

2973 Heatherbrae Drive
Poland, OH 44514

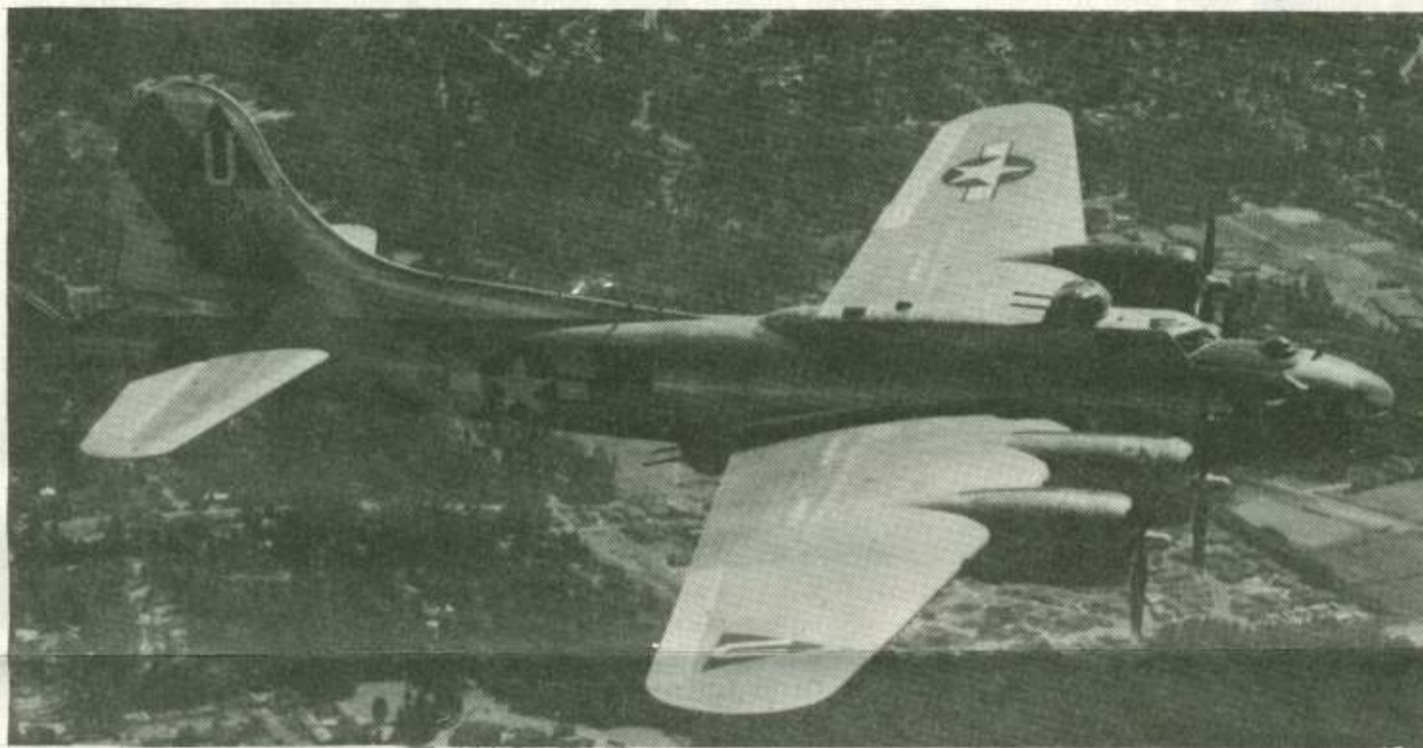
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DR THURMAN SHULLER
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MC ALESTER, OK 74501



306th Bombardment Group Association



Once again, a B-17 shows its class to the State of Washington.

Sept. 11-13 Dates Set at Dayton, Oh

Omaha, Fort Worth and Colorado Springs!!! All were superb reunions, and now it is Dayton, Ohio, for 1986.

Co-Chairmen Jack Grimm and Demetrius Chakiris urge you to put those magic dates, September 11, 12 and 13 on your calendar now and make plans to be at the Holiday Inn South for some exciting visits, meals, tours and other events.

Early indications of interest for the reunion are high, and you are urged to check out the reservation forms appearing in this issue of *Echoes* so that you can be among those who can be easily accommodated.

