

# The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



Supporting Units



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol 33 No. 1

91st Bombardment Group (H)

January 2000

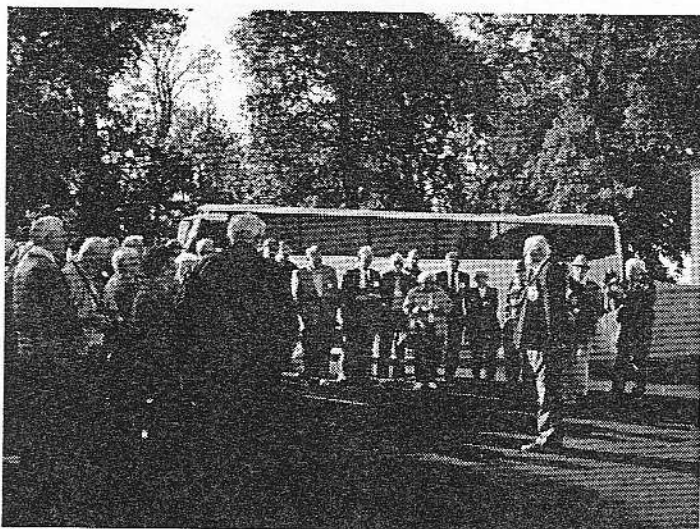
## Return to Bassingbourn—1999

**London, England, October 12, 1999.** Forty-three 91sters—many with their wives—bade farewell once again to the verdant country that will forever be a part of them in their memory of another time and another century—a time when they faced a powerful enemy dedicated on conquest of the world.

From this soil, they gave battle at a terrible cost in lives and souls and materiel until they triumphed. High in the stratosphere, in unpressurized bombers, at temperatures as low as any measured on earth, they carried the battle to the enemy in face to face combat. And they won! Many of their comrades never returned to their base at Bassingbourn and are interred in cemeteries on the Continent in France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, or in the United Kingdom at Maddingley near Cambridge, or are forever, "Missing in Action."

Many bear scars physically for wounds from flak and cannon fire and mentally from recollections of capture and prison hardship they endured. But it was with joy on this occasion in early October 1999 that they returned to Bassingbourn and now, after a week's visit, they made their departure for home.

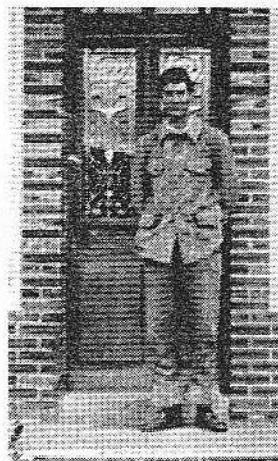
Paul Chryst, former founding member of the 91st BGMA, and Past President, led the tour. For him, it was the thirty-sixth "Return to England Tour" he has organized and led for World War II Units of all branches of service, ten of which were for the 91st Bomb Group exclusively.



Paul Chryst welcomes 91st BGMA Tour Group on Arrival in UK, October 1999. (SP)

## A Reunion in France—55 Yrs. Later

**La Membrolle sur Choisille, France, March 19, 1998.** On the north side of the Loire River above Tours, Christian Levaufre, began a search for an American airman who had been shot down July 8, 1944 and parachuting down landed on a farm near Dreux, about 80 miles west of Paris. Levaufre was known in the region for having been, or being able, to obtain information about aircraft that had crashed in the area during World War II. The grandson of Maurice Duval, a farmer, had contacted him to find out if the American could be located. He had a class ring, identified only with the inscription, "U.S. Army Air Forces, Freeman Field, Pilot." The only other clue was a photograph of the pilot in civilian clothes standing in front of the Duval house.



F/O James W. Fore, Jr.,  
Evadee, July 1944.

From this small beginning, Levaufre contacted the 8th Air Force Historical Society and, from a list of contacts they provided, he then wrote to Vincent Hemmings, Historian, member of the Friends of the 91st and former Curator of the Tower Museum at Bassingbourn. Five months later, Levaufre wrote to Asay Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer of the 91st BGMA, thanking him and expressing appreciation for the help of Hemmings and reporting that he had successfully identified the Pilot as James Fore. The aircraft was "Take it Easy," B-17G 4297173 assigned to the 323rd Sq.

Other members of the crew were: 2Lt. Milton Gastwirth, Bombardier, KIA, 2Lt. Donald F. Bridwell, CoPilot, Evadee, and POWs: 2Lt. Robert W. Ward, Navigator, S/Sgt. Robert M. Phelps, Engineer, Sgt. Bernamr F. Scharf, Tail Gunner, Sgt. Chaten L. Bowen, Radio Operator, Sgt. George Sherman, Ball Turret Gunner, and Sgt. James F. Zeiser, Waist gunner. This was the 25th mission for F/O Fore who was taking the rest of the crew on their first combat mission to bomb a "no-ball" target in France. What might have been a "milk run" turned into a disaster.

Jim "Paladin" Fore with Larry Jacks wrote and published a book, "Tragedy and Triumph," subtitle, "A Pilot's Life through War and Peace," Skyward Press, © 1996, a copy of which the author cordially sent to this Editor.

