

# The Ragged Irregular

ATTENTION!



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



SUPPORTING UNITS



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol 25 No 3

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

July 1992

OFFICIAL 1992  
BALLOT ON PAGES  
5 AND 6



## ENGLISH AUTHOR SAYS RRR TOUR TOUCHING

HIS FORTHCOMING BOOK, OLD FAITHFUL, 42-2795, near completion, English writer Rex Poulton had time to attend ceremonies during the 91st BGMA's "RRR" tour at Bassingbourn this past May. His quick report provides capsuled coverage of the event for this rushed edition. Further details, gleaned from still incoming member reports, will be published in the Oct R/I.

91st BGMA Sec Assay B Johnson, who also provided a quick report after his return, called The Berkshire Travel Agency conducted tour "one of the most memorable get-togethers that 91st BGMAers ever attended."

Some 135 members, family members and friends participated.

The three action packed days at Bassingbourn were particularly emotional for those who returned for the first time since the war.

Poulton's observations of the impressive, prepared ceremonies convinced him, "The 91st will always be remembered at Bassingbourn."

He was honored that the occasion made it possible for his artist friend, Mike Cox, to publicly present a large

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## SUPPORT UNITS TO BE MEMPHIS, TN "VIPs"

FORMER 324th Sq TTG Joe Harlick (right) and Frank G Donofrio display a sample of the 125 war-time photos Harlick has donated to the Memphis Belle Museum.



GRATIFYING ATTENDANCE IS ANTICIPATED AT THE Memphis, TN 91st BGMA's 16th National Biennial Reunion on Sept 2-5, 1992.

The Reunion is dedicated to the Support Units of the 91st BG(H).

Frank G Donofrio and B/G Earl C Pate (Ret), Reunion officials and their committee members, sharing and responding to the ground-swell feeling within the association that such recognition is long overdue, concur.

Past-Pres Tony Montalvo was vexed at the Seattle, WA  
*(Continued on Page 2)*

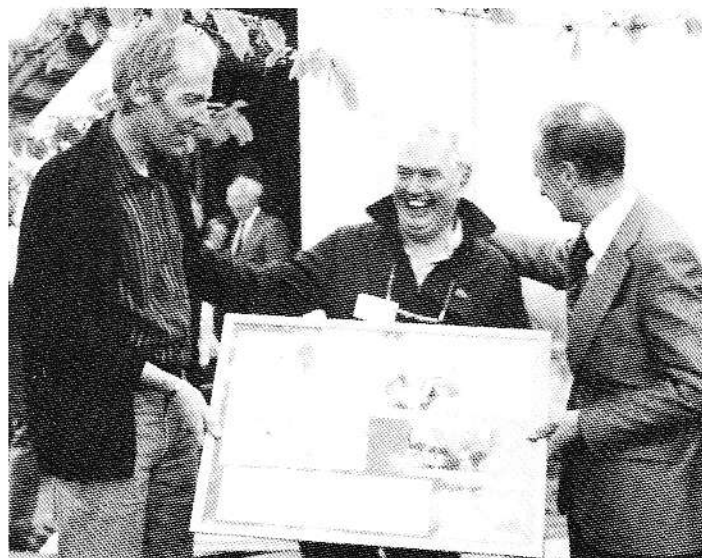
### FINAL NOTICE!

INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE SEPT 2-5, 1992 91st BGMA Memphis, TN 16th National Biennial Reunion has been appearing in the R/I since the July 1991 edition. All final details requiring action by attending members are available by writing: 91st BGMA Reunion 1992, PO Box 17182, Memphis, TN 38187-0182.

Those who have not requested Reunion brochures are urged to do so - Now! Reservations at The Peabody Memphis Hotel (Phone: 800-PEABODY or 901-529-4000) must be made before July 31, 1992 to assure accommodation. After that date reservations are subject to rate and space availability.

The Reunion literature contains tour details and activities, a Registration Form, a self-addressed hotel reservation envelope and a map of Memphis.

Again, Reunion information must be requested. No further information will be automatically mailed by the association to all members after this July 1992 R/I edition.



FORMER 401ST NAVIGATOR HOWARD GROONBRIDGE (center) is pleased with a new Tower Museum display prepared by author Rex Poulton (left). The display contains Groonbridge's flak ripped map. Vince Hemmings, Tower Museum curator, is on the right.

