

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd Bomb Sq.



323rd Bomb Sq.



Supporting Units



324th Bomb Sq.



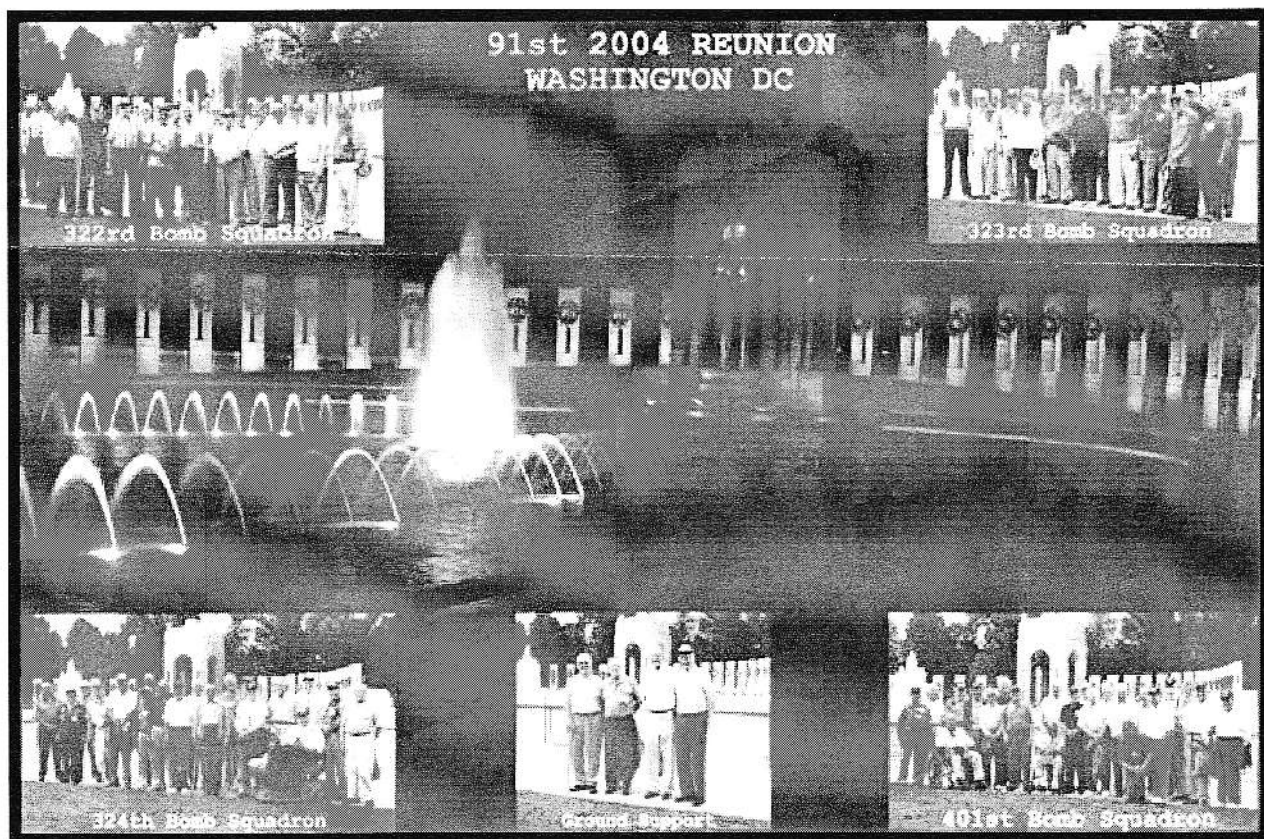
401st Bomb Sq.

Vol. 37 No. 4

91st Bombardment Group (H)

October 2004

2004 REUNION WASHINGTON D.C. WHAT A TIME WE HAD



(Our Thanks to Leonard Contreras for the above photo as well as the centerfold)

A good time was had by all. Everyone seemed to enjoy the many excursions that were planned and as always, The Hospitality Suite was the highlight of the Reunion along with the PX and Memorabilia Rooms. People seemed to enjoy the Trip to the New Air & Space Museum as well as the visit to Andrews Air Force Base and Mt. Vernon. The Dinner Cruise was especially enjoyed by Dusty and Caroline Hoffman. The Sunday Brunch Cruise was especially enjoyed by Steve & Nancy Perri, who had her son and daughter-in-law and granddaughter, Kali come along. Of course, the WWII Memorial was the highlight of the trip and it was fitting to end it all with a wonderful Sunday Night Banquet

The Presidents Corner:

2004 REUNION NEWS and more:

Unlike at the Reunion in Tacoma, I did remember to thank most of our members who were so helpful at this one. I did neglect to thank Len Contreras for taking our group photos at the WW II memorial. The Hospitality Room was such an asset to our fun and games, I do hope I honored our "barkeepers" - Joe & Jenny Harlick, Ace Johnson, Earl Pate and Herb (and son) Egender with Mick Hanou and myself helping where needed. Many of our other members pitched in as we always have. Even though I tossed kudos at the Banquet, special mention has to go to Nancy Perri and Judy Williams who monitored Registration and Betty Goldberg who arranged the lovely banquet decorations. Our unsung hero, Jim (and Suzi) Shepherd, helped in many ways including many months of keeping the world advised on the web site which now has over 250,000 hits. Wow!

Our business meeting started and ended on time and provided an "open mike" for the last hour. Ace Johnson gave his excellent reports on our finances. We received a report from Vince Hemmings on his complete compilation of photos of all the 91st names on the Wall of the Missing at Cambridge and the finishing of refurbishing of the Prop Memorial. We discussed and made available copies of draft changes to the By-Laws to make us a Board-managed organization with the President as chief executive officer rather than a rather autocratic organization. If you approve the changes when they are published in the January Ragged Irregular, we will also have a better chance of bringing our associate members into leadership positions and perpetuating the 91st BGMA beyond our dimming years. After the business meeting we were privileged to meet with Hilary "Bud" Evers, our Historian Emeritus who provided the basic research on which we all depend for our historical accuracy; we have such a great tradition that we do not need to claim credit for things that are not correct. Jake Howland and I are intent on being as accurate as possible for posterity.

