

The Ragged Irregular



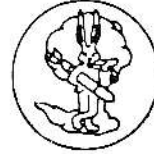
322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



SUPPORTING UNITS



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

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91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

January, 1990

FILM FIRM FETES MEMPHIS BELLE CREW

GENERAL H H ARNOLD, USAF Commander, gave then-Captain Robert K Morgan, 323rd Sqd, 91st BG(H), "permission to fly his plane as low as he pleased" during The Memphis Belle's triumphal tour of the US after she and her crew completed 25 missions in 1943.

The reasoning behind Gen Arnold's permissive order is partially explained in a forthcoming Warner Bros' film on The Memphis Belle. A publicist for the War Department is described in the film as "a person who is really trying to sell the B17s, make it a popular war item to sell War Bonds because at that time the B17s had a terrible success rate." (Morgan recalls 82 per cent plane and personnel losses during the initial, experimental operations in the ETO in which the 91st BG(H) participated.)

Then-Capt Morgan interpreted Gen Arnold's "permission" liberally when "The Belle" and its crew returned to the States.

Aug 11, 1943 he flew between Asheville, NC's City Hall and Courthouse. The space between the buildings is a



STANDING BEFORE THE FILM VERSION OF THE MEMPHIS ON LOCATION IN ENGLAND ARE THE surviving crew members and the actors portraying them in the film. L-R, kneeling, are: D B Sweeney, Reed Diamond, Matthew Modine, Sean Astin, Eric Stoltz, Neal Giuntoli, Courtney Gaines, Billy Zane, and Tate Donovan.

L-R, rear are: Chuck Leighton, Jim Verinis, Robert K Morgan, Harry Connick, John Lithgow, David Strathairn, Bob Hanson, Bill Winchell, Casimir Nastal, Eugene Adkins and Joseph Giambrone. (Photo - D Appleby.)

virtual crevice for "The Belle's" 103 foot wingspan. But he flipped her on her side, one wing up, the other down, and thundered through.

Among the discomfited was the Commander of the US Weather Station on the Courthouse's top floor. He tried to get Morgan punished for the stunt.

Later, high ranking military brass, stunned by Morgan's flamboyant flying before landing at Memphis, TN where

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\$100,000 SCHOLARSHIP FUND PROPOSED BY VP J M BACON

JAMES M BACON, 401ST RADIO OPERATOR, 2ND VP 91st BGMA, completed his wartime 35 mission tour successfully. (His wife, "Issy", proudly requests the DFC he received be mentioned.) It took Bacon's peacetime career in corporate sales, which included considerable time with a Division of The Columbia Broadcasting System, to provide him with the experience of getting "shot-down."

Sparking huge national sales promotions he, on occasions, found some of his imaginative proposals rejected by other high firm officials for one reason or another. Undeterred, he always returned with other acceptable proposals until successfully closing his peace-time sales career.

Members of the 91st BGMA will soon be receiving a "Special Edition" of the R/I in which he proposes a \$100,000 Trust Fund to provide "in perpetuity an annual scholarship of \$6,000" for chosen, eligible students at any accredited institution for higher learning.

Details of Bacon's imaginative proposal are fully explained in his forthcoming mailing.

Bacon's proposal is particularly unique because he, so sold on his idea, refused to let it be "shot-down" when association funding was determined to be too risky during the recent Denver, CO 91st BGMA think tank.

With the blessings and best wishes of the 91st BGMA officials he has personally paid for the promotion of his proposal so that the membership may express its reaction to his 91st BGMA Scholarship Fund plan.

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY TONY MONTALVO

A KIND OF REPORT

THE DENVER, CO OCT 1989 8th AFHS REUNION was also an Administrative Rally Round for the 91st BGMA. In addition to the president, VP James M Bacon, Sec Charles R Hackstock, Treas Charles V Welbes, Pictorial History Committee Chairman Earl C Pate, Jr, Reunion and Western Rally Round Committee Chairman Paul J Limm, Memorials Committee Chairman W W Hill and Funds Audit and Review Committee Chairman Marvin M Goldberg attended.

Since even an attempt to record a portion of the problems discussed and agreements arrived upon to resolve them is prohibited by the limited R/I column space, I'll only say I'm pleased with the results of this overdue 91st BGMA think tank. If all is accomplished that was agreed upon our Association, at the Seattle National Reunion, will be able to boast its tradition of continuing progress was preserved by its present officers. I'm certain all your officials will do their utmost to complete their varied projects to make the preceding prediction come true.

For better or worse "money" mattered in many of our decisions. The 91st BGMA project members can presently contribute to not requiring money is the Group Pictorial History being prepared by B/Gen Pate, ANG. He has thousands of pictures depicting 91sters engaged in events and activities of the past. Unfortunately, he has little information regarding "who, what, when, where, why and how." Without such documentation these photos have little value.

