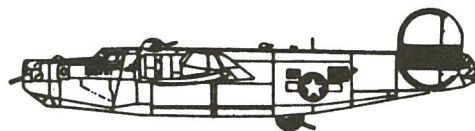


NEWS



392nd BG Memorial Association

VOLUME 21

November, 2006

CRUSADERS MET MILES APART LAST OCTOBER

19 392BGMA MET WITH 8AFHS AT BOSSIER CITY, LA

With the two parent organizations meeting miles apart and at approximately the same time, most Crusaders were forced to choose between the two.

Bossier City is near Shreveport; it is also near Barksdale Field, the headquarters of the 8AF, which is why 8AFHS officials chose the site.

President Charles Dye convened a meeting of Crusaders and guests present. This meeting was not an official meeting of the 392BGMA; the official meeting was with the 2ADA in Falls Church, VA.

A financial report was distributed. Bob Books reported that the web site has had over 350,000 visitors this year. Bob Vickers and Tom Perry, both of whom visited the Memorial at Wendling, reported that the grounds were in good shape but the flags needed replacement. A recommendation was made not to turn the maintenance over to the American Battle Field Commission.

Members were pleased to learn that next year's 8AFHS meeting will be managed by long-time successful manager Armed Forces Reunions, and that it will be held at Kalamazoo, MI Jul 17-22. (For more on this, see story, this issue)

Crusaders and guests present were:



*Photo by Larry Gilbert, Jr.
The USAF Thunderbirds perform their signature bombburst maneuver at the dedication of the AF Memorial at Washington, D. C.*

Gilbert and Martha Bambauer; Stanley Zybort and Helen; Charles and Helen Dye; Bob and Annell Vickers; B/Gen Bobby Efferson and Cindy; Gerald and Roz Gersten; Tom Perry; Richard and Rita Giesing; David and Renee Greene; and Bob and Carol Books.

MARK CALENDARS: 8AFHS REUNION AT KALAMAZOO, MI JULY 17-22, 2007

It's not too early to be thinking about next year's 8AF reunion.

Continued on page 2

2ADA MET AT FALLS CHURCH, VA, SAW DEDICATION OF AF MEMORIAL, ELECTED 392ND'S OWN OAK MACKEY PRESIDENT

392BGMA, MEETING AT SAME VENUE, NAMED SIX SECOND GENERATION TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PROVIDED FOR UPKEEP OF WENDLING MEMORIAL

By Jim Goar

The Crusaders, meeting at the Second Air Division Association reunion, took steps to harness the vigor of its 2nd generation members. They elected six of them to the Board of Directors. They also chose 2nd generation Bill McCutcheon to be Treasurer, joining 2nd generation Secretary Annette Tison. Happily, the Group meeting was presided over by CEO Col Lawrence Gilbert, who has made a strong recovery from an illness that kept him away from last year's meeting.

Looking to the future of our Memorial at Wendling, formal arrangements were made to insure its maintenance. The Association named the Tom Scott family to be trustees of our maintenance fund, with the Beeston Parish Council to succeed the Scott family if and when necessary.

Oak Mackey, the Group's long-time vice-president for 2ADA affairs, reported that the Fighting Sam exhibit at the Mighty 8AF Museum at Savannah has now been fully funded in the amount of over \$125,000. The Fighting Sam exhibit is the nose section of a B-24, on loan from the American Air Museum in Britain at Duxford. The 8AF Museum plans a comprehensive display featuring the B-24. This is much to the satisfaction of 2nd Air Division folks, who have long thought that the B-17 has taken a lion's share of attention at Savannah.

Oak also reported certain unrest in the Executive Committee concerning its prevailing leadership. Consequently, at the annual meeting of the 2ADA moderation prevailed, and Oak, a moderate if there ever was one, was elected President. Oak will be serving his second term as head of the Association.

A highlight of the reunion was the dedication of the USAF Memorial, thus the AF joining the other Services with a monument honoring the members of

Continued on page 2

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our own arm of the Service.

The Crusaders welcomed the presence of John Gilbert, a long-time Friend of the 392nd who lives in Norwich. After we left Wendling, the Brits used the base to help relieve the severe housing shortage occasioned by the war. John's family was housed on the base at the Combat Officers' Mess, and John lived his childhood in and around Wendling. John is a British Army veteran and an enthusiastic volunteer at the Memorial Library in Norwich.

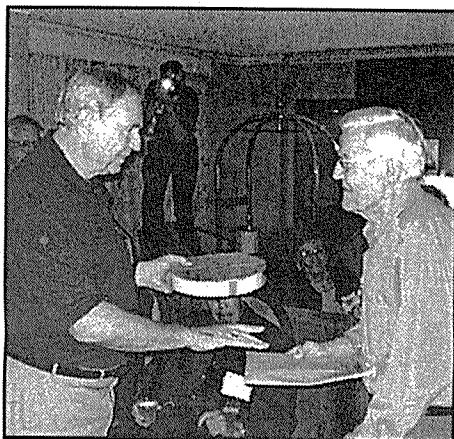
New Board of Directors

The 392BGMA voted to expand the Board in order to make room for 2nd generation members. The new Board is as follows, with 2nd generation members in bold type:

