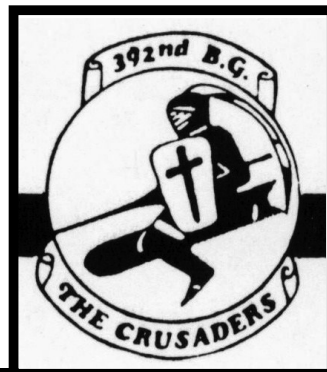




Operation Market Garden

During Operation Market Garden, 17-25 Sep 1944, Allied airborne troops parachuted into Holland behind German lines, intending to capture key bridges over the Rhine River and then link up with more airborne, infantry and armored troops for a united drive toward Berlin.

"Market" symbolized the airborne drop while "Garden" was the code name for the following fight to Berlin.

British Gen Bernard Montgomery first proposed the concept to Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower on 10 September, so planning had to be done quickly but thoroughly. Many of its details were pulled from previously canceled operations.

Day or Night?

In his book *The Siegfried Line Campaign*, historian Charles B. MacDonald notes, "One of the more crucial

decisions facing [the planners] was that of daylight versus night attack. Moving by day, planes and gliders would be exposed to more accurate flak. This was a serious consideration, both because the C-47 (Skytrain) troop carrier planes were low-speed aircraft possessing neither armor nor self-sealing gasoline tanks and because marked increase had been noted recently in anti-aircraft guns in the vicinity of the target area. On the other hand, moving by night invited greater danger from enemy aircraft. Although the enemy's daylight fighter force had been reduced almost to inconsequence, his night fighters had retained some measure of potency. In regard to the actual drop, it went without saying that a daylight operation should provide a better drop pattern. To realize what could happen in the

dark, one had but to recall the Normandy operation when drop sticks had scattered like windblown confetti. [A "drop stick" is the number of paratroopers who jump from one door of an aircraft during one run over a drop zone.]

"A major factor governing selection of a night drop in Normandy had been a need to coordinate airborne and seaborne units. The plan for coordination of air and

ground efforts in Operation Market Garden imposed no restrictions. [Nor] had the Allies at the time of the Normandy drop possessed the unquestioned air supremacy they now had attained. It was an air supremacy that could be maintained through proximity of the target area to bases in England, France, and Belgium. Assured of a comprehensive anti-flak program, [LtGen Lewis H.



466th BG Liberator #44-10558, on loan to the 392nd BG, releases a bundle of supplies over the Dutch village of Son. The parachute can be seen to the left of the road, which is filled with US half-tracks carrying paratroopers to the fight. The houses are flying Dutch flags, indicating the town was in Allied hands. The a/c was flown by the 578th's 1/Lt Dell E. Miller crew.

Brereton, commander of the First Allied Airborne Army] made his decision: by day."

Market

From the night of 16 September through morning on the 17th, 435 British and B-17 bombers with fighter escorts attacked German airfields, flak positions, and coastal

See MARKET GARDEN on page 4

392nd BGMA 2019 Reunion

The 392nd BGMA will hold its 2019 reunion in Norfolk, Virginia, from 2 - 6 October. See pages 9 - 11 for all the details and the reservation form. We hope you can join us!



392nd BGMA Officers

President

Bob Books

1432 Little Creek Dr.

Pensacola, FL 32506

(850) 458-0777

books@b24.net



Vice-President

Ralph Winter

rewcts@gmail.com



Secretary/Treasurer

News Editor

Annette Tison

9107 Wood Pointe Way

Fairfax Station, VA 22039

dtison5401@aol.com

(703) 690-8540



PX Chairman

Bill McCutcheon

20620 Milton Ct.

Brookfield, WI 53045

billm@b24.net

(262) 784-5606

FROM THE EDITOR

It's Official! The 392nd BGMA's next reunion will be in Norfolk, Virginia, from 2-6 Oct 2019. All the details are in this issue. In case you're wondering, "our" Norfolk was named by Adam Thoroughgood—originally from King's Lynn, Norfolk, England—who settled in the area in 1622.

The rest of the story. There was not enough space in the last issue to fully discuss the A-26 Invader crash at Wendling on 3 Sep 1944. Mentioned in my article was Pfc Neil W. Finkbeiner. The 465th Sub Depot history notes that he "received considerable publicity in the English papers, being the first American soldier to have his daughter baptized by an American chaplain. His daughter, born on 21 October 1944, was baptized by [Protestant Chaplain Capt Donald B. Clark] on the station on 3 December 1944."

A few weeks later, Finkbeiner was selected for transfer to the infantry; he and the others chosen departed Wendling on 26 Jan 1945, having had just two days' notice. At war's end, he returned to the US via ship with the rest of his infantry unit. It is not known when he, his wife and daughter were reunited.

Bombardiers Briefing Building. In a corner of Ben Burgess Beeston's property is a small two-room building that had a significant role in the 392nd BG's bombing success during WWII. T/Sgt George E. Pearson explained, "There were four of us Bombsight Mechanics [the others were S/Sgt Bart B. Harris, S/Sgt Lynd F. Tillyer, and Pfc Lewis H. Richards] who worked in a small concrete building where we stored, calibrated, and repaired, Norden and Sperry Bombsights and prepared them for missions. We also maintained the Auto Pilots that worked with the Bombsights."

Though the bombsight technicians repaired and maintained the bombsights, it was the line crew personnel who placed the bombsights in the planes before missions, removed them afterward, and replaced any malfunctioning autopilot components.

In February 1945, the Bronze Star was awarded to T/Sgt Pearson by Maj Gen Kepner, Commanding General, Second Air Division, "for outstanding work in the Bombsight field, ...having developed several outstanding labor and time-saving devices as well as superior work on bombsights in general."

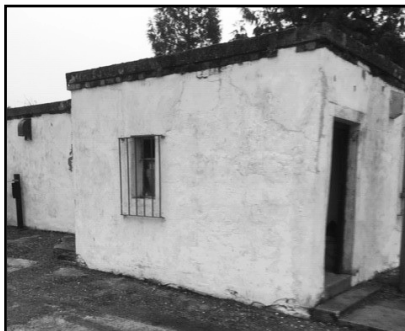
Before each mission, the bombardiers attended a special briefing in this building, where they looked through a Norden bombsite and saw images and photos of the route and the target (in a recessed area

in the floor), in order to familiarize themselves with what they would see during their flights.

