

RECORDS UPDATE

306th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

(Please complete as much of this form as you wish to, fold and mail as per address on reverse side. Or, if obtained at a reunion, hand to Russ Strong)

LAST NAME: BOURN FIRST NAME: OSCAR TITLE: CO-PILOT  
STREET ADDRESS: Rt 1 - Box 724 TELEPHONE: (817)435-2963  
CITY: MERIDIAN STATE: TEXAS ZIP: 76665

DATE JOINED 306th ASSOCIATION: OCT 1983

REUNIONS ATTENDED: (Years) 1983-1984-1985-1986-1987

WIFE'S NAME: RUTH

LAST EMPLOYMENT: CHEVRON U.S.A. INC. Oct 1, 1978

COLLEGE(S) ATTENDED: U. of HOUSTON - BS DEGREE(S): DATE: 1950  
NORTHWESTERN UNIV. - MS 1952

SERIAL #: 0-686448 SQDN: 368th MOS:

DATE ARR: NOV. 1943 CREW: F/O J.R. COLEMAN

DATE DEPARTED: FEB. 25, 1944 HIGHEST RANK IN 306th: 1st LT

SERVICE RETIREMENT DATE: ? RANK or GRADE: 1st LT

DECORATIONS WITH 306TH: Pres. U.S. Citation; AIR MEDAL; PURPLE HEART

TOP SERVICE ASSIGNMENT AFTER 306TH: —

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS WITH 306TH: —

QUESTIONNAIRE

CATERPILLAR CLUB - IRVING CHUTE COMPANY

NAME: OSCAR B. BOURN

COMBAT JUMP DATE & MISSION: FEB. 25, 1944

HEIGHT WHEN BAILED OUT: 14,000'

ANY PROBLEMS WITH PARACHUTE: NO

306th Bombardment Group. SQDN: 368th

November 8, 1985

Dear Russell,

I regret that I missed the meeting with you in Colo. Spgs. The day the business meeting was held I went to the Royal Gorge. I was reluctant to leave Roy Coleman & Lou Rodriguez (and their wives) and discussed the trip with them the night before, explaining my dilemma. However, they, knowing I wanted to see the Gorge for geological as well as scenic reasons encouraged me to take the trip. If the Tour van hadn't broken down just north of Canon City on the way back I probably would have returned in time to learn of your meeting with the POW's but as it was I arrived at the

one or two of them to you by letter. I do have a tape recorder but I bought <sup>it</sup> for my work books in 1971 and I don't know if it is still operational or not.

The enclosed check is to help with the expenses needed to send out "Echoes" which I always enjoy receiving -

my very best wishes,  
Olio Bourne

Hotel just in time to change my clothes and get in the Sqdn. photo.

I did not know of the General who gave the talk at the banquet but he had much more knowledge about what was going on, over the obvious, than I ever did. I doubt I could add anything of interest or useful information about our experiences while I was a POW. However, there might be some interest in the experiences I had while trying to escape with the help of the French Underground, although I don't know if this would be pertinent to your book. If you think "these incidents" might be of interest let me know and I will try to relate

30 December 1985

O. B. Bourn  
Rt. 1, Box 7B4  
Meridian, TX 76665

Dear Obie:

This is a belated reply to your early November letter, but only now am I fighting my way down to the surface of my desk and trying to get caught up on 306th matters. I doubt that I make it by the end of the year!

It was good of you to report the pleasure you derived from the Colorado Springs reunion. Its always good to meet once again those companions of earlier years.

I would be very much interested in any recounting you can do of the escape attempts you made with the aid of the French underground. I'll be happy to receive them either on tape or written, so fire away when you are ready and with what ever method you choose to to convey your experiences.

I hope that 1986 treats you kindly.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

June 21, 1986

Dear Russell,

Although the enclosed story is not the kind I anticipated you wanted for your book, I did tell you I would send you an account of one of the events I experienced so here it is. There are no heroics, cliff hangers or life threatening situations, although it was far from a dull & routine experience for me. There were a couple of heart pounding moments as when the German soldier arrived and when the "old man" came into the courtyard. It was very dark at the time of the latter incident and I didn't

have any idea who might be approaching.

Anyway, if you can use any of the material you are welcome and if not that is O.K. too.

