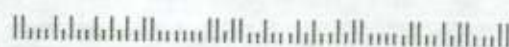


306th Echoes

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B-17 is a Plane You Can Love!

Our affection for the B-17 was not predicated on its flying higher or faster, on the size of its crew or on the tonnage of bombs it could carry. There has always been an affection for the Flying Fortress, feelings seldom attached to other military aircraft.

If you mention in any way that you have had an association with this wonderful old airplane, the person with whom you are talking often expresses wonderment, appreciation and envy for your experience with The Fort.

It is known far and wide, and is often painted in glorious colors tinted with awe at your good fortune by those who have seen it in books and magazines, on TV and movie screens, and in popular renditions in paint and plastic. One suspects that modelers today pick the B-17 as their very favorite WWII aircraft. Our "old friend" remains an icon of the airwar by those who flew it, rode in it, worked on it, fueled it, repaired it and polished it. All of this was a background for the fanciful and gutsy names which appeared on the noses of the planes, as well as names and other bits of minutiae elsewhere on the craft.

There are several collections of plane names that have been developed and published. Relatives and descendants of the WWII men associated with the planes often make inquiries by quoting the WWII name for their contact's aircraft, and there are also those who write the editor and ask something about their old plane, "which we named but never got around to painting that name on the plane."

The editor wonders if some of those early naming enthusiasts may have at times lost their enthusiasm on finding their plane MIA, and as the naming crew might well have been aboard that plane. The second one wasn't quite the same, although we did have a few names that followed along.

"Rose of York", the 367th's lead plane for some months, went through three names. It was first "The Princess," then "Princess Elizabeth", at which point the crew chief, Ed Gregory, suggested to anyone who would listen that the real Princess Elizabeth ought to be invited to come and christen the plane. Acceptance of the idea by the Royal family came with the proviso that the plane should be renamed as its possible loss might be an omen of ill will for the Princess. It became "The Rose of York": and the Princess Elizabeth, the King and Queen, and a large entourage of Britishers and high ranking American officers showed up 6 July 1944 to properly anoint the guns on the nose turret with a fifth of English cider.

In general our crews did not fly the same planes throughout a tour, or until they "lost" it (often to another crew flying it to its death). As the bombing and navigational equipment became more sophisticated, the planes were positioned in the formation and crews progressed forward as their special skills increased.

One specially equipped 367th plane had a relief tube in the nose, evidently placed there to assist a navigator or bombardier who had a special problem. Any users maintained their status with the ball turret gunner by warning him of its impending use so that the turret would be facing backward. If not, the gunner lost any sense of where he was and could not handle the gunnery

turn to page 3



Nose of an Original 306th B-17 Will Welcome you at Museum



The original painter of the Eager Beaver, Lee Kessler, has retouched his work on the plane, and is shown at work in the July 2000 presentation of this original piece of a real B-17. Lee is currently president of our 306th Association.



A New Treat for Echoes Readers Begins on Page 3

This editor constantly has his antennae raised for interesting things about our air war, about the personnel who served at Thurleigh, and about the aircraft we flew.

Therefore, when the most recent publication of the Arizona Wing, Commemorative Air Force (once known as the Confederate Air Force) arrived, our whole being began to vibrate and to send signals out to look and read carefully.

The front bore a familiar picture of a B-17 diving across the cover. Perhaps that gave us a real signal that there was more to appreciate inside, and riffling a page or two ahead, there it was, beginning with a brief one-pager on the evolution of the B-17 from that first Boeing test plane and progressing through the G model.

The F and G models were "our" airplanes, sleek in camouflage paint, but exquisite in natural aluminum.

By the time we had read it plans began to develop about how we could use it. Then, it was to the 306th telephone in my study and a call to the Arizona Wing, where I got to Bill Morgan, the head man of that operation.

My proposition to him was that I would like very much to use the pages out of this magazine as reprints in Echoes. Part of my motivation was that we have a fund to provide color in Echoes each issue. Most of us are aware that color photography was a rare

occurrence during WWII. Kodachrome from Eastman Kodak Co., had first come into being in 1936, but by the time of the war it had not become a normal thing to use, and very little of the film was available. But it did come, and we had a little bit at Thurleigh. It was difficult to process, among other things.

One of the editor's great possessions is a role of kodachrome film which came to him from Ben Marcilonis, a 367th welder, who had distinguished himself earlier in assisting in the development of a nose gun mount. He received a Legion of Merit for that work.

Marcilonis revealed that someone had sent him this role of film, and that he used it in early May 1945 on one of the postwar flights made over European targets for enlisted personnel who were not fliers. He brought the film home, and we would venture that he forgot about it for a long period. Once he found it he didn't know what to do about.

Finally he sent it to the editor and he was afraid to take it to the corner drugstore for fear that the images would be lost in processing. His recall brought to mind that a brother-in-law had mentioned serving on a committee with the top financial man for Eastman. I called my brother-in-law and he was willing to send it on to the friend for a "Kodak" treatment.

A month or so later I got an envelope

turn to page 3

Walk, Ride and See our host City's Treasures

So, you've come to Savannah!

And now what can you do? Check into the Marriott Hotel is one of the first things on your list. Get your room assigned, check it out, hang up your reunion duds.

Take a walk around the hotel: main lobby level, your floor, and the mezzanine level. This is where a lot of the eating takes place in a delightful room that extends along the river side of the hotel. Breakfasts are great, and if they seem a bit high for your taste, eat there once, and then find other less expensive places. They are around within a few blocks of the hotel.

There is much to see within an easy walk of the hotel on several levels. Good eating, good shopping and a chance to look at one of the very oldest cities in North America. It is quaint, it is cosmopolitan, there is much to see and do, and a carriage ride through some of the areas will sell you on the city. But you have to get out of the hotel and your room if you are to appreciate everything around you.

If you have Methodist leanings, this is where John and Charles Wesley tried their wings as preachers before hurrying back to England.

Unfortunately, you cannot walk to the Museum from the Hotel. But you can easily spend a whole day poking through displays, sit through a briefing and then "fly a mission". This will be great to tell your grandchildren about.

Good meals in the hotel and elsewhere, good visiting with old friends and the "new" people you can easily hob-nob with on a bus trip around the city, someone to walk the downtown with you, someone to trade missions with. All of these will help make Savannah a friendly place for you.

306th people are at home, in Savannah, and on British tours have always become good friends. Give some a try.

After a day at the Museum on Thursday, there will be opportunities Friday to take Savannah into your heart, by touring around the city, and by walking in various sections. Moving out from Bay Street, you can walk through a number of residential blocks which have interesting old houses, and various connections that may have touched you in some way or another.

The Girl Scouts, the Owen-Thomas House and Museum, and also the house mentioned often in the novel "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil", all have connections in these squares. In the September issue we will include a map of downtown Savannah so that you will have an ample guide as to where you should walk.

