

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



323rd Bomb Sq.



324th Bomb Sq.



October 2006



THE NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE 91ST BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSN.

Presidents Corner



The passing of the president's job from Ed Gates to me is exciting to say the least. Ed has done more than his share of work for the 91st BGMA. The well-planned reunions in Tacoma and Colorado Springs are two examples of his accomplishments.

For those that don't know me, my name is Jim Shepherd and my wife is Suzi Shepherd, daughter of Wayne "Tex" Frye, 323rd. We have been associate members from 1992 and last year, we became Full Life Members.

We maintain the web page for the 91st, www.91stbombgroup.com and have attended all the reunions since 1992. In addition, we have established a memorial at the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino California and held several Rally Rounds there.

In the next two years, I intend to:

Have some historic items of the 91st transferred to the Air Force Museum Dayton, and have them placed in such a way that future research can be conducted there.

Have each officer of the group supplied with a backup person to assist them.

*Steve Perri will receive assistance from Gary Hall in mailing the R.I. each quarter.

*Jake Howland, Historian will receive assistance from Ray McIlwain, son of James McIlwain 401st, in reviewing and scanning the old boxes of records of the 91st. If anyone else is interested in helping, please contact Jake.

*Asay Johnson will have backup help from Jody Kelly, daughter of Bob Dickson, 322nd.

*Request that Ed Gates and 1st VP Mick Hanou, Full Life Member, will be our Liaison to the Tower Museum and other interested parties in England and Europe. Ed has been very involved the past 4 years with this group and Mick has many contacts in the UK.

We will be looking for someone to assume the responsibilities of the PX. I will write an outline of the duties of the PX manager and send it to those interested in taking on this task. This job is open to Full and Associate members.

We had several suggestions on where to hold the next reunion, but the bi-laws state that it must be held in the west. We are currently looking at southern or central California. We have been invited to have a Rally Round at Minot AFB in North Dakota next July and/or a Rally Round at the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino California in May. The 91st Space Wing based at Minot, is the existing extension of the 91st Bomb Group. They are interested in being more connected and carrying on the tradition of the 91st BG. Those interested in either of the 2 above activities, please let me know.

We need someone to type stories from the veteran members so they can be placed on the web page.

Last but not least, we are amazed at the number of small separate memorials in England and Europe. A visitor to the reunion was Tony Goddard from Wincanton Town England. There is a memorial there for "Old Faithful" and I believe we should recognize their support by listing them under memorial on the web page. I am requesting that Bob Friedman collect photos and information on each one.

Your new President - Jim Shepherd

PS. The web page is under "Reconstruction" and should be back up to speed by Oct. 15th

The newsletter will now be available on the Website:

www.91stbombgroup.com

it will be offered in color and you will be able to receive your issue sooner than by mail – Try IT.

A sincere thanks to all who sent me pictures of the Reunion in Colorado Springs – Especially Jack Allen and Bonnie Selje and Janet Larocco As you can see, I used as many of them as I could. Many many thanks, Nancy Perri

LETTER FROM OUR PAST PRESIDENT – ED GATES

Steve and Nancy have kindly offered to provide somewhat less space than in the last issue for a few "Old soldiers never die, etc." comments from your past-Pres. The August Conference Call of your Board did make some decisions which I will share with you.

We settled on the National Museum of the USAF at Wright-Patterson AFB as the site for location of the permanent archives (historical records) of the 91st BGMA. Joe Harlick has offered a complete set of The Ragged Irregular and some 1000 original negatives from Bassingbourn as well as considerable photo reproduction, copies of Yank magazine and other items. (Subsequent to the Conference Call I contacted M/Gen Metcalf, Director of the Museum, and received a confirmation from him that they would be delighted to be the Repository offering exceptional archivist access for future scholars. Pres. Jim Shepherd has asked me to continue developing this contact with assistance from our historian, Jake Howland, and Secretary/Treasurer Ace Johnson.) If you have items of an historical nature which relate to the 91st Bomb Group in Europe or the BGMA please contact me.

I reviewed my trip to Europe. While not part of the Conference Call, we received some lovely messages of support from our British friends which I read at the Business Meeting at the Colorado Reunion. Councilor Lynn Berry, Town Mayor of Royston, was kind to include mention of my visit to the Priory Memorial Gardens to lay a wreath in your behalf in her greetings to the "veterans who were posted to Bassingbourn during World War II (from) all the people of Royston." Lt. Col. Nigel Smith, Commander at Bassingbourn since March, sent a lovely "Message of Support and Appreciation from the Commanding Officer and All Ranks" also including a generous reference to my stay with them. Finally, we received warm greetings from our four Friends of the 91st who have helped in so many ways – Sqdn. Leader Ray Leach, OBE, Col. Peter Worthy, RA (ret.), David Crow and Vince Hemmings. We will try to include the complete text in the next Ragged Irregular. *The Board voted to permit an appeal for funds in The Ragged Irregular by the East Anglia Aviation Society* who manage the Tower Museum at Bassingbourn with certain reservations. This is a one-time only exception to our normal practice of avoiding such appeals and will include an introductory letter by me reviewing my suggestions to the EAAS regarding their plans for fund-raising and hours of being open. We discussed other possible alternatives if the EAAS is unable to continue to provide access to the Tower Museum.

