

The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



Supporting Units



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol. 32 No. 4

91st Bombardment Group (H)

October 1999

Hamm Revisited

Mar. 4, 1943. The 91st Bombardment Group (H) completed the first mission to the Industrial heartland of Germany to bomb the railroad marshaling yards of the City of Hamm, a mission for which it was awarded the first of two Distinguished Unit Citations. [See related article in the January 1999 issue of *The Ragged Irregular*.] Twelve aircraft completed the mission. Six aircraft failed to return—a loss of a third of the attacking force. A loss rate like this couldn't be sustained. The theory of manned daylight bombardment was yet to be proved.

The story of the mission is told again but this time by the Bombardier of "Excaliber," B-17F-10-BO S/N 41-24464, the 224th B-17F to roll off Boeing's Seattle production line.

For this mission the crew was 1st Lt. Alan W. Brill*, P, 1st Lt. Allen W. Lowry*, CP, 1st Lt. Robert F. Brubaker, B, 1st Lt. Roland P. Ball, N, T/Sgt. Willis G. Dickson, TT, S/Sgt. D. C. Wells, RO, T/Sgt. L. M. Wolfington, WG, S/Sgt. James L. Bechtel, WG, S/Sgt. James E. Morgan, Jr. * BT, and T/Sgt. J. L. Barber, TG. * KIA.

The following is quoted from a letter written in longhand by Brubaker in response to a request of Mr. D. S. Drijver of the "Friesche Luchtvaart Documentatie 1939-1945" to "find out what happened in the skies over our country [The Netherlands] on this particular day [4 Mar 43]" as research project. Following are excerpts from the former 1st Lt. Brubaker, Bombardier:

"25 February 1999

To answer your request, I've collected quite a bit of information concerning aircraft, B-17F 41-24464, and my crew that actually ditched on 4 March. Our losses were severe during the early part of the daylight bombing of Germany in 1942 and 1943 mainly due to the fact that our fighter escort, (Spitfires) were unable to provide support or protection much beyond the coast of England and consequently the German fighters had a 'field day' attacking B-17s.

Early B-24s were better targets because usually we flew at 26,000 ft. and they flew at 22,000 ft. and were all spread out. The early Groups of B-24s, 44th and 93rd, took a big loss and were moved to North Africa.

German fighter aircraft were more plentiful than German Pilots



1st Lt. Robert F. Brubaker, 9 May 1945, Recently liberated from POW Camp at Moosburg.

Fourmy Honored for Volunteer Work

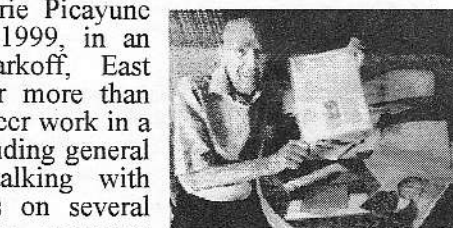
Metairie, La., May 1999, Ben Fourmy, former pilot in the 323rd Sq., 91st Bomb Group, was recently recognized for his volunteer work at the Veterans Administration Hospital in New Orleans. This recognition was given in the Sunday

Edition of the Metairie Picayune newspaper, May 2, 1999, in an article by Eva Barkoff, East Jefferson Bureau, for more than 3,000 hours of volunteer work in a variety of duties including general office duties and talking with patients. He serves on several committees including consumer affairs, veterans affairs and ethics committee. When the three soldiers were taken prisoner in Kosovo recently, Fourmy was called by two of the New Orleans television studios for commentary as a former POW. He received the outstanding volunteer award for 1992.

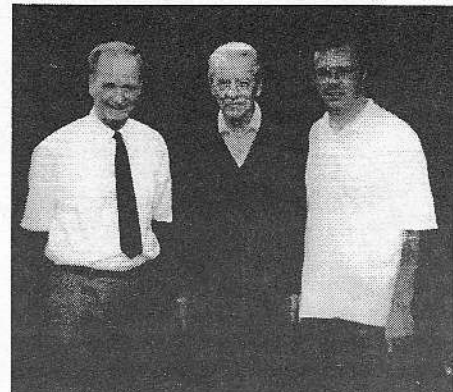
"You can't talk about what happened during the war to just anyone," Fourmy says, "but when I felt like talking about my imprisonment and experiences as a POW, I could always talk about it with those who had been there."

Fifty-four years after Fourmy and his crew of ten were shot down over Germany, two of whom were killed and the remaining eight, including himself were taken prisoner, he received a letter from Vince Hemmings, former Curator of the Tower Museum at Bassingbourn, a "Friend of the 91st," and general historian of military aviation. The letter told of his recent meeting with a friend, Richard Brandon, who travels to Germany

often and has a friend who knew a lot of ex-Luftwaffe pilots, one of whom was the pilot who had shot down Fourmy's B-17 Mar. 6, 1944! Brandon met Georg Greiner, who accompanied him on a visit to England to meet with Vince Hemmings. This same pilot was said to have had 50 confirmed victories.



Ben Fourmy holds telegram sent to parents when he was shot down and captured after a mission to Berlin, 1944.



L-R Vincent Hemmings, Georg H. Greiner, and Richard Brandon

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The President's Corner

Some months ago Ace Johnson called to tell me that his correspondence had showed that several of the other 8th AAF bomb group associations were closing down as of the end of the century. Most of these had scheduled dissolution decades ago when the advent of the twenty first century seemed a long way away. What, Ace wanted to know, did I think about the notion of dissolution? I learned after answering that he felt just as I did about the question, but felt it his responsibility to raise it anyway. It is being passed on to you in the same spirit.

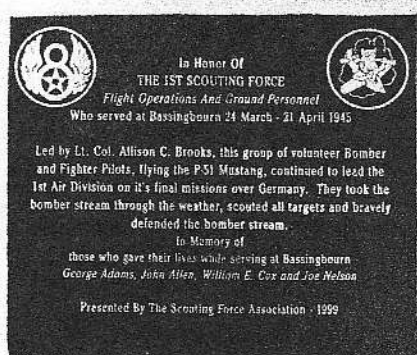
The question was a bit of a surprise. You see, we're trying to plan for the reunion for November 2000 in Galveston. Meanwhile, there is another group planning the reunion for the year 2002 when it is the turn of the West to play host. There is a web site, run by Jim and Suzy Shepherd, which gets a large number of hits every month, plus PX orders from people we had never heard from before. There is an e-mail loop, run by 91sters, which produces so much volume on my computer that I don't have time to read it all. Meanwhile, there is another e-mail loop run at the Tower Museum at Basingbourn.

Progress is being made on memorials in other museums, including one new one in California. I had a long letter from Jake Howland the other day which described how he was planning to handle the wreath-laying ceremonies at various cemeteries in Europe. All in all, there is quite a bit of activity going on and being planned.

Now I am as aware as you are that we cannot keep going as an organization forever and that there are fewer of us every year. In fact, much of the activity described above is being carried on by guys who hurt in places they didn't use to know they had. I suspect they were just taught the attitude that one flies until he gets shot down. Unless there is overwhelming sentiment for folding up, I'll just continue to believe that you all feel about the matter just as Ace and Paul and Jake and Tony and Phil and I do.

.....Bob Friedman

Basingbourn Welcomes 1st Scouting Force



In March 1945, the 1st Scouting Force moved to Basingbourn where Lt. Col. Al Brooks took command. A plaque established to recognize their service was dedicated May 28, 1999 and placed in the vicinity of the 91st Group Prop Memorial on the base. The

unit was first authorized by General Doolittle in June 1944 at the encouragement of Col. Budd J. Peaslee to use P-51s flown by bomber pilots to lead the bombers through weather, scout the targets and apprise them of weather at base. Ultimately the unit became the 857th Squadron. The contact man for the Scouting Forces Association is Richard Adkins, 1304 Cochise Dr., Arlington, TX 76012.

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Editorial—As I complete the third year as Editor of the 91st BGMA newsletter, I have to reflect on the many stories that have come across my desk, the realization of what we accomplished, the heroism enacted many times over with each mission, the hardship of those who became prisoners of war, the pain of the wounded, the silence of the dead. We who survived our own holocaust still bear the scars buried deep in the recesses of our personal memory banks.

