

A Reunion Peek



An excited "team" of cowboys and horses at the Museum.



George and Elizabeth Stephens dine with Ralph and Daphne Franklin.

COMBAT CREWS is a Picture Book of More Than 300 Crews, Identified

This is a book like no other published through the good offices of a USAAF Bomb Group and it pictures about 1800 men in the framework of 300 crews who came to combat from the States or were on crews formed at Thurleigh during the rigors of combat. Some lasted the course to finish tours, whether it was 25, 30 or 35 missions. Others may have lasted only a mission, and a few may never have flown together.

The book is 178 pages, with two crews pictured on a page, and the left to right identifications as to names and crew positions are placed on the surface of each picture, so that you may easily put the two items together without turning a page. A lengthy index will help you to easily find your way to particular pages. As you might guess, some crews appear in different configurations, and thus may be in more than one crew. Col. Robert P. Riordan appears in five pictures, but he was an original, and he was with the Group from 27 Mar 42 until his transfer to the 92nd Bomb Group as Air Executive in September 1944. He also went from 2nd lieutenant to lieutenant colonel, and flew 42 missions. (He died 27 May 2004, less than a month short of his 89th birthday).

The editor once asked Francis Waugh, dean of the 306th photographers, why they didn't take pictures of all airplanes and all crews. He said it was a lack of personnel, film, darkroom time, and that no one really expressed an interest in doing this. This collection came because of pilots who got their crews together at a photographic studio and had a formal portrait made, or pictures were taken in the States (especially Alexandria, LA, during 1944). Many crews were snapped at unusual places, in unusual attire, and if in combat with a camera that was brought to England surreptitiously. This helps account for the tremendous variance in picture quality.

Many of the pictures are very good in quality, and the worst was that of John Olson's crew, 367th, our first loss in combat on our list mission- if it had been any other crew it would not have been used.

The book sells for \$35 including postage and handling. It was three years in the making. And it came out of the 10 year series of such prints appearing in Echoes. The original objective was to have an album at reunions for people to look at. The pictures are not in any special order and that is why the index is so

continued on page 3

306th Echoes

Change Service Requested

5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, NC 28205
October 2004 • Vol 29, No. 4

McMahan Heads 306th This Year

Albert McMahan, 369th original with the Group, moved up one notch this year to become president, elected at Oklahoma City, and scheduled to serve through San Antonio. He also served as chairman of the Oklahoma reunion.

Advanced from a directorship, Herman H. Kaye, JD, MD, 423rd was elected vice president for the year. Russell Strong 367th continues as secretary.

Royce Hopkins, outgoing president, was elected treasurer. He was a late 367th pilot.



Continuing as directors are Hugh Phelan, 367th, William Houlihan 367th, and William Carnicom 423rd. Elected as the fourth director for a three-year term was Robert Rockwell 367th.

Memphis Belle Headed for New Museum Home at Dayton

USAF officials have announced plans to relocate the WWII B-17 *Memphis Belle* to the USAF Museum in Dayton, OH. No date has been set, but the move is expected to occur before the end of the year in conjunction with activities in observing the 60th anniversary of the end of "Our" war.

"We are grateful to the Memphis Belle Memorial Association for its preservation and restoration of the Belle," says MGen Charles Metcalf, museum director. The aircraft has been located in the Memphis area since 1946. It was on loan from the Air Force to volunteers and aviation enthusiasts until the 1980s when the MBMA became its lease holder.

The museum's restoration team, which maintains all of the nearly 350 aircraft and aerospace vehicles in the museum's collection, will continue the restoration on-site. It is expected to take several years to complete. Ultimately, it will become the centerpiece of its considerable WWII aircraft collection.

In 2003, nearly 1.35 million people visited the world's largest and oldest military aviation museum. Current and future museum expansion promises to generate increased attendance.

The 306th reunited with the 8th AF in 1982 at Cincinnati, and most members bussed to Dayton for the Air Museum, and we were back in Dayton in 1986.