The banquet on Sunday night was attended by over 200 who enjoyed great food, decor and fellowship. Tony Goddard from Wincanton, England, told of his city's continuing memorial to the crewmembers of "Old Faithful" who spared the city but gave their lives. James Bard of the 91st Strategic Recon. Memorial Assn. shared his views on how we hope to develop our mutual heritage. Vince Hemmings delivered greetings from Royston and others in

England and mentioned how diligently the East Anglia Aviation Society is working to carry on the Tower Museum and other activities in our behalf. I had the pleasure of presenting my personal Certificates of Appreciation (Jake Howland's handiwork) to "Bud" Evers, Paul Limm, Vince Hemmings and our retiring 2nd VP and former editor of The Ragged Irregular, Phil Mack. Our keynote speaker, M/Gen Ron Bath, from the office of the Secretary of the Air Force, gave us a terrific view of the "Future of the USAF" and then was kind enough to join us in the Hospitality Room afterwards.

What's next? We decided on Colorado Springs for **2006**, probably September. Ace Johnson and I will make arrangements with Sam Newton already working on securing tickets to an Air Force Academy football game and Jim Fletcher helping. Nancy Perri and Judy Williams have agreed to head-up Registration, Betty Goldberg is thinking up decorations for the banquet and Mick Hanou will be in charge of arranging coverage for the Hospitality Room. Mike Crossman of the Airmen's Preservation Society - who had a great display in our Hospitality area - is planning on attending and James Bard will see if the 91st Strategic Recon is interested in making it a joint affair. Our keynote speaker, M/Gen. Ron Bath, was either so impressed with our dedication or recognized we needed help that he volunteered to assist us with arrangements at the Academy and NORAD.

Start planning now for Reunion 2006.

Our quarterly Conference Call of your officers on 28 Aug 04 covered some updates on our continuing efforts to develop closer relations with Minot AFB (home of the 91st Space Wing) and the 91st Strategic Recon Memorial Assn, contacts with American Battle Monuments Commission and the refurbishing of the signs on the Prop Memorial at Bassingbourn arranged by David Crow of "The Friends of the 91st." Most of our attention turned to preparations for Reunion 2004.

So much for the "Corner"- staying a corner.

ED GATES, PRESIDENT

**NEXT REUNION
September, 2006
COLORADO SPRINGS
COLORADO**

91st BGMA Officers

President Ed Gates

1311 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

Earl Pate, Jr.

104 Skyview Drive
Hendersonville TN 37075
Tel: (615) 824-7909
(Eo91bg@mindspring.com)

Secretary/Treasurer

Asay B. Johnson

590 Aloha Drive
Lake Havasu City AZ
86406-4559
Tel: (928) 453-3114
FAX (928) 453-6370
(ace91bgma@mindspring.com)

Historian, Jake Howland

191 Parker Lane
Carthage TX 75633
Tel: (903) 693-233
(jhowland@sydcom.net)

Editor, Steve Perri

12750 Kelly Greens Blvd.
Ft. Myers FL 33908
Tel: (239) 454-5838
(deltareb@aol.com)

Please send all Obituaries
to:

ACE JOHNSON
(with photo if possible)

Any articles for the RI
Should be sent to:
STEVE PERRI - EDITOR

WEBSITES:

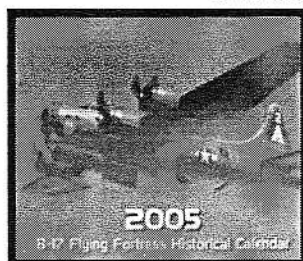
www.91stbombgroup.com

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Christmas Gifts from the PX – including:

"New" Metal License Plate Holder \$10
Adult Golf Shirts-Blue Cotton w/Logo--\$25
2005 B-17 Calendar-\$10 (All- plus S&H)
More items – too many to list

Order from: Marv Goldberg
437 Narragansett St. NE
Palm Bay, FL 32907-1332
Tel 321-953-3694



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND MORE:

Memphis Belle: The City of Memphis has lost a Historic B-17. Air Force Officials announced plans to relocate the WWII B-17 to the Air Force Museum near Dayton, Ohio. They expect the move to occur before the end of the year. "We are grateful to the Memphis Belle Memorial Association for its preservation and restoration of the Memphis Belle," said retired Maj. Gen. Charles Metcalf, Museum Director. "We have enjoyed the partnership over the years and look forward to the continued collaboration as we make this transition." The aircraft has been located in Memphis since 1946. It was on loan from the Air Force until the 1980's when the Association became its leaseholder. "The Memphis Belle is a prominent and famous part of the Air Force's historic collection and as such, it is only appropriate that it be displayed at the service's national museum where it can be viewed by millions and exhibited in a manner consistent with its proud legacy." Said Dick Anderegg, Air Force Historian.
(Sent in by Joe Harlick)

Colonel Robert M. Slane has written a book "Journey to Freedom and Beyond" which will be reviewed in next RI but might make a good "Christmas gift". Order directly from Bob Slane at 1510 Carmel Dr., Shreveport LA 71105. \$15 includes shipping.

Sam Newton-Country Dinner Playhouse founder wins Award

Sam, a longtime Denver area resident, has been awarded the prestigious Lily Award by Easter Seals Colorado in appreciation of the support he has proved to Easter Seals over the past 20 years, serving as President of the Board of Directors and on numerous advisory committees. Newton donated the funds to build a pavilion at the Easter Seals Camp in Empire, and also was a leading contributor in refurbishing the camp pool. Congratulations Sam.

Sam has written a book, "The Smell of Kerosene" which he told us at the reunion "is free to anyone just write to "Historian NASA, Dry Den Flight Research Center, 1613 Edwards California 93523-2073."

A thankyou from Eugene Eddy: Sent in along with a change of address to Ace: I'd be remiss to send any note and not add my thanks to you and those others who have volunteered so well to ensure that we who served with the 91st BG (H) are reminded of the reasons for being proud to have served with common men who performed with uncommon ability and unflagging courage.

