

# 306th Echoes



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## On the Road Again

“Red” Ketcham Remembers  
Show Business in the 306th and Beyond

*Editor's note: 306th BGA Secretary Barbara Neal collected much of the material for this story from “Red” Ketcham and the Echoes archives. These interesting events give us more of the 306th history, especially immediately after the war when the bomb group remained in Europe for Operation Casey Jones and other postwar duties. There continued to be a need for entertainment for the troops as the Eighth Air Force mission changed from combat to one of occupation.*

“Red” remembers Thurleigh soon after the war ended:

“After the war ended in Europe we were all waiting to see if we were to be sent to the Pacific theatre of operations.”

“The United Kingdom Headquarters Special Services in London sent out a request to all the air bases in England to join in a contest to put together a small stage show lasting about 15 minutes, and compete against each and would be judged by the British Broadcasting Corp (BBC).”

“Our original cast was made up of 8 men. Our theme was the hated duty of every soldier, being KP Duty in the mess hall kitchen--peeling potatoes--preparing the food--scrubbing pots and pans, garbage cans cleaning the tables mopping the floor after the meals were over and always starting about 3:30 in the morning and lasting until 10:00 at night.”

“Our kitchen was placed out in the open as if we were on training mission. Everything was done in pantomime as lead man, Jack Thompson sang the song that he had written called. THE KP BLUES. Bob Diebold played a small organ in the original show. We acted out these different duties in a half hearted way as Jack sang about them. Of course it was a lot of exaggeration, and mockery.”

“We were the last act in the contest and low and behold we walked off with the three top awards given out, Simplicity---originality---showmanship.”

“We returned to our home base and a few days later the cast was called into Col Upham's office and we were told that we were to put together a 2-hour variety stage show and would go on tour throughout England and to the embarkation ports of Le Havre, France.”



L to R: Harold Vandiver, Gailard “Red” Ketcham. Ketcham Historical Collection.

“We then were relieved of all duties for the duration of the show tour. In order to make a show, we had to have more people to help.”

“Announcements were made at the base theatre asking for any one with a talent of any kind to help put a show together, including anyone that played a musical instrument. This is where Al Mis came in and played one of the instruments in our five piece combo. Bob Diebold was their director. He could play any instrument that he would pick up, and write music as fast as

he played. Carrol Miller was a professional Magician and Ventriloquist, also had his little companion Scooter, the dummy. The show revolved around him.”

“Ned Cerimi was a very good vocalist and a very good imitator of Frank Sinatra and of course Jack Thompson the vocalist in the KP blues Skit.”

“In total we had 16 members. this included the 5-piece combo-stage hands and show cast”

“Our motto was ‘Make them laugh.’ The skits were of variety and anything that got a laugh was used in the show. Everybody had a say-so in what acts were used. If you had a new one, we tried it. All in all it was a very successful show and a lot of fun.”

“After the move to Geiblestadt, Germany in December 1945, the show broke up because we were scattered all over Europe and Africa. I was sent to North Africa and then back to Istres, France and then home in June 1946.”

(Red Ketcham's Notes on First Stage Show)



By the PX at Thurleigh. Left to right: Robert Diebold, Harold Vandiver, Harry wendowski, Ned Ceremi, Carrol Miller, Gailard Ketcham. Circa 1945, Ketcham Historical Collection.

### Schedule for the E-T-O-PEANS Stage Show

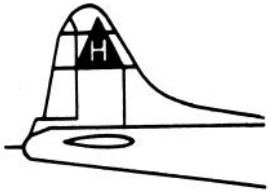
- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Saturday, 1 Sept 1945:   | Leave on trucks at 1:pm<br>Travel to Hq. 14th Port area [Southampton].   |
| Sunday, 2 Sept 1945:     | [will learn from there what our schedule will be.] Will play   |
| Monday, 3 Sept 1945:     | in Southampton Assembly Area.  |
| Tuesday, 4 Sept 1945:    | Tidworth Assembly Area and   |
| Wednesday, 5 Sept 1945:  | Barton Stacey Assembly Area.   |
| Thursday, 6 Sept 1945:   | More about this when we get there.   |
| Friday, 7 Sept 1945:     | Sept Travel and play at Bournemouth Leave Area.  |
| Saturday, 8 Sept 1945:   | Travel and play Hq. BADA [Burtonwood].   |
| Sunday, 9 Sept 1945:     | Plane will collect unit at Christchurch Air field. Play evening show.  |
| Monday, 10 Sept 1945:    | Still at Burtonwood.   |
| Tuesday, 11 Sept 1945:   | Still at Burtonwood.   |
| Wednesday, 12 Sept 1945: | Travel and play Hq. ATC, at Grove Wicket Field<br>Plane will pick up unit at Hq. BADA.<br>Warrington. Play evening show. |
| Thursday, 13 Sept 1945:  | Play ATC.  |
| Friday, 14 Sept 1945:    | Return to Base 111 { will fly Maybe?}  |

The seven men of the 306th Bomb Group in the 1945 show, updated with current data for the July 1994 *Echoes* article:

- **Harold (Bud) Vandiver** - 369th, chin turret and toggelier. Worked for the Illinois Central Railroad and the Institute of Aviation at the University of Illinois, retiring from there in 1987. Now living in Champaign, IL
- **Gailard T. (Red) Ketcham** - 369th ball turret gunner. Worked for the Frigidaire division of General Motors and White Consolidated Industries and retired from there in 1986. Now living in Dayton, OH.
- **Clayton (Blackie) Gilliam** - 369th, waist gunner. Worked for Douglas Aircraft; is retired and living in Jefferson, IA." Gilliam died in Apr-06 and his obit has been in *Echoes*.
- **Robert Diebold** - 369th, radio operator. Worked in journalism in the Midwest, worked for the *Los Angeles Times* and spent 17 years on the *Dublin Evening Press* retiring from there in 1989. Diebold married in Great Britain and remained there after the war. He is now living in Dublin, Ireland.
- **Carrol (Doc) Miller** - 369th. Became a pharmacist but liked photography more. Owned and operated camera shops in the Dallas area. After retirement, he worked part time in the store his daughter now runs in Dallas. Miller died in Dec-01 and his obit has been in *Echoes*.
- **Ben Scribner** - 423rd, ball turret gunner. Worked for Bethlehem Steel Corp, retiring in 1985. After retirement he remained active, working with churches in conflict and crisis as an Organizational Development Consultant. He and his wife, Susan, lived the rest of his life in Danvers, MA where Susan was the pastor of the First Church of Danvers, Congregational, United Church of Christ. Ben died 4 March 1995; his obituary is on page 5 of this issue.)
- **Al Mis** - 423rd radio operator. Mis enjoyed a career as a school teacher of art, drafting, and chorus. After retirement he continued to play the flute with an orchestra, combos, etc. in Niagara Falls, NY. Al died 8 May 2010; his obit is on page 2 of this issue. ✈



Goofing around with Scooter the Dummy. Left to right: Ned Ceremi, Bob Diebold, Scooter, Harry Bliendowski, Harold Vandiver, Carrol Miller, Red Ketcham. (see story, page 1) Circa 1945, Ketcham Historical Collection.



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#### 2010-2011 Student Interns:

Chase Brazell (Russell Strong Intern)  
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## Obituaries

Please send obits as soon as possible after the death, to secretary (see contact information at left on this page below).