*****ALL FOR ADC 601 S3 P20
LTC RALPH E BORDNER
131 E AUTUMN LN
EAST PEORIA IL 61611-1942

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 34
Charlotte, NC

Obituaries

Dalton R. Andrews, 423rd ball turret gunner, died 8 May 04 in Cumby, TX, of bone cancer. He was an auto body repairman. Andrews leaves his wife, Betty, 3c, 8gc, 8ggc.

Arthur T. Beaudoin, 367th gunner (John Ryan crew), died 6 Oct 04 in Canton, MI. He was on an original combat crew, and while not flying a full combat tour, left the group mid-June 43. He leaves his wife, Zella, 6c, 2gc.

John W. Boyle, 367th turret maintenance specialist, died 14 Aug 03 in Denver, CO. After service he graduated from Purdue U School of Pharmacy, and retired in 1991. He leaves 2c, 5gc. His wife died in 1988.

Gerald B. Bump, 369th gunner (Lloyd Johns crew), died 26 May 02 in Westerville, OH. He came to the group 13 Apr 44 and was MIA with Clayton Nattier 13 Sep 44 on a mission to Merseberg, Germany. He leaves his wife, Doris, 1d.

Wilson C. Elliott, 369th and 367th engineer (William Casey crew), died 2 Sep 04 in Avon Park, FL. He joined the 306th 3 Apr 42 at Wendover, UT, and flew nearly a full tour when Casey's plane went down 17 Apr 43 on a mission to Bremen that cost the Group 10 a/c. After a stint in German prison facilities, and release from service, he was back on active duty in 1949 and into fighter pilot training. He flew F102s in Korea. He leaves his wife, Libia, 2d, 8gc, 5ggc.

Albert D. Figone, 423rd gunner (Joseph Clark crew), died 21 Oct 04 in San Jose, CA. He joined the Group 3 Feb 45, and served into the Casey Jones period.

William W. Flanagan, 369th navigator, died 6 Oct 44 in Albuquerque, NM. He graduated from UFla in 1942 and received an ROTC commission. Bill arrived with the 306th 26 Dec 44 and flew more than a dozen missions before the end of combat 19 Apr 45. He became disabled after returning to the U.S. and attended the U-Miami Law School as a paraplegic, earning LLB and JD degrees. He was an active practicing attorney from 1953 until 1982. Surviving are his wife, Helen, 1d, 1gd.

Carl N. Grending, 368th and 423rd pilot, died 29 Jul 04 in Albuquerque, NM. He came to the 306th 31 Oct 43, transferring to 423rd 20 Jul 44

as squadron operations officer, staying in that assignment until 28 Feb 45. Much older than most of his fellow flyers, a grandson later reported that "Pop" lied about his age when he enlisted, and was at least five years older than other officers on his crew. His wife had died earlier.

Lamar Gudger, 423rd navigator (William Fortson crew), died 2 Aug 2004 in Asheville, NC, where he lived most of his life. He came to the Group 29 Apr 44 and completed his combat tour 31 Jan 45. He earned his AB degree U-NCar, before entering cadet training. After the war he opened a law practice, and was soon into Democratic politics, first as State Party Secretary. He served several terms in the NC Legislature, and in 1976 was elected to the first of two terms in the US House of Representatives. In 1988 he formed a law partnership with a son. He leaves his wife, Eugenia, 4c, 7gc.

Clifford L. Steiger, 423rd pilot, died 3 Aug 04 in Upland, CA. He joined the Group 16 Feb 45, flew 12 missions by VE-Day, including a midair collision over the Ruhr Valley 7 Mar 45. He continued with the 306th in the Casey Jones Project until 7 Oct 45. He had a checkered career in Federal Service, that was featured in the Jan 2004 issue of *Echoes*. He and his first wife had 2c, followed by 11gc, 17ggc, 1gggc. Following 52 years, his wife died, and he later married Ada, who survives. **Editor's Note:** The story of his Federal employment is too long and convoluted to retell here, and any reader is referred to issue of our newspaper mentioned above. In his last communique to the editor, he said he was 86 and hoped to make it to 87. In fact he reached 88 years last Jun 20!

