

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 49 No. 3

91st Bombardment Group (H)

July 2016

Charleston Reunion October 14-17, 2016

HOTEL: Charleston Airport Embassy Suites Hotel, 5055 International Boulevard, North Charleston. Telephone (800) 362-2779 and mention group name **91st Bomb Group Reunion and code "91B"** to insure you are booked into our reserved block of rooms. Rates good 3 days before and after. Free shuttle from airport, free parking. You must make reservations prior to September 14, 2016. The 91BGMA is contracted to a certain number of room-nights so please help us out by planning your trip soon and making reservations.

REGISTRATION: A registration form is included in this RI and is also available at www.91stbombgroup.com under heading Upcoming Events. Registration forms need to be received as soon as possible to assist in planning and definitely return no later than September 10.

EVENTS: Note that due to hotel bookings and capacity, we were unable to get Wednesday- Saturday as usual. However, the planned days are still four, so travel days are just shifted.

Friday, October 14 - Some of us are arriving early and will have rental vans. We plan to go to Patriot's Point that morning and see the aircraft carrier **Yorktown**. There is also a submarine, a destroyer and the Medal of Honor Museum.

Reception will open at 3:00 and there will be an evening ice-breaker in the hospitality suite.

Saturday, October 15 - Day tour of **Mighty 8th Air Force Museum** in Savannah. The bus will take the group to the Museum, which is the only one dedicated exclusively to the 8th AF. The exhibits depict pre-WWII background, a Mission Experience demonstrating what a mission was like, the Gallery, with a restored B-17,

various displays with artifacts and the Memorial Gardens. You can choose to have lunch at the Museum's English Pub and spend the afternoon at the museum ... or.... Take the bus into **Savannah** downtown for lunch, sightseeing or strolling the riverfront or old town square and houses.

The evening will be at the Hospitality Suite and there are numerous restaurants nearby for dinner.

Sunday, October 16 - The morning starts with the **Business Meeting**. It is open to all registered attendees. There is a ballot in this RI, which should be returned. Only FULL members may vote.

You will have some time at the hotel for lunch ... or ... take the 12:00 **Historic City Tour**. The bus will drop you at the Old City Market for lunch, shopping, or, if you already had lunch, time to visit a museum or two. At 2:45, the bus tour continues with a licensed guide who will recount over 300 years of Charleston's long and colorful history from 1670 to present day with a blend of knowledge, wit, and humor. Topics discussed will include Charleston's role in Colonial America, the American Revolution, the southern Antebellum Era, and the Civil War. Landmarks you will see include the Battery, Rainbow Row, St. Michaels Church, the College of Charleston, and South Carolina's famed military academy the Citadel.

That evening is the **Banquet**. This is the climatic event where we have a chance for the entire group to be together. Your choice of meals this year is roast beef, chicken and snapper. AND as we did in San Francisco, WWII veterans and their spouses will not be charged for dinner. Afterwards, the Hospitality Suite will be open for sharing stories and reminiscing.

Reunion (continued from page 1)

Monday, October 17 - This is the day to see two major highlights of Charleston - Magnolia Gardens and Fort Sumter. **Magnolia Gardens** is considered one of the most beautiful gardens in the world. As you stroll with your private guide through the lush garden pathways, these unique landscapes will captivate you. After the gardens, you will board the Nature Train which will take you into part of the Audubon Swamp Garden, home to scores of water loving creatures, and past the newly restored Slave cabins which interpret African American life on the plantation. A boxed lunch will be provided.

The bus will then stop at the hotel to pick up or drop off folks and then proceed to the **Harbor Cruise and Fort Sumter** tour. As you cruise through Charleston's scenic harbor you will view the beautiful homes along the Battery, and watch local marine wildlife in their natural habitat. Upon arrival at Fort Sumter, your private guide, who is well versed in Civil War history and the history of Fort Sumter, will give you an informative introduction and take you on a very special tour of this famous bastion and its marvelous museum. (He was recommended by the 447BG, who had their reunion there in 2013 and thought him marvelous!).

