

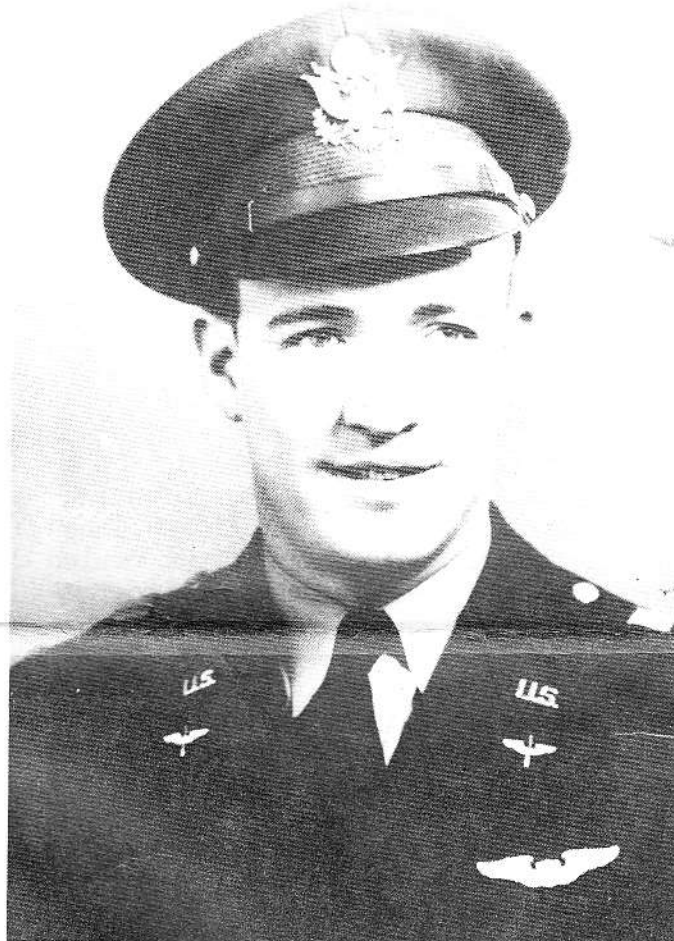


# This Is Number One...

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.) THIS IS THE SECOND INSTALLMENT



Lt. Duane E. Jones, pilot of the lead plane in the first raid. An original member of the 91st, he flew 41-124480 from the U.S. to the U.K. in September, 1942. He was promoted to Captain, but was declared Missing In Action on the raid of 23 November, 1942 on the submarine pens at St. Nazaire.

12.41 Hrs. Like the 324th, the 322 BS had closed up to a single four-ship formation when the others had turned back. With Maj. Zienowicz leading, McCormick No.2, Bader No.3 and Beasley in the box the squadron moved to the attack.

12.44 Hrs. Despite intensive flak the target was bombed, but due to cloud cover it was not possible to observe results. In the target area a solitary FW 190 attacked, (probably that seen by the gunner of 485). First seen by the crew of 482, it was fired on by the tail and ball gunners as it passed from the 9 o'clock position to astern; it was then spotted by 545's crew, again tail and ball gunners fired and the German curved in to fly through the formation. As he passed 479 he was fired on by the tail gunner and by the waist gunner of 499. It was probably at this stage that he was fired at by the tail gunner of 485. All gunners who fired claimed seeing flames around the cockpit and the crew of 545 saw smoke trailing as the FW dived away. Destruction of the fighter was credited to the crew of 482. At about this time two FW 190s dropped out of cloud and attacked the Exeter Wing Spitfires, shooting one down. The pilot, from 310 Sqdn., bailed out about 35 miles from the English coast as was never seen again.

12.50 Hrs. Crossing the French coast, homeward bound, Me 109s attacked the 91st, but with no damage to either side.

(continued on page 2)

There was a certain amount of hostile activity going on back at Bassingbourn, where the ground echelon was under attack from at least one Briton. Mr. Sizer, the newspaper seller at the Enlisted Men's Mess, had been refused permission to go home for his lunch. It was policy that no one should leave the base during a raid, a restriction which was later relaxed. Now Mr. Sizer had fought the Germans in World War One, as crew member of a British Army tank. He had lost an arm and gained the Military Medal in action, and was not prepared to go hungry just because someone else was having a go at the Hun.

