



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

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Southwestern Rally Round Scores

The first Southwestern Rally Round, held at Phoenix, AZ., November 6-8 was a smash hit, and already the half-hundred 91sters on hand are talking about an even bigger and better get-together next year. Sponsor Chuck Hadd and his crew of enthusiastic helpers put on an event to be remembered.

The program included guided tours to the Sonoran Desert Museum in Tucson, the Apache Trail, the Phoenix area, and showings of The Memphis Belle, Schweinfurt Raid, and Fight for the Sky on Friday. On Saturday, November 7, the 39th anniversary of the 91st's first combat mission, the group went to Falcon Field to view the Champlin Air Museum and the Confederate Air Force B-17G, followed by lunch and cold beer at Bob and Irene Hanson's in Mesa. Bob was radio operator on the Memphis Belle.

At the group banquet Saturday evening the speaker was Capt. John S. McCain, USN (Ret), who was six years a POW in Viet Nam. McCain, the holder of 2 Silver Stars, 2 Legion of Merits, 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 3 Bronze Stars, and 3 Purple Hearts, is the son-in-law of 91ster Jim Hensley.

Awards given at the banquet included the mug for members travelling the farthest to attend, Bob and Juanita Detterline, Hammond, IN.; door prize winner (bottle of Chivas Regal) Wayne "Tex" Frye; door prize winner (authentic Indian pottery donated by John and Dolores Mikesell), Del and Ielene Kaech; 91st questionnaire winners, number of aircraft lost, Tex Frye; number of sorties Dick Pressey; drawing for Indian pottery won by Ray Marshall, Joe Totusek, Ray Walker, Bob Sponsel, Gaylord Henryson, and Curt Pyrah.

Attending the Rally Round were: Bob & Irene Hanson, Del & Ielene Kaech, Jim Patton, Curt & Dick Pyrah, Robert & Juanita Detterline, Joe & Ellen Totusek, Bob & Maxine Sponsel, H.S. 'Ray' Walker, Rocco & Frances Maiorca, Dick & Travis Pressey, Mac & Vera McCarter, Gaylord Henryson, Walter J. Davis, Wayne 'Tex' Frye, John 'Pinky' & Jennie Maye Bell.

Jack & Jan Gaffney, Virgil Mott, Ken & Hazel Birch, Freeman & Becky Beasley, Willis & Doris McQuain, Tom Gunn, Henrietta Goldstein, Martha Frisch, James & Pauline Marshall, Jim & Smitty Hensley, John & Cindy McCain, Chuck & Leah Hadd, John & Dolores Mikesell.



322nd Squadron: Kneeling, 1 to r, Willis McQuain, Ray Walker, Chuck Hadd, Joe Totusek. Standing, Gaylord Henryson, Bob Sponsel, Jim Hensley.



323rd Squadron: L to r, Claude A. McCarter, Wayne "Tex" Frye, Del Kaech, John "Pinky" Bell.



324th Squadron: L to r, Bob Hanson, Tom Gunn, Curt Pyrah, Bob Detterline, Jim Patton.



401st Squadron: Kneeling, 1 to r, Rocco Maiorca, Dick Pressey, Walt Davis. Standing, Virgil Mott, Tom Gunn, Jack Gaffney, Ray Marshall.

Baslieuse Reunion - 37 Years Later

By Andy Anderson

Editor's Note: In the April, 1973 issue of The Ragged Irregular we carried a story by E.R. "Bob" Kelley about the experiences of his crew, flying in the 322nd plane "My Baby," who were shot down over France on a mission to Ludwigshaven September 5, 1944. They were hidden by the French underground and finally made their way back to Allied units and freedom. This story, by Andy Anderson, who was flying co-pilot that day, updates the event by 37 years -- a return to the spot of their crash and a memorable reunion with the French who helped them outwit the Germans.

As Bob Kelley related in his story of the last flight of "My Baby," I was assigned, as an experienced combat pilot, to fly co-pilot with Bob and his crew on the mission to Ludwigshaven, September 5, 1944. It was their first mission and my fifteenth. Just before the I.P. we lost an engine to flak and had to turn back with our load of incendiary bombs still aboard. We lost two more engines to flak and fighters, and bailed out over Alsace-Lorraine (now Meurthe et Moselle).

