

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 43 No. 2

91st Bombardment Group (H)

April 2010

91ST BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION REUNION

September 29 – October 3 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio



Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton

photo by Greg Hume

The 91st BGMA reunion is just around the corner! A schedule of events, costs and hotel information has been placed into the middle of your newsletter. If attending, your registration form must be mailed with payment no later than August 6th. Hotel reservations must be made before August 27th to reserve at the 91st BGMA rate.

To quote Ed Gates, "No excuse for not attending reunion 2010 at NMUSAF." If you need an excuse to

attend here are a few: 1) The events and social time promise to be fun, exciting and interesting; 2) The museum will have electric carts available for anyone with mobility issues; 3) With years to perfect them, the war stories have never been better; and 4) Beside all that, where else are you going to see two combat proven B-17s from the 91st Bomb Group in one location? Nowhere.

Hope to see you in Dayton!

President's Corner**Jim Shepherd**

We are ready for the 2010 91st BGMA Reunion! We are excited to visit the United States Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Our plan, from the beginning, was to see the *Memphis Belle* while it is being restored. The museum's rule is to only allow 50 people in to see the restoration work and only on Fridays. We are pleased to announce that because the *Memphis Belle* was a 91st aircraft, everyone at the reunion will be allowed to see this aircraft! Our thanks go to Maj. Gen. (Ret) Charles Metcalf for this special approval. His Special Events person, Jane Leach has been extremely helpful in setting up our time at the museum.

Ed Gates was assigned the task of organizing the 2010 Reunion. He had the events researched and organized with the help of Tom Freer, before he died. We will miss Ed for his intensive contribution to the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association.

There are plans to have a "Mission Briefing" with a group that will cover the planning of a mission. Their Briefing will be the November 2, 1944 mission to Merseburg, Germany. The designated plane and crew is *Little Patches* and that crew included our past president, Hal Johnson. Hal recently told me that he doesn't always remember what happened yesterday, but he will never forget everything that happened that November 2nd day in 1944.

The 48th Squadron Association has their reunion at the same hotel as the 91st and they will join us at the banquet on Saturday night. A little history of the Squadron follows:

In August 1942, 48th Fighter Squadron moved to Atcham, England and began training operations with the P-38 Lightning. In November 1942, the 48th moved to Algeria to support the invasion of North Africa and later operations over Sicily and Sardinia. While based in Algeria, the 48th flew escort missions for B-25 and B-26 bombers, made fighter sweeps, and flew reconnaissance missions. In December 1943, the 48th moved to Triolo, Italy and conducted fighter escort for heavy bombers on missions to central Europe, the Balkans, and Germany and also provided close air support to allied armies pushing up the Italian peninsula. In August 1944, the unit moved temporarily to Aghione, Corsica and engaged in patrol, dive-bombing, and armed reconnaissance missions to support the allied invasion of southern France. Through May 1945, the squadron continued operations from Italy conducting bomber escort and attacks against transportation, oil, and communication targets. The squadron was deactivated in September 1945 at Lesina, Italy.

I was contacted by a representative from MacDill AFB, Florida where the 91st BG was established. There was a Memorial Plaque at the entrance to the base and it was removed and they are looking for a new location. We will maintain contact with them to make sure the plaque is again mounted in a respectable place. Another major memorial of importance is the Prop Memorial at Bassingbourn. The continued cost of maintaining the memorial is of concern, but a new suggestion has been put forward. It was suggested that the painted squadron logos be replaced with permanent painted ceramic tiles that should last for many years. This would be a quality improvement.

The web page has been a wonderful addition to the 91st Bomb Group history. We continue to receive inquiries from all over the world with over 1,000 visitors per week. We have added additional memorial locations and will continue adding and updating. We wish to thank you for your donations and support for the web page and we will continue to tell all the history of the 91st, to the younger generation of the world.

91st BGMA Officers**President****Jim Shepherd**

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Please send obituaries to Jody Kelly.

Submissions for the July R/I need to be received before June 15th.

