

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

Name August Winter Capt. 0-729532
Address 501 Jennings Ave. Vallejo, Ca. 94590
Telephone 707 642-8030 Date 5-3-77
Occupation Teacher Employer Retired, 5-1-77
Address Hogan Sr. High Telephone _____

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th:

Cadet at Santa Ana & graduated from Victorville
Air Force Training Command at Casper, Wyo (Sq.
Bombus) & Topkap. Model Crew at Casper. Middle Lt. Lt.
& Salina, Kan. Went overseas from Salina Mar. 1943

After leaving the 306th:

Asst' Commandant of Officer Students at Mid-
land, Tex. made Capt. Sqd. Bomb at Casper, Wyo.
Asst' Group Commander at March Field, Ca.
& Sqd. Commander.

306th Record:

Arrival Date Mar. 1943 Squadron or other unit 368th

MOS 1035 Combat Status Bombardier & Bomber
nav.

Missions Completed 20

Promotions Cadet, 2nd. Lt., 1st. Lt. & Capt.

Decorations 1 AM 4olcs 1 DFC olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM

1 PH Battle Stars ? other _____

(OVER)

Name August Winter Address 501 Jennings Ave.
Telephone 707 642-8030

MISSING AIRCRAFT REPORT

Pilot 2nd Lt. Wesley D Peterson Plane # and Name Don't remember ^{group} It was a composite
Mission Date Sept. 5, 1943 3 am Target Stuttgart, Ger. Ball bearing ^{strange plane}
Cause of loss: AA fire lots of Fighter attack like turkey buzzards. Other, explain plane

Describe conditions in the plane as completely as you can: plaine out of gas
Circled the target too long because of cloud cover (under ack, ack fire). We had several bullets hit the plane. Don't know if it was gas lines. Over France, we bailed out because

There was no visual damage to the plane but gas was very low & decision was made to fly towards Eng. until gas ran out & then bail out. I don't think anyone in the plane was hurt. Some didn't want to jump, but were pushed & others jumped.

How and where did you leave plane? Everyone bailed out. at 32,000'
over France - 100 miles no. of Paris? It was
between Amiens, Bouay, Gornay (spell?)

What happened when you got on the ground? I lit in an apple tree & my
left leg was injured where a French family helped me to
a barn after showing me under bushes when Germans
were coming. Took off flight clothes. Stayed here 2 or 3 weeks
Did you meet any of your crew mates? I met 1st Lt. Maslanka. He
had a broken ribs. We were separated by a Ger.
patrol & I never saw him again. I was too

How were you treated, if captured? hurt to walk & he was unable to return to help me.
I was never captured. They
sent me to Paris to a lady Mr. when I could hear
the barn. I needed medical help, warmth & food.
Univ. of Paris students helped me to Toulouse (E)
France where underground took us over the
Pyrannies mts., thru Andora & Spain to Gibraltar
Returned to duty Nov. 3, 1943

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?

This is the crew I went overseas with
we assigned at Alamparado, N.Mex.
pilot 2nd Lt. H. C. Whipple
co-pilot 2nd Lt. Wm. J. Hooley
Nav. " J. C. Shelley

Bomb. 1st Lt. August Winter (s)
Engineer 1st Sgt. Ray Goodwin (top turret gun)
Asst Eng. Pvt. W. J. Tremper - ball " "
~~tail gun~~ 1st Lt. D. E. Fitch - r
radio operator Sgt. Kenny
waist gunner
tail gunner Cpl. W. J. Kenovich

I retired May 1, 1977 after 36 yrs. of teaching.

Other personal data: I have a brain tumor & am undergoing chemotherapy. I've had surgery & radiation. I am improving some but can't remember everything I used to.

Lt. Wm. Dooley (original co-pilot) finished his missions & flew PR315 on air-sea rescue. He was trying to rescue someone & last seen off the

Description of Air Missions: Holland coast & never seen again. (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?)

I witnessed Hanover, Hamburg, Kiel, Bremen, Schweinfurt, & Stuttgart raids in 1943. I was a Bomber. I was shot down on the Stuttgart Gen. raid, led by Gen. Travis. I landed between Amiens, Bouvau, Gorney France after parachuting & landing in an apple tree. I was injured badly in my left hip & leg - cut my chin & ears. Spent 21 days in a hay stack barn - couldn't walk. When I could he moved me to Paris to a Lady Mr. The underground helped me walk over the Pyrenees mts. thru Andora & Spain to Gibraltar where I was flown back to Eng. I was shot down Sept. 5, 1943 & returned to Eng. last of Nov. 1943. Returned to Calif. Dec 18, 1943. My brother LeRay Winter, Sgt. was in the British G.2 office too. He had been shot down on the Plo Foggia, St. rain & had been a prisoner in Italy. He escaped & had been returned to Eng. Each thought the other had come to identify him, neither knew the other was missing in action.

