

The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQUADRON



323rd SQUADRON



Supporting Units



324th SQUADRON



401st SQUADRON

Vol 31 No. 1

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

April 1998

Savannah -1998

Savannah, GA Aug. 26-Aug. 30. This is the place and these are the dates. Make your plans now if you haven't already done so. Marriott River Front Hotel. Trolley Tours. The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum. Southern Hospitality. Antebellum Homes. River Boat Tours. River Street. Wormsloe Historic Site. Scarborough House. Sea Museum. Washington Square. Cotton Exchange. Customs House. Chippewa Square. Richmond Hill. The Landings Golf Course. Shuckers Seafood and Oyster Bar. Southbridge Golf Course. Oglethorpe Mall. Southern Cooking at its finest.



Best of all, get together with your fellow crew members, wives, fearless leaders, buddies, visitors, guests and friends.

It is fitting that Savannah has been chosen as the site of the 1998 biennial conference and reunion for the 91st Bombardment Group (H) Memorial Association. After all, this was the birthplace of the 8th Air Force. The late General James H. Doolittle, former Commanding General of the 8th Air Force, wrote in his book, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, "The 8th Air Force was brought into being on January 28, 1942, at Savannah, Georgia. A small group of officers, headed by Brigadier General Asa N. Duncan, began the task of forming what was to become the most formidable war-making air organization in history."

General H. H. "Hap" Arnold in his book, *Global Mission*, remarks about the 8th Air Force: ".....the War Department's final statistics show that except for the Infantry, always the hardest hit, no group in the Army, in the air or on the ground, including paratroops and armored divisions, suffered as high a casualty rate as did our heavy bomber crews over Germany."

We are aware also that our Group experienced the highest losses in the 8th Air Force. This is your heritage, gentlemen. Celebrate it with your comrades-in-arms and families in Savannah, Georgia, in 1998.

Daytona Beach Shores, FL Feb. 14, 1998. Paula Kool, wife of Harry Kool, FM, 323rd, has written to tell us that *They are Coming to Savannah!*

Here is their tale, paraphrased, of earlier attempts to attend 91st BGMA functions which were met with adversity. Undaunted, the Kools are not going to let this get in their way.

"We would like to announce that we're determined to be among the many we hope will attend the Aug. 26-30, 1998 Savannah, GA, 91st BGMA Biennial Reunion."



L-R Paula Kool, Ace Johnson, Nancy & Steve Perri. Center Harry Kool

In 1991 - At the close of the 1991 Hutchinson Island, FL Rally Round, Harry fell very ill. At home, he was hospitalized and had to have a gall bladder stone removed.

In 1992, on their way home from the reunion in Memphis, they had an auto accident resulting in Paula getting broken glass in her face and scalp, her nose and some ribs broken and two black eyes. Harry got off with only a "shake-up" diagnosis.

In 1995 they were flying to a Royston Rally Round but Harry experienced a heart attack on board their flight and had to make a stop at Gander and return.

In 1996 at Tucson, Paula, rushing to get inside from a rainstorm slipped and broke her left hip. Still, she closes with, "Looking forward to Savannah, GA!"

Harry Kool completed his 25 missions unscathed as a member of George Birdsong's crew on the mission to Hamm, 1943 for which the 91st Group received its first Distinguished Unit Citation.

If the Kools Can Make it, You Can Too! Be there!



The President's Corner

Dear fellow members of the 91st BGMA:

As I complete my second term as President of our Association, I wish to thank all of you for the support you have given me, and although I will not seek another term, I plan to continue to serve our organization in any capacity possible. Any achievements I may have made in four years of office are entirely due to the efforts of the other dedicated and capable officers.

Bob Friedman, 1st VP, is a polymath with a doctorate in chemistry, a retired senior scientist in the R&D division of a major oil company. As 1st VP, he has revitalized our PX, making it a profit center generating more than \$5,000 annually.

2nd VP Rudy Malkin served the 91st BGMA for ten years as the Editor of the Ragged Irregular before assuming his duties as Vice President. Prior to joining our Association, Rudy was for many years the editor of a trade union publication.

Ace Johnson, our Secretary-Treasurer, retired as a senior officer of a Fortune 500 company, and as our Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer, is keystone in the organizational arch. In the past seven years he has nurtured our treasury to its historical high, and through his "outreach programs" has kept our membership relatively stable in spite of the ravages of time.

Earl Pate, our Historian, supplied the National Geographic Society with so much material and photographs a few years ago that an issue of the National Geographic honoring the Eighth Air Force developed into a tribute to the 91st Bomb Group. That particular volume helps explain the increasing international interest in the 91st BG and the 91st BGMA, and the letters of inquiry sent to the Historian. Earl is one of the few 91st BGMA members entitled to ruffles and flourishes.

Phil Mack, the Editor of the Ragged Irregular, retired as the head of The Boeing Company's Business Aircraft Sales organization but still runs his own sales and consulting company. He is a contributing author to a book recently published by the Seattle Museum of Flight about its B-17. In his first year as Editor, he was also the R/I foreign correspondent, visiting and reporting on St. Nazaire, Bassingbourn, and Duxford, England. He has cemented ties with the East Anglian Aviation Society and its Tower Museum, Friends of the 91st, Vince Hemmings, Historian and former Curator, and the Association du Mémorial Américaine in St. Nazaire.

