

In honour

Of

The crew of a B24 bomber

Who were killed

On 21st April 1944

At North Tuddenham

Norfolk

2nd Lt Louis F Bass

2nd Lt Kenneth L Gahm

2nd Lt Arthur R Stover

2nd Lt Wayne M Steele

T/Sgt James W Thomas

S/Sgt Robert E Norrell

Sgt Walter E Reeves

Sgt Warren Burnett

This brochure has been prepared in honour of the crew of a B24 bomber which crashed at North Tuddenham on 21st April 1944 with the loss of eight lives.

The Author would like to thank researchers at the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association, especially Annette Tison, without whose help and kind permission to use their material this brochure could not have been prepared.

More information about the 392nd Bomb Group is available at www.b24.net

We would also like to thank the Hudson County Genealogy Society and the many other people who have assisted us to prepare this brochure and to honour those killed on that day in April 1944.

The Memorial

On North Tuddenham Common



The Memorial and Seat on the Common



The seat has been carved from an oak tree,
the aircraft control wheel is symbolic and not an exact replica of a B24s' control,

NIN
 ARA Date 4-10-40
 392ND BOMB GROUP FORMATION DATE 21 APRIL 1944
 576th SQ
 P.F.F. Lt. Col. POLKING
 P.F.F. Capt. STAUDER
 BARNES
 L : 670
 NEFF
 C : 511
 MATHIAS
 D : 433
 ASESADO
 A : 129
 577 SQ
 SCHELTEBS
 F : 548
 BRAUER
 N : 649
 BRATTON
 A : 082
 BASS
 W : 979
 JOHNSON
 T : 495
 BRADFORD
 Y : 050
 BRUNN
 C : 510
 SPARES
 A/C# LETTER SQ
 571 F 576 Q : 688
 TYLER
 E : 027
 579 SQ
 CASSELL
 H : 605
 ELLINGER
 D : 552
 LOTTERHOS
 H : 615
 PARDUE
 M : 474
 GANN
 L : 448
 HUNT
 J : 308
 578 SQ
 FLETCHER
 T : 105
 MULDOON
 B : 548
 SABOURIN
 Z : 028
 SCHILDKNECHT
 Y : 517
 SLAFKA
 B : 100
 BRIDGON
 X : 850
 ELLISON
 K : 131
 SPARES
 A/C# LETTER SQ
 764 N 578
 BELL
 G : 780
 WYATT
 A : 261

Formation for mission in 21st April 1944

Reproduced by courtesy of the B24 Bomb Group Memorial Association

The site of the crash was a WW2 dummy airfield, a decoy airfield for Swanton Morley Airfield; there were plywood Wellington Bombers, fire engines, trucks etc. on the field with a dummy airstrip made of stones. There was a flare path and the site was manned by the RAF. It was realistic enough to cause a Spitfire to land there in error

Similar B24s in flight.

There was no time to mourn for lost friends, the day after 2nd Lt Bass and his crew crashed, the 392nd Bomb Group sent 27 crew on a bombing mission to Hamm, Germany





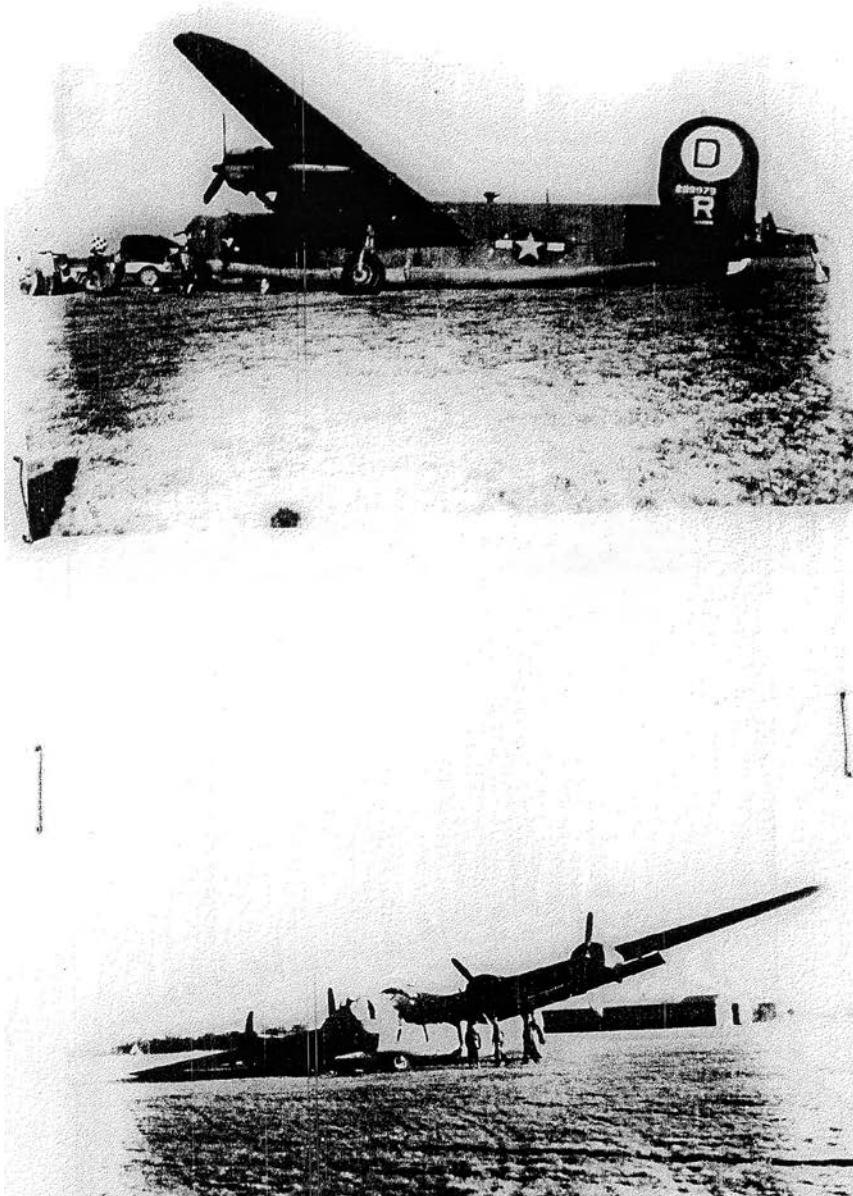
Reproduced Courtesy of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

