



# The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Vol. 5 No. 2

January, 1972

## Dayton Rally Round 'Wizard Prang'!

By Paul Chryst

Another highly successful Dayton Area Rally Round was scored October 16-17, with 70 members and guests attending. Co-hosts were Miss June Bryant and area Flight Leader Dick Dempsey.

The coveted engraved beer mug for the person who travelled the greatest distance to attend was won by Major Vicki Fox (Ret), one of the group's charter trustees. Vicki lives in Oklahoma City and beat out two-time winner Virgil Mott, who flew in from Tulsa.

To "top off" a recent family visit back to jolly ole England, Evan Zillmer contributed \$100 to the Association and received his Gold Life Membership Card during the Saturday evening celebration of the Rally. Evan is a former combat crewman who "signed on" for his second air tour with the 91st in order that he could marry his English sweetheart, Doris. They now reside in the snowmobile capital of the world, Woodruff, Wisc.

A special award was given to Bob Smith who celebrated his birthday on the same day as the rally. Very much surprised by the gift given him by the Committee, Bob's only comment was "At least it's the right size, 15 1/2-4."

During the Prime Rib Beef Dinner a congratulatory phone call was received from Sec. Treas. George Parks, who forwarded best wishes from all 91st-ers in the Western Division.

President Wray gave the group an up-to-date report on the status of the reclamation of "Shoo Shoo Baby." The Air Force intends to restore this famous aircraft to her original operational status after she is returned from her present location in Creil, France. The museum also sends out an urgent request for the donation of WWII officers Class A Uniforms of dark green blouse with "pink" trousers. These will be used to dress the dummy models placed in their respective

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Evan Zillmer blinks in surprise as he receives his Gold Card Life Membership General Wray at the Dayton Rally Round. Newest member to join the \$100

donation club, Evan and his wife reside in Woodruff, Wisc. They recently made a family trip to England and Bassingbourn.

## Dayton Rally Round...

positions aboard the refurbished aircraft. Members are encouraged to send all personal memorabilia to: Director, US Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433. Be sure to include your name, address, unit of assignment, and any important comments regarding the donations sent forward. Letters of accession will be mailed to each donor.

Former commander of the 324th Bomb Squadron and No. 1 in combat missions for the Group, Col. I. J. Klette, brought his own personal photo album to the Dayton Rally for the very first time. Many pictures showed the complex ground and aerial combat duties of the 91st during those months necessary for Klette to tally his amazing record of 91 combat sorties.

On Saturday Associate Life Member Frank Donofrio donated 1000 color post cards of the "Memphis Belle" to the museum. Also included as a gift were another 1000 postcards of the 91st B.G. squadron emblems. In appreciation, a public showing of the movie, "Memphis Belle," produced by William Wyler, was shown to the visitors, 91st-ers and a group of 200 uniformed Boy Scouts with their leaders.

At the conclusion of the combat film the loud speaker system announced that some of the participants of the film were seated in the audience as veterans of the 91st B.G., especially the former crew chief of the "Memphis Belle," Joe Giambrone. Joe spent a very

busy time afterwards autographing souvenir programs and answering the many questions of the Boy Scouts.

Attending the Rally Round were:

Maj. Gen. and Mrs. S. T. Wray, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Dempsey, Miss June Bryant, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gerstemeier, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Giambrone, Joseph Camelleri, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Chryst, Frank Donofrio, Hilary Evers, James Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. James Daley.

Robert Christman, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Bowles, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Backsman, Maj. Victoria Fox (Ret), Mr. and Mrs. Gayle Garner and son, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Guzek and sons, James Hopkins, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Iiams, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jackman.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jedinak, Harold Kirby, Dr. I. J. Klette, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kriegel, Mr. and Mrs. William McGavern, Col. and Mrs. James Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Rudy Moretti, Virgil Mott, C. O. Pierce, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sponsel, Thomas Sharp, Mr. and Mrs. William Thissel, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Zillmer, and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Smith.

Guests included W. Forrest Bryant, Mrs. V. M. Brannick, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Osborne, AFA, V.P. Great Lakes Region; Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Herbert (Ret), Chief Inspector, Scotland Yard; Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Meiring, residents of South Africa.



Former crew chief of the "Memphis Belle" Joe Giambrone signs autographs for Boy Scouts at the Air Force Museum following a showing of the "Memphis Belle" movie for audiences there. Also shown from left to right after Giambrone are Col. I. J. Klette, Robert Sponsel, and Bob Gerstemeier.