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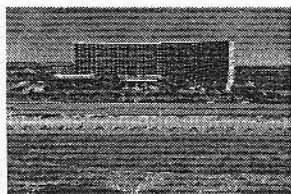
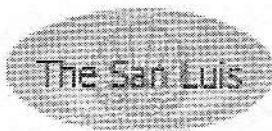
## The President's Corner

Detailed plans are firming up for our first meeting in the new century. The dates will be 1-4 November 2000. This is the week before elections and is past the hot weather and hurricane risk part of the year. The hotel, the San Luis Resort in Galveston, is quite elegant. All the rooms face the Gulf and all have balconies.

All of our meetings feature something to do with flight. This time we are using the Space Center, the control room of which you have seen on television during space missions. The location for the banquet is not yet settled. My preference is for the Galveston Flight Museum over the hotel. Final choice is dependent largely on costs. You will, I think, be very pleased with the program for the Galveston meeting.

On our way home from our last planning trip to Galveston, Joy confessed her worry that we would do all this work and then no one would come. The next day, I had two phone calls from people who told me of their plans to attend. Now, if I can just get her to continue articulating her "hostess" worries, we'll fill up the San Luis and spill over into the Hilton next door.

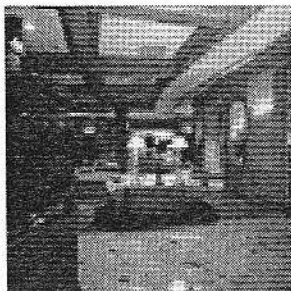
Bob Friedman.....



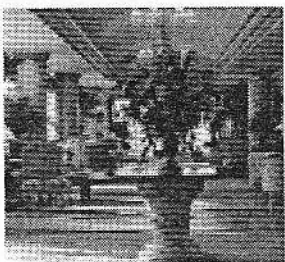
View from the Gulf



San Luis Pool



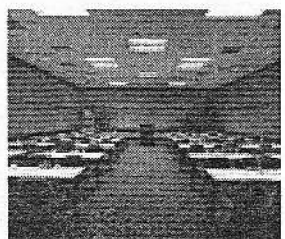
Hotel Lobby



The Promenade



Typical Guest Room



Class Room

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## Editorial

Many complimentary remarks were sent in regarding the expanded issue in October 1999. It is hoped to be able to do this more often. In fact, there are several items we will not be able to publish in this issue that will have to carry over to a future issue. We kept to the 8-page format only because this issue contains the annual membership renewal form and the P-X order forms.

The principal constraint on issue size—apart from the work load—is the postal cost. At this time, the postage costs more than the printing. We continue to use First Class mail rather than a bulk mail.

On another subject, it is interesting to observe the increasing interest on both sides of the ocean on battle reports of the great air armadas. This was especially noticed in the communications between Ben Fourmy and his ex-Luftwaffe Flieger, Georg Greiner, as reported in the October 1999 issue of the *Ragged Irregular*. Recently, Quentin Ellis, former Navigator on the "Village Flirt," wrote to tell us of his communication with a Slovakian gentleman, Peter Kaššák, who is doing research on certain air battles and crash sites of B-17s in Slovakia. The following is quoted from his letter to Ellis.

"From summer 1944 Germans start to use attacks from 6 o'clock high and the planes they used were heavily armed and armored, so it was hard to damage them nor hit or shoot them down. They flew 30 meters behind the tail of bomber and shot it off. Uff, that had to be something terrible for tail gunner (if he was alive at the moment)."

**Please renew your membership  
so we can continue the work of the  
Association.**



## Return to Bassinbourn—Continued from Page 1

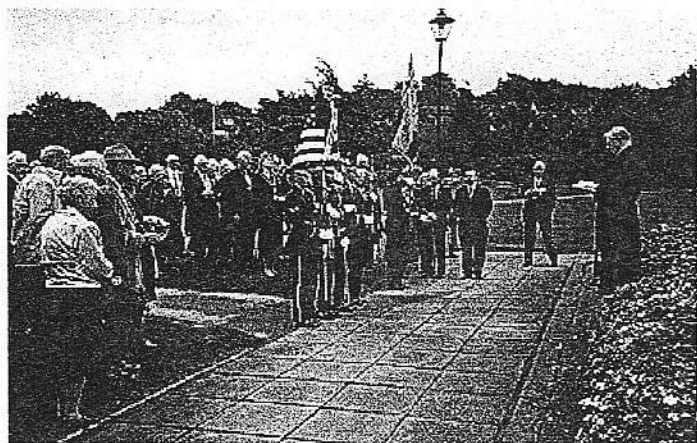
Many of the attendees were members of the ground echelon. These men provided the support of the aircraft operations in all aspects much like operating a small city including base management, aircraft maintenance and repair, housing, mess, grounds management, communications, military police, fire crews, photographic support, transportation, ordnance, etc.



Peter Roberts (right), Chairman of the EAAS, & Frank Lablotier, LM, 441st. (SP)

The tour began with a city tour of London, and continued to Lavenham for lunch and on to Bury St. Edmonds for a tour of the flower gardens of the Abbey. Then it was on to Cambridge with a stay at the New Holiday Inn and dinner and a visit to the Eagle Pub.

