



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 4

July, 1968

Denver Area Awaits Second National Reunion

Reservations continue to pour in for the second National Reunion of the 91st Bomb Group on July 23-24-25-26, and the Denver affair promises to draw far more ex-members than the first get-together in Memphis last summer.

With a very high percentage reporting that wives and children will accompany them, it seems apparent that many of the 91st-ers are making the reunion the highlight of a family vacation through the western states.

You'll be missing the experience of a lifetime if you're not part of the unit there. If you haven't already made reservations for the affair, it isn't too late. Headquarters will be at the Denver Hyatt House, where all

official activities will be held. The Mayflower Hotel and the Mayflower Motel, located in the same block with the Hyatt House, will also be used by many delegates.

Joining the 91st reunion as special guests will be more than 50 representatives of the 98th Bomb Group (H), who are in the process of organizing a reunion committee and who will be picking up pointers from us. The 98th was a B-24 outfit stationed in Palestine from August, 1942, with their principal objective the destruction of Rommel's supply lines in the North African campaign. Their reunion association is headed up by Rudolph Schmeichel of Dallas, Texas.

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The Snow Capped Rockies form a spectacular backdrop for the shining new skyscrapers of downtown Denver. At far left is the Queen City's classic Civic Center. At center is the 22-floor, 884-room Denver Hilton Hotel and the new Public Service Company Building. Immediately below the Hilton is the gold-domed State Capitol Build-

ing. At right center are the new, 31-story Security Life Building, Denver's tallest; the Western Federal Savings and Loan Association Building; the 26-story Denver First National Bank; the 22-story Brown Palace Hotel tower, and the Denver U.S. National Bank. At far right is the new Federal Office Building and Tower complex.

Denver Area Awaits...

Making the Denver preparations for the affair are Sam Newton, Col. Henry Terry, Jack Hobson, and Col. Herbert Egender.

One of the features of the July meeting will be the first scheduled get together of former 91st POWs. Joe Rose, of Memphis, who heads up "Rose's Heroes," has set two informal meetings of the ex-Stalag guests -- one at the official Reunion Luncheon on Thursday, July 25, and the other immediately following the 10 a.m. coffee break on Friday, July 26.

For those flying to Denver who might need cars upon arrival the Airways Rent-A-Car at Stapleton International Airport is offering 91st-ers a special discount rate of \$7.50 a day and 8 cents a mile (all-inclusive) for regulars and \$6.50 and 7 cents a mile for compacts.

Here's How To Find Headquarters...