I am very much aware, if the story is of some use, editing and a rewrite will be necessary. I have spent the last 26 years writing technical reports for the geologists at Chevron ("we won't read any thing if it is over 2 pages long") so what little knowledge I ever had of narrative writing is long forgotten. Hope you can read my writing.

Best regards,

Ohio Bourn

July 23, 1986

Dear Russell,

I received the copies of Echo yesterday and want to thank you for sending me the extras. I liked your heading for the article. However, I do wish, after I read the account I wrote, I had been able to have <sup>had</sup> the manuscript typed for an edit. Some of my sentences needed reworked and some of the remarks needed crossed out. Anyway, the incident did have a bit of humor to it and I



hope readers will pick that up.

Incidentally, I was amazed at the information you have on that raid. Who in the world kept track of times of fighter attacks and when the Group ran into to AA fire? Also, that was the first time I had heard the 368<sup>th</sup> lost 3 other planes on the Augsburg mission. The ~~element leader~~ leader of the element we were flying in kept dropping way behind the Group. We were literally isolated several times and I am pretty sure that is why we got attacked. I have often wondered what his problem was. Do you know? Regards,  
Oliver

27 July 1986

Mr. O. B. Bourn  
Route 1, Box 724  
Meridian, TX 76665

Dear O. B.:

Thanks for your kind comments--but, I now have the goods, the pilots really didn't know what we navigators were doing during a mission!

That was the navigator's job to note times that events took place on a mission, and out of that data came the intelligence report.

Unfortunately, I don't have a great deal of data concerning this particular mission, not like the amounts I have accumulated on some others. I don't have a formation chart, for instance, that not only tells where the planes were, but in some cases I have the chart which the air commander made notes on which can be very interesting.

I'm sorry that I didn't get a typed version to you for editing, and should have done so.

But I am sure that many found it interesting and amusing, and we need more stories like that in Echoes.

Again, thanks for your remarks, and hope to see you at another reunion before too long.

All the best,

Dear Russell,

Had I run across this form - as I thought I had sent it to you. I hope better late than never applies about this.

Best wishes,

Quio

Russell A. Strong  
2041 Hillsdale  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

# Pilot Survey

Name O. B. BOURN

Cadet Class H3G

Adv. Trng. Location WACO, TX

# Combat Missions 12

Date leaving 306th 2/25/44

Rank on leaving 306th 1<sup>ST</sup> LT

Did you fly with the Casey Jones  
Project in 1945-46? NO

Send to: Russell Strong  
5232 Cheval Place  
Charlotte, NC 28205

A WAR ANECDOTEThe First Eighteen Hours

Just as I neared the ground, after a long fall in my 'chute, I remember seeing the canopy at a strange angle above me, partially collapsed, then a green blur of the tree tops. I came to, flat on my back blinded by the bright noon sun. After slowly testing one arm at a time and then one leg at a time I decided I had no broken bones, so I gathered up my 'chute, drag it over a field, across a road and into the woods where I tried to dig a hole in the snow and bury it. It was February and the air temperature in the woods was cold enough to keep the snow from melting.

I hid out in the woods all day, watching people go by on the road. First a German soldier came riding up on horse back and stopped near the place where I had crossed the road. I thought, with fear, that all was lost as I expected him to dismount, draw his pistol and enter the woods to hunt me down. However, he sat his horse for awhile, looking about, and then galloped off. My first close call. During the afternoon as people went along the road,



walking or on bicycles, I could hear them talking. I tried to determine what language they were using as I didn't know if I had landed in Belgium, France or possibly Germany. This didn't work because, even though I could hear them, I couldn't understand the sounds. Late in the afternoon a couple of wings of B-17's flew over on their return to England. How I longed to be up there in one of those planes looking forward to a good meal and a warm place to sleep that night. As they droned out of sight a loneliness came over me that I had never felt before.

In the distance I could see a small roof of a house and as the sun began to sink below the horizon and the chill set in, I decided to head for the house and see if it could possibly be a safe place to ask for shelter. Once it was dark, I started off across the fields toward the house, it was much farther away than I had thought plus my back and legs were so stiff and sore I wasn't certain I was going to be able to get to it. As I climbed fences and waded through deep snow the house got larger and larger. Finally

I got to the road that ran near the "farmhouse" and realized it was one of the large communal farm buildings, with a large courtyard, that I had been warned was usually operated - or managed - by the German army.

