



91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Vol. 7 No. 1

Nov., 1973

1974 Reunion Scheduled For Valley Forge

The East Coast Division of the 91st proudly announces its provisional plans for the 1974 summer National Reunion when its area becomes the host for the group. For the first time, ever, a twin-barrel affair is in the advanced planning stage for all members to consider early reservations.

To reinspire our American Heritage, the historic site of Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, was chosen with the George Washington Motor Lodge as 91st headquarters. Their excellent facilities provide 405 modern and comfortable guest rooms, a majestic ballroom, indoor and outdoor pools, an 18-hole golf course, minutes away from Valley Forge National Park and Music Fair, across from the world's largest enclosed shopping center and twenty minutes from metropolitan Philadelphia, with Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell and many other different sights.

Reunion dates were moved up to stay out of the peak tourist season, when traffic, meals, room rates and frustrations are high. Confirmed dates are 22-27 June, 1974, with bus tours available to all local points of interest.

The 1974 Reunion Activity Schedule, with details on hospitality room, tours, room rates, dinner dance and other pertinent information will be mailed to every 91ster with the February issue of the R/I. Please return the survey form to Bob Gers-temeier, secretary, so that plans can be refined to suit the number of attendees.

The second barrel of the two-stage reunion is the invitation to join the Committee for a 14-day carefree jaunt to Europe which includes 3 days in the Cambridge-Royston area. Operation "One More Time" is designed with you in mind. It enables 91sters who did not make the trip in 1969 to travel with known members and at reduced group rates. Many will want

to repeat the fun of the last trip - plus all the new preplanned adventures.

"Eine mehr zeit" (One More Time) is scheduled to depart before the start of the National Reunion. We leave on Friday evening, 7 June, '74 from Philadelphia International Airport. Lufthansa German Air Lines is our contract carrier and exclusive Travel Agent for the 91st. We understand that the Red Baron pilots are vying for the Captain's seat, so the non-stop flight to Munich should be unique in itself. We have set aside four open days in the middle of the trip northward, when you are free to go and do what you want to do.

Reassembly occurs in Weisbaden, then to Rudesheim, Cologne, Dusseldorf, and on to Amsterdam. Free afternoons and full evening freedom dot the itinerary.

We cross the North Sea by steamer to Harwich, where buses await our move into Cambridge in time to make the pubs, unpack and hit the sack. The last two full days are planned for Bassingbourn, Royston, Mad-ingly, Hitchin, etc. The group departs on Friday, June 21, for London Airport where the "Baron" is ready to jet us back to Philadelphia.

Please note one very important item. Activity in the official National Reunion does not conflict with our trip to Europe. There is absolutely no obligation on the part of any member to participate in either or both functions. You may elect to attend either the Reunion or the overseas trip. However, you may decide that since your suitcase is packed why not take in both affairs at once? To help you and the Mrs. decide what to do, the committee has prepared a tentative program for the National Reunion. Also ready for mailing is the provisional itinerary for part I, the "Group Trip to Europe."

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California Rally Round Great Success

Western Division 91sters staged another "wizard" Rally Round Sept. 22 when more than 60 members and guests got together at the Fairfield, Cal., Holiday Inn for a Northern California meeting. The good attendance was despite a gas shortage that saw many California service stations closed for the weekend.

Winning the mugs for having travelled the greatest distance to attend were Lt. (Ret.) and Mrs. Freeman C. Beasley (324th sqdn.) of Cedaredge, Colo., for the out-of-state award, and SMS (Ret.) and Mrs. John R. Paget (401st sqdn.) of Fallbrook, Cal., for the in-state award.

Two new life members were announced at the Rally Round and were presented with "Rigid Digit" trophies. They were Dr. Weldon T. Ross (ex-323rd sqdn.) from McMinnville, Ore., and Clive Woodbury (ex-401st sqdn.), Fresno, Cal., who was unable to attend the Rally Round but whose Life Membership was announced at that time.

Guest speaker for the occasion was a former member of the French underground who lived at St. Nazaire during the war and who witnessed many of the bombing raids made on the submarine pens there by the Eighth Air Force. He was Chris "Ace" DeGuitaut, now an American citizen and a restaurant owner in Fresno. DeGuitaut, whose restaurant is at the Fresno airport, is very active in aviation, being an instructor pilot, a flight safety counselor, a member of the CAP, and one of the sponsors of the "Gathering of War Birds," an annual get-together of WW II aircraft.