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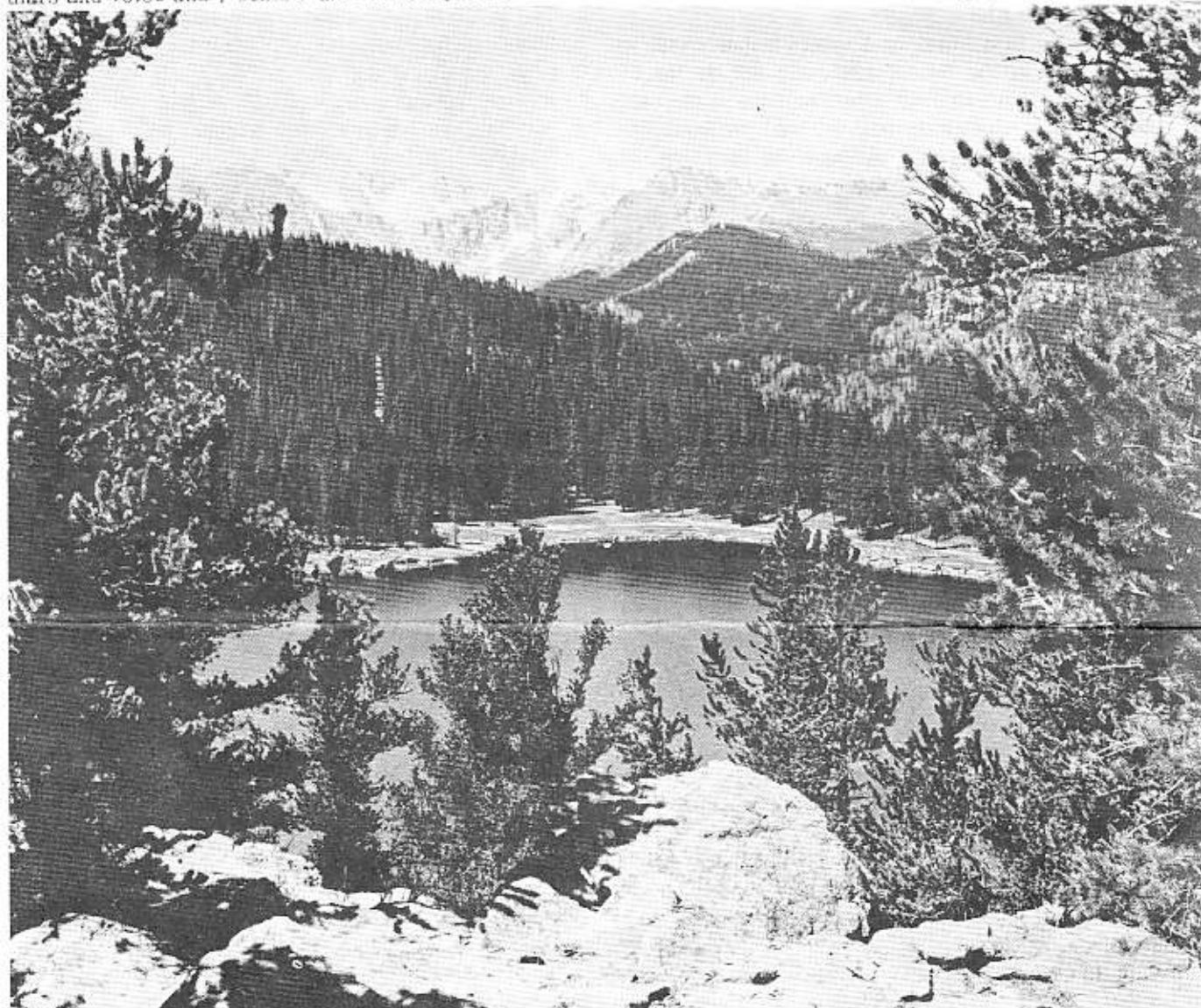
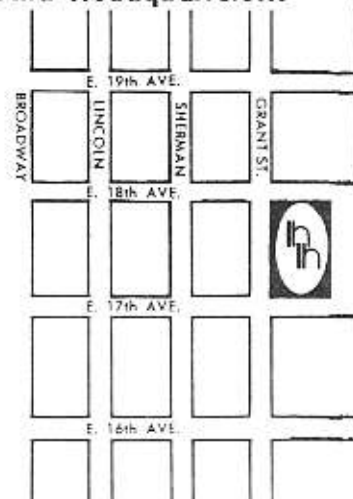
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System which provides numerous picnic areas, many complete with tables, fireplaces and playgrounds for children. Fishing, hiking and golfing are among the activities that may be enjoyed.

Make A Date In '68 - Denver or Bust!

91st Film "The Memphis Belle" Made By Famous Director

Highlight of every national reunion and many of the area rally rounds is the showing of the 91st's epic documentary movie, "The Memphis Belle." The film is internationally recognized as one of the great documentaries of all time, and audiences the world over have thrilled to its authentic combat photography.

What is little known about "The Memphis Belle," though, is that it was conceived, produced, directed, and partly photographed by one of the all-time greats of the American film industry - triple Oscar winner William Wyler, who directed "Mrs. Miniver," "The Best Years of Our Lives," "Ben Hur," "The Collector," and more than 60 other outstanding movies. He has just completed making "Funny Girl," starring Barbra Streisand, and it is already predicted that he will pick up his ninth Oscar nomination for the film.