The secretary has learned of the following deaths:

- **Allen, Herman F**, 368<sup>th</sup> bombardier (Charles W Smith crew on B-17 'Liberty Lady') and Swedish internee, died 26 May 11, at 94, after having forgotten the war due to Alzheimer's. In Sweden, Herman engaged in counterespionage against the Nazis in Stockholm, working alongside his future wife, Hedy, within the OSS. They married Jan 45 in Sweden, not long before he was ordered back to the States, five months before the war ended and she could join him. He was a businessman in FL prior to working for the Lung Association in SC. Predeceased by Hedy in Nov 07. Daughter Pat DiGeorge welcomes war-related info as she attempts to reconstruct her parents' war-work for a future book (website [www.libertyladybook.com](http://www.libertyladybook.com)). Survived by 5c, 19gc, 12ggc.
- **Barr, Leonard A, Jr.**, 367<sup>th</sup> crew chief, flight chief, & line chief, died 15 Mar 11 in Belton, TX, at 88. After attending TX Tech in Lubbock, he trained at Wendover, UT, Apr-Sep 42 and was in the advance party to Thurleigh. He rose to be the youngest MSgt in the 367<sup>th</sup> and was awarded a Bronze star for around the clock work keeping the B-17s flying. In Jan 45 in England he married. Post-war, they returned to Lubbock, where for 19 years he did fleet maintenance for Baldrige Bakery before he owned and operated for 15 years his independent auto repair garage. Predeceased in Mar 07 by his wife of 62 years, Minerva; he is survived by 3c, 3gc.
- **Bergmann, Bertram Jack**, 369<sup>th</sup> Sq engineer & ball turret gunner (Richard Wong crew), died 12 Dec 10 in Camarillo, CA, at 86. Bert worked for the teamsters union as a business agent. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, and loved the great outdoors. His wife of 63 years, Shirley, died 29 Mar 11. They are survived by 2c, 4gc.
- **Collins, James Edward**, 369<sup>th</sup> pilot, longtime resident of Orange Co, CA, died there 1 Jun 10 at 87. Upon arrival at Thurleigh in Oct 44, he was initially co-pilot (with James L Cation); then made first pilot flying every newly-arriving crew, with the incoming crew's pilot being co-pilot; thus his 35 missions were with many different crews. Post-war, from USC (Univ of Southern CA) he got his bachelor's in engineering and masters in business administration. He had his own businesses in engineering and in real estate while maintaining interest in family, flying, travel, and golf. His wife of 54 years, Melba, died in 98 at 75. Survived by 3c, 8gc, 1ggc.
- **Enders, Ralph L**, 423<sup>rd</sup> bombardier, died 18 Jan 11 at 91 in Milwaukee, WI. While at Thurleigh, where his barracks was Dingleberry, he was part of the D-Day mission; his tour included the Casey Jones mapping project. Post-war his career in Milwaukee was in sales. In 68 his wife of 20 years, Marian, died suddenly of pulmonary embolism. In 08, Violet, his second wife (25 years) died. Survived by 5c, 2sd, 7gc, 5ggc.
- **Kepler, Horace F**, 369<sup>th</sup> waist gunner (Andrew P Kata crew) and POW, of Decatur, IL, 88, died 8 Jul 11 at his home. POW from 8 Aug 44 (Caen mission), he was one of the four of his crew who were captured behind enemy lines after the entire crew parachuted before their aircraft exploded. Post-war he was a pipe fitter for Staley's Manufacturing. He was a member of the American Legion, Cisco, IL. His first wife, Betty Ruth and 1s preceded him in death; survived by Hazel, his wife of 38 years, 3c, 1sc, 12gc, 4ggc.
- **Mazzone, Peter A**, 367<sup>th</sup> radar man and navigator, longtime resident of Reno, NV, 88, died 5 Jul 11. Completed 26 missions from Thurleigh. Flew over France, Germany and North Africa, so likely also flew in Casey Jones mapping project. In 45 his plane crashed in Christchurch, England, and while recovering from injuries he met Edna "Dottie," who he returned to England to marry after the war. Post-war Pete worked for Lockheed in CA. In 54 they moved to Reno, where he was a general contractor and realtor, building many residences over the years. He was able to fix or find a solution to any problem, and enjoyed time with family, work, welding, fishing, and hunting. Survived by Dottie, wife of 63 years, 3c, 5gc, 3ggc.
- **Mellyn, John E, Sr**, 369<sup>th</sup> engineer & radio operator (Kenneth Dowell crew), longtime resident of Dover, NH, died 16 Jan 11 in Durham, NH at 96. He and others of the crew were seriously injured on 11 Jan 44 (Halberstadt mission), when their B-17 was nearly destroyed by Luftwaffe; it limped back and crash landed at Great Saling, an RAF station, where the plane was declared a total loss. Post-war he was long with General Electric Co, holding supervisory positions in MA and NH. He was a life member of the Disabled American Veterans Bellamy Chapter No. 5, an avid golfer, and a trustee of the Dover Public Library for many years. His wife, Marie Margaret preceded him in death in 2000 at 88. Survived by 3c, 5gc.
- **Mis, Albert F**, 367 radio operator, died 8 May 10 in Tallahassee, FL at 88. After his combat missions and photography missions identifying Russian troop movements on the Eastern front, Al was a cast member of the 2-hour GI Show presented by a group of 306<sup>th</sup> men to entertain the troops at various bases in England from 1 Sep 45 through Dec 45. He earned the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal, apparently for participation in the then-classified Casey Jones photography aerial mapping project of 45-46, which mapped Europe, North Africa, and Iceland. After his discharge in Mar 46, he worked for the Niagara Falls School District for over 40 years, teaching art, drafting, and chorus. His art work is on exhibit at the Albright-Knox gallery in Buffalo, NY, and in Niagara Falls and Canada. He played piano, accordion, and flute professionally. In the mid-90s he still played flute with an orchestra, combos, etc per Echoes article of Jul 94 about the GI Show. His wife Pauline died Apr 02; survived by 2c, 5gc, 4ggc.
- **Morey, Walter Z "Zeke"** 367<sup>th</sup> bombardier (Thomas F Witt crew), native of Manchester, NH, died 19 Apr 11 in St Petersburg, FL at 91. After completing his 25 missions at Thurleigh, he returned to help train new recruits. Post-war he worked 20 years for NH Finance Co of Manchester, and owned and operated a successful Richard P Rita Personnel franchise with 3 offices in southern NH. Retired to FL in 74. Survived by wife of 70 years, Dorothy, 3c.
- **Morrison, Carl A**, 369<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (Lloyd Johns crew) and pilot, died 9 Apr 11 in Palm Desert, CA, at 91. He was at Thurleigh 13 Apr 44 to Aug 44, completing a 35-mission tour. Post-war he and his wife settled in Ephrata, WA. He partnered in an appliance store; operated concessions in Sun Lake State Park, WA nearly 30 years; built college housing and condos in WA and HI; and was a land developer in WA, OR, and NV. He retired at 80 to Sun City, Palm Desert, and was active in vets' groups until health prevented him. Predeceased by 1s, 1gs; survived by wife of 67 years, Beverly, 2c, 5gc, 9ggc.
- **Morton, Robert G**, 423<sup>rd</sup> tail gunner on 'Little LuLu' (Harold R Fossum & John M Lockard crews), died 4 Dec 2010 in Lake Worth, FL (formerly of Ocala), at 86. He flew 34 missions Apr-Aug 44 and was a member of the VFW in his hometown of Haverhill, MA. He was preceded in death by his wife, Evelyn Grace (at 75 in Jan 01), 2c. Survived by 3c, 12gc, many ggc and gggc.

## President's Corner



Greetings,

The reunion in San Diego is just weeks away. Registration is running a bit ahead of last year so it looks like it will be a great opportunity to reconnect. If you have not yet registered, today is the day to complete and mail the registration form which is included with this newsletter. Also call the Holiday Inn Bayside and book your room. See page 7 for reunion details and registration/booking information.

If you haven't visited our website, [www.306bg.org](http://www.306bg.org), recently I suggest that do that before coming to the reunion. It will stimulate many memories and help make the reunion more interesting.

I look forward to seeing you in San Diego in October.

