


2025 416th Reunion in Branson MO September 17 - 20 2025

Twenty-four of us came to Branson from North Dakota, Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Arkansas, Missouri, Colorado, Texas, Washington and Georgia. **Jean Sittarich** hosted us at La Quinta, after **Carolyn** and **Sonny Haisler** had researched hotels in Branson for us last spring. **Jean** and **Sue Berg** provided snacks and drinks for us in the meeting room, which was perfect for our needs. Most of you don't realize, but hotel meeting rooms cost extra - ranging between \$300 and \$500 in previous reunions. **Jean** wins the prize  for negotiating the least cost ever - **\$0!**

These reunions were begun for several reasons. Initially the veterans themselves, and now the families of those veterans, wanted to honor the courage and the deeds of the veterans of the 416th in defeating Nazi Germany. However, another and equally important purpose through all of the reunions was to retain the strong bonds of friendship established during the war among the veterans. As a result of nearly 80 years of 416th reunions, even after the passing of all of the veterans, the families have created a strong sense of camaraderie and love among themselves that they wish to continue, in addition to honoring the veterans and their deeds in the war.

On Thursday Sept 11, we visited our 416th Archives in Gainesville MO. Not even a week post-surgery, **Wayne Sayles** greeted us with handshakes and hugs (mostly gentle). **Doris Sayles** and **Stephanie Sayles** (Wayne's daughter) had prepared the interior and the displays so that everything was shiny and perfect. **Doris** provided coffee and drinks, and **Sue** made cookies for us. **Doris** described a number of displays and the nature of her and **Wayne's** work at the Archives. **Wayne** visited with everyone and was not hesitant with his opinions. It was wonderful to see him and we all wish him a speedy recovery. **Alan Licker's** grandson **Quincy Licker** drove from Neosho to see the Archives for the first time. We had an early dinner at Cookie's in Theodosia. Some of us took desserts to go and one of us ate their dessert for breakfast the next day.

At our business meeting on Friday, **Doris** explained the mission of the Archives and how she and **Wayne** go through the acquisition and storage process. They digitize almost everything. The Archives does provide storage, and some display, of physical materials related to the 416th. At present, they have enough materials to catalogue, organize and digitize to keep them busy for many months

(years??). **Rick Prucha**, webmaster of our 416th website (416th.com), described his process of putting digitized materials on the website, ensuring that the website operates successfully for 416th families, researchers and the curious. He described his close working relationship with **Wayne** and **Doris**. The website is a trove of interesting and valuable information, and yet contains only about 15% of the Archives' digital materials.



Standing: Sonny, Carolyn, Sue, Steven, Chris, Arlene, Mary, Wayne, Doris, David, Howard, Rick, Sofia, Chris, Marla, Jean
Kneeling: Roy, Quincy, Jaxson, Larry, Alan, Galen, Sarah, Glenn

Steven Roy reported on the Wethersfield Airfield Museum, now located in Finchingfield. **Ross Stewart** operates the museum with the help of a few volunteers and financial donations. **Ross** would like to return the museum to the Wethersfield Airfield itself, but that will require cooperation and funding from the British and local governments. At present he has enough funds to operate the museum for another year, at which time he will evaluate the feasibility of its future existence.

I reported on the email project that **Arlene Hohn** and I had engaged in over the previous year. At the moment we have 160 contacts who have expressed

interest in receiving information on the 416th, such as our reunions. Included in that number are 19 contacts who reside in international locations - England, Netherlands, France, Belgium and even Australia. We seek as many contacts as possible, so if you know of anyone with an interest in the 416th, please tell them about us and send me their contact info if they wish to be on our list.

Sarah Prucha described *Expedition Unknown* episodes (on Discovery Channel) featuring *Project Recover* and WWII plane recovery. We discussed the missing plane and crew of **Lt. William Cramsie**, as described in **Wayne's** book *First to Fall*. **Ross Stewart** searched for the plane several times in Bradwell Bay. British and US governments have not been responsive to search requests. **Sarah** agreed to work with the **Cramsie family, Ross, Wayne** and **Steven** to submit an application to *Expedition Unknown* and *Project Recover* in order to persuade them to initiate a search for **Cramsie's** plane. No promises, but it does seem to fit with the purpose of the program.

Here are the *Expedition Unknown* episodes featuring *Project Recover* and WWII plane recovery (you can watch on Discovery Channel - Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, YouTube TV):

<https://www.projectrecover.org/>

Season 9, Episode 2 - "The Lost Avenger"

: Josh teams up with *Project Recover* to find a Navy training plane that crashed into the Pacific, bringing closure to the pilots' families.

Season 12, Episode 1 - "Missing Heroes of WW2"

: Josh and *Project Recover* use new intel to find a Japanese base and recover planes and American heroes lost during Operation Hailstone.

Season 12, Episode 2 - "Finding the Lost Pilots of WW2"

: This episode also involves Josh Gates and *Project Recover* in finding lost WWII pilots.

Season 15, Episode 6 - "Searching For World War II Lost Hero"

: This is a newer episode with *Project Recover* searching for a lost WWII hero, as announced by the project's Facebook page.