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY CHARLES R HACKSTOCK

### "RRR" AND REUNION NEWS

FIFTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE 91st BG(H) was formed! During that time the many activities of the 91st BGMA have refreshed our memories of, probably, our most memorable years. At the sametime, association activities have also enriched the lives of many of us.

Having recently returned from the May '92 "RRR" Tour, I must say I was impressed with the warmth which our tour group received from our English friends. The Prop Memorial, a fitting tribute to those in whose memory it was erected, is obviously being devotedly maintained by the Bassingbourn stationed members of the Queen's Division and the civilian members of the Friends of the 91st. The Tower Museum, another nourished memento of our 1942-45 presence, may soon bulge with the memorabilia being assembled.

When so many contribute to an unforgettable experience it is embarrassing to attempt acknowledgement. Attempts to list everyone inevitably end in unintentional omission of many. Therefore, I'm certain our English friends will understand if LTC Jerome Church, present Bassingbourn Barracks C/O, is singled out. He and his wife, Jane, participating in all our tour group activities at Bassingbourn and those in Royston and Cambridge, were gracious representatives of all those showering honors and hospitality upon us.

I must add this was my first return to Bassingbourn since the War. The impressive preservation of the 91st BG(H)'s war-time presence convinces me that we, as a group, should support the efforts of our English friends to "Preserve Our Proud Past."

The new 91st BG(H) Historical Marker unveiled at the Prop Memorial is a meaningful addition to that site. Though durable it will certainly add more to the maintenance chores of our English friends. Again, they deserve our group support.

The memory of our '92 "RRR" Tour will be cherished by all who attended. Our Sept 2-5, 1992 Biennial Reunion in Memphis, TN offers another opportunity for everyone to enrich their store of fond 91st BGMA memories. For those who have not yet done so I urge they request their Reunion Brochures now by writing: 91st BGMA Reunion 1992, PO Box 17182, Memphis, TN 38387-0182.

As announced elsewhere in this R/I the belated appreciation of the contributions of our Support Unit members is part of the Reunion program. I trust there will be a large turnout of those to be honored and those who will honor them.

## SUPPORT UNITS TO BE

(Continued from Page 1)

Reunion when his plans for similar recognition inadvertently failed to appear in R/I's preceding that Reunion.

Another oversight regarding Support Unit members is

recalled by the editor. During a Wash, DC premier showing of the film, "The Memphis Belle," former flight crew members were requested to stand and receive the sell-out audiences' applause. No one thought to announce the presence of many ground crew members, whose dedication, professionalism, loyalty and perseverance also contributed to the Allied Victory in WWII.

A new 91st Historical Marker will be dedicated on Friday, Sept 4, 1992 during Reunion Ceremonies on Mud Island. Support Units are duly recorded upon the plaque.

A recent donation of 125 photos to the Memphis Belle Museum by former 324th Sq TTG-Photographer Joe Harlick should contribute immensely to the Reunion theme of honoring 91st BG(H) Support Units. Though more lengthy coverage of Harlick's excellent black and white enlargements by active member Paul J Limm, CA, is ready for publication, an excerpt from Limm's article suffices to indicate appreciation of Support Unit members' work was always there.

Limm, impressed by Harlick's photo display at the Seattle, WA Reunion, took time to write about it. He calls the collection, "A Day in the Life of the 91st BG(H)."

Besides the dramatic flight photos, Limm says, "Joe Harlick has given long overdue recognition to the unsung heroes on the ground - those who toiled so valiantly to maintain the B17s to keep them combat-ready. These are grim and stark photographs; there is no glamour, no romance in them because Harlick does not glorify war. ...Harlick deserves our thanks for reminding us of this important fact."

Since both Marion Havelaar, former 401st bombardier now involved in the production of a 91st BG(H) history, and 91st BGMA Historian Pate now assembling a Group photo history, are borrowing heavily from Harlick's collection, it is certain that the contributions of 91st BG(H) ground personnel will be faithfully preserved.

