

A HISTORY OF THE 306th BOMBARDMENT GROUP - EIGHTH AIR FORCE  
Russell A. Strong, Rt. 1, Scotch Meadows Dr. Laurinburg, NC 28352

Name CALVIN G. GARRISON  
Address 586 WEST SHRYER AVENUE ST. PAUL MN 55113  
Telephone 489-0273 Date JULY 20, 1977  
Occupation RETIRED LETTER CARRIER Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th: OCT '42 TIL JAN '43 BASIC TRAINING - SAN ANTONIO TX. RADIO SCHOOL JAN '43 TIL MAY '43 GUNNERY SCHOOL KINGMAN, ARIZ. MAY AND JUNE '43. 1ST PHASE B-17'S MOSES LAKE WASH. JULY AUG. '43 2ND AND 3RD PHASE TRAINING SEPT-OCT. '43 RAPID CITY, S.D.  
After leaving the 306th:

14 MONTHS P.O.W.  
6 MONTHS HOSPITAL RECOVERY - MALNUTRITION AND HEPATITIS - SCHICK GEN. HOSP. - CLINTON, IOWA

306th Record:

Arrival Date APPROX NOV-10-43 Squadron or other unit 368  
MOS RADIO & P- GUNNER Combat Status \_\_\_\_\_  
Missions Completed 12  
Promotions S/SGT TO T/SGT JAN 44  
Decorations 1AM 1olcs DFC olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM  
1PH Battle Stars UNIT CITATION JAN. 11-44 other \_\_\_\_\_

(OVER)

Other personal data:

On Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> the day we were shot down. I tried to bail out the bomb bay only to find a wall of fire when I opened the radio room door. I headed for the rear exit and saw waste gunner Joe Buckley standing with his chute already open. On my descent I observed 2 chutes full of holes that actually passed me slowly after hitting the ground down to the closest crewman. I could hardly believe my eyes, thus Joe Buckley. He had wrapped the open chute in his arms, jumped and it had blossomed out. A 80 mm shell had blown his chute open

Description of Air Missions: and damaged the other chute of Fred Organiste  
(What were the highlights of your combat career? What was your role? What heroics did you witness? What events were there of which you have special knowledge?)

Although I remember most of my 12 missions, two stand out more than the rest.

The mission to Kiel Jan 5<sup>th</sup> '44 in which one engine had to be feathered on the way to the target, and we could not stay with the formation after "bombs away" was eventful. We had 3 confirmed kills, 1 rocket firing ME 210 shot down by the tail gunner Al Doine from Dunkirk, N.Y. I observed a German chute from this one. The belt turret operator Oakland Bittkofer from Andover, Ohio claimed two more. One confirmed by the bombardier Donald Baltzer, Milwaukee, Wis. and another M.E. 109 by a P-51 pilot who later called the base.

The Jan 11<sup>th</sup> mission to an aircraft plant (I believe J-88) at Halberstadt was about my toughest mission. Our escort was fogged in and the Luftwaffe hit us with everything they had. We lost a few planes and some of the rest were damaged. Our oxygen system was partially shot out and we had to use potable and milk around bottles to make it to the coast. Thurleigh was fogged in so the group had to land at a limey base on the coast and stayed for a couple of days. On returning to Thurleigh we had to have our tail replaced as an unexploded 20 mm shell had lodged in it.

Name CALVIN G. GARRISON Address 586 WEST SHRYEA AVE.  
Telephone 489-0273

MISSING AIRCRAFT REPORT

Pilot JAMES R. COLEMAN Plane # and Name TOP HAT  
Mission Date FEB. 25 1944 Target AUGSBERG  
Cause of loss: AA fire  Fighter attack  Other, explain

Describe conditions in the plane as completely as you can:

On this mission we were to gain altitude on the way to the target. When attempting to avoid collision with another aircraft in the formation we fell back and could not regain the formation.

A flight of F.W 190's jumped us and set the aircraft on fire. The intercom and oxygen systems were also knocked out.

In spite of other opinions our pilot did his best under the circumstances, and I shall always consider James A. Coleman to be one of the best pilots in the 8<sup>th</sup> air force.