# National Reunion at Anaheim July 11-15

The Third National Reunion, and the first for the West Coast, has been set for July 11-15 for Anaheim, Calif. Headquarters will be the Jolly Roger Inn.

Registration for the event has been scheduled for Tuesday, July 11. Since the Association believes that many 91st-ers will be making the Reunion part of their vacation, ample free time has been worked into the program on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday to allow members to visit the many outstanding attractions in the area. Group tours of many of these points will be available also. The Association's business program and Reunion Dinner has been set for Saturday, July 15.

A schedule of the complete Reunion activities and pertinent data about costs, attractions, distances, etc. will be found on a separate flyer included with this Irregular.

All members who indicate they will or may attend the Reunion will receive in April a Jolly Roger Inn brochure and a room reservation form. To assure reservations rooms must be requested at least two months in advance of the reunion, since July is the busy season and the Jolly Roger is just across the

street from Disneyland. The address is: Jolly Roger Inn-Motor Hotel, 640 West Katella, Anaheim, Calif. 92802. Phone area code 714-772-7621. Special rates for 91st-ers will range \$15 for singles, \$18 double, to \$21 for twin or king size.

For those who plan to bring trailers or campers the following places are recommended:

West Winds Trailer Lodge, 2170 South Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, Calif. 92802. This is about a quarter mile south of the Jolly Roger. Price \$4.50 for 2 people per night plus 50 cents each additional person. \$5 deposit by June 20 for reservation. Send trailer length with deposit. Telephone 714-537-0723.

Vacationland, 1343 South West Street, Anaheim, Cal. 92802, near Disneyland Hotel. Price will be \$6 for 2 persons per night, plus 50 cents each additional person. \$6 deposit by June 20 to hold spot. Telephone 714-535-5920.

For those who like to rough it, Featherly County Park. Just 15 miles by freeway from Jolly Roger, on Highway 91 in Santa Ana Canyon. \$3 per day. No reservations accepted. Telephone 714-637-0210.

## E.A.A.S. Seeks To Save Basingbourn Control Tower

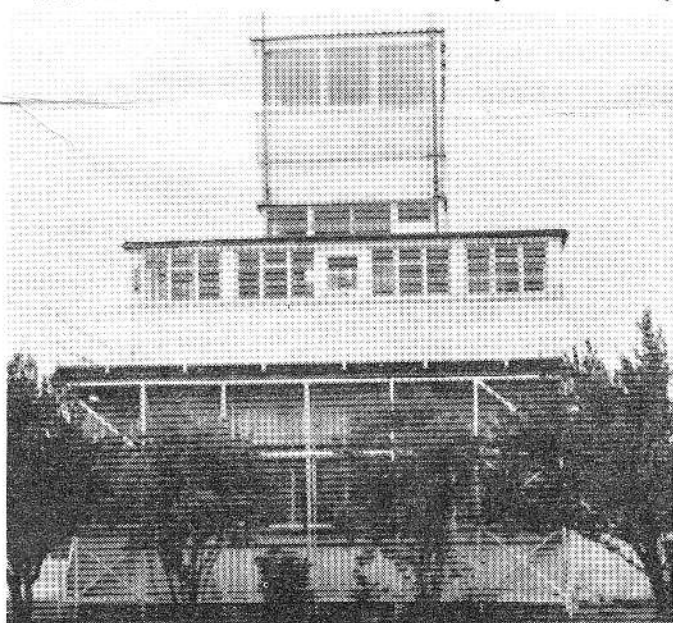
Members of the East Anglia Aviation Society are working hard to obtain permission from the British Ministry of Defense to make the wartime Control Tower at Basingbourn "a permanent reminder of the 91st's days there, in the form of a museum."

The Society hopes to have the control tower presented to the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association, under EAAS safekeeping, and to restore it as nearly as possible to the WW II condition.