(Identity of person in photo is unknown)

The Bass crew were members of the American 8th Air Force, 392nd bomb group, 577th Squadron, based at Wendling; they had been posted to the 392nd on 24th March 1944. The aircraft was a B24J bomber no 42-99979, originally assigned to the 578th squadron and known as Kentucky Baby, she was involved in a landing accident on 3rd March 1944 at Neaton /Station 505 (Watton). It is assumed that she was badly damaged as she did not fly combat missions again until mid-April. When she returned to duty, she was assigned to the 577th Squadron at Wendling, where records indicate that she was renamed Esquire Lady. It is not thought that her nose art was changed to reflect her new name.

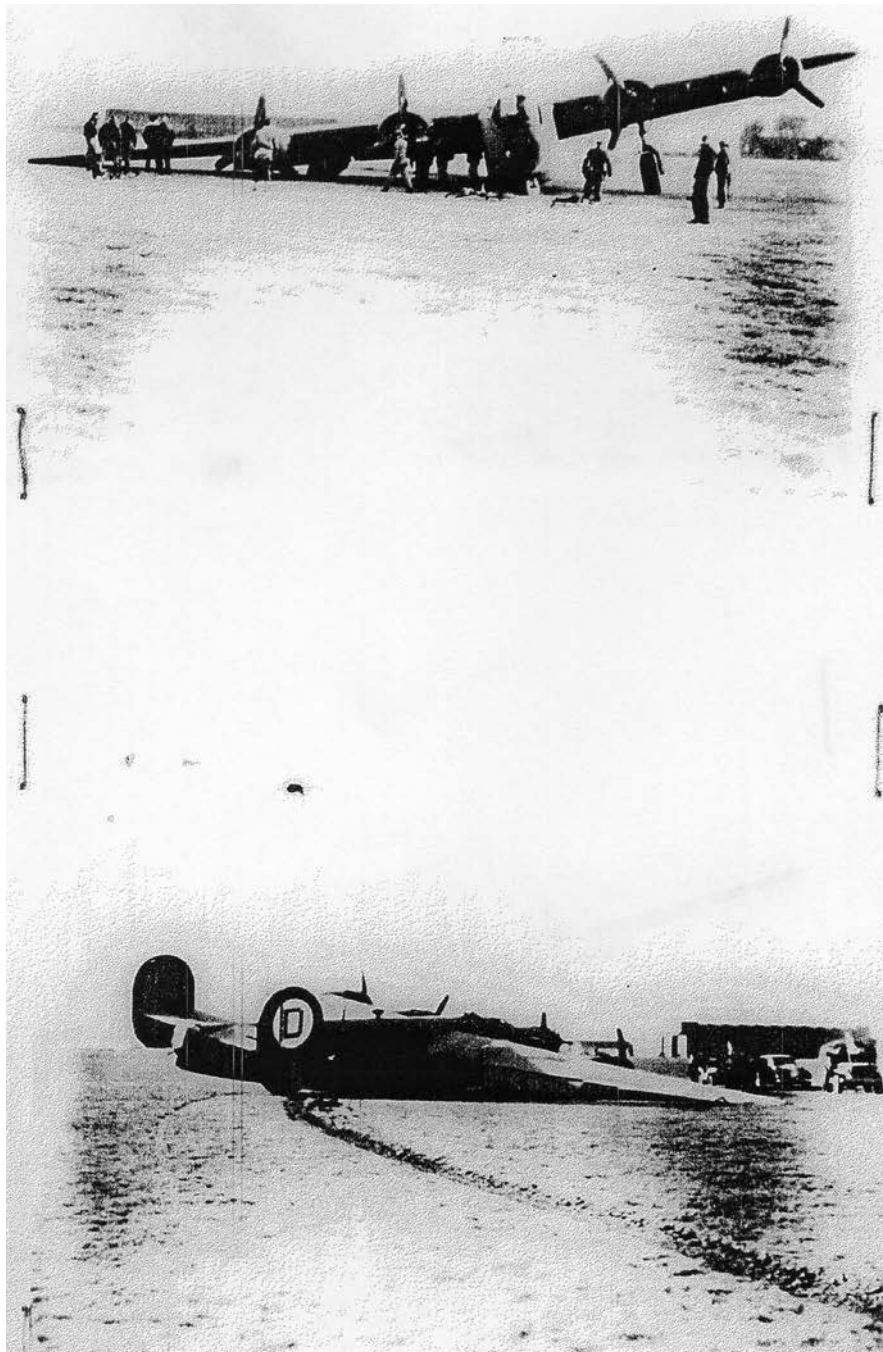
The landing accident at Watton

The plane was being ferried to Watton from Station 118 by 1st Lt G Floyd, who stated in his report that the landing was rough, but seemed alright, until I lowered the nose wheel and applied the brakes. At that time the right main gear collapsed, damaging no 4 prop etc., the right wing tip and the bomb bay.



Reproduced courtesy of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

The Aircraft following the landing accident at Watton



Reproduced courtesy of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

2nd Lt Wayne Steele was the first member of the crew to enter combat. On 1st April he flew as navigator with 2nd Lt Abells' crew. The Bass crew then flew their next seven missions together.

42-110058 was flown by the Bass crew on their first mission together.

On 8th April the Bass crew was aboard Lyndy again, on a bombing mission to Brunswick, Germany. The 392nd Bomb Group was attacked by about 75 German fighter planes. Three planes were lost, including two from Bass's squadron.

2nd Lt Bass had his first encounter with bad weather on 9th April. Conditions were so poor that 21 of the 34 aircraft from the 392nd had to abort, including Bass. The weather was no better the next day and Bass had to abort again.

On 11th April, the Bass crew completed a mission to Bernburg, Germany, while aboard B24 42-7495.

On 12th April, bad weather returned, Bass and four other crews aborted the mission.

