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401st SQDN

Vol. 22, No. 4

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

October, 1989

PAUL McDUFFEE, SHOO SHOO BABY'S FIRST PILOT, DIES



COL PAUL G McDUFFEE original pilot of the 401st Sq, 91st BG(H)'s Shoo Shoo Baby, died Aug 23, 1989. He was 72. His tireless and relentless contributions to the restoration of his war-time plane, despite severely disabling illness, approaches the legendary. A bit of that story follows.



COL PAUL G McDUFFEE (RET) HAD A distinguished career behind him before transferring to the US Air Corps in July 1943 and his assignment to the 91st BG(H) at Bassingbourn. Flying twin-engined Wellington bombers, he began bombing the Ruhr in July 1942 as an RCAF pilot.

With the RCAF he survived the Ruhr's heavy flak and saw the charred remains of another plane's crew. With the 91st, soon after his arrival, he survived the first Schweinfurt raid when, it is said, returning Forts "...simply followed the funeral pyres of B17s (60) until they reached the North Sea." Later, April 9, 1944, he was credited with a "one plane raid" on Marienburg, Germany.

But McDuffee's participation in particularly bloody and memorable details of WWII's Air War would never, however, have set him apart from others who served in the 91st.

A "stand down" day at Bassingbourn, March 5, 1944, did that.

That was when he was ordered to fly skeleton crews to Burtonwood Air Depot in Cheshire to pick up new planes for the group.

McDuffee selected the plane he'd fly back to Bassingbourn because of its proximity to Burtonwood's canteen. After taking-off the plane proved to be unique - it

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ROYSTON RETURN PROVES PAST NOT FORGOTTEN

MORE THAN 40 91st BGMAers attended the July 1989 Rededication Ceremonies of the new Royston Priory Gardens Memorial in Royston, England. The attendance by English friends swelled the audience and assured the 91st BGMA contingent that the war-time deeds of the 91st BG(H)'s dead and survivors have not been forgotten.



THE RESTORED ROYSTON Priory Gardens Memorial. (Photo - A Jacobs, English AM)

The focal point of the rededication was the restored memorial which now consists of an inscribed stone plinth set in a rose bed of the original fountain memorial dedicated years earlier by Gen Stanley T Wray, war-time 91st C/O. The cost of replacing the deteriorated fountain memorial was shared by the 91st BGMA and the North Hertfordshire Council.

Town and District Councillor Pat Rule, a trustee and 91st friend praised the joint funding.

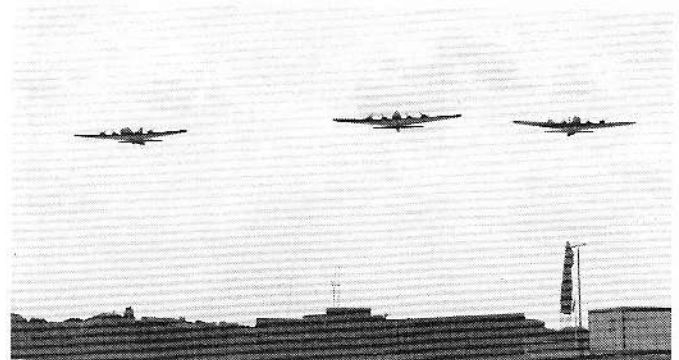
"It's very nice to think that such goodwill exists between us and the Americans. I think you should never

forget the past," she said.

RAF Chicksands Staff Chaplain, LtCol William W Lipscombe, while rededicating the memorial said, "Our thoughts not only go back to those (who died), but all those members of the group who sadly died since the war.

"The beauty and tranquility of this place will be a lasting

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A PORTION OF THE B17s PARTICIPATING IN THE FILMING OF "The Southern Belle," a movie based on William Wyler's 1943 "The Memphis Belle" documentary film, fly over Bassingbourn for the benefit of 91st BGMAers attending the Royston Priory Gardens Memorial in July, 1989. The salute was arranged by Air Vice Marshal Ron Dick, CB, RAF (Ret) who is directing flight formation filming for the new film. (Photo - J Askins)

PRES MONTALVO'S ROYSTON SPEECH

NOT FOR SALE! AMONG war memorabilia displays by English collectors at Duxford Air Museum Pres Montalvo found this painting of Shady Lady's nose art. Having flown her, he sought to buy it. Owner Mr Donald Burns of Bishop Stratford, generously promised to loan it for 91st BGMA affairs. (Photo - W W Hill)



COL LOUIS A (TONY) MONTALVO (RET), 91st BGMA President, was requested to address those attending the July 15, 1989 Memorial Rededication Service of the Royston Priory Gardens, Royston, England. The comprehensive notes, upon which he based his speech, are reprinted below:

THOUGHTS AND REMEMBRANCES

IN KEEPING WITH THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO are being honored here today and the theme of this Memorial Dedication, I would like to say a few words regarding how I ... and other members of the 91st BGMA ... remember Bassingbourn, the good people of the local communities and the generosity of the English Nation in general.

