

306th Echoes

Change Service Requested

*****ALL FOR ADC 740
S3 P19
DR THURMAN SHULLER
1312 E MIAMI AVE
MCALISTER OK 74501-6746

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

We Came from Coast to Coast, 155 Strong for Reunion #33

Their were 45 of the 306th at the first 8th AF reunion in Miami Beach in 1975. This kicked us off, but the numbers remained small for several years. We finally began to get organized in about three years. We got some bylaws, authored by Art Vann, bombardier. But the first officers were self-appointed: Ralph Bordner, president; Bill Collins, vice president and treasurer, and Russ Strong as secretary. Ralph held that top spot for five years before we really began to use that set of bylaws. Strong is still the Secretary.

Our reunion attendance ran as high as nearly 900 in our first event in Las Vegas. It remained from 400 to 700 through the years of our 50s, with the 1992 venture to England at 400.

People don't really get too nostalgic until about 50 years of age, and at our reunion just past, the second for San Antonio, saw most of us in our 80s. Those early reunions also were largely 306th veterans, but as familial duties have slowed for wives, now we have lots of wives, some widows, and children and grandchildren.

Most of the early counts of attendance were largely 306th veterans, but now we

count any who show up, basing it largely on those who attend the closing Saturday night banquet. This just past reunion was somewhat of a revival after we have had substantially smaller groups for the past two years.

Strong and others feel we ought to continue our reunions until we just can't get many at all. How many is that? Maybe 10, or 5. I think we will probably let nature have her way on the matter. Perhaps it will be for as long as we have someone to get us there and back home again. Maybe TV will have progressed to the point where we can dial up the same number at a given time and have our reunion in our own homes without the travail of driving or flying. Russ & June Strong had the pleasure this year of riding, napping and reading while their third son, David (pictured in this issue) served as their chauffeur, navigator, baggage handler and the seeker of lowest gas prices as we did the 1400 mile round trip between Charlotte, NC and San Antonio, TX.

Dave had retired from the Army late in May as a lieutenant colonel, and as he hasn't gone to work yet he was free to get us to this 306th annual event.



Our Recent and Continuing Leaders

At the left is Dr. Herman Kaye, our new president, who has been vice president and a director previously. And on the right is Albert McMahan, who is now the immediate past president, and who for the past two years has doubled as our reunion chairman. Both men have been generous of their time and as counsels to the Association. Al joined the Group in August 1942 and became a member of Robert Riordan's crew, but did not fly his first mission until 12 Dec 42. Al was the 18th EM to complete his tour, making #25 22 Jun 43. Dr. Kaye was much more a late comer, arriving 1 Sep 44 as the radio operator on Paul Reixoux's 423rd crew. Herman came to Thurlleigh facing a combat tour of 35 missions, and finished up about the first of March 45. He also survived a bailout 28 Dec 44, the planes having gone to Koblenz, Germany, that day, and Reixoux's plane having caught fire when they were returning over England. Herman bears the distinction of having become the largest single contributor to the 306th, which is the only such organization which has never collected dues. Our mailing list has always included all veteran 306'ers for whom we can find active addresses. Dr. Kaye is a medical doctor, a lawyer and an accountant when you review his academic career. At the time of his retirement he was a major partner of a large group of hospitals. Both men are widowers.

It's Omaha in '06- For Sure

We'll be coming back to Omaha in '06. It may not be quite the same as in 1983, but it will be close, and is a good mid-continent location, and we hope that many of you will be on hand.

Judge Donald R. Ross, the '83 chairman, had been hopeful that he and his family could do much of the work, but after thinking about it for 10 days his health forced him to say "No". But we will carry on,

because Roy Connally a longtime roster name came to San Antonio at the behest of Royce Hopkins. Royce was a pilot late in the war and Connally was his navigator. Thus, they have been a working team before.

At this printing we have no details, but there will be more information as the new year moves along, and we will begin feeding it to you in the January issue.

Young Texas Congressman Lauds "America's Greatest Generation"

Michael McCaul, a first term Republican congressman from Texas Dist 10, was our reunion banquet speaker at San Antonio. A former Austin attorney, McCaul felt very comfortable with our group as his late father had flown a combat tour with the 34th Bomb Group at Mendelsham as a pilot.

When Americans consider generations of our past, no one exemplifies the essence of America better than those part of what we now all call "America's Greatest Generation". To this day, and forever, I will be proud to say my father was part of this outstanding group who lead us to victory on the beaches, in the villages, at the concentration camps and on the islands of Europe during World War II. Major James McCaul of America's Army Air Corps, flew more than 30 bombing missions over Europe in the B-17 bombers, "the flying fortresses of the war" as he helped defeat Adolph Hitler and the Nazi reign of terror.

Flying with some of the most courageous men this world has known, Major McCaul described his missions in the clouds above Europe as flying in a tin can with wings... with flak coming at them from below and bullets from above as Nazi fighters did their best to defend the horror they inflicted on the continent beneath.

Numbers show us the Germans shot down one of every three of these planes, with these young American pilots watching, powerlessly as their buddies slammed into the ground.

