

# THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322<sup>nd</sup> BS



323<sup>rd</sup> BS



Supporting Units



324<sup>th</sup> BS



401<sup>st</sup> BS

Vol. 41 No. 4

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

October 2008

## Tower Museum Bassingbourn

Chris Murphy – Museum Curator

Greetings 91sters,

It is that time again when I bring you news of what has been happening at the Tower Museum Bassingbourn over the last few months. I think I will start with the visit of the 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association who returned for their bi-annual trip to their former base at Nuthampsted. The friends of Nuthampsted Airfield had asked me if I could open the museum for the group to visit, this I was delighted to do.

Among the 20 or so who came over from the USA were five veterans, the rest of the group being made up of family. They enjoyed their visit very much and got to see the base that their fellow flyers of the 91<sup>st</sup> occupied during the war. The veterans, of course, commented on how much nicer Bassingbourn was in comparison to "Mud-hampsted", the nickname given to Nuthampsted because of how muddy the base was.

I was thinking to myself when they visited how nice it would be to have a 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA visit; I think it was about 5 years ago this last happened. I think it would be good especially for the 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> generation to see where it all happened from.

In August of this year many months of communication between myself and Marilynn Rustand, finally ended up with Marilynn visiting the base and the museum to see where her Dad Hanford James "Rusty" Rustand had flown from. Marilynn never knew her father as she had not been born when he was killed flying a mission on a B-17 called *Pard* which belonged to the 323<sup>rd</sup> bomb squadron. The target that November day in 1944 was the synthetic oil plants at Mersburg.



Marilynn and "her protection detail" on the runway

I had arranged for Marilynn and her guests to have lunch in the officers mess (at no cost) and gave her a full tour of



the base, including the avenue where the 323<sup>rd</sup> bomb squadron dispersals were. I think the most moving moment for us all was when we went to the beginning of the runway; the last place that her father was on friendly soil. Marilynn spent about eight hours with me at Bassingbourn and gave a press interview, featured in all the local papers and is due to feature in a British Army publication; she also placed a plaque on the Tower Museum Wall of Remembrance, in memory of her Dad.

continued on page 5

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Please send obituaries to Jody Kelly.

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Deadline for submissions to the RI is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

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B-17Banta@aol.com

**91<sup>st</sup> on the Web**

www.91stbombgroup.com  
www.bombsqd323rd.com

**President's Corner****Jim Shepherd**

Hurricane Ike has destroyed many homes and killed many people. Our past president, Bob Friedman and his wife Joy have a home in Houston, TX, but had to move to Arlington, TX with Joy's sister because their home is without power. Joy states that two thirds of Houston is in the dark and their zip code is 100% in the dark. The good news is that they are OK. Did we have any other members affected by Hurricane Ike?

Yves Carnot, a guest at the Reunion from Brittany France, sent a picture of his display for September 11<sup>th</sup>. It was the American Flag hanging at half mast. Most people I tell about Yves and the other people in France, Belgium, Netherlands, England, etc. that I'm in contact with, can't believe that most people in Europe continue to honor the American Serviceman that came to restore freedom and defeat the Germans. In fact, many people and school children in Europe know more about WWII than our kids here in America.

I attended the business meeting at the Savannah, GA reunion in 1998 and listened to the officers' talk about the decrease both in number of members and assets. Wanting to help, I called Asay Johnson and requested permission to start a web page for the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA. He said OK if it was free, and it has been. The web page was published on the internet January 17, 1999. Two days later, Mike Banta (324<sup>th</sup>) started his internet email RING to contact other veterans of the 91<sup>st</sup>. We did not know each other at that time. Months later we found each other and have since helped hundreds and maybe thousands of people find information regarding their fathers, brothers, uncles and old friends and have aided historians wanting to know the truth about the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, based at Bassingbourn, England.

We continue to get over 1,000 visitors per week to the web page. Our page has the most complete information of any WWII bomb group on the internet. Thanks must go to all the veterans who have and continue to provide stories and pictures. Special thanks must also go to Lowell Getz, a historian, who has spent many hours researching documents and calling members for additional information. This is a real team doing research; Mike Banta and over 100 Ring members, Lowell Getz and the web page.

The web page has run into many problems over the past 2 years because of viruses and computer malfunction. I have had to hire help to maintain the web page and have just now purchased a new very expensive program. In other words, I can't keep up with the web page because we have much additional information to add and it will not get done without help. During the next year, I would like to hire someone part-time just to add more items. It will cost a minimum of \$10.00 per hour.

