

# The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



SUPPORTING UNITS



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol 26 No. 4

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Oct 1993

## "REACH OUT" EFFORT RESPONSE GRATIFYING

THE CONCERN AND CAMARADERIE THAT COMPELLED 91st BG(H) personnel to await and count Basingbourn's returning planes survives.

Most flight crew members recall falling or faltering Forts behind their steadily droning formations. Many ground crewmen also recall times when "their" plane and crew did not return. Subsequently filed MACRs at best provided hope that missing friends had survived.

The late Maj Gen Stanley T Wray, original 91st BG(H) C/O, recalled those distant times in his June 1963 Silver Altar Bowl Dedication speech in the Chapel of the American Military Cemetery in Madingley, Cambridge, England.

"I can remember a Squadron Commander sitting on a fence out back of Operations some two hours after the mission was over; not one of his eight aircraft returned," Stanely said.

However, war-time pressures precluded dwelling upon such losses - despite understandable, attendant grief and often accompanying unjustifiable guilt.

A carry over of that concern continues in the 91st BGMA to this day.

A recent decision by those aware of "Missing" members (Delinquents - or Non-Dues Payers) produced remarkable results. The "Delinquents" or "Non-Dues Payers" were designated "Stragglers." A 132 word long letter, produced by Sec/Trea Asay B Johnson, was subsequently mailed to the 221 computer identified Association "Stragglers."

Of the 102 responses 86 renewed their membership!

Twelve responses reported deaths; two former members replied but elected not to return and two others' mailings were returned by the postal service stamped, "Not Forwardable."

The just-a-bit below 50 per cent response to the total mailing and re-activism of 85 per cent of the memberships of those responding augers well for the 91st BGMA's future.

Any bulk mailer would be stunned by such a response.

The R/I is privy to only a few of the responses received. Some follow:

One overseas "Straggler," a long time Associate Member, regrets that since recent retirement he cannot afford non-essential expenses.

The wife of another "Straggler" thanked Johnson "for reminding us." Her husband, disabled despite open heart surgery, is "unable to do anything." Despite the pressures upon her she sent a check to restore "them" to the 91st BGMA roster.

Another "Straggler," declining to renew his membership, expressed continuing pride in being a former 91ster. "Circumstances, health and finances," however, preclude him and his wife from attending association affairs.

"If you can't spend a few hours with old friends - what's the point?", he wrote.

The affirmative responses of the 86 "Stragglers" assures their continued listing in the next 91st BGMA Directory.

Another "Reach Out" effort to the 119 "Stragglers" who did not respond is under consideration, according to Pres Charles R Hackstock.

In the meantime, the little publicized 91st BGMA policy of continuing the membership of those unable to afford non-essential expenditures continues. A note to that effect

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SEEKS FAMILY OF 324th's "KIA" LORD

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION EDITOR Robert S Patton seeks contact with surviving family members of LTC Marvin D Lord who was KIA along with the entire crew of the 324th's un-named Fort L DF, No 4297632 on the Feb 3, '45 Berlin, Germany raid.

The late, legendary Col "Many" T Klette was devastated by the loss because he had reluctantly agreed to let Lord substitute for him if inclement weather cleared while he (Klette) was on a short London leave.

The 91st BG(H) MACR 2232 records Lord's plane's fall in the following manner:

"Observed by 1/Lt R C Goheke 0723606. About 10 seconds after bombs away A/C hit by flak in waist resulting in explosion. It disintegrated from horizontal stabilizer to trailing edge of wing. Tail floated back through formation. Nose section dived. No smoke or flames. No chutes seen."

The Geographic's Patton seeks contact with Lord's family for additional data on the 91st BG(H) for an article being prepared by that venerable magazine. (Details regarding the above appeared in the July '93 R/I.)

Any 91st BGMAer with any clue regarding the whereabouts of Lord's surviving family is urgently requested to contact Robert S Patton, Illustration Editor, National Geographic Magazine, PO Box 98012, Wash, DC 20077-9762. He may also be contacted by calling: 202-857-7197.

Editor's Note: LTC Lord's war-time home address was 2902 S Logan Av, Milwaukee, WI, according to information supplied by Paul J Limm, CA.

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY CHARLES R HACKSTOCK

### HELP WANTED

#### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION COMMITTEE

Members are urgently required for the forthcoming Bi-Annual 91st BGMA Election of Officers. Service on those important committees is not burdensome. Participation does not detract from Reunion activity, it enriches it.

Anyone wishing to contribute to required 91st BGMA business by serving on the above committees are requested to contact me promptly. Address correspondence to: Pres Charles R Hackstock, 91st BGMA, 31520 118th CT SE, Auburn, WA 98002-3692. The phone number is: 206-351-0136.

