

306th Echoes

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Large Gift Helps 306th Finances

Just before the holidays the 306th Association received a check for \$10,000, a gift from Dr. Herman Kaye, 423rd, who is a retired attorney, physician and hospital administrator living in Beverly Hills, CA.

This is the largest gift ever received by the 306th and came as our treasury was beginning to rebound from the drain placed on it by the production of our 800 page book of 25 years of 306th Echoes.

As all of you should be aware, our Association has never charged annual dues, practice begun at the start of the 306th coming together in 1975. In the beginning all monies collected were from contributions, sometimes collected in a hat or box sitting on the end of a bar. Part of the rationale for our dues-less practice was to be sure that we did not exclude any of our members from receiving Echoes, and we have continued this mode of operation to the present.

"This will assure that we can continue to serve all of those 306th members we have been able to locate and we welcome any and all new names," says President Lowell Burgess.

In conversation with Russ Strong, Dr. Kaye emphasized his continuing interest in the production and distribution of 306th Echoes, which was the same statement made in years gone by by the late Kieth Jackson, who had been a major contributor for several years until his unexpected death in 1987.

In receiving this \$10,000 check, Treasurer Robert Houser expressed a hope that others would make more gifts so that the work of our Association can continue unabated in the years ahead. "All gifts to the 306th are deductible from Federal income taxes," Houser reminds us.

One More Trip To Merry England!

At the Minneapolis reunion there was voiced considerable sentiment that we have one more 306th trip to England to again view some of the places that became so much a part of our lives for the 60 years intervening.

Now it is time to turn that sentiment into reality for each of us, and you will find an initial registration form on page 2 of this issue of Echoes. If you intend to go and are willing to place \$300 on the line now, you must fill out this form and begin your preparations for the trip.

For some of you it means getting your passports up to date, and for that you must get moving so that the lack thereof does not impede you.

One of the problems encountered in our discussions was that of dates. Finally, after considerable debate trying to make our calendar conform to those of various interested participants, we have come up with a trip that will depart stateside 21 June and have us back here on 29 June. This will take us into London's Gatwick Airport, from which our coach will depart as soon as everyone has arrived in the afternoon, and take us to the venerable Swan Hotel in downtown Bedford.

We will spend two nights in Bedford, and then be off to Kenilworth where we will spend two more nights, touring the

Cotswold countryside and some noble digs as well. From there we will come back to London for three nights before making our way back to the States once again.

The itinerary follows below, which gives you a good outline of what we will see and our meal schedules.

We are still trying to settle on a driver, and are hopeful at this point that Peter Swan will once again drive and guide us. Peter was on the '92 excursion to England when 400 of us had a marvelous time, has done another smaller group for us and then has shown up for one of our reunions in the States. He has a great sense of humor and great knowledge of England.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Friday, 21 June Departure Day Departure from Northwest Airlines gateways throughout the U.S. Dinner on board.

Saturday, 22 June Arrival in London, Bedford Participants will arrive at London's Gatwick Airport throughout the morning and Afternoon. When everyone has arrived, we'll meet our driver/guide and board the waiting motor coach. Traveling around London, northward to Bedford, we'll check-in at our hotel in time to settle

turn to page 2

Silver Cigar Box in Museum

Late in his career at Thurleigh as commanding officer of the 306th, Col. James S. Sutton was presented with a silver cigar box which bore on the top the signatures 15 senior staff officers, who had worked closely with the West Pointer.

Eventually, and after his death in Novato, CA, which was his retirement home, the box was among the possessions turned over to his daughter, Patricia Ann Sward. After thinking about and looking further into the matter, she contacted the Secretary of the 306th Association, and in consultation with him indicated her desire to have the silver box returned to Thurleigh.

The box arrived with the Secretary in early November, and after discussing the matter with Ralph Franklin, curator of the Museum, the box was sent by Priority Mail to the Thurleigh Museum, through the good offices of the Historian of the Third Air Force.

Those whose autographs appear on the top of the box are: Paul J. Baillie,

John A. Bairnsfather, John H. Buie, Billy W. Casseday, John S. Chalfant, C. G. Duy, Frank B. Edelbrock, Thomas M. Hulings, Earl W. Kesling, Joseph A. LaMotta, James A. McKinney, Harold D. Munal, Henry J. Schmidt, James M. Venable and Thomas F. Witt. Those still living are Baillie, Casseday, Venable and LaMotta.

Another Look at 'Echoes' for All of You

You can still order copies of our 800-page book of 306th Echoes, sending your check for \$55 to the Secretary. The book is four pounds and eight ounces of pleasurable reading. The secretary and others report that they have forgotten some of the stories and that they enjoy going over them again. We think you will have the same experience.

You may have noticed that those old copies of Echoes you have been saving in a drawer or on a shelf are crumbling with age, already having taken on a brown patina that is not pleasant and is a sure sign of aging. The new book is printed on acid-free paper, which is expected to have a shelf life of 400 years.

This book may be something, also that you will want to contribute to your local library so that following generations can learn something more about WWII and your participation in the events of 1942-45. Because of its size, it is a sturdy book which should enjoy a long shelf life.

Also designed and included in the book is a 28-page index which will help you find a lot of events and names easily. And those pages of color pictures you have enjoyed in Echoes also reappear in the book in color.

Send your check for \$55, made out to the 306th BG Assn to the Secretary, 5323 Cheval Pl, Charlotte, NC 28205, and it is the usual practice to respond by mail with the book the next day.

Hot News!

24 July 1944; Target, St. Lo, France A/C 454-B, pilot Breslin, reported a B-17 on deck at 1346 at 5020N-0237W by Gee fix. Observing A/C sent distress message to Air-Sea Rescue at 1346 hours. A/C 936-P, pilot Fossum, reported an oil slick and 2 chutes at the same Place at 1355 hours. A Walrus and a Spitfire were circling the spot and the Walrus was seen firing a flare. A/C 598, Pilot Horn, reported 3 chutes at 5018N-0236W by Gee fix at 1355 hours. Two A/C were circling the chutes. This news was phoned to Division at 1605 hours.

This was a 401st BG aircraft, and eight of the crew survived the experience.

Big Bombers Big Operations

"In terms of men and machines, the Eighth Air Force was the largest striking force ever committed to battle. The complexities of putting 2000 bombers and fighters in a single day over Hitler's Reich were extraordinary and might involve directly and indirectly, one hundred and fifty thousand men and women. The daily

logistical requirements could be enormous, some three million gallons of fuel, four thousand tons of bombs and four and a half million rounds of ammunition to give just the major items. And such efforts were often repeated for several days in succession. Roger Freeman, Mighty Eighth War Manual

Introducing the Flannagan Family



To those of us who know how important family is we want to introduce the 33 members of Charles Flannagan's family, at Thanksgiving 2001. There are 33 of them, all told, and you can see so well in the color rendition of this picture the redheads, blondes and brunets. Charles and Dolores are seated in the center, with their four sons and two daughters also seated, and the remainder of this group are spouses, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Charles will be remembered by many as an original 369th Squadron pilot, the long-time operations officer of the 369th and for his last three months of 306th duty was commander of the 367th Squadron. He left the Group for home 17 Oct 1944. For years he was a dentist in Tell City, IN, where they continue to live.

