 1941. During WWII, its members provided orientation flights to thousands of prospective aviation cadets and recruits. Members also flew more than 24 million miles on coastal patrol. They summoned help for 91 ships in distress and 363 survivors of submarine attacks. Patrol crews spotted 173 enemy submarines, dropped bombs or depth charges on 57 of them and received credit for sinking or seriously damaging at least two. Others were destroyed by planes and ships summoned by CAP radios.

Its current missions are to provide 1) emergency services, such as inland search and rescue operations; 2) aerospace education, to promote an understanding of aviation and space programs; and 3) cadet programs, to inspire and encourage young people who are interested in aviation or military careers.

T/Sgt Burns was the engineer on the Spartage crew in the 579th Sqdn. He flew missions between November 1943 and May 1944, including Friedrichshafen on 18 Mar 1944.

History of the Emblem. The Daily Bulletin for 25 Apr 1944 reported that "A prize of five pounds will be offered by the Station Commander to any member of the station who can design a prize-winning group insignia for the 392nd Bombardment Group (H)." The number of entries submitted is not known, but an early version of the winning design is shown on page 7.

President's Message



Tom Eaton, for many years the Chairman of the Second Air Division Memorial Trust in Norwich, died Jan. 19, aged 91. Those of us who listened to his reports, delivered in clipped, precise English, at the 2ADA annual reunions were aware that he was a remarkable man but were not really acquainted with his record: Survivor of three years' captivity at

the hands of the Japanese; one of the youngest mayors of Norwich; a leader of the veterans of the Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Regiments; the senior partner of a prestigious law firm which was founded in 1788. He was considered to be "Mr. Norwich" in all East Anglia and beyond.

The 392nd salutes Tom Eaton, and extends condolences to widow Robin, son David, and daughters Kate and Mary.

On the same somber note we report the passing of Bob Vickers. When we learned that the end was near, we sent him the following message: "The 392nd is figuratively standing at Parade Rest, waiting to be called to Attention to render Salute." That salute is to be found elsewhere in this issue.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I really take umbrage at the soulful and otherwise varying renditions given the National Anthem at the opening of our sporting events. At the Pro Bowl, it was sung in falsetto voice by four young men. I penned a remonstrance to Jim Irsay, CEO of the Indianapolis Colts, but didn't send it because Annabelle, not a Service veteran, thought it "beautiful."

All central Indiana mourned the Colts' loss at the Super Bowl. I say central Indiana because the north is Chicago Bears' territory, and the south goes for the Cincinnati Bengals.

Those of you who were in the 578th, especially ground personnel, will be pleased to know that Bob Lane is still alive and kicking. He was Squadron Adjutant from the get-go, and became Executive Officer with the transfer of the beloved Capt Lieblich. He had Infantry training before becoming Air Corps, and was an accomplished soldier. He is living in a retirement home in Florida, having not too good a time of it, but toughing it out like the rest of us.

Editor Annette Tison has furnished some interesting statistics which show where we stand membership-wise. We have 423 members and friends, living in 44 states and 7 countries. 220 are 392nd veterans (174 air and 46 ground). Currently 12 percent of our members receive the News via email. 52% of our membership are veterans, which means that the other 48% are in place to pick up the banner when the last of us are called to "that great Air Base in the sky."

The 392nd chose the Detroit meeting of the 8AFHS to be the place for our annual meeting. The vote of the Board of Directors was 11 to 3, a substantial majority. We regret that our Western members will have farther to travel, but the high temperature at Tucson, plus the unavailability of hospitality rooms weighed heavily on the decision.

If you are considering choosing Detroit, and we hope that you will, make your hotel reservations NOW. If between

now and Aug. 5 you decide not to come, you can cancel without cost.

Blue Skies,
Jim Goar

I Remember...

577th Sqdn copilot Les Hadley flew missions on 1/Lt Phil Anundson's crew between May and August 1944. Here, he recalls enemy fighter attacks in general and one encounter in particular.

We were usually number twelve in the low left squadron. As "tail-end Charlie," we were not well-protected by the guns in our formation and would therefore be the easiest for enemy fighters to pick off.

German Fighter Attacks

Enemy fighters always seemed to follow the same routine. They would come from behind on our left and then swing around and attack four abreast from the front. It seemed forever that they would be just ahead, their wings blinking as the pilots fired their guns. Then they would dive slightly so the lead ship and two other fighters flew just under us while the fourth came in just over our right wing. If the assault didn't drive us out of the formation, they'd regroup and attack from the rear.

