The Ragged Irregular

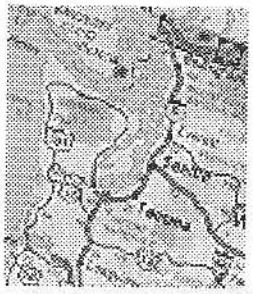
322nd SQDN | 323rd SQDN | Supporting Units | 324th SQDN | 401st SQDN

Vol 35 No. 2 | 91st Bombardment Group (H) | April 2002

Toot Toot Tacoma in 2002!!!

Ed Gates Report #3

Tacoma, WA. In Tacoma we are busily preparing the right-of-way for the arrival of the 91st BGMA. We clearly will not have it all done by the time you arrive. But that means we can be an ongoing "City of Destiny."



Tacoma

If you have not received your Reunion Bulletin and Registration Form from "Ace" Johnson by mid-April, contact him. (I will have probably fled the country by then with him in hot pursuit unless I get the info for the mailing to him real soon!) If we can interest local Boys and Girls' Clubs in participating, would you be willing to judge art related to the 91st, B-17s, etc? Would you care to share oral history with young people or others? If so, mark your registration Form.

Plans are pretty much as envisioned in my pitch to you at Galveston and as given in the October 2001 *Ragged Irregular*. One change is the Business Meeting and Ladies/Friends Tour will be on Friday morn because the LeMay Antique Auto (& other stuff) show was only able to handle our group Saturday.

While we have no real way of knowing until July, we are planning on 400 or so attendees. We have blocked over 240 rooms at La Quinta (800-531-5900), Best Western Executive Inn (253-922-0800) and Days Inn in Fife (800-274-9177 at no more than $79 plus tax (about $90/nite). More detail in you Reunion Bulletin, identify your self as a member of the 91st BGMA. This is the peak season for the Great Northwest —no humidity, rain, hurricanes, tornados and average temperatures ranging from 50 to 78 degrees. Daylight til 8:30 pm. Bring a coat and/or sweater for the evening!

We have negotiated group rates with Southwest Airlines (in your Jan 2000 R.I.), Alaska Airlines (5% off any fare of 10% off First Class or regular coach) and Continental (10% off if booking for 60 days before flight, 5% up to 5 days before). For Alaska, (800-44-4435) cite code **CMR 5679**, for Continental (800-468-7022) cite code **VRWTH4**, mention 91st BGMA.

We will try some innovations which we hope will work better than YB-40 armored gun ships did in 1942. Get your Registration Forms in by 31 May to participate in a drawing for fifty $5 coupons for food or beverages at the La Quinta. The first 150 who check-in will find special goodies in their Welcome Bags.

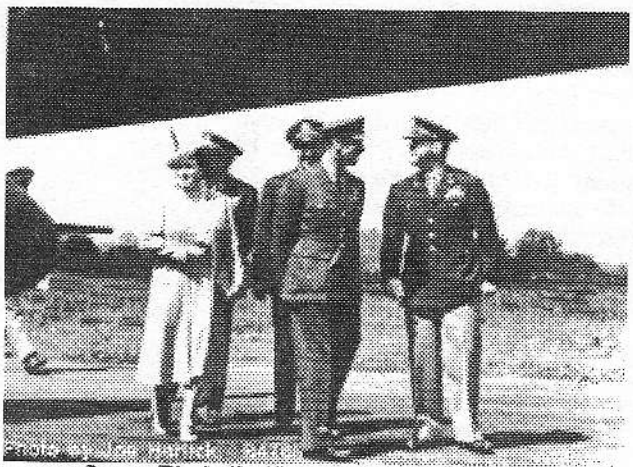
Continued on Page 3.....

Queen Mother Dies at Age 101

Her Late Majesty, the Queen Mother, Elizabeth, passed away March 31, 2002. The 91st Bomb Gp. stationed at Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, during the Second World War, was honored by her visit in the company of His Majesty King George VI, in 1942.



Queen Elizabeth & King George VI visit MEMPHIS BELLE



Queen Elizabeth - King George VI - Col. Wray by tail of MEMPHIS BELLE

We are saddened by her departure and express our sympathy to the Royal Family and the United Kindom, our ally in World War II and today in our war against Terrorism..

The President's Corner

Since the beginning of February, I have been a member of a grand jury. This duty will continue twice each week until 2 May. As is apparently quite common for grand juries, a disproportionate fraction of my group has had law enforcement experience. Most of the others are, like me, first timers on a grand jury. Unlike the professionals on the jury, I am shocked and appalled at the variety and quantity of depravity which appears to exist in my community. When witnesses testify, I am astounded to realize that often the testimony is largely fabricated. For the first weeks, I felt totally inadequate to the assigned task, being limited by my own naiveté.

More recently I have become less concerned about my many limitations and simply try to do the best job I can. All of us are restricted by personal experience, which is necessarily limited. Mine has been an association with very honorable people. My postwar career was in science. Scientists are people who are so busy making sure that they don't kid themselves, i.e., preserving their objectivity, that they automatically follow Polonius' advice to Laertes: Not lying to themselves keeps them from lying to anyone else. During the war, the people in what was then the Army Air Corps seemed quite poor at articulating moral and patriotic sentiments, but practiced the ideas anyway.

Given the choice between the way I have had it and the way it could have been, I'll take the way it has been. I've been very lucky. I just have to work a little harder when a member of a jury.

Bob Friedman.....

Nominations and Elections, 2002. A message from Paul Limm, Chairman of the Nominations Committee.

The 91st BGMA will furl and case its colors by the end of this decade. Unfortunately, as the Folded Wings list in the Ragged Irregular grows longer, it is also more difficult to find candidates to run for office in our Association. The 91st BGMA has six officers: President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Secretary-Treasurer, Historian and Editor of the Ragged Irregular. If you are a Full or Life Member, and wish to be nominated and have your name placed on the ballot for the Year 2002 election, please send me your name and a brief resume, and the office for which you desire to be a candidate no later than May 15, 2002. If you wish to nominate others, be certain that they are willing to serve. We are desperately in need of candidates for the offices of Editor of the Ragged Irregular and 2nd Vice President.

In the real world, "headhunters" have material, monetary and tangible incentives to offer the key personnel they pursue. The 91st BGMA can only offer an opportunity to serve a noble organization, but the immeasurable reward is the recognition by and the gratitude of, a distinguished group of WWII veterans who served in the 91st Bomb Group at Bassingbourn.

.....Signed Paul Limm

Send your name or your nominee's name to:

Paul Limm:
501 Calle de Soto,
San Clemente, CA 92672,
Telephone: (949) 492-4502
E-Mail: <jlimm91bgma@yahoo.com>.

The ballots will be mailed out by the end of May, 2002.

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Editorial

As some of you have already heard, I informed the officers of our association that I will not stand for reelection as Editor in the next biennium. It has been a wonderful experience that I have thoroughly enjoyed these six years and it will remain with me the rest of my life. I will, of course, carry on until the expiration of my current term.

We are living in an explosion of communications through various media but the greatest of these to me is the electronic mail. The amount of information available about our unit, the 91st, the people who served in it, the people who died in it, our allies and friends abroad who suffered with us and remember us, and even some of the people on the other side of the equation who fought us in the skies and imprisoned us when we were downed, but most importantly our fellow crewmen, squadron mates, and those in other squadrons in the air and on the ground, the term "awesome" is hardly adequate.

Looking into the future, it is my hope that the Ragged Irregular will continue and perhaps sometime, maybe not too far in the future, will be produced and distributed entirely by electronic mail—and IN COLOR. Perhaps it can be downloaded from the 91st web site. (I'll surely need a high speed cable connection.)

I thank all of the membership for their support and cooperation and patience.

Phil Mack, Editor

Report of the Secretary/Treasurer

Welcome New Life Members:

Joseph H. Backsman	324th	Raymond W. Paul	323rd
William D. Cameron,	323rd	Francis W. Rogers	401st
Hubert F. Donahue	323rd	James Shepherd	AL
Louis C. Goodman	323rd	Charles Smith, Jr.	323rd
Leland E. Forsblad	323rd	John Watts	324th
William G. Howard JR	AL	Richard L. White	323rd

Asay ("Ace") Johnson, Sec'y/Treas.

Toot Toot Tacoma in 2002 Cont. from Page1

We'll try a shuttle with regular stops in the Port and downtown at least Wednesday and Friday afternoon and eve to serve those without cars. Please mark your Registration Form if you will have a handicapped pass from your state; we may be able to obtain special vehicles. We and the Downtown Tacoma Merchants Association plan a "Nite on the Town" on Friday, it may involve the community in honoring the Flying Fort. We have no idea how it will work out!

