



579th AIRMEN: NO LONGER UNKNOWN

What follows is how a quest to pinpoint one man in one photo led to the identifications of nearly 90 men in two photos. It details the back-and-forth between Mike Cominsky and editor Annette Tison.

In early 1999, Mike began searching the internet for information about his uncle, 579th Sqdn waist gunner S/Sgt Marshall S. Yorra. He was one of three men on 1/Lt Douglas S. Rogillio Jr's crew who did not survive their ditching near the Frisian Islands on 13 Dec 1943. The other seven became POWs.

They called themselves the "All-American crew." Rogillio had Spanish heritage, copilot Lewis R. Worker was German, navigator William E. Kelly and bombardier Richard J. Hughes were Irish, radio operator Aloysius J. Malak was Polish, engineer Anthony P. Mazzei was Italian, waist gunner Walter F. Bryan was English, waist gunner Alexander Takacs was Hungarian, Yorra was Jewish, and tail gunner Joseph G. Reljac was Czechoslovakian.

Mike was able to contact Hughes, visit him and read his WWII diary; speak to Malak on the phone; correspond with Mazzei; and also exchange e-mails with Rogillio's daughter and Reljac's nephew.

From those conversations and written contact, Mike says, "It was very clear how much every crew member truly cared for each other and how profoundly they felt their loss. Hughes lit a memorial candle in church each year on

the anniversary of the mission."

The crew arrived in England on 15 Jul 1943 and was assigned to the 93rd BG. On 20 August, they flew to North Africa on a C-47, perhaps as replacements for 93rd crews lost during combat missions there. Apparently not needed, they returned on the 26th via a C-54.

They, and 2/Lt Vernon Baumgart's crew, were ordered to the 392nd on 6 Sep 1943 and both crews were assigned to the 579th soon after.

Hughes' diary mentions their quick trip to North Africa but had no details about what they did there—except that they rode a camel!

Mike recalled, "According to the diary, everything seemed upbeat and almost 'fun' prior to the mission on 4 Oct 1943. Lots of comments about eating lobster, visits to Edinburgh and London. The tone completely changes with that day's entry [when three 579th Sqdn crews became the Group's first combat casualties of the war], noting it as the 'Day of Days.' Everything was very sober after that. The same is generally true for my uncle's letters.

"Hughes told me that the crew made an internal decision that if all of them

couldn't fly together, then no one would. His entry on 15 Nov 1943 was 'I belong to a wonderfully loyal crew who will do anything to fly together, even risk health.'"

Mike also exchanged information with the son of
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Both of these photos are labeled "(11-10-43)(579th.SQD. COMBAT CREWS)." They (and at least five 579th crew photos) were taken on 10 Nov 1943. In the top photo are 51 enlisted crewmen while the bottom has 39 officers; thanks to Mike Cominsky, most of their identities have been learned.



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FROM THE EDITOR

Veteran Updates. I regret to report that **Aubrey Burke** passed away on 19 Dec 2020. He was a welder by military training but a machinist by inclination. Assigned to the 465th Sub Depot, he custom-made or modified components that were not otherwise available and critical to the repair of battle-damaged aircraft.

He also crafted two devices that helped everyone on the base:

Loaves of English bread came unsliced with a hard crust, so he invented a bread slicer. Powered by a 250-volt British motor, it could make 17 slices at a time.

Dentist Capt Emil F. Riha used a foot pump to power his drill. Aubrey was able to connect the drill to an electric motor, making the process much easier for Capt Riha—and less painful for his patients!

He also created a Communion cup service out of spent .50-caliber shells casings that he cut, flared, and silvered. The handle was machined from battle-damaged Hamilton propeller scraps.

Aubrey attended many reunions, accompanied most recently by his wife Beverly. They were a pleasure to be around.

Photos, from the top: The bread slicer, the Communion cup set and Beverly and Aubrey at the 2019 reunion.

1825th Ordnance Supply & Maintenance Co. (AVN) veteran **Charles Dye** passed away on 24

Feb 2021 at age 100. Shown at left, he was the Station Ammunition Officer. He also supervised the bomb dump, where the bombs dropped by the 392nd (11,804 tons in the first 200 missions alone) were unloaded, stored and then distributed to the squadrons before a mission. Later, he was 392nd BGMA Treasurer and active in several executive positions. He was also President of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Men like him were one reason "the Greatest Generation" got that name.

On a happier note, 579th navigator **Alvin J. Stasney** recently turned 100! In the photo below on the left, wife Virginia, daughters Rebecca and Laura, and son Mark celebrated with him in the hospital as he recuperated

from partial hip replacement surgery. (Note his 392nd BGMA cap!)

When **John P. Rumancik's** son (John Jr) renewed his dues for 2021, he included a note about his dad, shown at right in



March 1945. His oxygen tube and mask are visible as are his parachute harness, cold weather clothing and Mae West. "My father (576th, MacFarlane crew, tail gunner) and Mom each turned 95 around last October 1, 2020, and celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary last June 10. Both are doing well, still taking care of the house, yard, rose garden, and cutting neighbor's lawns. Dad drives the car very carefully around Albuquerque, New Mexico. Both are getting

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President's Corner



March 20th is the first day of Spring, so I decided to look at some quotes about this welcome season. With our wide-spread membership, I realize that Spring signifies different things in different locations. In the warmer regions, the quote "Blossom by blossom, the spring begins" is appropriate, while in the colder climates, "Spring is when you feel like whistling, even with a shoe full of slush" might be more apt.