Therefore he requests members who have documented photos to send them to him as soon as possible. Pate describes "documented" photos as containing as much of the following information as possible:

- 1) Date, place and organization,
- 2) Name, rank, duty assignment and unit of personnel shown,
- 3) Information describing any special circumstances or activity shown on picture, and
- 4) Any other data the sender can supply regarding the photo. (Example: If it is known pictured individuals were KIA, MIA or POWs, please include that data.)

Please do not write upon the back of the photos. Write information on a piece of paper and attach this caption material to the back of the photo with scotch tape. The pressure of writing on the back of photos often leaves damaging impressions on the image side. Those sending photos will be credited in the caption for their donation. Photos will be returned to members requesting that.

Official head and shoulders photos of 91st Group, Squadron and Supporting Units C/Os are sought as well as photos of OTU bases where the 91st was stationed in the US and "enroute" photos any member may have of his sea or air transportation to or from England. Also xeroxed copies of Orders of the Day, Deployment Orders, etc are sought. Group operations produced volumes of paper work which now has historical value.

Pate plans to portray the 91st's pictorial history from its initial cadre to its return home in 1945. Separate sections

or chapters will be allotted each Squadron and Support Unit.

Send all Pictorial History material to B/Gen Earl C Pate, ANG, 104 Skyview Dr, Hendersonville, TN 37075. His personal preparations have literally placed this project on a front burner for us but he won't be able to conclude it "successfully" without "U"!

Money, unfortunately, dictated denial of Association funds to an ambitious 91st BGMA Scholarship Fund proposed by 2nd VP James M Bacon, MI. Bacon, whose post-war career was corporate merchandising, is so sold on his Scholarship Fund project that he has proceeded with it - at his own considerable expense! Details on Bacon's altruistic project appear elsewhere in this R/I. It is hoped the membership makes Bacon's project "fly."

Money also dictated a regretful decision not to commit 91st BGMA funds to publish the late, former Lt C Carlton Brechler's book manuscript on the first year of the 91st BG(H)'s operations. Many members will remember Brechler as our Group's war-time Public Relations Officer. Documents available indicate he served the 91st BGMA with former editor Paul C Burnett as a Public Relations official.

I am happy to report the manuscript of his book, "WRAY'S RAGGED IRREGULARS," is nevertheless now available to interested members without commitment of any Association funds. Details concerning this project will be included soon in the R/I. I must add that 91st BGMA LM Michael C Rheam, PA, a heavily decorated former PFF Navigator, brought this project to "fruit" after Historian Hiliary "Bud" Evers' research did the "spade-work." A suggestion by R/I editor Rudy Malkin resolved the "harvesting" problem of their prodigious efforts.

I can think of no better way of concluding our past year of good intentions than wishing everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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The above means Bacon is personally footing the bill for the publication of some 2,200 "Special Edition" R/I's and their mailing. That ain't hay!

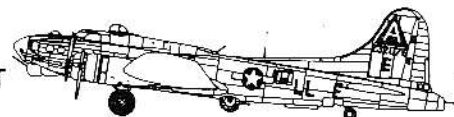
Thus far, even before the first mailing, he has received pledges totaling \$1,660.00

Oct 1988 then-Sec W W Hill personally mailed First Class postcards announcing Shoo Shoo Baby's departure from the Dover, DE AFB. An announcement of his generosity in the R/I elicited considerable membership response which helped him defray his printing and mailing costs.

Those so inclined may show similar appreciation for Bacon's imaginative but extremely expensive personal effort to provide a means of preserving the 91st's Proud Past in perpetuity. His address is: James M Bacon, 26725 W Warren Av, Dearborn Hts, MI 48127.

Membership response to the questionnaire in his "Special Edition" R/I will determine if the ever enthusiastic salesman in him is "shot-down" again - or not.

PRESERVE
OUR PROUD PAST



MEMPHIS BELLE CREW

(Continued from page 1)

the "Real Memphis Belle" awaited his arrival, was overheard muttering, "Something about a 'Court Martial' for that pilot."

A widely-heralded documentary film on "the Belle" and her crew by William Wyler was released during WWII. A new movie, a Warner Bros' presentation of an Enigma Production, portraying a fictionalized drama of "The Belle's" last mission before returning to the States, is scheduled for a late-summer release in 1990.

The producers of the new film have gone to great lengths to authentically recreate the historical tale told. Producer David Putnam (*The Killing Fields*, *The Mission* and *Chariots of Fire*) and fellow producer Catherine Wyler, daughter of William Wyler who filmed the original 1944 "Belle" documentary, invited the original "Belle" crew back to England to "brief" the young actors taking their parts in the movie.

Seven of The Memphis Belle's original crew happily accepted the July 1989 invitation. They were: Pilot Robert K Morgan, Co-Pilot James Vernis, Navigator Charles Leighton, Radio Operator Robert Hanson, Waist Gunner Casimir Nastal and Clarence Winchell and Gunner Eugene Adkins.