I landed in a small meadow in the midst of a woods not far from the tiny village of Baslieuse. I was met in the meadow by a peasant woman, Jeanne Jacob. She led me, on a dead run to lose the German patrol chasing us, to a cave where they were hiding two escaped Russian soldiers. Jeanne and her husband, Roland, brought in Bob Kelley, the pilot, Anton Karoli, the navigator, and George Lancaster, the bombardier, in the next few hours. The Jacobs and a local farmer, Jean Ney, fed and hid us for several days at great risk to themselves and their families, with the Germans constantly searching for us in and near the village. The Jacobs and the Neys shared what little food they had as well as sharing their clothing with us so that we could have some possibility of escaping, and they, who had been living under the German heel for six years, gave us hope and strength, so that when a stray jeep blundered into the village we shouted with joy, hugged our village friends, climbed in and roared away to freedom with Patton's invading army ---we thought. Not until we were several miles down the country road did we learn, too late to turn back, that the four soldiers in the jeep had "liberated" the craft at Cherbourg, and driven all the way across France looking for Germans to fight. Miraculously they had driven through the very fluid lines more than a hundred miles from us, then driven through the retreating German armies, which were all around us, without ever seeing them. With them we slipped back again through the lines to a forward Allied body collection point and gas/ammo dump where our friends

with the jeep obtained fuel, then turned back to seek the war, while we four airmen, hurt, tired, hungry, and vermin infested, wrangled transport back to partially liberated Paris, and from there to England and Bassingbourn.

That was thirty-seven years ago. During the latter part of those years, at various times, my parents, my sister, my brother, and my son, in traveling across Europe, had all sought out the Jacobs in Baslieuse, but I had never been back. My conscience bothered me, so this spring I contacted the French Consul-General in Los Angeles, Monsieur Jean Claud Moreau, and asked for his help in arranging a ceremony to honor the Jacobs and the Neys when we arrived in France in April. He was enthusiastic and gracious in his help. He arranged with the 'Préfet' of the department of Meurthe et Moselle and with the mayors of the larger town of Pierrepont and of the village of Baslieuse to arrange a ceremony to honor the Jacobs and the Neys. I called the 'Préfet' from a steamer on the Rhine when we arrived there in April to confirm that we would indeed arrive on April 22. He told us that all was in order, so we arrived in Luxembourg the evening of April 21, and on the 22, after thirty-seven years, I returned to Baslieuse, this time accompanied by my wife, son, and daughter-in-law.

The quiet villages, the green woods and fields, and the warm, generous, loving people of northeastern France had not changed. From Luxembourg we drove south through the city of Longwy, the town of Longuyon, and the village of Pierrepont, to the hamlet of Baslieuse, so small it is not on the map--so small that before we knew we were there we were out the other side, but we stopped, turned around and drove back into the village.

Most of the male population, together with the Jacob and Ney families, were gathered in front of the two-room city hall. As I stepped out of the car Jeanne hugged me, and Roland's face bristled against both my cheeks. Jean Ney bussed me and shook my hand. The mayor, wearing his tri-color sash of office, ushered us into the city hall, where champagne and crystal goblets were set on a long table. We drank champagne, made toasts and gave speeches. I presented our friends with an illuminated scroll from the city of Los Angeles, signed by mayor Tom Bradley, citing their heroism and sacrifices, with a plaque from the Board of Education in Los Angeles, for which I work, and with some personal gifts. Then Senator Martin, a lion of a man with a mane of white hair, spoke. The Deputy from Meurthe et Moselle spoke, the representative from l'office départemental des anciens combattants (office of veterans affairs) spoke. The local army commander, the village curé, and other local dignitaries joined in so that two hours flew by in a moment. The curator of a nearby museum, an ex French air force pilot, Bernard Wesolowski, was present and interpreted for us, fortunately, because the words flowed like the wine, swiftly and sweetly, and would have inundated us without the help of monsieur Wesolowski. He became a good friend, too, by the end of the afternoon.

As usual with our French friends, they gave much more to us than we brought to them. The farmer, Jean Ney, had taken a small piece from the cylinder wall of our burned out plane and set it on a wooden plaque, on which he had carved the fleur de lis of France, the stars of the United States, and an inscription which said, "We shall be friends eternally. May God guard us from more war." The people of the locality had had a lovely Renaissance style plate crafted for us, and another for my son. The local 'resistance' organization and the state gave me two magnificent bronze medals, and we were presented with the history of the community, written for us.

