

306th Echoes



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306th Bomb Group - First Over Germany on Facebook

by Sue Fox Moyer

Originated in 2009 by a 306th Bomb Group intern at Abilene Christian University, the 306th Facebook page is up and running again as a group page. As a group page your request to be a member either will be approved by an administrator, or current members may invite “friends” already on Facebook. Since August 2012 we have over 70 members with more being added every day.

Very early on a request for membership came in from Kris Waechter. He said his grandfather was a member of the 368th Bomb Squadron. Soon his brothers, Matt and Joe, joined in also and we discovered their grandfather was Leland Kessler whose artwork graced many a plane. His scrapbook, which was continued through Lee’s time in Stalag 17B, is a prized family heirloom. Lee’s grandsons graciously gave permission for our Facebook page to use Lee’s original artwork of his remembrance of the mission on which he was shot down (see painting at right). It will be familiar to many as it was also used on the cover of Russell Strong’s *First Over Germany: A History of the 306th Bombardment Group*.

At our upcoming reunion there will be a demonstration of the site along with other technology projects that you may want to consider as a NEX-GEN project. If you want to bring your own laptop we stand ready to help you get started. If you want to bring photos for us to upload we will have scanners available for your use. If you are unable to be in Savannah this year, please let us know if you need help. If you would like us to share crew photos or your story, please let us know. Your local public library should be able to help you prepare photos to send. Please feel free to contact Sue (Fox) Moyer at: ssma43@gmail.com.

Another sample post from our 306th BG Facebook page:

AT THE 306TH REUNION IN THURLEIGH, APRIL 1976, GLENN HAD A MODEL B-17 THAT HE HAD MADE CALLED THE "SOLID SENDER". HE WAS SHOWING IT AROUND NOT KNOWING THAT MY FATHER WHO WAS THE PILOT WAS THERE. SOMEONE ASKED GLENN IF HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET THE PILOT OF THE SOLIDSENDER. THE PHOTO SAYS IT ALL..!



Savannah Reunion Promises to be Special

by Vernon L. Williams
Reunion Chairman and Historian

With only about a month to go before our registration and hotel reservation deadlines, your reunion chairman is putting the final touches on the nuts and bolts of the reunion. Event tickets have to be printed, programs for our dinners and special events have to be laid out and printed, your name tags created, and a host of other items need to be made and stuffed into your packet. If you haven’t already booked your room, call the hotel today. If you haven’t sent your reservations to Joel Labo, do that as soon as you finish speaking to the hotel and put the telephone down. Early registration and hotel reservations really helps your 306th Bomb Group Association. See reunion details on page 7 of this issue.

As Sue wrote in the article at left, those of you Next Generation family members who are coming to honor your father, uncle, or grandfather, bring your photograph collections, bring your laptops and flashdrives and be ready to take advantage of several workshops designed to help you use technology to preserve your family’s 306th history and share with others. Veterans and widows, bring your children and grandchildren and put them to work preserving your World War II memories and memorabilia. See the revised schedule on page 7 for all the latest details on a reunion packed with things to do and see.

If you have questions or special needs, contact me at my History Department: Email— vwilliams@acu.edu or (325) 280-3399.

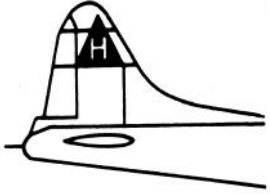
Glimpses from the San Diego Reunion—Left to right: Roland DeLair, Deran DeLair, Mike Hitchcock, Joel Labo, Jeannine ‘Joey’ Freund, Treasia Hendricks, Adolph Visconti, Bob Brown, Daphne Franklin, Ralph Franklin, Sharon Hunt, Patty O’Connell, Cathy Burrell, Carol Petrucka, Jill Bryce, Walt Lubojacky, Charley Hammond, Bill Mocharnuk, Nancy Huebotter, Susan O’Konski, Charles Neal, Donna Hammond, Steve Snyder, Rudolfo Campos, Greg Armbrust, Lillian Armbrust, Barbara Neal, Steve Sewell, Carol Wait Sewell, Debbie Guymon, Lance Lissner, Vincent Guymon, Steve Ledwith, Sam Rackham, Patti Sumner Ledwith, ‘Marty’ Vernon Wegener.





One half of the Hospitality Room at San Diego Reunion with table and main history exhibits displayed. Registration table at left with Barbara Neal, Joel Labo, Susan O'Konski, Vernon Williams.

Photographs courtesy Charles Neal



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2011-2012 Student Interns:

Trenton Dietz (Russell Strong Intern)
 Jonathan Carroll (Thurman Shuller Intern)
 Becky Jeffrey (Michael Roskovitch Intern)
 Randee Nelson (Peg Haapa Intern)
 Cortney Synder (Judge Donald Ross Intern)

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:

- **Dryden, "Wally" Ralph Waldo**, 423rd tail gunner (Joe R Clark crew), originally from Independence, MO, died 8 Jul 12 in the ICU near his Spring Lake, NC home at 87. He flew 30 missions from Thurleigh (Jan-Apr 45); his entire crew returned; life-long they stayed in close touch. In Glastonbury, CT, he owned and operated a successful industrial diamond business for tools to large companies across most of New England, until retiring at 70. He was a Freemason, member of Audubon-Parkside Lodge, NJ. Golf was a major love of his life including in Naples, FL for 8 years prior to their move 7 years ago to Spring Lake. He was a member of Anderson Creek Golf Club in Spring Lake, and 40+ year member of Wethersfield Country Club, CT. Survived by his wife of 14 years, Isabelle Remington, with whom in 10 he most recently attended our DC Reunion; 4c from two prior marriages, 5gc, 2ggd, 2 step-s, more step-gc.
- **Kenny, Peter G, Jr**, 368th navigator (Rene C Fix crew), of Valencia, PA, died 1 Mar 12 at 95. He apparently arrived at Thurleigh 1 Dec 43 with Fix, with whom he was downed 27 Mar 44 (LaRochelle mission); that night, Germans captured the entire crew at sea. Kenny was at Stalag Luft 1, Barth, until liberation. Post-war he returned to his family in Pittsburgh, PA, and married Genevieve in 47. When his career at the Post Office ended, they retired to the space coast area of FL. After 29 years in FL, they returned to the Pittsburgh area to be near the families of their three children. Survived by his wife of 74 years, Genevieve, 3c, 6gc, 8ggc.
- **Meredith, Curtis B**, 367th ground crew – transportation, lifelong TN resident, died 13 Oct 11 at his home in LaFollette at 90. A proud vet and member of Trinity Baptist, he was predeceased in May 95 by his wife Azalee at 66. Survived by 2d, 4gc, 2ggc. No further info.
- **Mills, Clyde T**, 423rd mechanic, of Castleton, VT, died 27 May 12 at 92. While stationed at Thurleigh 42-45, he was a mechanic on 'Belle of the Blue' and other B-17s. Post-war he married Jennie 2 Mar 46; she preceded him in death 2 Mar 03. He was a foreman with Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in Southington, CT for 32 years. Clyde was a member of American Legion Post #87 of West Rutland, VT and a charter member of the VFW in Canton, CT. He enjoyed gardening, golf, hunting, fishing, the NY Yankees, the NY Giants, and 306th Reunions with his step-son Charles Hammond and Charles' wife Donna, who survive him. Also surviving are 5gc, 7ggc.
- **Norris, Kenneth G**, [correction; obit first appeared in #2 issue of 2012] 423rd 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, near Snowville and Roanoke. His crew reached Thurleigh 16 Oct 43. He later worked for his hometown, the Town of Salem, NH, from which he retired. In VA, he was a member of Snowville Baptist Church. Survived by his wife Lena "Mae," 1d, 2gc.
- **Popivchak, Marion**, 368th engineer (Carl Hathaway crew), of Carnegie, PA, died 5 Nov 10 at 85. His crew reached Thurleigh 22 Sep 44; he completed 35 missions. Post-war, Mickey owned Tri-State Auto Parts in Carnegie. In Nov 10, survived by his wife 'Addie' Adeline, and 2d he was buried at National Cemetery of the Alleghenies with full military honors; no further info.
- **Portnoy, Hal H or Hyman**, 369th waist-gunner (Richard Vogel crew), of New York City and Boca Raton, FL, suddenly died 19 Jun 10 at 89. His crew reached Thurleigh 27 Apr 44. Post-war he founded Super Millwork, Inc in NY, and was a founding member of Midway Jewish Center. He was a longtime member of Bocaire Country Club in Boca Raton. Predeceased by 1s and his first wife, Sylvia, who died in Boca Raton in Jan 95 at 70. Survived by his later wife, Elaine Sommer in Boca Raton until 20 Jun 12; 2d; 4gs; 4ggc.
- **Rohan, Alton** [additional info, thanks to Bill Houlihan; obit first appeared in #1 issue of 2012], whose original name was **Alton Rohinsky**, 367th radio operator (crew of Shelly D Hodges) of W Bloomfield, MI, died 30 Mar 12 at 89. His memorial service was at Temple Shir Shalom, where The Lorraine and Al Rohan Madrichim Program is set up. His wife Lorraine predeceased him in 00 at 76. Survived by 3d, 6gc, 2ggc, and his special friend Lee Beck.
- **Ryan, William L**, 423rd bombardier (John J "Jack" O'Brien crew) of Cookeville, TN, died at home 7 Jul 12 at 90. Bill appears to be the NY-born man in WWII Enlistment records who enlisted initially as a Private in the Air Corps in Aug 40 at Chanute Field, IL. As O'Brien's bombardier, he arrived at Thurleigh 12 Apr 44 and completed his 31 combat missions by 2 Jul 44. He stayed in the AF Reserves, and was called back for active duty in both Korea and Vietnam, in part due to his training having included work in air traffic control. His interest in the Norden bomb-sight, which functioned as a "manual computer," led to his getting very early into computers. After active duty military, he worked for a series of companies, beginning their MIS departments and setting up LANs. He continued working, auditing the computerization of companies, until retiring at 77. After he could no longer run for physical fitness due to macular degeneration, he swam and was a Senior Olympics swimmer both for their district and statewide for TN. Maj. Ryan is to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery 26 Nov with full military honors. Survived by his wife, Velma ('Rudi'), 4c, 2gc, 1ggc.
- **Spadaro, Benedict J** (enlisted under his birth/Sicilian first name of **Pancrazzio**), 423rd (unclear position on flight crew), of Bronxville, Westchester Co, NY died 30 Sept 11 at 83. Ben, born in Nov 27, apparently falsified his age for enlistment without his father's permission. He likely reached Thurleigh in 45; later flew in the Berlin airlift (which ran from 24 Jun 48 to several months after the Russian blockade lifted 11 May 49). Ben was an advocate for veterans, and became Director of Veterans Affairs for Westchester County in the 80s, retiring in 92. As an AF vet of WWII, a disabled vet, and former member of the Veterans Rehabilitation Committee of the V.A., he was selected in Apr 02 by the US Secretary of the V.A. under President G.W. Bush for service on the V.A. Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials, where he served until 09. In 05 he advocated and succeeded in having the Gold Star Mother's Society change their bylaws to permit entry of immigrant mothers mothers of soldiers, sailors, and Marines killed in combat. He was also partly responsible for the creation of the Mothers Monument in Eastchester. Preceded in death by his wife Winifred "Dixie" in 09 at 82; survived by 1s.