We also voted to offer support to the French organization which has so nobly honored us in the past including a gift of \$10,000 to The Mighty Eighth Museum. They are in the process of preparing a French/English website with information from the dozen volumes on 777 B-17 crash sites in France collected by Michel Lugez over the past 20 years. I will encourage support from other bomb groups, the NMUSAF, the 8th Air Force Historical Society and any other interested parties.

Following-up on my visit to the 91st Space Wing at Minot AFB the Board voted to donate 8 copies of "Curly" Havelaar's book, The Ragged Irregulars of Bassingbourn, to the 91st Space Wing with the suggestion that one be placed in the Base Library, one in the Career Training Center and two for each of the three Squadrons. The Squadrons have an active program for encouraging study of their heritage along with pictures of our aircraft like *Nine-O-Nine*, *General Ike*, *Memphis Belle*, *Chow Hound* and others. Our thought is that they might circulate the books through their 5 missile control site alert rooms where people are on duty for 24-hour stretches. The NCOIC for the site I visited was very interested in getting his people to be knowledgeable about the 91st BG and the 91st Strategic Recon. Wing. We suggested to your new Board that they might consider a Rally Round at Minot next July in conjunction with their Northern Neighbors Day.

Finally, it has been a great honor to serve all of you in the past four years. I am especially happy that we have updated the By-Laws incorporating the coordination and management by the Board of Directors with the President as Executive Officer. The By-Laws are more specific about officers' responsibilities and clearly encourage the assumption of workload by our heirs. I would hope that many of you will take the opportunity to become Full Members; request a copy of the By-Laws from the Secretary Treasurer. The greatest memorial we could have is the "living memorial" of an energetic BGMA for years to come. I believe Jim Shepherd and Mick Hanou will serve you well and - with the support of us oldsters who are still doing our best - will do a great job. God bless you all.

Au revoir, Past-President, Ed Gates

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Please send all obituaries
To **ACE JOHNSON**
(with photo if possible)

Material for publication
should be sent to
STEVE PERRI – EDITOR
Deadline for the RI is the
15th of the previous month

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www.bombsqd323rd.com

Thank You Reunion Volunteers

Reunion 2006 in Colorado Springs was accomplished with the wonderful participation of many of our members, spouses and children. A special round of applause is due to the latter who made life easier and less expensive for us all. It must be a special hazard of newly elected Presidents; I forgot to acknowledge our volunteers at the Banquet in 2002 and Jim missed that line on his carefully pre-printed Program this time.

First, our planning committee included Sam Newton (our man on the spot in Colorado who also valiantly coordinated transportation from the "let's hope it works" schedules that I gave to him). Jim Fletcher assisted in transport coordination. Herb Egender provided guidance on Colorado Springs attractions and back-up transport. Nancy Perri prepared for Registration. Marv Goldberg coordinated plans for the PX. Mick Hanou managed the Hospitality Suite, made-do with things I forgot to buy at the Peterson AFB Class 6 store or the food for the Reception and coordinated Hospitality Room volunteers. Betty Goldberg arranged Banquet decorations. Jim Shepherd published the Banquet program. Asay Johnson assisted by Marilyn Webber prepared all of the tickets, event lists, money records and all those etceteras that go with being both Secretary and Treasurer. Steve & Nancy Perri suffered through my last-minute deadlines and kept the info flowing thru The Ragged Irregular in a timely and beautiful manner. And they all had a smile as we carried out our mission.

Assisting them at the Reunion were: Judy Williams at Registration with an assist from Rocco Maiorca. Herb & Cathy Egender, Joe & Jenny Harlick, Tony & Sandra Goddard (from Wincanton), Ace Johnson & Marilyn Webber, Jim & Suzi Shepherd, Tom & Connie Baron and Jody Dickson assisted in the Hospitality Room; Jack Allen, Wayne Baird (son of Vernon), Phil & Nadine Collins, Herb Egender, David Fodroci (son of Michael), Ed Gates, James Humm, Ace Johnson, Kathy Louis (daughter of Ed Gates), Don Murray, Dr. A.F. Peterman (son-in-law of Robert Stevens), Nick Pryor (son-in-law of Jake Howland), Bill Reid, Ed Ristow, Larry Ruth, Dean Selje, Jim Shepherd, Robert Stevens, Sheila Strieger, Greg Varhall and Jim White helped provide transportation; Marv & Betty Goldberg provided Banquet decorations and Herb Egender lent a model of the B-17 from which he bailed out for decoration. Joe Harlick also

prepared the photo displays that were in the Hospitality Room.