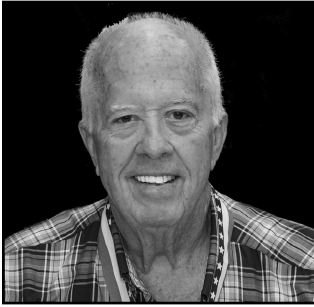
Here are then and now photos, clockwise from top left: •The building as it appears now; it is primarily used for storage of oil. •Bombsight mechanics S/Sgts Bart B. Harris and Lynd F. Tillyer flank the door of the Bombsight Maintenance building. •This

WWII photo shows the smaller room where parts were stored. On the right in the larger room is a Norden bombsight. Below it

See
EDITOR on
page 3



President's Thoughts



Attention Parents and Grandparents: The 392nd BGMA's 2019 reunion will be a great educational time for your children and/or grandchildren! Don't let them miss this chance to visit historical Colonial Williamsburg! See <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com/> for lots more information.

Save the dates to arrive on Wednesday, October 2 and finish with a gala banquet on Saturday evening, October 5th and depart on the 6th. This reunion is going to be an action packed few days with special tours and events at Colonial Williamsburg, the Military Aviation Museum, a Dinner Cruise and POW seminar hosted by Greg Hatton.

Many of our activities will be held in our own Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel hospitality room with a balcony overlooking the Elizabeth River. This is where we will have our social activities and free time—it will be stocked with snacks, beer, wine and soda—as well as the membership meeting and POW seminar.

Donna Lee of Red Team Events has negotiated a special

hotel rate of \$109 + taxes. The normal daily rate at this hotel is \$70 more than we are paying! Don't miss this reunion!

Recently had a nice conversation with Jim Marsteller and his wife Karen. Jim is doing well with a regular routine beginning with breakfast, exercise, television, reading and spending time with family. Karen said he loves watching WWII movies and reading.

After his car accident a couple of years ago, he no longer does his Friday night band rehearsals because of his limited mobility. Did you know that Jim played rhythm guitar for the Slate Ridge Bluegrass Band and played on stage at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee?

He told me he misses his Crusader friends. Jim was the first non-veteran on the 392nd BGMA Board (in 2001) and was responsible for bringing together much of today's active leadership. Jim was the one who got about twelve 2nd Gens to Savannah during the 1999 reunion; that meeting established much of the core 392nd BGMA group that we know today. See <https://www.b24.net/Newsletters/Dec-1999.pdf>.

If you have had contact with Jim in the past, why not give him a call? I'm sure he'd appreciate a phone visit with you.

See you in Norfolk!

Bob

EDITOR from page 2

was a recessed circle around which the Norden bombsight would be moved to simulate the flight path. •Although now filled in, the recessed area is still visible today.

The Ploughshare. This 16th-century Beeston pub, familiar to everyone who served at Station 118, was scheduled to be sold to a real estate developer for houses in 2016. The village rallied, created Beeston Community Enterprises (BCE) and embarked on a campaign to raise the £250,000 needed to buy it. Henry Dennett, Memorial Trustee and BCE Chairman, happily reports that the goal has been reached! The pub will now be owned by the community of Beeston, who plan to re-open it sometime during spring 2019—after doing much cleaning, replastering and refurbishing.

Congratulations to everyone who helped save this part of Beeston history!

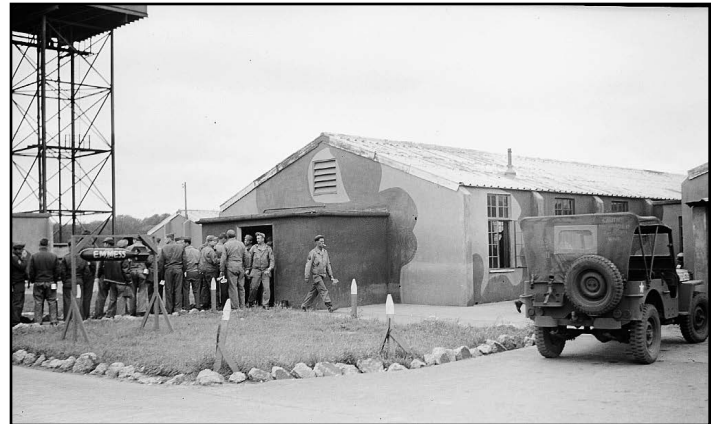
My error. In my article about the Combat Officers Mess in the December 2018 issue, I captioned a photo (on page 11) by pointing out “a water tower that served the entire base as well as the village of Beeston, and an enlisted mess.” I was wrong.

That water tower only provided water for the Combat Officers Mess and the enlisted shower room/latrine nearby.

Across Beeston Rd from the Combat Officers Mess was a dining facility for enlisted men. That's where the large black

water towers were (seen in the photos below) that served the entire base and the part of Beeston located within the base. The entrance to the Combat Officers Mess was near the telegraph pole on the left side of the bottom photo.

The water towers were not removed until the late 1980s.



MARKET GARDEN from page 1

defense batteries to minimize enemy efforts during the operation.

Then, escorted by 1,131 Allied fighters, 1,545 troop transport planes and 478 gliders left England for drop zones near the Dutch towns of Arnhem, Nijmegen and Eindhoven. MacDonald called the result "the most successful drop any of the three airborne divisions ever had staged, either in combat or training.

"Within an hour and twenty minutes, approximately 20,000 American and British troops landed by parachute and glider in good order far behind enemy lines. The unparalleled success of the drops and landings made it clear early that the decision for a daylight operation had been, under the circumstances, a happy one. Up to this point, the Allies had staged an overwhelming success."

Drop Zone Holland

On 18 September, another armada of 1,336 American troop carrier aircraft, 340 British Stirlings, and 1,250 gliders took off to deliver reinforcement troops under the protection of 415 fighters.