I was in London once when a large bomb hit a dance hall & killed about 500 people.

I saw 45 or 50 planes go down on the Schweinfurt raid (I think 80 or 90 were lost that day). I saw about 30 planes go down before we bailed out on the Stuttgart raid.

Add additional pages, if necessary

Bill Dooley wrote my account of the Schweinfurt raid.

'WIDEWING': The USAAF Phase

Excerpts from **After the Battle** on page 11:

"The build-up of US forces in the UK in 1942 included the dispatch to Britain of the Eighth Air Force. It had been decided at the 'Arcadia' conference that the first Allied offensive against Germany should be the extension of strategic bombing from Britain. Brigadier General Ira C. Eaker was to set up an independent bomber command, separate from the RAF, which would be the first establishment of the Eighth Air Force in Britain.

In February 1942, Eaker arrived with six other USAAF officers and they were at first attached to 'Southdown', Headquarters RAF Bomber Command, at Walter's Ash, near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Eaker himself lived for a time with the newly appointed command, Air Marshal (Arthur "Bomber") Harris, in his house, Springfield. The Americans observed British methods closely in the large underground operations room at Southdown and on April 15 set up parallel VIII Bomber Command Headquarters at Wycombe Abby, previously a girl's school. This, the first Eighth AFHQ in the ETO (Bomber Command), was known by the code-name 'Pine-tree'.

For about five months in 1942 (February to June), Eaker acted as the receiver of forces from the USA, whilst General (Carl 'Tooe') Spaatz was the dispatcher based in America under the Air Chief-of-Staff, General (Hap) Arnold. Spaatz arrived in Britain in June 1942 to take command of the new Eighth Air Force, the head-quarters of which was located at Bushy Park, to be known by the code name 'Widewing' . . ."

"When General Spaatz arrived

to see General Eaker's 'Pine-tree' headquarters before moving into 'Widewing'. His aide, Major 'Sy' Bartlett, sought out and found for him a residence known as Park House at 45 Inner Park Road, Wimbledon . . . His Chief of Staff, General Asa Duncan, the first commander of the Eighth Air Force, who would soon perish in an air crash, lived at nearby No. 33."

'Widewing' The SHAEF Phase

On page 15 one finds these words:

At the end of 1943, the Bushy Park base was reorganized, Eighth Air Force HQ being located at Wycombe Abby, while USSAFE (United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe, soon rechristened USSTAF-US Strategic Air Force) was set up at 'Widewing' under General Spaatz, who now controlled the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy as well as the Eighth in Britain from February 4, 1944."

Norfolk House

Norfolk House in Saint James Square is within walking distance of Saint James palace and a little further from Buckingham Palace. It is roughly between The Mall and Picadilly Street. General Eisenhower wrote from there on 12 July, 1945, "The Board Room of the British Aluminium Co, Ltd., in Norfolk House, will always occupy a place in British and American History.

It was here that the attack on North Africa and the Continent of Europe was planned." Signed: Dwight D. Eisenhower, General of the Army, U.S. Army".

Versailles

SHAEF had to move forward and on page 45 one finds this about **SHAEF Main Hq: Versailles:** (See cover photo!)

"There was little time to settle in at Jullouville and perhaps make improvements to the facilities because Eisenhower

had decided almost immediately to transfer SHAEF Forward Headquarters at Versailles. General Bull announced on September 10 that the headquarters would close at Jullouville and re-open at the Trianon Palace Hotel, Versailles, on September 20 at the Trianon Palace Hotel, Versailles.

Your editor encourages any history buff readers to seek out **After the Battle** and get a very interesting factual account of a British view of American activity.

Editor's Note: Two men in Britain have in a real sense adopted your editor and his wife and we feel active reciprocation. Nigel Dawe and Brian Prior played extremely active positive roles in bringing into fruition the 8th Air Force Memorial at High Wycombe on July 23 and 24 of 1994. Both men are active in the Ridgeway Military Aviation Research Group in Britain. It was they who solved many of our challenges and problems for the Memorial at Pinetree. Without them there probably would not have been the successful development of the Memorial to the 350,000 who served in the WW II overseas 8th Air Force.

