

The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



SUPPORTING UNITS



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol. 24 No 4

491st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

October, 1991

IT'S A SCANDAL! IT'S AN OUTRAGE!

(Maybe)

PART OF A RECENT PHONE CALL BETWEEN 91st BGMA reunion committee Chairman Paul J Limm and the R/I editor is vividly recalled. It must have made England's renowned turn-of-the-century operetta duo, Gilbert and Sullivan, smile—wherever they are.

Limm began the dialogue with a statement as emphatic as that of the "H M S Pinafore's" Captain Corcoran's assertion that he was "...never, never sick at sea!"

The editor's spontaneous reply was, "What, never?"

Limm's response perfectly paraphrased the Gilbert libretto answer to that question. Like the abashed Captain Corcoran, he said, "Maybe never!"

The news that shocked the editor was Limm's assertion that the 91st BG(H) is not mentioned in a seven-volume Official History of the Army Air Forces in WWII!

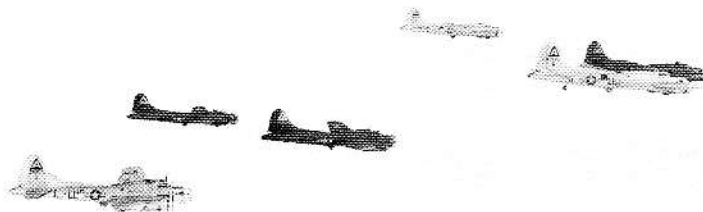
Following the editor's expressed incredulity Limm admitted to only reading and re-reading the 948-page Vol III, covering the Jan 1944-May 1945 period. Very thoroughly. According to the titling of the other volumes, only Vol II could contain any reference to the 91st BG(H), one of the Pioneer 8th AF Groups.

Since the 91st's Jan 11, 1944 Oschersleben Presidential Unit Citation is not mentioned in Vol III, which Limm read, it is possible the Mar 4, 1943 Hamm Presidential Unit Citation, awarded after the war, it also not mentioned in Vol II

which roughly covers the 1942-1943 period.

If so, Limm and the editor agree, "It's a scandal! It's an outrage!"

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STORIED 91ST BG(H) FORTS! IT IS LIKELY THIS PHOTO WILL appear in English writer Rex Poulton's soon to be released book "OLD FAITHFUL." Seven by 10 inch enlargements of it, as well as two other similar sized war-time photos by former 401st Pilot Allan N Morey, NY, were announced for sale at the Seattle, WA National Biennial Convention. Unfortunately inadequately prepared convention-site display of the offerings resulted in few sales.

The photos' original particular lure was the fact that SHOO SHOO BABY had been identified on two of them as being the fourth plane (L-R) and they are believed to be some of the few depicting SSB on a war-time mission.

Study of the enlargements by numerous 91st BGMAers has since identified the other planes flying with her. Thus far it seems the planes appearing are (L-R): MARY, KEYSTONE MANA, LACKIN' SHACKIN, SSB, ROUND TRIP TOPSY and OLD FAITHFUL.

In addition to other extensive literature, SSB's restoration is recorded in "SONG OF A VALIANT LADY," a Feature Condensation in the Mar 1986 Reader's Digest. The discovery of OLD FAITHFUL leading the formation and Poulton's forthcoming book on her adds another "storied" Fort to the uniqueness of the photo.

Though identification of the pictured planes seems certain there is still differing opinion regarding when the photo was taken. The May 29, 1944 Posen, Poland and the Apr 8, 1944 Oldenburg, Germany raids are the presently considered dates.

Identification of all the planes in the photos makes it possible for many more 91sters to participate in this dilemma. Members are invited to submit their findings to the R/I for inclusion in a soon to be published R/I article.

In the meantime new pricing and display arrangements will be made for the approximately 150 enlargements prepared by John Askins, CA for the 1992 Memphis, TN National Biennial Reunion. It is unthinkable that there aren't enough surviving crew members of the pictured planes not to deplete the supply of these historical photos made from Morey's original, war-time negatives.

MEMPHIS MEETING ON CONVENTION

A SEPT 9, 1991 BUSINESS MEETING OF 1992 91ST BGMA Memphis Convention Committee core members made great strides toward ensuring a memorable early Sept 1992 91st BGMA National Convention.

Meeting with Memphis Convention Bureau representative Byron Wolfe and The Peabody Hotel sales manager Ms Elana Churl were 91st BGMA Historian B/Gen Earl C Pate, ANG, Frank Donofrio of the MEMPHIS BELLE Association and 91st BGMA Trea Charles V Welbes.

Pate, in correspondence with other 91st BGMA officials, has requested suggestions and comments on the proposed plans just in case some item may have been overlooked.

Every effort will be made to have the 1992 Memphis

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It's a Scandal!

(Continued from Page 1)

This possible oversight in an Official History of the Army Air Forces in WWII has not, however, expunged the 91st BG(H)'s proud past.