If you plan to do the pre-reunion trip to Victoria and the San Juan Islands on Mon-Tues or the Boeing Flight Museum on Wednesday, you will have to plan your plane or train arrival for the day before. We will have advance registration at 8 am Monday at the La Quinta for those leaving for Victoria. If you stay at the LaQuinta Sunday nite, they will store your baggage free on Monday nite and you can pick up reservations beginning Tuesday when you return. We will have a "Free" reception (something less than gala) on Wednesday. There is a cruise to Alaska sailing from Seattle at 4 pm Sunday, Sept. 1.

Thursday Aug. 29, will be a delightful test of whether we can pull off a bit of logistics shuffling. Since we will be visiting Mc Chord AFB— USAF's Logistics Command—of course it will work. We want to combine the visit to the Air Force's 21st Century transport (C-17) - free -with a trip to Mt. Tahoma (aka Rainier) and a ride on the early 20th century Scenic Railway to a Salmon Bake. We plan to provide transport back to the LaQuinta early for those who want to do "The Mountain but not the train ride and Salmon Bake. Those who have seen enough mountains or aren't up to a full day, can leave the La Quinta at 10:30 arriving at the McChord Command briefing and C-17 at 11:00, have lunch and tour the base afterwards and return to Tacoma, at 4:30 pm they will have the option of leaving to join the intrepid ones for the Scenic Railway ride and Salmon Bake or loaf around Tacoma on their own.

Friday brings a members' Business Meeting as ladies and other guests tour Lakewood Gardens. Members who attend the Meeting will receive a $5 coupon for food or drink at the LaQuinta (almost covers the cost of the Friday buffet lunch). In the afternoon, we have scheduled Squadron pictures (and a 91st BGMA Board of Directors meeting). Then Friday late afternoon and evening will be our "Nite on the Town")well, until 9:00 pm - Mom wouldn't let us be out after dark). It will be a great opportunity to visit the Washington State Museum , the Tacoma Art Museum, the brand new International Museum of Glass and the glass bridge, Grassi's Café and the merchants who are working with us.

There will be a Friday buffet at Harmon's brewery with a cash bar for our own 91st BG labeled beers. They can handle about 100 at a time so it may be on a revolving basis. Be sure to count the steps on the way up so you don't crash land on the way down - we're not accustomed to being the bombees.

Saturday will start with a special Bombers' breakfast of chipped beef on toast (aka known as s-o-s) dried eggs, dried milk, orange marmalade and such goodies for those who wonder how good we had it. From there it will be uphill. We plan shuttle buses to the LeMay Antique Car (and other stuff) Show so you can stay as long as you want, it has the largest collection of antique autos in the world and a couple of London double-decker red buses. By Banquet time on Saturday, we'll settle for monogrammed glasses.

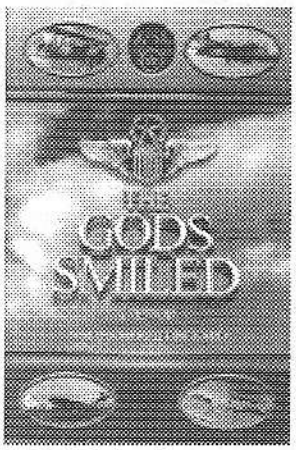
We may not do it right, but Tacoma in surely going to try to make it fun. Y'all come! Y' hear!"

The Gods Smiled Continued from right column....

political leadership stumbled into that morass, probably abetted by one of the Services, is worth reading and will no doubt raise hackles.

"While subtitled 'A Memoir,' the book more closely resembles a classical, old-fashioned autobiography, being a personal account of the writer's entire life."

[Ed. Note: Of the nineteen books he has reviewed, this Editor gives full recommendation to this book without reservation.]



Book Report: "The Gods Smiled" — A Memoir by Walter Merritt Pickard

This is a hard cover novel of 490 pages, with an attractive cover in soft tones of blues, grays, white, silver. Aircraft that the author flew are pictured on the perimeters: the Stearman, PT-17 trainer, the B-17 Flying fortress, the C-47 "Gooney Bird" (more politely named the " Dakota," and the T-33 Lockheed "T Bird"

The cover reflects the good taste of the entire book which covers the span of almost a lifetime. [We hope Col. "Walt" Pickard has many more adventures ahead of him, but that they may be a little tamer than those in the past.]

The fly leaf is quoted: "'The Gods Smiled'....is the story of the tens of thousands of young Americans who became "Accidental Warriors" serving in the Air Force during WWII and who continued to serve during the Cold War that followed. The author, a retired Air Force Colonel, was in that number. He relates the thrills and occasional moments of terror experienced in undergraduate pilot training. Then he tells how he was further trained to pilot and command a ten-man B-17 heavy bomber crew.

"His crew was assigned to a Bomb Group [the 91st, of course] of the 8th Air Force in England, arriving on the first of December 1943. Thus they were in position to take part in the bloody air battles with the German Luftwaffe (and German Flak batteries) during the dark, cold and critical winter of 1943-44, when the United States and Royal Air Force wrested control of the air space over Europe from the Luftwaffe.

"The writer tells, in easily understood terms, the strategic concepts underlying this epic, first-ever test of Strategic Air Power theory, as well as detailing tactics used by our bombers and fighters in implementing those basic concepts. Luftwaffe fighter tactics are also described in chilling detail. Descriptions of the ensuing air battles are graphic and frightening, even this far removed in time—especially for those who were there.

"The writer also describes in gripping detail how he was forced to ditch his battle-damaged Fortress in the North Sea with the loss of half of his crew.

These war stories make for grim and sad reading. But the lighter side of life, while on leave in London and on detached duty to North Africa and Italy, is not omitted.

"The Allied defeat of Germany , Italy and Japan in 1945 was seemingly merely a prelude to the longer lasting and potentially more destructive Cold War with the Soviet Union which followed. During the re-mobilization of American fighting strength to counter this threat, the "Christmas-help" Reserve Officers who had become warriors by accident in WWII, formed the nucleus of the professional force which waged the Cold War. The writer, after a spell in Reserve status (between end of WWII and start of the Korean War), was recalled to active duty and became a career Regular Officer.

"Part Three of the book relates the next twenty-five years of the writer's duties during the undeclared war with the Soviets. These included, commencing in 1952, assignment to a Fighter Wing in England and subsequent duty with other NATO forces in/Turkey, Belgium and France. And, unlike in a 'hot war,' he was accompanied by his family on these assignments. He and they experienced the 'Culture Shock' of adapting to the different and sometimes strange local customs, languages and dialects, while at the same time he was encountering bracing experiences while flying in the loosely organized civil air traffic control environment of Europe in those early post-war years.

"The writer was also assigned to the Air Staff in the Pentagon for three years of duty. His duties in Plans made him privy to many of the policy decisions leading, for example, to our involvement in the Vietnam War. His candid and scathing comments on how the

Continued in the adjacent column.....

Two Missions that Weren't By Phil Mack

Mission of 14 Dec 43. The first actual to Berlin, or "Big B" as we called it, was completed 6 Mar 44; however, first scheduled mission to Berlin was for 14 Dec 43. The earlier mission was, of course, "scrubbed." Following are the recollections of this author who was scheduled to fly in his regular duty as Co-Pilot of the "Village Flirt," "OR-M" with Dave Bramble, Pilot, and our regular crew.

The wake up call came unusually early. Dave and I shared a room in squadron house. It seemed we had hardly been in the sack for more than an hour. It was a very cold night and we shuffled over to the briefing hut, groggy and grumbling.

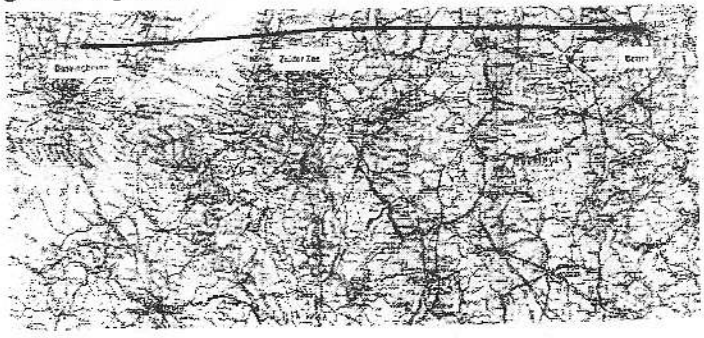
The hut was cold. The two pot-belly stoves had just been fired up and weren't producing much heat. The wall map at the back of the dais was covered so we couldn't see the target. Intuitively we guessed it had to be something big and most likely "Big B." That sent shivers into the hearts of the men, this author included. Everyone shivered. It wasn't all from the cold of the room. It was from what we might see when the curtain was drawn back.

