

The Ragged Irregular



ATTENTION!
1994



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



SUPPORTING UNITS



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol 27 No. 3

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

July 1994

ELECTION AND
BY-LAWS CHANGE
INSERT PAGES
INCLUDED!

"D-TIME" HERE FOR OKC REUNION PLANNING

AN EARLY JUNE REPORT FROM OKC, OK 1994 91st BGMA Reunion Committee Chairman Col Tom Ashinhurst (Ret), rather than seeking to stimulate enthusiasm for the Sept 21-24 event, reflects it.

Over 100 pre-registrations have been received, the pleased Ashinhurst announced.

Last minute data from the Reunion committee to increase attendance includes the following important items.



"SOMEPLACE SPECIAL!"

To facilitate Registration at the Clarion/Comfort Hotel complex members are advised to drive to and park at the Comfort Hotel, the seven story building north of the convention facilities. The Comfort Hotel, with 80 percent of the 91st BGMA Reunion rooms, consequently provides the most convenient parking for the majority of those attending.

Pre-registration is again urged and encouraged. Pres Charles R Hackstock, in an effort to promote pre-registration, has announced that OKC, OK Reunion ladies' and men's caps will be part of the usual "goodie-bag" contents. An adequate supply has been ordered - but, it is emphasized, caps will be awarded first to those who pre-register.

Those attending who have not pre-registered will receive caps - if the supply lasts.

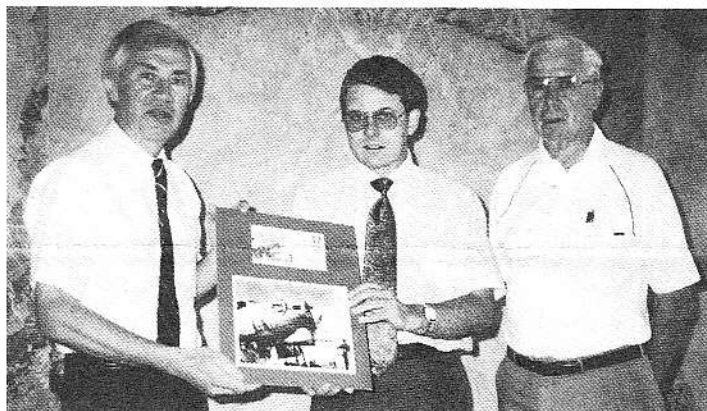
Originally intended as surprise items in registrants' "goodie-bags" are 3/4" 91st BG(H) and Sqd lapel pins - including one of the 441st Sub Depot's insignia. Regarding the latter, Hackstock who arranged the procurement of the

pins, says, "It's about time." The pins will be subsequently available to all 91st BGMAers through PX sales.

The availability of stamped GENERAL IKE Commemorative First Day covers at the reunion is detailed elsewhere in this issue. Only members attending and purchasing one, however, can immediately increase the

(Continued on Page 2)

91st SIGNATURES ENHANCE "IKE" MUSEUM DONATION



DR JOSEPH P CONNOLLY, LEFT, AN ARDENT ADMIRER OF GEN Dwight D Eisenhower, presents his patiently assembled "Ike" memorabilia to the Abilene, KA Eisenhower Museum during recent D-Day Anniversary ceremonies there. Dr Connolly, a serious philatelist, created a distinctive First Day envelope commemorating Eisenhower's 91st BG(H) "connection."

Each donated envelope carries a photo of the christening of the 401st's GENERAL IKE and at least one signature of a former crew member of the plane.

Herbert Pankratz, center, Eisenhower Library Archivist accepted the creative collection while OKC, OK Committee member Cecil E Williams, who worked closely with Dr Connolly on the project, watched.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT EVERY 91st BGMA National Convention Committee has gone proverbial "extra miles" in planning past reunion attractions. The OKC, OK Convention Committee's efforts may have topped those past efforts a bit because, in addition to the proverbial "extra miles", its' preparations include measurable miles.

OKC, OK Committee member Cecil E Williams' collaboration with Dr Joseph P Connolly, Orange, CT designer of GENERAL IKE 50th Anniversary envelopes, included a trip to the Abilene, KA Eisenhower Museum. While there he witnessed Dr Connolly proudly present the museum with the signed First Day covers former GENERAL IKE crew men autographed and returned to him.

(Continued on Page 6)

ATTENTION!

FULL FACILITY MOTOR HOME AND TRAILER Accommodations are conveniently available to the Clarion Hotel & Conference Center, site of the 91st BGMA's Sept 21-24, 1994 National Reunion.

Among the full hook-up sites are shaded areas. All sites feature pull through hook-ups, 50 AMP service convertible to 30 AMP, water and waste facilities.

Interested Motor Home and Trailer owners attending the OKC Reunion should contact RCA, Royal Coach of American Campground & Trailer Sales, 12115 NE Expressway, OKC, OK 73131. Owner Bill McGregor's phone number is: 405-665-2243.