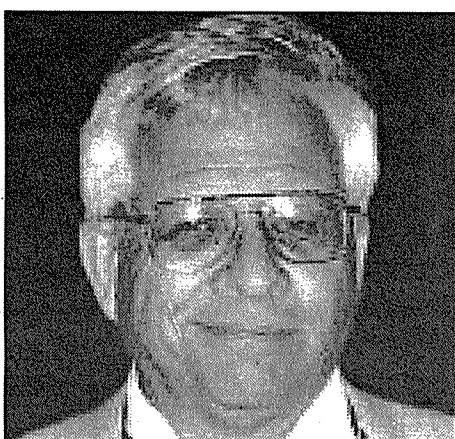
Class of 2007: Carroll Cheek, **Jim Marsteller**, Mary Peterson, Tom Perry, **Greg Hatton**

Class of 2008: Lawrence Gilbert, Jim Goar, **Ben Jones**, Charles Dye, **Bill McCutcheon**

Class of 2009: Gil Bambauer, Mary Rothrock, Stanley Zybort, **Annette Tison**, **Bob Books**



Ben Jones photo
John Gilbert presents Col. Gilbert with
a commemorative Wendling clock.



Jones/Books? photo
Bill McCutcheon, new Treasurer

The Board of Directors elected the following officers for 2007: President, Charles Dye; Vice-President for Communications, Jim Goar; Vice-President for Memorial, Carroll Cheek; Vice-president for 2ADA, Oak Mackey; Vice-President for 8AFHS, Charles Dye; Secretary, Annette Tison; Treasurer, Bill McCutcheon.

Some 450 members and guests of the Second Air Division Association attended the reunion. Crusaders attending were:

Wallace Blackburn, with Mike and Michael; Bob and Carol Books; Carroll and Mabel Cheek; John Conrad; Richard and Rita Giesing; Jim and Annabelle Goar; Lawrence and Marjorie Gilbert with Larry and David and Anne Brooks; Greg Hatton; Bill and Renella Jurczyn; Ben Jones; Thomas and Megan Jahnke; Jim Marsteller; Bill McCutcheon; Joe McNiel and Ruth; Oak and Maxine Mackey; Tom Perry; Dennis and Joanne Rogers; Mary Rothrock; Roland and Ronald Sabourin; Annette Tison; and Bob and Alice Tyler.

The editor feels compelled to explain why he gave himself a by-line for this story. At one place in the story an opinion was offered instead of stating a fact, and that is why.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

Gen H. H. Arnold became General of the Army-Dec. 21, 1944.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

Japanese attack Pearl Harbor- Dec. 7, 1941.

392BGMA ELECTRONIC DIRECTORY CHANGES

We'll print the entire Electronic Directory in the first issue of the year, and in ensuing issues we will print changes as they are reported to us. If you need an Electronic Directory now, let me know- Editor.

Bilz, Jack
Brent, Landon H.
Ehrlich, Lee D.
Ehrlich, Lee D. Fax
Enlow, Alvin R.
Hadley, Leslie R.
Hammond, John
Helling, Dick
Isakson, Everett
Jones, Mervyn
Marcelli, Anthony
McCutcheon, Bill
Ortiz, David
Sabourin, Roland
Willies, Doug & Celia

jjbilz@sbcglobal.net
lhb323@netscape.com
lde392@hotmail.com
847 715 9343
ALRAND8@aol.com
murles1267@aol.com
johnhammond@wildblue.net
theman@gohighspeed.com
ikandruth@msn.com
oboekjones@talktalk.net
am5792000@yahoo.com
BillM@b24.net
dolstd@yahoo.com
dpoobah5@accessbee.com
dougandcelia@talktalk.net

Continued from page 1

With the infusion of 2nd generation energy and back under the sure management of Donna Lee and her Armed Forces Reunions company, it promises to be up to the standards of the past.

Kalamazoo is neither East or West Coast, and is reachable by most of us.

The main draw will be the Kalamazoo Air Museum which has, among other things, a superb four dimensional movie experience featuring a bombing raid to Berlin led by the 91st BG. This is the closest your kids will ever get to experiencing the moments of the men of the 8AF in the air over Fortress Europe.

The anticipated guest speaker for the Saturday night banquet will be Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, granddaughter of Gen James Doolittle.

Many 2nd and 3rd generation as well as WWII researchers will be attending. Most of the Bomb and Fighter Groups will be represented.

Kalamazoo is the home of the Gilmore Car Museum, one of the largest antique car museums in America. And the Crossroads Mall, one of the largest in Michigan, is just 5 miles away via the hotel shut-

tle.

Headquarters will be the Radison Hotel, near the center of town with several shops and eateries just around the corner.

The 392BGMA's annual meeting will be held here, and there will be our usual Group Dinner and our hospitality suite for your enjoyment. *(The NEWS is indebted to Bob Books for the material in this story)*

An elderly woman from Brooklyn decided to prepare her will. She told her minister that she had two final requests. First, she wanted to be cremated, and second, she wanted her ashes scattered over the local Wal-Mart. "Wal-Mart", the minister exclaimed. "Why Wal-Mart?"

"Then I'll be sure my daughters visit me twice a week."

