

306th Echoes

DR THURMAN SHULLER
BOX 908
MC ALESTER, OK 74501



306th Bombardment Group Association

Damico Asks Data On Radar

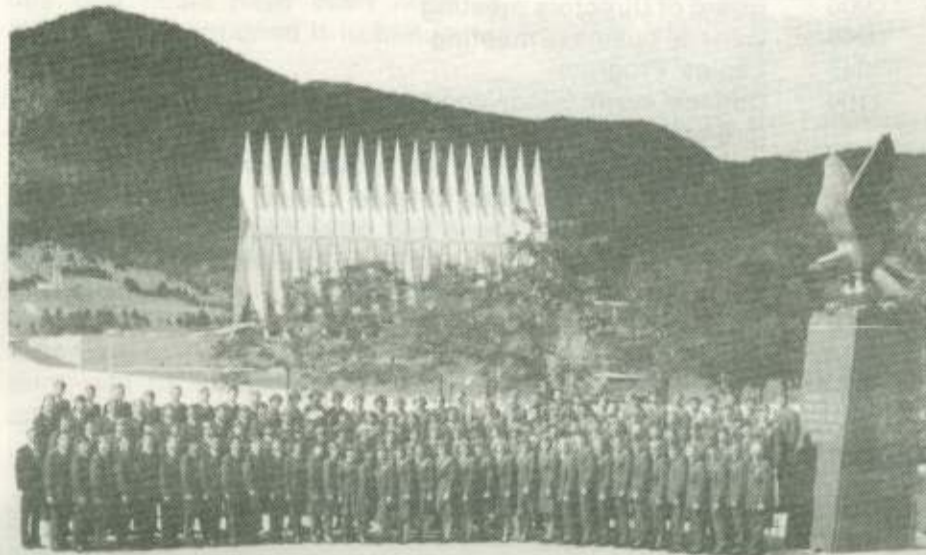
By Al Damico, 306th Group 'Mickey' Officer

The story of U.S. blind-bombing operations over the European Continent has never been told. It is surely a significant part of the history of the air-war during WW II. For this reason, I have spent more than a year now, compiling inputs for my book, *Pathfinder*. The work is still far from complete and there remains plenty of room for further incoming information.

I started this task erroneously by writing to and advertising to former mickey operators only. Later on, I knew that in order to tell the entire story properly, inputs would be required from:

- The inventors, innovators, developers, and decision-makers;
- The maintenance people, installers and ground crews;
- Intelligence and other staff personnel;
- Gunners, radio operators, engineers, pilots, bombardiers and navigators; and

Turn to page 2



The unique Air Force Academy Chapel stands in awe-inspiring beauty before the Colorado mountains.

Consolmagno Writes Play for Ex-POWs

Joe Consolmagno, onetime 367th bombardier, has turned playwright.

He started a visit to Stalag Luft III when he went down with Clarence Fischer's plane on 5 April 43 at Antwerp.

This year Kriegies in reunion at Denver will see Joe's latest play, "Tunnel Bier Stein," which he has written and which is being performed by a theatre group from the University of Denver.

Joe reports that among the

Kriegies recruited for scene painting detail is Lt. Gen. Albert Clark, who hit the silk over France on 26 July 42, flying his first combat mission as executive officer of the 31st Fighter Group. Clark was superintendent of the USAF Academy, retiring from there 31 July 74.

Last year's Kriegie reunion featured another play by the versatile Consolmagno, who now lives in Englewood, FL.

Colo. Springs Offers Much To Tourists

"Coming to Colorado Springs offers unusual opportunities for sight-seeing in some of the most scenic places in North America," says Eddie Montoya, chairman of the 1985 reunion for the 306th Bomb Group.

"We are offering this year, through tour operators a number of half-day or one day trips. Arrangements can be made in the hotel lobby for almost anything within reasonable travel distance," he adds.

Monty is not the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce executive, but he is enthusiastic about the special places located in the area.

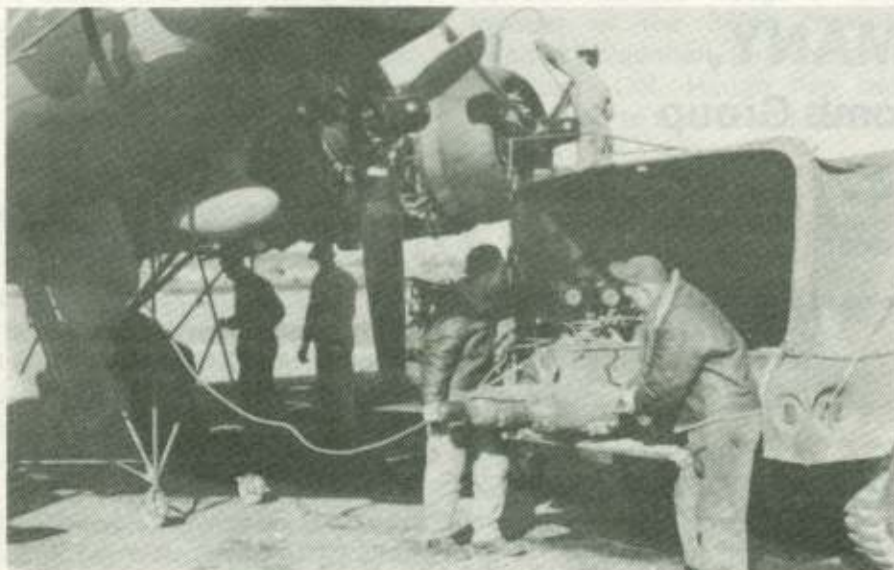
The reunion will officially begin Thursday afternoon, with registration in the Clarion Hotel beginning at 1300. The Thursday and late Friday periods are purposely not highly organized so that attendees can have plenty of opportunities for visiting, shopping and sightseeing in the area.

The major event on Friday will be the morning trip to the USAF Academy. Buses will be provided

Turn to page 2

The Saga of the Valiant 306th Ground Crews

'We worked until planes were ready to fly'



Filling the oxygen bottles was a necessary task before each mission.

By Paul Tardiff

Much has been written about the exploits of the combat crews of the 8th Air Force and individual bombing groups in particular. We of the 306th Bomb Group have an excellent history of our group in *First Over Germany* by Russell Strong. However, very little has been written about the ground crews who "kept 'em flying." It was not a glamorous job. It was a long grind under less than ideal situations. We did what we had to do and I'm sure few of the ground crew linemen would have changed places with the flight crew. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate after all these years to give some credit to this group of dedicated technicians.