Walt Rozett  
 President

Obituaries Continued on Page 3

## Obituaries Continued from Page 2

- **Visconti, Adolph "Vinny" L**, 367<sup>th</sup> crew chief of 'Skipper' (which completed 101 missions by the end of Nov 44, earning Vinny a Bronze Star), died 21 Mar 11 at home in Desert Hot Springs, CA, at 89. He enlisted immediately after Pearl Harbor and was an original member of the Group, serving from Wendover to Thurleigh from 42 to 45. Trained as a B-17 specialist at Boeing, he was grounded early as a flight engineer due to an inner ear problem. He eventually became crew chief of 'Skipper,' named after his fiancée. Late MG Barney Rawlings checked out as co-pilot on 'Skipper.' Vinny also played on the Group's baseball and football teams, although golf was his true passion. Pilots flying his ship recall his introductory speech, "When you're in the air it's your airplane, but here on the ground it's mine." His aircraft always flew on his initials, never on the red diagonal. He retired after 35 years as a corporate executive. After the death of his second wife, Vinny became reacquainted with his childhood sweetheart, Evelyn; they married in 91 and moved to Palm Springs, where she predeceased him in Apr 10. Survived by 2c, 1 d-in-law, 2 gc.
- **Wolfe, Lawrence E**, 367<sup>th</sup> navigator (Alden T Mann crew), died 21 Nov 10 at 91. He arrived at Thurleigh 23 Apr-43 and was MIA/POW from the 15 May-43 mission that hit the secondary target of Helgoland and the Dune Islands. Luftwaffe attack filled their B-17 with flames, which badly burned all who jumped out. After six weeks in hospital he was moved to Stalag Luft 3. Post-war he resided 51 years in Newbury Park, CA, where from 59 to 86 he taught industrial arts, math, and physics at The Newbury Park Adventist Academy and served as vice principal. Survived by wife Jo Anne, 2c, 4gc, 2ggc.
- **Ziem, Arne G**, 423<sup>rd</sup> tail gunner (Wilbur O'Brien crew) and evadee (15 Jun 44 Nantes mission), died 7 Jun 11 at 88 in Bayonet Point, FL. Post-war he worked as a union carpenter in NJ. A proud man who loved family, friends, and living life; he enjoyed being heard in a crowd. Predeceased by wife Evelyn and 1s; survived by 1s, 2gc, 5ggc.

**Obituaries: 306<sup>th</sup> Family**

- **Brown, Walter E, Jr., M.D.**, died 23 Feb 2011 at home in Spring Hill, TN, at 71. After graduating from Medical College of GA (MCG) and residency, Walt served in the USAF for 3 years in Wiesbaden, Germany, at the US referral hospital for all of Europe. For 35 years he was Emergency Room Physician at Baptist Hospital in inner city Nashville, TN, and was board certified in OB-GYN. Walt was volunteer editor of the 8<sup>th</sup> AF News magazine for 12 years (97-09) and VP of the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> AF Museum Board, and served as President and CEO of the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum at Pooler, GA for 3 years. He was President of MCG's Alumni Association, and later served twice on MCG's Foundation Board. Survived by wife Alice, 2s.
- **Griggs, Clara M**, died 21 May 10 after 7 years with Alzheimers; at her request her brain was donated to Alzheimers research at Texas Tech Univ, Lubbock; her ashes were placed on the two rose bushes in front of the main entrance to Craig Methodist Retirement main building as a permanent remembrance of her. Survived by her husband, Douglas (368 top turret gunner & engineer, roving after initially on crew of William "Bill" H Scheil).
- **McCormack, Marie** died 11 Jun 02 at Grand Junction, CO, at 80. Marie was a WAVE and one of first four to be promoted to Chief Petty Officer in Navy Comm. Int. (Code Breakers). Survived by her husband, Miles (368 pilot & co-pilot for Roy Ranck), 4c, 3gs, 2ggd.
- **Schmidt, Gail W**, died 10 Oct 10 at Parker, CO, at 92. She was widow of John M (Jack) Schmidt, 367th radio operator (Charles Wegener crew), who died in 91 in Belleville, IL. They were regular attendees at 306th reunions. No further info.

**Obituaries Not Recent; Not Previously Published** (Arranged by Date of Death)

- **Levis, Frank**, 367<sup>th</sup> (unknown assignment), longtime resident of Atlanta, GA, died there 31 Aug 09 at 92. His wife, Eileen, preceded him in death in Jan 04 at 76. Survived by 1d. No further info.
- **Brecher, Melvin**, 367<sup>th</sup> bombardier (William B Winslow crew), longtime resident of Broomall, PA, died 20 Sep 08 at 84 at Haverford, PA. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. He was survived by wife Anita, 2c, 2gc. No further info.
- **Marciano, Joseph J**, 369<sup>th</sup> radio operator (J J Gaydosh crew), died 27 Jul 08 at 84, in Colorado Springs, CO, where they had long lived. He arrived at Thurleigh Apr 45 and continued in the Casey Jones Project. He was a highly decorated retired Lt Col with 24 years of service; his final assignment was as Assistant Chief of Staff, Allied Air Force Baltic Approaches. After retiring from the USAF, he was PACE instructor for the US Navy, completing 40+ instructional assignments aboard 26 Naval ships. He was one of the two men who planned the Oct 79 "mini" reunion of the 306<sup>th</sup> in Colorado Springs, during the period when the 306<sup>th</sup> was not yet having separate annual reunions from the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS. He was an avid and active member of the Pikes Peak Chapter of Amateur Radio Operators whose call sign was known all over the world. He loved sailing and world travel. He was survived by his wife of more than 54 years, Shirley, 3c, 4gc.
- **Wiley, Gerald Alton**, 368<sup>th</sup> pilot & co-pilot (Richard M Weiser, Jr), an Austin native, died of cancer in Montgomery, TX, 4 May 08 at 83. Before being at Thurleigh from Apr-45 to May-46, he flew the B-25 Mitchell Bomber. Post-war he got his Bachelor's in Engineering from Univ of TX and Master's from SMU. He was at our San Antonio Reunion in 05, after his wife Sylvia, who was with him on the Thurleigh trip of 89, died in 04 at 79. Survived by 2d, 2stepc, 5gc, 4ggc.
- **Venable, James M Jr**, 369/423 & Group engineering officer & station reciprocal aid & lend-lease reporting officer, died 5 Jul 07 at 87 at Cocoa Beach, FL. He arrived at Thurleigh, where he spent almost three years, soon after graduating in Mechanical Engineering from Purdue Univ with an ROTC commission. Post-war he got his Masters in Industrial Engineering at Cornell Univ, and made the USAF his career. Served at the Pentagon, Patrick AFB (Cape Canaveral) and further before retiring from the USAF as Lt Col and returning to the Cape for various business vocations. He continued flying, was an active member of Kiwanis, and an avid golfer. His childhood friend and wife of 65 years, Peggy, survives him along with their 3c, 2gc, 2ggc.
- **Snyder, Howard John, Jr**, 369<sup>th</sup> pilot of 'Susan Ruth,' died 25 Apr 07 in Sedona, AZ, where he and his wife had lived 25 years. He and Ruth married Jul 41; his Thurleigh tour began 21 Oct 43. Downed 8 Feb 44 (Frankfurt mission) over Belgium, he successfully evaded, joining the Underground with an active Maquis unit engaged in guerilla warfare against the Germans, until reaching a US Armored Division at Trelon, France in Sep 44. He was back in London by Oct 44. Post-war he owned and operated a restaurant in Pasadena, CA before later buying a South El Monte, CA company that made machines used by stores for dispensing redemption stamps (S&H, etc). His wife of 65 years, Ruth, survived him for 5 months; survived by 3c, 6gc, 3ggc.
- **Hogan, William**, 369<sup>th</sup> radar operator bombardier, died 27 Jan 07 in Rock Island, IL at 84. He reported to Thurleigh as radar operator 2 Dec 44; retired from USAF in 52 as Lt Col, later serving in AF Reserves. He then served in the War Room at Rock Island Arsenal, retiring at age 52. He and his wife enjoyed several 306<sup>th</sup> reunions including 76 in England. Predeceased by a daughter; survived by wife of 60 years, Elayne.
- **Butz, Jerome "Jerry,"** 423<sup>rd</sup> engineer (Thomas Hedley crew), died 17 Mar 06 at 83, in Palmer Township, PA. His crew arrived Thurleigh 28 Nov 44. He retired from American Can Co, Dixie Cup Division, in 84. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, and camping. He was a member of Memorial United Church of Christ, sportsmen's clubs, and the NRA. Survived by his wife of 61 years, Arlene, 2c, 2gc, 2ggc as of his death.
- **Puckett, Bert O**, 368<sup>th</sup> engineering / mechanic (4 yrs at Thurleigh), died 31 Mar 05 at 86, at Sayre, OK where he had long lived. Post-war he raised thoroughbred horses. For many years enjoyed fishing, until his love of golf took over. Survived by wife of 32 years, Sheila.
- **Tenelly, Jack L**, 367<sup>th</sup> (assignment unknown), longtime resident of Scranton, PA, died 1 Dec 04 at 89. Survived by family members there. No further info.
- **Kobesko, Walter J**, 423 medical tech, died 11 Jun 04 at 82, at Baltimore, MD. No further info.
- **Victory, Luther D**, 369<sup>th</sup> tail gunner & POW, died 19 Jan 04 in Baytown, TX at 80. Dr. Victory had a 19-day career with the 306th, becoming POW (Stalag 17-B) on 24 Apr 44 on the ill-fated mission to Oberpfaffenhofen (Carroll Biggs crew). In 89 and 90 he served as Vice Commander and Commander of Stalag 17-B's American Prisoners of WWII organization. Survived by wife Kathleen and family.
- **Ottoson, Einar E**, 368th waist gunner on "Raincheck" (Rabe crew), of Columbia Heights, MN, died 22 Dec 03 at 81. Flew 33 missions at Thurleigh. Post-war, retired in 87 from Dept of Agriculture as State Grain Inspector. Member of VFW His wife, Edith Lucille, died Aug 06 at 81. Predeceased by 1s; survived by 1d, 3gc.
- **Winslow, William B**, 367<sup>th</sup> pilot, whose hometown was Benezette, PA, died 26 Nov 03 in Titusville, FL at 86. He was at Thurleigh from 23 Dec 44 to 22 Jul 46, and flew 28 combat missions Jan-May 45. His wife has honored him at the WWII Memorial Registry, noting he retired in Jun 60. Survived by wife of 22 years, Jean, 1d, 2stepd, 2gc, 1ggc.
- **Hadie, Raymond G**, 369<sup>th</sup> ambulance driver, died 2 Mar 03 in Hollister, MO at 82. No further info.
- **Barber, Rex C** (369<sup>th</sup> Squadron Headquarters chief clerk), died 20 Dec 02 at 83 in Layton, near his home of Syracuse, UT, from complications of congestive heart failure. Rex reported to the 306<sup>th</sup> 1 Apr 42 and departed to OCS in Oct 44. He later served in the Korean War and in China. Afterward, he worked at, and retired from, the Clearfield Naval Supply Depot and Hill Air Force Base in UT. He later retired as VP of Management Training Corp. He served on the Syracuse, UT, City Council and as mayor for 8 years. He also operated Barber Tax Service for nearly 50 years. He was an avid sports fan, and enjoyed golf. He and his wife enjoyed bowling with a league locally. He enjoyed hunting and fishing. He served as president of the Syracuse Lions Club, and was an active member of the LDS church, serving in many ward positions. He was active with the 306<sup>th</sup> BGA, attending his first reunion in 86, recruiting others to attend, and served as a Director 90-93. Survived by his wife of 56 years, Delsa, 2s, 5gc, and 7ggc as of Dec 02.
- **Schoolfield, Charles T**, 369th pilot, died 8 Jun 02 at 83 in Prescott, AZ. His Thurleigh tour was from Apr 43 to Jan 44; on 2<sup>nd</sup> Schweinfurt mission 14 Oct 43, as the group commander, Capt Schoolfield led 18 planes from Thurleigh, of which 3 had to abort, 15 bombed the target, 10 were downed, and he brought the remaining 5 back. He continued in USAF in Korea and Vietnam, ending his career as Lt Col. Survived by his wife Frances. No further info.
- **Bergen, Luther M**, 368<sup>th</sup> navigator (Marlen Reber crew), who was from Brigham City, UT, died 30 May 02 at 85 in North Charleston, SC, where he had long lived. He was an original member of the 306<sup>th</sup>, and was made the Squadron gunner & oxygen officer 22 Jun 43. On the Group's 50<sup>th</sup> mission, on Reber's plane which led the 29 Jun 43 mission to Paris, Bergen was one of the first 20 officers completing 25-mission tours. He stayed in the USAF 30 years. In North Charleston, he was an elementary school

