

306th Echoes

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Yes, we are going back to Thurleigh and England one more time.

There is still room to accommodate you and your spouse or friend, other friends, or family members. What an opportunity to show children and grandchildren where you served at least a major portion of your combat time.

Our old base is still there at Thurleigh, although a bit roughened around the edges, but recognizable. There is also the monument which was placed there in 1982 by the first large group of 306ers to return en masse to England. But it was the grand reunion of 1992 observing the 50th anniversary of the 306th arrival in the Bedfordshire hinterland that continues to mean a great deal to all of us.

There is an especially warm spot for those who found wives there and brought many of them to America. Many have come back almost annually to see family, and this is another occasion to bring children and grandchildren whose heritage includes a bit of this part of the world, and to let them see for themselves some of the many things you found in 1942 to 1945.

Now, if you want more information, or maybe already are now wanting to close the deal with our travel representatives dial 1-800/678-7800. The gracious people in Grand Rapids, MI, will be happy to fill in any infor-

mation voids you may have to give you explicit instruction as to what to do now to make this magic trip come true for you.

We are repeating the reservation coupon that appeared in the January issue, and we are looking forward to greeting you in Gatwick Airport.

For some of you who have traveled with us earlier, it is also exciting to let you know that Peter Swan, a delightful Britisher will once again be our driver and guide. He has a wealth of stories for you, and will lead us from London to Bedford, Bedford to Kenilworth, Kenilworth back to London. He handles our baggage, tells wild and wonderful tales of England's past and entertains us fully. He knows his way through the byways as well as the high speed motorways. (If you never have driven in Britain, now is not the time to start, but it is a time in our lives when we need to "leave the driving" to Peter. Come along with us and renew your recollections of one of the most special times in your life.

We are repeating the itinerary so that you will know what to expect. See you at Gatwick, etc.

Turn to page 6 for the
 England Itinerary day-by-day.

Yes, THAT'S BOB HOPE AT THURLEIGH in August 1943. Hope is still living at nearly 100, and the photographer, the 306th's own, Fran Waugh tells the editor he's now 84. But, one of the reasons for running this picture is to tempt those of you who heard Hope that afternoon 60 years back if you can find yourself or any friends to tell your spouse, your kids, or your grandkids about those "magic" days of 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945.

Sister Finds Capt. McKee

Adelaide McKee recently contacted the editor concerning her late brother, Capt. William C McKee, a 423rd pilot who was killed in a mid-air collision 22 Oct 44 on a mission to Hannover.

She had never been able to find out about him, except for people telling her that her brother was buried in The Netherlands.

We provided her with the answer, in that Capt. McKee's name is among 1700 names on the Wall of the Missing at the American cemetery in Margraten, The Netherlands. When planes flown by Harry Alyea and Joseph B. Mathis, Jr., became tangled in the formation on a day of poor visibility. The sole survivor of this was Hastings S. Key, a 423rd tail gunner, who was fished from the water off Great Yarmouth by Air-Sea Rescue. Key returned to the 306th and was later shot down and became a POW.

On Our Way to Covington Sept. 25-29

The program is ready and the reservation forms for our reunion at Covington, KY, 25-29 September 02 are to be found on page 8. Make your reservations now for the events at the Radisson Riverfront and other places in the area. Another form is provided for your hotel reservations. Note that they must be sent to different places.

If you really want to get in on one of the big events, you ought to be in the hotel at least by late Wednesday afternoon. That's because buses will pull out for the gigantic USAF Air Museum at Dayton in good season Thursday morning. Its about an hour and a half run up there.

Unfortunately our stay may not be as long as some would like, and you will just have to find time some other day and trip to see more. Even living in Dayton is no assurance that you will get to "read" your way through the entire layout (I never did it in three years and the floor space has doubled since then.)

You won't believe the B-36! It was brought in, placed on its spot with the aid of a bunch of surveyors and then the building was built around it. As the planes have grown in size, the demand for floor space has soared and now they can't get all of those big babies in out of the snow and hot sun. Without question it is the single greatest air museum in the world.

The B-17, *Shoo, Shoo, Shoo Baby*, is flyable, but after a multi-million dollar rebuilding and refurbishing of the frame, engines and all of the gauges, electronics, et al, no four-star general ranked high enough to fly it. Museum people said they had spent so much on *Shoo, Shoo*, they weren't going to let anyone try to lift it off the runways there.

It had a combat record with the 91st Bomb Group before being downed in Sweden. At some time after the war it was found, in pieces, acquired and returned to the USAF Museum where it was reassembled and put into working order over a two or three year period.

Remember, the USAF Museum is for air service craft, and includes everything from the early Wright planes to the SR-71 and later. It is an eye boggling experience to visit there. There is an eatery on the grounds where you can get lunch, but the price of your ticket includes your bus ride to Dayton and return to Covington. By paying federal taxes you fund this museum and entry is free.

That will take care of Thursday. Friday is the busy day, with a morning trip to participate in a guided tour of Cincinnati, just across the river, Covington and Newport. All of these have fascinating records as they served the intensive Ohio River traffic for years. They were also centers for a number of nefarious activities.

This latter aspect of the area will be served later, but in the afternoon there will be a trip to the Newport Aquarium, which will visually let you walk through the main tanks. Actually you will be in a tunnel of glass at the time with fish swim-

turn to page 7

Obituaries

Clements A. Amundsen, 367th crew chief and flight chief, died 29 Nov 01 in Littleton, CO, where he had retired as a U. S. Postal Service employee. He had also served during the Korean conflict. He leaves his wife, Virginia, 3c, 2gc.

Jack A. Brakebill, 367th assistant crew chief, died in Mar 9Y in Shelton, WX. He leaves his wife, Theodora.

Edgar L. Bratrud, 367th bombardier (Robert Ashley crew), died 30 Jan 02 in Medford, OR. He had joined the group 17 Nov 43 and completed 32 missions 26 Jun 44. After service he became a school employees Union official. He leaves 2s, 2gc, 1gsc

Elwood H. Brotzman, 368th tail gunner in the original group, died Oct 01 in Homestead, FL. Complications after surgery were fatal. He was MIA 21 May 43 w/Maxwell Judas on a mission to Wilhelmshaven. He was a dairy farmer until '66 in Pennsylvania. His wife, 2c, survive.

Thomas J. Costlow, 367th gunner (George Mapes crew), died 9 Jan 02 in Colorado Springs, CO, where he had lived for the past 37 years. He flew the last of 23 missions 30 Aug 44. His wife is deceased, and he leaves 3d.

Patrick Donnelly, 368th crew chief, died recently, it is reported by the Postal Service. He was a Chicago, IL, resident for many years.

David L. Ellis, 369th ball turret gunner (Lloyd Johns crew), died 25 Sep 95 in Fresno, CA. He came to combat 13 Apr 44 and finished in Sep 44. He later graduated from West Chester State Col (PA) and earned a doctorate from UCentral America. Retiring in 1984, he was chairman of driver education for the Fresno schools. He leaves his wife, Ruth.



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 Reixoux, 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.

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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 Museum can be mailed to the address shown below:

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

Craig B. Gadd, 423rd radio operator (John J. O'Brien crew), died 14 Feb 02 in Charlotte, NC. He flew 12 missions w/306th, having joined 12 Apr 44. He was a plumbing salesman for 48 years, retiring in 1988. He leaves his wife, Virginia, 3c, 7gc.

Leonard P. Ianzito, 367th navigator (William Winslow crew), died 14 Jul 2000, in Boise, ID. He arrived with the Group 23 Dec 44 and flew about 20 missions by the end of the war.

Don H. Lawley, 4th Station Complement Squadron electrical repairman, died in late '98 in Randolph, AL. His wife preceded him in death.

James B. Lenaghan, a station fireman assigned to the 4th Station Complement Squadron and then a gunner with the 367th, died 18 Jan 02 in Brunswick, OH. When he left service he was a fireman for the NASA installation in Cleveland, OH. He leaves his wife, Mary Ann, 1s, 2gc.

Joseph G. Mynatt, 369th waist gunner, died 8 Mar 02 in Knoxville, TN, where he had lived most of his life. He came to the 306th 3 Apr 42 and moved from ground duty to flying status 5 Jun 43. He became the 143rd EM to complete his combat tour 4 Jan 44. He worked for the Iron Workers Union much of his life, retiring in 1982. He leaves his second wife, Jody, 4c, 4gc.