From the city hall we proceeded to the village inn, where the whole village joined us at a lunch/dinner which lasted another four hours. Through ten courses and accompanying wines, and through innumerable toasts, we ate and drank and talked and hugged our way through the afternoon. When we were so satiated we thought we couldn't move, we all tramped out across the fields to visit the meadow where I had landed, then to the cave where we had hidden, and then back to the Jacob and Ney homes in the village where we had hidden and been fed, to drink home-brewed fruit liquors. What a magnificent day for all of us.

As we left, Jean Ney slipped a bottle of home-brewed clear cheery kirshe into my coat pocket. It is so strong that today, six months later, the level has gone down only two inches.

We all shed tears as we parted. It will not be another thirty-seven years before we return, we hope.

From Baslieuse we visited the war memorial at Bastogne, then flew to London and

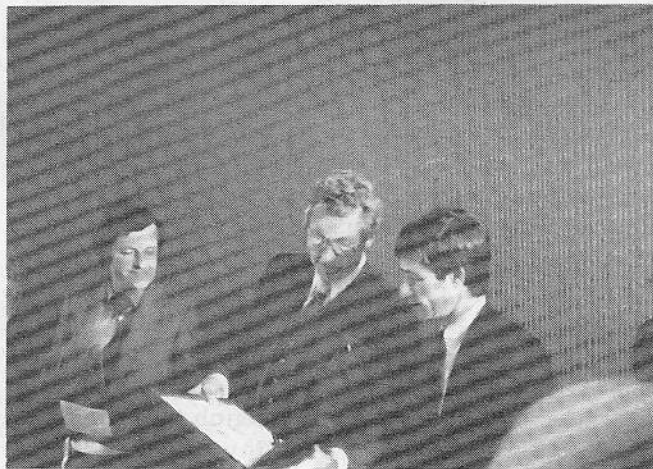
took the train to Cambridge and Royston, as I had done so many times, so long ago. We sat on the banks of the river Cam and watched the students punting on the river. In Royston we rented a car and drove to Bassingbourn. It was raining, just as I remembered it. We walked over the runways, which are still in excellent shape, looked at the revetments where we parked "Madame Shoo Shoo" in which I flew most of my missions with Tom Gordon and our crew (any of you guys out there?), and walked to the B.O.Q. where we lived, and which has changed as little as the runways, except that families live there now. It was too cold to stay long, but I visited a few moments with the ghosts that I remembered---with Suther, who led the mission to Kiel on September 3, 1944, where we lost an engine and came all the way home on three, with a P-51 riding guard on our wing much of the way home; with Hammer, who led the August 28 mission to Essen, where my notes say "flak thick enough to walk on 5,000 below"--we bombed at 29,000 feet; with the memory of the August 16 mission to Leipzig where we lost five ships from the high group; with the memory of Supcheck's "goodbye" when he lost two engines on the mission to Munich on July 31, and headed for Switzerland; with the memory of the ache when my bunkmate, Keck, didn't come back from the July mission to Leipzig; with the memory of the three consecutive missions to Merseberg and Munich on July 28, 29, and 31.

There were other memories, some good, some too painful to recall.

As we left the base we saw a small but lovely memorial in a flowered corner in front of the base entrance. There was a B-17 propellor set in marble, and beside it another marble cube on which was inscribed, "To honor all men of the 91st Bombardment Group (Heavy), AAF Station 121, Bassingbourn Depot, American Occupied, 14 October 1942-23 June 1945, NEVER FORGOTTEN, FOREVER HONORED."



Andy and Jeanne in the field where she found him after the 1944 crash of My Baby.



The Mayor of Baslieuse, Andy with scroll he presented to the Jacobs, & interpreter.



The entrance to the cave in which Andy was hidden.



The Mayor of Baslieuse, with the Jacobs and the Neys families, who hid Andy from the Germans. Andy and wife, Virginia, are in the back center.

Last Mission - From Fort Gunner To French Maquis

By Al Winant

Editor's Note: This story about a 91st waist gunner was written by Al Winant, who flew with the 452nd B.G. out of Deopham Green. He became interested in this story about Herb Campbell, 324th sqdn., through Herb's nephew, Bob Thompson, and began his research trying to track down any surviving members of the crew. Al is an associate member of the 91st.

Many of us who took off in the early morning mist from our English airfields returned safely to fly out on the next morning's mission. For some the "White Ball" went up forever; there were no returns and no more missions. There were some crew members who did not return to their bases, but started new survival missions on the ground in occupied territory.

