

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

**2007
DUES
ARE
DUE**

Vol. 40 No. 1

91st Bombardment Group (H)

January 2007



**U.S. AIR FORCE MEMORIAL – WASHINGTON D.C.
“IT’S A BEAUTIFUL THING”**

Photo taken by Ron Hall, Chief, AF Pentagon Photographer and submitted by Whitmal Hill

Presidents Corner



Now it's 2007, 60 years after the Army Air Corp became the United States Air Force and 65 years after the 91st Bomb Group was formed and later based at Bassingbourn.

The interest that continues to be generated via the web page and the 91st Ring, is amazing. Jake Howland has started reviewing the content of the records that have been in the possession of the past Historians and purchased a scanner to provide copies for those interested now and in the future. He is attempting to make contact with the museum at Wright Patterson. He is asking if they are capable of receiving and storing the archives of the 91st, that include Mike Banta's Ringmaster archives. We will keep you advised of the decision.

The web page problem has not been corrected. I will hire a professional to find the problem and correct. My son & I are at a loss. As Jake Howland says about the web page, "It is a very important link with the world and must be fixed.

The 91st Space Wing will be having their Reunion September 5 to 10, 2007. They have requested the 91st BGMA have a Rally Round at Minot, ND on those dates. The USAF Thunderbirds will perform on September 8. Anyone interest in attending, please let me know. They would like to link-up with the veterans of the 91st to show the pride of past, current and future members of the 91st, whether it's the 91st BG, or the 91st Space Wing. It's a chance to show the airman of today, why they should continue the proud name of the 91st.

I have requested information on all memorials for the 91st, in addition to the ones on the web page. There are many gravesites in England and in Europe that receive personal care, but we do not list them or give personal credit to the dedicated people that care for these grave sites or markers. Please contact Bob Friedman or me, with the information.

We are looking to have the 2008 Reunion in June as this will allow some members to bring their school age children to the reunion.
President - **Jim Shepherd**

Steve Perri, Editor

Would like to extend a warm welcome to Gary Hall, an Associate Life Member, who has kindly volunteered to take over the mailing responsibilities of the "Ragged Irregular" as Assistant Editor. He has made all the arrangements to get this issue out in a timely manner and Nancy and my sincere appreciation is extended to him.

A note from Ed and Joan Gates:

We want to thank our many friends in the 91st BGMA both in the U.S. and in England (a couple we never even had the pleasure of meeting. We deeply appreciate all of their good wishes, prayers and kind words. Ed is recuperating from a serious operation and he feels that everyone's kind thoughts have helped in this recovery.

The \$10 2007 Dues for Full and Associate Members (not Associate Life) is now due. We ask that it be paid in a timely manner. If you would like to become a Life Member and by doing so avoid this yearly nuisance, we would love to have you do so at this time.

Please send your check for \$10 or \$100 to:

**Ace Johnson
590 Aloha Drive
Lake Havasu AZ 86406-4559**

Letters to the Editor and More:

This letter sent to us by
Councilor, Lynn Berry, Town Mayor of Royston:

I have asked our friend Vince Hemmings to pass on the good wishes of the Council and the people of Royston on the occasion of your reunion in Colorado Springs. I am sure that it will be a very special even. To all those veterans who were posted to Bassingbourn during World War II, I send the sincere wishes of myself and all the people of Royston. The people of Royston are still keenly aware of the sacrifices that the young airman of the 91st Bomb Group (H) made. Ed Gates' recent visit to Royston and the memorial service at the 91st Bomb Group (H) memorial in the Priory Memorial Gardens was a moving occasion. I hope everyone involved in the reunion has a wonderful time.

Councilor, Lynn Berry, Town Mayor of Royston

Veep's Views by Mick Hanou - Vice President 91st BGMA



The honor bestowed on Jim and I in being elected your first non-WWII veteran officers is greatly appreciated. I hope to meet the trust you have placed in me over the next two years as VP. You may know that my willingness to serve you is in thanks for the efforts all the 91sters made to liberate my parents from occupied Europe those many years ago. If not for you veterans, and ladies of the Home Front, I wouldn't be here. Thank you.