November 6-7 2004 – ANNUAL VETERANS DAY FLY-IN

Falcon Field Airport, Mesa, Arizona Wing of the Commemorative AF
Phone 480-924-1940 - Special Flyovers – Veterans from WWII BG's B-17 Flying Fortress "Sentimental Journey", B-25 and much more.
Admission \$5.00 (12 & under FREE must be accompanied with adult.)

Letters to the Editor and More Cont'd:**From Lowell Getz:**

Upon the passing of George Birdsong
Hi Steve: A quick note to let you know I am thinking of you. Those of us who have not experienced combat and the closeness of a combat crew can only imagine the feelings as one's crewmates "fold their wings." The feelings have to be greater than even the loss of a genetic family member. I have looked at so many loading lists, formation patterns, and have seen so many crew photos, knowing that most of the men in them are no longer here, all the while realizing what you experienced and what you did for us, and then to learn of yet another passing plays heavily on the emotions. If I feel this way, then know your feelings are even deeper. You have my sympathy. Take care. Please stay with us a long time, Steve. We need as many of you as possible to be around to serve as a remembrance as to why we have been able to have the lives we have had.

From Whit Hill: The loss of George Birdsong is indeed sad. He was sure one hot-shot guy who livened up things, from Tampa, FL to wherever he went. I met him again in the Pentagon when I was working for the CIA, and we were just "young men. Looking back to Florida, we must have been kids. You do a great job Steve, with the RI. I am sorry I missed you when you were up for the Memorial Dedication. The only thing I had going in the hospital was I did not have to worry about the traffic and parking places. Come on by on your next run up to civilization. Keep up the good work. Keep hugging Nancy.

From Chuck Giaque, "Pilot of Eagles Wrath"

Re: The passing of his Ball Turret Gunner Lloyd Mahan. Was there a B-17 crewmember position more abhorrent than the Ball Gunner's? Many times when our times and missions come to mind, I think of how Lloyd was always there, never bitching, ready to climb into that Ball, and protecting our belly. Almost lost him on the Hamm mission, March 4, 1943 when evasive action loosed a chute pack that pulled loose his oxygen line. After minutes of not responding on the intercom, Waist Gunner Wawrzyniek took a look, saw Lloyd slouched over. He cranked the Ball to its exit position, and he and Corl, RO, pulled him out and clamped a walk-around bottle on him. Happily he came to and went on to become a widely respected, small-town country lawyer, and after a full life to finally die in the presence of loved ones. We few remainders of

the Eagle's Wrath crew honor Lloyd's last "take-off," assured that he has landed in that Revered Place

From Mike Banta, 91st Ring - Our deepest sympathy, thoughts and prayers are with George Birdsong's family and surviving crewmembers. I loved his first book, Stormy Weather, which he was selling at our 1994 91st BG Reunion. It's wonderful that he had the sequel "**OFF WE GO, A PILOT'S JOURNAL**," published in April of this year. Don't put things off. None of us knows the day or hour we will be called home. Steve, we all recognize that George, his crew, and Delta Rebel are an intricate part of the earliest history of the 91st Bomb Group.

From Paul Chryst - My friends - Many of Wray's originals, knew this wonderful Officer George Birdsong. He was one of the greatest of men; a silent HERO of three Wars. His life belonged to the Army Air Corps and the USAF. In his long active duty career; he managed more than 20 different "change of Stations" including many years of service outside the USA. We will miss this quiet spoken gentleman; but I know that he's up there - higher than any of us have traveled; yet. We send along our most sincere sympathies to his large family in California.

Colonel George Birdsong, Jr.'s book:**"OFF WE GO A Pilot's Journal"**

is available through Atlas books.

1 (800) 247-6553

A brief summary of the book, as well as price and shipping details can be viewed on:

<http://www.atlasbooks.com/marktpl/>

VISIT TO POLAND

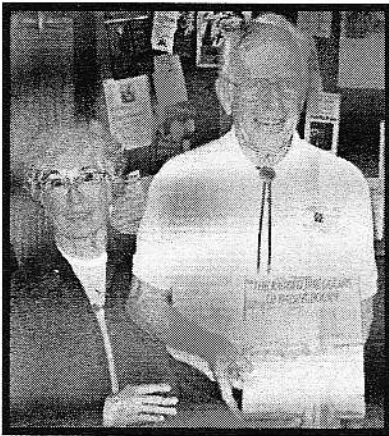
A proposed tour of Poland commemorating the B-17 missions to Poland. We know that the 91st flew at least one mission to Posen, Poland on 29 May 1944 when we lost Shoo Shoo (Shoo) Baby. If you flew this or another mission to Poland, perhaps you might be interested in this proposed tour.

If you are interested, contact Alicia at aserwatka@arcor.de (Alicia Serwatka)
aserwatka@arcor.de (Alicja Serwatka).

"Old Faithful"

Remembered 25th JUNE 1944

A thankyou note to the Harlicks from across the pond



Hi Joe & Jenny,
We were SO GLAD you came; it really would not have been the same without you being here for the commemoration. We associate so much with you both of the event and you will be lasting in our memories. Thanks for coming. I would very much like to tell

the 91sters" how much affection we have for them and what they did for us and indeed as you must have seen how much appreciated it was. The people here are so pro American, in fact to this moment the stars and stripes are still flying over the Dolphin Inn and it was only yesterday that the Town Hall took down all the flags that were put up for the commemoration. At a time when the United States and Britain are not always popular in the world it is good to know who your friends REALLY are.

Love Tony & Sandra Goddard

Tony Goddard was one of the people who were instrumental in putting together the 60th anniversary memorial of the crash at Wincanton in which the pilot of "Old Faithful" risked banking his badly damaged plane to avoid the village. Unfortunately, a wing fire had so badly damaged it that the wing collapsed killing all the crew. The town erected a Marker and apparently honors the crew periodically.

In an exchange with Joe Harlick they discovered he had come to Wincanton in 1944 to take photos of the crash site. He invited Joe and Jenny to be their guests last month, which they accepted and had a very touching visit.

The Goddard's visited the United States and joined us for the Washington DC reunion and so we all had the pleasure of meeting this very fine couple.