I thank these officers, and I know the membership joins me in my appreciation of all their efforts.

Harold E. Johnson

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Editorial.....

The article "Winter of '44-'45," in the last R/I by Jack Paxson, Crew Chief, omitted due to space limits that he had been awarded a Certificate of Merit by Col. Terry, Group CO. Also omitted were Paxson's complimentary remarks about Lt. James D. Judy, pilot of "My Prayer," who nursed his crippled B-17 home and "greeted Paxson with open arms" in appreciation of his work keeping the airplane in good condition.

I join in our President's thanks to the other officers of the 91st BGMA and to Harold Johnson for the steady hand with which he has guided us. Thanks also to Paul Limm who supports the Association in many ways.....

Welcome New Life Members:

Gerald Asher, AL
Robert Bercu, 324
Luc Dewez, AL
Gus T. Goodis, 324

Frank Kenely, 324
Henry J McCanny, 441
Max Shambaugh, 323

Mail to the following Members has been returned. Please advise Ace Johnson of new address or status of individual:

Robert Anthis, Chester Bolociuch, Charles D. Booth, Pete Columbo, Linez Folven, Otto Krause, Charles R. Peck, Bernard F. Priebe, and Mrs. Marian Tomek.

The East Anglian Aviation Society (EAAS) is a non-profit organization that supports and maintains the Bassingbourn Control Tower Museum. It is staffed by volunteers and its income is derived from membership fees, donations, expanding sales of souvenirs and volunteers contributions. Overseas membership rates are: Single Annual \$25, Family Annual \$35 and Life \$100. Anyone desiring to support this organization may send check (UK Sterling) to: Ken Sparkes, Membership Chairman, at 31 Coppins Close, Sawtry, Cambsire, England PE17 5UB. The Society welcomes and seeks to encourage support by 91st BGMA members. Membership is open to all 91st BGMA members.

Make your Plans for Savannah

Last Flight of "Panhandle Dogie"

Michel Lugez, President of the Association du Mémorial Américain, Saint Nazaire, sent a letter dated January 5, 1997 telling about a gathering of people in the town of Noirmoutier en L'île on the occasion of a visit of John Roten and his wife Jeanne on September 13, 1997. John was Navigator on "Panhandle Dogie" that was shot down Jan. 3, 1943. He bailed out over the sea but was able to guide his parachute to alight on land and ended up on the roof of a house at 18 Beaulieu Street.



L-R Mayor Maurice Chardonneau, John Roten, Michel Lugez

"Panhandle Dogie"
Shot Down St. Nazaire 03/01/43

All the people of the town of Noirmoutier en L'île were waiting for John Roten and his wife, Jeanne, when they came specially from U.S.A. in September 13, 1997, to inaugurate a plaque relating to his landing on the roof of the house 18 Beaulieu Street, where he was rescued.

That ceremony was arranged by Mr. Maurice Chardonneau, Mayor of Noirmoutier en L'île. Mr. Michel Lugez rendered homage to the aviators and recalled the American squadrons and the B-17, "Panhandle Dogie's" last flight over St. Nazaire with the object to destroy the German submarine pens.

He told that how Jan. 3, 1943 was a very sad day for the various bombing plane squadrons. Eight B-17s were shot down and 72 aviators were killed or reported missing. [Ed. Note: See article by Paul Limm in the April 1997 issue of the *Ragged Irregular*.]

"After several years of research in the United States and in France, I was able a year ago to identify with certainty, thanks to close collaboration with Doctor Gouroud, the American bomber which fell in the ocean on Sunday 3 January 1943 about 1150, about 8 miles from the port of L'Herbaudiere at the Trou de la Banche on the Plateau de la Lambarde.

"The aircraft, a B-17, 42-5084, belonging to the 323rd Sq., 91st Bomb Group, and baptized by its crew as "Panhandle Dogie," was piloted by 1st Lt. William M. Anderson. His crew comprised 10 aviators.

"The 91st Bomb Group, together with the 303rd, 305th and 306th Groups, known as "le Quatre Cavaliers" [the four horsemen], were the four pioneers of bombardment missions in France and Germany. Because of this they suffered extensive battle losses.

"It was estimated at this time, that two out of every three airmen had no chance of survival, considering that they were required to carry out 25 missions in enemy territory before being relieved to return to the United States.

"The 91st Group had accomplished nine missions over the port and submarine base of St. Nazaire (with five during the month of November 1942 without any radar, minimum navigational aids, and very small escort of Allied fighters which could accompany the bombers only up to the French side of the Channel)

"The U.S. air raid on the 23rd of November 1942 over St. Nazaire was particularly deadly for the 91st Group: two planes shot down, three badly damaged. Out of 52 airmen participating in this mission, 27 were killed and 9 seriously wounded. The degree of loss was 70%, the highest level of all the missions of the 91st over France and Germany.