His RCA campsite is located six miles NE of the Clarion Hotel at Exit 137 off I-35, just north of the Holiday Inn and Frontier City, one of the featured Reunion Tourist attractions.

SECRETARIAL NOTES

BY ASAY B JOHNSON

91st BGMA FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

31 MAY 1994

FINANCIAL BALANCES - 31 May 1994

MONEY MKT ACCTS	\$20,605.93
CHECKING ACCT	<u>\$10,410.19</u>
CASH ON HAND	\$31,064.41
PX INVENTORY & SALE PRICE	<u>\$ 7,502.00</u>
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$38,566.41

INCOME - 1 Jan 1994 to 31 May 1994.....\$17,425.80

EXPENSES - 1 Jan 1994 thru 31 May 1994

OFFICE EXPENSES	\$ 243.74
DIRECTORY EXPENSES	\$ 301.86
POSTAGE	\$ 623.40
PRINTING (PX ITEMS)	\$ 573.09
R/I EXPENSES	\$ 4,146.75
PX PURCHASES	<u>\$ 5,335.58</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$11,224.42

CORRESPONDENCE FROM MEMBERS IS A CONSTANT reminder that the 91st BGMA is alive - and well. Because of the volume it is requested that correspondents include their full name and address on their letters because, as will happen, once a letter is separated from its envelope, identification of the writer can become difficult. Correspondents can also ease reply problems by printing their names and complete addresses when writing.

The incoming mail volume is such that the patience of correspondents is required. If, after three weeks no reply has been received, a "reminder" note to the Sec/Trea should be considered as a means of clearing up any inadvertent confusion.

I must add our editor is confronted with the same problem and deserves the same patience - if not a bit more because R/I production is his primary function.

Hopefully some conveniently located members will be helpful in the 91st BGMA's "Reach Out" efforts to maintain and renew contact with as many former 91sters as possible. The Postal Service, after our recent mailings, returned seven former LM's mail stamped, "Undeliverable." It would be appreciated if members, near the listed last known home towns of the following would do a bit of local telephone sleuthing to determine the reason for the non-deliveries. Our presently missing LM's are:

BURTON W BLOW, 401st, Carbondale, CA
 JOE FRANKIE, JR, 323rd, Los Fresno, TX
 C W LOELLER, JR, 401st, St Louis, MO
 CLIFFORD E MORTON, SR, 323rd, Palm Coast, FL
 JOHN R PAGET, 401st, Aurora, CO
 RICHARD C WEITZENFELD, 324th, Brandenton, FL
 CARLYLE G WELLS, 401st, Oakland, CA

The cooperation of the general membership in locating missing members contributes greatly toward our set 50 percent response goal. I am happy to report more than 50 percent of those we query continue to respond - and rejoin. It's a worthwhile effort.

OKC REUNION PLANNING

(Continued from Page 1)

value of their philatelic acquisition by searching out and having a former GENERAL IKE crewman sign it.

According to Dr Connolly, the creator of the unique 91st BG(H) memorabilia, the following 401sters are among those whose signatures appear on the envelopes donated to the Dwight D Eisenhower Library. A number of them intend OKC Reunion attendance and would be honored to have their autographs sought. Known signers are:

Ashby, J; Boenig, W; Carter, W; Diethorne, E; Davis, J; Ellis, L; Grimmett, W; Hackstock, C; Hannah, W; Johnson, A; Johnson, H; Jabara, A; Kremer, J; King, W; Letalien, E; Malkin, R; Morey, A; Natvig, O; Parrish, G; Pate, E; Rentmeester, L; Rumph, J; Simonson, W; Wiggett, G; Wood, R; Woolsey, J and Williams, C.

The R/I must add to the preceding attendance inducements a portion of a reply it received following its Jan '94 publication of an OKLAHOMA OKIE photo. Former 324th Radio-Operator John J Shaughnessy, CO, responded with a letter opening with, "Wow! What a period in 91st history!"

Because his crew's BLACK SWAN was damaged the day before and their Oct 9, '43 replacement plane was scrubbed because of mechanical difficulty, they were finally assigned to fly OKLAHOMA OKIE on the Anklam, Germany mission.

After briefing, one level-headed pilot, he recalls, refused to fly the mission because he judged it suicidal - despite Intelligence's briefing which assured those who flew no more than 50 E/A would oppose their formation.

Lt Merrill G LaPoint, Shaughnessy's pilot, returned the battle damaged OKLAHOMA OKIE after the 1st Air Division's ensuing bitter four hour battle with 300 E/A.

Shaughnessy recalls when LaPoint told an Intelligence Capt during de-briefing that their formation had faced 150-200 E/A he was bluntly called "a liar."

A Gp Armaments Maj, who flew missions, happening to overhear the accusation, immediately intervened and told the Intelligence officer to apologize to LaPoint. The Maj opined LaPoint's estimate was low and a 300-400 E/A attack estimate was more accurate.

