

The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



SUPPORTING UNITS



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol 29 No. 2

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Apr 1996

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
ATTENTION!



**Tucson
Reunion
Info!**

SEE INSERT PAGE

MIGHTY EIGHTH AF MUSEUM TO OPEN MAY 13-14

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE MUSEUM will hold its grand opening on May 13 & 14, 1996, in Savannah, Ga.

The first day of the two day grand opening - May 13 - will be devoted exclusively to Eighth Air Force Veterans and their families.

The public grand opening will take place on May 14 starting with a ceremony and ribbon cutting at 10 am. Among the numerous well-known Eighth Air Force veterans who have indicated they plan to attend the grand opening are the 324th Sq's MEMPHIS BELLE pilot Robert Morgan and his co-pilot, Jim Vineress.

The Museum, which is located at the intersection of US Highway 80 and I-95 in the town of Pooler, will honor the more than one million men and women who have served in the

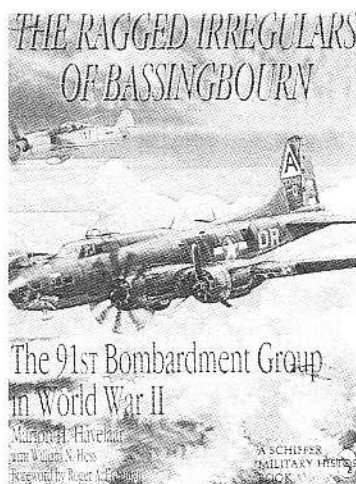
Eighth since it was created in Savannah in January 1942. Some 350,000 men and women served in the Eighth during WWII when it grew to be such a powerful force that it came to be known as The Mighty Eighth.

The 90,000 square foot Heritage Museum will house displays and exhibits that portray the daily activities, accomplishments and sacrifices of all who have served in The Mighty Eighth Air Force and will do it without glorifying the horrors of war. Instead the Museum will concentrate on educational needs of America's young people and will offer programs that stimulate them to become active contributing citizens.

In addition to the main exhibit areas the Heritage Museum will include a one hundred thousand volume capacity library,

(Continued on Page 2)

91st BG(H)'s PROUD PAST BEING PRESERVED!



NOT TOO LONG AGO THE R/I JUBILANTLY ANNOUNCED the availability of the first 91st BG(H) history, "WRAY'S RAGGED IRREGULARS." Written by the group's PIO, Lt Carlton Brechler, its manuscript was widely distributed and applauded during WWII. B/Gen F Anderson, Commanding Gen, 8th AF, called it, "...the story of all 8th Bomber Command Groups ... in the United Kingdom during the winter and spring of 1942-43."

Despite warm WWII reception Brechler's book went unpublished. The combined attention of former 91st BGMA officials Paul Burnett and Hilary "Bud" Evers and member Michael E Rheam made the book available in 1990. Before that, according to ex-Historian Evers, "The R/I was the only chronicle of our (91st) record."

Times have changed! Six years later books about the 91st BG(H) abound. This issue focuses upon some.

OLD FAITHFUL

A FLYING FORTRESS



Foreword by
Brig. Gen. J. H. McPartlin USAF (Retd)

OLD FAITHFUL

THE RAGGED IRREGULARS OF BASSINGBOURN

By MARION H HAVELAAR with William N Hess

264 pages, 8-3/4" x 11-1/4", profusely illustrated

5 Appendixes, Hard Cover

Schiffer Publishing Ltd.

77 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, PA 19310

By RUDY MALKIN

SOME THIRTY YEARS AGO FORMER 401st BOMBARDIER Marion H. Havelaar, while sending WWII photos to noted English author Roger A Freeman for use in his book The Mighty Eighth, hoped he too would be able to write a history of the 91st BG(H). He doubted he'd ever get around to it, however.

(Continued on Page 4)

OLD FAITHFUL - A FLYING FORTRESS

By REX POULTON

133 pages, 8 x 11-3/4", 76 illust., 3 appendices

Soft Cover

42 Sunnyhill Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3QJ
England

By PAUL J LIMM

REX POULTON HAS WRITTEN A REMARKABLE BOOK. It is dedicated "To the crews who flew and died..." before he was born. The book, OLD FAITHFUL, A FLYING FORTRESS, was inspired by an English village's WWII gratitude.

Wincanton, the village, honors OLD FAITHFUL and her crew with a memorial plaque because the pilot, desperate to land his burning plane and only minutes away from a safe

(Continued on Page 2)

OLD FAITHFUL

(Continued from Page 1)

landing field, veered to avoid flying over it. His turn's added stress caused a fire weakened wing to collapse and OLD FAITHFUL's crash upon the town's perimeter. Wincanton was spared civilian casualties but all of the plane's crew died.

B/Gen James McPartlin, who was the 401st Sq C/O at the time, in the foreword, calls Poulton's book, "...an-in-depth look at the brave deeds of the 91st Bomb Group and all the American airmen of the mighty Eighth who made VE Day a reality. He captures the emotions and daily lives of the ground crews and support personnel who kept the Fortresses flying...

"...outstanding detailed research has made the days and nights at Bassingbourn come to life again. I'm sure those who read Rex's book will find it not only entertaining but rewarding and inspiring as well."