You can save money by taking both tours. We do hope you stay for the Monday events after the Banquet. The Hospitality Suite will be open Monday evening and we hope you stay to help close out the reunion and give us feedback.

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Please send Folded Wings information to Jody Kelly.

October Ragged Irregular submissions must be received by **September 15th**.

91st BG E-mail Ring

b17banta@aol.com

91st on the Web

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

Collings Foundation Wings of Freedom Tour

See *Nine-O-Nine* as well as Collings' B-24 and P-51 at the tour stops listed below. For more information, please visit www.collingsfoundation.org or call (978) 562-9182.

July 29 – 31 Chicago, IL
August 5 – 7 Valparaiso, IN
August 8 – 10 Lafayette, IN
August 12 – 14 Akron-Canton, OH
August 15 – 17 Butler, PA
August 17 – 19 Indiana, PA
August 19 – 21 Altoona, PA
August 22 – 24 Hazleton, PA

August 24 – 28 Wall Township, NJ
August 31 – September 2 Millville, NJ
September 2 – 5 Cape May, NJ
September 19 – 21 Manchester, NH
September 21 – 23 Brunswick, ME
September 23 – 25 Worcester, MA
October 7 – 9 Westminster, MD
October 21 – 23 Greenville, SC

President's Corner**Mick Hanou**

The Board has finalized the details of the Charleston Reunion. I wish to stress to you how very useful it is if you reserve your hotel rooms and return the registration as soon as possible. This helps us confirm room numbers and tour attendees. We are contracted to a certain number of hotel room-nights and tour participants and have until one month before to cancel or modify without significant penalties. One reason the 2014 reunion was such a success is that we received all that information in a timely manner and could optimize the tours. Thank you and if you have any questions, please contact me.

Members of the Board, in cooperation with Chris and Amy Murphy (Tower curators), are working on Operation Restoration. This will be a crowd-funding website where we hope to collect sufficient donations to restore the Tower Museum Bassingbourn. We will keep you posted

as this develops. Please rest assured that the artifacts are safe from damage though the Tower remains closed at this time.

I attended the Chino Air Show at Planes of Fame Museum. The 91st BGMA wall and display frames have been completed and the display cases are under construction. The 91st BGMA has loaned the donations of Memorabilia from the Mack and LaBlottier families (I brought them with me and have them inventoried). We are looking forward to having two contextual displays – one on an officer in flying suit and the other a gunner in uniform.

Regards,

Mick Hanou

A DAUGHTER'S SEARCH TAKES HER BACK 71 YEARS TO WWII **by Marilynn Rustand Lieurance**

All I knew was his name and that he was killed during the war. There was an ache inside of me--I wanted to know who my dad was, and if I was anything like him? After mother died, I found a folder in the bottom of a trunk in a dark corner of the attic, and saw my first picture of my dad. I was in my thirties back then, and already knew at some point I would be searching to find somebody that knew my dad, and could tell me something about him. While looking through the papers in that folder, I discovered dad was a pilot, who flew a B-17 during the war. A list of names and addresses from the 1940's helped me start my on again, off again search through the years.

In the year 2000 I learned about reunions of various military units, and sought to find my dad's 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association. I became a member, and in preparation to attend my first reunion in Galveston, Texas, I had a business card made with my dad's picture and unit information. I researched the identification number of the aircraft he was flying during his last mission; and came up with the name *PARD*. Tony Starcer was one of three men known for painting the Nose Art on aircraft and jackets during WWII, and he had painted the Nose Art on *PARD*.

While searching the internet, I stumbled across Mike Banta's website the 91st Ring, and I posted a paragraph with the heading "Did You Know My Dad?" Frank Farr answered that posting, he had flown one mission with

my dad on 09 October 1944. Frank was the Navigator, and the B-17 was the *Nine-O-Nine*.

A big break came at the end of 2013, when I found the first family member connected to my dad's crew. Don Griffith was the nephew of T/Sgt. John A. Griffith, the Radio Operator / Gunner. I began pushing to find at least one other family of dad's crew, so I could invite them to a 91st BG reunion planned for May 2014. I got real lucky, and found them all in time to invite them to attend the reunion. A few of the families were able to attend, and some of us took a flight together in the *Nine-O-Nine*. I had researched all the crew and made a private presentation to each family, who attended; and mailed the other folders to the families, who were not able to attend.

