

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

Name John R Mc Kee

Address 4100 Warner Blvd. Burbank Calif. 91505

Telephone 213 842 3711 Date 1/22/77

Occupation Actor Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th:  
Was with 303 rd B.G. before joining 306th.

After leaving the 306th:

Returned to U.S. 4/--/43. Did some test work at Egland A.B. in Fla. also R.O.T.U. Ardmore, Okla-B-29 at Salina, Kans. Then back to 8th, E.T.O.

306th Record:

One of original member's, when Gp. was formed at Wendover, Ut.

Arrival Date /? Squadron or other unit 367th

MOS Pilot Combat Status Pilot

Missions Completed 5 or 6

Promotions Returned to the U.S. as Capt.

Decorations 5 AM olcs X DFC 1 olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM

X PH Battle Stars ? other \_\_\_\_\_

Other personal data:

Description of Air Missions:

(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?)

To me, the biggest thing was the fighter escort when I got back to the 8th. The fighter's were the answer to a bombers prayer. It was a lot tougher flying without "Little Friend". Along with being shotdown, the toughest "Op" was the low level mission on St Nazair (?spelling). Who ever dreamed-up that one must have been mad at the 306th!

My trip out of France, with the underground was rather uneventful. I was in Spain 1/1/43, shot down 12/20/42.

Name John Mc Kee Address 4100 Warner Blvd Burbank, Ca. 91505

Telephone 123 842 3711

### MISSING AIRCRAFT REPORT

Pilot John R. Mc Kee Plane # and Name B-17 "Rose O'Day"

Mission Date 12/20/42 Target Romilly, France

Cause of loss: AA fire \_\_\_\_\_ Fighter attack X Other, explain \_\_\_\_\_

Describe conditions in the plane as completely as you can:

#2-3 and 4 eng. shot out, two direct hit's on leading edge of right wing.

How and where did you leave plane?

Went out through bomb bay.

Shortly after dumping bomb's on air port at Rimmily.

What happened when you got on the ground?

On my own for three day's then picked-up by the underground, on to Spain, Gib. and back to Eng.

Did you meet any of your crew mates?

No.

How were you treated, if captured?

Not captured.

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?

Phila. Bulletin  
March 2, 1943

# LT. M'KEE IS ALIVE, PARENTS LEARN

## Former Football Star of Audubon was Shot down in Plane over France

"Singin' Johnny" McKee, U. S. bomber pilot and former Audubon High School and Villanova College football player, is "right back where he started" after being shot down over France and officially reported missing in action.

First news that he was alive came in a cablegram to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John McKee, 241 E. Albanus st., this city, formerly of Barrington, N. J. But there was no indication in the message to show where he was or whether he had been wounded.

Now he has written a letter, dated January 31, in which he said:

"I am back where I started, in good health, but I can't tell you where I am located. I still have a pair of shoes that are badly worn out."

His family reads into the last sentence an effort on the young man's part to give them an inkling of his whereabouts. "Knowing that he had been shot down over France, with his plane in flames, they suspect that he fell into friendly French hands; instead of being taken prisoner; that the cablegram announced and that his shoes are 'badly worn out' from much walking as he was passed from village to village by way of the French patriot 'underground,' which is known to befriend McKee, who was 'Singin' Johnny' during his football playing days and became 'the Singin' Irishman' to his comrades in the Air Force.

He played football, baseball and basketball for Audubon High, where he was graduated in 1935. Then he went to Sunflower Junior College in Mississippi, returned to the University of Southern California. He also, for a time, played football with the Northmont A. A. of Mt. Ephraim, N. J., and Zumbro A. of the Eastern States.

Weeks of anxious waiting ended joyously yesterday for Mrs. Anna McKee, of 241 E. Albanus st., when she learned that her son, a bomber pilot reported missing in December, is safe and sound.