Grover C. Ingram, 369th waist gunner (James Edler crew), died 24 Jan 04 in Huber Heights, OH. He spent 31 years on USAF active duty, flying in 17s, 29s, 36s, KC97s, and KA135s. His wife, Jean, died 3 Jan 04, and they leave 3c, 3gc.

Mack Mashburn, a longtime friend of the 306th, died 16 Jun 04 in Fayetteville, GA. He was with Delta Airlines for 40 years.

Marshall McDaniel, 368th waist gunner (Joseph Belser crew), died 16 Nov 03 in Boise, ID, at the VA Medical Center. He joined the Group 23 Apr 43 and completed 26 missions 4 Jan 44, the 42nd EM to end a tour. He leaves his wife, Melva, 4c, 8gc, 19ggc.

Curtis E. Oakes, 423rd pilot, died 1 Aug 04 in Riverside, CA. He brought his crew to the Group 27 Mar 45. During the Korean War he was a squadron commander with the 5th Communications Group. He retired in 1966, and earned a degree at the U-Neb. He leaves his wife Eva (Skip), 3c, 8g, 9ggc.

Sherwood W. Olds, 367th bombardier, died 27 Aug 04 in Houston, TX, where he had retired as CEO of Sherwood Olds and Associates. He flew nearly a full tour and was wounded once, which kept him out of combat for an extended period. Olds formed his own company after retirement from Chevron. He leaves his wife, Ursula, 1d, 2gs.

Frank J. Wesner, 369th engineer (Peters/Noack crew), died 23 Jul 04 from injuries received in a fall from a second floor balcony on his Wyndmoor, PA home. He arrived with Peters crew 8 Aug 43, and became a POW 11 Dec 43 on a raid to Emden (w. Noack).

Floyd Williams, Station Chemical Supply Officer at Thurcigh, and later a Squadron Adjutant, died 3 Aug 04 in Prescott, AZ. Most of this WWII service was with the 306th, including several other administrative posts. He served later for five terms as superintendent of public building maintenance for the State of Arizona. He leaves his wife, Marjorie, 4c, 11gc, 3ggc.

Other Family

Twila Jefferies, wife of Bennie Jefferies, 368th gunner, died 27 Mar 04 in Belle Plaine, KS.

Eileen Levis, wife of Frank Levis, 367th, died in Jan 04 in Atlanta, GA. She also leaves 1d.

Helen Phillips, wife of Col. Darryl Phillips, 423rd pilot, died 5 Sep 04 in Fresno, CA. She also leaves 3c, 7gc, 3ggc.



The End of the Trail

This 18 foot statue by James Earle Frazer is one of the featured pieces of statuary to be found in the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum at Oklahoma City, and was certainly one of our important places on our travels through the city. A tour guide says to plan on two hours there, but many think it is more like two days that one should spend. Their collection includes works by Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Remington and Charles Russell.

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

COMBAT CREWS	\$35.00
306th ECHOES Book	\$40.00
2004 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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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



ALBERT McMAHAN, President
Herman Kaye, MD, Vice President
Russell Strong, Secretary
Royce Hopkins, Treasurer
Directors: William Carnahan, William Houlihan, Hugh Phelan, Robert Rockwell
Royce Hopkins, Past President

Ralph Franklin, British Representative
National School Cottage, Mill Hill,
Keysoe, Beds MK44 2HP. Telephone
from U.S. 011-44-1234-708715
306th Museum@nscmh.fscmh.c.uk

306th *Echoes* is published four times annually: January, April, July & October and is mailed free of charge to 306th veterans for whom there are known addresses, 1942-45. Contributions in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer.