Willis S. Nelson, 367th copilot and POW, died 20 Jun 01 in Gering, NE. His crew arrived at Thurleigh 5 Apr 44 and was interned after ditching Louis Matchka's plane off Sweden 8 May 44. This came on a mission to Berlin that cost the Group five a/c. After the war Nelson was a mortician, retiring 1 Aug 77. He leaves his wife, Dorothy.

Lawrence Romano, a postal clerk at Thurleigh, died 2 Feb 02 in Yonkers, NY. He arrived with the Group 29 Sep 43 and served there until Dec 45. For more than 31 years he was chief film editor for the US Information Agency, and is survived by his wife, Eva, 3c, 8gc.

Shirly J. Ross, 367th copilot (William Winslow crew), and pilot, died 14 Jul 01 Boise, ID. He joined the Group 23 Dec 44, flew 19 missions and was then in the Casey Jones Project. He left the 306th 2 Apr 46. He leaves his wife, Betty.

Robert C. Sage, 367th copilot (Talmadge McDonough crew), died 20 Feb 2001 in Whitehall, MT. He had attended Franklin and Marshall College. He flew 32 missions and left the Group 7 Sep 44. He leaves his wife, Dianne.

Forrest E. Sweeney, 369th bombardier (Charles Kinsey crew), died 24 Feb 02 in Houston, TX. He came to the Group 31 Oct 43 and departed 13 Aug 44, having flown 32 missions. He was a sales rep for FMC Corp. and for EG & G Rotron, retiring in '96. He leaves his wife, Frances, 3c, 8gc, 1gsc.

Jack T. Valluzzo, 369th, served as a crew chief, NCO in charge of Tech Supply, and had been with the original group. When he left in Mar 44 it was as a member of the contingent which was sent to Russia to help service US aircraft on the shuttle missions from England to Russia. He died 16 Jan 02 in Danbury, CT. An avid reunion participant, he regarded the 306th as his second family. He leaves his wife, Sue, 3s, 8gc.

Clifford R. Wolfhope, 423rd tail gunner (Winston Wood crew), died 5 Feb 02 in Salix, PA. He joined the Group 7 Jul 44 and flew his last mission 22 Feb 45, many of them as a toggeler. He leaves his wife, Audrey, 3d, 6gc.

Robert K. Zack, 423rd waist gunner



This is Robert Cardon's plane which came back to earth 28 Sep 44 18 miles Southeast of Brussels, Belgium. The area had been liberated. Note that the engine to the right of the nose was feathered at the time of the landing, while the #3 and #4 props were turning. This was a late model plane, 43-37967.

A Memoir of 28/9/44

Lt. R. L. Cardon's a/c was hit by flak over the target and J1 engine was knocked out along with the entire oxygen system, forcing them to a lower altitude.

Later when crossing the Rhine River the #2 engine was knocked out, while headed for Brussels #3 went out, and then the pilot ordered all except the co-pilot to bail out.

The men jumped at 1445 hours over Tourinne, Belgium, and were taken to Ottignes, except for the navigator who landed near Mont-St Guibert where the entire crew was later assembled. The pilot and co-pilot landed the plane in a pasture and all equipment was taken out (Gee, IFF, maps, astro compass, etc).

Free French forces were later and they contacted USAAF people. A full report was made to RCAF intelligence personnel

(Ferman Millette crew), died 16 Sep 01 in Hamburg, IA. Wounded on his second mission, he returned to combat after a long pause and completed 29 missions.

He was a longtime farmer. He leaves his wife, Marjorie, 3c, 7gc, 8gsc.

Colvin M. Cooley, 423rd crew chief, died 7 Mar 02 in Colorado Springs, CO. He was in the USAF for 27 years, retiring in 1969, and also served in Korea and Vietnam. He leaves his wife, Marlys, 5c, 6gc, 5gsc.

LTC David L. Claytor, 367th bombardier (C. Oliver Smith crew), died 12 Mar 02 in Colorado Springs, CO. He was a USAF retiree. Claytor joined the 306th 18 Nov 43 He leaves his wife, Bette.

Charles K. Kirby was with the original group as an engineer for Earl Tunnell's

at Bauvavechauts. From there a C-47 brought them to Thurleigh, except for the engineer and ball turret. They are now at the RCAF 52nd Mobile Field Hospital, for treatment, the engineering has a fractured ankle and the ball turret gunner sprained or fractured his neck. A doctor stated they would be ready to return to combat in six weeks. Air evac of these two is expected 2 Oct 44.

— Lt. W. A. Leatherman,
306th Intelligence 30 Sep 44

Cardon's crew included: Robert L. Cardon, P John K. Fields, CP William B. Kaufman, N Richard Georgi, B Edward S. Fox, ro John Dolinich, eng Harold Schrecongost, bt Julius Coleman, wg Vernon Blucher, tg

crew, flew at least six missions and was MIA 6 Mar 43 at Lorient, and was a POW for 26 month. After service he graduated from Syracuse University, was in the transportation business, retiring as vice president of Freight Rate Service. He leaves 2s, 7gc.

Frank W. Wiegartner, chief clerk of the motor pool at Thurleigh, is believed to have died at Beachwood, NJ.

306th Family

Vernita Brandstrom, wife of Raymond B. Brandstrom, 423rd pilot, died 18 Jul 01 in Stanwood, WA. She leaves 4c, 4gc.

Mrs. L. Edmond Wagner, widow of Lawrenceville, IL, died in Dec 97. He had died 14 May 95 and had been a 368th waist gunner. She leaves 2c, 2gc.

Order Your Book NOW!

Our supply of the big book of Echoes, 1975 through 2000 is now half gone and a bit more. You ought to ensure that you will have it on your coffee table to boggle the minds of friends. It is colorful, voluminous and indexed. What more do you need? It is 400 pages, it weighs 4 pounds nine ounces, it costs only \$55.

One of our fellow bomb groups is trying to do the same thing, but is having trouble selling enough to get it on to the presses and into the bindery.

Ah, there's the rub and all the glue that holds it together. We found that with a book the size of a large mail order catalog, that we had to have a bindery order of 500 copies. That was so the bindery could make its payroll, and it was the minimum we could order. So we ordered 500 copies, and now we are down to about 200 copies waiting for your order.

The bindery process normally carries the assembled pages through a machine where the inside is mated to the cover with more than a small dollop of glue. Once the glue has brought the pages and cover together, a clamp holds it tightly,

and then the "new" book enjoys a ride of about 80 feet while the glue dries and it is already to be trimmed on three sides with a single stroke of three ultra sharp knife blades.

But our book was not ready to be turned over to the cutting machine. The process stopped at that point and the books were carefully stacked up from Wednesday morning to Friday afternoon while the glue dried. Without that pause, the action of the trimmer would have made the cover slide out of position. Once the glue had set the books were put back in the machine and trimmed.

The next day they left for the Minneapolis reunion and their introduction to the 306th family.

Get your \$55 check made out to the 306th Bomb Group Assn to Russ Strong, 5323 Cheval Place Charlotte, NC 28205. If he is not off to our reunion or some such frippery he will have it in the mail in its own specially made box the next day. Your one check will pay for the printing, all that glue and trimming, as well as the packing and postage.

Whose Been Telling the Story Of the 306th? Read Below

We think there is a good accumulation of writing about the 306th, its men, its air-planes, its missions, and its sacrifices.

There have been radio and TV programs about our group, and above all a movie featuring the 918th(!) Bomb Group and which includes several scenes which are straight out of 306th history. (Either divide 918 by 3 or multiply 306 by 3, and you will know why "12 O'Clock High" has its base in the 306th.) And to extend this comment a bit further, the scenes in the book and movie are really to be found for the most part in the activities of those first four bomb groups which came to England to help carry the war to the Germans who by then held much of the European people under its thrall.

An old English professor of mine told me that the most interesting time in which he taught college rhetoric or English was in about the first five years after the end of WWII. As opposed to those young men from 1925 to 1945, this new group of students (particularly the males) had been some place and had seen and/or participated in events which were engraved on their brains and which had a bearing on the future of the world.

Now we were principally that group, although some of the early ones were through college by the time they got into service, but the majority of us were either in college when called to active duty, or were of the same age group.

A number of you, both those still on our roster and some who have departed, have been so kind as to send me copies of your writing efforts. I may not have kept them all, which accounts for any gaps in this display, and although I am a pretty good file clerk, I must not have been able to retrieve things that are really in my possession.

