

# The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN



323rd SQDN



Supporting Units



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

Vol 35 No. 4

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

October 2002

## Tacoma Reunion in 2002!!! Ed Gates Report



Mount Tahoma\* and Friend

Tacoma, WA. August 28-31, 2002.

### Thank You,, Thank You!!!

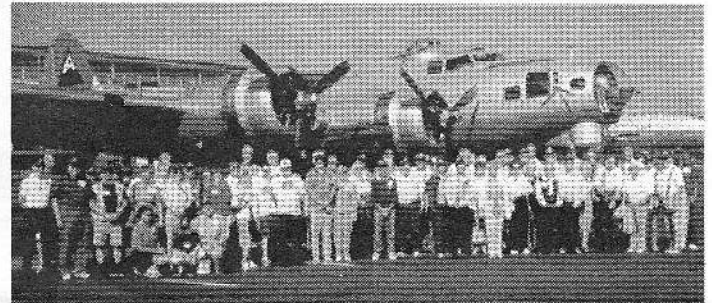
As noted on page two in the President's Corner, one of the unique things about the Tacoma Reunion was that we had no committees. It may turn out that this may be more common in the future, organizing the Reunion does take a lot of time, but in some ways, it is easier for one or two people to put it together. Our trusty Secretary/Treasurer, "Ace" Johnson, provided invaluable support in publishing the Reunion Bulletin, compiling the registration data, listing attendees by event and roster, preparing coupons as well as checking and handling the registration payments. All I can say is —"WOW!" The other vital member of our team was Phil Mack for publicity in The Ragged Irregular and relaying the info to Jim Shephard at our web site and to Banta's "Ring." Both Ace and Phil provided sound advice and infinite patience.

Because we managed without a committee structure I can only rely on my imperfect memory to thank the numerous people who helped once our "missions" got airborne. In my final "daily mission briefing" on Saturday, 31 Aug., I warned that we might encounter flak over the final target —the Banquet. Little did I realize just how heavy it might be! I admit I was running low on gas by the time the Banquet was under way and I could not quite get my mind around the list of all those who helped—and so I just set that aside to be covered later.

Continued next column.....

Sorry if that seemed like a bad choice and even sorrier if I now forget to mention you.

While we had no formal committees, some of you were kind enough to volunteer in the planning stage. Neat-neighbors Phil Mack and Joe and Jenny Harlick—who contributed so much to the Turner Memoirs of the 91<sup>st</sup> BG—helped plan for the set up of photos in the LaQuinta



91<sup>st</sup> BG at Museum of Flight, Seattle, WA, August 2002

lobby and our Hospitality Room. Kent Ramsey and Gordy Alton agreed to coordinate the Boeing Museum of Flight and Victoria trips respectively once I had set them up. Ed Kerrin, Jack Paxson and Bob Schuck agreed to bar tending. Jim Shepherd—who insists he never "volunteered" for anything—did confide that he and Suzi and their friends would arrive early and 'help' with preparing the Registration goody bags and PX, little did any of us realize that they would ultimately do the bulk of the work in both areas.

From there on it was virtually operation by *ad hoc*—Latin for "Gotcha!" Bonnie Ames pitched in to organize and safeguard our Registration items and brief local Rotarian volunteers. Nancy Perri and Judy Williams alternated with Bonnie, and Judy proved why she was a great school Principal with her handy-dandy straight from RV computer/printer. Barbara Schultz and Gary Hall helped at the PX. Our near volunteer "Trail Bosses," in addition to Gordy and Kent, included Mick Hanou, Suzi Shepherd and Lauri Kivimaki. Phil Collins helped keep me from losing stuff at the morning "Mission Briefings" and those nice healthy younger folks helped pick up the fallen flak from the floor. When I *as hoc-ed* Joe Harlick to manage the group photos he promptly made some shrewd choices of Barbara Schultz and Mick Hanou to help him put it together (I delivered the apple juice). Wherever I looked Jenny Harlick or someone was filling snacks or tidying up the parking lot and laughing about how that would look to the local police.

*Th Th Th That's all Folks*

## The President's Corner

This year I learned more about the 91<sup>st</sup> BG than ever before—even 1944-45. Preparing for the Tacoma Reunion, "Editing" the Turner Publishing Company's Memoirs of the 91<sup>st</sup> and now accepting the responsibilities as your President have been a vivid reminder of the appreciation we owe to those who have gone before. Past-President Bob Friedman made the transition easy and all of your officers have been wonderfully gracious to help me.

I am humbled in my admiration for all that has been done by the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. Not all missions were accomplished without stress, but "if it is worth doing, it is worth doing well." Consider accomplishments of your past officers! Note the solid historical base given us by "Bud" Evers, "Curly" Havelaar and Joe & Jenny Harlick. Applaud our memorials established from Walla Walla (WA) to England by the untiring efforts of Whit Hill, Tony Montalvo and others. Enjoy the growth of our outreach through the web site work of the Shephards, Banta's "Ring" and the wonderful continuity of the Ragged Irregular. The best may not be "yet to come" but we aren't about to pull the sheet up over our heads and fade away either.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Reunion was unique to say the least. We tried new things: a more intimate meeting facility, a shuttle so no one need feel isolated, a comfortably large hospitality room, a "free" reception (cost #2 each instead of \$15 if done by the hotel), providing our own Banquet wine (cutting costs by \$7. Each), involvement of McChord AFB and the local business community from the get-go and last - but far from least - close cooperation with the Visitor's Bureau. By involving local businesses - not just begging gifts - we obtained donations of Aplets and Cotlets, apples, Tree Top apple juice and wine tasting plus gift wines from Hoodspoor, Covey Run, Columbia and Washington Hills, we also have a promise from Hogue Cellars to do the same at our next Reunion-wherever it is! We arranged a bit of rain on Aug. 26<sup>th</sup> just to remind early arrivals this is the Great Northwest and "rainier" mountain is not misnamed, it sprinkled at 2:30 pm, Sunday, Sept. 1, and we had two days with record lows of 39 degrees the week you departed.

