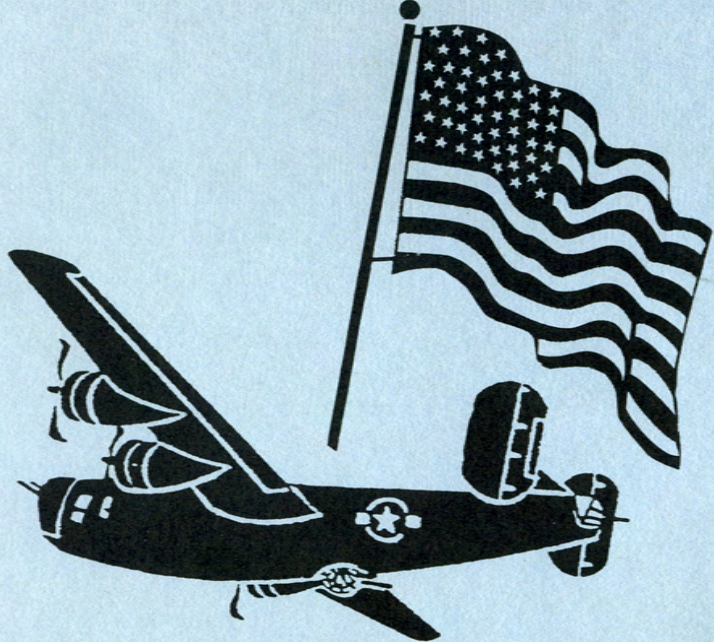




This book is dedicated to the memory of the 16 men of the 461st Bomb Group who died while stationed at Hammer Field, Fresno, California in 1943 and 1944.



Written by 1991 and 1992 Fourth Grade
Classes of Big Creek School.

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1991-92 Fourth Grade Class

Introduction

In February 1991 Melissa Schamanski brought a newspaper article to school that said the Southern California Edison Company would lower Huntington Lake to work on the dam. It also said that parts of a B-24 bomber might show up. Two days later an eighth grader brought the front page of a 1955 newspaper that told about the crash. Mr. Crider read some of the article to the 4th grade class. He asked us if we would like to learn more about the crew. We said, "Yes." That weekend Mr. Crider went to the library and found all the articles he could find. Mr. Crider read them to us and we decided that we wanted to do a project on it. We wanted to know all we could about the plane and its crew. Groups of two kids each got a crew member assigned to them to research.

We spent the next four months writing letters to anyone we thought would help us. We visited the crash site at Huntington Lake and went to Castle Air Force Base to see a B-24 bomber.



Bomber in Huntington Lake

During this time we started to get a lot of help and information from members of the 461st bomb group.

During the summer we had an informational booth at the Madera Air Show. We were collecting donations to build a memorial for the crew at Huntington Lake. We also had a picture painted of the B-24 that crashed in Huntington Lake.

When school started in the fall we continued to work with Mr. Crider three hours a week to finish the project.

On the evening of December 5, 1991, we put on a play written about the crash. The next morning, on December 6, 1991, 48 years after the crash, we dedicated the memorial at Huntington Lake.

The 4th Grade Class of 1992 decided to continue with the project. They researched the other ten men of the 461st that died while stationed at Hammer Field. They wrote this booklet using research from both classes, and they designed the plaque that will be placed at the Fresno Air Terminal along with the painting of the B-24 Bomber. Both classes will culminate the project on October 2, 1993 with the Memorial dedication ceremony at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum.

History

The 461st Bombardment Group was activated on July 1, 1943. They moved to Ven Field, Idaho on July 29, 1943; Kearns, Utah, September 11, 1943; Wendover Field, Utah, September 30, 1943; Hammer Field, California, October 30, 1943 - January 1944; Toretto Airfield, Italy, February 20, 1944 - July 1945.



The first casualty of the 461st was Edwin Drucker. Second Lt. Reginald B. Tribe was flying with his crew when he noticed engine trouble at 21,000 feet near Tonapah, Nevada.

After losing two engines he began losing altitude quickly. Seven of his crew members bailed out and landed safely.

One of the members on the plane tore open his parachute in excitement. After Lt. Tribe learned this he made up his mind that he was going to fly the plane down through an overcast. Co-pilot 2nd Lt. Edward J. Drucker stayed with the rest of the plane.