One specific story I remember my father telling me involves a badly shot up bomber with a full crew inside. These soldiers of the sky made it all the way back from their mission, but with their plane was so badly damaged it exploded while trying to make a safe landing. We remember stories like this and the men involved in those victories and tragedies. It's a wonderful statement about our nation, that even to this day we recall

stories like this as we remember and honor those who battled back the Nazis and gave freedom back to Europe. My father, like so many others, continued to receive unnecessary, "thank you's" whether in the form of the medals or the letter my family received upon my father's death from President Reagan commending his service so many decades ago. These men truly posted new columns upon which America could stand proud. As Winston Churchill eloquently stated, "this was their finest hour!"

Royce Hopkins also served our nation proudly during World War II. I am honored to say this man lives in my district and believes in the current battles for democracy. These are the Americans who learned about hard work, values and ethics during one of the hardest times in our history. Many spent parts of their childhood on city streets working, fighting and sometimes even begging for their existence during the great depression. It would have been somewhat understandable for this generation to succumb to the negative influences impacting their lives. But, instead they wound up leading our land and our world to one of the greatest victories in history. American's greatest generation would have remained the same, with the same title had the United States not entered World War II.

But on December 7, 1941 we were left with no choice. The men and women of the greatest generation took the attack on Pearl Harbor personally and responded with determination as President Roosevelt took America to war. It was our soldiers, sailors and pilots like my father who answered with equal determination to fight for Europe's freedom and, in turn, America's security. We see that same attitude and need today from the men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. Like the "Greatest Generation" Americans are in distant lands fighting the threat and horror of terror by spreading

Data Gathered in 30 Years

Year	Place	#s	Chairman
1975	Miami Beach	45	Bill Collins
1976	England, Dayton	100	Bill Collins
1977	St. Louis	87	Bill Collins
1978	Washington	95	Bill Collins
1979	Phoenix	150	Bill Collins
1980	Orlando	275	Bill Collins
1981	St. Paul	136	Bill Collins
1982	Cincinnati	150	Bill Collins
1983	Omaha	400	Donald Ross
1984	Fort Worth	522	Reginald Robinson
1985	Colorado Springs	428	Eduardo Montoya
1986	Dayton, OH	550	John Grimm
1987	Washington	725	William Rader
1988	Las Vegas	828	Edward Hennessy
1989	Little Rock	470	Hugh Phelan
1990	San Antonio	436	Dale Briscoe
1991	Pittsburgh	436	James Macry
1992	Thurlleigh/London	400	Donald Ross
1993	Seattle	575	Warren Wilson
1994	Des Moines	450	Robert Houser
1995	Knoxville, TN	400+	Wallace Boring
1996	Las Vegas, NV	540	Edward Hennessy
1997	Orlando, FL	367	Luke Jacobs
1998	Savannah, GA	425	Clayton Ridge
1999	St. Louis, MO	367	Alfred Villagran
2000	San Diego, CA	309	John Endicott
2001	Minneapolis, MN	230	Russell Strong
2002	Covington, KY	200	John Hickey
2003	Savannah, GA	140	Marty Lenaghan
2004	Oklahoma City, OK	115	Alfred McMahan
2005	San Antonio, TX	155	Alfred McMahan



OBITUARIES

MARVIN C. BARKER, 423rd ball turret gunner (Harold Brown crew), died 30 Jun 05 in North Ogden, UT. He arrived with the Group 17 Jul 44 and completed his 35 missions 21 Jan 45. Marvin had worked for the Weber School District, and paired with a brother to operate the Quality Dairy. He and his first wife had 5c, 15gc, 15ggc.

RAYMOND S. BIRDWELL, 369th pilot, died in May 2002 in Paris, TX. He joined the Group 17 Jul 44, completed his tour 12 Dec 44 and remained with the Group until Jul 45. He earned BS and MEd degrees from TX A&M, and retired 1 Apr 1981 as a district manager for Ralston Purina Co. He leaves his wife, Geraldine.

BILLY W. CASSEDAY, 369th pilot, died 5 Apr 2005 in Dayton, WA, where he had lived since leaving service. He reported with his crew 31 Oct 43, and completed his tour 24 Dec 44. He was D Flight commander, Group deputy for operations, and lastly 369th operations officer. During his years in Dayton he organized three businesses: Dayton Chemicals, a Shell Oil distributorship, and a Shell Oil service station, all of



Herman Kaye, MD, President
Robert Rockwell, Vice President
Russell Strong, Secretary
Royce Hopkins, Treasurer
Directors: William Carnahan, William Houlihan, Hugh Phelan, Robert Rockwell, Roy Connolly
Albert McMahan, Past President

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

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

SECRETARY/EDITOR:

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

TREASURER:

Send checks to:
Royce Hopkins
35427 Pontiac Drive
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)

which are still operating. He leaves his wife, Bobbie, 6c 9gc 3ggc.

RAYMOND O. DINGER, 368th gunner (Charles Witcomb crew), died 11 Nov 2002 in Rochester, NY. He leaves 1s.

SIMPSON J. GILBERRY, 368th engineer (Joe Marsh crew), died recently in McAlester, OK. He came to the Group 22 Sep 44, served briefly with the 423th and ended his combat tour as the war closed.

OTTO C. HUETTIG, 367th tail gunner (Shelby Scott crew), died 9 Aug 2000 in Twin Falls, ID. Otto got to the 306th 27 Feb 45. He was a farmer.

