

The Ragged Irregular



322nd SQDN

Vol. 19, No. 4



323rd SQDN



AND SUPPORTING UNITS

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter



324th SQDN



401st SQDN

January 1987

MAY "BELLE" RALLY AND "RETURN" DATES SET "BACK TO BASSINGBOURN" DETAILS AND FLYER INSIDE

Last November, on a well-endowed island in the middle of the mighty Mississippi River, the rich soil was turned to begin construction of a brand new 'home' for the B-17 of the 324 Squadron of the 91st BG(H)'s "The Memphis Belle". Led by Mayor Richard C. Hackett, dignitaries used special shovels with attached commemorative plates to initiate the start of a project which began nearly 20 years ago.

Mayor Hackett opened the program with the introduction of the many civic and business persons, who donated their time and money to support the ultimate construction of this Pavilion and raised \$500,000 to assure the formal opening in May 1987.

Ward Archer, Jr. chaired the hard working committee and our own Associate Life Member, Frank Donofrio teamed together to make it happen. Col. Richard Upstrom, Director of the USAF Museum in Dayton announced he'd be forced to take "Belle" away from Memphis unless a permanent shelter was provided. The future of "Belle" is now secure!

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Dignitaries relax after official groundbreaking ceremonies. L. to R. are Mary Stetler, Federal Express, Director, Public Relations; Frank G. Donofrio, President, Memphis Belle Memorial Assn.; Richard C. Hackett, Mayor of Memphis; Ward Archer, Jr. Chairman, Fund Raising Comm. and Margaret Polk, the BELLE's namesake

"Wanna Take A Sentimental Journey?" — To England!

The previous edition of the R/I reports the announcement of an invitational visit to England, hosted by Friends of the 91st BG to all members, families and friends of our organization. To properly administrate such a multi-faceted adventure, a bonafide tour operator was appointed (Berkshire), the travel dates were confirmed and the itinerary was coordinated with our "Friends" in the Royston area to help assure a relaxing trip for all.

Those of us who flew for the 8th AF many years ago, will never forget items like Field Orders, start engines time, flak areas, mag headings, briefings and runaway props - mixed with an occasional pass to Cambridge bouncing around in the back of a dark GI truck.

For those of us who were not on "Ops" - word pictures like broken tools, barracks bags, rain, no mail, Quonset huts, chowlines, pet dogs and a two year stay in the rationed life of England - are well remembered.

Compared to the thousands of AF veterans who served in jolly old England 1942 - 1945, relatively few have ever returned to visit with old friends or try to find their former air base areas and tiny villages nearby.

NOW is the time for the 91st BG to support this combined effort; to take advantage of the personalized services which avail, to seriously recognize that this may, well indeed be - the "last hurrah" for many of us.

Fun and nostalgia are the keys to a successful journey with friends and families along to share common interest with others. Act today. Be an active part of a sentimental journey back to places where we spent our youth! What fun it is to tour with those we know; to participate in special events and

group ceremonies with our loyal British friends to honor "all those who did not return from their missions and others who are no longer with us today."

Our travel dates are locked in from Tues. May 5 to Wed. May 13, 1987. Previous experience proves that it's best to form our group on arrival at London's Airport and start our fun-filled journey from that point together.

This method allows the Tour Operator to provide scheduled air ticketing from a variety of International Gateway airports in the USA, from New York to California, departing early evening and arriving London the next morning. Jumbo jets of named carriers are used and often land within minutes of each other. Flying directly to the U.K., their non-stop crossings by-pass New York.

As a point of interest the 91st BG has returned to England on five different occasions previously (not counting the Tour arranged by Uncle Sam). The dates and attendance were: 1963 - 14; 1969 - 250 (We filled ADC-8!); 1974 - 84; 1978 - 55 and 1983 - 45.

Paul Chryst has come out of retirement and has agreed to be your Tour Director. He was active on each tour listed above and has directed many fighter, bomber and depot groups to the U.K. over the past 20 years.

Highlights of the May 1987 tour are many. They are listed on the enclosed flyer and many 'specials' may never be repeated again. So, doesn't this sound like the very special group tour you've been looking for? Decide to attend NOW! Reservations confirmed on next day's mail.

