

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

# 306<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

*Secretary/Historian*

Russell A. Strong  
5323 Cheval Place  
Charlotte, NC 28205  
Telephone & Fax  
704/568/3803

E-Mail: russell.a.strong306@worldnet.att.net

19 December 2003

*Author Books*

First Over Germany

*Command and Staff*

Officers, 8th Air  
Force, 1942-45

306th Echoes 1975-2000

*Editor*

306th Echoes (quarterly)  
306th Directory  
306th Squadron Diaries  
367, 368, 369, 423

Dear Dean:

I have sent by Media Mail the two books you ordered.

Since then I have been looking into the matter of your grandfather, Horace Best.

I find I have a file card for him, to wit: he joined the 306th Group, assigned to the 4th Station Complement Squadron, a unit which provided many services for the base combat units.

He did work as a ward attendant in the hospital on our base.

Now early in the war we sometimes ran short of gunners and men were transferred from the ground service units. But later this seldom happened, and I can find no record of your grandfather being transferred or his name appearing on combat crews of the 369th Squadron. It is not unusual for non-flyers to report that they did fly, as it was a much better story for the home folks.

But one should understand also that it took 6 or 7 men on the ground to support every man flying. Our base, in effect was a town of 2700 people, almost all men, except at parties and for nurses who appeared from time to time. Without the ground support the planes didn't fly.

Could you perhaps secure for me a copy of your grandfather's obituary? I have 8000 3x5 cards for the men who served in the 306th, and copy obits on to the back of the card. I like such information as the widow's name, #c, gc, ggc, and what his employment was after the war.

Sincerely yours,

Always First First Over Germany

December 16, 2003

Russell:

I am sending two checks one in the amount of \$ 35.00 for the purchase of your book **FIRST OVER GERMANY** & a check in the amount of \$20.00 for a copy of the **369<sup>th</sup>. Bomber Squadron Combat Diary**. My grandfather (**Horace aka Hody Best**) just passed on a couple of weeks ago and he was a member of the 306<sup>th</sup>. BG / 369<sup>th</sup>. BS. Initially, as ambulance medic / nurse, then as a **B-17 waist gunner**. I have just recently seen some photos, that he had given to my father showing the beautiful nose art, the triangle enclosed **H** on the tail assemblies and the **WW** of the squadron code on the ships' sides.

He didn't speak much of the war, only that he had flown (17 missions on a B-17) & (2 missions on a B-24) as a substitute waist gunner. He did tell me about seeing, towards the end of the war a few German jets that would try to down the aircraft and that they flew "very quickly". Then later being shipped home after the war ended on the RMS Queen Mary, which is now a floating museum in Long Beach, here in southern California.

Looking forward to receiving the books & reading about men like you and my grandfather.

Sincerely,



**DEAN JAY JENSEN**  
126 Cameray Heights  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

(1 copy: **FIRST OVER GERMANY**) \$ 35.00  
(1 copy: **369<sup>th</sup>. BS Combat Diary**) \$ 20.00

Best Horace



Dean Jensen  
126 Cameray Heights  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

4 January 2004

Mr. Russell A. Strong

I received your letter & I appreciate your request for information on my grandfather. As you already know my grandfather's name, was **Horace Best** although he was always known as "Hody".

As I had mentioned before my grandpa Hody, told my father and myself, of being a male nurse, but as the war progressed he was then transferred to a B-17 squadron as a waist gunner. He claimed to have flown 17 missions on a B-17 & 2 missions on a B-24 Liberator as a substitute waist gunner. He never really talked much about the war, as he had seen a lot of death and had numerous photos of many wrecked B-17's that had crash landed @ the base. After the war he went home to Missouri, then went to Nebraska in the late 1940's, where he met and married my father's mother, whom had just recently been divorced. In the early 1950's they came to California, to find a new life and settled in Pico Rivera.

My grandfather's obituary: **HORACE "HODY" BEST**

Horace Best resided in Pico Rivera, CA from the early 1950's until his recent death.

Died 3 November 2003 complications from a stroke, buried 10 November 2003  
Riverside Veteran's Cemetery, Riverside, CA

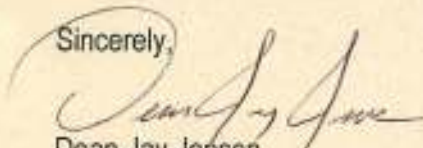
Survived by wife of 58 years Rose Best, (1) daughter Virginia Best, (1) step-son Wes Jensen, (2) grandsons Jerry Jensen and Dean Jensen.

After the war, Horace joined the United Brotherhood of Carpenter's & Joiners of America. Carpenter's Local # 1497 East Los Angeles, CA  
He was employed as a Journeyman Carpenter & Field Superintendent for over 25 years then retired, I believe in 1976.

He was a member of many public organizations, but could always be found @ the local VFW hall. Hody, was always proud of being an American veteran having served his country during the war & of being a member of the **306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group 8<sup>th</sup> AAF**.

I only wish that I had found out about the 306<sup>th</sup>. B.G. Association, before he had passed on I'm sure that he would have joined and participated in the association.

Sincerely,

  
Dean Jay Jensen