Friday, Oct. 8th, was spent in the Town of Royston where more than 100 local persons came to Town Hall and Priory Gardens to greet the visitors and take part in the Re-Dedication of the 91st BG Stone Plinth Memorial. Royston Mayor Fiona Greenwood and Councillor John Smith had set up the Program, aided by Friends of the 91st, David Crow, Vince Hemmings and Peter Worthy. One of (3) fresh floral wreaths with 91st

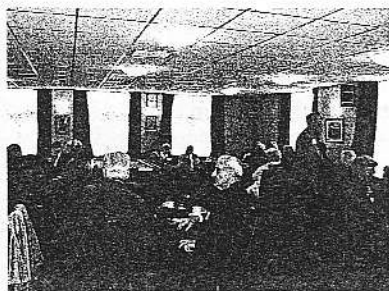


Memorial Service at Royston Priory Gardens conducted by Rev. Peter Jennings, Rector of Royston. USAF Color Guard from RAF Molesworth and Standard Bearer from Royston Branch, Royal British Legion. (VH)

banners was placed at the Memorial Base by Capt. Harold Lasch, former 322nd Navigator, who was wounded and shot down on 5 Dec 44 and became a POW survivor at Stalag Luft 1 in Barth, Germany.

The afternoon was spent with visits to the Anglican Church, the Royston caves, the Town Museum and a short bus ride to the Shuttleworth Collection of flyable antique aircraft.

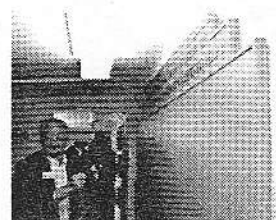
Saturday, Oct. 9, was devoted to the Bassingbourn area. Coffee and tea were served in the Club No. 2 hosted by 2IC Major Licence, in Command for



Tea at Officers Mess No. 2 (SP)

the day. A brief memorial service was held at the Prop Memorial at which a wreath was placed by Robert Wisor, 323rd Pilot, shot down on the 2 Nov. 44 mission to Merseburg. He was a POW at Stalag Luft 3 and 7 until Apr. 45. Lunch was held at the Hardwicke Arms with about 25 members of the East Anglian Aviation Society (EAAS) including Peter Roberts, Chairman, Steve Pena, Curator of the Tower Museum.

After Lunch, the party moved to the Tower Museum where Tour Leader Paul Chryst unveiled the new Panel on the Wall of Remembrance sponsored by the EAAS itself. [Information about how 91sters can have a plaque added to the Wall memorializing their duty at Bassingbourn in WWII was published in the October 1999 issue of the R/I, p.11].



Paul Chryst at the Wall of Remembrance. (SP)

On behalf of the 91st BGMA, Chryst presented Chairman Peter Roberts and Curator Steve Pena each with an engraved 9x12 plaque expressing appreciation for their efforts and dedication to preserving the memory of the 91st Bomb Group (H).

In the afternoon, David Crow, Association Director of the 355th Fighter Group, Steeple Morden, directed the group to the impressive 355th Memorial and presented Earl Williamson with a large photo of his B-17 airplane sitting on the field with full bomb load and fuel pouring out of the right wing where he crash-landed in February 1944.

The tour continued the next day to the American Military Cemetery at Madingley where Vincent Fonke, 324th Pilot, who was shot down on the 16 Aug 44 Leipzig mission, laid a wreath. Both an American and British flag were placed at the headstone of Robert Lacey and Earl each of the graves of the 36 men Williamson, Maddingley from the 91st who are buried there (SP)



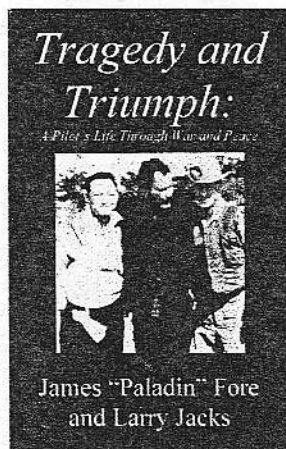
The names of an additional 111 men are listed on the Wall of the Missing.

The afternoon found the Group visiting Wimpole Hall and a visit to Ely Cathedral where a harvest festival was in progress. The next and last day found the Group visiting the American Air Museum at Duxford.

Following is a list of the participants: Donald Almon, Alice Andolshek, Sid & Carla Bamsley, Kermit & Thelma Burman, Paul & Nancy Chryst, Charles & James Collins, O. Glenn & Nancy Cooper, Dale Darling, Dale & Mary Davis, Michael & David Fodrocki, Vincent & Belle Fonke, John & Lily Hamner, June Helfrick, Robert Heller, Bernard & Verne Kase, Frank Lablotier, Robert & Lora Lackey, Harold & Dorothea Lasch, James & Elizabeth Norris, Leo Williams, Earl Williamson, William and Donna Wilson, Robert & Helen Wisor, Willard & Florence Wolf, George & Frances Wood, and John Zabel.

The above information was excerpted from a report by Paul Chryst, Photos by Steve Pena (SP), EAAS and Vince Hemmings (VH), Friend of the 91st. The tour service was provided by Berkshire Travel Agency, Reading, PA, which Paul Chryst represents. Chryst gave special mention to Kathy Coll, "our American Express Representative."

