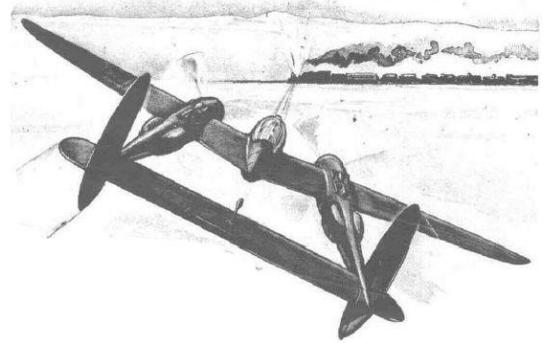




## 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group newsletter – Issue # 14 - DECEMBER 2016

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Dear Friends and 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group members,

The first article is the end of the article on the advanced landing grounds in Normandy I started in newsletter # 13. This article has additional pictures I wanted to share with you. We are lucky that a reporter of Life spent a few days with the outfit in A-2 Cricqueville but also that Lt. Ken Jorgensen took pictures in kodachrome.

We will see that the reporter of Life took a few pictures of the same briefing in the middle of a cow pasture but with different angles.

The « Honoring the pilots » article in this issue is not dedicated to a specific pilot. You will see that it is linked to the advanced landing grounds in Normandy.

No idea for your Christmas menu? Let's read the article 'The Christmas 1944'.

I wish you a good reading.

Olivier Le Floch

### The advanced landing grounds in Normandy, part 2

Erny Snow, propeller specialist of the 394<sup>th</sup> FS described the arrival on the French soil in his memories: *“We get ready to leave ship by way of landing craft, which we load into and it is lowered over the side. We went past a lot of large ships which had been sunk and now being used as a break water. Our boat landed at a pier and we unloaded onto French soil. The first man on it was Capt. Murdoch Young and I was second. Anyway none of us got shot at so it must have been safe. We got word to march up the hill, which didn't look very steep but time we got to the top we were all pooped out. At top of hill I was out of wind and could hear the guy behind me huffing and puffing also. This was at Utah Beach. We were carrying full packs. We went past a bunch of German prisoners and they looked a hell of a lot happier than we did. We walked a mile or so and camped in a small orchard for the night. We pitched up tents, ate K rations and settled down for night. Area was full of foxholes and a lot of old shells laying around. And it rained.*

*During the night we could hear guns firing in the distance, like the rumble of thunder and suddenly it seemed all hell had broke loose as the Ack, Ack near us started shooting. We all were scared as it was our first taste of war. O.J. Henry was up at latrine when the shooting started and he went running and jumping over foxholes and crawled into his pup tent to be safe.*



*Lt. Ken Jorgensen ready for a mission from ALG 6 La Londe and his crew chief (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*Lt. Ken Jorgensen's ground crew refueling the P-38 after a mission at ALG 6 La Londe (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*

*Next morning all was quiet and we ate K rations and waited to find out if we had to walk all over France or ride in trucks. Soon the trucks came and we were happy. We loaded up and were taken to our first field in France, strip A-6 near Sainte-Mere-Eglise. The paratroopers on D-day landed near this town. We pitched pup tents and dug foxholes. I did not have a partner to make a pup tent so just covered up with shelter half and sacked up, it started to rain so I cussed the weather and fell asleep.*

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*A few nights later we had the air raid, we heard shooting in distance but all of a sudden we heard a plane diving on field and all broke loose as the Ack Ack opened up plus small machine guns and some large ones. It looked like a 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks which had caught on fire and all shooting at once.*

*We all dove into our foxholes and as I jumped into mine I could see everyone else doing the same, sort of funny now but at time was not a bit funny. When it settled down a bit I realized we had more danger of the falling flack hitting us than plane bullets, so next day we built covers over the foxholes.*

*When the ground crews arrived a few days later and heard of our big air raid they dug holes very fast. The planes came in from England and our usual work began.*

