



# The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Vol. 2 No. 2

January, 1969

## 91st 'Operation Return' Flying At Full Throttle

"Operation Return," the 91st's international reunion at Bassingbourn and the unit's two memorials at Madingly and Royston, is running with full throttle and a strong tail wind, and a complete success seems assured.

Reservations for the Eastern Division's flight from New York on June 15 continue to pour in, and the Western Division has completed plans for a direct flight from Long Beach, Calif., to Europe for West Coast members. All indications point to the largest reunion to date of members who want another look at Bassingbourn before the base is closed forever this summer, and who can also take a European vacation at an unbeatable rate.

Many of the recently found members of the 91st are unaware that former 91st-ers staged the first Operation Return in June, 1963, to dedicate memorials to those group members who died during their service at Bassingbourn.

Beginning in late 1959, Maj. Gen. Stanley T. Wray began to search out former members of the group, seeking

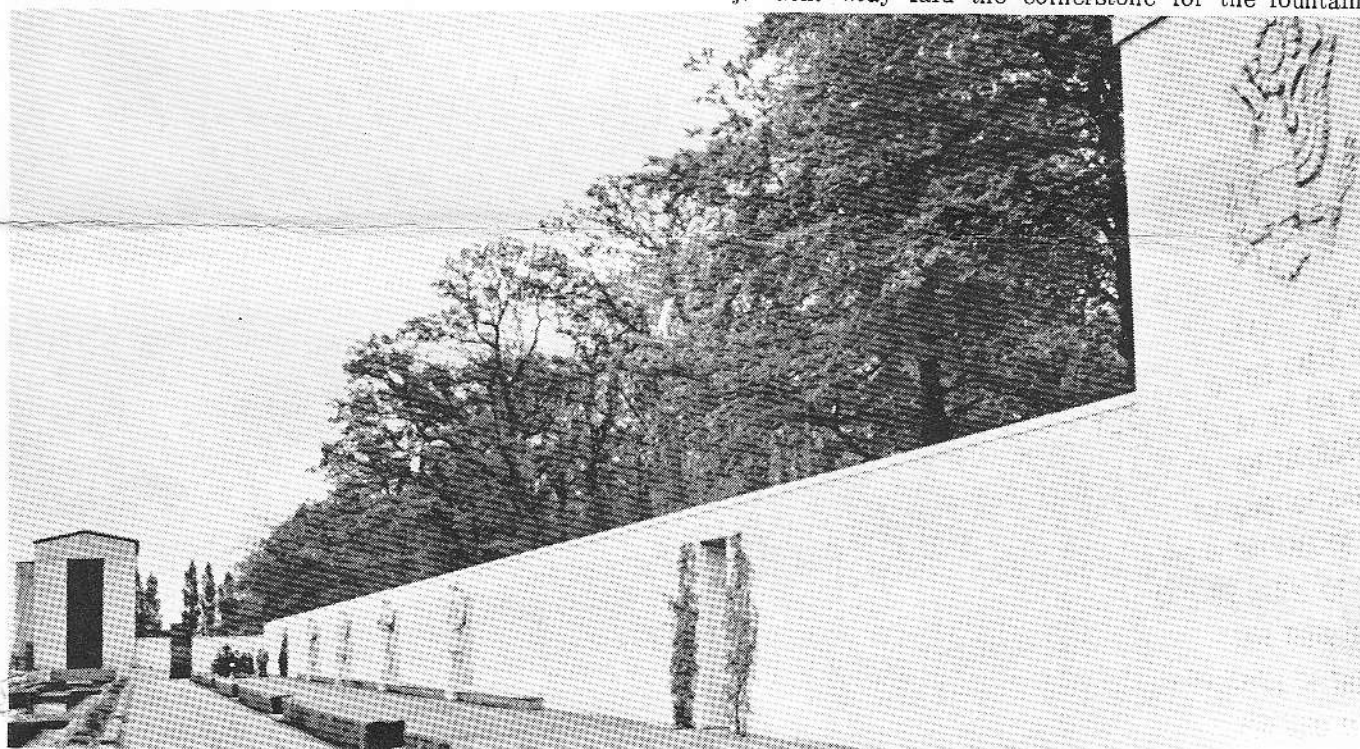
their help in setting up a permanent memorial to those

More than \$3200 was contributed to the cause. It was decided that the funds would go for a massive silver altar bowl for the Chapel of the American Military Cemetery at Madingly, and for a fountain and pool in the Memorial Gardens near the center of Royston.

who did not return. The task was taken up enthusiastically by former 91st-ers, and from a beginning of about 50 names the list continued to grow over the next several years to more than 600.

On 23 June 1963 the officers and some eight other members of the Memorial Association and their wives toured Bassingbourn and dedicated four official Squadron plaques to be permanently displayed at the base. That afternoon the group and more than 200 persons from the area witnessed the dedication of the altar bowl at Madingly.

From Madingly the group went down to Royston, where Maj. Gen. Wray laid the cornerstone for the fountain.



The memorial wall shown here is a shrine in the American Memorial Cemetery at Madingly. Members who take part in "Operation Return" will visit the cemetery and the memorial fountain at Royston.

## The Ragged Irregular

These news letters are published quarterly in October, January, April, and July, in an effort to keep alive the spirit of the 91st Bombardment Group (H) and to maintain the fellowship of those who fought together in World War II from AF Station 121, Bassingbourne, England, 1942-1945.

Material for publication should be sent to the editor, Paul C. Burnett, Box 909, Auburn, Alabama 36830, not later than two weeks before the first day of the month of publication.