When our guns opened up, the noise was deafening. The switch the waist gunners used to activate the interphone was in the handle of their machine guns; when they fired, they usually broadcast the sound of their machine guns throughout the ship.

Sometimes, even the turret gunners would hold down the mike button while they fired. Your earphones would practically jump off your head when all ten guns were firing. But it was always good to hear everyone giving it back to the Luftwaffe. I always thought that was the worst part of being a bomber pilot—you could not fight back but had to rely on the others in the crew.

When the fighters dove between the planes, the closure speed must have been what, four or five hundred miles an hour? But I can still remember the pilots' faces (or rather their brown helmets and their oxygen masks) as they passed only a few feet away.

Tail Gunner Sgt William M. Kleber

During a mission to Politz, German fighter opposition was especially fierce; every gun position on our plane was firing at once. An Me-109 got in really close and put some 20mm cannon shells into the tail section. One hit the tail turret's hydraulic accumulator. Besides knocking out the power to the turret, it also sprayed so much hydraulic fluid on the Plexiglas that Bill couldn't see.

The ammunition for the tail guns was in a box near the waist windows and was fed through long metal chutes. Normally, electric motors pulled the bullets into the guns. Since there was no power, Bill had to drag the ammunition forward by hand and lift the rounds over the teeth of the booster motors.

He managed to get the cranks in place so he could rotate the turret manually as the waist gunners called out the angle of the attack ("4 o'clock low," etc.). When he used the foot pedal to fire, the vibration shook the cranks onto the floor of

See Memories on page 11

8th AFHS/392nd BG OFFICIAL REUNION IN DETROIT

AUGUST 5-9, 2010

Registration Instructions. Please complete the registration form indicating your choice of meals and tours, along with the other member information. Mail your registration form, along with your check or money order, to 8th AFHS by July 15, 2010. Or you may also securely register on line and pay with a credit card at www.8thafhs.org. Just click on "Special Event." For "WWII GROUP" put "392nd Bomb Group."

Hotel reservations should also be made directly with the hotel no later than July 15, 2010 by calling 1-734-729-2600 or 1-800-227-6963. Just say that you are with the 8th Air Force.

Cancellation Policy. You may cancel your reunion plans with the Society and receive a full refund prior to the cut-off date. There will be a \$25 charge for each reservation cancelled after the cut-off date. Cancellations can be made Monday thru Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm Eastern time, by calling 912-748-8884.

PLEASE NOTE: Cancelling your Reunion reservations does not cancel your Hotel reservations. You must do that separately, or expect to be charged for at least one room night per room reserved.

Thursday, August 5

9:30am-12:00pm

Early Bird Registration Open

2:00pm- 5:00pm

Early Bird Registration Open

Friday, August 6

9:30am-12:00pm

Registration Open

10:30am- 3:00pm

Ford Museum Tour

3:00pm- 5:30pm

Registration Open

6:00pm-7:00pm

Cash Bar Reception

7:00pm-

Buffet Dinner and entertainment

Saturday, August 7

7:00am-9:00am

Full Buffet Breakfast

10:00am-4:30pm

Air Show (with box lunch)

5:15pm- 8:00pm

Symposium and dinner (at Willow Run)

8:00pm

Return to Hotel & Hospitality Suites

Sunday, August 8

7:00am-9:00am

Full Buffet Breakfast

10:00 am-4:30pm

Air Show

10:30am-3:00pm

Ford Museum Tour

6:00pm-7:00pm

Cash Bar Reception

7:00pm-

Gala 8th AFHS dinner

Monday, August 9

7:00am-8:30am

Full Buffet Breakfast; Hugs and Depart

THE CROWNE PLAZA DETROIT METRO AIRPORT

800-227-6963 Crowne Plaza Toll Free Reservation Line; 734-729-2600 Crowne Plaza direct line (ask for reservations)

The Crowne Plaza is located at 8000 Merriman Road, Romulus, MI 48174. Situated at the entrance to Detroit Metro Airport, its spectacular sun-drenched atrium lobby will welcome you with a special warmth, and the cheerful, professional staff will pamper you with exceptional service.

Stylish accommodations and gracious hospitality are the cornerstones of the Crowne Plaza Detroit Metro Airport. This magnificent 11-story hotel has 364 spacious guest rooms, many with walk-out balconies overlooking the atrium and pool area. Balcony rooms are based upon availability at time of check in.

See HOTEL on page 5

☺☺RE-ENLIST TODAY!☺☺

Please take a moment to look at the mailing label on this issue. Your membership status can be found right after your name. LM means Life Member and FRND means that you receive the News with compliments of the 392nd BGMA. If the number is 10 or higher, your dues are current; if the number is 09, please renew ASAP.

