

# 306<sup>th</sup> Echoes



DR THURMAN SHULLER  
BOX 908  
MC ALESTER, CK 74501

## 306th Bombardment Group Association

### June 5-6 Remembered by 306th Men

By John M. Kelly

U.S. Army Air Force Station 111—Thurleigh, England: The evening of June 5th, 1944, held the promise of a fine night. Under clear skies the moon was rising as a soft, warm wind caressed the English countryside. It was, in the words of Sir Harry Lauder's song: "... a braw brecht moonlecht necht, ..." but; the tranquility of those early hours was soon to be shattered.

It started about 9:00 p.m., or 2100 hours as we then reckoned time. It came with the throaty roar of an airplane engine springing to life and drowning out the hum of the crickets. Soon, very soon, other engines erupted in sound; each adding to the swelling cacophony of martial music signaling the start of Operation Overlord—The long awaited Allied Invasion of Festung Europa. The beginning of the end of the Third Reich.—D-Day!

Unless you were there, it is hard to realize that England, in mid-1944, resembled in many ways a vast aircraft carrier. Hundreds of airfields dotted the countryside, especially through the Midlands and East Anglia up to the Wash.

Home to thousands upon thousands of British and American airmen, these fields were the launching point for bombers (heavy, medium & light); fighters (day & night); photo and weather reconnaissance planes; troop carrier transports and assault gliders.

Combat operations had been conducted from most of these bases for many months prior to the invasion, but; on the night of June 5-6 Operation Overlord would bring these thousands of machines and men together in the greatest unified air action ever seen. And vast as it was, this great, ground-based air fleet was made even larger by additional planes from American and British naval carriers laying off-shore.

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Snuffy Smith receives the coveted Medal of Honor for his exploits of 1 May 43. Doing the honors is Henry Stimson, Secretary of War.

### Smith, Medal of Honor Recipient, dies May 11

There has passed from our midst the number one hero of the 306th, Maynard Harrison Smith, winner of the Medal of Honor for his heroics of 1 May 1943 over the embattled port of Brest, France.

Smith died May 11 at the Bay Pines VA Hospital, St. Petersburg, FL. He had moved in 1977 from Flushing, NY, upon retirement. He was 72 years of age.

Full military honors were accorded him on May 15 when he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Smith was a controversial figure, hardly known before that fateful day of his first mission, but forever after the frequent target of many remarks. Smith flew five missions, four following the 1 May flight, earned an Air Medal and oak leaf cluster and the Medal of Honor.

He continued to serve with the 306th in a variety of activities until he was transferred back to the Zone of the Interior in February of 1945. During his time with the 306th he served variously in a number of capacities, often in the Group Operations office and as a chauffeur for commanders in the early hours of the day before a mission.

Perhaps the story of Smith's exploits can be no better told than in the words of the citation for the Medal of Honor:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action above and beyond the call of duty. The aircraft of which Sergeant Smith was a gun-

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### 350 Ready To Attend Reunion

Reservations for the 10th reunion of the 306th Bomb Group are arriving in Fort Worth, TX, at a steady pace, reports Reginald Robinson, chairman of the 1984 gathering. By this writing more than 350 men of the 306th and spouses have sent in the necessary forms and information.

Robinson reports that more than half of the Friday night dinner reservations for Carswell AFB have been taken at this date. The limit is 325 persons, and once that point is reached, later arrivals will be shunted into the morning tour and noontime festivities at the base.

Arrangements had been completed for Lt. Gen. William H. Campbell, present commander of the 8th AF, to be the speaker at the Saturday evening event, but Gen. Campbell has recently learned that he will be taking a new assignment in August. It is expected that his successor will be the speaker at the banquet.

Appearing again this year, after last year's great introduction to the 306th, will be the Strategic Air Command band from Offutt AFB, NE.

Special ceremonies are being planned to honor the late Maynard H. Smith, the 306th's only Medal of Honor winner, and those who served a tour as POWs. Many 306th men spent far longer in Stalag 17B or III, or some other place in Germany, than they did at Thurleigh. Quite a number were actively in the 306th for a week or less. What a way to end your first mission!

Those who served as POWs, and will be attending the Fort Worth event, are asked to send a special note along to the reunion chairman apprising him of your POW status.

The Green Oaks Inn is on I-30 on the southwest side of Fort Worth, and will serve as the headquarters for the reunion. RVs can be parked there, but there are no hookups available. However, those traveling and wishing to stay in their RVs will be provided a list of places

where they can get hookups near the Green Oaks.

One of the features this year, while not quite up to a B-17 in emotional appeal, will be the arrival of a P-51 Mustang, which will fly into Carswell. It will be piloted by B/Gen. Regis F. A. Urschler, vice commander of the Electronic Security Command at San Antonio.

Plans are continuing to have Gordon and Connie Richards attend the 1984 reunion from their home on the outskirts of Bedford. They have been key people in the development of an enthusiastic British 306th Historical Group. Contributions are still being accepted by Bill Collins to assure the Richards' participation. It is anticipated that in succeeding reunions other members of the group in England will be invited to participate.

You are also reminded that special travel arrangements can be made through American Airlines. The only constraint is that you must make special mention of the 306th reunion and you must make your reservation early to assure that you can get there by American. We are competing on that weekend with football enthusiasts. If enough people fly American, special considerations will cut our travel ticket cost for the Richards.

Chairman Robinson also would remind you of dress for various events. The Billy Bob excursion Thursday night will be casual or Western. The same for the Carswell morning tour at the General Dynamics tour. However, the afternoon Carswell tour and carrying through dinner will suggest coats and ties for men and dresses for women.

Temperatures at reunion time will range from 55° to 75°, so bring attire that will fit these extremes.

Golf tee off times have not yet been filled. The fee for golf and carts is \$28.50 and payment should be made by separate check, so marked.

As last year, pictures will be taken of various units Saturday before the banquet.

When reunioners arrive at the Green Oaks and register in with the 306th, they will receive a packet containing all tickets, programs, lists of activities and information on nearby restaurants.

For those wives who tire of war stories and airplanes, there is abundant shopping very close to Green Oaks.



The 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association: Ralph Bordner, president; John L. Ryan, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; and William M. Collins, Jr., treasurer.

306th ECHOES is published four times annually: January, April, July and October, and is mailed free of charge to all known addresses of 306th personnel, 1942-45. Contributions may be remitted to the treasurer.

# DAYS IN FORT WORTH!

## Thursday, Oct. 25

- 8:30 Registration opens—306th Office open
- 10:00 Squadron Rooms open—Coffee Bar open
- 12:30 Golf Tournament
- 1:00 Message Center open—Personnel Locator Map and Display open.
- 2:00 Squadron Rooms open
- 7:30 Buses leave for Billy Bob's
- 8:00 Dinner followed by dancing and entertainment
- 10:30 Buses return to hotel

## Friday, Oct. 26

### GROUP A

- 9:00 Buses leave for Carswell AFB
- Briefing
- Flight Line Tour
- Training Simulator demonstration
- Memorial Service
- Cocktails and Luncheon at CAFB Officers Club
- 1:30 Buses return to hotel
- 2:30 Squadron Rooms open—Museum Tours—Shopping
- 3:30 Movies

### GROUP B

- 9:30 Squadron Rooms open
- 10:30 Movies
- 12:45 Buses leave for Carswell AFB
- Briefing
- Memorial Service
- Flight Line Tour
- Training Simulator Demonstration
- Cocktails and Dinner at CAFB
- Recognition of Hosts and Introduction of Guests
- Golf Tournament Awards
- Dancing to SAC Band
- 23:30 Buses return to hotel

## Saturday, Oct. 27

### GROUP A

- 9:00 Buses leave for General Dynamics Plant
- Briefing
- Tour of F-16 Production Line (one mile long walking tour)
- 11:00 Buses return to hotel

### GROUP B

- 10:00 Buses leave for General Dynamics Plant
- Briefing
- Tour of F-16 Production Line (one mile long walking tour)
- 12:00 Buses return to hotel

### LADIES

- 9:30 Depart for Neiman-Marcus Show in Ridgmar Mall
- 10:15 Brunch at Neiman-Marcus Tea Room followed by shopping
- 2:00 Museum Tours

### 306th GROUP

- 1:30 Business Meeting
- 3:00 Movies
- 4:30 Photo Session
- 5:00 Sing-A-Long
- 6:30 Cash Bar
- 7:30 Banquet
- Announcements
- Introduction of guests
- Speaker
- 9:00 Dancing to SAC Band

## Sunday, Oct. 28

- 8:00 Buffet Breakfast available
- 10:00 Transportation available to D/FW Airport

EDITOR: RUSSELL A. STRONG, 2041 Hillside, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Home 616/344-6466; Office 616/383-6160.

8th AF CONTACT MAN: WILLIAM M. COLLINS, JR., 2973 Heatherbrae Drive, Poland, OH 44514. 216/757-3463.

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## Stars and Stripes

Someone has raised the question of the availability of **Stars and Stripes**. All editions have been preserved on microfilm and are obtainable from the New York Public Library. The London edition was published the longest, and in its entirety the film will cost you at least \$225. Perhaps some other libraries around the country have



The white protrusion, where the ball turret should be, is the radar dome in its down position. It was partially retracted for landing.

