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306th Echoes



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306th Bombardment Group Association

SAC Marks 40 Years as Deterrent

The Strategic Air Command is now 40 years old, having evolved out of the wartime bombardment experiences primarily of the 8th, 15th and 20th Air Forces. A great deal of its leadership came out of the 8th, and a number of 306th officers moved into SAC in its early days and played key roles in its formation and development. Some of these included Gen. Curtis LeMay, L/Gen J. W. Wilson, L/Gen Frank A. Armstrong, M/Gen Delmar Wilson, B/Gen Claude Putnam, B/Gen William S. Rader, and a host of colonels, other officers and enlisted men.

We salute all of those of the 306th who carried a noble tradition forward into the Strategic Air Command and continued to serve their nation with distinction.

From the Omaha World-Herald

It was March 1946, and the euphoria that had swept the United States on V-J Day still prevailed.

Eight months earlier the United States had emerged from World War II victorious and secure. Most of the "boys"—the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen—had come home and were in civilian dress.

There was little inclination by most Americans to pay attention to the efforts of some national leaders to protect the new peace and security.

An executive order issued March 21, 1946, by President Harry S. Truman attracted little notice. Responding to requests by his military and national security advisers, the president directed the Army Air Forces to establish the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and to similarly set up the Tactical Air Command (TAC) and the Air Defense Command (ADC).

Science of Warfare

The Pentagon chiefs and presidential advisers in the White House had good reason for the pressure they put on the president to reorganize the Army Air Forces, particularly bomber forces.

The bitter but successful campaigns that eventually crushed the Axis powers had changed the art and science of warfare. No element had figured more decisively

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YOUR BIRTHDAY CAKE COLLAPSES FROM THE WEIGHT OF THE CANDLES... OR...

YOUR WIFE IS FEELING AMOROUS AND YOU HAVE A HEADACHE!... OR...

YOUR INCOME TAX REBATE CHECK BOUNCES... OR...

YOUR BOSS TELLS YOU NOT TO BOTHER TAKING YOUR COAT OFF... OR...

OR... YOUR SECRETARY TELLS YOU IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!... OR... OR... OR...

306th Reunion 'Special'; Barber Explains Just Why

By Rex Barber

The third reunion of the 306th in Colorado Springs was such an outstanding event in my life that I have been trying to express my feelings in writing since returning to Zion (Utah). I would like to share these feelings with you at this special time of the year.

I have been to a lot of similar gatherings over the years—Lions Club conventions, family reunions, high school reunions, to name a few. Some I enjoyed. Some I went to out of a sense of duty or because my sweet wife insisted. Most of them I just tolerated. I suppose, to some degree, I viewed the 306th Reunion in the same light—with a great deal of skepticism. Many questions ran through my mind as I pondered my decision about attending. I guess foremost of my concerns were "How would I be accepted?" "Who would be there who would be glad to see me?" "Would I be one of the group—or looked upon as an outsider—an interloper, since I had not been to any of the previous events?" I realize now that these concerns were foundless; however, in all truthfulness, at the time they were very real.

What made the event special? I have talked to guys who have been to similar functions—no "Big Deal." Other men I have discussed the subject with tell me that their outfits have never had a reunion. Several said "even if they had one, I wouldn't go." After a great deal of thought I have concluded that there are several items which made the 306th Reunion special.

First and most important, all of us were very proud to be part of the 369th Bomb Squadron—from the lowest private to Col. Terry and Col.

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Big Crowd Planned at '86 Meet

More than 50 rooms have already been reserved by 306th people for the Dayton, OH, reunion, beginning Thursday, September 11, at the Holiday Inn-Dayton Mall.

LTC Jack Grimm, co-chairman for the event, and hotel officials have expressed pleasure at the early response of veterans for this reunion. Appropriate registration forms are to be found on page 8 of this issue of *Echoes*, one going to the Holiday Inn and the other registration form for the group being sent to Demetrius Chakiris, co-chairman.

In a meeting April 11 at the Inn, 13 committee members, more than a half dozen wives, and Secretary Russell A. Strong, met with hotel officials to iron out details and to make sure that the facilities would take care of the crowd of visitors. Most of the rooms at the Inn have been reserved for the 306th, and additionally, there is a Ramada Inn immediately adjacent, and also Red Roof Inn, Days Inn and Knights Inn within a half mile.

Chakiris stated that every person who registers needs to pay a registration fee of \$25 to cover a host of incidentals. Several of the 82 persons who have already registered with the group will be billed for an additional registration fee.

At this writing, one person is scheduled to arrive on September 9, 10 are set for the 10th, 37 men have registered for the 11th and one for the 12th. During the meeting several more people submitted their registrations.

Mrs. Ruth Grimm announced that the Ladies' Program is planned for Saturday morning from 0930 to 1100 in the Hotel Ballroom, and will include a buffet breakfast. The program is still being finalized, but will include a demonstration of interest to women.

James Sheets, registration chairman, already has the tickets in hand for various events. They

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Rex Barber is Going to Dayton

Riordan, our C.O.'s. No matter how small our contribution to its success, we still thrill at the mention of its accomplishments. I can still remember how Major Stanko, Jack Wood and I used to "sweat out" the return of "our" planes. We rejoiced in their return and wept when they were lost. I know this same attitude prevailed among the other "ground pounders" as well as with the combat crews. The Reunion made me realize that even after 42 years, I still had a very strong feeling for the 369th, as I had as a kid of 22. It had dimmed a little over the years, but the trip to Colorado Springs certainly served to revive it.

I think also that the conditions under which we developed our relationships were very special. After all, our living accommodations weren't the best. The Nissen Huts, the coal stoves and the food were not the greatest. The English beer, the shortage of spirits and a lack of transportation didn't help our dispositions. Yet we still received a lot of enjoyment out of some little things—the "bull sessions," Black Jack games, squadron parties and an "occasional" pass to Bedford, London or Nottingham. Of course, some of the lucky ones (no names mentioned) had sweet little English lassies to console them when their morale was down.

As many of you know, after I left England I went to O.C.S. and then to China. I spent approximately 18 months with a Service Group, nearly as long as my tour with the 369th. Yet the relationships with the members of that group and the feelings we had about our unit did not compare to the way I felt about old "Fightin Bitin."

It was great seeing you all again. My thanks to each of you and your wives for your display of friendship and for the truly warm welcome you gave my wife and me. It was great to relive some of the experiences we had in England, many of which I had nearly forgotten until one of you reminded me.

It was good to see Jack Wood and his beautiful wife Patricia again as well as our old boss "Tiger" Terry. What a wonderful guy and what a fine leader. I only wish Major Stanko could have been there—he would have loved it. Terry had some inappropriate name for us like "The Unholy Trio" (Stanko, Wood and Barber).

The only one of the group I had seen prior to the Reunion was my old pass buddy, Hankey. It was great to see him again. If Griffin could have been there, it would have been complete. Maybe we can get him to Dayton.

As Hankey said several times, we saw more of Harnois at the Reunion than we did all of the time we were in England. It made me feel great when his sweet wife Marge said that I was one of the reasons Artie came to Colorado Springs. I still can't understand why all of the pictures I have of him show him with a cup of "mild and bitters."

I think we all owe a lot to four guys for helping keep the Reunion alive. I am referring to Harold Lightbown, Peter Pappa, Wilson Elliott and old Bob Crane. Their dedication to this cause and the extra effort they have made to get others interested, including me, are commendable. My special thanks to Crane for the cap. As yet I have not received the bill.

