

NEWS



392nd BG Memorial Association

VOLUME 8

MAY 1993

RETURNING A/C CRASH LANDS NEAR BASE

ALL WALK AWAY; CREW SERVED TEA BY VILLAGERS

It was New Year's Eve, 1944, and the 392nd was briefed for a mission to Euskirchen, Germany. 29 a/c began takeoff at 0800, in intermittent snow and rain showers.

During the bomb run the low squadron was hit by 12-15 enemy fighters. Two crew members of Lt. Majesky's crew of the 577th were wounded and the bomber landed in Belgium.

A/C #44-010528 with the 576th's Lt. Blakely in command had returned to Wendling but due to a landing procedure mix-up had to go around, and all engines quit as the tanks went dry. Blakely was able to crash-land the a/c near Beetley, a village about 3 or 4 miles from the base.

The entire crew walked away from the crash, with one of them sustaining a sprained ankle. The nearby villagers hastened to the crash scene with hot tea and biscuits for the grateful airmen.

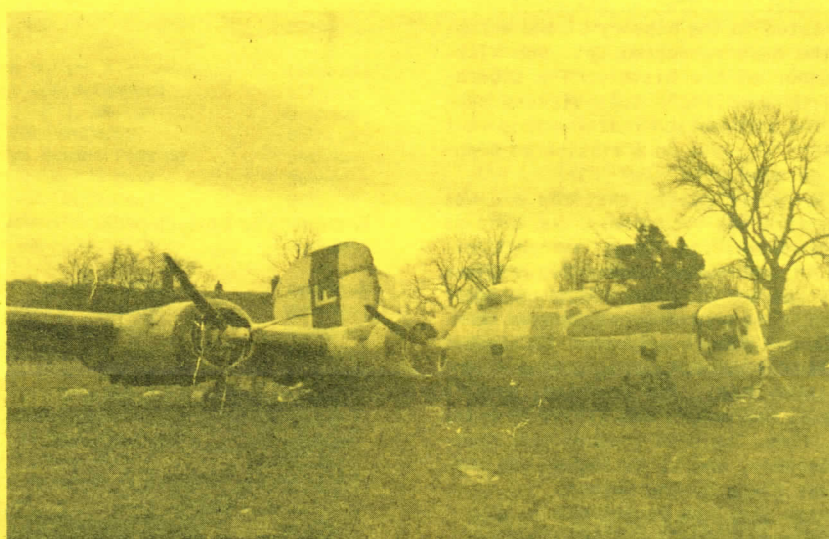
The crew had another close call on Jan. 16, 1945, when they were hit by AA fire and crash landed at Luneville.

Then on March 2 on a mission to Magdeburg the Blakely a/c was hit by friendly fire from the tail turret of another a/c and went down in flames. Five bailed out and became POW and five were KIA.

Two survivors are Richard Spades, the radio operator-gunner; and Stanley Robens, the tail gunner. Robens went by the name of Rubenstein in 1945. (See accompanying Profiles for details on Spades and Robens).

Spades was on board when the a/c crashed at Beetley, Robens was not. Let Richard Spades tell his story:

"I do recall that we had lost fuel but we made it back to Wendling. In our landing approach a smaller plane cut in front of us and to avert collision Blakely nosed upward and recircled the field. We didn't make it as all engines



The New Year's Eve, 1944, crash at Beetley.

(Photo courtesy Richard Spades)

failed. We were headed nose first into the ground when the plane with Blakely's help righted itself as we hit the ground. Nobody was hurt.

"Some English people were quickly on the scene and gave us tea and cookies."

And now, as the radio commentator says, for the rest of the story:

Denis Duffield, as most Crusaders know, has been a staunch Friend of the 392nd for years. He and wife Hilary live at East Dereham and show visiting Yanks around the old base. At reunions they act as hosts to the returning servicemen.

The Beetley crash happened practically in Denis' back yard. Denis was only a boy at the time, and for all the years that he has been interested in the 392nd he has wanted to find out about the crew of that airplane. All the information he had was the date of the crash and the a/c number.

Shortly after Christmas of last year, Bob Vickers' continuing research came up with the crew loading list of the a/c. Two of the crew were members of the 392BGMA, and soon the whole story was pieced together.

Here is Denis' story about the crash, in his own words:

"It happened on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon around 3-3.30 p.m. Me and my old Dad were out poaching rabbits at the time in some fields at the back of our home. At that time if you caught a rabbit you caught a dinner as meat was rationed and scarce at that time in England.

"We heard some cracking and banging and then less than five minutes later we saw the flares and we ran to where they were going up as we knew then that it was a plane down.

"When we arrived there we found all the crew members standing by the a/c, as there was no fire. I think the only injury was a sprained ankle. We spoke to all the crew and were given some of the goodies that they had no further use for.

"I still have the mechanic's cap I found at the wreck.

"I think the lady who brought the tea and biscuits to the crew members was a Miss Mary Beckett who lived in a farm house just opposite the crash site. If the a/c had gone a little further it would have ended up in her front room."

B-24#42 - 109835 IS SHOWN IN ENCYCLOPEDIA

SAME 576 SQDN A/C USED BY REVEL CO TO MAKE MODEL

"The Encyclopedia of the World's Combat Aircraft", by Bill Gunston, was produced by Chartwell Books in 1976. Among the many aircraft depicted in it was a 392nd B-24, #42-109835. Jack Stewart, tail gunner on the Marx crew in the 578th, brought it to the attention of the NEWS.

Then in entirely unrelated correspondence, the NEWS learned from Jack Bode, also a gunner but in the 576th, that the Revel Company, a maker of model airplanes, had also used the same markings for a model that they produced.

Interested in the history of the actual a/c, the NEWS consulted Col. Bob Vickers, author of the history "The Liberators From Wendling". Col. Vickers supplied the information that the ship went down Apr. 11, 1944 on a mission to Bernberg, Germany.

The US report stated that the a/c was flying with the 44th Bomb Group and was heavily damaged by enemy aircraft attacks in the target area; two engines caught fire and the landing gear dropped. Five chutes were reported seen.

The German report said that 10 crewmen were aboard, and 9 parachuted out and were taken POW. The co-pilot, 2nd Lt George P. Callaghan, was killed by enemy 20 mm. fire. The B-24 crashed near Koethen, Germany, and Lt Callaghan was buried near there by the Germans.