"The German gunners of the multitude of DCA cannons installed around St. Nazaire had once more justified the nickname of "Flak City." The pilot, William M. Anderson, was not more fortunate. He took possession of his first "Panhandle Dogie" in September 1942 at Dow Field at Bangor, U.S.A., but his combat career was one of the shortest. On his second mission over France, Anderson was able to return to his base at Basingbourn in England, but his aircraft was so badly damaged it was found uneconomical to repair. The B-17 ended its life in a hangar and cannibalized for its parts.

"On the 3rd of January, 1943, the submarine base at St. Nazaire was bombed for the sixth time by 60 B-17s and 8 B-24s of the 8th Air Force. On that day, Anderson was flying his new "Panhandle Dogie." Twelve B-17s of the 91st took off about 0900 from Basingbourn in the direction of "Selsey Bill" where they were scheduled to rendezvous with the 303rd, 305th and 306th at 1000.

"The formation flew over the Port en Bessin at 1048 and Fougères at 1101, over the Lac Grand Lieu at 1120, and over the objective between 1130-1139. "These nine minutes were the longest of my life," an aviator told me later.

"Over the Channel the weather was overcast 1/10 to 2/10, with breaks in the ceiling at 5 miles inside the French coast. The visibility was unlimited over the objective, with winds of 115 mph. At 20,000 ft. There were no clouds, with clear skies, cold and dry weather.

West of Nantes the anti-aircraft fire was strong, south of the Loire the fire of the battery of Château Bougon was very heavy, a few anti-aircraft bursts were seen in the vicinity of the Lac de Grand Lieu, and a strong defense encountered in the region of Paimboeuf.

Winds slowed the advance of the U.S. formation during the last part of the flight. The fire from the ground was intense and precise above the objective; one Group reported that it was more intense this day than on any previous mission.

The German fighters quickly intercepted the formation, attacking first the bombers damaged by anti-aircraft fire. Three planes were hit over the objective, two of which fell into the open sea fronting St. Nazaire and St. Brevens le Ocean; these aircraft, a part of the 303rd Group, were the B-17, 41-24526, "Leaping Liz," and B-17, 41-24517, the "Kali." Each aircraft carried ten crewmen, none of whom survived.

.....Continued on Page 4

Panhandle Dogie Continued from Page 3

"The third aircraft was Lt. Anderson's B-17. Witnesses said that the bomber, flying from the north, passed above du Vieil, turned right while the fighters continued their attack. At this moment, fire was seen coming from a starboard engine. Immediately 7 to 8 parachutes appeared, the plane exploded, and its parts fell into the ocean south of the Trou de la Banche, on the Plateau de la Lambarde about 8 miles from the L'Herbaudiere (Ile de Noirmoutier).

"One parachutist fell into the ocean at the entrance to the port of L'Herbaudiere, another one into the sea near a distant marker, and two others near Tower C.

"Fishermen were ready to rush to rescue the men in their boats, but the Germans running out on the moles forbade them to sail out. Forty-five minutes later, only the boat, "Georges Paulette" was allowed to go out. This boat picked up one dead parachutist (the one fallen near the harbor) and another parachutist who died shortly after reaching the port. The other airman fallen into the sea drowned.

"Three bodies were recovered: the pilot, Lt. Anderson, and two machine gunners, Sergeants Flint and Odegard. The others were declared as lost.

"Lt. John H. Roten, navigator, whom we have the pleasure to welcome here today, with his wife, his two daughters, and his two sons-in-law, was much more fortunate.

"After jumping in his parachute over the ocean, in spite of strong winds, Lt. Roten had the single idea of maneuvering his chute to reach the land. He used his whole energy to this goal, and was successful in landing on the roof of the house belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Pauvert, who we see here in front of us. The parachute stayed hung up on the neighbor's house. This landing was much better than falling into the sea, he said in one of his letters.

"His fingers numbed by the cold, he was unable to unfasten his harness to free himself from his chute. The Germans climbed on the roof to release him. He was allowed to enter the house to warm up. Mrs. Pauvert insisted to the Germans that she could not let him go before giving him some hot coffee. She also gave him a purple scarf. Mr. Roten must still remember this today.

"In the street, when the Germans left with their prisoner, there were more than a hundred people. The teacher, Mr. Pintault, started to sing, "Le Marseillaise," and was joined in by the others. The Germans threatened the people with their machine guns, so the Rue de Beaulieu fell silent.

"John Roten was taken to a camp at Oberusel near Frankfurt, Germany, to be interrogated. He was held there from 5 to 10 January and then transferred to an officers' camp in Poland from 14 January 1943 to 17 April 1943, and finally to Stalag Luft III Sagan, south of Berlin. He participated in the long march to L'oflag VIIB of Moosburg near Munich where he was liberated in May 1945. He had remained a prisoner for 28 months.

"Early Monday morning, 4 Jan 43, many people went with flowers to the Allied cemetery of Cuy where the aviators were to be interred. They waited all morning and afternoon but nothing happened, and they finally departed. Early morning, the next day, the Germans buried the airmen during the curfew, so that no French people could be present. However, in the evening, the graves freshly closed, were covered with flowers.