Top: Relaxing at the Air and Space Museum during the San Diego Reunion are, left to right, Don Snook, Katherine Snook, Daphne Franklin, Ralph Franklin, Wayne Stellish (standing), Lorraine Sekora, Walt Rozett. Bottom: Flight deck of the U.S.S. Midway during the 306th BGA tour of the ship, San Diego Reunion.

Photographs courtesy Charles Neal



Obituaries continued on page 3

Obituaries continued from page 2

- **Thompson, "Jimmy" James Nelson, Sr**, 367th toggler and gunner, born in AR, died 8 Jun 12 as a longtime resident of Vicksburg, MS at Vicksburg Convalescent Hospital following a lengthy illness, at 88. He flew his 35 missions from Thurleigh 22 Oct 44 to 28 Mar 45 with various crews, and left in May. Post-war earned his degree from Southern Methodist Univ in Dallas, TX. After a few years in residential construction in Miami, he returned to Vicksburg to help his father operate a new grocery; after it sold in the early 70s, he worked for a bakery, a chain of convenience stores, the Vicksburg Country Club, and a truck stop until retiring in the early 90s. He'd been a member of Church of the Holy Trinity, and of Christ Episcopal. He served the community in various capacities, including terms on the Planning & Zoning Commission, and Aviation Board. Preceded in death by 1gs, he is survived by his wife, Mildred, of Vicksburg (moving to Daphne, AL near family), 2c, 5gc, 1ggd.

FAMILY:

- **Alewitz, Beatrice**, wife of Sam Alewitz, PhD (waist-gunner on 367th crew of Leonard J Smith, who arrived Thurleigh 3 Feb-45) died 24 Jan 07 soon after turning 89, with her last zipcode of record with Social Security being at our then-address for them in Manahawkin, Ocean Co, NJ. No further info. **If anyone knows of any contact info for Sam (who has authored books on Public Health; who would now be about 94; and who is not receiving mail either in Manahawkin or Whippany, NJ addresses the Secretary had located) PLEASE alert Secretary at contact info on p.2, as he has furnished no newer address for Echoes.**
- **Casseday, "Bobbie" Roberta**, widow of Billy Wayne Casseday (368th pilot who died 5 Apr 05), died at 92 on 3 Dec 11 in the Dayton, Umatilla Co, WA, log house they built in 92. Born in OR, she graduated from Eastern OR College of Education in 39. After teaching grammar school for a couple of years, she worked for a year in the personnel department at the Umatilla Army Depot and then moved to Walla Walla, where she worked in personnel at the Walla Walla Army Air Corp base. She and Billy "Wayne" married 2 Sep 43 while he was stationed at Spokane's Geiger Field until leaving in Oct for Thurleigh. After he was discharged in Jan 46, they moved to Dayton, WA, where he purchased the Shell Oil distributorship. She was active in the Parent Council of public schools attended by their six children; was an active member of First Congregational Church including singing in the choir; she belonged to the Dayton Junior Club, Order of the Eastern Star, PEO, and a women's bridge club. She was a lifelong Republican, for many years serving as a precinct committee chairman. Among many interests, she enjoyed reading, cooking, needle work, hooking rugs, watching baseball, trips to the river and mountains in her family's earlier years, and later RV-ing to AZ. Predeceased by her husband of 61 years; survived by 6c, 9gc, 3ggc.
- **Ferguson, Catherine**, widow of William L Ferguson (369th top-turret engineer on 'Flack Shack,' Allen Babin crew which arrived in Feb 45), died 24 Mar 10, just after turning 89. Predeceased in Aug 05 by her husband of 30 years, Bill, she is survived by her 2s, 1step-d, 4gc, 2step-gc, and at least 2ggc & 4 step-ggc as of Aug 05. No further info.
- **Rockwell, Ruth E**, wife of Robert "Rocky" Rockwell (306th Board member & 367th engineer on Rutherford crew & substitute waist gunner Page crew), 91, of Munster, IN died 23 May 12. In a visit to Munster in the 90s, Robert met Ruth E Williams, a widow, over dinner and decided he was going to marry her; they married in 95. Together they enjoyed wintering in Myrtle Beach, SC, travel several times to Europe, and crossing the country attending 306th reunions, where many of us have enjoyed knowing both of them. Ruth was a member of Goodwill, participating in their fundraising fashion shows and searching for dolls to refurbish and refashion to give to needy children. She was an active member in her church; the Napoleonic Society; antiques club; book club; and woman's club. Buried at Riverview Cemetery in Monticello, White Co, IN. Survived by her husband Robert (who is moving back to CT near his own children), 2s, 6gc, 2ggc.

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

Correction NOTE: In our Winter (#1) issue of 2012 "Not Recent" column, the obit for Morris (nmi) Butler contained a typo; he was born in Dec 20, so was 88 [not 78] when he died in Oct 09.

