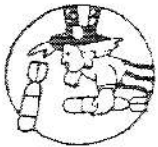


# THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



**322<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Sq.**



**323<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Sq.**



## Supporting Units



**324<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq.**



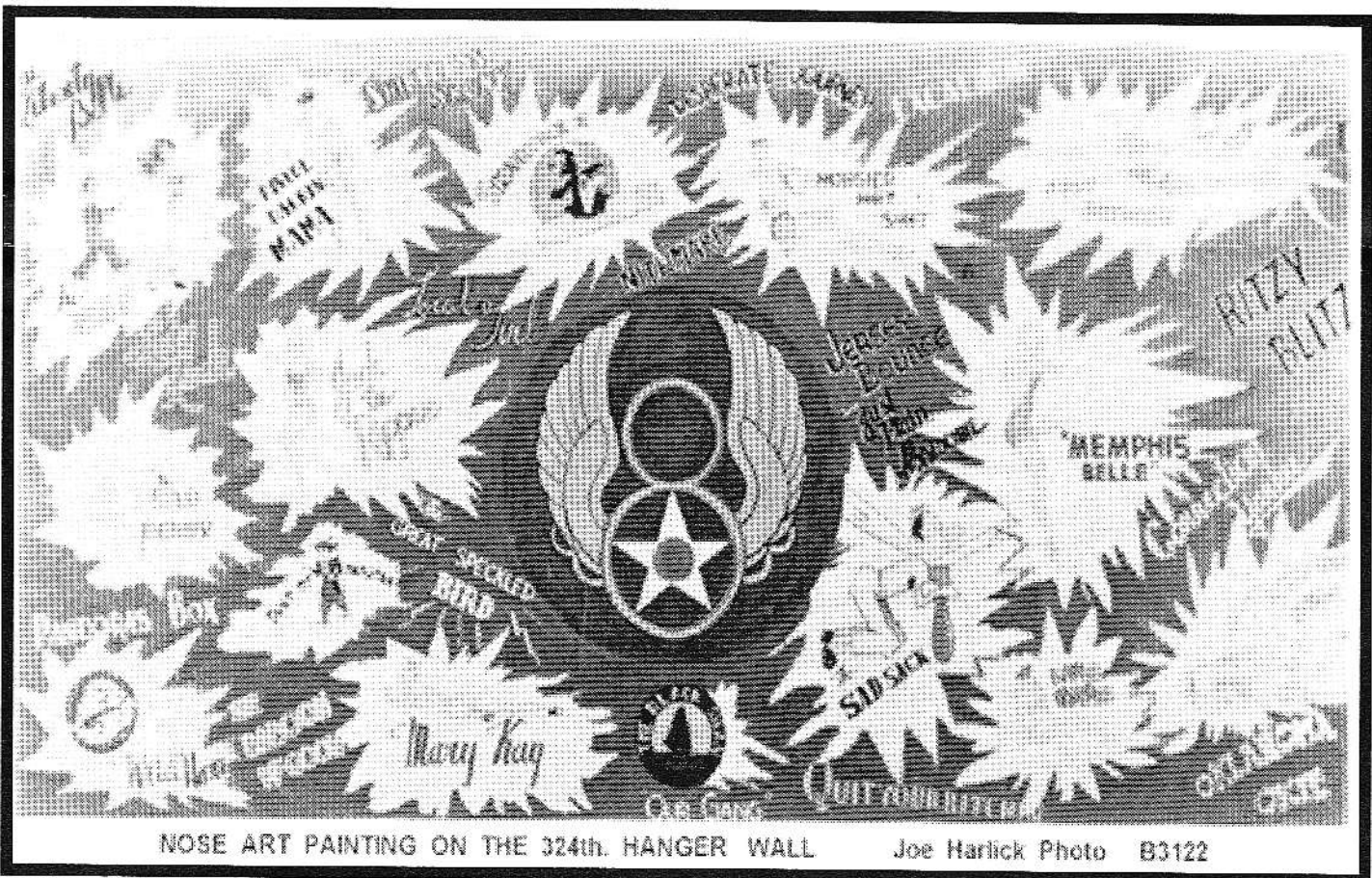
401<sup>st</sup> Bomb Sq..

Vol. 38 No. 2

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

**April 2005**

**The Hanger Wall of the 324<sup>th</sup>. Bomb Squadron  
of the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group at Basingbourn, England**



**The 324<sup>th</sup>. Squadron Mural painted by Tony Starcer and Charlie Busa**  
**Many of the Squadron's early named planes were illustrated on this mural,**  
**giving a clue to their Nose Art.**

## The Presidents Corner:

Your officers had our quarterly Conference Call on 12 Feb (we remember Lincoln's Birthday, even if our country seems to have lumped all them Presidents in together).

Thanks to Jim Bard's report from the 91st Recon. Memorial Association I was able to report that the new Commander at the 91st Space Wing at Minot is Col. Dan Adams; I will try to see if he is interested in re-starting the on-going relationship with his "grandpa" units. TSgt Larry Schomaker is still Historian of their unit (apparently) and April Kozma remains Chief of Protocol. B/G (now) Mark Owen has moved on - we know not where as I write. We'll keep pestering them. I finally got a letter off to the American Battles Monuments about honoring one of our ground crewmembers in England thanks to the valiant efforts of Vince Hemmings and Paul Limm.