We had no Committees as you began to arrive on Sunday, but many of you participated as noted on page one. A lot of prior planning went into the Reunion, but it came together (with minor losses due to flak) because you helped! In words of the former Comptroller of Maryland, "God bless you all real good!"

Your new officers are already looking to the future. To provide closer working relations we will spend some of your money to experiment with a conference call at 9:00 am PST on Nov. 9 with comments strictly time-limited (except the Pres), I will provide an agenda NLT Oct. 15. I have asked our two most recent Presidents to share their advice with us. We hope Paul Limm will also do so, even though he has indicated a desire to withdraw from his long time formal position of Advisor. Determination of a meeting site and host for Reunion 2004 will be made by February 2002 (note our appeal hereafter). We will consider a written proposal for on-going support of the Prop Memorial. Continued next column.....

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We will examine revision of the By-Laws to include back-up for the key positions of Secretary-Treasurer and Editor of the R.I., re-incorporating as a non-veteran 501c non-profit (to avoid possible IRS challenge of our % of veteran membership) and expanding full membership responsibilities to associate members. In accord with these plans we need a lawyer who would volunteer his/her services to look at new By-Laws and incorporation opportunities other than our present status as a Texas corporation. Do you know such a person?

I promised Phil Mack I would keep this to less than a column—promises, promises.

Ed Gates

## Editorial

Welcome to Steve Perri, newly elected Editor of the Ragged Irregular. As it was offered to me by my predecessor, Rudy Malkin, I have offered to publish this, the first issue after the election, to afford my successor a little more time to get organized. Steve accepted this offer.



Phil Mack and Steve Perri

I want to thank my predecessors for having established a history of editorial excellence and the members who contributed material for publication. They are your stories and articles that have made this newsletter what it is. To paraphrase Shakespeare, the Editor is but a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more.



## 2002 Reunion Attendees

Ah Tye, Edward	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Harris, Robert	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Ah Tye, Blanche	Guest		Harris, Carolyn	Guest	
Allen, John	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>	Hatfield, Betty	Guest	
Allen, Rosemary	Guest		Hatfield, John	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Alton, Gordon	AL		Heller, Robert	FM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Alton, James	AM		Hintze, Frank	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>
Ames, Bonnie	Guest		Holman, Charles	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Anderson, Lois	Guest		Holman, John Remby	Guest	
Anderson, Marvin	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>	Holman, Carolyn	Guest	
Barnsley, Sidney	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>	Howland, John	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Baron, Connie	AM		Isworski, Rae	Guest	
Baron, Thomas	AM		Isworski, Norbeert	Guest	
Beal, Donald	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>	Jackman, Ed	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Bergum, Barbara	AM		Jackman, Dorothy	Guest	
Birdsong, George	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	Jphnson, Asay B.	Lm	324 <sup>th</sup>
Bishop, Lee	LM		Johnson, Harold	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Burman, Thelma	Guest		Johnson, Phyllis	Guest	
Burman, Kermit	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>	Kerr, John	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Burts, Harold	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Kerr, Peggie	Guest	
Burts, Marjorie	Guest		Kerrin, Ed	Am	
Carpenter, Walter	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Kethley, Jerold	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Carpenter, Charles	Guest		Kivimaki, Lauri	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Carver, Tom	FM	323 <sup>th</sup>	Kivimaki, Kerttu	Guest	
Caswell, Andrew	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Kleyla, Robert	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Chase, David	AM		Kleyla/Purdy, Lillian	Guest	
Choffel, Betty	Guest		Koeller, C. W. "Bud"	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Choffel, Merle	AM		Lasch, Harold	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>
Chryst, Paul	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>	Lasch, Dorothea	Guest	
Chryst, Nancy	Guest		Leonard, Alvin	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Clemens, Mike	AL		Leonard, Jean	Guest	
Clemems, Dale	Guest		Lombardi, Bruno	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Clemens, Lorraine	Guest		Valmasoi, Marilyn	Guest	
Clemens, Harold	Guest		Lopez, Bernard	LM	322 <sup>nd</sup>
Clemens, Marilyn	Guest		Loyless, Joyce	Guest	
Collins, Philip	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Loyless, Roy	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Collins, Nadine	Guest		Luke, Gaile	Guest	
Cripps, Mary Faith	Guest		Luke, John	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Cripps, Faber	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>	Lursen, Al	AM	
Cullen, Mrs. James	Guest		Lursen, Claudia	AM	
Cullen, James	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	Lynch, Judy	Guest	
Danekas, Ralph	FM	401 <sup>st</sup>	Lynch, Paul	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Danekas, Dorothy	Guest		Mack, Philip	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Dart, Melvin	LM	322 <sup>nd</sup>	Mack/Carroll, Randi	Guest	
Davis, Thomas	LM		Marshall, John	Guest	
Donohue, Evelyn	Guest		McCoy, Margaret	Guest	
Donohue, Hubert	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	McCoy, Richard	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Dumochel, James	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	Murray, Don	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Dumochel, John	Guest		Murray,	Guest	
Dunn, Andres	Guest		Newton, Hilda	Guest	
Dunn, Ramone	Guest		Newton, Sam	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Dunn, Aulden	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	Norris,	Guest	
Egender, Catherine	Guest		Norris, Elizabeth	Guest	
Egender, Herbert	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>	Norris, Jim	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Ellis, Quentin	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	Norwood, Greg	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Ellis, Rena	Guest		Norwood, Chris	Guest	
Farwell, Otis	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	Pate, Mary	Guest	
Farwell, Rachel	Guest		Pate, Earl	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Frederickson, Wanda	Guest		Paxson, Jack	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>
Frederickson, George	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>	Perri, Steve	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Freer, Mary	Guest		Perri, Nancy	Guest	
Freer, Donald	LM	322 <sup>nd</sup>	Pressey, Richard	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Garrison, Clyde	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Pride, Mary	Guest	
Garrison, LaNelle	Guest		Pride, Bobby	FM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Gates, Edward	LM	323 <sup>rd</sup>	Ramsey, Kent	AM	
Gold, Bemico	Guest		Reid, William	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>
Gold, Seymour	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Ristow, Patricia	Guest	
Gold/Rainier, Elaine	Guest		Ristow, Edward	AM	
Halcy, Claire	Guest		Schuck, Mrs. R. L.	Guest	
Haley, Daniel	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>	Schuck, Robert	FM	322 <sup>nd</sup>
Hall, Gary	AL		Schultz, Clifford	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Hanou, Mick	AL		Schultz, Barbara	Guest	
Harlick, Jenny	Guest				
Harlick, Joseph	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>			