The 322nd lost three planes and the 323rd two over Anklam. LaPoints' crew flew the next day's Munster, Germany raid in THE SAD SACK and apparently never flew OKLAHOMA OKIE again.

Verbally exchanged memories, like the above, alone justify Reunion attendance. The R/I hopes many members will take time to record those they tell and hear at OKC for later possible inclusion in the records of the 91st BG(H)'s proud past.

401st C/O RECALLS "NO-CREDIT" D-DAY MISSION

BY JAMES H McPARTLIN
B/Glen, USAF (Ret)

THE 91st BG(H) POLICY WAS Squadron Commanders only flew when their Squadrons led. As a survivor of our original pilot complement, I had waited, with thousands of other Eighth and Ninth Air Force personnel, for an order indicating the "beginning" of WWII's end.

The D-Day order arrived while I was still the 401st's C/O. I am certain everyone, hearing the order, experienced difficult to recall myriad emotions.

I recall one of mine. I'll just call it, "a bit sad." (Because the 401st didn't lead the group that day, I seemed denied participation.)

Col Henry W Terry, 91st BG(H) C/O, briefed us that our mission was bombing targets in support of the invasion scheduled to hit Normandy at 07:30 am. His briefing included an estimated 11,000 to 12,000 Allied aircraft in the area; strict adherence to briefed courses and no abortings. Intelligence indicated limited fighter opposition and light flak in the target area, he added.

"Grounded" by 91st BG(H) policy, I returned to the 401st operations office to tend to details pertaining to our squadron's participation. After our planes departed without incident I settled down and shot the breeze with our NCO.

Within 30 minutes after the 91st's take-off the phone rang. Sgt Birdie, answering, said, "Major, Gen Gross wants to talk to you."

B/Gen William Gross was Commander of the First Combat Wing. Not accustomed to calls from generals, I got on the line immediately.

"Mac," Gross said, "do you have a bird flyable that's not on today's mission?"

I said, "Yes, sir. An old G Model (OLD FAITHFUL). We use it for transition and practice missions. It doesn't have bombs or guns or ammunition aboard, though."

"That's OK," Gross replied. "Can you get a skeleton crew together? I want to catch up with our formation and observe the bombing and the landings."

"Yes, sir," I said. Frantic phone calls assembled a skeleton crew and Gross was asked to meet us at OLD FAITHFUL.



PHOTO 1 - B/GEN JAMES H McPARTLIN (RET), PICTURED WHILE 401st SQ C/O, PLEDGES OKC, OK reunion attendance. Photo 2 - WWII B/Gen William Gross, recalled in McPartlin's article, presents a Silver Star to the 401st's Chauncey H (Tiger) Hicks (far right) during long ago Bassingborne ceremonies. (Photo: McPartlin Collection.)

After Gross's arrival and a quick briefing we took off. With the navigator's headings we climbed at full power to 23,000 ft, above a complete overcast. Streaming above the overcast and beyond eye-sight were Forts and Libs, headed toward the French coast. Halfway across the Channel we identified our combat wing.

We flew beside our wing until "bombs away." There was a fair amount of flak but not a sign of enemy aircraft - nor did we see any of our planes go down. It was one of the 91st BG(H)'s "milk-runs."

I was satisfied and prepared to return to England. Gen Gross, however, said, "Let's go down and observe the landings."

My request of our hurriedly recruited, unprepared navigator for a heading to the Normandy landing area produced an incredulous, "What?!" Nevertheless, within

(Continued on Page 4)

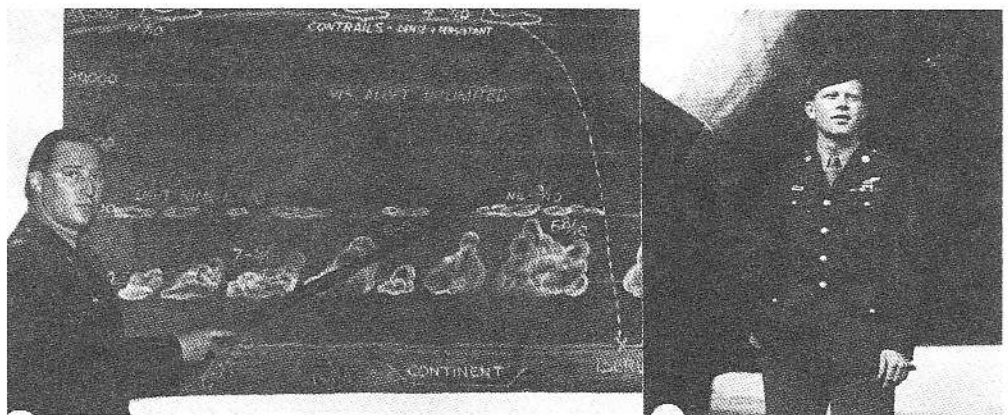


PHOTO 3 - THEN-MAJ LAWRENCE A ATWELL, THE 401st's WEATHER OFFICER, ACCOMPANIED McPartlin and B/Gen Gross on the "no-credit" D-Day mission described in this article. This photo of him working at his primary assignment raises a question. Who did the artwork? Photo 4 - T/ Sgt George A Parrish, McPartlin's "skeleton" crew flight engineer, remembers this snap was taken after he had completed his 32 mission tour. (Photos - McPartlin and Parrish Collections.)