Everyone attending the Reunion will be drawn to the Mud Island site of the restored MEMPHIS BELLE which was kept flying by ground crewmen. Those remembering her war-time missions and maintenance should also remember another "ground-guy" sparked her preservation for the future. Frank G Donofrio, former WWII Infantry officer, started it all years ago when he saw her deteriorating while exposed to the elements outside an armory in Memphis. The contributions of Support Unit members to our proud past cannot be measured. Donofrio's contribution to preservation of a portion of that past for posterity is equally unmeasurable.

One small typographical error is being corrected in the General Information material being mailed to members planning attendance. As announced earlier, Northwest Airlines is offering a special service and rates for attending 91st BGMAers from Aug 29 through Sept 9, 1992.

Information pertaining to this offer contained an error in the listing of the airline's 800 number. The correct number is 1-800-328-1111.

Reunion officials again emphasize that, in order to

(Continued on Page 7)



## 91st WAR FORMATION PHOTOS SET FOR MEMPHIS SALE

THREE WAR-TIME NEGATIVES, INCLUDING TWO of a 401st Sq formation and one of Cologne, Germany's ruins, were enlarged by John S Askins, CA, for sale at the 91st BGMA 1990 Seattle, WA Reunion.

Inadequate display resulted in few sales, disappointing officials and Askins, who labored long in his darkroom reproducing sharp, clear, approximately 8 x 10 enlargements begging framing.

The 1944 formation photos taken by former 401st Pilot Allan N Morey, NY have stirred too much behind-the-scenes comment to preclude a second sale opportunity to members attending the 1992 Memphis, TN Reunion.

The behind-the-scenes issue, which has prompted considerable research, correspondence and speculation, is the exact date Morey took the pictures. Opinion is divided. Most sources hold the photos were taken during the Apr 8, 1944 Oldenburg, Germany raid. Others hold it was not the Oldenburg raid.

Varying degrees of supportive data is provided by those involved.

Morey, who entrusted his negatives to the R/I editor before he was editor, never ventured even an educated guess as to when he took the photos. Whatever small commercial prints he had were lost in a "cellar flooding" years earlier. Aside from being able to determine there were B17s on the small negatives, it was impossible to make further identification.

After being appointed, the R/I editor requested long time AM John Hohman, MD, to make enlargements of the negatives for R/I use. Some of Hohman's enlargements were subsequently sent to then 91st BGMA President Paul Chryst who studied them with a magnifying glass. (It must be pointed out the enlargements sent Chryst did not contain all the planes on Morey's negatives because Hohman's darkroom equipment could not accommodate the odd sized negatives.)

Chryst's discovery of SHOO SHOO BABY and identification of the other planes on the prints supplied him enhanced the negatives historical value. He contacted Morey and pointed out the photos had to be taken between Mar 24, 1944 when SSB began her missions, and Apr 27, 1944 when she was interned.

Though Chryst's discovery of SSB narrowed the dating of his photos to an approximate five week period, Morey could not suggest a specific date.

Then the Oct 1988 R/I, listing SSB's War Record reached Morey. He compared his 31 mission record with SSB's. Using available data he surmised it was on May 29, 1944 Posen, Poland raid, SSB's last, on which he took his pictures.

Then the Co-Pilot on Capt John D Davis' crew, he was assigned to the TG position as Wing Observer because 401st Sq Operations Officer Major James MacPartlin flew in Davis' lead ship that day. Morey assumes his TG position provided an ideal time to take a camera along. It



**DURING A RECENT NATIONAL WARPLANE MUSEUM of Geneseo, NY Airshow former 401st pilot Allan N Morey (center) was honored with the temporary award of a WWII officer's cap. Two members of the Museum, in full flight gear, flank him.**

was not a usual practice for him to do so.

The appearance of one of Morey's photos in the R/I promptly involved former ROUND TRIP TOPSY Pilot Richard T. Pressey, OR, who identified his plane in the formation.

He wrote he believes the photo was taken on the Apr 8, 1944 Oldenburg, Germany raid.

"That...day on take-off we sheared a tail wheel lock pin and were unable to retract the wheel either electrically or manually. The picture shows the tail wheel down," he says.

Roger M Comer, TX, Pressey's TTG, shares his former pilot's belief.

Hearing there was differing opinion, Pressey, who like Morey doesn't claim "perfect recall," did what other 91st BGMAers have done seeking group historical data - he contacted then Historian Hiliary "Bud" Evers.

