

# THE RAGGED IRREGULAR



322<sup>nd</sup> BS



323<sup>rd</sup> BS



Supporting Units



324<sup>th</sup> BS



401<sup>st</sup> BS

Vol. 41 No. 1

91<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H)

January 2008

## 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group to Invade California!



**Join us at the 2008 Reunion  
June 24 – 29 in Fullerton**  
Details Inside

**President's Corner****Jim Shepherd**

The start of another New Year and 2008 is here and it is time for another Reunion for the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association. The Wyndham Hotel in Fullerton California has been reserved and it is near Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. The dates are June 24 to June 29, 2008.

We have trips planned for Catalina Island, a winery, March Air Force Base and Planes of Fame Museum. There will be other small local places to visit, including the World Famous "Crystal Cathedral Church".

A special person has been ordered to attend the reunion; Mike Banta (and his wife Yvonne). Mike has operated his 91<sup>st</sup> Ring of Veterans since January 19, 1999. For those that are not aware, Mike was a pilot in the 324<sup>th</sup> and completed 35 missions over Europe. His Ring is made up of veterans of the 91<sup>st</sup>, Historians and associate members which do research for family members and persons from all over the world that are interested in WWII history. Many veterans never talked about their experiences and their kids and grandkids want to know everything they can about their family member.

There have been many cases where family members know nothing of what their Fathers experienced and write to the Ring. In many cases, one of the Ring members remembers the person and relates the story to the requester. Frank Farr answered a recent email request to the Ring. Frank remembers the daughters Father as a nice looking kid (he added that they were all kids) and was into bodybuilding, a little. The daughter wrote back and told of how her Father was Mr. Maryland in body building in 1947. She was extremely please to learn a little more about her him.

There will be free transportation to Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm every day, so we expect everyone to bring their kids, grandkids and great grand kids. This will be one of the best chances for the younger generation to talk to men who I refer to as, "LIVING HISTORY".

This year's reunion will have 9 scheduled events. We asking for 18 volunteers to be the "GROUND CREW" for these events, so we can keep everything organized. Each event will have a "CREW CHIEF", with one assistant. Also, we will need help with the registration and the PX sales.

Anyone interested in volunteering, please contact me at jshep91@earthlink.net or (714)970-5540.

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Material for publication should be sent to Gary Hall – Editor. Deadline for the RI is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

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**91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group E-mail Ring**

B17Banta@aol.com

**91<sup>st</sup> on the Web**

www.91stbombgroup.com  
www.bombsqd323rd.com

**Veeps Views by Mick Hanou**

I am looking forward to seeing you at the reunion in Late June, 2008, but even more so to having you bring your families. At past reunions there has been a conspicuous absence of the young. We purposely scheduled the reunion this year during the time that kids are off school to give them the opportunity to learn from you firsthand.

This is a wonderful chance to share your history with your grandchildren and pass on your experiences. The US history books at high schools leave a lot to be desired about your contribution to WWII and the liberation of the world from tyranny. We have a Hospitality Suite and also an adjoining room and hope it will be well attended. There will be space for sharing stories, anecdotes, logs, scrapbooks and any artifacts you may wish to exhibit. Please come share.

As to the week's activities - the day trip to Chino gives you a chance to see the aircraft you grew up with (many one-of-a-kind) and should be a great outing for the families. And, as a hopefully-special treat, I have arranged to have a P-38 do a flight demonstration for you, subject of course to safety and weather.

Regarding the Collings Foundation on the right of this page; the aircraft will be at Livermore, California over Memorial Day weekend. I hope that any veterans or wives in the San Francisco Bay area will come visit the planes on Memorial Day. I have been the stop organizer for the past 15 years and would make your visit memorable. This is a wonderful opportunity to see the B-17 (and B-24 and B-25) in flight and commemorate your contribution to freedom.

Speaking of freedom - let me thank you once again for liberating my parents from occupied Europe. If not for you, I wouldn't be here. So "Freedom" probably has a bit more significance for me than the general public. Wishing you an enjoyable Holiday Season, I remain as always, at your service.

**2008 Wings of Freedom Tour**

The Collings Foundation of Stow, MA will begin the 2008 Wings of Freedom Tour on January 18th. For those unfamiliar, a replica of the 91st Bomb Group's B-17 *Nine-O-Nine* is flown on tour with a B-24 and a B-25.



Flight Experiences Donations are \$425 per person aboard the B-17. The B-25 is available at select locations for flight experiences. Flight Experiences Donations on the B-25 are \$400 for forward fuselage seats and \$325 for waist gun seats.

The B-24 will not be on the 2008 Wings of Freedom Tour until February 22nd in Keystone Heights, Florida because of an extended maintenance period.