How and where did you leave plane?

Bailed out the rear door

What happened when you got on the ground?

I ran to another crew member. I did not delay my jump and the Germans were waiting for us on the ground. Capture was in about 1/2 hr.

Did you meet any of your crew mates?

Yes, Joe Buckley immediately and shortly after 3 more. 1 more after 2 days. 4 crew mates were in French underground - 3 of these eventually captured, 1 Evaded

How were you treated, if captured?

11 months of my imprisonment outside of a few incidents was humane. The last 3 months was spent on a 500 mile ~~with~~ march that at times was indescribable. I do not blame my captors for this, but chalk it up to the fortune of war.

Any additional details, reminiscences, letters, or documents of these events would be appreciated. If you do send such materials, I will copy them and put them back in the mail to you within 24 hours.

Do you know the present, or WW II, addresses of any of your crew or other 306th personnel?

July 20, 1977

Dear Mr. Strong,

The time I spent with the 306<sup>TH</sup> was about 3½ months.

Although the time was short I hope to have added a little info on it.

I have enclosed a WWII list of the crew I was with when I unexpectedly left the 306<sup>TH</sup>. I have only had contact with two of these and will update their addresses.

J. F. Rodriguez

237 Russet Rd N.

Stamford, Conn. 06903

Ref Hayes

Rt. 1 Box 321A

Alexander, N. C. 28701

I cannot guarantee you any stories or info, but give it a try.

(over)

Some of the memories I have of the 368<sup>TH</sup> I will never forget. Major John Regan (our C.O.) was a man respected by all. He was 'one of the boys' and was not above having a drink at the Silver Grill or Bondarview in Bedford with any squadron member.

He seemed to have an understanding of the combat crew man and realized that enemy bullets did not know ranks.

On the numerous side I still recall a morgue dog named "Bronie" from our barracks. We had a dinghy radio parachute rigged up for him and more than once he was bailed out over the base.

At present I am retired although only 55 because of a heart ailment. I am not destitute, but would still find it hard to attend conventions.

Sincerely,  
Calvin B. Garrison

— Flight Officer James R. Coleman	Mrs. Ruth P. Coleman, (Mother), Route Number Two, Friona, Texas.
— First Lieutenant Oscar S. Bourn	Mrs. Fleda M. Bourn, (Mother), 214 North 2nd Street, Clinton, Missouri.
— First Lieutenant Louis Rodriguez	Mr. Cesar Rodriguez, (Father), National Paper & Type Company, 120 Wall Street, New York, New York.
— Staff Sergeant Clinton E. Snyder	Mrs. Julia M. Snyder, (Mother), Rural Free Delivery Number One, Mountain View, Missouri.
— Technical Sergeant Rex L. Hayes	Mrs. Maggie Hayes, (Mother), Route Number One, Alexander, North Carolina.
— Technical Sergeant Calvin G. Garrison	Mrs. Ellen V. Garrison, (Mother), 837 Decoto Street, St. Paul, Minnesota.
— Staff Sergeant Phillip D. Vaught	Mrs. Oleta B. Vaught, (Wife), Star Route, Bridgeport, Texas.
— Sergeant Joseph E. Buckley	Mrs. Corn Buckley, (Mother), 45 Walter Street, Buffalo, New York.
— Staff Sergeant William Wierma	Mrs. Richard W. Wierma, (Mother), 76 Prospect Street, Midland Park, New Jersey.
— Staff Sergeant Fred T. Organ	Mrs. Bertha J. Organ, (Wife), 231 Encoz Avenue, Monessen, Pennsylvania.

Jan 12, 1986

Dear Russ Strong,

This is the announcement of  
the death of a member.

Fred T. Organ 231 KNOX AVE  
MONROESSEN, PA. - 368<sup>TH</sup> GUNNER  
(J. R. COLEMAN CREW) POW. FEB 25, 1944  
DATE OF DEATH WAS JULY 2, 1985.

Maybe you know this also. In  
Studds Terhels' book (THE GOOD WAR)  
there is a chapter about POW life by  
a 367<sup>TH</sup> man Charles Miller.

sincerely  
Ed Garrison