



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

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91st Joins AF Living Tree Memorial

The 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association is taking part in the U.S. Air Force Museum's program for living memorial trees and dedicatory plaques on the Museum grounds at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton. Tree planting and marker base preparation will get under way in several weeks, according to Sam Cipolla, association 2nd vice president, who is directing the project. Decidation and marker plaque mounting will come in several months.

There are currently about a dozen memorial trees established, among them the POW/MIA Memorial Tree, the Bicentennial-99th B.G. Tree, the Maj. Alexander deSeversky Memorial Tree, the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Assn. Tree, 75th Troop Carrier Squadron Memorial Tree, Daedalian Memorial Tree, the 379th Association Memorial Tree, the 384th Bomb Group Memorial Tree. Several others are currently being planned by other WW II associations.

The 91st site is near the 8th Air Force Monument, adjacent to the main entrance to the Air Force Museum from the public parking lot. (See sketch on this page)

Cost of the memorial will be approximately \$1500, which will come from Memorial Association funds. The Air Force Museum will be responsible for maintenance.

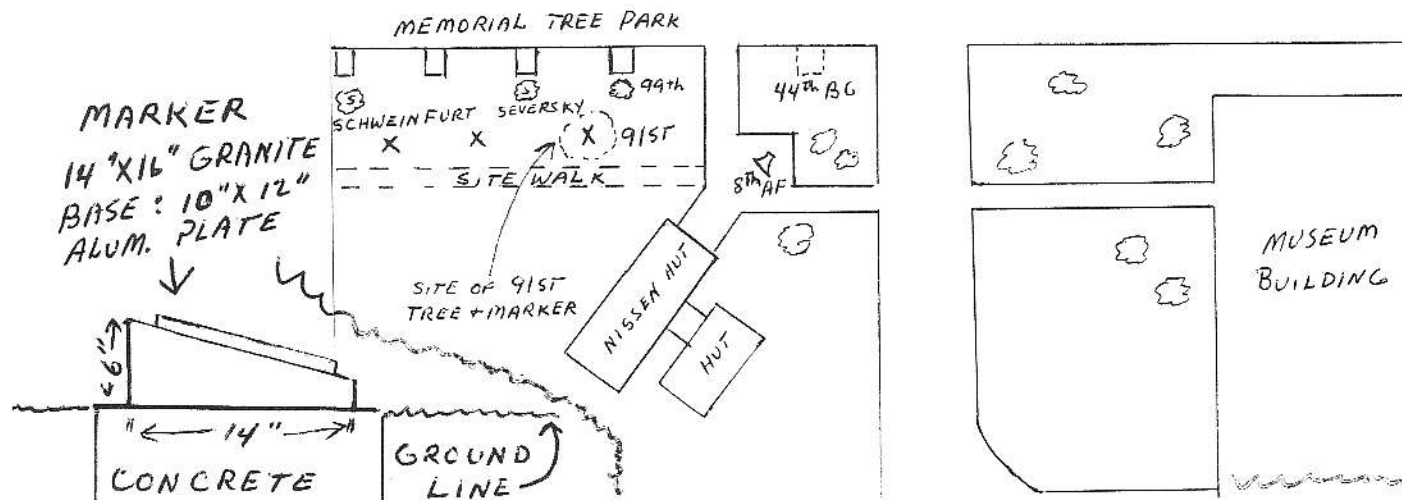
The living memorial tree will be a 4" diameter oak, to be planted by the Sieben-thaler Company, landscape nurserymen, of Dayton, for a total cost of \$495; \$295 for the tree and \$200 for planting.

The marker will be provided by the Dayton Monument Co. It will be of Barre granite. Total cost of installing the marker and mounting the plaque will be \$612.80.

The 10" x 12" plaque will be of aluminum, with silver letters against a black background. The wording of the inscription has not yet been decided upon, pending additional details from the Air Force Museum. It will be prepared by Meierjohan-Wengler, Inc., of Cincinnati.

