



The Aubrey Award Essay Contest

In May 2021, Beverly Burke approached 392nd BGMA officers about wanting to fund a project that would honor her late husband Aubrey's military service in the 465th Sub Depot, encourage young people to learn more about the 392nd BG and *the greatest generation*, and highlight the importance of education.

A committee of 392nd BGMA members was formed to bring Beverly's idea to fruition.

We are now pleased to announce the first annual Aubrey Award Essay Contest!

The Aubrey Awards

In order to accommodate the differences between the education systems in the USA, UK and Europe, and the school years when their students typically study WWII history, the entrants will be divided into two divisions. One is for US students ages 16-18 and the other is for UK/European students ages 13-15. The divisions will be judged separately. See the Rules section for details.

Each contestant will be required to prepare two original essays. The first will be a paragraph about Aubrey Burke using the biographical information on pages 7 through 10. The second, longer, essay will be written about one of 12 possible topics on pages 6-7.

The Essay Committee of the 392nd BGMA, many of them educators who are both knowledgeable about our topics and aware of the writing capabilities of these age groups, will use a blind judging technique to judge the essays.

Aubrey Awards for first and second place will be given for each division. These will be cash awards of \$600 for First Place and \$400 for Second Place for US winners and the cash equivalent in local currency for the UK/European winners. Additionally, non-cash Honorable Mention Awards may be given.

Essays may be submitted any time before, but no later than, midnight (EST) on December 15, 2021.

Specific rules are given on pages 1 and 6-10. Please

study them carefully and then encourage and sponsor (i.e., invite) your eligible family members and friends to enter the contest! If you have questions, please contact 392nd BGMA President Ralph Winter at rewcts@gmail.com.

Information about the 392nd Bomb Group is readily available at www.b24.net. Please feel free to explore all

of the information you can find there and make the student(s) you sponsor aware of this valuable resource.

ELIGIBILITY, RULES & GENERAL INFORMATION

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE?

The US division will consist of students ages 16-18 who are sponsored by a Member or Friend of the 392nd BGMA **and** are US citizens.

The UK/European division will consist of students ages 13-15 who are sponsored by a Member or Friend of the 392nd BGMA **and** reside in *England, the Netherlands, France, Germany or Belgium* (where we have members) **OR** students who are enrolled in one of the participating schools in East Anglia.

Since 392nd BG personnel spent so many months in East Anglia, we believe it is important to encourage school children in that area to participate; these students do not require a 392nd BGMA sponsor.

Members and Friends of the 392nd BGMA may sponsor any age appropriate relative, friend or neighbor. However, each Member or Friend may sponsor no more than five contestants. Each contestant will be required to name his/her sponsor.

RULES

Form: Each entry must be a Word document that can be transmitted by email. It must be written in English, in black ink, using a non-script font between 12-14 points.

Length: For their chosen topic, students ages 13-15 will be required to write a 600-750 word essay and ages 16-18

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PFC Aubrey Burke in 1943



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FROM THE EDITOR

The Aubrey Award. I hope all 392nd BGMA Members and Friends closely read the details in this issue about The Aubrey Award essay contest. Each Member and Friend can invite up to five eligible students to participate. We hope to receive many, many essays. Good luck to all participants!

Happy 100th Birthday! Member William "Bill" Trask reached this amazing milestone in May 2021. A 577th navigator on 2/Lt Oscar Weed's crew, Bill flew 15 missions between 21 Feb and 20 Apr 1945. He vividly remembers a mission where his plane was hit, jamming the nose wheel so it couldn't be lowered and starting a fire. 2/Lt Weed landed the plane in Liege, Belgium, using just the wheels under the wings. "Pretty exciting," Trask recalls.



Short Snorters. After reading about short snorters in the last issue, 392nd BGMA Member Floyd Bolstridge wrote that his brother, copilot Charles "Bud" Bolstridge, [who flew 30 missions from 6 Aug 1944-21 Feb 1945] was often aboard a B-24 named *Short Snorter*, which had nose art of "a pig with a short snout." He asked for details.

The 392nd BG had not one, but two planes named *Short Snorter*. Their nose art was based on the "Red Flying Horse" insignia (shown at left) used by Mobil Oil and its predecessors since 1911.

#42-99990 flew missions for the 579th Sqdn from 3 Jan-2 Aug 1944. Badly damaged by flak during its final mission—causing the death of engineer S/Sgt Arthur L. Abshier and the loss of three engines—pilot 2/Lt Wade P. Sewell was able to nurse it back



to England, where it crashed at Manston, Kent.

Its nose art is on the right.

Another rendering of #990's nose art, shown at <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=4361520343907938&set=p.4361520343907938&type=3>, comes from 392nd BGMA

Member Joel Fleck. His father, bombardier 1/Lt Ernest R. Fleck, flew in this a/c for 12 missions. It is memorialized in his A-2 jacket, which appears to have been painted by the same man who painted the plane.

Bud's B-24 was #44-10495, *Short Snorter II* (shown at right) which he flew on 14 missions. This nose art was obviously painted by a different artist!

It served the 579th Sqdn from 3 Aug-20 Dec 1944, when it was transferred to the 578th Sqdn. It survived the war.