### President

Maj. Gen. Stanley T. Wray (Ret)

### Public Relations

C. Carlton Brechler

5011 Elmgate Drive, Orchard Lake, Mich. 48033

### East Coast Division

(from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River)

#### Chairmen

Paul Chryst

1494 North Adams St. Pottstown, Pa. 19464

Joseph A. Camelleri

314 South 7th St., Reading, Pa. 19602

#### Secretary

Robert Gerstemeir

Kerr Road, RD #1, Lansdale, Pa. 19446

#### Treasurer

Joseph M. Giambrone

303 Brooksdale Ave., Glenside, Pa. 19038

### West Coast Division

(from the Pacific to the Mississippi River)

#### Chairmen

Phillip R. Taylor

3211 Eichenlaub St., San Diego, Calif. 92117

Maurice J. Herman

2821 Pruneridge Ave. Santa Clara, Calif. 95051

#### Secretary - Treasurer

George W. Parks

109 Wilshire Ave., Vallejo, Calif. 94590

Dues are \$3 per year, payable to the Division Treasurer. Get Your Buddies Back With Us. Send current addresses of former 91st-ers to the proper Division Secretary.

## Membership Data Forms

We need data forms on ALL former 91st-ers. If you haven't sent

one in, please do so today. If you need the data form,

contact your division secretary.

**NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE**

## From The Editor's Desk...

Those who may be kicking around the notion of making Operation Return will be interested in this excerpt from a recent letter from CMS Samuel R. Digristina, presently stationed at RAF Lakenheath: "The first thing I did when I got here was to visit Bassingbourne. It has changed considerably, but I enjoyed the visit. You may not believe this, but in the area where we parked our aircraft (323 sqdn.) on the hard stands you could detect the faint oil spots on the concrete, and if you looked hard enough you could see bits and pieces of hardware. It seems that when we pulled out no one moved in that area and the weeds have taken over... the 323 parking area was across the road."

Digristina was discharged in 1945, recalled to active duty during the Korean war, and has been in since. He plans to retire in August '69.

West Coast Secretary-Treasurer George Parks made an 8-column top-of-the-page banner headline in the Vallejo (Calif.) Times-Herald recently for his quick action in reviving a drowning 4-year-old girl. The paper had this to say, in part: "Quick thinking and equally fast mouth-to-mouth resuscitation by a Solano County deputy sheriff Tuesday afternoon saved the life of a 4-year-old girl who had fallen face down in a drainage ditch at Sixth and Lemon Streets.

"Deputy George Parks was passing the scene just as a rescuer carried up the body of Alicia Owens from the runoff ditch which carries water into Lake Dalwigh underneath Lemon Street.

"Parks wiped the mud from the little girl's face and out of her mouth and immediately applied mouth-to-mouth artificial breathing. In just a few minutes the girl's lungs began functioning again and she was screaming as a Fire Department resuscitator squad arrived and began to administer oxygen..."

Help! Help! The editor is desperately in need of help from some of you old timers whose memories (or diaries) are better than his own. For upcoming issues of The Ragged Irregular he's working on stories of the first raid the group made (Nov. 7, 1942), and the first Hamm mission, which won the group the Presidential Unit Citation. Does anybody have a list of the planes making those missions? Or any pertinent poop he can contribute? Send along a copy.

And while we are on the topic... We need stories and anecdotes of Bassingbourne days for The Irregular. The editor's well, which wasn't too deep to begin with is running dry. And it's heavily loaded with the first year of operation. So pass along copies of your clippings, or be a real buddy and write up some of the thousands of good stories about the group. And not just the combat bit -- we want stories of every aspect of our unit.

(continued on page 11)



# Western Division Schedules Charter Flight

A Special chartered flight leaving from Long Beach, Calif., for the Operation Return reunion at Bassingbourn has been announced by the Western Division, to enable West Coast members to fly directly to Europe for the get-together.

Dates and details of the flight differ from those of the Eastern Division Operation Return, but the two groups will meet in London for the reunion ceremonies.

Arrangements have been made with Atlantis Air Line, a West Germany Scheduled Airline, for a chartered DC-8

for a round trip from Long Beach to Frankfurt, Germany. Transportation costs for the round trip will be \$295 per passenger.

After landing in Frankfurt arrangements are being made to transport members, families and associate members to the French coast via the Rhur Valley along the Rhine, through the Netherlands and Belgium. At one of the French ports the group will board a ferry to England, and then on to London in time to meet the Eastern Division

(Continued on page 9)

## Northern California Area Rally Round

A highly successful Northern California Area Rally Round was held at San Jose on November 9, ramrodded by Western Division co-chariman Maury Herman.

Thirty-seven ex-91st-ers from all parts of California gathered at the San Jose Hyatt House Hotel for a get-together that lasted from 2 o'clock in the afternoon until the same hour in the a.m. for some hardy souls.

The afternoon was spent in informal bull sessions, with formal activities getting under way at 7 with a cocktail hour, followed by a dinner of charcoal broiled steaks

in the Governor's House Banquet Room.

A feature of the dinner was a talk by Lt. William O'Brien, who recently served a tour with the reactivated 91st Strategic Bomb Wing, a B-52 outfit that was so designated in honor of the original 91st Bomb Group (H), and inherited her history and honors.

Slides of the national reunion in Denver were shown, and a tape of a radio broadcast made by Ted Malone in WW II honoring the 91st for its first Hamm raid, entitled "Lest We Forget," was a highlight of the occasion.



Responding happily to the photographer's instructions to "Say Cheers! fellows" are these members gathered at the Northern California Area Rally Round at San Jose on November 9. First row, sitting, 1 to r, is Phillip R. Taylor, Doug Gibson, CMS. C.B. McGara, and Maj. Maurice J. Herman.

Second row, Leslie P. Gallagher, Maj. Edward P. Win-

slow, Maj. Gen. Stanley T. Wray, Dick Anderson, and Ken Cochran.

Third row, Ray O. Gillet, Charles H. Bonner, Albert Marcus, M/Sgt. George Parks, Jack Gaffney, Harry E. Carner, Robert Wright, and Lt. William O'Brien, and recent member of the reactivated 91st Strategic Bomb Wing, a B-52 outfit.

# Presentation Remarks At First 'Operation Return'

When the silver altar bowl was donated by the 91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association on Sunday, June 23, 1963, Maj. Gen. Stanley T. Wray made these remarks to a group of more than 200 persons who took part in the ceremony:

**Distinguished visitors from the City of Cambridge and the local country-side; Members of the RAF and the American Air Force who are here present; Parents, Relatives and Comrades of the men of the 91st Bomb Group who did not return from their missions, I give you welcome.**

Twenty-one years ago next October a small group of American combat crews, together with their aircraft, their ground support equipment and men, moved into Bassingbourn near here to take up their combat station. Through the next few weeks they trained, and starting on 7 November sent our eight aircraft on their first combat mission.