I'll always remember seeing Jim Furay across the hotel lobby and the instant recognition we both displayed. And at last I know what part of Idaho Eddie Perin comes from. I've looked all over the southern part of that state for him. I didn't have that problem with Jack Hartung—I think we all remember that he hails from Hondo, wherever that is. No problem recognizing that little feller.

Another guy whom I had no problem in recognizing was Everett Daniel. Except for the hair, he looks just like he did when he was doing Hankey's work for him. Same goes for old Goodwill, except that he still has all of his hair and very little gray. That Grecian Formula does wonders.

Another one who is minus a little hair is Frank Potter; however, I knew him immediately. Louie Damaso has put on a little weight as have some of the rest of us. Harold Thornam and J. C. Thorn looked as fit as they did 42 years ago.

It was also good to see Tony Santoro. His crew was always one of my favorites. My thanks also to Orville Karstaedt for helping make me feel welcome and for remembering some of the few good things I might have done.

In conclusion, thanks to all of you and your wives for helping Delsa and me have one of the greatest three days of our "young" lives.

Tax Exemption Includes Travel

If you want to make use of the income tax deduction for travel to 306th reunions, or for gifts to the Association, you may want to append to your income tax statement the information that the 306th Bomb Group Association has tax exempt status with IRS, and that it is a 501 (c) (19) organization.

In the future, this information

will always be carried in the identification statement of 306th Echoes, usually on page 2.

The income tax deduction has passed approval by a variety of tax consultants, and may be used to cover travel expenses for you, such as transportation, lodging and meals. It WILL NOT cover those for your spouse.

SAC Now 40

(From page 1)

in that change than strategic bombing.

The possible use of atomic bombs in some future conflict seems to have been a factor in the decision to form SAC, even though military historians have pointed out that the United States possessed relatively few nuclear weapons in early 1946.

The portion of the Truman order that spelled out the mission of the new command suggests much of the rationale for the decision to establish SAC:

"The Strategic Air Command will be prepared to conduct long-range offensive operations in any part of the world, either independently or in cooperation with land and naval forces; to conduct maximum-range reconnaissance over land or sea, either independently or in cooperation with land and naval forces; to provide combat units capable of intense and sustained combat operations employing the latest and most advanced weapons; to train units and personnel for the maintenance of the strategic forces in all parts of the world; to perform such special missions as the commanding general, Army Air Forces, may direct."

At the time, the United States had a large armada of B-29s. They were assigned to and were under the control of Army Air Forces commanders in the United States and in what had been overseas theaters in operation.

The reorganization plan that gave birth to SAC called for the B-29 units—and those that would have B-36 bombers, which were then being developed—to be under a single training and operational command.

Headquarters of Continental Air Forces at Bolling Field in Washington, D.C., was immediately redesignated as headquarters of the Strategic Air Command.

Gen. George C. Kenney, who had been Gen. Douglas MacArthur's chief air officer in the war in the Pacific, was named commanding general of SAC.

Maj. Gen. St. Clair Streett, Kenney's deputy, supervised the dismantling of the Continental Air Forces command structure and the effort to organize SAC.

At the time of its birth, SAC had six B-29 bombardment groups with 148 planes, three additional bomb groups with no aircraft, a P-51 Mustang fighter group with 31 planes, a second fighter group with no aircraft, a reconnaissance wing with 31 F-2s and one air transport unit equipped with 15 C-54s.

There were about 100,000 people in the new command. By the end of 1946, the number of personnel had been reduced by demobilization to 37,092.

SAC was given a new role in November 1946. U.S. armed forces, especially the Navy, had been used as instruments of international

diplomacy since the early 1800s. Now the new strategic bomber force would "show the flag."

The honeymoon with the Russians was over. The World War II alliance had crumbled. Where a year and a half earlier, American, British, French and Canadian troops had greeted Russian soldiers with handshakes and smiles, they now faced Russians across hostile borders. There were bellicose utterances from the Kremlin.

SAC was beginning to play its role as a strategic deterrent force, although the idea of a powerful nuclear deterrent had not yet jelled. SAC's nuclear deterrent role would not become military doctrine until after August 1949, when the Soviet Union exploded its own atomic bomb in Siberia.

Despite the show of force in Europe, SAC was poorly organized in those early days. It had not shaken free of the pre-World War II concept of a skeleton force that could be fleshed out by manpower and industrial mobilization in time of crisis.

The change to the modern concept of an efficient force in being would wait the arrival of Curtis E. LeMay.

DEATHS

Wayne J. Gray, 423rd gunner (Kackstetter's crew), died 8 September 83 in Collins, OH, where he had operated a garage for some years. He was with Robert H. Smith's crew when it ditched 21 May 43 in the North Sea, and the entire crew spent 31 hours in the water before being retrieved by a British mine sweeper. Gray completed his combat tour 4 November 43. (See *First Over Germany*, pp. 120-121).

Fred T. Organ, 368th tail gunner (Coleman's crew, late 1943), prisoner of war (with Coleman, 25 Feb 44, Augsburg), died 2 July 85 in Monessen, PA.

Francis H. Yarsky, 369th mechanic, died 1 December 85 at his home in Wheatland, IA. His widow was a Bedford war bride.



The 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association: John Ryan, president; Robert Starzynski, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; and William M. Collins, Jr., treasurer. Directors: Robert Crane, William Houlihan, G. Kieth Jackson and Gerald Rotter.

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 in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer. EDITOR: RUSSELL A. STRONG, 2041 Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Home 616/344-6466; Office 616/383-6162.

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

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association is a Federally tax exempt organization, and as a veterans' group is classified as 501 (c) (19).

Strong Wants More Orders From 306th

As the historian for the 306th Bomb Group, Russ Strong is still trying to extend his collection of special orders for the 306th, from its inception through to the end of the war, and if there are numbers to be found for late in 1945, they will also be included.

Orders were not routinely kept until 1 December 1943, thus Strong's collection of 1942 orders and the first 11 months of 1943 have all come from the 201 files of various members of the 306th.

From 1 December 1943 until the end of the war orders can be found on microfilm. But many were made from poor copies and cannot be legibly reproduced from the microfilm.

Strong's plea, therefore, is for each of you who has not previously contributed to his collection to locate your 201 file, make copies of any group or squadron orders you may find that pertain to the 306th and forward the copies to him. If you do not readily have a copier and wish to mail him the originals, he will have your copies in the return mail within 24 hours.

To help in the 1942 and 1943 searches, below are listed the dates which he is seeking:

- 1942**
 Orders #2, #4 thru #8.
 16 Apr to 18 June, 20 June to 30 June, 6 July to 10 Oct, 12-13 Oct, 15-28 Oct, 30-31 Oct.
 2-12 Nov, 14-17 Nov, 20-24 Nov, 27-29 Nov.
 1 Dec, 4-6 Dec, 10-11 Dec, 13-19 Dec, 21 Dec, 24-29 Dec, 31 Dec.
- 1943**
 1-4 Jan, 6-7 Jan, 9-15 Jan, 22 Jan, 24-26 Jan, 28-29 Jan.
 4-8 Feb, 10-14 Feb, 16 Feb, 19 Feb, 21-22 Feb, 25 Feb, 27 Feb-2 Mar.
 4-5 Mar, 7-8 Mar, 10-12 Mar, 14-15 Mar, 18-19 Mar, 21 Mar, 23-31 Mar.
 2-3 Apr, 7-8 Apr, 10 Apr, 13 Apr, 15-19 Apr, 21-22 Apr, 24-29 Apr.
 2-3 May, 5-7 May, 9-10 May, 13-15 May, 26-27 May, 29 May-4 June.

