

*IN LOVING MEMORY OF
JAMES LAWRENCE AVITT*

The oldest son of Harry and Edith Hall Avitt, Jim was born during the Great Depression on February 18, 1925, in Van Wert, Iowa. His family moved to Newton, where he graduated from Newton High School in 1943. Anxious to help in the WWII effort, Jim enlisted in the Army Air Corp where he rose to the rank of Second Lieutenant as a navigator of the B-17 bomber planes.

While in the service, Jim was united in marriage with his high school sweetheart, Phyllis Murray. They were married at the Army Air Corp Chapel in Ardmore, Oklahoma, on August 15, 1944. After flying 46 missions over Germany, Jim returned to Des Moines where he and Phyllis made their home.

Jim worked at Meredith Publishing for 42 years and was a Pressroom Foreman when he retired in 1988. After retiring, Jim and Phyllis divided their time between Iowa and Arizona--summering in Des Moines and wintering in Mesa--although each Christmas they flew back to Des Moines to spend the holidays with their family.

Some of Jim's many interests over the years included family activities, league bowling, fixing cars, dancing, camping, playing cards, traveling, and helping others.

On October 6, 1997, Jim died of mesothelioma cancer at Hospice Kavanagh House at the age of 72. He was preceded in death by his parents and also his brother, Russell (Bud) Avitt. Those left to honor the memory of Jim include his wife, Phyllis; three daughters, Judi Van Cleave of Des Moines, Cheri Reynolds of Davenport, and Lisa Weiser of West Des Moines; his son, David Avitt of Waynesboro, VA; a sister, Betty Smith of Congress, AZ; and his 10 grandchildren: Jim, John, Stacia, Tyler, Tara, T.J., Krysti, Kaitlyn, Austin, and Braden.

*Jim Avitt served on the committee
for our 1994 reunion in Des Moines.
His widow asked me to send this
death notice to the 306th.
B. Houser*

JAMES AVITT

Berwick



James Lawrence Avitt, 72, of Berwick died of cancer Monday at Hospice Kavanagh House in Des Moines. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. today at Hope Lutheran Church, of which he was a member. Burial will be in Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery.

Mr. Avitt was born in Van Wert and had lived in Newton before moving to Des Moines in 1945. He was a retired pressroom foreman at Meredith Corp. and served in the Army Air Corps' 306th Bomber Group during World War II. He was also a member of Mesa Regal Theatre.

He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; three daughters, Judi Van Cleave of Des Moines, Cheri Reynolds of Davenport and Lisa Weiser of West Des Moines; a son, David of Waynesboro, Va.; a sister, Betty Smith of Congress, Ariz.; and 10 grandchildren.

Hamilton's Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

April 15, 1986

Dear Sir:

I just received my 8th AF News of April, so thought I'd drop a line.

I wanted to visit on a few items, but maybe you aren't the one to contact. I was in the 306 B.G. and the 367th Spt. (Clay Ridgous) I was a navigator and flew missions from Nov-16, 1944 to March 31, 1945 (35)

After 41 years, I can remember the Pilots name — Turner, co-pilot — Kidwell, bombardier Myron Demoray, but can't remember radio operator, ~~waist~~ gunner, ball or tail gunners

We are getting our house ready to sell and have come across many items from my service time. I'm wondering where I could find out what could be of value to someone else. I will mail them if they would be of any help - flak maps, etc. pictures of bomb runs — etc — — — —

A month ago, we were in Hollywood and Ft. Lauderdale, looked in phone book but could not find the Air Force Society.

We do keep in touch with Myron Demoray of Grand Rapids, Mich., but would like to get the mailing addresses of my whole crew. Please let me know when you can.

JAMES L. AVITT
1026 N.E. 51ST Ave
Des Moines Iowa

Thanks a lot,
Jim Avitt

50313

11/12/89

Dear Sir:

I was wondering if you have any knowledge of my crew, as far as addresses and etc. I can remember some of their names, but not all -

Pilot - William Turner
Co-pilot - John Kidwell
Bomb - William Demurray
Eng -
Radio - Red Meyer
waist -
Tail gunner - Thanks,

(over)

Jim Witt

I would have liked
to go to the reunion at
Little Rock, but previous
commitments wouldn't
allow that.

Enclosed is a check
to help defray costs —

Check was not
enclosed.

D. Busser

22 November 1989

Mr. James Avitt
PO Box 206
Berwick, IA 50032-0206

Dear Jim:

According to me records, your crew included:

William B. Turner, Jr., pilot
John W. Kidwell, copilot
James L. Avitt, navigator
Miron N. Demoray, bombardier
Edwin F. Heyer, engineer
Chester S. Sosnowski, radio
Okey R. Coplin, gunner
EveretteRR. Nunley, gunner
Samuel D. Robinson, gunner
James N. Thompson, gunner

Again, checking records, I find that Coplin was KIA, but it appears that all of the others probably completed combat tours.

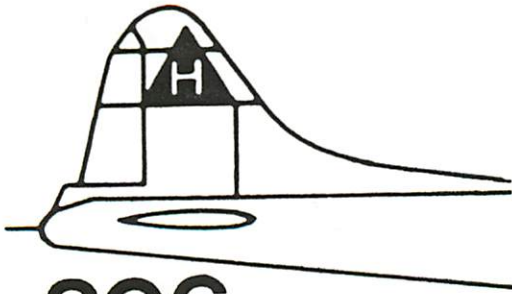
As to whereabouts today:

Kidwell, 2910 N. Memorial Dr., New Castle, IN 47362
Demoray, 2250 Blueberry, NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Heyer, 12555 Moss Ranch Rd., Miami, FL 33156

That's it for addresses. If you know of any others, or if you know their WWII hometowns, please let me know. If you know that any are deceased, please inform me. I'll give any help I can on finding men, but I need some starting places.

If you have your 201 file, please send me copies of any Special Orders issued at Thurleigh.

Good to hear from you,



367th, 368th, 369th, 423rd Squadrons, and service organizations
Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, England – September 1942-April 1945

306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

Secretary/Historian

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10 February 1993

Author
First Over Germany
Command and Staff
Officers, 8th Air
Force, 1942-45
Editor
306th Echoes
306th Directory

Dear 306'er:

In reviewing the February mailing list of the 8th AF Historical Society, I noted that the address listed for you there is as shown on the envelope in which this letter is being mailed to you. As it differs from that carried on the 306th computer listing, I need some help:

Is this merely a winter address, and I should retain the listing I know have, as shown below?

yes

James L Avitt
PO Box 206
Berwick, IA 50032-0206

Do you want the April issue mailed to the 8th AF listed address and then return to the regular listing?

I'll get it either way

Did you receiving the January issue of Echoes?

yes

Or, is this a new listing that I should put in the computer for regular usage?

no

An addressed reply envelope is included for your use, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Please leave all mail to address in Iowa as they transfer to me when I'm in Arizona. Sorry about the confusion, but this way you won't have to change back + forth -
Jim Avitt