

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 49 No. 1

91st Bombardment Group (H)

January 2016

Charleston planned for October 91st BGMA Reunion



Charleston, SC has been chosen as the next 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association reunion locale. Mick is working on pinning down the dates in October, but needs your help. Please see the President's Corner on page 2 for more information.



Jasper Statue in Madison Square (above) and Fort Sumter (below) are just two of the attractions in Charleston.



8th Air Force Reunion Highlights

Bill Curtis has kindly edited and shared video from the 41st Annual Eighth Air Force Historical Society Reunion in Omaha this past October.

The hour and sixteen minute video is available on YouTube via online link: tinyurl.com/8thOmaha.



91st Veteran Don Freer interviewed at the 8th Air Force Reunion

President's Corner**Mick Hanou**

The 2016 dues notice is on the following page. The Board has again agreed not to raise the annual dues, which have been the same since I joined 19 years ago. We are able to do this because of the reduced costs of the R/I (thanks Gary!) and some significant donations by members. So, as you fill out the notice, please consider a donation as well.

Our reported membership is 495, of which 189 are 91st BG veterans. This is 30 fewer than last year. To assist us, please make arrangements with family to notify us when someone has Folded Wings. It keeps our membership rolls current. Sadly, we've recently lost Jake Howland who served as Historian for many years and provided many DVDs on his technical expertise with navigation, Oboe and GEE, and the D-Day landings.

The Reunion dates are narrowing down a bit. Current plan is October 12 - 15, but that could move up a week depending on hotel availability and rates. PLEASE email mhanou@comcast.net if you plan, hope, or may attend and how many rooms / people you may have. This isn't a commitment but it'll help me get started. The rough itinerary includes a trip to the 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah. As in past years, there will be a balance of activities and likely a cruise as that has proven so popular each reunion.

The Collings Foundation will continue to fly "909" this year, with the B-24, a P-51, and occasionally a B-25. In 2017, they will take "909" off the tour for significant refurbishing (it will be replaced by another B-17). I have been reassured by the Foundation that "909" will stay in its livery when it returns to the tour in 2018.

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Please send Folded Wings information to Jody Kelly.

April Ragged Irregular submissions must be received by **March 15th**.

91st BG E-mail Ring

b17banta@aol.com

91st on the Web

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

Collings Foundation 2016 Wings of Freedom Tour Schedule

For more information and schedule updates, please visit www.collingsfoundation.org or call (800)568-8924.

Fort Myers, FL

February 8 12:00 pm
February 11 12:00 pm

Venice, FL

February 11 2:00 pm
February 14 12:00 pm

Pensacola, FL

February 26 2:00 pm
February 28 4:30 pm

Tyler, TX

March 18 2:00 pm
March 20 4:30 pm

Dallas, TX

March 23 2:00 pm
March 27 4:00 pm

Marana, AZ

April 8 3:00 pm
April 10 5:00 pm

Santa Ana, CA

May 4 2:00 pm
May 8 5:00 pm

Monterey, CA

May 18 2:00 pm
May 20 12:00 pm

Moffett Federal Airfield, CA

May 20 2:00 pm
May 28 5:00 pm

Livermore, CA

May 29 12:00 pm
May 31 5:00 pm

Minden, NV

June 16 12:00 pm
June 19 12:00 pm

Pasco, WA

July 1 2:00 pm
July 4 5:00 pm



R/I Editors Steve Perri and Gary Hall with *Nine-O-Nine* at Page Field, Fort Meyers, FL in 2011.

91st Bomb Group Memorial Association 2016 Membership Dues

Please do not delay your \$10 annual dues payment. If your dues are not received by April 1, 2016, we cannot guarantee receipt of all The Ragged Irregular issues as a limited number of copies are printed.

To further ensure receipt of your R/I, verify your address as printed on this issue and let the secretary / treasurer know of any errors. Also, please confirm the following information printed above your name:

- Three digit squadron number if you served with the 91st Bomb Group.
• Three letters identifying type of membership:
• Veteran – FM (Full), LM (Life)
• Associate –AM (Associate), AL (Life), AFM (Full)
• Public Relation – PR
• The final four digits indicating the last year you paid your dues.

Notify us promptly of permanent or temporary address changes. An added expense is incurred in forwarding correspondence.

Finally, please send us the names and addresses of deceased members. Surviving spouses are eligible for continues membership should they so elect. Spouses of life members are automatically made associate life members.

Support your 91st BGMA! Guarantee continued receipt of The Ragged Irregular, the only full source of information regarding local Rally Rounds, National Reunions and other activities you can share with 91st Bomb Group (H) friends.

Handwritten signature and a dashed line separator.