Also invited and attending were former Crew Chief Joe Giambrone and Frank Donofrio, founding president of The Memphis Belle Memorial Asso.

The film-makers paid for all their expenses - including those of their wives.

During a dinner with the young actors the old veterans were questioned regarding their re-actions under different circumstances and details pertaining to their duties.

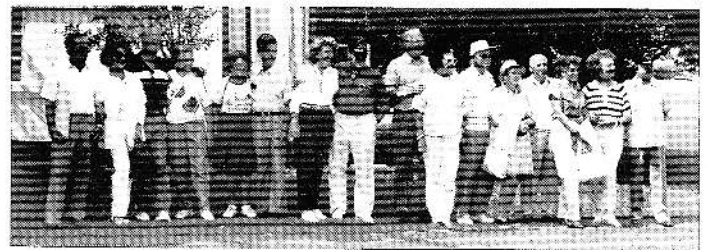
While at Binbrook, site of much of the filming, now-Col Morgan (Ret) flew a B17 for the first time in more than 40 years. After the flight he said, "It was like five Christmases all on the same day."

In solicited correspondence with the R/I he says he still pilots a plane - "But nothing like a B17. I don't remember it being so damn noisy."

Matthew Modine is the actor who plays Morgan's counterpart in the film. Mrs Morgan, after digging out old photos of her husband when young, says actor Modine even looks a bit like him. Morgan, in advising Modine how to portray a B17 pilot, advised him to "inflate his ego, be more cocky."

Of Morgan, Modine says, "He's fantastic. He's really a very bigger-than-life sort of character."

Frank G Donofrio, who initiated and led the drive to restore The Memphis Belle, participated in the filming of



ALL EXPENSES PAID! PICTURED BEFORE THE BASSINGBOURN Tower Museum are the guests of the film makers of the new Warner Bros movie, The Memphis Belle. Inadvertently missing is Frank Donofrio who sparked "Belle's" restoration. L-R are: Eugene & Irene Adkins, Casimir & Lois Nastal, Chuck & Jane Leighton, Robert & Elizabeth Morgan, Joseph Giambrone & Tilly Robins, (Unidentified) & C E Winchell, Robert & Irene Hansen and Jim and Marie Verinis.

several scenes in the film as an extra. One is a crowded bar scene in which his snow white hair may or may not identify him. In another he and Mrs James Vernis, wife of "The Belle's" original co-pilot, will appear in a large dance sequence in one of the hangars. (Donofrio, now 74, is presently trying to establish a local Memphis, TN chapter of the US Amateur Ballroom Dancers.)

Ground Crew Chief Joseph Giambrone who, in addition to keeping "The Belle" flying during its tour, compiled unauthorized combat time on her, says the royal treatment given "The Belle's" veterans by the film firms never wavered throughout the week they were there. Publicity Assistant Gilly Hodson greeted everyone upon their arrival in London with a waiting car, an envelope with English pounds and reservations at the Rembrandt Hotel.

Dinners, Press and TV interviews, conducted tours and thoughtfully arranged "free-time" insured memorable times for everyone. Sunday, Sept 30th, at the RAF Binbrook Base, was "Press Junket" day. British, American and International news representatives swarmed around them.

"I've never seen so many photographers at one time," Giambrone says. "The whole trip had a taste of Hollywood through and through."

Other former "Belle" crew members have been quoted in various daily papers as follows:

Eugene Adkins, who hadn't been back to England since 1943, said, "I'm glad to see its back in operation again!"

Clarence Winchell denied the "hero roll" everyone associated with the film assigned to their guests of honor.

"We had a moral obligation," he said. "Sure it was rough, but the thing I felt is that we were dedicated to the troop. We felt as close as we could be without being blood brothers, so my obligation was to defend their backs."

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EXUBERANT "BELLE" pilot Robert K Morgan thundered, one wing up, the other down, through this inadequate space between the Court House (left) and City Hall of his hometown, Asheville, NC, when he and his crew returned to the States after completing their tour in 1943.



An artist's painting of The Memphis Belle in action is on the right. A new painting has been begun by noted English artist Robert Taylor.



MEMORIAL GROUPS' PLANS CROWD 1990's CALENDAR

• A REUNION OF WWII USAF PERSONNEL IS BEING scheduled by the Association of Americans Interned in Sweden 1943-45 for June 1990. Thus far travel dates are flexible but related events are scheduled from June 6 to June 17, 1990.

"Invited are former Internees, Mustang pilots, Carpet-baggers, ATC personnel and anyone else involved in 1943-45 Scandinavian operations," Sune I Lundberg says.

Those interested in attending should contact Lundberg, 1194 Washoe Dr, San Jose, CA 95120. Phone: 408-269-3942.