*Obituaries Not Recent; Not Previously Published Continued on Page 5*

**PLEASE SEND IN YOUR ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION CORRECTIONS. WE NEED EMAIL ADDRESSES ON EVERYONE WHO HAS ONE.**

*Send corrections and additions to:  
Barbara Neal, Secretary  
P.O. Box 682530  
Park City, UT 84068-2530  
secretary@306bg.org*

To:  
 Veterans, Spouses, Children,  
 Grandchildren, & friends of the 306<sup>th</sup> b.g.

I am writing this letter to remind all the 306<sup>th</sup> members, off- spring and friends of the memorial that was placed on the old air base at Thurleigh in the year 1982, this coming October it will be 29 years old. It has stood the weather, vandalism and has stood proud. The board directors over the past few years have talked of moving it across the airfield and relocate it at the 306th Museum, which we all feel it is the proper place for it now. It will be protected and every one who comes to the museum will be able to view it. Here is a ceremony every year on our anniversary of the 306th when they left England at the end of the war and returned home. This anniversary is celebrated by the grade-school children of the village of Thurleigh, they place flowers at the memorial in remembrance of all the Americans who served at the base. They also remember all those who never returned. I have attended the ceremony, which is very touching and when you as a veteran of the base understand that they are paying a very high tribute and their personal feelings for all of us who were there This memorial has been taking care of by Ralph Franklin, his wife, Daphne & their sons from early spring until late fall they cut grass, the area cleaned up the memorial is washed & cleaned the lettering periodically repainted, trees pruned and what ever else these grand people see and take care of. And all these years Ralph has never received any reimbursement what so ever for what they have spent as it was all done for the love of the 306<sup>th</sup> there is such a great binding between these people and us all. And I'm sure that you all appreciate what they have done. We owe them our gratitude.

Now I come to the hard part, over the years there has been some deterioration, and it has now come to the point that it needs repair work. Ralph has been getting estimates on moving it and repairing it as our organization becomes smaller and smaller. The donations are less and less I come to you for help. We need to raise some money to move this piece of history onto the field itself where it belongs with the museum. It's a legacy that will be there for as long as time itself. And we should be very, very proud of this memorial. What it tells of the 306th bomb group, fourth group of the Eighth Air Force to arrive in United Kingdom, first bomb group to bomb German soil thus as we are known "first over Germany" and the very last bomb group to leave Europe to come home and flew 341 missions. This is part of our legacy!

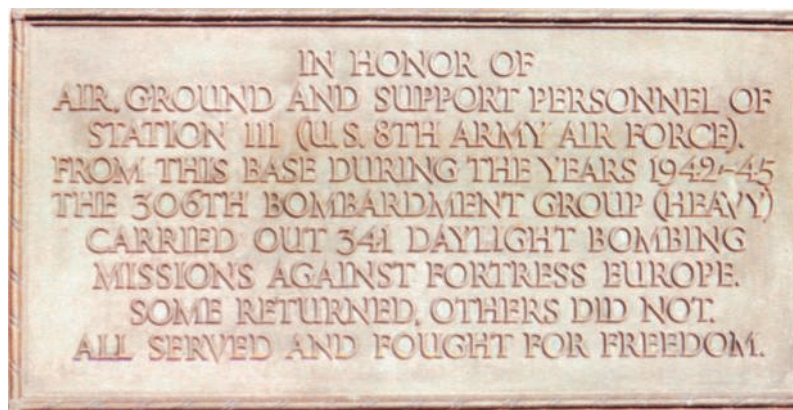
I ask of you knowing that we are in hard times and for some of us old people it doesn't get any easier. What you donate, no matter how small or how large you will be part of a great legacy being saved. I personally will see that a plaque is made up of all the donors' names. Not how much they donated, but just their names to show that you cared, and it will be given to Ralph to be put in the museum to show the British people that we also care. Not all the estimates are in as yet, but it looks like everything done will run between three to \$4000 American dollars. There are a few more estimates to come in. Again, please send a donation, no matter what amount. Make checks out to the following.

(306th. Memorial fund.)  
 To our treasurer, Joel Labo  
 875 Worth. Birmingham. MI.48009-6939

I would like to thank you all for your compassion and a great spirit of the group. I would like to give each and every donor, a big hug, a handshake and a very warm thank you!

