

306th Echoes



306th Bombardment Group Association

Bedford Tour Planned in '82 For Dedication

If Bedford is in your future travel plans, keep an eye on a 306th trip to England, leaving New York 3 Oct. 1982.

The principal objective will be the dedication of a 306th Memorial at Thurleigh, planned for 5 October. But there are eight days planned in England, principally Bedford, but with a London option for three days.

Tentative plans are now being

made under the leadership of William W. Flanagan of Miami.

The proposal is for departure from JFK Airport in New York about 10 p.m., 3 Oct., by scheduled airline. This would arrive at Heathrow Airport, London, about 9 a.m., and from there the group would be bused to Bedford.

Tuesday would be the Dedication Day in Bedford and at Thurleigh, with ceremonies and then a banquet.

Wednesday would be planned for a visit to Duxford RAF Base and Museum, and also the American cemetery at Cambridge. Thursday, Friday and Saturday could either be in Bedford or London, as individuals might prefer.

Departure would be out of Heathrow about noon on Sunday, with arrival in New York about 3 p.m.

The tentative price now is about \$900 per person, which would include round trip airfare, bus service to Bedford and back to London, six nights in Bedford, or three in Bedford and three in London (a slight increase for the latter option), breakfast and dinner on at least the first three days.

There would also be a possibility for people to stay an extra week with no increase in airfare.

At this stage this is only a tentative proposal, and inquiries can be made of Bill Flanagan, 7515 SW 79 Court, Miami, FL 33143.

New Size Ready of B-17 Etching

The outstanding copper etching of a B-17 bearing the tail markings of a 306th plane with a Triangle H is now available in two sizes.

Offered now is a 12 inch by 9½ inch rendition in a solid English oak frame for \$25, plus \$1.50 for postage and packing.

The larger size is 15 by 13 inches and is priced at \$37, plus \$2 for postage and packing.

Order from Contrive, Inc., 913 Shell Ct., Bedford, TX 76021.

The True Story of Snuffy Smith's Great Day!

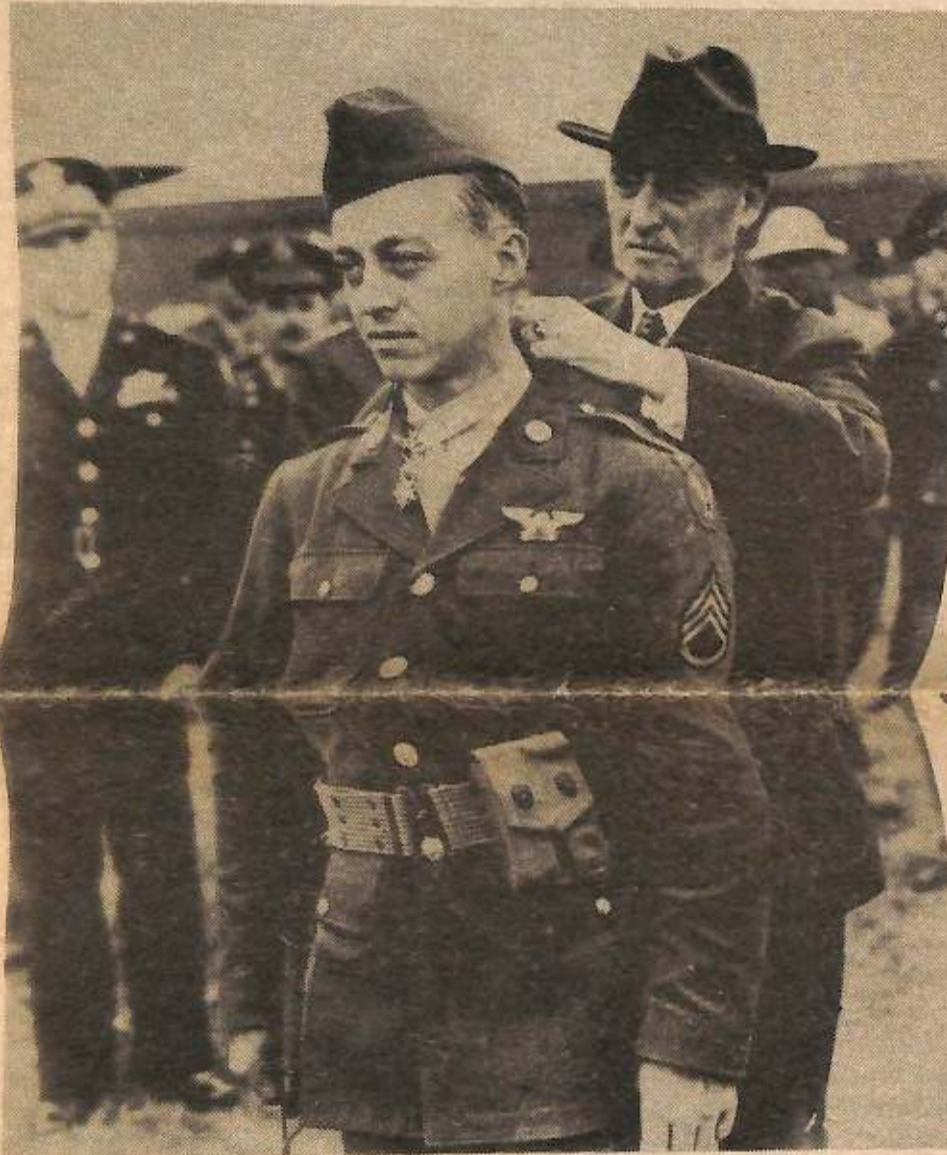
(pages 4 & 5)

New Edition on Schweinfurt Raid

BLACK THURSDAY, the classic by Martin Caidin on the second Schweinfurt raid of 14 October 1943, has just been reissued in paperback by Ballentine Press. If you don't have this one, you may want to pick up a copy at \$2.50. Remember, this was a raid in which the 306th played a major role.

If you are now retired and have more reading time, you might want to ask your library for PASTORAL by Nevil Shute; THE SUN IS SILENT by Saul Levitt or THE RAINBOW MEN by Douglas Sheldon. All are 8th AF stories set in England and will bring back memories.

When you look in your library and can't find a WW II book you'd like to read, ask the librarian to arrange an inter-library loan. It may cost you some postage, but the book you desire can be borrowed elsewhere.



Snuffy seems awed by the placing of the medal by Secretary Stimson.

8th Against The Luftwaffe

Plans for a Symposium on the conflict between the Luftwaffe and the 8th Air Force has been announced by the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation. Dennis R. Scanlan, Jr., co-chairman for the project, reported that the Symposium is slated to take place on 15 October in St. Paul, Minnesota. This date was set to coincide with the beginning of the annual 8th AF Reunion 15 - 18 October 1981.

The panel will include General Adolph Galland, commander of the Luftwaffe's fighter forces and the author of THE FIRST AND THE LAST; Philip Ardery, commander of the 564th Bomb Squadron and the author of BOMBER PILOT; Cass

Hough, chief of the 8th AF Technical Operation Section; and Francis S. Gabreski, highest scoring 8th AF Ace. Roger Freeman, eminent air-war historian and author of THE MIGHTY EIGHT, will moderate the panel sessions.

The Symposium will consist of two sessions. The morning session will include discussions of combat actions between the 8th AF and the Luftwaffe in the 1942-1943 period. The afternoon panel discussion will cover the 1944-1945 period. There will be opportunities for questions from the floor during both sessions.

Interested parties should write 8th AFMMF Symposium, P.O. Box 4738, Hollywood, FL 33083 for program details and schedules.



SEA SQUATTERS CLUB

This certifies that

Lt. Vincent J. Kiely, USAAF
has qualified as a member of the Sea Squatters Club,
having come down at sea and used a rubber life raft,
May 13, 1944 in the North Sea.