After having started or completed missions for five straight days, the crew at last got a few days off.

On 20th April, they completed a mission to France aboard 42-99979, Kentucky Baby.

On the day of the accident aircraft had been assembling over North Tuddenham to 'join up' in a formation for a mission to Zwickau. The briefed target was an aircraft repair factory at Zwickau. The weather was atrocious and the mission was called off due to the weather. Eye witnesses to the crash, who still live in the village, recall the accident and their recollections corroborate the accuracy of the following: a report written by local people shortly after the crash, recent recollections by eye witnesses, and a poignant account written by a fellow pilot who was in the air at the time of the crash and published by kind permission of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association.

An extract from the wartime journal written by 1st Lt Robert Pardue, (then a 2nd Lt) a pilot in the 579th squadron:

21 April 1944: Flight time 3hrs 30min

We were briefed for a mission into Germany but it was scrubbed because of the weather. We took off with an overcast and were to form at 15,000 feet; but the clouds were much thicker than anticipated, and there were severe icing conditions, therefore the assembly was raised to about 20,000 feet. We loaded up with ice and stalled out in the clouds. It was a close call. The co-pilot and I had a very hard time getting the plane level. We thought we were in a spin once. The plane stalled at 158mph, by using full rated power we were able to finally get out of the clouds. There was no formation. Planes were everywhere; it was terribly dangerous in the clouds. Finally it was called off due to the weather. We later found out that Bass's crew spun in killing all but two men who were thrown clear, the officers were my best friends. All were married. Bass had a two month old baby. It's hard to take!

14th BOMB GROUP		
Target	LEADER <u>Capt. Slough</u>	TIME OF REPORT
Flak	Tried at 18,000 Mod. to severe icing	
E/A	Gssh 13 AC & were leaving weather recalled	
Friendly Fighter Support	2 OTHER SHIPS LOST CONTROL & RECOVERED &	
Losses	RETURNED TO BASE.	
Remarks (assembly, order, route, weather, etc.)		

