

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 46 No. 2

91st Bombardment Group (H)

April 2013

Chino Rally Round May 3rd – 5th



91st BGMA Reunion at the Planes of Fame Museum, Chino, CA in 2008

A Rally Round is scheduled in Chino, California at the Planes of Fame Air Museum for May 3rd to 5th, 2013. The Rally Round will be held in conjunction with the Planes of Fame Airshow "Lightning Strikes Chino" highlighting the P-38 Lightning!

A limited number of rooms are available at the Ayres Hotel Chino Hill. They offer a rate of \$89.95 per night if you call the front desk at (909) 631-2922 and mention the Planes of Fame Museum. The rate includes a full breakfast. We strongly suggest you call today!

Those attending should send a check for \$50.00 per person, payable to Jim Shepherd. This covers your entrance fee and transportation to the Air Show. You will receive a full refund if you do not attend.

Jim Shepherd
20670 Via Augusto
Yorba Linda, CA 92887
(714) 970-5540



President's Corner**Mick Hanou**

Thank you to those who have returned their dues in a prompt manner. This helps reduce costs and keep track of our membership. In the last RI, I mentioned the Board had decided not to raise dues and rely more on donations and reducing printing costs. Many sent in a bit extra and it is very appreciated. Also, more of you are now receiving the RI electronically and that is helping reduce printing costs.

Our membership stands at 589 members: 124 Full Members, 88 Associate Members, 18 Associate Full Members, 160 Life Members, 185 Associate Life Members, and 14 Public Relations Memberships. We were requested at the Reunion to clarify the type of memberships. Somehow that missed the last RI, so here are the By-Law definitions:

- Full Member (FM) is described in Article 3, Section 1 of the By-Laws as WWII veterans of the 91st BG.
- Associate Member (AM and AFM) is described in Section 2 as those showing a genuine interest. No WWII veterans of the 91st BG are Associate Members. An Associate Member can become a Full Member after 3 years by applying to the Board. There is no distinction between a Veteran Full Member and Associate Full Member, other than it is tracked by the Secretary/Treasurer. 18 of us have become Associate Full Members.
- Life Member (LM and AL) is a Full Member or Associate Member who became a Life Member with payment of \$100 as described in Section 3.
- Surviving Spouse is described in Section 5. A complimentary Associate membership of two years is offered if the veteran was a Full Member (may continue membership by paying yearly dues) or a complimentary Associate Life membership if the veteran was a Life Member.

Regarding the small changes in the By-Laws to reflect the Web Master and Ring Master formally, as they do the PX, which were supported by Mike and Jim, 60 Ballots were returned. Yes: 58 to both, one NO to the Web and one NO to both. I will update the By-Laws with these changes and anyone who wants an electronic copy may contact me.

This week my Dad (90) surprised us with a visit while the girls are home for Spring Break. He moved last year and has been cleaning out scrapbooks and file drawers and has brought much material with him. We are reviewing his experiences through his youth and the war and capturing an oral history. Old photos have given us the opportunity to review our genealogy while he is still alive to share stories about these ancestors we know little about. So, as I did when I was Veep, I encourage you to get with your kids and grandkids and pass on these stories lest they be forgotten. This has been a very rewarding experience.

Hope to see many of you at the Chino Rally Round.

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Please send Folded Wings information to Jody Kelly.

July R/I submissions must be received by June 15th.

91st BG E-mail Ring

b17banta@aol.com

91st on the Web

www.91stbombgroup.com
www.bombsqd323rd.com
www.facebook.com/groups/91stBGMA

Correction: *The Untold Story* in the January 2013 newsletter inaccurately stated S/Sgt. Donald W. Pubentz was the last man of the 91st Bomb Group killed in combat. Pubentz was one of the last men killed in combat as eight crewmen flying on *Skunkface III* were also lost that day.

Wings of Freedom Tour Schedule

See *Nine-O-Nine* at an airport near you! On tour are Collings' P-51, B-17 and B-24. For more information see www.collingsfoundation.org or call (978) 562-9182.