John Kiddle



1st Lt. Henry E. Hanson's aircraft lost an engine off the coast of Denmark, after being hit hard over Stellen by flak. From then on it was all downhill, and after losing two more engines the crew ditched 60 miles off the coast of England. Hanson's picture is at the left, and above are the trophies of 1st Lt. Vincent J. Kiely, Hanson's navigator. The Sea Squatters Club card is self explanatory, and the patch at the right was the work of the British Goldfish club. Despite the

large swells, the complete absence of gasoline in the tanks made the plane somewhat bouyant, and it floated for what may have been a record 22 minutes. Kiely's comment was "Who had the presence of mind to keep track of that fact?" Although the crew got out easily, there was only one good life raft for nine men, so six rode and three floated, changing places in the cold North Sea until they were picked up by a British ship after two hours in the water.

News Releases of 1943 and 1944 Tell of 306th

This is the first of a series of news releases, written at Thurleigh during the war, which we will be publishing in issues of ECHOES. These were prepared by the base public information office under the direction of Capt. William C. VanNorman. They are interesting in that they were written not later than the day after the combat action, but they are also interesting in telling about a whole host of jobs which had to be done on the base to keep the planes in the air. At the conclusion of each item we will attempt to give you an update on the individual concerned.

THE STORY OF A REFUGEE

An Eighth Air Force Bomber Station, England, May 24, 1943.

He was formerly Eric Neuhaus of Vienna, Austria. He is now S/Sgt. Eric Newhouse of Flushing, New York. He and his family formerly operated a little Viennese chocolate shop — he now works behind two .50 caliber guns in the tail of a Flying Fortress. He was formerly an occupant of Austria under the shadow of the Third Reich — he is now a full fledged Yank with his citizenship papers in his pocket and helping to cast a few shadows himself — shadows of a Flying Fort over enemy occupied territories.

This transformation of Neuhaus to Newhouse was not an easy one. It was not done with the help of influential friends or a generous purse.

On March 15, 1938, Vienna was



306TH ECHOES is published four times annually by the 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association, in January, April, July and October.

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Each issue is prepared and printed at Kalamazoo, MI, and editorial contributions are welcomed and should be sent to the editor. Mailing is from Poland, OH, and new addresses, changes and deletions should be sent to the contact man.

overrun by the new war lords. In their black uniforms they strutted about the city. To show their strength they attacked the Jews. They hounded them off the streets and into their homes.

Watching from a window Eric Neuhaus saw them on the streets and listened to their broadcasts on the radio. "All Jews must go or die." Then he heard that several members of his family, hunted and with their backs to the wall, had killed themselves. He made up his mind. He would escape to America. His family planned to do the same, and he hoped to meet them there. To start out on his own on such a journey was a big decision for a boy of 15 to make.

Hiding in the countryside with a band of boys his own age, he helped attack sentries and disrupt communications before escaping to the Sudetenland. Finding the Nazis in power there the group split up and Eric was off on his own. He found food and shelter by working here and there for a few days at a time. In time the police would catch up with him and he would have to move on and move fast.

From the Sudetenland he went to Jugoslavia, from there to Greece, to Haifa, on the border of Syria. Here he met up with the British Army, told them he was 19 and was accepted as a temporary soldier, joining the Kent Regiment. Transferring to the Hampshire Regiment at Nazareth, he saw action against the Arabs.

To get to America he had to have a passport. So he went to Jaffa, and by slipping three pounds to someone in the German Consulate he obtained a German passport. Back to

Jerusalem he went to get his American visa. After a long wait the ticket to America was finally his. All he had to do now was get there.

The first leg of the journey was by boat, to Haifa, Beirut, Athens, Naples, and Genoa. Being young, he got the urge to do some sightseeing in Genoa. With his German passport and a series of snappy "Heil Hitler's" he had a good time. On the way to Marseilles he talked a fellow passenger, a Danish official, to taking him ashore as his secretary. Then he caught a ship to Gibraltar, where there was a ship sailing for the U.S., but the British wouldn't allow him to sail because his eyes, reddened by the desert sun, were thought to be infected. By now he was desperate. To have come so far only to meet what seemed utter failure was a tragedy. But he settled down to wait and finally his eyes cleared up, and he boarded a ship bound for Boston.

On arrival in Boston a nurse on the boat gave him a dime to see the town with. Hopping on a streetcar he rode all over the town, from one end to the other, thoroughly enjoying himself. The New World was all that he expected, even more so.

He left the boat in New Jersey, where he started looking for a job. He knew only a very few words of English, but he just started out and went from one store to the next asking for work. His first pay was earned by performing the great American task of dishwashing.

Before long he had word of his parents, joined them, and went to Wausau, Wis. Here he learned to be a machinist and soon found a good job back in New York.

Ten minutes after the announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor he tried to enlist. But he was not a citizen, and was refused. Thereafter, for a hundred and twenty days consecutively, he returned to the recruiting office until he was finally accepted into the Air Corps. Going to gunnery school at Tyndall Field, Panama City, Florida, he shortly graduated as a tail gunner, and came overseas in March, 1943.

When I first saw him he had just completed his first mission, over St. Nazaire. I asked him how he liked it. "It was wonderful," he said. "I saw three Germans going down in flames all at once. It was terrific."

Slim and small, with blue eyes and curly hair, he didn't look his twenty years, but when he spoke of those Nazi ships in flames his eyes were looking out of a window in Vienna, back in 1938.

For several months things went well for Eric Neuhaus, formerly from Vienna, Austria. He got on well with his fellows, and met a refugee girl. They announced their engagement and made their wedding plans. The day before the wedding the sergeant went on a mission. It wasn't a great historical attack, just a routine attack on a sub pen. But Sgt. Newhouse's plane didn't return, and he has never been heard from.

LOOK, MA! A HANDLE!

The target was Berlin, the ship, a Fortress, was weaving its way through the intense and accurate flak barrage much in the manner of a broken field runner. In the co-pilot's seat was 2nd Lieut. Robert C. Fife, Jr., Newark, N.J. They had dropped their bombs and were turning off the target, their traffic pattern leading them over the heart of the "Big City". Running into an especially heavy concentration of flak, the pilot, 1st Lieut. Frank A. Warner, Linden, N.J., asked Fife to hand him his flak helmet from under the seat. Fife, who had been dividing his time between watching the instrument panel and the flak bursts, was unaccustomed to the darkness of the interior of the plane. While reaching for the helmet his fingers touched what he thought was its strap and he pulled. It stuck slightly; so he pulled sharply. It came out and he found himself holding the red handle of a parachute rip-cord.

At this instant, the ship was hit by flak, and Fife realized his mishap had left his pilot without a chute. He didn't tell Warner what had happened, because he was having enough trouble with the flak and fighters.

"When I saw the chute open, I had the hell scared out of me," said Lt. Fife. "I climbed out of my seat and stood by ready to aid in case of trouble. I couldn't call for an extra chute because there weren't any. As soon as we got out of the flak I leaned down and switched my chute

The Defeat of the German Air Force

This is chapter IV from a book, "The Development of Long Range Fighter Escort, 1914-1945," prepared by Bernard Boylan under a USAF Historical Division Fellowship. Earlier chapters recount the history of fighter plane development and work in range extension, leading to the late 1943 developments that brought a solution to the problem. Many who read this can do so today because they were beneficiaries of this research work and its ultimate use.

The Combined Operational Planning Committee originally had scheduled ARGUMENT for the week of 2 Nov. 1943. This plan had been shaped with the idea of striking a coordinated and decisive blow at industries supplying the German fighter force. It materialized during late February 44, in the so-called "Big Week."

The decision to launch ARGUMENT came none too soon for the time was running short if air superiority was to be gained before the invasion of western France, which had been tentatively scheduled for the late spring or early summer of 1944.