Courtesy Charles Dye

AIR ANNIVERSARY

650 B-17's and B-24's made first major strike against German V-weapon sites- Dec. 24, 1943.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

Pre-invasion bombing of Cape Gloucester, New Britain completely destroyed enemy defenses-Dec. 26, 1943.

THESE CRUSADERS FLEW WITH US IN THE 8AF AND ALSO IN THE 15TH IN ITALY

By Annette Tison, Assistant Editor

579th Squadron pilot 1/Lt Walter S. Brunn and his tail gunner S/Sgt Ernest J. Fund have a unique perspective on the air war in Europe. They are the only living members of a crew that flew for both the 15th AF and the 8th AF.

Their crew arrived at the 376th Bomb Group in San Pancrazio, Italy, on 21 January 1944 and flew twelve missions with that Group. Most were to targets in Italy but they hit targets in Germany, France, and Austria as well.

In mid-March, they were reassigned to the 8th AF. Brunn remembers they were the envy of just about everyone at the 376th. They were flown to England via Casablanca and Scotland and were eventually sent to the 392nd. They flew their first mission with the Group on 1 April 1944 and finished their tour in July.

Brunn and Fund say the differences between the 376th and 392nd are almost too many to count. A major distinction was the required number of missions. When they were transferred, the required mission count was 50 in Italy but just 25 in England.

There are several reasons for the difference. The two men recall that there was no flak in Italy and German fighters usually attacked only over the target, if at all. A large part of most missions would be spent above the Adriatic or Mediterranean Seas. They'd fly over water, turn inland and drop their bombs, then immediately fly back to the water to start the homeward leg of the trip.

Another difference was how the missions were counted. When their target was in Germany (where fighter and flak protection was much stronger), or if they had to fly over the Alps to reach the target, they received double credit for that mission. As a result, an airman in the 15th AF did not necessarily have to fly 50 missions to get credit for 50.

Still, the missions weren't easy. On 28 Dec 1943, for example, the 376th lost 10 of the 17 ships it sent to bomb Vicenza, 600 miles north of their base. Unable to rendezvous with their P-38 escorts or the other bombs groups, they attacked alone and got the full force of many German fighters.

Both men expected that with 12 missions on their records, they'd be almost half-way through their required tour when they got to England. Instead, their 12 missions for the 15th AF were only counted as 7 completed missions for the 8th AF. Even so, they still had fewer missions left to fly than if they'd stayed in Italy, so there was only mild grumbling from the crew about the inequity.

Brunn and Fund agree that the missions in England were more difficult, chiefly because far greater time was spent over heavily fortified German territory and it took much less time to get there.

As a pilot, Brunn had to learn some new techniques when he got to the 392nd, chiefly how to form up in England's crowded skies. Different landing procedures were also used at Wendling, so he had to be trained on those as well.

The 376th had only arrived in Italy in November 1943 after months in Palestine, Egypt, and Tunisia. As a result, living conditions were quite primitive. Officers and enlisted men lived in tents and slept on cots. Floors were made from the wooden boxes their bombs came in.

Brunn says after a few days hard work, his officers made their tent quite comfortable. Their tent was so nice, in fact, that the base CO moved into

it after their crew was transferred. (Brunn also recalls that the tent next to theirs had a real bar in it; did this influence the CO's decision?)

Fund's tent was heated by a 50-gallon drum into which 100-octane gas was dripped. If the drip rate wasn't strictly monitored, the tent could catch fire, a fairly common occurrence at the 376th. Fund also recalls that the latrine was two large tents open on both ends; the facilities were just several 50 gallon drums that had been cut in half.

Although Brunn remembers that the food was good, Fund said he was usually served Spam—baked, fried, or stewed, but it was still Spam.

Just as the living conditions were more primitive, military discipline was also more relaxed. Fund said he hardly ever saluted the officers in Italy, except perhaps when going through the pay line. He is quick to point out that he didn't respect the officers any less, it just wasn't "part of the game" there. The men also weren't required to be clean-shaven. Fund got quite a shock during his first few days at the 392nd, where military regulations were enforced.

Recreational opportunities in San Pancrazio were almost non-existent except for the local opera. In Fund's two months at San Pancrazio, he never left the base.

Upon their arrival in England, Brunn wrote his parents about his good luck: "I am now sitting on a bed (with springs), in a room, in a building... The people are friendly and everything is spick and span. There are no beggars, no bums, and it's all fresh and clean. What a difference."

Both men are glad they were moved to the 8th AF, despite the missions being more difficult. Brunn says it was the target that made a mission hard, not where he started from, so having to fly half as many missions was fine with him. Fund agrees, but adds, "I would still want to go to England because you could talk to people and understand everyone. Plus there was stuff to do when you weren't on a mission."

It should be noted that military orders dated 8 April 1944 sent 1/Lt Robert K. Goodwin and his crew from the 578th Sqdn to the 15th AF. They ended up at the 376th! So the transfers evidently went both ways.

LUC DEWEZ REPORTS FROM BELGIUM ON THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

Messages from Luc Dewez, our staunch Belgian 2nd generation Friend, often appear in the NEWS. Below is what we heard from him regarding the 5th anniversary of the Al-quaida attack on the U. S. A.