However you view spring, my hope for all of us is that we will see a dramatic decline in cases of the coronavirus and a return to a level of normalcy ... one that allows us to enjoy being with friends and family and show our affection at whatever level is appropriate—hugs, kisses, or handshakes. So Happy Spring, everyone!

On a more somber note, since our last newsletter we lost two of our members who were veterans. Aubrey Burke passed away on December 11, 2020 and Charles (Charlie) Dye on February 24, 2021. Aubrey and Charles were members of the Ground and Support Crew at Wendling who were dedicated to maintaining the planes, munitions and other support equipment so vital to the missions and the safety and security of the air crews. Their loyalty to our organization was steadfast and they will be missed.

I received an email from Jill Scott and on behalf of herself and her entire family, she asked me to extend sincere thanks to all of you who contributed to the donation to the UK Dementia Research Institute in memory of her husband Tom. The response was excellent. Tom was one of our Trustees whose dedication to the 392nd BGMA and the memorial at Wendling was detailed by Annette in the December 2020 *News*.

I previously announced that our quarterly Meet & Greet Zoom sessions would be on the third Sunday of the month following the release of the quarterly newsletter. However, I need more flexibility in order to accommodate those members who have conflicts on Sundays, so we will alternate between Sundays and Saturdays. This time, we will meet on Saturday, April 17th at 1:30pm EST. Invitations with a link will be emailed to all members a few days prior.

As conditions improve, the prospects for our annual membership meeting and reunion in October are looking good. I hope that many of you will be able to attend. Savannah is a beautiful, old historic city with a lot to offer in the way of sightseeing and good food. See the details on pages 9 to 11 and mark your calendars. The hotel cancellation policy is very liberal, so make your hotel reservation soon, if you are even considering attending.

Ralph

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around like they are 55 years old. What a pair of love birds!! He is my hero...he is my Dad!!"

Publishing History. A math mistake has crept into the *News*. It has been published since 1985, making 2021 its 37th year. The "Volume" number on the front page has been changed accordingly! And in case you're wondering, I've been the editor since 2008.

AmazonSmile. There's an easy way to donate to the 392nd BGMA when you shop on Amazon. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and log in with your Amazon account username and password. If you don't have an account, create one. Select *392 Bomb Group Memorial Association Inc* as your designated charity. In the future, shop at smile.amazon.com, rather than the regular Amazon site. Every eligible purchase results in a donation to the 392nd BGMA.

Thanks for your support!

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Baumgart crew ball turret gunner S/Sgt Jack Money, who sent him a photo of 51 men posed in front of a B-24. The caption said it was taken on "11-10-43" and showed "579th Sqd. Combat Crews." The only person identified was Jack Money.

Mike immediately wondered if his Uncle Marshall was in the photo too.

The Rogillio crew photo had the same date, which Mike assumed was 11 Oct 1943. "By comparing the two photos," Mike said, "I was able to identify Marshall and the other five enlisted crewmen as well. I therefore thought that everyone else in the picture must also be a 579th enlisted crew member."

In early October 2020, Mike emailed me that photo, saying, "I think that it may be possible to identify other enlisted crew members by comparing their individual crew pictures to this one. Anyway, when other people identify their family members in the picture, it may cause the same little bit of happiness that I had."

I had not seen that photo before. I congratulated Mike on finding the six enlisted Rogillio crew men in it and asked if he would be willing to do some more detective work. "The photo can be enlarged enough to make distinctive things easily recognizable—a bomber jacket with a certain patch on it (not the 392nd's, since we hadn't developed one yet!), a certain type hat, a moustache, etc.

"If you go to <https://www.b24.net/missionsSummary.htm>, you can learn which 579th Sqdn crews were flying missions before 11 Oct 1943. If you then examine their crew and individual photos at <https://www.b24.net/airmenPhotos.htm>, you may be able to match even more individuals and names."

"Oh, by the way," I added, "I have a photo of 579th Sqdn officers that was taken the same day. I could send that to you as well."

Without hesitation, Mike accepted the challenge. "Send it to me. I'll try to match every person to their crew photos."

Detective Work

I emailed Mike the 579th Sqdn Officers Photo and one of
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News from Across the Pond

France

Bernard Ballanger emailed that ceremonies were held on 31 Dec 2020 at the memorial to 1/Lt Thomas R. McKee and crew near Montlieu-la-Garde, France. The crew was shot down on that date in 1943 with nine men killed and one captured.



Annual ceremonies have been held there since the memorial was dedicated in 1947.

This photo is from the American Consulate in Bordeaux, France. Due to covid protocols, the ceremony was smaller than usual, but just as meaningful.

Belgium

A memorial in Belgium commemorates the crash of 1/Lt Denver L. Walker and crew on 29 Dec 1944.

A recent post at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/b24bestweb/permalink/4917202744987760/> told of a memorial in Denderwindeke-Boterdael, dedicated on 10 May 2003 to the 577th Sqdn crew.

