THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

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

Vol. 49 No. 4 **91st Bombardment Group (H)** October 2016



Joe Harlick and Don Caldwell of the 91st Bomb Group sit on the bonnet of a Jeep in front of a B-17 Flying Fortress (serial number 42-29837) nicknamed "Lady Luck", 1943. Image by William D "Bill" Pulliam, 91st Bomb Group.

Photo from the Roger Freeman Collection

http://www.americanairmuseum.com

President's Corner Mick Hanou

This issue should reach you before the Reunion. For those who are attending, I ask you to bring memorabilia, especially scrapbooks or log books or family letters, to the reunion. My reasoning follows: my Dad, age 94, and our family have spent some quality time recently looking at his photo albums and documents from the war. Going through them so thoroughly added tremendous detail to his history that we were still not aware of. It prompted me to research more and I learned a lot about the day he was liberated by the 80th Infantry Division on April 13, 1945, in Jena, Germany. I have found that is also true when a veteran brings an album or logbook to the Collings Foundation stops. So much is learned as the pictures or words written over 70 years ago prompt memories – mostly good memories.

As I did in my numerous Veep's Views articles, I encourage families to do this while their veterans are still living. Get the grandkids, or even great grandkids, now likely Millennials, to participate. Have them learn the history first-hand. And preserve those articles and veteran memorabilia with their context! Please don't let the memorabilia later be sold in a garage sale or on eBay, and consider donating it to the 91st Bomb Group display if you have no family that is interested.

Speaking of which, there has been a nice potential addition to the 91st Bomb Group display in Chino. The Bartush family has made a significant donation intended to cover costs to have their dad's WWII navigation maps reproduced full-scale. We will also reproduce maps from the Mack donation. Between the two of them, we hope to have a full WWII map of Europe on the wall, similar to what was in the briefing rooms during the war. (I'd like to add a ribbon for some of the significant missions). Remember that the Mack and LaBlottier donated articles will be in the display cases.

Best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season – Thanksgiving would be a great time to share memories.

OPERATION RESTORATION

In the near future, the Bassingbourn Tower Museum and 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association will launch a crowdfunding campaign through the GoFundMe website. Crowdfunding is a method of raising funds through small donations from a large number of people. Our goal is to raise the funds needed to restore the Control Tower's structure back to its original glory.

The Tower Museum's *Operation Restoration* brochure is included in this RI and provides more detail regarding the campaign. Watch for updates in the January issue!

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Please send Folded Wings information to Jody Kelly.

January Ragged Irregular submissions must be received by ***December 15th***.

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b17banta@aol.com

91st on the Web
www.91stbombgroup.com
www.facebook.com/groups/91st BGMA

Nine-O-Nine remaining 2016 stops

October	
17 - 19	Burlington, NC
19 - 21	Statesville, NC
21 - 23	Greenville, SC
24 - 26	Athens, GA
26 - 28	Decatur, AL
28 - 30	Birmingham, AL
November	
4 - 6	Leesburg, FL



View from the top turret of *Nine-O-Nine*. Photo by Jamie Mitchell - Collings Foundation Flight Coordinator.


CONTROL TOWER
MUSEUM
BASSINGBOURN, ENGLAND
OPERATION
RESTORATION
PRESERVING THE HISTORY & HERITAGE
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

THE CONTROL TOWER MUSEUM BASSINGBOURN, ENGLAND

Opened in 1974, the Control Tower Museum is housed in the original 1930's built control tower. Situated on the former war-time RAF and 91st Bombardment Group (Heavy) (USAAF) station of Bassingbourn, in the County of Cambridgeshire, England.

Registered as a not-for-profit organisation, the Control Tower Museum is managed, operated and maintained by a small, dedicated and passionate team of volunteers who give of their time and expertise to further the Museum's aims and goals.

The Control Tower Museum stands testament to a time when the fate of the free world hung in the balance; when the young men of the Allied Air Forces put their lives on the line to secure the freedom and liberty we enjoy today.



Bassingbourn airfield became, probably one of the most famous of all WWII airfields, and home to perhaps, the most famous USAAF bomber group of the second World War; the 91st Bombardment Group (Heavy).