When the plane hit Lt. Tribe was stunned but got out in time.

After the three managed to get out, the plane burst into flames. Realizing that Drucker was still in the burning plane, Lt. Tribe tried to save him but was held back by his fellow crew members.

Lt. Tribe became the first victim of an airplane crash in the 461st.

Article from the Fresno Bee on December 7, 1943

Two Fresno Army Planes Are Missing

Two B-24 bombers from Hammer Field and their crews are being sought today in the Huntington Lake and Independence areas, with planes from here and Muroc and March Fields participating.

One of the big planes is believed down in the Huntington Lake region since late yesterday.

The other last was heard from between Independence and Las Vegas Sunday.

The public relations office at Hammer Field said it is known two members of the five-man crew aboard the plane parachuted to safety near Huntington Lake.

A combined air and land search is being conducted in the area for the men who bailed out and also the other six members of the crew and the plane.

Nothing has been reported concerning the plane which has been missing since yesterday nor the six-man crew which was aboard it.

Identity of the crew members and other details are being withheld pending further developments in the search.

On Routine Flights

Both planes were reported on routine flights at the time of their disappearance. Army air force officers said fog is hampering the search.

Another B-24 from Hammer Field was lost November 22nd near Tonopah, Nevada, when the copilot and injuring the pilot and two enlisted men. Seven other members of the crew parachuted from the plane before it crashed.

Second Lieutenant Edward J. Drucker, the copilot who was killed, lived in Richmond Hills, N.Y., Sergeant Donald E. Holliday of 404 D Street, Madera, was one of the men who bailed out.

On December 5, 1943, 2nd Lt. Charles W. Turvey and his crew were lost. The plane was believed to have crashed between Mt. Whitney and Huntington Lake, California.

Riding on the plane at the time were the co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Robert M. Hester; the navigator, 2nd Lt. William T. Cronin; the bombardier, 2nd Lt. Ellis H. Fish; the engineer, S/Sgt. Robert O. Bursey; and the radio operator, Sgt. Howard A. Wandtke.

The next day ten B-24's formed a search party for Lt. Turvey. On this mission Capt. William H. Darden developed engine trouble. His co-pilot and his radio operator parachuted safely to the ground, but the rest of the crew were lost. The people on the plane were: the pilot, William H. Darden; co-pilot, Marion C. Settle; the navigator, Samuel J. Schlosser; engineer, Franklyn C. Nyswonger; radio operator, George Barulic; gunners, Richard Spangle and Donald V. Vandeplasche; and also assistant gunner, Dick E. Mayo.

December proved to be a month of costly accidents.

January also was a bad month for tragedies. On January 8, John Atz, Billy Novotny, and Clement Amory all died while on high altitude training missions. Atz and Novotny were on the Bush crew while Amory was on the Grimm crew.

The 461st left Fresno on January 24 to join the war in Italy.

Lt. Edward J. Drucker

Lt. Edward J. Drucker was a co-pilot on a test flight over Tonopah, Nevada when they developed engine trouble at 21,000 feet. They started losing altitude rapidly. Capt. Tribe gave the crew the bail out signal. Seven of the men did as they were told. In all of the commotion Sgt. Finnegan opened his chute in the plane. When Tribe learned this he decided to ride the plane down through the overcast. Lt. Drucker stayed with the airplane commander. So did the side gunner, Sgt. Chester G. Kline. When the plane hit, Capt. Tribe was stunned but managed to get out. Sgt. Finnegan, though injured, dragged Sgt. Kline, who had suffered a back injury, from the plane crash. After the three were out, the plane burst into flames.

Realizing that Lt. Drucker was still in the plane, Lt. Tribe attempted to re-enter the plane, but was held back by the two crew members that stayed with the plane. Lt. Drucker was the first member of the 461st bombardment group to die in an airplane crash. He was from Richmond Hills, New York. We sent letters trying to find friends or relatives but received no answers.

Hester Lake

On December 5, 13 days after the loss of the first B-24, another bomber from Hammer Field, piloted by 2nd Lt. Charles W. Turvey, disappeared over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The crew included Lt. Robert M. Hester, co-pilot; Sgt. Robert O. Bursey, flight engineer; Lt. Elis H. Fish, bombardier; and Sgt. Howard A. Wandtke, radio operator.