With the passing of time, it becomes more critical that the next generation folks take more responsibility and efforts in propagating the memory of the Greatest Generation who served in the 91st BG. In 2001, the Board asked me to be part of the Committee for Long-Range planning. In 2002 we reported back that 75% of the members responded positively to continuing the 91st BGMA into the future. As you know, Jim, Suzi and I became full members in 2003; yet there are still fewer than a handful of NexGen Full Members. The By-Laws were revised in 2006, partly to clarify how Associate Members (AM) may become Full Members. Article III, Section 2 of the By-Laws states "After three (3) consecutive years as an AM, one may become a Full Member (FM) by written request to the Secretary/Treasurer and the majority approval of the elected Board members". Ed Gates reported further during the 2006 business meeting, and in his last column, on building an organization that will continue the 91st's legacy into the future. I encourage more of the Associates apply for Full Membership (now) so that we have a pool of talent to draw on in the coming years.

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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

91st Bomb Group Ring
B17Banta@aol.com
www.91stbombgroup.com
www.bombsqd323rd.com

More "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR"

This is a letter that was sent to the "RAGGED IRREGULAR" from Harry Friedman, MD in June and due to all the happenings of the last few months, "President Ed Gates, trip to Europe, and our 2006 Reunion, at Colorado Springs, we were not able to print it until now.

I sincerely offer my apology to Dr. Friedman. Steve Perri, Editor

THE FRIEDMAN CLINIC, P.C.
50 HUMPHREYS CENTER. SUITE 32
MEMPHIS. TENNESSEE 38120
HARRY FRIEDMAN. M.D.. F.A.C.S. PHONE (901) 7474320
NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY FAX (901) 747-4324

June 5, 2006

Mr. Steve Perri

Editor

The Ragged Irregular 12750 Kelly Greens Blvd. Ft. Myers, FL 33908

Sirs,

We have read Maj. Gen Metcalf's article regarding the "Memphis Belle" in the April 2006 "The Ragged Irregular" and would like to expand upon its history in Memphis.

When the "Memphis Belle" came to Memphis having been saved from the smelter by our then mayor, it came under the care of the city, the Tennessee Air National Guard (TANG) and later the American Legion until 1976. During this time, the airframe was largely outside suffering the ravages of time. In 1976, the city and the American Legion titled the airplane back to the United States Air Force Museum (USAFM) with the understanding that it be loaned back to the newly formed Memphis Belle Memorial Association, Inc. (MBMA.) Under the MBMA, three major restoration efforts occurred. First by the TANG and the Memphis Area Vocational Technical School at the Memphis airport starting in 1977. The second was in 1986 by TANG and the OMS and FMS from Blytheville Air Force Base when a considerable amount of sheet metal work and corrosion repair was undertaken. The airplane was then moved to a covered but open-air pavilion where it was displayed. A corrosion control program was carried out during this time. Recognizing that this was not an ideal situation, the airplane was then moved to an acclimatized hanger at the former Naval Air Station Memphis in 2003. At that time the airframe was completely disassembled, panels removed, and an extensive restoration was begun utilizing the skills of 40 volunteer FAA certified airframe and power plant mechanics from FedEx. The time line for the completion of the restoration was three to five years. The plan was to inspect and repair as needed (IRAN.) A considerable amount of work was accomplished before the work was called to a halt by the NMUSAF. Tech orders in use during WWII were used as guides for the restoration.

With regard to the on board equipment, in 1949, the commander of the Air Force Reserve Training Center received permission from the mayor of Memphis to remove whatever parts could be used for training purposes. These apparently were largely cockpit and engine parts but others as well. Certainly, much was later removed by vandalism until MBMA took over in 1977. Since that time until the airplane left Memphis for Dayton, there were only two relatively minor acts of vandalism. In 1983, the USAFM sent a large block of equipment to be used in the restoration. In addition, several companies, and individuals donated parts and some were loaned over the years.

Thus, about 60 to 70 years.