Behind them came 252 B-24s, tasked to drop badly needed supplies to the two American airborne divisions.

Per the 8AF report, *Supply of Forward Ground Elements (Arnhem)*, the Liberators would "carry supplies to the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions to reach Eindhoven and Nijmegen thirty minutes after the completion of the glider missions in these areas. Routes were to be the same as the [troop transport planes] as far as the I.P. [Initial Point, where the formation made the final turn to the target] to gain the benefit of previous flak neutralization. The supply aircraft were to fly toward their objectives at 1500 feet because of difficulties of navigation at lower altitudes but from the I.P. to the target they were to descend to 300 feet and fly at an

Indicated Air Speed of 150 miles per hour to make their supply releases. Reciprocal routes were to be flown on the return to England, the aircraft being briefed to climb to the base of the low clouds. Radio buncher beacons were to be used to guide supply aircraft to the dropping areas where distinctive Tees and colored smoke were to give additional marking aid. The aircraft were to fly in nine-ship Squadrons in trail at thirty second intervals, flying loosely en route but closing up for the dropping operations. Each aircraft was to carry 12 containers and specially trained personnel to handle the dropping."

The drop zones were designated by various visual markings: N, near Groesbeek, would be identified by a white letter T, a white letter N, and green smoke. Drop zone A, near Eerde, would be shown by a red letter T, a white letter A, and green smoke. Drop zone W, near Son, would have a white letter T, a white letter W, and red smoke. Specific radio signals were also assigned to each drop zone.

The Liberator crews were tasked to drop their supplies "when exactly over the tee."

At their briefings, airmen were warned that Pathfinder Force personnel "may be neutralized" which would impact their effectiveness. Therefore, "precision navigation by time and distance and pilotage is extremely important, in order to locate drop zones if part or all of the aids are knocked out."

They were also "cautioned that the entire route is over areas which may be occupied by Allied troops, however, there will be pockets of enemy troops within these areas. Gunners will not fire at any ground target unless definitely attacked by it first."

The result: "246 B-24s completed dropping operations from altitudes ranging from 200 and 500 feet between 1610

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392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your membership status is shown on the mailing label directly after your name; 19 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 Annette Tison, 9107 Wood Pointe Way, Fairfax Station, VA 22039 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. 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 \$ _____

MARKET GARDEN from page 4

and 1630 hours. Excellent results were achieved despite the fact that buncher beacons were inoperative."



American troops recover supplies dropped on 18 Sep 1944. US Army photo via Mark van den Dries

"On return routes some units preferred to remain 'on the deck' instead of climbing to the base of low clouds as briefed. Those units received proportionately little flak damage compared to the ones which climbed to the cloud base. These latter units suffered both battle damage and losses due to AA fire."

2nd Bombardment Division

2BD's *Resume of Operations* recounted last-minute confusion: "Preliminary information" about the mission was received at around 1100 hours on the 17th "but due to poor planning and coordination, complete data for the operation was not received until around 2100 hours... The penetration from the IPs to the targets were planned at minimum altitude but were later changed... Due to navigational difficulties at low altitudes it was decided to execute a normal let down from 1500 feet at the IP's to 300 feet at the target areas, and start and hold a climb immediately after dropping until reaching allied territory. At 0930 an error in the original target assignment [by the 8th] was discovered and reassignment of target areas had to be phoned down to the 14th & 20th Combat Wings [CWs]. Simultaneously, due to weather, [the 8th] changed the routes and added to the turmoil. The CWs had all the necessary information at 2 hours before take-off."

The 392nd BG, originally assigned to target W, was thus changed to drop zone N.

As for mission execution, "Take-offs and assemblies were normal. The CWs left the English coast in the proper order and executed a 360 over the channel to get their formation in better shape and also to keep from over-running a formation of C-47s. The result was that they were 25 minutes late at the target. No buncher, smoke marker, or dropping tee was sighted and bombing was reported from 5 miles short to excellent. Flak was moderate to intense and accurate and considerable battle damage was sustained. No enemy fighters were sighted and fighter support was reported excellent. Ten a/c failed to return from the operation."

In its 2 Oct 1944 *Tactical Report of Mission*, 2BD gave more details. "Meager to moderate small arms fire was encountered at various scattered points along the route and comparatively little light flak fire was seen. However, crews had considerable difficulty in seeing much of the fire as tracer was frequently not used and light flak fire could therefore often be identified only by the bursts when the shells self-destroyed. This considerably hampered the gunners who were briefed only to fire at troops or gun positions which were definitely engaging them. One Group reported that they saw practically no fire at all and that the only indication they had that they were being engaged was when bullets could be heard hitting the aircraft.... Nine aircraft were lost to small arms fire."

14th Combat Wing

Per its *Bombing Analysis* report on 19 Sep 1944, the 14th CW advised, "After a careful study of pictures taken from waist window positions it is thought that the mission accomplished its purpose. Although some ships dropped short and others had chutes that failed to open, the most part seemed to be in an area occupied by our troops."

"It was reported by several pilots, navigators and bombardiers that no markers were seen of any kind, and the red smoke markers were started some time after the lead squadron had gone over the target."

The 392nd

At least one low-level practice mission over Norfolk was held on the 17th.

Practice Mission

Robert Boney was initially an airplane mechanic. ("It is hard to realize," he later said, "that I did not know how to start a car, but I could start an airplane and taxi it.") He eventually became the engineer on 1/Lt Henry W. Hoffman's crew in the 576/9th.

He wrote, "When we were training for this mission, we had to fly real low. We flew over a large body of shallow water in England known as 'The Wash.' We had to fly at 50 feet above the ground and then pull up to 200 feet to drop the parachute supplies. The plane that was to our left was flying so low that the air from their tail skid made a wake in the water. Now that's low! I also remember that pilots would fly so low that they would have to pull up to get over hay bales."

