

# The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



SUPPORTING UNITS



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol 28 No. 2

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

April 1995

## NICHOLS HONORED FOR "A FLIGHT TO REMEMBER"

FORMER 324th SQ M/SGT MARVIN NICHOLS, DELTONA, FL resident, had an offer recently he'd never have refused - earlier. Health problems, however, precluded acceptance of an invitation from the Collings Foundation to fly in its replica of the 323rd Sq's NINE-O-NINE with former Pathfinder 324th Sq attached pilot Carl Clark. The two shared a memorable Bassingbourn mission on June 3, 1944.

Nichols, a Ground Crew Chief, was flying with Clark and his crew to their home PFF base prior to a mission to ensure usual last minute details received proper attention when the incident occurred.

Their plane had reached ground-speed. Its' wheels were off the ground during the take-off when a truck, pulling two bomb loaded trailers, emerged from the 2 am darkness and crossed directly into its' path.

The plane's right landing gear, smashed into the truck's framework and ripping it like tinfoil, was reduced to useless, dangling wreckage.

In addition to the landing gear damage, two feet of Clark's number three propeller were snapped off, the hydraulic system exploded and a 15 foot gash was ripped in the plane's underside. Too far down the runway to abort the takeoff, Clark continued his ascent.

Aloft and relieved to be airworthy, he flew the damaged plane for nine hours in the vicinity of Bassingbourn in order to burn up its' fuel load before attempting a dangerous one-wheel landing to save the PFF equipment aboard.

During the debriefing, after Clark successfully landed on the plane's remaining left wheel without injury to anyone, he "...paid tribute to Crew Chief Marvin Nichols for his inflight emergency repair of the hydraulic brake; a very critical factor in the successful one-wheel landing."

Present data available to the R/I indicates Clark and Nichols never met again after the War and, understandably, years later could not recall one another's name.



EILEEN SAMELSON/THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

MARVIN NICHOLS POINTS TO THE SKY WHERE NINE-O-NINE'S REPLICA CIRCLED HIS HOME.

A Jan 1994 R/I book review of PFF navigator John W Howland's "THE CLASS OF '43" mentioned an account of an incident involving a plane and a truck. Nichols ordered the book, read it and then wrote Howland for possible identification of the pilot. Howland not only identified the pilot, he sent Nichols his address. Nichols promptly wrote Clark to thank him for saving his life so long ago because he knew he was on the memorable flight recalled by Howland.

Clark, now a business owner in Idabel, OK and part-time pilot for the Collings Foundation of Stowe, Mass, was elated to hear from him. He subsequently invited Nichols to fly with him again on NINE-O-NINE's replica during its recent Orlando, FL stop on its' national winter tour.

Clark's invitation included the statement that during the past 50 years he has probably told the story of their June 3, 1944 take-off hundreds of time. In doing so he never forgot to credit the "...special Ground Crew Chief who was aboard. ...luckily for me and my crew, you were aboard with your tool kit and expertise," his letter to Nichols includes.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY HAROLD E JOHNSON

### PLANNING HELP SOUGHT

AT AN EARLIER DENVER, CO 8th AFHS ANNUAL reunion a meeting room was reserved for the 91st BGMA. Between the reunion tours and activities 91st BGMA officers and members met there for a round table discussion on how to improve upon 91st BGMA activity.

I hope a similar meeting at the 8th AFHS Reunion in St Louis, MO on Sept 5-10, 1995 will be possible. Numerous officers of the 91st BGMA and members of its' Executive Committee, presently consisting of former Presidents Tony Montalvo and Charles R Hackstock, former Sec W W Hill and 91st BGMA activists Paul J Limm and John W Howland, hopefully will be able to attend.

However, all 91st BGMA members attending the 8th AFHS' St Louis, MO Reunion are sincerely invited to join in and also contribute to the planning for our association's future activities.

Watch for final details in the July 1995 R/I.

I must add the Laughlin, NV Rally Round put together by Sec/Trea Asay Johnson portends great, good things for our 1996 Tucson, AZ 91st BGMA Biennial Reunion in which he is deeply involved.

The location of the Rally Round was just the frosting on the cake! I'm certain all those who attended will long remember the first evening's cocktail hour, the table loaded with fruit, salads, shrimp, meat balls, etc. and the second evening's impressive dinner whose only flaw was the near ninety attending could not be seated at one table. It was noted, however, that attending members easily dealt with that "short-coming" by wandering from table to table after dinner to renew old friendships and, in the process, making new ones.

I can only imagine how many, "Do you remember?" tales of the 91st BG(H)'s proud past were exchanged. Hopefully some of them will be recorded and submitted for possible publication in the R/I. (I am assured by our editor that if any member has *ever sent any copy* to the R/I the chances of it being published in it are still astronomically *better* than winning even a minor prize in the numerous lotteries tempting us all today.)

