



The 392nd BGMA Returns to Station 118

The 392nd BGMA traveled to Wendling/Beeston as a group for the first time since 2018. This trip was in conjunction with the Heritage League (HL). Just as the 392nd BGMA keeps alive the legacy of *our* bomb group, the HL perpetuates the legacy of all 14 B-24 Liberator and 5 fighter groups that comprised the Second Air Division.

Nineteen Crusaders and 23 HL members attended all or part of the trip. 392nd BGMA members who had visited Station 118 before were Doug Dovey, Joel and Connie Fleck, Neil Hammond (who lives nearby), Laurie Huntley, David Parnell, Jane Plant, Mark and Janet Stasney, Sue Williams, and Ralph Winter. Member Philip Brazier's wife Catherine and their five-year old son Oliver attended several functions.

Newcomers

Among the first-time visitors were Dennis O. Harrell, nephew of 578th Sqdn waist gunner S/Sgt Ora L. Harrell. Assigned to 1/Lt Cliff Peterson's crew, Ora was killed in action on 18 Mar 1944.

Deborah Wood (there with husband John Pope) is the daughter of 578/9th pilot Capt Douglas R. Wood. His navigator, 2/Lt Donald R. Satterthwait, was the

original recipient of the model of B-24 #42-51240, *Windy City Belle*, which now flies in The Beeston Ploughshare pub; the plane was named in honor of Capt Wood's hometown, Chicago.

While Laurie Huntley has often visited Wendling, this was the first trip there for her eight-year old son RJ.

Jay and Donna Adams have a very interesting connection to the 392nd BG through member Jane Plant, whose

father, 579th copilot 2/Lt Jack G. Holmes, became a POW on 21 Jul 1944.

Jay explains, "Jane Plant's father and my father [2/Lt James C. Adams] were POWs in Stalag Luft I near Barth, Germany. My father was a bombardier/navigator in the 82nd Squadron, 12th Bomb Group, 12th Air Force. Dad was stationed at Foggia, Italy, and was on a mission to bomb a fighter base near Rome on January 13, 1944. Dad was a crew member of a B-25C. They were hit by flak

over the target, although damaged the plane was airworthy, however they were overtaken by German fighters and shot down near Avazanno, Italy. One crew member perished, the others bailed out.

"Dad did not speak of his war experiences very often until 1985.

"The Russians that had liberated Stalag Luft I arranged a reunion in Barth that year which Mom and Dad attended. It was there that he ran into two of his crew members and learned that the pilot he thought had died, had actually survived. This began a quest to find the pilot and contact all of his POW buddies that really continued for the rest of



At the former Combat Officers Mess and its magnificent mural. Standing L-R: Ralph Winter, Joel Fleck, James Clarey, Connie Fleck, Janet Stasney, Mark Stasney, Dennis Harrell, Sue Williams, John Pope, Deborah Wood, Doug Dovey and David Parnell. Kneeling L-R: Laurie Huntley, RJ Huntley and Oliver Brazier.

his life. Dad passed away in 2006. Dad organized a number of reunions that took place all over the US. I attended one in Concord, NC (where Mom and Dad resided), in the early 1990s. The camaraderie was amazing. These guys traded stories and reported the events of their lives over many long weekends. Dad kept files on all of the guys that attended and those that responded to his letters.

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FROM THE EDITOR

New Interim Treasurer. In July, 392nd BGMA President Ralph Winter informed Board members that "Bill McCutcheon, for personal reasons, has asked to be relieved of the treasurer's job and I have accepted his resignation. Thankfully, Bill has agreed to continue managing the PX. Joel Fleck has volunteered to assume Bill's duties and I have appointed him as interim treasurer until our membership meeting in October when we will have our election of directors and officers. It is my hope and expectation that Joel will agree to be nominated for the treasurer's job and if elected will fill that position for us.

"I wish to express how grateful I am to Bill for the job that he has done for our association and for his willingness to continue managing our PX, which is no small task. His dedication and caring have been a true asset from which we have all benefited."

I echo Ralph's appreciation for Bill's long service to our organization. He was Treasurer from November 2007 to September 2012 and from December 2019 through July 2023. He has been our PX Chair since December 2012.

Joel, thank you for agreeing to be our interim treasurer!!

Medal of Honor Recipient. New member John Schunke is the son of tail gunner S/Sgt Calvin W. Schunke on 2/Lt Beverly R. "Ray" Shaw's crew in the 577th. John told me about their engineer, S/Sgt John H. Kedenburg. His son, Army Specialist Fifth Class John J. Kedenburg, was the posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor due to his actions on 13 June 1968. To learn more about this heroic young man, see <https://www.cmoahs.org/recipients/john-j-kedenburg> and <https://sofrep.com/specialoperations/remembering-john-j-kedenburg-medal-honor-recipient-june-1968/>.

