

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd Bomb Sq.



323rd Bomb Sq.



Supporting Units



324th Bomb Sq.



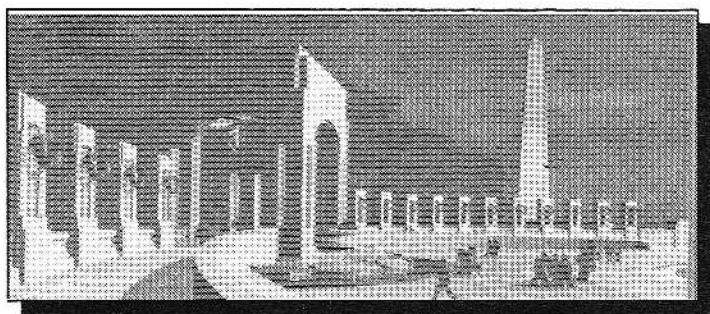
401st Bomb Sq.

Vol. Vol. 36 No. 2

91st Bombardment Group H

April 2003

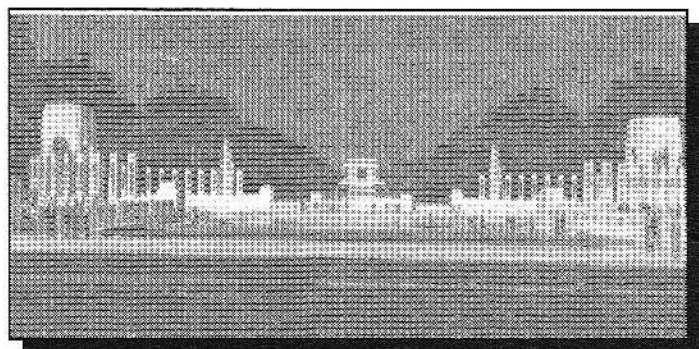
NATIONAL WW II MEMORIAL-Washington DC **(Scheduled for completion - Spring 2004)**



Atlantic Arch with Washington Monument

The memory of America's World War II generation will be preserved within the physical memorial and through the World War II Registry of Remembrances, an individual listing of Americans who contributed to the war effort. Any US Citizen who helped win the war, whether a veteran or someone on the home front, is eligible for the Registry. Names in the Registry will be forever linked to the Memorial's bronze and granite representations of their sacrifice and achievement. A donation is not required to enter a name in the Registry. However, if you would like to receive a certificate that includes your name and the name(s) of the individuals you honored, a minimum \$20 donation is required.

The Registry itself is currently under development. When completed it will be for viewing on the WW II Website. It will also be available for viewing electronically on the grounds of the WW II Memorial when the memorial is dedicated in May 2004.



View from 17th Street

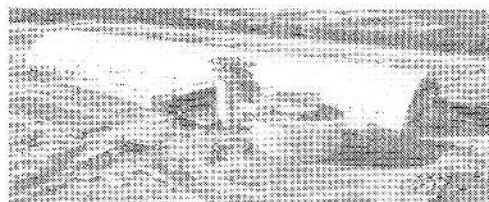
To Contact Call: 1-800-639-4WW2 or write to:

National World War II Memorial
2300 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 501
Arlington VA 22201

or E-mail: custsvc@wwiimemorial.com

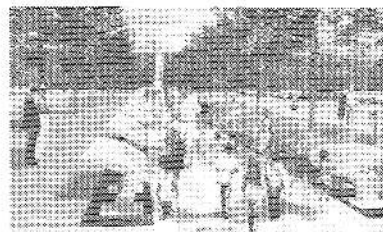
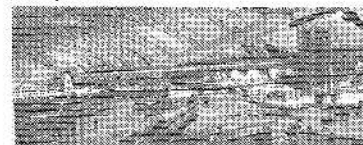
The National WW II Memorial will be the first national memorial dedicated to all who served during WW II. The memorial, which will be established by the American Battle Monuments Commission, will honor all Military Veterans of the war, the citizens on the home front, the nation at large, and the high moral purpose and idealism that motivated the nation's call to arms. The Second World War will be the only 20th century event commemorated on the Mall's central axis.

NEW AIR SPACE MUSEUM



176 Acre Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center

INSIDE HANGER



WALL OF HONOR

MORE INFORMATION ON
MUSEUM ON PAGE 6

**TWO REASONS TO HOLD OUR 2004
REUNION IN - WASHINGTON D.C.**

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER

I am writing this on 16 March - just one day before the deadline set for Iraq to show complete compliance with the many UN resolutions. It is a difficult time - made more so by the fact that one of my sons is already in the Theater as perhaps some of your children are. I am acutely aware of the similarity to the period 67 years ago this month when a belligerent, but outgunned at the time, Germany marched into the Rhineland. France, Britain and others procrastinated. Americans - barely coming off the bottom of the Depression - merely spoke of it as "Europe's War." One can only wonder what would have happened if the threat had been faced then; perhaps like your Grandmother, mine said, "A stitch in time saves nine." I took the opportunity on 4 March to write to the American Memorial Committee in Sainte Nazaire, France to mention the similarity and lament the strain that it is putting on Franco-American relations; I told them I could not speak for other members of the 91st BGMA with regard to the current situation. However, I felt I could assure them that we of the 91st deeply appreciate the honor they have shown to the 1942 sacrifices of our fellow-crewmen by their gifts (\$10,000) a few years ago to the Mighty Eighth Museum in the name of the 91st, 303rd, 305th and 306th BG. I have also suggested to the other three members of "The Four Horsemen" of the 8th Air Force that they might want to assure those who continue to honor us of our gratitude.

In your Board's Conference Call on 8 Feb 03 we reviewed progress on establishing a separate account for the "Memorial Maintenance Fund" which would include the Prop Memorial at Basingbourne. Into this will go the proceeds from sale of the Bailey Art lithographs "The Ruhr Valley Raiders" (see below right) and specified donations that you may make. As of this writing we have received \$550 from the former and over \$1,000 in the latter. Our Treasurer will continue to maintain a separate line item of "Memorials" in the regular accounting into which will go the one dollar from dues and corporate matching contributions that may be prohibited from use outside the US; from this we fund floral displays at various cemeteries which Jake Howland so efficiently coordinates. "Ace" Johnson was finally able to get a clarification from IRS saying we could use a separate "Memorial Maintenance Fund" to pay maintenance expenses abroad if the trust was set up in the US with appropriate termination provisions. The Board will be responsible for managing the account and contacts with cooperating entities abroad. I have advised the East Anglia Aviation Society, the Friends of the 91st (who will be completing minor renovations this spring) and others. Through our long-time friend Vince Hemmings we have heard that the Cambridgeshire government may be interested in working with us; that would be a blessing as many of our friends across the pond - just like us - are aging just a wee bit. Having received no viable proposals for Reunion 2004 for an east coast site, after reviewing various possibilities, your Board decided to maintain the practice of alternating Reunion location among east, central and west and chose Washington, DC for the summer of 2004. The WW II Memorial is scheduled for opening the last week of May 2004 with all the attendant hoopla and crowds. Having run a

colonial folk festival 40 miles from DC from 1971-85 on Memorial Day weekend I am quite aware that we encountered 13 years in which it rained out of the 15; temperatures and humidity are far from the pleasantries that we gave you in Tacoma in 2002. Late September or early October would be cooler, drier and less costly or congested, so for those of you who contemplate attending your preference can be expressed to any of your Board members. The Board plans to hire Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. to run the Reunion (do the heavy lifting) with our own W.W.Hill as Reunion Chairman to coordinate with them (and take any blame) so your Board members can stand around and smile. Nancy Perri and Judy Williams have volunteered to oversee the Registration process (which Armed Forces Reunions will man), so you can see that if you want to help you had better hurry up and contact:

W. W. Hill at 703-256-9165 E-mail Wwarhill@aol.com.

Especially you younger folks, act now and avoid the rush! Put May or September 2004 on your schedule. We would love to see a lot of active Associate members in Washington.

