



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association Newsletter

Vol. 11 No. 1

April, 1978

Target Memphis: It'll Be A Big Show

From the rapid return of Reunion survey forms it appears that the Memphis National Reunion July 18-21 will match the memorable 1967 get-together in that city, when more than 400 91st-ers and guests held their first reunion since WW II.

If you have not yet sent in your survey form to Eastern Division secretary Bob Gerstemeier please do so at once, so Reunion hosts Joe Gagliano and Frank Donofrio can more accurately complete their arrangements for the affair. They survey form or a card indicating the number in your party who will attend should be mailed to Bob at 930 Woodlawn Drive, Lansdale, Pa. 19446.

An additional feature to the list of activities has been announced by Joe Gagliano. Attorney General Phil Canale of Shelby county will give presentation with slides and all the evidence that was gathered in the Martin Luther King assassination case.

The revised schedule of events is as follows:

Tuesday, July 18--Registration at the Rivermont Holiday Inn 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Showboat tour on the Mississippi River at approximately 8 p.m. Dinner and dance on board.

Wednesday, July 19--Registration 9 a.m. Presentation of Martin Luther King assassination case 10 a.m. Fashion show and lunch 11 a.m. 'til 1 p.m. At 2 p.m. trip to the "Memphis Belle" and sightseeing tour of the city. Evening for war stories over open bar in Hospitality Room.

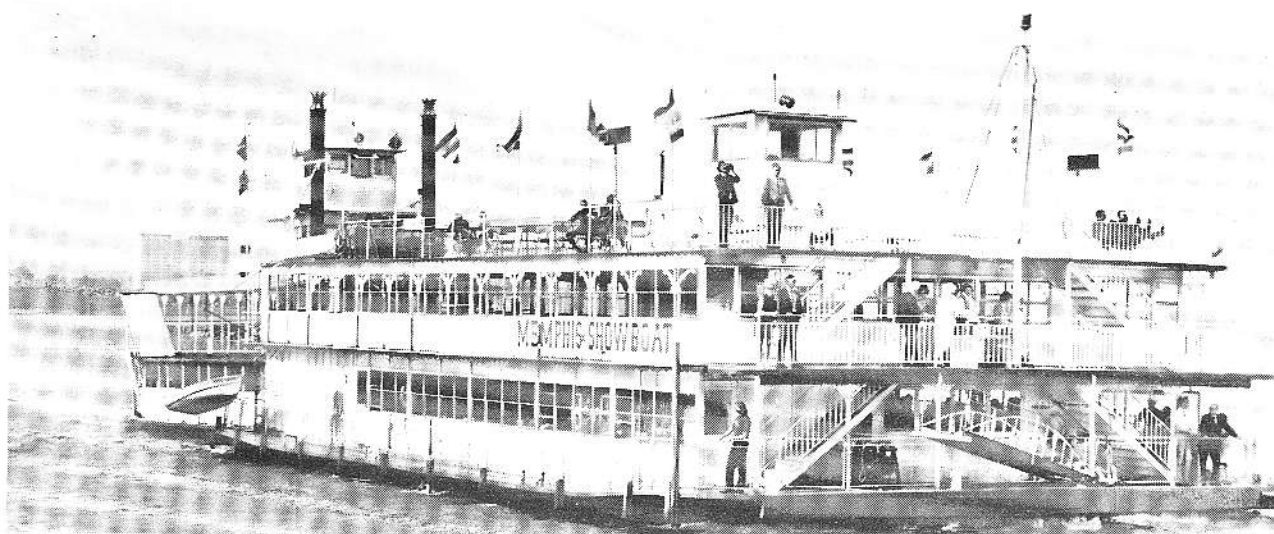
Thursday, July 20--Demonstration on How To Pack a Suitcase by an airline stewardess at 10 a.m. Schlitz Brewery tour and Barbecue Dinner 2 p.m. until 6 p.m.

Friday, July 21--Business meeting, election of officers from 9 a.m. until noon. Shopping on the Mall for the women. Dinner Dance from 7 'til.

The registration fee of \$35 per person will include all the activities listed.

