



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Vol. 13

No. 2

July, 1980

Royal Flush: Escape To Freedom!

(By Maury Herman)...In my first two articles I related the last mission of the Royal Flush and my first ten hours of evasion activity prior to capture. Those two events occurred on 22 June, 1943. This article is an account of my successful escape from Stalag XIII D, just outside Nurnberg. That event commenced on 4 April and ended on 27 April 1945. I will briefly summarize the intervening months.

Each of the crew members aboard the Royal Flush had been captured. Marc Fountain, pilot; Oscar Diederling, co-pilot, and Fred Sneed, flight engineer, had been able to hold altitude after the other seven of us bailed out near Wesel on the Rhine. They were able to make it all the way back to the English Channel, on the deck, before they got jumped again by Jerry fighters and went down in the drink. They and the others were all waiting for me when I arrived at the Luftwaffe's Interrogation Center, Dulag Luft, in Frankfort on the Main. Following our interrogation our sergeants were sent to one stalag, the officers to another-- Stalag Luft III, at Sagan, about 90 kilometers south of Berlin. I was but 21 at the time. I spent the next nineteen months of my life in that POW camp. During that time I tried two escapes. Both of them were unsuccessful.

The Germans evacuated us from Stalag Luft III on 28 January 1945. The Russian advance forces were just the other side of the Oder River. We could hear the sound of their cannon fire, coming ever closer. Our destination was the POW camp at Moosberg, near Munich.

I escaped once again, with "Doc" Wilcox, during the march from Sagan to Muskau. But we were caught the same evening after stumbling into a Panzer force bivouac area. Our captors turned us over to a POW group from another camp. Their destination was the POW camp at Nurnberg. I spent the next two months in that camp. My first attempt to escape from there was also unsuccessful, although I did manage to stay "free" for three days that time. While unsuccessful, I did learn something from all the mistakes we made on each of these escape attempts and did not repeat any of them on our next, the successful escape. The account of that follows:

The Germans evacuated us from Stalag XIII D on 4 April 1945. The American forces were just the other side of the Danube. Our destination this time was "Hitler's Redoubt" in the Bavarian Alps. I escaped again with Charlie Featherstone during the first ten-minute break of that march.

T/Sgt. Charlie Featherstone came from Chicago. He was a Link Trainer operator. Charlie got to be a POW by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. He wasn't even on a combat mission when his plane got shot down. Charlie had gone along



for the ride on a training flight over England on a day when the weather over the continent was too bad for bombing. Unfortunately for that crew, it socked in England while they were still aloft. As the plane had plenty of fuel flight operations ordered them to orbit until they could find a hole in the clouds through which to descend. It was dark when this occurred. The radio operator's "Hello Ducky, where am I?" was answered in a British accent and directions were provided to a near-by airfield. The runway lights were turned on to assist the pilots in getting their B-17 down. This hospitality was provided by the Air Base Group at Kassel, 300 miles southeast of the Wash -- deep in the heart of the Third Reich!

I had met Charlie in XIII D, following recapture from my earlier escape from there. We became friends. Together, we planned our next escape. That opportunity came on the day that the Germans moved us out of Nurnberg toward "Hitler's Redoubt." The German plan was to use POW's as a buffer against the American forces which were now advancing south-east towards Bavaria.

Charlie and I were in a group well at the head of the march column. The column numbered well over 10,000 "kriegies" when we departed Nurnberg at about 0800 hours. The column had reached Furth and was given its first ten-minute break about an hour and a half later. Charlie and I decided to implement our plan just as soon as we got into the foothills and forests which were now not far off. We described our plans to a few of the other kriegies. They agreed to help us implement them. Our chance came during the next break, at about 1100 hours.

The road was on the left side of a small wooded valley. The forest came down slope to the left edge of the road. There was a three-foot hedgerow on the right edge of the road. The slope on the other side of the hedgerow was grassy down to the stream meandering through the valley. The stream was about six feet wide, maybe eighteen inches deep. The forest began again on the far side of the stream and continued up and over the ridge.