For those of you who may have ordered Reunion 2002 memorial wine glasses or copies of the group photos (by squadron, Merseburg participants or POW), I think I finally have all of them sent out. If you ordered some and have not received them, please let me know; you have been very patient with me. We still have a few left, but I suggest you call me before sending money. As for the PX, Marv Goldberg is finally back to as good a health as most of us can expect these days; he told me last week that he is striving to assure a one-week maximum turn around on all orders (if the item is in stock). It is a time-consuming job that takes a lot of house space, spouse forbearance and tedious effort, but Marv believes it is worth his effort to make the items available to you; hope you will be as nice to thank him as many of you have done who ordered Reunion 2002 items from me. Marv will soon be stocking the Turner Publications' Memoirs of the 91st Bomb Group book at \$55 plus \$3 shipping.

Enough for now. Keep our service men and women in your prayers and add one for your officers. Ed Gates

CHINO, CALIFORNIA 2003 RALLY ROUND

MAY 16, 17, 18 Ontario California Hilton Hotel

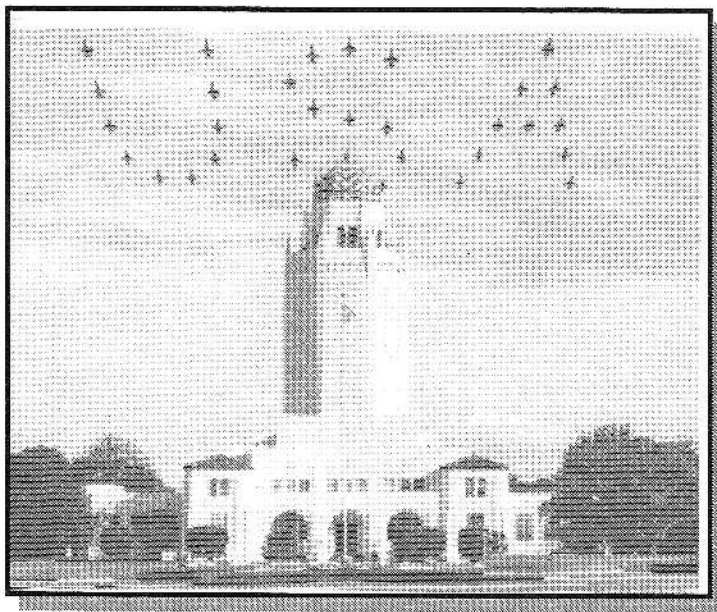
Must make own Room Reservation \$109 per night
reservation must be made by April 25th to get this rate
Hotel No. 909-980-0400 mention "91st BG"

Jim Shepherd - Coordinator 714-970-5540

\$35 for Air Show Ticket, transportation & misc. expense sent
to Asay Johnson, 590 Aloha Dr.
Lake Havasu City AZ 86406-4229

This was sent in by Lois & Roy Fratz 401st BS :

It's a Great photo of an Air Force training Squadron flying in never-done-before "USA" formating over the control tower Taj Mahal (HQ Building) of Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio Texas. Pray for all our young men and women serving our country and going into danger that we might preserve our Freedom and pray for wisdom of our leaders.



OUR NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS ARE:

Thomas W. Heller 322nd BS
Robert J. Lawson 322nd BS
Donald R. Wilson AL
Maurice Boultinghous 401st BS

We thank you for your support

Missing in Action

The following members have had their RI's returned to us.
If anyone knows if they have an address change or are deceased,
please let us know:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Robert W. Cooley | Baldwin MI |
| Robert G. Dandoy | Peoria AZ |
| Robert K. Fox | Hyattsville MD |
| Julian A. Pope | Tavares FL |
| Ted L. Skawinski | Las Vegas NV |
| Ellsworth Stumbo | Tavares FL |

We want to wish Paul Chryst and his group a wonderful "Back to Bassingbourn" Reunion.

May 9th to May 20, 2003
God Bless you all and keep you safe

91ST BGMA OFFICERS 2003-2004

PRESIDENT
Edward C. Gates
13311 16th Ave. Ct. S.
Tacoma WA 98444
Tel: (253) 535-4246

1ST VICE PRESIDENT
Marvin M. Goldberg
437 Narragansett St. NE
Palm Bay FL 32907-1332
Tel: (321) 953-3694

2ND VICE PRESIDENT
Phil Mack
17521 155th Ave. SE
Renton WA 98058-9087
Tel: (425) 271-5277
FAX (425) 227-8190
(mackavco@aol.com)

SECRETARY-TREASURER
Asay B. Johnson
590 Aloha Drive
Lake Havasu City AZ 86406-4559
Tel: (928) 453-3114
FAX (928) 453-6370
(ace91bgma@raz.net)

HISTORIAN
Earl Pate, Jr.
104 Skyview Dr.
Hendersonville TN 37075
Tel: (615) 824-7909
(cp91bg@mindspring.com)

R.I. EDITOR
Steve Perri
12750 Kelly Greens Blvd.
Ft. Myers FL 33908
Tel: (239) 454-5838
FAX (239) 454-0365
(deltareb@aol.com)

Letters to the Editor:

At different times during the month I was thinking of you and reflecting on how it was for me as I was laboring away on my first issue of the RI. And here it is! Congratulations on an excellent issue. You've made some changes and added some innovations - you now have your personal stamp on it and it looks great.

Thanks for the kind remarks.

Sincerely, Phil and Randi

During my phone call Nancy says you have received other material concerning Father Mazaika, I'm looking forward to your article.

Steve, what you are doing is just simply great. Where there was only a line before, you are putting some heart, some feeling, and some tribute to our fellow comrades who are leaving us a bit more quickly all the time.

Sincerely, Harold Mannon

Note from the Editor:

I think it's time to recognize that no organization can survive without the support of its members. As you know - that support can appear in many forms, - attending reunions - helping at the reunions - sending dues in promptly - keeping the Membership Chairman advised of changes in addresses etc. Without the latter, for example, the Newsletter goes out - and comes back after a while - then the chase begins to find out the correct address. In most cases, it has to be junked at a cost to the group in time and funds. Do help us out, its important

To those friends who make donations, we shall forever be indebted.

TURNER BOOK REVIEWS

The Ragged Irregulars, Memoirs of the 91st Bomb Group, is a publication of excellent condensed stories and pictures of what the 91st Bomb Group personnel did from April 1941 through June 1945. The stories were written by men who had "been there and done that".

Reading through the book, one finds many stories of who did what, and what happened to whom. There are lots of stories and photographs of the combat crews and ground crews, including one of the 441st men showing me (back row, 4th from the right on page 92. There is a picture of Clark Gable on page 85.

The only criticism of the book is that it would have been most appropriate to have had a picture of Major General Wray, our first Commander, not to take away from Colonel Terry, who was perhaps Commander longer.

On page 110 thru 122 is an Honor Roll, lest we forget all of those men of the 91st who gave their all for the USA..

Finally, in the last section 127-151 are photos of many former 91st BG members showing how they were then and now along with a short biography. What a pity more former members did not participate by sending in their photos for us to reminisce - which for many may not have been "The best years of our lives" and may have been the most interesting. However, on pages 152-155 there is a list of the cast who participated in WW II.