91st Bomb Group E-mail Ring

b17banta@aol.com

91st on the Web

www.91stbombgroup.com
www.bombsqd323rd.com

Veeps Views

Mick Hanou

Wings of Freedom Tour Schedule

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the Reunion and doing what I can to make your visit enjoyable. No other views today, but there is some important business to handle.

BY LAWS: There are some minor corrections to be made to the By Laws. We determined that the 91BGMA is a 501 (c) (3) organization and not a 501 (c) (19) organization. Second, the EAAS has changed its name to the Tower Museum Bassingbourn. Since these are errata updates and not amendments, the Board concurred that a full vote was not needed and that the changes would be published in The Ragged Irregular per Article IX; Section 3.I. Original text has been ~~struck through~~ and new text is in **bold italic**.

Article I. ASSOCIATION NAME a non-profit organization within the meaning of section 501 (c)-(19) **(3)** of the Internal revenue Service Code of 1954.

Article IV. PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION; Section 1) e.) cooperate with and nurture a close association with.....the ~~East Anglia Aviation Society (EAAS)~~ and its Tower Museum **Bassingbourn**,

Article X. DISSOLUTION; Section 1)c)in accordance with the provisions of Section 501 (c)-(19) **(3)** of the Internal revenue Service Code.....

Article X. DISSOLUTION; Section 2)in accordance with Internal Revenue Service Code, Section 501 (c)-(19) **(3)**, and any other.....

FULL MEMBERSHIP: in order to vote at the Reunion Business Meeting, one needs to be a Full Member. "After three years as an Associate Member, one may become a Full Member by written request to the Secretary/Treasurer and majority approval of the Board". In order for the Board to consider applications in time for the Reunion, we request you send them in by June 1.

Best regards to all,

Mick

2010 Officer Elections

Current nominations are Jim Shepherd, President; Mick Hanou, 1st Vice President; Bob Friedman, 2nd Vice President; Jody Kelly, Secretary / Treasurer; and Gary Hall, RI Editor. We are still searching for someone to take over as 91st Historian.

If you are interested in the Historian or any other position on the 91st Board, please contact Tom Freer, 6380 Winstead Ct, Lisle, IL 60532 or Email: tmf1108@sbcglobal.net.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Town / Airport</u>
4/7 - 4/12	Dallas, TX Dallas Love Field
4/12 - 4/14	Lubbock, TX Lubbock Preston Smith Intl
4/14 - 4/16	Albuquerque, NM Albuquerque Intl Sunport
4/16 - 4/19	Scottsdale, AZ Scottsdale Airport
4/19 - 4/21	Deer Valley, AZ Phoenix Deer Valley Airport
4/21 - 4/23	Phoenix, AZ Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport
4/23 - 4/26	Tucson, AZ Marana Regional Airport
4/26 - 4/28	TBD
4/28 - 4/30	San Bernardino, CA San Bernardino Intl Airport
4/30 - 5/3	Santa Ana, CA Orange County/John Wayne
5/3 - 5/5	Carlsbad, CA McClellan-Palomar Airport
5/5 - 5/7	Murrieta, CA French Valley Airport
5/7 - 5/11	TBD
5/11 - 5/14	TBD
5/14 - 5/17	Burbank, CA Bob Hope Airport
5/17 - 5/19	San Luis Obispo, CA San Luis County Regional Airport
5/19 - 5/21	Monterey, CA Monterey Peninsula Airport
5/21 - 5/29	Mountain View, CA Moffett Federal Airfield
5/30 - 6/1	Livermore, CA Livermore Municipal Airport
6/2 - 6/4	Stockton, CA Stockton Metropolitan Airport

Collings Foundation's B-17 *Nine-O-Nine*, B-24 *Witchcraft* and P-51 *Betty Jane* are scheduled at all listed stops!

For more information on the Wings of Freedom Tour, please visit www.collingsfoundation.org or call (978) 562-9182.

