



## 306th Bombardment Group Association



Sheraton Twin Towers, Scene of the 8th Reunion

## Reunion in Orlando Set For Oct. 31-Nov. 2

Reunion time is not far off now, and all of you should be making plans to make your way to Orlando, FL, for the October 30 opening of events there.

For your convenience, a registration form is included in this issue, and can be mailed as directed, along with your check.

This will be the sixth reunion of the 8th Air Force, and on the previous five occasions, the 306th has led in number of men present. It is intended that the 306th will continue to be first in attendance.

The Sheraton Twin Towers, at Interstate 4 and the Sunshine State Parkway is the convention center this year, located only 15 minutes from Disney World, downtown Orlando and the Orlando International Airport.

Those registering in advance, and arriving by air, will be able to also schedule transportation between airport and hotel.

Friday afternoon has been set for the Unit Rendezvous. The 306th men expect to have their own hospitality room and a dinner that evening with their own program.

Friday a tour of the Space, Wing and Wheels Museum is planned, and on Saturday the reunion banquet is planned, with dancing to follow with Vaughn Monroe's Orchestra.

Eighth Air Force reunions began in Miami Beach, and have been held in Dayton, St. Louis, Washington and Phoenix. Each time the 306th has held a concurrent reunion. Last year another reunion was held in Colorado Springs two weeks before the Phoenix get-together.

Handling various arrangements are William M. Collins, Ralph Border, Dallas L. Jacobs and Wilson Elliott.

## Now Registered

By July 10, the 8th AF Reunion committee had already received reservations for the October-November conclave from the following 306th men (and a widow):

Warren Day, Robert Sage, Leslie Turner, Kenneth Norris, William Carlisle, Casey Jones and John Howard.

Saul Kupferman, Jack Hubbard, George Roberts, Joe Gabrish, Charles Schwach, Russell Strong, Douglas Schrack, John Grimm, Bill Perry, Jack Schmidt and Robert Lavery.

Mrs. Catherine (Joseph) Brennan.



A 306th ceramic mug with YOUR squadron insignia and your name is now available, created under the direction of Casey Jones, onetime Group navigator. They sell for \$10 each. Send your name as you want it to appear on the mug, and your squadron, to LTC C. F. Jones, 40 Arthur Matthew East, Hanover, MA 02339.

## New Book Tells Tales of 1943 Experiences of 379th Navigator

**The Fall of Fortresses**  
by Elmer Bendiner  
New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons,  
1980, 258 pp.

Elmer Bendiner was there! "A personal account of the most daring—and deadly—American air battles of World War II" is a subtitle for this newly-published work, and that is probably a reasonably accurate description. A navigator with the 379th Bomb Group at Kimbolton, Bendiner arrived to face the battle in April of 1943, and flew on beyond Black Thursday, 14 Oct. 43.

He did fly both Schweinfurt raids, but does not overly dwell on them. He does detail most of the raids on which he flew and writes with real feeling about them.

This is the best personal reminiscence we have yet seen, and in part this is true because Bendiner is a professional writer—this being his third book.

But, it took a long time and a lot

of thought to bring his feelings and observations together—35 years. His memory is good and he has carefully researched much of his material, as well as searching out surviving members of his original crew to pick their brains for other bits and pieces.

Because he writes with feeling, he does not in all cases identify his fellow crew members, and this reviewer would agree it was a wise policy. No purpose is served, historical or otherwise, to "bell" some of the men for their shortcomings.

Any Eighth Air Force personnel will find this an intriguing account of the combat action; he takes a good look at non-flyers as well; he castigates some for their failures to perform; he views also some of the goings-on that were a part of those halcyon times; and he deals with candor about his own participation in many events.

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## Deceased

Maj. Gen. Joseph M. Belser, 368th pilot and flight commander, died June 7 in New York.

Maurice W. Davis, 423rd co-pilot and POW, died in 1979 in Hawaii.

Phillip W. Haberman, Jr., intelligence officer, died 17 July 71 at Perth, Scotland.

Gaylord O. Ritland, 367th pilot and POW, died in 1978.

John T. Threadgill, 423rd and Group equipment officer, died in 1973 in Fort Worth, TX.

James G. Woolbright, 368th co-pilot, died several years after the war in a plane crash.

Frank J. Zuckerman, 449th sub-depot, died 5 Jan. 80 in Port St. Lucie, FL.

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## Paull Reports From Thurleigh

A hot sun is pouring in through my office window as I sit typing this letter to you all, and the countryside is dressed in all those many shades of green which go to make up an English spring. The hedgerows are a mass of white hawthorn blossom and the song of the Skylark twitters above us all over the field. Another sure sign of spring can be seen at the "Jackal," the "Fox," "Falcon" and the "Plough" where the locals who have been entrenched deep in the public bar all winter are now venturing outside onto the tables and benches with their pints.

But times alas have changed as have the drinking habits of the British. Gone are the days of our warm dark beer with its thick creamy head and rich tangy sharp-

# Searching for Names Major History Need

Where have all the names of 306th members come from?

The Army, in its wisdom, never saw fit to maintain a roster of those who came and went in a unit. Only those who were present each day were important.

This has always created problems for historians, and many, many hours have been spent by many men searching through morning reports.

We haven't seen any morning reports from the 306th, and they may no longer exist.

Thus, the best single source of information on 306th members has come from Special Orders, those documents issued every day by the 306th Headquarters, by Station 111, and by other units on a less regular basis.

These are essential, but again, the government is not a lot of help. Those issued after 1 Dec. 43, and by the Bomb Group, are on microfilm, rolls of which can be purchased from the USAF Historical Center at Maxwell AFB, AL.