But, enough of that for now. I have compiled a listing of writings of and or about the 306th and its personnel. They are in some semblance of alphabetical order, and I have appended some bibliographical data about these items.

(Benson, Earl, 367th ball turret gunner). "Out of the Turret and into Hell" by V. Elaine Benson (his wife). The story of Earl's early life, his brief combat experience and his POW period. Victoria BC, Canada, 2001. 227pp, illustrated paperbound book.

Bevan, Donald, 423rd gunner and POW. *Stalag 17*, a very successful stage play and basis for a long running TV drama. 1951.

Bove, Arthur, for six months in 1945 a clerk in public information. *First Over Germany*. San Angelo, TX, Newsfoto Publishing, 1946. Collection of pictures and news stories. 227pp. Hardcover book.

(Clifton, Raymond C. 368th engineer, KIA). *Among Pioneers, R. C's Service in England*. By Raymond C. Ennis, 29 pp, illustrated typescript.

Denny, Robert R. *Aces, A Novel of WWII*. 368th pilot. New York, Donald I Fine, Inc., 1990. 294pp. Hardcover book.

Aces. New York, Dell Publishing, 1992. 349pp. Paperback.

Night Run, A novel in honor of the famed Night Witches of WWII. New York, Donald I Fine, Inc. 387pp. Hardcover.

Dowden, Leland A, 369 bombardier. *One and One-Half Missions*. San Mateo, CA, Western Book, 1989.

Based mainly on his experiences in German military hospitals. 234pp. Hardcover book.

Eldredge, Don H., 367th pilot. *World War II Experiences*. 1997. 91pp, Illustrated. Hardcover.

Hallock, Joseph T., *The Saga of Hallock*, 423rd bombardier. 1944. 44pp. Typescript.

Young Man Behind Plexiglas, profile by Brendan Gill. New York, the New Yorker, August 12, 1944. 9pp. Magazine.

Hermann, Robert, 367th bombardier.

Diary. 6 December 1941-5 March 1943. Typescript.

Lawrence, Edward L, *Reflections of a Combat Flyer*. 423rd navigator. 1991. 40pp. Typescript.

McMahan, Albert, 369th tail gunner. *Diary 1940-45*. 35pp. Typescript.

Means, Louis S. 367th navigator. *The Quality of Mercy*. Aptos, CA, The Pelican Press, 1996. 300pp. Paperback. His experiences as an amputee in German hospitals.

Moriarty, Ernest G. 368th engineer. *One Day Into Twenty-three*, 1987. 164pp. His story of evasion in France. Typescript.

(Oliver, Carey, 367th pilot). *The Crash of a Flying Fortress*, 22 February 1944. by Michael Gudelhofen. Bonn, Germany. 58pp. Typescript.

Olsen, Benjamin L. *A Very Fortunate Crew*. 368th pilot. 1989. 59pp. Typescript.

Robison, Brice, 368th tail gunner and POW. *Raus Mit Du* (Make It Snappy). His experiences in 22 months as a POW. New York, Vantage Press, 2000. 438pp. Paperbound.

Shuller, Thurman, Group surgeon. *Diary*, 1942-46. 510pp. Typescript.

Smith, Maynard H. *New Yorker magazine*. 423rd ball turret gunner. 18 September 1943.

Strong, Russell A. *Combat Navigator*. 1948. 103pp. Typescript.

First Over Germany, A Narrative History of the 306th Bomb Group. Winston-Salem, NC. Hunter Publishing Co. 1982. 328pp and indexes. Hardcover. *First Over Germany, Revised edition*. 1991

BOOKS ABOUT THE 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

First Over Germany, by Arthur Bove, 1946.

First Over Germany, A Narrative History. 1982; revised edition, 1991.

The Squadron Diaries, edited by Russell A. Strong. Charlotte, NC. 306th Bomb Group Assn. Authored by respective squadron intelligence officers. Typescript, spiralbound.

306th Echoes, 1975-2000., created and edited by Russell A. Strong. Charlotte, NC, 306th Bomb Group Assn. 2001. 400pp. Paperbound.

306th Echoes was published on microfiche, 1975-1994.

The Men of the 306th. 16mm film from 3x5 cards two sides, copied onto film.

ADDENDUM

Elvin Courtright's Military Experience, compiled by Grant Courtright. 2000. 22p illus. Typescript. Mission by mission compilation of data.

Saturday Evening Post, magazine: "We Bomb the U-Boat Pens", by Lt. Arthur Gordon, 27 Mar 1943, pp 12-13, 58.

24 Apr 1943 pp 14-15+. "Clay Pigeon Squadron" by Jack Alexander.

Your Help Welcomed!

This is probably an incomplete listing of the Bibliography of the 306th, and it is hoped that if you have material which should be included that you contact the editor of *Echoes*.

1) Send a copy of your publication, or typescript, for inclusion in the 306th collection, which will ultimately be placed in the Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum at Savannah, GA. Or, you may send him the bibliographical information in the style shown above.

2) If only one copy of your manuscript exists, it would be appreciated if you would loan it, forwarding it to the editor, who will then make a copy for the 306th collection and return your original to you, within a few days.



Bob Hermann during his residency in Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Poland.

Through the Eye of the Needle

#6 of 10

Bob Hermann was the bombardier on John Ryan's crew, and a native of the Chicago area. Bob, now deceased, gives a rather sketchy account of his capture, and then through German hands to Stalag Luft III, where he stayed for two years. Others to be featured in coming issues of *Echoes* are John L. Ryan, Robert W. Seelos, Myron Sorden and James V. Vaughtner. Used by permission of the Stalag Luft III organization per Gen. Albert F. Clark.

'Don't Drink the Water', German Advice to Bob Hermann

By Bob Hermann

The raid on the submarine base at Lorient on Mar 6, 1943, started on a note of exhilaration for me. The 306th was the lead group and we were the lead plane of the low squadron. It was quite a thrill to see the whole 8th Air Force spread out behind us as we swept in low over the Scilly Isles and began our climb to our bombing altitude. But that was early in the day.

We were coming off the bomb run when we were hit by A.A. fire and the #3 engine was on fire. We were about 40 miles out to sea when it was obvious that the extinguisher would not kill the fire—our cowling was falling off and the hub was white hot. We made a turn to return to France. Some of our planes continued to fly with us until they saw that we were not going to return to England on that day.

I had to knock out the lower escape door. I waited until I saw land below us and out I went in a tuck position. The rest of the crew followed. We were probably about 3,000 feet when I went out. I must have opened my chute at about 300 mph, and I was swinging wildly from side to side under the nylon canopy. The chute would collapse at the top of one horizontal swing, and then do the same on the other. Perhaps I was lucky, because the Germans were shooting at us from the ground—there were other chutes all around me. No one was hit by the rifle fire, but it was some new experience to hear the bullets whizzing by.

When I hit the ground I did a football roll block and let the parachute blow away. I had an English chute that day, which gave an immediate release after you turned the button and hit it with your fist. I was on my feet very quickly and started looking for the best way to go. What I saw was a very young German soldier pointing his rifle at me—he must have been all of 17 years old.

Up went my hands—my war was over. Eventually, seven of us were taken by a school bus to a nearby fighter aircraft field. The French people looked so sad as they watched us leave; I was pretty happy myself, simply to have survived.

The German officer at the air base told me in halting English "You no try to escape—we shoot you."

On the trip to Paris the next day, our bombardier Jim Laine and myself were in a compartment with two German guards when a German oberlieutenant from a fighter group came in to give us the universal tourist's advice. He presented us with a bottle of water and warned us not to drink any water in France, but, use this bottled water from Germany.

I had a tense moment on the train trip. We were delayed for what seemed to me like hours at the train station in Rouen. I knew the rail yard there was going to be a target at any moment. I had attended a briefing for it only a few days earlier, and the mission had been scrubbed because of weather. Luck was with me. Our bombers didn't get back to Rouen for another week, after we were long gone from there.

My capture was really non-eventful. It seems that I had been prepared for this since my early youth. Maybe because of all my previous military training—two years ROTC and one year CMTC—I knew that some day this would happen.

Solitary confinement at Dulag Luft Interrogation Center north of Frankfurt was an unpleasant experience—no cigarettes and limited amount of food so that the interrogation officers would have it easier to get whatever information we had.

My pilot, John Ryan, had not been captured and the Germans seemed extremely curious about him. I stuck it out and never said a damned thing. Finally, a German oberlieutenant, who said his name was George Hermann and could possibly be a kinsman, came in to interview me. It was the same old BS that you expected—plenty of American cigarettes and a walk in the field outside. And again, "Why were you fighting Germany?"

