



## Welcome to the 2020 Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Newsletter

Why has been 2020 such a special year? To start, it is the only year we are likely to live through where the first two digits will match the second two. The next year that follows this pattern is 2121. Aside from that, this year has been one of profound change. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our lives as we adapt to these changes. Some of these changes may have long-term effects on our society and economy.

The Friends of the 416th Bomb Group also experienced change this year. The annual reunion had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. Our reunions have been planned consistently and attended for many years. Click on "Reunions and Newsletters" at the 416th.com website to learn about previous reunions (<https://416th.com/reunions.html>)

Yet, throughout this year we have been contacted by several people desiring to know about their family's involvement with the 416th Bomb Group. Most contacted Wayne at the Archives and Rick Prucha, our webmaster. These new Friends are now receiving the annual newsletters, beginning with this one. One of our newest Friends, Roselyne Thomas, wrote an article in this newsletter about how her father, James Luther Owens who served along with the 416th Bomb Group, met her mother while at Melun, France. Our Friends family continues to grow and we aim to reach even more folks whether through the 416th website or on the Archives Facebook page.

This year's newsletter spotlights our Veterans who received the French Legion of Honor Medal. Earlier this year, T/Sgt. Roland Dullnig, Crew Chief from the 668th Squadron and Cpl. Alberie Nadeau, Operations Clerk were knighted on behalf of the

President of France, Emmanuel Macron. In September of this year, 1Lt. and Bombardier/Navigator Robert (Bob) Basnett from the 671st Squadron was knighted posthumously on behalf of President Macron. They were preceded by the late 1Lt. Dave Andrews also from the 671st Squadron who was knighted in 2019. We are honored to count them as heroes.

Most of us are accustomed to attending the annual business meetings at reunions and watching slide presentations by Wayne and Rick. This year's newsletter has those reports as articles. Wayne Sayles (416th Archivist and a 416th BG Honorary Command Pilot) announced that Jean Sittarich, a long-time Friend and the annual reunion photographer, and Doris Sayles (416th Archives Registrar and Treasurer) will now team up to keep the Archives Facebook page current. We truly thank them for donating their time and expertise to maintain interest in the 416th via Facebook. I hope you will take the time to read them.

We believe this year's newsletter is, perhaps, more significant as we sought ways to stay connected with each other during the pandemic. We thank all who contributed updates and wrote articles for this newsletter. Previous newsletters have been packed with updates from Friends, pictures and stories about reunions and interesting articles written by many Friends. We were able to piece together this year's Newsletter only through the help of contributions from Wayne and Doris Sayles, Rick Prucha, Steve Roy and others who sent in articles, and those of you, dear Friends, who sent in updates.

Our Friends family can look forward to 2021 as the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group continue to grow.

Plans for the 2021 Reunion in Windsor Locks, CT will continue move ahead. The **tentative dates are Wednesday, October 13, 2021 through Friday, October 15, 2021**. Please know these dates are tentative and are for planning purposes only. We hope to firm them up early in 2021. The Reunion Committee will once again pursue hotel accommodations and a tour of the New England Air Museum, to include the Reida Rae permanent exhibit. Keep checking your emails for updates.

Kathe Rensner

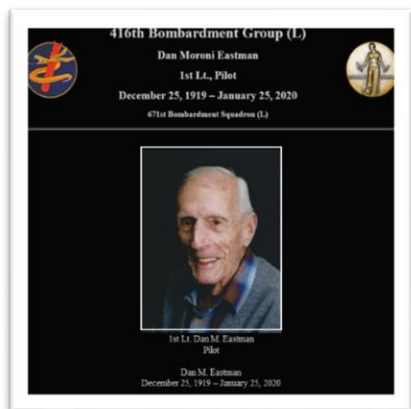
*Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Coordinator*

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## SAYING GOODBYE IN 2020

### IN MEMORIAM

Another year has come and gone. We sadly bid farewell and God Speed to Dan Eastman and Bob Basnett this year—two of our beloved friends and stalwart reunion pals.



#### ***1Lt. Dan Moroni Eastman***

December 25, 1919 – January 25, 2020

Read more about Dan's life at the 416th website:

[https://www.416th.com/Obits/671-EastmanDan\\_Obit.html](https://www.416th.com/Obits/671-EastmanDan_Obit.html)



#### ***1Lt. Robert J. Basnett***

October 18, 1922 – June 6, 2020

Read more about Bob's life at the 416th website:

[https://www.416th.com/Obits/671-BasnettRobert\\_Obit.html](https://www.416th.com/Obits/671-BasnettRobert_Obit.html)

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# Thank You for Coming to Our 2020 “Virtual Reunion”

While the COVID-19 pandemic may have slowed us down a bit from reuniting in person this year, it couldn't stop our connections and camaraderie uniting us as our 416th family. It is always joy-giving and heart-filling to see how we keep the memories alive through remembering the accomplishments and heritage of the 416th and through carrying those memories forward to the future. Isn't it wonderful

how we stay connected as a family and express our love and friendship to one another?

So, avoiding possible exposure to COVID-19 entirely and without actually needing to fly or drive anywhere, let's reconnect as we always do and remember together some of our best moments . . . virtually. Where have we been together the last 20 years? Here's a look . . . remember when?



## Our 416th Family Gatherings

A Look Back at the Last 20 Years of Reunions





**"The Group"**  
2001 Reunion (above)  
Tulsa, OK

**2006 Reunion (right)**  
**Louisville, KY**

*standing, l to r:* Bob Basnett, Al Damico, Carl Weinert, Jim Kerns,  
Wayne Downing, Robert Lee, Jack Sittarich  
*seated, l to r:* Dick Wheeler, Bob Kehres, Billy Brewer, Ray Jones,  
Don Sorrels, Eldon Kreh



**2007 Reunion (left)**  
**Oshkosh, WI**

*standing, l to r:* Jack Sittarich, Wayne Downing, Don Sorrels, Bob Basnett  
*seated, l to r:* Carl Weinert, Robert Lee, Dick Wheeler, Billy Brewer



**2009 Reunion (right)**  
**Branson, MO**

*standing, l to r:* Bob Kehres, Billy Brewer, Dick Wheeler,  
Wayne Downing, Roland Dullnig,  
Jack Sittarich, Bob Basnett  
*seated, l to r:* John Freese, Carl Weinert, Roy Burns







**2010 Reunion (left)  
Branson, MO**

*standing, l to r: Jack Sittarich, Wayne Downing, Ralph Conte, Roy Burns, Roland Dullnig, Bob Basnett  
seated, l to r: Carl Weinert, John Freese, Bob Kehres, Billy Brewer, Dan Eastman*

**2011 Reunion (right)  
Windsor Locks, CT**

*standing, l to r: Ralph Conte, Jack Sittarich, Jim Keefe, Joe Meagher, Wayne Downing, Gus Ebenstein, Roland Dullnig  
seated, l to r: Vinnie Fair, Carl Weinert, Dan Eastman, Dave Andrews, Billy Brewer, Bob Basnett*

*[photo taken at the New England Air Museum (NEAM) B-29 Hangar]*



**2011 Reunion (left)  
Windsor Locks, CT**

*standing, l to r: Joe Meagher, Gus Ebenstein, Ralph Conte, Bob Basnett, Carl Weinert, Jack Sittarich, Roland Dullnig, Merle Eastman (cousin to S/Sgt. Ashton Carter, armorer-gunner 669th BS, KIA, 1945)  
seated, l to r: Wayne Downing, Vinnie Fair, Billy Brewer, Dave Andrews, Dan Eastman*

*[photo taken at the NEAM Restoration Hangar]*



**2012 Reunion (right)  
Windsor Locks, CT**

*standing, l to r: Dan Eastman, Jack Sittarich, Ralph Conte, Bob Basnett, Roland Dullnig, Wayne Downing, Gus Ebenstein  
seated, l to r: Billy Brewer, Joe Meagher, Carl Weinert, Jim Keefe, Vinnie Fair, Dave Andrews*

*[photo taken at the NEAM in the shadow of the newly-dedicated A-26 "Reida Rae"]*







**2013 Reunion (left)**

**Gainesville, MO**

*standing, l to r: Bob Basnett, Ralph Conte, Roland Dullnig,  
Wayne Downing*

*seated, l to r: Carl Weinert, Bob Kehres, Billy Brewer, Dave Andrews*

**2014 Reunion (right)**

**Indianapolis, IN**

*standing, l to r: Joe Meagher, Bob Basnett,  
Roland Dullnig*

*seated, l to r: Bob Kehres, Wayne Downing,  
Ralph Conte, Dave Andrews*



**"The Group"**

**2014 Reunion (left)**  
**Indianapolis, IN**



**2015 Reunion (right)**

**Albuquerque, NM**

*standing, l to r: Bobbie Kinney, Josie Sittarich,  
Roland Dullnig, Bob Basnett, Dave Andrews*

*seated, l to r: Hilaria Huff, Bob Kehres,  
Wayne Downing, Joe Meagher, Mickie Weinert*







*"The Group – Members of our 416th Family"*  
2015 Reunion (above))  
Albuquerque, NM

**2016 Reunion (left)**  
Gainesville, MO

*l to r: Roland Dullnig, Dave Andrews, Bob Kehres  
Wayne Downing, Joe Meagher  
[photo taken in front of the 416th Wall of Honor at the  
416th Archive building in Gainesville]*

**2016 Reunion (below)**  
Gainesville, MO

*standing, l to r: Mickie Weinert, Josie Sittarich, Hilaria Huff  
seated, l to r: Joe Meagher, Bob Kehres, Wayne Downing,  
Dave Andrews, Roland Dullnig*



**2016 Reunion (left)**  
Gainesville, MO

*Wayne and Doris Sayles (right) receiving the 2016 George Bledsoe  
Preservation Award recognizing their "significant contributions to  
the preservation of WWII military aviation history."*







**2017 Reunion (left)  
Rosslyn, VA**

*standing, l to r: Bobbie Kinney, Bob Kehres, Josie Sittarich,  
Joe Meagher, Hilaria Huff  
seated, l to r: Dave Andrews, Roland Dullnig, Wayne Downing*



**2017 Reunion (right)  
Rosslyn, VA**

*l to r: Wayne Downing, Roland Dullnig,  
Joe Meagher, Dave Andrews  
[photo taken at the Air Force Memorial in  
Washington, D.C.]*



**2018 Reunion (left)  
Abilene, TX**

*standing at rear: Mickie Weinert  
seated l to r: Roland Dullnig, Dave Andrews, Bob Kehres*



**2018 Reunion (left)  
Abilene, TX**

*Captains Sean Bruce-Rennick and Anthony Bunker  
of the 28th Bomb Sq. at Dyess AFB—who served as guides for  
the 416th reunion visit to the base in Abilene—with (l-to-r) Dave  
Andrews, Bob Kehres, and Roland Dullnig*

**“The Group – Members of Our 416th Family”  
2018 Reunion (right)  
Abilene, TX**

*[standing in front of a Douglas A-26 Invader at  
Dyess AFB – This aircraft type was flown by the 416th  
out of bases in France from the Fall of 1944  
to the end of the war in Europe]*







"The Group – Members of our 416th Family"  
2015 Reunion (above))  
Albuquerque, NM

We hope you have a many happy memories of our family get-togethers as we do!

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## News from the 416th Archives

Wayne and Doris Sayles



Due to the COVID pandemic, the year 2020 was almost a year lost in time for many Americans. Surprisingly, the 416th Archive witnessed an unprecedented surge in research activity during this difficult time. This was due to several factors, but foremost among them was a seemingly constant barrage of questions from 416th family and friends. Some of these questions came from longtime friends, but a surprising number of them also came from the families of 416th veterans that we were hearing from for the first time. In the process of searching for answers to a broad range of questions, we often encountered a thread of discoveries that might be thought of as a "journey".

This year, for the first time in my memory, there was a distinct change in the nature of Archive research. In the past, many useful and valuable

projects were undertaken by individuals. This year, those projects were almost always undertaken as a team effort with more online and telephone discussion leading not only to project enhancement but also to a wider understanding of the 416th mission and personnel. Unveiling certain aspects of any one veteran's experience generally led to a realization that the same experience was shared by several others or even by the entire Group. While the Archive is a non-profit entity staffed and supported entirely by volunteers, the efforts of those involved are a considerable benefit to all Americans who have a yearning to learn more about those who defended our freedom in the dangerous years of WWII.

In this newsletter, Doris Sayles has mentioned some of the contacts that came through her as the Archive Registrar. Others have come through Rick Prucha, as Webmaster of the 416th.com website. Still others have come through our Archive Facebook page and from Ross Stewart's frequent contact with the Archive in his role as Director of the Wethersfield Museum in England. Ross is a valued colleague and a very dear friend. And, of course many queries came directly to our Archivist email "*Archive@416th.com*". I hesitate to try and name all of those who contributed to this effort, because in these "Golden Years" I am sure to leave out one or two. You all know who you are and I hope you know how much I appreciate your immeasurable help.