Charlie and I were standing together, with our backs to the hedgerow. We signaled our cohorts to start their "flap" (diversionary tactics). They began a loud argument which soon became a very realistic fist fight. This attracted the attention of the guards away from us. Others in on our plan provided a screen in front of us. When one of them gave us a "go" nod, we went! Charlie and I both fell backward through the hedgerow, rolled down the slope into the stream, and crawled in the woods on the far side. During this episode the muscles in my back were taut as piano strings, waiting for a Mauser slug to find its mark. We hid in the woods, about ten yards from the stream, afraid to move, for almost four hours -- until the last group in the march column had passed from view. That was at about 1530 hours. We had made our break good!

I no longer recall the sequence of events which took place during the next twenty-three days. But I do vividly remember a number of them and tell them as human interest anecdotes.

Charlie and I waited until dark that first day, before moving out. Our plan was to travel only at night so as to minimize our contact with other people. We crossed quite a few ridges and valleys that first night before coming to a wide fertile field just at daybreak. We bedded down and got some sleep. We awoke about 11 a.m. We observed the valley below us. People were plowing the field. The area was rural; no town. As the afternoon wore on we decided to descend the hill to a spur of trees where we could better observe the people at work. We felt this would help us pass the time until dark -- when we planned to cross this valley.

We were lying on our bellies in the grass beneath the low-lying branches of an evergreen right at the edge of the wooded spur. Our point of interest was an old-looking woman plowing furrows behind a brace of oxen. She had been at it for over an hour and had reached an area about forty feet from us. The woman halted her oxen and headed right toward us. Charlie and I froze! When the woman got to the edge of the wood, not more than three feet from us, she lifted her skirts, dropped her bloomers, and squatted. In the midst of relieving herself she became aware of our presence. I can still see her eyes opening wide like saucers. She screamed, jumped up and ran off into the field. We, of course, ran back up the hill and into the safety of the deep woods.

That night we crossed the valley. The woods on the far side were not as dense.

There were quite a few trails. The one we selected to travel must have been the local "lovers' lane" for we kept stumbling into young couples making love. They appeared to be more upset at the thought of having been caught in their act than we were in ours. Nevertheless, we decided to change our plans -- hole up during the hours of darkness and travel only during the day from then on.

The next morning we entered a barn in search of civilian clothes. We were wearing Canadian army uniforms which the Red Cross had provided us "old kriegies" whose original uniforms had worn out during our years in the Stalags. We not only found some work clothes in the barn, but also that there were laying hens doing their thing. So we decided to get us some eggs also. Just as I was lifting a hen off her nest the farmer entered the barn. When he saw us and what we were doing he grabbed for a pitchfork by the door. I grabbed for the eggs in the nest. All three of us made a run for the exit at the other end of the barn. In our haste to get out I dropped all but one of the eggs I had gathered. Charlie led the race. I was in the middle and the old farmer was right behind me --jabbing at my back with his pitchfork.

Two things were in our favor. Charlie had picked a route up the hill away from the barn, and we were in better physical shape than the German who was chasing us. Otherwise I don't think we could have outlasted him. But we did. We ran until we couldn't breathe any more. Then we collapsed with hurting lungs and pounding hearts. When our breathing rate had dropped back to normal I untwined my fingers from the egg I was still holding in my right hand. It had not broken -- but only because it was a glass nest egg.