Ridgeway, by the way, is the name of a very ancient road following a ridge which is very generally between Oxford and Swindon to the south.

The Group has been very active in developing memorials to Americans who served in Britain in WW II. They elected your editor to honorary membership in this august body. He and his wife Dorothy attended one of the meetings of the Group at Welford AFB.

Your highly mobile editor in WW II was photographed at Versailles! Oops. See cover of alone in a crowd.

Winter's Winter in the Pyrenees - the Pre-D-Day Escape Route by August Winter

by Eric Hawkinson (Account based on interviews, audio tape interview of August Winter and printed and hand written material).

My friend, Lucille Winter, of Vallejo went to the Pyrenees in 1993. Lucille, the widow of 306th Bomb Group Bombardier August Winter, and family members were scouting the Pyrenees Mountains about 50 years after August and his air crew evaded the enemy through evasion in France. Lucille said, "For many years I've wanted to go to Spain to see where August walked in the fall of 1943, so by chance my trip happened 50 years ago to the month." (Editor's note: Lt. Winters (later Captain) was shot down in September on the first raid to Stuttgart, Germany. He got back to England in November where he met his brother Le Roy. Neither knew the other had been missing in action. Lee was a prisoner of war in Italy and escaped by hiding in a rain barrel during changing of the guard!)

Lucille continued, "August finally got back to Los Angeles December 18, 1943. What a wonderful Christmas present!"

She also said, "August wanted to go back to see where he walked. He never went back because he died in 1978 at the age of 61 years.

"My son Tom, his wife Margery, Tom's friend Dennis Scott (his roommate at Cal Poly and an architect co-worker) and I went to Spain and Portugal for three weeks in October, 1993."

"Tom drove down to Andorra where August had been." (Editor's note: Andorra is one of the smallest countries in the world! In size it covers less land than the City of New York and only about 25,000 or so persons live in this small city-state which for years had been cut off from the rest of the world. Elevations range from 2,756 feet to 9,665 feet above sea level. The official name of Andorra is Catalan and it is ruled by the princes of Andorra, the bishop of Urgel, Spain and the president of France.)

Mrs Winter continued, "The mountains are similar in places like the Colorado Rockies and places like the Sierra in California. The pass we crossed was 8,000 feet. The day we were there was very cold, with light snow on the peaks. August told me many times that he only had on a ladies' nylon blouse and thin oxfords, with nails coming into this heel. I don't know how he and others survived the rugged terrain with little food. He said he found and ate apples one night and found the next morning they were full of worms."

Lucille said, "I appreciated Tom going and driv-

ing because tours never went to Andorra or to Gibraltar where I especially wanted to go. There August ate many olives (which he loved) but they made him sick. From here he was flown back to London - Number 1 Downing Street where he met LeRoy. Gibraltar is a big rock full of many holes.

"It was a nostalgic trip and fun to share with Tom and Margery, since it could not be with August. Tom and a friend had been in Barcelona in 1971, so we also visited where he stayed and ate."

Your Editor has been planning all year to write this story and now through sheer coincidence, some of the account is contained in the October 1993, 306th Bomb Group **Echoes**, edited by Russell Strong. The front page account is entitled "Taking the Long Way Home: The Evasion of Ed Maslanka". This 12 December 1943 writing is taken from the "E & E Report No. 222: Evasion in France. Edward L. Maslanka, 1st Lt., 368 Bomb Squadron, 306 Bomb Group, a 23 year old with one year and nine months of service was MIS 6 September 1943, arrived in Spain 29 October 1943, arrived in Gibraltar 10 November 1943 and arrived in the UK 20 November 1943.

"Members of the crew in addition to 1st Lt. August Winter, were Pilot 2nd Lt. Wesley D. Peterson, MIA; Co-Pilot 1st Lt. Edward L. Maslanka, Narrator; Navigator 2nd Lt. Donald E. Phillips, MIA; Radio Operator T/Sgt William B. Plaskett, Jr., MIA; Top Turret Gun T/Sgt William L. Utley, MIA; Ball Turret Sgt. Frederick E. Huntsinger, MIA; Waist Gunner Sgt William E. Scott, Jr. and Tail Gunner, S/Sgt Douglas G. Wright, MIA." The following are your Editor's excerpts:

"About 0600 hours on 6 September 1943 we took off from Thurleigh to bomb Stuttgart, I thought we flew the course as briefed, but the navigator said that we went in at 22,000 feet and started back at 17,000 feet, when we should have done the reverse. . . ." ". . . After we released our bomb, we figured we had just enough gas to get to the Channel and ditch, with a slim chance we might make the English coast. We could see the Alps, and a lot of fellows turned off to Switzerland, but we decided that we would try to make it to the Channel. . . ." ". . . For about five minutes we were flying with zero indicated on all tanks. . . ." ". . . The pilot and I yelled over the interphone the order to bail out. . . ." ". . . The Bombardier did not want to go out the nose and came tearing back to the bomb bay. I went out at about 17,000 feet." ". . . I could see only one chute far above me; I believed it was the bombardier's. . . ." August said that at the bomb-bay he actually pushed the frightened co-pilot out for the jump. He also went to the radio area and

tried to talk a frightened enlisted man into abandoning ship. The enlisted man said he would rather go down with the B-17! Later it was ascertained by an eye witness that nine chutes left the plane. Most of the crew was captured and imprisoned.

Winter reported a too-tight chute strap which cut the muscles internally in his hip. He was knocked out on impact with the ground and when he came to he was bleeding on his chin and out of his ears. FW 190's were circling the area as Winter's chute gyrated and was descending at a good rate of speed. He looked for a soft place to land and meant to avoid 2 barbed wire fences along a cow lane on a farm. He hit an apple tree like a bullet and passed out again.

(The B-17 was in the triangular area with Paris to the southeast, Gourney-en-Bray to the northwest and Beauvais directly north of Paris.)

Maslanka reported: "The French seemed unwilling to do much for me . . ." "When I had walked about half a mile, I came to a farmyard just off a road. About ten people were crowded in it. I walked up to them and said that I was an American aviator. I pulled out my phrase sheet and with it asked them if they could help me. They stood around as if they did not know what to do. I suddenly was struck by the fact that they all seemed to be smoking, and the cigarets were not home-made affairs. In fact, they looked like American cigarets. I suspected that one of my crew members must be around and asked them where he was. They went to some bushes rather reluctantly, and pulled out my bombardier, Lt. Winter. They took us both to a haystack and covered us up. "

August winter said the French took his flying clothes off and buried them. He was cold. He tried to walk and couldn't walk forward. When a dog barked, the French took off since patrols of Germans were in the vicinity. He looked for a place to hide and slid under a patch of blackberry bushes on his hands and knees. Later the French returned and pulled him out by his legs since he was immobile. They tried to feed him and he couldn't eat because of shock. They gave him whiskey. Later they hid August and Maslanka in a hay shock in a barn. Later the French dug them out and said they had to leave. The German patrols were back in the area.

Thirty-four B-17's were in trouble and a lot of them had run out of fuel. Fighters and ground patrols were searching for the evadees.

The frightened French told August the way to go and he feared he could not survive the cold without his flight clothing. He went out and looked for help. His companion was separated from him and they did not meet until in England three months later. He learned there that a German patrol had

come between them and his companion had to hide. The French underground, the Maquis, aided his companion but August hid once again in blackberry bushes.

Wandering around in tremendous shock and pain, he tried to forage for himself. As a former farmboy, he heard a familiar sound of a cow being milked. A French woman was milking a cow as August was approaching her from behind a typical French two wheel cart. She upon seeing August brought forth a young boy about 14 or 15 years of age. The young lad assisted August to walk about a half mile. August passed out from the pain. They approached a shack-lean-to where there was stored hand-baled hay. August was hid in the hay and the boy left. In the next week to ten days the boy periodically returned with whiskey and apple cider. August now felt he was succumbing to pneumonia and wondered too if he was not allergic to the hay material in which he was hidden.

So, a B-17 heading from the north of Paris area for the coast and the English Channel, just did not make it for lack of fuel. Remember that the entire Continent was occupied at the time by the Nazi forces. How to evade capture and possibly get back to England?

August was in no physical condition for any traveling. The free French got him to a lady doctor in Paris where she hid him and treated him for two weeks.

Going southwest of France to the treacherous Pyrenees or south to Switzerland were possible answers. My estimate is that August was about 400 miles, using a direct air route, from the Pyrenees. How far would it be by train or walking? August headed for the Pyrenees!