What was it like to be part of the B-17 bomb squadron ground crew? First of all there was no such a thing as regular hours—we worked

until our planes were ready to fly. Often we could only eat and catch a little sleep while they were out on a mission. On many typical missions the planes would come back in late afternoon and, missing dinner, we would work until late then drag ourselves to the mess hall for left-overs. Usually bread and coffee was about it. Then we would go to the Nissen hut to get some sleep, only to be awakened a few hours later to get on the flight line to get the planes ready. We had to get up several hours before the flight crew and preflight the plane before the armorers loaded the

Turn to page 4

(Revised tentative schedule)

Colorado

From page 1

for everyone, as there is not adequate parking at the Academy to accommodate private vehicles. The luncheon will also be provided in the registration package.

At the Academy a major event will be the unveiling of a memorial plaque for the 306th on a wall at the cemetery, where it will join other plaques from 8th Air Force organizations. Following the dedication ceremonies here, the group will move to the Officers' Club for a social hour and lunch. After a briefing by Academy officials, we will tour the unique Chapel there and the Field House. (Shoppers will quickly find the gift shop at the latter place).

On the way out of the Academy grounds the buses will tour the remainder of the built-up area so that we can see where some of our tax dollars go into the making of future Air Force officers.

Friday evening has been left free so that informal groups can get together for dinner and an evening of updating and reminiscing.

The Board of Directors will hold its annual meeting at 9 Saturday morning, followed at 9:45 by the general business meeting. A number of optional travel events will be available for the afternoon.

At 6 p.m. squadrons will assemble for the annual picture taking event, to be followed immediately by the cocktail party, and at 7:30 by the banquet. Arrangements have not yet been completed as to a speaker for this event.

Sunday will be a day of departure for many—and then plans will be underway for a gathering in 1986.



The 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association: John Ryan, president; Robert Starzynski, Vice President; Russell A. Strong, secretary; and William M. Collins, Jr., treasurer. Directors: Robert Crane, William Houlihan and Gerald Rotter.

306th ECHOES is published four times annually: January, April, July and October, and is mailed free of charge to all known addresses of 306th personnel, 1942-45. Contributions in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer.

EDITOR: RUSSELL A. STRONG, 2041 Hillside, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Home 616/344-6466; Office 616/383-6162.

8th AF CONTACT MAN: WILLIAM M. COLLINS, JR., 2973 Heatherbrae Drive, Poland, Ohio 44514. 216/757-3463.

Each issue is prepared and printed at Kalamazoo, MI. Editorial contributions are welcome and should be addressed to the editor. Changes in addresses and other matters concerning circulation of the 306th ECHOES should be sent to Poland, OH.

Thursday, 5 September

- 1300 Registration opens in Clarion Hotel Lobby
Afternoon free. Group hospitality room opens
1700 **Optional event:** Buses depart for Flying W Ranch and Western evening.
2030 Hospitality room open for informal get-together, cash bar

Friday, 6 September

- 0930 Buses depart for USAF Academy (transportation furnished)
1030 306th Memorial Plaque dedication at AFA Cemetery
1130 Social hour at AFA Officers' Club, cash bar
1230 Luncheon, AFA Officers' Club (luncheon furnished)
1415 AFA briefing at Arnold Hall, followed by tour of Chapel and Field House. Windshield tour of Academy grounds
1700 Buses return to Clarion Hotel
Evening free for activity of choice

Saturday, 7 September

- 0900 Board of Directors meeting
0945 General business meeting
0945 Ladies' Program
1100 **Optional event:** Buses depart for Cog Railway (pre-registration required)
Optional events: Daylong and half-day tours of the Colorado Springs area, Cripple Creek, Royal Gorge, etc. (Arrangements for these and other such tour events can be made directly with the tour operator in the Clarion lobby during Thursday registration)
1800 Squadron picture taking
1830 Cocktail party in the ballroom. Cash bar.
1930 Annual 306th Banquet.

Sunday, 8 September

No activities scheduled. Hasta la vista!

New Phone Booth

A second telephone booth of WW II vintage will soon be wending its way from England, this time traveling to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, where it will be placed among the 8th AF memorabilia at the USAF Museum. British Telecom has responded to the Museum request, and arrangements are being handled through Col. Elton Goff at RAF Chicksands.



Order your copy today of

FIRST OVER GERMANY, A History of the 306th Bomb Group

To: Russell A. Strong
2041 Hillside
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Please accept my order for _____ copies of First Over Germany at \$20 each, a total of \$_____.

name _____

mailing address _____

Make check payable to Russell A. Strong

Radar school personnel, instructors and staff.

The following is the type of information I would like to receive from anyone who had anything at all to do with the radar raids:

Maintenance stories, manuals, instruction sheets, diagrams, installation photos and/or interesting maintenance problems; Photos of radar aircraft such as B-17s, B-24s, Mosquito and other RAF planes; Stories from the innovators who early-on had helped to set up the equipment on the bombers and ground-trainers; Any RAF stories about H2S (Stinky) raids otherwise known as Carpet Bombing, Town Finding or Guernica; Training with H2X at Langley Field, Boca Raton, Alconbury or Bari, Italy; Photos, copies of log books, articles from *Yank*, *Stars and Stripes*, or English newspapers; Scope photos of coastlines, cities, bomb-run sequences or the invasion forces; Missions flown with GEE or Micro-H bombing; Happenings on base such as on flight line, NCO or Officers Clubs, guard gate, CQ shack or mess hall, etc; and Interesting encounters in the English or Italian towns and villages. (I had lots of these.)

Each item I receive, if used in the history, will be given due credit and contributors will each receive a free copy of the first edition. So all you Pathfinder involvees, please start looking amongst your 40-year-old memorabilia.

Send data to:

A. G. Damico
319 Forrest Hill
San Antonio, TX 78209

Survival! Bail Out, Parachute, Capture

By Joseph Consolmagno

There were no pictures of the crew of the Flying Fortress, L'il Abner, the aircraft in which I was shot down on April 5, 1943. It was largely a replacement crew that I met for the first time that morning as we boarded the craft. The members of my original crew, which I had joined before the Battle of Midway in the Pacific, were all killed on the first flight I had ever missed with them, in an attack on the submarine pens at St. Nazaire, on November 9, 1942. The plane in which we had flown to England with the 306th Group was destroyed just a month earlier on our first mission in Europe, crash landing at an RAF airfield on the Channel coast.