January	
18 – 21	Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport Fort Lauderdale, FL
22 – 24	Pompano Beach Airpark Pompano Beach, FL
24 – 28	Boca Raton Airport Boca Raton, FL
28 – 30	Naples Municipal Airport Naples, FL
30 – 2/1	Page Field Airport Fort Myers, FL
February	
1 – 4	Venice Municipal Airport Venice, FL
4 – 6	Vandenberg Airport Tampa, FL
6 – 8	Kissimmee Gateway Airport Kissimmee, FL
8 – 10	Ocala Regional / Jim Taylor Field Ocala, FL
11 – 21	<i>Maintenance Break</i>
22 – 25	Keystone Airpark Keystone Heights, FL
25 – 27	Dothan Regional Airport Dothan, AL
27 – 29	Montgomery Regional Airport Montgomery, AL

Please visit [www.collingsfoundation.org](http://www.collingsfoundation.org) for schedule updates and more information regarding the tour.

## 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting opened 0903, 10 Nov 07, with Jim Shepherd, Gary Hall, Ed Gates, Bob Friedman, Asay Johnson and John Howland participating. Mick Hanou joined about 0945.

Jim opened with report on 2008 Reunion scheduled for Tue, 24 to Sun, 29 June 08 at the Wyndham Hotel in Fullerton, CA, about 4 miles north of Anaheim. Room rates will be \$89 per night with free parking. Four complimentary hotel buses of various sizes are available for our use. The contract which has been signed provides for a complimentary Hospitality Room authorizing the 91st BGMA to provide our own refreshments. Trips are tentatively planned to March AFB (about an hour away), Chino Museum, Queen Mary and complimentary shuttles run to Disneyland. Suzi Shepherd is arranging a spouses' and associates' lunch to coincide with the Business Meeting. Jim asked if there would be any interest in arranging a visit to the Nixon Library (very close); no particular interest was recorded. Jim reported that new Full Member Greg Varhall had offered to contact Disneyland to see if they would be willing to arrange a special ceremony for the 91st Reunion centered on the contribution Disney made to nose art (and unit insignia) during WW II, especially the 91st BG; Jim has encouraged Greg to pursue the contact.

Jim advises that the Nominations form has been prepared by Joe Harlick and forwarded to The Ragged Irregular in accord with the By-Laws for publication in the January R.I. Steve Perri's resignation as Editor of The Ragged Irregular is in effect; Gary Hall will publish the next ones and solicits active input from 91st BGMA members.

Lacking a prepared agenda, Jim asked Ed to discuss the proposed items Ed had forwarded to Board members on 7 Nov 07. Ed reported as follows:

(1) The photo display at Minot AFB is still as it was for the dedication ceremony on 7 Sep 07 and did not have our proposed captions mounted yet, nor are the prints arranged in chronological sequence. Dan DeForest, 91st Space Wing historian, who did such a great job of getting them framed and hung with little time to spare, has not had an opportunity for any revisions, yet. He is still considering centering in the display the lithograph of *Nine-O-Nine* donated by Whit Hill in 2006 and presented to the 91st SW by Ed - then BGMA President.

(2) Ed reiterated his proposal made at the August Conference Call that the Board consider possible establishment of an annual award to a member of the 91st Space Wing perhaps with a monetary gift of \$500. With the Board's OK, Ed discussed the possibility with Col. Marty Whelan, C.O. of the 91st Space Wing, in September and followed up with an "exploratory" proposal in writing 24 Sep 07. Col. Whelan was most receptive particularly if

it were open to a broad range of personnel rather than being a scholarship; he will have his staff prepare some suggested criteria that might be used - if the 91st BGMA Board approves the idea. One suggestion was that the award be named the "*Nine-O-Nine* Award for Teamwork" since MSgt Rollin Davis, her crew chief, was kind enough to credit the teamwork of ground and air crews when he received the 8th Air Force award for most consecutive missions flown without a mechanical abort. (The Team approach is an area of great emphasis - e.g. "Team Minot" - in today's USAF doctrine.) (See *discussion below*.)

(3) The possibility of getting the portion of the crashed aircraft *Chow-hound* with the nose art from the French organization that has it, may have been overrun by events. (Ed had proposed in a 14 Oct e-mail that Jim make an effort to get a commitment of interest from Chino Museum to display it at Chino with the original Tony Starcer sketch. See below.) Ed and Jim recently received invitations to attend "the opening of the CAF Arizona Wing Aircraft Museum Exhibit honoring the 91st Bomb Group and commemorating the return of the remains of three crewmen of the B-17G *Chow Hound*" (sic - should be *Chow-hound*) at 1pm, 11 Nov 07 at Mesa, AZ. Gary Hall had heard of the event, has contacted a representative and will have an article in The Ragged Irregular. None of the Board members will be able to attend; Ed has advised his son, Charlie, an Associate Member who lives in Tucson. Ed will clarify whether the display includes the part of the aircraft with the nose art.