If you feel that you are in a position to help the 392nd BGMA treasury with a donation, there is a provision for it below. 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.

Send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Bill McCutcheon, 20620 Milton Ct., Brookfield, WI 53045.

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

Associate [] If you're joining or a member because a spouse, friend, or relative served in the 392nd, please give us his name and unit: _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

Dues:

[] \$25 if you wish to receive the News by postal mail OR [] \$20 if you wish to receive the News by email
Life Membership: age 61-65, \$120 []; age 66-70, \$96 []; age 71 and up, \$78 []

Hardship Waiver [] DONATION \$ _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

HOTEL from page 4. All rooms have lighted work desks, telephones with voicemail, free high speed internet access and cable televisions with in room pay movies.

Relax and unwind in the heated indoor swimming pool and whirlpool or stay in shape in the complimentary on-site fitness center. Discover the delightful cuisine of Bistro 94—elegant, but by no means formal—offering your favorite American fare, exquisite wines and elegant desserts. Trophy's Sports Bar provides hearty food and drink to guests while they enjoy televised sporting events or friendly conversation. All restaurant and Lounge selections are also available through room service.

The Hotel is less than 5 minutes from the airport and has 2 airport courtesy shuttles. Upon arrival at the airport, go to the lower level of the terminal (where you pick up your luggage). There is a phone board with hotels listed; ring the Crowne Plaza and the staff will instruct you. Upon departure, the van is based upon availability and runs every hour on the half hour.

Parking is free for all our guests driving in, including those with RVs and trailers; however, no hook-ups are available on site.

And for those of you who may start out with a full head of steam but slow down for some unexpected reason, we will have three wheelchairs on site for your convenience.

MEALS/TOUR SELECTIONS

CHOICE #1: THE FUN PACKAGE \$225 (our most popular option). The Fun Package is designed for those who prefer a "single priced" fairly inclusive event package. You may add extra events to your Fun Package as you wish by simply adding them to your registration form and paying the additional cost. The Fun Package allows you the option to add a Friday tour or Sunday tour, for those who only want to visit the Air Show on Saturday.

The Fun Package includes: Registration Fee; 3 full buffet breakfasts, beginning with breakfast on Friday; 3 Dinners (Fri, Sat, & Sun); Saturday Air Show with Lunch; Saturday Evening Dinner & Symposium; Bus Transportation and Preferential Air Show Seating on Saturday only. **PLEASE NOTE:** Ford Museum Tour Friday or Sunday is an additional cost with lunch on your own. The Sunday Air Show is an additional cost. See registration form for all additional costs.

Daily breakfast buffet includes bacon, eggs, sausage, potatoes, assorted juices and breads, cereal, fruit, yogurt, coffee, tea and milk.

CHOICE #2: INDIVIDUAL MEALS AND EVENTS

If you choose to purchase individual meals and event activity, you will be required to pay the Registration fee of \$35 per attendee.

INDIVIDUAL GROUP MEALS: Daily Group Buffet Breakfast.....\$12

FROM THE HISTORIES

465th Sub Depot, January 1945: It is a known fact that a strange rivalry exists between the B-17 Joes and the Liberator backers. On the 23rd of this month, we witnessed a sudden flare-up of this "rub" when a B-17 returning from a mission was forced to make a landing at this station. The plane did its best to eliminate the headquarters building with all "big wheels" therein but it hit and damaged the old S-2 briefing room and completely demolished a mobile link

trainer which was parked there. However, being a bunch of good-natured individuals, we simply passed this off to Reclamation and Salvage as another job. As is customary, whenever we do get an operation of this type, the first man arriving finds the airplane clock among the missing, this case being no exception. This often causes the imagination to wander, thinking that when a pilot sees he is going down he grabs a six pence from his pocket and immediately proceeds to remove the two small screws holding this instrument on the panel. The Sub Depot's fame for removing damaged aircraft was fully established on this base by the

efficient removal of the "remains" in three days.

Editor's note: This B-17 was #42-107213 from the 379th BG; it was returning from a mission to Neuss, Germany. After being diverted to Wendling, 2/Lt Carl C. Hathaway landed his damaged B-17 and then slid on the snow and ice into the link trainer. There were no serious injuries to his crew. Hathaway endured tremendous kidding during the three days his crew was at Wendling.



Note the feathered prop and the military vehicle under the #2 engine. Group Transportation Officer Jim Goar says the vehicle was a commercial 4x2. After this incident, it was rebuilt with a van body on the bed and turned into a liberty run bus. Photo from Janine Duffy.