Evers replied: "After checking and re-checking, the mission has to be the one you suggest, Oldenburg, Germany. ...this was the only mission those planes could have flown together. One or more planes were missing from all other missions. Don't believe it was a practice mission because the ball turrets were in use."

Evers also supplied a diagram of the formation identifying the pilots, planes and their eventual fate.

Pressey wrote, after receiving Evers' research results, "Your letter made me feel 10 years younger. Maybe I'm not as senile as I believed."

Col Lester R Rentmeester (Ret), FL, after calling Morey's pictures, "Just great," opines they were taken on the Apr 11, 1944 Stettin, Germany (Poland) raid.

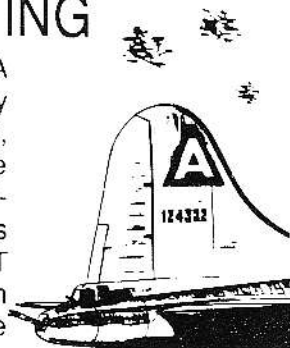
Flying the leadship, OLD FAITHFUL, LL-G 42-37958 that day, he recalls Stettin was the secondary target after Poznan. It was his crew's longest mission - 14 hours. They returned too late to witness the christening of GENERAL IKE by Gen Dwight D Eisenhower.

Rentmeester's recollection of that day, like all the others, is not adamant. His account, however, provides an example of how "vision fades." He credits the editor with

*(Continued on Page 4)*

# TAIL POST TERMINATED BY SAC COST-CUTTING

BEFORE THEY ARE BUT A memory, it is only fair to pay parting tribute to the Tail Gunners, whose position vied with the loneliness of the agile contortionists who crammed themselves into B17 Ball Turrets. (The BT position became obsolete when B29 design provided remote control of that position's guns.)



The TGer's position, however, survived until recently on the Strategic Air Command's B52 bombers. Before quoting an unidentified "obituary" to that effect, the R/I records the contributions of a few 91st BG(H) TGers.

Gerald E McDowell, author of *A TAIL GUNNER'S TALE*, recently reviewed by the R/I, was surprised when the R/I credited him with possibly saving lives by withholding fire upon Me 109s following his disabled plane. He believes he could have downed one but the other, he was certain, would have riddled his already hopelessly crippled plane before he could draw another "bead" upon it. Because of his discretion his HELLS BELLE crewmates survived the war as POWs.

Col Lester F. Rentmeester (Ret) 401st, FL, recalls one of his TGer's contributions which more than likely saved the lives of two 401st Sq crews. During the Apr 11, '44 Stettin, Germany raid LACKIN SHACKIN, LLL-K, piloted by Frank G Ammann, was hit by fighter fire. Out of control, Ammann's plane was reported by TGer "Flip" Lunt as being six feet behind his position – and ready to shred their tail assembly into "chaff" with its props. Putting on power, Rentmeester distanced OLD FAITHFUL, his plane that day, from Ammann's faltering Fort. Recovering control, Ammann and his crew made it safely to Sweden and internment.

Elsewhere in this issue is a photo of the restored MEMPHIS BELLE in Memphis, TN. Nine swastikas adorn its nose. TGer John P Quinlan accounted for five of them while defending the BELLE. During a subsequent Pacific Theatre tour on B29s he accounted for three more enemy aircraft, making him one of WWII's Top Gunner Aces.

Many other tales of TGer contributions abound. They should be cherished because there will be no more, as the following news story, from an unidentified source, indicates:

## END OF AN END

The era of the tail gunner, who sat in the back to protect the plane's rear, has come to an end as the Strategic Air Command announced the position would be eliminated on its B52 bombers. The cost-cutting move takes effect Oct 1, said TSgt Alan Dockery, a spokesman at SAC headquarters near Omaha, NE. For Albert E Conder, 65, and about 1,000 other members of Air Force Gunners Association, who once flew backward and stared at

approaching enemies with a pointed gun, the news marked the end of an era. "It was a fantastic view," Conder said.

Editor's Note: Former 323rd Sq Tail Gunner Marion C Hoffman's book, *A VIEW FROM THE TAIL, THE LAST MISSION*, released two years ago, has been read by the R/I but not yet reviewed. On Cecil G McConnell's crew, he recalls training, combat, social times and, finally, the bleakness associated with being a POW. He says his prose is, "Hoosieresque."