I am starting a WEB PAGE fund to double the size of the PUBLISHED web page. We need a minimum of \$5,000 donated to the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Web Page Fund, so please do what you can to help us. We do not have forever to complete the mission. Any and all donations would be appreciated.

Jim Shepherd

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**Veeps Views****Mick Hanou**

I hope all is well with you and your families - enjoying fall colors, surviving hurricanes, getting ready to meet winter or become a sunbird. Wherever you are, I wish you well this coming winter. For summer, I paid my annual visit to the Duxford Air Show as an air show security volunteer. As you realize, I love seeing WWII aircraft fly, and my California weather gods directed the British rain elsewhere for the air show. We had a wonderful turnout with large crowds and about 60 flying aircraft, including three B-17s. *Liberty Belle* joined *Pink Lady* in a dual demonstration flight while *Sally B* was grounded.

very dedicated to your interests - and he has very good relationships with the base personnel who also support your museum.



You may have read in the blue insert on the business meeting in the July RI that the USAF Museum is receiving the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Archival material. This is an excellent repository for Archival material, and as Ed mentioned, that is different from Memorabilia. Lately, I read a story of a dealer obtaining WWII memorabilia from a garage sale from the widow of a veteran. To me, this is sad, as the contextual history is lost and can never be recovered. If you haven't done so yet, please make arrangements to keep your memorabilia, artifacts, and history such as log books and photos intact. Obviously, first pass it on to your family and succeeding generations. If you do not have anyone to pass it on to, please consider sending it to Jim Sheppard for inclusion in the Chino 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group display (in the same blue insert, you see we are attempting to expand the 91<sup>st</sup> display at Chino), or to the Tower Museum in Bassingbourn England. This way the memorabilia stays with the 91<sup>st</sup> displays and history. In my opinion, if memorabilia is sent to the AF Museum or the Museum in Savanna, there is a very high likelihood that it gets separated from any context with the 91<sup>st</sup> and that it sits on a shelf in storage. Both museums receive so much material, they can't display it all. Thank you for considering my views on this, I wish to keep your history alive.

Best regards, Mick

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If you have a complete set of Ragged Irregular newsletters and would be willing to donate them to the Bassingbourn Tower or Chino Air Museum, please contact Mick Hanou.



Naturally, no visit to the Cambridge area is complete without a stop to pay my respects at the Prop Memorial, Bassingbourn. The Memorial is in good shape and the grounds are well kept by the Army. I met with Chris Murphy, who is doing a wonderful job with the Tower and has strong visions for the future maintenance and enhancement of your Museum in England. He briefed me on the various activities he has undertaken the past year, whilst I briefed him on the Reunion and 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA activities. The 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group is fortunate to have in Chris someone

## 91<sup>st</sup> Reunion – A Granddaughter's View

by Kayla Boye – Granddaughter of Don Freer 322<sup>nd</sup>

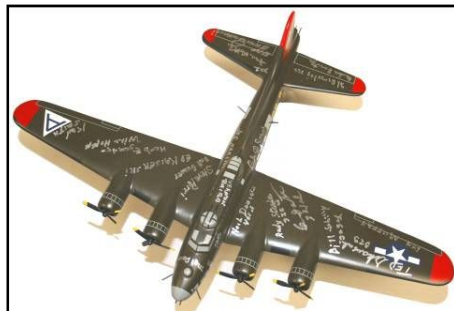
Having listened to my grandparents' stories about past reunions of the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, I've always wanted to experience one myself. Because it was held during the summer, my sister Kristen and I were fortunate enough to attend the California reunion. We were thrilled to meet our grandfather's comrades, and I personally found great enjoyment in the stories told by the veterans. Although I truly loved every aspect of the reunion, I especially loved the banquet and the ensuing gathering in the hospitality room. It was a wonderful culmination of our experiences that week and a rare opportunity for our family to reunite. My sister and I enjoyed seeking autographs of veterans for our B-17 posters, and in the process we were able to learn many fascinating histories of honorable men. For Kristen, the trip to Chino's Planes of Fame Museum was very interesting. She hopes one day to become a pilot, and in doing so, follow in the footsteps of our grandpa. We both feel that this exciting trip has strengthened our bond with our grandfather, and has made our admiration of the 91<sup>st</sup> grow even deeper. We are eagerly awaiting the 2010 Dayton reunion, and will always cherish the memories made at this past reunion.

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## Unfinished Reunion Business

The reunion photos printed in the July issue were from several sources. Thanks to Dean & Bonnie Selje, Barb Bergum, Jim & Suzi Shepherd, Steve & Nancy Perri and Mick Hanou for sharing the pictures they took throughout the week.