When one realizes Poulton's book was inspired by his ruminations regarding the last unrecorded six hours of life for the 401st Sq's 2/Lt Peter Mikonis and his crew, McPartlin's broad praise is not contestable. I, myself, believe OLD FAITHFUL belongs in every 91st BGMAer's library and should be read by all 8th AF veterans and all military aviation history students. Not for many years have I enjoyed reading a book of non-fiction and admired a writer's technique as much as I have since reading Poulton's OLD FAITHFUL.

His book, based upon OLD FAITHFUL's loss, required more than a decade of research. Since no records exist from the time Mikonis and his crew chose their perilous return to Bassingbourn across the Bay of Biscay in their burning plane rather than seek refuge in nearby Spain, Poulton's research into OLD FAITHFUL's 37 mission career culminated in a book reflecting favorably upon all those who served in the 8th AF during WWII.

The presence and contributions of Gaffney, Pierce, Bankowsky, Harry Smith and other crew chiefs and other ground personnel to 91st BG(H) operations are appropriately recognized in Poulton's felicitous prose and the wide ranging photo coverage in his book.

"...ground crews worked hard to ready them (damaged Forts) for the next mission. ...With no shelter from the biting wind out on the open airfield the cold was hardest on the hands, making work with the chilled metal tools difficult. ...Jobs took longer as the sense of feeling in the fingers went away in the low temperatures..." is an abbreviated sample of Poulton's sensitive probing and recording of the essential support activities behind every 8th AF raid. His is one of the few books to do so.

OLD FAITHFUL's career lasted six months - Dec 24, '43 to June 25, '44. Lt Charles Price, Poulson records, flew her 15 times; seventeen identified other 401st pilots shared her remaining 22 missions.

This and other such varied data included in the book, I believe, insures recognition of most 401sters also associated with OLD FAITHFUL. Unfortunately there is no index - readers seeking references to themselves or their contributions must read through it.

But that's a profound pleasure.

Order from: Rex Poulton, 42 Sunnyhill Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3QJ, England. Price \$24.00 per copy, including postage and handling - Airmail \$4.00 extra. Author's autograph if requested.

"306th ECHOES" JAN ISSUE ADDS FORT CRASH INFO

THE JAN 1996 QUARTERLY EDITION OF THE 306th BG Historical Association's "306th Echoes" contains the only additional information The R/I has received regarding the "crash" of a B17 at the Fayetteville (NC) Municipal Airport early last Nov. A photo of the damaged Fort appeared on page 4 of the Jan 1996 R/I along with a request for additional info to supplement the brief caption data accompanying the photo. Continuing information on the matter is invited by The R/I.

CRASH HALTS 'BELLE' FLIGHT

"The B17 which of late has carried the banner of the "MEMPHIS BELLE" emblazoned on its nose, and put there for its role in the recent movie by that name, came to a sad halt early in November '95 at the Fayetteville, NC airport.

"Piloted by David Tallichet, its owner and a onetime pilot with the 100th Bomb Group, the Belle received heavy damaged when it struck a building while taxiing for takeoff. It suddenly lost hydraulic power and began fishtailing.

"The plane skidded toward a wood-framed building that houses electrical equipment and the left wing smacked into it, reported the airport director. 'It spun and the nose of the two propellers just embedded into the building and part of the left wing was lost. There was extensive damage to both the building and the airplane.'

"The plane is often housed at the Air Heritage Museum at the Beaver County Airport northwest of Pittsburgh, PA for maintenance. James Macry, 369th and chairman of the 1991 reunion in Pittsburgh, is the principal fund raiser for the Air Heritage Museum."

MUSEUM TO OPEN

(Continued from Page 1)

Eighth Air Force archives, two theaters, an art gallery and educational meeting rooms.

The Heritage Museum will be open seven days a week from 10 am to 6 pm. There will be a small admission charge. Parking facilities for 200 cars and eighty RV and coach busses will be free of charge. The Museum will include a large canteen that seats more than 200 people and a 5,000 square foot gift shop. Special hours and group rates will be available for the Museum. Interested groups should call Jack Burton, Director of Retail Sales, at 1-800-421-9428 for more information.

Other well-known and distinguished Eighth Air Force veterans indicating planned attendance at the grand opening are: Medal of Honor recipient William Lawley; fighter aces Francis "Gabby" Gabreski, Robert S Johnson, Jerry Johnson and John Truluck - all from the famed 56th Fighter Group known as Zemke's Wolfpack; Paul Tibbets and Frank Beadle who flew together on the first Eighth Air Force daylight bombing raids against the Nazis. Steve Miller, son of famed band leader Glenn Miller, also plans to attend.

To reach the Heritage Museum and the site of the grand opening take exit 18 off I-95 and go east about one eighth of a mile on US 80 to Bourne Ave. Turn left on Bourne and the Heritage Museum will be visible straight ahead.

91st BGMA TUCSON REUNION "PLANNING PAGE"



USE INSERT PAGE FORMS FOR REGISTRATION AND ACTIVITY CHOICES

THE HOLIDAY INN-PALO VERDE, SITE OF THE SEPT 25-28, 1996 TUCSON, AZ 91st BGMA NATIONAL Reunion, 4550 S Palo Verde Blvd, is located off Interstate 10 and is only four miles from the airport. It features complimentary transportation to and from Tucson International Airport, University of Arizona and within a five-mile radius. An integral part of Tucson's tourist industry, it enhances its' outdoor setting with facilities for those interested in swimming, tennis, exercise, whirlpool and sauna activities. Its' Atrium Cafe features American cuisine while dancing and entertainment is available in its' convenient Nite Lites room for tired tour takers.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 25, 1996 TUCSON, AZ 91st BGMA Reunion Opening Registration will feature an open hospitality room at the Holiday Inn - Palo Verde, 4550 So Palo Verde Blvd, the Reunion headquarters, to promote early renewal of old friendships. An optional Get Acquainted City Tour will be provided if interest is adequate. This tour, not listed on the registration form, is a drive through the historic district of "Old Pueblo." Included is a stop at the Sosa-Carrillo-Fremont House for a guided tour of one of Tucson's oldest adobe buildings. From 2 to 4pm. Price: \$20.00 per person (including soft drinks on coach).