Thankyou from Vince Hemmings

On behalf of Margaret and I, may I thank you and all those who attended your reunion in Washington D.C. for the warm and friendly reception you gave us. We were overwhelmed by the kindness shown to us. We enjoyed our trips, particularly to the World War II Memorial. Very impressive. Thank you for taking us out to dinner, we enjoyed your company. We found the visit to Mount Vernon very interesting. In all Ed, a wonderful time with a group of people it was a pleasure to be with.

The Hotel Staff were most helpful, and I did enjoy the moment when I was presented with the bill for the banquet. If I had the money Ed, I would have paid it. Margaret and I found it most amusing.

This afternoon, David Crow informed me that the stonemasons Ivett and Reed have completed the Prop Memorial refurbishment. I am going to have a look at their work on Monday morning along with Peter Worthy, Ray Leach and of course David. We will take some photographs. David is coming to America later this month and will post them from there.

Again, Ed, thank you again for your kindness. It is greatly appreciated. Kind Regards, Vince Hemmings

From:

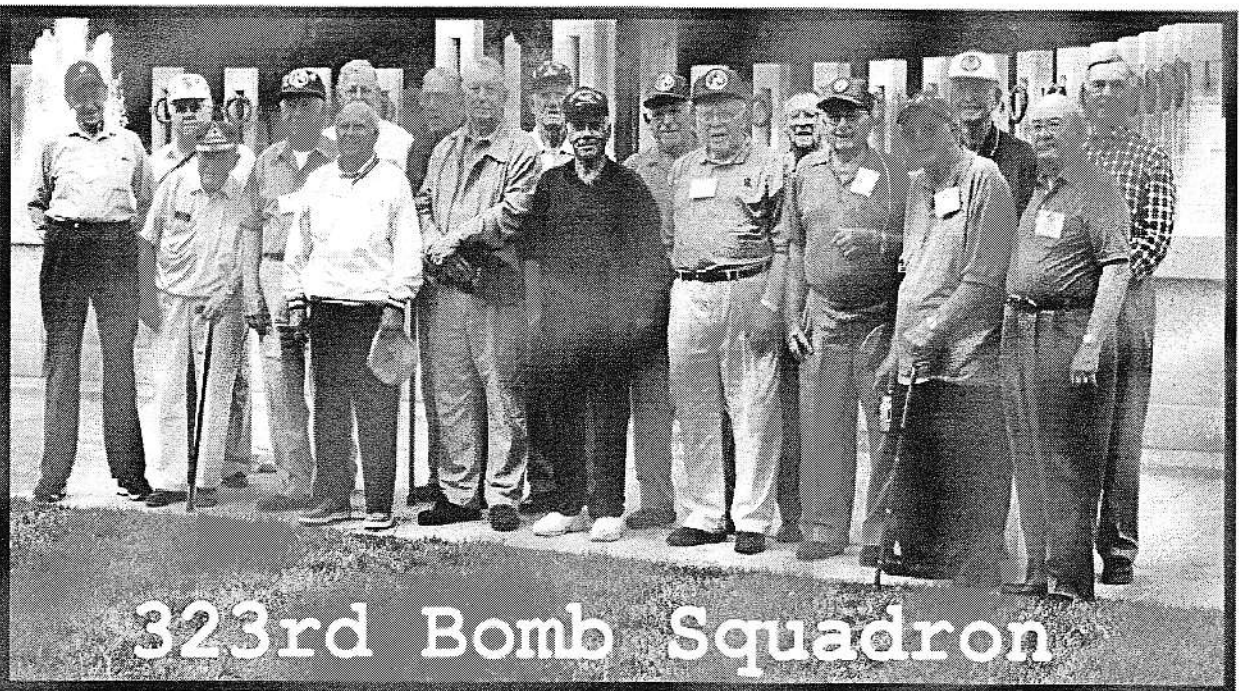
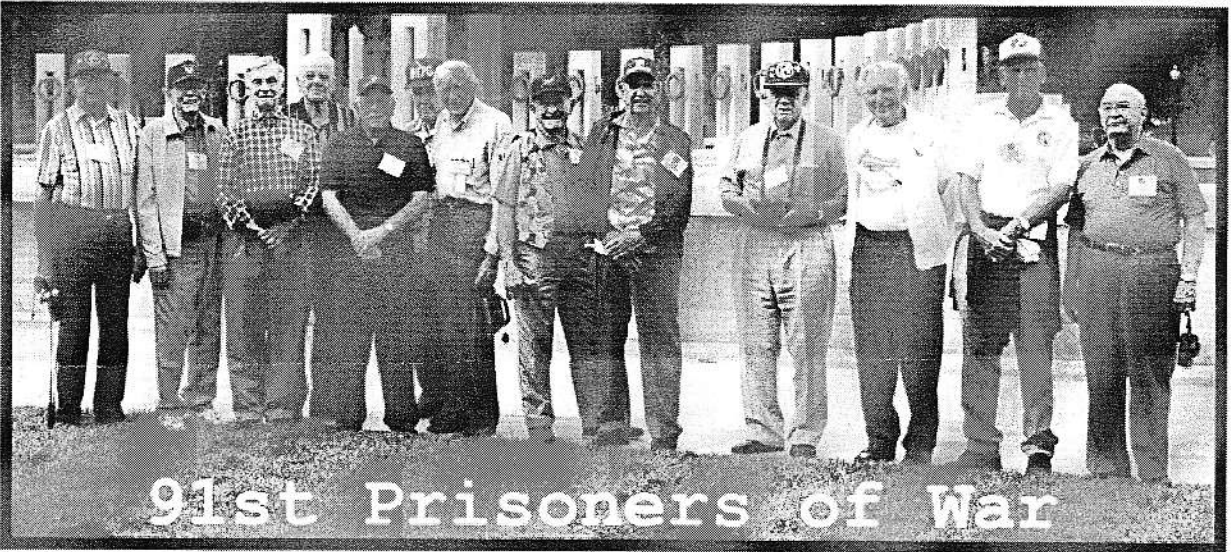
Councillor Philip Mayne, Royston Town Mayor:

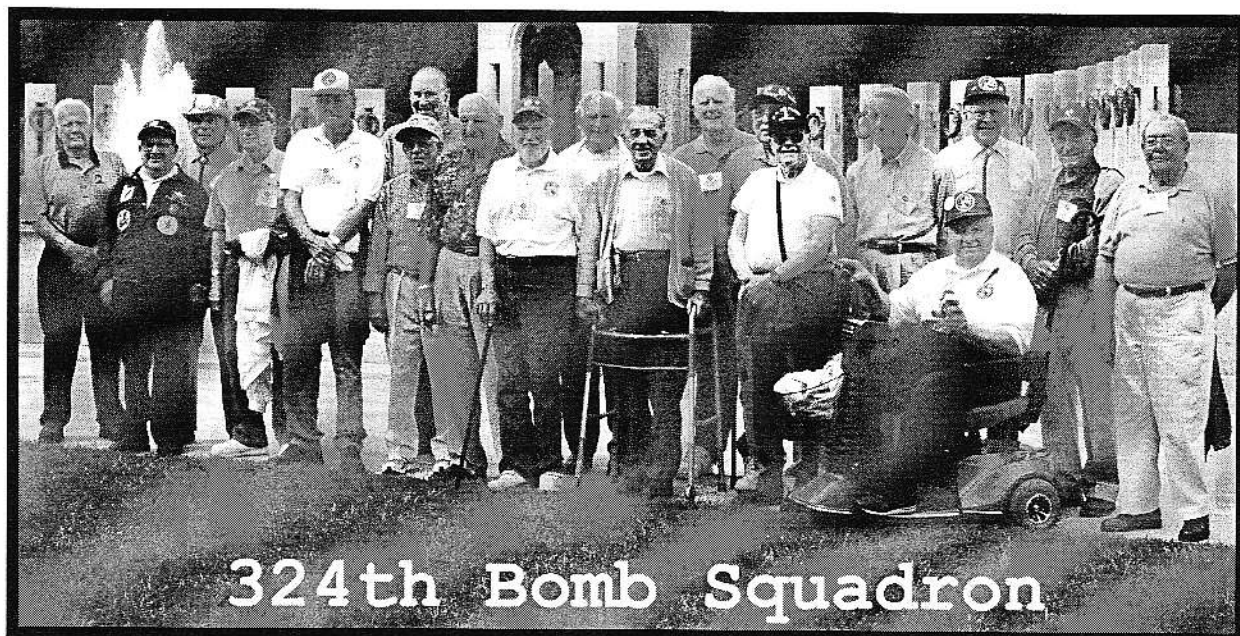
It is with great pleasure and pride that I have an opportunity to send greetings to you all on the occasion of your reunion. The very special bonds forged between Royston and the 91st BG during the war have continued over the years. The visits by Veterans to our Town are very special indeed. Successive Town Mayors have been proud and honoured to meet the Veterans and their families.

As many of you know, the Memorial to members of the 91st BG lost during the war is at the heart of the town in the Priory Memorial Gardens and is cherished by young and old. The gardens are particularly attractive and typically English in It seems particularly appropriate that the Memorial should be placed there. The ultimate sacrifice of so many young lives that was made during their tour of duty at Bassingbourn can never be repaid but it can be remembered and honoured.

We live now in very stressful times, with terrorism an ever-increasing danger, and young lives are again being sacrificed. The example set by the generation that fought so hard for freedoms in the past is one that must again be emulated.

On behalf of the people of Royston, I wish to thank you all for the enormous contribution you have made to our lives and sincerely hope that your Reunion will be one that is long remembered.

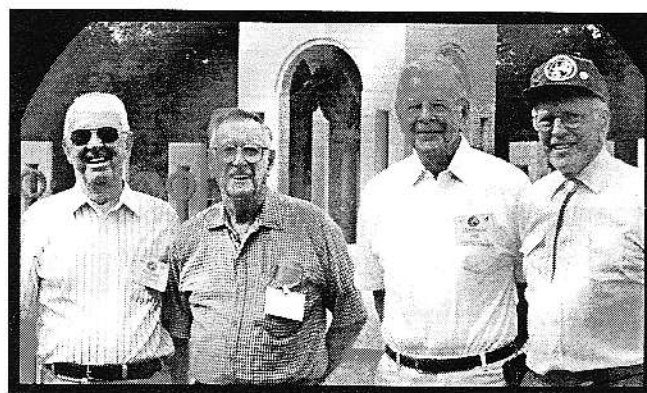




"ALL THE FINE YOUNG MEN"

of the
91st Bomb Group (H)
at the

World War II Memorial
Washington D.C. Reunion
2004



Ground Support



KUDOS TO THE GROUND CREW - Life of "*Times A-Wastin*"

as recalled by Crew Chief, Roy Fratz, M/Sgt, 401st Bomb Squadron

Group Headquarters called our engineering officer informing him of a new B-17 serial #42-102504 parked on the flight line, and would someone move it to the dispersal area? It looked like all the replacement planes, all new, bright and shiny. The date was probably May 11, 1944. I think I had one plane prior to "*Times A-Wastin*". It lasted just a few missions and failed to return. Bert J. Pierce, my flight chief, taxied the shiny-new B-17, to the dispersal area. At that time it was no big deal, just another plane to take care of.



I did not have an assigned crew the first few missions. I had seen a cartoon in "*-Yank*" or "*Stars and Stripes*", showing Snuffy Smith breaking thru a newspaper with the caption "*Times A-Wastin*," so the crew and I, with Tony Starcer's art talents, thus completed the naming of the plane, "*Times A-Wastin*". TAW aborted on the second or third mission due to a faulty oxygen regulator in one of the waist gunner's positions; problem remedied and nothing unusual happened the next few missions.