## 2002 Reunion Attendees .....Cont. from page 3

Selje, Bonnie	AM	
Selje, Dean	AM	
Selje, David	AM	
Sheeler, Patty	Guest	
Sheeler, Don	LM	91 <sup>st</sup> Gp HQ
Shepherd, Suzi	AM	
Shepherd, Jim	AL	
Siess/Rustand, Marilyn	AM	
Sinabaldo, Norma	Guest	
Sinabaldo, Armanda (AJ)	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Slane, Mary Lee	Guest	
Slane, Robert	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Smith, Donald	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Smith, Margaret	Guest	
Smith, Kenneth	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Smith, Mrs. Kenneth	Guest	
Smith, Harold	Guest	
Smith, Marilyn	AL	
Steele, Erwin	LM	LM
Vrooman, Ralph	LM	401 <sup>st</sup>
Williams, Edward	AM	
Williams, Judith	Guest	
Williamson, Alice	Guest	
Williamson, Earl	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Wilson, Howard	FM	323 <sup>rd</sup>
Wilson, Donald	Guest	
Wilson, Russell	FM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Witt, LaVerene	Guest	
Witt, James	Guest	
Witt, George	FM	323 <sup>th</sup>
Wolf, Willard	LM	
Wolf, Florence	Guest	
Woods, Verne	LM	324 <sup>th</sup>
Woods, Onic	Guest	
Yezdimir, Millie	AL	

### Banquet Only Attendees

Robert and Michelle Bailey  
 Gary and Bonnie Dolph  
 M/Sgt Craig and Mrs. Murray  
 Walt Fisher Air Depot  
 Donald Keller Air Depot



**The LaQuinta Inn**, Headquarters for the 2002 Reunion in Tacoma. Conveniently located on Interstate Highway 5 that runs from the Canadian Border to the North through Washington, Oregon and California to the Mexican Border. Located on the south end of Puget sound, the Inn is conveniently located with Seattle to the north about :30 minutes drive, McChord Air Force base, Fort Lewis and Olympia, the Capitol City of Washington State to the south and southwest. A little farther takes you to Portland,

Oregon and on to California. Excellent service provided.

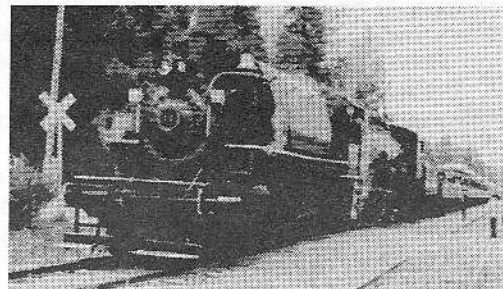
## 2002 Attendee Photos



**Merseburg Vets:** L-R Top Row: Joe Harlick, Lauri Kavimaki, Ed Gates, Don Sheeler, Faber Cripps, Philip Collins, Harold Johnson; Middle Row: Andrew Caswell, Harold Lasch, Donald Freer, Daniel Haley, Roy Loyless, Ralph Vrooman, Erwin Steele; Bottom Row: Cliff Schultz, John Allen, Bruno Lombardi, Robert Harris, George Frederick son, Ed Ah Tye.



**Ex-POWs** L-R Top Row: Verne Woods, Paul Lynch, Don Murray, James Cullen, Ace Johnson; Middle Row: Clyde Garrison, Robert Heller, Herbert Egender, Harold Lasch, Donald Freer, Jerold Kethley; Bottom Row: Robert Slane, Bruno Lombardi, Robert Harris, Roy Loyless, Andrew Caswell.



Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad. All aboard for steam locomotive train ride from Elbe, WA, to "Paradise"—the National Park site on the south side of Mt. Rainier National Park.



## 2002 Reunion — Unit Photos



322<sup>nd</sup> Sq. L-R Top Row: Sidney Barnsley, Don Sheeler, Melvin Dart  
Bottom Row: Jack Paxson, Donald Freer, Harold Lasch, Herbert Egender, Bernard Lopez.



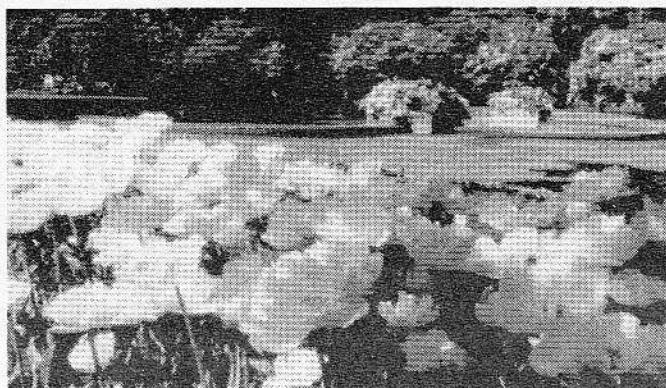
324<sup>th</sup> Sq. L-R Top Row: Paul Lynch, Seymour Gold, Cliff Schultz, Walter Carpenter, Russell Wilson, Verne Woods; Middle Row: John Howland, Andrew Caswell, Robert Kleyla, Charles Holman, Clyde Garrison; Bottom Row: Edward Ah Tye, Phillip Collins, Kenneth Smith, Ace Johnson, Joe Harlick.



323<sup>rd</sup> Sq. L-R Top Row: Lauri Kivimaki, Bruno Lombardi, Ed Gates, Steve Perri, Quentin Ellis, James Cullen, Ed Jackman. Middle Row: Don Murray, George Witt, John Kerr, Otis Farewell, Jerold Kethley, Erwin Steele. Bottom Row: Alvin Leonard, John Luke, Robert Harris, A. J. Siibaldo, Richard McCoy.