(quote below from my 14 Oct 07 e-mail)

"By pure chance (and my B-17 cap) in CDG airport at Paris, I met Michel Baudoin, incoming President of the French Society of Normandie, which has "authority" over the crash site of *Chow-hound*. Among other things in a couple of hours we discussed the bare possibility that we might still be able to get the piece of the wreckage that has the nose art which is still in his possession. We will pursue that possibility. If we are able to obtain shipment to Chino Museum, would they be interested in participating in the cost of shipping?

Second question, would Mrs. Starcer (and/or her son) be willing to make a permanent loan of Tony's nose art sketch for *Chow-hound* to Chino if we can obtain the piece?"

(4) Ed congratulated Mick on taking of notes from the Conference Call and encouraged publishing them in The Ragged Irregular.

(5) Comment on the 303rd BGMA Hell's Angels Newsletter which is received by Ed and Ace. Ace usually forwards his copy to the editor of The Ragged Irregular for possible quotes from it. The November issue reports on their very successful "final" Reunion which drew an estimated 560 attendance including 120 survivors of WW II. The numbers were far beyond what they had expected when they decided on dissolution at the end of this year and planned the Reunion. Ed suggested that they had

been more effective at recruiting children and grandchildren than we had (at least for this event), and that we might learn from them; he will continue his contacts solidified last year when he laid a wreath on the site of one of their downed aircraft at St. Nazaire, France. We will also continue to keep them advised of progress at the National Museum of the USAF at Wright-Patterson regarding recognition of all four of the "Four Horsemen" of the 8th AF (91st, 303rd, 305th and 306th BG) when the *Memphis Belle* goes on display as the centerpiece for their WW II display. The 303rd is sensitive to erroneous claims (never by the 91st BGMA) that the *Belle* completed 25 missions before their *Hell's Angels* and included a Congressional Resolution in their ceremonies by Congressman McCotter of Michigan commending them - among other things - as their "B-17 *Hell's Angels* was the first to successfully complete 25 combat missions on May 13, 1943, six days prior to the *Memphis Belle's* same accomplishment." (The *Belle* completed 25 missions after most of the crew flew their 25th.)

(6) Ed asked for comments on the French website for which we voted \$1,000 in assistance last year. It is [www.b17-france.org](http://www.b17-france.org). Board members will check. Ed is waiting for more info from Alain Charles regarding getting the interviews with eye-witnesses at the crash sites on the web. The donation will probably come from the Memorial Maintenance Fund.

Jim reported on the PX sales in which Suzi has been very active and will get sales proceeds to Ace soon. Have sold all of the copies of Ray Bowden's books brought back from England by Mick. Jim believes the inclusion of a PX list in the October R.I. offers Christmas sales prospects in addition to the January page.

Discussion of the possibility of offering an award to a member of the 91st Space Wing included a self-styled "Devil's Advocate" query from Ace about why the 91st SW should be a recipient? Ed believes they offer the best source of future Associate Members who would also be veterans (helping our quota), would perpetuate contact with them and in that way insure that the donation of photos and the litho would not go astray in the future. A \$500 award plus cost of a certificate would easily be covered by income from our invested funds. Jim commented on the genuine interest shown by members of the Command at the Sept. dedication. Ed recommended that members check the Minot AFB website for coverage of the presentation; a video shows on [www.minot.af.mil](http://www.minot.af.mil).

Bob suggested we might get more publicity by a similar award to some broad organization, such as an Air Force ROTC unit; discussion followed regarding how such an award would be handled other than to a local college or high school. Leaving the issue open to later consideration, the Board will wait to see the degree of interest shown by the 91st SW.

Ace reported \$40,102.67 in funds including \$7,654.94 in dues and gifts from 2006. The total includes \$7,118.28 in the Memorial Maintenance Fund received primarily from

sales of the lithographs donated to the 91st BGMA at the Tacoma Reunion; these funds are not subject to limitations that might restrict use of funds received as donations to a non-taxable entity. We have 260 Life Members, 269 Full Members, 148 ALM (many widows) and 65 Associate Members; the latter represents about half the 2006 total which is common in the year following a Reunion. 2007 income includes \$5,178 "dues & gifts" and \$3,303 from the PX. Expenditures this year include \$1,350 for memorial wreaths, \$4,358 for the PX and \$841 for donation of CD's and DVD's to Libraries.

Jake reported that 321 DVD's and CD's had been sent to 26 Museums that expressed an interest in the US and UK including all 85 stories by vets from the website on one. Some had to be replaced because they were destroyed by radiation detectors at the Smithsonian and a few other facilities. Tower Museum had expressed an interest in a display similar to the one put up at Minot AFB; when advised by Joe Harlick that he had sent them 80 photos many years ago, then Chris Murphy located them in storage.