Saving Our Records is a Future 'Must'

There has been a sharp increase in recent months by the children of 306th veterans "finding" their way to our organization. Frequently the veterans have been gone for some years, and in "noodling" through their computers the children come across our organization and then call, write, or e-mail the Secretary.

All of this helps in bringing in more information to our files, and has required the setting up of an e-mail file for the correspondence so that we can continue the exchanges in the interest of eliciting data that we never had before. Thus, we have eventually gotten data that those on the mailing list could have given us but never sent in those days when we circulated questionnaires. Now we are going at it the other way, beginning with the date of death and then getting that personal data which we had sought earlier.

If you sense a guilty spot on reading this, clue us in on your retirement date and your principal employer after service; add to that your wife's name; then c, gc, ggc (numbers only); and give us any significant service record which we might like to know about and send those on a postcard to the Secretary.

At such time as the Secretary's office ceases to function all of his files and background material will go into the special storage areas of the Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum at Savannah, GA, where they will be cared for in properly controlled environments to assure longevity for paper-based records. As many archives are finding, film and tape based archival materials do have a finite life that is far short of what we would like to have.

To aid this storage, we are doing more and more of our publications and records on acid-free archival papers, which are believed to have about a 400-year span of life.

This is also a plea to you to not let your records and your personal pictorial archives get away from you. Remember that the Secretary's office wants to at least have a look at them and to copy what we can for the 306th files that will eventually be placed in the Mighty 8th AF Museum files.

201 files, and Form 5s are invaluable, and we would like to examine such files, especially from men who came to the 306th in 1942 and 1943. Former EMs may also have a significant copy or two of orders. Send us a copy, as these were not organizationally saved until 1 Dec 43.

367th Diary a Mess; Reediting Now Underway

It was recently learned that the long standing 367th Squadron Diary had deteriorated in the frequent reprinting of its 150 pages of content. To overcome this deficiency and to update some of the biographical materials in the back of the book, it is now in the process of being redone.

If you have received a Diary in the last year and wish to replace it because you are unable to read parts of it, or several pages are missing, please inform the secretary and a replacement will be sent you.

If you find problems in other Squadron Diaries, confer with the secretary on

Trip to England, from page 1

in and rest before dinner is served. Breakfast on board and inner at hotel,

Sunday, 23 June Madingly, Ely, Bedford
Enjoy a full-day excursion with visits to our old base, the former RAE Bedford site, Madingly Cemetery and Ely Cathedral.. Return to Bedford. Dinner on your Own. Breakfast in hotel.

Monday, 24 June Stratford, Kenilworth
Following breakfast, there will be a lovely morning drive to Stratford. After time for an independent lunch, we will visit Shakespeare's birthplace, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, and Anne Hathaway's Cottage. After some free time for shopping and exploration, we will transfer to nearby Kenilworth for a two-night stay. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel.

Tuesday, 25 June Warwick, Cotswolds, Kenilworth

The morning begins with a tour of historic Warwick Castle, followed by a motor coach tour through the beautiful Cotswolds.

There will be visits to Stow-on-the-Wold and Broadway, before returning to our accommodations in Kenilworth. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel.

Wednesday, 26 June Banbury, Windsor, London

Our morning drive will include Banbury and Windsor. After time for lunch, we will tour the Royal Family's monumental Windsor Castle. We will then head on the London to settle in for a three-night stay. Breakfast at the hotel.

Thursday, 27 June London

A full-day tour of beautiful London will introduce you to this amazing metropolis. Breakfast in the hotel.

Friday, 28 June London The day is totally yours to explore the sights, shops and sounds of London. Breakfast and farewell dinner at the hotel

Saturday, 29 June Return to the U. S.

Following breakfast, it is time to say "cheerio" to Merry Olde England, and you will be

transferred to Gatwick Airport for flights to the States.

PRICING

Pricing includes services of a licensed driver/guide in England, accommodations in moderate first class and superior tourist-class hotels, transfers and touring by deluxe non-smoking motor coach, portage of one suitcase per participant, meals and sightseeing as noted in the itinerary, admissions to included sightseeing venues, tipping and taxes for all included items except for the major gateways listed below. Transportation from other Northwest Airlines gateways through out the United States can be added at reduced group rates. All prices are based on current tariffs, fares, and taxes for a minimum group of 21 participants. The per person, double occupancy pricing follows; the single supplement is \$240.

Chicago \$2,229
Detroit, Atlanta, Houston \$2,369
Los Angeles \$2,389

306th Reservation Coupon Return to England

An initial deposit of \$300 per person must accompany all reservations. Names should be exactly as they appear on the person's passport. Applicable terms and conditions and trip insurance information will be mailed to you upon the receipt of your reservation. This coupon and your deposit should be mailed to Tripmasters, Inc... Attn: 306th Desk, 4920 Plainfield Avenue, NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. Payment is only accepted by check or money order. For more information call Tripmasters, Inc., toll free at (800) 878-7800.

Name Date of Birth

Street Address Telephone ()

City, State, Zip.....

Roommate Date of Birth

Street Address Telephone

City, State, Zip NW WorldPerks #

Requested Northwest Airlines Departure City

X..... X.....

306E

(Signatures of Participants)



Lowell Burgess, president; Leland Kessler, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; Robert N. Houser, treasurer; Frederick Hudson, Hugh Phelan, Donald R. Ross, Frederick P. Sherman, directors; Paul Reieux, past president.
Ralph Franklin, British representative, National School Cottage, Keysoe, Beds., MK44 2HP, England; Telephone from U.S. 011-44-1234-708715.

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.

SECRETARY/EDITOR:

Handles all changes of address, editorial comments and records:
Russell A. Strong, 5323 Cheval Pl., Charlotte, NC 28205. Phone 704/568-3803. russell.a.strong306@worldnet.att.net

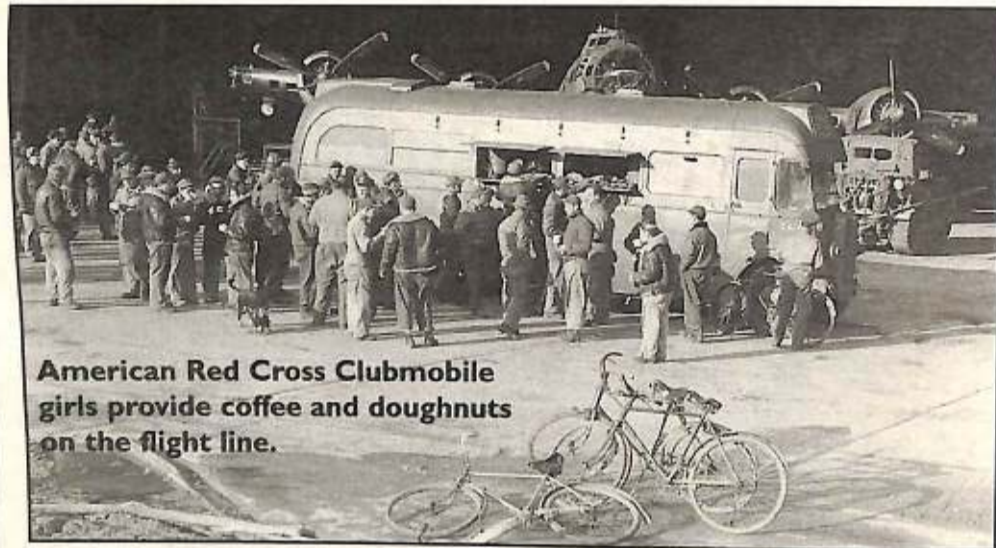
TREASURER:

Send money to:
Robert N. Houser, P.O. Box 13362, Des Moines, IA 50310, 515/279/4498.