For nearly a decade, the Archive has contributed data to a number of researchers and authors here and abroad. The topics have covered a wide range and the correspondents have come from virtually all of the countries of Europe involved in WWII. As a

result, the grateful point of view of those that the 416th helped to rescue from tyranny has been shared with the world and with our own posterity. When we look at the statistics and the Archive web site pages honoring those who served, and many who died in this effort, we can't help but be proud of America.

We at the Archive are committed to continuing this journey and honoring those who served in the 416th and its attached units. The 416th Archive Board of Directors consists of Rick Prucha, whose father was a Pilot in the 668th Bomb Squadron; Tom Rickels, whose uncle was a Pilot (KIA) in the 671st Squadron; Doris Sayles, the Archive Registrar, whose brother was in the Bataan Death March; Wayne Sayles, Honorary 416th Command Pilot and Jean Sittarich, whose father was a gunner in the 668th Squadron and POW. The board meets annually at the 416th reunion and has, to this day, been unanimous in its management decisions.

One of our major projects of 2021 will be to launch a several pronged search for all living 416th veterans. At this time, we can count with certainty only three: Roland Dullnig, Alberie Nadeau and Lucian Syracuse. There are very likely more and we hope to make contact with them. If any readers here know of others, please contact us at the Archives.

*For questions, comments, donations or just the urge to reach out, contact Wayne or Doris by email at [Archive@416th.com](mailto:Archive@416th.com) or telephone 417-499-9831 for Wayne and 417-499-1708 for Doris. The 416th Bomb Group Archive is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.*

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## 416th.com Website Updates

Rick Prucha

In past years during our Annual 416th BG Reunions, Wayne Sayles or Rick Prucha provided a summary of updates made to the 416th.com website since the prior Reunion. The first presentation slide always notes: "The purpose of the 416th Bomb Group Archive is to preserve the memory and honor the accomplishments of this World War II combat unit and its personnel through research, education and public interaction."



The Mission of the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group is “*Keeping memories alive by perpetuating the accomplishments and heritage of the 416th Bomb Group for present and future generations*”. The 416th.com website serves as one component of these common goals.



### Friends and Archive

Shortly after our Wonderful New Orleans Reunion in October, 2019, several members of the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group worked together to put together web pages specifically for the "Friends" organization. The Welcome page is at URL "[416th.com/Friends](http://416th.com/Friends)" and includes links to additional "Friends" related web pages/files.



The 2019 New Orleans, Louisiana Reunion summary web page from Kathe Rensner and Stephanie Andrews is at URL: <https://416th.com/Reunions/2019Reunion.html>. Links are included to Kathe's wonderful Newsletter; Wayne's Memorial video photo remembrance of Dave Andrews, Bob Kehres, and Joe Meagher; Reunion Photos and the Archive/Website presentations.

Some of the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group are organizing the "As Time Goes By..." 416th Bomb Group Tour to WWII England, May 26 – June 2, 2021. Information can be found at URL: [https://416th.com/Friends/2021\\_416thBG\\_EnglandTour.html](https://416th.com/Friends/2021_416thBG_EnglandTour.html)

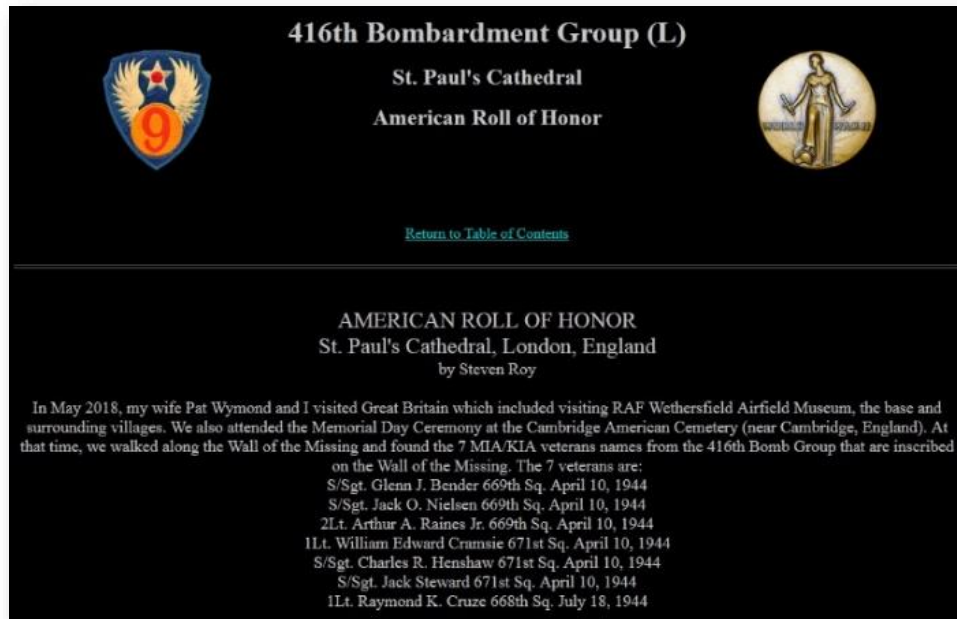
The 416th Bomb Group Archive page (<https://416th.com/archive.html>) was updated to include links to three News articles featuring Wayne and Doris and their Archive efforts and accomplishments.

## Memorials

During the 2018 Abilene and 2019 New Orleans Reunions, Steve Roy gave updates on his "discovery" of the American Roll of Honor books at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, England, and his subsequent successful



efforts to add the names of the six 416th MIA/KIA veterans not yet listed. Steve's summary is the "St. Paul's Cathedral American Roll of Honor" webpage – [https://416th.com/Memorials/StPaulsCathedral\\_RollOfHonor.html](https://416th.com/Memorials/StPaulsCathedral_RollOfHonor.html)

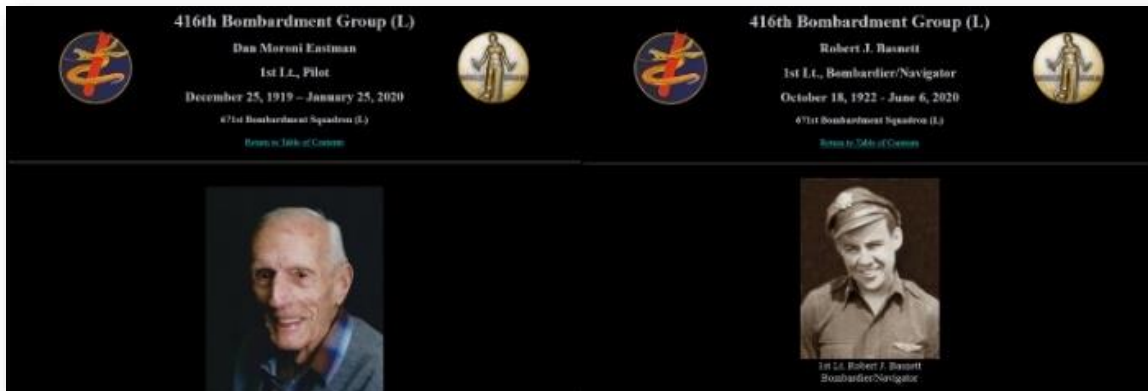


Steve also assisted Veterans Dave Andrews, Roland Dullnig and Alberie Nadeau in obtaining their French Legion of Honor Medal Awards (<https://416th.com/PhotoCollections/FrenchLegionOfHonor.html>). The National Order of the Legion of Honor, premier order of the French republic, was created by Napoleon Bonaparte on May 19, 1802 as a general military and civil order of merit conferred without regard to birth or religion provided that anyone admitted swears to uphold liberty and equality. This prestigious Medal has been recently awarded by the people of France to American Veterans who fought for the liberation of France during World War II. The webpage includes links to the individual Veteran's Awards.



Post-War Obituary pages added this year include Dan Moroni Eastman ([https://416th.com/Obits/671-EastmanDan\\_Obit.html](https://416th.com/Obits/671-EastmanDan_Obit.html)) and Robert J. and Lanola "Puz" Basnett ([https://416th.com/Obits/671-BasnettRobert\\_Obit.html](https://416th.com/Obits/671-BasnettRobert_Obit.html)). Also, the Meredith Joy Huff Veteran Photo and Documents pages were expanded

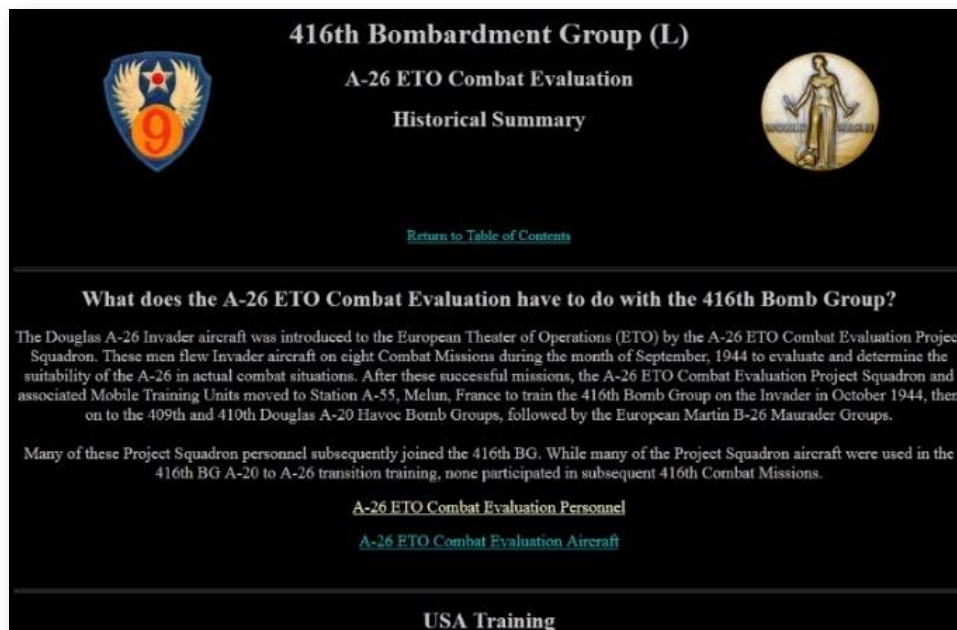
with over 550 WWII-Era ([https://416th.com/PhotoCollections/669-HuffMeredith\\_Photos.html](https://416th.com/PhotoCollections/669-HuffMeredith_Photos.html)) and Post-War ([https://416th.com/PhotoCollections/669-HuffMeredith\\_Post-WWII\\_Photos.html](https://416th.com/PhotoCollections/669-HuffMeredith_Post-WWII_Photos.html)) Photographs and Documents which were organized, digitally preserved, and graciously provided to the 416th BG Archive by Arlene and Roy Hohn.



## Research

34 Aircraft Accident Report PDF files were acquired and added, so we now have nearly ALL of the Missing Air Crew (MACR) and Aircraft Accident Report (AAR) original document scans available on the website. The index page is [https://416th.com/MACR\\_AAR/416th\\_MACR\\_AAR.html](https://416th.com/MACR_AAR/416th_MACR_AAR.html)

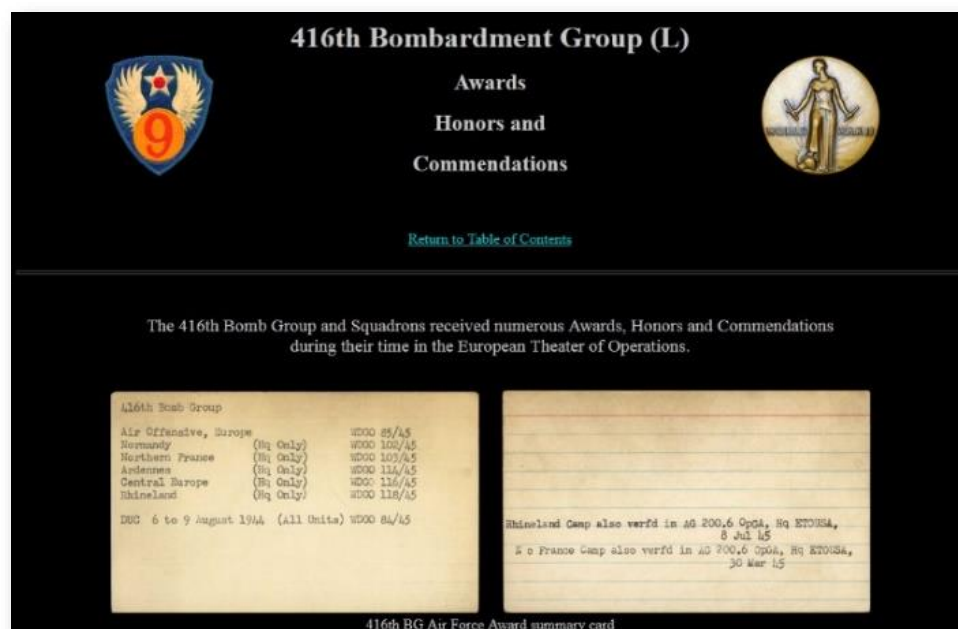
We researched and summarized the early history of the Douglas A-26 "Invader" aircraft and its Combat Evaluation and Introduction to the European Theater of Operations (ETO) ([https://416th.com/A-26-ETO-CombatEval/A-26-ETO-CE\\_HistoricalSummary.html](https://416th.com/A-26-ETO-CombatEval/A-26-ETO-CE_HistoricalSummary.html)). This research led to updates to the 416th Conversion from A-20 to A-26 type aircraft page ([https://416th.com/416th\\_history\\_a-26conversion.html](https://416th.com/416th_history_a-26conversion.html)) and lists of the first 500 A-26's manufactured at the Douglas Long Beach (DL) and Douglas Tulsa (DT) Plants, including Individual Aircraft Record Cards (IARC) images for many of the 416th planes (see links available on the A-26 "Invader" page <https://416th.com/a26.html>).