I served in the USAF for over 30 years. Sometime during the Vietnam War I remember seeing an advertisement in one of the major US newspapers which read like this:

WANTED - YOUNG, SKINNY, WIRY FELLOWS NOT UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE. MUST HAVE SOME FLYING EXPERIENCE AND BE WILLING TO RISK DEATH DAILY. ORPHANS PREFERRED. APPLY AT YOUR NEAREST COMBAT STATION.

I understood that the advertisement had been placed as a somewhat morbid jest. However, it struck me that there had been many young, skinny, wiry fellows who responded ... in all seriousness ... to a similar advertisement some 47 years ago. You and I knew many of them.

While at Bassingbourn the 91st BG(H) flew some 340

combat missions ... the first on Nov 7, 1942 and the last on Apr 25, 1945. During this time it dispatched over 10,000 B17 aircraft to enemy targets and lost 220 to enemy action. Some 2,400 of the young, skinny, wiry fellows who volunteered to fly these missions lost their lives, were wounded or held prisoners in enemy camps. It is these skinny, wiry young men we honor here today.

It is appropriate that the theme for today's dedication be "Thoughts and Remembrances."

How many of you Ground Crew members here remember sweating out the return of those skinny, wiry young fellows at the end of each mission? Do you still remember the heaviness of heart when your aircraft ... and the crew you sent out that morning ... did not return? Of course you do!

How many of you Air Crew members here remember the queasiness of stomach before taking off; knowing that some would not make it back ... or more ... when you saw your friends get shot out of the sky? All of you do!

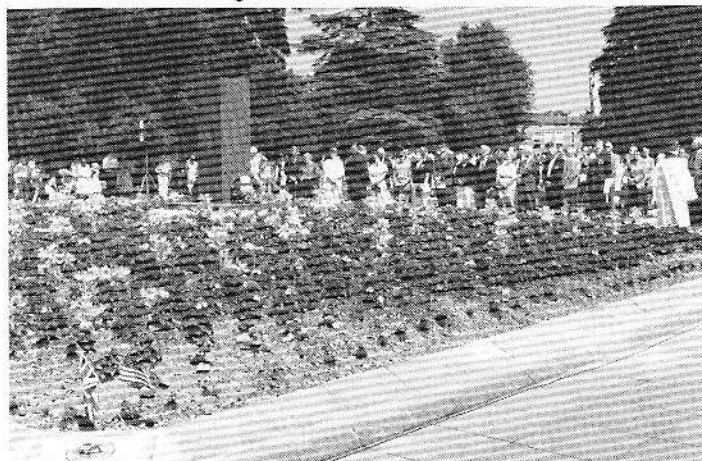
And, I'm sure many of you good English folk remember the evening that nice, wiry, skinny young fellow you had invited to dinner did not show because he had run into trouble over German skies. Remember, you never saw him again.

"Thoughts and Remembrances" ... The drink of whiskey after each mission ... Red Cross girls with donuts and coffee ... Fish and Chips, Mild and Bitter, an evening with a pretty lass at your side ... Cheery "Hellos" from the local gentry ... Fresh eggs frying over a pot belly stove - courtesy of a friendly farmer ... The occasional "Wing-Ding" which made you happy to be alive and proud to be a 91ster ... The sadness of having to pack a missing friend's belongings for return home ... The service item you didn't pack because you wanted something to remember him by.

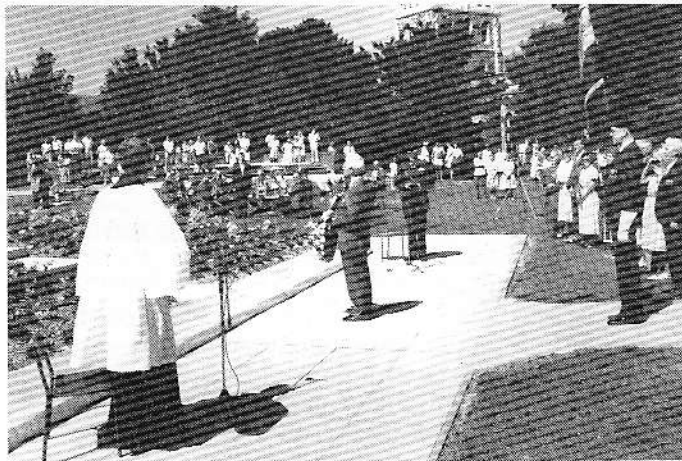
"Thoughts and Remembrances" ... So many of them! And now, some 46 years later, here we are ... all with our memories of the past ... honoring those we remember ... those skinny fellows who did not come home. Those young men who paid the full price ... whose signed blank checks Fate saw fit to cash for the maximum amount.

For me it is difficult to find words which totally honor these young men. Only the Grace of God spared those of

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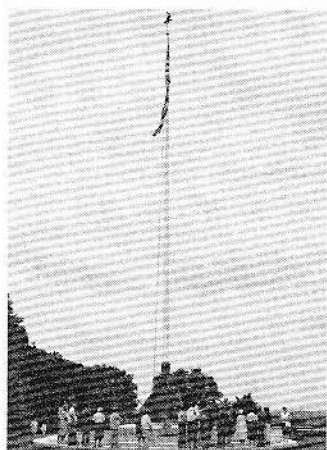


A VIEW OF THE GARDEN AND LARGE PORTION OF THE 91st BGMAers and English friends attending the Royston Priory Gardens Memorial ceremonies on July 15, 1989 in Royston, England. (Photo - J Askins)



ROYSTON TOWN MAYOR, COUNCILLOR C F LANDER, PREPARES to place a wreath upon the granite monument in behalf of the Council and people of Royston to honor 91st BG(H) personnel who served at Bassingbourn. (Photo - J Askins)

ROYSTON RETURN PROVES



A VIEW OF THE WREATH laying ceremonies before the flagpole at the US Cemetery at Maddingly, part of the July, 1989 activities attended by approximately 40 91st BGMAers. (Photo - J Askins)

(Continued from page 1)

tribute to those of us who can rejoice in your rich heritage cementing the friendships made from both our countries."