If you have not received your official room reservation card or

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Over The Top For Memorial Funds

As of press time contributions to the 91st Prop Memorial to be dedicated at Bassingbourn May 23 had reached \$3,609, slightly over the target figure needed, but well under the \$4,931 pledged by members in the initial survey. The total on hand should cover inevitable inflationary rises in anticipated costs and unexpected expenditures, however.

The breakdown of contributions show \$250 from 3 national officers, \$1,385 from 82 Eastern Division members, \$1,960 from 96 Western Division members, and \$14 from book royalties contributed by Bob Stevens.

Contributors since our last list in The Ragged Irregular are:

R.J. Maiorca, R.M. "Bob" Stevens, Paul Chryst, Randall Petersen, R.O. Gillet, H.A. Dooley, C.M. Woodbury, J.M. Giambrone, R.E. Gerstemeier, F.H. Cripps, H.R. DeBolt.

Rocky Mountain Rally Round Set

Another Rocky Mountain Rally Round has been set for Saturday, May 20, at Holding's Little America in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Signing in and hospitality will begin in Room 171 on Saturday afternoon.

A cocktail hour will be held at 6 p.m. with dinner following in the Regency Room. The cost for the dinner will be \$7.50 per person.

Persons planning to attend should contact Glenn Boyce, 1874 South Hoyt St., Lakewood, Colo. 80226 (telephone 303-986-8040) not later than May 15 for reservations.

have misplaced it, reservations should be made directly with the Holiday Inn Rivermont, 200 West Georgia, Memphis, Tenn. 38103 (telephone 901-525-0121). Identify yourself as part of the 91st Bomb Group to receive the special room rate of \$26, single through quad occupancy.

R.L. Modell, H.A. Nelson, F.A. Prouse, P.H. Schauffert, A. Thomas, D.A. Turner, E.N. Wagner, R.L. Wright, J.P. Zimmerman, C.B. McGara, F.M. O'Neill, D.L. Hanst, D. D. Boyer, I.D. Tufty.

A.N. Dunn, P.M. Smith, J.M. Rogan, T. Wyzhoski, W.A. McGavern, W.E. Stricklen, H.L. Knowles, J.E. Smith, J.J. Paxson, M.G. Pettera, C.R. Harrington, R.J. Powers, J.O. Renskers, D.M. Williams, R. M. Hoffman.

R.B. Hall, V.G. Bloede, J.J. Caravolas, S. Jedinek, J. M. Camelleri, L.R. Walshaw, R.L. Ibber-son, E.J. Zillmer, A.A. Gordon, J.P. Franke, E.L. Nichols, Jr., L.V. Hansen, A.R. Chandler.

A.H. Powell, M.A. Sibenac, L. Malone, R.J. Caldwell, W.H. Calvin, G. Amrhein, W.A. Bacon, G.W. Parks, Jr., L. Guzek, M. Kryjak, E.R. Steele.

C. Carlton Brechler Dies

C. Carlton Brechler, who was Group public relations officer for the 91st from the first days, died suddenly and unexpectedly December 31, 1977, on the last day of his vacation at his home on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

At the time of his death Carlton was Manager, Western Region, Public Relations Staff, General Motors Corp., based in Los Angeles.

He joined the AAF in June, 1942, and went to England with the 91st Sept. 26, 1942. He returned to the U.S. in November, 1945, one of the first over and last to return.

After his service with the 91st he was assigned to 8th Air Force Headquarters.

Major Brechler was the author of "Wray's Ragged Irregulars," a book of the first year of operations by the 91st.

He was one of the small first group to return to Bassingbourn when the Maddingley altar bowl and the Royston Park fountain were dedicated.

All Systems Go For 91st Memorial Week

Everything but a few loose ends has been completed for the dedication of the Group Memorial at Bassingbourn May 23, and a gala week is in store for those 91st-ers fortunate enough to be on hand for this once-in-a-lifetime event.

The prop memorial and stone marker have been finished and will be installed by the time The Ragged Irregular reaches you. Both will be draped with colorful parachutes until the final moment to unveil them at the special service.