Greg Varhall donated a beautiful model of the 91<sup>st</sup> B-17 *Nine O Nine*. The plane was autographed by veterans in attendance and raffled off. Congratulations to Verne Woods as he was holding the lucky ticket!



I can neither confirm nor deny a very special, one of a kind presentation by Robert Tieman. However, on behalf of the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA, I would like to publicly thank Robert for his time and effort, and Greg Varhall for organizing the alleged event. If you have no idea what I am talking about, find someone who attended the reunion and ask them (myself included).

Gary

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## 2009 Historic Calendars

### B-17 Flying Fortress & B-24 Liberator



# \$12.95

plus \$4.60 p&h (\$17.55 total)  
CA Residence add 7.75% (\$18.55 Total)  
Additional calendars of any type to  
same address \$8 each (includes p&h)

[www.bomberlegends.com](http://www.bomberlegends.com)

As in the past, your organization will receive a portion of the sale of each calendar thru 03/09. We track sales by the special code in the ( ) following "Bomber Legends" below.

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MAIL A CHECK PAYABLE TO:  
**Bomber Legends (91BG)**  
1672 Main Street, Ste. E-124  
Ramona, CA 92065

## Collings' *Nine O Nine* Schedule

10/1 - 10/3	Pittsfield, MA Pittsfield Municipal Airport
10/3 - 10/5	Schenectady, NY Schenectady County Airport
10/6 - 10/8	Binghamton, NY Greater Binghamton Airport
10/8 - 10/10	Hazleton, PA Hazleton Municipal
10/10 - 10/14	Trenton, NJ Trenton Mercer Airport
10/14 - 10/16	Easton, MD Easton/Newnam Field Airport
10/17 - 10/20	Westminster, MD Carroll County Regional

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**Tower Museum Bassingbourn** (continued from page 1)

On August 29<sup>th</sup> we hosted the launch of the long awaited book "*Memphis Belle - Dispelling the Myths*" by authors Graham Simons and Dr Harry Friedman (of the *Memphis Belle* Memorial Association). We had been approached about a year ago by the authors who asked if they could launch the book at Bassingbourn, as Bassingbourn is the spiritual home of the *Memphis Belle*, and we said yes. This would also give me a chance in which to promote the Museum to the wider public.

In the weeks leading up to the launch, my wife Amy and I spent much time preparing press releases, invites, and decorating the old 324<sup>th</sup> Squadron hanger with a big cinema screen, world war two jeeps, plush chairs and banquet tables. On the day about 60 invited guests were welcomed by me to Bassingbourn and were given a film show of *Memphis Belle* movie footage that was never used in the 1943 documentary. This was followed by speeches from the authors, and other VIP's. Everyone then sat down to a splendid buffet with Buck's Fizz and Wine.

One of the invited guests was 91<sup>st</sup> BG veteran Chris Goodwin and his wife. We are always really pleased to see them when they return to England each year. As for media coverage, the event ended up in all the regional papers and was one of the main news items on the BBC news.

I had invited the Ghost Squadron re-enactment group along, who have spent thousands of pounds of their own money buying WW2 USAAF bomber crew clothing and equipment. They wear the gear and recreate the look of the wartime bomber crews; this went down well with the BBC news crew. (Visit the museum website around mid October to view the BBC news reel on the book launch).

We continue to have growing visitor numbers and due to the recent publicity have had several enquiries relating to membership, we have also at last erected a flagpole on the top of the Museum, where we fly the US flag.



That brings us up to date so far; looking ahead we are planning some new displays, in particular these will be on the nose art of Tony Starcer, the job of the Bombardier on the B-17 and the Navigator's job. If

any one can help me with information or artefacts on any of these subjects please get in touch via the tower museum email. I have collected a bit of equipment on the bombardier and navigator, but could do with anything that will help tell the story of these particular jobs.

Just in case no one knows, we do have a Wall of Remembrance at the Museum where a plaque can be purchased and then placed on the wall to remember a loved one who served at Bassingbourn. At present we have about 100 plaques on the wall but we would like to fill it, there is room for about 400 more. For more information, please contact me via the museum email which is:

towermuseum.121@btinternet.com

Well that's all for now!

I hope you all stay well, until the next time I write of events at the Tower Museum, God Bless you all!

**Correction to the July RI**

Page 9, the Orange County Register article stated the ball turret had "50 mm cannons", but should have read "50 caliber guns".

**Warbirds 2008 – November 7, 2008**

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is pleased to announce the NEW DATE for the Warbirds Ball 2008, "Are The Stars Out Tonight?" postponed due to Hurricane/Tropical Storm Hannah. The Stars will be out on NOVEMBER 7, 2008.