401st C/O RECALLS

(Continued from Page 3)

minutes I was provided with a new heading, with periodic corrections.

We descended into the solid overcast into a forbidden area. The stream of planes pouring through it, which Col Terry had included in his briefing, made potential collision with Forts or Libs our first real hazard.

Finally we broke out of the overcast about 700-800 ft above the water in light rain and low clouds. Visibility was surprisingly good. Ships were every where!

To my, "What now?" Gen Gross said, "Make a right turn." During that turn I saw black flak puffs and heard familiar sounds, like rain on a tin roof. Flashing battleship guns on our left seemed to be firing upon us.

"We don't belong here," I said to Gen Gross. Without awaiting a reply I rammed throttles and RPM full forward, began the climb back into the overcast and asked our navigator for a heading back to England. His directions broke us out of the overcast above 18,000 ft and returned us to Bassingbourn without further incident.

After landing minor flak damage was duly noted upon OLD FAITHFUL; Gen Gross thanked the hurriedly assembled crew and departed.

Subsequently I regretfully had to inform my skeleton crew we would not be credited for our impromptu mission. Later, via the grape-vine, I heard Maj/Gen Williams, our Division C/O, gave Gen Gross a "verbal reprimand" for ordering us to fly an unauthorized mission with, "NO BOMBS, NO GUNS, or AMMUNITION."

I must add writing this article has been a revelation concerning the blurring of memories. With difficulty I've almost re-constructed the crew which flew with Gen Gross and me. Then-Maj Lawrence A Atwell (now Col, Ret) Fairfax, VA, the 401st's Weather Officer, flew as an observer. T/Sgt Eugene Letalion, Vacaville, CA, was our Tail Gunner.

Real research and probing finally revealed the identification of our engineer. Contact with the R/I editor cleared that up. T/Sgt George A Parrish, Burlington, NC was identified when the editor recalled Parrish, a friend of his, mentioning over the years that he flew a "no-credit" mission with some "brass." A phone call to Parrish and comparison of notes confirmed we two shared the "no-credit" mission recorded in this article.

Identification of our navigator, unfortunately, still eludes Atwell, Letalion, Parrish and me.

OTHERS' RECOLLECTIONS

GEORGE A PARRISH, THE ORIGINAL FLIGHT engineer of the 401st's famed GENERAL IKE, shared considerable publicity with the rest of John D Davis' crew back in 1944. He was surprised to be remembered again during recent D-Day memorial activity.

His first surprise was a phone call from a B/Gen (Ret) who wanted to compare D-Day notes. The ensuing conversation soon established the Gen (former 401st C/O

James P McPartlin) was the pilot with whom Parrish and a "skeleton" crew flew a "no credit" D-Day mission. Parrish says the conversation restored many past memories in addition to refreshing his D-Day experience.

"Seven hundred feet above the invasion forces," he says, "we could see soldiers unloading onto the beaches. The ground fire was so heavy we got out of there real quick."

"We observed the invasion from what you'd call a grandstand seat."

Parrish was later contacted by North Carolina's largest weekly newspaper, The Alamance News, and awarded a full page spread of copy and photos devoted to his "no credit" mission and other 91st BG(H) experiences.

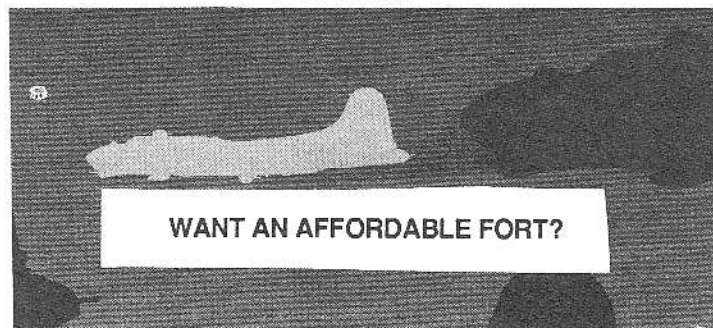
Sam Newton, CO, his CP Bert Stiles and their 401st crew were credited with their D-Day mission. Flak surrounded the 401st when bombs were dropped, a flight of Goering's Yellow-Nose ME 109s was seen and he and Stiles listened to Gen Eisenhower's speech while returning over the Channel, Newton recalls.

He and Stiles, after de-briefing, vividly remembered the poor troops on the beach while listening to the radio in their quarters until they fell asleep. They had had 30 minutes of sleep prior to being awakened by 401st Operations Officer Frank Parada for breakfast at 1 AM.

"I feel guilty," Newton says now. "It was a milk run. The easiest mission I flew out of 31."