Col "Tony" Montalvo, 91st BGMA President, addressed the assembly. (His speech, "Thoughts and Remembrance," appears on page 2.) David C Crow, long a leader in activities of the "Friends of the 91st," gave the reading - Ephesians Chapter 6 Verses 10-17.

Wreathes were laid by Pres Montalvo on behalf of the 91st BGMA, by Royston Town Mayor, Cllr Charles Lander on behalf of the council and the people of Royston and by Royston Branch of the Royal British Legion Chairman, Mr Red Rolph.

The hushed solemnity pervading the rededication ceremonies, Col Montalvo writes, in addition to the memories invoked, nurtured many "lumps in throats and more than a few tears." The solemn hush pervading the ceremonies continued until "The Blessing" close.

A formation of five B17s, involved in the filming of "The Southern Belle" at Duxford Airfield, flew by then. Despite the roar of their 20 engines, the noise of their passage was really but a muted memory of the thunder when the 91st BG(H) rose en force over 40 years ago.

The Rededication Ceremonies were followed by a Rededication Luncheon at the Royston Town Hall. Councillor C F Lander, Royston Mayor, gave a welcoming speech followed by speeches by North Herts District Councillor Geoffrey P Woods and 91st BGMA Pres

ROYSTON TOWN MAYOR Councillor C F Lander proudly displays a well kept memento of the past. The cup was a 1943-45 gift of members of the Officers Mess, 91st BG(H). (Photo - J Askins)



Montalvo. Montalvo presented Mayor Lander with a check for \$1500.00 from 91st BGMA for its contribution to the restoration.

During a conducted tour of the Tower Museum at Basingbourn a new corbel, a wall supported "Sign-in-Desk," was unveiled by Vince Hemmings who has contributed immensely to 91st BG(H) historical preservation in England. Complete with calendar, registration book and pen stand, the desk was built with funds donated by Mrs. Georgette DeGeorge, widow of recently deceased 91st BGMAer Bob DeGeorge.

Mrs DeGeorge, present at the unveiling, made her donation to honor her husband who was a Radar Navigator with the 323rd Sq. Among her husband's generous contributions to the 91st BGMA over the years was the computer preparation of the 1978 Membership Directory of the group.

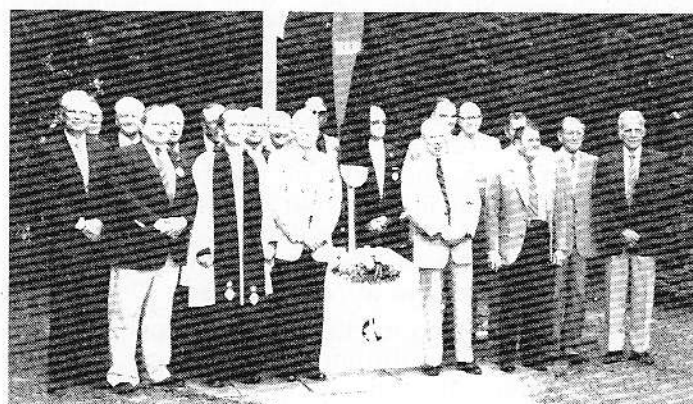
Pres Montalvo, during the desk unveiling ceremonies, noted that DeGeorge was one of the many to survive the war. He and all those like him, he said, "... also deserve to be honored. Not for what they suffered but for what they contributed to our world."

A letter from Pres Montalvo since his return indicates 91st BGMA activities are receiving increasingly sophisticated coverage. WWHill, Alexandria, VA, the 91st BGMA's Memorial Committee Chairman and former Sec, covered the Royston activities with a camera and a tape

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CEREMONIES AT THE BASSINGBOURN PROP MEMORIAL SITE included a special service led by Base Chaplain Graham Hatfield and wreath laying. LTC John R Parsons, Jr (Ret), 401st Hq 91, extreme left, reads the "Lessons for the Day." (Photo - J Askins)



THOSE ATTENDING THE PROP MEMORIAL SERVICES INCLUDED (l-r): John Askins, Willis Schilly, Paul Chryst, Sam Cipolla, Carlyle Wells, Ed Gallagher, Rev Graham Hatfield, Bill Auth, Ben Musich, "Tony" Montalvo, Asay Johnson, Conrad Lohoefer, Bill Leisure, Russ Mathisen, (next two unidentified), Ed Zeller, Otto Meikus and (unidentified).

