



Nick Hoolko examines Lee Kessler's B-17, which makes a last appearance at a 306th reunion before becoming a part of an Air Museum collection. Its been at several other 306th reunions in the past. The motors run (on batteries), and the plane is a real eye catcher.

5323 Cheval Place • Charlotte, NC 28205

October 2002 • Vol 27, No. 4

306th Echoes

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Three principals in the development of our new "Thurleigh Airfield Museum" on our old base, are Ralph and Daphne Franklin, and Dr. Jonathan Palmer, the power behind the museum's initiation and development. Palmer heads Palmer Sports, which is located on 400 acres in North Bedfordshire where once B-17s ruled the landscape.

'New Echoes' Result of Herman Kaye Gift

You are looking at the new appearance of 306th Echoes, a change that has come about through the generosity of one of our members, Dr. Herman Kaye, a retired physician and hospital administrator.

In the course of the recent reunion at Covington, KY, Kaye made a second annual gift of \$10,000, this time to benefit the production of our newspaper.

While discussing the gift with the editor, it was suggested that it would be nice to run two pages of color a couple of times each year, and Kaye countered that idea by saying he would like to see color in every issue. So, you see the result at this time because of two recent "colorful" events that were well covered by cameras.

We won't always have this much, but will try to produce two pages of color at least, but only if we can obtain good copy for the readership.

Our annual reunion has recently been completed at Covington, KY, and through the good offices of Dale Briscoe, Bill Houlihan and Don Snook you can see how that event was covered. Also through the efforts of Ralph Franklin and associates of Dr. Palmer, there is excellent coverage also of the opening of the museum. Those at the reunion also had an opportunity to see a 20-minute video of the museum and especially of the visit by England's only flying B-17, the "Sally B" which is housed at nearby Duxford.

How a New 'Speed' Business Has Come to Thurleigh

Soon after Dr. Jonathan Palmer began moves to expand his automotive business, related to high performance driving, racing, training of drivers, etc., he acquired 400 acres of our old airfield.

When he learned that it had indeed been the site of an American air operation from 1942 to 1946, he then wanted to meet someone who could tell him more about it. He was directed to Ralph Franklin, who has been our official representative in England since 1991.

Ralph had become a B-17 fan when a teenager in the area, one of those who hung on our fences to watch departing and returning aircraft from raids across Europe. In may have been this background that led him to become a part of the Royal Aircraft Establishment well after the end of the war and found himself then working inside the fences at Thurleigh.

He was with the RAE until his retirement. With the opening of our museum he is once again spending a lot of his waking hours on this same stretch of English countryside.

Back to Palmer and his meeting with Franklin: We think Ralph is still telling the racing entrepreneur more about the 306th and WWII as many things are coming to life again. Over a period of time we will show you some of the changes that Palmer has instigated around our old runways and taxiways.

Palmer's interest has soared in the past year, leading to his providing us with a WWII building of two large rooms, which has become the Museum. It was not just a building that Palmer gave, but first he had it rewired, upgraded, painted inside and out before Franklin began to move available items inside.

This where some of you veterans can fit into the picture if you go over your memorabilia and decide that you might want to contribute it. You may want to query Ralph first as to whether he needs an item or not. He can't use dozens of oxygen masks or the like, nor items that are completely worn out by age. But you can be helpful.

Gifts of money that you might like to make can be sent through our treasurer, Robert Houser, who converts U. S. cash to British pounds before sending it.

While at the reunion, Dr. Kaye gave Ralph a check for \$1,000 to be used for the efforts at Thurleigh.



Herman Kaye

Last year Kaye made a gift of \$10,000 to the Association, and he minces no words in saying that he would like to see other sizeable gifts from affluent 306'ers to that activities of the 306th can be enhanced and continued. Already the response to the new museum has been heartening to the Franklins and others on the site.

**SAVANNAH in '03;
where and when in
January issue.**

Obituaries

Delmar E. Corderman, a 368th crew chief, died 29 Aug 02 in Sac City, IA. His first wife was a British war bride. He leaves his third wife, 1d, 1gd, 3ggc. Delmar had retired from farming in the early 1980s.

Lawrence L. Currier, a 369th mechanic and assistant crew chief, died 4 Sep 01 in Lyndon, VT. He worked for the Vermont Tap & Die Co., for more than 40 years, and also serviced vending machines for many years. He was a town trustee for four years and a justice of the peace. He leaves his wife, Ruth, 3d, 7gc, 4ggc.