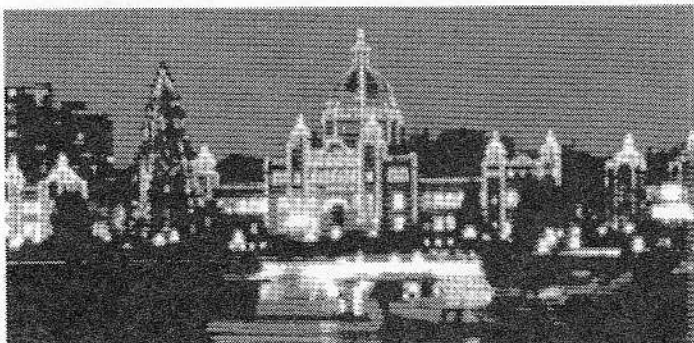


401<sup>st</sup> Sq. L-R Top Row: John Allen, Bernie Stanton, Sam Newton, Richard Pressey, Paul Chryst; Middle Row: Donald Smith, Faber Cripps, C. W. "Bud" Koeller, Roy Loyless, Ralph Vrooman; Bottom Row: Robert Slane, Robert Heller, Merle Choffel, Harold Johnson, George Fredrickson.



Lakewood Gardens—A beautiful 10-acre formal estate garden near Gravelly Lake. One of many tours enjoyed by 91<sup>st</sup> BG Reunioners.

## Reunion 2002 — Scenes to Remember



Victoria, B.C. — Empress Hotel



Antique Cars



Museum of Flight — BFI



Northwest Trek — Wildlife Animal Park



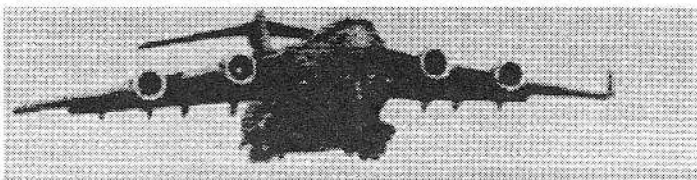
Washington State History Museum



Mount Rainier — 14,410 ft.

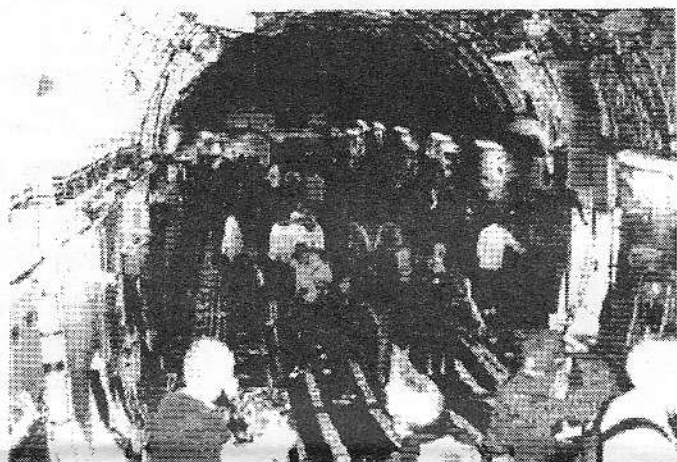


## McChord Air Force Bases Hosts the 91<sup>st</sup>



McChord C-17 "The Big Mama"

The Trip to McChord AFB raised a new level of excitement for the Reunion veterans, all of whom served in the Army Air Forces in World War II. Some remained in the Service to fulfill careers and some remained in the Air Force Reserve, but all of them with their families retained a devotion to Aviation, the Service, and the Nation.

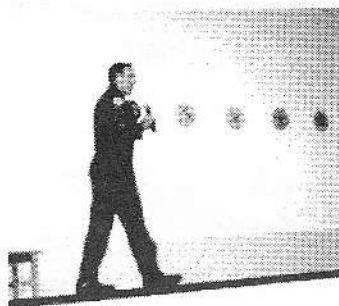


91sters Get Lost inside the "Whale"

After WWII, this Editor served in the Reserve several years assigned to Troop Carrier Wings, (434<sup>th</sup> and 355<sup>th</sup>). The type aircraft relegated to the Reserves at the time was the C-46. Later these were replaced by C-119s. To describe the C-17 in comparison with the older Transport Aircraft, the term "awesome" comes to mind.

[As an "aside," during one summer encampment, we dropped the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division then stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. To an ex-bomber pilot, indoctrinated with the commitment to bring everyone home safely, having all your "passengers" bail out leaves you with an empty feeling. The much larger C-17 must magnify the emotion by several factors.]

The C-17 alone made the trip worthwhile. It should not be overlooked, however, that most of the presentations on the C-17 and ancillary equipment, offensive and defensive, were described and demonstrated by the Airmen. The



Col. Strause Briefing 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA

absence of commissioned officers demonstrated the increased reliance upon enlisted personnel and non-commissioned officers by the modern Air Force. The only noticeable presence of an officer was at the outstanding briefing in the Base theater by Operations Group Commander, 62<sup>nd</sup> Military Airlift Wing,

Col Strause

## Report of the Nominations and Election Committee — Paul J. Limm, Chairman

The 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA will begin a new chapter with the elections of President Ed Gates, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Marv Goldberg, 2nd Vice President Phil Mack, Sec/Treas Ace Johnson, Historian Earl Pate, and Editor of the R/I Steve Perri. This will be a strong management team, with President Gates and VP Mack still active in their professions. President Gates is an investment adviser and consultant who publishes an investment newsletter, VP Mack is the CEO of Mack Aviation Company.

1<sup>st</sup> VP Goldberg is a retired CPA with 35 years of experience, thus assuring our organization the absence of the problems, which afflicted corporations currently in the news. Sec/Treas Johnson retired as a senior officer of a Fortune 500 company, and has served our Association as Secretary and Treasurer. Historian Pate helped found the Tennessee Air National Guard and eventually commanded that distinguished unit after serving combat tours in Korea and Vietnam. Our new Editor of the Ragged Irregular, Steve Perri, now brings his talent to the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA after a successful career as an entrepreneur in several businesses.