Holiday Inn South at Dayton is several miles south of the city on I-75, and is immediately adjacent to the Dayton Mall. There are also many other motels in the immediate vicinity so that no one need stay very far away. The Dayton Airport is on the northwest side of the city.

A major event will be the Friday bus tour to the U. S. Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. There a plaque will be dedicated to the men of the 306th and a special tree will have been planted next to it. Both of these will be close to the 8th Air Force memorial that was dedicated several years ago during a reunion of the 8th Air Force Association at Cincinnati.

Those traveling to Dayton will find it easily accessible from interstate highways going north and south and east and west. Those traveling by air can use the Dayton Airport or the Cincinnati Airport, which is located across the Ohio River in Kentucky. In all likelihood, ground transportation for those who choose not to rent cars, will be best from Dayton.

Registration for the reunion will begin at 1300 on Thursday, September 11. That evening there

(Turn to page 4)

Boeing Company Properly Honors One of Its Greatest Creations—B-17

They came from all corners of the globe, 12,000 strong, to experience the thrill of a very special airplane once again!

Many of you reading *Echoes* can recall the first time you saw a B-17, and in particular the first time you climbed aboard and rode with it into the wild, blue yonder. Your life changed a little bit then, and there has been a special corner of your mind devoted to a bit of hero worship, if one can call an airplane a hero.

Several years after his distinguished military career had come to a close, Col. George L. Robinson, the longest serving 306th commander, perhaps epitomized the feeling of many when he answered a query by stating that the B-17 was the finest airplane he had ever flown.

It's a feeling echoed once again by many. It was a special time in our lives, and the Boeing Company tried to bring that once again to the fore in its splendid late July reunion at Seattle.

Gen. Curtis LeMay (onetime 306th executive officer) said that the Boeing reunion was one of the most emotional experiences of his

life.

A number of the 40 men from the 306th who registered at Seattle mirrored LeMay's reaction with their own.

It was an emotional, thrilling time.

Here, 50 years after its first flight in 1935, the B-17 is still flying, not in great numbers, but 30 to 40 worldwide are still in action, some of them continuing to do useful work, others providing continuing thrills for new generations of aviation enthusiasts.

Each year as air shows appear around the country, one or more of the B-17s may be seen flying, along with P-47s, P-51s, B-25s, assorted trainers, and other planes. This writer has seen at one time, a B-17, B-24, B-29, and half a dozen Air Force and Navy fighters of WWII vintage, in the air together. And now we are telling our grandchildren about them.

Our hearts are warmed, and our hats are off to Boeing, for its creation and continued promotion of "our" airplane, the B-17.

One of the very beneficial effects of the Seattle event was that it brought out more than 20 new

names to add to our mailing list for future issues of *Echoes*, and we hope future attendance at 306th reunions.

It's Time for You to Give a Bit for Echoes

This 306th organization has always operated on voluntary contributions.

A look at the bank balance indicates that it is time for recipients of *Echoes* to ante up in order that the bills can be paid.

If it has been more than six months since you made a contribution, we urge you to mail a check today to Bill Collins, 2973 Heatherbrae Dr., Poland, OH 44514.

New Light on the Poet of Our Air War: The Letters of Randall Jarrell

John McCollum, after his experience with the 306th and the 423rd where he flew as engineer with John Delapoe's crew, July 1944-January 1945, earned a degree at the University of Washington and his doctorate in sociology at the University of Chicago. He is now president of a Washington, DC, based consulting firm, Social, Educational Research and Development, Inc.

by JOHN W. McCOLLUM

"Shorten your tour
with a trip to the Ruhr."

These lines were burned with a candle by some 306'er into the ceiling of a hut somewhere on the base at Thurleigh.

This exacting little doggerel, which said so much in so few words about flying missions in World War II, was the kind of stuff Randall Jarrell would have used as a starter for a poem. Jarrell was, and is, *the* American war poet of World War II. He published more than fifty war poems, most of them about the air war and many about bombers and the fliers who flew them.