Ed suggested that a schedule for the Collings Foundation's replica of *Nine-O-Nine* be published in The Ragged Irregular. Mick will send a copy to Gary.

Meeting closed at 1005 PST.

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## Correction: A Tale of 2 Daughters

The October 2007 RI incorrectly identified Lt. Glenn U. Brooks as a pilot with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group. Lt. Brooks flew with the 94<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.

*Editor's Note:* Upon arrival in England, the 331st and 332nd squadrons of the 94<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group were assigned to the 91st Bomb Group at Basingbourn for combat indoctrination. They flew six combat missions under supervision of their hosts, the first on 13 May 43 to St. Omer, France.

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## Correction: The 91<sup>st</sup> History

91 <sup>st</sup> Bomb Group (H)	1942 – 1945
91 <sup>st</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing	1948 – 1957
91 <sup>st</sup> Bombardment Wing (Heavy)	1962 – 1968
<b>91<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Wing</b>	<b>1968 – 1991</b>
<b>91<sup>st</sup> Missile Wing</b>	<b>1991 – 1994</b>
<b>91<sup>st</sup> Missile Group</b>	<b>1994 – 1996</b>
<b>91<sup>st</sup> Missile Wing</b>	<b>1996 – 1997</b>
91 <sup>st</sup> Space Wing	1997 – present

No change in mission since 1968.

**2008 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Reunion**

B-17 44-83684 at Planes of Fame museum, Chino, CA. Pictured here as *Piccadilly Lilly II* with 91<sup>st</sup> BG markings. The B-17 is currently stripped of all paint and is in the process of being restored to flying condition.



East lawn of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum

The 2008 Reunion is quickly approaching!

Please find the blue registration form included in this issue of the RI. Fill out the form and mail it along with a check payable to the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA in order to register for the scheduled events.

You will need to make your own hotel arrangements. The Wyndham Hotel in Fullerton is the official 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Reunion Headquarters. They have a block of rooms available at \$89 per night for reunion attendees. To reserve a room at this rate, call (714)992-1700 before May 24<sup>th</sup>.

The scheduled events are mentioned in the "President's Corner" and a list provided on registration form, so instead of repeating them here, I've included a few photos of the sights.

Hope to see you all in California!



Crystal Cathedral



Catalina Island

**91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Officer Elections**

It's time to elect your 2008 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA officers. A ballot is included for all full members. Please make your choices carefully, fold and tape the ballot, add postage and mail to Joe Harlick.

**Attention Associate Members!**

If you have been an associate member for a minimum of two years and would like to become a full member, you may do so! Send a request for full membership in writing to:

Asay B. Johnson  
590 Aloha Drive  
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406-4559

**Thanks to Steve and Nancy Perri!**

Steve and Nancy Perri put The Ragged Irregular together for the past five years. Steve has decided to retire from the newsletter and move to the roll of 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA Historian. I'm certain everyone will agree that Steve and Nancy have done a wonderful job! They leave some big shoes to fill, although both have offered their ongoing support. Thank you for your commitment to the RI and the 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA!

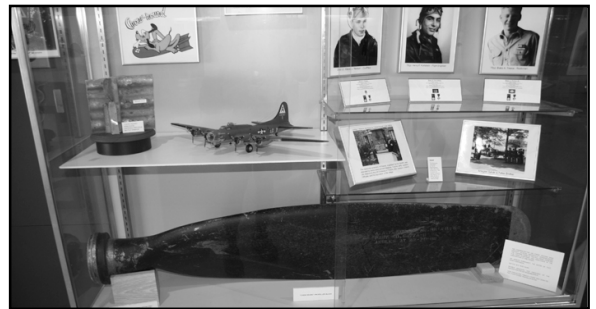
**2008 Dues**

A yellow dues form is also included in this quarter's RI. If you wish to continue your 91<sup>st</sup> BGMA membership, please fill out and return the form so it is received before March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Chow-hound Exhibit at the Arizona Commemorative Air Force Aircraft Museum**



The Commemorative Air Force Aircraft Museum in Mesa, AZ opened an exhibit dedicated to the B-17 Flying Fortress *Chow-hound* during its annual Veteran's Day open house. *Chow-hound* was a 91<sup>st</sup> B-17 that was lost in action over France. The exhibit features photos and posters honoring the crew of *Chow-hound* and the 91st Bomb Group.



Chow-hound propeller and exhibit

Henry F. Kortebein was flying his final mission Aug. 8, 1944, when German anti-aircraft fire exploded around *Chow-hound* five minutes from its target south-east of Caen. The aircraft broke into two and the fuselage came down on a French farm. Residents and German soldiers found the remains of six of the nine crewmembers and laid them to rest. Leon Chevallier, who was 16 at the time, a farmer and a member of the French Resistance, picked up one of the propellers from *Chow-hound* and hid it from the Germans.