8th AFHS Willow Run Air Show General Registration Form

“The Last Great Gathering of Fortresses and Legends”

Please complete the registration form below for all you attendees, make a copy of it for your records and return it along with your full payment in the form of check or money order payable to 8th AFHS (see address below). Your cancelled check will be your confirmation.

You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.8thafhs.org just click on on the Home Page “SPECIAL EVENT.”

Registration forms and payment must be received by July 15, 2010, after which time reservations will be accepted on a space available basis only.

8th AFHS
P.O. Box 956
Pooler, GA 31322

CUT-OFF DATE IS 7/15/10

	Price Per	# of People	Total
<u>EVENT PACKAGE</u> The FUN Package (see description elsewhere) Fun Package includes the Registration fee. Please select your meals, any additional tours and proceed to the bottom of the page.	\$225		\$
<u>REGISTRATION FEE</u> Required for all individuals purchasing separately priced meals and events (covers activity related overhead and expenses)	\$35		\$
Reg. Fee for children ages 8 - 15 Children 7 and under free	\$20		\$
Please select your entrée choice(s) for the Banquet			
Filet Mignon		#	
Salmon		#	
<u>SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (if not purchasing a package)</u>			
Friday: Welcome Buffet and Entertainment	\$34		\$
Saturday: Banquet (please select your entrée) Filet Mignon	\$45		\$
Salmon	\$45		\$
<u>OPTIONAL EVENTS/TOURS</u>			
Friday: Henry Ford Museum Tour	\$37		\$
Saturday: Air Show 10:00am-4:30pm	\$55		\$
Saturday: Air Show Symposium and Dinner 5:15pm-8:00pm	\$35		\$
Sunday: Air Show 10:00am-4:30pm	\$45		\$
Sunday: Henry Ford Museum Tour	\$37		\$
Total Amount Payable to 8th AFHS			\$

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) _____ ☐ VETERAN ☐ NEXTGEN

8AFHS MEMBER# _____ WWII GROUP (for seating purposes) _____

SPOUSE/GUEST NAMES _____ ☐ VETERAN ☐ NEXTGEN

PHONE # (_____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

MUST BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? ☐ YES ☐ NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PHONE # (_____) _____ - _____

PHOTOS FROM THE FILES



New crews arrive at Station 118 on 26 March 1944. They may have been among the 19 crews ordered to the 392nd on 21 March, probably to replace the 14 crews shot down on the Friedrichshafen mission a few days earlier.



576th Sqdn intelligence clerk Cpl Tommy Mullins is credited with creating the Crusader emblem. Here, in a photo taken 20 Feb 1945, he demonstrates an early version of his winning design.



In this posed safety photo, GIs stroll down Herne Lane to demonstrate how narrow English roads were when compared to those in the US. To remind the Americans, safety signs were posted (as shown here): "Under English mud, they were laid to rest, they liked to walk three abreast. Think Safety!!" The living quarters on Site 5 can be seen in the upper right.



576th Sqdn ground crew personnel change an engine (top photo) and propeller (bottom photo). The a/c would then be taken for a test spin before it was returned to combat. The old engine would likely be sent to a depot for overhaul or salvage. This kind of maintenance work went on daily, outside, regardless of the weather. Both photos from 576th crew chief M/Sgt Walter S. Meeker.



The airfield at Mont de Marsan, France, was the target for 16 a/c on 27 Mar 1944. They dropped their load of 120 pound fragmentation bombs with excellent results. Bad weather in England forced 14 crews to land at Barcombe, an RAF base about 80 miles west of London. The crews returned to Wendling the next afternoon. This strike photo has been annotated to show the difference between the impact of high explosive bombs and fragmentation bombs.

36th REUNION of the 8AFHS

Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites - Tucson, AZ

July 21 - 25, 2010

The 2010 Reunion is locked in, with Tucson, AZ, being the host city. The 8AFHS host hotel is the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites located at 4550 South Palo Verde Road, in lovely downtown Tucson, Arizona.

The 8AFHS looks forward to seeing you all, your children, and your grandchildren.

REUNION REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete the following registration form indicating your choice of meals and tours, along with the other member information. Mail your registration form, along with your check or money order, to 8th AFHS by July 1, 2010. Or you may also securely register online and pay with a credit card; go to <https://www.8thafhs.org/RegOnline.htm>. For "WWII Group" put "392nd Bomb Group."

HOTEL REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Reservations should be made directly with the Hotel by calling 1-520-746-1161. We have a room rate of \$88 per night (plus taxes) for a traditional room and \$108 per night for a 2 room parlor Suite. Be sure to mention that you are with the 8th Air Force Group to receive this preferred room rate.