I told him ordinary lieutenants don't know the answer to these profound questions. It was back to solitary.

Upon release from solitary, I was shipped to Offlag XXIB at Schuben in Poland, and eventually to Stalag Luft III.

Dues? No! Gifts? Yes!

It does take money to keep the 306th Association flying. Those who are able are asked to make an annual contribution to keep everything running smoothly. No one is dropped from the mailing list for non-payment! Your gift is tax deductible.

Please accept my gift to the 306th BG Association: \$ _____

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306th Bomb Group Association
P.O. Box 13362
Des Moines, IA 50310

DATE _____

A Rough Road to Berlin Gets Documentation

Large Paper Trail Follows Loss of 9 Planes at Ruhland

The binder is thick for the 12 Sep 44 mission to Ruhland, a synthetic fuel refinery a bit to the southeast of Berlin. It was not unfamiliar to the 306th, as we bombed there several times. But never did the losses run as high as on this date.

Those in the van had cause to wonder about the navigation today, or more particularly the route planned for us. It appeared to bring the column of 59 40th Combat Wing planes too close to the flak guns of Berlin, and throwing one stream of FW-190s down through the 306th formation with disastrous results for the planes from Thurlough.

Weather was not a factor in the mission, as shown by the map, a feature that did not often appear in the National Archives collection of 306th mission histories.

But here we are showing two items that help tell the story of a hot day over the continent. As you count down the one ladder, you will count eight planes missing in action out of 36 dispatched and one plane that staggered back to Manston's expansive runway system.

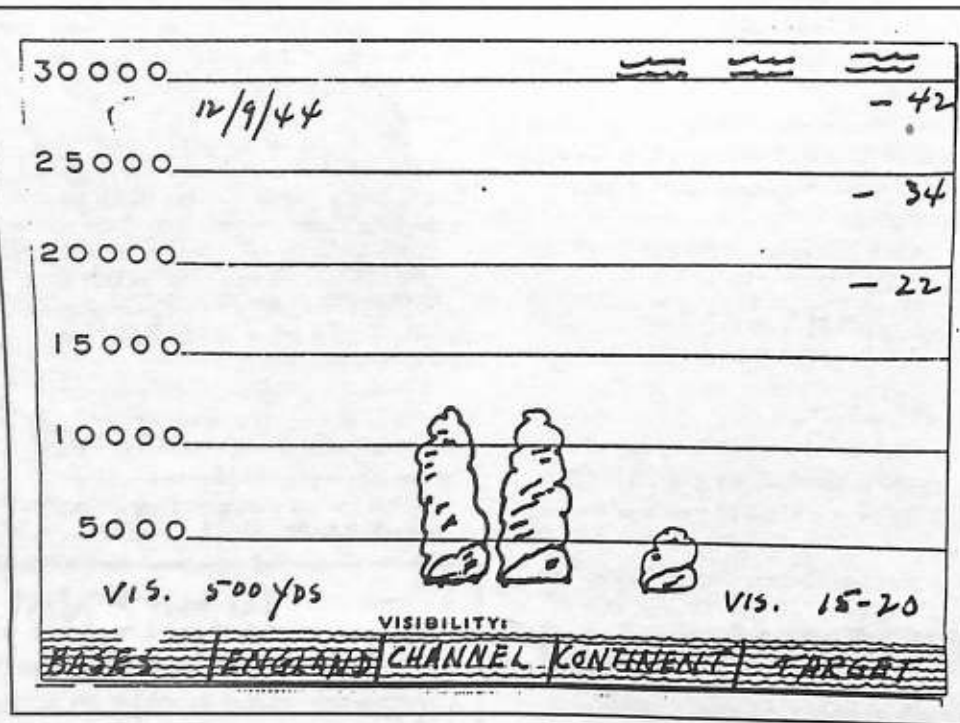
Gordon Donkin and his crew got to the edge of the strip, at which time 093 quit after six and one-half months as a Clay Pigeon plane. (A picture of the burned hulk of this A/C and a chart of its injured crew members appears in Echoes Jan 2000, pg 4). Its worth another look.)

Finally, we have included the formation chart for the day. This was on a clipboard in the lap of the Group Air commander, LTC John Chalfant, on this occasion. Perhaps you can translate his notes, and observe what his concerns were as he began the mission planning to bring all 36 planes home again. But, it was basically 26 who came back, while Donkin's plane was alone after being plastered hard by flak and fighters.

Roger Freeman's summary in "The Mighty Eighth War Diary" shows, 888 bombers up for this mission, escorted by 652 fighters, two-thirds P-51s. By Air Divisions the bomber count was 299-1AD, 348-3AD and 241-2AD(B-24s). Each Combat wing had a different target for its planes, with eight out of 20 primary targets being hit. Our planes knocked down 54 German planes, with 2 damaged and 8 probables. The GAF, little and unfriendly, were credited with 26 kills and 31 damaged. By divisions were lost 19-1AD, 4-2AD, 12-3AD. The First Division had 8 KIA, 11 wounded and 171 MIA.

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357, with 170 Life Members, Still belong to 8th AFHS

When asked recently to verify the addresses and names of 306th people belonging to the 8th AF Historical Society, it was noted that there were 358 on the list. After finding one deceased on the 8th roster, that made our total number 357. Of these 357, 170 are life members. The very earliest name on the list for the 306th is Ed Dinstbier, 423rd, who has the lowest membership number of 83. He is a life long resident of St. Johns, MI, and is one who made it to many of the early reunions. Others early in the membership are;

Russ Strong 367, 115; Bill Carlile GP, 138; George Roberts 367, 218; Dr. Albert Finck 367, 334; Delmar Corderman 368, 369; Joe Uhor 423, 366; Bill Houlihan 367, 373; Ralph Bordner 368, 414; Oscar Bourn 368, 416; Bill Flanagan 369, 457, and Bennie Jefferies 368, 488. Its a lot of work to check the list (and was a great deal more when we had 600 members), but it lets us look at the entire list and perhaps find a 306'er who has slipped through our list. And we've found a few who cannot explain why they are on the list at all for the 306th.

Aircraft Combat Mission Report

Serial #	Flak	20MM
367th		
42-32099	Sev	Sev
42-102969		MIA
42-38042		MIA
42-31065		MIA
42-31726	Sli	
42-10/063	Sli	
42-97278		MIA
43-37715	0	
42-97133	0	
368th		
42-97368		MIA
42-38093	Salvaged	
42-31690		MIA
42-37Y43	0	
42-97796	0	
43-37675	0	
42-38148	Aborted	
42-102512	Sli	
42-31454	0	
43-37633	Sev	
369th		
44-8124	Sli	
42-97574	0	
43-37619	Sli	
42-97181	0	
42-97185	0	
42-97181	0	
42-97301	0	
42-38362	0	
43-38287	0	
43-38296	0	
43-37616	0	
43-37967	Sev	
42-31444	0	
44-6012	0	
43-37598	Sev	
43-38153	Sev	
42-102503		MIA
42-97180		MIA
Dispatched	36	
Aborted	1	
Missing	8	
Damaged	10	
Severe	5	
Slight	5	
Flak	10	
20 MM	1	
Salvaged	1	

Jumping out of A High Rise May Be Your Ticket To Further Life

Since 11 Sep 01 John Rivers' Executive-Chute Co. has sold thousands of small, lightweight parachutes designed for jumping out of buildings in an emergency. The idea he once thought wouldn't be commercially viable is now expected to generate \$7 million to \$9 million in annual sales for his Three Rivers, MI, company. Rivers says he sells the Israeli-made chutes primarily to individuals who live or work in high-rise buildings. The parachutes are modified safety reserve chutes commonly used by paragliders and skydivers. The modifications allow the user to automatically deploy the parachute by attaching a rip-cord like device to something in the building before jumping. Sold individually, the Executive-Chute retails for up to \$995. Large orders can be had at discounts of 20 per cent or more.

8th Veterans Visit Schweinfurt Memorial

By George Roberts

The Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association (SSMA), a veterans association formed by survivors of the October 14, 1943 mission to Schweinfurt, held its 26th reunion in that city 1-16 of October 2001. Hosts for this reunion were the German flak helpers who manned the ack-ack guns during the historic raid on the ball bearing works. They were 15-16 year old students at that time and were released from school during air raids. On that fateful day the Eighth Air Force dispatched 317 B17's to Schweinfurt, but due to the bad weather and some abortions only 257 planes entered German air space. Of this number, 60 were shot down and another five crashed in Britain. Twenty-nine of the missing bombers were from the 40th Combat Wing composed of the 92nd, 305th and 306th Bomb Groups. Due to the high percentage of losses, Historians refer to mission 115 on October 14th as "Black Thursday".

