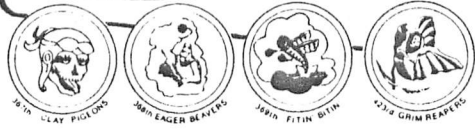
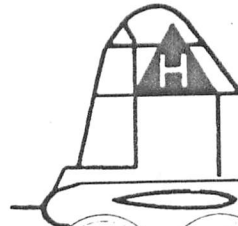




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306th Echoes



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Rip Riordan Elected 306th President

The annual business meeting for the 1989 year of the 306th Bomb Group Association convened in the Arkansas Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock, on Saturday morning, 23 Sept 89, at 9:30 a.m., led by President William F. Houlihan.

Treasurer C. Dale Briscoe reported that the Association had received \$12,200 in contributions during the year, and in addition had banked \$10,200 in gifts to the Special Project Fund.

Two major projects for the Fund were disclosed as the planned 1992 reunion in England and the accumulation of complete Mission Report data so that it can be made available to members.

The report of the nominating committee was presented by Reginald Robinson: Robert P. Riordan, president; M.E. (Chris) Christianson, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; C. Dale

new board met to name Jack Wood to fill the one-year vacancy on the board created by the election of Riordan as president.

Holdover directors are John G. Grimm and Leo Van Deurzen, while Houlihan continues for a year on the board as past president and Delmar Wilson joins as the 1990 reunion chairman.

Lowell Burgess, 369th, and Charles Wegener, 367th, were both introduced and each stood with five other members of their original crews who were in attendance.

Saul Kupferman made a presentation on the proposed 8th AF Memorial Museum project at Savannah, GA, and action was deferred to the board of directors.

It was also disclosed that the memorial tree, planted in Dayton, OH, at the USAF



Luther D. Victory, 369th and a resident of Baytown, TX, has been elected national vice commander of the American

470 Attend Reunion At Little Rock

306th enthusiasts began arriving at Little Rock's Excelsior Hotel on the Sunday before the formal activities began, and by the time the smoke had cleared on Saturday the group had come to at least 471, and perhaps larger.

Thursday was the major registration day, and with waits for room occupancy the norm now in American hotels, there was plenty of time to roam through the lobby looking for, greeting and talking with old and new friends.

That evening the crowds lined up on the terrace to the north of the hotel in a delightful park between the building and the banks of the Arkansas River to take part in the buffet dinner afforded there.

Friday brought people out early for the

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North African Trip - Riordan's Recollections

My squadron commander, Major Terry, informed me that my crew had been selected for a very special and critical mission to North Africa. I was told that we would be carrying a special, highly classified cargo but that an Army major would be going with us and would be solely responsible for the cargo. We were informed one afternoon and were told to plan takeoff the following afternoon. Our first stop was to be a fighter base in the Lands End area. We were then to takeoff around midnight after the cargo had been put aboard. Our flight plan was west of France over the Bay of Biscay, west of Portugal, then east toward the Strait of Gibraltar, and land at the British base on Gibraltar. After a day or two at Gibraltar, we were to fly on east to Maison Blanc airfield just outside Algiers.

On landing at the Lands End airbase, we discovered that we had a significant hydraulic leak in the plane's left landing strut. Maintenance personnel at the base tried to fix the problem but were not able to do much except put in more fluid and pressurize the strut just before takeoff. I felt that we were committed and could not delay. Our crew had a meal and then tried to get a few hours sleep. Soon after midnight we were awakened, got a last minute weather briefing (the weather was good), and tookoff. The bad strut did not bother the takeoff but I realized that we would have very little or no pressure when we landed at Gibraltar - it would just have to be a smooth, soft landing because our cargo weighed some 6,000 pounds.