## Pathfinding Led Way to Target, Aided the Enemy

Pathfinding, or PFF, was the special work of the 482nd Bomb Group for a fairly extended period in the 8th, using either the British H2S equipment, of the American H2X.

Special crews had been trained in the 482nd for lead work, often outstanding crews being borrowed from the various groups. They flew into the various bomber fields, picked up the air commanders to fly with them, and then led groups on the missions.

H2S was what the British called "town finding" radar. It scanned the earth for several miles around the bomber, and towns, coastlines, rivers, and the like could be identified. This marvelous invention then permitted the bombers to drop while over clouds and without visual reference to the ground.

Eventually, as more equipment became available and trained personnel arrived on the scene, each group had a number of PFF planes of its own which then provided the group leadership on many raids. The G model B-17 with the white dome protruding from the belly instead of the usual ball turret was the radar lead plane. The dome was retractable for landing.

It was not all plusses for the Allies and minuses for the Axis powers, however, as R. V. Jones points out in his excellent book, **The Wizard War**: "Since H2S was being switched on as soon as our bombers took off from their airfields in England, the Germans could get very early warning of a raid, and get their fighters airborne so as to be able to home on the transmissions when they came within range." Homing range for German fighters on radar transmissions from the bombers was at least 40 miles.

it, and one might be able to arrange an inter-library loan. It can be viewed at the Library of Congress, as well.

By Lt. Col. Kenneth Blackshaw

The papers were carrying stories daily of the impending arrival. The radio and television stations also featured items of the grand coming. All the Washington media were preparing for the great event. What was the event that was creating such remarkable interest in usually blase Washington? Was Congress returning to take decisive action on the increasing national debt? Were the Olympics being transferred here from Los Angeles? Were the Russians sending submarines up the Potomac? Or were the Chinese sending us another panda?

No, to all of the above. It was something greater—the arrival of one of this country's last surviving flyable B-17's. One of the 12,700 wonderful planes that were built during World War II at three assembly plants—Seattle, Burbank, and Long Beach. This survivor of the greatest bomber ever built was making one last flight to join other famous aircraft of the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum and the first of its Dulles Annex. It piques the interest of the press, of history buffs, and, of course, the many former crew members who now live in the Washington area. I was one of those, a B-17 pilot, who could feel the nostalgia swelling inside me as the day of the arrival drew closer.

This Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress was added to the collection of the National Air and Space Museum in October, 1981. Because of space limitations at the downtown Washington Museum and the Suitland, Maryland, Annex, this World War II four-engine bomber (#383814), was placed on loan to Pima Air Museum in Tucson, AZ. The arrival of this aircraft marked the first significant contribution to the newly-approved Museum Annex at Dulles. This Air and Space Museum Annex eventually will have other large aircraft including the Space Shuttle, the Concorde, a 707 and a 747, the last two also built by Boeing.

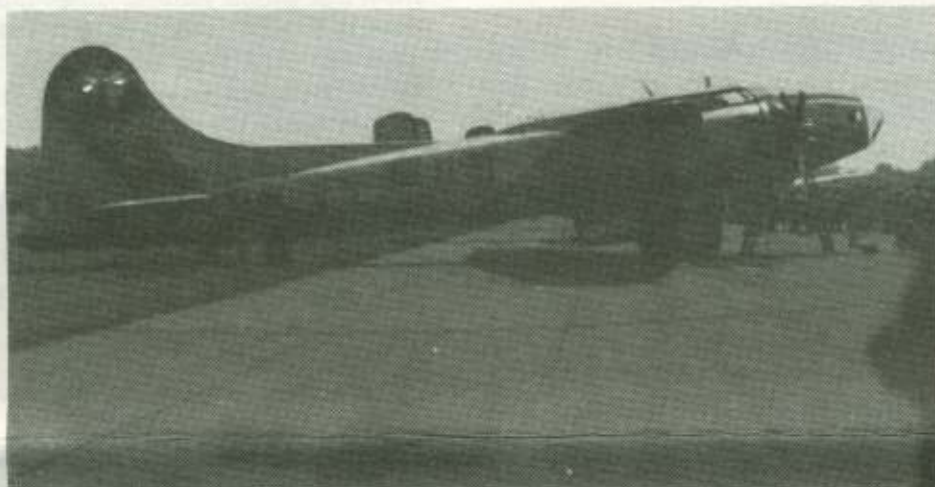
The ferry flight to Washington was a family affair. The pilot and co-pilot were a father and son team. Arnold Kolb was the pilot and his son, Arnold, Jr., flew as co-pilot. To further demonstrate the family's interest in aviation, Arnold's wife, Florence, was on hand to greet the aircraft as was his daughter, Pamela, who works as a commercial flight attendant.

This was indeed an occasion for nostalgia, a chance to relive those glorious days when we were privileged to fly the great silver birds that were so instrumental in our victory over the Axis powers. Webster defines nostalgia as the "wistful or excessively sentimental yearning to return to some past period," as if any B-17 crew member could ever be "excessively sentimental" about the wonderful, all-forgiving fortress of the air. As it turned out I was not the only former crew member in the area to

## Heralded Arrival of B-17 at Dulles Airport Brings Throngs of Veterans



Ken Blackshaw stands before the B-17 which recently landed at Dulles Airport and will become a part of the National Air and Space Museum collection outside the nation's capitol . . . Below is the Experimental Aircraft Association's B-17, "Aluminum Overcast," which took part in a big WW II aircraft spectacular in June at Kalamazoo, Mich. More than 125,000 spectators in two days saw many WW II planes flying, including: B-29, B-24, B-17, B-25s, P-51s, P-47, and P-38, and Corsairs, Wildcats, Hellcats, and a Martin torpedo bomber.



be affected strongly enough by the media reports to be drawn to Dulles for the arrival. There would be many others on hand to greet this visible reminder of our World War II aerial victories.

With press credentials obtained from Rita Cipalla, chief of public affairs for the Air and Space Museum, I proceeded out to Washington-Dulles well in advance of the scheduled arrival time of 3:05 p.m. on April 25, a sunny but cool and very breezy Wednesday. I had conned an old Hump pilot, Colonel Herb Wurth, into joining me in this expedition down memory lane.

We proceeded to the designated terminal area at Dulles and were pleased to see many others there ahead of us—some legitimate news media and others, like ourselves, who were there for the ego trip, the opportunity to revel, ever so briefly, in those glorious moments of victory in the air with the greatest bird of them all, the mighty Flying Fortress.

But there were sad memories too. Many of my colleagues were lost during the devastating conflict. This was dramatized by a relatively young man that we engaged in conversation. He had come to Dulles because his father had been a B-17 pilot with the 91st Bomb Group and was killed in late 1942 on one of the early missions

of the 8th Air Force. He had come to see the plane that his father had flown.

The event began to unfold as we were taken out to the arrival area on the field in one of Dulles' unique mobile lounges that most passengers at Dulles use for transportation to and from their aircraft. These unusual vehicles can rise and lower to whatever height needed by any particular aircraft. In our case they dropped us in the middle of the field to await the arrival ceremony.

Overall the atmosphere was one of glowing elation as the thought of seeing firsthand, and yes, even touching the mighty aircraft that was to arrive shortly. The plane performed on schedule, first flying low over the field at 2 p.m. with the wheels up, making a low pass that made all of us oldtimers' hearts beat a little faster. It then circled Washington counterclockwise over an area including Andrews Air Force Base, and then landing as scheduled at 3:05 p.m.

What a thrill it was to see this beautiful fighting machine from the past come sweeping in from the north and fly directly in front of the gasping onlookers. There were old-time salutes and doggings of hats as it whizzed by, at an altitude that would do any former B-17 pilot proud—and I most certainly was.

Even my old "Hump" pilot friend admitted it was as thrilling a sight as he could remember.

After landing on the west side of the field it taxied proudly to the center spot at Dulles. By this time, the #3 engine had been shut down and feathered. It only did more to add to the nostalgia of the moment by bringing to mind the many times I had come "home" to Thurleigh with an engine feathered.

It was at this time that a young reporter from a local radio station, WAMU, did a lengthy interview with me allowing me to extol the virtues of the great plane that had brought me home safely 35 times. The interview was carried uncut on local broadcasts the following morning.

After the arrival ceremonies I was chatting with TV Channel 7's Special Assignments reporter, Ed Turney, when that final and unforgettable 35th mission came up, and I mentioned that, at the time of completion of the mission, I got down and kissed the ground. He videotaped my re-enactment of that great moment, relived again at the sight of the B-17, the plane which on March 17, 1945, brought me home safely and allowed me to enjoy another rewarding and fulfilling 39 years of life.

The sight of the plane coupled with other 8th Air Force alumni who were on hand for this great event, brought back stirring memories of my 306th flying mates. They are scattered across the country now. Some have retired, like myself. I still get a New Year's Eve call from my old co-pilot, John Wilson. We missed for the few years I was overseas in serving my 20 years of active duty, and again in 1957, when, as a KC-97 aircraft commander in Strategic Air Command, I was enroute from Barksdale Air Force Base to Goose Bay, Labrador, on a SAC "Reflex" operation.