Music provided by Jeremy Davis and the Equinox Jazz Band. Dinner catered by Chef Matt Cohen, owner of The New South Café. Silent auction and lots of fun! Join us for a memorable evening.

Honoring the past...Preserving the legacy!

For tickets or more information, please contact:

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum  
175 Bourne Avenue  
Pooler, GA 31322  
912-748-8888  
www.mightyeighth.org

## Air Force vet marks milestone

**Decorated pilot in Arlington, TX recalls bombing mission over Germany on event's 50th anniversary.**

by John Austin, Star-Telegram Writer, April 19, 1994. Submitted by Tommy Gunn as a tribute to his hero – his father.

ARLINGTON, TX - The Messerschmitts must have come out of the sun.

Lt. Tom Gunn hauled back the wheel of his B-17, trying to dodge the German fighters, but a lone ME-109 slid through. Gunn and the German pilot locked eyeballs, the attacker's 20mm cannons blew out two engines, ripped through the Flying Fortress' nose, cockpit, bomb bay and left gas tank, then blasted a hole bigger than a man in the vertical fin.

The co-pilot was hit, his planes on either wing exploded, and Gunn felt the big bird drop into a steep spin.

"To this day, I don't know how we got out of that spin," said Gunn, a retired Air Force colonel who lives in Arlington, recalling the bombing mission over Kassel, Germany, on April 19, 1944 - 50 years ago today.

If you've ever seen *Memphis Belle*, a film based on the exploits of some of Gunn's squadron mates, you've got a Hollywood version of what the men of the Eighth Air Force were experiencing.

The mission wasn't as momentous as D-Day or as infamous as the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but it was hairy enough for the young World War II pilot. And if the movie included the part when the 20-year-old Gunn, who had just made first lieutenant, got drunk and told off the revered Gen. Jimmy Doolittle after the mission, audiences would have shrugged it off as Hollywood hype.

Gunn wasn't too happy about piloting a B-17 in the first place. The brass had bumped him out of P-51 fighters and transferred him to bomber duty.

"It was like crawling out of a Corvette and getting into an 18-wheeler," Gunn said.

But there was a war going on.

"The attrition rate was 4 percent per mission," Gunn said, adding that the "old man," the group commander, was all of 26. "That's the reason all these people were so young. Nobody lived to get old."

The only reason they didn't become statistics that day was Gunn's flying, said Gunn's flight engineer, George Parks, who lives in California.

Not only did Gunn fly the aircraft without instruments or a rudder, but due to frost-bitten fingers from a previous mission, he drove with one hand while he stuck the other one between his legs to keep it warm. Hoping for a glimpse of the horizon, he stuck his head out the side window.

Nevertheless, they reached their target, a German aviation plant, and running on just two engines, one of which had a damaged turbocharger, dropped their bombs.

Fortunately, on the way home they picked up U.S. fighter escorts, who radioed that they would stay with them until they went down.

"We said, 'We ain't going down,'" Parks said.

And although the ambulances and fire crews were rolling toward them in anticipation of a crash landing, Gunn landed the shot-up B-17 down safely, despite a locked brake.

"It was a pile of junk," Parks said, describing the bomber, which never flew again. A total of 50 airmen died, and five Flying Fortresses went down on the mission.

The next day, his commanding officer told Gunn that "some of the boys" wanted to meet the man who had gotten the wounded bird home; as it turned out, the boys included the undersecretary of state and three touring generals, including Doolittle.

As luck would have it, the crew members had just expressed their admiration for Gunn's flying skills by donating their entire whiskey ration to him; Gunn said that just about the time somebody said, "Tom, Gen. Doolittle wants to meet you," he had just polished off 12 ounces of hooch.

"Kassel isn't as rough as it was a year ago," Gunn recalls Doolittle saying.

Reeking of whiskey, Gunn said he recalls staring into Doolittle's piercing blue eyes and replying, "General,

it was rough enough for the five crews who didn't make it back yesterday."

Parks recalled that somebody said, "You've had a lot to drink."

And he said that Gunn replied: "That's right, and I'm gonna drink some more."

Not coincidentally, the Eighth Air Force suspended combat rations of whiskey for returning crew members on April 21.

"I'm just grateful the rest of the Eighth Air Force didn't suspect I . . . was the culprit responsible for the suspension," said Gunn, who won a Distinguished

Flying Cross for the mission. "Nobody knew about that."

But Parks said: "Tom, he deserved it. I've flown with a lot of people in the Air Force, and he was the best."