Sam Cipolla suggested the memorial at the San Diego national reunion last fall, and has made several trips from Chicago to the Air Force Museum to complete the planning.

PUBLIC PARKING



Madam Shoo Shoo's Toe Dance

While combat missions naturally contributed most of the "hairy" flying adventures during WW II, routine local flights and maintenance checks often offered all the excitement base personnel could take. Consider the case of the crew that Maury Herman told about in his saga of the "Royal Flush" of the crew slow timing their plane about their base, only to land at a German airdrome and spend the rest of the war as POWs. Or the time a plane loaded with bombs caught fire on the runway.

Or the time the 91st plane "Madame Shoo Shoo" had to make a one-wheel landing at Bassingbourn at night!

It all started out routinely enough. With a skeleton crew aboard, "Madame Shoo Shoo" was scheduled for an afternoon practice bombing run to drop dummy bombs on the "Wash." The crew consisted of the pilot, Lt. Fred L. Suther (23 combat missions), co-pilot, F/O Walter R. Golubic (20 missions), bombardier, Capt. Jack R. Mangold (26 missions), aerial engineer, S/Sgt. Francis J. Mahoney (7 missions), and radio operator, T/Sgt. William G. Reid (29 missions), plus the ground crew chief, M/Sgt. Wallace Stark.

After several hours over the practice bombing range, the crew returned to Bassingbourn at dusk and began their landing approach. Unfortunately, "Madame Shoo Shoo" refused to cooperate, and the crew could get only the right wheel and the tail wheel down -- the left wheel refused to budge. Night was coming on fast.

While her crew chief, M/Sgt. Stark, tried every trick in the book to dislodge the recalcitrant wheel, Lt. Suther flew around and around the base. Nothing budged the stuck wheel, and Suther decided that his only choice was to make a "one-point" landing. He ordered all gasoline jettisoned, and all loose guns and equipment thrown overboard, so there wouldn't be stray pieces flying about to injure the crew in the event of a quick stop.

The grapevine had spread the word of the "Madam's" difficulties, and a big crowd had gathered around the control tower. Fire trucks and crash wagons inched toward the runway. One interested spectator was Gen. William Gross, of 1st Wing headquarters.

With the pilot and the co-pilot at the controls, the other four huddled in the radio room, braced against the bulkhead for the crash. There hadn't been much conversation for the last 2½ hours. "It was just a slow sweat," said one of the crew.

With the flaps down, "Madam Shoo Shoo" touched her one landing wheel to the concrete runway and wheeled down the strip as gracefully as a unicycle rider on the stage. Slowly, the left wing dipped, then touched. Slowly wheeling to the left, the scraping wingtip rumbling and screeching in protest, the Fortress came to rest.

Not even the ball turret had touched. Pilot Suther had set her down like a crate of eggs. A few square feet of wing tip was damaged, and the two props on the left side needed replacing, the hearts of the crew members had to be lowered from their throats. "Madam Shoo Shoo" was safely home, ready for different but not more thrilling assignments!

Rocky Mountain Rally Round

The annual Rocky Mountain Rally Round has been set for May 16 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Boyce, 1874 South Hoyt Street, Lakewood, Colo., in the Denver metropolitan area.

Cocktails, snacks, and an old-fashion get-together at 3 p.m. will kick off the Rally Round. The cost is \$3 per person.

Dinner has been arranged for 8:30 p.m. at Dardano's Restaurant, 11968 West Jewell Avenue. Guests will order directly from the menu, which includes a variety of Italian dishes, chicken, ribs, seafood, and steaks. Individual checks will be given for dinner.

Lodging accommodations in the area include the Six Pence Motel, 9930 West 49th Ave., Wheat Ridge; Country Village Inn Motel, 4700 Kipling, Wheat Ridge, and Kipling Inn, 715 Kipling, Lakewood.