On 20 Feb. ARGUMENT was finally under way, with a majority of targets being aircraft factories in central Germany. To reach them, the planes had to penetrate far into enemy territory, exposing themselves to aggressive German fighter attacks. Thus, it was the opportune time to find out if long-range escorts could achieve the hoped-for tactical victory. If at the end of "Big Week", losses of American bombers were not alarming, the Air Force planners believed that this could be attributed to escort support. If ARGUMENT succeeded, the daylight bombing effort would be an accomplished fact, and the escort fighter, indeed, the answer to the German fighter defense.

After the autumn crisis the Eighth Air Force underwent a rapid build-up of both bomber and fighter units in view of the forthcoming operations. Two new units joined VIII Fighter Command in time to participate in ARGUMENT. These were the 361st Group (P-47), which became operational 21 Jan., and the 357th Fighter Group (P-51), which had been assigned first to the Ninth Air Force before becoming part of VIII Fighter Command 5 Feb. in exchange for the P-47 358th Group.

In addition, a series of conversions took place within VIII Fighter Command from the P-47 to the P-51. The 4th Fighter Group 26 Feb. was the first to convert to the Mustang, but during ARGUMENT only the 357th and 399th Groups flew the P-51. Pilots of the 4th Group flew their planes after having spent a few days, and in some cases only a few hours, in practice.

On 8 Feb. Doolittle ordered all pilots who had qualified to fly the P-

51 to do so in all critical operations, even if it were necessary to borrow aircraft from the Ninth Air Force. In view of this order, the 399th Group, already equipped with the P-51, was assigned to the Eighth Air Force 15 Feb. instead of the 50th equipped with P-38's as had been scheduled originally. By mid-February some 539 P-38J's, 329 P-51B's and C's, and 416 P-47D's comprised the build-up of the Eighth's fighter groups.

Heretofore fighters had been ordered to offer close support to bomber formations and under no circumstances to range any great distance from them. Intercepting enemy fighters were to be kept away from bomber formations, but not to be pursued. The first variant of this tactic came in January when Doolittle permitted escort fighters to attack enemy fighters even though they were not pressing attacks on bomber formations. This change made it possible for escorting fighters to move away from bombers and seek out enemy planes. No longer were the "little friends" limited to offering close protection to their "big brothers;" they were now committed to destroying anything in sight.

The offensive implications of Doolittle's order were appreciated by General Adolf Galland, commanding general of the German fighter forces, who wrote, "Only now did the superiority of the American fighters come into its own. They were no longer glued to the slow-moving bomber formation, but took the law of action into their own hands."

The fighters employed this law of action during the momentous air battles that soon developed. Their chance to prove their worth as escort and offensive fighters came in the missions of "Big Week." The first mission 20 Feb. went to Posen and Tutow, Poland, the major concentration being directed against targets in central Germany; at Leipzig, Oschersleben, Bernburg, Brunswick, Halberstadt, and Gotha. The VIII Fighter Command supported the mission with 668 P-47's, 94 P-38's, and 73 P-51's, a total of 835 fighters.

German fighter opposition consisted of approximately 275 sorties. Total bomber losses were 21 out of an attacking force of 1,000. Fighter losses totaled 5: 2 P-47's, 1 P-38, 1 P-51, and 1 RAF Spitfire. The two groups of P-51's escorted bombers to the Leipzig and Bernburg areas, while the P-38's accompanied the B-24 groups to targets at Gotha and Brunswick. Although the bombers met fighter opposition in the final stages of penetration and in the target area, the enemy had not responded with the expected mass opposition

defense. American fighters claimed 61 enemy planes destroyed, 7 damaged, and 73 probables. The first day of ARGUMENT had proved very satisfactory. Although the Germans failed to offer battle on the scale previously encountered, American fighters had shown their ability to cope with enemy defenses.

The second mission was directed against two aircraft factories at Brunswick and six important airfields and aircraft storage parks in western Germany. Total bomber strength was 907 planes. The fighters consisted of 13 P-47 groups, 2 P-51 groups, and 2 P-38 groups, a force of 679 planes. They furnished initial penetration support and rendezvoused with the 3 bomber formations over the Zuider Zee according to plan. From that point they provided continuous protection to the target area by successive relays of P-47's. German opposition was intense but spotty, and generally not too aggressive. Because of this, American fighters supported the bombers for a longer period of time than had been anticipated.

Inclement weather supposedly accounted for the weak German opposition, but the severe strain imposed on the GAF by three simultaneous, large-scale missions conducted by the Eighth Air Force and the RAF also played a part. Estimated total enemy opposition consisted of 150 planes, evenly divided between single- and twin-engine fighters. Thirteen B-17 and 3 B-24 bombers failed to return home. Five fighters were lost, 3 P-51's and 2 P-47's, but the fighters claimed 33 enemy planes destroyed, 5 damaged, and 18 probables. The operation was supported by the 358th, 362d, and 354th Fighter Groups of the Ninth Tactical Air Force. Post-war investigation of these and other operations indicates that claims of enemy planes destroyed were in many cases grossly exaggerated.

The third mission of the week proved costly for both the attacking force and the enemy. Some good bombing was achieved in spite of adverse weather conditions which hindered the day's effort. Of a total of 600 bombers airborne only 466 reached their targets. Bad weather caused many to turn back. Over the Continent, many bombers attacked targets of opportunity rather than those originally assigned. The enemy offered more opposition on this mission than on the preceding two. Enemy fighter attacks began immediately south of the Zuider Zee, and, in contrast to the other two operations, these were characterized by a vigor and an aggressiveness lacking previously. German fighters accounted for 35 American bombers, and 5 more were lost to enemy anti-aircraft fire. Most of the planes attacked were in unescorted bomber formations. The American force of 659 planes lost 11 planes, but claimed 61 enemy planes destroyed, 7 damaged, and 27 probables. The Germans had

sent approximately 250 aircraft aloft to challenge American bombers. Early opposition to penetrating forces marked a change from past enemy defensive tactics, supposedly for the purpose of hitting American bombers while unaccompanied during initial stages of penetration. Targets 22 Feb. had included Oschersleben, Bernburg, and Halberstadt.

The weather, again stormy on the fourth day, 23 Feb., grounded the Eighth Air Force and gave bomber crews a rest after three full efforts.

On 24 Feb. the second half of "Big Week" began with an attack on ball-bearing factories at Schweinfurt and Gotha, where the target was Gothaer-Waggon-fabrik, largest producer of Me-110's. A smaller force bombed aircraft component factories and assembly plants in northeastern Germany and Poland. The VIII Bomber Command effort was complemented by the Fifteenth Air Force, which bombed a ball-bearing and aircraft-component factory at Steyr, Austria.

The Eighth sent out 834 heavy bombers against Schweinfurt, Gotha, and Rostock, the latter a diversionary target to confuse the Germans and force them to divert some of their fighter strength. American fighters consisted of 20 groups, 15 of P-47's, 3 of P-51's, and 2 of P-38's. Support for withdrawal was undertaken by 7 P-47 groups, while an additional P-47 group, 1 P-51 group, 2 RAF Mustang squadrons, and 8 RAF Spitfire squadrons provided the general support for the remainder of the flight. Of the 236 bombers hitting Rostock, 5 were lost: 4 to enemy aircraft and 1 to an unknown cause. Of the forces sent to Gotha and Schweinfurt, 11 bombers were lost from 359 attacking Schweinfurt, and 33 from the Gotha force. Enemy aircraft accounted for 36 of these. Four were lost by anti-aircraft fire and 4 from unknown causes.

Because of the great distance of the Rostock strike, no escort was provided. For the Gotha and Schweinfurt missions penetration was supported by 8 P-47 groups, in the course of which 20 to 40 enemy aircraft were dispersed. Target support came from two groups each of P-38's and P-51's. Here the fighters and bombers encountered large number of enemy planes. While the escort for the 834 bombers was considered good, the lead combat wings of the bomber forces were not fully covered during penetration and in the target area because they had reached rendezvous points several minutes early. American fighters claimed 37 enemy craft destroyed, 5 damaged, and 13 probables against a loss of 10; the bombers reported 79/9/31.