Floyd also wrote that according to his brother, "his flights were hours of boredom



and minutes of sheer terror!"

LT Joseph P. Kennedy Jr, USN. After reading the article in the June 2021 *News* about antisubmarine warfare in WWII, Suzie Harrison (an Interpretive Guide at Cambridge American Cemetery) wrote, "The story we tell here is one of the most complicated in the American Battle Monuments Commission. Because of US **See EDITOR on page 3**

President's Corner



It's rewarding to see exciting things happening with the 392nd BGMA in spite of the ongoing health crisis. A dedicated group of nine of our members, plus an educator from Norwich, has been working diligently to put together The Aubrey Award Essay Contest which I mentioned in the June edition of the *News* and is a highlighted feature of this issue.

This contest and the associated awards have been designed to honor the memory of Aubrey Burke and bring attention to the 392nd BGMA to a younger generation. Aubrey's widow, Beverly, is funding the program and we are most grateful to her for her generosity. I hope that our members will support this very worthwhile endeavor by encouraging their young family members and other young people with whom they come in contact to enter the contest.

I'm looking forward to our reunion and membership meeting in October in Savannah—the site of my first meeting with our members at our 2013 reunion. We're expecting between 20 and 25 members to attend.

On Saturday, October 30, from 2:45—5:00pm EST, I plan to have a computer set up in our hospitality suite with an ongoing Zoom meeting where people who are unable to be there in-person can “drop in” and say hello. This will serve as our quarterly Meet & Greet, which, by the way, have been going quite nicely with interesting and informative discussions.

Please mark your calendar and plan to participate. Be on the lookout for your email invitation with the link closer to time.

Another exciting event which is in the early planning stages is our 2022 Membership Meeting & Reunion to be held in Norwich, Norfolk, England. It is our hope that by late summer or early fall 2022, conditions will have improved to the point that we will be able to have an unrestricted, enjoyable visit to Wendling and other meaningful sights in East Anglia. More to come on that as the plans progress.

For the time being, please be safe, stay healthy and know that I appreciate your dedication and support of our beloved organization.

Ralph

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presence in the UK from 1941 to 1946, the various roles that military and civilian personnel occupied and the social history back-story, we tend to be ‘jack of all trades, master of none.’

“I found the article on ASW very interesting, as we tell the story of the longest running battle of WWII, the Battle of the Atlantic, in various guises.

“One of the main reasons is that the name of he who would be President, Joseph Kennedy, is inscribed on the Cambridge Wall of the Missing. As a USN Aviator, he was sub-hunting in the Caribbean when his media-savvy father



told him to get himself over to Europe, as that was where the story was!!!!

“We understand that he was then attached to one of the three squadrons joining British Coastal Command to sub-hunt in the south-western approaches and the Bay of Biscay. He flew missions all through the cold winter of 1943/44, becoming one of the most experienced Liberator pilots. That might be why he volunteered for, and was

accepted, as part of Operation Anvil, dying on 12 Aug 1944 on the way to Mimoyecques to bomb Hitler's V3 supergun. Unfortunately the Torpex packed into his aircraft detonated prematurely. Nothing of Joe or his co-pilot, LT Wilford Willy, was found. The rest, as they say, is history.

“It is interesting that you cannot find the number of missions that were required. We understand that he completed one tour in the UK, and then volunteered his crew for a second, which was 10 more missions. Obviously, the USAAF were given hope, by having a limit of 25, then 30 and 35 missions, before they could be sent home.

“I have corresponded with ABMC historians who have corresponded with their Navy historian mates, but no one seems to know how many missions that first tour included.”

Indianapolis 500. Fans of the Indianapolis 500—the “greatest spectacle in racing”—will be interested to learn that a former 392nd BG airman raced there several times.

S/Sgt James E. Daywalt, from Wabash, Indiana, was a gunner on the 579th's 2/Lt John T. Cornell crew. He flew combat missions between 3 May and 2 Oct 1944.

After the war, he began racing cars, first on dirt tracks in the midwest and then graduating to the “big time.” He started the Indy 500 eight times, completed all 200 laps three times, was eliminated by wrecks three times, and twice by mechanical failure.



This photo shows Jimmy at the 1953 Indy 500. He qualified to start in the 31st position, finished 6th, and was named Rookie of the Year. In 1954, he led the field for eight laps.

He died of cancer in 1966 at just 41 years of age.

Veterans. We Americans will celebrate Veterans Day on November 11. I recently read that Gulf War-era veterans
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News from Across the Pond

Beeston

Memorial Trustee Jill Scott emailed, “Many of you will remember the Reverend Jonathan Boston. For many years after ‘taking’ the Service at Beeston Church on the annual November Remembrance Day Service, he then came to your memorial to officiate at the Service there. Always with the dignity and solemnity that the occasion required. On a lighter note, his voice was such that only on the windiest of days could his voice not be heard, and then only if the wind was coming from the wrong direction! Not shouting, but a resonant voice. Perhaps honed from many years of talking/preaching to a congregation from a pulpit and ensuring that those at the back could hear him!