For what seems to me obvious reasons, we need to explore options for the future of our Archives, both physical and digital. New attendee **Larry Blumer** suggested two organizations that may be interested in our Archives and its mission. **Larry's** father was a B-26 tailgunner in the 386 Bomb Group that was stationed at Great Dunmow Airfield, which was remarkably close to Wethersfield Airfield, where the 416th was stationed. His organization, B-26 Marauder Historical Society, has placed archival materials at the University of Akron Archives and at the Pima Air Museum. I will contact them to see if they are open to accepting our archives and respecting our mission. Also, the B-26 Marauder Historical Society is

scheduling a March 2026 reunion in Omaha and planning a visit to the nearby Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum. The museum is very large, but does feature an A-26 and a small display with photos of Lt. **Lou Prucha (Rick's father)** and with **Lou's** uniform. Our group is welcome to attend the reunion. When I receive more information, I will send it to everyone.

New attendee **Alan Licker** agreed to contact the Air Museum in Dayton OH about possibly acquiring our archives. I will report results of these inquiries to the 416th Archives Board of Directors. Perhaps by the next reunion we will have information to share.

Mary Adams, Chris Adams and Doris Sayles solved the dilemma of our final agenda item by agreeing to host next year's reunion in **Dayton OH**. Thank you, **Doris, Chris and Mary!!** On the itinerary will be a visit to the National Museum of the USAF, located at Wright-Patterson AFB. In the museum's Memorial Gardens we will find one of the nine bronze plaques commemorating the 416 BG. In addition we will find a bronze plaque commemorating the 671st Squadron of the 416th BG. (I believe there are plaques honoring all the squadrons but we don't know where the others are. Do any of you 160 recipients of this report know the location of the 416th individual squadron plaques?)

Chris, Mary and Doris are planning an exciting reunion for us sometime in September/October 2026. Information about the reunion will be sent out sometime in winter/spring 2026.



Back: Jean, Arlene, Chris, Doris, Sofia, Sue, Glenn, Marla, Alan, Larry, Carolyn, Sonny.
Front: Sarah, Rick, David, Galen, Steven, Chris, Mary, Howard, Roy

Later on Friday, **Doris** led us in the Missing Man tribute. **David Andrews** performed *Taps*. **Jean** took the traditional group and family photos. **David** also took photos and videos that he posted on his Facebook site (https://www.facebook.com/hightechredneckpgr/photos_by; <https://www.facebook.com/hightechredneckpgr/videos>). **Carolyn** and **Sonny Haisler** had researched restaurants for us, and we held our reunion dinner that night at Landry's Seafood.

Rick will post reunion information, including **Jean's** photos, on the website.

We hope to see everyone next year in Dayton OH. And, if all 160 of you do come, we will increase allotted remuneration for **Chris, Mary** and **Doris** by 160%. Thank you to all who help preserve memories of the courageous soldiers of the 416th and their WWII deeds.

Sincerely,
Roy Hohn

2025 Branson Reunion Attendees



Chris and Mary Adams - Chris - son of **Lt. James “Herky” Adams**, pilot Sq 671



Pepper Adams - dog of **Chris and Mary Adams**



David Andrews - son of **Lt. Harold D. “Dave” Andrews**, pilot Sq 671



Galen Bartmus and Sofia Steryo-Bartmus - Galen - son of **Capt. Galen F. Bartmus**, pilot Sq 668



Jaxon Baumann - grandson of **Jean Sittarich** and great grandson of **SSgt. Jack Sittarich**, gunner Sq 668

Sue Berg - daughter of **SSgt. Jack Sittarich**, gunner Sq 668

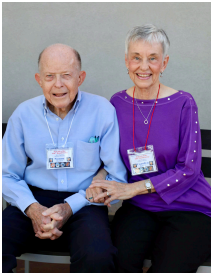
Jean Sittarich - daughter of **SSgt. Jack Sittarich**, gunner Sq 668



Larry Blumer - son of **William Blumer**, B-26 Marauder tail gunner in 9th AAF 386th BG



Glenn and Marla Carroll - Glenn - nephew of **Lt. Willard Land**, pilot Sq 669



Carolyn and Sonny Haisler - Carolyn - daughter of T/Sgt Roland E. Dullnig, crew chief Sq 668

Roy and Arlene Hohn - Arlene - daughter of **Capt. Meredith Joy Huff**, pilot Sq 669

Suzanne Mwengi - daughter of **Roy and Arlene Hohn** and granddaughter of **Capt. Meredith Joy Huff**, pilot Sq 669

Ty Mwengi - son of **Suzanne Mwengi**, grandson of **Roy and Arlene Hohn** and great grandson of **Capt. Meredith Joy Huff**, pilot Sq 669

Alan Licker - son of **Sgt. Morton Licker**, gunner Sq 670

Howard Licker - son of **Sgt. Morton Licker**, gunner Sq 670

Quincy Licker - grandson of **Alan Licker** and great grandson of **Sgt. Morton Licker**, gunner Sq 670





Rick and Chris Prucha - Rick - son of **Lt. Lou Prucha**, pilot Sq 668

Sarah Prucha - daughter of **Rick and Chris Prucha** and granddaughter of **Lt. Lou Prucha**, pilot Sq 668



Steven and Pat Roy - son of **Sgt. Roger Roy**, airplane and engine mechanic Sq 671



Doris and Wayne Sayles - Founders and current archivists of the 416th Archives; Wayne - 416th BG Honorary Command Pilot, retired USAF