New Names

- Belker, Joseph S., 117 Center Graview, Quincy, IL 62301 369
 Bemrose, E. Clive, Ithersey, Burland Green Lane, Weston Underwood, Derbyshire, England DE6 4PF FR
 Brown, Bill, 7137 Shoup Av 11, Canoga Park, CA 91307 369
 DiGuillio, Louis, 208 Hearth Rd., Broomall, PA 19008 367
 Funk, William J., 135 Maplewood Av., West Covina, CA 91790 FR
 Giancaspro, Frank, 59 Ross Av., Hackensack, NJ 07601 423
 Graves, Robert L., 626 Shearwater, Madison, WI 53716 423
 Jones, Richard L., 113 Twin Hills Dr., Madison, TN 37115 369
 Kate, Hendrik, 25 Hale Av., Hooksett, NH 03106 423
 Kester, Alton A., 23 Pocono Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15220 369
 Kozier, Henry J., 218 Scott Dr., Monroeville, PA 15146 368
 Krone, Charles C., 7430 Ponce, Canoga Park, CA 91307 369
 McLario, Edward, 7131 Paterese Dr., Birmingham, MI 48010 FR
 McGarvey, Francie O., Totters Ln., Nantucket, MA 02554 367
 McGovern, Frederick R., 1938 E. Bataan Dr., Dayton, OH 45420 367
 Palencia, Matthew, 3895 East 54th St., Cleveland, OH 44105 423
 Puckett, Fred A., 5115 Highland Dr., Apt. 133, Baton Rouge, LA 70808 368

Albert W. LaChasse has the notoriety of being one of the first American Prisoners of War in World War II. He was captured in France on October 9th, 1942, several hours after his B-17 "Flying Fortress" bomber was shot down by German fighter planes. For several weeks, he was paraded around train stations, shown off as the "American prisoner". Ironically, when he did arrive at the prison detention center, the date was November 11, 1942 — Armistice Day.

It all began when the young second lieutenant and his squadron were flying on their first European air raid. As they flew over France, enemy fire riddled the aircraft. LaChasse ran to the front of the plane to discover that his commander and co-pilot were dead and all of the flight instruments shot out. "I knew we had to get out," said LaChasse. "The whole world was shooting at us, the ship was on fire, and there was death on board. I jumped."

After parachuting to the ground, LaChasse tried to get directions to the underground, where he thought he could find his way back into England. However, those plans ended when he was captured by German soldiers. LaChasse was sent to Dulag Luft, the detention center, where he was interrogated and kept in isolation for about two weeks. Finally, after the Germans failed to get any important information from him, LaChasse was sent to Stalag Luft III in Sagen, Germany, where he spent the remainder of the war.

LaChasse soon realized that it was important to concentrate on a few things — food, clothing, health, and comradery — to survive his ordeal. "My first meal as a POW consisted of a hot, thin substance they called 'soup', bread, and tea. This was indicative of the meals I would have for the remainder of my stay," said LaChasse. "Prisoner of War life is a difficult transition for a freedom-loving American...to a dictated detention life with an excruciatingly uncertain future. The only compensation was the knowledge that the early captured fellows, some for three years or more, were somehow standing up to this miserable life without breaking."

The idea of escape occupied LaChasse's mind. "For us," LaChasse said, "it was a new kind of war. Our wits to escape against the enemy's will to keep us detained. It was amazing to see people who had few accomplishments in their young lives become experts at many of the escape occupations." One escape plan involved digging three tunnels, which were named "Tom", "Dick", and "Harry" (the tunnel immortalized in the film "The Great Escape") by the prisoners. A recent citation given to LaChasse points out that he was involved in other escape activities including, "design and manufacture of escape equipment such as: German uniforms, civilian clothing, maps, compasses, forged documents, food rations. Training was provided to the escapee to suit the assumed identity; language, cultural characteristics, underground contacts, routes to follow, and how to mitigate detection."

LaChasse was awarded the Purple Heart along with various other campaign and theatre ribbons. Because of his war adventures, he was chosen to play a part in the motion picture "Stalag 17", and is now working on a manuscript about his war experiences.

LaChasse is married and has four sons. His wife Dorothy is a world-class championship swimmer and spends her time teaching handicapped youngsters.



"... of Courage, Leadership, and Dedication to our Country ..." was the theme for the United Services Automobile Association's 1986 calendar—and as you can see, the 306th had representation in it. Al LaChasse, self-styled 'First Pigeon' because of being the very first prisoner of war from the 306th, was featured in the calendar. His presentation, pictured above, was for January. Others honored are: Capt. Michelle Koehler, Army; CW2 William A. Weller, Army; BGen Jerome Cooper, Marines; Cmdr David G. Strong, Navy; Col. David L. 'Tex' Hill, Air Force; LTC David G. Jayne, Army; RAdm John D. Bulkeley, Navy; LTC Donald L. Rodewald, Air Force; BGen Patrick H. Brady, Army; VAdm James B. Stockdale, Navy, and Capt. John Wheeler, Army.

- 6-10 June, 12-14 June, 16-17 June, 20 June, 23-25 June, 28-30 June.
 2-10 July, 12-14 July, 16-18 July, 21-27 July, 29 July-7 Aug.
 9-12 Aug, 15 Aug, 20-22 Aug, 24 Aug, 26-28 Aug, 30-31 Aug.
 1-28 Sept, 30 Sept.
 2-4 Oct, 6-12 Oct, 14-15 Oct, 17-20 Oct, 22-30 Oct.
 1-2 Nov, 4-13 Nov, 16-17 Nov, 20 Nov-30 Nov.

From that point on he would like copies of any orders you may have. He is interested in Squadron orders, which are very scarce. And he is also interested in orders that may have been issued by the 39th Service Group.

If at any time you wish to dispose of your 201 file or your Form 5, please send them along and they will be added to the 306th Collection, which will eventually be housed in the Library at the Air Force Academy for research use by future generations of cadets.