Primarily (in my eyes) a poet, he was also a powerful novelist and a distinguished literary critic. As a poet, he is among the top eight or ten in this country. He had that special talent that one took for granted in Ernie Pyle and Bill Mauldin of being able to say, without hysteria, exaggeration or nonsense, exactly what should be said about the war in ways that gave meaning to the day-to-day experiences of soldiers. Jarrell did it with poetry, Pyle with prose and Mauldin with cartoons. For example, the title of one of Jarrell's collections was *Little Friend*.^{1/} Here, with clarity and the same flat economy of words which characterized Pyle, Mauldin and the 306th "poet" quoted above, Jarrell showed a remarkable ability to pluck out of human crises the confident with dependent empathy that fliers had for one another—in this case, a bomber in distress calling in a fighter and the fighter pilot's description:

... Then I heard the bomber call me in:
'Little Friend, Little Friend, I got two
engines on fire. Can you see me, Little
Friend'?

I said, I'm crossing right over you.
Let's go home.^{2/}

Jarrell washed out as a cadet in the Air Force and served from 1942 to early 1946, at Second Air Force bases. Though never overseas, he was able to convey the experiences and feelings of those on the way, those who came back and those who did not come back. If you are still with that young lady who visited you during training and who followed you from base to base and finally returned home when you went "ORD," sit down with her and read "Good-Bye Wendover, Good-Bye Mountain Home. . . ." Do you remember the anxieties, the joy, the fears and feelings of achievement?

Wives on day coaches traveling with a baby
from one room outside Lowrie to a room near Kearns.
Husbands firing into sagebrush near Wendover,
Mesquite outside Laredo: you're on Shipping. Kearns.

Wives on day coaches crying, talking to sailors,
Going home, going somewhere from a room near Kearns
Husbands getting shots for cholera, yellow fever,
and shipping in the morning on a train from Kearns.^{3/}

We now have Randall Jarrell's letters written to his wife, friends and fellow poets from 1937 to his death in 1965.^{4/} About one-third were written during the war. The letters give us glimpses of how he came to produce some of his poetry and of the experiences which shaped his views of the Army and the war. In his poems, he sees fliers as forever young, not well-informed, innocent, and decent fellows doing what they were supposed to do in ways as efficient as their capacities permitted. To him, they were not particularly aware of the enormity or the significance of the war:

. . . It's the way I judge. Including German
prisoners and former air-crew members, pilots,
navigators, etc. I've met thousands of people
who've killed great quantities of other people and
had great quantities of their companions killed;
and there's not one out of a hundred who knows
enough about it to kill a fly or be stung by a fly.
Talking about a slaughter of the innocents! And
those are the soldiers, not the civilians.^{5/}

From the days of Homer, war poetry has been, by and large, about heroic, brave soldiers marching off or coming home victorious in noble causes. This poetic glorification of war finally stopped in the horrible,

gas-infected trenches of World War I. War was no longer the most noble and highest calling of man. The British poet, Siegfried Sassoon, a World War I infantryman, saw soldiers as dreamers and victims:

... when the guns began
they think of firelit homes, clean beds and wives
I see them in foul dugouts, gnawed by rats
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain.
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
and marked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank holidays and picture shows, and sports,
And going to the office in the train.^{6/}

World War II poetry continued in this vein. James Tate, whose father was a pilot killed in action, stressed the absurdity of the war. In the *Lost Pilot* Tate recalls his father not as a hero, but off somewhere in a never ending orbit with whom he can never establish contact and:

... unwilling
to tell me that you are doing
well, or that it was a mistake.^{7/}

Jarrell, like Sassoon and Tate, did not see war or soldiers as heroic. To Jarrell, soldiers and fliers were doing their jobs: "... in bombers named for girls, we burned the cities we had learned about in school." In his poem, *Eighth Air Force*, they played with puppies and like Sassoon's World War I soldiers dreamed of going home:

Three of them play Pitch, one sleeps and one lies
counting missions, lies there sweating
Til even his heart beats: One; One; One.
O murderers! . . . Still this is how it's done.^{8/}

And when they got home:

... The man
Puts down his razor, leans to the window,
And looks out into the pattern of the field,
Of light and darkness. His throat tightens,
His lips stretch into a blinded smile.
He thinks, The times I've dreamed that I was back. . . .
He only yawns, and finishes shaving.
When the gunner asks him, 'When you leaving?'
He says: 'I just got in. This is my field.'
And thinks: *I'm back for good. The States, the States!*
He puts out his hand to touch it—
And the thing about it is, it's real.^{9/}

They were unceremoniously killed in training accidents or on missions by flak and fighters. When they finished their missions they came back to the States as "permanent party" quietly thinking "this is my field." When they dies, as "... the fighters rolled into the tracers like rabbits," their wives burned their letters.