JAMES E. HUGHES, 423rd wg (Marvin Freeman crew), died 22 Feb 2004 in Tyler, TX. He was MIA and a POW on the 12 Sep 44 mission to Ruhland, Germany, with Freeman. Hughes retired as a Federal employee at Lackland AFB, TX, 30 Aug 1980.

WILLIAM R. McKILLOP, 369th waist gunner (Wallace Young crew), died 25 Sep 2005 in Melbourne, FL. Bill came to the Group 23 Dec 44 and flew about 18 missions until he was MIA 10 Apr 45 with Allen Babin's crew. He evaded with about half the crew. After 23 years in the USAF, he retired as a senior master sergeant and then worked for the US Postal Service. He leaves his wife, Margaret 4c, 8gc, 1ggc.

MAHLON C. MORLEY, 368th engineer (Robert Edwards crew) died 25 Mar 2005 in Belle Plaine, KS. He came to the 306th 21 Aug 44, completing his tour in late December. He was president and later chairman of the 1st National Bank, Belle Plaine. He leaves his second wife, 2s, 2gc.

FRANK A. SERAFIN, 423rd mechanic, died 3 Oct 2005 in Pittsburgh, PA. In addition to the 306th, Frank served in the Civilian Conservation Corps before WWII, then in the Regular Army, and finally in a tank battalion of the 5th Infantry Division, receiving a Korean Service Medal. He was a plumber in later life. He and his wife, Florence, had 3c, 5gc.

HENRY A. SIBLEY, JR. served as a statistical officer and a flying control officer at Thurleigh until being transferred out 20 Apr 44. He died in 1972 in Haverhill, PA.

LESTER TERRY, 367th waist gunner (Ray Ryther crew), died 1 Jul 05 in Painted Post, NY. He became a POW 20 Dec 43 on a mission to Bremen, and ended up in Krems, Austria. He leaves his wife, Shirley, 2c 2gc.

HERBERT A. VERDICK, 367th pilot, died 30 Sep 2005 in Sequim, WA. He arrived in combat with his crew on 31 Jan 45, and flew 25 missions by the end of combat. His wife, Phyllis, had died in 2003.

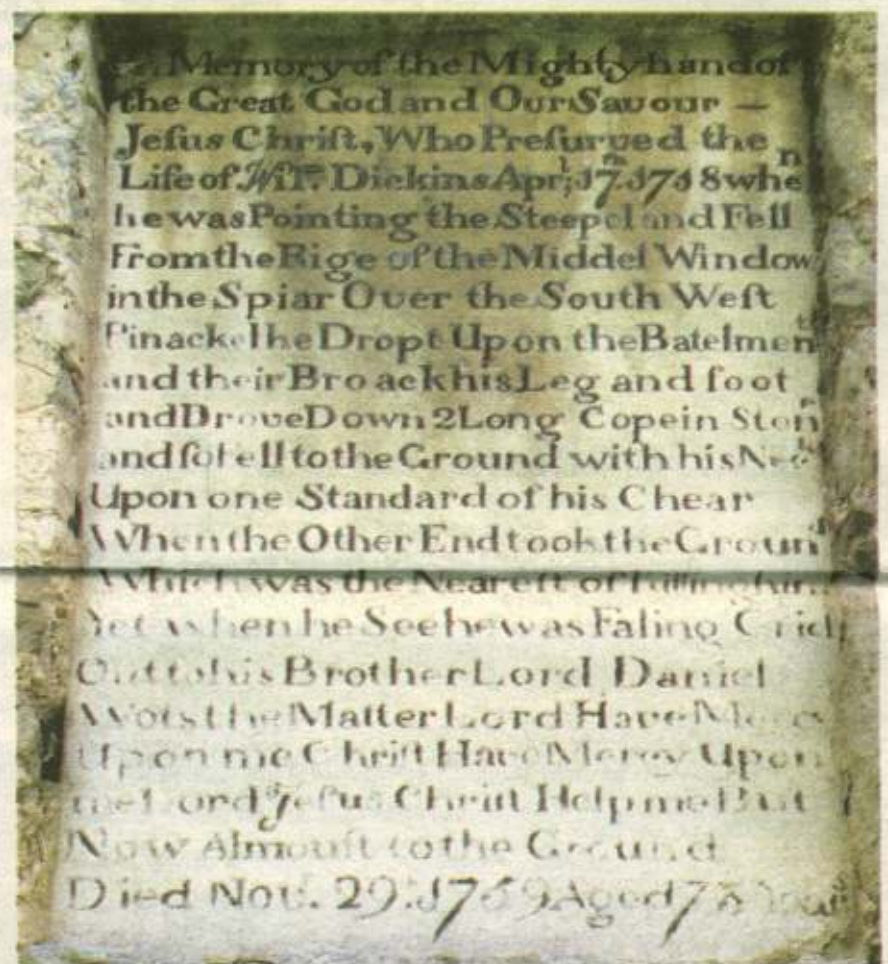
Perhaps this is a Bit of a Quick Return to the Keysoe Church

The Strongs sudden return to Keysoe and Thurleigh gave us an unexpected opportunity to get a close up look at the Keysoe church, which is a short walking venture from Ralph and Daphne Franklin's nearby home. And we took advantage of it, and particularly after we heard about the plaque which is in the back wall of the church.

We tried photographing the engraving, but could not get anything reasonable from the ground. By using a tall ladder one of Ralph's sons was able to get an excellent rendition of the plaque, which is pictured here. And as the English language, just like our American version, is a constantly changing "creature" Ralph was able to get us a contemporary version. After you've read the original, take a look below and you note the numerous changes in spelling.