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

Items of all kinds for the Thurleigh Library can be mailed to the address shown below:

HQ, 3rd Air Force
Historian's Office
APO 09459



American Red Cross Clubmobile girls provide coffee and doughnuts on the flight line.

306th Echoes 1975-2000

Available in September, you will be able to have your own copy of 25 years of 306th Echoes, all reproduced in a book, including all pictures and the color pictures as well.

The cost for each of the new books is \$55, including postage and handling. Produced as a paperback, with a heavy, varnished cover, the final size is 8 3/8 x 10 3/4 inches. To make sure that you receive one of the 500 copies, place your order today.

I enclose \$ _____ for _____ copies of 306th Echoes, The Book.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Make your checks out to the 306th Bomb Group Association. Send this coupon and your check to:

Russell A. Strong
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, NC 28205

Reunion on Program at Covington

An initial meeting of the program committee for the 2002 reunion at Covington, KY, met Thursday, 3 January at the Radisson Riverfront hotel in the downtown area.

John and Betty Hickey, who have graciously accepted the leadership role for our meeting of 24-28 September, were on hand for this session. Also attending for the 306th were President Lowell Burgess and Russ and June Strong.

In the general exploration of matters, the group discussed a possible trip to the USAF Museum at Dayton, while at the same time agreeing that some other event might well interface with this trip for those who do not wish to look at or discuss aviation at length. In this regard there are numerous venues to consider both sides of the Ohio River. One of these is the new aquarium at Cincinnati, which is almost in sight from our hotel and is easily reached by bus or auto.

The program is not ready for exposition in this issue of *Echoes*, but will appear in the April and July issues. In ample time for everyone to complete this matter and to mail their checks to the Hickeys in plenty of time.

At the same time, the housing form can be taken from this issue of *Echoes* and mailed to the hotel to complete that part of your arrangements.

Activities for the 2002 reunion, centering in the roundly-built Radisson Riverfront Hotel, will begin on Thursday, 26 September, and you will want to plan on checking in Wednesday, 25 September, so that you will be ready to move along with the crowd.

Ample parking above ground or in the hotel's garage will be available for those driving. The hotel is literally right next to I-75, so you can come at it from the north or from the south, and quickly exit onto 5th St, once you have spotted our digs. The hotel is more or less round, with rooms around the exterior. Communication is an easy matter on each floor as rooms are close by and demand little walking on your part. Registration for the hotel is on the front, or street side, of the hotel, and as you enter you will go to the left, and then come back to the right to find our Group registration at the end of the hall and in front our hospitality room and immediately adjacent to the ballroom we will use on Saturday evening. You can unload your car at the front door. It is within a few steps of the hotel registration desk, and elevators are very close.

The principal dining room for the hotel is on the 18th floor and features a circular seating area that goes through its complete spin about once an hour. Diners are thus provided an excellent view of Cincinnati and the Kentucky hills from the eating area. It is really a spectacular view. There is also considerable dining to be found within a few blocks of the hotel in any direction, and one can even review this situation from the upper floors of the hotel. The hotel is very close to the German settlers' area, where there are more restaurants to be found. Taxis will pro-

Another a/c Underwater

Bartlett Smith, a 367th and Casey Jones pilot, has received an e-mail from Sweden reporting a sighting by Swedish divers of the 367th plane that Louis Matichka and his crew dropped into the Baltic Sea 8 May 44. This was a Berlin raid in extremely bad weather when the Group lost three planes in a collision before the target. Matichka's plane lost contact with the formation and headed for Sweden very low on fuel. They ditched in close to the Swedish shore and divers have viewed and videoed the plane. All of the crew members survived but it is believed today that Willis Nelson, the copilot, is the only one living at this time.



Betty and John Hickey will be in charge of reunion planning and execution at Covington. So, send your ideas to them.

vide inexpensive transportation to many eating establishments.

For those persons arriving by air, there is convenient messaging to the hotel at the baggage claim area, and they tell us that service is as frequent as you place your requests. The hotel is within a half hour of the airport.

Obituaries

Don L. Beers, 423rd armorer, died 1 Mar 01 in Champaign, IL. He joined the Group 15 Jun 44. Beers retired from the UnivofIll. His wife had died in '99.

Kenneth Bickett, 423rd copilot and pilot, died 8 Jan 95. He came to the 306th with the John Lewis crew 5 Jul 43, and completed his combat tour 13 Jan 44 as a flight commander. After the war he went to TWA and flew with them until 1980, retiring as their senior 747 pilot. He left his wife, Louise (now deceased), 3c, 4gc.

John E. Corcoran, 367th tail & ball turret gunner (Wm. Bisson crew), died 6 Oct 01 in Ludlow, VT, where he had made his home for several years. He came to the Group in Jun 43 and was the 133rd EM to complete his tour, by the end of the year. He was transferred to the 91st BG 24 Dec 43 and then to the 12th Replacement Depot 5 Apr 44. He was a BostonC graduate in 1948, and was in the insurance business in Wellesley Hills, MA, retiring as president and treasurer of the Corcoran & Havlin Agency. He leaves his wife, Marge, 5c, 9gc.

Joseph A. A. Desroches, 368th crew chief, died 14 Mar 01, in Conyers, GA.

Eugene C. Engberg, 368th engineer (Wm Nash crew) and POW (w.Rene Fix) 27 Mar 44 at La Rochelle, France, died 9 Jul 01 in Ogden Dunes, IN. He had joined the 306th 15 Mar 44. In 1950 was recalled for Korean duty, serving with the National Guard Troop Carrier at O'Hare Field, Chicago, IL. In '51 left USAF to attend USArmy OCS at Ft Benning, GA. Commissioned a 2nd Lt, became a rifle platoon leader in Korea W/40th Infantry Div. Leaves his wife, Mary, 2s.

John Horkulic, 423rd navigator (Harold Fossum crew), died 9 Dec 01 in Davenport, IA. He joined the Group 3 Apr 44, was wounded by flak 20 Jun at Hamburg, and completed his 30-mission tour 17 Aug 44. He later graduated from U-Colo and earned his MA at FL Inst of Technology. He was a procurement specialist at the US Army Armaments and Munitions Command at the Rock Island Arsenal. He was a longtime reunion attendee and leaves his wife Mary, 4c, 2gc.

Reed T. Miller, 423rd gunner (Nelson Troup crew), died 27 Nov 01 in Lock Haven, PA. He was not with Troup's crew 23 May 44 when they crashed in England on a mission return, losing five crew members. He leaves his wife, Janet.

Andrew T. Seman, 369th munitions worker, died in 1997 in Baltimore, MD. He was with the original Group, remaining throughout the war. His wife died in 1999.

'Clash of Wings' Highlights Air War

Clash of Wings, World War II in the Air, by Walter J. Boyne. 1994, Simon & Schuster, NY. 415pp, inc appendices. Available in paperback.

This is a reasonably thorough study of WWII, at least for those of us who are less than scholarly readers. It covers all aspects of the War, with emphasis on each of the major participants, and with interesting comparisons of the planes that continue to be in our memories.