E MAIL: hfriedmancl@aol.com

91ST BGMA**2006 REUNION
ATTENDEES****COLORADO SPRINGS
COLORADO**

Alcott, Susan & Guest
 Allen, Jack Paula, Julie
 Annis, Frank
 Baird, Sharon, Vernon, Wayne
 Baron, Connie, Tom
 Belmont, Rebecca
 Boye, Susan (Freer)
 Calvert, David
 Caswell, Andrew
 Choffel, Betty, Merle
 Collins, Phil & Nadine
 Daniels, Neil
 Dart, Melvin
 Dickson, Robert & Jody
 Egender, Cathy & Herb
 Evers, Bud, Hilary III & Janie
 Fenton, Jenene
 Finch, Robert, Guest
 Fletcher, James & daughter
 Fodroci David & Michael
 Fox, Linda & Paul
 Freer, Donald, Mary & Tom
 Friedman, Joy & Robert
 Fuchs, Jr., John
 Garrison, Lanelle
 Gates, Ed, Joan,
 Kathy & Steve
 Gibson, Ann & Jack
 Goddard, Sandra & Tony
 Goldberg, Betty & Marvin
 Hall, Gary
 Hanou, Mick
 Harlick, Jen & Joe
 Harness, Barbara
 Harris, Debra & Mike
 Hoffman, Barbara & James
 Holland, Malcolm & Tracy
 Howland, Jake
 Huesser, Charles
 Humm, James & Shari
 Humphreys, Norma

Johnson, Asay
 Johnson, Harold & Phyllis
 Kagel, Carol
 Kleyla, Robert
 Knowles, Chester
 Larocco, Janet
 Lombardi, Bruno & Marilyn
 Louis, Kathryn & Nick
 Loyless, Joyce, Renee & Roy
 Lynch, Paul & Judith
 Maginnes, Dale & Betty
 Majorca, Karen & Rocco
 McIlwain, Raymond
 Murray, Craig
 Newton, Hilda & Sam
 Norwood, Chris & Greg
 Paget, Jack & Norma
 Painter, Florence & Marion
 Parker, Anna Lee & Burns
 Perkins, Molly
 Perri, Nancy & Steve
 Peterman, Dr. AF & Nancy
 Pryor, Nick & Lillian
 Reid, Marjorie & William
 Ristow, Edward & Patricia
 Ruth, Jacque & Larry
 Rutter, Russell & Vernon
 Schultz, Barbara & Clifford
 Scudder, James & Marilyn
 Selje, Bonnie & Dean
 Shepherd, Jim & Suzi
 Simin, Ralph & Betty
 Shook, Debra & George
 Skawienski, Ted
 Slane, Lee & Robert
 Smith, Ken & Virginia
 Soeller, Arlene & Richard
 Steele, Erwin
 Stemple, Andrew, Chris, Kelly
 Ken & Teri
 Stevens, Mary Jane & Robert
 Striegel, Sheila
 Varhall, Greg, Linda & Greg
 Wagner, Sherwood
 Walker, Charles & Mary
 Webber, Marilyn
 Weinacht, David
 White, Jim & Sharon
 Williams, Ed & Judy
 Wilson, Linda & Russell
 Wolf, Florence & Willard
 Woods, Onie & Vern

322nd Bomb Squadron

Baird, Vernon
 Dart, Melvin
 Dickson, Robert
 Egender, Herb
 Freer, Don
 Gibson, Jack
 Maginnes, Dale
 Reid, William
 Shook, George
 Simin, Ralph
 Steele, Erwin

323rd Bomb Squadron

Calvert, David
 Friedman, Robert
 Hoffman, James
 Lombardi, Bruno
 Murray, Don
 Perri, Steve
 Rutter, Vernon
 Skawienski, Ted

324th Bomb Squadron

Annis, Frank
 Caswell, Andrew
 Collins, Phillip
 Evers, Bud
 Goldberg, Marvin
 Harlick, Joseph
 Howland, Jake
 Johnson, Asay
 Kleyla, Bob
 Schultz, Clifford
 Smith, Kenneth
 Soeller, Richard
 Stevens, Bob
 Wilson, Russel
 Woods, Verne