With that assurance I can only say if any member wishes to make a "better bet," a written Bassingbourn anecdote to the R/I is a great way to *spend* valuable leisure time and *save* some "betting" money. In the meantime, any locality considering holding a 91st BGMA Rally Round is urged to contact this writer or Sec/Trea Asay Johnson for information on the assistance available. My phone number is: 209-477-0071. Johnson's is: 602-453-3114.



THE PHOTO SESSION AT THE LAUGHLIN, NV RALLY ROUND found most of those attending dutifully present.

## NICHOLS HONORED

(Continued from Page 1)

During the hours Clark circled Bassingbourn before attempting the one wheel landing, Nichols restored the plane's hydraulic system. With braking power in the left landing gear, co-ordination with number 4 engine to sustain lift on the right side of the plane was possible.

As planned, Clark brought the plane down so the left landing gear settled upon the surface of the runway while the right side, eventually settling upon the grassy area just off the runway, spun the plane around and to rest on the grass.

Nichols' emergency in-flight repairs of the hydraulic system provided Clark with a "40-45 mph Ground Loop speed instead of an estimated 'brakeless' 80-85 mph landing," according to Clark's recent contact with Nichols.

When Nichols regretfully declined Clark's invitation to fly with him again John Rising, the Collings Foundation Tour's pilot-in-command and part-time pilot Carl Clark decided to reverse the ancient "Mohammed-Mountain" story. If Nichols could not come to their restored B17 they would fly it to him.

Media publicity alerted Nichols' community of the Feb 26, 1995 Sunday evening "Dusk Patrol" planned to fly over and circle Nichols' Tulip St residence in Deltona, FL.

Nichols' daughter, Patty, and her husband Ron Collins, had more faith in the preceding publicity than Nichols. They prepared themselves with a large white mattress cover for waving when Clark, in NINE-O-NINE's replica, approached.

Just a bit before the plane's arrival at 6:20 pm, dusktime in Florida in Feb, Nichols, after impatiently waving his arms on his front lawn and vocally wishing "it" would come, walked into his garage and took a seat. He was discouraged, the Orlando Sentinel reporter covering the story wrote.

Then the droning sound began. As the volume increased Nichols' son-in-law, Ron, knew what it was. He told his wife, "There it is, get your father." That accomplished, she and her husband vigorously flapped the white mattress cover to pin-point their location. Their effort was rewarded. Clark circled Nichols' home six times.

Prodded by the media after the plane had departed into the gloom that precluded video taping of its appearance, Nichols said, "It's hard to say what I felt. It hit me a lot harder than I thought...to think that someone would do that for you..."

"It meant a lot to see that plane because we walked away from that mess," he added.

Later, in his living room, Linda Cressy, the Orlando Sentinel Correspondent, lingered long enough to record another emotion Nichols grappled with after the flyover.

"...voice filled with emotion, (Nichols) said:

"He has to be a nice guy to do that," she wrote.

The "nice guy" he referred to was Clark who shared their flight to remember with him. Before returning home to OK Clark and his wife made a point to include an enjoyable evening with Nichols and his wife, Pete, in Deltona.

Former 401st navigator Paul Limm, San Clemente, CA, presently, one of the 91st BGMA's productive behind-the-scenes activists, heard about Nichols' flyover honor before the R/I. Included in material he sent regarding the impressive tribute paid Nichols was the fact that Nichols was awarded the Legion of Merit in Oct 1943 (until 1946 it took

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# NICHOLS HONORED

(Continued from Page 2)



"AN EIGHTH AAF STATION - LT GENERAL JACOB L DEVERS, Commanding General E.T.O. U.S. congratulates M/Sgt Marvin E. Nichols, of Athens, AL, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Nichols, after awarding him the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in performing outstanding service as crew chief responsible for maintenance of bomber aircraft from Nov. 7, 1942 to Mar. 21, 1943." (Editor's Note: The above caption appeared beneath the above photo when it was published in Nichols' war-time home town newspaper.)

precedence over the Silver Star) and the Bronze Star in July 1944 for "...outstanding services..." as a 91st BG(H) Ground Crew Chief.

The burial of a 50 year time capsule to honor WWII Veterans by AF cadets of the Emory-Riddle Aeronautical U, Daytona Beach, FL in 1993 will reveal Nichols' lasting and continuing dedication to the 91st BG(H)'s history when it is opened in 2043 AD.

Nichols contributed three items to the 29 enclosed in the capsule. His are the only ones recording the contributions of the 8th AF. His pride in the 91st BG(H) and 91st BGMA is evident in the fact he included Hilary "Bud" Evers' HISTORY OF THE 91st BG(H), the WWII USAAF manual, BOMBING THE NAZIS, written by the crew (including presently known surviving members Bill Leisure, Pete DeBoy and Rufus Youngblood) of the 324th's JACK THE RIPPER and an audio cassette of the late Col Immanuel "Manny" Klette's dedication address at the Memphis Belle Pavilion on May 17, 1987 as testimony for the entire 8th AF's WWII contribution.