In a resumé of the battle of the 24th, VIII Fighter Command noted that pilots saw very few twin-engine enemy planes, and even those had single-engine escorts. The enemy hesitated to attack allied fighter craft and bombers accompanied by fighters. Though attacks began

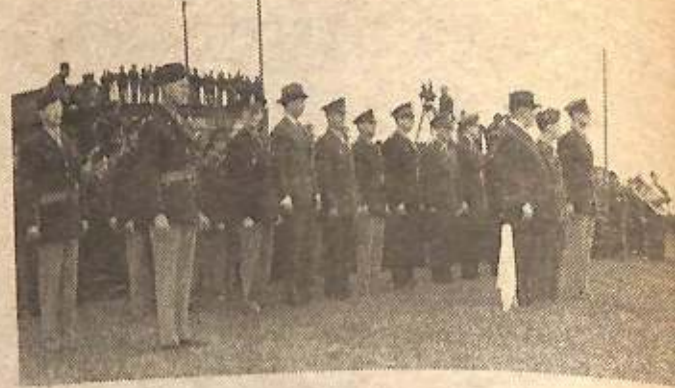
Snuffy Smith's Heroic Deeds Recalled

Perhaps it is time to review the Maynard M. (Snuffy) Smith story in detail, as such stories of heroics tend to grow and become distorted with the passage of years. The events of 1 May 1943 are indelibly inscribed in the annals of the 8th Air Force combat operations. It was a day of tragedy for the 306th Group. There was no triumph, but the heroics of Snuffy Smith, John Roller and Charles Vondrachek, to mention only those who gained high recognition, will not be forgotten.

To these names should be added L.P. Johnson, Bob McCallum, Bill Fahrenhold, Carroll Briscoe, Victor Rose and Alden Mann. All played heroic roles that day over Brest.

As the source of our story we have chosen the version prepared by 306th Public Information and dated 11 May 1943. Only 10 days had elapsed since the event, the heroes were back at Thurleigh; meanwhile, two crews had been totally wiped out and a third crew had four lucky survivors who were now German prisoners of war.

Snuffy Smith, now retired in St. Petersburg, Fl, is the largest of a number of real heroes who flew with the 306th.



This is the story of S/Sgt. Maynard H. Smith, a ball turret gunner from Caro, Michigan, who, on his first mission over enemy territory acted with such outstanding heroism that he has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The story is as he told it on the day following the mission, the bombing of enemy installations at St. Nazaire, France.

"We had left the flak behind us and were heading out to sea — with the FW 190's trailing right along. About half an hour after we had left the enemy coast I was watching the tracers from a Jerry fighter come puffing by our tail when suddenly there was a terrific explosion, 'WHOOMPH', just like that. Boy, it was a pip: my interphone and electrical controls to my turret went out, so I decided that the best thing to do was to get up into the waist section and see what was going on.

"I hand-cranked myself up and crawled out of my turret into the ship. The first thing I saw was a sheet of flame coming out of the radio room and another fire by the tail wheel section. Suddenly the radio operator came staggering out of the flames, made a bee-line for the gun hatch and dived out. I glanced out and watched him hit the horizontal stabilizer, bounce off and open his chute. The poor guy didn't even have a Mae West — it was burned off. He was a veteran of 22 missions.

"By this time the right waist gunner had baled out over his gun and the left waist gunner was trying to jump but was stuck half in and half out of his gun hatch. I pulled him back into the slip and jokingly asked him if the heat was too much for him. All he did was stare at me and say, 'I'm getting out of here.' I helped him open the escape hatch and watched him go. His chute opened O.K.

"The smoke and gas were really thick. I wrapped a sweater around my face so I could breathe, grabbed a fire extinguisher and attacked the fire in the radio room. Glancing over my shoulder at the tail fire I thought I saw something moving and ran back. It was the tail gunner painfully crawling back, obviously wounded. He had blood all over him. Looking him over I saw that he had been hit in the back and that it had probably gone through the left lung. I laid him down on his left side so that the wound would not drain into the right lung, gave him a shot of morphine and made him as comfortable as possible before going back to the fires. I just got started on this when that FW came diving in again. I jumped for the waist gun and fired at him and as he swept under us I turned to the other waist gun and let him have it from the other side. He left us for a while so I went back to the radio room fire again. I got into the room this time and began throwing out burning debris. The fire had burned holes so large in the side of the ship that I just tossed the stuff out that. Gas from a burning extinguisher was choking me so I went back to the tail fire. I took off my chute so I could move easier. I'm glad that I didn't take it off sooner because afterwards I found it had stopped a thirty caliber bullet.

"Another quick burst with the guns and back to the radio fire. Then back again to the wounded gunner to comfort him when on asking 'Are we almost home yet', I lied and told him we were. All during this time that damn FW kept coming in and I had to drop whatever I was doing and hop to the guns to keep him off. You have to show those babies that you mean business or they are supposed to finish you off real quick.



Lt. Robert McCallum, co-pilot on Snuffy's plane, inspects the damage to the fuselage and wing. The radio room, where much of the fire was concentrated, was a shambles when the plane finally came to rest in Southern England.



Snuffy was a hero to the men on the day his Medal of Honor was awarded, as they shouldered him for a triumphant ride around the base.



Secretary Stimson, Snuffy and Col. George L. Robinson take the salutes as the men of the 306th pass in review. **2**



Snuffy stands at attention as Secretary of War Henry Stimson reads the citation for the Medal of Honor.

"By now it was so hot that the ammunition was exploding all over the place and making a terrific racket. I didn't dare to throw all of it out because I had to keep some for the visits of the FW.

"Back to the radio room with the last of the extinguisher fluid. When that ran out I found a water bottle and emptied that on. After that was gone I was so mad that I urinated on the fire and finally beat on it with my hands and feet until my clothing began to smolder. Again that FW came in and again I answered him. This time he left us for good.

"The fire was slowly dying out and the room was beginning to clear. Only then could I see the damage. The room was absolutely gutted. The radio operator's seat was simply burned away and his gun just a melted mess. Most of the ceiling was gone and where the side walls should be were gaping holes.

"I went back to the tail and put out the fire there. Talked to the wounded gunner and saw that we were approaching the coast of England. With the ship in the condition it was in, I was sweating out three things. It might explode or break in half, or I might be killed by exploding ammunition. It was lucky I paid particular attention to the control cables so the pilot could bring us home.

"I could tell that the ship was acting tail heavy so I tossed overboard everything I could. Guns, ammunition, clothes, everything. I really had a time with the ammunition cans, they weigh 98 pounds and I weigh 130, but I managed to get them out. The tail wheel gear was gone and I was afraid the shock of landing would break the ship in half. Our pilot brought the ship in O.K. and by the time she stopped rolling I had the fires completely out.

"All I know is that it was a miracle that the ship didn't break in two in the air, and I wish I could shake hands personally with the people that built her. They sure did a wonderful job and we owe our lives to them."