Per a translation of the plaque, *"In the early morning of*

Friday the 29th of December 1944, after the briefing on their base Wendling (county Norfolk) in England, the 29 bombers of the type Consolidated Liberator B-24 from the 8th air army of the USAAF started for a raid on Neuwied, near Koblenz, Germany; their mission was to eliminate a railway bridge. Their mission went completely in accordance with their plan until the formation was hit by flak above the Ardennes, where at that moment the Battle of the Bulge was occurring.

"Thirteen planes were hit by enemy fire. 577th Sqdn plane B-24 #42-50861, with 9 American crew members, was one of the planes who crashed in Boterdael about 2:30pm. It was on its 16th mission.

"Before pilot 1/Lt Denver L. Walker could make an emergency landing, copilot 2/Lt Dominic J. Nunziato was badly wounded in the legs. All the men bailed out before the terrible crash.

"For two members the jump was fatal. Navigator 2/Lt Cletus E Bedore died in the neighborhood of the Saint Leonardus chapel at Tollembeek, where his body lay in state. Waist gunner S/Sgt Thomas M. Bradford lost his life in Vollezele near the farm Ten Berg at the Congoberg.

"In addition to the pilots, other survivors were bombardier 2/Lt Lowell E. Faust, engineer S/Sgt Albin S. Gusciora, radio operator S/Sgt Allen E. Lane, and tail gunner S/Sgt Peter T. Ballas."

Records show that 2/Lt Nunziato was "seriously Wounded in Action" and "evacuated to the United States."

For six survivors, this mission completed their combat tour. Although 2/Lt Faust was also "Seriously Wounded in Action," he "Returned to Duty." He had been on fewer missions than the rest of the crew and thus flew an additional 16 missions between 9 Feb and 25 Apr 1945.

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392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

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

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

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

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

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

Hardship Waiver []

DONATION \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

ACROSS THE POND from page 4 England

The Second Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich, Norfolk, has been renamed the American Library. It is closed due to renovation and pandemic protocols. However, its digital archive is a treasure trove of material relating to 2AD servicemen and women.

The 392nd BG's digital collection is at <https://digitalarchive.2ndair.org.uk/digitalarchive/Dashboard/Index/40>. Ensure you have several hours available before you visit the website, as there is a lot to see!!

Zoom Get-Together

The first, informal Zoom get-together of Crusaders was held on 17 Jan 2021. Twenty people attended, including several first-time participants.

Dale Campbell says, "My 392nd BG connection is through my grandmother's youngest brother, 2/Lt John M. Peppard, navigator on 2/Lt Charles W. Warner's crew in the 578th. As a child, I can remember my grandmother and her older brother talking fondly of their younger sibling, telling tales from their childhood as well as sharing family photographs and other memorabilia that once belonged to Uncle John. I knew he had served during WWII and I had seen his headstone in our local cemetery every time I went with my grandfather to place flowers on all of our family's graves each year. But it wasn't until my early teens that I can remember truly understanding how he died.

"Around this same time, I became fascinated with military aircraft and often attended air shows with my parents and grandparents; I built a few models as well. I enjoyed the modern planes, both jet fighters and bombers (my father served in the USAF and I was born in the base hospital at Cannon AFB in Clovis, New Mexico), but my passion grew for WWII aircraft and I could often be found at museums or air shows where the older 'warbirds' were present.

"One such place I would frequent (especially after getting my license and being able to drive myself) was the National Warplane Museum in Geneseo, New York, and its annual *Wings of Eagles* air show. Little did I know that later in life I would be hired by the Museum as their sole on-site IT person when they temporarily relocated to a regional airport near me.

"During that brief period, from 1998-2000, I built and managed their new website as well as many other IT-related jobs. I also worked with the museum curator in online communications for various history projects and was single-handedly instrumental in connecting with some historians in Germany who had found the wreckage of the original B-17G *Fuddy Duddy* and shipped us pieces for display. (The museum at that time still owned and flew a B-17 painted to resemble the *Fuddy Duddy* and I had the privilege of being able to ride in it.)

"I was also on staff each year as an assistant to the chairman for the *Wings of Eagles* air show, which put me in direct contact with all the aircrews (active military as well as those flying restored planes) and their aircraft. As you can imagine, I jumped at any chance they gave me to be

near or inside those planes, especially any B-24 that made a rare visit.

"Then, not too long ago, I ran across www.b24.net and quickly discovered that it was a site all about the men my Uncle John had served with and the base in England where he spent the last few months of his life. Thanks to the work of so many of you, I was now looking at photos of places my uncle had been and reading information about things these young men saw and did... things I wished I could have shared with my grandmother, who passed away in 1999, but could now at least share with my kids and other family members still living.

"I am forever grateful for those men who served and for those who continue to preserve their history and memories for future generations. It wasn't long before I became a member of the 392nd BGMA and I really enjoyed being able to connect on the Zoom call and meet some of this fine group. I look forward to meeting more of you and hearing more memories and information about the 392nd.

"My great-uncle flew 22 missions between January 13 and April 14, 1945, at which time he and the rest of his crew perished shortly after take-off when their aircraft, #42-50446, *J.C. POOLHALL*, lost power on the two left wing engines and crashed near the end of the runway."



Dale provided this photo, which shows the burial of seven Warner crewmen on 17 Apr 1945 at US Military Cemetery, Cambridge, England. The eighth died on 29 May 1945 and was also buried there. Four of the men remain in England, now buried at Cambridge American Cemetery.