Odd Jobs in the Army. I recently came across <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2001405/10-odd-jobs-of-world-war-ii/>, which says that during WWII, "there were a lot of jobs that would seem strange in today's technologically focused military. Over the course of the war, technological advances reduced or eliminated the need for many manual occupations. This transition is captured in the War Department's list of military jobs from 1944, where entries like 'horse artillery driver' appear just a page away from 'remote control turret repairman.'"

Odd jobs were also done at the 392nd BG. The history of the 403rd Air Service Unit (created after an April 1945 reorganization) noted, "There are four forgotten men whose grimy job entitles them to a little recognition at this writing. They are Pfc Anastas A. Panteck, Pfc Michael Borowitz, Pfc Rudolph D. Lindgren and Pvt Payne, men of no rank but stout hearts and stomachs. It is their unholy task to see to it that all the grease traps on the base are properly cleaned and maintained daily. Surprisingly, the gripes of these boys are nil."

392nd BG Stuff. As reported in the June 2023 *News*, attendees at the April Meet & Greet discussed what to do with our 392nd BG memorabilia. A few weeks later, I received an email from Scott Loehr, President and CEO of The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in regard to a comment in the article about a museum's right to sell donated items.

Scott wrote, "Dear Ms. Tison, I always enjoy receiving the Mighty Eighth Museum's copy of the 392nd BG Memorial Association's newsletter. Congratulations on the success of the Aubrey Award essay contest. The Association and particularly Beverly Burke are to be commended for initiating this fine education program.

"While all of this edition's articles were of interest to me, it was the penultimate paragraph of the "From the Editor" column that captured my full attention. The subject was the donation of historical objects to a museum.

"As a public-history professional, I am compelled to comment on the gist of the paragraph. Yes, history museums do acquire donated collections unconditionally, and, yes, these donated collections become the property of the receiving museum (the Deed of Gift transfers title from the donor to the museum; loans of objects excepted).

"However, I know of no history museum that has consciously accepted an object or collection of objects with the intent of selling it.

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President's Corner



Greetings, Fellow Crusaders! I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying some cooler weather after the brutal summer temperatures felt by many of us across the country. Our members experienced very mild weather on our trip to England and Normandy in conjunction with members of the Heritage League. And what a trip it was! We had nineteen members that

took part in various aspects of the tour around Norwich and Wendling with ten members continuing on to Normandy.

As we always do when we go to Wendling as a group, we hosted a luncheon for our Friends of the 392nd BGMA who live in the area, many of whom open up their properties for us to visit so we can see remnants of the base. We had the luncheon at The Beeston Ploughshare, a restored pub which was popular with the airmen during the war. There were thirty-one guests and nineteen members in attendance. Annette has included details of the trip, ceremonies, and festivities elsewhere in the newsletter.

In all of my trips to Wendling, the thing that is always inspirational and meaningful is the heartfelt gratitude of the English people for the American war effort in England. They have a genuine appreciation for what our airmen did to keep England from falling to the Germans and a true devotion to ensuring that the memory of those who lost their lives is kept alive. In addition to Remembrance Day ceremonies, a significant number of individuals have worked to establish and maintain memorials to 392nd Bomb Group crews that were lost, usually near their homes. The children and young people in East Anglia are keenly aware of the history of their area and the many airfields and American airmen that served there, so the legacy lives on.

We were fortunate to have James Clarey step in for John Gilbert, whose health prevented him from leading our tour this time. James grew up near Wendling and has a fondness for the 392nd Bomb Group and a firm grasp on the history of the base.

David Parnell, Mark and Janet Stasney and I had the good fortune to travel to Cawston in David's car for a visit with John and Doris Gilbert. John was very entertaining and we were treated to some of the stories that he is so famous for about the airmen at Wendling. Doris served us a proper cuppa before we returned to Norwich.

I hope that in reading about what a meaningful and enjoyable time we had you'll be inspired to join us the next time we go. You won't regret it.

Our quarterly Meet & Greet Zoom meeting will be Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 1:30pm Eastern Daylight Time—the day before the US reverts back to Eastern Standard Time. There will surely be some folks on-line who went on the trip to Wendling and want to share their stories. Look for an email invitation a few days in advance.

All the best to you and yours,
Ralph

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"History museums, including the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, adhere to professional standards and a code of ethics that address collections acquisition, management and care. Additionally, most history museums have collections management policies that speak to the above, including deaccessioning; i.e., the formal removal of an object/collection from the permanent collection. The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force operates by a collections management policy.