A Photographer came in and took a picture of the crews seated before him. This was another omen of something big coming up.



Crews awaiting Briefing Officers

I don't recall who among our Group Staff arrived first. In that time period it was usually Major Alford, Group Operations Officer. When the curtain was opened, there it was: Berlin! Straight in and straight out. There was no diversion, no feint at another target, nothing but blood and guts straight in.



Berlin Route Map —14 Dec 43

What also was different about this mission was that we would (1) take off at night (most previous takeoffs had been in the daylight), (2) instead of assembling over a "buncher," we would individually fly a direct route to the Zuider Zee in the Netherlands. (3) We would circle the Zee until we could find our leader who would be circling with his landing gear extended and join up in the prearranged order of battle. When this was assembled we would then proceed on a direct route to Big B.

The idea apparently was that the weather over Germany was supposed to be so bad that the Luftwaffe wouldn't be able to get off the ground. The long range P-51 Mustangs hadn't yet arrived in large numbers.

After briefing, the crews donned their gear and went out to the dispersal areas. Assigned to the 323rd Squadron, we were taken by truck to our dispersal area in the "avenue of trees" on the north side of the field. We did our external visual inspection and climbed aboard, still shivering. It was a night as cold and as black as any I had seen it in England. It was raining and ice and snow appeared to be sticking to the wings. We started engines on schedule and the movement across the road to the airfield began precisely at taxi time.

Once on the perimeter strip, we came to a stop to await the green-green flare signaling takeoff. We had completed our cockpit check and engine run up. Not far ahead of us was the squadron lead ship, the "Careful Virgin," with Major Bishop and Capt. Gladstone. We sat and waited what seemed to have been a long time. Finally a flare was fired from the tower. My recollection is dim on the color but I would think it would have been an amber flare. In any case, it was a signal that the Pilot and the Navigator of each aircraft were to return to the briefing hut for a new briefing.

As Co-Pilot, I remained with the aircraft and the rest of the crew. It was still raining and the rain was forming more ice. It wasn't a good night. It seemed we waited a long time when we finally saw a red red flare fired from the tower. The trucks came back to pick up the crews and we were returned to our respective Operations Offices.

The mission hadn't been scrubbed; it was just postponed. I sat down on one of the steel folding chairs, laid my parachute pack and flak helmet on the floor beside me, and leaned back against the wall in the Ops room and fell asleep.

The next thing I knew was that someone was shaking my arm saying, "Wake up, Sir. Wake up. It's morning. The mission was scrubbed." It was indeed morning. It was 0800 Hrs. I must have slept in that chair for several hours.

Later, I heard that the weather that was supposed to have been stalled over Germany, i.e., freezing rain, had instead stalled over England.

The second mission of interest was scheduled the day after the 14 Oct 43 Schweinfurt mission on which the 8th Air Force has lost 60 bombers. The 91st suffered the loss of only one aircraft but the other returning aircraft all suffered major battle damage. This mission had become known as "Black Thursday." [Ref: "Black Thursday," by Martin Caidin, © Bantam Books, 1960.]

On the very next day, 15 Oct 43, the 8th Air Force ordered another maximum effort mission. Historically, this mission never occurred. The 1st Combat Wing had suffered so much in the October Air Offensive that the entire 91st Bomb Group could put up only six aircraft! It took three Groups to put up one "Group" of 18 aircraft!

Continued on Page 5, Column 1.....

Two Missions that Weren't (Cont from P. 4)

This writer was again on the crew of the Village Flirt assigned to participate in this mission. After briefing, we flew to another B-17 bomber base. Upon arrival, we found that there would be three Groups participating in order to make up a single combat Group of 18 aircraft!. The other Groups comprising the 1st Combat Wing at the time were the 351st and the 381st.

After a second briefing, we waited around the trucks that were to take us out to our aircraft, a Red Cross vehicle was parked nearby offering hot coffee. I went over and got a cup and returned to our ship with the rest of the crew. While sipping my brew, I noticed that the pilot of another ship in our squadron was standing behind the Red Cross truck, vomiting. I knew him. He had been on all the rough missions of the past couple of weeks including the one the previous day.

I also noticed a "Padre" nearby no doubt giving comfort to crew members of other ships. I walked over to him and told him about the Pilot and that he had been on all the rough missions recently. The Chaplain went over to him and I returned to my duties.

The mission was scrubbed. If anyone in 8th Air Force Headquarters wanted to find out what the breaking point was for the air crews, they had found it. Some intelligence prevailed and the mission was canceled.

The Pilot who had taken ill was given a rest leave. Sometime later, he returned to the Group to complete his combat tour. I have always ranked him among the top "heroes" of that war.

Letters to the Editor and Short Bursts.....

Bert Markle wrote us last July to tell us that his father, Herbert Markle, really enjoyed reading the newsletter with Ben Fourmy's story (Oct. 1999 RI). He said that after reading that and the rest of the issue he felt like he was there again, ready to go on another mission. He also sent in a check for his membership and expressed regrets that he hadn't joined the organization (91st BGMA) earlier. [Welcome aboard.] He also gave us permission to publish his own story of his imprisonment and escape from Stalag Luft 1 at Barth.

"On the 24th of May 1944*,we crashed our B-17, on fire, on the way to Berlin. I became a POW and I made up my mind that I would have to try to escape.

"After traveling by boxcar for several days we arrived at Dulag Luft at Frankfurt. We went through a very intense interrogation for a few days and then another trip by boxcar to Stalag Luft 1 at Barth. That was a trip no one will ever forget. I am certain all ex-POWs will agree. I still dream about those boxcars.


Herbert Markle

Stalag Luft 1 turned out to be the best camp from which to try to escape. If you were able to get out of the camp you did not have to go far to reach the coast. The town of Barth was a seaport and was not far from Denmark. At any other camp you would have to go all over Germany before you could hope to get in friendly hands. [* *This is the date shown in the 91st BGMA records]

Continued next Column.....

I first had to come up with an escape plan that the Camp Escape Committee would approve. Next, I had to find one or two other people that would take the risk of getting caught. The chance of getting shot was pretty good. I made friends with Tom Brooks and Bill Clark.

Tom spoke German. Bill was from Brunswick, Georgia, and knew a bit about boats and thought we could sail to Denmark. They were the type men I knew I could trust and were brave enough to try the escape.

At Stalag Luft 1 there was a little fence (like a guard rail) about a foot or two high around the camp and about ten yards inside the double barbed wire perimeter fence. The double fences were about ten feet high. Rolls of barbed wire about six or eight feet across were between the two fences. There were guard towers on each corner that were thirty or forty feet tall. The towers were manned with German guards. They had machine guns and search lights in each tower.

If someone failed to catch a football and it went across the guardrail you could get the guard's attention. He would point his machine gun at you and let you go get the ball. We observed that he could not see the fence behind him while he watched you get the ball. You could walk slowly.

There was one corner of the camp that the goons had put up a small warehouse building about twenty yards outside the double fence. We noticed it was not locked. The barracks close to that point had a bench about ten feet long. We could get the board off and use it to cross the double fence by laying it from the top of one fence to the other. After we crossed the people from the barracks could put the bench back together

After the afternoon roll call we had about fifteen minutes before we were locked in the barracks. If we could get across the fence during that time we could hide in the warehouse until after dark. That way we could not be missed until the next morning. We could Walk all night following a railroad track to a small fishing town. If we were able to get to the seaport, we could hide someplace until the next night. We would then try to steal a boat and go to Denmark..

To get over the fence we planned to have someone throw a ball over the guardrail in the opposite direction from the point where we wanted to cross. If we did not get shot going over the fence, the plan should work.

The Senior American Colonel and the Escape Committee gave their approval but said there were five (as best I can remember) Captains who had been waiting to escape and they would try the plan first. We selected people to help. We had to have people get the board off the top of the fence. There were people used as lookouts all around the compound. The Captains, two one time and three on another day made it outside the camp. We were later told they were recaptured in a few hours.

When Tom, Gill and I escaped, (probably around the 1st of May 1944) we left about five minutes before lock-up, crossed the fence and got in the warehouse. We all knew that if anyone had been seen a lot of people would have been killed or wounded.

We stayed in the warehouse until after dark. We then crawled about thirty of forty yards to get further away from the camp. While crawling, the search light from the guard tower went right over my back. I saw the light coming and stopped moving. I almost felt the bullets hitting me. A few minutes later a guard and his dog walked about five yards from me. The wind must have been blowing away from me.