## A Reunion in France..... (Continued from Page 3)



Biography of James W. Fore

The following is quoted from Fore's book with permission of the author. "We were on the right side of the formation when our plane suddenly shuddered. I checked the instruments and saw no indication of a problem. Everything seemed fine until I saw the copilot in the next plane gesturing and pointing frantically at my left wing. There was a huge hole between the number one and two engines. We were in serious trouble.

"We were hit hard, and it couldn't have been in a worse location. Our fuel tanks were on fire with flames trailing from the wing almost all of the way back to the tail. It was so hot that the wing skins were melting. Some of the metal was actually burning. With no extinguisher system in that part of the plane, it was impossible to put out the fire. Our plane was doomed. We were too if we didn't get out quickly.

"I immediately gave the bail out call on the intercom and rang the fire alarm bell. Lt. Bridwell was monitoring the group radio frequency and didn't hear my announcement. I pulled him over to see the fire. There wasn't a second to waste. Our plane, still heavily loaded with fuel and bombs, could explode at any second.

"The moment we saw the fire, we pulled out of formation. We didn't want to risk damaging any other aircraft if our plane exploded. I set the autopilot to hold the plane steady and climbed out of my seat. Next, I grabbed my chest-type parachute and clipped it to my harness, then crawled down to the emergency escape hatch just underneath and behind the cockpit. There was only time for a final quick look around at our new, yet suddenly old airplane.

"When the emergency hatch door opened, I looked down. It was a long, long way to the ground. This was my first parachute jump. I hesitated for a moment. It was time to go—the plane could explode at any second. By this time, most of the crew had already left the plane. There was nothing else I could do to help them, so I jumped."

After landing, Fore tells about a farmer who was plowing some ground nearby and who motioned him to some trees and brush. He hid his parachute and waited until the farmer came to him and took him to his house. Fore's hands were lacerated and the farmer poured some antiseptic and bandaged them. He gave Fore some civilian clothes [see photo on p.3].

The next morning, five other crew members were brought to the house. Fore learned that Lt. Gastworth had been shot and killed while descending in his parachute.

Fore continues: "The farmer and his wife prepared a comfortable place for me in their cellar. I lay down and drifted into a somewhat guarded sleep. I spent only one night with them, but I'll always be grateful for the risks they took. For harboring me, they risked being thrown into a concentration camp or a date with a firing squad. Over the years since that night, I've forgotten this brave couple's names. They were part of the patriotic French who only wanted their freedom from the Nazis."

On the afternoon of July 9, Fore and the other members of his crew met with the leaders of the Resistance and a plan was made that would take them out of France and back to England. It didn't work out that way. They were taken to Paris and after a time were driven to a location where they encountered the Gestapo. They had been betrayed. Now, in civilian clothes, they could be shot as spies. They were sent not to a Prisoner of War camp, but to an extermination camp: Buchenwald!

The conditions at Buchenwald defied description. It was a place where it became obvious that the intent was that no one should ever leave alive. If not by torture or extermination then you would die by starvation. Fore was near death by starvation after 100 days at Buchenwald when a well-dressed Luftwaffe Officer appeared at the camp. Through his efforts, Fore and the other American airmen were removed from the death camp and transferred to a Stalag Luft POW camp.

Upon leaving Buchenwald, Fore's sentiments are expressed in his book, "After what I saw, heard, tasted and smelled, I felt a compassion for the rest of the camp's prisoners. While happy for our group, I felt concern for all



James Fore and Maurice Duval Reunion after 55 Yrs.

those thousands of poor wretches we left behind with no hope for survival. I cried at the thought of those defenseless, derelict, and starving human beings. All their future held was total misery, torture and death."

Fore was eventually liberated at Moosberg on April 25, 1945, after having been held in several Stalags and having made the infamous march to Moosberg.

Now, fifty-five years later, and after a brilliant career in civil aviation, Captain James W. Fore enjoyed the long sought reunion with Maurice Duval and family.

## Letters to the Editor

**Edwin Whitten, FM 323rd, Marco Island, FL, and Cape Elizabeth, ME.** It takes a lot to reflect my thoughts and put them on a piece of paper, but I felt I would be remiss if I didn't this time and I'm compelled to do just that.

I usually skim through the RI for news of any of my buddies who were there when I was. The October issue was a revelation as I read through article to article and said to myself how lucky I was to be back home again.

My missions didn't start until late 1944 and into 1945. And yes, I was fortunate enough to have completed 30 missions, but not as tough as those that preceded me. I was with the 323rd when it had "Outhouse Mouse" or "909" and I was proud to put time on those planes.

Having said that, I only want to take my hat off to those who were there in the early stages of the campaign. They were brave to accomplish what they did and deserve the greatest admiration and gratitude that one pilot and his crew can give to another pilot and his crew.

Letters to the Editor continued on Page 6.....



## A Quiet Sunday Morning in London

Chuck Galian, a member of the 323rd Sq. ground crew, collaborated with his sister-in-law, Pearl Blanchette, in writing the following story that appeared in "The Telegram" in recent time.

**Pearl:** It was a quiet Sunday morning during World War II, in London, England, when a telegram came. I remember Dad taking a handful of coins from his trouser pocket and giving them to the boy who delivered it.

His hand shook as he held the small envelope in the air for Mum and me to see. He was afraid that it was bad news about my brother who was in the infantry in India at that time.