I finally decided, after hiding under a bush for some time and watching for anyone entering or leaving the courtyard, that I could make my way into it. The cold had caused my back and leg to become so painful I decided to try and get into the big building some way.

I slipped into the courtyard and crouching down behind a wagon watched and waited for some one to come out or go in one of the several doors that I could see. Eventually, an elderly, small man walked into the compound and up to a door. He knocked and as the door was opened I could see by the dim light from inside that he wore the working clothes of a civilian. I waited a while to be sure no one else was coming and then, with considerable misgivings, leered over to the door and knocked. Soon I heard a voice and I answered: "Je suis un veter Américain". The door opened and a little, old man peered out. He hesitated for a moment then firmly reached out and pulled me inside. He indicated that



I was to stay by the <sup>entrance</sup> door, then hurried down a long hall and disappeared behind a closed <sup>door</sup>. It seemed an awfully long time had passed, and I had about decided he wasn't coming back, when the door opened, and the old man, along with an attractive girl <sup>who appeared to be in her mid thirties</sup> came out and up the hall to where I waited. They both spoke to me in French, which I did not understand, then after considerable discussion ushered me down the hall, into a large room, and bolted the door.

Inside was an older woman holding a baby, several straight back chairs, a stove, a cot, a table and a large double bed. The room was illuminated by a bare bulb hanging from the center of the ceiling. The <sup>girl</sup> mentioned for me to sit down in one of the chairs at the table and soon the older woman brought me a piece of bread and a large bowl of broth. As you can imagine both were welcome as I had not eaten since very early that morning. Before bringing me a pencil and large piece of paper the man helped me get out of my flight boots and suit. The zippers on both boots were jammed tight and unremovable so he cut them off with a large knife. He also had to help me take off my flight suit and heated suit as by now I wasn't



morning about too well.

It seems now that we actually sat around the table and conversed but, of course, we did not. However, by use of signs and drawings, I conveyed to them how I got there and they made me understand that they saw me descend in my parachute. Soon the man pointed to the cot and I needed no more persuasion to get down to my long johns and crawl in.

Later in the night I woke up and much to my surprise the light was still burning. I looked about and there in the double bed lay the girl with her baby and the older woman all sound asleep. I pondered this peculiar situation for awhile and then fell asleep.

The next thing I was aware of was the old man shaking me and indicating I get dressed. This I did while the older woman warmed another bowl of broth for me. Once I had finished, by then the girl had come in with her baby, the three had a long and serious conversation that at times seemed to become an argument. Eventually the old man left. ~~For some odd reason~~ I began searching through my uniform pockets, when I felt <sup>looking for something</sup>

a coin. I pulled it out, handed it to the girl and said: "Here is a souvenir for you". It was a surprise and much to my pleasant surprise she said: "Souvenir, ah merci, merci." I hadn't realized until then that souvenir was a French word. It was the first spoken communication I had had and I felt as though I had just made contact with the world once again, a joyful feeling.

Suddenly, the big, board window on one side of the room opened and outside was the old man beckoning me to climb out through the window and join him. Just before I did, the girl gave me a small sack which I later discovered had an apple and a piece of bread in it.

Once outside the old man took me a little way down a path that led into the forest and indicated, by pointing, which way I should go. I glanced back at the window to see the woman and girl with her baby watching me leave and as I turned to enter the forest I waved to them good bye.

Later, I found out from an English speaking member of the French underground



that I had become an item of extreme amusement, in addition to some ribald jokes, among the French resistance movement in the nearby town. Unknown to me, until my English speaking friend related the story, I had stayed all night with the young Czechoslovakian wife of the Herman military manager of the large communal farm. It was well known her loyalties were not with the Nazi regime. That day <sup>her husband</sup> had gone into town for business reasons but had decided to stay there over night rather than go home. The resistance fellows <sup>were</sup> circulating the story, which may have been true in one part, that while he was in town spending the night with a lady friend his wife was home entertaining an American flier.

A true story - weird though it may seem.

O. B. Ohio Bacon

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O. B. Bourne

Oscar Benjamin

Died May-11, 2003

He was 87 1/2 yrs old

He lived and owned

a 2500 acre Ranch

located 6 miles west  
of Meridian Texas,

Submitted by

Ray Coleman - Pilot.