

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 44 No. 1

91st Bombardment Group (H)

January 2011

11th November Memorial Service 2010 at the American Military Cemetery, Madingley



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Joel Mease

We have a Sunday evening programme on our television called Country File and as the title suggests it is about the countryside here in England. Always they give the weather forecast for the whole week and noted that the whole country was going to have winds up to 100 mph and heavy rain on Thursday 11th. Each day we watched hoping for a change but the forecasters got it right.

So it was with some trepidation that Margaret and I set for Madingley in strong winds and heavy rain. Water proof clothing, cushions in plastic bags to sit as the plastic seats collect water and extra layer pullovers. Fortunately, when we arrived at Madingley the rain had all but stopped which just left the wind. The Stars and Stripes flag was horizontal so strong was the wind.

Normally I place the wreath by its number behind the Chapel but this year for the first time that I can remember all wreaths was placed in a room under the Chapel.

Among the principal guests was Her Majesty's Vice Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Mrs Jane Lewin-Smith, High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, Dr Nigel Brown, Vice Commander, Third Air Force, Major General Mark. R. Zamzow, Assistant Chief of Staff & Air Officer Commanding Directly Administered Units, Air Commodore Elaine West, RAF and The Honourable Darrell Dorgan from the Battle Monuments Commission. There was also twelve Mayors from surrounding districts all resplendent wearing their chain of office.

Colonel Timothy. S. Cashdollar, Commander, 501st Combat Support Wing covered many relevant facts in his excellent opening remarks.

Words of Remembrance were given by Commissioner Darrell Morgan, ABMC, and Air Commodore Elaine West, RAF.

Airman First Class Kelsey. M. Larson recited the poem "In Flanders Fields".

One new innovation this year was six airmen/women standing by the entrance of the Wall of the Missing and forming an archway with gleaming chromium swords for the Principal Guests when they arrived.

Time to lay the Group's wreath of red poppy's once again funded by that wonderful friend Paul. J. Limm.

So the Service ended with Firing of Volleys and Taps and still the rain held off. How lucky we were. Time to talk to many friends that normally I only see twice a year.

May I close by saying thank you for allowing me the honour and privilege of representing your group and laying its wreath.

Kind regards,

Vince Hemmings.

President's Corner**Jim Shepherd**

Setting our GOALS for 2011, we need to outline what the goals are and how to accomplish them. FIRST, we need to understand what is needed to continue the 91st BG Association. The membership is reducing and the collection for funds is down. We must have sufficient funds to continue the association and that's why I wrote in the last R.I. that we needed 40 members to donate \$250.00 each to handle future expenses. 16 members have donated this amount, but we need 24 more to help us meet our goal, or 48 members to donate \$125.00 each. The total amount collect so far is \$4,110.00.

SECOND priority, are the memorials around the world. We spend \$2,600 to up-grade the Prop Memorial at Bassingbourn; working with MacDill AFB, in Florida on the relocation of the 91st Memorial. It had to be moved and we are pushing to get it relocated in 2011, and preparing to help if necessary other memorials that will need attention. When everything is said and done, it's the memorials that must be maintained. Also, we have agreed to support the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino California and the 91st Bomb Group Memorial which is predominate there. We are helping to expand the 91st BG display with new display cabinets. If you have anything to add to this display, please send to me. We have already given them \$2,500.00 and we have promised then same amount after the first of the year.

THIRD priority is upgrading and updating the web page. I have worked on the web page for 12 years and spend about 10 hours a week. However, the technical aspect is very complicated and I must have help to continue. The web page has been a driving force that allowed the association to continue and even helps find 91st veterans that never knew about the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association. 3 new veterans just joined; A. P. Miller Jr. 324th; Alfred P. Murphy 322nd; Roger W. Layn 322nd.

FOURTH priority is the PX and the fact that it is no longer generation a considerable sum of money to support the association and is projected to continue the downturn which means we must stop purchasing replacement items. Purchasing items from the PX will help put money back into the treasury, so check the items available on the web page.