SECRETARY/EDITOR:

Handles all address changes, editorial contributions & records. Book orders should also be placed with him.
Russell A. Strong
5323 Cheval Pl.
Charlotte, NC 28205

TREASURER:

Send checks to:
Royce Hopkins
35427 Pontiac Dr.
Brookshire, TX 77423

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

Early Days En Route to England

Robert Hermann, 367th navigator in the original group, was also a POW for two years, and during most of his career was an inveterate diarist. We are lucky to be able to bring much of it to you, although he told the Editor after the war that the best parts of his "book", which remained in England or in a U. S. warehouse, was "edited" by good friends, and thusly did not come home at all. We might not have been able to use it all anyway, and we could spend our time removing some of his scatological vocabulary.

On to Wendover, UT, maybe 120 miles west of Salt Lake City. (This base was to gain fame later as the training site for the Doolittle Raiders who first bombed Tokyo). When I got off the train, I couldn't believe what I saw. This was June and the glare off the salt flats was awful; a desolate sea of white, including two concrete strips beside a mountain and a bunch of tar paper shacks. Every dumb 2nd Lt. was assigned a job immediately. Thank God, no white rocks to move around. One brand new Lt. was assigned as mess officer. He liked steaks so he figured so did everyone else; but man, steaks for breakfast, lunch and dinner got to be real old in a hurry. Sometime during this brief interlude (two months) Henry "Tiger" Terry and his aces from the Battle of Midway joined the 306th and specifically the 367th squadron. These were big temporary heroes from action in the Pacific theatre and they all had jungle machetes. I used to think those machetes would be good to cut up salt cakes.

Bob and his buddies used to go to the big hotel in Salt Lake City across from the Mormon Tabernacle and live it up for a few weekends. The streets in Salt Lake were very clean. They had recessed gutters with constantly running water and the merchants would sweep their sidewalk dirt into these gutters.

I also remember the fire department washing down the streets with fire hoses on Saturday. I used to talk to those firemen because my uncle was a firefighter in my hometown of Chillicothe, OH.

The main purpose for the 306th 2nd Air Force was to get organized and this was done. The commanding officer was Charles "Chip" Overacker and I saw him on combat missions over France. I was assigned to a plane commanded by John Ryan, Troy, NY, and we liked each other from the very beginning of our acquaintance. The co-pilot was James Miller, who later transferred as a command pilot to the 301st to go to the invasion of North Africa in late 1942.

Everything moved so fast in those days because I don't believe anyone was in bed more than just a few hours a day. The first that Bob and all the navigators did each morning was to go to gunnery school and also study aircraft identification. Bob was a crack shot back in those days because of being raised in the hill country, so this was boring until they got to the big guns, .50 caliber. I sure would love to own one of those today. On his B-17 Bob had no less than two and sometimes three to throw very hot lead at the Germans from his nose position. This was an awesome machine gun and could knock a hole through a railroad engine like it was paper.

One of the best experiences that I had at Wendover was learning how to shoot craps, play roulette and 21 at the State Line Hotel, just up the road apiece. Everyone who wasn't love sick went there every night for booze and gambling. You can learn a hell of a lot in two months if you concentrate. The last night that Bob was there, he took the crap table for a whole musette bag of silver dollars.

Sometimes Bob and his buddies would go out into the desert at night and hunt jackrabbits with submachine guns, shotguns, and the .45 pistol that everyone had. This was cheap diversion from booze and gambling at the State Line Hotel. Should anyone be tee'd off killing rabbits, this sure was a good way to practice for later to kill Germans and Japs.