Larry Copp's father, Robert D. Copp, was a pilot in the 577th Sqdn from its formation in the US. He flew diversion and combat missions from 6 Sep 1943 to 29 May 1944.

Larry says, "From 1977, when I completed initial flight training, to mid-2005, when Bob (that's what we kids always called him) became unable to enjoy the experience, we had many delightful hours in the cockpit. There were many good memories, but one flight really stands out.

"We were on a trip back home to Burlington, Vermont; I was piloting a Cessna 206 Stationair with Dad next to me. It was dark, we were in the clouds (ceilings were 600 feet—imagine not being able to see the ground from the top floor of a six-story building!) plus there was blowing snow and a challenging crosswind. Imagine breaking out of the clouds at 120 mph and having less than 30 seconds to take in the picture, slow the aircraft, align with the runway, and flair to a stall, all while maintaining a forward track across an icy runway.

"When I finally saw the runway extension lights through the clouds and snow, I powered back, put in full flaps and

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Standing Top Row (L-R): 1/Lt Nicholas Robson, 1/Lt John Adams, 1/Lt Wyeth Everhart, 2/Lt Vincent Coleman, 1/Lt Harrison Cassell, 2/Lt William Kelly, 1/Lt James McGregor, 2/Lt John McDade, 1/Lt Edward Kubale, Unknown (possibly 2/Lt Joseph Higgins), 2/Lt Edward White, F/O John Colvin, 1/Lt Winfield Cordes, 1/Lt Charles Holloman
 Bending Down Row (L-R): 1/Lt Duane Freeborn, 2/Lt Harry Casey, 2/Lt Perry Wharton (leaning), Unknown (partially blocked, possibly 1/Lt Robert Hull), 2/Lt William Cetin, 1/Lt Roy Swangren, 2/Lt Robert Good, 1/Lt Ralph Taylor, 1/Lt Ralph Lamma
 Kneeling Row (L-R): Capt Myron Keilman (579th Sqdn CO), 2/Lt Marshall Crouch, 2/Lt Douglas Rogillio Jr, 2/Lt Charles Cleaton, 2/Lt Vernon Baumgart, 2/Lt Lewis Worker, 2/Lt Robert Hughes, 2/Lt Stanley Stupski, 2/Lt Jack Chatten
 Sitting Cross-Legged Row (L-R): Unknown (possibly 2/Lt James Piper), 2/Lt Ralph Keck, 2/Lt Edward Durrance, 2/Lt Chester Broyles, 2/Lt Kenneth Bevan, Unknown (possibly 1/Lt James Goff), 2/Lt John Lessey

579th Sqdn bombardiers taken on 10-29-43; I had gotten them a few months earlier from Mac Cassell, son of 579th pilot Capt Harrison Cassell. Mac had identified the officers on his father's crew as well as most of the bombardiers in their photo. At some point, he had also met with Vern Baumgart, who pointed out his crew members.

These, I thought, would help jump start Mike's efforts.

Just a few hours later, Mike emailed that he had "easily" found the Rogillio crew officers in the 579th Sqdn Officers photo.

It took Mike less than two weeks to send me his first findings. He started with the photos on our website of crews who were flying combat missions by 11 Oct 1943. He then carefully compared each photo to the two 579th Sqdn photos. Some men "were easily identified by their uniforms, gloves, hat angles, scarves, and relative heights, and almost jumped off the page."

He was able to identify other men by comparing their "hairline, mustache, and expression" in their crew and 579th Sqdn photos. That still left some men whose faces were too indistinct to be identified, so he asked if I had other photos that could help.

I sent Mike more photos of the relevant 579th Sqdn airmen from my files and he found others on the internet. He grew concerned, though, when he could not find anyone from some crews who *should* have been in the photo based on the date.

Breakthroughs

At that point, there were two major developments. We had assumed the officers' and enlisted men's photos were taken on 11 October because the date 11-10-43 was written on them. BUT, the date on the bombardiers photo was 10-29-43, which meant the dates were written in Month, Date, Year format rather than Date, Month, Year.

That meant the combat crew photos were actually taken on 10 Nov 1943. Therefore, some of the crews Mike had been

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Standing Top Row (L-R): S/Sgt William Yarbrough, S/Sgt Donald Smith, S/Sgt Frank Wind, S/Sgt Charles O'Reilly, T/Sgt William Cauble, S/Sgt George Heckendorn, S/Sgt David York, T/Sgt Harold Davis, S/Sgt Chester Dobrowski, Unknown (possibly T/Sgt Robert Wright), S/Sgt Thomas Sumlin, T/Sgt William Murphy, T/Sgt Wilson Heuser, S/Sgt Thomas Johnson, T/Sgt James Beard, T/Sgt Leslie Tribbett, S/Sgt Frederick Veit, S/Sgt Thaddeus Padden, T/Sgt William Galloway, T/Sgt Elroy Prud'Homme, T/Sgt Clifford Northcutt

Partially Blocked Middle Row (L-R): S/Sgt Cecil Rothrock, S/Sgt Alexander Takacs, S/Sgt David Surls, T/Sgt James Johnson, S/Sgt William Buchert, T/Sgt Myron Boerschinger, S/Sgt Marshall Yorra, S/Sgt Ralph Lanier, T/Sgt Anthony Mazzei, T/Sgt William Hay, S/Sgt Raul Vasquez, S/Sgt John Yost, Unknown (possibly S/Sgt Harvey Jackson), S/Sgt Raymond Bookout, S/Sgt Burr Long, S/Sgt Glen West, S/Sgt James M Housteau