No matter. His recollection of places, incidents and times constantly revive memories for the reader as pleasantly as "Pene's Pub" anecdotes told in the varied accents prevalent throughout the States.

His 145 page, paperback book is privately sold. His address is 5950 Cindy Drive, Dayton, OH 45449-3207.

## 91st WAR FORMATION PHOTOS

*(Continued from Page 3)*

being with his crew on that mission. The editor, whose "murky memory" matches anyone's, checked his mission card. It indicates he never flew in Apr 1944. That was probably the time he was grounded with pleurisy. Eugene J Letalien, CA, probably flew his LW position that day.

Charles T Bell, MD, who writes like a careful, considerate historian, recently saw one of Morey's photos. Involved in another writing project for the R/I, he took time to write it a note.

After studying the photo a bit, he wrote, "This picture is not of the Oldenburg mission. The weather was clear all the way." (Editor's note: Bell brought a plane back that day on 2 1/2 engines and got a battlefield promotion to 1Lt.)

Meanwhile, in England, Rex Poulton, author of a forthcoming book on OLD FAITHFUL, has been begging and pressing numerous 91st BGMAers for the date Morey took the pictures so some may be included in his book with full data. John Fleming, in Scotland, seeks the same for his 91st BG(H) memorial display at Culzean Castle.

Probably there are other communications and opinions pertaining to the photos in the R/I's cluttered files. If so, they will surface.

The R/I has been described as an important, original source of 91st BG(H) history by former Historian Evers. It hopes the availability of Morey's photos at the Memphis Reunion will help it continue the data accumulation begun by its first editor, Paul C Burnett, AL, and all those members who have since contributed copy. Also, it is hoped Memphis, TN Reunion attendance will deplete the limited stock of Morey's photos and the purchasers will discuss when Morey, in addition to more pressing duties, had time to take memorable pictures.

The price at the Reunion will be: \$5.50 per picture or \$15.00 for all three. Unsold photos will be stocked as 91st BGMA PX items at the same price – plus as yet undetermined postage and handling costs.

In the meantime, the R/I welcomes continuing opinions and data from members who wish to "keep the record straight."

## ENGLISH AUTHOR SAYS

(Continued from page 1)

painting of OLD FAITHFUL, recently completed by Cox, to Curator Vince Hemmings for display in The Tower Museum.

"In the distance, in the painting, are the hangars faithfully reproduced as they appear from the 401st Sq dispersal side of the airfield," Poulton says.

Poulton also welcomed the opportunity to contribute new memorabilia to The Tower Museum.

Former 401st Sq Navigator Howard Groonbridge, FL, loaned Poulton a war-time map pertaining to the Apr 24, 1944 Metz, France raid to assist his research. Poulton, as he had promised Groonbridge, had the map, along with associated photos and text, framed for Tower Museum display.

Presented to the museum during "RRR" activities, it is but a bit of OLD FAITHFUL's history. Groonbridge miraculously survived when an 88mm shell smashed

through OLD FAITHFUL's nose, through his table and the map and, crashing through the astrodome, exploded immediately outside. Shrapnel from it re-entered the plane, wounding the pilot, Charles Price. The co-pilot, Jack Oates, flew OLD FAITHFUL home. Groonbridge happily helped Poulton make the presentation.

An RAF Canberra bomber, making a number of fly bys, helped revive past memories but, Poulton believes, one "stop" in the "RRR" tour was too personal to even permit observation of its effect upon participants. The tour coaches, for awhile, parked at the end of the main Bassingbourn runway – the precise spot where many tour group members "began those perilous combat missions into enemy airspace."

"I didn't look, but I bet silent tears were shed as those men sat there in the coaches at the end of that runway," he says.

Poulton, who was born after the war, closed his account

(Continued on Page 6)

## THIS IS YOUR OFFICIAL 91st BGMA 1992 BALLOT

THE NOMINATIONS FOR 91st BGMA 1992-94 OFFICES ARE CLOSED. FOUR OF THE PRESENT OFFICIALS, RE-NOMINATED WITHOUT OPPOSITION, WILL CONTINUE IN THEIR PRESENT POSTS. THEY ARE: PRES CHARLES R HACKSTOCK, 1ST VICE PRES HAROLD E JOHNSON, SEC ASAY B JOHNSON AND HISTORIAN EARL C PATE, JR.