We then walked to a single fence about fifty yards away from the camp. While crossing the fence a man in the dark said something to us. Tom said a few words to him in German and he went one way and we went the other way. We did not know who he was but probably was not supposed to

Continued on Page 6.....

Herbert Markle

Continued from Page 5.....

be there. I doubt if he was as scared as we were.

The Escape Committee had given us maps, escape rations and a compass. We located the railroad tracks and started walking along them toward the coast. We arrived at a small seaport just before daylight. We could see several small sailboats. We came to a wooded area about fifty yards from the water and decided to hide until night. We found a big hole someone had dug. We got into that and covered up with pine bows to wait for dark. We were very tired and cold. All three of us fell asleep.

Captured. An old man woke me up with a pistol against my head. There were several other men with guns standing around. They took us to the police station and locked us up.

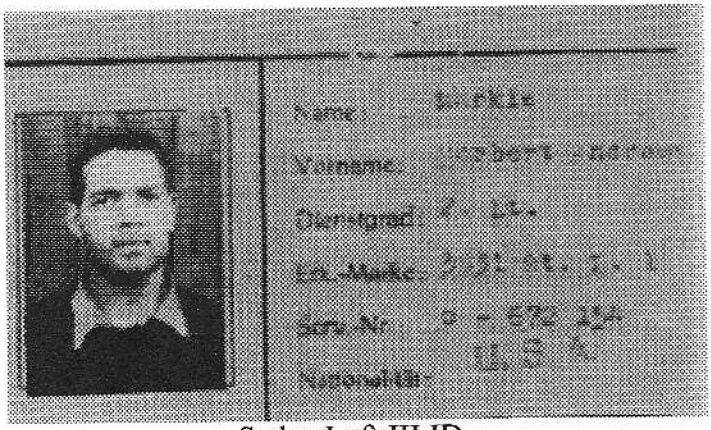
They said we were spies. Tom convinced them we were POWs and asked them to call Stalag Luft 1. They did and the German Intelligence Officer came to get us.

The Stalag Luft 1 Intelligence Officer recognized my Virginia Polytechnical Institute (V.P.I.) Ring. and said he had worked for Hercules Powder Company at Brunswick, Georgia. He named some people I knew at VMI and some places Bill Clark knew about in Brunswick. We would not answer any of his questions about how we escaped so he took us to Stralsund and put us in the Gestapo prison.

Imprisoned by the Gestapo. The Gestapo prison was a real hell hole. I only remember a few things about our stay there. The building was a real prison, four to five stories high with steel doors. They put the three of us in one cell that was about eight by twelve feet. There were no beds, chairs or other furniture. All we had were a couple of blankets and a bucket for a toilet. There was no way to wash ourselves. Once a day we were given a bowl of soup and two slices of bread. I remember that everyday they made us crawl down the hall to get the soup and bread. If you spilled your soup you did not get any more. The soup consisted of water, acorns, leaves and twigs.

We did not know what they were going to do with us and no one spoke English. Every day someone was shot in the courtyard. A prisoner in the next cell told us through the window that the people shot were Russian and French. We never knew who was going to be next. We thought we were the only Americans there.

Bert is not sure how long they were in that prison but



Stalag Luft III ID

they were eventually moved back to Stalag Luft III on May 28, 1944. "We stayed there until January 1945 when we were moved to Stalag 7A Moosburg. General Patton liberated us from Stalag 7A. [Thanks Bert, for sharing this. The rest of the story is available at www://http.merkki.com.]

Kay Peacock Steinfeld, daughter of Lt. James Edward Steinfeld,, wrote: "My father served in this unit (91st BG, 401st) in WWII and as I've inherited his training, military and POW correspondence, I'm trying to follow as many leads as possible. Is there a source through your publication? Thank you for any possible help. My father was James Edward Peacock.

A copy of her message was forwarded to Mike Banta for access to the "Ring;" the 91st BG web site, and it is published here for the information of others who may be able to help her.

This Editor, through his own research, learned that Lt. Peacock was shot down on a mission to Wilhelmshaven, November 3, 1943—a mission he had flown as Co-Pilot on the "Village Flirt,"with Capt. Dave Bramble, Pilot.

Three ships of the 91st were lost that day: "Bomb-Boogies Revenge," "Vagabond Lady," and an unnamed B-17, S/N 4239802, all from the 401st Sq.. Her father was navigator on the latter piloted by Lt., Kenneth D. Rutledge. A report on that mission was published in the book, "The Ragged Irregulars of Bassingbourn" by Marion Havelaar: "It was last seen dropping behind the formation with no. 2 engine on fire. Two members of the crew are known to have become Prisoners."

This much of the report triggered this Editor's memory and his response to Mrs. Steinfeld is as follows:

"I flew that mission and my terse notes, written after each mission, read, 'Reached target. Flak moderate but one odd burst of heavy flak five feet in front of aircraft. Fighters numerous and caused much damage. 20mm cannon shell in no. 3 engine nacelle causing us to feather the prop. Five bullets in our ship. The remark about the flak 'five feet in front of us' was more an impression than an accurate estimate of distance. Momentarily the sky was bright red.

"There was a B-17 ahead of us that appeared to be from another Group. It had one engine out and right wing tip shot off. It was no longer able to stay with its own formation. As it drifted back, it was under constant attack by three FW-190s that were determined to shoot it down. As it came closer in front of us, we could see the gunners firing away, but one by one the guns ceased firing.

"The Navigator on our crew, Quentin Ellis, was busy during this time keeping the log of the mission along with keeping aware of our position geographically. As the attacking fighters came within range, our own gunners were firing at them, except for the Navigator.

"Sensing the desperate plight of the other ship, I called over the interphone to Quentin and said 'For Pete's sake Ellis, get on the gun!' He did and the next thing I heard was a long burst of fire from his single ".50" in the nose. After a long burst, our Bombardier, Bob Singer, say, "OK Ellis, you can quit firing now. He just bailed out."

"First Lt. Quentin Ellis, Navigator, who lives nearby in Renton, WA, and is a retired Bank President, was credited with destroying an FW-190. This was so unusual for a Navigator that he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

"Unfortunately, the crippled ship succumbed to the point-blank attacks of the remaining fighters and he went down out of control. All of us in our ship felt the agony of the gunners trying to survive on the other ship. We felt the pain of seeing him go down out of control. We watched for parachutes. I remembered the old expression, 'There but for the Grace of God, go I.'" Mrs. Steinfeld asks anyone with information about Lt. James E. Peacock or other crew members to write Kay Peacock Steinfeld, 138 Charles St. Annapolis, MD 21401, e-mail: <kpeacock15@aol.com>

Letters to the Editor and Other Short Bursts

Arend Roos is a resident of **Terschelling**, one of the Frisian Islands off the north west coast of The Netherlands. Few aircrew members will ever forget the Frisian Islands for their inhospitable welcome during the German Occupation of World War II. Today, we are pleased to hear from Arend and Susan Roos, residents of Terschilling. They, too, remember the armadas of B-17s and B-24s that flew over in the time of hostilities.

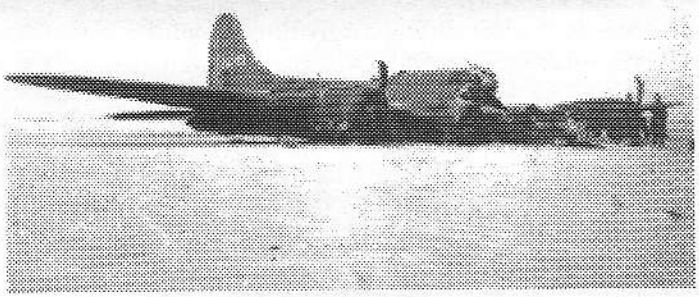
The following information has been provided to the Ragged Irregular mainly by Mike Banta with information provided to him from Arend and 91ster Bert Humphries.

What prompts this line of communication was an e-mail message from Arend Roos. Arend originally sent an e-mail to Jim Shepherd, keeper of the 91st BG web site as follows:

"Hello,

"My name is Arend Roos, and I live on the Island TERSCHILLING, which is almost the most northern part of Holland. As you probably know, a lot of raids to Germany came over the North Sea by the Frisian Islands. I read a lot about the air war especially in the northern part of Holland. I know that the first B-17 which came down in Holland was the 'Texas Bronco.'

"It landed on the beach of our Island Terschilling, and almost all of the crew survived.



