

# 306th Echoes



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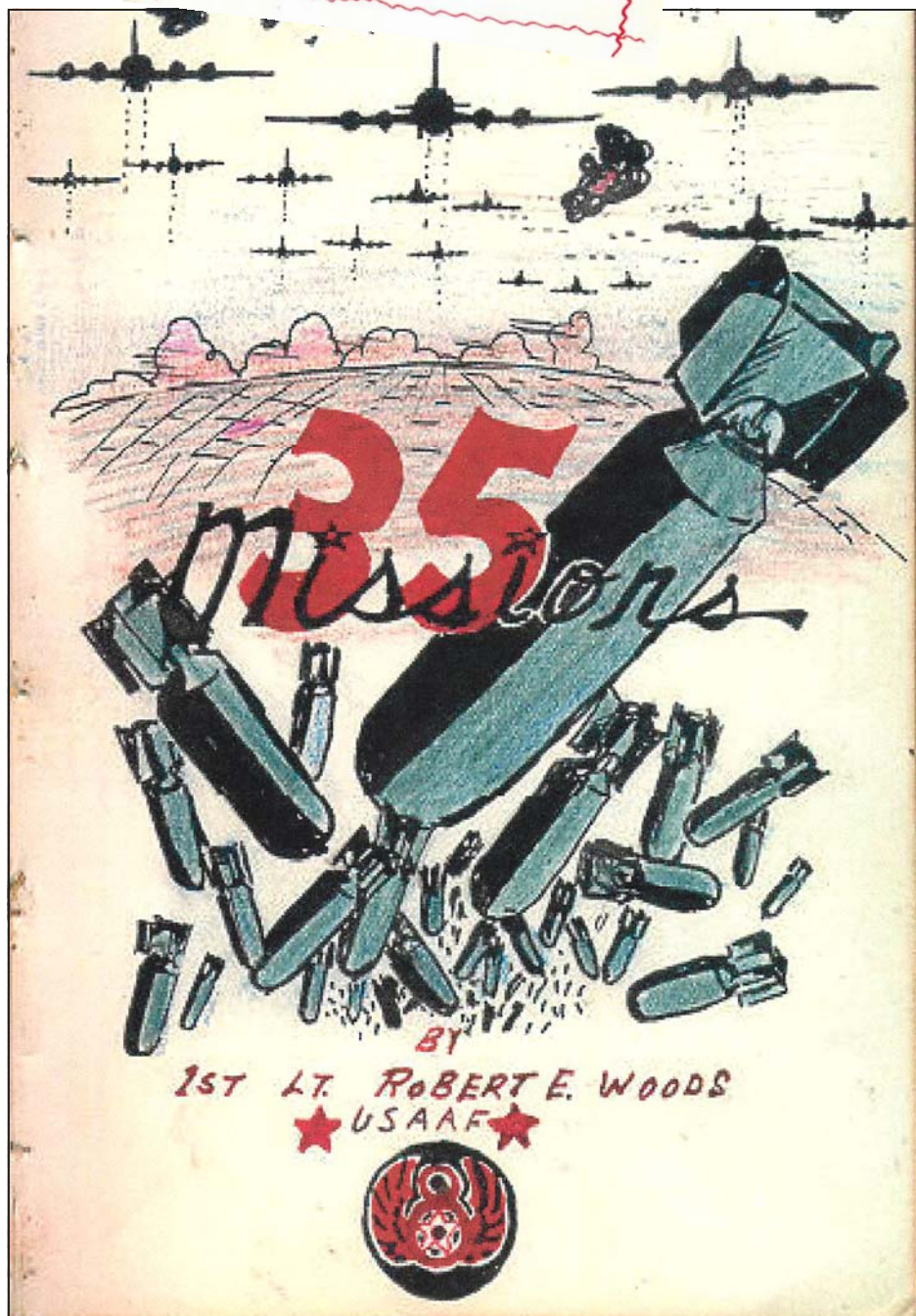
## Lt. Robert E. Woods

**His wartime diary and postwar artwork leaves behind for all of us a rich history of his days of flying the “Big Iron Birds.”**

Beginning with this issue, Part 1 of Lt. Robert E. Woods’ wartime diary makes its appearance. Woods takes us through his early life and the beginning of his war service when he volunteers for the Aviation Cadets in 1942. In the pages that follow, you will trace Woods’ footsteps through his arrival at Thurleigh, his assignment to the 369th Bomb Squadron and his first fifteen missions. And that is just the beginning. In the following issues for summer and fall, you will follow Woods through the rest of his 35 missions and be treated to his wonderful artwork and some insightful conclusions about the 306th Bomb Group and its service in the victory of World War II.

On the cover page of the diary, Woods wrote a brief note to his granddaughters, Anne Marie and Sarah and a reminder to all of us:

Remember, freedom is never free—  
It’s always bought with a price—  
Love you—



Top: Robert Starzynski is presented with the Knight Legion of Honour by Graham Paul, French Consul General at Chicago. Center: the French Knight Legion of Honour medal. Bottom: Jack Hubbard (center) presented the Knight Legion of Honor in Miami by French Consul General Gael de Maisonneuve (left) and Rear Admiral Patrick Martin, French Navy.

## Two 306th Men Receive the Knight Legion of Honour

Veterans of the 306th Bomb Group have begun to receive recognition from France for their service in the liberation of that nation during World War II. Recently the editor received word that Robert Starzynski was so honored at the French Consulate in Chicago and Jack Hubbard received his Legion of Honour from the Consulate General in Miami. Other 306th men have received the award over the past several years.

The National Order of the Legion of Honour is a French order established by Napoleon Bonaparte on 19 May 1802. The Order is the highest decoration in France and is divided into five degrees: Chevalier (Knight), Officier (Officer), Commandeur (Commander), Grand Officier (Grand Officer) and Grand Croix (Grand Cross).

To be eligible for this outstanding award, the veteran has to fit strict criteria: 1) Interested veterans of all the different armed forces must have fought in at least one of the 4 main campaigns of the Liberation of France: Normandy, Provence, Ardennes or Northern France. Actions having taken place in Belgium, Germany, Italy or any other neighboring European country are not taken into consideration. 2) The file presented must contain the military separation record (honorable discharge), a chronological resume about one typewritten page in length and a copy of a current identity document with a picture. If possible, it must also contain copies of citations for all the decorations already received in France or in the United States indicating meritorious action during wartime operations.

The documentation is particularly important for decorations that were not shown in the discharge document at the time of separation. To be considered, these citations must have been issued during WWII or the close aftermath, and must relate to events (outstanding actions, wounds, having been made prisoner, evasions, having taken action with the resistance, etc.) that took place on the French territory only which includes ground, airspace and coastal waters.

Since only a small number of Legion of Honor medals are awarded each year in the United States, care is taken to nominate only those with the most distinguished records. It is important to have such decorations as the Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Silver Star and higher, earned in French territory in order to have a competitive record.

To receive consideration for the French Legion of Honor, send your file materials to the French consulate your home. Any American soldier who served in France during WW II must be alive at the time of application in order to qualify for this award. The processing time is between 6 months and over a year, due to the large number of applications submitted by U.S. veterans. If the file meets the criteria, the documents are sent to The Legion of Honor committee in Paris, through the French Embassy in Washington and the French Foreign Affairs ministry. The Legion of Honor committee approves or rejects the candidate presented after appropriate review of his file.

Please note that this program does not involve an application. Other than receiving an acknowledgement of your records submittal, you will not receive further word unless you are ultimately selected for the honor. This process can take several months.



Ralph Franklin chats it up with Luna Nightingale, a singer specializing in the music of the 1940s. The Mainline Big Band can be seen in the background.

Photographs courtesy Charles Neal



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**306th Echoes** is published four times annually: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. *Echoes* is mailed free of charge to all known addresses of 306th personnel, 1942-1945. Contributions in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer.

#### 2011-2012 Student Interns:

Trenton Dietz (Russell Strong Intern)  
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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 © (19).