A more contemporary version:

"In memory of the Mighty Hand of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who preserved the life of William Dickins April 17th 1718 when he was pointing the Steeple and fell from the Ridge of the Middle Window of the Spire over the South West Pinnacle. He dropped upon the Battlement and there broke his leg and foot and drove down 2 long coping stones and so fell to the ground with his neck upon one standard of his Chair when the end and took the ground which was the nearest of killing him. Yet when saw how he was falling cried out to his brother Daniel "What's the matter? Have mercy upon me Christ. Have mercy upon me Lord. Help me, but now almost to the ground." Died Nov. 29, 1759. 73 years."



306th PUBLICATIONS

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

ORDER FORM

First Over Germany by Russell A. Strong A 325 page narrative history of the 306 th , 100 pictures & 1700 names. Fourth edition is paperback.	\$35.00
306th Echoes Book 800 pages, including 25 years of our quarterly newspaper, B&W & color.	\$40.00
306th Combat Crews More than 300 identified combat crews are pictured. Individuals are indexed.	\$35.00
The Reich Wreckers 80 pages of charts & other data covering 341 combat missions. Prepared by Charles J. Westgate III	\$6.00
Squadron Combat Diaries More than 100 pages each, compiled daily after missions by Squadron Intelligence officers. Also included are rosters of Specialty personnel.	
Spiral bound.	367th \$20.00
	368th \$20.00
	369th \$20.00
	423rd \$20.00
306th Group Directory	1 Feb 06 \$10.00
	Total \$

Make check to 306th BG Assn. and mail to Secretary: 306 Bomb Group Assn.
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, NC 28205



Grover Goode 368 and Bill Carnicom 423



Shoppers Wynon Clark and Ruth Carnicom 423



Dale Briscoe and Russ Strong at hotel desk



Ralph Bordner and Ted Cumberledge 368 bombardiers



Cowboy Nick Hoolko 367



Ralph and Daphne Franklin, our British guests



Thurman Shuller, medical chief, and Bill Houlihan 367, medic clerk



Beti Briscoe, Tony and Margaret Santoro 369



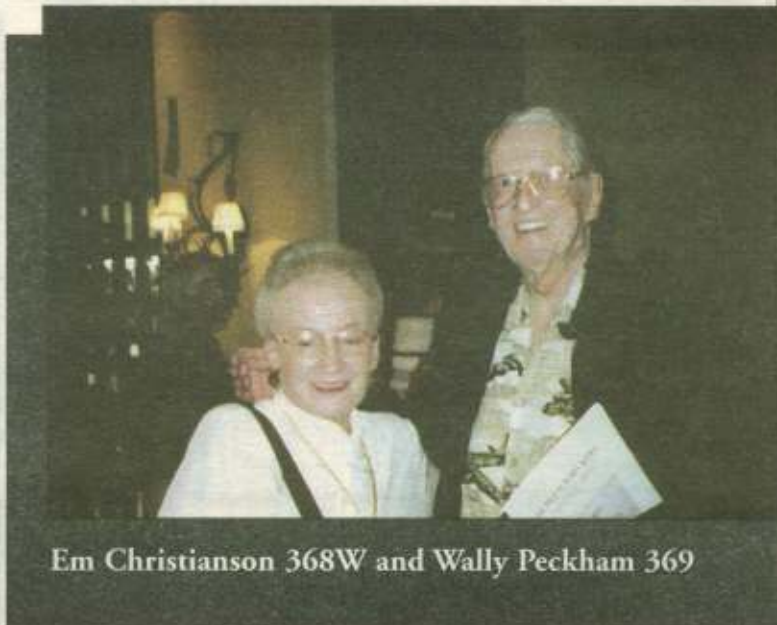
Nell and Ralph Bordner 368w, Ruth Rockwell 367w, Peg Haapa ARC, Em Christianson 368W