Kneeling/Sitting Unblocked Front Row (L-R): S/Sgt Joseph Kiss, S/Sgt Joseph Reljac, T/Sgt Joseph Reljac, T/Sgt Joseph Reljac, T/Sgt Joseph Reljac, S/Sgt John Fons, S/Sgt Jack Money, S/Sgt Charles Piper, unknown (possibly S/Sgt Almos Sweatt), S/Sgt Nelson Putnam, S/Sgt Harold Erbe, Unknown (possibly T/Sgt Earl Lett), S/Sgt Alfred Rinke

The unknown men are most likely members of the Goff crew (T/Sgt Earl Lett, S/Sgt Harvey Jackson, T/Sgt Robert Wright, and S/Sgt Almos E. Sweatt) as: 1) other members of the crew are identified in the enlisted and officer pictures; 2) their plane is in the background; 3) the uncertainty is due to how blurry the photo is. S/Sgt Robert Fowler may also be a possible figure as he was assigned to other crews after the loss of the Nicholson crew.

expecting to find based on the October date—1/Lt Brian T. Smith's, 1/Lt Orval S. Morphew's, 1/Lt James A. Fuererstacke's, and 1/Lt William W. Clifford's—had been shot down by then. Between 11 Oct and 9 Nov 1943, 2/Lt William P. Nicholson's and 1/Lt Wallace W. D'Aoust's crews were also shot down. All of them had been replaced by other crews.

I took a closer look at the pertinent crew photos in my files to see if any of them were dated. I found proof that the crew pictures of 1/Lt Cassell, 2/Lt Rogillio Jr, 2/Lt Baumgart, 1/Lt Ralph E. Lamma, and 2/Lt Robert L. Hull were all taken on 10 Nov 1943; this made it easier to compare uniforms, head tilts, etc., between the crew and Squadron photos.

Additionally, 1/Lt James F. Goff's crew photo was taken on 4 Nov 1943; and while none of my photos of 2/Lt Joseph A. Higgins Jr's and 1/Lt Wyeth C. Everhart's crews were dated, the way they looked closely matched the Squadron photos.

So, Mike went back to work. He has now identified "with some confidence" all but about eight men in the two photos; their faces are obscured by their hats or the people in front of them.

The results of his detective work are on this and the opposite page, while his methodology and analysis are shown at <https://b24.net/579thCrews.pdf>.

Mike says, "I'm pretty confident about the identifications based on the photos I was able to find for comparison purposes. However, if anyone thinks I've mis-identified someone or can name any of the unknowns, please let Annette know so we can correct the captions."

Our heartfelt thanks:

- to Mike, for all his hard work to ensure that the men in these photos are now identified!

- to Mac Cassell, who at several key points provided clear, high-definition photos that were extremely helpful in this project.

- to Tom Nicholson, son of pilot 2/Lt William P. Nicholson, who thoroughly searched his father's files for pertinent information.

Afterthoughts

Mike says, "My uncle's letters that were saved are pretty vague and never

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with full aileron to the right into the wind and left rudder to the stops so we stayed on the runway center line, we slid onto the runway and rolled across an icy taxiway to the hangar. Once on the ramp, I turned to Bob and said, "Well, pretty exciting, wouldn't you say?" He turned to me and said, 'Yea, I like the fact that no one was shooting at us.' "

"To me, the important part is this: It took a lot of guts and cool heads to do what the airmen of the 392nd did during their combat tours. All the training in the world did not prepare them to be on the receiving end of gunfire and flak.

"Mine was an extremely difficult approach and landing—only an accomplished aircrew would even make the attempt. Bob was cool, calm and solid as a rock throughout the approach and landing. Me, I was sweating bullets.

"Bob's Army footlocker had become a frequent warehouse of all things aeronautical from my earliest days; pilot manuals, survival gear, aeronautical charts and training guides were reprieves from cold, rainy, and gray Vermont days when out of door activities were beyond tolerance. A journey into the footlocker always led to excitement and intrigue and stimulated my imagination. My passion for flying emerged from those days. We shared many good lessons over my life and our flights.

"I was grateful for Bob's guidance and commitment to our family, raising me and my siblings with values that mattered: personal responsibility, persistence, imagination, a notion that all was possible, and dedication to community.

"I was fortunate enough and take great comfort in being able to share those cockpit times with Bob, and most of all to tell him how much I appreciated what he did for his family and our country. My question was, 'How did you do it, Bob?' His reply, 'We just did it as it had to be done.' "

Taylor Gilbert is the grandson of Col Lawrence G. Gilbert (the 392nd BG's last CO); he spoke eloquently about him and the Group during our 2018 reunion in Wendling.

Taylor recalled an anecdote: The 392nd BG flew to England with the first B-24 H-model planes in the theater. Since this version featured the new electrically powered nose turret, General Jimmy Doolittle immediately flew to the 392nd to see the aircraft.

As 392nd Commander LtCol Irvine A. Rendle and his staff waited outside, Doolittle crawled all over the new plane. He finally descended and, while chatting with Rendle, said, "I don't see how the damn thing's going to fly."