392nd BOMB GROUP		
Target	LEADER <u>COL. RENDALL</u>	TIME OF REPORT
Flak	COL RENDALL LEAD AC OUT 16,000 200 ABOVE	
E/A	HEAVY-ICE BAD ASSEMBLY ONLY FEW AC	
Friendly Fighter Support	DIDN'T GET CW ASSEMBLED. LEADERS	
Losses	DIDN'T GET WITH THEIR GROUPS. LOTS	
Remarks (assembly, order, route, weather, etc.)	OF SHIPS WILLING AROUND. Had 30 AC.	
	ASSEMBLED SOUTH OF AREA	
	5000-18000 BUILDING UP HIGHER	
	WITH CONTRAILS	
	WASN'T WITH PROPER GROUP.	
	392 DIDN'T GET ASSEMBLED. 44 VERY FEW.	
	LITTLE ICE NOT SEVERE	
	IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR ASSEMBLY	

Conditions at the time of the accident.

Report written after return to base after mission was aborted

Reproduced courtesy of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

The report written by local people reads:

On Friday 21st April 1944, a major 8th AAF bomber operation was recalled with most of aircraft in the air, due to the atrocious weather and particularly bad icing conditions encountered caused the loss of at least six bombers.

The B24's of the 392nd Bomb Group (Wendling) had Zwickau airfield as a briefed target but all aircraft were recalled before assembly was completed. As B24J 42-99979 was returning to base it is believed to have iced up and broke up in mid air following loss of control and a power dive.

The aircraft crashed and burst into flames at Pound Farm North Tuddenham at 14.13 hours. The B24 was completely burnt out; Category 2 destroyed and 2 x 500lb unexploded bombs were found in the wreckage. The wreck was salvaged by a crew from 3rd Strategic Air Depot under Lt Blake, starting on 23.04.1944.



Two of the crew bailed out and survived, although they were injured; eight members of the crew perished.

Dereham Fire Service attended the incident.

One eye witness recalls the aircraft coming over and debris coming from it. A glove and a rubber dinghy were amongst items found in the witnesses' garden.

A second eye witness recalls- I was 9 years old and at school that day in April 1944. We were in the playground at the time and did not witness the breakup of the plane. All I can remember is a very large explosion which turned out to be the bombs exploding on the fields about one and a half miles to the west of us. The debris was flying through the air, hundreds of feet high.

My brother, who was 13 years old at the time, was off school that day, and was on his cycle in the lane called Mill Road at the time of the incident. Mill Road is about 600 metres east of the crash site. He heard planes overhead but did not take any notice at the time. We were so used to planes being overhead as there were USAAF bases at Shipdham, 8 miles to the south, Wendling, 8 miles to the west, and Attlebridge 5 miles to the east, also a RAF base at Swanton Morley, 3 miles to the North.

He suddenly heard a tremendous explosion and looked up and saw a large amount of debris flying hundreds of feet up in the air. He noticed two parachutes coming down in the distance and what he thought was a large piece of debris coming down in Mill Road. He went to investigate and discovered this was indeed the dead body of a crew member. My brother reported this to an adult and did not return to the scene. My brother assumed that the airman managed to jump from the stricken plane and his parachute was cut off by the debris. However he cannot remember seeing any sign of the parachute. The two parachutes which he saw in the distance were obviously the two survivors coming down.

The main crash site and where the bombs exploded was the western perimeter of the decoy airfield. All the kids, after school, visited the crash site. There was very little of the plane left, the debris was spread over an area of about a square mile, but there were several very large bomb craters about 20 feet deep, and quite close together. My brother recalls seeing the body of a crew member in the wreckage.

A third eye-witness recalls standing, with his father, in the doorway of his house and seeing the plane come over and crash.

Official records confirm that the salvage crew was led by Lt Blake and that the wreckage was classified as category E2 (totally destroyed)



Reproduced courtesy of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association

The 392nd BG Flight Surgeon Cpt. Thomas. B. Stone wrote a memo dated 27th April 1944 which stated ' While on an Operational Mission on 21st April 1944. A B-24H exploded in Mid-Air, cause undetermined at 12,000ft, with ten men on board. Two men parachuted, one body was burned beyond recognition, one body had a complicated fracture of the skull. Bodies of the remaining six were not burned and recognisable. Two individuals were identified by dental records, 2/Lt Gahm and Sgt Reeves, the remaining six were identified by their dog tags.

All those who died were originally buried in the Cambridge American Military Cemetery in Cambridge.

Original burial locations in Cambridge American Military Cemetery were:

T/Sgt James W Thomas	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 17
Sgt Walter E Reeves	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 18
2/Lt Wayne M Steele	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 19
Sgt Warren H Burnett	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 20
S/Sgt Robert E Norrell	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 21
2/Lt Louis F Bass	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 22
2/Lt Kenneth L Gahm	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 23
2/Lt Arthur R Stover Jr.	Plot C, Row 6, Grave 24

All eight were buried at 3pm on 25th April 1944, there was a Protestant Military service for all except for 2/Lt Stover for whom there was a Catholic Military Service. The graves were marked with temporary wooden crosses

T/Sgt James W Thomas is the only crewman who was interred in the Cambridge American Cemetery after the war, the others were returned to the US at the request of their next of kin.