The crew list was as follows:
2/Lt Edward J. Conneran, pilot
2/Lt George P. Callaghan, co-pilot
2/Lt Sunny J. Craig, bombardier
Sgt Elmer W. Horey, navigator
S/Sgt Joe T. Still, radio op
T/Sgt Alton W. Kramer, Asst radio op
S/Sgt Harry B. Sooy, Engineer
Sgt Charles A. Repley, Asst engr
S/Sgt Leon K. Ross, Armorer gunner
S/Sgt Walter W. Hanna, Armorer gunner

The NEWS was able to contact four of the crew and their stories follow:

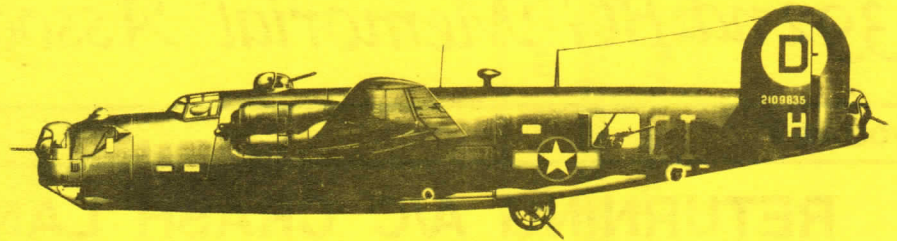
ELMER HOREY: "When our regular navigator, Lt. Kramer, went to PFF school, the crew was of course short a navigator. I was within two weeks of finishing navigator school when I was washed out and I was fairly well qualified. The squadron gave me a chance to check out, and they must have been satisfied with my work because I was the navigator of the crew on three missions that we flew before being shot down. So I was a rare bird, an enlisted navigator.

"I bailed out right behind Lt. Craig, the bombardier, over the nose wheel with my arms wrapped around a popped chute and luckily it opened. The a/c blew up right after I exited. I broke my ankle when I hit the ground".

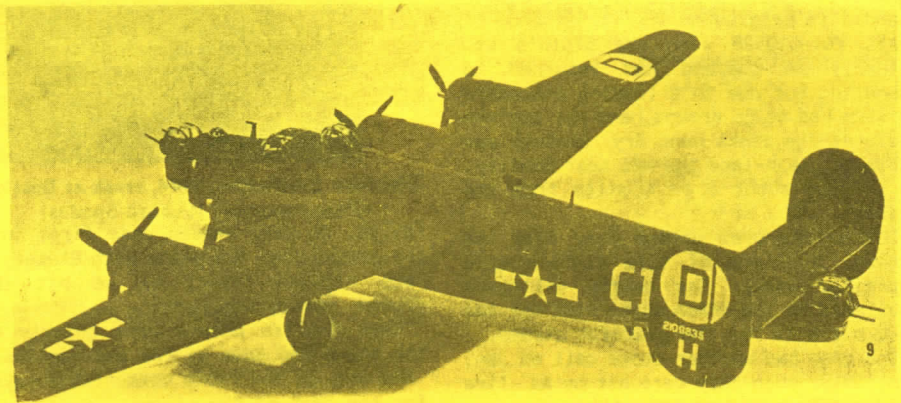
WALTER HANNA: "I landed in telephone wires, but my body was only a yard or so

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

Three Army planes made first group cross-country flight-1912.



B-24 in "The Encyclopedia of the World's Combat Aircraft". Photo courtesy Jack Stewart.



Same B-24 as produced as a model by the Revel Company. Photo courtesy Jack Bode.

from the ground. The Germans helped me out of my harness, but then I had to shinny up the telephone pole to disengage the chute".

HARRY SOOY: "I broke my ankle when I landed. My regular parachute was in for service and the substitute that I was issued was only a 20 foot one, so I descended rapidly. About the only good thing I could say about it is that it was better than nothing".

CHARLES REPLEY: "We were on our seventh mission. The enlisted members of the crew spent the rest of the war at Stalag Luft 17."

Alton W. Kramer died in 1988. The NEWS was unable to contact any of the other crewmen.

PROFILE

T/Sgt. Richard J. Spades was the radio operator-gunner on the Blakely crew in the 576th, arriving at Wendling Dec. 4, 1944. (See accompanying story, "Returning A/C Crash Lands")

He returned to the US in June 1945 after liberation from POW camp.

He graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1950, and has been in the credit and insurance business in Baltimore and Atlanta. He now owns and manages his own real estate business in Black Rock, Arkansas.

He and wife Ina Ruth live at 6th and Elm, Black Rock, AR 72415. They have four children and 9 grandchildren.

S-2, THE BRAINS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Squadron, Group, and higher commanders depended upon their S-2 (A-2 when a general officer commanded) for information about where the enemy was and what he was up to. S-2, aka Intelligence, also collected and dispensed all sorts of other information, especially the results of operations.

The Air Corps didn't always try to drive square pegs into round holes, and in choosing S-2 personnel it generally found some pretty brainy types who were able to perform such tasks. A lot of us played poker in our off hours; the S-2 guys played a lot of bridge.

Public Relations also fell into their bailiwick, because most of them were pretty good at stringing sentences together.

Major Percy Caley was Group S-2. He was probably a little past 35, so to most of us he was "old" Percy Caley. Art Olson, who was in the 579th's S-2, reports that he passed away three or four years ago.

Of course the legendary S-2 officer was the late Holmes Alexander, the 578th's S-2. He also was somewhat older than most of us, and had before the war established himself as a writer and journalist. He had been educated in Europe and was the scion of a wealthy Eastern family, but was as common as an old shoe. Unfortunately he often looked like an old shoe as he was a large person not much given to sartorial perfection or military appearance. He was courageous, concealing a broken arm incurred just before we went overseas for fear he would be left behind. He also flew several combat missions in the lethal early months as an observer before Colonel Rendle found out about it and grounded him. He left the 392nd to be with an air-sea rescue organization. He was, incidentally, possessor of an enormous thirst and was a crony of Leroy C. MacTavish, the 578th's communications officer. Birds of a feather, some say.

3.

The NEWS has been furnished a roster of S-2 personnel from the best memory of Art Olson. The list was compared with the 392BGMA's Directory and if there is the notation Directory or Member, the NEWS can furnish an address upon request.

HQ.