Sam & Hilda Newton donated those beautiful mugs for each attendee. Greg & Linda Varhall contributed the B-17 model of *Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby* that was won by Vernon Baird in the drawing. Thanks to the Newtons and Varhalls for going the extra mile-high. Last - but far from least - my wife, Joan, donated much more of our house to the clutter that my preparation efforts (and wind-down) produced and sacrificed some time we could have spent doing other things. I waft a gentle kiss.

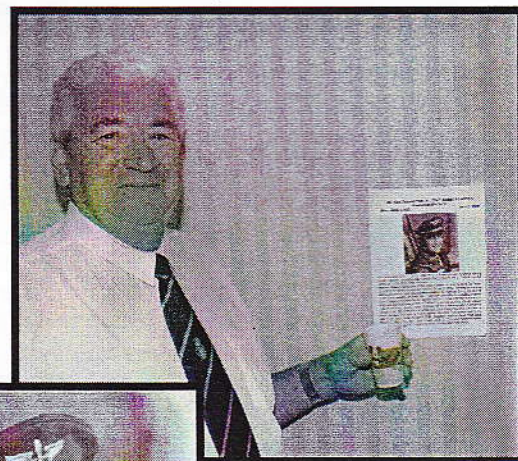
I'm sure I missed someone and to you I apologize. It is with special pleasure that I note the number of younger members who gave of their time and energy. Keep 'em flying !!

The future of the BGMA as a living memorial to those of us who served in 1942-45 is in your hands.

Thanks, Ed Gates, Reunion Chairman

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & MORE:

To Editor Steve Perri: It was so meaningful to all of us to think that Daddy was remembered at the Reunion by the friends and comrades that he cared so deeply about. Although Daddy was extremely self-effacing and would have never asked for such a tribute, we deeply appreciate what you did to remember him. Sincerely, Melinda Pate



Member of the
91st toasting
Gen. Earl Pate at
the Colorado
Springs Reunion
Sept. 2006.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND MORE (cont'd)**From Mike Banta, 91st Ring**

I received a wonderful letter from Carol Miller, Dale Darling's executrix, in which she told me that all of Dale's files and memorabilia has been donated to the Air Force Museum in Dayton. The Air Force museum has told her that duplicates, if any, will be sent to the Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah.

Lowell Getz gave me her telephone number and I called her today and thanked her for her letter. She is a delightful eighty three year old young lady and has carefully gone through Dale's files, contacted the Dayton Museum and with their delighted acceptance, prepared and shipped them to the Museum.

From: Carol Swartley Miller

Tribute: Dale's family, my son and I, are deeply appreciative of the expressions of condolence received from so many of the 91st Bomber Group of WWII. My orders were, "No interment, nothing paid for cremation until the following is inscribed in bronze on the rear of the headstone":

"O Jesus, I have promised To serve Thee to the end; Be Thou for-ever near me, My master and my Friend: I shall not fear the battle If Thou art by my side, Nor wander from the path-way. If Thou wilt be my Guide. O Jesus, Thou hast promised To all who fol-low Thee That where Thou art in glory There shall Thy servant be; And, Jesus, I have promised To serve Thee to the end; O give me grace to fol-low My Master and my Friend. I walked one day along a country road, And there a stranger journeyed, too, Bent low beneath the burden of His load: It was a cross I knew. I cried, " Lord Jesus," and He spoke my name; I saw His hands all bruised and torn; I stooped to kiss away the marks of shame, The shame for me that He had borne. My cross I'll carry till the crown appears, The way I journey soon will end. Where God Himself shall wipe away all tears, And friend hold fellowship with friend."

That accomplished, Dale's ashes were interred at the Riverview Cemetery, Aurora, Indiana, on July 6. Services were held, full military honors, presented by members of the Air Force out of Wright-Patterson Field, Dayton, Ohio. The wooded setting is across the drive from the Veterans' Circle. Dale's beloved Ohio River is just across the road, all reflective of the serenity of Dale's outlook. His friend, Mark Townsend, marktownsend@lanxess.com son of Ted Townsend, Tail Gunner, 91st BG, has by now removed these records in entirety from

Dale's home, is carefully tending them as he researches a safe "landing place" for them. It is his way of paying homage to his father and Dale, and, in turn to all of you.

Respectfully, Carol Swartley Miller Executor

THINK CHRISTMAS !!

The PX is temporarily (we hope) at Suzi and Jim Shepherd's while we are looking for someone to take it over.

There are some very wonderful **LETTERED MUGS** (From the Colorado Reunion) available (\$10.00 plus S&H) Also **COFFEE MUGS** with triangle "A" (\$5.00 plus S&H). as well as many other items(shirts, books etc).

For more information visit the websight www.91stbombgroup.com Or Call Suzi & Jim at 714-970-5540

(If you order the Calendar below, make sure you mention us and a portion of the sales will go to the 91stBGM)

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As in the past, your organization will receive a portion of the sale of each calendar through March 2007. We track sales by the special code in the () following "Bomber Legends" to the left.