Col Rendle said goodbye to the General, then turned and said to his staff, "Don't Ever repeat that to anyone!"

During the meeting, **George Abbott White** mentioned that "Thanks to the pandemic, Boomers have become Zoomers." So true!!

His connection to the 392nd is through a long friendship with 578/9th pilot Bruce McClellan.

George says, "Joel Greenberg was my roommate at the University of Michigan in the mid-1960s and remains my best friend. He was hired by Bruce McClellan, headmaster of the Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, in 1968 and recently retired after 45 straight years in harness.

"Although my WW2 aviation interest began early with a junior high baseball team named *The Flying Tigers* and trips

past Willow Run where the B-24s were built, progressed during high school and college years (learning all I could about the Battle of Britain, Hurricanes and Spitfires), I came to know Bruce through Joel—and, through several projects, including Rhodes Scholars in WW2, the 392nd.

"Bruce's remarkable character and undeviating sense of mission seemed to me less formed than confirmed by his experiences with those men and machines, the terrible failures and almost miraculous successes, of their "mighty 8th" campaign against fascism and Nazi Germany and for democracy and the liberation of the human spirit.

"So I've followed Bruce's 392nd a number of years through the well-written newsletter to learn more about the context in which he became, more fully, what he and his colleagues were. For almost half a century I've visited relevant sites in England and in Europe. My UK fellow cultural historian Eric Homberger (University of East Anglia, Norwich) has helped me know Norfolk, as John Gilbert generously took me in hand not a few hours around Wendling.

"I've taught undergraduate and junior high students, taken high school youngsters to Central Europe twenty spring and summer weeks, testing out in some sense ways the values for which so many struggled not so many years ago can be understood today. The 392nd is for me, then, a less abstract and more personal example of that challenge, made ever more necessary, sorry to say, by recent events in our own Capitol."

Conversations

After all those present had spoken about their 392nd BG connection, the conversation was wide-ranging.

Most agreed they had "found" the 392nd BGMA because of our website. Attendees Bob Books, Ben Jones and Dennis Rogers were among those who created it!

Jimmy Stewart, one of the first major US movie stars to enlist to fight in WWII, was discussed in detail.

Jimmy Stewart

A licensed amateur pilot, he received his commission as a pilot on 1 Jan 1942. After spending a year training pilots stateside, he asked for a transfer overseas and was sent to England in November 1943 to fly B-24s with the 445th BG.

His war record is exceptional. He began flying combat missions with the 445th, became its Operations Officer, and ended the war as a Colonel and Chief of Staff of the 2nd Combat Wing, having completed 20 combat missions. He stayed in the Army Reserves, moved to the Air Force Reserves, and eventually became a Brigadier General—and then flew as an observer during a bombing mission over North Vietnam in 1966.

Moreover, he absolutely refused to let his military accomplishments be used for movie publicity purposes, even when he was playing a man in uniform.

He also had a direct tie to the 392nd BG.

Bombing Switzerland

On 1 Apr 1944 the 392nd dispatched 24 ships to bomb the chemical works at Ludwigshafen, Germany. Due to radar malfunctions, clouds, and stronger winds than anticipated, the 392nd was blown off course and bombed Schaffhausen, Switzerland, by mistake.

Disciplinary action was taken against 576th Sqdn lead

See ZOOM on page 9

ZOOM from page 8

navigator, Capt Christian H. Koch. Although he flew 21 more missions, he was never again allowed to serve as lead navigator. (See <https://www.b24.net/MM040144.htm> for more information about that mission.)

Although Schaffhausen was the most serious of incidents—with 40 people killed, about 270 injured, and large parts of the town destroyed—this was not the first (or even the last) time that Allied bombs were accidentally dropped on Switzerland. In fact, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aerial_incidents_in_Switzerland_in_World_War_II#:~:text=Allied%20planes%20bombed%20Switzerland%20about,for%20having%20collaborated%20with%20Germany, says, “Allied planes bombed Switzerland about seventy times during World War II, killing 84 people.”

On 4 Mar 1945, a series of equipment malfunctions, bad weather and miscommunication resulted in six B-24s, led by a 392nd BG Path Finder Force (PFF) plane, dropping 12 tons of incendiaries and 12.5 tons of high explosive bombs on Zurich, Switzerland, mistakenly thinking they were bombing Freiburg, Germany.

579th pilot 1/Lt William R. Sincok and dead-reckoning navigator 1/Lt Theodore Balides were court martialed, with Col Jimmy Stewart as presiding judge. They were both acquitted. See <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a523036.pdf> for details of the mission, the many things that went wrong, and the court martial. For Balides' thoughts decades later, see <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1994-11-06-1994310006-story.html>.

579TH AIRMEN from page 7

directly refer to a specific mission. Instead, they often had newspaper clippings about those missions with instructions to save them as ‘they are important.’

“A letter after the 13 Nov 1943 mission seems to have a long, key part cut out by the censor (1/Lt Cordes). When I was working to connect the names and pictures, it was especially poignant to find that several of the officers had actually signed my uncle’s mail as censors (pilot 1/Lt James McGregor, Lamma crew bombardier 1/Lt Duane Freeborn,

Baumgart crew copilot 1/Lt Winfield Cordes, Cassell crew bombardier 2/Lt William Cetin and navigator 2/Lt Kenneth Bevan, pilot 2/Lt William Nicholson and others).”