On April 5, L'il Abner was flying in the vulnerable tail-end position of the trailing flight of three aircraft of the 367th Squadron which could only put six aircraft into the air that day. All three of the planes in our flight were shot down on that mission, ours being the first, never reaching Antwerp.

There were only sporadic bursts of flak from the emplacements at Ghent as we passed that city on the way in to Antwerp, harmless black puffs at first. It was at about this time that I noted that our escort of Spitfires had been replaced by FW 190s. Just beyond Ghent, we took a direct hit from flak in one of our engines and dropped out of the formation into the vacuum between the 306th and the following groups. We were immediately attacked by waves of FWs, coming at us in twos and threes. We took hits on each assault amid a shattering din of flailing engines, explosions, thuds, and our own clattering guns. In our violent evasive action, the belt of .50 caliber bullets feeding into my machine gun kept buckling, jamming the gun, always it seemed, just when an attacker was flying straight into my sights, his wings ablaze with his own gunfire. In a momentary respite between attacks, I remembered to attach my chestpack parachute to the harness I was wearing. After a third—or fourth or fifth—attack, one of our crew reported engine fires out of control.

Acknowledging this last in a series of disastrous reports, pilot Clarence Fischer replied calmly, "OK.—Bail out."

Apparently confused by the matter-of-fact tone of the order, a voice on the intercom asked

pointlessly, "Do you mean all of us?"

There was no confusion about Fisher's next reply, "I mean every one of you sons of bitches." The bailout alarm jangled.

Leaving the Plane

If there was any more dialogue, I didn't hear it. I had ripped out my intercom wires and oxygen tube that had made me an organic part of the dying aircraft. I quickly scrambled back to the crawl space between the nose and cockpit, pulled the emergency release lever on the forward escape hatch and kicked the hatch cover off into the slipstream. Looking down through the opening at the earth some four miles below, I fought back a sudden spin of vertigo. I hooked the thumb of my left hand into the ripcord ring of my parachute, not being able to reach it with my right hand across the bulky chestpack. On the periphery of my vision I caught sight of the flight engineer dropping down into the crawl space from the cockpit as I tumbled headfirst out through the hatch. Concerned that I might not be able to extend the ripcord far enough out with my awkward grip on the ring, I pulled it as soon as I hit the slipstream. A giant hand seemed to yank me back by the scruff of the neck as the chute streamed open. The jolt snapped off one of my flight boots. Freed of the thunderous roaring death throes of the B-17, I was suddenly engulfed in an eerie silence, broken only by the hissing of air escaping through the opening in the top of the parachute and my own labored breathing in the rarified air. I watched our plane descending steeply below me and about a mile off, trailing smoke and fire from both wings, but still flying level as it dropped off its line of parachutes. I tried to count them, but lost track. The abandoned plane continued its long, sweeping, flaming glide, arcing back toward me. It exploded somewhere below me over open country and I seemed to be lifted for an instant, parachute and all, by the shock wave.

Other bomb groups droned by overhead in a stretched-out parade until finally I was all alone again, miles high and still gasping for oxygen. I ripped off my useless oxygen mask, dropped it between my feet, and watched it slowly spin into the nothingness beneath me. Perhaps intoxicated by the lack of

oxygen, I found myself laughing at the thought of the mask not dropping away from me after I released it but floating motionless before my eyes. The sound of a single-engined aircraft came into range before I saw him—an FW 190. I braced to feel the shock of the gunfire I expected. But he didn't fire. He circled me so closely that I could see his face, and he waved. I waved back. It didn't seem appropriate to be impolite.

Spectator at War

He left me and went on to the other chutes in a line spread out far ahead of and below me, circling each one as he came to it. I was still miles high over open country, being borne by the winds toward Antwerp, which I could identify by the forts described to us that morning at the navigators' briefing. I watched our flights of bombers, from the lead group to the last, drop their bombs and make the turn back toward the fingers of the North Sea that reach through the bordering islands of Belgium and the Netherlands.

The parachute drop seemed interminable, so high had I been when I pulled the ripcord, but eventually I was breathing more easily in the richer atmosphere nearing ground level. At length I realized I was not going to land in open country, as I had hoped. I was drifting rapidly toward the city and the black palls of smoke now rising from it.

As I approached a river at the city's outskirts, I had a momentary hope of hitting the parachute quick-release and dropping into the water to attempt evading capture. But that hope went glimmering as I crossed above a ship anchored on the near shore, perhaps 200 feet below me. I was too high to risk a free fall.

Closer to the ground my lateral motion seemed to be at an incredible speed. A factory building loomed up ahead of me and I tried to anticipate what to do if I were swept high up into its walls. As I dropped I raced by clusters of people, white faces peering up at me. Several raised their hands in what I took to be the V-for-Victory salute. I saluted back with the V. And then I struck ground hard, landing on my one boot, and collapsed in a heap against a pile of rails, my chute draping over it. In the instant it took me to recover and attempt to release my chute, there was a German soldier standing over me, holding a pistol at my head. The gun shook in his hand, and, still under the influence of anoxia, I thought it hilariously funny for an instant that the man holding the gun should be the one who was shaking. But I raised my hands. I didn't want him to get too nervous. Almost immediately we were joined by the plant manager, a Belgian.

"Estes-vous blessé?" he asked me.

"No, I'm all right," I answered. "Englander?" he asked.

"American," I replied. He seemed surprised.

I removed my chute, he helped me to my feet, and a German soldier frisked me for weapons. I had none.

The manager walked with me toward the office, a German with a rifle behind us. As we passed groups of civilians—men and women—a furtive hand would frequently shoot up from among them in the V-salute. There were scattered calls of "Vive l'Amerique!" all along our way. Each time I returned the V-salute the guard poked me in the back with his rifle. While we walked the manager spoke to me quietly and rapidly, informing me in English that except for the plant guards there were no Germans in this section of the city.

The sequence of events from that point on is confused now, after the passage of so many years, but even so I can call up individual scenes like short film strips picked at random. In one I am sitting in a reception office looking out the window at the Nazi flag and feeling that I am really on a stage set back home, trying to remember my lines. A distraught young woman is speaking tearfully to the blond uniformed girl at the desk. The girl says something I cannot hear and directs the woman's attention to me with sheer hatred. The woman turns a piteous glance to me. I know it has something to do with the bombing and I look at the floor.

In another I am in a room with an interrogator who looks too villainous to be real, surrounded by some thugs he describes as newspaper reporters but who look for all the world like Max Schmeling's sparring partners.

"The plant manager spoke to you in English," the interrogator says. "What did he say?"

"He asked me if I was wounded."

"What else?"

"That's all I remember."

