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306th Echoes

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George Kerr, left, points out some of the gadgetry for the Norden Bomb Sight which he recently sent to England to Roy Trask. He was Kerr's pilot of a 369th plane which flew missions over France and Germany in 1944.

Unique Museum at Thurleigh Houses Artifacts

A rugged green building on the onetime WWII airfield at Thurleigh, Beds, England, provides a unique British home for the 306th Bomb Group Museum. This is the only airfield that survived the war and is now the site of a museum dedicated to that effort of 60 years ago.

The 306th Bombardment Group (H) flew its original contingent of 35 B-17 F model planes into its British

base (minus two that didn't make it) and was still actively flying combat when V-E Day arrived. In fact, because the 306th was one of two bomb groups who carried on a year and a half program aerial mapping Europe and North Africa, the last B-17 from Thurleigh left its longtime base in January 1946.

The 306th served the longest time

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Tough Times Hit the 306th!

We need money in order to stay afloat, and we are appealing to all who are on our mailing list. If we are to continue to entertain you and keep track of you we need concerted help in the next several months.

There are a number of you who can afford \$100 or multiples of this in the next few months, and there are others who can send along \$10 or \$20.

Your continuing checks will give us the boost we need, and this will make a difference.

Our emphasis on color pictures is not a viable target for cost reduction as an annual gift from Dr. Herman Kaye, our present president, has pro-

vided for that for several years and he will continue this effort on our behalf.

Our mailing list has shrunk some, and probably will more, although we are hard pressed to get new addresses, or notices of death. If you can help in this regard, please do. We have a large number of widows and others who have been in 306th families, and lastly we have 100 to 200 free loaders who really need to make an annual commitment of a \$20 bill to aid us as well.

There is an envelope with this paper which is addressed, and which needs to be used bringing your contribution to the treasurer in the next quarter.

Dates! Dates! Dates!

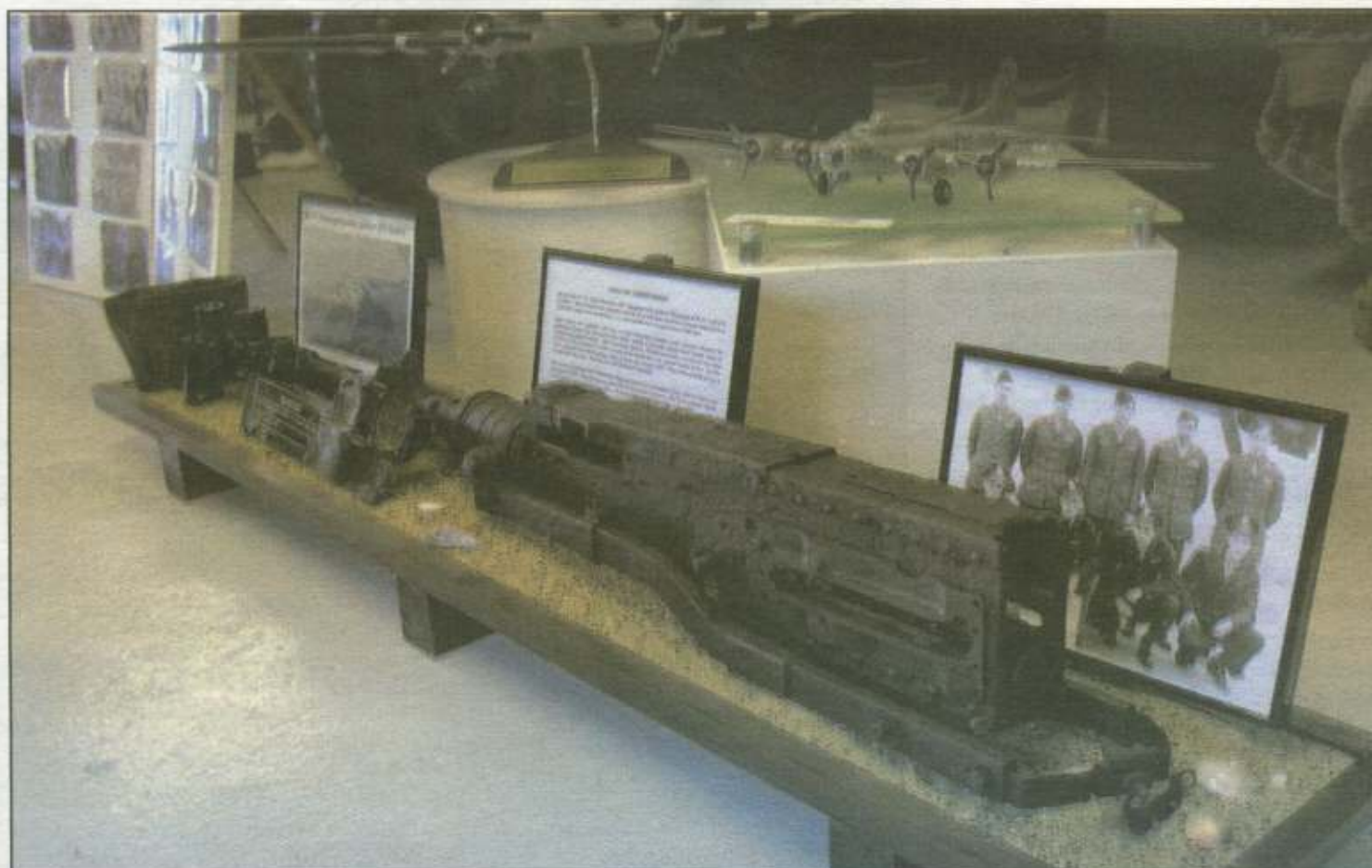
This is the most important item for the membership at this point in the year. We have already had calls wanting to know when we will meet in Omaha so that other parts of our "family" can make plans.

In this matter, there days when it was the charging 500 got the next year's date during the reunion, giving everyone a whole year's lead.

In fact, at a reunion in Washington, DC, 20 or more years ago, registration slips were handed out at the business meeting, and several people mailed in their registrations for the following year before they left the Nation's capitol. Thus, the beginning date for the 2006 reunion in Omaha is 1 November, and we close out with the banquet on Saturday night, the 4th.

In the June issue we will have a lot more information on program and other matters of concern. This year we will be at the Doubletree Hotel at 1616 Dodge St. Omaha.

Roy Connolly, the director of this reunion, and the officers and directors are looking forward to seeing you in Omaha, which we will recall for you was the very first 306th-only reunion we had. Crowds in that period have ranged from under 100 to nearly 900, and we are planning for something in the 150 range this year.



This .50 caliber machine gun from Louis Matichka's 367th Flying Fortress has already spent a year in the Thurleigh Museum. This came out of the airplane when Swedish divers found the intact plane which went under the waves in 1944. The flying crew is pictured at the right.

OBITUARIES

John T. DeJohn, 369th gunner (Robert Riordan crew), died 17 June 2005 in Birmingham, AL. He was seriously wounded 8 Nov 42. DeJohn was one of several of Riordan's crew wounded on this mission. The medical people kept DeJohn hospitalized for 18 months, and he did not return to combat duty. He leaves his wife, Eudaneal, 5gc.