And the Distinguished Flying Cross wasn't all he got.

"Can you believe I got a Good Conduct Medal?" asks the white-haired Gunn, who spent 28 years in the Air Force. "I'm surprised they didn't court-martial me. I had a bad attitude.

"They either have to give you a medal or a court-martial. Sometimes they flip a coin."

**Mike Banta's Web Ring**

*If you do not have email and would like to reply to any of these requests, please send a letter to The Ragged Irregular and it will be forwarded.*

**John Zajac looks for *Lewd Angel* crew members**

I was the ball turret gunner on the *Lewd Angel*, 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group (H), 322<sup>nd</sup> Squadron. Hoping to locate former crew members, any information at all would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you!

John T Zajac

Email: firecrackerredone@yahoo.com

**The Church in "*Memphis Belle*" Movie**

I can help with Paul Henry's request about the church which is in the opening scenes in the "*Memphis Belle*". It is at Little Stukeley which is to the south of RAF Alconbury. According to Roger Freeman's *Mighty Eighth*, it was the home of the 92nd BG (H). The airfield is now closed but was home to A-10's for many years. Just before they left the runway was re-serviced and is one of the longest runways in the country. Sea going containers are now stored on the runway.

Kind regards,

Vince Hemmings

Email: miller@waitrose.com

**Do any of you remember seeing David Ansell?**

Hi everyone I am a World War Two aviation author and spend hours and hours researching this fascinating period. This brings me into contact with many eye-witnesses and veterans. Recently I had a letter from a certain David Ansell who as a child stayed with his relatives in Royston from 1942 on and off until 1945. David recounted to me that he used to hang around Bassingbourn base watching the B-17s and met many American servicemen during this period. Almost every day when possible he used to listen for the returning bombers and then run up to a local high point called One Hill up on the Heath. Here he would stand on a bench and wave a white handkerchief to "Welcome the Americans home" apparently many crews saw him and looked out for the little lad with the neckerchief. I was wondering if any vets remember or have relatives who they may have mentioned this fact to.

David is now 74 and I would love to pass on any recollections to him as he is incredibly proud to have witnessed the making of such history, and speaks with true passion when he recollects the shot up and blazing bombers he used to see passing low overhead. If anybody would like to contact me privately they are most welcome to do via email.

Kind regards Julian

Email: j.evenhart@ntlworld.com

**News from Across the Pond****Vince Hemmings****Hamm Mission Information Request**

I recently met David Bedford, the Superintendent of Madingley, and his colleague Arthur Brook at the Bassingbourn Barracks. They are looking for information on the 4th March 1943 mission to Hamm. Photographs and data are needed for a display, regarding that mission, planned for the cemetery's reception. I have the Missing Air Crew Reports, Mission Report and a photograph of Major Paul Fishburne, who was leading the mission.

I believe the 91<sup>st</sup> BG (H) aircraft assigned to that mission were:

<i>Chief Sly II</i>	<i>Royal Flush</i>	<i>Excalibur</i>
<i>Rose O' Day</i>	<i>Short Snorter II</i>	Unnamed B-17 42-24480
<i>Hells Angels</i>	<i>The Careful Virgin</i>	Unnamed DF-K 42-5370
<i>Dame Satan</i>	<i>Delta Rebel No.2 (aborted)</i>	<i>The Bad Penny</i>
<i>Invasion II</i>	<i>Eagle's Wrath</i>	<i>Connecticut</i>
<i>Bad Egg</i>	<i>Our Gang</i>	<i>Stupen-taket</i>
<i>Mizpah (aborted)</i>	<i>Jersey Bounce (aborted)</i>	<i>Stormy Weather</i>

David and Arthur are keen to have photographs of Lt. Allen Brill and Lt. Allen Lowry, the two pilots from *Excalibur* who were posthumously awarded Distinguished Service Crosses.

You can pass photographs and data to me [Vince] or you can send it directly to the cemetery.

Kind regards,

Vince Hemmings  
46 Scholars Walk  
Diss  
Norfolk  
IP22 4EA  
United Kingdom

Mr. David Bedford  
Superintendent  
American Military Cemetery  
Madingley Road  
Coton  
Cambridgeshire  
CB3 7PH  
United Kingdom  
e-mail: [cambridge@abmc.gov](mailto:cambridge@abmc.gov)

**Party Celebrates Kathleen Dodkin reaching 100 – Printed May 20, 2008 in the Cambridge News**

Celebrations were in order at the weekend as a former wartime worker reached her centenary.

Kathleen, who was awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) at the age of 90 for her work for the Armed Services, had a party thrown in her honour at Richard Cox House in Royston.