THURSDAY, SEPT 26, 1996

1) **PIMA AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM.** Planes that made history! More than 180 aircraft on display. An entire complex is dedicated to the B17 and WWII memorabilia. Special guides for 91st BGMA groups will be on hand. Narrated walking tours, tram tours and special info on some of the famous planes displayed available. Luncheon and refreshments will be provided. Time: 10am to 3pm(?). Price: \$34.00 per person.

2) **ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM** (Alternate tour to Air and Space Museum). Fully guided tour of Arizona's famous living museum with over 200 animals and plants of the Sonora Desert displayed in open natural settings. The museum features two walk-thru aviaries (one exclusively humming birds) and beautiful gem and mineral displays. Lunch provided at the ironwood Terrace. The restaurant is located within the Desert Museum grounds. Views of distant Mexico available from the dining patios. Time: 10am to 3pm(?). Price: \$35.00 per person (including lunch, admission and 91st BGMA group guides).

3) **COMPLIMENTARY SALSA AND MARGARITA RECEPTION** (One Hour)

4) **OPTIONAL DINNER PACKAGE** (Following Reception). A place is reserved for dinner at one of Tucson's oldest and finest Mexican restaurants. Enjoy tasty local cuisine, a complimentary margarita and the music of a top mariachi band in an old world setting. Time: Depart following Holiday Inn Margarita Reception - til 10pm. Price: \$35.00 per person.

FRIDAY, SEPT 27, 1996

1) **SCENIC TRAIN RIDE-WESTERN ENTERTAINMENT-COWBOY COOKOUT.** Ride through the San Pedro River Valley and learn about the colorful and varied history of the area. Refreshments and bar on the train. Included is a lunch stop along the way with accompanying western music. After train ride there will be western stunt shows, roping demonstrations, the rodeo arena and other fun - including cowboy music and entertainment. A western cookout will include a choice of steak or chicken with all the trimmings. Non-alcoholic beverages included in tour price. Time: 9am to 8pm. Price \$90.00 per person (a full day with all transportation, meals, taxes, tips and entertainment.)

2) **COWBOY COOKOUT AND ENTERTAINMENT ONLY.** Join train riders for dinner at a rustic steakhouse. There will be time to stroll around Trail Dust Town and visit the fudge shop and antique carousel. Price \$32.00 per person.

SATURDAY, SEPT 28, 1996

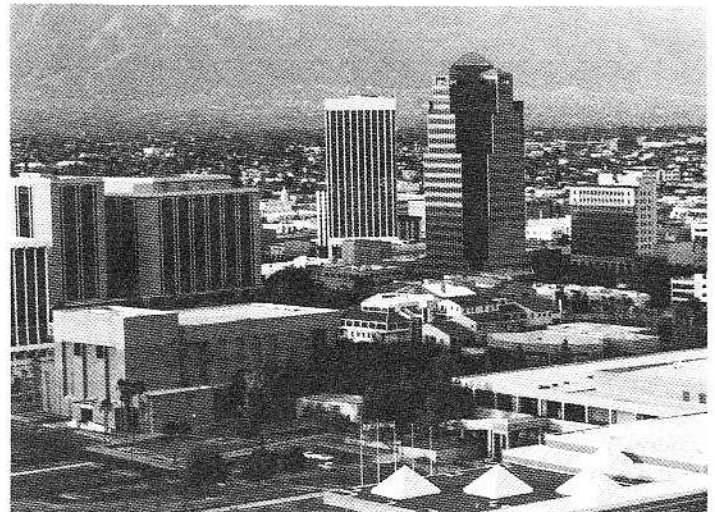
1) **MEMBERS BUSINESS MEETING AND LUNCH.** Price: \$15.00 per person.

2) **LADIES MISSION TOUR AND NOGALES, MEXICO SHOPPING TOUR.** Entertaining shopping! The shopkeepers love to bargain - it's part of the experience! Great buys on jewelry, leather goods, pottery and hand blown glassware. Tour guides accompany "first-timers" to tutor and assist. Lunch on the Arizona side of Nogales.

MISSION SAN XAVIER DEL BAC. One of the finest examples of Spanish mission architecture of the 1700s. It has frescoes, exquisite hand carving and gilt work. Located on the Tohono's O'odham Indian Reservation, it has a gift shop Indian Fry bread and tacos are available at the stands adjacent to the Mission. Time: 8:30am to 4:30pm. Price: \$32.00 per person.

3) **GALA BANQUET, ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING.** Price: \$30.00 per person.

Those desiring more detailed and additional information may obtain same by writing: The Great Southwest Tour Company, 5241 N Blue Bonnet Av, Tucson, AZ 85745. The phone number is: 1-800-743-4833.



DRENCHED IN AN ANNUAL 350 DAYS OF SUNSHINE, TUCSON IS the true southwest. A city alive with character, history, cosmopolitan charm and cultural diversity, its' stunning desert and southwestern hospitality create the perfect setting for any meeting, convention - or reunion!