Nichols was one of the 91st BG(H)'s ground personnel who kept it flying during WWII. By contributing continuing information and historical items to civic and veterans' affairs, always with an emphasis upon the 91st BG(H), he has assured that 91st history will, for many, to an extent, continue to be virtually synonymous with 8th AF history.

## "RECORD SETTER" AND POSNAN DATA SOUGHT

INCLUDED IN OKC REUNION REMINISCING WERE conversations regarding who completed a tour in the shortest time.

Former 401st pilot William T Hanna, Col, AF (Ret), involved in the discussions, thinks it would be interesting to determine who held the 91st BG(H) record for the "shortest successfully completed mission tour."

The best way of doing that, the R/I agrees, is to challenge all 91st BGMAers to beat his record. (Duly recorded on his "Form 5" are 32 sorties completed in 67 days!)

He flew his first sortie on Apr 19, 1944 and his last on June 25, 1944. His last five missions were "volunteered" for him by Col Henry W Terry after the loss of four lead pilots.

The R/I welcomes any claims from other flight crew members who crammed more than 32 sorties into less than 67 days. Hopefully, a committee will be able to report to the 1996 Tucson, AZ 91st BGMA Reunion who flew the most 91st BG(H) missions in the shortest time.

Along with his suggestion regarding the above, Hanna raises another interesting topic. He urges those who participated in the May 29, 1944 Posnan, Poland mission to assist a Polish historian who is seeking information on that raid. Hanna, who flew the Deputy Group Lead on that mission, has supplied Poland's Michal Mucha with his (Hanna's) memories of the raid.

"This was the longest sortie flown from England. As I remember, we were without fighter escort from just south of Berlin on - and German fighters took our fire to get to the B24s. Th B17s maintained 17,000 ft and the B24s were at 12,000 ft until 20 min before IP", Hanna summarizes his contribution to Mucha's research request.

Mucha's contact with Hanna contained so much information on the effectiveness of the raid that Hanna wrote Sec/Trea Johnson, "Makes the risk seem justified, doesn't it?"

Consequently, Hanna urges all 91st BGMAers who participated in the Posnan, Poland raid with diary notations or memories of it to contact: Mr Michal Mucha, AL. WIELKOPOLSKA 43, 60-603 POZNAN, POLAND.

Oddly, the 91st BG(H)'s only loss on the raid provided it with its' unique association with B17 history. The 401st Sq's SHOO SHOO BABY was the only 91st BG(H) plane "lost" that day. 1/Lt Robert J Guenther's crew, struggling with No 4 engine trouble on the way to the target, had to settle for internment in Sweden after hitting the target. SSB, subsequently surviving the war and 50 years of peace, is now enshrined at the USAF Museum in Ohio - still proudly displaying a "Triangle A" on her tail.

Some data supplied by Mucha in response to Hanna's questioning follows:

All airfield facilities except one building were destroyed or damaged - along with a lot of assembled aircraft at Krzesinki. The airfield there was so heavily damaged it ceased to be important for the rest of the war.

Fortunately, the first bomb, dropped a few minutes before the main attack, alerted the 7,000 work force (mostly Poles) which took cover in air raid shelters. Probably none were killed at Krzesiny but 26 Poles and 16 Germans were killed at Poznan, Mucha says.

# 91st PILOT "SORT OF" DEFENDS B24 REPUTATION



THE PHOTO ON THE LEFT WAS TAKEN BY VERNE CURRIE, 322nd NAVIGATOR. THE SOURCE OF THE RIGHT PHOTO OF ANOTHER downed B24 is unknown. It is in the editor's small collection.

BACK IN EARLY 1989 FORMER 323rd PILOT PHILIP G Mack, Renton, WA, chanced upon a Wall Street Journal article by former B24 pilot Murray Grainger, South Orange, NJ. Mack sent it, along with a letter, to the R/I to "help settle" or "add to" the argument regarding whether B17s or B24s were the "better" planes.

Recent receipt of a photo collection from Vern Currie, FL, former 322nd Sq navigator, included photos of a falling B24. The photo reminded the R/I of Mack's dormant contribution. It follows:

A March 7, 1989 WSJ General Dynamics advertisement seeking donations "to help restore a B24 to its' original condition" stirred former B24 pilot Grainger's writing. Strangely, Mack, who, of course, flew a B17 tour, is less critical of the B24 than Grainger.

Grainger, who survived 35 13th Air Force South Pacific missions, pointed out seven of his original crew members died "...not from enemy action, but from mechanical failures of the B24!

"Aside from being variously called (with no affection), 'the flying prostitute' (no visible means of support), 'the prop hanger,' 'the flying brick' - and enjoying its own notorious version of the Air Corps song, 'Off we go, into the wild blue yonder, CRASH!' - it was the worst, misbegotten, wrongly

conceived, improperly designed and negligently slapped together piece of junk ever to needlessly

take the lives of American flyers." Grainger wrote.