The Association of Americans Interned in Sweden 1943-45, PO Box 4954, Santa Rosa, CA 95402, will also provide information if contacted.

• THE AIR FORCE ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY (AFEES) consists of American airmen who were downed behind enemy lines and either evaded capture or who later escaped and returned to Allied Control.

One of its purposes is to re-unite American airmen with "underground" Resistance Helpers in France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Italy and other countries.

By Dec 1944 4,000 US Evaders had returned to the UK and about the same number, it is estimated, were being sheltered by "underground" forces in German occupied countries. It is unknown how many of these 8,000 Evaders were airmen.

Former members of the "underground" are intensely interested in knowing if their sacrifice helped those they assisted get back to the UK safely. They would like to contact the airmen they helped and know if their efforts were successful.

"That's all," says Claude Murray, one of the directors of AFEES.

AFEES presently has a "drop in the bucket" list of 700 "found" Evaders. It requests anyone qualifying as an Evader to contact and join it so that more "underground" Helpers will experience the satisfaction of knowing their mission was accomplished.

An Evader himself for several months in Holland during the 1944-45 winter, Murray, in recent years found and contacted his 14 Helpers! He has since received a list of over 500 American airmen who were Evaders in Holland alone and who are now sought by their Dutch Helpers. Fewer than 100 of these Holland Evaders have been located by AFEES thus far.

The AFEES offers all 91st BGMAers who evaded or escaped with the assistance of "underground" Helpers a unique opportunity to show their appreciation for the brave, risky assistance provided them years ago.

According to Memorial Committee Chairman W W Hill 91st BGMA members Regis R Carney, 324th, PA, Clement D Dowler, 324th and Chauncey H Hicks, 401st, CA are surviving Evaders successfully assisted by Belgian Helpers.

Information supplied by AFEES, according to Hill, also indicates the following former 91sters were assisted by Belgian Helpers: C A Bennett, 323rd, D F Bridwell, 323rd; A W Calder, 322nd; W G Cass (Coss?), HQ; R D Hatten, 401st; J M Kinnane, HQ; E B Moser, 322nd; G C Nordman, 322nd; L Rogers, 322nd; J C Ross, 324th; C M Seiler,

322nd and D C Stairs, 401st, PA.

Only D C Stairs is a 91st BGMA member. Any information available on the others will be appreciated by AFEES, Hill and the R/I.

Claude Murray's address is: 16810 Boswell Blvd, Sun City, AZ 85351. Phone: 602-972-3991.

• THE 8TH AFHS HAS SCHEDULED A 10-DAY RETURN to England on the 45th Anniversary of VE Day. The May 1-10, 1990 event includes comprehensive tour arrangements. For details: 8TH AFHS, P O Box 727, Oldsmar, FL 34677.

• THE 45th ANNIVERSARY REUNION OF THE STALAG Luft III, Ex-POWs Association will be held from April 26-29, 1990 in Norfolk, VA. For information contact: Robert L Weinberg, 2229 Rock Creek Dr, Kerryville, TX 78028. Phone: 512-257-4643.

MEMPHIS BELLE CREW

(Continued from page 3)

Robert Hanson, asked his feelings regarding watching young actors portray a part of his crews' past, said, laughingly, "They're not quite as good looking as we were, but they are young and enthusiastic - exactly like we were."

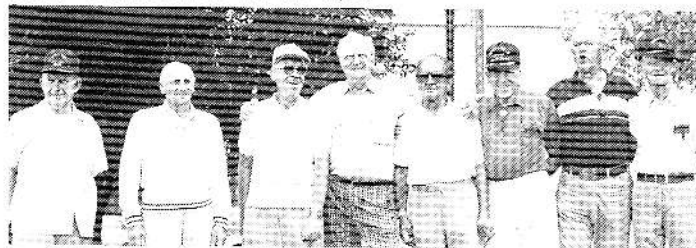
David Puttnam, the producer who earlier made the Oscar-winning film, *The Last Emperor*, says his "Memphis Belle" film is not just a story of heroism. "It's a parable of good and evil, of what makes men heroes."

As such, the characters portrayed are not intended to be duplicates of the original "Belle" crew members.

D B Sweeney, who portrays the navigator, was reluctant to meet "Chuck" Leighton, the "Belle's" original navigator. He didn't want people to think he "was basing the character on him." (Publicity releases pertaining to the film indicate the film's navigator is a "Rigid Digit Award" candidate.)

Morgan says he thinks the movie will be good. "It will bring back a lot of memories to 91sters and others," he says. An American columnist, Candace Burke-Block, covering "The Belle's" crew's involvement in the filming, adds credence to Morgan's speculation. While watching a B17 zoom across the English sky during the filming, she also watched Col Morgan's reaction to the sight.