Dad's somber expression quickly became a smile of relief as he read the message. "Connie—meet me at Knightsbridge Station—12 p.m. Sunday—love Chuck. I can still see the smile on Dad's face today when he'd finished reading that telegram.

Connie is my sister. Mum and Dad knew that Chuck was an American Airman stationed near Cambridge, 40 miles from London. However, they had never met him.

The telegram posed a problem.....Connie was out of town. Mum didn't like the idea of Chuck waiting around for Connie, knowing she couldn't be there. Mum looked at me and asked, "Will you go and tell Chuck that Connie won't be home until tonight?"

I was 16 at the time and had never met an American, and all that I knew about America was what I'd seen at the movies. I gave this question some thought and decided I didn't want to leave Chuck waiting at the station either, and I agreed to go.

It wasn't long before I left the house wearing Connie's pink coat. I'd been convinced by Mom and Dad that I looked enough like Connie that Chuck would recognize me.

Knightsbridge station was a 20-minute bus ride from my house. I hopped onto the number 19 bus and was soon on my way. When the bus neared the station, my thoughts turned to my mission. I asked myself, "What would Chuck be like? Would I find him?" I didn't know what he looked like. "Would he understand why my Mum and Dad sent me to meet him? Maybe he'd think Mum and Dad were

eager to get my sister off their hands!"

I reassured myself, knowing that Connie was selective when it came to choosing her friends.

When I stepped off the bus and looked around, my heart sank. Chuck had chosen a popular place to meet Connie. The station is on a corner. There were sailors, soldiers and airmen from many different countries there. Before I had a chance to think what to do next, I found myself walking toward a handsome young American Airman standing in front of the entrance.

My instincts had taken over, and as I approached him, he smiled. Before I could ask him if he was Chuck he said to me, "You must be Connie's sister."

"Yes, I'm her sister Pearl," I answered. I explained that Connie wasn't at home, and that Mum and Dad had asked me to invite him to our house. Chuck agreed, and we were soon boarding the number 19 bus back home.

The events that followed are told by Chuck.

**Chuck** I thought that a teenager extending an offer to meet the folks of my girlfriend, Connie, was a bit unusual. When I accepted the invitation I didn't know that it was the start of my road to matrimony, that taking the number 19 double-decked bus would become a steady route for me.

On our half mile walk to Pearl and Connie's family's home, we talked about our lives, relatives and interests. I noticed there were no Americans around. There were no cries from children saying, "Got any gum, chum?" I found out later this was because the London subway didn't come into this area. It became an obstacle course a few months later when the Yanks found their way into the vicinity.

As we approached Connie's home I became apprehensive. The feeling vanished when I met her parents, George and Kate Vollar. They were so pleasant and courteous to me, a young lad from America. I was introduced to two younger sisters, Daphne and June. An older brother George was in India. I didn't meet him until 1969, 25 years later. One other member of the household was an unforgettable elderly Colonel Blimp-type character called Grandad Langly.

The old gent wasn't a relative, but a person who came to dinner and never left. Upon presenting Gramps with an inexpensive King Edward cigar, I had a friend for life.

The welcome I received that day was that of a long-lost son returning home after years of absence.

Connie's Dad showed me the sites of bomb damage with related stories, dates and losses of friends and close calls. I noticed the Luftwaffe had deposited their calling cards on mostly non-military targets.

In between visiting the ruins, we did manage to "taste test" the different types of English beer at several local pubs.

When our systems reached the "high tide stage," we walked slowly home, chatting away as though we were old-time friends, a cherished memory never to be forgotten.

A home-cooked dinner was waiting for us, and inwardly I had the feeling of being a member of the family.

My girlfriend returned home. Plans were made for an evening at The Crown, a local Pub. It was filled with Old World charm and hospitality. Connie's friends and relatives joined us, and we shared an evening of sing-along accompanied on a vintage piano by my new "Mom."

As I observed the faces of everyone present, a look of happiness and good will glowed from them. There were no complaints of hard times, although their life style was austere and uncertain. This was the true spirit of a Londoner.

"Time, please." The loud request from the bartender meant that it was time to empty your glass and kindly leave.

When it was time to return to the airbase, Connie's folks reminded me that I was welcome to stay at their house whenever I wished.

I could never repay those good people for making my stay in Britain a pleasant one. They had opened their home and hearts to a total stranger, sharing whatever they had, asking nothing in return.

They stood by me even after I married their daughter. Taking her to another land. I've always considered myself "Mr. Lucky" to have had such great in-laws.

*Author's note: Connie left England before the end of the war, and was one of the first G.I. brides to arrive in America. Pearl joined Connie and Chuck in Milwaukee in 1949, married and raised a family. Connie, Chuck and Pearl (now a widow) are still in Milwaukee.*

[Ed. Note: What a wonderful story!]

## Letters to the Editor (Continued from Page 4)

**Joseph Backsman**, FM, 324th, writes from Cincinnati, OH, that he has placed a stone at his own expense in the St. Stephens Cemetery in Ft. Thomas, Kentucky to remember our friends who were lost in the War. The stone reads, "8th



Air Force. To those who served. 91st Bomb Gp. (H)." We are proud to add this memorial to the list of 91st Memorials. Backsman's generosity is much appreciated.