Our last Savannah reunion happened while "Midnight in the Garden ..." was high on the best seller lists. And tours were offered through the city, the cemeteries and other places mentioned in the book. Now more time has elapsed so you should have no trouble getting a copy at your local library, which will enable you to catch up on Savannah lore, whether true or fictional.

Along the waterfront, almost at the front door of our hotel is lots of shopping, walking, eating, and you can do your best at playing "tourist".

Come see us in Savannah!

Obituaries

Ethan A. Allen, 369th pilot, died 24 Jun 03 in Morrisville, VT. He joined the Group 15 May 44 and finished his 34 missions 7 Sep 44. Allen retired as a personnel supervisor for New England Telephone in 1979. He leaves his wife, Margaret, 2s, 4gc.

Benjamin F. Balkum, 449th Subdepot and the Prop Shop, died 8 Jul 2003 in the VA Hospital, Iron Mountain, MI, after a year's illness. He had lived his entire life in nearby Norway, MI, retiring in 1976 from Northland Wholesale Grocers. He joined the 306th 9 Oct 42, just after the Group arrived in England, and left 10 Oct 45. Ben's wife was a British war bride from St. Noets, and survives him along with 11c, 21gc, 11ggc.

Oscar B. Bourn, 368th copilot and POW, died 11 May 2003 in Meridian, TX. He was in the pilot class 43-G at Waco, TX, and joined the 306th 18 Nov 43 as copilot for J. Ray Coleman. He flew 12 missions and the Coleman crew went down 25 Aug 44 en route to Augsburg, Germany. After his release from POW camp he enrolled at U-Houston, earning his BS in 1950 and an MS at Northwestern University in 1952. Bourn retired from Chevron Corp USA in 1978 and then worked his 2500-acre ranch at Meridian. He leaves his wife, Ruth, no c.

Joseph S. Belker, 369th radio operator (Roy Trask crew), died 10 Nov 1991 in Quincy, IL, where he lived following the war. He joined our Group 1 Sep 44, completing his tour and departing 16 Jan 45.

Joseph C. F. Fowler, 367th navigator, died 18 May 03 in Houston, TX.

Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister, 367th pilot and longtime Squadron Operations officer, died 1 Dec 02 in Tacoma, WA. He spent a year at the Pasadena Playhouse before entering the Air Corps. He arrived with the Group 4 May 43 and became the 95th officer to complete a tour with the 306th 1 Feb 44. Din was A Flight commander. He departed for the States 4 Oct

44. Later he became the first paid director of the Tacoma Little Theatre, in 1948, until appointment as a producer and director for KTNT-TV. Five years later he moved to the Tacoma News-Tribune as promotions director, retiring in 1982. His duties there included the direction of the Tacoma Soap Box Derby annually, and was a national director for the organization. He was heavily involved in the 306th reunion at Seattle in 1993. He leaves his wife, Mary, 3c, 5gc.

Jason C. Hurd, 423rd ball turret gunner (Earle Schafer crew), died 1 Feb 98 in Austin, TX. He came to the 306th 11 Dec 44 and flew until the end of the war, not quite completing a tour. He leaves his wife, Mary, a British war bride.

Albert F. Marenholz, 369th engineer (Bill Hilton's crew), died 28 Sep 2001 after failing to recover from complications of open heart surgery. After service his interest in horses and his abilities as a polo player, brought him professional status in the sport. For 17 years he was coach of the Yale University Polo Team. He had come to the 306th 29 Oct 43 and completed his tour about the end of the year. He leaves his wife, June, 1d, 2gs.

Herman L. Mitchell, a truck driver assigned to base headquarters, died 3 Nov 02 in Clinton, TN. He had worked for Union Carbide for 25 years, and leaves his wife Juanita, 1d, 1gd, 1ggd.

Denzil L. Parker, 367th radio operator, (Homer Cruze crew), died 3 May 2003 in Concord, CA. He spent 30 days with the 306th on detached service from 1 Bomb Division.

Herbert W. Vetterman, a control tower operator, died 14 Jul 2003 in Liverpool, NY, where he had moved in the last few weeks to be near a daughter. He came to the 306th 7 Jun 43 and departed 27 Dec 45. He was also called back during the Korean Conflict to serve in the Air Defense Command. For some years he worked in the family textile business. Herb leaves his wife, Ethel, 2d, 1gc.

306th Family

Marnie Bowles, wife of Douglas Bowles, 367th radio operator, died 15 Apr 2004 in Wolfeboro, NH. She had been co-editor with her husband of the "Diary of New Hampshire ex-POWs", published in 1990.

Mary Lenaghan, widow of James B. Lenaghan, died 22 Mar 03 in Brunswick, OH. Jim had died 18 Jan 02, having been an original EM with the Group who switched to combat in Feb 44, flying 22 missions. She was also the mother of Marty Lenaghan, a frequent reunion attendee who is now handling our merchandise, as well as being in charge of many aspects of our 2003 Savannah reunion.

Barbara Witt, widow of LTC Thomas F. Witt, 367th pilot and Group operations officer, died 17 Jun 2003 in Glen Burnie, MD. He had died 29 Oct 95 in the Waco VA Hospital. She was chief cryptography code clerk in the US Embassy, London, during WWII, and they were married in London in 1945. Barbara leaves 2s, 4gc.

Tracie Young, widow of Wallace W. Young, 369th pilot, died in Dec 2002. He had died in Oct 61. She leaves 2s, 1gs.

Saluting Hope's 100th

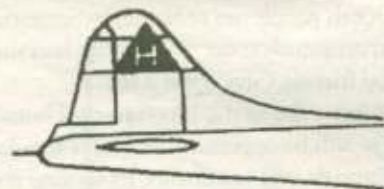


What role did our Fran Waugh, a senior photographer at Thurligh play, in the recent 100th birthday celebration of Bob Hope?

This visit was on 8 July 1943, and Waugh took the picture of Hope and his entourage at Thurligh. This same photo was trotted out again this month and was seen in the Coloradoan Newspaper, again supplied to them by Fran.

And in the picture below, some other picture snapper from our base took the photo below of Frances Langford, Waugh is the admiring GI wearing a jacket, to her left.

We'd like to know who the other GI's were, and would be happy to run this photo again with proper identification. Yes, we know which one was Langford and Fran's grin gives him away. Send your list of names, left to right, to the editor.



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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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).

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

Name: _____

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

New Treat,
continued from page 1

with color slides in it and a set of color photos made from that aged Kodachrome. It is still in the possession of the editor and will eventually be archived at the Mighty Eighth Museum that we all will be visiting in December.

We are also interested in acquiring color photos any of you may have from Thurleigh, or of prints that have been "colorized" to use in future issues of Echoes. Color photos of anything just make it more interesting.