As far back as I can remember, it was always a goal to visit the grave of my father. He was buried in Luxembourg, and I was finally in a position to go there and honor him by visiting his grave. Many months before my trip, I was networking with people, and had become acquainted with Herr Albert Trostorf, the Mayor of Merode, Germany; and a retired Colonel from the German Air Force, Herr Jorg Dietsche, whose dad opposed my dad during the war. The Colonel now works with our government's DPAA (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) to find our American MIA's. While in Germany, I also met Prince Simon de Merode, Son of Prince and Princess Leonel de Merode of Westerlo, Belgium.

As a member of the American WWII Orphans Network (AWON), I was designated to present the flowers in behalf of AWON during the Memorial Day Ceremony at the American Military Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg. While there I met His Royal Highness Crown Prince Guillaume of Luxembourg, Son of Grand Duke Henri. I also met His Excellency Mr. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg.

Constant Goergen, Founder and Honorary President of the United States Veterans Friends, Luxembourg (USVFL) was my contact in Luxembourg, and an extraordinary host while I was there. He arranged to have me taken to a luncheon where I met Patrick Murphy, (also known as Murph) and we soon discovered we have a great deal in common, and talked throughout the entire lunch. Murph is Commander of the Civil Air Patrol Squadron in Spangdahlem, and also a member of the DPAA. He has founded an organization named, WWII Battlefield Research and Preservation Group (WWII BRPG). I told Murph about a goal of mine to locate the site where my dad's B-17 crashed, and that it was looking like I would not be able to accomplish this. Murph said, he was interested in helping me. Over the next seven months, Murph and I exchanged 3 or 4 emails. He had done his own research, and told me he was confident he would be able to find the crash site, and planned to take a look in the spring of 2016.

In May 2016 my husband, Don, and I were on our way to Nevada on business, and to meet friends at a Ghost Town. Our suitcases were packed and in the car, when I went to check emails and turn off the computer. Wow, an email from Murph told he was in Germany, thought he had located the crash site, and had waded through two feet of muddy wetlands until twelve midnight, but didn't find anything. The following day he was planning to go to Berlin for further research, and then return to speak with people in the village. A few people actually remembered the crash, (dad's plane was the only plane that had gone down in their small village--still rural farmland), and they gave details of what happened, and then pointed to the location of the crash. It was immediately next to where Murph had been searching a few days earlier. The big plus was the actual crash site was just above the wetlands, on high and dry ground. Murph went to the field, already planted with a new crop of corn emerging, and found some small pieces of the plane. He emailed me right away, and I booked a flight to Luxembourg. He picked me up at my hotel, and we drove 7 or 8 hours to Germany, got settled in our rooms, and then went to the site. I stood there thinking about that last mission, one of the worst air battles of the war, and all the things I had read and heard about it. For me it was like a silent picture surfacing in my mind, and there

was an odd calm about me. As an experienced treasure hunter, my trained eye was a real plus. It wasn't long before I found pieces of Plexiglas from the nose of the plane, and then a few metal fragments. Murph set up speakers and played a recording of "Amazing Grace" and "Taps" on bagpipes--it was an emotional time.

The next day, we located the mayor's daughter, Marie, who understood what we were there for. Marie spoke very good English, and while Murph was talking with her, she made several phone calls. When a stranger drives into a small village of 45 people, everybody knows you're there, and most are a bit reluctant to talk with strangers about the war. It was most helpful to have Marie there to interpret for us. First we went to the house of an older lady, and spoke with her through the open window of her home. Then, there was a man, who was twelve years of age back then--Murph had spoken with him when he was there two weeks earlier. Next, we found a gentleman, who recalled being six years of age, when he saw the plane in the air and on fire. He saw it explode and crash, breaking into two pieces--the tail being completely separate from the rest. This man (now 77) said, his father took him to the crash site. He said, the pilot (my dad) was laying up close and next to his plane. He was face up, with blood all over his face, and he was dead. He told how he could see this clearly in his mind, as it still haunts him to this day.

