

# The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQUADRON



323rd SQUADRON



Supporting Units



324th SQUADRON



401st SQUADRON

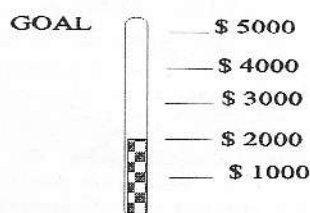
Vol 34 No. 3

91<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H)

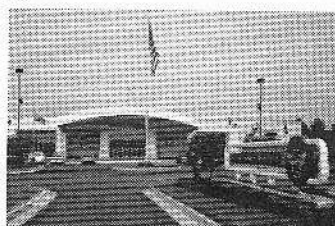
July 2001

## 91<sup>st</sup> Banner Fund

The Fund Drive for raising \$5,000 to donate a banner to honor the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group at the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum in Savannah has raised to date approximately \$2,000 or 40 percent of the goal.



91<sup>st</sup> BANNER FUND



Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum

Contributions have been coming in slowly from both Full members and Associates in amounts ranging from \$25 to several hundred dollars. As of this writing, the fund needs additional support to bring this worthy objective into fruition.

Of all the Bomb Groups that made up the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force in World War II, certainly the 91<sup>st</sup> is the foremost as one of the original "four horsemen" with the 303<sup>rd</sup>, 305<sup>th</sup> and the 306<sup>th</sup> Groups.

It has a proud heritage of achievement with two Distinguished Unit Citations, a record of the most enemy aircraft claims: 785 Destroyed, Probables and Damaged, having flown 9,591 Sorties between November 7, 1942 and April 25, 1945. In this time period, the 91<sup>st</sup> dropped 22,143.3 tons of bombs on enemy targets. It was the first Group to attack the industrial heart of Germany, the Ruhr Valley, on March 3, 1943, the first Group to reach 300 missions completed, the Group that led the Schweinfurt mission on August 17, 1943. It is the Group that was parent to such famous B-17s as the Memphis Belle, and "909," a replica of the original airplane on which this Editor had the privilege of serving as a Co-Pilot on his crew's twenty-fifth mission: Berlin, Mar. 9, 1944.

Unfortunately the 91st Group suffered the most B-17s lost from any Group in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force: 197.

It is right that the 91<sup>st</sup> should be represented in the Great Hall of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum in Savannah. Those of you who agree that we should perpetuate the memory of this outstanding Group, are asked to make your contributions and send them to Asay B. Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA (Address is on Page 2, herein.)

## Knaben - Not the First Mission to Norway

The April issue of the RI described the November 16, 1943 mission to Knaben, Norway, as the "only time during WWII that the 91<sup>st</sup> was scheduled to bomb a target in Norway." Very quickly, Charles J. Leiman, FM 324<sup>th</sup>, responded in a cordial letter correcting the above premise. The first and only other mission to Norway was flown on July 24, 1943—three and a half months earlier—to a target in Heroya, Norway. Leiman, who has an earned PhD, and lives in Towson, MD, is quoted as follows:

"The mission was to bomb a "heavy water plant" which raised some questions, as no one knew just what was involved. It was a long mission of eight and a half hours.

"Because it was billed as a low level mission, the gunners on the crew of 'Our Gang' decided to take along two cocker spaniels. These dogs were purchased by the Pilot, James Smith, and by Jacob Levine, the Engineer-Gunner. The dogs were small enough at the time to sleep in a flying boot. They were obtained when we were training at the Casper, Wyoming, Air Base. By the time we reached Great Britain via the southern route, they were fully grown. It was against British law to import any animal without a long period of quarantine. The crew used two wooden ammo cases into which they bored holes and hooked the boxes up to the oxygen system. The dogs rode the whole mission in these boxes.

"The flight was uneventful. Heavy cloud cover made it difficult to find the target, but we did drop our bombs on a large white factory type building and returned home. Several German fighters were spotted.

"The B-17 returned intact except for the dogs. When they were released from their confined cages, they were soaking wet and half dead from the body heat generated in their enclosed space. Fortunately, they survived and eventually were brought back to the United States.

"Crew Members of 'Our Gang' included James Smith, Pilot; Fred N. Dibble, Co-Pilot; Anton O. Ungstad, Navigator; Arthur L. Smith, Radio; Edward L. Lawler, Tail Gunner; Jacob Levine, Top Turret gunner; Marion J. Spagnolo, Ball Turret; John R. Carlson, Waist Gunner; and Charles J. Leiman, Bombardier. We completed our twenty-five missions just weeks after the 'Memphis Belle' crew. The entire crew returned to the States for training in the B-29, except Fred Dibble who elected to remain in England and serve in Operations."

In a second letter, Dr. Leiman points out that there are photos of the crew in the book, "First of the Many" by Tex McCrary and David Scherman, Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1944. There is a picture of the two dogs in a jeep with James Smith and Haley Aycock on Page 67. The two dogs were also featured in an issue of the Stars and Stripes. In the same book there is also a picture of the bomb impact at Heroya. He concludes, "I have been very fortunate in my marriage, career and family. The war years seem far away."

## The President's Corner

On the first weekend in October there will be a Rally Round at the Air Museum in Chino, California. The occasion for this meeting will be the gift of a painting from the association to the Museum. A separate mailing will be made within the next several weeks giving details about the meeting. We apologize for the short lead time but, as always with ad hoc assemblies, this is par for the course. We turned down the choice of a still earlier meeting because notification of our membership would have allowed even less time than is the case with this date. The painting was done by Don Wellings who flew his missions with the 323<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. Don, a very fine artist, has done other art work for the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. No costs have been incurred by our treasury. These were paid for my contributions from a small group of members. The arrangements with the Chino Air Museum were made by Jim Shepherd. Jim and his wife Suzi are associate members of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. We are hoping that a sizable number of our members will be able to come to the ceremony. Jim runs our web site which may be accessed at [www.91stbombgroup.com](http://www.91stbombgroup.com).

Bob Friedman.....

## 91ST BGMA OFFICERS 2001-2002

### PRESIDENT

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## Changes of Address

The following changes have been reported after release of the 2001 Directory:

Charles Davis 6 Alexander St, Alexandria VA 22314-3869  
Harry Friedman 950 Audupon Dr. Memphis, TN 38117  
Lyle Jones Lake Towers Apt, 414 S Morgan Shelby IL 62565  
Al Larsen 585 Jenny's Ln Fernley NY 89408  
Rudy B Lehmann Rt 4 Box 582 Buna TX 77612  
Mary P Morton\* 431 Orange Dr Apt 124 Altamonte Springs FL 32701  
G. William Potter 107½ E 32<sup>nd</sup> St., Kearney, NE 68847-3062  
Nelson Richardson 1255 Pasadena NW North Canton OH 44720  
William A. Tegler 8264 SW 106<sup>th</sup> Pl, Ocala, FL 32676  
John Wallin 96 Upper Sheep Pasture Rd E Setauket NY 11733

\* Mrs. Morton's name was unintentionally misspelled in the April 2001 issue. An apology was sent promptly upon learning of it. Graciously, Mrs Morton informed us in her letter, "Thank you so much for your kind note of apology. Your prompt response was greatly appreciated. Clifford [her late husband] would really have enjoyed the humor. He and I both lost our mates and were married in 1990 when we were both in our seventies-and had nine and a half years together.

"He and his late wife lived in Alexandria, VA, and both were Federal Employees. He used to tell a humorous story about when he introduced himself to someone. He would say, 'My name is Clifford Morton; as in Morton Salt.' From that time on they were known as 'Mr. and Mrs. Salt'."

## Missing Persons

The following persons' copies of the *Ragged Irregular* were returned with no forwarding address. Anyone who knows the current address or status of the individuals listed below are also asked to inform Sec'y/Treas. Asay B. Johnson address given above.:

Katherine Sykes, AM, 226 Leasure Cir., Port Orange, FL 30127-6704  
John Paget, LM 401\* 10168 Timberlane Dr., Grass Valley, CA 96949

## Current Membership - 1,045

Life Members 311, Associate Life Members 97, Full Members 311, Associate Members 83, PR\* Members 23.