Boasting "extraordinary year-round weather" (perceived temperature is always lower than air temperature) its' residents and visitors find their busy, bustling days blend into cool and calming nights at its' world class resorts, hotels and facilities.

Outdoor activities are plentiful and include world class golf courses, hiking, cycling and guest ranches with horseback riding. Its' outdoor sporting opportunities are unmatched.

THE RAGGED IRREGULARS

(Continued from Page 1)

Fortunately for all members Havelaar has kept his 1990 Seattle, WA National Reunion promise to produce a definitive hard-bound history of the 91st BG(H).

THE RAGGED IRREGULARS OF BASSINGBOURN, which he has recently released, is a remarkable book which is much, much bigger than its 264 pages. Included in it are the listings of all 91st BG(H) combat missions; B17 aircraft used by the 91st BG(H) by name and serial number; plane losses by date, location and serial number and a Roll of Honor of 91sters KIA or MIA.

The basic text, fact packed and clear, frequently includes personal recollections. The editor, who flew with the 401st's then Lt Les Rentmeester during the original early '44 Berlin raids, turned to Havelaar's "Chap 11: BIG 'B'" soon after receiving his book. A lesson was learned - regarding memories. A waist gunner, he recalls little of the Berlin raids - including the account of a head-on attack by Messerschmitts 110s on the 401st Sq which caused problems up-front for Rentmeester. Steel splinters ripping into the cockpit stunned and temporarily blackened Rentmeester's world but the sound of TTG Elmer A Diethorn's twin fifties' retaliatory fire inches above his head assured Rentmeester he was still conscious. The editor is indebted to Havelaar for refreshing his memories of a splendid crew and is sure other reader's will have similar experiences.

Once a reader wrestles his attention from the text and the unrivaled photos included, a study of "Appendix 2, AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED" opens a library of 91st BG(H) info reproduced with the permission of the Eighth AF Memorial Museum Foundation. Abbreviated lines of numbers and letters, once mastered, contain paragraphs of ready, detailed data concerning the fate of planes and personnel of the 91st BG(H).

It is impossible to mention all those who contributed to the excellent photos included. Consequently the R/I confines itself to noting two of the Allan N Morey formation photos sold by the 91st BGMA PX are used in this book with stunning effect.

This is a book to read, refer to and forever cherish!

Orders for the \$47.95 book should be sent to M H Havelaar, 5421 Cavalry Post Dr, Arlington, TX 76017-4514. His phone number is 1-817-557-3096.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

DANIEL M BIENZ (AL), Neshanic Station, NJ

LEE D BISHOP, Tallahassee, FL

ROGER M COMER, San Antonio, TX

PETER F COTTAM (AL), England

GEORGE B GAINES, Corpus Christi, TX

HAROLD E JOHNSON, Stockton, CA

DAN B JORDON, Houston, TX

JAMES C ROSS, Tacoma, WA

DONALD E SHEELER, Whittier, CA

DONALD R SMITH, Big Bear Lake, CA

GOFF SUMMERS, Glennville, WV

JOSEPH WEINSTOCK, Miami, FL

TALES TO NOSES OVER BERLIN

By RAY BOWDEN

Published by Design Oracle Partnership
50 Argyle Road, Ealing, London, W 13 8AA
England

128 pages, 8-1/2 x 11-1/2", 100+ photos
Soft Cover

By CHARLES T BELL

JUST TO GET ATTENTION, I HOPE MY SAYING SOME of this book is not an "easy" read does not discourage anyone who participated in the 8th AF's 20 Berlin raids from ordering it. (Any reader who served at Basingbourn during the period Mar 3, '44 to Feb 2, '45 should get it because more than likely he flew missions over this "dreaded target" - Berlin.)

Ray Bowden's latest book, TALES TO NOSES OVER BERLIN, contains a complete accounting of the casualties incurred on each mission. Included data indicates no other 8th AF unit was more involved than the 91st BG(H).

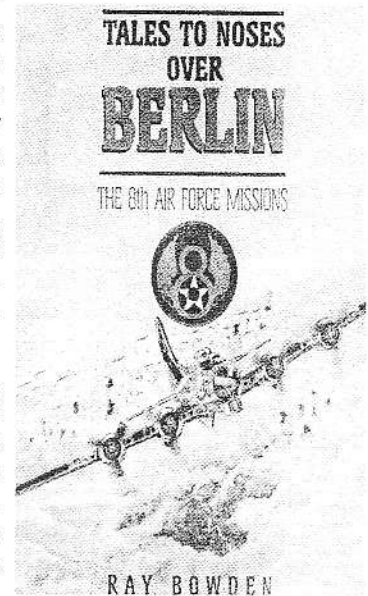
Despite my opening caution that some of Bowden's latest book is not an "easy" read, it is well written and painstakingly researched. The result is an engrossing account of command controversy behind the raids. Bowden successfully captures the essence of the Berlin missions' stark reality while giving scholarly attention to the conflicting views regarding their contribution to the over-all war effort. (The 8th AF Berlin raids were begun just as the RAF's ambitions "to crack the city wide open" were abandoned.)