Bob was the lead navigator for the 367th Squadron of the 306th Bomb Group because Major Harry Holt wanted to fly with John Ryan as they headed out from Wendover across the USA to Chanute Field at Rantoul, IL. I definitely wanted another plane in the lead, because I knew my com-



A Stalag Luft Group from the 306th: Quentin Burgett, Joseph Consolmagno, Frank Jacknik, Lewis McKesson and Robert Herrmann. All were 367th, except for Jacknik, 369th.

passes were not functioning properly due to magnetic variation from air machine gun firing. They missed their crossing point over the Mississippi River by 30 miles and I corrected into an almost due north heading as they went to Rantoul. They thought I was a big screwup, but the next day they learned better. Major Holt decided he would take navigational command and head for Washington, DC, by way of Cincinnati, OH. I am now getting close to my hometown of Chillicothe. After missing Cincy by 60 miles I asked if they wanted any professional help and they acknowledged that they did. So, I surreptitiously took them over my hometown. Imagine leading 36 B-17s over your hometown!

Then we followed radio cones of silence to Bolling Field, Washington, DC, where we landed safely. At that time LTC Jimmy Doolittle and some of his Tokyo raiders were there to be decorated for the first air raid on Japan, I didn't see any of them then, but sure did later as roommates and fellow prisoners of war.

The next day BIG orders were issued: No flying over Hyde Park, NY; no flying under the George Washington Bridge over the Hudson River at New York; never drop any bombs or depth charges on the US Military Academy at West Point, NY. Probably no one would have done the latter. Maybe! The first two orders were an invitation to a bunch of crazy aviators to do just that.

So, off to a month at Westover Field at Chicopee, MA for ocean sub patrol to wait for new B-17s to fly us across the Atlantic, to England and combat!

Those three to four weeks in New England were beautiful. The weather was perfect in August 1942. The ocean patrols were very dreary and one could understand after a 10-hour trip why a guy would take a B-17 under the big bridge or dive on little boats to swamp them with their prop wash. Bob and his crew never did that, but one day off Martha's Vineyard they came upon a U.S. Navy destroyer. So, being nuts they opened their bomb bay doors and flew right over the destroyer. It's a wonder those guys from Annapolis didn't shoot at the plane.

The B-17s of the 306th were not regular ocean patrol but just guys waiting for new B-17s to take to combat. They flew very low, 10 feet of altitude on a straight line course and returned the same way. The idea of this was to keep the Germans submerged during daytime. You were not supposed to shoot your .50 caliber machine guns, but Bob and his fellow aviators shot at ducks, geese, sharks, whales and just about anything.

In the summer of 1942 the Atlantic Ocean was a sea of oil where tankers had been sunk by submarines. I suppose we didn't have enough destroyers and patrol boats to provide escort service at that time. We sure lost a hell of a lot of oil and men. Our Merchant Marines earned their pay.

Toward the end of August, Bob and his crew of John Ryan, James Miller, Sherwood Olds, and all the good gunners and technicians on that B-17 had to take a fuel consumption test flight before leaving for England. Capt. Ryan asked Bob where we should go- no doubt about it, back to Columbus, OH, and fly low over Ohio State

and the football stadium. After this part of the flight, Bob didn't care where we went, so up to Lake Erie and across Lake Erie and on to Buffalo. Bob was asleep in the nose when Ryan asked him if he had ever seen Niagara Falls. No! It was right in front of us and we were 10 feet off the water as we zoomed over it, and then on to Troy, NY, to buzz John's hometown, and finally back to Westover.

One very pleasant interlude at Westover before leaving for England and the 8th AF. I got my Dad to come from Chillicothe to

visit me. We had a hell of a time getting together because my Dad was at one gate and I was at the other. Those ground-pounders wouldn't provide any fly boys with transportation, so I walked all across the base to get my Dad. We were in my barracks and were talking about gambling in Nevada and I showed my Dad the big musette bag of silver dollars. I gave him a couple of handfuls of the weighty coins and my Dad still has them.

It was almost three years before I saw either Mom or Pop again.

ANOTHER ISSUE of Echoes will continue more of Hermann's adventures in combat.

COMBAT CREWS

continued from page 1

important.

