



# The Ragged Irregular

91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association Newsletter

Vd. 11 No. 2

July, 1978

## Memorial Dedication 'Great Event'

"Dedication Week" was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for members of the 91st, and the 78th and 355th Fighter Groups when they returned to Bassingbourn May 21-28. One ex-323rd waist gunner enthusiastically summed it up appropriately for all--"It was the thrill of a lifetime to re-visit the old Station 121 and go back all those years. Great!"

And the British welcome to the visitors was equally warm and memorable, with those events open to the public drawing overflow crowds. More than 5000 raised the roof of Hangar 3 for the Glen Miller Tribute Concert, and 50,000 attended the Anglo-American Air Festival on Saturday.

The memorial to the 91st was dedicated in a most impressive and solemn ceremony Tuesday, May 23. Following an introductory prayer by the Rev. P. M. Brooke, FC, Chaplain Bassingbourn Barracks, and a hymn by guests, Maj. Gen. Stanley T. Wray unveiled the memorial stone. The stone is engraved with the words "To Honor All Men of the 91st Bombardment Group (Heavy).

AAF Station 121. Bassingbourn Depot. American Occupied 14 October 1943-23 June 1945. NEVER FORGOTTEN. FOREVER HONORED. Erected 1978."

Prayers then followed by the Rev. J.F. Aitchison, Vicar of Bassingbourn, Chaplain General The Ven. Archdeacon P. Mallett QHC AKC, Chaplain J.R. Harnett, USAF, and Father Denton, RC Chaplain Bassingbourn Barracks.

Wreaths were laid by the 91st, the 78th, the 355th and other dignitaries, including the U.S. Ambassador, Bassingbourn C.O., the East Anglian Aviation Society and others. A fly-by of WWII Lancasters and Flying Fortresses ended the service

British friends of the 91st who provided the evergreens and shrubs which surround the memorial area were acknowledged. They included Councillor Duncan Ferguson, Councillor Patricia Rule, Sir Alexander Reid, Roger Freeman, Doris Foster, John Howes, Reg Pannell, Vincent Hemmings, Grace Pearce, Fred Pearce, Maurice Rowe,

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View of the Prop Memorial as seen from the bus. Joe and Jenny Harlick

with Vince Hemmings, EAAS, check last minute details.

Tom Faulds, Tom Pepper, Cliff Bishop, John Weatheritt, Vernon Orme, Clive Flack, Malcolm Osborne, Wyndham Williams, Brian Harlow, Malcolm Freestone, Henry Kitchener, and members of The Depot the Queens Division.

On Wednesday a Service of Remembrance was held at the American Cemetery at Madingley. Each of the groups and a representative for the British government laid memorial wreaths to honor the dead, and all 91st, 78th and 355th graves were decorated with U.S. and British flags.

A complete list of 91st-ers taking part in the activities is not available since a number worked their attendance into independent vacations, but those making the Galaxy tour were:

Ken & Dorothy Allsteadt, B/Gen. Alex and Marti Andrews, Noel & Lucille & Rebecca Assink, Richard Bagg, James & Betty Bedwell, Lawrence & Leona Bernady, Joseph & Mary Camelleri, Paul & Nancy Chryst, Sam & Mary Cipolla.

Charles Clark, Glenn Cooper, Robert DeGeorge, William & Ruth Dietrich, Vernon Dion, John Dobranski, Frank Donofrio, Joseph & Alberta Franke, Joe & Joey Frankie, Robert & Trudie Gerstemeier, Joseph & Mary Jane Giambrone, Clifford & Diana Glidewell.