The status of the location of the *Memphis Belle* is still in limbo (and we have our own feelings about which would be heaven). Earl Pate has talked to the "Committee" in Memphis and will be our action officer; he hopes to visit the appropriate authorities at Wright Patterson Museum soon to assess their intentions. We surely do not want to see this important part of our history deteriorate any more and the aircraft does legally "belong" to the Air Force.

As always, Ace gave his detailed report of our finances which are doing fine. The bill for the completion of the cleaning and retouching of the metal work on the Prop Memorial - which was completed earlier - will be paid from our Memorial Maintenance Fund. That Fund is separate and has grown to over \$5000; we will be adding proceeds from a couple of more sales of the "Ruhr Valley Raiders" lithographs soon. I have more copies if you want to make a gift of one to a local school (AFROTC maybe) or library.

Even though our finances are doing very nicely, we are looking at other ways to save money. We discussed the possibility of sending The Ragged Irregular by e-mail to those of you who would be willing to receive it in that form which would save us significantly; Past President Bob Friedman will be working with Steve Perri to see if it is feasible to develop such a list. Steve and Ace have also done the paper work to try to get Post Office authority to mail as a non-profit organization to those who want a hard copy. Nothing is easy, but we are trying.

E-mail to Europe would be especially timesaving and money saving.

We talked about Membership and Money and agreed the former are most desirable even though it also helps the latter. I see a number of young service people at Ft. Lewis and McChord AFB who express an interest; I always encourage them to look at our wonderful website and sign up as a member. It is a double benefit if they are in the service because they help our qualifying numbers with IRS as a military non-profit organization. Ace reported that as of 12 Feb. 61% of our Full Members had paid their dues and 66% of Associates; his follow-up "reach-out" letter in the past has added about 75% of the "lost souls." In line with our hope to serve you, First VP Marv Goldberg who doubles as PX Officer is going to offer some discounts on our 91st goodies including the calendars. Send friends to our website for bargains.

Finally, we talked a good deal about the portions of the to-be-proposed By-Laws revisions, which deal with your officers' duties. As we have said over the past year we will be proposing to make the BGMA less autocratic and more responsive to a strong Board - your elected officers. Our Chairman of Nominations Joe Harlick will be out soon beating the bushes for candidates for 2006 and we certainly hope some of our younger members will be candidates, at least for Second Vice President. Some of you might want to consider being back up for Editor of The Ragged Irregular or Secretary-Treasurer, or Manager of the PX.

If I had any doubts I was reminded forcibly of how fast our future can change on 17 Feb. My wife of 48 years, Joan, was involved in an auto accident leaving her with a broken hip, knee and leg and fractures to her sternum and numerous ribs. She planned very nicely to be the least bother possible by having the accident while turning into the Madigan Army Hospital entrance; she is such an accommodating lady. The wonderful staff at Madigan have taken care of her well and she survived the hip replacement very well on 23 Feb; they believe the other fractures will heal in 6-8 weeks though she will be an invalid for that period while the leg and knee heal. Many of you have much worse problems and less chance of getting out to feed the ducks this summer, so this is a note of joyful appreciation, not cause for sympathy for us. Love you all - even if some of you did vote for that Navy guy who was a candidate.

Keep smiling, your President ED GATES

**91<sup>st</sup> BGMA****Officers****President Ed Gates**

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**ACE JOHNSON**

(with photo if possible)

Material for publication  
Should be sent to:

**STEVE PERRI - EDITOR**



**PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND IN YOUR DUES –  
IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR DUES FOR 2005 –  
THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST ISSUE.**

"Time-value" items must be received on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day preceding the month of publication to permit necessary priority consideration for inclusion in that issue. We publish issues in January, April, July & October. Every effort will be made to utilize other submitted material in later RI issues.

## 2006 Reunion COLORADO SPRINGS CO

### **Exercise at Eighty, by President Ed Gates**

Many of us walk the dog, play golf and have a few other activities. In spite of our best efforts there are plenty of aches and pains. This program appears to be helping me. Last April I began participating in a weight lifting program called "Health Outcomes" at the Madigan Army Medical Center at Tacoma, WA. It is a program to improve well being and mobility of seniors or handicapped originated by Dr. Joe Dzados and managed by an exceptional retired Army nurse, Mr. Tofa Salafai. An individual program using various weight machines is designed for participants who continue on their own with up to three sessions per week and the assistance of Tofa. I have increased my weight lifting capacity by more than 50% for arms, back, legs, etc. I no longer have persistent lower back pain which I suffered for over five years. Doctors had diagnosed loss of movement in my left ankle as irreversible due to severe neuropathy; I now have some movement. My walking is far less stable than it was even ten years ago, but it is not deteriorating. Bone density measurements in my back have actually increased.