On 3rd Feb 1947 the next of kin were sent a photo of Cambridge American Military Cemetery. The letter sent with the photo to Dorothy Bass said that the photo had been sent in the hope that ' she may gain some solace from this view of the surroundings where your loved one rests. As you can see, this is a place of simple dignity, neat and well cared for. Here assured of our continuous care now rest the remains of those who fell together in the service of our country.' Additionally the letter said ' This cemetery will be maintained as a temporary resting place until, in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin , all remains are either placed in a permanent resting place or returned to the Homeland for final burial.

(It is likely that this is a standard letter sent to all next of kin, together with the photo.)



2nd Lt. Louis Franklin Bass 12th January 1917 – 21st April 1944

Service ID: 0-807662 US Army.

2nd Lt Bass was the pilot of the aircraft and had been assigned to the 392nd on 3rd March 1944. His hometown was McKinney, Texas and he was enlisted on 28th January 1941, at Dallas. Prior to enlistment he had been employed as an automobile engineer.

Louis Bass was married to Dorothy Sumners Bass in 1942 and had a 2 month old son, Richard Lewis, at the time of his death.

The war department listed his date of birth, as 1 December 1917, although his date of birth is listed in other places as 12th January 1917.

On 18th September 1944 a summary court martial declared Dorothy to be his next of kin and entitled to receive his effects, Dorothy remarried on 9th February 1946 and became the wife of Mr. Earl. C. Minor. As she had remarried Dorothy was no longer the legal next of kin and Louis's father, William, became next of kin and signed The Request for Disposition of Remains asking that his son be returned to the US for re-burial in Altoga Cemetery, Collin County, near Princeton, Texas.

Louis was transported home on the USAT James Robinson and was delivered to the funeral home on 19th January 1949 under escort by 1/Lt Dolle who was asked to stay for the funeral by the next of kin, which he did. 1/Lt Dolle stated that 'after talking to the family of 2/Lt Bass, I was able to confirm that the deceased and I were stationed together at three different bases and that I had instructed him in pilot training on one base in 1943. 1/Lt Dolle presented Louis's mother Emma with an American flag.

One of large family , 2/Lt Bass was survived by 3 siblings of which he was the 2nd youngest. He was honoured on the Registry of the National WW11 war memorial by his younger brother Lloyd Bass, and is also honoured on the war memorial at McKinney Texas.

2nd Lt Kenneth L Gahm Co-Pilot

31st October 1917- 21st April 1944

ID No 0-693031

2nd Lt Kenneth L. Gahm was the co-pilot and was qualified for flights to 30,000ft.

Kenneth was married to Verla Lois Gahm and lived in Wichita , Kansas, although his enlistment papers named Sedgewick County Kansas as his home.

The war department named Verla and 2/Lt Gahm's Parents Melva and Charles as his beneficiaries and subsequently named Verla as his next of kin.

On 15th May 1947, Verla signed a request for her husbands' remains to be returned to the US for burial in Wichita Kansas. Kenneth was transported on the USAT Lawrence Victory and under escort by Capt. Quentin J Walker 2/Lt Gahm's remains were delivered to the mortuary in Wichita on 18th August 1948. He was then buried in Wichita Park Cemetery, Wichita, Kansas.

2nd Lt Arthur Ray Stover

26-10-1921 to 21-04-1944

ID : 0-755124

Arthur Stover was the bombardier on the aircraft, and he is buried in Wyuka Cemetery, Lincoln County, Nebraska. He is also honoured on the Registry of the National War 11 Memorial.

2nd Lt Stover attended Lincoln High School and then Nebraska University prior to being enlisted in the army, in 1941, as an infantryman, he served eighteen months as an infantryman prior to joining the Air Force. He was trained to be a bombardier and received his wings and was commissioned as a 2/Lt in September 1943. Arthur 'Smokey' Stover married Mildred (Millie) Echols at the beginning of WW11.

His wife, Mildred, received the Purple Heart, which was awarded to her husband posthumously, from the President in August 1944. Following the death of her husband Mildred, volunteered to serve others in the Army Medical Corps, trained to be a Physiotherapist and was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

Mildred completed a Request for Disposition form on 19th March 1947, stating that she was not the next of kin authorised to direct the final disposition of remains and named his father Arthur R Stover as next of kin. She gave her name as Mildred. E Penberthy of Barstow, Texas Mildred had married a serviceman that she had met whilst working as a physiotherapist, and after his death married a Mr Ells. Arthur Stover is honoured on a war memorial by Mildred Ells. Mildred became known as 'Auntie Millie' by the servicemen that she helped whilst working as a physiotherapist.