Visitors at the Veteran's Day Event

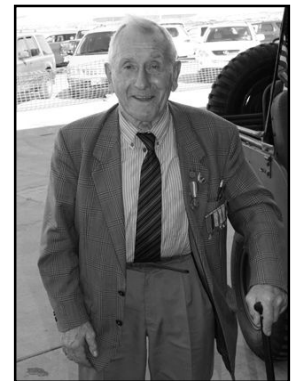
In 2004, Michel Baudouin and members of the Normandy Association for Air Remembrance (NAAR), a French aircraft recovery group, found wreckage from *Chow-hound* in a farmer's field. When crews excavated the wreckage they discovered the remains of Kortebein, along with those of Blake Treece and David Nelson.



Leon Chevallier and Michel Baudouin telling of *Chow-hound's* recovery



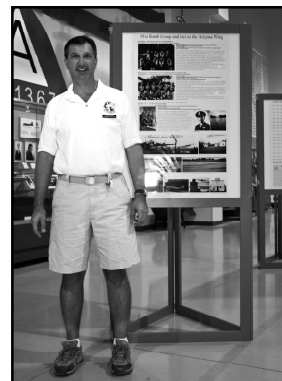
Marion Burkhardt



Leon Chevallier

The NAAR investigated the crash site and Joint POW / MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) anthropologists identified the three crewmembers through DNA. Their remains were then buried at Arlington National Cemetery 62 years and 17 days after *Chow-hound* was shot down.

Earlier this year, a 6 by 10 inch piece of *Chow-hound's* wing, complete with patched bullet hole, was presented by Marion Burkhardt, Henry F. Kortebein's sister, and Baudouin to Bud Kahn and the Commemorative Air Force Arizona Wing. A short time later, Chevallier donated the propeller he picked up in 1944. All were on hand for the Veteran's Day exhibit opening.



Rick Senffner Arizona Wing Member and 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association Member



Dan Goldstein Arizona Wing Member and 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association Member and 91st Veteran

## **VA Seeking Former Prisoners of War and Family Members**

*Submitted by Jim Bard Jr.*

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- Veterans Affairs officials are seeking any former prisoners of war or their family members who are not currently using VA benefits and services.

The officials are urging them to contact VA to find out if they are eligible for health care, disability compensation and other services.

"One of VA's highest priorities is meeting the needs of former prisoners of war," said Jim Nicholson, former VA secretary. "They are extraordinary men and women who have endured captivity, suffered extreme deprivation and sacrificed their own freedom to preserve the freedom of all Americans."

VA officials estimate more than 25,000 former POWs are alive today. Officials are trying to contact the remaining prisoners of war not receiving any benefits or health care through an outreach program; including asking citizens to pass the word to veterans they know.

These officials are also seeking surviving spouses and family members of former POWs who may be eligible for certain benefits and services.

In recent years, VA has expanded benefits to all former POWs with strokes and certain common heart diseases. More than a dozen other diseases were already covered.

The government's effort to inform former POWs about improvements in benefits has faced a particular hurdle trying to reach older veterans who may not have been in touch with VA for decades.

A majority of former POWs are veterans of World War II, and their military service was before the use of Social Security numbers. As a result, it has been difficult for VA officials to track down those with military "service numbers" who have not been in contact with the Department in recent years.

Throughout the years, a nationwide outreach campaign including direct mailings and the help of news media and veterans organizations has added hundreds of former POWs to VA's compensation rolls. These people who had not previously been receiving benefits to which they were entitled are now receiving what is due to them.

People who know a former POW can ask him or her to contact VA at (800) 827-1000. Details about benefits and services available to former POWs and family members are available at [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/POW/index.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/POW/index.htm).

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## **WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE A PRISONER OF WAR**

*© Marion C. Hoffman February 16, 1999 – Used with permission*

To be a prisoner of war is to know hunger. We don't speak about hunger you feel when you miss a meal or cannot stand your diet. We talk about hunger from lack of solid food for weeks and months. Hunger, that gnaws at your vital organs and strips the flesh from your bones, hunger that forces you to eat anything and everything available. Black stale bread made from sawdust, watery soup infested with worms and made from garbage, rotten potatoes and turnips dug from muddy fields, and if you are lucky, hot water to wash it all down.

To be a prisoner of war is to experience cold. Not a cold blustery Indiana Winter when you wish you had worn your gloves. We talk about standing for hours in soup lines in freezing weather pelted by sleet, feet numb and fingers nearly frozen. Your body is racked by uncontrollable shivering you are sick, your mind is a mask of pain. Adding to the misery, dysentery knots your stomach. It never comes it merely teases you, you began to wonder, could death be far away?