At Chanute Field, Jarrell became a Link Trainer instructor and upon completion of training was notified that Link instructors were no longer needed. He then got into the celestial navigation program and became a CNT operator. He shipped out—meandered about the country—Salt Lake, Los Angeles and finally to Davis-Monthan field in Tucson. The Army did not get in the way of his poetry:

I had a wonderful, pleasant day yesterday. . . . They
sent me to the laundry room where I might have
found some laundry lists to type. There in an enormous
dark room, a big coal stove in the middle, I
found two privates surrounded by old
newspapers: one was reading papers, the other
writing home to his mother. The sergeant was
gone but they gave a glowing tribute to him: he
never made them do a thing. There were tremendous
piles of dirty sheets and pillows behind a
tremendous pile of cardboard boxes: I went down
there, lay down and fell asleep. When I awoke at
three, the sergeant had returned but hadn't waked
me—apparently he was used to strangers coming
in and going to sleep in the pile of sheets.^{10/}

His wife notes that "Jarrell regularly wrote poems there."

Jarrell empathized with those who fought in the air. To him, they were harrassed by the brass and by regulations. He wrote of a pilot named Northrup from the 19th Bomb Group. According to Jarrell, Northrup had:

the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Air Medal, the Purple Heart, several citations and something else, I forget. He said he wore them once or twice when he was first in this country but it got him into so much trouble he stopped.^{11/}

The MP's at the gate used to ask Northrup for his "authorization to wear the medals," which meant that he had to go back to the squadron to get the authorization and then take it to the MPs. As a result of this, Northrup quit wearing his medals.

Jarrell never liked life in the army:

... It is like being in an orphan asylum in a Dickens story, or in an old-fashioned inefficient jail—in some ways. I sleep in a double-deck bed with a cowboy from Texas, a nice boy who never finished the third grade, just below me; if I stretch out my left hand I can touch a small dark pleasant Italian, about five feet high; with my right hand I can touch somebody who came from I don't know where, but he's just been here two weeks while his wife had a baby boy. I have to drill, or do calisthenics, or stand in line, or go to classes at my school, or fly in the Link Trainers, or eat meals in the mess hall, all the time from 5:30 in the morning till 7 at night; in the evenings I mostly write poetry...^{12/}

In his letters he talks about being the "Chief operator of an enormous washing machine full of 'clanks and steam,' called the 'Clipper,' of getting into an argument with an overbearing corporal, about manipulating the Army system, of talking his way out of becoming a Second Air Force historian, about being required to wear a woolen uniform on a hot day, and about the terrible army humor:

It mostly consists of practical jokes (anything from pushing the guy ahead of you to shouting into his sleeping ear, ALL UP FOR KP).^{13/}

He said he even wrote a poem about the dogs at Sheppard Field, a poem which has never been found. He describes the dogs:

There are seven or eight... who go on our longest walks and cover about twenty miles to our eight, running round and round the columns. And when we do calisthenics from the (you'll love this) 'sitting position of attention,' they often sit by us and look gravely into our faces.^{14/}

I had hoped that Jarrell's letters contained more on what motivated him to write his war poems. Nevertheless, for several reasons, it is good to read them. First, he reminds us of things and events we may have forgotten. Often when one looks back on Army days, people do so with the eyes of nostalgia for a time when what one was going was supposed to be very important, for excitement, youth and the fact that one survived. We forget that much was pure terror, or simple tedium or just plain nonsense; sometimes we forget the humor, and take our young selves too seriously. Jarrell's letters help us remember the "chicken shit" along with the rest and recall the day-to-day reality of those years—a good lesson for all of us.

Second, though he says very little of why he wrote his war poems, it would have been *more* surprising had he not written them. The irony that permeates them is not without sympathy, neither is it without wonderment at man's folly. Jarrell was on one level, a realist driven by a superior intellect, but on another, a child-like innocent who sees men's lives in the simple ways we all see them as children—that is, in very concrete yes and no terms. That is evident in his letters as well as in his poetry and essays.

He was a keen observer of his environment. He was obviously sympathetic to the young men whose fates he, as an instructor, was helping to determine. He could not be divorced from their experiences. Boredom was his enemy in the military; in self-defense, he had to become involved in the lives of these young men. His poetry reflects some of his despair at seeing people spend their lives in such idiotic ways.