George T. DeVack, 368th pilot and Squadron Operations Officer, died 29 Mar 2006 in San Jose, CA, his longtime home. He joined the 368th 3 Apr 44, flew his tour and on 14 Oct 44 was named to the Ops post. On 29 Mar 45 he became the station accident officer. He was preceded in death by his wife.

David W. Dillon, 423rd tail gunner (John Delapoe's crew), died 25 Aug 2005 in Green River, WY. He had retired April 87 from Stauffer Co., leaving his wife, Margaret, 3c, 7gc, 3ggc.

William E. Ferguson, 369th engineer (Allen Babin crew), died 4 Aug 2005 in Henderson, TX. He came to the 306th 16 Feb 45, and was MIA 10 Apr 45 on a mission to Oranienberg, Germany. Babin's crew was split up along the German border and Ferguson was captured. But eight days later he was rescued by a British armored division. After the war he received a degree in law from Baylor University. He leaves his wife Catherine, 3c, 6gc, 6ggc.

Arthur E. Hatton, 423rd engineer (Joseph Clark's crew), died 3 Mar 2006 in Pompano Beach, FL. He had completed 30 missions by the end of combat, later participating in the Casey Jones aerial mapping project. He

leaves his wife, Cynthia, 5c, 8gc.

Joseph H. Hoffman, 368th tail gunner on the Leon Risk crew, died 24 May 2003 in Englewood, CO. He came to combat 8 Aug 44 and completed his tour 21 Feb 45. He was a quality control manager for some years. He left his wife, Charlene, 2d, 2gc.

Everett Hulme, 367th gunner (John Conlin crew), died in 2006. He joined the Group 17 Jul 44 and finished his combat tour in December. He leaves his wife, Vivian, and his last known address was Papillion, NE.

Charles F. (Casey) Jones, 369th navigator, died in early Apr 2006 in Henderson, NV. He came to the 306th 25 Nov 42, transferring from the RCAF. He became Squadron navigator and his final two months were as Group navigator, leaving the Gp 28 Jul 43. He earned BS and MA degrees at Purdue University. Casey was OIC, Force Control for the directorate of operations, Strategic Air Command until retiring 1 Dec 69. Then came a period as a computer engineering consultant for Boeing Aerospace, Renton, WA. He left his second wife, Luise.

John Kappmeyer, 367th co-pilot (Wm Kirk crew), died 25 Feb 2006 at the VA Hospital in Waukon, IA. A graduate of Upper IA U and U IA, he spent much of his life as a teacher. He had become a POW 14 Oct 43 when we lost 10 a/c en route to Schweinfurt, Germany. His POW experience was in Stalag Luft III. He had lived in Harper's Ferry, IA, where his widow, LaMarr, continues to live.

Lucien F. Peters, 369th navigator who came to the 306th without a crew, died 22 Mar 2006 in Parkville, MD. He completed combat 18 Dec 44. Peters graduated with two degrees from Johns Hopkins University,



Warren Edris Not in Agreement with Hennessy 8 Mar 43, 14 pt BF

"I was Rip Riordan's copilot from 1 Jan to 8 March 1943.

"The trip to Lorient on 6 March I remember quite differently than Ed Hennessy, with whom I roomed during my brief stay at Thurleigh.

"As I remember it — we went on the deck to South England at Lands End, then we were out over the Atlantic. We later turned landward and climbed to bombing altitude. This procedure was to keep us out of German radar as long as possible.

"Coming back we retraced our flight path

out into the Atlantic and made a right turn for England.

"A bunch of planes started to run low on fuel, including us. The B-17 had a warning light for low fuel and ours came on while we were still on the outward leg out over the Atlantic.

"It got really hairy as we approached Exeter. Some planes were losing fuel-starved engines.

"We were lucky—we were able to taxi to our parking, but others just ran out of fuel while taxiing.

and retired in 1991 as a principal in the Baltimore County Public Schools. He leaves his wife, Marie, 3c, 5gc, and 2ggc.

the Stamford Fire Dept. Surviving him are his wife, Patricia, 3c, 8gc, 3ggc.

306th Family

James P. Smith III, a waist gunner on Walter Keilt's crew (368th), died 29 Jan 2006 in Stamford, CT. He was with the 306th from Dec 43 to Jun 44 when he finished his tour. He retired as a captain with

Peggy Hill, the wife of Charles D. Hill, 367th waist gunner and POW, (Earl Tunnell crew), died 21 May 2004 in Baltimore, MD. (Corrected).



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

One Bomb Too Many for Crew

By Warren Day

During WWII, the B-17 in which I was the lead radio operator, was flying over Germany on one of its many bomb runs. At an altitude of 25,000 feet the plane had turned at the I.P. and was on course for the bomb run. Most of the crew gave off a little sweat as the bomb bay doors opened. Flak was everywhere and hit the plane with great accuracy as we moved along at what seemed like a snail's pace.

The tension lessened as "Bombs Away" sounded from the bombardier, Charlie Wallin. The aircraft pitched and moved upward as the plane was relieved of the weight of the bombs. As the plane was leaving the target area, the pilot radioed over the intercom to troubleshoot the bomb bay. A red light was on in the cockpit indicating problems.

Upon examination, I found a live 500 pound bomb hung up in the left rack. I knew without a doubt that the plane could not be landed with a renegade bomb in the bay. Too, we wouldn't be able to keep up with the group if the bays were open. Neither one was NO choice. "Get rid of the bastard" ordered the pilot.

I quickly approached the bay. I'll never forget the vastness of the sky as I looked down through the wide open doors at the huge bomb. The plane was really pitching, doing evasive moves, in order to avoid the flak. The situation looked hopeless to me. I had to step backwards to put on my parachute then I realized the catwalk was too

cont. on page 3

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
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367th	\$20.00
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306th Group Directory 1 Feb '06	\$10.00

Mission Reports Detailed information on
specific missions flown between 9 Oct. 42
and 19 Apr 45. May range from 1 to 50 pages.
Include the name of individual you are
interested in to derive most benefits. List
dates, etc. on separate sheet.

3 for \$5.00

Total \$

Make check to 306th BG Assn. and mail to Secretary: 306 Bomb Group Assn.
5323 Cheval Place
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Fire Fighters at Thurleigh Had a Dull Routine

Those on flying status at Thurleigh kept to a pretty good schedule, flying often when weather was o.k. But, there were some who flew only occasionally and had regular duties about the base, which required their presence.

The fliers flew missions, rising early, getting home often late in the afternoon. If they weren't on schedule a given day they often went to combat meetings morning and afternoon, from which those not flying might be slow-timing planes just out of repairs, or they got to go to the skeet range for a couple hours of fun. Or there were other dabs and jobs to do. And those actively in the mission business would get two day leave at a time.