401st Bomb Squadron

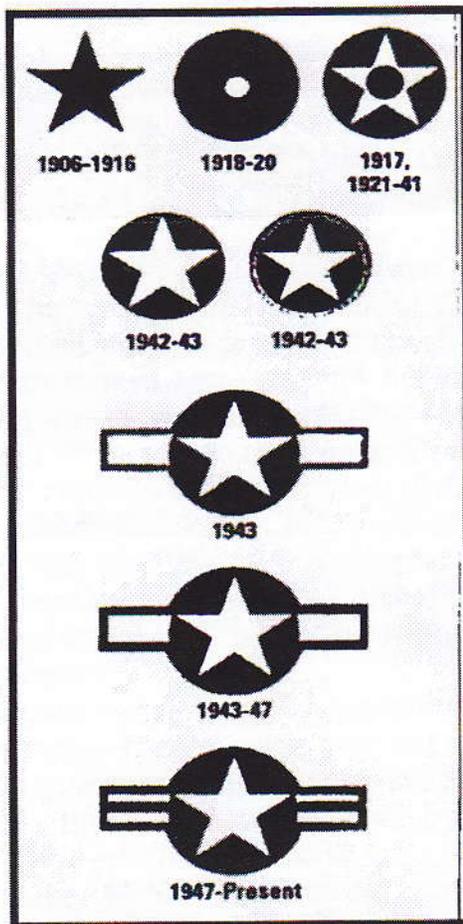
Choffel, Merle
 Daniels, Neil
 Evers, Bud
 Fletcher, James
 Fodroci, Mike
 Johnson, Harold
 Loyless, Roy
 Lohefer, Conrad
 Newton, Sam
 Painter, Marion
 Paget, John (Jack)
 Scudder, James
 Slane, Robert
 Wagner, Sherwood
 Walker, Charles

EVOLUTION OF THE AIR FORCE

From its very beginnings, America's air arm seemed destined for numerous transformations until it finally achieved independence as a separate service. This evolution included name changes as well as insignia changes.

- Aeronautical Division
U.S. Army Signal Corps
Aug. 1, 1907-July 18, 1914
- Aviation section, U.S.Signal Corps
July 18, 1914-May 20, 1918
- Air Service
May 21, 1918-July 2, 1926
- Army Air Forces
June 20, 1941-Sept. 18, 1947
- U.S. Air Force
Sept. 18, 1947

AIR FORCE STARS



Letter from John Fuchs:

(SEE MORE ON PAGE 8 OF THIS ISSUE)

Here is a little bit of information about the Veterans' Museum here in Huntsville TX. The lady that got some of us Veterans together about 12 years ago, Charlotte Olleinik, is related to Roy Loyless. Roy's wife, Joyce and Charlotte Mother are first cousins. We get visitors from all over the world. It's free and we Veterans volunteer our time. The Museum is full of Memorabilia and the history of all the wars.

H.E.A.R.T.S. VETERANS MUSEUM

Helping Every American Remember Through Serving

Hear first hand accounts of what war and battle are actually like, hear it from the soldiers who were actually there. A concerted effort is made to the preservation of our country's freedom. This is done through displays and presentation so we can impart historically correct knowledge. All these things will serve to remind us of our proud heritage while including national patriotism in all citizens.

The H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum
is Unique in Many Ways

Its primary function is to educate younger generations. The educators are veterans. It houses all military groups in all Wars and Conflicts. Learn of the sacrifices veterans have made in the defense of our country. It allows veterans to validate their own feelings. It is a hands-on, living history museum.

Discover American Heroes

Mission Statement

- To honor individuals who have served in our armed forces
- To provide space for the preservation of military memorabilia, artifacts, and the history of past wars
- To provide education and inspiration for children and adults concerning our patriotic heritage and the sacrifices made to preserve our freedoms.

Please send material for the "Ragged Irregular" to the Editor no later than the 15th of the previous month. Material for April's issue no later than March 15th.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE POND by Vince Hemmings

Gentlemen:

Firstly, may I offer my congratulations to Jim and Mick on being elected as President and 1st Vice President respectively of the 91st BG(H)MA. I wish you both every success.

91st Bomber Group (Heavy), 1st Combat Wing, 8th Air Force.
Based at RAF Bassingbourn, (Station 121) during World War II.

The author of these notes was 5 weeks away from his 11th birthday when World War II broke out in Europe. When the Group's aircraft took off in a westerly direction they flew over his home so low that he was able to wave to the Waist Gunners standing by their open windows. He has often thought over the years was he the last person to wave these young men off in to action. The first Commanding Officer of the 91st BG(H) while at RAF Bassingbourn was Colonel Stanley Wray, (a West Pointer and later a General) and he told me that when he was returning to the airfield he found Kings College here in Cambridge, set a heading of 240 degrees found the Avenue of elm trees from Wimpole Hall which led him down to his airfield. No doubt many airmen have used the same route back to RAF Bassingbourn, as Colonel Wray did.