Texas Bronco, Terschilling Beach, Feb. 4, 1942

"The Captain was Lt. Eugene B. Ellis as you know. Why is it that I can't find anything of that very interesting story on the 91st Bomb Group about landing on the beach? I have pictures of the Texas Bronco lying on the beach of Terschilling and also the story, written by researcher Ab Jansen in his book: 'Spooren aan Hemel' something like 'Trail in the Sky.' Let me know if you're interested, and if you have some more information for me about the Texas Bronco, please let me know.

"It's because of all these airmen that we still live in freedom."

Thanks,

Arend Roos
Thasoslaan 8
8881 ES Terschillling West
The Netherlands
E-mail: <rozon@cybercomm.nl>

Gordon Alton from Saltspring Island, BC, writes: Every now and then, I like to put out a reminder that some of you veterans and/or spouses have benefits coming to you that you have never applied for or received. Many of you think you don't need it, or won't take it. A lot of this is the pride that you can and will make it on your own, and that is very admirable. But, you may have survivors such as your wife and children, or even your grandchildren, that will be eligible for pensions or grants. Some of these are for something as simple as medical or education. Don't miss out on them if you or your family are eligible. If anyone deserves it, you guys do. You won the war that had to be won. Try this link in your Internet Explorer "engine," which is the top line on your page.

Or, right click on the symbol below, and choose open. There is a whole bunch of stuff that you guys have coming to you. Don't pass it up.

Gordon L. Alton
Box 855
Salt Spring Island, BC, Can. V8K2W3
Ph. 250-537-5913
<tailgunnerson@uniserve.com>

Clinton Quarve writes to us via e-mail:

Hi, My grandpa was a 91st Bomber. He is dead now, the only way I was able to figure this out (I mean to get to your web site) was by a 91st BG memorial picture card he had given to me when I was a kid (by an artist, Bob Stevens, saying "...what a hellofa story this will make to tell at future group reunions" with a cartoon sketch of the B-17s in aerial combat. His name is Walter G. Quarve and he was a Bombardier. I checked your [web] site over and couldn't find anything on him or his squadron, plane(s) etc. He talked little about the war. It is to my knowledge that he flew 24 missions, then the war ended. One time they were flying back across the English Channel with only one engine out of four still operative. Another time they crashed in enemy territory and had to escape to Switzerland so the Allies could smuggle them out. I will have to talk to my Grandma to see if I can get more info on the situation.....seems to me I had once seen a photo with him and the rest of the crew in front of their plane. If I get anything, I could scan any pics and pass the info along to add to your site, with crew info if possible. Would you have any idea about my Grandpa or what crew he was with? If not, is there some other (government?) Site that would provide the information? I searched on google.com (that's how I found your site) but didn't have any immediate success. I might be able to get the necessary info from my Grandma when I see her in a few days, but I would like to find out as much else as I can also

Sorry to take your time up, but I have a few other technical questions you might be able to help with. I watched the 1990 version movie of "Memphis Belle", the first bombing crew to complete its assigned tour of 25 missions. Were all of the crews of the 91st assigned a tour of 25 missions, before they completed duty and were sent back to the U.S., or am I mistaken" Also, while watching "Belle," the squadron leader in the movie said that there were 24 planes on the mission (all of the squadron's planes). Am I to assume that there were roughly 25 planes for each squadron in commission at the ordered 298 planes from the War Dept. (or whoever) and lost 197 of them from late '42 to late Spring '45? Also, what's a "sortie," a bombing mission???? Sorry, I was born in the 70s. Thanks so much and I hope we can both be of help to each other.

Clinton Quarve, Rochester, MN.
<emailclint@aol.com>

Letters to the Editor and Short Bursts Continued

Clinton Quarve (Cont.) Before this issue has even gone to press, some responses have already been sent out via the e-mail circuit. Mike Banta has answered Clinton's questions on assigned number of missions, number of aircraft in a Group, definition of a sortie, meaning of losses to number of aircraft that could be fielded. George Parrish provided identification of Clinton's granpa's squadron, pilots with whom he flew and a photo of a very young Walter Quarve "Grandpa to be."



Lt. Walter G. Quarve

Anyone else who can add to Cliinton's information about his grandfather will be much appreciated.

John M. Watts writes to "Ace" Johnson, "I apologize for not responding sooner. Shoveling snow, sawing logs and splitting blocks added to all the other useless things that keep me busy prevented me from going through my stack of "things I must do." So I'm late in sending in my dues. To keep this from happening again I'm sending a check for $100 for a Life Membership. After all at 85 I think I have a good chance of living another 10 years.

Sincerely
John M. Watts

Hubert Carpenter upon renewing his membership writes in a note to "Ace" Johnson, "I'm enclosing a news item from our local paper that might be of interest to the RI readers. This was quite an honor which resulted in several congratulations from various sources. I have also been interviewed by one of the high school classes.

You may know this but Kevin Pearson of the 8th Air Force Historical Society located the crash site of my plane, "Boston Bombshell" in 1998 and sent me several pieces of what he uncovered. It was quite an interesting story.

Kevin recently moved to 900 W 5th Ave. Ste 300, Anchorage AK 9001, Phone 800-462-7275.

Dana E. Morse writes: "A few lines to let you know I enjoyed your story in the 91st Bomb Group Internet. I have just had help from my son-in-law, Steve and Barbara Holland as they have a computer and I had kept quite a few records from my day in the service.

Our crew under 1st Lt. Bob Tibetts went down on the first raid over Berlin on March 6, 1944 and it's a great thrill to me to have it on the internet. The German side of the story will be out by Barry Smith pretty soon in book form and I will send my story in.

Thank you for your many years of hard work for the 91st Bomb Group.

Ray Bowden, author of "Plane Names and Fancy Tales," and other books about the 91st, reports he has a new e-mail address: <rjbowden@usaaf-noscart.co.uk> He also adds: "Five years! [since we last corresponded] I moved home since then and now live in Dorset in the southwest of England-beautiful area but a long way from the airfields of East Anglia unfortunately.

I have become a grandfather (twice) in that time and also published my last book on the named planes of the 100 BG. I'm researching another on 385th BG named planes, also 94th BG named planes, as well as trying to put together a book on Merseburg. I have no idea when (or even if) any of these will get onto a printing press. Money is tight (as always) and the books are not selling so well these days. Times are changing I guess.

Ray Bowden.....

[Ed. Note] Another book of interest by Bowden is "Tales to Noses over Berlin."

Kevin Bannon, who submitted the "Folded Wings" report for his father, Frank Bannon, [Page 12] provided the following additional information about his father's most interesting life.

Frank spent his youth playing on the shores of Puget Sound, the fields of his mother's Quebec homestead, and the hills of the Cascade Mountains. After graduation from West Seattle High School, he convinced the skipper of his Dad, Arthur's, fishing boat, that "Dad wants you to haul me up to Alaska for family business." Of course it was a stretch of the truth, but his subsequent adventures in the future 49th State were the stuff of Jack London, working in the copper mines, a stint in the CCC, and finally hooking up with a prospector and together striking a big lode.

Returning to Seattle, Frank bought himself a fast car and tuition at the University of Washington with his mine earnings, majoring in mining engineering, driving and skiing fast. Shortly before the war Frank took a job at Boeing, but joined up as soon as the war began. He was assigned to the 91st Bomb Group. He flew a few missions as a gunner, but suffered a bout of serious pneumonia when his oxygen line was severed during a mission. After a long hospitalization and a long recovery he was assigned to ground duties, finally returning to missions and going home after earning his points.

After the War Frank returned to the Boeing shops and got married. His Guard unit was called in 1950 and he served a couple of years duty in Alaska. Returning home and to Boeing, Frank studied at night and by correspondence earning a Professions Engineer license. Boeing promoted him to the offices as a Mechanical Engineer and he served with pride on the 727 Tri-jet Airliner and the Minuteman Missile programs until his retirement in 1974, all the while living a vigorous life building a cabin in the mountains, skiing, fishing and later mountain climbing.

Frank later moved to Salt Spring Island in Canada and spent the next years sailing avidly throughout the West Coast of North America, vacations overseas, and winters in his RV in Desert Springs, California. He also joined the local Canadian Legion Post and took an interest in attending 91st Memorial Association reunions. It was at one such event Frank met the man who saved his life years ago when his oxygen line was severed. Each had thought the other had not survived the war.

Alas, though approaching80 years old, Dad bought yet another boat, in of all places, Bristol, England, which he sailed back to Canada, surviving another batch of close scrapes and incredible adventures culminating with a wreck when the anchor cable snapped during a storm at Baja California. Nonetheless, the hull was loaded on a trailer, hauled to Seattle, and Dad began yet another boatyard job.