"Many of our members have taken care of that. Hopefully, they will continue to do so," Limm says.

The rich fabric comprising the 91st's past is to a great extent dependent upon members' contributions to the R/I, which began publication 25 years ago. If members continue contributing personal recollections the mound of manuscripts will soon amount to a monument—and a ready reference source for future writers.

While envisioning a future anthology that, admittedly many of us will not survive to see but would delight 91ster's descendants, Limm, with equal enthusiasm, returns to the present. He calls 1991 "The Year of the Books" because so many pertaining to the 91st have been or are about to be published.

English writer Rex Poulton's book "OLD FAITHFUL," one of the 401st's ill-fated planes, is slated for release late this year. On June 25, 1944, Poulton, then a child, saw OLD FAITHFUL's fall in a field just outside his little English village. He never forgot the fiery crash fatal to all her crew. Thirty years later he began searching for information about the plane and her crew.

B/Gen James H McPartlin (Ret), Richardson, TX, former OLD FAITHFUL pilot and 401st C/O, located in 1980, was requested to write a forward to Poulton's book after McPartlin provided extensive information on the plane and her last pilot, Lt Peter Mikonis.

It is gathered that background material on OLD FAITHFUL's crew members is included in Poulton's forthcoming book. That makes his book particularly unique inasmuch as it is a truly dedicated effort to keep alive the memory of a crew, which, like so many, had no survivors to tell their story.

Another 91st book, "U.S.A. THE HARD WAY, An Autobiography of a B17 Crew Member," by Roger W Armstrong, has been released by Quail House Publishing Co.

Armstrong was the Radio Operator on the 401st's "unnamed, silver LL-J," which was probably the first of 13 91st Fords to fall during the Nov 2, 1944 Merseburg, Germany raid. John S Askins, Sunnyvale, CA, the pilot, received a belated Silver Star in 1989 for successful efforts which allowed all his crew to bail out from the flaming plane.

Prior to his retirement, Armstrong wrote legal briefs. Upon his retirement he put his research and detective skills to work accumulating the data for this book of which Roger A Freeman, well-known English historian, says, "I thoroughly enjoyed reading this manuscript. It is a fascinating history."

Limm, having access to an early copy, provides confirmation of the thoroughness of Armstrong's research. Example: Askins' and Armstrong's plane, officially listed as having "no name," had one.

A publicity release by the publisher describes the book this way:

"This is the story of the author's training, flying missions in the 8th Air Force over Germany and being shot down in one of the largest air battles in history. Capture by the German home guard and solitary confinement at the Luftwaffe Interrogation Center. Incarceration at Stalag IV and Stalag Luft I. Starvation diets and freezing barracks during Europe's coldest winter in 50 years. Liberation by the Russians and negotiations by the Western Allies for the camp's release."

Limm, in his comments, indicates Armstrong's rescue at the close of the war could be the denouement of a drama. "But," he says, "Armstrong adds a coda about his return to the USA and civilian life which is just as fascinating as the main body of his book. It also helps to provide the title, 'U.S.A. THE HARD WAY.'"

Raymond F Toliver, noted American historian and author, also praises the book. He says, "I found the story very interesting. Having heard many first-hand accounts such as this, each one is different since it was seen through different eyes. This account, though, is warmer and much more fascinating."

Presently not in possession of a copy of Armstrong's book, the editor can only say Armstrong's frequent R/I copy contributions have provided precise, polished and stimulating reading. There is no reason to believe his book prose does not maintain that standard.

Editor's Note: Armstrong's "U.S.A. THE HARD WAY" is presently available by writing: Roger W Armstrong, 9641 Skylark BL, Garden Grove, CA 92641-2631.

Also, elsewhere in this issue are book reviews of two other recently released 91st BG(H) books. One, "A TAIL GUNNER'S TALE," by former 401ster Gerald E McDowell has been released for sale. The other, by former 324th Navigator G William Potter is a comprehensive report on the Jan 11, 1944 Oschersleben mission which is being made available to the membership as a PX item.

If the membership is impressed with this sudden surge of new 91st BG(H) publications, the editor is even more because he has just begun compiling a bibliography of the growing number of lengthy, published and unpublished articles and books available to him.

Unfortunately some may no longer be readily available other than in well-stocked libraries. Examples of these are Col Lester F Rentmeester's extensive account of the Mar 5, 1944 Berlin Raid in the Oct/Nov 1983 edition of American Heritage magazine and his Memoir of the Air War against Germany in the Autumn, 1990 edition of the Wisconsin Magazine of History. It is hoped the bibliography, with availability information, will be completed in time for inclusion in the Jan 1992 R/I.

In the meantime the books covered in this issue could be timely Christmas gifts 91sters could award themselves for reading pleasure during those vexing times when the R/I is late arriving.