## 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:

- Barnett, John R.**, an original 423<sup>rd</sup> Sq pilot (of 'Miss Swoose') & POW, died 3 Mar 12 at 96 in Severna Park, MD, where he had lived for 10 years. When he enlisted with the Air Corps in 41, he was a single native of Glenville, WV and graduate of Glenville State College. Following flight training in TX, as a B-17 pilot he had a short tour in the Pacific before being assigned to the 306<sup>th</sup> at Wendover. After reaching Thurleigh and flying in the first Group missions, he was held at Stalag Luft III from 9 Nov 42 (mission to bomb submarine pens at St Nazaire, France). After liberation, he married Claudine, his wife of 66 years who survives him. His continued USAF career included tours in Bangkok, Taiwan, and Vietnam. He retired as LtCol in 68, and they lived in Pt Charlotte, FL for 30+ years, where he was an avid golfer and boatman, and an active participant in local theater productions. He and his family were also lifelong summer residents at the family fishing camp on the Elk River in Clay County WV. Also survived by 2s, 7gc, 10ggc, 1gggc. Buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Jul 12.
- Burkhardt, Robert E.**, 423<sup>rd</sup> radio operator (Neill G Kirby crew), of Baltimore Co, MD, died 11 Jan 12 at 87. He reached Thurleigh 28 Oct 44 and was there at least until mid-Mar 45. He had enlisted 30 Jun 43 in Baltimore as a single man with unclear education and work experience coding in the WWII Enlistment index. His wife Eva predeceased him 7 Jan 10 at 86. Both were interred at Holly Hill Memorial Gardens, with donations suggested in lieu of flowers to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Rosedale, MD for Eva, and to the American Cancer Society for Robert. They are survived by 2d, 4gc, 6ggc. No further info.
- Butler, James H.**, 368th pilot, of Shreveport, LA, died 28 Nov 11 at 89. James and his identical twin brother Warren enlisted in the Air Corps at 20, and took their training together in Hobbs, NM; Warren became a co-pilot in the 388th BG, and James arrived at Thurleigh 3 Feb 45. He flew 28 combat missions and continued in the Casey Jones Photo Project, leaving Thurleigh 12 Feb 46. James graduated from LA Tech and in Oct 49 he married Marie in Shreveport, where they lived all their lives. During the Korean War, he was recalled to pilot B-29 refueling tankers. In his 45-year career, as JH Butler, a highly respected independent Petroleum Landman, he worked across the country for various oil, gas, and independent production companies, until he retired in 07. After 60 years of marriage, James was preceded in death by Marie, who was an accomplished artist in watercolor, oil, glass and sculpture, known for oil portraits. She was active in the Northwest Louisiana Diabetic Association, Shreveport Art Council, Hoover Watercolor Society, Shreveport Sculpture Club, Seven Plus One Art Group, Era Club and Marquette Club. She volunteered many years in the Christian Service Program, and was a 79 recipient of the National Conference of Christians and Jews Brotherhood and Humanitarian Award. They were preceded in death by 1d, and are survived by 2c and 1 foster d, 8gc, and numerous ggc.
- Cargile, Vinson G.**, 367<sup>th</sup> tail-gunner (Robert A Vieille crew), originally from TX and in recent years of Aumsville, OR, died 19 Aug 2011 at 86 in Salem, OR, surrounded by his family. The crew arrived at Thurleigh 5 Feb 45; Cargile had 19 missions with Vieille before 14 Apr 45 when 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Vieille and all on board his plane that day, including Miss Emily Rea of American Red Cross, died when the plane flew into a hill on Isle of Mann while en route to Langford Lodge in Ireland. Cargile's remaining 5 combat missions were with various lead pilots. He received a BS and MS in Education from Western NM Univ, Silver City, NM. He also served in Korea and Vietnam, serving more than 32 years in the AF. After retiring as Major, he was an instructor for Northrop Corp. Most of his life he lived in NM and TX. He had a lifelong love of swimming, was a lifeguard, and an instructor for American Red Cross. For more than 50 years he was a member of the Brotherhood of Freemasons. He enjoyed Judo, woodworking, dachshund dogs and Siamese cats. In Dec 50 in NM, he married Sarah, who predeceased him in Jan 92. In recent years he enjoyed living next door to his son and daughter-in-law, and helping as caregiver for his older brother, an Army vet, who survives. Also survived by 1s, 1gd, 1ggs. He was buried at Ft Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, TX.
- Carnicom, William M.**, 423rd pilot & co-pilot (Joseph R Clark crew), of Pagosa Springs, CO, died 9 Mar 12, at 90. Bill had more than two years of college when he enlisted at Ft Benjamin Harrison, IN, in Jul 42. Prior to becoming a pilot, he was a propeller specialist in El Paso. During flight training, he suffered a ruptured appendix which led to months of recuperation in San Antonio. After completing his flight training, he arrived at Thurleigh 3 Feb 45 and flew 28 missions before the end of combat. He then flew mapping missions around Portugal and north, in the Casey Jones Project before departing to the States in Dec 45. Back home in Toledo, OH, he served in the Reserves about five years, initially while working for the railroad, and then went back to college, studying geology. In 52, he married Ruth. His post-military career was in the oil service industry. They owned property in Pagosa Springs since 75 and built a home there 12 years ago. In Dec 03, when we last had a Reunion in Savannah, Bill was elected as a Director on the Board of the 306<sup>th</sup> BG Association for three years; sadly from Oct 04 through 06 in the Echoes box listing Board members his surname was consistently misspelled as "Carnahan." Bill and Ruth, who survives him, attended our 05 reunion in San Antonio. Also survived by 2s, 1gd.
- Hill, "RT" Rupert Trenton.** 369<sup>th</sup> engineer / top-turret gunner (Ethan Allen crew), lifelong resident of Bellville, Richland County, OH, died 22 Apr 12 at 93. The Secretary appreciates the correction of his name (from "Robert" as he was mistakenly listed on p.171 of *Combat Crews*, in the Allen Crew) as submitted by Jeffrey Dance and posted at the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS, Oregon Chapter website by Tom Philo, their Historian/ Secretary/ Webmaster. RT reached Thurleigh 15 May 44 and departed 25 Sep after being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross 27 Aug (Gelsenkirchen mission). In the Air Corps, he flew 32 missions in the European and South Pacific Theaters, as top turret gunner and navigator, respectively. After his service time, he and his wife, Rose, returned to Bellville and built Ravenwood Farm, where they raised and trained 19 World Champion Morgan horses, and enjoyed watching their granddaughters ride and show the horses. He was a successful realtor prior to his career with the US Postal Service, from which he retired in 84. He was a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church, the American Legion, and AMVETS in Bellville. He loved the outdoors, had a passion for trapping, and shared his love of the outdoors with young people in the local school system. Rose predeceased him in Jul 91 at 68. Buried at Mansfield Cemetery; contributions were suggested to the Alzheimer's Association. Survived by 2d, 2gd, 2ggc.



Obituaries continued on page 3

Obituaries continued from page 2

- **Kurtz, Curtis E**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (unknown duties), died 4 Jan 2012, age 91, in Wheaton, IL (where he's been on our list with an erroneous middle initial). He was raised in SD, where in Jan 42 with three years of college, he enlisted with a deferment date of Apr 43 for finishing his degree. After Thurleigh, he also served in the Korean War. He later lived in Cadiz, KY until moving to the Chicago suburbs. He retired from Borg-Warner Research Center in Des Plaines, IL in 84. He was a longtime Boy Scout leader, avid woodworker, and devoted member of the Catholic Church. He was preceded in death by his wife of 59 years, Donna in 06, at 80, and son Patrick. Following services in Wheaton in Jan, he was to be buried later with Donna at St. Henry's Catholic Church Cemetery in Aurora, KY. Survived by 4c, 16gc, 11ggc.
- **Leeker, Walter C**, 369<sup>th</sup> original navigator (William J Casey crew), 92, of St Louis, MO, died 12 Nov 11. He reached Thurleigh in Jun 42, and flew combat missions that apparently culminated with his serious wounding on the 9<sup>th</sup> mission flown by the 306<sup>th</sup> on 23 Nov (St Nazaire) when Casey's crew, flying in "Banshee" had "7 kills" against the Luftwaffe. At enlistment, Oct 41 at Jefferson Barracks as an aviation cadet, he had completed two years of college, and had experience working as "Bookkeepers & cashiers except bank cashiers." On 12 Jul 10, he was pictured in SLToday with a son, visiting the B-17G "Aluminum Overcast" at Spirit of St Louis Airport in Chesterfield, MO. He enjoyed working on genealogy, for which he received Certificates of Appreciation Awards from St Louis Genealogical Society in 96 and 03. Capt Leeker was buried at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. Survived by his wife Betty of 58 years, 3s, 4gc.
- **Norris, Kenneth G**, 423<sup>rd</sup> ball-turret gunner (Elmer Heap crew), originally from Salem, NH, and more recently of Snowville, VA, died 25 Mar 12 at 92 at the hospital in Salem, VA. His crew reached Thurleigh 16 Oct 43. He later worked for the town of Salem, VA, from which he retired. He was a member of Snowville Baptist Church. Survived by his wife Lena "Mae," 1d, 2gc.
- **Northway, "Red" Marion J**, 367<sup>th</sup> bombardier (James P Roberts & Perry E Raster crews), born in Champaign County, IL and long of Hot Springs, AR, died 1 May 12 at 92. He reached Thurleigh 24 Jan 44, a few days after his initial pilot James Roberts (who was POW at Stalag Luft 1, when downed 4 Feb as co-pilot with Henry L Ware). Red then flew with the Raster crew, and was pictured with that crew, 6 Jul with the Royal Family at the christening of 'Rose of York.' At some point before the end of his tour in Jul, he was 367<sup>th</sup> Lead Bombardier. A member of The Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist, and of the retired AF Veterans Association, he was the second owner/operator of Patton's Lake Resort on Lake Hamilton (Hot Springs County) for over 35 years. His wife Mary preceded him in death at Hot Springs in 87; survived by 1s, 2gc, 3ggc.

**FAMILY:**

- **Anderson, Lavonne**, widow of Fred (367<sup>th</sup> navigator, Breed crew), died 19 Mar 12 in West Des Moines, IA of complications of heart disease at 88. In Fall 10, Lavonne and her two daughters generously sent to the 306<sup>th</sup> all of Fred's war memorabilia, including his flight jacket, for our archives collection. In Apr 12, just five weeks after Lavonne's death, daughter Paula Cross of Waukee, IA also passed away, at 59. Paula's career, with an MBA in Management from Purdue, included work at Pillsbury, Johnson & Johnson, Butler and Principal Financial Group, with extensive travels including US, Canada, Europe, and Asia; her surviving husband of 13 years, Dieter, born post-war to his German mother and her GI husband serving in the Berlin occupation, retired from the Marines after 22 years including two Vietnam tours and service in Beirut. Lavonne received her BA in 44, and in 45 married Fred when he returned from Thurleigh. She taught in public schools in Des Moines, Long Beach, CA, and Wheaton, IL, during their moves that also included Akron, Toronto, and Minneapolis, with Fred's pioneering work in budgetary control and computers. In 87 they moved to West Des Moines, and until Fred's death from cancer in 90, wintered in Venice, FL. She was an active member of West Des Moines United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women, and PEO Chapter HY. For many years she volunteered at Bidwell-Riverside Center, and travelled extensively in the US and Canada, as well as visiting China, India, Nepal, South Africa and more. Following Paula's death, Lavonne's descendants are 1d, 1gs.
- **Reioux, Aileen**, widow of Paul (423<sup>rd</sup> pilot, who served on Board of 306<sup>th</sup> BG Association in 99-02, as VP, President, and Past President), 91, died peacefully at home in Kihei, Maui, HI 17 Apr 12 under hospice care for Parkinson's disease. Born in Seattle, her schooling was in southern CA, graduating from Mercy College of Nursing in San Diego in 43. She and Paul married in 46; his army career took the family to WA, England, and El Paso. After he retired from active duty, they relocated to southern CA in 61, settling in Carlsbad, CA in 64 where she resumed her nursing career. In 86 they retired to Maui from where they enjoyed travel to Europe, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, New Zealand and mainland US. She was an organist at St. Theresa Catholic Church in Kihei, and volunteered with Hale Kau Kau food program and Hospice Maui. After 64 years of marriage, Paul died in 10; they're together at Maui Veterans Cemetery. Survived by 7c, 3gc.
- **Suhaysik, Lillian**, wife of Donald F (423<sup>rd</sup> tail-gunner, Elmer Heap crew), 85, originally of Milwaukee, WI, died 7 Jan 12 in Sun City West, AZ, where they have lived since 82. In May 47 she married Donald in Milwaukee; she worked as a bookkeeper until she became a homemaker for their 5c. In their Sun City West retirement, she quickly became involved in bowling, golf, an active social life, and continued her passion for the Green Bay Packers. Survived by Donald, 5c.