She wrote: "Awesome in its fierce dignity and aggressive grace, the olive-green B17 the men are watching is almost identical to the fighter plane they flew during WWII: The Memphis Belle. Capt. Robert Morgan, who was The Memphis Belle's pilot, stands transfixed, a bitter-sweet smile on his lips."



A CLOSE-UP OF THE MEMPHIS BELLE'S ORIGINAL CREW TODAY. L-R are: Eugene Adkins, Gunner; Casimir Nastal, Waist Gunner; Charles Leighton, Navigator; Robert K Morgan, Pilot; James Verinis, Co-Pilot; Joseph Giambrone, Groundcrew Chief; Robert Hanson, Radio Operator and Clarence Winchell, Waist Gunner.

PHOTOS FAILED IN COVERAGE OF BASSINGBOURN CHANGES

BY W W HILL

THE OLD SAYING THAT ONE PICTURE IS WORTH A thousand words was re-affirmed for me while attending the Royston Memorial Rededication Ceremonies at Basingbourn last July 1989. There is no doubt that hundreds of pictures were taken and are now the source of thousands and thousands of verbalized memories. The weekend's theme, "Thoughts and Remembrances," naturally focussed the cameras on the related ceremonies and the people attending them. Appropriately engrossed in the nostalgia of the past, I'm afraid the present, the changes at Basingbourn since the war, were not similarly recorded by those of us attending.

Though words are a poor substitutes for pictures, I believe even a partial description of some of the post-war changes is of interest.

Those returning to Basingbourn today first see changes at the Main Gate where WWII British Army tanks and other heavy equipment are displayed. "The Changi Lychgate," built during WWII by British POWs in Changi after Singapore's fall now stands before the Headquarters Bldg. This gate originally stood at the entrance to the Changi prison cemetery where 400 POWs were buried. When their remains were returned to England the gate was brought back with them to serve as a Memorial to the 18th Division, a British unit essentially manned by men of East Anglia.

The four foot high trees that were there when Gen Stanley T Wray dedicated the 91st BG(H) Prop Memorial in 1978 now subtly shield and protect the monument with their 20 foot height.

Many of the old buildings remain the same - changes have altered others and plans to meet the training requirements of today's British soldiers will soon add other structures on the base. The old hangars are still there but they house training facilities - not planes. One is a gymnasium.

The old consolidated mess, closed, is being refurbished for other activities.

A huge man made ski slope breaks the former flatness of the airfield about a quarter of a mile southeast from the Control Tower. Covered with an artificial snow base it permits year round ski training. The slope was closed to civilian use recently because of the current Terroisist threat.

LTC Michael Boocock, during a tour of his Command, pointed out areas where rare orchids grow wild and sites which have been prepared to attract a species of

endangered owls in a protected environment. t.

The south and west sides of the base provide the biggest surprise. Large man made lakes occupy much of that area. The lakes are naturally filled from upwelling fresh underground water. This modification required the shortening of the main runway which is now only suitable for small, light planes. The other runways are things of the past.

Also, throughout the base, hundreds of trees have been planted. The gate, on the north side, that once led to the 323rd Sq's dispersal area across Huntington/Royston Rd and the lower part of the Wimpole Hall Estate, is locked. The unforgettable huge, hundred-year old elm trees that bordered the road between Wimpole Hall and Huntington/Royston Rd, destroyed by Dutch Elm disease, have been replaced by young Lemon trees. The Elms once sheltered the planes of the 323rd - no 91st BGMAer will ever see their replacements grow enough to serve such an assignment.

The changes, in a way, probably helped many attending the Royston Priory Gardens Rededication Ceremonies cope with the solemnity of the occasion. The changes placed a perspective upon past memories of an emotional time for us all. Even the weather blurred the memory most of us retain of war-time Basingbourn. Instead of low hanging, sullen overcast, gloomy fog, rain and chilly temperatures, a radiant sky with few scattered cumulous clouds lazily warming themselves in the 80° to 90° temperature, prevailed.

Post-war changes have "plowed under" even the last traces of many other 8th AF bases. Though Basingbourn's mission has been changed from air to ground activities, it will remain for many years to come-changing - but still a unique, living memorial to the 91st BG(H) and, perhaps, the entire 8th AF.