The 416th BG Transfer from Lake Charles, LA to Laurel, MS – Special Orders No. 278, Effective 31-Oct-1943 – were transcribed, which includes the complete list of personnel by Squadrons as of that transfer date. Both the transcription and original images are available at URL [https://416th.com/416th\\_history\\_LCAAF\\_SO278.html](https://416th.com/416th_history_LCAAF_SO278.html)

The 416th Bomb Group and Squadrons received numerous Awards, Honors and Commendations during their WWII time in the European Theater of Operations. Details are on web page [https://416th.com/416th\\_history\\_awards.html](https://416th.com/416th_history_awards.html), including links to more information on 416th BG Battle Participation Credits of their various WWII Campaigns.



#### 416TH.COM COUNTS AND STATISTICS FOR 2020

Website File Type	2020 Count	2019 Count	Increase
Individual Web Pages	946	899	47
Images (Photos/Documents)	8,263	7,011	1,252
PDF files (1,144 AFHRA Mission Files)	2,079	1,930	149
Videos	51	48	3
Total Website Size - GB	22.1	16.5	5.6
Total Website Size - # Files	17,856	15,323	2,533

(Above file counts do not include 311 Carl Sgamboti Website files)

Website Usage	2020 Total	2020 Monthly Average	2019 Total	2019 Monthly Average
Unique Visitors	13,519	1,127	16,473	1,346
Number of Visits	62,066	5,172	37,891	2,985
Pages	133,507	11,126	109,566	8,639
Hits	342,170	28,514	394,131	32,773
Bandwidth - GB	166	14	200	16

## Thank You

As always, we wish to **Sincerely Thank** all those who volunteer and contribute to the 416th.com website, including but not limited to: Wayne and Doris Sayles, Chris and Mary Adams, Jane Enman, Rich Milhorn, Kathe and Gary Rensner, Tom Rickels, Jim Roeder, Steve Roy, Carl Sgamboti, Jean Sittarich, Ross Stewart, and Rick Prucha.

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## THE 416<sup>TH</sup> BG AND THE FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

The certificate honoring its recipient reads “*Honneur et Patrie*”, the motto of the *Ordre National de la Légion d’Honneur* or the National Order of the Legion of Honor – “Honor and Country”. This world-renowned Order is the highest decoration in France for military and civil merits. For two centuries, it has been rewarding the outstanding merits of citizens and designating them as models of service to France.

**A Brief History.** Prior to the French Revolution, the Order of St. Louis was the most popular honor in the French kingdom. Louis XIV founded it in 1693 and it was comprised of various ranks – grand crosses, commanders and chevaliers (or knights) – all of whom were Catholic officers of the royal army. Louis XV instituted the Order of Military Merit for Protestant foreign officers serving in France.

After the Revolution, the royal orders of the Kings were abolished. The Legion of Honor was founded on May 19, 1802, by First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte, in a hostile context. After lengthy discussions at the Council of State, it was adopted by 56 votes for and 38 against by the *Tribunat*, and 166 votes for and 110 against by the *Corps législatif* (legislative body). The new institution was part of the extensive program to reorganize the State, along with the Civil Code, the *Conseil d’Etat* (Council of State), the Court of Auditors, the prefects and the *grandes écoles* (specialized national elite schools).

Napoleon Bonaparte was aware of the need to restore a comprehensive system of rewards, inspired by ancient honorific orders swept away by the

Revolution, but respectful of equality among citizens. To that end, he pursued three visionary objectives:

- Reconciling the French, exhausted by a decade of political instability and military conflicts
- Reuniting them around a common ideal: individual honor and national honor
- Uniting the courage of military personnel with the talents of civilians, as the strong symbol of a powerful and unified State.

On July 15, 1804, the first *Légion d’Honneur* were awarded in the Chapel of The Invalides with the emperor personally bestowing the awards in a grand military and religious ceremony. Along the first to be honored were eighteen marshals, five cardinals and a number of scholars, scientists, writers and composers. By 1812, 1,400 civilians had been decorated. A few weeks later on, August 16, in a solemn military ceremony held at *Boulogne-sur-Mer*, the troops who were to embark for England and were within sight of the enemy’s shores were personally bestowed the new honor by Napoleon.



*Napoléon Bonaparte, First Consul of the French Republic, in the first presentation of the Légions d'honneur in the Chapel of Les Invalides, July 15, 1804.*



To spur the members of the Legion to even greater efforts in the service of their country he instituted four ranks in the Legion: knight, officer, commander, and grand-officer. Later, as Emperor, Napoleon added a fifth rank: "Grand croix" (grand cross), called "grand-eagle" during his reign. The ranks of grand officer and grand cross are known as *dignités* ("dignities") today.

What the creation of the *Légion d'Honneur* heralded was important. Instead of privileges, exemptions, or remuneration as with the royal orders, there was now recognition only of individual merit, acquired by service and not transmitted by birth. By honoring the different kinds of services rendered to the country, this new order reflected the ideals of the revolution.

At the turn of the twentieth century, there were just under 45,000 French members of the *Légion d'Honneur*. But everything changed with World War I. By the countless sacrifices and acts of courage that it generated, the 1914-1918 war compelled a change in the award criteria of the *Légion d'Honneur*. The awards were further heightened by every new conflict: World War II, Indochina war and Algerian war. By 1962, the Order had 320,000 members.

In 1962, General Charles de Gaulle, as President of France, undertook a major reform of the system of national decorations in order to stop the growth of the Order. (He thought the rapid growth the Order undermined the prestige of the Legion of Honor.) He reestablished the *Légion d'honneur* as the premiere award for "eminent merit" (*mérites éminents*) restoring the *Légion d'Honneur* to its original concept as the highest general military and civil order of merit.

**Membership.** While membership in the Legion still is technically restricted to French nationals, foreign nationals who have served France or the ideals it upholds may receive the honor. Foreign nationals who live in France are subject to the same requirements as the French, but those foreign nationals who live abroad may be awarded a distinction of any rank or *dignités* in the Legion. American and British veterans who served in either World War on French soil, or during at least one of the 1944 campaigns to liberate France (Normandy,

Southern France, Northern France, and the Ardennes), may be eligible for appointment as Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, provided they were still living when the honor was approved.

**The Insignia.** The insignia of the Legion of Honor is a five-armed Maltese asterisk, topped by an oak and laurel wreath. The central disc, enameled white, is surrounded by oak and laurel branches.

On the obverse is depicted the effigy of the Republic (head of Marianne) with the epigraph "*République française*" (French Republic).



On the reverse, there are two tricolor flags and the inscription of the Order's motto, "*Honneur et Patrie*" (Honor and Country), and the date of its creation, "29 Floreal Year X" (19 May 1802).

**The Legion of Honor and the 416th Bomb Group.** The members of the 416th BG greatly distinguished themselves in their 14 months of combat operations in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) having fought valiantly in seven campaigns during 1944-1945: Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe; and Air Combat European-African-Middle Eastern (EAME) Theater. Three of these meet the requirements of membership in the Legion of Honor (Normandy, Northern France, and the Ardennes). Is there any wonder that the 416th

truly lived out the Legion's motto "Honor and Country"?

## A Note from Steve Roy

*[Excerpted from Steve's "Keeping in Touch" update which you will find later in this newsletter]*

In 2020, I learned about the French Legion of Honor Medal that our 416th Bomb Group veterans are eligible to receive from the French Government. This prestigious medal dates back to Napoleon Bonaparte and is awarded to WWII veterans that served in France to free France from Nazi Germany. It is an honor and privilege to have worked with the 416th veterans' families during the application process to successfully bring about the award of the French Legion of Honor Medal for the following 416th Bomb Group veterans:

T/Sgt. Roland Dullnig, 668th Squadron  
Cpl. Alberie Nadeau, 671st Squadron  
1Lt. Bob Basnett, 671st Squadron

Please note that 1Lt. Dave Andrews, 671st Squadron, received his French Legion of Honor medal in 2019.

To learn more about the 416th Bomb Group and the French Legion of Honor medal please go to:  
<https://416th.com/PhotoCollections/FrenchLegionOfHonor.html>

If you know of a surviving 416th Bomb Group veteran, please contact me and I can assist you in applying for French Legion of Honor Medal. To receive the medal, you must be alive when your application is approved by the French Government.

## OUR 416th BG LEGION OF HONOR AWARDEES

**T/Sgt. Roland E. Dullnig**

Crew Chief, 668th BS

[Honor awarded February 8, 2020]



**Cpl. Alberie J. "Frenchie" Nadeau**

Clerk, 671st BS

[Honor awarded March 6, 2020]





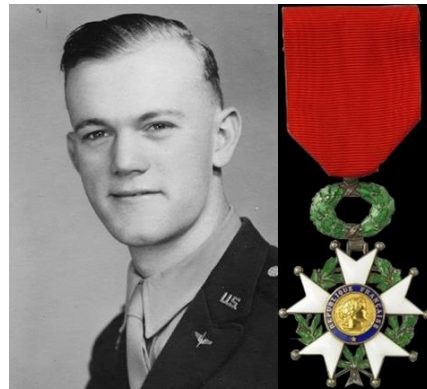
**1Lt. Robert J. Basnett**

Bombardier/ Navigator, 671st BS  
[Honor awarded posthumously  
September 29, 2020]



**1Lt. Harold D. "Dave" Andrews, Jr.**

Pilot, 671st BS  
[Honor awarded posthumously  
December 18, 2019]



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## RECOLLECTIONS FROM OUR VETERAN FAMILIES

### How My Parents Met

submitted by Roselyn Owens Thomas

daughter of veteran James Luther Owens, 1781st Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company who served with the 416th in Wethersfield, England, and Melun, France

November 6, 2020, was my parents' 75<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, the second they celebrated together, after a half century apart, in Heaven. I posted their wedding photo, and a short explanation of why their wedding took place a day after it was originally scheduled, on Facebook. A few days later, when back on social media, I noticed a Veteran's Day post from the 416th Bomb Group, which I began following last year just weeks after my mother's passing. I was moved to send the group a message about my father and my search—aided greatly by my genealogist daughter—to flesh out my father's long-ago stories about his WWII service. The groups' responses and offers of assistance have been amazing and generous beyond description! We think maybe my father—

James Luther Owens, from Fountain, North Carolina, who went by "Jimmy"—was assigned to the 1781st Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company and served with the 416th from England, across the English Channel to Melun, where he met and married my mother, to Laon.

There are so many stories to tell and I love to tell stories. Here are two of them.

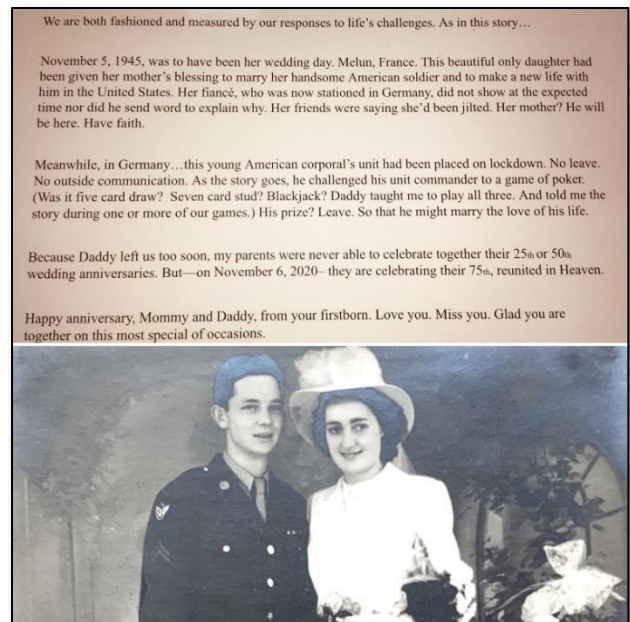
The first has always been my favorite fairy tale. "A beautiful young woman from the village meets her Prince Charming at a dance in a castle on her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday". In real life, my mother's (Gisèle Renée Ollivon) carriage was most likely a Red Cross truck. The castle was a large home, Chateau Coubert, used

as headquarters for the US military forces assigned to Melun.