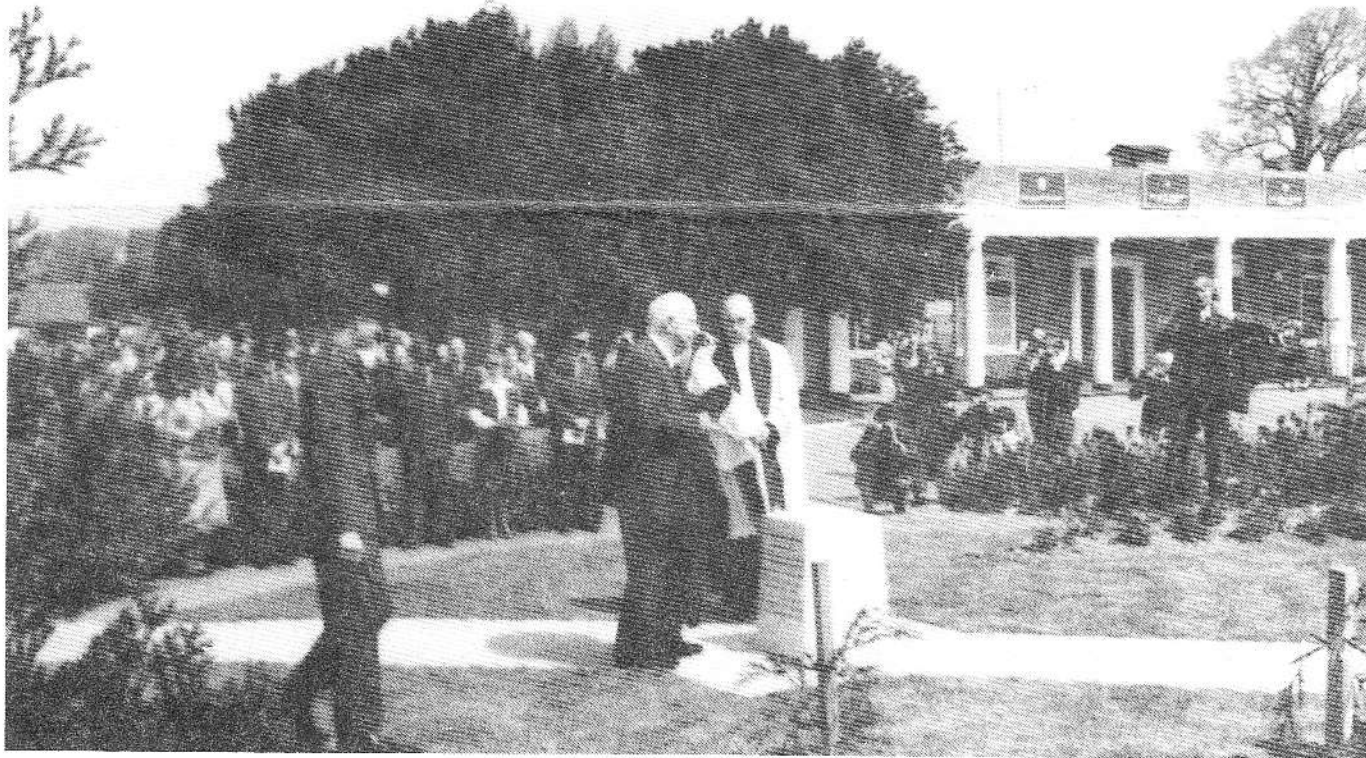
Marvin Goldberg, Anyan & Myrtis

Gordon, Milton & Gerturde Green, Lloyd & Mildred Guzek, Harold Harding, Madeline Henders, Richard & Mary Ann Holly, Gordon & Jane Hunsberger, LTC Marjorie Hunt, Don & Rica & Harris Josey, Frank Keneley.

Domenic Kolenic, Willard & Carnell Korsmeyer, Robert P. & Robert E. Krueger, John & Madeline Kurylo, Dr. Milton & Scott Lazarus, Norman Lazarus, Harold Mannon, Peter Markowski, William & Celinda McGavern, Dorothea McRae, Jack & Jean Miller, Oscar Mouton, Lauren & Dorothy & Kathryn Mummert, Benedict Musich, Joseph & Isabella Myers, Isabella Novak.

Jack & Helen Paxson, Peter & Mary Pompetti, Charles & Maxine Redenbaugh, Capt. Sebastino Ripa, Ruth Rusconi, Howard & Mary Sisk, Roman Siudut, Mary Schmirring, Anthony & Genevieve Sopata, Ernest & Mabel Stroud, Philip & Judith Taylor, Alex & Marcella Thomas, William & Annie Turcotte.