This is an appropriate time to Honor others who continue to support our Association: The Shepherd family, Suzi, Jim and son, James, Jr., who created and developed the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group web site into an award winning information center, Mike Banta and his celebrated Ring which provides answers from experts to the most difficult questions. By now, we have all marveled at Lowell Getz's abilities to solve mysteries, perform research and track down obscure information, let us not overwork these willing horses, and all the others who do diligently support our Association. There are always more people riding inside the wagon than outside pulling.

The Nominations and Election Committee thanks all those who voted in this election. Your vote indicates you have reviewed the qualifications of the candidates and that you endorse the committee's judgment that all the nominees are highly qualified to lead our Association. You have elected them and in so doing, have indicated your trust and confidence in their fidelity and loyalty to the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. More importantly, you have shown your support and appreciation. These intangible factors will counter act the inevitable carping and criticisms from the chronic complainers.

In the British regiments, there is a toast, "Men die, but the regiment lives!" The Committee would like to thank our elected officers and all those who support our Association with the toast,

"Men die, but the Regiment lives!" [Here, Here]

## For Sale

For the Reunion we ordered more caps than needed for each person who paid the Registration fee. In quantity we could get a better price. The are stitched in four colors with our emblem on the front, 60th Anniversary and a B-17 (*Nine-O-Nine*) on the side. They are available at \$10 through our PX.

We have three other items. We have some memorial wine glasses available for \$2.50 each plus \$5.00 mailing four or less in the U. S. (I underestimated costs pre-Reunion.) Second, a museum quality lithograph 23" X 34" was prepared featuring *Nine O Nine*, *Outhouse Mouse*, *Gen. Ike* and *The Wild Hare* as they might have been as "Ruhr Valley Raiders" in mid-1944, we have a few copies in an unsigned version at \$175 and a version signed by 15 representative 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA members with biographies at \$300 available one per member first come/first served based on postmark (plus postage if outside the U. S.). Finally we have squadron, POW and 91<sup>st</sup> Members at Bassingbourn on 2 Nov 44 color prints from the Reunion available at \$13 for 5X7 and \$15 for 8 X 10. These three items are available from Ed Gates. Make checks to 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA.



## Business Meeting Highlights

[Editor's Note: The following information is taken from notes of the RI Editor and should not be construed to be the official Minutes of the Business Meeting of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA at its 2002 Reunion.]

**Election Results** having been given [see previous page] newly elected President Ed Gates took the gavel and began the business meeting. The significant items are given below not necessarily in original order.

**Turner Publishing Status.** Largely through the efforts of Ed Gates with assistance from Phil Mack, a draft of the book, "History of the 91st Bomb Group (H)," which many of our members have ordered and to which many have contributed autobiographic material, has been reviewed, edited and returned to Turner Publishing. This has been followed by a "blue line" [draft of the finished product] which again was reviewed and resulted in additional corrections and changes and has been returned to Turner for final publication.

At this time, the book is ready for printing as far as the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA is concerned. Turner has given us a target publication date of late November or early December 2002. Enclosed with this issue of the RI are "fliers" prepared by Turner to provide information to any one who has not yet ordered the book but wishes to do so now. For those of you who have already ordered the book, we hope your patience will be justified in a better quality book. The books may also be ordered through the 91<sup>st</sup> PX [Attn: Marv Goldberg].

**Paul Chryst**, the ubiquitous Maitre d'Tour, says he might consider a tour "One More Time" in 2003. This could coincide with a "rededication" of the American Air Museum in England at Duxford which is expected to draw a large attendance.

**Jake Howland** will continue to be the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA contact with American Military Cemeteries and European contacts as before. He will also work to correct discrepancies in data bases used by the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA.

**Jim Shepherd**, who, with his wife Suzi, is "keeper" of the 91<sup>st</sup> web site, gave a run down on the number of "hits" on the web site as a measure of its increasing popularity. He has also worked closely with the Air Museum at Chino, CA, and recognizes its strong interest in expanding its association with the 91<sup>st</sup> BG.

**Mike Banta** will continue to be "Ring Master" of the 91<sup>st</sup> Ring of e-mail participants.

## Official Call for Reunion Site—2004

No host group had a prepared proposal at our Business Meeting but we did receive on tentative proposal for Valley Forge, PA. Possible sites at Fort Meyers, FL, and Branson, MO., have been suggested to our officers. Our By-Laws as amended Sept. 96 no longer require that we alternate geographic location; they just say that if "no host group volunteers" we will participate in the "annual 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society reunion." However, some of our members say that we have never enjoyed very good attendance when we tried to piggy-back with the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS. The door is wide open if you want to lead a "host group."

If you are willing and able to take on the task of hosting the next reunion, here are some things that you might consider. Identify 3 or 4 tours or activities in your area remembering that the age of our Reunion attendees will range from teens to the 80s. Check with your tourism or convention bureau to see if

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## Call for Reunion Site—2004 (Continued)

they really want to help. Is there an attractive hotel that will provide a suite (for management/storage), complimentary Hospitality Room with Bar/snack privileges and complimentary room nites for every 40 paid? With the economy and travel weak it is a great time to shoot for a rate below \$80/nite; in the 154 room LaQuinta we were not lost in the shuffle. If there is a military base nearby, will they help arrange buses through their Morale and Welfare resource and would the public affairs (PAO) want to participate? Is there a business association that would be interested in the \$200,000 or so we will spend? Can we boost local products or companies? Are there service clubs (Rotary, Lions, VFW, Legion) who will help?

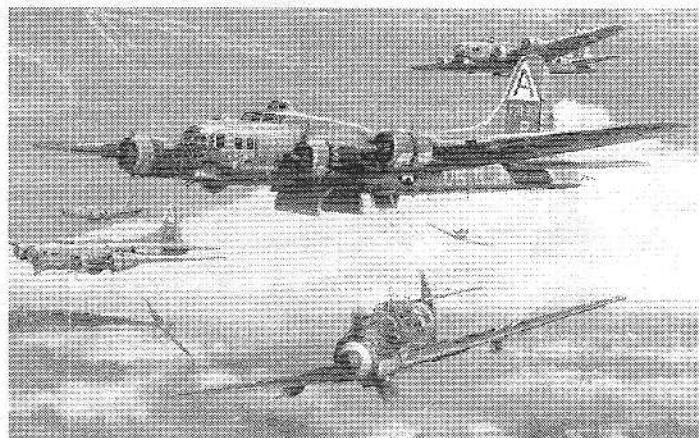
We also have another alternative if we want to "go it alone."