On 8 November a combat mission was made to Abbeville and we received our baptism of fire from the yellow-nose kids. On the next day, 9 November, the famous low-level raid to St. Nazaire was made as an experiment to protect the landings in North Africa.

Over the next few weeks more combat missions were flown, without fighter escort, and in the face of unknown dangers. During the next few weeks we experimented, learning how to execute air operations against

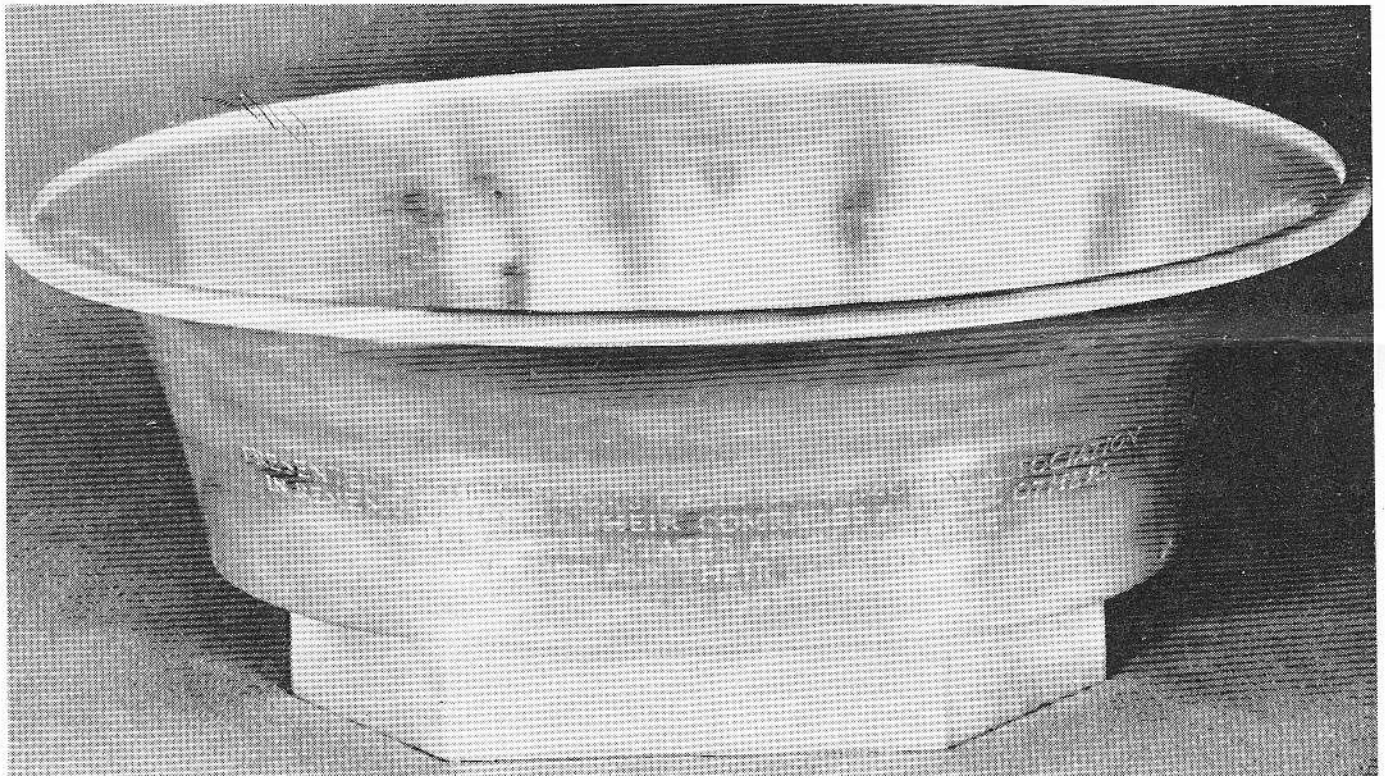
the Germans during the daylight hours.

We tried different combat formations; we tried different bombing techniques; we tried different methods of keeping our guns firing in the cold of high altitude. During these weeks we trained no heroes -- we trained only men. Our crews were taught not to die for their country, but to live and fight for their country -- to go out on their missions and deliver their bombs with precision and come back safely so that they could go out another day -- because they were part of that group holding the dike against Hitler across the Channel. We had come to help Mr. Churchill overcome that "wicked man".

In November of 1942 two of the four squadron commanders were lost on one mission. At the end of December a third squadron commander was lost. Yet, through all these dark days, the group fought on courageously -- without losing their morale -- and during the months of January and February they pressed the attack into Germany itself.

During February and March -- frozen, limping home -- they were met with the first trickle of replacement crews and aircraft. And as the Eighth Air Force grew the 91st was ready to teach the incoming groups how to fight and survive against what seemed to be insuperable odds.

(continued on page 5)



This 24-inch, 213-ounce silver altar bowl was presented to the American Memorial Cemetery at Madingly for the chapel there. It is inscribed "Presented by the 91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association in remem-

brance of their comrades and all others of the United States Army Air Force who died for their country 1941-1945."

Don't Forget -- Send Your Dues Now!



## Presentation Remarks...

We fought hard, we played hard, and we slept fast -- if at all.

As the winter blackout went on, we began to be part of the community. Combat crewmen with sugar under their arms and tins of canned fruit in their hands went out to Sunday dinner and Sunday teas. Officers of the group began to take the salutes at the local parades, the King and Queen came to visit us, and we became part of the community. We could sing the RAF songs with a broader accent than the Squadron Leader. Our troops could step up to the bars in the countryside and order their pints of warm "Arf-n-Arf" with the best of them. We loved and respected our friends in the civilian community and military community, and we believe that this was reciprocated.