HAVING SERVED TWO CONSECUTIVE TERMS IN THEIR POSTS, 2ND VICE PRES JAMES M BACON AND TREA CHARLES V WELBES, DUE TO BY-LAW PROVISIONS, WERE INELIGIBLE TO RUN AGAIN. THE

EDITOR, RUDY MALKIN, DUE TO PRESENTLY PRESSING MATTERS, WITHHELD A FOURTH CONSECUTIVE TERM COMMITMENT.

THE OPEN POSTS WILL BE FILLED BY PRES HACKSTOCK BY APPOINTING QUALIFIED VOLUNTEERS.

SINCE THERE WILL BE NO NOMINATIONS OR BALLOTS ACCEPTED AT THE MEMPHIS MEETING IT IS IMPORTANT THAT MEMBERS USE THIS BALLOT TO VOTE UPON THE FOLLOWING PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE:

### PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE

Article VII, OFFICERS:

Delete 5th sentence – No elected officer shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in any office with the exception of the Editor and the Historian.

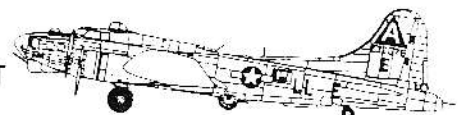
**VOTE!**

YES \_\_\_\_\_

NO \_\_\_\_\_

After voting be sure to sign and print your name and date in the spaces provided on the back, clip, fold, stamp and mail.

PRESERVE  
OUR PROUD PAST





## Folded Wings

• PHIFER, CARL R, 324th, Rt 1, Box 79, Doyle, TN 38559, Apr 11, 1992. Phifer was the navigator on Bob Cran's crew which arrived at Bassingbourn just before D-Day. Reported by Walter S Carpenter, AZ, who describes himself as the crew's "Bob-Aimer."

• SMITH, LAWRENCE C, 324th, Rt 2, Box 49, Chouteau, OK 74337, May 9, 1992. Reported by his wife, Esther Lee, who is now an AM.

• TOWNSEND, John A, 324th, 49 Airview Dr, Coldwater, MI 49036, Mar 1992. Reported by his daughter.

• YOUNG, WILLIAM A, LTC (Ret), 323rd, 607 Fountain Av, Redlands, CA 92373, Sept 5, 1991. Reported by his wife, Jean, who is now an AM.

## NEWEST LIFE MEMBER

EMIL YEZDIMIR, LM, Jonestown, PA

## REUNION

A 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IS SCHEDULED by the Eighth Air Force Historical Society in Louisville, KY on Oct 6 thru 11, 1992. The special anniversary commemoration of the 8th AF's WWII participation is the 18th Annual Reunion of the sponsoring group. For details, write: 8th AF Reunion, PO Box 1304, Hallandale, FL 33008-1304.

## ENGLISH AUTHOR SAYS

(Continued from Page 5)

with praise for the "wonderful job Vince Hemmings and his colleagues are doing in The Tower Museum." For one as deeply immersed in Bassingbourn history as Poulton, that's a compliment.



THIS BALLOT IS FOR THE SOLE USE OF 91st BGMA LIFE (LM) AND ACTIVE FULL MEMBERS (FM) WHOSE DUES ARE CURRENT. THERE WILL BE NO

NOMINATIONS OR BALLOTS ACCEPTED AT THE REUNION IN MEMPHIS, TN.



## THIS IS YOUR OFFICIAL 91st BGMA 1992 BALLOT

Please fold your Ballot on indicated arrows so that the address shows, fasten together (Staple or Scotch tape),

affix a 29 cent stamp and mail so Ballot is received by August 25, 1992.

YOUR FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed)

AND DATE \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICIAL BALLOT

FIRST CLASS MAIL

PLEASE PLACE  
29  
CENT  
STAMP HERE

91st BG Memorial Assn.

