

# THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322nd BS



323rd BS



Supporting Units



324th BS



401st BS

Vol. 50 No. 1

91st Bombardment Group (H)

January 2017

## Memories of Charleston 2016



Our group at the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum after touring the USS Yorktown (CV-10). This was the first of several events during our four day reunion in Charleston, SC. See pages 5 – 7 for more reunion photos.

**President's Corner****Mick Hanou**

Our Reunion was again successful and attendees enjoyed themselves. My personal thank you to all those who sent me feedback. That is appreciated after all the work put into the Reunion. I also wish to thank my fellow board members and those attendees who pitched in and volunteered to handle the Hospitality Suite, the PX, the lunch at the 8AF Museum, the banquet and raffle, and myriad other items. As with 2014, that help made for a good time for all.

The 2014 Reunion in San Francisco had 104 registrants. Unfortunately, we've since lost Ken Smith, Jake Howland, and Ted Skawinski, whose families were 30% of that attendance. This 2016 Reunion had 42 participants and it has become too difficult to secure favorable room rates with hotel blocks less than 100 room-nights. We also had to modify significantly our Monday tour because we didn't have enough participants. Per the By-Laws, the 2018 reunion should be held in the central region, and some options were discussed at the Business meeting. One is with the 8AF Reunion, which will likely be held in the central region. Another proposal is to coordinate with the rollout of the Memphis Belle and combine with the 8AF or other bomb groups.

Some background: many of the veterans will remember that the reunions used to be split amongst various individual unit reunions in the country. They were eventually combined into one reunion that rotated from Eastern to Central to Western of the country. After the 1996 Reunion in Tucson, the By-Laws were amended such that Article V reads: "If no host group volunteers, then regular meetings of the membership will be held biennially on even numbered years in conjunction with the annual 8th Air Force Historical Society (8th AFHS) reunion." Though the individual units are long-gone, that tradition of rotating between regions and having our own Reunion has persisted. Interestingly, in the January 1997 RI, Paul Limm comments on the By-Law change "Eventually, of course, the advantages of holding our Reunions with the 8th AFHS will become more attractive." We made it 20 more years before needing to invoke that rule change!



Current 91st BGMA Board - Janet Larocco, Jody Kelly, Gary Hall, Mick Hanou, Tom Freer, and Larry Ruth.

**91st BGMA Officers****President****Mick Hanou**

607 Blossom Ct  
Pleasanton, CA 94566  
Tel: (925) 425-3220  
[mhanou@comcast.net](mailto:mhanou@comcast.net)

**Secretary / Treasurer****Jody Kelly**

3600 Harbor Blvd #82  
Oxnard, CA 93035  
Tel: (805) 984-7706  
[njkelly@roadrunner.com](mailto:njkelly@roadrunner.com)

**Editor****Gary Hall**

1054 Sunrise Dr  
Woodbury, MN 55125  
Tel: (651) 260-2397  
[raggedirregular@gmail.com](mailto:raggedirregular@gmail.com)

**1st Vice President****Tom Freer**

6380 Winstead Ct  
Lisle, IL 60532  
Tel: (630) 747-3700  
[tmf1108@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tmf1108@sbcglobal.net)

**2nd Vice President****Larry Ruth**

2316 Smith Hill Rd  
Walworth, NY 14568  
Tel: (315) 524-7936  
[larrylruth@gmail.com](mailto:larrylruth@gmail.com)

**Historian****Janet Larocco**

1132 Duke St  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Tel: (703) 684-1984  
[fauno-aventi@usa.net](mailto:fauno-aventi@usa.net)

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](mailto:b17banta@aol.com)**91st on the Web**

[www.91stbombgroup.com](http://www.91stbombgroup.com)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/91st BGMA](https://www.facebook.com/groups/91stBGMA)

That 1996 Tucson Reunion had 352 registrants and was handled primarily by Ace and Gloria Johnson. We should still recognize that effort and many since (Friedman, Gates, and Shepherd) as it takes some work to track all the people and their events, hotels, and banquet meals.