"The Sunday, 3 January 1943, that I still remember today, was a black day for the U.S. 8th Air Force: 8 bombers failed to return to base, 2 fell into the Loire estuary, one crashed at La Baule les Pins, one Croisic, one at Gerande, one fronting Brest, and one at Land's End. Seventy-two airmen were killed or lost, 29 wounded; most were between 22 and 24 years old.

"One pays dearly for freedom.

"Fifty-four years later, it is comforting to see you, Mr. Roten, who came back to the scene with your family, with us, the French people, assembled here at Noirmoutier, that we have not forgotten those who gave their lives, whether they be American or French, so that our nations could be free. We will never forget!

Long live Liberty, the United States of America, and France!

After luncheon, Mr. Lugez showed the Rotens the entrance to the harbor of St. Nazaire and the roof of the submarine pens. Mr. Roten was very much moved to relive a past of 54 years but delighted for his travel and the welcome received both at Noirmoutier and St. Nazaire.

Memorial Plaque to the Crew of the "Black Swan"

Mr. Yves Carnot, a resident of Rosporden, France, a town about 80 miles WNW of St. Nazaire on the south side of the Brest Peninsula, has written to report on the erection of a plaque in memory of the crew of the Black Swan, a B-17F, 42-29895. [Ed. Note: This airplane is 13 serial numbers later than the B-17F owned by the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington. See additional information in Book Review Section.]

"My researches have progressed very well last month, because I received a long letter from the Co-Pilot, Mr. Verne Woods, an extremely informative and interesting letter about the story of the "Black Swan" and its last mission December 31, 1943. [Late in 1997] I decided to organize a tribute in memory of the Pilot, Stuart B. Mendelsohn and the Top Turret Gunner, Richard G. Hensley. I made by my hands a memorial plaque in wood so every evening during two weeks until midnight and one o'clock in the morning I work to give concrete form to this project.



Mr. Yves Carnot at work



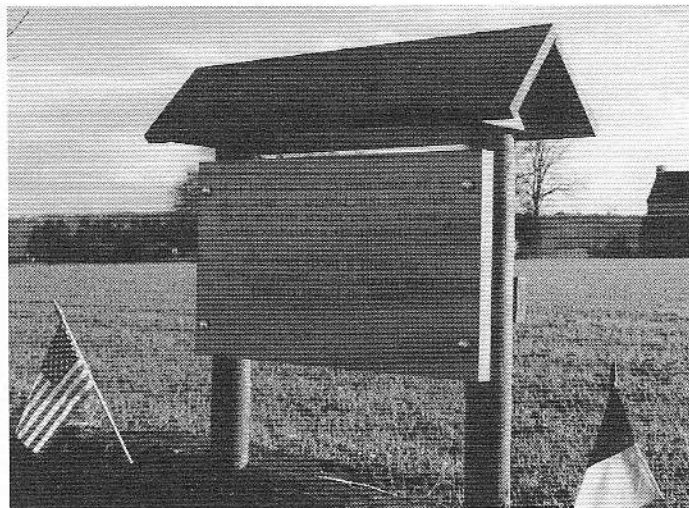
Yves Carnot, Center, Polish and English Veterans, and Bagpipes

"On the morning to Dec. 31, 1997, the plaque was erected on the spot where the Black Swan crashed near the farm of 'Kerancréac'h' close to 'Keriquel.' The owner agreed with pleasure and was very proud this monument was erected on his field.



Local Citizensry at Plaque Dedication

"I invited all the witnesses who I met along my investigations, people from patriotic associations, prisoners of war, an English SAS parachutist veteran and the Mayor of the town.



Letters to the Editor

Eric Dominicus, Associate Member from Belgium wrote to express appreciation for the address of Robert Martyr [January 1998 edition of the R/I]. He sent him information he had about a crashed B-17 in Switzerland, "Lazy Baby," and in return received some pictures of the visit of Col. Robert Morgan to the Tower Museum at Bassingbourn.

Chasten Bowen, FM 323rd and his wife, Loretta, reaffirmed their wedding vows on the occasion of their 50th Anniversary, in Anaheim last August. Congratulations.

Ken Brown, FM 401st, was pilot of "Mary Ruth," from early 1943 until shot down on June 22, 1943 over Huls, Germany. He wrote, "Reference the January 98 R/I re the desire of the EAAS [East Anglian Aviation Society and keeper of the Tower Museum] to receive memorabilia suitable for display. He asked for the address of **Steve Pena**, Curator. If he has not already received it, it is as follows: **Bramble Cottage, Netherstones, Stotfield, Herts, SG5 4BX, UK.**

Steve Pena, AL, and his wife, Alison, announced the birth of their first child, a son, whom they named Rhys, on Sunday, February 22, 1998.