While attending a recent State Fair this writer was attracted to a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) booth. Those manning the booth were instrumental in having "Uncle Sam" honor an old debt to him. A few weeks after the VFW booth contact a packet of medals, earned during his service but never awarded, arrived in the mail. In addition to the surprisingly quick response were the medals which accompanied the numerous ribbons most of us wore but never realized a medal accompanied them.

The total cost incurred by this recipient was the little time it took to fill out the provided VFW form, a stamp and the price of a Foreign Medal which subsequently had to be purchased through a military supplies firm.

Well, getting all those overdue decorations sure stirred memories. Hopefully, in the years to come, they'll stir questions in our family's youngsters not only about "Grand-Pop" but also about the 91st BG(H) in which he served. Those wishing to leave a similar legacy are advised to contact any local VFW Post and request details on how to get all the medals they earned while serving their country before people began asking what their country would do for them first.

## ATTENTION!

ALL P-X ITEMS LISTED in the Jan 1993 R/I are again available for sale excepting the Allan N Morey formation photos. Members, however, are urged not to order G William Potter's "Before the Vision Fades" at this time because he has completed new material to accompany that item. Pricing details are planned for inclusion in the next R/I. Order all P-X Items from Sec/Trea Assay B Johnson, 590 Oloha Dr, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403-4559.



## 441st SUB DEPOT'S SIGN SURVIVED - AWHILE



THE ABOVE PHOTO, TAKEN ABOUT 1950, WAS THE SOLE Remaining evidence of the 441st Sub Depot's presence at Basingbourn during WWII. The 441st made major repairs on battle damaged 91st BG(H) Forts. The shop, run by Sgt Jim Bedwell (deceased) also repaired the gas engines used on base portable electric generators and those used to run portable air compressors required by Sheet Metal crews to operate rivet guns in the dispersal areas. (Photo: Courtesy of W W Hill, a former 441ster whose "...a Little Crazy" volunteering to fly missions was squelched because the 441st always desperately needed civilian learned plane restoration skills throughout the 91st BG(H)'s WWII operations.)

## "REACH OUT" EFFORT

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to Pres Hackstock, 31520 118th Ct, SE, Auburn, WA 98002-3692 or Sec/Trea Assay B Johnson, 590 Aloha Dr, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403-4559, will suffice to keep them on the association roster.

Responses to Johnson's letter confirmed the deaths of the following 91st BGMAers. No further details are available.

BEETY, JOHN W, 324th, Bloomington, MN.  
BROOKS, THOMAS W, JR, 323rd, Midlothian, VA.  
GRILL, LEONARD, J, 855th, Minneapolis, MN.  
HUBERTS, JOSEPH J, 401st, Chicago, IL.  
MOYER, EDGAR M, 324th, Naples, FL.  
NELSON, PAUL, 401st, Dallas, TX.  
QUARLES, HY, JR, 401st, Columbus, MS.  
RICHARDS, WILLIAM P, 401st, Moore, OK.  
ROBERTSON, GEORGE D, 323rd, Marshfield, MO.  
ROGERS, LEONARD R, 322nd, Mesa, AZ.  
SIKORSKI, EUGENE C, 323rd, Scranton, PA.

Mailings to KECK, WILBUR, 3463 Graystone CR, Chamblee, GA 30341 and MAGREE, LOUIS H, LM, 323rd, Boque Chitto Woods, Tylertown, MS 39667 were returned, stamped, "No Forwarding Address." Information on the two is sought by Sec/Trea Johnson whose address appears earlier in this article.



## SOME "KINDA - SORTA" BOOK AND ARTICLE REVIEWS

**FOUR PUBLICATIONS UNFOLD MORE 91st BG(H) LORE**

BY RUDY MALKIN

THE GIANT PUBLISHING HOUSE, SIMON AND Schuster, is mired in controversy concerning its publication of "The Last Brother," a book about Sen Ted Kennedy. The issue is the author, Joe McGinnis, who never interviewed Kennedy, omnisciently presumes to know the undeniably imperfect Massachusetts' senators' private thoughts during his less than exemplary life.

The authors of two new books pertaining to the 91st BG(H), in different degrees, use the same technique criticized writer McGinnis employed. They, to, "think" for their subjects. However, the authenticity of their omniscient writing convinces because both lived lives like their subjects. The authors' WWII survival permits them to provide empathetic accounts of the inner and last thoughts of two 91st BG(H) members who contributed to our proud past.