For those of us fortunate to have completed a tour, who can forget the odd feeling when it all ended. Was it elation or happiness that we had "won?" Or was it a numbness, a feeling of emptiness. We had cheated death. I have been to Cambridge three times since 1944 but have not been able to bring myself to visit the American Military Cemetery at Madingly. The feeling of kinship with those brave men who are buried there is still too overwhelming. They were my friends, my fellow warriors, my brothers.

Most of us do not speak of our combat experiences very often. Yet, when one of us does, it is remarkable how much detail gushes forth. I have a friend who was co-pilot on a B-24. It took much battle damage, with wounded and dead men among the crew on the mission to Berlin March 8, 1944. My friend had to throw one of the crewmen whose arm had been shot off out of the open bomb bay with a cord tied to his rip cord in hope of saving his life. My friend was himself captured and became a prisoner of war for the duration when his airplane crashed in enemy territory. Today, like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, he is condemned to tell his story to anyone who will listen. What is both impressive and tragic is that he has total recall of every detail of his experience. He must carry this throughout his life.

Material intended for publication in the Ragged Irregular should be sent to the Editor.

Send Folded Wings notices to Asay B. Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer.

Hamm Revisited

(Continued from Page 1)

"...so if a German would bail out in his parachute on the way into a target, he might come up in another aircraft refueled, reloaded and harass us on our return from the target.

"1st Lt. Allen Brill, pilot, was very good but I'm not sure how many missions I had flown with him because so many crew men were either killed or wounded that you were lucky to fly with the same crew on another mission. My Co-Pilot, Lt. Allen Lowry, I knew better because he had crashed in a forced landing in November 1942 at Bovington, England, on returning from a raid on the Lorient submarine pens. He had a bad scar across the front of his chin and Col. Wray had given him permission to grow a goatee to cover the scar. Moustaches and beards were not allowed in the U.S. Army Air Force at that time. The oxygen mask didn't fit over them too well.

"Sgt. Morgan, our Ball Turret Gunner, I didn't know too well except that I personally had him get out of the turret just before we knew that we had to ditch. (The turret compartment was so small that the gunner could not wear a parachute while in it.) Morgan had stayed in the turret for over four hours shooting and moving his guns even after he had exhausted all of his ammunition. I instructed him to get into the radio compartment for ditching.

"After we ditched and the seven of us were in the two dinghies, I realized [Morgan] wasn't with us so he could have been killed in the crash or he drowned unbeknown to me.

"Our small group of 15 bombers were attacked by all types of German fighters: Me 109s, FW 190s, Me 110s and even Ju 88s just after we crossed the coast of The Netherlands going toward Hamm. They didn't seem to worry about flak as the attacked right through it.

"Our aircraft was on the wing of the lead aircraft and the target was partly covered by clouds so I had sighted in the target area in my bomb sight and when my release indices met, I dropped my bombs and the rest of the planes dropped their bombs on my drop. Lt. Brill turned off the target run then and we were hit by several fighter shells in both wings. We immediately lost two engines and had to fall out of formation. We were smoking and gasoline was pouring out of the wings. (I didn't see this as I was busy shooting at the fighters that were pressing their attacks from all sides.)

"Lt. [George P.] Birdsong and two other bombers were immediately knocked out of formation and the three planes were flying close together on two engines each until the two were shot down in flames. Birdsong continued on down to tree-top level and managed to return to the base on two engines. [Ed. Note: Birdsong's story is well-told in his book, *Stormy Weather*, Hambleton Publishing Company, © 1988, George P. Birdsong.]

"At about this time I told the Navigator, Lt. Ball, to get out of his seat pack parachute and get into the radio room for ditching as we were flying about fifty feet above the water. It was impossible for him to get out of the nose of the airplane, between the pilots' section and the bomb bay area, wearing a seat parachute plus the fact that he could not actually use a parachute at that altitude.

"As I was going by the pilots, Lt. Brill asked me if he should use flaps in ditching and I said by all means, slow the airplane down as much as possible. (By the way, I was a pilot so he respected my advice).

Cont. next Column.....

"Prior to heading to the radio room I put a flare pistol and eight shells for it in my flight coveralls and had everyone leave all of their heavy flight clothing on as I knew the water was going to be mighty cold. I went aft and had the Engineer place one seven-man dinghy partially out of the waist window and the second one partially out of the radio room top hatch. I placed the remaining flotation cushions against the bulkhead frame with my back against them. The Engineer sat in my crotch with his back against my chest. Just before assuming this position the last ME 110 flew over us, wiggled his wings as he probably was out of ammo and gas and decided that we were going to make it back to England. At this time, we were completely out of ammo so we had even thrown our guns overboard to lighten the plane.

"The plane upon impact must have struck a wave head on because it was like hitting a brick wall. I went right through the bulkhead and immediately into the water as there was a ten foot gap in the bomb bay as both wings were broken off.

"I went out through the large hole and looked forward as the nose of the plane was slowly going down. I saw the Pilot and Co-pilot each exiting their windows. Prior to the ditching I had the two wounded crew

members inflate their 'Mac Wests' and all seven of us went out into the water. I found out later that the Navigator, Lt. Ball, had been behind the radio room in front of the ball turret and that the turret came up through the bottom of the plane. How it missed pinning him in I'll never know.

"The Engineer's account is slightly different as to what actually happened next. He had failed to inflate his 'Mae West' but fortunately the 'Gibson Girl' [hand-cranked emergency] radio came floating by and he grabbed it for support. Also, one large dinghy floated by and I grabbed it, pulled the rip cord to rupture the CO2 cartridge to inflate it but it failed and all I had was the rip cord in my hand. As I was trying to rupture the cartridge with my hunting knife, the other dingy floated by and, thank God, it worked correctly but inflated upside down.

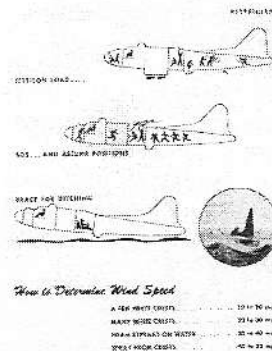
"While I was working the two dinghies, the Pilot and Co-Pilot swam forward of the crash site and one of both hollered to get away from the plane as they thought the suction would carry us down while we were trying to get a dinghy inflated. I faintly recall them calling for help but I kept working on the dinghy because I knew none of us would survive if we didn't get into a dinghy out of the cold water.

"The tail stood up straight and I had moved toward it as I thought maybe it was on the bottom, but it suddenly fell forward striking one of the Gunners as it sank.

"I managed to get the dinghy right side up but no one was able to get into it alone. The Engineer helped me get into it and I pulled the two wounded men on board. I immediately looked forward to see if I could see either pilot but they were nowhere to be seen. The waves were about thirty feet high but long sloping types of waves as the wind was blowing about six or seven knots at the most.

I managed to break the plexiglass covering the plunger to release the CO2 cartridge on the other dinghy and the other four men got into it. We tied the two dinghies together.

Cont. Page 4.....



USAAF B-17 Pilot's Handbook

Hamm Revisited

(Continued from Page 3)

"and all we had left out of the airplane were one paddle and the 'Gibson Girl' radio with its box kite.

"We ditched about 12 noon and the RAF Air Sea Rescue received our distress signals about 1 o'clock but as the sea was running so rough their rescue craft could not leave port so they vectored a mine sweeper to our location and it arrived about midnight. I was so happy to be on board that I gave my Colt .45 pistol to one of the officers after a rough ride into Port Grimsby, north of the Wash, arriving about 7:30 am on 5 March. About 9:00 am, Lt. Robert Morgan of the "Memphis Belle" fame, flew into a nearby aerodrome and picked up five of us (we left two wounded men in Grimsby hospital) and returned to Bassingbourn. "I spent four days in the hospital for broken ribs."

Lt. Ball was listed as killed in action on a mission to Wilhelmshaven, 23 May 1943. One of the wounded gunners having recovered from his wounds lost an eye in an accident on the Base skeet range and was returned to the U.S.