While all of us are nearing the end of our travels on earth, the B-17 has almost disappeared from the scene. Now it lives in a few memories, in a lot of books, myriad magazine and journal tales. I don't know about you but I would rather not fly in a plane that saw its first days when I was about 12 years old.

And as we were fighting our way through high school, the B-17 was into the growing pains of becoming a full fledged military aircraft. Those early ones went to the far reaches of the Pacific, with only a few returning.

A few early models went to England where they did not win many bouquets. But they aged well and with basic modifications aided the British in the early stages, and they used some later on for Cycle Relay and other activities not in direct confrontation with the enemy.

Our F and G models continued to undergo modifications during the war: at Langford Lodge in Ireland, at various stations in England, and finally on the more than 35 bomber bases we occupied for operations.

Brits often said the 17 was the best plane they flew during the war, and Americans tended to agree.

In the last few days, looking ahead to further issues of Echoes, I have arranged for a color rendition of a 306th B-17 that was painted for David Wheeler, 369th pilot, and still hangs in the offices of his auto dealership in Yuba City, CA. (n.b. Dave is retired and his two sons run the business).

Emboldened by that success, I found a phone number for The Wings Club in New York City. I think at one time we ran a black and white rendition of one of our B-17s in Echoes. I chatted with the manager of the club and he revealed that their old collection of paintings had been put in storage several years ago, but that color copies had been made of all planes, and as soon as he learns how to identify a B-17 he will send along a picture of another B-17 of ours.

These paintings and others we have collected will be merged before long in an Echoes edition that will also include paintings by our president, Lee Kessler. One of his appeared on the book jacket of the two hard cover editions of *First Over Germany*, and the same print is used on the cover of the paperback edition of that book. Life Magazine in its archives, should have several color paintings made during WWII that are 306th identifiable.

If you have or have seen any such art, please contact the editor and help us get copies that we can use. Has a wife or some of your children done any such paintings?

Wonderful B-17,
continued from page 1

job he was assigned to. Splat! C'est la guerre!

Some of our badly damaged planes which made it home became hangar queens and were stripped of parts so that other planes could fly. There was also a matter of planes being sent off to other suffering groups to help them fill out their formations. Bill Cavaness, 368th line chief, told of a plane under his care which was a gas hog among other shortcomings. It could be assured of getting home only if he managed to get extra fuel (200 or 300 gallons) into it. They had another plane that went from one

B-17 Flying Fortress Evolution

B-17B

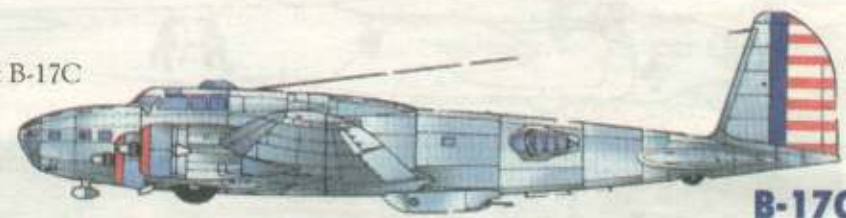
This was the first production model, flown on June 27, 1939. Thirty-nine were built, powered by four R-1820-51 engines, giving it a maximum speed of 292 mph at 25,000 feet.



B-17B

B-17C

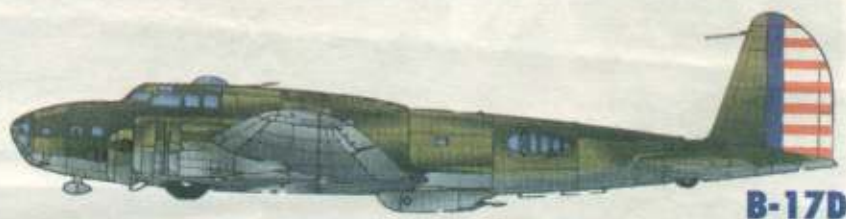
Fitted with a large "bathtub" lower gun position, the first B-17C flew on July 21, 1940. Twenty were delivered to England as Fortress Is. Equipped with self-sealing fuel tanks and crew armor, the four R-1820-65 engines gave it a top speed of 323 mph at altitude.



B-17C

B-17D

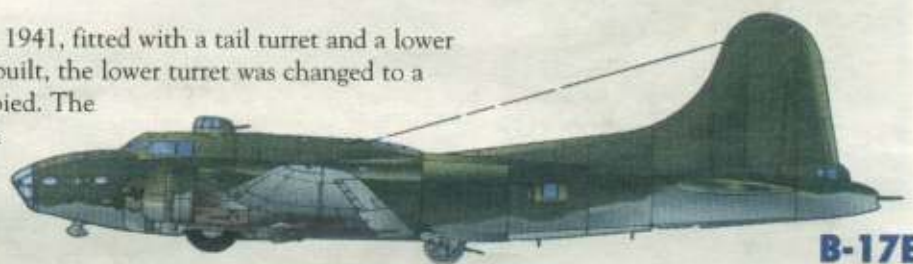
Forty-two B-17D's were similar to the C model, with the addition of cowl flaps, an extra crew member and other internal changes. Both models saw combat in the Pacific following Pearl Harbor.



B-17D

B-17E

The first of over 500 B-17E's flew on September 5, 1941, fitted with a tail turret and a lower remote-controlled gun turret. After 112 had been built, the lower turret was changed to a Sperry ball turret, which the gunner actually occupied. The addition of a larger tail structure made the B-17E a more stable bombing platform. This model was the first to see action in Europe with American crews.



B-17E

B-17F

Increased fuel capacity (called "Tokyo tanks"), wider-blade propellers and a molded plexiglas nose were just some of the changes incorporated in the first B-17F when it entered production in April 1942. Over 3,400 were built with the R-1820-97 engines giving it a top speed of 299 mph at 25,000 feet. Cruising speed however, was only about 160mph. B-17F's bore the brunt of the U.S. bombing offensive in Europe in 1943, but were vulnerable to head-on attacks by fighters.



B-17F

B-17G

The B-17G saw the addition of a powered chin turret in the nose and a new tail turret with an improved field of fire and reflector gun sight. Top speed was 287 mph, with a range of 2,000 miles, and a 6,000 pound bomb load. The B-17G was the most produced model of the Flying Fortress with over 8,600 being built.



B-17G

squadron to another on our base because of its bad flying habits. No one seemed able to work out the bad habits this craft was saddled with. Crews liked it like the plague, and on one of those days when the 306th was ordered to send off several planes to the less fortunate, that non-flyer headed the list, and it was gone. Bill said they hoped another group had a genius who could cure it of its bad habits. One of the gas hogs, after much pleading with Wing and Division operations people for the extra fuel to get it home, didn't make it back across the Channel and we lost a plane and a crew because of some hard-nosed non-flier's refusal to head off the loss when he could have.