577th Sqdn lead navigator Bob Cleverdon recalls, "During our practice mission, we flew over 'The Wash,' which was occupied by many birds. Our planes frightened them so much that the birds flew up in a panic and made a mess of the plane. I rode in the nose turret and saw the birds taking off and hitting the plane. One of the crew members, with his head out a bubble window, got hit by a bird and was covered with blood and feathers. We all had a good laugh about it, but there was so much damage that we were given a different plane on the 18th."

Loadmasters and Cargo

Loadmasters from the 2nd Air Cargo Resupply Detachment delivered specially packaged supplies—some in canvas-covered bundles and others in metal containers—to each plane. These were carefully stowed aboard: the metal canisters were attached to the bomb racks and the bundles

See MARKET GARDEN on page 6

MARKET GARDEN from page 5

placed near the bomb bay catwalks and in the waist. A static line, to automatically pull the parachute open once the package was out of the plane, was attached to each.

A loadmaster flew on each plane to supervise the drop process.

18 September 1944

Forty aircraft took off (including seven on detached service from the 466th BG at Attlebridge) between 1:05 and 1:54pm. Aboard the 392nd's #42-95241, Jolly Duck, were Gen Leon W. Johnson, 14th CW commander, and Col James E. Duke, Chief of Staff of the 9th Troop Carrier Command. While Johnson was monitoring the B-24s, Duke was focused on how well the troop reinforcement operation, just minutes ahead of the B-24 formation, had been carried out.

An Unusual Mission Remembered

The photo on page 1 shows 466th BG B-24 #44-10558, flown by 1/Lt Dell E. Miller, 578th. It was taken by someone in 392nd BG ship #42-50387, Birdie Schmidt ARC, which happened to have 392nd Public Affairs Officer Capt Donald B. McCammond aboard as an observer. He is likely the one who spotted this perfect photo opportunity.

The mission was so unusual that it was mentioned in many accounts by 392nd airmen.

Wildrick Hart

576th pilot Wil Hart recalled, "The B-24s were rigged to carry 12 parapacks on the bomb racks, with 8 more parapacks to be dumped out of various openings. For this operation, the cover plate where the ball turret normally was located had been removed. At the DZ, the intervalometer would be triggered which then sequenced the parapacks off of the bomb racks and everyone else was trying to heave the rest of the packs out of the bomb bay and the turret opening before we overflowed the drop area. A dropmaster from the Army Quartermaster Corps flew with us to help out with this duty.

"There was one problem with using the B-24 in this service. At normal flying speed, the parachutes would have been stripped from the packs when they hit the airstream. Consequently, we had to put down half flaps and stagger along at 140-145 mph to make a successful drop. With a full load, this condition put us uncomfortably close to stalling speed."

He confirmed the change in drop zone for the 392nd: "On the 18th, we were actually briefed to drop at Ramagen, but as we were getting the aircraft ready for takeoff, a Jeep rushed up with some new maps and the news that we had

the load for Eindhoven.

"From the pilot's point of view, the mission went well. We flew in at 1000 ft, giving us a nice view of the countryside—something of a lark. I could even see what probably were German troops standing in the streets of various cities watching us go by. At the DZ, we went down to 500 ft and got the parapacks off well within the limits of the drop area. In this case the DZ was the glider park where the airborne infantry had landed the day before. This was a sight to see. Those gliders, and there were hundreds of them, were parked as close to each other as the cars in the average shopping mall! It must have taken a lot of practice to make such efficient use of every square foot of their landing zone.

"The airspace got a little cluttered over the DZ—it seemed as though everyone got there at the same time. After avoiding some other squadrons that were muscling their way into a relatively small target, my wingmen and I pulled away to find most of the rest of the squadron following us. With the job done, formation flying was not a necessity and the trip home was made in a rather informal manner.

"Upon landing and talking to the crew, I found that the mission was not the milk run that I had supposed. There was no 88mm flak to contend with since tracking a bomber at 1000 ft with a big gun was not practical. However, we were pretty much well riddled with small arms and light cannon fire, most of which didn't make itself evident on the way through the airplane. One rifle bullet had hit an oxygen bottle and the stream of oxygen had impinged on a nearby rag which caught fire. This happened just before the DZ. Everyone was so busy with the drop that they just put out the fire and kept on with their duties. I learned about the fire when we got home. In retrospect, I had to conclude that some of those ground troops that I saw on the way in really had to be German.

"This type of duty; ie, low altitude formation flying, was hard physical labor. As a result of the two practice missions and the run in to Eindhoven, I found my left hand—the control wheel hand—had a number of blisters on it. Of course, no one ever said that the B-24 was light on the controls."

Manny Abrams

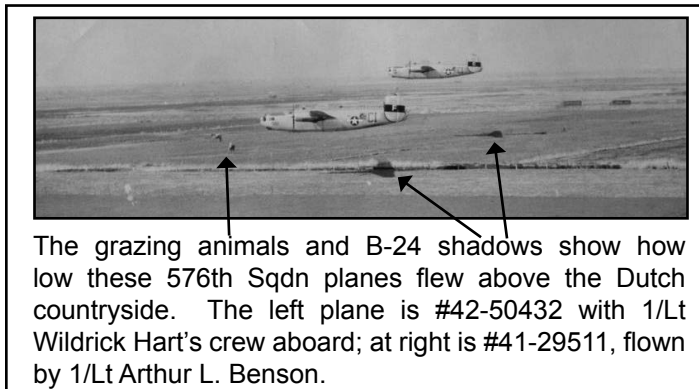
579th navigator Manny Abrams says, "A word first concerning the bovine attitude in East Anglia toward airplanes: they paid them zero attention. I don't know the number of wartime airfields in East Anglia, but doubt you could go 10 miles in any direction without seeing an RAF/USAAF bomber or fighter airfield. In a box running from Ipswich to Cambridge and Kings Lynn to Norwich, there were perhaps 3,000 aircraft.

"Farm animals in that area were totally oblivious to the sound of aircraft engines, in mass or alone, and from the ground up to 4 or 5 miles above.

"We used to calibrate (adjust for accuracy) our B-24 compasses over and along the many canals in the Fens near Cambridge. There are many of them, thoughtfully aligned on perfect east-west and north-south axes.