Jack & Ellen Webb, A.C. & Carole Wendt, Henry Wertz, Earl & Alice Williamson, Emmitt & Marion Wilson, Perry & Eleanor Woffard, Theodore Wyzkoski, Arthur & Peggy Yokom, Evan & Doris Zillmer, Ann Lafferty, George Kemnitz, Elroy Bruss, Frank Erlingheuser.



Gen. Wray with Chaplain Brooke unveils the Memorial Stone marker



Lord Whaddon, left representing Her Majesty's Government and representatives of the 78th, 91st (Col. Tom Gunn)

and 355th groups prepare to lay wreaths honoring their dead at the American Military Cemetery.



A busload of happy 91st-ers leave the Cambridgeshire Hotel for Bassingbourn.

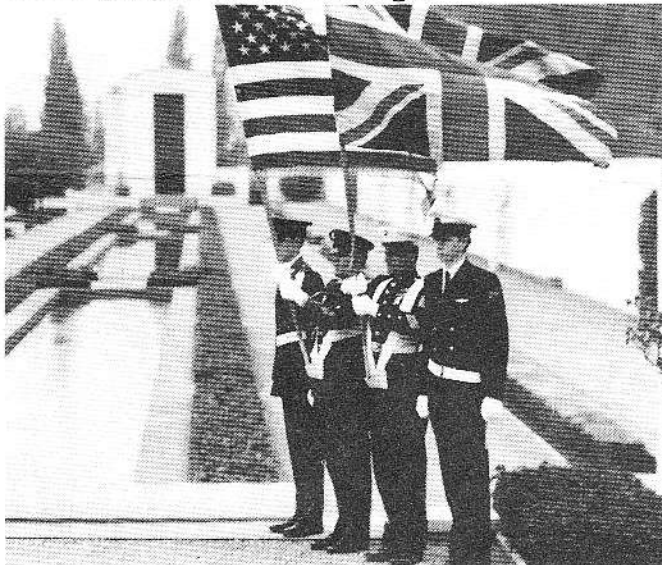
# Rocky Mountain Rally Round Shines



June Allyson, her husband David Ashrow, EAAS Sec. David Crow and his wife Valerie at the Memorial Dedication at Bassingbourn.



The Rev. Peter Brooke, Chaplain of Depot, the Queens Division, leads memorial prayer and blessings.



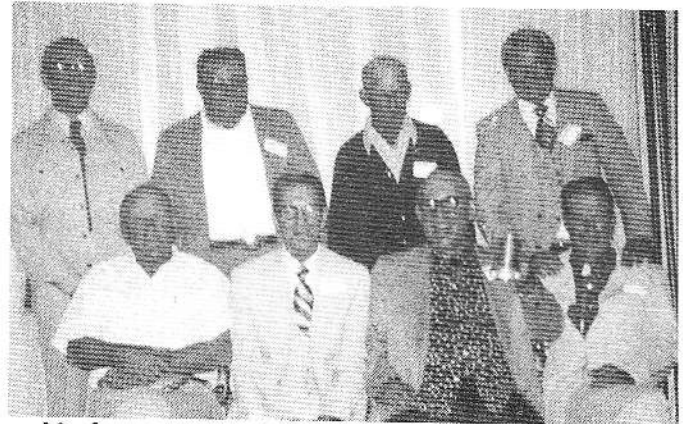
A joint services color guard from RAF Mildenhall, composed of representatives of the U.S. Army, Navy Air Force, and Marine Corps, participated in the Memorial Services at Madingley.

The Rocky Mountain Rally Round was held May 20 at Holding's Little America in Cheyenne, Wyo. The event was headed by Glenn Boyce with the help of Aulden Dunn.

The affair started in the afternoon and after cocktails and dinner the group was entertained by the Missile Airs from Fort Warren Air Base and the newest member, Leonard Wamsley of Lander, Wyo.

The mug for coming the greatest distance to attend was won by Leonard Wamsley.

Attending were Mr. & Mrs. Walter S. Brown, Mr. & Mrs. David Calvert, Mr. & Mrs. Aulden N. Dunn, Leonard Wamsley, all from Wyoming; Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Boyce, Mr. & Mrs. William R. Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Simpson, all from Colorado, and Mr. & Mrs. Peter J. Hoffman from Arizona.