On an afternoon shortly thereafter we had to swim a stream to get across. Naturally we were sopping wet. To boot, it began to rain. We were cold and miserable. We came to a wayside chapel by the side of the dirt road we were on. So we went inside with the hope of being able to dry out our clothes. But people, farm folks, came in to get out of the rain also. Obviously we were strangers in that area, so each newcomer eyed us with great suspicion. We departed, headed across the fields and back into the woods. That night we slept on the ground, covered only by long grass and evergreen boughs. When we awoke we were stiff, miserable and still soaked. The sun came out for awhile and we dried off some. Then it began to rain again. We were approaching a small rural community. The first house had a large barn adjacent to it. We headed for the barn and got inside without being seen. We climbed to the hayloft and took off our wet clothes, then snuggled in under the hay to warm up. About a half hour later we heard voices in the farm yard. I crawled to the edge of the loft and looked out through the open barn door below. Damned if it wasn't a platoon of German soldiers! I could hear their officer (or non-com) telling the farmer he was putting his troops up in the barn for the night.

Charlie and I hastily put our pants and shoes back on, grabbed our other clothes, kicked a board out at the back of the loft and lept to the ground running. The last thing I saw as I looked back, just before dropping out, was a hand at the top rung of the ladder to the loft. Once again we had gotten away.

Our next encounter with German troops took place in a small town along about noon. It had gotten warm and we were thirsty. By now we were mixing with German travellers, also on foot, and travelling on roads rather than through woods and across fields. We stopped at a Gasthaus for a glass of beer, some bröt, kartainfel and wurst. (We paid for this with Deutschmark which we had acquired from guards back in the Stalag in preparation for escape activities). The room was crowded, so when two more people came in, soldiers, they came over to our table and sat down. Naturally they started a conversation while waiting for their order. I spoke some German - better than Charlie - so he let me do all the talking, which was as little as I could get away with. We gulped our food and left. To say the least, our company made us feel mighty uncomfortable!

(To Be Continued)

Editor's Note: We will carry the final installment in the October issue of The Ragged Irregular. We guarantee that you will find it one of the most unusual escape experiences of WW II.

Make San Diego In September!

New Members - Address Changes

The latest updating of address changes and a listing of new members has been prepared by the Eastern and Western Division Secretary-Treasurers, John Flinn and George Parks, as of June 15. Check the list and correct your permanent directory accordingly.

