



Sentimental Journey: 2025

Then-392nd BGMA president Ralph Winter began planning a trip to England in May 2024. Its main purpose was to visit memorials to 392nd BG crews in England and thank those who continue to remember and honor our Group.

As Ralph's health declined, Directors Joel Fleck and Annette Tison assured him that his trip *would* happen and his itinerary *would* be followed. They finalized the plans and in early September 2025, American 392nd BGMA members Doug Dovey, Joel and Connie Fleck, Mark and Janet Stasney, and Annette and Don Tison traveled to England for this sentimental journey. British members David Parnell and Neil Hammond joined them for many events.

Sunday, Sept. 7

On our first full day, we traveled to Westgate, Kent, to lay a wreath at a plaque honoring two B-24 crews that crashed on the same day within a few hours and just a mile from each other. One of them was the 578th crew led by pilot 2/Lt Jacob Weinheimer.

27 Apr 1944

The 392nd's target was the marshalling yard at Chalons-sur-Marne, France. Flak near Dunkirk badly damaged Weinheimer's plane. Radio operator T/Sgt Parke V. Kent bailed out, thinking others would follow, but everyone else stayed on board. Kent became a POW.

Weinheimer later said that three engines were knocked out, causing a spin. He regained control of the plane and it continued in a slow, descending glide toward England. When he realized he couldn't make it to the emergency landing field at Manston, Kent, Weinheimer thought his best

option was to land just offshore in the shallows of Westgate Bay, where the risk of fire would be reduced and landing on beach sand would improve their chances of survival.

Unfortunately, what he thought to be sand was in fact limestone rock that ripped apart the undercarriage of his aircraft. It was also high tide, meaning the men were in imminent danger of drowning.

Patrons at the Swan Inn, a public house facing the Bay,

ran to the site and pulled three survivors out of the plane and the water. The Royal Lifeboat Society rescued another. In all, five of the crew were killed.

Weinheimer, whose back, pelvis and several ribs were broken, was not expected to live. Tail gunner Robert Cox's back was also broken while the injuries of navigator 2/Lt Marvin L. Gurwit were less severe. They were taken to an English hospital in Ramsgate; once stabilized, they were transferred to a US military hospital. Copilot 2/Lt George C. Marshall was relatively uninjured

and was presented the Distinguished Flying Cross soon after.

Weinheimer fully recovered from his injuries and was also awarded the DFC in recognition of his extraordinary feat of piloting. He served 26 years in the Air Force.

The other B-24 was from the 446th BG. Its pilot, 1/Lt Harold J. Larson, nursed his badly damaged Liberator to Manston, but was waved off and instructed to make a circuit around the Isle of Thanet so that priority could be given to

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Top: This photo of 2/Lt Weinheimer's plane, #41-29509, *Knucklehead*, taken at low tide 19 days after the crash, shows the damage caused by its impact on the sharp limestone. Bottom: Local Ramsgate WWII historian Dr. John R. Pritchard describes the events of 27 Apr 1944 and pointed out where Weinheimer's plane crashed. Larson's crash site could be seen at the other end of the bay.



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as of 4 October 2025

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FROM THE EDITOR

I'm late! My apologies for how late this issue is! You'll see that it includes lots of information and photos from our September trip to England. I hope this account will inspire you to visit these sites yourself!

I extend my heartfelt thanks Jill Scott, Pat Baldwin, and Doug and Celia Willies, who spent many hours to arrange or facilitate the ceremonies and events we enjoyed so much in Beeston, North Tuddenham and Upper Sheringham! Dr. John Pritchard was an expert guide to the Margate area while Ivan Barnard spent several hours showing us about Rackheath. Beverley Cooper arranged our visit to Parliament and Paul Standford treated us to superb fish and chips and amazing beer. The Reverends Blore, deLong and Clarke made our memorial and church services much more meaningful and impactful. We thank *everyone* who made this trip to informative and simply wonderful.

Because this "September" issue is being published so late, it also includes some items that actually occurred later. I'll point that out, in an effort to avoid confusion!

2025 Reunion. The October reunion will be fully reported in the December 2025 issue, but I am pleased to announce that our Board of Directors elected Laurie Huntley as our new 392nd BGMA president. She is the first third-generation member and first female chosen for that office and I can assure everyone that she brings a lot of energy, excitement and new ideas to the position.

Laurie's first *President's Corner* column will appear be in the December *News*. It will describe her vision for our future and the collaborative efforts already underway with the new Board of Directors. Congratulations, Laurie!

The names of the current Officers and Directors are listed in the column on the left.

2026 Reunion. During a December 2025 meeting, the Board of Directors decided that our Association will meet with the 8th Air Force Historical Society and the Heritage League at San Antonio, Texas, from 14-18 Oct 2026. Details will be published in the March 2026 issue.

Two-for One Dues Renewal Opportunity!!! The Board of Directors is offering a short window to renew your own dues AND provide a free year's membership to anyone you choose—one of your children or grandchildren, a sibling, a friend...it's up to you! We hope this offer will help broaden the reach of our organization and the wealth of information we have available to pique their curiosity about those who served the 392nd BG so well during WWII. Here's how it will work:

☛ This offer will run from December 2025 through 1 March 2026.

☛ Regardless of whether you receive an online version of the News (\$20/year) or a print version (\$35/year), your "plus one" will get the online version.

☛ Every dues-paying member for whom I have an email address will receive an email advising of his/her dues status. Otherwise, if you get a print version, look after your name on the mailing label. The two numbers indicate the calendar year in which your dues expire. If the number is "25," for example, your dues expire on 31 Dec. 2025. The names of everyone whose dues expire on 31 Dec 2025 and who have not renewed by 1 Mar 2026, will be removed from our membership rolls.