English writer Rex Powlton, near the completion of his book on the 401st's OLD FAITHFUL, recently supplied B/Gen J H McPartlin (Ret) with the names of the remainder of his "no-credit" mission crew. The navigator was Capt Francis Dougherty, the bombardier was Lt Ralph Villmers and the radio operator was Ralph Rigand.

McPartlin's article is a classic example of how many of our "clouded" memories can still be cleared - with the efforts and cooperation of others.



ANYONE WANT TO BUY AN AFFORDABLE, READY to-fly B17G on his way to the OKC, OK Reunion? The "6th Annual B17 Gathering Big Bird Fly-In" at Bomber Field, Monaville, TX on Sept 16, 17, 18, 1994 is the place to go. A 10ft wing-span model will be raffled off during the flying scale model air show which will include a fly-by by one of the Confederate Air Force's B17s on Sunday, the 18th at 1:30 pm. Further information may be obtained from: B B Weber 713-498-7935. The R/I would appreciate photos and copy covering the event from any member able to attend even a portion of the activities.

PAST AND PRESENT SERVICE "REWARD" MURPHY



RICHARD MURPHY, FORMER 323RD NINE-O-NINE TAIL GUNNER, points to the page of the National Geographic story on the 91st BG(H) which featured a photo of him and other former NINE-O-NINERS. The Geographic's photo resulted in extensive local press coverage for the surprised but pleased Murphy.

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S MARCH '94 ARTICLE, "The Wings Of War," produced unexpected, but deserved recognition for Richard E Murphy, one of the 323rd Sq's NINE-O-NINE former tail gunners.

His personal appreciation for the original plane's record setting 140 missions without an abort or loss of flight crew life and Murphy's deep involvement with The Collings Foundation's restoration of another Fort as a replica of the original NINE-O-NINE justified the almost full page of copy and photos appearing in the Mar 25, '94 Lynn, MA DAILY EVENING paper.

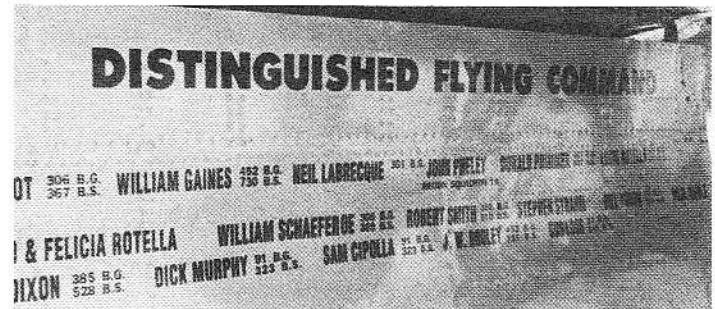
The article opened with, "Staring out from the pages of this month's issue of 'National Geographic' is a local face: retired Lynn firefighter Richard E Murphy."

"I've had a couple of people mention it (the Geographic article)," Murphy said when interviewed and photographed by the local paper.

Murphy and fellow crewmates, pilot John Pullen, ball turret gunner Sam Cipolla and "bombardier-navigator" Bob Mefford were photographed in the cockpit of The Collings Foundation's B17 during a "Geographic" arranged meeting in Indiana. The photo appears on page 105 of Thomas B Allen's "Geographic" article.

Murphy's deserved big page spread probably hinged as much upon his post-war activity as his successful 30 mission tour on NINE-O-NINE. Living near Stowe, MA, The Collings Foundation headquarters, he volunteers his assistance to the antique aircraft restoration work. NINE-O-NINE's replica was one of the first projects to which he contributed.

Since then he's been involved in the restoration of an AT-6 and a Navy TBM (Torpedo plane). The TBM is



THIS PICTURE OF THE BOMB-BAY DOORS OF THE COLLINGS Foundation's NINE-O-NINE replica probably accounts for some of the press attention Murphy received. A dedicated volunteer worker for the Stowe, MA based foundation's airplane restoration work, Murphy's contribution has been recognized by the painting of his name upon one of the doors. Sam Cipolla's name, another former NINE-O-NINER and restoration contributor, appears to the right of Murphy's in the bottom list of names.

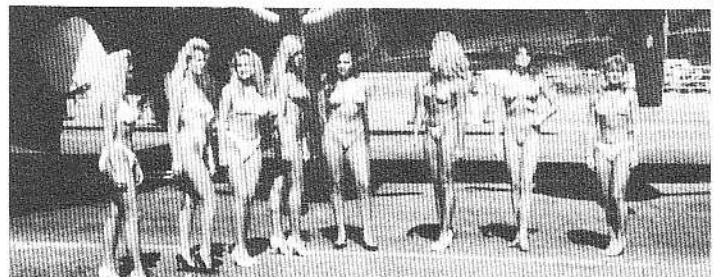
presently about two thirds completed. "It's going to be a beauty," he says.