Aronson, Jerry A.	6776 S. Bellaire Way	Littleton, CO.	80122
Ashby, Joseph T. L/Col(Ret)	5824 Normont	El Paso, TX.	79912
Bruce, Stan Lee	29 Raleigh Ave., Torquay	TQ2 6DL, Devon.	England
Casey, Robert A.	P.O. Box 12	Abingdon, MA.	02351
Chipp, Milford	771 Blackthorne	El Cajon, CA.	92020
Clark, Robert H.	Rt. 1, Box 268-D	Galena, MO.	65656
Cohen, Myron	63 Bristol Ave.	Hyannis, MA.	02601
Daugherty, Johnny R.	142 Parkway	Hazard, KY.	41707
Dawson, T.H.	33 Hillcrest, Rt. 9	Parkersburg, W. VA.	26101
Dealey, Robert F.	308 Park Av. Rt. 3, Box 998	Curtis, NB.	69025
Dean, John Capt. (Ret)	23 Williamsberg Rd.	Boyce, LA.	71409
Dehart, John H. M/Sgt (Ret)	2805 Alkay Drive	Shreveport, LA.	71118
Erickson, Richard H.	22805 Thunderbird Dr.	Des Moines, WA.	98188
Evens, Peter D.	P.O. Box W	Buellton, CA.	93427
Fahner, Byron C.	5145 Southglow Ct. S.E.	Grand Rapids, MI.	49508
Frantz, George J.	2377 N.E. Center Circle	Jensen Beach, FL.	33457
Frawley, John	1268 W. Church St.	Elmira, NY.	14905
Friedman, Harry Dr.	910 Madison, Suite 722	Memphis, TN.	38103
Garofalo, Vincent J.	262 Victory Blvd.	New Rochelle, NY.	10804
Grego, Robert F.	R.D. #3 Box 409	Oswego, NY.	13126
Heatherly, Earl	1413 S.E. Vesthaven Cr.	Port St. Lucie, FL.	33452
Hasler, Arthur	5595 Homewood Rd.	Pensacola, FL.	32504
Hewlett, John D.	2301 Walnut Lane	Arden, DE.	19810
Hoffman, Peter J.	7523 E. Edgewood Ctr.	Mesa, AZ	85208
Hohler, David L. Jr.	1677 Sequoia St.	Napa, CA.	94558
Hrenkevich, Andrew	270 Beaver St.	Lettsdale, PA.	15056
Jones, R.E. L/Col. (Ret)	110 Hazel St.	Sulphur, LA.	70663
Kurylo, John Box 108	R.D. #2, Iron Horse Drive	Ringoes, N.J.	08551
Lasker, Francis	21 Calais Rd.	Randolph, N.J.	07869
Leister, Michael D. T/Sgt.	30 Orchard Acres, Rt.3	Felton, DE.	19943
Letalien, Eugene M/Sgt. (Ret)	169 Carlsbad Circle	Vacaville, CA.	95688
Lieberman, D.	211 S. Michigan St.	South Bend, IN.	46601
Mavy, Elsmore	353 Edith Drive	El Paso, TX.	79915
McCanney, Henry J.	1123 Del Lane	Faribault, MN.	55021
Meikus, Otto M/Sgt (Ret)	1 Gainsborough Close,	Cambridge, England	
Michel, Roland R.	2521 Villa Dr. # 107	Fargo, ND.	58103
Myers, Alfred M.	724 Garrard Creek Rd.		
Parker, V.A. L/Col (Ret)	121 W. California	Floydada, TX.	79235
Parsons, Bruce V.	1628 Lassen Way	Burlingame, CA.	94010
Partridge, Eugene C.	P.O. Box 578	Alva, FL.	33920
Pengegelly, Jack SMSgt. (Ret)	MSC-EUR. APO 09069	New York, N.Y.	
Potters, Robert	75 Devon Road	Essex Fells, N.J.	07021
Rheam, Michael	521 Stein Lane	Lewisburg PA.	17837
Root, J.D.	1801 Trinity	Liberty, TX.	77575
Schlaich, Lester H.	Rt. 2, Box 250	Cass Lake, MN.	56633
Sponsel, Robert C.	2175 W. Southern, #256	Apache Junction, AZ.	85220
Walshaw, L.R. Maj. (Ret)	PSC Box 864	AP0, N.Y.	09021
Wilson, W.D.	118 Upland Drive	Council Bluffs, IA.	51501

Make San Diego In September

Election Procedures Announced

To help facilitate the election of Memorial Association officers at the 1980 San Diego Reunion and to provide proxy voting for members not attending, an election committee appointed by President Tom Gunn has announced several changes in voting procedure.

The committee is headed by Lt. Col. John R. McCombs, and consists of Col. Frank S. Kamykowski, Col. Donald S. Gauthier, Sam Cipolla, and Charles Kirkham, all of whom have played an active part in Memorial Association activities. They were recommended for the post by Eastern and Western Division chairmen.

The committee will prepare a slate of nominees to be presented at the Reunion business meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, and in an innovation to widen participation, will accept and present nominations received by mail before the Reunion.

Posts to be filled include President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, Editor-Historian, Secretary-Treasurer, and President Emeritus, if appropriate. Any one officer may serve in more than one office. The guidelines presently call for the office of President and 1st Vice-President to be filled by a person of at least the rank of colonel. Nominations to be made by mail should be sent to the chairman, Lt. Col. John R. McCombs (Ret), 2334 Platt Drive, Martinez, CA. 94553. A statement of willingness to serve, signed by the nominee, must accompany the nomination.

Article IX of the By-Laws provides for proxy voting by Association members who cannot attend the Reunion. Included below is a proxy form to be used for such voting.