One afternoon a jeep pulls up to our parking spot and two officers identified themselves. They said they had been assigned to TAW; they

were Lt. Sam Newton, pilot, and Bert Stiles, co-pilot. They looked her over and drove off. Things went well with Lt. Newton's crew, just the occasional flak holes and other minor problems. For several missions the crew reported #3 engine had a "slight vibration". They couldn't quite decide whether it really was a vibration, or a prop shadow. This went on for several missions. It never was a problem, just something to watch. We changed plugs, checked magnetos, checked props for being slightly out of balance, pressure checked cylinders, checked valve adjustments, etc. One day, for some reason, we had to replace the carburetor. The problem was gone. Carburetors seldom gave us trouble so this was an isolated case.

Well, Lt. Newton, finished his missions on "*Times A-Wastin*" as did most of his crew, Bert Stiles dropped out along the way and finished his missions with Green's crew. Things went along smoothly for the first 350 hours; had to change #3 engine. Engine changes were relatively simple unless you got one "in a box". In the early days most engines came in a shipping crate and were brand new. These engines were bare of accessories except for the magnetos. This meant installing the carburetor, starter, generator, vacuum pump, spark plugs, the mounts for the engine cowling, cowl flaps, and: the engine mount itself. After the group really got going and got a sub depot we got the engines already built up. We would order, from supply, the engine we needed, and it was delivered to us ready to attach to the firewall. This could be an overnight job, test hop it next day, and the following day it was ready to fly a mission. One other problem, if the engine we were replacing had "internal failure", this meant we would have to remove the oil tank and oil cooler just in case there were metal particles in the oil system. Also the prop dome had to be flushed and cleaned - so much for engine changes. I had good luck with the engines on "*Times A-Wastin*" #1, 2 and 4 lasted 350 hours. It was policy to replace the engine after 350 combat hours. That, I believe, came from 8th A.F. Headquarters. "*Times A-Wastin*" did one mission after the 350-hour limit. If everything was going OK and no problems, the engineering officer could release the plane for another flight. As for the quality of the engines, the Wright Cyclones were the best. Later on in the war we got a lot of Studebaker engines. A lot of us preferred a rebuilt Cyclone over the new Studebaker engine.

As far as the airframe goes, we replaced numerous outboard wing panels, mostly from flak damage. "*Times A-Wastin*" took one hit in the tail section. There are some photos of a hole about 6" in diameter in the lower right corner of the tail gunner's access door. The door was blown off. Whatever the device was; it exited on the left side of the vertical stabilizer. There are photos showing where the stabilizer was patched. The tail gunner was injured but not too severely. "*Times A-Wastin*" also suffered the usual damage; outboard wing panels, wing tips, horizontal stabilizers and control surfaces. I do not know for certain the date that Sam Newton and crew completed their missions, probably July 1944.

At that point, Ed Garner and crew took over "*Times A-Wastin*". The missions seemed routine as far as maintenance was concerned but for the flight crews, I'm sure it was a different story. By the time mid-December rolled around, Lt. Ed Garner's crew had completed their missions and another crew took over.
(cont'd on next page)

Kudos -Continued from page 6:

John Ondrovic and crew took over "Times A-Wastin" then. Through no fault of Lt. Ondrovic and crew, "Times A-Wastin" suffered its second abort. In a letter to the Squadron C.O., John states "excessive oil leak in #1 engine. On inspection after landing, a broken elbow supplying engine oil to the prop governor" was found. A letter from the Squadron C.O. to Lt. Ondrovic states, "Justified abort. No action taken".

Lt. Ondrovic and crew completed their missions in March 1945, and John proudly reports that 7 of his original crewmembers are now 91st BGMA Life Members.

I do not recall another crew having been assigned to TAW. On April 8, 1945, "Times A-Wastin" flew its last mission. Lt. Peter Pastras and crew were hit in the open Bombay-doors with a burst of flak. Three parachutes were seen leaving the plane. According to "The Ragged Irregulars of Basingbourn", page 189, there were two survivors, the radio operator and the top turret gunner, who became POWs. "Times A-Wastin" had completed 96 missions. "You can't win'em all". "Times A-Wastin" and "Wee Willie" of the 322nd Squadron. were the last 2 aircraft lost by the 91st BG.

Approximately May 21, 1945 I received my orders to return to the U.S. and was assigned to crew #1 of 18, Lt. Elwyn Bloodgood, pilot, and was assigned to A/C #44-6623. It was a 324th plane, DF-B - it had no name. I believe it was just released from the sub-depot and was a mixed up thing, parts of it were painted (outboard wing panels), but it performed well on the way home with no problems. A crew of 10 with 10 passengers were assigned to each plane. We had cargo racks in the bombay for all the luggage---time overseas, 2 years, 8 months and 28 days.

We departed Station 121 May 25 via Valley Airdrome in Wales, then on to the Azores where we spent the night, then to Gander Lake, Newfoundland. Spent the night there. We were supposed to go on to Bradley Field, Connecticut, but due to crowded conditions there, we were requested to spend the night at Grenier Field, Manchester, NH. The next morning we arrived in Bradley Field. As we landed we fell in line with other B-17s. When we reached the terminal we were instructed to leave everything on the plane except our personal luggage. This was the last we would see of our plane. A crew was standing by ready to fly it to Kingman, AZ, I presume. I've often wondered what happened to the items the guys

had squirreled away, .45-cal. hand guns, binoculars, and other mementos that would have been souvenirs all had to be left behind.

After processing and clothing checks, off we went to Camp Miles Standish for further processing and travel authorization to our homes. Thirty days R&R, then back to my induction center, Camp Atterbury, Indianapolis, Ind.

That's it, my overseas time - a once in a lifetime experience!

Folded Wings: (Cont'd)

Charles A. Holman, 324th, Age 81
Framingham MA Sept 25, 2004

He was born in Somerville in 1923. He graduated from High School and learned to fly at the age of 16. He joined AAC and flew 31 Missions as a B-17 pilot at age 20, with the 91st BG and also participated in the first deep penetration raids to Berlin in March 1944. and received DFC with 3 oak leaf clusters, the European African Middle Eastern campaign ribbon with 1 Bronze star, and the Presidential Citation with 1 Battle star. After the war, Mr. Holman was a commercial airline pilot with NE Airlines, later merging with Delta. He retired in 1983 after more than 30 years. In addition to his wife of fifty years, Carolyn, four children and 7 grandchildren survive him

John Diracles, 323rd, Age 85
Minneapolis MN,

He was born in Salonika, Greece and immigrated to NYC in 1920 with his family.