Maj Percy Caley	Deceased
Capt Robert S. Morton	Deceased
Lt Fletcher Hunt	Unknown
M/Sgt George Bremer	Directory
Sgt Ernest Weiner	Unknown
Sgt William Wall	Member
Sgt Paul Wright	Unknown

576

Capt Marvin Felheim	Deceased
Capt Edwin T. Wood	Directory
Lt Walter Neustadt	Member

577

Capt Elliott Finkle	Member
Capt Elmer Grage	Directory
Lt George Rhodes	Directory
S/Sgt Theodore Evans	Directory
Cpl Robert S. Gardner	Member

578

Capt Holmes Alexander	Deceased
Capt Don McCammond	Unknown
Lt John J. Whelan	Unknown
Lt John McCauley	Unknown
S/Sgt Robert Fleming	Unknown
Sgt Robert Harned	Member
Sgt Conley Harman	Unknown
Cpl Robert Cohen	Unknown
Pfc Willard Matthews	Unknown

579

Capt Lawrence Gram	Deceased
Lt John D. O'Neill	Unknown
Lt Milton Wolfson	Unknown
S/Sgt Sam Ralston	Deceased
S/Sgt Bill Goshorn	Directory
Sgt Arthur Olson	Member
Sgt Peter Baxter	Member
Pfc Richard Merchant	Unknown
Pfc Adrian Hanft	Unknown
John Puchir	Directory

UNIT UNKNOWN

Capt Alfred F. Marsh	Unknown
S/Sgt Harold Burkle or Birkle	Unknown
Sgt Russell Parkinson	Unknown
Sgt Poole	Unknown
Cpl Tom Mullins	Unknown
Cpl Jerome Greenspan	Unknown
Cpl Joe Pyle	Unknown
Pfc Gonzales	Unknown

PROFILE

T/Sgt. Howard D. Landers, Group Ordnance, was only with the 392nd for a couple of months, but is a member of our Memorial Association.

One of the ETO's early birds, he arrived in Sept. 1942 with the 44th. In February 1944 the 492nd deployed to North Pickenham less most of their ground echelon and Howard was one of the many who were transferred into the 492nd from other Groups in the 2AD to make up their ground echelon.

The 492nd, a hard luck outfit, had some monumental losses and the powers that be broke them up. Howard returned to the 44th, but then got a call from Capt. Bill Metz, the 392nd's Group Ordnance officer, to come and fill in at Wendling. He stayed with us for a couple of months and then was rotated home because of his long overseas service.

Howard's article about 8AF Ordnance was published in the Fall 1992 2AD News. Accompanying the story is a photo of two 392nd officers, the late Capt. Bill Metz, the Group Ordnance officer, and also the late Paul Burtner, the Group Armament officer.

The Landers' have been back to Norfolk twice, the last trip in the Spring of 1993.

After the war, Howard was a plant superintendent and coordinator in a manufacturing plant. He is now retired.

He and wife Sarah live at 709 Martha St., SW, Decatur, AL 35601-5633. They have a son and a grandson.

2AD, 8AF NAME SITES FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL 93 MEETS

The national reunion for the 2AD Ass'n will be at Hilton Head Island, SC, on Nov. 4-7. Early reservations are recommended. See the Spring issue of the 2AD Journal, just out, or write or call Evelyn Cohen at 06-410 Delaire Landing Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114, phone (215) 632-3992. For campground information, write or call Floyd Bull, PO Box 30, Circleville, NY 10919, phone (914) 361-2632.

The 8AF national meeting will be at Chicago Sept. 28 - Oct. 4 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. Watch the 8AF NEWS for further information or write or call Cliff Peterson, Group vice-president, at 2120 Woodcrest Dr., Winter Park, FL 32792, phone (407) 647-7741.

A regional 8AF reunion is planned for Memphis July 29-31. Further information is available by writing or calling Air/-Sea 8th Air Force Escrow, 3385 Airways Blvd., Suite 105, Memphis, TN 38116, phone 1-800-443-7578. Deadline is July 1.

Congratulations to the Leadership of 8AF and 2AD- their reunions are scheduled far enough apart for dedicated reunion goers to make both of them.



The S-2 Library at Wendling (Photo courtesy Walter Neustadt)

BEESTON MAKES P 1 OF WALL ST JOURNAL

The March 2, 1993 edition of the Wall Street Journal featured a page one story about the closing of the Ploughshare at Beeston.

Headlined "Local Pubs are a Thing of the Past For Many in England", the article referred to the traditional place of the village pub in English life, and went on to say that many are closing, some 2,000 out of 60,000 since 1989.

The story also described the village of Beeston, then and now. "A century ago, it had 469 people and three pubs- plus two grocers, a draper, blacksmith and wheelwright. Today, with about the same population, it has no pub and one struggling store", the article said.



Referring to our era there, the article described how often the GI's drank up all the available beer, leaving none for the villagers. Reference was also made to present-day visits to the pub by returning Crusaders. A gala dinner was held there in the summer of 1992 when the 392nd returned in a body.

As reported in the Feb. 1992 issue of the NEWS, the Ploughshare was bought by a semi-retired architect and was modernized with a new dining room and a chef imported from Belfast. One can't help but wonder if maybe the up-scaling outdistanced the clientele. After all, plain folks in both Beeston and Clinton County, Indiana feel comfortable in plain surroundings.

A recent letter from the Jones family at Litcham notes that it is rumored that a new owner has been found and the Ploughshare will re-open.

A reading of the Wall Street Journal article will bring on a lot of nostalgia to Crusaders.

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

First blind solo flight made relying solely on instruments-1932.

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

Lt. G. E. M. Kelly became second Army officer killed in an airplane-1911.

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

AEF received a DH-4, its first American made airplane-1918.

INFORMATION SOUGHT: 2/LT D. N. FRANKE-B.W. WYATT CREW, 579

Lt. Douglas N. Franke was navigator on the Wyatt crew, which failed to return from the Apr. 29, 1944 raid on Berlin. They were in a/c 510, "El Lobo".

Franke was a member of Navigator class 43-13-4 at San Marcos, TX, graduating on or about 16 Sept. 1943. Anyone having any knowledge or recollections of Lt. Franke is asked to contact his brother Robert H. Franke, RR 1, Box 81, Winterville, NC 28590, phone (919) 756-2335. Robert Franke is an associate member of the 392nd BGMA.

GENERAL ASKS SGT FOR HIS OPINION- AND GETS IT

This WW II anecdote is a TRUE STORY, related to the NEWS by one of the participants, who was not the general.

The story has no connection with the 392nd; in fact the people involved were not even Army Air Corps. But Crusaders of all ranks will relate to the situation.

The S/Sgt. was a member of the governing body of the base NCO club, and was accompanying the commanding general and his staff on an inspection of the NCO club.

A couple of beer kegs were stored outside the refrigerator in a hall. The general said, "Sergeant, don't you think those two beer kegs should be inside the refrigerator?" To which the sergeant replied, "Oh, no, General, it never gets hot enough in the hallway to damage the beer."

Thereupon the conversation went about like this, to the best memory of the sergeant:

General: "Colonel, don't you think those beer kegs ought to be in the refrigerator?"

Colonel: "Yes, General, I do. Major, don't you think those beer kegs ought to be in the refrigerator?"