The attached proxy form is not a ballot. It is for your convenience in appointing your representative if you cannot attend. Appoint your proxy by checking the name of ONE of the present Association officers listed on the form, OR write in the name on the blank line of any other member whom you expect to be present to represent you. Print and sign your name, date the form and mail it to your appropriate Division Secretary-Treasurer by August 6, 1980. Eastern Division Secretary-Treasurer is John C. Flinn, Jr., Box 131, McClure, PA 17841. Western Division Secretary-Treasurer is M/Sgt. George W. Parks (Ret), 109 Wilshire Ave., Vallejo, CA 94590. Proxy votes will be tabulated by the Elections Committee.

PROXY

I hereby constitute the person whose name is checked hereon my attorney and proxy, with power of substitution to vote for me at the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association business meeting at the Town & Country Hotel, on 6 September 1980, with all powers I would possess if present. I have paid my 1980 membership dues (Life Members excepted).

_____ Glenn Boyce, _____ Paul Burnett, _____ John Flinn Jr., _____ Tom Gunn

_____ W. Warren Hill, Jr., _____ John McCombs, _____ George Parks

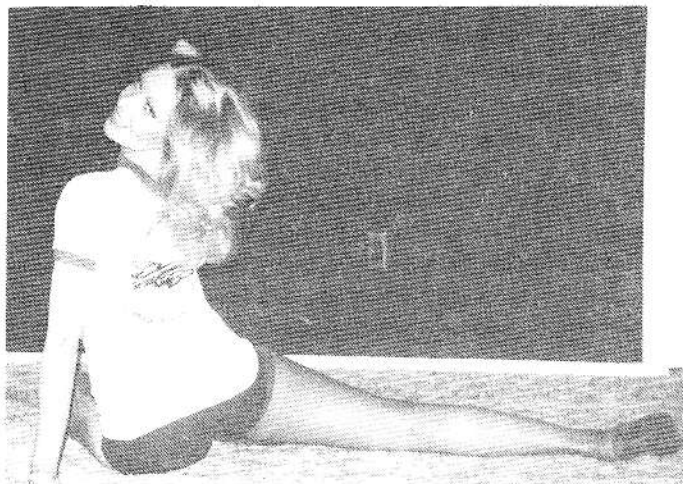
_____ Other (Please print name)

Your Name (Print) _____ Signature _____

date _____

From The Editor's Desk...

Paul C. Burnett Box 909 Auburn, Al. 36830



The picture of Terry "Shoo Shoo" van Brackle in the original Shoo Shoo Baby pose is a reminder that we are still giving away a unique Shoo Shoo Baby T-shirt for every \$10 contributed toward the restoration of our combat veteran B-17 bomber which is being restored at Dover AFB. Since the initial publicity in the April R/I more than 30 publicity pictures have been sent to as many newspapers and magazines here and abroad.

Two Association members should be recognized for their exception generosity - David Bramble, who contributed \$500 directly to the 512th Antique Restoration Group, and Paul McDuffee, who sent in \$120 for 12 T-shirts for the 512th Restoration crew.

Restoration funds have been reduced because of the current austerity program, so each contribution is really needed. Send your \$10 contribution, shirt size, and your return address to: W.W. Hill, 4002 Braddock Rd., Alexandria, VA. 22312 for a shirt by return mail.

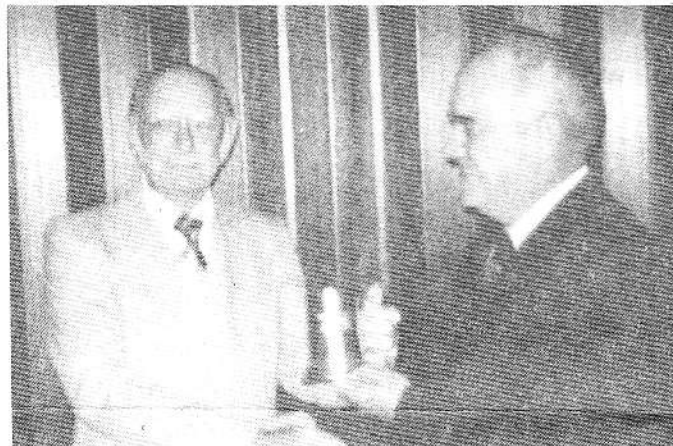
Colorado Rally Round

Another successful Rocky Mountain Rally Round was held May 17 in Englewood, Col., at Sam Newton's Country Dinner Playhouse. Members attended from Texas, Arizona and Wyoming as well as Colorado.