The 91st Bomber Group (Heavy) was activated at Harding Field, Baton LA on the 15th April 1942. The Group arrived at RAF Kimbolton, England on 12th September 1942. On 14th October 1942 the Group moved to RAF Bassingbourn just a few miles from Madingley Cemetery. Its first mission was on 7th November 1942 to the submarine pens at Brest. This was the start of 340 missions the Group was to fly, a record for the 8th Air Force. During those 340 missions, 197 aircraft were lost in action, the highest losses by any Group in the 8th Air Force. Aircraft that crashed in friendly territory are not included in these losses. On some missions the losses were exceptionally high. On 17th August 1943 the Group was part of a formation that attacked Schweinfurt. The 91st BG (H) lost 11 aircraft 25% of the force that left RAF Bassingbourn. On 2nd November 1944 the Group sent 36 aircraft to attack the oil refineries at Merseburg. 13 failed to return. One can imagine the feelings of their colleagues who returned to their quarters that night to find empty beds. The Group was the first to 100 missions. It is possible the Group would have been the first to 200 and 300 missions but for the fact that the 324th BS of the 91st BG(H) became the Pathfinder Squadron for the 1st Combat Wing and other Bomber Groups.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONY – MADINGLEY AMERICAN CEMETERY
Preserving the Future by Honoring Our Past

(Excerpt from the Veterans Day Program at Madingley American Cemetery)

In 1918, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day in the eleventh month, the world rejoiced and celebrated. After four years of bitter war, an armistice was signed. The "war to end all wars" was over.

November 11, 1919 was set aside as Armistice Day in the United States, to remember the sacrifices that men and women made during World War I in order to ensure a lasting peace. On Armistice Day, soldiers who survived the war marched in a parade through their hometowns. Politicians and veteran officers gave speeches and held ceremonies of thanks for the peace they had won.

Congress voted Armistice Day a federal holiday in 1938, 20 years after the war ended. But Americans realized that the previous war would not be the last one. World War II began the following year and nations great and small again participated in a bloody struggle. After the Second World War, Armistice Day continued to be observed on November 11.

In 1953, townspeople in Emporia Kansas called the holiday Veterans Day in gratitude to the veterans in their town. Soon after, Congress passed a bill introduced by a Kansas congressman renaming the federal holiday to Veterans Day.

Americans still give thanks for peace on Veterans Day. There are ceremonies and speeches, and at 1100 hours in the morning, most Americans still observe a moment of silence, remembering those who fought for peace.

"WE SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER"

POW STORIES-

George Harris 322nd Bomb Sqd.

(From Boca Raton News 1998)



George Harris knows he may not have been here today to talk about his WW II experiences if a high-ranking German Officer didn't spare his life in 1944.

"A group of us had escaped from Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1944, which was occupied by the Germans at the time.

We had escaped from train cars that were called 40-8, but, unfortunately, we ran right into the Gestapo. The group was captured and prepared for the firing squad. The Germans just lined us up and brought out the firing squad. I really thought that was it, but ironically, our luck changed at that point. A German officer ordered the guns lowered because he was sympathetic to young Americans. I later learned that the Captain who ordered the guns lowered had spent some time in the United States. In fact, he fathered two boys in the US whom he never saw. Because of that, he attempted to spare the lives of as many Americans as possible."

That was not the first time that Harris attempted to escape capture. "I was part of the 12 to 14 men who attempted to escape from Stalag 17 in a tunnel that was 93 feet long and 18 feet deep. The only problem was that the tunnel was a few feet too short and we ended coming up between two barbed-wire fences."

Harris and his crew were shot down on December 22, 1943, nine months after he joined the 91st Bomb Group. "We were shot down over Holland. I bailed out at 23,000 feet and landed in the woods. When you are in the woods for eight to ten hours, fear comes into play"

While held in Stalag 17, the prisoners endured extreme psychological torture. "They were trying to get information out of us, so one of the favorite things for the Germans to do was to drop the temperature in a room down to 20 degrees and leave us there for a while without

food or water. Then the temperature would go way up so we went from shivering to sweating in the span of hours," Harris said.

Harris said that being a prisoner of war taught him something about handling stress. "Being a POW teaches you a lot about people. I learned a lot about what I could handle under pressure."