There is an EXCITING RALLY ROUND planned for 2011 and information is included in the R.I. The 91st has been invited to a Pass Off (graduation) of British solders at Bassingbourn with a special invitee; Re-dedication of the Prop Memorial; a visit to Cambridge Military Cemetery for Memorial Day; a tour of Royston Township; a day at the Duxford Air Museum and a few days in London. Then off to France for dedication of a new 91st Memorial at the town of Paluel and then to Normandy and the 67th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

The 91st BG Board is working hard for the association; Mick Hanou worked his legs off at the reunion and contacting members and outside contacts for help; Jody Kelly arraigned to have many of the veterans picked up at the Dayton airport and does an outstanding joy keeping up with the accounting and membership; Gary Hall is working on the 2011 Rally Round and his work on the Ragged Irregular is fantastic. We need more financial support in 2011 so the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association can continue for many years to come.

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Please send Folded Wings
information to Jody Kelly.

**Submissions for the April R/I
need to be received before
March 15th.**

91st Bomb Group E-mail Ring

b17banta@aol.com

91st on the Web

www.91stbombgroup.com
www.bombsqd323rd.com

Veeps Views**Mick Hanou**

Hello, and I hope all of you had a Happy Holiday Season and were able to celebrate with family and friends.

I made a few trips through Denver (for Mom's funeral); the plus side was that I was able to meet with Frank LaBlotier who was ground crew (armorers) from the early 1942 group's move to the end of the war. I had a quite enjoyable time listening to his stories, querying him on experiences, and viewing the many artifacts and papers he has. There is quite a collection of physical material including medals, uniform, helmet, equipment, clothes, photos and even a camo-parka from the Bulge. He also has numerous papers that were posted on the bulletin board during the war, including letters from generals regards commendations to the group – all of which gives me better insight to an aspect of the 91st's collective experiences that I had not yet encountered. This was the first ground crewman I had met with such a long period on base and a good memory. This is why I reiterate how important context is in telling your story. We do hope to someday preserve his story / material in either the Chino display or the Tower Museum (however Frank wishes).

On a second note – I received a call from Mr. O'Neal of Tacoma who mentioned to me that he had acquired Ed Gates' wartime diary. He's very enthusiastic about it and mentions how full of information it is. He will be transcribing the entries for us to add to the website and I thank him for his generosity. However, here is a case where the original is lost to the 91st BGMA. Knowing how Ed always wanted to assure that this sort of material was passed on to family or to museum archives, I am rather surprised and can only surmise that it was inadvertent that the diary ended up in an estate sale and bought by a dealer.

This brings me to a recurring theme. You know my views on making sure your memorabilia (log books, uniforms, medals, etc.) are preserved in context. Please pass them on to family, with your stories (preferably recorded somewhere). If they are not interested or you don't have family, please consider donating them to the Tower Museum or your 91st display at Chino. We will keep the material together and will assure it is displayed and not just put on back-room shelves. Please put a codicil in your will indicating your intent and / or set the material aside so that it doesn't just get sold in an estate sale.

Last but not least – a sincere "thank you" to all our overseas contacts who represent the 91st at the recent Veteran's Day services.



A portion of Frank LaBlotier's collection

Don't Forget Your 2011 Dues!

If a date less than 2011 appears on your address label, please fill out the included dues form and return it to Jody Kelly before March 1st. This is important if you wish to continue receiving *The Ragged Irregular*.

Lifetime members will not have a date on your address label.

Bassingbourn Rally Round - Update

As of December 15th, seventy people have expressed interest in our tour to Bassingbourn. Planning is still underway and everyone will be notified as soon as we have the detailed itinerary and costs finalized.

Tentative plans are to arrive in London May 27th and stay in the Cambridge area four days. A private coach will take our group to Bassingbourn, Royston, Wimpole Hall, Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Duxford, Glenn Miller Museum and the Eagle Pub. We'll have two days in London before leaving for France. Four days in the Normandy area will include Paluel, Le Havre, Caen, Pointe du Hoc, Arromanches, Bayeux and Sainte-Mère-Église. The group will return from Paris June 7th (or you may extend on your own).