And each Christmas I anxiously await the five cards from crew members Wes Gunkel, Ed Tutun, Roy Nokes, Chuck Yeager and John Wilson. I wish they could have been with me on this trek down memory lane. Hopefully, by reading this, they will recapture some of the exultation that gripped many of us.

This story has an emphasis on nostalgia, and I would like to close in the same vein. The whole experience was one of wonder and amazement—amazement that 39 years have elapsed since that memorable 35th mission.

I followed my 20 years of active duty with another 17 as an Air Force civilian in the Pentagon, before retiring again in 1981. I still report in for a few months every year as a Consultant to the Secretary of Defense for the an-

# D-DAY!

D-Day brought 11,000 Allied aircraft swarming over Normandy in support of the landings on the beaches below. Many of these planes flew more than one mission that day. By night-fall on June 6th, over 30,000 sorties (1 plane—1 mission) had been flown.

The logistics, routing and control of such an air armada were of staggering proportions; thus the early start on the previous night. Planes to be fueled, armed and inspected. Crews to be briefed, engines to be warmed up—then take-off, rendezvous and assembly.

Few people in England would sleep as the mighty void of tens-of-millions of horsepower surged through the night air. The ground literally shook in many places that busy night, and witnessing this gigantic undertaking would prove to be a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

On D-Day the group flew three more missions. I know, because as a newly promoted captain in a newly-assigned job as operations officer of the 423rd squadron, it was my task to assign the air crews, see to the briefings, coordinate matters with ordnance, maintenance, etc. What I didn't get to do was fly . . . Group policy you know! Operations officers were not to be considered regular combat flyers . . . their main duties took precedence.

Actually, by the time D-Day arrived I'd flown almost 200 combat hours in some 28 missions to targets in such places as Wilhelmshaven, Bremen, Frankfurt, Leipzig and of course Big "B"—Berlin. And it had been 245 days since I'd seen Scranton.

My last view of Scranton had been in the late afternoon of October 4, 1943. Early that morning I'd assembled the other nine members of my crew at an air base in Grand Island, Nebraska, where we boarded a new, combat-ready B-17 and headed east on the first leg of a journey that would culminate with assignment to the 8th Air Force in England.

Knowing it might be a long time, if ever, that I would see home again, I guided the four-engine bomber slightly south of course (our destination was Syracuse, NY) and about 4:00 p.m. was over downtown Scranton at about 1,000 feet.

My family lived at the time in the 2300 block of North Washington Ave. just below Marywood College. The great gold dome on the mother-house at the college made a perfect sighting point, and aiming the nose of the Flying Fortress just to the left of the college I descended to where we just skimmed the trees in passing over the homes in that area.

I remember my grandfather, the

late Harry McLean, was raking his back yard garden as we thundered over. Quite startled, he threw down the rake and retreated toward the house.

I pulled up in a great turning circle over Olyphant, Providence, West Side, Pine Brook and around to dive one more time over the homestead, then with a waggle of the wings we headed for war. It was then 44 days since my 20th birthday.

After "dive-bombing" Scranton we resumed our flight to Syracuse. From there, and with some bad weather delays, we went to Presque Isle, Maine, Gander, Newfoundland, and ultimately after a 13-hour trans-Atlantic flight, touched down at Prestwick, Scotland, in the early afternoon of October 14. I felt not unlike Charles Lindbergh in the Spirit of St. Louis.

Unbeknownst to us, the 8th Air Force was suffering one of its largest losses that very day. Attacking the ball bearing works at Schweinfurt the 8th Air Force lost 60 heavy bombers, which came to be known as "Black Thursday." The 306th Bombardment Group (H) was one of the groups especially hard hit, losing 10 of the 18 planes they sent out that day.

Replacement crews were urgently needed and by the end of October 15 new pilots (myself included) together with our crews arrived at Thurleigh to commence combat duty. In less than three months, nine of the 15 would be out of action. Three were destined to be killed in action, four would be prisoners of war in Germany, another, shot down, evaded capture until his ultimate liberation by Patton's army in August of 1944, and the ninth, severely wounded by 20mm cannon fire brought his badly damaged plane back to England but was in no condition even to fly again.

My crew and I got our first taste of the air war on November 3 with a six hour mission to Wilhelmshaven. The bombing run was successful, flak was meager and the few enemy fighters seen did not press the attack. Nonetheless, it was not to be a casualty-free day.

On the return flight to England two planes of the 368th Squadron collided in mid-air. There were no survivors. We returned to Thurleigh and contemplated 20 empty bunks. Obviously, war was not all Hollywood heroics!

Almost 31 weeks passed by; the group flew another 88 missions, and now on the night of June 5th we prepared for D-Day operations.

Searchlights aimed straight into the night sky began to wink on across the countryside. This unusual breach of wartime black-

The Group and Squadron diaries are far from perfect, but it seemed that in order to best recall the events of D-Day for all of those who were on the scene, that perhaps it was good to turn to the diaries and to quote them verbatim. The authors were intelligence officers assigned to the daily diary task. Their names are listed. The only significant change that has been made from the original copies is to have put in the full names of all persons listed.

## 306th Group Diary—by Wiley W. Glass

### D-Day, 1st Mission, Arromanches, France

From this day forward the Second Front is a reality. Today we operated in direct support of ground troops. 24 a/c were assigned a 105mm howitzer installation about one mile inland and 18 a/c attacked a defended locality at Anselles. Takeoff was at 0430 hours. Targets were reached without incident. Due to heavy undercast, bombing was by navigational equipment with unobserved results.

### D-Day, 2nd Mission, Caen France

The 306th put up 12 a/c led by Capt. Earl Kesling, 423rd, to bomb a road junction in Caen. Takeoff was at 0730 hours—a solid undercast was encountered over the target area and due to absence of PFF equipment all of our a/c returned to base with their bombs. No E/A or flak was seen en route.

### D-Day, 3rd Mission: Thury-Harcourt, France

11 a/c plus one PFF flew high group of 306th B CBW and 22 a/c plus two PFF flew lead and low groups of the 306th B CBW to bomb a bridge over the River Orne. Takeoff was at 1730 hours. Due to most adverse weather conditions there was trouble in assembly with a/c from our group joining other groups and vice versa. A large cloud over the target made it necessary to use PFF equipment. All a/c, with the exception of one, which aborted, dropped bombs in the target area. No flak or enemy fighters were seen. Crews reported seeing great fires on land and the Channel to be filled with ships and landing craft.

## 367th Squadron Diary— by Lt. William A. Leatherman Arromanches

This was the mission that everyone wanted and had waited for. Today we were to operate in direct support of ground troops on French soil. From this day forward the second front is a reality instead of just a gleam in the general's eye. The 306th flew three missions during the day and the assignment on this, the first, was to destroy a 105mm howitzer installation about one mile inland and near the town of Arromanches; also a defended area near Anselles. Our squadron was with the group assigned to the defended area and sent six a/c as the high squadron of the lead group and was led by Lt. Perry E. Raster.

The bombing was PFF and no results were observed. It is felt a good pattern resulted as all bombardiers dropped together. The whole route was obscured by 10/10 cloud, and all crews were disappointed in not being able to see the ground forces make their landings.

No flak was encountered, and the Luftwaffe was conspicuous in its absence at a time when everyone expected it to make an all out effort. All planes returned safely to base.

Other pilots from the 367th were: Lts. Joseph W. Pedersen, Talmadge G. McDonough, William M. Wood, William H. McNeil, and Edward J. Magner.

### Caen, France

This, the second D-Day mission, was aimed at the German communications center of Caen. The 306th sent twelve a/c that followed the 92nd Group over the target. The 367th furnished six a/c which flew numbers 4, 5 and 6 positions of the lead element plus the high element of the formation. This group did not have a PFF ship and was unable to bomb because the entire area was covered by a 10/10 undercast. All planes returned with their bombs.

No flak or fighters were encountered on the mission. There was excellent area support by our fighters.

Pilots from the 367th were: Lts. Charles M. Tell, Ben H. Peters, Edward W. Locke, William R. Allen, George J. Mapes, and W. Bradley Butterfield.

### Thury-Harcourt, France

This group dispatched 36 a/c to form the 306th B CBW. Our squadron flew all positions of the lead squadron, lead group except lead a/c. Lt. Talmadge G. McDonough of our squadron led the high element of the high group. Our target was the lines of communication in the town of Thury-Harcourt. The assembly was made under

the most adverse weather conditions and all the 306th planes never made the join up. The high group never found the lead and low groups and went on to bomb with planes from other fields. The lead and low groups were never completed, and even so some of the positions were filled by a/c from other bases. The target was bombed PFF with unobserved results by the lead and low groups. Lt. McDonough of our squadron bombed with the high group, lead squadron, PFF with unobserved results.

No flak or enemy a/c were seen, and all our planes returned safely to base. On this mission there were clear areas and the crews reported seeing a great many fires on land, and the sea was said to be filled with ships and landing craft.

Other pilots for the 367th were Lts. Joseph Pederson, William N. Wood, Edward J. Magner, William H. McNeil, and Virgil W. Dingman.