Col. Bud Peaslee, task force commander, and several other survivors of the mission formed SSMA in 1973 and they began to hold reunions on alternate years. Members observed the 50th anniversary of the raid on October 14, 1993 in New Orleans, Louisiana. At this gathering several citizens from Schweinfurt attended and gave vivid pictures of events on the ground. Members were amazed to learn that these Germans had information on the times bombers were shot down, where they crashed, the fate of the crews and in some cases the fighter pilot that made the kill. Additionally, they could recall many of the bomb hits and the effectiveness of the attacks.

Members of SSMA and these former flak helpers began a friendship that was to grow with each passing year. One of the Germans, Georg Schafer, a direct descendant of the owner of a ball bearing plant was a 16-year-old student who was assigned as a flak helper. Schafer also attended the reunion the following year in Las Vegas and stated that many of the flak helpers proposed erecting a memorial to those on both sides who were killed during the mission. SSMA members heartily endorsed the idea and it became a joint project. It was erected in downtown Schweinfurt and is inscribed in German and English "In memory of Citizens of Schweinfurt and Airmen of the 8th U.S. Air Force and the German Luftwaffe who lost their lives in Mission 115, October 14, 1943, known to those who were there as BLACK THURSDAY" The memorial was dedicated in June of 1998 with twenty five members of SSMA participating in the event.

In October 1999 over 20 former flak helpers and wives led by the Lord Mayor of the city of Schweinfurt attended the SSMA reunion held at the 8th AF Museum in Savannah and many applied for associate membership in the organization. They also expressed an interest in holding a future reunion in Schweinfurt. During the reunion held in October 2000 in Reno, Nevada, SSMA members voted unanimously to select Schweinfurt as the host city for the reunion in 2001. Mr. Schafer agreed to be the reunion chairman. By September 1st of that year 80 members from the US indicated that they were going to attend. After the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, there was doubt if the event could go on due to the travel restrictions and a general fear of flying. The flak helpers appealed to the membership that the city of Schweinfurt had made everything ready and hoped we could go on as planned. Members were canvassed and approximately 60 confirmed their intent to attend. Sixty-two eventually made the trip in spite of the travel and security concerns. The city of Schweinfurt and the flak helpers in particular went all out to insure that we were glad we came.

A team of our hosts met us at the arriving terminals at Frankfurt and drove us to the Panorama Hotel in downtown Schweinfurt via two chartered busses. After a few hours of rest we attended a gala reception at the Brauhaus, a large cafe and meeting room in the town center. Flak helpers were already in place at the many tables to greet and meet with the members from the US. After much talk, a good meal and many laughs, Schafer



Standing before the dramatic Schweinfurt Memorial, placed there in honor of the German flak helpers who were defending their native city and the 8th Air Force crewmen who lost their lives 14 October 1943 are the officers of the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association.

This picture was taken at the 14 October 2001 reunion held in Schweinfurt, and includes, left to right: Bud Klint, 303rd Bomb Group, vice president; George G. Roberts, 367th Squadron radio operator, treasurer, and John P. Noack, 369th Squadron pilot, president.

gave an outline of things to come and we learned that we were in for a memorable occasion.

The next morning we boarded busses with our friends to tour the beautiful Rhon Mountains. We stopped to visit local wood carving shops, nature trails and then on to the former Iron Curtain which divided East and West Germany during the cold war. Members of the Schweinfurt police escorted us up to the old gate, watchtower and concrete barriers that prevented motorized vehicles from crossing into the West. Hundreds of visitors daily still visit this former barrier. We had a delicious meal at a great farmhouse and then visited an old fortified church with the watchtowers and walls, which gave it the appearance of a city in itself. Germans in all the small villages welcomed us and made us feel like honored guests. By nightfall we stopped at a large restaurant and again it was a delicious meal at a large cellar type restaurant complete with live music, food and drinks. It was after nine o'clock when our tired but happy group returned to the hotel for the night.

The next morning, Saturday, October 13, we visited the Georg Schafer Museum, which was named for and partially funded by the father of our host. This was a very modern building constructed of Italian marble and its unique design enabled visitors to view the city from its glass sides. The paintings were all masterworks that had been collected from all over Europe. Some of them had been stored in secret caves during the war. That evening we attended a Schweinfurt Luau in a large church hall. The German hosts invited American military members who were stationed at the Schweinfurt garrison to sit at our tables. We were advised at the start of the meal that the cook had accidentally dropped the plates and we would be required to eat directly from the table. This meal could only be served in Schweinfurt as it consisted of seven courses of the various sections of schwein (pig), sauerkraut, and pumpnickel bread. After sampling each section the remains were scraped up and a new part of the pig was served. Wine, beer and non alcoholic drinks accompanied the meal and waiters refilled the glasses as soon as they became empty. German and American music was provided by two of the flak helpers and everyone joined in singing old favorites. "Lili Marlene" was a crowd favorite, along with

the closing song, "God Bless America".

On Sunday, October 14 we attended an ecumenical service at beautiful St Johannis Lutheran Church, which had received only minor damage during the Black Thursday mission. The service was conducted in German and English and programs provided the necessary translation. From the church we walked to the memorial which is placed directly next to the World War II bunker that housed the flak helpers. Wreaths were placed in memory of the German and American military who had lost their lives fighting for their country and the other for the citizens of Schweinfurt who were killed during the raid. The Lord Mayor of Schweinfurt, now a member of SSMA and the German flak helpers gave short talks. From the memorial we went to a large school hall set up with tables. Our host, Georg Schafer, made the introductions and reminded everyone that our theme today is "Once we were enemies by conditions, now we are friends by choice." I gave a short description

of the air battle in 1943, one of the flak helpers described the action from the flak batteries and a citizen of the city describe conditions in the town at the time of the raid. The final talk was given by the Lord Mayor who reminded all of us that this reunion proves that despite the past war between Germany and the United States we can live in peace and show the world and particularly the young people how it can be done. She was most grateful to the SSMA members who came to the reunion despite the terrorist's attacks and said that this demonstrates that we would not let the terrorist of today dictate how we will live. The 15-16 year old members of the school band then played the national anthems of Germany and the United States and then we sat down to another delicious meal. No events were scheduled for that evening, but many of us were welcomed into the homes of Schweinfurt citizens where we relaxed, talked of our wartime experiences and enjoyed their warm hospitality.

On Monday, October 15th we began with a visit to the ball bearing plants, which are today a large part of the Schweinfurt industrial complex. They are very modern and turn out the latest types of bearings for civilian and military vehicles throughout the world. That afternoon we held our business meeting, electing officers for the coming year and selecting Ft. Worth, Texas, as the site for the 2002 reunion. Seattle, Washington, is to be the location in 2003. Our farewell get together was held that evening in the historic city hall (Rathaus). This magnificent building several hundred years old is very ornate and houses all of the city offices and meeting rooms. The Lord Mayor who presided over this event thanked the members of SSMA for sparing this building in 1943. A delicious meal was served, music was provided for those wishing to dance and we mingled one last time with those who made us feel so welcome. We thanked the city of Schweinfurt for their hospitality and our hosts for their efforts in putting on an all-star reunion. Good byes were said and promises of "We will see you in Ft. Worth" echoed across each table.

The following day, Tuesday, October 16, we boarded the bus for the Frankfurt terminal and return to the United States. We were so thankful we made the trip and all of us agreed that this was the best reunion ever for SSMA.

Today, SSMA has 340 members; about 200 of this number flew the mission on October 14, 1943. Remaining members are associates (83) or widows (57) of former members who died. Twenty of our associate members reside in Germany and most of these were flak helpers. John Noack of the 369th Squadron was president in 2001. This writer, formerly of the 367th Squadron is currently serving his tenth year as treasurer.

306th PUBLICATIONS

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

Combat Diaries of the 306th Squadrons

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

Men of the 306th, on microfilm

A roll of 16mm film duplicates the 306th card file of nearly 9,000 men, including data extracted from various 306th records, and personal data on some of the men. 1995 edition.

Mission Reports

Copies of official reports on each mission you flew, including intelligence summaries, track charts, formations and crew interrogation reports. Data for some missions may be missing from the files. Three missions for \$5.