Along with T/Sgt. Dickson, Lt. Brubaker was shot down on a mission to Huls, Germany, on 22 June 1943, and remained a POW until the end of the war. After fifty-six years, Robert F. Brubaker has been authorized to receive the following decorations: Purple Heart with one bronze oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster, Presidential Unit Citation, Prisoner of War Medal, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two bronze service stars, World War II Victory Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

William D. Beasley—End of an Era

[Clyde R. Burdick of Williamsville, New York, former member of the crew of William D. Beasley, has submitted the following information on Beasley and his Bombardier, Olan Hubbard, who also participated in the above described mission to Hamm on 4 Mar. '43. This is taken from a book, *Luftwaffe Waterloo, Thunderbird, Motsie*, by Burdick.]

Just out of flight school, 2/Lt. William D. Beasley was assigned to the 29th Bomb Group, MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida. When the 91st bomb Group was activated, May 16, 1943, at MacDill, Bill was assigned as a pilot in the 322nd Squadron.

William D. Beasley, Lt. Col. USAF Ret, a life member of the 91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association until his recent death [see *Folded Wings*, Page 12] was born in Mississippi August 12, 1915, lived in Hazelhurst, married Martha (Bill called her "Motsie") who was born May 17, 1921, and they were married April 7, 1942.

2/Lt. Olan Hubbard graduated from Bombardier school at Victorville, CA and was assigned to the 322nd Sq. at Walla Walla, where he was assigned to Beasley's crew. Together, Beasley and Hubbard flew B-17F, 41-24545, "Luftwaffe Waterloo," from Bangor Field, Maine, Sept. 29, 1942 to Kimbolton, England and relocated shortly thereafter to Bassingbourn on October 12, 1942.

In addition to "Luftwaffe Waterloo," the crew also flew "Thunderbird," "Marnita I" and "Marnita II," the latter two names were made up of Beasley's wife's first name, Martha, and Hubbard's wife's first name, "Juanita." Together, they flew on the 91st's very first mission: to Brest, France, Nov 7, 1942. On the Hamm mission [see related article above]

it has been reported that Beasley and crew flew Dame Satan" They returned on two engines and claimed seven enemy fighters.

During the filming of "Memphis Belle," Beasley's airplane, among others was seen in the film. They also assisted producer William Wyler taking photos in-flight and sometimes just driving Wyler in a Jeep.

FROM THE MOVIE "MEMPHIS BELLE" BY WILLIAM WYLER



DRIVER: CAPT. WILLIAM D. BEASLEY
CAMERAMAN: CAPT. WILLIAM H. HUBBARD
DIRECTOR OF FILM: WILLIAM WYLER
LEFT: BOBBI BROWN, ST. BASSINGBOURN



Kneeling, L-R Capt. Leonard Santero, Capt. W. D. Beasley, and Capt. O.L. Hubbard. Standing, Lt. R. A. Bercu, Capt. J. W. Hensley, Maj. W. E. Clancy, Capt. Jas. R. Bullock.

When the film was to be premiered in Memphis, Beasley, Hubbard and several other 91sters were present.

Editor Phil Mack's 27th Mission.

The above story about the premiere of the "Memphis Belle" reminded this Editor of his first viewing of this original film by William Wyler. He had completed a tour of 26 combat missions in the 323rd Sq. on a mission to Hamm on 23 Mar. '44. After a few days at the 12th RCD at Chorley, and a ten day voyage across the Atlantic still under the threat of U-Boat attack, he sailed into New York harbor past the Statue of Liberty on 1 May '44. Home on leave with his parents on Long Island, he took a day to visit "the City." He just wanted to look around Manhattan, Time Square, etc. There had been time not so long ago when he wondered if he would ever see any of this again.

While walking by a theater in Times Square, he saw a billboard showing a picture of a B-17 being shot at by fighters and flak. The name of the airplane was "Memphis Belle." That sounded familiar to him. There had been a famous B-17 in his Group. Maybe he better see this movie.

As the film began, there was Bassingbourn, the 91st Group, the airfield, the briefing room, everything. He was right back there in England. The film went on. The mission was under way. The flak came up as they crossed the coast. Then the fighters poured in. The gunners were firing away and calling out over the interphone. He was right with them in the airplane. "Get that #*&%!\$*~!" "He's coming in."

When the film ended, he left the theater and stopped in at the first bar he saw and promptly ordered a shot of Johnnie Walker. He had just completed his 27th mission.

Fourmy Honored..... (Continued from Page 1)

With Fourmy on the fateful day in 1944 were 2nd Lt. Herbert A. Markle, Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. James C. Daragan, Navigator [Notice of his recent death is listed in the *Folded Wings* section on Page 12], 2nd Lt. Arleigh B. Hale, Bombardier, S/Sgt. Frederick B. Walker, Engineer and Top Turret Gunner, S/Sgt. James H. Pultz, Radio Operator/Gunner, Sgt. Arthur P. Collins, Jr., Ball Turret Gunner, Sgt. Joseph M. Benoit, Left Waist Gunner, S/Sgt. Russell L. Brinkerhoff, Right Waist Gunner, and S/Sgt. Theodore C. Zawadzki, Tail Gunner.

The airplane was a B-17G, Serial Number 42-38118. It was so new to the Group that it had not been named nor did it have any distinctive "nose art" that was characteristic of most of the aircraft assigned there.

The date was March 6, 1944. The Target was Berlin, "Big B." "Little B" was Bremen dreaded for its heavy flak barrages. The air war had gone on for a year and a half and Berlin had not yet been attacked in force. In anticipation of eventually attacking the Capital City of Berlin [actually the military objectives in and about the City of Berlin], crews referred to the target as "Big B," a term that struck fear into the hearts of all airmen. This was it! The date of the first major air attack by the U.S. Army 8th Air Force en masse. Ben Fourmy's story in his own words follows.

"When we crossed the English Channel we were attacked by German fighter planes, the ME 109s and the FW 190s. Our plane was badly damaged on the first pass of the fighters as the top turret was blown off, the right outboard engine was knocked out and we could not feather the propeller, which caused us to have a runaway propeller, and a piece of the nose was destroyed. The top turret gunner, Fred Walker, was badly injured so we had the radio operator come forward and take him to the radio room to stop the bleeding and help with his other injuries.

"At this point we were having trouble keeping up with our group and eventually had to fall back to the group behind the 91st. We were then hit by flak and a little later more ME109s and FW 190s. We lost our right inboard engine, but we were able to feather it. To make matters worse, the co-pilot did not have heat any longer and was freezing.

We could not find the trouble but at this point it did not matter as we could no longer keep up with the groups and had to leave the formation.

"It was 60 degrees below zero and we had a draft through the plane from the hole in the nose and the missing top turret. This left us the choice of bail out, or try to go back to the base in England. We had clouds below us and knew that would help protect us from the German fighter planes. The clouds were at about 20,000 feet but it was still too cold to fly without heat and the draft through the plane, but it did not matter as we ran out of clouds.

"We then went down to the tree tops as that was the only other place to fly that would give us a chance to make it back to England. We were doing great until we passed over a German fighter field. We were picked up by a German fighter, an ME110, that was taking off or was already airborne. He followed us and stayed out of range of our .50 caliber machine guns and set us on fire with his 20 mm cannons. Our plane at this point was out of control and crashed. The pilot of the German plane that shot us down was Oblt. Georg Greiner."

Lt. Fourmy at this point corrects the official MACR report. "Sgt. Benoit was at his correct position, left waist gun and Sgt. Collins was at the right waist gun. Sgt. Brinkerhoff did not have a compound fracture of the leg; he

walked away from the crash. Lt. Arleigh Burke, Bombardier, was thrown through the nose of the plane during the crash landing and the plane passed over him and killed him. The plane was completely out of control and burning badly at this point and nothing could be done to prevent the crash. His body [Burke] was a little to the left and rear of the B-17. Sgt. Pultz, the radio operator, was in the radio room at his gun position and the fuselage broke at the spot where he was standing. His legs went under the plane and pinned him in, and they could not release him. He burned to death; however, we were told that the plane exploded and that is what finally killed him. We have not been able to verify this information but are still trying to get the answer to that problem.

"The top turret gunner/engineer, Sgt. Walker, was in the radio room with him and verified some of this information. Walker was in the radio room because he was injured as you will learn later.