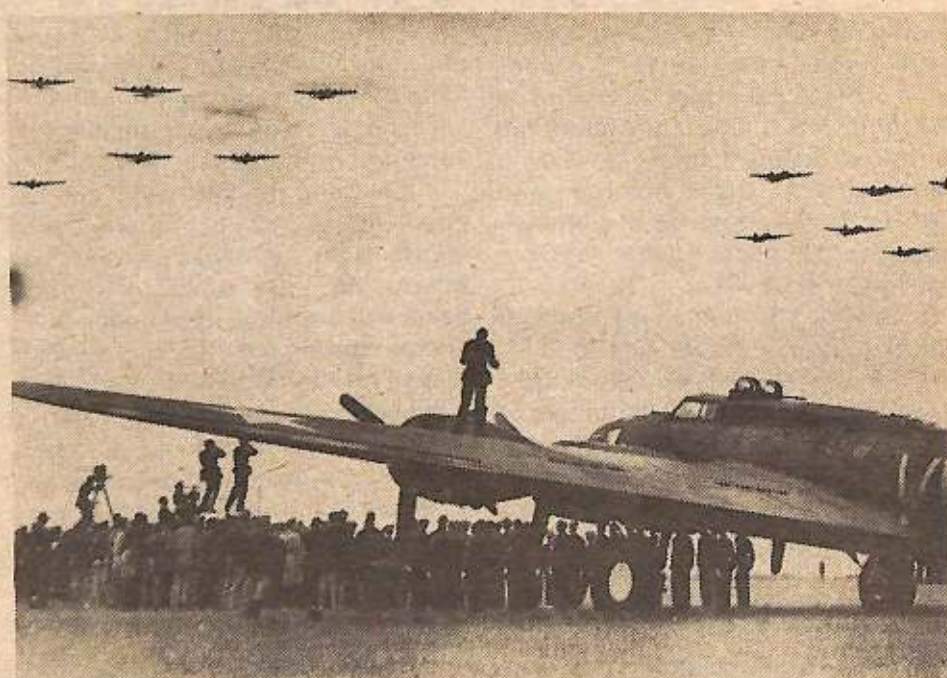
Following is the condition of the ship after it had landed:

Radio room gutted. Tail wheel section gutted. Control cables shot up. Oxygen system gone. Intercommunication system gone. One prop hit. No. 4 engine nacelle gone. Tail wheel gear damaged. Ball turret out of commission. 20 mm. hit on flaps. Electrical system out from ball turret on back. One gun in top turret out. Both waist guns out. Radio gun burned out. Radio system burned out. Sides of radio room burned out. Fuel tank in left wing burned out. Nose hit heavily by flak (nose gunner and bombardier wounded). Nine holes from 20 mm. shells in waist section. Entire ship peppered by 30. cal. holes.

Sgt. Smith is 32 and was born and raised in Caro, Mich. His father, now deceased, was a circuit judge. His mother lives at 302 S. State St. He attended Caro public schools and worked for the U.S. Treasury Dept. in the field division of the Internal Revenue Dept. He enlisted 31 Aug. 1942 at Sheppard Field, Texas. He went to gunnery school at Harlingen Field, Texas, trained for three more months and came overseas. The events above occurred after he had been overseas one month.



Although the ball turret guns were his to operate, Snuffy won fame with heroics other than at the trigger.



As the proceedings began on the flying field, flying crews of the 306th were in the air to honor Snuffy and the ranking guests for the day.

FIGHTER ESCORTS

(From page 3)

early, they were not concentrated when fighters were on hand for support. The only groups which met intense and concentrated attacks were the two leading B-24 wings of the Gotha force. In this case, the B-24's flew at lower altitudes than the B-17's, with which they were in visual contact, thereby making escort efforts more difficult.

The Germans quickly took advantage of the B-24's vulnerable position and viciously attacked them with Me-109's and FW-190's. Flights of from 3 to 6 enemy aircraft attacked abreast and in trail, flew through the formation, and in many instances dropped parachute bombs that exploded on opening after head-on approaches from above. The Fifteenth Air Force's 87 B-17's suffered from a series of aggressive and well-executed attacks. Although a P-38 escort met the bombers at the target to protect their withdrawal, the enemy succeeded in shooting down 17 heavy bombers.

On 25 Feb. the last day of "Big Week", strikes were undertaken against targets at Augsburg, Stuttgart, Furth, and Regensburg. Some 820 bombers, escorted by 899 fighters, including 20 AAF groups, 20 RAF Mustangs, and 10 Spitfire squadrons, took part. Fighters and bombers were instructed to remain in one group until they had penetrated enemy territory 325 miles. From that point bombers and their accompanying fighters were to approach their own individual targets. The leading combat wing of the first formation lacked support until it reached the vicinity of Regensburg, and its exposed position invited intermittent attacks. At the target area, however, two groups of P-38's and P-51's provided excellent support, which prevented enemy interference with the bombing. On the withdrawal, escort was furnished by 10 P-47 groups and 1 P-51 group that was flying its second sortie of the day. Antiaircraft fire and enemy fighters downed 5 additional American bombers and 12 more were lost from unknown causes. Bomber claims against enemy fighters totaled 33 destroyed, 3 damaged, and 9 probables; fighters claimed 26/4/13. Two P-51's and 1 P-47 were lost. A diversionary effort by 34 bombers of the Fifteenth Air Force took place simultaneously with the main raid. This diversionary attack against southern Germany achieved its purpose. In meeting two threats, the Germans dissipated their efforts, thus failing to challenge successfully either force. American pilots estimated that only 150 enemy fighters rose to challenge the bombers.

The second half of this mission was an attack by the Fifteenth Air Force against Regensburg with 116 bombers. Escort was provided by 36 fighters of the 1st Fighter Group, 33 P-38's of the 14th Fighter Group, and 27 P-38's of the 82nd Fighter

Group, a total of 96 planes. This mission was one of the costliest of the war. The Germans attacked the bombers as they passed the northern tip of the Adriatic Sea and continued to harass them for an hour to an hour-and-a-half. They pressed their onslaught until after the bombers had passed the target and returned to the rendezvous point approximately 100 miles south of the target. There was no intention on the part of the enemy to attack the formation once escorts had arrived. The lead elements of the bomber formation bore the brunt of the attacks, with losses totaling 41 planes.

The heroic efforts of ARGUMENT cost the Eighth Air Force 137 bombers and the Fifteenth Air Force 89. Fighter losses totaled 28 planes. Against this, VIII Fighter Command claimed 208 planes destroyed, 28 damages, and 108 probables. These losses, exclusive of bomber claims, were indeed costly to GAF fighter strength, although after the war, Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering, commander of the Luftwaffe, said Americans exaggerated their claims.

ARGUMENT proved that long-range escort fighters could meet the threat of German fighter forces. Use of P-47 Thunderbolts for initial penetration and withdrawal portions of the missions, and of P-38's and P-51's for covering the bombers over targets and back to the point where Thunderbolts could take over again, gave the bombers most constant escort. This required precision timing to insure that bombers and fighters would meet at planned rendezvous points. The RAF and RCAF fighters also contributed much support to the escort by flying direct support missions and engaging in feints and diversionary action to distract and tie down enemy fighter forces. Considering the size of bomber forces used during these operations and the losses suffered by them, as compared to the Schweinfurt missions the previous August and October, it is clear that the fighter escort was largely responsible for keeping bomber losses low.

If bombing results were not as good as hoped for, the week's efforts went far toward giving the Allies the air superiority they needed to continue the air offensive. The pattern of activities during "Big Week" set the course of operations that continued in the spring.

Asher Lee, in his book "The German Air Force", sums up the air situation in the spring of 1944:

"At all events, the hundreds of Lightnings, Thunderbolts, and Mustangs which now covered and supported Fortresses and Liberators attacking the German aircraft industry in the spring of 1944 soon dominated the skies of Germany. Gone was the aggression and persistence of the Luftwaffe fighter defenses of 1943. The "Achtung Spitfire" of 1940 over Great Britain became the "Achtung Mustang!" over Germany in 1944.

"Many of the crack German

fighter pilots who had braved the fire of the Fortresses and Liberators in 1943 were now killed. The number of experienced German fighter pilots in 1944 who could emulate them and cope with the close attention of American fighters was getting fewer as the year

wore on. German twin-engined fighters who were a strong attacking force in the summer of 1943 now hardly dared to make an attack on escorted American bomber formations and themselves required single-engined German fighter escort.