Upon our return to Luxembourg, I attended the Memorial Day Ceremony at the American Military Cemetery for the second year in a row. I had the honor of meeting Helen Patton, Granddaughter of General George Patton; and Rene (Rini) Majerus--together the three of us presented the AWON flowers. Helen took a long walk to my dad's grave and placed a long stem red rose there, honoring him and all the soldiers there.

War is such an awful, but sometimes necessary thing. The men, who fought for every freedom we enjoy each day of our lives will always be Our Heroes. Their bravery is our history, and we will always remember them for it. Our veterans should know the people of Luxembourg remember what our soldiers went through, both in the air and on the ground, and they remember the cost of lives to twice liberate their country. Every village has a memorial in it. A day is set aside every year to remember and honor our American Soldiers, (our fallen soldiers and all those who served and lived). Rain or snow does not stop this celebration, as people gather at memorials, conduct ceremonies, and as night falls they light torches and parade through the villages. The running theme of Luxembourg is: WE WILL NEVER FORGET!

91st Bomb Group Memorial Association 2016 Reunion Registration

Hotel Rooms can be booked at the Charleston Airport Embassy Suites Hotel in one of two ways.

- 1) **Book by phone:** Call reservations at **1-800-362-2779** and mention code **"91B"** for our group reservation. This is important as the 91st BGMA is committed to a certain number of room-nights.
- 2) **Book online:** Use link tinyurl.com/91HotelSC to access our group reservations online.

You must make reservations prior to September 14, 2016

If you encounter any problems, our contact at the hotel for reservations is Andrea Harvey **843-747-1882**.

Rates are good three days before and three days after in case you want some more sightseeing time in Charleston.

The hotel is near the Charleston International Airport and has a **shuttle** that operates every hour. For those who are driving, the address is 5055 International Boulevard, North Charleston. **Parking is free.**

Based on the registration response, we can finalize contracts for the buses. So we ask that you respond by returning this form no later than September 10, 2016.

Please indicate the number of people in each event and don't forget to fill in some of the questions at the end of the survey. If you have any questions, Mick Hanou can be reached at 925-425-3220 or email: mhanou@comcast.net.

Please make a copy of this form for your records and bring to Reunion.

Primary contact: _____ Phone _____

Email: _____

Others in your party: _____

<u>Event</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Friday, October 14 – 9:00am Optional trip to Yorktown aircraft carrier. A number of us are renting vans and participants will share rides and costs. Yorktown admission price \$22, \$17 seniors. Will you have a car to help? _____ # _____ \$ on your own that day			
Friday afternoon – 3:00pm Reception and Evening ice-breaker at the Hospitality Suite. Registration (Required)	# _____	\$35	_____
Saturday, October 15 – 8:30am departure - Day Trip to Savannah to see the National Museum of the Mighty 8th AF. Also downtown Savannah for lunch and sightseeing. Optional - can stay at the museum all day and have lunch at their pub. <i>Lunch not included.</i>	# _____	\$47	_____
Saturday evening – Evening at Hospitality Suite – share an evening with friends, reminiscing and sharing scrapbooks and history. <i>Dinner / snacks is on your own or ad-hoc.</i>	# _____	FREE	FREE

91st Bomb Group Memorial Association 2016 Reunion Registration

Sunday, October 16 – Business meeting, ½ day tour, and Banquet. The morning Business Meeting is open to all registered attendees. Only FULL members may vote. There will be time for lunch before the afternoon tour.

Lunch not included. # _____ **FREE** **FREE**

Afternoon City Tour of Historic Charlestown – 12:00 bus from hotel to the heart of downtown Charleston where you'll have time for lunch, shopping or seeing one of the museums. 2:45pm - a bus city tour of Charleston with a knowledgeable guide.

Lunch not included. # _____ \$38 _____

Reunion Evening Banquet – The event that brings everyone together!