SUBMITTED BY WHITMAL W. HILL, 323RD BS AND 441ST SUB DEPOT

LETTER FROM ED GATES RE: TURNER BOOK

As Phil Mack and I spent many days and many reviews of this book, I complained about discrepancies in our history like number of aircraft lost and who did what and when etc. I completed four days of research at National Archives in early December. Imagine my chagrin to learn that some of the "facts" of which I was so sure of - just were not right!

So if you read my contribution to the Turner book on "Merseburg" - be sure to also read the one "Yes, I Remember it well". In case any of Donohue's crew read it, they did lead the low element of the 323rd Sq. - not Kirkham - and if we were flying his left wing (not the squadron leader's), it may have been because we slipped over into that position after Liekhus' crew was shot down. The reports show that FW-190's were coming in below the 323rd lead and shooting up because neither the lead nor his right wingman had an operating ball turret - which explains why the GAF pilot that I eye-balled was at the same level we were in the low element.

The Archives also show that we may have flown *Outhouse Mouse* only once even though we had our crew photo taken in front of it. We did fly five missions in *Nine-O-Nine* including my first on 30 Aug. 44 and the Merseburg disaster (at least I got that right!) However, it also seems that our crew did not fly an element lead until December. (I may have been a free spirit, but I don't think I got that far away from the body.)

To compound my inaccuracies, I also got the date that the *Memphis Belle* completed its 25th mission wrong (page 12). It appears the *Belle* really flew #25 on May '43 to Heligoland (Wilhelmshaven) which was the 39th mission for the 91st BG. (I used reference Under photo page 63) (So much for my accuracy.)

There are also many errors and omissions in the index listings of aircraft in spite of the fact that I twice asked Turner to print it exactly as I sent it to them.

(IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE A COPY OF MY "INDEX OF AIRCRAFT" PLEASE SEND A SSAE (LEGAL SIZE)

TO: Ed Gates 13311 16th Ave. Ct. So. Tacoma WA 98444

Elaine Gladitsch (William Gladitsch 324thSQ) sent a letter to the Ragged Irregular sending her dues and the following: I finally received "Memoirs of the 91st BG, The Ragged Irregulars, Turner Publishers. I was very disappointed to note on page 152, the listing of 91st Bomb Group Troops - that the list is incomplete. Members of my late husband's crew, namely Wayne Lutz, navigator, William McCullough, co-pilot, Walter Koontz, Bombardier, Edward McClintock, Engineer, William Howell- Radio Operator and William Hansen, Tail Gunner are not included in this list. Their plane was *DF-Q-Shure Hot*. Originally this was *Shure Shot*, but when they were assigned to it, they felt the name was bad luck, so they removed one of the "S" and renamed it *Shure Hot*. They completed their 25th mission on April 25, 1945 Pilsen, the last mission of the war. On this mission, #884-Sure Hot-led the 2nd Element, piloted by Lt. Wm. Gladitsch. The photo of 4 airmen on page 34 of Aviation History is a photo of Lt. Gladitsch and crew.

Thank you for continuing the Ragged Irregular. My children and grandchildren are absorbed in the retelling of events.

FROM CLYDE R. BURDICK, 322ND Bomb Squadron

I received my book from Turner Publishing and am very pleased with it. It's too bad that there were not a lot more of the 91stre that contributed their histories into the book. The book is excellent.

FROM JACKIE STARCKER

"Wife of the late Tony Starcker - nose artist"

I, like the Turner Publishing Co., would like to extend my appreciation to Phil Mack, Asay Johnson and Ed Gates for your help in coordinating the new 91st book. I know if my husband were alive, he'd be very proud. Thank you

Would you like to participate in the 91st BG E-mail Ring

The Ring is composed of over 100 veterans and associate members of the 91st BGMA. Its purpose is explained in the paragraph below along with the terms and conditions of participation. If you wish to participate contact me. I will add your name to our "Group E-mail list".

MIKE BANTA, 91ST RING - E-mail b17banta@aol.com

Terms of participation in the 91st BG E-mail Ring:

This is an electronic means for those of us 91sters who have moved into the computer age to stay in touch. All members served in the 91st or are members of the 91st BGMA. No solicitations are allowed and we request that all e-mail be acceptable for family viewing. No politics, please. We are unable to delete or add your E-mail address during periods that you are going to be away from your computer for an extended time.

The Ring is strictly a means to find answers to questions about 91st personnel, missions and other data and to share old memories. When we are asked something to do with the 91st - one of us usually comes up with the answer.

DESIGN FOR AIR FORCE MEMORIAL UNVEILED

For the better part of the past century, the men and women of the Air Force and its predecessors have soared high above the clouds in defense of the nation and freedom-loving people everywhere.

Those ideals will soon be reflected in a Memorial designed to reach high into the skyline of the nation's Capital, honoring those who have slipped the surly bonds to overcome America's enemies, both at home and abroad.

The design for the new Air Force Memorial was unveiled during a ceremony in Arlington, Virginia March 5. The Memorial will provide a fitting tribute to the millions who have served, are serving today, and those who will serve tomorrow, said retired Maj. Gen. Edward F. Grillo, president of the Air Force Memorial Foundation.



The Air Force does not have a National Memorial, so this is certainly long overdue. We feel this memorial will honor the millions of patriotic men and women who have served in the Air Force and its predecessor organizations -- the aviation pioneers of yesterday. It will serve as a source of pride and tribute to those serving today. And certainly to recognize the nation's military industrial base that has made American airpower the most formidable air force on Earth. Most importantly, it will serve as a tribute to those who have paid the ultimate price. Construction on the memorial, designed by New York architect James Ingo Freed, will begin in 2004 and be completed in September 2006, coinciding with the 59th anniversary of the Air Force. The design features three "spires" reaching heights of 270, 230 and just above 200 feet. The memorial will be located just southwest of the Pentagon on a "promontory" piece of land. The three spires will represent the Air Force in a manner that is projecting itself into the air and space -- gracefully yet boldly.

From Mathias G. Pettera -
29696 Highway 131
Wauzeka, WI 53826-9612

He was Assistant Crew Chief of *Anxious Angel* and sent the RI the obituaries listed on page 11 of this issue. He is interested in hearing from anyone who was on the combat crews that he was assistant crew chief on. See list below:

- 431 The Saint - Pilot Earl Riley - (deceased)
- 437 - Frank's Nightmare" - Pilot D.H. Frank
- 060 - Hell's Bell - Pilot Gwinn
- 061 General Ike - We had for 2 missions
- 929 - Lackin Shackin - Pilot - Amman
Crashed in Sweden. Was a story on it in the RI
- 509 - Liberty Run - Pilot - Hanna
- 869 - Hell N' High Water
- 779 - Pistol Packin Mama - 2 missions - to 324th
- 035 - Anxious Angel

BOOK REVIEW:

by Phil Mack (Reviewed in earlier RI)

THE GODS SMILED - A MEMOIR - By Walter Pickard (see page 10)
The fly leaf notes that this is the story of the tens of thousands of young Americans who became "Accidental Warriors" serving in the Air Force during WW II. He was assigned to the 91st BG, trained to pilot and command a B-17, "My Desire" arriving the first of December 1943.

He describes in gripping detail how he was forced to ditch his battle-damaged Fortress in the North Sea with the loss of half of his crew. These war stories make for grim and sad reading, but the lighter side of life, while on leave in London and on detached duty in North Africa and Italy, is not omitted.

After a spell in Reserve status (between the end of WW II and start of the Korean War) he was recalled to active duty and became a career Regular Officer.

Part Three of the book relates the next twenty-five years of the writer's duties during the undeclared war with the Soviets.

While subtitled "A Memoir", the book more closely resembles a classical old-fashioned autobiography, being a personal account of the writer's entire life. In addition to his wartime experiences, he told - "the Rest of the Story" his early life before the War and his later career in the Air Force after the war. He retired at the rank of Colonel.