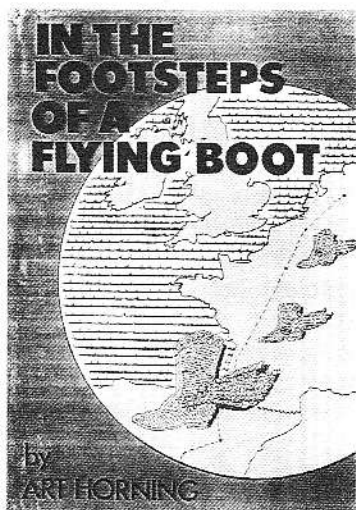
The book contains accounts from many Berlin mission participants - including ex-POWs like the 91st BGMA's Sec/Trea Asay B Johnson who witnessed the death of LTC Marvin D Lord and the 324th's Immanuel J "Manny" Klette's experienced crew on the Feb 3, '45 Berlin raid.

Not too many veterans of the "Big B" bombings are aware that more than 450 heavy bombers and their crews were lost and 140,000 8AF veterans participated in the operation. Readers, particularly the survivors of the raids, will find many facts in the data portion to add to their recollections of those times to affirm or dis-affirm long held personal conclusions regarding the American decision to bomb refugee filled Berlin.

The exchange rate between English and US dollars has been simplified by the publisher. Single copies are approximately \$35.00 by surface mail and \$44.00 by Air Mail to the States. Bank Drafts or Tellers' Checks or USPS International Postal Money Orders are accepted in US dollars. Orders or queries should be sent to: Design Oracle Partnership, 50 Argyle Road, Ealing, London W13 8AA, England.

Editor's Note: Bell, a 322nd pilot who flew four "Big B" missions, somehow omitted emphasizing the hundreds of personal accounts in Bowden's book. The book's layout and photos makes easy, absorbing reading of all.





IN THE GRANDEST TRADITIONS of the truly courageous US 8th Air Force which fought in WWII, author Art Horning recounts his personal memoirs of the war, his bailing out of a burning plane and his four month journey by boot to once again stand on allied soil. This is also the story of and a tribute to those many European civilians who placed their own lives in danger while helping airmen like Mr Horning return safely.

"IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF A FLYING BOOT" might not

have been written if not for a Dutch author who was gathering information about war activities in his home locale during WWII and came upon the once classified information about Mr Horning. Through the Veterans Administration he contacted Mr Horning. Armed with enthusiasm, and assured by the government that his information was no longer "classified secret," Horning also began his own research into finding and writing about his adventure as well as those of the missing members of his own flight crew. After almost fifty years this journey was filled with great joy, but also with the sad reality that some were no longer living.

Written in smooth, eloquent prose, with action galore and descriptions that can't help but make one feel as if he/she were walking, crawling or hiding out right alongside Horning who was a bombardier in the 401st Sq of the 91st BG(H), this book brings to life one of the more well-kept secrets of the humanitarian service provided by European patriots. It is not often that a book written in autobiographical form will be able to attract and enthuse readers who are not family members or close friends, but this book does both.

This account of Horning's adventures after bailing out of burning HELL'S BELLE during the Oct 10, '43 Munster, Germany raid, is highly recommended to any reader who is interested in human nature, wartime experiences and reliving such days of excitement and danger.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above book review was published in the Sept '95 edition of CROSSHAIRS, edited by E C "Ned" Humphrys, Executive Director of Bombardiers, Inc. The R/I editor, having read, enjoyed **and postponed** reviewing Horning's book can only agree with Humphreys' enthusiastic review.

Those not responding to the availability of this book will miss a lot. Horning's account of his final days in the ETO are recorded without apparent resentment. After returning to England he learned DFCs and promotions were no longer given for successful evasion and, also, since he had been on his fourth mission when downed he was not eligible for an Air Medal. Also a Finance Officer deducted from his back pay the standard combat \$21.00 a month flat amount for lodging and subsis-

tence for the four months while he was evading capture!

In his subsequent lectures on effective evasion he irked an Intelligence Officer by telling audiences there were no rewards for evasion. (The Intelligence Officer was still promising DFCs and promotions!) On Mar 7, '44 he received his evasion award - he was shipped home to the States to finish his duties there. Before leaving, however, he located where his crew's Ground Crew Chief, Sgt Pinkowski, was working. Finally noticing him seated silently on a nearby revetment, Pinkowski recognized him. After the surprise was over they talked and shared some laughs together.

After his return to the States Horning was entitled to wear the ETO ribbon with one battle star and a personally purchased silver Flying Boot on his tunic.

Copies of "IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF A FLYING BOOT" are available for \$13.75 ea plus \$1.50 for postage & handling. To order, write: Art Horning, 641 Hummingbird Lane, Delray Beach, FL 33445.

"DEATH OF A B-17" BOOK MAY BECOME A FILM

AN OCT 1993 R/I BOOK REVIEW DEALT WITH JACKSON Wallace's slim book about the 401st's KEYSTONE MAMA and her pilot Bob Wylie, Wallace's fraternity friend. Wallace, a retired USAF Col, is not a 91st BG(H) veteran. He flew B29s in the Pacific during the war. While researching his book on KIA Wylie, Wallace became so enamored with the 91st that he became an Associate Member and is "proud to have even that small relationship with the Group."

Entrusted with "reporting" on the war-time loss of his Sigma, Sigma, Sigma Fraternity friend, Wallace's report became a brief book that only someone sharing combat experience could, with a good conscience, have dared write. Wallace succeeded in convincingly describing his friend's possible feelings and inner thoughts up to the final instant when KEYSTONE MAMA, the only 91st BG(H) casualty on the May 19, '44 Berlin raid, began its fatal 26,800 ft fall.