The books referred to are: "DEATH OF A B-17" by

Jackson S Wallace and "SERENADE TO THE BLUE LADY, THE STORY OF BERT STILES," by Robert Floyd Cooper. (Wallace writes about Bob Wylie, the 401st's THE KEYSTONE MAMA pilot and Cooper writes about Stiles, a 401st Sq co-pilot whose promising writing career ended while flying a fighter pilot tour after completing his 91st BG(H) stint.)

The R/I recommends equal attention be given other following reviews pertaining to other publications recording parts of the 91st BG(H)'s proud past. It goes without saying that an eight page, quarterly news bulletin can never hope to publish all the data they contain.

Special thanks are extended to authors Jackson S Wallace, Robert F Cooper, Lester F Rentmeester and Memphis Belle Memorial Asso member Harry Friedman, M.D. for providing the R/I with copies of the publications reviewed.

**SERENADE TO THE BLUE LADY,  
THE STORY OF BERT STILES**

Robert Floyd Cooper

30 College Park

Davis, CA 95616

243 pages, 9 x 6

Paper Back, Bound, Illustrated

"THIS IS AS REAL AS IT GETS," ONE REVIEWER AND author of successful WWII books says in his endorsement of Robert Floyd Cooper's story of Bert Stiles, the 91st BG(H)'s "might-have-been Hemingway" whose untimely death left an empty area on the shelves of swelling, recorded history of WWII aerial combat history.

At the time of his death Stiles, in addition to having completed a 35 mission tour as the "self-doubting" co-pilot and fraternity brother of the 401st Sq's Sam Newton, was a recognized, maturing American writer.

Before his arrival at Basingbourn his restless drive to write had interrupted his college attendance (where he met Newton) and had resulted in publication in widely circulated magazines of the time. Among them were: The Saturday

his civilian writing success suddenly "mundane." He joined the USAF - but continued to write.

His increasing reputation as a prominent writer was confirmed by a Nov '44 war-time radio news announcement of his combat death at age 24.

The 401st's then-Capt Lester F Rentmeester, shortly returned to the States after his tour completion, and his wife, Jeannine, visiting Stiles' parents in Denver at the time, shared that devastating news with them.

While Flying his 35 mission tour, mostly with Newton on COOL PAPP and TIMES A-WASTIN, Stiles had written the classic "SERENADE TO THE BIG BIRD." Published after the war, the book revealed his friends' and his family's loss was not a private one.

The war had cost America a new member of its select writers and poets.

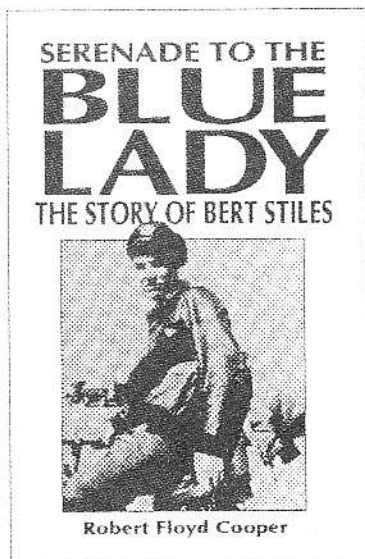
The author of this book, Robert Floyd Cooper, was a B-17 co-pilot with the 385th BG. Intrigued after reading Stiles' original "Serenade" in 1975, he began researching and writing on Stiles some twelve years later. His ensuing research was so extensive that his book could have been written by Stiles - had Stiles survived the war.

"Few thoughts herein did **not** originate with Bert Stiles," Cooper's foreword states. Stiles' journals, personal letters and quotes from his book are augmented by extensive interviews of those close to Stiles.

Among former 91st BG(H) veteran contributors are Stiles' former pilots Newton and Jack Green; former Co-Pilot House resident Jim Fletcher, TTG Gil Bradley and Richard Pressey, whose poem, "To A Fallen Friend," originally appearing in the R/I, aptly closes Cooper's tribute to Stiles.

How did Stiles write to justify his potential longevity as an American writer along with such WWII survivors as

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Evening Post, American Magazine, Liberty and the Writer. (He rejected a Hollywood Paramount Studios writing job to further perfect his short story writing.) Pearl Harbor made

## FOUR PUBLICATIONS UNFOLD MORE 91st BG(H) LORE

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Jones, Michener, Uris and Wouk?

According to University of California at Davis Counseling Psychologist Sumner Morris, he recorded "an appreciation of the beauty and sanctity of life."

Stiles also recorded brutal war - the kind that confronted flight and ground crews alike. Regarding the removal of a mortally wounded crew man from another returned Fort, he wrote, "He was so slippery with blood, they dropped him once, one guy told us."

After he completed his 91st BG(H) tour he and fellow 401sters Capt Rentmeester and 1/Lt Bill Behrend negotiated with the 339th, a P-51 Fighter Gp, for another tour. Stiles and Behrend were accepted; Rentmeester was rejected because "Wingmen" could not be "Captains."

