392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

NEWS

Volume 40 March 2024

In Their Own Words

The purpose of the 392nd BGMA is to "perpetuate for future generations the legacy and history of the 8th Air Force, 392nd Bomb Group and the memory of lost comrades." The best way to honor their legacy is to use their own words.

Crew Resurrection
By Hugh Malcolm Hinshaw

This article is from the October 1984 issue of 8th AF News. Hugh was the engineer on the 578th Sqdn crew of 1/Lt Clifford L. Peterson. It has been lightly edited.

"Who says there is no silver lining in the clouds? Not me! Forty years ago, 18 March 1944, I was mopping blood off Clifford L. Peterson, as we sat beside an icy cold stream, snow on the ground, on top of a mountain—near the little village of Etthenheimmuenster.

"We had just endured hours of fierce running battle—even more intense than the Gotha raid of 24 Feb 1944—and we had been hit hard several times, when finally we received an attack from the nose—of 40 German fighters.

Back, L-R: tail gunner S/Sgt Jimmie C. Byrd; waist gunner S/Sgt Ora L. Harrell; engineer T/Sgt Hugh M. Hinshaw; ball turret S/Sgt Enoch E. Masters; waist gunner S/Sgt Leon G. Hancock; radio operator T/Sgt Eugene M. Rosko. Front, L-R: bombardier 2/Lt Edmund J. Brown; copilot 2/Lt Russell I. Vrieling; pilot 1/Lt Clifford L. Peterson; navigator 2/Lt Cliff Fremstad.

"We were not shot down, we were rammed, tearing off both vertical stabilizers, and went into a centrifugal power dive. I was pinned against the upper deck wall and was trying to get across the cabin to my chest pack. Suddenly, I was catapulted across the cabin, hitting the opposite wall like a sledge hammer. There was no fear to jumping. The need was to bail out, right now.

"We almost didn't make it; five of our crew did not. [Note: Killed in action, and found at the crash site, were bombardier 2/Lt Edmund J. Brown; waist gunners S/Sgt Ora L. Harrell and S/Sgt Leon G. Hancock; and tail gunner S/Sgt Jimmie C. Byrd. They were interred in a common grave in the town cemetery of Ettenheimmuenster. Ball turret gunner S/Sgt Enoch E. Masters' body was found, (by berry-pickers), on 31 Jul 1944. He was buried with his comrades.]

"The others were badly injured. Me? Not a scratch. I flew top turret, aerial engineer. I always felt I manned the safest position aboard (two floors beneath me, pilot and copilot armor plate nearby, two .50 cal. breeches either side of the head, ammunition boxes around my turret, and plenty of metal forward and aft).

"Clifford L. Peterson was the number one man aboard, and here I was mopping up his blood. From my vantage point on the hillside, I could see that T/Sgt Eugene M. Rosko, radio operator, and 2/Lt Russsell I. Vrieling, the copilot, had both been captured already. The local militia already had them, lower down on the mountain, in a big open field. I ran in the opposite direction, after hiding my chute in a hole left by an uprooted tree, and ran smack into Peterson.

"Pete was on all fours, tangled in his shrouds and chute up a tree. There was no doubt in my mind, after looking at his bloody face, with blood in his eyes, that he was in shock. I can't imagine why. Ha!

"Alive, awake and in no-man's land. The snow was spotty and I tried to get him to jump from bare spot to bare spot, so they couldn't track us. Pete was a big man, a redheaded Irishman and strong as a bull. I once saw him

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FROM THE EDITOR

B24.net website updates. Bob Books, our amazing webmaster, points out a few changes he's made to www.b24.net. First and foremost, he recently rewrote the "Search" link shown at the top-right of the website's main page (or at https://www.b24.net/Search.php). It is now more user-friendly in the search display and includes a single search option to search any name or text in the entire website that would include all missions, stories, newsletters, photos, documents, POW records, etc.

He has also posted more than 40 videotaped interviews with our veterans at https://b24.net/Videos.htm. Listen—and watch—as they describe both their ordinary—and extraordinary—events they remembered from their time at Station 118.

You'll learn something new in every video. For example, did you ever wonder how newly-arrived crews fine-tuned their gunnery skills before their first combat missions? They did it by shooting at the targets towed behind a plane flown by Sgt Raymond D. Husk! When not loading bombs for 576th Sqdn planes, he was a tow target operator.

His recollections ranged from the poignant to the amusing. He remembered one mission when he was getting ready to load bombs on a plane that the mechanics were taking through pre-flight testing. As Husk and his buddies waited in their bomb service truck, "the first thing we knew the plane jumped its chocks and ran into our weapons carrier and killed my buddy Brownie. He was sitting in front of me and I wound up in the hospital for three weeks with injuries to my back and so on."

Cpl Warren L. Brown (shown at right) was Killed in the Line of Duty on 21 Jan 1945 while loading bombs for the mission to Heilbronn, Germany.

I really enjoyed the section when Husk talked about one of the planes he worked on—Black Widow, #42-7527. The interviewer asked if there was a "big, black spider on the front of it." "Oh no," he said, with an absolute delightful grin on his face, "a beautiful woman!" (A photo of that nose art is at https://www.b24.net/aircraft/BlackWidow.jpg.)

On behalf of the thousands of people who have found, and appreciate, the great information and photos available at www.b24.net, I thank Bob for his never-ending efforts to keep our website both relevant and user-friendly!

Book Recommendation. A book by long-time member Christine Gorder has recently been published. *In the Shade of the Olive Tree: Love and Sacrifice During World War II* traces Christine's life as a freshman at the University of Arizona in 1943, meeting and falling in love with Sgt Ward M. Sackal (a young 578th Sqdn engineer stationed at nearby Davis Monthan Field), the end of their relationship as he went off to war, and how she re-created her life after learning of his death on 31 Dec 1943. Decades later, she resolved to learn what happened to Ward—and then, to ensure he was not forgotten.