'87 DUES DUE! '87 DUES DUE!

1983 BASSINGBOURN CEREMONIES — Isn't it time to travel again?



PAVILION TO PRESERVE PLANE

Continued from page 1

Donofrio began the drive to collect funds toward the refurbishing of the "Belle" more than 19 years ago. He explained that the present achievement of more than one half million dollars resulted during the past six months, as Federal Express donated \$100,000 and the Boeing Co. matched the same amount.

The City of Memphis contributed \$150,000 toward the Belle Pavilion and donated the valuable land, it's being built on. The Mayor remarked, "The actual preservation of the "Belle" is an example of the ultimate, in what I want Memphis, Tennessee, to be. As a community, we made this happen . . . I want this city to be proud".

Over 3,000 individuals contributed to remaining funds to push the goal - over the top. The 91st BG Memorial Assn. voted to send \$1,000 to this worthy cause and the gesture has been acknowledged.

Local Host Donofrio has planned a week-end Rally for 91st-ers who can travel to Memphis and would relish participation in the Dedication of the Belle Memorial Museum from May 15 through 17, 1987 on the popular tourist site, Mud Island.

Special hotel rates for those who plan to attend have been arranged for your selection and convenience. YOU must make your own reservations, in advance; and the 91st BGMA will assume no responsibility.

For direct confirmations of rates and room availability write to: (nearby hotels)

THE RIVER PLACE, 100 N.Front at Adams, Memphis, TN 38103 \$49 single/double.

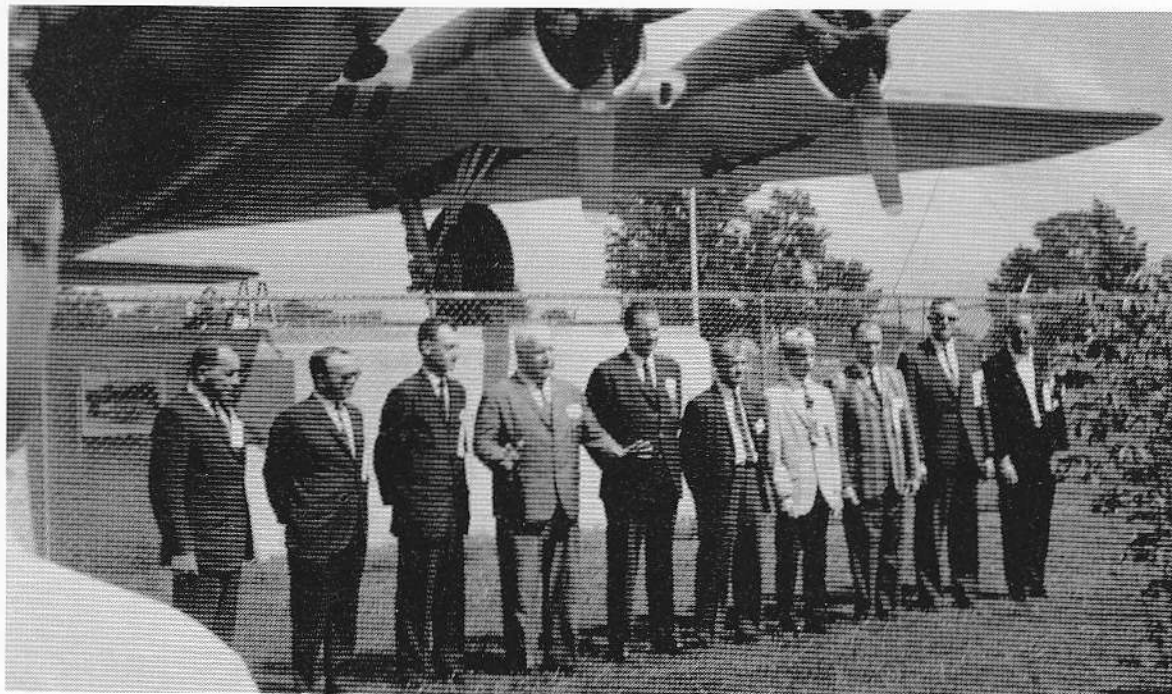
SHERATON MEMPHIS, 300 N.Second Street, Memphis, TN 38105 \$55 single/double.