“Also on a lighter note, some of you may remember his army Land Rover that he would drive on ‘appropriate’ occasions.

“It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that Jonathan died on Sunday, 13th June. He had only recently been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer (he had never smoked). Unfortunately, other complications very suddenly developed and he died in hospital.

“He was a widower. He leaves behind a sister and two sons. Grandchildren also.”

We in the 392nd BG Memorial Association extend our condolences to the Rev. Boston’s family.

North Tuddenham

This small village, population about 339 and ten miles east of the former Station 118, has not one, but three memorials to a 392nd BG crew.

On 21 Apr 1944, the scheduled mission was to an aircraft repair factor at Zwickau, Germany. Due to terrible weather conditions during form-up, including extensive clouds and icing conditions, the entire 8th AF was eventually recalled.

The turn-back notice came too late for 2/Lt Louis F. Bass and his 577th Sqdn crew, aboard #42-99979, *Kentucky Baby*. Their left wing broke off at the outer panel, perhaps due to icing, and they crashed in a field near North Tuddenham. The only survivors were engineer S/Sgt Gerald A. Knettel and waist gunner Sgt John J. Brzostowski.

Pat Baldwin lives near the crash site and resolved in 2010 that there should be a memorial because “the sacrifice made by these men should always be remembered, not only by me when I look from my home across the field to the crash site, but by future generations.”

The whole village joined in that effort and the memorial was dedicated on 18 May 2010. At the site is a plaque with the heading “In honour of the crew of a B-24 bomber who were killed on 21st April 1944 at North Tuddenham” that named the eight casualties.

The local blacksmith made a replica pilot’s wheel, the idea being that children could play with the wheel until they were old enough to understand what the memorial represents.

On 8 Nov 2014, during the village’s Remembrance Day commemoration, an identical plaque was installed in the porch of nearby St. Mary’s Church.

The third memorial, just recently unveiled, came about

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392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

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

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

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

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

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

Hardship Waiver []

DONATION \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

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in an interesting way. Pat emailed, "Last year, during lockdown, we organised a competition to design a village flag, to keep the village children busy. The idea was simple: show the interesting things about the village."

"Would you believe this, the winning entry was from an 8 year old, Esme Okan, who had included the B-24 in her colorful design! When I gave her the prize it all came tumbling out that she is very interested in the history of the B-24 and Wendling."

"The judges chose her design as she was the only one to include the B-24 and a cross to represent the memorial, plus the church where there is a plaque remembering the crew. It also shows local sites such as the Lodge (our pub) and the River Tud, which flows nearby."

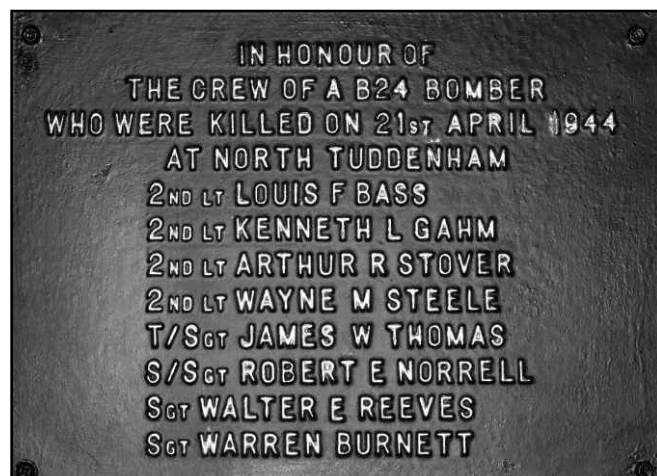
It took Pat about eight weeks to sew the flag, faithfully following Esme's drawing. It is five feet by three feet. Esme unveiled the flag on 15 Aug 2021 after a barbeque at The Lodge. This local pub (which now includes a restaurant) dates back to 1836 and was open during WWII, when 392nd BG airmen and support personnel visited it.

Once a proper pole is erected, the flag will be flown at the village hall. Then, when urgent repairs to the tower at St. Mary's are complete, it will fly there.

We profusely thank Esme for her desire to include the Bass crew in her flag design and her parents and villagers for telling her about this piece of history.

She proves that for history to be remembered, it must first be taught. Once taught, even the very young can remember—and that remembrance can be made with new perspectives in unique formats.

Photos, clockwise from top right: The memorial to the Bass crew after its dedication on 18 May 2010; the plaque installed in St. Mary's Church on 8 Nov 2014; Esme Okan's delight, on 15 Aug 2021, upon unveiling the North Tuddenham flag that she designed; Esme, a happy 8-year old wearing a very pretty dress, is applauded by North Tuddenham villagers who had come to see their new flag.



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will need to write a 750-1000 word essay. The title page, bibliography and your written paragraph about Aubrey Burke are excluded from the word count.

Title Page: This page must include the following information, double-spaced and centered on the page: 1) the title you gave your essay (subtitles permitted); 2) your full name and address; 3) your complete phone number with US area code or international calling code; 4) your email address; 5) the name of your school, your grade level and age; 6) the name of your sponsor or participating school; 7) the topic number on which your essay is based and your Country Code (US=U.S.A., UK=the United Kingdom, EU=Europe).