Mike Banta's Web Ring

Contact Mike Banta to join or ask questions of the Ring at email: B17banta@aol.com. If you'd like to comment on or answer any of the following and do not have email access, simply drop a line to the Ragged Irregular (address on page 2) and the information will be forwarded to Mike and the Ring.

Lori seeks info re Michael La Medica, KIA 4 Feb 1943

I am looking for any information or recollections of S/S Michael T. La Medica. My brother was a crew member on the *Texas Bronco*. He was killed on a mission in Holland in 1944 but many of the crew survived. I being the youngest, still remember the day we received the telegram of his passing. Thank you for any memories you can share with me.

Lori La Medica
Email: Nantuckit@aol.com

Mike's reply to Lori:

Hi Lori,

Jim Shepherd, keeper of our web page sent us your Blog entry for answer. We are the participants in the 91st BG E-mail Ring (101 91st Bomb Group veterans, ages 82 to 97, and 91st BGMA associate members) who answer questions for searches. Since some of our Ring participants are outstanding 8th Air Force historians, researchers and authors, our ring has a remarkable ability to find information for relatives. We represent all periods of time that the 91st was active and so some of us can answer almost any question.

We are delighted to hear from the sister of Michael LaMedica. Michael was flying at the most dangerous time of the strategic air battle against Nazi occupied Europe. He was a true hero as were all the men who took on the task of getting the 8th Air Force off the ground. His crew was the 7th crew to be lost by the 91st Bomb Group out of 197 91st B-17s missing in action during the war.

Texas Bronco was a B-17F, #41-24589, radio call letters OR-R, and was one of the original 323rd B-17s. This B-17 was assigned to the Ellis crew and as such, the Ellis crew participated in the second mission to be flown by 91st Bomb Group. This mission was to bomb the Drucat Airfield in Abbeville, France, and tail gunner, William Howard, was credited with destroying a German FW-190, one of the first kills of a German fighter by the 91st Bomb Group in WW II.

Here is the information we have on your brother, Michael's, last mission as a crew member of the Eugene Ellis crew. We are not sure whether your brother was a regular member of the Ellis crew or had filled in for a regular Ellis crew member. The target for that day was Hamm, Germany, but weather was so bad

over the primary target that the 91st Bomb Group was diverted to the secondary target which was the marshalling yards at Emden, Germany. *Texas Bronco* was damaged by flak over the target. The damaged B-17 was later attacked by Me 109s and Me 110s. Lt Ellis made an emergency landing on the beach of one of the Frisian Islands, Terschelling Island. The bombardier was killed in the air by German fighter fire. Your brother was badly wounded in the air and died the same day at a hospital at Leeuwarden, Holland. He was originally buried in the local Northern cemetery and later re-interred in the Netherlands plot TT-11-252 on 5 November 1945.

We are sending your request to all our Ring participants, some of whom flew in the 323rd at the same time your brother did and we are asking if they knew your brother to write to you at your e-mail address, Nantuckit@aol.com, with a copy to me for my files.

We have copied below a picture of *Texas Bronco* and its crew. We are sorry for the poor quality but this is the only picture we have. The crew shown was the regular Ellis crew. Crewmen often filled in on other crews.
Mike Banta, 91st Ringmaster

Ellis crew flying that day
(P) 2Lt Eugene B Ellis (Pow)
(CP) 2Lt Futch (Pow)
(N) 2Lt Dunham (Pow)
(B) 1Lt Marvin H Beiseker (Kia)
(E) T/Sgt Demars (Pow)
(RO) S/SGT LaMedica, Michael T
(BTG) S/Sgt Gaetz (Pow)
(WG)S/Sgt Floyd (Pow)
(WG) Sgt Mastroerardino (Pow)
(TG) S/Sgt Howard (Pow)