Arthur was transported home on the USAT Lawrence Victory , under escort by Capt Quentin J Walker and his remains were delivered to the Mortuary in Lincoln Nebraska on 30 August 1948. He was then buried in Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln.



Wyuka Cemetery

2nd Lt Wayne Matthew Steele Navigator

12.05.1919 - 21.04-1944

ID : 0-692348

The following information has been given by The Clinton County Historical Society:

Wayne Steele was the son of Mr & Mrs William Steele of New Vienna, Ohio (in Clinton County) He graduated from Ohio State University College of Pharmacy in 1941 and was married to Christine M Boyd Steele, also of New Vienna.

He earned his navigator wings and was commission a 2nd Lieutenant at Ellington Field, near Houston, Texas, in 1943. He was qualified for flights to 30,000ft. After combat training at Casper, Wyoming, he and his crew received additional training in Northern Ireland before



being transferred to the 392nd Bomb Group. In news release to the Wilmington News Journal "from an 8th Air force Composite Command Station, Northern Ireland" 2nd Lt Steele was quoted as saying "I am anxious to get into combat so that I can do my part to win this war as quickly as possible".

Lt Steele was the 12th Clinton County man to be killed in WW11 and its 2nd flyer to be killed over Europe.

The navigator's position

On 30th August 1944 a summary court martial determined that Christine was the next of kin and his effects were forwarded to her soon after. On 3rd October, Christine wrote the army: I have received the personal effects of my husband 2/Lt Wayne M Steele. These effects were those that my husband had overseas at the time of his death. A footlocker containing the majority of his personal belongings was forwarded by boat on his departure from this country by air in February, However this locker had not reached him before his death in April. I know this locker arrived at his base a week after his death from a letter written to me by a fellow officer. It is my impression that these will be returned to me. Is it possible that these belongings will be sent to Kansas City at a later date? There are several valuable articles among these which I want. I realize that it takes time for these matters but will appreciate helpful information.

On 13th October 1944, the Army Quartermaster Depot in Kansas City replied ' I am sorry to report that we have not yet received the addition effects of your husband. It is reasonable to assume that they will ultimately be received here; however, because of transportation difficulties, considerable time may elapse before the shipment arrives. Please be assured, as soon as the property is received here it will be forwarded to you immediately.

On 1st June 1946, Wayne's parents sent the army a letter saying ' In case his wife does not request the return of his body to the US would it be possible to have his body sent to us (his Father and Mother). We are very desirous of having the body returned home.

On 20th June 1946, the Army replied that ' This offices appreciates your desire to determine the final resting place of your son. However inasmuch as the records of this office indicate that the legal next of kin of the late 2/Lt Wayne M Steele is his widow, this office must recognise her right to determine the final resting place of the remains of your son.'

On 28th March 1947 Christine signed the Request for Disposition of Remains asking for her husband to be returned to the US for burial in New Vienna Cemetery, New Vienna, Ohio.

The remains were transported home on USAT Lawrence Victory and were delivered to the funeral home under escort by Capt William L Boling Jnr. On 30th July 1948. At Christines' request Capt Boling stayed for the private burial in New Vienna International Order of Oddfellows Cemetery.



Technical Sergeant James Wall Thomas

31st March 1923- 21st April 1944

ID:18136291

T/Sergeant James Thomas was the radio operator on the aircraft, and his hometown was Holly Grove, Arkansas, where his sister still resides. He was awarded the Purple Heart.

His remains are buried in the Cambridge American Cemetery, England: Plot F, Row 4, Grave no. 36.

T/Sgt Thomas was married to Jean F Thomas, who was declared to be his next of kin.

On 11th July 1947 Jean Thomas signed as Request for Disposition of remains asking that her husband be permanently interred in the Cambridge American Cemetery, but as according to an Army memo dated 17 Sept 1947, Jean Franks Thomas (aged 22 years) had married Rosco Lee Harvey of Little Rock on 18 January 1947, she would not have been entitled to sign this form. Mrs Phil Thomas, James's mother became the next of kin and accordingly on 9th December 1947 authorised his remains to be permanently interred at Cambridge.

The army notified Mrs Thomas on 27 May 1949, that her sons' remains had been permanently interred at Cambridge in the newly established Cambridge American Cemetery and wrote her: He now rested 'side-by-side with the comrades who also gave their lives for their country. Customary Military funeral services were conducted over the grave at the time of burial'. She could rest assured that this final interment was conducted with fitting dignity and that the grave-site will be carefully and conscientiously maintained by the United States Government.

Sgt Warren H Burnett
19th March 1921- 21st April 1944

ID: 12066823

Warren Burnett enlisted on 17th January 1942 and his home was Columbia. New York. He was the Ball Turret Gunner.