"History museums exist to preserve history, and by collecting the material past ensure the preservation, presentation and growth of the historical record. Donating a family's collection to a museum is a personal, emotional matter. If one is considering doing so, please complete your research on the prospective repository. Doing your homework may mean the difference between a mutually beneficial experience and disappointment.

"Please know that the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force is available to assist the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association or any of its members with this or any related subject.

"Wishing the organization much continued success in fulfilling its mission. Appreciatively, Scott"

It would be unrealistic to think that a museum could display or even house a multitude of duplicate items, but I want to say that the Mighty Eighth Museum's Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price manages the archived memorabilia expertly and, when given advance notice, has always been able to have items pertinent to the 392nd BG (or any other Group) available for display and close-up study and scrutiny.

Member Daniel Vasconcellos suggests the MAPS Air Museum in Canton, Ohio, as a possible donation site. "They have a lot of 'personal memorabilia' and are always looking to add more exhibits. I go there a lot with my cousin, to shows, etc." Their website is <https://mapsairmuseum.org/>.

Gift Giving? Looking for a perfect birthday, holiday, or "just because" gift for a relative or B-24 enthusiast? Consider this Liberator keepsake, small enough to easily mail, yet large enough to be immediately recognized as a B-24. One will look great on a bookshelf or wherever you display your Bomb Group keepsakes. Hand-crafted in America from fine pewter. \$20 each with free domestic shipping; \$30 (including postage) for international orders. To order, see <https://www.b24.net/itemsForSale.htm>.





News from Across the Pond

**An Act of Remembrance: The
Dedication of a New Memorial Plaque
July 26, 2023**



Above: The new plaque is shrouded with an American flag as Trustee Hugh Scott welcomes the large audience before turning the service over to 392nd BGMA President Ralph Winter and Revd Canon Sally Theakston. Right, from top to bottom: The engravings on the left, right and back of the Memorial which look like new after their refurbishment by the Memorial Trustees.

**392ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
HEADQUARTERS
576TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
577TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
578TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
579TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
OF THE
UNITED STATES EIGHTH AIR FORCE.**

**465TH SUB-DEPOT (CLASS I)
10TH STATION COMPLEMENT SQUADRON
1217TH Q M. SERVICE GROUP (R.S.)
1825TH ORDNANCE S & M CO (AVN)
1287TH MILITARY POLICE DET "A"
806TH CHEMICAL CO (AO) DET "A"
586TH ARMY POSTAL UNIT
208TH FINANCE DETACHMENT
2101ST ENGR FIRE-FIGHTING PLATOON
OF THE
UNITED STATES EIGHTH AIR FORCE.**

**IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO
FELIX M. GARNER JULY 1946
TOM AND JILL SCOTT JULY 1989
FOR THE GIFT OF THESE MEMORIAL GROUNDS**

392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

If you get the *News* in print format, your membership status is shown on the mailing label directly after your name; "23" and later means your dues are valid for 2023. If you get the *News* via email, you will receive an email in September and December advising if your dues are expiring. If you wish to join or renew, send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Joel Fleck, 5606 Doolittle St., Burke, VA 22015 or join/ renew on-line at <https://www.b24.net/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 concerns, so if you're in straitened circumstances, check the Hardship Waiver box below. If you can help the 392nd BGMA treasury with a donation, please indicate the amount in the space below.

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

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

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

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

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

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"When Jane contacted me inquiring as to whether or not my father had ever mentioned [hers], I simply pulled the file Dad had created on her father, scanned the material he had accumulated and sent it to her. That is the sequence of events and a bit of the story that led up to our visit."

Tour Guide James Clarey

With John Gilbert, long-time 392nd BGMA Director and exemplary tour guide, unable to lead the tour due to poor health, member Philip Brazier offered to step in. He lives almost within eyesight of the Memorial and, as a historian by nature, has gathered a lot of information about the area. Unfortunately, he was unexpectedly unable to help due to British Army commitments.

Philip found an ideal replacement in James Clarey, who says, "I grew up in Norfolk amongst the airfields of the 8th Air Force, being born in New Buckenham which is the next village to Old Buckenham, I had an early affiliation to the 453rd BG who were based there, [but] my interest in the 453rd didn't really come to the fore until the early nineties.

"My earliest interest in the Second Air Division began on the 392nd's former base at Wendling/Beeston. My parents moved there in the mid seventies when I was a small boy. We lived at Holme Farm which was adjacent to the perimeter track and main runway on the base. I attended Beeston Primary School and I would walk there every morning, along the perimeter track, across the threshold of the main runway, then past the 392nd BG Memorial.

"In the seventies many of the farm labourers who lived in the village during the war were still working the farms and remembered the young Americans who were based there with affection, being a curious boy I would ask all sorts of questions about the Americans, and the overriding impression I received was that the Americans were a very friendly and generous group of people!