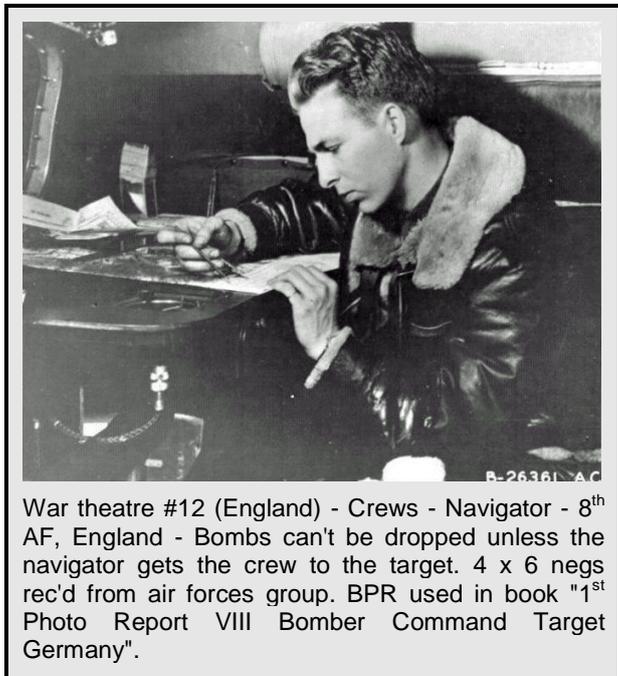


Lori sends her thanks:

Thank you so much for the information you sent. I can't tell you how much it means to me to know all I can about Michael La Medica. I have fond memories of him as a little girl, one of them being his last leave home the December before his February flight. My parents told me they asked for volunteers for those missions and asked for unmarried men. I guess they realize it would be dangerous missions....Our family was very proud of him. His gold star remained in our window for many years.

With best regards,
Lori La Medica

Is this Belle's navigator's table?



War theatre #12 (England) - Crews - Navigator - 8th AF, England - Bombs can't be dropped unless the navigator gets the crew to the target. 4 x 6 negs rec'd from air forces group. BPR used in book "1st Photo Report VIII Bomber Command Target Germany".

We may have stumbled onto the "smoking gun" picture of a B-17 with the nav table on the right (co-pilot side). Unfortunately, there's no other information, so we don't know if this was even a 91st aircraft. We're also not sure the person in the picture is Charles Leighton, the Belle's navigator on most of its missions. If it is, then it's fairly sure (but not conclusive) that this is the Belle. Can you circulate this for us? Hopefully, someone in the 91st can identify the person in the picture and provide other information.

Regards,
Steve Markman
Email: smarkman@att.net

The Last Great Gathering of Fortresses and Legends



The 8th Air Force Historical Society is hosting veterans, family members, and their guests at the Willow Run Air Show, located just outside Detroit, August 5 thru 8, 2010. The Air Show organizers are expecting 8 to 10 B-17's to attend , 2 B-24's, 12 P-51's, the usual cadre of other WW-II aircraft, as well as a flying ME-262 and an ME-109. (NOTE: Detroit is also a Non-stop flight from several airports).

Attendees registered with the 8th AFHS and staying at our hotel **within our room block** will have preferential (back door) motor coach transportation to and from the event with delivery to a private tented seating and viewing area at center stage, as well as free access to several B-17's offering "walk thrus" to the general public who, will be paying \$5 to \$10 per person for access. Our admission will include lunch, transportation, center stage seating, as well as dinner Saturday, followed by a symposium Saturday night. Optional tours will be available Friday and Sunday for those who only want to attend the Air Show Saturday.

Our host hotel is the Crowne Plaza Detroit Metro Airport with complimentary airport shuttle, free parking for those driving in, and a room rate of \$89 per night + tax. A limited number of Group Gathering rooms (or Hospitality rooms, whichever you prefer) will also be available at a nominal cost to the seven largest Groups in attendance with 30 attendees or more.

There will also be a Fully Stocked 8th Air Force communal hospitality room welcoming all others who walk thru the door.

PLEASE NOTE: This is not an 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion, but rather an 8th AFHS sponsored event, and you **do not** need to be a member of the Historical Society to attend. We were requested by the Air Show organizers to host the veterans and their guests in an "organized fashion," which we are happy to oblige.