It was at this airfield that legends such as the "Memphis Belle" were born; it was the location for Hollywood Director, William Wyler's 1943 documentary of the same name, and it was here that the 91st BG (H) would make its war-time history and ultimately, suffer the heaviest casualty rate of any group within the Eighth

It is this history and these facts, among many others, that the Control Tower Museum stands guardian over.



"...For us old guys who flew out of Bassingbourn with the 91st Bomb Group during WWII, the Tower keeps fresh old memories ... memories good and bad, memories of fear and courage, memories of triumph and camaraderie, of mild and bitters and sweet English girls! For our children, grand-children, nieces and nephews, the Tower can give some life and meaning to the old stories they've heard from us. The Tower is our history and must be preserved...!"

Frank Farr, Navigator - 91st BG



Men of the 91st celebrating the successful completion of an airmen's final mission which will now allow him to go home!

"... I'm now approaching my 94th birthday and I still vividly remember the days I was stationed at Bassingbourn and actually spending time in and around the Tower. Always, when we took off we would set our brakes, run the engines up to full power and then release the brakes and take off with max power. The people at the tower were always there, and a lot of the ground crew too and all were outside the Tower and they all waved at us as we went by and we waved back at them. I remember that. And of course I remember very vividly that the gang would be back at the tower when we returned, or we'd be there ourselves, back there at the tower waiting for our friends to come back. So, it's always been one of the most vivid symbols, I guess you would say, of a mission rather than the barracks or a hangar, the actual control tower stood there as a symbol of the flight leaving and coming back, to me ... "



Don Freer, Pilot 322nd Bomb Squadron - 91st BG

“OPERATION RESTORATION”

Restoring the Control Tower Museum for Future Generations

“If walls could talk……” a familiar phrase often used by veteran’s, their families and visitors to this historic setting.

The Control Tower at Bassingbourn has witnessed much in her lifetime, and has served those who used her, well. But now the ravages of time have taken their toll upon this unique structure and after more than 70 years of service she is in need of help.



The Control Tower was opened as one of the first Museums of it’s kind in the UK in June 1974, by the war-time USAAF commander, Col.Stanley Wray, and has since been recognised for it’s historical importance.

In 2004 the Control Tower was awarded a Grade II Listing on recommendation from English Heritage and the Listed Status was granted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. This listed status now affords the Control Tower protection through the Conservation Department of the local Government Authority.

The Control Tower Museum is seeking to raise £250,000.00 in order to fully restore the Control Tower, both internally and externally, to bring the historical interpretation up to date and in line with the 21st Century, and to expand its historical and educational programmes.

OPERATION RESTORATION will be split into two phases: **PHASE ONE**; the External restoration and **PHASE TWO**; the Internal restoration and refurbishment.

PHASE ONE:

The complete restoration of the external fabric of the structure; this will include:-

- concrete repairs and brick renovation
- new windows and doors
- new roof and guttering
- new external stairs to upper floor
- the reinstatement of the war-time balcony
- returning the Tower back to her former war-time colour scheme

The projected costs for Phase One of the restoration project are **£165,000.00**

PHASE TWO:

The complete restoration of the internal fabric of the structure and refurbishment of the display space. This will include:-

- repairs to concrete and brickwork
- re-wiring of the electrical systems
- complete redecoration and new floor coverings
- conservation grade display cabinets complete with LED lighting
- installation of multi-media equipment to include audio-guides; allowing the Museum's archive of audio and visual content to be accessed by all visitors

The projected costs for Phase Two of the restoration project are **£85,000.00**

PROJECT PROGRESS

To date, much of the ground work required for **OPERATION RESTORATION** to commence has been done. The approved Restoration Specialist Contractors have provided the project costings and detailed scope of works; consultation with the Planning and Conservation Department of the local authority is in progress and the main effort now is to secure the required funds for the project.

If the Control Tower Museum is to continue with its vision of its current and future goals, then the raising of the required funds is vital; failure to achieve this objective would mean that there is a real risk that in the not too distant future the Museum would be unable to continue within the Control Tower at Bassingbourn.