Finding Canadian taxes for this "Pipedream" onerous, Dad moved back to Washington rather than paying the import duty or selling of his boat, and lived on Anderson Island, just outside of Tacoma until becoming sick four years ago from a terrible stroke, the effects of which ultimately brought Frank down. Frank's oldest son, Robert Trent Bannon, named after a 91ster, now lovingly cares for his boat, "Pipedream."

Gordy Alton, Associate Member from Saltspring, BC, Canada, sent the following remarks concerning Frank Bannon.

"I was just informed by Frank's son, Kevin, that Frank is gone. Frank was the only man from the 91st to ever have lived on Salt Spring Island [BC, Canada]. His son, Kevin, had become one of my Internet friends, right from the start. I started getting in touch with 91st vets and then some of them by name, and I have become very close to some of these men, and their sons.

"You know, guys, Frank Bannon was one tough old bird. These were the men that won the war that had to be won."

Gordy Alton, Associate Member

Letters to the Editor and Short Bursts

Continued from Page 8

John Parsons' annual Christmas letter, a little late for the January issue , is presented at this time.

"Dear Friends,

Before World War II changed all of our lives, I had embarked on a career in journalism and was City Editor for the Gilroy (California) Evening Dispatch, and later the Hollister (California) Free Lance. Part of my duties included writing weekly columns, which I called Randy at Random, and Parson's Pharce.

In later years, I have burdened my fans with my annual Christmas Message in which I would detail some of my world-wide travels. I have been fortunate enough to encounter such wonders as walking the Great Wall of China; going inside an Egyptian Pyramid; and the Rock of Gibralter; riding the Australian Trans-continental railroad; and climbing such edifices as The Leaning Tower of Pisa, and Mount Etna. I have explored the Blue Grotto of Capri; Norway's North Cape; South Africa's Table Mountain and going on a number of big game safaris.

I told of Hot Baths and massages, and adventures in more than a dozen exotic emporiums. The Washington Post, by the way, has daily ads for 15 to 30 such parlors. I handed out a lot of free advice, such as Why Pay Ten Bucks for a movie you'll see free in a couple of years later on the TV. Recently I saw Jurassic Park, Dirty Dozen & Titanic within the same month.

Always included was a joke or two such as: Too bad that all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving taxicabs and cutting hair.

My traveling days, however, look bleak at the moment. I banged up my back and smashed up my left arm in a very bad fall at a nursing home where I was recuperating from an operation. I have no regrets, however, as I've already been to so many places in the world, and seen so any strange and beautiful things. After the September 11th fiasco, I went down to the local recruiting office to see if I might be recalled. After looking me over, they declared me "4M." I told the recruiter I knew what 4F was, but what was 4M? He replied when the enemy gets to 4th and M Streets, Washington D.C. they will call me up. (joke)

The rest of mly immediate family are all i good shape.

All the best,

/S/ John [aka "Randy"]

[Ed Note: We wish you well, John, and look forward to hearing from you next Christmas. After visiting all those exotic places, what were you doing at the Washington Post?]

Adolph Miller sent in a letter after the July 2001 RI was published and referred to the obituary of Walter H. Keirsey III, 324th Sq., who was tail gunner on Capt. Beasley's crew on "Dear Becky." Adolph adds, "I was the pilot flying Dear Becky on a mission to Altenbecken when shot down on Nov. 26, 1944. The 91st Bomb Group's Roll of Honor lists me as KIA. The Book of Remembrance in St. Paul's Cathedral in London also shows me as KIA. The only crew member killed that day was my Co-Pilot, 1st Lt. Richard Prunty." [Attention: 91st BGMA Historian.]

PX Changes

Marv Goldberg announces the following changes and/or corrections to the January 2002 PX Order Form:
Under "Accessories" delete the "Blue Baseball Cap $8."
Under "Miscellaneous"retain the listing "Baseball Caps blue mesh with 91st patch $8.50."

Marv' e-mail address is: <MMarvgold@aol.com>

Folded Wings

Continued from Page 10.....

● **JOHN A. WALLACE** (Cont.) ".....life was a low level night training mission in October, 1944, when the aircraft, 42-38398, developed engine problems. The pilot, 1st Lt. Delisle, managed to "pull" the B-17 up a thousand feet or so, and ordered the crew to bail out, staying behind to hold the aircraft straight and level. Unfortunately, Lt. Delisle did not have enough time to leave the airplane and died in the crash. Half a century later, Wallace was still emotionally distressed when describing this tragedy. Jack never forgot the 91st Bomb Group and its members who remained forever in England. He returned several times to visit the American Cemetery in Cambridge. Jack leaves a sister, Mrs. Kathryn Barman and two nephews, Jack and Ralph Batman.

● **WALTER C WAWRZYNEK**, May 6, 2001, reported by Mario Matte, Crew Chief on "Eagles Wrath," Walt was top turret gunner on Chuck Giaque's crew, but was flying with another crew on the May 1, 1943 mission to St. Nazaire, when his ship, Vertigo," was shot down. Walt was taken POW.

● **HOWARD F. (BUS) WEBER**, FM 401st, Joliet, IL, Feb. 20, 2002, Age 83, of a massive brain hemorrhage. He was Pilot on "Destiny"s child. "Bus" was still playing tennis twice a week in fact he played tennis two nights earlier.

Bus was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1904. He was a member of Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity. He enlisted in the Army August 28, 1942, was commissioned 1943 as a B-17 Pilot. Assigned to the 401st Sq. he completed 30 combat missions May 11, 1944, He had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters. He joined the 27th Air Transport Group and flew VIPs around England and France until July 1944.

His most memorable mission was Bremen, December 20, 1943, when with three engines shot out he crash landed just inside the coast of England with no casualties. He was separated from the Service as a Captain, October 15, 1945.

A lifelong resident of Joliet, Bus was Owner of the Dupage Farmers' Elevator Company in Romeoville, IL, from which he retired in 1996.

Bus' Wife, Beverley, noticed a letter to the Editor appearing in the Herald News that she felt was apropos brave young men of that day:

"One morning you are awakened at 4:00 am and told you are going on a bomber mission to someplace in Germany. You are25 years old and you get into the B-17, the inside of which had all the niceties of a mausoleum in February. As you settle into your seat, it hits you that one out of three planes did not return from the last mission." Bev adds, "Most of the combat veterans do not get the accolades they deserve, but fortunately for the country, there were few 'white-knucklers.' These young men served their country with bravery and courage. Let us never forget." In addition to his wife, Beverly, "Bus" is survived also by three children, three stepchildren, and eight grandchildren.

● **JOHN F. ZUVICH, SR.** LM 324th, Steelton, PA, Feb. 2002, Age 77. John was Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner on the crew with 91st BGMA Secretary/Treasurer Asay Johnson, on the Feb. 3, 1945 mission to Berlin when they were shot down.

John was the former co-owner/operator of Zuvich's Confectionery store in Steelton. He retired as a construction Inspector from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. An Army Air Force veteran and member of the B-17 crew of "Yankee Belle." He received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. John was active in his Church, the VFW Post 945, the Steelton Fire Department, the DAV and Ex-POW Association.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret A. Seker Zuvich, four sons, three brothers, eleven grandchildren, a step grandson, and a great-granddaughter.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in Prince of Peace-Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Steelton. Burial with full military honors took place in Resurrection Cemetery, West Hanover Township.

Folded Wings

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● **JOSEPH R. KNOWLES**, FM 324th, Syracuse, IN, Feb. 2, 2002. No other information available.

● **EMIL KUBIAK**, 324th, July 8, 2001, Novelty OH, Age 77, submitted by fellow crewman, John Hatfield. An Obit from the Novelty Newspaper states: "Kubiak, 77, a mechanical engineer who helped develop submersible pumps used in submarines and spacecraft, died at his home in Russell Township. Kubiak worked for PESCO and Gould Ocean Systems for 26 years before retiring in 1986. The Cleveland native graduated from East Technical High School in 1943 and from Fenn College in 1949. During World War II, Kubiac served in the Army Air Corps in Europe as a B-17 tail gunner in the 91st Bomb Group. He received the Air Medal twice. He and his wife Betty, would have celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary in August. In addition to his wife, Betty, he is survived by three sons, ten grand-children and two sisters.

Hatfield adds, "There are only three of us left now from my crew ...which makes me feel very sad. I have notified Tony Montalvo and Charley Skidmore by letter and sent them copies of everything Kubiak's wife Betty sent us."

● **LAURAINE LAFFERY,** wife of Walter Lafferty, FM 322nd, passed away Oct. 20, 2001. They met in London in the "tube" and were married Feb. 1, 1945. They settled in Blackwell, OK. In addition to Walter and their family in America, she is survived by her brother, Cyril Jacobs of London, England.