MUNICH MISSION

BY CHARLES T BELL

(Concluded from the July, 1989 R/I)

The Germans had highly effective 88 mm-gun batteries concentrated on the coast at places like Ostend and Dunkirque. As usual, they sent up their lethal calling cards to introduce themselves. However, the gun locations were carefully charted and courses were set to avoid as many as possible. Pinpoint navigation was essential and was provided.

Once over enemy territory, friendly fighters took up strategic positions above and to each side of the bomber stream. As the penetration deepened, fresh fighters replaced those whose fuel supplies were getting low. This escort system was very effective, thanks to the introduction of the long range P-51 Mustang fighter. However, equally welcome P-47 Thunderbolts and P-38 Lightnings also played an important role.

The trip to Munich proved to be relatively uneventful for our group. In due time, the targets came into sight. The wing now had to rearrange itself so that each group could proceed over its assigned target in regimented sequence. This we did. It was at this point when the adrenalin really began to flow. Like a football team on the goal line, we desperately wanted to score but we could expect the stiffest opposition the opponent could muster.

The beginning of the bomb run was known as the "Initial Point" (IP). At the IP, our lead bombardier quickly got the target in his bomb sight. The lead pilot had already set up the plane's controls on autopilot. At or shortly after reaching the IP, the pilot transferred control of the plane to the bombardier. The Norden Bombsight was integrated with the autopilot. Thus, as the bombardier twisted his controls to keep his sights on target, the plane responded by making necessary flight adjustments. Soon, the bombardier opened the bomb bay doors and set his bomb release on automatic. Having preset all factors (such as wind, altitude, and airspeed) into the bombsight, all that remained was for the bombardier to keep his crosshairs squarely on target. The bombsight did the rest, automatically releasing the bombs at the instant necessary to hit the target some 28,000 feet below. As the bomb run progressed, each pilot inched his plane as close as possible to his leader, while maintaining his position in the formation. This assured a tight pattern of bomb strikes.

The first bomb to leave the bomb bay of the lead plane began immediately to exhude thick, colored smoke. This was the signal for 17 other bombardiers in the group to salvo their bombs. Their cries of "bombs away" would come almost in unison with that of their leader. The pattern of the total effort would place more than 40 percent of the bombs within 1,000 feet of the aiming point and more than 70 percent within 2,000 feet.

The 1st Combat Wing made the deepest penetration, bombing targets to the north and east of Munich. The 91st Group was among the first formations to release its bombs.

Having laid our eggs, we began a 180 degree turn to the right and reassembled in wing formation. As we did so, we witnessed a sight which none will ever forget. Unlike usual conditions, the sky was crystal clear in every

direction. Far to the west, we could see the dim outline of the French coast, about 300 miles distant. Stretching east from the horizon, all the way to Munich was an unbroken stream of American heavy bombers. It was as though an aerial assembly line had been constructed to transport the tools of destruction to Germany. On each side of the battle line, our fighter planes danced and zoomed, some in mortal combat with the enemy. It was the most awesome and formidable sight we had ever seen.

To add to the show, we could clearly see scores of bombs exploding like firecrackers on the targets, splashing fire and smoke in all directions. This was an experience not usually accorded to pilots. Usually, the target area was screened from our view or we were too busy to sightsee. On this occasion, the angle of the turn and the juxtaposition of the flight paths made the view possible. The absence of enemy opposition invited us to gawk for a brief moment, like spectators at a fireworks display. Then our attention returned to what was going on around us.

We tried to imagine what it must have looked like from the ground, but could not. We wondered how the enemy could view this exhibition of sheer power and continue to resist. Personally, I got a lump in my throat and chills up my back as though someone was running up the colors while a band played the National Anthem. It was an aerial spectacle such as I had never seen before and would never see again. The scene was rivaled only by my first sight of the bridge of ships which was built across the channel for the Normandy invasion.

As we made our way home, the drama continued to unfold. Ahead and to our right, vicious battles were taking place up and down the line. The German fighters, finally aroused, were concentrating on the bombers which still carried pay loads. They swarmed and struck like angry bees. Though the friendly fighters and aerial gunners fought valiantly to keep them off, some still got through. When they did, the always chilling sight of bombers going down in flames inevitably followed. Each time we saw this, we instinctively huddled closer together in our formation, fully expecting the next thrust to be directed our way. Each time, fate decreed otherwise.

Meanwhile, like performances in other rings in some diabolical circus, the two opposing fighter cover forces dove, and swirled, and spat their venom at each other. The overall superiority of the American forces assured that we witnessed a number of German fighters fall from the sky. But in individual combat, an occasional Yank fell to an obviously more experienced foe. Following one duel, both pilots bailed out at the same time.

Our group was lucky. We clobbered our target and returned home, about 1530 hours, without losing a single man or plane. It was not always so. For the record, our group historian wrote this laconic report:

"Crews describe bombing results as good. No enemy aircraft attacked our formation. Flak was not directed at us."

Many of those who participated in that mission to Munich had already been part of strike forces which gathered more headlines. Some had experienced the hell of Schweinfurt. Most had fought their way to Berlin and back. But all who caught that brief view of America's might from high over Munich knew that on that day they

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McDUFFEE DIES

Continued from page 1

was "a symphony of balance and design." Throughout the usual tests to which he subjected her no retrimming was ever necessary. And she turned, effortlessly like an auto, without rudder assistance. She virtually flew herself. Delighted, McDuffee requested Col Claude E Putnam to assign the perfect plane to him. His request granted, he told his Ground Crew Chief, TSGT Hank Cordes, not allow anyone near the plane without "our permission."