Sincerely

*Rocky Rockwell*



Top three photos: The 306th Bomb Group Memorial at Thurleigh, a site where children and visitors often can be found paying their respect to the men of the 306th. Photos courtesy: Ralph Franklin.

**Visit the 306th Web**  
**[www.306bg.org](http://www.306bg.org)**



## Plan to Attend the San Diego Reunion

~~~~~  
**Book Your Hotel Now**  
**Send Your Registration in Now**  
**See page 7 for Details**

### DONATIONS FOR THE 306TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Those who are able are asked to make an annual contribution to keep everything running smoothly in our Association. There are no dues—so your gift is needed to support the 306th operations. Your gift is tax-deductible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Street and No.

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 Telephone No.                      306th Unit

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address



Send to:  
 Joel LaBo, Treasurer  
 306th Bomb Group Association  
 875 S. Worth  
 Birmingham, Michigan 48009

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

## The Gustave S. Holmstrom Crew's Rendezvous with Destiny on the Schweinfurt Mission August 14, 1943

By Russell Strong  
Excerpted from *First Over Germany*

1st Lt. Gustave S. Holmstrom, an original 369th copilot, who had been off flying status for several months following a traffic accident, lost his number 4 engine in the first fighter attack on the way in [to Schweinfurt], feathered it and managed to stay with the group. Just past Frankfurt, as another wave of fighters continued the assault, Holmstrom saw a large hole appear in the left wing with a resultant loss of gasoline. At that point he asked his navigator, F/O Philip D. Anderson, for a heading to Switzerland. As he pulled "Piccadilly Commando" out of formation, a Luftwaffe fighter followed and continued firing. Suddenly the plane went into a climb, Holmstrom and 2nd Lt. Francis E. Ferguson, copilot, found they had no controls and the pilot ordered the crew to bail out. Holmstrom did not realize that Ferguson had been rather severely wounded in both legs and that he himself had also picked up some extraneous metal.

The navigator, Anderson, and the bombardier, 1st Lt. Jack A. Kelly, went out the nose hatch and were never heard from again. In fact, the Germans were never able to account for their bodies. S/Sgt. Michael Uhrin, radio, was killed in the plane during one of the fighter attacks. Crewmen who parachuted to safety were: T/Sgt. Paul R. Loubet, engineer; Sgt. Frederick K. Massey, ball; Sgts. Ralph E. Ellsworth and Bill Oliver, waist; and T/Sgt Charles Mace Fatigati, tail. Most of the surviving crewmen were gathered together that night by the Germans and made their slow way to prison camps after periods of solitary confinement at Dulag Luft. Holmstrom, although surviving, was reported at one time by the Germans among those killed and appeared so in the *Missing Air Crew Reports*.

### Ralph Ellsworth Remembers

By Vernon L. Williams  
Abilene Christian University

Ralph Ellsworth, flying at the waist gun position, is possibly the only living crewmen on board the *Piccadilly Commando* that day. None of the others are listed in the 306th BG Directory and Ellsworth has had no contact with anyone since they were liberated in 1945. He remembers August 14, 1943 remarkably well and adds some new information to the story that Russell Strong was able to put together in his seminal book, *First Over Germany*. Ellsworth provided the *Echoes* with at least part of the explanation of how the three replacements came to fly with Holmstrom that day.

Ellsworth trained in the United States with the Bill Hilton crew and arrived at Thurleigh sometime in the fall of 1943. Before he could fly a mission, he and three other gunners were ordered to other planes for the Schweinfurt mission in the early morning hours of August 14th. Ellsworth and his radio operator, Michael Uhrin, were assigned to Holmstrom's crew, and he does not know where the other two gun-



The Holmstrom Crew. Front row, left to right: Paul Loubet, (e); Frederick Massey (bt); Harold Maron, (wg) [replaced by Ralph E. Ellsworth]; Bill Oliver, (wg); Jerome Evenson, (ro) [replaced by Michael Uhrin]; Charles Fatigati, (tg). Back row, standing, left to right: Curtis Dunlap, (b) [replaced by Jack A. Kelly]; Gustave S. Holstrom (p); Francis Ferguson, (cp); and Philip Anderson, (n).

ners went. He never saw them again. And for Michael Uhrin, he would not survive, the only crewmen killed during the fighter attacks. The Schweinfurt mission was Ellsworth's first mission and Uhrin's second. It proved to be the last for both of them.

During the flight into Germany, Ellsworth suffered shrapnel wounds to his legs and arms but continued to fight off the German fighters. When Holmstrom sounded the bail out bell, the three gunners in the waist could not get the waist hatch open. Uhrin was already dead, so the three surviving gunners moved toward the tail position where they found the escape hatch. Fatigati, the tail gunner, had already bailed out. Oliver was the first of the three to leave the ship. Ellsworth was next with Frederick Massey, the ball turret gunner, behind him. Just as Ellsworth prepared to jump, a flak burst hit him in the hand, blowing off all but two fingers. He knew that he had to wrap his fingers around the D ring or he would never make it. That was his last conscious memory. He blacked out from oxygen deprivation before he could jump. Massey thought Ellsworth was frozen and pushed him out of the plane, saving his life. The next thing that Ellsworth remembers is lying on the ground, flat on his back with Germans surrounding him. He was already captured.

Suffering from his wounds, the Germans took Ellsworth to a hospital where he remained for a number of weeks. "They treated me pretty well," commented Ellsworth, "considering." Later he joined some of his crew in Stalag Luft 17B. He remained there until May 3, 1945 when the camp was liberated. Six men of the 13<sup>th</sup> Armored Division arrived in three Jeeps and easily captured the 205 guards. Other units of the 13<sup>th</sup> Armored followed quickly and set up medical stations and organized the evacuation of the POWs by C-47 to France six days later. By then the war was over in Europe. ✈

#### Obituaries Not Recent; Not Previously Published Continued from Page 3

- teacher for only 3 years before being made principal; he retired when his health was failing due to Parkinson's Disease. Survived by his wife of 56 years, Ruth, 2s, 4gc, and now 3ggc.
- **Dantzig, Henry, M.D.**, 423<sup>rd</sup> Sq medical officer, surgeon, died 14 Apr 02 at 85 in East Randolph, VT, where he long practiced medicine. His wife Lyn, predeceased him in Oct 01. No further info.
  - **Bradley, John M.**, 368<sup>th</sup> gunner, who enlisted in San Francisco, appears to be the man of that name who died 19 Mar 01 at 75 in Stockton, CA. He arrived Thurleigh 30 Oct 44 with Charles Crooks' crew; Bradley was not onboard Crooks' B-17 on 15 Dec 44 when it collided with Wilke's B-17 at Greenham Common. We have no record of him having been found to be on our 306<sup>th</sup> association roster through the years; no further info.