He served in the Army Air Force during WWII.

He established his own accounting firm in 1950 the same year the Minneapolis Junior C of C named him the group's outstanding father. He also completed a year as Jaycee president in 1953 and in 1957 was named one of the 100 outstanding young men of Minneapolis by Time magazine.

He was elected president of the Minn. Aquatennial and had the opportunity to green Vic President Nixon and his wife Pat. His firm merged with Arthur Young & Co. and he stayed on as managing partner until his retirement in 1978 when he became an adjunct professor in Graduate School of Management at the University of Minn.

In addition to his wife, Louise, he is survived by son's James and John, daughter Louise.

Folded Wings (cont'd)★ **Capt. Harold W. Lasch, 322nd****Orland Park IL, August 11, 2004**

As reported by his wife Dorothea.



He was a Navigator on Don Freer's plane "Easy Does It" and was on the Nov. 4, 1944 Merseburg mission. On his 25th mission, Dec. 5, 1944, they were shot down over Berlin and he became a POW. He was buried in the Abraham Lincoln Veterans Cemetery with an Air Force Honor Guard and a 21-gun salute and the playing of "Taps". Another Veteran played "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes. We are especially grateful that Harold's pilot, Don Freer and his lovely wife Mary, their son Tom and his wife Denise were able to attend all of the ceremonies. He is survived by his loving wife Dorothea, son Charles (Janice) Lasch, daughters' Barbara (Al) Czuprynski, Janice (Lee) Hulting, Pari (Tom) Fergus, sons" Terry and Kevin (Victoria) and preceded in death by daughter Jean (Don) Dumich as well as 10 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

★ **Steve Lindley, 322nd****Breckenridge TX, July 17, 2004**

As reported by his wife Gwenda



Steve served in WWII as a bombardier with the 91st and flew on the first US bombing raid over Germany, January 1943 and on 24 subsequent raids. Having been shot down, he was heavily decorated and gained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He was a

longtime petroleum engineer for Petco Corp. Involved in various cattle ventures, he farmed and ranched and was an avid hunter and fisherman.

He was a 32-degree Mason, member of the Scottish Rite Charity, Elks, American Institute of Engineers, Vet. Of Foreign Wars and as a Texas Hero of WWII, his portrait and military records are preserved in the Hall of State in Dallas TX. He is survived by his wife Gwenda and her three children: Pam (Jon) Langford, Bobby Baber, Kim (Randy Lowrance, five Grandchildren Cash, Lacey, Hannah, Link & Libby; and his brother, A. L. Lindley (Hazyl) He read & reread each issue of The Ragged Irregular.

★ **Robert S. Lammers, 322nd****Plano TX, August 3, 2004**

As reported by Clyde R. Burdick



T/Sgt. Robert S. Lammers was an original member of the 322nd BS and was the Radio Operator on the crew of Capt. William Beasley flying on the first mission of the 91st to Brest, France, Nov. 7, 1942 and completing his 25 missions June 11, 1943 after which he was sent to the Third Division to the 385th Bomb Group at

Great Ashfeld where he was assigned to set up Radio and Ditching procedure schools. He received a battlefield commission from General Curtis LeMay. At the end of the war, he wound up with the 496th and was discharged as a 1/Lt.

He met his wife of over 55 years, Stella (deceased) at the Dorothy Ballroom in Cambridge, England. She worked for Army Intelligence, 8th AF Hqtrs. London.

He is survived by two sons, three daughters, 12 Grandchildren and 10 Great Grandchildren. Bob was a great guy, and excellent RO and crewmember and served his country diligently and well and with much honor. He will be missed by his family and friends.

★ **Edward R. Pearson, 323rd, Age 83****Stoneham NH July 14, 2004**

As reported by his wife Phyllis



He died at the Sunbridge Care and Rehabilitation Center in North Reading after a lengthy decline.

He was born Nov. 15, 1920 in Boston and was a graduate of Roxbury Memorial HS. He was a Veteran of WWII, USAAC

serving in a B-17 as a gunner and bombardier from Jan. 29, 1943 to Dec. 7, 1945. He was survived by his wife Phyllis, daughter Linda White (Bruce), grandfather of John Lane, and Carrie, Adam White Robert and Maryann Powers, Richard and Mary Powers and Martha and Jack Downs and a brother-in-law, Clifton lane.

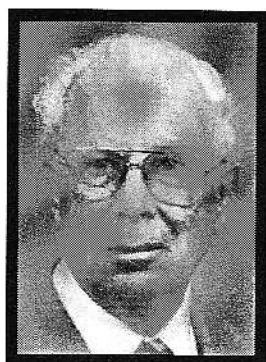
★ **Robert L. Wright, 322nd****Long Beach CA, Aug. 11, 2004**

As reported by his wife Kathleen

Robert L. Wright, a member of the 91st BG passed away after a long bout with cancer.

He is survived by his wife Kathleen, daughter Sallie, 2 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

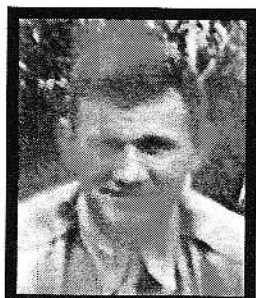
★ **CECIL EDWARD WILLIAMS, 323rd, Age 83**
Ponca City, Oklahoma, April 25, 2004,



Submitted by his son, Steve
 Cecil was born, June 30, 1921, in Ponca City, Oklahoma, the son of O.W. "Doc" Williams and Nora Myrtle Ivy Williams. He graduated from Ponca City High School in 1940. In 1942, Cecil enlisted in the Army Air Corp and served as a bombardier with the 91st Bomb Group, 323rd Squadron based at Bassingbourn, England. The majority of Cecil's 26 combat missions to Belgium, France, and Germany were on the "Blue Dreams" B-17. Cecil received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and Unit Citation with one Bronze Service Star. He was a life member of the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association. He retired from the Air Force Reserves as a Lt. Colonel.