Had author Cooper written before Behrend's death his re-construction of Stiles' fatal plunge would have included his friend Behrend's frantic, radioed, "Pull up Bert! Pull up BERT!" as he watched Stiles too closely pursue a downed enemy fighter, according to Rentmeester's recollections of post-war talks with Behrend. Behrend completed his P-51 tour credited with at least two enemy aircraft.

**DEATH OF A B-17**  
Jackson S Wallace  
Carmel River Publishing  
PO Box 656  
Carmel Valley, CA 93924  
38 pages, 5 1/2 x 8, Some Photos  
Paper Back, Bound

THE 91ST BG(H) LOST ITS COMPLETE INVENTORY Of B-17s four times over, the most losses of any ETO based BG during WWII. This slim book tells the partial story of the 401st's KEYSTONE MAMA, one of the lost planes, while providing a unique, believable and intimate account of MAMA's pilot Bob Wylie's time with the 91st BG(H).



Death of a B-17

Jackson S. Wallace

During the May 19, '44 Berlin, Germany raid Wylie's plane was the only 91st BG(H) casualty. The MACR 4829 pertaining to it consists of:

"Observed by S/Sgt W L Sexton, 38444147. A/C hit by flak in left wing tip, took off 5 or 6 ft. Pulled to right over his element and went into a vertical dive into clouds at 16500 ft. Occurred just before bombs away. No chutes were seen."

In May of 1992, during an annual meeting of the

Thus far nothing has been said about Cooper's writing. Writing about Stiles following his first hit (after substantiating Stiles had insisted on flying that day despite detected fatigue) Cooper says Stiles thought, "...the poor son-of-a-bitch, probably about twenty years old, dead or dying now, and I did it to him. What a lousy war."

But for the type face changes (Stiles' writing appears in smaller point size) there is no readily discernible difference between Stiles' and Cooper's crisp prose. Cooper's engrossing book should prove to be the only lasting and convincing sequel to Stiles' "SERENADE TO THE BIG BIRD."

Paul Limm, former 401st navigator and active 91st BGMAer, never met Stiles. He recalls hearing much about him at Bassingbourn. After reading Cooper's book he congratulated him on "a biography that really brings the subject to life."

"Serenade to the Blue Lady" may be ordered from the author, Robert F Cooper, 30 College Park, Davis, CA 95616. \$12.95 plus \$2 for 4th Class Mailing or \$12.95 plus \$3 for UPS Delivery. California residents add 7.25% sales tax.

Sigma, Sigma, Sigma Fraternity (of which Wylie was a member) Wylie was recalled as times before. His friends, again struck by the fact that no further information other than his service death was available, voted that the author, a close fraternity friend of Wylie and former AF pilot, should "pursue the matter."

Wallace, a retired Col, subsequently delved deep into available historical files for data. His pre-war, close relationship with Wylie resulted in a book "by Wylie" instead of a book "about Wylie."

"Death of a B-17" is written as though access to Wylie's casual conversations, private thoughts and even confidential discussions between others when Wylie was not present is, somehow, possible after almost 50 years.

But Wallace was a close friend of Wylie - he knew him well. Since Wallace was also a war-time bomber pilot, it is plausible to assume some of the "thoughts and feelings" he ascribes to Wylie were experienced and shared by him and a never-to-be-known total of other flying personnel. It is certain many veterans, while reading this book, will recall their own mind-set while they did what Wylie did.

The book begins with Wylie wrestling with the unexpressible. In order to hide what gnawed within him he kept his hands in his pockets to conceal their tremor. He was nearing his 26th birthday and had completed nine of his required 25 missions.

He empathized with one of his crew members, a married man with children, who visibly was not coping with his share of the stress. The other crew members wanted him replaced. Wylie, through 401st C/O Maj McPartlin, arranged a session for the gunner with the Flight Surgeon.

Confronted by the Flight Surgeon with the question

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## FOUR PUBLICATIONS UNFOLD MORE 91st BG(H) LORE

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regarding his probable fear of flying missions, the gunner replied, "Maybe so, but if I have to fly, I want to fly with Lieutenant Wylie. He is a fine man and I trust his flying."

Since he admitted "freezing up" and being unable to operate his gun during an earlier mission, it was decided his problem would be pursued further after he flew the next day's mission with Wylie and his crew.

The mission was rough. KEYSTONE MAMA, for the tenth consecutive time suffered battle damage. Some 91st BG(H) planes did not return. MAMA's crew saw them fall. One exploded.