PRESERVE OUR PROUD PAST

GENERAL "IKE" CREW SIGNATURES SOUGHT

EARLIER THIS YEAR THE CREW OF THE 324TH Sq's Memphis Belle signed 250 prints of artist Robert Taylor's latest painting, "Return of the Belle." Their signatures, Virginia Bader's Costa Mesa, CA Fine Arts Gallery realizes, enhance the value of the prints.

That is not surprising.

The publicity focused upon the BELLE's crew ever since their triumphant early WWII return to the States has made their participation in any BELLE related event valuable. Such demands for participation and the accompanying honors in one way or another, we all ungrudgingly accept, are reserved for the famous.

It must have been, however, quite a surprise to numerous former 401sters to have their signatures solicited recently to enhance a memento pertaining to President Dwight D Eisenhower.

Dr Joseph P Connolly, of CN, whose naval career included service in the Tonkin Gulf during the Vietnam War, is a member of the Eisenhower Society. His admiration of the late President developed into a hobby and he is seeking autographs of people who had "some connection" with Ike.

Dr Connolly's request for the R/I editor's signature upon a First Day Commemorative envelope honoring Ike was certainly more surprising to the editor than the same request to many other former 401sters reached by Connolly.

The "Eisenhower Centennial" First Day Cover sent by the doctor has a photo of then-Gen Eisenhower christening the 401st Fort named after him. Readily identifiable to the editor in the lower left of the photo is former 401st C/O Maj John D Davis.

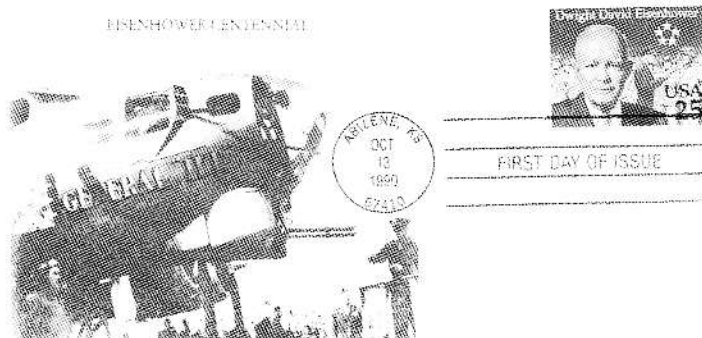
The editor, who trained with and flew a bit with Davis' crew, wondered how Dr Connolly assembled his list of GENERAL "IKE" crew members. He diffidently deferred signing the First Day cover sent him.

The reason for his reluctance was his war-time indifference to the identity of the planes in which he flew. A WG, his SOP prior to take-off was to find a dry spot, preferably outside the plane, place his parachute beneath his head and sleep some more.

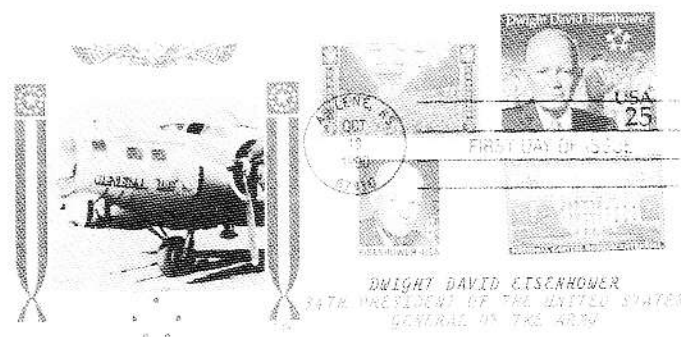
Col Lester F Rentmeester (Ret), FL, has subsequently assured the editor that he was part of his crew when he, Rentmeester, piloted GENERAL IKE. So the editor signed the Philatelic souvenir associating him with President Eisenhower and is returning it to Dr Connolly.

It is hoped all other former GENERAL IKE crewmen reached by him have done the same. (Aside from a possibly anxious debt collector awaiting our names upon an overdue check, our signatures will never again be sought by anyone hoping to enhance the value of a memento!)

Should any former GENERAL IKE crew member have been missed in Dr Connolly's mailing the R/I, if notified, will happily forward his name and address to Dr Connolly for any such action still possible for him.



DR CONNOLLY'S EISENHOWER CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE envelope depicts General Eisenhower christening GENERAL "IKE," the 401st plane named after him, on Apr 11, 1944.



THE EISENHOWER CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE ENVELOPE prepared by 91st BGMAer Owen G Cooper, MD, is shown above. A very limited supply of Cooper's creativity is available to 91st BGMAers.

Thanks to former 401ster Owen G Cooper, Catonsville, MD, a limited number of another type of President Eisenhower First Day Covers is available to 91st BGMAers

Cooper's First Day Covers, as indicated in the accompanying photos differs from Dr Connolly's. The only similarity between the two independently conceived and prepared covers is that both honor the Eisenhower Centennial of Oct 13, 1990. Though surprised to hear of another First Day Cover remembering Gen Eisenhower's 91st BG(H) "connection," Cooper points out there is no conflict.