☛ You may only renew your dues for one year under this offer. A "25" can renew for 2026, a "26" can renew for 2027, etc.

☛ You may renew in two ways: a) by going to <https://www.b24.net/membership.htm>, clicking the *Join or Renew* button, and paying \$20 by credit card. Then, please email me at dtison5401@aol.com and tel me the name and email address of the person you are giving the membership to. I will promptly update my records for both of you. OR b) by completing the form on page 4 and mailing it and your check to Joel Fleck.

If you have questions, please email me or Laurie Huntley at Loretta.huntley2@gmail.com. 2026 will be full of excitement, let's make it a record year for new members!!

Next Meet and Greet: Saturday, 24 Jan 2026, 1pm EST. Hope to see you then!

President's Corner

On 20 Sep 2025, eight 392nd BGMA and Heritage League members attended Ralph Winter's celebration of life service in person and many more viewed the livestream.

The speakers drew on their own interactions with Ralph, but all spoke of his genuine passion for building friendships, his sense of humor (which manifested itself in jokes for every occasion!) and his kindness.

The complete service, including Laurie Huntley's eulogy on behalf of the 392nd BGMA, is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=OMrUAoH9cd4>.

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an incoming VIP flight. As his plane circled, it continually lost altitude. As they neared a 50-ft. high cliff, two men bailed out and were quickly rescued by the same lifeboat that had assisted Weinheimer's crew.

The plane teetered briefly on the edge of the cliff before falling to the shoreline below and exploding, killing the eight men still on board. Within two days most of the wreckage was reclaimed by the sea.

The travelers saw both crash sites, symbolically laid a wreath at the plaque (and noticed that several crosses of remembrance were already there), and then re-placed it at the War Memorial at the center of town, where it would be more visible.

After lunch, we visited the Spitfire and Hurricane Museum and learned more about those two fighter planes and their important roles in the Battle of Britain.

Monday, Sept. 8

We had planned to take the Tube from our hotel near Marble Arch to Parliament, but the Tube strike changed our plans. Six of us were able to get a cab, but stalwarts David Parnell and Mark Stasney briskly walked the 2.5 miles, arriving in time for our 9am appointment!

Member of Parliament George Freeman, who represents Mid Norfolk, was unfortunately unable to meet us but had arranged for staffers Fiona Whiting and Laura Dunn to guide us on our hour-long tour. It was an amazing visit and we were extremely grateful for the opportunity.

392nd BGMA coins were presented for all three of them.

We then walked to Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral for guided tours (thankfully with a lunch break in between!). Of special interest at St. Paul's was its American Chapel. It houses the original 1951 Roll of Honor, with the

names of over 28,000 Americans killed in the defense of England.

Tuesday, Sept. 9

After checking out of our London hotel, we were bused to Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, to pay homage to the crew of 2/Lt John D. Ellis. The Liberator Memorial, dedicated on 22 Jan 2011, is maintained



L-R, David Parnell, Mark Stasney, Janet Stasney, the St Paul's docent, and Doug Dovey look at the name of 1/Lt Ralph E. Lamma, Ralph Winter's father, on the replica copy of the Roll of Honor in the American Chapel at St. Paul's Cathedral.

by 392nd BGMA Director David Parnell. He led the service of remembrance, which ended by his reading a poignant selection from *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas; it can be read at <https://www.poetryverse.com/dylan-thomas-poems/from-under-milk-wood>.

John Philip Sousa's stirring music, *Stars and Stripes Forever*, then filled the air—a reminder of the cause for which the Ellis crew gave their lives.

The group adjourned to The Eagle pub in Cambridge. The ceiling of the bar has markings made by many US/UK WWII groups and the walls are adorned with modern military coins and patches. The 392nd BGMA now joins them, as we added our challenge coin to the collection.

Wednesday, Sept. 10

This was a very busy, meaningful day!

We visited Wendling Village Hall, which Doreen Gilbert kindly opened for us, to see its large mural of B-24 Liberator bombers flying over Wendling. Artist Malcolm Cockell told us that local school children painted the village houses it shows.



Top: Our wreath and its Crusader logo. Bottom: Joel Fleck points to the just installed 392nd BGMA challenge coin at The Eagle.

Our next stop was the 392nd BG Memorial, where we joined dozens of locals in paying homage to the 832 Crusaders who lost their lives and the thousands who

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served there, but were able to return home.

The photo at left shows the mural in Wendling Village



Hall and its artist, Malcolm Cockell.

At bottom left, Revd John Blore watches as Joel Fleck places a wreath at the Memorial, while Annette Tison, Mark Stasney and Doug Dovey look on. Trustee Henry Dennett watches nearby as Kim Wheeler stands ready to raise the American flag at the proper time.



In the Act of Remembrance, Revd Blore implored, "Let us remember before God and commend

to his sure keeping: Those who have died for their country in war, especially those of the 392nd Bomb Group; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind.

"They shall not grow old as we who 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."

During the service, a group of US F-15 fighter jets from RAF Lakenheath flew overhead; their timing could not have been more perfect!

After some time renewing old acquaintances and making new friends, the Americans traveled to the site of the former Combat Officers Mess, which David Coleman kindly opened for us. The mural of flying B-24s looks wonderful while Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth still keep a watchful eye on everything!

North Tuddenham

We next went to North Tuddenham for lunch with many of the villagers who maintain the Common where the memorial to 2/Lt Louis F. Bass and his crew is located and who helped make our visit there so special.

After a delightful meal at The Lodge, we boarded WWII-era vehicles to travel the short distance to the Common.



This photo shows Janet Stasney in a Jeep.

An audience of over 60 people awaited us—impressive for a village with fewer than 370 residents!

