

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 47 No. 1

91st Bombardment Group (H)

January 2014

Go West Young Man to California

Such was the theme 165 years ago when the 49'ers went searching for gold. San Francisco became the gateway to California with its wonderful harbor which still attracts a million visitors a year. During WWII the Golden Gate saw numerous ships departing for the Pacific Theater. This will be your opportunity to see some of the key sights of the area, reunite with old friends, and be steeped in some WWII history.



The 91st BGMA 2014 Reunion is being held during Memorial Day Weekend in hopes we can get more NexGen or even grandkids attending. This is when the Collings Foundation's B-17 *Nine-O-Nine* is visiting the area so you'll have an opportunity to see a flying B-17 and B-24, and perhaps even take the family on a flight. The itinerary is a balance between WWII-focused activities and scenic tours, as it has been at past reunions. Thank you to all who returned the survey last year; it looks to be a very well-

attended event. This has allowed us to plan the itinerary and to get a cost estimate for the events. Feedback on the survey from many of you was to not make it a too full or hectic day and have to a balanced itinerary.



Thursday we will visit the famous Muir Woods, a grove of towering coastal redwood trees. These are the tallest trees in the world and a must-see. On the drive, enjoy vistas of the city and cross the Golden Gate Bridge.

The buses will return to San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf. Because of the variety of activities in that area, you will have the opportunity to spend the afternoon at your own enjoyment. Many visitors take a ferry to visit Alcatraz. For WWII enthusiasts there is the liberty ship Jeremiah O'Brien and submarine Pampanito. The Maritime Museum has ships from all ages. There is also Ghirardelli Square, the Wharf and many fine places for lunch. The more-adventurous could

take a cable car ride. The day ends with a bus tour of other sites in the city.

That evening is not a normal evening at the Hospitality Suite. We will gather for dinner and a special presentation by Jake Howland on the D-Day landings in Normandy and the 91st Bomb Group's role.



Friday is a unique opportunity to see a functioning B-17, B-24, and P-51. *Nine-O-Nine* will be at Moffett Field and available for tours through the airplane. You can also tour a fully-restored B-24 and I am sure the veterans will participate in discussions of the merits of the aircraft with you. There will be opportunity to fly on the B-17 so if that has been on your "bucket list", now is the time!

The day includes a drive through Stanford to see the famous Rodin Sculpture Garden, a visit to the

Moffett Field Museum, and NASA's Ames Research visitor center. To keep this a non-stressful day, the buses will return to the hotel by 3:00 for an opportunity to rest for the cruise or share time in the Hospitality Suite.



Feedback and numerous discussions with people who returned the survey indicate a split on desired Friday night activity, even within families. Many vets and the Board will be staying at the Hospitality Suite that evening renewing acquaintances and for us 60 and younger - learning more about history from the veterans.

However, the dinner cruises have proven popular in the past few reunions and a 60/40% interest was shown in the survey. The cruise is being offered, but will operate only if there is enough interest. On the Hornblower cruise of San Francisco Bay, you will enjoy views of the city, the Golden Gate Bridge, and dinner.



Saturday is the traditional day for the Business Meeting. All registered attendees are welcomed to attend though only full members can vote. The afternoon 1/2 day trip will be to the USS Hornet. Though not the same Hornet of Doolittle Fame, CV12 participated in two of the greatest events of the 20th century - World War II and the Apollo 11 manned space mission. It is a National Historic Landmark and has

a fine museum. If you have time, there is also a good museum nearby of the Alameda Naval Air Station.

The evening banquet will be the climax of the Reunion.

As mentioned, the Reunion is a balance of military venues and sights-to-see. For those who wish more WWII, *Nine-O-Nine* will be flying to Livermore Sunday at 11:00 AM. The initial survey response was not sufficient to arrange a bus as many folks wanted to go to Carmel or are returning home. But we will have a few vans available and will be arranging transport between ourselves.