Other miscellaneous items to report: The Board was reelected, which works well for us as we each seem to have found our niche. Our total membership is 499, 161 of which are veterans, and 23 of which are Associate Full Members. Though we took a small loss on the Reunion, our finances are reasonably sound. We have \$41,556 in total funds which includes \$13,525 in dedicated donations towards Chino, etc., and \$9,418 in the Memorial Fund to support 91st BG Memorials. The dues are due in January. We've maintained \$10 dues again, 10% of which goes to the Memorial Fund. We rely on your donations to help fund the RI. Gary has done a great job of lowering costs and we've converted more to electronic receipt, but all donations help.

Regards,

Mick Hanou



**91st Bomb Group Memorial Association 2017 Membership Dues**

Please do not delay your \$10 annual dues payment. If your dues are not received by April 1, 2017, 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 continued 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.

✂ - - - - -

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

2. Mail dues and other payments to: **Jody Kelly**  
**3600 Harbor Blvd # 82**  
**Oxnard CA 93035-4136**

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)

2017 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Fourth quarter 91st BGMA donations top \$1,000!**

Donna Bogusz  
Jason Mateo

Donald Mounts  
Barrie Railton

Morris Spielberg  
Loren Glenn

*In Honor and Memory of two wonderful "Women of Valor" Breatrice Jacobs and Yvonne Banta*

George Jacobs

**Associate Members seeking  
Associate Full Membership**

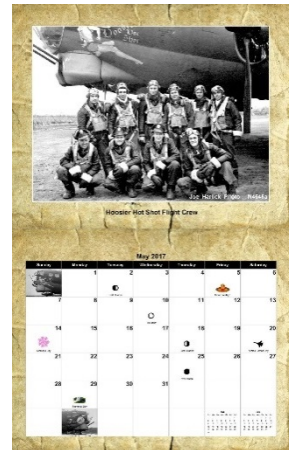
The 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association's by-laws allow an Associate Member to petition the board to become an Associate Full Member. After three years as an Associate Member, one may become a Full Member by written request to the Secretary / Treasurer and majority approval of the 91st BGMA Board. As an Associate Full Member, you are entitled to vote at the reunion business meeting.

**2017 Calendars Available**

Sarah Duzynski, granddaughter of 91st Veteran Maurice Knutson, created a 2017 calendar for our group. A portion of the sales will go directly to the Tower Museum towards Operation Restoration.

The calendar is available in two sizes: 8.5 x 11 and 11 x 14. Either size is \$20 plus shipping.

Calendars can be ordered online at address: <http://tinyurl.com/91CAL2017>.



See 2017 Dues Notice on Page 3.

Please return completed form to:

**Jody Kelly**  
**3600 Harbor Blvd # 82**  
**Oxnard CA 93035-4136**





[clockwise from top]

(1) Our group on the steps of the U.S. Custom House at the end of a visit to the Charleston City Market.

(2) Bob, Jasmine, and Sheila Striegel, and Sharon Baird with the Eighth Air Force Museum's *City of Savannah*.

(3) 91st Veterans George Jacobs, Howard Stebelton, Don Freer, and Glen Kessler with the B-17 *City of Savannah*.

(4) Visiting some recent 91st Bomb Group Memorial Bricks.

(5) Deep conversation in the hospitality suite between Loren Glenn, Dave and Howard Stebelton, and Jeff Uyak.

(6) Robert Orr, Glen Kessler, Jody Kelly, and Rebecca Vaughn.





## Sunday Evening Banquet



Veterans Howard Stebelton, Don Freer, Glen Kessler, Otto Eggert, and George Jacobs with the evening's Color Guard.





Banquet speaker Richard Allison. Richard is the author of "Operation Thunderclap and the Black March." His book is based on the experiences of 91st Veterans Addison Bartush and Paul Lynch.



Our group on the Magnolia Gardens tour.



Fort Sumter [above and below]



Happy New Year! My name is Morris Spielberg. I flew in the 91st Bomb Group, 401st Squadron and my pilot's name was Dick Broughton. On May 22nd, 2016, I received the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor at the French Embassy in New York.

If you participated in Normandy, Provence, Ardennes, or Northern France, and are still alive, you may be eligible to receive this honour as well. The main number for the French Embassy in New York is 212-606-3600. Ms. Claire Voisin was very helpful in the process of receiving this medal. Her telephone number at the embassy is: 212-606-3628. Her email address is: [claire.voisin@diplomatic.gouv.fr](mailto:claire.voisin@diplomatic.gouv.fr).

If you have any additional questions, I would be happy to speak with you. My home phone number is 973-239-5412. The best time to call is between 9.00 am to 5.00 pm EST.