We will have a large buffet "Welcome" dinner Friday evening, followed by lunch and dinner at the Air Show Saturday, with an interesting symposium to follow Saturday evening, and concluding with a Gala Banquet Sunday evening, with a very notable speaker.

More information, instructions, and registration form can be found on our web site at www.8thafhs.org.

91st BGMA Board Meeting

February 2, 2010, 9:07 – 10:20 AM PST

Attendees: Jim Shepherd, Mick Hanou, Jody Kelly, Steve Perri, Gary Hall, Ace Johnson and Tom Freer.

Memorials: Jim

- MacDill AFB Plaque is being moved to a different location on the base and suggested we pay for it. He will get an estimate.
- The David Crow Memorial is also in need of repair. The squadron insignias are fading and need to be repainted every few years. Suggested we pay for a special process that will make them permanent and they will not fade for many years. The cost is approximately \$2,500. Ace commented that this is a lasting memorial to the 91st and suggested we spend the money. Mick stated that he also supported spending the money and asked if we had a separate account for memorial maintenance. Ace stated that the Putman account is for memorial maintenance. The board voted and approved \$2,500 so Jim could move forward on the project.
- Discussion regarding a memorial fund in the honor of individuals who have served on the board. All agreed memorials would be done in the honor of the 91st as an organization.

Joe Harlick Photos/Uniform: Jim/Mick

- Mick talked to Jenny Harlick and the scans need to be verified before the photos are released. Jenny would like Joe's uniform displayed by his photos at the Minot AFB. If Minot is not able to do so, she would like the display to be at the Planes of Fame museum in Chino, CA.
- Ace commented that he recently visited the Savannah Museum and found that many of the uniforms donated were not on display and nothing had been organized. He said that the Museums are good for archives but not for donating the uniforms.

2010 Reunion: Jim

- Cost of the hotel is \$99.00 per night which includes breakfast.
- Working on permission to take the entire group to visit the *Memphis Belle* restoration.
- Mick spoke with Chris Murphy and Tom Gill of Bassingbourn and they plan to attend the reunion. They have done an outstanding job working on the Tower and will be speaking at the banquet.
- Tom Freer is working on transportation and is in the process of getting the costs.

Website: Jim

- Working to get the complete set of the Ragged Irregular newsletter on our website.

Treasury Report: Jody

- The total in the checking account is \$4,664, there is \$22,713 in the CD account and the Putman account has \$7,421 for a total of \$34,798.
- 2010 dues are coming in and expected to continue through March, which is the deadline.
- There are 103 Associate Members, 237 Full Members, 213 Life Members 159 Associate Life Members and 13 Public Relations Members.
- Mick will review the Putman Account.

Elections: All Members

- Mick stated that officers need to be Full Members.
- There will be a list of candidates in the April RI.
- Tom Freer was voted in as a Full Member.

91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Reunion

Members, Associates, and Friends are invited to attend the next Reunion of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association.

The dates are Wednesday 12 May thru Monday 17 May 2010.

Event location:

El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel
(Holiday Inn)
110 Lexington Ave
San Antonio, TX 78205

You must make your own reservations on or before Monday, April 12, 2010.

When calling, please identify yourself as being with the 91st Strategic Recon Wing 48-57, this will ensure you receive the \$95 group rate (includes free parking), and that our room block is credited. Call the toll free reservation number (866)423-7814 or email reservations@eltropicanohotel.com.

For more information check the January 2010 issue of the ReconRecorder or www.91stsrw.microway.com.



Folded Wings (continued from page 8)



King George VI of England meeting Capt. H. W. Terry and the crew of his B-17 named *Terry and the Pirates* in 1942.

