



416th Bomb Group

Memorial Plaque Project

"286th Mission"

Steven Roy, Son of Sgt. Roger Roy, 671st. Squadron

Memorial Plaque History

“286th Mission”

- **1992, S/Sgt Frank Basford made a proposal to the 416th veterans and began during the 416th Bomb Group Reunion held at Orange Beach, Alabama, May 29-31, 1992, Frank presented his ideas and plans to the Group and gained their approval.**
- **Over the course of the next year, Frank tirelessly pursued his dream of designing, financing, coordinating and placing the Seventh 416th Bomb Group Bronze Memorial Plaques throughout the United States and England, a project he termed “Our 286th Mission”.**
- **Three designs ultimately were developed and cast: 1) 12”x10” one plaque; 2) 13”x13”, 7 plaques; 3) 18” x 14”, 1 plaque.**
- **Providing much appreciated assistance to Frank in the Memorial Plaque project were the following 416th members:**
 - Claude Brown - CPT, Pilot, 671st BS**
 - Walter Buckley - 671st BS**
 - Noel Clark - MSGT, Maintenance Flight Chief, 670th BS**
 - Gordon Doule - CPT, Armament Officer, 668th BS**
 - Wayne Downing - 1LT, Pilot, 668th and 670th BS**
 - Royal Everts - SSGT, Crew Chief, 670th BS**
 - Judge Robert E. Lee, Jr. - SSGT, Gunner, 670th BS**
 - Bob Price - Armament, 668th BS**
 - Dolphus Whitten, Jr. - 1LT, Adjutant, 669th BS & HQ**

Wethersfield Airfield Plaque

- **Over a period of several years, Frank communicated, coordinated and planned with Ian MacTaggart, Neil Martin and Malcom Flatman at RAF Wethersfield for approval and installation of the Wethersfield Plaque.**
- **Royal Everts (former SSGT, Crew Chief, 670th BS) traveled to England and hand delivered the Plaque to the Ministry of Defense (MOD) Police. The MOD Police has been the primary occupier of RAF Wethersfield since 1992, and graciously assisted in the installation of the 416th Plaque on the Chapel Courtyard Wall in 1993.**
- **We are very fortunate the MOD Police continued until recently to be onsite at RAF Wethersfield to secure, preserve and protect the Plaque as well as the history and memories of the 416th Bomb Group, 20th Tactical Fighter Wing, "Red Horse" 819th Engineers and other groups based at RAF Wethersfield.**
- **In early 2022 it was announced that the Wethersfield Airfield Museum would close and be required to move from it's location to off-site. I expressed concerns about the security and protection of the memorial plaque to Ambassador Hartley in June 2022. Without the Museum staff keeping an eye on the memorial plaque and the change of administration from the MOD to the Defense Infrastructure Organizations and then to the Home Office it increasingly became clear that the security of the plaque was in question. This became especially true when the Home Office announced that there would be 1700 asylum seekers housed at RAF Wethersfield. As a result, I wrote Ambassador Hartley again March 2023 asking her to take possession of the plaque.**
- **I received no response from the U.S Embassy, so in May of 2023 I asked my Congressman Rick Larsen for help. His office communicated with the U.S. State Department which followed up with the United Kingdom government. Shortly thereafter, the plaque was removed from the Chapel Memorial Garden wall and was placed in custodianship by the MOD until a transfer to the U.S. Embassy could occur.**

Current Status (2023)

- Last week the Air Attache, U. S. Embassy London, committed to make the plaque transfer before our reunion business meeting on Saturday, October 14, 2023. On Thursday, October 12, 2023 I received an email from Col. Kimsal, the Air Attache at the U.S. Embassy - London sent me an email that the MOD posted the 416th plaque plus the POW/MIA plaque and the tree remembrance plaque. During our October 14 Reunion Business meeting, I received an email from Col. Kimsal that the U.S. Embassy - London had received all three plaques on Friday, October 13, 2023. On October 31, Wethersfield Parish Councilman, Colin West, picked up the three memorial plaques from the U.S. Embassy London and safely returned them to his home in Wethersfield for safekeeping until a permanent home can be identified.



Next Steps

Need a Permanent Location

- The future of the Wethersfield airfield museum is very uncertain.
- The future use of the Wethersfield Air Base will not likely afford us an opportunity to place the plaque on the air base.
- I contacted the Cambridge American Cemetery and they can not accept the plaque.
- One option is establishing a war memorial in the Village of Wethersfield.
- Another option is placing the 416th plaque inside the St. Mary Magdalene church in the Village of Wethersfield. Permission is now being sought from the diocese for this option.
- http://www.416th.com/416th_BronzeMemorialPlaques.html