He has donated his limited supply to the 91st BGMA. Philately minded members may obtain one by sending \$3.00 to 91st BGMA Trea Charles V Welbes, 210 Leatherwood Dr, Mountain Home, AK 72653. All receipts, aside from mailing costs, will be deposited in the 91st BGMA General Fund. Please specify the purpose of your \$3.00 check when writing Welbes and be sure your name and address is legible.

Cooper's First Day Covers could be ideal Christmas stocking-stuffers for serious minded young philatelists in former 91ster's families.

Editor's Note: Due to the limited quantity available this offer expires Nov 30, 1991.

TG'ERS DISCRETION SAVED HELL'S BELLE CREW

BY RUDY MALKIN

EARLY IN THIS BOOK'S ACCOUNT OF THE author's AAF Aerial Gunner's training it is established he was (may still be) a "crackshot." As a youngster in New Cumberland, PA he recalls, "...I practically cut my teeth on a rifle..."

During his account of his States' side preparation he remembers often being credited with reducing targets to shambles. Ironically, though in combat his accuracy was confirmed, it is likely he saved his crew's lives by withholding his fire.

That there is no braggadocio in former 401st Sq Tail Gunner Gerald E McDowell's account is apparent throughout his 152-page book. When he arrived at the 91st BG(H) with Lt Charles Quinn's crew, a few weeks after the disastrous Oct 14, 1943 Schweinfurt Raid, TG'ers were still VIPs.

McDowell's excellent recall and extensive research makes this apparent. Early in their brief 8 mission career a stricken, out of control Fort's props wrecked one of the wings of their plane, 079, while the formation was preparing to bomb. Lt Quinn maintained position, completed the bomb run and returned McDowell and the rest of his crew to Basingbourn. They were all rewarded by having a photo of themselves and their spectacularly damaged plane appear in newspapers throughout the US a few days later. (The R/I, while edited by Paul Burnett, probably published a reprint of that story.)

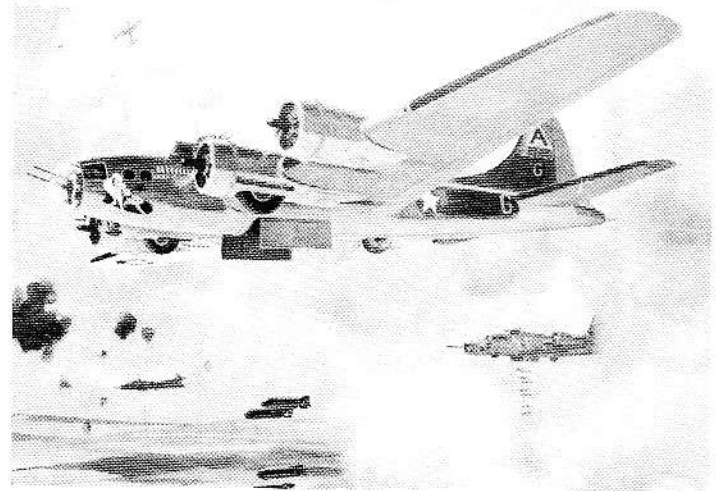
Shortly after that close call, McDowell stood before the 401st's repaired HELL'S BELLE, 23060, his crew's "new" plane. She wasn't new. Decorated with over 30 mission bombs, she was scarred by countless bullet patches. Counting the 16 patches around the TG position, he wondered how many TG'ers had been hit during its earlier missions. Though he does not word it, those 16 patches must have suggested his position was a "VIP" one. (In this case "VIP" stands for "Very Important Position.")

Dec 1, 1943 was HELL'S BELLE's fateful day. She would be downed on the Leverkusen Raid. Dec 1, 1943 was also the day that the importance of TGers was again reaffirmed - two more times.

Flak vests were scarce in those days. It was still a matter of First Comers getting one. McDowell was late that morning. When his pilot, Quinn noticed he didn't have one, Quinn gave McDowell his. Rejecting McDowell's profuse attempts to refuse his pilot's flak vest, McDowell writes Quinn gave him "...a side glance and a smile, ...turned and quickly headed for the flight deck.

"...he suddenly made me feel the importance of being able to protect the ship's tail during combat, ..."

Fighter attacks during the Leverkusen Raid tumbled



AN ARTIST'S RENDITION OF THE 401ST HELL'S BELLE, WHOSE downing on the Dec 1, 1943 Leverkusen, Germany raid is an exciting chapter in TG McDowell's book, recently released.

HELL'S BELLE from formation. Quinn and Co-Pilot 2Lt Kenneth W Fallek together regained enough control to put her into a steep 400 mph glide and authorize bail-outs by the crew members. McDowell, after kicking out his position's escape hatch, abandoned his jump effort when he realized he did not have his chest chute. It was still back in his TG position.