Members attending the Rocky Mountain Rally Round May 20 were: Front row, Simpson, Boyce, Wamsley, Calvert. Second row, Miller, Brown, Dunn, Hoffman.



Wives attending were: Front row, Miller, Boyce, Brown, Hoffman. Second row, Dunn, Simpson, Calvert.

# 'Shoo Shoo Baby' Restoration Begins

A giant step in the restoration to flying status of the 91st's "Shoo Shoo Baby" has been taken with the transfer of the plane from the Air Force Museum to the 512th Antique Aircraft Restoration Group, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, on July 19.

The unit, a part of the 512th Military Airlift Wing, USAF Reserve, has already made extensive preliminary efforts in surveying the aircraft and gathering technical and historical information relating to it, with the purpose of a complete restoration to flying condition as in WWII.

Dana D. Lake, Project Director of Maintenance, reports that he and Michael D. Leister, Project Director, made a preliminary examination of the aircraft that revealed the need of extensive repair. Most of the interior is missing and much corrosion is evident. Harsh but unavoidable measures had to be taken in the disassembly of the aircraft for shipment back from Rhein-Main airfield in Germany by C5A in June, 1972.

The inboard wing trailing edges had to be cut, along with the nose section being severed. The wing to fuselage attach points had to be drilled in order to remove the attach taper pins.

Lakeman reports that the 512th is in a desperate search for parts, maintenance manuals, pictures of the aircraft, information, or anything of value that might help in restoring this historic aircraft. They have a new set of engines on hand, but turrets and structural parts are proving difficult to find.

They are operating on a limited Museum budget and are therefore asking for donations of parts, information, etc., to be made through Lakeman to the Air Force Museum Foundation. Transportation of items will be arranged by the 512 MA Restoration Group.

Any 91st-ers who have material or who know where parts, etc. may be found are asked to contact: Dana D. Lakeman, Rt. 2, Box 290-D, Dover, Del. 19901. He may be reached by phone weekdays at (302) 678-6868 or nightly at (302) 736-1764.

This is a 91st project that had its beginning in 1969, when Australian aviation historian Steve Birdsall discovered "Shoo Shoo Baby" derelict on a French airfield at Creil and began working toward the return of the aircraft to the U.S. and a museum restoration.

With the 91st carrying the ball the Air Force Museum finally worked out a deal with French authorities and the plane became Museum property, with hopes for a speedy restoration. However very limited restoration funds were available and no work has been possible before now. The takeover by the 512th means that the plane will at last be flying again, sporting the Triangle A of the 91st.

"Shoo Shoo Baby," s/n 42-32076, joined the 91st in 1944 and was assigned to pilot Paul McDuffee. It was in this plane that McDuffee's crew flew the only one-ship mission logged by the 91st (or any 8th AF unit), a trip to Marienburg on 9-4-44. The 91st was to fly to another target but the planes were recalled because of bad weather before they had completed assembly. "Shoo Shoo" missed the recall, tacked on to another formation, and flew the entire mission with them.

When McDuffee's crew finished their tour the plane was turned over to Bob Guenther. It picked up some blonde nose art and another "Shoo" and became "Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby." The plane had to forceland in Sweden after the May 29, 1944 Posen raid.

She was given to the Swedish government by the U.S. and was modified into a transport by SAAB. As a transport she served with the Danish Air Lines and then with the Royal Danish Air Force.

In 1955 the plane was acquired by the Institute Geographique National in France and flew until 1961. It has no air time since 1961, but those 17 years of flying (3364:25 hrs.) saw a multitude of adventures and glory!