Jarrell's war poetry is the best that came out of World War II, and, as noted, much of it is about bombers. While a great deal of poetry is written for other poets and is not comprehensible to the average person nor meant to be, such Jarrell poems as *Second Air Force*, *Eighth Air Force*, *The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner*, *Siegfried*, etc., do exactly what poetry should do—heighten one's appreciation of the world, stir souls, and develop levels of understanding not possible in other ways. In the case of Jarrell's war poems, they put into perspective what really happened to flyers during the war.

One more example of the imagery, pictures-in-the-mind if you will, the passions and feelings Jarrell was able to produce is found in *Losses*, which is about death and dying. Death in this poem is (or was) routine. It



Eunice and Don Upchurch

Upchurches Renew Vows

Doomsayers like to predict that wartime marriages may not last, in fact, are doomed from the start.

To prove them wrong, Don Upchurch and Eunice returned to Luton in November 1984 and repeated their ceremony at the Luton Parish church. Not only were the "bride and groom" the originals, but 20 of the guests from the first wedding in 1944 were around for the second.

They returned again to Bedford this past fall and on October 14, Don and Eunice placed a wreath at the 306th memorial at Thurleigh commemorating the Black Thursday mission to Schweinfurt.

Eighteen 306th planes went across the Channel that day, three of them returning early. Ten of them went down over enemy territory, and only five made their way back to Thurleigh—a devastating blow to the group.

first occurred as accidents on training missions then as flyers:

... turned into replacements and woke up
One morning, over England operational.
It wasn't different: but if we died
It was not an accident but a mistake.

Then missions were flown...
"Till our lives wore out; our bodies lay among
The people we had killed and never seen."^{15/}

Shortly after he went into the Army he said in one of his letters that "... if I ever have the time, I can write some good, dreary poems about the Army; but they won't be printable while I'm in the Army and they won't be liked by anybody until the '20's' (AD 2020)—when they return."

He, of course, was wrong on both scores, but I can't help but wonder what we would be reading now if the Air Force had kept Clark Gable home making training films and had got Randall Jarrell off the piles of sheets and sent him to Thurleigh. He might have written another good poem starting with, "Shorten your tour."

- 1/ Randall Jarrell, *The Complete Poems*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Company, 1969, page 395. (paper)
- 2/ *Ibid.*, page 395.
- 3/ *Ibid.*, page 205.
- 4/ Mary Jarrell, (ed), *Randall Jarrell's Letters*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985.
- 5/ *Ibid.*, Mary Jarrell, page 129.
- 6/ Siegfried Sassoon, "Dreamers," *Collected Poems*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1946.
- 7/ James Tate, "The Last Pilot," from *The Last Pilot*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.
- 8/ *Ibid.*, Randall Jarrell, page 143.
- 9/ *Ibid.*, Randall Jarrell, pages 147-148.
- 10/ *Ibid.*, Mary Jarrell, page 92.
- 11/ *Ibid.*, Mary Jarrell, page 109.
- 12/ *Ibid.*, Jarrell, page 100.
- 13/ *Ibid.*, Jarrell, page 94.
- 14/ *Ibid.*, Mary Jarrell, page 95.
- 15/ *Ibid.*, Jarrell, page 145.



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.

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

Check Data For New '86 Directory

During December an attempt was made to correct and upgrade our mailing list in preparation for the printing of a new 306th directory in the first quarter of 1986.

Please examine your mailing label carefully, and if any changes should be made, notify Russ Strong as soon as possible.

If all goes well at that point, the directory will be completed some time in March and mailed immediately.

In particular, if you have retired from the military service

or reserve and want your rank to appear, please notify Russ and it can be included on your mailing label and your directory listing.

Reunion (Cont. from page 1)

will be a cocktail hour. Friday will be largely devoted to the trip to the Air Museum. On Saturday morning there will be a ladies program in the morning, the general business meeting will be at 1 p.m. and the annual banquet is planned at 2000 hours. Details of the banquet program will be announced later.

At this writing, no Sunday events have been scheduled.