To be a prisoner of war is to experience fear. The promise of food if you help remove enemy civilians bodies from homes that were bombed at Christmas time. The homes were setting along side of targeted railroad tracks. The promise of food if you help repair the bomb demolished railroad system. Nameless terror as you are packed into railroad box cars, doors locked and barred, while attacking Allied aircraft bomb and strafe and not knowing that you are there and if you will be blown to bits the next second. The terrible fear of catching a horrible disease that runs rampant throughout the Stalags, no strength or medicine to fight back. The fear that you might never again be free.



To be a prisoner of war is to experience anger and deep depression. Anger knowing that your enemy counterparts, imprisoned in the United States, are well fed and clothed. Thoughts of your family and home lock your mind in bottomless depression and the cruelest torture. Anger at your captors and wishing for their death. Knowing that you are with your knowledge, training and experience in war are no longer of any use in war, Knowing that you have been sacrificed by your government like those who gave the Supreme Sacrifice.

In a suddenly alien world is to suffer the agony of rehabilitation as a prisoner of war. There is frustration in trying to cope and fit into a society that seems foreign and unable to relate to your experiences. It is the resentment you immediately feel for those who have never felt what you have, seen what you have, and whose personal problems pale by comparison. The recurring nightmares that plague you for the rest of your days. The nagging question, "Was it worth it?" "What was it all for?" "What good did it do?" "Who cares?" Nobody listened, nobody believed. Therefore, we who were Prisoner's Of War were sacrificed like those who gave the Supreme Sacrifice we did not speak. We became victims of our own silence.

Perhaps there was a purpose. Perhaps the Former Prisoner Of War has a clearer perspective of what is real and who is genuine. Perhaps he understands what is really important in life...

## Mike Banta's Web Ring

### **Book about aerial gunners**

I'm working on a book about aerial gunners to be published by Potomac Books in 2009. So far, I have interviewed several dozen gunners. With the exception of men who were in the first day of our involvement in the war at Pearl Harbor and in the Philippines, I haven't talked to anyone who was a gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress. I'm looking for people who are willing to be interviewed by telephone (or in person, if you're near me in northern Virginia) to let me write about your experiences.

I'm an Air Force veteran (1957-60), a retired American diplomat (1964-89) and an author (1955- ) of about 70 books plus magazine articles and newspaper columns about the Air Force and its history and current operations. I write the weekly Back Talk opinion column for Air Force Times newspaper (as well as the paper's history articles), the monthly Washington Watch feature for Aerospace America magazine, a bi-monthly column for Air Combat magazine, and a quarterly feature for Air Power History magazine. My book on gunners will cover the entire period of the Air Force's history.

If you're considering whether you'd like to talk with me, we can have a chat on the phone to decide whether you want to proceed further. I'm at my desk at (703) 264-8950 from 4:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Saturday through Thursday, including holidays. I take Friday off.

Robert F. Dorr (Bob), 3411 Valewood Drive, Oakton VA 22124, (703)264-8950, e-mail: robert.f.dorr@cox.net

### **Sebastian looks for info on Richard Wertheim**

First I will introduce myself. My name is Sebastiaan Vonk, a fifteen year old boy from the Netherlands. I am very

interested in the Second World War. To honor the soldiers who died for our freedom I have adopted on three American overseas cemeteries a grave. On the Margraten Cemetery the grave of Cpl. Lawrence F. Shea, 318th Infantry Regiment, on the Henri-Chapelle cemetery the grave of Pvt. Charles G. Brinkley, also 318th Infantry Regiment and since yesterday on the Ardennes Cemetery the grave of 2Lt. Richard A. Wertheim, 401st Bomb Squadron, 91st Bomb Group.

Yesterday I started my research to Richard A. Wertheim. I found your very interesting website and found already some very interesting information about his latest flight. Like with which crew he was flying, which bomber and more! I found also the story of mister Dana Morse who survived the crash which Richard Wertheim didn't survive. That story was very interesting because I am of course also very interested in the death of Richard Wertheim. I want to know as much as possible about Wertheim.

I write you because I hope you want to help me with my research to Richard Wertheim. I would appreciate it very much when you want to help me. And maybe can bring me in contact with mister Dana Morse. I think he can tell me very much about the crash and about 2LT Wertheim.

I will enclose with this mail a photo of me and 2LT Wertheim's grave.

Many thanks. I will hope that you will answer me.

Kind Regards,

Sebastiaan Vonk  
Kievit 12  
3371 JP Hardinxveld-Giessendam  
The Netherlands

Email: [sebastiaan\\_vonk\\_8989@hotmail.com](mailto:sebastiaan_vonk_8989@hotmail.com)



**Special Folded Wings:****✪ Paul W. Tibbets Jr. Age 92**

Columbus, OH, November 1, 2007



Paul Tibbets Jr., who flew the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb — on Hiroshima, Japan — died this morning at his East Side home. He was 92.