THE PEABODY HOTEL, 149 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN 38103 \$70 single \$90 double.

Be sure to mention that you are a member of the 91st BGMA; when applying for rooms at the rates listed. The number of rooms are limited on a first-come basis. Our Hqs will be located in the River Place Hotel.

It is expected that a large group of guests and dignitaries will travel to this city to become part of the celebration.

Therefore the specific details of the Program will be announced in the next R/I in April.



DOWN MEMORY LANE. East and West Coast Officers of the 91st BG Reunion Committee pose for a formal picture during the planting of a "living memorial" tree to commemorate our first National Reunion, July 1967. L-R is Joe Giambrone, "Belle" Crew-Chief; Joe Camelleri; Paul Chryst; General Wray; Bob Morgan, Pilot; "Bill" Winchell, "Belle" Waist Gunner; young David Pitts who sparked its refurbishing; Bob Gerstemeier; George Parks and Phil Taylor.

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Renew NOW
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PRESIDENTIAL NOTES

Happy New Year and a sincere "thank you" for your cards and letters wishing all of us . . . congratulations and good luck with our turn in office as your Group leaders. It is truly inspiring to know that many of you support this new effort to keep the 91st 'the most viable AF veterans unit' !

It's rare when an inactive member volunteers, rolls up sleeves and completes a frustrating job like Rudy Malkin, our new Editor, did with the last R/I issue. Sincere thanks! For sometime after the Tampa Reunion a pleasant "afterglow" lulled us all while sparse information, unanticipated delays and other problems contributed to a drift "off course." No one had taken notes at the Business Meeting. The tape recording in lieu of a transcript proved impractical. But the determination prevailed. We're back on course.

We traced Hal Mitchamore in Texas, who supplied (3) color prints of the formal presentations; and Hal Loper returned from his tour of the USA to ready the Tampa Grp pictures with full captions for the R/I.

91st BG Treasury funds were held up for transfer due to a severe lack of communication and the need to conduct an audit. (?) Group personnel records were sent to our Treasurer; instead of the Secretary and many letters later; we "took off" on our own. Thanks for your persistence, fellas; we're flying straight and level, now.

• B/Gen Earl C. Pate has declined the post of Historian; he is willing to research the files at Maxwell AFB for 91st history and will assist who does volunteer for

the time consuming job. There must be a good supply of information in Auburn; if we can secure these files for future Group use. Is there someone out there who'll try ?

• Secty. W. Warren Hill plans a weekend Rally in the Nation's Capitol later this busy year for the formal presentation of another Memorial 91st BG Plaque as a tribute to Unknown American Heroes. Upon formal acceptance by the Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, it will be placed in the position of honor in the Display Room of the Amphitheater, near the Tomb of the Nation's Unknown Soldier. Thanks, W.W.

folded Wings

KALTENBACH, WILLIS J.; 401st Sqd., Engineer and Top Turret Gunner on "DESTINIES' CHILD"; 120 Marshall Dr., Renfrew, PA 16053; Dec. 30, 1986. Survivors include his wife, Chris, a daughter and two sons.

'87 DUES DUE! '87 DUES DUE!

The 1987 91st(H) Memorial Association's \$5.00 Annual Membership dues are due! Send your check to Treasurer Charles R. Hackstock, 14224 S.E. 288th St., Kent, WA 98042.

91st BG MOVIE PROJECTOR FOR SALE

During the transfer of property and supplies purchased by former Group officers, a 16mm, sound, movie projector with auto feed, complete with speakers, reel and accessories, was found. The new "EIKI" model is practically new and is appraised at a \$850 value. We have no use for this machine; so make us a fair offer. Write your bid to W.W. Hill, Sec., 4002 Braddock Rd., Alexandria, VA 22312. Highest bid gets it.

THE RAGGED IRREGULAR

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

Material for publication should be sent to the Editor, Rudy Malkin, 1643 Thetford Rd., Balto., Md. 21204. "Time-Value" items must be received three weeks before the first day of 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.

91st BG Memorial Assn.
1643 Thetford Road
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