"I have to tell you that for 10 days September 11 was remembered on TV in Belgium (and in France too, which could be a surprise to some of you). Yesterday all Belgian French-speaking newspapers had a 9/11 front page (Flemish-speaking didn't!). The French speaking Belgian TV aired its 7:30 PM news live from New York.

"America, you are not forgotten. I (we) think about you always, as I did before, during, and after September 11."

AIR ANNIVERSARY

Flying Tiger pilots went into action against Japanese for first time- Dec. 20, 1941.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

Lt. "Buzz" Wagner became first American ace of WWII-Dec. 18, 1941.

AN APT QUOTE

From Dr. George Barger, bombardier, Episcopal priest, college professor, our Chaplain, when asked how he was feeling:

"As well as one could expect given the materials I have to work with". About sums it up for all of us.

RESEARCHER ANNETTE TISON REPORTS ON THE FIRE ON THE FLIGHT LINE THAT HAPPENED THE NIGHT OF DEC 4, 1944

By Annette Tison, Assistant Editor

Group records say that 579th Sqdn a/c #42-7556, Exterminator II, crash-landed at Wendling on 4 December 1943. To find out what happened, I got a copy of the Report of Aircraft Accident and discovered quite a different story.

The Report included accounts by 579th Sqdn Engineering Officer 1/Lt Walter Giesecke, Group Flying Control Officer Capt Bernard Glettler, 579th Sqdn Ordnance Officer 1/Lt Brooks Pendleton, and ground crew personnel Cpl Allen Jacobs, Cpl Alvin Ottenstein, M/Sgt Theodore Ritland, and M/Sgt Glenn Engelhardt. The sequence of events that follows is derived from their statements.

At about 2300 hours on 4 Dec, the 579th Sqdn was put on alert. At 0030 on 5 Dec, twelve 500-pound M43 demolition bombs were delivered to #556 in dispersal No. 41. They were placed in two areas under each wing. Sgt James D. Wyllie, Cpl Ottenstein, and another armorer then began installing the plane's ball turret guns.

After that, Cpl Ottenstein went to a/c 42-7529 in dispersal 41-A and got half a can of gas from M/Sgt Golub. He re-fueled the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU, or putt-putt generator) for #556. Sgt Wyllie started the putt-putt and the men resumed getting #556 ready for its mission to Cognac.

At about 0130, the fuel tanks on the right side of #556 suddenly blew up. Bullets in the plane exploded; one tracer hit a fuel servicing unit which caught fire.

Cpl Jacobs, fireguard for #529, ran towards #556. When he was about 50 feet away, he "met a man who was running from it and was on fire. I grabbed him and smothered the flames with my jacket. I then took him to a nearby hole full of water and completely extinguished his clothing." The man, Cpl Robert Shockley, had been in the left rear bomb bay when the fuel tanks exploded. Three other men were also seen running from the plane, no doubt Sgt Wyllie and the armorers.

Flying Control personnel notified the Hospital and Group Operations and dispatched crash trucks. Men in the ordnance shop were told to go to the bomb shelter. 1/Lt Giesecke had a nearby oil truck and both Cleotrac (tractors) driven away.

A second explosion occurred at 0145. It ignited a gas trailer and an oil truck parked about 35 yards away in dispersal No. 43. Debris was scattered in all directions, damaging the a/c parked in dispersals 40 (#42-7510) and 41-A (#42-7529). Buildings and ground crew tents in the area were also damaged. A member of the crash crew tried unsuccessfully to move a/c 529; a pilot finally arrived who drove it to dispersal No. 43-A. Another explosion followed at 0148.

Over the next half hour, the gas truck fire was put out and an effort was made to keep the other bombs from exploding. 1/Lt Pendleton had the Control Tower announce that all personnel should remain at least 2,000 yards from the fire. He then returned to the fire site and had the guards on duty move everyone farther back. A few minutes later, at 0220, the fourth and final explosion occurred. Again, debris and fire were flung in all directions.

It was decided that the bombs should be moved from the adjacent a/c, #510; this was done by 1/Lt Wilbur Metz (Gp Ordnance Officer) and T/Sgt James Switzer and Sgt Jack Truesdell of the 579th. As they worked, the fire near that dispersal was put out.

At 0730, crews aboard 21 a/c started engines; they began to taxi ten minutes

later. As the first plane took off at 0756, ground support personnel were just minutes away from extinguishing all the fires.

When 1/Lt Giesecke inspected the two planes that had been nearest to #556, they both seemed "pretty badly damaged, having their fuselage warped and tail assemblies twisted." #510 didn't fly again until 20 Dec while #529's next mission was on 22 Dec.

Despite the fires and bomb detonations, only two men were injured. Sgt Wyllie sustained lacerations in his scalp and cheek and lost his left middle finger. Cpl Shockley suffered severe burns on his scalp and other parts of his body.