\*PR=Public Relations.

## Report of the Secretary Treasurer

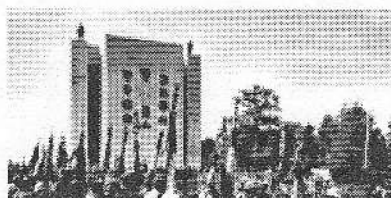
Profit & Loss Statement  
January through December 2000\*

Jan - Dec '00

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Membership Dues	8,712.75
Memorial Fund	1,418.50
Miscellaneous Income	213.60
PX Sales	5,301.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>15,645.85</b>
Expenses	
2000 Bulletin	3,849.93
Contract Labor	250.00
Dues and Subscriptions	263.50
Galveston Reunion	0/00
Galveston Reunion Income	(684.10)
Memorial Fund Expenses	281.16
Office Supplies	
Web Page Software	247.71
Office Supplies - Other	153.13
<b>Total Office Expense</b>	<b>400.84</b>
Palm Springs Event	57.11
Postage and Delivery	796.93
Program Expense	87.50
PX Inventory	3,284.77
Ragged Irregular	5,390.18
Repairs	
Computer Repairs	125.00
<b>Total Repairs</b>	<b>125.00</b>
Telephone	340.06
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>14,441.98</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Expense</b>	<b>1,203.87</b>
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
Interest Income	783.73
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>783.73</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>783.73</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>1,987.60</b>



## We Are Remembered



American Military Cemetery at Ardennes, Belgium.

"Friday May 25, in the evening I picked up the floral wreath I had ordered at the floral shop. May 26, a beautiful sunny day, I depart at my home at approx. 8 am for a 1.5 hour drive to the [American Cemetery at] Ardennes. Due to circumstances, my wife Inge, had to work and couldn't get a day off. As always, Liège is a center where all Belgian roads come together heading to Germany, Brussels, Luxembourg, France or the Ardennes. I always have to look to the road signs very carefully. (I wouldn't have made a good Navigator.)

"I arrived at time and took some time to deliver the floral wreath and take some pictures of the area. I also went to the grave of Bert Stiles [91<sup>st</sup> Pilot and author of *Serenade to the Big Bird*.]

"The ceremony started at 10:00 am, the opening words were spoken by Mr. James G. Gegg, President, American Overseas, Memorial Day Association, Belgium. He welcomed the people who came to the ceremony and it was a lot. He welcomed especially some veterans and relatives of the buried men, there was a family, 'Hanson' that donated to the Superintendent of the cemetery a photo of where the fallen member of the family was buried in this cemetery. They also gave him a plaque with the inscription, 'In appreciation for what you do for our family member.' With it was a (triangle) folded American flag the family had received when they heard about the death of their son so many years ago.

"On schedule there was a fly-by of four F-16 fighter planes that came from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

"In French, then, spoke the Priest and the Mayor of Neuville-en Condroz.

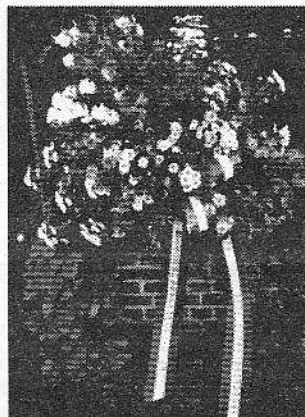
"Then there was a tribute by Lieutenant General David S. Weisman, United States Army, U.S. Military Representative, NATO Military Committee. In his speech he honored all the buried soldiers for what they did and said, 'AMERICA WILL NEVER FORGET THEM.'

"Next was Mr. Michael McKinley, Embassy of the United States. Those young and brave men buried here came overseas and never returned. They came from all over the U. S., black and white, Latin and Jewish, they are all buried here like friends, Navy, Air Force and Infantry, enlisted men next to officers.

"The laying of the wreaths took place and I proudly represented the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. There were over 50 wreaths. They were so beautiful. They came from everywhere. Belgian Veterans Associations, Boy Scouts of America, American

**Ardennes.** As Memorial Day passed in the United States and abroad, traditional ceremonies took place honoring the fallen airmen of the 91<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H).

From Belgium, we hear from Eric Dominicus and his wife, Inge.



91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Wreath

Womens Club Brussels, etc.....

"The Belgian Army (4<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion) salvaged a few shots out of their rifles. Then came the taps and raising of the flags, a very emotional moment. Afterwards came a few words of a Jewish prayer and an American Chaplain.

"At about 11:15 am, the ceremony was over. I took some time to go to the wreaths and took some photos, then went inside the monument to look at the different battlemaps on the walls.

It was a great honor for us to serve as representatives for the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA.

Eric and Inge Dominicus



Closing Ceremony - Ardennes

**Maddingley, UK.** Otto Meikus, former member of the 91<sup>st</sup> and resident in the UK, was unable to make the traditional laying of the wreath on behalf of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA at the American Military Cemetery at Maddingley, near Cambridge, due to reasons of health.

Arrangements had been made for Vince Hemmings to perform this service as he has in the past. Hemmings reports that actually there was a wreath laid on our behalf. In compliance with a directive issued by the U. S. Government the wreath was laid by an American child and a British child, each 12 years old, on an unknown grave.

## Opijnen, The Netherlands.

Ron Putz reports on the services conducted at this small burial plot of eight airmen of the crew of "Yankee Dandy" that crashed returning from a mission to Kassel on July 30, 1943. This has been an annual event.

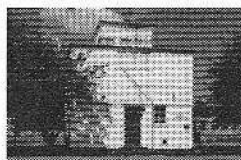
After the ceremony, Lucy Correll of the American Women's Club of Amsterdam asked Eric Dominicus who was in attendance to present Certificates of Appreciation sent by John Howland and signed by the Secretary of Defense for services rendered on behalf of the United States of America. [Above photo reproduced from previous issue of the *Ragged Irregular*. Current photos had not been received in time for this issue.]



L-R M. den Besten, D. de Vries, Margie Rikert, Nancy Koster-Tschirhart, Lucy Correll, Anne Locke, Anoushka, Granddaughter of Mr. de Koeke, H. de Koeke

## Word from the Tower

**Bassingbourn**—Steve Pena, Curator, reports that the control tower top story has been removed and replaced. This work will restore the outward look of the place to how it appeared during the 91<sup>st</sup>'s tenure. Unfortunately, the wood/glazed top section, added in the early 1950s, has been in a parlous state for sometime so, for reasons of safety, it was decided to remove it completely.



Bassingbourn Tower

## The Ring

(Cont. from P.10, April 2001 issue of the *Ragged Irregular*. Mike Banta, "Ring Master" of the ring of 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA members with e-mail addresses, was responding to a request by Craig Tufty for information from anyone who knew his father, Iver Tufty, pilot of a B-17 that was shot down on a mission and was killed. Mike's story and those of others along with Craig's response are continued here.)

"..... Your Dad was flying the B-17 he had named after your mother, Lorraine.

17 March 1945, your Dad along with Lt. Col. Smith were squadron lead on a mission to the synthetic oil plant at Bohlen, this time in a brand new No Name B-17. I flew on his left wing this day again in Skunkface III.

On 21 March 1945, he again lead the 324<sup>th</sup> on a mission we both flew to Rheine/Salzbergen airfield which was being used as a base for Germany's new ME 262 jet fighters. This time I and my crew were leading the low element in my assigned B-17, "Yankee Gal." Bombing was visual and we plastered the target. I believe this was your Dad's last mission as I don't remember seeing him at any further briefings.

You asked about "Shirley Jean." This B-17 was assigned to Lt. Lindel while I was flying my checkout missions and I flew copilot for him on two checkout missions in Shirley Jean. She survived the war, completing more than 98 missions and met the salvager's torch at Kingman, Arizona.