HAROLD E. JOHNSON  
2021 PORTER WAY  
STOCKTON, CA 95207

TO:

ELECTION COMMITTEE  
91st BGMA REUNION 1992  
PO BOX 17182  
MEMPHIS, TN 38187-0182

BALLOTS MUST BE  
COMPLETED AND RETURNED BY  
August 25, 1992.

STAPLE HERE

## IMPROMPTU BASSINGBOURN

(Continued from Page 8)

from a light rain, I gave up on the bus and walked to the nearest Pub for a pint of Bitter. The barkeeper remarked that I must be a Yank. I said, yes, I had been stationed at Basingbourn, etc, etc, and intended to see the old base. He explained the buses were irregular on Sunday and there were no taxis on Sunday. No, he didn't know where I could rent a bicycle. So, I had another pint.

The barkeeper then told me about another Pub that was "owned or visited" by a Yank who had married a local girl and settled down in Royston. I walked to that Pub and inquired about the "Yank." While I was sipping another glass of Bitter (a half pint this time) I was told the Yank wasn't there and wasn't expected.

"Probably Sunday," I muttered.

I thought about walking to the base. I recall doing that in '43 or '44. But then, I was 20 and in better shape. What's more, after all the Bitter, I doubted I could have made it to Kneesworth Hall – the manor house that was used by the 91st for guest quarters and other administrative purposes. Since it was getting late and the weather wasn't improving I walked back to the train station and caught a train to Cambridge.

At Cambridge I found the University Arms Hotel in the center of town where I used to stop in the "old days." The dining room was serving dinner. I had a fine meal of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.

With food and drink under my belt, I headed back to London. Funny, on the train, I thought more about the frustrations of the day than the nostalgia I had sought. With resignation came the realization that Royston is still a small country town. You can't expect the conveniences of a big city. The war ended in '45; half the population isn't old enough to remember it.

There are friends in Royston and nearby who preserve the memory of Basingbourn both as a former RAF base and an American base. They give of their time voluntarily on special occasions for memorial dedications, maintain the Tower Museum at the base and conduct tours for visiting 91st BGMAers and others most anytime, I hear, if alerted in advance.

The next time I visit Basingbourn, I'll make advance arrangements with Mr Vince Hemmings, Museum Curator, 48 Meadow Way, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 3HX, England.

But, unless Hemmings or one of his fine volunteer helpers say, "OK!" – it'll never again be on a Sunday.

### HELP WANTED

INFORMATION IS SOUGHT ON THE 323rd SQ. mascot "Amitol." An exhibit dedicated to AF unit mascots is being assembled by Charles G Worman, Chief, Research Division, USAF Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. Former 323rd Sq pilot Philip G Mack has been requested to assemble "Amitol" data for the early 1993 exhibit.

Mack recalls seeing the goat outside his quarters from Sept '43 to Mar '44. Mack is aware of the data and

references to it in the Apr '72 and July '88 R/Is and his appearance in Birdsong's book, STORMY WEATHER, a B17.

Any recollections of "Amitol" by anyone will be welcomed by Mack. His address is: 5436 116th Place SE, Bellevue, WA 98006. Phone: 206-746-2303.

## POTPOURRI

U.S.A.

(Continued from page 8)

the exception of '67 (one issue) and '74 and '76 (three issues each) the other years contain four issues. Members ordering the '74 and/or '76 volumes will also receive the lone '67 edition.

- Xeroxed copies are available through the 91st BGMA's PX at \$7.00 per year (four copies), postage and S&H costs included. Overseas orders require an additional \$2.00. Please specify the yr/ys when ordering from Trea Charles V Welbes, 210 Leatherwood Dr, Mountain Home, AR 72653.

- NUMEROUS MEMBERS WHILE ORDERING 91st BG(H) T-shirts (advertised in the Apr '92 R/I) have indicated they'll wear theirs as the uniform-of-the-day at the Memphis, TN Reunion – particularly at the Memorial Dedication ceremonies. That's a great idea. Those T-shirts still available may be ordered from Trea Charles V Welbes whose address appears earlier.

Sizes are: S, M, L, XL and XXL. Total cost per shirt is \$8.50 with the following exceptions: XXL orders require an additional \$1.00 for S&H; all overseas orders require an additional \$2.00 for S&H. Specify size and quantity when ordering.