I certainly cannot say that such a program will help you, but I thought it worth the effort to ask B/Gen. Michael Dunn, Commander of Madigan Army Medical Center, if he would be agreeable to have me recommend the program. He recently concurred and said they would be happy to provide information to any other armed forces medical center that wished to contact him about the program; it is funded for FY05. If you want to explore the possibility with a medical center with which you participate, ask them to contact Gen. Dunn at Madigan, ZIP 98431-1100. A key to success of the program, I believe, is the skill and personality of the trainer. Mr. Salafi has said he would be willing to counsel any other potential trainers. To say "It can't hurt!" may not be altogether true, but I really believe participation in the program was responsible for my wife, Joan, surviving her auto accident so well (in "President's Corner"). In my case it seems to be helping. Let me know if it helps you and I'll pass it on to Gen. Dunn.

**Web Sites:**

**WWW.91STBOMBGROUP.COM**

**WWW.BOMBSOD323RD.COM**



**REUNIONS AND MORE****CHINO Rally Round  
May 2005 May 21<sup>st</sup> + May 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

Our official headquarters  
will be the La Quinta Inn, Ontario. CA.

We have established the Headquarters for the  
2005 Chino CA Rally Round to be:

**The La Quinta Inn,**  
3555 Inland Empire Blvd, Ontario CA.  
This is just off the 10 Freeway at Haven (across  
from the Hilton Hotel).  
Phone number for reservations is  
**909-476-1112.**

To get the \$99.00 rate, tell them you are with  
the 91st Bomb Group.

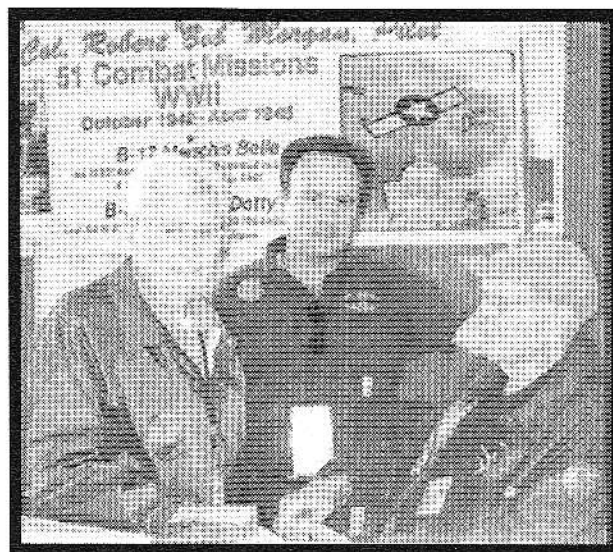
Please let us know if you have any problem  
with the La Quinta Inn.

The cost of the Air Show is \$10.00 for  
advanced tickets and \$15.00 at the  
gate. Just let us know who wants an advance  
ticket and we will collect from  
you at the hotel.

**Jim & Suzi Shepherd >>**  
[augusto@earthlink.net](mailto:augusto@earthlink.net)  
Tel. 714-970-5540

**The following are Members Planning to  
attend the Chino Rally-Round – Join Us**

Mike & Yvonne Banta  
Lenny Contreras  
Ray & Lorraine Darling  
Tom Davis  
Bob Dickson  
Frank & Irma Farr  
Clyde & Lenelle Garrison  
Mick Hanou  
Ace Johnson  
Tom Koranda  
Paul & Jeannie Limm  
Jack Paget  
Steve & Nancy Perri  
Jim & Suzi Shepherd



L-R: General Tibbets, His Manager Ed Humphries,  
Colonel Robert Morgan, Pilot-Memphis Belle

**HAPPY 90<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY GENERAL PAUL TIBBETS**

Pilot of the B-29 "Enola Gay" which dropped the first  
Atomic Bomb over Japan, August 6, 1945 at 0815 hours.  
This photo was taken by Linda Morgan, Widow of Col.  
Morgan, at the Air Show in Lakeland Florida, April 2004.  
General Tibbets also led the first mission flown by the  
Eighth Air Force over enemy territory.

**B-17 Flying Fortress Association**

1640 Cambridge Drive  
Walla Walla WA 99362

Is looking for new members  
Membership Dues \$15 a year 6 Newsletters a Year  
Email: [b17assndhayes@bmi.net](mailto:b17assndhayes@bmi.net)

**The 91<sup>st</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Assn.**  
Reunion will be at the Hope Hotel, Wright  
Patterson AF Base, Ohio – August 23-27 2005  
Contact: Reunion Committee Chairman,  
Jerry Haines – 2411 S. Tecumseh Rd.  
Springfield Ohio 45502

**The Florida Chapter of the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS**

Will hold a Reunion:

**May 5, 6, 7, 2005**

At the Doubletree Guest Suites  
In Boca Raton FL 33487

If anyone is interested in attending  
Get in touch with: Bill Uphoff of  
Jupiter FL at 561-747-4295

**THE REUNION by Rachel Firth**

Autumn leaves rustling, together to the appointed place, the old warriors come. Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve. Where they meet is not important anymore. Greetings echo across a lobby. Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces, that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to accept so lovingly.

But deep within these Indian Summer days, they have reached a greater understanding of life and love. The shells holding their souls are weaker now, but hearts and minds grow vigorous, remembering. On the table someone spreads old photographs, a test of recollection. Friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone. The rugged slender bodies lost forever. Yet, they no longer need to prove their strength.