On Aug. 6, 1944, Cecil married Anna Mae Whisenhunt in Ponca City, Oklahoma. Following World War II, he earned a BS in Architectural Engineering from Oklahoma (A & M) State University. Cecil retired from Conoco Oil Company after a 35-year career as Senior Engineer of Architecture and Facilities Coordinator. Privately, he designed many prominent homes, commercial buildings, and churches in the Ponca City area. Cecil is survived by two sons, Steve Williams and wife, Kathy, of Yukon, OK, and Mark Williams of Worcester, Mass.; two daughters, Pamela Bauer and husband, Patrick, of Luxembourg and Cynthia Tackwell and husband, Steve, of Deltona, Fla.; four grandchildren and a great-granddaughter. His wife preceded him in death on Dec. 28, 1992.

★ **Robert Crego, 324th, Age 90**
Camillus NY, Nov. 3, 2002



Submitted by, Alfred Lanfear
 He was born Feb. 5, 1912 in Balwinville NY and joined the 91st in Walla Walla WA as an Intelligence Officer. He was discharged in 1945 as a Captain.

He obtained a Masters in Education from Syracuse University and ended his career in teaching at the University NY at Oswego, retiring in 1972.

His wife of 61 years, Ann. and a son William, a brother and a grandson survive him. Bob and I, with wives, spent a week each summer fishing in either Vermont or Canada and when ever possible in between.

★ **Lloyd Mahan, 80, 323rd, Age 80**
Parkston SD, July 30, 2004



Submitted by his Pilot,
 Charles (Chuck) Giauque

He died Friday, July 30, at Avera Bormann Manor in Parkston. Lloyd J. Mahan was born September 4, 1923, in Decatur, Indiana. He entered the U.S. Army Air Corp. on January 1, 1942 and became a Ball Turret Gunner and Radio

Operator in a B-17 "Eagles Wrath" He flew 25 missions over occupied France and Germany in 1942-43 and became one of the first Indiana men to return to Indiana from England, having completed his missions early in the war. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the air medal with 4-oak leaf clusters while flying in England. After four years in the service, he returned to civilian life.

He graduated from the University of South Dakota School of Law in May 1950 with a Doctorate of Jurisprudence Degree. He married Florence Wiczorek on September 3, 1944. They moved to Parkston in July 1950 where he opened a law practice. He served a two-year term as County Judge, a term as Hutchinson County State's Attorney, and also served as Deputy States Attorney of Davison County for a short time. He also served on the Board of Lutheran Social Services for 12 years, was a 50-year member of the South Dakota Bar Association, and was a member of the American Legion and VFW. He retired from his law practice in Aug. 1987. His wife, Florence, daughter, Carla Zehnphennig and husband, Charles of Rochester, Minn; son, James Mahan, Orlando, Fla.; four grandchildren, Andrea and Aaron Zehnphennig, and Amanda and Tim Mahan; and one sister, Mary Casanova, survive him. His three brothers, Jack, Ivan, and Richard Mahan preceded him in death.

Folded Wings:

★ **George P. Birdsong, Jr., 323rd, Age 84** **Pleasanton CA, July 9, 2004**



As reported by his wife Eileen Colonel George Purnell Birdsong, Jr. died in his wife's arms at his Pleasanton CA home.

Born 12th of October 1919 and raised in Clarksdale MI, he earned a football scholarship at Southwest Mississippi Jr. College. Winning his pilot's wings in April, 1942 and was

immediately assigned to a B-17 with the 91st BG and sent to Bassingbourn, England where he was one of the first to fly daylight combat missions over Germany. His plane, "The Delta Rebel", was the first to complete 25 missions in the European theatre.

Receiving a regular Army commission, he remained in the Air Force until November, 1970; his combined military service was over 32 years.

He experience four wars, flying a combat tour in B-17's 1942-43 and flying B-29's, B-47's, B-52's and B-58's during the Korean and Cold Wars. He was a Wing Commander of the 633rd Special Operations wing, Piciku Airbase in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, where he flew

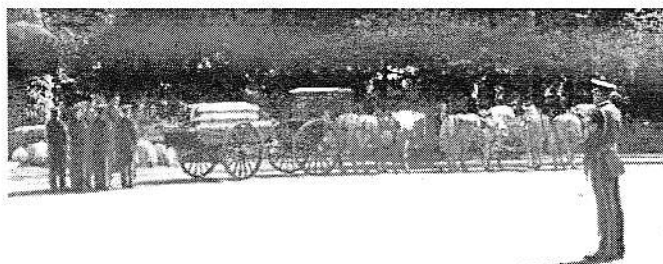
A-1 Skyraiders. He wore the wings of a command pilot and was rated Navigator, Bombardier and Radar Observer. He survived over 245 combat missions including 220 in Vietnam.

He earned his undergraduate degree from University of Nebraska and his MBS from Michigan State. He was also a golfer, published (continued next column)

author and writer of articles for Aviation magazines and Journals.

His wife Eileen, his children, George, Marguarite, Bill and Amy and ten grandchildren survive him. He loved California but his heart will always be in Dixie. Colonel Birdsong was buried with full military honors at Arlington Cemetery, VA. Which was attended by some of the 91st members that attended our 91st BGMA Reunion.

Editor's Note: I considered George to be one of the best pilots in the 8th Air Force and flew 24 of my 25 missions with him on the "Delta Rebel No 2"



Arlington Funeral - Col. George Birdsong, Jr.

(Photo by Bob Dickson)

★ **William Lynn Eblen, 323rd, Age 84** **Jefferson IN, August 13, 2004**

He was a native of Louisville and lived in Fairfax VA For most of his life until moving to Jeffersonville three years ago. He was an AAF Veteran of WWII , where at part of the Eight Air Force, 91st BG he completed 35 combat missions as a pilot of a B-17. After the war he became a pilot with United Airlines for 35 years, retiring in 1980.

He is survived by his wife Alma, daughter, Carol Lynn, sons William and Jeffrey, five grandchildren and preceded in death by son James.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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

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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