"Yankee Belle" was lost over Berlin 2 February 1945 when flak bursts immediately after bombs away took out the whole lead element. The lead ship received a direct hit and was blown in half where the trailing edge of the wing meets the fuselage. I was watching the lead ship intently when it was hit and my crew were leading the low (left) element and flying off of the lead ship. "Yankee Belle", flying as left wingman for the lead ship, received major flak damage and was also lost. "Rhapsody in Red", flying on the right wing of the lead ship received major damage and fell out of formation but made it back to Bassingbourn.

"Yankee Gal" was assigned as my crew's B-17 until I was wounded in the right hand by flak. When I was returned to flying status, I was assigned a brand new B-17 which had flown only one mission. It was #43-38936, No Name DF-Z, the B-17 that your Dad had crash landed in France and which had been declared salvage and a hangar queen. To read the sorry story of 936, click the hyperlink:

<AHREF="http://www.91stbombgroup.com/wherefrom.html">Click here, Where did you come from? 91st Stories</A> Yankee Gal survived the war having flown more than 71 missions and met the salvager's torch at Kingman Arizona.

"You will likely hear from other 91sters who flew with your Dad."

Banta addressing other recipients of this e-mail response: "91sters, if you have further information for Craig, contact him directly at <craig@ctuffy.com> with a copy to me for my files. /Signed/ "Mike Banta, 91<sup>st</sup> Ring"

Roger Armstrong, LM 401<sup>st</sup>, upon receipt of a copy of the above response, volunteered the following additional information addressed to Craig Tufty:

"I knew your father when I lived in Sioux Falls, SD - your grandfather and your Dad ran Hutton-Tufty Dodge Motors. Joe Foss was chosen to organize, after WWII, the S. Dakota Air National Guard. Your Dad and I were in the

Squadron. Your Dad flew a P51. He and I found we had both been at Bassingbourn. We flew many of the same missions over Germany. I remember 1 mission when your father's plane was hit and he pressed the 'Prepare to bail out' bell and 2 of his crew jumped - he never pressed the bailout bell because the problem was corrected and he made a safe landing. It was a situation where it was right for him to press the 'prepare to bail out' and not unusual for them to have jumped. I moved away and later found he had moved to Sioux City. (My wife wants to know if you went to Central High School). I was sitting with Joe Foss and asked about your father and he told me he passed away. Iver and I were charter members of the Air Guard. Best wishes, Roger Armstrong." [Ed. Note: See "USA The Hard Way, an Autobiography by a B-17 Crew Member" by Roger Armstrong, Quail House Publishing Company, Second Edition, 1995.]

Melvin Dart, LM 322<sup>nd</sup>, added the following: "Hello Craig, I have a bit of information on your father that might be interesting.

"When the war was over in Europe the 91<sup>st</sup> was ordered back to the USA with the intent to prepare to go to the Pacific. As some crews had recently arrived and had very few missions and some were closer to completing their 35 missions, it was decided to send crews home in reverse order. That way, the newer crews would be sent to the Pacific first while the older crews could wait before ordered into combat again.

"Our crew was the 'oldest' crew in the 322<sup>nd</sup> squadron. I, as Navigator, had just completed my 35<sup>th</sup> mission while the remainder of the crew had 33 or 34 missions. (See the story on the web page by Lowell Getz, 'The Last Mission of the 91st-25Apr 1945.') Our plane was 'The Biggest Bird,' Lt. Bob Marlow Pilot. It seems like it took a couple of weeks to ship out all of the planes. A few departed every day, with each plane carrying an additional 10 'passengers' in addition to the crews. As the oldest crew we were the last to depart and with it was the remainder of our squadron. Our passengers consisted of our Squadron Commander, Operations Officer (Capt. Iver O. Tufty), Squadron Navigator, Squadron Bombardier, and other squadron headquarters personnel plus our crew chief. The Operations Order no. 16 dated 30 May 1945 was the last operations order that your father issued and I assume it was his last 91<sup>st</sup> flight. We departed 4 Jun, and with stopovers in Wales, Iceland, Labrador, arrived in Massachusetts on 7 June 45."

In response to the above, Craig Tufty sent the following message:

"Thank you so much for your e-mail. I have received other responses that obviously came as a result of your contribution to the Ring.

I am collecting this information not only for myself but for my two sons as well. My father died when they were very young and I felt it was important that they knew what he and others like him did for this country.

As I get older I have come to realize what a defining moment WWII was. Not only for the generation who fought it but also for the generation that followed. We owe so much to you.

Thank You,  
Craig Tufty.





## Chino California Rally-Round

October 6, 2001

A Rally-Round has been scheduled to be held at the Planes of Fame Air Museum, Chino, CA, Oct. 6, 2001. This dates coincides with the Annual Air Show.

The main event for the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA will be the installation of a plaque and presentation to the Museum of a painting commissioned by the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. Association President, Bob Friedman is expected to be in attendance and encourages all members who can to participate in this event. Let's make a good showing.

Jim and Suzy Shepherd, keepers of the 91<sup>st</sup> bomb Group web site, have informed us that the Museum has a B-17 that is scheduled to be rebuilt along with a new hangar to be built for the airplane. The airplane has a large Triangle "A" on the tail and the name is "Picadilly Lilly." It was used in the Television series, "12 O'Clock High."

A special event will be the donation to the Air Museum of a painting by 91ster Don Wellings, whose paintings have been very popular with the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA members. The painting to be dedicated was commissioned by the 91st.

A flyer will be prepared and sent out to provide further details of the event, motels/hotels and a dinner on the same night.

Those of you not making the "Return to Bassingboourn," (see next column) are encouraged to attend.

Chino Airport is located east of Los Angeles and about ten miles south of Ontario. Set your GPS for N33-58.48 and W117-8.19. Approaches available for GPS, RNAV, ILS, VOR. (Sorry, no ADF or GEE.)

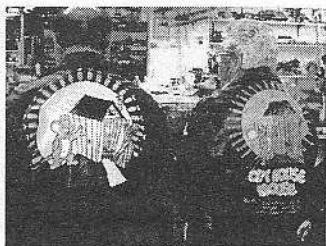
Oh yes. Jim and Suzy Shepherd ask, "Do we have any VOLUNTEERS?" Their email address is <augusto@earthlink.net> and street address: 20670 Via Augusto, Yorba Linda, CA 92887.

## "Out House Mouse" to Fly Again

George Odenwaller, LM, 323<sup>rd</sup>, doubles as a "Colonel" in the "91<sup>st</sup> B.G. Composite Radio Control Model Aircraft Group." Everyone is a "Colonel" except their Fearless Leader, Arthur Muglia, who is a "Commander." Our B-17G model should be ready for flight next year: a 12 foot wing span, to be "Outhouse Mouse #231636 OR N."



91<sup>st</sup> BG Modelers: Cdr. Arthur Muglia Standing Far Right, Col. Geo. Odenwaller Kneeling Far Right.



A2 Jackets with Outhouse Mouse nose art.

"We all thank the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA for permission to exist as an R/C Club."

## Paul Chryst Announces:

Back to Bassingbourn is a "GO!"  
October 2—11, 2001

Tour Manager Paul Chryst, announces that a confirming invitation from the Commander of the Barracks at Bassingbourn has been received. The tour group will visit their former duty Station 121 on Friday, October 5. Primary plans include a Morning Reception with the British Staff, a Prop Memorial Rededication Service, Guest Luncheon at the Officers Club, a Coach tour of the Base and Tower Museum with the East Anglian Aviation Society (EAAS) members.

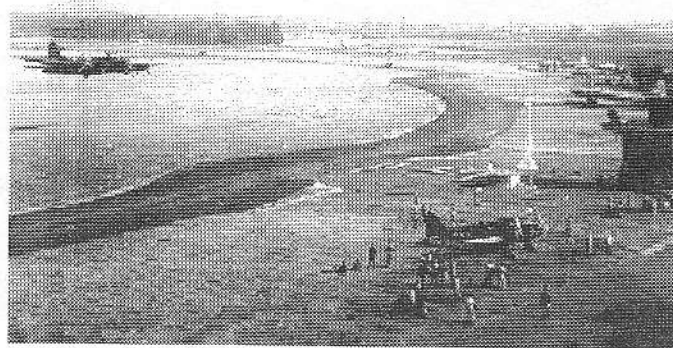
The Royston Town Council has also set up a "Welcome Back Day" on Sat., Oct. 6 for 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA participants. Plans include: a Town Hall Reception (with Toasting), Memorial Service at our Stone Plinth in Priory Gardens, a buffet Lunch followed by a guided walk tour of the Caves, the old Norman Church, the Red Cross Museum, the Bull Hotel and a Pub stop.

This special 10-day tour will depart on Oct. 2 and return on Oct. 11, 2001. Sixty-five (65) persons, who expressed previous interest will receive complete travel brochures for Registration, with deposit, in July. For your detailed interest; contact Paul at 1494 No. Adams St., Pottstown, PA 19464 or phone 610-323-1877 or email: <paulnanncc@aol.com>.

This will be the twelfth Bassingbourn for the Chrysts. He conducted the first in June 1963 and the eleventh in May 1999.



Paul & Nancy Chryst at the Prop Memorial-Bassingbourn



The "Careful Virgin" Makes its 25-Mission Buzz Job.

Piloted by 323<sup>rd</sup> Squadron C.O., Maj. John Gladstone and his Operations Officer, Capt. "Ike" Gladstone, the Careful Virgin makes an exciting run at the Bassingbourn Tower. The pass was close enough that personnel, traditionally standing on the top deck of the Tower building were obliged to "duck" as it roared overhead.

Visible above the B-17 is the famous "Avenue of Trees" that extended from Wimpole Hall and provided a camouflaged dispersal area for the 323<sup>rd</sup> Sq.

## A Tale of Two Daughters

An incident that took place fifty-seven years ago brought two ladies of mature age together for the first time to share an emotional experience few if any have ever known.

It started with the following E-mail sent to the 91<sup>st</sup> BG E-mail Ring participants, dated Mar. 7, 2000 from Mike Banta ("Ringmaster"):

"Hi 92sters,

Bob Friedman, President of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA, sent me a copy of the following letter he received from Jean B. Rhinehart. She was born the day before her father was shot down over Wilhelmshaven, Germany, March 22, 1943. According to Ray Bowden's book, 'Plane Names and Fancy Noses,' the aircraft in which his 92<sup>nd</sup> BG crew were flying with the 91<sup>st</sup> Pilot Hascall McClellan was #42-29659, 'Liberty Bell,' which was flying its first mission.

Liberty Bell was lost in an unusual manner. An Me 109 flew over the squadron and dropped a 500 pound high explosive bomb which tore off the right wing of Liberty Bell and sent the new B-17, now a heap of junk, into the North Sea with all 10 crew men KIA. Ray does not list the crew other than the pilot since they were loaned to the 91<sup>st</sup> by the 92<sup>nd</sup> which was not yet operational.

With all the information in the hands of members of the Ring, I'll bet we will be able to supply Jean with the names of all the members of her Dad's crew. At present we have only Jean's phone number, but I've written Bob to see if her return address was on the envelope. If it turns up, I'll send it along to you. Signed//Mike Banta."

Following is Jean's letter dated Feb. 1, 2000:

"Dear Mr. Friedman:

"My name is Jean Brooks Rhinehart and I am the only child of Lt. Glenn U. Brooks, Jr. He was with the 92<sup>nd</sup> BG, but on OS (detached Service, Ed) to the 91<sup>st</sup>. On March 22, 1943, he was flying as copilot with Capt. H. C. McClellan. The plane went down on the North Sea following a raid over Wilhelmshaven, Germany. None of the crew survived.

"I was hoping you might be able to put me in touch with someone who may have known my Dad. I realize he was not a regular with the 91<sup>st</sup> which will make locating someone familiar with my Dad very difficult.

"Also. It is my greatest hope to be able to locate Capt. McClellan's daughter. I understand she was born in Dec. 1942. I was born April 22, 1943, one month after the plane was lost.

"If she is a member of your group, could you please give me her number? Since our Dad's died together, I feel we share a bond.

"Thank you very much for your time, consideration and whatever help you may give me. Fondly,

Jean B. Rhinehart"

Continued top of next column.....

Banta continues, "With this little bit of information, what odds would you give that we would ever find Lt. McClellan's daughter. Can you believe that she was found and that the two ladies have been put in touch with each other? Ring participant Lowell Getz, Guru at finding lost persons, succeeded in doing just that. He is truly remarkable. Read the story of how he did it below.

## FINDING CLARETTE MCCLELLAN HOOK

by Lowell Getz

On March 7, 2000, I received the above E-mail from the 91<sup>st</sup> BG E-mail Ring telling us the story of Jean Rhinehart's father, Glenn Brooks of the 92nd Bomb Group, and how he had been killed in action, along with all other crewmen on the plane, while flying with the 92st on March 22, 1943. Jeanne said that she was born a month after her Dad was killed. She had been told that the 91<sup>st</sup> pilot that day, Hascall McClellan, had a daughter who had been born three months before her Dad was killed. Jeanne indicated that for her entire life she had wanted to get in touch with McClellan's daughter. She did not know her name nor where Hascall McClellan was from.

From the 324<sup>th</sup> Casualty Report summary for 1943, I found that McClellan's wife, Harriet, lived in Pasadena, CA. A check of the Internet phone directory came up with no name for a Harriet McClellan, nor did a regular Internet web page search turn up anything. There was no listing for her on the Social Security Death Index. That will give when and where a person died and with that information can go to our newspaper library and get the local papers for that time frame to see the obituary, which often gives the names and towns of family.

Next I got the phone numbers of the high schools in Pasadena. Called Pasadena High and found that the high schools do not keep individual records. So I called the Pasadena city office that keeps school records. Within less than 15 seconds (!) The guy told me there had been a Clarette McClellan born December 1942 who had gone to school at Pasadena High. So, now we had a name to work with.

Then I called Pasadena High and got from the alumni records office the class officers of the classes of 1959, 60 and 61. First I called Judy Trout of class of 60. She said Clarette was in her class and she remembered her. Unfortunately, the class had lost track of Clarette. The 40<sup>th</sup> class reunion was coming up in November and they were still trying to locate all missing members. I called her now and then through the spring and early summer, but they still had not located her.

In the meantime, I got the addresses of the major papers in the Los Angeles and Pasadena area. Jeanne wrote a letter to the editors saying that she was trying to locate a Clarette or Harriet McClellan and why. But, no response.

In October, Judy told me that the class officers had employed a search agency to look for missing class members. The agency said that Clarette was married to a Charles R. Hook and gave an address in Scotts Valley, CA. However, there was no Internet listing for a phone number for a Charles Hook in Scotts Valley. Continued on Page 7.....



## A Tale of Two Daughters

Continued from page 6.....

.....two others elsewhere in CA were not the right one.) I called information and was told that the number was unlisted. So, she appeared to exist and somewhere in the region. Judy wrote a letter to Clarette at the address given her by the agency indicating we were trying to get in touch with her and why. Also, the reunion officers wrote her about the reunion. There was no response to either letter. Jeanne finally wrote her and that letter came back a few weeks later with "not at this address" handwritten on the envelop. We were afraid she had read the first letter and simply did not want to deal with the situation.

I located via the Internet a guy who lived two houses down from the address we had. When I called him to ask if a Charles Hook lived in that house, he understandably would not answer my question. However, after explaining he would not give out such information to a stranger on the phone and as he was hanging up, mumbled "I do not know anyone by that name." So I assumed they had moved sometime in the past.

From then on, I ran her name and her Mom's name through the Internet phone and web page search engines every month or so. On March 12 Clarette Hook appeared with a web page listing!! The web page would not open, but had a phone number and e-mail address. I called the number and asked for a Clarette Hook. The guy who answered said a Clarette Hook worked for them, but that she did not have vocal cords and could not talk on the phone. I told him who I was trying to locate and he asked her. She told him that she was Clarette McClellan and to e-mail or write (different address in Scotts Valley, CA) her. Unfortunately, the office (her son-in-law's insurance agency) e-mail system was down for several days.

I finally wrote her a letter telling her why I was trying to get in touch and asking permission to give her address to Jeanne. Also, I told her I had a lot of information about her Dad, including copies of loading lists he had signed off on as Operations Officer for the 324<sup>th</sup>, if she wanted such information.

A few days later I got a fax back telling me to give her address to Jeanne and that she would be interested in exchanging information with Jean. She said that she would be interested in getting her Dad's records from me. Also, she said that her Mom is still alive and living in Pasadena.

Jeanne has written Clarette, but she does not have a response as of yet. I assume they will soon be in touch. I do not know if and when they can meet personally. Jeanne lives in Pennsylvania.

I have done nearly a thousand searches for crewmen of families over the past six years. This one has been the most rewarding of all.

Lowell Getz.....



Lowell L. Getz

Lowell Getz, PhD, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois, Fellow American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Men and Women of Science, Who's Who in America, Former Officer in the U.S. Army Security Agency, and retired Colonel, U.S. Army Medical Service Corps, has been a major research contributor to the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA, well known to this Editor and especially to Mike Banta's E-Mail Ring. The tenacity and depth of his research have contributed much to the history of the 91<sup>st</sup>

## ATTN: Former Chow Hound Crew Members

Too late to make the April 2001 issue of the *Ragged Irregular* it was learned that a B-17 model maker by the name of Lance Burrell, was seeking information from any living former members of the crew of **Chow Hound**. The request came into the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group web site and was forwarded by Jim Shepherd, keeper of the 92<sup>nd</sup> web site, to Mike Banta, keeper of the 91<sup>st</sup> "Ring" for distribution to members of the 91<sup>st</sup> BG who have e-mail addresses. Burrell was making a model of Chow Hound and wanted to collect signatures of former crew members.

The action on this has probably been completed but the problem is presented here to illustrate the interaction of the 91<sup>st</sup> web site and the "91<sup>st</sup> Ring" of members with E-Mail addresses.

The request went out by E-mail with the traditional introduction: "We are participants in the 91<sup>st</sup> E-mail Ring (115) 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group veterans and 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA associate members) who answers questions for searches put in the guest book of our web site. We represent all periods of time that the 91<sup>st</sup> was active and so some of us can answer almost any question.

"Would you please advise us as to why you want this information? Reply by clicking 'Reply' on this E-mail or by sending your reply to: b17banta@aol.com."

Burrell answered, ".....The reason I am seeking surviving crew members is that I have been building models for 30 years. I have in the past couple of years been collecting signatures of the original flyers on models of their aircraft. Some of these are seeking out the person or crew of airplane represented by the model manufacturer. This is the case with the "Chow Hound." I built it about 30 years ago and it occurred to me that there might be survivors. There are others in which I have met the pilot, and with a picture can duplicate the markings, etc. In any event this is my intent. I have felt a great urgency in this project as I feel we are losing this chapter of our history at an alarming pace.

Thanks again, Lance Burrell."

Banta responded by submitting the names of the crew members who were flying Chow Hound when she was lost according to Ray Bowden's book, "Plane Names and Fancy Tales." He also provided the name of the only crew member and address who survived the otherwise fatal crash.

The next day, Burrell responded with a list of names of a different crew that had been associated with the model, "Green, Bentzel, Callaway, Carlson, Watford, Bailley, Muse, and Weddel."

Banta responds giving the name of the original crew that was assigned to the Chow Hound: Jerold Newquist. He was followed by Maynard Frey and his crew.

A couple of days later, Chris S. Johnson replies to Burrell with a copy to members of the Ring:

".....I have been studying the history of the Chow-hound [sic] for about a year and a half now. What Mike has told you is true, save one detail: there were no survivors when the Chow-hound was lost on 08 August 44.

"I tell these details with respect and to the memory of the Lt. Jack Thompson crew.

"The mission on 08 Aug 44 was in support of Montgomery's fiasco in St. Lo, and was supposed to be a 'milk run.'"

Continued on Page 8.....

## More Chow Hound

Continued from Page 7 .....

"Briefed altitude for the 322<sup>nd</sup> was 16,000 ft., but I have determined in reading reports and talking to veterans it was flown at 10,000 to 12,000 ft. The B-17s were being used like artillery at this low level to bomb German troop concentrations along the front lines south of Caen, which was not anything a B-17 was designed for, more a job for the mediums. As you can imagine, every German field gun was shooting up at the bombers, and at that altitude, even the smaller 37 mm and 57 mm guns were in range.

"The 1st Combat Wing was lead by the 381<sup>st</sup> BG followed by the 91<sup>st</sup>, and then the 398<sup>th</sup>. The 381<sup>st</sup> was flying at 10,000 feet. A lead pilot for the 381<sup>st</sup>, Everett Worrell,



who was flying 'Patches' (the postage stamp plane) on this mission, told me that he returned with over 300 holes in his aircraft. The 381<sup>st</sup> had to stand down the next day as they did not have enough serviceable aircraft to even form a squadron. It was no milk run in my opinion.

"In the target area, Chow Hound was hit by flak in the waist and cut in two. The tail drifted off and the tail gunner was observed to jump out of the tail, but it was later discovered that he fell out without his chute. The forward section went into a flat spin trapping the crew, while it dove straight into the ground near Bretteville, France. The top turret Gunner/Engineer in the lead ship, 'Hikin' for Home,' whose wing Chow Hound was flying off witnessed the whole thing and his brief description is in the squadron combat report.

"Chow Hound was on her 69<sup>th</sup> mission when lost"

The last contribution to this chain of E-mail messages came from Frank Bolen:

"Dear Mike [Banta], This may be of some interest re, the Chow Hound. I was bombardier on Jack Thompson's crew for the first 13 missions I flew. When the 14<sup>th</sup> came up to Caen, I was replaced by Lt. Sherrill, a Squadron Bombardier (I hadn't yet checked out as such.) When the other crews returned and gave me the news, I was devastated. I was then assigned to Lt. Dave McCarty's crew. After 7 days R&R, we began flying the 'Roxy's Special.' August 14 to Metz, France, then Ostheim, Germany, and next to Ludwigshafen, Germany, September 8<sup>th</sup> where we were shot down, then spent the rest of the war as a 'guest' of the third Reich in Stalag Luft I, Barth, Germany.

## Book Reports

**Dale Jensen, <b17fan@home.com>** Writes on behalf of Joe Springer, who is writing a book about the unit in which his uncle served in World War II. The book mentions his quest to learn the details of his uncle's death. He did find out what happened and it is a heart-warming story in itself. Joe worked under the guidance of Eric Hammel, a prolific writer of military histories. Mr Hammel wants Joe to write another book. The subject will be, "Big Week." "I've told Joe about you [Editor of the RI] and my membership in the 91<sup>st</sup> ring and he would like to interview you and other members of the organization if you would like to contribute to this project.

Like myself, Joe also works full-time at the 183<sup>rd</sup> ILANG. His Dad was an AAF ordnance man in the Pacific theater and later in Italy. Joe is very knowledgeable about the Civil War and of course the "Black Devil Brigade" but his first love is aviation. He will do an excellent job writing the story of Big Week.

**Roger Armstrong** informs us that his 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> editions of his book, "USA the Hard Way," contain photos of the Barth Airdrome—air and ground shots. "A man who was living in Barth at age 15 sent me drawings of all of the buildings at the base. He said the young people from the town were ordered by the Russians to tear each building down and number the parts. There was a spur line that came into the Airdrome. He now lives south of Cologne."

**Andy & Karen Driscoll** have published a book, "Not as Briefed—From the Doolittle Raid to a German Stalag." Hardbound printed by Washington State University Press. The story is about Ross Greening, a university graduate in fine arts, became a pilot, flew in the famous Doolittle Raid on Japan, and Flew another 26 missions in the North Africa theater until his luck ran out and he became a POW—eventually as senior officer of the North Compound, a camp filled with thousands of Allied airmen. His art work while a POW was published by Brown & Bigelow, "Not as Briefed." It is expected to be off the press in "mid-summer, 2001." Further information can be obtained from Karen Driscoll by e-mail: <plumwild@olypen.com> or by regular mail at: 4595 EAGLEMONT RD, Chimacum WA 98325, or call (360) 732-4426.

**Sam Halpert, FM 324<sup>th</sup>**, author of book, "A Real Good War," reviewed in the RI Jan. 1998, has established his own web site, <http://www.b17sam.com/index.html>. If you have access to the internet, look him up. He'd like to hear from you. Sam's e-mail address is <sam8ch@hotmail.com>.

**Loss of a Flying Fortress**, an article in Air War Europe, copyright 2000 Cynrik De Decker, can be downloaded at: <http://users.pandora.be/airwareurope/b17crash.html>.

This information was supplied by Luc Dewez, who represents the 91<sup>st</sup> BG in Belgium for the American Military Cemetery at Margraten. The ship appears to have been from the 452<sup>nd</sup> BG. It is mentioned here as an interesting story with dramatic photographs that transmitted very well. We who have "tasted the waters" cannot help but share in the drama that took place in 1944.

**"Mary Ruth' Memories of Mobile. We still Remember"** by Lowell Getz. Lowell reports that this book has been enlarged by the addition of five stories to the four in the original version. The total number of pages is 141, plus the foreword and cover photos. There are 31 photographs in the book. The contents include ten short but interesting stories. It can be purchased from the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Heritage Museum by telephone and credit card by calling: (912) 748-8888. Ask for the gift shop. Also, check out [http://www.geocities.com/b17\\_mary\\_ruth/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/b17_mary_ruth/index.html)



## Letters to the Editor

Continued.....

**Al Leger**, <betal315@charter.net>, with street address: 281 Chauncey Walker St., Lot#315, Belchertown, MA, 01007-9146, is looking for information from Lt. Bernard Hayen's crew. They were Lt. Billy Baldwin, Lt. Andrew Germer, Lt. William Howard, Sgt. Frank Polk, Sgt. John Thomas, Sgt. Albert Brandt, Sgt. Wesley Fiman, Sgt. Charles Beebe, and Sgt. Alderic Leger. Would welcome hearing from anyone of our crew. We flew from April 1944 to beyond D-Day. Thanks for any help.

**Kenneth McPherson**, <bagpiper32@webtv.net> is seeking information about several former members of the 91<sup>st</sup> Group. Herbert (Bert) A. Markle, former pilot with the 91<sup>st</sup> who flew Co-Pilot with Ben Fourmy on unnamed B-17G, 42-38118 which was shot down on the Mar. 6, 1944 mission to Berlin. Also he is seeking information on S/Sgt. Earl E. West who was Waist Gunner, KIA, and Robert M. Miles, Pilot and POW shot down July 30, 1943 in 42-29916, "Yankee Dandy." McPherson's street address is: 169 Saco Ave #11, Old Orchard ME 04064. He asks any surviving crew members or other persons knowing any of the above to please contact him.

**Norm Stuckey**, LM, 324<sup>th</sup>, was Co-Pilot on "Jack the Ripper" Feb. 22, 1944. The following story was picked up from Mike Banta's e-mail Ring as told by Stuckey. The target was Oschersleben.

"Referring to the letters about the famous B-17, 'Jack the Ripper,' which was shot down 22 Feb 44 with the crew of Lt. James Considine, P, Lt. Norman D. Stuckey, CP, Lt. Henry S. Schaub, N, S/Sgt Donald A. Day, WG, S/Sgt John P. Stipe, WG, S/Sgt Vernon H. Pochardt TG. All returned to the States after the war except Lt. Schaub who was killed when the plane was shot down. After evading capture for three days I was finally picked up by civilian authorities.

"I went into a railroad crossing gate operator's house to get warm. The German didn't seem much concerned. He asked if I was "Ruski?" to which I replied, 'No, a farmer.'

He smiled at my terrible college German. He asked if I had a pistola, to which I replied 'No.'

"We crew members were issued .45 pistols in the States, but at Basingbourn, we were required to turn them in and were told that the German had been informed that none of the aircrews had weapons. I was taken across the tracks to a country depot to wait for a train. People began coming into town to catch a train for work. They crowded around and wanted to know if I knew their brothers, father, uncle in the States. In the Police Station I was given a hearty meal and again people came to inquire about their relatives in the States. A sergeant came in a staff car and took me to his office at a nearby airfield.

"When the work day ended I was taken to the guard house and given more good food. Here again many people came to talk to me about their relatives in the States. Never at any time did I feel uncomfortable. The next day I was taken to Frankfurt and then to Stalag Luft I. The B-17, 'Jack the Ripper' was famous as having survived some bad encounters with the Luftwaffe. It had been sent to the salvage yard twice, then retrieved because of its contribution to the war. As Co-Pilot on our fateful day, I personally looked the plane over very carefully and beside the many patches it seemed airworthy enough. When I was off the ground it flew fine, however, I was kept busy adjusting the throttles and superchargers (which were not needed on the later G models.) Flying the B-17 was a good foundation for when I was an aircraft commander on the B-52. The bomb load was

Continued top of next column.....

different. On the -17 all we had was plain 500 lb bombs with a nose fuse. On the -52 I had to know how to detail the inner working of atomic weapons.

"Now at age 82, I am glad I lived through it to tell you about it. Of the B-17 crew I am the only officer still living, and I think John Dias is the only enlisted man.

Norm Stuckey, Lt. Col, USAF Retired"

**Mary Beth O'Quinn**, daughter of Lt. Felix O'Quinn (from Louisiana), Navigator with the 91<sup>st</sup> in 1943. "I remember him telling me that his plane had 'Bugs Bunny' painted on it. I never realized how brave all you guys were until I read 'The Eighth Air Force' book this week". Her request for information about her father from anyone in the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA was published on the "Ring" of e-mail addresses June 29, 2001 as requested by Bob and Joy Friedman. Ms. O'Quinn's address is: 221 C Street SE, Washington, DC 20003, or by e-mail: <mboquinn@hotmail.com>

[Ed. Note: The 91<sup>st</sup> Ring of e-mail addresses numbers currently 115 including associate members. The mailing list for the Ragged Irregular numbers approximately over 900 veterans. Although it is published quarterly and may take longer to get a response, its larger distribution may produce greater response.]

**J. T. Debolt**, grandson of Harold R. Debolt, writes to the Ring: Hello! I am trying to find information on my grandfather who flew with the 91<sup>st</sup>. Some may know him from the famous "Ghost Ship" mission. If you have any information on medals, awards, citations, stories, and the like, I would greatly appreciate it. I am trying to compile a shadow box in the memory of my grandfather, my hero, the greatest man I ever knew. God Bless. J. T. DeBolt, 2013 Blue Angel St., Corpus Christi, TX 78412

**Pat Medcroft**, son of Peter F. DeBoy, contacted the 91<sup>st</sup> Ring, May 10, 2001 asking for information about his father who was Radio Operator on "Jack The Ripper." He gives his e-mail address: <laura21228@yahoo.com>. He reports that his grandfather has Alzheimer's disease and only now and again remembers about his time in the war. He would like to hear from anyone who knew his grandfather.

As of July 2, 2001, Pat has heard from Bertrand Emily, Jack Gaffney. Gaffney's records show that DeBoy was radio operator on a flight from Tamp to Wall Walla June 25, 1942 with pilot 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert K. Morgan and Co-Pilot William J. Crumm. In February 1943, he was on the crew of Crumm that was returned to the States after completing 11 missions. They made a tour of "over 300 cities talking to combat crews in training as well as addressing civilian groups to promote War Bond sales." At Orlando, they wrote a training manual, "Bombing the Nazis by the Crew of 'Jack the Ripper.'" In November 1943, the crew was split up and DeBoy went to Officer Candidate School.

**Gordon Alton**, an associate member living on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, Canada (near Victoria), who signs his mail, "tailgunner," sent in a comprehensive report on the 91<sup>st</sup>'s mission to Hamm, March 4, 1943, for which the 91<sup>st</sup> received its first Unit Citation. Nice Work, Gordie. We'll try to publish it next issue. (He always adds to the bottom of his e-mail message, "Our freedom is not free. Please remember those who fought to keep it.")

**Douglas Edmond**, of 32 Gerald Road, Marblehead, MA 01945 made contact with the 91<sup>st</sup> web site of Jim and Suzi Shepherd, and inquired for information about his father, Eugene Edmond. The request was passed to Mike Banta's who sent the request to the Ring of 91sters with e-mail addresses. His Dad served on the crew of "Man O War-Horsepower LTD. Anyone with additional information contact him by regular mail or [douglas\\_w\\_emonde@fleet.com](mailto:douglas_w_emonde@fleet.com)

## Letters to the Editor (Continued)

### Late Report from Paul Chryst

The Return to Bassingbourn tour as of July 2, 2001 stands with 26 confirmed Reservations with deposits! This is very good and most of these names came by way of the notices printed in the Jan. and April R/I. All the scheduled events in England have also been confirmed, so we look forward to those who may be holding back for some reason. Space still exists and we do appreciate your kindness.

Best wishes, /signed/ Paul Chryst

## French Certificates of Appreciation

Have you applied for and received your certificate? Applications were included in the April 2001 issue of the RI.

Shown below is miniature reproduction in black and white of an original certificate. The actual size is 11 x 8¼ in. It is printed on a parchment paper with a marbled off-white color. The flags of the Allies are painted in their actual colors. The main body of the certificate bears an artist's faint rendering of the soldiers' landings on the beaches at Normandy.

This Editor in his limited French translates the inscriptions as follows (top to bottom):

Republic of France  
Ministry of Defense  
Secretary of State for Defense, War Veterans  
Regional Council of Basse-Normandie

Diplomé

in recognition by France of the soldiers of the allied armies  
engaged in combat in the invasion of Normandy and the  
liberation 1944-1945

to Monsieur (Your Name)

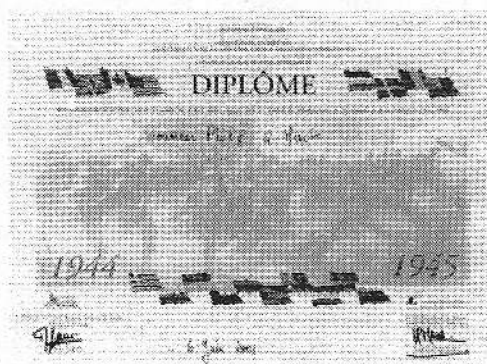
President of the Regional Council of Basse-Normandie  
Senator of Calvados

René GARREC

Secretary of State for Defense,  
War Veterans

Jean-Pierre MASSERET

6 June 2001



## Letters Continued

Jim McPartlin has been helping round up financial support for the B-17 Memorial at Pearl Harbor and sends for your information the status as presented in a letter from Cheryl Henderson, Sec/Treas., Groups Memorial Inc. of the AAF.

"Enthusiasm for the B-17 Memorial at Pearl Harbor has been severely lacking. To date only 23 recognized donors (those who contributed \$500 for a listing on the plaque) have given to this project. Because of this, it is unlikely that your B17 bronze will be created this year. The Directors of Groups Memorial, Inc., of the Army Air Forces has decided to offer you, the recognized donor, a choice as to how you would like to proceed.

"Many of you have already chosen to have the name listed on the **ARMY AIR FORCES MEMORIAL AT PEARL HARBOR** which will be dedicated on December 7, 2001. Should the B17 Memorial at Pearl Harbor become a reality in the future, you will be given a free listing on that monument as well. The Army Air Force veterans are represented by a monumental bronze P40. This memorial has been created and has been accepted by the Department of the Air Force (letter enclosed.).

"Two other alternatives are available: 1) Finding a major donor who will sponsor the B17 Memorial and be cited as such on the plaque, or 2) returning a portion of your contribution, marketing expenses deducted.

"Knowing that this may be the final opportunity for many of you to be included in a major memorial to WWII Army Air Force veterans, we hope to see you at Pearl Harbor on December 7, of this year where we will gather to dedicate the **ARMY AIR FORCES MEMORIAL AT PEARL HARBOR**.

"Please call our office at 800-305-1738 or log on to [www.warbirdcentral.com](http://www.warbirdcentral.com) and let us know your preference.

Sincerely

Cheryl Henderson, Sec./Treas.  
Groups Memorial Inc., of the AAF"

Jim adds a personal note,

We don't want to miss any WWII vets who wish to attend. Many of us already have made hotel reservations to be in attendance for the Memorial celebration. I'm hoping to be vertical by December.

My best regards,

Jim

Ed Note: We hope you are too.

Danny E. Smith is looking for information about his grandfather, Earl E. Eve who served as a B-17 tail gunner from approximately 30 Jun44 to 12 Jul 44. According to information we have he was involved in Normandy, Northern France and the Rhineland. I would like any and all information that could be provided.

Danny E. Smith, ASG, USAFR  
EMS Coordinator, NCOIC Training & Education  
445 Aeromedical Staging Squadron (AFRC)  
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433-5113  
E-Mail: <[desmith445@fuse.net](mailto:desmith445@fuse.net)>

Tele: DSN 674-2001; COM - 937/904-2001

fax: DSN 787-4612; COM - 937/257-4612

THE BEST MEDICS-TRAINING THE BEST-AIR FORCE



## Letters to the Editor

Continued from Page 11.....

**Gordon Alton, AM**, writes to tell us of a web site that has downloadable video "shorts" of the B-17, "Aluminum Overcast." "You can just click on the high lighted lines under the photos, and they will play, or you can right click on the highlighted lines, and then click on "save target as." You can then save it to a file, any type and replay it at your convenience, over and over, without ever downloading it again. Here is the site: <http://www.b17.org/video.html> [Ed Note: Do you suppose they would have the Andrews Sisters playing "Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy....?"]

**Ace Johnson, Sec'y/Treas.**, on behalf of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA received congratulations from Yahoo.com for having been selected as "The Best Military Site on the Net!" This award entitles the Association to display the award 'on your site for the remainder of 2001.' The congratulations go directly to Jim and Suzi Shepherd who set up and maintain the site. Any member of this Association who hasn't seen it must connect with the site on his computer, or ask a friend to call it up.

**Norman Thomson** told a remarkable story of having been on submarine patrol in the "early days" while the 91<sup>st</sup> was stationed at MacDill. Norm was radio operator but because the top turret gunner was 6 ft. 4 in. tall and couldn't get into the turret, Norm filled that position. They took off but hadn't had any anti-submarine depth-charges loaded. They spotted a submarine submerged in the shallow waters of "the shelf" off Tampa Bay. Nobody seemed to know what to do, either in the B-17 or back at the base. Norm handled the communication and then went into the top turret. Eventually they returned to base.

What prompted this writing was the recent sighting of a German U-Boat, U166, in the Gulf of Mexico in the vicinity of the sighting on that Norm's crew made in 1942.

**Jim and Suzi Shepherd**, keepers of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA web site reported that since they went on line January 17, 1999, 34 months later, 50,000 people had visited the web page. Five months later, an additional 25,200 people have signed on to the web page. This would not be possible without the HISTORY of the 91<sup>st</sup> and the 91<sup>st</sup> Ring of Veterans making it more interesting.

I am proud to tell everyone that we have an active "LIVING HISTORY" of the events of World War II. Congratulation for a job well done!

**Louise and Nelson Hillock** report that they have a new but temporary e-mail address: [LN59@juno.com](mailto:LN59@juno.com). They say, "Please keep in touch."

**Vince Hemmings**, noted Aviation historian has a new address: 46 Scholar's Walk, Diss, Norfolk, IP22, 4EA.

**Mary Smith** had informed us through Mike Banta's Ring that she had a video she received recently about the 91<sup>st</sup> rescue of prisoners of war from Stalag Luft I. The tape may be seen at:

<A HREF="http://home.att.net/~merkki/rescue.htm">Click here: Rescue of World War II POWs from Stalag Luft I by the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group</A>

**Ray Ward** cited a conflict of information in the April 2001 issue of the RI. On page 8, Thomas Price is listed as having been wounded on 15 Aug 1944 flying with Halstead Sherrill's crew on a mission to Osthelm. Then, on page 9, Sherrill is identified as lost on 16 Aug 1944 on a mission to Halle. Upon further review, the information on Sherrill was correct; the information is that Price was in error. Actually he was shot down on Robt. Heller's crew on 12 Aug 1943 on the "Jolly Roger" on a mission to Gelsenkirchen.

## Golden Wings

Continued from Page 12.....

● **Jack M. Rogan, LM 322<sup>nd</sup>**, Jessup, PA, March 27, 2001. The following was submitted by George B. Uihlein, LM 324<sup>th</sup> and Navigator on "Betty Lou's Buggy."

"Jack was the Bombardier on "Betty Lou's Buggy" for 15 missions and then became a "Mickey" (Pathfinder) operator for the Group. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters.

After his World War II service, Jack was an administrator for 38 years with the Veterans Administration in Wilkes Barre, PA, and Washington, D. C. He was an active member of the VFW, AL and DAV.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Agnes, a son, Rev. John Rogan, Jessup, PA., a daughter, Patricia Ciuba, of Cortland, OH and four grandchildren.

● **Charles W. Sanzenbacher, LM 401<sup>st</sup>**, Charlotte, NC, Nov. 2000. [Late Report. No other information provided].

● **Norbert Schultz, AM**, Chicago, IL, May 9, 2001, Age 83. Norbert, an Associate Member of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA, was a veteran of WWII having served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Force HQ from 1942 until 1945. Submitted by his brother, Clifford Schultz, LM, 324<sup>th</sup>, Radio Operator in "Rhapsody in Red."

● **William H. Turcotte, LM 322<sup>nd</sup>**, Richland, MS, Nov. 5, 2000. Bill was Navigator on "Destiny's Tot" on his first mission when the aircraft was ditched in the North Sea, July 26, 1943, according to Ray Bowden in his book, "Plane Names and Fancy Noses."

● **Julian Walker, FM 401<sup>st</sup>**, Deland, FL, June 16, 2001, Age 78. Julian served a Bombardier on Lt. John R. Follett's crew. On June 21, 1944, they were shot down and the crew became prisoners of war in Germany. After being liberated he returned to the U.S. and became an Electrical Engineer. He survived Cancer a couple of years ago. He was an avid golfer, belonged to the National and East Central Florida Chapter of Ex-POWs and the DAV. He is survived by his wife, Geraldine, one son, Steven, three daughters, Glenna Kurzon, Roni Walker and Ronna Janssen, eight grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.



## Hail and Be Arewell

Attn: All Ex-Prisoners of War. Fred Campbell of the Outreach Program Committee, American Ex-Prisoners of War reminds us that "of all former prisoners of war, with approximately 46,000 still living, only about 35% have connected with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to accept the benefits for which they are eligible. Now is the time to step forward. Learn more, call or write."

American Ex-Prisoners of War  
C/O New Member Committee  
National Headquarters  
3201 E. Pioneer Pkwy #40  
Arlington, TX 76010

American Ex-Prisoners of War  
C/O National Service Office  
DVARO  
3225 M/ Central Ave. Ste 407  
Phoenix AZ 85012-2421

(817) 649-2979

(602) 745-2201

(602) 745-2203 (FAX)

Let's get with it Kriegies

## Folded Wings

● **Gil Crotte**, LM 323<sup>rd</sup>, Citrus Heights, CS, Jan. 26, 1999, Age 79. Previously reported in the Jan. 2000 issue, the following additional information has recently been provided by his widow, Virginia Crotte.

Gil enlisted in the Army Air Corps Sept. 24, 1940 at age 21. He became an Aerial Engineer and was shot down on the Merseburg mission, Nov. 2, 1944, became a POW and survived the infamous "Death March." He continued in the service, participating in the Berlin Airlift, and was stationed in Alaska, Panama, and Columbia, S.A., in addition to England and Germany. His campaign medals included the Berlin Airlift, National Defense, WWII Victory, Asiatic-Pacific Theater, and others.

In addition to his wife, Virginia, Gil is survived by his son Scott, Daughters Kim, Terry and Connie, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Virginia adds, "I've always been proud to be have been married to such a fine man."

● **Walter H. Keirse, III**, LM 324<sup>th</sup>, Madison Heights, VA, Apr. 22, 2001, Age 75. He was a retired construction engineer and a veteran of the Army Air Corps in WWII. He was a life member of the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association, and the VFW in Norristown, PA.

In addition to his wife, Iberia Hobbs "Ann", he is survived by six children, and eleven grandchildren. Son Walter IV, reported his fathers death on the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA web site as follows:

"He was a Tail Gunner in the 324<sup>th</sup> flying with Capt. Freman C. Beasley on the "Dear Becky" during the summer

● **Kenneth V. Kerr**, FM 324<sup>th</sup>, Keosauqua, IA, Feb. 21, 2001, Age 81. Ken grew up in the Irish Bend neighborhood between Keosauqua and Douds, Iowa. He attended Douds High School and Iowa State College, Ames. He was a B-17 pilot during WWII and became a licensed commercial pilot and flight instructor. He had also been a pilot for TWA and flew his own airplane and maintained a keen interest in aircraft and flight technology throughout his life.

Ken and his wife, Betty Jo, farmed extensively and were named Van Buren county farm family of the year in 1949. They were co-administrators of the Iowa County Care Farm Bureau for 22 years. Ken was President of the Iowa County Care Facility Administrators Association.

Ken was a member of the Keosauqua United Methodist Church, Van Buren County Farm Bureau and Beer-Barker Post No. 113 American Legion, Elks and Eagles lodges in Fairfield, AOPA and the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. He was a founding member of Keosauqua Lions Club and Van Buren County Flying Club. In addition to his wife, Ken is survived by daughters Connie Cay, Kathee, Korky Carruthers, and Kim Keller and their husbands; son, James and his wife, 10 grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren, a sister and a brother.

Interment was with military rites by the American Legion Post 113.

● **Ferd A. Koch**, FM 323<sup>rd</sup>, Albuquerque, NM, Jun 14, 2001. Notices of his death received from son, Jamie Koch and friend Scott Ingram as this column is being written. Interment is on June 21, 2001, in the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

● **Bert J. Pierce**, 401<sup>st</sup>, White City, OR, Mar. 5, 1998, Age 83. [Late report.] Bert served as a Crew Chief in the 91<sup>st</sup>, 401 Sq. attaining the rank of Master Sergeant. He was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service having invented a tool to ease the work on the planes' engines.

91st BG Memorial Assn.  
590 Aloha Dr.  
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LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU

### 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.

of 1944. Other crew members at the time were Co-Pilot John W. McGourty, and Bruce Pardue, Robert Boice, Charles Becraft, Jack Alford, Alvin DeSisto, Bill O'Neal and Charles Bright. He notes that Capt. Beasley recorded "a wonderful oral history of what I call 'The Saga of Dear Becky' which I plan to donate to the Association."

Walter Keirse IV closes with "Keep up the good work. God Bless you all."

[Ed. Note: There's an interesting write-up on "Dear Becky" in Ray Bowden's book, "Plane Names and Fancy Tales," available for sale from the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA P-X.]

Bert's efforts were mentioned several times in the book, "Once there was a War," by John Steinbeck. "He was privileged to taxi Gen. Eisenhower's B-17, and was also Crew Chief during the filming of 'The Memphis Belle.'"

In civilian life, Bert was foreman of the Modoc Pear Orchard at Table Rock, OR. In 1964 he worked for the Jackson County Road Department retiring in 1975. He was survived by his wife, the former Inice F. Inman, two daughters, Anita Wolff and Lorieta Pierce, a grandson and a great grand daughter, and three sisters.

Folded Wings Continued on Page 11.