  - **Lambert, Ernest P.**, 367<sup>th</sup> bombardier (crews of Albert John Bowley & Leo K Reinhart when wounded), who was from IL, died 10 May 00 at 82 in Albuquerque, NM. He arrived at Thurleigh 27 Dec 44 and on 10 Jan 45 (Gymnich mission) was seriously wounded in the leg and eye by flak which had knocked him off his seat. He crawled back into position and dropped the bombs despite his wounds, later being awarded a Silver Star for his heroism along with the Purple Heart for the wounds. No further info.
  - **Cairns, William C.**, "Scotty" 39<sup>th</sup> service group dental assistant, died 28 Mar 00 at Bellevue, WA. Possibly survived by wife Judi. No further info.
  - **Schember, Joseph V.**, 423<sup>rd</sup> waist gunner on 'Little LuLu' (crews of Harold Fossum & John Lockard), died 24 Sep 97 in Banning, CA, where he had long been a resident. No further info.
  - **Berardi, Edward C.**, 423 medic section leader, died 28 Feb 1997 at 78 in Jersey City, NJ, very near Long Island where he had long lived. In the WWII Memorial Registry he was honored by his brother-in-law. No further info.
  - **Ewing, Richard N.**, 367<sup>th</sup> (assignment unknown), originally from Missouri, died 28 Apr 95 at 85, at Heber Springs, AR. They had 1s who died in 2001. Survived by his wife Mary Albert Ewing. No further info.
  - **Scribner, Benjamin F.**, 423<sup>rd</sup> ball turret gunner, died 4 Mar 95 in Danvers, MA, at 70. He was one of the participants in the GI Show that toured in England in 45, with 6 other 306<sup>th</sup> men and men from other Groups (Jul-94 Echoes article and page 1 of this issue). He got his PhD after the war, and retired in 85 from Bethlehem Steel Corp. As of 94 he was actively working with churches in conflict and crisis as an Organizational Development Consultant, living in Danvers, MA where his wife, Susan, was then pastor of the First Church of Danvers, Congregational, United Church of Christ. No further info.
  - **Sprunger, Richard W.**, 423<sup>rd</sup> pilot & co-pilot (Douglas Schrack), died 26 Dec 94 at 75 in Bessemer, AL. His tour at Thurleigh was from Aug 44 to Mar 45. He continued in the USAF, reaching rank of Lt Col. In 1992 he and his wife returned to visit Thurleigh. Survived by wife Helen, at least 1s.
  - **Shaner, Paul H.**, 367<sup>th</sup> (assignment unknown), died 27 Jun 94 at 75 in Oak Hill, OH. Survived by his wife, Ruth. No further info.
  - **Edwards, Richard G, Jr.**, 369<sup>th</sup> tail gunner (Clayton Nattier crew), of Unicoi County, TN, died 12 Sep 1993. Their crew arrived Thurleigh 21 Jul 44, and was downed 13 Sep on Edwards' 13th mission; held at Stalag Luft 4. Post-war he was supervisor of the diesel shop for CSX railroad. Survived by wife of 48 years, Charlotte, 2c, 3gc.
  - **Goncher, Stanley.**, 423<sup>rd</sup> navigator (Robert L Mox crew), originally from New York, died 19 Jul 1993 at 68, in Boca Raton, FL. The crew arrived Thurleigh by 1 Jul 44; completed 35 mission tour by Dec 44. Survived by his wife Sue. No further info.
  - **Boyer, Norman P.**, 367<sup>th</sup> navigator, died 16 Apr 92 at 75. He reported to Thurleigh 5 Jun 44 and completed his tour in Sep 44. Post-war he always had his own businesses, and operated a trailer park for many years. They enjoyed traveling all over the US, including Alaska, and in later years spent winters in FL. He was survived by his wife of 49 years, Virginia, who died at 89 in Sep 10. Survived by 2c, and now 5gc, 4ggc.
  - **Teets, W Melvin.**, 369<sup>th</sup> radio operator mechanic, died 10 Nov 91 at 67. Post-war he graduated from Lafayette College in 49, worked for Hanson Van Winkle Company in Grand Rapids, MI and NJ until retiring in 89. Married in 51 to Anne, who survives him along with their 3s, 8gc.
  - **Schroeder, Charles T.**, 423<sup>rd</sup> tail gunner (Bartlett crew), died 1 Mar 91 at 66. Survived in OR by his wife, Georgia; no further info.
  - **Quinones, Ruperto** 367<sup>th</sup> medical clerk, of Alice, TX, died 12 Dec 90 at 72. No further info.
  - **Bowman, Edward J.**, 39<sup>th</sup> / 423<sup>rd</sup> dispensary clerk, ambulance group, of Bronx, NY, died 11 Sep 90 at 77. No further info.
  - **Sharkey, Howard C.**, 369<sup>th</sup> pilot, died 9 Feb 90 at 69 as a Lt Col, USAF, having served in Korea and Vietnam after WWII. Survived by his wife Dolores, in CO. No further info.

# The Sky Was Never Still

By Roger A. Freeman

*Editor's Note: This poem was sent in by Lee Swofford of Coppel, Texas. Lee flew with the 700th Bomb Squadron of the 445th Bomb Group, based at Tibenham, not far from Norwich. Roger Freeman's poem will have special meaning for all of the 306th family. From Wikipedia: "Roger A. Freeman (May 11, 1928–October 7, 2005) was an English farmer who became a noted aero-historian specializing in 8th Air Force operations in World War II. His 1970 book *Mighty Eighth* is still considered the definitive popular history.*

*He was born and raised on a farm in Essex which became part of the base for the 56th Fighter Group and their activity spurred his interest in aviation. After the war he continued to operate the family farm until the mid-60's when he began to research and write about the 8th AF. In time, he came to write a series of books with the help of many veterans who shared their experiences with him; many with rare color photographs never seen by the general public. These photographs were eventually formed into a book unto itself.*

*Freeman died from the complications of cancer in October 2005 at the age of 77. The Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center - Library and Archive was dedicated at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia in 2007."*

The old man sat in the English pub  
As he had for many a year  
And listened to the strangers talk  
As he sipped a temperate beer.

A stranger asked how long he'd lived  
In the village here about  
"Why all my days," the old man said,  
"An age, without a doubt."

"I envy you," the stranger sighed  
"Your tranquil life,  
The gentle fields, the muted sky,  
Devoid of urban strife."

The old man smiled a wistful smile,  
"That's just a townie's dream,  
For I have seen the sky aflame  
And heard the meadows scream.

"I've known the thunder at each dawn  
That shook the very ground  
As warplanes sought to gain the clouds  
From airfields all around."

"They called some Forts and others Libs  
And there were fighters too  
I've counted hundreds at a time  
Yes, what I tell is true."

"They'd climb and soar like flocks of rooks  
And round and round they'd mill  
From north and south, from east to west  
The sky was never still."

"Sometimes there'd be a wondrous sight  
A sight beyond compare  
The bombers going out to war  
Forging the frigid air."

"Four miles above, just silver specks  
Like sunshine on the dew  
And trailing lines of cloud-like white  
Across the cosmic blue."

"They set the heavens all a-throb  
That did not fade away  
For others rose to meet the night  
Invisible to stay."

"And when was this?" the stranger asked  
"And who were those you saw?"  
The old man drank and then replied  
"It happened in the war.

"They were but boys and many died  
Some lost without a trace  
For then the sky in foreign parts  
Could be a violent place."

Yes, they were boys and me a child  
But I remember well  
And if you have the time to spare  
There's more that I can tell."

The stranger said that he must go.  
"Perhaps another day."  
Indifferent to the old man's tale  
He quickly slipped away.

The old turned to inward thoughts  
His memories to tend  
He knew that those who were not there  