Toward the close of his WSJ article Grainger said, "If they (General Dynamics) restore a B24 'to its original condition', then God help and have mercy on whoever has to fly it again."

Notwithstanding, Mack, whose 91st B17 tour was flown in late '43 and early '44, recalls many defending the B24 because it was faster, carried a larger bomb load and had a longer range than the B17.

However, Mack also recalls turning off the target over Berlin on Mar 22, 1944. A wing of B24s, about three thousand feet below, flew through the chaff the 91st BG(H) had dumped to confuse German radar. The B24s caught hell because, as usual, they were committed to lower levels because of the plane's inability to fly good formations at higher altitudes.

The problem was, Mack says, the "Davis" wing - which gave the B24 its' speed and range advantage over the B17. The "Davis" wing was a long, thin wing of high aspect ratio with a relatively low drag coefficient requiring large changes in angle of attack per unit change of lift. Pilots were unable to handle this in the thin stratosphere while they jockeyed throttles and heavy controls to stay in formation. The denser air of lower altitudes abated the problem but increased vulnerability to flak and fighters.

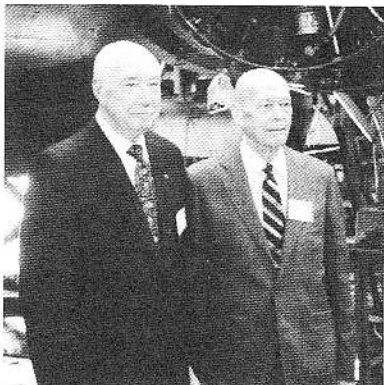
Mack flew a late production B24L in 1945 after completing his B17 tour. He says it was easily maneuverable and light to the touch. Stripped of all armament, he held it at 15,000 ft altitude on one engine.

"It would have been another story if we'd been at combat weight," he admits.

An unbelievable peculiarity of a portion of the B24's design was that the fuel gauges were glass sight gauges mounted on the left forward side of the bulkhead between the cockpit and the forward bomb bay. The glass tubes contained 100 octane fuel.

"Thinking back on the flak hits I received in B17s, I can easily visualize those glass gauges shattering and 100 octane 'lighter fluid' being sprayed and flowing into the cockpit.

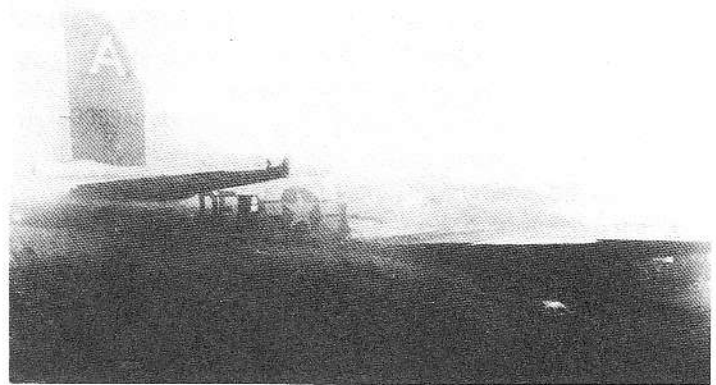
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FORMER 323rd SQ PILOT Philip G Mack and Navigator Quentin Ellis (L-R), at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field, Seattle, WA during 1993 ceremonies still scheduled for R/I coverage.



# 324th's "946's" SHORT CAREER NO SHORT STORY!



DISMAL ENGLISH WEATHER PROBABLY ACCOUNTS FOR THESE PHOTOS OF THE 324th SQ'S CRASHED DF-H 338964. ITS' DEC 24, 1944 crash on its' first mission probably was caused by sabotage.

THE NOV 1994 R/I ARTICLE ON THE "10 MINUTE Combat Career" of the 324th Sq's factory fresh DF-H 338946 (henceforth referred to as "946") was scheduled for conclusion in the Jan 1995 edition. Continuing input on "946's" crash has made the story too big. Even too big to be concluded in this continuation!

Those now involved in former 324th Sq radio operator Clifford M Schultz's original recollections of the incident (not necessarily in order of importance) include WWII 91sters: LTC Marvin D Lord, Maj Emanuel J Klette, Maj James L Griffin, 1/Lt J C Bowlan, 2/Lt Conrad Hohing as well as Schultz's wife, Barbara and "unidentified sources." (Military ranks cited above were the WWII ranks of the 91st BG(H) personnel mentioned at the time of the crash.)

The following continuation of "946's" brief story is basically dependent upon reunion and rally round contacts.

Schultz's long ago membership application recollection of "946's" crash was submitted as an interesting anecdote. Over the years his real interest centered upon remembering RHAPSODY IN RED and he was disappointed he never found information pertaining to it available in articles and books during the ensuing years.