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

- **Walczak, Robert J**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (S/Sgt, unknown duties), may well be the man of this common Polish surname who grew up in Cook County, IL and who died 16 Dec 01 in Kendall Co, IL at 75. Our vet of this name reported to the Group 8 Oct 42 (the month before an older brother enlisted as Pvt in QMC in Cook Co); at Thurleigh first in 39<sup>th</sup> Services Group; promoted to S/Sgt 9 Dec 43; Nov 43 was in 204<sup>th</sup> Finance Co; departed 25 Nov 45. In the 1208<sup>th</sup> section of early 306<sup>th</sup> Directories was in Duluth, MN; USPS returned our undeliverable '07 letter. Buried with him at Mt Vernon Memorial Estates, Lemont, IL (Cook Co, just E of Kendall Co) is wife Frances, who predeceased him Dec 98 at 65; both his vet marker (showing Sgt US Army WWII), and hers indicate they were beloved parents; no further info.
- **Dugard, William T**, 368<sup>th</sup> engineer (Leon B Dorich crew, and earlier Joseph G Rethy crew), of TN, died 15 Sep 2001 at 76. The crew arrived at Thurleigh 1 Dec 44 with Rethy, who was replaced in early Feb 45 by Leon Dorich. Post-war he stayed in the service, serving in Korea and Vietnam. Lt Col Dugard is buried at the West TN Veterans Cemetery, Memphis, TN. No other info.
- **Creasey, Frank Lee Sr**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Cpl; unknown duties) originally from Stuart, VA, died 31 Oct 00 at 78 having lived for some years in Roanoke. Buried at Sherwood Memorial Park in nearby Salem, VA; about 3 years later his son, Frank L Jr, 57, was also buried there. No further info.
- **Peck, Warren G**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Cpl, unknown duties) originally from MA, died 6 Sep 99 in FL at 79. Post-war he continued in the service through Korea and Vietnam. Lt Col Peck is buried at Bay Pines National Cemetery in Bay Pines, FL with his wife Gladys who survived to Nov 00. No further info.
- **Fink, Paul K**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (unknown duties), of Dearborn, MI, died 14 Jul 99. He had been a stenographer/ typist when enlisted in May 41 at Detroit as Pvt. He was in our Directories from 94 on; his wife Pauline survived to Oct 02 at 88. No further info.
- **Lakser, 'Max' Moses**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pfc; unknown duties) of Miami and later New Port Richey, FL, died 10 Feb 99 at 91. He enlisted in Apr 42 when not yet a citizen, having been born in Poland in 07. He is buried at Meadowlawn Memorial Gardens in New Port Richey, which later also handled the arrangements for his apparent wife, Hanna, who survived until May 04, at age 96; surviving were 2d, 4gc.
- **Rethy, Joseph G**, 368<sup>th</sup> pilot, died 21 Sep 98 at Orange, CA, at 76. Reported to Thurleigh with his crew on 1 Dec 44; at least by early Feb 45, Leon Dorich replaced him as the crew's pilot. Unknown whether he transferred to base due to pilot need or other reason. Survived by his last wife, Virginia; they married in Dec 83 in Orange. No further info.
- **Day, Norman Lee**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (laundry, TSgt) of Lockport, NY, died 12 Jan 98 at 79. He reported to Thurleigh 1 Nov 42. His widow Sarah survived to Nov 07 at 81; his daughter Jane Arsenault survived to Aug 05 at 58; his son Steve survived to Apr 07 at 67; all are buried at Long Lake Cemetery, in Adirondack Park, NY. No further info.
- **Boyles, Albert J**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co, of Whittier, Los Angeles Co, CA, died 11 Dec 97 at 93. He arrived at Thurleigh 29 Aug 43 in 367<sup>th</sup> Sq; moved to 1208<sup>th</sup> 24 Feb 44; went to hospital 11 Apr 44; 15 Apr 45 moved to 414<sup>th</sup> Air Services Gp as T/5. No further info.
- **Maxwell, Robert L**, 369<sup>th</sup> bombardier (James Edeler crew), died 13 Dec 97 at 81. He arrived at Thurleigh 11 Jun-44 and completed his tour in Oct. In our '94 Directory he was listed as a widower in Newcomerstown, OH, where he is buried at West Lawn Cemetery. No further info.
- **Harris, Reginald G**, 369<sup>th</sup> & 367<sup>th</sup> gunner (original with William Casey crew & POW), of Houston, TX area, died 5 Dec 96 at 57. POW at Stalag 17B when downed (Alden Mann crew) in Wilhelmshaven mission 15 May 43 that hit secondary targets of Helgoland and Dune Islands. Predeceased by wife Eileen. No further info.
- **Lillywhite, William H**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pfc; unknown duties), of East Hampton and later Southampton, Long Island, NY, died 7 May 96 at 88. When he enlisted in Apr 43 he was married with post-graduate education and the civilian occupation of railroad conductor. His apparent wife Helena survived him to Oct 96 at 86. Reportedly survived by at least 1d; no further info.
- **Bills, Eugene R**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pvt, unknown duties) originally from MO, died 19 Jan 92 at 69. He enlisted in Jan 42 at Jefferson Barracks, MO as Pvt in Air Corps, and is buried in Riverside, CA, at Riverside National Cemetery. No further info.
- **Threatt, Robert W**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pfc; unknown duties), originally of Chesterfield County, SC. Died 3 Sep 90, at 67. Post-war, he re-enlisted 2 Nov 45 as Pfc, undefined branch of service, for one year with his civilian occupation listed as "skilled occupations in manufacture of electrical machinery and acces-

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

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Lt. Robert E. Woods' diary continued from page 1

**PREFACE.**

**I**T'S ALL OVER NOW - THE SHOOTING PART I MEAN - and THE HORRIBLE DREAD OF BEING PULLED OUT OF YOUR BELOVED SACK (BED) TO YOU LUCKY CIVILIANS AT THE UNGODLY HOUR OF 2 AM. IS A THING OF THE PAST. BUT BEFORE ALL THESE HAPPY (?) DAYS DRIFT TOO FAR INTO THE WINDING TRAILS OF MEMORY, I'M GOING TO SET A FEW OF MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN BLACK and WHITE FOR THE BENEFIT OF POSTERITY and FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO DO ON A DUTLEVENING.

THIS SHORT HISTORY IS CONCERNED MOSTLY WITH MY VIEWS and EMOTIONS DURING MY TOUR OF DUTY AS PILOT OF A B-17.

(FLYING FORTRESS) ASSIGNED TO THE 306 BOMBARDMENT GROUP, 369 SQUADRON; THURLEIGH ENGLAND, TO BE EXACT.

NOW FOR A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF YOUR "AUTHOR" BEFORE HE BECAME A MOVING TARGET FOR THE FLAK GUNNERS OF NAZILAND. BORN: BRIDGE, TENN. (Pop. 300)

DATE: JAN 17, 1922

THE WOODS FAMILY MOVED TO MEMPHIS, TENN. IN JULY, 1929. BEING ONLY SEVEN, NATURALLY I CAME WITH THEM.

I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL AT HUMES, WORKED AT FIRESTONE TIRE and RUBBER Co, BELL TELEPHONE, western electric and FINALLY GOT MARRIED TO MISS LOU E. TAYLOR; AT A VERY MATURE AGE OF 20.

I SAW THAT YOU TOO CAN BE AN AVIATION CADET POSTER AND WAS SWORN INTO THE AIR FORCE SEPT. 24 1942.

I WAS CALLED TO ACTIVE SERVICE JAN. 30, 1943.

I RECEIVED 38 DAYS BASIC TRAINING AT MIAMI BEACH FLA., B.T.C. #9. WHEN WE WERENT DRILLING IN THE "DUST BIN", A NAME WE "FONDLY" GAVE OUR DRILL GROUND, WE WERE LOCKED IN OUR HOTEL. I WISH I COULD HAVE SEEN MIAMI - THEY SAY ITS BEAUTIFUL.

FROM MIAMI TO FAYETTEVILLE ARK, HOME OF U. OF ARK. THIS UNIVERSITY BECAME OUR ALMA MATER FOR 5 MONTHS, WHERE 2 YEARS OF COLLEGE WAS CRAMMED DOWN OUR THROATS.

NEXT CAME CLASSIFICATION AND PREFLIGHT AT SAN ANTONIO TEX. THEN WE FLEW OUR FIRST ARMY SHIP AT PRIMARY, IN VERNON TEX. THOSE WHO WERE LEFT WENT TO BASIE AT GARDEN CITY KAN. (I CAN STILL TASTE THE DUST.) AND AT LAST CAME ADVANCED,

CLIMAXING 18 MONTHS OF HARD WORK, WITH A PAIR OF SILVER WINGS and A SHINEY SECOND LIEUTENANT'S BAR.

I WAS SENT TO RANDOLPH FIELD, TEX. FOR ONE MONTH OF INSTRUCTORS TRAINING; THEN BACK TO FREDERICK OKLA, MY ADVANCED SCHOOL, AS INSTRUCTOR.