Anglo-American friendship was restored when it was decided that Mr. Sizer could eat at the base and draw a cigarette ration, no small privilege in the days of strict food rationing and cigarette shortages for the British.

13.15 Hrs. From the cockpit of 483 Lt. Barton watched Bassingbourn as it seemed to creep toward him. As he turned downwind and the flaps and wheels dropped into place, from all buildings on the camp came men and women to watch his return. In the control tower they knew that this plane must have aborted the sortie, but those around the camp could not know; some feared that this was the only survivor.

13.17½ Hrs. At just 120 mph, the wheels of "Spirit of Alcohol" brushed the runway, and as she rolled toward the end the crew went through the post landing checks. They were the first of a steady trickle of returning planes which arrived not in the order of aborting, since different crews had returned by various routes.

13.29 Hrs. Lt. Frank Flanagan brought 503 back safely, followed by "Quitthurbitchin" with Lt. Cliburn at the controls at 13.37; Lt. Hardin in "Mizpah" at 13.40; three minutes later came "The Sad Sack" and Lt. Gaitley, and the last of the aborts to return was "Hell's Angels" landed by Lt. Baird at 13.48. Then came the long wait. The returned crews had been interrogated by the intelligence officers, had told the armourers of the frozen gun problem and now were hanging about, waiting for the return of the remaining eight aircraft; four from each squadron. For nearly an hour after the last aborted plane shut down engines the sky was still.

14.37 Hrs. One man, somewhere on the field, tensed and hushed those about. The distant drone became louder, and now the planes could be seen, in good formation, approaching from the southwest. Eyes strained to count the number of planes, and a wave of relief and jubilation swept the base as it became clear that the formation consisted of all eight remaining aircraft - the mission was complete with no planes lost! As the planes flew down the dead side of the traffic pattern Lt. Crumm peeled "Jack The Ripper" out of the formation, lowered the wheels and turned downwind, followed in turn by Lt. Jones in 506 and Lt. Morgan in "Memphis Belle."

14.45 Hrs. Lt. Crumm made the first landing of a 91st plane after completing an operational mission, followed at 2 minute intervals by Lts. Jones, Morgan and Fischer. First 322 pilot to land was Maj. Zienowicz, followed by Lts. Beasley, Bader and McCormick, the later landing "Sad Sack" at 15.01 hrs.

When the interrogations were over the 91st was credited with one enemy aircraft destroyed, 2 damaged. One B-17 had been slightly damaged by flak, but there were no American casualties. For the raid as a whole, the 306th BG had 9 aborts, 15 planes bombed the target; the 91st jettisoned 30,000 lbs of bombs, dropped 40,000 lbs in the target area; the 301st BG aircraft all jettisoned their bombs. The R.A.F. lost one pilot and a Spitfire.

What was the cost to the Germans? It seems likely that they lost no aircraft at all, as the "flames" reported by each gunner were most probably from the muzzles of the FW190's guns, and the smoke seen when the fighter dived away was a normal condition. Subsequent reconnaissance photos by the R.A.F. No.1 P.R.U. showed that the bombing had sunk a barge and two small craft in addition to gutting several small sheds.

(continued on page 3)

On the face of it, not a sparkling, successful raid, but how is success measured in this context? Col. Wray had discovered that only 6% to 7% of bombs dropped in the early raids were within 1000 yards of the aiming point. The R.A.F. operated at levels as high or higher than the 91st without suffering from frozen guns, as did the Luftwaffe. U.S.A.A.F. training and techniques were based on operating conditions not found in N.W. European winters. The shortcomings were revealed; now they could be rectified. That they were rectified is thanks to the efforts of those early operational aircrews. Col. Wray set about improving the accuracy of the 91st bombing, and it was up to 37% at the end of his period of command. He also found the cure for the frozen guns (but that is another story!).