- **Hancock, John D**, 1208th QM Co (officer, unknown duties), who was listed in Echoes Jul-91 as ground officer (no dates), is most likely this man of his name who was a native of Lexington, KY and died 30 Jan 07 in Louisville at 87. He had enlisted in the Air Corps at Louisville, KY in Aug 42, with 4 years of college. He retired from Brown and Williamson Tobacco. He was preceded in death by 1s. He and his wife of 63 years, Margaret "Peggy" E, were members of St. Raphael's Parish, and charter members of Woodhaven Country Club. Peggy, an avid bridge player, survived him until 14 Feb 10, dying at 87. Survived by 2c.
- **Roosa, Richard Keith**, 367th radio operator (Joseph Hess crew), died while living near Houston in Baytown, Harris County, TX, on 30 May 01 at 78. Hess' crew arrived at Thurleigh 22 Sep 44. Online, the National Archives WWII Enlistment index shows that Richard K Roosa, born 22 in IN, enlisted in the Air Corps 7 Aug 42 from Beaver, PA with 4 years high school education and civilian occupation of "Apprentices to other trades." He's listed twice at the WWII Memorial, by his two sisters, Patricia & Boyd Clark, and by Ralph F & Janet Roosa Scalera. Online death records show his death date and then-residence zip, and show that his remains are at Earthman Memory Gardens, near Houston, TX. At that cemetery, only one other Roosa's remains are located: his presumed wife, Mary Jane Roosa, who died in Feb 95 at age 65. Found no info re whether Roosa had children, or what he did post-war that took him to TX. **The Secretary greatly appreciates learning via Ruth Des-Rochers (widow of Albert, waist-gunner on Hess' crew, and wartime buddy of Roosa) that Roosa was from Beaver, PA; this one bit of info made it possible to figure which of 3 men named Richard Roosa in the WWII Enlistment records was "ours," and possible to find his death.**
- **Sellen, Warren J**, 423rd engineer (Elmer Heap crew), of Passaic, NJ, died 27 Apr 01, at 78. He reached Thurleigh with the crew 16 Oct 43; while there he was halfback on the base football team, and made 15 points in the winter 45 basketball game won by 423rd over 369th 51 to 34. Prior to enlisting as Pvt in Air Corps at Newark, Sep 42, his civilian occupation had been Semiskilled machine shop and related occupations. No further info.
- **Sawyer, George L**, 1208th QM Co, who served at Thurleigh as Sales officer (Dec 42), Station Billeting officer (Jul 43), Base Quartermaster, Director of Material (Apr 45), and Group Supply officer, and reached rank of Capt on 1 Mar 44, appears likely to be the man of his name who died at 86 on 5 Mar 01, at Wesley Care Center, Charlotte, NC, with memorials suggested to the Alzheimer's Association; buried at Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Cornelius, NC. He was born in 15 in NC; at enlistment Jul 42 at Ft Jackson, Columbia, SC, he was single with four years of college and civilian occupation classification of Teachers & Principals. After the war, he received his Master's degree at Appalachian State Teachers College; taught biology and science in the Charlotte public schools at Central High and Garinger High, also serving as tennis coach; and retired with 43 years in 79. At his death he was survived by Nancy, his wife of 58 years, 2c, 1gc.
- **ADD'L INFO re Creasey, Frank L**, 1208th QM Co, whose 31 Oct 00 death was reported in the #1 "Winter" 2012 issue of Echoes: the Secretary received word (from Virgil Lempenau, who was his back-up in this position) that Creasey was Capt Sawyer's driver at Thurleigh.
- **Harris, Ernest C**, 1208th QM Co (Pfc, unknown duties) who enlisted as a Pvt in the AF Dec 42 at Ft Thomas, Newport, KY as a single resident of Shady Spring, Raleigh Co, WV, born 23, appears to be the man of that name who was born 15 May 23, got his Social Security # in WV, and died at 77 in Madison, Morgan Co, GA on 20 May 00. No further info.
- **Kearley, Charles R, Jr**, (1208th QM Co (Pvt, unknown duties), of Cumberland Co, TN, died there 14 Apr 99 at 76, and is buried in Crossville. When he enlisted in the Air Corps at Camp Forrest, TN in Oct 42 he was a single high school graduate. No further info.
- **Atwood, "R G,"** 368th gunner, who arrived Thurleigh 7 Jun 44; was there at least to 6 Jan 45; and who had Serial #36176468, appears likely to be the Roy G Atwood, Jr, S/Sgt in WWII, who was born in MI in 19; died 8 Nov 97 at age 78; was apparently never on our Echoes list, and whose USVA marker is at Maplelawn Cemetery in Paducah, KY. No further info. [NOTE: "R G" Atwood is NOT the same man as Richard G Atwood of OR, who was 368th tail-gunner on Marsh's crew; had a different Serial # and who has received Echoes since at least 1994.]
- **Christopher, Sidney J**, 39th Services Gp (Sgt, main job was photographer for Eager Beavers 368th Sq), of De Soto, MO, died 15 Nov 95 at 73. Prior to his Mar 41 enlistment in the Air Corps at Jefferson Barracks, MO, he was single, working as a photographer for FoJo Studios. His son Bob has some nice photos he took of movie stars and other important people visiting Thurleigh. Post-war, married Agnes "Nadine" in Sep 46, who survives, and returned to FoJo, later working for the railroad and ultimately ending his career as an electrician for Chevrolet. Also survived by 5c, 8gc.
- **Horsley, James L**, 1208th QM Co (unknown duties), who was listed in Echoes Jul-91 as ground officer (no dates) and who was listed as 2Lt at Thurleigh, with surname misspelled as "Hersley" in Russell Strong's card file, appears to be the James L Horsley who died 9 Apr 94 at age 73, and is buried at Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, CA. His USVA marker shows he also served in Korea and reached the rank of Capt. His wife Thetis, originally from McAlester, OK, survived him at Wildomar, CA to 28 Apr 05, at 83. Survived by 8c, 18gc, 15ggc as of her death. No further info.
- **Kelso, Harry Alfred**, 423rd engineer (Neill G Kirby crew), originally from OK, died 10 Mar 1993 with his last residence being in Lemon Grove, San Diego County, CA, at 71. He reached Thurleigh 28 Oct 44, and completed his tour 10 Apr 45. He had enlisted as Private in Air Corps at Ft Rosecrans, CA in Nov 42, then a single resident of San Diego Co, having completed high school, with work experience as "Skilled mechanics & repairmen." No further info.
- **Schultz, Robert A, Jr**, 1208th QM Co (Pvt, unknown duties), in 306th records with Serial # 36161691, who is shown in his Nov 41 enlistment at Ft Custer, MI, as born in 19 in MI, and then a single resident of Clinton Co, MI (Lansing area), appears to be the man of his name who died at 72 in Lansing, 21 May 92. No further info.
- **King, Frederick R**, 1208th QM Co (Pfc, unknown duties), who had Serial # 11016810 in 306th records, is apparently the man of that name who was from Maine, born 12 Apr 1923, and died in Boston, MA 8 Apr 1992 at about age 69. At enlistment as a Private in Portland, ME on 31 Dec 41, he was a single resident of Penobscot, ME with civilian occupation of "Semiskilled chauffeurs and drivers, bus, taxi, truck, & tractor." No further info.

Obituaries continued on page 6

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

Send corrections and additions to:
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Part 2: Lt. Robert E. Woods' War Diary

(Part 1 appeared in the Spring 2012 issue)

(The Diary pages can be enlarged for easier viewing at our website, 306bg.org under the Echoes tab.)



*Mission No. 16
10 MAR. 1945
DORTMUND, GER.
flight time
7:40*

I FLEW AS FIRST PILOT - I DON'T HAVE A CREW OF MY OWN AS YET. I CHECKED OUT A BRAND NEW CREW, SANDINA WAS MY CO-PILOT.

I MADE SURE THEY KNEW WHAT TO DO and TOOK OFF AT 1046. WE CROSSED INTO ENEMY TERRITORY IN HOLLAND and TOOK A COURSE FOR DORTMUND.

THE NEW BOYS WERE O.K. ONLY THEY KEPT ASKING IF THOSE BLACK PUFFS WERE FLAK. THEY SOON FOUND OUT. WE WATCHED IT TRACK A SHIP - GRADUALLY COMING CLOSER. FINALLY IT WALKED RIGHT UP TO THE LEFT WING and TOOK IT OFF. 105MM STUFF IS ROUGH. THE SHIP WENT

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INTO A FLAT GRAVEYARD SPIN- WE COUNTED 3 CHUTES BEFORE IT WENT INTO THE CLOUDS.