DeGuitaut related how as a 15-year-old member of the French underground he watched the shooting down of a 303 B.G. plane, Snap, Crackle, 'n Pop. From the wreckage he recovered some charts and other mementoes. He observed two survivors bail out and is currently engaged in a search to see if they survived the war. DeGuitaut is an associate member of the 91st B.G. Memorial Association.

Recognized for having attended a Western Division Rally Round for the first time were: M/Sgt. (Ret.) Del Kaech, of Phoenix, Ariz. (323rd sqdn.), E. R. "Bob" Kelly, Project City, Cal. (322nd sqdn.), Leland E. Forsblad, Fresno, Cal. (323rd



M/Gen Wray and LTC. McCombs present a 91st Group Plaque to guest speaker Chris DeGuitaut (center). The plaque will hang in "Ace's" restaurant at Chandler Field.

sqdn.), Lt. Col. Henry J. McFadden (Ret.), Clovis, Cal., a 91st associate member who was with the 379th B.G. at Kimbolton during the war, and Fred Mazzie, Fresno, associate member.

B/Gen. (Ret.) James A. Mangiapane, Oakland, Cal., associate; Dr. Weldon T. Ross, McMinnville, Ore., (323rd sqdn.), LTC. Lawrence E. Gaddis (Ret.), Auburn, Cal., (324th sqdn.), Dennis Cross, Sacramento, Cal., associate member, and James Nelson, associate member.

Attending were: M/Gen. Stanley T. Wray, B/Gen. and Mrs. James A. Mangiapane, LTC. and Mrs. John R. McCombs and daughter, M/Sgt. Eugene J. Letalien, M/Sgt. and Mrs. George W. Parks, Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Racicot, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip R. Taylor, Mr. Chris DeGuitaut, LTC. Henry J. McFadden, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mazzie.

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Attending the Northern California Rally Round were: First row, kneeling, Rocco J. Maiorca, Chris DeGuitaut, E. Robert Kelly, M/Gen. Stanley T. Wray, Dr. Weldon T. Ross, Lt. (Ret.) Freeman C. Beasley, Phillip R. Taylor, and Leland Forsblad.

Second row, Fred Mazzie, Ammon Powell, Robert H. Racicot, Robert H. Clapp, LTC.

John R. McCombs, Virgil Mott, M/Sgt. Gene Letalieu, SMS John R. Paget, and M/Sgt. George W. Parks.

Third row, Maj. Edward P. Winslow, Charles Newlin, LTC. Henry McFaddin, S/Sgt. David J. Boksanski, Aubin Pene, M/Sgt. Delmar E. Kaech, SMS Henry Cordes, Capt. Frank S. Ripa, and Maj. John W. Ryan.

California Rally Round...

S/Sgt. David J. Boksanski, Ms. Betty Emmons, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Blaich, Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Clapp, SMS and Mrs. Henry Cordes, Maj. Edward P. Winslow, Ms. Margaret Haney, CMS and Mrs. Charles W. Yaroshak, M/Sgt. and Mrs. John Kostraba, M/Sgt. Delmar E. Kaech, Mr. Aubin R. Pene, Mr. E. Robert Kelly.



Lt. (ret.) Freeman C. Beasley gets the mug for having travelled the greatest distance from out-of-state (Cedaredge, Colo.) for the Rally Round.

Mr. and Mrs. Ammon Powell, SMS and Mrs. John R. Paget, Capt. and Mrs. Frank S. Ripa, Dr. and Mrs. Weldon T. Ross, Mr. Virgil Mott, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Yates, Mr. and Mrs. Rocco J. Maiorca, Mr. and Mrs. Leland E. Forsblad, Maj. and Mrs. John W. Ryan, Mr. and Mrs. Grant Johnson, Lt. and Mrs. Freeman C. Beasley, Mr. Charles Newlin.



SMS John R. Paget is presented the mug for coming the greatest distance in the state (Fallbrook, Cal.) to attend.



Here is one-half of the dining room at the California Rally Round

"Frisco Jenny" Crew Holds Denver Mini-Reunion

The seven surviving crew members who were aboard "Dame Satan" when the plane was shot down August 17, 1943, got together for the first time since WW II in a 30th anniversary reunion in Denver on August 17. The story of that flight and their adventures was told in the July R/I.

The seven, whose regular plane was the "Frisco Jenny," were Edward P. Winslow, Carl Smith, Victor Ciganek, Jarvis Allen, Al DiMinno, Gerold Tucker, and Rudy Thigpin. Carl Smith hosted the reunion at his home in Denver.