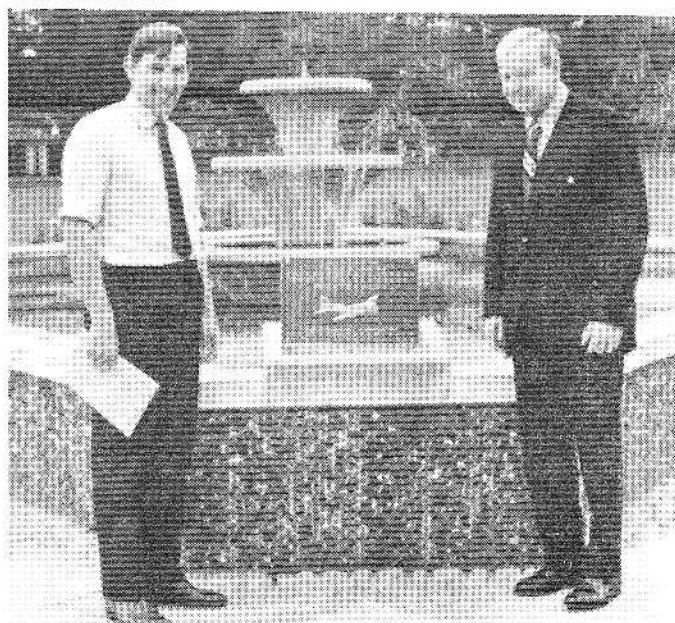
The move has been enthusiastically endorsed by

Gen. Wray and the Memorial Association, and the EAAS offered all the help that the Association might provide.

As is customary with such projects, there is much red tape to be untangled and progress is necessarily slow. But there is the possibility that the 91st will in this manner be permanently commemorated at Basingbourn, even though the base is now an army installation.



The Basingbourn control tower as it looks today. The East Anglia Aviation Society is trying to get the tower as a permanent memorial to the 91st B.G.



E.A.A.S. Secretary David Crow (left) and former 322nd squadron bombardier Jim Hensley before the 91st plaque.

# 1945 History Summarizes 91st Exploits

After the final 91st bombing mission was flown in April, 1945, a brief summary of the Group's history was printed at Bassingbourn. While much of the information is already familiar to old 91st-ers, we felt that you would all find it interesting and informative, and much of it new to those who were with the group for only part of the time. We are reproducing it exactly as it was first distributed:

Since that eventful day in Oct., 1942, when the first aircraft of the 91st touched down on the soil of England, the Group has been piling up a most enviable record. Those first boys, eager and full of fight, were to be the guinea pigs in the trials and experiments which marked the first phase in the history of Heavy Bombardment. One Pilot, Lt. Genheimer, in his eagerness to get to England, left the formation in mid-Atlantic. When the rest of his squadron arrived 45 minutes later, his ears were still burning from the "eating out" he received. Our first hero appeared during the crossing operation, Sgt. Wicks, although severely injured, rescued Sgt. Harrison, a wounded comrade, from a crash in Northern Ireland.

Our first home was unfinished Kimbolton A/D, but because its runways would not accommodate B-17s, we moved to the "Show Place of the ETO," Bassingbourn, a luxury airdrome built just before the war. By the first of November 1942, the 91st became operational and the first mission was flown on the 7th of November to Brest, France. 8 A/C attacked and returned without loss even though E/A were encountered and our claims were 1-2-0. On the next day, we successfully beat up the home of the "Abbeville Kids," escorted by Spitfires. All our A/C were damaged but returned to base carrying our first wounded: Capt. H. W. Aycock, Lt. E. L. Clinard, Lt. L. G. Karnath, S/Sgt. M. W. Knutson, and Sgt. J. H. Jones.

Thus began the combat career of the 91st B. Gp. (H), a career which was to carry the 91st through long months of toil and sweat, blood and glory to establish an outstanding record of success against the enemy. With 4 other groups, it was our object to pioneer the way for the 8th Air Force and discover the battle strategy best suited for heavy bombers attacking Fortress Europe in daylight. Fighter support was very scanty; there were no reinforcements, either of men or machines and 50 sorties for the whole 8th Air Force was considered a tremendous effort. Although casualties and damage were severe, the infant 8th established the proud tradition of never being turned back from an enemy target because of flak or fighters. Not until the skeptical American and British "Big-Wigs" were convinced of our worth, did we get much needed men and material. Long range fighter support came, going all the way to the most distant targets on the Baltic and into Austria.

Our No. 1 task was to engage the Luftwaffe; strangle it on the ground and knock it from the sky.

During the winter of 1943-44 the campaign was at its height and by Spring '44 the allies were dominating the air.

During Nov. 1942, the 91st participated in 7 attacks on U-boat installations on the West coast of France, a direct assist to the Allied landings made in N. Africa.

On 4 March 1943, the 91st, with 15 A/C led by Maj. Fishburne, attacked the M/Y at Hamm alone, with excellent results. Fanatical E/A and intense flak did not turn our A/C back; neither did the loss of 4 A/C from their midst.

On 18 March '43, we took part in a Mission of great historical importance. The destruction wrought on the shipbuilding yards at Vegesack, convinced all skeptics about the worth of high altitude, daylight, precision bombing, and personal messages of congratulations came from such men as Churchill, Lt. Gen. Andrews, Maj. Gen. Eaker and Air Chief Marshall Sir Charles Portal, who described this raid as a "complete answer to criticism" of this type of bombing. To help clinch the argument, the 91st gave a pasting to the Renault Works in Paris, Aero engine works at Antwerp and rubber plant at Huls. Then came Gelsenkirchen on 12 Aug. '43, a visit to the "Happy Valley," one of the most heavily defended areas. On the 17th Aug. '43 we flew our first Schweinfurt, known as the Castration Run. Shortly afterward, during a fighter attack, Maj. James McPartlin dryly remarked "Look at all those FW's without any ball-bearings!"

During this same period the 91st invaded Norway, smashing nazi aluminum plants at Heroya. The 1250 mile trip to Anklam stirred up fierce swarms of E/A on the 9th of Nov. '43, rivalling the attacks on Oschersleben and Schweinfurt. During this Battle of Germany, which saw the fiercest air battles of the war, we were blessed with not only superb machines, but also men with guts, who even volunteered for extra missions after their tours were completed.

In early 1944 we were dispatched against "Nobals" and "Crossbows," difficult V weapon targets in France and Belgium and succeeded in decreasing the potent threat to the Invasion preparations. 6 Mar., 1944, saw our first mission to Berlin. By Sept. we had participated in 11 missions to the Capital of the Reich, and by the end of operations had totaled 16 missions to this target, having participated in the paralyzing attacks of 3-26 Feb. 1945.

Early in June 1944, without entirely forgetting strategic targets in Germany, the 91st turned to tactical targets in the Invasion areas. Coastal targets, airfields, bridges and enemy transport lines were heavily hit. On "D" day our A/C spread a destructive pattern of bombs on enemy beach positions, minutes ahead of the Doughboys. Close support was given for a short time, but as the ground situation developed favorably, the task of air support was left to the Tactical Air Force. Once more, our attention was turned to throttling the German war machine in a strategic sense. Air fields, aircraft factories, arms



## 1945 History Summarizes...

works, and in particular, oil targets became our priorities. ThenamesMerseburg and Leipzig took the place of Schweinfurt in the vocabulary of the crews. The Germans spared no effort to protect his synthetic oil plants, blasting our planes from the air with terrific concentrations of flak and hounding the poorly escorted with fanatical fighter attacks.

In July and August '44, the experimental site for V weapons at Peenemunde was successfully attacked, slowing up work on Hitler's V-2. During Sept. and until the end of the year, emphasis was placed on Marshalling Yards in Western and Central Germany in an effort to cut off front line supplies. With the rest of the 8th A.F. the 91st participated in blasting Von Rundstedt in the Ardennes bulge, hitting communication targets in the front line areas, taking off and flying in some of the most trying winter weather the ETO has known.

Early '45 brought some exceptional bombing weather and rail transportation was brought nearly to a standstill throughout Germany on 22 Feb. when some 6,000 bombers hit rail targets from North to

South. The 91st's target, Stendal, was soundly pasted by Maj. Hudson, our ace bombardier, who sent back the strike message "Wizard Prang." Although pleased with the bombing, the "wheels" restricted Charlie for his fancy language.

March and April were characterized by exceptionally long missions, several hours of flying for tactical targets. 22 Missions were flown in March, trying the Invasion month, two missions mounted in one day in support of General Eisenhower's Rhine crossing. All the remaining missions may be classed as tactical after the ground forces to surge across Germany. Visual bombing was the order of the day and the 91st augmented its record superbly. The ideal "milk run" was flown to Gironde Estuary on 15 April in support of French ground forces, with no opposition of any nature. Operations of an offensive nature stopped 25 April, Pilsen being the last target attacked, the 340th mission.

Since the days of Col. Wray's Ragged Irregulars, the wonderful spirit and individuality of this group has been carried out by each succeeding C.O. This fine tradition has been fostered by Col. Lawrence, Col. Wurzbach, Col. Putnam and by our present C.O. Colonel Henry W. "Tiger" Terry.

Basingbourn School,  
Raystone  
Herts

20.12.44.

Dear American Friends,  
Thankyou for the pineapple cake and  
for the cream chocolate cake and for  
the chocolate chocolate cake. mostly every  
one who was at the party had a piece  
of every cake that you sent us. The chocolate  
was like old piece time chocolate it was  
the best I had since the war started  
five years ago nearly thirty years now.

Your sincerely,  
Laurie Buchan



With the third National Reunion dedicated to 91st Ground Crews and Support Personnel we show a few of the members from the 441st Sub Depot.

From the Headquarters Staff are: (Standing, l to r) 1st Sgt. Edwin T. Peterson, Cpl. John H. Saydek, Major

Frank S. Kamykowski, Cpl. Warren J. Butler, 2nd Lt. Rudolph R. Kupersmith, S/Sgt. Milton J. Brown, Sgt. Theodore J. Janicki.

Seated, l to r. Cpl. Herbert D. Fleischer, S/Sgt. Bryce F. Barrett.



From the 441st welding shop are, l to r, S/Sgt. Frank V. Kelley, M/Sgt. Otto O. Sturdivant, S/Sgt. Lloyd J. Carson, T/Sgt. Lawrence A. Carson, and S/Sgt. Arne W. Westin.



## From The Editor's Desk...

**Paul C. Burnett Box 909 Auburn, Al. 36830**

As is our custom, all former 91st-ers for whom we have current mailing addresses are receiving the January issue of The Ragged Irregular. The other issues of the year go only to those members who have paid the \$3 Association dues. We always hope that some who have not yet been moved to help support the Memorial Association or who have procrastinated will get aboard and help keep the marvelous 91st flying! With our third national reunion coming up we especially want ALL former 91st-ers to know what's in store, and welcome them to join us at Anaheim in July.

It is still not too late to send in your Advance Survey forms for the National Reunion if you haven't already done so. It is a big help for the committee to have some idea of how many to anticipate. The returns have been coming in steadily and it looks as if there will be a really big bunch of us at Anaheim.

During the next year we plan to run many more pictures of our days at Basingbourn. We need your help in lending us crew pictures, groups, and informal shots in which persons are identified. Our files have hundreds of such shots, but almost always without any identification, and pictures without such identification are not nearly so interesting to our members or of much service to the many writers and historians who use the Irregular for reference purposes. So send 'em along, fellows. We will handle them with care and return them safely.

Earl F. Riley, ex-401st squadron pilot, an original member of the 91st, is now JUDGE Riley. He was appointed to the Superior Court Bench of Los Angeles by Gov. Reagan in August.

A nice note from ex-322nd squadron member John Longaker, now with Coldwell Banker Realtors in Los Altos, Calif. "Please find \$10 check to cover '71-'72 dues. I'm glad to see that you guys are still doing an excellent job with the Association. Hope to make the Anaheim reunion..."

Also a note from Jim Hensley (whose pictures of the control tower and the Royston fountain are printed elsewhere in this Irregular) about his recent trip to England. "Our trip to England and Basingbourn was great. Dave Crow (Sec. of East Anglia Aviation Society) is certainly the greatest. He really appreciates the old 91st. British Army at the Base trotted out the red carpet, from Capt. Clark (Base Adjutant) on up and down."

And from Lt. Col. Don Bader, a change of address. Don is now living at 907 Crestmont Drive, Dayton, Ohio 45431.

Speaking of changes of address, many of you who move forget to pass the word along and your Irregular goes astray. These are not forwarded but return-

ed to us. If you move, drop a line to Secretary Robert Gerstemeier, 930 Woodlawn Dr., Lansdale Pa. 19446 if you are in the Eastern Division or Sec. Treas. George Parks, 109 Wilshire Ave., Vallejo, Calif. 94590 if you are a Western Division member.