The service began with the Act of Remembrance.

The names of the fallen and the two survivors were read by retired LtCol Terry Byrne of The Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, followed by opening remarks from Annette Tison:

"On behalf of the entire 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association, I would like to thank you for being here today. We are grateful to everyone who helped arrange this service of remembrance for 2nd Lieutenant Louis F. Bass and his crew. On April 21st, 1944, eight of them were killed

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392nd BGMA MEMBERSHIP FORM

If you wish to join or renew, send this form and your check (payable to 392nd BGMA) to Joel Fleck, 5606 Doolittle St., Burke, VA 22015 or join / renew on-line at <https://www.b24.net/membership.htm>. From now through 1 Mar 2026, the Board of Directors is offering a Two-for-One dues renewal special. Every member who renews can "enlist" a second person with a free, one-year membership, with the newsletter sent via email. See page 2 for complete details.

If you can help the 392nd BGMA treasury with a donation, please indicate the amount in the form.

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

YOUR Mailing and Email addresses _____

The name and email address for your GIFT membership: _____

Dues: [] \$35/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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near where this memorial stands.

"As the WWII-era vehicles escorted us from The Lodge to the Common, I thought about how noisy it must have been in North Tuddenham during the war, both overhead and on the roads. There were many airfields within a few miles, among them Shipdham [44th BG] to the southwest, the 392nd Bomb Group to the west at Wendling, RAF Swanton Morley to the north and Attlebridge [466th BG] to the east.

"A villager who lives near the crash site resolved in early 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 idea was immediately embraced by the Parish Council. A great deal of thought went into the design of this memorial. The bench was handcrafted from an enormous



English oak. While sitting on it, one faces the memorial and just past it, the site of the crash.

"The plaque has the names of the eight American

casualties. Directly below it is a replica pilot's wheel, the idea being that young children can play with the wheel until they are old enough to understand the meaning of the memorial.

"My husband I were here on May 18, 2010, when this Memorial was dedicated. I had the privilege of pulling back the curtain to reveal the plaque. The care taken of the Common and the Memorial in the past 15 years is obvious.

"But, you may not know why the crew crashed here, in North Tuddenham. Let me explain.

"2/Lt Bass and his crew were ordered to the 392nd BG on March 21st, 1944, flew their first mission on April 8th, and took off again for missions on each of the next four days.

"But in these first five missions, they, and many other 392nd BG planes, had to turn back three times due to bad weather conditions.

"On April 20th, they completed a mission to France.

"On April 21st, the 392nd Bomb Group was directed to attack an enemy aircraft repair facility near Zwickau, Germany. The Bass crew was assigned to fly in the same plane as the day before. It had nose art that showed a beautiful woman soaring through the air; at a later date, the name *Kentucky Baby* was added. At some point, the name may have been changed to *Esquire Lady* but that has not been confirmed. That's why this plane is sometimes called *Kentucky Baby* [as shown in this photo with an unidentified



airman] and sometimes *Esquire Lady*.

"The Bass crew took off at 1:37pm, the 8th of 28 crews to depart from Wendling that afternoon. They had all been instructed to climb to 10,000 feet (or 2,000 feet above the top clouds),

and then gather together north of Wendling.

"Conditions on the ground seemed normal, but as the planes rose, they encountered several layers of clouds. The lowest layer was between 5,000 and 7,000 feet in altitude, then a middle layer extended up to 14,000 feet and finally the top layer rose as high as about 20,000 feet.

"The middle cloud layer was quite dense and very cold—perfect conditions for heavy, clear ice to form on the bombers—and especially their wings. The ice made it difficult to control individual planes and the thick cloud made it impossible to see other planes. One 392nd pilot later recalled, 'There was no formation. Planes were everywhere. It was terribly dangerous in the air.'

"The same weather was affecting all the bombers taking off throughout England. As a result, the mission for the entire 8th Air Force was canceled. Almost 900 bombers were in airspace over England—and the crews who had worked so hard to get above the icy cloud layer now had to descend through the same dangerous layer to get back to their bases.

"From take-off to landing, most 392nd BG crews were aloft for just 3 hours. But that was too long for the Bass crew. It is believed that their left wing iced up and then broke off, with immediate loss of control. The plane went into a steep dive and crashed at Pound Farm, just behind this memorial, at about 2:13pm.

"There were only two survivors. Engineer Gerald A. Knettel rarely talked about the incident, but did tell his son that the air was colder than normal that day and he thought they were flying at a higher altitude than usual. He heard a tremendous noise and then he and waist gunner Sgt John J. Bryzostowski just fell from the plane.

"As his parachute deployed, the plane exploded and debris went everywhere, damaging his chute. He therefore descended too fast and was so severely injured when he hit the ground that a metal plate had to be put in his head and a rod in his leg. The worst thing, he said repeatedly, was that the eight men who were killed were all married while the two survivors were single.

"After they recovered, both men were transferred to the 392nd Bomb Group's ground support crew. They eventually were re-trained as Airplane and Engine Mechanics and served in that capacity for the rest of the war.

"All eight casualties were buried in Cambridge American Military Cemetery. After the war, seven were returned to the United States for burials in their home towns. The mother of radio operator T/Sgt James W. Thomas chose to have him permanently interred in what is now Cambridge American Cemetery at Maddingley.

"In 2010, when your Parish Council began planning this Memorial, their thoughts were already focused on future generations. In 2020, that vision had a very important result. To keep the village children busy during Covid lockdown, the Council organized a competition to design a flag for North Tuddenham. The idea was simple: show the interesting things about the village.

"I was overcome with emotion when I was told that the winning entry, submitted by an 8-year old girl, showed a B-24 Liberator bomber flying over the village, a cross for

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remembrance, and St Mary's Church, where a plaque identical to the one on this memorial was installed in 2014.