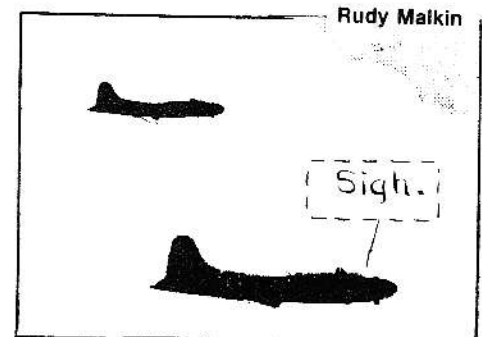
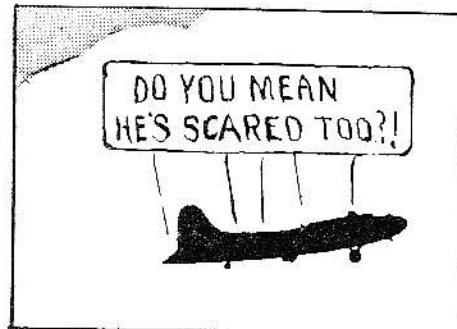
"ROYSTON RETURN" TID BITS

• R/I READERS ARE JUSTIFIED IN NOT BELIEVING everything they see in print. (Particularly in the R/I - after its erroneous April 1989 "Folded Wings" listings.) Fair enough. The R/I editor does not believe everything in the Sunpapers of Balto, MD either. But he still has faith in Herts & Cambs Reporter & Royston Crow paper of Royston, England. The following true story appeared on page 14 of that excellent paper's July 21, 1989 edition.

According to the account a former 91ster, having returned to England for the first time since the war to attend the Royston Priory Gardens Memorial ceremonies, sought, unsuccessfully, to find some of his 91st friends in oyston on July 15, 1989. Unfortunately, all

(Continued on Page 6)

THE RAGGED WRETCHES



Rudy Malkin

POTPOURRI

U.S.A.

• THE R/I's REQUEST FOR A TRANSLATION OF THE caption appearing below a photo of the crash site of the 323rd Sq's "Fightin' Pappy" in a Spanish edition of "Der Adler," a wartime German magazine, received prompt response.



"FIGHTIN' PAPPY" AT Bassingbourn.

Former 91st BGMA Sec-Trea John C Flinn, Jr, 401st, KY, Ray R Ward, 322nd, TX and Pres "Tony" Montalvo, 401/324th, CA, provided translations. Past 91st BGMA Pres Paul Chryst, 401st, PA, sent a photo of her before her downing.

The translations are similar. It must be added the intricacies of the Spanish language, explained by Ward, account for the variations in the translations. Assisting in the translations was the head of the Romance Languages Dept of a university, a high school Spanish teacher and a Spanish Major college student.

Representative of the three translations is the following:

"A B17, boastfully called "FIGHTIN' PAPPY" by American airmen, awaits its last take-off to the shops at the junkyard."

The R/I bets "Fightin' Pappy," true to its "boastful" name, went down fightin'.

• The 401st's recent recipient of a belated Silver Star award for gallantry in action during the Nov 2, 1944 Merseburg, Germany raid, John S Adkins, Jr, Sunnyvale, CA, is giant steps ahead of the 91st BGMA's efforts to record 91st BG(H) history. A recent letter from him indicates he's assembling a VIDEO Tape Library pertaining to post-war 91st BGMA activities. He says he's pleased with the VIDEO tape he obtained from former Pres Paul Chryst, Pottstown, PA, covering the recent Royston Return.

"All the events that took place on the trip are covered admirably. It is a very worthwhile tape to add to any 91st BGMAer's VIDEO Library," he says.

Sometime ago one of the editor's former 401st Flight Engineers, George A Parrish, Burlington, NC, graciously sent him a VIDEO tape he and his wife made during a personal return to Bassingbourn. As his camera records the landmarks of the past his soft Southern drawl, which purred from his Top Turret duty station during the war, records his reminiscing. No still picture of those war years has ever approached the intimacy of an actual return to Bassingbourn and the past as Parrish's VIDEO tape has for the editor.

"ROYSTON RETURN"

(Continued from page 5)

had left town.

Having nothing else to do "he decided to ask around and see if anyone knew the whereabouts of a certain Grace Lockwood who he remembered as an 18 year old girl he met all those years ago."

The last time he had seen her was in 1945, before she was "posted" to Scotland.

He found her!

Happily married to Mr. Fred Hughes for 41 years,

Grace, now 64, is reported to have "got the shock of her life" when re-introduced to the former 91ster.

"To tell the truth," she is quoted, "at first I couldn't really remember him, but he had a picture of me at one of the old dances we used to go to in the hangars at the camp."

"They used to take photographs for the Army paper and then the soldiers were given the chance to buy copies. I was really just a face in the crowd, but he remembered me!"

Discretion has deleted the former 91sters' name from the above story. The editor hates having to write "Oops News!" items.

• THE ANGEL PUB IN ANGEL PAVEMENT WAS demolished long ago. Memories of it will remain as long as former 91sters live. 91st BGMAers, attending the July 1989 Royston Memorial Rededication Ceremonies, may have difficulty recalling details of their popular wartime pub - but there was no problem recalling the former landlady, Doris Foster, or her "1940's black velvet, halo hat."

They both live on.

Doris, now 82, met with former 91sters during the July 1989 Royston activities, as she does at reunions of other service men based at Bassingbourn during the war.



DORIS FOSTER AND "HAT" with Sam Cipolla. (Photo - J Askins.)