✪ **Henry W Terry Group Commander Age 74**

Tucson, AZ, November 30, 1990

Reported by his nephew Terry Terry

Henry was born October 24, 1916. One of only four of the original members of the 306th Bomb Group who were not shot down, killed, captured or wounded. Henry completed his missions and proceeded to rise through the ranks of the 306th serving as 367th Squadron Commander and then Group executive. He transferred to 91st Bomb Group as Group Commander from May 17, 1944 through May 30, 1945. He remained in the Air Force until his retirement in the late 50's or early 60's.

✪ **Joseph L Ritchey 322nd Age 90**

San Jose, CA, January 16, 2010

Reported by his niece Betty Rose



Born September 22, 1919. Joe was a decorated veteran of World War II, where, in the 8th Air Force, he piloted B-17s. His decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Purple Heart.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 66 years, Lorraine, his sons Joseph Jr. and Gary, daughters-in-law Susan and Martha, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

✪ **James Scudder 401st Age 84**

Troutdale, OR, November 16, 2009

Reported by his wife Marilyn

Jim was born March 6, 1925. He graduated from Corbett High School in 1943 and attended Linfield College.

Jim served in the Army from 1943 to 1967. He flew with the 91st in World War II as a toggler, flying the 35 required missions, most bombing runs over Nazi-held Europe.

"Those were terrifying days," he told East Multnomah County historian Clarence Mershon. "My plane never had less than 12 major holes from flak on any mission." Scudder actually flew 39 missions but four were aborted. On one of those he received a leg wound from flak. In 1950, he was recalled to active duty in the Korean War as a personal aide and helicopter pilot to Maj. Gen. Wayne Smith.

Survivors include his wife, Marylin; daughter, Candace Deay; sons, James Lawrence and William Randal; stepdaughters, Julie Gornick and Junell Hill; stepson, Jay Hollingsworth; ten grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

✪ **Quentin H Ellis 323rd Age 91**

Renton, WA, February 24, 2010

Reported by his wife Rena



Quentin was born on July 14, 1918. He attended the University of Washington and started his career in banking at People's National Bank in Seattle.

Quentin's career was interrupted when he enlisted in the Army Air Corp. He became a B-17 Combat Navigator in the 8th Army Air Force and was stationed in Bassingbourn, England. After completing a 25 mission combat tour and receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross he returned to the United States. He became a Navigation Instructor and Flight Commander for Aviation Cadets in Selman Field, Louisiana until he was discharged in 1945.

He is survived by his loving wife of 65 years, Rena Ellis. Quentin has a sister, Marion Hunter and nephew John Hunter, Jr.; nieces Mara Reddan and Shawna Hunter and many friends.

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 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 Gary Hall

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Folded Wings:

☛ Edward C Gates 323rd Age 86

Tacoma, WA, January 8, 2010



Reported by his daughter Kathy Ed was born December 14, 1923. During the Depression he worked in the rail yards and went to college, joining the Army Air Corps in 1942. Until the end of the war in Europe, he flew as a B-17 co-pilot. After a twenty two year career in the Army Air Corps and then the Air Force that took him around the world, he retired to civilian life.

Ed was very active in the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association. A past president of the organization, he continued working tirelessly to promote the group, laying a foundation for the future and planning upcoming events.

He is survived by his wife Joan Ann (nee Drenga), his daughter and four sons, his six grandchildren, and his many friends.

☛ William D Wilson 322nd Age 86

Council Bluffs, IA, August 15, 2009



Reported by his family William was born August 29, 1922. He graduated from Missouri Valley High School in 1941, after which he served in the Civilian Conservation Corps in Missouri Valley and farmed with his father until he enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1942. He served as a Flight Engineer on B-17s and was stationed at Bassingbourn Air Base. He flew 30 Missions and returned to the United States in 1945. He retired from the Air Force as a Master Sergeant in 1968 and from the Omaha Post Office in 1986.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Donna (Jones) Wilson; daughters, Lisa (Nyls) Beckwith, Theresa (Mark) Bowerman; sons, Jeffrey (Teresa) Wilson, Mark (Corinne) Wilson; 12 grandchildren; and 9 great-grandchildren.