Just a technical note or two: All pictures were copied on a Kodak Picture Maker. This permitted odd ball pictures to be resized, and the emphasis for this book was always on the men and not on the planes. Two 5x7 prints were produced and identified, and one copy of each picture went to the Thurleigh Museum of the 306th. Many were good 8x10 prints which were easy to handle. A few were taken vertically, and appear that way. A 1 1/4 x 1 1/4 print was blown up to a 5x7 that was a clear, focused picture, that being the smallest original print I worked into the book.

There are a number of pictures which include ground personnel, and they were difficult to identify. If you can help us, please send the editor a note reporting names and where they appear in a picture.

The books are \$35 each. Write your check to the 306th Bomb Group Assn, and mail to the editor.

When your copy arrives then you can try to find the pilot's wife in one picture, the small son of one of the crew in another picture, and one EM seeming to be hiding behind a propeller blade.

As you can guess, the editor likes the book, and still thumbs through it to check on pictures. We hope you will do that, too.



Medal of Honor Awards Looked At

The question has arisen as to how many Medals of Honor were awarded by the USAAF in WWII. A West Coast newspaper reported 14, and John A. Wright 369th, challenged them, and e-mailed your editor.

The Air Force in its various forms has awarded 59 Medals of Honor, beginning with 4 in WWI, 38 in WWII, 4 in Korea, and 13 in Vietnam.

Two others were given to men for unique and historic contributions to aviation: Charles A. Lindbergh, 20-21 May 1927, for his solo flight from New York to Paris, and a posthumous naming of M/Gen. William Mitchell for his "foresight in military aviation."

Where do you find such data? The May edition of **Air Force Magazine**, published monthly by the Air Force Association, contains much data and it is updated annually. For instance, the list of fighter aces for WWII goes on and on. You can obtain annual subscriptions for the magazine, and single issues now appear on better newsstands.



Checking new book for 306th data: Aldo Romanin, John Gaydos, Allan Lawson, Wallace Peckham



Our crowd is gathering for the annual Reunion banquet.



Ralph and Eva Shaw



Dr. Herman Kaye came in a wheel chair, and from the left are Daphne and Ralph Franklin, Gloria Lu and Sally, housekeepers for Dr. Kaye.



Graford Jennings and Vernon DeLair



Tress Engstrom, Wynon Clark and Joseph Clark.



Russ Strong receives a plaque from Royce Hopkins as "The Heart and Soul" of the 306th.



Betty Jane and Brice Robison, Norman Armburst

Reunion Visitors in Oklahoma City



The men all arrived at Thurligh 15 Jan 43. All completed their tours. Seated in front are Ruth and Fred Sherman, newly weds, and Victor Rose. In black are John and Betty Hickey, Dale and Beti Briscoe, Hugh and Evelyn Phelan. Briscoe was the pilot of his crew, and Phelan came on the Richard O'Hara crew.



Evelyn and Hugh Phelan brought their two grandsons to the reunion, Tom on the left is a Little Rock dentist and Patrick is in sales and marketing. The Phelans have two sons, and these boys are cousins. Hugh reports that the two can't quit talking about the reunion.



Danny and Hoot Houghton, Robbie Lanyon, and Clyde Mills.



Russ Strong, Ruth and Bob Rockwell, Wallace Peckham.



Em Christianson in her leather dress.



George DeVack and Reginald Thayer in conversation.



Margaret and Wayne Stellish, Louise and Robert Starzynski.



at statuary at Cowboy



Snook.



in watery statuary at Museum.

It Took A Lot of Special People on the Ground to Make a Bomb Group FLY!

We know about pilots, navigators, bombardiers, gunners, crew chiefs and mechanics; and even about MPs, cooks and bakers! What about the rest of those six men it took to keep one man flying? What did they do?

There were Intelligence people who gathered information, saved it, and briefed combat crews going on missions... They were waiting to debrief



Airmen work when well fed.

crews when they got back home. When everyone else went to eat, the intelligence people wrote reports and collected other data to send to higher headquarters. And at 8th AF Headquarters reporters were gathering facts



Keeping the weeds under control make visiting inspectors happy.

to use for stories that often a day or two later were being read in our hometown newspapers, which in turn made parents and friends wonder

whether any of us in the planes were maybe now only a statistic!