Major: "Yes, Colonel, I do. Captain, don't you think those beer kegs ought to be in the refrigerator?"

Captain: "Yes, Major, I do. Lieutenant, don't you think those beer kegs ought to be in the refrigerator?"

Lieutenant: "Yes, Captain, I do. Sergeant, don't you think those beer kegs ought to be in the refrigerator?"

Sergeant: "Yes, sir, I do."

The sergeant, who in civilian life recently retired as president of a manufacturing company, said "I started out in the infantry, but because of a childhood injury was placed on limited service and was at the time stationed at a general hospital. I guess I forgot my infantry training and thought the General really wanted my opinion."

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

War Department ordered use of national star insignia on all planes-1919.

MAJOR AL HUBER

Crusaders will remember Major Huber, the legendary Mess Officer at the Combat Officers' Mess. If it was in the way of food or drink, he could scrouge it up. We would assign a driver and a weapons carrier to him and he would be off to London or God knows where and when he returned the weapons carrier had a cargo.

Regretfully, we report the passing of Al Huber, who died suddenly at San Antonio, TX Feb. 4, 1993 at the age of 81. He joined the U. S. Cavalry when he was 16, and retired from the Air Force after 27 years of service. In civilian life he was a salesman.

Col. Warren Polking represented the 392nd at the funeral.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Folded Wings: This issue carries an especially long list. Lest members come to the conclusion that suddenly we're dying like flies, the long list comes because of the last mail-out of the newsletter.

Ordinarily the NEWS is mailed only to paid-up members, but once a year we mail to everyone we have in our directory. This mailing, then, went to many people we had not heard from for some time, so we heard of a lot more passings than is usual.

Sick Call: Marilyn Lane, wife of 578th's ground exec Bob Lane, is recovering nicely from some serious troubles and the two were able to make their annual trek to Florida. Husband Bob had a brush with a heart attack when he was given the "balloon treatment" to open up a clogged artery. At last report, both were able to return to their golf game.

Ebe Ebersole, 578th pilot at Wendling Jan.-May 1945, may be about our last pilot still flying. Some heart problems recently curtailed his flying but he reports that after some apparently successful surgery he can probably regain full flying status.

J. D. Long, pilot in the 578th who arrived at Wendling in Nov. '43, reports improvement in an ailing arm after it was operated.

News about the NEWS: We continue to try to improve the content and looks of the paper. A new printer last year helped a lot, and we continue to experiment with type faces, searching for readable type.

Right now, the word processor is being stubborn about new type faces, but we are working on it.

The 9th Troop Carrier Command was based in England and with their C-47's and gliders hauled the airborne into battle on the Continent. A friend of the NEWS was a statistical control officer in the 9th, and he had a sign above the door of his office that said, "You shoot 'em, we compute 'em".

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

320 Army aircraft participated in first simulated European combat operations-1940.

ORLANDO SITE OF 2AD REGIONAL MEETING

The Florida Regional meeting of the 2AD held at Orlando on Feb. 7 was attended by 296 and was hailed as a success by John Conrad, 2AD president and Col. Lawrence Gilbert, its chairman.

"Regional meetings are a means by which we can get together at lower cost and without long travel distances", Conrad said. "Florida in the wintertime is a natural location for such a meeting. Many of our members are permanent residents and many more are here for the winter months."

The attendees voted to schedule a like meeting next year.

The B-24J "All American" and the B-17 909 flew into the Orlando Executive Airport for the occasion.

The afternoon of the one-day meeting featured a large hospitality room where attendees met and reminisced under their Group banners. At the dinner in the evening speakers held the attention of the crowd as they told of WWII related events.



Photo by Zybert
Col. C. D. McCallister addresses the 2AD at the evening banquet at Orlando.

Col. C. D. McCallister, only 97, told of flying in the early days, when he and cadet Charles Lindbergh were involved in a mid-air collision during training at Kelly Field, Texas in 1925. Both survived, becoming member numbers 12 and 13 of the Caterpillar club, an elite organization composed of flyers whose lives were saved by descending to the ground in a parachute. Theirs was the first class to be equipped with parachutes.

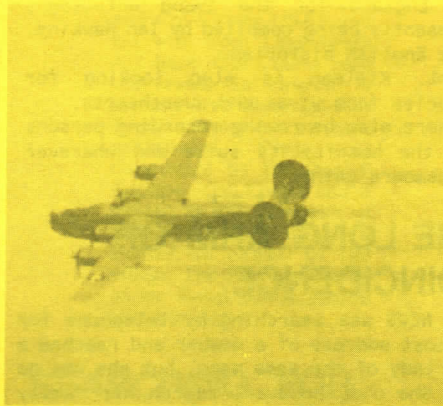
Brig. Gen. John Brooks III, West Point '41, reviewed his involvement in the ETO, starting with Ploesti and later as commander of the 2nd Scouting Force. The mission of the Scouting Force, who flew in fighters and whose existence was kept pretty well under wraps by the 8AF, was to precede the bombers to the target by 30 to 40 minutes and report weather, smoke, and other vital information to the bomber commander. (See accompanying story on the details of Gen. Brooks' experiences.)

Tom Rielly, director of the War Birds Museum at Kissimmee, told of the two years and nearly 100,000 man-hours of effort involved in the restoration of the Collings Foundation's B-24J "All American". Working without a parts book, they pieced together what virtually a pile of junk aluminum into the combat-configured war bird that now flies all over the U. S. After all that work and when nearly done, a chance visitor to the Museum offered them a parts book.

The committee in charge was composed, naturally enough, predominately of 392nd people. In addition to chairman Gilbert, 392nd members were Cliff Peterson, Toni Robinson, Ed Schwartz, and Art and Teddy Egan. Charles Peterson, 389th, handled all arrangements for the visit of the B-24 All-American and the B-17 #909. The 392nd further distinguished itself by having the largest Group attendance, 53.

Those who attended from the 392nd were Tom Alexander and Helen; Olin Castle; Carroll Cheek and Mabel; James Conley and Jeanette; John Conrad and Wanda; Art Egan and Teddy; Robert Erfurth and Evelyn; Herman Garner; Lawrence Gilbert and Marjorie; Jim Goar and Virginia; Eugene Gorman and Corine;

Jack Graves and Evelyn; Harry Hall and Pauline; Ken Healing and Elinor; Harry Kruse; John Kolodziejski and Bessie; Leroy MacTavish; John Matt; Randall Mayer and Rita; Murray Milrod and Helen; Donald Mitchell and Patricia; Clifford Peterson and Mary; Charles Piper; Toni Robinson; Philip Sacher and Edna; Edward Schwartz and Connie, David Scott and Betty; Maltby Watkins; Oscar Weed; and Stanley Zybert and Millie.