The Control Tower building is the heart of the museum, and is just as important as the exhibits, displays and memories within its four walls.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Tower Museum is dedicated to:-

Honouring the sacrifices and memories of all those who served with the Royal Air Force and the 91st Bombardment Group (Heavy) (USAAF) at Bassingbourn during the dark days of World War II, and all those who were stationed at this base from the end of World War II up to the present day, ensuring that their service is not forgotten;

Being a centre of historical and educational importance so that current and future generations can learn of the events that took place at this airfield, the sacrifices made and the price that was paid, to secure our freedom and liberty;

Becoming the flag-ship Museum of its kind within the United Kingdom; and to always ...



"KEEP THE MEMORY ALIVE FOR THOSE WHO COME AFTER"

"... Daddy didn't tell his daughters much about his experiences during the war. After he died, we came across a cigar box containing a list of the 52 missions he piloted in a B-17 during 1944 - '45, photos of him and his friends, and B-17's at Bassingbourn. Also in the cigar box were his medals; among them the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with seven Oak Leaf clusters.

My two sisters, niece and I had the great pleasure of visiting Bassingbourn. Our time spent at the Tower Museum and on the Airfield was so meaningful to me. As I looked out over the runways I found myself appreciating the extraordinary gift of my life, and the courage and sacrifices made by my Dad (and so many others) long before my sisters and I existed.

My experience at the Tower Museum was a personal one that helped me fully understand and appreciate my Father, and how I came to be. Those serving in the Military see many statues commemorating wars but there are few museums that help one feel the reality of war and the everyday experiences of so many courageous young men and women who serve their country - the Control Tower Museum is one of these and I hope it will continue and flourish."



Jean Yavis Jones
Daughter of Lt. John J Yavis - 91st BG, 323rd Sqd.



"My dad's name resides on the Tower Museum's Wall of Remembrance along side fellow 91st Bombardment Group
members who helped restore peace to the entire world over half century ago.

We would encourage anyone that enjoys the freedom we now share to join and help support the preservation of the Tower Museum so that future generations can see and learn about the most important struggle of the 20th Century."

Danny Linn
506 Infantry Regt. 101st Airborne Division (Rtd.)
Vietnam Veteran

"It was a wonderful experience to visit the Tower Museum and a very real privilege to finally honour my Dad with a plaque on the Wall of Remembrance, that is housed in the Tower Museum. The Control Tower is an icon, a landmark worth remembering, and worth preserving - may we never forget all it stands for."



Marilynn (Rustand) Lieurance

Daughter of 1st Lt. Hanford James "Rusty" Rustand
Pilot 91st BG
Killed in action 02nd Nov 1944 - Mission to Merseburg



If you would like to support OPERATION RESTORATION and make a financial donation to the project, or would like further information, we would be delighted to hear from you.

In the first instance please contact the Museum Director:

By post: The Tower Museum
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Bassingbourn Barracks
Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 5LX United Kingdom

By telephone: +00 44 1763 243 500

By email: towermuseum.121@btinternet.com

Visit our website: www.towermuseumbassingbourn.co.uk

Find us on Facebook



January – September Donations

Arvin Battersby	$40
David Bramble	$100
Leslie Burton	$10
Raymond Choye	$150
Charles Davis	$100
Kay Duzynski	$40
Charles Egender	$100
Otto Eggert	$35
Don Freer	$45
Richard Hamilton	$20
Chuck Heusser	$200
James Hoffman	$10
Mary Johnson	$10
Peggie Kerr	$30
George Kesselring	$10
Glen Kessler	$40
Phillip Lunt	$20
David Mattie	$20
Susan McDonald	$10
Martin McElroy	$20
Edmund McGee	$225
Kevin McGee	$10
Patrick Milward	$20
Richard Pridemore	$10
Deborah Rodewald-Charles	$40
Rick Senffner	$50
Laurence Smelser	$10
Steve Smith	$10
Morris Spielberg	$100
Robert Stevens	$50
The Bartush Family Foundation	$5000
Joanne Thompson	$10
Rick Tierney	$20
Aurora Viarengo	$25
Verne Woods	$200
Dominic Zurella	$10
In Memory of	
Frank Annis	
Kenneth Altemeyer	$40
Andrew Jury	$75
Robert Kurtz	$50
Zoe Perkins	$100
Joe Harlick	
Jenny Harlick	$100
M/Sgt Rice C. Linn	
Danny Linn	$100
Jake Howland	
Renona Louvier	$100
2nd Lt. E.G. "Bud" McCabe 323rd	
Michael McCabe	$30
Ralph D. Simin	
Betty Simin	$40
Operation Thunderclap and the Black March book	
Richard Allison	$85
Tower Museum Operation Restoration	
Gary Hall	$3,000
US Bank [Matching Gift]	$3,000