## **368th Squadron Diary— by Capt. Sam S. McNeely**

### **Invasion Target—1st Mission: Arromanches**

306th flew 42 a/c on the first invasion mission. They were composed of two groups of 18 a/c each and one lead squadron of composite group 40th CBW. Capt. J. Bruce McMahon led low squadron of A group with Lts. Edward R. Patton, Ivan W. Oberhelman, John W. Curtis, Charles L. Trigg, and William A. Reece. Capt. Carl Grending led low squadron of B group with Lts. William Breslin, Frank L. Kryzston, Dewey O. Jones, Elton C. Rabe and Ted Boswell. Capt. Russell S. Lund led the composite group. Bombing was on PFF technique over 10/10ths cloud. Pictures at bombs away show good close patterns. No flak or E/A were seen. All a/c returned. Capt. A. W. Weld, S-2, removed his flak helmet for sufficient period of time to observe one burst of flak in vicinity of Caen and picket fence effect of smoke bombs dropped along Coastline.

### **2nd Mission: Caen**

Twelve a/c led by Capt. Earl Kesling of the 423rd took off. Lt. Wayne H. Erwin was the only 368th pilot on this mission. All bombs were brought back due to 10/10th undercast and to no availability of PGG a/c with formation. No E/A or flak was met.

### **3rd Mission: Thury-Harcourt**

Eleven a/c of the 306th plus 1 PFF formed high group of 306th B CBW. Capt. J. Bruce McMahon led with Lts. Elton C. Rabe, Charles L. Trigg and Ivan W. Oberhelman of the 368th filling in other positions. 22 a/c plus 2 PFF formed lead and low groups of 306th B CBW. Capt. Lund led low group with Lt. John W. Curtis filling in after not making rendezvous with lead groups. Lts. Dewey O. Jones, Frank L. Kryzston and Ted Boswell flew high element of lead group. Lts. William A. Reece and William Breslin flew in low element. Considerable difficulty experienced in making rendezvous on account of 10/10th cloud over England. 5/10th clouds persisted until half way across Channel where visibility was clear. At target a cloud patch prevented visual run on high group MPI. PFF was used. The lead and low bombed visually and with good results, no flak or E/A were seen: P-38s, P-47s and P-51s and Typhoons were seen covering landing craft and strafing good targets. Intense activity noted along beachhead and the sea approach. All a/c returned safely.

## **369th Squadron Diary— by Lt. John M. Kavanaugh and Lt. Henry L. P. Moore**

### **D-Day—1st Mission: Arromanches**

D-Day found the crews up early and the 306th sending 24 a/c to attack a Gun Battery in Arromanches area and 19 a/c to attack a defended locality at Anselles-Sumer. 10/10 clouds prevented crews from observing activities below and made PFF bombing necessary. The 369th sent 11 planes all of which attacked the field battery. Crews report a good concentration of bombs but they could not see results. No E/A opposed operations and no flak was seen. Capt. Loy Peterson and Lts. Lowell W. Burgess, Cecil C. McKinney, Ethan A. Allen, Francis H. Bennett, Eldon L. Ralstin, Richard F. Vogel, Clifford F. Baxter, Richard D. Buttorff, William O. Thompson and F/O Andrew Kata and crews flew for the 369th.

### **D-Day 2nd Mission: Caen**

The target was a road junction in Caen, but 10/10 cloud cover in the absence of PFF equipment prevented bombing. The 306th flew 12 a/c of which 3 were from the 369th. Lts. Morris D. Reed, Earl R. Saunders and Lloyd E. Johns and crews flew. No AA gunfire or fighter opposition was met. Numerous P-38s were seen.

## **D-Day 3rd Mission: Thury-Harcourt**

Eleven a/c plus 1 PFF flew high group of the 306 B CBW and 22 a/c plus 2 PFF flew lead and low groups of the 306th B CBW to bomb tactical targets in Thury-Harcourt. 10 a/c of the 369th flew, 4 in the high and 6 in the low groups. There was trouble in assembly with ships from this group joining other groups and other groups joining this one. One 306th ship bombed with some ships of the 3rd Division and a B-24 bombed with the 306th group. Nobody missed a chance to bomb. Clouds were 5/10 over the Channel and generally clear over the target area, but a large cloud over the target prevented visual bombing. No AA gunfire was seen. Flying for the 369th were Lts. Clifford L. Baxter, Francis H. Bennett, Richard F. Vogel, Richard D. Buttorff, Lowell W. Burgess, Ethan A. Allen, Cecil C. McKinney, William O. Thompson, Eldon L. Ralstin, F/O Andrew Kata and crews.

## **423rd Squadron Diary— by Lt. Joseph C. Brashares**

### **Arromanches**

At the first minute of the new day the crews were called for breakfast at 0030 hours, briefing at 0130 hours and takeoff at 0430 hours to bomb defended areas on the French Coast and gun positions just inside the French Coast. The target area between LeHavre and Cherbourg was reached without incident and there were no opposing enemy fighters and no flak. The mission was hindered by heavy undercast and bombing was by navigational equipment with unobserved results. Capt. J. W. Frazer, Jr. led one of the many squadrons with pilots John D. Baldwin, Kenneth Yass, Wilbur C. Weiland, Harold R. Fossum, John J. O'Brien, Derrill L. Latham, Ferman J. Millette, George C. Berner, Taylor L. Leedy, Richard Nickelhoff and crews.

### **Caen**

At 0730 hours, a second mission to attack an important crossroads inland from the beachhead area in France. A 10/10ths undercast prevailed over this region and as it was impossible to attack the assigned target the a/c returned without dropping their bombs. Capt. Earl W. Kesling led the group with pilot W. D. Fortson and crews.

### **Thury-Harcourt**

At 1730 hours, a tactical target, a bridge over the Orne River near Thury-Harcourt. No flak and no enemy fighters were seen. A large patch of clouds hit the primary target and bombs were dropped with unobserved results. Pilots Derrill L. Latham, Richard Nickelhoff, Ferman J. Millette, George C. Berner, Taylor L. Leedy, Wilbur C. Weiland, John J. O'Brien, Kenneth Yass and crews represented the squadron.

## **USAAF Chronology**

### **6 June**

"Heavy bombers fly four missions in support of the invasion of Normandy. 1,361 heavy bombers are dispatched on first mission of the day. 1,015 of the heavy bombers attack the beach installations, 47 bomb transportation chokepoints in the town of Caen and 21 bomb alternate targets. Overcast and inability of heavy bombers to locate (or absence of) Pathfinder leaders causes failure of some units to attack.

The second mission strikes at transportation chokepoints in towns immediately around the assault area. Total cloud cover causes most of the 528 heavy bombers dispatched to return with the bombs, but 37 bombers manage to bomb secondary target at Argentan.

The third mission is dispatched against the important communication center of Caen. 56 B-24s bomb through overcast skies. Transportation chokepoints in towns immediately south and east of assault area are the objectives of the fourth mission for the Eighth. 553 heavy bombers bomb targets including Vire, Saint-Lo, Coutances, Falaise, Lisieux, Thury-Harcourt, Pont-l'Évêque, Argentan and Conde-sue Noireau. In all, 1,729 heavy bombers of Eighth Air Force drop 3,596 tons of bombs during D-Day, suffering only three losses (to ground fire and a collision).

VIII Fighter Command has threefold mission of escorting heavy bombers, attacking any movement toward assault area, and protecting Allied shipping. The fighters fly 1,880 sorties, including fighter bomber attacks against 17 bridges, 10 marshalling yards, and a variety of other targets, including convoy, railroad cars, siding, rail and highway junctions, tunnel, and a dam. Very little air opposition is encountered. The fighters claim 28 German aircraft destroyed

# Bombardiers Were Primarily a of WW II; Now an Obsolete Cra

time we memorized the full system.

The principle of both sights was the same. Each was an entry form of computer designed to solve the "bombing problem."

That problem was to calculate the downward path of a bomb so that the release point could be adjusted to ensure that it would land in the desired place. The main factors involved were (1) the forward motion gained from the aircraft; (2) the motion lost in descent and (3) the wind effect.

The predicted winds and the bomb's physical characteristics were known. The rest of the calculations had to be made at the site by manipulating knobs on the bombsight.

That instrument, in effect, was a telescope aimed ahead of the aircraft and moving at a slow speed to the upright position. The speed of this rotation was controlled by the knobs on the sight. If the calculations were right and the knobs were adjusted properly, the cross hairs in the telescope stayed on the target, the bombs were released automatically at the right time and a few minutes later, a satisfying puff of smoke appeared in the center of the target. To keep it stable in a pitching, yawing, rolling aircraft, the sight had high-speed vertical and horizontal gyroscopes rotating inside of it.

Learning to operate this mechanism was a matter of putting the cross hairs on the target and then adjusting the knobs with coordinated precision as the hairs began to drift off. It was roughly the equivalent of trying to tune a radio and adjust the temperature in a shower at the same time.

Of course, the bombsight did nothing by itself but calculate where the airplane should be at the moment of bomb release. Somebody had to steer it to that position. There were two ways of doing that.

One system relayed signals to a "pilot direction indicator" in the cockpit and the pilot turned left or right as the indicator needle indicated. A more sophisticated system tied the bombsight into the plane's automatic pilot so the bombardier actually "flew" the plane when he turned his knobs.