The pilot of the B-24 All-American racks her up after a low pass over the Orlando Executive Airport. The famous warbird made an appearance there for the 2AD Regional Meeting in February. Watching Crusaders immediately recalled the buzz jobs at Wendling when jubilant crews finished their tour of missions.

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

Germany surrendered unconditionally-1945.

2AD SPEAKER TELLS OF BREAKING UP FIGHTER ATTACK

Brig. Gen. John Brooks III was a featured speaker at the Orlando 2AD Regional meeting Feb. 7. He had the complete attention of the audience as he related his involvement in the European air war.

Arriving in England in the summer of '43 as the Operations Officer of the 389th, he shuttled back and forth from England to Africa with them. He led the second section of the 389th at Ploesti and was on the first U.S. mission to Rome.

Back in England, he was deputy CO of the 20th Combat Wing, then did staff duty at both Hq. 2AD and 8AF. He finished his first tour with the bombers.

Early in the air war, Bomb Group commanders in England used war-weary fighters to shepherd their formations as they formed up over England, and it was only a question of time and increased range for the fighters until that concept grew to going all the way to the target.

A Scouting Force was organized for each Air Division, and Brooks led the 2nd. Their mission was to precede the bombers to the target by about 30-40 minutes and render a scouting report to the bomber commander. Their strength was typically eight a/c.

After the bombers reached the target, the Scouting Force was released for tactical operations. On the Magdeburg mission in Feb. 1945, Brooks noticed some 50-75 German fighters flying in loose formation, preparing for an attack on the bomber stream. Realizing that the German pilots did not recognize him and his wingman, Brooks flew through the German formation until he located the leaders. He and his wingman then dropped their tanks and attacked the German leaders, downing 4 a/c. The attack broke up the German formations; and Brooks was able to contact other U. S. fighters who also attacked and shot down 34 German fighters.

The Germans never were able to mount an attack on the U. S. bomber formations that day.

For this action Brooks was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

PROFILE

S/Sgt. Walter W. Jake Hanna was a gunner on the Conneran crew in the 576th. (See story, this issue, "A/C #109835 Is Shown In Encyclopedia"). The a/c was shot down Apr. 11, 1944, and Walter was one of the 9 survivors who became POW.

Walter has been the water superintendent for the city of Wadesboro.

He and wife Rebecca live at 1408 Morven Rd., Wadesboro, NC 28170. They have four children and five grandchildren.

SIGN-UP DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR ALBUQUERQUE

Bob Vickers and Charley Dye, co-chairmen of the Albuquerque stand-alone reunion scheduled for May 20-24, have announced that the deadline for sign-up has been extended to May 15. A sign-up blank is to be found elsewhere in this paper.

They emphasised that it will be necessary for Crusaders to be registered in order to be admitted. "It's kind of like showing up at a friend's for dinner without an invitation. The friend is glad to see you, but has no room or food for you since he was not counting on your coming. The hotel will have a certain number of rooms and meals ready, and unannounced comers will be an embarrassment to themselves and the Association", Bob said.

40's Night Saturday

The Saturday evening dinner will feature a 1940's theme, with music and entertainment to match. Crusaders are asked to come as they were in the 40's (insofar as possible) wearing WW II uniforms or civilian clothes.

Crusaders' Round Table

To capture individual 392nd stories, there will be a Crusaders' Round Table. Three sessions are scheduled: "The Early Days of the 392nd"; "The Ground Team Prepares For A Mission"; and "The Tough Missions". The moderator will be Col. Myron Keilman, commander of the 579th. He will be assisted by Keith Roberts, 578th navigator on the Vickers crew.

Come to the reunion prepared to tell your story of an interesting incident while you served in the 392nd.

The stories will be recorded and sent to England for the 392nd anthology, presently being compiled by Ian Hawkins, the English historian.

Col. Kielman is also looking for stories from wives and sweethearts.

There also be roving recording persons at the hospitality suite and wherever Crusaders gather.

THE LONG ARM OF COINCIDENCE

The NEWS was searching by telephone for the lost address of a member and reached a nice lady of the same name, but she was no kin. She did, however, search her family contacts for the missing Crusader, but to no avail. So we sent her a newsletter with our thanks for her effort.

Back came a reply that when her brother-in-law's eye happened to fall upon the 392nd's logo, he remembered that he had worked as a technical rep at Wendling and Hethel in 1944.

His name is W. D. Fling, and he represented Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corporation who built the first electronic gunsight for the Martin upper turret. Wright Field sent him to supervise the testing of the equipment and the training of gunners.



The Oscar Weed crew, 577th, were awarded Certificates of Appreciation at Orlando by chairman Lawrence Gilbert in recognition of a contribution by Weed on behalf of the crew to the Collings Foundation, owner of the B-24 All-American. From left to right, Col. Gilbert; Robert Erfurth, ball turret; John Kolodziejski, tail gunner and looking sharp in his WWII uniform; Oscar Weed, pilot; and Eugene Gorman, engineer.



Present at the 2AD Regional Meeting at Orlando were Col. Joe Whittaker, 578th, 392nd, and 2AD Bombardier in that order and a past president of 2AD; Col. Lawrence Gilbert, chairman of the event and president of 392BGMA; and Brig. Gen. John Brooks III, one of the speakers and commander of the 2AD Scouting Force in WWII.

PROFILE

S/Sgt. Theodore Evans was in the 577th, S-2. He joined the Group at Orlando in March 1943, evidently while some of the Group were there at the AAF School of Applied Tactics.

He fits the profile of an S-2 person, being possessed of a B.A. degree from St. Johns before entering the army and garnering an M. A. from NYU after the war.

Postwar he worked for major accounting firms as a traveling auditor. He retired in 1984 from a major shipping company.

He is married to Celia and they live at 13455 SW 3rd St., NH S-210, Pembroke Pines FL 33027. They have two children.

2ND GENERATION CRUSADER WILL BUY 392ND MEMORABILIA

Philip Bogater's uncle was Nick Ponder, the co-pilot on the 577's Marfia crew which was MIA Nov. 13, 1943 over the North Sea.

Like many other second generation members of the 392BGMA, Phil is very interested in the 392nd's role in WWII and is collecting memorabilia such as flying gear, patches, and photos. His goal is to have a traveling museum and he will buy such items for his collection. At his death the collection will be donated to the 2AD Heritage group.

Phil's address is 29137 Hathaway, Livonia, MI 48150, phone (313) 326-5518.