● **HARRY V LANE**, who flew a few missions on "Shoo Shoo Baby" and flew his 25th and 30th missions on "Jub Jub Bird,"passed way at the age of 92 recently, according to a report by his grandson, Shawn W. Lane published on the 91st Ring."

● **ELDON R. LAPP** FM 401st, Fort Wayne, IN, October 29, 2001, Age 81. He served as waist gunner on "Invasion II" and was held POW for 25 months in various prisoner camps. He is survived by is wife of 56 years, Evlyn, two daughters, three sons, 13 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Reported by Gordy Alton as read in the "Taps" section of the AX-POW site.



Harry F. Larkin, Jr.

● **HARRY F. LARKIN JR.**, LM 323rd, Pittsburgh, PA, January 2, 2002, Age 77, in a traffic accident while on his way to his winter home in Florida. He as a long time partner with Schneider Downs, the 53rd largest accounting firm in the United States. Schneider Downs President, Ray Buehler, said Mr. Larkin's innovations and team approach laid the groundwork for the firm's success. The firm which Mr. Larkin joined in the early 1960s has more the 239 employees today. He retired in 1989 but remained a frequent visitor at the office Christmas parties.

He graduated in 1942 from Central Catholic High School in Oakland. Mr. Larkin studied at the Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics.

During World War II he was stationed in England where he flew B-17s on bombing raids into Europe. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The information was published in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette and submitted by Willis C. Schilly LM 323rd with whom Harry Larkin flew as Co-Pilot.

His wife, Betty Jane, died in 1998. He is survived by three daughters and two sons., all living in the area.

● **JOSEPH E. LAW**, FM 401st, Grand Ledge Mi, October 13, 2001, Age 82, after a long battle with heart and respiratory problems. Originally from Wilkes Barre, PA, Law retired from J. W. Knapp Company after 34 years as display director. He was a graduate of the Traphagan School of Design, New York City.

Continued top of next Column.....

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Harriett, Daughter Susan of Olivet, sons Joseph of Columbus, OH, and Thomas of East Lansing, MI, seven grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren, sister Ida of Reading, PA, three nieces and a nephew. He was buried with full military honors.

● **WILLARD F. MEIER SR.** FM 324th, Hastings, MN, Sept. 24th , 2001. He is survived by his wife, Elaine, son, three granddaughters, and two great grand children. Willard was employed by the U. S. Post Office.

● **JACK L. PARMER**, FM 322nd, San Antonio, TX, Jan. 16, 2001after a long illness. Submitted by Maxine Parmer.

● **LEE R. SCHOFIELD**, LM 322nd, Belleville, IL, August 16, 2001, after a 10-year battle with Parkinsons and Alzheimer's diseases. Lee enlisted in the Army Air Corps in January1942 and was stationed at Bassingbourn, England, June 1943 through January 1944. He was part of one of the crews of "Wee Willie." He was discharged in 1945 and, finding that civilian life was not for him, he re-enlisted in February 1950, having spent the interim years in the reserves. Lee retired in November 1967 and we settled in Belleville, Illinois–close to Scott Air force Base–where we had been stationed for a number of years. Lee was a Mason, member of Scottish Rite and a Shriner. He was also a ham radio operator (WB9AJW) and enjoyed working with wood. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Virginia, one son and three daughters, three grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

● **LEWIS SIMPSON**, LM 323rd, Hudson, CO. Reported by Aulden Dunn. His wife dies a few days later. No other information available.

● **GEORGE N STURTZ**, LM 323rd, Boone, IA, January 21, 2002. Daughter, Lynn Pruett of Bella Vista, AR, tells us that George and his wife lived in the Eastern Star Home in Boone until his death. His wife, Enid, now lives in a care center in Boone. She enjoys receiving mail but is not able to reply. She can be reached in care of Lynn Pruett, at 6 Hursley Lane, Bella Vista, AR.

● **EARL C. THOMASON**, 324th, Rusk, TX, December 2001. He is survived by his wife, Oleta. Reported by Kenneth S. Smith, FM, 324th.

● **PRESTON R. TILLEY**, FM 323rd, Durham, NC, Dec. 9, 2001, Age 85. He suffered from emphysema for several years and died following a stroke as reported by his wife of 55 years, Doris B. Tilley. She writes, "Preston served for four years and eight months as an Airplane Armorer. Three of those years were at Bassingbourn. He had earned the rank of Staff Sergeant at the time of his discharge.

"After the War he co-owned and operated a general store in Durham and later worked in hardware stores and managed a large parking lot in downtown Durham. He was a master gardener and supplied the family and friends with an abundance of vegetables: Better Boy Tomatoes and Silver Queen Corn were his specialties.

"He eagerly awaited his issues of THE RAGGED IRREGULAR and the 8th Air Force News reading them from cover to cover.

"He is survived by his wife, two children: Clifford Tilley and Doris Anne Hair, and two grandsons."

The announcement notice of his death includes the statement: "He fought a good fight and finished the course peacefully."

Mrs. Tilley concludes her report with the request that she herself become an Associate Member of the 91st BGMA to continue receiving "The Ragged Irregular." [Attn: Asay Johnson].

● **JOHN A. WALLACE**, FM 322th, Indianapolis, IN, December 12, 2001, passed away in Philadelphia, PA and was buried with full military honors near that city. "Jack" as he was known was a Navigator and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross upon completion of his combat tour. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War and flew B-29s before returning to civilian life. On one of his missions when he served in the 91st Bomb Group, his B-17 had to ditch in the English Channel and the crew was rescued by the British Air Sea Rescue, but the flight that affected him for the rest of his

Continued on Page 9, right column.....

Folded Wings

Continued from Page 12

● **OTTO A. BREMER** FM 322nd, Berkley, CA, May 2001. Late report received from Frank D. Hintze. "Otto and I shared a room at Bassingbourn in 1945 and our friendship continued from then until he passed away. "My first wife of 45 years died in 1993. When I remarried in 1995, Otto officiated as the Pastor. He was a man of great character with a marvelous sense of humor."


Rev. Otto Bremer

Rev. Bremer is a graduate of Harvard, earned an MBA af the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration and received his theological education at the Lutheran School of Theology /Chicago, Tübingen University in Germany, and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at Berkeley. He has written for the Harvard Business Review, Forum for Social Economics and other periodicals. He has also contributed to "Values, Motivation and Management" (1972), Insight into the Management of Change (1979), and Business Environment and Business Ethics (1987). He was widely known for lectures and seminars presented in 20 States and on 18 college or university campuses, and at conferences throughout Europe. He was co-chair of the 1988/89 "International Dimension of Business Ethics" seminars in Anaheim, California and Cambridge, England.

● **ARTHUR W. BURNS** 401st, Jan. 10, 2002. Nephew Arvin Battersby, 10519 E. 3000 St., Kewanee, FL 61443,, informs us of Arthur Burns death and that he was a tail gunner on "Hitler's Gremlins" in the 401st Sq. "My family and I are so proud of him and the 91st Bomb Group that I would like to become an associate member. [Attn: Asay B. Johnson, Sec'y/Treas.]

● **JAMES C. CATER**, LM 324th. No other information available. His copy of the Ragged Irregular, Jan. 2002, was returned, "Deceased."

● **ALFRED J. CIAMBOLI**, FM 401st, Nov. 26th, 2001 as reported by Jack Gaffney who heard from Al's son, Mike. Al was an instrument specialist in the 401st Sq., and also was involved with "The Creep." This was a homemade utility unit that was able to go from plane to plane with numerous hook-ups for performing many check-ups and inspections as well as making repairs on the spot."

Mike Ciamboli tells us that his father, Al, came from Newburgh, NY, and confirmed his father's death and adds: "A S/Sgt of the 401st, he served with the 91st from Sept. 1942 through June 1945. While at Bassingbourn he participated in the construction of the 'Creep' which was featured in 'Stars and Stripes' in May 1943. Additionally, with T/Sgt Gerald Rathermel, he developed a Training Compass for pilot instruction. With the transfer of Rathermel, Al was put in charge of the Instrument shop of the 401st and modified planes from high pressure Oxygen to low pressure demand and built a mockup for pilot instruction on the electronic Supercharger. He was transferred to MacDill AFB in June of 1945 where he was training on B-29s when the war ended in August.