NINE-O-NINE's replica, repaired after a crash a few years ago, continues to serve The Collings Foundation well, he says. A '92 report submitted by him supports that statement. Local sponsors donated 1,000 gallons of gas towards its appearance at Bluefield, WV and an appearance of NINE-O-NINE's replica at Courtland, AL produced a 333% jump in Foundation Volunteers. (An accompanying photo explains that phenomenon.)

Ironically, the dedication of volunteers like Murphy has contributed to the only readily discernible discrepancy in the authenticity of NINE-O-NINE's replica's paint job. Never, during its' war-time service did the original NINE-O-NINE contain the lettering now upon its replica's bomb-bay doors.

Names of volunteer workers appear on the replica's bomb-bay doors now. Former 91st BG(H) members. Murphy and Sam Cipolla are honored by having their names listed in neat, black letters along with other Collings Foundation volunteer workers.

Cipolla, owner of a Chicago machine shop, tooled costly parts to make the bomb-bay doors operable. Despite past
(Continued on Page 7)



THIS PHOTO, FROM A RECENT COLLINGS FOUNDATION publication, helps account for the enthusiasm of the foundation's volunteer workers. After this photo was taken at a Courtland, AL Airshow NINE-O-NINE volunteers increased by 333%. No wonder NINE-O-NINE's replica remains in great shape!

91st SIGNATURES ENHANCE

(Continued from Page 1)

Daniel D Holt, director of the Eisenhower Library welcomed Dr Connolly's addition to the museum's collections. Herbert Pankratz, the Eisenhower Library Archivist, met with Dr Connolly and Williams in the library lobby during the hectic 50th D-Day Anniversary ceremonies on May 13-15 to formally accept the donation.

Pankratz, pleased with the signatures of former GENERAL IKE crew men on the envelopes, indicated the information signers added on 3 x 5 index cards provided by Dr Connolly enhanced the memorabilia.

Col Lester F Rentmeester (Ret), FL, whose signed envelope randomly selected by Dr Connolly is reproduced, noted on his index card he piloted GENERAL IKE during Apr/May '44 when the 401st led the 91st BG(H) and the 1st Air Division. Since Dr Connolly expresses intense interest in all Eisenhower memorabilia Rentmeester sent him a war-time photo of himself before GENERAL IKE "which appeared in several magazine articles, e.g., American Heritage, Wisconsin Magazine of History."

Cecil Williams, who wrote the R/I sometime ago that working with Dr Connolly "was more involved than I anticipated, but I really enjoy the challenge to help in the project," was compensated for his efforts in Abilene. Dr Connolly and his wife thoroughly enjoyed his companionship while dining and attending available events with him.

Williams, returned to OKC, supplied most of the following data to possibly encourage OKC, OK Reunion attendance:

1) Some 400 GENERAL IKE commemorative envelopes, donated by Dr Connolly, will be available for sale at about \$2.00 each. Cancellations will vary between the Air Force Academy, West Point and Wash, DC.

2) Present planning envisions one sale per member attending the OKC Reunion. Unsold envelopes will be made available as PX items to the general membership at a price to cover shipping and mailing costs.

3) Dr Connolly, a serious philatelist, says patriotic commemorative envelopes have a long history - at least back to the Civil War. They were very popular in WWII. The idea is to commemorate a certain event, use a patriotic type stamp and get them cancelled on the appropriate date. 50th Anniversary of WWII events are now very popular.

4) That translates to an increase of a \$2.00 purchase today to about a \$5.00 value within a reasonable time. Signed commemoratives, like the crew member signed GENERAL IKE envelopes donated by Dr Connolly to the Eisenhower Museum, could rise in value to as much as \$20.00 in the same amount of time.

5) That means members attending the OKC Reunion who purchase one of Dr Connolly's memorial envelopes can immediately increase its' value by tracking down an attending former GENERAL IKE crew member and having him sign it!



The "General Ike" was christened by General Dwight D. Eisenhower on 11 April 1944.

FORMER 401st PILOT LESTER F RENTMEESTER WAS ONE OF many former GENERAL IKE crew men who cooperated by signing a First Day cover sent to him by Dr Connolly. Rentmeester's signature appears above the GENERAL IKE photo.

ADDED 91st HISTORY DATA

(Continued from Page 8)

Potter subsequently returned to further research and produced four more accompanying pages to his original 37 page manuscript. Entitled, ERATA AND ADDENDA TO BEFORE THE VISION FADES, the first page contains a map locating 26 crash sites of the 1st Air Division in the Oschersleben area. Five 91st BG(H) losses, further identified by pilot names, are recorded upon the map.

Copies of Potter's new data will be available at OKC, OK for perusal. Sec/Trea Assay B Johnson says Potter's new data will be sent free to any 91st BGMAers who ordered Potter's original '91 manuscript of BTVFs upon request.

Potter's BTVFS is among the three best selling 91st BGMA unbound books. Complete copies may be obtained at the original \$7.00 ea (\$9.00 overseas) '91 PX price by writing, Sec/Trea Assay B Johnson, 590 Aloha Dr, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403-4559.