FROM THE KEILMAN WWII NOTEBOOK

Col. Myron Keilman, the commander of the 579th, has compiled accounts of events in 392nd history that he has named "Lest We Forget". Following is his recital of an operation, with a citation from the Commanding General:

On 24 April 1944 our 392nd target was the Messerschmit (ME) 263 jet airplane base at Leipheim, Germany, 80 miles west of Munich. The 26 B-24's released 1352 100-lb bombs which obliterated the runway, hangers and surrounding buildings. Two airplanes and crews were lost to flak. But General Doolittle liked the results. He said:

"Pictures of the bombing on 24 April show that excellent results were obtained on all targets. Please convey to the units participating my congratulations for a job well done."

FOLDED WINGS

Stanley O. Beaton, 578, Feb. 11, 1993

William Bowers, 576, Nov. 1992

Percy B. Caley, Hq, about 1989

C. A. Campbell

Marion W. Clardy, Oct. 1989

Biago Colasanti, 576, 1991

John Farah, 576, Jan. 1993

Marvin Felheim, 576, about 1960

Lawrence Gram, 579, 1980's

Walter M. Harvie, 578

Albert Hobstetter, 1985

Albert B. Huber, Feb. 4, 1993

Erling Byron Jordan, 577, 1986

Robert M. Lee, 1991

Charles E. Lewis, 576

John E. Moffat

Robert S. Morton, Hq, 1980's

Elmo S. Orr, 1983

Joseph B. Payton, 577, Nov. 15, 1992

Jack A. Ross, Jan. 26, 1993

John M. Serafini, 578

Robert W. Shoenberger, 576, Nov. 6, 1990

Felix W. Susen, Hq

Ernest W. White, 576

David L. York, 1986

Ed Young, 579, 1992

ADVENTURES OF BIRDIE SCHMIDT LARRICK, ARC

By Jim Goar

The first director of the Red Cross Aero club was the lovely Birdie Schmidt, later Birdie Larrick, wife, mother, school teacher. Now widowed, she lives in her home town, Columbus, OH.

If she hasn't discovered the fountain of youth she has least has found one of its ingredients, activity and involvement.

A graduate of Ohio State with theatrical training, treading the boards has always fascinated her. She left the comforts of Wendling in 1944 to go to the Continent with a Red Cross showmobile.

She is a member of a senior citizen show troupe based at Ohio State, known as Grandparents Living Theatre. The troupe not only has traveled Ohio and neighboring states, but has also been to Europe on tour.



Birdie as Sister Damien in the play Sacred Hearts, a production of the Grandparents Living Theatre.

but theatre is not her only bag. She this Spring went to Albania with a church group on a humanitarian mission. Tiny Albania, about the size of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island together, is sandwiched between Greece, Yugoslavia, and the Adriatic. Only two years ago they deposed a Communist dictatorship. Until then, the country's leaders kept the borders closed and it was an unfriendly climate to foreigners, especially Westerners.

Birdie reports that Albania is mountainous, very poor, and has an agrarian economy. It has bad roads and primitive living conditions. However, the people are gradually working into a democratic form of government, and are friendly to Americans.

Living in foreign countries does not daunt her. Recently she spent a couple

of years in China, teaching English at a school there.

Until the death of her mother last year, Birdie was her primary care-giver, maintaining the family home in Columbus. She now lives in a new apartment in the suburbs.

VILLAGE NEWS

Denis Duffield has sent us the following clipping from the local newspaper serving the Wendling area.

It gives us a glimpse of what is going on around the old base, especially the involvement of the villagers with the 392nd Memorial.

BEESTON

Cycle ride — In the ride for Beeston Church, Maddy Shakespear, Linda Winterbone, Jim Wiseman, and John Kinnaid set off from Beeston Store. They set out towards King's Lynn and when finished phoned to be picked up. Wendy Carter and Diane Walthew chose to walk the churches and chapels of Norwich. Richard Wale cycled locally. They raised a total of £284 for Beeston Church.

Pub closes — The Ploughshare pub has closed. Andrew and Christine Johnson the landlord and lady will be missed very much. Andy restarted the Beeston Cricket Club and played for the first year, giving his support with raffles and money-raising events.

Remembrance service — A remembrance service held at Beeston Church war memorial was conducted by lay preacher Norman Wagg and attended by villagers and Col Coates USAF and his wife from Lakenheath Air Base. Col Coates read the lesson in church. A service was then held at Beeston American air base memorial. This was conducted by the Rev P Rushton. Col Coates laid a wreath as did chairman of Beeston Parish Council B Potter on behalf of the village. The Litcham branch of the Royal British Legion also attended.

SEARCHING FOR MEMBERS OF THE MARX CREW: 576TH

Three of the 578th's Marx crew are presently members of the 392BGMA: Sackman Marx, pilot; Victor Ferrari, navigator; and Jack Stewart, tail gunner. They are searching for the rest of the crew: James H. Chenet, CP; Omar E. "Eddie" Roberts, B; Harold E. Posey, WG; Mario G. Sanna, WG; Edgar B. Fletcher, E; and Richard S. Wright, TG.

Anyone with information please write or call the NEWS.

PROFILE

1/Lt. Donald C. Bailey was the navigator on the Cerrato crew in the 578th for five missions. He then became a radar navigator and flew 16 missions as a lead navigator with various crews. He joined the Group at Wendling in Sept. 1944.

He was recalled to duty in the Korean war and flew 46 missions as a radar navigator in B-29's from Yokota AFB, Japan, in 1950-52.

In civilian life he was vice-president and cashier of the Columbia Heights State Bank in Minneapolis.

He had a second career as Treasurer of Anoka County, MN., and is now retired.

He is married to Marlyce, and they are the parents of four sons and two grandsons. They live at 6260 Able St., Fridley, MN 55432

PROFILE

1/Lt. Emanuel J. Abrams was the navigator on the Neundorf crew in the 579th, arriving at Wendling in early July 1944.

He had a reprise of combat flying March 17 1970 when he was a passenger on an Eastern Airlines highjacking.

He has been an executive in manufacturing and now does merger/acquisition consulting.

His avocation is music; he plays violin in the Newton Symphony Orchestra. He is also an accomplished swimmer.

His spouse is Barbara, and they live at 68 Harwood Road, Natick, MA 01760. They have two daughters and one grandchild.

PROFILE

S/Sgt. Stanley J. Robens, aka Stanley J. Rubenstein, was the tail gunner on the Blakely crew in the 576th. He joined the Group at Wendling in October, 1944. (See accompanying story, "Returning A/C Crash Lands")

After returning to the US when liberated from POW camp, he graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1949.

He has been in the retail mens' clothing business and life insurance sales.

His wife is Vickie and they live at 9998 E. Purdue Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85259. They have a daughter and a son and have 3 grandchildren.