"This was the catalyst for a lifetime's interest in the 8th Air Force and in particular the Second Air Division.

"Since I was a boy I've been an avid collector of USAAF memorabilia and Unit Histories, scouring auctions, the internet, antiques and collectors fairs, other collectors in the UK and the USA to add to the collection.

"In particular I look for items relating to the 14th Combat Wing (44th, 392nd, 491st and 492nd BG's), and the 2nd CW (389th, 445th and 453rd BG's).

"Over the years this has turned into a sizeable collection that had culminated into two museums that I've created over the last seven years at Old Buckenham Airfield—the 453rd Bomb Group Museum which exhibits artefacts relating this group, and the 8th Air Force Heritage Gallery which displays items from various Fighter and Bomber Groups of the 8th AF including the 392nd BG. The Airfield owner and the Airfield Manager have graciously allowed me the space to do this."

A few of James's 392nd BG items can be seen at <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1380607662746324&set=pcb.5701439769909316>.

Social Time Before the Friends Luncheon

For 392nd BGMA members and their many English Friends, the Ploughshare luncheon was a wonderful time of great food and fellowship. The family of each Friend

in attendance was given a 392nd BG Liberator keepsake (shown on page 3) as a memento of this special day.

The mood was set early, because mounted outside the entrance was the old plaque from the Memorial that was replaced with the new one that was dedicated a few days later.

Next to it was an item James brought. He explains, "When I attended the luncheon at the Ploughshare in Beeston I didn't know anyone there, as an icebreaker I brought with me a selection of artefacts relating to the 392nd BG during their time at Wendling to share with everyone, it was purely a random selection, these artefacts were;

♦ "An original wartime sign bearing the names of the



occupants of a long gone Nissen Hut that was saved over fifty years ago.

[All of them were assigned to the 465th Sub Depot; the fifth name from the bottom is undoubtedly Cpl Aubrey Burke, for whom our annual Aubrey Award is named.]

♦ "A selection of original photographs relating to the 392nd BG.

♦ "A book, *Britain's Homage*, dedicated to the memory of S/Sgt Vernon H. Simpson who married a local English girl and was killed on the 25th March 1945 following a Mid-Air Collision during Assembly. [S/Sgt Simpson performed radio counter-measure (RCM) duties for all squadrons in specially-equipped B-24s.]

♦ "The Purple Heart and Air Medal named to Captain John Slowik along with a photo of him being presented with his Air Medal." [579th Sqdn navigator Capt Slowik and eight of the other men in 2/Lt Dallas O. Books' crew were killed in action on 18 Mar 1944.]

Everyone had a wonderful time of renewing acquaintances, meeting many locals with a keen interest in the 392nd BG, and enjoying English beer. All who tasted it agreed that Beeston Brewery's "Worth the Wait" golden ale definitely warranted that name!

During this gathering, 392nd BGMA President Ralph Winter gave Gemma Drew, a member of the Beeston Ploughshare Management Committee, a photo album. It contains nearly 100 labeled photos from 392nd BG archives, selected to display "not the lives of 392nd Bomb Group airmen during World War II, but the English people, places and events we captured in photos as we lived

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amongst you. Thank you for welcoming our airmen then, and for keeping their memory alive today.”

The album is posted on the 392nd's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1563692720350729/permalink/6453794648007154>. If you can provide more information about the people, places or events shown in the photos, please post a comment there, so we can all learn more!

Laurie Huntley also gave the Ploughshare a nice supply of a brochure she had prepared that describes when and why 392nd BG personnel became known as Crusaders. This will help customers understand why the bar is named the *392nd Crusader Bar*.

Sue Williams, daughter of 465th Sub Depot Instrument Repairman Richard Giesing, says one of the Friends brought an old map they found in the attic. “It had some



serious water damage, but we spread it out on a table at the Ploughshare to have a look.”

[Later research revealed that the map is the November

1944 Wendling Record Site Plan. This small section shows the locations of several structures near Canister Farm. #57-67 were barrack huts and latrines for the defense site while #68 was the location of the 72,000 gallon Bulk Aviation Fuel Store.]

The Friends Luncheon

The 50 attendees then moved into the restaurant area. Ralph welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming, saying “Those of us who flew in from the States have been looking forward to this for a very long time.”

Presentations

His first priority was to recognize some very special guests. They were from the small village of North Tuddenham, about ten miles east of the former Station 118, which has *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 the engineer and waist gunner.

“Pat and Geoff Baldwin live near the crash site and resolved in 2010 that there should be a memorial because, as Pat put it, ‘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 plaque was mounted above a replica pilot's wheel made by a local blacksmith, the idea being that children could play with the wheel until they were old enough to understand what the memorial represents.