Meanwhile, Hitler in response to this new threat to his Western Wall was forced to redeploy fighters, flak guns and troops to Western Europe, easing the burden of Allied bomber crews and ground troops in Russia and Africa. This raid was carried out one day after Rommel was in full retreat from Montgomery in Egypt; one day prior to Eisenhower landing his troops in Algiers. The Battle of Stalingrad was raging and now the Americans had added daylight bombing to the night bombing offensive of the R.A.F. While not wishing to overstate the importance of individual raids, each was a further strain on Nazi resources, and daylight bombing became a strain which led to the destruction of the Luftwaffe in its own skies, to the extent where, in 1945, some B-17 crews flew to Berlin and back without seeing a German fighter.

And so, should anyone be tempted to ask what was the use of this raid resulting in the destruction of three small vessels and a few sheds, let us remember Benjamin Franklin, who replied to a similar question about man's first flights in a balloon:

"Use? What, Sir, is the use of a baby?"

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#### NEW DIRECTORY BEING DELIVERED

All members who paid their dues for 1978, plus Life Members, should have their new 91st directory very soon if they have not already received it by the time this issue of The Ragged Irregular reaches you. We paid dearly for it, so don't lose it! An extra copy will cost \$3. The printer wailed that he lost over \$300 on the job; Tom Gurn offered no more money, just a crying towel. Seriously, each directory costs about \$2.50 (printing, freight, postage, etc.), but yearly revisions should cost only about \$50 (page replacements), which will represent a significant savings when amortized. This approach is merely one of continuing efforts to avoid increasing annual dues.

#### PROPOSED BY-LAWS

In each 91st directory is a copy of the proposed By-Laws for your Association. If approved by voting members, they will remain as is. If approval requires amendment, only affected pages need be revised; they would be sent to you as replacement pages.

Very few copies of the existing By-Laws are in existence. Your elected officials believe each member should have a copy of their association's By-Laws. The proposed By-Laws abolish Eastern and Western Divisions, as such, and reorganizes the 91st into one national association. Provided the leadership is responsive to the wishes of the membership the resulting centralization should provide better management.

The proposed By-Laws also incorporate the offices of 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President which the members voted for at the 1976 Reunion in Colorado Springs. General Wray had Colonel Gurn working on the new By-Laws almost from the moment Tom was elected 1st Vice President. General Wray approved the By-Laws appearing in your directory. Voting members soon will be asked to vote on the proposed By-Laws.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

Beginning in 1979, the financial status of the 91st will be reported in each April issue of The Ragged Irregular. Data is not available in time to publish it in the January R/I. As a dues paying member you are entitled to know how your funds are being managed.

## Don't Put Off Sending In Your Dues

324 Squadron

506 Jones

8th Air Force Bomber Command

Mission No. 16

490 Crumm

485 Morgan

91st Bombardment Group

Mission No. 1

504 Gaitley

Target: Brest U-Boat Facilities

Date: 7 November 1942

515 Fischer

505 Cliburn

B-17s dispatched:

324 Sqdn. 7

322 Sqdn. 7

503 Flanagan

B-17s bombed:

324 Sqdn. 3

322 Sqdn. 3

322 Squadron

Planes lost:

none

499 Zienowicz

Planes damaged:

1

482 Bader

481 Baird

Planes aborted:

324 Sqdn. 3

322 Sqdn. 3

Enemy aircraft credited:

Destroyed 1

Damaged 2

479 McCormick

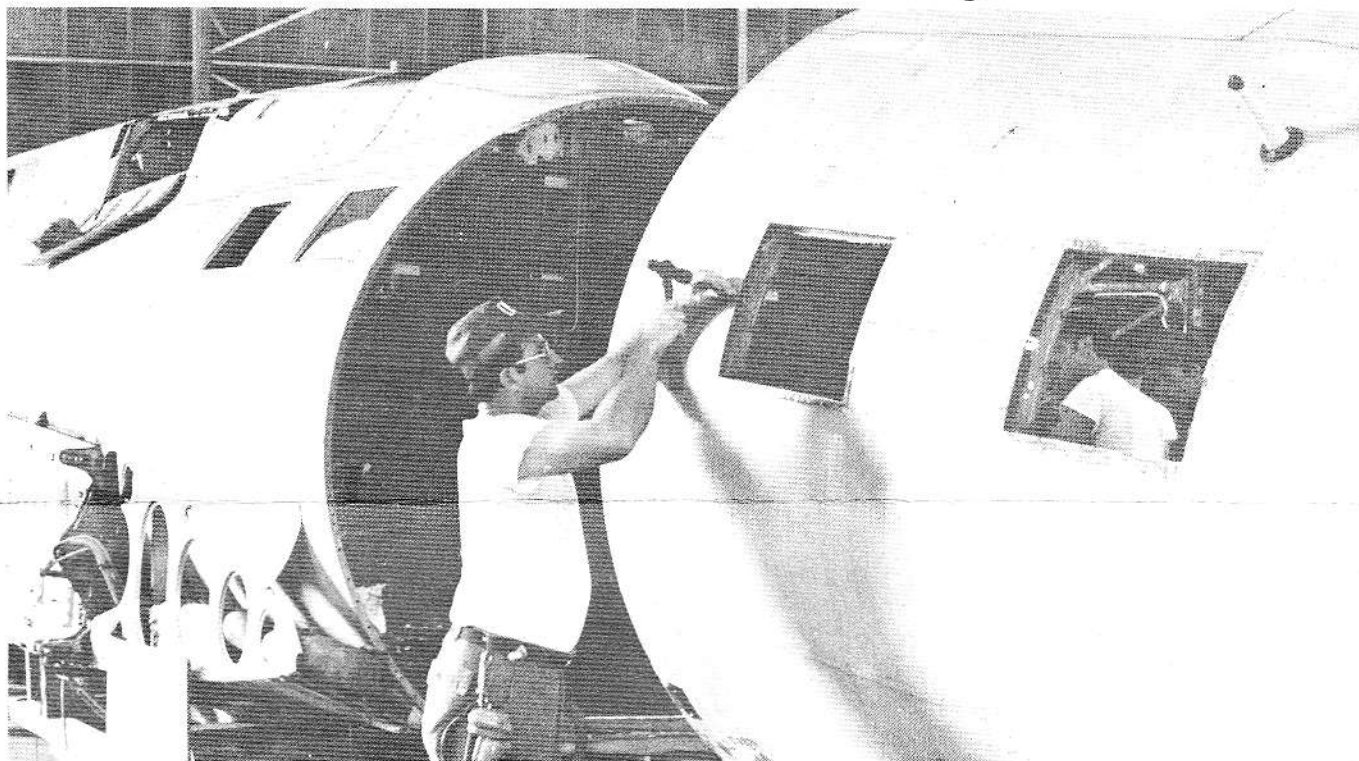
453 Hardin

483 Barton

545 Beasley



# Shoo Shoo Baby



Work goes on in the restoration of Shoo Shoo Baby. Here a member of the 512th Antique Aircraft Restoration Group of the 512 Military Airlift removes the airliner windows to help restore the plane to combat condition.

The 512th Antique Aircraft Restoration group at Dover AFB, Del., is continuing all out with the rehabilitation of the 91st's Shoo Shoo Baby back to combat status. The project has stirred great enthusiasm in the 512th, and to help promote the restoration the group is selling a Shoo Shoo Baby patch and a souvenir booklet on the restoration project to B-17 buffs. The four-inch blue patch has an olive green B-17G with the words "Shoo Shoo Baby" and "512 Antique Aircraft Restoration Group" on it. The 16-page booklet has 8 black and white photos and three line art drawings of B-17Gs and the aircraft being restored. All donations of \$3 or over to the work will receive the patch and the booklet. Donations should be sent to the 512th Antique Aircraft Restoration Group, 512 MA, Dover Air Force Base, Del. 19901.