The unveiling of the prop memorial will be strictly a Service affair, and except for the Press and VIPs will be exclusive to the 91st-ers and their colleagues. The Divisional Band will be on parade, and the Chaplain General of the Armed Forces will be present. The Depot the Queen's Division will be playing host to the group all day, ending with a Beat Retreat Ceremony especially for the group.

There has been some misunderstanding among group members that these activities were to be limited only to those persons taking part in the charter tours, but Gen. Wray and Col. Lohan point out that ALL 91st-ers in England at the time are welcome and invited to join the activities. Gen. Wray and Col. Tom Gunn will officially represent the group at the dedication ceremonies.

The Glenn Miller Concert for Thursday, May 25, in Hangar 3, is attracting wide attention in England, with ticket demand already excellent even though the tickets are not on sale yet!

Among the celebrities whose appearance has been confirmed are Jimmy Stewart and June Allyson, who starred in the movie The Glenn Miller Story. Three members of the original Miller Band will "sit in" with the BBC Orchestra for several special numbers. Bob Hope and Perry Como have been invited but their appearances have not been confirmed.

The Charity Concert and the Air

Show the following day will benefit the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, the British Army Benevolent Fund, and the United States Air Force Assistance Fund.

The Air Festival has become the major air show for all Europe in 1978. The British Ministry of Defence and the NATO equivalents are participating, and if the weather is cooperative more than 100,000 persons are expected over the two days.

Arrangements are progressing to completely color videotape all of the 91st activities. A special tele-radio hook-up will be made to broadcast greetings to the Group as they arrive in Cambridge, with BBC disc jockey Allen Dale.

Representative of the many area residents who are going all out to welcome the returning 91st-ers is a Bassingbourn village grandmother, Mrs. May Wedd. Throughout the war she and 40 friends worked to provide snacks and hot drinks for 91st bomber crews at the old Church Room. In recent years the "deluxe soup kitchen" has been lying damp, dilapidated, and forgotten. When Mrs. Wedd learned of the 91st's planned return she began efforts to restore the old building to have it ship-shape for the memorial services to be held at Bassingbourn.

All in all, everything points toward a never to be forgotten experience for those who attend, and a unique expression of respect for everyone who served at Station 121!

Tour arrangements are being handled by Galaxy Tours, Suite 107, General Washington Office Bldg., 216 Goddard Boulevard, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406. Toll-free telephone is 1-800-523-7287.

IT'S DUES TIME AGAIN!

If we are to keep the 91st Memorial Association flying high and proud we need the active support of every member on our roster! Send your \$5 annual dues to your Division Treasurer.

Pacific States Rally Round Another Hit

Some of the heaviest rainfall in modern California history failed to dampen the spirits of 91st-ers who got together for the annual Pacific States Rally Round in Anaheim March 3-4. Although many area highways were closed by floods only one expected member failed to complete the mission, with a total of 107 persons attending the dinner and dancing Saturday night.

In addition to Pacific States members former 91st-ers from Texas, New York, Maryland, Illinois, Idaho and Arizona attended the event at the Jolly Roger Inn.

Four Western Division members became Life Members with \$100 donations to the Memorial Association. Receiving their Order of the Rigid Digit, gold membership cards and certificates from Col. Tom Gunn were: George Vender, of Norwalk, Ca., who was surprised by this gift from his wife; Mrs. Dolores Mikesell, an associate Life Membership, a gift from her husband, Life Member John Mikesell, of Bapchule, Ariz., and Rocco Maiorca, of Los Angeles. Robert J. Campbell, of Kilgore, Texas, former 322nd squadron C.O., was not present but was awarded his Life Membership at the Rally Round.



William D. Allen presents Rocco Maiorca with his POW "Barbed Wire Cluster" to add to his newly given Purple Heart and the Rigid Digit for becoming a Life Member.



Receiving the pewter mug for having come the greatest distance to attend is Emil R. Knutelsky of Westport, N.Y.

The mug for coming the greatest distance to attend was presented to Mr. and Mrs. Emil R. Knutelsky of Westport, New York.