During a pause in the seemingly ceaseless action Wylie deliberately raised a gloved hand to see how badly it shook. He was astonished. It "was steady as a rock."

His anxiety problem was under control and would remain so. His problem gunner's dilemma was also resolved on that mission. Serious flak wounds terminated his flight duty.

Wylie promptly reported his gunner's wounding to Maj McPartlin and requested any records concerning the man's fear of flying be expunged from his record.

"Moral Fibre" was an intimidating phrase at the time. Wylie transcended the application of such rote judgement upon his crew man. He recommended he be awarded a DFC in addition to his honorably earned Purple Heart. He had been courageous, Wylie knew.

After a leave in London and a few more missions he and his crew faced their 13th. Wylie did not involve himself in the discussions that would have labeled it "12A." He just

wanted to add another mission to the required 25 total.

KEYSTONE MAMA was six and a half minutes from the target when flak ripped off her right (left?) wing, short of the number four engine.

Uncontrollable gyrations pinned him to his seat as he tried vainly to assist his co-pilot, Joseph J Kozina, who was being thrown about the cockpit.

Kozina, the sole survivor of MAMA's fall, later recorded some details of what transpired in the cockpit. He was never able to explain his escape because, while unconscious, he was somehow thrown from the plane. Regaining consciousness while "floating in the air," he pulled his rip-cord, landed safely and was captured several days later.

Kozina, after a USAF career, died in 1973.

Writer Wallace records his friend Wylie's thoughts during that fatal fall up to the time he hopes Wylie and his still living crewmates lost consciousness, like Kozina, during their 26,800 ft fall.

Wallace and his wife practice law in Carmel CA. During his research on this book he became so enamored with the 91st that he became an Associate Member and is "proud to have even that small relationship with the Group."

He says this book is his first and last literary effort. A pity. There are so many other subjects deserving of his time and talent.

"Death of a B-17" may be ordered from the Carmel River Publishing Co, PO Box 656, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. \$6.95 each.

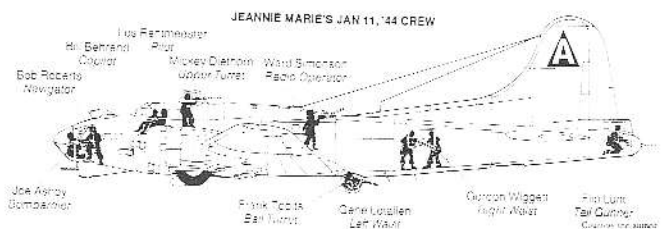
**LESTER F RENTMEESTER, "Big Brothers and Little Friends: A Memoir of the Air War Against Germany," WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY, Vol 74, No 1 - Autumn 1990, pp 30-47. Illustrated.**

LESTER F RENTMEESTER, FORMER 401ST PILOT, trained at Kearney, NE with eighteen other pilots, all subsequently assigned to the 91st BG(H) in Nov '43. He was among the eight who completed their tours.

This article is the product of occasional shelving of his primary, disciplined writing about his native state, Wisconsin. (He and his wife, Jeanne, were named "Historians of the Year" by the Outagamie County, Wisconsin Historical Society in 1992.)

In this article he gives an account of the Jan 11, '44 Brunswick Halberstadt-Oschersleben raid (during which the 91st BG(H) earned its' second Distinguished Unit Citation) and pays tribute to the "Little Friends", the P-51s and their pilots, who made possible long distance, daylight bombing.

A retired Florida Institute of Technology Public Administration professor and AF Col, his researched data prose blends indistinguishably with generous portions of his memories of 91st BG(H) personnel, the Oschersleben raid, refreshing reflections and open candidness.



Initially rejected for pilot training before "Pearl" because of flat-feet, Rentmeester, after being accepted, noted during his subsequent training all his instructors were pilots from the Pacific Theatre of Operations.

Upon arriving at Basingbourn, shortly after the disastrous Oct 14, '43 Schweinfurt 20 per cent loss raid, the puzzling absence of State-side ETO instructors was clarified for him. Few ETO flyers were completing their tours.

The only friendly gesture he recalls receiving from 91st BG(H) veteran pilots upon his arrival was an invitation to join an impromptu barber shop quartet one night in the Officers' Club. Within a week all his fellow singers were lost.

That experience added to the 401st C/O Capt J H  
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## MORE 91st BG(H) LORE

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McPartlin's statement that new crews had one chance in eleven of completing their tours, dictated his similar, subsequent "distancing" from later arrivals. (The practicality of unescorted, long range, daylight bombing was still being seriously contested by the Luftwaffe.)