John Fuchs - From Roy Loyless 6/6/06



Dear Steve: Johnny was my roommate when we were POW's and since we were from the same hometown, Houston TX, we became friends. We met again, 56 years later. He is an AM of the 91st now. He flew one mission with 385th and was shot down on that mission! He's real active with the Veterans' Museum in Huntsville TX and helps

lots of Veterans, taking them to VA Hospital for their needs"

Veteran gets reacquainted with B-17

By kprew@itemonline.com

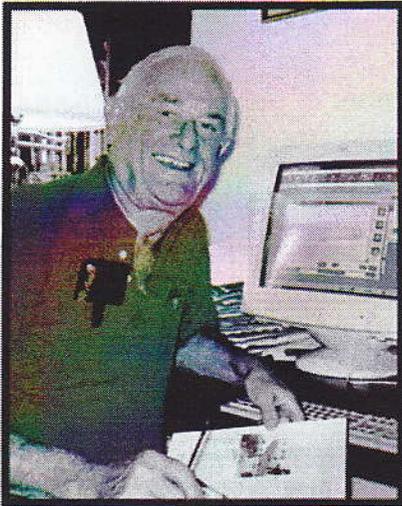
Even from a distance, the silver B-17 makes its presence known – thundering propellers and freshly painted wings catching the mid-afternoon sun – while one man watches the sky from the ground and feels something he's missed for more than 60 years. (and this time, he landed safely)

When I saw it fly in, it was very exciting for me, but very touching" said a visibly shaken John Fuchs, who served as a sergeant in the USAAC during WW II. He was a gunner, shot down during his first mission, Sept. 12, 1944, and survived as a POW for nearly a year in Germany and Poland before he was evacuated May 1, 1945. "It just gave me cold chills all over," he said. "When I saw that plane land, something came over me, and it was just overwhelming.

On Friday, Fuchs had the opportunity to fly again for the first time in more than 60 years, in the "Liberty Belle" a living museum and B-17 restoration, at the David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport in Tomball, which was brought to the Houston Area by the Liberty Foundation as a living museum.

Mike Banta's Ring

Reliving the Mission to Berlin, 21 June 1944



The Ring is in touch by E-mail with friends of the 91st living in various countries around the world. Our dear friend in Poland is Mike Mucha. Mike is a historian and his web page "Aircraft MIA Project" is a

excellent page full of wonderful research on Army Air Force aircraft MIA in Poland.

([Http://www.samoloty.ow.pl/amiap/](http://www.samoloty.ow.pl/amiap/))

Mike wrote to me recently and told me that one of the B-17s recovered from it's crash site in Poland was a 91st B-17 which had been extracted from their Stolsko Lake.. This 91st Bomb Group, 322nd Bomb Squadron, #44-6177, O'bannon crew, "no name" B-17, had been lost on the Berlin mission of 21 June 1944. The crew had bailed out and all survived with the exception of tail gunner Amos Estrada. The B-17 flew on and crashed into Stolsko Lake where it remained until the excavation told on Mike's web page. Four 91st Bomb Group B-17s were lost that day.

This information was sent to the 91st Ring participants. Where else but on the Ring could you find someone who had flown on this mission and was an eye witness to the action and another that had pictures of this no name B-17?

Dave Hanst had flown that mission and had kept an account of the mission in his diary. Dave's account is copied below.

Joe Harlick found pictures of 44-6117 among his fantastic files of 91st Bomb Group aircraft. Dave's account of-Berlin mission of 21 June 1944.
Mission # 16 Wednesday, June 21, 1944
Target- Traffic Circle and marshalling Yards. Berlin. Germany Flight Time- 8:20
Opposition- Flak Heavy and Accurate. Enemy Fighters, 60 to 70 Damage - Minor
Remarks:

Today was my third trip to "Big B", Berlin. I hope it is my last. On the climb to the enemy coast Ed Waters and Abbott were leading the 91st Group.