The B-24 hit the mountain peak taking off the right wing and sliding the airplane into a spin over a small lake. The plane was not found, all were thought to be lost.

Bobby Hester's dad was from Los Angeles. Every summer for 17 years Clint Hester went up to the Kings Canyon National Park looking for the plane and his son, Bobby. Late one night in February 1959, Clint Hester died at the age of 63. His last words were, "Now I'll finally know what happened to Bobby."

On July 17, 1960, two geologists were walking their way up a stream in Kings Canyon National Park.

First they found a piece of plywood and the wing zipper that looked like it had come from a flight suit.

When they reached the lake, they found a yellow colored object in the lake. One of the geologists dove in and got it. It was an aviation oxygen bottle with markings that indicated that it had come from a B-24 Bomber.



Hester Lake Crew

When the geologist dove in he spotted an aviator's boot and on another dive he got it. Inside there were bones of a human foot.

They found more pieces of wreckage on the north bank of the lake and with the shadows just right they could see more pieces in the lake.

The wreckage turned out to be the lost B-24 bomber, serial number 41-28463, that was lost on December 5, 1943.

The following is an excerpt of an article written by William D. Landsford for "Stag Magazine" in July, 1961.

By August 4th, the military divers had searched the lake, examined the crumpled fuselage and recovered all that would ever be found of Bob Hester, Charles Turvey, and their crew. The 600 yard-long lake was found to be up to 110 feet deep, and the intense cold made recovery very difficult. All that was found was a lower torso and miscellaneous bits of flesh and bones. The portion which could be definitely identified belonged to Sgt. Bob Bursey, but there was enough evidence to indicate that all aboard had died instantly.

A week after recovery, all that remained of the crew was buried in the mass grave at Arlington National Cemetery. Only the identifiable remains of Sgt. Bursey were given a separate burial. The family attended, and Bob's sister, Janet, was there in behalf of Clint.

Lt. Charles W. Turvey



Lt. Charles W. Turvey was the pilot on the plane that crashed into Hester Lake on December 5, 1943. He lived in Reesville, Ohio, when he was growing up. We wrote several letters to Reesville but did not receive an answer.

In March of 1992, Mr. Crider was on his way to Dayton, Ohio, and stopped at Reesville, Ohio. After talking to many residents he found a woman who knew the Turveys. She gave Mr. Crider the name and telephone number of Lt. Turvey's brother. Mr. Crider called him and he sent pictures, a log book, a flight school year-book, and the following information.

Lt. Turvey was born in Port William, Ohio on July 23, 1920, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Turvey of

Reesville. He attended Reesville schools and played on the high school basketball team. After graduation, he attended Wilmington College for two years followed by his enlistment in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1940.

Lt. Robert M. Hester

Bob's interest in aviation had begun in high school. With his family's encouragement he took flying lessons around the Los Angeles area, mostly out of Clover Field near Santa Monica. When he became 17 he flew "solo."

Bob Hester went North, to Alaska, where he worked for a year as a forest ranger. He fell in love, was married, and returned with his bride to Los Angeles.

Then it was 1941 and World War II had just begun in Europe. Bob moved quickly. He began flying again and began making arrangements to enlist as a pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Then, suddenly, Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese and the U.S. Army Air Corps offered flight-crew training to married men. Bob enlisted, and late in September, 1943, he was commissioned a second lieutenant and awarded his pilot's silver wings. His next move was to Hammer Field, Fresno, California, to begin training with B-24 bombers. While he was at Hammer Field on December 5, his plane crashed somewhere in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

2nd Lt. William T. Cronin

William Cronin was the Navigator on the plane that crashed in Hester Lake on December 5, 1943. The plane's name may have been *Lucky Lee*.

On December 6, 1943 Bill's parents received the telegram telling them that the plane was overdue and a search was being undertaken. After a long search nothing was found.