The bombardier began on a ground trainer, which was a self-propelled scaffolding on wheels, carrying the bombsight. With it, the student chased a small moving box around the floor of a hangar scoring simulated "hits" with a bobbing pen on a bit of paper atop the box.

This simulator lacked the ability to bank, vibrate and produce airsickness. That phase of training was accomplished in the twin-engine Beech AT-11, a modifica-



Frank Yaussi, first group bombardier, inspects the bombs before takeoff.

This interesting appraisal on the bomb dropers of WWII appeared in the Commentary column by Bruce Callender, appearing in the 9 April 1984 issue of Air Force Times.

The bombardier was a child of World War II. His life expectancy was short, and if he survived the war his career prospects were slim. His specialty was born, flourished and died all within about one decade.

What sparks this recollection is a request from reader E.C. Humphreys, Jr. A bombardier graduate at Midland Army Air Field, Tex., he later retrained as a navigator and retired as a colonel. Now at Star Rt. 1, Box 254, Eagle Harbor, Mich. 49951, Humphreys is trying to contact former bombardiers with an eye toward a reunion next year.

Having graduated from Midland several classes behind Humphreys and plied the bomb-aiming trade briefly with the 15th Air Force in Italy, I got to thinking about this odd breed.

To say the bombardiers were unique to WWII is not strictly true, of course. Before the 1940s some pilots but many gunners trained on the job to drop bombs. And there were a few old-style bombardiers around through the early 1950s.

But almost all of those who learned only the skill of bomb dropping as aviation cadets graduated during the war years.

The Army had planned as early as 1939 for separate, specialized

bombardier training, but it was almost literally on the eve of Pearl Harbor that the Army Air Forces began to train students specifically for the job.

Many students, like me, began as pilot trainees, washed out and took bombardier training as second choice. For others, this new crew specialty was first choice.

If we had known how the AAF improvised and jerry-rigged some of its initial training, we might have been less confident that we were being groomed to bring the Axis to its knees. But, as it usually does, the military represented the schools as the last work in state-of-the-art education.

Later, I was to learn otherwise. The director of training at Midland was a young lieutenant colonel named John D. Ryan, who had been a captain barely two years earlier. Years afterward I met him again when he was Air Force's chief of staff and he confessed that he had gone to Midland thinking he was to run a pilot school. Until he arrived he never had seen a bombsight, so he enrolled himself in the course and tried to stay a day or two ahead of his cadets.

One problem was that U.S. bombsights made by Norden and Sperry, still were secret weapons. AAF was afraid to print textbooks on them, so we spent much of our time laboriously copying diagrams of the sights from the blackboard. After each class our drawings were collected and destroyed, but in



Smaller bombs drop in profusion over Ebelsbach, 21 July 44. Altitude, 24,500'.

# Creature

ft



Maj. W. H. Coons, longtime group bombardier.

tion of the advanced pilot training plane with a plastic "greenhouse" in the nose. In it, pairs of students would make realistic runs on circular ground targets. They dropped 100-pound practice bombs (Model M38A2) filled with sand and loaded with a four-pound charge of powder in the tail, enough to produce a puff of smoke on impact.

After a number of practice runs, the students' bombs were scored for "circular error," the distance they fell from the center of the target. The overall "CE" was calculated with a mathematical formula, and it had to average within 230 feet when converted to the standard altitude of 12,000 feet.

Bombardiers who scored within this magic ring graduated and were commissioned (or made flight officers) and most were sent to bomber units for crew training. I went to a B-24 group. After being trained largely on Norden bombsights aboard AT-11s, I discovered that the Liberators were equipped with Sperry sights and that bombers did not behave much like trainers. It took another several months to recover the proficiency gained in school.

Of all the crew training developed in WWII, however, that devised for bombardiers may have been the most effective. Other crewmembers had more or less traditional jobs calling for logical movements. Not the bombardier. His prime role was to operate a sensitive mechanical device while kneeling five miles above the ground in the midst of bursting shells, rattling machine-gun fire and falling aircraft. Somehow, the AAF had built a training program that would concentrate the bombardier's attention on that one task so fully that he could block out the distractions. Whatever failings the program may have had, it worked amazingly well in that respect. I knew several bombardiers who were nervous as cats during most of every mission but were able to kneel calmly over the sight for the half-hour of the bomb run and

caress its knobs with the quiet proficiency of a diamond cutter at his bench.

Even as we plied our trade, however, we saw the first signs of technological obsolescence creeping in on us. In mid-1944, our bomb group received its first "Mickey" ship, fitted with an airborne radar system nicknamed for Mickey Mouse.

Specially trained operators began to use the thing on live missions. Then, in a move humiliating to all conventional bombardiers, we were told to drop our bombs when we saw the Mickey aircraft do so. Naturally, we had no faith in this electronic gadget, and for a time it seemed unable to find targets, much less hit them. Eventually, of course, radar was refined and operators became proficient in its use.

And another development occurred to number the days of the conventional bombardier.

Early in the war, crewmen were scarce and the object was to get them into combat as soon as possible. The first bombardier courses were a scant 12 weeks long. As manning eased, however, the course was lengthened to 18 weeks and, later, students were required to take an added six weeks of gunnery training.

As cadet applicants became even more plentiful and experienced bombardiers flocked back from their first combat tours, the AAF decided that it would be a good safeguard to have two officer crew members trained in both bomb aiming and navigation. Early programs were limited to giving bombardiers a little dead-reckoning navigation but, eventually, the concept of the full bombardier/navigator took hold.

I was one of the "retreads" who returned to navigator training and was groomed for a dual-rated role on the B-29. While I was still in training, however, Japan surrendered and it was all over. When I was recalled for the Korean War, I was told I was now a bombardier-navigator even though technically I had not completed my navigator course. But radar was replacing the old optical bombsights and schools were producing "triple-threat men" (bombardier/navigator/radar operators). It was only a matter of time until, like me, old-style bombardiers began receiving the word that their specialties were considered obsolete. My politely worded notice assured me that I could continue to wear my old bombardier wings if I had not qualified for a more current badge. In fact, I had been authorized "observer" wings (now the standard navigator badge), but I took them off and dug out the old bomb-aimer's badge. If I was a relic, I decided I might as well look like one. I wondered how long it would be before some newly minted bombardier/navigator would look at the bomb on my wings and ask what that thing was.



A closeup of two 500 pounders leaving the plane, headed perhaps for sub pens.



It didn't take long.

Having gone through the better half of all three cadet training programs, I know that pilot and navigator schools also convinced their students that their jobs were the most important ones on any aircrew. But I always thought that bombardiers were given the best pep talk. Everybody else, we were told, was working for us. The airplane driver and the map reader were to get us there and the gunners were to see that we weren't disturbed before we could do our thing. The entire mission, in short, was dedicated to seeing that we had our uninterrupted 30 minutes to make out bomb run.

It was a ridiculous proposition, of course, but it did wonders for the ego.

## 45 New Names in One List

Leo Gallegos, who joined the 306th as a waist gunner in the 368th, and his wife are treasurer and secretary, respectively, of the Stalag XVII-B organization nationally. When the directory hit their mail box they went to work, resulting in 45 new names for our 306th list. When you look through the list of the newly-added in this issue, much of the thanks must go to Leo and his wife. Its help like this from all over the U.S. that keeps our list growing. These additions put us over 1,800 names for the July issue.

out regulations was a response to the unusually heavy air traffic that night. The beacons marked assembly points for the groups of planes now forming up. Among the first in the air were Lancaster and Short Sterling heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force who set out to strike around midnight at targets in the Pas de Calais area.

This was consistent with a diversionary strategy that had been followed for some weeks and was designed to make the Germans believe that the invasion would come at the point where the English Channel was the narrowest. This ploy, perhaps the single most important element in the success of the invasion, had succeeded.

Field Marshals Gerd von Rundstedt and Erwin Rommel, convinced that the attack would come in the Pas de Calais area, had concentrated their strongest force, the German Fifteenth Army, north of the Seine between Le Havre and Dunkirk and had increased its strength that spring from 10 to 15 divisions. Meanwhile, under cloak of darkness, thousands of ships carrying the Allied invasion forces steamed not towards Picardy, but to the Normandy beaches where they would meet the much weaker German Seventh Army.

The ground in England continued to shake as hundreds upon hundreds of troop carrier planes, many towing assault gliders, took to the air. Assembling on the beacons, they headed for France carrying the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the British 6th Airborne Division to their drop zones.

Starting shortly after midnight, landings of gliders and paratroopers commenced over a wide area. The Germany Army sounded a general alarm at 1:30 a.m., June 6, 1944. Operation Overlord had begun in earnest as the airborne soldiers proceeded to destroy bridges, communication points, and to raise general hell in a manner designed to frustrate any attempt to reinforce the German Seventh Army which, in a state of near panic, prepared for the first assault waves soon to hit the beaches at 6:30 a.m.

As day broke, the assault from the sea started, and overhead the sky now filled with thousands of fighter planes beating up the beaches, driving defending German forces to take cover and



Smoke bombs from the lead planes serve as guides for the following ships of the formation.