The restoration is a two-year, 25,000 hour job taken on as a community service project on behalf of the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Following completion in the fall of 1980 the aircraft will be on display for one year at Dover and then return to the AF Museum for permanent display.

Several members of the two crews who flew the craft are still being sought. They are: Lt. D. N. Kennedy (bombardier), T/Sgt. S.L. Sommers, S/Sgt. J.S. Bond and S/Sgt. D.E. Harrington of the first crew piloted by Paul G. McDuffee. From the second crew the unlocated are: Lt. George Havrisik (co-pilot), T/Sgt. Jim Shoesmith, S/Sgt. Nick Premenko, T/Sgt. John H. Bigham, S/Sgt. H.J. Teems, and S/Sgt. Harold F. Nicely.

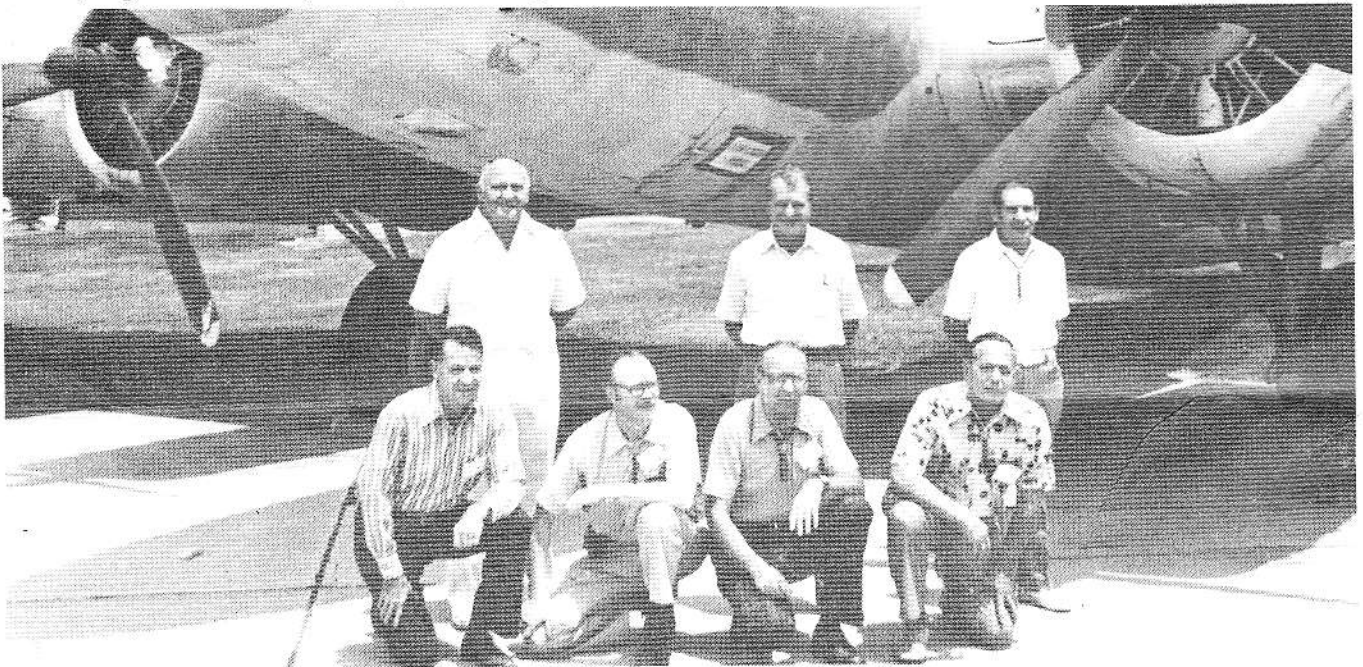
Also a mystery man associated with the plane is Lt. Maurice A. Marston, whose small calling card was found stuck in the back panel of the fuselage of Shoo Shoo Baby as the aircraft was being taken apart. He was never a crew member, the National Personnel Records Center does not have him on record, and to date no one has come up with an answer.

If you know any of these missing persons send the data to Wesley Bell, 512 MAW Information Office, Dover AFB, Del. 19901.