"We would fly the plane down low and close to the selected E-W or N-S canal and align our compasses to those headings. Most often, there were many cattle grazing alongside the canal. No matter how close to the ground we

See MARKET GARDEN on page 7



The grazing animals and B-24 shadows show how low these 576th Sqdn planes flew above the Dutch countryside. The left plane is #42-50432 with 1/Lt Wildrick Hart's crew aboard; at right is #41-29511, flown by 1/Lt Arthur L. Benson.

MARKET GARDEN from page 6

flew, those animals kept a stiff upper lip and never cast a glance skyward! It was truly amazing.

"During our resupply mission we flew 'on the deck' immediately after leaving the British coast and held our altitude 50 feet above the North Sea. We should be below German radar surveillance at this height and have the element of surprise in our favor.

"This mission truly required clear weather, and the virtual use of a road map of Holland rather than our aeronautical chart (not a facetious statement, but one of fact). There would be no way or meaning for a navigational wind to be computed when you are flying that close to the ground. The mission depended upon the lead plane's perfect navigation, coupled with the stream of planes visually following.

"I vividly recall seeing the Dutch coast approaching. Charlie Neundorf, our pilot, had to climb slightly to clear the raised banks of the coastal dikes. Shortly before he did so, we passed over several Dutch fishing boats a few miles offshore, all hands staring up at the stream of about 250 B-24 bombers.

"On the land side of the dikes were Dutch cattle grazing and they must have produced butter that day! They ran about frantically in all directions as we thundered by. Our closeness was an entirely new experience for them. Our usual altitude was about 20,000 feet; at 100 feet the sound level is different!

"As we continued onward at 200 mph plus, we passed small Dutch villages, always with a church and a steeple in the center. I saw German soldiers with submachine guns, crouching on the ground, kneeling in the belfries, all firing away at the bomber stream. In turn, our waist and tail gunners were returning fire with their .50-caliber heavy machine guns. Our plane would shudder occasionally, either with recoil from our guns, or from the spattering impact of the ground fire hitting some part of our fuselage. We were very lucky to have no injuries aboard.

"The paratroopers were to outline the drop area with white sheets about the perimeter. Before we reached this area, we gained several hundred feet so the 'chutes attached to the bundles could take effect. After the drop we climbed up to 10,000 feet (my recollection) and flew out over the Dutch coastline.

"I think the air crews all heaved a sigh of relief, leaving that kind of personal war behind. Without doubt, the farm animals welcomed the return of greater tranquility, but in spite of all this resupply effort, the unfortunate result was the surrender of the paratroopers a few days later."

Twining's Crew

According to 578/9th pilot Ned Twining, English cows were no more placid than their Dutch counterparts. "We flew a couple of low practice missions and frightened all of the cows in East Anglia. Most of the milk in Britain must have been sour that day...

"The Dutch people were standing on the roofs waving flags and the Germans were shooting at us with rifles. There were more people killed or wounded on this mission than any other while I was there."

Per engineer Frank Hostetter, "When the supplies loaded in the bomb racks were dropped, I was supposed to throw

out three boxes of ammunition loaded on the front of the catwalk and waist gunner Gus Gusciora was supposed to throw out three boxes loaded on the rear of the catwalk. The bomb bay doors were open and Gus and I were standing by when the hydraulic reservoir in the bomb bay was hit by small arms fire. The oil was about to drown poor Gus. He would take a swipe to clear his eye, then look to see if the supplies were still hanging on the bomb shackles. On the way home, everyone chewed up a big wad of chewing gum which I used to patch the hole in the reservoir. I then refilled the tank so that the landing gear and brakes would work for landing."

Other 392nd BG Memories

Copilot Joe Cook, from Robert H. Johnson's crew in the 578th, recalls, "Bob flew that one and I had some spare time to watch scenery go by. Usually the copilot flies the bomb runs leaving the command pilot free for higher level management of the total system: battle damage, flak holes in the hydraulic system and ailerons, analyzation for the separate gunners of the bigger picture of Luftwaffe positioning to go for us as soon as we got out of the flak. This time I got to see soldiers firing at us from behind mail boxes and out of stair-wells, and telephone wires up real close. Usually I was so intensely focused on the run that I didn't even see FW-190s making a head-on pass through our formation."

576th navigator James McCutcheon wrote a very terse entry in his logbook: "Dropped supplies to troops in Holland. Several bullet holes in ship but no flak. Went in at low altitude, 'On the deck!'"



The B-24 on the left is the 577th's #42-95012, Trips Daily, with 2/Lt John C. Daley's crew (including tail gunner S/Sgt Joe Berry) aboard. The plane on the right has not been identified.

Tail gunner Joe Berry, in the 577th, was a little more descriptive: "Dropped supplies to paratroops. Flew 50-300 ft! Saw flooded lowlands and people waving. Also hundreds of gliders on ground. Oxygen supply hit by snipers & caught fire. Looked pretty bad for awhile. Couldn't put it out for awhile. Threw burning stuff over. Waist gunner saved from bullet by flak curtain on floor."

Being in the lead plane, Bob Cleverdon did not see any Germans but he could hear the shooting at the planes behind him. "We lost three planes at the tail end of the formation who got hit heavy from the Germans, but I did not experience any."

Per 576/9th pilot Don Scharf, "We were briefed to drop when the plane in front of us dropped. Our bombardier, 1/Lt James B. Thomas Jr., was in charge of the toggle

See MARKET GARDEN on page 8

MARKET GARDEN from page 7

switch that would drop the load manually, not by radio like wing planes in a squadron dropped. We soon came in sight of a huge field strewn with gliders, some intact but most wrecked, parachutes and vehicles. The airborne unit, which I think was the 101st, was completely surrounded by the Germans, who were not happy to see us arrive. Just before we got to the edge of this area, the plane just ahead of us was hit and dumped its load of supplies. J.B. then dutifully dumped our load, which probably didn't end up where it was supposed to. We pulled up sharply, turned back toward the coast and returned to base about 1810 hours. I don't think we had a single bullet hole. Others didn't fare as well."