Order your copy today of

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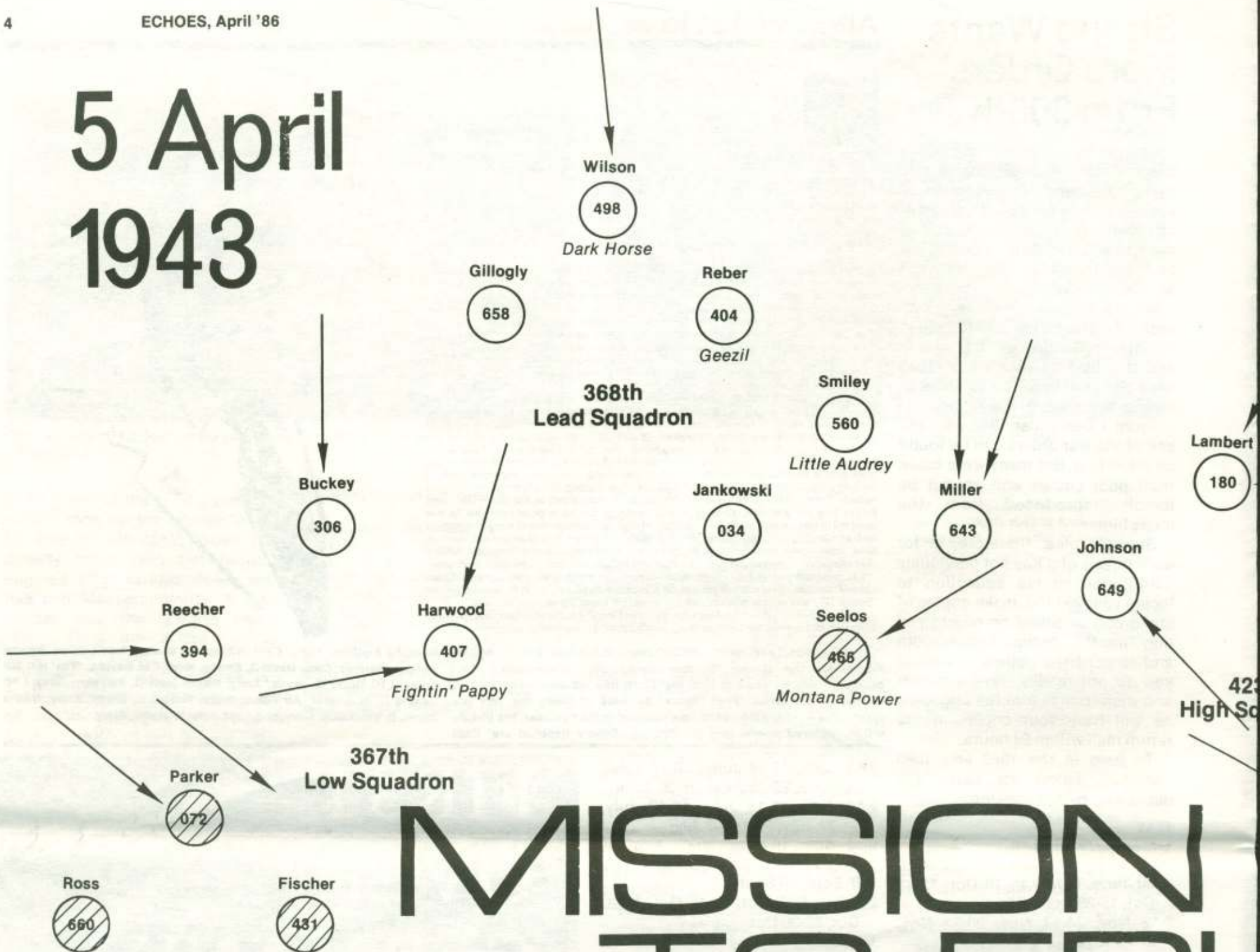
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- Rohrer, Louis C., 2005 Orwin Dr., Sioux Falls, SD 57105 423
 Sandercock, Donald, 21801 Briarwood Dr., Fairview Park, OH 44126 368
 Sanders, Burt, PO Boc 13, Beech Island, SC 29841 369
 Schafer, Earle E., Box 203, Dufur, OR 97021 423
 Stahl, Harry E., PO Box 7713, Van Nuys, CA 91409 BW
 Stephens, George, 5614 Armstrong, Wichita, KS 67204 369
 Swierk, Walter, 1328 S. 3rd, Philadelphia, PA 19147 367

5 April 1943



MISSION TO ERL

Schweinfurt. Berlin, The sub pens. St. Lo. Munich. Noll.

All of these are targets which evinced great interest during the war and which have frequently been written about since. But, in the last several years the editor has spent considerable time, along with other members of the 306th, in helping Belgian and Dutch history enthusiasts with the details of the raid of 5 April 1943.

The target was Antwerp, but our bombs dropped in Mortsel, a tiny village, causing many deaths and considerable damage.

Perhaps something of the intensity of the mission can be gained by quoting directly from the Intelligence teletype report to the Commanding General, First Bomb Wing:

"1. 20 A/C of 367, 368 and 423 squadrons took off at 1245 to bomb the Erla Works at Antwerp. Two returned early. Seventeen were over the target but one was unable to bomb and jettisoned later. Four failed to return. 14 landed safely at 1658.

"2. Bombing was probably poor. The formation was under terrific attack and it was impossible for lead bombardier to synchronize sight due to violent evasive action.

"3. One A/C turned back at 1435 just before reaching English Coast. Cylinder Head broke and supercharger buckets blew off.

One A/C turned back at English Coast at 1438 because #4 engine went out and A/C could not keep up.

"4. Successful enemy interception just after crossing Belgian Coast, attack continuing over target and out to Coast where Spit escort took over brunt of battle. E/A concentrated headon attacks on lead group evidently under orders to break up attack at all costs before bombs were away. Probably most determined attack and hottest fight seen by our forces in this theatre. Lead group reports 40 to 60 E/A mostly yellow nose FW 190s. We claim 5-3-2.

"5. Relatively little flak, but accurate. Flak observed at coast, over target, and on coast going out.

"6. Four of our A/C observed in distress over enemy territory, all losses seeming to be due to fighters. One before target, three between target and coast.

One A/C at 1514 was hit by first enemy attack coming over Belgian coast. Was observed

losing altitude, turning out of formation and heading back for England.

After target at 1535, 5 miles NW of Antwerp, one A/C was seen going down. One chute.

Five miles further, another A/C dropped under control with #2 and #3 engines on fire. Four or five chutes.

Between target and Coast, a fourth A/C in distress. Seven or eight chutes.

"7. Seven of our A/C seriously damaged in addition to four lost.

"8. Our crews feel enemy is desperate and that enemy proves his desperation by variety and intensity of his efforts to stop accurate bombing of American forces. Yellow nose FWs closed time after time in headon nose attacks, coming back immediately to attack formation from any direction. Attacked in groups of six or seven, effort seeming to be to break up fire power of formation by continuous attack by numbers of E/A attacking in rapid succession from every angle. There now seems

to be no question that FW is being used to drop bombs on formation. Many crews report seeing both bombs and explosions. One bombardier says bombs are carried externally between folded wheels. Another officer states he saw bomb clearly enough to say it has fins."

A more detailed account of the mission begins on page 80 of *First Over Germany*.

Those planes shot down on this mission were flown by Lt. Clarence Fischer, Lt. Robert J. Seelos, Lt. Kelly Ross and Lt. William H. Parker.

Lt. Col. J. W. Wilson was the command pilot for the day and Capt. John Regan was his pilot. Brig. Gen. Frank A. Armstrong, former commanding officer of the 306th and now deputy commanding general of First Wing, flew in the lead ship and received a Distinguished Service Cross for his efforts.

Of particular note, besides the loss of the four planes, were the fatal injuries to the group

Planes and Pilots

42-3034	Ted Jankowski
42-5072	William Parker
42-5180	John Lambert
42-5218	Raymond Check
42-5306	George Buckey
42-5394	Kenneth Reecher
42-5404	Marlin Reber
42-5407	Craig Harwood
42-5431	Clarence Fischer
41-24465	Robert Seelos
42-29498	James W. Wilson
42-29524	David Steele
42-24560	Walter Smiley
42-29643	Robert Miller
42-29649	Lewis Johnson
42-29658	Fred Gillogly
42-29660	Kelly Ross
42-5714	Pervis Youree
42-5720	Richard O'Hara
42-5784	James Hopkins

No Routine 'Milk Run,' Says Regan of April 5

By Col. John Regan

"Milk-run" my foot! This was supposed to be a relatively easy mission but, wow! It sure wasn't. The last German fighter pretty nearly rammed us head on and one of his 20mm cannon shells exploded in the nose of our B-17, hitting a can of .50 caliber ammo and blowing it up. The resulting explosion and shrapnel shattered the leg of our navigator, "Salty" Salitryk, slightly wounding me, knocking out the oxygen system in the cockpit and setting part of our hydraulic system on fire.

Some "milk-run!"