Tibbets had suffered small strokes and heart failure in his final years and had been in hospice care.

He was born in Quincy, Ill., but grew up in Miami after his father moved the family there.

Tibbets fell in love with flight and, at age 12, volunteered as a backseat assistant to a biplane pilot, dropping leaflets for the Curtiss Candy Co. at fairs, carnivals and other public gatherings.

He joined the Army Air Corps in 1938. After the U.S. entered World War II, Tibbets first patrolled the Atlantic coast for submarines and later piloted some of the first daylight missions of B-17s over Germany.

On Aug. 6, 1945, Tibbets piloted the *Enola Gay*, a B-29 he had christened for his mother, down the runway on Tinian Island for a six-hour flight to Japan. He was a 30-year-old colonel. The day's assignment was code-named Special Bombing Mission No. 13.

"If Dante had been with us on the plane, he would have been terrified," Tibbets said later about bombing Hiroshima. "The city we had seen so clearly in the sunlight a few minutes before was now an ugly smudge. It had completely disappeared under this awful blanket of smoke and fire."

Tibbets remained in the military until 1966. He later was president of a Columbus-based, international air-taxi service called Executive Jet Aviation.

As pilot of one of the most famous flights of WW II, which brought about a quicker surrender from the enemy and a reduction in the loss of Allied lives, and for his leadership and skill with both airplanes and people in times of stress, Paul W. Tibbets, Jr. is enshrined with honor into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

Survivors include his wife, Andrea, and three sons — Paul III, of North Carolina; Gene, of Alabama; and James, of Columbus.

Tibbets specified in his will that there should be no funeral service after his death and no headstone because anti-nuclear demonstrators could make his resting place a pilgrimage site. Tibbets asked to be cremated and have his ashes dispersed into the waters of the English Channel.

**Folded Wings (continued from page 12)****✪ Peter J. Hoffman Jr. 323<sup>rd</sup> Age 87**

Chandler, AZ, June 13, 2007

Reported by the Arizona Republic



Peter John Hoffman Jr., 87, passed away June 13, 2007 in Chandler; AZ. Peter was born Dec. 15, 1919 in Hastings on the Hudson, NY the son of Peter and Marceline Hoffman. Following high school he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the 91st Bomb Group of the Army Air Corps during WWII. Following the service he went to work for American Airlines, retiring as manager of air craft maintenance in Phoenix after 36 years. A car buff, he was interested in the Model A & T Fords, and was a member of the Ford Falcon Club. He had residences in Prescott in Highland Pines and in Tempe, Arizona in recent years. Peter was preceded in death by his wife Arline in 1990, and is survived by his daughter and son-in-law Linda and Randy Drwinga, and grandson Richard Drwinga.

**✪ John P. Guros 323<sup>rd</sup> Age 88**

Henderson, NV, November 20, 2007

Reported by his wife Francis Guros

John P. Guros, age 88, passed away on Nov. 20, 2007. He served in the Army Air force in WWII as Technical Sergeant. He was shot down on his 18th mission. He spent two months in German hospitals and the next ten months at Stalag 17B Krems, Austria. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Francis, one son, one daughter and three grandchildren.

☛ **Billie C. Gilfillan 322<sup>nd</sup> Age 82**

Tolono, IL, January 13, 2007

Reported by www.specialforces.org

Billie C. Gilfillan of Tolono, Illinois died at 8:55 p.m. Jan. 13 at Bayfront Medical Center, St. Petersburg, Florida.

Born Sept. 23, 1924, Billie flew 24 missions over Europe as a tail gunner in a B-17 during World War II. He later served as the commander of Co. B 123rd Infantry Regiment during its mobilization for the Korean conflict, where he subsequently volunteered for duty with the 8240th Special Forces unit engaged in covert training operations behind North Korean lines. Billie joined Chapter LX in 1998 and was a life member of the Special Forces and the Special Operations Associations. He is survived by his wife, Mary; two sons, William and Robert; and two grandchildren, Kelly and Skip.

☛ **Matthew A. "Matt" Munding 324<sup>th</sup> Age 85**

Muskogee, OK, January 19, 2007

Reported by www.muskogee phoenix.com

Matthew A. "Matt" Munding, Jr., longtime Muskogee businessman and feed mill owner died Friday, January 19, 2007 at his home south of Muskogee.

He was born April 3, 1921 in Muskogee where he grew up and attended St. Joseph School. Matt's father, Matthew A. Munding, Sr., established New State Flour & Feed in 1906, a year before statehood. The business has long been known as Munding Milling Company.

During World War II, Matt served overseas with the 324th Squadron, 91st Bomb Group of the Eighth Force. Following the war, he attended Northeastern State College where he graduated with a degree in Business. Then he joined his father in the mill full-time.