Ralph Winter, son of 579th pilot Ralph Lamma, confirmed the identifications of the men in his father’s crew. He also noted that the 579th Sqdn combat crew photos were taken just three days before the Lamma crew was shot down and five of the men (including his father) killed in action.

Perhaps it was their loss on 13 Nov 1943 that had so troubled S/Sgt Yorra...

8th AFHS Reunion

October 27-31, 2021

Savannah, Georgia

Wednesday, October 27

1:00pm— 6:00pm Reunion Registration open
6:00pm— 7:00pm Complimentary Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own
7:00pm— 9:00pm 8AFHS Board Meeting
7:00pm— until 392nd BGMA Hospitality Suite open

Thursday, October 28

7:30am— 8:30am American Breakfast Buffet
8:00am—12:00pm Reunion Registration Open
9:30am—12:00pm “The Other Savannah”
1:00pm— 6:00pm Reunion Registration Open
2:00pm— 3:30pm “Learn from the Past...Journey to the Future” with UK speakers
3:45pm— 5:00pm “Honoring their Service” with Gary Webb, Webb Military Museum
6:00pm— 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm— 9:00pm Buffet dinner and program: “The 8th, Beyond the Legacy”

Friday, October 29

7:30am— 8:30am American Breakfast Buffet
8:00am—12:00pm Reunion Registration Open
8:00am— 9:15am 392nd BGMA Membership Meeting
9:30am— 2:30pm *National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force*

See REUNION on page 10

FOLDED WINGS REPORT

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

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

REUNION from page 9

1:00pm— 6:00pm Reunion Registration Open
3:15pm— 4:30pm WWII Vets with Q & A
6:00pm— 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm— 9:00pm 392nd BGMA Rendezvous Dinner

Saturday, October 30

7:30am— 8:30am American Breakfast Buffet
8:00am—12:00pm Reunion Registration Open
8:45am—10:15am 8AFHS General Membership Meeting
11:00am— 2:30pm *Historic Savannah City Tour*
12:00pm— 4:00pm 8AFHS Board Meeting
1:00pm— 6:00pm Reunion Registration open
6:00pm— 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm—10:00pm Gala Dinner and Program

Sunday, October 31

7:30am— 8:30am American Breakfast Buffet

Registration Instructions

Using the information on this page, make your hotel reservations. The hotel has a liberal cancellation policy; you can cancel your reservation without penalty within 48 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that our vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee.

Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.

Once your hotel reservation is confirmed, complete the registration form on page 11. Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag (and for any others registering with you). The principal attendee **MUST** be a current member of the Society to register for the reunion. You may JOIN and/or RENEW directly on the registration form. Indicate on the form that you are affiliated with the 392nd BG and specify if you are a WWII veteran.

ALL MEALS are priced separately. Be sure to select your entree if you plan to attend the Saturday evening gala.

There are three tour options; make your selection(s) on the form. Then, total up the amount owed and include a check or money order (payable to **8th AFHS**) or complete the credit card information on the form and mail to: 8th AFHS, 68 Kimberly's Way, Jasper, GA 30143-4769.

If paying by credit card, you may scan the registration form and email it to ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org.

ALL registration forms **MUST** be received by 10 Oct 2021 in order to guarantee your place. If you have questions, please contact 8th AFHS Managing Director Debra Kujawa at (912) 748-8884 or ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org.

All reunion information and forms are available at 8thAFHS.org and <https://b24.net/reunions.htm>.

TOUR OPTIONS. Driver and Staff gratuities are NOT included in the tour prices. All tours require a minimum of 35 participants. Please be at the bus boarding area at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled departure time.

The Other Savannah takes a look outside the Historic District and visits lesser known but beautiful neighborhoods such as Ardsley Park and Victory Drive. Then, the tranquil Isle of Hope to see beautiful antebellum homes along Bluff

Drive, where the movie *Glory* was filmed.

On Friday, we will be guests of the *National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force*. Stroll through the Memorial Gardens, with its scale model replica of the 392nd BG Memorial at Wendling and plaques to many 8AF and Crusader crews. Then visit the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles, with its beautiful stained glass windows and the 392nd BG Prayer in the narthex. The Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center has over 9,000 books significant to 8AF history—many are shelved in the John H. Woolnough Library—as well as original manuscripts, photographs, artifacts, works of art, oral history interviews and personal accounts.

A centerpiece exhibit is the B-17G *City of Savannah*, which is currently undergoing extensive renovation in the Combat Gallery.

Be sure to order a delicious box lunch from Miss Sophie's (via the registration form) and enjoy it in the beautiful Colonial Group, Inc., Art Gallery, which displays paintings from the world's leading aviation artists.

During the *Historic Savannah City Tour* you'll enjoy a comprehensive, completely narrated guided tour of one of the largest National Urban Historic Landmarked Districts in the US. You'll be transported through more than 287 years of American history. You'll ride along cobblestone streets beneath moss-draped oaks and experience the Old South with stately mansions, beautiful squares, romantic riverfront and abundance of true Southern charm. Your driver will then take you to City Market, a wonderful downtown pedestrian area filled with quaint shops and eateries, for a leisurely lunch on your own before being picked up and returned to the hotel by 3pm.