Besides Grimm and Chakiris, also serving on the committee are Jim Sheets, Walt Latscha, George Horner, Doug DeLaVars, Bill Rich, Dick Argo, Rudy Mason, Joe Miller, Al Rehn, Don Marsh, Ernest Higham, Mrs. Ruth Grimm and Mrs. Walt Latscha.

Corrections

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HOTEL REGISTRATION

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

Guaranteed Reservations:

- Send a deposit of one night's room charge plus tax (12.5%).
- Include your credit card number (AMX, D/C, M/C, VISA, C/B, or Discover Card). If you do not cancel directly with the hotel within 48 hours prior to arrival, you will be billed by the credit card company for one night's lodging, plus tax.

Cancellations: If you cannot stay with us, please cancel your guaranteed reservation by calling (515) 434-8030 at least 48 hours prior to your arrival date and obtain a cancellation number.

Check-Out: Check-out time is at 12:00 Noon. Therefore, **CHECK-IN** is not guaranteed prior to 3:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: Reservations made after August 21, 1986, will be subject to space availability.

306th BOMB GROUP

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Home Address _____ Home Phone Number _____

City _____

Sharing with: Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Please check type of room requested: _____ Inc. Tax

Single (one bed, one or two person) \$57.00 _____ = \$64.12

Double (two beds, two or more persons) \$60.00 _____ = \$67.50

Triple (two beds, three or more persons) \$60.00 _____ = \$67.50

Quad (two beds, four or more persons) \$60.00 _____ = \$67.50

Rollaways @ \$4.00 nightly.

DEATHS

John P. Heraty, 367th pilot, July-December 1944, died 17 Aug 85 in Rochester, MN. He retired as a command pilot in 1963 and had made his home in Camanche, IA.

Jack Kalikow, 423rd orderly, died 3 Jan 85 in Miami, FL.

Fred B. Larmer, Hanes' crew (early 43), died 15 Aug 85 in Raytown, MO.

Stuart H. Latimer, 1029th Ordnance Company, died 18 Sep 82 in Mukwanago, WI.

Harold J. Novak, 367th gunner (Ritland's crew) and MIA 15 May 43 (Ritland) at Wilhelmshaven, died 13

Dec 84 in Hesperia, CA.

Clarence G. Spencer, 368th, photo lab.

Milton F. Swanson, 368th and 423rd, died 16 Aug 85 in Coventry, RI.

Robert S. Weston, 367th tail gunner, MIA 8 Oct 43 (Kooima) at Bremen, died 23 Oct 85, Treasure Island, FL.

The Fox, a popular Keysoe pub, has closed because of the economic recession in England. Others in the Bedford area report difficulty in keeping their doors open because of the high cost of gasoline and the general decline in trade.

Dayton In '86 306th Reunion Order Form

September 11, 12, 13, 1986

TO: 306th Reunion
P.O. Box # *358*
Dayton, OH *45406*

Make Checks Payable to:
306th Reunion Fund

Please reserve tickets for the 306th Reunion for me as follows:

	Number	Total Charge
Registration Fee (Per Person)	\$25.00 x _____	\$ _____
9/11 306th Luau (Per Person) at Holiday Inn, Dayton Mall	\$14.00 x _____	\$ _____
9/13 USAF Museum Tour (Per Person) (Includes Transportation)	0 x _____	\$ <u>No Charge</u>
9/13 Annual Banquet (Per Person) Holiday Inn, Dayton Mall	\$20.00 x _____	\$ _____

TOTAL price for Registration & Tickets \$ _____
(ENCLOSE CHECK)

INFORMATION

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

Address _____ Guest(s) Name(s) _____

Zip _____

Phone No. _____

Squadron _____ Crew Position or Other Duty _____

Arrival Time: Date _____ Hour _____ Departure Time: Date _____ Hour _____

Have you made Hotel Reservations? _____ If so, where _____

HOLIDAY INN DAYTON MALL

7999 Prestige Plaza Drive
Miamisburg, OH 45342
(513) 434-8030

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

Arrival: Thursday, September 11, 1986

Departure: Sunday, September 14, 1986

PLEASE MAKE MY RESERVATIONS FOR:

Arrival: _____ Departure: _____

Month _____ Month _____

Day _____ Day _____

Time _____ Time _____

GUARANTEED RESERVATION

_____ Deposit included AMX _____ DC _____ MC _____ CB _____ VS _____

Discover Card _____

Credit Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Special Requests: _____