# This Is Number One...

By Ft. Lt. E.M.C. Rowe

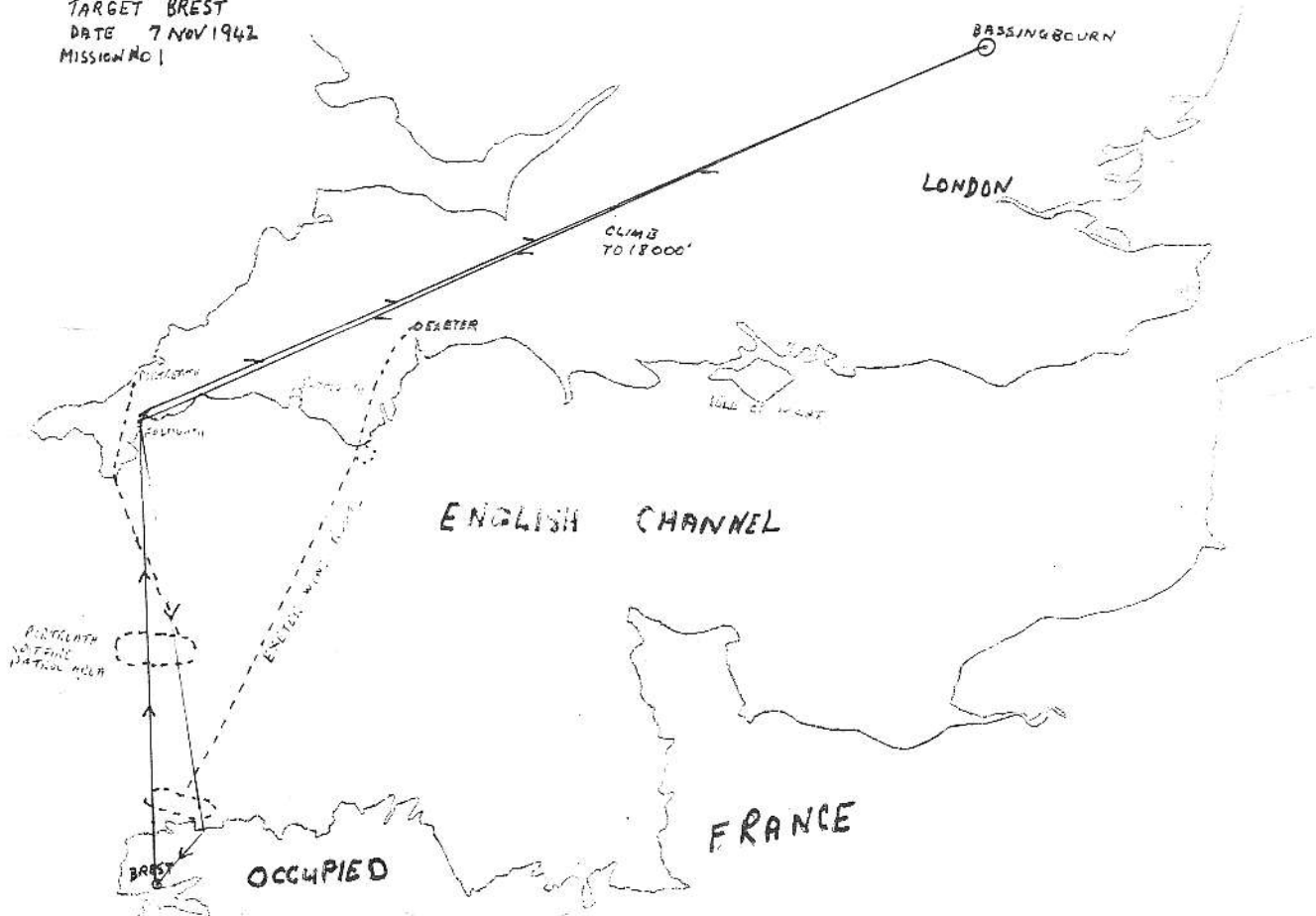
## And The Fun Had Just Begun...

(Editor's Note: Flt. Lt. E.M.C. Rowe of the RAF has been working for several years on a complete history of the 91st and has provided several stories for The Ragged Irregular. This is a complete and detailed account of one of the most memorable flights of the group--the FIRST combat mission the group ever flew. It was not a particularly spectacular or decisive mission, but as the 91st's initial contact with the enemy it deserves a special place in our records.)