Lloyd A. Elrod, 423rd navigator (Wilmer Schultz crew), died 25 Sep 02 in Kansas City, MO. He held degrees from William Jewell College AB, U of Kansas City MA and U of Missouri, MBA. He retired in 1987 as a computer systems analyst for Bendix Corp. Elrod leaves his wife, Patricia, 3c, 3gc, 3ggc. He had joined the 306th 13 Jan 45 and finished his 12th mission 17 Apr 45.

James W. Haywood, 368th tail gunner (Robert W. Smith crew), died 8 Jul 02 in Adrian, GA. He came to the 306th 22 Sep 44 and flew a full combat tour, finishing 17 Aug 43, the 65th EM to do so.

Col. Jerome A. Hinman, a worker in the Group radar shop, died 10 Aug 02 in San Diego, CA. He and his wife, Françoise, made their home on Coronado Island for years after his USAF retirement. He served on the 2000 reunion committee in San Diego. He had joined the 306th 3 Oct 44, and besides his wife leaves 2c, 1gc.

Joseph E. Kosakowski, 368th bombardier (John Regan crew), died 19 Aug 02 in Bath, ME. In Jun 43 he became the 86th officer to finish a combat tour, flying 20 missions, most as a lead. He was the second 368th squadron bombardier, trans-

ferring to ICBW 1 Jul 43 as wing bombardier, and 18 Aug was transferred to the 102nd provisional combat wing. After leaving service he was in the food service business until recalled during the Korean War, where he was assigned to Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. When he left service he joined the Traveler's Insurance Co., retiring in 1986. He leaves his second wife, Janet, 3c, 2gc.

Robert L. Lynch, 369th radio operator (Robert Stewart crew), died 19 Aug 02 in Taylorsville, IL. He joined the Group 1 Jul 44 and flew 34 missions by 9 Nov 44. He then operated a buncher beacon at Honeybourne until he returned to the States 28 Mar 45. He also served in USAF in Korea in 1951. He then returned to farming, until retiring 1 Jun 85. He leaves his wife, Diane, 3s, 7gc.

Arthur W. Mack, 367th pilot, died 21 Aug 02 in Palmyra, VA, where he had lived since retiring as an American Airlines captain. He brought his crew to Thurleigh 19 Nov 43 and then flew 28 missions, earning a DFC for the Halberstadt mission of 11 Jan 44. During his AA service he became a captain in 1955 and retired as a 747 pilot in 1988, and also held a USAF Reserve commission as a lieutenant colonel. He began his military service in 1940, enlisting in the 212th Coast Artillery, NYNG. He leaves his wife, Tess, 4c, 8gc, and his brother Philip G. Mack, Jr., who was a 91st BG pilot at the same time Art was with the 306th. Phil lives in Renton, WA.

Charles R. Patten came to the 306th 27 Aug 42, and his first assignment was as adjutant for the 423rd Squadron. It was a job that tended to bore him, and after a few months behind a desk had concocted a way to escape Thurleigh and get back to the States for pilot training. He would fly 25 missions for his ticket home. We'll never know if his calculations included time in the hands of the enemy, but by the time he had flown several missions he was sure he'd make it. Then, came that fateful date, 13 Jun 43, when with William Marcotte's crew he was shot down and became a POW. It was his sixth mission, and he did get a chance to see the target, Bremen, from the ground after bailing out. While in his parachute he was fired on by the Germans, and when he hit the ground 10 of the enemy were waiting for him. Death came 7 Apr 97, and he was survived by his wife, Barbara, 1s, 2gc, 1ggc. As the owner of the Colfax Envelope Co., he had for many years supplied the #10 imprinted envelopes to the Group at no charge. He lived in Palatine, IL, and the company continues under the leadership of his son, Charles, Jr.

John A. Pinchback, 367th pilot, died of cancer 14 Aug 02 in Fernandina Beach, FL, where he had resided. He arrived with the Group 13 Feb 45 and flew 27 missions by the end of combat. He left the 306th in Mar 46 after flying with the Casey Jones aerial mapping project. He leaves his wife, Margaret, 3c, 7gc.

Everett W. Roush, 367th ordnance, died 8 Jul 02 in Zanesville, OH. He was with the original group and served throughout the war. He leaves his wife, Margaret, 3c, 7gc.

Eugene A. Skonieczny, 367th navigator (George Hatch crew), died in Aug 78 in Kensington, CT. He came to the 306th 22 Sep 44 and finished his 35-mission tour in Feb 45. Postwar he sold for Erwin division, American Hardware Corp., and raised rhododendrons as a hobby.