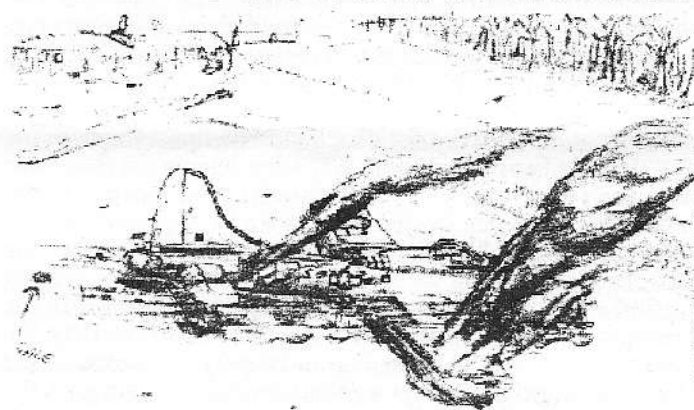
"We were greeted by German civilians on the ground and pitch forks as this was a farming town, and shortly after by German Troops. The German pilot who shot us down continued to circle over us until the troops arrived, so that we could not run into the woods that were close at hand and



Oblt. Georg Greiner, 1944



A/C Ben Fourmy, Oct. 1942



Artists Rendering of Crash site, B-17G 42-38118, Nortrup, Germany

hide. The eight of us were moved by truck under guard to the air base that the German Pilot had taken off from which was in Quakenbruck, Germany. We were locked in a cell that was large enough for one person, two at the most, with one bunk, and we spent the night like this. We were able to sit on the floor in order to get some rest. We received no medical help for our wounds. The crew members that were hurt the most would swap off with the bunk and try to get some relief. There was no light in the cell and some time later, after dark, we were given a bucket with some half cooked potatoes that were full of sand. Yes, we cleaned them as best we could without water and ate them, as we were very hungry by this time. The next day we were moved by truck first, then train, to the Frankfurt area and to Dulag Luft for interrogations. The truck or train rides were very dangerous as the American or British fighter pilots were always looking for anything that moved on the ground to strafe, and none of the vehicles that we were in were marked P.O.W.

Continued on Page 6.....

Fourmy and Greiner

(Continued from Page 5)



1st Lt. Ben Fourmy - P.O.W.

We were separated and placed in solitary confinement with bread and water and some ersatz jam. That was the food we received for about the next three or four days. Time was hard to keep track of as we had no window not did we have a watch. Everything was taken away as soon as we were brought to the first prison cell and never given back. Going to the rest room was a big problem as they would not let you out until it was almost too late. We thought we were smart and would start early, but they knew about that trick also, and did not pay attention to us.

After they were tired of hearing us give our name, rank and serial number with no other information they told us all about ourselves from information they had, and they had plenty, in fact it surprised all of us. Finally they put us in the famous 40 and 8 box cars and sent us on a four day box car train ride to Barth, Germany on the Baltic Sea. From this point on it was very much routine for all POW's, solitary, bread and water, interrogation, hunger, the box car train ride, confinement and no or very little contact with your family or the outside world. We were marched to our prison camp, Stalag Luft One through the civilians in Barth, Germany, who were kind enough to throw rocks and spit on us, which is very hard to forget. One thing for sure, though, they did not do that on our way out as we marched past them.

Life in the prison camp was very boring, as there was not much to do and you were with the same people all the time. We had some games that the Red Cross sent into the camp and that did help. We were given one card and one letter each month that you could mail to your family. Trying to find things to write about was hard, for if you said the wrong thing in the letter it was either destroyed by the Germans, or would worry your family to death. We attended religious class on a volunteer basis to help pass the time away. I did work for our compound such as help with the food from the Red Cross and worked on the coal detail. This did help both yourself and the compound, and it would get you an extra bath.

As time went on food became very hard to come by as the Germans were having trouble feeding their troops, so we were given less rations. Some of the guards were nice, but some were hell and did not care what they did to cause you harm. We were liberated by the Russians who wanted to march us to Odessa, Russia which was 1,500 miles away, but an American Colonel, Harry Cain, heard about this some kind of way and we were flown out by the Eighth Air Force on May 13, 14, and 15, 1945.

The Russians were told we were being moved and they didn't object. Our P.O.W. camp had 8,000 Americans, 2,000 British, and about 1,500 Russians. We were flown to an airfield in France and then moved by truck to Le Havre to await a ship to return us to the United States. We arrived in Boston and worked our way down the U.S. to Camp Shelby and then to New Orleans, La. I arrived at the train station on Canal Street on June 25, 1945. The rest of the story of the suffering endured in prison camp will have to wait for another edition. Thank you, Ben Fourmy, *American Hero!*

A Day in the Life of George Odenwaller

USAAF Station 121. Somewhere in England. Orderly: "O.K., everybody up—it's 4:00 a.m.. Chow at 04:30. Briefing at 05:00. Good Luck." He leaves!

Open one eye, look at watch—he's right, it's 4:00 a.m. The lights are on. I'm in top bunk. Lloyd [S/Sgt Milton Lloyd] my radio man is below. Everyone is bitchin' and bellyachin'. Jump down, grab toilet articles from foot locker. Put socks and shoes on (in shorts and T-shirt). Look back at nice warm sack with straw bag pillow. Trudge down the hall to latrine!

Back to bunk ASAP. Put on "Long Johns" then O.D. pants and shirt. Make sure you've got "good luck" charm (very important). Put on B-15 jacket, grab two fresh eggs from own can & leave bldg. With crew and others in the dark to walk across small meadow to Combat Mess Hall.

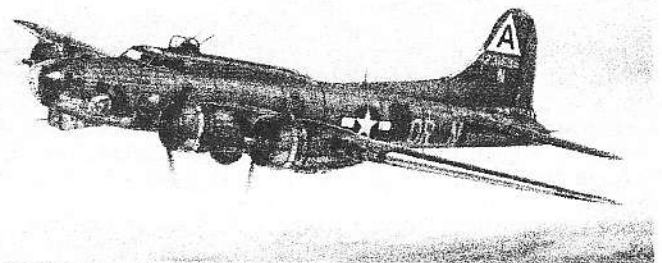
By this time, if you forgot your fresh eggs and cheese, it's too late to go back. You'll have to eat powdered eggs with ham or French Toast, sausage, juice-orange or tomato, coffee or tea with real milk, or creamed chipped beef on toast—better known as "SOS," two-day old white, wheat bread or rye bread and butter or jelly. Sometime biscuits. Always a low gaseous menu.

Leaving the Mess Hall in the dark with four-inch-tall grass wet with dew and also wet with large night crawlers. Yup, fat slimy worms—very slippery—don't fall down.

Then it's over to briefing for instructions for today's mission. Sit down inside lone hut on wooden benches. Before us is a small stage with a large map of Europe with ribbons attached to show route of flight to be taken.

"Attention"—Stand Up—"At Ease. Smoke if you wish" announces a G-2 Officer. Another Officer points out our target for today—how long the total flight time should be, how many hours we will be on oxygen, where and when we will probably encounter enemy aircraft along with flak areas, what type of fighter protection we will have, P-51s, P-47s, the colors of the aircraft. When they pick us up and when they'll leave us. (Never the same route back.) Our Navigator will advise us all as to when these things might occur while in flight if possible, from his briefing!

Takeoff time is posted as is Bomb Load, ETA over target and ETR home. Then comes weather along with Bombing Altitude, and outside temps. "Attention" shouts someone. "Good Hunting. Dismissed!" "We all made mental notes-sometimes on back of hand!!



B-17G "Outhouse Mouse" © J. Crandall, Artist

Outside again, we walk over to the 323rd Sq. Hangar to pick up our Flight Gear (all stuffed into a flight bag) Goggles, Helmet, Oxygen Mask, Parker with pants, boots, two piece silk electric heated jacket and pants (green hornet suit), electric gloves and silk scarf (a "mission scarf," usually handed down to a newer crew member from one who completed his missions). Everyone has his own locker and

Continued on Page 7.....