392nd BG Losses

From the 579th in #42-94886 (No Feathered Injun, on loan from the 466th BG), 1/Lt James A. Gerow's crew was last heard announcing that #2 engine was feathered, #3 was leaking oil badly and intentions were to continue down the coast to land in Belgium. Their plane ultimately crashed in Holland, with two men killed (including dropmaster Pvt Edward Yensho), six men taken prisoner, and two who were able to evade.

Their story is well told in Mark van den Dries' book, *Holland Drop Zone*, available at www.amazon.com. The book also vividly describes Dutch life under German occupation, eyewitness accounts of the action in the air and subsequent crashes, and heroic efforts by the Dutch (including Mark's grandfather) to help airmen escape capture.

Also from the 579th, 2/Lt Wade P. Sewell's ship, #42-50673, was damaged on the way to the drop zone and again over the target. The men were forced to bail out in Belgium with three men captured and five who evaded. Three were killed, including Cpl Nevin J. Johnson. A member of the 10th Station Complement Sqdn, he had been approved for a transfer to a paratroop unit. Perhaps seizing this opportunity to see airborne action, he either stowed away or got permission to accompany Sewell's crew. Sadly, he broke his leg when he landed and bled to death while a firefight raged around him.

1/Lt Robert C. Martin's crew, 576th, in #42-52524 (on loan from the 466th BG), was forced to crash land near Brussels. Radio operator T/Sgt John G. Thiel was injured during the crash and put in a local hospital, but the rest of the crew was returned to England the next day by C-47.

Thiel was flown back on the 20th and put in the station hospital. The Holland mission was the last for the other members of his crew. They had all been transferred by the time he got out of the hospital on the 29th.

The Liberators of two 579th Sqdn crews (2/Lt Henry K. Porter's in #44-10495, Short Snorter II, and 2/Lt Henry J. Leser's, aboard #44-10528) and two from the 577th Sqdn (1/Lt Thomas F. McGrath's, flying #42-95040, Silver Streak, and 2/Lt Henry M. Propper's, in #42-95164, Lady Eve) were heavily damaged with wounded men aboard. They were forced to land at the emergency field at Woodbridge, Suffolk, when they returned to England. To accommodate planes with bad hydraulics or engine problems, its runway was 9,000 ft long and 750 ft wide (much longer and wider than typical heavy bomber runways).

Don't Tell Grandma

S/Sgt Richard H. Wickham was 2/Lt Propper's tail gunner. On September 19, he wrote a letter to his parents that vividly described the mission. He had turned 19 just the week before.

"Dear Mom and Dad, A lot has happened since I wrote you yesterday. We flew supplies over to the troops that landed in Holland. We were flying at about 50 feet above the ground and just as soon as we dropped our supplies we were hit with everything including the kitchen sink. First a 20mm exploded in the bomb bays and hit Moose [right waist gunner S/Sgt Andrew R. Musante Jr.] in the leg. It was just a flesh wound and he will be all right in a couple days. It left a hole about 2 feet square in the bomb bay.

"Then our hydraulic unit was shot out and our bombardier got a small cut over the eye. It isn't serious. Then 2 bullets about the size of a .50 caliber came through the pilot window and ruined part of the instruments. Then some flak hit the nose turret and set off the ammunition can.

"Then came the real damage. A 37mm made a direct hit between 3 and 4 engines. It tore out the leading edge of the wing right up to both engines and 2 feet of the middle of the wing. The pilot had no control of engine 4. We still don't know how it kept running. In the meantime #3 engine prop was hit with a 20mm and the engine started on fire. It was soon put out.

"#2 engine started to smoke and the pilot told us to be prepared to bail out or crash land in the North Sea. If we had to do either one of those things none of us would be alive today. The average time a person can live in the North Sea is half an hour.

"The pilot had control, finally, of all the engines except #4 which as I said before, ran on the grace of God. We threw out everything we owned including our mess kits. I believe we have a very good crew. No one got panicky. We all had certain things to do and we did them. I wouldn't exchange crews for a million bucks.

"Our regular landing speed is 105 miles an hour and we had to come in at 150 as we didn't have flaps to slow us down nor did we have brakes. It's a good thing we landed at an emergency field which had a 3 mile runway.

"We had over 150 holes not including the 2 big ones in our ship. We took an extra man along with us [loadmaster Sgt Charles D. Peden] because he specialized in dropping supplies and right now he is in the hospital being treated for shock. The poor guy had only been up once before and that was at high altitudes. He kept throwing up and he was just in our way all the time.

"Mom and Dad, you can thank God that we got back safe. We were all saying our prayers. I received your package with candy and stuff as soon as I got back from that mission. I was so glad to be back I passed it out to everyone. You asked me if I felt older than 19. Well, now I can honestly say I do, about 10 years.

"Well, I guess I told you most of my troubles so I will come to a close.

"Lots of love, Dick

"PS 1. I don't think you should tell Grandma about this.

"PS 2. I didn't get hurt at all, I just got scared."

See MARKET GARDEN on page 9

MARKET GARDEN from page 8

Success or Failure?

Charles B. MacDonald notes, "Operation Market was the largest airborne operation ever mounted and was destined to retain that distinction through the rest of World War II. (In Operation Varsity, launched in the spring of 1945, more planes, gliders, and troops were involved on D-Day than in Operation Market, but additional airborne troops flown in on subsequent days made Market the larger operation.")

Despite optimism as bomber crews returned to England and were interrogated, the 82nd Airborne got about 80 percent of its expected supplies while the 101st got less than half (due in part to the constantly fluctuating battle lines near the drop zones).

MacDonald points out that "Operation Market Garden accomplished much of what it had been designed to accomplish. Nevertheless, by the merciless logic of war, [it] was a failure. The Allies had trained their sights on far-reaching objectives. These they had not attained."

The cost was high: "Including airborne troops, glider pilots, and transport aircraft pilots, the airborne phase [17-25 September] cost 11,850 casualties." This does not include losses suffered by 8AF fighter pilots and bomber crews.