The wing leader climbed at too fast an airspeed, this made our formation string out behind. My crew and I were flying in the Wild Hare. The flaps kept creeping down and Goldy would crank them up about every three or four minutes. Nearing Berlin our group was straggling and strung out. Off to the left we saw a large gaggle of bandits going toward the rear or the bomber stream. About five minutes later Jo called me on the interphone and asked if we had any Beau--fighters in our fighter escort. I told him no. he said there were twin engine fighters coming up on our rear. About that time 20mm shells began bursting all through our formation. The pilots flying those fighters certainly had nerve; they flew right through our group then rolled over and dove away. Every gun on our plane was going full blast, the whole ship was shaking, the noise was terrible, and the cockpit was thick with power smoke. The bandits numbered around 60 to 70, they were ME 410's, twin engine fighters. One went under our left wing less than 20 feet below, the right engine was streaking: smoke and flame, it rolled over and went straight down. On the first pass the bandits got three of our Forts, all three were in the squadron we were in. all had their gas tanks on fire from 20mm bursts. Ahead of me was Ed Waters. to my left another ship. in one glance I could see huge sheets of flame coming from the wings. Down they went. I feel the only thing that saved my plane was the fact that as soon as the white bursts of 20mm started exploding all around I just kept easing back on the 'Wheel and managed to stay above the bursts. On the second pass the 410s got another Fort, a PFF ship. that left two of us. four B-17's down in four minutes. I started scrambling for the high squadron, by this time we had reached the IP and were headed for Berlin. Short of the target we encountered overcast, here the fighters broke off the attack. Then the flak began. At this point I was still trying to find a new position in the formation. Contrails were heavy, and visibility was very poor. We opened our bomb bay doors when the planes ahead did. Bombs were dropped and I started the chase again. The krauts were tracking me with flak, I cut over through the bursts and opened all four throttles to the limit. At 50" Mg' we flew for half an hour. Then, number one shot all of it's oil out through the breather. we feathered it. Near the enemy coast a group of P-38's picked us up and herded us across the Channel.

Dear American friends of the 91st:

This morning at 11:00 we attended the ceremony in memory of the two airmen KIA during the last flight of the "Black Swan" on December 31st 1943

More than 50 people were present and luckily we had a lull in the bad weather. But we came back home in the jeep under strong rain and wind.

God bless you and America

Keep well Yves Carnot



**The members of the 91st appreciate all the care that you have given this very special Memorial each year,
Thankyou**

Folded Wings (continued)

★ **James Ross, 324th, Age 86**
Tacoma WA, Nov. 24, 2006



As reported by Ed Gates
He was born in Canada and lived in Tacoma since 1922.

A veteran of WW II, flying with the 91st. He received the Purple Heart and also wore the "Flying Boot" which was worn only by those who were shot down over

enemy territory and evaded capture. He was shot down over France but escaped back to England.

He was a life member of the VFW, Post 969, The 8th AFHS and the 91st BGMA and was also a 44-year member of the Elks.

He retired as Captain from the Tacoma Fire Dept having served for 25 years.

His stepson Raymond Burke (Carole), Grandson Eric and sister Isobel Spolaric survive him.

★ **Robert A. McKee, 401st Age 87**
Decatur GA, July 29, 2006



As reported by his wife, Sarah

He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in January 1942 and trained at several bases including the Air Force Clerical School in Denver where he was assigned to the 91st Bomb Group. He arrived in England in

September 1942 and served as an Orderly Room clerk at Bassingbourn until the war ended. He was discharged as a Staff Sergeant in September 1945.

After the war, he attended Law School and took many banking courses at night while working full time by day in the banking industry in Atlanta. He retired with 40 years of service in banking.

Robert kept pocket-sized diaries during the war and two years before his death. He started writing his World War II memoirs, finishing just months before he died. It's an excellent account of his experiences.

His wife, two children and one granddaughter survive him.

Editors note: If you are interested in reading Robert McKee's memoirs, please contact me. Steve Perri

Folded Wings (continued)✪ **Lawrence Politzer 401st, Age 83****Troy OH, October 24, 2006**

A U.S. Air Force Veteran, he flew 35 missions as a navigator with the 91st, July 1944 - Feb 1945.

Lawrence Max Politzer was born August 19, 1923 in Bremen Germany, while his parents were *en route* from Budapest to Cleveland. He grew up in Cleveland, and enlisted in the AAC and was called up in February 1943 arriving in England in late July 1944, and flew the standard 35 missions as navigator for a B-17 with the 91st BG between September 1944 and February 1945. The first 30 missions were with the same crew, with Tom Holmes, pilot; Ned Davis, bombardier; and Wes Edwards, Co-pilot.