A Day in the Life..... (Continued from Page 6)

flying gear fitted to him only. I was E-7. Oh, yes, don't forget your chest chute! (For me in the ball turret, this was almost useless-no chute while in the turret.)

Put most of this on and then climb aboard a "6-by-" covered truck and head for the gun shack to pick up our personal Gun Barrels. On the truck again to head over there, across the old Roman Road where our ground crew and aircraft, "Outhouse Mouse," awaits us. Still dark!

Three crews and flight gear are usually aboard one truck. Driver calls out Pilots' names for crews who are then delivered to their aircraft. About the same time the Officers' Jeep arrives and we meet once again for "another one."

I put my gun barrels down by ball turret. Rear door already open—thanks to ground crew. All switches "On." I flip my master switch on for lights and power, remove gun back plates, install gun barrels, replace back plates, charge both guns, turn off all switches and close up turret door—all this while on my knees. Note: The back plates for the .50 cal. Machine guns are also known as "Buffer Plates," containing 1/8th inch Red fiber discs. These discs were usually removed by the Gunners and replaced with U.S. Quarters. Reason? Quicker recoil action—much quicker. Guns fired faster.

Still dark! We stand outside the aircraft and smoke. Talk with ground crew of going aboard the aircraft to keep warm. No smoking in aircraft while on ground!

We wait for "Joe." (Pilot 1st Lt. Joe Harvy) to come by inside aircraft to discuss any possible problems. Takeoff time coming up—Settle Down.

Joe goes forward thru Radio Room, Bomb Bay and closes door to the flight deck. We already checked the Bomb Bay, so Lloyd, Radio man, closes door to this side of Bomb Bay. A few moments later, Joe cranks up #1 and the aircraft begins to vibrate and oscillate. Blue smoke blows back past the port waist window. When #2 is started up, more noise and bouncing. Then #3 and #4 are also roaring! Engines are then Run Up, one by one to max. rpm then down again to idle. Mags are checked, chocks are pulled and brakes begin to squeal. The Aircraft begins to taxi from the revetment and hardstand out to the perimeter track leading to the far end of the runway. We and about 30 other aircraft following each other in the dark (Navigation lights on of course). Stop. Move. Stop. Squeal. Stop. Move. Turn right. Stop—Engines (outboard) high & low rpm to move us down the track. Finally out turn off. Joe swings the "mouse" right with the port engine in high rpm and lines up with the runway. Heavy on the brakes! We stand there poised for takeoff with all four engines at high rpm. The aircraft is straining and bouncing, waiting to go as Joe is standing on the brakes. Joe pushes the throttles Full Forward as the Tower says "Go" and we are then off the brakes and surge forward quickly. The noise here in the waist is deafening. At this point, as we gain speed, if we can get up to look out the port waist window, we see and wave to the three "Sky Pilots" standing alongside the Runway, each with his own horseshoe raised high. These three Sky Pilots consist of a Minister, a Priest and a Rabbi. We wave as the aircraft vibration stops and now only engine noise prevails as we leave the ground slowly gaining altitude making a shallow turn to port into the Light of Dawn.

Now all eyes are wide-watch for other aircraft around and above us while we look for the "form-up" ship up here while circling over the field. We find our position and hang in there until all aircraft are caught up and in position.

Now, the Form-up ship leaves and as a Group we head for the Channel while forming up with other Groups! Note: the Form-up ship was an old war weary B -I 7F, stripped of all weight, turrets, guns, any excess equipment not needed for combat, it was painted grossly and outlined with lights, many. It carried a crew of four: Pilot, Co-Pilot, Engineer and Radioman. I saw it once on the field—all white with big red blue and yellow polka-dots—in the dark it was an airplane; in daylight it was bizarre!

"OK," Joe says, "Light up if you wish before we hit the coast of France." Still gaining altitude. From there on it's oxygen time. I crank my turret down, open both door latches, there, guns down, my turret is ready for entry. As I step down into my ball, the first thing I do is plug in my headset into my jackbox (radio) and pick up a disk Jockey somewhere down there in France in a Special Services mobile truck whose name was "Sgt. Mel Galiard." This was the AFN (Armed Forces Network). He played all Big Band music only: Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, etc. His thing was "music from down here to someone up there." Boy, was he right!

All hooked up now, headset, heated suit, all turret and gunsight switches "On," 10,000 feet, now hook up oxygen mask, set flow to demand, pull ball turret door closed, secure latches. Waist Gunner Al Kus checks my door. When "OK," he bangs twice. (Thanks, Al.) I then rotate the turret up with guns horizontal with flight, notify Joe that I will now test my guns. Everyone else follows. Right now we are all settled in. Joe wants an oxygen check (every five minutes). "Co-Pilot," "Engineer," "Radio," "Ball," "Waist," "Tail! All in quick succession. Lots of airplanes up here. I rotate. We're on our way. "Pay Attention." "Keep Alert." "Watch for Fighters"—both German and our own fighter protection. 'Me morning sky and clouds are beautiful. The engine drone and vibration are very relaxing. I wonder..., I wonder My God! What am I doing up here?"

[This article was written by Life Member S/Sgt. George H. Odenwaller, Ball Turret Gunner, who flew 26 missions with the 323rd Sq., 91st Bomb Group, in aircraft 42-31636, better known as "Outhouse Mouse," OR N, an aircraft that survived 139 combat missions.

Other crew members were: 1st Lt. E. Joe Harvy, P; 2nd Lt. Phil Darby, C-P; 2nd Lt. Martin Raber, B; 2nd Lt. Katz, N; S/Sgt. Neil Jorgenson. TT/E; S/Sgt. Milton Lloyd, RO; S/Sgt. Alen Kus, Waist; and S/Sgt. Walter M Limberger, TG.

Über Obersaxon—A Different Perspective

Articles printed in the RI in January and July 1999 told of the mid-air collision of two 91st B-17s 19Jul '44 on a mission to Lechfield. Don McBey, M/Sgt. USAF Ret., Flight Engineer on "Champagne Girl," the surviving B-17 that made it to Switzerland, submitted reports written shortly after the accident by two other crewmen describing what happened. CP John Sybec, Jr. who had the controls wrote: "Soon afterward, another B-17 [“Bunky”] appeared under our right wing [and] proceeded to bump hell out of us. There was nothing I could do except yell “We’re going to be hit!” Bombardier John Grubka wrote, “...Another B-17 approached from underneath. He was going faster than we were and coming up at the same time. I thought we could get by with a near miss but I was wrong because the next instant he was trying to give us a piggy-back ride.” This should clarify the Champagne Girl did not “sit on” Bunky; rather, it was the other way around.

Letters to the Editor

Michel Lugez, Association of American Memorials, St. Nazaire, France, sent in a poem in homage to John H. Roten, Navigator sole survivor the crew of Lt. William M. Anderson of the B-17, *Panhandle Dogie*, and his nine comrades who were shot down and died Jan. 3, 1943. The poem was published as written in French in the April 1999 issue of the R/I. [This Editor had considered translating it to English but the translation belied the beauty of its original prose; hence it was left to be read in French.] M. Lugez has now furnished a translated copy by Antoine Richard.

In honor of Lt. John H. Roten Sole Survivor
Noirmontier, France, 13 September 1997

"You were there, standing, poignant!
Your right hand over your heart,
Your eyes wet, in front of the ocean
Where your fallen plane still rests.

So, when from our moved islanders
The hymn in your honor sounded,
A grave shudder filled the street;
At the base of the protective roof.

To which side, by cold weather
His ten fingers frozen, landed
One of Those (to whom we owe so much,
That forgetting would be a shame),

In the fields marked by crosses
where only hate would dwell,
Smothering the first of human rights: Freedom.

This is why your nine friends
Assassinated in our sky
Will now have their names set
On the gilding of our missals
So that God, source of life,
Will give them back their wings."

Lucy Correll of the American Women's Club of Amsterdam, in the company of many dignitaries observed Memorial Day this year by honoring the memory of eight crewmen who died in the crash of their B-17, "Yankee Dandy" 30 July 1943: Harold Sparks, S/Sgt W1, Robert Duggan, 2nd Lt N, Douglas Blackwood, T/Sgt R, Americo Cianfichi, T/Sgt TT, George Krueger, S/Sgt W2, Mike Perotta, S/Sgt BT, Daniel Ohman, 2nd Lt B, Herman Poling, S/Sgt T.