Newly-Found Members

- Abernathy, Raymond E., 1062 Thorley Pl., St. Louis, MO 63112 368
Anderson, Harold P., 5936 Patterson, Chicago, IL 60634 367
Bagley, Charles R., Box 486, Chester, SC 29706 367
Bayless, C. M., Box 634, Stevenson, WA 98639 368
Biggins, John E., 305 Washington, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221 367
Bronson, Roy B., 814 E. Pierce, Luling, TX 78648 423
Cameron, Jack, Box 445, Frazeyburg, OH 43822 367
Chamberlain, Donald R., 23155 Cleveland, Dearborn, MI 48124 4th
Champion, John G., 900 First Pl., Tyler, TX 75702 423
Conrey, Calven P., 1311 Kearney, Laramie, WY 82070 369
Cothran, Herman, 4315 N. Maple, N. Little Rock, AR 72118 423
Fann, Jerrold J., 929 N. 48th St., Muskogee, OK 74401 369
Fawcett, Richard B., 511 Marrott Rd., Lexington, MA 02173 423
Gassman, Maj. Lawrence W., 225 Carolyn Ct., Lincoln, NE 68510 367
Golden, Guy H., Jr., 3205 Willow St., Pine Bluff, AR 71603 423
Greunig, Robert D., 5138 N. 81st, Scottsdale, AZ 85253 367
Hagemier, Walter J., 511 Parkway Dr., Bloomington, IN 47401 369
Haggerty, Edward J., 713 Griffin Rd., South Windsor, CT 06074 369
Hall, Dr. John W., 1311 W. Elm, Breckenridge, TX 76024 367
Hood, Theodore C., 6107 Ridgecrest Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205 423
Hoover, Charles E., 4787 Overton Rd., Wooster, OH 44691 423
Hopkins, Ben R., 4049 Tim, Bonita, CA 92002 368
Hoppe, Clarence G., Edwardsville, IL 62025 369
Latimer, Stuart H., Rt. 3, Box 162-C, Mukwonago, WI 53149 1024
McLellan, John C., 199 Kona Cir., Pittsburgh, CA 94565 367
Piepenbrink, Frederick, 150 N. Main, Cohasset, MA 02025 369
Pritt, Harold J., 3212 5th St. SE, Canton, OH 44701 423
Prokop, Louis, 104 Lordship Rd., Stratford, CT 06497 367
Reppy, Henry, 38 Bellview Dr., McKees Rocks, PA 15136 368
Revolti, David R., 56 Grant St., Milford, MA 01757 368
Roeder, Gilbert H., 7 Burnt Tree Rd., Savannah, GA 31406 368
Romine, Clyde R., 8351 Downing Rd., Denver, CO 80229 423
Seman, Andrew T., 4419 Jameson, Saginaw, MI 48603 369
Spry, Robert C., 2553 Charms Rd., Milford, MI 48042 369
Stansbury, Olin M., Jr., 226 W. Central, Suite 301, El Dorado, KS 67042 369
Tanella, Stephen F., 653 Hewlet, Franklin Square, NY 11010 367
Walls, Raymond E., 129 Compass Rd., Baltimore, MD 21220 368
Watkins, Alfred E., 212 W. Market, Scranton, PA 18508 368
Weaver, Charles H., Jr., 407 Park Pl., Pittsburgh, PA 15237 369
Werlin, Sol, 16 Bolivar Ave., Troy, NY 12180 423
Wernet, Franklin H., Box 44, Effort, PA 18330 368
Yerak, Ray D., 2648 Som Center Rd., Willoughby, OH 44094 369
Becker, Edmund, Box 32, Clearfield, IA 50840 368
Buffington, William H., 5012 Irene Dr., Harrisburg, PA 17112 1628
Danziger, Dan, 1717 W. Leewood, West Covina, CA 91790 1628
Dobbs, Hurotte, 41 Euclid Ave., Ludlow, KY 41016
Fassino, Anthony J., 5 Stafford Ave., Woodbury, NY 11797
Harris, William V., 1432 Hiway 1 South, Greenville, MS 38701 423
Hovey, Ernest P., 1916 48th St., Sacramento, CA 95819 369
Maxwell, Robert L., Rt. 2, Box 170-B, Leesburg, VA 22075 367
Nygaard, Danton J., 5636 County Line Rd., Kansas City, KA 66106 367
Paris, George E., 4976 Holyoke Way, Sacramento, CA 95841 369
Schaak, Frederick A., Pleasant View, CO 81331 423
Wagoner, L. Edmond, 512 Jefferson Ave., Lawrenceville, IL 62439 368
Withrow, William E., 1530 SW Webster, Topeka, KS 66604 1628
Wolfe, Eugene W., 128 Cileste St., Greenville, MS 38701 423
Zale, Isaac, 3608 Main, Kansas City, MO 64111 368

Your Help 'Moves' 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 1981. (Mail your check to Russell Strong, 2041 Hillside, Kalamazoo, MI 49007). Contributions of \$100 or more will receive a copy of the history without further charge.

Name _____

Address _____

REUNION PROGRAM of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society

St. Paul, Minnesota

15-18 October 1981

PLEASE NOTE: The 8th AF Registration and Information Centre and all events will take place at the Radisson St. Paul (reunion headquarters hotel) unless specified otherwise.

Thurs. 15 Oct.

WELCOME TO THE TWIN CITIES

0830 hrs UNIT CONTACT BREAKFAST
1200 hrs Rendezvous rooms open (Radisson St. Paul & Radisson Plaza hotels)
2030-2330 hrs AERO CLUB DANCE. Entertainment & music by Strategic Air Command. Cash bar, WWII movies. (Let's all join in the spirit of the 40's! . . . We expect to see some 'zoot' suits and old uniforms on the guys, and for the 'bobby sockers' (we mean you, dolls), hope you'll don a skirt and sweater!)

Fri. 16 Oct.

PROCLAMATION: 8th AIR FORCE DAY

0730-0900 hrs 'Hearty' BREAKFAST (at both hotels)
0900 hrs Buses depart (from both hotels) for panoramic tour of twin cities St. Paul and Minneapolis with guides . . . then continue to FORT SNELLING NATIONAL CEMETERY . . .
1130 hrs Memorial wreath-laying ceremony (also, floral offerings by Rendezvous Units)
1200 hrs Reboard buses for CIVIC RECEPTION and LUNCH with lively IRISH ENTERTAINMENT (Prom Hall)
1400 hrs Buses return (to both hotels)

CALLING ALL LADIES!

1500 hrs Off to OMNITHEATRE, world's most advanced space theatre for special presentation of 'GENESIS' and see many changing exhibits covering such topics as cooking, geography and anthropology. Time, too, for shopping/ browsing in lovely TOWN SQUARE.

PLEASE NOTE: Balance of today's scheduled events to take place at both hotels.

CALLING ALL 8th AFers!

1500 hrs A great time for you and your buddies. Many Units present have programmed this period for group sessions. Check UNIT LOCATOR BOARD for details, posted in the 8AF registration lobby area. BRING YOUR OLD ALBUM AND OTHER MEMORABELIA. Afternoon refreshments.
1930-2030 hrs Social pre-dinner 'HAPPY HOUR' (cash bar)
2030 hrs RENDEZVOUS DINNER, MEETING AND 'HANGAR FLYING'

Sat. 17 Oct.

THE BIG DAY

0700-0830 hrs 'Continental' BREAKFAST (Radisson St. Paul Hotel only - mezzanine level)
0900-1130 hrs 8th AF GENERAL MEETING and Election of Directors (Not to be missed!)
1200 hrs Buses begin continuous shuttle service, departing from Radisson St. Paul only, for 'downtown' St. Paul Airport . . . review a nostalgic display of WWII aircraft . . . also, a rounded program of other fine aeronautical exhibits sure to please you and your guests. Light lunch available at airport (cash service). Buses returning from airport will disembark passengers at both hotels.
1600 hrs Last bus departure from airport (to both hotels)
1745-1845 hrs Buses will begin continuous shuttle service (from both hotels) to nearby CIVIC CENTRE for this evening's festivities.
1800 hrs RECEPTION (cash bar)
1915 hrs 'FLAG' & OPENING CEREMONIES
1945 hrs 'Flag Of Our Heritage' GALA REUNION BANQUET (full course sit-down service, featuring 'filet de boeuf' & all the trimmings). From 2200 hrs, dance to the live sounds of the Big Band Era. H-U-G-E DANCE FLOOR! (3 hours duration)
0115 hrs Last bus will depart CIVIC CENTRE (for both hotels) . . . SWEET DREAMS

Sun. 18 Oct.