1. Make check or money order payable to 91st BGMA Inc.

2. Mail dues and other payments to: Jody Kelly, 3674 Sunset Ln, Oxnard, CA 93035-4130

3. Please print or type all information.

Name _____ Squadron _____ Veteran (circle one) Yes / No
Address _____ Telephone _____
City, St, Zip _____
E-mail Address _____

Ragged Irregular Deliver Method: (Choose One) Paper _____ Email (enter address above) _____ Both _____

Dues: (Choose One)

2016 Full or Associate Member - \$10 plus \$10 new member signup fee \$_____
Life Member or Associate Life Member - \$100 (once) \$_____

Donations: If you wish to make a donation please indicate:

Ragged Irregular Donation \$_____ (suggested \$10 donation for non-veteran members who receive a printed copy of the newsletter)
Memorial Fund Donation \$_____
General Fund Donation \$_____
Web Page Fund Donation \$_____
Total \$_____

Donations consistent as \$2,500 received by the 91st BGMA in the 4th quarter!***In Memory of****Fewer E. McGee (324th)*

Edmund McGee

Frank Keneley (401st)

Kathleen Ondrovic

Vernon Baird (322nd)

Laura Freed

Kenny and Pam Baird

Mick Hanou

Chevron

Peggy Bullion

Barrie Railton

Phillip James Casey

Morris Spielberg

Attention Associate Members seeking Associate Full Membership

The 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association's by-laws allow an Associate Member to petition the board to become an Associate Full Member. After three years as an Associate Member, one may become a Full Member by written request to the Secretary / Treasurer and majority approval of the 91st BGMA Board. As an Associate Full Member, you are entitled to vote at the reunion business meeting. In order for the board to consider requests in time for the 2016 reunion, please send your request as soon as possible.



See 2016 Dues Notice on Page 3.

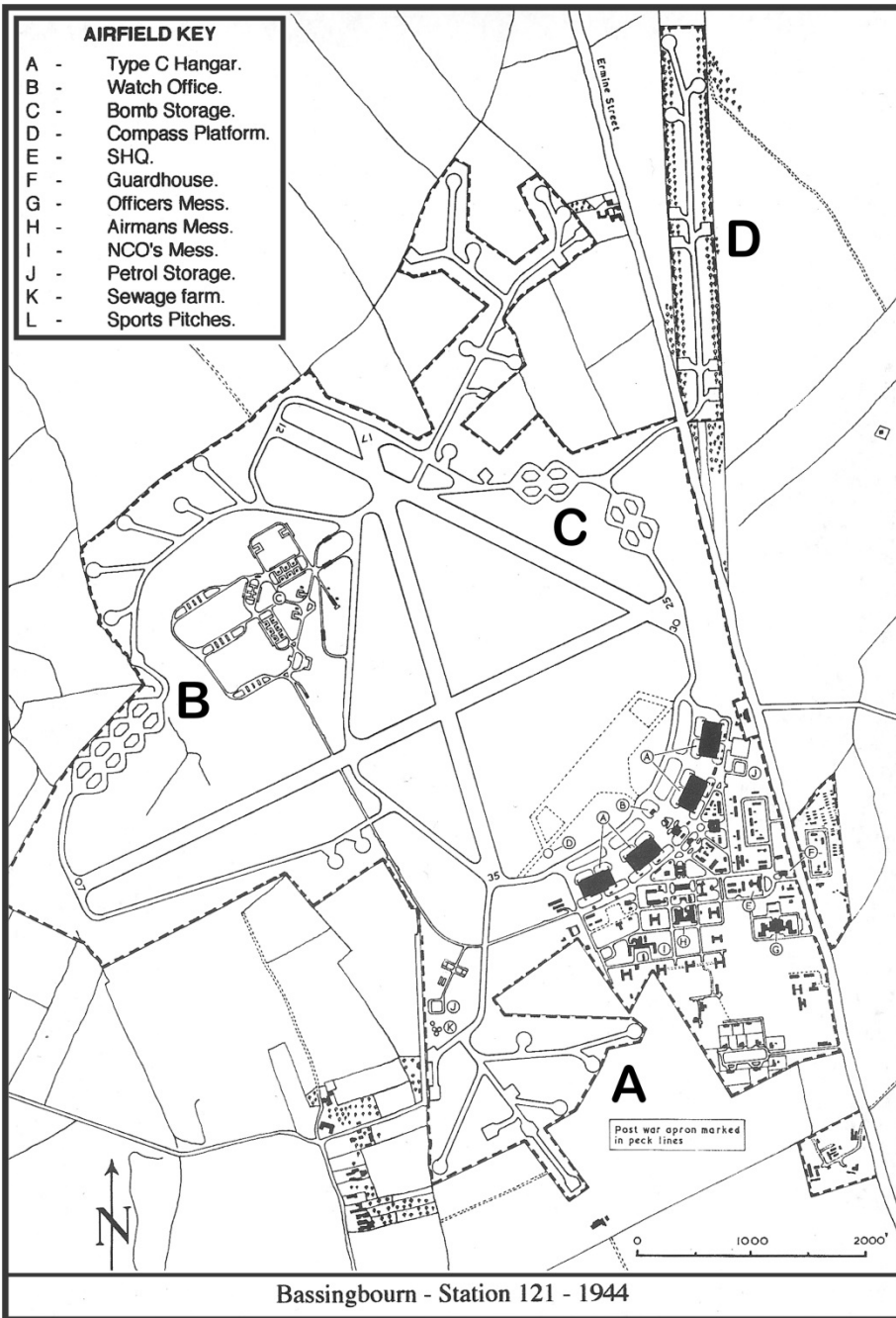
Please return completed form to:

**Jody Kelly
3674 Sunset Ln
Oxnard, CA 93035-4130**

Bassingbourn Dispersal Area Question

There has been a recent debate on the 91st BGMA Facebook page regarding the dispersal areas of the 324th and 401st Bomb Squadrons. The map below was scanned from *Airfield Focus 2: Bassingbourn* and represents the airfield in 1944. Everyone is in agreement over dispersal areas C and D which belonged to the 322nd and 323rd Bomb Squadrons respectively. The squadrons assigned to dispersal areas A and B are inconsistent based on various sources ranging from books to memorial pamphlets.

We are hoping 91st Veterans or historians may be able to definitively answer which dispersal areas belonged to the 324th and 401st. If you have memory or documentation regarding dispersal areas A and B, please contact Gary Hall by email raggedirregular@gmail.com or US Mail using contact information on page 2.



Steve Pena provided the dispersal area photographs in the right column. The top photograph is dispersal area A, followed by dispersal areas B, C, and D.

Mike Banta's Web Ring

Bomber Dear crash site confirmed

I have some great news to share with all of you.

The aircraft "*Bomber Dear*" crash site has been confirmed by the DPAA - Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, involved with JPAC [Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command]. The site was confirmed in Spring / Summer 2015.

As you might recall, my Great Uncle John Liekhus was the pilot of the a/c when it went down on Nov 2, 1944 after the bomb run on Merseburg.

This news that we received is exciting in that several of our Liekhus family members were asked for mouth swabs for genetic testing. We met with a representative from DPAA on 12/26/15 in regards to what has been happening. We are very hopeful that some of John's remains, as well as those of other crewmen on the plane, will be recovered.

The site will be returned to in the Spring, 2016.

I would like to thank all of you folks for your help in pulling this together.

Please pray that we find John and the other crew so that our families can put some closure on what really happened to these brave men.

A happy New Year to all of you, and many more to come!

Sincerely yours,

Michael Cushing, MD



C A S U A L T Y R E P O R T Air Forces

Date : 2 November 1944
 Time : 1230 h
 Aircraft : B 17G 42 - 97234 ` Bomber Dear `
 Codes : OR - M
 Group / Squadron: 91 BG H 323 BS
 Base : Bassingbourn, Cambs. Take off:
 Crashed : When formation increased speed just after bombing, this B-17 could not catch up and was immediately attacked by several German fighters.....
 Crash due to : fighters.....
 Target : Merseburg, south of Halle, Germany.

..... During the 3rd or 4th pass the aircraft burst into flames, peeled off to the left and dove down completely enveloped in flames. Crashed 2 km SW of Barby, 9 km NE of Calbe, or 70 km NNW of the target.

Killed : identified and buried in the Cemetery of Barby.
 Reinterred in Netherlands, Plot DD-5-118 as Unknown X-870 but positively identified later, on 27th May 1945.

N : YOUNG Allen D., 2/Lt. O-717612
 U.S.A., CAL.

Missing in Action : all commemorated on the Walls of the Missing in Henri-Chapelle.

P : LIEKHUS John H., 1/Lt. O-761138 CAL

E : BRADY John F., T/Sgt. 31092599 MASS

RO : CHANDLER Allen A. Jr., T/Sgt.18113787 OKLA

BTG : YOUNGER Bobby J., S/Sgt. 38536880 TEX

WG : SHOEMAKER Robert O., S/Sgt. 33564915 MD

P.O.W. : managed to bail out in time.

CP : WISOR Robert C., 2/Lt. O-825358

B : SAMBO Robert H., 2/Lt. O-772081

TG : LOMBARDI Bruno D., S/Sgt. 19142746

Note: the German report, attached to the MACR, states that in all 4 remains were buried.

Editor's Note:

Chris Henry, from the Experimental Aircraft Association, posted a message on Facebook October 23, 2015. While visiting EAA's B-17 *Aluminum Overcast*, Fern Bridges told the story of her husband Allen Chandler. They had been married just before he left for Europe. In November of 1944, she received a Western Union telegram stating that *Bomber Dear* had been shot down. Allen was listed as Missing in Action, which he is still listed as today.