"Well and safe. Letter will follow," said the cablegram from Lieutenant John R. McKee, relayed to his mother by telephone. The message, which did not indicate where Lieutenant McKee is, was addressed to his family's former home in Barrington, N. J., and was relayed here by a telephone operator who knew the lieutenant McKee, a former football player, was released November as a pilot from Nazi-held territory.

McKee returned from a mission and flew over the

# Mis 'Alive Wires Pe

After several weeks of their Army flier son, Mr. and Mrs. McKee, will receive from him well. Letter will follow." On Dec. 29 the War Department had notified John R. McKee, son, Lieutenant John R. McKee, had been shot down on Dec. 20 and was missing. Their hopes were raised by an article in The Philadelphia Inquirer on Jan. 10 by Ivan H. Peterman, sent from a bomber base in England. The war correspondent that article reported that the flier was down in France after two of his engines had been set afire. That report raised hopes of the parents. The telegram they received yesterday did not indicate whether their son was a prisoner or was safe in England. The McKee family formerly lived in Barrington, N. J.



LT. M'KEE

# MISSING PILOT WIVES MOTHER HE IS SAFE

Weeks of anxious waiting ended joyously yesterday for Mrs. Anna McKee, of 241 E. Albanus st., when she learned that her son, a bomber pilot reported missing in December, is safe and sound. "Well and safe. Letter will follow," said the cablegram from Lieutenant John R. McKee, relayed to his mother by telephone. The message, which did not indicate where Lieutenant McKee is, was addressed to his family's former home in Barrington, N. J., and was relayed here by a telephone operator who knew the lieutenant McKee, a former football player, was released November as a pilot from Nazi-held territory. McKee returned from a mission and flew over the



Interview with  
JOHN MC KEE  
At Glendale, CA  
in June 1979

Lost an engine, #2, on the way in.

Took two hits of leading edge of right wing, losing  
#3 and #4.

Lost lots of fuel, streaming out like a condensation trail.

Can't understand why it didn't catch fire.

Warheit, ball turret, was hit in the throat by flak and killed.  
Engineer

, co-pilot and pilot went out tje bomb bay.

After landing, saw a Frenchman and went up to him, talking  
English. Frenchman ignored him until a frustrated McKee  
called him a "dumb, old son of a bitch."

The Frenchman began to laugh, and said that convinced him  
that McKee was an American. Frenchman spoke good English.

Originally with the 303rd bomb group, went to Hawaii for the  
Battle of Midway, but arrived two days too late. Kept planes,  
and flew back to U. S. and Wendover. Also, Buck~~y~~, Lambert,  
Check and Raper.

On the first night at Thurleigh, a German plane came over and  
dropped a Christmas tree bomb. Were also greeted by Lord Haw Haw.

At Wendover one co-pilot had Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

B-23 shot down in gunnery practice.

After evasion, McKee went back to U. S., and then to 92nd group  
as operations officer. *LT. Col.*



To Whom — FILE 8380

Like to give you a  
change of address.

New

John R McKee

249 South BARRETT, Ave  
AUDUBON, N.J. 08106

Old

4115 Hood Ave

BURBANK, CA  
91505 —

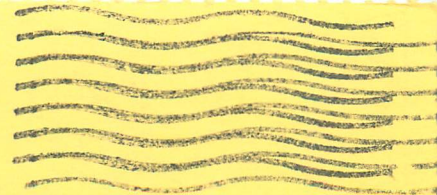
Thank you — see you in  
Cal Springs

Truly  
John



Russell A. Strong, Secretary  
306th BG Association  
2041 Hillsdale  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

41-24486



Russ: AIRCRAFT NAME: MAN O' WAR

CREW CHIEF - SORRY - I DON'T  
REMEMBER —

See you in September —

Joe Concolmagno



# McDonald's TV Spot Features Local Man

You've probably seen this McDonald's TV commercial.

A distinguished-looking man "past middle age" has a tray full of goodies and looks around for a table. He sees an equally-distinguished woman sitting alone. They both smile and it looks like they will happily share a Big Mac attack.

