

# Crew of the Susan Ruth remembered

**By Cis Spook**

*USAG Benelux Public Affairs*

U.S. Airmen from Chièvres Air Base, Belgium, to include a Color Guard, joined members of the “Duty to Remember” association and patriotic associations February 9 in commemorating U.S. service members who were at the premise of liberation 70 years ago.

A first ceremony was held at the war monument in Macquenoise honoring both the military and civilian victims of World War II. Participants then went to the site where the B-17 Susan Ruth crashed outside the village, February 8, 1944, while en route for a bombing mission over Frankfurt, Germany.

Ball turret gunner Louis Colwart and radio operator Ross Kahler were killed in the plane by the fighter attack. Bombardier Richard Daniels, left waist gunner Joseph Musial and top turret gunner Roy Holbert were captured.

Musial’s left leg was amputated and Daniels shattered arm was treated before they were sent to a prison camp. Tail gunner William Slenker remained in hiding until American Forces liberated the area in September 1944.

Evading capture for three months, co-pilot George Eike, navigator Robert Benninger and right waist gunner John Pindroch were caught in a forest hideout near Chimay and executed by the Nazis along with other air crews and Belgian Resistance members in April 1944. Capt.

Howard Snyder, pilot of the B-17 nicknamed after his wife, evaded capture and spent the following seven months, fighting with Belgian and French Resistance units.

“To them (the Belgians in the area), the crew represented a hope of freedom to come,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Kuester, 424th Air Base Squadron Commander, in his speech. “For the crew, the Belgians were also a hope. A hope and a dream to once again see their families. Seventy years later, this memorial still represents hope. It stands as hope



(From left to right) Staff Sgt. Justin Monty, Staff Sgt. Fernando Andres-Miguel (not in picture), Staff Sgt. Yvonne Simons, Staff Sgt. Antoine Banks and Staff Sgt. DeAndre Dickerson, all members of the 424th Air Base Squadron at Chièvres Air Base, stand behind the star-shaped memorial honoring the 12 first Soldiers who died during the Liberation of Belgium, September 2, 1944.

that peace can be obtained, that people will volunteer to help a fellow human and that friendship last longer than a lifetime,” Kuester added.

After the ceremony at Macquenoise, the commander and color guard went a few miles away to the memorial at Monceau-Imbrechies which honors the 12 Soldiers who died there on the first day of the liberation of Belgium, Sept. 2, 1944.

Christel and Séverine Delahaye who now chair over the association “Duty to Remember” announced that family members from the Susan Ruth crew will be making the trip to Belgium for the other 70th anniversary ceremonies in September

## THE GAZETTE

To subscribe, email [usarmy.benelux.imcom-europe.list.pao@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.benelux.imcom-europe.list.pao@mail.mil)

**Col. Marvin G Vannatter Jr.**

USAG Benelux  
Commander

**Editor**

Keith Houin

**Marie-Lise Baneton**

USAG Benelux  
Public Affairs Officer

**Staff Writers**

Rita Hoefnagels  
Donovan Abrassart  
Cis Spook

*The Gazette* is an unofficial publication published under the provisions of AR 360-1 for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of *The Gazette* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of the Army or the USAG Benelux. *The Gazette* is a free weekly publication distributed via email every Thursday, except when that day is an American, Belgian or Dutch Holiday, then *The Gazette* is published on Friday. The editorial content of this publication is prepared, edited, provided, approved and published by the USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office, Unit 21419, APO AE 09708. Telephone (0032) 068-27-5419/DSN 361-5419. Everything advertised in this publication will be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser is confirmed, the publisher will refuse to print advertising from that source until the violation is corrected. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement of the products or services advertised by the U.S. Army. Submit content or story ideas to [usarmy.benelux.imcom-europe.list.pao@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.benelux.imcom-europe.list.pao@mail.mil) by Monday at 3 p.m.