This is one such story: the story of Staff Sergeant Herbert Campbell from the 324th Bomb Squadron, 91st Bomb Group, who started a new survival mission by hiding out with the French Underground, and gave up his life while fighting in action with the Maquis.

Sgt. Campbell was a waist gunner on Lt. Jim Carter's crew. He had flown 15 missions. On April 25, 1944 the crew was shot down over Bourges, France. The following are some excerpts from letters written to Herb's parents from French associates of Herb. The other facts and photos have been supplied by Bob Thompson, Herb's nephew.

To the Campbells from Michelino Glover, mid-'40s, exact date unknown... "I belonged to the underground movement. We learnt that in a raid over Bourges American fliers had been shot down, and not knowing how to contact our people from the underground were lost in the country. We started looking for them. A few days after, our group located Don Dowler and your son (Herbert). Only the two of them had succeeded in jumping from their ship in blaze and reached the ground safely. They buried their parachutes and most of their uniforms, and started to run away from the place because the Germans were hurrying... They hid in the daytime and walked at night. Luckily for them they found a peasant who gave them food and some clothes, but he could not keep them because the Germans were searching through the whole area, in houses and everywhere... Finally, not far from Montlucon they reached a farm in which the farmer could keep them a while. This man, a member of our group, contacted us immediately... Our search was over. I was thrilled to meet Herbert and Don, because they were the first Americans I met. I can say that they were awfully glad to meet somebody who could understand them and speak to them... I moved them to another farm, well hidden in the countryside, where the Germans had no opportunity to find them... I can say that all the people there treated them very nicely and did all they could to help them. That farmer was a friend of Jean Delize, who was a very good friend of mine, belonging to our group... I gave Herb and Don clothes and all the things they needed. That was part of my job. They stayed a week at that farm. I spent every day with them, coming from the city where I was living. It was I who sent you (Mr. and Mrs. Campbell) a message through the Red Cross from Montlucon. I tried to make their secluded life not too dull in being with them all the time. This is how I learnt to appreciate your son very much.

After a week in the farm, we moved Herb and Don to Jean Delize's home, which was later on burnt to the ground by the Germans. But a few days after, we decided to send them on their way through Spain as the news was beginning to spread in the city that American fliers were hiding in the countryside. Then suddenly, we were told that all the passages to Spain were closed because of the advance of the allies. Herb and Don were told that their only chance was to join a fighting group in the Puy-du-Dome. They accepted. The day they left Jean Delize's home I almost missed them. I was lucky enough to meet the car which was taking them away on the road. We stopped and said goodbye. We all promised to see each other after the war. I never saw them again. I heard about them behaving very bravely, and one (I don't know which one) being slightly wounded in some fighting against the Germans. You can be proud of your son being awarded the Croix de Guerre. This is the highest French military decoration. Very few

Americans have it." --Michelino Glover.

Another letter sent to Herb's mother, this time from Major George Weinbrenner, in March 1945, uncovered additional information..."I first met your son Herbert on June 8, 1944, at a place called Mont Mouchet, in the Department of Haut Loire, France. He was one of a group of 17 Allied airmen hiding out with the Maquis, the famous French guerilla army. On June 10 we were attacked by a large force of German infantry. Our situation was critical. The French were forced to disband. It became necessary for us to split up in small groups, as the food situation was acute, and the Germans were everywhere looking for the Maquis. Herb and a Canadian Sgt. Garnet Columbus decided to try to reach the Spanish frontier. Lt. Cater and another officer started off for Switzerland. I took four boys and started north, with the idea of eventually working our way to Normandy. However, it soon became evident it was too dangerous to travel. The Germans were arresting (and shooting) all young men who looked as if they belonged to the Maquis.

As a result, my group was forced to join up with another French Maquis unit hiding in the mountains. We were attacked many times, but the good Lord was kind to us. Early in August I met an officer from another Maquis outfit located in a different section of Haut Loire. This officer went by the name of "Capitaine Orval," a false name. (The French Maquis adopted false names in order to protect their families.) Capitaine Orval spoke no English, but fortunately I speak French. He told me that Herbert and Sgt. Columbus had joined his company in June. His company was attacked by the Germans, and practically wiped out. According to this officer, Herbert was killed in action, and Sgt. Columbus captured. Capitaine Orval told me that Herbert was buried with three French boys in a cemetery in the tiny village of Bosalbert, in the department of Puy de Dome, France. This little place is not shown on most maps, but it is located about 15 kilometers southwest of the town of Issoire, which is located about 30 kilometers south of the large city of Clermont-Ferrand, in the center of France. I visited the cemetery at Bosalbert. A Frenchwoman pointed out a grave she said was Herbert's. Unfortunately I could only spend a few minutes there, as the Germans were hot on our trail. When on September 5th our little group finally reached safety, I immediately reported these facts to the Intelligence officers."...Major George Weinbrenner.