Boyne spent considerable time in a B-52 cockpit, and has had a keen eye out for everything he can learn about those planes we flew in several generations before he was on the scene.

The theatres other than Western Europe are covered quite thoroughly, and if he skimps at all it may be in his coverage of "our" corner of the air war. But he does give considerable space to the B-17 and the P-51. Perhaps he doesn't give as much coverage as he might have to the B-24, the P-38 and the P-47. But we can find other places to satisfy our minds and egos on our "favorite" planes.

One of the more interesting aspects of his study is his reportage on the late war planes of the Germans and the Japanese, aircraft we don't hear much of, but which came within a whisker of giving fits to the American planes of the late war period.

He also provides some interesting

insights into the personalities who "ran" the combat in the several theatres, not always favorable to them, regardless of their origins. At this time, some 55-60 years later, it is time to be looking rather critically at our top leaders and just how they did run things.

A detailed chapter mid-volume deals with the development of the Pacific War, and concludes "Japanese soldiers, sailors, and airmen fought with courage and dignity; they deserved better of their leaders."

In concluding his commentaries on the war in Europe, he says "The Allies consistently underestimated German production capacity and overestimated damage to targets. There were too many attacks on too many different targets, and not enough return attacks on critical targets."

Then his concluding chapter turns to the B-29 development and its impact on the Pacific war, and especially in getting the atomic bombs on targets.

One comment of interest to this observer from the front of the B-17 came in Boyne's late discussion of the emphasis on oil targets in Germany: "...an argument that had by now become academic was settled: precision bombing using the Norden bomb-sight could do more damage with 250 tons of bombs than could an attack using radar with 1,000 tons!

From Ditch to Dory to Dulag Luft

By Don Eldredge

Our target was the submarine pens at La Pallice, France. We left our base at Thurlough that morning, got into formation and flew South across the English Channel. We crossed the broad throat of the Brest Peninsula and stayed east of St. Nazaire, another submarine center, to avoid the highly accurate flak there.

We lost our #3 engine over the target just after completing the bomb run. It caught fire and ran away. I was able to extinguish the fire using the CO2 cylinders, but the propellor shaft broke off; the prop continued to windmill and could not be feathered. It was just five feet away from me and I watched the propellor shaft go in and out of the engine, wondering if it would come right through the flight deck and finish us. It caused the plane to vibrate violently, shaking the engine to pieces.

Our bomb bay doors would not close because of the vibration. The drag caused by this and the windmilling propellor reduced our power, forcing us to drop out of formation. Pilot Bud Gaston told the crew to prepare to bail out.

If we bailed out, I suggested, none of us would survive because we were now about 15 miles off the French Coast. We elected to stay with the plane. Bombardier Ken Jones parachuted into the bay, possibly a victim of a slip off the bomb bay catwalk. He was never found.

We flew for half an hour before we were discovered and fired upon by flak ships. Shortly thereafter, an FW-190 attacked us and we dropped down to the deck so that he couldn't get under us. The ball turret gunner was out of the turret, because he would not have been able to get out of the plane when we ditched. Two more FW-190s joined the fray and they all made passes at us, knocking out our top turret and wounding the gunner, Sergeant Les Quandt. At this point the red lights showed up on the instrument panel, indicating that we had less than five minutes of gas in our three remaining engines.

We were then about three miles west of the Ile de Ouessant, which is off the tip of the Brest Peninsula. Gaston did a great job of putting the plane down in the ocean with

the open bomb doors. We ditched at 90 MPH and the nose went under, but came back up. We deployed the life rafts and got everyone into them. The FW-190s flew over and wagged their wings, indicating they would not fire at us. Our plane stayed afloat for about five minutes, so we had ample time to get away from it and avoid the suction before it sank. An open fishing dory with two very surprised French fishermen picked us up about 15 minutes after we got into the rafts. A German coastal patrol boat was about a mile away and bearing down on us. They picked us up from the Frenchmen and took us to Brest where we were put into a hospital. At this point the officers were separated from the NCOs. The three FW-190 pilots wanted to meet us and talk about our evasive maneuvers. After two days in the hospital, the officers were put on a train with a lieutenant and three soldiers to guard us. We proceeded to Paris, where we changed trains and continued to Frankfurt. After a long layover at the Frankfurt station, we were put into a truck with the guards and taken to Dulag Luft in Oberursel, a suburb. Upon arrival, one of the guards said to me, "I'm very quiet for you." He didn't like the looks of the place, either. It was a forbidding building.

A couple of unpleasant weeks later we were put on a train to Sagan and arrived there the second week in December, 1942.

Through the Eye of the Needle

#5 of 10

Don Eldredge was one of the original 367th pilots to go to combat, flying with the crew of Ralph Gaston. Herein Don recounts their landing in the waters off the Brest Peninsula. Others to be featured in future issues of *Echoes* are Robert Hermann, John Ryan, Robert Seelos, Myron Sorden and James Vaughter. Used by permission of the Stalag Luft III organization per Gen. Albert P. Clark.

From Ditch to Dory to Dulag Luft



Now Taking Shape, the Road Above Will Direct Your Wheels to the New Museum For Our 306th Memories

Ralph Franklin opens the door to invite you in to the new museum, made possible through the efforts of Jonathan Palmer and his automotive empire.

We already have a WWII jeep which has been reconditioned into top notch working condition through the efforts of Ralph's brother.

Displays are only now coming into being, but there are glassed cases ready to receive the memorabilia of your life at Thurleigh that you would like to see preserved in style.



Ralph Franklin



We are all ready

Our Museum will be open for those joining the 306th pilgrimage to Bedford and Thurleigh in June, although the Museum will not be completely ready for crowds of people until some time in the next year. See page 2 as to how to send your contributions along to Ralph Franklin.

Memorial Fund Gifts

In memory of Gloria Beigel and Warren Wilson, by Em Christianson
 In memory of John Corcoran, by Hugh & Evelyn Phelan
 In memory of Mrs. Robert W. (Pat) Daniel, by Jack Persac
 In memory of Elmer J. Weber, Paul G. Tardiff and Leslie W. Turner, by Bill Edwards

Memorial gifts to the 306th Association are deductible on your Federal Income Tax. These gifts are used for special projects, as determined by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting.

Looking Back Over a Combat tour over Europe

By E.J. Hennessy

The subject I have in mind is purely personal in the sense that I am trying to confirm or disprove a belief that I have had since 20 May 43!

Since I have never kept a diary in my life, I am simply recollecting some things that probably would have been in it.

I have felt all along that my flight record was clean—all missions assigned were flown. No mechanical reasons for not taking off—no aborted missions.

I recall three dates that might have seemed strange. On 23 Nov 42 the target was St. Nazaire—the 306th only managed to get eight airborne and four of them aborted! I made the bomb run, including Clay Isbell with Fulton Dyer, assistant operations officer, filling in for me as copilot. Only the bombardier, Abraham Burden, and Peter Fryer, the navigator, survived. I had been grounded for a week because of a strep throat that was treated at about 3 a.m. a few mornings earlier by the Medical Officer of the Day in the dispensary with sulfa—the new wonder drug. Neither he, nor a flight surgeon, nor I knew that this entailed an automatic 7-day grounding. So I was never assigned to fly that mission and Dyer was the unlucky one. Thus I was innocent survivor, in a manner of speaking. Rather shaken, as you would expect.