Cordes said, "OK," then received McDuffee's approval to name the plane Shoo Shoo Baby, a hit song by the Andrews Sisters and one of Cordes' wife's favorites.

McDuffee completed his 30 missions on the May 22, 1944 Kiel raid. His perfect plane, Shoo Shoo Baby, had seen him and his crew through the last 16. The night after his last mission he returned to her and sat in the cockpit with his hands on the controls - remembering and crediting her with saving his life 16 times. When he finally left he left with the knowledge he'd never fly another like her. He dealt with his emotional attachment to her by departing on his bicycle without looking back.

Over twenty years later, McDuffee, stricken with diabetes that tormented him with nearly unbearable leg pains, received a phone call from Steve Birdsall in Sydney, Australia. Birdsall announced he'd found Shoo Shoo Baby.

A book, "Song of a Valiant Lady," written by Nathan M Adams, which was a Feature Condensation in the March 1986 Reader's Digest, faithfully records the results of Birdsall's long distance phone call.

McDuffee sparked the initial interest in having his old plane returned to the States from Creil, France where she sat wasting away. After her return to the States in 1972 he involved himself through correspondence and telephoning in virtually every phase of her restoration.

His ceaseless efforts, despite his confinement to a wheel chair, prodded and stimulated the restoration of Shoo Shoo Baby until her recent enshrinement at the Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, OH on Oct 15, 1988 - almost decades after he learned she had miraculously survived the ravages of war and the callousness of peace.

His efforts, which continued unabated while his illness progressed and rendered him "legally blind," are what made McDuffee one of the 91st BG(H)'s unforgettables.

Col Paul G McDuffee (Ret), born Dec 14, 1916, died on Aug 23, 1989 in his sleep at his Tampa, FL home.

The last few days of his life attest to his indomitable spirit and intense interest in 91st BGMA affairs and its members.

- Saturday, Aug 19th, Al Ciambrello, Newburg, NY, received a call from McDuffee. Ciambrello, an old friend, apologized for not having been in contact. After Ciambrello cited the accumulating serious ailments plaguing his wife and him McDuffee cheered him up, Ciambrello says.

- Monday, Aug 21st, two days before his death, McDuffee called Historian "Bud" Evers for a "final" chat. He had just had two more heart attacks. Evers, while calling the R/I editor the same day on R/I business mentioned McDuffee's earlier call. During his call McDuffee had enthusiastically announced that "The Memphis Belle" crew had been feted in England recently and he had felt

that story would make great R/I copy. The editor said he would like to have the story. Evers said he'd buzz McDuffee back.

- Tuesday, Aug 22, the day before McDuffee died, the editor called him in the evening to "chat" a bit, request permission to edit a Marienburg Mission article McDuffee had submitted earlier this year and ask if he had reached a source for the Memphis Belle story.

McDuffee answered the phone. His strong, authoritative voice, booming back, belied serious illness. He authorized the "editing request" but cautioned that his facts be respected. Regarding The Memphis Belle Story, he said he'd contacted Joseph M Giambrone, Glenside, PA former "Belle" Crew Chief, after receiving Ever's second call, and told him to send the story to the R/I.

- Wednesday, Aug 23, McDuffee died.

- Thursday, Aug 31, eight days after McDuffee's death, a thick packet arrived in the editor's mail. It was from the former Ground Crew Chief of The Memphis Belle, Giambrone. It contains extensive documentation of the cordiality extended to former "Belle" crew members and their wives while in England as guests of Enigma Films Limited of England. The firm is producing the new movie on The Memphis Belle story.

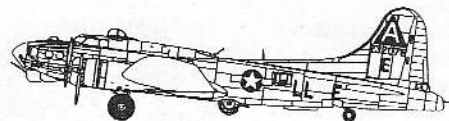
Giambrone's mailing proved that just hours before his death McDuffee had transmitted his enthusiasm for 91st BGMA affairs - and sparked prompt response.

A native of Grand Rapids, MI, McDuffee had lived in the Tampa Bay, FL area for 44 years. He is survived by his wife, Mary P; two sons, Paul G II and William N, one stepson; five stepdaughters; two brothers, the Rev John N and David E and three grandchildren.

He is also survived by the perfect plane he discovered while a 2Lt in the 401st Sq, 91 BG(H) during a "stand down" assignment on Mar 5, 1944. Long ago McDuffee credited that plane, Shoo Shoo Baby, with "saving" his life 16 times. It is not unlikely his intense involvement in her restoration also prolonged his life.

George Merva, who wrote the text for the recently released book, "SHOO SHOO BABY, A LUCKY LADY OF THE SKY," deftly capsuled the fulfillment of McDuffee's most memorable mission. Referring to the reversible preservation processes used on Shoo Shoo Baby prior to her enshrinement, he wrote:

"In the meantime she waits, her proud nose lifted, almost sensing the runway and, just beyond, the sky."