## The Crew — Dec. 1, 1943

By Eileen P. Duggan

On Dec. 1, 1943, my father didn't die. But the rest of his B-17 bomber crew did. And he spent the rest of his life trying to fulfill the purpose for which he was spared.



B-17 bomber A/C 229794, a.k.a. Mizpah II

The crew of *Mizpah II*, officially aircraft No. 229794, of the 322nd Bomb Squadron, 91st Bombardment Group (known as the Ragged Irregulars), 8th Air Force, was based in Basingbourne, England, during World War II. 1st Lt. Les Duggan Jr., my dad, was the co-pilot of the crew with whom he had trained in Washington state and Oregon. As the end of 1943 drew near, the 322nd was training Lt. Harry Hollinger to pilot his own crew. His trial run would be a combat mission to Germany with *Mizpah II* and other aircraft. On Dec. 1, Lt. Duggan sat out so Hollinger could fly.

The mission target was Leverkusen, Germany, but over Vossenack, the formation of bombers and fighters met enemy fire. The *Mizpah II* was one of five planes that were lost that day at Vossenack, three of them with the 322nd Squadron.



Pilot Lt. Leonard F.  
(Andy) Anderson

It was the thick of WWII, and the Western Allies were making bombing runs over Germany, in efforts to put an end to the Nazi regime's numerous grave misdeeds. On Dec. 1, 1943, the 91st Bomb Group sent three squadrons including 28 aircraft to assist in a bombing raid of a chemical works plant at Leverkusen, then were diverted because of cloud cover to a secondary target at Solingen. The *Mizpah II* was one of those

bombers. Although the crew referred to their plane as *Mizpah II*, in honor of a previous *Mizpah* that ditched at Stuttgart three months earlier, the 91st labeled it as a no-name B-17G, serial No. 229794. The plane was piloted that day by Leonard (Andy) Anderson and trainee co-pilot Hollinger.

Also on the mission was the *Wheel 'N Deal*, co-piloted by 2nd Lt. Robert Dickson, who happened to be Hollinger's best friend. Incidentally, Dickson also was a substitute pilot flying with a crew not usually his own. While forming up over England, Dickson's and Hollinger's planes were mixed up in the planned formation, when another bomber had to abort from the mission.

When they neared the target, flying at about 26,000 feet, the American B-17 bombers attracted 40 to 50 German Luftwaffe Focke-Wulfs on their tail. For about 20 minutes from 1140 and 1200 hours, the Flying Fortresses had no fighter escort. During this period, Dickson's plane was damaged and dropped back in the formation. A second attack destroyed the batteries, knocking out the two turrets. After his plane was hit a third time, Dickson and all but one of his crew bailed out. Landing in Germany, the *Wheel 'N Dealers* were captured and held in a German prison of war camp for the duration of the war. Tail gunner William Roller was hit and went down with the plane into the Rhine River.



The Gunners of *Mizpah II*

Before bailing, Dickson had seen the wing of his friend Hollinger's plane get shot off by German fighters halfway between Koblenz and Cologne, sending the *Mizpah II* spinning down out of control. No parachutes came out.



Because the two planes had switched places in the formation, other crews on the mission reported that it was Dickson's plane that spun out of control and went down with no chutes deployed. It was the *Mizpah II* crew that was presumed to have bailed out. They were declared Missing in Action; Dickson and his crew were presumed Killed in Action.

It took the Red Cross almost a year to notify Dickson's family that he was still alive in a POW camp.

Meanwhile, the families of the *Mizpah II* crew held onto hope that their men were just missing. Among the devastated and uncertain was the crew's original co-pilot, Lt. Duggan, who, but for an orientation schedule, would have been in Hollinger's seat when A/C 794 crashed in German territory.

The crew of *Mizpah II* — officially A/C LG-O #229794 — were: Pilot — 2nd Lt. Leonard F. (Andy) Anderson (age 23, Skagit County, Washington); Co-pilot — 2nd Lt. Harry Hollinger (23, Bonne Terre, Missouri); Navigator — 2nd Lt. Steve Domladovac Jr. (21, Struthers, Ohio); Radio Operator — Staff Sgt. Robert L. Pendergast (31, Syracuse, New York); Bombardier — 2nd Lt. Clinton V. Copeland (21, Lockhart, Texas); Ball Turret — Sgt. Albert V. Rose (29, Providence, Rhode Island); Top Turret/Engineer — Staff Sgt. Everett N. Ross Jr. (22, Buffalo, New York); Waist Gunner — Sgt. Wayne Houser (22, Rockwall County, Texas); Waist Gunner 2 — Sgt. Joseph F. Campbell (23, Tarkio, Missouri); Tail Gunner — Sgt. Charles Shelley (28, Tulsa, Oklahoma).