I was, I suppose, kind of a 5th wheel, for a while, but found myself doing a lot of odd jobs. One was flying one miserable night as Doyle Dugger's co-pilot on a weird test flight. Dugger was 369th operations officer and the mission was to test some hooded blue runway lights that were put on our shortest one, east/west, as I recall. These blue lights could only be seen from a correctly aligned final approach at 30 degree angle of descent, I believe. (This was one of those typically half-assed things we tried in those primitive times—we had no runway device at Thurleigh.) Well—a clear enough night but black as pitch. The takeoff was predictably on instruments and we climbed out into the oblivion, believe me. I was busily timing our 'pattern', designed to fly a rectangular path and come back, hopefully, to the desired alignment with those effing blue lights! Need I tell you that we did NOT find them?

So, we bravely guessed at some adjustments in the timing of the legs of our pattern and came up empty again. Rather than bore you with the details, in about the 40th minute aloft, over God knows what, we make another let down and Dugger yells, "I see one line of blue lights—do you?"

"Yes, but nothing on my right—jog left and right real fast" - he did and bingo - two lines of blue and we make it down in one piece, sweating profusely. Dugger firmly announced on the Tower channel, "This exercise is over", and we waited for a jeep to lead us back to the hardstand.

What a stupid mission that was! We debriefed in the club bar and reflected on the shortcomings of whom ever dreamed up this fiasco.

I did a lot of local flying with various 369th pilots (there weren't that many) and on Jan. 3 I flew as a co-pilot (designated) With Charles Flannagan to St. Nazaire. Again on Jan. 13 to Lille. I had a lot of control time on these flights, and in retrospect, they seemed to be check rides. For the next 10 days I sat in the left seat with three senior pilots in succession for local check rides. The last was with Jack Howard and we had a 20+mph cross wind on the main runway for my first landing for Jack. It was one of the best cross wind jobs I ever did—like a real sweet golf shot you never forget—and that was it. "You could not do any better—let's park this thing."

Next up was 27 Jan 43 to Wilhelmshaven—the "First Over Germany". For some forgotten reason I wound up with Wild Bill Casey's aircraft, "Banshee." I assume he was off campus, or incapacitated, so I got the job with my makeshift crew. Naturally, we were

assigned as a spare. However, whoever started in the #2 spot on Col. Armstrong's right wing, aborted so I climbed up to that spot and remained there. I have wondered if the switch in airplanes confused the records which often were (!) (On 26 Feb 43, Casey Jones flew "Banshee" to Wilhelmshaven with Andy Rooney on board—as he remembers this as the first Germany strike!)

On 4 Mar 43 we tried Hamm in terrible flying weather in clouds over whatever at about 18,000 feet, full load. I was in the lower flight on Rip's left wing. I could see him looking up and around rather frantically it appeared, and I was able to glance left at the flight instruments—we were in a 30 degree left bank and airspeed for me in the bottom of the turn, was moving under 110! I felt the buffeting and wallowing when the gyros tumbled because so had we. Fell out into a spin—hoping no one was under me. I guessed three turns later and 4,000 feet lower I got out of it on the basic needle-ball-air-speed procedure and was able to restore order, get back on course for Hamm and contemplated what next? No way could we ever recover 4,000 feet lost—and the group was climbing, so we kept the heading and found ourselves in layered clouds with an opening to the ground dead ahead—about 14,000 feet now—and Bill Colantoni shouted "Marshalling yards straight ahead. Do you want to follow the PDI?" Why not—it was occupied territory at least, so we dropped it, according to Bill and headed home. We got there about 40 minutes after the Group, which had aborted unbeknownst to us.

For whatever it's worth—Bill was treated like dirt and his strike photos were mysteriously lost in the photo lab. So it was a non Mission, officially. But, so was the Group effort, so we, at least, got credited with a mission as did the others.

So, there are the little things that might have clouded the issue. But there is a little more—in mid-April "old" John Baimsfather (WWI!) hailed me in from the HQ one day to tell me that Henry Terry (369th CO) had sent up a recommendation for a DFC for sure. I was completely surprised—"What for? Nothing wonderful happened." John said that I was the only pilot who made every mission assigned in a time when abortions were too common. However, Bomber Command balked—said we cannot give an award to somebody who just does his duty. John was mad because it, "the duty," was totally unique in his view. I thanked him for telling me.

So, 28 May 43 was my 25th one, and I believe my record was spotless—flew them all as designed. I believe I was the 6th pilot to finish 25 and probably the only one who made all the flights. 25 assigned, 25 flown.

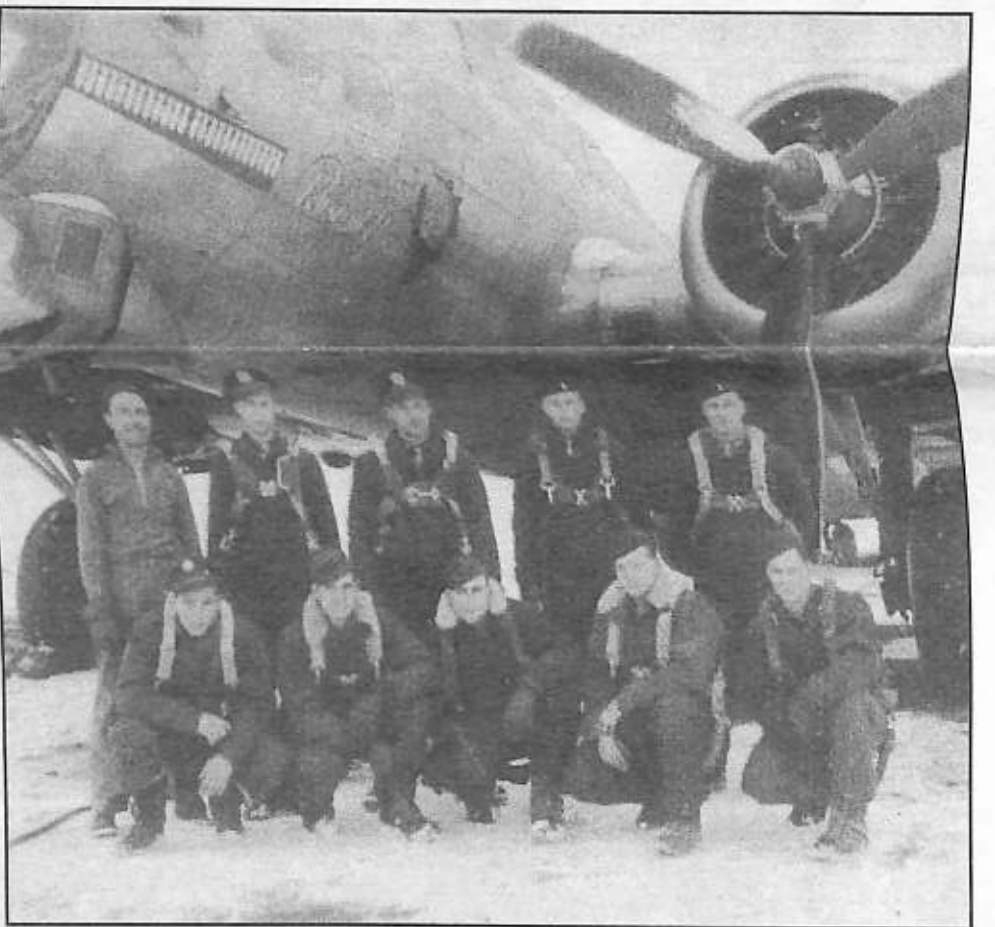
I am not looking for anything except a memory check. I'm glad I'm still around to remember anything, and I understand that I could forgotten some things.