The 100-year-old, who has lived in the town all her life, said: "I had a lovely time, it was extra marvellous."

She worked with the British and American forces during the war, spending time at Bassingbourn barracks and an American military base built in the grounds of Wimpole Hall.

Kathleen was an early member of Royston's Women's

Guild Choir and a long-serving volunteer with the RSPCA.

For 30 years she also played the organ at the barracks' church at Bassingbourn and the Congregational Church in Royston.

She carried on working and volunteering until the age of 90.

Kathleen's son, Colin Freeman, grand-daughters, Zoe and Amy, and great-grandson, Cory, were at the party.

Colin said: "She's had a very long and interesting life and has been fortunate to have remained active throughout and to have made a wide circle of friends."

**91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Board Meeting Minutes – August 2008**

Teleconference began at 9:05 PST and ended at 10:30 PST

In attendance were Jim Shepherd, Mick Hanou, Jodi Kelly, Gary Hall, Ed Gates, Steve Perri, Bob Friedman and Ace Johnson.

**2010 reunion in Dayton: Ed**

- Initial results of the survey indicate June or October as most popular months. A second survey will be sent in the RI before final arrangements are made.
- George Bruckert's group would like to re-enact the Merseberg mission briefing at the reunion.

**Treasury: Ace / Jodi**

- Reunion made a profit of \$953.37. Profit "windfall" was that \$2200 was committed to March AFB and only two people asked for money back.
- Discussion on raising associate membership dues. Ace's opinion is to go slow on issue of raising dues. If we don't charge dues, the treasury would still fund the Association for a long time. Others concur that we consider issues - fixed income, ratio of paying members to life members, age. Discussion tabled.
- Ace is in the process of transferring the responsibility of the treasury to Jodi.
- Membership - 777 Total members.

**Historian: Steve**

- Collecting information and material on the location of both public and personal 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Memorials.
- Bob suggested we put together a directory of members. We could possibly make it available on the 91<sup>st</sup> website.
- Steve created a spreadsheet of deceased members published in RI's "Folded Wings".
- Mick suggests we keep the address of the next-of-kin for possible future contact when we receive obituaries.

**England: Mick**

- Met with Chris Murphy at the Tower Museum during annual Duxford Air Show visit.
- Chris has organized a number of events which have proven quite successful. Their treasury is much more robust than 3 years ago.

- Chris would like a complete set of RIs at the Tower for reference material.
- Chino would also like a complete set of newsletters.

**RI: Gary**

- Scanning previous copies of RI for digital archive.
- Able to eliminate mailing labels by printing address on RI on the July issue.
- Working to provide future newsletters digitally in color and/or printed in black and white depending on each person's preferences. Digital distribution will cut costs significantly.

**Miscellaneous: All**

- ED – Lt. Col. Nigel Smith is reporting to Iraq. The new commanding officer of Bassingbourn is Lt. Col. Simon Waddington, REME. We will extend an invitation to Lt. Col. Waddington for the 2010 reunion and will ask him to speak at the banquet.
- ED - If we establish that United States Air Force Museum the 91<sup>st</sup>'s archival storage and MG (ret.) Metcalf is interested in assisting the French Society that has documented all 91<sup>st</sup> BG crashes, it might be good to invite a French representative to the 2010 reunion.
- Jim and Mick to work offline on buying more of Ray Bowden's "Plane Names and Fancy Noses" books for the PX.
- ED - Turner publication asking that we commit to 150 copies of their book at \$30-\$40 each. Will ask about getting the printing plates.

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**91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Donations**

Patty Burke and Jerry Bodisch	\$50
in memory of George Harris	
Lisa A. Hammerly	\$30
Gary Brock	\$30
Melanie Finch	\$20

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**Is Your Address Label Correct?**

We are working hard to correct addresses we have on file. If there is any incorrect information on your mailing label, please send a correction to Jody Kelly. If you are receiving the Ragged Irregular in error, please let us know so we may find our member's proper address. Thank you!

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## **Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum “The Garden of Folded Wings Columbarium”**

Contributed by Henry Skipper of The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum

In keeping with the many traditions we seek to preserve, the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is undertaking one of the most important and ambitious projects in its history. It has long been the Museum's goal to provide Mighty Eighth crew members with a permanent and significant final resting place worthy of those who proudly and heroically served in one of our nation's most renowned military organizations. That goal is now becoming a reality. Very soon, construction will begin on “The Garden of Folded Wings Columbarium”, a magnificent Columbarium program honoring the Mighty Eighth.