As the English countryside resounded with the cacaphony of B-17 engines being run up by their crew chiefs in the early morning in preparation for the day's mission over occupied countries and the sounds of the RAF night bombers returning safely from their missions, and as the flood of our Air Force bombers and crews and the RAF grew in strength, the pressure began to relax. But all was not clear sailing. I can remember a squadron commander of mine sitting on the guard fence out back of Ops two hours after the mission was over. Not one of the eight aircraft he had sent out on this mission, nor one of his eighty crewmen returned. Many of these crewmen were on their twenty-third or twenty-fourth combat mission. Only a mission or so and they would have been returned to the Z.I.

But during the summer months of June, July and August the replacement crews began to come in a flood, and our crew strength and our bomber strength was doubled on each station.

As the days went by and the weeks and the months, our fighter escort became available and, with the addition of tiptanks, finally fighters were able to take us all the way to Berlin and fight over that city.

By this time the combat crews who had been returned to the Z.I. for rest and recuperation and to train other crews started to come back for their second combat tours.

Now, twenty and a half years later, this small group wishes to do honor to those of us who did not return from their missions, and to all others of the American services who failed to come back from their missions, without regard to creed, rank, or service. We recognize only that these few gave their last measure of devotion to protect not only our own families at home and those of the local community in Britian, but all the free world.

The world may little notice what this little group is doing today, but those of us gathered here together know in our own hearts the sincerity and the affection and the sorrow for those of us who did not come home. For those of us who died alone and in a strange place, Mr. Cetola, on behalf of the parents, relatives and comrades of all those members of the 91st Bomb Group who did not return from their missions, and all others of the American Air Force and all others who did not return from their missions, I wish to present to the American Military Cemetery here at Madingley this silver alter bowl, that their lives and their names may be forever honored.

## Now Is The Time...

The annual payment of \$3 for membership in the 91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association is due by February. If you want to continue membership and receive our publications regularly don't overlook this IMPORTANT duty. We hate to lose a single alumni, but everyone needs to share the responsibilities as well as the benefits.

Funds from the dues and contributions are used wholly to further the growth of the organization, to provide publications, track down 'lost' members, and to aid area get-togethers. Don't make your buddies carry you.

**Eastern Division Members (from the Atlantic to the Mississippi) mail dues to:**  
**Joseph M. Giambrone 303 Brooksdale Ave. Glenside, Pa. 19038**

**Western Division Members (from the Mississippi to the Pacific) mail dues to:**  
**M/Sgt. George Parks 109 Wilshire Ave. Vallejo, Calif. 94590**

**Make checks payable to 91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association**

**No change? Drop in a \$5 bill for dues, directory, and 'the cause'**

**Contributions deductible by donors under Sec. 170 Internal Revenue Code.**

**YES! KEEP 'EM FLYING IN '69**

# 91st Still A 'First Line' Defense Unit

Old timers would recognize neither the aircraft nor the combat crews, but in 1969 as in 1942 "the best damned group in the Air Force" is still on America's front line of defense, as it was in World War II. Only now, instead of the colorfully named B-17s waiting in the dispersal areas at Basingbourn to carry bombs to the Nazis it is 150 Minuteman missiles in silos at Minot, North Dakota, with nuclear warheads waiting to be delivered anywhere in the world.

And therein lies a long and devious tale.

As most members of the Memorial Association already know, the 91st Bombardment Group (H) was first activated at Harding Field, Baton Rouge, La., on 15 April 1942. First phase training was at MacDill Field, Tampa, Fla., under the 3rd AF, and second and third phase training was at Walla Walla, Wash., under the 2nd AF. Her combat service was under the 8th Air Force through July, 1945.

With the end of the war the group was inactivated at Drew Field Tampa, Florida, 7 November 1945.

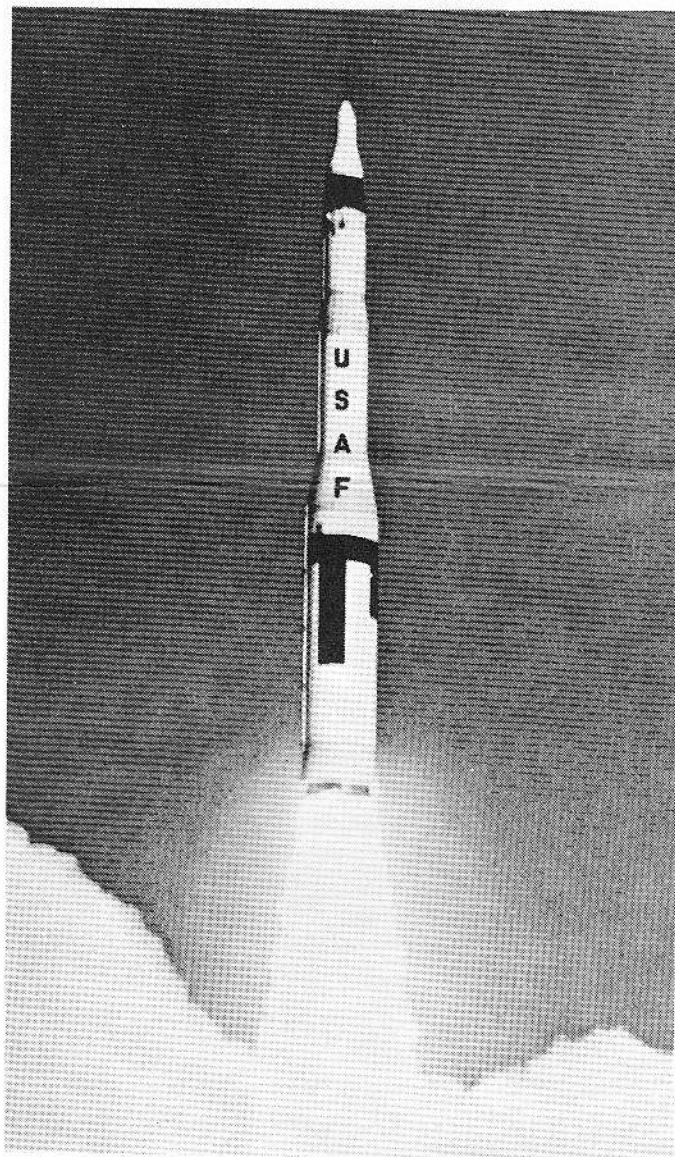
The group was reactivated at Andrews Field, Camp Springs, Maryland, 1 July 1947 as the 91st Reconnaissance Group (Very Long Range) (Photographic) for the Strategic Air Command. It was redesignated the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Group (Medium) 10 November 1948.