- 4/22 - 4/24 Palm Springs, CA
Palm Springs Intl. Airport
- 4/24 - 4/26 LaVerne, CA
Brackett Field Airport
- 4/26 - 4/28 Burbank, CA
Bob Hope Airport
- 4/29 - 5/1 San Bernardino, CA
San Bernardino Intl. Airport
- 5/1 - 5/3 San Diego, CA
Gillespie Field
- 5/3 - 5/5 Carlsbad, CA
McClellan-Palomar Airport
- 5/6 - 5/8 Ramona, CA
Ramona Airport
- 5/8 - 5/13 Santa Ana, CA
Orange County / John Wayne Airport
- 5/13 - 5/15 Santa Barbara, CA
Santa Barbara Municipal Airport
- 5/15 - 5/17 Monterey, CA
Monterey Peninsula Airport
- 5/17 - 5/25 Mountain View, CA
Moffett Federal Airfield
- 5/26 - 5/28 Livermore, CA
Livermore Municipal Airport
- 5/29 - 5/31 Vacaville, CA (**B-17 not scheduled**)
Nut Tree Airport
- 5/31 - 6/2 Sacramento, CA
McClellan Air Park
- 6/3 - 6/5 Reno, NV
Stead Field
- 6/5 - 6/7 Santa Rosa, CA
Sonoma County Airport
- 6/7 - 6/9 Concord, CA
Buchanan Field
- 6/14 - 6/16 Everett, WA
Snohomish County Airport
- 6/21 - 6/23 Seattle, WA
Boeing Field
- 7/5 - 7/7 Fort Collins, CO
Ft. Collins-Loveland Municipal
- 7/18 - 7/21 Minneapolis, MN
Anoka County-Blaine Airport



Justin Suan, grandson of 91st veteran Lt John Moeller, poses with C-5A *Memphis Belle X*. Justin was recently stationed in Japan and talking to others in his new squadron about his grandfather and the *Memphis Belle*. He received a call from an inbound C-5 and rushed to marshal the plane. Justin thought he was daydreaming when he saw the nose art!

8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion

The 39th Annual 8th Air Force Reunion will be held July 22 through 26 at the historic Marriott Savannah Riverfront Hotel in Savannah, GA. Information is available in the March issue of the 8th AF News, on the web: www.8thafhs.org or contact Armed Forces Reunions at (757)625-6401.

91st Yearbook Project Update



Nelvin Coupe

George Parks

Donald Almon

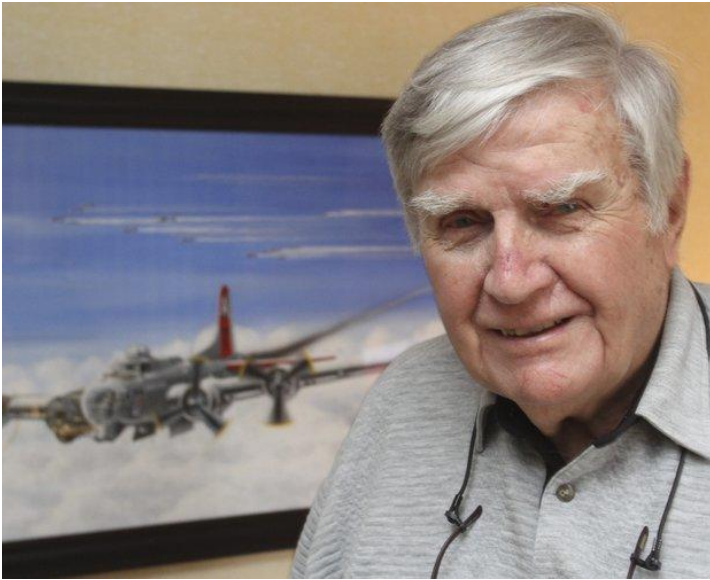
We received several contributions for the 91st Yearbook in January, but we are still far short of the photos needed for the project. If you or a loved one served with the Group, and we have not heard from you, please consider contributing to this valuable and important project.