Among the former 91sters was one who has a photograph of her wearing her famous hat, taken by the Cambridge Evening News in 1978, on the wall of his Chicago home. Legend has it he also has a model of a B17 hanging from the ceiling but he first says "Good Morning" to the photo of Doris and her hat every morning.

Doris' halo hat was made famous by an RAF Air Crew which frequented her pub during the war. In addition to other battle damage their instruments were destroyed on one raid. They assured her they just "beamed in" on her hat to get back!

She says it was a very glamorous hat with a black eye veil when her husband bought it for her - and then went "pub crawling" while she window shopped in Oxford. She remembers receiving "lots of whistles" when she first walked into the Angel Pub with it.

It cost an expensive 2 pounds/10 shillings in 1941. Since the RAF crew made it famous she's worn it for such festive occasions as reunions with wartime friends and, once, she wore it on a trip to Wash, DC in 1971. Jokingly, she says her hat is destined for a place of honor "in the museum at Bassingbourn."

Her pub was a haven for American, Australian, Canadian and New Zealanders during the war. Reunions with such old friends "are the highlight of my life," she says.

• BECAUSE ONE 91st BGMAer WAS SHOT DOWN ON his first mission back in 1942 he never had the "pleasure of landing back at Bassingbourn." He and his wife attended the recent Royston Return ceremonies and,

(Continued on Page 7)

AN AIRMAN'S HYMN

When the last long flight is over
and the happy landing's past
and my altimeter tells me
that the crack-up's come at last,
I'll point her nose for the ceiling
and I'll give my crate the gun.
I'll open her up and let her zoom
for the Airport of the Sun.

Then the great God of flying men.
will look at me sort of slow
as I stow my plane in the hangar
on the field where flyers go.
Then I'll look upon his face,
The almighty Flying Boss,
Whose wingspread fills the horizon
from Orion to The Cross.

PAUL G McDUFFEE

Mrs. Paul G McDuffee, Tampa, FL, widow of recently deceased Col McDuffee, has sent her husband's complete file of the R/I editions from Oct 1967 to the present to the editor. The editor thanks her in behalf of the membership for the valuable reference material and will pass it on to his successor.

folded Wings

■ BRAMAN, CHARLES R, 74, LM, 401st, 154 Sunset Blvd, Sequim, WA 98382; Sept 11, 1989. Braman was the original Radio Operator on Col Paul G McDuffee's Shoo Shoo Baby Crew. Reported by his wife, Ann, who said the "The Army Air Corps Song" was played during services held for him and she was glad he had been able to attend recent Shoo Shoo Baby ceremonies at Dover, DE and Dayton, OH where he "had such great times with the crew." She requested to remain on the R/I mailing list.

■ O'KEEFE, DANIEL J, 66, 322nd, 171 O'Keefe St, SE, Palm Bay, FL 32907; Nov 8, 1989. O'Keefe completed 25 missions as a gunner with the Madame Shoo Shoo crew. After the war he joined the Army Counter Intelligence Corps and learned Hungarian, German and Czechoslovakian. He served as a Hungarian linguist during that country's 1956 uprising. During 20 years of service the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart and Army Commendation Medal, among other service ribbons, were awarded him. Following retirement as a MSGT he was operations manager for TWA at John F Kennedy International Airport, Queens, NY for 10 years. An active Lions Club member he was prominently involved in Brevard County, FL politics and St Joseph's Catholic Church activity. The street upon which he lived was renamed "O'Keefe St" by the Palm Bay City Council from "Cardinal St" to honor him. An avid golfer, he once made a "hole-in-one" during his retirement years.

His wife, Florence, one son, two daughters, numerous brothers and sisters and three grandchildren survive him. Donations may be made to the American Heart Asso,

2800 Aurora Rd, Suite G, Melbourne, FL 32935-2097. Reported by Col Lester F Rentmeester (Ret), 401st, FL.

■ ORTEGA, ROSIE, MRS, AM, 1636 Gardena Blvd, Gardena, CA 90247. Reported by Doug Gibson, 401st.

■ PARSONS, BRUCE V, 324th, 39-904 Desert Angel Dr, Palm Desert, CA 92260; July 28, 1989. Parsons died of a heart attack while playing tennis in Burlingame, CA. Reported by a friend, Phillip F Guckes, 351st BG, 8th AFHS.

■ PHILLIPS, CHARLES R, LTC (RET), 401st, 48 S Stonybrook Dr, Marlborough, CT 06447; Oct 1989. Phillips was confined to bed during the past few years with "severe neck pains and crippling arthritis." Prior to his virtual immobilization he coped with the aide of a motorized wheel chair, a handicapped-equipped van and a loving wife and family.

Former 401st Ground Crewman White Breed, Ormand Beach, FL who reports Phillips' death, says injuries sustained by Phillips while parachuting from his stricken plane, The Buccaneer, during the Mar 22, 1944 Berlin mission probably contributed to his late life, crippling neck pains.