There was an understandable unwillingness "to form friendships that would cause pain when we witnessed fellow-flyers disappear from the sky and saw their empty beds in the barracks," he recalls. JEANNIE MARIE, Rentmeester's plane, named after his wife, eventually was lost over Poland while flown by another crew. However, Rentmeester and his crew flew her on the Oschersleben raid when the 91st BG(H), while distinguishing itself again, lost five out of 18 planes.

While contributing to that Unit award, JEANNIE MARIE's crew witnessed P-51 pilot Maj James (Tex) Howard's single-handed disruption of a pending attack by 30 to 40 enemy fighters upon their battered formation. Though Howard subsequently received The Medal of Honor, witnesses to his heroism (Rentmeester's crew

included) "considered it an insufficient award."

Legend has it that Howard, before beginning his solitary attack, radioed his base that he had the 30 to 40 enemy plane formation "surrounded"!

Though he credits JEANNIE MARIE's survival that day to "luck", his semi-bilingualism probably contributed to their safe return. While separated from the formation he understood enough of the German fighter pilots' lingo to realize his plane was the straggler being discussed. That fore-warning accelerated JEANNIE MARIE's re-attachment to a surviving formation fragment.

Other accounts of the Oschersleben raid, in which 60 of 238 1st Air Division planes were lost, exist. Rentmeester's memoir of his crew's survival incontestably contributes to enlarged understanding of the myriad emotions and experiences of individuals involved in such desperate battles.

Copies of Rentmeester's 1990 article may, perhaps, be still available. Those interested should request information from: The Editor, Wisconsin Magazine of History, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. The R/I did its' readers a dis-service by not publishing a more prompt review of this portion of the 91st BG(H)'s proud past.

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### AIRFIELD FOCUS, 2: BASSINGBOURN

John F Hamlin & Graham M Simons

GMS Enterprises

67 Pyhill

Bretton, Petersborough

PE3 8QQ, England

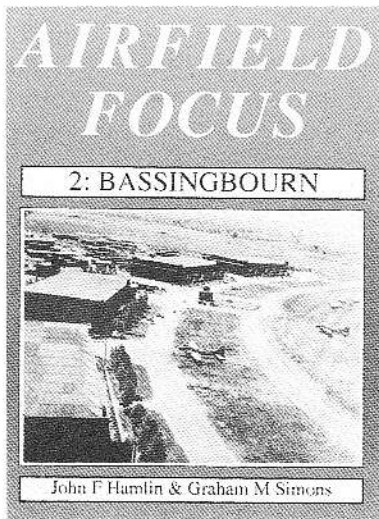
22 pages, 7 x 9 1/2, Illustrated

Paper Back, Bound

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THE MEMPHIS BELLE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION IS  
The sole USA agent of this English publication.

It records Bassingbourn history from early 1937 to the present so readably that it is a welcome, engrossing substitute for any evening's drone-like TV newscast watching.



Bassingbourn's history is divided into six parts - Phase One: 1938-1942 - A Grass Field, Phase Two: 1942-1945 - The Americans are Coming!, Phase Three: 1945-1950 - The Royal Airforce Returns!, Phase Four: 1950-1951 - A Year of Americans, Phase Five: 1951-1968 - RAF and the Jets! and Phase Six: The Army Moves In!

Data pertaining to the 91st BG(H) is prominent Capsuled

anecdotes of its' storied past abound.

Then-Col Stanley T Wray's "misunderstanding of an order!" resulting in the 91st BG(H)'s "Country Club" base occupation did more than add to the creature comforts of his men, reading suggests. (Many War Correspondents, preferring the easy access to the base - and its' comforts, wrote so much from the plush surroundings that to this day the image of a "typical" WWII bomber base was "atypical" Bassingbourn!)

Also, William Wyler, the war-time director of the documentary MEMPHIS BELLE film, chose Bassingbourn because of its' comfortable quarters. Capt Robert K Morgan and his crew's successful completion of their tour provided the nucleus of Wyler's famed film and drew additional attention to Bassingbourn and the 91st BG(H).

If, in a way, early, preferential publicity was awarded the usurpers of a prime RAF airdrome, ensuing events justified the unwavering spot-light turned upon Bassingbourn.

An account of the Mar 4, '43 Hamm, Germany raid records that the 91st BG(H) "received the first Distinguished Unit Citation to the 8th AF" for that mission. LITTLE MISS MISCHIEF's dramatic return to Bassingbourn is recorded. (The plane, cut nearly in two by flak, had BTG Sgt Ed Abdo trapped in his position.) The recording of the miraculously safe landing is followed by an account of the equally miraculous restoration of the plane by Col Frank Kambrowski and his 441st Sub Depot personnel.

For a brief book, the range of data and anecdotes astounds. Even the 91st's unauthorized last "bombing mission" is recorded.