The Pyrenees is a mountain chain that forms a natural barrier between France and Spain, a distance of about 270 miles and cover about 20,000 square miles. These mountains extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Bay of Biscay. Even though the average height is 3,500 feet there are many peaks that rise over 10,000 feet. Pico de Aneto is 11,169 feet above sea level. None of this terrain could be inviting to downed airmen wishing to escape and yet there were no options until after D-Day on June 6, 1944.

American airmen could be subjected to crossing the glacier fields on the northern slopes of these mountains. There are, however, two railways which cross them. One runs from Pau, France to Saragossa, Spain by way of Canfranc Tunnel. The other railway runs from Toulouse, France to Barcelona, Spain. There are 40 tunnels in a 57 mile central section in the Pyrenees and this line crosses at a mile high point.

August feigned being a deaf mute as he rode the

train for part of his journey south to the Pyrenees. He could understand German so was able to ascertain what German troops were saying in various places in which August found himself.

A free-French partisan served as the guide for the group of Allied personnel who were to walk over the mountains. They wended their way into Spain and then to Gibraltar. From there it was a flight to England.

Editor's Note: Lucille Winter, widow of August, died on March 7, 1995 as the result of complications of cancer.

More On the Murmansk Run

Do you remember reading "The Russians Recognize Dick Brown" on page 22 of the February 1994 Journal?

One of my good UK buddies read that article. Remember where Dick said, he had made a trip to Benson and talking with Britons over tea? Dick said, "To one such fellow, I made the remark that I had done the Murmansk run on a Liberty ship as a cargo security officer taking the supplies from England via Murmansk to the bases in the Murmansk."

My good buddy is Nigel Dawe whose words have been found in various Journals. Nige is a member of the Ridgeway Military and Aviation Research Group in Britain.

He lives in Abingdon near Oxford.

So whom did Dick Brown speak with at Benson? It was Bill King, Chairman of the Ridgeway Group! This is what Nigel Dawe said in a 1994 letter: "The fellow that Dick Brown spoke to at Benson was none other than our Group Chairman, Bill King. I was standing with them when Bill mentioned his father's recent Russian convoy medal! Would you pass on to Dick our congratulations. If Bill had Dick's address, I'm sure he would like to write to him with personal regards. Its nice to hear of people getting deserved medals courtesy the Ridgeway Group! Not quite, but you know what I mean."

Bill King and the Ridgeway Military and Aviation Research Group played a very significant role in the 8th AF Memorial and Glenn Miller anniversary concert at Pinetree (High Wycombe Abbey) on July 23 and 24, 1994. Notably helpful were many members of the Group, but with intensive help over many months to bring the weekend into fruition were Nigel Dawe and Brian Prior.

1944:

On June 5 the French Resistance carried out nearly 1,000 attacks on railway lines and engines to prevent the Germans from moving troops.

What You Leave Behind - An Editorial

This editorial appeared in the June 1989 "Air Power" of the General James H. Doolittle Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society. evh

Lou Dubnow wanted a replica of a WWII 8th AF Control Tower constructed somewhere in the United States, the interior to be used as a museum display. Lou and I corresponded early in March of 1989 because as a Unit Contact for the Flying Control Veterans Association he was checking in with me as the Chairman of the Unit Advisory Committee of the 8th AF Historical Society. By mid-March Lou's wife phoned to say he had just suddenly died.

In April, I announced the death of Lou to the 8th AFHS Board meeting in Denver. I asked about the control tower possibilities. Maj Gen (ret.) Lew Lyle explained the reluctance of the Wright-Patterson AF Museum to display a control tower there.

Some of the upsurge in WW II interest among currently living (and aging) veterans is the direct result of the recognition that we will soon be gone to the Great Hangar in the Sky. This creates the great fascination we have with out WW II units, their reunions, old buddies, memorial services, the stored mementoes, memorials and related museums.

We want to leave something tangible behind to memorialize that we have lived, what we did and what our units did.

Time is running out. One minute we are here. A moment later and we are gone. Your editor regularly gets phone calls, letters and other notices from widows, widowers and children who are announcing the death of a WW II veteran.

These are the days for getting our lives and "houses" in order. What instead of a control tower did you mean to leave behind? Do it now.

Addendum: A WWII Control Tower, British style, has now been completed at Wright-Patterson AFB. We are told that a Control Tower will also be a part of the 8th AF Heritage Center at Savannah, Georgia.

D-Day Postponement

D-Day had actually been postponed for 24 hours due to bad weather. Forecasters predicted a 36-hour window of calm for the invasion. Because of the tides, the next invasion date would have to be two weeks later.