- A PARAGRAPH ON HOW TO OBTAIN LONG OVERDUE WWII medals in the Apr '92 R/I has proven productive. Charles F. Busa, 324th, who submitted the information, reports receipt of his and feels his grandson will treasure them. Paul C Bara, Levittown, PA acting on Busa's information, has also received his. Busa and Bara both submitted samples of the forms required. They may be obtained from: National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records) 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100, C/O Ralph W McCann, Chief, Air Force Reference Branch. Bara has offered to assist anyone having difficulty. His phone number is: 215-945-2161.

- THE BERLIN AIRLIFT VETERANS ASSO CONVENTION will be held in the St Anthony Hotel, San Antonio, TX on Sept 27-30, 1992. Further info: Bill Gross, BAVA, PO Box 612, South Vienna, OH 45369.

## SUPPORT UNITS TO BE

(Continued from Page 2)

obtain the 40 percent savings on applicable round-trip coach fares and 5 percent savings from the lowest applicable round trip fare available at the time of booking, the caller must cite NW's contract number with the 91st BGMA. The contract number is: 91st BG Contract #08934.

## IMPROMPTU BASSINGBOURN RETURN DISAPPOINTING

*DEADLINE PRESSURE PERTAINING TO THE MAILING of 91st BGMA Election Ballots dictated prior preparation of this R/I's editorial copy. Consequently reporting on the recent 91st BGMA "RRR" is held to a minimum — despite the fact it is all good news!*

*Whether another opportunity will arise again for members to return to England on an organized, conducted tour is not known. It is known, however, that many members, for various reasons, unable to participate in the May 5-13, '92 "RRR," are planning individual returns. The following article by Maj Philip G Mack (Ret), former 91st BG(H) pilot, should impress upon them the necessity of advance arrangements.*

BY PHILIP G MACK

THE OPENING SCENE IN THE MOVIE, "TWELVE O'clock High," shows a middle-aged gentlemen in a homburg getting off a bicycle at an abandoned airfield in England. Staring keen-eyed into the distance, he soon hears deep-throated engines running up and ground vehicles lumbering by. Eventually the scene reverts to an earlier time. The base is operational. A bombing mission is in progress.

Who, having served at an 8th Air Force Bomber Base in England, hasn't pictured himself in that scene and longed to visit his old base? Well, a few years ago, I had a free weekend in London during a business trip and decided to go to Basingbourn.

I chose Sunday as a good day.

Remembering how I used to do it, I caught the Underground to Kings Cross Station, went up to the window, bought a ticket, and shortly was on a train to Royston — alone.

Some old memories from the cobwebs of my mind emerged as familiar scenes passed by during the train ride. There has been a lot of changes, but the town names are the same: Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, and, of course, Royston.

The Royston train station hasn't changed much, except that the signs advertise new products. I didn't see anything about "Bovril."

I climbed the stairs to street level. It was mid-March, cool, and the cloud cover was 10/10ths with low stratus clouds. Seeing no taxis around the station I walked to the center of town. There were none there either. Asking how I might get to Basingbourn I was told to take a bus; one came every hour on Sunday. I was pointed in the direction of the bus stop.

Cold, after a two hours' wait, and beginning to get damp

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### 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.

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• MANY 91st BGMAers AFTER COMPLETING B17 TOURS went on to Pacific service in B29s. The Boeing Co is sponsoring a B29 50th Anniversary Celebration on Aug 14, 15 and 16, 1992 at the Museum of Flight on Boeing Field in Seattle, WA to honor that plane. Friday, Aug 14th activities, including a light supper, will be dedicated to those who operated the B29. Admission for all three days will be free for attending veterans and their families. Various Wings, Groups, Squadrons, etc will have individual events on either Thursday or Saturday evening.

Further information may be obtained from Karl Crosswhite, Co-Chairman, 206-655-2034. He needs the names of accompanying family members to arrange flightline passes, etc.

Paul Friedrich is in charge of handling BG coordination. Write: B29 50th Anniversary Committee, PO Box 3999, M/S 17-28, Seattle, WA 98124-2499.

• THE DONATION OF THE LATE COL PAUL G McDuffee's carefully preserved file of R/I's to the 91st BGMA by his widow, Mary, has made it possible to fill increasing requests for back issues.

McDuffee's file covers the Oct '67-Oct '90 period. With

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