Some are now sustained by one of "medicine's miracles," and, even in his fact, they manage to find humor. The women, all those that waited, all those who loved them, have watched the changes take place. Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other, as glad to be together as the men.

Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told and told again, reweaving the threadbare fabricate of the past. Mending one more time the banner of their youth.

They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as engines whine and whirl, and planes come to life. These birds with fractured wings can be seen beyond the mist of clouds, and they are in the air again, chasing the wind, feeling the exhilaration of flight close to the heavens.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit, move silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes. Each, in his own way, may wonder who will be absent in another year. The room grows quiet for a time. Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns. The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility. So, this is how it goes. The past is so much present. In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches and the prayers, one cannot help but hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.

Finally, it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but the past cannot be held too long, for it is fragile. They say "Farewell"... "see you another year, God willing." - ***Each keeps a little of the others with him forever.***

**THE CREW OF "THE WILD HARE" HAS A MINI-REUNION IN CALIFORNIA**

Phil Collins-Ed Ah Tye-Andy Caswell-Ken Smith



The four remaining members of one crew that was assigned to "The Wild Hare" got together in California in February 2005. Only three of the crew attended the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA reunion in Washington DC.

The fourth member, Ed Ah Tye, at age 91, finds it hard to travel because of using a wheel chair. So, the other three decided to visit Ed in California and finish off the reunion in style, with the whole crew together.

The four members were: Dr. Phillip L. Collins & wife Nadine from Marshalltown Iowa, Col. (USAF Ret.) Kenneth S. Smith & wife Virginia from Winter Springs, Florida, Lt/Col (USAF Ret.) Andrew D. Caswell (Widower) from Algonac, Michigan and Edward Ah Tye & wife Blanche, living in Stockton California. They got together in Stockton, along with Doreen Ah Tye (daughter), Gordon Ah Tye (son), Ray and Judy (daughter) Hong, Greg and Lani (daughters) Farkas.

They were entertained at both Ed & Blanche's house and at Ray & Judy's house and attended church at St. Marks United Methodist Church in Stockton. The out of town members were introduced to the congregation and all had lunch at the church.

The out of town group also did the usual sightseeing in San Francisco, etc. Everyone had a great time.

**Excerpts from MY LAST FLIGHT IN A B-17 by Whitmal W. Hill**

Occurred on 6 April 1944, and it was a thriller. This particular day there were no missions flying. The weather was nice and I was sitting in the 323<sup>rd</sup> BS Operations Office with several 323<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chiefs drinking coffee and shooting the breeze. A Pilot came in with another Pilot who had just been released from the hospital after being wounded by enemy fire on an earlier mission, and three Army Officers who were going for a ride in a B-17. The Pilot asked for a Flight Engineer to go up for a short flight to show his Copilot friend the type of low-level flying the Group had been practicing while he was in the hospital. None being around I volunteered to go as a Flight Engineer. Away we went for a low-level flight over the local English Countryside. Once aloft, we buzzed the Control Towers of a couple of other nearby bases. On one Tower, our approach was hidden by trees surrounding the base. We hopped over the trees, dropped down low, shot across the field and headed straight for the tower. We were low! As we approached base's tower they fired a couple of red flares and we could see the personnel starting to evacuate the tower. An airman was leaning on the right front fender of a Red Cross Ambulance parked next to the tower. Suddenly he stood up and took off running.

We were now just south of Royston. As we approached Royston, we could see The Royston Green Plunge Swimming Pool. There on the top of the high diving board was a young man standing and watching us. Still flying low, it was decided to give the man on the high diving board a buzz job. As we closed in, the diver grabbed his nose and jumped into the pool. It was April and as near as I can remember he was the only one in the pool. We then headed for home, Bassingbourn A.B.; but, we didn't know that the real fun (?) was about to begin.

As we approached the runway, the Pilot dropped the tail wheel, and as some of the new aircraft were having trouble locking the tail wheel, it became necessary for the Flight Engineer to go back through the bomb bay and waist sections to check that the tail wheel was locked before landing. I went back and all was OK, and returned to the cockpit, closing the door between the cockpit and the bomb bay. All being OK, the pilot lowered the flaps, followed by lowering the front wheels. The Pilot and Co-Pilot cracked their side windows to visually check that they were indeed down and then closed the windows and proceeded on the approach to the main runway. Opening the windows, however, created a vacuum which sucked the air forward from the back of the airplane, even though the door between the cockpit to the bomb bay was closed. In the cockpit there were no indications of a fire or the odor of gasoline in the cockpit. The passengers riding in the nose, however, began shouting back to the cockpit that they smelled gasoline. A quick check of the cockpit revealed no gasoline leaks or odors. Then, opening the door between the Bombay and the cockpit, I was greeted by a bomb bay that was full of heat and orange flames that made it impossible to enter. Quickly slamming the door closed, the Pilots were alerted of the fire in the bomb bay.