Between Mike Banta's email ring and Facebook, we are working to connect Fern with Michael Cushing and the DPAA. Look for a follow up to this story in a future R/I.

Folded Wings (continued from page 8)✪ **Stephen Lada 322nd Age 98**

November 2, 2015, Greenville, RI



Reported by his son Douglas Stephen flew as a Group Bombardier on Dudley Mather's crew. He was the recipient of the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters.

Stephen is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Frances (Starck) Lada; two sons, Stephen (Joan), and Douglas (Ann); five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

✪ **Roy E Forsbacka 322nd BS Age 94**

September 2, 2015, Kennesaw, GA



Reported by his daughter Lisa Roy flew 35 successful missions over Germany as the navigator on Dudley Mather's crew. He was awarded three Air Medals. His most memorable plane was *Stinky*.

Roy is survived by his wife Aino; children Matthew (Besty), and Lisa (Jon); and six grandchildren.

✪ **John H Carr Jr 401st Age 90**

November 17, 2015, Morehead City, NC



Reported by his son Randy John served as a Flight Engineer and Top Turret Gunner on B-17 *Little Patches*.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Bessie Jones Carr; son, James Randall (Penny) Carr; and two grandchildren.

✪ **George H Bogert 401st Age 93**

October 23, 2015, Baltimore, MA



Reported by his son Daryl George was the ball turret gunner on *Shoo Shoo Baby*, and the last surviving member of the Paul McDuffee crew.

George is survived by his wife Betty; sons Dean (Lyn), Douglas (Donna), and Daryl (Kathy); six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

✪ **Robert C Christman 323rd Age 92**

August 7, 2015, Erie, PA



Reported by his son-in-law Greg Bob served as an Army Air Force mechanic at Basingbourn. He met his wife, Dorothy Pamela Sole, in Kelshall Hertfordshire, England, where they were married on September 30, 1944.

Bob was preceded in death by his loving wife of 60 years, Dorothy. Survivors include his two daughters, Barbara (James) Sherlock, Susan (Gregory) Tower; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

✪ **Gordon A Wiggett 401st Age 94**

October 13, 2015, Randolph, VT



Reported by his wife Grace Although his mother had dual citizenship, Gordon was turned away from a U.S. recruiting station as he had been born in Canada. He prepared to head north to join the Canadian Air Force, but received his U.S. draft papers in the mail. Gordon flew as a waist gunner on Lester Rentmeester's *Jeannie Marie* crew. He married Grace

Sniffin on October 13, 1943.

Survivors include his wife, Grace Wiggett; sons, Craig Wiggett, Scott (Patricia) Wiggett, Brad Wiggett and Ben Gronauer; daughters, Kathy (Bernie) Duncan, and Martha (Brian) Kinsley; 12 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren.

✪ **John F "Jack" Coyne 322nd Age 92**

December 15, 2015, New Castle, PA



Reported by John Mooney (son of pilot Edward L Mooney)

Jack was youngest and last surviving member of Lt. Edward L. Mooney's crew. As a tail gunner, he was credited with damaging an ME-410 and earned the following decorations: The European African Middle Eastern Theater Medal, Three Bronze Battle Stars, The Distinguished Flying Cross Medal, The Air Medal with Three Oak Leaf Clusters, and The Good Conduct Medal.

Jack is survived by his wife Dorothy; two daughters, Mary Beth Coyne, and Cathy (Thomas Murray) Coyne; and one grandson.

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:

☛ **Lorcey J Sonnier 322nd Age 91**

December 18, 2015, Maurice, LA



Reported by Joyce Herbert
Lorcey, or "Frenchie" as crewmates fondly called him, flew as a tail gunner on a B-17 they named *Ack-Ack-Annie*. He flew 30 missions; receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air medal with Oak leaf clusters, and other medals for service. One of his greatest honors from the war, Lorcey was bestowed the Chevalier de la legion

d'honneur by M. François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States, on June 28th 2012.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Annie Breaux Sonnier; and one son, Joseph Sonnier. He is survived by his three daughters, Glenda Sonnier, Sue Sonnier, and Bonnie (Larry) Bergeron; seven grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren.

☛ **John W "Jake" Howland 324th Age 95**

November 22, 2015, San Antonio, TX



Reported by his son Johnny
A proud World War II veteran, Jake was a B-17 Pathfinder navigator with the 8th Air Force. He flew numerous missions with both the 91st and 381st Bomb Groups. Jake led a group of 18 B-17s on D-Day bombing Gold Beach moments before the landing of British and Canadian troops.

Jake was preceded in death by his loving wife of 63 years, Dorothy Archer Howland. He is survived by son Johnny Howland (Margaret), daughters Priscilla Spradley (Pat), Nancy Howland Pryor, six grandchildren and a great-grandson.

.....
Folded Wings continued on page 7