Such time might find a crew off together, perhaps to sit two days in a pub drinking and telling stories. Sometimes crew members in pairs or whatever, would be off to London to see the sights, or visiting Oxford, or Cambridge, or to Scotland by train. Flak houses were also a nice interlude- if your pilot wanted to go to one.

This editor was on a flying crew. Never went to a flak house. Didn't do the pub visitation either. But figuring he would never get to London at some later time in his life he would take advantage of two days to get to London to see Madam Tussaud's wax museum, or got a room at the officer's club on Jermyn St. from where he could walk or taxi to the major sites about town.

We need to remember there were more men on base who didn't fly than there were those who either flew regularly or at least occasionally.

"This is all leading in to what the non-fliers did and how often their section or unit kept to their regular duties, and accounts were kept. We have displayed such things once or twice, and in this issue we are featuring the fire-fighters, men who kept track of aircraft and of their fire fighting equipment. We won't bore you with their goings on for a month, only for 10 days, and we would guess that this report was submitted in 1944:

1. A combat mission took off at 0815 and returned at 1810. The men filled extinguishers because most of those sitting out on the dispersal point suffered from the freezing weather. Sgt. Melvin VanVliet went to Honningdon for supplies. The pump was used to dry up a project at the Post Office, and the men continued to exchange extinguishers on them. Lt. Kenneth Kelly continued on with his inventory of the fire equipment.

2. The trailer pump was used again today at the Post Office and the men continued to exchange extinguishers at the dispersal points. Lt. Kelly continued on the inventory as there was no flying today.

3. A Combat mission was ready at 0700 and returned at 1515. T/5 Roy Smith filled and exchanged more extinguishers today. We had

our regular Saturday inspection after which Lt. Kelly went out to the Bomb Dump to continue his inventory project.

4. Lt. Kelly inspected and checked the 423rd dispersal area while the men refilled many extinguishers and replaced those that had been sitting out for considerable time.

5. Exchanging of extinguishers today and three of these were delivered to one of the Sites. Pvt. Charles Jenkins and Pvt. John Haugh assisted in road washing with a decontamination machine. The parts for our British truck arrived and T/5 Einar Newquist installed a gasket in the Coventry Climax pump.

6. A combat mission took off at 0700 and returned at 1540. During that day extinguishers were exchanged and the CO2 tank was lined up for proper installation. Pvt. Abraham Scheinhaus, Pvt. Haugh and Pvt. Charles Galvin assisted in road washing. Sgt. Raymond Kaminski cleared a drainage ditch for draining the front of the department, where water collects daily.

7. Lt. Kelly, S/Sgt James Slusher and T/5 Newquist worked on the trucks today. T/5 Robert McKee went to depot G-25 to obtain parts for the 135 crash unit, PFC Maurice Tait accompanied him. The unit history for January was submitted again today.

8. Pvt Jenkins' hopes of returning home were destroyed when his application papers were returned after traveling through channels of this theatre. The project of exchanging extinguishers was completed today by Sgt. Odell Barber's crew. PFC Ralph Pierce went to the hospital for an x-ray on his foot. Today's mission was scrubbed at 0630. T/5 Newquist, PFC Tate and Staff Sgt. Slusher replaced the parts in the 135 unit and assembled the pump on the Fordson unit. T/5 Charles Hoffman and Pvt. Clyde Moyers enjoyed filling extinguishers as extra duty today.

9. S/Sgt Slusher and T/5 Newquist, with the assistance of others, were busy all day doing mechanical repairs that were found necessary. We received 26 15lb CO2 extinguishers from the gasoline trucks to be checked and refilled. The men pumped out two static ponds in the Tech area which overflowed with heavy rain, as well as a pond at the EM Mess Hall.

10. Men were awakened for a mission take-off at 0530 but after several delays was off at 0930. The planes were back at 1550. Due to the inclement weather the men had to stay on the line for an extra amount of time. T/5 Robert Goins went to the depot at Honningdon for a supply of CO2 for refilling CO2 extinguishers. The men stood inspection of the living quarters and around the station. The supply of CO2 arrived and the extra tank and the truck were filled with CO2, this causing rearrangement of the new supply shed. S/Sgt Slusher and T/5 Newquist completed the repairs and put the 135 crash truck back into operation today.

Unique Museum Houses Artifact..... cont. from page 1

of any bomb group in England with the 8th Air Force and did this service at a single base. As a result, too, more than 100 men of the 306th married British wives. The male partner of a couple which had lived in England for many years died within the past month.

Thurleigh began its airfield career as the home base for a Polish unit of the Royal Air Force. When the 306th flew in in early September 1942 the Poles had been transferred, so the Americans engineered the site with new runways, the longest being 5200 feet. The 306th led the first raid to Germany in January 1943, and until the end of the war it put up 18 raids to Berlin.

There are still some 306th members around who flew their first combat mission to Lille, France 9 October 1942, and who also were on the first Berlin raid in March 1944. When crews appeared at the Group briefing room to learn of the day's mission they verbally expressed themselves. Walking into the briefing room men felt dominated by the big map of northeastern Europe in front of them. But the map was obscured until an intelligence officer pulled aside the cover and everyone could see the map with a string across it that ran from our base to the target, with some attention to the actual track to be flown. The audible vote came from the crowd of fliers seated before the screen.

Berlin, Merseberg and Munich were among the longer routes flown, and with the anticipation of considerable flak on the bombrun and over the target. And there was always anticipation of heavy Luftwaffe fighter planes along the route. Fighters were heavy until the advent of the long range P-47s and P-51s. These American planes became great bomber escorts

once they were equipped with long range tanks.

These Americans who faced the flak and fighters see their ranks growing thinner, as they are now 81 years of age or older. An additional foe to be considered was the 60 below zero temperatures. Heated suits were the regular for bomber crews as there was no cabin heat. Fighter planes were probably somewhat warmer. Bomber personnel wore heated suits—jackets, pants, boots and gloves, and hoped that the equipment worked properly. British suits early on were difficult, but American heated suits arrived in 1944, much to everyone's relief. Frostbite could be a problem.

Now the Thurleigh Museum has two mementoes which are on display. The first to arrive came in May 2005 was a .50 caliber machine gun from the 306th B-17 of Louis Matichka who ditched the plane off the south coast of Sweden. The plane has been gone over by Swedish divers, and they sent the machine gun to the Thurleigh Museum for safe keeping.

The second memento came several weeks ago through the efforts of George Kerr, a onetime 369th Squadron bombardier. He had had it for some years, and recently concluded he would like to see it in the Thurleigh Museum. He dropped it off at UPS, paid the shipping bill and two days later the instrument was in England. But, when it came time to deliver it it had come up missing. After some frantic calls back and forth the right person in England solved the dilemma and Ralph Franklin had the bomb sight at the Museum.

Now two special items are in the Thurleigh Museum and it is expected that attendance will climb rapidly. The gun won't shoot and the sight won't drop bombs, but both are becoming attractions to people all over England. Visitors to the Museum have come from as far as Australia, and it should be a good season for people far and near to help relive the days of WWII aviation in the Midlands of England.