MUNICH

(Continued from page 4)

were privileged to witness the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany.

There can be little doubt that General Eisenhower knew it too. For as he struggled with his final decision to launch the Normandy Invasion, his diary entry of June 3, 1944 reveals concerns about many things, but none about air superiority. The mighty 8th had done its job. It had forced the German Air Force to fight and gained ascendancy over it, just as General Ike foresaw it would. The victory made possible all that followed.

"EAGLE'S WRATH" CREW SEEKS LONE CASUALTY

LTC CHARLES R GIAUQUE (RET) AND MOST OF HIS crew were lucky. All but one completed 25 missions during the early days of 91st BG(H) operations while flying the 323rd Sq's "The Eagle's Wrath." Shortly after completing their tours their plane, with a new crew, was lost on the Aug 8, 1943 Schweinfurt Raid. It was believed that their unlucky comrade was with the new crew.

William C "Tex" Butler, Grand Prairie, TX, the crew's Bombardier, recently wrote the R/I for help in locating or determining the fate of their fallen Waist Gunner. Butler recalls his name as "WARZNEK" but cautions that his spelling is purely phonetic. "It just sounds like that," Butler says.

A check into records provided by 91st Historian Evers revealed "The Eagle's Wrath" fell on the Aug 17, 1943 Schweinfurt raid. The "91st Report" describing her fall, states briefly, "E/A attacked about 02:45 at 23,000 ft. A/C left formation 20 miles East of Frankfurt on Main." However, no name of anyone on "The Eagle's Wrath" that day even vaguely resembles "WARZNEK."

A further check into the "91st Roll of Honor," a listing of 91sters MIA, Ditched or Crashed, also compiled by Evers, records a "WALTER C WAWRZYNEK." (Poor type reproduction makes even that spelling suspect.) Information pertaining to "WAWRZYNEK" lists his serial number as 16043311, the date of his fall as May 1, 1943 and his A/C as 4124547. (The Eagle's Wrath's serial number was 4124524.) The good news about "WAWRZYNEK" is he is recorded as being "returned to US."

(Since he often works from nearly illegible records Historian Evers makes no claim that there are no errors in his data thus far. In fact, corrections are welcomed and solicited from all.)

Former pilot Giauque writes a newsletter for those associated with "The Eagle's Wrath." Thus far eight of his original flight crew, two of the ground crew and "other friends close" to the plane have been located.

In addition to possibly locating "WAWRZYNEK," the former 323rders seek to locate "KEVA SUMERGRAD" who was known to be in Dallas, TX in the early '50s but may now be nearer his original "Bronx, NY" address.

Butler's comment, "There are so many stories to tell," suggests "The Eagle's Wrath" survivors plan something. Members are requested to check their local telephone directories. Anyone able to supply any information regarding "WAWRZYNEK" or "SUMERGRAD" should write: LTC Charles R Giauque, 600 Donald Cross Dr, Pinehurst, NC 28374 or William C Butler, 2338 Robinhood Dr, Grand Prairie, TX 75050-2029.

VISUALLY HANDICAPPED OFFERED R/I READINGS

W W HILL, 91st BGMA MEMORIAL CHAIRMAN WHO records books for the Northern Virginia Recording Service for the Visually Handicapped, will record the R/I for any member who cannot read because of eye problems. Just send a blank cassette with your name and return address to: W W Hill, 4002 Braddock Rd, Alexandria, VA 22312.

ROYSTON RETURN PROVES

(Continued from page 3)

recorder. Former Pres Paul Chryst, Pottstown, PA, covered the activities with a camera and a video camcorder. Picture credits in this issue thank other 91stBGMAers for photos sent to the R/I. Acquisition of sophisticated coverage, unfortunately, requires personal correspondence.

THE FOLLOWING LIST OF BGMAERS ATTENDING the Rededication Ceremonies of the Royston Priory Garden Memorial and other ceremonies was assembled by Memorial Chairman W W Hill and former Pres Paul Chryst. Since some members travelled independently and did not officially register their names may not appear. The R/I regrets any such omissions.

Recorded present were: John and Jackie Askins, William Auth, Betty Bedwell, Michael J Boocock, Paul and Nancy Chryst, Sam and Mary Cipolla, Elizabeth Chamberlain, David Crow, Georgette De George, Karen Dixon, Doris Forster, Ed and Jeanne Gallagher, W W Hill, Vincent Hemmings, Andrew J Jacobs, Asay and Gloria Johnson, Charles Lander, William and Dorothy Leasure, Conrad and Stephanie Lohoefer, Russel Matteson, Otto and Jean Meikous, "Tony" Montalvo, Ben and Clarice Musich, Earl C Pate, John R Parsons, Jr, Pat Rule, Willis and Ann Schilly, Ellen Totsuek and friends, Carlyle Wells, Peter Worthy and Guy Zellers.