We lost our first plane on the trip across the pond off the Coast of Greenland. A second plane made it to a fairly smooth ditching off Northern Ireland. And that fuselage has now been found and may be raised at some later date if the necessary funds can be raised for such an enterprise.

So, out of those first 35 planes the 306th received, only 33 were ready for combat. And then we lost one on the first mission and a couple of others were badly battered. Our luck did not run well through to the end of 1942, and we lost more than could be replaced easily.

The pipeline for planes and crews only operated at a trickle and it was April 1943 before we began to get either commodity in larger quantities, but new planes did come and by September 1943 the B-17G was replacing the dun-colored B-17E. It was

concluded that B-17s required 500 pounds of paint for camouflage, and was there any real need to camouflage 500 or a thousand bombers at 25,000 or more feet in altitude? The quick answer was "No", so a few late model Fs joined a rapidly increasing flow of silver G models to England.

As one of the crew chiefs told me, it didn't make any real difference because the F model and the G model were essentially

the same plane. While most of the WWII combat planes went through serial changes to as many as 10 to 12 models, the B-17 showed its class by putting only two models into combat from the beginning to the end, a remarkable showing and a tribute to the Boeing engineers who conceived and executed the plane. Were still in love with the B-17 Flying Fortress, and we hope that you are too!

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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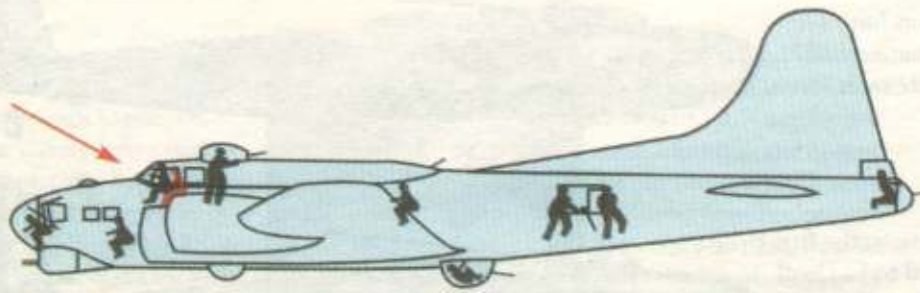
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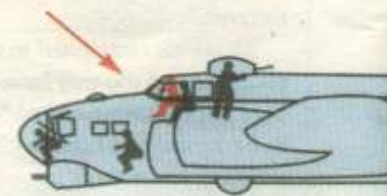
DATE _____

Pilot

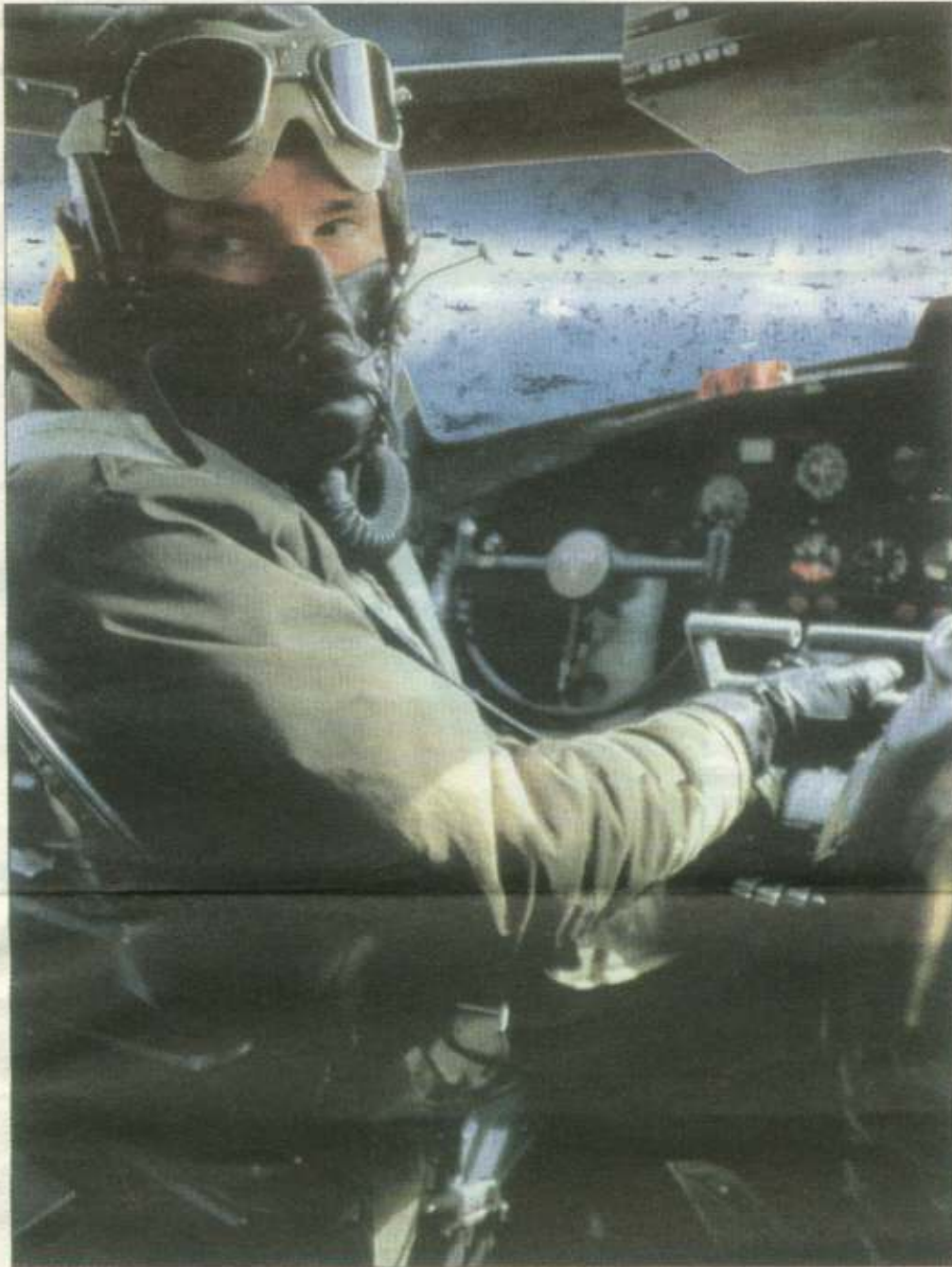
Pilot



Co-Pilot



This pilot gives the tower a "Buzz Job" after completing his 25th and final mission.



The pilot had to have good leadership skills for the crew to develop as a team and depend on one another, which was vital in emergencies.