By this time we were well on the final approach for landing, and there was no alternative other than to continue landing, and hopefully praying it would be all in one piece. Nearing the runway, I recall thinking to myself, "What a mess". Here we are going to win this war with Hitler, and here I am going to get killed on a joy ride in a B-17, and never see the end. Luck and the good Lord were with us, as the Pilots skillfully landed the aircraft. As we were rolling down the runway with the propellers still flopping over, the passengers in the nose compartment rushed for the nose hatch, but, fortunately didn't know how to open the door, and was in fact sitting on it. Pushing them back into the nose, and pulling the release handle, the hatch door fell off. It was then necessary to hold the passengers back from jumping out into the path of the wheels.

Finally all came to a halt near the center of the runway, and every one escaped through the hatch, except the Pilot who went out his window and slid down the side of the B-17. All of our chutes, and the new Officer's trench coat were left lying back on the floor in the waist area. Everyone was out safely. The next thing we did was all run down the runway to get away from the B-17 in the event it blew up – nothing happened so we again crept back. As we got close, we could hear all sorts of crackling noises not unlike an electric pressing iron heating up, so we turned and ran away again. Suddenly, we saw an unknown Sergeant ride up on a bicycle. He dismounted and was about to enter the waist door to see what was wrong with the aircraft sitting in the middle of the runway. We shouted and waved our arms, and he finally got the message and moved away.

Whew! It should be noted that while we were still airborne the Pilots concentrated on making certain that they didn't overshoot the runway or do any thing else that might cause us to "go around again." As a result no one called the tower of our plight.

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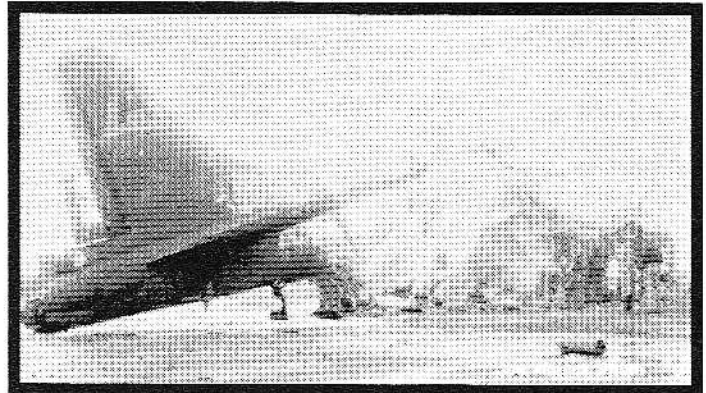
It wasn't until after we were on the ground that the Sergeants in the 323rd Operations Office noted that our aircraft must be in some sort of trouble as it had stopped in the middle of the main runway, and observed the crew running off. They quickly alerted the Tower. The Tower in turn then notified the fire department who finally came lumbering out to see what the emergency all about. Meanwhile the flames had burnt their way to the inside of the inboard wings, and as the electrical lines became shorted, the props flopped over, the engines coughed, but never started. Then the "Keystone cops/Firemen" came onto the scene. The first fire truck to arrive was loaded with foamite for battling gasoline fires, and had a flexible fire hose neatly folded in the back of the truck. The truck slowed down and several firemen jumped off, including one fireman who held the nozzle end of the hose. The firetruck continued moving slowly as the hose was played out. However, it did not stop when the hose reached the end. Thus the fireman holding the nozzle was jerked off his feet, and dragged a few feet, before the fire truck stopped. He was shaken up but not injured. The fire truck then backed up allowing the hose to reach the burning plane. The time of day was now about five in the evening. The Fire Chief was dressed in his Class "A" uniform and had anticipated catching the early GI truck/bus taking the troops on the evening run to Cambridge. Meanwhile the firemen were busy spraying the foamite into the engine nacelles, which ran off and made the ground slippery.

The fire, however, was burning internally, and no one was eager enough to enter the B-17 via the waste door in the back. One of the Army Officer's meantime reported that his brand new Covert Cloth Officer's Trench coat was still in the planes waist area. He was upset, as he had used all his clothing coupons to purchase the coat. Neither he nor anyone else volunteered to rescue the coat. The fire was burning internally and one of the firemen set up a ladder between the engine and the fuselage, and was prepared to chop a hole in the wing. Unfortunately, the man setting up the ladder did not consider the slick foamite several inches thick covering the runway, and did not ask someone to hold the ladder to keep it from slipping.