Jean Ridings, wife of Raymond C. Ridings, FM, 323rd, called to inform us that Ray passed away March 24, 1998. He had suffered a series of strokes. Ray was Ball Turret Gunner on Dave Bramble's crew of the Village Flirt of which this Editor was a member and was pictured on the cover of the Jan. 1997 issue of the R/I along with the rest of the crew. He completed his 25 missions March 9, 1944. He was credited with destroying three enemy aircraft. We will miss you, Ray. [This information arrived too late for the Folded Wings section.]

Alice E. McNichol, widow of the late William E. Nichols, FM 323rd, expressed appreciation for notice of her husband's death in the R/I. "Our family received several cards with notes from Bill's buddies. It was greatly appreciated."

Hooper R. Maplesden, FM, 32th, writes, "After attending the last two reunions, and looking forward to the next, my old flight engineer, Thayne I. Johnson, has decided to become a full-fledged member of the 91st BGMA. [Welcome back, Thayne.]

Robert Hall, 1320 Bear Creek Rd., Cookeville, TN, 38508, would like to hear from anyone who had experience with B-17s, "Bad Egg" and "Gay Cabelleros."

Vince Hemmings, AL, former Curator of the Tower Museum, informs us that he has joined the Friend of the 91st. He has agreed to lay the wreath for the 91st BGMA this year on Memorial Day at the American Cemetery at Maddingly.

Cloren Meade, FM, 323rd, advised via E-Mail, that the web site for information about the 91st Bomb Group published in the October issue of the R/I was non-existent. It must have been shut down by its sponsors.

If anyone is curious, it really didn't add any information that wasn't already in the work of Bud Evers' historical reports. Cloren tells us that he was in a replacement crew arriving in England on St. Patrick's Day 1943 and was shot down on his 5th mission May 21, 1943. He spent the rest of his time in Stalags 7A and 17B. His crew members were Norman Retchin, P; Bob Paulson, N; Ed Rdynolds, B; Stan Dallman, CP; Andy Muzik, RO; Charles Huber, LWG; Elmer Kalfsbeek, RWG; Joe Wing, FE/TT, and John Connard, TG. Cloren was in the ball turret. His E-Mail address is <Kriegie@inwave.com>.

Charles E. Walker, FM, 401st, advises his E-Mail address is: <ci241@FreeNet.Buffalo.EDU>.

Clyde Garrison, FM, 324th, sends kudos to Steve Pena, "a most wonderful person. We are fortunate to have him in the position he has chosen to fulfill. We spent five hours as his guest and enjoyed every minute of it." As to his wife picking up a small piece of the runway, "That is true, but I had no connection with the bomb truck or the airplane. I arrived at Bassingbourn in Nov. 1944. We flew "Yankee Belle" and lost it over Berlin, Feb. 3, 1945.

Marvin D. Anderson, FM, 322nd, wrote to give us an address correction and say, "hello." He was on the committee in Seattle that put on the Rally-Round for the 91st BGMA on the 50th Anniversary of the B-17 in 1985. He lived nearby in Redmond, WA, and recalled our meetings at Bob Schuck's home. Marv now lives in Goodyear, AZ.

Lyle McCullough, FM, 324th, wrote that he enjoyed the St. Nazaire stories. They "brought back memories of the first of my 35 missions on August 4, 1944, to the U-Boat installations at Kiel. As a newcomer, I thought it was the noisiest B-17 I was ever in. Little did I know until looking out of my radio window that the noise was exploding flak and that we were bouncing around in the midst of a flak barrage. I still have flak fragments as souvenirs."

Lyle questioned why the dedication of the B-17 Memorial was not covered in the R/I. He wrote his letter in July '97. The coverage came out in the October issue, Page 5.

Beverley White, AM, Norwich, England, expressed her appreciation to Ed Kerrin and Earl Pate for their "wonderful efforts on my behalf and for making it possible to receive my father's, S/Sgt. Rudy L. Olague's medals."

Raymond Shaw, Asst. Superintendent, Cambridge American Cemetery, wrote to thank the 91BGMA for sending the July 1997 issue of the R/I. "We enjoy reading it very much and placing it in the 91st BG folder for others to read.

D.S. Drijver, of the Netherlands would like to contact Donald Joseph Vandervelden, 324th Sq., shot down on Feb. 4, 1944 on A/C 42-39803, "The Wolf," and became a POW. Anyone who knows his whereabouts should please write Mr. Drijver at: Wibrandastate 1, 8926 MA Leeuwarden (frl.), The Netherlands. Mr. Drijver is Correspondence Administrator for the "Friesche Luchtwart Documentatie, 1939-1945."

Letters to the Editor—Continued from Page 5

Earl Pate, 91st BGMA Historian, asks on behalf of an English gentleman if anyone has any information about a B-17, 42-29973, "Patty Gremlin," that crashed near Polebrook. The names of two survivors are Bronski and McGovern. First names are unknown. [See Page 2 for address and phone number of Earl Pate.]

William F. Adams does wood carvings, including some for the 91st BG members. He is looking for the address of Roland Reeves, a 91ster, so he can obtain the address of his daughter, Vivian Reeves, to send her a 91st BG emblem. Anyone having information may contact Adams at 91 Pelly Rd., Plaistow, London, England, E13 ONL.