Evadee from France Honored

Robert J. Starzynski, a 367th tail gunner, has received several honors recently principally as a result of his escape and evasion in France. Beginning 17 Jun 44 when he bailed out of Virgil Dingman's a/c on a trip to Noyen, France. His efforts to escape capture and to return to freedom were classic.

He has now been recognized with U. S. Army's Commendation Medal, the presentation being made at the Milwaukee Airport near Chicago 28 Jul 2002. The B-17 of the Collings Foundation was also a part of the medal festivities.

Bob has also this year received the 'Jubilee of Liberty' Medal, in recognition of 'dedicated service during the liberation of France and Europe.'

A fragment of Bob's story that did not appear in "First Over Germany" has come along since and is quoted here: "Bob was finally put in touch with the Resistance and under their protection for three months. Eventually the Canadians liberated him at Quilebeuf and Bob was instructed to leave with them. They wanted me to hop on their tank and leave the area, but I could not because I had to get my dog tags and money back from the Underground. I sent word to the fellow who had them. He turned out to be the mayor and at first refused to hand the money over to me. The Canadians suggested I tell him that if he did not hand it over they would drive a tank right through his darned house! That did the trick and I was given my dogtags and money.' From then on, Bob was sent to a small unit that dealt with downed airmen and eventually sent back to England."



Robert Starzynski

From DC-2 to 747: Buck's Saga

North Star Over My Shoulder, A Flying Life, by Bob Buck. NY, Simon & Schuster, 446pp. \$26.00.

Are you tired of USAF or military, or combat flying stories? Here's your chance to switch to the very literate Bob Buck, who spent a lifetime of flying for North West Airlines, the DC-2 to the 747.

He kind of lets it all hang out as he discusses all aspects of commercial flying, from the equipment, to the pilots, to the flight crews. He goes from the thrills to the chills of flying and keeps you turning pages all the time.

Along the way through his lifetime, or almost, in the air, he had a lot of thrills, and share as many of them with his readers. He had great experiences, and he tries to bring them all to his audience, and captivates you with the detail and the reasons why many things were done. He had his share of battles, but was a winner in most confrontations.

Those of you who went on the airlines will probably find Bob more interesting, and will be able to see how your lives crossed. He crossed paths with Lindbergh, and as Howard Hughes was the largest stockholder in Northwest, he also worked for Hughes on some special operations.

He loved flying Connies, but said he knew the Connie's day was soon to be past the first time he saw a jet takeoff.

And he reports on the advent of commercial jets, stating "Not all pilots welcomed the coming of the jet; some feared their ability to master it and to pass the needed checks."

306th Family

Vera Burgess, wife of Broadus Burgess, 367th ordnance, died 12 Sep 01 in Summerville, SC. She leaves 3c, 7gc.

Jo Sherman, wife of Frederick P. Sherman, 369th copilot and pilot, died 23 Jul 02 in Fayetteville, AR after suffering from cancer for nine weeks. She leaves 5c, 17gc, 2ggc.

British

John Mills, a Britisher who had a special interest in the 306th, died 25 Apr 00, leaving his wife, Diane. He had attended state-side reunions of the 306th, and his wife was at our 2002 reunion in Covington, KY. He also participated in activities of the 92nd BG.

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.

ORDER FORM

306th ECHOES' Book	\$55.00
Sept. 02 Directory	\$10.00
367th Combat Diary	\$20.00
368th Combat Diary	\$20.00
369th Combat Diary	\$20.00
423rd Combat Diary	\$20.00
Casey Jones Project	\$10.00
Men of the 306th (16mm film)	\$20.00

Make check payable to: 306th Bomb Group Association (prices quoted include postage and packaging charge)

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Mailing Address: _____

Send to: Secretary, 306th BGA, 5323 Cheval Pl., Charlotte, NC 28205



Leland Kessler, president; Anthony J. Conroy, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; Robert N. Houser, treasurer; Royce Hopkins, William F. Houlihan, Hugh E. Phelan, Frederick P. Sherman, directors; Lowell W. Burgess, 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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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 Museum can be mailed to the address shown below:

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

'Milk Run' Puts Seelos in POW Camp

By Robert W. Seelos, 368th

When I returned from the Paris mission of 4 Apr 43, my ears were bothering me so I went to see Doc Shuller. He said I had a head cold and the pressure at high altitude was making my ears ache. He said I was grounded for a few days. For medication I went to the Officers' club, and after a couple of drinks I felt all right again.

The usual unwelcome announcement came over the loudspeakers: "All armament personnel report to the flight line."