The Denver Post carried a big picture spread of the get-together and relates the story like this:

For 30 years Victor Ciganek of New York City has wondered who saved his life that day in 1943 when the B-17 bomber he was aboard was shot down over Belgium.

In his mind there has been a blank from the moment shrapnel struck him in the back in the plane's radio room.

He's had only a hazy memory of running back through the plane, suddenly

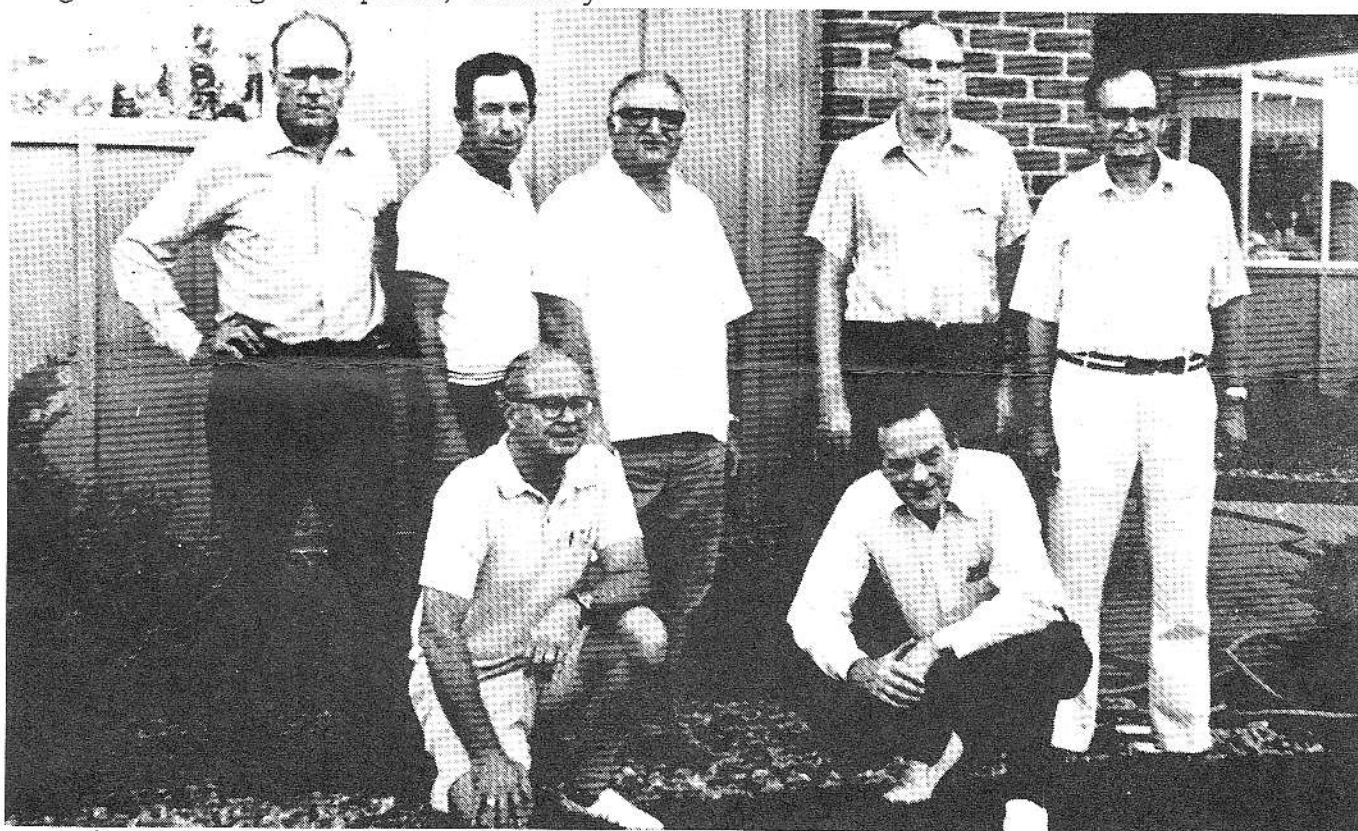
floating in space in a parachute, feeling hands strapping him into an ambulance, hearing a clang of the bell, becoming semiconscious in a floodlit room and hearing a voice asking: "What is your mother's name?"

"I opened my eyes and looked into a German uniform. I passed out."