Activities in addition to the Playhouse dinner and theatre included a Saturday afternoon open house at host Glenn and Lois Boyce's home in Lakewood and a Sunday breakfast get-together.

Receiving the pewter mug for having come the greatest distance was Harold and Mae Mitchamore, from Kingwood, Texas. Col. Paul D. Jessop (Ret) made the presentation.

Attending were: Peter J. & Arline Hoffman, Arizona; Harold & Mae Mitchamore, Texas; Aulden & Ramona Dunn, Wyoming; Tom & Margaret Blume, Glenn & Lois Boyce, Herb & Erna Egender, Milton & Gertrude Green, Paul & Mary Jo Jessop, Bill & Pearl Reynolds, Lewis & Maldarine Simpson, Joe Bowman, Jean Derowitsch, and Michael & Patricia Jessop, all from Colorado.



Harold Mitchamore (L) receives mug from Col. Paul Jessop at Englewood.

Dayton Rally Round To Feature Air Force Museum Visit

The Eastern Division is holding a pre-Reunion Annual Rally Round at Dayton, Ohio on the weekend of 26 July.

The Rally Round will be held at the Imperial House-North Motel (I 75 and Needmore Road, Dayton, Ohio 45414, Tel. 513 278-5711). This is a splendid place to get together with other 91sters and at the same time visit the famous United States Air Force Museum located at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton.

The program for the Rally Round calls for a Saturday morning sign-in at the 91st Hospitality Room at the Imperial House-North, with the afternoon free for a visit to the AF Museum (open 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.). There will be cocktails in the Hospitality Room at 7, and the banquet will follow at 7:45. There will be a Group breakfast at 9 Sunday. The Museum is also open the same hours on Sunday.

National Reunion - Don't Miss It!

In less than two months our National Reunion will be held in San Diego. The early return by members of their Pre-Registration Forms indicate that we may expect the largest attendance ever.

Several members have indicated that they will be traveling in RV's and are interested in nearby over-night parks that accommodate such vehicles. Listed below are two such parks that you may write direct for reservations. Or if you wish, in the remarks section of your Pre-Registration Form, ask for brochures of these parks and they will be sent to you by return mail.

DeAnza Trailer Harbor, 2727 DeAnza Road, San Diego, CA. 92109. Daily rates are \$16 for 1 to 4 persons.

DeAnza Campland, 2211 Pacific Beach Drive, San Diego, CA. 92109. Minimum 3 days. \$13 to \$22 per day, dependent upon campsite location.

The response of golfing members is about 20%. Because of the very wide range of handicaps, it is planned to reserve starting times for a fun day of golf and possibly a luncheon afterward. So you golfers bring your clubs.

For the convenience of those members who plan to attend and have lost or misplaced the original announcement flyer with the Pre-Registration Form, a reprint is provided on the back of this page.

We urge you to send those Pre-Registration forms in as soon as possible. We welcome all of you and are anxiously awaiting you in San Diego. Jack Paget, Chairman.

Here are the members who have responded through June 30.