Lt. Duggan was rather a prolific writer of letters to home. The tenor of his letters before Dec. 1, 1943 was that of a young man writing about girls, planes and popular singers, asking dad to send spending money, complaining about the army. He wrote nothing about his missions, and his letters were never redacted or censored. When his crew was lost, he was one month and 11 days shy of 22. The tone of his letters became more serious. He didn't mention the incident directly in his extant letters, but it's apparent that the folks back home knew about it somehow.



Lt. Lester W. Duggan Jr.

Two weeks after the mission, Duggan asked his parents to write to the mother of bombardier Clint Copeland, known as "Chug," of Lockhart, Texas, to tell her that he had "every reason to believe that he is safe. He was a very good buddy of mine as were all the boys in the crew. I only wish that I would have been with them that day. Don't think I'm foolish, but that's the way I feel."

As it turned out, he wrote to the Copelands himself, trying to walk the line between hope and false hope. After describing the eyewitness reports, he wrote, "I don't know what happened after that and I don't want to raise any false

hopes. It's entirely possible that they may have all bailed out or even landed in enemy territory."

In September 1944, back in the States, Harry Hollinger's wife visited Les Duggan while he was on leave in St. Louis. She still had not received a definitive answer about her husband and was eager for information. She was disappointed.

"I found out absolutely nothing from Les," Erma Lee Hollinger wrote to Ann Domladovac, one of navigator Steve Domladovac's three sisters. "He either didn't know anything at all (no more than I did) or he chose to convey that impression, for good reasons, I am sure. Everything he said was rather confused and vague, and I just had to come to my own conclusions from his reactions. He apparently was greatly upset over losing the crew, and seemed to be an especial friend and pal of Copeland's. He also remarked what a great guy Steve was. ... He may only have a strong hunch where they are, but he definitely wasn't encouraging in the least, and on the other hand, he couldn't be said to be discouraging. I really gained nothing by seeing him." She wrote that if they didn't hear anything at the end of 12 months, the War Department would declare the airmen officially KIA.

By that time, Germany had reported the deaths of four of the crew and that they had been buried in Vossenack. Mrs. Hollinger and Les Duggan both were mystified as to why Germany would report only four, leaving the fate of the other six unknown.

But Duggan did know something about Harry Hollinger, another Missourian whom he had never met. Duggan had written home in March that someone at base had heard from Hollinger as a POW. By May 5, the story on Hollinger was muddier, as his original co-pilot who had reported unofficially that he was a POW, had since gone missing himself. On May 28, Duggan wrote his family that he had no official news of Hollinger and Copeland, whose wife and mother, respectively, had written him. "I just didn't know what to tell them," he wrote. "The word about Hollinger is unofficial and the fellow who told me has since gone down," he wrote.

Eventually the *Mizpah II* airmen were declared killed in action. Hearts were broken; the war dragged on.

### The Aftermath

Because of the loss of his crew, Duggan, by his own account, floundered around the base in Bassingbourn for several months, flying occasionally until he was assigned to a new crew on the *Texas Chubby*. After finishing his tour of duty in May 1944 with a total of 29 missions, he spent three more months in England and Ireland with an Air Transport Group, ferrying airplane parts and VIPs, such as bandleader Major Glenn Miller, around the British Isles. Shortly before D-Day, June 6, 1944, he flew a VIP general from an allied country to a secret rendezvous with General James Doolittle in a remote part of Wales.

In May 1945, the fighting in Europe ended, and with Japan's surrender in August, the war was over. The survivors who went home and the families of those who didn't all started new lives, trying to put the war behind them.