The survey indicated there are those who enjoy discovering new sights. A Sunday trip to Monterey / Carmel has been arranged. Buses will tour Monterey Bay, Cannery Row, and take a 17 mile drive to Carmel. See the "Lone Cypress" and Pebble Beach. In Carmel you have the opportunity to stroll amongst exclusive shops and art galleries, see the beach, or visit one of California's famous missions, built in 1771.



Lastly, Memorial Day is the annual visit of the Collings Foundation to Livermore. This event has been held every Memorial Day for 23 years and has attracted numerous other WWII aircraft including T-6, Cub, P-40, and more P-51s. There will be historical re-enactors, period singers, and we have a BBQ at day's end that is famous. Transport will be arranged separately.

- Mick

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Please send *Folded Wings* information to Jody Kelly.

April R/I submissions must be received by **March 15th**.

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www.facebook.com/groups/91stBGMA

President's Corner**Mick Hanou**

The reunion is coming together and I want to thank all of you who returned the survey as that helped a lot. We have worked hard to have a balance between sites to see and WWII focus and to keep it from getting too hectic or stressful. Enclosed in this RI is a blue registration form. The KEY action for you is to make reservations at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and be sure to mention the 91st Bomb Group Reunion to receive our reduced rate. The second KEY action is to return the registration form as soon as possible so we can contract the buses, purchase museum tickets, and finalize banquet meals. Both need to be done so we can finalize contracts for the buses.

The third KEY action is to return your dues and donations with the registration form. January is when our association receives its annual dues, which are fundamental to keeping it viable. Last year we decided not to raise dues, but rely on donations and reduce newsletter printing costs. Both proved successful. The dues are being held at \$10 per year, a very good value considering the quality of the newsletter. Donations have been generous, so please return the yellow dues insert with the registration to Jody.

While elections are usually every two years at the September Reunions, the By-Laws state they have to be done in association with the bi-annual reunion. So, short stint for us this time. Your Board is interested in continuing to serve you. If you have any other nominations for office, you can submit them to the nominations committee as described in the next column.

Bassingbourn Barracks has confirmed that no change will be coming to the Tower Museum and the Barracks are not closing. They continue to maintain the Tower effectively and are actively working to raise funds to repair this 80+ year old building to health and safety standards. Note that this is the 40th Anniversary of the Tower Museum opening. They have also brought to our attention that an unofficial website called Station 121 may be replicating material from our websites and trying to obtain archival material from veterans. The only official websites are: the 91st Bomb Group website www.91stbombgroup.com; and the Tower Museum website www.towermuseumbassingbourn.co.uk. Please do not engage a non-sanctioned website.

Speaking of which, Jim and his son continue to maintain our website and our thanks go to them for that effort. 91st BGMA costs for the website are manageable and we believe it has strong value. Mike Banta's Ring efforts also continue strongly and the Ring fields many of the questions posted on the 91st BGMA website. Both are of great value to our organization and in keeping the history of your organization to the forefront. Jim has also been working on the establishment of the display cases at Chino.

It is my pleasure to be associated with this organization and all you fine veteran and other members. PS: my Dad is now 91 and my thanks again to your efforts in liberating him from labor in occupied Germany. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Reunion.

**2014 ANNUAL DUES
ANNOUNCEMENT**

The 2014 Annual Dues for all 91st BGMA members are due to be paid March 2014.

In order to remain current with your membership and continue to receive the *Ragged Irregular*, please mail your 2014 dues to Jody Kelly as soon as possible.

See yellow insert for more information.

**Full Members Are Vital For Victory**

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, OF THREE OR MORE YEARS, CAN BECOME FULL MEMBERS AND SERVE ON THE NINETY FIRST BGMA BOARD.

APPLY BY CONTACTING ANY 91ST BOARD MEMBER

2014 Officer Nominations

The 91st BGMA has six officers: President, 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents, Secretary-Treasurer, Historian, and newsletter Editor. If you are a full member or would like to nominate a full member who is willing to serve, we need your information by March 22nd. We are in need of candidates for the Secretary-Treasurer position.

Please send your name or your nominee's name, brief resume, and desired office to: Larry Ruth, 2316 Smith Hill Rd, Walworth, NY 14568.