1 February 1980

Mrs. August Winter
501 Jennings
Vallejo, CA 94590

Dear Mrs. Winter:

As you will note from the above address, I have moved since seeing you last June in Vallejo.

I actually went to work for a university I had worked for before in my home town, hence there was considerable interest in the move, last October. But we didn't get the house sold and ready to move until Christmas, so your tapes arrived in the middle of this flurry, and they are now sitting on top of my desk in a box.

Unfortunately, I have not even had time to listen to them, but the bulk of the work of settling and repairing a house ought to be over in another couple of weeks and I'll get back to my book.

I do appreciate your thoughtfulness in getting copies for me, and I am sure that I will find them most interesting. I am proceeding along with the writing of the book, now on Chapter 7, but my efforts have slowed considerably since Thanksgiving.

I must apologize for not informing you sooner of their arrival, but I hope you will forgive my inattention.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

Jan. 1 P. 1980

Dear Mr. Strong,

I finally sent you the cassettes that August made of his Army air force & escape story. It was just before Xmas so I wondered if you actually got them. Did you? I hope so & I hope the information will be of help to you.

August always wished that the escape story of he & Le Roy could be written. Wonder if any brothers had

Aloha from Hawaii

such an experience
not many, if any.

Sincerely,
Lucille Wenter

M

August Winter's story
July 23, 1947

My final examination for selective service was successfully completed five days after Pearl Harbor. I ~~thought~~ ^{thought} then that some form of military service was inevitable, and ~~my mind~~ ^{my mind} ~~turned~~ ^{instantly} turned to the air corp with every boys dream of being a pilot. I immediately proceeded to submit my application for flying training. Several weeks later, I completed my pre-flight physicals (medical 64) and was soon sworn in as an aviation cadet.

I was given leave, but was called early. I began my first gree~~ely~~ (^{ly}?) duties as a soldier - March 28, 1942. From this date until June 8, my time was utilized at pre-flight school at Santa Ana, California. Being classified a Bombardier, I studied physics, math, code (radio), air craft identification, cryptography, photography, marching - drilling, K.P., and various other army duties.

Leaving Santa Ana June 10, '42, we were soon to find our orders directed us to Victorville, Calif for advanced bombardier training. After three grueling months in the hot desert of Calif, I was about reach my long sought goal - - those coveted gold bars and a pair of silver wings. This day - Sept. 5 - was indeed a glorious day. Much joy and

guide can never again be equalled. My orders at a 2nd Lt. read - Second Air Force Distribution Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. Staying there, only long enough to have my orders cut, I was again the train heading for 1st phase training at Boise, Idaho. There I spent little time on duty, as it was a B-17 pilot transition training field. After one month, we were again on the train, heading for 2nd phase training at Alamogordo, New Mex. En route, I met Lt. D. E. Whipple who was to be the pilot of ~~my~~ ^{our} crew.

At Alamogordo, we were assigned to squadrons and were introduced to the rest of our crew. ~~The~~ ^{the following} ~~was~~ ^{men} composed of my crew:

- 2nd Lt. D. E. Whipple - pilot
- 2nd Lt. Wm. J. Hooley - co-pilot
- 2nd Lt. J. E. Shelley - navigator
- 2nd Lt. A. Wintere - bombardier
- 1st Lt. Roy Goodwin - engineer (top turret gun)
- 1st Lt. D. J. Fremper - asst. engineer - call
- 1st Lt. D. E. Fitch - turret gunner
- 1st Lt. ~~Wm.~~ Kenney - radio operator
- 1st Lt. W. J. Lenovich - waist gunner

Several days later, we took off for our first practice mission as a combat crew. It was on one of these missions that our crew was nearly lost. Two engines (no. 1 & 3 engines) caught fire on the take-off and the ship contained nearly 3,000 gallons of

to land with three engines, we finally
~~landed the ship without damage &~~
~~any~~ brought our ship safely to
 the ground while no's 1 & 3 engines
 were still burning. We quickly jump
 ed to the ground and stood around
 laughing at our ^{actions and} ~~unpleasant~~ ^{upstairs} ~~unpleasant~~.