*Field is dirt and quite dusty. I found another shelter half and now had a pup tent all my own. On this field there is also a P-47 group and with our P-38s there is a lot of flying going on. Runway had a wire netting on ends and a lot of tires got punctured. .../... A party was given for the orphan children of Sainte Mere Eglise, the mayor spoke English and told of the paratrooper landings on D-day. Our planes are flying many missions and we are busy. Many French people come to see the planes and Sunday they turn out in droves. A few men get caught sitting on latrines as French people walk past them. In a small grain field near our tent area I saw a number of French women gleaning grain and it reminded me of the famous painting 'The gleaners'. There is a lot of cider, wine and cognac and some of the fellows are finding out they can't handle the stuff".*

Col. Young in a letter to his folks on August 12<sup>th</sup> 1944 describes the party given for the children of Sainte-mère-Eglise: "At noon our group did something unique. Fifty children from a nearby 'liberated' town, all of them without one or more of their parents due to the war, plus the mayor and his wife, and two old teacher maid school teachers, were our guests for chow. The men have been going without certain parts



*Men of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG with some children of Sainte-Mère-Eglise on August 13, 1944 (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*

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*of their meals for several days for the occasion. Fifty soldiers sponsored the kids, fed them out of their own mess kits, and in general entertained them. After lunch we had entertainment. The mayor and his wife sat at special table with me. I introduced the mayor who gave the children a talk in French, followed by a description in English of how our paratroopers liberated his town on D minus one. Then a very lovely little orphan about ten presented me with a huge bouquet of flowers with a very poised speech in French which the mayor's young son interpreted for me. That was followed by a French comedian who sang some songs and told some jokes all in French much to the amusement of the kids and hence the soldiers.*



*Mr Renaud, mayor of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, and Col. Charles Young during the party organized by the 367th FG on August 13, 1944 (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*A French comedian doing the show during the party organized for the children of Sainte-Mère-Eglise (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*

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*Ken Jorgensen and the little girl by the name of Ledic (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*Two of the children during the party organized by the 367<sup>th</sup> FG. According to Ken Jorgensen, the boy whose first name was Pierre was the mess tent helper. He followed the unit almost to the German border and was along during the battle of the Bulge. See how he protects his pocket full of candy of the « C » rations (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*

*Our own orchestra then played a few numbers, but about that time I was called away to fly a mission and had to leave in the middle of the celebrations.*

*I have had nothing to impress me like those kids did. When that little girl gave me those flowers, with all the kids gathered around, I actually had a lump in my throat. And when we passed out candy to the kids – the men gave their weeks PX rations – it was a sight seldom to be seen. The kids were all clean and neat, though as a rule poorly dressed. One little girl had on a dress made from a parachute that was used in the liberation of her town. The kids were the best the best behaved kids I have ever seen, but of course they have spent four years doing just what they were told. Many of them had scabies, a type of skin rash caused by poor rations. All of them were on a holiday, and they had a wonderful time, making many a soldier happy that he had participated in the affair. The mayor's wife had spent a year in England and spoke English fairly well. The mayor knew enough English to make up for what I couldn't say in French. They were nicely dressed, though naturally their clothes showed lack of cleaning and pressing. They were charming people with three sons, all youngsters, and an air of living well that American can't affect. For instance, the mayor sipped his coffee loud and clearly, something we don't do in the best circles, but he enjoyed it thoroughly making it correct in France. He loved coffee so much that I gave him my beloved can of Nescafe. He has had no coffee for four years".*

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*Men of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG having fun in the quarry at Fresville, a few miles from A-6 La Londe and A-14 Cretteville (Ken Jorgensen via Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*Same quarry at Fresville in June 2016. Except for some trees and the water level, the place has not really changed*

After two weeks spent at the three ALG, the 3 squadrons moved to a unique airfield, ALG A-2 Cricqueville. The move was rather short as this new airfield is 9 miles east of ALG A-10 Carentan, 20 miles from ALG A-6 and 23 miles of ALG A-14 Cretteville. The ALG A-2 had been first occupied by the 354<sup>th</sup> FG and its P-51 Mustangs. Once this group moved to another ALG, the 3 squadrons of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG had enough hardstands for its P-38s. The men and the aircrafts moved to this airfield on August 14.