She gives heartfelt thanks throughout her book to www.b24.net and the help she received on her journey. If you want to know how our website can literally change a life, this is the book for you! I highly recommend it. It's available at https://www.amazon.com/Shade-Olive-Tree-Sacrifice-During/dp/B0CS948WWF and other booksellers.

Ted Dudziak provided several photos shown in this issue. Keep an eye out for them! He also sent this link, https://www.facebook.com/reel/354628173636374, to a video with a five question quiz, "What You Never Knew about the B-24 Liberator." I got 4 out of 5 correct. How will you do?

President's Corner

Dear Crusaders,

It looks like Spring is on its way here in Georgia with trees beginning to leaf out and daffodils in full bloom. I hope this early warmth doesn't get knocked back by a late freeze —not an unknown event.

Plans for this year's reunion are shaping up nicely and it looks like a good number of our members will be heading to "The Big Easy" in September. The hotel accommodations are right in the city and conveniently located near The National World War II Museum. The French Quarter is only a 15-20 minute walk away so there will be many things to see and do within easy reach. There's a special rate at The Higgins Hotel, right across from the Museum and also at the overflow hotel, the Hilton Garden Inn, a short seven minute walk away. I hope even more of our members will be signing up. We'll have a hospitality suite where we can get together to visit and exchange stories and experiences. For more information and registration see https://www.8thafhs.org/reunion-registration/.

As usual, we will have our annual membership meeting in conjunction with this event so plan to come if you can. If you can't be there in person, we will make it available on Zoom. Speaking of which—our quarterly Meet & Greet will take place on Saturday, April 13th at 1:30pm Eastern Time. Mark your calendar and plan to attend this informal get together with fellow members. An invitation with a link will be sent closer to time.

On a more somber note, I got the news on February 16th that Harvey Naber, one of only three veterans who are members of the 392nd BGMA, passed away. Harvey was 105 years old and had been a loyal member for many years. Harvey and his son Mark attended several past reunions and had travelled to Wendling in 2014 where they, along with Doug Dovey and I, had the privilege to visit the base with John Gilbert as our guide. Harvey was even in attendance at our last Zoom Meet & Greet in January. He will be missed.

Our Archival Committee continues to explore possibilities for placement of our documents and memorabilia with top priority being their accessibility for family members, researchers, and anyone interested in the history of the 392nd BG. I'll keep you updated as we progress.

If anyone has any primary source material—PSM (such as flight logs, journals, documents, original photos, flight suits etc.)—this might be an opportunity for you to place it somewhere where it can be appreciated and beneficial to future generations.

Wishing you all the best and hoping to see you soon.

Ralph

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pull back the charging handle on the hand-held .50 at the waist window (he came back to shoot for fun). He broke it off!"

"Just before we were rammed—our aircraft was in terrible condition (trim tabs wouldn't trim the ship and he was fighting the controls with brute strength)—I heard him holler, "Russ, quit that and help me."

"Russ was our cowboy. He had his side window pulled back and was shooting at the FWs with his .45. (I know that many of you will say that we didn't carry hand weapons on missions at that time. You are right. But Russ did it anyway.)

"The German pilot didn't ram us on purpose. I had hunks of fuselage coming off of him, big as card tables. He was dead. My bubble [top turret] was long gone. One .50 was torn from the mounts and I was flying with old fashioned goggles right out in the slipstream. The generator panel and transfer fuel valves were long gone, with a big hole in their place. One engine feathered and there were holes in the wing that you could drive a Cadillac thru (I know I am exaggerating a little bit.)

"I think that Brown, our Bombardier, was killed over the target. We had a 40 below windstream blowing thru the nose. Pete and Russ were freezing. Pete gave me a buzz and he said, "Hinshaw, we are freezing. See if you can do something about it and see why Brown isn't firing the nose turret."

"The happiest man of the ship was Rosko, our radio operator. He had no active duties and sat on one flak suit and wore another, huddled behind the pilot's armor plate, sweating tons of sweat. Rosko took over the top turret (first and last time) while I went crawling with a bail-out bottle tube stuck in my mask.

"No wonder we were cold. The nose wheel door was open. Navigator 1/Lt James C. Moorehead Jr was gone. [A substitute on the crew for this mission, he became a POW.] I opened the nose turret doors and Brown fell into my arms. Not long after that we got rammed.

"Now back to Pete on the mountaintop.

"Both our escape kits were gone. We came down off the mountain and found a road. We heard a noise approaching and hid in the bushes and watched a very old lady, in the company of a 40-year old lady and a boy of about 12 in his Youth Corps uniform, go by. The younger woman was carrying a huge pile of branches on her back; the older one was pulling a two-wheel cart full of firewood. Pete had reckoned our location to be close to the French border (we were about 20 miles away.) We sat there in the bushes like a couple of monkeys.

"I picked some more shrapnel out of him. I couldn't get out the big piece embedded in his forearm. We talked about what to do, how to find out which direction to go to France. We decided to slip along the road and see where the ladies went, and saw them enter an isolated house.