Graves of "Yankee Dandy" crew—Opijnen, Neth.



Mayo of Opijnen, A.W.H.M. Jansen 3rd from rt.
Mr. H. DeKock and granddaughter, 4th from left.
Mr. R. Deuerlein, U.S. Vice-Consul, 3rd from left

Terry Faulkner, LT Signs & Designs, 12105 East FM 917, Alvarado, TX 76009, Tel: 817-477-1118.
e mail: terry@earthlink.net offers Leather Squadron patches for sale. He has sent a copy of the 323rd Sq. patch as downloaded from Jim Shepherd's 91st BG web site: <http://home.earthlink.net/~augusto/91st.html> showing an example of his work.

Dorice B. Lindsey of Alberta, Canada and Venice, Florida, was a young girl of 14 living in France during World War II. She has written of her experiences and wishes to share them with us.

"I was 14 living in the town of Chatou, about 10 kms from Paris, when during one of our frequent air raids, our eyes were, as usual, riveted toward the sky and our excitement reached a crescendo as we saw the Flying Fortresses in the distance heading our way. They would bomb Villacoublay airfield, factories or railway centers not far from us.

We had been under the German occupation for 4 long years and looked forward to being "liberated" from the occupying forces.

Across the street from us was an R&R home for S. S. troops who had been wounded on the Russian front. My father had already been arrested by the Gestapo and after having spent 8 months in the prison of Fresnes near Paris, we were told he was in the concentration camp of Buchenwald where he was allowed to write to us in German, once in a while. We knew he was alive but had no idea that Buchenwald was an extermination camp. The Germans across the street told us that he was in a "work" camp, and was well treated.

He came home weighing 80 lbs, a living skeleton, and spent months in bed after his return, but that's another horror story. The reason for his arrest: 1. A German general was found floating down the river Seine. 2. Stealing of documents from German offices in Paris (where my father worked as an interior decorator). 3. Treason against the "Great Reich."

After his liberation from Buchenwald, he was made Commander of the Legion of Honor for his services to the Allies. Because he stole "the plans of the Luftwaffe and forwarded them to the Allies, they credit him with having saved the lives of so many of the allied pilots. My father had unlimited access to the German occupied airfields to make black-out curtains for all the windows of the Luftwaffe barracks, and was able to count the planes and gather information for the Allies. He always said he did it because it was his duty, and never wanted any credit for it. We begged him to write his story which he finally did, a couple of years before he died in 1986 and called it: "I stole the plans of the Luftwaffe," by Jacques Barroux.

During an air raid, instead of seeking cover we would quickly run outside to our garden and look for the first planes to arrive, and it would not take long to spot them with their long contrails behind them before the German anti-aircraft all around us would begin their action against them. We watched in horror as one plane was hit one day, a wing broke off and slowly circled down to earth, while men jumped from their plane before it came crashing down to earth. Some airmen had their chutes deployed, some didn't. Our hearts just broke as we witnessed these sights. I am still haunted today by these scenes.

I remember seeing two bodies plunge to the ground without chutes opening up. I saw one airman coming down with his chute deployed, and watched in horror as the Germans machine-gunned him. His head tipped down all of a sudden and we knew then he was gone. Another parachuted to safety in an island across the river Seine from us. He was so close, we could watch him wrap up his chute and hide it about 150 yards from us and then disappear.

All of a sudden the Germans from across the street rang our door bell and wanted to borrow our boat, a small sailboat, to go to the island to find this crew member from

Continued on Page 9.....

Letters to the Editor

Dorice B. Lindsey

(Continued from Page 8)

one of the B-17s. We told them this was impossible for it was a sailboat and it would take a long time to get it ready and there were no oars for these boats. They left, disgusted, but could realize for themselves that these boats would not be of much use to them. Then they noticed our motor boat on blocks in our garden. We explained to them that the motor was not working and we had no gas anyway. The nearest bridge to enter the island was about 5 miles from our house and we found out later that the Germans had blocked it to prevent French people from going onto the island to try to rescue this airman. The Germans went in and never found him.

Late that night our door bell rang. Cautiously my mother opened the window. It was our town's assistant mayor. He knew my mother was American and wanted to know if she could come and speak to the airman. Knowing the Germans across the street watched all of our moves, and my mother being alone with her two girls, my sister and me, she offered money and food, but would not leave us alone at night, as tempted as she was to go see her first American soldier. (The French Underground had crossed the river at night and found the pilot and brought him back in a row boat at the far end of the island to the town hall, unbeknown to the Germans.)

How we would love to know who he was! We were told he was sent back to England via Spain from Paris directly in front of our house.

This is just one of thousands of similar storied, but these are unforgettable moments for anyone having lived through it.

A few months later, August 26, 1944, we heard loud noises in the street. I ran outside to the gate to see what the commotion was about. It was German tanks retreating toward Germany; they were going home. (It was almost 3 months since D-Day.) I opened our gate to take a better look and they immediately pointed their machine guns toward me. You never saw a 14 year old close a gate so fast!... The next day we found out that these same troops had just murdered 19 Frenchmen, making them dig their graves, shooting them and pouring water into their grave to drown those who were not quite dead yet. There is a memorial to them at that spot in Chatou.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all crewmembers of our Air Forces who did for us the unthinkable, risk their lives and give their lives to liberate us from the Nazi oppression. It was not in vain.

Dorice Barroux Lindsey

[Contact the Editor for Ms. Lindsey's address]

Joe Weinstock, LM, 324th, on reading the R/I article "A Christmas Story," R/I, January 1998, was inspired to send his article written Dec. 24, 1944. Space limitations had not permitted its publication before. With the advent of Autumn and the winter soon to follow, it is printed at this time.

Twass the Night Before Christmas, Dec. 24, 1944

The weather has been poor for days and our 1st Army needed help badly. We could not do anything to help them. The German were shelling our boys continuously and they were in desperate need of supplies and ammunition. On the morning of December 24th, 3,000 bombers and 1,000 fighters from the 8th Air Force took off to plaster the

"Huns."...The biggest force ever to fly over Germany.

We were all given different targets and the weather over the continent was clear as a bell for visual bombing. Our squadron had an airfield that day. At briefing the C.O. warned us at either bail out over Germany or hit the target. (Of course he was kidding about bailing out.) I was flying as Bombardier. We reached our check points on time and started on the bomb run. There was formation after formation of planes. Our fighters protecting us as much as possible. Flak was heavy in spots and we saw Nazi aircraft on the loose. Half way down the run my pilot calls up: "Pilot to Bombardier, why are you releasing the bombs so early?" Bombardier, "Who's dropping bombs?" Pilot: "The whole right side just left the ship." Bombardier: "That's funny I haven't touched any switches yet. Probably a rack malfunction somewhere. Well, I'll save the others for the target." We reached the target and I was synchronized smack on the money, so I hit every switch possible, "Bombs away."

Engineer: "The bombs are still here. Three on top have fallen on the others and there's a little wheel spinning on all three." (After a spinner makes approximately 250 revolutions, the bomb becomes armed to explode.)

I immediately informed the Engineer to kick the bombs out before I could get back there in time. When I reached the bomb bay, the spinning bombs had already left the ship and the Engineer and I put the pins back in the six remaining bombs that were still hanging. Since the racks were bent, it was just impossible to release them I then proceeded to go up in the nose and close the bomb bay doors until let down.

I told the pilot it wasn't safe to land with all that weight hanging. By this time we were in safe territory. I suggested we ditch the bombs in the Channel; so the Pilot called for the Squadron leader's permission and he agreed.

Upon reaching the Channel, we circled until the Engineer and I cut the wires and carried the bombs to the radio room where we dropped them out of the camera hatch one at a time. To open the bomb bays would be too dangerous, and it was also possible for the wires to tear the door off.

Now that was over and we had to reach England, our field was socked in, so we had to land at another airdrome. With poor visibility, the pilot finally brought her down to safety. We were almost one hundred miles from our air base, so we had to spent the night sleeping in the planes—clothes and all. This field was unable to accommodate the hundreds of flyers that weathered in for the night. It was cold and very uncomfortable, but the boys kept on singing Christmas carols while the others talked about their past Christmases. Me?