But those issued before remain essentially a mystery.

The Army Records Center at St. Louis, MO, has the first six Special Orders issued at Wendover, UT, but none can be copied in a readable form.

As historian, I now have the best collection extant of 306th and Station 111 orders, especially for 1942 and 1943. These have not come from official sources, but rather have come from the collections that many officers have maintained in their own 201 files.

Most officers will find in their 201 the orders issued when they reported at Thurleigh. Others will have those issued when they went on leave. Still others will have them for being appointed to boards or placed on detached service or sent to a school.

All of these, from whatever source, and for whatever they contain, are valuable additions to the Group Archives. They often denote the comings and goings, the new

## Fortress

There's pride in her every movement  
And the strength to forge ahead,  
'Till the job is done  
And the battle won,  
Though half of her crew be dead.

There's more to her than engines,  
More than a pair of wings,  
Than rivets and wires  
And rubber tires,  
And all these man-made things.

She has the heart of a warrior  
We know for we've seen her die  
And her gallant fight  
Was an awesome sight  
Far in the dome of the sky.

She has a soul immortal  
She fills her mission well  
With head held high  
We've seen her fly  
Straight to the jaws of hell.

She has a will of iron  
She seeks no chance to hide  
Though her flight be straight  
To the fiery gate  
No fury can turn her aside.

Great is her fame and mighty  
And great is her gallant crew,  
Wherever their base,  
They've won a place  
By the side of the famous few.

You think of her only as metal,  
Welded and riveted strong  
She's a living thing,  
A queen on wing  
Who carries a warrior throng.

Strangers may one day replace her  
Higher and swifter to fly  
But we'll always recall  
She's the top of them all  
The queen of the azure sky.

By Clement L. Lockwood.

appointments, the personnel changes that constantly took place.

Without them it would be exceedingly difficult to actually identify many of the people.

Bill Rader had perhaps the largest collection I've seen. Jim Cheney had a great many, Henry Cordery had one, which is more typical.

The two latest contributions have been Ed Miazza, who had the complete orders for the ground echelons moving from Wendover to Richmond and from Richmond to Fort Dix. Bill Hilton had that for 1 Oct. 43 when he and his crew reported in.

Thurman Dawson and Elbert Odle sent in groups at the same time, from which I culled more than a hundred names to add to my card file.

Now the card file index on 306th personnel probably numbers around 9,000 cards, each with a name, and hopefully serial numbers, units, MOS, dates of arrival, crews, decorations, promotions, and other pertinent data.

For those deceased, a red slash is entered across the card on which there is written pertinent data.

Now, if you have never checked your file, please do so, and if you have records dating before 1 Dec. 43, please send me a copy, or send the original so that I can copy it. Yours will be returned to you within a few days.

# A Night of Revelry, Recorded By 'Fightin' Bitin's Sgt. Potter

The article below is taken from the 369th Squadron history, and gives a little flavor of the activities that went on at Thurleigh when planes were not being loaded, flown or repaired.

By M. Sgt. Frank B. Potter, Jr.

On the first of March 1945, the members of the Fightin' Bitin' Squadron, firm believers in the old saying that all work and no play makes Fightin' Bitin' a dull squadron, gathered around the bar and dance floor of the Enlisted Men's Club for a fling into the lighter side of the life overseas.

The wheels beat the bushes around and about Bedfordshire and scared up about 75 airwomen from the nearby WAAF billets, as well as the same number of gals from the feminine population of that great city so majestically overlooking the fertile banks of the river Ouse.

Needless to say, the boy meets girl angle was accomplished immediately if not sooner, and the happy couples were soon joyfully pushing each other around the dance floor to the soothing strains of the melodious post orchestra. Master Sergeant Hankey even found one capable of holding him erect while he made the round trip from the dance floor to the bar. 1st Sgt. Wood was operating smoothly here, there and everywhere, seeing to it that everyone had a large evening.

On the dance floor Master Sergeant Harnois, the line chief, was doing some fancy steps with a cute little WAAF and was, no doubt, telling her of the beauties of New England, and at the same time displaying his new Air Force battle jacket. Many of the other oldtimers from Engineering, Schrader, Foster, Bonadio, Furay and others didn't seem to be standing too short with the members of the fairer sex. Master Sergeant Sanford and his Armament "Johns" were out in full force and appropriately enough, all seemed well loaded. The men from Communications were well entrenched around the bar where Traynor, Hayes and Wood were perfectly at home and comfortably settled. Traynor led the chorus in the singing of the old Irish songs and the atmosphere was filled with good fellowship and comradeship. Every now and then the steady murmur of conversation and song was pierced by a ringing cry of Fightin' Bitin'. "That" always brings back the memories of other parties of the old Squadron.

At intermission time, 1st Sgt. Wood finally quieted the gang long enough to announce the floor show, which consisted of a group of gals from the County Theatre in Bedford. They came out in their scanty costumes and danced several numbers to the accompaniment of the band and the whistles of the admiring audience. One little gal did a solo dance and Master Sergeant Watts, the idol of Swampscott, Mass., was all eyes and was getting in the best with the dancer.

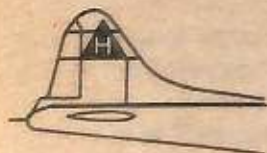
The gunners were operating with their rows of dazzling ribbons and all seemed to be in high spirits—as long as the "spirits" lasted. The blokes from Ordnance were well occupied and didn't seem to be sweating out the probably pre-dawn loading orders. The pencil pushers from the Orderly Room were pushing aside the cares and worries of the paper warfare branch and entertaining themselves hugely. Even "Clanwinkle" Breen wasn't on furlough and was holding up the good name and reputation of the Bombsight Blokes.