"We decided to venture in. They showed no great fear and finally (I don't know how) we managed to find a map in the boy's schoolbook. They pointed out where we were and gave us a big chunk of raw bacon. About then we

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News from Across the Pond

Current Photos of Station 118

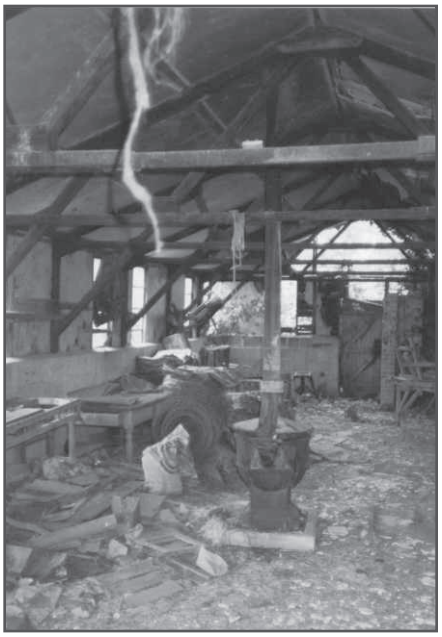
Ted Dudziak noticed a Facebook post by the group "Battlefields of the Past" showing the "Interior of a WWII-era bunkhouse at RAF Wendling in Norfolk, United Kingdom"; that photo is shown below and at https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=822795633226436&set=a.659034089602592&type=3&mibextid=6yaNxA.

A thorough search through 392nd BG archives turned up a different photo of what is likely the same building (shown at upper right). This one was taken by John Gilbert in March 2008; he said the building was at the former Site 10, where the 578th Sqdn lived. The heating stove (and some of the debris) look the same in both photos! (One can only hope that there was more than one stove in this large room!)

The photo below was taken in 1992 when a group of unnamed Crusaders visited the base. The caption for this one says it all—"Site 10 living quarters where this man lived in the hut with the stove!"

Please note the horse just behind him, proof that the area was still quite rural in 1992.

Can any of our English friends tell us if this building still exists?



An internet search for "RAF Wendling" turned up these additional images and information:

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392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

If you get the *News* in print format, your membership status is shown on the mailing label directly after your name; "24" means your dues expire in December. If you get the *News* via email, you will receive an email in September and December advising if your dues are expiring. If you wish to join or renew, send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Joel Fleck, 5606 Doolittle St., Burke, VA 22015 or join / renew on-line at https://www.b24.net/membership.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 concerns, so if you're in straitened circumstances, check the Hardship Waiver box below. If you can help the 392nd BGMA treasury with a donation, please indicate the amount in the space below.

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

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

Please provide the name and unit of your Crusader relative/friend: _____

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: I am renewing for _____ years.

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

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- https://www.invisibleworks.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/RAF-Wendling-Map-Overlay-Ghost-%C2%A9-Nick-Stone-copy-copy.jpg

- https://www.28dayslater.co.uk/threads/raf-wendling-bomb-dump-norfolk-december-2022.134278/

- https://www.geograph.org.uk/snippet/11573

Ted and his daughter Lauren visited what's left of the base in September 2023 and James Clarey showed them around. Many thanks to David Coleman who answered their knock on his door and opened up the former Combat Officers Mess for them to see. Sharp-eyed Lauren noticed the artist's markings in the lower left corner of the flying B-24s mural, as he tried to get the perspective right!

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heard the dogs barking and peeked out. There they were, down the way we had come, on leashes, swallowing up our smell. I knew that I was clean, it must have been Pete that stunk. There was no cover, no place to run, and the dogs were tearing the door down.

"A rag tag bunch of militiamen—some with arms missing—with persuaders (beat up old rifle, ancient shotgun, etc) came in without knocking. It was like a "B" movie. Pete and I were nonchalantly sort of leaning against the kitchen table. We weren't scared. It didn't enter our minds.

"Then a great movie scene. They were explaining that we must put our hands up. Pete decided that was silly. One little old fellow seemed a little more brave than the rest. He began to try to pat us down, except he couldn't get his feet to move closer than six feet from us. He leaned way over and felt us with his finger tips (God's truth). We could have been carrying .50 cal. and he never would have found them. He kept shaking. Parkinson's, I think.

"This is the better part of the movie. Down the road we went with the old cocked shotgun in our backs. The more we walked, the more entourage we picked up. When we got to the village jail, we had at least 200 admirers. We found Rosko and Vrieling there. Rosko had a broken leg and a shattered kneecap. Poor old Russ was in never-never land, with bones hanging out of his broken flesh (he lived).

"This is where Pete and I parted company.

"Seven days ago, 18 March 1984, forty years to the day, I received a letter from Clifford L. Peterson. We found each other—the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

"How did this come about? Someone sent me an old directory of 8AFHS Directors and there was Pete's name. What a grand present! Thank you all very much.

"Since then I have located the last surviving member of our crew. Here is how I found him. I knew he had been wounded and it occurred to me that he had to be on Veterans Compensation. The VA wouldn't give me his current address, but they did forward my letter on to him. As a result, I will get to see this cherished person on 14 April 1984. I am like a boy about to get his first kiss. Isn't that dumb? I just can't help it. This is the best thing to happen to me in these past 40 years."

*In Twentieth Century Crusaders, the 392nd BG's anthology, Hinshaw recounts that "*on 22 March, I was in the city of Frankfurt, where I had my first shower and food since breakfast at Wendling at 2am, 18 March.

"That night Royal Air Force Bomber Command hit Frankfurt. The British Pathfinder plane put on a Fourth of July fireworks display with red and green marker flares. We had red flares drifting down over near our camp while dozens of searchlights scanned the night sky. We scrambled into a partially-completed concrete air raid shelter along with other Allied airmen. The raid began.

"A 4,000 lb. "cookie" [blockbuster] and several other bombs hit our camp. As the bombs exploded all around the camp, the ground appeared to visibly shake and heave. Six barrack blocks were there, but the next morning you could have put the largest remaining piece of the buildings in your pocket. There were huge lumps of clay, as large as a car, lying all around the edge of the "cookie" crater, which was itself large enough to take a two-story house.