CANCELLATION POLICY

You may cancel and receive a full refund prior to the cut-off date. There will be a \$25 charge for each reservation cancelled after the cut-off date. Cancellations can be made Monday thru Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm Eastern time, by calling 912-748-8884.

TUESDAY – July 20

3:00pm Hospitality Rooms Available
3:00pm-6:00pm Early Bird Registration open

WEDNESDAY – July 21

9:00am-12:00pm Reunion Registration open
9:00am-4:30pm Memorabilia room & PX open Wed.-Sat.
9:00am-2:30pm PIMA AIR MUSEUM & BONEYARD TOUR
9:30am-5:00pm 8AFHS Board Meeting
3:00pm-6:00pm Reunion Registration open

THURSDAY – July 22

8:00am-11:00am Reunion Registration open
8:00am-9:30am Group Board Meetings
9:00am-2:30pm PIMA AIR MUSEUM & BONEYARD TOUR
9:30am-2:30pm OLD TUCSON-LUNCH
3:00pm-6:00pm Reunion Registration open
3:15pm-4:30pm Unit Advisory and Chapter and Unit Development Meeting
6:00pm-7:00pm Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm-9:00pm Dinner & Entertainment

FRIDAY – July 23

7:00am-8:30am Full Buffet Breakfast
8:00am-11:00am Reunion Registration open
8:30am-2:30pm SONORA DESERT MUSEUM
9:00am-2:30pm PIMA AIR MUSEUM & BONEYARD TOUR
3:00pm-6:00pm Reunion Registration Open
3:30pm-5:00pm NextGen Meeting
6:00pm-7:00pm 8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm-9:00pm Group Dinners

SATURDAY – July 24

7:00am-9:30am Full Buffet Breakfast
10:00am-11:30am General Membership Meeting
11:30am-1:00pm Reunion Registration Open
12:00pm-1:00pm Lunch on your own
1:30pm-4:00pm Roger Freeman Symposium
6:00pm-7:00pm 8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm-8AFHS Gala Banquet

SUNDAY – July 25

7:00am-9:30am Full Buffet Breakfast
9:00am-4:00pm 8AFHS Annual Board Meeting

SUGGESTED TOURS - TUCSON, 2010

Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices. Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time, as all buses will absolutely leave on time. All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

PIMA AIR MUSEUM. We will begin our tour with a driving visit thru the Boneyard, home to over 4000 military aircraft, and often referred to as the world's third largest Air Force. We will meet our museum step-on guides just prior to our one hour tour. You will be required to provide valid government identification (a drivers license will be fine). We will then spend the rest of the time at the Pima Air Museum, established in 1967 and now ranked as the third largest aviation history museum in the U.S. View models, uniforms, insignia, WWII mock-up airmen's quarters, a B-29 "Superfortress," Douglas "Globemaster," F-84 "Shooting Star," F-100 "Super Sabre," SR-71, and a pristinely restored B-17. There are over 200 planes on display including JFK's Air Force One. Trace America's heritage of flight from a full-scale replica of the Wright brothers' plane to the X-15 rocket that first took men to the edge of space. For a nominal fee, payable at the museum, take advantage of the convenience of a tram ride through this outdoor museum. 9:00am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel. \$39/Person includes bus, guide, and admission.

SONORA DESERT MUSEUM. The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum was selected by the New York Times as one of the ten best zoos in the world and described as "probably the most distinctive zoo in the United States." Being a living museum it features animals, plants, and fish native to the Sonora Desert—a 120,000 square mile region of Arizona, the Mexican State of Sonora, and the Gulf of California. Enjoy lunch on your own at Ironwood Terrace. This is a fully narrated walking tour for groups of about 15; please wear comfortable shoes. 8:30am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel. \$45/Person includes bus, guide, admission.

OLD TUCSON. Spend the day in Hollywood; "Hollywood in the desert" that is, the nickname for Old Tucson Studios. This 1860's Old West Town was built up from the accumulation of movie sets and props which provide a unique background for family fun. Shops, restaurants, gunfights, and musical revues await guests daily, all surrounded by Sonoran Desert scenery.

See TOURS on page 9

TOURS from page 8. Upon arrival you will be given a meal coupon for lunch and a show schedule for that day. Enjoy a BBQ lunch at Big Jake's at your leisure. Your show schedule will tell you when to start making your way to the Grand Palace Hotel and Saloon for a western show. 9:30am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel. \$45/Person includes bus, guide, admission, and lunch.