THE EIGHT AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2003 REUNION - October 14th through 19th - COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

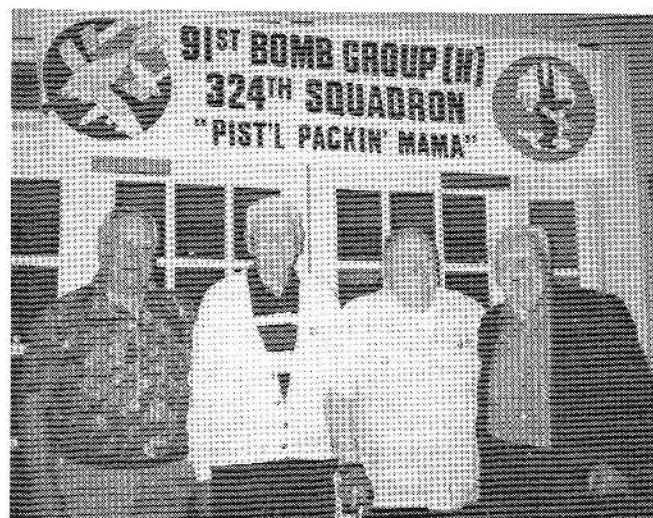
The Robert Nolan Florida Chapter of the
Eighth Air Force Historical Society

FLORIDA REUNION - MAY 8, 9, 10 & 11

HOLIDAY INN - BOCA RATON TOWN CENTER

Palm Beach Princess Cruise - Hotel Rate \$65 per night

Call Bill Uphoff - (516-747-4295 for reservations)



Dom Zurrela Charles Justen Charles Holman George (Red) Cameron

RO TT PILOT BT

FIRST TIME TOGETHER SINCE 1944

(cont'd from page 1)

The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum located in Washington DC.

Is the world's most visited museum facility with over 9 million visitors per year. It holds artifacts that range all the way from the beginnings of flight culminating with the era of space flight. The original museum, created August 12, 1946 and was followed by the new Museum which opened to the public for the first time July of 1976. As big as the main building is, the displays account for only about 10% of the actual collection available. Thus, the displays are rotated in and out for special events or as new exhibits are finished. The other 90% are in storage and are rarely seen by visitors to the museum.

Another facility was badly needed for the public to view all the artifacts and it would have to be a huge structure, well over 600 feet long and many stories in height as well as completely air conditioned and environmentally controlled. On October 1, 1996, Congress passed a bill authorizing the construction and design of a new museum but did not commit any federal funds for building the project which will cost about 310 million. It must be built entirely with voluntary contributions.

Enter Mr. Steven F. Udvar-Hazy, President, CEO and founder of International Lease Finance Corp. Based in Los Angeles CA. His company is the largest purchaser of commercial aircraft in the world and he then leases them to major airlines around the world. He happens to be a lover of aviation history and on October 8, 1999 he pledged \$60 million towards the construction of the new facility, the largest single donation in the history of the Smithsonian, but just a start on the road to complete funding. For his most generous contribution, he and Senator Howard Baker were named co-chair of the Campaign and they then set out to recruit further contributions from other corporations, foundations, associations and individuals to help fund the new addition.

The new facility, a 176 acre complex is located at the Dulles International Airport in northern Virginia just outside of Washington, DC. The main building will be a series of hangar-like structures, over 1000 feet in length and over 10 stories high, housing 180 aircraft, 100 space artifacts and missiles and hundreds of aviation artifacts. Anyone who has visited either the old original building or the new Air and Space Museum will attest to the superb way the artifacts are displayed and how our rich history is preserved.

Other features will include classrooms and hands-on demonstrations for groups, restorations that can be viewed by the visitors, archival resources that visitors can use and one of the new large format theaters. There will even be an observation deck to listen and view the airport air traffic. This new facility will not only enhance the original NASM facility, but will probably surpass it.

Help us create this facility to honor not only our past endeavors, but also inspire future generations of aviators.

TO DFCS MEMBERS - Excerpts from the DFCS Magazine

In recognition of your receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross and **as a member of our DFC Society**, The Director of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington DC has reserved a space for the permanent placement of your name on the -

National Aviation and Space Exploration Wall of Honor.

With your agreement your name will be prominently displayed and forever honored as both an aviation enthusiast, a decorated veteran and a volunteer to aid in the construction of the world's greatest monument to the first century of manned flight, the new -

National Air & Space Museum Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center

During the July 2002 board meeting of the DFCS, the commitment to support the Wall of Honor was approved. This was further endorsed at the membership meeting during our recent convention in Washington DC. With your \$100 donation, you will have your name displayed on the plaque under the DFCS banner and will receive a commemorative certificate personalized with your name. All contributions are tax-deductible.

For more information, contact:

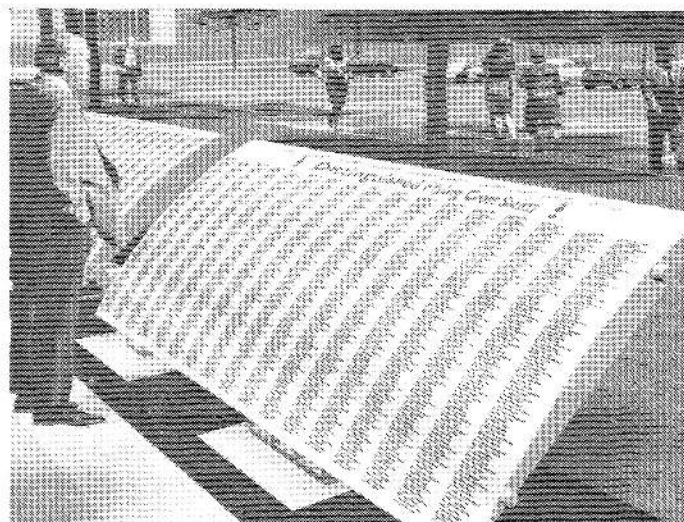
The Distinguished Flying Cross Society

4442 Vandever Ave.

San Diego CA 92120-3322

Toll Free 1-866-DFC-Medal (332-6332)