Now, 37 years later, the early morning mist still covers the English countryside, but the planes are gone, and the airfields turned back into wheat fields and farms.

For those of us who returned home safely, we look back on exciting and challenging times. For those heroes, like Herbert Campbell, who made the supreme sacrifice and did not return, in Monsieur Glover's words..."We can never be thankful enough to all the American boys who have given their life to my country."

Author's note: If there is anyone who has additional information, or knows the whereabouts of Herb's crew members, please let me know. AL WINANT, 8 GIRDLER ROAD, MARBLEHEAD, MA. 01945



Sgt. Herbert Campbell

Herb's crew consisted of Lt. Jim Carter, pilot; Lt. John Tidrick, co-pilot; F/O Joe Covington, navigator; F/O Barney Swinburn, bombardier; Sgt. Edward Flowers, Sgt. Rege Carney, Sgt. Cy M. Bagal, Sgt. Clement Dawler, Sgt. Al V. Lagowik, and Campbell.

From The Editor's Desk...

Paul C. Burnett Box 909 Auburn, Al. 36830

The German Television Network is preparing an hour-and-a-half long film of the Battle of Hamburg in the summer of 1943. They would like to contact 91sters who flew the missions on July 25 and 26, to add a personal approach to the official Air Force records and photographs. If you made these missions please contact the producer, Liesel Friedrich, German Television, 251 West 57th St., Suite 427, New York, N.Y. 10019, or call her at 212-307-0242.

After 38 years 91ster Bill Cornwell had a reunion in September with his RAF counterpart at Bassingbourn, Don Pescot. Bill and his wife Thelma, of Dayton, Ohio, spent two weeks with Don and his wife Babs in Buriton, Hampshire, their first meeting since both worked together in operations and intelligence with the 91st.

Working together the two became close friends, and when Don Pescot married his fiancée Babs in his home town of Haslemere in 1943, Bill served as his best man. A few months afterwards Pescot was transferred to the 3rd Air Division.

"After the war we wrote to each other every Christmas, and for the last couple of years telephoned," explained Pescot, who is a newly enrolled member of the 91st Memorial Association. "A surprising thing was that we recognized each other straight away at the airport."

They are planning now for the Pescots to visit the Cornwells in Dayton, perhaps for the 1982 Reunion.



Bill Cornwell, Don Pescot, Babs Pescot, Thelma Cornwell.

Steve Birdsall, the Australian air historian who discovered the 91st's "Shoo Shoo Baby" in France and was largely responsible for getting it returned to the U.S. for restoration, is again asking our members for help with his upcoming book on the B-17. First, he is trying to find serial numbers on half a dozen 91st planes he wants to include in his book. The planes are: Anxious Angel, French Dressing, Peace or Bust, Qualified Quail, Tower of London, and White Cargo. Some of you former crew members or ground crew staff should be able to come up with these.

Also he is trying to complete the following: complete serial number for #563, of the 323rd sqdn., flying during April, 1944. Any name for 42-5714, OR-N, or 42-32116, OR-B? Any name for LL-Z, 42-107042, or LL-F 42-97467?

Steve has been of great help to the 91st Memorial Association since the beginning. If you can be of any help to him contact: Steve Birdsall, 31 Parkland Road, Mona Vale, New South Wales 2103, Australia.

Ted Wyzoski of Pittsburgh, who made the 1978 Prop Memorial Dedication Trip to Bassingbourn is trying to get in touch with another member who made the trip. Says Ted: "He sat near me at the Glen Miller concert and recorded the entire 2-hour concert held in the hangar. I'd like to know if it 'took' and if so I am very anxious to get a copy from him." Contact Ted Wyzoski, 192 Grove Avenue, Ptttsburgh, PA. 15229. Telephone 412-931-6078.