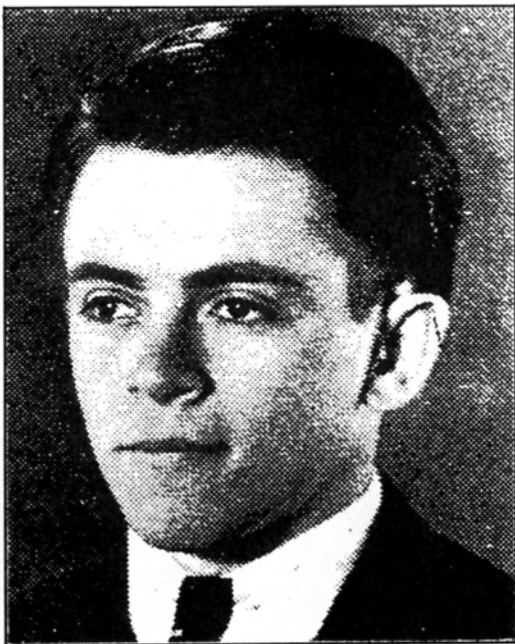
They found the plane in 1960.

Bill had three sisters and one brother.

He was born in Olean, New York, on October 15, 1919.

According to Bill's sister he had dark brown hair and honest brown eyes. He was strong and was a hard worker.

When Bill was young he and some others always went to the nearby Mt. Hermann for a hike and to pick huckleberries. This was his favorite thing to do because the mountain was within walking distance and also provided a beautiful view.



Bill skied and loved to hunt. He liked to read and was a good student.

He was very athletic in sports of all kinds. In 1935, 1936, and 1937 Bill won medals for the mile in high school.

He was a senior in 1938. Bill was voted the "Swingest" by the members of his senior class.

After High School he went to St. Bonaventure University at Allegany, New York.

At St. Bonaventure they are putting up a plaque with Bill's name on it. They are also adding his name to another plaque that they already have up.

Bill's sister says she still feels sad about her brother. She said, "When you're so little your big brothers are so special . . . it's hard to imagine, but it's still hard to talk about it after all these years."



Group Burial Arlington National Cemetary

2nd Lt. Ellis H. Fish

Ellis H. Fish was from Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was the bombardier on the B-24 that crashed on December 5, 1943. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery with the other members of the crew. We have written three letters to Minneapolis and have gotten no response so this is all we know.

S/Sgt. Robert O. Bursey



Staff Sgt. Robert O. Bursey

Army Air Corps in September of 1942. He took basic training at Camp Luna, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

On a shady knoll in St. Joseph's Cemetery lies Sgt. Bursey's grave. The grave is marked with an American flag fluttering in the breeze. The monument there is inscribed: S/Sgt. Robert O. Bursey — U.S. Air Force "Who Gave His Life In Service Of His Country."

All that remained of Lt. Hester and his crew were buried in a mass grave at Arlington National Cemetery. Lt. Hester's sister, Janet, was there and Sgt. Bursey's family was there.

From the information that we have gotten, we believe that Sgt. Bursey was a very nice man.

S/Sgt. Robert O. Bursey was from Rutland, Vermont. He was a flight engineer.

On December 5, 1943, his plane crashed in an unnamed lake in Kings Canyon National Park. He was only 22 years old when he died.

Nothing was found of the plane until 1960 when two geologists discovered the plane in the small lake. The bodies were then removed and sent home for burial. Sgt. Bursey was buried in his home town but the rest of the bodies were buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Sgt. Bursey did not have a wife or any children. However, he did have two sisters, Mrs. Rena Hill (Bursey), and Reta Allen (Bursey). We got a lot of our information from Mrs. Hill and also from one of his teachers.

Sgt. Bursey went to high school and graduated from Rutland High School in 1940.