Major Venable of the Group S-4 Office was a guest and for once wasn't trying to give someone a hardtime, in fact he was rubbing shoulders with the men both on and off the dance floor and in the bar. S/Sgt. Howell, Sgts. Johnson and Kichak and the other fellows who keep the outfit fed were battling the breeze and helping to deplete the stock of brew that had accumulated in the barroom, while the transportation men were looking for someone to convey safely home.

Judging from the size of the heads the next morning, the blowout was a howling success and thus marked another page in the social history of the Fightin' Bitin' Squadron.



One wonders if this group really were reporting events, or just telling great stories to Lt. William VanNorman, the 306th's public information officer from Wendover to the end of the war.



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EDITOR: RUSSELL A. STRONG, 2041 Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Home 616/344-6466, office 616/383-6160.

CONTACT MAN: WM. M. COLLINS, JR., 2973 Heatherbrae Dr., Poland, OH 44514. 216/757-3463.

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# Prison Camp and the Long Freedom Walk

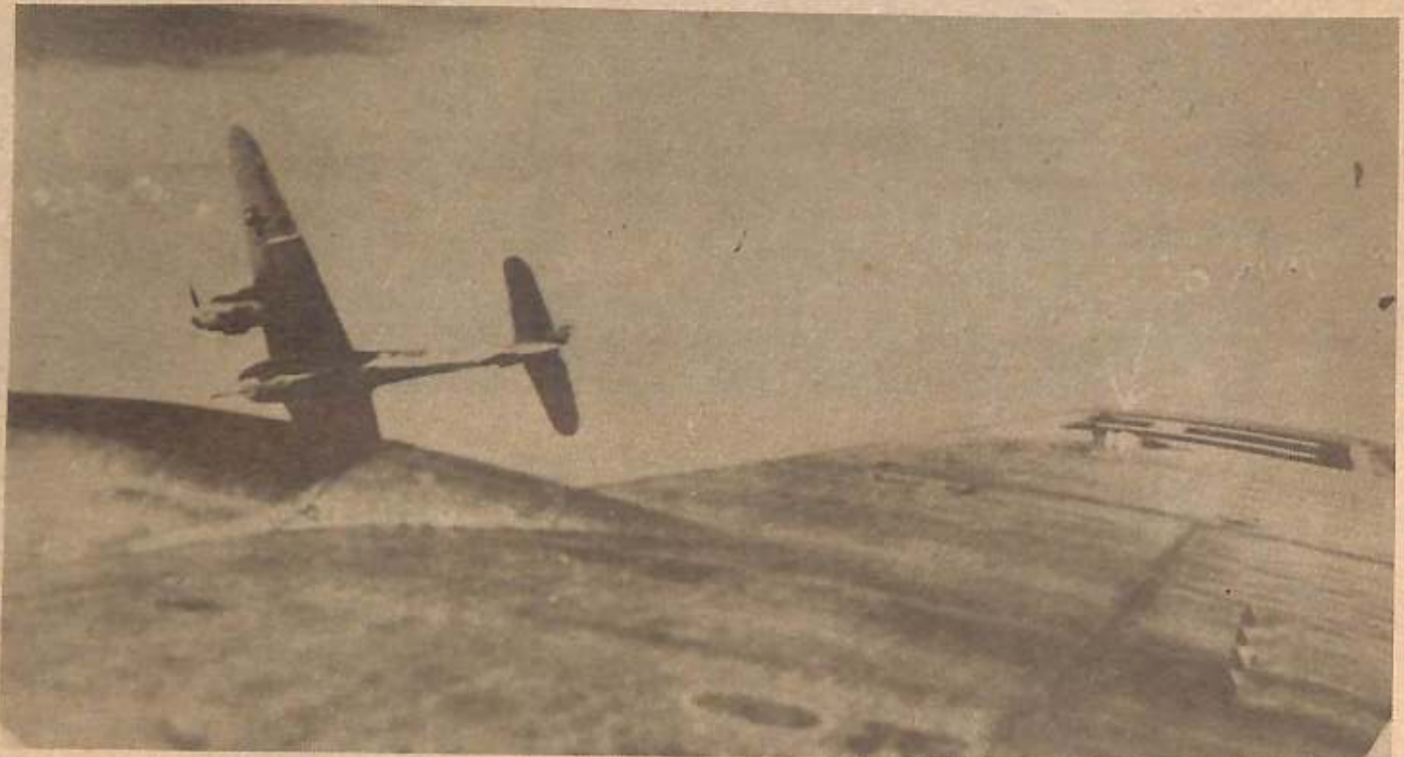
This is part 2 of 2nd Lt. James V. Vaughter's account of his participation in Black Thursday, the 14 Oct. 43 raid on Schweinfurt, which claimed 10 planes from the 306th. This installment covers the later stages of his imprisonment.

Colonel Charles Goodrich was our senior officer, and what a man he was. He was a West Pointer who had been shot down in a B-25 out of North Africa back in 1942. He had been badly hurt in the crash, including a badly broken back that continued to pain him constantly. He remained aloof from the rest of the prisoners, but he constantly watched out for our welfare and he gave the Germans a bad time at every opportunity.

We constantly talked of escape and made plans that were sometimes fantastic. There was quite a formal procedure to go through before attempting to get away. Whenever anyone came up with an idea that he considered gave him a good chance, he had to present the idea to "Red X." If the plan seemed at all reasonable, he was given permission to complete his plans with all the help and assistance possible. "Red X," who was Lt. Col. Clark, a tall, redheaded West Pointer shot down early in the war, gave the approval for escape plans and put out a call for food and supplies for the potential escapees. There was a rigid rule that the plan must not jeopardize those who remained and could not deprive them of their meager necessities. Some ideas were really crazy and some showed great ingenuity. One small person escaped by hiding in a "honey" wagon. He was returned the next day smelling just like someone who had ridden inside the tank of a "honey" wagon.

Around the middle of December, 1944, we began to hear the Russian guns, and we knew things were in a bad way with the Germans. We were pretty watchful of our guards, for we remembered what had happened to the Poles. Rumors were flying thick and fast and our panic plans were rehearsed.

On the evening of January 27, 1945, we were told to get ready to move out at once, and about 2130 we were marched out in formation. The Germans told us they had no time for stragglers and if we fell out, that would be the end of us. There were about 15,000 in our prison, including several nationalities and about 1,500 in our particular compound. We marched all night in a driving snowstorm. It was a bitterly cold night and I



The enemy at close range. Note 20 mm hole in wing.

remember sitting down on an asphalt road. When I started to get up, my pants had frozen to the pavement. At around noon the next day, we were marched up to a barn and were allowed to go inside and lie down for our first real rest. Some had fallen out during the night, and I never saw them again. I was in pretty good shape, as I had taken exercises and long walks around our compound to keep as physically strong as possible.

I never was sick while in camp and the only thing that bothers me today that I attribute to my P.O.W. experience is getting cold very easily, especially the ends of my fingers on my right hand and toes on my left foot. This I attribute to frostbite experienced on this trek in below-freezing temperatures, and insufficient food and clothing. The German bread was frozen so hard that one could not break off a piece to eat. We rested in the barn until evening when we hit the snow and cold again. This time, we walked all night and all the next day. We didn't make as much distance on this march, although we walked several hours longer. We were nearing the end of our strength and the old German guards were dropping out of sight.

I have a little notebook in which I recorded some information about the march. It is in pencil and quite faded today, but here are some of my notes:

"Left Sagan Gate at 21:30 January 27th—30 min. notice—traveled 30 km to ? 20 km trip to Maskau—stayed two days. Cross Selton—30 km; Muskail

—20 km; Groustein—18 km; Sprenberg—7 km; to Moosburg by train 450 km—total 525 km. 2° F."

On the evening of the third day, they marched us to a glass factory. It was a wonderful place to stay. The factory had just been shut down for the night, and the hot bricks made the place warm. A boy laid down by me and as his body hit the warm floor, he said, "I'se dead." I really think he thought he had died and gone to heaven. Many were disabled due to chillblains, blisters, colds, and utter exhaustion (256 stayed behind when we continued the march). It seemed like the first time we had been warm since we could remember, and when the German guards came in and said we would have to move on, Col. Goodrich made a classic retort that is still quoted by Air Force training manuals.

He told the Germans, "We've gone as far as we're going this day. If you try to move us, you'll have to shoot us first." The German guards were glad for any excuse to rest, so we were allowed to rest for the night on the warm bricks.

On January 31, we arrived in Sprenberg at noon and got our first hot food (barley soup). We were transported from Sprenberg to Moosburg by rail (53 men per 8-mule box car).

In the box cars, we were loaded like sardines. There was no room to sit down; there were no sanitary facilities. We were on this filthy train for three days, and each morning it would stop for 15 minutes in open country and the prisoners

would be allowed to get out and relieve themselves in the deep snow.

At Stalag Luft VII in Moosburg, there were over 120,000 prisoners from many nations: Russia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Great Britain, Australia, etc.

There also were millions of fleas and body lice. They about drove me nuts as they crawled over my face, in my hair, and between my toes. I lived in a tent downgrade from an open toilet pit which overflowed and seeped into the tent. Some guys got so weak from diarrhea that they had to be carried to the latrine. There were no Red Cross parcels and no salt. The Germans served soup made from goat bones and vegetables. Some of the men did go insane.

We were liberated on April 29, 1945 by the 14th Armored Division of General Patton's Third Army. In my notebook, I wrote: "At 13:45, April 29, saw American flag go up. Battle started 0900—L-4's flying observation. Heavy machine gun-fire by SS troops returned by fire by American tank forces. Dug foxhole within few minutes using Klim cans, bullets whistled overhead. 12:03 first tank rolled right by front gate—wounded and dead Germans brought in."

Continued in my notebook is:

"April 30, saw my first bread in 18½ months—looked odd—thought of angel food cake.

"May 1st, snowed—ate first white bread in 18½ months—tasted like angel food cake.

"May 2nd, snow on tent tops and

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# And there were days when things