## Remember Doc Weihe?

B/Gen. G. Barney Rawlings, 367th co-pilot, writes in comment on the April issue of Echoes:

"Dr. Art Weihe's death brought to an end an interesting 367th legend. The Clay Pigeon combat crews were his. I recall him 'patrolling' the entrance at every mission briefing in the interest of assisting any combat crew member who might have had a 'short night' and need some medication and oxygen more than they needed the briefing. Doc and I last visited here in Las Vegas four years ago at which time he entrusted to me a pewter flask, with carved autographs of some of the most colorful 'Clay Pigeons.' "

aiding in many ways the debarking troops on the beaches below.

Throughout the day the bombers and the fighters returned again and again. Air cover was absolute; by nightfall, the beachhead was secure and the long march to Berlin began. It would end 48 weeks later with Germany's unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945.

John M. Kelly reported to the 368th squadron as a pilot 21 October 1943, completing his combat tour 26 June 1944. He was transferred to the 423rd squadron as operations officer 1 May 1944. Kelly left active duty in 1953 as a lieutenant colonel and is currently president of Management Enterprises, Inc., Scranton, PA, his home town.

## Remembered by Men of 306th

From page 5

and 14 damaged. Also destroyed are 21 locomotives and two carloads of ammunition. Numerous targets are damaged including locomotives, trucks, tank cars, armored vehicles, goods ac carriers barges and tugboats. Targets attacked with unreported results include warehouses, radar towers, barracks, troops, artillery, staff cars, 85 trains, and a variety of other targets. 25 VIII Fighter Com-mand aircraft are lost.

"Combat Chronology, 1941-45." The Army Air Forces in World War II.

## Newly-Found

- Anderson, William S., 924 1/2 15th Ave., Apt. 1, E. Moline, IL 61244 367.
- Barnes, William B., 167 Preston Ave., Shreveport, LA 71105 423.
- Bedard, Lucian, 345 Oak Grove Ave., Fall River, MA 02723 367.
- Carey, Daniel H., 1415 Robbia Ave., Coral Gables, FL 33146 423.
- Carsiglia, John M., 64 Lawton Ave., Riverside, IL 60546 449.
- Corlee, Lloyd, 3057 SW 61st St., Oklahoma City, OK 73119 423.
- Cunningham, Jack R., 2440 Cardinal Dr., Apt. 15, San Diego CA 92123 369.
- David, David C., 902 Cornell St., Madison, WI 73705 423.
- David John L., 7031 Albatross Dr., Buena Park, CA 90620 367.
- DeFlorio, Daniel P., 20 Cranton Ave., Groveland, MA 01834 423.
- DeWolf, Fletcher M., Rt. 1, Boc 749, Bristol, NH 03222 367.
- Dore, Eugene H., 100 7th Ave. N, Hopkins, MN 55343 369.
- Downing, Robert J., 509 13th Ave., NW, Ardmore, OK 73401 423.
- Evenson, Jerome A., 3318 N. Farragut St., Portland, OR 97217 369.
- Fehr, Charles E., 6113 Kingston Rd., Oklahoma City, OK 73122 368.
- Gray, John, 101 Stanley Ct., LaPorte, IN 46350 367.
- Grimm, Raymond M., 1670 Lincoln Ave., Lakewood, OH 44107 369.
- Gustafson, Edward J., 325 Hamilton St., Albany, NY 12210 369.
- Gutierrez, John, 7835 Santa Elena, Houston, TX 77061 423.
- Hazy, John, Rt. 3, Wall Rd., Monongahela, PA 15063 423.
- Henderson, Ernest H., Lillie, LA 71256 367.
- Hovis, David M., 914 Parkwood Rd., Shelby, NC 28150 367.
- Jackson, Ernest B., 455 Clearbrook Dr., Covington, GA 30290 423.
- Johnson, Alvin C., Rt. 3, Box 21, Burlington, CO 80807 368.
- Koetter, Jack E., 229 Coleen St., Livermore, CA 94550 423.
- Ladage, Charles D., 2975 Shelby Dr., Orange Park, FL 32073 369.
- Leaprot, Herman, 839 Beedingfield, Macon, GA 31206 368.
- Loubet, Paul R., 501 Valley Rd., R. 1, Oxford, NJ 07863 369.
- Lux, Charles H., 3632 Green St., Steger, IL 60475 368.
- Mannello, Frederick, 18 Michael Rd., Syosset, NY 11791 423.
- McClennan, George J., 509 Brookhurst St., Dallas, TX 75218 423.
- McMahon, Thomas D., Box 582, Redway, CA 95560 369.
- Mills, Irving J., 328 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314 423.
- Minto, Everett L., 4631 Webb Rd., Youngstown, OH 44515 369.
- Melton, W. C., 350 Mt. Alto, Rome, GA 30161 368.
- Moore, Matthew G., 1470 Midland Ave., Bronxville, NY 10708 369.
- Pagano, Joseph J., 137-22 Negundo Ave., Flushing, LI, NY 11355 423.
- Perry, Charles, 29 Thistle Rd., Woburn, MA 01801 367.
- Randall, Charles E., 1356 Loomis St., Box 382, Wheatland, WY 82201 423.
- Robel, Robert G., 146 S. Ryan St., Auburn, AL 36830 367.
- Sanders, Lee, 9322 Tahiti Circle, Huntington Beach, CA 92646 367.
- Santos, Earl, 4926 E. Weldon, Fresno, CA 93705 369.
- Schieb, Ray, 1400 Warrington Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48103 369.
- Sears, J. F., PO Box 275, Pioche, NV 89043 628.
- Sutor, Marvin O., 1321 Belvedere Rd., Port Deposit, MD 21904 368.
- Thompson, Joseph J., Rt. 2, Box 140, Waupaca, WI 54981 367.
- Victory, Luther D., 721 E. Texas Ave., Baytown, TX 77520 369.
- Williams, Donald E., Box 24, Hereford, AZ 85615 369.
- Williams, Duncan J., Glenwood Rd., Rutland, MA 01543 369.
- Winkeller, Henry, 1 Lindbergh Rd., Marblehead, MA 01945 423.
- Zrust, Gordon F., 7119-W Georgia, Glendale, AZ 85303 367.
- Banas, Charles, 1935 Kenilworth, Wilmette, IL 60606 369.
- Gedney, Herb, 4504 Century Dr. S., Salem, OR 97302 367.
- Gesiriech, Florian, 44659 Bemald St., Lancaster, CA 93534 368.
- Huddle, Orville C., 3340 Locust Grove Lane, Salem, VA 24153 368.
- Johnson, James R., Rt. 1, Box 68, Gonzales, TX 78629 368.
- Morgan, William G., 8625 Shadwell Dr., Roanoke, VA 24019 423.

## Snuffy Smith, Medal of Honor From page 1

ner was subjected to intense enemy anti-aircraft fire and determined fighter airplane attacks while returning from a mission over enemy-occupied continental Europe on 1 May 1943. The airplane was hit several times by anti-aircraft fire and cannon shells of the fighter airplanes, two of the crew were seriously wounded, the aircraft's oxygen system was shot out, and several vital control cables severed when intense fires were ignited simultaneously in the radio compartment and waist sections. The situation became so acute that three of the crew bailed out into the comparative safety of the sea. Sergeant Smith, then on his first combat mission, elected to fight the fire by himself, administered first aid to the tail gunner, manned the waist guns, and fought the intense flames alternately. The escaping oxygen fanned the fire to such intense heat that the ammunition in the radio compartment began to explode, the radio, gun mounts, and camera were melted, and the compartment completely gutted. Sergeant Smith threw the exploding ammunition overboard, fought the fire until all the fire fighting aids were exhausted, manned the workable guns until the enemy fighters were driven away, further administered first aid to his wounded comrade, and then by wrapping himself in protecting cloth, completely extinguished the fire by hand. This soldier's gallantry in action, undaunted bravery, and loyalty to his aircraft and fellow crew members, without regard for his own personal safety, is an inspiration to the armed forces of the United States."