His wife, Daisy, was at work in the store where she was employed, excitedly describing the furniture that she had purchased for their new home, when she received the news of his death.

Daisy was declared to be his next of kin by the Army and on 17th April 1947 completed and signed a Request for the Disposition of Remains, asking that her husband be returned to the US for burial in Malden Cemetery, Malden, New York.

Sgt Burnett was transported home on the USAT Lawrence Victory and under escort by T/Sgt John O Allipas,(NB this surname may not be correct) ,was delivered to the funeral home in Valatie, New York on 30th July 1948. He was not buried in Malden Cemetery, Daisy must have reconsidered as her decision as his grave is in Old Chatham Colonial Cemetery,Valatie,New York.



Staff Sgt Robert E Norrell

8th December 1923--21st April 1944

ID: 34508679

Staff Sgt Robert Norrell was enlisted at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia on 29th January 1943 and he was the tail gunner on the aircraft.

His hometown was Memphis, Tennessee and he had been at college for one year prior to enlistment. It is known that he was survived by a sister.

The War Department listed Roberts' beneficiaries as his parents Benjamin and Mary Norrell, his father was determined to be his next of kin , having replied on 7th July, to an army letter dated 17th June 1944. Mr Norrell replied to confirm that Robert was not married and enclosed a certified copy of Roberts' last will and testament.

(Mr. Norrells' statement contradicts a survivors' statement that all those who died were married men)

Mr Norrell requested that Robert be returned to the US for a military funeral burial in the National Cemetery in Memphis, however he later changed his mind and asked for his son to be buried at the Memphis Memorial Cemetery,

Robert was transported home on the USAT Lawrence Victory and arrived in Memphis on 7th July 1948, he was buried soon after. His grave is in Shelby County, Tennessee.

On 21st July 1948, his mother wrote the Army a letter- she wrote:

We, the parents and sister of S/Sgt Robert E Norrell, wish to sincerely thank you for your courtesy and sympathetic understanding during the time we were awaiting his return from Cambridge American Military Cemetery in England.

Now that he is resting in the homeland in the soil of his beloved Tennessee, he seems so near. To us this is satisfying.

Since I have been privileged to kneel at his casket and say 'welcome home son', since we have done all we could for him, our sorrow seems easier to bear.

For us there will continue the vacant chair, aching and yearning hearts. But, oh, the peace that is now within our hearts.

We are grateful to these United States of America and the military authorities for making it possible for our war dead to be returned to their native country.

Sincerely yours, Mrs Benj M Norrell.

Lt Col Dan L Miller, Chief, American Graves Registration Division, Memphis, Tennessee replied:

I want to thank you very kindly for the thoughtful letter that you have written me. I fully realise what satisfaction you must have in knowing that your son is back here where you can at least visit his resting place when you so desire.

I would like to say that if we have done anything at all which has been instrumental in easing your burden during this period of time, we feel our mission has been worthwhile.

We try to do for the next of kin of every remain that comes through our distribution Center anything and everything within our power to help them.

Yours very sincerely, Dan L Miller

Sgt. Walter Edgar Reeves

26.11.1920 – 21.04.1944

ID: 14079106



STAFF SERGEANT REEVES

Late Sgt. Reeves Will Be Honored

Memorial services for Staff Sgt. Walter E. Reeves, who was killed in action April 21, 1944, in the European theatre, will be held Friday at 2 p. m., at the Free Methodist church, Gainesville, Ga.

Sergeant Reeves' wife, Mrs. Eunice Gambrell Hughes, and stepdaughter, Annette Hughes, live at 100 Choice street, this city.

The service will be conducted by Chaplain Frank Waaser of the Second Army Air forces Service Group Training center of municipal airport, Greenville, where Sergeant Reeves served for a time.

He has been awarded a citation of honor and a Purple Heart, posthumously. At the time of his death he was a waist gunner and electrical turret specialist on a Liberator and had completed more than five missions.

Staff Sergeant Reeves was born in Auburn, Ala., lived for some years in Chicago, Ill., and later lived in Gainesville, Ga.

He and Mrs. Reeves were married December 9, 1942.

Other survivors are his mother, Mrs. Victoria Hammonds, Dahlonega, Ga.; three brothers, J. H. Reeves, Gainesville, Ga., and Knox, Tenn.; and Rudolph Reeves, Gainesville, Ga.; and six sisters, Mrs. Georgia Crow, Gainesville, Ga.; Mrs. Mac Crow and Mrs. Ethel Anderson, Dahlonega, Ga.; Mrs. Lucille Muller, Chicago, Ill.; and Mrs. Fannie Henison and Miss Wilma Reeves of Detroit, Mich.

Sgt Walter Reeves was the right waist gunner on the aircraft and was awarded a citation of honour and a purple heart posthumously. He had completed 7 missions prior to his death.