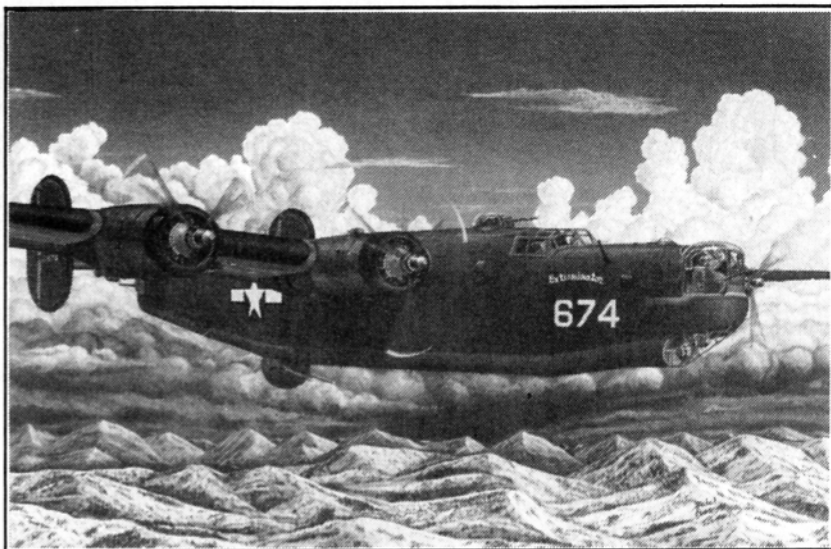
In high school he was in soccer, home room basketball, The Wheel, and the Senior Chorus.

We got information from one of Sgt. Bursey's friends, Reginald Lafley. He said that Sgt. Bursey was a quiet person who kept to himself.

We received another letter from Bob Laird that said that Sgt. Bursey joined the

Sgt. Howard Wandtke

Howard Wandtke was the radio operator on the plane that crashed in Hester Lake on December 5, 1943. We wrote several letters to Toledo, Ohio, where he was from but got no answer to them.



Painting of Exterminator

Huntington Lake Crash

On December 6, 1943, a crew in a B-24 was looking for a plane that had crashed the day before. As they were flying over Huntington Lake they got into mechanical trouble. Captain Darden gave his crew a choice to bail out or stay with the plane. Marion Settle and George Barulic chose to bail out. The other crew members decided to stay with the plane. Marion Settle and George Barulic both landed near the forest near Huntington Lake. When they got to Huntington they saw some debris floating on the lake. Settle and Barulic knew their crew had crashed in the area. Later a man named Cecil Wright who was a dam tender was in a snow cat when he spotted the men (Settle and Barulic). Cecil Wright took them to Big Creek.

A search by civil and military authorities in a nearby area of Huntington Lake failed to locate the aircraft.

Huntington Lake was searched but nothing was found. After a lot of weeks of searching the hunt was called off.

Many years passed and still there was no clue of the missing B-24 bomber. Then, in August 1955, the water level was lowered in Huntington Lake to allow repair work to start on the dam. It was at this time that the plane appeared. The army sent divers to an unsuccessful attempt to remove the plane.

During July 1980, a man named Gene Forte tried to raise the bomber but all he pulled off was one wing and two engines.

In the spring of 1990 the lake was lowered again to work on the dam.

The tips of the props appeared and part of a wing was above the water on the beach. Again an attempt was made to remove the plane, but this project failed for lack of funds.

There is still some interest in salvaging the plane but it seems unlikely that it will ever be taken from the lake.



Huntington Lake in the Winter

Many of the residents of Huntington Lake would like the plane to be left alone. It has become part of the area's folklore and they view it as a memorial to the crew and to the Second World War.

Captain William Darden



Captain William Darden

William H. Darden was from Portsmouth, Virginia. When he was younger his sport was horse jumping. He was married and had a daughter. When he died she was nine months old. She is now grown up and has two children. We tried to get information from Billy's high school but they said their records didn't go back that far.

Captain Darden was the pilot of his plane. On that last flight, the plane had motor trouble. When Captain Darden gave the signal to bail out, only two men did. They are George Barulic and Marion Settle.

Five other men lost their lives besides Captain Darden.

The Air Corps looked in the lake but found nothing. In 1955, the Southern Califor-



**William Darden's grave in
Portsmouth, Virginia**

Later Settle became a pilot with Barulic as his radio operator and flew over 50 missions in Italy. After the war he became a math teacher in high school. One day while he was teaching he had a heart attack. He died four hours later. He had six brothers in the service.

Lt. Samuel Schlosser

Lt. Samuel Schlosser lived in Brooklyn, New York. He was the navigator on Darden's plane and died in Huntington Lake on December 6, 1943.

We wrote several letters to Brooklyn, New York, and have received nothing.

nia Edison Company lowered the lake to work on the dam. They found the bodies and the plane. Captain Darden's body was returned to his hometown and is buried at Portsmouth Cemetery.