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369th Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
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Make check payable to: 306th Bomb Group Association (prices quoted include postage and packaging charge)

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Day by Day Through 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 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.

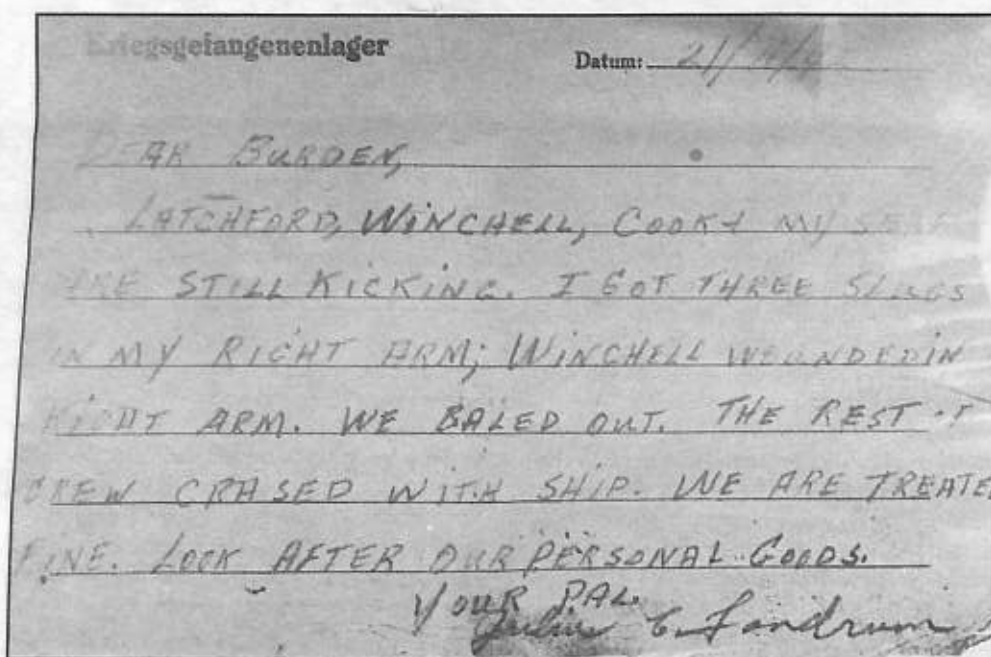
PRICING

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 throughout 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



One Living From Adams' Crew 8 Nov 42

Julius C. Landrum, a retired corporate attorney living in Fort Worth, TX, is the only person now living from Richard Adams' 369th crew which went down in a flurry of fighter planes on 8 Nov 42.

As so often happened, crew members from one end of the plane survived, and those in the other end perished. It was the front group in this plane which made it out and to safety.

Two weeks after they went down Landrum was writing to his friend, Abraham Burden, about what had happened, as you can read above. But, Burden may not have gotten the card until after the war because his plane was shot down 23 Nov, just two days after Landrum wrote him. There is no indication as to how long it took the card to make it back to Thurleigh.

Landrum still remembers the day and the rest of his crew members. Combat was a new experience for the 306th, having flown their first mission on 9 Oct 42 and the Group's second venture was 7 Nov 42. From then on they came thick and fast, and our losses ran high.

Back to Landrum's crew, Adams evaded capture and eventually made his way back to England. And Adams was married to John Saunders' sister. Saunders was one of the enlisted men who died in the plane. Landrum in turn, was married for many years to the sister of John Latchford, the crew's bombardier, who was a survivor.

Carl Cook was the copilot that day, and he got out of the plane after being a bit slow in moving to an exit, reported Adams. Cook died 8 Apr 74. Latchford died 5 Nov 75 and Adams, who had divorced Sally Saunders in the interim, died 5 Apr 71.

Besides Saunders, others lost out of the back of the ship were Jim McCloy, radio operator, who was captured but died the next day; Peter Greyno, Anthony J. Lacek and Frank M. Zeck.

Escaping the stricken craft was Ford H. Winchell, the tail gunner, who ended up in prison camp, but Landrum believes that Winchell contracted tuberculosis, and is now deceased.

The Making of Twelve O'Clock High

Nominated in 1950 for four Academy Awards, including best picture of the year, the film *Twelve O'Clock High* is a sharper, more refined version of the popular 1948 novel by the same name. Going before the cameras in early of 1949, the film offers a retrospective on one war while the U.S. was preparing to enter another war in Korea.

Although the story is admittedly nostalgic, the film captures, as does no later effort about the Eighth Air Force has, that highly perishable feeling for a specific period in history. Like the finest of wines, *Twelve O'Clock High* only seems to improve with age.

In 1946, Sy Bartlett was working as a screenwriter at Twentieth-Century Fox during the day. Enlisting the aid of Bernie Ley, Bartlett worked with his co-author at nights on a book he felt had to be written. As a Major in the U.S. Army Air Forces during the war, Bartlett had struck up a friendship with Col. Frank A. Armstrong, Jr. As group commander of the 97th Bomb Group, Armstrong had led the first Eighth Air Force strike of the war on the Rouen-Sotteville marshalling yards. Later, on 4 January 1943, Armstrong was sent to Thurleigh to take command of the battle-weary 306th Bomb Group (H). Less than four weeks after he arrived, Armstrong led the first American raid over Germany. The five Eighth Air Force groups were led to Wilhelmshaven by the rejuvenated 306th.

Bartlett had been so impressed by Armstrong and the events that transpired at Thurleigh that he was determined to tell the story as a novel. Bartlett contacted Bernie Ley, Jr. shortly after the war to help as co-author. Ley had himself been commander of the 487th Bomb Group, a B-24 unit, and was an accomplished writer in his own right. His popular book *I Wanted Wings* had been made into a successful film by Paramount Studios in 1941. In 1942, Ley was one of General Ira Eaker's "original seven" who figured prominently in the establishment of the Eighth Air Force. To Bartlett's mind, Ley was a natural to help author the book. Indeed, while "General Savage" would be

fashioned in large measure after Bartlett's recollections of Armstrong, it was Ley's early suggestion that the fictionalized bomb group be the "918th" (3x306th BG=918th BG).

With the novel nearing publication, Fox producer Louis D. Lighton expressed an interest in adapting the story for production as a feature film. At his suggestion, and upon the basis of a brief synopsis, Fox's studio head Darryl F. Zanuck purchased the film rights.

With Lighton's mentoring, Bartlett and Ley were contracted to do the screenplay. Since they had written the book, both Ley and Bartlett assumed that turning out a screenplay would be a piece of cake. They were wrong. Lighton insisted at every point that Ley and Bartlett justify everything in the script. Both authors were surprised to discover that, although they had written the novel, they had never established a central theme for their work. Lighton insisted on one, and one that could be stated in a single paragraph or, better yet, be distilled into just a few words.

After almost two weeks, Bartlett and Ley managed to get the central theme down to four words - the disintegration of Savage. With this theme, Lighton insisted not a single word be written that didn't contribute to this central idea, with the key word being "disintegration". "Savage," Ley recalled, "was to be a humane, warm-hearted, civil kind of guy, saddled with the bloody, dirty job of sending nice young kids out to get killed." The story was to tell about these conflicting forces that would eventually tear a strong man apart.

With three different drafts in hand, Zanuck took control of the production from Lighton and began wrestling to create one cohesive script. After considerable effort, Zanuck called in director Harry King and asked him to look at the project. Zanuck told King that if he wanted to take it, go ahead: if King didn't want to tackle it, Zanuck was prepared to cut his losses and drop the entire project.

King read all three drafts and immediately agreed to the project. Since Ley was now working at MGM on *Above and*

Beyond, Sy Bartlett and King hammered out the final version of the script in a Florida hotel room.

Originally, *Twelve O'Clock High* was envisioned as a somewhat modest production that would be filmed on Fox sound stages. Any exterior scenes would be created by rear projecting film taken at the former P-38 base at Santa Maria, California. King, however, wanted the realism of shooting on location. It appeared everyone would be going to the U.K. until the USAF informed Fox that the only B-17's still operational were in Alabama and Florida after doing stints on Caribbean weather patrol. For this reason, Ozark AFB, an abandoned, overgrown former training field near Dothan, Alabama was selected for the opening and closing flashback sequences, as well as Paul Mantz classic gear-up landing into a row of tents. Some care had to be taken with each shot so pine trees were not featured players in the final film.