BEFORE-- In 1944 the proud crew of Outhouse Mouse posed for their official crew picture. Shown are: Front row, 1 to r, Lt. Ed Gates, co-pilot; Lt. Lauri Kivimaki, navigator; Lt. Charles Kirkham, pilot; Lt. Joe Frankie, Jr., bombardier.

Back row: Cpl. Calvin Perkins, waist gunner; Sgt. Wes Rabadeaux, waist gunner; Sgt. Harold Griswold, flight engineer; Sgt. A.J. Jolly, ball turret; Sgt. Edmund Floyd, tail gunner; Sgt. Emil DeQuardo, radio operator.



AFTER-- In 1978 at the National Reunion the crew poses again, before the Memphis Belle. Seven of the nine members still living made the trip to Memphis--the highest percentage of any crew there. Recreating the original pose, with gaps for the missing members are: Ed Gates of Chesapeake Beach, Md., stockbroker; Lauri Kivimaki of Seattle, Wash., mechanical engineer; Charles M. Kirkham, Tuscaloosa, Ala., manufacturer's representative; Joe Frankie, Los Fresnos, Texas, restaurant owner. Back row: Wes Rabadeaux, Wilton, Iowa, former senator and weekly newspaper publisher; A.J. Jolly, Newport, Ky., attorney and past county judge; Emil DeQuardo, Waukasaw, Wisc., quality control for International Harvester.



## From The Editor's Desk...

**Paul C. Burnett Box 909 Auburn, Al. 36830**

A Rocky Mountain Rally Round has been set for May 19 at Colorado Springs. Area members will meet at the Peterson Field Officers Club at 6:30 for cocktails, with dinner at 8.

Complete details will appear in the April Ragged Irregular, or you may contact Glenn Boyce at 1874 S. Hoyt St., Lakewood, Co. 80226, or Col. Paul D. Jessop, 802 Aurora Drive, Colorado Springs, Co. 80906.

A Shoo Shoo Baby Rally Round is planned for Dover, Del., July 14-15, according to Eastern Division Chairman W.W. Hill. It will be held in conjunction with the 512th Antique Aircraft Restoration Group.

Details will be carried in the July R/I.

A note from aviation historian Roger Freeman says: "Some people in Holland have come up with the flight jacket worn by a 322nd BS crew member who went down in Holland in B-17 #42-37738. The jacket carries the name G.D. Harris. There is also the number HO 613 written in pencil on one of the pockets. Maybe someone can put us in touch with Harris." If you can help, contact:

Roger A. Freeman  
Mays Barn  
Dedham  
Colchester  
Essex CO7 6EW  
England

Newest Life Member is Michael N. Kunrod, former communications chief, 323rd Sqdn. Michael, who lives in Colorado Springs, is retired from Civil Service after more than 38 years of federal service. Twenty of those years were at the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he was technical manager of the Hybrid Computer Facility.

At present he is working part time at the University of Colorado branch in Colorado Springs with the Electrical Engineering Department.

A mini-Rally of old and new Eastern Division officers, wives and guests was held October 28 at Jack Fearheller's "Scotch Hall" in Ocean City, N.J., in conjunction with the transfer of property

and funds. Attending were Joe and Mary Jane Giambrone, W.W. and Jackie Hill, Bob and Trudy Gerstemeier, Bob and Georgette DeGeorge, John and Kay Flinn, Doris Foster from England, Paul Chryst and Jack Fearheller.

Eastern Division Secretary-Treasurer John Flinn has passed along the information that four ex-91sters are to be added to our list of deceased. They are Harvey R. Bonnel, RD #1, Box 23-D, Fly Creek, N.Y. 13337; Fred B. Eischadle, 151 Main St., Sayresville, N.J. 08872; Robert N. Roberts, 24 Marquis Apts., Morningside Drive, Perry, Ga. 31069, and Franklin A. Schumacker, 187 Dodge Ave., Akron, Ohio 44302.

From the Western Division Secretary-Treasurer George Parks passes along the information that former Tech. Inspector I.W. Roberts, 5806 Angie Place, San Antonio, Texas 78240, died in May, 1978.