Following the Korean conflict the group was again inactivated at Lockbourne Air Force Base, Columbus, Ohio, 28 May 1952.

The old 91st came back to life again in 1963 at Glasgow, Montana, Air Force Base. Originally in 1957 there



A modern 91st combat crew, standing by at Launch Control on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week alert, ready to fire a salvo of missiles in case of enemy attack.



The latest in 91st aircraft, a Minuteman 1 missile, takes off from a hardened silo, proof against enemy nuclear attack.

was a fighter group at Glasgow, and in 1961 they were joined by the 4141st Strategic Bomb Wing, a B-52 outfit attached to the 15th Air Force. In 1963 the Air Force re-instituted the program of ending short term units and redesignating them as old units that had been deactivated. The 4141st looked over the list to pick the group with the most distinguished record, and right at the top of the list was the 91st Bomb Group. So on February 3, 1963, the old group became the 91st Strategic Bomb Wing. The only squadron activated was the 322.

The combat record, the unit citations, banners, and other mementoes of the original 91st were on display at the base, together with many photographs from Basingbourn days.

(continued on page 7)



## 91st Still 'First Line'...

The new 91st won many awards, including best overall combat crew evaluation and best bombing record.

On June 25, 1968, the 91st Strategic Bombardment Wing (H) was deactivated because of the closure of the Glasgow Air Force Base. The same day, as Air Force records show, "To preserve the history of this glorious Unit" the 455th Strategic Missile Wing at Minot AFB, North Dakota was redesignated the 91st Strategic Missile Wing. The history and honors of the 91st since its activation in World War II, have been bestowed upon the 91st Strategic Missile Wing.

The 91st no longer used aircraft to perform the mission of the Strategic Air Command, but has evolved to the missile era. The wing, under the jurisdiction of the 810th Strategic Aerospace Division and Headquarters, 15th Air Force, maintains 150 Minuteman I Inertcontinental Ballistic Missiles on constant alert.

The missiles are housed in separate underground hardened silos which can withstand the force of a nuclear attack. These missiles are controlled by 15 Launch Control Centers, also hardened and underground. The entire complex covers 10,000 square miles of north central North Dakota. Two officers form the missile combat crew. Each Launch Control Center has a missile crew on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The 91st Strategic Missile Wing is composed of the 91st Headquarters Squadron, 91st Missile Maintenance Squadron, 740th Strategic Missile Squadron, 741st Strategic Missile Squadron, and the 742nd Strategic Missile Squadron. Colonel B.H. Davidson is the present commander.

From B-17s to the Minuteman I is an almost unbelievable jump, but the old 91st still flies high in defense of her country!

## They're Headed For Bassingbourn

Here are some of the early registrants for Operation Return from the Eastern Division. Due to deadline pressures of The Ragged Irregular the list only includes those who registered before December 1. Since that time the list has lengthened considerably.

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Haller, St. Cloud, Fla.  
 Mr. & Mrs. James R. Dempsey and children, Dayton, Ohio.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Phillip D. Dewhurst and child, Salem, N. H.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond E. Jones and son, Lake Charles, La.  
 Mr. & Mrs. George E. Dowell, Knoxville, Ill.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Owen G. Cooper, Baltimore, Md.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Chryst, Pottstown, Pa.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Sponsel, Sturgis, Mich.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles R. Harrington, Evanston, Ill.  
 Mr. & Mrs. John E. Powers, Erle, Mich.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Iiams and son, Dayton, Ohio.  
 Meyer London, New York, N. Y.

Mr. & Mrs. Willis C. Stinson, Washington, D. C.

Victoria E. Fox, Oklahoma City, Okla.

John B. Ventura, Detroit, Mich.

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas O. Llewellyn and children, New Marshfield, Ohio.

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth E. Breckenridge, Grove City, Ohio.

Mr. & Mrs. Richard E. Murphy and daughter, Lynn, Mass.

Mr. & Mrs. Ben H. Dickens, Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. & Mrs. John W. Beety, Minneapolis, Minn.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Christman and daughters, Erie, Pa.

Russel W. Wilson, Hatboro, Pa.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Gerstemeier and son, Lansdale, Pa.

Mr. & Mrs. James F. Byrd, Winston-Salem, N. C.

Mr. & Mrs. Earl E. Reese and children, Runnels, Iowa.

Mr. & Mrs. Harry L. Knowles, Atlanta, Ga.

Mr. & Mrs. William D. Thissell, Charleston, Ill.

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth L. Blackburn, Niles, Mich.

Mr. & Mrs. Rudy Moretti, Wooster, Ohio.

Robert L. Dorcy, Columbus, Ohio.

Mr. & Mrs. Arthur MacLemore, Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. & Mrs. Howard M. Dunham, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph P. Franke, Columbia, Mo.

Mr. & Mrs. Earl F. Riley, Whittier, Calif.

Maj. Gen. & Mrs. Stanley T. Wray and son, Alexandria, Va.

June C. Bryant, Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Giambrone and son, Glenside, Pa.  
 Joseph Camelleri, Reading, Pa.

Mr. & Mrs. William E. Guldner, Van Nuys, Calif.

Mr. & Mrs. Arthur E. Roper, Savannah, Ga.

Mr. & Mrs. Gail R. Garner and son, Charleston, Ill.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Abb and children, Sherman, Texas.

\*Alton E. Renninger, Spring City, Pa.

\*Loretta Roversi, St. Cloud, Fla.

\*Mr. & Mrs. James E. Cooper, Dayton, Ohio.

\*William Gerstemeier, Southampton, Pa.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Harry White, Gilbert, W. Va.

\*Marilyn Chandler, Iowa City, Iowa.

\*Dr. Lois Hodgson, Toledo, Ohio.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Edmiston and children, Erie, Pa.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Harold Horrocks, Norristown, Pa.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Joseph C. Horrocks, West Chester, Pa.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Wilfred Horrocks, Bridgeport, Pa.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Herbert V. Gerding, Norristown, Pa.

\*Lee Querns, Dowingtown, Pa.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd D. Ramsey, Niles, Mich.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Sam Rose, Wooster, Ohio.

\*Mr. & Mrs. John Skebbie, Columbia, Mo.

\*Mr. & Mrs. Don Cure, Columbia, Mo.

\* Indicates associate members.

## Denver Area Flight Leader Dies

Just at press time The Irregular received the sad news that Denver Area Flight Leader Jack Hobson passed away on December 12. Jack and his lovely wife June attended the first national reunion in Memphis in 1967 and played a leading role in setting up the Denver reunion in July. The home address is 2042 South Paseo Way, Denver, Colo. 80219.

## MISSION TO MARIENBURG -

## When 'Shoo Shoo Baby' Was 'Lonesome Polecat'

In all the long list of 340 missions made by the 91st, surely the strangest entry of all is this cryptic notation... "9-4-44, Gdynia -- Recalled" and immediately below, on the same date, is "1 A/C Marienburg, Completed." Though in the early days the group sometimes had to struggle to get more than half a dozen planes in the air, this is almost certainly the only case in 8th Air Force history when a group got mission credit with one aircraft participating.

And it all started out as a perfectly normal morning for pilot Paul McDuffee and the crew of "Shoo Shoo Baby."

At briefing the weight was hanging way up on the wall, so everybody knew at once it would be a long, mean one. Gdynia, a Polish rail and shipping center,

was the target. The group was to assemble at altitude over East Anglia and proceed from there.

As usual, the weather was miserable, with fog, no visibility, and a heavy overcast. The crews went through the "set and sweat" period, waiting for a mission scrub which never came. Instead, the planes took off, only to be swallowed up immediately in the overcast.

Shoo Shoo Baby cut through a thin layer of overcast into clear air at several thousand feet, without another plane in sight, and then plunged into a layer above that seemed endless. McDuffee and crew kept climbing higher and higher reaching for the top, scared stiff at the thought of several dozen other Forts struggling just as blindly through the mess and likely to make contact at any moment.

(continued on page 9)



Here is the crew of Shoo Shoo Baby, when they made the only one plane group mission for the 91st. Front row, left to right, they are: Bonomo, bombardier; McDuffee, pilot; Sylvester, navigator; Langford, co-pilot. Back row, Soderburg, engineer; Bogert, all turret; Borchert, waist gunner; Cordes, crew chief; Braman, radio operator; Gallagher, tail gunner; Hughes, waist gunner.

Don't Forget -- Send Your Dues Now!



## Mission To Marienburg...

At 30,600 feet the plane broke clear, almost in the middle of a group of B-24s. "We were within wing tip distance of the last plane in the formation," McDuffee recalls, "and the slipstream bounces nearly tore the wings off. We were all petrified!"

Except for the 24s there wasn't a plane in sight. They flew in circles for some minutes looking for other 91st planes, but they were alone in the sky. Checks indicated that the radio was working, and there had been no messages received of any change in plans or a recall.

Finally, far off in the distance appeared a group of B-17s, and Shoo Shoo Baby headed for an intercept. When they closed up they could see it wasn't the 91st but another First Division group. At the moment, McDuffee wasn't choosy but decided to tuck in where he could and ride with the herd. The only open spot was deputy lead, so Shoo Shoo Baby slid in there, despite protestations and general shaking of fists by the formation pilots. With radio silence ordered that was all they could do.

"We'd found a home," McDuffee declares, "and we weren't about to be dispossessed!"

The group was apparently going to a target other than the one assigned to the 91st, for the heading was approximately 40 degrees, which carried them up near the tip of Sweden before they swung right on a 145-degree heading.

"When we approached the coast the navigator immediately picked up Gdynia and Danzig, which obviously wasn't the target, and we changed to a to a course of 190 degrees. About that time we hit a terrific flak barrage and hundreds of fighters," McDuffee remembers. "We opened the bomb bay doors and headed for the target when the others did, though we really didn't know what it was. On the run to the target five B-17s were lost. After turning off the target another plane went down, with the crew parachuting. Two chutes were shot down by the German fighters using tracers."

On the way to the coast Shoo Shoo Baby encountered a mystery no one has yet explained, Says McDuffee, "A shell burst ahead and above us, emitting what appeared to be a big puff of brown smoke. Immediately, another burst just above us, and the whole plane was covered with what appeared to be brown tobacco juice. The windows and windshields were completely covered, and the wipers only made it worse. The only way we could see to fly for the rest of the trip was to slide back the windows a bit and sort of stick one eye out."

About half way across the North Sea coming back Shoo Shoo Baby left her unknown friends and set course straight for Basingbourn. The plane landed after 12 hours and 55 minutes in the air, and all four engines quit simultaneously on the taxi strip with

all fuel gone.

In talking to the tower, McDuffee asked how many others had gotten back o.k. "Nobody," said the tower man, and then before shock had totally disoriented the crew, "Nobody else went. We had a recall."

"Waiting for us to come in was Col. Claude Putnam and some major general," MacDuffee recalls. "We were sure our names were mud! When I stepped out of the plane after all those hours of flying I fell to my knees, and when Col. Put came up I told him not to be too hard on us, since I was already on my knees."

"He just laughed and said that we'd been to Marienburg, and that our flight reflected honor on the 91st, and the general was pleased and said the 91st would get group credit for our mission."

Why didn't Shoo Shoo Baby get the recall? A freak accident had disabled the radio so that it appeared to function normally but it didn't receive, so the crew never got the recall.

The "tobacco juice?" They never did discover what it was. All his buddies claim that Mac flew through a blivet for sure, but as Paul says, "Whoever saw a blivet flying at 30,000 feet!"

## Western Division Schedules...

members. The trip from Frankfurt to London will cost \$22 per passenger.

Dates set will allow for three full weeks in Europe. The flight will depart Long Beach on June 10 and arrive in Frankfurt on June 11. The return trip will leave Frankfurt on July 2 at noon and arrive at Long Beach on July 2 at 6:50 p.m.

Hotel arrangements will be made when the type and cost of accommodations preferred by a majority of the persons going have been determined.

Members interested in joining the Western Division flight should contact Dick Anderson (ex-323rd Top Kick) at 1101 El Sur Avenue, Arcadia, Calif. 91006, for information as to down payment, dates for reservation, and final close of reservation date. To insure reservations an immediate contact is urged.

## 1969 Membership Directory

A 1969 membership directory of the Memorial Association is being prepared for publication, scheduled for a February or early March printing date.

Because of a great increase in membership during 1968 and a multitude of address changes it was felt that an additional supplement to the original directory would not be satisfactory, and that a new publication was needed to do the job properly.

Copies can be ordered from division treasurers when 1969 dues are paid, for \$1 per copy in addition to the \$3 annual dues.

Don't Forget -- Send Your Dues Now!

# East Coasters Rally Round at Middletown

From six states, and with some members making an 800-mile trip to attend, 43 ex-91st-ers, wives and guests had a wing-ding Rally Round October 12 at Middletown, N.Y. Flight leader Oscar Dino outdid himself as organizer and host, providing all food and "refreshments" for the afternoon "preflight," and going all out to make sure Middletown was well aware of the 91st.

Members got together in a room well equipped with photo displays and wartime albums, and with a stereo playing early-1940 dance tunes. In a separate room was

a display of more than 100 scale models of all WW II aircraft -- allied and enemy.

A horse-drawn surrey "with the fringe on top" carrying a sign on the back "Welcome General Wray" drove through downtown Middletown traffic for several hours.

Dinner was a candlelight affair at the new Holiday Inn. The balance of the evening was spent showing slides of the national reunion at Denver and of the 91st memorials in England.



Flying a loose formation, with no FWs in sight, members and guests flash big smiles at the Middletown Rally Round. Center flight, leading consists of Paul Chryst (crouching), host Oscar Dino, and Maj. Gen. Stanley T. Wray. Immediately behind (and we're skipping all the ladies), the 3-ship flight contains Joe Camelleri (with hands on Oscar Dino's shoulders), Richard Knutelsky, and Fred W. Merkert, Rear flight high is Jack Fearheller, Vernon Dion, and Francis Deary, Jr.

Left hand flight, front row, is Phillip Dewhurst, Robert Caldwell, and Bob Gerstemeier. Rear left is Roy Smith and Kenneth Wallick.

Right hand flight, front row, Bernard Balletiere and John Slattery. Second row (with head turned), Spud Paciotti (351st B.G.), Anthony Gaeta, Charles Marrah, and Nicolas Terefenko. Back row, 1 to r, Steve Perri LaVerne Mckelvy, and John Parsons. The photo was taken by member Ernie Kiss.



## From the Editor's Desk...

A note from Bob Abb relayed the news that a former member of the 91st photo section, Ken Criswell, passed away on November 22 in Milan, Ill. Cris was apparently smoking and fell asleep in his chair. The resulting blaze suffocated him.

Long Beach Area Flight Leader Doug Gibson sends along news of two former 91st-ers in his area. Clyde E. Dunn, who was crew chief of the A-20 that gained fame for bellying in when the wheels were raised instead of the flaps, passed away recently after a lingering illness. Ben Dugger, former tail gunner with the 323, has been ill in Long Beach Veterans Hospital for some months.

For the many 91st-ers who sent Christmas greetings to the Burnetts, our heartfelt thanks! The pressures of ending the university term, getting The Irregular to press, and especially preparing for our daughter's wedding December WI left no time to send cards this year, but our best wishes for a perfect New Year go out to all!

M/Sgt. James F. Brigman (323 sqdn.) retired from service on November 30. Formerly of Arlington, Va., his new address is 223 Kingston Road, Thomsaton, Georgia 30286.

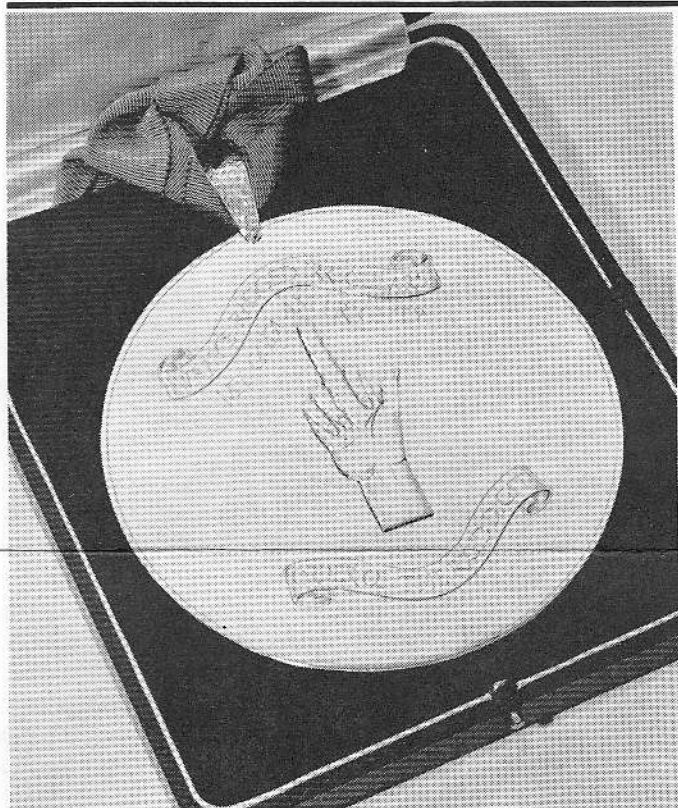
Please, fellows, when you make a move...send the secretary your NEW address. Every issue of The Ragged Irregular sees a dozen copies returned, stamped by the Post Office "Moved." Since we must mail third class, it is not forwarded. When you move you're lost, unless we get your new address, and we had too hard a time finding you in the first place to go through that again!

## Long Beach Rally Round Planned

Flight Leader Doug Gibson is promoting a Long Beach Area Rally Round set for February 15, aiming for a bigger turnout even than last year's record-setting blast.