E-mail dfcs@dfcsociety.org

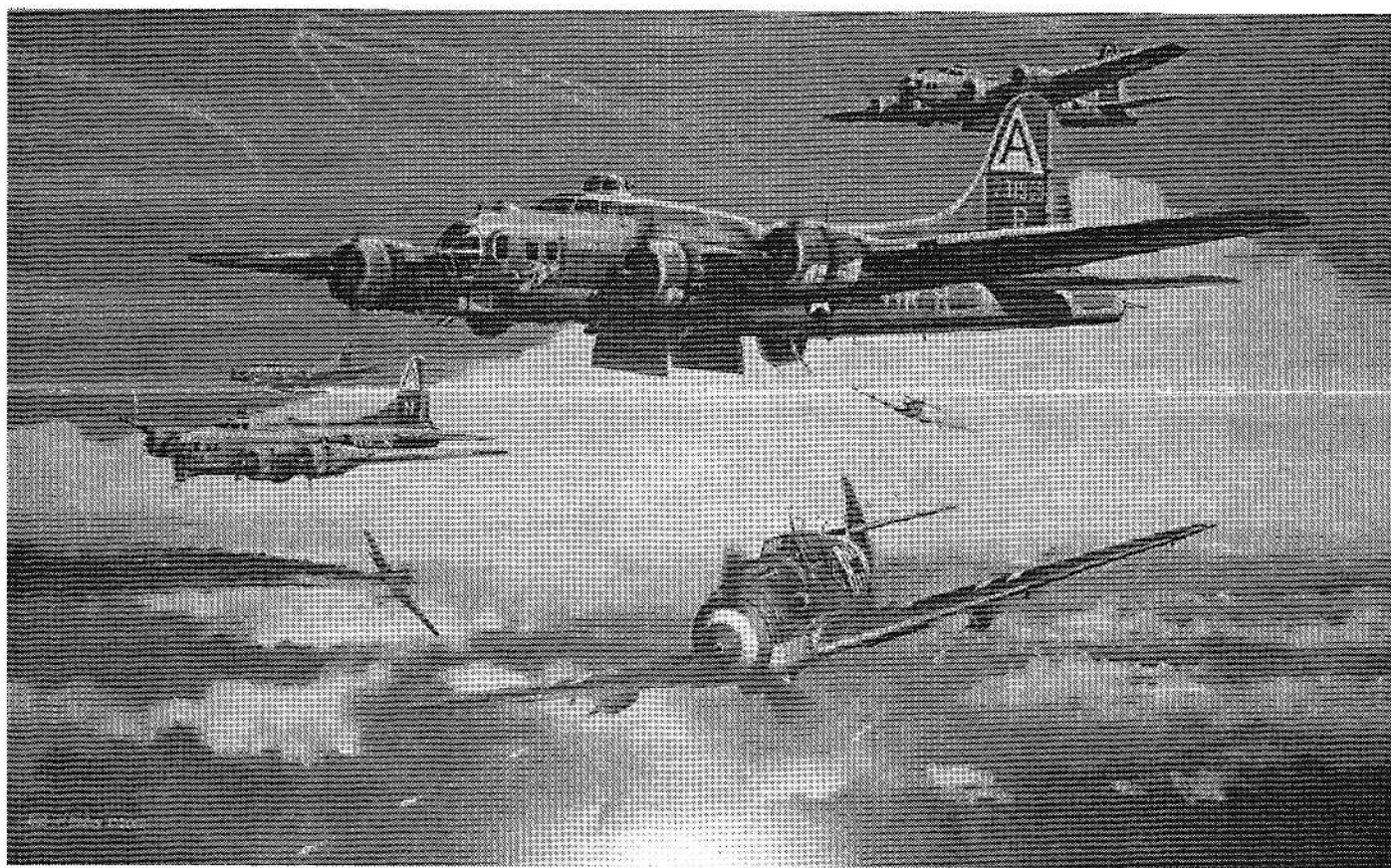
**WALL OF HONOR**

THE RUHR VALLEY RAIDERS

Below is the artist's representation of four famous aircraft of the 91st BG (H) under attack by Messerschmitt Bf 109's. The B-17's featured are **Nine-O-Nine** of the 323rd Sq., **Outhouse Mouse** of the 323rd Sq. (off the right wing), **The Wild Hare** of the 324th Sq. to **Mouse's** right and **General "Ike"** of the 401st Sq. trailing. In theory, they could all have been together on the same mission between 16 March and 26 November '44.

In fact, Jack O'Neil's crew with "Tex" Frye as navigator did fly **General "Ike"** in the 323rd Sq's. high element on "loan" from the 401st on the 2 Nov. '44 mission to Meresberg. Ed Gates flew **Nine-O-Nine** in Kirkham's crew in the low element on the same mission and they were hit by 109's, but neither the **Mouse** nor the 324th were flying.

All four were "gained" by the 91st BG in the first 76 days of 1944. The ground crew of **Nine-O-Nine** headed by M/Sgt. Rollin L. Davis and including Sgt. Yezdimer set an 8th Air Force record by keeping her flying for 124 consecutive missions without an abort due to maintenance. They also crewed **Outhouse Mouse** which completed 139 missions by the end of the war, one less than **Nine-O-Nine**. Gen. Eisenhower's namesake was christened by him on 11 April 44 and also survived the War in spite of a harrowing loss of the propeller off number three engine which barely missed his likeness when it sliced into the fuselage. Thank you M/Sgt. Davis and crew!!!!



Lithograph "The Ruhr Valley Raiders" donated by Robert Bailey \$85 unsigned \$135 signed by 14 members of the 91st BGMA
**The Proceeds from the sale of this Lithograph will go into a separate account called the
 "MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE FUND" which will include: The Prop Memorial at Bassingbourn.**

We are appreciative of Mr. Robert Bailey's honor to us and recognition of the 91st as the first to attack the Ruhr Valley. Unfortunately, other groups were separated from the 91st by clouds on the mission to Hamm on 4 Mar 43. With only 16 Flying Fortress's led by 22-year old Maj. Paul Fishburne, Commander of the 322nd Sq., the 91st BG completed its 22nd mission (22 must have been the lucky number that day) with on-target bombing of the key railroad yard. The Group was awarded the first of two Distinguished Unit Citations for their achievement while claiming 16 German aircraft - but four of the crews were shot down.

The 91st, 303rd, 305th and 306th BG's - the first of those that later became the 8th Air Force - arrived in England in October 1942 and entered combat the next month. Of the 38 officers and 47 enlisted men in the original crews, 32% completed 25 missions and another 15% survived wounds or reassignment to go home plus - nearly half of the 41% who were shot down and became POW's.

THE CRASH IN SWEDEN

By Christer Grerot (Swedish Priest)

This information was sent by me to one of the children of
W. Nee -The Pilot (deceased)-He wrote in the Rings,
Guestbook.

The plane (Boeing B-17G42-107178) crashed May 24, 1944 in the water in southern Sweden (Missing Air crew Report No. 5358) The plane was one of 616 B-17's heading for Berlin, Nauen and Rechling. They started in Bassingbourn. Immediately after the attack 33 planes were missing. On the way home, enemy fighters hit this plane.

TTG T/Sgt. Gaetano Scida was wounded in the neck, and WG S/Sgt. Robert D. Heimbach called out that 4 enemy fighters were attacking them. A fire broke out behind the pilot's chair (in the electrical wires), which took out the intercom-system. The Pilot, 1st Lt. William Nee gave the order to bail out, but 6 of them didn't hear the order (due to the failing intercom).

11:15 Nee, Co Pilot, 2nd Lt. Reginal Aragona and Scida bailed out 25km NE of Berlin. They became POW's in Germany and returned to USA May 1, 1945.

Navigator, 2nd Lt. Frederick T. Neel, Jr. put the fire out and took the controls along with Tail Gunner T/Sgt. Donald M. Spaulding as co-pilot.

11:57 Reached the Swedish Coast (town-Ystad) and the plane continued to Simrishamn.

The Crew bailed out and this is what happened to them:

- Sgt. D. Heimbach, Waist Gunner

Bailed out and 30" over ground a wind lifted him and took his parachute out over the water. Several boats from the fishing fleet tried to rescue him but when they were 30 meters from him the huge waves took him down and he drowned. He was later found and buried in Malmoe Sweden - December 14, 1944

- Sgt. Phillip J. Branner, Radio Operator - POW

• Sgt. Leonard A. Bielawski-Ball Turret Gunner - POW Parachuted after Heimbach and landed west of Simrishamn (SE Coast of Sweden) Returned to USA February 1945 and October 1944.