The Columbarium, which will be located directly behind the Museum Chapel, will incorporate beautiful granite surfaces, memorial towers, a spectacular fountain, and the original terrazzo floor from the operations building at Hunter Army airfield here in Savannah. The floor, with its compass rose within a circle, provides an important link with the past as 7,000 ten man crews walked across its surface before boarding the planes bound for England in World War II.

The non-denominational Columbarium will provide niches for permanent storage of cremains in a tasteful, secure setting.

The niches are available to the general public, but preference is given to veterans and the immediate family members of the Eighth Air Force. The Columbarium is designed to meet the needs of the Eighth Air Force community.

Just as the Museum provides an enduring repository for materials and artifacts that tell the stories of these brave servicemen, the Columbarium provides a permanent resting place for them and their immediate family members.

This will be one of the most important and beautiful Columbariums in the United States and we are proud of the role it will play in preserving the memory of the Mighty Eighth.

For further information, please contact:

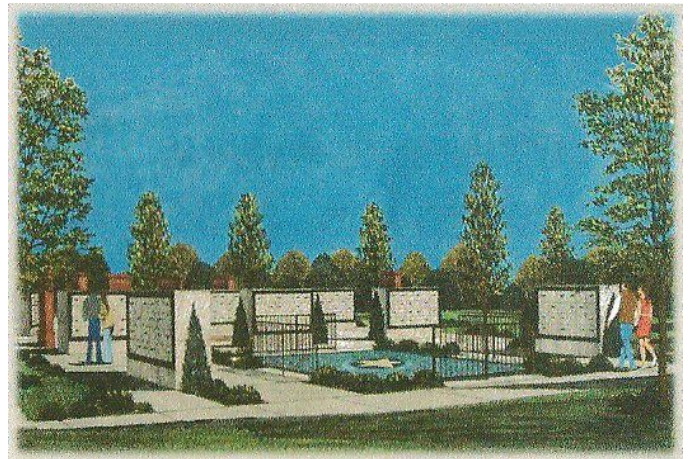
The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum  
The Garden of Folded Wings  
PO Box 1992  
Savannah, GA 31402  
Phone: 912-748-8888 Ext. 123

### **A FITTING RESTING PLACE**

The Garden of Folded Wings is a home worthy of those who proudly served in one of our country's most renowned and gallant military organizations.

### **Columbarium Niche Description**

- All niches are “double sized” and can hold two urns.
- Following inurnment of containers, niches are sealed and are impervious to most natural elements.
- The face stone for each niche is made of granite and will be engraved with the name of the occupant, plus one additional line of text.
- A Memory Medallion, which will tell the life story of the inurned, will be installed on the exterior of each niche.
- The Chapel of Fallen Eagles will be available for services in connection with the Columbarium.



Concept representation of The Garden of Folded Wings

### **Fees and Charges for Niche Reservation**

- Eighth Air Force Veterans (any era) - \$3,750
- All others Veterans - \$4,250
- Non-veteran friends of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum - \$4,750

**Folded Wings (continued from page 12)**

☛ **George F. Miller 324<sup>th</sup> Age 83**

Topsham, ME, May 15, 2008

Reported by Ace Johnson

George Francis Miller died following a brief illness. He was born in Hattiesburg, Miss., on Sept. 22, 1924, the son of Francis Loren and Elsie Massengale Miller.

He served in World War II as a B-17 pilot with the 8th Air Force in England. Shot down on his 17th mission, he was a POW in Germany the last four months of the war.

He is survived by his wife, Ellen Tilton Miller, and a son, George Wentworth Miller, and his companion, Lynn Blake Avigo.

☛ **Hazen J. Wilson 401<sup>st</sup> Age 83**

Plymouth, MI, February 6, 2005

Reported by his wife Margaret Wilson

Hazen was born April 8, 1921. He died at Angela Hospice, Livonia, MI following a stroke. He was born and raised in Detroit, attended Cooley High School. After graduation he worked for Michigan Bell Telephone Co. until he enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942. He served as a B-17 Navigator while stationed at Bassingbourn, England. After World War II he returned to Michigan Bell where he retired in 1983.

He enjoyed his family, golf, sailing, winters in Punta Gorda, FL and summers in Plymouth, MI. He is very much missed by his wife, Margaret, Children: Barbara, Jack and Marilyn, Grandsons Mark and Shawn.