'TIL WE MEET AGAIN

0800-1000 hrs 'Hearty' BREAKFAST (at both hotels)
1300 hrs Hotel check-out time. HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME.

Mail Sample Lauds Echoes, Adds Funds

Below is a sampling of recent notes received by Bill Collins and the editor:

"I enjoy receiving the Echoes and have been remiss in my contribution to the publication."

Taylor Leedy
423rd

"Enclosed find a check as a grateful contribution to your publishing efforts with the 306th Echoes, which I enjoy immensely. Keep up the good work and stay healthy — we need you."

Len Garrett
423rd

"Thanks for a great job you guys are doing. Enjoy the 306th Echoes tremendously and am looking forward to the 'history'. Keep up the good work and loads of luck — may it all be good."

Ray Fortin
367th

"Please keep the Echoes coming. The recent article on the coal shortages reminded me of our late night visits to the coke piles — using as I recall a jeep 'borrowed' from the Ops Officer — also reminded me to send a support contribution."

Paul Osburn
367th

Bill Collins and Russ Strong enjoy bringing the Echoes out quarterly and getting it to you. We'll continue as long as we can, and those contributions — from \$1 to \$50 — keep the production moving. Two other men who are instrumental in things are Bert Perlmutter, who sets

RESERVATION FORM — ST. PAUL '81

HELPFUL HINTS TO AVOID DELAYS

1. Mail this Reservation Form with payment (incl. Reg. Fee); payable to: 8AF REUNION as soon as possible.
2. Personal checks accepted if postmarked by 15 Sept. After 15 Sept. only money orders, travelers checks & cash accepted (including reunion weekend dates).
3. 8AFHS Reg. Fee by itself not accepted in advance of reunion.
4. To room with a buddy. You must register together.

PLEASE PRINT

Name(s) _____

(first & surname of each attendee for name badge) _____

Address (incl. zip) _____

Tel: () _____ WWII Group **306 TBB**

My 8AFHS Member No. _____
(I recently paid my 1981 Dues. Give date: _____)

A. 8AFHS REGISTRATION (over 18 years) per person
By 15 Sept. \$7.50 x _____ pers. = \$ _____
Late reg. after 15 Sept. \$9.50 x _____ pers. = \$ _____
(\$3 of Reg. Fee given to your Rendezvous Unit if booking postmarked by 15 Sept./\$2 from 16 thru 30 Sept./\$1 after 30 Sept.)

B. THREE-NIGHT PACKAGE - begins Thurs. eve.
(incl. cost, tax and tips for room, 6 meals, and events as listed in program)
Two Persons - Twin Room (\$198 x 2) \$396 = \$ _____
One Person - Single Room \$263 = \$ _____

C. TWO-NIGHT PACKAGE - begins Fri afternoon
(incl. cost, tax and tips for room, 4 meals, and events as listed in program)
Two Persons - Twin Room (\$145 x 2) \$290 = \$ _____
One Person - Single Room \$183 = \$ _____

D. EARLY ARRIVALS (before Thurs 15 Oct) & EXTENDED STAYS (room only, incl tax)
Two Persons - Twin Room (\$62 per night) = \$ _____
One Person - Single Room (\$50 per night) = \$ _____
Enter dates if 'D' applies to you.

Arr: _____ Dep: _____
ENCLOSE FULL PAYMENT (incl Reg. Fee) \$ _____
(After 15 Sept. personal checks not accepted)

CANCELLATIONS: Full refund less reg. fee, if written cancellation is postmarked by 5 Oct. Amount of refund for late cancellations will depend on charges made for unused portion of services by hotel, etc.
'LOCAL' RESERVATION FORM AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
(if you do not require hotel room).

SEND PAYMENT & COMPLETED RESERVATION FORM TO: EIGHTH AIR FORCE REUNION / P. O. BOX 1304 / HALLANDALE, FLORIDA 33009

(From page 2)

for the opened one."

Lt. Fife then leaned back and prayed that nothing would happen. It was a long jump to make without a chute. He didn't tell Warner what had happened until they were well over the channel on the way home.

Lt. Fife grinned, "It was a hell of a place to be without a parachute."

Casey's Darkroom Work Big Assist

A signal service is being performed by Charles F. (Casey) Jones, onetime Group navigator, in the production of black and white copy prints for the archives of the 306th Bomb Group. As pictures are loaned by various former members, they are sent to Casey, who then

copies them. The originals return to their owners and the black and white prints are stored by Russell A. Strong.

Strong's collection now is in the neighborhood of 3000 prints, and he still is anxious to examine any you may have to loan.

a great deal of the type, prepares pictures for printing, and sometimes argues with the editor over statements made; and Field McChesney, who has been instrumental in helping to locate a number of you.

'War Between' Offers New Look At Top Officers

THE WAR BETWEEN THE GENERALS, by David Irving. NY, Congdon & Latties, 1981. 446 pp.

That there was conflict between Eisenhower, Montgomery, Bradley and Patton, among others, was to be expected. The Allied cause wanted strong leadership and in these men they got that; at the same time there was also some conflict. The generals did not think alike on many matters and frequently were not reticent about voicing their own opinions.

David Irving as a sleuth has uncovered some things, although much of what he deals with has already been received by others in earlier works.

He has injected into THE WAR BETWEEN THE GENERALS tidbits of the personal relationships of these men, with women especially. The Eisenhower affair has been widely published before, and the Patton story seems to hang on a thin thread as to just how one interprets one sentence by Patton.

Irving has done some good research to uncover and interpret the diaries of Gen. Everett S. Hughes who was something of a confidant of Patton and also of Eisenhower. One is inclined to feel that there was perhaps more smoke than fire in the allegations made by Hughes and amplified by Irving.

After any war there is a great deal of publishing by participants in trying to set their record straight. And we are now far enough away from World War II to have the revisionists stepping in to try to reset the record from a different vantage point.

Irving has not contributed a major work to the WW II lore, but has only nibbled at the edges a bit. If one is addicted to reading everything available, then the Irving book will offer several hours of reasonably interesting reading. But perhaps one would be better served by reading Bradley, Eisenhower and Montgomery from their own hands, and the Ladislas Farago writing on Patton.

One of the curious things about WW II personalities is that probably Patton had more material published from his own pen than anyone else. He had been a prolific writer of professional articles in the 20s and 30s that may well be worth studying.

If one wants keener insights into the problems facing Eisenhower, there are now available nine volumes of his letters. They are worth glancing through to gain some concept of the enormous task facing the supreme commander.

New and interesting THE EISENHOWER LETTERS (published by Norton) and EISENHOWER'S LIEUTENANTS by Russell F. Weigley.

Deceased

This alarming number of obituaries does not mean that suddenly men of the 306th are dying in record numbers. Rather it is indicative of a lot of research in the last two months which has given us data on men whom we have been unable to find. Also note that our additions to the roster of names is growing at a rapid rate.

Block, Edwin J., 369th radio operator (Nattier's crew) and POW (13 Sep 44), 18 Jan 79.

Butler, Ralph P., 369th tail gunner (an original mechanic) and POW (29 Mar 44), 27 Nov 70.

Gibson, David F., 423rd gunner (O'Brien's crew) and POW (15 Jun 44), 6 Aug 74.

Glynn, Arthur F., 367th pilot, in Janesville, WI.

Hepple, Murray F., 368th navigator (Rethy's crew) in El Paso, TX, 5 Dec 80.