While tents for the belly landing were all that Fox erected while in Alabama, construction at Florida's Eglin No. 3 (Duke Field), where the majority of the film was shot, was extensive. Fourteen Nissen huts and the control tower were erected and a number of existing buildings were suitably aged by the Fox prop department. The Air Force loaned Fox twelve B-17's based at Eglin, complete with crews for the film. Fox technicians went to work and painted each aircraft in livery of the "918th Bomb Group."

Due to the good weather that Florida was experiencing, filming at Duke Field proceeded well. However, the weather was so good that Fox cameramen were forced to resort to repeatedly soaking the area that the cameras would be filming with fire hoses what was captured on film better resembled the soggy, boggy Midlands of Merry Ol' England.

Production of *Twelve O'Clock High* concluded on 1 July 1949. The final, edited version ran 133 minutes and premiered at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on Christmas Day, 1949.

Teen British Flyer Still Marvels at Luck

By John E. Thornton

During the war years, I lived and went to school in Harrow, a suburb of London. I was in the school squadron of the Air Training Corp.

We would go as a unit to visit RAF and other service stations to experience service life. If we were lucky would hope to get "flying time" in service aircraft.

My sister and her husband farmed in Bolnhurst, only a mile or two from the 306th base at Thurleigh. Some of the farm fields were almost to the perimeter fence. I was fortunate to be able to spend almost all of my school holidays at the farm.

Before daybreak the air would be filled with the sound of dozens of Wright Cyclones being warmed up, which then became continuous as the squadrons took off and circled to build the formation. The middle of the day was comparatively quiet until the planes came back, and then more noise and drama as they circled, peeled off, banking like fighters, and then landed. The occasional red flare, or a feathered prop, or flak damage telling its own story.

We would hardly have finished our evening meal--then more noise--the sudden guttural but marvelous noise of Rolls Royce Merlins as the heavily laden Lancasters and Mosquitoes of the RAF from Little Staughton strained to scrape over the tree tops, then over the farm and off to continue the offensive. In the small hours the RAF would return, and again before dawn, it was the Cyclones again, and so on day after day.

The farm at Bolnhurst was well equipped with modern farming equipment, all of it in the familiar green and yellow of John Deere. A passing GI from Thurleigh, seeing the familiar colours, called to say hello. He was Master Sergeant Howard A. West, 423rd Squadron armorer, and from a farming background. Howard visited us when he could, sometimes to give a hand with harvest or to have a stroll around with a 12 bore, and maybe stay for a meal with the family.

One day Howard invited us all to a party, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Group's arrival (Ed. Note: Thornton called it the 200th mission celebration, but it was the second anniversary, and we had flown 225 missions by 9 Sep, the date events began.) In austere war-time England this was quite a party! A complete funfair had come out from Bedford. Just for the day, a "flying circus" of captured German aircraft was on display. There was skeet shooting and ice cream, as well. The ice cream came from the Group's own plant, which had been purchased earlier from a defunct operation some distance from the base, and operated frequently, to the delight of both Brits and Americans).

One hangar was cleared for dancing and a stage erected for Glenn Miller's orchestra. Girls were brought in from distances around to provide dancing partners for the 3000 men then at Thurleigh. A boxing ring in another hangar was used for an exhibition by Billy Conn, a heavyweight contender.

My sister and I cycled over to the base to be shown around by Howard, even the inside of a B-17. We had a most enjoyable time, such a unique and even bizarre event at that particular time. I think the 306th excused itself from the war for at least the next day.

Engines were silent and I gather insufficient clear heads could be gathered to make up the flying crews.

The Group was to have been "stood down" for three days, and got through Friday and Saturday all right. But on Sunday morning it all came to a halt, and our planes were off at dawn with the rest of the 8th for a "maximum effort" deep into Germany--regardless of the condition of those who flew.)

Howard West called at the farm a few weeks later. Apparently he was still having to ask young ladies "please get off the ammo boxes" at dispersal tents several days after the party. Somehow some beer barrels were broken in the Motor Pool office and there was a tide mark to prove it!

On a later occasion I went over to Thurleigh accompanied by a school chum. Knowing of our Air Training Corps connections, Howard suggested that he could arrange for us to get some "flying time" in a B-17. We were taken to the Drying Room to have parachutes issued. We were taken to the aircraft in a truck. We were to fly with two pilots (K.D. Blackshaw signed my log), and there was just a radio operator, for an engine check. We were installed in the nose compartment. I was in the bombardier's seat and my friend in the navigator's position. The radio man fitted us with headsets, and as he left put our two parachute packs by the doorway of the compartment. We settled down for takeoff, listening to the chat on the headsets. I had flown at least a few times before, but my companion was experiencing his first venture, and what an initiation!

We were just passing over the Milton Ernest water tower at only a few hundred feet, and probably still at full power, when there was an awesome explosion and a fair amount of vibration. The number 2 engine was well alight, the prop was windmilling and the engine had lost its entire front cowling. We immediately went into a tight left hand turn to get round into the circuit to come straight back in.

The conversations in the headsets were to say the least animated! Suddenly the radio op appeared, hastily clipped a parachute on my friend's chest, put the other one on himself and disappeared aft. Within seconds, but seeming like minutes he was back, grinning sheepishly with the other chute and shouting something about being worried that we might have jumped! He had to be kidding!

By this time we were on final approach and mercifully the fire was out and the prop feathered. We touched down safely and taxied into dispersal, secretly reveling in being involved in such a drama. No doubt pretty much all in a day's work for combat aircrews but quite an episode for a couple of 16-year-olds. It appeared that one of the cylinders in the radial engine had burst. The connecting rod and remains of the piston then clattering around inside. We were of course miffed that the flight time was only 10 minutes, but I think the guys were a bit taken aback when we asked if there was any chance for another flight the next day. The innocence and ignorance of youth!

But my "private connection" came up trumps. About a month later I went over to the base again and was lucky enough to go for a dream flight lasting three hours, a training flight over Southern England. Once again, I was able to sit in the bombardier's seat, sitting

reports and the election of officers for the following year.

If the weather is kind to us, we will be in walking distance of retail shops and some historical areas near the hotel.

At 5:30 in the ballroom area there will be a cash bar that opens at 5:30 p.m., then followed by our annual banquet, with President Lowell Burgess presiding.

The evening entertainment after the meal is featuring Gary Griesser, a former teacher and school administrator, who boasts an excellent baritone voice, and who will sing for us in a patriotic program. This will take us until dance time in the Radisson Ball Room, bringing to a conclusion yet another 306th reunion.



Arthur Mack, 367th pilot on the left, paints his co-pilot, Frank McCullagh, upon Frank's completion of 30 missions. Mack's crew arrived 17 Nov 43, and Frank went on to fly a second tour, totalling 50 missions, which he completed in Jan/Feb 45.

almost inside the plexiglas dome with a fabulous, unimpaired all around view. That had to be the only way to fly, especially at low level, as we were most of the time with Lorn Wilke as our pilot. It is almost impossible to appreciate that these things happened nearly 60 years ago. Trivial as these events that I have mentioned were, in the greater scheme of things, they are nevertheless important memories for

me of those dramatic, heroic, and too often tragic years. It is very gratifying to have even a tenuous connection with these men, some of whom gave so much for all our futures.

PS: I never did get to join the RAF. I retired in 1988 from a major pharmaceutical company, where I worked as a research microbiologist. I have recently tried my hand at gliding, though.

Twelve O'Clock High, from page 6

On 26 January 1950, the Air Force Association presented the film in New York City. In attendance was General Curtis LeMay who commented he hoped that the usual technical foulup so common in air pictures had been avoided, although he very much doubted it. Fox representatives told LeMay that they only knew of one error and bet him that he would never pick it up. As was his want, LeMay let it be known, very clearly, that he was certain to find this mistake and half-a-dozen more.

After the screening, LeMay was asked where the error was. "By God," he admitted, "there weren't any mistakes in the film, although I never would have believed it!" Actually, there is one significant technical error in the film.

Twelve O'Clock High was an instant hit with both critics and theatergoers and retains this popularity to the present day. Indeed, it's become something of a fixture on the "American Movie Classics" cable television network, and is shown about frequently at the annual Film Festival of the U.S. Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Video sales are also brisk.

The only major complaint critics had had over the years is that Savage's breakdown at planeside just prior to a mission is contrived.

