

87

H O U S T O N I S G O ! ! !

Note, that due to your positive response, OUR REUNION is definitely on!!

I won't have to emulate Oral Roberts anymore--not too many more theatrics that is. So many of you have taken a chance and all systems are percolating. We can now afford to extend deadlines--the hotel until 1 June and for individual functions until 5 days prior to the event (if you're willing to trust the mail). Please read the section about postal deadlines for me here in Lakeport and Ken Johnson in Whitehouse, Texas.

POLLY and TOM HANLEY have graciously accepted the "chair" for DR AHEAD '87 and the schedule and cost figures for various functions follow. Many who live near or in Houston have volunteered to help and I look forward to a relaxing and joyous "gathering of 'gators".

ONE WORD OF CAUTION!! I contracted with Continental in good faith, believing that with their home base in Houston and normally low fares, they would give us the lowest rates possible. Soon after I signed with them, the "air wars" started. Soon after my January letter was in the mails several of you alerted me to discrepancies ie you received lower rates with the regular Continental booking agents or by calling other airlines. I've tried to pry out answers, but so far "NO JOY". Sooo, Continental may not be your lowest fare! I'm driving!!

I tabulated your responses on the pledge form and we now have a dim picture of what you want. We will schedule busses based on this data and hope our projections prove accurate. Since many of us are driving to Houston I'm sure we'll be able to move everyone, when the time comes. Some definite conclusions were that: Gilley's Place on Thursday 2 July is the choice of almost 75% of you. The 25% of you who want to stay the whole evening may want to set-up car pools, as the majority just want to stay a few hours; we're definitely going NO-HOST Bars; 65% of us want to visit NASA and VISIT ELLINGTON. So we're planning a big day on the 4th (Saturday) in casual clothing all day: NASA TOUR, Lunch, San Jacinto Monument and a MEMORIAL FLY-OVER of F-4cs at Ellington. This leaves Friday the 3d for our Association Banquet and Guest Speaker (a NASA ASTRONAUT). Only 35% of us still remember how to dance and 1/3 of those would just as soon dance in one of the two clubs in the hotel. That saves us the expense of hiring a band (and my daughter isn't going to donate her singing this time). That will leave hours for talking, either in the dining room or our hospitality room or out on the town with your old best friends!!

Only 30% want a memory book (so that's out) and 60% want to be able to buy group pictures. We're working on that.

So far only 8 are bringing their clubs to play golf and Pro Hanley said he can easily handle such a group. The Lampards and the Sellers may get in a few tennis doubles and anyone else is welcome. Oh, it should be interesting what the Hanleys decide on our banquet entree: it was 60% seafood, 30% steak and 10% chicken (sounds like cordon ???).

I didn't give many options on CANCELATIONS for DR AHEAD '86. This time if you notify us 5 days before an event, you'll get a full refund for that event. YOU MUST NOTIFY ME, KEN or TOM.

Ruth and I will probably leave Lakeport o/a 1 June, to visit our families in S. California, prior to driving to Houston. SO, IF YOU MAIL ANYTHING TO ME AFTER 24 MAY I won't receive it--SEND IT THEN TO KEN JOHNSON in WHITEHOUSE, TEXAS. DONNA and KEN, in turn will leave Whitehouse on 30 June, so the DEADLINE on his mail must be 24 June. After that (24 June) send all communications to ME at the LINCOLN HOTEL POST OAK, MARKED "Hold for Clarke Lampard. The Ellington Navigators' Association Reunion".

The opposite or bright side of this, is that we will accept your registrations through the same dates. The hotel may not be as flexible re rooms, but they'll try to accomodate any of you who get a last minute reprieve from board rooms or sitting details. Better to reserve early and cancel, rather than miss out and spend the night in the YMCA. I KNOW you all can't commit this early, so know that we'll make every effort to accomodate you, even at the last minute. JUST COME!!!!

If you just need a little nudge: CECILE AND HAYS GRIFFIN are flying in from Australia; JUNE and ED BAILEY from Korea and MARIE and BILL WILLIAMSON from Hawaii. Should bring a few more of you from across town, or across Texas or just half-way across the Z.I.????? I'm really optimistic that we'll top our attendance in Vegas--we have gained almost 100 new names and a few of you must have received your gold watch by now. Bring your cameras, your yearbooks and leave your cares at home for this week. Our HOSPITALITY ROOM will be open from 1-5 July and we will schedule all the MINI-REUNIONS, after the "day out" on 4 July, when everyone coming indicated they'd be there. It really cheered me to see that the majority of you will be in Houston 2-5 July and half of you will arrive on the First!!

I PROMISE!! THIS IS THE
LAST ASSOCIATION REUNION I
WILL INITIATE. FROM NOW ON
I'LL JUST SIGN A PLEDGE FORM,
WHEN IT ARRIVES IN THE MAIL.
WOULDN'T YOU HATE TO MISS THE
LAST REUNION? GOD BLESS US
ALL * * * * C.S.I.

THEODORE J. MICHEL

Ted passed away in his sleep one night in February. Some of you may not have known him, but those of us who did, probably attribute most of what we grew to know as the Air Force Way, to the direction he gave the Aviation Cadet Program and the Student Officer Trainees; as we learned to become Officers first and Navigators second at Ellington AFB. His own words certainly best describe the reopening of Ellington in 1949. He sent them to Ken Johnson in January of this year and I intended to include them, even before we heard of his death. Mrs Michel has indorsed our use of his Reminiscences here:

EARLY REMINISCENCES - ELLINGTON AFB
by Theodore J Michel

By the end of the late 1940s the Air Force had abandoned most, if not all, of it's Navigation training programs and bases. Then, almost abruptly, the demand for navigators reappeared, including the need for the "Triple threat" airmen for the B-47.