Duggan returned to his home town, Richmond Heights, Missouri, just over the western border of St. Louis. He served in the new Air Force Reserves for several years while attending college and law school at Saint Louis University. In 1947, he married Frances Burke, a newly minted piano teacher and graduate of St. Louis Institute of Music. His older brother, Joe, a B-29 radio operator who had received a Purple Heart for an injury in a bombing mission over Tokyo, married another SLIM piano teacher, Frances's friend Jean Stahl. Les and Joe's oldest brother, Ed, married his longtime love, Eugenia Bernhard, after surviving the war and the Battle of the Bulge as a quartermaster with the 357th Infantry, serving in the Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe, Normandy and Northern France. All three brothers married that same summer, as did one of their sisters, Tess, and commenced getting to work, raising families, populating the suburbs and helping lead the country into prosperity, along with many of the WWII veterans, the "Greatest Generation."



SSgt. Joseph D. Duggan



SSgt. Edward L. Duggan

Les Duggan went on to accomplish many achievements. He married and raised five children and took to the stage as an amateur thespian and singer. He was a lawyer, mostly in private practice, often taking cases other lawyers wouldn't for clients who couldn't pay him. He got involved in politics, becoming the mayor of a little-known northern St. Louis suburb called Ferguson. He ran for various other offices, including state representative, prosecutor and even governor, often as an outside-chance candidate, just to make sure the people had a choice. In the late 1960s, he joined a new law partner in the booming town of O'Fallon, Missouri, in St. Charles County, just west of St. Louis County. After practicing in St. Charles County for some 25 years, he was elected a Circuit Court judge and served a six-year term.

He lived a life of strong principles, a life his crew could not.

### The Memories Resurface

The tale of Dec. 1, 1943 was unknown to our family until 1995, when he was contacted by Steve Domladovac's nephew, Rick Senffner. Although Dad had never told the story to our mother or any of us kids, it apparently was never far from his consciousness.

More than 50 years later, he recalled in painstaking detail in a letter to Rick Senffner all the members of the crew. Senffner had located and contacted my dad through the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association, after finding his name in the letter from Mrs. Hollinger to his aunt, Ann Domladovac. Senffner's mother, Frances, was the youngest of the sisters, three years younger than Steve, a National Honor Society student who was talented in math, algebra and calculus. He aspired to be a pilot, but he scored high in math on his officer training test, so he was sent to navigator training. He was 21 when he died. His nephew became a pilot himself, with a special interest in WWII-era planes, the B-17 in particular. A member of the Commemorative Air Force Airbase Arizona in Mesa, Senffner honors his uncle's memory and service by being part of the flight crew of a vintage, fully restored B-17 called Sentimental Journey around the country for air shows and tours.

"I am ashamed that I have made no effort to contact any family of the crew members before," Dad wrote to Senffner in July 1995. "It seems that I did make some effort after that tragic incident which changed all of our lives so drastically. I guess it was so traumatic to me that I tried to shut it out of my mind, but that is impossible because I still think about the incident and the members of the crew frequently even now."



Lt. Steve Domladovac Jr.

He recalled Steve as a "fine man and a fine navigator. Quiet, but intelligent and competent. He got us from Scott Field across the great Atlantic and hit all of those remote spots on the way in unusual weather." The crew had trained together in Walla Walla, Washington, and Madras, Oregon, before heading across the country, then across the Atlantic Ocean to the United Kingdom to join the war.

An unscheduled stop along the way due to engine trouble allowed radio operator Robert Pendergast to see his family in Syracuse, New York. "The Lord must have taken a hand to him, because it was the last time his family saw him," Dad wrote.

On Sept. 20, 1943, the day before that trip across the Atlantic, Steve Domladovac wrote to his oldest sister Ann, hoping she could ease his parents' apprehensions. "This is the moment they've been dreading to see," he wrote. "I think my chances are very good of coming back. I'll need a lot of luck and prayers, will power and guts in the next few months. I hope I will have all of those requisites. It's awful hard to write a letter before going over. I've got a lot to say but it just won't come out. Tell Mom and Dad that I will promise to do my best for them. I want them to be proud of me and will try to live up to our name."

Steve need not have worried about having the right requisites. "We flew only a few combat missions as a crew before that tragic day," Les Duggan wrote. "I can tell you that Steve did his job well because he had to see that we made it to the rendezvous point where the group formed after



takeoff to head for the target. ... We flew on the same plane many times and each got shot at the same times by the same enemy. There is some special relationship that comes from that which is like no other. What could you call a guy who fought for and gave his life for his country but a special hero? I often think about him and the others on that special crew and the many others whom I knew who will never come back. The Lord will have a special place for them, I'm certain. Those of us who did survive must keep this country worthy of their supreme sacrifice."