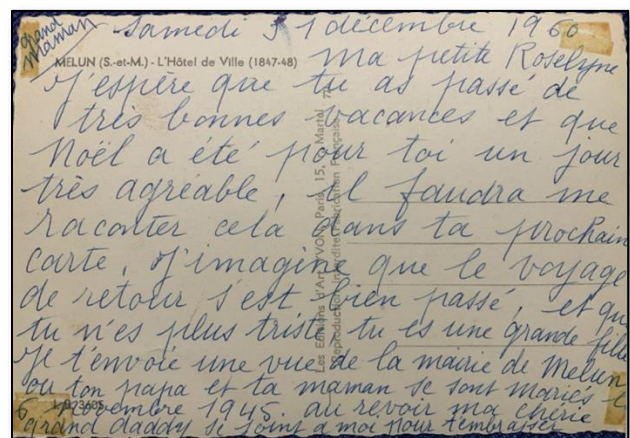
The dance was either the Friday before or the Friday after her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, which fell on a Sunday in 1944....



The beautiful young woman and her Prince Charming set their wedding date: November 5, 1945. But, as in most fairy tales, there's always that last glitch before the "happily ever after" ending...



When I was 13, Grandmaman Yvonne sent me this postcard of the Mairie in Melun where my parents civil wedding service was held. They were also married in the rectory of the local Catholic Church that day...





## RECOLLECTIONS FROM OUR VETERAN FAMILIES

### *Furlough in Paris*

submitted by Rich Milhorn

son of 416th veteran 1Lt. Gentry "Bud" Milhorn, 671st BS

My father, 1Lt. Gentry "Bud" Milhorn served with the 671st BS from October 1, 1944 through V-E Day. During that time, he piloted 40 combat missions. The 416th then undertook training for the Pacific Theatre. In August, 1945 he joined a flight echelon that ferried fifteen A-26 aircraft home to Hunter Field, Georgia. While in the air over the Atlantic Ocean word was received via radio that Japan had surrendered. The war was over and they really were going home.

Lt. Milhorn and his buddies liked to furlough in Paris. In his private photo collection (that I only discovered in the years since his death in 2000) are several photos from one of those furloughs in the Spring of 1945. The two photos below are of Lt. Milhorn on the left and an unidentified Pilot that accompanied him. If any family member, or friend recognizes the officer on the right please notify the newsletter editor. The photo on the left was captioned on the back, "That's me in the center with the uniform on", lest someone mistake him for the naked boy in the sculpture, I suppose. Both of these photos were taken in the Trocadero Garden with the Palais de Chaillot in the background.

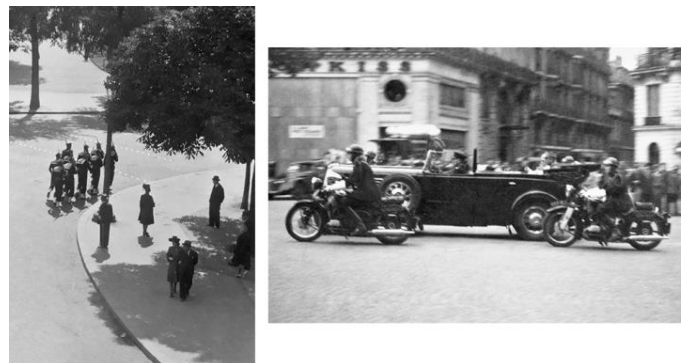


(Note: These photos have been cropped and reduced in size to fit the newsletter. For a better view please visit [416th.com](http://416th.com) and click on **416th Veterans Photo Collections** and then navigate to **1Lt. Gentry L. "Bud" MILHORN, Pilot, 671st B.S.**)

The next two photos are icons of Paris that most everyone will recognize. Pictured on the left, the Eiffel Tower and on the right, the Arc de Triomphe.



Below, the photo on the left is a street scene with soldiers marching in formation and civilians out and about in their Parisian finery. The photo on the right is an unidentified official with an escort of what appears to be a military motorcycle entourage.



Shortly after I found these photos, two interrelated things happened. First, my wife and I had planned a tour with Road Scholar to visit Brittany, Normandy, and Paris in the Fall of 2019. Not long after, while trying to document my Dad's military history, I stumbled upon the 416.com website and emailed a question about how to decipher a "Loading List". Both Wayne Sayles and Rick Prucha were quick to respond and I was off to the races in what has become an ongoing research project with no apparent end in sight! Our trip to

France actually coincided with the 416th Bomb Group reunion. So, we were over there touring the D-Day sites while many of you were gathered in New Orleans to celebrate & remember the achievements of the 416th Bomb Group during WWII. I would now like to share a small bit of what we saw and learned on our trip in October, 2019.

## Normandy D-Day Sites & Memorials

The first week of our tour was spent in Brittany visiting several cities and sites that had severe WWII stories to tell. From Quimper, to Vannes, to St. Malo and many points in between our group of American tourists were greeted with thankfulness and praise for the efforts of the American military to liberate them from the Nazis. Upon leaving Brittany we immediately began to explore WWII battlegrounds and memorials as described below:

### *Port-en-Bessin*

As we entered Normandy one of our first stops was the small village of Port-en-Bessin, located near Omaha Beach. When we arrived in mid-October, 2019, the store fronts were still decorated as they were for the 75th D-Day remembrance in June. The following three photos display their gratitude. I especially like the first one because it appears to me that the twin engine airplane is an American A-20, complete with Invasion Stripes.



The next two photos also show the appreciation of the shop owners and residents of this small fishing village that was liberated on June 7, 1944, by a combination of British forces (who had landed on

Gold Beach) and American troops (who had landed on Omaha Beach) as they converged on the city.



Here we see a big THANK YOU to the paratroopers that jumped to help save them. And, below, we see a British fighter plane, paratroopers, and an American Jeep with two G.I.s standing by.



### *Longues-sur-Mer Battery*

Stretched out along the coast of France, Norway, and Finland are the remnants of the "Atlantic Wall", a system of fortifications constructed by Nazi Germany to guard against invasion by Great Britain and its allies. Designed to be impenetrable, these batteries were massive and the guns had a firing range of up to 12 miles. There were four of these long-range weapons at Longues-sur-Mer. Positioned on a 200-foot-high cliff, and located between Omaha Beach and Gold Beach, they were used to fire on both beaches during D-Day.





Shown above is a single battery with the gun still in place 75 years after it was last used on D-Day. The photo below shows three of the four gun batteries at Longues-sur-Mer, a truly formidable sight.



## Omaha Beach

Our next stop was Omaha Beach. As we approached in our tour bus, we passed by an intact German pillbox (see below) located in the hillside above a house.



Next, we passed by the site of the "First American Cemetery in France" that was established after D-Day. Those buried here have since been

relocated to the Normandy American Cemetery, just a short distance away. (Pardon the image quality, please. It was photographed through a rain-drenched bus window.)



And, now, the infamous Omaha Beach. The first photo is looking right from my vantage point and the second photo is looking left. Nothing but a pure sandy beach, nothing like it looked on D-Day with so many men and so many casualties.



Nearby, overlooking Omaha Beach is a monument to Charles Norman Shay, one of thousands of Native Americans to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. His story is one of bravery and



heroism of the highest order. The next few photographs attempt to highlight his accomplishments. Mr. Shay is still alive. He is approaching 96 years of age and lives within a few miles of Omaha Beach. The first photograph is of a stone monument in his honor that depicts a turtle which is of special importance to him.



The second photograph is a plaque dedicated to Mr. Shay adjacent to the Turtle Monument.



## Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial

Of all the things we saw and the sites we visited on our tour through Normandy none was quite so poignant as walking onto the grounds of the Normandy American Cemetery that overlooks Omaha Beach. Here, 9,387 American troops are buried and another 1,557 listed as missing in action are honored in the Garden of the Missing.



Pictured above are but a few of the thousands of gravesites at the cemetery.

The Garden of the Missing, below, honors those missing in action with a wall that lists name, rank, military unit, and home State.



The next two images show the memorial & reflecting pool, followed by a special wreath laying ceremony at the foot of the statue, "The Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves". The three people in the center of the photograph were on our tour. Each of their fathers landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day, fought, survived, and came home after the war.







## Pointe du Hoc

Next stop, Pointe du Hoc where U.S. Army Rangers assaulted the Nazi gun battery on D-Day and took control of it after two days of fighting.



A monument dedicated to the Rangers stands atop a Nazi bunker at the cliff's edge.



The next two photos are of bomb craters created by intense aerial attacks on Pointe du Hoc by allied aircraft. The batteries, though damaged somewhat, still stand today.



I had asked our tour guide a day or two before our visit to Pointe du Hoc if he knew about the involvement of the 416th Bomb Group on D-Day and beyond. He certainly did. As we were in the bus headed for our next stop, he told me to look out the window. I looked out upon an open field of farmland (see photo below). The guide said that was the location of "Advanced Landing Ground A-1" a temporary airfield that was constructed within days of the D-Day invasion to support Allied aircraft. The 416th B.G. used this airfield on a limited basis as it worked its way deeper into France.





## *Arromanches and the Mulberry Harbours*

On to Arromanches where the British constructed a temporary, portable harbor within days of the D-Day invasion. These harbors (code name: Mulberry) were prefabricated in England, shipped across the English Channel and installed at a few locations on the coast of France. They were used to transport supplies to Allied troops until the permanent French harbors could be liberated from German control.



Photo of the beach at Arromanches with remnants of the Mulberry Harbour, both on the beach and out in the water. Pictured below is the D-Day Museum at Arromanches.



## *Caen Memorial Museum*

Our last stop of the tour was the Caen Memorial Museum. As we traveled away from the beaches on our way to Caen, we encountered a roundabout with a familiar name and face, the Rond-Point Eisenhower (see below). General Dwight D. Eisenhower was Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces. He is still revered in France to this day.



The Caen Memorial Museum is packed with artifacts, dioramas, photographs, and a walk-through history from WWII to present times. As you enter the lobby you are greeted by a British Hawker Typhoon fighter suspended from the ceiling.



As we departed the museum all the flags of the Allied Forces were flying gloriously in the afternoon sun. What a great way to end our tour of Normandy. And, a great way to end this story!





## CONNECTIONS AND A SHARED MISSION

submitted by Kathe Rensner in Collaboration with Joseph Wilds

Kathe is the niece of veteran 1Lt. Francis W De Mand, Pilot in the 671st BS (KIA 1944)

Joseph is the grandson of S/Sgt. Harley J Wilds Sr., Gunner, 671st BS, (MIA, POW, RMC, RTD)

This year's pandemic made Americans more tech-savvy as we relied on our cellphones and emails to keep us connected with our families and friends. I never thought that I'd become somewhat proficient in texting and emailing people! Such was the case, though, when I received an email from Joseph Wilds with pictures of his grandfather, S/Sgt. Harley J. Wilds, who served with the 671st BS. Joseph is one of our newer members of the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group; in fact, he had first received a newsletter from the Friends in 2019. Joseph sent his first email to me earlier this year and the first set of photos he shared were of his grandfather and his grandmother, Josephine.

**S/Sgt. Wilds, Patriot, Gunner, and POW.** One photo of S/Sgt. Wilds, who enlisted in 1942, shows a proud American in his Army Air Corps uniform.



Harley and Josephine



Harley J. Wilds

He spent many months training and serving in the 411th BG, a Replacement Training Unit based in South Carolina, before transferring to the 416 BG, 671st BS in May, 1944, along with Pilot 1Lt. Robert York and gunner S/Sgt. Lewis Ashton.



1Lt. Robert York(middle), S/Sgt. Lewis Ashton(left), and S/Sgt. Harley Wilds(right)

Included among those first photos, were pictures of the German POW camp Stalag Luft IV where I learned S/Sgt. Wilds was imprisoned during the war.