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A-2 Cricqueville was built by the 820<sup>th</sup> EAB from June 9<sup>th</sup> to June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944. The runway was 3600 feet long and 120 feet large and made of square mesh and was extended with 1400 of square mesh. The airfield perimeter was on the soil of two villages, La Cambe and Cricqueville and was very close of the coast and the Pointe du Hoc where the Rangers climbed on D-Day. The pilots would fly over the Channel just after takeoff to gain enough altitude before taking their heading for the mission because the German troops and their anti-aircraft fire were still close to the ALG.



*P-38 of Lt. 'Short Jab' Connally, 393<sup>rd</sup> FS, in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944 (© Life)*



*P-38s of the 393<sup>rd</sup> FS taxiing toward the end of the runway in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944 (© Life)*

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Erny Snow gave additional information on the new airfield: *“We move again to a field not too far away. It is strip A-2 near Cricqueville. Field is similar to other one. .../...We still live in pup tents but haven’t dug any foxholes yet. Biggest nuisance is the darn bees, at chow time a fellow has to use one hand to bat away the bees. Mess area is out in a pasture and sort of picnic type eating goes on. I got stung on the tongue and Scheffler got stung on lower lip which swelled up and looked like a horse’s lower lip. The field has one runway and we often stand near watching planes take off or land. One from other squadron crashed on take-off*



*P-38s of the 393<sup>rd</sup> FS taxiing toward the end of the runway in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20th, 1944. The first P-38 is « Stinky III », serial 44-23521, of Lt. Col. ‘Mo’ Crossen. (© Life)*



*Runway in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20th, 1944. The starter sends the authorization of take off with his lamp (© Life)*

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*killing pilot (this pilot was Ken Slepicka of the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS. He was killed in the crash). Supposed has been caused by dust clogging carburetor and stopping an engine, which on take-off is a bad thing to have happen”.*

A few days after the 367th FG settled down at this new ALG it received the visit of General ‘Pete’ Quesada, the C.O. of the fighter command of the 9th Air Force. It also had the visit of Frank Scherschel, a reporter of Life magazine. This reporter took a lot of pictures of the men and their P-38s. To my knowledge the photos were not published in an issue of Life. Frank Scherschel even flew a bombing mission in the nose of a P-38 Droopsnoot flown by Cap. Jack Reed who wrote this event in his diary for August 21st : *‘Yesterday the Life photographer was here to do a story on our group. We have some « droop snoots » which are 38s revamped*



*P-38 of the 393<sup>rd</sup> FS taxiing toward the end of the runway in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20th, 1944 (© Life)*



*P-38 of the Lt. Dan Noble of the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS taxiing toward the end of the runway in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20th, 1944. The man in the wagen is not identified (© Life)*

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*to carry two people. Namely a bombardier in the nose. We fixed up one of these, slung 2 x 1000 bombs on it and took this guy (a Mr. Frank Scherschel) to a mission with us. I was flying the Droop Snoot and we had a 4 ship escort as the Snoot has no guns. Went in north of Paris and bombed a shipyard. Guess he got some good pictures as weather over the target was excellent. However, after we made our bomb run he was ready to go home. Think it shook him a bit'.*

The 367<sup>th</sup> FG left Normandy at the beginning of September 1944 and occupied the ALG-44, north of Le Mans. The outfit only stayed there one week before moving farther to the east of France. But this is another story.



*Shipyard bombed by the droop snoot with Frank Scherschel in the nose and Cap. Jack Reed at the control on August 20th, 1944 (© Life)*



*The droop snoot with Frank Scherschel in the nose taxiing to its hardstand after the mission in A-2 Cricqueville (© Life)*



*The escort of the droop snoot with Frank Scherschel in the nose are taxiing before or after the mission in A-2 Cricqueville (© Life)*



*The droop snoot with Frank Scherschel in the nose taxiing to its hardstand after the mission in A-2 Cricqueville. The P-38 on the right is also a droop snoot (© Life)*



*The white stripe in the middle of the picture is the runway of A-2 Cricqueville. Note all the edgrows making this part of Normandy a very hard place to fight the German troops. Note also the channel in the background. It is easy to understand that the pilots of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG were flying above the sea just after take off (© Life)*

70076A.C.