Elsie Sculli, widow of the late Joe Sculli, 323rd Navigator, replied to a letter sent by this Editor enclosing a photo of Joe taken in March 1944. The question was, "Did Joe ever establish the Pub he said he would after the war was over?" Elsie replied, "Yes, Joe did operate a Pub. His folks started it and when he came home he took it over. In 1968, we closed the Pub and built a supermarket on the same premises we worked for 42 years." Elsie admits that Joe's death was a great loss to her and his many friends.

George Jacobs, LM 324th, celebrated his 57th year in broadcast engineering and was awarded the Lifetime Radio Engineering Achievement Award given by the National Association of Broadcasters. After the war he obtained BS and MS degrees in EE, worked for several radio stations, joined the Voice of America and eventually headed up his own firm.

Other letters. We acknowledge receipt of letters for which space does not permit publication at this time from Joseph Weinstock, Jack F. Gibson, Braxton Bradford, Carl Hoff, Howard Van Cleave, Enoch Perkins, Scott Holman, John Howland, Dr. James Scudder, Vernon Rutter, H.M. Wiley, Chuck Galian, John Frey and Robert S. Lammers.

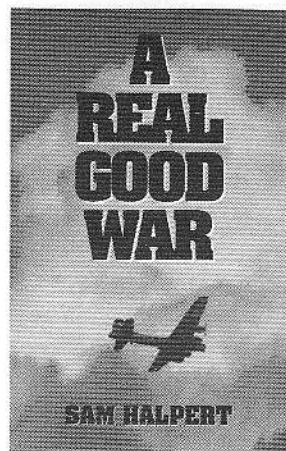
The Memphis Belle Association Announcement

Brent Perkins, President of the Memphis Belle Association, announces that the USAF Judge Advocate General has issued a paper clarifying that the "Memphis Belle, Serial Number 41-24485 is the property of the USAF Museum Programs, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. As such it is planned in the future to move the airplane from its present location in Memphis to the former Millington Naval Air Station nearby.

A celebration will take place in Memphis May 23-25, 1998. Five crew members of the "Belle" will attend: Bob Morgan, Harold Lock, Tony Nastall, Jim Virinis, and Bob Hanson. Chairman of the event is David White. There will be a fly-by of several aircraft. For further information, contact Mr. Perkins at (901) 683-0603.

/The Book Beat

"A Real Good War," by Sam Halpert, former Navigator in the 324th Sq. This is a fictional story based on Sam's experiences in the 91st BG. The story is told by a fictional Navigator. Many writers tend to heroize their the characters. Not so with Halpert. He lets the chips fall where they may. There are goof offs, screw ups and good guys. And he maintains a warm sense of humor throughout.



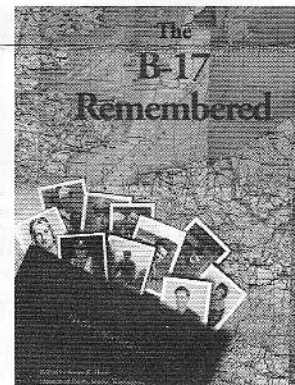
There is a resemblance to the character, Yossarian, in Heller's "Catch-22." The language is rough at times but that's realistic too. This should not be confused with the author's writing skills. This is an accomplished author.

The book is published by Southern Heritage Press, P.O. Box 33733, St. Petersburg, Florida, Tel: 800-282-2923 at \$19.95 (224 pp.) Clothbound.

A typical review comes from Leonard Michaels: "If you want to know what World War II air war was like; the blood, fire, death and hell for American boys, *A Real Good War* is the book to read."

The B-17 Remembered,

Published by the Museum of Flight, Boeing Field, Seattle, Washington, this is a book about the Museum's own B-17, the only Boeing Built "F" in the world still airworthy. The book relates its history from the time it was delivered to the Army Air Corps to its present status.



The airplane has been restored to original delivery configuration by volunteers and The Boeing Company.

The book was written by a team of ten authors who tell their "Remembrance" of the B-17 in training and combat. Three of the ten authors were in the 91st BG. They include Phil Mack (Editor of the RI), Quentin Ellis N, and Paul Zimmerman RO. Personnel from other Groups are Bob Klein, Pilot, 92nd BG, Ted Bardue,

.....Continued on Page 7



Boeing B-17F-70-BO S/N 42-29782

The Book BeatContinued from Page 6

The B-17 Remembered (Cont.)

Engineer and Top Turret Gunner, 384th BG, Frank Priesnitz, Crew Chief, 384th BG, Art Guillmet, Crew Chief, 384th BG, Henry Sienkowitz, B, 384th BG, and Ned Thorne, Book Team Captain, from the Air Materiel Command.