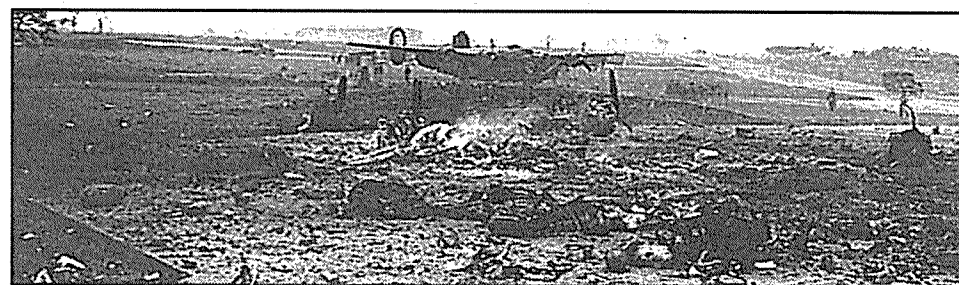
It was believed that the initial explosions were fuel tanks (first the right side, then the left side) while the other two explosions were from the eleven bombs under #556 that had detonated.

In his testimony, Cpl Ottenstein stated, "I put the fuel in the putt-putt, which was not running, and did not spill any." M/Sgt Engelhardt and M/Sgt Ritland also testified that they had been in and out of a/c 556 several times before the explosion; neither had detected any gas leak or smelled gas fumes.

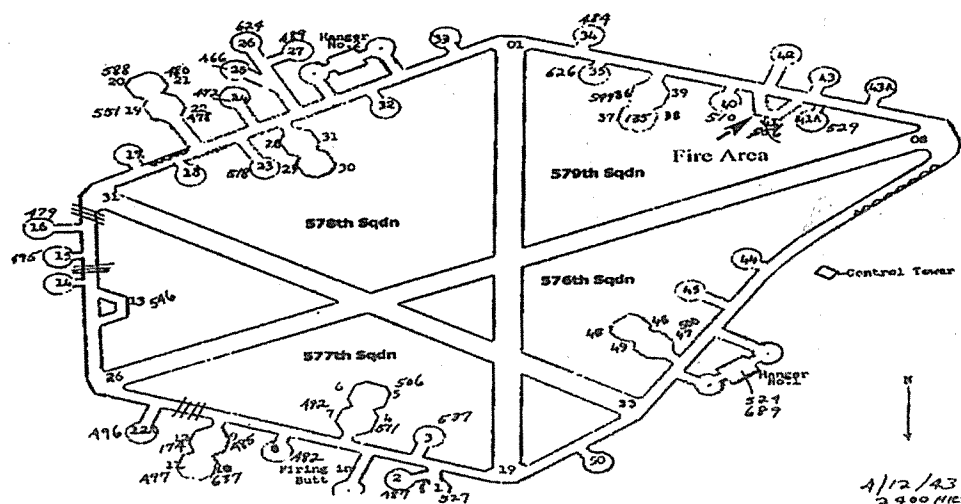
The investigating board believed that when the putt-putt was refueled, some gas was probably spilled and then sparks from the APU ignited the fumes or fuel, causing the initial fire. It was recommended that all possible precautions be taken not to spill fuel when servicing the APU, and if fuel were spilled, "that power unit will not be operated until thoroughly dried and with fire extinguisher in hand."

No matter the cause of the incident, the 579th was able to put three of its remaining four ships in the air that morning: #135, #599, and #626. Ted A. Bailey, a 579th ground crew chief, said he was so busy getting his plane ready that he wasn't even aware of what was going on until later.

Commitment and concentration of that sort on the ground surely contributed to the 392nd's success in the air.



This photo shows the utter devastation caused by the fire. #42-7510, El Lobo, is in the background. (Photo from M/Sgt Barfield)



This diagram shows the positions of the 392nd's planes on their dispersals as of midnight on 4 Dec 1943. (NARA files)



ERNIE PARKE HELPED ERECT THE MEMORIAL

Ernie Parke was an Air Ministry employee at Wendling during most of the war, forging many friendships with the Yanks.

In a recent letter to the NEWS, he recalled helping place the Memorial stone, sometime in July or August 1945. The stone arrived at the railway station from Aberdeen and with his trusty hoist (left behind by departing Motor Pool personnel) he helped unload it. Later, he went back to the site and helped erect it.

He sent this photo, taken the day the Memorial was dedicated. The officiating RAF and USAAF officers are not identified.

392 DEPLOYMENT TO ENGLAND IN 1943 WAS RECORD

The NEWS recently came into possession of a periodical, Antique Week. Its cover story was about the value of memorabilia from the Queen Mary, the ship that carried the 392nd ground echelon and its attached units to England.

The story gave a history of the ship, particularly the part it played in carrying U. S. troops to England in WWII. It stated that in July 1943 it carried a record 16,683 troops.

According to Bob Vickers' history, The Liberators From Wendling, we sailed from New York on July 24.

Again according to the story, the Queen Mary made one voyage per month, so we think it probable that we were on that record-breaking voyage.

Part of the story from Antique Week is reproduced below. The first paragraph tells of the transformation of the Queen Mary from civilian to military use. The second paragraph tells of her many war-time voyages, including the one of which we were a part.

Painted into anonymity, the ship was then sailed to Sydney, Australia, where the rest of its conversion into a troopship was finalized: any remaining furniture and all 2,000 stateroom doors were removed and put into storage. Wooden bunks and hammocks were installed for troops, shops were converted into military offices and the ballroom was transformed into a 50-bed hospital.