Kinsey, Charles J. Jr., 369th pilot, 9 Dec 68

Markowski, Alexander F., 369th waist gunner (Quaintance's crew) and POW (22 Feb 44), 20 Jun 70.

McAllister, Roderick H., 367th tail gunner (Peterson's crew) and POW (24 Apr 44), 20 Dec 79.

McBroom, Walter P., 369th co-pilot, (Wong's crew) and POW (3 Feb 44), 23 Feb 68.

Nally, William S., 368th pilot (Goris' crew) and flight leader, 14 Jun 65.

Terry, Edgar A., 367th line chief and reputedly oldest enlisted man in group, 8 Jul 79.

Toth, Andrew E., 423rd radio operator (Parks' crew) and POW, 10 Feb 62.

Krahn, Jack P., 367th radio operator (Donkin's crew) and POW (12 Sep 44), Aug 45.

Bryant, Byron C., 369th pilot (Maresh's crew), 16 Feb 72

Campbell, Henry M., 368th pilot, 6 Dec 65.

Cook, Carl W., 369th co-pilot (R. Adams' crew), 8 Apr 74

Cuozzo, Vincent J., 369th gunner (McKinney's crew), May 75 in South Orange, N.J.

Dixon, Ted D., 367th tail gunner and POW (24 Feb 44), 20 Jan 76.

Fowler, Harold K., 369th gunner, 17 Jul 66.

Hagen, Bernard C., 369th crew chief for 100+ mission "Flack Shack", 3 Nov 77

Hlavac, Louis J., 368th gunner (Cook's crew) and 4th Sta/Comp/Sqdn, 19 May 63.

Horn, John T., Jr., 369th transportation, Sep 75.

Johnson, Houston, 368th transportation Kenealy, Degland T., 423rd pilot and sqdn/gunnery officer, 20 Aug 62.

Lachowicz, Edmund J., 368th, 20 Mar 70

LaRubio, George, 367th engineer (J.W. Johnson's crew) and POW (22 June 43), 7 Sep 69

Lavers, Milton D., 423rd pilot, (Plecher's crew), Mar 71 in Melrose, MA.

Lund, Russell S., 368th pilot and flight leader, 12 Dec 78.

Lusic, Frank T., 423rd gunner (Pipp's crew), 2 Sep 77.

Mathis, Isham P., 368th transportation.

McDaniel, Clyde W., 368th transportation, in England.

McGrane, Clifford W., 369th gunner, 4 Nov 76 in Muskegon, MI.

Mostek, Clem, 369th transportation, Jan 81 in Bonners Falls, ID.

Murphy, Charles E., station fire marshal and 369th adjutant, 29 Oct 74.

Murtha, Edward T., 368th intelligence officer, 16 Jan 74.

Nitka, Sigmund R., 423rd medic, 1 Jun 66.

Odle, Elbert G., 368th pilot and sqdn/operations officer (12 Feb 43 to 14 Oct 44), 14 Apr 81 in Westfield, IN.

Parker, John B., 423rd bombardier (Logan's

Bremen Provokes Response In Mind of One 8th AF Man

Bremen was the one mission I never wanted to fly. Say what you will about premonition, there was no easy dismissal of the anxiety which arose whenever the name Bremen came up at our briefings. The fear ballooned as it did for no other German target, a fear without logic, without a particular reason, but there, nonetheless, pumping adrenalin to a thumping heart.

Why Bremen? I could never explain. Our bomb group — 452nd, 3rd Division, 8th AF — had flown many missions. Our crew's B-17 had led at least 20 of them: Schweinfurt, Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Regensburg — the deep penetration targets that many World War II crew members who flew out of England over Europe will remember. I was past my 25th combat encounter, on my way to the 30's, beginning to think about ending the tour. I had experienced so much fear that I was numb, a veteran, an automaton moving through missions by rote, living with a fatigue so absolute it extinguished the flickering flames of panic.

Except for Bremen. When the blanket came off the briefing room map and the line of red yarn stretched taut from our base at Attleborough northeast to the North Sea port city, I could feel the sweat on my ribs, chill in the cold Quonset.

Back when my missions were in the single numbers, we had started for Bremen. On takeoff the Flying Fortress was cumbersome, laboring with a full bomb load and topped-off fuel tanks. . . Bang! The tire on the left wheel blew out and the ship slewed off the runway into a pasture where black and white Herefords grazed. Dirt, dust, fragments of grass and clover whirled around us as we careened toward the hedgerows that crossed the field. We braked in time, jumping out the waist door to look at the damage, and to laugh at the nearness of our doom. My laughter was explosive in its relief. We could not go to Bremen, not that day.

A dozen missions later, the red yarn stretched to my nemesis once again. We got off the ground, we circled and formed above gathering clouds, then we led the 3rd Division toward the bombing run's initial point near Wilhelmshaven. The clouds gathered more quickly, pushing us to thinner and thinner air, toward the limits of the B-17's ceiling. Out of the clouds in front of our formation tumbled a returning group of B-24's, the clumsy American Liberator bombers, some smoking, on their way home. The 17s and 24s peeled and dove to avoid collision; incredibly, there were only near misses, but enough curses and confusion were radioed to Operations to scrub our mission. We turned in the clouds and headed southwest across the Channel and home. No Bremen, once again.

But, it could not be avoided forever. Thirty-six years ago this November I was awakened at 2:30 in the morning and told, "Breakfast at three, briefing at four." The cornflakes and powdered milk were a lump in my gut when the blanket was lifted and the yarn said Bremen.

There were no blown tires, no climbing clouds this time out. A chill November morning, the thin cobweb of cirrus crimson in the rising sun as 128 Boeing B-17's climbed and turned and maneuvered into formation over The Wash, headed across the Channel and droned toward Bremen. Bits of my saliva froze at the edge of my oxygen mask, then my mouth dried up with fear. Why, I kept asking myself, was this target this mission, this Bremen such cause for visions of disaster?

Within the hour, I had my answer. As we turned on the initial point, an anti-aircraft 88 mm. shell exploded just under our number four engine. The plane lurched, then steadied as the prop was feathered. But the 88s kept pounding. Our navigator's throat was torn away by a shell fragment; the pilot's right arm was all but severed, another engine was knocked out. The co-pilot ordered me from the radio room to the plane's nose to man the guns there. A German JU-88 was in front of us, ready to make his move. I stepped through the navigator's blood to the nose guns, trembling and praying. The German made one pass and vanished.

The co-pilot got us back — a wheels-up landing, scraping, shrieking along an emergency runway at the Channel's brink. I had learned every answer to my Bremen questions.

John N. Cole lives in Brunswick, ME, and writes occasionally for the BOSTON GLOBE. This tale was printed 20 November 1980.

crew) and POW (17 Apr 43), 1 Jan 81.

Perkins, Dale H., 423rd intelligence officer, 6 Oct 67.

Pool, William H., 369th statistical officer, 13 Oct 78 in Little Rock, AR.

Porter, Ellis O., 423rd pilot and POW (20 Jun 44), 30 Aug 78.

Riley, Frank W., 423rd, 12 Aug 78

Scherr, Jerome A., 423rd engineer (McNaught's crew) and POW (20 Jul 44), 29 Jan 74.

Schneider, George C., 369th pilot and flight leader, 10 Oct 74.

Sellers, Henry R., 423rd transportation.

Stoklosa, Walter J., 367th engineer (Sutton's crew), 24 Jan 78.

Struckhoff, Virgil A., 367th engineer and POW (8 Oct 43), 12 Sep 77.



Thomas, Charles W., 369th medic and gunner, 4 Oct 67, in Cincinnati, OH.
Villard, Michael P., 423rd, 18 May 76 in Alexandria, LA.
Weiler, Gerald A., 367th navigator (Donkin's crew), 17 Aug 70.
Whitman, Leroy, 369th chauffeur, 79.
Wydra, Joseph S., 423rd, 29 Sep 76.