Charles Banas 369 and Brice Robison 423



Wallace Boring 368



Em Christianson 368W and Wally Peckham 369



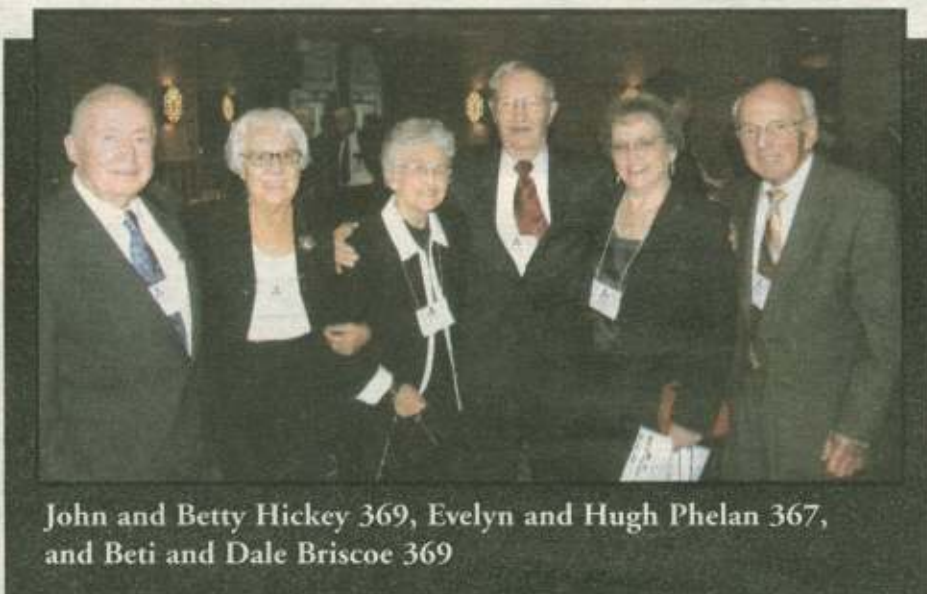
Gary and Lillian Armbrust 423s



Barbara Neal



The Poythress Family



John and Betty Hickey 369, Evelyn and Hugh Phelan 367, and Beti and Dale Briscoe 369



The Hugh Phelan Family 367



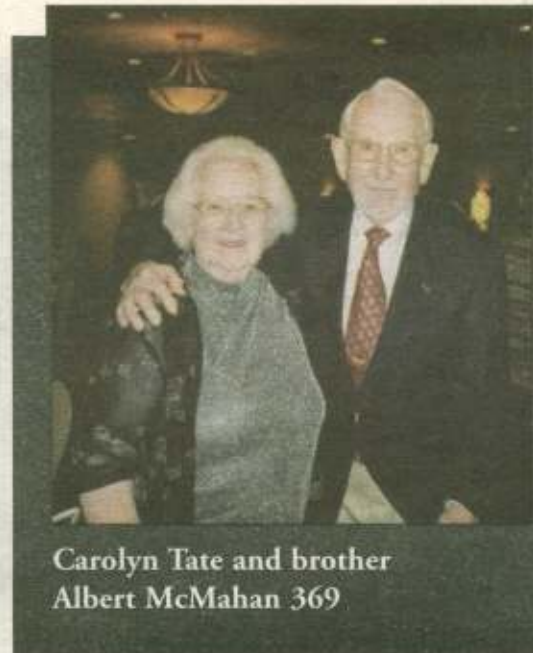
The Vernon DeLair Family 423



Hugh Phelan 367 and Maynard Nelson



Eugene & Jean Smith 423



Carolyn Tate and brother Albert McMahan 369



Nick and Gypsy Hoolko 367, Danny and Evelyn Houghton 368s



Henry Shuller, Maggie Davis and their father, Thurman Shuller Gp



Royce and Mollie Hopkins 367



Hazel and Forest Goodwill 369



Roy Connolly 367 and David Strong 367s



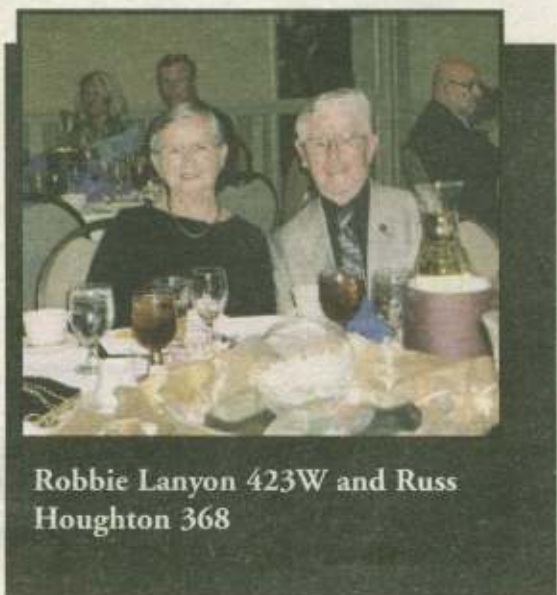
Gloria Lu and Sally Mula, aides to Dr. Herman Kaye



Richard Brown 369, Vernon DeLair 423, and Virginia Brown



Col. Susan O'Konski, niece of the late Adrian O'Konski 368



Robbie Lanyon 423W and Russ Houghton 368



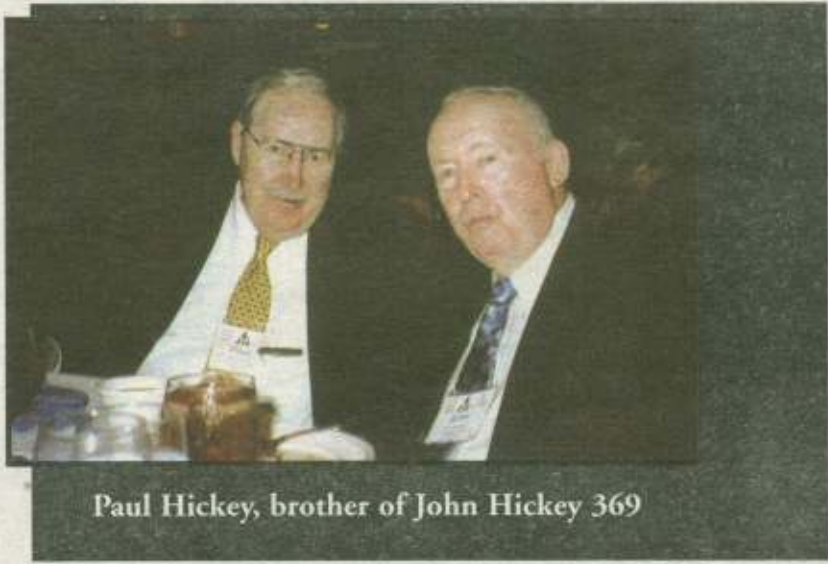
Ruth and Fred Sherman 369, flank Congressman McCaul



Don and Katherine Snook 369



Margaret and Wayne Stellish 368



Paul Hickey, brother of John Hickey 369



Ruth Carnicom 423w, Mikey Endres 368W and Wynon Clark 423w



Dr. Herman Kaye 423, Royce Hopkins 367, Congressman McCaul

On the Wings of a Memory

By the late Harry Hill, 423rd pilot, June-August 1944,
and editor of the Milwaukee Journal.