Ellington, in it's World War II heyday, was a big Advanced pilot (twin engine) training base, and a basic training base for incoming Bombardiers and Navigators. After World War II it was, like most others, deactivated, but it did retain a relatively small National Guard mission. I think Ellington was probably a good pick for the navigator training program, but when the first of us who were going to run the place arrived, it was a mess. The buildings were of the frame, WW II era, and were all in bad shape. All the grass areas were overgrown. It was like starting from scratch with everything. Offices, classrooms, barracks, mess halls, clubs, recreational facilities, were all in need of repair. When we finally did get things fixed up it was still very austere. (here your editor must agree heartily with every word!!)

I believe the first group of students to arrive were student officers. They were pilots who were going to be the triple threat crews of the B-47s. As usual, we weren't ready for them. The training program wasn't ready, nor the facilities. I remember getting the first bunch of student officers out in their fatigues to cut down the weeds around the military training building and cadet barracks. (here I think that Col Michel may be remembering the ex-bombardiers who arrived in the spring of 1949 to be trained as navigators--Classes 50-A,B & C.) I thought it was a good idea at the time. They didn't have anything to do, and the job needed doing. I'm equally sure they thought it was a lousy idea at the time and probably still do.

The Military Training Squadron was the squadron of assignment for the student officers and cadets. It provided administration and supply support for the officers, but also provided housing, messing, recreation and military training for the cadets. I can remember the terrible time we had getting a cadet club together for the cadets. We had an "H" shaped building, but had very little money or anything else to furnish it. But we had a lot of help from the cadets, and I suspect that you may have some funny memories of the old place.

One other incident I remember well was the time the Cadet Group went to Houston to parade. The parade went OK but the evening got out of hand for some, and it turned out to be "Black Monday" or Tuesday or something for the people who were busted. Surely some of you remember this better than I do, (some of us will never forget it Ted)

We had a pretty good group of guys running the training operation, James K Johnson was the Group Commander, He later distinguished himself in Korea as an F-86 Ace and Wing Commander, Dick Hale, as I remember, was Group Operations, Herb Massengale was Navigation Training Squadron Commander, and I can't remember the Flying Tng. Sq. Chief,

We had a couple of colorful Wing Commanders, The first, whose name I can't recall, was the National Guard advisor who took over the training wing when it was activated, He didn't last long, but I recall he was the kind of a guy that showed up in his office in his underwear and spent a lot of time in the BOQ with "Jim Beam". The second Commander was William "Wild Bill" Lee, He had been a Brigadier General in the 15th Air Force in North Africa during and right after WW II, He was doing alright until he took a swing at a fellow named Maragon, in Rome, Italy, Maragon happened to be President Truman's special envoy at the time, and he had the audacity to park in General Lee's reserved parking spot, Lee was just as fiesty as a Wing Commander, At the first graduation dinner that we had at the Officers' Club, Col Lee took a few swings at the Lauterstein salesman, He was an invited guest, but he bugged Lee one too many times, Jim Johnson separated the two,

Those days were good days for me, I hope for you too!

TO ABSENT COMRADES.....



D R A H E A D ' 8 7 , 5 0 - D

When was the last time you saw someone you cared about a great deal and wondered if you would ever see him again? My last visual glimpse of KARL, BILL, JACK, MARIO, JIM, WAYNE, KEN, JAMES and CLAUDE was on 12 Oct 1950 at ELLINGTON. Many of you were more fortunate then I and shared joys, sorrows, war and peace with them until.....

On 27 April 1986 many of us were saying goodbye again and we bent to hug BYRON and said "until next time". Again, some of you may have seen him again--I did not. But I'm so glad I was able to share a few hours with him in Vegas, after 35½ years apart.

When I'm asked why I keep on with this quest, I have to pause and reconsider the pat answers I've been flipping off since March 1984. Maybe I need to be "President" of something and it surely is nice to get a room "comped" in Vegas and Houston. Realistically I know that not everyone thought A/C Lampard was memorable--but weren't there others each of you were sympatico with? If you haven't been using the roster to good purpose, consider HOUSTON '87 A GREAT OPPORTUNITY to "catch-UP".

I was part of the huge search for Karl's C-124 in the stormy Atlantic off Shannon. I never took the opportunity to tell Bill how sorry I was that I gave him (and other cadet officers) such a hard time. I'd dearly like to be able to tell Jack, it didn't matter that he hit me in the nose over some trifle in the barracks. Did I ever return Mario's ear to ear smile? Jim included me in his group often and we shared many salty dogs on the beach at Galveston and Wayne and I double dated at San Jacinto Monument. Ken wrote to me last when I was at Goose Bay and James cautioned me often to "get serious Lamp". Claude, I regret I did not get to know, but I pray he'd find me a better human being today, then I was in 1949 and 1950. I wish they could all come to Houston-----but they can't-----except in our memories.

Isn't there someone you'd like to take aside in Houston and say something like: For years I've been P.O.d because you said.....and then show him it was all so trivial? Right Moose? Would anyone like to hazard a guess, as to how many of us will make muster in October 1990? I won't and that's why I instigate reunions!!!

PLEASE JOIN US IN HOUSTON!!

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