This meant they were loading them up again for another mission the next day. Then, somehow, the word leaked out that the mission would be a short milk run. Naturally, I figured I shouldn't miss the chance to get my 19th mission in, leaving me with only six more to go. So I immediately went to Doc Shuller and had him "unground" me.

I advised my squadron commander that I was ready to go, but that I didn't have a navigator. He said not to worry; a replacement crew had just arrived from the States that night, and I could have the navigator.

The next morning after briefing I had the crew all in place, the engines warmed up and waiting for the red flare to signal us to start taxiing—but still no navigator. Just before the signal, a command car skidded around the corner and let out the new navigator, who was pulled up into the nose. We started to taxi immediately. I didn't even get introduced to my new crew member. I learned later that his name was James E. Murray, and that he had been married just prior to leaving the States.

We took off and formed the group. At 22,000 feet we headed southeast and crossed the English Channel at Dungeness.

About half way across the Channel we made a one hundred and eighty degree turn and headed back to Dungeness in a diversionary maneuver meant to draw up and confuse the German fighters.

Just north of Dover between Ramsgate and Margate at Foreland, we headed due east across the Channel to the Belgian coast near Ostend. Obviously our diversion had not worked. The Germans were forewarned of our arrival. We were the lead group and they were already attacking us.

I would guess we were about halfway between the coast and Antwerp when I took a direct hit in the prop dome of my #1 engine. It was running wild, and with the feathering mechanism destroyed, there was no way I could do anything about it. With the old style props and the drag from the #1 engine, I had to pull full power on the other three engines to stay with the group, which seemed to me to be in anything but a tight formation.

At least three other planes were in trouble and trying to hang in there for more fire power and protection. I called the group lead ship and told them to slow down, that we were in trouble. I got no response. For some reason I kept thinking—if only our old squadron commander, Bill Lanford, was leading the group—he would have slowed it down and tucked the cripples in like an old mother hen, and would possibly have got us all back at least as far as the Channel. (Ed. Note: Lanford had been relieved of his 368th command 19 Jan 43). By now I was so mad and busy trying to keep going to the target, I really didn't have time to get scared or worry that we weren't going to make it.

Just after our bombs were released I took a direct flak hit in the #4 engine. I immediately made a flat left turn in hopes the group lead would try to pick me up as they made their turn off the target at least a



Is a thatched Roof for You? - This is Ralph and Daphne Franklin's house in Keysoe, close to Thurleigh Airfield. In the late stages of a thatching project to renew the roof over their heads, you see a rather rough rendition of the roof. And the pattern along the ridge line is the "signature" of the thatcher. The Franklins had had their name on the list for two years before the two thatchers showed up. They also had been saving more than pennies, as the bill came to more than 11,000 pounds—or as we say in the States, about \$17,000 dollars. It is expected to last for 60 years or more.

Hennessy's Farewell; There May be More

By Ed Hennessy

The B-17 was truly a conceptual aircraft since there was no pool of experience in strategic bombing, nor, in fact, in four-engine aircraft. It was built on speculation for use by the "branch operation" of the Army, whose leaders jealously guarded their turf. They still do.

Billy Mitchell was pilloried by the entrenched majority of Army planners and leaders who believed that man-to-man on the ground was the only way to win wars.

Early Air Corps leaders had to negotiate a careful path through the hostile military and political environments. Air visionaries had their wings clipped regularly by the opposition antis on permanent guard against aerial encroachment in their domain. Billy Mitchell was an early martyr.

Aerial visionaries in the Mitchell mode responded with the concept of the "Flying Fortress," a legend before its reality, by incorporating traditional perceptions of forts and tanks. There was lots of armament, but impregnable they were not! Steel and stones are tougher than aluminum sheathing. They also underestimated the fixed gunnery

on high flying enemy fighters—guns bolted on their air frames.

This created a very flexible platform that could be quickly maneuvered in the best aiming point against B-17s, for example, that flew without escort cover. Unsupported in combat, the bombers had to fly straight and level on the bomb run. Imagine four-engine ducks as moving targets in an armament arcade.

B-17 E and F models were extremely vulnerable to head-on, dead-level fighter attacks. There was no formal fire power in the vertical gap between top and ball turrets—creating a convenient "tunnel" of air for head-on attackers. The Luftwaffe quickly found and exploited that weakness. This resulted in only 20% of the original 306th aircrews surviving 25 missions. To make matters worse, the inexorable combat erosion of the original 25 aircrews wore heavily on the survivors while their elusive quota of 25 had yet to be flown against terrible odds.