In retaliation for the kidnapping of "Redline" a 91st BG(H) Fort dumped a half ton of horse manure on the Duxford based 78th Fighter Gp. In retaliation a lone P-51

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## Folded Wings

• CARRINGTON, HUBERT G, 401st, PO Box 43, Morehouse, MO 63868, Apr 18, 1992, suddenly. Carrington survived a heart attack some fifteen years earlier and subsequent extensive by-pass surgery. His wife, Myrtle, writes he never spoke about the war until he was visited by a former 91ster some two years ago. During their ensuing conversation she, for the first time, heard that fear was part of the two veterans' memories. Carrington's visitor, she recalls, was writing a book entitled, "Fear No More." The book title sounds familiar to the R/I despite the fact that preliminary file searching has been unproductive. Contact with the writer is requested.

• FRYE, WAYNE B, "TEX," LM, 323rd, PO Box 15060, Zapata, TX 78076, June 11, 1993. "Tex," a former navigator on WICKED WITCH, before attending the May '93 50th Anniversary MEMPHIS BELLE English tour, contributed a "Maybe 'We Were All a Little Crazy'?" article to the Apr '93 R/I. He was so pleased with its' appearance he submitted another story after returning from England. Long known as a self-confessed "teller-of-tales," the R/I was elated that he had at long last succumbed to its' badgering and was ready to record some for such posterity that the R/I provides.

Frye's pride in his participation in the 91st BG(H)'s past provided a unique new 91st BGMA Associate Member, Mrs Olwynne Wilkins, a WWII English Women's Land Army veteran. Details regarding her generous offer to those who "remember her" appear elsewhere in this issue.

Frye is survived by his daughter, Suzanne Shepherd; sons Wayne B, Jr and Theodore and Martin; six grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

His daughter, Suzanne who accompanied him on his recent return to England, writes her father's last years were spent contributing to the accuracy of recorded 91st BG(H) and, particularly, 323rd Sq history. He contributed material pertaining to the Nov 2, '44 Mersburg raid to English historian Roger Freeman in addition to other writings.

Frye's last article to the R/I explaining his simultaneous "eligibility" for a Silver Star and a Court Martial will appear shortly in an R/I.

• GADDIS, LAWRENCE E, LTC, (Ret), 324th, 852 Holly Hill Dr, Auburn, CA, 95603, Apr 17, '92. Reported by his widow, Betty, who, after his death found he had assembled a complete collection of R/I's from Oct '67 to Apr '92. Arrangements are being made to have his bulky R/I file transferred to the 91st BGMA, according to Asay B Johnson who promises further details.

• KOCH, WILLIAM, 401st, 1329 Augusta National Blvd, Winter Springs, FL 32708, Feb 7, 1993. Koch completed 25 missions as a TIG on BLOOD'N GUTS. He retired from his Uniroyal Tire Regional Manager position in 1980. He and his wife, Evelyn, after attending the '86 Tampa, '88 Chicago and '90 Seattle Reunions had to cancel '92 Memphis attendance because of ill health. He is survived by his widow, two children, George and Barbara and three grandchildren. Reported by fellow 401ster Chuck W Walker, Williamsville, NY.

• LAHOOD, LOUIS, 322nd, 3524 Linden Lane, Peoria, IL 61604, May 2, 1993. Reported by his widow.

• QUARVE, WALTER G, 401st, 1229 S Garden, Lake City, MN 55041, Apr 27, 1993. Quarve was the original bombardier on former 401st C/O John D Davis' crew. While flying with another crew battle damage dictated landing in Switzerland and internment. Impromptu phone calls after the war kept him in contact with former crew members. After one particularly late call to his former co-pilot, Allan N Morey, Syracuse, NY, he sent an unforgettable floral arrangement to Betty, Morey's wife, to apologize. Despite serious illness for the past few years Quarve and his wife hoped to renew old friendships at pending reunions. His death preceded that of Davis' navigator, Frank I Varva, reported in the July '93 R/I, by a bit more than a month.

## POTPOURRI

(Continued from page 8)

shared "Tex's" enthusiasm about his "... A LITTLE CRAZY'?" article in the Apr '93 R/I.) Ms Wilkins says she'd like to hear from any of the new 91st BGMA Memphis, TN Reunion friends she met through "Tex." Also, if any plan an English visit, she'd happily "meet them" and serve as an impromptu tourist guide to Winston Churchill's nearby Coventry home and "Biggin Hill," the Spitfire base for the "Battle of Britain."

Those able to accept her generous gesture should first write: Olwynne Wilkins, 9 Nawton Drive, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 6EP, London, England.