“On November 8, 2014, during the village's Remembrance Day event, an identical plaque was installed in the porch of nearby St. Mary's Church, establishing the second memorial.”

Ralph thanked Pat and Geoff on behalf of the entire 392nd



BGMA and presented Pat with a Certificate of Appreciation.

He then spoke about the third memorial, which came about as a way to keep the village children busy

during the Covid lock-down. Pat and the Village Council organized a competition to design a village flag. The idea was simple: show the interesting things about the village.

“‘Would you believe,’ Pat told us, ‘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 serve as who we Americans know as Betsy Ross and sew the flag, faithfully following Esme's drawing.”

392nd BGMA members Joel Fleck and Mark Stasney then brought the flag forward for display.

Ralph asked Esme to come forward and presented her a certificate, thanking her profusely for what she did to remember the Bass crew.

Esme had been excitedly looking forward to this event. She couldn't believe that people from America were coming to meet her! She will perhaps be happier still to learn she has been added to our membership list as a Friend of the 392nd BGMA.

In the top photo on page 7, from left to right, Esme Okan—now 11 years old—displays her certificate, Joel Fleck holds her flag, Pat Baldwin, and Ralph Winter. In Esme's right hand is a bag with gifts from the 392nd BGMA: a model of a B-24 and a 392nd BGMA polo shirt.

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There was tremendous and enthusiastic applause for the Baldwins and Esme!

Coronation Mugs

Then, Trustee Jill Scott rose. She addressed Ralph, "You've been very kind in making presentations. You may have noticed in the States that we had a coronation this year? For the village celebration, one of the things the Parish Council did was to have mugs made for the village children about the Coronation so they would always remember this day.

"We knew that you had one young man coming over from the States so we thought perhaps he would like to take one home with him. And, there are others, so the Parish Council thought that perhaps the mothers and grandmothers among you would like to take them back for their children."

Jim Pitt, Chair of the Beeston Parish Council, distributed the mugs after lunch. They are truly special and greatly appreciated souvenirs!!

The photo at the bottom left shows Jill Scott and a delighted RJ Huntley after he received his mug.



Almost a Miracle

During the luncheon, James Clarey happened to sit next to Laurie Huntley. They, of course, talked about their connections to the 392nd BGMA. After James told

her about his childhood in Wendling and hearing first-hand accounts from locals who had known the airmen personally, "Laurie then told me about her Great Uncle who flew from Wendling with the 392nd BG as a Navigator and was killed on the Friedrichshafen Mission on the 18th March 1944, and her quest to recover his lost artefacts that went missing many years ago, I asked her his name and she replied Captain John Slowik, my reply was, 'I'll just fetch his [Air Medal and Purple Heart] from my car!' The look of disbelief on her face was a picture to behold!!

"Her first response was to ask if she could buy them and how much, well I'd bought them from a dealer in the USA several years ago ... but by the time it had taken me to walk to my car I had already made up my mind to give them to her, it's impossible to put a price on Valour and Sacrifice and I could see how much it meant to her. And that's the story from my side, a series of random actions and coincidences that culminated in a pair of long lost awards being returned to the family."



Upper Sheringham

After an all-too-brief time to enjoy a great meal, the Crusader group boarded a bus to Holt, where they took a steam train to Sheringham. A quick bus ride brought them to All Saints Church in Upper Sheringham, where a memorial honors the five men in 578th Sqdn pilot 2/Lt Colby A. Waugh's crew who were killed nearby on 4 Jan 1944 while returning from a mission to Kiel, Germany.

There, Doug Willies spoke about the two years he and his wife Celia spent researching what had happened to the crew, locating their relatives, and finally dedicating the memorial on 7 May 1994. [For the complete story, see <https://www.b24.net/storiesNotForgotten.pdf>.]

For this Crusader visit, Doug says, "Sue Moreton and her husband were most helpful from the start and kindly made the necessary arrangements involving the Church, including a welcoming peal on the Church Bells! The flag of Maine [2/Lt Waugh's home state] was neatly displayed around the Font and numerous ladies involved in the

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Church provided refreshments—tea/coffee and some rather appetising cakes! Sue also arranged for the Rev. Frank Clarke to come along, meet our American friends and, at an appropriate time, provide a few prayers. (Rev. Clarke by the way is not the full-time Priest at All Saints Church but invariably is the one that conducts the Service on Remembrance Day every year). Janet Day opened up the Village Hall so that they could see the framed pictures on the wall taken during the Dedication proceedings that took place on May 7th, 1994.”