After the war, Politzer earned a B.S. in Physics at Ohio State. He worked for the Brush Development Corp. in Cleveland, married Catherine in 1950 and rejoined the Air Force in August of the same year after the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. In 1958 he earned a degree in Electrical Engineering from the USAFIT at Wright-Patterson AFB and then worked at the Electronic Technology Lab there. The Air Force sent him back to Ohio State for a year of advanced electronics in 1961, after which he was assigned to Electronic Systems Division at Hanscom Field, Bedford, Mass. In '64 he was made manager for Project ARIA (Apollo Range Instrumented Aircraft), developing and building the airborne communications systems for Project Apollo, for which he was commended. He then worked on electronic defense systems in Southeast Asia and retiring 1968. From then until 1977 he worked as a Consulting Engineer for the City of Cleveland Dept of Public Utilities and the Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

He taught at Youngstown State University from 1982-1989.

One of the projects of his retirement years was building an electric car, which he got

up and running just as his own engine was running low on fuel. He was active in the community, with the Volunteer Fire Department, with St. Edward's Church in Parkman and with the local Amish community.

His wife Catherine, children and his grandchildren survive him.

✪ **Jim King, 322nd Age 85**
Milwaukee WI,

As reported by his brother "Bud" Elsworth. Jim suffered an apparent heart attack on Thursday as he was getting ready to go to work. "He worked, literally to his last day, he didn't like just being home. He liked being around people" his wife said. He grew up in West Allis and was in the family business "King Braeger Chevrolet" which his father helped start. He joined the USAAC in 1944 and became a B-17 Bomber Pilot and was shot down over Germany and sent to a POW camp. His brother was also a pilot on fighter aircraft.

✪ **Joseph Camelieri, 324th, Age. 90**
Reading PA. Sept. 28, 1006

He was born in Reading and was an AAF



Veteran of WWII serving with the 91st BG in Bassingbourn, England. He was an original member of the "Memphis Belle".

He was a co-founder and co-chairman of the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association.

He was a truck driver for many years until his retirement in 1971.

In addition to his wife, of 50 years, Mary, son Gerald, sisters Marion and Jean, survive him.

91st Bomb Group Memorial Association
1054 Sunrise Drive
Woodbury, MN. 55125

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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 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

January 2007

Folded Wings:

★ **Aubrey Commons, 322nd, Age 88** **Grass Valley CA, August 25, 2005**



Aubrey was from Grass Valley, California, home of the largest gold mine in the state. He was second generation Cornish, and visited some of his father's family while at Bassingbourn. After high school, Aubrey worked for a local mining company driving a truck and other jobs. Then he decided to go to college and attended San Jose State College.

After the war, he returned to San Jose State to complete his degree, and later attended San Francisco State earning a master's degree in education. He taught Industrial Arts in Sacramento, California. He served in the US Army Air Force from February 1942 to January 1946. He was attached to the 322nd Bombardment Group in Bassingbourn from December 1943 to June 1945 as an armament and chemical officer. He and his wife Julia built their retirement home in Grass Valley. When not traveling in their motor home.

IN MEMORIUM **Gerald R. Ford**

38th U.S. President 1974-1977
Born July 14, 1913 Died December 26, 2006

★ **Fred Mellon 324, Age. 88** **Lynn MA, October 5, 2006**



He died at his home after a brief illness. He was the husband of Elizabeth "Betty", with whom he shared 61 years of marriage. He served in the Army Air Force as a sergeant in the 324th Bomb Squadron 91st BG during WWII

He was employed at Avco in the space and engineering division and he was significantly involved in the rocket re-entry program. He was also employed as a watchmaker at Shreve, Crump & Lowe in Boston for many years until he retired in 1987, and worked part time at Bissett Jewelers in Lynn.

He was a member of the former Wesley United Methodist Church and a member of the Grace United Methodist Church. He was a member and past master of Golden Fleece Lodge A. F. and A. M., where he was presented the distinguished Joseph Warren Service Medal. He was past secretary of the Lynn Eighth Masonic District. He was a member of Sutton Royal Arch Chapter, Zebulun Council, Olivet Commandery Association, and Aleppo Temple, where he was a member of the Provost Guard.

Mr. Mellon also leaves two sons, William and Scott, a daughter, Joyce Mellon-Phillips and two grandchildren.