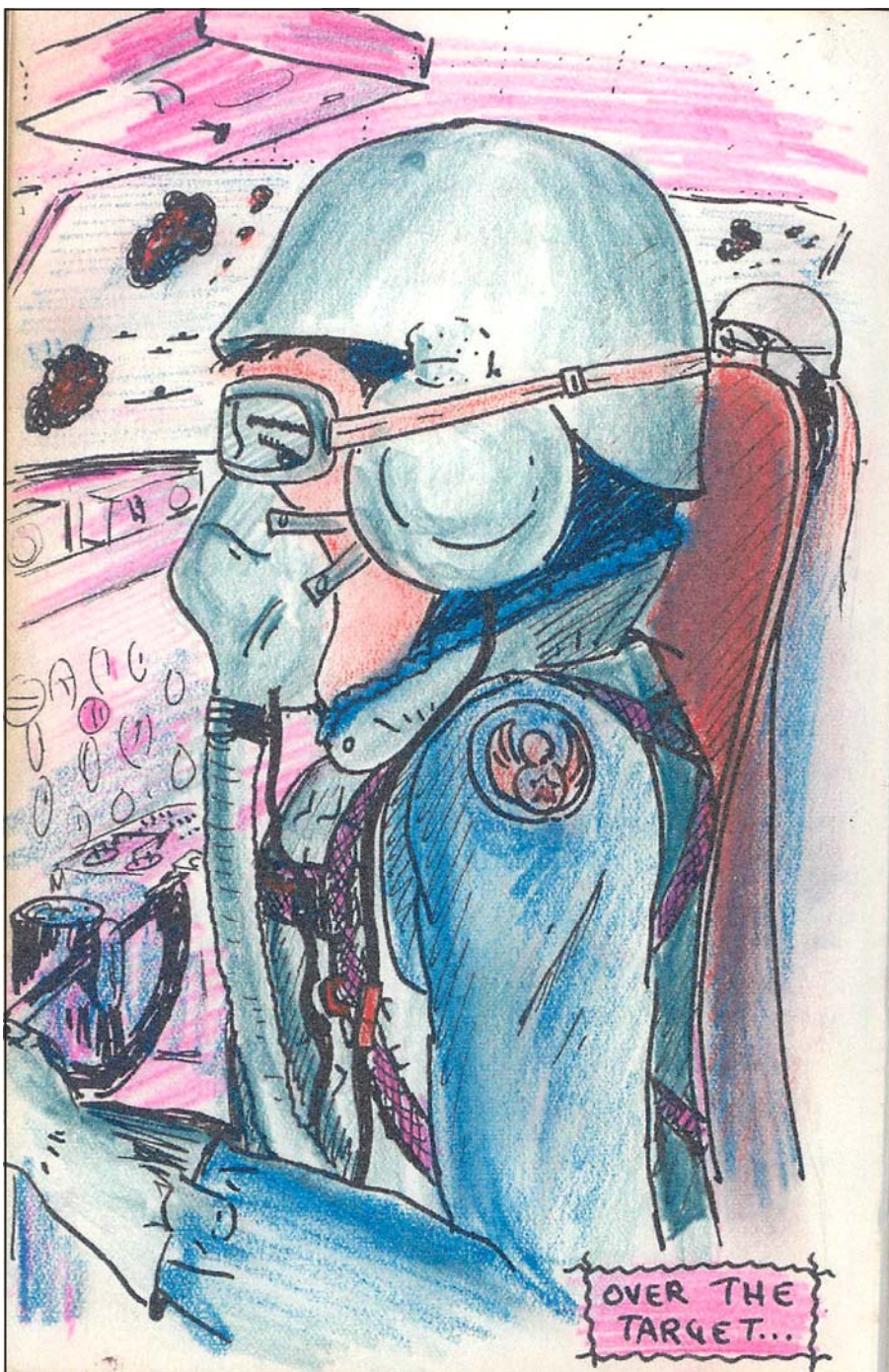
I SETTLED BACK TO RELAX AT LAST, WITH MY WIFE and REGULAR HOURS; IT WAS SWEET BUT... 30 DAYS LATER - REPORT TO PLANT PARK, TAMPA FLA. IN 48 HOURS FOR CO-PILOT OF B-17 TAMPA FLA. IN 48 HOURS? IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE!

WE, 23 OTHER FUTURE CO-PILOTS and I, ARRIVED IN TAMPA 2 DAYS LATER, VIA THE AIRLINES. WE RUSHED TO PLANT PARK DISTRIBUTION CENTER and REPORTED. TWO WEEKS LATER WE WERE ASSIGNED TO CREWS. AFTER 6 WEEKS TRAINING AT

DREW FIELD FFA, LT. SAMUELS (OUR FIRST PILOT) HAD TO HAVE AN OPERATION and WAS TAKEN OFF THE CREW. HE WAS REPLACED BY 1ST LT L.E. HOBBS, AN INSTRUCTOR THERE. HE IS A SWELL GUY - SHORT, RESERVED, STUBBORN, LIKES HIS BREW (and CAN HOLD IT TOO) and HAD 25 MISSIONS OVER GERMANY - YEP, HE ASKED FOR A SECOND TOUR, and THIS WAS HIS CREW....

WOODS, R.E.	CO-PILOT	TENN
LISEC, Y.	NAVIGATOR	ILL.
SOPINSKI, H.J.	BOMBARDIER	IND.
MOODY, B.S.	ENGINEER	KY.
WEST, C.E.	RADIO OPR.	PAN. CANAL Z.
LEOPOLD, W.A.	W/ST GUNNER	OHIO
HUNTER, C.W.	BALL "	S. CAR.
MORGANROTH, L.	TAIL "	ILL.

..... UP TO THIS TIME I HAD HAD EXACTLY NO LEAVES OR FURLONGHS SINCE I ENTERED THE ARMY... MY LUCK STILL HELD.



AFTER SAYING GOODBYE TO A VERY BRAVE LITTLE WIFE, WE LEFT DREW FIELD NOV. 5, 1944 FOR HUNTER FIELD, GA. MY MOTHER and MOTHER-IN-LAW CAME DOWN FROM MEMPHIS TO SEE ME OFF - and FOR ONCE MOM DIDNT CRY - AT LEAST NOT WHERE I COULD SEE HER - THAT HELPED A LOT.

THE 2 MONTHS WITH LOVE, MY WIFE, AT TAMPA WERE THE BEST 2 MONTHS OF MY LIFE - AS THE TRAIN ROLLED OUT OF TAMPA I KNEW I HAD TO COME BACK.

AT HUNTER FIELD WE WERE ISSUED STEEL HELMETS, BLANKETS, MESS KITS, PACKS --- THEY ACTED AS IF WE WERENT GOING TO FLY ACROSS!

WE STEAMED OUT OF NEW YORK HARBOR and PAST THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AT 4 AM.

Nov. 30, 1944.

AFTER 8 DAYS ABOARD THE GOOD SHIP 'LE DE FRANCE' WE DROPPED ANCHOR AT GREENOCK, SCOTLAND; A FEW MILES FROM GLASGOW. EVER BEEN SEASICK? IT'S AWFUL!

IT TOOK 2 DAYS TO UNLOAD THE SHIP - BUT FINALLY WE WERE ON A TRAIN TO BEDFORD, ENGLAND. BUT FIRST WE SPENT 3 DAYS AT STONE, THE "PLANT PARK" OF THE ETO. HERE WE WERE SHOWN MOVIES and TOLD HOW TO ACT IN "JIMIELAND". G.I. TRUCKS CARRIED US THE LAST 5 MILES TO THURLEIGH AIR BASE, OR THE 306 BOMB GROUP. THE GROUP IS DIVIDED INTO 4 SQUADRONS THEY GO BY NAMES and NUMBERS:

- 369<sup>th</sup> - FIGHTIN' BITIN'
- 367 - EAGER BEAVERS
- 368 - CLAY PIGEONS
- 423 - GRIM REAPERS.

OUR CREW WAS ASSIGNED TO "FIGHTIN' BITIN'" WITH MAJ. J.A. WALKINNEY AS O.O. and CAPT. BILLY CASSEY WAS OUR SQUADRON OPERATIONS OFFICER.

WE RECEIVED 8 DAYS OF GROUND SCHOOL - CONSISTING OF LECTURES ON RADIO SECURITY, FLARE CODES, STARTING and TAKING TIMES, TYPES OF FORMATIONS, and SOMETIMES A FLAK HAPPY CHARACTER WOULD MAKE OUR HAIR STAND ON END WITH TALKS OF BLOOD and THUNDER - THAT'S ALWAYS GOOD FOR THE MORALE OF NEW CREWS....

ABOUT THIS TIME, DEC. 20, 1944, GENERAL VON RUNDSTEDT WAS WHOOPING IT UP IN THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE. THE WEATHER WAS ZERO, ZERO - EVEN THE BIRDS WERE WALKING. RUNDSTEDT HAD TO BE STOPPED! SO, IN THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING OF DEC 28, 1944 THE TELETYPE OF THE 8<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE POUNDED OUT THE BATTLE ORDER.....

**Mission No. 1**  
28 DEC. 1944  
**COBLENZ, GER.**  
Flight Time: 6:00  
7:00

**Diary**

**W**AS AWAKEN THIS MORNING AT 0005 BY MY BUNKMATE, WHO HAD JUST "CLOSED" THE BAR AT 'B' MESS. BEFORE HE DOZED OFF HE MUMBLED SOMETHING ABOUT THE LOADING LIST OF TODAY'S MISSION WAS OUT - and I WAS ON IT... SO I DIDN'T SLEEP MUCH THE REST OF THE REMAINING NIGHT.

AT 0500 THE C.O. INFORMED ME THAT BREAKFAST WAS AT 0515 and BRIEFING WAS AT 0600. EVER TRY TO DRESS IN BED? IT COMES IN HANDY WHEN IT'S DOWN TO ZERO and THE NEAREST FIRE IS A HALF MILE AWAY AT THE MESS HALL.