A number of R/I readers responded to the book by writing they appreciated the presence of fear had been finally faced by a former flight crew member writer. The R/I review, noting Wallace considered the book "his first and last literary effort," closed with, "A pity. There are so many other subjects deserving of his time and talent."

Indications that the R/I's praise for Wallace's book was justified have surfaced. His book has gone into a second printing and a Los Angeles agent has contacted him regarding buying film rights to it. Wallace says anything received for the film rights will be donated to the 91st BGMA.

Members attending the coming Tucson Reunion are encouraged to check the B29 at the Pima Museum. The block K on its tail identifies it as one of Wallace's group's planes. His plane, K3, in which he experienced his own combat tour, was destroyed at Pyote, TX in 1947.

DEATH OF A B17 copies may be ordered from Carmel River Publishing, PO Box 656, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. The \$4.95 price includes tax and postage.

1997-1998 ELECTIONS NEED NOMINATIONS

THE 91st BGMA HAS BEEN FORTUNATE OVER THE years in having dedicated, enthusiastic officers. But such officers do not appear magically - they are elected from candidates who volunteer their services.

Association Bylaws stipulate our association be administered by seven officials: President, 1st and 2nd Vice presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor (of The R/I) and Historian. Pres Hal Johnson requests that anyone interested in being a 1997-98 term candidate for one of those positions to submit his name to the Chairman of the Nominations Committee for publication in the July 1996 R/I.

The Nomination Committee Chairman is: Paul J Limm, 601 Calle De Soto, San Clemente, CA 92672-2252. Phone: (714) 492-4502.

No form is required. Simply send your name and address, position of interest, squadron or unit in which you served and any information you consider appropriate for a micro-profile to be published in support of your candidacy.

The July 1996 R/I will, in addition to the ballots required for the association's '96 elections, contain any proposed Bylaw changes. A deadline will be provided for the voting response.

NEW PX ITEMS

(Continued from page 8)

announced introductory bridge lessons at the Tucson Reunion possibly may be arranged to encourage card buying by those attending!

To order items (1-Travel Alarm, 2-Pocket Knives or 3-Playing Cards) send the total number of items desired, a check for their total cost PLUS \$3.00 Shipping and Handling to R H Friedman, 1st VP, 91st BGMA, 6015 Valkeith, Houston, TX 77096.



TWO ATTRACTIVE reminders of our proud past are the pictured Travel Alarm (top) and the Barlow made pocket knife. Both items carry 91st BGMA identifications and are now available from our PX.

91st's LAST MISSION PHOTOS BY CURRIE GOT RESPONSE

VERN CURRIE, A 322nd NAVIGATOR AND IMAGINATIVE photographer, enlivened two editions of The R/I with his war-time photos. The publication of his photos taken after the 91st BG(H)'s last mission prior to VE Day in the July 1995 R/I sparked an interesting response.

John L Frencho, the navigator on William P Steffens' 324th Sq crew which flew LADY FREDA (DF-P)(?), wrote The R/I and requested a "clearer copy of picture 6" which appears on page 5 of the July 1995 R/I.

Frencho believes photo "6" depicts their Co-Pilot Lt Robert F Yocher in the foreground with himself (Frencho) directly behind Yocher's right shoulder. Steffens, the crew's First Pilot, "is the tall gentleman to my (Frencho's) right with his head slightly turned," Frencho says.

A more clear picture, he hopes, will help him confirm his identifications.

Frencho remembers the final war-time 91st BG(H) target as being Pilsen and the fact that his crew later made two missions to evacuate Allied POWs from Barth, Germany.

Unfortunately, he adds, both Steffens and Yocher, who he believes appear on the photo, are deceased and he has no information regarding the rest of his crew who he identifies as: B - James F Rawson, Lt; E - James R Thompson, Cpl; RO - William L Swanson, Cpl; Ass't RO - Francis B Selner, S/Sgt; Armorer - Sgt Joseph Papson and Ass't Armorer - Clyde Bittner, Cpl.

Since none of them are listed in the 91st BGMA Directory the R/I urges readers to check their local phone directories - and call to check if a listing seems to be a former crew member of Frencho's crew. Once contacted they could be potential new 91st BGMA members.

In the meantime The R/I is sending Frencho the full photo page copy used for the July 1995 R/I edition. The Photos on it are a bit more clear - and hopefully we'll hear his more than "gut-felt" identifications prove true.

Hopefully that result will inspire others to write, "Hey, that's me!" whenever similar captionless R/I future photo projects appear.

Folded Wings

(Continued from page 8)

17:43 Schweinfurt, Germany raid. Set afire by E/A their plane fell out of control to 6,000 ft, 20 miles SE of Frankfurt. During the fiery uncontrolled fall, six other crew members and Burton bailed out and became POWs.

Upon recovering control Judy and his co-pilot Roger Layn, (FM, Bristol, VT?) alerted to the fact that their top turret gunner Earl Cherry was wounded and his burned parachute useless, made the inevitable decision "...to make it home." The 91st MACR preserving their feat concludes with, "Came back at 100ft, fighting E/A & fire. Landed at Manston, England where T/Sgt Cherry was hospitalized."

Burton retired from Dixie Narco as a chief engineer, was on the board of directors of Royal Vendors, a member of American Ex-POWs of Flagler County and a member of the Church on the Rock when he died.