26 March 1944, Lt. McBride's landing



14 July 1943, 42-29959



24 July 1943, from Heroya, Norway



Chennault's Pappy, 18 Nov. 1942



5 February 1944, at Chateaudon Airfield

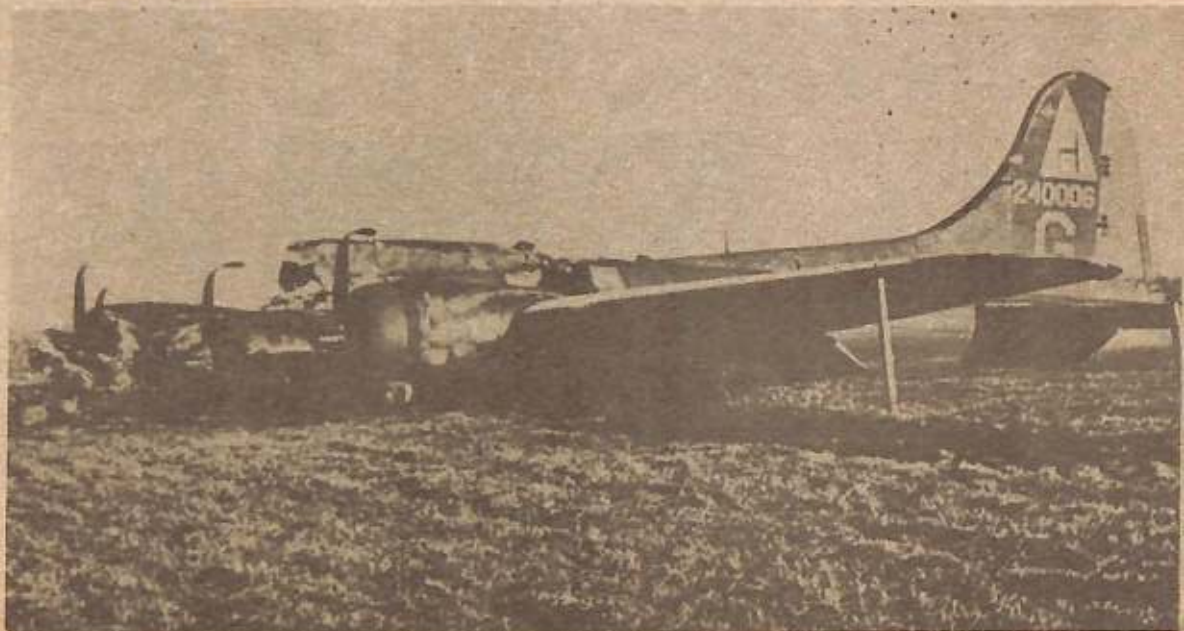


27 July 1944

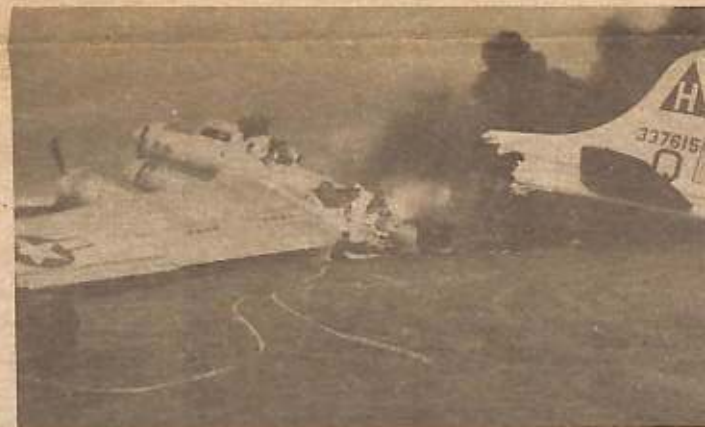
...plan to go well!



...s plane, with Lt. Robert McCallum



6 March 1944, landing in Sweden



27 July 1944

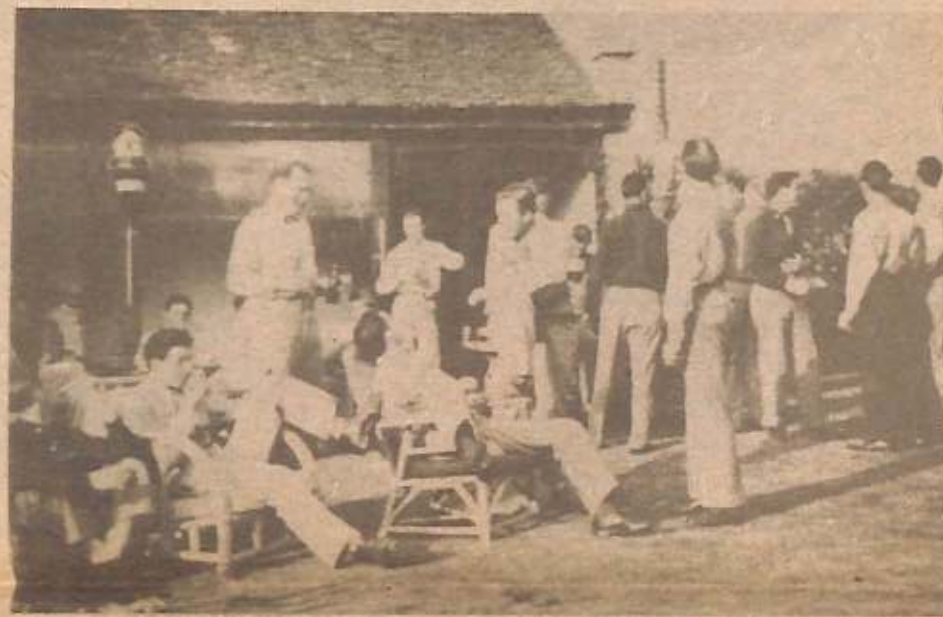


Liberty Belle, 9 October 1943



# The Falcon Inn

Famed in literature, it became a popular spot for 306th personnel, especially in the first year. The two lower pictures are of a 368th party in July 1943.



## Prison Camp and the Long Freedom Walk

From page 3

barracks—went for walk. Stole old hen—tough eating. Wrote Mother V-mail letter.

"May 3rd, C-47 flying over camp—loaded with guys going to England.

"May 4th, no one being moved out today—wrote brother a V-mail letter. Overcast for several straight days—ice in containers in the mornings—very little food.

"May 8th, had first fresh egg since October 10th, 1943. Was not disappointed.

"May 9th, called out at 6 a.m. to go to Landshut Air Base to fly to France—oh Happy Day. Flew to Le Havre, France, took truck to Lucky Strike Camp."

We were sprayed with DDT for fleas and lice, given a hot shower, issued clothing and fed a control diet.

Vividly I recall seeing the Swastika flag being lowered from the City of Moosburg flagpole and being replaced with the American flag. What a thrilling sight! We jumped up and down, hugging each other and cried with joy.