*Above and right, P-38 of Lt. Ray Jackson of the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS taxiing toward the end of the runway in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944 (© Life)*



*P-38s of the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS taxiing toward the end of the runway in A-2 Cricqueville around August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944. (© Life)*

## Briefing in Normandy

We saw in the article dealing with the advanced airfield in France that a photographer of Life visited the 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group in A-2 Cricqueville. This Man, Frank Scherschel, took a lot of pictures. It seems that they have never been published in Life. So I wanted to share with you 4 photos of the same briefieng. This briefing was lead by the C.O. of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG, Col. Charles Young. The P-38 is Miss Helena, flown by Col. Young and named after his home town in Arkansas.



*Col. Young during a briefing in A-2 Cricqueville. The day is thought to be August 20th, 1944. In A-2 the briefings were done outdoor (© Life)*



*Almost the same pictures. Note the armament on the nose (© Life)*



*Again almost the same pictures. This mission was a group effort mission as pilots of the 3 squadrons can be identified (© Life)*

## Honoring the pilots

An association in Normandy has organized in the late eighties the construction of stones in honor of the American landing grounds in Normandy. On each ALG a large stone or stele was built close to where was the landing strips . The stone in honor of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG was built in A-2 Cricqueville in 1988. Some men of the outfit did the trip with their family from the USA to attend the dedication and the unveiling of the stone and its plaque.



*Clyde Deavers and 'Doc' Livingston, 392<sup>nd</sup> FS, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1988 in A2 Cricqueville. Behind them are from right to left Rolling Lippert, 393<sup>rd</sup> FS, Ralph Arrington, 392<sup>nd</sup> FS, and Jack Curtis, 394<sup>th</sup> FS. Note the walking stick of Clyde Deavers. Clyde lost one foot when he bailed out of his P-38 on 31 July 1944 (see NL # 10, honoring the pilot article and NL # 11, a special flying helmet article) (Auvray's family/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*The stone in A-2 Cricqueville and plaque a short time ago*

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To me this inauguration was placed in the « Honoring the pilots » article because this monument honors the pilots of the 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group but also all the ground officers and enlisted men of the outfit who did their best to make this unit a remarkable and unique unit. To find this big stone, type « les Vignets » in the town of La Cambe in your GPS. Thanks to the Auvray's family whose house is just a few feet from the big stone we have the pictures of the inauguration.



Men of the 367<sup>th</sup> who attended the inauguration of the stele on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1988 in A-2 Cricqueville (archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)



Close-up on the plaque in A-2 Cricqueville a short time ago

Stone and plaque September 17<sup>th</sup> 1988 in A-2 Cricqueville (Auvray's family/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)

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*After the inauguration of the plaque the American men of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG and their families were invited to the 'vin d'honneur', a French tradition consisting of a glass of wine or champagne with some « petits fours ». On the left are Clyde Deavers and 'Doc' Livingston (with grey suit). On the right, Art, the brother of 'Doc' is discussing with Nicole Auvray and her 2 daughters Karine and Anne-Sophie (Auvray's family/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