### A Very Brief German Language Lesson

**Dulag-Luft** – in German, Dulag is a contraction of the word *durchgangslager* or “transit camp” [a literal translation is *Durchgang* = passage(way) and *Lager* = camp, so “camp of passage” or “transit camp”]. In German, *Luft* is “air”. So, Dulag-Luft was the transit camp for captured Air Force personnel. Dulag-Luft had 3 sections: a hospital at Hohemark, an interrogation center at Oberursel, and a transit camp at Wetzlar.

**Stalag** – in German, Stalag is a shortened form of the word *Stammlager*, which itself is another, shorter word for *Kriegsgefangenen-Mannschaftsstammlager* [a literal translation is *Krieg* = war, *gefangenen* = captured/prisoner, *Mannschaft* = crew, *Stamm* = cadre, and *Lager* = camp, so “prisoners of war camp”].

**Stalag Luft** = see above for “Stalag” and “Luft”. Combining the words together means “prisoner of war camp for captured Air Force personnel”.

When *Luft* occurs in the titles, as in Dulag-Luft and Stalag Luft IV, the camps are run exclusively by *Luftwaffe* personnel [*Luft* = air, *Waffe* = weapon, so “air weapon” or “Air Force”]. In contrast, the Stalags were run by the German Army for captured Allied personnel who were not Air Force.

Joseph sent me a copy of the Dulag-Luft POW record card for his grandfather. The Dulag-Luft were transit points located throughout Germany that were the first to receive and process captured Allied Air Force personnel.

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*Dulag-Luft where S/Sgt. Wilds was processed as a Prisoner of War.*

From the Dulag-Luft, S/Sgt. Wilds was transferred to Stalag IX-C located near the town of Bad Sulza in central Germany, between Erfurt and Leipzig. Under the administration of Stalag IX-C was a large hospital called *Reserve-Lazaret IX-C(a)* in the town of Obermaßfeld southwest of Erfurt, where S/Sgt. Wilds may have been treated for his injuries. He was interrogated by the German Luftwaffe officers and eventually transferred to Stalag Luft IV where he remained until he was liberated in May, 1944. The map below shows the locations on his POW journey.



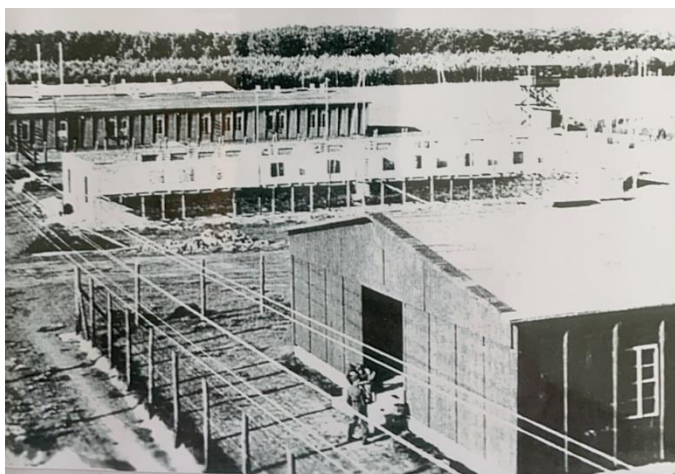
*Map of Germany during the War showing Wilds POW journey from when he was captured (near Jülich, where Wilds' plane was shot down, far left) to Stalag Luft IV (far right)*

The stark black and white photos I saw of the prison camp showed prisoners existing in horrific conditions. In fact, when I searched for more information on Stalag Luft IV on the Internet, I discovered that conditions were indeed very poor; open latrines, no wash-up facilities, scarce blankets, unheated wooden barracks, and poor food were among an ever-growing list of complaints. The camp opened in 1939 and was one of the largest Stalags in Germany. In May, 1944, the camp was opened for American POWs. The International Red Cross inspected the camp in October, 1944, noting the general condition of the camp was bad and citing it held 8,255 prisoners – of which 7,089 were American – more than twice too many inmates as it could hold.





Map of Stalag Luft IV



View of Stalag Luft IV



Another View of Stalag Luft IV. (notice Guard Tower, right)



Coming into the Vorlager at Stalag Luft IV

Coming into the Vorlager at Stalag Luft IV.  
 "Vorlager", in English means "pre-camp" – the main camp area for such things as the infirmary, food and clothing storerooms, guard quarters, and administration buildings.  
 [Notice the German Shepherd dogs.]



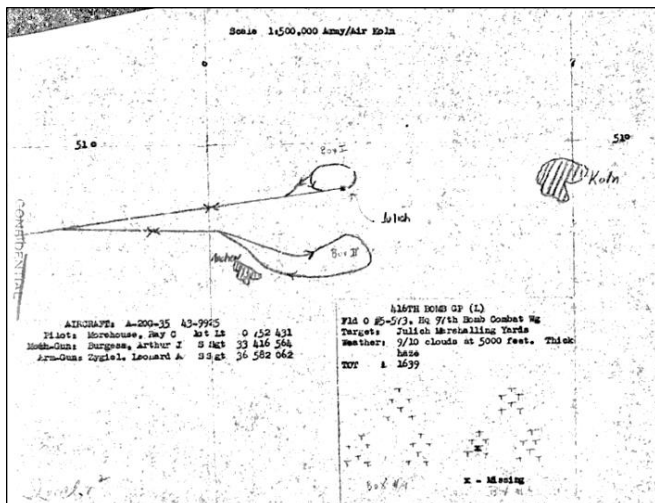
Roll Call at Stalag Luft IV



After the war, S/Sgt. Wilds enlisted in the Air Force where he remained until his retirement in 1964. He passed away in 1969, leaving boxes of his military records for his family to keep. He received the Prisoner of War Medal posthumously in 2013.

**Connection – A Shared History and Mission.** I made the first of several immediate connections with Joseph and his grandfather. I discovered that we had a significant date in common: September 29, 1944. On that day, the 671st BS flew two missions out of Melun, France, targeting marshalling yards located in Germany. Mission 148 flew in the morning and targeted the Bitburg Warehouse and Marshalling Yards; Mission 149 flew in afternoon targeting the Jülich Marshalling Yards to destroy the stockpile of equipment and materiel meant to shore up the German army in the battle front. Joseph Wilds' family and mine share Mission 149 in common.

Both S/Sgt. Wilds and my uncle, 1Lt. Francis W. De Mand, flew in Mission 149. The Loading List for that mission shows two Boxes with three Flight Groups of six planes each. My uncle was the Flight Leader for Box 2/Flight III and flew in Plane 1. His crew included two gunners, S/Sgt. Clyde Middleton and S/Sgt. Rueben Troyer, and Bombardier/Navigator, 1Lt. Alwin Burns. Unfortunately, heavy flak over the target made a direct hit on my uncle's plane and its gasoline tank exploded killing him instantly. Burns and Troyer were MIA and declared dead. S/Sgt. Middleton parachuted safely to the ground, but was captured shortly thereafter and became a POW.



Route Map of Mission 149 Showing Separation of Boxes 1 and 2

S/Sgt. Wilds was in Box2/Flight III/Plane 2 with Pilot 1Lt. Robert York and fellow gunner S/Sgt. Lewis Ashton. Their plane was seen at the target, diving and losing altitude. The third plane, Box 2/Flight III/Plane 4 Piloted by 1Lt. R.C. Morehouse with S/Sgt. L.A. Ziegel and S/Sgt. A.J. Burgess as gunners, did the same maneuver, diving and losing altitude over the target. No parachutes were seen coming from Planes 2 and 4; however, it appears S/Sgt. Wilds was able to land safely on the ground only to be captured becoming a POW, the same as happened to S/Sgt. Middleton in my uncle's crew.

The 416th flew in 16 missions during the month of September, 1944. Mission 149 was the last mission of the month and the end of a day in which five crews were lost. In his book, *Attack Bombers We Need You!*, Ralph Conte, who served with the 669th BS and 670th BS, wrote about Mission 149 as "one of the costliest missions for the group...five planes and crews were lost".

MISSION NO. 149		LOADING LIST		29 SEPTEMBER 1944	
		BOX II		FLIGHT I	
1.	442 D	MAJOR J.G. HAPIER	4.	159 G	LT J.E. BLONGREEN
		LT C.W. JONES			S/SGT. M. BOOKACH



Incidentally and as a side note, 1Lt. Dave Andrews, who passed away in July 2019, Piloted Box 2/Flight III, Plane 3 on the same Mission and returned safely to base. I got to know Dave Andrews through the 416th reunions. More about him and our encounter later.

As another side note, 1Lt. Dan Eastman, who passed away this past January (see our *In Memoriam* section at the end of this newsletter), piloted Box 2/Flight III/Plane 6 on that same Mission also. He, too, returned safely to base. I was able to connect with his family earlier this year as well. It seems Box 2/Flight III and I have a lot in common.

**Connections – On the Home Front.** At home, both Joseph's grandmother and mine received the same tragic news at nearly the same time. According to Joseph, he remembers his grandmother (Josephine) telling him she thought S/Sgt. Wilds had been killed in action. Joseph said, "My grandmother and his great grandparents were at home when the military car drove up. My grandmother said that she passed out, and my great grandparents were attending to her as the Chaplain and military driver stepped up to the door. They saw what was happening and began assisting, too". Months later, the family found out that S/Sgt. Wilds had been captured and taken prisoner.

For my family, receiving the news of my uncle's passing was an exceedingly painful day and a hard pill to swallow for my grandmother. After that day, my grandmother rarely spoke about my Uncle Francis other than the time she visited his grave site at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, Netherlands shortly after the war.

Both Joseph's family and mine carried the burden of loss connecting us emotionally and connecting us to the 416th BG family in an even stronger way.

**Connections – Living Histories with Memories to Tell.** Both Joseph and I have discovered that another family from the 416th BG shares the story of Mission 149. At my first 416th BG Reunion in 2014 in Indianapolis, Indiana, I met several veterans, including Ralph Conte, who knew my uncle Francis. During a discussion with Ralph, I told him about my grandmother's reticence to talk about my Uncle

Francis preventing me from learning more about my uncle, who died before I was born. I owe a great debt of gratitude to the late Mr. Conte because he taught me about the 416th BG, showed me records of my uncle's service in England and France, and introduced me to the 416th website to learn even more.

He also introduced me to Dave Andrews who was the Pilot in Box 2/Flight III/Plane 3, my uncle's wingman on Mission 149. He witnessed my uncle's plane exploding, seeing my uncle cover his face with his arms just seconds before the plane engulfed in flames while losing altitude. His tender recalling of my uncle slumping over as his plane was taking a direct hit has forged a strong bond and friendship between my family and the Andrews family. Amazingly, Dave Andrews had witnessed the demise of all three planes in Box 2/Flight III on Mission 149, connecting us all in memory of that fateful day – a remarkable connection indeed between the Andrews and Wilds families and mine.

**Connections – The Friends of the 416th BG Family.** When he contacted me earlier this year, Joseph had begun searching out more of his grandfather's military service in those boxes of military records he left behind when he passed away in 1969, including information about his time with the 416th. His search turned to discovery as he became a part of the Friends of the 416th family and began sharing his grandfather's story with us. When he did, I was able to connect with someone with whom I shared common feelings and history. The connection in life between his grandfather and my uncle made 76 years ago while at Wethersfield, England, and Melun, France, has now connected Joseph and me through history and memory. I truly believe the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group and our newsletter was an important catalyst in that reconnection.

The Friends of the 416th BG has one mission: *To keep memories alive by perpetuating the accomplishments and heritage of the 416th Bomb Group for present and future generations.* Certainly, the connection between Joseph Wilds and the Friends of the 416th BG has kept the memory alive of his

grandfather and his service during WWII. It is not often that we as Friends can take part in honoring the sacrifices of our beloved 416th Veterans such as those Harley Wilds made. I wish that I could have met him face-to-face and shaken his hand to thank him.

Kathe Rensner  
in collaboration with Joseph Wilds  
*Friends of the 416th Bomb Group*

Recommended Links to Learn More:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalag\\_IX-C](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalag_IX-C)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dulag\\_Luft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dulag_Luft)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalag\\_Luft\\_IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalag_Luft_IV)

<https://www.b24.net/powStalag4.htm>

<https://www.416th.com/missions/mission149.html>



December 14, 2020

To the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group,

Steve Roy, Son of Roger Roy, 671st Squadron; Ross Stewart, Curator, Wethersfield Airfield Museum; and Dr. Vernon Williams, Military Historian have put together a plan to visit England in May/June 2021 that will center on the Wethersfield Airfield Museum at the old 416th airbase and other places where the air war unfolded during WWII in East Anglia. **This is an opportunity of a life time.**

The tour will include six days in England and two travel days—eight days in all (**May 26 through June 2, 2021**). To eliminate a tour company and extra expenses, everyone on the tour will pay as you go for their own airfare, train, meals, and hotel. The group will share the cost of a van that Vernon will rent in Braintree and drive for the group. We will split the cost of the van and gas so we can make the trip as inexpensive as possible with no middle man expenses. Having the van will make our visit more flexible, able to go anywhere at anytime, especially locally.