"Her drawing was re-created and sewn into a village flag that is about 5 feet by 3 feet, which I am eagerly looking forward to seeing later today.

"We Americans thank Esme Okan for including the Bass crew in her flag design and her parents and villagers for telling her about the crew's part in your village's history.

"What she did demonstrates 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.

"By including children in the design of this memorial, your village has ensured that it has meaning now, and into the future.

"And for that, the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association extends its thanks to everyone gathered at this Memorial today and to those—past and future—who continue to remember our crew. Thank you."

Everyone then recited The Act of Remembrance.

Standards were lowered as a sign of respect to the Bass

After the ceremony, attendees were treated to Dann's Luxury Norfolk Ice Cream, thanks to current owner Simon Dann. The Dann family have farmed over 600 acres in the village of North Tuddenham for four generations—and it was in one of their fields that the Bass crew crashed. Those fields now house 440 cows who create absolutely wonderful ice cream!



Everyone present was invited to meet at St Mary's Church for the final part of the formal events. There, the travelers were greeted by an American flag flying above the 14th-century tower! (L-R: Joel Fleck, Connie Fleck, Janet Stasney, Doug Dovey, Annette Tison, Mark Stasney and Don Tison.)

The distinctive

North Tuddenham flag, designed by Esme Okan, was on display in the nave. She was present to receive the thanks and gratitude of the 392nd BGMA representatives.



crew as the solemn bugle call, *Taps*, echoed around the Common. After a minute of silence, wreaths were laid. The ceremony ended with prayers, a reading from John 15:9-14, the singing our national anthems, and a benediction asking "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

The wreath laid by the 392nd, in the center, has eight red roses for the crewmen killed and two white roses for the survivors. It was flanked, on the left, by a wreath "In Remembrance of our USAF Brothers who gave their Today for our Tomorrow" from the Royal Air Force Association, Dereham and Swaffham Branch, and, on the right, by one "Presented on Behalf of the Men and Women of the 48th Fighter Wing" at RAF Lakenheath.



392nd BGMA challenge coins were given to a US airman and a US Marine who attended in uniform.

Another wreath was laid near the plaque in the porch that commemorates the crew members.

After tours of the church (and ringing of its bell by church warden Mike Smith), a framed photograph of the flag was presented to Annette. She was also named an American 'North Tuddenhamite,' an overwhelming honor!

After we returned home, Annette received this letter from Andrew Harding, Chair of Tuddenham Parish Council, who asked her to share it with the entire organization:

"Dear Members of 392nd Bomber Group Memorial Association

"Bomber Command Visit to North Tuddenham

"I am writing on behalf of North Tuddenham Parish Council to register our deepest thanks to all your members who attended the event last month in Norfolk. We were so delighted to host you and appreciate the efforts made to make the long journey to England, and to include us in your tour. The efforts that continue to be made from across the water to visit us, are deeply appreciated, and this event to commemorate the service and sacrifice of the 392nd Bomber Group during World War II is something we relish in terms of recognition, remembrance, and hopefully as a reminder to all of us, of the importance of peace.

"We look forward to your next visit!"

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"Sincerest thanks from all at North Tuddenham Parish Council, and its residents."

Annette assured Mr. Harding that their feeling of appreciation and gratitude was warmly reciprocated by all of us Americans!

Our day ended with a wonderful fish and chips dinner at The Railway Tavern in Dereham, compliments of proprietor Paul Stanford. He surprised us with a case of beer, each bottle bearing a photo of #42-7521, *Poop Deck Pappy*, and the Crusader logo! The excellent lager was brewed



and bottled by The Wolf Brewery in Attleborough, which donates 5 pence per bottle sold to the Royal Air Forces Association Wings Appeal, a charity helping those in the RAF family.

A 392nd BGMA coin was given to Paul in thanks for both the wonderful meal and his gift!

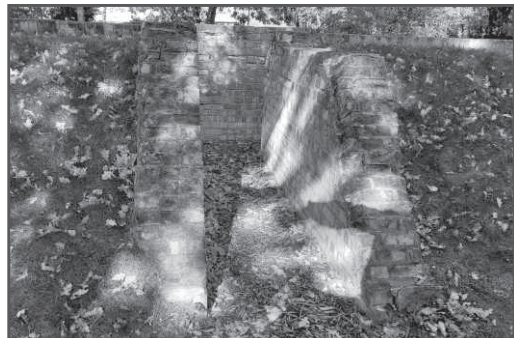
The beer was enjoyed in the Maids Head Hotel pub over the next few evenings and the empty bottles



brought back to the US as great souvenirs. (L-R, Don Tison, Joel Fleck, Doug Dovey and Mark Stasney)

Thursday, Sept. 11

This day was spent in the vicinity of the 467th BG's base at Rackheath. We saw the foundations of several WWII



buildings that have been carefully excavated by volunteers. While doing so, they have removed about 80 tons of dirt in the process!

This open-air blast shelter was designed so that the blast waves from any bomb explosions in the area would roll

up its curved sides and over the heads of anyone seeking shelter inside.

All these foundations (which included an officers mess, a sergeants mess, several shower blocks, a large dining hut, a theater, and the Commanding Officer's quarters) were all in Site 6.

We ate lunch at the B-24 Café in Rackheath, which has memorabilia from the site, and saw its WWII control tower, largely intact and now used as an office building.

A video showing some of the recently excavated ruins, including some we did not have time to see ourselves, is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTWIWtJrZho>.

That evening, we attended the gala opening of the American Library's *Silver Wings* event, which showcased the Army Air Forces' "invasion" and its contributions to winning the war. Doug Dovey recalls, "By a stroke of luck, I noticed David



Morgan's 44th BG jacket. My dad was assigned to the 44th for several weeks and that was our connection.