8th AFHS Reunion Registration Form

Please complete the registration form below for all your attendees, make a copy of it for your records and return it along with your full payment in the form of check or money order payable to 8th AFHS (see address below). Your cancelled check will be your confirmation. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.8thafhs.org, click on "2010 Reunion." Registration forms and payment must be received by July 1, 2010, after which time reservations will be accepted on a space available basis only.

8th AFHS

P.O. Box 956

Pooler, GA 31322

CUT-OFF DATE IS 7/1/10

	Price Per	# of People	Total
<u>REGISTRATION FEE</u>			
Includes meeting expenses. Eaker Award expenses and other expenses.	\$45		\$
Reg. Fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel	\$25		\$
<u>DUES</u>			
The principal attendee must be a member of the 8AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are not a member, please pay your yearly dues here.	\$30		\$
<u>MEAL PACKAGES</u>			
Choice #1 includes 6 hotel meals beginning with dinner on Thursday.	\$163		\$
Choice #2 includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Friday	\$128		\$
Please select your entrée choice(s) for the Banquet			
London Broil		#	
Salmon		#	
<u>SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (if not purchasing a package)</u>			
Friday: Rendezvous Dinner (chicken)	\$35		\$
Saturday: Banquet (please select your entrée)			
London Broil	\$42		\$
Salmon	\$42		\$
<u>TOURS</u>			
Wednesday: Pima Air Museum and Bone yard	\$39		\$
Please choose one of the following two tours:			
Thursday: Old Town Tucson	\$45		\$
Thursday: Pima Air Museum and Bone yard	\$39		\$
Please choose one of the following two tours:			
Friday: Sonora Desert Museum	\$45		\$
Friday: Pima Air Museum and Bone yard	\$39		\$
Total Amount Payable to 8th AFHS			\$

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) _____ ☐ VETERAN ☐ NEXTGEN ☐ OTHER

8AFHS MEMBER# _____ WWII GROUP (for seating purposes) _____

You must be a member of the 8th AFHS in order to register. If you are not a member, please pay your dues above.

SPOUSE/GUEST NAMES _____ ☐ NEXTGEN ☐ OTHER

PHONE # (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

MUST BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? ☐ YES ☐ NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PHONE # (____) _____ - _____

AIR-SEA RESCUE

This article on Air-Sea Rescue (ASR) operations is largely based on The Army Air Forces in World War II, Volume 7, Services Around the World, Chapter 15 Air-Sea Rescue. The entire chapter can be viewed at <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/AAF/VII/AAF-VII-15.html>. Unless otherwise specified, all quotes are from this document.

The British System

At the start of WWII, the Army Air Force had neither the equipment nor the experience to rescue men downed at sea. As early as March 1940, though, the British had created a communications network to ensure that distress calls from its planes were quickly transmitted to the nearest rescue organization. During the Battle of Britain, the RAF and Royal Navy agreed that air-sea rescue had to be a joint service operation. Planes would be used to search for and spot downed planes but the actual rescue would be done by surface craft.

Searches up to forty miles out were conducted by RAF Fighter Command groups using Spitfires, Avro Ansons, and Walrus flying boats. Searches beyond that point were done by Coastal Command using A-29 Hudson and Anson a/c.

In September 1942, the RAF and 8th AF agreed that "the Americans would not duplicate the rescue services the British could provide. Instead, American crews would be protected by the existing British service, to which the AAF would contribute planes and other assistance as the scale of its operations expanded."

Capt Holmes Alexander

Capt Holmes Alexander was originally the 578th Sqdn's S-2 (Intelligence) Officer. He later became the Air-Sea Rescue Officer first for the 392nd and then the 2nd Air Division.

In an unpublished manuscript, he recorded that after the mission of 4 Oct 1943 when the 392nd had its first combat casualties (three crews), 14th Combat Wing Commander Col Leon Johnson "came storming into my small office at Base Operations... and demanded, 'Why the hell isn't there some effort to save our crews who're down in the water?'"

Alexander had just returned from training at an RAF ASR squadron, so he explained that the British ASR service just didn't have the crews, planes or time to rescue RAF crews by night and AAF crews by day.

Johnson then roared that he would get Alexander some



Capt Holmes Alexander, "father" of the 392nd's ASR program.

planes and he should train the crews and the Yanks would begin their own Air-Sea Rescue program. "Within a few days two white-painted (for camouflage) B-24s landed at the Wendling base—I had suddenly become a flyer, later with air crew wings, for the duration of the war."