The plane headed south and reached Skillinge (where my father lived with his family at that time) and began to circle-the rest bailed out one by one:

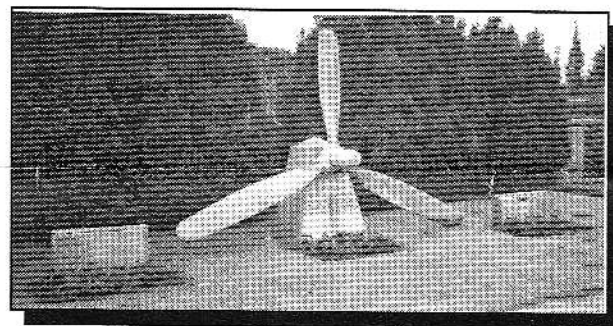
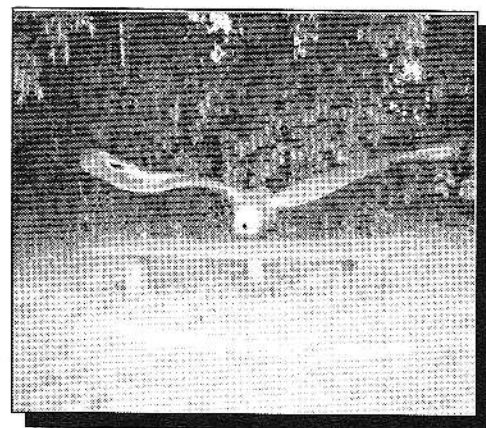
- Sgt. Donald M. Spaulding, Tail Gunner - His parachute jammed and he drowned. He was dead when the fishermen managed to get him from the water outside the harbor of Skillinge (his face badly injured). This was his 55th mission. He was buried in Malmoe among the others. It was a military funeral-sermon. Consul Riggs, Lt. Guy Shafer present.

Flowers from "Your Buddies")

- 2nd Lt. Richard Markley, Bombardier- Bailed out at Skillinge. Rescued but in shock. POW. Returned to USA - October 1945

• 2nd Lt. Fredrick T. Neel, Navigator - The Hero of crash: Flew the plane from Germany to Sweden and managed to get his buddies out of the plane before he crashed it in the water! Divers found the wreck empty-so he must have bailed out (The papers wrote). His remains were found July 8, 1944 by a little boy out fishing. The funeral service was led by O Nivenius, a young priest at that time but now a former Bishop in Sweden (who, by the way, ordained me as a Priest in 1980).

The crew that was rescued appeared very frightened during the rescue-operations, and not until they got in contact with the Swedish police and authorities did they become calm. Wrong Navigation? There were plenty of emergency-landing opportunities around because this part of Sweden is flat as a pancake - but than you have to be a pilot and Neel wasn't. The propeller from the airplane was placed directly in the soil on the by where the plane crashed. It was still there 8 years ago when I visited the place the last time. (I now live 350km away from there) The local museum of Skillinge had it under observation and with small means, tried to make it a memorial place.



Cemetery in Malmoe where most of the pilots KIA in Sweden had their funeral services.

Malmoe-a Swedish War-Cemetery with about 50 US crew members buried. Only 2 left there now-British - The rest moved to other war-cemeteries in France.

HOTEL SVEA- & LOKA-BRUNN

All that bailed out were first "guests" at the Hotel Svea (still in Simrishamn and still a famous Hotel)

They were later transported to a camp called Loka-brunn (That is Loka-spring, where over 1500 US flyers were kept for investigation and so on during the war. It is therefore I write "XXX" around POW - good food, swimming, dancing, meeting the local girls (with many local tragedies to follow and several babies with no fathers). Loka was a former health-center in Sweden - where you "drank water and you can still find the famous water in the supermarkets here in Sweden as "mineral-water from Loka"! Perhaps it was the salt and mineral loss in the food in the beginning of 1900 that gave the Swedes a lot of diseases-and the water apparently cured them.

As Editor of the Ragged Irregular, I want everyone to know how important the 91st Ring is for getting information that might otherwise be lost to us. The following are excerpts taken from the 91st Ring to show you what an important job its doing.

The preceding page has the story of 2nd Lt. Fredrick T. Neel, Jr. And the details of the crash of his B-17. All this information was gotten thru the Ring and the proper Cross will be put on 2nd Lt. Neel's grave. Our thanks to all who participate, its an invaluable source of information for us.

(See page 4 for information on joining the ring)

This is how the Ring works:

To Mike Banta-91st Ring from Randall Banky: 1/3/03
I am the Asst. Superintendent of the Luxembourg American Cemetery and was recently contacted by a Swedish Priest who told me that 2nd Lt. Fredrick T. Neel, Jr., buried here (killed in Sweden) actually was killed on 24th May 1944 not 1945 as listed in our records, the American Battle Monuments Commission's database, and as engraved on his cross. I would appreciate it if you could provide me with any information one 2nd Lt. Neel or place me in touch with someone who may provide additional information, I want to get his information corrected if it is indeed wrong

To Randall Banky from Mike Banta 1/3/03
We are the participants in the 91st BG E-mail Ring who answer questions put in the guest book of our web site. Thank you for taking good care of the graves of our fellow airmen who lost their lives, words cannot express our gratitude.

The priest is correct 2nd Lt. Neel was killed in action 24 May 1944

(see preceding page for the story)

To 91sters 1/13/03 From Mike Banta
Randall Banky of the Luxembourg American Cemetery would like to have a copy of MACR to correct an incorrect date on the gravestone for Fredrick T. Neel, Jr.. I feel certain that one of us has this MACR. Would you please scan it and send a copy to Randall Banky.

Notice to the Ring - From Mike Banta 1/14/03
Father Grerot forwarded a copy of F. T. Neel's death certificate to Randall Banky. This should confirm the date of death.

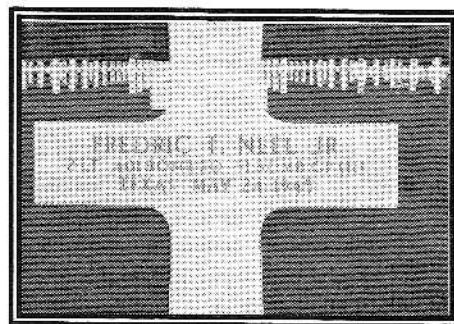
Christer Grerot & Mike Banta-From Randall Banky 1/28/03
I'm happy to report that I received the approval from my HQ today to order a new cross for 2nd Lt. Neel, which I have done. The information you both gave me provide irrefutable evidence that he died in 1944. I appreciate all that you have done

My next step is going to be to submit him for an award. Once I put some initial info together I'll run it past both of you. If you don't mind. Mr. Banta, I hate to bother you again but once I get the info together, I'll ask if you can send out an APB to see if its possible to contact any of the original crew members. Again, thank you. Randall Banky

To Randall and Christer 1/8/03 From Mike Banta-91st Ring
Its wonderful to hear that 2nd Lt. Fredrick T. Neel, Jr's. cross will be replaced with a cross bearing the correct year of his death, 1944. Thanks to both of you for making this correction.

To Steve Perri
2/17/03

My name is
Randall Banky
and I am the
Assistant



Superintendent of the U.S. Military Cemetery in Luxembourg where 2nd Lt. Neel is buried. Father Chris Grerot sent me a copy of the correspondence you sent him ref 2nd Lt. Neel and your desire to write about him in your newsletter.