He and his son gave me information on my father's 1944 bailout and hospital recovery while with the 44th, for which I had few details. They also equipped several display booths at the library with items recovered from the airbases."

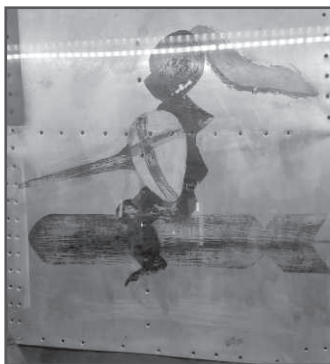
The photo above shows Glenn Morgan, Doug Dovey and David Morgan.

Friday, Sept. 12

We traveled to Swaffham to see Jim Clarey's Second Air Division Heritage Gallery, located within the Wartime & Vintage Store at 3C Market Place, Swaffham. He grew up next to the old airfield and walked past the 392nd BG Memorial on his way to school; he has been collecting WWII memorabilia ever since.

He now has enough for three museums—the first two, featuring the 43rd Bomb Group and the 8th Air Force Heritage gallery, are at the airfield in Old Buckenham.

The one in Swaffham largely concentrates on the 2nd



Air Division's B-24 Liberator bombers and their crews, with lots of 392nd BG memorabilia, including this Crusader image painted on aluminum airframe. The rivet holes are still visible!

The Gallery houses airplane models, mannequins in WWII uniforms, lots of flight gear, and notebook upon notebook of photos—

including many labeled 392nd BG photos! The museum is now a must-see for future trips as it will take several visits to really plumb its depths.

We drove to Kings Lynn for lunch. About 20 miles west of

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Station 118, it was a convenient spot for airmen to go when they had only limited time off.

We then enjoyed several hours at Sandringham, the King's Estate.

Saturday, Sept. 13

We spent the morning at Upper Sheringham, where, in February 1996, a memorial to the 578th's 2/Lt Colby A. Waugh and four others in his crew was installed near the north door of All Saints Church.

On 4 Jan 1944, Waugh was nursing his heavily damaged B24, #42-7485, *Alfred*, back to Station 118. It was seen to come over the cliffs at Sheringham but at around 2:34pm lost height and crashed at a wooded spot known as *Pretty Corner*. Four men were killed outright and a fifth died in hospital a few days later.



Annette Tison has just presented a 392nd B G M A coin to Celia and Doug

Willies. They were key figures behind the memorial and have spent the ensuing decades maintaining it and ensuring the crew is remembered. (And a "happy birthday" to Doug, who has recently turned 96!)



A wreath was placed at the memorial and Revd. Frank Clarke said a prayer for the airmen.

The full story of the crew and their memorial is at <https://www.b24.net/storiesNotForgotten.pdf>.

We returned to Norwich for lunch before walking to the American Library for the first day of its *Silver*

Wings event.

At 4pm, Philip Brazier (left) spoke about "Bombs, Brides and Bravery" at Station 118, followed by Mark Stasney, son of 579th Sqdn navigator 1/Lt Alvin J. Stasney (bottom left), who presented excerpts from his father's diary, accompanied by many photos.

The event was filled with memorabilia, photos, diagrams and information about the 2nd Air Division.

Sunday, Sept. 14

We attended service—a morning prayer in the Celtic tradition—at Beeston St Mary Church. Before



and after, we chatted with the other attendees and looked at large display boards (all prepared and placed by Philip Brazier) of several weddings between 392nd BG airmen

and British women.

A separate board had information and photos about the 11 May 1945 wedding of Maj Robert E. Lane, 578th Sqdn Adjutant, and 1/Lt Marilyne Haglund, a US Army Nurse stationed at Peterborough. A large bouquet of white flowers nearby had a note from 392nd BGMA member Sharon Marcander, who pointed out that her parents "both went to England on separate ships about the same time in 1943 and ended up stationed close to each other... They had five daughters and four have traveled to the church to see where their parents were married. The sisters thought it might be appropriate to have some flowers there in honor of them. My oldest son proposed to his future wife in the church in 2000, as a tribute to his grandparents."

These photos show two of the weddings at Beeston St



Mary Church. At left are S/Sgt and Mrs. Hortis Hanna, married on 2 Sep 1944 and at right, Maj and 1/Lt Lane.

Besides the grandeur of the historic 14th century church, two other artifacts drew a lot of attention. The first was the pew kneeler with the 8th Air Force emblem, displayed here by Connie and Joel Fleck.



It was embroidered in loving memory of T/Sgt Norman J. Lancy (killed in action on 4 Aug 1944) at the request of his WWII fiancée, Hester Mary "Jackie" Frost Gould. The full story is available at <https://b24.net/Newsletters/March-2025.pdf>. It was a pleasure to meet two of Jackie's children, Fr Gary Gould

and his sister Jillie Splendow!

The other item was a small wooden cross, believed to have come from the 392nd BG's base chapel.

Revd Hilary deLong welcomed the congregation and especially the Americans. She began her sermon by noting, "When I was preparing for this service, I realised that I knew little about the history of the American airmen who came to Norfolk in 1942 to support us in



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our fight against Hitler and fascism. But I rapidly discovered that Norfolk became home to thousands of US airmen, as well as women, starting with the United States 8th Army Air Force. And between 1942 and 1945 there were around 50,000 USAAF personnel stationed within a 30 mile radius of Norwich.

"Of course, I was particularly interested in finding out about the 392nd Bomb Group. I discovered that the airfield where they were stationed was at Wendling, situated between the villages of Beeston and Wendling, and that it was the most northerly 8th Air Force heavy bomber airfield. Although it had been planned for RAF bomber use, Wendling became home to the 392nd Bomb Group from August 1943 to June 1945.