SHOO SHOO SHOO BABY RALLY ROUND

Whitmal W. Hill is sponsoring a Shoo Shoo Baby Rally Round for the weekend of 26 June at Dover AFB, Delaware. Plans are to meet at the Sheraton Inn, Dover, DE., on Friday night. On Saturday the group will visit Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby, meet the dedicated 512th Restoration personnel, and see other Dover AFB facilities, including a C-5A tour.

Full details of the Rally Round will be carried in the April R/I.

Whitmal, who has done an outstanding job raising funds for the Shoo Shoo Baby restoration through his T-shirt sales plans to continue the program through 1982. If you would like to help in the restoration send your T-shirt size (S-M-L-XL) and \$10

to W.W. Hill, 4002 Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA. 22312.

Donations have come from all over the world, but we need more from the 91st.

Probably no single individual has done more to help the restoration of Shoo Shoo Baby than Larry Sylvester, the navigator of the plane, on pilot Paul McDuffee's crew. Larry contributed \$1000 toward the restoration, and has taken part in a film about Shoo Shoo Baby prepared by KYW-TV3 of Philadelphia. The crew from KYW filmed the progress of the restoration in August, and the film was a hit in Philadelphia. The film could be shown nationally if enough interest is shown. Any 91sters who would like the film shown either locally or nationally should contact Station KYW-TV3, Philadelphia, PA. The film is titled "Shoo Shoo Baby: My Plane Will Fly Again."

The Boeing Company employees have been enthusiastic in their support of the restoration of Shoo Shoo Baby. Employees at the Seattle plant where the Baby was built during WW II have contributed \$600 through T-shirt sales and donations to get the old bird back in flying condition. Dick McLester, a Korean War veteran, Superintendent of the 727/737 Final Assembly at Boeing, and past president of the Boeing Management Association, has become an associate member of the 91st B.G. Memorial Association.

Chuck Hadd, who sponsored the recent Phoenix Rally Round, says he has found the easy way to put on a successful event: "Just find as enthusiastic and great group of helpers as I had. The real credit goes to Jim Hensley for his furnishing enough Budweiser to keep us alive for two days; to Del & Ielene Kaech & Maxine Sponsel for running the hospitality room; to Dan & Henrietta Goldstein for their telephoning help before the Rally Round; to Bob & Irene Hanson for setting up registration, and serving lunch and beer at their winter quarters in Mesa, and to John & Dolores Mikesell for their donation of beautiful pieces of Indian pottery as door prizes."

We have learned that former 91ster Libero A. Ingnoli, of Chicago, died from lung cancer November 9.

Any 91sters who plan a visit to Basingbourn during 1982 and who wish to visit the Control Tower Museum should contact Vince Hemmings of the East Anglian Aviation Society, curator of the museum. Because of security and storage problems the valuable items are on display only when the EAAS is on hand. As many guests have discovered, the EAAS are wonderful hosts and go far out of their way to be helpful. So if you plan a Basingbourn visit drop a note in advance to: Vincent A. Hemmings, 48 Meadow Way, Letchworth, Herts SG8 3HX, England.

Incidentally, a recent gift to the Tower Museum came from Nicholas Hardinge, of Fingringhoe, Essex. In the July, 1979 Ragged Irregular we told the story of how Hardinge, a 14-year-old schoolboy home for Christmas, witnessed the crash of the "Chief Sly" in Sussex following the mission to Romilly sur Seine December 20, 1942. He "liberated" a Very pistol from the navigator's compartment of the wrecked plane, and recently gave it to the museum to join the other 91st mementoes.

Lt. Col. Harold A. "Hap" Packard, of Redondo Beach, CA., died of a heart attack while in the V.A. Hospital at Long Beach November 5.

It was a long time between drinks but Danny S. Abeles, ex-401st radio operator, and Sec.-Treas. George Parks got together recently for the first time since the morning of April 19, 1944. Danny was shot down that morning and spent the rest of the war as a POW. He and his wife Ester were returning from a vacation from a vacation in Hawaii and spent two days with George and Marian in Vallejo, CA.

Bob Kelley and his former navigator, Alton Karoli, also had a reunion after not meeting since October, 1944. Alton, from New Port, R.I., and his wife were in California on business and spent two days with the Kelley's in Project City.

We have learned that D. Fred Pilcher, ex-323rd sqdn. and an active Memorial Association member, died of a heart attack at his home in Anamosa, IA., November 8. Fred is survived by his wife Margaret, six sons and seven grandchildren.