Chris and I have been in contact for several months now and it was due to him contacting me that caused me to initiate the process to have a new cross erected for 2 Lt Neel (cross erroneously has 24 May 45 as date of death. Mr. Mike Banta of your organization also provided me with copies of the casualty report for that day's action (24 May '44). All told, the new cross is finished, we shall pick it up next week and then we'll wait for the ground to thaw so we can replace it. All the crosses are cemented into concrete beams underground and the tolerance on the cant is w/in 3/32", so it is a delicate process. I am enclosing the same picture of the cross I sent Chris, the engraving stands out because I rubbed sand from Omaha Beach in Normandy into the letters to provide a contrast. I also sent Chris the picture of 2nd Lt. Neel I found in the Just Plain Lonesome crew picture. One thing that struck me as odd was that according to all I've read, 2nd Lt. Neel was the navigator on his last flight, but the other photo (different squadron also) lists him as the bombardier. I would think that with the training involved, few men served as both navigators and bombardiers, can you shed any light? (Editors note - this was possible)

Part 2 of this whole matter is that I am also working to submit 2nd Lt. Neel for an award, as I'm finding out, this is proving no small feat. I am a retired USS Army Infantryman, I feel it is very important to recognize the valor and sacrifices made by you and your fellow servicemen. Current policy for award submission states that only commanding officers or eyewitnesses may submit personnel for awards. Chris has told me of his futile efforts to contact any surviving crew members. I'm working with him to substantiate the information that he's previously provided on that day's action. One of the crew members, S/Sgt. Bielawski, was the one that apparently described the event, but as you well know, the military requires authentication when dealing with awards (and rightly so). I'll be sending Chris pictures of the new cross once erected, if you'd like I'll include you in the mailing. I'd like to stay in touch with you as I continue in my award quest to compare notes. If I can be of any assistance with your endeavors, don't hesitate to contact me.
Randall Banky

Folded Wings (Continued from page 12)

• **Walter Merritt Pickard LM 323rd** **Luverne AL January 23, 2003, Age 82**

A retired Air Force Colonel, Walter Pickard was one of the almost vanished breed of Air Corps Pilots who learned to fly at the beginning of WWII on fabric-covered, open cockpit bi-planes; then commanded a four-engine B-17 Flying Fortress in over 300 hours of combat flying over Europe from 1943-44. Then in postwar years flew jet aircraft. He went from "Wind in the Wires" flying to the whine of jet engines.

He was a native of Luverne AL, attended Troy State and Auburn Universities and graduated from the University of Maryland as well as from the Air Command and Staff College.

After WWII he became a Regular Officer in the USAF. He held command and staff positions in a SAC Wing in Georgia, a Fighter Wing in England, on the Air Staff in the Pentagon, in the Military Assistance Group in Turkey, a Tactical Air Command base in Arizona, at the NATO Military Headquarters (SHAPE) in Belgium, with a final tour of duty as Chief of the Air Force Section of MAAG-France, in Paris before retiring in 1975.

In addition to his Command Pilot Wings, his Service decorations included two Air Force and one Joint Service Commendation Medals, four Air Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Legion of Merit. He was also a member of The Goldfish Club, an unofficial British order with membership limited to those airmen who survived an ocean ditching. He crash-landed a battle damaged B-17 in the North Sea in March 1944.

Colonel Pickard lived in Alexandria VA from 1975. He served on the Board of the Northridge Citizens Association, the Alexandria Beautification Comm. And on the Parish Council of Christ Episcopal Church involved in overseeing the conservation and restoration of that Church's historic buildings and grounds. He, with his wife designed and developed an award-winning pleasure garden at their home; and he wrote for gardening magazines and lectured on gardening to garden clubs and at the Williamsburg Garden Symposium.

He is survived by his wife Amy (Emma), a son John of Marietta Georgia, a daughter Martha Douglass Zink of Ruxton MD, five grandchildren and a sister, Dessie Davis in Destin FL. His marriage to Frances Howze ended in divorce in 1967. He will be buried in the family plot in Luverne, Alabama.

From Phil Mack:

This is sad information. I didn't know Walt was so ill. My first contact with him was after he visited the Tower Museum and sent me a photo which I published in the January 1998 issue of the RI. He wrote an excellent book, "The Gods Smiled", (review reprinted in this issue - Page 5)

I don't recall that we ever met personally but I felt I knew him and his wife Amy through our correspondence. I pass my condolences to Amy and his family who I'm sure will miss him greatly, and of whom they can be very proud.

From his wife Amy



• **William E. Guldner FM 401st**

Northridge CA, Dec. 16, 2002, Age 83

As reported by Avery Gage & daughter Kathy



William Guldner, was the Pilot of *Qualified Quail* the plane assigned to us and in which we flew all but two or three of our missions. We were in it on the Leipzig mission, July 20, 1944, when it became the only plane out of six in the low squadron to survive. Bill told me that the reason we survived was because the plane next to us was going down and it slid over into us. Bill

had to pull up to avoid him which took us out of the line of fire. He completed 33 missions and we were fortunate to have been able to take all of our crew members home with us in September of 1944. Wilkenson, McVay and Myself are only crew members left.

Bill was very active in his community, having been active in the Masons, Shriners (donations can be sent there) and American Veterans as well as his church.

He is survived by two daughters and their husbands, Kathy and David Ailman, B.J. and Mark Frazier and Grandson Todd Doty (who was given the American Flag at his service). His wife, Nellie, passed away in 1944.

Kathy Ailman, 7811 Langdon Ave., Van Nuys CA 91406

• **James Angelo Verinis, FM 324th Age 86**

Woodbridge CT/Jupiter FL, March 3d, 2003

Reported by his son Steve

He was born and raised in Stamford Ct. Where he earned a basketball scholarship to the University of CT. Upon graduating he enlisted in the USAAC in July of 1941 where he learned to fly P-39 and P-40 fighter planes and was then trained to fly a B-17 Flying Fortress and was sent to the 91st BG as a first pilot. He's remembered by his pilot & friend Bob Morgan as the steady hand in the cockpit. After serving as co-pilot on the *Memphis Belle* for numerous missions he was given a B-17 of his own which he named *Connecticut Yankee*. It was on this bomber that he made Air Force History becoming the first Eighth Air Force airman to fly the

requested 25 missions. He returned with the crew of the *Memphis Belle* to the US for a war bond and morale tour. Verinis retired as a Lt. Col. in the Air Force Reserve. For most of his civilian life he ran his own contract furniture business, JAVCO Inc. He was a member of Race Brook Country Club for 48 years and a lifelong parishioner of St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church. Verinis is survived by his wife Marie, children Steven and his wife Mary Ann, and James Verinis of Jupiter FL. & grandchildren Arielle and Alexander.



Morgan & Verinis 1990

Folded Wings (Continued from Page 10)

• **Col. Donald Stanley Gauthier Sr. LM 401st**
Lakewood, WA, May 26, 2002, Age 80

As reported by his son Donald S. Gauthier, Jr.

He was a B-17 pilot in the 91st BG& flew the 1st mission to Merseburg as lead low group on *Hey Daddy*. Then went on to fly 15 missions on the *Jub Jub Bird*.

He served in the Air Force over 21 years before retiring in 1965. He then had an 18 year career with the US Post Office retiring in 1983.

He had been a founding member of St. Joseph/St. John's Episcopal Church, a volunteer at Madigan Hospital, a member of the "Clover Park Clown Alley" and was active with "Seniors on Stage". Survived by son Donald.

• **Robert Card, 323rd Bomb Sqd**
Modesto CA, March 8, 2003, Age 81

As reported by his wife to George Birdsong

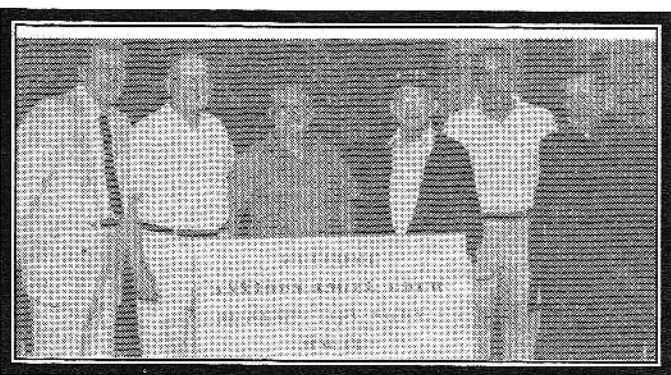
Bob was the tail gunner on the Delta Rebel #2 on George Birdsong's crew. No other information available.