"Of everything he was known for, it was his extensive collection of photographs of daily life at Bassingbourn and the men he served with and the aircraft they flew. His collection included rare Dufay color transparencies of engine changes and the planes which included 'General Ike' that are now in possession of the USAF Museum in Dayton. He had hundreds of photos of planes, dignitaries, that included Glenn Miller, Churchill and the King of England, and documentation of the daily routine at a WWII Bomber base. During retirement he visited 'Shoo Shoo Baby' while she was being restored at Dover, attended the Oct 1987 installation of the 91st BG plaque at the Tomb of the Unknown in Washington and the installation of 'Shoo Shoo' at Wright-Patterson. He provided numerous photos to the RI of aircraft and flight crews to their crew and families. Unable to travel, he received a surprise telephone call from his granddaughter, Erin, while she was at the Tower Museum in Bassingbourn several months before his death. He received an eye-witness update and tour of Royston, the base and the Tower Museum by telephone. He is survived by his three children."

Continued next Column.....

● **ROBERT S. GERALD**, LM 322nd, Euless, TX, October 17, 2001, Age 79. Submitted by William G. J. McCrea who was ball turret gunner for Lt. Gerald on "Wheel and Deal" on the Anklam raid, Oct. 9, 1943. "It was truly a suicide mission" as listed on the recap of Gerald's life [see excerpts below].

Born in Evant, TX, during the Great Depression, Gerald as a child often rode on the top of a cotton sack pulled through the cotton fields of the area behind his well-educated father, Dr. Robert Julian Gerald, a graduate of Yale University and Columbia Medical School, but who had to work the cotton fields to supplement his income during the hard years.

Robert joined the Air Corps after Pearl Harbor and with newly awarded Silver Wings, he was assigned to the 91st BG. He flew the Anklam mission among the squadron of B-17s that comprised the mission's unescorted decoy group to make a feint toward Berlin while the primary Group destroyed targets of eastern Germany. They suffered heavy losses .

His post war career included service on the Berlin Airlift, the Korean Conflict, and in SAC during the Cold War. After his active military service, Gerard joined American Airlines becoming a Captain and having flown everything from the DC-3 to the DC10 and became a Superintendent of the American Airlines Flight Academy.

After 50 years, he returned to his roots, Mills County TX, with his wife, Laura Helen and devoted his time to cattle farming. "He touched the lives of all who knew him with jumor, humility and gratitude in all things."

● **WILLIAM R "BILL" HADLEY**, Miami, FL, Bombardier/Navigator, Feb. 19, 2002, Age 83. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Lerline B. Hadley. Submitted by Bill Squires, AM Atlanta, GA.

● **LEONARD HEDLUND**, FM 324th, McPherson, KS, Jan. 18, 2002, Age 83, reported by George B Uhlein, LM 324th and Navigator on"Betty Lou's Buggy,"and Edward H. Ristow, Jr., AL. Leonard flew as Co-Pilot for Arvid Malvik, on "Betty Lou's Buggy." He completed thirty missions in early 1944 and received the DFC and the Air Medal with Clusters . Len, a retired farmer, was born and lived most of his life in McPherson, Kansas. In December 1959, he had the misfortune of having a tumor on his spine that paralyzed him from the waist down.


Lt. Leonard Hedlund

Unable to farm, he attended drafting school in Okmulgee, OK and with his wife, Alice, moved to Anaheim for awhile and then to Waco TX for twenty yers. Then he moved in with his brother, Virgil, and his wife, Ginger, in a home designed by them for his comfort and disability.

Leonard's passions included talking with everyone, gardening, fishing, creating and giving away his various crafts, and story telling. He was an avid reader and his personality was an encouragement to all who knew him. He was preceded in death by his wife, Alice, and step-daughter Doris McAfee. He is survived by his brother, Virgil and his wife, and many step-children and step-grandchildren. He was a life member of the VFW Post 2715 and the Paralyzed Veterans Association.

Folded Wings continued on Page 10.....

Folded Wings

● **FRANCIS (Frank) HENRY BANNON,** LM 323RD Anderson Isle, WA, March 12, 2002, Age 88. Son, Kevin, submitted the following report and additional details of Frank's remarkable life published on page 10 herein.

Frank is survived by his wife, Vivian, his former wife, Eileen, brother Calvin, sons Robert Trent, Kevin Arthur and Brian Martin, and at best count, some 55 grand and great grand children. Being the type of guy not afraid to introduce himself and start a conversation, there are also uncountable numbers of friends, admirers, and acquaintances. Though people associate Frank with his plain speaking with no patience for cow dung, physical strength, booming voice, zest for adventure, his true friends also knew he possessed a soft touch, tender heart, and giving nature. Family and friends treasure sharing many of Frank's adventures. A mighty tree has fallen in the forest. God Bless and Keep you.

● **BEN BEAUCLAIR**, 324th, Duluth, MN, passed away in the late -80s as reported by John E. Evans, formerly of Duluth, MN and now living in Fargo, ND. He says, "I met Ben when we worked at the St. Louis County Court House in Duluth. He was Chief Engineer and I was a Maintenance Man. We became good friends and exchanged a lot of war stories. Ben was a Lt. in the 324th and was shot down Feb. 20, 1944 and remained a POW for the duration.

● **JOSEPH P. BILOTTA, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret),** FM 322nd, Charleston, SC, April 4, 2001, age 82. Born in Norwood MA, he was a highly decorated veteran pilot of WWII, the Berlin Airlift, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War. He was commander of IGY Station Alpha, a scientific expedition at the North Pole. He is survived by his wife, Marie Gelso Bilotta, son Joseph Paul Bilotta, daughters Donna Hart and Marie, four grandchildren and one great grandchild. Information provided by Armond Lehman, FM 322nd, former Radio Operator on Joe's plane, "The Bloody Bucket," which was later renamed "Hikin' for Home." Lehman gives his address as "Kc4iys@webTV.net."

Continued next Column.....

● **JOHN M."Jack" BROWN**, FM 323rd, Reedsburg, WI, Nov. 25, 2001, Age 78. Jack was born in Gourock, Scotland, the son of John W. and Annie (McRae) Brown. He was a veteran of both WWII and the Korean Conflict.. On Aug. 31, 1947 he married the former Betty Lee O'Brien. Jack worked for many years for Hankscraft and later for Gerber Products until his retirement in 1987. He was a member and former trustee of the United Methodist Church, the Thurber-Greenwood VFW Post 1916, a former member of the Reedsburg City Council, past president of the Reedsburg Chamber of Commerce, the Reedsburg Area Medical Center Foundation, Ridgeview Heights Independent Living Corporation and United Fund Chairman.

Jack was also a Little League coach for several years. He enjoyed golfing, fishing, sports and gardening. Survivors are his wife, Betty, three children, three grandchildren and many relatives living nearby. He was interred with full military rites.

● **KENNETH L. BROWN,** FM 401st, La Jolla, CA, January 25, 2002. Lowell Getz informs us that Ken passed away and had been pilot of "Mary Ruth." This was the B-17 that first got Lowell active in the 91st BGMA through his book, " 'Mary Ruth' Memories of Mobile...We Still Remember— Stories of the 91st Bomb Group." An excerpt from the story tells of the last mission of "Mary Ruth". June 22, 1943: "Three flights of two FW-190s in a frontal attack from slightly high off the right wing of 'Mary Ruth', about ten degrees to the right, would set the number four engine afire, damage the cockpit flight controls and knock out much of the electrical system.....Other FW-190s would then attack.... their20mm cannon shells exploding in the cockpit destroying more controls. The bail-out bell would be rung.....Before all the crew could bail out, the outer wing would blow off throwing "Mary Ruth" into a spinning downward dive, the centrifugal force of which would prevent the remaining crew from leaving the plane. Almost immediately thereafter the 'Mary Ruth' would explode, throwing free all but Sgts. Allen and Maculley, who would lie dead in the wreckage... .....Lt. Brown would be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his efforts on behalf of the crew." Brown became a POW for the duration and endured the "Death March" from Stalagluft III to Moosburg until rescued by Patton's Third Army April 29, 1945. The rest of the story is replete with tragedy associated with injuries, wounds, and captivity.

Folded Wings continued on Page 11.....

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THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

These Newsletters are published quarterly: January, April, July and October. The R/I's purpose is to keep alive the spirit of the 91st Bombardment Group (H) and to maintain the fellowship of all of those who fought together in World War II from AF Station 121 in Bassingbourn, England from 1942-1945.

Material for publication should be sent to the Editor, Phil Mack, 17521 155th Ave. SE. Renton, WA 98058-9087. "Time-value" items must be received on or before the fifteenth day preceding the month of publication to permit necessary priority consideration for inclusion in that issue. Every effort will be made to utilize other submitted material in the scheduled or later R/I issues.