☛ **George D. Harris 322<sup>nd</sup> Age 85**

Pompano Beach, FL, June 22, 2008

Reported by his son Barry Harris



George died June 22 after a lengthy illness. He was very proud of his role in WWII and was a regular participant in 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group activities and several ex-POW organizations. At the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, he was a student at New York University and worked at the New York Daily News. In early 1942,

George enlisted in the Army Air Corps and went to Miami Beach for basic training. He trained at Scott Field, IL as a radio operator and Harlingen, TX as a gunner. Assigned to a crew in Washington state, they were given a new B-17G, which they named *Miss America*, and prepared for shipment overseas.

Dec, 22, 1943, Osnabruck was the target on George's 16<sup>th</sup> mission. The Jagdgeschwager 26, an elite Luftwaffe squadron flying yellow nosed ME-109s and FW-190s, met

them over the target. With engines 3 and 4 hit and on fire, the crew bailed out 23,000 feet over the North Sea, but a strong headwind blew them back into occupied Holland.

The Dutch underground found my father, but he was eventually captured by the German SS. After interrogation, he was sent to Krems, Austria and placed in Stalag 17, barracks 40-A. My father often explained the one thing that kept him and the other POWs going was their constant plans to escape. He was once captured during an escape attempt, placed in front of a firing squad and saved by a German Captain von Mueller. My father later learned the Captain had married an American woman around 1920 and had two American sons. Von Mueller felt by saving Americans he could be saving one of his sons.

George was later sent to Stalag Luft 1, Stalag Luft 6 and Stalag Luft 4. On Feb. 6, 1945, my father and other POWs were put on a forced march from Stalag Luft 4 to Berlin, Hanover and Halle, Germany. They were liberated on Apr. 26 and transported to Camp Lucky Strike. Returning to the US, my father was hospitalized in Atlantic City to treat jaundice and malnutrition and was given an Honorable Discharge. He achieved the rank of T/SGT and was awarded two Purple Hearts, an Oak Leaf Cluster for shooting down a German ME-109 and the POW Medal.

As a civilian, George stayed in the aviation business, working on projects that supplied CRT deflection components for military aircraft. My father and mother (Judy Bomser) were married on Mar. 2, 1947, had two sons (Barry & Stuart) and four grandchildren (Amy, Caryn, Stevie and Evan). After raising their family in Fair Lawn, NJ, they moved to Pompano Beach, FL in 1991.

☛ **George Shook 322<sup>nd</sup> Age 88**

Wichita, KS, June 30, 2008

Reported by his son Stephen Shook

George passed away after a short illness. My father was very proud to have been associated with the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group and was very proud to have served with "Wray's Ragged Irregulars" at a time this nation faced a deadly threat from evil.

My father and his crew survived 19 combat missions over the skies of Germany before the air war in Europe ended. He flew as a top turret gunner / flight engineer.

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR is published quarterly in January, April, July and October. The purpose of the newsletter 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 Gary Hall

91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association  
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Woodbury, MN 55125

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**Folded Wings:**

❖ **George J. Genotti 323<sup>rd</sup> Age 90**

Woodridge, VA, August 4, 2008



Reported by his daughter Mary Genotti-Collins  
George was born in Lock Gulley, W.Va. on Oct. 17, 1917. He was the son of Italian immigrant, John (Giovanni) Costantino Genotti and Ethel Garibaldi.

He served in the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, 323<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, as a mechanic on the B-17 *The Careful Virgin*. He received an Honorable Discharge in 1946.

In 1974, George began working for the Smithsonian Institutes, National Air and Space Museum. He reconstructed many aircraft including the B-29 *Enola Gay*, an Aichi M6A1, a Messerschmitt ME 262, an Arado Ar-234 and Nakajima J1N Gekko "Irving".

Mr. Genotti is survived by his wife, Nellie; his children, Greg, Mary and Diana; 11 of his grandchildren; four great-grandchildren and his sister Vickie. He is predeceased by his brother, Gus and two of his grandchildren Chris and Anthony. He will always be loved.

❖ **Sam Newton 401<sup>st</sup> Age 87**

Englewood, CO, July 21, 2008



Reported by Jake Howland

Sam was born in Sioux City, Iowa to James Newton and Nellie Stacklin. He attended Colorado College in Colorado Springs where he met and later married Hilda Brickell.

He served in the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, 401<sup>st</sup> Squadron, during WWII and piloted 32 missions. His copilot, Bert Stiles, recounted Sam's daring and flamboyant style in his book, "Serenade to the Big Bird." After the war, Sam began a six-decade adventure into entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and community support.

Sam is survived by his wife of 60 years, Hilda, son Stephen (Lynne), daughter Carol Ann (Jim) Stout, grandchildren Kelley and Bridget Newton, Tyler and Holly Stout. Preceded in death by his daughter Deborah Parker Newton.

Folded Wings continued on page 11