Any interest or questions regarding the tour may be directed to:

Gary Hall
1054 Sunrise Dr
Woodbury, MN 55125
Telephone: 651-260-2397
Email: raggedirregular@gmail.com

WARNING TO VETERANS

Forwarded by Kevin Secor, VSO Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans.

This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way. <http://www.vaservices.org/us/index.html>

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. Our Legal Counsel has requested that we coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.

In addition, GC requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38 United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to Mr. Daugherty at the address below.

Michael G. Daugherty
Staff Attorney
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel (022G2)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

91st BG Related News

Statue to capture wartime beauty that inspired naming of B-17 bomber

By Michael Lollar, Originally printed November 9, 2010.

The Memphis Belle Memorial Association will break ground Saturday in Overton Park for a bronze statue of Margaret Polk, the namesake of the World War II bomber.

Association president George Barnes said the life-size image will be mounted on a limestone slab with a plaque about the B-17 bomber, the first to complete 25 missions over Nazi-occupied Europe with its crew intact.



Margaret Polk

The groundbreaking will be at 11 a.m. in Veteran's Plaza between the Doughboy and the Korean War monument, said Barnes. He said the statue will be installed in 2011.

In a photo used as the model for the statue, Polk is looking skyward with her hand shielding her eyes. It will be cast at the Lugar Foundry in Eads.

Polk was the sweetheart of pilot Robert Morgan, and their highly publicized but ill-fated romance helped the War Department feed publicity when Morgan returned from battle and joined his crew for a war bond tour. Polk died in 1990, Morgan in 2004.

The airplane, known in wartime as the Flying Fortress, was brought to Memphis in 1946 and spent almost 60 years here before the U.S. Air Force reclaimed it to fully restore it as an exhibit in the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio.

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Collings Foundation's *Nine-O-Nine* taxiing at the Anoka County Airport in 2009

Wings of Freedom Tour Schedule

Collings Foundation will be starting the 2011 Wings of Freedom Tour in Florida on January 21st. *Nine-O-Nine* (B-17), *Witchcraft* (B-24) and *Betty Jane* (P-51) are scheduled for all dates below. They will be joined by *Tondelayo* (B-25) in Kissimmee on February 9th.

Call 978-562-9182 or visit www.collingsfoundation.org for more information.

1/21 - 1/24	Fort Lauderdale, FL Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport
1/24 - 1/27	Miami, FL Kendall-Tamiami Executive Airport
1/27 - 1/31	Boca Raton, FL Boca Raton Airport
1/31 - 2/2	Marco Island, FL Marco Island Airport
2/2 - 2/4	Fort Myers, FL Page Field Airport
2/4 - 2/7	Venice, FL Venice Municipal Airport
2/7 - 2/9	Lakeland, FL Lakeland Linder Regional
2/9 - 2/11	Kissimmee, FL Kissimmee Gateway Airport
2/11 - 2/13	Clearwater, FL St Petersburg-Clearwater Int'l Airport
2/14 - 2/25	Maintenance Break
2/25 - 2/28	Leesburg, FL Leesburg Intl. Airport

91st BGMA Donations

\$500 Donation

Jenny Harlick
In Memory of Joe Harlick

\$300 Donation

Col George W Mankel
In Memory of Harold White KIA 2/22/44 and deceased crew members of *Paper Dolly* A/C 42-37746
In honor of pilot Ehud Merkel living in Palm Springs, FL

\$250 Donation

Tom Freer
Steve Perri
Kenneth Smith
In Memory of Phil Collins
Kenneth Smith
Gary Hall
US Bank (match to Gary Hall's donation)
Frank Farr
Greg Norwood
In Memory of T/Sgt Ellsworth (Mike) Norwood
Flight Engineer *Chippewa, The Milwaukee Road* - 324th
Henry Hall

\$150 Donation

Mrs Ilse Weinberger
In Honor of the marriage of Paul Limm's Daughter Helen Limm to Robert Smyth.