The photo above was taken in All Saints Church during the visit. In the back row, left to right: Ralph Winter, RJ Huntley, Emilia Bentley (granddaughter of Rev. Clarke), Laurie Huntley, Sue Williams, Mark Stasney, Doug Dovey, Doug Willies, Jane Plant and Connie Fleck. In the front row, left to right: Donna Adams, Jay Adams, the Rev. Frank Clarke (with grandson James Bentley in front), Joel Fleck, Janet Stasney,

David Parnell and Celia Willies.

In the bottom photo, Doug and Celia Willies took advantage of a pause in the rain before their guests arrived to pose by the memorial to 2/Lt Waugh and his crew.

July 23-25

This whirlwind of activity was followed by some quieter days. July 23 was arrival day for those joining for the main tour. Many Crusaders took advantage of this opportunity to visit Norwich Castle. After Evensong at the Norwich Cathedral, the Heritage League hosted a reception for its members and Friends at The Maids Head Hotel.

Monday was taken up with the annual business meeting of the Heritage League (where RJ Huntley led the *Pledge of Allegiance*), a visit to the American Library, and dinner at Sir John White's home, Salle Hall. Sir John is extremely appreciative of the American war effort in Britain and of the hospitality he has received on his frequent trips to the

US; hosting dinners for American groups is his way of expressing his gratitude.

July 25 was a day of tours. The first stop was the Norfolk Suffolk Air Museum at Flixton followed by lunch and then a wreath-laying ceremony at the 446th BG Memorial and a tour of the base. A trip to the 448th base at Seething was next. The group visited several Nissen huts, the control tower, a museum and—especially welcome after the very busy day—a local brewery.

392nd Base Tour

Wednesday was the highly-anticipated tour of Station 118 by Crusader and Heritage League travelers. It began at the Wendling Village Hall with its painting of B-24s flying over the village. In the photo below, Malcolm Cockell describes how he and village children created the mural in 2005 in memory of, and to pay tribute to, the 392nd BG as a thank you to them and to ensure they would not be forgotten by the people of Wendling.



New Plaque Dedication

The next stop was at the 392nd BG Memorial for the dedication of the new plaque. The Memorial looked magnificent! The Trustees had expertly installed the gleaming new plaque. In addition, they had re-colored the engraved words so they really stood out.

Revd Miriam Fife, Team Rector, Launditch and Upper Nar Group (Norwich Diocese), helped plan the service and the prayers. Sadly, she was unable to attend due to illness so Revd Canon Sally Theakston, Chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich, led the service.

Revd Fife was well-represented by her husband Russell, who played the anthems on his audio equipment.

The program was titled *An Act of Remembrance with the Dedication of a Memorial Plaque to Commemorate All 392nd Bomb Group Airmen Who Lost Their Lives Fighting to Preserve Freedom and Democracy during WWII at Beeston*.

As attendees arrived, the flags of the United States and United Kingdom flew at full staff. The plaque on the Memorial obelisk was shrouded with an American flag.

After Trustee Hugh Scott welcomed those gathered, Ralph reminded them, “This site is dedicated to the memory of those who died while fighting to preserve

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freedom and democracy everywhere and especially for our longtime friends and allies here in England whose lives and livelihood were so threatened by enemy forces during the early years of the 1940s.

"This new plaque serves two main purposes. It replaces a plaque which was worn, weathered and unbecoming to this special site. But more importantly, it corrects the number of lives lost. Research has revealed that the original number cited on the plaque reflected only those killed in action and did not include those killed in the line of duty.

"For example, if a plane crashed on take-off for a combat mission and its entire crew were killed, they were not included in the count of lives lost in action because they were not killed while in combat with the enemy. For the same reason, those airmen who were killed in practice missions or while performing vital duties such as aircraft maintenance were not included.

"We at the 392nd BGMA felt it important that ALL airmen who lost their lives while performing their duty in England should be equally recognized. We have done that on this new plaque by correcting the number of airmen who gave their lives from 747 to 832."

Ralph explained that the music to be heard next was the *Second Air Division Fanfare*, which combines the sounds of B-24 Liberator engines, the *US Air Force Song*, and *The Star Spangled Banner*. This stirring music was followed by *God Save the King*.

Attendees from both countries proudly sang along!

In the ceremony transcription below, the words of Revd Canon Theakston are in italics and the words of the attendees in bold.

Act of Remembrance. *Let us remember before God and commend to His sure keeping: Those who have died for their country in war; Those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; And all those who have lived and died in the service of mankind.*

We remember in silence the 832 American Service Personnel from the Wendling Air Base who lost their lives during the Second World War.

They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old: Age

shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them. We will remember them.

And it is to their memory that we dedicate this new plaque and rededicate this Memorial.