91st Veterans and their spouse attend for free - please indicate your choice of meal and enter \$0

All -please indicate the dinner you wish to have:

Prime Rib	# _____	\$65	_____
Chicken Pecan	# _____	\$55	_____
French Quarter Snapper	# _____	\$55	_____

Monday, October 17 – day trip to Magnolia Gardens and Fort Sumter 9:30am. Tour magnolia Gardens with a guide. Ride the Nature train and see wildlife. Wander the grounds.

Lunch at the gardens. # _____ \$49 _____

Tour continues – 1:30 Depart hotel for Charleston Harbor Cruise and Fort Sumter Tour. On the cruise you will see the scenic harbor and old homes, and local marine wildlife. Your private guide at Fort Sumter is very well versed in Civil War history.

Lunch not included. # _____ \$44 _____

Combined Price – Participate in both tours (with lunch) and save \$8 # _____ \$85 _____

Total cost of the registered events. _____

Make check payable to 91BGMA and send with this form to:

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

Please make a copy of this form for your records and bring to Reunion.

Separate questions helpful in planning the event:

Does anyone in your party require a wheelchair? _____

Are you planning on renting a van (if so other costs will be adjusted) or are you willing to assist with helping the veterans and easing the logistics by renting a minivan? _____

If you have a National Park pass, please bring it to reduce costs.

91st Bomb Group Memorial Association – Year 2016 – Election of Officers

Full members in good standing are eligible to vote. Although this appears to be a formality, **it is important that a vote be cast.** The 91st Bomb Group Bylaws state it is necessary to have at least four elected officers for the 91st BGMA to remain an organization. **Please indicate a positive vote by circling a candidate's name.** Return by mail to: **Bob and Sheila Striegel, 5425 Mystic Place, Oklahoma City, OK. 73150**

Ballots must be postmarked by September 15, 2016 in order to be valid.

There shall be no officer candidate nominations proposed at the General Membership Meeting in Charleston 2016. Send any write in Nominations to: **Bob and Sheila Striegel at above address.**

PRESIDENT

Mick Hanou Mick has a history of being an air enthusiast, mostly exhibited by helping at air shows with marshalling aircraft and security. Since 1993, he has organized the annual visit of the Collings Foundation's B-17 *Nine-O-Nine* to his home town. George Birdsong sparked his interest in the 91st BG; he joined as an Associate and became a Life Member in 1997. Since 1996 he has annually visited Tower Museum Bassingbourn and has had a good relationship with the various curators. He does this to honor all 91st veterans for liberating his parents from Hitler-occupied Europe for "If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be here."

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Tom Freer Tom is the son of Donald Freer, 322nd Sq. Pilot of *Easy Does It* – shot down December 5, 1944 and subsequently POW at Stalag Luft I, Barth, Germany. Tom has been the Vice President since 2012.

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

Larry Ruth Larry is a retired teacher, researcher, and author of several books on the US caliber .30 carbine. He serves as Adjutant in local Sons of the American Legion and is a Town Councilman. His uncle was a ball-turret gunner on B-17 *Destiny's Child*. Larry joined the 91st as an associate member in the mid 1990's, became a full member in 2011, and was elected 2nd vice president in 2014. He has attended all the reunions from 2004 to 2014.

SECRETARY / TREASURER

Jody Kelly Jody was born in the Base Hospital at McClellan AFB in 1952. Her father Robert "Bob" Dickson was a pilot in the 91st Bomb Group (H) and she is a Full (Associate) Life Member of the 91st BGMA. Jody holds a BS Degree in Business Administration and an AA Degree in Managerial Accounting. Over the past 35 years, Jody has worked in the accounting field as Controller, Director of Finance, etc. for companies in the Southern California and Arizona area. In 2006 she started her own business Channel Islands Accounting Services.

Jody and her dad have attended all reunions and rally rounds since 2004 until his death in 2010. "I enjoy being a part of the camaraderie and friendship that goes on at these meetings." In 2008, Jody took over the Secretary/Treasurer position from Ace Johnson.

EDITOR "RAGGED IRREGULAR"

Gary Hall Gary is the grandson of 401st Sq. ball turret gunner Edgar Harrell, who was killed in action April 8, 1945. He assisted Steve Perri with mailing the Ragged Irregular in 2007 and took over as editor in 2008. Gary views the position as a way to help keep the history of the 91st Bomb Group alive and honor the memory of his grandfather. He has attended all the reunions from 2002 to 2014.