"Didn't he tell you he was your friend, your ally, and that he would help you to escape?"

"I don't remember anything like that."

"What do you remember?"

"Nothing."

Angrily, "What do you mean, nothing?"

"Nothing. I was excited. Confused. I didn't know what was going on or what anybody was saying."

He seems to weigh this answer for a moment, and then he asks with quiet menace, "How old are you?"

"Twenty-four."

"When you came in that door, you were a young man. When you go out, you will be an old man."

'They Were Bluffing'

An ominous silence follows. From the beginning our heavy losses have convinced me that I was not going to survive this war. I



At dawn a B-17 stands silhouetted against the rising sun as the ground crew waits the "start engine" flare.

Ground Crews

From page 1

bombs and ammunition. As the dispersal areas were scattered all over the field we had a long walk unless we were fortunate enough to have a bike.

One of the worst aspects of being a mechanic in England was contending with the weather. The weather could be miserable and working out in the open we were very much exposed to its fickleness. The pervasive fog—the cold and dampness—and in the winter, the ice and snow made our tasks less than desirable. Many were the times that we had to swab the wings with an alcohol mixture to de-ice the wings' surface before take-off. Working on an engine in such weather, such as replacing spark plugs, was no fun. Our hands would get so cold we couldn't hold on to the wrench. Draining the fuel sumps and having the gasoline drip over our hands on a cold morning was no picnic either. After the spring thaw we had to contend with the mud. More than once when taxiing a B-17 from a grassy area to the hardstand, we would get it stuck axle deep in the mud at the end of the taxi strip. Sometimes it took two Cletracs to pull the plane out.

A Dedicated Bunch

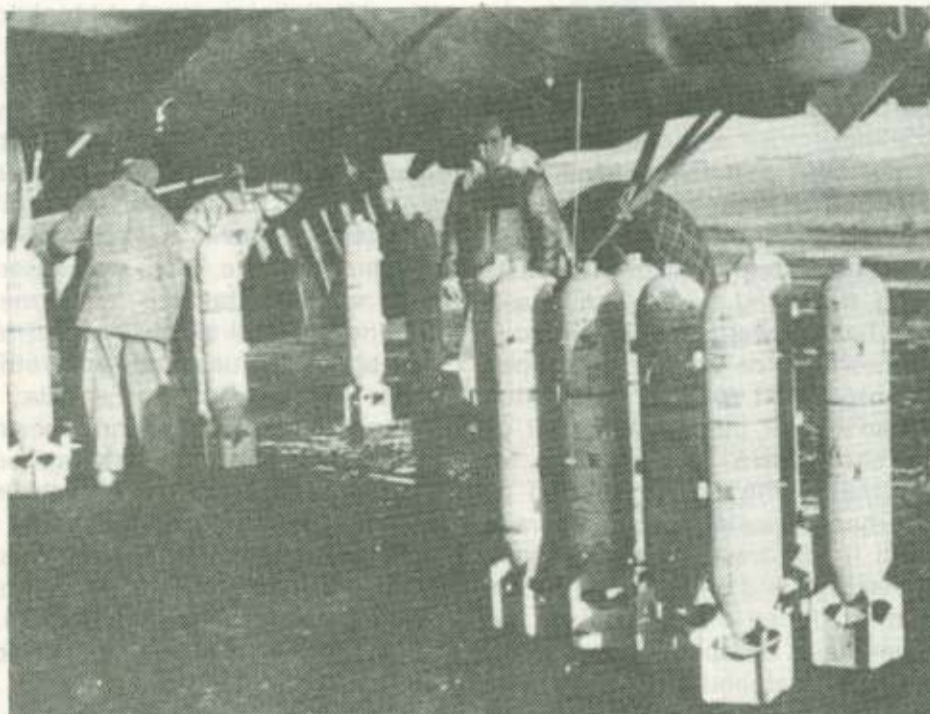
Mechanics of the 306th came from various technical schools such as Perry Institute in Yakima, Wash., Sheppard Field, Tex., and Chanute Field, Ill. They were a dedicated bunch. They knew that a lot of guys lives depended on how well they did their job. They knew the dangers the combat crews faced on every mission and saw to it

that the B-17 they crewed was in as good a shape as they could make it. The mech's good maintenance record in part must be credited to "Yankee ingenuity" possessed by most linemen. The mechanical knowledge and experience gained from repairing and rebuilding used cars and farm tractors doubtlessly saved many airmen.

We were really proud when the pilot came in to sign the release Form 1A and the status block contained no marks. (A red cross in the status block indicated a major defect and not ready for flight. A red diagonal indicated a minor defect but did not affect the airworthiness of the plane. A red dash meant that an inspection had not been completed.) When a pilot returned from a flight and did not report any mechanical problems we considered ourselves lucky

because only normal maintenance would then have to be performed which would take only a few hours. If the plane had mechanical problems or battle damage we might have to work all night to get the plane in shape for the next mission. Most nights some crews were on the flight line. It was rare indeed when the roar of the Wright Cyclone engine was not heard at some dispersal area.

The heart of our maintenance was keeping the engine in tip-top shape. The condition of the engines determined whether a plane could make it back to Thurleigh. The engine accessories, turbo superchargers, magnetos, spark plugs, valve clearance, compression, prop controls, were some of the items carefully checked and rechecked. Combat flying was tough on engines. If one