# Guess Who's Coming to Fort Worth?

# 306th Reunion Order Form

OCT. 25-27, 1984—Ft. Worth

## 367th SQUADRON

Fred Anderson & Lavonne  
J. W. Broussard & Ada  
Howard Balcom  
John Bloom  
Alexander Clark  
John Conlin & Vinita  
Joe Consolmagno & Pat  
Walter Coons & Beth  
John Dexter & Bettye  
John Corcoran  
C. Larry Emeigh  
Clay Ganes & Thelma  
John Grimm & Ruth  
E. J. Edwards  
Wilson Elliott & Libia  
William Feeser & Pauline  
William Futchik  
Walter Guy  
Bill Hifler & LaVon  
William Houlihan & Ruth  
Robert Hermann & Janice  
Ralph Irvine  
Keith Jackson & Karen Beth  
Norman Johnson & Lorraine  
Jerome Kostal & Lillian  
Al LaChasse  
John Kalb  
Vincent Kiely & Eleanor  
Fred Lauer  
James Lenaghan  
William McKearn  
William Mutz & Athene  
Arch Nesbitt & Grace  
Ben Peters & Betty  
Lawrence Ristuccia  
George Roberts & Norma  
Robert Rockwell  
John Ryan & Janice  
Jack Schmidt & Gail  
Donald Sheridan & Faye  
Robert Shultz  
Parley Small & Virginia  
Myron Sorden & Kay  
Paul Steele  
Russell Strong & June  
Stephen Tanella  
Leslie Turner & Muriel  
Patrick Walsh

## 368th SQUADRON

Marshall Baker  
Ralph Bordner & Nell  
Wallace Boring & Betty  
William Breslin & Dorothy  
Ted Boswell  
William Cavaness & Dorothy  
Chris Christianson & Em  
Louis Cook  
Orval Cook  
Maynard Dix & Virginia  
George Fisher  
James Gerlach  
Joe Hardesty & Vicki  
Russell Houghton  
Toy Husband  
Graford Jennings & Margaret  
Glenn Lally & Dorothy  
Eduardo Montoya  
Mahlon Morley  
Alvin Naumann  
Jane Odle  
Reginald Robinson & Verna  
J. Louis Rodriguez  
Donald Ross & Janice  
Andy Vangalis

## 369th SQUADRON

George Antous  
C. Dale Briscoe  
Joe Bowles  
William Collins  
Horace Corigliano & Ronnie  
Robert Crane  
Elvie Deal & Nora  
Robert Dwiggin  
William Flanagan & Helen  
Charles Flannagan  
Robert Flood & Kay  
Maxine Fontenot  
James Furay & Lucy  
Forest Goodwill & Hazel  
Marian Hall  
Arthur Harnois & Margaret  
Theodore Harkin  
Ken Herbster  
Roy Howard  
Edward Hennessy  
William Hogan & Elayne  
Harry Hoser & Emily  
John Krische  
Edward Murphy  
Y. B. Newsom  
Vincent Palumbo & Muriel  
Eddie Perin  
Bert Perlmutter  
Malcolm Phillips & Vera  
Robert Riordan & Mirian  
Frank Potter & Terry  
Gerald Rotter & Lois  
Robert Roth & Barbara  
Dennis Sharkey & Mary Rose  
Howard Sharkey & Dolores  
Edgar Smith  
Forrest Sweeney & Frances  
William Tarr & Rebajane  
Roy Trask  
Leslie Yearous  
Ray Yerak & Reggie

## 423rd SQUADRON

James Babbs  
Hollis Baker  
Edward Bergeron  
Harold Bougher & Irene  
Catherine Brennan  
Charles Dimter  
Harry Doles & Betty  
Milton Edwards & Betty  
George Gransie  
Joe Hathaway  
Howard Hutchinson & Elaine  
Lee Jenks & Doris  
George Johnson & Ruth  
Edward Jordan  
Roy Kelley & Dorothy  
Phillip Lanyon  
Nena Leary  
Jacob LeRoy  
Jack Metcalf & Betty  
Jack Murphy  
Aram Nahabedian  
John O'Brien  
William Perry & Dottie  
Matthew Radnofsky  
Paul Reieux  
W. T. Riedel  
Jerrell Sanders  
Frank Serafin & Florence  
J. P. Shutz  
Forrest Stewart & Ann  
Leo VanDeurzen & Florence  
Robert Williams & Betty

TO: 306th Reunion      Make Checks Payable to: 306th Reunion Fund  
c/o Reginald L. Robinson  
Box 16917  
Fort Worth, TX 76162

Please reserve tickets for the 306th Reunion for me as follows:

	No. of Tickets	Total Charge for Tickets
10/25 Billy Bob's BBQ, Dancing, Entertainment per ticket. (Includes transportation)	\$18.00x _____	= \$ _____
10/26 Carswell morning tour and luncheon per ticket (includes transportation)	\$11.00x _____	= \$ _____
10/26 Carswell afternoon tour and dinner per ticket (includes transportation)	\$20.00x _____	= \$ _____
10/27 Banquet, 7 p.m. at Green Oaks, per ticket	\$23.00x _____	= \$ _____
TOTAL price for all tickets—enclose check		\$ _____

Each of these events will be preceded by a cash bar cocktail hour.

### INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Will Spouse Attend? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Position on Crew or Other Duty \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Time: Date \_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_ Departure Time: Date \_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_

Have you made Hotel Reservations? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, where \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need airport transportation? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, give Airline, flight number, date and arrival time: \_\_\_\_\_

What other information can we furnish? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need parking place for recreational vehicle? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, do you need hookup? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you play in golf tournament? \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse? \_\_\_\_\_  
Golf Tournament entry fee is \$28.50 each (includes green fees, 1/2 cart rental and trophy contribution. Send separate check marked "Golf" to: 306th Reunion Fund, Limited entries, early reservations important.

Please assist our English Friends in coming to Fort Worth. Send a separate check to: 306th Reunion Fund marked "FOTE"

Frank Yaussi      FOTE  
Earl Youree & Juanita  
Oliver Young      Gordon Richards & Connie  
Ralph Zimmerman & Charlotte  
GUESTS

GROUP  
Gary Baker  
W. R. Carlile      Jeanne Geese  
Ray Hopper      D. M. Mashburn  
Rex Jones & Doris      Wayne Montie  
H. Deane Munal & Elizabeth      Estelle Theriot  
Thurman Shuller

## Greenwich Meridian Celebrates 100th Birthday in June; No Time for Change

Perhaps only of interest to navigators will be the following piece, taken from the *Wall Street Journal* of 11 June 1984. How many of us in our time in England ever bothered to search out Greenwich and to really see where time and distance began?

GREENWICH, England—At the Greenwich Observatory, situated in this leafy London suburb, are the old telescopes and pendulum clocks that once were used to observe and to time the earth's motion in relation to moon and stars. Not far away is the brass strip set into the ground to designate the prime meridian—zero longitude. By placing a foot on either side of the line, as visitors are sure to do, one can straddle the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.

Never mind that the day-to-day work of the observatory moved several years ago to a 15th-century castle in southern England, where air pollution is less severe and the heavens easier to see. Greenwich, and that strip of brass, still represents the starting point from which longitude is determined, and the place from which time zones are reckoned.

In fact, this year is the centennial of Greenwich as prime meridian, and Greenwich is celebrating. The brass strip is being drawn out with tennis-court-marking fluid from the observatory down the green hill that leads into town. June 26 was designated meridian day.

There would have been no prime meridian, however, if in 1675, Charles II, hadn't ordered that an observatory be built in Greenwich. The need for the observatory was clear and pressing: Although a method for determining latitude at sea was available to navigators, none existed for determining longitude. (Latitude could be found by observing the North Star and the Sun. But to determine longitude, one first had to understand the spinning of the earth itself.) Without knowing his longitude, a navigator sailing east or west really didn't know where he was.

It took nearly a century, but, in 1767, the observatory issued its first annual nautical almanac, which predicted the position of the moon and particular stars relative to a fixed line (or meridian) at Greenwich. With almanac in hand, a navigator could take a reading of the heavens with a sextant, compare it with the configuration of stars as the almanac predicted they would appear above Greenwich, and, by way of some fancy trigonometry, he could arrive at a fairly good estimation of his longitude. Later, marine timepieces called chronometers were used in conjunction with the almanac, making for even truer calculations.

A little more than 100 years ago, almost every county, city and even

town kept its own local time. When it was 12:15 p.m. in Portland, Maine, it was noon in New York City and 11:40 in Buffalo, NY. U.S. railroads had more than 80 different time standards. A punctillious traveler crossing the country by train had to reset his watch some 20 times. The inconsistencies were messy.

Enter, in 1870, an unsung American hero: Charles Ferdinand Dowd, the principal of Temple Grove Ladies Seminary in Saratoga Springs, NY. It was this man, with black frock coat and pepper-and-salt beard, who invented the idea of time zones: Instead of countless time variations, divide the U.S. by meridians into zones one hour, and 15 degrees, apart. The zones would be neatly marked off from Greenwich, England, he decided.

In 1883, U.S. railroads adopted the idea: Clocks in New York were set back four minutes. Washington's advanced eight. Cleveland lost 32 minutes. As the sun peaked in the Eastern time zone, all the clocks chimed noon. Those in the Central region struck 11. The Mountain zone struck 10. And those in the Pacific zone struck nine. It was a first.

Greenwich wasn't officially named the world's prime meridian until 1884, however, when the decision was put to a vote at an international conference in Washington, D.C. It was Greenwich that in 1833 took upon itself the task of being the world's timekeeper, lowering a large canvas ball from the top of the observatory tower at precisely 1 p.m. daily. At first the signal was used by navigators in the harbor to set their clocks. Later, the signal was transferred electrically to train stations and cities in England and on the Continent.

For 83 years following the meetings in Washington, the Greenwich Observatory was the timekeeper of the world. Then, in 1966, the atomic clock was invented, and with it went much of the significance of the observatory: The oscillation of cesium electrons in the atomic clock was found to be far more accurate than time determined by the study of the spinning of the Earth. Indeed, compared to the suitcase-size atomic clock, which loses less than a second every 10,000 years, the Earth is a poor measuring instrument, wobbling on its axis like a creaky machine and ever-so-slowly slowing down. Thus the measurement of time passed from astronomers to physicists.