Sure, I told them about the wonderful sunshine in Hollywood just one year ago. But why complain? We were safe and alive! At 4:00 in the morning we were awakened for another mission. After briefing, the mission was scrubbed because of snow, ice and what have you. Oh yes, fog too,

Lt. Joseph Weinstock
4th Bombing Mission
Merzhausen, Germany

Gordon Alton, of 129 Mariko Place, Saltspring Island, BC, Canada V8K 1E1, is seeking information about his father, Donald Merle Alton, 323rd Sq., August to October 4, 1943. He is known to have flown on Sept. 23 and 27, and Oct. 4 when he was shot down. Anyone who witnessed Don getting wounded or has other information is asked to contact son, "Gordy," whose father has never received medals.

Letters to the Editor

Continued.....

Paul Eisenzimmer, 323rd, in renewing his 1999 dues, tells an interesting story and asks if anyone could verify his observation or explain the circumstances. "On a mission toward the end of the war, Mar. 1945 (?), I was ball turret gunner aboard a B-17. We had just dropped our bombs and headed home when another Group dropped their bombs on the same target after us and were over a large growth of woods. Suddenly, an airman bailed out of one of the planes. The sky was clear. I could follow him all the way down to the forest below. I reported this at interrogation back at the base but never heard anything further." If anyone knows of this incident, Eisenzimmer would like to know about it. Address is 618 2 St. So., Cold Spring, MN 56320. Telephone: 320-685-3790.

Rodney Demara, SMSgt, USAF Ret., 322nd Sq. was Engineer on "Texas Bronco," shot down on first mission to Hamm, Mar. 4, 1943. Hit by ground fire and fighters, they crashed on an island north of Holland. Pilot, Lt. Eugene B. Ellis and Bombardier, Marvin H. Beiseker, Jr., were killed-in-action.

Of the remaining eight crewmen, all became P.O.W.s, except Demara, Anthony Gasto, S/Sgt., Asst. Engineer, and Joe Maestrobescardino, S/Sgt. Asst. Radio, all others have died of natural causes. After retirement from the USAF, Demara worked for Lockheed building the forward upper lobe of the C-5A. He moved to California in 1977.

C. Bowen, 323rd, informs us that his former crewmember, Robert "Bob" Ward, is living in Arkansas and spending winters in Apache Junction, Arizona. His wife, Marilyn, passed away the first of this year. Ward's phone number in Apache Junction is 202-983-8682. Bowen's number is 714-772-6140. They crewed "Take it Easy," shot down Jul. 8, 1944. The story of Pilot John W. Fore is planned for the January 2000 issue of the R/I.

John R. Parsons, Jr., 401st Sq., wrote earlier this year offering Christmas greeting and telling of his two trips to Europe the past year. Parsons had two suggestions for us to consider: Publish a list of Memorials and a list of Past Reunions. These are worthy suggestions and will be considered. The space available in the R/I has been limited and in this issue, we are trying to catch up by increasing the size from eight to twelve pages. Even so, there is not enough space for these things in this issue. They will not be forgotten. In fact Whit (W.W.) Hill has already sent in a list of memorials. This will be coordinated with our Memorials Chairman and we do thank Whit for his diligence and you for your suggestion.

Rosemary Struble Newkirk, sister of Lt. Cleo C. Struble, KIA on a mission to Emden 27 Sept. 43, thanks everyone who has helped her obtain more information about her bother and his untimely death. She was five years old at the time and hardly knew him. Specifically, she mentioned help received from Bert W. Humphries, Homer Chatfield, Earl Pate, Jr., Hilary "Bud" Evers, Melvin R. and Maxine Scott, and this Editor. She located Cleo's tail gunner, Burdette Rausch, in La Porte, IA. She noted that Burdette had last year published a book of their experiences, "Three Came Home." She closes with, "What a lot of GREAT people."

Ray Bowden, British author of several books has a new e-mail address: Rbowden@compuserve.com.

Sonja Bender, seeking information about her father, James W. Mercer, shot down over Poland and believed to have been Radio Operator on Shoo Shoo Baby. Her e-mail address is: gvpsvwzrd@sol.com.

C. A. Theodore Lundberg, 323rd, celebrated his 82nd birthday by giving instead of receiving. Although he has been a Life Member of the 91st BGMA, he has donated \$100 to the Association "to help keep the 91st alive for a little longer." A belated Happy birthday to you.

Larry O'Neill, 322nd, sent in a letter expressing appreciation for the work the Staff of the Association in keeping alive the spirit of the 91st. "You have my heart felt thanks and my sincere appreciation for all your hard work."

Tony Montalvo, Chairman of the Memorial Committee of the 91st BGMA, barely out of the hospital for surgery, has provided the Staff with a report on the status of various Memorials in being and planned. We thank him for his dedication.

John L. Dienst, Curator of the Stillwater Airport Memorial Museum, has been preparing a book about the 475 combat aircraft that were scrapped there in 1946. Two that served in the 91st were: 42-29837 "Lady Luck," and 42-29947, "Wabash Cannonball." He would appreciate receiving copies of any photographs and stories about these aircraft. Address: SAMMA, P.O. Box 6042, Enid, OK, 73702, or e-mail: Dienst@hotmail.com.

Otto Meikus, our life member and former crew chief in the 324th, who lives near Bassingbourn, sent a note informing us that the Imperial War Museum launched a free bus service on Sundays between Cambridge and Duxford. This is a summer service but will be appreciated by those visiting during the peak vacation period.

Earl Pate, Jr., Historian for the 91st BGMA needs some help. He is looking for anyone who has information on two B-17s that landed at Bristol, England, returning from a mission to Nantes, France, 23 Sept. 1943. The aircraft have been identified as 29711 LG V (no name or nose art) and 23073, LL A, "Lightning Strikes." Earl's address is shown on Page 2 in the Association Officers' Block.

Herbert Rickards, 322nd Engineering, was with the Group from Walla Walla in June 1942 until discharged in Sept. 1945. He only recently (1998) learned of the existence of the 91st BGMA and has joined our ranks. He has been retired for 20 years and lives at 1101 Lincoln Blvd., North Cape May, NJ, 08240-1837. Welcome to the Club!

Warren W. Whit Hill, Memorial Advocate, and "our man" in Washington, D.C. celebrated USAF Armed Forces day at a meeting at Andrews AFB, MD in good company.



L-R Owen Cooper, 401st, John Parsons, 401st, Robert Morgan, 324th, Whitmal Hill, 323rd.

In Memoriam



Royston Mayor Pat Rule

It is with regret that we announce the passing of Pat Rule, a grand lady who has supported the memory of the American 91st Bomb Group (H) over the many years as Mayor of the City of Royston, Herts. The Royston "Crow," tells us she was 78, a town and district councillor for more than 20 years, Mayor for three years and chairman of North Hertfordshire District Council in 1982. David Crow, local resident and member of Friends of the 91st, writes, "Following a telephone conversation with our dear friend Vince Hemmings, please find an obituary for our dear friend, Pat Rule. Pat was a great supporter of the 91st and was at the front of all 91st visits to Royston. Pat will always be remembered for her quiet activities, especially her love of children and her contemporaries.

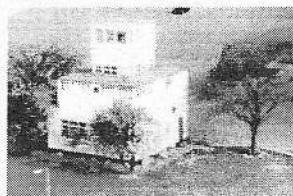
She supported many charities and gave generously of the time for worthwhile projects. She supported me on many occasions at Bassingbourn with the reunions and although she liked to hear of the 91st she became more reclusive as her health deteriorated to the point of heart failure."

Paul Chryst, Past President of the 91st BGMA and leader of several "Back to Bassingbourn" tours for 91sters, including one about to depart at this writing, sent a note, "Many of the 'old-timers' [that's all of us] will remember Mayor Pat Rule of Royston when we took a large group of 122 persons (with Gen. and Mrs. Wray) 'back home.'"