Folded Wings (continued from page 12)

✪ Andrew M Schumacher 324th Age 91

August 22, 2016, Linton, ND

Reported by Ken Schumacher



Andrew entered the Air Corps during WWII. He was a ball turret gunner, and completed 35 missions over Germany.

Andrew was preceded in death by his wife Clarice; and son Patrick. He is survived by sons Michael (Deb), Vic, and Brian (Sue); daughters Andrea (Gary) Hager, and Clarice (Mark) Harrison; twenty grandchildren; and seventeen great-grandchildren.

✪ Cornelius P "C.P." Chima 322nd Age 98

July 30, 2016, Akron, OH

Reported by his son Craig



C.P. volunteered for the Air Corps shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He graduated from flight school in August 1942, and by September of that year was in England flying B-17 bombers on missions over Europe.

Over the next two and a half years, while stationed in Europe, he flew more than 45 missions in B-17 bombers and P-47 fighters, flew with two of his brothers, survived several crash landings, and received 28 decorations including the Silver Star. He returned from the European Theater as a Lt. Colonel, but was recalled in 1950 for two additional years' service where he was promoted to full Colonel.

C.P. is survived by his wife of 61 years Cornelia; and children Lissa, Craig, and Derek.

✪ Robert L Kleyla 324th Age 89

July 20, 2009, Washington, DC

Reported by Rebecca Youngblood Vaughn



Robert was the Bombardier on William Crumm's *Jack the Ripper* crew. They flew the first American air raid on Nazi Germany January 27, 1943 and were the first full crew to fly back to the US from the ETO. He was also a veteran of the early and late Cold War and Korea. Detailed to the Central Intelligence Agency from 1956 to 1961 he planned intelligence overflights of the Soviet Union using U-2 and other types of aircraft.

Robert is survived by sons Robert II, and Van; three grandchildren; and friend and companion Lillian Purdy.

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep alive the Spirit of the 91st Bomb Group (H) and to maintain the fellowship of those who fought together in World War II from AF Station 121 in Bassingbourn, England from 1942-1945. Editor Gary Hall

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Folded Wings:

✪ **David E Calvert 323rd Age 91**
September 16, 2016, Edmonds, WA

Reported by his daughter Marilyn Tirador



David joined the Army Air Corps at the beginning of WWII, serving as a ball turret gunner. He flew 23 missions including Operation Revival to help rescue prisoners of war from Stalag Luft I. In June of 1945 he was one of the eight-man crew who stayed to close down Bassingbourn and fly the famous B-17 *Nine-O-Nine* back to the U.S. He donated much of his World War II memorabilia to the Veterans Museum in Casper, Wyoming.

Predeceased by his beloved wife of 42 years Ruth, his son Justin, and grandson Kurt. He is survived by his daughters Karen Lougheed, Marilyn Tirador, and Shirley Wilson, five grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.

✪ **Frank C Annis Jr 324th Age 90**
July 19, 2016, Gerald, MO

Reported by his daughter Zoe



Frank proudly served in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a bombardier during World War II. Frank and his crew were captured as Prisoners of War after *Yankee Belle* was badly damaged by flak over Berlin on February 3, 1945.

Frank was preceded in death by his wife of 54 years Barbara. He is survived by sons Claude (Cathy), and Clayton (Debra); daughters Zoe Perkins, and Meredith Annis; seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Folded Wings continued on page 11