After takeoff we flew southwest out over the Atlantic at about 1,000 feet altitude. We saw no activity of any kind except for the bobbing lights mentioned by Santoro. We assumed that the lights were on fishing boats. We stayed well clear of the coasts of Portugal and Spain. About 10AM we sighted the Rock of Gibraltar - it was very imposing. Identification requirements were that we approach the southern end of Gibraltar on a northerly heading. About three miles out we fired the Very pistol showing the colors of the day. We must have had the right signal because we received a green light to proceed. We made a wide turn inside the bay on the west side of Gibraltar staying clear of Spanish Territory, lined up with the runway, and landed. We hit a violent downdraft about two miles out on final and this shook all of us up a bit. We had lost all hydraulic pressure on our left landing gear strut but there was no problem in the landing.

We had a very interesting and enjoyable couple of days on Gibraltar - ate fresh citrus fruit for the first time in many months, saw the Barbary Apes, etc.

Our takeoff from Gibraltar was in daylight and again occurred with no problem. The flight to Algiers took about four hours and was uneventful. It was great to bask in the sunshine of North Africa for a few hours before we were taken in to Algiers to the billets which had been arranged for us. The removal of the cargo from our plane was taken care of by waiting Army personnel. We didn't learn until later that our cargo had been thousands of leaflets which were to be air-dropped over Sicily just prior to the allied invasion of that island.

When our transportation dropped us off in Algiers, we had some time to walk around before we went to our billets. It now seems humorous that the ten of us were walking around in the middle of Algiers with our flight clothes on and with a big 45 cal strapped to each of our hips. We had not been alerted to any particular danger - except going into the Casbah -but we were taking no chances !

we were getting into. As we were flying I noticed, to my left blinking lights I was informed that we were flying away from the French coast. It was still dark and I got to thinking that this had to be a very important mission to jeopardize a veteran bombing crew and a good plane,

It finally became daylight and you could see the beautiful blue water. As we approached land I got my first view of Gibraltar. As we prepared to land I made my routine check of all of the plane and informed my pilot that we were ready to land. At that point I noticed that my pilot's safety belt was not secured. I reached over and hooked it in for him. I had no sooner returned to my position between the pilot and co-pilot seats when suddenly the plane seemed to fall out of the sky, like a ton of bricks. I hit my head against the ceiling of the cockpit. I felt that the only thing that kept us from crashing was the great ability of "Rip" Riordan, our pilot.

After the plane became airborne again I checked on all the crew to see that they were all right and also that the plane was O.K. While I was aft of the plane one of the crew men informed me that our radio operator Schultz, had saved the major from going out the radio operator top gun position opening. I returned to the cockpit and informed my pilot that the crew and the plane were ready for landing. Our landing was perfect. Upon landing the plane was again surrounded by guards. I made a visual check of the plane.

I don't remember how many days we stayed in Gibraltar.

One day while the rest of the enlisted men were in town we met some American sailors. They noticed our Air Force patches and wanted to know what ship we flew. They had never seen a B 17 bomber and would like to see the ship. We took them to the base to see our plane. They were impressed with the picture of Old Chief Wahoo holding Hitler by the scalp and were amazed at how many guns the ship had. After we left the base the sailors invited us to go aboard their ship. We had a wonderful meal, fresh white bread and butter and to top it off home made ice-cream.

The following morning I and the rest of the enlisted men went into our plane. I did pre flight inspection on the engines and had the plane ready for flight.

We took off across the Mediterranean sea for Africa. We finally hit land over Spanish Morocco. We received a few bursts of anti-aircraft fire, we finally reached French Morocco and landed at Marakesch air base.

As soon as the ship engine stopped we were approached by two 6X6 trucks and guards. The bundles were loaded on to the trucks and the Major left. We were taken to Algeria, that night German bombers came over and bombed the city and the harbor. I had to come to Africa to be in an air raid!

On our return flight to Gibraltar we picked up two American officers. One of the officers was a pilot, Capt ^{Adams} ~~Adams~~ of the 369th. squad. His ship flew off our right wing and was shot down over Lille, France. The same mission that our first plane Wahoo 1 was peppered pretty good. The two officers were in bad condition from the weather, crossing the mountains from France to Spain.