The ballots will be included in the April issue of the *Ragged Irregular*.

The 91ster Who Was Shot Down Twice

By Mike Banta

German fighter pilots compiled an amazing number of victories because when they were shot down and not seriously injured they would be up in their fighters the next day. If injured they would be up as soon as they were placed back on flying status.

Eighth Air Force airmen who were shot down over enemy territory became Prisoners of War and as such they didn't fly again. If they evaded capture and returned to duty, they never flew again in the European Theater of operation to protect those who helped them evade. However there were still a few instances where they were shot down and did return to duty assigned to a combat crew.

This writing is about an American airman, Rollin P. Ball, who was shot down and returned to duty to be shot down again.

The *Excalibur* crew, Rollin P. Ball, and the Hamm mission.



Navigator Rollin Ball

Lt. Alan Brill and his crew, which included navigator Rollin P. Ball, was assigned B-17 41-24464 which had been transferred from the 306th Bomb Squadron to the

91st Bomb Group's 324th Bomb Squadron. Lt. Brill and crew named their newly assigned B-17 *Excalibur* and took it on its first 91st Bomb Group mission of 26 February to Wilhelmshaven. Nine days later they took *Excalibur* on the mission to bomb the marshalling yards in Hamm, Germany, which was in the heavily industrialized Ruhr Valley.

This was to be the Eighth Air Force's first attack on this heavily defended industrial section of Germany. The 91st Bomb Group found itself to be in a unique and extremely dangerous position. This is because the entire Eighth Air Force except the 91st Bomb Group had abandoned the primary target due to weather conditions and attacked other targets or returned to their bases.

Major Paul Fishburn, the officer in command of the 91st Bomb Group formation, had not heard the radio transmission recalling the Groups and found his way through the weather front. Now the Group, with its sixteen Fortresses, found itself fighting off the entire German Luftwaffe. The bomb strike on the Hamm marshalling yards was extremely effective. The Group's battle with the German fighters and an intense flak barrage was exemplary with losses less than one would assume under the conditions. All the Fortresses received heavy damage and casualties were taken, but only four 91st Bomb Group B-17's were Missing In Action that day.

The Group was awarded the coveted Presidential (Distinguished) Unit Citation for this mission, the first of two awarded to the 91st during the war.

All the previous was prologue. Now, The story of Rollin P. Ball. Shot down twice.

This article, which appeared in newspapers shortly after the event, tells Rollin's part in the event with quotations from those involved. It's an incredibly well written account.

Seven Fortress Crewmen Saved After Craft Falls Into Water

By EDWARD D. BALL

A U. S ARMY BOMBER STATION SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND.

March 7. (AP) -

Seven crewmen on a crippled Flying Fortress which was forced down in the North Sea after Thursday's raid on Hamm, Germany were picked up by a minesweeper after battling frigid, 40-foot waves for eight hours.

The group, now back at this base, said the entire crew got out of the bomber after it crashed into the water but that three of

their comrades drowned. The Fortress struck the water with such force it broke in two at the middle and sank in five seconds.

Those rescued were First Lieut. Robert F. Brubaker of Clearwater, the bombardier; Second Lieut. Rollin P. Ball of Easton, Md., the navigator; Tech. Sgt. Edwin L. Barber of Memphis, Tenn, the tail gunner; Tech. Sgt. Leroy M. Wolfington of Claremore, Okla., the right waist-gunner; Tech. Sgt. William C. Dickson of Selma, Ark., the top turret gunner; Staff Sgt. Donald C. Wells of Lincoln, Neb., the radioman; and Staff Sgt. James M. Bechtel (home town unlisted), the left waist-gunner.



The officers of *Excalibur*. Rollin Ball on the right.

"We kept our heads," said a spokesman for the group, "and I got out like a flash."

Although two of the seven were injured, they managed to pull themselves aboard small rubber life-rafts and survived the bitter cold of the mountainous seas.

The men said the Fortress sank so quickly they were unable to remove the planes two life-rafts and emergency radio, but fortunately these vital pieces of equipment floated to the surface soon after the plane went down.