8th AF ASR Efforts

8th AF ASR efforts focused on two areas:

Changing the attitude about ditching. Early on, US crews

seemed to think that bailing out—even into frigid North Sea waters—was safer than trying to ditch their planes. As a result, ditching drills were either not done at all, or were perfunctory at best. When planes did ditch, results were abysmal, reinforcing the idea that ditching was not a realistic option. By better training crews on how to ditch, 8th AF felt it could directly affect the outcome.

Improving rescue equipment. It was critical to keep survivors afloat, ensure that life rafts had the items necessary to keep survivors alive, locate airmen downed at sea, and bring them to safety.

"The ideal life raft should be light in weight, small in bulk when deflated, and have stowage room for food, water, and other survival items. It—even the largest raft—should be easy to launch from ditched aircraft, be rugged enough to stand buffeting by rough seas, and be capable of being steered. To find a satisfactory balance of all these requirements took years." The 8th also worked to create a life raft that could be dropped by rescue aircraft.

Improved life rafts and rations would not matter if survivors could not be found. Flags, mirrors, dye, and flares were all tried; unfortunately, each was effective only at short range and all were useless in bad weather. A radio transmitter was the obvious answer.

The first portable radio transmitter used for this purpose was the SCR-578, known as the Gibson Girl because of

See AIR-SEA RESCUE on page 11

FOLDED WINGS REPORT

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

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

AIR-SEA RESCUE from page 10

its hourglass shape. It included a kite or balloon to lift the antenna 300 feet into the air. The user would hold the transmitter between his knees; turning the hand-crank at two revolutions per second would automatically transmit an SOS signal. No batteries and simple operating instructions meant that it could be used by any one at any time.

Aircraft were also vital to finding airmen adrift at sea, with the type of a/c used contingent on what was available. The workhorses were generally British Warwicks, B-24s, B-17s, and B-29s.

The Liberator was deemed "more satisfactory" in "range and in rugged dependability" but it was "too fast for meticulous searching, and its turning radius was so great the spotters on board could easily lose a sighted dinghy as the bomber came about. Nor could the B-24 carry a lifeboat. On balance, however, it was the best plane available."

The helicopter was a significant addition to the ASR arsenal. In May 1944, the 8th "asked for six helicopters, each capable of carrying a payload of 1,800 pounds, considering them especially valuable for service in foggy weather."

8th AF ASR Procedures

In May 1944, the 65th Fighter Wing was chosen to be in charge of 8th AF ASR efforts; its rescue control detachment at Saffron Walden later became the 5th Emergency Rescue Service (ERS).

Soon after its activation, the 5th ERS used fighter a/c to patrol the routes to be used by returning bombers. Later, the AAF provided 25 P-47s for these patrols and the RAF made eight Walrus bombers and amphibians available for the rescue of US crews.

These P-47s would be aloft monitoring for distress calls. If one came, a P-47 would circle over the downed a/c and drop flares or a small dinghy and notify the naval motor launches. The P-47s were identified by red, white and blue striped noses and yellow-banded tails. The group's radio call sign was "teamworks."

After the newly-rescued crewmen were taken aboard the rescue launches, they were put into dry clothes, rubbed down to help warm them up, and given a shot of medicinal alcohol.

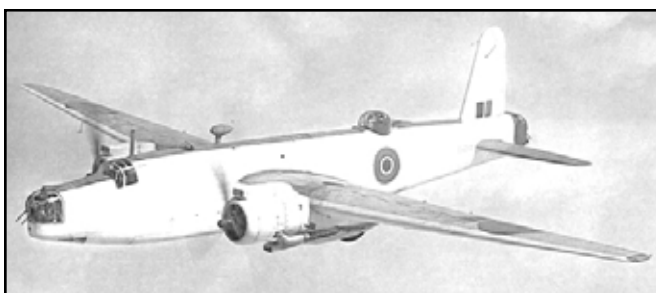
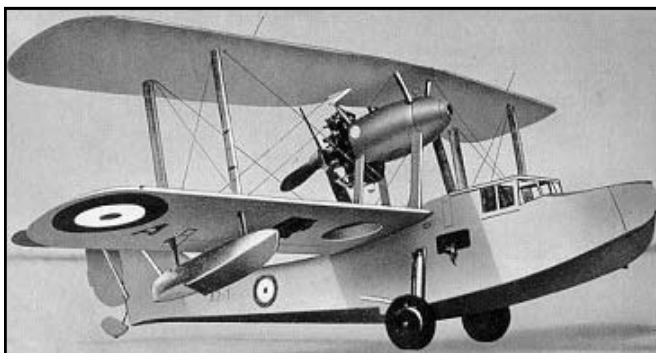
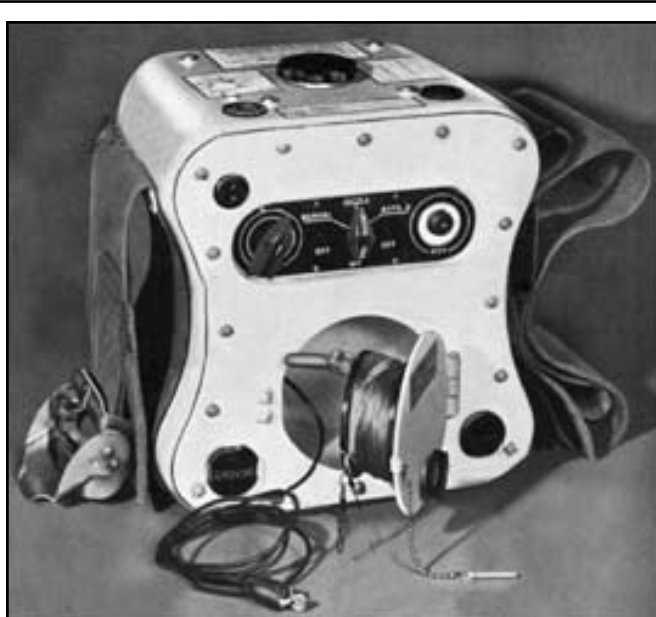
392nd BG