Editor's note: To learn more, see the iconic movie *A Bridge Too Far*, which shows the valiant but ultimately futile effort by airborne troops to achieve their mission. *September Hope: the American Side of a Bridge Too Far* by John C. McManus includes other memories by 392nd BG airmen.

colonial days; and, most important, decide the business of our Group as we continue to perpetuate the legacy of the men who served our country so well.

ITINERARY

Wednesday, Oct. 2. Check in at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel. The 392nd BGMA hospitality room, where reunion registration will occur, will be open from 2pm through the evening. All meals on your own.

Thursday, Oct. 3. *Military Aviation Museum and Spirit of Norfolk Dinner Cruise.* Our bus will depart at 9:30am for the Military Aviation Museum, home to one of the largest private collections of WWI and II era military aircraft in the world. Each plane has been beautifully restored and most are airworthy. The dozens of aircraft on display can change at any time, but you are likely to see a wide variety.

Connected to the main museum building is the 15,000 square foot Army Hangar where US Army Air Corps aircraft can be found, including the P-51 Mustang, the Curtiss P-40, B-25 Mitchell, the Spitfire, Hurricane, and more.

A box lunch from Panera Bread with a turkey sandwich, chips, cookie, and a bottle of water will be provided at the Museum. After returning to the hotel about 2:30pm, meet friends at our hospitality room or enjoy walking around on your own.

At 6:15pm, we'll meet in the lobby to walk as a group to the dock and board the *Spirit of Norfolk*, the area's premier dining cruise ship. The two-hour cruise (7-9pm) allows time to dine, dance and see spectacular views of all the in-port ships and submarines of the US Navy's Atlantic Fleet from the open-air top level. The buffet dinner in the climate-controlled deck includes freshly prepared salads, multiple entrees, sides, and lavish desserts. Unlimited coffee, tea, and water are included while a cash bar is available for other drinks. We'll walk back to the hotel and continue our conversations in the hospitality room.

Friday, Oct 4. *Colonial Williamsburg.* Our bus will depart the hotel at 8am. Be prepared to step back in time at your own pace to learn about life in colonial America. Our journey starts at the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center, where we'll get our tickets, maps, and information about which buildings are open and which programs are offered

See REUNION on page 10

392nd BGMA Reunion



**October 2 - 6, 2019
in
Norfolk, Virginia**

Please join the 392nd BGMA for a trip through American history! During our reunion in Norfolk, Virginia, we'll see WWI and WWII military aircraft (most of them airworthy); view Norfolk Harbor during a dinner cruise; step back to

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

REUNION from page 9

during our visit. Then, we'll have privileged access until 1pm to explore historic 18th century buildings, engage our nation's founders, and gain a new perspective on our American story. Nearly 100 masters, journeymen, apprentices, and interpreters practice many trades using the tools and techniques of the 18th century.

After 1pm, we can continue to walk the streets of the historic area and go into its restaurants and shops. Nearby Merchant's Square (on the edge of the historic district) has restaurants and shops as well. Lunch is on your own.

The bus will depart the historic area at 2:45pm and return to the hotel about 4pm. The rest of the day is free for you to explore Norfolk.

Please wear comfortable walking shoes as the historic district is nearly a mile long with some uneven surfaces.

The hospitality suite will be open from about 4:30pm until 10:30pm. Dinner is on your own.

Saturday, Oct. 5. At 9:30am, we'll meet in the hospitality room for our annual membership meeting, followed by a POW seminar led by our own Greg Hatton. Then, enjoy the afternoon on your own. The hospitality room will be open from 5 to 7pm for pre-dinner cocktails followed by our traditional rendezvous banquet at the hotel.

After dinner, we'll continue our conversation with friends in the hospitality room before saying our farewells.

Sunday, Oct. 6. Check out and depart.

Registration Instructions

Please see the hotel information on this page and make your room reservations. Then complete the Registration Form on page 11, paying particular attention to the ages of the people in your group so you pay the correct price. Each attendee over age 18 must pay the \$30 reunion fee. This will cover expenses such as the hospitality room with snacks and beverages and other administrative costs.

Our ticket prices and bus costs require us to have 20 people on each excursion, so we hope you'll join us on all the outings!!

Reserve your spot(s) by mailing your completed Registration Form and a \$50 non-refundable deposit per person no later than May 30, 2019 to Annette Tison, 9107 Wood Pointe Way, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. Make your check payable to *392nd BGMA with Norfolk reunion* in the memo line.

The remaining balance will be due to her by Aug. 26.

Cancellation Policy

Attendees canceling reunion activities will be refunded to the fullest extent that our vendor commitments and guarantees permit. Canceling your hotel reservation doesn't cancel your reunion activities.

LODGING

The 392nd BGMA has reserved a block of rooms at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel, 777 Waterside Dr., Norfolk, VA 23510 <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/orfsi-sheraton-norfolk-waterside-hotel/>.

As the only downtown Norfolk hotel located directly on the Elizabeth River, the hotel is just steps away from the business district and many attractions, restaurants and nightlife (see <https://watersidedistrict.com/> for some dining and entertainment options). Naval Station Norfolk and the

Virginia Beach resort area are a short drive away. The fully renovated rooms feature complimentary high-speed internet and views of the downtown Norfolk skyline or the Elizabeth River. Additional amenities include a 24-hour fitness center and waterfront dining at Waterside Seafood Company (with a 15% discount on published food and non-alcoholic beverage prices when you mention the 392nd BGMA reunion).

The Sheraton Waterfront is a smoke free hotel. It will post a \$200 cleaning fee to the account of any guests who smoke in their guest room.

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

Our hotel reunion reservation page is at: <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1551812349220&key=GRP&app=resvlink>. Scroll to the bottom of the page and enter your requested dates. (The page is pre-set for reservations three days before and three days after the reunion dates, so adjust as necessary!!) To reserve a pre- or post-reunion room, call the hotel directly at (757) 622-6664 and reference the *392nd Bomb Group 2019 Reunion*.