"However, I recall my first air-raid with tender and loving emotions. What was the tender, loving part? The constant roar of many aircraft and the massive, earthshaking explosions were absolutely terrifying, but those lovable "Limey" boys, shot-down British airmen—about six of them—sang songs such as "Roll Out the Barrel," "Roll Me Over in the Clover," etc., all through the raid. I'm sure I would have died of fright had it not been for their great morale-boosting cheerfulness. They, of course, were fully experienced and had seen it all before under German bombs back in England. Even now, I would come and help them fight. I had many experiences thereafter with other Limeys, Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians and, of course, us "Yanks"... all great buddies in a crisis.

In a letter published in the June 1999 8th AF News, Hinshaw also spoke about his experiences in England:

"This beautiful Island, roughly 300 miles by 500 miles, began to sink. Americans, Canadians, New Zealanders, Australians, etc. etc. and all their equipment, ammo, bombs, tanks, aircraft, gasoline, cannons, trucks—oh my gosh, the weight was fantastic…

"I knew the Island was sinking for it was always wet or muddy. Armies had arrived, and mashed all the grass and flowers into mud. We had three kinds of weather: rain, fog and clouds touching the ground. It was never broad daylight!

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"And nights were terrible. You got lost trying to find the mess hall. After several bloody noses I walked around with my hand in front of my nose/bloody noses (and that's where the British soldiers got the cuss word "bloody.")

"To keep from drowning, each night the Royal Air Force would take to the skies, with their weight of aircraft, gas and bombs—the Island would raise four feet in elevation.

"Same with the daytime (gray almost black) the Air Force (ours) took to the air to keep the Island from sinking."

Above Flanders Fields
by Leo Ruvolis

This article was originally published the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Sunday News on 7 Feb 1982 and then republished on the 392nd BG's Facebook page on 15 Feb 2024. It has been lightly edited.

The newspaper noted, "Leo Ruvolis ... has not written for publication prior to [this]. The story told here has been told orally to others, but has never been put down on paper before, he said. He was a bomber pilot with the Eighth Air Force during World War II, and the event of which he writes occurred on his 10th mission on a flight over Germany, and ironically on his 20th mission, with only five more combat missions to complete, to the same general area of Germany, his plane was shot down and he was taken prisoner.

"In Flanders Fields where the poppies grow
Between the crosses row by row…"

"These are the well known words of a popular poem that many of us had to memorize during grammar school days. There were others, many others, but this poem holds a tender spot in the gallery of my memories. Inspired, as it was, by the tragedies of one great war, it came to life for me amid the tragedies of another great war.

"We were returning from a raid on Berlin. Our plane had taken a lot of flak, forcing us from the protection of our Squadron formation, and we were limping toward England through the dangerous skies of Germany.

"I was a bomber pilot flying with the Eighth Air Force out of England. The year was 1944. It was not a time to be flying over Germany in broad daylight with a crippled American bomber. We had signaled our distress by radio, and with flares, in the desperate hope that friendly fighter planes might be in the area.

"THE JOURNEY WAS slow and fearful. Scarcely breathing, stomach muscles taut. Wanting to whistle as a young boy might whistle while walking through a cemetery after dark.

"Suddenly, a voice cracked out over the interphone system. It exploded with a severity that most humans, fortunately, will never have to hear.

" 'Bandits at 6 o'clock high.' "

"Soon our guns turrets sent a rhythmic vibration through the plane as our gunners opened fire at the closing enemy. In return, a spray of bullets tore through the thin sheathing of our wings and fuselage. Shattered glass from the instrument panel sprayed my face.

"I saw the silvery flash of three yellow nosed German ME-109's as they passed into view. One was trailing thick black smoke. It turned left and downward in a long spiral as it fell earthward out of control. The other two twisted upwards to position themselves for the next pass.

"ANOTHER VOICE SOUNDED over the interphone, this time with great jubilance. 'Little friend coming in at 9 o'clock high.' An American P-51 fighter plane scrambled into view.

"In the dogfight that followed, the fighter planes twisted and turned in a series of controlled maneuvers as though caught in the draft of a mighty wind storm.

"Then silence, unbearable screaming silence, broken finally, by a radio transmission from the American pilot to his command base in England. He reported his engagement, crisply and calmly, stating that he had destroyed one enemy plane and another had turned toward Germany. With casual calm, he terminated his message with these words: 'and the poppies are blooming in Flanders fields.'

"By instinct, I looked down from the cockpit and saw the golden hues of the poppies and the beautiful landscape they had painted. Then it struck me. This was Flanders fields. The same Flanders fields of poetic fame.

"HERE, WHERE THE larks still bravely singing fly, we were acting out a scene for those who lie below. On this field of battle known but to God, it was as if we could let them know that they would sleep in peace… in Flanders fields where the poppies grow.

"I thought about my boyhood days and the red brick school house in Hanover Township, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Were the kids in school today? Would they be studying poetry? And, my teacher, what emotions might be hers if she could know that one of her tow heads was flying over Flanders fields under such unusual circumstances.

"I took solace from my final thought that maybe it would be on wings of Peace, rather than on wings of War, that her youngsters would one day visit Flanders fields.

"I never knew that young pilot who saved my life that day. I only knew that he was some mother's courageous son, and through this experience I learned that even in adversity can be found a greater beauty, if we would but see things with more than just our eyes."

[Note: On 7 Jul 1944, 2/Lt Ruvolis was not so lucky. Returning aircrew eyewitness reports (by 579th pilot 1/Lt Robert A. Niederriter and 579th bombardier 2/Lt Ernest R. Fleck on 1/Lt Henry J. Leser's crew) stated that this aircraft was attacked by enemy aircraft after bombs away; dropped the nose gear; then most of the landing gear came down with the plane leaving formation under control with #3 engine windmilling; #4 engine out, and some flames coming from the ship. Ruvolis and four others became POWs; the other four crewmen were killed in action.]