Late analyses showed that the chances for survival improved with successful experience—the heaviest losses came in the early missions and tapered downward thereafter. Small consolation to crews embarking on their last five. It was a test of faith and sphincter.

Through the Eye of the Needle

#8 of 10

Bob Seelos was an original pilot who went down on 4 April 43 on a raid in the Antwerp area. Here he tells briefly his experience of bailing out and his capture by the German troops. But there is much more to Seelos' story.

Several lengthy tales have appeared in 306th *Echoes* in the past 20 years. We suggest you purchase a copy of the 800-page book, *Echoes, 19/5-2000*, in which you will read several stories and view other pictures. The book is well indexed for your convenience.

Two more tales of 306th men who were shot down over the continent will appear in the next two issues of *Echoes*, those of Myron Sorden and James V. Vaughter. Again, we thank the Stalag Luft III organization for its permission to quote from their book, permission having been granted by Gen. Albert F. Clark.

half mile ahead of me. But they seemed to be heading full power for the coast.

In the meantime the German fighters were spraying the hell out of us. I had hopes of reaching the Channel and trying to ditch in the water, but the #4 engine burst into flames. I told copilot Alex Kramarinko to tell the crew to bail out at once.

By the time I got out I was well away from the others. I came down on the edge of the town of Wuustwezel, Belgium. As I was descending I could see I was going to go through the top of a tree. I braced myself and gritted my teeth—so hard that I bit through my cheek. The chute collapsed and I hit the ground so hard that I was knocked out momentarily.

When I came to I was looking into the eyes of a perfect doll of a Belgian girl—long braids, blue eyes, wooden shoes. Blood was coming out of my mouth, and she thought I had been shot and was bleeding internally. She was trying to find the bullet hole and I had a hard time convincing her that there wasn't any. When I was finally able to get to my feet, I had her hide the parachute in the brush. Then I tried to tell her to get the hell out of there and hide someplace.

By September 1943 B-17Gs with twin .50 chin turrets arrived and closed that vertical gap between top and ball turrets. P-51s and P-47s also came to provide long range escort cover. Simultaneously, the rapidly expanding numbers of U. S. bombers and fighters were wearing down the Luftwaffe as relentlessly as the strategic bombing was destroying the Nazi industrial complex in daylight and the British were area bombing their cities at night.

Happily, the overall survival rate of the 306th grew to 70.5% for the duration of WWII, vs that of 20% for the original comparatively defenseless complement.

Even so, the 306th experience seemed to be ignored, perhaps a reluctance to believe the overall 29.5% loss rate was so much worse than the other military branches that averaged 3.4%. Marines in the Pacific were seen as taking the worst losses, averaging about 4%. Our aircrews would have fared much better as Marines in the Pacific!

There was at least one top WWII commander who was impressed: Air Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, head of the German Luftwaffe. When asked at the Nuremberg trial what made Germany surrender, he said that the daylight strategic bombing had ruined their factory output and their distribution systems. "We could not continue."

Daylight missions cost many American lives, but they saved many more. Modern strategists recognize the true power of our modern Air Force, albeit grudgingly.

Traditions die hard!

ADDENDUM

Dear Russ:

This essay has been a longtime coming and should be my last words on the 306th experience. Think of it as an epilogue.

Editor's Note: We haven't run everything that Ed has produced in the last several years, and our file has at least a half dozen more interesting pieces. Sorry, Ed, but you'll see your byline several more times before we all fold our tents. But I write for all of our readers in thanking you profusely for these contributions on the 306th and its role in WWII combat. We all must remember that WWII was a military effort the likes of which had never been tried before or since. We were all a part of a unique effort in winning a long, hard, costly modern war.

But just then about a dozen German soldiers appeared with their little machine guns. I wasn't about to run or do anything foolish. I had eased my escape kit from my pocket and managed to give it to her without the Germans noticing. Just prior to reaching City Hall, I slipped one of my dogtags and gave that to her also.

The following morning, my family in Montana received the standard MIA telegram. When no more word was received after more than a month, my family was about to give up hope.

On Mother's Day, the blond girl was in Brussels and went to the equivalent of our Western Union. Using the address from my dogtag, she sent this cablegram to Mrs. Seelos, Philipsburg, Montana, USA. "Dear Aunty: Robert was here visiting, was in very good health, and sends his love to his darling relative."