Here are two title page examples:

The US Air Bases in East Anglia
during World War II
Dillon Writeswell
123 Cherry Blossom Lane
Bloomsbury, Georgia 33300, USA
Phone: 912-453-6798
Email: dillonw@gmail.com
Shamrock High School, Grade 10, Age 16
Sponsor: Jack B. Nimble, 392nd BGMA member
Topic 1 US

OR
Letters from the Past
Dillon Writeswell
123 Back Lane
Beeston, King's Lynn PE32 2NN
011-44-7712-543345
Email: dillonw@gmail.com
Litcham High School, Year 9, Age 14
Sponsor: Litcham High School
Topic 8 UK

The Essays: Each participant will be required to write two **original** essays. If plagiarism is detected, the essay(s) will be disqualified.

1) After reading the biography of Aubrey Burke on pages 7 through 10, you must write a five to ten sentence paragraph telling what you found interesting and inspirational about Aubrey's life and his service in the 465th Sub Depot of the 392nd Bomb Group. This paragraph must be on a separate page.

2) Your main essay must be based on your exploration and research on one of the twelve topics listed on pages 6-7.

The Bibliography: The longer essay will require a bibliography, but not internal source citations. The bibliography should be written using the style that you have been taught. List all the materials you used to gather information for your essay including, but not limited to, conversations or emails with relatives or veterans, books, newsletters, magazines, websites, and documentaries. It should credit the authors or creators of the material and in the case of website material, the full URL. The bibliography will not be included in the required word count.

Submission Deadline: Midnight Eastern Standard Time, December 15, 2021.

Submitting Your Essay: Your submission should be one document in the following format: Page 1, your title page; Page 2, the short one paragraph essay on Aubrey Burke; Pages 3 through however many are required for your main essay; Final page(s), your bibliography.

Save your document in this format: your name, your country code, and the number of your chosen topic (for example, "Dillon Writeswell, US, topic 5").

Attach the document to an email addressed to essays@b24.net with ESSAY, your name and country code in the Subject line (for example: ESSAY, Dillon Writeswell, US).

IMPORTANT!! If you have not received an email acknowledging receipt of your entry within 5 days after submission, please notify Ralph Winter at rewcts@gmail.com for instructions on how to re-submit.

GENERAL INFORMATION

HOW WILL THE ESSAY BE JUDGED?

Points will be awarded on a scale of 0–100 points using this criteria:

- Following directions on form, number of words, and title page (1 to 7 points)
- Historical accuracy (1 to 20 points)
- Adherence to subject (1 to 10 points)
- Organization of material (1 to 10 points)
- Originality (1 to 8 points)
- Interest (1 to 10 points)
- Spelling and punctuation (1 to 10 points)
- Grammar (1 to 10 points)
- Bibliography (1 to 5 points)
- Aubrey Burke paragraph (1 to 10 points)

WHEN WILL THE WINNERS BE ANNOUNCED?

All winners will be notified and the awards given no later than January 20, 2022. Please note: The winners, by accepting this award, agree to have their essays featured in a future edition of the *News*, the quarterly newsletter of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association; their essays may, at the discretion of the 392nd BGMA, be released to local news outlets for publication. Additionally, the essays will be kept in the archives of the 392nd BGMA.

Members of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association, and especially Beverly Burke, want to thank all participants for entering this contest. We hope you learn a lot and enjoy doing it. Good Luck!!

ESSAY TOPICS

Please choose one topic below to explore, research and write about.

The Landscape:

1. How has learning about the 392nd Bomb Group base near Wendling impacted you? Almost 100 air bases were located in the east of England. Explore and explain the advantages and disadvantages of these locations. Consider the climate and geographic differences for the many young soldiers who were experiencing their first time away from home.

2. What have you learned about the 392nd Bomb Group,

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the people who served with it, and their relationships with the nearby communities? Did combat airmen (who arrived, finished their tour and departed) and ground support personnel (who were there for the duration of the war) have different relationships with neighboring communities? How did the presence of the 392nd BG from 1943-1945 change the local area, both temporarily and permanently?

3. Are there any aftereffects that have yet to be addressed? It might or might not be the case that issues about the environment today were not at the top of the list (or even capable of being corrected or lessened at the time). Find out what, if any, problems of this sort existed then and what, if any, environmental issues remain for remediation. Remember, before there were concrete runways, there were forests and fields!

4. What have you learned about the memorial to the 392nd Bomb Group? Are there any other remembrances that should be maintained? Remembering or memorializing takes many, many forms, and as time passes well-known individuals, words and quotations may take on new meanings, so view them from the perspective of the war years. Did one location mean more to you than another, and why?

The People:

5. Do you have relatives or family friends who lived through WWII? What stories have they told you about it? What issues did they have to face, either in combat or on the home front? How did they deal with the scarcity of food and supplies or their fear for themselves and their loved ones? How would you deal with similar issues today? Compare and contrast what they experienced with events in your own life.