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Two Shoot-Downs, One Target
by Ray A. Ward

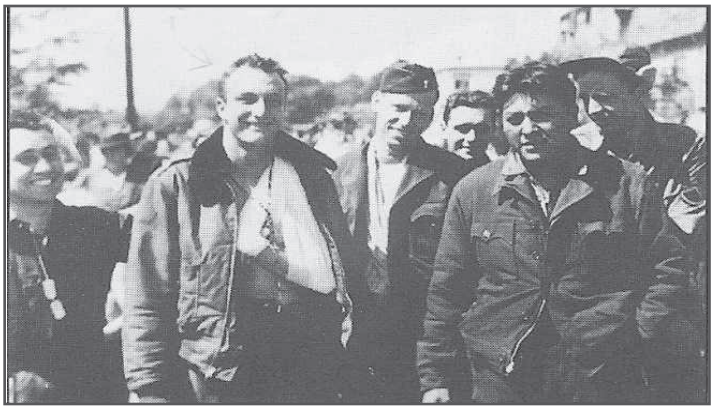
This letter by the radio operator on 1/Lt Wesley A. Schafer's crew in the 579th Sqdn was originally published in the October 1987 issue of 8th AF News.

"On the 29 May 1944 mission to Politz, Germany, we were shot up by flak and fighters. Two engines were knocked out and we had to bail out at the England Coast on return. In spite of my protest to the Chaplain (he put his hand on my head, blessed me, and said, 'Don't worry, son. You will be safe.'), we went on the next mission to Politz twenty-two days later, 20 June 1944. You guessed it. Flak and fighters knocked out two engines and we had to bail out over Sweden. Was that a record?

"While in Sweden, four of us got in a fight with some German internees. We were busted to Pvt (without a court-martial) and told we would be given our rank back in England on return. We are still working on getting our rank restored." [Editor's note 1: Ray stayed in the Air Force, served in Korea and Vietnam and ultimately retired as a Master Sergeant.]

[Editor's note 2: Swedish researcher Stefan Möller later pointed out that intense flak and fighters damaged many of 8AF's planes during the 20 June mission, with 21 landing or crashing in southwest Sweden.

He wrote, "[Schafer's] B-24J was properly hit by FLAK over Pölits, and with two engines out of function the crew headed for Sweden. The crew bailed out over Marieholm but then the plane kept going for about 30 km before it hit two trees and almost hit a farm near by Hjortshög. Two of the crew were lightly injured when they took ground (waist gunner S/Sgt Razo, Eusevio G. sprained an ankle and radio operator T/Sgt Raymond A. Ward Jr broke his left collar bone. The crew was sent back to England late October 1944."



Möller also provided the above photo, showing some of the crew shortly after they arrived in Sweden. L-R: bombardier 2/Lt Arthur J. Jaffee; radio operator T/Sgt Raymond A. Ward Jr; pilot 1/Lt Wesley A. Schafer; tail gunner S/Sgt Jimmie B. Pitts; waist gunner S/Sgt Samson Miller; and engineer T/Sgt Henry R. Reid Jr. Not shown in the photo were copilot 2/Lt George L. Winans, navigator F/O Arliss V. Martin; and waist gunner S/Sgt Eusevio G. Razo.]

Samson Miller, a Muscalero Apache, was one of three known American Indians who served with the 392nd BG. The others were T/Sgt Otis N. Croy, a Cherokee who was radio operator on 2/Lt Philip E. Rose's crew, 578th, and T/Sgt Wes Durant, a Choctaw who was a replacement tail gunner on Maj Harrison S. Cassell Jr's crew, 579th.

Sonny Eliot ~ Bomber Pilot
By Jim Hanford

Before Sonny Eliot retired from broadcasting in 2010, he had been inducted into both the Michigan Broadcasting and Michigan Aviation Halls of Fame. Before he was Detroit's best-known TV weatherman from the 1950s to the 1980s, he was 577th Sqdn pilot Marvin E. Schlossberg, who became a POW on 24 Feb 1944. This excerpt about his last mission is from an article published in Yankee Wings: The Magazine of the Yankee Air Force in its May-June 1991 issue. It has been lightly edited.

"It was one of those hectic days. We had to go through the overcast into the bright sun, and we went across Holland, then headed for the center part of Germany to a town called Gotha. Our Initial Point [IP] was a little town called 'Kassel' which was just about the central part of Germany. We'd had a lot of fighter attacks over Holland coming in, and we'd beaten those off pretty well. They'd gotten only two planes, I think, out of our entire group. I think we had 27 planes up that day.

[Actually, the 392nd BG dispatched 32 planes, four of whom aborted. From 1½ hours before the target until one hour after bombs away, an estimated 100 to 150 single and twin-engine enemy fighters relentlessly attacked the Group and other 2nd Bomb Division B-24s.

When the mission ended, seven 392nd BG planes had been shot down, with 21 Crusaders killed and another 51 taken prisoner. However, the 392nd BG was later awarded the Presidential Distinguished Unit Commendation for its exceptional bombing.]

"It was a thousand-plane raid, including the fighters, and we thought, 'Well, this is gonna be a good day.' Then cloud cover broke. It was bright blue, 'severe clear' all the way into the target.

"Just about the time we got to the IP, a flight of 12 FW-190s came at us. They swept through the formation, and got four of us right quick. My number one and two engines were hit, and immediately burst into flames.

"We thought we could make it through, and we could get the fire out. When we got to the target, we dropped our bombs, and then number three engine was hit.