**Roy Fratz**, FM, 401st, formerly crew chief on Times-a-Wastin', tells us he has a photo of his Asst. Crew Chief, Boyd Picking and himself and also information about another pilot, John Ondrovic and air crew who flew many of their missions in Times-a-Wastin'. Fratz e-mail address is: ifratz@! Juno.com.

**Vicki Hibbert** has sent the following message to Jim Shepherd, Keeper of the 91st BG web site: "I am a 24 year old girl from Hertfordshire and live about 20 miles from Bassingbourn. I have been extremely interested in the second world war all of my life and have a particular interest in the air war; with a real affection for the 91st bomb group. This web site is fantastic as the human interest side of things completely fascinates me. I could listen to your stories all day! I have met several veterans, including Robert Morgan (Memphis Belle) and read many books and diaries, but I can't get enough. If anyone would like to share any stories with me please contact me as I would really appreciate it. Thanks, Vicki." <hibbert@comms-dealer.com>

**Ben Fourmy**, FM, 323rd, who was the subject of an article in the October 1999 issue of the RI, telling his experiences of being shot down on 6 Mar '44 and spending the duration in the state of a POW, responded to this Editor's remarks about a friend who had total recall of events as a POW. "I, like your friend, have a very good memory and can tell you just about everything that happened that day, and it does not go away. It will stay with us until they close the lid on the casket at our funeral, so sad but so true.

"The RI article is now all over the V.A. Medical Center in New Orleans. Any time anything happens to me, or about me, they all want to see it. I was possibly the first POW volunteer that was able to last at the medical center and they respect that." He corrects some information about his crew composition as reported in the MACR.

**Willard Wolf**, LM, and his wife, Florence, write about their recent "Back to Bassingbourn" tour led by Paul Chryst: "This was our third trip with the group and we are still in awe of the emotion involved in visiting [all the points of interest]. We wish all 91sters could experience the thrill of a 'Back to Bassingbourn' trip. Thanks to Paul for his

leadership, good humor and knowledge shared on the trip."

**Jack Gibson**, FM, 322nd, sent an article from the Asheville Citizen-Times telling about 91ster Bob Morgan's accepting an invitation from the 116th Bomb Wing, Georgia Air National Guard, to take an orientation ride in a B-1B bomber. It further reported that he had made a similar flight in the B-52 at Barksdale AFB where he pinned on his pilot wings and Lieutenant bars on Dec. 12, 1941, just five days after Pearl Harbor. The article went on to describe Col. Morgan's career flying B-29s out of Saipan as Commander of the 869th Squadron.

**Steve Pullen**, Grandson of John C. Pullen seeks information about his grandfather who was in the 323rd Sq. His e-mail address is <pullen\_steve@imp-usa.com>

**Roger Freeman**, noted author, enjoyed the October issue of the RI, and asks if there is a record of how many DSCs, the second highest award for bravery, were awarded to members of the 91st BG. "Some years ago, I tried to obtain a complete listing of all 220 8th AF DSCs but was told no such listing was ever compiled." His e-mail address is <RAFMAYBARN@aol.com>

**Freeman Municipal Airport**, Seymour, IN, Ted Jordan, Airport Manager, announces they are hosting a Freeman Army Air Field Reunion, April 28-30, 2000. For further information, contact Jordan, or Jane Henley, Secretary, at: Freeman Municipal Airport, P. O. Box 702, Seymour, IN 47274, Phone: 812-522-2031, FAX: 812-523-3925.

**Walter M. Pickard**, LM, 323rd, Upon reading the October "expanded" issue of the RI, wrote: "Hope you can continue with the longer version. I'm still amazed at the stories some of our people tell of their awful experiences. Like you, I had my share of gut-wrenchers, but many had it worse." Pickard also acknowledged that "Champagne Girl" in the article titled "Über Obersaxon," (RI Jan 1999), was hit from below rather than from above as pointed out by Sgt. McBey.

**John R. Parsons**, LM, 401st, in addition to the 91st, has an Associate membership in the 351st and travels with them to their reunions. He sent samples of lists that organization prints of the 351st Memorials and Past Reunions by date and location. [Ed. Note: This is something to work on for future "expanded" issues of the RI.]

Parsons also is probably the world's most traveled person. Under the heading, "The Big Bag," he says "I've had champagne and caviar at the North Cape, climbed the Leaning Tower of Pisa (when you still could), walked the Great Wall of China, been inside a Pyramid in Egypt and the Rock of Gibraltar, walked the streets of Pompeii, climbed Mt. Etna in Sicily, ridden the Australian transcontinental railway, and watched the sunset change colors on the World's largest monolith, Ayers Rock.

I've ridden the Orient Express, had dinner at the top of the Eiffel Tower, walked the Apian Way and followed the steps of Christ on the Via Dolorosa. I've seen the Holy Grail in Valencia, Spain, visited the room where Christ had the Last Supper in Jerusalem, climbed the Acropolis and ridden the train under the English Channel.

In 1998 he toured cities in Germany including Frankfurt, Cologne, Lübeck, Hamburg, Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Weimar, Buchenwald, Würzburg, Munich, oberammergau and Linderhof Castle, and crammed in on the last day, Freiburg, Black Forest, Triberg and Heidelberg.