"Inevitably many friendships were formed, as well as marriages no doubt, during that time, and it is clear that there has been an enduring connection between, not just those who were here at that time, but also the generations who followed them and continue to return here each year, though not surprisingly now few in number. We are very glad to see you here, and to remember with you the sacrifice made by those who did not return home at the end of the war."

She ended her sermon, "Eighty plus years ago young men and women from America, from this country and across the world, followed Christ's example and gave up their lives that others may have life in all its abundance. Giving ourselves up to the love of God can appear frightening, but if we let go of our fears and trust in him, then God's truth will set us free and give us, with them, eternal life. Amen."

While the attendees chatted after the service, Trustee Hugh Scott took Annette and Don Tison to visit his mother,



Head Trustee Jill Scott. As she was unable to attend any of the Beeston events, Annette and Don were delighted to see her—especially after corresponding with her for months to plan them!

The visit also gave them an opportunity to thank Jill, on behalf of the 392nd BGMA, for her decades of loving care for our Memorial—going back to about 1986!

Ploughshare Luncheon

The get-together at the Ploughshare with our friends was simply wonderful. The food was amazing and the presentation was suitable for a 5 star restaurant. It was a special treat to see the Gilberts: Doris and son Adrian, and



John's brother David and his wife Doreen.

Hugh Scott thanked the Americans for coming and mentioned Annette Tison, who, as editor of the News, is known to every

member and Friend! Hugh also spoke of the bonds that still exist between the descendents of those who served at Wendling and those who welcomed them 80 years ago.

In turn, Joel Fleck responded, "Connie and I have been to the Memorial three times and every time we marvel at the hospitality and friendship we experience from all of you. All of us here from the States would like to thank you for everything you have done to welcome us and set up the very nice service at the memorial.

"At the same time we want to thank you for everything you do to keep the memory alive of our ancestors who were stationed here in World War II. We also would like to thank the staff of the Ploughshare that has done such an amazing job today serving this wonderful lunch and refreshments."

The event ended with hugs, handshakes, and fond farewells.

On the way back to Norwich, we diverted to Attlebridge, where the 466th BG was stationed. It, too, has several WWII buildings on site and many interesting artifacts. Mark Stasney took an imaginary jaunt in a WWII Link trainer (which was on loan from the 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum at Thorpe Abbots); he was never able to successfully land!



A nearby sign said, "The Link Instrument Flying Trainer, named after its U.S. inventor Edwin Link, is an early form of motion flight simulator. The electrically

powered trainer consists of a fully equipped cockpit mounted on a gimbal which allows it to adopt various flying altitudes as demanded by the pilot. A device known as a 'crab' remotely records the progress of a pilot's flight, via a pen, onto a map."

392nd BG pilots spent a lot of time in their Link trainer. 578th Sqdn pilot 2/Lt Walt Cranson's journal records that he used it to practice instrument assembly and break up, localizer and glide path problems, and a "localizing problem coming in on [runway] 08 with a go around and come in on [runway] 26," among others procedures.

Monday, Sept. 15

Our last outing was to Cambridge American Cemetery at Madingley, which is on the site of the former Cambridge American Military Cemetery. Guide Tracey Haylock said its first burial, on 7 Dec 1943, was an airman from the 398th BG and at the height of the war, 600 burials a month were held. Many, unfortunately, were mass graves from plane crashes. By war's end, CAMC held over 6,000 Americans, including many Crusaders. Burials continued into 1946.

Even as the war continued on the continent, US Army Graves Registration Service personnel disinterred American dead from their initial burial locations and by 1947, had moved them to about 37 temporary US military cemeteries in Europe.

The U.S. government offered the official next of kin of

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these war dead a choice: to have their loved one buried in a permanent US military cemetery overseas or have them repatriated to the US for permanent burial in a national cemetery or a private cemetery of his/her choosing.

About 60 percent of Americans initially buried abroad were ultimately brought home. The federally funded program ran from about 1947 to 31 Dec 1951 and cost about \$163 million (roughly \$2.6 billion today). It successfully returned over 171,000 remains to their families, following a massive logistical effort by the American Graves Registration Service to recover bodies from around the globe.

While aboard US Army Transport ships on the return journey to the US, each was in a wooden coffin, inside a metal transportation box; the boxes were not stacked, but in a single layer—and each was covered with an American flag. A military escort accompanied the remains from the port of embarkation to the place of burial.

In 1948, the American Battle Monuments Commission chose Cambridge as the site for our permanent WWII cemetery and war memorial in the United Kingdom. US war dead from the three temporary cemeteries in the British Isles (Cambridge, Brookwood Military Cemetery near Woking, Surrey, and the American Military Cemetery at Lisnabreeny, Northern Ireland), were consolidated in the Cambridge cemetery during an extensive cemetery construction project.

The Cemetery was closed to visitors for two years while the 3,812 Americans chosen for permanent burial there were disinterred; the grounds re-designed and re-landscaped; a new chapel and visitor center constructed; and the remains re-buried. Cambridge American Cemetery was officially opened on 16 Jul 1956.

In a letter that day (likely to the US Ambassador) displayed at the Visitor's Center, Queen Elizabeth II wrote, "More than twelve years ago, in the middle of the Second World War, the American Military Cemetery at Madingley was opened. This Cemetery and the Military Cemetery at Brookwood, dedicated after the First World War, together commemorate the sacrifice made by the United States Armed Forces in both wars to secure the freedom which their country and my own value so much. From bases in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, many American aircrews set out for the last time. Many men of the United States Air Force rest here now with their comrades in the Army and Navy.