Unbelievably, the message got through, untouched and uncensored. It was one fantastic Mother's Day gift to my mother. She called the War Department, and they informed her that they still had no informa-

turn to page 6

2002 Reunion's Color Coverage



NEW OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS - l to r: Russell Strong, secretary; Lee Kessler, president; Royce Hopkins, director; Robert Houser, treasurer; Fred Sherman, director; William Houlihan, director; Hugh Phelan, director; Lowell Burgess, past president, and Anthony Conroy, vice president.



Bob Crane, a veteran reunion participant, also won the award for the "Most Colorful" 306th reunion attendee. He is a USAF retiree.



FIVE BRISCOE CREW MEMBERS ATTENDED - Allen Meaux, Victor Rose, Dale Briscoe, John Hickey and Frederick Sherman.



Proud grandfather & new 306th president Lee Kessler meets 2nd Lt. Kris Waechter at the Dayton Museum. Kris is with the B-2 bomber group there.



We don't know whether Bob Long, was caught coming or going in the Hotel lobby.

(R) Doris and Bob Houser, 368th. He begins tenth year as treasurer.



(L) Russ Houghton 368th and Robbie Lanyon 423W



Ben Pelzel 368th and Ray Yerak 369th



Archie and Nadyne Nesbitt, 367th



Don and Janice Ross, 368th. He was twice elected president.



Our British friends and their 306th hosts took lunch one day in the revolving restaurant of the Radisson Hotel at Covington: Ralph and Daphne Franklin, Ralph Bordner, Nell Bordner and Diane Mills.



Jack and Pat Ward

Two People Made it All Happen at Covington

When John and Betty Hickey agreed to 'chair' the 2002 reunion at Covington, they didn't know that it entailed learning a lot about a computer, and a lot of other things.

But they took hold of the reins, made visits to Covington, Wright Patterson AFB, and other sites to make sure that the program could be managed, and then teased along to get all of those 'little' problems solved.

They did it and the two hundred people who came enjoyed everything. The

hotel was round with a revolving restaurant at the top, 18th floor, but elevator service was good. Our crowd soon labeled food prices in the hotel as pricey" and quickly scattered to willing and able restaurants close by.

The tours went well and people learned a lot about the local area and some of its historic lore. The trip to the Air Museum was good in many ways, but several WWII era exhibits were closed as a lot of remodeling is going on there.



Betty and John Hickey, 369th, at 'their' reunion



Hugh and Evelyn Phelan, 367th, Fred Sherman 369th, George Kellogg 367th

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	\$22.00
___ 368th white	M, L, XL	\$22.00
___ 369th green	M, L, XL	\$22.00
___ 423rd blue	M, L, XL	\$22.00

Group Golf Shirts

Embroidered with 306th logo on left pocket

___ Putty color	S, M, L, XL	\$22.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
___ Birch color	S, M, L, XL	\$22.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
___ Grey color	S, M, L, XL	\$22.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00

Caps

___ Grey baseball, embroidered with First over Germany, B-17, 306th Bomb Group	\$12.00
___ Royal Blue, w/scrambled eggs on brim and 306th logo	\$17.00
___ Grey summer mesh, embroidered with B-17, Squadron# and group#	\$12.00
___ 367th	\$12.00
___ 368th	\$12.00
___ 369th	\$12.00
___ 423rd	\$12.00

Patches

___ 306th Patch 3 inch, with First Over Germany	\$6.00
___ 306th 2 inch without First Over Germany	\$6.00
___ 306th 5 inch Group logo	\$6.00
___ 367th 5 inch in full color	\$6.00
___ 368th 5 inch in full color	\$6.00
___ 369th 5 inch in full color	\$6.00
___ 423rd 5 inch in full color	\$6.00

___ B-17 Gold pin for lapel or hat	\$6.00
___ 306th decal w/First over Germany	\$.50
___ 306th Coasters, metal, black & silver, set of 4	\$4.00
Total	\$6.00

SHIPPING AND HANDLING CHARGE

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DIE BUILDER

Memorial Gifts

In memory of Arthur Harnois, 369th, by Jack & Pat Wood.

In memory of William Landrum, 367th, by William Houlihan.

In memory of Oliver (Snapper) Nasby, 423rd, by Jean O'Neill and family.

In memory of Waverly Ormond, 367th, by Kathy Ormond, daughter.

In memory of Robert Zach, 423rd, by Marjorie Zach, wife.

Al La Chasse Story Told in New Book

So Long Guys, Goodbye is Forever, by Jane R. Edwards. Glendale, CA, 2U02. 326 pp.

Al LaChasse was a voluble, attractive veteran of one mission with the 306th, as his plane was lost on the very first mission, 9 Oct 1942. He was one of three survivors, and the first POW from the Clay Pigeon Squadron. Many other POWs came from the same source, especially in the early days of the 306th.