FORMER 401st BOMBARDIER MARION HAVELAAR, SD, committed himself and a personal five figured donation of "seed money" to the production of an approximately 300 page, hardbound 91st BG(H) history book at no cost or obligation to the 91st BGMA during the '91 Seattle, WA Reunion.

The book, entitled, THE RAGGED IRREGULARS OF BASSINGBOURN, is in the hands of the publisher and is tentatively scheduled for release in the spring of 1995.

"It's been quite a job but it was worth it," Havelaar says.

He, among the swelling numbers of 91st BGMAers indicating OKC, OK Reunion attendance is planned, says the cost, availability, size, etc of the book should be available in his report.

In the meantime, rather than be a potential source of delay in his book's appearance, The R/I seeks the cooperation of one of the many members who purchased copies of the Allan N Morey 91st War Formation photos first offered for sale at Seattle, WA and finally sold out at Memphis, TN. Havelaar, wishing to include them in his book, would appreciate the loan of the three approximately

(Continued on Page 7)

Folded Wings

● BRITT, JESSE CLARENCE, 322nd, 699 Middle St, Lumberton, NC 28358-5335, Sept 29, 1993. Reported by his widow.

● BROOKS, EARL R, 322nd, 4555 S Mission Rd, Lot 190, Tucson, AZ 85746, Oct 30, 1990. Reported by his widow, Florence.

● EVANS, FERREL H, 324th, 133 Edwards Rd, Johnstown, OH 43031. Reported by Carl A Gunderson, CT, who recalls Evans was SAD SACK's pilot when while he flew the LWG position with Evans' crew several times. Evans' death notice was transmitted to Gunderson by Evans' widow.

● HANZEL, ALBERT P, 401st, 5856 Chapel Rd, Madison, OH 44057, Jan 22, '87. His daughter, Dayna Meshginpoosh, explained her belated report in a lengthy letter. Sometime, after Hanzel's death she sensed an important portion of the generous legacy he left his family was missing. He had never shared his WWII service experiences with his family.

After Hanzel's death a neighbor, Robert Lindsay, studying his collection of 91st BG(H) photos, opined Hanzel was a ground crew member of BOMB-BOOGIE which completed 17 missions before being lost on the Sept 6, '43 Stuttgart, Germany raid. Neighbor Lindsay also wrote "someone" in the 91st BGMA who replied "mechanics often put their wife's names on the engines they worked on." A published photo of BOMB BOOGIE reveals "Laura" painted upon the No. 4 cowl. "Laura" was Hanzel's wife's name. She died a few years after him.

Hanzel's daughter, Dayna, believes the "Laura" painted upon that cowl was dedicated to her mother, who, she writes, "took excellent care of Dad when he was sick."

Dayna says she and her husband and sister Denise planned to treat their parents to a return trip to England. Cancer, soon after Hanzel's retirement, made that expression of their appreciation of their "perfect parents" impossible.

"I wish I would have asked more questions of my father when he was living so that I could have learned more about his service to his country," Dayna said prior to closing her belated report of her father's death with, "I enjoy reading the Ragged Irregular."

● KEMNITZ, GEORGE A, LM, 322-323rd, 6208 W Richmond Av, Milwaukee, WI 53210. Reported by his widow, June, who says he kept a complete file of The R/I from the "very first Oct 1967 Vol 1, No 1" and waited "anxiously" for each edition. "In later years I started reading it also," she said in a note seeking reassurance she'll receive the "final one" containing Kemnitz's Folded Wings listings. She continues as an AM.

● KUBALA, JOSEPH J, SR, 324th, PO Box 326, Nelsonia, VA 23414-0326, recently. Kubala was stationed at Bassingbourn throughout the war, according to his widow, Valencia, who adds some "nose art" photos have been found among his papers. He retired from the Balto, Md Armco Steel firm in the early '80s.

In addition to his widow he is survived by two daughters,

a son, his mother, numerous siblings and a grandchild

● RUSSO, ANTHONY A 322nd, 115 N 2nd St, Virginia, MN 55792, Sept 9, '92. Reported by family.

● STRONG, CURTIS T, Col, Ret, LM, 324th, 4001 Crest Hill Rd, Chester, VA 23831, May 16, 1993. He completed 35 missions during WWII, was recalled to active duty during the Korean War, later assigned to the Pentagon and graduated from the Air Command and Staff College in 1963. His varied career included Air Force plant representative at Hughes Aircraft Corp, CA, the General Electric Co, Phila, PA and director of procurement and production at the Defense General Supply Center.

His widow, Gladys, writes since his '76 retirement he was "working on information about all his flights while in England" and wonders if his notes would be "of interest to anyone." The R/I plans a request for copies of them.

In addition to his widow survivors include two daughters and two sons. Memorial contributions to St John's Episcopal Church, Chester, Va were preferred by his family.

