

Friends of the 416th Bomb Group (L)

"Keeping memories alive by perpetuating the accomplishments and Heritage of the 416th Bomb Group for present and future generations"



MAIL CALL

QTR 2, 2022



Dear Friends,

Tomorrow is the Fourth of July, the day we celebrate our independence from England. On July 4, 1776 the original thirteen colonies proclaimed independence from England with the Declaration of Independence. The conflict between England and the colonies was already a year old when the Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia on June 7, 1776. During the June 7 session, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia presented a resolution with the famous words, *"Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."* Lee's words proved to be the impetus for the Declaration of Independence. Yet it was not until July 1, 1776 that the Second Continental Congress met again and voted to accept Lee's resolution. On July 2, 1776, the Congress voted to declare independence from England, and after several revisions, the Declaration of Independence was finally approved on July 4, 1776. John Hancock, the president of Congress, was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence yet it was not until a month later—in August, 1776—that all signatures were finally acquired, a total of 56 men signing the Declaration in all.



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

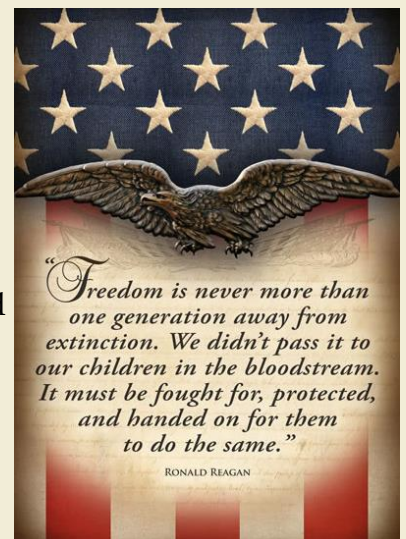
The men who signed the Declaration knew they had committed treason and, if captured, would face horrible deaths (being hung, drawn and quartered). Their possessions would be forfeited, their families would become homeless and imprisoned. And, indeed, that did happen as properties of many of the signers were looted and destroyed. Five of the signers were captured during the Revolutionary War, tortured as traitors and died. Nine others died from wounds or hardships during the War. Three others either lost their sons or their sons were captured while fighting for the freedom and principles in which they believed.

The importance of this holiday lies not only celebrating a new, free nation but, as Abraham Lincoln said in recognizing the significance of the Declaration of Independence, as *"... a rebuke and stumbling block to tyranny and oppression."* As we celebrate the nation's birth, let us ever remember that the spirit of the Declaration of Independence has continued to be the banner of hope to those countries seeking liberty and freedom from despotism, particularly and especially during World War II. I am humbled by the 416th Bomb Group's service and sacrifices to pay the immense cost of freedom. Freedom is never free!

Kathe Rensner, Liaison

Friends of the 416th Bomb Group

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What's New?

Date	Check Out the 416th.com Website [to read all monthly updates, click on this link: https://416th.com/416th_website_update_summary.html]
Jun 2022	Added 3 additional Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPF) obtained via Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) requests graciously fulfilled by Archival Reference Technician George Fuller, NARA, St. Louis, MO. Published Registration for the 2022 Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Reunion (Tucson, AZ, October 26-30)
May 2022	Added three new web pages with information on Honors received by Individual Soldiers in the 416th BG (Individual Awards, Honors and Commendations, Individual Medals Details and Campaign Medals: American, European-African-Middle Eastern, and Asiatic-Pacific); updated Group and Squadron Awards, Honors and Commendations page.
Apr 2022	Updated Wethersfield page with "Memorials at RAF Wethersfield, Essex" video link, Added "RAF Wethersfield" section with 4 videos to 416th Videos page, Added Short article written in 1996 by Ed Renth about D-Day PDF file link to Mission #67 page. Through FOIA requests graciously fulfilled by Government Information Specialist Bryan K. Jolly of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Office, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, KY, we recently acquired complete Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPF) for 40 of the 416th BG Fatalities. We already had 11 IDPFs acquired through various sources. A new "IDPF File" column was added to the "WWII Military Service Fatalities 1943 - 1945" index web page to indicate if an IDPF is on-line for a given Soldier Dead. To view the actual IDPF file in PDF format, click the Individual Memorial web page hyperlink, scroll down and then click the IDPF hyperlink. Also added is a new WWII Individual Deceased Personnel Files summary information web page. Added Q1 2022 Friends of the 416th Bomb Group Quarterly Newsletter

Wethersfield Airfield Museum News

In April, Ross Stewart, Curator of the Wethersfield Airfield Museum in Essex, England announced the closure of the Museum effective June 30, 2022. Since then, a flurry of letter writing campaigns and emails to US Ambassador Jane Hartley, among others, have gained some traction. Steve Roy offers this update:



"Ross and his team have done a Herculean job of moving the Wethersfield Airfield Museum collection off-site. The entire collection is being temporarily stored at two farms and museum friends and volunteers homes. It is hoped they can return to Wethersfield and be able to occupy the Chapel and Memorial Courtyard as the museum.

"The U.S. Embassy Air Attache, Col. Charles Metrolis has been advocating on behalf of those that served at Wethersfield and honoring those that sacrificed for our freedom. MP James Cleverly, whose District Wethersfield is in has been engaged with US Ambassador Hartley. He is also the Minister for Europe and North America and understands the importance of Wethersfield as a heritage site. He is a Lt. Col. in the Territorial Army. So the campaign to save Wethersfield as a Country Park and Heritage Site is gaining momentum but has a long ways to go to prevail."

Additionally, Steve Roy and Roger Robbins representing the Friends of the 416th Bomb Group and the British interest in Wethersfield were interviewed on BBC Essex Radio on May 18th. I have posted several You Tube links about the Museum below:

<https://youtu.be/66BMpEtEmxs>

A video of some of the memorials located around the Museum

<https://youtu.be/gV0YqUWEJW8>

The history of RAF Wethersfield including the 416th Bomb Group

In Remembrance

1st Lt. **Lucian James Siracuse (Siracusa)**, 668th Squadron, passed away October 7, 2021 at 101 years of age. Mr. Syracuse was shot down over Amiens, France on May 27, 1944 and spent the duration of the war as a POW.

Keeping in Touch!

Thanks to Rick Prucha and Steve Roy for their input. Do you have news or a story to share? Please let me know at friendsof416thbombgroup@swcp.com.