Still wearing their heavy flying gear, the men thrashed about for half an hour before the rafts were inflated and by then they were so numbed and exhausted they barely managed to pull themselves onto the rafts.

The rafts were lashed together to prevent upsetting. Then a box-kite was sent up with an aerial for transmitting distress signals.

The crash occurred shortly before noon. Twice during the afternoon, planes were sighted some distance away but failed to see their flare.

Then they began paddling "towards England."

"I was the sickest I have ever been in my life," said Dickson, who had swallowed a lot of sea water. About 6 p. m. a Royal Air Force I patrol plane sighted them. The RAF crew dropped food and water then wheeled away to guide the minesweeper to the rescue. It was dark when the ship came up and the men used flares to give their position.

"They sure had good soup on that ship," said Dickson. "We wise-cracked while bobbing about on those rafts," Ball said. "No one talked about our predicament. The ways the boys talked you'd think we did this every day. The injured men were in pain, but they never complained."

The Fortress hit the water when three engines quit on the way home after a 77 minute battle with swarms of Nazi fighters over Hamm.

Rollin Ball returns to Duty

As each of the surviving Brill crew members recovered, they were Returned To Duty. Since Rollin's first pilot, Lt. Alan Brill, had been Killed In Action, Rollin was assigned to the crew of Lt. Phillip Fischer. Lt Fischer's assigned B-17 was *Marie Jane* and it had been assigned to him in the States before the Group embarked for England. He had flown the first mission of the 91st Bomb Group when it first arrived in England. His tenth mission was the mission of 21 May, 1943, to bomb the U-boat pens at Wilhelmshaven. Fischer was flying his assigned B-17 and Rollin was flying as his navigator.



The Fischer crew. Rollin Ball, bottom row, right.

Wilhelmshaven was on the coast of Germany and at the base of the Danish Peninsula. To reach the target from the 91st Bomb Group base in England, the group would fly mainly over the North Sea on a North East flight path with a minimum of flying over Germany.

As the *Marie Jane* reached the target, the crew could see enemy aircraft in the area but standing off to the

side. When they reached the Initial Point of the bomb run, the enemy fighters attacked head on, with six to eight enemy fighters lined abreast. The enemy sent up no flak, but instead intended to scatter the Group with its fighters before bombs away. Rollin was again in a vicious air battle. Two 324th B-17's and one 323rd B-17 were shot down on the bomb run and crashed into Germany. In spite of severe battle damage, Rollin and the crew of *Marie Jane* started across the English Channel to try to reach England.

Rollin had been here before and survived a ditching. What thoughts must have raced through his mind as he tempted King Neptune and the North Sea for a second

time? What stories would later be told? Did they survive a good ditching and deploy their life rafts? If they deployed the rafts did they wise crack and avoid talking about the situation in which they found themselves? What happened will never be known for this time Neptune and the North Sea exacted their toll.

Rollin Ball was a true American Hero. After escaping the wrath of the North Sea, he again climbed aboard a B-17 to help take out Hitler's means of making war by destroying his factories, submarines and infrastructure. This time the North Sea won and Rollin forfeited the rest of his life to keep our world free for each one of us.

Red Wing man gets rave reviews in honoring father, a WWII vet By Brett Boese

Originally published November 11, 2013 in the Post-Bulletin, Rochester, MN. Used with permission.

RED WING, MN – Twenty-four years ago, Lake City native Michael Duncan sat at his ailing father's side to hear firsthand details of World War II for the first time. After six months of teary tales, his father's 60-page, war-time diary was finally shared on Nov. 16, 1989 - the day Merrel Duncan died.



Mike Duncan talks Tuesday in Red Wing about a commemorative WWII 91st bomber group print that he sells along with a copy of his father's flight mission diary. "I couldn't believe the man I honored and loved went through this," Duncan said.

The stunning account vividly recalls the horrors of flying 30 missions inside a B-17 bomber. His squadron suffered 82 percent casualties and lost 41 of 48 planes in the first seven months of combat over Europe.