We got a lot of our information from Billy's sister, Mrs. Winifred D. Mason.

According to a fellow officer, Captain Darden was small and wiry, but nevertheless, a highly intelligent and resourceful man. "This little bundle of ceaseless energy was probably the best known, best liked, and the most inspiring officer in the 461st group."

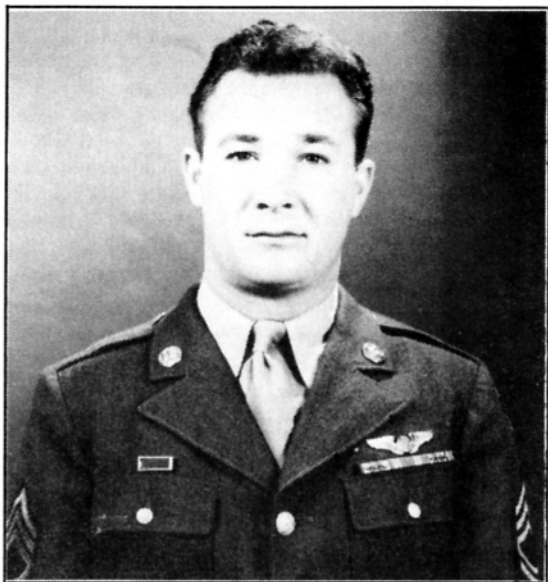
Lt. Culos Settle

Lt. Culos Settle was a co-pilot on a search mission for a B-24 Liberator. He and Sgt. Barulic were the men that bailed out and survived the crash. The other six crew members stayed with the plane and died.



Lt. Culos Settle (far left)

Sgt. George J. Barulic



Sgt. George J. Barulic

George J. Barulic grew up in a small town in New Jersey called Newark. George joined the air corps when he was a young man.

Barulic and the rest of his crew set out the morning of December 6, 1943 from Hammer Field, Fresno, to find another plane that had been lost the day before. They were flying over the Sierras when they suddenly began having mechanical trouble. Pilot William Darden gave the crew a choice to bail out or stay with the plane. Only two men chose to bail out. They were Co-pilot Marion C. Settle and Radio Operator George J. Barulic.

Barulic and Settle looked from the bomb bay and then finally jumped. They both landed hard and both hurt their legs. After they called for awhile they found each other and started walking to Huntington Lake on an old logging road. When they saw the parts of the B-24 floating in the lake they thought the rest of the crew had bailed out. At 4:00 p.m. they heard a noise. They turned around to see a SCE snowcat. Cecil Wright, the driver, took them to Big Creek.

In January of 1944 Barulic went to Italy as the radio operator on Lt. Settle's crew. They flew 51 combat missions, then came back to the U.S.A. Settle became a teacher and had a heart attack while teaching and died four hours later. Barulic became a policeman and had to retire early because of heart trouble. George now lives in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Sgt. Richard Mayo



Sgt. Richard Mayo was in the Army Air Corps. He was stationed at Hammer Field, Fresno. He was the gunner on the plane that crashed in Huntington Lake on December 6, 1943. When the plane was crashing Mayo didn't bail out. He stayed with the plane. The plane was not found until 1955. At that time he was buried in Prestonberg, Kentucky with his family. Richard's next door neighbors said he was a great athlete and an all American boy. He played football and was the captain and quarterback. He also played basketball.

Sgt. Richard Mayo



Richard Mayo was in the boys glee club, "P" Club, Hi Times staff, library club, and Sports editor in 1937 and in 1938, at Prestonberg High. After high school he went to the University of Kentucky, played football, and was a law student.

Sgt. Richard Mayo's grave

Sgt. Franklin C. Nyswonger

Sgt. Franklin C. Nyswonger, 21, from Green Bay, Wisconsin, entered the United States Air Corps. He was stationed at Hammer Field, Fresno, California. Sgt. Nyswonger was on a B-24 bomber that was lost during a routine training flight near Huntington Lake, near Big Creek, California on December 6, 1943.

Franklin Nyswonger was the Engineer on the flight during the crash. He didn't bail out of the plane as it was crashing.