When Nine O Nine Came Home

Most durable B-17 in the 91st and the entire 8th Air Force was the 323rd squadron plane "Nine O Nine," # 4231909, with 140 missions without an abort. (Hoping that some of the numbers magic may rub off, the Memorial Association has Box 909 as its official address.)

The plane was assigned to the 323rd on February 25, 1944, and M/Sgt. Rollin L. Davis was made crew chief. By April, 1945, the ship had made 126 missions without an abort, eight trips to Berlin, and dropped a total of 562,000 pounds of bombs on the Reich. By then it had a total of 1129 hours on it, and had had 19 engine changes, 4 wing panel changes due to flak, and 15 main gas tanks and 18 Tokyo tanks changed, besides considerable flak damage in the fuselage. M/Sgt. Davis had been awarded the Bronze Star for his efforts in keeping the plane flying. The ground crew consisted of Davis, Cpl. Robert Detwiler, Cpl. Charles H. Huffman, Sgt. Edward Lincoln, and Sgt. Wallace Southard.

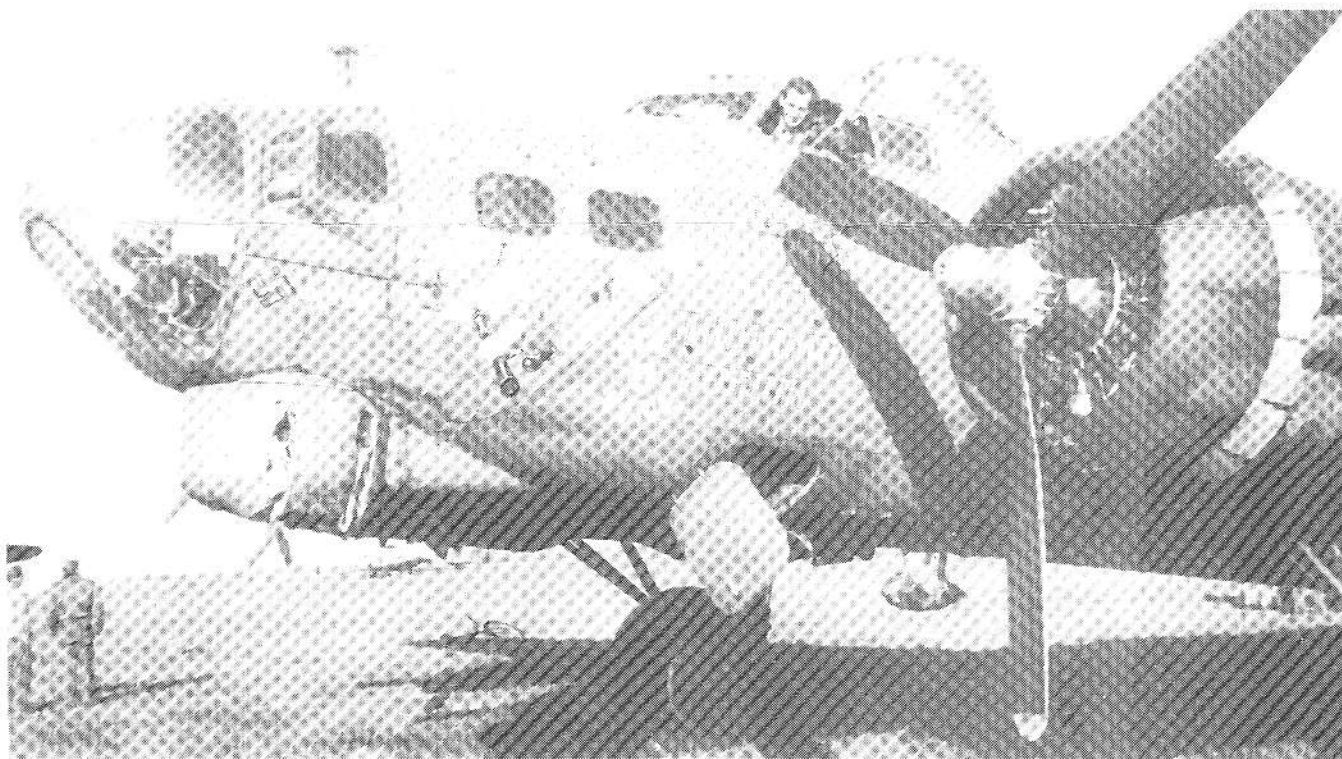
After European hostilities ceased "Nine O Nine" was ordered back to the States in June, 1945. Aboard were 10 crew members and 10 passengers, who were to fly the ship to Bradley Field, Windsor Locks, Conn.