*I shall close by telling of a sad incident first; followed by what I think is a very humorous one.*

*During the Summer of 1944,*

more and more Flying Fortresses were flying over or near our camp and we would wave and shout with glee. This did not please the Germans, so they put out an order that when bombers flew by, we were to immediately go inside our barracks and batten down. This included both closing the window shutters and closing the outside doors (one door at each end of the barracks). This was the same procedure we had to follow at "Lights Out" time each night.

The first time Allied bombers came over after the order was issued, one of the fellows stood in the doorframe of a door facing a "Goon Tower." The guard shot him in the face; he was killed instantly. One could speculate that the guard's home had been recently bombed or that being German, an order is an order—judgment be damned.

All in all, the Germans treated us very fairly. An incident which is funny, at least to me, happened in the Fall of 1944. After each morning Appel, hundreds would head for the latrine. The latrines consisted of a wooden structure located over a pit. There were 24 holes, 12 on each side of a divider some two feet high. German newspaper was used for tissue. One day, a fellow lost his wedding

ring as a result of its slipping off his finger because of loss of weight. He rolled up a sheet of paper, lit same and poked it down the hole he had been using to see if he could find his ring. As soon as the flames reached inside the pit, there was a flash of flame from the methane gas and 23 fellow prisoners came up yelling as all of them had been well singed. The guy found his ring, it had lodged on cross timbers but he almost lost his life from the screaming 23. Fortunately, I was a bystander.

The scariest incident that I experienced while in P.O.W. camp I failed to mention in the original typing. One afternoon in the Fall of 1944, the Germans called us all out for a special count. They were suspicious, and rightfully so, that some of the P.O.W.'s were working a tunnel. To delay the count and give the boys in the tunnel time to join us (between 1,200 and 1,400), we began to mill around, line up in uneven lines, fall out of formation, etc., just as the guard began his count. After some thirty minutes of this, and with the appearance of some high-ranking German officers, suddenly there appeared what to me looked like the entire German Army.

A glance up to the Goon Towers revealed not one but four guards,

not one but four machine guns. All of the ground troops were carrying rifles, and I was looking down the barrel of one of them. After a few brief barking of orders by the German officers, we promptly lined up correctly and everything was so quiet one could hear his own heartbeat. We were immediately counted but not immediately dismissed by any means. One wrong move by anyone that afternoon and we may have all been mowed down. The time delay allowed the four or six boys to get out of the tunnel and to join us. All prisoners were accounted for but the Germans would not let us back in the barracks until they had searched each one. They did not find the tunnel. The start of this particular tunnel was under a coal stove.

One of the most pitiful sights I saw happened in the Summer of 1944. Some 50 prisoners who had been held about three months in a political concentration camp came marching in. They were so thin and weak with hunger they could hardly walk. We shared our food with them, in addition to their allotment, until they were up to par with us. I have forgotten why they were placed in the political camp but I think it was because they had been captured by SS troops.



# REUNION Reservation Form

**EIGHTH AIR FORCE REUNION - ORLANDO '80**

To avoid any delay in processing your reservation, PLEASE COMPLETE IN FULL. Then mail this form, together with full payment by check or money order; made payable to 8AF REUNION, and address to: EIGHTH AIR FORCE REUNION, P.O. Box 1304, Hallandale, FL 33009.

(To room with a buddy, you must reserve together.)

**PLEASE PRINT**

Name(s) in full (incl. 1st names, please)

Print Names as they should appear on Name Tags.

Address (incl. zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ WWII Group: \_\_\_\_\_  
8AFHS Memb.# \_\_\_\_\_

A. REGISTRATION FEE (over 18 yrs) per person  
(\$2 to Unit Rendez-Vous & bal. to 8th)  
By 30 Sept. \$5 x pers. = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Late Registration after 30 Sept. \$7 x pers. = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. TOTAL THREE-NIGHT PACKAGE - begins  
Thurs evening (incl cost, tax & tips for room,  
meals & events as listed in program)  
Two Persons - Twin Room (\$174 x 2)  
\$348 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
One Person - Single Room \$219 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Deduct \$16 per person not wishing to  
join Friday's Wings & Wheels program &  
lunch. (less \$16 x \_\_\_ pers.)

NOTE: Deduct \$16 per person not wishing to  
join Saturday's Sea World program &  
lunch. (less \$16 x \_\_\_ pers.)

C. TWO-NIGHT PACKAGE - begins Fri dinner  
(incl cost, tax & tips for room, meals & events  
as listed in program)  
Two Persons - Twin Room (\$120 x 2)  
\$240 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
One Person - Single Room \$150 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Deduct \$16 per person not wishing to  
join Saturday's Sea World program & lunch  
(less \$16 x \_\_\_ pers.)

D. EARLY ARRIVALS (before 30 Oct) &  
EXTENDED STAYS per night (incl. tax)  
Two Persons - Twin Room \$ 54 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
One Person - Single Room \$ 42 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enter dates if "D" applies to you.

Arrive: \_\_\_\_\_

Depart: \_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSE FULL PAYMENT \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Be sure to include Registration Fee)

**CANCELLATIONS:** Full refund less registration fee, if written cancellation is received in Hallandale, Florida before 22 October. Amount of refund for late cancellations will depend upon charges made for unused portion of services by hotel, et cetera.

On Feb. 13, 1945, officers of the 423rd squadron had a party at the B mess, and on that occasion selected Miss Elizabeth Shapley of Bedford as "Squadron Sweetheart." On the 16th, Elizabeth and her mother were guests on the base to christen a plane, "Elizabeth's Own." Lt. Lorn A. Wilke was the pilot of the ship, and Elizabeth was introduced to members of the flight and ground crews for the ship.