But despite universal time, the world's time zones still use Greenwich as a starting point. Greenwich still is zero longitude for map makers, and for navigators at sea, who still also use the nautical almanac. Even the most-computerized navigational instruments for aircraft orient

## Recent and Not so Recent Books of WWII

*Mustang, A Documentary History*, by Jeffrey Ethell. Jane's New York, 1981. 176 pp., \$19.95.

You know a lot about the P-51, and you may have read things about the most redoubtable fighter plane of our time, but you'll enjoy this small book, if you can locate a copy.

Jeff Ethell has a love affair with the Mustang brought about in large measure because his father flew them in Korea.

In this book he transfers that love of the aircraft into an exciting documentary on its development, its baptism into combat, and its continued use until final retirement. Although no longer flown by the Air Force, the F-51 is a popular air show feature even today.

If there is a shortcoming of the book it is probably that most of the combat space is devoted to 8th and 9th AF usage, and tales of other theatres are rather meagerly explored.

Ethell, who is an authority on the 4th Fighter Group, was co-author with Garry L. Frey, of "Escort to Berlin, The 4th Fighter Group in World War II," and "Target Berlin, Mission 250:6 March 1944," written with Alfred Price. Both are exciting works and well worth a few evenings of reading.

*The Secret Squadrons, Special Duty Units of the RAF and USAAF in the Second World War*, by Robert Jackson, Robson Books, London, 1983. 199 pp., \$17.50.

A small book of 10 chapters, only two are devoted to U.S. Army Air Forces operations, one of them being the Carpetbagger operation of the 8th Air Force, using largely black B-24's. They were stationed north of Thurleigh at Harrington, and once in a while would be glimpsed by Thurleigh personnel.

This book tells something of work that most of the bomber crews knew little or nothing about. It is the unit which Col. Hudson H. Upham commanded before he was transferred to Thurleigh as group commander in April, 1945.

If you find this on a library shelf, you may find it interesting.

*Serenade to a Big Bird*, by Bert Stiles. First printed in 1946 and now available in a paperback version.

There is an "old" book about flying B-17s, an important book because it echoes many of our own thoughts that we failed to put down on paper when we were in the throes of combat. You ought to read it. Or, if you were lucky

Turn to page 12

themselves according to the Greenwich meridian. As one navigator said, so much has been built on Greenwich, it would only cause chaos to change it now.

## Regan Writes Editor About TV Documentary

As a commentary on the June 2 showing by NBC-TV of a documentary on the 8th Air Force, we offer Col. John M. Regan's letter to the *San Francisco Times*. The editor would note that the film concentrated on two missions: Second Schweinfurt, 14 October 1943, and the first great Berlin raid, 6 March 1944.

To the Editor:  
*San Francisco Times*

The *Times* had an excellent article about the NBC-TV documentary of June 2 about the 8th Air Force. In this it was stated that "60 bombers were lost on the Schweinfurt raid, each with 12 men aboard." The crew of a bomber was 10 men and not 12.

The documentary had many exciting film clips of actual combat and for me, and certainly for other veterans of the 8th Air Force, it was filled with nostalgia, and vividly brought back the horrors of war.

As a pilot/squadron commander of a B-17 Flying Fortress unit, I question a statement from this documentary. The commentator said that the worst enemy of the bombers was flak, as one could not shoot back at it. Those of us who flew missions early in the war—my first was on Oct. 9, 1942—would undoubtedly rate enemy fighters far more dangerous than flak. This was especially true as on early missions we had no fighter escort. It was only in the latter part of World War II, when the Allies had a degree of air superiority and bomber crews rarely, if ever, saw enemy fighters, that flak was considered the No. 1 enemy.

The Schweinfurt raid of August 1943, which was highlighted in the documentary, was difficult. However, it should be pointed out that, prior to the time of this raid, the 8th Air Force had already flown over 60 daylight missions against German targets, and had suffered great losses. The number of aircraft involved in the early missions was not as numerous as in the Schweinfurt raid, yet the difficulty of the combat and the strain on aircrews was similar. Both were relative and depended on time, circumstances and other factors. All missions were tough.

Those who survived a combat tour in bombers were fortunate. There is no other word to properly portray it. I have had pilots flying in my combat formations doing everything correctly and yet get show down. Why? It was simply a matter of fate.

John M. Regan  
San Mateo

## Help Needed

William B. Barnes, 423rd, needs to get in touch with anyone who remembers him from 1943-44 at Thurleigh. His address is 167 Preston Ave., Shreveport, LA 71105.

# Familiar Scenes of 40 Years Ago at Thurleigh



# Brit Travel Fund Stands At \$1,700

"Please find enclosed check for \$50 which I hope will assist in transporting Gordon and Connie Richards to our reunion in Fort Worth.

"I do sincerely hope that we will be able to raise the necessary cash to bring the both of them over, in view of all the wonderful work they have undertaken on a purely voluntary basis over the last few years.

"I am sure that you are aware of the efforts they have made, thereby maintaining the remembrance of the glorious achievements of the 306th Group in the consciousness of the local population of Bedford and beyond."

This represents the sentiments of one 306th veteran in a letter addressed to Hollis Baker, who presented the idea for such a fund at the Fort Worth reunion.

Money has continued to come in, and more is needed at this point to assure that the Richards are in attendance. While there are a number of Britishers who are active in the promotion of 306th history, the Richards have served as nominal leaders, and it was the intent of Baker's motion last September that in succeeding years other members of the com-

## More Issues of 'Echoes'

Here's my help for future issues of **Echoes!**

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support the production and mailing of the 306th **Echoes**. I also want to support continuing reunion activities for those who once served.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Wm. M. Collins, Jr.  
2973 Heatherbrae Drive  
Poland, OH 44514

## Andy Rooney's Story Questioned

Editor's Note:

One hates to impugn the memory of a writer of the caliber of Andy Rooney. He did the 306th signal service during the time the group served at Thurleigh. His column of October 1983 was sent to me by numerous people, and I expect that many thought it should appear in **Echoes**. It hasn't and perhaps an explanation is due.

I found the introduction to the piece interesting, but midway through it there was introduced a story, dated in April 1943, of an event that did not take place at Thurleigh then or at any time, as I read the diaries of the group and its squadrons.

mittee be offered the same opportunity for meeting with us.

Checks marked for this fund should be forwarded to Bill Collins, treasurer of the association, to add to the more than \$1,700 that is already in the fund.

That is the story of the gunner trapped in the ball turret, who lost his life when the plane bellied in.

I have again checked the sources written at that time and I find no such story. I would be sure that it happened at least once some place in the Eighth during the halycon days of WW II—but not at Thurleigh.

If you have certain knowledge that it did, please let me know all of your facts.

—Russ Strong

## B-17 at Dulles

From page 3

nual Combined Federal Campaign which covers all the military and DoD civilians in the Washington metropolitan area—116,000 of them. Last year we raised \$4.9 million. I have been asked to join this fund-raising effort again this fall (for the 7th year).

I like to think that I'm helping my fellow man a little bit with this effort and returning to the community the talent and time I gained by the efficiency and durability of the "Big Silver Bird" that brought me back safely to the 306th Home Base of Thurleigh 35 times.

This piece is dedicated to two 306th alumni who are no longer with us—Colonel Craig Powell, and LTC Ted Jankowski.

## AF Almanac

Each year **Air Force** magazine puts out 12 fine issues, but their Almanac issue is by far the best, a treasure trove of data about today's USAF, and with a smattering of historical data. The May issue sells for \$3 and is worth every penny of it. Borrow a copy and spend a week pouring over the compelling contents.

## Keep Echoes Coming With Your Latest Address

New address information:

name \_\_\_\_\_

street address \_\_\_\_\_

city, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

## 'Big Bird'

From page 10

enough to read it years ago, it's time to savor it again.

Bert Stiles was 23 years old and a co-pilot for Col. Henry Terry's 91st Bomb Group. On a battered typewriter he wrote this book as he worked his way through 35 combat missions.

"The queer thing about this part of the war is that it never stays the same for any length of time. Sometimes it is as unreal as a dream, and as quiet and lonely as moonlight, and sometimes it is horrible and twisted with fear and the feel of death."

That is Stiles as he expresses the feelings of many of us. He talks about girls, Piccadilly commandoes, pilots, gunners, radio operators and engineers, formation flying, bicycling away from the base, food—good and bad.

There is something for each 8th AF veteran, as Stiles writes about how everything affected him. He wrote with style, and one can only regret that nothing more came from his battered typewriter.

This writer flew his last mission on 26 Nov 44 to Hannover, and that was Stiles' last mission as well. He had finished his B-17 tour earlier, wangled a transfer to fighters and died flying a P-51 escorting us to Hannover. It was a day that the GAF was in the air as well.

## Aviation Books

So, you want a book, and can't find it?

If you just want to read the book, go to your local library and ask them to purchase it if it is of recent publication date. Often they will respond to such a request. If you can't arrange that, have them secure an inter-library loan for you. You'll probably have to pay postage at least one way.

But, if you wish to purchase a book on aviation and your local store can't satisfy you, the editor would suggest that you write Bookstore, USAF Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433.

They have one of the finest collections of aviation books for sale to be found anywhere.



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