In addition to becoming a Life Member Rocco Maiorca received two long-delayed rewards for his service with the 91st. After 35 years Rocco received his Purple Heart medal for wounds received in action as a flight crew member in the 401 sqdn. The award was made possible by research done by 91st-er William D. Allen, who also heads up the B-17 Combat Crewmen and Wingmen. Allen also did research which brought Maiorca the Presidential Unit Citation which was awarded the 91st for action on March 4, 1943 over Hamm, Germany, and on January 11, 1944 over Oschersleben, Germany.

Newly found members attending a Rally Round for the first time were Robert N. Chumbler, ex-324th sqdn., David Gladhart, ex-324th (POW), and John T. Wennerberg, ex-322nd sqdn., (POW).

Two crew members on the same plane, Curt Pyrah of Boise, Idaho, and Clarence A. Cluck, of Yarnell, Ariz., met for the first time since late 1942. Neither had known the other

was planning to attend.

The popular "Pene's Pub" was presided over by Perry E. Wofford, giving genial Aubin Pene a chance to enjoy the bar from the customers side for a change.

Attending the Rally Round were: Col. Thomas H. Gunn, Mr. & Mrs. George Vender, Mrs. Otto Cahill, Mr. & Mrs. William F. Guldner, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Wright, CMS & Mrs. Charles W. Yaroshak, Dave L. Hohler, Jr., M/Sgt. & Mrs. George W. Parks, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur E. Thomsen, Mr. & Mrs. Jack P. Gaffney.

Mr. & Mrs. John W. Mikesell, Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Pyrah, Mr. & Mrs. A. Winnfield Jones, Mr. & Mrs. Phillip R. Taylor, Mr. & Mrs. Perry E. Wofford, SMS & Mrs. John R. Paget, Mr. & Mrs. Clarence A. Cluck, Mr. & Mrs. Bruce D. Moore, Mrs. Clara M. Smith, LTC & Mrs. John R. McCombs, David L. Hanst, David L. Hanst II, Mr. & Mrs. William D. Thissell.

Maj. Edward P. Winslow, LTC Ben Newby, Mr. & Mrs. Anthony L. Starcer, M/Sgt & Mrs. Eugene J. Letailien, Mr. & Mrs. Aubin R. Pene, Mr. & Mrs. Robert N. Chumbler, John W. Tucker, Mr. & Mrs. Rocco J. Maiorca and family members Judy & Julian Disigio, Susan & Charles Taylor, Theresa Anderson, Angela Maiorca, Paul Bostick, Shawn Anderson, Donna Bostick, Rocco & Karen Maiorca, Vincent Maiorca.

Mr. & Mrs. David Gladhart, Mr. & Mrs. Phillip F. Lunt, James O. Bedwell, Ralph J. Tomek, Mr. & Mrs. Emil R. Knutelsky, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Mousseau, John T. Wennerberg, Mr. & Mrs. Robert H. Clapp, Mr. & Mrs. James Warner, Phillip Kaplan, Mr. & Mrs. William D. Allen, Mr. & Mrs. William E. Connelly, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Correll, Mr. & Mrs. Dick Whittington, Mr. & Mrs. Don Mann, Mr. & Mrs. Warren Cowden.

John Hurd, Mr. & Mrs. Chris H. Christiansen, Dr. & Mrs. Paul F. Miner, Harry A. Hovermill, Almon Jones, Mrs. Robert Ortega, Miss Debbie Ortega, Mr. & Mrs. Henry Vandelt, Mr. & Mrs. Leo Sayre, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Marshall, Jim & Cindy Hansen.

Whittington, Guest, Karin Maiorca, Fran Maiorca, Judy Maiorca.

Third Row: Mrs. Connelly, Firelei Moore, Betty McCombs, Shirley Allen, Florence Jones, Clara Smith, Betty Chumbler, Shirley Vandelt, Bessie Sayre, Cindy Marshall, Sue Taylor, Jo Lunt, Phyllis Thomsen, Norma Paget, A. Maiorca.

Fourth Row: Jan Gaffney, Therese Maiorca.