Folded Wings All 401st All Anxious Angel

Reported by Mathias G. Pettera 401st Assistant Crew Chief

- **Dick Gibson FM** - Pilot
Riverside CA November 2001
- **Roy Hall** - Waist Gunner
Palestine W. VA, November 30, 1990
- **Chester Bolociuch, FM** - Tail Gunner
Cicero IL, January 1, 2003
- **Edward Pinkowski** - Crew Chief
Fox Lake IL, January 17, 1998
- **Robert Powers LM** - Top Turret
Urbana, IL, 1997
- **Don Richter** - Waist Gunner
Eaton OH, December 15, 1990
- **Albert Lucia** - Navigator (Reported by Editor)
Dunkirk NY 1992

One of "Angel's" memorable times that was recalled was



L-R BOLOCINCH, GIBSON, LUCIA, POWERS, RICHTER, MAZAIIKA
 TG P N E WG RO
REUNION OF CREW OF ANXIOUS ANGEL - OCT. 1988 RI

when Powers, the engineer had to kick out their bombs over the Zuider Sea after they failed to drop over Berlin. RO Mazaika held Powers by his parachute harness to keep him from accompanying the bombs - he was in good hands as Mazaika became a priest after the war.

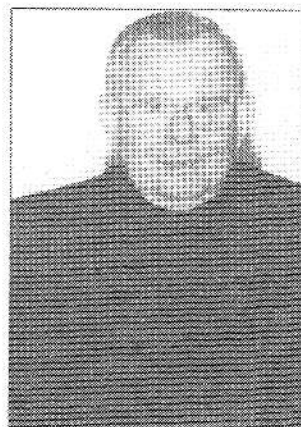
• **Rev. Joseph John Mazaika 401st**
Grand Prairie TX, January 17, 2003, Age 78

As reported by Harold Mannon & Paul Christ

Father Mazaika, longtime priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tulsa died at his home in Grand Prairie TX.

He enlisted in the AAC at the beginning of WW II in the 8th AF and flew 35 missions over Germany.

He was ordained to the Oklahoma Diocese in 1953 and was immediately assigned as assistant pastor of the Immaculate Conception parish in Pawhuska. He received his first pastorate in 1959 at St. John Catholic Church in Yukon. At the same time he was appointed assistant to the diocesan master of ceremonies, Msgr. Buswell and when he was appointed Bishop of Pueblo CO, Mazaika assumed his duties which he continued until 1969.



Rev. Joe Mazaika

In 1967 he was named pastor of St. Mary's in Ponca City and two years later was named pastor of Prince of Peace in Altus. He concurrently served as an auxiliary chaplain at Altus Air Force Base.

In 1970 he was transferred to Tulsa where he served seven years as Chaplain at St. John's Medical Center and as Diocesan Coordinator of Health Affairs. He pastured St. Clement's Parish in Bixby and was the director of liturgy and Diocesan Master of Ceremonies in the Diocese of Tulsa from 1977 to 1983. His next assignment as pastor of

the parish he first served, Immaculate Conception in Pawhuska was his longest-12 years. In 1991 he was appointed Vicar for the Diocese's Northwest Vicariate. Since his retirement in 1995, he assisted as needed in various parishes of the Dallas Diocese. Father Mazaika is survived by two brothers, Anthony of Dixon City PA and Vincent of DeBary FL and sister Ann Gagliardi of Trenton NJ. Friends are making memorial contributions to the Priests' Retirement Fund of the Diocese of Tulsa.

Father Mazaika

Enclosed is a copy of the obituary for Father Joe Mazaika. Father Joe, as we called him in his work with us in the cancer support group, was such a caring, compassionate, warm-hearted person that the whole community came to love him.

Being together a great deal and being near the same age, our talk drifted back to other times - of course WWII. What a surprise when we learned we were both at Bassingbourn, he out flying while I was spending my time in the machine shop of the 441st Sub Depot - and then not meeting until eleven years after we had shut that big operation down. He was a great guy. He has faced what we all must.

By the way, Father Joe was in Tulsa attending a seminar ten days before he died. Hale to hearty he seemed to be. Apparently it was a heart attack that removed him from our rolls.

Cheerio, Harold Mannon.

Folded Wings

• Maurice Smyth-Bassingbourn Jan.20,2003

as reported by Steve Pena

A Tower Museum volunteer for many years, many of you who paid a visit to the museum in the past will have undoubtedly seen or met Maurice. He was a quiet "gentle-man" in the truest sense who, despite poor health always displayed a keen and wry sense of humor and fun. He was one of our stalwarts, a "doer" who would work quietly at the museum week after week, summer and winter. He served in the British army in the Far East toward the end of the war and it is obvious from the photos in the various albums he showed me that he had that same offbeat sense of fun back then. He was a well-read man with a keen sense of history and wide musical taste. Often off to a big name rock concert at one venue or another. I can picture him now sitting on my sofa tapping away to the beat of the latest CD he had brought around to play on my new sound system.

You were a real friend, a real mate. We're going to miss you.

• Martin Pisarski FM 322nd

Charlton NY, January 17, 2003 Age 89

As reported by Frederick R. Miller, PH1 USN Retired

He died suddenly at Ellis Hospital after being stricken at home. He was a member of 8th Air Force 91st Bomb Group stationed in England from 1942-45. He was employed by the GE Corp. for 28 years as a specialist in welding before retiring in 1975. Prior to his retirement he built and operated the former Marty's Square Deal Market in Charlton.

(Cont'd below)

• Julian M. Hexum 322nd

Boise ID January 17, 2003 Age 85

Julian M. Hexum, Lt. Col. USAAF (Ret.) Died of natural causes. He moved to Portland OR as a young man where he met and fell in love with Janet Hegele. At the start of WW II he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and prior to shipping out, married Janet in Albuquerque NM in December 1942. He was a bombardier/navigator in the B-17 Flying Fortress. During one mission, his plane was disabled with heavy fire over Hamburg, Germany. The pilot was able to fly the damaged aircraft over home territory before the crew was ordered to bail. He flew over 25 missions and was awarded many commendations including the Distinguished Flying Cross. He also served his country in Korea and retired as a Lt. Colonel in 1965. After retiring from the service he joined the civilian workforce until he retired in 1985. He was an avid outdoors man and enjoyed camping, fishing and traveling throughout the world. He enjoyed raising quarter horses, Airedales and Welsh Terriers and he and his wife loved sailing. A gentle soul, he will be truly missed by his loved ones.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Janet, his five children, Ron (and Mardi) Hexum of Portland OR, Janis (and John) Hoeschele of Parker, CO, Shirley (and Tom) Rist of Mountain Home, Howard Hexum of Boise and Beverly Hexum of Boise 10 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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

FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED

LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU MOVE!

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

These Newsletters are published quarterly, January, April, July and October. The RI's purpose is to keep alive the spirit of the 91st Bombardment Group(H) and to maintain the fellowship 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 Perri, 12750 Kelley Greens Blvd., Ft. Myers 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 RI issues.

Survivors include his wife, Eileen M. Pisarski of Lake Ballston NY whom he married on Oct. 16, 1943, two sons Douglas of W. Palm Beach FL and Bryan of Clifton Park and one daughter Maureen Jane Farrell of Langhorne PA. Martin was the half-brother to Josephine Sykes of PA. Also surviving are four grandchildren, a great granddaughter and a great, great granddaughter.

Please send **OBITUARY** notices to:
Assay B. Johnson, Sec'y/Treas. 91st BGMA
590 Aloha Drive, Lake Havasu City AZ 86406