"In the hour of common peril they came from every part of your country to fight at our side; and some remain, even in death, a symbol of the faith which unites our two nations.

"Today we do honour to their memory and dedicate ourselves to the task of living in a manner worthy of the ideals for which they died. We are proud that there should be in our land this memorial to them."

Cambridge American Cemetery has the longest Wall of the Missing (580 feet) of all the US cemeteries in Europe, due to the large number of airmen and soldiers lost in the Battle of the Atlantic, the strategic air war, and in the English Channel during Exercise Tiger. It lists the names of 5,126 men and one woman—about 75 percent from the Army Air Forces and most from crashes at sea with no bodies recovered. It is the final resting place for 45 Crusaders with

another 114 of their names on the Wall of the Missing.

After viewing the plaque to the 2/Lt John D. Ellis crew on the outside wall of the Visitor's Center, Cemetery Associate Tracey Haylock took us on a guided tour. Every American Battle Monuments Commission cemetery includes a battle map showing what happened in the surrounding area. Cambridge's instead shows the four objectives of the war: the Battle of the Atlantic, Operation Torch (Africa), the strategic bombing campaign, and the invasion of Normandy.

Cambridge American Cemetery personnel work daily to fulfill a 1923 promise made by Gen John J Pershing, ABMC's first chairman. He spoke of the cemeteries as sacred shrines for future generations to honor the fallen, and said, "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds." It is the solemn duty of all ABMC personnel to keep these resting places worthy of the heroes who lie here. At Cambridge American Cemetery, they achieve this with skill and dedication.

In Summary

Joel Fleck summed up the trip: "It was a 'feel good' trip. We were there to thank our British friends and they were there to thank us. The work they do to honor our service men and women is amazing.

"We enjoyed each day with breakfast, lunch, dinner and touring together—and a few times in the bar at the Maids Head at the end of the day.

"We toasted Ralph often and thanked him for arranging the amazing weather.

"The Brits have a great fondness, respect and appreciation for Annette. She has been with the 392nd BGMA since 2003 and has made many close friends across the pond."

Doug Dovey adds, "What a great adventure with six other Crusaders to again explore London and East Anglia! Thanks in honor of Ralph Winter's plan, we made the most of a busy schedule assisted by a marvelous bout of utterly delightful Fall weather! I can easily say that pub meals are the best and I have consumed a year's worth of fish and chips. I am continually amazed by the gratitude displayed by the locals regarding our WWII Army Air Forces.

"Reflecting on our journey, I am reminded of our remarkable experience together during our 10-day Crusader invasion. A most special guided tour of British Parliament Houses and Westminster Abby while navigating around the London's subway strike meant that this group could surmount obstacles. A 'poundful' of thanks to Annette and Joel Fleck for their diligent efforts in keeping us on task. And to David Parnell for guiding us the first days and with his personal recollections.

"This particular trip stands out not only for its historical significance in keeping the sacrifices of our Veterans alive, but also for the memories plus camaraderie and laughter we shared along the way."

Annette Tison adds, "It was wonderful to connect with so many of our British friends, whom I know through our newsletters. If you plan to visit the 392nd BG's base, please contact me in advance; I can connect you with knowledgeable people whose information and guidance will certainly enhance your visit. And, if you haven't already been, please make a point of going, whether alone, with family, or with other Crusaders. As this article points out, your sentimental journey will be priceless."

July 2025 Meet & Greet

These minutes were recorded by Debbie Beigh just three weeks before her death.

Greg Hatton, our 1st Vice President, hosted the July 2025 meeting, which had 13 attendees. He greeted everyone, then asked them for reminiscences about the 392nd that their Crusader friend or relative had told them.

Mac Cassell began with a story about a practice run over the Wash he was working on for his book, *Lead Crew: The Boys of the Sally Ann*. The crew had a wooden bomb and intended to drop it into the courtyard of an English estate near Wending; they figured the bomb would stick into the ground, straight up. Rather, the bomb fell sideways and tore a huge trench in the courtyard. Mac said the crew was met by the "brass" on landing at Wendling.

No further information was available, and Mac asked if anyone else had heard of this, or knew where documentation could be found. Doug Dovey said his dad was the radar navigator on Mac's dad's crew, and he had never heard about this, either.

Laurie Huntley thought it might be mentioned in pilot Jim McGregor's book, *Don't Call me Hero: You Don't Send a Man to War and Get the Same Man Back*, but she said when she visited him and his wife several years ago, this incident was not discussed. Someone else suggested bombardier Bill Cetin's journal (<https://www.b24.net/storiesCetin.htm>) but that didn't lead anywhere. Remains a mystery, but one that piqued much interest.

Joel Fleck then told of his dad, a bombardier, who like so many, didn't talk about his war experiences, but instead that he sold war bonds after the war, appearing on stage with celebrities as the "token guy." He then went to law school, because "that was the shortest line." After law school, he was involved in oil and gas in North Dakota.

Bill McCutcheon said that his dad wouldn't talk about the "serious stuff" of the war, only the "funny stuff." He did say that he became a member of the Caterpillar Club, comprised of those who had to parachute out of aircraft to save their lives and named after the caterpillars who gave up their lives to make the silk parachutes. He did say that his dad remained in the Air Force for the Korean War, flying 37 missions out of Japan as lead navigator in a B-29.

Greg and Ted Dudziak mentioned that their dad and uncle, respectively, served in the 392nd for just a very short time. Greg's dad was shot down and captured after only 30 days, and Ted said his uncle was killed on his second bombing mission. Ralph Winter's dad, Ralph Lamma, was also mentioned as being shot down and killed a very short time after arriving in England [on his third mission].