STORY'S from Mike Banta's Ring B17banta@aol.com

AFTER 63 YEARS 91st Bomb Group "CHOWHOUND" CREWMEN MIA RETURN HOME In 2004 the Ring was asked by John Collins if we could help him locate the wreckage of Chowhound lost in action 8 August 1944. John was the nephew of Sgt. Richard R. Collins who was Missing in Action as waist gunner on Chowhound. Ring participants helped him locate the area where Chowhound had violently crashed into a farmers field south of Caen, France

On his trip to visit the site of his uncle's final resting place for the past sixty years, he met in Caen with officials of ANSA, the French organization that honors all air deaths from the war liberating France during WWII. He discovered that The JPAC wing of the U.S. military was currently excavating the site. It's purpose was to exhume and identify the remains of missing Chowhound airmen. He drove directly to a town called Banvou. This town is no more that 3 km (2 mi) from the crash site. There he was shown some pieces of the nose of the aircraft, complete with the Chowhound's nose-art intact. It is a painting of Pluto with a bone in his mouth riding a bomb. Tony "Starcer's" signature was below the nose art. He was then shown a waist gun that was found in the wreckage. It was the gun that his uncle Richard was operating when the plane was shot down. It was fairly rusted and the barrel was deformed, but clearly identifiable.

He along with locals who accompanied him drove to the crash site. There he was greeted by the leader of the JPAC team and given an overview of the process that JPAC follows. He spoke to an eyewitness who was sixteen years old at the time. Here is the essence of his account; At around two PM the sky overhead became full of B-17 bombers. He and another friend saw flack explode midway in the plane. They watched it descend to the ground. There was a large explosion when it hit, and they ran to the site within minutes.

They saw the front section of the plane still on fire. Three bodies were seen about 50 yards North from the site, and one was seen still in the ball turret compartment, also in the same vicinity. Later, two bodies were found about 100 yards from the site on the South side of the field near the tail section.

The excavation site for the JPAC team was approximately 100 X 100 feet and 10-15 ft deep. There was some standing water in the lower level. One 250-pound bomb was found "live" in the hole and was quarantined. Much of the wreckage looked like an accordion. The direct impact was so severe, that much of the plane "pancaked" on impact. Later in the afternoon, John visited the farm of the other eyewitness. On his farm lay the remains of the wings and wing sections of the aircraft. Ironically one wing-section was being used to support a large branch of the farmer's apple tree. He said that if it weren't for the wing, he wouldn't have this beautiful apple tree in his field today. As this story progressed over the last four years, John Collins kept the Ring appraised of the progress of the JPAC team. In early August, we were delighted to receive the following E-mail from John; "I know that I've corresponded with you over the last three years on the subject of the B-17 Chowhound and its crew, which crashed in Lonlay l'Abbaye, France on August 8, 1944. "This week, I was visited by representatives of the Department of Defense, who presented the findings of JPAC, (Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command), with regards to their investigation of the crash site in June and July 2004 and subsequent identification of the remains. "Three crew members were positively identified. Portions of mixed remains were identified. As a result, a Memorial service and interment in Arlington National cemetery will take place in August of this year.



91ST BG MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION REUNION-COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 2006



91st BG MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION REUNION-COLORADO SPRINGS CO - 2006



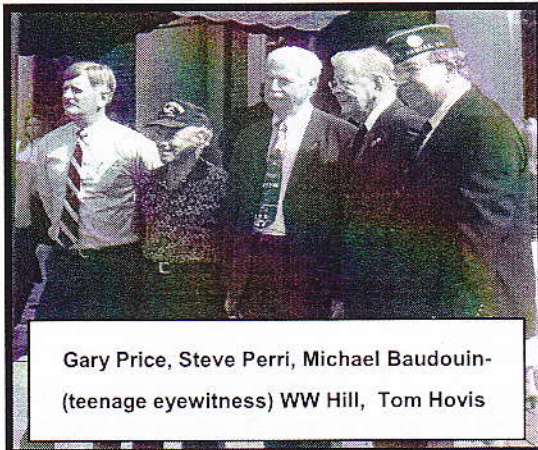
91ST BG MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION REUNION-COLORADO SPRINGS CO - 2006

(Continued from page 6)

"I'm sure that it would be a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives for our Country if you could attend.
Regards John

We put John's E-mail on the Ring and asked for those who would attend. The 91st was well represented at the interment ceremonies by associate member, Gary Price (Past Secretary Whitmal Hill and Editor Steve Perri and their wives also attended the service at Arlington.)

I asked Gary to write a brief report. His report follows:



Gary Price, Steve Perri, Michael Baudouin-
(teenage eyewitness) WW Hill, Tom Hovis

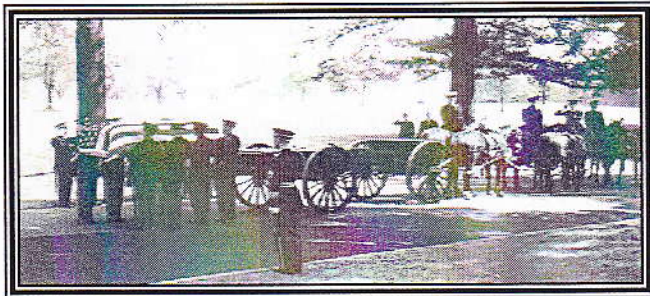
As you requested, I wanted to provide to you, a report of the events surrounding the interment of the Chowhound crew on Wednesday, August 23rd and Thursday, August 24th, 2006 at Arlington National Cemetery

"On Wednesday evening, at Murphy Funeral Home, located in Arlington, VA, eight of the nine families gathered together for a Visitation Service to render honors for the gallant soldiers that made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. I would estimate that there were 125-150 people in attendance. It was encouraging to see many young people in attendance.

At the funeral home were four caskets, one for Lt. Nelson, one for TSgt. Treece, and one for TSgt. Kortebein. The fourth casket represented all nine crewmen. The visitation included remarks

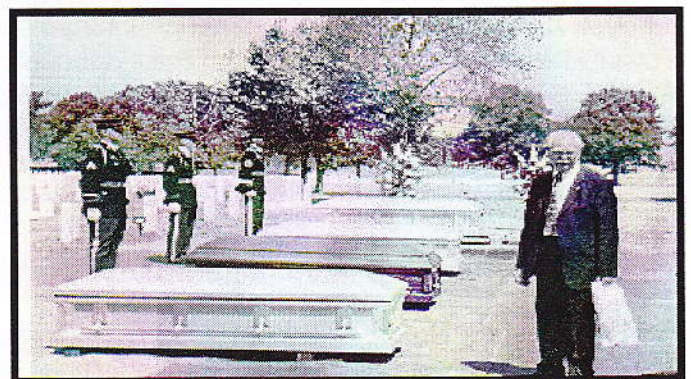
from the Army describing the events that surrounded the loss and recovery of the Chowhound crew.

During the visitation, family members and guests were permitted to make remarks about the crew. It was very emotional to listen to the stories of the family members as they described their loved ones. It brought tears to the eyes to many of those present. At the conclusion of the service, the families were presented with a flag case and military decorations, followed by a general visitation. On Thursday morning, the families were taken to Ft. Myer Old Chapel for a service. There was a minister and priest present. There were two readings from the Bible, followed by remarks from the priest. The casket that represented all nine crewmen was loaded onto the caisson for procession to the grave sight. The caskets for Nelson, Treece and Kortebein were initially taken to graveside. There was a band and honor guard present during the procession to the grave sight. When we reached the grave sight, the casket representing the nine crewmen was taken off the caisson and escorted and placed, next to Nelson, Kortebein and Treece.



presented to the next of kin. Taps was sounded. The entire ceremony was conducted with military precision, and full honors rendered. The news media was present, including the local TV station and Associated Press."

The priest and minister conducted a short ceremony. The band played. A volley was fired. The flags were



Dear Ray,

As I told you in our meeting, the EAAS has many friends in the 91st BGMA and I hope that we will always work together to perpetuate the cooperation during WW II. I did suggest that it would always be best for the two organizations to maintain contact through our officers. In that regard, I hope that you and the new President of the 91st BGMA, Jim Shepherd, will take the opportunity to stay in close contact.

As I promised, I did discuss the appeal for funds to our members with our officers in my August Conference Call. The decision was to include your July message in the October publication but with the caveat that it was a one-time exception to our standard practice to avoid fund appeals and with the comments that I am including herein. As I shared with you at Bassingbourn, I strongly feel that it would have been better if you had disclosed what your plans were for covering expenses and how you planned to provide greater access to the public; less than 300 visitors to the Tower Museum over the past year does raise questions of the viability of the present approach.

I also reviewed the situation at our recent Reunion including the above comments. I noted the appealing condition of the displays and mentioned the dedication of the six or so active members of the EAAS like yourself and Chris Murphy.

As you may know, I also discussed with Lt.Col. Nigel Smith our concerns. I gathered that he is genuinely sympathetic and will do what he can to lower the rent and facilitate more public access. I mentioned to him the pending visit of the priest from Sweden which should have given the Tower Museum some added publicity on top of the "Belle Tower" article. I hope you were able to capitalize on it.

I wish you and the EAAS the very best in the future. I do hope your relations with President Jim Shepherd will be cordial and rewarding. I have asked Steve Perri to print this message with your appeal for funds.

Very best regards, sincerely, Ed Gates, past-Pres. 91st BGMA

NEWS FROM THE CONTROL TOWER, BASSINGBOURN

Dear Ninety-Firsters and Friends: Let me introduce myself, I'm Ray Jude. I was born near Bassingbourn (1940), and went to the school at Bassingbourn and my Grandfather was involved in building the R.A.F. base there (Station 121). These are my personal reasons and interests in the place. In 1994, I became involved with the EAAS and was soon helping to remodel and build showcases to try and display the artifacts to their best advantage. It was not long before I was nominated and voted onto the committee and following the untimely death of the then EAAS Chairman, Peter Roberts, I was nominated and duly elected to fill that vacant office. Being younger than some involved and from a different background, I soon realized that as a group, we needed to have a good look at ourselves. Some things needed to change. Unfortunately, whilst we were actively engaged in trying to improve and modernize the society, several issues arose from outside sources (all of which have been communicated to you before). These have taken some time and a good deal of effort to resolve.

The purpose of this letter, however, is to let you all know that we are up and running at full speed and are fully open to visitors. In brief, what we have achieved is not only the "listing" * of the control tower building itself by English Heritage (which will help in our quest to preserve it for future generations), but also the security of a formal legally drawn up and agreed lease for the Tower Museum itself. This involved some hefty solicitor's bills, plus insurance costs, which, together with our annual rent demands, we will need to meet. To this end, we were asked to see if you could help us with any funding donations to assist us in "keeping the memorial alive". If you feel you can help in sending a donation, please send it to our secretary, Mick Killaspy, Hon Sec. The Control Tower Museum, ATR Bassingbourn, Bassingbourn, Cambridge, SG* 5LX UK (cheques made payable to "East Anglian Aviation Society"). We really would be most grateful for whatever you could spare. You will have read in the April RI that we were set to have a meeting with your president Ed Gates. In the event it was most positive and beneficial to tone. I expect Ed will report back to you the findings, in due course.

Yours Sincerely Ray Jude (Chairman) – Sent to us June 20, 2006

- In the UK, the term "listed building" refers to a building or other structure officially designated as being of special architectural, historical or cultural significance. Details of what listing means can be found at the English Heritage website at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1374>.

Folded Wings(Continued)★ **Carl Rizer 323rd****Greenbriar CA, October 4, 2004**

As Reported by, Janet McIlwain Larocco
 Joined the Army Air Corp on July 13, 1942. He was assigned to the 91st BG and reported for duty on June 4, 1944, two days before D-Day. On June 24, 1944, he flew "Outhouse Mouse" to Distre, Samuar, France, to bomb a railroad bridge. On June 25th, he again flew "Outhouse Mouse" to Toulouse to bomb enemy airfields. "The thing I remember about 'Outhouse Mouse', besides being a battle worn ship, was the extra 600 pounds of sheet metal in the cockpit. Most of it was around the pilot's seat, as well as the control panel. On take off, I had to throttle the engines to full power in order to get it off the ground, and it took most of the runway. It was obvious that one of the previous pilots was concerned about his body parts getting hit by flak". He flew a total of 26 combat missions in twelve different B-17s. For his service in the 8th Air Force, he received the DFC, the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the ETO with two stars. He retired from the Air Force Reserves in June 1976, with the rank of Lt. Colonel and became a special agent for the US Treasury Department, working on cases involving the casinos in Las Vegas. His work was instrumental in the Armand Hammer case, and he served three years on the Watergate case.

★ **Evelyn Mildred Ritscher, , Age 98**
Altameda CA, July 14, 2006

As reported by, Bruce McManigal
 (Evelyn was a life member of the 91st BG)



Evelyn was born in NYC and and moved with her family to Pasadena in the early twenties. She Graduated from Pasadena HS and then UCLA where she was a Delta Gamma in 1932. She obtained her masters degree in Social Work from Columbia University in NY.

During WWII she served with the American Red Cross attached to the 91st in Bassingbourn England from 1942 to 1945. He Red Cross unit was one of the first in Paris at the end of the war.

After the war she returned to the US and continued her career in social work She held positions at Mass. General and the Pasadena

Dispensary and finished her working life as a psychiatric social worker.

Her enjoyments were world travel and she was a past board member of "the Boys and Girls Aid Society of LA County.

Her nieces Carol, Christine and Heidi along with 8 great great nieces and nephews survive her.

To all she was Aunt Mimi.

**Phyllis Tobias Felker, Age 86**
Springfield July 22, 2006

As reported by her son Alex
 She flew with the Women Air Force Service Pilots squadron during WWII and also was the former owner of a Springfield printing business.

Born in Detroit, she was the daughter of a Ford dealer who enjoyed taking his daughters to air shows. She got to go up in a

biplane and that experience nurtured an early love of flying. Graduating HS at age 16. She went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Indiana University in 1940 and while there obtained her pilot's license. She became a WASP and in 1944 Gen Henry "Hap" Arnold pinned the wings on her at Avenger Field in Sweetwater Texas (now home to the National WASP WWII Museum).

She became one of about a thousand WASP pilots who ferried military aircraft from the US during the war.

After VE Day WASP pilots were suddenly and unceremoniously disbanded with no recognition of their efforts and no GI Bill benefits. Her flying career ended when she was 25 (She and her fellow pilots finally received veterans' benefits in 1977). She became an Air Force wife and lived with her pilot husband on three continents. After her divorce in 1974 she became an executive secretary at a Springfield environmental engineering firm and then opened her own business "Copy Right Printing which grew to more than \$1 million in annual revenue. She sold her business in 1997 but stayed involved with the business community and also remained active within the WASP and military community. She was a charter member of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation.

She is survived by three children – Alex Felker, Sally Beecroft and Frank Felker, a sister and six grandchildren.

Folded Wings (Continued)

★ **Rev. James (Jim) Feerick, Age 87**
Zanesville, July 26, 2006



He died at his residence following a lengthy illness.. He was the devoted husband to Dr. Frances T (Ugis) Feerick, Ph.D. for 60 years and was a member of St. Nicholas Catholic Church. Jim retired from the New York City Fire Department in 1973 following 36 years of service as Director of Safety for New York City Hospitals and in

1989 from Mount Sinai Hospital, as Administrator of Safety. He was ordained a Roman Catholic Deacon in 1977 and served in the Dioceses of Brooklyn NY, Scranton, PA and Columbus, OH. Jim was a decorated WW II Army Air Corp Veteran. He received the Prisoner of War Medal after being held captive in Germany for over two years and the Purple Heart. Jim was a member of the American Legion, VFW, Knights of Columbus, and very active in the American Ex POW Organization. In addition to his wife, Frances, Jim is survived by two sons: James Feerick, Jr. and Captain John Feerick, MD and his wife Pat, two daughters: Erin Feerick and Cathy and her husband Mike McQuone; eleven grandchildren and two great grandchildren

★ **Eugene D. Cook, Age 84**
Grayson, Ga., Oct. 3, 2005

As reported by Janet Larocco A native of Asher, he served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and was a B-17 combat pilot. Serving in the European Theater. His plane was shot down over Germany and was held as a wounded prisoner of war for over 18 months. He retired from the Air Force after 22 years of service with the rank of Lt. Col. After his retirement he was employed with the Veterans Administration in Washington DC and Gainesville Fla. He was a member of the Campus View Church of Christ in Athens.

Survivors include his wife, Mozelle, a son, Eugene two daughters, Shirley J. Bartlett and Kathleen M. Cook; a brother, William three sisters, Lois Sasser Thelma Lee and Zelma Crothers eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

★ **Joseph Zastenchik, 322nd, Age 88**
Spring Hill, FL. June 17, 2006

As reported by his daughter Janet Borowski Originally from Tarrytown, NY. Joined the Army Air Corps in 1942. He flew as tail gunner, on B-17 Wee Willie. Discharged in October 1946 and worked for the New York Telephone Co. His 3 Children, Grand- Children and Great-Grand Children survived him.

★ **Albert Nosse, 324th, Age 84**
Sandusky OH, June 20, 2006



As reported by Henry Jensen It is with great sorrow that I inform you that Albert Nosse, our ball-turret gunner on the Brubaker crew, died of liver cancer. Al always had a sunny disposition, no matter how grim the situation. He was the favorite of the whole crew.

★ **Russell A. Mattson, 324th, Age 86**
Shrewsbury MA, July 28, 2006



As reported by his son Russell He was born in Worcester and served as a B-17 crew/chief mechanic in the USAAC during WWII.

After the war, he served as a laboratory research technician at Norton Co. for 44 years. His son Russell and his wife Nancy, a daughter Dawn Williston and her husband Harry, 4 grandsons, John Christopher, Russell and Andrew, survive him.

★ **James Walter Valentine 324th Age 84**
Albuquerque NM, May 18 2008

Lt.Col. Valentine served proudly in the Army Air Force and USAF from 1942 until 1964 when he joined the Federal Aviation Administration as a pilot examiner and aircraft accident investigator. During his aviation career he amassed a total of 17,000 hours as pilot-in-command or as an instructor pilot.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Phyllis.

Folded Wings (continued)

★ **Edward J. Stone, 323rd, Age 86**
Boca Raton FL, Sept. 11, 2006

He was a retired Lt. Colonel in the Air Force Reserve, former diplomat with United Nations and Assistant Professor at LSU.

Born in Westfield NJ, he went into the service with the AAC and was a B-17 bomber pilot with the 91st BG. Upon completion of his WWII military service, he returned to New Brunswick NJ and obtained his degree from Rutgers University and was an associate professor of Dairy Science at Louisiana State University from 1952 to 1966 after which he was employed with the United Nations. During his 13 year tenure, he was posted in Bagdad, Iraq, New Delhi, India, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Bogota Colombia.

His wife Myriam, four sons, one daughter, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren survive him. His first wife, Theresa, preceded him in death.

Stone was interred with full military honors in the Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell FL.

★ **William (Bill) Potter, 324th, Age 84**
Kearney, NE, June 28, 2006

He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and completed part of his training at the Kearney Air Base. On Jan. 11, 1944, while serving as a navigator on a B-17, he was shot down over Germany and was one of only four of his crew to survive. He was captured and spent 16 months as a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft I in Barth, Germany. He was liberated from the camp at the end of World War II.

For the first few years of their marriage, he and his wife Majorie lived in Syracuse, where he continued his college education and worked for Sun Oil Co. They then returned to Nebraska and purchased a farm north of Sumner. He attended Kearney State Teachers College while farming and graduated with a teaching degree in 1959. He continued farming and also taught and served as principal at Sumner Public Schools. He later worked at Security State Bank of Sumner. In 1982, they moved to Kearney, where they lived until his death.

Survivors include his wife, Marjorie; and daughters and sons-in-law, Lisa Atchison (Dan)

Valerie Gwin (Rob); granddaughters, Katie, Sarah and Becky and grandsons, Matthew and Will.

★ **Ray Slominski, 401st**
Concord CA, June 18th 2006

As reported by Roy Bacon

Ray was a ball turret gunner/asst. engineer on 24452 (aircraft was not named). Ray participated in the groups' second mission and bailed out of his B-17 when it was shut down on his 4th mission on 12/20/42 to the aircraft depot at Romilly France. He spent the rest of the war in a POW camp.

Two years ago I contacted Ray to find out if he knew my uncle, another original 91st member. He did indeed and could tell stories of flying together at Walla Walla. Ray's aircraft was parked next to my uncles on 12/20/42, the 2 crews were friends and talked before takeoff. Ray, from his position in the turret, watched my uncles plane go down, then they themselves were shot out of formation and went down. Ray was hit in the lower leg as he bailed out. He was taken to a French hospital and surprised to see Sal Dalterio, the tail gunner on my uncles aircraft. Ray thought the entire crew had perished, but was happy to see that at least Sal had survived. That began a life long friendship, the survivors of the 12/20/42 mission stayed in contact, calling each other on each anniversary of the mission. I believe Ray is the last survivor of the 2 crews shot down. My wife and I flew to California to see a concert and meet Ray and his wife. We stayed with them and spent a few days talking and video taping Ray talking about his life in the USAAF and the 91st. He spoke kindly of Maj. Myers, the first 401st Squadron Commander, and was upset in POW camp when he learned the Major was killed on 12/30/42. Before long, most of the original members of the 401st were either dead, POW's or wounded out of action. Ray met up with many of them in Camp Ray. He was an outstanding person who was respected by all who came in contact with him. I know

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Published quarterly, January, April, July and October. The purpose of the Newsletter, THE RAGGED IRREGULAR, is to keep alive the Spirit of the 91st 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

October 2006

Folded Wings:



Leland E. Forsblac

Fresno CA, August 3, 2006



As reported by John Bruce
He played the accordion and other musical instruments and the talent served him well as a POW during WWII. A composer, player and music teacher with Fresno Unified School District, died of Pneumonia at age 85.

Born in Kingsburg, he played the accordion, clarinet, saxophone and other woodwinds and piano. He was an early winner the old Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio show.

He enlisted in the USAAC the day after Pearl Harbor and became a B-17 bomber pilot and his plane was shot down near France. He and another crewmember survived bailing out of the crippled plane and he wound up in Stalag Luft III. He organized a war prisoner's band with instruments supplied by the Red Cross and other agencies.

Following Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the USAAAC and became a B-17 pilot. On July 10, 1943, he was shot down over the English Channel and spent the next two years in Stalag Luft III. He Graduated with a BA degree from Fresno State College and began a teaching career with the Fresno City Unified School District retiring in 1979.

Mildred, his wife of early 64 years and his daughter Marcia survive him.

There were no services, as were his wish.

23rd, Age 85
13, 2006



He was born in Newton Mass and grew up caddying for PGA profession, Denny Shute before becoming a high school hockey standout in Boston.

He served in the USAAC during WWII as the first radioman in his squadron and among the first to complete 25 missions over enemy territory. He was awarded five air medals including a Purple Heart, three oak clusters and a DFC and was interviewed by UPI senior Correspondent, Walter Cronkite and profiles in a Boston newspaper under the headline "Newton's Man Over Germany."

Following the war, he was known to anchor the first US National Hockey Team, (the predecessor of the US Olympic Hockey Team that competed in Europe.

He is survived by his wife, Jane; children Jeanne and Terrance, a brother Richard, five stepchildren and three grandchildren.



Elmer Gettis, 324th BS, Age 87,
Osallon IL, September 29, 2006

Reported by, Cliff Schultz, RO
Navigator of Frank Adams original crew of "Rhapsody In Red" folded his wings nine days short of his 88th birthday.