WE WERE CARRIED FROM THE MESS HALL TO THE BRIEFING ROOM BY TRUCKS.

CAPTAIN NICKELHOFF, GROUP OPERATIONS OFFICER, and our GROUP C.O., COL SUTTON, WERE ALL SEATED ALONG THE FRONT ROW, NEXT TO THE COVERED MISSION MAP. THESE FRONT SEATS WERE FOR THE "BIG WHEELS" - and so THEY WERE REFERRED TO AS THE WHEEL CHAIRS.

CAPT. NICKELHOFF READ THE LINE-UP FOR TODAY'S SHOW. OUR GRP WAS 2ND IN FIRST DIVISION STREAM, OUR SQUADRON WAS FLYING LEAD. THIS POSITION GAVE US THE RADIO CALL SIGN OF "FOXHOLE BAKER LEAD". OUR BOMBLOAD WAS 18/250 LB DEMOLITION BOMBS and 2 CLUSTERS OF INCENDIARIES.

THE COVER OVER THE BIG MAP WENT UP - TARGET... COBLENZ GERMANY. AIMING POINT... THE MARCHALLING YARDS. FLAK WOULD BE SLIGHTLY HEAVY IF IT WAS VISUAL - LIGHT IF TEN-TENTHS.

AS WE ROLLED UP TO NO. 1 TAKE OFF POSITION and STOPPED,

HOBBS PULLED OFF HIS GLOVES and WE SHOOK HANDS; SORT OF WISHED EACH OTHER GOOD LUCK. HOBBS SLOWLY OPENED THE THROTTLES AS I GAVE EVERYTHING A FINAL CHECK - BOOST PUMPS, COUL FLAPS, TURBO SET, HIGH R.P.M., AUTO PILOT OFF, TAIL WHEEL LOCKED, ECT.

WE USED EVERY FOOT OF THE RUNWAY, ENGINES ROARING BEAUTIFULLY, and INTO THE SOOP WHICH WAS DOWN TO 200 FT.

WE BROKE OUT OF IT AT 12000 FT - LISEC HEADED US FOR MOUNT FARM, OUR GROUP RENDEZVOUS POINT. THERE WE CIRCLED FOR 25 MIN. UNTIL THE 36 SHIPS FORMED INTO A GROUP FORMATION...

WE JOINED THE BOMBER STREAM AT CLACTON, ENGLAND and HEADED FOR GERMANY. NEVER HAVE I SEEN SO MANY PLANES! HUNDREDS! THEY LOOKED LIKE BEES SWARMING AROUND THE HIVE.

WE PICKED UP OUR FIGHTER ESCORT AT 4° EAST (P-51'S). THEY KEPT CONSTANT PATROL ALONG THE BOMBER STREAM - QUICKLY CHALLENGING ANY JERRIE INTRUDERS.

BURSTS OF FLAK DOTTED THE SKY AT 20' O'CLOCK LEVEL - TOO FAR AWAY TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT.

AS WE ROLLED OUT ON THE BOMB RUN A FEW BLACK PUFFS OF FLAK MUSHROOMED OVER THE TARGET - BUT IT DWINDED OFF TO 3 O'CLOCK, HARMLESSLY FOLLOWING THE LEADING GROUP'S CHAFF. BOMBS WERE DROPPED BY MICKEY and WE HEADED HOME WITH NO LOSSES.

\* see diagram on page 84.

Lt. Robert E. Woods' diary continued from page 4

Mission No. 2.  
29 DEC. 1944  
BINGEN, GER.  
flight time:  
7:20

**B**REAKFAST AT 0300, BRIEFING AT 0400. THE RIDE DOWN TO THE BRIEFING ROOM IN THESE TRUCKS SURE HELPS TO SETTLE THOSE PAN CAKES - AFTER EATING 3 OF THEM YOU FEEL ABOUT AS COMFORTABLE AS IF YOU HAD SWALLOWED A 500 POUNDER. TAKEOFF WAS DELAYED 1 HOUR. HOPING THE WEATHER WOULD LIFT - BUT IT DIDN'T. WE COULDN'T SEE THE SHIPS AFTER THEY WERE HALF WAY DOWN THE RUNWAY. THE TOWER GAVE US THE TAKE OFF INTERVAL WITH A GREEN LIGHT. WE ASSEMBLED AT 15000 and JOINED THE BOMBER STREAM, LEAVING ENGLAND AT 1032.

13

THE GROUP CROSSED THE ENEMY LINES SOUTH OF BOHN, GER, FAKING A RUN ON COBLENZ AGAIN, PICKED OUR I.P. and TURNED ON THE BOMB RUN FOR BINGEN. IT HAD BEEN TEN-TENTHS ALL THE WAY - BUT RIGHT OVER OUR TARGET IT WAS WIDE OPEN. TODAY I SAW MY FIRST REAL FLAK, and WHAT IT CAN DO TO AN AIRPLANE.

JERRIE WAS THROWING UP A BARRAGE AT OUR EXACT ALTITUDE - and WAS HOLDING IT THERE - JUST WAITING FOR US TO FLY THROUGH IT, and WE DID. I SAW 2 SHIPS IN THE LEADING GROUP GET HIT. ONE BLEW UP and THE OTHER LOST ITS RIGHT WING and WENT INTO A SPIN - I COUNTED 12 CHUTES FROM BOTH SHIPS. THE 367<sup>th</sup> LOST ONE SHIP - THE GROUP'S ONLY LOSS - BUT BATTLE DAMAGE WAS HEAVY. OUR SHIP GOT 9 HOLES, ONE PIECE OF FLAK BARELY MISSED MY HEAD and SMASHED THE ASTRODOME.

14

Mission No. 3.  
30 DEC 1944  
MAINZ, GER.  
flight time:  
7:40

**A** MILK RUN. ONLY 4 BURSTS OF FLAK! THIS FLAK BARRAGE WAS SHORT LIVED THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE SQUADRON AHEAD WHO DROPPED THEIR LOAD RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF JERRIE'S GUN BATTERY.

OUR JOB WAS TO HIT A TUNNEL ENTRANCE and CAVE THE SIDES OF THE MOUNTAIN IN ON A VERY BUSY RAILROAD. ITS GOING TO TAKE LOTS OF DIGGING TO FIND THOSE TRACKS AGAIN.

OUR LITTLE FRIENDS KEPT US COVERED ALL THE WAY. YOU COULD SEE DOG FIGHTS UP AHEAD, BUT NO JERRIES GOT INTO THE STREAM. MY OXYGEN REGULATOR FROOZE TODAY. WHEN I CAME TO, MOODY WAS SHAKING ME. HUBBELL HAD TURNED THE EMERGENCY ON. I WAS OUT ONLY 2 OR 3 MINUTES.

15

Mission No. 4  
2 JAN. 1945  
KYLBURG GER.  
flight time  
6:30

**O**UT OF THE SACK AT 0300. TOOK OFF AT 0648. THE FOG IS STILL 12000 FT. THICK - and ABOUT 3 FT. ABOVE THE GROUND.

OUR AIMING POINT TODAY WAS AN ORDNANCE DEPOT. WE DROPPED OUR LOAD, 18/250 LB DEMOS, and 2/500 LB INCENDIARY CLUSTERS, BY INSTRUMENTS. RESULTS NOT VISIBLE. 'BOMBS AWAY' AT 1013, DROPPED AT 50FT INTERVAL. BOMBING ALTITUDE 26,500 FT. I HOPE THIS TRIP HELPED SOPINSKI'S BROTHER WHO IS FIGHTING IN LUXEMBOURG. WE MADE AN S.O.P. LETDOWN FROM MOUNT FARM and SET HER DOWN AT 1227. "GOOD SHOW!"

16

Mission No. 5  
3 JAN. 1945  
COLOGNE GER.  
flight time  
7:20

**T**HE LINE ON THE MISSION MAP STOPPED IN THE MIDDLE OF A BIG RED SPOT NAMED 'COLOGNE'. I NOTICED THE OLDER MEN, WHO HAD BEEN THERE, GULPED. MAJOR BAIRNESFATHER, THE S-2 OFFICER, SAID IT WOULD BE TEN-TENTHS and READ US THE STATISTICS OF PREVIOUS RAIDS ON THIS TARGET - LOSTS HADN'T BEEN TOO BAD.

THE MAJOR WAS RIGHT - IT WAS TEN-TENTHS and FLAK WAS LIGHT and IN-ACCURATE.

TOOK OFF 0730  
BOMB LOAD 12/500LB DEMOS  
BOMBS AWAY AT 1100  
ALTITUDE 25000 FT.

17

Mission No. 6  
5 JAN. 1945  
NIEDERMENDING Air Field, GER.  
flight time  
6:40

**T**ODAY'S JOB WAS TO POSTHOLE ONE OF JERRIE'S FRONT LINE AIR FIELDS. THE WEATHER IS STILL BAD. WE MADE A GOOD GEE RUN and DROPPED OUR BOMB LOAD OF 38/100LB'S. NO FLAK - and NO FIGHTERS NICE MISSION - I COULD TAKE ABOUT 30 MORE LIKE THIS. BOMBING ALTITUDE, 24,500 FT. THE FIELD WAS LOCATED 17 MILES WEST OF COBLENZ.



18

Mission No. 7  
7 JAN. 1945  
BOHN, GER.  
flight time  
7:20

**I**T SNOWED LAST NIGHT - NOW THE WIND IS BLOWING IT AROUND. I HOPPED A TRUCK and GOT A RIDE TO THE MESS HALL FOR A CHANK. I WISH THE NEW CREWS WOULD HURRY UP and GET OUT OF GROUND SCHOOL SO WE COULD GET A REST.

WE TOOK OFF AT 0700. THE SNOW HAD STOPPED FOR A WHILE. WE CLIMBED THROUGH SNOW STORMS UP TO 11000 FT. ICE FORMED HEAVY ON THE WINGS, BUT WE HAD A SHIP WITH GOOD DE-ICEING BOOTS and WE GOT MOST OF IT OFF.