Al was a salesman, a great raconteur, and provided a lot of entertainment around the swimming pool at his Glendale, CA home. He attracted friends like flies and he told great stories. Like all of us, he embellished a few, but that's life!

We are indebted to Jane Edwards because she was a good listener, and at some point she made a decision to write Al's story—we must be thankful that someone did! It would have been a crime to just have had all of these lost in the ether of Southern California with no one at least thinking about how they could all fit together.

This reviewer has set by Al's pool on several occasions, with such stalwarts of the early days as Bob Seelos, John McKee, and Frank Yaussi, and others whom I do not remember these many years later.

Al is good material for such a story, and Jane Edwards was a dutiful listener, who also taped many stories, and interviewed Al to get the background she needed. As many of you know, its not difficult to put down 50 or 100 pages of your own adventures in a B-17, but to write and have published 300 pages of good stuff takes more effort than a college rhetoric assignment, or an evening class at night school, or a couple of months of nights



banging on your typewriter. Putting together a book takes dedication that occupies days and night, and rewriting, and facing an editor and other good things that result in a great story well-told.

This is one of those books that occupied a lot of time, and she made some mistakes. Most writers do. But these can be read over without wrecking the basic story. In fact, few of you will note things that have revised history a bit in this story, and I mention only one, which I have discussed with the author. On page 69 Curtis LeMay is mentioned as the C.O. of the 306th, a statement that was later clarified. And there are several quotes from LaChasse about LeMay. A search of the records shows that the day Al arrived at Wendover for duty with the 306th was the very day LeMay left his brief stint with the 306th to take command of the 305th Bomb Group. If they met it was a wave in passing, hardly likely to have taken place between a fledgling second lieutenant reporting to his first duty station, and a seasoned lieutenant colonel on his way to higher things.

You will enjoy the glimpses of those early 306th warriors as seen by LaChasse, and you'll enjoy the Atlantic flight to Prestwick, Scotland, and on to Thurleigh. It's good reading, and its a part of our story.

More 306th Crews



369th: Fr: Evan C. Wellsandt e, Robert L. Grace P, Lester L. Reid CP, Walter C. Cochran N. Bk: Harry L. Beard bt, Gerald D. Larson tt, Lewis M. Nichols ro, Clifford Mitchell tg, Bedal Diaz bt.



369th: L to R: Stan Parton bt, Ned Erne P, Ray Tiff tg, George Good B, Louis Marchese eng, Fred Hudson N, Rob Gattis ro, and Art Miller CP, missing from photo.

Seelos

Continued from page 3

called the War Department, and they informed her that they still had no information about me but would check with the Swiss Red Cross. They called back shortly that my name was on the latest POW list.

From the City Hall, the Germans took me to a fighter base at Duerne, just on the outskirts of Antwerp. While I was there, they brought in Lt. (William W.) Saunders, Lieutenant (Clarence) Fischer—the pilot of another 306th crew, a Lt. Moses, and I can't remember the others.

I learned later that my navigator, whom I hadn't even met, had been killed. In a bomb group reputed for its high turnover rate, Lt. Murray had the shortest tour of all with the 306th—a matter of hours only. We also lost our top turret gunner and one of our waist gunners.