"He began to doubt whether or not he flew on 959 (RHAPSODY IN RED)," Mrs Schultz says.

In Feb 1992 Schultz received an invitation from Ray Bowden, the English writer who was then working on his excellent book, PLANE NAMES & FANCY NOSES, to contribute copy. Mrs Schultz, who calls her 324th Sq survivor husband "a saver," says both of them jumped at the chance to put "RHAPSODY" in a history book.

Digging into their records filled basement and garage, utilizing "Evers' History of the 91st," telephoned contacts with Schultz' remaining original crew members and conversations at reunions (1992 Memphis particularly) swelled the two's RHAPSODY IN RED information file.

Robin Mott, an English 91st BGMA AM, meeting the Schultz' during their May 1992 50th Anniversary return to Bassingbourn tour, welcomed the opportunity to assist them with English research. A year later Mott sent them a "RHAPSODY" leather patch and the information that Tony Starcher's model for the nose-art was an Oct '44 Esquire magazine "pin-up" illustration. The memento spurred the Schultz's on.

Subsequent "bits and pieces" to establish Schultz's association with RHAPSODY IN RED included the coincidence that 10 91st BGMAers, seated at a Men's Luncheon Table during the Memphis, TN reunion participated in the Feb 3, '45 Berlin raid in which "RHAPSODY" participated. Oddly, Schultz, possibly the most fervent "RHAPSODY" fan at that table, did not fly that mission during his 35 mission tour.

Mrs Schultz says her two year research on the missions her husband flew have finally assured him he flew most of his missions on RHAPSODY IN RED. Nevertheless, she writes that his attachment to that particular 324th plane led to the realization that he also flew on YANKEE BELLE, MAH IDEEL and several other planes which included 10 minutes combat time on factory fresh "946."

For 48 years before the 1992 Memphis Reunion, Schultz says, he understood "946's" crash was due to pilot error. Late in 1994 the editor, poking into back files after meeting Schultz and his wife at the OKC, OK Reunion, published the article based on Schultz's whimsical recollection of the plane's short combat career.

Shortly after his wife's additional information regarding his and her two year search for "RHAPSODY" data arrived too late to include in the Nov '94 R/I article, correspondence from another important survivor of "946's" short career reached the R/I. It was from former 324th Sq 2/Lt Conrad Hohing, Ocean Isle, NC, who was the co-pilot on 1/Lt J C Bowlan's crew when they crashed on take-off.

In addition to copies of his statement and that of his pilot pertaining to the over 50 years ago crash, Hohing says, "The plane was definitely sabotaged, as were nine others in the Eighth AF on that particular mission."

Though injuries were sustained on the 324th plane, Hohing's and Schultz's memories of the incident indicate their crew was lucky. After the crash another pilot from another group told Hohing in an English hospital that he and his co-pilot were the only survivors of the other nine (9) Eighth AF planes that also crashed during Dec 24, 1944 take-off attempts.

LTC Lord, then-Maj Klette and Maj Griffin comprised the Dec 1944 324th Sq 91st BG(H) Accident Board required to render judgement regarding the cause of the "accident." The

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## NO SHORT STORY

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crash statements submitted to that board by "946's" pilot and co-pilot, provided by Hohing, follow:

### PILOT'S STATEMENT

*"The reason for the crash landing of B-17G aircraft 43-38946 was instrument failure and bad weather conditions. The airspeed read 115 at almost the end of the runway when it should have read about 130. As I pulled the ship off the runway, the airspeed fell to 105 and the artificial horizon was not working after we took off, but I did not know that at the time. We did not gain any air speed and were 300 ft off the ground so I nosed it down just a bit and just as I saw the ground at 200 ft., we hit a tree with our No. 3 engine which I had not seen due to the heavy fog. The co-pilot tried to feather the engine and could not. We paid no more attention to the airspeed and artificial horizon and tried to keep the plane level and gain about 100 feet per minute, but the No. 3 engine was vibrating so much I could feel we were stalling out. I then saw some trees just in front of us, so I pulled over them and the ship stalled out at that time. I knew we were going to crash so I pulled off the power and leveled out.*

J.C. BOWLAN,  
1st Lt., A.C., Pilot."