Seventy years after the diary was written, Michael Duncan has created a stir throughout the military community by offering a copy of that highly personal document to anyone who purchases the limited-edition commemorative print of World War II bombers created by Bryan Moon, a noted MIA hunter from Cannon Falls.

"The night I first read the diary was the night he died," said Michael Duncan, a 65-year-old Vietnam veteran who now lives in Red Wing. "That was when I knew I had one last mission to do."

The companion pieces, titled "The Last Mission," have been gobbled up by VFW and American Legion posts around the country; 100 of the 750 have been sold in the last few weeks, Duncan said. The Zumbrota VFW and the Rosemount American Legion, where Duncan spoke last week, are among those where framed prints will be prominently displayed in a public setting.

The son's emotional presentation of private details often brings tears to the eyes of hardened vets, many of whom are reticent to share their own combat experiences. Veterans Day has only heightened the interest.

"I think Mike deserves a lot of accolades because of the devotion he put into this," said Rosemount American Legion past commander Robert Racette, whose father took part in the Invasion of Normandy. "He's put together a real nice piece of American history."

Discussing the diary

Duncan's presentation can last up to an hour and requires no speaking fee. However, the five displays that travel with him reflect decades spent filling in the holes of missing military history.

Sparked by the diary, Duncan's initial inquiries to various military experts about his father's bomber squadron came back empty. No photos were believed to exist of the planes or crew, he was told by numerous historical societies.

Undaunted, his quest continued for years before disappointment finally gave way to disbelief when men who flew with Merrel Duncan began sending their personal artifacts to a comrade's son who was attempting to honor their memory. The photos include pictures of the B-17 bomber crew on "Tennessee Tess," a rare aerial photo depicting battle with the Nazi's Luftwaffe and a hand-signed note from General Dwight D. Eisenhower, among other things.

Duncan says he's been offered five figures to purchase Eisenhower's letter - signed on June 7, 1944, the day after the Supreme Allied Commander launched the D-Day offensive - and "a lot" to purchase his father's yellowed diary. However, he has no intention of selling something that has "immeasurable" personal value.

"Not too many times have people come in and actually spoken of their own experiences," said Zumbrotta VFW commander Frank Aunan. "(Michael) did such a great job and he had such great information that you almost thought you were talking to his father."

Spreading the word

Merrel Duncan flew with the Eighth Air Force, 91st Bomb Group, 401st Squadron, which was based in Cambridgeshire, England. He took part in the first daytime bombing of Berlin, and other raids of important strategic targets throughout Europe; the journal details all 30 missions and the son travels with a large map marking each destination.

The radio operator, who celebrated his 28th birthday while on duty, became known as "the old man" in a bombing group that suffered heavy casualties. However, he still volunteered for five additional missions after reaching 25, which was considered a full tour of duty during WWII.

Michael Duncan has recently been in contact with Randy Tesdahl of the Minnesota American Legion in hopes of gaining additional exposure for his father. Tesdahl, the American Legion adjutant, says the story has been added to a stack that will eventually be featured in Legionnaire, Minnesota's American Legion magazine.

"When we put (these stories) in the Legionnaire, that's only heard by the veterans," Tesdahl said. "They need to be told other than just to veterans. The whole community needs to know about these things. There are so many Minnesotans who have incredible stories just like his."

As the 24th anniversary of his father's death nears, Duncan says his goal remains unchanged: Ensure the public never forgets the sacrifices of his father and other veterans.

"What I'm doing is basically a son loving his dad," Michael Duncan said. "I'm so honored and humbled to do this for the Greatest Generation. It changes your whole life. I just hope what I've done is enough."



Back Row: SSgt Merrel L. Duncan, SSgt Hugo A. Miller, SSgt Lester F. Ulmor, SSgt William S. Beavers, Ssgt John E. Gawley; Front Row: 1Lt Robert R. "Goldie" Goldsmith, 1Lt Julius D. Cobb, 1Lt Hugh W. Brooks, 1Lt Charles H. "Chuck" Davis

Mike Duncan flips through his father's mission diary from bombing raids in the 91st bombers group in WWII on Tuesday in Red Wing.