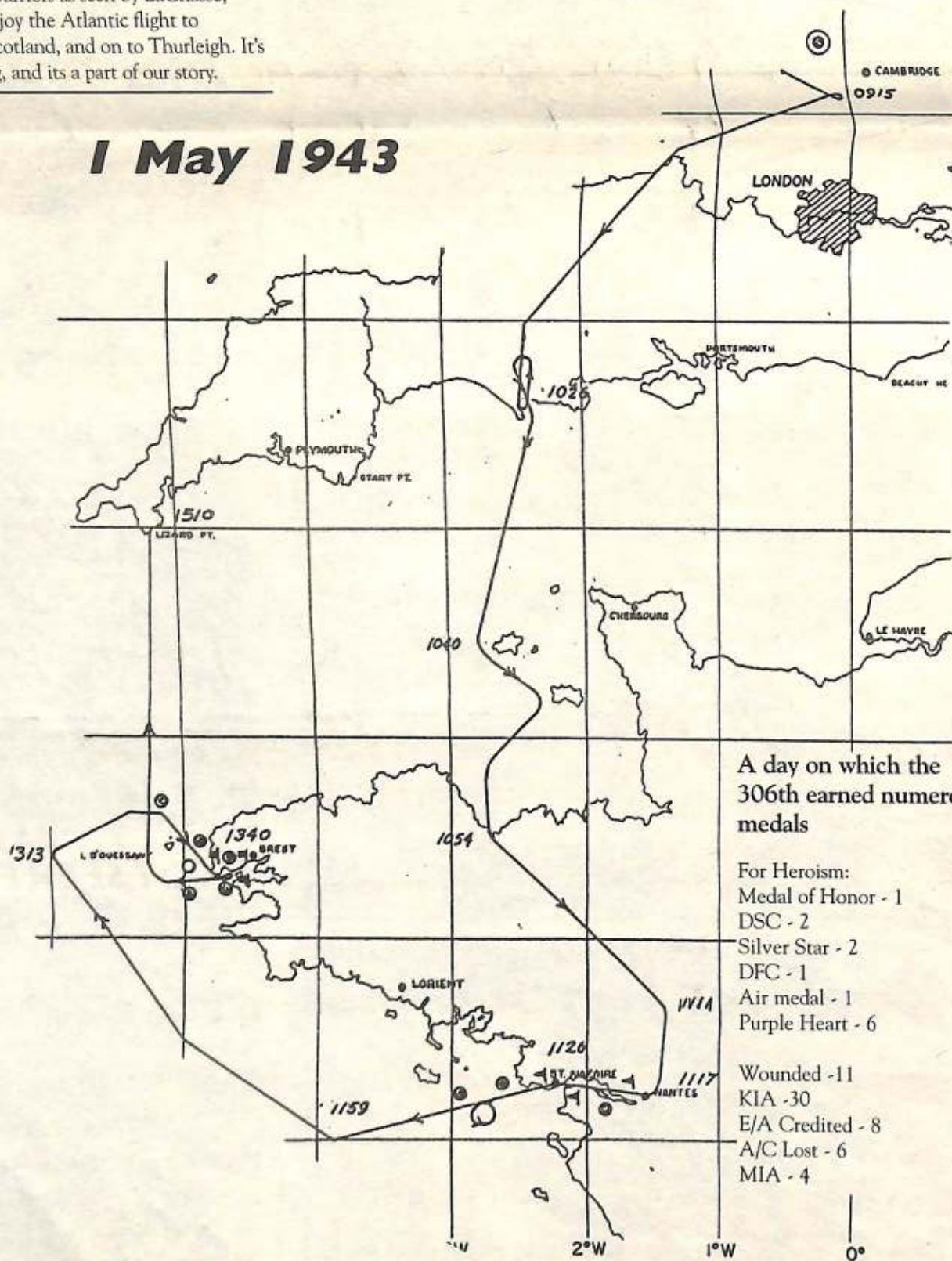
Epilogue: The girl who sent the cable to my mother was named Else Moors. I was able to thank her in person, many years later.

I have on more than one occasion been invited back to the city of Wuustwezel, and each time have been treated like royalty. The people of Belgium and Holland whom I have met over the years seem to believe that it was the American Air Force that paved the way for their eventual freedom.

Knowing that 5 Apr 43 remains one of the bleakest days in Belgian history, because of the havoc caused that day among the civilian population, I was quite concerned on my first trip back there as to what my reception might be. But not only did they treat me like a VIP, they gave me a plaque from the city and the Freedom Medal of Belgium.

The people of Belgium and Holland are undoubtedly the most considerate and friendly people I have ever had the privilege of knowing.

1 May 1943



A day on which the 306th earned numerous medals

- For Heroism:
- Medal of Honor - 1
- DSC - 2
- Silver Star - 2
- DFC - 1
- Air medal - 1
- Purple Heart - 6

- Wounded - 11
- KIA - 30
- E/A Credited - 8
- A/C Lost - 6
- MIA - 4



Mid-1943 Picture of 367th officers; Maj. Wm. Raper was C.O.



1945 collection of 369th officers; Note increased numbers



Dinner companions at annual banquet: Bartlett Smith, Roy Stroud, Marty Lenaghan



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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The 'SALLY B' circles over Thurleigh Airfield at the Museum opening.

A New Day Dawns at Thurleigh



(Above) Jonathan Palmer and a tearful Ralph Franklin watch the 'Sally B'
(R) From uniforms to pinups evokes memories of combat days.



A part of the throng which came out for the opening day of the museum. The building is open on alternate Sundays and attracts crowds.



An authentic WWII jeep, rebuilt by Franklin's brother, is a part of the new museum's exhibit.



Cased exhibits house many interesting artifacts of our days at Thurleigh.