At this point, 392nd BGMA members Joel Fleck and Mark Stasney came forward and removed the American flag that had shrouded the obelisk. They carefully folded the flag into the shape of a triangle, which, to Americans, is one of the final acts of honor for military personnel or veterans.

Trumpeter Adrian Houghton then played *The Last Post*. This English bugle call is similar to our *Taps* in that it is played at military funerals and memorial services, where it symbolizes the fact that the duty of the deceased is over and they can rest in peace.

We remember in silence the 832 American Service Personnel from the Wendling Air Base who lost their lives during the Second World War.

After two minutes of silence, Mr. Houghton sounded *Reveille*. The British and American versions are not the same, but both symbolize the start of a military person's daily service. When used at a memorial ceremony, they also signify the person's rebirth into eternal life.

When you go home, tell them of us and say

For your tomorrow, we gave our today.

Similar words date back to Roman days, but what is now known as *The Kohima Epitaph* commemorates the April to June 1944 battles at Kohima, India, between the British and Japanese.

Laurie Huntley and her son RJ then laid a wreath at the

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FOLDED WINGS REPORT

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

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Our website, www.b24.net, contains the history of the 392nd Bomb Group. You could make no greater tribute to your loved one than a donation for this living and ongoing memorial. Please send this report to: Debbie Beigh, 6284 Antler Ct., Zionsville, IN 46077-9089

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Memorial on behalf of our organization.



Almighty and eternal God from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, either by death or life; hear our prayers and thanksgiving for all whom we remember this day; fulfil in them the purpose of your love; and bring us all, with them to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Memorial Prayer. O God, by whose grace your people gain courage in the way of the heroes of faith, we lift our hearts in gratitude for all who have lived valiantly and for all who have died bravely for truth, and liberty and righteousness. Especially do we thank you for the heroes of the common good, who suffered and made trial of bitter sacrifice in achieving the freedom of religious worship and the measure of social and political and economic liberty we enjoy in this good land.

God of our Fathers, help us to prize very highly, and to guard very carefully the gifts which their loyalty and devotion have passed on to us. Grant unto us the gift of a living and vigorous faith, that we may be like the heroes: that we may be as true as they were true, that we may be loyal as they were loyal, and that we may serve our country and the cause of pure religion all the days of our lives; and grant that we with all those that depart hence in the faith of your holy Name, may wear the victor's crown. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Ralph then described the life and death of American Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee Jr. and his immortal poem, *High Flight*. Its words and his biography are at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Gillespie_Magee_Jr.

The Collect for the 392nd Bomb Group. *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 sustain and strengthen 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 the last into your eternal presence there to rejoice eternally. Amen.

(This prayer was composed by 576th Pilot the Very Reverend Robert C. Martin, Retired Dean of the Cathedral at Erie, Pennsylvania.)

The Lord's Prayer was said in unison, followed by Rev. Canon Theakston's prayer: *Almighty and eternal God, from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, either by death or life; Hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all whom we remember this day; fulfil in them the purpose of your love; and bring us all with them, to your eternal Joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The Blessing: *God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the church, the United States of America, and to all humankind, peace and concord; and to us and to all his servants, life everlasting; and may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.*

Ralph ended the service, "Thank you for attending this service of Remembrance. We in the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association are grateful that so many of you came today, just as many of you come to Remembrance Day services year after year. We invite you to remain for a few minutes so we, whose family members served at this location, can thank you in person for your ongoing dedication to remembering and honoring our loved ones. And please take a moment to look at the new plaque and the refurbished obelisk."

A Time of Remembrance and Sharing

As Ralph hoped, most of the villagers stayed behind. Ralph was approached by one who showed him a pass that his relative, Sidney Bloomfield, had to use when he visited his parents, who lived within the base perimeter.

Mark Stasney, son of 579th Sqdn navigator 2/Lt Alvin Stasney, showed his father's WWII journal to an interested onlooker.

The Tour

After the group enjoyed lunch at the Ploughshare, James Clarey provided information and anecdotes as he led them on a visit to the former Operations Building (now Ben Burgess Beeston), hosted by its current manager Robin Pitcher. David Coleman then opened up the building where JagSpares had been located but which once was



the Combat Officers Mess. Then, off to see a "temporary" Nissen hut that still exists, as well as an underground bomb shelter (which now houses fish, not airmen seeking safety from bombs).

The final stop on the tour was Honeypot Wood. Now a nature preserve, the site is thought to be a remnant of wild wood dating back to the retreat of the last ice age. During WWII, however, it was used as the storage site for the tons and tons of bombs that were



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dropped by the 392nd BG. It was a rare treat for the group to see it, as the site is often too wet and muddy to visit.