The pilot of the B-17 was the "aircraft commander." Typically, he was a 21 year old, newly introduced to

military life, as was the rest of the crew. He had just graduated from flight training school with little flight time

and no experience. His job was to physically fly the airplane. He was assisted in doing this by the co-pilot assigned to the crew. Both pilots were expected to know the operational characteristics of the B-17 and the functioning of all its systems.

The pilot was also charged with ensuring that the training syllabus set up for the crew was accomplished and that each member of the crew received the training required.

The pilot was responsible for the individual operation of each and every flight the crew conducted, whether in the training phase or on combat missions. The course of action taken in any emergency was his decision to make. If time permitted, it was made with input from the pertinent crew members. In many instances the urgency of the situation did not permit such input until after the fact.

The combat crew of a B-17, or any other multiple crew aircraft, developed a rapport and a camaraderie; the tone of which was set, to a large degree, by the crew's pilot.



Cadets learned the skill of formation flying early in flight school.



Close formation flying or flying a damaged Fortress

The Fortress, like other American medium and heavy bombers, was designed to carry two pilots, a requirement of all multi-engined US Army aircraft. Other airforces considered this waste of skilled manpower but the policy was thoroughly proven by the Americans in combat. The rigors of close formation flying for long periods of time would place tremendous physical and mental strain on a single pilot. For that reason alone the co-pilot or "guy in the right seat" was essential. There were many occasions when one pilot became a battle casualty and the presence of the second pilot saved the crew as well as the aircraft.

Prior to the start of a mission, after ground inspection of the airplane, the crew would wait for the signal from the

"That's Flak!" Startles Newcomer on first/last mission

By Myron Sorden

I overslept on my second morning at Thurleigh. One of my crew members woke me up and told me "they" wanted me. I was to substitute for a navigator who had grounded himself, and be the first mission up on the rest of my regular crew.

I had not time for breakfast, but the jeep driver taking me out to the plane gave me a piece of coffee cake. I climbed aboard the B-17 as one engine was being started, and met the toggler, Sgt. Eugene Levy, also on his first mission. A few minutes later we were joined in the nose by Captain Paul George, the group assistant engineering officer. He was an old guy of 43. He brought some flak vests with him.

I remember seeing some P-47s over the Channel. Also I had taken a couple of sun fixes and was plotting the course of our flight. At ten thousand feet, pilot Thomas Ledgerwood said to put on the oxygen masks. While we were over the Channel and approaching the coast of Holland, Capt. George said to put on the flak suits. Shortly after this I commented to

Ledgerwood over the interphone that I had never seen so many small black clouds. He asked how many missions I had been on.

I replied, "None."
I heard over the interphone, "That's flak!"

Shortly afterwards, German ME-109s were coming through our Group. With three men in the nose, each firing a .50 caliber machine gun, it was very noisy, and with the spent shells on the floor, it was hard to stand up. After we had left the Initial Point on the way to the target an ME-109 came directly at our nose.

Sgt. Levy screamed, "I got him!"
The fighter blew up not too far from our plane. Whether Levy got it, I cannot say, but someone did.

Anyway at this time, Levy hit the toggle switch, intentionally or accidentally, in his excitement. Russ Strong's history of the 306th Group, First Over Germany, says that all planes dropped their bombs after the deputy lead plane dropped theirs for some unexplained reason.

We were the deputy lead. Our crew had limited combat experience. There was Pilot

Ledgerwood on his seventh or eighth (Ed. note: "fifth") mission, but his first after several months of convalescence recovering from a broken arm. John Acker, copilot, was on his first mission; Levy and I were on our first; Capt. George on his second or third mission, probably without authorization for any of them. Four gunners were from one crew, the rest of the six on their crew were sick. I don't have information on the other two gunners. My question is: Why were we flying deputy lead for the Group?

Over the target area a plane from our Group was there, and suddenly debris was hitting our aircraft and that plane was gone. Five gunners did get out alive from a crew on their 24th mission. Our plane was hit by rockets from an ME-110, damaging one or two engines, and the Tokyo tank on the right wing tip was streaming fire.

After leaving the formation we became target practice for several fighter planes. Ledgerwood said he was going to dive and see if he could put out the fire and maybe shake the fighters. I can't remember the air speed but do remember that I knew he

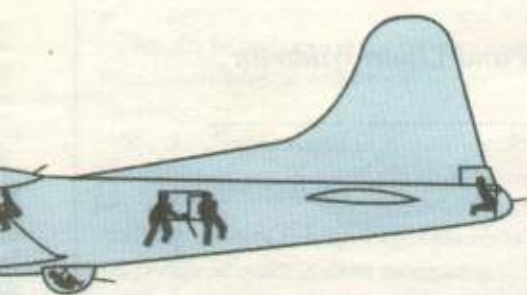
couldn't pull the plane out at that speed. Everyone in the nose was quiet and there was no chatter on the phone. Everyone was just waiting to die. I had heard that your life flashes before you at times like that. I remember only thinking of my wife and my high school sweetheart. Gradually the nose started to come up and we heard the order to bail out. The B-17 was a great plane. The fire was still with us, but the enemy fighters were gone.

I made an entry in the log book, "Bailing Out, 3:41 p.m."

I took off my flak suit, which had been torn apart when I had been hit earlier by a shell. From the position I was standing and the hole in the plane, it would probably have hit my heart. Thank you, Capt. George, for bringing the suits. I reached for a parachute, making sure it didn't have any shell holes.

Before jumping, I made sure my hand was on the rip cord. After free falling for some time, I couldn't believe the quietness. I didn't even hear the engines on our plane. I wondered for a second if the plane had exploded and I was in heaven. But blue sky

Co-Pilot



required the skills of both pilots.

tower to start the engines. Once the signal was received the co-pilot would read the prestart check. Upon completion of the checklist the co-pilot would prime and start each engine. The engines would be warmed up at 1000 rpm. Prop feathering was checked at 1500 rpm. Each engine was then run up to test magnetos and turbos.

As the B-17's started moving into position the crew would be watching for the tail number of the aircraft they would follow for take-off. Once their assigned plane was spotted the co-pilot would release the parking brake and roll on to the taxiway. The tail wheel lock situated on the cockpit floor was operated by the co-pilot and would have to be unlocked and locked often during taxiing, particularly on curved perimeter taxiways.

ission

and white clouds were above me and green landscape was far below. I had no sensation of falling after I was away from the plane, so my thoughts were on escape. I decided to delay opening the chute and get to the ground sooner. Shortly I could see the horizon changing more rapidly so I decide now was the time to pull the rip cord.

Then I felt a jolt that made me think my back was broken. I was really unhappy and wished I had stayed in the plane. I assumed that when I hit the ground it would finish the back and I would be paralyzed.