6. Have you met any WWII veterans? It's said that those most heavily involved in conflicts are reluctant to recall and relate their experiences. Approach a veterans group and see if you can speak with four individuals. Explore with them the meaning of the term, *The Greatest Generation*. Compare and contrast this with their own military experiences.

7. Imagine yourself living through the hardships of WWII and immediately thereafter. History, it is said, comes home close to home. Who were key players in your neighborhood? Who helped maintain order and discipline in a time of chaos, while also uplifting local morale? How did they accomplish these difficult tasks? Would their methods work today?

8. Did your family save any letters or journals from this time? What do they mean to you? It is likely teachers or staff at your school can point you to old newspapers and magazines that provide the "look and feel" of what it meant to have an estimated 100,000 Americans associated with the 8th Air Force in East Anglia, or for the American families left at home.

B-24 Liberator and Supporting Tools:

9. What have you learned about the B-24 aircraft and its principal advantages and limitations? The two chief American airplanes for delivering large bomb payloads from East Anglia were the B-17 and B-24. Compare and contrast these specifically designed bombers. What

are their strengths and weaknesses? What did their "champions" say in their defense?

10. What do you know about the maintenance, training and support facilities and personnel necessary to carry out the mission of the air crews? Find out what it was like to fly a B-17 and B-24; be specific about issues involving take-off and landing; navigation at low and high altitudes, "quirks" in handling and special "tricks" for safety and maximum performance.

11. What technology developments were significant to air operations? Examples include the innovative Norden Bombsight, the improvement of the cavity magnetron by British scientists and its significance for radar, and the development of the air navigation instrument LORAN (Long Range Navigation) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

12. Discuss the types of munitions in use at the time; compare and contrast their advantages and disadvantages. What became of unused supplies and munitions? What about bombs that were not dropped on a target or were dropped on a target but did not explode on impact? Are there items of this type still being found today? Who is responsible for dealing with and disposing of these items?

Who Was Aubrey Burke?

Use this information as you reflect on the life of Aubrey Burke, one of *the Greatest Generation*.

This biographical information comes from 392nd BGMA archives and private communications/emails between 2011 and 2020; Aubrey's Facebook page; an interview with Aubrey on July 26, 2015 by Michael Brewer of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club; and an on-line article at <https://www.vvdailypress.com/story/news/2021/02/06/as-only-a-burke-could-do-it-the-life-of-world-war-ii-veteran-aubrey-burke/4398238001/>.

Aubrey was born in El Dorado, Arkansas, in 1923, the fourth of five children (two of whom died in infancy). That same year, oil was discovered nearby. By 1933—a few years into the Great Depression—his world changed.

His father had become a major oil rig building contractor but lost it all in the Depression. Aubrey remembered pulling boards off the back fence to burn for cooking and heating. Things got so bad that they were scheduled to be evicted from their home on Monday, March 16, 1933. However, Pres. Franklin Roosevelt closed the banks effective at 1 a.m. that morning, and their eviction was permanently postponed. ("Very opportune for us," Aubrey said.)

His father abandoned the family when Aubrey was 12, so he "had to learn to change my way of life." He rode his bicycle all over town, selling things he found. He loitered around junk yards and machine shops, "just watching and learning" and a neighbor taught him how to use a wood-turning lathe.

At age 18, essentially destitute, he took advantage of an opportunity to learn a trade. A few years earlier, Pres. Roosevelt had created the National Youth Administration, stating, "I have determined that we shall do something for the Nation's unemployed youth because we can ill afford to lose the skill and energy of these young men and women. They must have their chance in school, their turn

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as apprentices, and their opportunity for jobs—a chance to work and earn for themselves.”

Aubrey said, “From as early as I could remember (at age four, disassembling and then re-assembling a new tricycle), I’ve been one to tinker with tools. So it was a natural for me to go through the NYA’s three-month hands-on machinists training program.”

Upon completing the course, the NYA got him a job running the vertical turret lathe on the graveyard shift at the Cushman Chuck Co. in Hartford, Connecticut. There, he made parts for industrial-sized lathe chucks, using a 36-inch diameter Bullard Vertical Turret Lathe, 1896 model.

This was considered “essential work” and Aubrey would not have been drafted. In the fall of 1942, however, he quit his job, returned to Arkansas and on October 3rd, enlisted in the Army Air Force. His early training was at bases in Texas, Illinois, Washington and Nebraska.

465th Sub Depot

In December 1943, he was sent overseas and soon assigned to the 465th Sub Depot. It supported the 392nd Bomb Group, which flew B-24 Liberator bombers on 285 combat missions between September 1943 and April 1945. The Group was based in Wendling, Norfolk, England.

The 465th Sub Depot was the largest non-combat unit at Wendling, with six officers and about 250 enlisted men. It was responsible for repairing aircraft and vehicles which could not be fixed at the squadron level, reclaiming and salvaging parts from B-24s that could no longer be flown in combat, repairing and calibrating instruments installed in the aircraft, and many other repair and maintenance duties.

Its commanding officer, Col James W. Wall, was well aware of the importance of their work and frequently told his men that “they could get more flying personnel but they couldn’t easily replace” the highly trained mechanics, machinists, welders and engineers in the Sub Depot.