TARGET WAS RAILROADS - WE DROPPED BY MICKEY. NO FLAK, EXCEPT ON CROSSING THE LINES, IT WAS NOT TOO ACCURATE.

19

Mission No. 8  
10 JAN. 1945  
COLOGNE, GER.  
flight time  
7:30

**E**VERYBODY WAS PRAYING FOR A SCUB THIS MORNING. THE CREW CHIEFS HAD BEEN WORKING ALL NIGHT CLEARING THE SNOW and ICE OFF THE SHIPS. IT WAS SNOWING HARD. SALT HAD BEEN SPREAD AROUND THE PERIMETER TRACK and ON NO. 1 TAKE OFF POSITION. THIS MELTED SOME OF THE SNOW and KEPT THE BIG LUMBERING FORTS FROM SLIDING OFF THE TAXI STRIPS and RUNWAY.

TIME TO START ENGINES and STILL NO "RED-RED" FROM THE TOWER. WE GAVE UP HOPE and STARTED TURNING 'EM OVER. YOU COULDN'T SEE THE SHIPS AS THEY ROARED DOWN

20

THE ICY RUNWAY. ALL THAT WAS VISIBLE WAS A BALL OF WHIRLING SNOW.

ON THE WAY UP THROUGH THE STUFF WE HAD THE SAME TROUBLE AS YOU WOULD EXPECT IF YOU FLEW IN A SNOWSTORM. ICE ON THE WINGS, ICE ON THE PROPS, ICE IN THE CARBURATOR, ICE IN THE PITOT TUBE and COLD AS BLAZES IN THE SHIP.

THE CLOUDS WENT UP TO 30 THOUSAND FT. - BUT WE FOUND A FAIRLY OPEN SPOT and ASSEMBLED, AT 17000 FT.

EVERYTHING WAS O.K. UNTIL WE LINED UP ON THE BOMB RUN - THEN ALL HEAT BROKE LOOSE.

IT HAD BEEN SOLID UNDERCAST ALL THE WAY, BUT JUST LIKE THE BINGEN RAID, IT WAS CLEAR OVER COLOGNE.

HALF WAY DOWN THE BOMB RUN ANOTHER GROUP CAME

21

BARRELING THROUGH OUR SQUADRON, WHICH WAS LEADING THE GROUP. WE HAD TO SCATTER TO AVOID A MIDAIR COLLISION. THIS FOILED OUR RUN ON THE PRIMARY, THE HOENZOLLERN BRIDGE, so THE LEAD SHIP STARTED A TURN TO THE LEFT FOR A RUN ON THE SECONDARY. WE NEVER COMPLETED THAT RUN.

THOSE BLANK PUFFS BEGAN TO BREAK ALL AROUND US. THE DEPUTY LEAD GOT HIT IN THE #2 ENGINE - HE PEELED OUT OF POSITION and BLEW UP; TAKING ANOTHER SHIP DOWN WITH HIM. THE HIGH ELEMENT LEAD WENT DOWN NEXT, WITH NO TAIL SECTION. THE LEAD SHIP GOT HIT IN THE BOMB BAY - SCATTERING BOMBS LIKE PAPER. 3 OTHER SHIPS HAD TO LAND IN FRANCE WITH DEAD OR INJURED ABOARD.

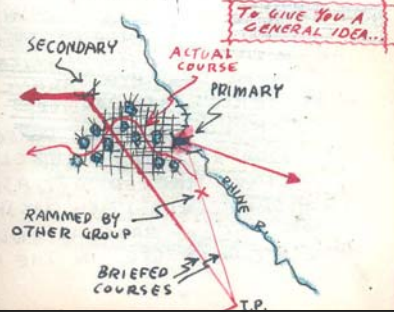
WE WERE LEADING THE LOW ELEMENT, THE ONLY ELEMENT TO

22

NOT LOSE A SHIP. BUT WE COUNTED 19 HOLES AFTER WE LANDED. AFTER WE GOT OUT OF THE FLAK WE BROUGHT OUR ELEMENT IN WITH THE 423<sup>RD</sup> SQUADRON and CAME HOME WITH THEM FOR FIGHTER PROTECTION.

MOST ALL THE SHIPS THAT RETURNED WENT TO THE HANGERS FOR REPAIRS.

I LOST TWO GOOD BUDDIES TODAY. LT WATTSON and LT PIERCE - THIS WAS PIERCE'S 34<sup>TH</sup> MISSION.



23

Mission No. 9  
17 JAN. 1945  
BIELFIELD GER.  
flight time  
7:40

**L**T. POWERS, LT. PIERCE'S CO-PILOT, BROUGHT #287 BACK TODAY. HE SAID PIERCE GOT HIT IN THE HEAD BY A PIECE OF FLAK - THE SIZE OF YOUR FIST. HE DIED RIGHT AFTER THEY LANDED. LT. SNOEWAMBER SAYS WHEN THEY GET HIM ON ANOTHER MISSION IT WILL BE A COLD DAY IN HELL. HE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL - WE NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN. HE WAS PIERCE'S BOMBARDIER.

I FLEW WITH LT. DENTON ON TODAY'S RAID. HUBBELL IS BEING CHECKED OUT AS SQUADRON LEAD. I FLEW FLAK SHACK. WE HIT A RAILROAD BRIDGE NEAR BIELFIELD GER., IN THE HEART

24

OF THE RHUR, BETTER KNOW TO US AS "FLAK HAPPY VALLEY." IT LIVED UP TO ITS NAME, BUT DUE TO A SOLID CLOUD LAYER IT WAS INACCURATE. THE GROUP AHEAD LOST ONE SHIP. A FEW OF OUR SHIPS WERE HIT, BUT ALL CAME HOME. TEMPERATURE AT BOMBING ALTITUDE WAS 31° BELOW ZERO. BOMB LOAD - 6/1000 LB. DEMOS, DROPPED SALVO.

I WAS SURE TIRED TONIGHT. HIT SACK AT 1830.

COMPARATIVE SIZES OF DEMOLITION BOMBS.



25

Mission No. 10  
29 JAN. 1945  
COBLENZ, GER.  
flight time  
7:40

**E**NTERED ENEMY COAST NEAR ALKMAAR, HOLLAND - CROSSED THE ZUIDER ZEE and TURNED SOUTH AT 7:30' TO MISS THE OSNABRÜCK FLAK. WE KEPT EAST OF HAPPY VALLEY, WELL OUT OF RANGE OF THEIR GUNS. I SAW A B-24 GROUP BLOWING UP THE VALLEY, IT WAS GETTING CUT UP PRETTY BAD - 4 BIG BIRDS WENT DOWN WHILE WE WERE PASSING.

NO FLAK WAS ENCOUNTERED OVER THE TARGET.

WE LED THE HIGH SQUADRON FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY. CEILING WAS 400 FT ON RETURN TO BASE - WITH HAZE DOWN TO THE GROUND. LANDING WAS THE ROUGHEST PART OF THE MISSION.

26

Mission No. 11  
6 FEB. 1945  
FULDA, GER.  
flight time  
9:40

**O**UR BRIEFED TARGET WAS BOHLEN, GER., BUT ORDERS WERE TO BOMB A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY IF BOHLEN WAS CLOSED IN. NOT ONLY WAS THE PRIMARY TEN-TENTHS BUT THE LEAD and HIGH SQUADRON'S MICKEY and 'G' EQUIPMENT BECAME INOPERATIVE. WE WERE LEADING THE LOW, so WE TOOK OVER and LED THE GROUP THROUGH A THICK HAZE THAT WENT UP TO 35000. OUR MICKEY SET WASN'T WORKING SO WELL EITHER, BUT FINALLY THE TOWN OF FULDA GER. APPEARED IN THE MICKEY SCOPE. WE OPENED BOMB BAYS and DROPPED - 10/500 LB DEMOS.

27

Mission No. 12.  
9 FEB. 1945  
LUTZKENDRIF, GER.  
flight time  
8:45

**B**RIEFING AT 0400. WE TOOK OFF AT 0650 and HEADED FOR THE BIG SYNTHETIC OIL PLANT AT LUTZKENDRIF, 11 MILES SOUTH OF MERSEBURG. I FLEW CO-PILOT FOR LT ROZETTE and WAS LEADING THE HIGH SQUADRON.

ABOUT 12 GROUPS WENT IN ON THIS TARGET. TO MAKE SURE THIS PLANT WOULD BE OUT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE WAR. ALTITUDES VARIED FROM 15000 UP TO 17000 FT. WE WERE AT 24,500 FT. THE FLAK WAS WORKING UP and DOWN THE SCALE - IT WOULD START BREAKING AT 15000 and WALK UP TO 28000, and PLENTY OF IT. WE GOT PLENTY NEAR

28

sories." A double marker at White Plains Baptist Church Cemetery in Jefferson, Chesterfield Co, SC, shows his wife Nell's name; she apparently survived him. Likely survived by at least 1s. No further info.