Returning to his position, he saw two Me 109s pursuing them. As they closed the gap between he drew a bead on one - but withheld his fire. The result of that calculated restraint follows:

"I wanted to avoid drawing fire at any cost as we were already badly shot up, two engines were gone, and we were going down. Fearful of jeopardizing all of us and having the ship blown up in our faces by these two Me 109s, I

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A SEPT 21, 1990 HELL'S BELLE CREW REUNION IN NY DREW (L-R): author TG Gerald E McDowell, TTG Bert A Stieler, "Ellis" (B Sydney Edelstein?), P Charles A Guinn and BTG Bill E Rasmussen. They all appear to have survived the long post-war years remarkably well!

A TAIL GUNNERS TALE

Gerald E. McDowell.

Vantage Press.

152 pages.

Hard Bound - \$13.95.

FIVE YEAR OSCHERSLEBEN RAID STUDY RELEASED

BY RUDY MALKIN

THE FIVE MISSING AIRCRAFT CREW REPORTS (MACRs) filed by 91st BG(H) personnel after the Jan 11, 1944 Oschersleben, Germany raid contain two clues indicating the intensity of that bleak day's air battle.

Initial reports after the battle were staggering. The Luftwaffe claimed 124-150 B17s downed, the 8th AF claimed over 230 kills. Research by devoted American, British and German historians has since corrected the losses to 39 Luftwaffe planes and 60 B17s downed. Despite the loss correction, those who survived survived carnage.

All the 91st BG(H) MACRs are terse and all record E/A activity. One cannot help but conclude that the participants in that bitter battle were preoccupied with survival. The brevity and E/A activity clues present in all the MACRs indicate that observation of others' plight was reduced to glimpses.

2Lt George W Potter, Kearney, NE, Navigator on the 324th's LITTLE JEAN, was there. Of her fall, Lt William Major reported, "Plane bombed on target and then was shot down by E/A in vicinity of Watenstedt and Walsdorf, Germany."

Over forty years later Potter met LITTLE JEAN's former Engineer Bernard "Barney" Offlay at a Boeing-Seattle reunion, their first meeting since the war. They talked about their six crew members reported KIA. Their reminiscing led to a lot of questions.

Potter, his interest stirred, set out to obtain details on the deaths of their friends and whether or not LITTLE JEAN had reached the target. That personal project resulted in five years of research of official documents pertaining to the Oschersleben raid, correspondence and phoned and personal interviews at thousands of dollars of personal expense and incalculable time.

The tremendous support and contributions by former 91sters contacted during the past years is credited with making Potter's account possible and, as the late Col Paul G McDuffy would have said, "Setting the record straight."

Basically what Potter has done is provide an "Amendments and Supplementary Account" (ASA) to the official records of the Oschersleben raid.

Particular efforts were made to establish strict standards in the acceptance of any new data necessary to justify amendments or revisions to existing records. Potter does not discount the possibility that in the future other information may emerge and warrant further examination. Conse-

quently, even where reasonable conclusions are made he still qualifies them with "seems," "appear," "likely," etc.

Potter's 37-page ASA is divided into 20 chapters. A listing of those chapter headings indicates the scope of it. The chapter heads are: BRIEFING; AIRBORNE AND FINAL DISPATCH; ROUTE(S) FROM LOWESTOFT TO IP; ONE ABORT - ONE DOWNED; OUR SECOND LOSS; A/C IN TROUBLE PRIOR TO TARGET; WHERE IS OUR 'MICK-EY'?; THE 381st LOSES 8, ABORTS 1 & 401st LOSES 1; CONGESTION AT THE IP; SEVEN MORE IP TO TARGET LOSSES; 91ST DROPS BOMBS - 3rd AND 4th LOSSES; 2 'HIT THE DECK' AND OUR FIFTH LOSS; BOMBING BY OTHER GROUPS; OTHER GROUPS' LOSSES AFTER TARGET; WHERE THEY LANDED; INJURED CREW MEMBERS & DAMAGED A/C; BOMBING EFFECTIVENESS RECALL AND FIGHTER SUPPORT.

The importance and urgency of Potter's and other 91st BGMA researchers and writers is indicated in his suggested explanation for the absence of data in Group records.

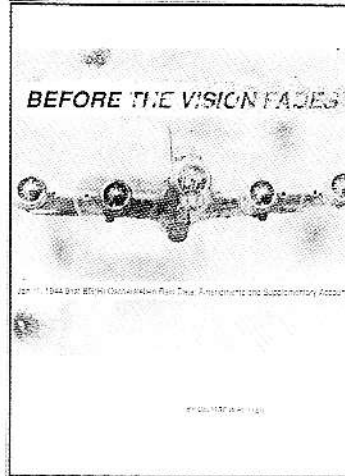
"When the 91st BG(H) was being de-activated...many files and records were 'deposited' by bulldozers. Lee Nichols, 324th Base Engineering Sec, became aware of it and hurriedly recovered a few of the papers. He said there wasn't time to get others as there were so many, they were all mixed up, and there wasn't time to be selective. This was a sad but necessary method of discarding 'excess records...." Potter laments.