Soon after the first American bombers began operating out of England in the fall of 1942, the 8th Air Force assigned Major Wyler to head a film unit given the task of making a documentary on heavy bombardment activities. Wyler had recently won an Oscar for directing the memorable movie of Britain's early days in WWII, "Mrs. Miniver," starring Greer Garson.

In November, 1942, Wyler and his group came to Bassingbourn seeking a base from which to operate. There they found a warm welcome, and Col. Stanley T. Wray offered full cooperation from the group and saw that the film unit had adequate quarters and facilities. Coordinating the effort with 8th Air Force headquarters in London was Col. Bernie Lay, who later wrote the outstanding book and movie, "12 O'clock High."

Wyler's documentary was to follow one crew from one base as they made a typical raid. In this case it was the 25th (final) mission of the crew of "The Memphis Belle."

Every scene (except one minor sequence) was made during actual combat operations, with the group members going about their usual daily tasks. Nothing was staged, and there was never a script.

The filming was done from November, 1942, through the early months of 1943, and the movie is a composite of action taken over that period.

To obtain actual film of fighter attacks and other combat activities Wyler issued 16 mm. cameras loaded with color film to selected crew members from a number of group's planes, with instructions to "fire that camera when the fighters come in." From personal experience the editor can testify that a 16 mm. camera is not nearly as comforting as the handle of a 50 caliber machine gun when facing a FW 190 head on.

In addition, Wyler accompanied the 91st on missions to Lorient, St. Nazaire, Kiel, and Wilhelmshaven, flying with Robert Morgan and his crew in "The Memphis Belle" to get some of the shots he wanted.

This approach produced some of the most fantastic combat photography ever made, and most of the air-to-air combat scenes in air war movies and television shows since that time were made by the 91st's amateurs.



BARBRA STREISAND GETS TIP FROM WILLIAM WYLER

In the entire movie only one scene was staged, that of the briefing preceding the mission. The original filming did not turn out, and the scene was recreated later. There is a slight bit of "dubbing in" of an intercom conversation between Belle Bill Winchell and Morgan which was garbled in the original (and, considering that he was desperately firing at a 190), might have needed some cleaning up for family audiences.

The documentary that Wyler put together went to theaters throughout America, and got a tremendous reception. The Air Force later adopted it as a regular training film, and in the years since it has been produced in seven different languages. As Maj. Gen. Wray says, "It is rather surprising to hear yourself give a briefing in perfect Persian." The film is in current use at the Air Force languages school.

Major Wyler received the Air Medal, the Legion of Merit, and the French Legion of Honor for his WWII service.

401st's "Time's A-Wastin'" Is Featured Plane For July

Honor plane for the quarter is one of the workhorse B-17 Gs of the "middle" period of the 91st at Basingstoun--LL-D Mutter D-Dog, #102504, "Time's A-Wastin'", of the 401st squadron. "Time's A-Wastin'" is particularly appropriate for this reunion issue of The Irregular, because it was first assigned to Sam Newton, who has been spearheading arrangements in the Denver area for the July get together. Her original co-pilot, Bert Stiles, made the plane widely known to the general public through his famous book of WWII, "Serenade To The Big Bird."

Eastern division co-chairman Paul Chryst served his tour of duty in "Time's A-Wastin'" a short time later.

The plane began her active career with the 91st only two days after the D-Day invasion began, on June 8, 1944. Stiles describes it this way in his book: "In the afternoon Sam and I stole a jeep and went out to the ship, our new one. (Newton's original ship was "Cool Papa," which was lost while being flown by another crew). Roy and the ground crew had named her "Time's A-Wastin,'"! Sam didn't think much of the name and it didn't strike any deep chord in me, but we figured the ground crew might as well have the honor.