THIS FLAK SUIT and HELMET SEEM VERY HEAVY and UN-COMFORTABLE, UNTILL YOU SEE SOMETHING LIKE THAT, THEN IT GETS AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER - and YOUR BIG FLAK HELMET FEELS LIKE A DERBY. SOMETIMES I'D LIKE TO HAVE PULLED IT DOWN OVER MY SHOULDERS, WITH JUST MY FEET STICKING OUT.

ALL OUR BOMBS WENT OUT O.K. and THE RADIO MAN GIVE THE WORD THAT THE DOORS WERE CLOSED. I BREATHED EASIER, IT'S ALWAYS A RELIEF TO GET THAT LOAD OF T.N.T. OUT OF THE SHIP.

WE LANDED AT 1705.

HUBBELL MADE CAPTAIN TODAY. HE REALLY DESERVED IT. I WONDER HOW THE FOLKS AT HOME ARE DOING - I FEEL A LITTLE LONESOME TONIGHT.

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*Mission No. 17
12 MAR. 1945
SWINEMUNDE, GER.
flight time
10:25*

BREAKFAST AT 0300, BRIEFING AT 0400.

WE BOMBED THE DOCKS AT THIS BIG NORTHERN PORT, NOW VERY BUSY TRANSPORTING RE-TREATING GERMAN TROOPS FROM THE RUSSIAN FRONT. ALSO THE BIGGEST NAZI BATTLESHIP "ADMIRAL SHEER" WAS IN THE HARBOR.

TAKE OFF WAS AT 0702. OUR COURSE WAS ACROSS THE NORTH SEA - OVER DENMARK, DUE EAST TO AN I.P. IN THE BALTIC SEA. OUR BOMB RUN WAS ON A HEADING OF 180°.

IT WAS FROM FIVE-TO TEN-TENTHS ALL THE WAY - and COMPLETELY COVERED OVER THE TARGET.

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RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AIR DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 557

GENERAL ORDERS) 18 May 1945
NUMBER 403)

EXTRACT

1. Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended and pursuant to authority contained in letter, Hq Eight Air Force, File 200.6, 23 September 1944, subject, "Awards and Decorations", the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS is awarded to the following-named Officers and Enlisted Men.

ROBERT E. WOODS, O-2059680, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement while serving as Pilot of a B-17 airplane on a bombing mission over Germany, 10 April 1945. En-route to the target exceptionally accurate anti-aircraft fire inflicted severe damage upon the aircraft which Lieutenant Woods was piloting. The plexiglass nose was shattered, the oxygen system was damaged, the Number One and Number Three engines were rendered inoperative and the Number Two engine caught fire intermittently. Despite these difficulties and the fact that Lieutenant Woods sustained a hand wound, he capably completed the return flight to base where a safe landing was accomplished. The courage, coolness and tenacity of purpose displayed by this officer on this occasion reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered military service from Tennessee.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TURNER:

BARTLETT BEAMAN,
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:
S/T/ ROBERTS P. JOHNSON, JR.,
Lieut. Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION: "H"

WE ALL KNEW IF THAT BATTLESHIP WAS DOWN THERE IT WOULD THROW UP SOME MEAN FLAK - and THE FIRST GROUP OVER CAUGHT IT - THEY LOST 3 SHIPS BUT THEY STOPPED THE FLAK -

THE UNDERCAST WAS AT 12000. THE SMOKE FROM OUR HIT BOILED UP THROUGH IT and ROLLED OUT ON TOP. BLACK SMOKE, MEANING OIL, MAYBE "BATTLESHIP" OIL.

ONE 1000 LB. BOMB HUNG UP IN OUR RACKS - THE TOUGHER CLIMBED OUT ON THE CATWALK and TRIPPED IT WITH A PAIR OF PLIERS. I DON'T LIKE TO LAND WITH BOMBS IF THEY ARE HANGING DANGEROUSLY.

THIS WAS MY LONGEST MISSION. IT'S NO FUN FIGHT - A 60,000 LB. FORT IN FORMATION FOR 10:25. I'VE GOT BLISTERS IN MY HAND - ALL OF US HAVE, and THIS OXYGEN MASK ALMOST DRIVES YOU CRAZY AFTER 8 HOURS OF IT.

36

*Mission No. 18
14 MAR. 1945
HILDESHEIM, GER.
flight time
8:45*

ANOTHER low ALTITUDE MISSION. I DON'T LIKE IT THIS LOW - THE HIGHER THE BETTER FOR ME.

WE WENT IN AT 12000 FT. TARGET WAS A JET AIRPLANE FACTORY. ALL THREE OF OUR SQUADRONS MADE PERFECT HITS. VERY LIGHT FLAK - AT THIS ALTITUDE I DON'T SEE HOW THEY MISSED - BUT NO SHIPS WERE LOST FROM THIS GROUP.

OUR 1000 POUNDERS RIPPED THE FACTORY OPEN and THE INCENDIARIES SET IT ON FIRE - SMOKE BELLOWED UP TO 8000 FT. ALL THE "BIG WHEELS" WERE PROUD OF THE RESULTS. I GOT THE SECOND BLISTER TO MY AIR MEDAL TODAY. WEATHER WAS C. A. V. U.

38

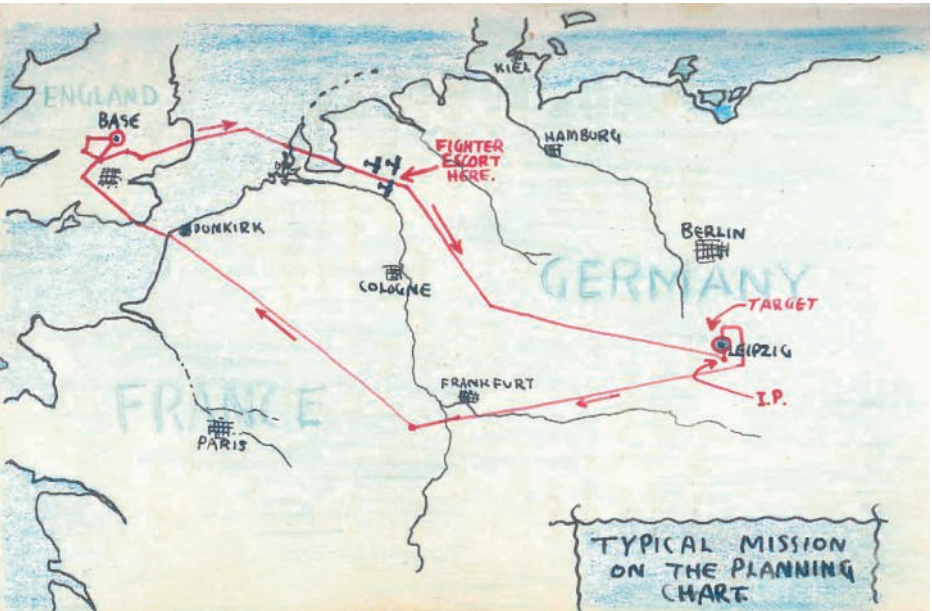
*Mission No. 19
15 MAR. 1945
ZOSSEN, GER.
flight time
9:30*

HITLER'S HIGH COMMAND HEAD-QUARTERS GOT IT TODAY. IT WAS LOCATED IN THE SMALL TOWN OF ZOSSEN, A FEW MILES FROM BERLIN. 14 OTHER GROUPS HIT IT BESIDES US. WE LEVELLED THE PLACE.

ENCOUNTERED FLAK GOING IN and COMING OUT, BUT NONE OVER THE TARGET - A LUCKY JERRIE GUNNER FIRED TWO BURSTS - THE LAST BURST HIT A B-24 DIRECT - ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS A BALL OF SMOKE and FIRE... NO CHUTES.

S/T HUNTER WAS RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL TODAY. HE'S BEEN IN FOR TWO WEEKS WITH A BURSTED EARDRUM. HE'S O.K. and READY TO FLY AGAIN.

39



*Mission No. 20
21 MAR. 1945
RHINE, GER.
flight time
7:20*

THE BIG BIRDS TOOK TO THE WILD BLUE AT 0620 THIS MORNING.

HAD A SHORT EAST MISSION, COMPARED TO SOME WE'VE BEEN GETTING.