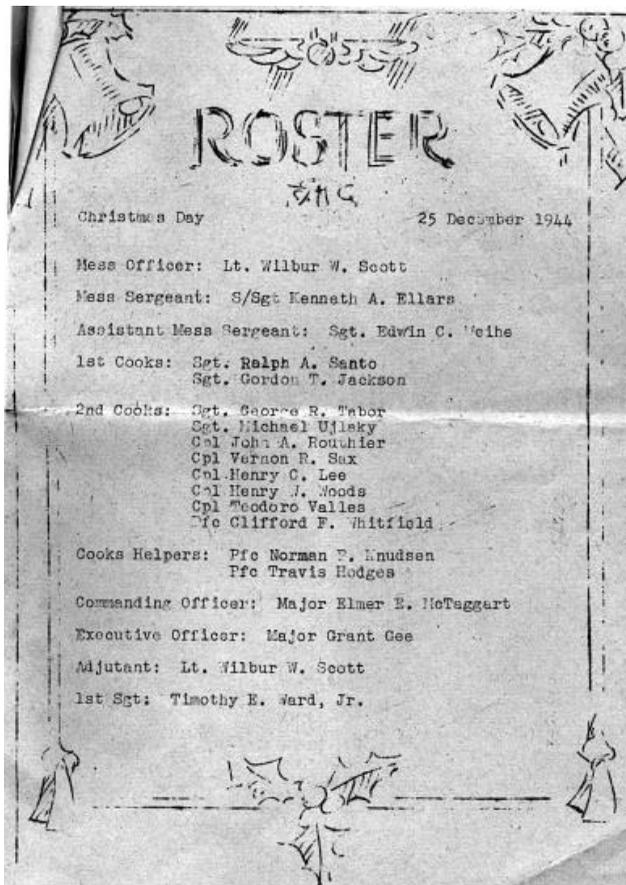
*From left to right Karine and Anne-Sophie Auvray, 'Doc' Livingston, miss Auvray who lived in the A-2 perimeter during WWII, the daughter of 'Doc' and Nicole Auvray. On the right is Betty-Ann Curtis, the wife of Jack Curtis. Behind the group one can see the back of Jack Curtis and Clyde Deavers (Auvray's family/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*