PROFILE

Cpl. Joseph L. Thomson was a communications technician in the 577th. He joined the Group at Wendling as a replacement in Dec. 1943.

In civilian life he stayed with electronics (only we didn't call it that then), working for Western Electric and retiring from Litton.

He lives at Apt. B-28, Harriman Woods Apartments, Route 17M, Harriman, NY 10926. He is married and has three children.

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

Lt James H. Doolittle performed first known successful outside loop-1927.

PROFILE

S/Sgt. John Kolodziejewski was the tail gunner on the Oscar Weed crew in the 577th. The crew arrived at Wendling in January, 1945, and flew 14 missions before 8AF operations were halted.

After the war he operated a sewer construction company until open heart surgery in 1972 put him on the disability list.

He and wife Bessie live in Salisbury Mills, NY 12577, and their address is RR 1, Box 19K. They have three children and five grandchildren.

PROFILE

Sgt. Elmer N. Horey was the navigator on the Conneron crew in the 576th. (See story, this issue, "A/C #109835 Is Shown In Encyclopedia".) The a/c was shot down Apr. 11, 1944 and Elmer was one of the 9 survivors who became POW.

Elmer, an almost-graduate of the Navigator school, took over the navigator position on the crew when the regularly assigned navigator went to PFF school.

Post-war, his career was in Education and he was a teacher, principal, and Director of Communications before a heart attack in 1975 sidelined him.

He is active in volunteer work, the American Legion, and has been an officer in the ex-POW organization.

He and spouse Bertha live at 135 Forest Place, Fredonia, NY 14063-1701. They have one son and three grandchildren.

PROFILE

Capt. Elliott Finkel was the 577th's Squadron Intelligence Officer, joining the Group at Alamogordo in April, 1943.

As was the case with many Crusaders, he left the Service after the Group was broken up at Charleston, SC in August, 1945.

He returned to the US Attorney's office in Pennsylvania and in 1950 entered the private practice of law, and is still active.

He and wife Lois live at 5426 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. They have two daughters and four grandchildren.

AMERICAN HERITAGE MAGAZINE FEATURES 392ND WALL MURAL

Crusaders will be interested in the April 1993 issue of American Heritage Magazine, which carried a story labeled "American Graffiti".

The author is David Higgs, an English writer, and he wrote about the many wall murals and other decorations that still exist in derelict buildings on former US WWII bases in England.

The featured picture was the wall mural at the old combat officers' mess, which is now being used as an auto wrecker's office and warehouse. Most Crusaders who have returned to Wendling have seen it, and a photo of it appeared in the August 1992 issue of the NEWS.

Other pictures were from Shipdham, Hethel, Bungay, and other place names that will have a recollective ring to the ears of Crusaders.

An effort to preserve such artifacts in under way in England by an organization called Eighth Wall Art Conservation

8.



REGISTRATION REUNION '93

Reunion Events:



NAME(S):

PLEASE PRINT for ALL Registering Persons)

SQDN:

ADDRESS:

(Street; P.O. Box; City; State & Zip)

TEL: ()

* **REGISTRATION FEE** for ALL Reunion Events (except GOLF) is: \$129.50 per person. Reunion events include all scheduled activities to include three (3) Dinners; two (2) Breakfasts; and one (1) Luncheon/Style Show plus motor coaches and three (3) tour visit events.

◇ **REQUEST** Registration for () person(s) x \$129.50 per person = \$

◇ **"YES,"** I/We will play in the Golfing Event Friday, 21 May:

• Request Golf for () persons x \$26 per person = \$
(includes Green fee, one-half cart plus "stuff")

◇ **TOTAL AMOUNT** (Check or Money Order to: CHAS. DYE, Treas.) = \$

✓ **Make Payment to:** 392 BGMA REUNION '93

✓ **Send Completed REGISTRATION FORM & PAYMENT to:** Charles Dye
7000 Louisiana NE #1601
Albuquerque, NM 87109

(Cut here and return)

HOTEL RESERVATIONS: Call in—or use the Hotel Form BELOW:

Special Reunion '93, standard room rate is \$57 per night plus tax to be paid at checkout. **NO ADVANCE DEPOSIT OF ONE NIGHT** required IF reservations made **BEFORE January 1st!** Either **CALL IN** your request **TOLL FREE** at (800) 228-9290 or direct to Hotel at (505) 881-6800 for "392 REUNION '93"—or use form below and mail directly to the ABQ MARRIOTT HOTEL at address given. **DO IT NOW. OK?**

392ND BGP—REUNION '93

20 - 24 MAY 1993

CUT OFF DATE

15 May 93

NAME OF GROUP

DATES

LAST NAME

FIRST

MIDDLE

FIRM

PHONE

STREET

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

SHARING WITH

LAST NAME

FIRST

MIDDLE

ARRIVAL DATE OF SHARING PARTY

PLEASE CIRCLE TYPE OF ROOM REQUESTED

DOUBLE - DOUBLE
2 BEDS - 2 PERSONS

SINGLE
1 BED - 1 PERSON

TRIPLE
2 BEDS - 3 PERSONS

DOUBLE
1 BED - 2 PERSONS

QUAD
2 BEDS - 4 PERSONS

A limited number of sleeping rooms have been set aside for your group. Any reservation request received after the cut off date will be handled on a space availability "first come" basis for both availability and rates.

ARRIVAL

DEPARTURE

DATE

DATE

DAY

DAY

TIME

TIME

CREDIT CARDS

NAME

NUMBER

EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE

Rollaway Beds \$10.00

Children in same room with parents - Free

Check in after 3 pm

Check out - Noon

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Society, EWACS for short.

John Conrad, president of 2AD Association and former mickey navigator in the 579th, has been in contact with American Heritage for permission to use the pictures.

The editors of the magazine penned a historical epitath for us when they said, "Dim and peeling, dozens of murals hidden in derelict buildings on forgotten British air bases still vibrate with the energy of a tremendous campaign".

PROFILE

S/Sgt. Peter S. Baxter was in the S-2 of the 579th squadron, joining the Group at Biggs Field in early 1943.

He returned to the States with the ground echelon on the Queen Mary and returned to civilian life, spending 40 years with the Ethyl corporation at Houston.

He and spouse Mary live at 11822 Kirkbriar, Houston, TX 77089. They have six children and nine grandchildren.

AL LISHKA FOUND

Those Crusaders who sweated through the brutal early months of combat in '43 and '44 will be pleased to learn that AL, a veteran first pilot in the 578th has been located.

He has changed his name to Lester and is a general sales manager at a Ford agency in California.