On our take-off, I noticed the engine
 running furiously from my position in the
 nose. I yelled to my navigator on the
 interphone and he let out a nervous
 whoop. The pilot brought the ship
 around to land it, but in the
 excitement, he overshot the field and
 jugged the throttles in order to get the
 ship back into the air. The engines
 began to sputter all the more. At
 about 100 ft., our pilot feathered the
 props ^{prop 3 engine} ~~prop 1~~ ^{after} ~~prop 1~~ unsuccessful attempt
 to extinguish the fire with extin-
 guishers. About ~~then~~ this time, I
 began to feel my fringes of panic. We
 completed the final approach again
 and soon discovered that Whipple
 had overshot the field again. He
 immediately began a 360° turn
 into the lead engine. I was still in
 the nose - landing lights had been turned

on. - I looked down and saw the ground but a few feet away. Strapping on my parachute immediately, I made a B. line for the rear part of the plane. As I passed Shelley - I heard the words - Chicken. He looked out to see the ground coming up to and felt him pushing me on before I had reached the bomb bay door. With my parachute on, I found ~~myself~~ it impossible to force my way thru the bomb bays, even with the efforts of my navigator. Being helplessly caught between 800 gal. of gas, panic seized me and I ripped my chute to shreds trying to dash into the radio room ~~where~~ ^{where chaos} reigned among the enlisted men. With that, it started I felt the plane hit ground. It bounced several times, then settled neatly, and I knew we were safe. By then we had all lined up by the back escape door for a quick exit from the burning ship. That was my first experience of cheating death.

Our third phase training took us to Topeka, Kansas. Here we made long navigational ^{hope} and bombardier ^{hope} missions. We were being prepared for overseas duties. Shots, vaccinations, etc. were being given special attention.

To our surprise, our crew was selected to become O.T.U. instructors at Casper, Wyoming instead of being sent directly to embarkation points. At Casper, I was soon advanced to Sgt. Bomb. at which position I was recommended to the grade of 1st Lt.

Feb. 2nd. 1943, we received unexpected embarkation orders foralina, Kansas. Upon arrival, we were immediately processed and briefed for detour debarcation for overseas duty. We were given a new B-17 23-084 which we slow-tuned, calibrated ~~and~~ all the instruments - and generally made ready for the hop across the ocean.

Feb. 7, 1942, my fiancée, Miss Lucille Andrew arrived from Santa Ana, Calif. to say goodbye. I had found a nice room for her in the home of Mrs. E. Brown. after difficult hunting.

February 14, 1942 we were married - valentine gifts - to each other. Then Feb. 20 my promotion to 1st Lt. came thru. We were awfully happy.

March 4, 1942, we took off for Ft West Palm Beach, Florida. Upon arrival, we received ^{new} orders for debarcation to points east. In a vain attempt to stall for time, we

detected a few small defects, in the
air craft. This delayed us three or
four days, giving some minor time to
arrive from Salina by train to say
a last goodbye.

On the morning of March 9, our plane
left the good old soil of the U.S. Army.
never to return. ~~Of the crew of, which~~
~~only one member returned~~ ~~but~~
11 of our crew, four are prisoners, one
two were killed in action, one was
severely wounded and returned to the
U.S., and ~~two~~ one whereabouts unknown,
and one shot down over enemy occupied
territory and escaped.

We landed at Trinidad, Br. Guiana for
our first stop. Our stay there was three
days - taking off for George Town, Brazil
March 12. en route, we ran into our
first tropical weather - violent squalls.
We stayed in George Town only one
night, and I had to guard the plane.
On this landing, we discovered that
we had luckily escaped ~~with~~ what
would have been a disastrous fire.
Our wind shields wiped, had an elec-
trical short circuit, and started a fire.
Quick action on the part of the engineer
put out the blaze.
The following day we took off for Natal,

stragedy, which we should never have.
The weather was terrifically sultry and
were the day. We gave the ship a
hundred hour inspection in preparation
for our hop to Ashmun, Africa March 18.
En route, we encountered one of the worst
electrical storms imaginable. This ex-
perience gave me my first terrific flight,
which were later to become so
prevalent. The terrific were the up
and down drafts of the storm that
we were climbing several thousands feet
per minute. With the power off and at
250 miles per hour. At times the electri-
city was so strong that checks of planes
(better known as St. Anne's fire) were
visible on all leading edges of the plane
and the propellers. It was so light,
I could ^{have} read a paper in the nose of
the ship. ~~Navigation~~ ^{Baron} finally arrived and our
navigator was sure we were miles
off course. Knowing we were better than
650 miles at sea, and position uncer-
tain, we began to look for possible
breaks in the clouds so we got a
star fix so as to determine our
position. Our prayers were answered
the ^{sky} cleared enough to give us sever

minutes for a 3 star fix. No sooner
 had we received the fix on those 3
 stars, than the clouds again covered
 the sky. (These 3 stars were probably the
 only ^{ones} remaining in the gas just growing
 daylight. These stars were identified
 by a star map and our position deter-
 mined to be 75 miles off course to
 left of course. At three hours after
 change of course, land was sighted.