We could consider partnering with another group, e.g., the original "Four Horsemen" of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 91<sup>st</sup>, 303<sup>rd</sup>, 305<sup>th</sup> and 306<sup>th</sup>.

We could also hire the services of somebody like Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. from whom we have received a proposal. They now arrange reunions for the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS, 303<sup>rd</sup>, 305<sup>th</sup> and 306<sup>th</sup> and many others. They would charge \$10/attendee plus \$1/each/meal and suggest that they could obtain better rates than we do (though that seems doubtful for the Tucson and Tacoma reunions, at least.) A big plus would be that they do much of the work that now falls on Ace Johnson and the Reunion Chairman. We would also be free to choose from some 20 cities on the east coast in which they have representatives including Charleston, SC, (Fort Sumter and nearby air bases), Milwaukee (breweries and pleasant weather), Norfolk, VA (nearby NASA research center, Langley, AFB), Pensacola, FL (Eglin AFB research and development), Philadelphia and Washington, DC. If this interests you, write to any of your 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA officers! Now!

At the 2002 Business Meeting we announced that your officers would welcome all proposals and make a decision by March 2003. Let us hear from you for both where and how to host.

"Ruhr Valley Raiders"—a painting by artist Robert Bailey features three B-17s of the 91<sup>st</sup>, "Outhouse Mouse," "The Wild Hare," and "909," accompanied by two unfriendly but not unusual Me 109s. Members of the 91<sup>st</sup> at the Reunion were invited to sign the original painting. Copies of the "litho" may be purchased from the 91<sup>st</sup> PX at a price of \$10.00



B-17s of the 91<sup>st</sup>: 909, Outhouse Mouse and The Wild Hare with dubious escort.



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**Lethers Writes President Bush** Continued from Page 9....

"I know that his experiences during that time affected him painfully for the rest of his life and for many years since his death I have hoped to visit this base as a way of understanding more clearly what it had been like for him.

"When my wife and I were finally able to go in August [2002] we were delighted when Mr. Roberts graciously made himself available for nearly five hours to show us around. He conducted us through the museum and around the entire base pointing out those buildings which still remained from the war and the locations of others which did not. His anecdotes and stories would fill a book. We cannot overstate how touched we were at this completely unexpected display of generosity.

"Mr. Roberts explained to us that he was grateful for the opportunities he had enjoyed living in a free country that he would not have had if the outcome of the war had been different. Unlike many of us who pay lip service to freedom, Mr. Roberts and a few others have acted over literally decades in producing an opportunity for thousands of us who are descended from those heroic members of the 91<sup>st</sup> as well as others to come as close as possible to understanding what it was like in those terrible years of the war.

"Years ago the airfield at Basingbourn was transformed into a British military training base. As such, access to the museum is now only possible when Mr. Roberts or one of only two other individuals can accompany the visitor. As Mr. Roberts is 70 years old and the two others are of a similar age, it is unclear at the moment how access to this important facility will continue to be possible over the coming years and decades. The hard work of these Englishmen on our behalf is very much in jeopardy.

"As a portion of the museum is dedicated to the equally heroic members of the RAF who flew from this base as well, the British government would likely view with favor an American initiative toward preservation of the site. One idea for preservation might be to designate the building as an historical landmark. Mr. Roberts has petitioned the British Government in this regard but has received no conclusive answer.

"If the State Department could be of any assistance to Mr. Roberts, very little if any expense would be involved. On the other hand, an important tribute to a glowing chapter in American military history would be preserved, many British as well as American citizens would have an opportunity to learn more about the special relationship of our two countries and the selfless and dedicated work of a few would receive the recognition it so richly deserves."

Respectfully yours,

/S/ Alan Lethers  
1349 Madrone Lane  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
(305) 595-1989

**Letters to the Editor**

● **George Parks.** George wrote us back in April and his letter was received too late. When the July issue was completed, George's letter was among the others that again missed "the next issue." We apologize to George and to all whose letters missed out in past issues. It is just an unfortunate fact of life that when the issue is full, it is full. We did increase the size of the newsletter from eight pages to twelve pages.

Continued to of next column.....

**George Parks Letter, Continued**

We reduced the type size, page margins and line spacing. We did introduce the "Letters to the Editor" section but the old phrase out of the past, the "exigencies of the Service" [read "Gotcha."] prevailed. Here is George's letter with some minor editorial liberties.

"Guess you have wondered about me but rest easy, I'm still around just getting slower and older, but heck, we all do. Any way the new year started out well and no complaints except the old knee pains that I've learned to live with, but at 2 am on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January, I woke up with one heck of a pain just under my rib cage and it would not stop. I got up and said to myself, maybe I had better go to the hospital. But then, I was sort of afraid to drive. Around 11 am, I called my lady friend and told her what was going on and she and a young lady who lives with her drove over and at 1 pm I went to the ER at Kaiser Hospital and told them what was going on and they put me on a gurney and had the doctors all over me."

George was found to have some gall stones that will have to come out. We haven't heard from George since this procedure was carried out. He did say, "I would like to attend the Reunion in Tacoma but it's such a hassle to travel, walking with a cane, my knees won't take it any more.

[Ed. Note: We missed you, George. Hang in there. If anyone would like to send George a note, his address is, 109 Wilshire Ave., Vallejo, CA 94591-7937. He was an original member of the 91<sup>st</sup>, served as a gunner, remained in England after his tour and eventually became Sergeant Major of the 91<sup>st</sup> BG. George is a founding member of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA and past President of the Western Division for several years before the divisions merged.]