Quintin L. Bennett, ex-322nd sqdn., who was with the 91st from June, '42 till February, '44, made his very first get-together with old buddies at the Memphis reunion in July. Bennett, who was assistant crew chief on "Mizpah" and later assigned to oxygen maintenance, was sent to Russia in Feb. '44 to service the shuttle missions. Upon his return to England in Nov. '44 he was assigned to the 9th Air Force at Le Harve, France, and never got together again with his friends until the 1978 reunion. One thing about the 91st esprit d'corps he realized at the reunion--it is all for one and one for all! All because of Joe Zimmerman of Clackamas, Ore. Joe hasn't missed a reunion, and he is one of the most loyal 91st members. Some months ago he was injured, almost fatally, in a motorcycle accident, and couldn't make the trip to Memphis despite long time plans to attend. As Bennet explains: "One night at the reunion 25 ex-322nd members and their wives converged in Arnold Brown's room to telephone Joe, and each had a turn to tell him hello, to tell him we missed him, to convey our best wishes, and wish Joe God Speed in his recovery. Buddies, that's love, and Joe Zimmerman is a man of the 322nd who is worthy of our respect. God Bless us everyone!"

Most 91sters remember beautiful Wimpole Hall, not far from AF Station 121 on the road to Cambridge. One of the most distinctive features (and to many bewildered flyers, the most useful) of the estate was the great avenue of elm trees that stretched two and three-fourths miles from just south of the house to the 323rd squadron dispersal area and the beginning of the main runway at the base. The estate is now owned by The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty and is being restored.

Several years ago this beautiful double row of trees was infected with Dutch Elm disease and they have been cut down. The National Trust is beginning to replace the trees in the same lay-out and the same direction that formerly guided many disabled bombers back to Bassingbourn.

A special tree register will be set up and numbered for physical location. Any 91ster who wishes to aid the project with the purchase of his own tree, in memory of himself, his crew, his squadron, etc., should make a bank draft payable to The National Trust for \$20 (US) and mail it to: Mr. Robert Walber, The Administrator  
Wimpole Hall  
Arrington  
Royston, Herts SG8 0BW  
England

An unusual bit of nostalgia many of you will enjoy is a recent book "Airfields of The Eighth Then and Now," published by After the Battle Magazine. The book covers 68 American airfields of the Eighth, with pictures of the base during the war and pictures showing how they look now. A descriptive text of each base, by well-known aviation historian Roger Freeman is extremely valuable and enlightening. Copies may be ordered from:

After the Battle Magazine  
3 New Plaistow Road  
London E15 3JA England

Regular copies are \$23.50 including postage. Presentation copies with grained cover a metal-embossed Eighth Air Force Badge are \$33.50.

Former waist gunner of the Careful Virgin, Ted Wyzkoski, would like to get in touch with any 91ster who plans to make a trip back to Bassingbourn this year. Ted, who made both the memorial dedication trip to England last year and the Memphis reunion, is donating his WW II blouse complete with all insignia to the Control Tower Museum at Bassingbourn. Surface delivery of packages being what it is, Ted would like to entrust it to an old buddy for personal delivery. If you can help, contact Ted at 192 Grove Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15229, or call him at area code 412-893-6078.



Two of the 91st's own Red Cross Angels-- Joan Johnson (now Joan Fewsmith) and Evelyn Ritscher.

## California State Rally Round

A California State Rally Round will be held April 28-29-30 at the Jolly Roger Inn in Anaheim. This annual event always attracts one of the largest Rally Round groups of any 91st get together. The hospitality room will open at 6 p.m. Friday for early arrivals. On Saturday the hospitality room will open at noon and remain open until 6 p.m.

A no-host cocktail hour will be held in the main ballroom of the Jolly Roger from 6 until 7:30, when dinner will be served. There will be a guest speaker and a briefing on 1980 National Reunion plans. Out of state members wishing to attend may contact Western Division Sec.-Treas. George Parks for room reservation details.