His location was inquired about in an early 1948 newsletter (see Feb. 1993 edition of the NEWS) and was found when Denis Duffield, our man at Wendling, reported that he had shown up there and Denis had escorted him around the old base.

He was in the Korean war as a B-29 pilot, retiring as Major.

He and wife Kaye live at 706 E. Toussau Dr., Fullerton, CA 92631-1940. They have two children and one grandchild.

PROFILE

S/Sgt. Jack O. Stewart was the tail gunner on the 578th's Marx crew, shot down on their second mission on Nov. 13, 1943. He spent the rest of the war as a POW.

The Marx crew was one of the early replacements, arriving at Wendling in October or November of 1943.

After repatriation, Jack spent 20 years in the Air Force, retiring as M/Sgt. He was air crew on the Berlin airlift and in Korea. Other assignments were with MATS in Massachusetts and Columbus, OH.

Postwar, he was a technician in biological science at Purdue university near his home town.

Jack's address is 807 Walnut St., Box 296, Brookston, IN 47923. He has two sons and one daughter; and three grandchildren.

Shown below is one of Jack's prized memorabilia. It is a flight record signed at Boise, Idaho by Jack's namesake, the then 1/Lt, later Brig. Gen. James M. Stewart, the movie star who became a bonafide hero as a squadron commander in one of the 2AD bomb groups.

INDIVIDUAL FLIGHT RECORD (cont)

STEWART, Jack O. (Name) Sgt. (Rank) 15335002 (Serial No.)
 52ND (Organization) 22TH (Group) GOWEN FLD (Station)
 Boise, Idaho

Month & Date	Duty	Mission Symbol	Flight Time	Number Lts	Type	Remarks
6-11	"	"	1:25	1	9021	Ride
6-12	"	"	1:55	1	9021	"
6-13	"	"	1:00	1	9022	"
6-14	"	"	2:40	2	7644	"
6-15	"	"	3:20	3	9022	"
6-16	"	"	1:00	1	9021	"
6-17	"	"	2:18	1	9113	"
6-18	"	"	3:00	2	7120	"
6-19	"	"	1:00	1	7644	"
6-18	"	"	3:00	3	7115	"

I certify that I have made frequent check of the method of preparation of flight records, and have assured myself that the information contained on this form is an accurate summary of the individual's flying time, and that the symbols used correctly record the type of mission flown, and

For the Squadron Commander:
 [Signature]
 Operations Officer

PX ITEMS

Book, "392nd War Stories, by Col. Myron Keilman, 579th, \$20 []
 Book, "Country Boy Combat Pilot", by Col. Bob Tays, 578th, \$15 []
 Book, "Liberators From Wendling", by Col. Bob Vickers, 578th, \$25 []
 Cap, black, 392nd BG with gold braid, summer, \$9 []
 Cap, black, 392nd BG with gold braid, winter, \$9 []
 Jacket, white nylon, w/392nd BG and Crusader patches, \$20 []
 Patch, 392nd, \$1.50 postpaid []
 Print, "The Flying Crusader", by Frederick T. Searle, unsigned \$30 post pd []
 Print, "The Flying Crusader", by Frederick T. Searle, signed \$55 post paid []
 T-shirt, 392nd, \$10 []
 Add \$1.50 per item for shipping cost (except postpaid items) []
 Total []

Send with check to Charles Dye, Treasurer,
 7000 Louisiana Blvd., NE, Apt. 1601, Albuquerque, NM 87109

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YOU CAN TELL WHERE YOU STAND WITH YOUR DUES BY THE CODE RIGHT AFTER YOUR NAME ON THE LABEL. IF IT IS LM (FOR LIFE MEMBERSHIP) OR 93 OR HIGHER, YOU'RE PAID UP. IF YOU ARE NOT PAID UP, PLEASE SEND YOUR DUES TO CHARLEY DYE. IF THERE IS AN ERROR, CONTACT CHARLEY.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS RULED THAT NO CRUSADER WILL BE DENIED MEMBERSHIP BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY. SO IF YOU ARE IN STRAIGHTENED CIRCUMSTANCES CHECK THE HARDSHIP WAIVER BOX.

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Send with check to Charles Dye, Treasurer,
 7000 Louisiana Blvd., NE, Apt. 1601, Albuquerque, NM 87109

PROFILE

1/Lt. Oscar Weed was a pilot in the 577th, arriving at Wendling in January, 1945.

He was a pilot in an AF reserve troop carrier Group after the war.

He was with the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company from 1946 to 1979, when he retired as vice-president.

He is married to Mary Louise and they

live at 1893 Kingwood, Coos Bay, OR 97420. They have four children and seven grandchildren.

MAY AIR ANNIVERSARY

Lts H. H. Arnold and T. D. Milling became first Wright School Army pilots-1911.

FOLDED WINGS REPORT (PLEASE REPORT ANY DEATH OF SPOUSE AS WELL AS OF MEMBER)

Name of Deceased _____ Sqdn. _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

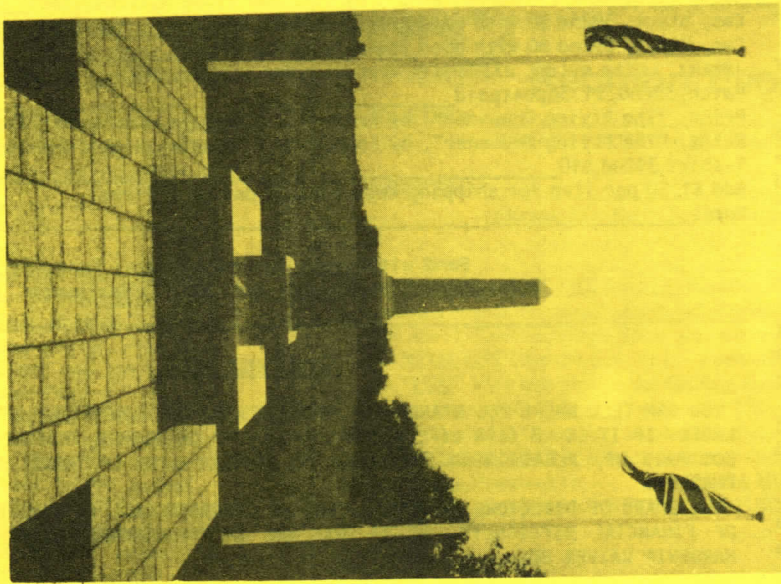
Date of Death _____ Survivors: (Send copy of obit from newspaper if possible) _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

[] Record a memorial contribution to 392nd BGMA in my name, check made out to 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Ass'n., enclosed. Send this report to J. D. Long, Jr., 102 Kemp Road East, Greensboro, NC 27410.

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