Matt married Alice "Jo" Tate in 1947. The couple had five children, four of whom survive. Jo preceded him in death in 1978. In 1982, Matt married Mary Simms. Until last summer, he had continued to serve at the mill, which remains family owned and operated.

Also preceding Matt in death were his sister, Evelyn Southgate, brothers, Linus Munding, M.D. and Bill Munding and son, Steve Munding. Survivors include his wife, Mary, and the couple's children and their

spouses: Kay Hicks, Matt Munding, III, Roger and Lisa Bull, Ronell and Pat Stinson, Larry and Cindy Angle, John and Karis Simms, and Mike and Jeanette Simms; eleven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews and many dear friends.

☛ **Joseph "Pene" Charles Boiani 322<sup>nd</sup> Age 95**

Newport, RI, April 15, 2007

Reported by the Newport Daily News

Joseph Boiani of 120 Eustis Avenue, Newport, RI, died Sunday, April 15, 2007 at Newport Hospital.

Born in Newport, RI on July 22, 1911, he was the son of the late Rodolfo and Aurelia (Bosia) Boiani. He was the husband of the late Mary Corrigan Boiani.

Mr. Boiani served with the 91st Bomb Group in the Army Air Corp during WWII. After the war he went to work for Bill O'Brien at O'Brien's Music as a mechanic until his retirement in 1983. He was an avid fisherman and could often be seen with his friend Randy Steward Sr. out on Ocean Drive fishing. Mr. Boiani was a life member of the VFW Post 406, the Newport County Salt Water Fish Club and the RI Striper Tournament.

He leaves a daughter Cynthia N. Boiani of Newport, RI. He was brother of the late John Boiani, Aldo Boiani, Elmira Sonogo and Evelyn Trifero.

☛ **Anthony J. Baummer 322<sup>nd</sup> Age 84**

Cambridge, MD, October 26, 2007

Reported by his daughter Joy Ritz

He was a waist gunner aboard *Wee Willie* from July, 1944 to March, 1945 based in Bassingbourn, England He lived an honorable life raising four children on a farm in Pennsylvania then retiring to the Eastern shore of Maryland in Cambridge for the last 25 years. He shared with me many, many stories of his experience during the war which I will always treasure.

He was and always will be my hero not only for his bravery in the war, but for the wonderful father he was.

**Folded Wings:**☛ **“Long” John R. Parsons Jr. 401<sup>st</sup> Age 92**

Washington, DC, September 24, 2007

Reported by Whit Hill



John R. Parsons Jr., 92, a retired lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, died of pneumonia Sept. 24 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He lived in Washington, DC.

John was born in Oakland, CA on February 21, 1916. Following graduation from the University of California he was drafted into the U.S. Army early in 1941. Taking advice from an old Boy Scout friend, he was able to resign from the Army and immediately re-enlist in the U.S. Army Air Corp. He then attended Officers Candidate School, graduating as a Second Lieutenant. His first assignment was as the Adjutant to the 401st Bomb Squadron, 91st Bomb Group. As Squadron Adjutant he became a top assistant to the 91st Group Commander, Col. Stanley T. Wray.

Following the end of WW II John remained in the Air Force. After D-Day and the Germans were pushed out of Paris, Long John was transferred as Adjutant to the U.S. Air Corps Air Weather Service unit in Paris. His next assignment was a tour of duty in New York City, followed by duty in Korea during the Korean conflict. His last assignment was in the Office of the Inspector General, US Air Force, Pentagon, from which he retired in 1962. He

continued to work in that office as a civilian until he retired again in 1984.

While John was serving in Korea he met and married Chung Oak who was employed as a dental assistant, 5th AF. Survivors include his wife, Chung Oak Parsons of Washington, DC; a son, Johnny Parsons of Washington, DC; a stepdaughter, Chan Sun of New York, NY; a brother Robert; and nephews Gary, Bob and Randy of California.

☛ **Dr. Deane A. Turner 323<sup>rd</sup> Age 88**

Roseville, MN, November 6, 2007

Reported by the Star Tribune



Turner, Dr. Deane A. Home in Heaven November 6, 2007 Age 88, of Roseville. Preceded in death by his loving wife of 61 years, Ferryl. Survived by daughter, Sherry Oleson; granddaughter, Anne-Marie Grove and husband, Patrick;

great-grandchildren, Rachel, Daniel, Gabrielle and Tahlia Grove; sister, LaVora Knudsen; nephews and nieces. Deane was a decorated WWII Army Air Force, B-17 co-pilot veteran. In 1984, he retired as Professor Emeritus, U of M after 32 years of service. Deane volunteered his time and talents to many organizations. He was known for his kind heart and generous nature. Deane was a friend to many.

91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association  
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**LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU MOVE**

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 91<sup>st</sup> 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