IT SEEMS THAT THE JETS and W.E. 109'S HAVE BEEN GIVING MONNY A LITTLE TROUBLE WHILE HE'S GETTING READY TO PUSH ACROSS THE RHINE INTO THE RHUR. THEY WERE OPERATING OFF AN AIR-FIELD IN THE NORTH NAMED RHINE - and WE CARRIED OUT AN ORDER TO GET RID OF THEM - WE DID, COMPLETELY.

MY SHIP DIDN'T DO ANY PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO THE

42

FIELD - I WORKED ON THE MORALE. I CARRIED NICKELS - NOT THE AMERICAN 5 CENT PIECE - BUT SURRENDER LEAFLETS and NEWS PAPERS TELLING JERRIE WHAT THE SCORE WAS and ASKING HIM TO BASH IN HIS SHIPS.

THE REST OF THE GROUP CARRIED 38 PACKS OF SMALL ANTI PERSONAL (FRAGMENTATION) BOMBS. OTHER GROUPS CARRIED 1000 POUNDERS. WE WORKED ON THE BARRACKS and FLAK BATTERIES and THEY DROPPED ON THE RUNWAYS, GIVING THE FIELD AN ALL AROUND GOOD PLASTERING.

FLAK WAS LIGHT - BUT AFTER WE DROPPED THEY QUIT ALTOGETHER FIRING and RAN TO THEIR HOLES. AFTER WE, THE HEAVY BOMBERS, FINISHED, P-51'S WENT IN and STAFFED WHAT WAS LEFT... MARK OFF ONE LUFEWAFFE FIELD!

43

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

Mission No. 21
22 MAR 1945
FILDHAUSSEN, GER.
flight time 7:20

ANOTHER NAZI HEADQUARTERS HIT THE DUST THIS MORNING, THIS TIME IT WAS ON THE WESTERN FRONT. I'LL BET WE SCATTERED NAZI "MORNING REPORTS" OVER HALF OF GERMANY. TARGET WAS LOCATED IN THE RHUR, BUT NOT THE FLAK WE EXPECTED CAME UP - THEY'RE PUTTING IT BACK. ONE OF THESE DAYS WE'RE GOING TO GET HIT IN SOME UNEXPECTED and UNCHARTED FLAK AREA. THESE GUNS ARE PILING UP SOMEWHERE IN GERMANY - and S-2 DOESN'T KNOW WHERE.

WE TURNED OFF THE TARGET IN A HEAVY 60° BANK - BUT JUST IN TIME - THE WHOLE

44

SKY 500 YARDS AHEAD BURST INTO FIRE and SMOKE - THE GROUP AHEAD HADN'T TURNED OFF THE RUN SOON ENOUGH and WAS CAUGHT IN THIS BLACK DEATH - THEIR SHIPS BEGAN PEELING OUT OF FORMATION LIKE SICK FLIES - SOME BURNING, SOME JUST SPIRALING DOWNWARD. FOUR WENT DOWN, BEFORE A CHANCE FOR EVASIVE ACTION COULD BE TAKEN FROM THIS BARRAGE.

ONE OF OUR SHIPS LANDED IN FRANCE - 2 ENGINES SHOT OUT. TWO OTHERS HAD ONE ENGINE OUT - BUT THEY CAME IN WITH THE GROUP.

MACDONALD, JR., HUNTER, IFRATE, SOPINSKI & LEOPOLD WERE WITH ME TODAY. THEY ARE ON MY CREW. SOPINSKI IS MY NAV. and LEOPOLD MY TOUGGLER. MACDONALD IS MY CO-PILOT - HE'S A GOOD PILOT. HOPE I GET TO KEEP HIM.

45

Mission No. 22
23 MAR. 1945
COESFELD, GER.
flight time 6:25

BREAKFAST AT 0500, BRIEFING AT 0600. WE WENT TO THAT D—M HAPPY VALLEY AGAIN. I WISH MONTY WOULD HURRY and CROSS THAT RHINE and PUT THAT FLAK NEST OUT OF THE WAR.

WE BOMBED A MARSHALLING YARD AT COESFELD, HELPING TO ISOLATE THE RHUR SO IT WILL BE EASIER FOR MONTGOMERY TO TAKE IT.

WE SAW ANOTHER V-2 ROCKET BOMB LEAVE HOLLAND. I HAVEN'T MENTIONED IT BEFORE, BUT WE USUALLY SEE 2 OR 3 EVERY TIME WE GO OVER THERE. YOU CAN'T SEE THE ROCKET ITSELF, JUST IT'S CON TRAIL - A THIN WHITE STRIPE ACROSS THE SKY.

46

STRAIGHT UP - 70 MILES. WE ALWAYS MADE NOTES OF WHERE THEY CAME FROM - SO THE MEDIUMS and FIGHTERS COULD COME OVER and SHOOT UP THEIR LAUNCHING SITES.

JERRIE TRIED TO DRIVE US OFF, AS USUAL, BUT THE BIG GAS BIRDS CAN'T BE STOPPED - SOME GO DOWN - BUT YOU CAN'T STOP 'EM, AS HE FINALLY FOUND OUT.

HALF OF OUR BOMBS DIDN'T GO OUT WHEN THE TOUGGLIER HIT THE SWITCH - I HAD TO DROP 'EM FROM THE EMERGENCY SALVO SWITCH IN THE COCKPIT. WE DROPPED 20 SECONDS LATE.

A PIECE OF FLAK HAD CLIPPED SOME WIRES IN THE BOMBARDIERS CONTROL PANEL.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 26000.
TEMP. 49° BELOW ZERO.

47

Mission No. 23
28 MAR. 1945
HANNOVER, GER.
flight time 7:30

HAD TO CALL IN A DELAY OF TAKE OFF FOR MY SHIP, BOMBS WERE NOT COMPLETELY LOADED. WE TOOK OFF 38 MINUTES LATE. OUR GROUP WAS ASSEMBLING NORTH OF PARIS OVER A RADIO BUNCHER.

30 MINUTES AFTER TAKE OFF LARRY CALLED and SAID THE G. BOX and RADIO COMPASS WAS OUT. WE HAD BEEN ON INSTRUMENTS SINCE TAKE OFF, I DIDN'T WANT TO ABORT SO I TOLD HIM TO DO HIS BEST TO D.R. US TO THE RENDEZVOUS POINT. WE WERE AT 13000 FT and STILL NO SIGN OF A BREAK IN THE WEATHER.

WE WERE BRIEFED TO BOMB BERLIN - ONE TARGET I WANTED

48

TO HIT. BUT THE WAY IT LOOKED NOW I WOULDN'T MAKE IT. I COULD HEAR OUR GROUP LEADER TALKING THE HIGH and LOW SQUADRONS HE WAS LEAVING THE ASSEMBLY POINT, and I HADN'T EVEN BROKEN OUT OF THE OVERCAST YET.

WE DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE WE WERE, SO I TOLD THE CREW TO LET ME KNOW IF THEY SPOTTED A GROUP WHEN WE CAME OUT OF THIS STUFF.

WE BROKE OUT AT 20,000 FT. I SPOTTED A GROUP CIRCLING AT 2 O'CLOCK LEVEL ABOUT 5 MI. AWAY. I HEADED FOR THEM, IT ISN'T HEALTHY FOR A BU BIRD TO BE WONDERING AROUND UP THERE, BANDITS LIKE MEAT LIKE THAT.

THIS GROUP DIDN'T FLY THE SAME FORMATION AS OUR GROUP DID, BUT I SETTLED INTO A POSITION NEXT TO

49

A SHIP THAT WAS FLYING ABOVE THE LEAD ELEMENT OF THIS SQUADRON. HE MUST HAVE JUST SPOTTED ME - FOR SUDDENLY HIS GUNS SWUNG OVER ON ME. I WAS A STRANGER, and HE WASN'T TAKING ANY CHANCES ON A JERRIE SNEAKING IN and PICKING HIM OFF, AS HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST.

I COULDN'T MAKE RADIO CONTACT WITH HIM, OUR SETS ARE TUNED DIFFERENT FROM THE 3RD DIV. WHICH WAS HIS OUTLET.

HE MUST HAVE CALLED HIS LEADER. BECAUSE THEIR ROVING HEAD MAN CAME UP and GAVE ME A ONCE OVER - HE MUST HAVE IDENTIFIED MY MARKINGS and WAS SATISFIED. THE GUY NEXT TO ME PULLED HIS GUNS OFF and EVERYTHING WAS O.K.