Aubrey was assigned to the Machine Shop, which helped repair battle damage so that the B-24s could fly again. If a tool or part needed for a job was not available, the machinists used milling, shaper and Do-All machines as well as lathes, power hacksaws, drill presses, grinders and other necessary equipment to re-create the part or invent something that could do what was needed.



This Machine Shop photo, taken on September 4, 1944, shows some of the many machines Aubrey mastered.

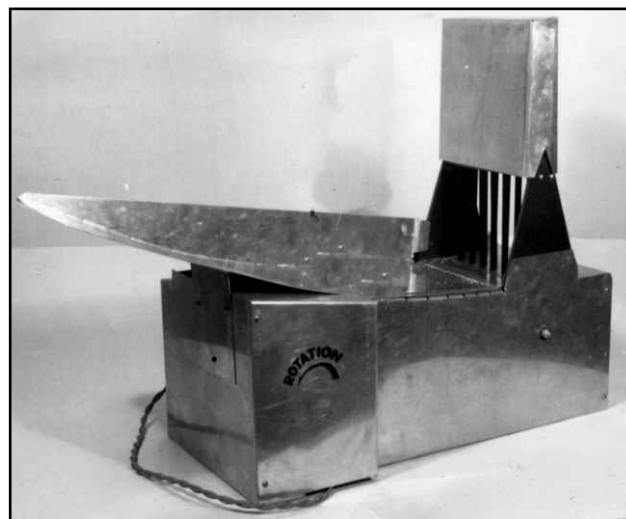
Inventive ingenuity was key and Aubrey excelled at the work. Once presented with a broken tool or part, he had a knack for being able to instantly visualize how he could fix the item or create a new one with the available machines.

In fact, soon after its work began, the Machine Shop received a letter of commendation from the Chemical Officer for constructing 5,000 retaining rings and retaining wrenches, which at the time were not available through Supply channels, but vital for the use of incendiary bombs.

In August 1944, the Sheet Metal, Machine, Welding and Carpenter Shops coordinated their skills on a special job for the Signal Corps unit working on secret installation of a radio-controlled bomb-dropping mechanism.

Once, while working on a damaged B-24, he saw expended shell casings from its machine guns. He picked up a few and took them back to the shop, where he turned them into Communion cups. He created a tray and then machined a handle for it from battle-damaged propeller scraps. He called it *Swords to Plowshares*.

He created devices that benefited every person on the



Top: Aubrey’s *Swords to Plowshares*. Bottom: Aubrey’s bread slicer on 29 Mar 1945. It had eight reground hacksaw blades and was spring-loaded at the top with a crankshaft drive. Using a 250-volt British motor, it could make 17 slices at once.

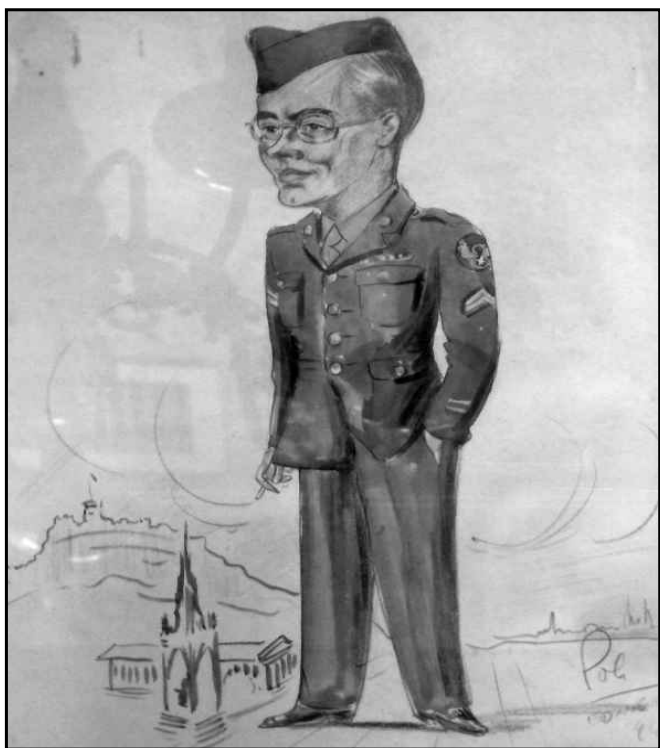
See THE AUBREY on page 9

THE AUBREY from page 8

base. He recalled, "The British bread loaf had a tough crust, was shorter and a bit wider than our standard loaf, and hard to cut with our regular butcher knives. Early on I was given almost free reign of the machine shop to carry out any of my special projects. One of my first projects was a bread slicing machine for Mess Hall #2." It finally stopped working the day before Aubrey left Wendling!

He also put an electric motor drive on the dental clinic's drill, which was previously been powered by pushing a foot pedal up and down. This device undoubtedly made things easier for both the dentist and his patients!

He did get occasional time off, some long enough that he could travel to Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland, by train.



This caricature of Aubrey was made in Edinburgh, Scotland.

He didn't celebrate Victory in Europe on 8 May 1945. Instead, he and other 465th Sub Depot personnel were

"too busy getting ready to pack things up for the Pacific War." After return to the US, he had 30 days leave and was on his way to Charleston, South Carolina, for deployment to the Pacific Theater when Victory in Japan was declared.