The transformation was worth the investment. The first voyage in 1940 carried 5,000 troops, and between 1940 and 1946 the Queen Mary made 72 voyages, safely transporting 765,429 military personnel. In

fact, in July 1943, it held 16,683 troops, the largest number of humans ever transported on one vessel, a world record that stands today.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AT THE WENDLING MEMORIAL

By Jim Goar

The villagers at Beeston turn out in large numbers at our Wendling Memorial to celebrate Remembrance Sunday, which corresponds to our Veterans Day.

This year, Mervyn Jones, father of Ben Jones, laid the wreath on behalf of the 392nd BGMA.

Those Crusaders who have not met Mervyn Jones have missed knowing a very interesting character. A Welsh lineage gives him a distinctiveness of personality, one manifestation of which is the door to his bathroom in his home. It is a swinging bookshelf, which also exemplifies one his passions, books. I was with him on one of his visits to the U. S., and the bookstore was one of his early targets.



Ben Jones photo

Mervyn Jones

He was the driving force behind the production of our signature print, "392nd B-24's En Route To Berlin, 18 March, 1945." He is a Royal Navy veteran.

His home has always been open to visiting Crusaders. He and now deceased wife Barbara once took me in and gave me bed and breakfast until I recovered from a twisted knee. And another time, he drove me all the way to London to catch a plane home.

TIME TO RE-UP FOR 2007

The Board of Directors, faced with declining membership, increased the dues in 2003 by a modest \$3, to \$15. They remain the same for 2007. Also, if you feel that you are in a position to help the Treasury with an extra donation, there is a provision for it below. It is possible that Life Members might feel that the Lord has been good to them and that they have lived beyond their actuarial years and an extra payment might be in order. Your dues status can be found right after your name on the mailing list. If the number is 07 or higher, you're current. LM means Life Member, and Frnd means that you are our guest.

The Board of Directors has ruled that no Crusader will be denied membership because of financial difficulty, so if you are in straitened circumstances check the Hardship Waiver box. Fill out the form and send it now!

Name _____ Ground ☐ Air ☐ Sqdn _____ Assoc ☐

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dues for 2007, \$15

Hardship Waiver ☐

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Age 61-65 \$120 ☐

Age 66-70 \$96 ☐

Age 71 and over \$78 ☐

DONATION

\$ _____

Send with check to Bill McCutcheon, 20620 Milton Court, Brookfield, WI 53045

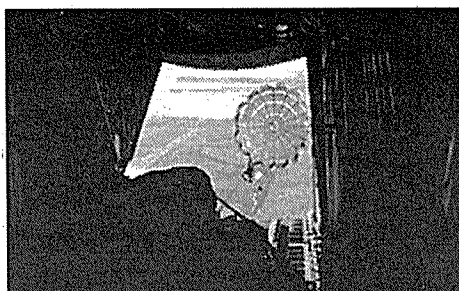
BEN JONES, FROM LITCHAM KID TO USAF NON-COM, PROUD FATHER

By Jim Goar

Nearly all Crusaders are familiar with Ben's story: how as a teenager he met us at Wendling on one of our first trips back, how over the years he visited me, J. D. Long, Jim Marsteller and others; how his father Mervyn and mother Barbara hosted Crusaders in their home at Litcham; how he immigrated to the U. S. and met and married lovely school teacher Barbara who has presented him with two children; how he was one of the first second generation members to be elected a Director of the 392BGMA; how he has attained the rank of T/Sgt in the U. S. Air Force.

Ben's present duty is loadmaster on a C-130, the Air Force's monster cargo plane. Recently he sent us photos taken during a training exercise, together with details of his and the a/c's mission.

These photos were taken on a training mission in the Eastern U. S. from a C-130 a/c in a two ship formation.



Extraction chute deployed



Pallet clears the a/c

Ben explained that they drop pallets that can be sized to various



Load on its way down

loads. Drops up to 42,000 pounds such as a tank or a Humvee can be made. Heavy pallets are extracted from the a/c using extraction chutes, while lighter loads are gravity drops. The a/c has a higher angle of attack during these drops.

He says that tactical airdrops going on these days are mostly in the remote areas of Afghanistan to re-

supply the ground troops with everything they need from toilet paper to munitions and food.

Ben's unit is the 914th Airlift Wing, 22nd AF. The crew comple-



Second a/c of formation, dropping load

ment is 5 or 6, depending on the mission: Pilot, co-pilot, navigator, engineer, and a loadmaster or two. The loadmaster is responsible for the loading and unloading of the a/c, as well as ensuring that it is within limits for flying and calculating the center of gravity of the load.



Bronte, one; and Brayden, three.