FLAK WAS HEAVY, BUT WE MADE IT BACK WITHOUT CASUALTIES.

50

Mission No. 24
31 MAR. 1945
HALLE, GER.
flight time 8:00

OUT OF THE SACK EARLIER THAN EVER THIS MORNING - BREAKFAST AT 0100 and BRIEFING AT 0200. SOME OF THE BOYS GOT IN FROM THEIR DATES JUST IN TIME TO MAKE BRIEFING.

PRIMARY TARGET, IF VISUAL, WAS TO BE OUR OLD FRIEND LUTZKENDORF AGAIN. IF THE PRIMARY WAS COVERED, and IT WAS, WE WERE TO HIT THE MARSHALLING YARDS AT HALLE. THESE YARDS WERE FULL OF ROLLING STOCK HEADED FOR THE EASTERN FRONT.

WE HAD A LONG HARD CLIMB - PULLING 38" MANIFOLD PRESS and 2300 R.P.M ALL THE WAY.

51

I WAS SWEATING OUT MY ENGINES - THE BEST FRIENDS A MAN'S GOT WHEN HE'S 5 MILES UP and 300 MILES IN OVER ENEMY LINES.

WE GOT TOO CLOSE TO MERSEBURG GOING IN and GOT CLIPPED BY THEIR FLAK - ONE OF OUR SHIPS GOT HIT and HAD TO TURN BACK. OUR SQUADRON COULDN'T GET THE RIGHT INTERVAL FOR THE BOMB RUN SO WE MADE A 360° TURN - OFF TO THE SOUTH THE "LITTLE FRIENDS" WERE HAVING TROUBLE WITH SOME JETS WHO WERE TRYING TO GET AT US. THEY NEVER SUCCEEDED, THANKS AGAIN TO OUR MUSTANG ESCORT.

IT WAS ABOUT FIVE-TENTHS OVER HALLE - and FLAK WAS INACCURATE - NO ONE WENT DOWN - BUT LOTS OF CLOSE ONES.

WE TOOK OFF LATE AGAIN, DUE TO A FAT TIRE - THEY GAVE US A SHIP WITHOUT BALL TURRET GUNS. WE JOINED OUR GROUP AT THE COAST.

53

Mission No. 25
KIEL, GER.
3 APRIL 1945
flight time 8:40

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE BEEN "SCRUBBED" and FLEW A MISSION, ALL IN THE SAME DAY.

WE WERE UP THIS A.M. AT 0100 - BRIEFED and WERE READY TO GO OUT TO OUR SHIPS WHEN RED-RED FLARES BROKE THE EARLY MORNING SKY. WE PULLED OFF OUR FLYING GEAR and HIT THE SACKS AGAIN AT 0615.

THEY GOT US UP AGAIN AT 0915 and TOLD US THE WEATHER WAS BETTER OVER THE TARGET - and THEY WE WOULD TAKE OFF AT 1015.

WE CLIMED THROUGH ONE FRONT and OVER THE TOP OF ANOTHER. WEATHER WAS CLEAR OVER THE WESTERN COAST OF

54

GERMANY and DENMARK. BUT IT CLOUDED UP AGAIN. OVER THE TARGET IT BECAME EIGHT-TENTHS SO WE DECIDED TO MAKE A WICKY RUN ON IT.

ON THE BOMB RUN, 4 BRITISH "MOSQUITOES" CAME PAST US and LET GO WITH THEIR LOAD OF CHAFF - THIS IS KNOWN AS A SCREENING FORCE. IT HELPS TO RATTLE THE JERRIE FLAK GUNNERS and THEIR RADAR EQUIPMENT.

YOU COULD SEE THE CHAFF and THE FLAK PUFFS FOLLOWING IT DOWN - BUT YOU CAN FOOL JERRIE FOR JUST SO LONG. WE MUST HAVE MADE A BLUER SPOT IN HIS RADAR SCOPE, FOR THE BLACK PUFFS BEGAN WITH ROOMING AROUND US - TOO CLOSE.

THE SHIP GAVE THAT OLD FAMILIAR LURCH, LIKE A JIG OF RELIEF, AND THE TOUGGLER CALLED "BOMBS AWAY".

55

WE MADE A SLOW 180° TURN TO THE RIGHT OFF THE TARGET and DOUBLED BACK. WE GOT A GOOD VIEW OF OUR WORK.

OTHER GROUPS WERE DROPPING ON THEIR AIMING POINTS IN THIS MIGHTY GERMAN PORT. DOCKS, WAREHOUSES, MERCHANT SHIPS and MACHINE SHOPS WERE GOING UP IN BILLOWS OF SMOKE - FIRES STARTED, OTHER EXPLOSIONS ROLLED OUT OF THE BOILING WRECKAGE.

LITTLE P.T. BOATS WERE RUNNING OUT OF THE HARBOR, LIKE FRIGHTENED RABBITS. P-51 MUSTANGS WERE WAITING FOR THEM THEY DIVED ON THEM, POURING OUT DEADLY 50 CAL. SLUGS and INCENDIARIES INTO THEIR HULLS.

OUR WING LOST 3 SHIPS - NONE FROM OUR GROUP. A VERY SUCCESSFUL MISSION.

COMING HOME, WE LET DOWN OVER THE NORTH SEA and CAME BACK UNDER THE FRONTS, BARELY SKIMMING THE TOP OF WAVES. SNOW and RAIN WAS PLENTIFUL.

56

Mission No. 26
HALBERSTADT, GER.
8 APRIL 1945
flight time 9:00

MY BREAKFAST OF THREE HOT-CAKES AT 0300 THIS MORNING DIDN'T SETTLE RIGHT.

I DID O.K. WHILE WE WERE ASSEMBLING - BUT ABOUT HALF WAY THERE I FELT LIKE I HAD SWALLOWED A DOZEN OR SO BUTTERFLIES, and THEY WANTED TO COME UP FOR AIR.

ON THE BOMB RUN, OF ALL PLACES, IT REACHED IT'S CLIMAX. I TOLD MAC TO TAKE OVER - I PULLED OFF MY FLAK HELMET, and AS BOMBS WENT AWAY. I TOSSED MY COOKIES. THANK GOD THERE WAS NO FLAK...

WE MADE EXCELLENT HITS ON THE RAILROAD YARD... and MY INSIDES SETTLED BACK TO NORMAL. WOTTA MISSION!

57

Mission No. 27
ORANIENBURG, GER.
10 APRIL 1945
flight time 11:00

IN THE AIR CORPS THEY SAY THAT WHEN YOU START FLYING YOUR MISSIONS, YOU ARE ALLOTTED SO MUCH LUCK, WHEN YOU USE UP THIS GIVEN AMOUNT OF LUCK - YOU DON'T COME BACK.

TODAY I THINK MAC, I and THE REST OF MY CREW USED UP OUR ACCOUNT, and OVERDREW ABOUT A DOZEN FOUR-LEAF-CLOWERS WORTH OF THAT LUCK.

I DON'T BELIEVE TOO MUCH IN HUNCHES - BUT THIS MORNING FOR THE SECOND TIME SINCE I STARTED FLYING COMBAT, I PERSONALLY CHECKED THE EMERGENCY WALK-AROUND OXYGEN BOTTLES. I HAD TO FORCE MYSELF TO OPEN THE THROTTLES, AS WE ENTERED

58

THE FOG. A COLD CHILL WENT THROUGH ME.

EVERYTHING WAS GOING FINE - THE CREW CHECKED IN: "TAIL O.K.", "WAIST O.K.", "BALL O.K.", "RADIO O.K." and SO ON UP TO THE TOUGGLIER IN THE NOSE. I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT MY PECULIAR FEELING.

WE BROKE OUT AT 6000 FT. THE SUN WAS SHINNING BRIGHTLY. THE CIRCLING SHIPS IN THE DISTANCE GLISTENED LIKE DIAMOND DUST FLOATING IN THE AIR - FIRST TIME I EVER THOUGHT OF THEM THAT WAY.

AS WE JOINED THE BOMBER STREAM and CROSSED THE CHANNEL, THE CLOUDS THINNED OUT and FINALLY IT CLEARED UP COMPLETELY. BRUSSELS APPEARED OFF OUR LEFT WING TIP - THEN COLOGNE and THE RHINE RIVER. COLOGNE HAD BEEN TAKEN A FEW WEEKS AGO. JERRIE HAD BEEN FORCED BACK FROM HIS BELOVED RHINE and NOW HIS VERY

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EXISTANCE WAS AT STAKE - HE HAD GAMBLED, and NOW HE WAS LOSING THE HARD WAY.

"THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD, SHALL DIE BY THE SWORD."

WE WERE FOLLOWING THE GROUP AHEAD, WE WERE "BAKER FORCE" or SECOND GROUP IN OUR DIVISION. WE WERE USING THEM AS OUR INTERFERENCE. THEY HAD ENCOUNTERED NO FLAK or FIGHTERS so OUR GROUP NAVIGATOR CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THEM, WHICH LATER PROVED VERY UNWISE.

WE WERE PAST WHITTENBURG BETWEEN THE FABLE RIVER and BERLIN, 5 MINUTES BEFORE OUR I.P. WHEN IT HAPPENED. THINGS HAPPENED SO FAST FROM NOW ON I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN PUT THEM IN THEIR RIGHT ORDER or NOT - BUT HERE GOES.

WE WERE AT 24000 FT, and STILL CLIMBING, AT THE ABOVE

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Obituaries continued from page 3

- **Kristoff, Emil A**, 367th ball-turret gunner (William S Kirk crew), of Fayette Co, TX, died 6 Oct 1990 at 73. He enlisted in Jul 41 at Ft Sam Houston. He is buried at LaGrange Cemetery in LaGrange, TX. Survived by his wife Veronica, and at least 2c. No further info.
- **Harding, Kenneth L**, 1208th QM Co, PX auditing & inventory officer. Our 306th 2Lt Harding appears likely to be the man of that name who was born 1918 in MA, and enlisted in Feb 41 in Boston, MA, as a married 23-yr old resident of Norfolk Co, MA with experience as a bookkeeper. He died in Quincy, Norfolk Co, MA at 71 on 24 May 89. No further info.
- **La Forgia, Joseph F**, 1208th QM Co (Pvt, unknown duties), originally from Astoria, Queens Co, NY, died 8 Dec 88 in Dania, FL at 71. He was a single resident of Queens when he enlisted in Jul 42. He was survived by his wife, Joyce, who died at 87 in Jan 11 in Dania, FL. They're buried with his parents at Calvary (Catholic) Cemetery in Woodside, Queens, NY. No further info.
- **Boncic, George**, 423rd bombardier (Elmer Heap crew), of Hempstead, Nassau Co, NY, died in Nov 79, around his 60th birthday. He reached Thurleigh 16 Oct 43; on 22 Dec 43 (Osnabrook) he was credited for downing an ME-109; 21 Jan 44 (Pas de Calais mission was flown that day) 1st Lt Boncic was sent to 3479th Station Hospital per Strong's card file. He was born in NY of parents from Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Post-service, by age 40 he had become Supervising Engineer for buildings for all of NY Telephone Co. No further info.
- **Kirby, Neill G**, 423rd pilot, originally from VT, died 3 Mar 77 in San Bernardino Co, CA at 58. Before reaching Thurleigh 28 Oct 44 he had done a Pacific combat tour; he completed his 306th tour in Mar 45. He had initially enlisted in Washington DC in Sep 40 as a Pvt, after one year of college, with work experience in manufacture of autos; at that time he was a single resident of Bronx, NY. No further info.
- **Erickson, Arthur R**, 423rd radio operator (Elmer Heap crew), of Kitsap County, WA, died 9 Nov 71 at 64. At age 35, having worked as a salesman, he enlisted at Tacoma as a Pvt; at 36, he arrived at Thurleigh with the crew. His vet marker at Bredablik Cemetery in Kitsap Co, where he rests various older Ericksons, shows T/Sgt, DFC, AM with 3 OLC - PH. No further info.
- **Reitmeier, Woodrow A**, 1208th QM Co (listed in Jul-91 Echoes as a ground officer, unspecified duties), originally from New York, NY, died 3 Mar 71 at 52. After Thurleigh, he continued to serve in Korea and Vietnam. LTC Reitmeier is buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. When he enlisted as a Private in Jun 41 at Governors Island, NY, he was single and had three years of college. No further info.
- **Cohen, Herman G**, 1208th QM Co (reached Pfc rank 23 Dec 43, unknown duties), who entered the service from Bronx, NY, and was listed in Strong's records with Serial # 32707505 which cannot be located in the National Archives' WWII Enlistment index apparently due to typos, seems most likely to be this man of the 11 vets named Herman Cohen in USVA Grave Locator: Herman Cohen, born 31 Jan 25, died at age 39 on 20 Jan 65, buried at Long Island National Cemetery as Cpl in WWII; buried with his wife Marian who survived him to age 66 in Nov 1995; Air Force per plot listing at FindAGrave.com. No further info.
- **Allen, Wayne K**, 368th flight engineer (James H Butler crew), from Multnomah County, OR, was KIA from Thurleigh 21 Feb 45, less than 3 weeks into their tour. During the mission, somehow Allen's walk-around oxygen tank got knocked off him, though it did not appear that he was hit by flak or enemy fire. Crew mate Charles R "Charlie" White found Allen, and got him to the bombardier hatch, where he hooked him up to oxygen. Medics met them upon landing, but Sgt Allen did not survive. Wayne was born 22 Nov 23 in WA; he enlisted 27 Feb 43 at Portland, OR, at which time he was single with dependents - presumably his parent(s) and/or younger sibling(s) were dependent on him. Buried at Siskiyou Memorial Park, Medford, OR. No further info.
- **Hinkle, James M**, 1208th QM Co (1Lt, likely in accounting or auditing), who enlisted in Milwaukee, WI in Apr 41, with 4 years of college and civilian work experience as "Accountants & auditors" died sometime during the War, apparently at Thurleigh. He was listed by the US War Dept at the WWII Memorial Registry with hometown of Milwaukee and his officer serial number, as "DNB" [Died non-Battle] and no indication of where he's buried. In Echoes Jul-91, he's listed as a ground officer at Thurleigh with no dates shown.



Wives and Widows at the San Diego Reunion. Seated, left to right: Charolotte Griffin, Elizabeth Huebotter, Virginia Brown, Bari Lissner, Back row: Katherine Snook, Mattie Carleton, Francine Burrell Jackson, Em Christianson, Cynthia Lawson.

Photograph Courtesy Charles Neal

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

POSITION. SUDDENLY OUR SHIP JUMPED and LOUD SERIES OF THUMPS RAN THROUGHOUT HER INSIDES - I CALLED THE GUNNERS and TOLD THEM TO STOP TEST-FIRING THEIR GUNS. HUNTER CALLED FROM THE TAIL "SIR, WE AREN'T FIRING, IT'S FLAK, and Chase too!"

ANOTHER JAR SHOOK THE SHIP. IFRATIE CALLED "SIR, I THINK I'M HIT". BEFORE I COULD ANSWER, THE ENGINEER CALLED FROM THE TOP TURRET "LOOK! THE WHOLE TAIL OF THAT SHIP JUST BLEW UP!" THAT WAS BABIN'S SHIP OLD "FLAK SHACK", HE WAS FLYING #3 OF THE LEAD ELEMENT, I WAS FLYING RIGHT UNDER HIM IN #6 POSITION.

A BLACK FORM WENT PAST OUR #3 PROP - IT WAS HIS TAIL GUNNER STILL HOLDING HIS GUNS.

THEN A BLACK CLOUD ENVELOPED US and A SOUND; LIKE TWO HS'S

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WERE FIRED IN MY EARS, ECHOED THROUGH THE COCKPIT. FLYING GLASS, METAL, and INSULATION FILLED THE AIR, BEING BLOWN ABOUT BY ESCAPING OXYGEN FROM A BROKEN LINE. MY RIGHT HAND GLOVE WAS RIPPED TO SHREDS and MY HAND and ARM WERE STINGING LIKE A DOZEN BEES HAD JUMPED IT. I SALVED THE BOMBS.

THE SHIP WAS ALMOST ON ITS BACK NOW - HEADING DOWN - I GLANCED AT THE ALTIMETER - IT WAS HAZY - WE HAD LOST 8000 FT ALREADY. I PULLED BACK ON THE STICK WITH ALL MY STRENGTH and STARTED A 180° TURN TOWARD FRIENDLY LINES. I KNEW I HAD NO OXYGEN - I COULDN'T SEE VERY WELL - I LOOKED AT MAE FOR HELP - HE WAS LEANING AGAINST HIS SIDE WINDOW, EYES OPEN, WITH A BIG GAPING HOLE TORN THROUGH HIS FLAK HELMET. "MY GOD,

62

HE'S DEAD!", I THOUGHT.