The chaplains did their bit, too. Waiting after briefing to talk with those who had special concerns, and once the planes were gone began to prepare for Sunday worship services, and visiting men in the infirmary, as well as keeping up relations with the entire base population. And there was a chaplain's assistant who helped with a lot of the minutiae.



Welders put things back together.

The M.D.s, dentists, and enlisted specialists who served in the hospital looked to their duties of caring for men on the base each day. Did you ever watch a surgeon treat an aching spine by shooting novocaine down the middle of a ball gunner's back? Or, watch the ambulances and crash crews following a plane firing red-red flares?

Orderlies were a special group who cared for the Officers' barracks, making beds, straightening up what ever they found. Bringing in mail, copies of **Stars and Stripes** and **Yank**, and those special packages from across the ocean which meant so much to everyone. The orderlies did special tasks for the officers that brought more money into their pockets,

The Postal Service clerks

dispensed mail and packages, and took in items to be sent west by air or ship for those



Daniel Bastida adjusted superchargers.

special people who were waiting for everyone to come home.

And there were all kinds of mechanical geniuses who fixed planes and autos and trucks, and all kinds of mobile equipment. They also made special pieces of equipment, and invented large pieces to help in mounting tires and engines on planes, and small things



Who is this? We know what he does.

that provided pilots with an easy means of controlling their planes. They also made cigarette lighters out of .50 caliber machine gun bullets. I still have mine, and have yet to light one of those white sticks.

The armorers dealt with

guns on the planes, fixing, testing, putting in and removing barrels for the officers, cleaning the barrels and seeing that each gun had its quota of shells, both armor piercing and tracers.

And the Ordnance people were heavy lifters, storing our various bombs in the bomb



John Ziarko works on an engine.

dump on the back side of the flying field, then getting them onto special bomb hauling trucks which were usually strung together and pulled by a tractor out to the planes. From there most of the bombs were moved by the loading personnel who pushed and pulled the trolleys under the bomb bay doors so the cables could be attached and the bombs raised upward, fastened to the shackles, and prepared to do their terrible duty.



Oxygen from these tanks saved lives.

There were flight chiefs, line chiefs and crew chiefs who kept things moving around the planes. They worked from early morning, often through



It takes quite a hoist to get a top turret back in its "home."

the day and maybe a second day to get "their" planes in shape to fly and fight another day. There were mechanics and armorers who worked for the crew chiefs on the planes. They became a team, and they had on call specialists who worked also on the turrets, on the wings and inside the wings.

The radio men were another group who worked on the planes and in their shops. They kept the 13 radios of the B-17 in working order, rebuilding items on the ground and returning them to a/c so that the fly boys could keep their signals straight, reading beacons on the ground and receiving messages in the air that changed our routing or cancelled the show. When your plane was the "fighter standby" you did want the Little Friends out there to come in close on call, or to escort you out of enemy territory if you were all alone up there.



The Prop Shop gang assembled and balanced propellers.

There was a host of technicians who kept the radar in working order, and fixed other

instruments that went bad.

Among other specialists were those in the Prop Shop, who assembled new propellers that came to Thurleigh from Wichita via Spokane, and early developed their own balancing apparatus long before such an item came from the States. There were sheet metal experts who patched the myriad holes that flak and fighters put in our planes, and the welders who "stuck" broken parts back together.

We had electricians who kept the lights on and lots of wheels turning, carpenters, painters, and barbers who kept us looking trim. And the oil and gasmen who transported fuel in big trucks to our base, from where it was dispensed to the ever-hungry planes.



Fliers needed oxygen above 10,000.