NOTES FROM THE PAST

FEW ATTENDING THE REDEDICATION Ceremonies in Royston July 1989 shared similar personal memories during the nostalgia provoking services. 91st BGMA Historian Hilary "Bud" Evers took time to capsule a bit of the war-time July 1943 and 1944 occurrences recorded in 91st BG(H) history. His notes follow:

- JULY 1943 - The large increase in bomber groups required the introduction of Group identification. The Triangle "A" was then given the 91st BG(H). During this month 10 missions were flown - six missions during the last week which was called, "Blitz Week." Hamburg was the big target on the 25th and 26th. The devastation resulting from the combined RAF and 8th AF raids was so great that thereafter German fighters showed no mercy to American flyers. Of the 200 aircraft dispatched six were lost. Twenty three of the crew members were KIA and 37 eventually returned. At the end of this July the 91st had completed 61 missions and received commendations from the 8th AF and CBW. Col Clem Wursback was its C/O.

- July 1944 - Seventeen missions were flown. Of the 591 aircraft dispatched 14 were lost. Thirty five of the crew members were KIA; 93 eventually returned. On July 20th the group flew its 200th mission. The loss of eight planes on one mission was the highest since Aug 17, 1943 when 10 were downed. Heavy bombing by 1,500 8th AF bombers assisted the American break-through at St Lo. MSGT Mike Katona was killed when he walked into a spinning propeller in a 323rd Sq dispersal area. Col Henry Terry, 91st C/O, was married in Norwich. At the end of this July the group had completed 205 of its 340 total missions. Remember?

POTPOURRI

U.S.A.

■ **BETTY BEDWELL, WIDOW OF JAMES O BEDWELL,** LM, Quinlan, TX, Georgette DeGeorge, widow of Bob DeGeorge (See "Royston" story) and Nancy Chryst, wife of former 91st BGMA Pres Paul Chryst, Pottstown, PA, have made recent generous, personal contributions to the 91st BGMA Memorial Fund. Mrs DeGeorge, in the past, joined with Esther Wray, widow of Gen Stanley T Wray, in sponsoring the full payment of an Oak Memory Bench at the Basingbourn Prop Memorial. An engraved plate has since been attached to the bench by David Crow of England.

■ **"UN 'B17', LLAMADO JACTANSIOSAMENTE 'Fightin' Pappy' por los aviadores americanos, espera su ultimo 'despeque,' hacia los talleres del desposito",** Der Adler, Numero 12/Berlin, 18 De Junio DE 1944.

Anyone who can translate the above caption which appeared in a 1944 Spanish edition of the German magazine "Der Adler" (The Eagle) can contribute to 91st BG(H) history.

Former 91st BGMA Sec George W Parks, Vallejo, CA, forewarded two xeroxed pages from "Der Adler" to the R/I recently after receiving the copies from Charles G Gelinsky, Portland, OR.

Bold, felt point pen notes, apparently written by Gelinsky to accompany the copies, say, "I picked up this propoganda magazine at Templehof Airdrome and found a bit about a 91st BG(H) bomber. The magazine was at Templehof because the Germans couldn't get it to Spain - no trains - no bridges - no air force!"

The "bit" about a 91st plane is a crash photo of "Fightin' Pappy." A hurried reference to data provided by Historian Paul M Andrews reveals "Fightin' Pappy" was a camouflaged B17F, serial number 25407 and "OR" code letters. The plane was assigned to the 91st's 323rd Sq on Sept 11, 1943 from the 306th BG(H). On Sept 27, 1943 it was transferred to the 379th BG(H).

The Xeroxed reproduction of "Fightin' Pappy's" crash scene clearly shows the name "Melanie" painted above one of the windows in its nose and, what appears to be, 13 or 14 mission bombs beneath its' nose art.

Since "Fightin' Pappy" carried the 91st BG(H) insignia during its career further information pertaining to it will be welcomed by the R/I.

THOUGHTS AND REMEMBRANCES

(Continued from page 2)

us who are here today. So, we must all try to find our own perspective with which to honor their sacrifice ... the gift which in parting they bequeathed us. If Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness was their goal, they achieved it ... But not for themselves ... for us. And so we are left ... with the words so appropriately inscribed at the base of the flagpole at Maddingly. They read:

"To you from falling hands we throw the torch to be yours ... to hold it high."

We of the 91st BGMA are organized to do just that ... to honor those wiry, skinny young fellows who never came back ... to hold their torch high ... We thank you for allowing us to join you in honoring them. It is with a spirit of humbleness that we pledge ourselves to continue to

honor all our fallen comrades until such time as we answer the Last Roll Call.

"Thoughts and Remembrances" ... If God will it, we shall fly together again.

Thank you.

NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS

ROBERT A FOSTER, Tampa FL

LOUIS GRAMESTRY, Stratford, CT



THE BIG STORY BEHIND THE ABOVE PHOTO WILL BE FEATURED in the Jan 1990 R/I. (L-R Kneeling): E Adkins, C Nastal, J Verinis, F Donofrio and B Winchell. (L-R, Rear): J Giambrone, B Hanson, B Morgan and C Leighton.

Folded Wings

■ **BOROWSKI, ROMAN,** 401st, 478 County C Palaski, WI 54162; May 1, 1989. Reported by his wife, Myrtle.

■ **CLEMENS, PORTER D,** 324th, 4301 Winter Av, Klamath Falls, OR 97603; Reported by his son, Terry, who requested to remain on the R/I mailing list. Clemens, a Tail Gunner, was flying his 25th mission when his crew was shot down over occupied France. Taken prisoner, he spent 17 months in Stalag 17-B, Krems, Austria. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; two sons, Terry and Tim, their wives and children and numerous others including his mother, sister and brothers. Friends wishing to do so may make memorial contributions to the Klamath Hospice, 310 N Ninth St, Klamath Falls, 97601.