The male star of that commercial is John McKee, who grew up in Barrington and graduated from Audubon High School. Now living in the Haddon View Apartments in Haddon Township, McKee recently returned to this area after years as an actor in Southern California.

"California was getting too smoggy," McKee joked. "I needed a change of scenery and wanted to get back to all my kin in this area."

McKee acted in many roles in Westerns and war movies after gravitating to the West Coast in 1948.



**John McKee**

"I did some commercials over the years," he said. "Years ago, I did cigarette commercials when they were allowed on television. This one for McDonald's is being aired nationally, but I was also in an Olympics commercial for United Airlines about six years ago."

Ironically, McKee now lives in an apartment building that throws a shadow on the McDonald's restaurant on Cuthbert Rd. If you are an older woman looking for a luncheon companion, you just might see John McKee there.



1992

Friend Russ;

I guess one will always remember his first Mission more than any other.

I'am sure you have herd manytimes how little training we had before going to the U.K. Most crew's, mine for one, never had air to air gunnery; infact I don't recall any fireing of the gun's at all. The same amount of training went into bombinb; none/. We did have c/x navigation missions and a lot of night flying and insturment (thank God) fling.

Back to the first Mission. The takeoff and assembly was good. The formation on the way to Lille was good. It was when we hit the French Coast <sup>M.P.H.</sup> thing's started to go bad. We were to fly at 150/indicated aid speed. I was flying "tail-end charlie" and it took all the power I could get to keep-up with Col Overacker; I looked at my air speed and it was almost 170 M.P.H. ind. The Group started, what I thought was the bombrun then for some reason the Col. made a 90% turne to the left. This action throwing Capt. John Olson out of formation. Al La Chasse was the bombardier on Olsons ship. Olson and the co-pilot were killed, Al, hit te silk and was to be one of the first U.S.; P.O.W's.

Not knowing any better at the time, I droped back to try to give "Swead" (Cap. Olson) some help. He started going down and I knew it was to late for any help. By all the law's of the game I should have been the next to go. Looking down I saw another ship smokeing real bad and one motor on fire. My luck was good, the fighters <sup>NOT FROM 306 B.G.</sup> left me to finishoff the unlucky crew below.

I did catch-up to the group without any truble from The Hun. There was one thing bothering me; gas. The power setting's used on the way to the target and the power I used catchingup to the Group usedup about all my gas. I called Capt Terry, who was flying with Col. Overacker and told him the sad new's. The best he could do was wish me; GOOD LUCK. I did make it to a fighter field in from the coast of English Channel. Stewart; who was



was later killed landed in the Channel. *all fuck - up!*

All in all I think the Lille mission was a bad show. I don't think you can point to anyone person. It was just a matter of sending untrained crew into the fight.

Russ, after having been shot down; I 2/20/42, I went back to the 8th in 44. Take my word, the long haul's, the 2780 gallon of gas trip's were not as tough to me as the trip's over the channel to the Sub-pen's. Those trips got the attention of the whole German A.F. and we had no escort. On the second tour it was so good to see Little friend and the job they were doing to help us in and out of the target area.

Fifty Year's since the Lille Mission? Where has the time gone?  
Take care Russ and hope to see you soon;

*John McKee*

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NAME: John R McKee

If you do not have a picture, what crew member would be most likely to have one?

Sgt FRAN Hess, 3 South Young Lane - Eagle, Idaho 83616

RADIO, OP-

Information update:

# missions flown 5 1/2 <sup>SHOT DOWN AFTER,</sup>  
<sup>"BOMBS AWAY!"</sup>

Date leaving 306th 12/20/42

Wife's name ✓

Numbers

✓  
Children

✓  
grc

✓  
ggrc





John R. Mc Kee  
249 S Barrett Ave.  
Audubon, NJ 08106



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5323 Cheval Place  
Charlotte, NC 28205

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