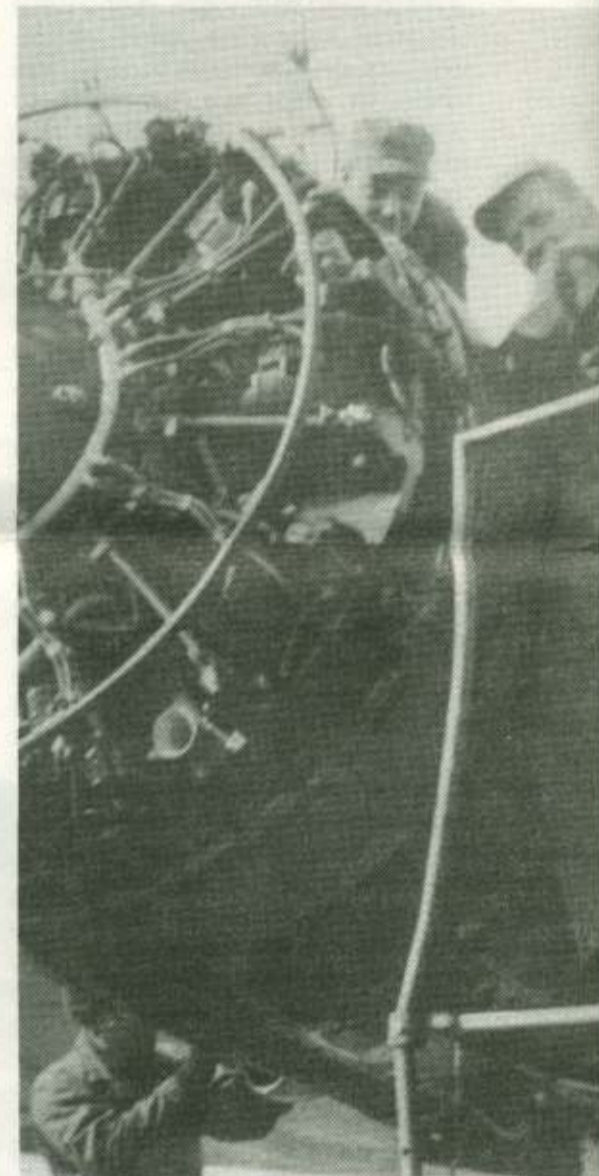


100 pound bombs stand in a cluster waiting to be loaded into the bays of the B-17.

engine went out, the other three had to work harder and high manifold pressure for extended periods was rough on engines.

Engine Variables

Thousands of B-17s were built by Boeing, Douglas, and Vega, requiring a lot of engines. The Wright Corp. was unable to produce the necessary quantity of engines, therefore the Cyclone R-1820 was built under license by Packard and Studebaker. The Packard engine was almost as reliable as the original Wright, but the Studebaker (at least the early ones) were real lemons. Sometimes they would "freeze" during slowtime. If our plane had "Stude" engines we would keep our fingers crossed every time it took off on a mission. No amount of maintenance could correct an inherent weakness in a product. It was also peculiar how some B-17s would give little trouble while others always seemed to



There was always work to be done on the Wright Cyclone both before and after missions.

have things go wrong. We just couldn't account for it. However, the great majority of B-17s were exceptionally reliable airplanes. We had great affection for it. We had good reason for this faith, for the B-17 revealed a capacity to take an enormous amount of punishment and return home.

The ground crews became so attached to their planes that there was quite a bit of competition as to who would accumulate the most missions without an abort for mechanical reasons. Some would literally hate to take a leave because they didn't trust others to look after their plane.

New Books

A New Look at Pre-War Luftwaffe and Nazis

BERLIN ALERT. The Memoirs and Reports of Truman Smith; Robert Hessen, editor. Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution, 1984. 172 pp. \$15.95.

If you are interested in the events that led into the opening of World War II, you might find this small volume by Col. Truman Smith to be of some value, although you will have difficulty finding it in many libraries.

It is one of the Hoover Archival Documentaries, not a widely circulated publishing effort.

Truman Smith was the military attache in Berlin, 1935-39. A regular Army man, but not a West Pointer, he impressed such a person as Gen. George C. Marshall with his abilities, and seemed in the attache's post to have been particularly well suited for the task at hand.

He was a keen observer of the Berlin scene and the opening charades of the Nazi Party. He knew Goering and had interviewed Hitler in the early 20s, while once before having been posted to diplomatic duties in Berlin. He also had a very good rapport with many German officers and diplomats.

In 1937 and 1938 he was Maj. Arthur Vanaman's superior, and it was this experience for Vanaman that made him such a valuable negotiator in 1944 and 1945 for the plight of thousands of American prisoners of war. Continuing this aside a moment further Col. Vanaman was an assistant chief of staff for intelligence of the 8th Air Force 26 May 44 until he was shot down over Germany 27 June 44. He retired from service 31 May 54 with 37 years of active duty as a major general and a command pilot.

Back to Col. Smith. It was he who first invited Col. Charles Lindbergh to come to Germany to assess the growing Luftwaffe. In all, Lindbergh made five trips to Germany before the outbreak of World War II, three of them at the behest of Smith. On one of these trips, during a reception at the American Embassy, Goering suddenly stepped forward and presented Lindbergh with a German medal. Trapped, Lindbergh accepted the medal as graciously as he could. And from then on American critics were all over him.

Lindbergh, with Goering's blessing, was taken on extensive tours of German flying fields, into aircraft and engine factories, and encouraged to fly such planes as the new ME-109. Major Vanaman was his almost constant companion on such trips.

Lindbergh cooperated totally with Smith and Vanaman in the preparation of lengthy and exhaustive reports of what had been seen and learned about the burgeoning of the new German air force. But for much of his work he was excoriated by Harold Ickes and others. There is considerable evidence that President Roosevelt took a very dim view of Lindbergh.

In retrospect his reporting has been found to have been extremely accurate and of great assistance to those who would believe what he expressed. Contrary to what was often claimed, Lindbergh was



and bombs were delivered to each plane in preparation for the upcoming mission.

On a typical morning, we would go to the flight line and give our plane a thorough preflight check of each engine before the pilot and crew arrived. After preflight the gas truck would come over so we could top off the gas tanks. Most missions required full tanks of 2,780 gallons of gasoline (which included the Tokyo tanks).

When the flight crew arrived at the dispersal area following their briefings, we were there. The crew chief or his assistant would get the pilot to sign the Form 1A. A few pilots would do a walk around inspection of the plane before their preflight. Most flight crews assigned to a particular plane would in time gain confidence in the ground crew and dispense with this inspection.

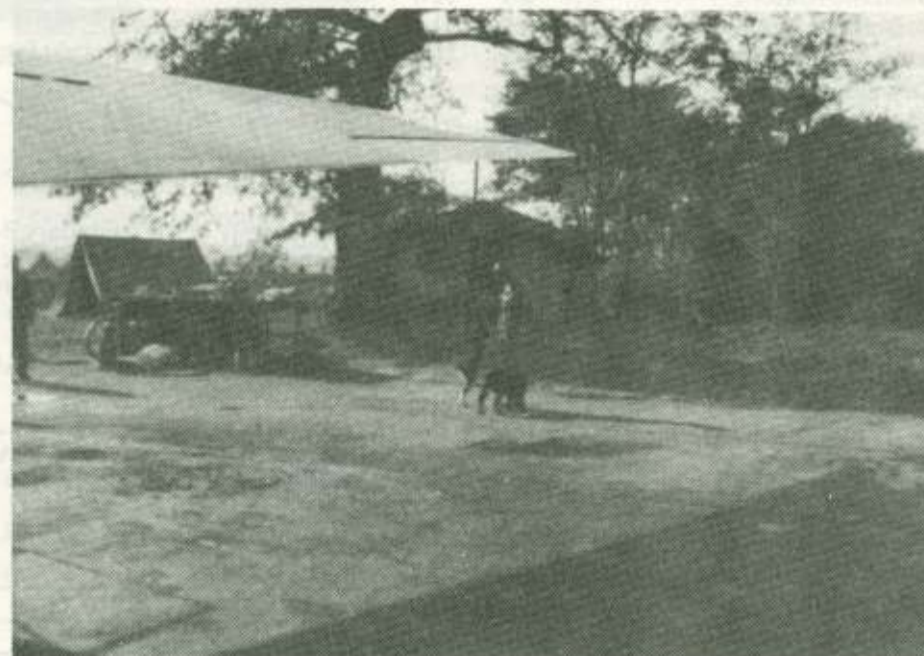
Because of the lousy English weather, many missions were cancelled. The sense of let down when a mission was "scrubbed" affected not only the aircrew but the ground crew as well. Unlike the fliers who had a set goal of missions, the ground crew could see no end to their tour until the end of the war.