Dolores Mikesell joins her husband in becoming a Life Member as she is presented a Rigid Digit by Col. Tom Gunn.



George Vender, ex-322nd sqdn. and POW, receives his Rigid Digit after joining the growing number of Life Members.

**Don't Put Off
Sending In Your Dues**



The photographer had to make two shots of the group to get everyone in, but the members and guests attending were: First row, sitting, L to R: Charles W. Yaroshak, Robert N. Chumbler, John R. Paget, David L. Hanst II, John W. Mikesell, George Vender, David Gladhart, Tony Starcer, Rocco J. Maiorca, Walter Correll, John R. McCombs.

Second Row: William Connelly, Chris H. Christiansen, Robert Wright, Dr. Paul F. Miner, Curt Pyrah, Clarence A. Cluck, Mikesell's grandson, William D. Thissell, Dave Hohler, Emil Knutelsky, Robert H. Clapp, John Hurd, Ralph Tomek,

Rocco Maiorca Jr., Eugene J. Letalien, Aubun R. Pene.

Third Row: William D. Allen, Phillip R. Taylor, John T. Wennerberg, Jim Hansen, Edward P. Winslow, Thomas H. Gunn, Dick Wittington, Bruce D. Moore, Henry Vandent, Paul Mousseau, Philip Lunt, Vincent Maiorca, Chuck Taylor, guest.

Fourth Row: George W. Parks, A. Winfield Jones, Ben Newby, Almon Jones, James O. Bedwell, Harry Hovermill, Leo Sayre, Arthur E. Thomsen, William F. Guldner, Jack Gaffney, Parry Wofford, Don Mann.

From The Editor's Desk...

Paul C. Burnett Box 909 Auburn, AL 36830

Ex-322nd sqdn. member Joe Zimmerman of Clackamas, Wash., made it through the war without difficulty, but a few weeks ago as he was riding his motorcycle home from work a dog ran into him and Joe nearly bought the farm. He suffered very critical injuries, and is only now slowly recovering. Joe is a familiar figure at National Reunions and had been looking forward to Memphis, but their attendance this year is now doubtful.

Swedish Broadcasting Corp. producer-director Torbjorn Olausson, whose hobby is researching American crews who landed in Sweden in WW II spent several weeks in April visiting the U.S/ While he was here he visited Western Division secretary-treasurer George Parks before leaving the San Francisco area for Washington and a meeting with Lt. Gen Ira C. Eaker. Torbjorn has written several stories for the Ragged Irregular on 91st planes and crews that landed in Sweden.

Also, the brother of Australian air historian Steve Birdsall spent several days with George in March.

Associate member August Winter recently died in Vallejo, Ca., after a long illness. August was a Captain Sqdn. Bombardier with the 306th BG, but had been an associate member of the 91st for a long time. He was shot down over Stuttgart, Germany and smuggled to Gibraltar by the French underground. When he was flown back to England for interrogation he met his younger brother, who had escaped from an Italian prison camp and just returned for the same debriefing session.

We have received information that Elvis R. White of the 401st sqdn. armament section died on January 13. His widow, Mrs. Wilma White,

lives at 812 N.W. 10th St., Oklahoma City, Ok. 73106.

CWO Whitmal W. Hill, Jr. USAF (Ret), who was with the 323rd sqdn. and the 441st Sub Depot sheet metal crew, passes along a good story about a couple of 441st Sub Depot maintenance men, Gaybruk and Wagner. It seems a rivalry developed between these two to outtrick the other, and extended from "short sheeting" to turning off the hot water when one or the other was in the shower.

One day Wagner returned to the barracks early, much before lunch and the rest of the gang, and proceeded to nail a pair of Gaybruk's shoes to the floor and then depart. When lunchtime came, Wagner didn't show up for the usual blackjack game. Now, one of the barrack routines was that beds had to be made and the room floor dry mopped before reporting back to work after lunch. When the mopping began, Gaybruk found his shoes nailed to the floor. Needless to say, he knew who did the nailing.

In a rage, Gaybruk took off to the shop and returned with hammer and nails and proceeded to nail down a pair of Wagner's work shoes to the floor.