"On one engine, there was no way. We began to fall back and down. Meanwhile on the intercom, they said my waist gunner was hit; my tail gunner was hit; my radio-engineer was hit. The worst hit was [waist gunner S/Sgt James E. Allen]; he had a 20mm shell go right through his right side. We found out later that it took out his kidney as it went through, and then exploded just on top of the bomb bay, and gave us some ventilation.

"The tail gunner and the other waist gunner wrapped him in a parachute, opened the parachute inside the airplane, and threw him out.

"About that time I hit the bail-out bell, and we bailed out. We all finally did get out, [and] our people were strung out for a distance of, maybe 30 miles. [Allen] landed near a

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WORDS from page 7
hospital, and an ambulance was there.

"Of course, the temperature of 28,000 feet that day was something like 50 to 60 below zero. What it did was coagulate the blood right away. Everything just froze, and when he landed in the snow they rushed him to the hospital, and he lived.

"We were hit at something like 28,000 feet and I happened to look at the altimeter on the way out. It was unwinding. I mean really unwinding. I got out at around 11,000 feet, through the bomb bay. The airplane was completely engulfed in flames at that time. I was afraid it was going to explode, but it didn't.

"I landed in a farmer's field, hip-deep in snow, and an idiot-looking guy with a .22 rifle ran out. The bore on the rifle looked like an 88mm cannon when he pointed it at me.

"I did not have dog tags with me. I did not have my .45 caliber pistol with me, which is a good thing, I think, because had I had the .45, in fear I might just have shot him; which is why not many of wore the .45."

Schlossberg then explained that the shock when his parachute opened was so great that it snapped off his shoes. "So I was barefoot in the snow, and he had iron-shod boots, and he kept kicking me in the keister all the way into the town of Gotha, where they threw us into the basement of some pigsty somewhere with straw. [Copilot 2/Lt Belden G. Blake] was also there, and we were the only two …"

Watch this interview with Eliot about his WWII experiences at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y40YvCenZKI and you'll see why he was such a popular TV personality!

Back row, L-R: bombardier 2/Lt William B. Pettigrew; navigator 2/Lt John M. Bender; copilot 2/Lt Belden G. Blake; pilot 2/Lt Marvin E. Schlossberg. Middle row, L-R: waist gunner S/Sgt James E. Allen; radio operator T/Sgt Robert V. Williams; tail gunner Sgt Willard E. Axvig; ball turret gunner Sgt Ralph V. Bailey. Front row, L-R: waist gunner S/Sgt David J. Overton; engineer T/Sgt Albert R. Cooke.

January 2024 Meet & Greet

Thirteen people attended the January 2024 Zoom meeting, including first-timer Doug Decker. His father was 576th Sqdn engineer T/Sgt Chester D. Decker, who was interned in Switzerland on 18 Mar 1944 along with the rest of pilot 1/Lt Walter T. Hebron Jr's crew.

Joel Fleck mentioned that the community around Flixton and Bungay in Norfolk, England, has created the *USAAF Heritage Trust* with a site by the same name on Facebook. Their purpose is to preserve the communal buildings at Flixton/Bungay, which many of us visited during the 392nd BG trip to England/France this past July. They seem to be getting a lot of interest.

David Parnell could not attend but asked Ralph to report that there is now extensive development occurring in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, on the land where 2/Lt John D. Ellis's crew crashed on 12 Aug 1944.

There was a discussion on efforts by the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force to obtain a B-24 Liberator to display in their new wing, which led into a chat about the upcoming TV series, *Masters of the Air*. If you have comments about the show, please post them on our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1563692720350729.

Tom Miller posed an interesting question. His father, Capt Henry W. Miller, was a 576th Sqdn pilot from 5 Dec 1943 to 15 Aug 1944 and then flew 6 more missions as a lead pilot in the 579th Sqdn. He asked if Crusader veterans (and especially pilots) continued to fly after the war or never wanted to fly again.

Attendees agreed that they knew of Crusaders in each category. Mac Cassell noted that his father, 579th Sqdn pilot Maj Harrison S. Cassell Jr, continued to fly as a pilot in the USAF Reserves, because he "trusted their maintenance, not so much the civilian airlines."

As always, the conversation was wide-ranging and enjoyable! Please join us at 1:30pm Eastern Time on April 13 when we will once again meet and greet. 392nd BGMA President Ralph Winter will send an email invitation and link a few days in advance. Hope to see you then!

50th Annual
8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion
September 25-29, 2024
New Orleans, Louisiana

All reunion information is at www.8thAFHS.org.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 25

8:00am— 5:00pm	Reunion Registration open
9:00am— 5:00pm	**The National WWII Museum***
6:00pm— 7:00pm	Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own
7:00pm— 9:00pm	8AFHS Board Meeting
7:00pm— until	392nd BGMA Hospitality Suite open

Thursday, September 26

7:00am— 8:30am	Breakfast on your own
8:00am— 5:00pm	Reunion Registration Open (TBD)
9:00am— 5:00pm	**The National WWII Museum***
10:30am— 2:30pm	**Lunch/Cruise on Steamboat Natchez**
6:00pm— 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm— 9:00pm	Dinner & program: Stephen J. Watson, President & CEO, The National WWII Museum

See REUNION on page 9

REUNION from page 8

Friday, September 27

7:00am— 8:30am Breakfast on your own
7:45am— 8:45am 392nd BGMA Membership Meeting
8:00am— 5:00pm Reunion Registration (TBD)
9:00am— 5:00pm **The National WWII Museum***
10:00am— 2:00pm **City Tour of New Orleans**
6:00pm— 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm— 9:00pm 392nd BGMA Rendezvous Dinner