After the plane taxied out and took off, it was necessary for the ground crew to hang around in case their plane aborted. The group commanders were very hot on aborts and required full details. No doubt a few pilots knowing the target was going to be rough would use some pretext to abort, but these were few. An abort would reflect on the ground crew's ability and were to be avoided at all cost.

It was a terrific feeling to see our planes return home after a mission, hoping that they all made it. As they peeled off for landing we watched to see if we could recognize our plane. We were always on the lookout for red flares indicating injured personnel on board. Sometimes a B-17 was badly damaged and ran off the runway, or couldn't get the landing gear down and belly-landed in a shower of sparks. It was disappointing to see the B-17 damaged but gave us an immense pride in the pilot and



Gun barrels got a going over by armorers.



Ground crew accommodations for one B-17.

Survival!

(from page 3)

anything but pro-Nazi. He proved himself to be a patriot of the highest order. But many will always believe otherwise.

Smith presents a very positive case for Lindbergh's actions, and at the same time offers considerable information as to the workings of the attache and his staff in a foreign land, and especially one that is growing hostile to many of its diplomatic corps.

New Book Airs POW Problems

"For You the War is Over, American Prisoners of War in Nazi Germany," by David A. Foy. New York, Stein and Day, 1984. 200 pages.

The jacket blurb describes this book as "the never-before-told story of the 100,000 American troops who fell into the hands of the Germans during World War II."

Ah, if it were that!

Professor Foy made some use of resource materials in various archives, but appeared to rely rather heavily on two or three documents written by prisoners. This reviewer was disappointed that he only actually interviewed two former prisoners and corresponded with 10 others. It would seem that in any fair sized American city today he could find an almost unlimited number of Americans who were incarcerated in Germany during WW II.

The book is weak in that regard, and strong on American Red Cross and governmental statistics. While these have been well organized, the real "guts" of the prison camp stories were overlooked, or totally ignored.

At the same time it provides some interesting reading.

For the further edification of those who visit libraries, we have borrowed from Foy's bibliography some titles you might like to look for:

Barker, A. J. *Prisoners of War*
Beattie, Edward, *Diary of a Kriegie*
Bennett, Lowell, *Parachute to Berlin*
Dobran, Edward, *P.O.W.*
Duke, Florimund, *Name, Rank and Serial Number*
Ludden, Robert, *Barbed Wire Interlude*
Newcomb, Alan, *Vacation with Pay*
Stone, James F., *A Holiday in Hitlerland*
On the fiction side, you might like to try reading the play, *Stalag 17*, coauthored by the 306th's own Don Bevan. It is the forerunner of *Hogan's Heroes*. Len Giovanetti has written *The Prisoners of Combine D*.

Swedish Internees

At the 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion Oct. 17-20 in Wichita, KS, Ernest J. Richardson is hoping to get together those men who were interned in Sweden during the War. If interested, contact Richardson at 10491 Marcia Ln., South Lyon, MI 48178, or call 313/437-0140.

am determined not to flinch now when the time has come. I stand in our military At-Ease, teeth clenched, staring sightlessly ahead, probably anesthetized by the shocks of this day. Our intelligence briefers have told us that the German interrogators would try to intimidate us, would threaten us, but would be bluffing. They were right, this time.

And there is one scene that refuses to dim with passing years. I am squeezed into a little car. There is a German guard beside the driver in the front seat, and another beside me in the back. We are in another section of the town and we come to an area where fire hoses are stretched across the street. There is building wreckage all about. Out of a smoldering building, obviously a school, a man emerges carrying the limp form of a child in his arms.

"What do you say to that?" asks the guard up front. "There are your friends, your allies."

There is no possible answer, and yet even appalled silence is inadequate.

It was years later before I learned that this tragedy was not the case of only one errant bomb but was part of a far greater catastrophe.

Inside St. Giles Prison

There is another scene. I am in a large cell on the second tier of one of the wings that stretch out as spokes of a wheel from the center core of St. Giles Prison. I am with our pilot and some others of our crew. The cell is constructed of high stone blocks. There is a single barred window on the outside wall, so high up that even a man standing on the shoulders of another cannot see out. We tried it. There is

Deceased

Maynard D. Dix, 368th squadron navigator (Louis Cook's crew, second half 43), died unexpectedly 13 Feb at Newton, IA. He was an engineer for the Maytag Company until retirement.

Gordon L. Donkin, 367th pilot in mid 44, died 11 March at Salem, OR, where he had been a heating salesman. His combat career came to a sudden halt 12 Sep 44 in a spectacular crash landing at Manston.

Finis E. Hudson, 369th cook, died recently in Union City, TN.

Walter C. Reid, 369th and 423rd radio operator (Saunders' crew in mid 44), died 26 Feb in Woodland Hills, CA.

Robert L. Tramontin, a medic, died 11 Dec 84, in Cloquet, MN.

Francis Tropeano, chief enlisted medic at Thurleigh, died 9 June 80 in Pittsburgh, PA, it has been learned recently. He was employed by Jones & Laughlin Steel Co., and died about four months after retirement.

no glass in the window, and through it from time to time we hear the screams of women, as if they were suffering tortures or deliriums.