Two fighter planes headed toward me. That took my thoughts away from my back. I tried to take evasive action by tugging on the parachute ropes but I'm sure that didn't help. Instead of shooting at me they went on either side of me and one waved as he went past. They knew I wasn't going anywhere except onto the soil of the Fatherland.

Our plane was flying in a circle around me and finally took a long glide into a field below me. When I came down, landing in a plowed field, I could feel the heat from the burning B-17. By this time my back was



The flying ability of the pilots was often tested to safely bring home a damaged bomber and its crew.

When their time came for take off, the pilot would line up the plane and the co-pilot would lock the tail wheel. At this critical stage, the co-pilot had to keep his eyes on the instruments, as the pilot advanced the throttles. The co-pilot followed through with the throttle controls, taking them over from the pilot as soon as maximum power was reached. Normally, with a full bomb load, every bit of runway was used.

After takeoff, the pilot would call for gear up and as the co-pilot actuated the landing gear switch, he would also apply the brakes to stop the wheels from spinning. Once assembled in the formation, the co-pilot normally flew the plane as much as the pilot. The pilot in command had to have his eyes glued to his lead aircraft, even during fighter attacks and flak. The pilot that wasn't flying monitored the instruments and intercom.

After the bombing run on the return leg from the mission and when out of danger, the formation could loosen up. In the landing pattern, the co-pilot lowered the gear and flaps for touch down. Upon reaching the dispersal point the co-pilot would verify that all switches were off before leaving the aircraft.



Pilots had to fly tight formations with the B-17 if they were to survive in combat.

relaxed and the landing was not bad.

After rolling over when I hit the ground and struggling to get the parachute under control, I gathered the chute in my arms and went into some woods. About this time there were screams from children, and looking toward them it was evident that they were watching the parachutes come down. I counted six before going deeper into the woods. I got out the escape kit and put some sulfa powder on cuts on thumb and knee. I tore a strip of my handkerchief to wrap around the thumb and put a band aid on my leg.

I knew that we were southwest of Bremen and I should be near the Holland border. I was very thirsty, and as it was beginning to get dark, I started walking west. About 15 minutes later I came upon a stream. I took the pouch from the escape kit and filled it and took a drink. I couldn't wait for the pills to work, I did use them when I refilled the bag to carry. I figured the water was safe because cows were drinking downstream. Just before dark, I saw some carrots in a garden, so one became my dinner. Most of the dirt came off.

Father, Son at Thurleigh

My Dad did not come to Thurleigh to welcome me to the 8th Air Force, and we doubt very much that anyone, except Dudley Fay, had a visit from a parent. There was a story current in mid 44 that an infantry officer brother came to visit, and brother combinations, even twins, were not unknown.

But, Dudley Fay's father came to see him. Dudley, Sr. had earned his pilot's wings in WWI. After his son was shot down, his father wangled permission to fly, and did five missions with the 8th. At Widewing, 8th AF headquarters, the father was a statistical control officer, supplying a flow of information on aircraft availability and possibilities to the commanders. He received a promotion to colonel and Gen. James Doolittle pinned a Legion of Merit on him.

Dudley, Jr., arrived with the 369th as a navigator on Craig Powell's crew 13 Sep 43. He went down 11 Dec 43, his 11th mission, to Emden and with J. P. Noack's crew.

The father also had his moments of excitement, flying with a Third Division group on the ill-fated shuttle mission to Russia. The Germans followed the American bombers into Poltava and proceeded to destroy many of our unprotected aircraft. He made his way back to

England and further duty, coming through Moscow and Egypt.

At 8AF, Fay had a young executive officer, Robert S. McNamara. "Dad" decided not to go with the Whiz Kids after WWII into their executive jobs at Ford Motor Co. Instead, he served in governmental posts until retirement, and then died in the early 1960's.

Our Dudley went into advertising in the East after the war, later moved to the West Coast and became a stockbroker. Now legally blind, he has returned to Connecticut to live.



Dudley Fay, father & son

Now I was getting more confidence and I walked on to the next road. So far I had not seen a human. It was moonlit and I saw a person coming on a bicycle. I couldn't get out of sight so I kept going, with a passing thought of trying to get the bicycle from her. All went well until I was approaching a village.

Two soldiers met me, and said something I didn't understand.

I answered, "Ya."

They went on.

With blackout the village was as dark as the countryside. Shortly after passing through the village, I saw a truck coming. I got in the ditch and it passed. With the headlights blacked out except for a small hole, they didn't have much vision except straight ahead. I continued along the road until coming to a T road, so then I started across country again.

Clouds were moving in and I was getting very sleepy at 3:30 a.m. I lay down on the ground and sleep came very quickly. I awakened shaking from the cold. It was beginning to get light so I got up. Two or three feet ahead of me was a drainage ditch, four or five feet wide. A three-foot stick didn't touch bottom. If I had fallen in before deciding to sleep I might have drowned. I couldn't swim and I panicked in water at that time. I still do.

I entered the next road I came to. Shortly thereafter I came to a farmhouse that had three five-or-six gallon cans of milk waiting to be picked up. I was tempted to empty them but was afraid of being caught and also knew all the hard work of milking the cows, having grown up on a farm. With daylight approaching, it was time to leave the highway.

I soon came to the Dortmund-Ems Canal. Barges and boats were going every few minutes in both directions. Luck was with me because I spotted a boat shed. However, it had a padlock. No problems, the escape kit had a file. It wouldn't even make a scratch! None of the boards were rotten enough to break. I peeked through the cracks and it looked like a nice boat in there. Too bad I couldn't get at it.

Starting north, I came to a bridge a mile or so away. I had observed that there was very little traffic over the bridge. I didn't

think anyone on the river would wonder about me being there, so I watched until the road was clear and made a dash over the bridge. I could not see traffic coming from the west because road turned north.

It was about noon after I crossed the bridge. I hid in some bushes along the west end of the bridge until I knew that I had a clear path to the field west of the north-south road. This was home for some hogs. Now my hopes of reaching Holland were getting higher. This was farming territory and I went past some trees and saw a woman digging potatoes. She ignored me.

About two-thirty I noticed a man in black uniform heading the opposite way, about two hundred yards to my right. I tried not to look at him but out of the corner of my eye I could see that he kept glancing at me. After about 10 minutes, I came to a pine forest. When I last looked back, he was still looking at me. I then ran as far as I could. Again I came back to farm land and passed by a village of six or seven houses.

About a mile further on I came to a river. It was quite wide, perhaps a hundred feet, but I could see where horses and wagons had driven through it. I walked across. It came to the top of my pinks. The water was cold but very clear, so I filled my bag and put in purifying tablets.