HISTORIAN

Janet Larocco Janet has served as the 91st BGMA Historian since 2010. Her impassioned interest in the European Air War has been an asset to the group. Janet's connection to the 91st is her father James McIlwain. James' plane was shot down and crashed into the North Sea November 3, 1944. He bailed out, was rescued by a German boat and became a Prisoner of War.

91st Bomb Group Memorial Association – Year 2016 – Election of Officers

After voting (reverse side of this page), please return this form to:

Bob and Sheila Striegel
5425 Mystic Place
Oklahoma City, OK. 73150

Memorial Day 2016 at Cambridge American Cemetery The American Battle Monuments Commission

Cambridge American Cemetery hosted its annual Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday, May 30, 2016 at 11 am.



Volunteers from RAF Alconbury helped to place the American and British flag at the base of every headstone.



Members of the U.S. Air Force participated in the 2016 Memorial Day Ceremony at Cambridge American Cemetery.



Hundreds of people gathered at Cambridge American Cemetery.

Members of the U.S. Air Force from RAF Mildenhall laid the wreaths during the ceremony.

Mike Banta's Web Ring

Note: To contact Mike Banta's web ring, please email: b17banta@aol.com

Looking for B-18 #338860 323 OR M

International Museum of Airbase of Chièvres

Hello, we are in search of any information on B-17 sérial 338860 code YET OR-M.

He fell to QUIEVRAIN (Belgium) on February 14th, 1945.

One of our members, 15-year-old then, cut a piece of sheet steel from the radio compartment. This piece represents a girl in shirt on a beach with a coconut palm.

This drawing was engraved probably by a crew member.

We have three photos of the plane on the ground, but the mediocre quality, the civil devices of the time being rather rudimentary.

Can you help us?

Thank you.

Very friendly

Daniel LELEU
d.leleu@skynet.be
Chair MIBAC

Reply

Hi Daniel,

We did find this B-17 in our 323rd Bomb squadron. We are sending the information we found to you.

338860 323 OR M - Sept. 2, 1945 was assigned to our 323 Bomb Group. On February 14, 1945, this B-17 failed to return and made an emergency landing on the continent in allied territory. On February 22 this B-17 was declared salvage.

From the 323rd Squadron dailies:

"14 Feb. 1945: On this day, Dresden, Germany was bombed to disappointment because the rain they expected us to give them never came thru. Instead,

Prague, Czechoslovakia looked more promising for some reason or other, and so they caught hell instead visually. This was carried out by our high and low squadrons. Results were good. Some other target looked better to our lead squadron so they hurried off and bombed it as a target of opportunity by "PFF" with results unknown. Eight crews landed on the continent. Our crews participating were #806, Lt. Theis and crew; #939, Lt. Cochran and crew; #841, Lt. Shambaugh and crew; #431, Lt. Hoffman and crew; #636, Lt. Harvey and crew; #490, Lt. Borgstrom and crew; #540, F/O Adams and crew; #860, Lt. Lawson and crew; #276, Lt. Flynn and crew; squadron lead, Lt. Partridge, in ship #630. Lt. Harvey and crew aborted due to mechanical failure. All crews returned safely.

This was the only mission this B-17, #860 flew. It was the 23rd mission for F/O Adams and crew.

Sorry the story of the brand new B-17 wasn't very interesting.

Mike Banta, 91st Ringmaster

Clarification for the previous article

The Last of *The Heavyweight Annihilators* by Rebecca Y. Vaughn

As the author of "The Last of the Heavyweight Annihilators," Vol. 49, No. 2 *The Ragged Irregular*, I wish to make the following clarification:

Paragraph ten, fourth sentence should have read: "Before the month was over, the 322nd had lost their first crew."

Without defining "they," the reader could assume this reference applied to the entire 91st Bomb Group, in which case the tragic loss of the 324th's crew of *Pandora's Box* with CO Major Harold Smelser and pilot Lt. Duane Jones should also have been noted.