One Bomb Too Many cont. from page 2

narrow and almost impossible to pass even with my 152 pound frame.

My breathing became heavy as I began to realize my predicament. My oxygen was waning. I pulled on my gunner gloves because my hands would have frozen to the superstructure as I went about the task at hand.

As there weren't any pry tools to dislodge the bomb or step plates to negotiate my position, I grabbed onto anything that I could and then gently stepped onto the bomb. It didn't budge. Thoughts of what would happen to me if the bomb suddenly dropped, leaving me suspended in midair without a chute. But I felt I had to complete my assignment as directed by the pilot. I

jumped on the monster perhaps three times and away it went. For a brief moment, I felt as though I was going with it. With my oxygen almost gone, I managed somehow to make it back to my station.

Even though all this occurred in 1943, there are times when my mind races back to those precarious moments 63 years ago. I was truly blessed to be able to participate in fighting a war for my country and come home without a scratch.

N.B. Warren F. Day was a 423rd radio operator on John Lewis' crew. They arrived with the Group 5 Jul 43, and Day completed his tour 29 Jan 44, the 153rd EM to finish up. He died 29 Jan 2005. He was a school teacher, retiring in 1980.

British Pilot's Skill Saves Nine Americans

16 October 1942

Nine American Flying Fortress crewmen are alive and their \$250,000 airplane will fly against Hitler again because in one split second, an alert British Spitfire pilot improvised an aerial sign language.

But for Flight Lt. A.J. Andrews, the Fort would have crashed in the rough English Channel and these men on its crew might not have been here today to tell the story:

- Lt. James M. Stewart** from Marrowbone, KY, the pilot;
- Lt. William W. Dickey**, Beverly, Mass, co-pilot;
- Lt. Joseph Consolmagno**, Boston, MA, navigator;
- Lt. James A. Creamer**, Louisville, KY, bombardier;
- Sergeant Hugh L. Langan**, Sioux City, IA, radio operator;
- Sgt. Charles J. Meriweather**, Sanford, FL, engineer;
- Sgt. Raymond J. Schmoyer**, E. Greenville, PA;
- Sgt. Thomas E. McMillan**, Steubenville, OH, waist gunner;
- Sgt. Jack M. Wheeler**, Muskogee, OK, tail gunner.

Stewart was piloting his fortress in the big raid against Lille last Friday when he was jumped by swarms of German fighters. They knocked two motors out, smashed his radio apparatus, riddled the life raft and drilled shell holes in the rudder.

The third engine was beginning to cough. "I knew it was only a question of several hundred yards before I would have to make a crash landing and with hills in front of me it looked like the best chance was to land in the Channel," said Stewart.

"I was picking out a soft spot in the water, which was very rough."

At this critical moment, Andrews appeared and instantly sized up the situation. He could not communicate by radio so he jumped in front of the Fortress, waggled his wings and headed directly for shore.

"I knew he wanted me to follow him so I took a chance," Stewart continued. The Spitfire sped straight over a low hill, he said, and "just as he reached the crest of the hill he waggled his wings again and dropped his landing gear to show me there was a field below."

The struggling bomber just cleared the hill and rolled onto a runway directly in front of which the crew had never known before. The crew agreed that their plane probably could not have flown another 100 yards.

Thanks, Bill

15 March, 2006

Dear Russ:

A special message for Newsletter editors. Stay well. You are an endangered Species! Boy, Russ, you are one guy we can't afford to lose. Editor of the best newsletter of any military unit being published. We can't let that get away. Each issue I get (having published the 40th Group Newsletter for 25 years) I read yours and stand in awe of what you singlehandedly have done.

For me there seems like no end. I have repeatedly asked to be relieved of the 40th Group job. No luck. Not only that, I go over to the Hospice office to do some volunteer work last month and they usher me in and say, "We'd like you to do a newsletter for our volunteers." That's why we must preserve gems like you. There ain't many good ones and they aren't making any more of them.

Regards,

Bill Rooney

William A. Rooney
40th Bomb Group (B-29s)

Two of Our Writers Turn Out Good Books



Larry Shurilla, writing about his father and Vince Fredrick, penning tales of his crew have brought appealing and interesting stories of combat.

Larry was one of Robert Shurilla's brood of six and he has intriguingly entitled his effort, *I Grew Up with a Hero*. Larry did not do 75 pages quickly, but spent several years on the manuscript. And he tried it out on your editor several years ago at which time considerable editing made the story better.

One is sure that his siblings, and follow-on generations have found it a good way to learn what WWII aerial combat was all about. Larry found that he and his siblings had gathered up much of the "stuff" he needed, as he said his father

had talked about combat some, but not a lot.

This is rather typical I think. And as kids we didn't ask a lot of questions. But you do the best you can. Read anything you can find about "Our" war and both your local librarians for stuff. They WILL help and may turn you to people in your community who can also help. Kids who read *Echoes* could learn, and if your Dad took you to a reunion you learned more.

The writing itself is the hard work and other people you may know can help you with that, if you but ask. Larry also got hold of a 423rd Combat Diary and this helped him greatly in keeping the chronology straight and also gave him a great fund of background that helped at every turn.

Larry's book is generously illustrated, which also helps create reality for the reader.

Vince Fredrick has written his autobiographical experience around his days in combat, and also has brought forth a