## Paul Writes

From page 1

ness. Try saying "I'll have an 'arf of 'Arf and 'Arf" to any barmaid now and she will look blankly at you and reply "Sorry, we don't stock that, perhaps you would like a cold Lager instead!"

With the Spring comes our first few of the season's returning visitors from the 306th and I have already had the pleasure of showing a few couples round the field.

When I started this article I had intended to mention that today is the 6th June, and it was 36 years ago today that the Group flew those three missions to the Normandy beachheads. Several of you who flew that day have told me what an impressive sight they saw below them as those thousands of ships which made up the invasion fleet clustered in the bay below them, whilst back here on the field activity was at fever pitch all day as the ships came back for reloading three times in the day, and rumour had it that there might have even been a fourth mission had there been time.

Before closing these notes may I once again extend to you all the invitation to visit your old station

should you come to England for a vacation, and could I ask you once again to please write to me a little in advance so that I can clear things with our security and admin. departments. The address to write to is Keith Paull, 2 The Lodge, High St., Clapham, Bedford, MK41 6AJ, and we will do all we can to make your visit a memorable one.

Keith Paull,

Written on Thurleigh Field

## Bendiner's Book

From page 1

Bendiner flew 25 missions, survived a ditching, and rode home on several planes that were less than airworthy.

Bendiner's credentials are good as a veteran of the experience, but it is his writing skill that makes the story even better reading. You'll relive some of those tense moments over the target and through the hail of fighter bullets. And you will also find that Bendiner has done some homework to be able to fill in with command material from several sources to give the enterprise a significant form.

We recommend "The Fall of Fortresses" for your reading pleasure.

## HELPING THE 306th

I enclose my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the production and mailing of ECHOES, and reunion activities of the 306th Association. (Mail your check to Wm. M. Collins, Jr., 2973 Heatherbrae Dr., Poland, OH 44514)

I enclose my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the research, writing and publication of a new history of the 306th Bomb Group. Publication is expected during 1980. (Mail your check to Russell Strong, 2041 Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, MI 49007) Contributions of \$100 or more will receive a copy of the history without further charge.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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Elmer Bendiner

## Framed Etching of B-17 Now Available

A beautifully etched B-17G, on copper, and bearing the tail insignia of the 306th, can be yours.

Arrangements for this framed creation were made by Judge Donald R. Ross, onetime group bombardier, and it makes a handsome addition to any office or den. It's also an interesting reminder of earlier days.

They sell for \$35, plus \$1, for postage and handling.

You can order yours from Contrive, Inc., Box 21158, Eagan, MN 55121.



This classic shot of the aerial gunner was actually posed by Sgt. Robert L. Taylor, 423rd. He reported to the 306th 12 April 43 as a part of Lt. Thomas Logan's crew and became the 97th enlisted man in the 306th to complete a combat tour. Obviously, the picture was posed on the ground.

## 'Gunner Can Feel Pride', Said Gen. Arnold in GIF

Below is the introduction from the "Gunner's Information File," a copy of which was recently obtained by the editor. It is of interest to note that this file underwent great changes during the war, many of them brought about by the creative mind of Col. Eugene J. Pollock, the first officer in the 306th and the second in the 8th Air Force, to complete a combat tour of 25 missions. Pollock was a 423rd navigator, and now lives at Cocoa Beach, FL. It was Col. Pollock who observed the frequent misses by gunners, and who then thought out the problem and moved to get aiming methods changed.

*By Gen. H.H. Arnold*

If anyone in the Army Air Forces needs proof that he is helping do a great job, he can find it in the words of a British corporal named William McLoughlan. Corp. McLoughlan once had a dangerous privilege. As a prisoner of war in a camp deep inside Germany, he watched a U.S. bombing mission as the enemy sees it.

Near Corporal McLoughlan's camp was a German airplane factory, busy turning out planes for the Luftwaffe. The Germans needed that plant—so one day the Eighth Air Force paid it a visit.

After Corporal McLoughlan returned to England, he described the bombing mission in these words:

"In two or three minutes—I give you my word for this—the factory had been flattened. Not a building except one shed was standing when the Americans went away. Everybody was thunderstruck by the whole thing. Every one of the bombs fell exactly inside the target area. It was perfection bombing."

"Perfection bombing"—or what we call precision bombing—is the ultimate goal of the Army Air Forces. It is the offensive weapon with which we hasten the day of victory by knocking out the enemy's munitions and airplane plants, cutting off his supplies, and weakening the very source of his power.

Precision bombing strikes terror to the heart of the enemy. Using precision methods, we can pick out the most important target—the one which the enemy needs most—and methodically destroy it. A formation of heavy bombers, dropping their bombs with deadly accuracy, can level any enemy war plant within a matter of minutes.

The success of precision bombing depends on many things. It depends on the famous Norden bombsight. It depends on the quality of our bombers, which are tough and durable and can fly all day. It depends on careful planning by intelligence officers who pick out the most vital targets, on operations and flak officers who can route the mission over the least dangerous course, on an elaborate system of traffic control which enables bombers and fighters to rise from scores of scattered airports, meet in the air, and proceed together to the target.

But above all it depends on good crews: pilots who can handle the big ships smoothly, navigators who can steer a course to the pinpoint targets, bombardiers who can drop the bombs accurately—and gunners who can fight off any enemy planes which dare to interfere.

No man in a bomber crew, or in the vast system of ground operations which puts the bomber in the air, can claim that he is more important than another. Precision bombing is a matter of teamwork, in which every man's work is crucial.