WE WERE DOWN TO 13000 FT NOW. SGT. POMYHAL, THE ENGINEER WAS OUT OF HIS TURRET and WAS POINTING AT THE FEATHERING BUTTONS and HOLDING UP TWO FINGERS - I RAISED UP IN MY SEAT - NO. TWO ENGINE WAS A RAGING INFERNO, FIRE BLAZING BACK OVER THE WING; WITH 400 GAL'S OF 100 OCTANE GAS JUST WAITING TO BE SET OFF.

SUDDENLY MAE CAME TO LIFE and HIT #2 FEATHERING BUTTON - I LOOKED AT #3 ENGINE, TWO CYLINDERS WERE BLOWN FROM IT and OIL WAS BOILING OUT OF THE NACELLE. IT WAS BURNING - YET, SO I DIDN'T FEATHER, NOT WHILE IT WAS PUTTING OUT AIR POWER AT ALL. IT LASTED 5 MINUTES.

I LOOKED BACK AT #2 - MAE STILL HAD THE BUTTON IN BUT SHE HADN'T FEATHERED YET. THE FIRE WASN'T AS FIERCE AS IT

63

STAGGERING ALONG AT 120 M.P.H. and STILL LOSING 50 FT PER MIN. WITH BOTH OUR GOOD ENGINES WIDE OPEN.

I TOLD THE CREW TO THROW ALL EQUIPMENT OUT - BALL TURRET, RADIO EQUIPMENT, FLAK SUITS, AMMUNITION, ANYTHING THEY COULD PULL LOOSE. IN 15 MIN. THE SHIP WAS STRIPPED - and WE WERE HOLDING OUR ALTITUDE AT 7000 FT. AT 120 M.P.H.

WE CALLED FOR FIGHTER PROTECTION, and GOT A DOZEN LITTLE FRIENDS IN A HURRY. THEY WOULD COME UP ON OUR WING, WITH THEIR FLAPS DOWN; FLY ALONG A FEW SECONDS, THEN PEEL OFF TO CHECK A "BOGIE". THE MUSTANG PILOTS WOULD WAIVE JUST BEFORE THEY PEELLED OFF. GREAT GUYS!

WE SAW GROUPS OF B-24's and B-17's PASS US - GOING HOME - I CALLED OUR GROUP and TOLD

65

THE LEADER OUR SITUATION and THAT WE WERE TRYING TO MAKE IT TO FRIENDLY LINES. HE ACKNOWLEDGED and WISHED US LUCK.

LARRY NAVIGATED US AROUND THE FLAK AREAS WE KNEW ABOUT - 8 MILES AHEAD ANOTHER B-17 WAS LIMPING HOME - WE FOLLOWED HIM. IF THEY SHOT AT HIM - WE WERE TIPPED OFF and WENT AROUND THE FLAK POSITION. WE WERE NOW HOLDING OUR ALTITUDE AT 6500 and 123 M.P.H. AIR SPEED.

WE GOT TO BRUSSELS and WE DECIDED TO TRY IT FOR THE CHANNEL. AT THE CHANNEL WE WERE DOING O.K. - SO WE GAMBLERD ON GETTING TO ENGLAND, and SO ON FROM ONE TOWN TO ANOTHER UNTIL WE GOT OVER THE HOME FIELD. THEY WERE SURPRISED TO SEE US BACK. "HOW SOON" 'S CREW CHIEF WAS VERY HAPPY. WE LANDED WITH A LEFT FLAT TIRE.

THANK GOD WE ARE BACK and ALIVE.

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I STAYED IN THE HOSPITAL TONIGHT GOT MY HAND CLEANED OUT and DRESSED.

WE BROUGHT OUR SHIP BACK, OR IT BROUGHT US BACK, ANYWAY YOU WANT TO SAY IT, BUT HERE'S ALL THE DAMAGE DONE TO IT:

- ★ NO. ONE ENGINE HAD ITS SUPERCHARGER BLOWN OUT.
- ★ NO. TWO ENGINE BURNED COMPLETELY UP. NO FLIGHT INSTRUMENTS.
- ★ NO. THREE ENGINE HAD 2 CYLINDERS KNOCKED OFF and 2 HOLES IN THE PROP. NO OIL.
- ★ SIX HOLES IN THE COCKPIT, 3 THE SIZE OF BASE BALLS.
- ★ OXYGEN SYSTEM SHOT OUT ON RIGHT SIDE, C-1 SHOT OUT.
- ★ NO BALL TURRET - NO RADIO EQUIPMENT. NO AMMUNITION.
- ★ 39 HOLES IN THE SHIP - ONE THROUGH THE MAIN SPAR OF THE LEFT WING.
- ★ and A VERY SHAKEY CREW.

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Part 3 of Lt. Robert E. Woods diary coming in the next issue of Echoes, coming soon this fall. (The Diary pages can be enlarged for easier viewing at our website, 306bg.org under the Echoes tab.)

Plan to Attend the Savannah Reunion at the Marriott Savannah Riverfront October 25-28, 2012

Em Christianson and Bill Houlihan enjoy the San Diego Reunion.

Photograph courtesy Charles Neal



**Registration Form – 306th 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 306th 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, Lunch & Dedication Ceremony x \$35.00 = \$_____ (10:00 am-4 pm) (Revised and updated 25 April 2012)

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

Saturday, 27 October

Narrated Savannah River Cruise & Lunch (11:30-1:30 pm)..... x \$49.00 = \$_____ (Revised and updated 25 April 2012)

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

Everything else on the schedule is free!

Total..... \$_____

**Make check payable to 306th 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 Riverside 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 306th archives online, how to search it, and where to find documents--Dr. Vernon L. Williams - Savannah Ballroom DE (1-2 pm)

• **Cyberspace and 306th History - Bring your laptops and mobile devices. Sue Fox Moyer and Pat DiGeorge, Savannah Ballroom DE (2-3:30)**

- 306th BG Veterans Roundtable No. 1, with 306th 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 (2 pm-5pm; 7-10 pm)
- Mighty Eighth Tour, Lunch & Dedication Ceremony (9:00 am-3 pm) – Mighty Museum at Pooler, GA
- Second Generation meeting - Savannah Ballroom DE (4 pm)

- First Over Germany Reception & Dinner (Reception in Pre-function C (6-7 pm), Dinner in Savannah Ballroom C (7-9pm))

SATURDAY, 27 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)

- Narrated Savannah River Cruise & Lunch (11:30-1:30 pm) (Revised and updated 25 April 2012)

• **Searching for Your Family History Workshop - Learn how basic research skills, luck, and determination has worked for others in search for the unknown, Savannah Ballroom DE (1:30-3:30)**

- 306th BG Veterans Roundtable No. 2, with 306th veterans telling their stories with a Q & A with the audience--moderated by Dr. Vernon Williams, Savannah Ballroom DE (3:30-5 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, 28 OCTOBER

- Farewells and check out

- Travel Home — See you next year!



Museum Notes

Thurleigh Airfield 306th Bomb Group Museum



1



2

Thurleigh Museum Marks Its Ten-Year Celebration on July 8th



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Photographs: 1) British honor guard marching in to begin the ceremony, 2) Remembrance plaque to donors for the rededication of the 306th BG Memorial, 3) The 306th BG Memorial pictured with memorial wreaths in its new location on the green in front of the 306th Memorial Museum, 4) 306th BGA family members and representatives gather in front of the Museum—left to right, Charles Neal, Barbara Neal, Dr. Vernon L. Williams, Suzanne Megregian, Nena Brennan Leary, Carolyn Couey, Ashley Megregian, 5) British visitors wear WW2 dress as they view the vehicles exhibits in the car park, 6) a large crowd awaits the start of the re-dedication ceremony, 7) Ralph Franklin visits with a British visitor who wears the uniform of a captain in the 8th AF as he honors America's service to victory in WW2, 8) Walt Rozett's Purple Heart and other memorabilia on exhibit in the 306th Museum. Photographs courtesy Charles Neal and Jim Leary

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