Around Station 121 the air was vibrating with the throb of Wright Cyclone engines. Fourteen B-17Fs, seven from 324 sqdn. and seven from 322 sqdn. were on the perimeter track, run-up checks complete. Through the continuous light rain the eyes of all who could see it were glued to the control tower. From the tower the eyes of Gen. Carl Spaatz, Commanding 8th Air Force, and those of Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Commanding 8th Bomber Command, peered back at the planes, moving only to glance at the control room clock from time to time.

10.22 Hrs. The watching pilots saw a figure walk out on the tower balcony. Holding his arm high, the figure pulled a trigger and a green Very signal arched above the field, bright against the dull clouds. The first of the 324 sqdn. planes pulled forward, the screen wipers making slices of clear visibility through the rain-spattered windshield. Turning onto Runway 25 the crew went through the pre-take-off checks. With tail wheel locked, gyros set and the generators on, pilot 1st Lt. Duane L. Jones, aged 27 and from Iowa, opened the throttles of 41-24506 DF-G.

TARGET BREST  
DATE 7 NOV 1942  
MISSION No 1



10.23 Hrs. Slowly at first the plane rolled down the tarmac. As the props began to bite the air the speed increased and co-pilot Col. Stanley T. Wray, following through on the throttles, watched the engine instruments for any sign of trouble. Thundering down the runway, 506 passed 110 mph and the pilot eased back on the stick.

10.23½ Hrs. 506, carrying eleven men, eleven .50 cal. guns, ten 500lb G.P. bombs and 1,700 gallons of gasoline, left the runway and began climbing slowly. As flying speed built up, Col. Wray applied the wheel brakes and, under instructions from Lt. Jones, raised the landing gear. Jones called in "Landing gear up left"; Wray stated "Landing gear up right" and Engineer S/Sgt. Alvy G. Masters confirmed "Tailwheel up." With airspeed at 140 mph power was reduced and the slight turn to required track was made. The first aircraft was airborne on the first 91st BG mission against Hitler's "Festung Europa"; in this case the U-boat installations at Brest, Northern France. The date was November 7, 1942, just 11 months after America entered the war.

10.24 Hrs. 1/Lt. Robert K. Morgan lifted 41-24485 DF-A (later to become famous as the "Memphis Belle") into the overcast, followed at 30-second intervals by 2/Lt. William J. Crumm in 41-24490 DF-C "Jack the Ripper"; 1/Lt. Edward D. Gaitley, Jr. in 41-24504 DF-D "The Sad Sack"; 2/Lt. Charles E. Cliburn in 41-24505 "Quitchebitchin"; 2/Lt. Phillip S. Fischer in 41-24515 and 1/Lt. Frank W. Flanagan in 41-24503 DF-E. With all of the 324 sqdn. airborne it was the turn of 322 sqdn. to take the runway.

10.27½ Hrs. Maj. Victor Zienowicz was the first of the 322nd to be airborne, in 41-24499 LG-P "Fury," followed by Lt. James Baird in 41-24481 LG-M "Hell's Angels"; Lt. Don Bader in 41-24482 LG-S "Heavyweight Annihilators"; Lt. Frank McCormick in 41-24479 LG-R "Sad Sack"; Lt. Bruce Barton in 41-24483 LG-U "Spirit of Alcohol"; Lt. John T. Hardin in 41-24453 LG-O "Mizpah," and Lt. Harold Beasley in 41-24545 LG-T "Motsie."

The 91st was part of a raid of 54 B-17s enroute to Brest that November day; ahead were 24 Fortresses of 306 BG, behind the 91st flew a further 16 Fortresses of the 301 BG. The first leg of the planned route was direct from bases to Falmouth, flying below 5000 ft. until 10 miles south of Bath. At this point a climb to 18,000 ft. was commenced, all crews going on oxygen at 10,000 ft.

11.30 Hrs. At Exeter, in Devonshire, 35 Spitfires Mk. Vb and Vc bumped across the grass and set course for their rendezvous at Bolt Head, on the coast. The 91st had been briefed that there was to be no fighter escort on this raid, but in this the briefing had been wrong. These Spitfires of the RAF's Exeter Wing comprised some from each of 310, 312, and 313 sqdns., flown in the main by Czechoslovakian pilots who had escaped from enemy occupied territory to continue the fight.