## New Names, New Addresses

Armstrong, Claudius P., 174 Mellwood Dr., Charlotte, NC 28214  
 Awe, Robert W., 1203 Norton St., Alton, IL 62002 368  
 Baker, Marshall E., 2600 Londonderry Rd., Alexandria, VA 22308 368  
 Barr, Dr. Earl R., 1513 Colerain Pike, Martins Ferry, OH 43935 367  
 Barrett, Harold W., Box 24, Titusville, FL 32780 367  
 Bennett, Charles T., S 4307 Terra Verde Dr., Veradale, WA 99037 369  
 Brower, F. J., 924 W. 2nd St., Grand Island, NE 68801 368  
 Burkett, Gail V., 604 E. 8th, Tarentum, PA 15084 367  
 Callaghan, Richard S., 36 Willow Rd., Tinton Falls, NJ 07724 367  
 Carrazone, G. M., 4 Kuchler Dr., LaGrangeville, NY 12540 369  
 Christianson, M. E., 3871 Boca Bay Dr., Dallas, TX 75234 368  
 Damaso, Louis F., 254 Pynchon St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212 369  
 Diaz, Bedal, 16235 Indian Creek Rd., Cerritos, CA 90701 369  
 Donahue, Mark T., 7545 Rainbow Dr., Cupertino, CA 95014 423  
 Dryden, R. W., 160 Pennywise Ln., Gastonbury, CT 06050 423  
 Edwards, Robert L., 5814 Baltimore Ave., Hyattsville, MD 20781 368  
 Falco, Anthony J., 1910 Trinity, League City, TX 77573 423  
 Green, James C., Rt. 7, Montevale Rd., Maryville, TN 37801 367  
 Haas, Norman N., Rt. 9, Box 355, Albany, GA 31705 369  
 Hardy, Bruce A., 425 Briarwick, St. Louis, MO 63011 369  
 Harvey, O. F., Jr., 504 Dodson Dr., Stanford, TX 79533  
 Hickey, Don P., 10137 Chezelle, El Paso, TX 79925 368  
 Hepple, Murray, 1024 Esplanada, El Paso, TX 79912 368  
 Holdson, George R., 4710 Dixie Dr., Ponce Inlet, FL 32019 369  
 Johnson, Norman L., 3124 South 134th St., Omaha, NE 68144 367  
 Jones, W. D., 11706 Wickhollow, Houston, TX 77043 368  
 Kellum, William E., 3910 W. 40th Ave., Spokane, WA 99204 367  
 Lemon, Charles R., 1423 West Drive, Roanoke, VA 20415 368  
 McCarthy, Denis E., 1715 E. 14 Mile Rd., #D, Birmingham, MI 48008  
 Meltzer, George F., 1415 Briarcliffe Bl., Wheaton, IL 60187 369  
 Merrill, Eugene H., 1627 Suffolk Pl., Glendora, CA 91740 423  
 Miller, Charles K., 1115 Skylark Dr., LaJolla, CA 92037 367  
 Myers, Kenneth L., 3700 E. Piedmont Dr., Highland, CA 92346 369  
 Novak, Harold, 31130 Gen. Kearney Rd., Temecula, CA 92390 367  
 Pool, Beekman H., Dublin, NH 03444 423  
 Ranier, Harry M., 2 Beach Dr., Baltimore, MD 21222  
 Robinson, Reginald L., 4009 Ranier Ct., Fort Worth, TX 76109 368  
 Sheldon, Russell, P.O. Box 663, Hollywood, FL 33022 369  
 Smith, Allen, Jr., 9412 Sheila Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46236 368  
 Smits, Harry W., 722 W. Packard St., Appleton, WI 41911 369  
 Vale, John, 134 Deerhill Ave., Danbury, CT 06810 367  
 Waldrop, Robert, 10739 Meteah Tr., Fort Wayne, IN 46815 367  
 Wesner, Frank J., 8620 Cheltenham Ave., Wyndmoor, PA 19118 369  
 White, C. A., Box 156, Casper, WY 82601 423  
 Wiehrdt, Ralph W., 123 W. Robertson, Palatine, IL 60067 367  
 Woellner, Gen. Edwin D., 835 Wade Hampton, Houston, TX 77024 368  
 Zdobylak, Fred J., 7038 W. Forest Ave., Chicago, IL 60656 369

**This represents now about 1,325 men of the 306th whom we have been able to locate. We continue to need the help of everyone. Have you told us where your crewmen are, or your barracks mates, or your fellow workers? Send WWII-era hometowns, and we'll continue the search. Do you know of any who are deceased? Send such information either to Bill Collins or Russ Strong.**

But the gunner can feel honest pride—and a sense of grave responsibility—in the importance of his job. Now that the terrible striking power of precision bombing has been proven, the enemy is doing everything within his power to keep our missions from getting through. The enemy is concentrating on building as many fighter planes as possible, and sending them up with his best pilots to meet our bomber missions. And when fighters attack, only the gunner can beat them off.

Like all combat assignments, the gunner's job is dangerous. In every big air battle, planes are shot down—the enemy's and our own. It takes courage and good nerves to be a gunner, and it takes skill to be a gunner who wins all his fights.

Although bombers travel together in formation for mutual protection, and enemy fighters team up to launch their attacks, in the analysis air combat always boils down to two men shooting at one another—and the best man always wins.

In the long run everything is up to you. You have to be a better man than the enemy—who will be a pretty good man himself. In combat you will have to search the skies so closely that no enemy fighter can ever surprise you. You will have to take care of your equipment so well that it never fails, and know how to use it as well as you use your right arm. You have to know how to aim; you can never afford to miss.

The best life insurance in combat flying is to know your job better than the enemy knows his. This is no idle sermon; it has been proven over and over again in the field.