

Thanks for the June and August newsletters. I particularly enjoyed the August issue with the letter and photos from my old buddy, Ralph Reed, with whom I served for two and a half years in the 26th station complement at Bovingdon, and later in Virton, Belgium. It was good to see some mention of support units who were not members of the 92nd group.

I have unearthed a box of old memorabilia from 8th AF days. This includes more or less complete roster of the 26th station complement squadron. I have already sent you a list of AAF stations. If you wish I can retype the roster as it is yellowed and crumbling badly. It includes both officers and EM. I also have copies of station orders from the 1st CCRC which I could xerox and send. The attached list of pubs in Hertfordshire is enclosed. This is bound to stimulate someone!

Robert C. Wornick (FL)

COMMENT: We are continually attempting to coax articles and info from support personnel. I am sure there are many untold tales and documents out there that will never see the light of day. Dig them out!!!

### REUNION COMMENTS

This is to acknowledge with gratitude the receipt of the back issues of the 92nd News you sent me.

I also want to say how much I enjoyed meeting you at Shreveport and to state that I have never had a better time at any gathering.

You and all of the other people who worked so hard on it are to be commended.

Hugh Stiles (327th)

COMMENT: Carolyn and Charles Kelly please take a bow.

Some belated thoughts in regard to the reunion. Mary and I had a great time at Shreveport and I appreciate the opportunity to meet you and other officers and members of our group. It was our first, but hopefully we'll have the good fortune to be able to attend at least a few more before we fold our wings. I also dropped a line to Charles and Carolyn Kelly. We thought they did a great job for what we thought was a modest fee. That reunion reawakened memories of six dead crew members and a number of friends on other crews who gave their lives. Those sad thoughts evoked from me the following eulogy.

The battles once that raged on high,  
In cold forbidding hostile skies,  
Are over, and in air serene,  
The thrush now sings where eagles screamed,  
Bright youth cut down in lifes sweet morning,  
Our fallen comrades ageless now,  
Fly on forever in God's own blue.

You mentioned at the business meeting that the memorial at Dayton was not yet finished, nor was the wording for the plaque at Podington final. I offer the above for the consideration of the Memorial Committee for possible use in either or both memorials.

... We are looking forward to receiving further details on the proposed tour to Podington next May.

George and Mary Buckner (OH)

COMMENT: This verse may be suitable for the base of the memorial in Dayton.

Sorry I didn't make the reunion this fall. I got a nice letter from Carolyn Kelly saying she was sorry Ginny and I didn't make it. Tom Hulings showed up at the end of June and we spent two hours over brunch telling lies. I hope to sell my business to my manager the first of the year and have more time to complete the new house. Ginny and I are both well and sorry we did not get to see all of our 92nd friends. Barksdale AFB was my first station after I got my wings. I had 4 hours in a B-24 (horrible)

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and then was transferred to McDill. Hopefully we will see some of you at the 8th AF Historical Society Reunion at Wichita in October 1985 and Stalag Luft 3 Reunion in May of 1985.

Gene Wiley (CO)

### MID AIR COLLISION

(See page 11 - 92nd News, Vol. 8 No. 3)

Here is a first hand account of the collision between Lt. Dempsey's ship and that of Lt. Wiley, as told by the Base Intelligence officer, Major Joseph R. Harmon of 327 S. LaSalle Street, Chicago, who was riding as an observer with Lt. Wiley. This is one of the very few cases of mid air collisions on record where there were no casualties.

"Thundering along at 200 miles an hour, two Flying Fortresses collided 24,000 feet above the coast of France while on a bombing mission, but all 19 men aboard them lived to tell about it. Not a man was scratched. The B-17s were going in the same directions, but that was small comfort because even a slight collision can knock out of kilter some of the many intricate devices which keep the big bombers running. Almost invariably both planes are lost in such a case. The lucky ships were piloted by Eugene M. Wiley of Kansas City, Missouri reported missing in action on a subsequent raid, and Lt. James Dempsey, Jr. of Wilson, North Carolina. Heading east over the English Channel, they were jockeying for position in their formation when the mishap occurred. All of a sudden there was a terrific crash. It sounded as though our plane had been torn apart. The other Fortress had crashed into us from underneath. It peeled off the right without any fin or rudder. It looked as if it were going to go down in the sea. Our first feeling was that our number was up. I looked for my parachute, but never did find it. Since then I have never flown without making sure where my parachute was. The pilot tried to release the bombs but they stuck. He finally released them with the emergency release. All this time there was a gaping hole in the fuselage, and the two starboard engines were vibrating terrifically as though they would tear off the wing, which was dripping gasoline. While we were worrying about fire, the pilot made a bee line for the English coast. With only two good engines he made a perfect landing on a small British landing field. Then we took our first deep breath in 15 minutes. At the field they put in a quick request for an Air-Sea Rescue craft to go after Lt. Dempsey's Crew, thinking they had gone down in the sea. Later they learned that this Fort, despite its damage, had made it back to the home base. Dempsey's ship had the vertical stablizer almost completely cut off, the horizontal stabilizers partially wrecked and the rear gunner's hatch and part of the fuselage damaged. Lt. Wiley's crew, looking over their own plane, wondered how they ever made it. The two failing propellers which were bent in the collision had deeply gashed the fuselage. Besides the hole in the underside, an escape door near the nose was torn off, the ball turret, was broken, and gasoline was steaming from the right wing. All's well that ends well, but sometimes in the interim one has a few bad moments. "Others on Lt. Wiley's ship included Lt. Donald Treu, Copilot; Lt. Thomas H. Waldon, Navigator; Lt. Joseph F. Thornton, Bombardier; S/Sgt. Lawrence V. McDaniel, Top Turret; Cpl. Joseph J. Struske, Waist Gunner; Cpl. Donald E. Hutton, Waist Gunner; Sgt. Everett K. Teaford, Ball Turret; Pfc. Forrest D. Irwin, Tail Gunner. Sgt. Teaford and Cpl. Hutton have subsequently been taken prisoner of war.

Lt. Dempsey's crewmen included Lt. James B. Foster, Copilot; Lt. W.D. Toole, Navigator; Lt. R.W. Grove, Bombardier; Sgt. Sidney Hardaway; Top Turret; Pfc. Stanley W. Brooks, Gunner; T/Sgt. John Paulick, Gunner; S/Sgt. James M. Kirk, Tail Gunner.

This report was an appendix to the Fourth Mission of October 9, 1942. A photograph to accompany this can be found on the back cover of "Impact" Vol. 1, April 1943.

Submitted by Adrian Fett (UK)

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