● **Lester Rentmeester's** letter has been in our "in basket" for much too long. Dr. Les writes: "You have a lot of information in each copy of the *Ragged Irregular*. Our war is quickly becoming ancient history but your publication is extremely interesting to those of us who were there. I was a pilot in the 401<sup>st</sup> Squadron from Nov. 1943 to May 1944.

"The reason that I am writing is to let you and your readers know about some stories about the 91<sup>st</sup> that have appeared in recent publications.

"A story 'Help From an Unexpected Source' tells of Czech-sabotaged cannon shells which appeared in the Dec. 2000 issue of 'Voyageur' magazine. It has been reprinted in 'Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul,' 2001, and 'Legacy of Daedalus,' 2001. Both books have circulations over 300,000.

"A story, 'Yes, by Damn, We're Going Back to Berlin' a story of the first Berlin raid led by the 91<sup>st</sup>. It was reprinted in 'Eyewitness to World War II,' published by Forbes.

Sincerely, Les."

● **Tron Jean Pierre** from Gonesse, France, has written: "Dear Sir, On February 5<sup>th</sup> 1944 and April 28, 1944, the 91<sup>st</sup> BG participated in the raid on AVORD Air Base. I am looking for witnesses about this raid. Could you make a request in the next newsletter of your association?

"I need this information to realyze AVORD air base historical account. Thank you very much for your help."

Sincerely, Tron

Ed Note: Avord is a small town southeast of Bourges, and almost due south of Paris. Havelaar's book, The Ragged Irregulars of Basingbourn, has a brief paragraph on page 99, Chapter 10, "Big Week," that refers to a mission on 5 Feb 44 to bomb the airfield at Avord. Tron's request has also been published on the 91<sup>st</sup> e-mail "Ring" of Mike Banta and presumably, he has had some responses already. An interesting comment in Havelaar's book on the raid tells that five FW 200 Condor's took off from Avord, one hit a tree and three were shot down by P-38s.



**Golded Wings**

Late Report.....

**Golded Wings**

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● **Raymond L. Howard**, FM 324<sup>th</sup>, Liverpool, NY, Sept. 16, 2002. Son Duane Howard, on behalf of the family, writes: "[Dad] enlisted in the Army Air Corps at the start of WWII. He was stationed at Bassingbourn, England as an airplane mechanic. He served with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 91<sup>st</sup> bomb Group from 1942-1945. He was born in 1919 and passed away Sept. 16, 2002. He was married in England to Iris Treby and they had 58 wonderful years together. He touched many lives as a Barber and was a friend to all. He is survived by his Wife, Iris T. Howard, two Sons, Duane Raymond and Alan Lee Howard, six Grandchildren and two Great Grandchildren. He is greatly missed. He enjoyed reading the *Ragged Irregular*.

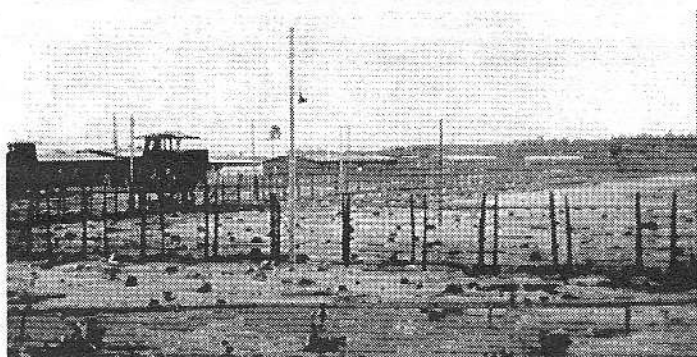
**Book Report**

William H. Wheeler, former 401<sup>st</sup> Pilot and author of the popular book, *Bomber Pilot*, (reviewed in the January 2001 issue of the *Ragged Irregular*) announces the publication and availability of his new book, *Shootdown*.

Wheeler was held as a Prisoner of War for 21 months in Stalag Luft III after being shot down on his 24<sup>th</sup> mission over Schweinfurt, Germany, in August 1943. He experienced solitary confinement, relentless interrogation, and trauma of being locked in a body-packed boxcar for three days

His real test of leadership began on a cold wintry night in January 1945 when the Germans hurriedly evacuated 12,000 Allied POWs within the sound of the Russian guns.

POW camp photographs and illustrations are outstanding. They will bring out the reality of the bleakness and hardship experienced by the airmen whose lot it was to suffer this humility of war.



Stalag Luft III POW Camp—1943/45

● **James K. Sanders** "Mission to Merseburg"

"The clothing included a heated jacket, heated pants, and heated gloves, and were wired and plugged into the B-17's electrical system. Foot wear included socks, boots, and over them were wooly boots with rags stuffed inside for insulation. There was a metal helmet and an oxygen mask. Also useful, a flak jacket, that was made of sheet metal, attached around the neck and extended just below the knees. Each crew member also had a parachute that would attach on the front waist-high.

"The plane sometimes reached altitudes of 30,000 feet and there would be a period of cold, as low as -50 degrees below zero, lasting 4-5 hours. The waist gunner had an armor plate built into the plane for protection. At times, during the Merseburg mission, it became necessary to lie against the metal armor plate, drape the flak jacket over the back, and use the .50 caliber waist gun to protect the face and head. During this mission, the flak was so heavy that it left over 300 holes in the plane.

● **William A. Tregler**, LM, 441<sup>st</sup>, Ocala, FL, May 19, 2002. Son, William D. Tregler, writes: "My Dad was still very active with the sheet metal artwork until the last month of his long life. He passed away suddenly due to heart failure. A son could not ask for a better father than I had.

"All his photos were destroyed in a flood in 1987. If anyone remembers my Dad and may have some photos, I will gladly pay for any costs involved to get a few copies. My e-mail address is <Doug134@aol.com>

Please extend my thank you to all veterans who have fought for the freedom I now enjoy." Address: 1109 Richmond, Darien, IL 60561.

● **Arthur W. Mack** 306<sup>th</sup> BG, Palmyra, VA, Aug. 21, 2002. Phil Mack, RI Editor, wishes to honor his only brother who was a classmate in Flying School, 43D, and who completed a combat tour of 30 missions in a B-17 in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. Phil writes: "Our tours overlapped. Assigned directly to a B-17 crew as Co-Pilot, I arrived in the UK in Aug. 1943. Art came over as a Pilot with his own crew about three months later. We used to phone each other after each mission to find out if the other got back.