Ciganek ended years of wondering Friday when he learned in Denver that Gerold Tucker, the waist-gunner on Dame Satan had grabbed him, hooked up his parachute, and pushed him out of the crashing plane.

"It's the true story, finally. He saw me wandering around and pushed me out. Otherwise I wouldn't be here today," Ciganek said.

He, Tucker, and five other crew members who were aboard the plane Aug. 17, 1943, on a bombing run over southern Germany met Friday in Denver. They hadn't seen each other since they jumped from the burning craft.



Getting together for a 30-year reunion in remembrance of their plane going down on August 17, 1943, are the surviving members who met August 17 at Col. Carl

Smith's home in Denver. They are, front row, Carl Smith and Ted Winslow. Second row, Gerold Tucker, Rudy Thigpen, Al DiMinno, Jarvis Allen, and Vic Ciganek.

'Frisco Jenny' Crew...

Meeting in the home of the co-pilot Carl Smith, 2305 S. Lansing St., Arapahoe County, they talked into the night, piecing together what happened "from the time we hit the silks until we got back to the states."

There were seven men at the reunion. One, Rudy Thigpin, had been wounded during an earlier mission and was hospitalized, missing the flight of the Dame Satan. He recovered to fulfill his required 30 missions.

Of the 10 men aboard "Dame Satan," two were killed in bailing out. A third has since died.

None knew what had happened to the others, and it might have stayed that way had not Smith received a Christmas card this year from a man named Jarvis Allen.

He didn't recognize the name and spent some time questioning friends before he realized Allen was the crew engineer, from Prestonsburg, Ky.

Mrs. Smith began a letter-writing campaign in February, tracking down as many of the crew members as she could.

The men began arriving in Denver Thursday and included Allen, Ciganek, Tucker, from Lolo, Mont., Thigpin, of Shreveport, La., Al DiMinno, Las Vegas, Nev., and Edward P. (Ted) Winslow, Menlo Park, Calif.

Dame Satan was to have hit a ball-bearing plant in southern Germany that day in 1943, but was struck by enemy fire near the target.

With the No. 2 engine gone, the plane left the formation and limped homeward, getting as far as Belgium, when the crew abandoned ship.

Four of the jumpers fell into the hands of the Belgium underground and made a classic escape by hiking across Belgium, France, the Pyrenees Mountains and Spain to Gibraltar.

Three--Ciganek, Winslow and Tucker--weren't as lucky and were captured. The men had a lot of figuring to do during the reunion, trying to nail down how they were captured.

According to Smith, Winslow and Tucker have now satisfied themselves that they were betrayed by a Belgian girl and delivered into enemy hands. The wounded Ciganek was picked up by the Germans.

Winslow brought to the reunion a diary he wrote and illustrated during his

days as a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft 1 in Barth, Germany.

"It's the biggest thrill. It's hardly believable," Winslow said as he and his friends sat together. Soon the conversation moved to happier times, each telling what he had done since the war.

And soon the former members of the 322nd Squadron of the 91st Bombardment Group were standing around the fireplace, posing for snapshots--for memories that will bridge that 30-year gap a little more quickly in the future.

Two National Magazines Run 'Shoo Shoo Baby' Story

Two national magazines, the "Air University Review" and "Air Classics" have recently carried stories about "Shoo Shoo Baby," the 91st aircraft that has been brought back to the United States and is awaiting refurbishing by the Air Force Museum.

The article, by William G. Holder, appeared first in the Air University Review several months ago, and was reprinted in the October, 1973 issue of Air Classics. Titled "You've come a long way, Shoo Shoo Baby!," the article relates at considerable length two of Shoo Shoo Baby's wartime exploits, the flight to Marienburg, when she was the only 91st plane to make the mission, and the mission to Poznan, Poland, from which the Baby force-landed in Sweden.

The tracking down of the plane by writer Steve Birdsall and the efforts of the 91st and the Air Force Museum which resulted in the return of the aircraft to the States is also detailed.

Numerous pictures of the plane and others of the 91st illustrate the article.

A few gold and silver bullion type blazer patches are still available for \$12.50 from Western Division Secretary-Treasurer George Parks, 109 Wilshire Avenue, Vallejo, Ca. 94590. As anyone who has seen them will agree, these are really something super, and 91st wives could really score with the "old man" with one for a Christmas present.

Silver "Rigid Digit" tie tacs are available from both Eastern and Western division secretaries for \$2.50 each.

From the Editor's Desk...