The fireman ran up the ladder holding on tightly to the outside rails instead of the rungs. As his head came level with the wing, the load shifted, and the bottom of the ladder began to slip out from the wing. Although he raced to get up on the wing, the ladder won as it slid out from the wing and came crashing down into the foamite. When the ladder hit the ground, the fireman's feet were on a ladder rung but his fingers were trapped under the ladder and to get him off we had to lift the ladder. Since we never heard whether his hands were broken, we assumed the foamite cushioned the fall. We realized that the firemen did not have any knowledge of the many inspection covers on the bottom of the B-17 wings, especially the large inspection cover on the inboard wings that allowed easily access to the wires, fuel lines, and other equipment, and was easily held up by Zeus fasteners requiring only a screw driver to open them. The opening was large enough to insert ones shoulders to reach inside. The Fire Chief was advised and quickly came up with a screwdriver. I then went under the wing to open the big inspection cover. I advised the Chief that when the inspection cover was ready to drop I would shout "NOW," and then drop the inspection cover. The fireman with the foamite hose should then shoot the foamite into the opened inspection area. Shouting "NOW" to the Fire Chief the cover was dropped. Somehow the Fire Chief got between the hose man and the open inspection cover. As the fireman swung the hose toward the opening he squirted the foamite on the Fire Chief from the front of his blouse up. While he turned his face, it knocked his hat off, and left gobs of foam on his eyebrows and head. It was a funny sight, but the Chief wasn't laughing. I then retreated out from under the wing stood at a great distance from the fire with the rest of the plane's crew, and asked myself what the hell was I doing under that wing in the first place. Fortunately the B-17 did not explode. We had started the flight with gas tanks full to the top in the event there was a call for a mission.

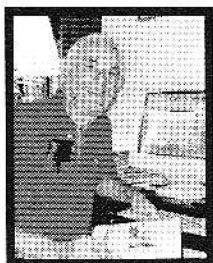
As we had only been flying a short time, there were lots of 100 octane gasoline left to burn. The B-17 just slowly burned away, until all that was left were parts of the wings with the engines, the main landing gears a hunk of the nose, the vertical/horizontal stabilizers,

and the tail gunners position. I believe it was later determined that when the flaps were dropped, the activating solenoid located on the fire wall below gasoline transfer lines shorted out, and burned through the lines. The lines were used to transfer gasoline from the outboard wings' Tokyo Tanks to the main tanks.



**STORY'S from the Ring - Mike Banta Ringmaster**

Become a member of the ring by e-mailing Mike at [B-17banta@aol.com](mailto:B-17banta@aol.com)

**Passing of a Generation - Won't Be Long And They Will Be Gone**

**Written By, Captian Stephen R. Ellison, M.D, a Military Doctor**

I am a doctor specializing in the Emergency Departments of the only two military Level One-trauma centers, both in San Antonio, TX and they care for civilian Emergencies as well as military personnel. San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here as a military doctor, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous. One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work. Most often, it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash. Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient.

Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brought in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees. I had not stopped to think of what citizens of this age group represented. I saw "Saving Private Ryan." I was touched deeply. Not so much by the carnage, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Dept. and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else that has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless. Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without the inquiry. I have been privileged to an amazing array of experiences, recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Dept. encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to the hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic, trying to start an IV line in her arm. She remained calm and poised, despite her illness and the multiple needle-sticks into her fragile veins. She was what we call a "hard stick." As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said, "Auschwitz." Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering. Also, there was this long retired Colonel, who as a young officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific Island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, his head cut in a fall at home where he lived alone. His scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi, to take him home. Then he realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived 7 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country and the least we could do was get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret was that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, and I couldn't drive him myself. I was there the night M/Sgt. Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Dept. for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick; he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later. The gentleman who served with Merrill's Marauders, the survivor of the Bataan Death March, the survivor of Omaha Beach, the 101 year old World War I veteran, the former POW held in frozen North Korea, the former Special Forces medic - now with non-operable liver cancer, the former Viet Nam Corps Commander. I remember these citizens. I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women. I have seen a Congress who would turn their back on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties, won with such sacrifice. It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Dept. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation. My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must "EARN THIS."



From Across the Pond by Vince Hemmings**Handing over of RAF Bassingbourn to 91st Bomb Group (H)**

At 1200 hours on 21st April, 1943, this station was handed over by the Station Commander Squadron Leader. John. S. Ellard - 79014 - to Colonel Stanley. T. Wray, Commanding Officer, 91st Bombardment Group (H), United States Army Air Force.

The Handing over Ceremony took place on the Station Parade Ground, the RAF and U.S.A.A.F. each having a Guard consisting of one Officer and 33 Other Ranks and the Military Band from R.A.F. Station, Henlow was also in attendance. At the lowering of the Royal Air Force Ensign, the R.A.F. "March Past" was played and as the American Ensign was being hoisted, the Band played "To the Colours", all Officers saluting and the Guards presenting arms.

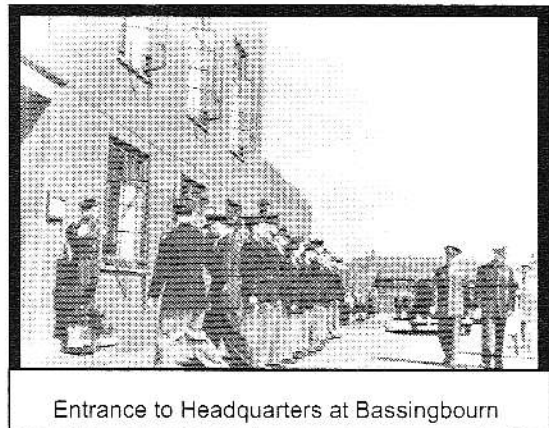


Squadron Leader, Ellard handed a Silver Casket containing the inventories of the Station to Colonel Wray, and after the Guards had reformed, the Band played whilst both contingents marched past in column, both Commanding Officers taking the Salute.