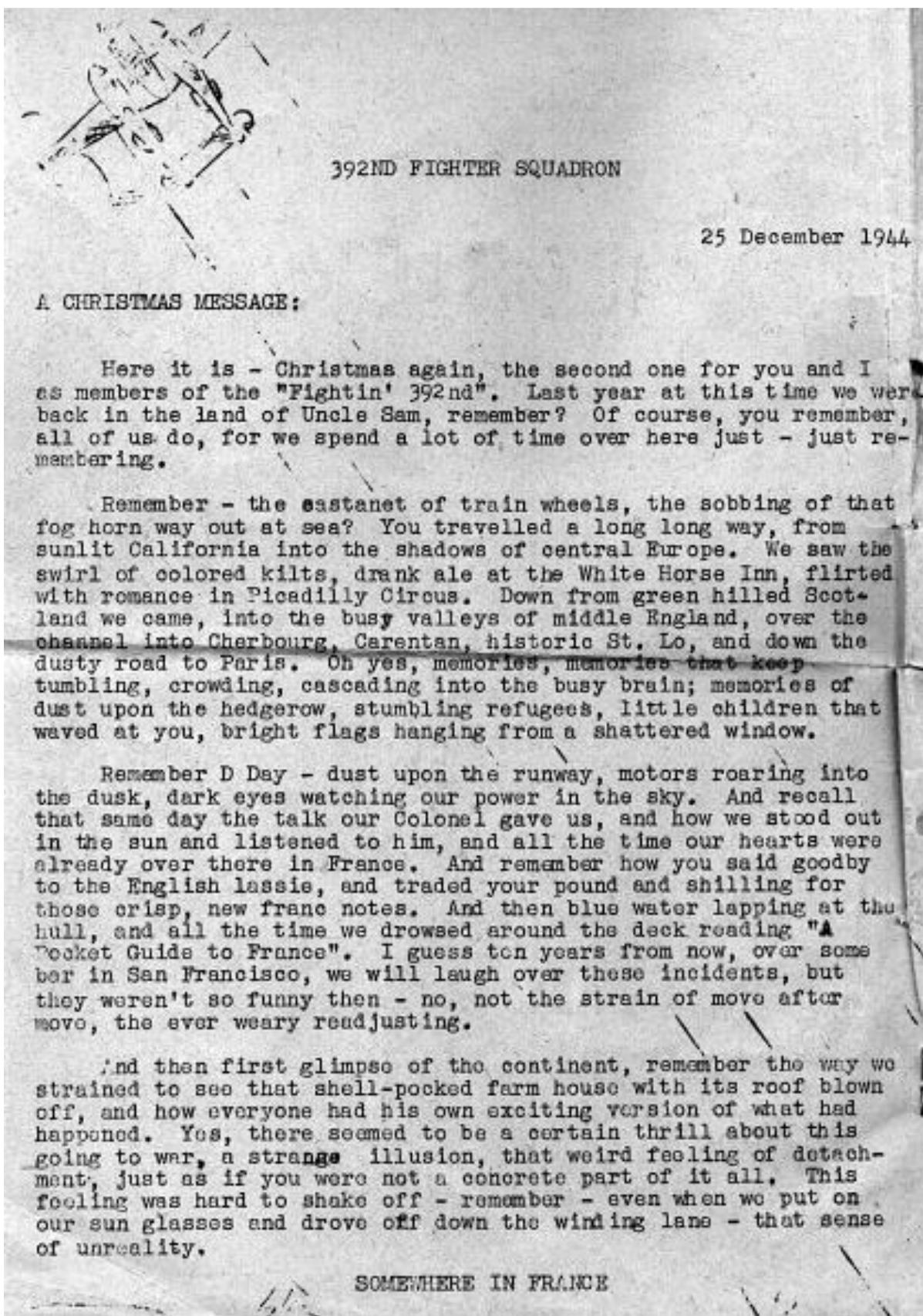
**CHRISTMAS 1944**

A few years ago Vern Truemper sent me a few CD's with material on the 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group. Among the documentation were the menus of Thanksgiving that we saw in the last issue of the newsletter. Next to the Thanksgiving menu was the Christmas menu of the 392<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Squadron. Although the men were far from home and right in the middle of the Bulge battle a group of officers and enlisted men did their best to make Christmas more 'sweet'.



392<sup>nd</sup> FS Christmas menu and roster (archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)





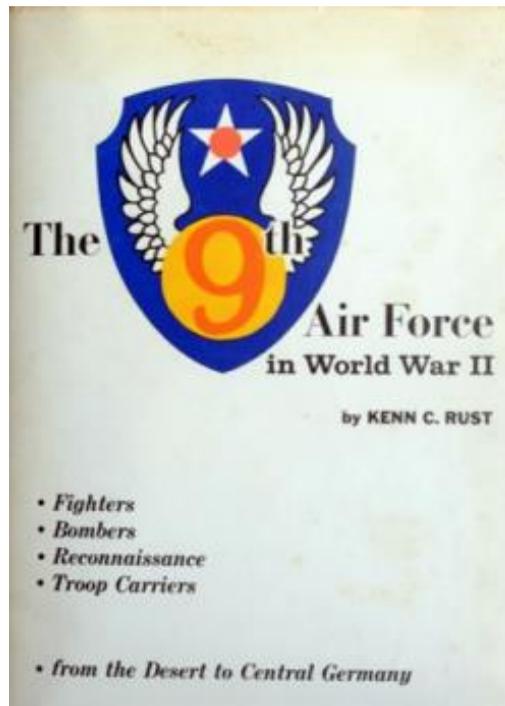
Christmas message to the men of the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS. This message is a colorful history of the squadron for the elapsed year (archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)

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## Books, DVDs and Links

### The 9th Air Force in World War II by Kenn C. Rust – Aero Publishers, Inc

This book relates the history of the Ninth Air Force from its creation in Africa to the end of World War II in Germany. This is also a day by day summary of the missions lead by the Bomber, Fighter, Reconnaissance and Troop carriers groups.



### A-2 Cricqueville

The 4 videos shows the P-51s Mustang of the 354<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group in A-2. They give a little idea of what was like this advanced landing ground. In one of the videos one can see General Dwight Eisenhower and General 'Pete' Quesada in a 2 seater Mustang.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y\\_TBXRqdXk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y_TBXRqdXk)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxQYWhZopQw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9iJ4PkCRzI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2b27uPsQRsU>

### Coming in the next Newsletter



- The advanced landing grounds in France after the Normandy
- A special book
- Honoring the pilots, part 8