He is survived by his widow, Barbara, two daughters, a

(Continued on Page 7)

(Continued from Page 6)

sister, a brother and two grandchildren. Reported by Clifford E Norton, 323rd, LM.

● CRAGHEAD, JESSE J, 322nd, LM, 303 Atkin St, Jetmore, KS 67854, Nov 6, 1995 of cancer. Reported by his daughter, Sandra (Graghead) Masden of 2400 6th, Dodge City, KS 67801.

She said her father was a proud member of the 91st BGMA, enjoyed the reunions he attended and cherished the connection his membership provided with fellow Bassingbourn veterans. Her Feb 3, 1996 letter concluded with, "Thank you for the services and comradeship you gave my father in his life."

● DOTTER, JOHN H, 324th, PO Box 273, Woodbridge, CA 95258, July 29, 1995 from injuries suffered during a Nevada airplane crash. He served as a navigator with the 91st BG(H) from 1943 to '45.

A native Baltimorean, he returned there after the war to marry and graduate from Johns Hopkins University before his civilian career drew him westward. He retired from Chevron USA as an engineer after 35 years of service in 1984. Besides figuring prominently in the Woodbridge Golf and Country Club and the American Bonanza Society, he enjoyed flying his own plane.

Reported by his widow, Margaret ("Toni"). Two daughters and four grandchildren also survive him.

● GAWLEY, JOHN E, 401st, 10 Brush Neck Rd, Marlboro, NJ 07745, Apr 27, 1995. Gawley completed 30 missions with R R Goldsmith's Lead Crew. Goldsmith credits him with making it possible to nurse damaged planes safely home numerous times. On one occasion he successfully dealt with flak riddled Tokyo tanks, cut hydraulic lines and fire in the hydraulic fluid pump.

"He successfully transferred our remaining fuel back and forth for four harrowing hours while returning from Leipzig on three engines," Goldsmith says.

Gawley retired from the AFR after 26 years as a Senior M/Sgt. His civilian careers included 23 years as Asst Supt of Shell Oil Terminal and 12 years as Plant Engineer for Marlboro Municipal Authority.

He is survived by his widow, Mabel, whom he married at Chanute Field in 1942. Other survivors include a son, two daughters and twelve grandchildren. Reported by Richard R Goldsmith, Houston TX.

● JOHNSON, RAYMOND A, 15321 Greystone Dr, Sun City West, AZ 85375, July 20, 1995 after a long illness. Reported by his widow, Shirley.

● KRUSEN, ROBERT A, 323rd, 6923 Birchward Av, Niles, Ill 60714, Sept 12, 1995 of cancer. Reported by his widow, Ruth, who wrote he loved the AF and always talked of his flying experiences.

● LOMASNEY, JAMES M, 401st, LM, 2501 Waverly St, Palo Alto, CA 94301-4247, Nov 1995. Reported by his son, David J, who indicates his father's payment of Life Membership dues to the 91st BGMA shortly before his death impressed him.

Though it was apparent his WWII service was an important part of his life, Lomasney rarely spoke of it, his son says. Occasional references to the past by his father have intrigued him to the point where he now would appreciate any info on what he can do to help "keep alive the spirit of the 91st BG(H)."

One particular, recent incident occurred when NINE-O-NINE's replica visited their area. Lomasney indicated he had taken WWII color photos of the original plane which subsequently contributed to the accuracy of the NINE-O-NINE replica's paint scheme.

David J Lomasney, who requested 91st BGMA membership procedures in his letter, would welcome contact with anyone who knew his father. His address is: 2981 Neet Av #4, San Jose, CA 95128. Phone: 408-247-3859.

● NICHOLS, MARVIN E, 324th, 877 Tulip St, Deltona, FL 32725 of cancer at age 75.

While serving as a Ground Crew Chief Nichols was awarded the Legion of Merit and a Bronze Star for "...outstanding services." After the war his aircraft maintenance skill resulted in a career as an Eastern Airlines mechanic until his retirement. He was a quiet, frequent attendant of 91st BG(H) Reunions and Rallies whose interest in the planes he serviced inevitably surfaced whenever he and flight crew members talked about the same planes. He listened patiently and intently to his airborne friends' adventures before pressing them for still needed reassurance that "mechanical failures" had not caused them mission problems - fifty years earlier!

A Jan 1994 R/I book review of PFF Navigator John Howland's "The Class of '43" helped Nichols identify the pilot (Carl Clark) with whom he was flying when their plane's right landing gear was destroyed during take-off by contact with a stalled truck on the runway.

Clark, now a part-time pilot for the Collings Foundation of Stowe, MA, honored Nichols for his contribution to their safe war-time one wheel landing by circling Nichols' Deltona residence with NINE-O-NINE's replica shortly before he died. (Nichols had regretfully declined Clark's invitation to fly with him again because of his (Nichols') illness.)

Since his retirement Nichols contributed information and historical items with an emphasis upon the 91st BG(H) to suitable projects in order to help assure 91st history will be virtually synonymous with 8th AF history.

He was a member of the First United Methodist Church, the VFW, DeBary and the 91st BGMA. A former volunteer for the Florida Methodist Children's Home in Enterprise, he also enjoyed gardening.

He is survived by his widow, Demetra ("Pete"), two daughters, two brothers and three grandchildren.

● OPP, ROBERT C, 52 Vine St, Wilmington, OH 45177, Feb 28, 1992. Reported by Joseph M Knowles, 324th, Syracuse, NY.