Marriott Savannah Riverfront

100 General McIntosh Blvd., Savannah GA 31401

Explore the warmth and beauty of Georgia's oldest city from our riverfront location, with many top attractions, shops and restaurants just a short stroll away. Treat yourself to a massage at our premier day spa, work out in the 24-hour fitness center or go for a swim in our seasonal outdoor pool. Enjoy traditional Southern breakfast options at Blue, our delightful restaurant overlooking the riverfront, or enjoy cocktails and a light meal in the Atrium Bar. At the end of the day, retreat to your room and enjoy plush bedding, room service and Wi-Fi access while you take in views of the Savannah River or downtown.

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Call 1-800-285-0398 to make your hotel reservation.

GROUP NAME: 8th Air Force Historical Society

DATES: October 27-31, 2021

RATE: \$180 + 13% tax + \$6.00 city/state occupancy fees. (so, \$209.40 per night). Rates are offered 3 days prior- and post-reunion based on availability.

CUT OFF DATE: September 27, 2021

CANCELLATION POLICY: All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

SELF-PARKING has been discounted to \$25/day/vehicle. There are two electric charging stations available.

WHEELCHAIR RENTAL. Please call (888) 441-7575 or visit ScootAround.com.



REGISTRATION FORM

47th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

Marriott Savannah Riverfront, Savannah, GA
October 27-31, 2021

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS October 10, 2021	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
The principal attendee MUST be a member of the 8th AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are NOT a CURRENT member, please pay your yearly DUES here:	\$ 40	#	\$
REGISTRATION FEE—ALL attendees MUST pay registration fee.	\$ 45	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel:	\$ 30	#	\$
Buffet Breakfast @ \$33 per day: Thursday _____ Friday _____ Saturday _____ Sunday _____	\$ 33	#	\$
BOX LUNCHES @ \$10 per lunch FRIDAY, Oct. 29th, ONLY!!!! Box lunches will be available from the Mighty 8th Museum ONLY: You MUST PREORDER THEM HERE! Please select: Ham # _____ or Turkey # _____ Vegetarian Wrap # _____	Price is per lunch per person: \$ 10	#	\$
DINNERS			
Thursday, Oct 28 — EVENING DINNER BUFFET Savannah Style favorites	\$ 55	#	\$
Friday, Oct 29—RENDEZVOUS DINNER Roasted Breast of Chicken and seasonal sides	\$ 45	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 30—GALA BANQUET (Please select ONE entrée)			
Filet Cut Sirloin	\$ 55	#	\$
Pecan Grouper (<i>a Savannah favorite</i>)	\$ 55	#	\$
Vegetarian plate(s) Please indicate [number]: Thurs # _____ Fri # _____ Sat # _____	\$ 45	#	\$
TOUR OPTIONS:			
Thursday, Oct 28: The Other Savannah Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 25	#	\$
Friday, Oct 29: Tour of National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force —round trip	\$ 15	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 30: Historic Savannah City Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 25	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

Please PRINT. If registering a WWII veteran here, please list their name first.

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): _____

WWII Veteran _____ BG/FG Affiliation (for Rendezvous Dinner seating): _____ POW: _____ (Korea, Vietnam, etc.): _____

SPOUSE or PERSON attending: _____

ADDITIONAL GUESTS: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PH #: _____ EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PH #: _____

PLEASE INDICATE ANY PHYSICAL OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: _____

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD —M/C; VISA; or AmEx (**a 3% convenience fee will be added**):

CARD #: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ *Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.*

MAIL completed form with check or credit card info to: 8th AFHS ~ 68 Kimberlys Way ~ Jasper, GA 30143-4769

IF paying by credit card, you may SCAN and email form to: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

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

The COVID crisis has changed a lot of things in our routines and probably given us more time on our hands. I seem to have more TV-time.

Because of my veteran dad's stories and my respect for him, I have an interest in WWII movies. There are two documentaries I recently enjoyed and can recommend. They are factual representations of real war-time events.

Flags of our Fathers is about the raising of the U.S. flag on Mount Suribachi (twice) on February 23, 1945. It graphically depicts the battle for Iwo Jima and the significance of our flag flying from the island's highest peak.

Political motives and racial discrimination appear throughout the movie. Although the events occurred 76 years ago, it is still relevant to our country's current concerns.

Wind Talkers focuses on the WWII Navajo military code. Previous codes had been broken by the enemy, but the Navajo military men could provide coordinates, battle updates, etc., in their own language, which baffled the Japanese. Infantry soldiers were assigned specifically to protect these "Wind Talkers" and they shouldered a difficult, secondary and unspoken duty...

Both these movies show prejudice and honor. Both are worth watching as they not only speak to history but also to present U.S. issues.

Honor and respect should continue to be given to our military and law enforcement personnel as they protect the freedom fought for and won—which still allows us to disagree in a peaceful and patriotic manner.



**THE 392ND MEMORIAL
AT WENDLING**

(photographed by Ben Jones at sunset on 23 Nov 2020)

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Class Mail

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

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

Janet Engelmann, widow of Clinton F. Schoolmaster, 578/7th,
July 16, 2019

Aubrey Burke, 465th Sub Depot, December 11, 2020

Virginia H. Tierney, widow of Joseph F., 577th, June 26, 2020

Charles Dye, 1825th Ordnance Supply & Maintenance Co.,
February 24, 2021