PX ITEMS

Anthology, "20 th Century Crusaders" (Hard cover book)	\$36.50 postpaid	\$
Anthology, "20 th Century Crusaders" (CD)	\$15.00 postpaid	\$
Book, "Remembrance of the Missing", by Col. Bob Vickers	\$37.00 postpaid	\$
Book, "The Liberators From Wendling", by Col. Bob Vickers	\$35.00 postpaid	\$
Book, "Country Boy Combat Bomber Pilot", by Col. Bob Tays	\$13.50 postpaid	\$
Book, "My Combat Diary", by Walt Cranson	\$13.50 postpaid	\$
Cap, black, 392 nd Bomb Group w/gold braid, summer	\$10.50 postpaid	\$
Cap, black, 392 nd Bomb Group w/gold braid, winter	\$10.50 postpaid	\$
Directory	\$10.00 postpaid (ALL DIRECTORIES ARE NOW WITH CURRENT DATA)	\$
Jacket, white nylon, w/ 392 Bomb Group and Crusader patches	\$29.00 postpaid	
(Circle size wanted) M L XL XXL		\$
Patch, 392 nd Bomb Group logo	\$1.50 postpaid	\$
Print, "The Flying Crusader", reduced to	\$16.50 postpaid	\$
Video, 392 nd 's memorabilia photos	\$15.00 postpaid	\$
DVD, 392 nd 's memorabilia photos	\$25.00 postpaid	\$
Video, from Albuquerque Reunion Symposium, "The Early Days"	\$17.50 postpaid	\$
Video, Symposium above, "The Ground Support Teams Prepare For A Mission"	\$17.50 postpaid	\$
Video, Symposium above, "The Tough Missions", Pt 1: Bremen, Keil, Gotha, Friedrichshafen both parts	\$27.50pp	\$
Video, Symposium above, "Tough Missions", Pt 2: Politz, Berlin, Bernberg, Bingen, Wesel, both parts	\$27.50 pp	\$
Video, Symposium above, general scenes from the reunion, 2 parts	\$27.50 postpaid	\$

Total (Send with check to Charles Dye, 300 Valencia Dr., SE, Apt 101 Albuquerque NM 87108) \$

Book, "After The Liberators, A Father's Last Mission, A Son's Lifelong Journey", by Bill McGuire, son of 579th navigator Bill McGuire Sr., KIA Friedrichshafen mission.

Order direct from publisher, Parkway Publishers: PO Box 3678, Boone, NC 28607, \$20.95 postpaid (Mention 392BGMA newsletter in your letter and you can take 10% off the total bill)

Book, "Joey, Joe, and Joseph" by William A. Damerst, 576th navigator.

Order direct from publisher, Publish America: PO Box 151, Frederick, MD 21705-0151. \$21.95 postpaid

Book, "Stalag 17B, Prisoner of War", by L/C (USAF, Ret) Richard H. Hoffman, ball turret gunner, 579th. Order from publisher, Xlibris Corp, phone 888 795 4274, or on line at www.xlibris.com/html/bookstores. Also at Amazon.com. No cost figures furnished.

Book, "Don't Call Me A Hero", by Jim McGregor, pilot, 579th.

Order from Publisher, Willeo Publishing, 702 Foxborough Sq. W, Brentwood, TN 37027. \$19.95 postpaid.

ODE TO JACK BODE

(Editor's note: Jim Marsteller, the author of this article, is a second-generation member and a Director of the 392BGMA, whose uncle, S/Sgt Everette E. Morris, was killed on the 18 March 1944 mission to Friedrichshafen. He was the engineer on 2/Lt Dallas Books' crew.)

It is an understatement to say that Jack Bode was one of the more colorful Crusaders in the 392nd BG Memorial Association. And as I go through my day to day life, once in a while I see something that reminds me of Jack.

Several weeks ago, I was reading the newspaper and saw an article hidden at the bottom of the page. It was about a bird on the Endangered Species list that might even be extinct, the ivory-billed woodpecker. Included in the article were drawings of what the woodpecker looked like.

I read the article, looked at the pictures of the bird, and thought to myself, Self, that is the same woodpecker that Jack Bode was carrying around in a paper bag at the 8th Air Force reunion in Colorado in 2003. He was asking everyone he met if they had seen that woodpecker anywhere. I am sure that Jack told me he had seen this bird in the Colorado area. At the time, I didn't pay much attention to what he was saying. Now, after reading the article, I wish I had. I think he knew something that we didn't, and maybe he was trying to tell us something in the form of his hand-carved woodpecker.

In my library of WWII books, I have two copies of Bob Vickers' book, *The Liberators from Wendling*. One of them is a well-used workbook with scribbling all over the pages and a torn cover. Ben Jones and I had the other one hard-bound with blue covers and gold printing and the Crusader emblem on it just like the original. It is a beautiful book that is even more special to me because mine is signed by all the living survivors of the Friedrichshafen mission as well as by family members of Crusaders who were killed on that mission.

Jack visited me several years ago and we spent time going over our research material on the March 18 mission. Jack is very special to me as he is probably the last man who remembers seeing the Books crew's plane being hit and going down, killing all but one man on the crew.

I would like to share what Jack Bode wrote that makes this ivory-billed woodpecker have a lot in common with the remaining Crusaders. "Right waist gunner to Jim Marsteller, right waist gunner to Jim Marsteller. S/Sgt Jack Bode on Lt. Meighen's crew 576th BS 392nd Bomb Group. Survivor of the Friedrichshafen disaster on March 18, 1944, our worst mission of the entire war. Jim, your dedication & research are truly an inspiration about our group, now fading into ancient history. The B-24s are virtually all gone and we old Flyers are becoming extinct too. Your friend, Jack Bode".