In addition, the crash landing of 324th's *The Shiftless Skunk* resulted in the deaths of half of Lt. Nathan Corman's crew (totaling twenty-seven men of the 91st lost during this mission.)



42-5712 *My Prayer* – from the Joe Harlick Collection

Folded Wings (continued from page 8)

☛ Marion E Painter 401st Age 94

June 6, 2015, Mesa, AZ

Marion married his high school sweetheart Florence Hill August 12, 1942 and received his draft notice the following day. He was a flight engineer / top turret gunner and was shot down during a bombing raid on Berlin. He was captured and sent first to Stalag Luft VI and later Stalag Luft IV. In February 1945, Marion and thousands of other Allied POWs were put on a forced march to the west. The march, which lasted until April 1945, later came to be known among the survivors as The Black March, The Death March through Germany, or simply The March. An estimated 3,500 Allied POWs died as a result of the march.

In the mid-50's, Marion re-enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He served as a crew chief of a Mace missile site in West Germany for three years during the height of the Cold War, including the period of the construction of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis. He returned to the U.S. in 1963 and served the remainder of his time in the Air Force as an instructor in the Minuteman missile system at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. He retired from the Air Force as a master sergeant in 1972.

Marion was preceded in death by his wife Florence. He is survived by three daughters, Dovie Bryant, Kathy Morris, and Connie Hartig; three sons, James, John, and Paul; 10 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren; and 3 great-great-grandchildren.

☛ Theodore "Ted" L Skawienski 323rd Age 95

April 8, 2016, Grover Beach, CA

Reported by his wife Olivia



Ted joined the Army Air Corps in 1943. He fought in the Pacific and in Europe during WWII. Stationed in England he flew B-17 Bombers over Germany, conducting 96 combat missions. He received numerous commendations including the Distinguished Flying Cross.

While attending flight and navigation school he met married Anne Valk in 1943. He and Anne had 5 children together. After a brief stint as a civilian after the war, he re-enlisted in the USAF in 1947 where he served with distinction until his retirement after 23 years. Stationed at Castle AFB, Ted was assigned to one of the first Strategic Air Command Units, flying B-47 and then B-52 Bombers. He eventually became a Squadron Commander. In 1957 he attended and graduated from the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright Paterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. In 1959, he became the Project Director of the Skybolt Missile project at Eglin AFB, Florida. In 1962 Ted was selected to attend the Naval War College in Newport, RI. He completed his Air Force career stationed at Norton AFB and Vandenberg AFB, California. After retiring from the military he worked for Bechtel and the Air Force Academy, finally settling in Santa Maria.

Ted was preceded in death by his first wife Anne and his second wife Mary. He is survived by his wife Olivia; sons Jan, Ted Jr, Tony; daughters Lisa Hammerly, Mary Olchefske; step-son Gary Brock; and 3 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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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Permit No. 7911

Folded Wings:

✪ **Harry Ackerman 323rd Age 95**

April 15, 2015, Grapevine, TX

Reported by his granddaughter Junell Casey-Dubois



Harry distinguished himself while flying as a Navigator with the 91st Bomb Group. On his 20th mission, he was wounded by flak. He recovered and completed 25 missions. He returned for a second tour with the 34th Bomb Group. On his 7th mission his B-24 was shot down. He was reported a prisoner of war, but actually evaded

capture using the Belgium underground.

His awards include 2 Purple Hearts, 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and 8 Air Medals.

He is preceded in death by his wife June. Harry is survived by his daughter Sally (Mike) Casey; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

✪ **Charles J Justen Jr 324th Age 95**

April 19, 2016, Toledo, OH

Reported by his grandson Casey Wieck



Charles proudly served his country during World War II. He flew 29 missions as a flight engineer / top turret gunner. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with three Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters.

He is survived by daughters Linda (Gary) Ludwig, Susan (Douglas) Smith, Christine (John) Wieck; son-in-law Steven Forrester; 12 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. Charles was preceded in death by his wife of 72 years, Leona; daughter, Julie Forrester; and one great grandson.

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