Saturday, September 28

7:00am— 8:30am Breakfast on your own
8:00am— 5:00pm Reunion Registration (TBD)
8:45am—10:15am 8AFHS General Membership Meeting
9:00am— 5:00pm **The National WWII Museum***
12:00pm— 4:00pm 8AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm—10:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm—10:00pm Gala Dinner and Program: MajGen Jason R. Armagost, Commander, Eighth Air Force, Barksdale AFB. Music & Entertainment by The Victory Belles

Sunday, September 29

7:00am— 8:30am Breakfast on your own

***The National WWII Museum is self-guided...your "ticket" is a one year membership for unlimited access!

✱✱✱HOTEL INFORMATION✱✱✱

This reunion is already so popular that all 150 rooms in the 8AFHS block at the official reunion hotel—The Higgins—were completely booked by mid-February. The overflow hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn. The Higgins is about 250 feet from The National WWII Museum and the Hilton Garden Inn is just three blocks farther.

For both hotels:

The Group Name is 8th Air Force Historical Society

The Group Rate is $189.00 + 16.20% + $1.00 = $220.62 per night. Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

The Cut Off Date is August 21, 2024

To Cancel: All reservations have a *72* hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

If flying into New Orleans, you will need to either rent a car, or use a cab (currently around $40), a car service, or a ride-share such as Lyft or Uber.

The Higgins
1000 Magazine St.
New Orleans, LA 70130

As the official hotel of The National WWII Museum, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center's name reflects the contributions of extraordinary entrepreneur Andrew Higgins, who designed and built over 20,000 boats in New Orleans that were used in every major amphibious assault of WWII.

Conveniently located directly across the street from The National WWII Museum, the hotel offers 230 era-inspired guest rooms and specialty suites, premium amenities, full-service restaurant, lounge, and a rooftop bar, as well as a large second-floor conference center and meeting space.

To make your reservation (there may be cancellations): call (833) 357-1172 or use this direct link to reservations: https://group.curiocollection.com/zg61jf. Reference "928" to get the group rate.

Self-parking is available at The Higgins. The rate is $32 per day + 12.45% tax (per car/day) when charged to a guest room account. Clearance is 7 feet.

NOTE: THE 392ND BGMA WILL HAVE A HOSPITALITY SUITE AT THE HIGGINS.

Hilton Garden Inn New Orleans Convention Center
1001 S Peters St.
New Orleans, LA 70130

To make your reservation: call (800) 774-1500 or use this direct link to reservations: https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/msygigi-91a-dd2d662d-2e6e-47a1-b1ab-97d2212aede4/. Reference "91A" for the group rate.

Self-parking is NOT available at the Hilton Garden Inn, but valet parking is available at a flat rate of $45 per day, charged to your room. There is a third party parking lot near the Hilton Garden Inn, but it is self-park and self-pay—which means you pay every time you exit the lot.

TOUR OPTIONS

Staff gratuities are included in the tour prices but please remember to tip your driver. All tours require a minimum of 45 participants. Please be at the bus boarding area at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled departure time.

The river boat and bus tours have limited seating and are

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 _____

Our website, www.b24.net, 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. Please send this report to: Debbie Beigh, 6284 Antler Ct., Zionsville, IN 46077-9089

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filled on a first come first available basis.

The **National WWII Museum**. Selecting this '"tour option" on the registration form gives you an individual membership in the National WWII Museum! This entitles you to unlimited admission to the Museum from 9am to 5pm throughout the reunion AND through 31 Dec 2025! If you are a current member of the WWII Museum, you MUST show your Museum membership card for admission.

Offering a compelling blend of sweeping narrative and poignant personal detail, The National WWII Museum features immersive exhibits, multimedia experiences, and an expansive collection of artifacts and first-person oral histories, taking visitors inside the story of *the war that changed the world*. Beyond the galleries, the Museum's online collections, virtual field trips, webinars, educational travel programs, and renowned International Conference on World War II offer patrons new ways to connect to history and honor the generation that sacrificed so much to secure our freedom.

Louisiana Memorial Pavilion. Start your visit in the Museum's original pavilion, which features the Museum's original D-Day exhibit, the story of the war experienced on the Home Front, macro-artifacts, special temporary exhibits, and the *L.W. "Pete" Kent Train Car Experience*—the perfect place to begin your journey into the WWII story.

The Arsenal of Democracy. Opened June 2017, *The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George R. Brown Salute to the Home Front* tells the story of the road to war and the Home Front, drawing on personal narratives and evocative artifacts to highlight facets of WWII-era American life through an experiential narrative.

Campaigns of Courage: European and Pacific Theaters. Follow in the footsteps of the citizen soldier in 360-degree displays that take visitors through key settings in World War II. The galleries serve as an immersive timeline and provide a service-member's view of the war.

Road to Tokyo. Its *Pacific Theater Galleries* retrace the grueling trail that led from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay by way of New Guinea and Southeast Asia, the Himalayas, Burma, the islands of the Pacific, China, India, and Alaska.

Road to Berlin brings to life the drama, sacrifices, personal stories, and strategies of America's campaign to defeat the Axis powers and preserve freedom.

US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center. Stand beside ground-level tanks and trucks to view WWII airplanes—or brave sky-high catwalks for an up-close look. Exhibits describe the history and production of war machines and honor service in every branch of the military.

The **New Orleans Steamboat Natchez Jazz Cruise & Lunch Tour** on Thursday, September 26. Buses board at 10:30am, board "Natchez" at 11:00am, sail 11:30am-1:30pm, arrive back at The Higgins at 2:15pm. Travel like the residents of New Orleans did decades ago when you step aboard the historic riverboat on this Mississippi River cruise. After you depart from the harbor, listen to entertaining commentary on the sights that pass by as you stroll the expansive deck, enjoy live jazz music in the main dining area, and check out the churning paddle wheel in action. Along with an exciting cruise on the "Mighty Mississip," your experience includes an incredible southern-inspired buffet lunch, filled with New Orleans favorites!