The document is signed John. S Ellard, Squadron Leader, Commanding RAF Detachment , Bassingbourn.

All the records are signed by Squadron Leader Ellard, who if I remember correctly, was rather a portly gentleman. A copy of this is in the 91st BG(H) archives.

I have copied these records verbatim.



★ **Bernard D. Offley, Age 82**

**Gig Harbor, WA January 20, 2005**

As reported by his Navigator, Bill Potter  
(last surviving crewmember of Little Jean)

A Gig Harbor and Tacoma area resident since 1979, passed away January 20, 2005. Past resident of Bellingham, Bernard was a WWII Veteran shot down over Germany Jan. 11, 1944, interred in Stalag 17B POW camp in Germany, and liberated by the Russian Army. He was a member of the DAV (Disabled American Veterans), VFW Gig Harbor, and X-POW Tacoma Chapter.

Mr. Offley was employed by Georgia Pacific Corp., Bellingham Division for over 30 years before moving to Gig Harbor. His wife Jessie; daughter Hattie Otto, Bentonville, Arkansas; son Bernard D. Offley, Jr., St. Helens, Oregon, Jerry Offley, Gig Harbor, WA; 3 sisters and 1 brother; 6 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

★ **Ralph C. Brown, 322<sup>nd</sup>, Age 81**  
**East Stoneham ME, Nov. 14, 2004**

He was born in Buffalo NY Nov. 17, 1922 and received a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree from the University of Buffalo and a Ph.D in Geography from Syracuse University. He was Chairman of the Dept. of Geography at Universities in NY, PA, WI and ND. He retired in 1985 as Professor Emeritus, University of ND, Grand Forks.

During WW II he served in the European Theater involved in 35 combat missions in B-17's. He was active in Veterans groups and affairs and was a licensed single engine land and seaplane pilot. He flew extensively enhancing geographic observations particularly in Alaska and the rural lower 48 states and presented pertinent findings at national conferences.

His wife Harriett, daughter, Bobbie Brown Abbott and her husband Fred, one granddaughter and three grandsons and two great grandsons as well as a brother Jack Brown and his wife and family, survives him.

**PLEASE SEND ALL OBITUARIES TO  
ACE JOHNSON,  
SECRETARY/TREASURER**

★ **Robert Gordon Morgan, DDS, 324<sup>th</sup>**  
**Toledo OH, January 9, 2005, Age 85**

As reported by Bill Potter

Dr. Morgan graduated from South High School in Youngstown and then went on to attend the Ohio State University and played baseball while there. He was pursued by the farm team in Los Angeles CA but got married instead and then the war happened. He enlisted and was a Bombardier on a B-17. He bailed out of a B-17 with a ten-man crew and was one of three that survived. He was interred in Germany for a year and was liberated by the Russians. He weighed less than 100 lbs. When he came home.

He entered the first post war class at OSU Dental School in 1946 and practiced dentistry with his uncle in the Colony area and then had his own practice until he retired around 1990.

Bob had an avid interest in hunting and fishing and some say he knew more about baseball than anyone in the world.

Dr. Morgan was preceded in death by his wife of 50 years.

★ **Joseph E. Hutton, 401<sup>st</sup>, Age 79**  
**Mobile AL, February 17, 2005**

Submitted by his son William Hutton



He was born in Oxford MS, March 17<sup>th</sup> 1925 and enlisted in the UAAAC at the age of 17.

He was a Tail Gunner on Lt. William Bateman's crew of "Broad Minded" and was awarded the Air Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, three

Battle Stars (Rhineland, Ardennes and Central Europe) and completed 35 missions. He was discharged September 1945, graduated Ole Miss. In 1949 with a BSCE degree and was recalled to active duty August of 1950 where he served as a Senior Navigator-Observer on an F-94 All Weather Fighter with the 66<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, Alaskan Air Command and was released from active duty in Nov. 1952 with the rank of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.

He was employed for 35 years with the U.S. Corps of Engineers and was a consultant for almost 14 years with U.S. and European manufacturers.

His wife of 53 years, Paulette, two sons, one daughter and four grandchildren survive him.

**Folded Wings cont'd:****Ford Cowherd, 323<sup>rd</sup>, Age 81****West Palm Beach FL, Feb. 20, 2005**

As reported by Roy and Lois Fratz  
He was a highly decorated veteran of WW II with the 8th Air Force as a flight engineer.



He was a member of the 1st United Methodist Church of West Palm Beach, The American Legion Post #268, His wife of 57 years, Betty Cowherd, his son, Charles and daughter, Gale Smith, one granddaughter, one great-granddaughter and his sister survive him,

**Remembrance from a long time buddy, Whit Hill:**

Chet was a member of the original nine crews that made up the 323rd Bomb Squadron of the 91st Bomb Group, and flew as a Flight Engineer on B-17, "STUPNTAKIT" and was shot down on the infamous Schweinfurt mission of 17 August, 1943, and went down over France. He met the French Underground became an evadee. After a harrowing trip across the Pyrenees Mountains, he returned to Bassingbourn on his way back to the States, where he advised new crews on how to contact the Underground if shot down.

**James (J.D.) Cummins, 322<sup>nd</sup>****Middletown NJ, January, 2005**

As reported by John Zajac, fellow crewmember



"J.D." was assigned to the 322<sup>nd</sup> as a Radio Operator on the plane "Lewd Angel". He had completed 35 missions and we had our share of "close calls" over Germany. He leaves behind his loving wife Ruth, two children and five grandchildren, as well as, his fellow crewmembers.

**Edwin "Ed" Whitten, 323<sup>rd</sup>, Age 87****Naples FL, February 23, 2005**

As reported by his wife  
He was born in Portland ME and lived most of his life in South Portland. He graduated from South Portland HS in 1935 and attended Duke University.

A B-17 pilot in the European Theater flying 30 missions over Europe and was awarded decorations and citations including a ribbon and

(Continued in next column)

three bronze stars, an air medal with on silver and two bronze oak leaf clusters and a Presidential Citation.

Ed worked for Weyerhaeuser for 33 years. He and his wife spend winters in Marco Island for 21 years and had their home at the "Oaks" in Cape Elizabeth ME. He leaves his wife Helma, son Matthew, five grandchildren, 2 step-daughters. 2 step-grandsons and a daughter-in-law Nannette Whitten, preceded in death by son Eric.

**William "Bill" Ingham, 401<sup>st</sup>, Age 79****Merritt Island FL, Sept. 19, 2004**

Bill was called to duty on in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Oct. 4, 1943 and served as a Tail Gunner on his B-17 named "Lonesome Dove". He served in the battles and campaigns of the Rhineland and Central Europe and was honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant in June 1945.

After the war he worked as a railroad engineer and then as a hazardous materials inspector with the Federal Government covering nine northwestern states with the Bureau of Safety Standards.

His wife Billie and their five children: son, Mark; four daughters: Kathleen Morrissey, Donna Franchimon, Kathleen Clark and Linda Hudson and seven grandchildren survive him.

**Donald W. Wilkinson, 401<sup>st</sup>, Age 81****Prairie Du Sac, Wisconsin, Dec. 12, 2004**

As reported by his wife Vila  
Don served in the Air Force from Jan. 1942 until Sept. 1945. He was with the crew that flew "Qualified Quail". He was an auto mechanic most of his life spending 10 years in business at City Service-Citgo Station in Prairie du Sac.

He was a founding member of the Sauk Prairie Trap and Skeet Club and enjoyed deer and duck hunting and fishing.

He is survived by his wife, Vila and 11 children, 28 Grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren and two sisters, Vickie Klitzke and Charlotte Williams.



FORWARDING AND ADDRESS  
CORRECTION REQUESTED

LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU MOVE

Published quarterly, January, April, July and October. The purpose of the Newsletter, THE RAGGED IRREGULAR, is to keep alive the Spirit of the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb 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. Editor Steve Perri

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The Ragged Irregular

April 2005

## FOLDED WINGS

### ★ Jack Jenson Paxson, 322<sup>nd</sup>, Age 84 Redmond WA, January 13, 2005

Submitted by Phil Mack

He was born in Friday Harbor WA. He was a Crew Chief in the 322<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron. Jack was a regular supporter of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA and helped with a Reunion held in Seattle a few years ago.

He enjoyed spending time hunting, fishing, skeet shooting and traveling the world as well as being politically active in the community.

Jack is survived by a son John (Marie) Paxson and a daughter Beth (Ken) Capek and four grandchildren, Nicole, Jeff, Kirsten and Linn and one great grandson, Joseph.

### ★ William "Johnny" McCrea, 322<sup>nd</sup>, Age 84 Doylestown PA, October 2, 2004

As reported by his wife and his former crewmember Larry O'Neill

He died after being in a car accident that left him unconscious for five days.

He was a Ball Turret Gunner on Pappy Gerald's B-17 and completed his tour of 25 missions and returned to the states in the summer of 1944.

He is survived by his wife, Audrey, his daughter Judy and five grandchildren.

### ★ Myron E. Kirschbaum, 322<sup>nd</sup> Age 83 Minneapolis, MN, April 10, 2003

He will be deeply missed by loving wife of 59 years, Loretta; sons, Jeff (Maryam), Stuart (Jan), Brad (Sue); grandchildren, Heidi (Mike), Jeremy, Sharlene (Tom); great-grandchildren, Savanna, Roman and Sydney; brother, Norman.

### ★ Mario Mattie 323<sup>rd</sup>, Age 85 Parma OH, Feb. 5, 2005

Submitted by Chuck Giauque, Pilot of Eagle's Wrath



Sad to report the passing of Mario Mattie, Crew Chief on Eagle's Wrath and, later, Emeigh. It was my good fortune to be able to be with him and family nearing and at his last breath.

He was an Ohio Bell retiree and Duquesne University alumni. He is survived by his wife Mary, who is also very ill, and children Davis (Carlyle) and Teresa and grandfather of Amy, Paul and Courtney and a brother Henry, Louise Panaro.

(Editors note; We are sorry to report that Mario's wife, Mary, passed away the following month.)



Mario Mattie and his ground crew