● WRIGHTSMAN, WAYNE C "STORMY," 323rd, 1440 S Orange, SP #100, El Cajon, CA 92020, Feb '93. Reported by Col Walter M Pickard (Ret), VA after receiving notice of Wrightsman's death from his widow. Pickard and Wrightsman had kept in touch. Now Pickard believes he may be his crew's sole survivor.

While returning from the Mar 3, '44 Wilhelmshaven, Germany raid Pickard had to ditch MY DESIRE, L OR-U, in the channel. A row boat rescued him and four other members of the crew. His other crew members drowned while clinging to a half inflated dingy and being towed toward shore. They were N-Milton LWG-Pike, B-Robert R Warren, TT-Edward C White, BT-Darrel E Moran and TG-Lewis C Alger.

His former CP, Bascom P Smith, with whom he lost contact about '65, may still be alive because he is some years younger than Prickett, who closed his note to Sec/Trea Johnson with, "Maybe I'll hang about a little longer. Hope the same for you."

SERVICE "REWARD" MURPHY

(Continued from Page 5)

efforts to make a feature article out of his gratis contribution to the restoration of the replica, that's all the data the R/I can now supply on Cipolla's generosity.

ADDED 91st HISTORY DATA

(Continued from Page 6)

8 x 10 glossy prints.

Morey's original negatives are temporarily lost in The R/I files. A desperate search will be made for them after the mailing of the July R/I.

Though most such "desperate searches" are generally successful, The R/I hopes anyone willing to share temporarily their Allan N Morey Formation Photos will contact, Marion H Havelaar, 13115 Michelle Dr, Rapid City, SD 57702-8501.

CALIFORNIA RALLY ROUND STIRS "MORE!" SPIRIT

AN APR 20, 1994 91st BGMA RALLY ROUND, IN PALM SPRINGS, CA was hosted by former 401st Sq members Aubin Pene, Jack Gaffney and Faber Cripps.

Twenty four people from Southern California, including 91st BGMAer's wives and friends, attended. The success of the affair was evident by the participants' agreement that more Rally Rounds should be held and the announcement by many of their intent to attend the Sept '94 OKC National Reunion.

After registration and lunch in downtown Palm Springs' "Harry's Hofbrau" the group visited the office of the Palm Springs Air Museum for glimpses of some of WWII video tapes, pictures and other memorabilia slated for inclusion in a soon to be built air museum in the area. Impressed by the museum plans, those attending contributed funds for the purchase of an appropriate frame for a 24" X 36" color print of THE MEMPHIS BELLE donated by Faber Cripps for future display in the museum.

The Rally concluded at Cripp's residence where personal WWII photos, books and news clippings were perused while old camaraderies were re-newed and new established. Former 91st BGMA Pres Louis Montalvo was

the "most distant" participant to attend. His attendance required a five hour drive.

Further indication of the success of the affair is the fact that "the possibility" of a bigger and better Rally Round next year was discussed. Laughlin, NV, a resort area with favorable hotel and restaurant rates, is a considered site.

Those attending were: Roger and Gloria Armstrong; Robert and Gloria Elroy; Jack and Jan Gaffney; David and Marian Hanst; Chauncey Hicks; Frank Keneley and his brother Jim, a fighter pilot; Paul and Jeannie Limm; Aubin and Jackie Pene; Mrs Tony (Jackie) Starcer; Bob O'Bannion; Dolly Pion; Dan and Pat Terze; Mrs Art (Phyllis) Thomsen; Bob and Kay Wright and Faber and Mary Faith Cripps.

NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS

JOSEPH BENTZEL, West Chester, PA
RONALD F CANNON, Roseville, OH
NORMAN C COX, San Antonio, TX
WILLIAM C DARDEN, Fort Worth, TX
JOHN W GREEN, Glendale, CA
WILLIAM HOOTS, Patterson, IL
CLARENCE W KOELLER, St Louis, MO
EDWARD J LEE, Norwich, NY
KEENE C McCAMMON, St Paul, MN
ALBERT J RUKUS, Philadelphia, PA
GORDON A WOOLARD, Encino, CA

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.

Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403

FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED.

FIRST CLASS



LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU MOVE!

ADDED 91st HISTORY DATA SET FOR OKC EXPOSURE

FORTY YEARS AFTER THE 324th's LITTLE JEAN WAS downed on the Jan 11, '44 Oschersleben, Germany raid her navigator, George W Potter and flight engineer, Bernard "Barney" Offlay met at a Boeing-Seattle, WA reunion.

Reminiscing about their six KIA crewmen and the 60 Forts lost on the raid launched Potter's five years of exhausting and costly personal research.

Back in Oct '91 Potter's research manuscript, entitled BEFORE THE VISION FADES (BTVF), was made

available to 91st BGMAers through PX sales.

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

Those members who ordered copies of Potter's "BTVFs" have in their possession a definitive single raid report packed portion of 91st(H) history that explains one of its' Presidential Citations.

Since Potter's initial '91 completion of his project 8th AF history writers have burdened him with requests for his mother-lode of information regarding the Oschersleben raid.

(Continued on Page 6)