## Obituaries

continued on page 6

Obituaries continued from page 3

- **Dumenigo, "Don" Albert P, Jr**, 368th ball-turret gunner (Leon B Dorich crew, and earlier Joseph G Rethy crew) originally of NY, died 1 Apr 89 in Phoenix, AZ at 64. The crew arrived at Thurleigh 1 Dec 44 with Rethy, who was replaced at least by early Feb 45 by Leon Dorich. [Note: in Russell Strong's book of Combat Crews photos, p.177 in the back, non-indexed listing of non-pictured crews, an error for Rethy's 368th crew mistakenly listed the ball-turret gunner as Albert P Desrochers, who was instead on 367th crew of Joseph Hess. Per crew's tail gunner, Robert Schuberg, their ball-turret gunner's correct name was Albert P Dumenigo, Jr, known as "Don."] No further info.
- **Russell, John T**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (T/5, unknown duties), of Smartt, TN, died 3 Dec 88 at 71 in adjacent McMinnville, TN. His marker shows his rank as Cpl and middle name as Tillman. "J.T." was survived by his wife Sue R until Jul 92 when she died at 73. No further info.
- **Blay, Leo F**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pfc, unknown duties), originally from NH, died 21 Nov 88 at 65. He enlisted in Feb 42 at Manchester, NH. At Thurleigh after serving in 1208<sup>th</sup>, he was assigned to 414<sup>th</sup> Air Services Gp on 15 Apr 45. He is buried at Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, CA. No further info.
- **Meginley, James C**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Cpl, unknown duties), of Dearborn, MI, died 1 Mar 87 at 68. No further info.
- **Wilson, William A, Jr**, 368<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (Leon B Dorich crew, and earlier Joseph G Rethy crew), originally from TX and who enlisted in Santa Fe, NM, died 19 Jul 86. He and the Rethy crew arrived at Thurleigh 1 Dec 44. Capt Wilson also served in Korea. He and his wife, Alta Ruth, are buried together at Ft Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, TX. No further info.
- **Ross, Delmer O**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pvt, unknown duties), a farmer of Crockett, TX, who was enlisted in Jan 43 at Tyler, TX, is apparently the man of that name who died in Mar 86 at 64 in Henderson, TX, leaving his wife Leona, at least 4c, and some gc. No further info.
- **McGill, Frank R**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (SSgt, unknown duties) of Hoisington, KS, and longtime resident of Douglas, OK, died in Sep 85 at 68. When enlisted in Feb 42 he was a married general office clerk with a year of college. He returned to Hoisington after the war. There, sometime in the 50s, he married Kathryn Leona, a widowed teacher, and in 57 they moved to Douglas, OK. She survived him to Dec 06, age 98. She was survived by 1d, 2gc, 3ggc.
- **Koziol, Joseph D**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM (billeting office aide T/5), of Chicago, IL, died 1 Apr 85 at 70. He reported to Thurleigh 1 Nov 42. No further info.
- **DePasquale, "Nick" Nicholas**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM (Pfc, unknown duties), died in Oct 82 in Ulster Co, NY at 57. Nick and his parents came to Brooklyn, NY from Italy soon after his birth. At enlistment in Mar 43 his civilian occupation was "Messenger, errand boys & office boys." At Thurleigh in mid-Dec 43 he was sent to Station 130. No further info.
- **Eberle, Atwood V**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM (Pvt, unknown duties), of Burbank, CA, died 21 Aug 82 at 62. When he enlisted as Pvt in Air Corps in Nov 42 at Los Angeles he was listed as a skilled mechanic or repairman. No further info.
- **Turner, Coy A**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM (Pfc, unknown duties) from the Commerce, TX area, died 7 Jan 82 at 71 while last living at George West, in Live Oak Co, TX. He had survived his wife Ruth, who died in Feb 65 at 54. They are buried in the Malakoff Cemetery, Malakoff, Henderson Co, TX. No further info.
- **Brooks, Horace J, Jr**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (1<sup>st</sup> Lt, duties unknown), died 1 Jul 1981 in White Plains, NY at 73. He was a statistician when he enlisted in NY City; he made 1<sup>st</sup> Lt 15 Sep 43 and was transferred from Thurleigh to Station 107 in Dec 43. No further info.
- **Freeman, Howard A**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pvt; unknown duties), lifelong resident of Asheboro, Randolph Co, NC, died 1 Feb 80 at 68. A married textile worker at enlistment 27 Oct 42 as a Pvt in the Air Corps; his post-war occupation is unknown. His wife Versie, a retired employee of Bost Neckwear and member of First United Methodist Church, survived him to 15 Dec 99, at 83. Family members surviving were not listed; no further info.
- **Warren, Lacy Franklin**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (S/Sgt, unknown duties), of Faison, NC, died 17 Jul 75, at 57. When he enlisted Feb 42, his civilian occupation was "Semiskilled railroad switchmen." His vet marker is at Faison Cemetery, where that of his apparent widow, Hilda, shows she survived to May 04, at 86. No further info.
- **Chambers, Gordon S**, 369<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (James Edeler crew), who was a single resident of Kenosha County, WI when he entered the service, died in Jun 75 at 58. He arrived at Thurleigh 11 Jun-44 and completed his tour in Oct. No further info.
- **Veth, Gerard**, 1208<sup>th</sup> (T/5, unknown duties), originally from the Bronx, NY, died in Jun 75 at 59 in East Islip, NY. He had enlisted at Ft Dix, NJ. No further info.
- **Stine, Clifton L**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Sgt, unknown duties) originally from Sioux City, IA, died 1 Apr 75 at 72 in Freeport, IL. No further info.
- **Ely, Fernand H**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pfc; unknown duties) of Stony Point, Rockland Co, NY died at 50 on 1 Aug 73. He enlisted 30 Nov 42 at NYC, NY as Pvt in Air Corps. No further info.
- **Cutsler, Harry W Jr**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pfc; unknown duties), of Phillipsburg, Warren Co, NJ, died 4 Mar 72 at 51. Buried at Fairmount Cemetery in Phillipsburg. No further info.
- **Boatman, Antone**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co, of Provincetown, Barnstable Co, MA, died 21 Feb 72, at 63. Enlisted Jun 42 Boston, MA; 15 Apr 45 moved to 414th Air Services Gp. Pfc Boatman is buried at Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY. No further info.
- **Evans, Lester A**, 368<sup>th</sup> pilot, originally from NJ and later from OK, died 27 Feb 71 at 55. He arrived Thurleigh 27 Dec 44 and completed his tour in Apr. Buried at Fort Gibson National Cemetery, Ft Gibson, Muscogee Co, OK, where his marker indicates that after WWII he served with the AF 60<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing. He's been honored at the WWII Memorial Registry by his son Barry, daughter-in-law,

and gd. No further info.

- **Stevenson, Gilbert**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pfc, unknown duties at Thurleigh) originally from Lansford, PA, died 11 Jun 70 at 64. When enlisted in Jan 43 his civilian occupation was "Stenographers & typists." His vet marker at Fairhaven Memorial Park, Santa Ana, CA, shows he was from PA, and in USAF through Korea, reaching T/Sgt. No further info.
- **Gibaldi, John J**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (T/Sgt, unknown duties), originally of IL, died 24 Nov 56 in Alameda Co, CA at 39. He reported to Thurleigh 1 Nov 42; served as 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt for unknown dates. Post-war he was a married resident of Franklin Co, IL with civilian work experience as "Engineers, electrical" when he re-enlisted 23 Oct 45 as T/Sgt in Air Corps for Hawaiian Dept. No further info.
- **Meadows, "Junior" Arthur, Jr**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Sgt, unknown duties), of Ballard, WV, died 21 Feb 54 at 34. Buried at Ballard Church Cemetery. No further info.
- **Petrisor, Nickolas, Jr**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QM Co (Pvt, unknown duties) of Canton, OH, died 20 Feb 51 a month before turning 37. After Thurleigh he re-enlisted as a married Cpl in Air Corps on 17 Nov 45 for Hawaiian Dept and rose to Sgt with the 466<sup>th</sup>

Lt. Robert E. Woods' diary continued from page 5



MISSES - YOU COULD HEAR AND FEEL THE SHIP RING AND JUMP WHEN A BURST HIT CLOSE. TWO ME 262 JETS CAME THROUGH OUR SQUADRON LIKE STREAKS OF LIGHTENING AND TOOK OUT TWO FORTS IN THE GROUP AHEAD OF US. ONE FORTRESS ROLLED OVER ON ITS BACK AND SPLIT SID STRAIGHT DOWN - I DIDN'T SEE ANY CHUTES. WE LOST THE OTHER TWO SQUADRONS AND CAME HOME ALONE. WHEN BANDITS ARE REPORTED IN THE AREA, THE SQUADRON REALLY FLY A TIGHT FORMATION. THEY TRY TO PUT THEIR WING TIP IN THE NEXT SQUADRON'S WINDOW. WE HAD A FEW HOLES IN THE SHIP, NOTHING SERIOUS. HIT SACK AT 2100 - VERY TIRED.

Mission No. 13  
10 FEB. 1945  
DULMEN, GER.  
flight time  
8:30

I CALLED THIS "MISSION NO 12-B" (NOT THAT I'M SUPERSTITIOUS) BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE ANY CHANCES. WE WENT TO HAPPY VALLEY TODAY AFTER AN OIL STORAGE DUMP IT WAS TEN TENTS AND THE FIRST 'G' RUN DON'T TAKE; SO WE MAKE A 360° and TARGET AGAIN - FLAK BY THIS TIME WAS SO THICK YOU COULD TAXI ON IT. WE LOST ONE SHIP - 3 OTHERS GOT HIT BAD. 1 TUGGLER and 2 RADIO MEN ARE IN THE HOSPITAL. OUR GROUP LED THE 8<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE, ("CHIEF FLAK BAIT") WEATHER WAS SO BAD and WAS SO LOW, WE BROKE UP THE GROUP and CAME IN ALONE.

Mission No 14  
23 FEB 1945  
PLAUE, GER.  
flight time  
10:00

SOMETHING NEW HAS BEEN ADDED! OUR BOMBING ALTITUDE TODAY WAS THE LOWEST IN OUR HISTORY - THE 8<sup>th</sup> BOMBED ITS TARGETS AT 12,000 FT! WE ARE GIVING PATTON'S 3RD ARMY A HAND - HITTING COMMUNICATIONS, RAILS, BRIDGES, and ROADS. EVERY TOWN AS FAR AS YOU COULD SEE WAS BLAZING. I SAW ONE GROUP DROP ON A TOWN - IT SEEMED TO LIFT OFF THE GROUND, THEN WENT UP IN SMOKE. P-51'S GOT IN A FIGHT RIGHT UNDER OUR GROUP - ONE P-51 WENT DOWN ON FIRE - NO ENGINE - HIS BUDDIES GOT THE JERRIE, HE BLEW UP. THE LITTLE FRIENDS TAKE GOOD CARE OF US "BIG FRIENDS".