*His story as written in the edition of Sunday,
November 23, 1975*

Thurleigh, England - You remember the scene from the late, late show on TV. The balding, middle aged American returning years later to his World War II bomber base stands at the edge of the grass scared runway, long abandoned. Memories begin to flood through his mind. Then in the movie "Twelve O'Clock High", flashbacks tell the dramatic story of a US heavy bomber group in the air war over Hitler's Europe.

Would it be the same for me as it was for actor Dean Jagger? After three decades, would the thrills and fears, the joys and sorrows of my youthful days as a B-17 pilot in the 8th Air Force come back as vividly as 20th Century-Fox retold them in this 1950 film?

Would I remember faces and places? Would anything be the same? The British preserve their castles and cathedrals for 1,000 years. What about my wartime airfield at Thurleigh? Could dim recollections from the distant past be refreshed by revisiting the scene after 31 years? I wondered about these questions when I decided that my first return trip to England since the war provided a chance to go back to the base from which I flew 32 missions in the summer of 1944. Surely, something I would recognize was still there. If Dean Jagger could do it, why couldn't I? Of course, he was playing a role (for which he won an Academy Award) but I was doing the real thing.

Before starting to write the script for my own version of "Twelve O'Clock High", I telephoned an acquaintance on the London Daily Mail. He searched their files and discovered that my old airfield was still in use. It had been, in fact, the subject of a major planning controversy in the early 70s as the proposed site of a third London airport. When farmers and villagers of the Bedfordshire countryside organized to fight it, the government dropped the idea. But, the Daily Mail reporter said, the Thurleigh base was still being operated as an aeronautical research center. He gave me the name of Jack Jones, an administrator at the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) office in Bedford. A telephone call to him cleared my visit.

Accordingly, I went to St. Pancras Station in London on a sunny October morning to catch a train to Bedford. Except for advertising signs and the racks of best sellers-including Jaws - in the book stall, the old station looked much like it did in 1944. The grimy train shed, arching high over the boarding platforms, did not appear to have been cleaned in the years since I had last seen it.

My 9:30 train pulled out precisely on time. From the carriage window, I looked at

scenes that became increasingly familiar once we had cleared the dingy trackside squalor of London and moved into the countryside. Place names came back to me - St. Albans, Luton, Flitwick, Leagrave, Radlett. As the train sped through cities and villages, backyard rose gardens and patches of brussell sprouts, beans and cabbage rolled past. Jerseys and Holsteins grazed in farm pastures beginning to take on an autumn brown. And finally, in 45 minutes, we stopped in Bedford.

Jones met me on the platform, recognizing me immediately from my self-description as a bald, middle aged American in a blue leisure suit. In his car, we chatted about the old airfield as we drove seven miles to Thurleigh. I told him I had been surprised when the Daily Mail reporter pronounced it Thur-lee. I remembered that we fliers and our English neighbors said Thur-lye, as Milwaukeeans pronounce Burleigh.

"You're right," Jones said. "Those foreigners down in London don't know."

Jones had been an RAE civil servant for 20 years since his retirement from the Royal Artillery. He filled me in on some of the changes at Thurleigh while I peered intently from his moving Peugeot, searching for some familiar landmark.

"I'm afraid you won't find much that you remember," he said. "All the roads are new. The whole center of Bedford has been torn down and rebuilt since you were here. The base won't look anything like it did when the Americans had it. It's a research and development center now. We're a civilian agency which does the testing on aircraft designs for the civil airlines and the military. Thurleigh is now full of office buildings and wind tunnels and research hangars."

On the way, he proposed a stop at Twinwood, a little airstrip used in wartime for VIP planes. I remembered hearing of it, but I never landed there. We drove to the tarmac runway, where grass indeed grew thickly in the seams, and stopped in front of the old brick control tower.

"I want you to see this," Jones said, "because you may recall that it was here that Glenn Miller took off on his last flight."

We walked up dusty stairs into the empty control room of the tower. Its window panes had long since been smashed. Wrens flew in and out, apparently to nests in the abandoned structure. There on a wooden plaque propped against a wall was a hand lettered memorial to Miller, the famous American bandleader who directed an Air Force orchestra during the war.

"On foggy Dec. 15th 1944, on a flight to France, Maj. Glenn Miller took off from this airfield in a single-engine Norseman airplane and was never seen again. The music he left behind insures he's not forgotten."



—Illustration by Kenneth Frank
of The Journal Staff

My British host explained: "Twinwood hasn't been used for years except by a local flying club. But people remember about Glenn Miller. There is some kind of Miller society in England, and every Dec. 15 we have a group of music pilgrims who come here to walk on the field where he took off on his last flight. Now we'll zip over to Thurleigh - you Americans once had 14 airbases within a 12 mile radius of here. It is the only one still left."