• URGENT! SEC/TREA ASAY B JOHNSON URGES ALL correspondence addressed to him include his full nine digit Zip Code due to local postal prodding. His address, the R/I repeats for emphasis, is: 590 Oloha Dr, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403-4559. His ten digit telephone number is: 602-453-3114.

## MORE 91st BG(H) LORE

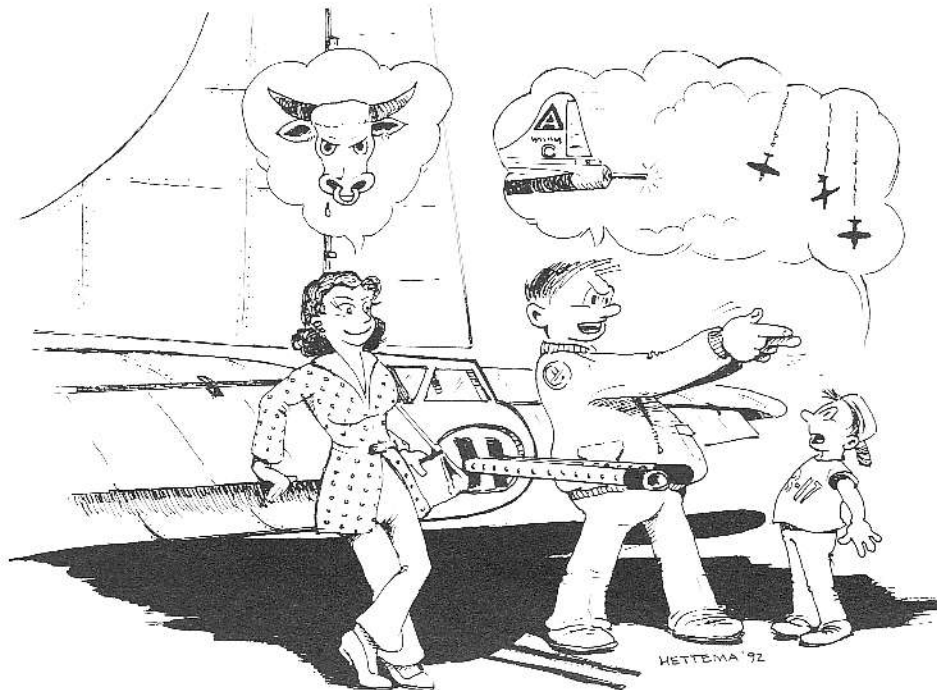
(Continued from Page 6)

from Duxford flew over Bassingbourn the following day and dropped a wreath with a sympathy card. The card said, "In memory of your Commanding Officer who yesterday, over Duxford, fell from one of your aircraft."

The English friends responsible for this book record 91st BG(H) gunners "had the highest claims for enemy aircraft" and the group suffered the highest losses (197 planes MIA) of any 8th AF Gp. Residency at "The Country Club of the ETO" was not cheap.

Profusely illustrated, the book contains many 91st BG(H) photos from Harry Friedman, M.D., of the Memphis Belle Memorial Association. Two excellent maps are included. Copies may be obtained for \$10.00 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling. Book sale profits bolster Belle Memorial Asso activity. Make checks payable to: The Memphis Belle Memorial Asso, 626 Shady Grove Rd S, Memphis, TN 38120. Address correspondence C/O Harry Friedman, M.D.

## HETTEMA HUMOR



By David R Hettema

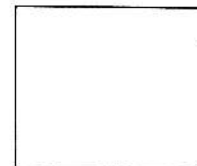
## THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

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.  
590 Aloha Dr.  
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## POTPOURRI

• PLANNING FOR THE SEPT 21-24, 1994 91st BGMA Reunion in Oklahoma City, OK proceeds.

A recent mailing to the R/I from the OKC Convention & Visitors Bureau contained 19 color slides depicting attractions in "the city born in a single day," - April 22, 1889.

Attendance at the 91st BGMA Reunion would break records if all members could pre-view their Reunion site as the R/I has.

Since that's impossible it is hoped the R/I's opinion that



"SOMEPLACE SPECIAL!"

the slides depict "Someplace Special" will suffice to stimulate better than average attendance!

• MS OLWYNNE WILKINS, A WWII VETERAN OF THE English Women's Army, is one of the new 91st BGMA Associate Members, thanks to recently deceased former 323rd Wayne B "Tex" Frye.

Their brief acquaintance (they met in '92) left the 91st BGMA with more than a new "AM." Ms Wilkins, who attended the '92 91st BGMA Memphis, TN Reunion, wrote Sect/Trea Johnson after "Tex's" death, about the "wonderful experience" and "very nice people" she'll always remember - thanks to "Tex", her escort. (She

(Continued on Page 7)