He was married to Eunice Gambrell Hughes on 9th December 1942 and had a stepdaughter Annette Hughes. He was in born in Alabama and had also lived in Chicago for a while before making his home in Gainesville, Georgia. He was survived by three brothers and six sisters. His grave is in Little Texas Cemetery, Macon County, Alabama.

on 23rd September 1944, a summary court martial determined that Eunice Gambrell Hughes was the next of kin, but as she married Edward Franklin Ramey on 30 June 1946 the army sent a letter to Sgt Reeves mother, acknowledging the re-marriage of his widow and naming his mother Queen Victoria Reeves as the next of kin. Accordingly Mrs Queen Reeves requested that her sons' remains be returned to US for burial in The Little Texas cemetery , Auburn, Alabama,

Sgt Reeves was placed aboard the USAT Lawrence Victory and under escort by T/Sgt Billie R Rowlette, Sgt Reeves remains were returned to Alabama on 22 July 1948. He was then buried in The Little Texas Cemetery, Alabama.



The

following photos were kindly donated by the family of Sgt Walter Reeves



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He and Mrs. Reeves were married December 9, 1942.

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Sgt Reeves and his wife Eunice at the time of
their wedding



Walter E. Reeves 9/7/43

The Survivors of the Crash

The two men who parachuted from the aircraft were injured but survived. Neither ever flew in combat again but after recovering from their injuries worked as ground crew at Wendling. Both had technical skills (Airplane Mechanic/Flight Engineer) and were therefore still useful to the 392nd. They were at Wendling until its' personnel returned to the US in May 1945.

Sgt John J.Brzostowski

18th September 1922- July 1979

He was a waist gunner on the aircraft and was living in Hudson County, New Jersey when he was enlisted on 12th November 1942. Eye witnesses recall seeing an undamaged parachute descending from the plane, this must have been the one used by Sgt Brzostowski as the other survivor recalled that his parachute was damaged by a piece of flying metal. Local

people did not realise that either man who used a parachute had survived and until recently considered that all ten crew members had been killed, indicating that Sgt Brzostowski may have been severely injured.

John Brzostowski
Services for John J. Brzostowski, 56, of 5408 Petty were pending with Hubbard-Kelly Funeral Home.
Brzostowski died Wednesday in Andrews after an apparent heart attack.
He was born Sept. 18, 1922, and married Rose English in 1973 in New Jersey. The moved to Odessa in 1977 from Lyndhurst, N.J. He was a retired member of the U.S. Air Force and a member of VFW Post No. 4372 and American Legion Post No. 430.
Survivors include his wife; two daughters, June Mapor and Lori Brzostowski, both of Windsor, Ontario; one son, Paul Brzostowski of England; one brother, Peter Brzostowski of Odessa; and two grandchildren.

The son of polish immigrants, Sgt Brzostowski had an older brother and sister and also a younger brother. He was a single man at the time of the crash, and continued to serve in the USAAF, although when he retired is not known. Sgt Brzostowski lived in Lyndhurst New Jersey until 1979, when he moved to Odessa Texas, where his younger brother lived. Sadly he passed away with a suspected heart attack in July 1979. He was

survived by his wife, Rose whom he had married in 1973, two daughters, a son and two grandchildren. In his obituary he is described as retired member of the USAAF, and a member of the VFW Post no 4372 AND American Legion Post No. 430. Every effort has been made to trace the family of Sgt Brzostowski, to ask if he recounted any memories of 21st April 1944, that they were able to recall, but without success

The information on this page has been obtained as the result of extensive research by the Hudson County Genealogy Society,

Sgt Gerald. A. Knettel

He was the engineer on the aircraft and sadly passed away in 1967 aged 47.



James Knettel , the son of Gerald Knettel was contacted by Annette Tison of the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association, and in his reply to her message he wrote ' I was so excited to receive a letter regarding my father, he passed away in 1967. What you have described to me in the letter was exactly as the story was told to me, the tidbit that I could add is that the ones who survived were the only single men, the others were married. I always found that sad. I was only five when he died in 1967 aged 47 and I heard the account from my Mother. She passed away several months ago and would have been as excited as me.

When this story was told to James's friend and employer, he arranged for James to be presented with a scale model of Esquire Lady together with a cap badge, identical to the one which would have worn by Gerald Knettel, as permanent mementos of his father.

Michael Knettel, James elder brother wrote to Annette, 'The only memory that I have of my Fathers', is the day his plane exploded. He said that they were up extremely high and he thought that the plane froze and split in two. He and Sgt Brzostowski were directly above and below one another and were sitting in their seats one minute and the next were falling from the plane below it. He said that it then blew up above them. His parachute was damaged and caused him to fall faster to the ground. He was injured severely resulting in a metal plate to be placed in his head and a rod in his leg. Much after that I don't know anything.