If that wasn't enough, he's been to Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Russia and St. Petersburg. He's even been to Noo Yawk City! and eaten at Lutece.

**Letters to the Editor** Continued on Page 7.....



## Letters to the Editor..... (Continued from Page 6)

**Arnold C. Hughes**, FM, 401st, sends new address: 4415 W36½ St., St. Louis Pk MN 55416.

**Mrs. Barbara Duggan**, widow of Les Duggan, former 322nd member, resides in St. Charles, Missouri, (MO) and not Maryland (MD).

**Kevin M. Pearson**, Secretary, St. Louis Wing, Eighth Air Force Historical Society, would like to hear from anyone who was on a mission on 16 Aug 44 to Halle, Germany. He reports that six B-17s of the 324th Sq. were shot down that day. He would like to hear from anyone who was on that mission and has any recollection of that day. He has identified two of the aircraft as "Lassie Come Home", 231673 and "Boston Bombshell," 239996. Pearson's address is 2514 W Woodland, St. Joseph, MO, 64506, Phone: 816-232-4461 or 800-748-7856. His e-mail address is <kpearson@saintjoseph.com>

**Otto & Gladys Meikus**, LM, 324th, one of our few members who stayed in England after the War, sent a note that "Lots of guys who found the Pub at Bassingbourn a friendly watering hole might be interested in a clipping from the local newspaper: 'Last Pint Looming. The owners of a village pub have decided to call it a day after 18 years of pulling pints. Geoffrey and Yvonne Hill and Alan and Diane Williamson are leaving The Pear Tree in Bassingbourn, famed as the watering hole of the Memphis Belle American aircrew who were stationed at Bassingbourn during the Second World War.'"

**David A. Bramble**, LM, 323rd, was honored by lifelong friend, Charles "Speedy" Joiner, with a gift of a scale model of the B-17F, 229739, the "Village Flirt," that is a replica with the capability of remote controlled flight of



L-R Dave Bramble, Pilot of the Village Flirt, Charles "Speedy" Johnson, model builder and Louis Anthony, all lifelong friends.

the original airplane on which Bramble served as Captain for 25 missions during WWII. "When Dave saw her," (the nose art), Joiner said softly, "it kind of brought tears in his eyes. You don't easily forget those experiences."

**Joe and Jenny Harlick**, LM 324th, former 91st Photographer send Year-end greetings. "We have received many thank you's from people we have supplied pictures of B-17s that their relatives flew in. It's been very gratifying to help History. ....Can you believe we made it to the 21st Century?"

**Clyde Burdick**, FM, 322nd, tells us that the B-17 that crashed near the village of Opijnen, Netherlands, on 30 Jul 43, was not "Yankee Dandy" as previously published in the RI, but was in fact, "Man-O-War," OR-V, 124399. The airmen who are interred in a small burial plot at Opijnen, and which are honored every year by the American Women's Club of Amsterdam are the crewmen of "Man-O-War." He has verified this with the MACRs for both aircraft that were shot down over the Netherlands on the same date.

**Louis A. "Tony" Montalvo**, Chairman of the 91st BGMA Memorials Committee, sent his apologies for having been ill for several months requiring surgery. To be sure, his apologies were hardly needed and we are happy that he has "returned to duty." He mentions two Memorial projects that are under consideration: expansion of the 91st Memorial at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, and a plaque for the 441st Sub Depot.

**Robert F. Brubaker**, FM, 324th, received his long overdue decorations in a ceremony at Travis Air Force Base, during the National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 17



Sept. 1999, including the Purple Heart and Oak Leaf Cluster, POW Medal, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Presidential Unit Citation, American Campaign Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two battle stars, World War II Victory Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. Brubaker is shown on the left along with Brig. Gen. Steven A. Roser, 60th Air Mobility Wing Commander.

**Asay B. Johnson**, LM 324th, is better known as "Ace" and also as Secretary/Treasurer of the 91st BGMA. Ace not only sends Letters to the Editor but also many many e-mail messages. Recently, however, he kindly sent this Editor an Advanced copy of his book, "From Commission to Captivity." He has been known for some time as an efficient and dedicated person carrying out his duties in an orderly manner. In his book, Ace shows a new dimension as a skilled author. Here are some brief excerpts.

"Watching the 'huge' bombers assemble was a sight I observed with awe and extreme patriotism. To be part of this was a dream fulfilled."

"The trip to the target was disappointingly uneventful except for a flurry of flak bursts as we entered Germany..... Little attention was paid to the bursts except to log the time and place. I couldn't log my disappointment, but I felt if that was what anti-aircraft fire was all about, it certainly wasn't very exciting."

"As we turned on the IP the flak became heavy and accurate and I witnessed my first B-17 hit and fall from formation in an uncontrolled slow spin. Then another plane blew up. Almost simultaneously the flak was bursting dangerously close enough to rock the plane violently! All of a sudden my illusions of invincibility were challenged and I reached a most profound conclusion. Those 'bastards' shooting those guns were trying to shoot my plane down and kill me!"

**Dave Lomasney**, AL, writes on November 11, 1999, "Thanks to all the veterans who gave so much. Thank you to everyone that helps to keep the memories and the spirit alive."