We will be on hand at the Cambridge American Cemetery for the Memorial Day (May 31) ceremony and wreath laying observance. This will be a special day for all of us.

The daily sheets that follow include a plan for each day of the tour, including the travel days. Click for Information on Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Tour to WWII England, May 26 – June 2, 2021.

As we make the tour's final arrangements, adjustments and changes will be made to the final itinerary packet that will be issued to each family who signs up for the tour. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic we are uncertain as of this writing whether we will be able to safely conduct this tour. As an aggressive vaccination program has started in the United Kingdom. Our vaccination pro-gram in the United States is not far behind. We will know more in the February/March timeframe whether we can safely conduct this tour. Please look over the individual day plans for the tour and consider if you will join us on this extraordinary odyssey. Please let us know of your interest by **February 1, 2021**. You can contact Steve Roy by sending an email to [stevenroy1@comcast.net](mailto:stevenroy1@comcast.net)



Click on this link for Information on Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Tour to WWII England,  
May 26 – June 2, 2021: [https://416th.com/Friends/2021\\_416thBG\\_EnglandTour.html](https://416th.com/Friends/2021_416thBG_EnglandTour.html)

Sincerely,

Steve Roy (call 425.344.3926 if you have questions)

Ross Stewart

Dr. Vernon Williams

## DON'T MISS THIS TOUR OPPORTUNITY!

### A QUICK LOOK AT THE WETHERSFIELD AIRFIELD MUSEUM

The 416th BG was first stationed at Wethersfield during WWII and part of the “As Time Goes By” tour will take us to the Wethersfield Airfield Museum (see the itinerary for Day 2 following this article). A cornucopia of visual and oral history awaits us. Just to whet your whistle and show you what you don’t want to miss, Ross Stewart has posted a video on Youtube giving us a glimpse of the treasures stored there. You can view the video for yourself at <https://youtu.be/rwutm7V1JcQ>. Here are some of the sights you’ll see when we visit the Museum:



**YOU WON'T WANNA MISS THIS ONE!**

Day 1 --- Wednesday, May 26th

The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS

- Arrange your air travel so that you will arrive at Heathrow on Wednesday morning, May 26th.
- When you arrive at Heathrow, catch the train to Braintree. Your tour packet will have detailed instructions for your arrival activities and how to get the train to Braintree.
- The van will meet you at the Braintree Train Station
- Check in Holiday Inn Express
- Meet and Greet Reception at hotel 4-5 pm
- Dinner on your own 6-8 pm
- Van will be available for transportation for dinner
- Early night to say goodbye to jet lag



**Braintree Station**

View eastward, towards Witham.

Braintree was an important part of life for the men who were stationed in the 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group at Wethersfield during World War II. Just over 8 miles from Wethersfield, Braintree served as a destination for men on pass and offered many things to do and see not far from the air base. Today, Braintree is a growing, bustling city where visitors can see much of the World War II footprint still there.



**American Army War Memorial, Braintree, Essex**

White Courts is now a residential housing estate of some 550 plus homes located to the south of Braintree town in Essex, England. It was formerly the American 8th Army Air Force military hospital, built in the grounds of "White Court" which previously had a large detached house standing in its own grounds on London Road, originally known as "Oaklands".



Day 2 --- Thursday, May 27th

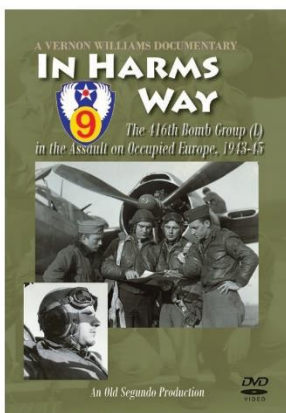


The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

- After breakfast, meet van in front of hotel for trip to the Museum at Wethersfield base. 8:30 am
- Museum visit with Ross Stewart presentation about the Museum and current operations and prospects for the future. Some of the museum volunteers will be on hand.
- Lunch at local pub 11:30 am
- On and off van tour of the WWII buildings on the base with drive down the runway. It may be possible to visit ruins of communal site on nearby farmer's land.
- Back to hotel for rest stop and early dinner. 3:30-6:30 pm
- Dinner on your own
- Depart for Wethersfield base. 6:30 pm
- Host Wethersfield History Group and Premiere of *In Harms Way* film. 7 pm
- Back to hotel, 9:30 pm



The 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was stationed first at Wethersfield during World War II. Today's activities will focus on Wethersfield and the memories associated with it. A tour of the Museum and site visits to WWII buildings and infrastructures will be on the agenda for today. After a brief rest stop and dinner at the hotel, it is back to Wethersfield base for an evening of honoring local citizens who participated in the oral history program with Dr. Williams' group in 2016 and the premiere of a new, full length documentary film about the 416<sup>th</sup> and its history during World War II.

Day 3 --- Friday, May 28th

The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 3 HIGHLIGHTS

- Breakfast at hotel
- We will spend the day on the road visiting a few nearby American bomber bases where British communities have kept the Yanks' history alive.
- Lunch at a local pub.
- Continue on our American bomber base tour
- Arrive at Braintree hotel and dinner on your own
- Conversation time in hotel



British communities keeping alive the history of the Yanks of World War II.



Day 4 --- Saturday, May 29th

The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 4 HIGHLIGHTS

- Breakfast in the hotel with a departure for the Duxford Air Museum at 9 am from the hotel parking area. Duxford opens at 10 am.
- Lunch on the grounds at Duxford. There are three cafes and restaurants to choose from.
- At 5 pm back to Braintree for dinner and some good fellowship with the staff of the 416<sup>th</sup> Museum. We will host them for the evening at a local restaurant.
- The van will be available after dinner to take you back to the hotel.



### IWM Duxford

Walk through the same hangars and buildings as those who served at RAF Duxford. See aircraft take to the skies from the airfield that Spitfires first flew. And get up close to over a century of aviation with hundreds of aircraft and objects on display.

#### Opening Times

10am to 4pm, with AirSpace open until 5pm.

Day 5 --- Sunday, May 30th



The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

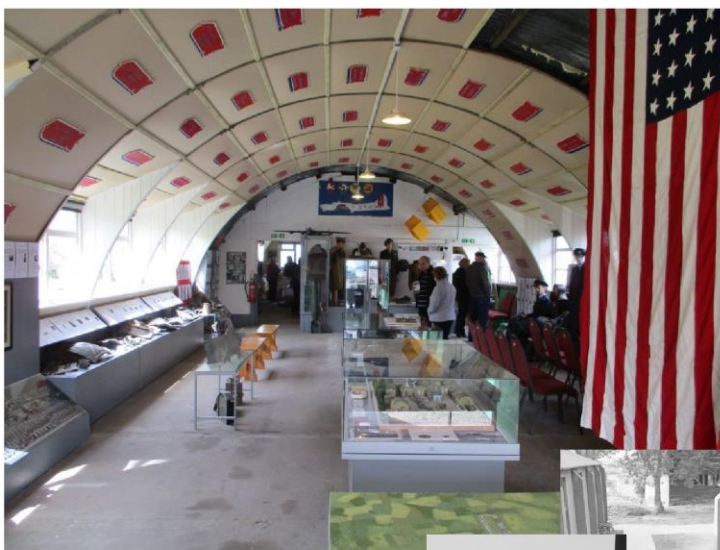
# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 5 HIGHLIGHTS

- Breakfast at hotel.
- Depart 9 am by van from hotel for Ridgewell Museum.
- Tour the museum with welcome from museum staff.
- Van tour of Ridgewell with lunch at the King's Head Pub.
- Van tour of villages around Wethersfield with stops along the way. Ross will provide commentary on points of interest that connects to 416<sup>th</sup> times.
- Dinner in Braintree



Hollywood actors Lawrence Olivier and Vivien Leigh visit Ridgewell in 1944.



The Ridgewell airdrome was not far from Wethersfield and the 416<sup>th</sup> often found themselves at Ridgewell for a USO show or other activity in the village.





Day 6 --- Monday, May 31st

The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 6 HIGHLIGHTS

- Breakfast at hotel.
- Van departs for Cambridge American Military Cemetery. 8:45 am
- We will arrive early enough to tour the visitor's center and walk among the graves.
- Be sure to view the Wall of the Missing.
- You will find 416<sup>th</sup> men all around.
- Ceremony begins at 11 am.
- Lunch at a pub in Cambridge.
- Tour Cambridge and some of the sights where 416<sup>th</sup> men went on pass during the war. Not much has changed.
- On the way back to the hotel, we will stop for coffee at the Wethersfield Museum and have some time for conversation and relaxing, then back to the hotel.
- Dinner on your own.



### Cambridge American Military Cemetery

Senior Airman Rebecca A. Baucum (left) passes a wreath to Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire James Crowden during the Madingley Memorial Day Commemorative Service at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Coton, Cambridge, England.



Day 7 --- Tuesday, June 1st



The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

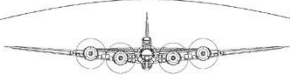
# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 7 HIGHLIGHTS

- Breakfast at hotel and checkout. Load our luggage onto the van.
- Van departs hotel at 9 am for the Braintree Museum and explore various WWII sites in Braintree.
- Lunch at George Pub in Shalford.
- After lunch, tour Shalford and view a screening of the documentary film Dry Gulcher Down: A B-17's Fiery End Over Shalford Village.
- Late afternoon we arrive at the Braintree Train Station to take our train to London.
- Arrive at the Sheraton Hotel near Heathrow and check in.
- Dinner together and turn in.



The crew of the Dry Gulcher lost over Shalford Village on August 4, 1944. Only the tail gunner was killed (standing, 4<sup>th</sup> from left—Harold Norris). All the others parachuted safely into Shalford Village.




**THE FLYING FORTRESS DRY GULCHER  
AND HER CREW CAME DOWN  
AT SHALFORD VILLAGE ON 4 AUGUST 1944**

IN MEMORY OF THE CREW  
WHO SERVED THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM AND OF  
HAROLD F NORRIS WHO GAVE HIS LIFE AT THIS PLEASANT PLACE

LT HANLEY G. CUPERNALL	PILOT
CAPT IRVING MOORE	CO-PILOT, DEPUTY MISSION LEAD
LT JAMES W. SNEED, JR.	NAVIGATOR
LT CHARLES W. YOUNG	BOMBARDIER
TSGT EARL T. YANKTON	TOP TURRET GUNNER, ENGINEER
LT RUSSELL J. HADLEY	RADAR (MICKEY) OPERATOR
TSGT FRANK H. HEINZE, SR	RADIOMAN
CAPT FRANCIS G. HAWKINS	WAIST GUNNER, PHOTOGRAPHER
SSGT LOREN W. MURPHY	WAIST GUNNER
SSGT HAROLD F. NORRIS	TAIL GUNNER (KILLED)

532nd BOMB SQUADRON  
381st BOMB GROUP  
U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE





Day 8 --- Wednesday, June 2nd

The 416th Bomb Group at Wethersfield

# AS TIME GOES BY....

## DAY 8 HIGHLIGHTS

- Breakfast at the hotel or at Heathrow, depending on flight time.
- Catch hotel shuttle or Uber to Heathrow.
- Farewell to Mother England. See you at the 416<sup>th</sup> Reunion next fall.



## KEEPING IN TOUCH

This section has been the primary purpose of the annual newsletter since its inception more than 70 years ago. Throughout the history of 416th squadron reunions, and eventually the Group reunions, there has been a concerted effort to provide contact information to those who wish to stay in touch with their extended family.

Today, those historic newsletters serve another important role as windows into the past for those, like most of us, who are later generations. Reading those newsletters from years gone by offers us insight that no other source can provide. So, thank you to those who have shared their thoughts, feelings and good wishes here — not just for the rest of us, but also for those who will come after us.

[Please note: entries below are shown in alphabetical order by last name for ease of searching and finding particular entries.]

### **Chris and Mary Adams**

Son of 1Lt. James D. Adams  
Pilot – 671st Bomb Squadron  
(deceased 2005)

We were pleased to meet Dan Eastman and Wayne Downing who knew my dad and they provided information about his time with the 2911th and the 416th. In fact, I met Dan at the 2011 reunion in Windsor Locks and when I asked how

he came to be there, he said he had come to meet me because he was a roommate with my dad and thought I'd like to hear about it. Such a nice person to do that. I just about dropped over at that same reunion when I learned his, not too complimentary nickname, was "Herky" (a reference to a character of Damon Runyon, a popular writer at the time). He's probably not too thrilled wherever he is now that that secret got out! I certainly had never heard the name before the reunion.