91st Veteran Jack Proctor with *Nine-O-Nine* in St. Paul, MN

Wings of Freedom Tour Dates

2/28 – 3/2	Pensacola, FL Pensacola International Airport
3/3 – 3/5	Gulf Shores, AL Jack Edwards Airport
3/12 – 3/14	Houston, TX Ellington Field
3/17 – 3/19	McKinney, TX Collin County Regional Airport
3/19 - 3/23	Dallas, TX Dallas Love Field
3/26 – 3/28	San Marcos, TX San Marcos Municipal Airport
4/4 – 4/6	Marana, AZ Marana Regional Airport
5/7 - 5/12	Santa Ana, CA Orange County / John Wayne
5/16 - 5/24	Mountain View, CA Moffett Federal Airfield
5/25 - 5/27	Livermore, CA Livermore Municipal Airport

Donations reach \$3,930 for end of 2013

US Bank	\$3,100
Match for donations by Gary Hall and Richard Wilson	
Mrs. Hilde Keneley	\$500
In memory of Frank Keneley	
Richard Wilson	\$100
In honor and memory of his father Paul D Wilson Jr. 13th Air Force	
Edmund W McGee	\$75
In memory of Col. Fewer McGee	
Patrick Milward	\$50
Donald R Freer	\$35
George Burnette	\$30
James Sikich	\$20
Alfred J Lanfear	\$10
Lura Martin	\$10

91st Bomb Group Yearbook Update

Janet continues to work on the 91st Bomb Group Yearbook. At this time, 170 portraits have been received and compiled into the five portrait pages. One of those pages is sampled on the right. While this is a good start, we have many more portraits to gather!

Among the many obvious benefits to a 91st BG Yearbook:

- 1) Such a collection would provide a database for researchers, now and in the future, and help to preserve and expand the record of the 91st.
- 2) Those who adopt the graves of our fallen comrades could search for photographs of the man whose memory they honor.
- 3) It might be possible to identify more of the men in our photograph collections.

To contribute your portrait:

If you are willing to add a portrait to the 'Yearbook' database, contact historian Janet Larocco by email: fauno-aventi@usa.net, or any member of the 91st BG Board. If you cannot scan and send the portrait in electronic format (jpeg or similar), your hard-copy picture can be scanned and returned to you. Portrait donations would also be welcome at the 91st BG Reunion in May.

Please note: The photos remain the property of the donors, and will be used on the site with their gracious permission.