This was my 18th mission. On all previous combat sorties I had been pilot or aircraft commander for the squadron or the group. But today our airplane was leading the 8th Air Force and I was flying as co-pilot for Lt. Col. Jim Wilson, one of the most experienced and best pilots in our group and the 8th A.F. Our crew was veteran and sharp. Brig. Gen. Frank Armstrong, our former C.O., stood in the cockpit as an observer.

The flight had been routine until we crossed the Belgian Coast toward the target. Then all hell broke loose. This was somewhat surprising. I had thought this mission might be a little easier than most, as we would only be over enemy occupied territory a short time and not over their homeland. But, one thing I had learned from experience is that there were many ways to get clobbered flying combat—I had seen this only too often. One could never assume that a mission could be just routine. Therefore, as always, I was apprehensive and this time it proved to be right.

The first waves of German fighters attacked us as we crossed the coast of Belgium and continued to press their attack until we hit the English Channel on our way back home. Since we were leading the raid our formation took the brunt of these assaults. I was so damn busy helping to fly that I only vaguely saw and absorbed what was going on around us. I do

reveals that the original trees are cut at ground level on the spot. New trees were planted after the accident.

"After flying over the target we turned to the river where Mr. Ross fought his last round against the Luftwaffe before ordering to abandon the aircraft. This came down in the 'Verdrongen land van Saeftinge' area, today a nature reservation (drowned land of Saefting). This unique part of the Schelde River just over the border in Holland is twice a day partially flooded by the tide. Every part of Mr. Ross' plane must now be under 20 feet of mud as every heavy part

(To page 6)

recall seeing one B-17 go down just after we crossed the coast, and others later.

When we were hit I realized quickly that our oxygen system had been knocked out so I grabbed an emergency bottle to share with Gen. Armstrong (we took turns using it). Gen. Armstrong showed great courage as he went into the nose of the airplane to assure that the badly wounded "Salty" was getting oxygen and to tear open his pant leg and pour sulfa on his wounds. With limited oxygen this took guts.

On one of Armstrong's many trips into the nose I glanced behind me and saw that our hydraulic lines were burning. I struggled out of my seat and with our flight engineer, John Crowther, we fought the fire with our hands until it went out. I was lucky I didn't pass out from the lack of oxygen but managed to get to my emergency source to keep me going. I returned to my seat just in time to grab Gen. Armstrong by his grey hair and give him oxygen before he passed out. It was hectic.

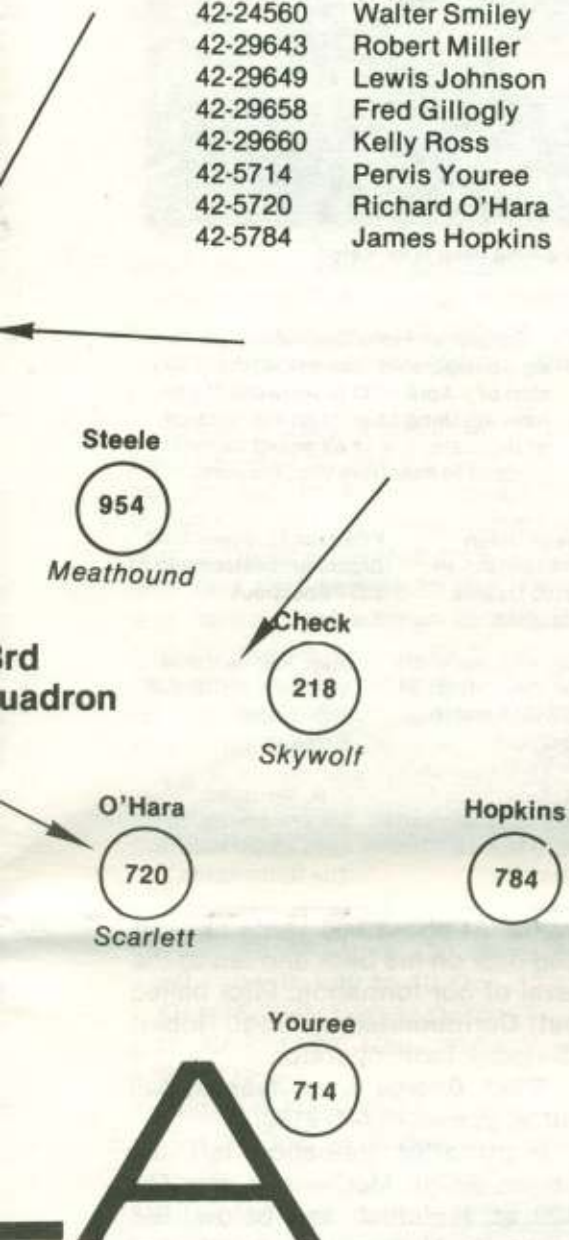
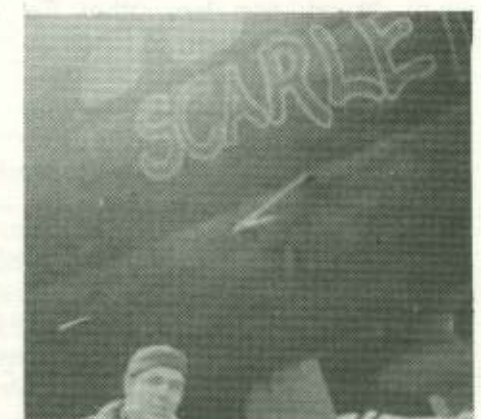
Under these difficult circumstances we dropped our bombs and headed home. In spite of his pain and severe wounds, "Salty" propped himself up and gave us headings to fly to our base.

As we left the Belgian coast and crossed the English Channel, RAF Spitfires joined us as escort to England. Only then did the German fighters break off their attacks.

We limped back to Thurleigh. Wilson, who had done a superb job of flying, brought us down with no further serious complications. On final we had fired a red flare showing we had wounded aboard and were met by a medical crew and ambulance. "Salty," who had lost a lot of blood, was given four pints of plasma right on the spot before he was taken to the 8th A.F. hospital at Paddington. I was treated at the base clinic and released little the worse for wear. Tired—yes, shaken—yes, and damn glad it was over.

I visited "Salty" at the hospital several times and watched his condition improve markedly. I thought he had it made. However, on my last visit with him on 15 April, I found him delirious and in great pain. I talked with the head nurse who advised me that they were going to take a cast off his damaged leg that night and treat him further. When it was removed they found that gas gangrene had set in and had spread through his body. He died on 16 April. With his passing our group had lost a great navigator, a swell guy and a natural leader. I had lost a good friend.

For a so-called "milk-run" my 18th combat sortie had been some mission!

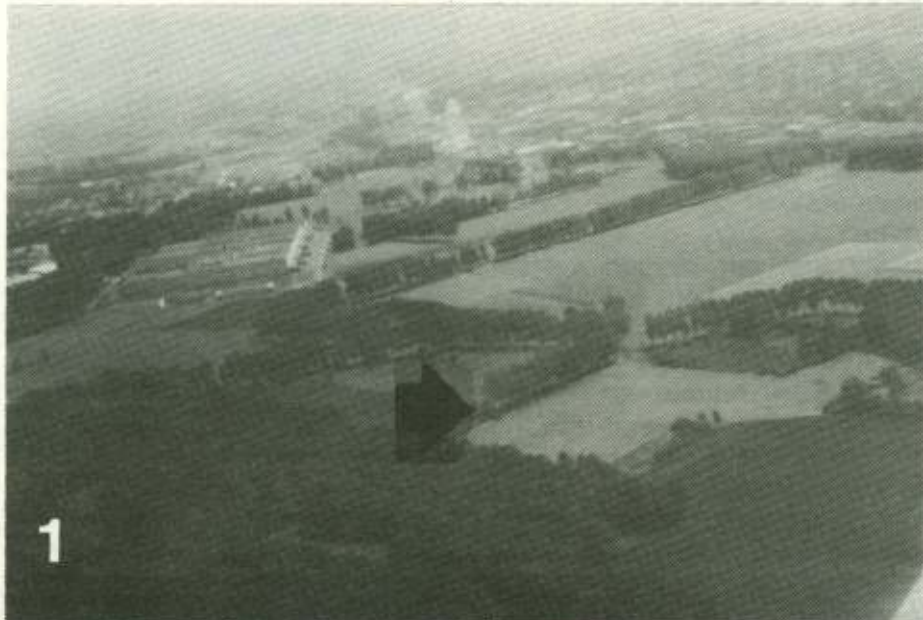


navigator, Capt. Robert Salitryk, who died of wounds incurred during the mission.