Ted told a funny story about his uncle: after finishing stateside training; he told his family in Buffalo, New York, that he would buzz their house on the way overseas. His family asked how they would know it was him, and Teddy said that they would surely know. They certainly did, because he landed and brought the crew home for dinner!

Laurie gave details of Ralph's memorial service in September. She also asked who was going to Colorado Springs. A number of hands went up.

Wendy Vowell mentioned two strands of research she is pursuing; one is of her father-in-law who flew with the 15th

AF out of Italy; he was shot down and a prisoner in Stalag 4, the same as Greg's dad. She is also doing submarine research; she mentioned that of 300,000 soldiers in WWII, only 13,000 were in submarines, and they pledged never to discuss their experiences.

Debbie told of her father-in-law, stationed on a submarine ready to leave port for a tour in the Pacific. While on shore leave, he hit an officer and landed in the brig. His sub left without him, and was later torpedoed with all hands lost. He spent the rest of the war on a minesweeper, and afterward became a teacher and the father of five children, the eldest of whom is Debbie's husband, Mike. Mike's US history students were always amazed when he told them that he was standing before them because his dad slugged an officer in WWII.

Peter Adriaans noted that his connection to the 392nd stemmed from adopting the grave of 579th Sqdn engineer S/Sgt Amos Doty at the Netherlands American Cemetery. Peter came to Washington, D.C. on business, met Annette who gave him a tour of Arlington National Cemetery and the city, and he then joined the 392nd.

Someone asked about the history of the 392nd BGMA and was told that it is well-documented at www.b24.net.

Mark Naber told of how his dad was persuaded to re-enlist in the Air Force for the Korean War. He said his sister had some medical issues, and his dad said that if he could be guaranteed a posting near an orthopedic hospital that could operate on and care for his sister, he would do so; otherwise, the answer was NO. Apparently that request climbed higher and higher, until it was granted.

The discussion then turned to the England trip in September. Joel said the details were coming together for touring Parliament and Westminster Abbey in London. Philip said arrangements had been made for a walking tour of Site 6, including a visit to the B-24 Cafe. Someone asked if there would be an opportunity to see the bomb dump at the base; Philip Brazier said only by looking over a barbed wire fence [and regardless, it wasn't on the trip's agenda].

Philip asked if anyone had heard of a film about Jimmy Stewart called *A Truly Wonderful Life*? No one had [it is still in production], and Doug mentioned that he had been in the Jimmy Stewart Museum in Pennsylvania not long ago and there was no notice of it. John Marx asked if much of the museum had to do with his war experiences, and Doug said no. Someone else said that Stewart wanted no mention made of his contribution in his film bios after the war.

Mark then mentioned a film that will appear on PBS Masterpiece Theater in late November called *The Great Escaper* about a vet who goes to Normandy long after the war to pay respects to old colleagues. Philip then mentioned a film called *The Last Rifleman* about a soldier from Ireland who also goes to Normandy to pay respects. Someone in the group said they had just seen it on TV.

There being no more discussion, everyone signed off with a wave and a "good seeing you."

The next Meet & Greet will be a 1pm EST on Saturday, 24 Jan 2026. Look for an email with the link a week or so in advance. Please join us for an opportunity to get to know newly-elected president Laurie Huntley!

Deborah Goar Beigh

*daughter of Jim Goar, Group Transportation Officer &
News Editor from November 1989 to December 2007*

Deborah Goar Beigh of Zionsville, Indiana passed away unexpectedly on August 14, 2025. She was born on September 24, 1950, in Frankfort, Indiana to James V. Goar, Jr. and Mary Lou (Hampton) Goar. Deborah graduated from Purdue University with multiple degrees in secondary education and administration.

Her 53-year career in education included stints as a classroom high school teacher at Clinton Prairie High School and Zionsville Community School, as an adjunct college professor at Purdue University, a language arts consultant to the Indiana Department of Education, and assistant principal at Southmont High School and Lebanon High School. After retiring in 2008 she continued to substitute teach at Zionsville High School.

She married Michael Beigh on July 24, 1983. They shared lifelong interests in reading, music, traveling to historical sites and a love for Dalmatians. Debbie was a member of Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis where she joyfully sang in the Sanctuary Choir and was a Decon. In her middle years, she developed an interest in photography and started a second career as a sports photographer for the Zionsville Times Sentinel and the Lebanon Reporter. Debbie also judged 4-H photography for many central Indiana county fairs, as well as the Indiana State Fair. She especially loved the beach and traveled many times to Florida and North Carolina to spend time with her Shell Sisters and other friends. In retirement, she took up the game of golf and loved to socialize with friends as a member of the Zionsville Penny Putters Golf League.

Debbie was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma and Delta Delta sororities, Boone County Retired Teachers and many professional educational organizations.

Following her father's footsteps, Debbie was actively involved with the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association serving as the group's Secretary. The 392nd BGMA is dedicated to preserving the memory of the contributions of World War II veterans, as well as extending that knowledge to later generations.

She is survived by her Husband Michael Beigh, and brother Robert (Janet) Goar of Zionsville, and numerous nephews, nieces and grandnephews and grandnieces.

The funeral was held at Second Presbyterian Church, 7700 N. Meridian St, Indianapolis, IN 46260 on Saturday, September 6, 2025, at 10:00 AM with internment in the church columbarium. Donations can be made to the Second Presbyterian Sanctuary Choir in care of Dr. Michelle Louer.

Debbie had a soulful and gentle spirit that touched many friends, students and peers. Our world is much less from her passing.

**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∞

Debbie Beigh, 392nd BGMA Director and Secretary
August 14, 2025
Daughter of Group Transportation Officer
Capt James V. Goar Jr.

Robert M. Holland, Associate
August 25, 2025