On page 10, the top photo in the right column shows the pipes that once housed the poles that supported the camouflage netting over the bomb dump; it is visible in the bottom photo, taken on 30 Apr 1944.

Free Day

July 27 had optional tours to Blickling Hall (birthplace of Anne Boleyn) or Cambridge American Cemetery. Ralph Winter, David Parnell, and Mark and Janet Stasney seized this opportunity and visited John and Doris Gilbert. They still have the same warm smiles that have greeted hundreds of visiting Crusaders throughout the past decades!



Transition

On July 28, the travelers were bused to London. They attended a Memorial Service at St. Paul's Cathedral and another at The American Chapel, which is dedicated to the memory of American servicemen and women based in Britain who died during WWII. This was followed by Choral Evensong.

After a farewell dinner, the travelers prepared to go their separate ways; for those extending to Normandy, July 29 was an all-day bus/ferry/bus ride to Bayeux, France.

July 30 and 31st were spent touring D-Day and other sites: Pegasus Bridge, the British and Canadian landing zones, the Bayeux Tapestry, Omaha Beach and the Normandy American Cemetery.



This photo is of the memorial Les Braves ("The brave"), at the center of Omaha Beach. It has three elements: *The Wings of Hope*; *Rise, Freedom!*; and *The Wings of Fraternity*. See <https://www.tracesofwar.com/sights/1437/Les-Braves-Omaha-Beach-Memorial.htm> for more information.

Normandy American Cemetery

The Cemetery is on the site of the temporary American St. Laurent Cemetery, which was established by the U.S. First Army on 8 June 1944 as the first American cemetery on European soil in WWII. It has the graves of 9,387 of our military dead, most of whom lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations. On the Walls of

the Missing are another 1,557 names.

The group placed a wreath at the bronze statue, *Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves*, before proceeding into the Cemetery to visit several graves.

Two Crusaders Remembered

Of the 392nd BG's 26 combat missions in June 1944, 22 were to targets in France. During the sortie to the German airfield at Laon-Athies on June 23, three planes were shot



down. Among the 13 men killed were copilot 2/Lt Charles R. Stratton Jr and tail gunner S/Sgt Stanley J. Prazak from the 577th crew of 1/Lt Neil R. Larsen. They are the only Crusaders buried in the Cemetery.

The photo, above left, shows a red rose



they had laid on S/Sgt Prazak's headstone. In the bottom photo, Sue Williams places a red rose on copilot 2/Lt Stratton's grave while Ralph Winter and Joel Fleck reflect on

young lives, lost too soon.

Tuesday was another all-day trip, this time to Mont St. Michel, followed later by a farewell dinner.

On August 2, the travelers went their separate ways—exhausted, but completely thrilled by the places they had been, the historical buildings they had seen, and the friendships they had made and renewed.

Recalling the trip after he returned home, Mark Stasney wrote, "I was happy to have a beer at the pub where my father found respite and mentioned in his war diary. The farmland of East Anglia is very similar to where my Dad grew up in the Gulf Coast region of Texas and I'm sure that provided him comfort, even in the midst of war. It was wonderful to see how the current owners have kept some of the buildings, the artwork and the memories of the base alive. The warm welcome we received in Wendling during our visit gives testament to the human bond of friendship formed then and exists still."

July 2023 Zoom Meet & Greet

Eleven Crusaders attended the July Zoom meeting; none were first-timers. Most of the discussion was about the upcoming trip to Norfolk, London and Normandy.

The next Meet & Greet will be at 1:30pm Eastern Daylight Time on November 4. Look for an email with the Zoom link a few days prior.

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

by Char Heim

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

Unexpected events happen to all of us. These events can be happy, sad, manageable or challenging.

My most happy, yet unexpected event was meeting my life partner even when more than half my life was already over.

A sad "unexpected" happened recently when a dear colleague and friend of my husband passed away. I did not know him personally but was inspired by the sentiment that guided him: "Life is Good."

His memorial service was encouraging as I have never seen grief be so positive. As he did in life, he brought together in death a community of family, friends, colleagues and long-term neighbors/acquaintances that changed sorrow into joy and loss into gain.

His last, greatest gift to those who cared for him was fellowship, laughter, community and yes, tears—but positive, healing tears.

We do not know what happens after death. We only know how we can celebrate a life well lived and a person who loved and was well-loved because "Life is Good."

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

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The newly dedicated plaque on the 392nd BG Memorial "in memory of the 832 airmen who gave their lives and in honor of all who served with them at this base" from July 1943 to June 1945. The American flag had covered the plaque until it was unveiled during the service.

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∞

Leroy M. Deneen, 578th, July 5, 2023

Paul M. Main, 576th, August 16, 2023