The **Guided New Orleans sightseeing Tour** on Friday, September 27. Buses board at 9:45pm and arrive back at The Higgins at 2:15pm. This four (4) hour city sightseeing tour covers 25 square miles of iconic neighborhoods through three (3) centuries with ample opportunities to experience the beauty and history of New Orleans. Includes stops at St. Louis Cemetery #3, City Park, and lunch (on your own) in the incomparable Garden District on Magazine Street.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Make your hotel reservations first! The hotels have a liberal cancellation policy; you can cancel your reservation without penalty within 72 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. **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 want it to be on your name tag—and for up to 3 guests registering with you. PLEASE—just ONE address per registration form!

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. Every attendee must pay the non-refundable registration fee.

On the registration form, state that you are affiliated with the 392nd BG and if you are a military veteran.

All meals are priced separately. Be sure and indicate if you need special meals such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, etc., and the number of meal types needed each day for all the members of your party. *Please note that breakfast is NOT included in the reunion package!*

There are *three* tour options available during the reunion: admission to The National WWII Museum, the river cruise and the city tour. After carefully reading the information on each, please indicate your selection(s) on the registration form on page 11. Bus and boat tours have limited seating and are filled on a first come first available basis.

Mail your completed registration form (including credit card information, if applicable) or a check/money order payable to **8th AFHS** to:

8th AFHS
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769

OR, if paying by credit card, you may scan the registration form and email it to ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org. A 3% convenience fee will be added to your bill.

To guarantee your place, ALL registration forms MUST be received by **August 23, 2023**. If you have questions, please contact 8th AFHS Managing Director Debra Kujawa at (912) 748-8884 or ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org.

If you wish to rent a wheelchair for this reunion, please call (888) 441-7575 or visit ScootAround.com. Reserve your chair(s) early!

As they say in the Big Easy, *Let the good times roll!!*

REGISTRATION

50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS August 23, 2024 **(NO refunds on cancell ons past this date)**	**Price p/p**	**# of People**	**TOTAL**
DUES: The **principal** a endee ***MUST*** be a **CURRENT** member of the **8th AFHS** to register for this reunion. If you are **NOT CURRENT**, or a member, **please pay your yearly dues here:**	$ 60	#	$
REGISTRATION FEE (non-refundable): EVERY a endee MUST pay registra n fee	$ 45	#	$
DINNERS			
Thursday, Sept 26: Dinner—Chef's deligh ul favorites welcoming you to the Big Easy!	$ 82	#	$
Friday, Sept 27: Rendezvous Dinners—Roasted Marinated Chicken & all the trimmings!	$ 70	#	$
Saturday, Sept 28: GALA Banquet—Surf & Turf bu t...*the best of both worlds!*	$ 78	#	$
Vegetarian [Vg], vegan [V], gluten free [GF], etc— **Please indicate # of meal types each day: Thurs_____($82)Fri_____($70)Sat_____($78)**	- - -	- - -	$
TOUR OPTIONS: *LUNCH INCLUDED on Thursday*			
NEW!!! UNLIMITED ADMISSION to Na nal WWII Museum. This is a MEMBERSHIP**details in tour descrip ons*. **If you are already a current member of the WWII Museum, you *MUST SHOW YOUR CARD to ENTER!* er each name on registra n, please enter ✓ if touring Museum.**	$ 50	#	$
Thursday, Sept 26: 10:45am-2:00pm ~ Fabulous River Cruise Includes Lunch & Live Jazz	$ 92	#	$
Friday, Sept 27: 10:00am-2:00pm ~ New Orleans & Garden District ~ LUNCH ON YOUR OWN!	$ 48	#	$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			$

Please PRINT. If registering a veteran, please list their name t.

MAXIMUM of FOUR [4] persons per ADDRESS per registration form!

MEMBER NAME:_____BG/FG (for name tag & sea ng)_____

VETERAN? If yes—> WWII:_____Post WWII:_____ (con ct or era):_____(Branch of Service):_____

ADDRESS:_____CITY:_____STATE:_____ZIP:_____

DAYTIME PH #:_____EMAIL:_____

Name #2:_____WWII Museum:_____Military service:_____

Name #3:_____WWII Museum:_____Military service:_____

Name #4:_____WWII Museum:_____Military service:_____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:_____PH #:_____

PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WILL BE USING A WHEELCHAIR ON TOURS:_____NEED HYDRAULIC LIFT?:_____

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

CARD #:_____EXP. DATE:_____

SIGNATURE:_____

Your contact info on will only be shared with a endees.

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

***Qu ons?* PLEASE CALL: (912) 748-8884**

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim
daughter of Charles E. Dye, 1825th Ordnance Co.

Plumbing problems today gifted me with a cold shower. Was I upset - yes. Did I object and curse - probably.

As I shivered, the TV news greeted me with a bigger picture. Stepping back from my predictable and comfortable life was a frigid wake-up.

People are starving on our planet, people are scrambling for food dropped from the sky, people live in tent cities with no sanitation and no dignity. Discouragement and hopelessness are abundant.

Maybe the true human experience is not wealth, comfort, technology or status. Maybe the essence of humanity, rather, is tolerance, kindness, acceptance and generosity.

Always take care of yourself. Be happy, healthy and abundant. Help where you can; help who you can and feel blessed for that opportunity.

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.

The 392nd BG Memorial
Remembrance Sunday
November 12, 2023

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

Harvey W. Naber, 576th, February 16, 2024

Charles H. Pedrotta, 577th, November 8, 2020