### CO-PILOT'S STATEMENT

24 December 1944

*"The first time I knew there was something wrong was when I realized that we were getting more airspeed than the air speed indicator showed. The pilot pulled the ship off the ground near the end of the runway at an indicated airspeed of 115 MPH. After this the airspeed dropped off to about 105 MPH. The pilot nosed the ship down to prevent stalling. At this time I realized that the flight indicator was not functioning, because when we broke through the overcast we were in a turn to the left, while the flight indicator indicated a turn to the right. I had previously checked the pitot heat finding it on and as I looked over at the vacuum pressure we struck something. It was probably a tree, but I am not sure. However it bent the prop and ripped the cowling from number 3 engine. I immediately pushed number 3 feather button and completed the feathering procedure. As I looked out at number 3 I knew that feathering was useless because the cowling had ripped the prop governor off.*

*"The next thing I knew we had broken through the overcast again and were heading for a row of trees. Both the pilot and I drew the column back at the same time. We cleared the trees but between the vibration caused by number 3 engine and the reduction of airspeed caused by the sharp climb we did not have enough air speed to enable us to maintain flying speed. The plane stalled and knowing that it was inevitable that we would crash, the pilot gained as much air speed as possible by nosing it down and leveled it out just before making contact with the ground. We landed in a ploughed field approximately 6 miles NE of the field in a three point position.*

*"My conclusions for the cause of the crash landing were primarily the failure of the airspeed indicator and secondarily the failure of the flight instruments. I contribute the failure*

*entirely to material failure since at the time the instruments failed the vacuum pressure was normal and the pitot heat was on.*

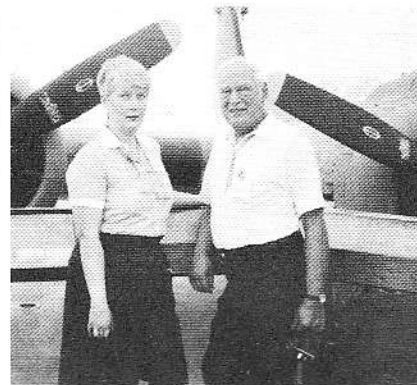
CONRAD HOHING, JR.,  
2nd Lt., Air Corps., Co-Pilot."

In the final (perhaps) installment on the 324th's sabotaged "946" the July '95 R/I will publish the finding of the Accident Board and other data of this unusual tale whose telling, basically, depends upon Barbara Schultz's interest in her husband's 91st past.

Meanwhile, among other details since recalled by Schultz is his and other crew men crawling from the wreckage and sitting near one of the plane's wing tips. "Someone" among them suggested the scattered 500 lbs GP bombs on board might explode.

"So we moved about 10 feet further from the wreck. Real smart!" Schultz laughs now.

BARBARA AND  
Clifford Schultz, whose  
RHAPSODY IN RED  
interest stirred a big  
story about another  
plane's short career.



## B24 REPUTATION

(Continued from Page 4)

"The naivete of that design is still appalling," Mack says.

The wrinkled fuselage skin of the B24s and the stressed skin of B17s often enter comparative discussions. Mack, who says a B17 with "wrinkled skin" justified alarm says others have told him B24 fuselages' internal structure allowed the skin to be of a thinner gauge than B17s'. The wrinkled appearance of B24 skin was of no consequence.

"The B17 was designed for higher monocoque loads, i.e., the stressed skin carried a higher proportion of the load than the internal stringers and frames," Mack says.

The long post-WWII years have contributed another point to B17 vs B24 discussions, according to Mack, a retired Boeing sales director.

"The higher stressed B17 skin contributed to its ability to withstand combat damage without primary structural failure better than the B24. The fewer structural elements of the B24 carrying higher loads would be more critical to catastrophic failure in the event of failure of any one element.

"Also, I must add, I am unaware of any modern airplane in commercial or military service today that follows the B24 structural philosophy.

"Anyway," Mack closed his 1989 contribution, "be happy we (the 91st BG(H)) had the B17s as (Grainger's) article will tell you."

Former B24 pilot Grainger, of the 868th Bomb Gp, 13th AF, closed his WSJ article with the suggestion that B24s be "remembered" by honoring "the brave crews...who fully knew it was a horrible deathtrap but went up in it anyway, because forty-five years ago, ... freedom was on the line."



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● HOBBS, JAMES B, 324th, PO Box 69, 2918 Sugar Hill, Yatesville, GA 31097, May 8, 1994. Reported by Sec/Trea Asay B Johnson.

● LYONS, "POP" LEO L, 323rd, LM, 7 Evergreen Lane, Trenton, NJ 08690, Feb 1995 at age 79 after lengthy recurrent cancer. He retired from the New Jersey Bell telephone company in 1978.

He was a member of Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, the Holy Name Society Hamilton Elks No 2262, the Hamilton Knights of Columbus, the Adjutant for the American Legion Post No 93, a life member of the Telephone Pioneers of Trenton, Burlington District and President of the Hamilton Energetic Leisure People (HELP).

Survivors include his widow, Catherine "Kay," two sons, a daughter, a brother and sister, eight grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Reported by Howell B Loper.

● KAMYKOWSKI, FRANK S, Col (Ret), 441st, LM, 308 Warehill Dr, Montgomery, AL 36109, Jan 28, 1995 at age 89. Kamykowski's 32 year military career resulted in life memberships in the Retired Officers Association, the VFW, the DAV, the 91st BGMA and membership in the Memphis Belle Association.