Bringing the old bird home were: Pilot, Capt. Robert M. Hoffman; Co-pilot, Lt. Leslie S. Thompson; Navigator, Lt. Harry A. Dooly; Bombardier, Lt. Edwin D. Pitts; Engineer, T/Sgt. Charles H. Baucom; Radio Operator, T/Sgt. Donald B. Carmichael; Ball Turret Gunner, S/Sgt. David E. Calvert; Tail Gunner, T/Sgt. Bruce J. Johnson; Flex Gunner, S/Sgt. Martin A. Carter; Flex Gunner, S/Sgt. John H. Nelson.

Passengers included M/Sgt. Rollin L. Davis, Maj. William E. Reid, Capt. Joseph M. McPhie, Lt. Col. Willis J. Taylor, Capt. Joseph A. Sulli, Lt. John D. Oliver, Capt. Burton Brazier, Capt. Laurence E. Baird, S/Sgt. Henry J. Fagan, and S/Sgt. John C. Scott.

After an overnight stop at Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, June 12, 1945, the crew flew next day to Bradley Field, Conn. "Nine O Nine" was left at Bradley, while the crew continued on to Camp Miles Standish, Boston.

While the rigors of war never could stop the historic "Nine O Nine," she succumbed at last to the scrapper's hammer, along with the thousands of other proud combat B-17s.



Maj. William E. Reid, 323rd Ops Officer, in the cockpit of "909" before the home flight

Shoo Shoo Baby Progress Report

BY MICHAEL D. LEISTER III
Project Director

Editor's Note: In the January Ragged Irregular we began a progress report on the reconstruction of Shoo Shoo Baby. That issue contained the work done on the Bombardier and Navigator's Compartment, the Cockpit, and the Cockpit Underfloor. In this April issue we continue the report of the project director. Of course, additional work has been completed since this report was written several months ago.

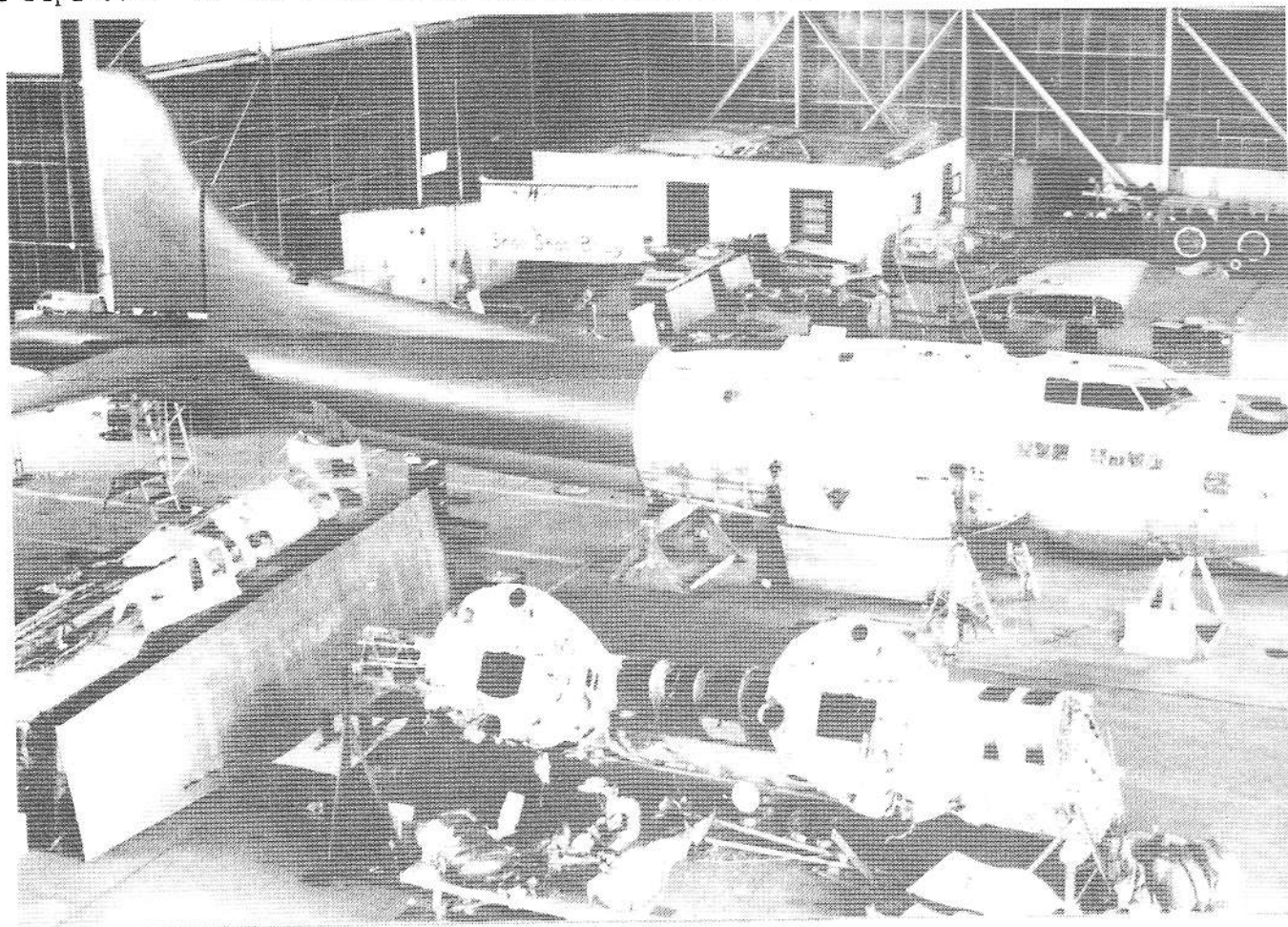
Bomb Bay

The Bomb Bay had been converted to a cargo hold and all the bomb racks had been removed. Soundproofing was glued between all the stringers. The door mechanism were missing and the doors were shackled shut.

The restoration was started in this area by stripping and priming the interior. Then a set of bomb racks, the bomb bay doors, and the bomb door mechanism was restored and installed. The doors now work electrically, manually, or with the emergency release cables. Some of the additional equipment like the oxygen regulator, oxygen walk around bottle rack, relief tube, and the catwalk ropes have been installed. Many interior sheet metal repairs have been completed.

Radio Compartment

As the radio compartment had been totally modified to hold several passenger seats, no radio equipment survived. The most serious corrosion on the aircraft was found on a main longeron in this compartment. The longeron and surrounding circumferential stiffeners required extensive restoration. Several pieces of skin in that area had to be replaced. As the floor level had been lowered to accommodate passenger seats, the



floor braces will have to be rebuilt and the original type flooring replaced. We have obtained approximately 40% of the required radio gear for restoration.

The four airline windows in the radio compartment were removed and replaced with two of the proper rounded corner windows that were hand made by one of our restoration team leaders. The radio gunner's hatch that was covered over has been opened up and corrosion treated. A replacement hatch frame has been located, repaired, and is awaiting plexiglas. The aft bulkhead of the radio room was too badly damaged to repair so a new bulkhead was fabricated and installed.