Everyone laughed, little realizing that the real joke was to come later. That evening after work and dinner when all were just "sacking it out" before going to town, Wagner got up and said to Gaybruk, "Say, what are my shoes doing under your bed?" And with this he got up and removed his shoes from under Gaybruk's bed. A few minutes lapsed before we and Gaybruk realized that Wagner had swapped his shoes with Gaybruk earlier in the day, and that when Gaybruk had nailed "Wagner's" shoes to the floor he was indeed nailing his own. And the feud continued...

CMS Joe Totusek has at last retired after 32 years active duty with the Air Force. He and his wife Ellen live at 624 So. San Jose, Mesa, Ariz. 85202. Joe is now working at Williams AFB.

Some of the support units who did such outstanding work for the 91st sometimes get overlooked in our stories of Bassingbourn days. Those airplane drivers and passengers whose earliest views of many bomb targets were those wonderful sky markers pointing a white finger of smoke to the heart of the target will appreciate this note from Wayne A. Cupper, of Lake Oswego, Oregon, ex-C.O. of the 863rd Chemical Co. (AOH) Air Operations Heavy Bombardment.

Wayne says: "We arrived at Glasgow on August 17, 1942, and then went to Alconbury. It was a mark-time mish-mash until October 5 when we split the company almost in half to send 59 enlisted men and 2 officers to service the 303rd B.G. at Molesworth.

"Then, very fortunately, the other part went to Station 121 at Bassingbourn on November 2. This was the H.Q. company and 1st platoon. Our first contact with the 91st was Major Nathan Roberts, a real prince.

"From there at Station 121 we progressed to:

1. Our own bomb dump--Incendiaries separated from H.E., a good idea.
2. Loading crews formed, including a CWS man, a good idea should we get into chemical warfare later.

"In our sojourn we serviced the 91st, the 303rd, and the 93rd. The 91st was tops by far.

"One of our functions was to prepare the Sky Markers, an 8th Air Force innovation to promote saturation pattern bombing. We manufactured the Sky Markers from 100 lb. light case incendiaries. We blew out the jellied gasoline, converted and filled with FS smoke. We usually loaded 6-- 2 lead, 2 spare lead, and 2 standby lead.

"We are proud of our contribution to the 91st."

Raymond W. Judy of 3066 Behme Road, Custer, Wa. 98240, would like to contact 91st-ers who knew his brother James Donald Judy, who was a pilot in the 322nd sqdn. in

1943. Judy's first ship was "My Prayer," which was very severely damaged on the Schweinfurt raid of August 17, 1943. Seven of the crew bailed out, but with the engineer seriously wounded and only two good chutes aboard, Judy and another crew member brought the crippled ship back to Bassingbourn. Judy was shot down October 9, 1943, and wound up in Stalag Luft III. He came back to the Air Force in 1947 and was killed in 1955 flying a B-25 out of Mitchell AFB, N.Y. If you knew him please write to Raymond Judy.

It took four years of saving odd change but 91ster Robert D. Smith of Flint, Mich., became the newest Life Member in the Eastern Division. "It was a long haul, but well worth it," Smith feels.

Associate member Capt. John H. Kuehnert, 3641 Zuni, Glendale, Az. 85307, who is currently flying F-4s at Luke AFB, needs help from the 91st on a B-17F model he is making. He is working on a 323rd sqdn. plane, OR N #25714, finished in olive drab with green splotches, and red panels surrounding the triangle A. He needs to know what the artwork on the nose looked like, as well as any other individualized markings.

If any of you have any information involving the Norden bomb-sight, Ray Merriam, executive editor of the Military Journal, would like to hear from you. The publication is planning a historical/technical treatise on the sight. In Vol.2, #1 they carried the story of how the Nazis stole the plans for the Norden in 1937 and built their own version--something the Allies didn't find out until May, 1945. Merriam's address is International Graphics Corp., 218 Beech St., Bennington, Vt. 05201.

Many of you have stories to share with us just as W.W. Hill and Wayne Cupper did for this issue. Pass 'em along for all to enjoy.