

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 44 No. 3

91st Bombardment Group (H)

July 2011

2011 Rally Round UK and France



Rally Round participants pose during a Thames River boat tour of London.

As I'm preparing this issue of The Ragged Irregular, I realize two things. The first is this issue is becoming the August, not July, issue and the second is that two months have passed since our group met in the UK! A reminder of how quickly time passes.

Our group of thirty seven met in London and had a very special two weeks. We were treated as VIPs everywhere we went, but especially at Bassingbourn, Royston, Wimpole Hall, Duxford, RAF Mildenhall and

Paluel. A respectful tribute to you and all the persons who fought to protect England and liberate France during the Nazi oppression.

Many of you expressed a desire to attend, but realized a trip across the pond may be too physically taxing. We are sorry you were not able to join us, but we hope to share our experiences with you through this newsletter. I apologize for my tardiness, but hopefully you will find it worth the wait!

President's Corner**Jim Shepherd**

The Rally Round to England was a tremendous success. Gary Hall was the organizer and he enlisted Chris and Amy Murphy, from the Tower Museum at Bassingbourn, to set up the buses, hotels, and the complete tour. We started at the Prop Memorial with the laying of a wreath by our veterans on the tour, Mel Dart, Don Murray and our special veteran Guy Bechtel. Guy lost a brother who was in the 91st in 1943 and Gary Hall arranged his travel with us. The memorial looks great, with the new ceramic squadron tiles that should outlast all of us. With Chris' precision, we were off to lunch in the officers mess and then to the Tower Museum.

To those who have not been to the Tower lately, there has been a fabulous upgrading, with more to come. Tom Gil, who spoke at the Dayton Reunion, has been helping Chris during the upgrading and we hope to have more communication with the Tower Museum and publish this in the *Ragged Irregular*. Chris Murphy has been invited to attend our officer's quarterly meeting, via SKYPE and this is just a start. We were up early and Chris had us on the bus for Madingley Memorial Ceremony for Memorial Day 30 May 2011. Vince Hemmings, the person assigned to lay the wreath, was sick and could not attend. Don Murray and Mel Dart were assigned the duties to lay two wreaths; one for the 91st BGMA and one for the 401st Squadron donated by Paul Limm. This was a very emotional ceremony with the more than 100 United States Air Force Personnel handing the wreaths to the wreath layers, the 21 Gun Salute, the fly-over of a KC-135, a C130 and 2 F-15's and the hundreds in attendance in total silence.

We were then off to Royston, as Chris and Amy had arranged a lunch with the Mayor and his staff. It was a very warm welcome and some in the group didn't realize that the people of Royston had not forgotten the efforts of the American service men who came to England and helped them retain their freedom. A memorial ceremony was held at the memorial to the 91st Bomb Group and this memorial is listed on the web page.

The next morning, it was off to London and a wonderful dinner cruise on the Thames River, just as the sun was setting. The next morning it was off for a tour of London. 3 June we were off to Caen, France. We traveled to Portsmouth and toured the area. In the evening, we board a ferry and were assigned rooms for the night. We must admit that this was a fun experience, waking up as we entered the harbor of Le Havre, France. Again, we are off on another adventure to Paluel, France. The Mayor, Bernard Piednoel, had invited the 91st BGMA and Guy Bechtel to the town to dedicate a new memorial to the John A. Coen Crew, B-17 42-29537, that crashed near the town 28 March 1943. Mr. Piednoel was 10 years old when he saw the crash and never forgot the tragedy. All crewmen were killed. The town supplied lunch when we arrived, with many choices of drink. The drive to the memorial was uneventful until we arrived and saw perhaps the whole town waiting for us. The memorial is located in a beautiful place on the beach and will soon be listed on the web page. This is the largest memorial plaque we are aware of that is dedicated to the 91st BG. Invited back to their community, we arrived to find many inhabitants of the town in attendance. A toast was made and they had many wonderful snacks. One of the persons from the town was Daniel Lefebvre, who has been in contact with us for several years on the internet. Also in attendance was Alain Charles, who attended our last reunion.

June 5th & 6th we visited the Normandy coast and Chris gave us a complete history lesson of the D-Day Invasion. He is like an encyclopedia with all of his knowledge of events. I would suggest that everyone visit the Normandy area on 6 June any year and take Chris with you. You wouldn't believe the activity that takes place there and the respect given to the Americans that helped free their country.

The group that attended the Rally Round was incredibly wonderful in all respects. A proud group honoring the men of the 91st Bomb Group.

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Veeps Views**Mick Hanou**

The coming of spring heralds air show season, my opportunity to see veteran friends and volunteer at air shows. First was the Chino show, which had numerous WWII naval aircraft participating in some beautiful displays. (I took a flight in a TBM Avenger). It is one of the best shows in the world and has a large attendance, many who see our 91st BG display which is in a prominent place at the museum. We are moving forward with the display cabinets; and the big news is that we have retrieved much of Joe Harlick's photo and scrapbooks for the display.

My job moved to Bakersfield and so the Collings Foundation asked me to host a new stop. The day after I returned from working at the Chino show, I watched the B-17 lumbering in for a landing at Meadows Field Airport. I had a number of veterans in attendance and heard some more experiences. Hats-off to all of you. There was an unexpected interview on TV where I was able to mention the 91st BG quite a bit and those on the Ring may have seen. My two-hour flight (as crew) on 909 was a new experience because of the unusual amounts of rain and storms that California has gotten this year. We flew tucked below the cloud base and above the terrain. The Livermore stop, which I have organized for the past 19 years, was again exceptional with many attendees. 909 and the 91st get a lot of publicity and exposure. We have long lines all day long but also have a number of veterans to pass the time sharing their stories with the crowd. My next flight was a short hop from Livermore to Stockton. I mention one more flight – in the B-24 from Vacaville to Klamath Falls for two hours over spectacular scenery. It was very special because I had a chance to ride in the ball turret for the first time.



The *Liberty Belle* after a successful off airport landing in a muddy field due to an engine fire. Unfortunately the mud prevented fire crews access to the bomber which was destroyed as the fire spread throughout the plane. Photo Liberty Foundation

be my third B-17 of the year. Sadly, *Liberty Belle* (which I saw in April) had a forced, but capably controlled landing due to a small engine fire. Everyone was able to evacuate safely, but the fire proceeded to engulf and totally destroy this beautiful B-17 because the fire engines couldn't get to it in the field. Full story on the web: www.libertyfoundation.org.

While in England I will of course pay my respects at the 91st Memorial and visit the Tower. Lastly, I have recently made contact with the president of the 355th FG (Steeple Morden) and will be looking at filling in some more history of the 91st if possible.

91st BGMA Donations

US Bank	4,250.00
Donation match for Gary Hall and Rochelle Treziok	
Mick Hanou	250.00
To honor my good friends Bob Dickson and Joe Harlick	
Dan Linn	250.00
Sharon White	250.00
In honor of Paul Limm	
Charles Egender	100.00
Paul Jessop	100.00
Paul R Zimmerman	100.00
In memory of Paul L Zimmerman	
Paul Kahl	78.08
Mrs Ellen Totusek	50.00
In memory of Joe A. Totusek	
Elizabeth Busa	30.00
In memory of Charlie Busa	
Michael McCabe	30.00
Kenneth Geisinger	25.00
Maurice Markway	25.00
David Spratt	12.00
Nevin Fritch	10.00
Bonnie Selje	10.00

By the time you read this, I will be in Duxford, England for their show – another of the best in the world. We anticipate a large turnout of a/c this year. *Sally B* will be there, so that will



Ray Darling and Ace Johnson with the *Nine-O-Nine* replica at a recent tour stop. *Photo Loraine Darling*

Rally Round 2011 Photo Essay



Don Murray, Mel Dart and Guy Bechtel welcomed into the Officer's Club. *Photo Kerri Anderson*

Wings of Freedom Tour

Relive history with a tour or flight experience on Collings Foundation's B-17, B-24 or P-51 when they land at an airport near you! For more information, visit them on the web at www.collingsfoundation.org or call 978-562-9182.

- 8/26 – 8/29 White Plains, NY
Westchester County Airport
- 8/31 – 9/2 Cape May, NJ
Cape May County Airport
- 9/2 – 9/5 Belmar, NJ
Monmouth Executive Airport
- 9/6 - 9/9 Bridgeport, CT
Igor I Sikorsky Memorial Airport
- 9/9 - 9/12 Oxford, CT
Waterbury-Oxford Airport
- 9/12 - 9/14 New Bedford, MA
New Bedford Regional Airport
- 9/14 - 9/16 Plymouth, MA
Plymouth Municipal
- 9/16 - 9/19 Beverly, MA
Beverly Municipal Airport
- 9/19 - 9/21 Auburn/Lewiston, ME
Auburn/Lewiston Municipal Airport
- 9/21 - 9/23 Westfield, MA
Barnes Municipal Airport
- 9/23 - 9/28 Worcester, MA
Worcester Regional Airport
- 9/28 - 9/30 Keene, NH
Dillant-Hopkins Airport
- 9/30 - 10/3 Nashua, NH
Boire Field
- 10/3 - 10/5 Pittsfield, MA
Pittsfield Municipal Airport



Bassingbourn Prop Memorial Ceremony. Honor Guard (above) and our veterans placing a wreath at the memorial (below).





Speakers at the Prop Memorial included Jim Shepherd, Lorinda Crow, Lt. Col. Hugh Lohan (ret.) and Col. Peter Worthy (ret.).

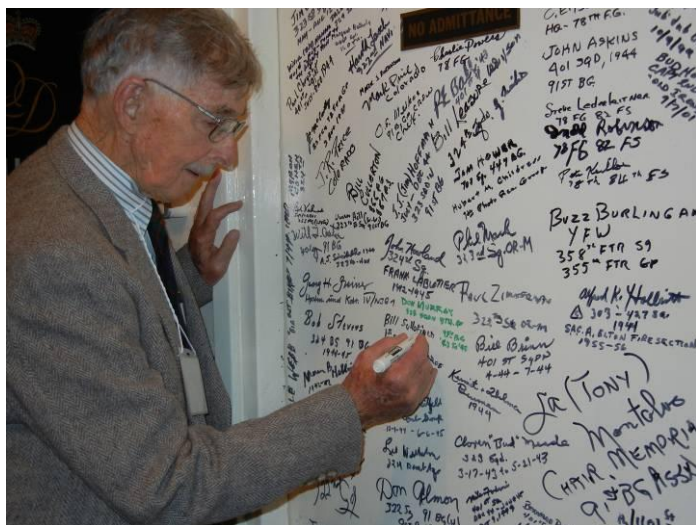
The Yavis family enjoying our reception at the Officer's Club.



91st veterans sign a print of *Honoring the 91st*, a painting by Steve Harper commissioned by the Tower Museum (above) and a door in the Tower Museum (below).



A beautiful day greeted us for the Memorial Day service at the Cambridge American Cemetery at Madingley. Wreaths for the 91st Bomb Group and 401st Bomb Squadron were placed by Mel Dart and Don Murray. Unable to attend, Vince Hemmings was missed by our party.



A short walk took us to the 323 Squadron's dispersal area.





(clockwise from upper left) Chris Murphy speaks at the Priory Memorial Gardens in Royston. A toast on the Thames. Sally B at the Duxford Air Museum. Our group in Portsmouth just before departure for France. A nightly happy birthday song was in order for Don Murray who turned 91 our first night in London.





The unveiling of a memorial to the John Coen crew in Paluel, France. Pictured with the memorial is Guy Bechtel, brother of Coen crewmember James Bechtel, and his daughter Kerri Anderson. The group photo below taken at the entrance to Camp Lucky Strike.





Normandy June 5, 6 & 7



A surprise meeting of Bernard Dargols, the only French man to have fought in Normandy wearing an American uniform. His command of the French language was invaluable for American intelligence services.

Chris sharing some of his in-depth knowledge of the D-Day Invasion (top). A C-47 displaying invasion stripes flies over Omaha (middle). Normandy American Cemetery (below).



Overlooking Arromanches with its still present Mulberry Harbour (above). Memorial service at Pegasus Bridge over the Caen Canal (middle). Chris with Jaque and Larry Ruth as our ferry leaves France (bottom).



Folded Wings (continued from page 12)✧ **Armando J Sinibaldo 323rd Age 89**

Lisle, IL, August 11, 2011



Reported by Dot Lasch & Barb Schultz
"A.J." served in WWII as a navigator on B-17s in the 91st Bomb Group. In 1945, he married Norma, and they were married 65 years. Armando was predeceased by Norma who passed in April 2011. "A.J." worked for The Visking

Corporation, Union Carbide/Dow Chemical and as an independent mechanical engineering consultant.

"A.J." is survived by his son, Glenn Sinibaldo (Janine); daughter, Gayle Hoffman; four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

✧ **Paul A Henritzky 401st Age 86**

Bethlehem, PA, May 21, 2011



Reported by his wife Cynthia
Paul was born on July 23, 1924 in Emerald, PA. After high school, he enlisted in the newly formed Army Air Corps in March of 1943. He was a navigator of a B-17 Flying Fortress named *Little Patches*. Paul was awarded the Air Force medal and Oak Leaf Clusters for

meritorious duty, coolness and skill during his 8th Air Force Bombing over Nazi Germany. He received his First Lieutenant Commission September 29th, 1944. As a Lieutenant he flew 35 bombing missions in the European Theatre of war and was active until October of 1945. After 20 years of active duty and reserves he retired as a rank of Major. After active duty, Paul graduated from Lehigh University in June of 1949 with a B.S. degree in Business Administration. He retired from General Motors Acceptance Corporation (GMAC) after 30 years and spent 10 years with Cement National Bank.

Paul is survived by his wife of 58 years, Cynthia Vogler Henritzky; daughters Leslie Henritzky Belak and Paige Anne Zaia (Joseph); son Ted Henritzky (Debi); and six grandchildren.

✧ **Frank T Keneley 401st Age 94**

Laguna Beach, CA, March 20, 2011



Reported by his wife Hilde

Born in Twin Falls, ID in 1916, his family moved to Long Beach, CA where Frank fell in love with the silver screen and Hollywood. He would often reminisce about his experience working on movies including two of the most memorable, *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

In 1943, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, where he hoped to become a pilot, but instead was assigned to become a navigator. He was commissioned a 2nd Lt. and assigned to the 91st Bomb Group. Frank flew 22 combat missions over Germany and was shot down while on a bombing raid to Eschwege. Frank and two other crewmen were able to bail out before the plane disintegrated, killing the rest of the crew of ten.

That night Germans captured Frank and his remaining crew. They were POWs for thirteen months at Stalag Luft III. Frank lost fifty pounds and nearly lost his leg from wounds received during the crash. The camp was liberated in 1945 by American forces lead by General George S. Patton, whom Frank remembers standing close to.

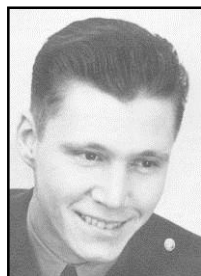
Returning home he graduated from USC, School of Pharmacy in 1949 and opened a pharmacy in South Laguna Beach.

As a United States Air Force Veteran of World War II he would share his many memories about his missions and time he spent as a POW. His passion for aviation and his 91st Bomb Group always stay strong in his heart.

He is survived by his wife, Hilde; two daughters, Suzi and Robbi; and one granddaughter.

✧ **Donald W Almon 322nd Age 88**

Milwaukee, WI, April 9, 2011



Reported by his wife Elizabeth

Don was born July 4, 1922. He was a navigator on a B-17 named *Easy Does It*. Don flew 35 missions over Europe in WWII. He retired from the Air Force Reserve as a Lt. Col. In 1982. He worked in middle management for the George Meyer Company.

Don is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; and two daughters, Donna DeWitt (Donnie) and Patricia.

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:

☼ Joe A Totusek 322nd Age 91

Mesa, AZ, April 7, 2011



Reported by his wife Ellen

Joe was born in Omaha, NE. While stationed at Bassingbourn during the war, he met his lifelong sweetheart. He thoroughly enjoyed his 30 years in the Air Force which included many tours in Germany and England. After his Air Force retirement, he continued working at Williams AFB, where he opened and operated the plating

shop. His spare time was spent hunting, fishing and repairing cars and boats for family and friends.

Joe is survived by Ellen, his wife of 66 years. He is also survived by daughter, Lynn Gile (Roy) and son Torger Totusek (Laura), along with grandchildren, Heather (Neil), T.J., R.C. and great grandchildren, Oliver and Alistair. In addition, he is survived by a sister Elsie Dasovic and many other family members in Omaha. He was preceded in death by his granddaughter, Margaux Totusek.

☼ Erwin R "Rudy" Steele 322nd Age 91

Buckley, WA, April 10, 2011



Reported by his wife Esther

Rudy was born November 23, 1919 in Red Cloud, MN, growing up in Sumner, WA. After high school, he served in the Army Air Corp during WWII. While serving in England, Rudy had the privilege of meeting President Eisenhower.

He continued to actively support all service members through his work with the VFW in Sumner. He was also an active member of the Puyallup Elks. Rudy loved square dancing, gardening and bee keeping. He often told funny stories about his bee experiences.

He is survived by his wife, Esther Steele, who he met square dancing; three step children; 14 grandchildren; and 21 great grandchildren.