ADDENDUM TO HENNESSY LETTER

P.S. When I reread this I suddenly realized that in war time you having to do something extraordinary to be noticed—and in many cases the extraordinary act resulted from a prior mistake that required a spectacular effort to correct. Like Snuffy Smith, who could not bail out because he forgot to bring his parachute back on board. The real hero in this case was L. P. Johnson, who had hit the bailout switch and then found out that the hysterical Smith was back in the waist with no where to go! So, L. P. and his copilot stayed with the flaming wreck and managed to drag it back for a rough landing. This probably explains why L.P. has never turned up at a reunion (to my knowledge). Probably does not want to be reminded of that miserable day and its bizarre sequel. Nobody who knew Snuffy was surprised that he got into the mess, because that was his style. A human anomaly! No less.



1944 OVEN IN WRIGHT-PAT MUSEUM
Robert Vickers, 367th bombardier, and who became a prisoner of war when his plane went down 12 Sep 44 on a mission to Ruhland, Germany, is shown above at the USAF Museum Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH. He was there to verify that the oven shown (lower left) was the one he developed in prison camp. This visit to the museum occurred in Oct 01.



367th: front, Harold Bemetz wg, Vere Fennerty ro, Lloyd Miller eng, Bill Cranford bt, George Beck, tg; back, Edward S. Gregory crew chief, Roland Lissner P, Chester Britton CP, Finley Robbins N, Frank Ballish B.

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WAR WE DID WIN

1942-1945



Oil fires at Hamburg, in a picture from 26,600 feet 20 June 1944.



The spires still stand tall on the Cologne Cathedral, under construction from the 13th to 19th centuries.



Follow the 306th down the bomb run at Peenemunde, German rocket research center.



Bridges are so hard to hit at Stralsund on the Baltic.



Pock marked Villacoublay got more 306th bombs 14 August 1943.



Schweinfurt scene showing our bomb strikes on raid of 17 August 1943.