In five minutes we pulled up to the Thurleigh gate. Signs proclaimed that this was the property of the Royal Aircraft Establishment and that entry was restricted. We checked in a guardhouse, where a uniformed security officer issued my pass. He objected to my carrying a camera in to a super-secret installation. Some minutes of telephone discussions with his superiors, plus a promise by Jones that I would photograph nothing that was prohibited, were needed to get the clearance.

And now the moment came. We drove around the base. I looked in vain for anything I could recognize. Gone were the winding country lanes on which we bicycled from our Nissen hut barracks to the mess hall or the flight line. The old perimeter track on which our B-17s lined up before dawn for many a bombing mission had vanished. Jones sensed my bewilderment.

In my day, Thurleigh, home of the 306th Heavy Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force, had been widely dispersed through the rural countryside as a precaution against enemy bombing. None of those buildings in the settings I remembered, still stood.

"You won't recognize much of the airfield today. Your old runways have been largely torn up as we rebuilt the place and constructed roads. We have put in a new 11,000 foot runway which can handle the biggest jets. One of our research projects is an instrument landing system to permit blind landings in fog, and the civil airlines use our runways for their crews to practice landings and takeoffs."

We stopped at a narrow, one story building that looked familiar. This, Jones said, was one of only a few surviving WWII structures. It was a Nissen hut that, he said, we called the "Eager Beaver Hut" and used for briefings for missions. Then I remembered, but I would not have recognized it. Jones took my camera and photographed

me standing beside it, posing in my best Dean Jagger stance.

Another old building was a huge hangar, where our crew worked around the clock to repair mechanical problems and combat damage on our Flying Fortresses.

"All we've had to do in 30 years is repaint it and reroof it," Jones said. "I guess we wish we had kept all your hangars (4). We still use your old base hospital. Now it's the officers' mess for the RAF pilots who fly our research planes."

We moved along. The Peugeot bumped over an old WWII taxi strip. Sticking out like fingers, but nearly hidden by grass, were the hardstands where our bombers were parked and serviced between missions. Then we came to a thickly wooded stand of hazel, oak and willow trees. A large sign warned: "Danger. Keep to the road. Area not certified clear of explosives." For the first time my memory cleared and I recalled that this was Galsey Wood, our bomb dump. Jones confirmed it.

"Your old bomb dump has caused us a frightful lot of trouble for 30 years," he said. "It seems you didn't take all your ammo when you moved out. Besides, you mined the woods and we aren't sure where they are buried. Whenever we want to bite into it for a new building, we have to get the Royal Engineers up here with their bomb experts to go over the area and clear it."

We backed away carefully and drove to the main office building. Inside, we met Cmdr. E. H. Whitley, a former Royal Navy officer, who now is assistant chief engineer at the RAE center. He led me on a guided tour of the research facilities. He told me the RAF still used "Twelve O'clock High" as a training film for pilots. In the corridor, we encountered a young Englishman whose face brightened into a broad smile when he saw me.

"This is a fellow who wants to meet you," Whitley said. He introduced Don Larkins, an aviation maintenance specialist at the base.

"I was a 14 year old boy, living in this area when you Americans were flying here. Every morning before dawn, I'd hear you take off and watch you assemble your formations overhead. I guess there have been a lot of you who come back for visits over the years, but you are the first B-17 pilot I've ever met. I've waited 30 years for this."

Texas Congressman.....continued from page 1

freedom and making our homeland more secure.

We will never forget their victories or the victories in Europe. And we will never forget that those victories came at great cost. So many thousands of my parent's generation were killed in the name of freedom and democracy. Few causes are as worthy. Few prices are as great. We must always remember, not just the victory in Europe, but also what it meant. It gave an entire continent of people another chance to live under flags of freedom and ultimately made this world

safer for future generations. Victory-Europe Day will forever stand as an example of what American pride, determination and freedom means to us. I yield back the balance of my time.



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: \$ _____

Name _____

Street and No. _____

City, State & Zip _____

Telephone No. _____ 306th Unit _____

Send to: Royce Hopkins, Treasurer
306th Bomb Group Association
35427 Pontiac Drive
Brookshire, TX 77423-9541

Date _____

MISSION REPORTS

Help Museum Meet Research Needs



A gift from Dr. Herman Kaye has given the Thurleigh Museum a boost to help visitors and researchers

to obtain information that has usually been available in the States. It cost \$2600 to have the data from our 341 combat missions copied from the 306th collection and now housed with the Group historian.

In the late 70's, when research was begun on the 306th history, the historian showed some of the mission data he was accumulating and people began ordering data on the missions they had, the need was seen to have our missions in our possession.

At that time Donald Ross, a now inactive Federal circuit judge and our former Group Bombardier, suggested that we enhance what we had already found. *First Over Germany* used information on about 110 missions. Most of the data was found, although the mission files on about eight of our missions are no longer to be found at National Archives. Some of the gaps have been filled by deeper searching, and our files have been filled out with data from the Squadron Diaries and other sources.