Breed, a friend who enjoyed visiting Phillips and his family, says then-Captain Phillips and all his crew escaped injury when their plane received a direct flak hit. After futile efforts to wrestle The Buccaneer's wreckage home they bailed out. Phillips remained at the controls until he only had 500 feet of altitude. Miraculously saved by his back-chute, he landed near his Co-Pilot, James R Dempsey, Dayton, OH, who had broken a leg in his fall. Phillips carried Dempsey for about a mile in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid their capture. A POW for more than a year, he was liberated by Gen Patton's forces.

The 91st MACR 3412 pertaining to The Buccaneer's fall consists of the usual terse language. It says, "Observed by Roy J Griesbach, 1Lt 0742315. At 13:13 just prior to bombing with no visual damage A/C left formation. Appeared to be dropping back to join low group."

The probability that Phillips received neck injuries during his 500 foot jump was denied by service medical authorities, Breed says.

Editor's Note: The editor, 401st, was on the 3-6, 3-8 and 3-22-44 Berlin raids. He recollects the ground below was white and he wondered what the depth of the snow was. There is no doubt deep snow would cushion a parachutist's fall from dangerously low altitudes but not necessarily preclude injury.

"ROYSTON RETURN"

(Continued from page 6)

while touring the Tower Museum with other 91sters, his long ago misfortune came to the attention of a member of the Friends of the 91st who had flown in for a short visit with his own light plane. The English pilot was exceptionally pleased to take him for a short flight as a passenger so he could at last experience the "pleasure of landing back at Basingbourn." The 91st BGMAer, the pilot and the witnesses to the long delayed completion of a 1942 mission found it a moving, memorable experience.

PRESERVE OUR PROUD PAST



THE RETURN OF FORSYTH'S FORTRESS

BY RICHARD T. BEVEVINO

THE VISION IS CLEAR, THE DANGER IS REAL. Every year on the anniversary of the Krailburg mission, the images return.

We had completed our mission - a strike deep in enemy territory - and were returning, badly shot up, to our home base. Miraculously we survived the intense anti-aircraft fire over the prime target and escaped, although not without casualties and considerable damage to the plane. After we had dropped our lethal payload, enemy fighter craft extracted their punishment for the raid. Two of our crew were seriously injured, our dependable flying machine had sustained substantial damage to one motor and worse yet, we were not even halfway home. Through sheer determination, luck, and I'm not afraid to admit, divine intervention, we managed to nurse the crippled, smoking ship to base.

Our wounded, unlike so many others on that mission, survived. The ship, however, did not. After a harrowing landing it exploded into nothingness a few minutes after we scampered out.

The war ended shortly thereafter; however, every year since then I relive the Krailburg mission. It's as though I am watching reruns of an old movie in which the crew and I are the main characters. We were so young, so dedicated, so much a part of one another. We depended on and trusted one another explicitly in the air and on the ground. Sadly, in the many years since, I have not come close to such an experience of total trust, complete confidence, and camaraderie. My co-workers, post-war friends, and relatives have not produced such a feeling of shared humanity.

Somehow, I sense a tremendous loss as the vision fades.

Editor's Note: The author of the above essay has been a Spanish and Latin-American History Prof at Edinboro University of PA since 1966. Forty-seven years old, he had no service-time experience to draw upon when he wrote it. In correspondence initiated by the R/I, he says, "I did not have a prior interest in B17s or WWII Air War history before selecting the topic. I do, however, have a great deal of interest and enthusiasm for history in general and military history in particular."

Prof Bevevino wrote his essay as an entry in a 1986 contest sponsored by The Erie Times newspaper. Entrants in the Times' "Dreamscapes" writing contest were provided a choice of pictures to stir their imaginations. Bevevino chose an illustration of a burning B17 crash landing. His vivid imagination and writing earned him First Prize out of 288 entries.

Other published writings by him include, "Into the Valley of Anahuac," June 1985 issue of Army; "Difficult Objective for a Landlocked Navy," Aug 1987 issue of Military History and articles in The Numismatist magazine.

The R/I first received a Xeroxed copy of his prize winning essay years ago from a now forgotten source. Unfortunately the publication in which it appeared was not identified. Paper re-shuffling periodically resurfaced it and re-reading made it more impressive. When it became apparent the essay was the greatest inducement to attending a 91st BGMA National Reunion the editor could imagine, its' source was tracked down by probing long distance phoning so re-publication permission could be obtained.

The R/I hopes Bevevino's eloquence helps persuade vacillating 91st BGMAers to attend the 1990 Seattle National Reunion.

ATTENTION! ▶ INSERT PAGE A CONTAINS IMPORTANT 1990 REUNION DATA.
DON'T MISS IT!

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.

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