Ab A. Jansen, the Dutch writer who is compiling a book on WW II air activities affecting Holland is trying to get in touch with some ex-navigator who flew the Berlin missions of March 6 and 8, 1944. He is trying to locate the point where they crossed the Dutch coast on the way in. He says, "For March 6 the U.S. formations may have passed the coast in a wide pattern, say from Haarlem to Den Helder, but on the other hand I know that IJmuiden and at Den Helder there was some quite heavy flak and those areas may have been avoided. Near places like Petten, Bergen, Egmond, and Castricum there was at least no HEAVY flak, as far as I could find out...I know that on March 6 a number of planes crossed the coast near Bergen, but I do not know whether they were bombers or fighters." If you can help drop a note to:

Ab A. Jansen  
Populierenweg 34  
Oudorp, N.H.  
Holland

The Oakland Calif., Tribune carried in October an editorial comment by Western Division chairman Phil Taylor. Most 91st-ers will find it so pertinent that we feel it should be shared by the entire association:

### 'Black Thursday' Remembered

EDITOR: Last Thursday was the 28th anniversary of Black Thursday, the most violent, savagely fought and bloodiest battle in the titanic aerial conflict waged in the high arena over Germany in 1943.

During this battle, in which approximately 2,600 American airmen were engaged, better than 600 were listed as killed or missing in action. I have the privilege of being one of the survivors of that tremendous battle.

Today, while listening to the news on television, I learned of the mutinous action of sailors aboard an aircraft carrier bound for Vietnam and of the cowardly actions of soldiers in Vietnam who refused to obey the lawful order of their superior officers and noncommissioned officers to mount a patrol against the enemy.

On Oct. 14, 1943, I was a young man of 22 who had been taught by my parents, my teachers and my spiritual advisors the glories and greatness of this country. Today, upon hearing the news, I hang my head in shame that these men, many who were my close, dear personal friends, died in vain for such cowards and malcontents who question the ordered word of their appointed officers and noncommissioned officers whom they have sworn to obey.

It is a sorry state that 28 years ago so many fine, good, clean American youths had to give their lives in support of a cause whose ultimate end was the destruction of Adolph Hitler and his Nazi regime. Per-

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haps if the young men I remember now had not won those battles, "Herr Hitler" and his cohorts would be telling our dissenters of the armed services, our schools and our places of worship what they could and could not do.

I doubt, under "Herr Hitler," that any of us would ever hear of sailors of the United States Navy mutinying and soldiers of the United States Army refusing to engage the enemy. If these boys insist on following their current course of conduct our nation will someday be faced with a man like Hitler.

If such a situation should ever occur, I hope it is long after I am gone since I don't feel I could bear the shame and disgrace the current youth of America is bringing upon this absolutely wonderful country of ours—even with some of its very obvious faults and inequities.

May my friends of "Black Thursday" rest in peace in the knowledge that there are still young Americans remaining who believe in love and our country with the same passion that so many other Americans loved, upheld and if need be, died for.

Phillip R. Taylor,  
Alameda.

## FEBRUARY IS 1972 DUES MONTH

Send your \$3 (or more) to: Eastern Division,  
Joe Giambrone, 303 Brookdale Ave.,  
Glenside, Pa. 19038

Western,  
George Parks, 109 Wilshire Ave.  
Vallejo, Calif. 94590

## Eastern Division Plans Reunion Flight

To assist Eastern 91st-ers to attend the Third National Reunion in Anaheim in July, the Eastern Division Committee will join with United Airlines to offer members and associates a reduced fare round trip jet flight from Philadelphia.

The charter non-stop schedule aboard a DC-8 jet includes cocktails, complete meals and first class service for all passengers. Special busses will carry members and baggage from Los Angeles International Airport directly to 91st headquarters at the Jolly Roger Inn. Complete price for the trip is \$175. A valid membership card is required to qualify for the flight.

The return flight will depart from San Francisco to enable all members to visit both cities on the same trip to the West Coast. Transportation from Los Angeles to San Francisco will be at the expense and schedule of the passenger, not the 91st B.G. The plane ticket does not include motel or registration fee for Reunion activities.

The schedule is:

10 July 1972 Lv. Philadelphia 5:30 p.m. Arr. Los Angeles 7:55 p.m.

22 July 1972 Lv. San Francisco 8:30 a.m. Arr. Philadelphia 4:35 p.m.

For applications, trip details, deposit information, etc. write immediately to:

Secretary Robert Gerstemeier, 930 Woodlawn Drive, Lansdale, Penna. 19446.



Maj. Vicki Fox (Ret.) receives the engraved beer mug for having come the farthest distance to attend the Dayton Rally Round. Vicki, who lives in

Oklahoma City, just beat out fellow Oklahoman Virgil Mott from Tulsa.