My dad was serious about doing his time there and getting home. Certainly, no different than everyone else over there. I found it interesting that he was the first Pilot to rotate back to the states after being the first to complete his 65 missions in the 671st squadron, according to the unit history. I once asked him what it looked like over the channel on his D-Day mission. His reply? "I don't know". When pressed, he said he was flying and trying to keep his place in the Flight so didn't have time to "sightsee". A typical response about the war even after so many years.

One of Mary's and my best times with the 416th family was traveling to Wethersfield and meeting Ross and Sally Stewart. Walking the Wethersfield base, driving down the same runway my dad took off and landed on, visiting the 416th museum that Ross and the volunteers founded to ensure the story of the 416th would continue, going to Mattingly Cemetery in Cambridge and visiting 416th veterans' memorials, eating at pubs and seeing sights that my father would have seen was one of my favorite visits anywhere.

Belonging to the family of the 416th Bomb Group has been a wonderful experience for Mary and me in so many ways.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

Chris and Mary



**Sonny and Carolyn Haisler**

**Ron Dullnig**

Carolyn (daughter) and Ron (son) are children of Roland Dullnig, Veteran, T/Sgt.

Crew Chief – 668th Squadron

Hello from Texas,

Our family has been staying close to home and only venturing out when necessary. We spent the first few months of the pandemic only visiting by telephone. We have gotten together a couple of times since the stay-at-home orders were put in place. Dad has been doing fine, Ron was furloughed for several weeks but is back at work now and very busy, and Carolyn and Sonny have been working on home projects, both inside and out.

On Sunday, Oct. 18, Dad fell in the kitchen, hurt his hip, and was taken to emergency for x-rays. He didn't need surgery but had a chip on his hip bone and needed rehab to strengthen his hip, legs, and arms. Currently, he is mending and having physical therapy every day in a rehab facility. We talk to him on the phone each day and he has a window where we can wave to him and have a short phone visit. He is looking forward to returning home where he will be in his own bed and familiar surroundings.

We miss seeing all of our 416th family this year and hope that things will soon be a little closer to normal so that our reunions can resume. We hope that everyone is doing well and will have a peaceful 2021.

*Note:* The Haislers also shared the following newspaper article reporting on Roland's Legion of Honor award.

**Honor from France for World War II veteran** *SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-News Feb. 9, 2020*



Photos by Ronald Cortes / Contributor

**World War II veteran Roland E. Dullnig is greeted by Bernie Bys on Saturday before he receives the French Legion of Honor.**

**W**orld War II veteran Roland E. Dullnig, 98, received the French Legion of Honor at a ceremony here Saturday. A San Antonio native and Fox Tech High School graduate, he was a crew chief maintaining A-20 Havoc and A-26 Invader light bombers and served in France with the 416th Bombardment Group's 668th Squadron. He left the Army Air Forces in 1946 as a technical sergeant.

France has been saluting American veterans who fought for the nation's liberation from the Nazis. A representative of the French Consulate in Houston bestowed the medal.



**Dullnig's daughter, Carolyn Haisler, adjusts the medal for him after the ceremony.**



### Roy and Arlene Hohn

Arlene is the daughter of Cpt. Meredith Joy Huff, Pilot, 669th Bomb Squadron (deceased 2006). (Note: While he was a Capt. at the end of the War, Huff retired as Lt. Col. from the Reserves.)

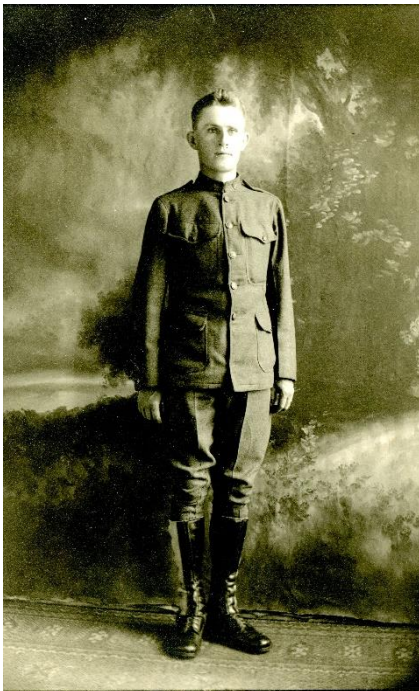
Roy and I remain loving partners which means we have passed the COVID stress tests. Our three children and their families are doing well. Todd, our oldest son, turned 50 (no party) and married a wonderful woman (again, no party). We will celebrate after COVID is under control.

We have discovered the value of Zoom. Every Sunday, we Zoom with our kids, their families and several close friends. We plan to continue after COVID. On Thanksgiving Day our family even played a cribbage tournament on a friendly website. Besides family, I have Zoomed with walking friends and teaching friends. All this has helped to keep us content in our home.

In 2019, I planned to spend 2020 getting my knees replaced so that I could enjoy walking again. The pandemic did not deter me from my plan. On May 11th I had my right knee replaced. On August 17th I had my left knee replaced. I did lots of physical therapy (with a mask on) and now I am able to go out walking again.

We are looking forward to making the trip with the 416th group to England and Wethersfield. Hopefully, we will be able to make the trip in 2021.

I am attaching a photo of Jesse M. Huff (father of Meredith Joy Huff). Jesse served in the military during WWI. I came across a letter written to his wife, Eunice. I will quote the letter below:



Somewhere in France 11/11/1918

My Dearest Wife:

The last shot was fired  
the roar rolled up the valley  
and echoed against the hills  
and died away to be heard  
no more and the smoke of the  
battle rose up like a cloud  
and peace reigns once more  
and now I am coming home  
to you Dear.

Your ever faithful loving husband,  
Jesse

Pvt. Jesse M. Huff

Psalm 116:1-5

**Rich Milhorn**

Son of 1Lt. Gentry L. Milhorn,  
Pilot - 671st Squadron

See the article written by Rich in this issue of our newsletter on the "Furlough in Paris".

**Paul J. Nadeau**

Paul is the oldest son of Cpl. Alberie J. Nadeau,  
Operations Clerk, 671st BS

As I write this my Dad is a month shy of his 97th birthday. He resides at Crosswinds Residential Care Facility in Fort Kent, Maine. This is the community where he grew up, went to school, and spent most of his life. After returning from the war, he met and married my Mom, Geneva Michaud. Together they raised 6 children. His brief military career was one he always looked back on with pride. Looking back, I realize how the time spent serving his country so formed his future. He has maintained his connection through organizations such as Veterans of Foreign

Wars and American Legion. The year 2020, though a trying time, he was recognized for his service with the "French Legion of Honor Award". Over the years he enjoyed all things military. He marched proudly in many parades and volunteered for many events. His residence is adorned with various memorabilia he has amassed over the years. We are honored to be able to call this humble man our Dad.

A side note: His family consisted of 6 children.

Gloria (Nadeau) Saucier

Rita (Nadeau) Cyr

Donna (Nadeau) Freeman

Paul Nadeau                4 years Air Force

Thomas Nadeau        22 years Air Force

Peter Nadeau            21 years Air Force

**Rick and Chris Prucha**

Son of 1Lt. Lumir J. (Lou) Prucha  
Pilot, 668th Bomb Squadron (deceased 1981)

Even though I was the youngest of the 416th group at the 2018 Abilene Reunion Dyess AFB tour, I am fortunate to have retired early this year after 40+ years in the "Oil Business". Between our home improvement projects, I am able to squeeze in some time working on the *416th.com* website – check out the "What's New on *416th.com*" link on the Table of Contents page. I sincerely appreciate all who have helped with website input – this is definitely not a one-man operation.

I was truly honored to be invited to and able to attend Roland Dullnig's French Legion of Honor Medal Award Ceremony in San Antonio, TX in February, 2020. Dave Andrews and Alberie Nadeau have also received this prestigious award. Thanks to Steve Roy for his assistance for our Veterans. Web pages for the 416th Veterans who have received this Award are available via the Table of Contents page "French Legion of Honor" link.



Sure miss everyone, but am glad folks are staying safe. Thanks to Kathe and Gary for keeping us updated with this annual Newsletter. As always, Thank You to all our Veterans and their families for their many sacrifices to provide us the freedom we continue to enjoy.

We wish everyone All the Best.

### **Gary and Kathe Rensner**

Kathe is the niece of 1Lt. Francis De Mand Pilot, 671st Bomb Squadron (KIA 1944)

We kept busy throughout the year even as COVID-19 rampaged throughout the world. We kept tabs on family here in the US and in Scotland; thankfully no instances of infection. Gary moved his office from work and settled in to working from home. He enjoyed the short "commute" from our kitchen down the hall to his office. Kathe kept busy catching up on projects relegated to the To Do folder. She also worked with the Committee on the 2020 Reunion before it was canceled.

We went to San Antonio for Roland Dullnig's French Medal of Honor Presentation. It was quite an honor to be included in Dullnig-Haisler family fold during such an important milestone for Roland.

We left the relative safety of our home in October to attend to family business in Missouri. Later, we masked up and visited Wayne and Doris in Gainesville just a few miles down the road from where we had been staying. We toured the 416th Archives and were simply amazed at the love Doris and Wayne have poured out toward the Veterans and their families.

We enjoyed the beautiful fall colors displayed throughout the Ozarks before heading back home to New Mexico. As this year is winding down, we wish all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and we hope to see you at the 2021 Reunion in Windsor Locks, Connecticut next year!

### **Steven Roy and Pat Wymond**

Steve is the son of Sgt. Roger Roy, Aircraft and Engine Mechanic - 671st BS (deceased 2010)

In the 2019 Newsletter it was an honor and privilege for me to report on my work with Congressman Rick Larsen (WA-02) and the U.S Embassy in London to successfully add 6 missing veterans names from the 416th Bomb Group to the St. Paul's Cathedral American Roll of Honor. The American Roll of Honor at St. Paul's Cathedral London is to honor those veterans that flew missions from England during WWII and made the ultimate sacrifice.

These 6 veterans are:

- |                               |           |                |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| • S/Sgt. Glenn J. Bender      | 669th Sq. | April 10, 1944 |
| • S/Sgt. Jack O. Nielsen      | 669th Sq. | April 10, 1944 |
| • 2Lt. Arthur A. Raines Jr.   | 669th Sq. | April 10, 1944 |
| • 1Lt. William Edward Cramsie | 671st Sq. | April 10, 1944 |
| • S/Sgt. Charles R. Henshaw   | 671st Sq. | April 10, 1944 |
| • S/Sgt. Jack Steward         | 671st Sq. | April 10, 1944 |

Please note that one 416th Bomb Group veteran's name was already included in the American Roll of honor and his name is:

- 1Lt. Raymond K. Cruze                      668th Sq.                      July 18, 1944

To learn more about the 416th Bomb Group and the American Roll of Honor please go to:  
[https://416th.com/Memorials/StPaulsCathedral\\_RollOfHonor.html](https://416th.com/Memorials/StPaulsCathedral_RollOfHonor.html).

In 2020, I learned about the French Legion of Honor Medal that our 416th Bomb Group veterans are eligible to receive from the French Government. This prestigious medal dates back to Napoleon Bonaparte and is awarded to WWII veterans that served in France to free France from Nazi Germany. It is an honor and privilege to have worked with the 416th veterans' families during the application process to successfully bring about the award of the French Legion of Honor Medal for the following 416th Bomb Group veterans:

- T/Sgt. Roland Dullnig, 668th Squadron
- Cpl. Alberie Nadeau, 671st Squadron
- 1Lt. Bob Basnett, 671st Squadron

Please note that 1Lt. Dave Andrews, 671st Squadron, received his French Legion of Honor medal in 2019.

To learn more about the 416th Bomb Group and the French Legion of Honor medal please go to:  
<https://416th.com/PhotoCollections/FrenchLegionOfHonor.html>

If you know of a surviving 416th Bomb Group veteran, please contact me and I can assist you in applying for French Legion of Honor Medal. To receive the medal, you must be alive when your application is approved by the French Government.