Did Jack see something in that extinct woodpecker that reminded him of himself? It's too late to ask him now, as Jack passed away and is gone, just like the ivory-billed woodpecker he so carefully handled inside that paper sack.

I miss Jack. I miss that A2 jacket that he always wore with the design on the back that he painted himself: a B-24 with the cartoon image of a "Right Waisted Gunner." As Bob Hope said, "Thanks for the memories", Jack.

PROFILE

Sgt Meredith M. Church was in the Communications section of the 578th. He joined the 392nd at Alamogordo a few days before we left for the ETO.

After the war he rejoined the Delco-Remy Division of General Motors. In 1985, he retired after 45

years service from General Motors as Personnel Director of Guide Lamp Division.

He is married to Betty, and they live at 10862 Waterscape Way, Noblesville, IN 46062.

They have six children, fourteen grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

PROFILE

1/Lt (later Maj) Leslie R. Hadley was co-pilot on the Phil Anundson crew in the 577th. They arrived at Wendling May 16, 1944 and finished their missions on Aug. 24. A pretty busy time in the annals of the 392nd.

He entered the Army at Boston, MA, on Jan 26, 1943; finished flying school and was commissioned 2/Lt Jan 7, 1944, two weeks before his nineteenth birthday.

He stayed in the Air Force, seeing

foreign duty in Germany and Japan. He did data processing when he was not on flying duty. He served in the Air Transport Command, accumulating over 4000 hours and Senior and Command Pilot ratings. He retired after 20 years, after which he did data processing in a civilian company in Pennsylvania.

He and spouse Muriel live at 42 Burning Bush Lane, Levittown, PA 19054-2806. They have four children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

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NEWS



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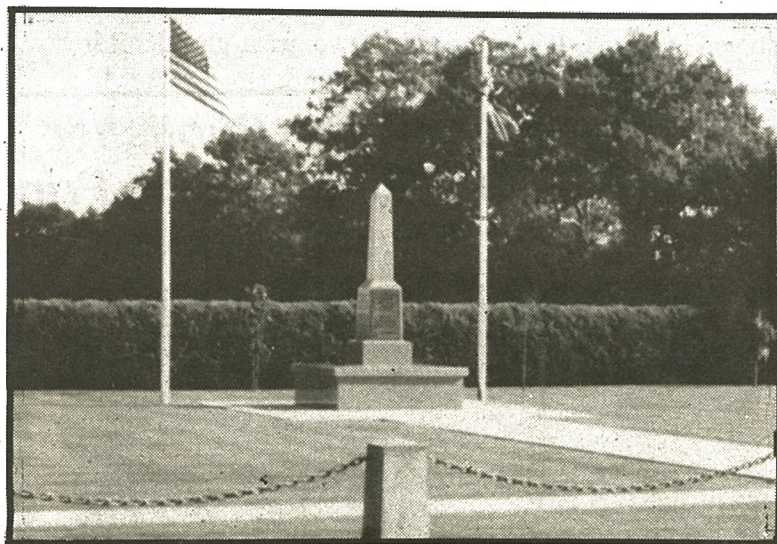
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THE 392nd MEMORIAL AT WENDLING

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.

-Prayer composed by 576th pilot the Very Reverend Robert C. Martin, retired Dean of the Cathedral at Erie, Pa.

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 Jim Goar, 1555 N. Main St., #106, Frankfort, IN 46041.

Folded Wings

Joseph C. Bonanno, 579, July 3, 2006
Robert Gries, 577, Dec. 20, 2005
Mary Brent, June 28, 2005
Wife of Landon Brent, 578
Ben W. Hunsaker, 577, Mar. 23, 2006
Charles H. Breithaupt, Assoc, Oct. 4, 06
Leroy MacTavish, Oct. 16, 2006
Roy A. Smith, Jr., 579, May 31, 1989
Glenn L. Davis, 578, Oct. 30, 2006
James Eugene Bennett, 578, March '02
William B. Dowling, 578, Oct. 31, 2006
Ben L. Holliday, 576, Aug. 22, 1976
Kenneth B. Rambo, 576, Mar. 10, 1990
Lancil A. Johnson, 576, Dec. 29, 1993
James McCutcheon, 576, Sept. 19, '98
Elliott Finkel, 577, Sept. 9, 2006
Richard F. Williams, 576, late 2006

Genevieve Collin, Nov. 29, 2006
Widow of Everett Collin, Hq.
Joseph G. Murphy, 578, Nov. 13, 2006

But we..shall be remembered;

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;

For he to-day that sheds his blood with me

Shall be my brother...

William Shakespeare
Henry V



392nd Bomb Group Memorial Ass'n NEWS
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Chaplain's Corner

By George Barger, Ph. D.
(aka Bombardier, 576/7)

Time is a cheat! It takes away so much - our friends, our memories, our past. Mutability is the theme of life: nothing lasts. So much of what we hold dear is transient and non-recoverable. A religious faith can guide us to "the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are fleeting, but the things that are unseen are eternal". What are "those unseen?" O Lord, open my eyes that I may see.

AIR ANNIVERSARY

First sustained controlled flight in a powered aircraft- Dec. 17, 1903.