The cell is bare of furnishings, except for a slop bucket and one large mound of straw. The door is solid, metal-clad, with a single peep-hole, covered from the outside. From time to time the shutter clicks and a baleful eye appears at the hole. A gutter runs down the floor along the outer wall, leading from a hole in the wall on one side to another in the opposite wall. From time to time I communicate in my high school French with a voice that whispers to us through one of the holes. The voice, whose owner I am never to see, is as wary of a trap as we are throughout our brief friendship. Young Belgian prisoners, in uniforms, bring in our meal once a day and carry out the slop bucket, always under the watchful eye of an armed guard. But each time they leave, we find that they have surreptitiously dropped cigarettes and matches behind.

St. Giles Prison was our last stop in Belgium. After a day or two, we were entrained for Germany and two years behind barbed wire.

The 306th Bombardment Group had a complement of 315 air crew members when we crossed the Atlantic to England in the summer of 1942. In the course of the war it lost 776 air crew members killed and 885 taken prisoner. In stark numbers, the Group was wiped out five times over. That was our part of the price that was paid to free Western Europe from the grip of the invader.

306th at Madingly

American Memorial Day was celebrated Sunday, June 3 of last year at Madingly cemetery, Cambridge. Representing the 306th in the laying of a memorial wreath at the base of the flagpole were Joe Albertson and Earl Rudolph, both of whom now claim England as "home." The speaker was MGen William P. Acker, then commander of the Third Air Force.



New address information:

name

street address

city, state, zip

Keep Echoes Coming
With Your Latest Address



ORIGINAL FULL COLOR COMMEMORATIVE PRINT

The B-17 Flying Fortress

The majesty of the legendary B-17 Flying Fortress and its courageous crews is captured in rich, dramatic color in this limited edition print from the original painting by Jeff O. Landis. Depicted in the signed and numbered print are B-17s of the 306th Bombardment Group carrying out a mission over Germany.

With a 16 x 20" picture size, each print measures 20 x 22" overall and is ready for framing.

Limited edition prints \$45 each. Add \$2 for insured shipping.

Check or money order only, payable to:

Heritage Limited Prints
1372 50th Ave. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33703

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

117 788

Biographical
DirectoryCommand
& Staff
OfficersEighth
Air Force
1942-45

By Russell A. Strong

Strong Makes 8th Directory

This is a new project just completed by Russ Strong for the Eighth Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation. The book lists more than 1,700 officers of the 8th, including in general those who served as commanders of squadrons or higher units, or staff officers in the grade of lieutenant colonel or higher.

The project was underway for about three and one-half years, and involved attempting to locate and contact these men. About a thousand of the officers have reasonably detailed biographical sketches.

Roger Freeman wrote: "I can honestly say that in my opinion you have done a superb job . . . I know only too well how difficult it must have been for you to obtain the greater part of the information you have collected . . . The result is most creditable and I can tell you that it will be very well used here."

The book is to be published by Aerospace Historian, and was made possible with a grant from the Museum Foundation.

Richwine Weds

Jim Richwine, one of the Thurleigh mail personnel during WW II, is going to live in the Bedford, England, area. He had lived for some years in New Holland, PA, but after the death of his wife about three years ago went back to England. There he again met Connie Polger, whom he had known during the war. They were married early this year, honeymooned in the States, and now intend to take up permanent residence in England.

Newly-Found

Martin Andrews, 2 Gramerly Place, Huntington, NY 11743 423
Edgar L. Countryman, General Delivery, Green Pond, AL 35074 423
Ralph E. Davidson, 2145 Pasadena, Apt. D, Metairie, LA 70002 423
Dick Fowler, 401 S. 16th St., Lanett, AL 36863 367
Lewis Gideon, Box 238, Manchester, OK 73758 423
Lawrence J. Huschle, Rt. 2, Box 129, Richmond, MN 56368 423
LTC Jack McDonnell, 8329 Wagon Wheel Rd., Alexandria, VA 22309 162
Raymond M. Stevenson, 205 Tierra Berrenda, Roswell, NM 88201
Lester Terry, Rt. 2, Box 375, Painted Post, NY 14870 367
Reginald Thayer, Rt. 1, Box 265, Palisades, NY 10964 368

The Editor's Mail Bag

To the Editor:

Just when I had given up hope that my film would ever be found, lo and behold, while I was reading the last page of *Echoes* covering the Texas reunion, I nearly fell out of my chair when I read the article on the roll of film found at the banquet tables.

The further I read the more I realized that it was my roll of film with some irreplaceable shots on it that I had given up for lost.

I immediately called long distance to the Hogans in Rock Island and identified myself. A few days later I received a letter from Harold Lightbown advising me that this film could have been mine since I had mentioned it to him in my Christmas card.

Louis Damaso, New Port Richey, FL.

Thanks for your response to my letter asking for unit newsletters. Yours is really one of the best that I have seen. And there is a lot of information contained therein that I think will be of benefit to those who see the papers in the CAF Library.

Fred Huston, Confederate Air Force, Harlingen, TX.

'You're All Heroes'

In *My Book You're All Heroes* is now available. It has one hundred and seventy pages of stories by and about people involved in Mission #115 by the Eighth Air Force to Schweinfurt, Germany on 14 October 1943; the day remembered by many as "Black Thursday." According to historians this may have been the greatest single air battle of all time.

The book has 170 pages, is spiral bound with stiff covers. A limited number of copies have been printed. The price is \$9.75. (California residents only add sales tax net \$10.34). Postage: single copy is \$0.63. Two copies for \$1.00. Order from: Bob O'Hearn, 2919 Renegade Ave., Bakersfield, Ca. 93306.

New Commander

Col. Lynn T. Berringer succeeded Col. Richard Hedge as commander of the 306th Strategic Wing at Mildenhall, England, on 21 February. Col. Hedge has been reassigned to SAC headquarters at Omaha.

Ernie Pyle Comes to England In Spring of '44 for Invasion

It felt wonderful to be safe in England, for I had sort of dreaded the trip.

RAF and USAAF people saw us through the formalities. We ate breakfast in an RAF dining room. In an hour we were in another plane on the way to London. By noon we had landed at an airdrome where I had been many times before, and a big bus was waiting to take us into the city.

I had left London for Africa one dark and mysterious night a year and a half before. Many times since then I had never thought to see England again. But there it was, fresh and green and beautiful. And although I was still far from home and family it was a wonderful thing to be returning for I have loved London ever since first seeing it in the blitz. It has become sort of my overseas home.

At first, I couldn't seem to make up my mind about the state of things. Some people said they could see in people's conduct the strain of waiting on the invasion—that tempers were short and nerves taut. Yet the English seemed to me just as imperturbable as ever.

Some people said the English had been at war so long they had forgotten about peacetime life and were resigned, sheeplike, to the war dragging on and on. But I didn't sense any such resignation.