ABBOTT
George A



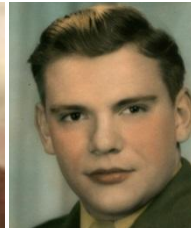
AH-TYE
Edward



ALTON
Donald



ANDERSON
Andrew W. Jr



ANNIS
Frank



ARNETT
Edwin L



BACHO
Theodore J



BAILEY
Lamond J



BAIRD
Vernon H



BALSEY
Robert S



BARNSELY
Sidney O



BAUMAN



BERRY



BOGGAN
Wade H



BOOMER
John L



BOOTH



BORELLIS
William



BRUSH



BUNTE
Ernest L



BURCH
Richard W



BURTON
Arnold L



CAMERON
Walter Reed



CAMERON
William D



CAMPBELL
William F



CAPPARELL
Thomas J



CARPENTER
Hubert



CASWELL
Andrew D



CHIMA
Cornelius P



CHIMA
Nicholas



CHRYST
Paul D



CLAY
Arthur D



COBB
Julius D



COHEN
Myron



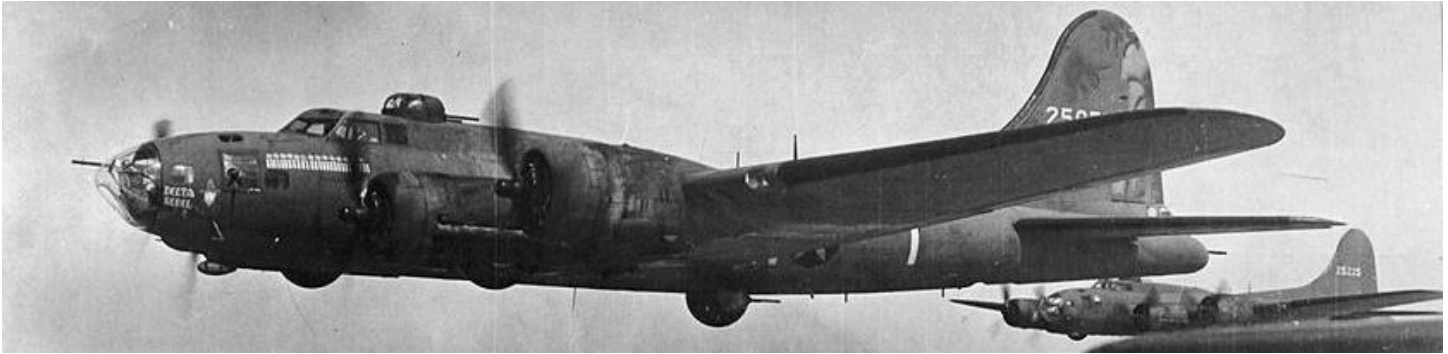
COLLINS
Philip



COOPER
Owen G



CORNELL
William M



Folded Wings (continued from page 12)

✪ Virgil G Faust 322nd Age 92

July 10, 2013, Johnstown, PA

Reported by Frank Cummins



Virgil was the radio operator on James Judy's crew. He and six other crew members bailed out of a burning *My Prayer* on the Schweinfurt mission August 17, 1943. He was a POW for 21 months in Stalag 17-B.

Survived by wife of 66 years, Sara (Helman) Faust; daughter, Janie (Thomas) Terebus; son-in-law, Dennis L. Holtzman; three grandchildren; and four great-grandsons.

✪ Claude E Harper 323rd Age 88

May 20, 2013, Vienna, IL



Claude was the radio operator on James Faris' crew. Flying *Sherry's Cherries*, they were hit by several enemy aircraft on the November 2nd Merseburg mission. Claude was captured and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner.

✪ Albert P Martineau 401st Age 89

May 26, 2013, Providence, RI



Albert was a Veteran of WWII, having served in the Army Air Corps as a tail-gunner. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and several other decorations for his service.

Albert was the beloved father of seven children: Clare (Jerry) Dunn, Lawrence (Rosalie), Donna (Thomas) Amaral, Leonard, Joseph (Catherine), John (Patricia), Steven (Precilinda); grandfather of 13.

✪ Rollie C Hill 324th Age 87

November 1, 2011, Liverpool, WV



Rollie volunteered for the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II and attained the rank of T/Sgt., serving as a radio operator and gunner on a B-17 bomber. During the war he was attached to the 91st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force in Bassingbourn, England. He completed 27 missions and was a recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Mary K. Richmond Hill; sons, Jeffrey (Edna), John (Cindi), James (Pam); and eight grandchildren.

✪ Herman S Boncquet 401st Age 95

May 15, 2013, Benson, AZ



Herman served with the 91st Bomb Group on the B-17 *Qualified Quail*. He survived 25 bombing missions.

Herman is survived by his wife, Felicia M. Boncquet (Kintz) and their children: Denice Williams, Wayne (JoDeen), Clark (Kay); and four grandchildren.

✪ Wayne R Dennison 323rd Age 89

November 12, 2013, Ellsworth, ME



Wayne was a ball turret gunner assigned to the crew of *The Sheriff's Posse*. He was the last surviving member of that crew.

Wayne is survived by his three children, John Dennison, James Dennison, and Jane Butler; four grandchildren.

❖ **William L Hoots 323rd Age 91**

March 28, 2013, Patterson, IN



William spent the majority of his life serving his country. He completed 25 missions as a gunner with the 91st Bomb Group. After a short leave, he was back flying missions with the 303rd Bomb Group. He was shot down and taken prisoner of war Nov. 26, 1944, but escaped in April, 1945 and was picked up by the British. His

later assignments included flight engineer and crew chief. He served 18 months in Vietnam, and retired from service in 1970.

During his service, he received the following medals and citations: Air Crew Wing, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Air Medal with six silver oak leaf clusters, Presidential Unit Citation, Outstanding Unit Award with two bronze clusters, Prisoner of War Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Euro-African-Middle Eastern Campaign with two bronze stars, World War II Victory Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze star, Longevity Service Medal with three bronze clusters, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Military Training Instructor Ribbon and Expert Marksmanship Ribbon.

Surviving are three children: Cheryl Partlow, Lanny Hoots, and Michael Hoots; four grandchildren; one sister, and numerous great-grandchildren.

❖ **Vernon F Currie 322nd Age 89**

December 21, 2009, The Villages, FL

❖ **Francis J Moyles 323rd Age 88**

Camp Hill, PA, January 17, 2013



Reported by his son Jim Francis served his country in the Army of the United States during WWII, where he was a pilot and flew B-17, AT-11 and C-45 aircraft. Francis flew two combat missions and received 2 Bronze Stars, an ETO Ribbon, an American Theater Ribbon and a World War II Victory Medal.

Preceding him in death was his loving wife Elizabeth Munley Moyles. Surviving is his son, James; and daughter Christine Miller; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

❖ **Paul W McElroy 324th Age 93**

December 26, 2013, Waynesville, NC



Paul was a navigator / pilot flying B-17 Bombers. His primary aircraft was *The Bloody Bucket*. During the Korean War, he was involved in the Korean Air Lift, transporting wounded troops and supplies to Japan.

Paul leaves to cherish his memories two daughters; Rebecca; Susan (James) Davis; four grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren

❖ **Edward J Dobrinski 323rd Age 89**

June 8, 2013, Monee, IL



Reported by his nephew Fred Dobrinski Edward was a waist gunner on *Wicked Witch* with Capt. Jack O'Neil's crew.

❖ **Emil J Viskocil 401st Age 98**

December 4, 2013, Farmington, MN



Emil was a flight engineer / top turret gunner on Roy Griesbach's crew. He completed thirty missions over enemy territory and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He is survived by his brother Clarence; and many nieces; nephews.

❖ **Franklin F Whitcomb 401st Age 94**

February 6, 2011, Modesto, CA

Reported by his daughter Sharee Zyp Frank was a co-pilot with the 91st. Returning from Stuttgart on March 20, 1944, 42-31672 dropped out of formation near Mannheim. Pilot Frank Turk flew *Buckeye Boomerang II* as the crew bailed out near Dieppe, France. The plane blew up 800 feet above ground level, throwing out Turk. All crew members parachuted, but it is believed navigator James Grube was killed by Germans after reaching the ground. Frank spent 18 months as a POW.

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:

★ **Avery O Gage 401st Age 87**

April 21, 2006, Urbandale, IA



Reported by Patrick Milward and Jody Kelly
Avery was the Navigator for the crew formed under Lt. William E. Guldner. His first mission was on June 3rd, 1944, on *Times A-Wastin'*, but he flew most of his missions on *Qualified Quail*. She was a lucky ship to them since they all completed their tour and returned safely home.

This luck showed in his own words when he told about a mission to Leipzig. "We were in it on the Leipzig mission, July 20, 1944, when it became the only plane out of six in the low squadron to survive. Bill told me that the reason we survived was because the plane next to us was going down and it slid over into us. Bill had to pull up to avoid him which took us out of the line of fire."

Avery was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

★ **Robert S Newman 323rd Age 88**

July 12, 2013, Elberon, NJ



Robert entered the Army Air Corp during World War II at age 17. He was assigned to the 91st Bomb Group, 323rd Squadron as a tail gunner, flying 34 missions and was awarded numerous service medals. On Father's Day 2012, he was surprised by his family with a flight on a B-17 at Teterboro Airport.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 68 years, June Rudewick Newman; daughters, Kathy (Todd) Nicholas, Roberta Betts, Denise (Louis) Cuevas; ten grandchildren; eleven great-grandchildren; and five great-great grandchildren.

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