For the present he has produced the most detailed account possible on the 91st BG(H)'s part in the Oschersleben raid. He has dedicated his ASA to the KIA of the 322nd's BLOND BOMBER and CHIEF SLY; the 323rd's HARASS DRAGON and the 324th's RITZY BLITZ and LITTLE JEAN.

As one reads his digest of the voluminous data assembled one cannot forget the recently released movie, "The Memphis Belle." Someone in that production must have read Potter's manuscript or the same Oschersleben records he obtained. In the filmed version of THE BELLE's last mission a B17 is cut in two in a collision with an E/A. (A 381st BG(H) plane is identified as suffering that fate by Potter's research.) All Group leaders are credited for their wise use of options to avoid a dreaded '360 degree' turn back to Oschersleben which IP congestion, for a while, seemed to require. Had it been made, many others, unlike the filmed MEMPHIS BELLE's survival of a "360 degree" return to her filmed, final target, would have fallen.

It must be pointed out that Potter's five years of research and writing produced much more than the 37-page conden-

(Continued on Page 6)



UNBOUND BOOK AVAILABLE!

BEFORE THE VISION FADES

Jan 11, 1944 91st BG(H) Oschersleben Raid Data;
Amendments and Supplementary Account

G. William Potter.

91st BGMA Unbound Manuscript.

37 pages \$7.00.

(\$9.00 Overseas.)

TG'ERS DISCRETION SAVED

(Continued from Page 4)

chose discretion as the better part of valor and just sat at my guns, tensely waiting to see what they would do. ..." he says.

McDowell feels he never had a better shot than the one Me 109 upon which he had drawn that bead. His gut feeling, however, told him the other Me 109 had an equally fatal bead upon HELL'S BELLE and his crew.

He didn't fire. Neither of the Me 109s fired either. Probably because they surmised HELL'S BELLE was "...out of it. As they broke off, one pilot did a loop around us and while he was upside down over our plane, saluted, then turned sharply and flew away," McDowell writes.

(It must be added that Harold Wingate, HELL'S BELLE's Engineer, later credited McDowell with downing a Me 109 during one of the early attacks during which McDowell only had a two or three second "track.")

Aside from the one Me 109's display of gallantry, the silently, solicitous plate of cookies given him and others of his crew by the wife of a German official soon after their capture and recollections of a Stalag 17-B Luftwaffe officer who tried to be decent, the remainder of McDowell's tale deals with dismal times.

He was a POW for 18 months, most of which was spent at Krems, Austria. No one escaped the brutal conditions. (One POW, stressed to the breaking point, ran to the wire and begged to be killed. He was.)

After his return to the States, along with thousands of others, McDowell noted there was little response when former POWs were asked to sign up for the reserves. Dozens of them, however, were interested in returning to Germany and serving in the Army of Occupation - obviously interested in "squaring accounts." Regulations forbade such reassignments.

In addition to numerous other illustrations, page 4 and 5 of the 1973 edition of the R/I are reproduced in McDowell's book. The accompanying text was written by German architect Johann Richter, who witnessed and took photos of HELL'S BELLE after her crash landing. This is concrete proof that past R/I's are and can contribute to 91st BG(H) history.

McDowell put the war behind him after his discharge and became a successful business man. Some forty years later, after retirement, with considerable effort, he re-established contact with his old friends and began his book. Former 91st BGMA Historian Hiliary "Bud" Evers is credited with supplying considerable background data.

The 91st BGMA's Paul Limm, who also has read the book, says, "It is a tribute to all Allied POWs, and more specifically, to the 33,000 AF POWs, many of whom were our brothers in the 91st BG(H)."

McDowell's recalled and researched data is couched in clear, cryptic prose. Reportedly selling well in PA bookstores (some initial stocks are sold out the first day when McDowell is present to autograph them) it is recommended by the R/I. The R/I editor has read it, will re-read it - and will retain it as a valuable 91st BG(H) reference book.

OSCHERSLEBEN RAID STUDY

(Continued from Page 5)

sation here being described. His unabridged account and all supporting evidentiary material has been donated to the 91st BGMA files. His 37-page condensation includes, in addition to thorough coverage of 91st matters, references to other Groups only when they directly shared the 91st's experience. News of the completion of his project has burdened his mailman with requests from other BGs for copies of his unabridged account which is a mother-lode of information for all involved in the Oschersleben raid, a particular costly 8th AF mission.

Potter arrived at Bassingbourn with Pilot Allen A Uskela's crew on Dec 1, 1943 from Kearney AFB with 16 other crews. Between Jan 11 and Apr 19, 1944 nine of those replacement crews were shot down. His ASA of the big, initial battle of that time, stirring the memories of those who survived, will surely produce more personal accounts of facts and faces involved before the vision fades.

Listing even a portion of his sources and the extent of their contributions is impossible. In a recent phone call he indicated he plans a quiet winter - filing his data for future, ready reference. (As an example of the assistance Potter received, LTC John R Parsons, Jr (Ret), spent four days Xeroxing the mission file of the 91st BG(H).)

Former 91st BGMA Historian Hiliary "Bud" Evers says of Potter, "No one has ever worked harder on a project." There is no doubt concerning that. It is also likely that no 91st BG(H) project has ever before received the quiet, unpublicized support of so many members - for so long.

For years Potter's project was little more than a rumor to the R/I. Now completed and released, it should remain the most definitive, single raid, data packed portion of 91st BG(H) history available. It will certainly be the ultimate reference sought to explain the gold bordered blue ribboned Presidential Unit Citation all 91sters were authorized to wear after the Oschersleben raid.

It belongs beside the 91st BGMA's other two unbound, manuscript books, WRAY'S RAGGED IRREGULARS by Lt C Carlton Brechler and HISTORY, The 91st Bomb Group (H) (also referred to as REPORT TO MEMBERS) by former 91st BGMA Historian Hiliary "Bud" Evers.

Early copies of Potter's BEFORE THE VISION FADES may be obtained by writing 91st BGMA Trea Charles V Welbes, 210 Leatherwood Dr, Mountain Home, Ark 72653. The price is \$7.00 per copy (\$9.00 overseas).

Potter's manuscript will be placed on the 91st BGMA PX List in the Jan 1992 R/I.

ATTENTION!

HELP WANTED

PETER GERACI'S FATHER SERVED IN THE 322ND Sq, 91st BG(H) from July 1942 til 1945. He seeks contact with anyone who knew him. Geraci's address is: 1449 Harlem Rd, Cheektowaga, NY 14206. Phone: 716-897-3374.

Folded Wings

• CORMAN, EDWARD M, 323rd, LM, 14606 Killarney Circle, Wichita, KS 67230. Reported by his son, Dan Corman. Corman's wife is among his other survivors.

• FREIHOFFER, ROBERT W SR, 401st, POW, East Acres, Troy, NY 12180, July 20, 1991. Freihofer, the CP on HELLZAPOPPIN when it was downed on the Apr 17, 1943 Bremen, Germany raid, was liberated from Stalag Luft 3 after two years as a POW. After his return he entered his family's baking company. From "just another bakery" he built it up to a \$113 million-a-year firm employing 1,500 people. The then-family-owned firm eventually shipped its products throughout NY, NJ and New England. Over his objections the business was sold to General Foods. He subsequently conceded the new owner's management was maintaining the high standards generations of his family had established.

He was particularly pleased to note extensive community services he initiated to "making Troy (NY) a better community" were being continued. Even a resume of his far-ranging civic activities is impossible. The Times Union of Albany, NY headlined his death and awarded him 21 inches of copy. He is survived by his wife, Mary Jane Tarrant; two sons, a daughter and two sisters. Contributions may be made to the Child Cancer Program, Albany Medical Center Hospital, New Scotland Ave, Albany, NY 12208.

• KISS, ERNEST J, 322nd, June 27, 1991, 1010 Plantation Dr, Surfside Beach, SC 29575. Kiss, who died of a massive heart attack, was a close friend of Glen L Kessler, Okeechobee, FL, who trained with him through Radio and Gunnery schools and served in combat with him in the 322nd Sq. Kiss's sister-in-law, Mary Kiss, and Kessler reported his death.

• SHERK, MAURICE DAVIS, 322nd, 428 Crest Dr, Homewood, AL 35209, Mar 30, 1991. Sherk, retired, was active in numerous fraternal organizations and a former president of the Birmingham Food Sales Executive Club. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; sons Thomas H and James E; daughters, Linda and Maj N Lee. The family suggests memorials be made to the church or charity preferred by the contributors.

MEMPHIS MEETING

(Continued from Page 1)

Convention forms and complete, final information in the Jan 1992 R/I, he says.

A printout of the agenda covered Sept 9, 1991 indicates a vivid imagination will be required to enhance the presently planned agenda.

Included in the plans is a stroll "within" walking distance of The Peabody Hotel, the Convention Headquarters. Mud Island's varied points of interest, including THE MEMPHIS BELLE, an exhibit of ancient Ottoman Empire artifacts and other attractions, await those taking the casual tour.

Professional guided tours of Beal St, home of Dixieland, Blues and Jazz music; Antebellum homes and a Ladies Luncheon are being arranged.

Coors Brewery is contributing to a barbeque and beer party at which former 91st BGMA Pres Tony Montalvo will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Col Montalvo's dismay at the Seattle Convention concerning the lack of publicity preceding his intent to honor former ground crewmen has prompted the Memphis Convention Committee to unanimously urge "special recognition of the 91st ground support units; those unsung heroes who were the very backbone of the Group."

Other individual 91st BGMAers, the Committee recommends, should be given special recognition for their contributions to the welfare of the Association. Since it is possible other worthy 91st BGMAers may be added to that list, the R/I withholds identification of those presently singled out.

Since full details will appear in the Jan 1992 R/I it will suffice to add the Committee's efforts have not ignored the financial phase of interest to all who plan to attend. Northwest Airlines, responding to Donofrio's interest in designating an "Official Airline for the 91st BG(H) Reunion," has offered a 40% discount on designated applicable round trip coach fares.

FINANCIAL REPORT

91st BGMA TREASURER CHARLES V WELBES' financial statement for the period ending June 30, 1991 is published below.

FINANCIAL BALANCE - 31 DEC 90

GENERAL FUND:	\$16,322.29
MEMORIAL FUND:	1,311.75
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE:	10.00
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$17,644.04
PX INVENTORY	\$6,906.80

INCOME - 1 JAN 91 - 30 JUN 91

Dues:	\$10,040.00
Interest:	484.85
Donations:	2,574.84
PX Sales:	3,560.50
1990 Seattle Reunion:	4,687.70
TOTAL INCOME	\$21,347.89

EXPENDITURES - 1 JAN 91 - 30 JUN 91

*BGMA Administration:	\$4,329.62
Memorial Fund:	252.41
Petty Cash:	556.04
"R.I." Fund:	4,501.76
PX Inventory:	1,154.01
1990 Seattle Reunion:	316.50
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$11,110.34

FINANCIAL BALANCES - 30 JUN 91

GENERAL FUND:	\$23,657.68
MEMORIAL FUND:	3,116.84
HISTORY FUND:	466.34
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$27,240.86
PX INVENTORY:	\$ 6,177.50
TOWER MUSEUM FUND:	\$ 640.73

* INCLUDES NEW DIRECTORIES.
(PRINTING, ENVELOPES, POSTAGE, ETC.)



"Royston Rally Round"

East Anglia prepares for another friendly invasion after 50 years.

91st BOMB GROUP (H) MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



91st BG Officers have accepted the East Anglia Tourist Board's invitation to return to England and participate in the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the arrival of USAAF forces in 1942 - 1992. This BG sponsored journey is dubbed as the - - "Royston Rally Round" for most of our activities are planned to be held in this local area.

Travel dates are confirmed for departure on May 5 and return on May 13, 1992.

The general Itinerary includes:-

- direct air reservations, R/T London
- group assembly (Heathrow) and transfer
- Welcome Party (4) nites 1st Class hotel
- Contl. Breakfasts in London with full English breakfasts in Cambridge hotel
- panoramic City tour, London, with private coach throughout tour (with luggage)
- full day at Basingbourn, Prop Memorial Service, O.C. Lunch, Base tour, and Control Tower Museum visit. (sounds great, huh?)
- (3) nights, 1st Class hotel Cambridge with complete Dinner served nightly
- professional escort for complete tour

- ROYSTON DAY, Town Hall Council greeting, Plinth Memorial Service, Lunch/Reception to meet old friends, visit the old Roman caves, the old Bull Hotel, 12th century Norman Church and more.
- American Military Cemetery wreath laying and short walk tour of colleges, Cambridge Univ.
- Special visit to RAF Alconbury (3rdAF Hqs) and A-10 briefing, with G.I. Lunch at NCO Club
- Duxford Air Museum visit followed by coach ride back to London for hotel and free time.
- Windsor Castle tour of Royal Apartments and famous Doll House. Afternoon and evening 'free'.
- transfer coach to Heathrow Airport

NOW is the time to start planning to go with us!

Complete Land cost, PLUS airfare from the closest Intl. Airport to your home; makes the best 'free service' package price offered by selected **Berkshire Travel Agency, Reading, PA**. For an 'early-bird' edition of the tour brochure; send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Asay Johnson, Project Officer, 590 Aloha Drive, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403.

91ST HISTORICAL MARKER'S TAMPA DEDICATION SET

THE DEDICATION OF THE 91ST BG(H) HISTORICAL Marker at the Visitor Center near the Dale Mabry Gate to McDill Air Force Base, Tampa, FL will be held at 2 pm, Sunday, Oct 27, 1991.

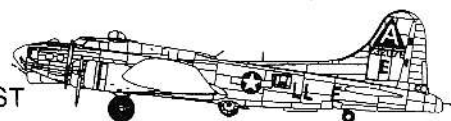
91st BGMA Memorial Committee Chairman W W Hill points out the unveiling of the Marker, identifying the site where the 91st was formed in Apr 1942, is conveniently one day after the Oct 26th end of the nearby 91st BGMA

Rally Round at Jensen Beach, FL.

Howell B Loper, Tampa, FL (Phone: 813-239-3483) is the local representative at the ceremonies.

Selected area motels and rates are: 1) Whitman Motor Inn, 102 N 2nd; 509-525-2200; Rates \$43-\$125. 2) Comfort Inn, 520 N 2nd; 509-525-2522; Rates \$42-\$57. 3) Econo Lodge, 305 N 2nd; 509-529-4410; Rates \$27-\$29.

PRESERVE
OUR PROUD PAST



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 Basingbourn, 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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