Aft Fuselage

The aft fuselage came to us with seat tracks for airline seats still installed. The remnants of a galley and latrine remained. The fuselage was covered inside with rock wool insulation, and all the control cables had been encased in trays to keep them out of sight. Ten airline type windows had been installed. The waist gunner's windows were removed and skinned over. The structure for the ball turret and the proper catwalks had been removed. The control cables and all of the wiring had been cut.

In the first several weeks of restoration, we removed 550 cubic feet of modified equipment from the aft fuselage alone. This section has been completely stripped down to the fuselage structure. All the airline windows have been removed and the circumferential stiffeners and stringers have been manufactured and installed. We have removed all the skin from the lower half of the fuselage, corrosion treated the airframe, and re-installed the original skin or replaced the corroded pieces with new skin. We replaced approximately six corroded stringers in the aft fuselage at the same time. A ball turret frame obtained from a salvaged aircraft has been test fitted and is being rivetted in place.

The framework for the main entry door had been modified for passenger service. We have rebuilt the original square top framework and the redesigned door is nearly complete.

The tail wheel assembly has been removed, x-rayed, completely rebuilt, and is ready for installation. The electrical components have not yet been worked on. The waist gunner's windows are supposed to be of the barred type. At this time we do not have the window frames or any of the re-enforcing structures. Some of the catwalk has been reproduced. The vertical stabilizer fin had been cut in half for shipment and has now been spliced in place. A ball turret has been restored using parts from three wrecked turrets. It is 90% complete. The two fuselage halves have been bolted together.

Tail Gunner's Position

The tail gunner's position was badly damaged in shipment from France. Extensive sheet metal work has restored the airframe. The dual oxygen system, the interphone box, the ammo boxes, the kneeling pads, and the plexiglas windows have been installed. The whole compartment has been primed and the outside has one coat of finish. We do not yet have a tail gunner's seat, the ring and post sighting mechanism, or the gun mount stanchion.

Horizontal and Vertical Stabilizers

The vertical stabilizer has been completed. The rudder has been stripped, corrosion treated, primed, and is awaiting fabric at a later date. The horizontal stabilizers have been stripped, corrosion treated, and primed. Some sheet metal work remains to be done on the tips of both stabilizers. The elevators have been stripped and have had some sheet metal work started on them. More work remains.

Wings

The left outboard wing had considerable interior corrosion on the truss gussets and was full of bird nests and gunk. This section has been fully stripped, corrosion treated, and primed. All the bad parts have been replaced, re-assembled, and painted with one coat of exterior finish. The cables and wiring for the outboard wing are ready for mating with the inner wing. The aileron is also restored and ready except for the fabric covering and the installation of the trim tab mechanism which has just been rebuilt. De-icer boots have not yet been obtained but a donation of them has been promised.

The right outboard wing restoration is much the same as the left--only about 70% as complete.

Now the worst part. Both inboard wings were cut in half lengthwise to facilitate shipping to the U.S. The wing attach points were drilled through to remove them from the aircraft before shipment. The engine nacelles were cut off the wing, thus damaging the nacelle's main structure longerons.

We have obtained a set of inboard wings from a crashed B-17 forest fire bomber. One of these wings, while needing several hundred hours of sheet metal work, is serviceable and has what may be serviceable fuel tanks as well. The right wing can only be used for parts. We hope to use the parts from both the original right wing and one replacement wing to make one serviceable wing. Unfortunately, this will involve several thousand hours of work. The flap system components and the main landing gear have been completely overhauled and are awaiting installation.

Engines

Four "zero time" since overhaul engines have been donated for the restoration of SSB. Many of the engine accessories such as carburetors and starters are still missing. We have two new superchargers and four old ones. The old ones may be cannibalized to make two rebuilt superchargers so that we will have four serviceable ones in all.

Miscellaneous

Our technicians have completely rebuilt the landing gear mechanisms from the original aircraft to re-install in the finished wings. We have begun to explore ways of remanufacturing the damaged wing attach fittings. The engine mounts have been non-destructive inspected, and two complete mounts were constructed out of the serviceable parts from the four mounts with which we started. No interior rewiring has been started. No flight control cables have been remanufactured with the exception of the outboard wings. Only 30% of the electrical equipment that we have on hand has been made operational. We are still missing approximately 50% of the interior furnishings of the aircraft.

In summary, we've come a long way; we've got a long way to go.



Shown above are some of the 441st Sub Depot crew posed before Peacemaker. Kneeling, 1 to r: Sgt. Edwin C. Zellars, Sgt. Ben D. Ritchie, Cpl. Robert E. Burnette, Cpl. Francis W. Gabruk, S/Sgt. Norman B. Wittman, T/Sgt. Albert W. Hudson, and Sgt. Leo B. Mazzie.

Standing: Cpl. Frank J. Carrieno, Sgt. Clarence Moon, S/Sgt. James W.H. Clapp, Pfc. Andrew S. Puszykowski, T/Sgt. Joseph J. Scandaliato, Sgt. John A. Welsh, T/Sgt. Walter L. Ray, S/Sgt. Whitmal W. Hill, Sgt. Ralph J. Schnee, S/Sgt. Faber H. Cripps, S/Sgt. John T. Carlstrom.

From The Editor's Desk...

Paul C. Burnett Box 909 Auburn, Al. 36830

The New Year apparently brought at least one common resolution to a number of Memorial Association members. Since January nine have joined the ever-growing list of 91sters who have decided that the Group needs their lasting support by becoming Life Members.

Receiving their gold Life Membership cards and the "Rigid Digit" statuette for their \$100 contributions are:

William H. Calvin, ex-323rd; Col. C.P. Chima (Ret), ex-322nd; Myron Cohen, ex-324th; Walter E. Wilkinson, ex-323rd; Col. David M. Williams (Ret), ex-401st; George A. Kemnitz, ex-322nd and 323rd; Col. Paul D. Jessop (Ret), ex-322nd; Lt. Col. Ted L. Shawienski (Ret), ex-323rd, and Lt. Col. William T. Smith (Ret), ex-323rd.

If we can match this in the other quarters of 1981 the Association will be racing ahead to bigger and better endeavors.

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 WW II from AF Station 121, Basingbourn, England, 1942-1945.

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One of the recently found "old 91sters" is also one of the most unique, Lillian M. Keil, R.N., a flight nurse who was assigned to Basingbourn in January '44 for ambulance line duty, removing wounded from planes after return from bombing V-2 sites in Germany. Nurse Keil was the inspiration for the motion picture "Flight Nurse," and was recently an honoree at the Air Force Association Ball, whose theme was "The Air Force Salutes Hollywood." While at Basingbourn she made flights in "Hitler's Hearse," "Miami Clipper," "Shamrock Special," and "Yankee Doodle." She holds the Air Medal and OLC.

Vince Hemmings, chairman & curator of the Tower Museum at Basingbourn, needs information for a model display he is planning at the museum. Specifically, he needs the color scheme, numbers or letters, and the name of the station A-20. Anyone with any helpful information on the old plane contact Vince at 48 Meadow Way, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, England.

A British writer who is a member of the American Aviation Historical Society is researching the war history of "Old Faithful," #42-37958, of the 401st sqdn.

He writes: "I am anxious to contact any former air crew member of the 401st Bomb Sqdn. who may have recollections or photographs of LL-G, "Old Faithful," and her crews and missions between December 1943 and June 1944. I am particularly interested in contacting those air crew who flew in her on her 35 missions, or anyone in the group who flew the 25 June 1944 mission to Toulouse, France, who can help me piece together events aboard "Old Faithful" on her final flight that day before she crashed at Wincanton, England. Any photographs loaned will be treated with the utmost care and returned promptly. Please contact G.R. Poulton, 42 Sunnyhill Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3QJ, England."