The continuing interest of Belgians in the mission is the reason for recounting this mission at the present time, and we are in particular indebted to Jean Dillen of Deurne, Belgium, for the photographs which are a part of this story. He is a member of Studiegroep Luchtvaartgeschiedenis Antwerpen, or in English, Study Group Aviation History Antwerp.

Dillen's story in part is:

"Several months ago I made a flight following the path of the 306 in 1943. We took it up some way after the Initial Point (Lokeren) and headed to the target, Erlawerk 7 in Mortsel/Antwerp. After crossing the Schelde river we flew over the crash site of Mr. Fischer's L'// Abner. Today, the pit made by the explosion is still there and filled with junk as refrigerators, automobile parts, etc. The aircraft fell right beside a row of trees and closer inspection on the ground



1. Lt. Fischer's "L'il Abner" hit the ground at the end of the row of trees and exploded with its full bomb load.



2. The Erlawerk VII factory at Mortsel/Antwerp. The aiming point is indicated.

sinks slowly to the solid ground.

"We took up the course where Lt. Seelos' *Montana Power* was already flying with two burning engines after various duels with flak and Messerschmitts. A little further was the 'Zwarte Hond' (Black Dog) Inn where Seelos' plane came to rest.

"Then we set course to Dinteloord/Holland, the hometown of Johan Verhagen, who traced back so much of this 5 April 1943. Not far from the little town is still a little lake where Lt. Parker's plane went in."

From A. Rely of Mortsel, another of the historians with a great interest in this mission, comes the Luftwaffe report for the day, translated from the German:

"Operations Ramrod No 52 (Part II), flown by 104 Fortresses and Liberators of US VIII Bomber Command covered by nine squadrons of RAF Spitfire Mk IX fighters, in the afternoon of 5 April 1943 against the Erla GmbH aircraft subsidiary at Mortsel, near Antwerp, was heavily engaged by Focke-Wulf Fw190s drawn from I/JG 2, II/JG 1, Geschwaderstab JG 26, III/JG 26 and parts of III/JG 26. Luftwaffe personnel casualties amounted to the following: Hauptmann Fritz Geisshardt (RK:EL) of Stab III/JG 26 mortally wounded in combat (Fw 190A-4 Werk Nummer 7051 coded P+ - with 60% damage in a crashlanding near Ghent at 15.15 hours CET), and Leutnant Johannes Wiethoff of 2./JG 2 wounded in the head in combat with Spitfires north of Haamstede (Fw 190A, WNr 5679 with 90% damage in crash near Ostend). In addition two other Fw 190As were written-off in landings (damage rated in excess of 60%), and three were damaged in varying degrees. Of the four B-17s lost, one was claimed by Major Josef Priller of Stag/JG 26 at 15.12 hours CET, when 20 km west of Ostend (his 84th kill); another by Hptm Wilhelm-Ferdinand Galland of II/JG 26 at 15.25 when south of Antwerp; another by Oblt Otto Stammberger of 4./JG 26 north of Antwerp at 15.50; and a fourth by

A Partial Cast of Characters

The Lead Crew (42-29498)

Maj. J. W. Wilson, pilot
Capt. John Regan, copilot
B/Gen. Frank A. Armstrong, observer
Capt. Robert Sallitnik, navigator
Capt. Frank Yaussi, bombardier
T/Sgt. Wilbur F. Hoffman, radio operator
T/Sgt. John K. Crowther, engineer
S/Sgt. Carl L. Pugh, ball turret
S/Sgt. Roy LaBlanche, right waist
S/Sgt. August J. Retcofsky, left waist
S/Sgt. August J. Krajcik, tail gunner

Missing in Action

42-5072
1st Lt. William H. Parker, pilot
1st Lt. Charles J. Thelan, copilot
1st Lt. Paul A. Spaduzzi, navigator
1st Lt. Arthur L. Milbourn, bombardier
T/Sgt. John M. Creatore, engineer
T/Sgt. James E. Gross, radio operator
S/Sgt. James S. Clark, ball turret
S/Sgt. Richard E. Haeft, waist gunner
S/Sgt. Sidney E. Davis, waist gunner
T/Sgt. Leonard H. O'Brien, tail gunner

42-29660

1st Lt. Kelly Ross, pilot
2nd Lt. George L. Lewis, copilot
2nd Lt. Sidney S. Miller, navigator
S/Sgt. Earl Benson, nose gunner
T/Sgt. William A. Hovekamp, engineer
T/Sgt. F. Douglas Bowles, radio operator
S/Sgt. Clyde Smith, waist gunner
S/Sgt. Arthur Byrd, waist gunner
T/Sgt. Arnold E. Hyman, tail gunner

42-24465

1st Lt. Robert W. Seelos, pilot
1st Lt. Alexander Kramarinko, copilot
2nd Lt. William W. Saunders, navigator
2nd Lt. James E. Murray, bombardier
T/Sgt. Stanley P. Stemkoski, engineer
T/Sgt. William H. Kesky, radio operator
S/Sgt. Roland Magee, ball turret
S/Sgt. William E. Baker, waist gunner
S/Sgt. Raymond E. Walls, waist gunner
T/Sgt. Fred R. Hampton, tail gunner

42-25431

1st Lt. Clarence Fischer, pilot
2nd Lt. James Crouch, copilot
1st Lt. Joseph Consoimagno, navigator
2nd Lt. William A. Moses, bombardier
T/Sgt. Francis L. Eastham, engineer
S/Sgt. Henry B. Compton
S/Sgt. Walter R. Kuczynski
S/Sgt. Norris R. Phifer
S/Sgt. Lee Sanders
Sgt. William C. Rhodes

Oberfeldwebel Adolf Glunz also of 4.Staffel north of the Scheldt at 15.38 CET. RAF fighter cover was restricted to the west of Sas van Ghent."

(Editor's note: RK:EL stands for Ritterkreuz mit Eichenlauf, a high

306th Gunners' Five Claims Win Approval

One of the unresolved mysteries of 8th Air Force action was the disparity discovered after the war between American bomber crews' fighter claims, and the reports of losses by the Luftwaffe. Detailed studies have shown no correlation between the two, and this difference is amply shown in the mission of 5 April 1943.

Experts in the A-2 section of First Bomb Wing awarded five "destroyed" to 306th gunners, one damaged and five were not allowed any claim.

S/Sgt. William G. Hicks, ball turret gunner in A/C #394:

There were seven planes circling Lt. Ross, who had been hit and had fallen behind. When at seven o'clock level and about eight hundred yards, Sgt. Hicks picked him up. As he came a little nearer E/A burst into flames and went out of control. Before passing out of sight the pilot was seen to bail out. Corroborated by Sgt. William J. Standish, right waist gunner.