392nd BG planes took their turn flying ASR patrols. For example, on 22 Apr 1944 Capt Alexander directed 577th Sqdn pilot 2/Lt Ray L. Schumacher to fly ASR patrols from 1430 to 1830 hours. He had a full crew, including all gunners. The route was Station 118 to Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, to search area. The search area, to be flown at 1,000 feet, was approximately 25 miles out to sea.

After completing their combat tours, 1/Lt Dee W. Bunting and 1/Lt Harold E. Schildknecht both served as the 392nd's ASR Officer.

Capt Alexander was rightfully proud of the tremendous improvements made in air-sea rescue during his time in England. According to his manuscript, "By training crews how to conduct a search mission and how to drop rescue gear, and also by briefing the bombing crews on use of their radio signals and life rafts, I was instrumental in changing the B-24 rescue rate from 14 percent (1943) to 50 percent

(1944). My Journal shows I 'felt we ought to get it up into 60 percent or even the 70 percents in another year.' The war didn't last that long."



Essentials to Air-Sea Rescue operations (top to bottom): the SCR-578 emergency radio (called the "Gibson Girl" due its distinctive shape), a Walrus Flying Boat, and an RAF Warwick. The Warwick could drop a life boat via parachute from 700 feet. (All photos from Wikipedia.com)

MEMORIES from page 3

the turret. Then he had to feel around, find the cranks, insert them again, crank the turret to the clock position the gunners were calling to him, fire, and go through the whole procedure again and again to keep us from being shot down.

And then, as he did on every flight, Bill got airsick as we prepared to land. He had nerves of steel when it counted, though, and he saved us more than once.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Tom Perry,
576th Sqdn Armorer

Mardi Gras was recently celebrated in many parts of the world. The most well known U. S. celebration was held in New Orleans. The last day of the celebration was "Fat Tuesday" when revelers ate their fill of favorite foods and beverages, then made a sacrifice to God with a pledge to give up doing something they like for Lent. God is pleased when we give up something for Him, but he is more pleased when we do something, rather than give up something. The Bible tells us that Jesus said, "Why call Ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46. I again encourage us all to read The Bible to find out what God wants us to do and how much He loves you. If you have not established the practice of reading the Bible, a good place to start reading is the Gospel of John. May Grace, Mercy, and Peace abide with you each day.



**THE 392ND MEMORIAL
AT WENDLING**

But we...shall be remember'd;



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



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

William Shakespeare
Henry VI

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association
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 Very Reverend Robert C. Martin, retired Dean of the Cathedral at Erie, Pennsylvania.

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

Barbara E. Abrams, widow of Manny Abrams, 579, Dec. 2, 2009

John Wambach, 577, Aug. 14, 2009

Richard D. "Dick" Butler, 44th BG/2ADA, Dec. 29, 2009

Murray Milrod, 577/9, Dec. 12, 2009

James R. Carlson, 10thSCS/577, July 7, 2004

Odell Dobson, 578, Jan. 21, 2010

Bob Vickers, 578, Jan. 28, 2010

Eivor McCutcheon, widow of James McCutcheon, 576, Feb. 1, 2010

Manly J. Fox, 578, Dec. 26, 2009

Tom Eaton, 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust, Jan. 19, 2010