Sgt. Nyswonger's sister was at Huntington Lake on January 19, 1992. She went to the Rancheria Garage. She said that her brother died in Huntington Lake. She said that she knew very little about her brother's death and would like to know more. She left her business card and phone number with one of the people at the Rancheria Garage. That person gave the number to Mr. Crider. Mr. Crider took Heather Charlton and Sarah Magness to visit Sgt. Nyswonger's sister. They met her in Fresno, California. Heather and Sarah told her all about her brother. There was a lot of emotion and hugging. She was touched and she wrote a letter to us when she got back to Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Sgt. F. C. Nyswonger



Richard L. Spangle

Richard L. Spangle joined the Air Corps at the age of 19 after he graduated from high school. He was married when he went into the Air Corps but had no children. Richard Spangle was the tail gunner on William Darden's crew. He died on December 6, 1943, in Huntington Lake. In 1955, the Southern California Edison Company lowered the lake to work on the dam. Richard Spangle's father and brother came to watch as they took the bodies out of the plane. Richard Lee Spangle is now buried in the San Francisco National Cemetery.



Richard Spangle grave



Richard Lee Spangle

Sgt. Donald Vandeplasche

Sgt. Donald C. Vandeplasche was born on May 29, 1913 at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He graduated from Wauwatosa High School and entered the service on October 28, 1942, at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.



Sgt. Donald Vandeplasche

We wrote to the principal of Wauwatosa High School and he gave us this information. The principal said that he took these classes in school:

English (4 years), Modern History, American History, Civics, Economics, Problems in Democracy, Algebra, Plane Geometry, Business Arithmetic, Physical Training (3 years), Elementary Science, Biology, Chemistry, Manual Training, Book-keeping, Typewriting, and Commercial Geography.

Sgt Vandeplasche is buried with Sgt. Nyswonger in Snelling Cemetery in Wisconsin. We tried to locate members of his family but had no luck.

Sgts. Billy Novotny and John Atz



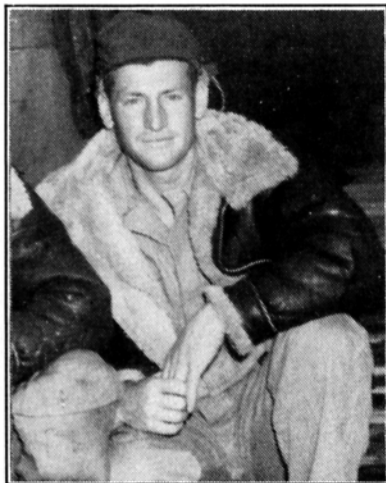
Sgt. Billy Novotny

Apparently, while working on his gun, Novotny accidentally pulled his oxygen hose from the supply plug and at that altitude the supply of oxygen in the air would only allow him to be conscious for a few seconds.

It is thought that when Atz left the tail turret to check on Novotny, he saw him lying on the deck, and in his hurry to help, forgot to take his portable oxygen tank with him, for it was found in its regular place in the tail turret. By the time he reached Novotny, Atz had collapsed also.

Artificial respiration with pure oxygen was applied until the plane could be landed at Tonapah, Nevada. Even though medics boarded the plane as soon as it landed, no measures taken could prevent their deaths.

Billy Novotny and John Atz were two more men that died while stationed at Hammer Field, Fresno. Sgt. Novotny, the waist gunner, and Sgt. Atz, as the tail turret, on Lt. Bush's crew, set out on a practice gunnery mission in their new B-24. Novotny told Lt. Bush he was going to go back to the waist of the plane and do some work on his fifty cal. machine gun. Whenever a B-24 reached 10,000 feet or more they wore oxygen masks and had three minute oxygen checks so that they could report their Okay. When Novotny failed to answer the three minute oxygen check, the pilot called back to the tail gunner who was Atz. He asked him to see what was wrong. After repeated calling got no answer from him, Lt. Busch sent the Engineer, Sgt. Jackson to the waist of the plane. He reported over the inter phone that both men were unconscious, Atz lying on top of Novotny. Atz and Novotny were both wearing their oxygen masks but neither of them had them plugged into the supply line.