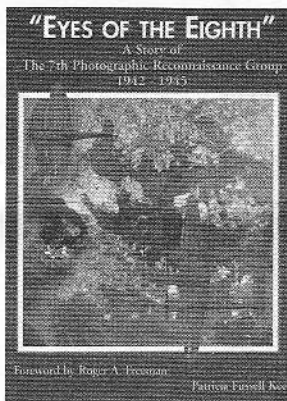
"The B-17 didn't die easily. Structurally, there was no finer combat airplane built in the World War II period. Aerodynamically, it was reliable with no bad habits. It gave the bombardier a stable platform from which to sight and drop his lethal load. Its systems tolerated many failures that allowed it to return from its missions where other aircraft would have succumbed. It wasn't perfect but it was the very best we had."

The book is offered for sale at the Museum of Flight for \$21.50 plus S&H (242 pp.)

Eyes of the Eighth—A Story of the 7th Photographic Reconnaissance Group 1942-1945 by Patricia FussellKeane with Foreword by Roger Freeman, CAVU Publishers L.L.C., 16810 Boswell Blvd, Sun City, AZ 85351. Tel: 602-972-3991.

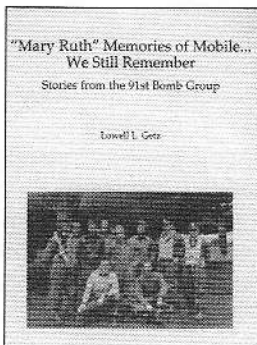
Some Events covered are Berlin Raids, Hasselt RR Bridge, Brux Refinery, Aphrodite Mission, B-24s over German, Metz Tactical Targets, and Operation Frantic, Operation Market Garden, V-1 Flying Bomb Sites, D-Day Invasion of Normandy, Low-level PR after VE Day.

This book is suggested for Unit Historians and Military Aviation enthusiasts in general.



"Mary Ruth" Memories of Mobile...We Still Remember. Stories From the 91st Bomb Group by Lowell Getz.

Author Getz sent a complimentary copy of his book that covers a period from Aug. 18, 1944 when a particular B-17 arrived at Bassingbourn to the end of the war in Europe. The story begins with the author telling the story of this B-17 in first person—a new approach. Other planes are mentioned along with their crews and mission experiences. "Mary Ruth" appears at the end of the book in a brief history. Getz has donate 450 copies to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah where they are for sale at \$9.95 each plus \$3.00 S&H. All proceeds go to the Museum.



Folded WingsContinued from Page 8

..... Wheatland, WY, he served in the Army Air Corps from 1941 to 1944 and had become a POW. He married Ella Neely on Aug. 25, 1951 in Olympia, WA, where he lived for the past 60 years, and is survived by his wife, daughter Wanda H. Riley, brother Cleo, Cheyenne, WY, 3 nieces and 4 nephews.

● **WILLIAM J NOCITRA**, FM, 322nd, Ocala, FL, Jan. 15, 1997. A retired construction engineer and a native of Philadelphia, he moved to Ocala ten years earlier. He served as a Captain in the U. S. Army Air Corps during World War II. Survivors include his wife, Ann, 3 daughters, Nancy, Susan and Marie, 2 brothers, Joseph and Edward and two grandchildren.

● **CHARLES J. PHILLIPS**, LM, 401st, Southington, CT, Oct. 26, 1997, original member of the 91st starting at MacDill, Walla Walla and making the big trip via the "Queen Mary" to England in 1942. Sgt. Phillips was an engine mechanic. Reported by his daughter, Barbara Tucci, also of Southington, CT.

● **MARVIN B. ROBINSON**, FM, 323rd, Robbins, North Carolina, June 30, 1997. S/Sgt. Robinson served as Tail Gunner on "Wicked Witch" and completed 35 missions. He lost contact with his friends after the war but later caught up with them in Colorado Springs in 1984. He so enjoyed the reunions and friendships. He is survived by his wife, Peggy, daughter, Vicki, and one grandchild.

● **THOMAS B SIMMONS**, FM, 401st, Tampa, FL, Jan 13, 1997, of pancreatic cancer. He so enjoyed his associations with all his military groups. He is survived by his daughter, "BJ," a brother and 2 grandsons. Reported by daughter, "BJ," who adds, "Thank you for being such an important part of my Dad's life."

● **SAMUEL SUGG**, FM, 322nd, Kinston, NC, June 17, 1997. He was Navigator on "Red Alert" as reported by Edward Damro, who was informed of his death by Sugg's wife, Ruth.

● **GRIFFITH L. WILLIAMS**, FM, 855th, Phoenix, AZ, Jan. 17, 1998. Congestive heart failure. He was a member of the ground crew and is survived by his wife, Lois, one daughter, two sons, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Reported by his wife of 52 years.

● **EMIL YEZDIMIR**, LM 323RD, Harrisburg, PA, Oct. 15, 1996. Emil was a ground crew member on the famous "Nine-0-Nine," played on the Base Soccer Team, and according to his buddy, Howell Loper, "was always jolly and wanted to make music." He attended many 91st reunions, the last one in Tucson, just a few weeks before he died. He was a graduate of Temple University, a mechanical designer and retired from Westinghouse Electric, but music was his passion. He organized and for many years directed the Choir in this Church in Philadelphia. He was an accomplished accordionist. In addition to being recognized for his expertise in Eastern European Music, he was active with the American Accordion Society and participated in many of their symposiums and was associated with a musical group called, "Jorgovan," at the time of his death. A music scholarship has been established in his name. He is survived by his widow, Millie, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Folded Wings

● **WILLIAM L. BATEMAN**, FM, 401st, Riverside, RI, Dec. 18, 1997, age 80. He was Pilot of the original crew of "Broad-Minded," which he named, and with his entire crew completed 35 missions on Mar. 23, 1945. He was greatly admired and respected by his air crew and ground crew for his superb flying skill and knowledge of the B-17, leadership, ability, devotion to duty and determination to complete the mission successfully despite the odds.