T/Sgt. Louis J. Enloe, top turret gunner in A/C #407:

FW 190 came in from 9 o'clock high, and dove in to about 800

yards. At about 600 yards he flopped over on his back and fell to the level of our formation. Pilot bailed out! Corroborated by T/Sgt. Robert G. Robel, radio operator.

S/Sgt. George J. McClennan, ball turret gunner in A/C #180:
Right after formation left the target, S/Sgt. McClennan saw FW 190 at 4 o'clock and below. E/A came in, McClennan shooting at him all the way. When at 200 yards, E/A suddenly blew into pieces, completely disintegrating. Corroborated by S/Sgt. Warren A. MacGregor, top turret gunner.

T/Sgt. Edward H. Small, top turret gunner in A/C #643:

E/A FW 190 came in from 1245 high. Top turret gunner opened fire at extreme range. At 200 yards, E/A started smoking, and then engine burst into visible flames. Left wing dropped off. E/A was out of control, enveloped in flames. Our A/C was about 1½ miles out of formation, protecting our A/C #465, which was in trouble. Corroborated by S/Sgt. W. J. Phillips, ball turret gunner, and S/Sgt. Jesse E. Wade, right waist gunner.

Several air historians have expressed considerable interest in the mission of 5 April 1943 to Antwerp. If you have anything to offer on the mission of this date, any or all would be most pleased to hear from you. They are:

Jean Dillen Ivanowlaan 46 2100 Deurne Belgium	Kristiaan Hoedemakers Broechemsesteenweg 31 2531 Boechout Belgium
Eddy Kempeneers Bormansstraat 34 B-3401 Landen Belgium	Marc Van de Velde Voetballersstraat 36 2650 Boom Belgium
A. Rely Hof van Riethlaan 85 2510 Mortsel Belgium	J. R. Verhagen Th. Willemstra. 13 4671 EX Dinteloord The Netherlands

yards. At about 600 yards he flopped over on his back and fell to the level of our formation. Pilot bailed out! Corroborated by T/Sgt. Robert G. Robel, radio operator.

S/Sgt. George J. McClennan, ball turret gunner in A/C #180:

Right after formation left the target, S/Sgt. McClennan saw FW 190 at 4 o'clock and below. E/A came in, McClennan shooting at him all the way. When at 200 yards, E/A suddenly blew into pieces, completely disintegrating. Corroborated by S/Sgt. Warren A. MacGregor, top turret gunner.

T/Sgt. Edward H. Small, top turret gunner in A/C #643:

E/A FW 190 came in from 1245 high. Top turret gunner opened fire at extreme range. At 200 yards, E/A started smoking, and then engine burst into visible flames. Left wing dropped off. E/A was out of control, enveloped in flames. Our A/C was about 1½ miles out of formation, protecting our A/C #465, which was in trouble. Corroborated by S/Sgt. W. J. Phillips, ball turret gunner, and S/Sgt. Jesse E. Wade, right waist gunner.

S/Sgt. James J. Garris, left waist gunner in A/C #720:

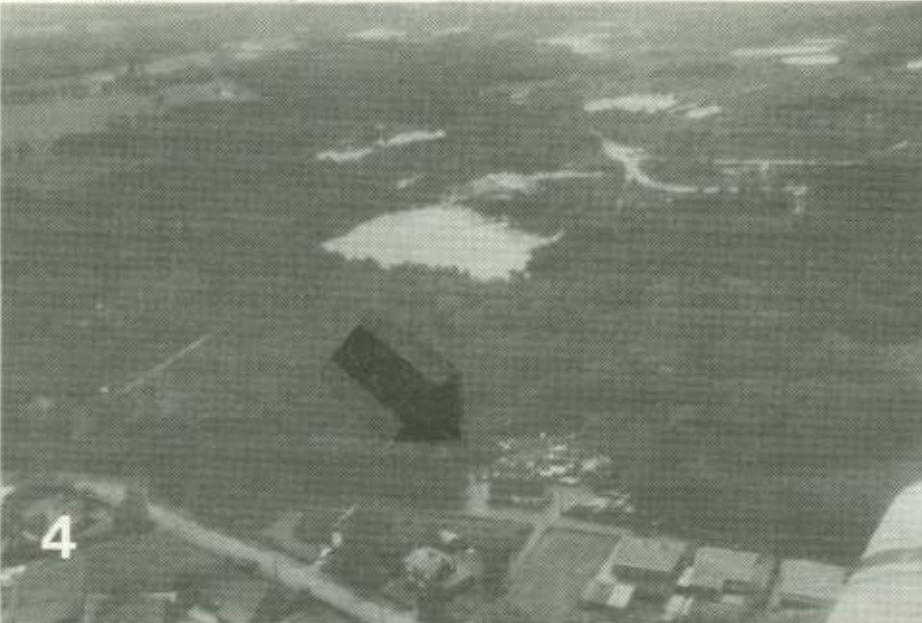
Three FW 190s came in from 10 o'clock in dive. S/Sgt. Garris sprayed all three of them and at 300 yards the entire tail of the second one fell off. Then the front end blew up and we were too busy to make further observations. Corroborated by S/Sgt. Paul A. Fetkiw, ball turret gunner.

Pictures loaned by John L. Reynolds, the original sergeant major of the 368th Squadron.



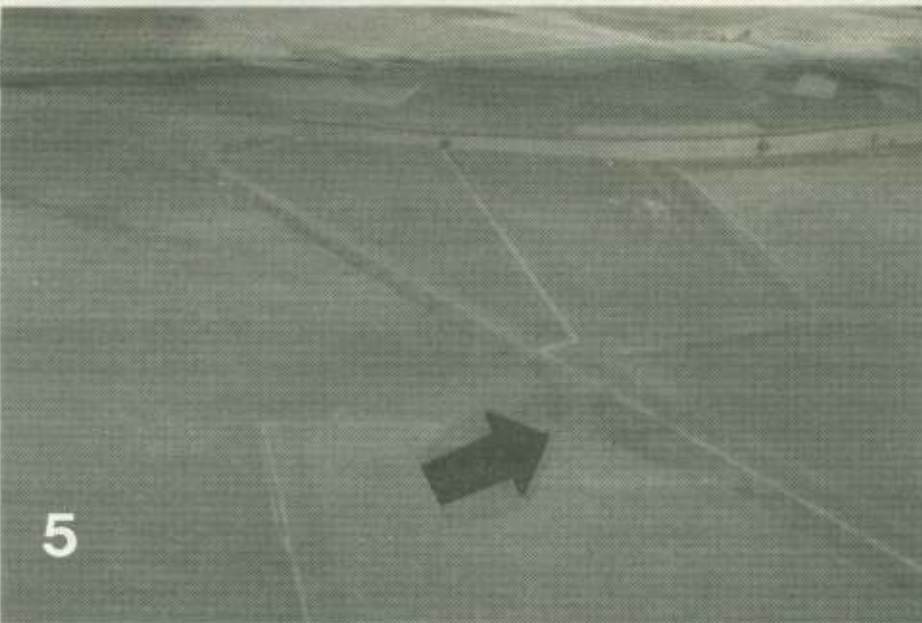
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3. The "Saeftinge" area. Lt. Kelly Ross' aircraft fell in the mud flats on the river bank. Most of the land outside the dykes is flooded twice a day as the difference between high and low tide is more than 20 feet.



4

4. The "Zwarte Hond" Inn in Kalmthout/Belgium where Lt. Seelos' "Montana Power" came to rest. Bushes have taken the place of the pastures where the aircraft fell.