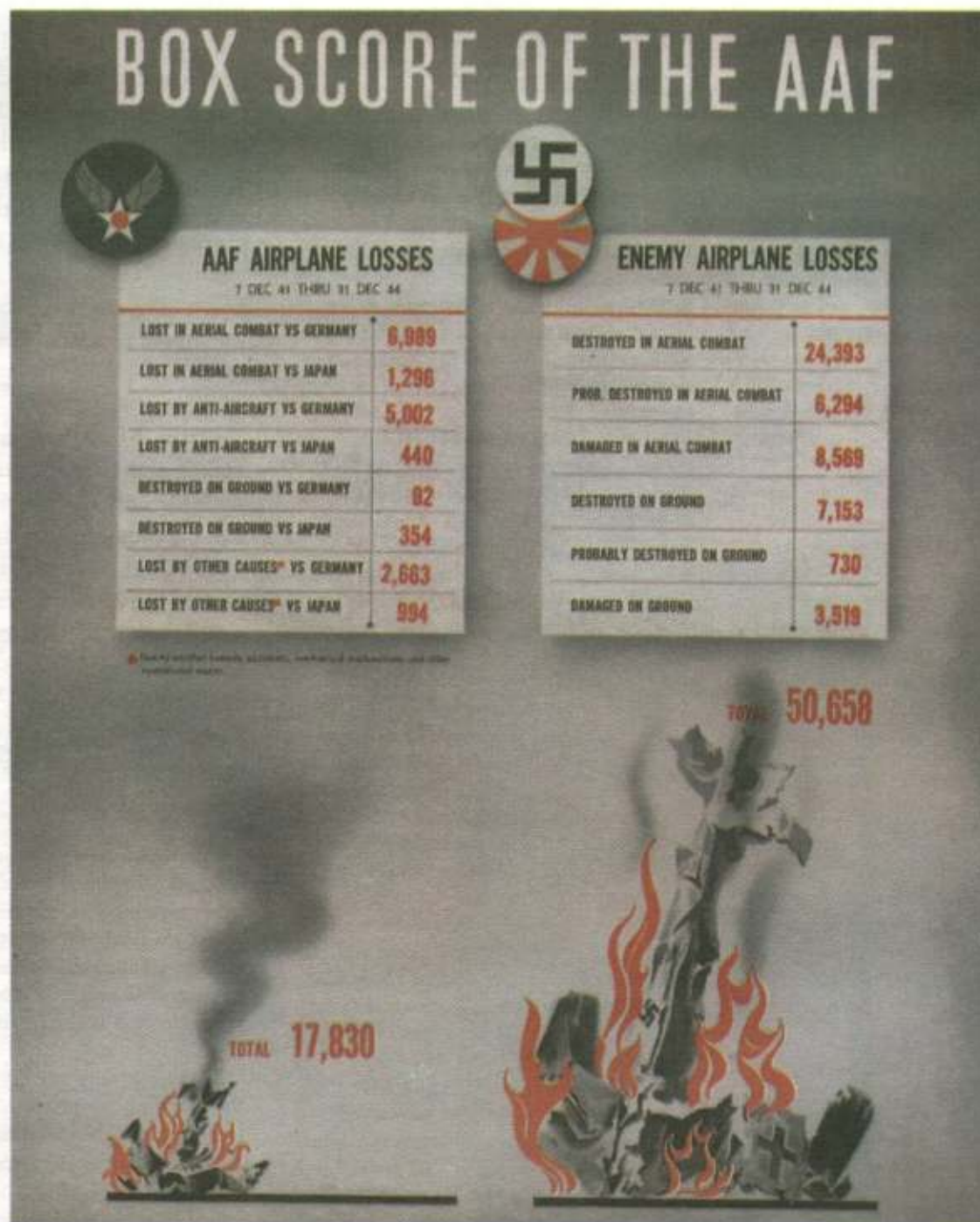
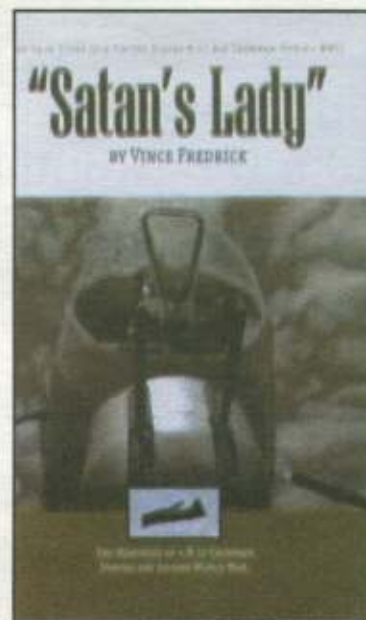
lot of information that tells family what life was like in the military, as well as dealing directly with combat. Vince came along a bit later and thus had 35 missions to deal with, which offers more experience than many the other men had.

Fredrick made sure that he had some resources to use, such as published materials of the 306th during his time under fire. He, too, found the use of photographs helped him in fleshing out his

own story. Either of these books could be helpful to analyze if you readers want now to tell Dad's story, or that of granddad or a great grandfather, or an uncle.

Someone once told this editor early on that the research was the easy part of bringing a story to life. It is the writing itself that is the task master if you are to complete such a job. Even at this late date there is still time to get something

done. Write everyday at an appointed time and place, and do not let yourself be driven from it by lawn mowing, snow shoveling, or watching TV.



A box score reflects accomplishments only in part. We flew far more sorties than the enemy. Many were unopposed, the foe conserving his planes,

while ours fought weather, A-A, and other hazards. The true test of an air force lies in its strategic bombardment accomplishments and tactical results.

Barney Still on a High Note

At a military affair in the late 1960s, Las Vegas showroom emcee G. Barney Rawlings sang the Irish classic "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen," which impressed then Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Paul McConnell.

"You're the greatest... singer since (Irish tenor) John McCormack," McConnell told Rawlings, then a major in the Air Force Reserve.

"Two weeks later, I was promoted to full colonel," said Rawlings, who eventually retired as a major general. "I guess it made sense that as a military figure I was a pretty good singer."

Known for his self-effacing sense of humor, Rawlings was downplaying his military contributions to the extreme.

An Army Air Corps pilot in World War II, Rawlings flew 35 combat missions in B-17 bombers, logged 282 hours over Europe and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, three battle stars and six Air Medals.

After the war, he made his mark in local show business with thousands of performances as a singing emcee at the Last Frontier and Thunderbird hotels on the Strip and later by performing the national anthem at numerous ball games and dedication ceremonies.

He also was executive director of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority from 1969 to 1972 and was an executive in sales and marketing for several local resorts, including the Riviera, Sands, Tropicana and Landmark.

At 83, Rawlings is still going strong, performing concerts and running GE-BARA Enterprises Inc., which provides television production crews for HBO and Showtime events in Las Vegas.

In September, Rawlings will enter his 60th year in show business in Southern Nevada, which he believes is some kind of a record.

"If I am to be remembered at all, I would like to be remembered as perhaps the most blessed guy of my generation," Rawlings said at his Las Vegas home where photos of stars he worked with — Dennis Day, Peggy Lee, Duke Ellington and Nat King Cole, among others — adorn the walls of one room.

"Whether it was in the military, in show business, in sales or in production work, I never did anything spectacular. But boy did I rub elbows with some great people."

He recalled that as assistant man-

ager of the then Las Vegas Convention Bureau in the late 1950s, an actor came to town and asked him for a tour that included places where few tourists visit.

"I took him up to what is now Hollywood Boulevard—then a dirt road—and showed him the view of the valley," Rawlings recalled. "He talked of the potential for growth, conservation and other issues."

"I was so impressed with the way he spoke, I asked him, 'Dutch, do you have any thoughts about running for political office?' He laughed and said, 'Being president of the Screen Actors Guild's the extent of my political aspirations.'"

The actor was future California, governor and U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who remained a close friend of Rawlings' until Reagan's death in June 2004.

Rawlings, who was born and raised in Provo, came to Southern Nevada on Labor Day 1947 to perform three nights at the Railroad Pass Casino for \$150.

An aspiring law student at the University of Utah who at the time was singing in a Utah nightclub for \$5 a night, he performed before a local crowd that included Last Frontier Hotel show producer Hal Braudis, who asked Rawlings to audition for him.

The next day, Rawlings showed up at the Strip resort, performed "Begin the Beguine" and "All the Things You Are" then drove back to college that night, figuring his brief Vegas career was over and that he would become a lawyer.

Two days later, Braudis called Rawlings, hired him and Rawlings never looked back.

As a local singing emcee—a position that no longer exists in Las Vegas showrooms and lounges—Rawlings performed a record 3,128 consecutive performances at the old Thunderbird Hotel.