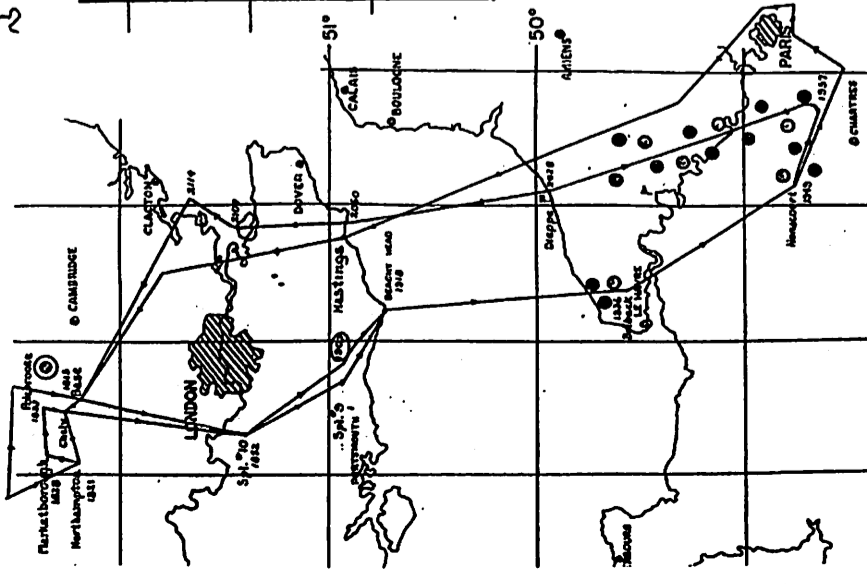
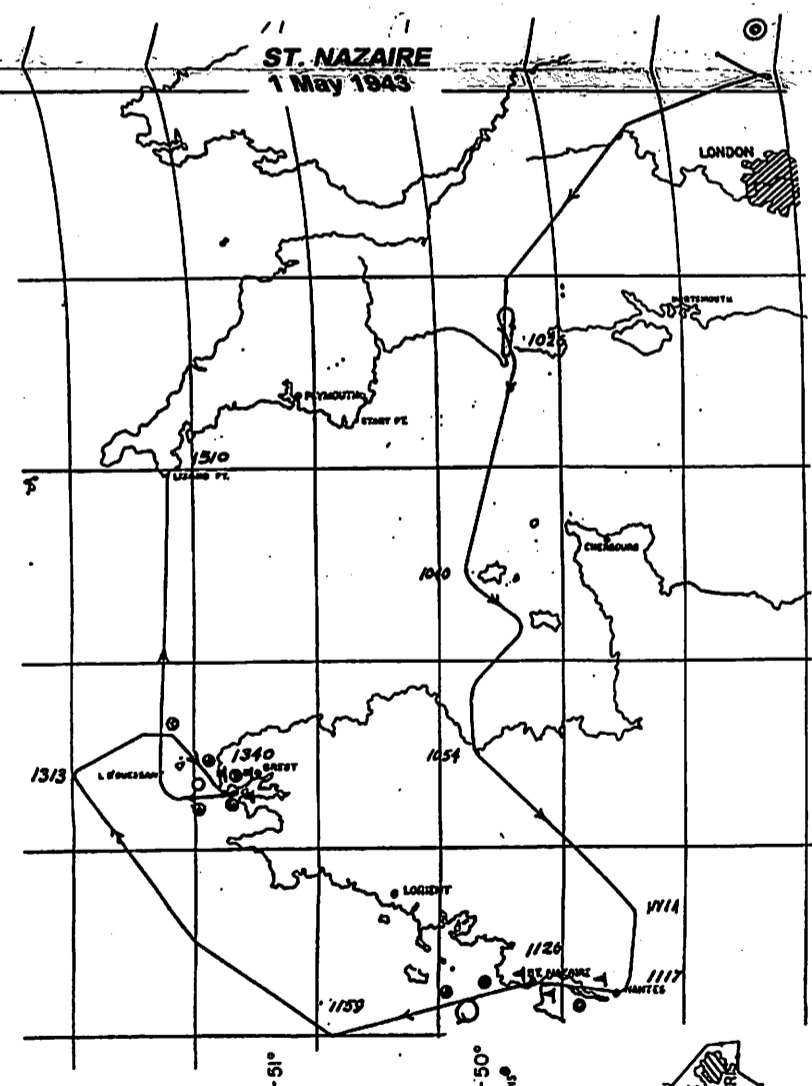
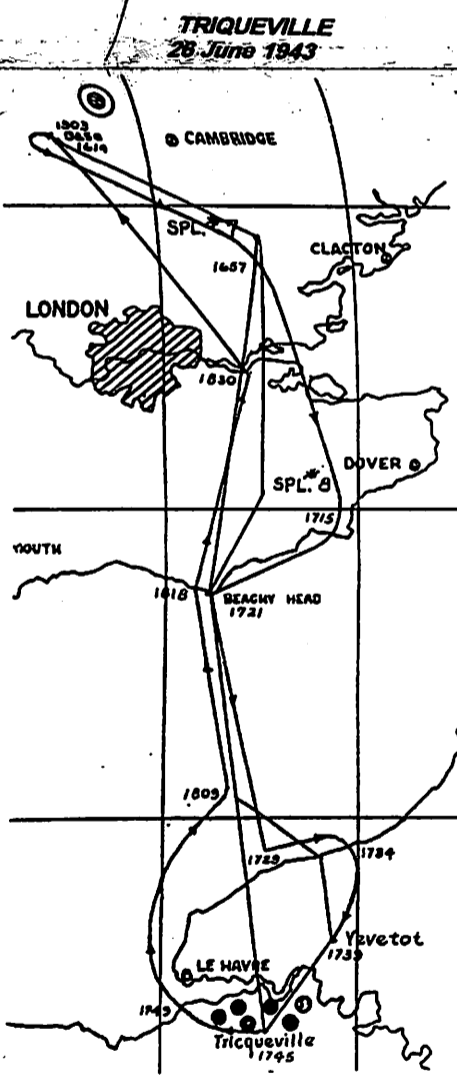
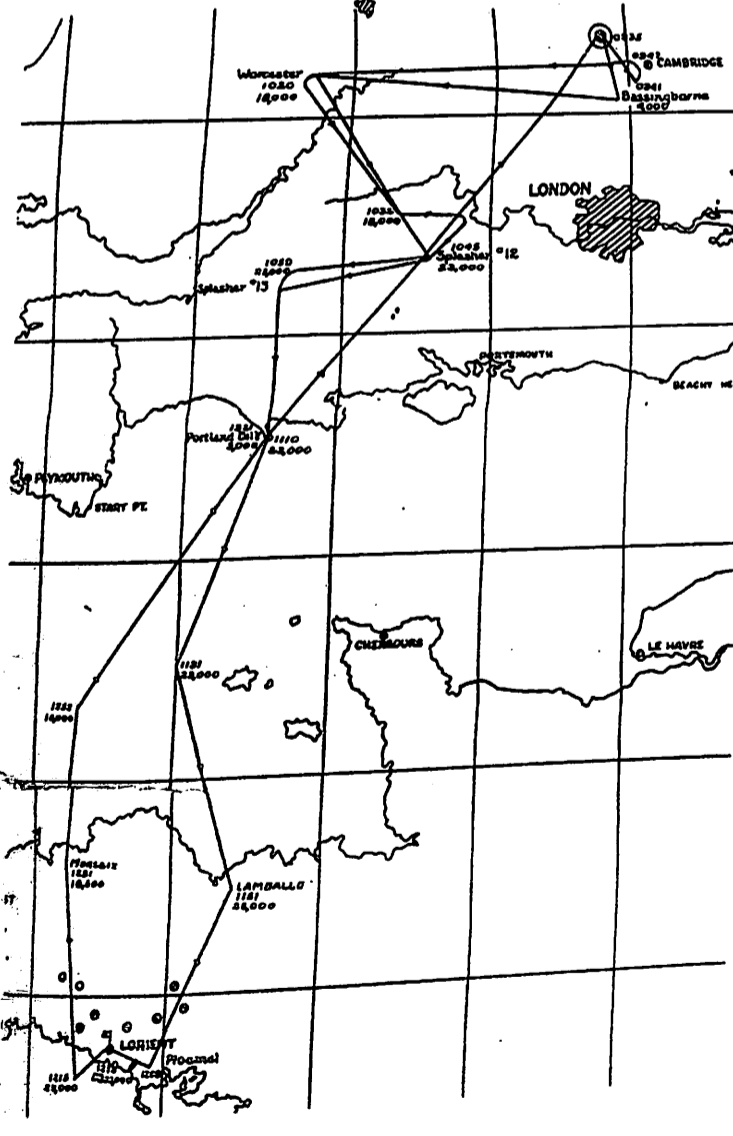
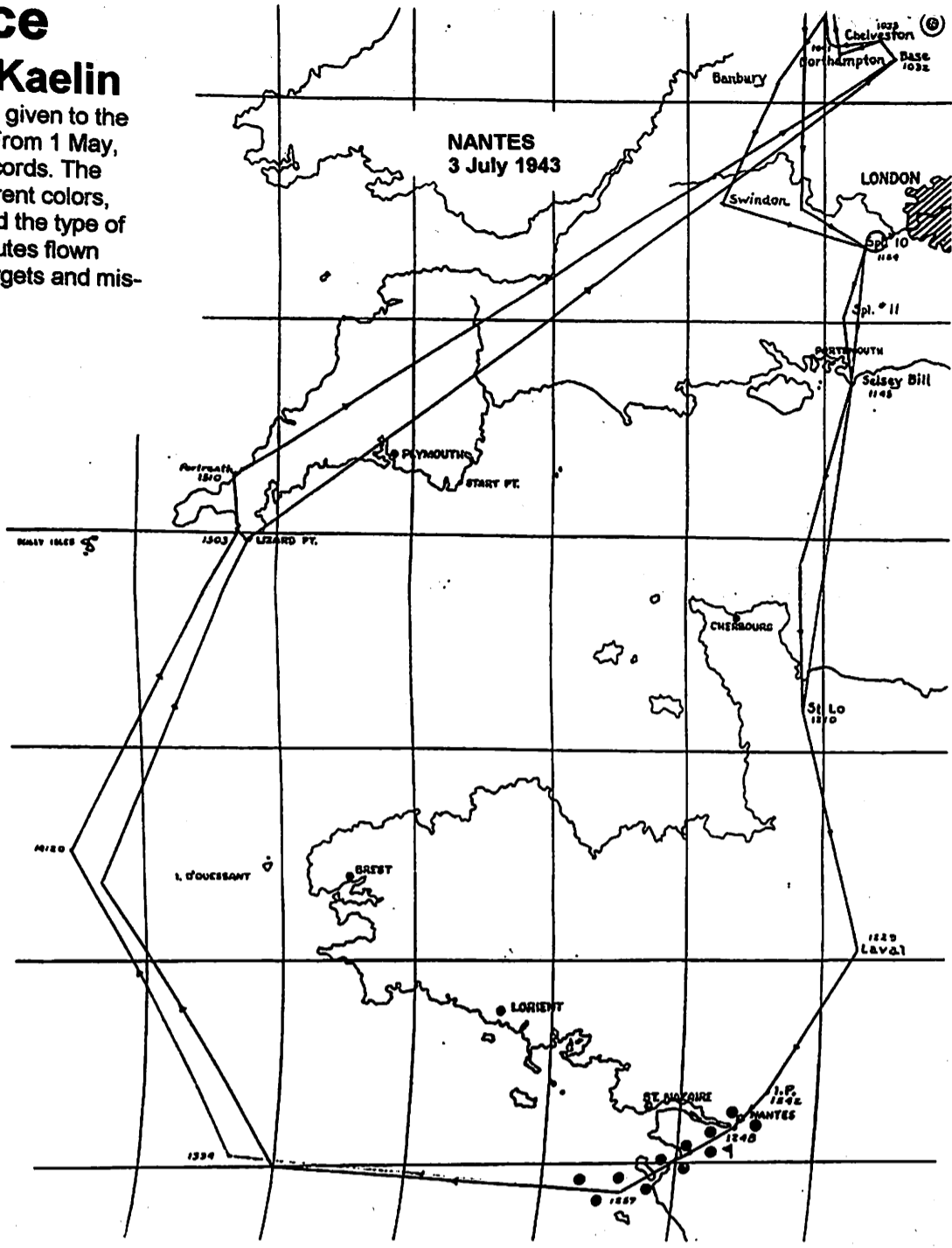
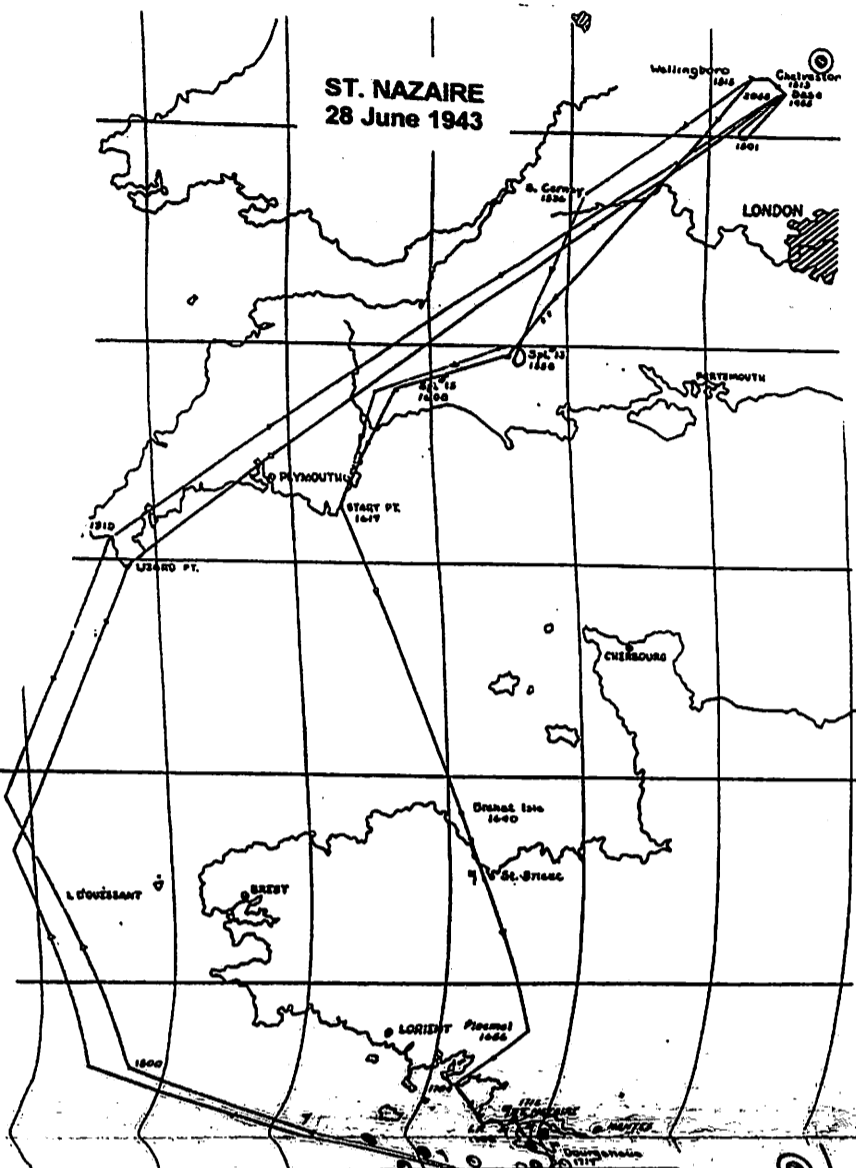