5

5. Dinteloord/Holland. Lt. Parker's aircraft met its end here after the gallant crew tried to return it home after being chased by the Luftwaffe. Today a water filled crater marks the spot.



Mortsel after the attack of 5 April 1943. The building at the right was the townhall, which is about 400 meters from Erla.



368th Staff Maj. William Lanford and Lt. Edward Miazza, seated. Standing, left to right: S/Sgt. J. L. Reynolds, squadron sergeant major, 1st Sgt. Henry Cordery, Cpl. Orley Parker, Sgt. Warren Uttal, and Sgt. Marshall Baker.



Day room at Wendover, with the ever-busy ping pong table. That's 1st Sgt. Henry Cordery facing the camera.



Day room, Wendover, Utah, 1942.

A Clay Pigeon patch, in tooled leather, has been presented to the 306th Strategic Wing, Mildenhall, England, by Gordon and Connie Richards, acting on behalf of Jack Schmidt, who had the patch created.

Robert McCourt, 367th navigator in 1944, is now confined to a rest home in Wellesley Hills, MA, with MS. His bedside telephone is 617/235-8415.

Big Crowd

(From page 1)

will not be mailed in advance, but will be in the registration packets when people arrive at the Inn. The four squadrons will all be color coded for easier identification.

One of the major events will be the dedication of a memorial plaque at the Air Museum, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, planned for 1045 Friday morning. Much of the day will be spent at the Museum, with lunch available in the Museum cafe. The extensive bookstore and gift shop there will be open, and the indoor museum area carries exhibits from the beginning of military aviation in the United States to the present day. Most of the WWII planes are inside. There are also the giant, contemporary planes parked outside in front of the museum building.

Bus transportation is planned for those who do not want to drive their cars to the museum, about 10 miles from the hotel. Grimm states that following the lunch period buses will begin to shuttle back to the Holiday Inn, with everyone scheduled back by about 1700.

There is no dinner planned for Friday evening, with everyone encouraged to eat with friends informally. Almost within sight of the Inn are more than 30 restaurants, ranging from pizza to full menus.

Thursday night will feature the first major event of the reunion, a luau in the Inn ballroom. And, the hospitality room should be adequate, convenient, and it will open at 1300 on Thursday, and will be

open for most of the reunion period.

The Group executive committee will meet Saturday morning, and at 1100 the annual meeting of the Group will be held under the gavel of President John L. Ryan.

Squadron and unit pictures are planned for the Holidome at 1215 Saturday, and the social hour prior to the banquet will begin at 6 p.m. The pictures taken earlier in the day are scheduled to be available following the evening's program.

While nothing is planned for Sunday, and most people will probably be leaving for home, the Inn does feature a brunch at 1030.

Those who are among the first registrants for the 1986 reunion at Dayton are:

Marshall Baker, C. Dale Briscoe, William Breslin, Edward Beaver, Wallace Boring, Birkenmeier, Ralph Bordner, Joseph Consolmagno, William Cavaness, Louis Damaso, Robert Dwiggin, William Feeser, John Ferrari, William Flanagan, James Furay, Andrew Gallagher and Donald Goodin.

Leif Hansen, Robert Hermann, Richard Hill, Ray Hopper, Russell Houghton, Casey Jones, Jacob Leroy, Harold Lightbown, J. D. Lyles, Clayton Meyer, Jerry Myers, Edwin Oliveros, Richard O'Hara, Peter Pappas, Ben Peters, Matt Radnofsky, Brice Robison, Ray Schieb, Myron Sorden and J. P. Shutz.

Colvin Sammons, Cecil Starks, Wilmer Strawn, Robert Starzynski, William Taylor, John Thatch, Reginald Thayer, Leslie Turner, Adolph Visconti, Richard Wallace and Ray Yerak.

AIRPLANES OF THE 306th

A Request for Data

We are endeavoring to bring together a great deal of information about the airplanes which the 306th crews flew in during World War II. In 1979 a list of named planes was carried in Echoes. A number of additions have been made to the list, and other new data has been found. But there is still a need for more input from everyone involved. Please complete all data that you can on this coupon, use other paper for additional planes with which you may have had contact, and add any anecdotes about these planes that you may wish.

Name of plane _____ Plane # _____

Model: F G Squadron Assignment _____ Tail Letter _____

Crew Chief(s) _____

Pilot(s) assigned more or less permanently _____

If you have a good picture of this plane, would you copy it, or loan it to be copied?

Return this coupon to: **Russell A. Strong**
2041 Hillside
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

HOTEL REGISTRATION

MAIL DIRECTLY TO HOLIDAY INN-DAYTON MALL

7999 Prestige Plaza Drive
Miamisburg, OH 45342
(513) 434-8030

Reservations accepted on a **GUARANTEED** basis only.

Guaranteed Reservations:

- Send a deposit of one night's room charge plus tax (12.5%).
- Include your credit card number (AMX, D/C, M/C, VISA, C/B, or Discover Card). If you do not cancel directly with the hotel within 48 hours prior to arrival, you will be billed by the credit card company for one night's lodging, plus tax.

Cancellations: If you cannot stay with us, please cancel your guaranteed reservation by calling (515) 434-8030 at least 48 hours prior to your arrival date and obtain a cancellation number.

Check-Out: Check-out time is at 12:00 Noon. Therefore, **CHECK-IN** is not guaranteed prior to 3:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: Reservations made after August 21, 1986, will be subject to space availability.

306th BOMB GROUP

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Home Address _____ Home Phone Number _____

City _____

Sharing with: Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Please check type of room requested:		Inc. Tax
Single (one bed, one or two person)	\$57.00 _____ =	\$64.12
Double (two beds, two or more persons)	\$60.00 _____ =	\$67.50
Triple (two beds, three or more persons)	\$60.00 _____ =	\$67.50
Quad (two beds, four or more persons)	\$60.00 _____ =	\$67.50

Rollaways @ \$4.00 nightly.

Guest rooms for this meeting are held as listed. Any variation is subject to availability.

Arrival: Thursday, September 11, 1986

Departure: Sunday, September 14, 1986

PLEASE MAKE MY RESERVATIONS FOR:

Arrival: _____ Departure: _____

Month _____ Month _____

Day _____ Day _____

Time _____ Time _____

GUARANTEED RESERVATION

_____ Deposit included AMX _____ DC _____ MC _____ CB _____ VS _____

Discover Card _____

Credit Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Special Requests: _____

Dayton In '86

306th Reunion Order Form

September 11, 12, 13, 1986

To: 306th 1986 Reunion Committee
PO Box 358
Dayton, OH 45406

Make Checks Payable to:
306th Reunion Fund

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

	Number	Total Charge
Registration Fee (Per Person)	\$25.00 x _____	\$ _____
9/11 306th Luau (Per Person) at Holiday Inn, Dayton Mall	\$14.00 x _____	\$ _____
9/13 USAF Museum Tour (Per Person) (Includes Transportation)	0 x _____	\$ <u>No Charge</u>
9/13 Annual Banquet (Per Person) Holiday Inn, Dayton Mall	\$20.00 x _____	\$ _____
TOTAL price for Registration & Tickets (ENCLOSE CHECK)		\$ _____

INFORMATION

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

Address _____ Guest(s) Name(s) _____

Zip _____

Phone No. _____

Squadron _____ Crew Position or Other Duty _____

Arrival Time: Date _____ Hour _____ Departure Time: Date _____ Hour _____

Have you made Hotel Reservations? _____ If so, where _____