Sgt. John Atz

Sgt. Clement Amory



Sgt. Clement Amory

Sgt. Amory was the tail gunner on crew number 35. He was the first casualty on their crew. They had just picked up their new B-24 Bomber that was made in San Diego, and a few days later, with the whole crew on board, they took the new plane on a "check out" mission. They flew south from Fresno, out over the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Mexico. During this mission they had to reach an altitude of 35,000 feet. There was no such thing then of "pressurized cabin" aircraft and everyone had to wear oxygen masks at or over altitudes of 10,000 feet. All ten crew members were at their regular stations. Communication was normal between all stations for awhile, but then after a period of quiet, the waist gunner noticed Clem had not moved and was not answering his calls on the intercom. The ball turret gunner left his station and with the two waist gunners, found Clem unconscious. Clem was given artificial respiration

for about 1½ to 2 hours until they arrived back at Fresno and landed. They were unable to save him. They were later told his oxygen regulator had trouble and hadn't functioned properly.



Memorial Ceremony with the 4th Grade Class of '91 at Huntington Lake, December 6, 1991

Postscript by Mr. Crider, Teacher:

This booklet was compiled by 27 fourth grade students at Big Creek School. Some of the material came from the 461st Bomb Group Unit History, from magazine articles, and from newspaper clippings, but most of the writing was done by the students from information contained in the many letters they received.

You will notice that there is some repetition in the stories because 27 kids doing individual research wrote the accounts and felt that what they had to say was important based on their research.

Although this started as a class project, it soon gained school-wide and community interest and support. Our thanks to the Big Creek School staff and the Big Creek community for all their help.

The students also received help from the Southern California Edison Company, the local post office, and Dave Parker, author of *"Flight to Nowhere"*.



The parents of the kids did everything they were asked to do and more. They volunteered their time and contributed money for the memorial. Most of all, they showed a deep interest in the project which encouraged and motivated the kids.

Our initial research went slowly until our first correspondence with members of the 461st Bomb Group. After the kids started to receive letters and pictures everything seemed to begin moving along. Many of the letters began, "I have never written this down before so here goes to the best of my memory" We really appreciate the 461st Bomb Group members that corresponded with us. The kids will never forget the experience of participating with the 461st in the memorial ceremonies.

Lastly, we would like to thank all of the relatives and friends of the deceased airmen who wrote to us. Their letters gave us an insight into the lives of the men and the kids realized that someone really appreciated what they were doing. None of us will ever forget their heartfelt letters and sincere comments about their loved ones.

Fourth Grade Students

1991

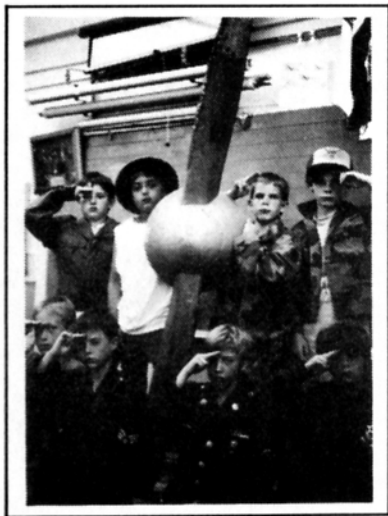
Adam Brockway
Heather Charlton
Christie Correa
Shawn Foster
Brynn Hayden
Sarah Horten
Ian Kellogg
Sarah Magness
Jean Muzquiz
Katy Robinson
Joe Saenz
Melissa Schamanski
Ben Taylor
Nicholas Vanlandingham

1992

Sydney Belanger
Jamie Benzing
Andi Charlton
Toby Cordova
Micah Davis
Corey Gillihan
Tomica Magness
Robert Martin
Tim McPheeters
Jennifer Nickel
Josh Quintal
Kristin Schelir
Kristin Yancey



4th Grade Class of 1991 Girls



4th Grade Class of 1991 Boys

Together we can brighten the future.

For more than 100 years we've been using our energy creatively, together to build a better community. Energy from Big Creek, the hardest working water in the world, helped power the growth of our state.

We think it's important to remember and honor the accomplishments and achievements of the past, even while working to build a brighter tomorrow.

That's why we're proud to support the memorial for the crew of the B-24 Liberator. We're in the community for good, and working together we truly can brighten the future.



Southern California Edison

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