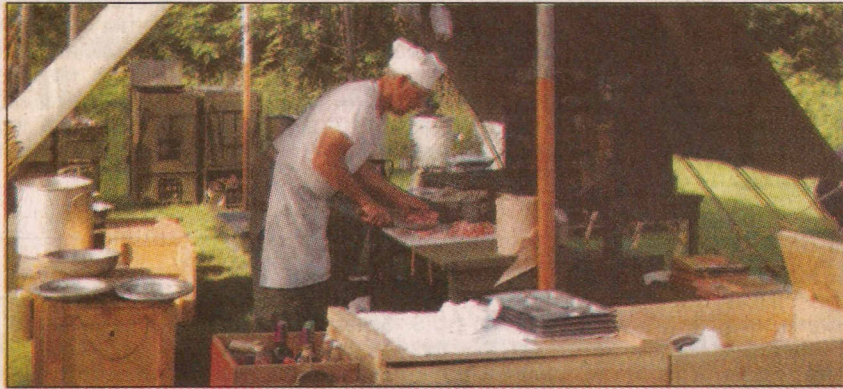


Hall of Honor, warbirds on display



Submitted Photo

MESS HALL — Steeleville resident Byron Vinyard fixes up some grub during last year's EAA Fly-In at the Mt. Vernon Airport. Vinyard will be providing ham, beans and cornbread for veterans and their spouses today during the veterans reunion.

14th Annual event features World War II field kitchen

BY RICK HAYES

MT. VERNON MANAGING EDITOR

MT. VERNON — A promise of excellent weather and anticipated large crowds coming to the King City for the Southern Illinois Harvest Festival are two variables that should result in a successful Little Egypt Fly-In and Veterans Reunion at Mt. Vernon Airport

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today.

Featured attractions at the 14th annual event are the World War II army kitchen and the veterans display, highlighting the "Hall of Honor" inside the Koziara Terminal.

"We have a 50-50 goal of furthering aviation and honoring veterans," Airport Manager Chris Collins said in a Sentinel interview a week ago. On Friday, Collins said

airport officials are anticipating a good event.

"Everything is still looking like it was the other day [Monday] at our board meeting," Collins said. "We've got quite a collection in the Hall of Honor museum. That came courtesy of the gentleman that's doing the World War II field kitchen. He's got quite an impressive collection of World War II memorabilia. Of course, all our local guys are setting up memorabilia and uniforms right now."

Steeleville resident Byron Vinyard is setting up the field kitchen just off the flightline. Ham and beans and cornbread, prepared on vintage

equipment, will be served free to all veterans and their spouses. Vinyard, along with his sons, has spent the last eight years honoring veterans by providing free meals as well as educating the general public about the logistics involved with feeding soldiers, displaced European citizens, and captured German soldiers. The general public is invited to sample the field kitchen offerings for a small donation.

"One of the things we want to do is expand our Hall of Honor," Collins said. "We're calling on all veterans to come out and enjoy their free lunch, and if they want to

become involved in our Hall of Honor that would be great."

The Hall of Honor was initiated at the 2009 event and has since grown to include about 200 framed tributes of local veterans. Veterans wishing to be included in the display are asked to bring photos (preferably in uniform), a copy of their DD214, and any other memorabilia that they wish to have

included on their tribute.

The EEA fly-in, of course, will feature several vintage airplanes, including the Amy Blackhawk helicopter and C47 transport plane from World War II. Other warbirds expected to be on display are the P51 Mustang, Douglas C47 Sky Train, C-2 COD, T-6 Texans, and Yak-52/CJ-5's.

One of the big draws of the event is free flights for kids, ages 8 to 17. After a permis-

sion form is completed, the kids get to experience the thrills of flying. To date, 2,900 children have been introduced to aviation through the Young Eagle program.

Good food and free parking will be available. In addition, helicopter rides and rides in a 1941 open cockpit Waco Bi-Plane will be available for a charge.

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