Of this criticism, Bernie Lay is adamant: "Not only was it not contrived, it was the basis for the whole book. This incident happened identically as you saw it at the end of the picture to a very fine commander who had been on four rough missions in a row."

Sadly, in this case, art exactly imitates life.

What's that?
Oh, the error?

Well, the next time you watch the film, notice that when the 918th Bomb Group comes under attack, you can hear the whine of the Luftwaffe fighter's engines as they rip through the formation.

In reality, no one could hear the fighters inside the bombers, but it's a nice effect added to the film by the Twentieth-Century Fox sound department. Dramatic license, don't you know?

But if you missed it, don't fret. After all, LeMay missed it, too.

306th Echoes 1975-2000

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Covington, from page 1

ming all around and over you so that you can get all kinds of views of all sizes and colorations of denizens of the deep.

Comes the evening we will be on the buses at 6 p.m. for a short trip to a dinner and show at The Syndicate, a restaurant that has a theme out of the 20s and early 30s that will entertain and amuse you. The editor and his wife have had an excellent meal here, really top of the line, and it will be followed by a musical show.

On Saturday there will be a continental breakfast, and at 9:30 the men and others interested will gather for the annual meeting of the 306th Association, with

First Combat Mission for Bowley's Crew Too Much

By A. John Bowley

In December 1944 my crew and I were deployed to England aboard the Queen Elizabeth. After arrival and an initial briefing by Thomas Witt, Group operations officer, I was asked by Witt if I knew Betty Bowley, a Red Cross girl attached to the base.

He quickly replied that she was his older sister, and by her assignment to England and Thurlough, she beat her two brothers, myself and Freeman, to the combat theatre. She later married Frank Phillips, who filled several engineering posts on the station, and my brother and I served in their wedding. Freeman gave the bride away and I was the best man.

My crew and I were privileged to begin our combat careers on 10 January and a mission to Gymnich, and as we were new to the whole scenario, Leo K. Reinhart, a combat veteran, was the first pilot that day.

It was an auspicious beginning as the flak became intense at the IP and just before bombs away we were struck by flak, knocking Ernest Lambert, our bombardier, off his stool and wounding him severely in one leg. He crawled back into position and managed to drop the bombs.

Another flak burst knocked our entire electrical system, and our outboard engines. We were able to continue on the two inboards and we headed west toward the Channel, hoping we could make it home.

With the severe damage we entailed, it was decided that we would not trust the mechanical arrangements or the gas supply, and chose to crash land in a field on the French/Belgian border, ending up near the town of LeQuesnoy, nine miles southeast of Valenciennes.

We did make a successful wheelsup landing, finally stopping close to a farm house. After we had evacuated the aircraft a woman came running out of the house in a complete state of frenzy. When she finally realized that she wouldn't be blown up and

that we were Americans and friendly, she calmed down and invited us into her house and out of the cold.

When I informed her that our bombardier had been badly wounded and needed medical attention she called a nearby Catholic hospital and an ambulance was sent out to pick up Lambert. I went with him, and when they were about to begin operating on his leg, MPs arrived and took him to a military hospital. The MPs also informed me that my crew had been taken to a French chateau that had been commandeered by a P-38 outfit, Ninth Air Force.

When I got to the chateau I was greeted by the P-38 Squadron commander, who wanted to show me something special. By that time all of the crew had been bedded down in the attic, and my host took me to a parlor, where upon his opening the door I saw Marlene Dietrich sitting at the piano and singing.

He invited me in, but I told him I was completely exhausted, and that what I needed most was a bed to sleep in.

This day, 10 January, happened to be my first wedding anniversary, which thus far I had observed by flying my first combat mission, crash landing somewhere in France, and seeing Marlene Dietrich singing at a piano. My wife on this date received a bouquet of a dozen red roses and a Whitman Sampler that I had arranged for before I left. At this same time she was hoping I was having a pleasant first anniversary!

The following day we were taken to an airfield where American mechanics were repairing disabled planes, and they told us that the next day there would be a B-17 ready to be flown back to Alconbury. We took it, arrived safely, and were trucked to Thurlough.

After a day of rest, the CQ wakened me in the morning, and we were soon off to Cologne again, trying once again to bomb the bridge that we had not taken out a few days earlier. Fortunately, flak was not so ferocious nor so accurate on our plane.

Want to Record 'Your' Story?

The Library of Congress is seeking volunteers to help record the memories of the 19 million living U. S. Veterans. Can you help? To get more information about the Veterans History Project, call AARP (a founding sponsor) at 800/424-3410 or log on to the LOC Web site, www.loc.gov/folk-life/vets.

You'll get a free project kit loaded with

helpful tips, resources and forms for recording and registering an oral history. And your recording will be permanently housed in the nation's archives.

Editor's Note: Once you have begun, or completed this project, please write to Echoes and tell us how it went, and as to whether you would recommend it for others.

306th Bomb Group 2002 HOTEL RESERVATION

Mail to: Radisson Hotel Covington
688 Fifth St., Covington, KY 41011
or Fax to (859)491-8698



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Room Rate: \$88.00

Room Type: King Double/Double Non Smoking Smoking

Number of Individuals in Room: _____

Guarantee Method: Visa MasterCard Diners Club American Express Discover

Credit Card Number: _____ Exp.: _____

September 26, 27, 28, 2002 Check-In time 3 p.m. Check Out, Noon

306th Bomb Group Association 2002 Northern Kentucky Reunion 25-29 September 2002 Radisson Hotel Riverfront, Covington

WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER	
Arrival and 306th Registration	_____ x \$30= _____
THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER	
9:30 AM Board buses for USAF Museum	_____ x \$20= _____
10:45 AM Arrive at Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB	
10:45-2 PM IMAX Theatre, Museum Tour, Lunch on own	
2:00 PM Board buses and return to Radisson	
3:30 PM Arrive Radisson, Dinner on your own	
FRIDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER	
9:00 AM Board Trolley at Radisson for guided tour of Cincinnati, Newport and Covington	_____ x \$12 = _____
10:15 AM Return to Radisson Riverfront	
1:00 PM Board buses for Newport Aquarium	_____ x \$22 = _____
3:15 PM Return to Radisson Riverfront	
6:00 PM Board buses for DINNER and SHOW at The Syndicate, Newport, Ky	
_____ Prime Rib _____ Champagne Chicken	_____ x \$47= _____
9:00 PM Return to Radisson Riverfront	
SATURDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER	
9:00 AM Continental Breakfast in Hotel	_____ x \$10= _____
9:30 AM Annual Business Meeting President Lowell Burgess, Presiding	
5:30 PM Cash-Bar, near Ballroom	
6:30 PM Annual Banquet and Entertainment	_____ x \$39= _____
_____ Prime Rib _____ Chicken	
9:30 PM Dancing and Socializing	
TOTAL _____	

Mail this registration form to:
John K. Hickey NAME: _____
3340 Nantuckett Rd. ADDRESS: _____
Lexington, KY 40502 CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

CHECKS to 306th Bomb Group Reunion

306th MAIL ORDER MEMORABILIA

Send this form and check to 306th Bomb Group Association to: Jack Frost, PO Box 13362, Des Moines, IA 50310

Squadron Golf Shirts			
Embroidered with B-17, squadron # and group #			
Circle size in listing below:			
367th red	M, L, XL	\$20.00	
368th white	M, L, XL	\$20.00	
369th green	M, L, XL	\$20.00	
423rd blue	M, L, XL	\$20.00	
Group Golf Shirts			
Embroidered with 306th logo on left pocket			
Putty color	S, M, L, XL	\$20.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
Natural color	S, M, L, XL	\$20.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
Birch color	S, M, L, XL	\$20.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
306th Hat			
Royal Blue, w/scrambled eggs on brim and 306th logo		\$15.00	
369th Hat			
Grey summer, embroidered w/369th BS, B-17, First Over Germany		\$10.00	
306th Patch 3 inch, w/First Over Germany		\$5.00	
306th Patch 2 in. without First Over Germany		5.00	
306th Patch, w.Group logo, 5 in.		5.00	
367th Patch, 5 in. in full color		5.00	
368th Patch, 5 in. in full color		5.00	
369th Patch, 5 in. in full color		5.00	
423rd Patch, 5 in. in full color		5.00	
B-17 Gold pin for lapel or hat		5.00	
306th decal w/First over Germany		.50	
306th Coasters, metal, black & silver, set of 4 in container		4.00	
Total		_____	
Up to 2 lbs.		3.50	
Priority Mail		3.95	
Grand Total		_____	

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