He was transferred to Long Beach, California, and discharged from the Army Air Force in December 1945.

Aubrey was overseas for 18 months. His most vivid memory? "Watching planes take off in formation and coming back not in formation—two, three or four at a time. And always the question: did a missing plane go down because of something I did? There was a bit of insecurity because sometimes I'd do a last-minute repair job on an engine the night before a mission."

Thanks to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (the "G.I. Bill"), he was able to attend, and graduate from, the University of Southern California. Always "in need of a few dollars," he joined an Army Air Force reserve unit in the fall of 1949.



Aubrey, while attending the University of Southern California

Having switched his major to psychology and counseling, he was assigned to a medical group.

He was recalled to active duty in 1950 but due to his degree (and the birth of his second child), he was stationed at Victorville Army Airfield in California instead of being deployed to Korea. He was discharged from the military in 1953.

For the next 23 years, Aubrey worked for Southwestern Portland Cement Company. As the production foreman, he oversaw total plant operation when on shift (evenings, nights, and weekends). After retiring, he worked

See THE AUBREY on page 10

FOLDED WINGS REPORT

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

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

EDITOR from page 3

now account for the largest share of US veterans, having surpassed Vietnam-era vets in 2016. There are about 240,000 WWII vets, 933,000 who served during the Korean conflict, 5.9 million who served during Vietnam and 7.8 million veterans who served during the Gulf War.

In the US, the number of adults with military experience is decreasing, dropping from 18% being veterans in 1980 to just 7% being veterans in 2018.

How does our 392nd BGMA membership compare to these percentages? If you served in the military (no matter which country, since we have members from six!), please tell me when you served and in which branch. I'll publish the results (and any anecdotes you provide) in the December *News*.

392nd BGMA PX. If you're planning to attend the reunion or a Veterans Day ceremony, why not show your Crusader pride? See <https://www.b24.net/itemsForSale.htm>.

THE AUBREY from page 9

as a self-employed contractor for 30 years, designing and installing home electronic and ventilation/air conditioning systems.

After going into business for himself, Aubrey opened Burke's Interiors in Apple Valley, California. He also took business and accounting classes at Golden Gate University in pursuit of a Master's in Business Administration.

He began attending reunions of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association in 2011, accompanied at first by one (or more) of his children and then by Beverly.



Beverly and Aubrey at the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association reunion in 2019, their last.

Aubrey said that being in the military "enlarged my scope and understanding of the world." He would "never have received the education or traveled to the places I did" without his military service.

He was also quick to point out that "I was just one of the guys working in the shop. I didn't fly any aircraft but I helped manufacture the parts to repair them. We were the boys that kept the planes in the air."

Aubrey passed away on December 11, 2020. Beverly said he had recently completed what was to be his final project: a fence surrounding the couple's front yard.

"Each piece designed, made and put in place by the man who could—and did—do everything," she said. "Someone else might order a fence—Aubrey ordered wood—and literally made each slat that went into that fence."

Zoom Get-Together

The quarterly Zoom get-together of Crusaders was held on 25 Jun 2021. Seventeen people attended, including three first-timers:

Anne Brooks is the daughter of Col Lawrence Gilbert. She writes, "Although this was my first time on the Zoom get-together, I have attended several 392nd reunions. I am very thankful to Annette and all the others who are keeping the memory of the 392nd alive through the newsletter and website.

"My first experience with the 392nd was in 1989 at the rededication of the Memorial at Wendling. It was moving to talk to the veterans and listen to their stories.

"My father, a B-24 pilot, arrived in England in July 1943 as the Group Operations Officer and was the third and final Group Commander at the end of the war. He was extremely proud of the 392nd and their mission during the war. I have no doubt that the time he spent preparing for and serving with the 392nd were the most important years of his life."

Dennis O. Harrell says, "I was happy to join in the Zoom meeting in August and finally get a chance to put faces to names that I have seen often in the newsletter. I have been a silent member of the 392nd BGMA for many years and have read all of the newsletters with appreciation for the work you and others do in honor of the 392nd.

"My link to the 392nd is my uncle, S/Sgt Ora Lee Harrell, who was a member of Cliff Peterson's crew in the 578th Sqdn. (His family nickname was Bliz and I always knew him as Uncle Bliz.) He was killed in action on his 18th or 20th mission—the tragic Friedrichshafen mission on March 18, 1944.

"Although he went through training as an engineer, he ended up being in the ball turret on his last mission. Five crew members managed to parachute out and were placed in POW camps. The other five went down with the plane. Details of the final mission and pictures of his burial in a German cemetery are in William McGuire II's book *After the Liberators*.

"After the war, his remains were removed to Avold Cemetery in France and then, in 1950, to his final resting place in his hometown of Winamac, Indiana. He was survived by a wife and an infant daughter. The wife remarried, so it was my grandfather who decided on the final disposition of the remains. As a native Hoosier, I have visited his grave numerous times.