Could never comprehend.

Those who'd not known the crowded sky  
The sounds that drenched the land  
Or stood in awe and wonderment  
Would never understand

The old man left the English pub  
And stood awhile outside  
The evening vault was milky blue  
Cloud-free and stretching wide.

He raised his head and scanned the sky  
That held so still and clear  
And in his mind a memory  
And in his eye a tear.



*Obituaries Not Recent; Not Previously Published Continued from Page 5*

- **Allen, Dudley J**, an original 306th supply officer, died 27 Jul 89 at 69. At his death, he was survived by his wife. No further info.
- **Cox, Donald W** (423<sup>rd</sup> bombardier, Thomas Logan crew) died 6 Aug 86 in Salt Lake City, UT, at 68. He arrived at Thurleigh 12 Apr 43, and was POW from 25 Jun 43 after their crew had to bail out near Amsterdam. He was held at Stalag 7A. He was survived by 4c, and wife Nansi, who died Jan 10 after she was predeceased by 1s. Survived by 3c, 2gc.
- **Sansom, Norman J Jr** (bombardier; Dean C Rodman crew when downed) died in Apr 86, in Chicago, IL, at 68. He was held POW from 8 Oct 43 (Bremen) mission, at Stalag 3. Survived by Norman III, who served as US Army Sgt in Vietnam & died Jun 06 in IL, at 59. No further info.
- **Maron, Harold Martin** (369<sup>th</sup> engineer & waist gunner, Gerald Haywood crew when downed), of Orchard Park, NY, died 1 Jul 85, at 74. Waist gunner when POW 29 May 44 (Brunswick mission); held at Stalag 17B. Post-war he was Parts Manager for various companies in western NY. He enjoyed doing small engine repair and always had a garden. He and his Oct 45 bride, Louise, had 1d. No survivor info.
- **Buccellato, John A** (367<sup>th</sup> medic / ambulance driver, died in Jul 84 at 67 in Queens, NY. No further info.
- **Hess, Joseph N** (367<sup>th</sup> pilot), of Des Moines, IA, died in Dec 83 at age 66. No further info.
- **Milton, Ralph E** (368<sup>th</sup> ball turret gunner, Albert Rehn crew) died in Sep 82 in Richmond, VA, at 72. His crew arrived Thurleigh 19 Nov 43 with Don Ross as bombardier and completed their tour. Milton replaced ball turret gunner Lowell Jackson, who actually appears (mislabelled as Milton) in Rehn's crew photo. No survivor info.
- **Bosworth, Guy E** (368<sup>th</sup> waist gunner, James Butler crew), of Odessa, TX, died there, Oct 81, at 55. He met and married his wife in Sioux City, IA before heading to Thurleigh. Post-war he was an oil driller. No further info.
- **Rile, Smedley D**, 367<sup>th</sup> ball turret gunner (William B Winslow crew), died in May 1981 at 56 in Clementon, NJ. One of his arms was caught in the turret mechanism 10 Feb 45 (Dulmen mission) and he was hospitalized at Sudbury. No further info.
- **Shade, Floyd M** (367<sup>th</sup> gunner), of Long Pine, NE, died in Nov 80, at 60. He was at Thurleigh from at least 22 Dec 43 (Osnabruck mission), to at least when he was wounded 26 Mar 44 (Pas de Calais mission) and perhaps much longer. His name was listed in Robert Starzynski's WWII address book. No further info.
- **Hudson, Carl E** (368<sup>th</sup> waist gunner, Charles M Bayless crew when downed), died in Jan 78 at age 55 in Urania, LA. Their B-17 was downed 25 Feb 44 (Augsburg mission); he was held at Stalag 4. No further info.
- **Gaynor, Patrick** (369<sup>th</sup> waist gunner, Kurt Ahlstrom crew when downed), of Long Island, NY, died 13 Mar 76, at 59. He was POW from 11 Apr 44 (Stettin mission), when he and others survived explosion of their B-17; held at Stalag 17B. No survivor info.
- **Tuttle, James W** (369<sup>th</sup> radio operator, Ed Sandini crew) of Virginia, died at 50, in Feb 76. No further info.
- **Brookins, Louie**, 368<sup>th</sup> medic, surgical tech, ambulance group, died 15 Jun 72 at 53. He was a native of Hancock Co, GA, and is buried nearby at Milledgeville, GA, where his vet's marker shows him as a Sgt. No further info.

## MONTHLY BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO VETERANS AND SURVIVING SPOUSES FOR HOME CARE OR NURSING HOME COSTS

Aid and Attendance is an under-utilized program of monthly governmental benefits offered to assist veterans and surviving spouses who require in-home care or nursing homes. The veteran had to have served at least 90 days in military service to qualify for the benefits. Payments can be retroactive and most veterans can qualify.

The amount is a benefit to the veteran of \$18,234 annually; increases to \$21,615 if there is one dependent. The surviving spouse living alone is \$11,715 annually.

For information call 1-800-827-1000 or online at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or type AID AND ATTENDANCE in the search block. Or contact your local Veterans Administration office.

Apply online at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/>  
(this information courtesy our director, Em Christianson)



**Registration Form**  
 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association Reunion  
 Holiday Inn Bayside — San Diego, California  
 27-30 October 2011

Registration fee (per person)..... x \$35.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Thursday, 27 October** (everything is free on this arrival day, including a Welcome Reception with a complimentary bar—5-6 pm Thursday in the hospitality room)

**Friday, 28 October**

Ladies Breakfast (7:30-9am)..... x \$28.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

San Diego Air and Space Museum Tour (10:00 am-3 pm)..... x \$35.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

First Over Germany Dinner (7 pm)..... x \$45.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, 9 October**

USS Midway Museum Tour (1:30am-5:00 pm)....., ..... x \$35.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Banquet (7 pm)..... x \$49.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

*Everything else on the schedule is free!*

**Total.....\$\_\_\_\_\_**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address w/ City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron or Base Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Assigned Duty \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to: 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association Reunion and mail to:  
 Joel LaBo, 875 S. Worth, Birmingham, Michigan 48009*

Please list the names and hometown for each person registered.

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Is this your first reunion? \_\_\_\_\_ Veteran? \_\_\_\_\_ Family? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please call the Holiday Inn Bayside direct to make reservations:  
 1-800-662-8899 or 1-619-224-3621  
 Ask for 306th Bomb Group reunion rates:**

**\$105.00 (plus tax) Single, Double, Triple, or Quad Rooms—All One Price**

**Deadline for registration and hotel reservations is 5 October 2011.  
 Please help your 306th Bomb Group reunion planning,  
 register and make hotel reservations early. Do it today!**

**A full-sized hard copy of this form is on the 306th website: 306bg.org**

## Reunion Schedule At San Diego

**Wednesday, 26 October**

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Harborview Room (2 - 6 pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits Setup Harborview Room (12 noon - 5 pm; 7 - 10 pm)
- Dinner on your own (hotel restaurants and other food venues close by)

**Thursday, 27 October**

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Harborview Room (8 am – 5 pm)