By now the sun was getting lower and the air was cool on my wet clothes. After about a mile I came to a field with grazing cattle. Walking across the field, I headed for a three-sided foundation of a bygone shed. Suddenly I noticed a farm wagon going down the road. Next a farmer was coming to get the cows. I was sure I was in Holland but was still hesitant to be found. I walked to the foundation and got inside. The farmer got his cows and headed west. He hadn't seen me.

The man on the wagon was now coming toward me when I sneaked a look over the foundation. I started to run but my football knee quit on me. The farmer took off his wooden shoe—now I knew I was in Holland—and was using it as protection in case I tried to tangle with him.

"Holland-Netherlands?" I asked.

"Ja!"

Victory for Dr. Victory In New Park

It would appear that four trips in the back end of a B-17 was enough to turn Dr. Luther Victory into a professional veteran—that is, his own personal experiences in combat and his time as POW set up the rest of his life for him as one who wanted desperately to help those who needed him most.

Luther came to the 306th on 5 Apr 44, a fateful time to appear, because it was in less than three weeks before our planes and others from the 8th went into Southern Germany hunting aircraft assembly and parts plants, with the 369th one of our four squadrons headed to Oberpfaffenhofen.

We took 18 planes down across Europe, and left 10 of them there, mostly victims of intense fighter attacks. Carroll Biggs had arrived with his crew of which Luther was the tail gunner. They got in three missions and were then overwhelmed on the 24th. They got hit on the first big fighter assault as "Misscarriage" lost its #3 and #4 engines and flames spread across the entire right wing. Biggs ordered everyone out, and shortly after the pilot took to the silk, the craft exploded nearby.



After a stint in POW camps in Germany, he went home to Baytown, TX. Then he got some education and opened his practice as a podiatrist. He graduated from Baylor University in 1948, then went on to the Illinois College of Podiatry.

As the veterans' movement strengthened nationally and with the maturity that age brings, Luther went on to tasks closer to the plight of many veterans. He became

president of the Stalag Luft XVIII B Association, representing thousands of POWs. He also served as commander of the American Ex-Pows, Department of Texas in 1986-87, and then was commander of the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Texas, 1997-98.

These kinds of situations brought him into the arena of honoring veterans for what they had done for their nation and for those POWs who came home with serious afflictions that demanded attention from the Veterans Administration or other agencies.

Luther is suffering from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) and is in and out of the hospital, whatever his condition permits.



In 1999, Dr. Luther Victory dreamed of a paza surrounding the monument and began to raise the funds. He shared his dream with individuals and groups and obtained a promise of matching funds from the City of Baytown and Harris County. After months of hard work and perseverance, he saw his dream become a reality.

That's Flak, continued from page 5

He had left his 10-12 year old boy in the wagon. I went with him trying to say I wanted clothing and food. I was using the dictionary in the escape kit.

Every answer was "Ja"

When we got to the wagon I said "Germany?" and pointed down.

The boy pointed east. I must be in Holland. There had been no conversation between the father and boy. I gave the boy the chocolate bar from my escape kit. He gave me a green apple. I ate it. I had been saving the bar for hard times.

We went back across the river exactly where I had waded and then to the village that I had passed by earlier in the afternoon. When we arrived at the village, he motioned me to go with his boy. It was almost dark by now. We went in the house. The woman had me take off my flying coveralls and pinks, and shoes and put them by the oven door to dry. She then fried some boiled potatoes for me.

The boy just sat and watched. Finally some French workers came in, saluted me and left. By this time my clothes, shoes and socks were about dry. Next, another

Frenchman came in who saluted and thanked me in English. His mother was a Canadian. He said they were all prisoners of war doing farm labor. He had escaped twice but had been recaptured. Then he told me they were guarding the house and that the army was coming to get me. He told me that we were in Germany, about two miles from the Dutch border. I asked him to help me escape, that the United States would pay him.

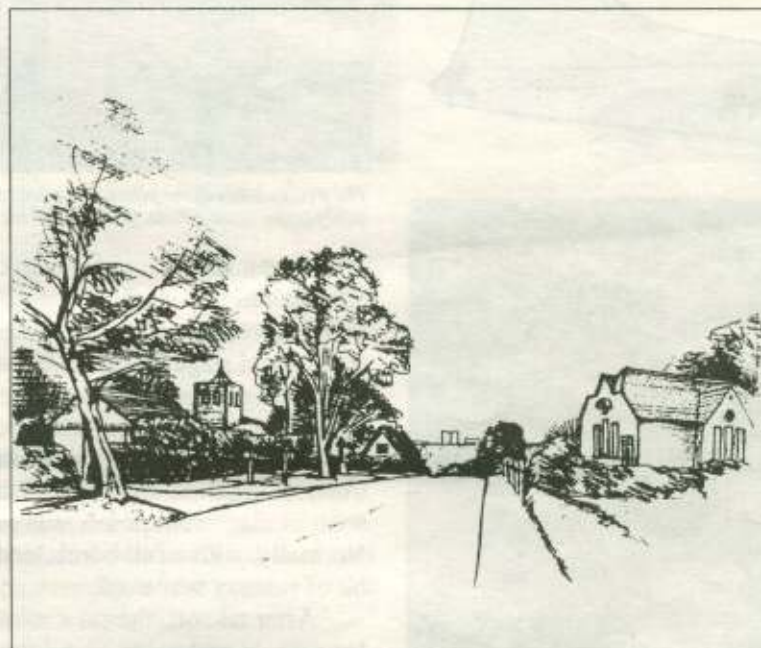
He told me not to worry, the U. S. fliers were in a good camp, no work and there was a radio. Also the war would be over by Christmas, not saying the year. He saluted and left.

The table was set for three, but the father did not come in. About seven o'clock, a non German came to take me. He had a German Shepherd dog. We walked for over two hours, but at least he had to push the bicycle. At a small army post, he turned me over to a corporal who put me in the side car of a motorcycle. We traveled for about 25 miles to a larger army post. It was quite a thrill on narrow, winding and hilly roads with a blackout headlight.

A few days later I was at Dulag Luft, where I met pilot Thomas Ledgerwood face to face for the very first time.

Thurleigh Through the Years

Compiled by Judy Stanton and Lilian Wildman



Research and text: Lilian Wildman
Cover illustration: Judith Armstrong

Booklet Relates Thurleigh Story

A 120-page book of pictures and text about Thurleigh and its 20th century history, but unfortunately, the book fails to provide an address for securing one, nor does it list the price.

If you spent a lot of time at Thurleigh in WWII you may find it interesting reading, and pictures show tools and dishes dating back to Roman times.

It was done by two local women, and is one of those valuable little collections of data on a small part of our world.