For additional information, or to submit photographs and information, please contact Historian Janet Larocco by email: fauno-aventi@usa.net.

For love of country and *Stinky*

By William K Alcorn

Original article published on November 11, 2011 in The Vindicator, Youngstown, OH. Used with permission.



After getting his crew out, Donald Freer let go of the controls of his burning B-17 bomber and dived through the front hatch to escape — but his parachute caught and left him dangling.

He dragged himself back into the plane, hard-hit by anti-aircraft fire during a bombing run over Berlin, put his hands across the top of the parachute to hold the corners down and rolled out, this time successfully.

The aircraft, with three of its four engines dead, plunged to earth and exploded. Its bomb bay had been loaded with 1,000-pound bombs.

Freer, a first lieutenant with the 322nd Squadron, 91st Bomber Group of the Army Air Corps' 8th Air Force, based at Bassingbourn, England, during World War II, crashed through branches in a forest of tall pine trees, dislocating his knees when he landed on the ground. He popped his knees back into place and began to hobble away but was captured by German civilians, who he said became belligerent, causing him to fear they might kill him.

A local law-enforcement officer rescued Freer from the civilians and took him to his home where he had his last good meal for quite a while.

He was turned over to German military authorities who, after interrogation, imprisoned him at Stalag Luft I at Barth on the Baltic Sea.

Freer was a prisoner of war for about six months before Russian troops captured Stalag Luft I on April 28, 1945,

and he remained with the Russians until May 15, a week after Victory in Europe Day. He and other airmen POWs were flown to France and then to London via their own B-17s.

He had entered the prison camp a healthy 180 pounds and left weighing 140 pounds and suffering from anemic dysentery.

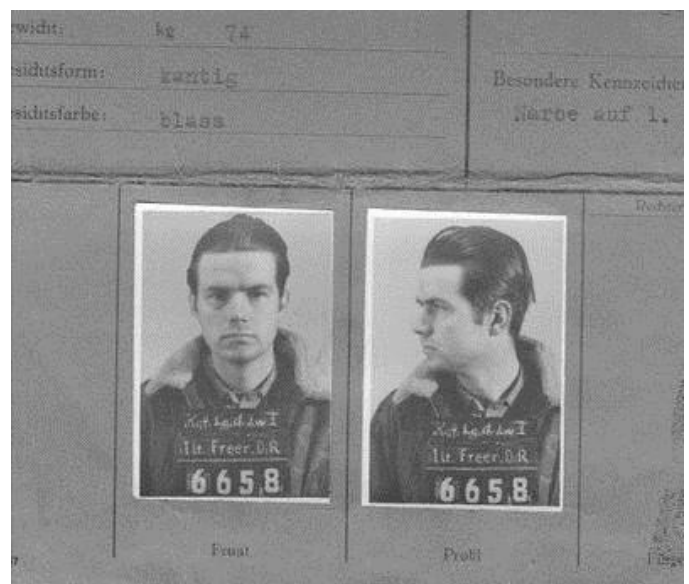
Ironically the “nose art” on Freer’s B-17 was *Easy Does It*.

Nose art is the name for images painted on the fronts or noses of American aircraft during WWII.

Freer, 90, who enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942 and went on active duty in January 1943, is among several World War II aircraft pilots and crew members featured in a documentary DVD about the sometimes humorous, most often racy pictures of women painted on American aircraft based in England during World War II.

The film, “Nose Art and Pin-Ups,” was released this year, the 70th anniversary of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) joining the Allied bombing offensives against Germany.

Freer said the most famous nose art was *Memphis Belle*, the name given the B-17F Flying Fortress that was the first Army Air Forces heavy bomber to complete 25 missions over Europe.



Don's mug shots taken before internment at Stalag Luft I

The pilot named the plane after his girlfriend from Memphis, Tenn., and the artwork was a painting of a picture of an attractive, scantily clad woman originally published in Esquire magazine.

The film was made by former British Broadcasting Corp. producer Gail Downey, from Whirlwind Productions, who interviewed Freer at his Howland Home.