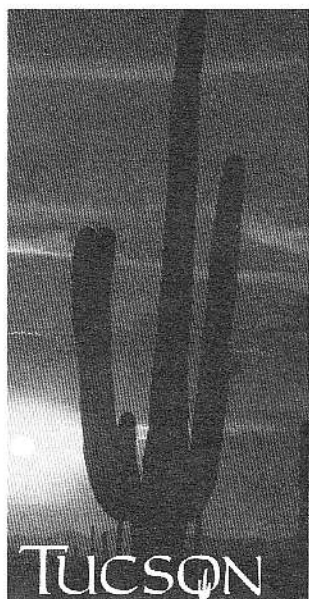
● POPE, JEROME D, 401st, 430 Shadywood Dr, Dayton, OH 45415-1250, Jan 14, 1995, of cancer. Reported by Dick Dempsey, a fellow 401ster who identifies Pope as a navigator/bombardier who flew 52 missions with the 91st BG(H).

● RACICOT, ROBERT H, Vallejo, CA, Feb 10, 1996 after a short illness. Reported by former long-time 91st BGMA official George W Parks, 324/401, of Vallejo, CA. Parks' report identifies Racicot as a former 91st BG(H) Mess Sgt who met his wife, Lilian D, during the war while stationed at Bassingbourn. He retired in 1982 after a 40 year post-war career as an elementary school principal in the Vallejo City Unified School District.

Besides his widow he is survived by four children, a sister, six grandchildren and a great-grandchild. A member of the St Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, he was active in many volunteer activities.

NEW 91st BGMA PX ITEMS SET FOR TUCSON DISPLAY

THREE NEW PX ITEMS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE SEPT 25-29, 1996 Tucson, AZ 91st BGMA Biennial Reunion. Listed



among other offered standard items in the PX Items list in the Jan 1996 R/I, 1st VP Robert H Friedman sees the items as useful, enduring mementoes of the past.

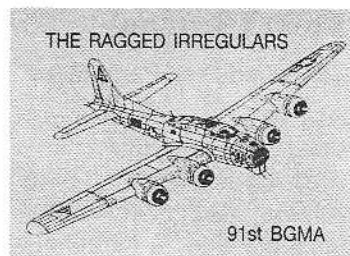
1) TRAVEL ALARMS: battery operated with quartz movement; 91st BGMA "logo"; features face that looks like an altimeter and has a "B17" sweep second hand! Color restriction to black. Slip case included. \$22.50 each.

2) POCKET KNIVES, eight function; made in USA by Barlow - similar to the more publicized Swiss Army knives. Have white handle with red 91st BGMA "logo". \$16.00 each.

3) PLAYING CARDS, double deck, for bridge or poker. One deck silver, other gold; the back

designs feature a detailed pen-and-ink drawing of a 91st

YOU CAN BET ON THESE!
Great Hoyle manufactured
playing cards now available
from the 91st BGMA PX!



BG(H) B17 and copy: "THE RAGGED IRREGULARS, 91st BGMA." The design is the work of member Don Wellings, former 323rd navigator, who earlier designed the association's appropriate and appreciated sympathy cards. \$14.00 one double set; \$25.00 for two double sets.

All of the above items will be available for sale at the Tucson Reunion where, it is hoped, the first big burst of sales will emerge because their attractiveness and practicality will be readily recognized. It is apparent travel alarms and pocket knives are potential gifts for a wide range of family members and friends. The subsequent use of those items will always remind recipients of the gift giver - a 91st BG(H) veteran.

It is hoped the stocking of THE RAGGED IRREGULAR playing cards will also prove a happy hunch. They, too, are potential gifts for family members and friends as well as personally desired items. During the course of any card game their distinctive 91st BGMA back design by artist Wellings will have to stir memories, stories - and queries about "our proud past."

To stimulate such 91st BGMA promotion, Friedman has

(Continued on Page 6)

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.

91st BG Memorial Assn.

590 Aloha Dr.

Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403

FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

1996



92557-8117

LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU MOVE!

Folded Wings

● **ADAMS, HARRY MARSTON**, 324th, 725 Stony Ridge Rd, Heber Springs, AR 72543-7823, Dec 2, 1995 at the North Little Rock Ark VA Hospital from complications associated with Parkinson's disease. Adams was the 324th Sq's Sgt in-Charge of Parachutes and flying equipment and clothing. He is survived by his widow, Molly. Reported by E L Nichols, Jr, a 324th friend.

● **BAKER, ROBERT B ("BOBBY")**, 322nd, 2922 Henry St, Augusta, GA 30909, Nov 21, 1995. Baker's Air Offensive Europe, Normandy, Southern France and Rhineland service earned him the DFC, the Air Medal with Three OLCs and accompanying service medals and ribbons. He retired

from Southern Bell Telephone Co with 42 years of service during which he participated in the Barber Shop Quartet and was a member of the Telephone Pioneers.

He also contributed immensely to the Augusta National Golf Club Masters Tournament's development and the operation of its communications system from its beginning in 1934.

He is survived by his widow, Eldorah, a daughter and son-in-law and numerous grandchildren. Reported by his widow and Charles H Bonner, Augusta, GA, "a long time friend and neighbor of Baker who flew combat while Baker was completing his tour."

● **BURTON, PAUL F**, 322nd, 3 Classic Ct S, Palm Coast, FL 32137-8348, Feb 1, 1996 at age 76. He was the tail gunner on James Judy's MY PRAYER's crew on the

(Continued on Page 6)