The City of Royston maintains a memorial fountain in the Priory Gardens in memory of the 91st Bomb Group (H)

Word from the Tower

Steve Pena, Curator of the Tower Museum, has announced the establishment of a "Wall of Remembrance" consisting of a large wooden panel on the 1st floor of the



Bassingbourn Tower

Museum bearing the title:

**RAF BASSINGBOURN USAAF STATION 121.
WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED
HERE.**

The Tower Museum is offering individual 91st BGMA members the opportunity of purchasing a 1x3 inch plaque which we will have engraved with their own:

Name & Rank
Crew Position and aircraft name (if flight crew),
Squadron and Unit.
Dates (from and to) they served at Bassingbourn

Continued next page (lower right).....

Golden Wings

Continued from Page 12.....

● **Warren "Bud" L. Paschke**, FM 324th, Eden Prairie, MN, Aug. 12, 1999, Age 74. Bud was a food and coffee broker for over 40 years, and a member of the Association of Manufacturers' Representatives. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Lucille ("Lukey"), a sister, brother, sister-in-law and four children, eight grandchildren, and three nephews.

● **Robert "Bob" Potters**, LM, 401st, Sun Valley, ID, July 2, 1999, Age 79. Born in Brooklyn, NY, Bob graduated from Peekskill Military Academy in 1937. He was inducted into the Army in 1942 Coast Artillery Bn. until transferring to the Air Corps for Pilot training. Assigned to the 91st, Potters served as Pilot on B-17 "Blood & Guts." He survived twenty-five missions, and received the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters. After the war Bob joined his father and two uncles in a glass manufacturing company, Potters Brothers, Inc. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Gertrude, daughter Marilyn Peck and husband Jonathon, his sons, Robert S., and Paul W., daughters-in-law Cynthia and Christina, and six grandchildren. Submitted by son, Paul.

● **Eugene J. Rimmell**, LM, 323rd, Freeland, MD, Sept. 14, 1999, Age 79. The following is extracted from the Baltimore Sun and sent in by W. W. Hill. Rimmell was Engineer and top turret gunner on George Birdsong's crew in the "Delta Rebel." He died in his sleep at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in St. Mary's County. After completing his tour in the 91st BG, he returned to the 21 to be a gunnery instructor, but soon volunteered to get back into combat. He was assigned to a B-24 in the 15th Air Force and was shot down over Yugoslavia. Flying 50 missions overall wasn't enough. After repatriation, he was assigned to the 20th Air Force and flew B-29 missions in the Pacific theater.

Highly decorated, Rimmell retired from the Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant. He then worked for the U. S. Postal Service until his retirement in the early 1980s.

"He seldom talked about his wartime experiences. He always said, 'It was no big deal. The real heroes are dead,'" said his son, Harry M. Rimmell of Freeland.

● **Leroy "Roy" G. Sheehan**, LM, 322nd, Oxon Hill, MD, June 10, 1999, Age 79. Roy completed 25 missions as a waist gunner on a B-17 and was awarded the DFC, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. Having been wounded in action several times, his doctors proposed that he would be unlikely to sire any children. His wife of 54 years, Elvyra, is pleased to report that he is survived also by two boys, Paul-Michael and Robert J., and two daughters, Maureen and Laurane.

Roy and his wife met at Mitchel Field, NY while he was recovering from his combat tour and she was a singing member of the USO. At his next duty station, McDill Field, he was afforded the opportunity to attend Officer Candidate School after which he was commissioned 2nd Lt. He then served in various posts in the United States and Europe and it was the Office of Special Investigations that brought them to Maryland. After retirement from the Air Force, Roy was a Labor Relations Analyst at the Naval Ordnance Station in Indian Head, MD.

Word from the Tower

Continued.....

The above will then be permanently affixed to the panel mounted on the Wall of Remembrance within the Tower Museum.

Applications for plaques are also invited from families and those who wish to remember lost friends, etc.

Cost per plaque is \$30.00. This will also entitle the purchaser to a certificate stating that the individual named is remembered still on their old base. The panel to which the plaques will be affixed will be unveiled during the up and coming 91st BGMA tour.

All funds should be sent to the project coordinator: John Doughton (EAAS), 11 Tannery Close, Royston, Herts, UK

Folded Wings

Please send obituary notices to:

Asay B. Johnson, Sec'y/Treas., 91st BGMA,
590 Aloha Drive, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406.

● **William D. Beasley**, LM, 322nd, Winter Haven, FL, Aug. 26, 1999, Age 84. An original member of the 91st Group, he completed his tour of operations May 29, 1943. He is survived by his wife, Martha who reported that he had fallen and broke his leg. After surgery and therapy, he couldn't seem to regain his strength. A memorial service was planned. Reported by Clyde Burdick, former T/Sgt Gunner on Beasley's crew. See related article on Page 4.

● **Louis L. Brown, Jr.**, FM, 401st, Lakewood, CA, July 31, 1999, Age 79. A devoted husband, father, brother, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend. "Lou" was an ex-POW at Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria. Reported by his wife, Claire, he was a member of the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Assoc., B17 Combat Crew & Wingmen, Long Beach Elks, Buena Park Seniors Club, Smile-A-Mile Travel Club, Amateur Bowler, Golf Legend (in his own mind), Ram's fan (no one knows why).

● **Vernon L. Dion**, LM, 401st, Webster, MA, June 26, 1999, Age 79. As reported in the Telegram & Gazette, "Vern" was a retired textile colorist at Cranston Print Works. He was a member of Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ Church, and League of Sacred Heart. He was involved in the Boy Scouts of America. He was also a founding member of the American Air Museum in Britain, and a member of American Legion Post 184. He is survived by a brother, three sisters, nephews and nieces, several grandnephews and grand nieces. Vern is pictured wearing his 91st BGMA hat. Submitted by John Irak, LM, 401st, of Crown Point, IN.

● **Manuel Fisher**, LM 323rd, Charlotte, NC, July 23, 1999, Age 78. "Manny" was a Navigator on the B-17, "Blue Dreams" and flew 26 combat missions. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. In civilian life, Manny was a licensed Auctioneer, and Certified Real Estate Broker. He also served as Executive Vice President of Perfect Fit Industries. He is survived by his wife, Donna, and children: Lewis and wife, Janice Fisher, Cathy and husband Alan Breitman, Tom and wife, Judy Fisher, Marjorie and Husband, Dan Hyde, and Alan and wife, Robbie Fisher, grandchildren and two brothers.

● **Edward Haller**, FM, 401st, Highland, IL, May 15, 1999, Age 85. Reported by Joe Franke, Haller drove a Staff car for Gen. Gross, Commander of the 1st Combat Wing of which the 91st was a part. In civilian life, Haller served as a member of the Florida State Patrol, the St. Cloud Police Department and the Osceola County Sheriff's Office. Haller reported later that he had served in France and Germany helping evacuate former prisoners of war by loading them on B-17s. On his return to the United States, he "got off a ship

91st BG Memorial Assn.
590 Aloha Dr.
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403

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THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

These Newsletters are published quarterly: January, April, July and October. 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 on or before the fifteenth day preceding 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.

● **James J. Cronk**, LM, 323rd, Boulder City, NV, Nov. 5, 1997. Reported by Joanne P. Molen, Secretary of the Las Vegas Chapter of the POWs.

● **James C. Daragan**, FM 323rd, Manlius, NY, Aug. 15, 1999, Age 79. As reported by his wife, Katherine and family, Jim was a retired Senior Civil Engineer from American Electric Power Corporation. In addition to his wife, he is survived by two daughters, a stepson, and three step daughters and several grandchildren. He was interred at the Onondaga Military Cemetery with full military honors.

in New York City and kissed the ground." He is survived by his wife, Helen, a sister, stepson and three step granddaughters. He was interred with full military honors.

● **Olan L. Hubbard**, 322nd, Northglenn, CO, Nov. 17, 1998, Age 78. 2nd Lt. Hubbard, Bombardier, joined the crew of Capt. William D. Beasley at Walla Walla, WA and completed a 25-mission tour in the 91st Bomb Group. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with three bronze Oak Leaf Clusters. Reported by Clyde Burdick. See related article "Beasley" on Page 4.

Folded Wings continued on Page 11.....