"I was born in May 1945 and given Ora as my middle name in his honor. Although it is an unusual name (used

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by both men and women and thoroughly out of style), I am proud of it and feel somewhat responsible for his memory. I have a few letters he sent to my father during the war and also have his WWII Victory medal.

"After I discovered your wonderful website in the 1990s, I was able to contact both Cliff Peterson and Malcolm Hinshaw by phone and letters. I also managed to meet some of the members of the BGMA during their convention in Cincinnati some years ago.

"Just as a personal note, I am a retired attorney living in Northern Kentucky. My entire legal career was spent at the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit which sits in Cincinnati, for 22 years the Senior Motions Attorney.

"I extend my gratitude for the work you and others have done in the newsletter and on the website. It was my fortune to have had an uncle in a unit that treasured its service and put in such effort to preserve its memories. Thanks to all of you. Keep up the good work!"

Robert Holland says, "From Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, I am the second of three sons of Major Robert Holland (MD), the 392nd Group Surgeon from its formation in 1943 until the end of WWII. Born in 1938, my earliest memory of my father is the 1940 departure, in uniform, of First Lieutenant Holland for one year of active duty to train and serve as a flight surgeon. Commissioned as an Infantry Officer in 1931, he had transferred to the Medical Corps in 1939. He was promoted to Captain in 1941, and to Major in 1942. He retired from the Air Force Reserve, as Lt. Colonel."

After the meeting, Robert thoroughly explored his father's "stuff." He found documents that said Maj Holland (Group Flight Surgeon), Capt Bernard U. Glettler (Group Flying Control Officer) and Capt Thomas B. Stone (576th Sqdn Flight Surgeon) were each awarded the Soldier's Medal for their heroic actions on 5 Dec 1943. <https://www.b24.net/MM120543.htm> details the events of that day at Station 118. Their awards were not previously known, so they have been added to the website account. The two

doctors undoubtedly treated those injured by the fire and explosions. Capt Glettler, in charge of all air traffic at the 392nd, ensured that 392nd BG planes took off for their mission despite the danger and confusion.

Zoom Conversation

The dialogue was wide-ranging. Topics included the recent flooding in Europe, the Savannah reunion in October, our proposed 2022 reunion in Wendling and the merits of white versus green asparagus.

Philip Brazier noted that the WWII aviation-based TV miniseries "Masters of the Air" has recently begun filming in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. For more information, see <http://warbirdsnews.com/warbird-articles/masters-of-the-air-production-beginning-to-unfold.html>.

Greg Hatton talked about the 392nd BGMA's Facebook page; it can be found by searching for 392nd Bomb Group (H) Wendling ~ England 1943~1945 WWII. Joining involves simply answering a few quick questions to ensure you're not a robot. All posts must relate to the 392nd BG.

Greg says that many comments on similar Facebook pages are about hardware (planes, their equipment, etc) but we'd like to see more folks post on our Facebook page about their Crusader family members or friends. Connections to other people might then ensue. For example:

Many of the Crusaders who Zoomed said their father/uncle/etc absolutely refused to talk about their war-time experiences. Dutch member Peter Adriaans said that was also true of his father. "He moved to Germany in 1938 to get work in a butter factory. At the beginning of the war in 1940 he was forced to work for the German army which he didn't like. He managed to escape to Russia in 1942. He didn't get back home to the Netherlands until 1943. Although I tried many times, he never talked about those years. He died in 2015 at the age of 97. I guess he saw many terrible things which he took into his grave."

Robert's father once brought his three sons to see the movie *12 O'Clock High* but that was the closest he came to

relaying what he had seen or done.

On the other hand, Robert said his father was playing squash with Col Gilbert when Victory in Europe was declared. Anne was astounded. "Dad often spoke about his wartime experiences, but he never told us that he played squash!"



392nd BG Medical Staff on 20 Feb 1944 (ranks and positions per 25 Feb 1944 rosters). L-R: Capt Lawrence R. Woodard, 578th Sqdn Flight Surgeon; 1/Lt Edmund W. Burke, HQ Assistant Dental Surgeon; Capt Walter M. Tirrell, 10th Station Complement Sqdn Medical Officer; Capt Emil F. Riha, HQ Station Dental Surgeon; Maj Robert M. Holland, Group Flight Surgeon; Capt John B. Byers, 577th Sqdn Flight Surgeon; Capt John A. Cooke Jr, 579th Sqdn Flight Surgeon; and Capt Auer (MD). At right: Capt Thomas B. Stone, 576th Sqdn Flight Surgeon.



IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

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

Organizations like ours are so needed in this changing world.

As a group with an honorable goal and generous outreach, politics, beliefs and background are unimportant. We are able to come together with no judgment and are able to honor the past to affect the future.

I saw a slogan recently that said: "I can't hear you over the sound of my freedom." How was that freedom won and how is it preserved?

As Americans we have the freedom to peacefully protest and to burn draft cards, library cards and COVID masks. But at the root, what we really need is community, tolerance and kindness.

Do something good today. You may never know just how far the positive result extends.



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

William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Class Mail

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

∞FOLDED WINGS∞

Betty Engle, Associate, April 25, 2021
The Reverend Jonathan Boston, Friend, June 13, 2021