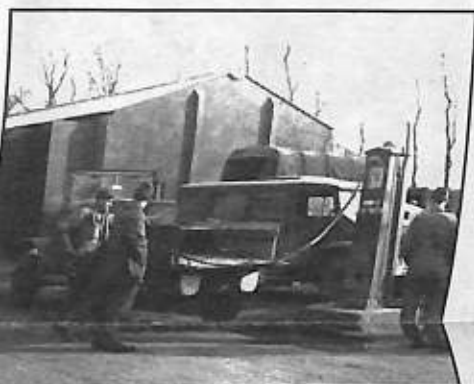
Remember when we ran big missions and far distant missions that the planes were refueled after engine warm ups, so we could go far, not quite to Tokyo, but with our "tokyo" tanks we could sometimes use most of our allocated 2780 gallons in each of our aircraft. (Now, try multiplying that by the 36 planes we flew in formation in the later stages, and our biggest venture, 54 a/c and relate that to our fuel prices and crises of today!)

Before most missions left we wanted the oxygen tanker to show up at our planes to fill each system so we could survive. Luckily, we didn't fly many missions to test LOW altitude bombing (Nov 9, 42 at St. Nazaire, when Col.



A good bicycle race got the kinks out of hard working mechanics.

Charles Overacker led the Group and Maj. Harry Holt led the 367th at 7,000 feet.) In Ruhr Valley bombing, and perhaps Berlin or Merseberg, we had planes on target at plus 30,000. We lost three aircraft that day at St. Nazaire. (N.B. read pages 42-44 in First Over Germany).



Fuel for ground vehicles was essential, too.

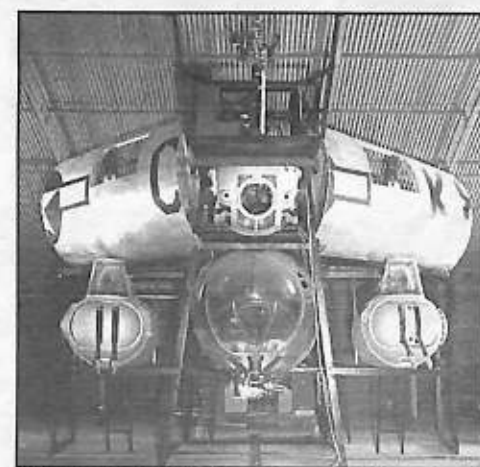
The Quartermaster operations at Thurleigh were certainly vital for everything we worked with. Clothing, fuel, food, office supplies, furniture, just about anything that we used came through the quartermaster. I've never



It's hard work to get a 1000 pounder properly hung on bomb shackles.

thought to ask what were the rules about purchasing in the local market, but it must have

been pretty slim in order not to short the British any more than we could help. And it in one way went backwards, as it was suggested that if you were going to eat with a British family that you visit our mess halls to pick up things to take to your hostess.



A turret trainer helps gunners work together.

It was possible to get your hair cut on the base, but I don't know about tailoring services. And we bought eggs from a local vendor who bicycled around and by the barracks. We provided for our own defense, because from 10 Dec 1942 until everyone left in early 1946, we were American property, the first base to be so transferred in the 8th.

It all was like an American town of 2700 persons, except that the female of the species was in short supply except on party weekends. And after the big Second Birthday Bash in September 44, the party atmosphere rather collapsed as midway through Saturday evening dancing at the Officers' B mess there was an announcement that the Squadron operations officers were to report to Headquarters. That was the only serious pause in the partying until about daybreak when the Briefing Room became busy and the planes soon departed for Stuttgart.

I regret that I have omitted some worthy tasks that were handled on the base. Everyone there had a job to do and there were no fluffy kinds of things that were not important to the whole venture.



Arthur Frazier with his son, Randy on his left and grandson David.



Ted and Gloria Boswell and their son and daughter-in-law.



Dancing followed the banquet.



Lovina Demetre and George Stephens.



Bob Rockwell and Roy Demetre.



Bill and Ruth Carnicom.



Fred and Tress Engstrom, 1st Timers.



Andy Vangalis needed cowboy boots!