"The singing emcee created an aura of warmth, introducing the acts and performing in support of the star," said veteran Strip publicist Harvey Diederich.

"Barney Rawlings was good at that job because he had a lot of charm and great stage presence. He knew



how to work an audience. Later, with his leadership experience and background, he fit into a number of hotel executive positions."

In 1953 Rawlings took on the added responsibility at the Thunderbird of sales and convention director, before leaving in 1957 for his first of two stints with the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority as assistant manager.

He went to the Riviera in 1963 as vice president of sales and in 1968 became executive director of marketing for the Sands. At the same time, he served as national director for the Nevada Hotel Sales Management Association and as vice chairman of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce's aviation committee.

At 47, Rawlings was appointed to the then \$25,000-a-year job as executive director of the convention authority—a post that would bring him great satisfaction and many headaches.

One major controversy centered, on Rawlings pushing for the construction of the Las Vegas Convention Center's East Wing to improve convention business. That effort was inaccurately interpreted by some as Rawlings' opposition to the LVCVA constructing what is now Sam Boyd Stadium—a pet project of some board members.

"Rawlings was right to push for the convention center's East Wing because it was really needed," said UNLV history professor Gene Moehring, who has written extensively on the history of the convention authority.

"But at that time there was pressure from the football team and its boosters—some very powerful people—who really wanted the football stadium."

Moehring credited Rawlings for being a man of vision. "Rawlings rec-

ognized that convention business was growing," Moehring said. "Also, the UNLV football team was no big deal at that time."

The convention center expanded through a bond passed under Rawlings' leadership, and the stadium, originally called the Silver Bowl, also was built. Rawlings sang the national anthem during the stadium's dedication and later was honored by UNLV as one of Sam Boyd Stadium's original supporters.

But the rift between Rawlings and some board members had become irreparable. In November 1972, Rawlings was forced to resign as director.

Rawlings said he also has been blessed to have been married to two good women in his life. His first wife of 49 years, Hazel Palfreyman Rawlings, died in 1989 at age 67. She often accompanied him on accordion onstage.

For 15 years, Rawlings has been married to the former Christine Ann Puff Russell, who is 18 years his junior. She helps him run his production business, including hiring the crew members.

The father of four grown children, the grandfather of 16 and the great-grandfather of 17, Rawlings said at his age he is amazed he still can carry both a tune and a good conversation. He also is willing to offer opinions on just about any topic raised.

For example, Rawlings says he is "so disappointed" at how Las Vegas is marketed today, in ways that almost completely ignore older generations' taste in entertainment.

"I'm not tickled about the present selling of sin," he said, referring to topless shows at resort nightclubs. "But I understand this is not my town anymore. It's not the little town where I performed."

How Strong Got Into Writing

I had begun writing as a kid and continued on learning about the craft through high school and college. I also did some writing in service and spent five months at Thurleigh on the intelligence staff working in the public relations end, with Bill Van Norman.

But I got bored with the ground pounder's life and told Major Bairnsfather that I preferred to return to combat, fly my five missions as a 367th navigator. This I did and ended up on 26 November 1944, went home and ended up at Ellington Field, Houston, TX, as an instructor for returning navigators, and got out of service in time to return to college in the fall of 1945.

I had had one semester of college in 1942 before being accepted into the cadet program. But now it was fulltime as a student, majoring in English, but ending splitting my time between English and history.

Arnold Mulder, a kindly older man taught English, including writing. He had had a half dozen book published. He told me that postwar was the most interesting period of his teaching career, because among the veterans you had people who had been some place and seen the world.

In my second year I took a writing class from him, I was the only student in the Fall and a friend who had been a tanker on the continent joined me the second semester. We met for an hour a week, at which time we turned in a chapter of our service record and were handed back each week the previous period's production. Then we deeply discussed our earlier effort which the professor had covered with red pencil.

It was an interesting experience and is often what author's do when a critic reviews their work. When I got done with this year on campus I had the makings of an autobiography. I still have the original document and each of my five sons has had a chance to read it as they were growing.

I find that I refer to it once in a while, and I did use it a bit when I was writing *First Over Germany*.

Memorials

For **Frank Serafin**
by Robert Maus
by Donna Millet
by Thomas G. VanWilder
by Thomas & Phyllis Maus
by James R. & Wendy Maus

For **Harold Thornam**
by Jeanette Thurman & Family

For **Daniel Gates**
by William Carnicom

For **Donald Borzým**
by Joseph Borzým

For **Arthur Hatton**
by William Carnicom

For **John Kappmeyer**
by L. LaMarr Kappmeyer

Total through April 2006: \$11,482.45



Views of 306th Heroes

"I wish to hell they'd let me transfer to pursuits. I'd ask nothing but a P-38 and permission to go back to Brest. Charlie was my pal.

"You see, when he set her down, that whole Nazi bunch followed, strafing. We could see it all. We weren't more than 500 feet above. One after another, realizing he was badly hurt, they dove on Charlie's airplane, all guns going.

"But, by God, and this I'd like the folks back home to know- all the way to the finish, Charlie's ship fought back. Yes, sir, Captain McKay had his stopwatch on him, and said they floated just 40 seconds. But I saw something else, more inspiring.

"I saw good old Arizona Harris, top turret gunner, hurling lead at

those lousy Huns until his gun went under the waves."

The bunch was silent. Nobody had to say more. I knew there were no dinghies launched under such a hail of Focke-Wulf fire. No parachutes had opened.

But Sergeant Arizona Harris, shooting son of the West, went down fighting, in the tradition of his country.

So when I think of him, and all the others like him and Charlie and the rest, I also wonder if others, besides those who get telegrams, know what these boys put on the line. And, understanding, try to do their share, while insisting those in high place do like-wise. Anyway, I said I'd write the story and try to get it through.

In going through the 306th card file one day, I came across the five Levy cards at the left. All are now deceased, but I got my kicks out of seeing how much information we had on them. As to whether there were any familial relations among them, I suppose we will never know.



The 367th Squadron's orderly room changed greatly in style between Thurleigh and this view of the quarters in the Fall of 1945 at Giebelstadt, Germany.

LEVY, Charles N.		0-719969					
Rpt. 17 Jul 44		368th (N)					
Robert Chrisjohn crew							
6 Jan 94							
AM 8-20-44							
o/c 9-25-44, 10-2-44, 10-27-44,							
12-20-44, 12-2-44							
DFC 12-30-44							
(35)							
S.O.#	Col	LtCol	Maj	Capt	1Lt	2Lt	
					Z 12-12-44	X	
LEVY, Eugene H.		19091035					
Rpt. 23 Aug 43		367th (g)					
MIA 8 Oct 43 Bremen (w-Ledgerwood)		p.161					
POW Rtd							
29 Mar 84							
S.O.#	M/Sgt	T/Sgt	S/Sgt	Sgt	Cpl	Pfc	Pvt
				Z			
LEVY, Henry I.		0-739471					
Rpt. 27 Nov 43		369th (B)					
William Quaintance crew							
AM PH		p.217					
21 Feb 44 Newark (w-Quaintance)							
S.O.#	Col	LtCol	Maj	Capt	1Lt	2Lt	
					X	ZX	
LEVY, Joseph M.		0-732744					
Rpt. Apr 43		367th (N)					
Alphonse Marech crew		369th					
2 Oct 2004		368th 4-20-43					
AM 5-30-43							
o/c 7-7-43, 8-1-43, 8-28-43							
DFC 9-16-43							
42nd Off to complete tour (25)							
To 11CCRC 9/5/43							
S.O.#	Col	LtCol	Maj	Capt	1Lt	2Lt	
					X	Z	
LEVY, Robert T.		0-440578					
Rpt. Jun 42		368th (B)					
William Melton crew							
AM 2-22-43		SQ Bombardier					
12-12-42							

All the Levys in the 306th Record File



Recording an Early 17

How does one tell this is an early B-17F? There are a few tell-tale signs of one of our early aircraft. Tail shows only a number; the star on the waist has not yet been given its bars to differentiate it from Japanese a/c with "Meat Balls" in a similar spot; closed waist windows, with only a small port to see through. This is old enough to have a modification to the nose which indicates two machine guns firing forward.



Fighting Day at an Airdrome

by Roy Alexander

The Fortresses lay sulking and lean in the English mist of their dispersal stations. There had been no flying the preceding day. But now the forecast was good news for the bomber crews, bad news for Occupied Country targets. The Fortresses were being bombed up and a typical fighting day in a U.S. airdrome had dawned. Target for this day of last week: St. Nazaire. Fighter escort: none. None needed for the most heavily armed bombers in the world.

Long before dawn combat crews had been up and at their dispersal points chaffing with the ground crew as last checks were made. On bicycles and in trucks they had dashed to the mess hall for breakfast, had been briefed on their mission by intelligence officers. As engines spat and thudded into life, the camp began to move. Work-men rumbled out in trucks and went to work on new roads and buildings.

Soldiers and officers, clumping in galoshes through mud to offices and shops, started fires, rubbed red hands, cursed head colds and set to work.

Across the airdrome the Fortresses strained at their blocks as the engines were run up. Blue exhaust flames stabbed the dawn, flicked yellow as throttles were retarded. The first plane taxied out and waddled down to the take-off point. Others fell in behind. The sun was up now. A green light winked at the first Fortress. The B-17 crept down the runway, picked up her tail. She burst from the thinning mist, tucked up her legs, suddenly became graceful, slim, deadly. Now the thunder of exhausts and props was continuous. In a few minutes the group was airborne and its fine squadron was already wheeling in formation.

They swept low over the control building, closing up like wild geese,

grouped tight in purposeful flight V's of which U.S. pilots are particularly proud. Then they were gone.

The airdrome settled down to the routine of reports, forms and other administrative work, knocked off for dinner, went back to work. Yet now there was an almost imperceptible tension. The Fortresses should be enroute home. The group commander, haggard from lack of sleep, moved up to the tower. Other officers, grounded for the day because of too much flying, wandered in, immaculate and elaborately at ease.

Reports began to trickle in. The Jerries had made a direct flak hit on one Fortress, torn out one of his engines completely from the wing. He was down safely in the south. The group commander heard it without a flicker and the youngsters lounging in the room seemed to be pretending they didn't hear. Another report: A Flying Fortress, "Chennault's Pappy," (see photo on page 8) had staggered into a southern field with one dead, three wounded. The group commander coolly asked the name of the dead man, was told it was not yet available.

On an outside balcony an enlisted man flung up his hand and pointed to the west. Another trained his binoculars, laid them down, entered the room. "Here come six of 'em, sir," said he to the group commander. The CO nodded acknowledgment, pulled on his overcoat and went outside.

"Where are the rest?" was the obvious question. Nobody asked it. Six B-17's swung over wing to wing, peeled out with the majestic deliberateness of bombers and headed for landing. As they came down each was watched by a man with binoculars. "No damage visible, sir," he told the CO. The group leader nodded silently.

Other B-17's were showing up and

finally all were home, some singly, some in formations of three. In landing they flicked past close by, the pilots sitting up straight in their seats, waist gunners peering from gun posts, tail gunners bearing cold hands.

On the ground the B-17's looked tired and out of their element as they picked their way to dispersal stations, their transparent noses scowling to the ground crews. The flight crews climbed out and began directions for servicing. There were grins all around yet no shouting, no yarns. Tomorrow was another day. It was already time to prepare for it.

Trucks pulled up and combat crews climbed in, their Mae Wests a bright yellow in the gloom under the tarpaulin top. None looked relieved nor stimulated by the good mission, none bored nor frightened. This was a veteran and prideful group. It had developed a mass poker face.

In the mess hall there were coffee and sandwiches. Crews clotted together, officers and men sitting in the same groups. The room hummed with quiet discussion of the raid and now and again a pilot would set down his coffee and use his hands for a demonstration of the flying done that day.

Intelligence officers were waiting. The crews trooped into the rooms, sat down and began to answer questions. One crew, fairly typical, was a group of small-town Southerners except for the Brooklyn navigator whose clipped speech and sprouting mustache were in odd contrast to the smooch faces, long jaws and drawls of his mates.

All the crew joined in answers to questions and there was no ceremony for rank. Toward the end the captain, having finished his sandwich, leaned back, loosened his jacket and began abstractedly to pick at his front teeth with his

index fingernail. His replies became brief for the story had been almost told.

"Any instances of bravery to report or unusual skill?" asked the intelligence officer. "No, sir."

"Any remarks?" The captain went on picking his teeth, looked around the room at the crew that had fought its way home at treetop height after the raid, knocked down one Focke-Wulf 190, seen a couple of machine-gun slugs rip through their ship. All eyes settled on the young gunner and he grinned.

"Well, sir," said he, "the French are still on our side- they waved at us all the way home."

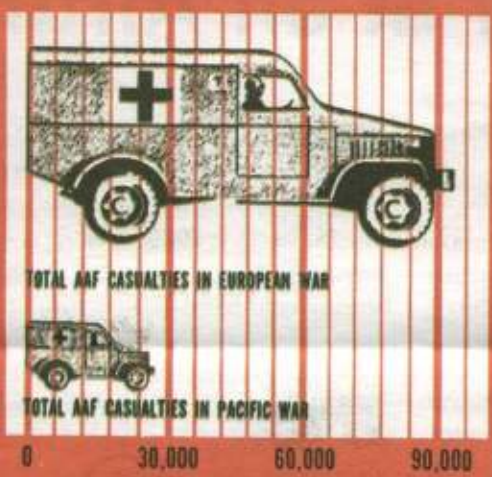
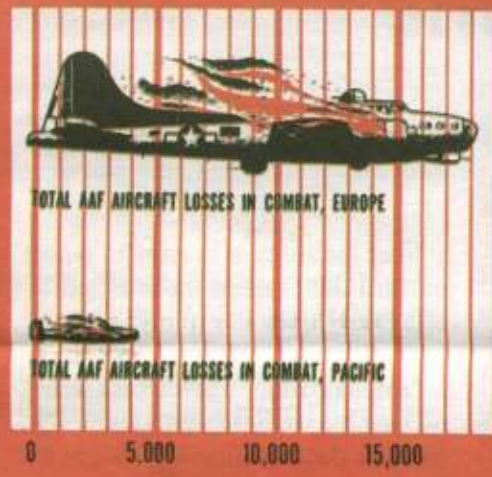
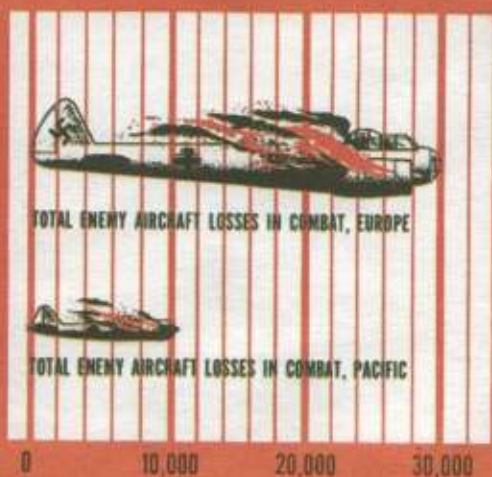
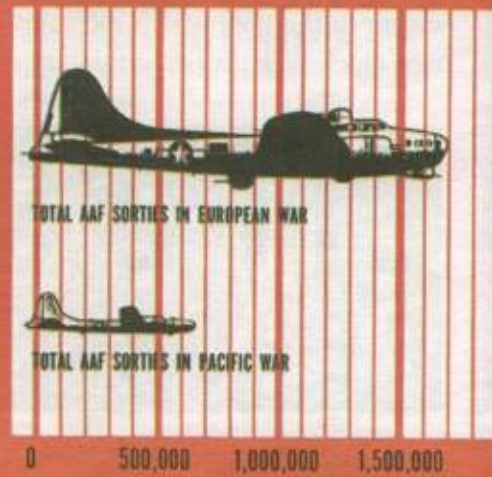
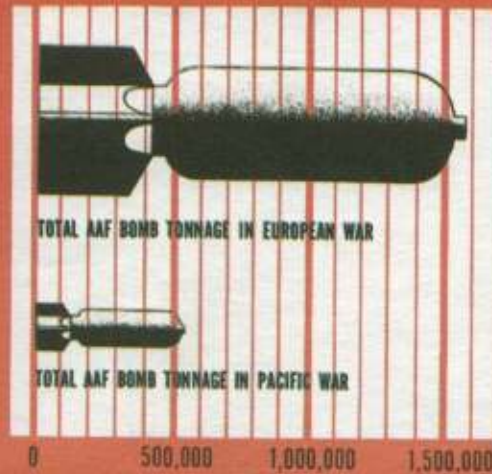
Everybody grinned. The crew trooped off to their quarters for baths and clean uniforms. The intelligence officer went off to gear his report with other interrogators.

By supper that night the mission for the next day was in. Crewmen drank light in the bar or did not drink at all. The conversation at the supper table was of flying and decorations, in which all professionalized soldiers are profoundly interested, and of women- wives left behind and girls met in England. By 11 o'clock clubs and messes were deserted. In one barracks, armorers, finished with preparation for the next day, played shilling-limit poker and ribbed a Brooklyn boy for his accent and for the Dodgers.

But on the field men were working. Ground crews had a night ahead, patching the damage, bombing up, tuning engines, hydraulic gear and all other things on which the combat crew's life hangs. Some of them were still there when the sun came up again. Others had grabbed a handful of sleep and were "sweating it out" with the ships when the crews climbed aboard.

SOME AIR WAR STATISTICS

Intangible and unpredictable factors make difficult an accurate accounting of war costs in lives and materiel. However, interesting conclusions can be drawn from bomb tonnages, sorties, aircraft losses, and casualties on the part of Germany, Japan, and ourselves. AAF bomb tonnages include bombs dropped in N. Africa, against Italy, and from Italy against Germany. AAF casualties include personnel killed, wounded, and missing. As a nation we can take pride in the U. S. war effort. However, our Allies gave us precious time to develop a successful military machine. Time to prepare after a war has started will not be given us again.



Heroes Come Wholesale

The story of one Fort group, one of many units making air war history fighting the Germans.

By Andy Rooney, Stars & Stripes Writer

If gallantry came in cans there would never have been enough shipping space to get all the Eighth Air Force has used to England.

Heroism has been buried by heroism here. Heroes have come wholesale and there have been more than America could digest. Stories which in normal times would be headlined in every paper in America end up as two paragraphs in someone's hometown paper. In U.S. military history no fighting unit the size of the Eighth Air Force ever performed with a higher percentage of work-a-day heroes; not heroes in name, but men who have actually been warmed by comradeship to do more for their fellow men than they need have; men who have unnecessarily risked their lives to save others and men who have performed with an intelligence and courage to save their own lives when it would have been easier to die.

Had the men of any one of ten U.S. heavy bombardment groups operating from fields in England performed with commensurate heroism in battle actions which caught the imagination of the American public as did Guadalcanal, that group would be the most celebrated in American military history.

Here, briefly, is the story of one Fortress group which has been operating against the German for a year and a half. It is the story of American boys which could be a book; there are other groups with the same story and people don't want to read that many books.

The group has never had a name which stuck. The boys know it as a

number or by the name of the small town near the field. Both are restricted information.

Its first haul was last October 9 when it went into Lille, France. From that day on the group was at war and it didn't take the men long to find out that heavy bombardment of targets on the Continent was no picnic. Principal objectives in the early days were German U-boat pens. Again and again they attack at St. Nazaire, Lorient and La Pallice. On the second trip into St. Nazaire, the one Nov. 9, the group participated in one of the Eighth Air Force's most successful experiments—the experiment proved to everyone's satisfaction that medium level was not the altitude at which to send in Flying Fortresses. They got the hell shot out of them.

The group went in that day at about 8,000 feet and the ships that did come back that day came back looking like colanders. There are still a few veterans left in England as gunnery instructors who will tell you about that raid. They may have been to the heart of Germany since that day, but when they have had bad dreams it is the flak that day over St. Nazaire they dream about.

The group has completed 135 missions and dropped about 6,000 tons of bombs in Germany and German targets in occupied countries. Like too-short or too-long artillery fire, some of the 6,000 tons fell in kraut fields and potato patches, but a lot of it has fallen in the middle of some of Germany's best industrial plants.

The group is made up of four squadrons, the Eager Beavers, the Clay Pigeons, Fitin' Bitin', and one which has never adopted a name that stuck. One they picked held too much blood and thunder and was forbidden. In anger the fliers dubbed themselves "The Buttercup Boys."



Chennault's Pappy after being shot up 11 Nov 1942



Early plane- note bicycles of plane ground crew



Typical early morning scene covered with ground haze



Early 423rd plane, later transferred to 384 BG