"The group artist had a picture painted on it of Snuffy Smith breaking out through a newspaper with invasion headlines."

Though the days of the Abbeville Kids and the Bastards from Brunswick were long past by her time, on at least one occasion "Time's A-Wastin'" ran into a regular hornet's nest of fighters, and came away with five victories and a probable. It was on a trip to Berlin, and Stiles describes the action this way:

"Ross (T/Sgt., Edwin C., radio operator) knocked off

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"Time's A-Wastin'" with 61 missions under her belt. The crew are: front row, 1 to r, H. Ed Garner, pilot; Kermit Bunnan, co-pilot; John W. Allen, navigator; Paul Chryst, bombardier. Second row, James Norris, tail gunner; Walt Satewicz, engineer; Dave O'Day, radio; Robert Gruetter, waist; Frank Ellicson, ball turret; Robert Pride, waist.



At left, the original crew. Front row, 1 to r: Sam Newton, pilot; Don Bird, bombardier; Bert Stiles, co-pilot; Grant Benson, navigator. Second row, William Lewis, engineer; Gordon Beach, ball turret; Basil Crone, waist; Edwin Ross, radio; Gilbert Spagh, loggler; Elma Sharpe, tail gunner.

Each One Reach One!

Reprinted from Air Force/Space Digest

Bob Stevens' "There I Was..."

THERE'S A "FIRST" FOR EVERYTHING ~
COMBAT FATIGUE?



A fond look back at some of the everyday occurrences and annoyances that made life in the AAF during the Big War such a truly unforgettable experience . . .

PUZZLE: PILOT IS OLD 8TH AF HAND BEGINNING HIS 2ND TOUR. CO-PILOT IS BIRD COL - AIR COMMANDER - ON HIS LAST MISSION OF HIS 1ST TOUR. THEIR B-17 HAS LOST 2 FANS ON A MISSION NEAR NEUTRAL SWEDEN. GUESS WHERE THEY WENT...? (ANSWER BELOW)



"Time's A-Wastin'" ...

a 410 when the simple guy tried to pull in and fly formation while he lobbed shells into the group ahead.

"I could've conked the pilot with my gun barrel" Ross said. "But I decided to shoot him."

"The 410 blew up.

"Lewis (T/Sgt. William F., engineer) tracked another across the tail, saw the pieces begin to chip off, and smoke belch out of the cowl, and the pilot came out streaming silk.

"Five o'clock high," somebody called... Crone (S/Sgt. Basil J., waist) lined up on him straight-away low. It tipped over into a spin, spilling flame, and spun into the ground...

"That other bastard came in from two o'clock high on the nose. Mac tagged him fair, saw him break up. Lewis called a bailed-out pilot and a falling wing..."

After 10 missions on another plane Chryst's crew (H. Ed Garner, pilot; Kermit Burman, co-pilot) was assigned to "Time's A-Wastin'" on September, 1944, and flew their next 25 missions on it, finishing up in December, 1944.

Chryst has this to say about her: "We felt "Time's A-Wastin'" was one of the better G models, and her flight crew will be eternally grateful to the ground crew

who always kept her in good shape. 504 had her share of flak holes, ruptured fuel lines, jammed waste gates, feathered props and frustrating gremlins, but she was dependable and brought us back every time."

8th AF History To Be Published

A comprehensive history of the Eighth Air Force in Europe during WWII will be published in England by Macdonald and Doubleday later this year. Much material about the 91st and many pictures of group action and planes will be included.

The author of the forthcoming volume, Mr. Roger A. Freeman, refers to the 91st as "probably the most famous of all Fortress outfits." He has offered basic information on more than 200 planes of the 91st, a tremendous boost to our historical files.