The event is scheduled for Rochelle's Restaurant and Motel in Long Beach. The lounge opens at 5 p.m.; a prime rib dinner will be served at 8. Tab for the affair is \$6.

Make reservations not later than Feb. 15 with Doug Gibson, 2740 Knoxville Ave., Long Beach, Calif. 90815.



Familiar to all who have attended area Rally Rounds and national reunions is the large banner with "Wray's Ragged Irregulars" at the top and the clenched fist with upthrust middle finger. Not so well known is the original of the emblem -- the Order of the Rigid Digit.

Established in the early months of combat (late 1942) by Col. Wray to help lighten the dark days, the Order consisted of an engraved, sterling silver medal approximately six inches in diameter, hanging from a ribbon of "the baby blue of innocence." It was given with great pomp



to a 91st-er as reward for some monumental goof. The recipient also received a miniature for permanent wear.

Across the top is emblazoned "Wray's Ragged Irregulars," and immediately below, the motto "My God, Am I Right?" Below the hand is "Order of the Rigid Digit." On the back is the list of recipients, headed by Col. Wray's name. The award was so admired that several non-91st-ers wrangled presentations, including First Wing commander Brig. Gen. "Possum" Hansell, Gen. Ira Eaker, and Gen. Jimmy Doolittle.

# Log of Missions - The Second Installment

Here is the continuation of the mission log begun in the July, 1968 issue. The left-hand numbers represent completed missions; the next row represents the alerts, and then the date is shown, by day and month.

Alert		1943							
26	54.	13-3	Amiens	Completed	102	13-7	Poix	Scrubbed	
	55.	14-3	Rouen	Scrubbed	54	103	14-7	Amiens	Completed
	56.	17-3	Rouen	Scrubbed		104	15-7	Vitry	Scrubbed
27	57.	18-3	Vegesack	Completed		105	16-7	Vitry	Scrubbed
	58.	19-3	Emden	Scrubbed	55	106	17-7	Hannover	Ab Sortie
	59.	21-3	Wilhelmshaven	Scrubbed		107	18-7	Kassel	Scrubbed
28	60.	22-3	Wilhelmshaven	Completed	56	108	24-7	Heroya	Completed
	61.	23-3	Rotterdam	Scrubbed	57	109	25-7	Hamburg	Completed
	62.	27-3	Rouen	Scrubbed	58	110	26-7	Hamburg	Completed
29	63.	28-3	Rouen	Completed	59	111	28-7	Kassel	Ab Sortie
30	64.	31-3	Rotterdam	Ab Sortie	60	112	29-7	Kiel	Completed
31	65.	4-4	Paris	Completed	61	113	30-7	Kassel	Completed
32	66.	5-4	Antwerp	Completed		114	3-8	Villa Coublay	Scrubbed
	67.	14-4	Antwerp	Scrubbed		115	10-8	Schweinfurt	Cancelled
33	68.	16-4	Lorient	Completed	62	116	12-8	Gelsenkirchen	Comp.
34	69.	17-4	Bremen	Completed	63	117	15-8	Flushing	Completed
	70.	19-4	Amiens	Cancelled	64	118	16-8	Le Bourget	Completed
	71.	21-4	Brest	Cancelled	65	119	17-8	Schweinfurt	Completed
	72.	27-4	Antwerp	Scrubbed	66	120	19-8	Gilze Rigen	Completed
	73.	29-4	Meaulte	Scrubbed	67	121	24-8	Villa Coublay	Comp.
35	74.	1-5	St. Nazaire	Completed		122	26-8	Brussels	Scrubbed
	75.	3-5	Antwerp	Scrubbed	68	123	27-8	Watten	Completed
36	76.	4-5	Antwerp	Completed		124	30-8	Cambrai	Scrubbed
	77.	5-5	Meaulte	Cancelled	69	125	31-8	Romilly	Completed
37	78.	13-5	Meaulte	Completed		126	2-9	Conches	Recalled
38	79.	14-5	Keil	Completed	70	127	3-9	Evereux	Completed
39	80.	15-5	Wilhelmshaven	Completed		128	4-9	Romilly	Scrubbed
			(Heligoland)		71	129	6-9	Stuttgart	Completed
40	81.	17-5	Keroman	Completed		130	7-9	Paris	Scrubbed
41	82.	19-5	Keil	Completed		131	10-9	Bergen	Scrubbed
42	83.	21-5	Wilhelmshaven	Completed	72	132	15-9	Romilly	Completed
	84.	28-5	Bremen	Scrubbed	73	133	16-9	Nantes	Completed
43	85.	29-5	St. Nazaire	Completed		134	17-9	Frankfurt	Scrubbed
	86.	4-6	Caen	Scrubbed		135	18-9	Nantes	Scrubbed
44	87.	11-6	Bremen	Completed		136	20-9	Nantes	Scrubbed
45	88.	13-6	Bremen	Completed		137	21-9	Rheims	Scrubbed
	89.	14-6	Le Mans	Scrubbed	74	138	23-9	Nantes	Completed
46	90.	15-6	Le Mans	Ab Sortie		139	24-9	Frankfurt	Scrubbed
	91.	21-6	Huls	Scrubbed	75	140	26-9	Meulan	Ab Sortie
47	92.	22-6	Huls	Completed	76	141	27-9	Emden	Completed
	93.	23-6	Villa Coublay	Abortive		142	28-9	Ship Lutzow	Cancelled
48	94.	25-6	Hamburg	Completed		143	29-9	Emden	Cancelled
49	95.	26-6	Villa Coublay	Ab Sortie	77	144	2-10	Emden	Completed
50	96.	28-6	St. Nazaire	Completed		145	3-10	Kassel	Cancelled
51	97.	29-6	Tricqueville	Ab Sortie	78	146	4-10	Frankfurt	Completed
	98.	2-7	Le Mans	Cancelled		147	7-10	Bremen	Cancelled
52	99.	4-7	Le Mans	Completed	79	148	8-10	Bremen	Completed
	100.	8-7	St. Nazaire	Cancelled	80	149	9-10	Anklam	Completed
53	101	10-7	Villa Coublay	Ab Sortie	81	150	10-10	Munster	Completed