■ **EMERSON, FRANK, LTC, USAF (Ret),** 324th, 729 Wanaao, HI 96734; July 1989. Reported by the US Postal Service.

■ **HEDGLIN, WAYNE D,** 324th, 1016 Nancy St, Fort Morgan, CO 80701. Hedglin was a POW at Stalag Luft 1, following the downing of his crew on Jan 11, 1944. Reported by William G Potter, 324th, Kearney, NB who was downed on the same mission.

■ **JONES, DONALD W,** 11 Park Place, Delmar, NY 12054; June 1983. Reported by his wife, Merle.

■ **WHITE, CLIFF C,** 323rd, Box 311, Hettinger, ND 58639; Dec 15, 1988. Reported by his wife, Grace.

GREAT "OOPS!" NEWS!

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS RECENTLY received by Innocent 91st BGMA Treas Charles V Welbes, Guilty R/I Editor Rudy Malkin and the Innocent American EX-POWs association:

Dear ALL:

I want to let you all in on a deep dark secret. Ole Kenneth H "Ken" Futch is alive, enjoying excellent health at age 72, is newly married, playing golf 2-3 times weekly and having a great time. The reason I choose to pass this information on to you is the July 1989 issue of "The Ragged Irregular" listed me in its "Folded Wings" obituary column.

Imagine the surprise experienced by several friends calling to offer their condolences to my wife when I just happened to answer the phone. Now if you guys who publish "The Ragged Irregular" know something about my demise then maybe you could provide me with more positive proof because insurance companies don't seem to want to pay off based on the information at hand.

"The Ragged Irregular" obituary stated the information was reported by the May 1989 EX-POW Bulletin. Maybe it is they who have the direct line to The Man above.

If you are unable to confirm the truth of my demise then we would greatly appreciate your printing a retraction for the benefit of my friends out there who would probably be interested.

Many Thanks,
s/ Kenneth H "Ken" Futch



Now, hear this excuse!

EDITOR'S NOTE: The R/I is more delighted than embarrassed by its latest big blooper. Happily it reports LTC Kenneth "Ken" Futch (Ret), 323rd, Nacogdoches, TX, who wrote the above letter, is not the only 91st BGMAer whose condition was erroneously listed in last July's R/I. Many more listings are suspect. A phoning called the blunder to the editor's attention. It was a rather early morning call. (10 AM!) The scrambled notes taken then suggest the call was from William G Potter, 324th,

Kearney, NB.

The call's good news was that four listings are believed incorrect! They are: Robert D Crain, Futch, James "Jim" Graham and "J C Page and Alice." It is possible there are more errors. The R/I hopes so.

An explanation is due. Stacy Wiitalia, Balto, MD, was a B24 Nose Gunner with the 506th Sq, 44th BG, 8th AF. Downed on his fifth mission on May 28, 1944 near Frankfort, he was taken prisoner. He is now a member of the American Ex-Prisoners of War and receives its excellent publication.

Stacy bowls in the same leagues as the R/I Editor and religiously supplies him with items referring to the 91st BG(H) when they appear in the EX-POW Bulletin. Sometime after April 1989 he gave the R/I separate lists of "New Members," "Life Members" and "Deceased Members" published in the EX-POW Bulletin.

The R/I Editor inadvertently filed all the categories in his "Folded Wings" folder.

Everyone is urged to check the July 1989 "Folded Wings" listings so that all errors can be corrected. A postcard from those erroneously listed will suffice. The Editor extends his sincere condolences for any mischief his blunder caused and begs forgiveness.

FRENCH FORT'S CRASH MARS "BELLE" FILMING

ONE OF THE FRENCH-OWNED B17s PARTICIPATING in the filming of "The Southern Belle" crashed and burned during take-off filming at Binbrook, Lincs, England recently.

All ten crewmen aboard scrambled to safety. One suffered a broken leg.

The plane was one of five B17s featured in the new Warner Bros movie about the 324th Sq's "The Memphis Belle." "The Belle" and then-Capt Robert K Morgan and his crew were the first to complete 25 missions early in WWII.

Witnesses said the plane "...got 30 feet off the ground then belly-flopped into a corn field before catching fire."

"The crew was very lucky," a member of the film team said, "but the aircraft is a write-off."

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

These newsletters are published quarterly. October, January, April and July are the scheduled publication months. The R/I's purpose is to keep alive the spirit of the 91st Bombardment Group (H) and to maintain the fellowship of all those who fought together in World War II from AF Station 121 in Bassingbourn, England from 1942 to 1945.

Material for publication should be sent to the Editor, Rudy Malkin, 1643 Thetford Rd., Balto., Md. 21204. "Time-Value" items must be received three weeks before the first day of the month of publication to permit necessary priority consideration for inclusion in that issue. Every effort will be made to utilize other submitted material in the scheduled or later R/I issues.

91st BG Memorial Assn.

210 Leatherwood Dr.
Mountain Home, AR 72653

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