Harold L Mannon, Tulsa, OK, another 441st veteran was honored by Mrs Kamykowski's request that he deliver the eulogy. It was a "tough assignment" Mannon writes - but his memories of a "great C/O's extraordinary character" lessened the burden by providing prodigious inspirational anecdotal material.

Kamykowski is survived by his widow, Anne T; a son, Stanley; a daughter, Nancy Jackson; four sisters; seven grandchildren; five great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. Full military honors accompanied the St Peters Catholic Church burial services held for Kamykowski. His family suggested donations to favorite charities be made in lieu of flowers.

Reported by Harold L Mannon and W W Hill.

● TAFT, GILBERT L, 401st, 707 W Spruce Av, Midland, TX 79705. Reported by the USPS.

● TILLEY, NATHANS, 8153 Fiesta St High Point, Brooksville, FL 34613, Nov 20, 1994 at age 78. After his 91st BG(H) service he was transferred to Hdqs, 1st Air Div, 8th AF at Brampton, Hunts, Eng in Nov 1942. Reported by Sec/Trea Asay B Johnson.

● VAUGHN, "BOB" ROBERT G, 401st, N 11922 Camellia Lane, Mead, WA 99021-9579; suddenly, Sept 10, 1994. Being raised on a ranch provided him with rodeo skills that paid for his early education. Prior to his enlistment in the AF he was a draftsman at Boeing. While completing 32 missions and flying an additional volunteered three more so he could participate in the D-Day Invasion, he declined a Purple Heart addition to the many other medals awarded him.

After the war he was a specialty and general contractor - restoring many historical structures in Spokane. He was deeply involved in local associations involving horsemanship, promoting youth organizations as well as active participation in the VFW, the Masonic Lodge and other organizations.

He is survived by his widow, Betty, a daughter, numerous grandchildren, a great grandson and a large extended family.

He is remembered as a "one-of-a-kind man" - always ready to help (those) in need. He especially enjoyed attending the "Super Rally Round 50th Anniversary of First Flight in Seattle, WA in 1985," was proud of his service, his service friends and

always looked forward to the R/I, his widow, Betty, reports.

● WEITZENFELD, RICHARD W, 324th, 3940 Plumosa Terrace, Brandontown, FL 34210. Reported by Sec/Trea Asay B Johnson.

● WILLIAMS, SAMUEL PHILLIP, 322nd PO Box 296, 418 S Oak, Oak Ridge, LA 71264, Sept 22, 1994 at age 79. Reported by his widow.

## NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS

DENNIS C BEASLEY, B/Gen USAF RET, AL, Colorado Springs, FL

ROBERT H FRIEDMAN, 323rd, Houston, TX

WILLIAM T HANNA, COL USAF RET, 401st, Marionville, MO

RAYMOND E JONES, 401st, LTC USAF RET, Hemphill, TX

JAMES LOMASEY, 401st, Palo Alto, CA

LUCY McKELVY, AL, Howes Cave, NY

ROBERT R MEGCHELSEN, 322nd, Answorth, IA

HARVEY A THOMPSON, 401st, Springfield, OR

JAMES M VERES, SR, 401st, Parma, OH

JAMES WITTER, SMSGT USAF RET, 322nd, Heber Springs, AR

## "RANK AND FILE" PLEASED BY NEVADA RALLY ROUND

THE MARCH 1995 LAUGHLIN, NV SPRING RALLY Round attendance, comprised of 91st BGMAers, their wives and family members, associate members and guests, totaled 87. Deadline scheduling does not permit more coverage at this time than the pleased comments of Pres Johnson in his column and the following roster rushed to the R/I by a pleased Sec/Trea Asay B Johnson. Attending were:

322nd

Mel and Della Dart; Herb and Cathy Egender; Bob and Gloria Elroy; Bernard Lopez; Robert and Leota Lovely; J D and Jeannie Mills; Larry and Nancy O'Neil; Donald and Patty Sheeler (also HQs); Bob and Pat Schuster; Lou Smith; Thomas J Fitzgerald and Bill Williams.

323rd

George Birdsong; M J and Marjorie Darnell; Aldun and Ramona Dunn; Robert and Mary Lee Gould; James and Barbara Hoffman; William and Jeanne Hollenback; William T Koranda (also 324th); Hank Lilly; Bill and Ann Schilly; Lewis and Maldarine Simpson and William Stripling.

324th

John Dean; Charles and Frances Falkenberg; Linez Folven; Clyde and Lanell Garrison; Asay and Gloria Johnson; James and Madeline Patton and Andy and Clarice Schumaker.

401st

Albin and Alice Andoshek; Roger and Gloria Armstrong; Donald Beal; Faber and Mary Cripps (also 441st); Lester and Gwen Grove; Hal and Phyllis Johnson; Frank and Hilde Kensly; Paul and Jeannie and daughter Limm; Phillip Lunt; Albert and Myrna Marcus and Bill and Margie Thissel.