It was certainly true that Britain had adjusted herself to wartime life, but that didn't mean blind, perpetual acceptance. People had learned to get along. American aid, and years of learning how to do, had eased the meager war life of the early days. There was more food, and it was better than it used to be. There were more people on the streets, more shopping, more Sunday strollers in the parks.

I had supposed the people would look shabbier than before, but to me they looked neater. And the city itself seemed less dreary than in the fall of 1942.

As for short tempers, I didn't see any. . . Maybe it was just because I had been accustomed to the screaming outbursts of the emotional Italians. But from what I could see the English were as kind and polite to each other as always.

All in all, my first impression was that England was better, all around. Of course spring may have had something to do with it. The days were warm and the buds were out and flowers were blooming, and everything always seems kind of wonderful to me in springtime.

Every day the London papers quoted all the German rumors on invasion. They printed the predictions of the German radio and pieces from neutral countries saying the invasion would have to occur between 4:30 a.m. today and 4:41 a.m. tomorrow, or else be put off for a month. They printed pictures of German fortifications, and told of the sudden regrouping and rushing around of German troops. They conjectured about the thunderous explosions heard daily on the French side of the Channel.

Since the only invasion news we had was what the Germans predicted, this echo from Germany had the effect, upon me at least, of a war of nerves.

London was crawling with Americans, both Army and civilian. All headquarters cities were alike in their overcrowding, their exaggerated discipline, and what appeared to be military overstaffing.

There were those who said London was as bad as Washington. Others said it was worse. Certainly the section where American officers were most highly concentrated was a funny sight at lunchtime or in late afternoon. Floods of American uniforms poured out of the buildings. On some streets an Englishman stood out as incongruously as he would in North Platte, Nebraska. Desk officers and fliers and WACs and nurses abounded.

There were all kinds of cracks about the way Americans had flooded the island and nearly crowded the English off. Actually the Americans weren't bad and the English reception was good. But the little jokes helped to keep us from getting on each other's nerves. Americans told this one themselves. Said one American to another, "These English are beginning to act as if this country belonged to them."

More Issues of 'Echoes'

Here's my help for future issues of *Echoes*!

I enclose \$_____ to support the production and mailing of the 306th *Echoes*. I also want to support continuing reunion activities for those who once served.

Name _____

Address _____

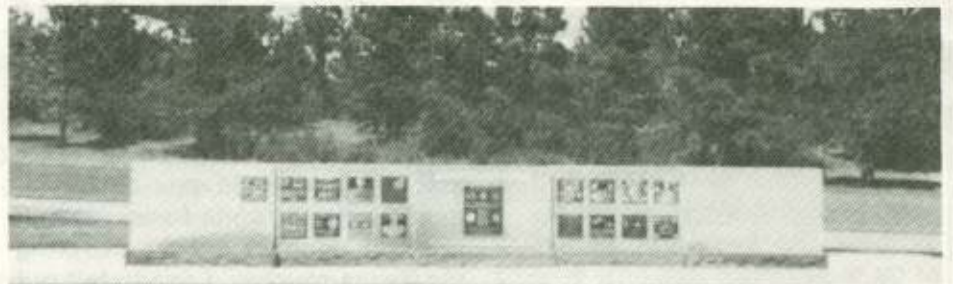
Mail to: Wm. M. Collins, Jr.
2973 Heatherbrae Drive
Poland, OH 44514



The falcon is the mascot of the U.S. Air Force Academy.



Entertainment at the Flying W Ranch near Colorado Springs.



The wall of plaques at the Air Force Academy honors WW II air units. The 306th plaque will be mounted and dedicated at the September reunion.

Reunion Registration

306th Bomb Group Reunion Committee
 c/o Eduardo M. Montoya
 P.O. Box 25883
 Colorado Springs, Colorado 80936

- I will attend the 306th BG reunion and will bring _____ family members with me. Enclosed is \$_____ (\$25.00 registration fee **Per person**). I understand that these funds will be committed early and therefore will not be refundable after 1 August, 1985.
- (I am) (We are) staying at the Clarion Hotel and (I have made) (I will soon make) my own reservations by direct correspondence with the hotel.
- I am arranging for accommodations at a place other than the Clarion Hotel but will participate in reunion activities.
- I will need parking space for a Recreation Vehicle (with) (with no) hook-up.
- I am arriving at Colorado Springs on Flight # _____, _____ Airline, scheduled to arrive Colorado Springs at _____ (a.m.) (p.m.) _____ Sept. '85.
- I was shot down over enemy territory and evaded capture.
- I was shot down, captured, and escaped.
- I was a P.O.W. until liberated.
- I was a member of the _____ Sqdn. My crew position or other duty was _____.
- I want (my) (our) reunion name tags to read: _____.

Signature _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Hotel Registration

Reservations are accepted on a **GUARANTEED** basis only.

GUARANTEED RESERVATIONS:

- send a deposit of one night's room charge plus tax (_____ %)
- include your credit card (Am/Ex, D/C, M/C, VISA or C/B only). If you do not cancel directly with the hotel 48 hours prior to arrival, you will be billed by the credit card company for one night's lodging, plus tax.

CANCELLATIONS: Please don't be a "NO SHOW." If you cannot stay with us, please cancel your non-guaranteed reservation by calling the hotel or our toll free number 800-362-6000. To cancel a **GUARANTEED** reservation, contact the hotel directly at least 48 hours prior to arrival and obtain a Cancellation Number.

CHECK-OUT: Check-out time is 11 a.m. Therefore, **CHECK-IN** is not guaranteed prior to 3 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: Reservations made after August 5, 1985, will be subject to Higher Rates and space availability.

Name of Group: 306th BOMB GROUP

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Company Name _____ Company Phone Number _____

Address _____

City _____

Home Address _____ Home Phone Number _____

City _____

Sharing with: Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Non-poolside Poolside

Single—1 person \$62.00 \$72.00

Double—2 person \$65.00 \$75.00

Triple—3 person \$65.00 \$75.00

Please check type of room requested

Rollaways @ \$10.00 Nightly

Guest rooms for this meeting are held as listed. Any variation is subject to availability.

Arrival: Thursday, September 5, 1985

Departure: Sunday, September 8, 1985

PLEASE MAKE MY RESERVATIONS FOR:

Arrival: _____ Departure: _____

Month _____ Month _____

Day _____ Day _____

Time _____ Time _____

GUARANTEED RESERVATION

Deposit included AMX DC MC CB

Credit card number _____

Expiration date _____

Signature _____