Freer piloted 11 bombers during the war, two with nose art titled *Stinky* and *Easy Does It*.

In "Nose Art and Pin-Ups," Freer talks about how *Stinky* came to be his B-17's name. [DVD expected to be available from the 91st PX soon.]

He said he wanted to name it "Little Stinker," after a Disney character, because it fit the plane's radio call sign, LG S, but the crew vetoed that name in favor of *Stinky*.

"There were no military regulations about nose art. I think the powers that were didn't object because they thought the planes wouldn't last that long anyway," Freer said.

Based on interviews for her documentary, Downey explained the popularity of nose art.

"These were young men, thousands of miles from home, who faced death every day. They told me the artwork personalized their aircraft and gave them something to 'pat' before and after every mission. It was also much easier to talk about "*Our Gal Sal*" or "*Turnip Termite*" than plane No. 123. People remember names, not numbers."

Freer, the youngest of the 10 children of Floyd and Julia Freer, comes from a military family. Two of his brothers served during World War I, one in the Army and one in the Marine Corps, and another brother served with the Army's 82nd Airborne Division in WWII. Freer's grandfather was a Union soldier during the Civil War. After his discharge from active duty in 1945, Freer remained in the reserve.

Freer, a 1941 graduate of Warren G. Harding High School and a 1950 industrial engineering graduate of Ohio State University, went back to Packard Electric in Warren after being discharged from the military. He had worked there as a draftsman before the war.

He said he liked Packard but soon longed for something more exciting and went to North American Aviation, the major aerospace company at the time, working in Alabama and California. He eventually was involved in field- and flight-testing rocket engines up to and including those for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Apollo program.

At one point, he said his aerospace career got a little too exciting.



The plane was nearly named "Little Stinker", but a vote by the crew named B-17G 44-6308 *Stinky*.

In 1962 Freer was working in California in the thick of the developing space age and knew how serious the Cuban Missile Crisis was. He was so concerned he got survival gear for his wife, Mary and their infant daughter, and sent them across the mountains away from the coast.

"It was one of the worst times. I know how close we came to nuclear war. That was more scary than flying in WWII," Freer said.

Today, Freer enjoys his family, son Thomas in Chicago, who studied graphic arts at Youngstown State University and is the family historian; his daughter, Susan Boye, a Liberty Local Schools music teacher; and grandchildren, Kristen Boye, in the ROTC program at Kent State University, and Kayla Boye, a senior at Youngstown State University.

He is a member of the 8th Air Force Association, attending occasional reunions, and the Mahoning Valley Chapter of the American Ex-POW Association.

And, he remains interested in his hobby, electronics.

"The family joke is, don't get him a gift if it doesn't have a wire in it," his wife, Mary, said.

91st BGMA Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday, March 16, 2013
Conference Call at 9:00 AM PST

Board Members Attending:

Mick Hanou, President
Jody Kelly, 1st Vice President
Tom Freer, 2nd Vice President
Janet Larocco, Historian
Gary Hall, Editor

Financial Report (Jody)

- 589 total members: LM 160, FM 124, AL 185, AM 88, AFM 18, PR 14. 284 Original 91st BG veterans and 291 Associates.
- Article VIII Finances: In the last Board meeting we agreed not to raise dues and instead asked for voluntary donations. As a result, Donations are increasing with the dues receipts and more people are requesting the newsletter by email.
- The Board has agreed to send a gift of \$3,000 to Tower Museum Bassingbourn.

By-Laws Amendment (Jody)

- Section 2.) e.) New section proposed: establish, appoint, or replace any Full or Associate Member as Webmaster.
 - 60 ballots returned.
 - Votes: 59 For, 1 Against
 - Amendment Passed
- Section 2.) f.) New section proposed: establish, appoint, or replace any Full or Associate Member as Ringmaster.
 - 60 ballots returned.
 - Votes: 58 For, 2 Against
 - Amendment Passed

- Mick will update the By-Laws to reflect the change and make this available to Board Members.

Newsletter Report (Gary)

The January RI cost a total of \$600 to print and mail. The cost has trended down over the past five years due to attrition, favorable printing costs, and the use of email.

Historian Report (Janet)

- Janet has John Howland's casualty list and is working to load it to an Access database.
- Reviewing Haavelar's book *The Ragged Irregulars of Bassingbourn* and constructing an index for it.
- Yearbook – Receive a flurry of interest and activity after each newsletter and then it drops off.
- POW database “published” on-line. No new discrepancies to fix and is almost done with the MACRs.
- Jody – Bud Evers had a book to where people were buried – can Janet get a copy of this? Ask in the RI “Does anyone have this book?”

PX Report (Mick)

- Position unfilled – Tom Freer will take on the duties of taking orders and Mick will coordinate on shipments.

Open Discussion

- Is our 91st BG insignia copyrighted? Is it a Military signature that can't be copyrighted?
- Contacts with overseas people such as Ivo de Jong, Mick to ask Jim what he used to do.
- Chino display cases. Jim is retired and can pursue this. Mick will send the information on his gift-matching donations to Jim and also the photos of Frank LaBlottier material.
- 2014 reunion likely in San Francisco over Memorial Day 2014.

First quarter donations total \$4,220! Thank you to these members and friends.

J Addison Bartush
Sune Engelbrektson
Mrs Gloria Summers
Laverne E Woods
Virginia McGavern
George Fredrickson
Jean Yavis Jones
Myron Cohen
Charles F Egender
Paul J Limm
Craig T Murray
James Norris
Robert G Stevens
Leslie S Thompson
Roy E Forsbacka
Lu Ann Allen
Warren W Schulthies
Sherwood A Wagner
Sharon H White

Kay Duzynski
Michael McCabe
John Zajac Jr
Otto J Eggert
Olyn T Guice III
Rick Tierney
C P Chima
Frank Drake
Donald R Freer
John Janse
Rolf H Pieper
Drew Rayman
Richard Senffner
Barbara Tilly
Robert T Dean
Edward J Fitzpatrick
Thomas J Gill
Madelaine Kurylo
George A Parrish

Richard O Pridemore
Ralph D Simin
Mrs Patricia Williams
Phyllis Bibbo
Basil F Hackleman
Eugene H Sell
Kevin Bannon
Armand Battista
Susan Boye
Edward E Causey
Glen Crumbless
Edward W Damro
Edward J Dobrinski
James J Hoffman
Glen L Kessler
Dorothea E Lasch
Phillip F Lunt
Susan McDonald
Martin McElroy

John H Morris
Howard D Stebelton
Joanne G Thompson
Aurora Viarengo
Sebastiaan Vonk
Mrs Paul L Zimmerman
Dominic Zurella

In Memory Of

James Fletcher 401st
Marnie Fletcher-Hermes
William E. Roller 322nd
Carol Dalh
Harold H. Humm 322nd
Allen Dale Maginnes
Sidney O. Barnsley 322nd
Anne And Lisa Goetze
Barbara Tilly

Folded Wings (continued from page 8)❖ **Alexander "Alex" Thomas 323rd Age 93**

Manchester, MO, April 11, 2012

Reported by his son Terry



Alex had been the pilot of *Sweet 17, Spirit of St. Louis* in the spring of 1944. He was a First Lieutenant and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with One Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. He had been a Group Lead Pilot on a number of his

missions over Europe.

Alex is survived by his beloved wife of 69 years Marcella; sons Robert, Terry (Michele); and daughter Patricia (Scott Atthowe) Thomas; four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

❖ **Otis W "Red" Farwell 323rd Age 89**

Plattsburg, MO, October 2, 2012

Reported by his wife Rachel

Red, like most of the young men, volunteered after Pearl Harbor to serve his country. Staff Sergeant Farwell was a tail gunner and proud to be a member of the *Sheriff's Posse* crew. Red flew 33 combat missions over Europe and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his bravery. His missions included two over the Schweinfurt ball bearing plant and one over Germany on D-Day.

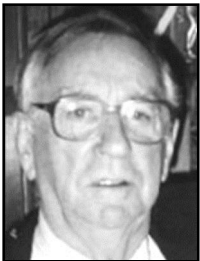
Upon his return to the States, he graduated from the University of Missouri, where he met his wife.

He is survived by his wife of 66 years Rachel; five children Rachel Pogois, Howard, Beth, Raymond and Ellen; twelve grandchildren; and fourteen great-grandchildren.

❖ **Robert J Cayer 323rd Age 92**

East Providence, RI, January 4, 2013

Reported by his daughter Maggie Quillin



Robert was part of the 91st Bomb Group ground crew, having worked on the electronics team.

He was the husband of the late Mary (Grant) Cayer and the late Norma (Beeby) Cayer.

He is survived by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

❖ **Charles E Walker Jr 401st Age 89**

Williamsville, NY, March 12, 2013

Reported by his son John

Charles enlisted in the Army Air Forces in 1942. He flew 35 missions over Europe and was on the crew of the "Ghost Plane" which landed near Liege, Belgium after the crew had bailed out of the damaged bomber. Charles earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal along with other military awards. He later attended the 50th anniversary of the 8th Air Force in England in 1992 with other members of the 91st Bomb Group.

Mr. Walker married Mary Magdalene Rott of Buffalo in 1952.

Charles is survived by his wife Mary; three sons, Charles E. III, John L. and Philip J.; and a daughter, MaryBeth Hoffarth.

❖ **Gerold H Tucker 322nd Age 93**

Lolo, MT, January 17, 2013

Reported by his son Gary



Gerold entered the 91st bomb group 322nd squadron of the U.S. Air Corps. He was assigned to a B-17 bomber as a waist gunner and radio operator. In August of 1943 his plane was shot down over Belgium while returning from a bomb raid. After being severely injured he was able to hide in the Belgium underground for a

few months before being double-crossed and turned over to the Germans.

He became a POW at Stalag 17 until September of 1944. He returned to the States as part of a prisoner of war exchange and spent a year in Walla Walla, WA at a military rehab center. He received two Purple Hearts and a Silver Star for his war effort that he was very proud of but spoke very little about.

In 1993, 50 years after being in World War II, he was able to return to Belgium with his son to visit the families that cared and protected him after his B-17 was shot down. It was a very memorable and emotional trip.

He is survived by his wife, Jean; son Gary (Becky); daughter Jodie (John) Mackey; and five grandchildren.

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:

✪ Harold "Hal" E Johnson 401st Age 93

Aberdeen, WA, March 17, 2013



Reported by his daughter Carol Kegel Hal joined the California National Guard 184th Infantry Division in 1938 achieving the rank of transportation Sergeant. In 1943 he transferred to the US Army Air Corps, was promoted to Second Lieutenant and received his pilot's wings. In 1944 he flew *Little Patches*

on 35 missions over Germany with many a close call.

After the war he met the love of his life, Phyllis Everhardt, and they were married August 23, 1947.

He continued his military duties in the US Air Force Reserve over 40 years until retiring in 1979 with the rank of Lt. Colonel. He was a past president of the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association.

He is survived by his wife, Phyllis, and daughters, Carol (Bob) Kegel and Patty (Jon) Gorski; and eight grandchildren.

✪ Lamond J "Buck" Bailey 322nd Age 90

Pocatello, ID, January 29, 2013



Reported by his nephew Kenny Demick Buck enlisted in the Army Air Force the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked. He graduated from the Air Force Armament School at Lowery Field in Denver, Colorado. Later he received a Navigator rating and was assigned to B-26 Martin Bombers as a Bombardier-Navigator.

Buck and his crew arrived in England in 1943 and volunteered to fly on B-17s. Completing 30 missions, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, and ETO Ribbon with Star. June 1944 he returned to the United States and entered pilot training in California. He was honorably discharged from the Army Air Force, July 1945.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife Lillian. Buck is survived by his stepsons, Grover (Renae) Noble, George (Delaine) Peterson and stepdaughter Linda (Don) Franklin.