Destination - Babar Airport - was
 dead end. Emergency was jubilant
 and thankful.

At Babar we stayed 2 days,
 then proceeded to Marrakech, No. Africa.
 Here we viewed our first air raid
 damage. The attention of was still
 pretty high since the Germans had
 just been driven out 2 months before.

Barely had our wheels touched
 ground, when a messenger boy
 rushed out with a despatch for
 the pilot saying our destination
 had been changed to England.

After two days in Marrakech we
 took off at 1:00 a.m. for the north.

On arriving in England with
 we landed in England with
 at 1:00 a.m.

17 May 1977

Mr. August Winter
501 Jennings Avenue
Vallejo, CA 94590

Dear August:

Many thanks for the loan of these materials. I have inspected them and copied those parts I need for my collection. They tell me a great deal and are important in forming a total picture of the 306th and its men.

Interestingly, many of the best and most exciting stories are not recorded anywhere--those involving men missing in action. I have a number of good evadee stories now in my collection, as well as some thrilling stories about those who were captured.

In your materials I have only one major question: What was the deal with the P-38, and how did this involve the 306th or its personnel? Also, do you know anything about Kosakowski? I have no information on him, other than that he came from Reno, and would like to locate him.

I hope that your health continues to improve, and if I can ever figure out a way to get to California again, I'll visit you. I was there a couple of years ago and did see John Regan at that time--a non-stop talker who was fascinating to listen to.

Thanks again for your invaluable help.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

APR. 12 1977

SUBJECT: Mailing list.

Referred by:

Your name has been submitted as a former member of the 306th Bomb Group, Thurleigh. We have had two Stateside reunions - Miami '75 and Dayton '76. The 306th had the largest turn-outs at both reunions. Reunions in '77 - England in August, St Louis in October.

TO: William M Collins Jr
2973 Heatherbrae Dr
Poland, Ohio 44514

Yes, add my name to the mailing list.

August WINTER 501 Jennings Ave. Vallejo, Ca 94590
NAME ADDRESS ZIP

306th BG. - 368th Sqd
SQ OR UNIT

Feb. 1943 to Sept. 5, 1943 when shot down in
YR(S) ASSIGNED

Please send stamped, self-addressed envelope (letter size) or stamps or donation to cover cost of maintaining mailing lists. *France. Walked out,*

I was stationed at Bovington, Eng;

over andorra, thru Spain to Gibraltar. Returned to Eng. Nov 1943. Returned to Calif.

Dec. 18, 1943.

2/23/44

Dear Russel Strong,

The 306th Echoes came yesterday, but the story of The Evasion of Ed Maslanka was not concluded. The Oct. Echoes said it would be continued in Jan. I hope it will be in the next issue. If not, could you please send me the end of the story?

My son, - his wife & I went to Spain in Oct. Tom took me to Andorra where August crossed when he walked out of France. We also went to Gibraltar where August ended

I was flown back to
England where he met
his brother Le Roy who had
escaped from prison in Italy.
They met in London neither
one knowing the other had
been missing in action.

It was coincidental that
we were in Andorra 50
years after August had
walked there. Just thought
you might like to know!

Yours truly,
Lucille Winter
Mrs. August Winter

May 21, 1977

Dear Russell,

The B-38's were to have been used to bomb several kinds of missile sites. We (Kosakowski & I plus several others) were briefed to use these planes with two 1000 lb. bombs slung under the wings. IY was to be low level bombing. QV was very secret.

I never went on such a mission & since I was shot down, I don't know if they were used or not. QV does seem that I read in "The mighty 8th" that they were used, but not too successfully.

I don't know anything about Kosakowski except that he was from Reno. I did meet

his brother 25 or 30
years ago at a golf
tournament in Santa
Cruz. He was going to
the St. of Nevada in Reno.

Perhaps you could
get an address if you
wrote to the Chamber
of Com. on the Amer-
ican Legion in Reno.

Could you send
me John Regan's
address?

I would like to go
to Eng. with the 306th
in Aug. & Sept., but
am physically unable
maybe there will be
another time.

Sincerely,
August Winter