11.50 Hrs. Climbing to 24,000 ft. the Spitfires set out for France, where it was planned that they would meet the Fortresses just before reaching the target. At this time the 91st should have been leaving the Cornish coast at Falmouth, on a heading for France. Somewhere along the line 10 minutes had been lost, and the operation's timing was beginning to slip.

12.00 Hrs. As the British coast slipped behind them the crews of the 91st tested their guns and started scanning the skies for any possible enemy planes, and this is when the problems really began.

12.05 Hrs. Lt. Hardin, with guns frozen up by the intense cold, turned Mizpah for home, jettisoning ten 500 lb. bombs harmlessly into the sea. One minute later Lt. Barton finding frozen guns in Spirit of Alcohol, also turned back and another ten 500 pounders dropped to the sea, an example copied by Lt. Baird in Hell's Angels a few minutes later.

The Exeter Wing Spitfires were still speeding across the Channel in their climb, leaving the bombers well behind. Meanwhile, the eight remaining 91st planes closed up into two flights of four and pressed doggedly on.

12.20 Hrs. The little Cornish fishing village of Portreath reverberated to the sound of 24 Rolls-Royce Merlin engines as two squadrons of RAF Spitfires climbed away from the nearby airfield, on their way to cover the departure of the B-17s from the target area. They made for the briefed patrol position, at 18,000 ft. 40 miles SSE of Lizard Point.

12.23 Hrs. The 91st should now have been attacking the target but were still heading SSE across the Channel. The other bomber groups were having their problems; the 306 had three planes abort with mechanical failures, and upon reaching the target area found the area almost covered by cloud, and another six aircraft aborted due to lack of target visibility. The 301st jettisoned their bombs due to poor visibility over the target. The Spitfires of Exeter Wing were now patrolling 10 miles north of the target area, but observing neither enemy aircraft nor American bombers. Just as the fighters had to leave the area because their fuel was getting low, they saw a formation of 16 Fortresses followed by a further six approaching the French coast. As they watched, the Czechs saw the rear formation of 6 drop their bombs into the sea and turn back. It may be assumed that this was the leading B-17 Group, the 306th.

12.31 Hrs. The first 324 sqdn. turn-back. Lt. Flanagan could do nothing to free the frozen guns in his top turret, turned 503 for home, taking his bombs back with him. Ten miles farther on, Lt. Cliburn was informed by his tail gunner that the rear guns were frozen and so "Quitthurbitchin" joined the doleful procession back to base and another bomb-load splashed into the English Channel, as did that of The Sad Sack when Lt. Gaitley found that his gunners could not free the waist guns, particularly as his No.3 engine was giving trouble.

12.39 Hrs. The 324 sqdn., led by Lt. Jones in 506, attacked the target between 18,500 and 19,000 ft. Lt. Morgan and Lt. Crumm were in the number 2 & 3 position respectively, and Lt. Fischer was in the box. Members of Fischer's crew claimed seeing hits in the target area, others saw nothing because of cloud. Both light and heavy flak were encountered over the target area, but only Morgan's tail gunner claimed to see an enemy aircraft when he fired at a FW 190 which was on fire, 600 yds. away.

(To Be Continued in the October Issue)

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR is the quarterly newsletter of the 91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association, Inc. All material for publication should be mailed to the editor, Paul C. Burnett, Box 909, Auburn, Al. 36830

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The undersigned members of the 355th Fighter Group Association wish to thank the 91st Bomb Group for inviting us to return and participate in your operation "One More Time." Words cannot express the feeling of appreciation to your members and the warmth extended to us by all participants in this operation. Your "little friends" were deeply touched by all the V.I.P. treatment and hope that at some time in the future we may return this friendliness. If any participants desire to trade pictures taken during "Anglo-American" week, please contact us. Thank you again and God Bless all of you for your friendship. Sincerely, Gordon H. Hunsberger, Henry D. Wertz, Charles W. Redenbaugh, Joseph G. Myers, Jr., Harrison T. Price, A.R.W. Channing, Julius A. Mosley.