"I try not to think about the war and all of the fine men like Steve who died in the prime of their lives," he continued. "Even though I am convinced that it was a worthy, necessary cause, it seems such a terrible waste of fine young men — and women."

Then there was the inescapable memory of the coincidence that kept Lt. Duggan from dying along with his crew. "The Lord works in mysterious ways," he wrote to Senffner. "I have always felt that He spared me for some purpose. I don't feel that I have yet justified that Decision; and, of course, have felt some responsibility for Lt. Hollinger's fate, though I played no part in the decision."

### At Rest

Three of the crew members who were originally buried in Vossenack, Germany, were moved later to Ardennes American Cemetery near Liege, Belgium, where more than 7,500 American servicemen are buried. Those include Steve Domladovac, Andy Anderson and Charles Shelley. Senffner laid flowers on their graves in 1999 on behalf of his mother. "Standing among a sea of white crosses, you cannot express the feeling that you feel toward these special heroes," Senffner wrote on the 91st Bomb Group website. "These young men gave up all of their tomorrows so that we could have our todays."



Steve Domladovac's gravesite at Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium.

Clint Copeland's body was finally returned to his family in Lockhart, Texas, on June 1, 1949, and he was buried in the Lockhart Cemetery with full military honors. "Chug" had been awarded the Purple Heart posthumously in January 1945, although his precise fate was still unknown at that time, according to the Lockhart Post-Register.

Three of the crew, Everett N. Ross Jr. of Niagara County, New York; Robert L. Pendergast of Syracuse, New York; and Joseph F. Campbell of Tarkio, Missouri, are buried in a common grave at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis. Across that same cemetery is a memorial stone for their co-pilot who lived, Lester W. Duggan Jr.



Gravesite of Campbell, Pendergast, and Ross at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery

My dad died of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) at age 76 in 1998, two days after the remains of Lt. Michael Blassie, a Vietnam-era fighter pilot, were moved from the tomb of the Vietnam Unknown Soldier in Washington's Arlington Cemetery and reinterred at Jefferson Barracks in his home



Michael Blassie's gravesite.

state of Missouri. It struck me at the time that this Vietnam-era pilot had been about the same age as my dad was when that B-17 went down without him. If Blassie had survived, what might he have achieved? Might he have become a lawyer, too? An airline pilot? An engineer? A teacher? A few

years later, I learned that the remains of three of the *Mizpah II* crew members — from an earlier war that robbed society of the potential of even more young men — rest little more than a baseball's pitch from Blassie's grave.



The author and Rick Senffner with *Sentimental Journey*, a fully restored B-17 of the Commemorative Air Force Arizona Airbase.

This December, 73 years have passed since that bomber went down. What could those young men have achieved in those years? Do the three buried in St. Louis have any relatives who have visited their grave? My sister and I occasionally visit, leave flowers and other remembrances, and ponder what might have been.

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

Ragged Irregular  
1054 Sunrise Drive  
Woodbury, MN 55125-9282  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
Permit No. 7911

**Folded Wings:**

✧ **Robert T Dean 324th Age 91**

May 13, 2016, Ocean City, MD



Reported by his daughter Amy

Bob joined the US Army Air Force when turning 18 and served with the 91st Bomb group for two years.

Bob was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 67 years, Jeanne Dean; his daughters, Melissa Lauer and Connie Giordano. He is survived by his children, Robert; Sydney (Dave)

McKay, and Amy (Dale) Swecker; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

✧ **George J "Hammy" Amrhein 401st Age 98**

June 25, 2015, Glen Head, NY

✧ **John C Portner 323rd Age 87**

May 20, 2012, Swarthmore, PA

John was a tail gunner with the 91st Bomb Group. He flew 31 missions and received several commendations, including the Purple Heart.

Beloved husband of 56 years to Lucy Portner (nee Taddeo). Loving father of Louretta, Lorraine, Kathleen Scandle, Deborah, and Jacqueline Reilly. Cherished grandfather of eight and great-grandfather of five.

✧ **Chester R Zimmerman 401st Age 84**

May 24, 2007, Casselberry, FL

✧ **Marvin M Goldberg 324th Age 91**

March 17, 2014, Melbourne, FL