AND

Alex Bettencourt (HQs); Diana Chennin (Guest); Rose Clapp (Associate Member); Bob and Ruth Keeler (Guests); Harold and Jean Mannon (441st); Clarence and Bertie Neel (Guests); Stanley Pablick (Guest); Jim and Suzi Shepherd (Associate Members) and Duane and Margaret Tarket (Guests).

## MEMBER PARTICIPATION SOUGHT IN PROJECTS

THOSE MEMBERS HAVING ANY INFORMATION ON the following items are requested to contact the 91st BGMAers involved in a new, unique association project. Ultimately it is planned the data assembled by the three involved members will be combined in an unbound book and made available through the 91st BGMA PX.

Seeking assistance are:

1) 1st Vice President Robert H Friedman seeks contact with any 91st BGMAer who has knowledge of, or participated in Operation Revival, the project to fly POWs from Germany back to England and France.

The Oct 1987 R/I contained an article submitted by Alfred M Meyers, 324th, which credited the late Senator Harry P Cain of WA with being instrumental in saving 10,000 POWs from the Barth POW Camp. Cain, a colonel, was dispatched to Barth when Russian authorities indicated they planned to repatriate the Barth POWs by marching them 1500 miles to Odessa. Cain's oratory and his immediate procurement of a big flock of Forts temporarily intimidated the Russians. Before they recovered he had evacuated the camp.

It is likely 91sters were involved and can contribute more to Friedman's project. His address is 6015 Valkeith, Houston, TX 77096; phone: 713-729-2255.

2) Harold I Mannon's project is assembling data for a unit history of the 441st Sub Depot. He seeks information or

documents of the Sub Depot's mission, organization charts, history, achievements, honors, stories and any and all suitable subject matter. His address is 5921 E 54th St, Tulsa, OK 74135; phone: 918-628-1168.

3) Paul J Limm says there is an unconfirmed story that the 91st BG(H) flew Jewish displaced persons from concentration camps after VE Day. One version says 401st planes unloaded some of them in the 401st hangar. Even fragmentary information on the above will be welcomed by Limm. His address is 601 Calle De Soto, San Clemente, CA 92672; phone: 714-492-4502.

## OCT 26-29 RALLY ROUND SET FOR JUPITER, FL

AN OFF-SHORE CRUISE IN THE OCEAN GOING "Viking Princess"; a pool-side welcome party; a showing of the new MEMPHIS BELLE film, "A Flight in Time"; the premier of a WWII mission film; a shopping tour on the world famous Palm Beach FL's Worth Av and the beautiful Palm Gardens Mall; golfing and fishing; a "Big Band" dinner dance - and more are all part of the Oct 26-29, 1995 91st BGMA "Jupiter, FL Rally Round" being organized by Robert E Gerstemeir, his wife Trudie and other Florida 91st BGMA "activists."

Those desiring immediate detailed data on the above can obtain it by contacting the Gerstemeirs. Their address is: 124 NE Twylite Terr, Port Lucie, FL 34983-1247; their phone number is: 407-879-9518.

The R/I will publish final details in its' July issue.

### 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 21286-8131. "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.

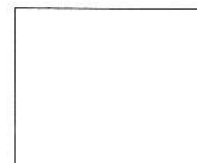
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### Folded Wings

● BALLOU, DONALD T (TIBBY), 401st, 2055 Lee St, Lakewood, CO 80215, Aug 23, 1993. Jack Francis, a family member, wrote Ballou's widow, Mazie, enjoys receiving the 91st BGMA mailings but doubts she'll ever attend another reunion "without Tibby."

● BIACHINI, VINCENT, 311 Taylor, Collingwood, NJ 08107, Mar 8, 1994. Reported by his widow, Dolores, who wrote, "He talked a lot about the 91st BGMA. ...all of you men are the best. I wish I could have met all of you. God Bless you all."

● BROWN, HAROLD W, 311 N First, Chandler, IN 47610, 1992. Reported by his wife.

● FIGLER, EDWARD A, 322nd, 12 Valley Lane, Avon,

NY 14414, Jan 21, 1995. Figler's widow, Jane, wrote he "spent hours entertaining his grandchildren with stories of England." An FM, he looked forward to each issue of the R/I which he "read over and over." Confirmation of his 1995 dues payment arrived on the day he died. His widow looks forward to continued receipt of the R/I "because I enjoy them too," she wrote.

● FIIGEN, KENNETH P, 401st, Cedar Oaks Cen, 1311 Durham Av, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, Dec 9, 1994. Fiigen, the TG on Lt John E LaFontin's plane when it was downed in Germany on Apr 19, '44, was one the crew's six survivors. Reported by his brother, William M Fiigen of North Canton, OH.

● HEWLETT, JOHN D, 2301 Walnut Lane, Wilmington, DE 19810, Jan 21, 1995. Reported by USPS.

(Continued on Page 7)