Australian air historian Steve Birdsall who found Shoo Shoo Baby forgotten on a French airfield and was responsible for the eventual return of the ship to the U.S. is doing a new book on heavy bombers and would like the help of 91sters on a

couple of questions. He asks:

What was the final mission total on Ack Ack Annie, LG-L 42-32095? I believe she flew 120 or 121 missions, maybe more. Seems to me she has been sort of over-looked, and I'd like to tell a little about her in a section of the book devoted to 100-mission bombers.

Another one is 42-107040. This airplane evidently had an incident-packed career with the 91st. As DF-D with the 324th she was involved in a mid-air collision which bent the vertical tail almost double - don't have the date of this, but the pilot was John Lindahl. And, either before or after that incident, during the Cologne mission of October 15, she lost a couple of engines and four of the crew in the back bailed out. Pilot Capt. Tufty got her back to England.

After one of these happenings she was transferred to the 323rd, where she became OR-K, and was named Shirley Jean for sure, although she may have had that name while with the 324th. I'd be interested in any information which will put these events in sequence and add detail to them.

If you can help, write to Steve Birdsall, 31 Parkland Road, Mona Vale 2103, Sydney, Australia.

Russell A. Strong, 2041 Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, Mich. 49007, the 306th Bombardment Group Assn. historian, is seeking information that some 91ster may be able to help him with. He is trying to track down details on an event on 4 May 1943, when two members of the 367th sqdn. of the 306th who were on detached service with the 91st, were killed at Snettisham, Norfolk County. The only details he has at present is a note in the diary of the 367th sqdn.

The Memorial Day Wreath presented annually at the American Cemetery at Madingley, will be laid this year by a former 91st crew chief, Otto Meikus, who is a permanent resident of Cambridge.

There will be an air display at the Planes of Fame Museum at the Chino Airport, San Bernadino County, CA, May 9-10.

Featured will be a B-17G Bomber tour, a flying Zero fighter, P-38, P-39, P-40, P-47, P-51D, Wildcat, Corsair, Hellcat,

Me-262A German jet fighter, B-25, Me-109, Spits, and others. Gates open at 9 a.m. Flying displays begin at 1 p.m. Adults \$6, kids, \$3.

We have just learned that ex-401ster Kenneth Fiigen suffered a stroke in Feb., 1980, and has been hospitalized since. He has made some improvement and enjoys hearing about (and from) his old buddies.

George Jacobs, a navigator in the 324th sqdn., who has been one of the U. S. Government's top experts on international radio broadcasting since 1949, has retired to enter private practice as a broadcasting consultant. George played a major role in developing the system of the Voice of America. In 1977 Jacobs received the Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Achievement. He is the co-author of "The Shortwave Propagation Handbook" and numerous technical and scientific papers.

The 91st Strategic Missile Wing (SAC) at Minot AFB, N.D., the grandchild of the original 91st B.G., has established a Heritage Center Display of 91st material. The background is a copy of the wall in the 324th briefing room, with a collage of 91st insignia, loaned by the Air Force Museum. They have reproduced many of the Memorial Association's 91st pictures, and have a complete flight suit with leather jacket with the 91st logo on it from the AF Museum.

James F. Dougal, in 323rd sqdn. operations, has retired after more than 31 years of service with the Chicopee, Mass. police department.

The new 1981 Directory of Members will be distributed to all persons who have paid their 1981 dues. A delay at the printers has delayed distribution, but everyone should receive the new book shortly.

Without the help of all 91st members The Ragged Irregular cannot do the job it should do. If you have any information about members, anecdotes, stories, or reminiscences, send them along to the editor. Don't worry if you're not a skilled writer - what we want are the facts.