Finally, I recently viewed a few episodes of the TV series, "Twelve O'Clock High". I recall watching this TV series when it originally aired. It was originally broadcasted on ABC-TV for two-and-one-half TV seasons from September 1964 through January 1967 and was based on the 1949 film of the same name. I have also viewed the original film. It is based upon and about air crews flying B-17 "Flying Fortress" heavy bombers with the 8th Army Air Force during the daylight bombing missions. Both the TV series and the original film gives oneself a good view of what the 416th Bomb Group, 9th Army Air Force, would have experienced during their missions. As you watch you see the anxiety, emotions, and tragedy during missions as the air crews flew through unbelievable flak, struggle to keep their airplanes flying, fend off attacks by German Luftwaffe fighter planes and the high number of crew losses. Our 416th Bomb Group air crews would have experienced similar anxieties, emotions and tragedies. Also, the TV series and film show the emotions of waiting and the anticipation of the return of the aircraft from a mission to the airfield. Some aircraft were shot up so bad their air crews were severely injured or dead, their hydraulics did not work, their landing gear would not come down, engines were not working, airplane control surfaces barely working, ... I recall during the reunions I attended our 416th veterans, the late 1Lt. Dave Andrews, 671st Squadron, the late 1Lt. Wayne Downing, 668th and 670th Squadrons, and the late Captain Joe Meagher, 668th Squadron shared with me the horrors of tremendous flak they encountered. They told me the German Luftwaffe pretty much left them alone but surely made up for it with heavy flak. In fact, Captain Meagher was injured by flak in his leg, but was able to land his A-20 Havoc safely and get to safety.



I encourage you to watch "Twelve O'Clock High" to gain a better understanding of the air war over Europe during WWII and the sacrifices our Army Air Corp air crews made and emotions the ground crews experienced.

Steve Roy,

Son of Roger Roy

Airplane and Engine Mechanic

671st Squadron

**Wayne & Doris Sayles**

(Wayne is the 416th Archivist and a 416th BG Honorary Command Pilot and Doris is the Archives Registrar and Treasurer)

Hello Everyone,

It has been a challenging year for all of us to say the least. When I sat down to list my highs and lows for 2020, I am happy to say I have many more highs than lows and so I am attempting to share them with some of my favorite people. I miss you all and think of you often.

So sorry the in-person reunion did not happen this year in Connecticut but I am proud of all of us for paying close attention and abiding by the rules of this pandemic.

Loving Christmas helps my morale. I am in the process of decorating our home and office spaces for the Christmas season in November and enjoying the glitz and sparkle.

The best news came for our family this June. Some of you have been following our son Bret's cancer journey over the past two years. Thank you for your prayers and good wishes. He had spine surgery to fuse L 3, 4, and 5 vertebrae together and they were able to remove the original spine tumor during this surgery. He has been improving physically since and was even able to go deer hunting (got a doe). This was done with his bicycle pulling a trailer. So proud of Bret.

In October we shared a delightful visit with Gary and Kathe Rensner. This was their first time at the 416th Archive building and to have a hands-on feel for all the wonderful memories our WWII veterans have stored and on display here. We spent quality time together discussing everything possible during our short visit and we shared so much laughter at lunch. Really happy we had this opportunity to get more acquainted with each other. Wish others could come to visit also.

Happy to report that we are set to have 33 tiles engraved on the Wall of Honor at the Archive building. The engraver has not worked with us yet, but we are on the list. It may be spring before it happens but when it is done you will hear from me and get pictures of the tiles with the names you sponsor.

Two new children of 416th people have contacted me this year. Timothy Creeden (son of Edward J. Creeden (Eddie) and Roselyne Thomas [daughter of James Luther Owens (Jimmy)]). Others may have contacted Wayne or Rick or someone else, but these are mine personally. YES!

Wayne and I have been staying healthier this year at least, and that is a good thing. We are thankful.

We worked this summer on our land quite a bit, and made improvements in flowers beds and garden spots. Wayne is now cutting away brush, scrub trees and making walking paths. Come join us.

I don't want to mention any of my lows. They don't add anything interesting to this news from me. I pray for our country and our country's leaders.

Thank you for SOME social media. Enough said! it is good to stay in touch with all of you when we can't catch up in person.

Happy New Year for 2021. "I am going to stay up on New Year's Eve this year. Not to see the New Year 2021 in, but to make sure this one leaves".

Love

Doris

**Jean Sittarich**

Daughter of S/Sgt. Jack Sittarich  
Gunner – 668th BS (deceased 2013)

One of the biggest highlights of any given year is the 416th Bomb Group Reunion! No doubt this has been one crazy year and having to cancel this year's reunion was just par for 2020!! It was the right thing to do, but do I ever miss my 416th family!! Looking forward to the 2021 reunion!! I retired in February just before COVID shut the country down. So, although I was at home, so were many friends so it was fun to keep in touch with them anytime of the day knowing I wasn't interrupting their work. There's always a silver lining to everything! My mom is doing fine, staying home, safe and staying well. Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and a spectacular 2021!!

**Ross and Sally Stewart**

Friends of the 416th Bomb Group  
Director, Wethersfield Airfield Museum

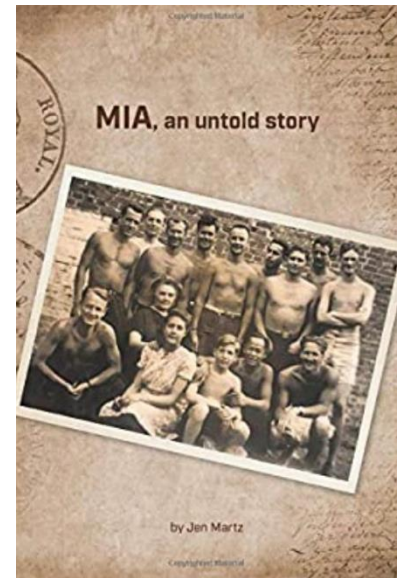
*Ross and Sally have been very warm and generous hosts for several 416th family members visiting Wethersfield. A tour with Ross is the only way to really see the base.*

Well here at Wethersfield Airfield Museum we were so looking forward to 2020. Our first team meeting was scheduled for April 5th and on the agenda was the 416th As Time Goes By Tour and a reunion of the 20th TFW Security Police. We also hoped to pass our 600 visitors of 2018 with an exciting year ahead. As we now know, after March 2020, our meetings were cancelled and, if we are lucky, the first meeting of 2021 might happen after the Easter Holiday, but no one can be sure. When restrictions were relaxed for a while, small groups of three from some of the 11 volunteers visited to tidy, and maintain the Museum, Brian Render continues to visit occasionally to check and maintain the building, Roger Robbins the Secretary keeps the story alive posting daily on the Museum Facebook Page, and we all hope for a better 2021 although the future of the museum due to the MOD closure has still not been determined.



We had a visit last year from Jennifer Martz and her book about her father Sgt. Harold Boyer who was shot down in 669th 43-9983 2A-J on May 27th 1944. The Pilot Lt. H Hewes and other Sgt. J Kasper were captured and became POWs, but Harold evaded capture and returned to Wethersfield on September the 5th 1944. Jen's book is available on Amazon, "MIA an untold story".

Local artist Chris French completed his third painting of Wethersfield with a 416th vision "Return to Wethersfield"; prints can be purchased online at his website.



Although we are in COVID lockdown and travel from USA is restricted we were surprised to have an American Visitor in September, who was very fortunate to see the museum as he happened to turn up on a day Brian was checking the building. He also held an MOD pass and was over doing work for USA and UK. He was following the story of his Uncle who was in the 416th, but left no other information just a name and location, he did buy a museum booklet, so hopefully he may contact the 416th Family sometime. The Visitor was Matt Kerr from Ashburn, Virginia, USA.

Comments		
17/Feb 2020	Chris Meghe	Very Very Good
19/Feb 2020	Patricia Meghie	Excellent.
19/FEB 2020	MARVIN JOHNS	SICKLERVILLE NJ
19/February 2020	Jean Schuringen FARR	BURES
19 September 2020	Matt Kerr	Ashburn, Virginia, USA

On behalf of the Wethersfield Museum Team

We wish you all a Good Christmas and a much better New Year in 2021.

#### Roselyne Owens Thomas

Roselyne is the daughter of veteran Cpl. James Luther Owens who was with the 1781st

See the article written by Roselyne in this issue of our newsletter on how her parents met.

Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company and who served with the 416th in England and then across the English Channel to Melun, France

**Joseph A. and Carol Wilds**

Joseph is the grandson of S/Sgt. Harley J. Wilds, Sr., Gunner, 671st BS (MIA, POW, RMC, RTD)

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone that continues to keep the spirit and memories of the 416th BG alive. Without the hard work of so many, the lives and honor of the heroes of the 416th BG would be forgotten.

I have done some research on my Grandfather's military career. I have started putting a book together which contains the reports of Aircraft Incident Reports, pictures of the POW camp that he was in, pictures from that era as well as other material. I hope to pass this book down to my son once I have completed it. My son is in the Air Force and has been very successful in his fifteen years as a sensor operator for the drone as well as an instructor. He is a war veteran of Afghanistan.

I am retired Army and a Gulf War veteran. My father was in the Army and a Vietnam veteran, but went into the Air Force after returning home from Vietnam. And, of course, my Grandfather, Harley J. Wilds Sr., was Army Air Corps and switched to Air Force. So, as you can see, military is a way of life for the Wilds family. My hopes are to attend one of the Reunions at some point in the near future.

Until then, May God bless the 416th BG family and its Friends.

Sincerely,

J. Wilds



## **A Special Note About Future Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Newsletters**

Publishing the annual newsletter is a major labor of love, as those who have published previous newsletters can attest. Traditionally, the newsletters are published after a reunion when those who attended are still excited to share stories, pictures and personal updates with the 416th BG family. Typically, most reunions are held during September or October when hotel and venue rates are more reasonable and the weather is cooler. After that, the newsletters generally are compiled and published before the year-end. We think that makes sense; newsletters should coincide with the reunions and personal updates should be current.

We need your help! We want to get our newsletters to you by year-end, but that requires a lot of planning, especially when the holidays approach so quickly these days. It takes a fair amount of time and effort to collect and compile all of our articles, stories, pictures, and personal updates to publish each newsletter, let alone distribute the newsletters via email, or in some cases, US mail.

One way you can help us is to send your pictures, updates, and feature articles to us throughout the year rather than waiting until the newsletter cutoff dates in the Fall (avoid the holiday rush!). We can then have your information ready to go, adding it to the annual updates we receive from the Archives and our webmaster, when we put the newsletter together. Feel free to send us anything you wish included in the newsletter any time! Our dedicated email link is [friendsof416thbombgroup@swcp.com](mailto:friendsof416thbombgroup@swcp.com).

If sending during the year doesn't work out, you can always send us your stories, pictures, and personal connection notes later, after the reunions, but please try to honor the established cutoff dates. Keeping to these deadlines gives us enough time to assemble the newsletter, even during the busiest time of the year, so we can all share it together by year-end.

A final suggestion is to send your annual "Personal Update Form" to us by the cutoff dates. These personal notes and contact information updates are the heart and soul of the newsletter. Through them, we connect with each other, keeping in contact with we have known for years. And we begin friendships connecting with and embracing people who might be new to the Friends and want to know about the 416th Bomb Group or who want to follow up a posting on the 416th Archives Facebook page.

The annual newsletters are a time-honored tradition with the 416th Bomb Group. Our deadlines help us get what we need in time for us to send you the compiled newsletter by the end of the year. Please help us and work together to keep this tradition rolling on next year and beyond! We love hearing from you!

Kathe and Gary Rensner

*Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Newsletter Publishers*

## INTERNET ADDRESSES OF INTEREST TO 416<sup>TH</sup> FAMILY AND FRIENDS

<a href="https://416tharchivestore.ecwid.com/">https://416tharchivestore.ecwid.com/</a>	The 416th Archive Store
<a href="https://www.416th.com/contents.html">https://www.416th.com/contents.html</a>	416th web site table of contents
<a href="https://www.416th.com/links.html">https://www.416th.com/links.html</a>	List of online resources for WWII
<a href="https://www.416th.com/missions/LoadingList.html">https://www.416th.com/missions/LoadingList.html</a>	416th Mission Loading List Search
<a href="https://www.416th.com/CachatPhotos/Cachat_416thBG_Photos.html">https://www.416th.com/CachatPhotos/Cachat_416thBG_Photos.html</a>	900+ 416th photos
<a href="https://www.416th.com/Reunions/2019Reunion.html">https://www.416th.com/Reunions/2019Reunion.html</a>	2019 reunion summary and photos
<a href="https://www.416th.com/neam.html">https://www.416th.com/neam.html</a>	The 416th Memorial Exhibit at New England Air Museum
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/416th">https://www.facebook.com/416th</a>	416th Facebook Page
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/1473744302842355/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/1473744302842355/</a>	David Andrews 416th Facebook
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/56981237530/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/56981237530/</a>	Ross Stewart's Wethersfield Page
<a href="https://www.angliaairwar.org/">https://www.angliaairwar.org/</a>	Dr. Vernon Williams' East Anglia Air War Project website

### BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS 2021!

We hope to see you all in the Fall in Windsor Locks, Connecticut.  
Come and enjoy the Fall colors and a Special Visit to the Reida Rae!