"I'll be making Veterans Day this afternoon with a visit to my father's grave (James M. 'Mack' Lomasney, 401st). I'll spend some time telling my children about their Grandpa and about the War. We'll make sure that his marker is well groomed and that his flag is flying proudly."

"We will remember."

[Editor's Note: I extend my good wishes to all as we enter the year 2,000. It has been a pleasure to serve as your Editor. My wife Randi and I hope to see you in Galveston.]

## Folded Wings

Please send obituary notices to:

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

● **Gilbert "Gil" Crotte**, LM, 323rd, Citrus Heights, CA, January 26, 1999. Reported by his wife.

● **Peter M. Delo**, FM, 323rd, Havana, FL, Oct. 6, 1999, Age 75, of congestive heart failure. He had the dubious distinction of having ditched twice in his career, once in the English Channel returning from a mission in a B-17 in 1942, and again as pilot of an Air National Guard airplane in 1950. He received the Purple Heart, European Theater Medal and the Air Medal. Married in 1952 to Agnes Kemp, he worked as an acoustical engineer for Johns-Manville Corporation. In addition to his wife, he is survived by a daughter, three sons, a sister and six grandchildren.

● **Fred Hindman**, FM, 324th, Fort Smith, AR. Limited information provided by Everett Montgomery, FM, 324th.

● **Jack Levine**, FM 324th, Haddam, CT, Feb. 18, 1999. He is survived by his wife, Connie, who is now living with her brother, Andrew Bertiglia, in Durham, CT.

● **Jack R. Marlowe**, FM, 324th, Asheville, NC, believed to have died in September 1999. Jack was Ball Turret Gunner on Mike Banta's crew.

beginning shortly after D-Day and ending in October 1944. He was awarded the DFC, Air Medal with 3 OLCs, and 4 Battle Stars for the ETO Medal. AJ said, "John showed great flying skill." He is survived by his wife, Naomi, son David, daughter Anne, six grandchildren, sister Adeline, and brother James. [See request of Grandson Steve Pullen for information about his grandfather in "Letters" section of this issue.]

● **Thomas G. Smith**, 401st, Romeo, MI, Sept. 26, 1999, Age 86. The following article appeared in the Detroit Free Press and is paraphrased in part: "Staff Sergeant Smith enlisted June 4, 1942 in the Army Air Force and was assigned to the 401 Sq., 91st Bomb Group as an Armorer Gunner. He flew two combat missions in a B-17 over enemy territory and was shot down over Holland on his second mission, captured February 1944 and held Prisoner of War in Germany for fifteen months before he made his escape in April 1945." Submitted by Addison Bartush, LM, 324th."

● **George C. Stuts**, FM, 323rd, Bristol, VA, Sept. 13, 1999, Age 75. George was Radio Operator on the crew of Willis "Bill" Schilly who submitted this report. Stuts was a graduate of Ohio State University and an administrator at Seahurst Medical Center in Seattle, WA.. He was a member and Deacon of the Central Presbyterian Church of Bristol. He is survived by his wife, Brenda, three sons, a daughter, a sister, five grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

● **Aldo Veirengo**, FM, 323rd, Gilroy, CA, October 12, 1999. Submitted by Mrs. Aldo Veirengo.

● **Louis E. "Joe" Wheeler**, FM, HQ., Birmingham, AL, October 26, 1999, following an extended illness. His son, Harry Wheeler writes, that "he [Joe] is survived by his wife, Marian, my sister, myself, our spouses and four grandchildren. My father was never able to make one of the "Back

91st BG Memorial Assn.

590 Aloha Dr.

Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403

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● **Clifford E. Morton, Sr.**, LM, 323rd, Palm Coast, FL, Oct. 9, 1999, Age 81. He had a heart attack but did not survive subsequent Angioplasty surgery. He moved from Alexandria, VA after retiring from the Department of Defense. He served in the 91st as a Ball Turret Gunner. Reported by his step-son, Dan Frailey, "He was a fine Christian man who enjoyed life in general and particularly traveling and talking about his grandchildren and great grandchildren. He looked forward to getting the *Ragged Irregular* and keeping up with his old comrades. He will be missed."

● **John C. Pullen**, LM, 323rd, Jennison, MI, Oct. 14, 1999, Age 78. Armondo ("AJ") Sinibaldi, LM, 323rd, served as Navigator on Pullen's crew for 17 missions until he became a lead pilot. AJ further reports that he attained the rank of Captain and completed 35 missions between a period

Folded Wings continued top of next column.....

to Basingbourn" tours, but my wife and I did manage a very brief visit to Royston in 1982. For me, that visit somehow made everything more real. I know this, the people of this earth owe the men of the 91st Bombardment Group a debt we will never be able to repay except to say, "Thank you!"

● **Robert A. Wood**, FM, 401st, Denver, CO, July 1999, Age 85. Wood was the original Top Turret Gunner of Major John D. Davis' crew. A serious flak wound incurred on his 19th mission during the 24 Mar '44 Schweinfurt raid returned him to the States for rehabilitation. He received the Air Medal with Clusters and a Purple Heart.

He is survived by Thelma, his wife of 54 years, son, Paul, brother William, three sisters and three grandchildren. His remains were interred with full military honors in the Fort Logan National Cemetery. "Every man on his crew was better off knowing and flying with Robert A. Wood"—Davis.