Dr. Kaye's gift also included 40 three-ring binders which we sent along to England because the pages were three-hole punched on the U.S. system. The historian's collection has 36 binders, but some of them are five inches thick. Another volume holds the Missing Aircrew Reports, which are not fully complete either. One National Archives worker told the historian some years ago that when he went to work at Archives he found aircrew reports in and

about a four drawer file cabinet, some them stacked on top loosely, some of them between the wall and the back of the cabinet, and scattered elsewhere. One surmises also that some of these records developed legs and "walked" out of Archives. Today the security at Archives is exceptional.

At our last business meeting when the decision was made that all of the historian's records go to the Kalamazoo Air Zoo in Kalamazoo, Michigan, rather than to the 8th AF Museum in Savannah, it was our effort to provide a fine repository for our records, the likes of which are already at Savannah for two other USAAF units. When all of this was discussed at our recent annual meeting, Albert McMahan, our outgoing president, presented a motion that we send a full set of our Mission Reports to the 8th Museum at Savannah. It was approved after Dr. Kaye said he would fund this copying effort.

When you really realize how valuable such records are is when you confer with my friend Fred Casimo who was a B-25 radio operator in the 13th AF in the Pacific. They do not have such records available and it is unlikely that they ever got to National Archives at all. The origins of the 8th and its assignment to England into highly organized atmosphere led to a lot of things happening. The cadre of the 8th came largely out of well educated, business experienced people who knew how to compile and use records. The climate was conducive to creating and keeping quantities of paper that accumulated.

A late comer to the 306th Intelligence office told this writer that after the end of the war that all of the Mission Report material was brought together, reviewed, sorted and prepared for transmission to National Archives where it still reposes.

Why Our Records Have Stayed In One Place Forever

With one secretary serving the membership since its inception in the 1970s it has been relatively easy to keep our voluminous records together. I have always thought that if someone else were elected to the post that the "lucky" wife would not admit all of the 306th collection into her house, and there would go the secretary or a lot of the collection would disappear, particularly if there were two or three moves. And on occasion I have heard my wife mutter "Your study would make a fine sewing room".

The motion made and passed to eventually move our records to an archival site is dependent upon how long I can continue the work, or the official demise of the organization. IRS has an interest in this, and while we pay no

taxes, we are required to officially state where everything goes. It can only be transferred to something that is a 50 1(c)3 designee. The Kalamazoo Air Zoo meets this qualification. It isn't that IRS has any interest in our records, but they do want to track the money, and do not want anyone to make off with it.

Aside from the things already mentioned, perhaps the index card file of some 8,000 items may be the most interesting. That's why obits in *Echoes* are more than one liners. There are a couple of thousand pictures in the file. There are also all kinds of documents concerning the 306th and the 8th. Don't be mistaken about anything, but I thoroughly enjoy serving the 306th and ALL of its variegated members.

It's a Beaut!
Rockwell's Art a Winner

Robert Rockwell, our new vice president, has a rare talent that came to the fore at the San Antonio reunion. He brought several pieces of plastic that had been worked over extensively, which he announced would go to the highest bidder. And it did! \$1,000 being paid by Dr Herman Kaye. This came after several much lower bids and it effectively cut out the "shoe clerks."

This piece of art came from plastic, and before we proceed further let's point out that the brownish spot to the right side is a piece of the main runway we used for most of our takeoffs and landings. The chunk was pounded out of the runway by Ralph Franklin and then sent along to Bob.

In fact, if you look carefully, you will note that the lines running around the central part are some of the runways and the hardstands where our planes were parked. Have your eye follow the arrow from the lump and you will see where Ralph freed up a chunk of cement and gravel. In a conversation with the editor Franklin said: "Rockwell wants a chunk of runway. I think he wants to sell some pieces to people." Little did anyone know what was really bubbling in Bob's mind.

Armageddon
The Battle for Germany, 1944-1945

By Max Hastings

This is a great retelling of the stories that came out of Eastern Europe and beyond as World War II came to an end after engulfing much of the world since 1939. Hastings is a masterful writer of this period. Now he takes us into periods and situations that we might feel more comfortable in skipping altogether.

Most of us have little background in what went on in Russia and the German invasion there that killed millions of Soviets. This was later followed by Russia's entry into the European continent, and the perpetration of the same murderous events that had been visited in Russia by their unwanted visitors.

Hastings' book will introduce you to all kinds of situations that you could not have introduced into your Westernized mind. Again, you need maps to follow the situation well, such as the region of East Germany that most of us know little or nothing about. While it is a massive dose of current history, it is also a great lesson in geography.

Two magnificent quotations are in the *frontispiece* of the book: Winston Churchill, 6 February 1945 said "Tonight the sun goes down on more suffering than the world has ever known", and a second by a Russian officer: "We were living an existence in which people's lives had absolutely no value. All that seemed important was to stay alive oneself."

Hastings concludes: "The battle for Germany began as the largest single military event of the twentieth century, and ended as its greatest human tragedy. More than half a century later, we may be profoundly grateful that it's worst consequences have been undone without another war. The men who fought and died for the freedom of Europe received their final reward with the collapse of the Soviet tyranny, two generations after the destruction of its Nazi counterpart."



PLANES HAD TROUBLE ON THE GROUND- On 8 Aug 44 two planes collided when 43-3801, 423rd Squadron, lost its brakes and overran 42-102619, 368th, when "Report to the Nation" had not yet cleared the runway. Both were salvaged. John J. Allen was the 368th pilot and Malcolm Frazee, 423rd.