After the War, he was a Master Mechanic Diesel serving the heavy duty equipment, trucking and contracting industry in the Providence, RI area.

Bateman was the husband of Edna Turnbull (Westberg) and the late Evelyn M. Bateman. Beside his wife he leaves 5 children, 5 stepchildren 20 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren.

He was buried with military honors in Swan Point Cemetery in Providence. Reported by fellow crewman, Joe Hutton, TG, Paul Kennedy, BT, and Robert J. Cayer.

● **GALE W DONER**, FM, 324th, Wichita, KS, October 7, 1997. Gale was tail gunner on "Pist'I-Packin' Mama." He suffered cardiac arrest while vacationing in the vicinity of West Warwick, RI to view the fall foliage. Reported by his widow, Esther Doner.

● **THOMAS J FITZGERALD**, FM, 322nd, Bullhead City, AZ, August 1997, of "chronic obstructive pulmonary disease." He was interred in the Los Angeles National Cemetery. Reported by his daughter Kelly Grucella.

Continued from previous column.....

Ms. Bienz reports that their crew had always been her heroes, and her inspiration to join the USAF in 1968. Mr. Green is survived by 2 older sisters and their families, and many, many friends. Condolences should be sent to George Rivers, Lt. Col. USMC, Ret., 9405 Mountaineer Ave., Las Vegas NV 89134, and to Leo del Gado, 320 N 24th Ave., Hollywood FL 33020-4314.

● **FRED HINDMAN**, LM, 324th, Ft. Smith, AR, Dec. 19, 1997 at age 72. He was nicknamed "Peaches" because he was only 19 and had not yet shaved when he joined the crew of Mike Banta. Banta wrote a beautiful eulogy for Hindman who was the fifth member of his crew to have folded his wings. It is with regret that the eulogy cannot be reproduced here by reason of length. He is survived by his wife, Toni, 2 daughters and 10 grandchildren.

● **DR. MILTON LAZARUS**, DDS, LM, 323rd, White Oak, PA, Oct. 5, 1997, of pancreatic cancer. Reported with deep regret by his wife, Catherine Lazarus.

● **ERNEST LOFTIN**, FM, 401st, Front Royal, VA, April 23, 1997. "Ernie" was the ball turret gunner on George Shoups crew. He died of a massive heart attack cutting the lawn at his home. He completed 30 missions from Nov. 1944 to June 1945 and is survived by his wife Mary Helen, 3 children, Melanie, Bob and Nelly. Reported by Jerome F. Ahl.

● **JAMES R MARSHALL**, FM, 401st, Alpha, MN, Age 83, reported Jan. 28, 1998. He passed away in Phoenix, AZ, following a stroke. He was a crew member of "Destiny's Child." He completed his missions in April 1944. He was preceded by his wife, Pauline, and is survived by 2 daughters, 4 grand children and 1 great grandchild. Reported by Jack Paget.

91st BG Memorial Assn.
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THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

These Newsletters are published quarterly. January, April, July and October are the 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 of those who fought together in World War II from AF Station 121 in Bassingbourn, England from 1942-1945.

Material for publication should be sent to the Editor, Phil Mack, 17521 155th Ave. SE, Renton, WA 98058-9087. "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.

● **KENNETH H FUTCH**, FM, 323rd, Nacogdoches, TX, January 16, 1998, of cancer. He was an original member of the 323rd Sq. and was shot down on a mission to Emden, Feb. 4, 1943 and became a POW. He is survived by two daughters as reported by Norman C. Cox, LM 322nd.

● **JOHN W. "JACK" GREEN**, LM, 401st, and former squadron commander in the 25th Bomb Group (Reconnaissance), Pilot to Bert Stiles' "new crew," *Serenade to the Big Bird*. Reported to Earl Pate by M.J. McAvoy-Bienz, daughter of former R.O.G. Thomas F. McAvoy Jr., deceased.

.....Continued next column

● **JAMES J MCKEE**, 324TH, Staten Island, NY, Oct. 6, 1995. This is a late report from his wife, Muriel, who sent a copy of his Honorable Discharge and enlisted record showing he was an enlisted bombardier in the 324th Sq., and had been awarded the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters. Date of Separation, 10 Jul 45, Brooklyn, NY. Mrs. McKee asks anyone who knew her husband to contact her at 937 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10301.

● **ORLAN L NEELY**, FM, 401ST, Olympia, WA, May 24, 1997, Age 76, of a massive heart attack. Born and raised in
.....Continued on Page 7