Mission No. 15  
28 FEB. 1945  
HAGEN, GER.  
flight time  
8:10

WENT UP THIS A.M. AT 0600. BRIEFED AT OTIS FOR ANOTHER OIL DUMP AT HAGEN GER. TOOK OFF AT 1100. LEFT ENGLISH COAST AT 1300. THIS WILL BE MY LAST MISSION AS CO-PILOT. I WAS CHECKED OUT YESTERDAY AS FIRST. I FLEW WITH LT. BOWLEY TODAY. WE LED THE HIGH SQUADRON. WE MADE AN INSTRUMENT RUN ON THE TARGET, WHICH IS ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE RHUR VALLEY. MEDIUM and IN-ACCURATE FLAK; SLIGHT DAMAGE. TEMPERATURE 49° BELOW ZERO. BOMB LOAD 6/1000LB DEMOS. BOMBING ALT. 26000 FT. SGT PATTERSON, OUR ENGINEER, FINISHED TODAY. HE PROMISED TO CALL LOVE.

Part 2 of Lt. Robert E. Woods diary coming in the next issue of Echoes, coming soon this summer.

Plan to Attend the  
Savannah  
Reunion at the  
Marriott Savannah  
Riverfront  
October 25-28, 2012  
See page 7 for details



**Registration Form – 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association**  
**Marriott Savannah Riverfront – Savannah, Georgia ~ 25-28 October 2012**  
 DEADLINE for Registration & Hotel: Monday, October 1, 2012  
 Toll-free number for hotel reservations: 800-285-0398  
 Ask for 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group reunion rates: \$119 single or double

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

**Wednesday, 24 October** Hospitality Room opens 7 pm—Free (*see schedule for details*)  
**Thursday, 25 October** Arrival Day, Hospitality Room and Cinema Room—Free (*see schedule for details*)

**Friday, 26 October**  
 Mighty Eighth Tour & Dedication Ceremony (10:00 am-4 pm)..... x \$35.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Saturday, 27 October**  
 Old Savannah Town Trolley Tour (1:30am-3:00 pm)..... x \$30.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

*Everything else on the schedule is free!*  
**Total..... \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**Make check payable to 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association Reunion,  
 and mail to Joel LaBo, 875 S Worth, Birmingham, MI 48009**

**Full name of your family's Thurleigh vet** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is he living?** \_\_\_\_\_

**His Squadron or Base Unit** \_\_\_\_\_ **His duty while at Thurleigh**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**If he was on a flight crew, name of pilot &/or his B-17, if known:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Every person attending for this registration**      **Every person's relationship to family's Thurleigh vet**

**My name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please add an asterisk \* by the name of anyone attending his/her first Reunion

My street (or Post Office Box) address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please call the Savannah Marriott Riverfront Hotel direct to make reservations:  
 1-800-285-0398 or 1-912-233-7722  
 Ask for 306th Bomb Group reunion rates:**

**\$119.00 (plus tax) Single or Double Rooms—All One Price**

**Deadline for registration and hotel reservations is 1 October 2012.  
 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 Savannah

### WEDNESDAY, 24 OCTOBER

- Volunteers set up Hospitality Room & Exhibits - Plaza Room (9 am - 5 pm)
- Dinner on your own (hotel restaurants and other food venues close by)
- Hospitality Room Opens – Plaza Room (7 – 9:30 pm)

### THURSDAY, 25 OCTOBER

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Plaza Room (8 - 5 pm)
- Board Meeting – Mercer Room (10 am)
- Sign up for Oral History interviews at Registration Desk (8 am-5pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits – Plaza Room (8 am - 5 pm; 7 - 10 pm)
- Eighth Air Force Cinema – Film presentations at 10 & 11:15 am – Savannah Ballroom DE (*See your packet for a complete reunion film schedule*)
- The 306th BG Archives Online—A demonstration of the 306<sup>th</sup> archives online, how to search it, and where to find documents--Dr. Vernon L. Williams - Savannah Ballroom DE (2-3 pm)
- 306<sup>th</sup> BG Veterans Roundtable No. 1, with 306<sup>th</sup> veterans telling their stories with a Q & A with the audience--moderated by Dr. Vernon Williams, Savannah Ballroom DE (3:30-5:30 pm)
- Dinner on your own (hotel restaurants and other food venues close by)

### FRIDAY, 26 OCTOBER

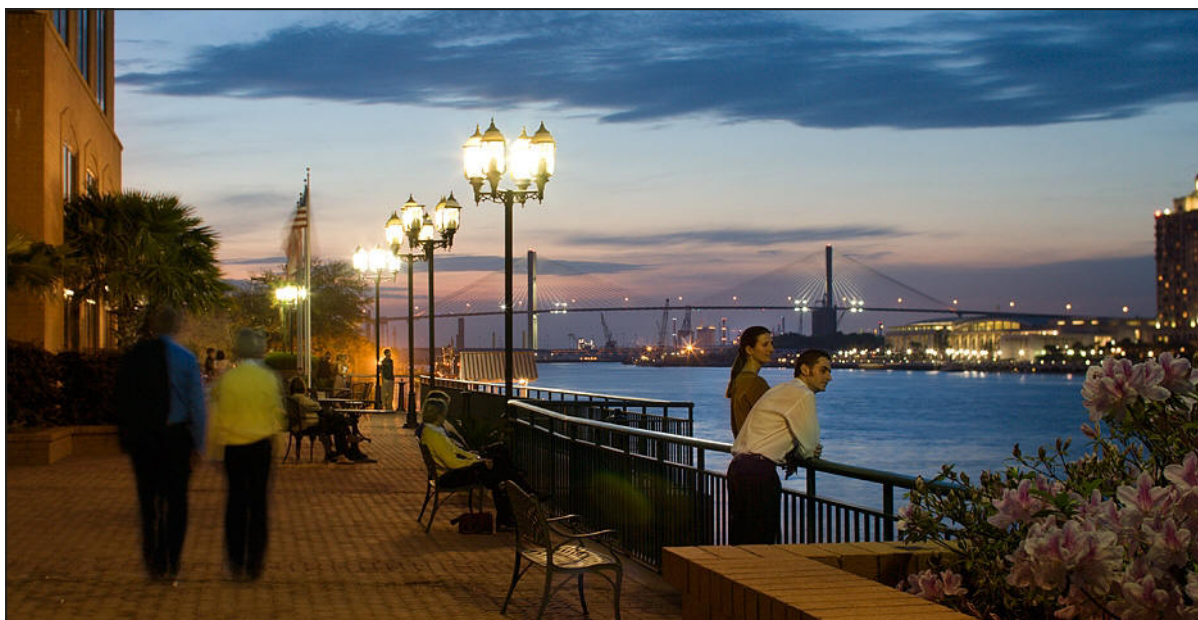
- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Plaza Room (8 am-5 pm)
- Oral History interviews (pre-scheduled by appointment)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits- Plaza Room (8am-5pm; 7-10 pm)
- Eighth Air Force Cinema – Film presentations at 10 am – Savannah Ballroom DE (*See your packet for a complete reunion film schedule*)
- Mighty Eighth Tour & Dedication Ceremony (10:00 am-3 pm) – Mighty Museum at Pooler, GA
- Second Generation meeting - Savannah Ballroom DE (4 pm)
- First Over Germany Reception & Dinner (Reception in Prefunction C (6-7 pm), Dinner in Savannah Ballroom C (7-9pm)

### SATURDAY, 29 OCTOBER

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Plaza Room (8am-5pm)
- Business Meeting, Savannah Ballroom DE (9-10:45 am)
- Memorial Service—Tribute to the Fallen and Folded Wings Memorial, Savannah Ballroom DE(10:45 am)
- Oral History interviews (pre-scheduled by appointment)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits - Plaza Room (1-5pm)
- Old Savannah Town Trolley Tour - (1:00 pm-2:30 pm)
- 306<sup>th</sup> BG Veterans Roundtable No. 2, with 306<sup>th</sup> veterans telling their stories with a Q & A with the audience--moderated by Dr. Vernon Williams, Savannah Ballroom DE (3-5 pm)
- Eighth Air Force Cinema – Film presentations at 2 pm – Savannah Ballroom DE (*See your packet for a complete reunion film schedule*)
- Cash bar, Prefunction C (6-7 pm)
- Veterans-only Group Photograph - Savannah Ballroom C (6:45 pm)
- Widows Group & Next Generation Photograph - Savannah Ballroom C (6:50 pm)
- Banquet, Savannah Ballroom C (7 pm)

### SUNDAY, 30 OCTOBER

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



# Museum Notes

## Thurleigh Airfield 306th Bomb Group Museum



### Sneak Preview Thurleigh Museum Ten-Year Celebration

Editor's Note: Since this issue is late in reaching you, it gives us an opportunity to have a sneak preview of the exciting events that took place at Thurleigh in July. More details and many more photographs will be forthcoming in the next issue (which will be published at the end of summer—not long from now). Enjoy these glimpses of the great fun had by all and see the wonderful work that the Franklins are doing on behalf of the 306th Bomb Group veterans and those who did not return. They are certainly not forgotten and will live on in the minds and hearts of the British people forever. The Thurleigh Museum will see to that.



Photographs: 1) Tenth Anniversary poster for the Thurleigh event in July 2) The 306th BG Memorial as it now appears in its new location on the green in front of the museum 3) Daphne Franklin, Charles Neal, Barbara Neal, Ralph Franklin in the exhibits area, 4) Pamela Aggett, Barbara Neal, Vernon Williams, Ray Aggett (Ray and Pamela appear in Williams' Thurleigh at War documentary film and tell about their extraordinary war-time experiences), 5) British Army exhibit next to the museum, 6) military and civilian vehicle war-time displays, 7) uniform displays in the exhibit tent, 8) some of the crowd wait for the next part of the program.

Photographs courtesy Charles Neal

### 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. \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_ 306th Unit \_\_\_\_\_

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



\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_