Paul C. Burnett

Box 909 Auburn, Al. 36830

Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, who commanded the Eighth Air Force, and who was a guest of honor at the Washington Rally Round, had this to say in a note to Col. "Long John" Parsons, who hosted the event: "I have always admired the courage, morale, and spirit of the 91st Bomb Group, and I am especially delighted to see that such a large number of its former gallant crews have maintained the traditional spirit of the organization, postwar.

SMS (Ret) Lou Holland of the 401st and his wife were recently injured when their car struck and abandoned auto in the center of a freeway at night. Fortunately, seat belts prevented serious injuries, though the "Mrs." was hospitalized several days. The Hollands have a new address: 42951 N. Cinema Ave., Lancaster, Ca., 93534.

The editor had a real "Twilight Zone" experience recently on a flight back to Alabama from Texas. Due to flight curtailment the only plane available was a "local" that stopped at every airfield along the way. At Shreveport, La., a 20-year-old making his first flight ever took the seat next to me. We got to talking flying and I mentioned the fact that I had been stationed for a time during WW II at our next stop, Monroe, but hadn't seen the airfield there since 1943. As the DC-9 headed in for a landing I could see the field almost as it was thirty years ago. Then, just ahead of us, I saw a flight of three B-17s, shining silver and sporting yellow triangles on the tail, land and taxi to a parking area. When we landed and I discovered I hadn't dreamed it all I found out they were working out of the base on a fire-ant poisoning job, "bombing" with Mirex.

1974 National Reunion Set...

Dont put it off. Write today to the secretary, R.E. Gerstemeier, for detailed information on this unique two-part mission. An early survey this past summer brought in the names of 75 members who were seriously interested in our efforts. Act now for "Twice More in '74."

On Sept. 8-9 the Western Division Committee were guests of Chris DeGuitaut and the "Gathering of War Birds," aircraft of WW II, at the Fresno-Chandler Downtown Airport. The Committee showed the new "Memphis Belle" movie during the event. More than 1600 persons attended the showings, and they have been invited back for next year's affair.

We continue to add long lost members to the 91st rolls. Bob Kelly, whose story was told in the April R/I, wrote to the chief of the underground who first hid them after their plane went down. Through him he learned that a member of the co-pilot's family had visited them in France, and through him Kelly got the address of co-pilot Andy Anderson, who is now a high school principal in Northridge, Calif. Andy's address is: A.W. "Bill" Anderson, Jr. 9735 Paso Robles, Northridge, Calif. 91324.



Posing before Madame Shoo Shoo on Sept. 20, 1944, are Andy Anderson, co-pilot, George Lancaster, bombardier, Alton Karoli, navigator, and Bob Kelley, pilot.

Pictures of the Washington Rally Round can be ordered from Eastern Division chairman Paul Chryst. For color prints the prices are \$1.30 for 3½x5; \$5 for 8x10; \$3 for 5x7. Black and whites are \$2 for 5x7; \$3 for 8x10. Paul's address is 1494 N. Adams St., Pottstown, Pa. 19464.

The Portland "Oregonian" recently carried an outstanding feature article on Life Member Joe Zimmerman, ex-322nd sqdn. The paper told how Joe, who has run a garage there since 1946, is regarded as one of the top GM cars specialists in the country, with regular "patients" from as far away as New York and Arizona. All of his work is done on regular, long-time appointments. He hasn't been able to accept a new patient since 1962. Joe deals wholly in preventive medicine, "giving the cars a stem to stern check at regular intervals.

Movie star Ben Lyon, who is a long-time member of the 91st B.G. Memorial Association, has recently moved to California from England, where he has lived since WW II. Ben flew a mission with the 91st, and together with his wife Bebe Daniels was a frequent visitor to Bass-

ingbourn. His new address is 10433 Wilshire Boulevard, Apt. 810, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024.

One of the 91st's associate members, CMS Charles W. Yaroshak, has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal upon his retirement after 30 years of service. Yaroshak was a member of the 96th B.G., with 30 missions over Germany. He also made 25 missions over Korea and 67 airlift missions into Vietnam. The last 6 years he has been Staff Performance Flight Engineer with the 22 AF, Travis AFB.



This "oldie" was taken at the 401st beer party at Redmond, Ore., in August, 1942, before the Group left Walla Walla. First row, Al Peters and C. O. Pierce. Second row, Walter Ward, Roy Fratz, L. C. Pierce.



And here is the other side of the dining room at the California Rally Round