After-action photo of factories at Schweinfurt on 18 August 43.

A 1943 Mission Tour of France

Maps by Gilbert Hahn and Charles Kaelin

Maps were not a high point of the 306th mission records until the task was given to the two men named above, both serving as draftsmen in Group Operations. From 1 May, 1943 until late in 1944 these two contributed almost daily to the Group records. The original maps were in color, with the route out and the route home in different colors, and the block dots highlighting fighter attacks. The colors used determined the type of German fighter planes attacking. You can usually determine the actual routes flown by the arrows which will guide you on the outbound and return routes. Targets and mission dates are shown with each track chart.



You Can Compare Bail Outs From B-52 30 Years Later

The story of Linebacker II has been told many times, but the cold statistics conceal the human drama faced by every Bomber crew on every mission. Lt Col George Larson provided the following excerpt of an interview with Maj. John Wise, 28th Bomb Wing, to give some insight into just how harrowing they could be. All six crew members of Ash 02 survived.

"I flew my 295th combat mission on Dec. 27 1972, we were to attack the Van Dien supply area. We were Ash Cell. I flew Ash 02, aircraft # 56-05999, not a good position to be in because the North Vietnamese were using the lead aircraft to set up on the following cell's aircraft.

"At the IP, I believe there were five to six SA-2s fired at us. At bombs away, we were level for dropping our bombs, which were salvoed in 1.5 seconds. I put the B-52D into a 90-degree wingover when—wham!—we were hit on the left side [wing]. all four engines on that side were finished. There were lights blinking all over the cockpit. We were later told by USAF Intelligence that the fatal hit was from SAM Site VN 549.

"ALL the crew was OK. We had no engine power on the left side. It was 250 miles to reach friendly territory. Aircraft control was terrible, trying to make course on an exit heading to U Tapao. We were at 30,000 feet, and as the aircraft slowed, I would dive down, picking up speed, slowly climbing, but not making up all lost altitude. I could only steer a course of 190 degrees, but we were getting out of the North by using the roller coaster maneuver. However, we were slowly losing precious altitude.

We crossed the 15,000-foot altitude bailout decision point, but I looked down and there were lights. These lights were coming from a firefght below between Communist troops and US-backed forces in Laos. We cross the Mekong River at 12,000 feet, all the time keeping in constant communications with the Air Force rescue helicopters then airborne.

"We had been in the air nearly 45 minutes after being hit by the SAM and it was time to bail out. I called the gunner to go first. However, unknown to me at the time, the gunner did not go out on the first try, requiring a second attempt. The



Group Radar Specialists: front, unknown, Roger Hodson, James Henson, Donald Young and Morton Schacher; back, Sid Stenberg, Morris Kurtzer, Murray Rothstein, George Scharg, Jim Stark, Mark (?).

gunner eventually went. The navigator attempted to go, trying to blow the hatch below, but it did not open, probably jammed from the SAM hit in the left wing. The radar navigator ejected. I told the navigator to jump out the open radar navigators hatch. The electronics warfare officer then ejected.

Well the navigator's microphone pulled loose as he jumped and I did not know he had gone. I told the copilot to eject and—boom—he was gone, filling the cockpit with insulation. I kept calling the navigator. I was not going to eject

until I knew he had gone safely out of the wounded bomber.

"At 3,000 feet, I heard the Air Force rescue boys indicate that it was time for me to get out of the aircraft. Well—boom—the hatch above me was gone and then I squeezed the ejection handle. Then, up and out I went. I was uncertain if I would separate from the seat. However, once in the wind, the seat was gone and I was floating free. The chute opened with a jerk. I looked down to see me bomber hit the ground with a huge fireball, turning night into day."

306th PUBLICATIONS

Published materials now available from the Group will help you follow the 306th through the combat period 1942-45:

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Day by day diaries kept by intelligence officers, of the Squadrons' combat activities. More than 150 pages, also including plane and personnel rosters. Plastic bound

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