Art was awarded the DFC for a mission to Halberstadt, Jan. 11, 1944—the same day the 91<sup>st</sup> was awarded its second Distinguished Unit Citation for the mission to Oschersleben. The 1<sup>st</sup> Air Division split up to attack three targets. Art's ship took a lot of hits from attacking fighters. Heavily damaged, with three wounded men, an engine on fire, his elevator and rudder control cables severed, still under heavy attack, he managed to maintain control using the autopilot elevator control and manual control only for the ailerons.

He dove for some lower clouds and told the crew they had the option to bail out, but with three wounded men on board, he would try to make it back to England. All of the crew elected to remain with the ship. He was able to struggle back to an awkward landing at the base of the 379<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group at Kimbolton. All of the crew survived and completed their tours in June 1944. Art went on to a career as an airline Captain until his retirement.

Phil and Art Mack, Bassingbourn  
December 25, 1943

## Folded Wings

● **Roger Armstrong**, LM 401<sup>st</sup>, Garden Grove, CA, July 11, 2002 of Alzheimers. A memorial service was held in his honor July 17, 2002, at the Chapel in Westminster Park, Westminster, CA. Roger was a Radio Operator on the crew of John Askins and was shot down on the Nov. 2, 1944 mission to Merseburg, captured and imprisoned until the War's end. His story is written in his autobiography, "U S A The Hard Way." This is an excellent book that was reviewed in the October 1999 issue of the *Ragged Irregular*.

● **Mary Bankovsky**, wife of Nicholas Bankovsky, LM 401<sup>st</sup>, Palm Bay, FL, passed away on or about July 10, 2002. Together they had attended many reunions and had been planning on attending the recent reunion in Tacoma.

● **Menford "Skip" M. Borgerson**, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret), FM 401<sup>st</sup>, Santa Ana, CA, Aug. 18, 2002, in his early '80s from complications of cancer. He flew most of his missions in "Old Battleaxe," and completed his 35<sup>th</sup> mission in late March, 1945. He is survived by one daughter, Donna Mae, a granddaughter, Jennifer, and a grandson, Jeff, as well as crew members Conrad Lohoefer, Top Turret-Engineer, Visalia, CA, Dick Melcher, Tail gunner, Appleton, WI, and Navigator, Gene Johnson, Altamont, NY. Burial was to be held in Southern California. [Information supplied by Conrad Lohoefer.]

● **Benedict Bernard Borostowski**, FM 401<sup>st</sup>, LaSalle, IL, April 11, 2000, Age 80, Retired Postal Service. In training as Ball Turret/Radio Operator when the 91<sup>st</sup> was formed at

● **Robert B. Compton**, LM 322<sup>nd</sup>, Levelland, TX, date not given. Reported by his cousin, Marguerite McLain. Box 174, Hart, TX, 79043. He is also survived by daughter, Bobbie Nell McDaniel, 2658 Colorado Ave., San Angelo, TX, 76901. Mrs. McLain commented that "Robert did so look forward to Group Reunions."

● **James V. LaGrossa**, FM 322<sup>nd</sup>, N Little Rock, AR, Sept. 20, 2001 of complications from diabetes. Submitted by Joanne LaGrossa who says, "He was always proud to have been in the 91<sup>st</sup>."

● **Cloren A. "Bud" Meade**, LM, 323<sup>rd</sup>, Beloit, WI, Aug. 19, 2002, age 78, of pancreatic cancer. The following is quoted from the Beloit Daily News as written by Jeff Bolter, Staff Writer:

"Former Beloit City Councillor and prisoner of war, Cloren Meade, wasn't one to sit back and wait for things to happen. He was a strong person."

"Charles Meade, one of Cloren's four sons, said, 'He had his beliefs and nobody was going to change them. He cared for the city and I think he felt it was somewhat of a civic duty.'"

"Meade, 78, a World WarII B-17 pilot and prisoner of war,.....stayed pretty well clear of veterans activities until around 1980 when Congress ordered the recognition of former POWs' Charles Meade said.

"His involvement with veteran's service groups didn't begin until he joined the American Ex-POWs in 1980, 37 years after his B-17 went down in the Netherlands.

"It started losing engines on the way over," Charles Meade said."

"Meade was taken to the POW camp Stalag 17 where he remained for two years," Jean Meade, wife of 56 years, said. Meade retired from the Beloit Corporation in 1980 and was appointed to the City Council in 1986."

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

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#### THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

These Newsletters are published quarterly: January, April, July and October. The R/I's purpose is to keep alive the spirit of the 91st Bombardment Group (H) and to maintain the fellowship of all of those who fought together in World War II from AF Station 121 in Bassingbourn, England from 1942-1945.

Material for publication should be sent to the Editor, Steve Penn 716182 Kelly Woods Dr., Ft. Meyer FL 33908. "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.

MacDill, Florida, 1942. Shot down on a mission to Bremen April 17, 1943 along with five other ships from the 91<sup>st</sup>. Crewed B-17F 42-5070, "Invasion II." Pilot Oscar O'Neill, whose aircraft was in contention with the "Memphis Belle" [first to complete 25 combat missions]. He is survived by sons Joseph and Robert and daughters Christine, Rose Ann, Jeanette, and Mary Ann. Belatedly submitted by his long time friend and POW buddy, Norman L. Thompson from Macon, GA.

Folded Wings Continued top of next column.....

● **James K. Sanders**, FM 401<sup>st</sup>, Roanoke, VA. Date not given in write-up sent to the 91<sup>st</sup> e-mail ring by his son. "My father recently lost his battle with cancer. He was one of the great generation that put his life on the line for our freedom in WWII. I am sending this message as a tribute to him and his service to this country." James was a waist gunner on "Zootie Cutie," and flew his missions between June 19 and August 26, 1944, including two missions to Merseburg.

Notes from one of James' missions to Merseburg will bring back some memories to fellow 91sters:

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