DATES: Oct. 2-6, 2019

RATE: \$109 + state tax (currently 14%) and local tax (currently \$3/day). Rates will be offered three days before and after official reunion dates, subject to availability of guest rooms at the time of reservation.

CUT OFF DATE: 5:00pm EDT on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019. After the cut-off date, it is at the hotel's discretion whether to accept additional reservations, which will be subject to prevailing rates and availability.

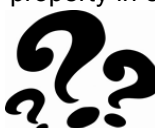
CANCELLATION POLICY: All reservations must be accompanied by a credit card guarantee. Reservations can be cancelled up to 48 hours before the expected check-in time of 4pm.

PARKING & SHUTTLE INFORMATION: Convenient, covered and secured automobile self-parking is located at the Dominion Tower Parking Garage, adjacent to the hotel and other nearby facilities. Parking is subject to availability. Reunion attendees will be offered a reduced self-parking rate of \$8.00 per car, per day with in/out privileges; the discounted \$8.00 self-parking vouchers can be purchased at guest check in. Persons displaying a disabled parking tag may park in the valet lot at the self-parking rate.

The hotel doesn't have a shuttle to or from Norfolk International Airport, but James River Transportation is recommended at www.jamesrivertrans.com. Currently, the price is \$35.40 for up to 3 people (total price, not per person) each way. So, for example, if husband and wife needed round trip transportation, the couple would pay a total of \$70.80 round trip. If a group of 4-10 arrive together, the price is only \$65 total each way—very economical if several people arrive or depart the airport at about the same time. Gratuity is included.

SECURITY. The hotel requires us to advise attendees that they are responsible for safekeeping of their personal property in event and function spaces.

Contact... Annette Tison—dtison5401@aol.com or (703) 690-8540; Ralph Winter—rewcts@gmail.com or (404) 354-7485; or Bob Books—books@b24.net or (850) 458-0777.



392nd BGMA REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Norfolk, Virginia
October 2-6, 2019

Listed below are all registration, tour, and rendezvous dinner costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will participate in each event (using the appropriate fee for their age) and total the amount. Then subtract the \$50 per person registration fee to obtain the final amount due.

The registration form plus the \$50 per person reunion fee is due by May 30, 2019; the remaining amount is due by Aug. 26. After Aug. 26, reservations will be accepted only on a space available basis.

Please make a copy of this form before mailing, to remind you when your final payment is due and that amount. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee.

Checks should be made out to 392nd BGMA with *Norfolk reunion* in the memo line.

Mail checks to: Annette Tison, 9107 Wood Pointe Way, Fairfax Station, VA 22039

	Price / Person	# of People	Total Cost
Registration Fee			
All attendees over age 18 must pay this fee	\$30.00		
Tours (prices do not include driver gratuity)			
<u>Thurs., Oct. 3: Military Aviation Museum</u>			
Age 18 and older; includes bus, ticket & box lunch	\$70.00		
Ages 6-17; includes bus, ticket & box lunch	\$63.00		
Ages 5 and below, sitting on laps in the bus; no box lunch	\$0.00		
<u>Thurs., Oct. 3: Dinner Cruise</u>			
Ages 13 and older; includes cruise, dinner, tax and tip	\$65.00		
Ages 3-12; includes cruise, dinner, tax and tip	\$45.00		
Ages 2 and below, sitting on laps in the bus; no individual meal	\$0.00		
<u>Fri., Oct. 4: Colonial Williamsburg</u>			
Ages 18 and older; includes bus & ticket; lunch on your own	\$69.00		
Ages 6-17; includes bus & ticket; lunch on your own	\$60.00		
Ages 5 and below, sitting on laps in the bus; lunch on your own	\$0.00		
Sat., Oct. 5: Rendezvous Dinner			
Age 11 and up			
Pan Seared Bone-In Chicken Breast with a Lemon Caper Sauce	\$45.00		
Roast Sliced Beef Sirloin with a Peppercorn Cognac Cream Sauce	\$45.00		
Age 10 and below	\$21.00		
Total Amount Payable to 392nd BGMA			
less the \$50 non-refundable per person deposit due May 30, 2019			-
Remaining amount due by August 26, 2019			

Primary Contact Person for Your Group _____

Others attending with you (and ages, if under 18) _____, _____

_____, _____

Your email address _____ Your Phone Number _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of Your 392nd BG Relative: _____

Disability / Dietary Restrictions in Your Group _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone Number _____

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

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

Let's trust that we will all get through this record-setting winter and will have many warm, sunshiny days ahead of us.

Since winter has kept many of us home, I find myself watching a lot of TV news. I am always intrigued and touched by news stories about the assist that so many people offer (sometimes risking their own lives) to keep people safe during events such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and their aftermath. These unselfish people should be honored just as we should give continuous gratitude to our WWII warriors who kept us free.

When I was in the 9th grade, I was lucky to get a new teacher fresh out of college. She challenged our class with an assignment to write an essay titled *Man's Inhumanity to Man*. I thought this project would be difficult until my research found so many historical and current examples.

Certainly, WWII was a blindingly obvious illustration of our potential for inhumanity to one another. It was clear to politician Charlie Dent who said, "We in the United States should be all the more thankful for the freedom and religious tolerance we enjoy. And we should always remember the lessons learned from the Holocaust, in hopes we stay vigilant against such inhumanity now and in the future."

May our nation stay positive, focused and tolerant. May strong values and kindness taught to us by our veterans be our foundation and a guideline for how we treat others. The time is always right to do what is right.



**THE 392ND MEMORIAL
AT WENDLING**

**But we...shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few,
we band of brothers.
For he to-day that sheds
his blood with me
Shall be my brother...**

William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Assoc.
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∞

Marvin R. Graham, 579, January 3, 2019
Karen Cook Cannady, Associate, September 20, 2018
Michael K. Sassaman, Associate, October 23, 2018
Donald T. Overman, 578, January 28, 2019
Lewis H. Richards, 578, February 2, 2019
Mabel A. Cheek, widow of Carroll, 578, February 22, 2019
Robert H. Franke, Associate, February 8, 2019
Harold E. Wear, 576, March 12, 2016