\$100 Donation

Gerold Tucker
Dan Linn
In memory of M/SGT Rice C. Linn
Paul Limm
In Memory of Bob Dickson

October Issue Corrections

The photo in the upper right corner of page 7 labeled "Recovering the control surfaces of the *Memphis Belle*" was actually the rudder from *The Swoose*, also in the process of restoration. Thanks to Gerry Asher's keen eye for finding the mistake! An article on *The Swoose* is included below as an added bonus.



B-17D 40-3097 *The Swoose* in flight

The photo immediately below the misidentified rudder photo has Mike Clemens' name misspelled. Sorry Mike!

B-17D *The Swoose*, Ole Betsy

from website www.pacificwrecks.com

Aircraft History

This is the oldest B-17 Flying Fortress left in the world. Built by Boeing constructor's number 2125, completed on April 28, 1941.

Initially assigned to the 11th Bombardment Group, 14th Bombardment Squadron, adorned with red and white striped tail, with tail number 21.

Part of the first group of 14th BS B-17s to fly across the Pacific. They flew via Darwin and 7-Mile Drome on September 9, 1942 arriving at Clark Field, the longest mass flight of land based aircraft flown until that date, Nicknamed *Ole Betsy* (no nose art).

Wartime History

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, this B-17 flew what was likely the first American combat mission of the war, a reconnaissance mission out of Del Monte Airfield.

Less than a week later, *Ole Betsy* took off to bomb Lingayen Gulf, piloted by Goodman. Soon after taking off, it experienced engine trouble and proceeded to Davao, an alternate target. The airplane arrived over the Davao Gulf in darkness and conducted the first American night bombing attack of the war.

At the end of December 1941, this B-17 was relocated to Singosari Airfield on Java. During a mission to bomb

Tarakan on January 11, 1942, three enemy fighter aircraft mounted a 35 minute attack. The crew claimed two of the attackers and the B-17 escaped. The damage was extensive enough to end her career as a bomber.

Flown to Melbourne for a complete overhaul and fitted with a new tail scavenged from B-17D 40-3091. Captain Weldon Smith became the new pilot of this restored Flying Fortress and nicknamed it *The Swoose (It Flies)* after a popular song. Assigned as personal transport of General George Brett.

Postwar

After the war, it was stored at Kingman, AZ to be scrapped. Instead, was saved by the efforts of Frank Kurtz, who flew it during the war, and named his daughter Swoosie Kurtz after this B-17.

On April 6, 1946, Kurtz flew the B-17 to Mines Field (Los Angeles Airport) with passengers aboard including the mayor of Los Angeles and Mrs. Kurtz. Following acceptance ceremonies, airport personnel stored the B-17 inside a hangar at the airport.

Plan for war memorial fell through and Frank Kurtz arranged for the National Air Museum to acquire the aircraft. Kurtz flew the plane in May 1948 to the old C-54 assembly plant at Park Ridge, IL for storage. In June 1950 the USAF claimed the Park Ridge facility for military use. On Jan 18, 1952, an Air Force crew flew the plane to Pyote, TX for storage. Flown to Andrews AFB, MD Dec 3, 1953 and stored outdoors for six years.

NASM & Storage

In April 1961, the plane was trucked to the National Air & Space Museum Paul Garber Facility. The B-17 was placed into storage in a preserved but unrestored state from 1961 - 2008. The drift meter from this bomber is part of the NASM collection, Inventory Number: A19500075025.

USAF Museum

During July 2008, *The Swoose* was moved from National Air & Space Museum Paul Garber Facility to the USAF Museum, arriving on July 14, 2008. Visitors may see *The Swoose* in the museum's restoration facility by signing up for a Behind the Scenes tour held each Friday. Advanced registration is required.

At this time, USAF Museum staff has not finalized restoration plans. *The Swoose* will undergo an extensive and detailed technical inspection. Based on the findings, the museum will determine how to best restore and display the historic aircraft. The extensive restoration is expected to take a number of years.



324th insignias from left to right ; painted A2 jacket; an early "blue bunny"; more recent "blue bunny"; and the new RI representation

324th Bomb Squadron's New Old Insignia by Gary Hall

324th veteran Bill Uphoff called one afternoon and asked why *The Ragged Irregular* had the wrong insignia for the 324th on the cover page. Honestly, I didn't know the answer. I'd seen photos of the squadron insignia in front of the barracks at Bassingbourn, but I've seen so many variations of other insignias that I hadn't paid a great deal of attention to detail.

While preparing my first newsletter in 2007, I wanted to update the look of the front page and decided to replace the line drawings of the insignias with more detailed colored renderings (yes, I do realize it is a black and white newsletter). I began scouring the internet for images to use when I came upon a 91st Bomb Group postcard for sale on eBay.

On the postcard were hand painted insignias of the 91st and all of its squadrons. It was exactly what I'd been looking for! The card arrived, was immediately digitized, broken into each squadron's insignia, cleaned up and placed in the newsletter's heading. The 324th painting on the postcard had a blue bunny holding something that looks more like a torpedo than a bomb standing in front of a mushroom cloud. Since it was on a postcard, I assumed it was official.

Thinking about Bill's question, I again started searching the internet. Neither of us knew the origination of the postcard insignia. As a matter of fact, I still don't know, but I did find the "missing link" and can see how the original design morphed into the blue bunny and mushroom cloud.

The original insignia had a brown rabbit wearing a flak vest and helmet, holding a bomb in one hand and a carrot in the other. He was leaning on a cloud with another cloud in the distance hovering over a hut with a windsock and grass visible next to the runway.

The second version of the insignia I found was similar, but missing was the flak vest and helmet, grass alongside the runway and the extra cloud in the background. As clouds generally do, the remaining cloud changed shape. Gone was the round puffy cloud and a tall narrow cloud which reached the ground was in its place. The rabbit also evolved into a hue of blue with white spots on its belly, foot and nose.

The next iteration is not that different from the previous, but it does lead us to the image on the postcard. The runway, hut and white spots on the rabbit were all AWOL. Once again the cloud changed shape this time forming the mushroom cloud.



Postcard acquired on eBay

Just like the story changes slightly with each person playing a game of telephone, the insignia changed slightly with each artist's rendering. If anyone has knowledge of the birth of the blue bunny, please share! It's always interesting to find more pieces to the puzzle.

For the "new old" 324th insignia, I wanted to blend all the elements of the original with the hand painted look of the postcard. The merge was done using Paint Shop Pro software, the A2 patch and the postcard scan. Now you know where the "new" insignia came from.

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:

✪ Clifford M Schultz 324th Age 86

Park Ridge, IL, November 26, 2010

Reported by his wife Barbara



Cliff was the Radio Operator on the original crew of *Rhapsody In Red*. On December 24, 1944 he and his crew flying in A/C DF-H (no name) crashed on takeoff, but all of his crew survived. Cliff completed 35 missions.

Awarded DFC, Air Medal with five OLC's, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign, EAME and WWII Victory Medal. After the War he returned home to work for Illinois Bell as an installer, retired as equipment engineer.

Cliff is dearly remembered by his wife Barbara, sons Curtis and David and daughter Jeanine. Seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

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✪ Richard T Pressey 401st Age 92

Portland, OR, December 18, 2009

Richard was born in Pueblo, CO and served as a pilot in the 91st Bomb Group. He is survived by his son Kirk; brother Charles; and numerous nieces and nephews.

TO MY FALLEN FRIENDS

by 1st Lt. Richard T. Pressey, 91st BG, 401st BS
Submitted by Cliff Schultz for the July 2004 RI

The Lord looked down and saw you fall
No longer will you answer the flight line call
Nor hear the Flying Fortress engines roar
Or see the blood and feel the hate of war.

You ventured forth on a noble quest
To challenge the Luftwaffe's very best.
The sky was filled with bursting flak
Followed by a whirling, Messerschmitt attack.

They came spurting fire out of the sun
You were their target, your life was done.
War with its glory, war with its shame,
Wrote your life's last chapter in smoke and flame.

You flew your final mission without regret.
A mission most mortal men will soon forget.
But rest in peace, you'll receive your due.
For the eternal skies are always blue.
Yes, await God's call, again to fly
With the angel squadron in the heavenly sky.