Col. John William Carroll Dies

Col. John William Carroll, one of the original members of the 91st and a stalwart of the 401st squadron, died March 13 of a heart attack at March AFB, Calif. Col. Carroll was Wing Commander of the 341st Strategic Missile Wing at Malstrom AFB, Montana. He was attending a SAC Wing Commanders Conference at March AFB when the fatal attack occurred.

91st Mission Log Begins - The First Twenty-Five...

Each issue will carry additional entries , through the entire 340

1942				(continued)			
	Alerts			26.	22-1	Vege sack	Cancelled
	1.	3-11	Brest Cancelled	15 27.	23-1	Lorient	Completed
1	2.	7-11	Brest Completed	28.	24-1	Ghent	Cancelled
2	3.	8-11	Abbeville Completed	29.	25-1	Ghent	Cancelled
3	4.	9-11	St. Nazaire Completed	16 30.	27-1	Wilhelmshaven	Completed
4	5.	14-11	St. Nazaire Completed	31.	29-1	Bremen	Scrubbed
5	6.	17-11	St. Nazaire Completed	32.	31-1	Hamm	Cancelled
6	7.	18-11	La Pallice Completed	33.	1-2	Hamm	Scrubbed
	8.	19-11	Lorient Scrubbed	34.	2-2	Hamm	Abortive
	9.	21-11	Lorient Scrubbed	17 35.	4-2	Emden	Completed
7	10.	22-11	Lorient Completed	36.	5-2	Amiens	Scrubbed
8	11.	23-11	St. Nazaire Completed	37.	7-2	Amiens	Scrubbed
	12.	29-11	La Pallice Scrubbed	38.	8-2	Amiens	Scrubbed
	13.	3-12	Lille Cancelled	39.	10-2	St. Nazaire	Scrubbed
	14.	5-12	Lille Scrubbed	18 40.	14-2	Hamm sortie/	Abortive
9	15.	6-12	Lille Completed	19 41.	16-2	St. Nazaire	Completed
	16.	10-12	Romilly Cancelled	42.	19-2	Amiens	Cancelled
10	17.	12-12	Romilly Completed	43.	20-2	Amiens	Cancelled
11	18.	20-12	Romilly Completed	44.	25-2	Dunkirk	Cancelled
12	19.	30-12	Lorient Completed	20 45.	26-2	Wilhelmshaven	Completed
				21 46.	27-2	Brest	Completed
				47.	2-3	Rennes	Scrubbed
				22 48.	4-3	Hamm	Completed
13	20.	3-1	St. Nazaire Completed	23 49.	6-3	Lorient	Completed
	21.	9-1	Emden Scrubbed	24 50.	8-3	Rennes	Completed
14	22.	13-1	Lille Completed	51.	9-3	Amiens	Scrubbed
	23.	14-1	Lorient Cancelled	52.	10-3	Wilhelmshaven	Scrubbed
	24.	15-1	Amiens Cancelled	25 53.	12-3	Rouen	Completed
	25.	16-1	Amiens Cancelled				

We've Been A Little Lax, But...

At the Memphis reunion last summer the group voted that members who were delinquent in their dues after February, 1968, be dropped from The Ragged Irregular mailing list. We've been fudging some, and keeping them flying to all 91st-ers we had addresses for, because we want ALL former members to share our activities. But after this issue, we can't keep non-dues-payers on the list. With printing and pictures and postage priced as they are we just can't carry freeloaders any farther, and it's not fair to those who are actively interested. If YOU have overlooked your dues, send along \$3 (or more, it's tax deductible!) An extra dollar gets our directory of 1200 current addresses of your buddies. Send your dues, contribution and/or directory order to:

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303 Brooksdale Ave.
Glenside, Pa. 19038



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209 Lamont Court
Vallejo, Calif. 94590

The Ragged Irregular

Published quarterly to help keep alive the spirit of the 91st Bomb Group (H) and supporting units, and to maintain the fellowship of those who fought together in WWII from AF Station 121, Basingbourn, England, 1942-45.

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