306th MAIL ORDER MEMORABILIA

Send this form and check to 306th Bomb Group Association to: Marty Lenaghan, PO Box 918, Brunswick, OH 44212

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
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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#

___ 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

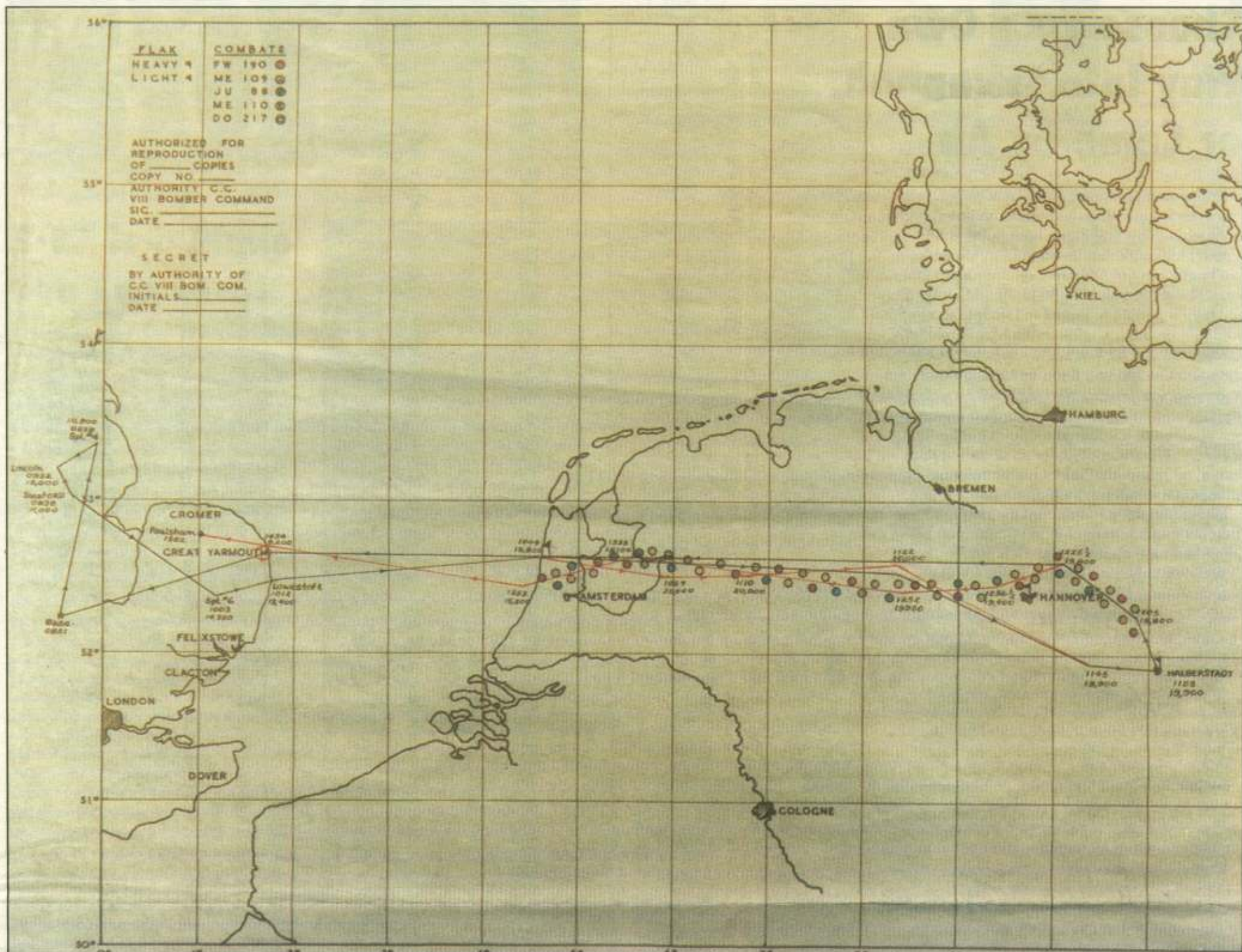
___ B-17 Gold pin for lapel or hat	\$6.00
___ 306th decal w/First over Germany	\$.50
___ 306th Coasters, metal, black & silver, set of 4	\$4.00

Total

SHIPPING AND HANDLING CHARGE \$6.00

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Once again we look at the fateful mission to Halberstadt, 11 January 1944. It cost us five aircraft down and 43 crew members killed. On the map, the colors will show you tracks in and out, and the colored circles show you what kind of enemy planes were attacking.



44-6515 came to the Group 10 Sep 44 and completed its wartime missions, then went to the 381st Bomb Group. Nelson Ake was its crew chief. Note the patched flak holes in the vertical stabilizer. The red flashing marks it as a 367th plane.

Choose Your Own Way Into Savannah, or Come by Air

Several years ago we ran a cartoon of an aging war veteran sitting in his living room in his reunion "uniform", packed and ready to go. (That might have been any of us.)

And his spouse enters the room to say something such, "Aren't you in a bit of a rush? Your reunion doesn't begin for another week!) Now this writer believes that could be any of us, but our real hope is you will be packed and ready to go a day or two in advance, depending on how far you have to travel.

Savannah is in the lower right extremity of Georgia, just over the South Carolina line, if you are heading south. That pretty well covers you if you are traveling down I-95, or you may have slipped over a bit to US-17, which is more coastal in its approach and would bring you down through Charleston. If you are coming in on '17, you may choose to go all the way until you have crossed the spectacular bridge over the Savannah river. It is not an approach usually jam packed with cars.

If you come across I-10 through the Gulf Coast area, you may want to swing north onto I-95 as you approach Jacksonville, which likely will also be used by Floridians.

And then if the mid-South approach is your desire you may may take I-20 or I-75 into Atlanta, down to Macon pick up I-16 which comes directly into downtown Savannah. Either of the two approaches will take you to Bay St., and you just continue down Bay Street until you see the Marriott Savannah Hotel and drive in there.

It really is no matter how you come, but just do so and get there for the early festivities, then a day at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Center and talk a lot of WWII.

You know, some doubters may look a bit askance at you as you relate those WWII adventures of yours, whether they occurred in combat, on the hardstands, in downtown Bedford or Piccadilly Circus. Just keep on talking and you'll spawn some more stories that you never heard before, and a few of which may just have popped into the speaker's mind.

Just be careful, don't suddenly become an expert on events which happened before your arrival at Thurligh, and you may also have to take on an eyewitness to an event that you may not really recall very well. Of course, as many will have passed their 80th birthdays by the time they get to Savannah (mine won't occur until I have been back home for four months), but we must all remember we are with friends and most anything goes.

And we must also remember that our wives have been listening to our tales for many years, and as one lady once said she knew all of the stories, but as her husband related them she had long ago noted that the cast of characters had undergone numerous changes.

If you haven't been to a reunion yet, its never too late to start. Get there, get a name tag, and you'll soon become a regular. AND, they haven't heard your stories yet so you can inject some "new" information into the discussions.

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