- Board Meeting Arlington Room (10 am)
- Sign up for Oral History interviews (8 am-5pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits Harborview Room (8 am - 5 pm; 7 - 10 pm)
- Welcome Reception with complimentary bar, Harborview Room (5 pm-6 pm), compliments of the hotel
- Thurleigh at War film (10 am); Thurleigh Memories 11:15 Coronado Room
- The 306th BG Archives—From Start to Finish, a final report and presentation on the 306<sup>th</sup> Project at ACU--Dr. Williams Coronado Room (2-3 pm)
- 306<sup>th</sup> BG Veterans Roundtable, with 306<sup>th</sup> veterans telling their stories with a Q & A with the audience--moderated by Dr. Vernon Williams , Coronado Room (3:30-5:30 pm)
- Dinner on your own (hotel restaurants and other food venues close by)

**Friday, 28 October**

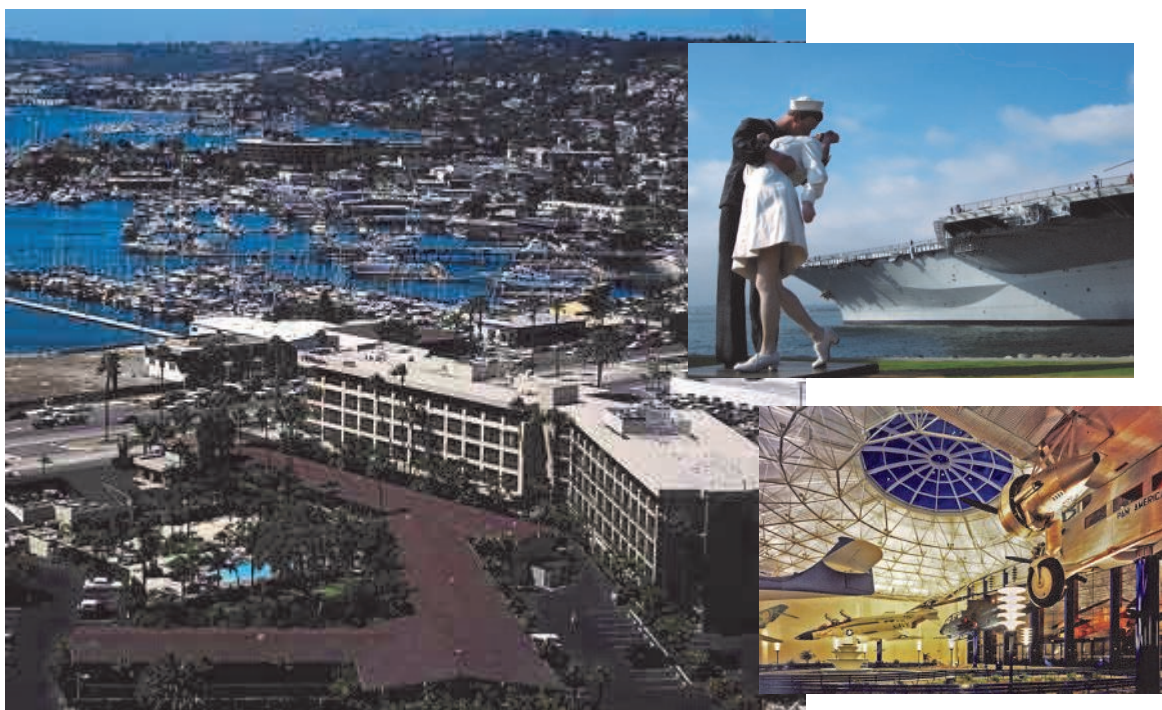
- Ladies Breakfast - Pacific Room (7:30-9am)
- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Harborview Room (8am-5pm)
- Oral History interviews (pre-scheduled by appointment)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits- Harborview Room (8am-5pm; 7-10 pm)
- Thurleigh at War film, Coronado Room (10 am)
- San Diego Air & Space Museum Tour (10 am-3pm)
- Second Generation meeting - Coronado Room (4 pm)
- First Over Germany Dinner, Poolside Deck (Cash Bar 6-7pm, Dinner 7-9pm) (Special Program Planned)

**Saturday, 29 October**

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Harborview Room (8am-5pm)
- Memorial Service—Tribute to the Fallen and Folded Wings Memorial, California Room (8:00-9:30 am)
- Business Meeting, California Room (10-Noon)
- Oral History interviews (pre-scheduled by appointment)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits Harborview Room (1-5pm)
- USS Midway Museum Tour - (1:30 pm-5:00 pm)
- Thurleigh at War film (3 pm)
- Cash bar (6 pm – 9 pm )
- Veterans-only Group Photograph California Room (6:45 pm)
- Widows Group & Next Generation Photograph California Room (6:50 pm)
- Banquet, California Room (7 pm) (Special Program Planned)

**Sunday, 30 October**

- Farewells
- Check out
- Travel Home — See you next year!



### HOTEL RESERVATIONS

**Holiday Inn Bayside San Diego**

Please call the Holiday Inn Bayside direct to make hotel reservations

**1-800-662-8899 or 1-619-224-3621**

Ask for 306th Bomb Group reunion rates:

**\$105.00 Single, Double, Triple, or Quad Rooms—All One Price**

# Museum Notes

## Thurleigh Airfield 306th Bomb Group Museum

### The William Griffin Story *How Your Luck can Change*

By Ralph Franklin  
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On the 12th September 1944 some of those attending the early morning briefing were apprehensive as they watched the tape wind across Northern Germany, around Berlin, southward a short the distance to the Ruhrlund and then, in an almost straight line, stretch westward towards England. The proximity of the route to the northern edge of the Berlin flak coverage seemed ominous to the navigators at their own specialized briefing.

Briefing was at 0345, a very early hour, and take off was planned at the first hint of dawn. Lt Col. John S Chalfont headed his PFF ship down runway 24 and the mission was on for the 40th 'A' Combat Wing.

At about 1126 the group approached the target area. Before the 306th group got entirely clear, one of the aircraft in the lead group (Robert H. Farwell) and the leader of the high group (John W. Sasser) were hit. The low group, trying to get clear of the flak, was flying a collision course with another group which came out from the right and passed through the 40th, breaking up the formation. At this moment about twenty-five Foch Wulf 190s jumped the disorganized planes. The entire attack did not last for more than five or six minutes, but accounted for seven planes from the 306th, one of which crash-landed in England. *Methuselah* so named for it's last three numbers, 969 was a veteran 367th and on this mission was flown by 1st Lt Earl O R Barr. After the fighters attacked, the aircraft developed fires in number 1 and number 3 engines, the right wing, and the radio room. Bail out was ordered and most of the crew jumped, but T/Sgt Hector Chaves, engineer, and S/Sgt Nicholas Hoolko, ball turret, were still in the plane when it blew up. Nick's story also appears in the museum. We first met Nick at the reunion in 1992 in England

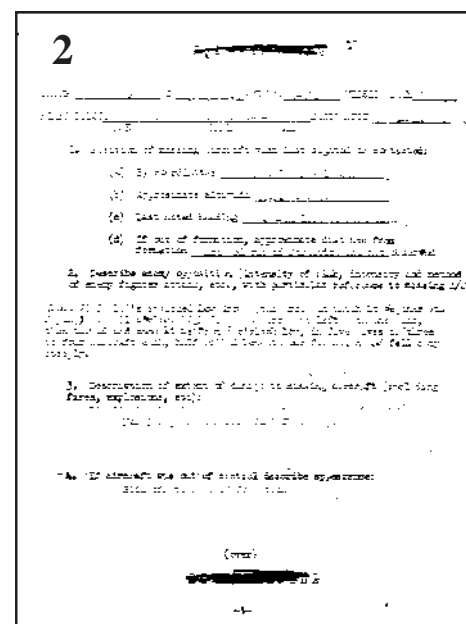
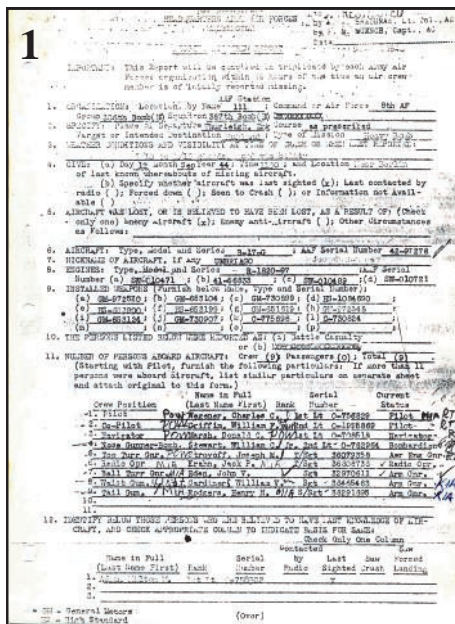
Also flying that day was the 367th plane, 42-97278 *Umbriago*, piloted by veteran 1st Lt Charles C. Wegener nearing the end of his tour missions. Also on board was navigator 1st Lt Donald C Marsh who apparently later remarked "We should have aborted, not much went right that day." At 1121 the low group was attacked by about a dozen FW-190s. 2nd Lt William F Griffin, flying as co-pilot on his 33rd mission described their aircraft as an instant wreck after the fighter pass. All controls were shot out and the plane was completely sprayed with 20mm cannon fire. One engine was out and there was an oxygen fire. The bail out order was given.

My story now moves forward some 66 years to the 2010 Reunion in Washington DC when we met William and his wife Charlotte. Following our initial greetings, almost their first question was do you have space in your cases as we would like to donate two of Bill's wartime pieces of clothing to your museum. My reply was I think we may have, if not we will buy another case.

As at most reunions our conversation turned to events from World War Two and in Bill's case his 33rd and final mission. He told me that once he had jumped, things seemed a little better for a short while. He was falling slowly on his parachute when one of the attacking FW 190 pilots came flying towards him. There was nothing Bill could do apart from saying a quick prayer. The aircraft came in close and circled around him, then saluted and turned away. Continuing his decent Bill fell into a pine forest northeast of Berlin. After crashing through the trees, he hit the ground, smashing up both his knees and ankles. As he was laying there attempting to gain his composure, there was a cracking noise from above. A branch that had broken from one of the Pines came crashing down, landed on him and broke his back. Bill was to spend eight long months in POW hospital in Meinnigen Germany (see photograph above).

In early May 1945 along with other prisoners, Bill was liberated by tank units of General Patton's 11th Armoured Division

The items of uniform so kindly donated by Bill and Charlotte are now proudly being displayed in our museum as yet another tribute to over 8000 young Americans who came to the countryside of North Bedfordshire and helped to defeat the common enemy. The story of Station 111 and those that served there is told each time a visitor walks through our doors.



From Top, clockwise—1-2) Two of the four pages included in the Missing Air Crew Report for the Wegener crew; 3-4) Bill Griffin's uniform exhibit in the 306th Memorial Museum at Thurleigh; 5) Bill Griffin (left) at the Umbriago on the flight line; 6) Pilot Charles Wegener (L) and Bill Griffin 7) The POW Hospital in Meinnigen, Germany where Griffin received medical care for his injuries suffered during his parachute jump from his burning aircraft. Photographs courtesy of the 306th Historical Collection at Abilene, Texas, Ralph Franklin, Mrs. Charlotte Griffin, and the 306th Bomb Group Historical Collection at Thurleigh, England.