Ashby, Joseph T.	Gaffney, Jack	Ondrovic, John J.
Ballard, James A.	Gagliano, Tony J.	Ortega, Rosie A.
Bedwell, James O.	Gaston, Elon M.	Paget, Jack R.
Beety, John W.	Gauthier, Donald S.	Parks, George W.
Birch, Oliver K.	Gerald, Robert S.	Parsons, Bruce V.
Booth, Charle D.	Giese, Argo O.	Paxson, Jack J.
Borellis, William F.	Green, Milton A.	Peacock, Edward A.
Boyce, Glenn V.	Greene, Edward C.	Pene, Aubin R.
Bramble, David A.	Haller, Edward	Powers, Robert J.
Burman, Kermit M.	Hamner, John D.	Ridings, Raymond C.
Burnett, Paul C.	Hanson, Robert J.	Sisk, Howard E.
Cahill, Goldie J.	Harlick, Joe	Smith, Donald R.
Cameron, Walter R.	Hovermill, Harry E.	Sponsel, Robert C.
Carpenter, Hubert B.	Hrenkevich, Andrew	Starcer, Tony
Christiansen, Chris H.	Kamykowski, Col. Frank S.	Steele, Erwin R.
Cipolla, Sam J.	Kurylo, John	Thompson, Jack W.
Clapp, Robert H.	McCombs, John R.	Van Dyke, Roy W.
Cluck, Clarence A.	McCrea, William J.	Viskocil, Emil J.
Daniels, Neil A.	McGavern, William A.	Vrooman, R. Clifford
Donofrio, Frank G.	McPartlin, James H.	Weber, Howard F.
Dumouchel, James E.	Mitchamore, Harold	Wilson, Emmett R.
Dunn, Aulden N.	Moeller, John A.	Wilson, Russell W.
Ellis, Quentin H.	Mouton, Oscar J.	Yaroshak, Chuck W.
Fletcher, James D.	Mummert, Lauren H.	Frankie, Joe

Make San Diego In September!

Town and Country HOTEL

PHONE (714) 291-7131
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92138

ATLAS **dh** HOTELS

P.O. BOX 80098

91st BOMB GROUP (H)
MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

September 2-7, 1980

IF AFTER 6 P.M. FIRST NIGHT'S DEPOSIT REQUIRED

NAME _____ DATE OF ARRIVAL _____
ADDRESS _____ DATE OF DEPARTURE _____
CITY _____ NO. IN PARTY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____ TIME OF ARRIVAL _____
ROOM MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL AFTER 3 P.M.

PLEASE CIRCLE RATE DESIRED:

	Superior	Deluxe	
Single Occupancy	\$34	\$40	
Double Occupancy	\$39	\$45	Suite rates on request.

YOUR RESERVATION ASSURED IF RECEIVED BY AUGUST 12, 1980

**91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Assn.
National Reunion Headquarters**

TOWN AND COUNTRY HOTEL
500 HOTEL CIRCLE
SAN DIEGO, CA. 92138
Phone: (714) 291-7131

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

MAIL TO: Jack Paget, 4650 Dulin Road, Space 58, Fallbrook, Ca. 92028 Tele: (714) 728-9215

YES, we will be in attendance for the 1980 NATIONAL REUNION. Please note the applicable boxes I have checked below:

We will ☐ will not ☐ be staying at the TOWN & COUNTRY HOTEL. We will arrive: _____ (Date)

(Note: complete the following if you will be sending your RESERVATION CARD to the hotel)

We have reserved _____ (#) rooms for _____ (#) nights and there will be _____ (#) persons in our party.

Include us in the tour to "SEA WORLD" ☐ and/or the "SAN DIEGO HARBOR CRUISE" ☐

☐ YES, I am a GOLFER and would be interested in a TOURNAMENT. My handicap is _____ None _____
* * * * *

Please PRINT or TYPE the following information:

Full Name: _____ (Last) _____ (First) _____ (MI) _____ Wifes First Name _____

Address: _____ (Street, P.O. Box, etc.) _____ (City or Town) _____ (State) _____ (Zip Code)

Tele #: _____ (Area Code) _____ (Number) _____ Sqdn or Unit Assigned to: _____

Remarks: