



306th Patch

# 306th Echoes

Educating and Communicating



B-17 Flying Fortress



## Battle of the Bulge: 70 Years Later

By Clifford L. Deets  
306 BGHA Historian

This coming December 16<sup>th</sup> marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the WWII Battle of the Bulge, a pivotal engagement between German and Allied armies that could easily have changed the outcome of the war. The battle itself would not be decisively concluded until January 25, 1945 but the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group and Eighth Air Force participation in the battle would be frustrated by weather, limiting the missions and number of aircraft flown until Christmas Eve. When weather cleared on that day, a monumental Eighth Air Force “maximum effort” was ordered directing all bombardment groups to launch every combat worthy aircraft against multiple targets. The fickle English weather would complicate the day and further frustrate the men of the 306<sup>th</sup> at Thurleigh.

Author Martin Bowman wrote in his book *B-17 Flying Fortress Units of the Eighth Air Force (Part 2)*: “December 1944 brought the worst winter weather in England for 54 years. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, using appalling conditions to his advantage, Field Marshall Karl von Rundstedt and his Panzer force, supported by an estimated 1400 fighters, attacked U.S. positions in the forests of the Ardennes-Belgian border and opened up a salient, or ‘bulge’, in the Allied lines. In England all aircraft were

grounded by fog.” One of the most important battles of WWII had been engaged.

In his book *The Mighty Eighth, A History of the U.S. 8th Army Air Force*, noted Eighth Air Force historian Roger Freeman wrote: “The Germans had chosen a period of bad weather when they knew the Allied air support would be minimized... As the men of the heavy bomb groups knew only too well, clouds were the enemy’s greatest asset in shielding him from attack from the sky.” If it wasn’t bad weather over the continent preventing bombing missions, then it was bad weather and ground fog preventing the bombers from taking off from England. The 8<sup>th</sup> was able to get some bombers off the ground on 18 and 19 December, targeting communications and tactical targets. The 306<sup>th</sup> participated on 18 December, briefing 39 crews that bombed the railroad marshalling yards at Kaiserlautern, but they had to bomb using H2X radar and Gee-H radio positioning as the target was obscured by “10/10<sup>th</sup>” cloud cover. Missions were planned and briefed for 19, 20 and 22 December. The simple entry in the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group diary for those days tells the story:

- December 1944
- 19 - Mission scrubbed
- 20 - Mission scrubbed
- 22 - Mission scrubbed

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KEYSOE, BEDS MK44 2HP**From the Editor**

Entrusting me with the position of "*Echoes* Editor" is quite an honor, but it comes with some very serious responsibilities. My first responsibility is to you, the reader and to keep up the tradition that has been captured in the previous 39 volumes of *Echoes*.

The creation of this first issue has taught me a number of things, which will be reflected in future issues. I do welcome your suggestions! I am also interested in your stories, so let me hear from you. My contact information is on this page.

Nancy M. Huebotter  
*Echoes* Editor

**Battle of the Bulge:** (continued from page 1)

The Thurleigh tower log entries for each of those days included "*red to IBD ops*" telling the 1st Bomb Division that the airfield at Thurleigh was closed due to weather. Then to notify the bomber crews sitting in their aircraft on the hard stands that the mission was scrubbed, the on duty flying control officer would order two red flares to be shot at various positions around the perimeter of the field signifying there would be no mission that day. The first control tower log entries for the following day read:

*Saturday 23 December 1944*

*07:00 Red To Div Wx – a/c cleared*  
*07:15 fog and haze reduces vis to 250 yds*

The weather confounded flight operations and the men of the 306<sup>th</sup> were frustrated and anxious to get into the fray to help blunt the German counteroffensive. Everyone knew our boys were taking a pounding. Bill Carlile, a Flying Control Officer with the 306<sup>th</sup> who spent many long hours in the tower during this time remembers: "*As I recall the officers in the junior officer's mess, and I am sure the men in the GI and senior officer's mess, were all wondering when we would get off to help the people on the ground. As you know that happened on Christmas Eve and just about everyone involved in the operation knew Christmas dinner would be delayed.*" Pilot Walt Rozett of the 369<sup>th</sup> expressed his concern with more gravity: "*There was a feeling that if we did not get the Air Force off the ground to support the troops they might have to abandon the continent.*" Surely that is what the German high command hoped when they planned their counteroffensive.

A building high pressure weather system over Germany on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> promised clear skies and un-obscured targets. And so the largest armada of Allied air forces would take to the air the morning of 24 December, Christmas Eve. On that Christmas Eve day, the 8<sup>th</sup> AAF

launched every available bomber, both B-17's and B-24's, from all of its heavy bombardment groups constituting the three bomb divisions, attacking 32 separate targets, with General Fred Castle and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Division in the lead. Eleven of those targets were airfields and airdromes being used by the Luftwaffe to fly missions in support of the German army. The others were communications and logistics targets that were supporting and resupplying the German offensive. 8<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command flew a total of 2034 sorties that Christmas Eve day. 8<sup>th</sup> Fighter Command had over 850 P-51 and P-47 fighter sorties and there were 500 RAF and 9<sup>th</sup> AAF bombers and fighters that were also sortied. It would be the largest mission of the war.

The 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group had 34 aircraft that made up the 40<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing "B" group formation assigned to "pothole" the runways and airfield at Giessen, Germany, while another 15 aircraft were assigned to the 40<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing "D" group, 12 of them making up the lead squadron and another three flying in the high squadron. Again the target was an airfield at Nidda with the same objective of making it unusable to the Luftwaffe fighters that were sent to support the German ground forces. At this time in the war, the skies over the continent were well controlled by the Allies, and few enemy fighters were encountered by any of the bombers in the air, and even flak was minimal. Only 10 bombers were lost to enemy action that day, one of them being the lead ship of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Division with General Castle onboard. His heroics that day would earn him the Medal of Honor posthumously. The 306<sup>th</sup> lost no aircraft and had no injuries to any crew with a few of their planes receiving some battle damage. The bombing would later be reported as good to excellent.

The weather was to play a greater role as "enemy" to the 8<sup>th</sup> AAF and the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group after the targets had been struck. According to statistics listed in Roger Freeman's *The Mighty Eighth War Diary*, that day there were four bombers lost to takeoff crashes, four bombers lost to landing crashes in England with another three colliding on the ground after landing. Then there were three more crash landings on the continent. For the 306<sup>th</sup>, it was the challenge of just trying to get home for Christmas. The following is excerpted from the 306<sup>th</sup> control tower log:

*Sunday December 24, 1944*

0030 Briefing 0630 Breakfast 0530  
0630 Attended briefing 51 a/c

*Magnesium flares will be placed: one for base leg turn and two for the funnels.*

*4 flares 800 yards from the end of the runway 6 flares on the end of the R/W*

Dog	Baker	Baker High		
SE	0921	0931	0937	0943
TX	0936	0946	0952	0958
TO	0946	0956	1002	1008

SE-start engines; TX-taxi; TO-takeoff.

Of the 51 aircraft, three were designated spares and the rest were constituted from all four 306<sup>th</sup>BG squadrons. The last column of times presumably is the three spares. Flares were placed at various locations on and around the runway to assist the pilots when taking off. The visibility was zero! Walt Rozett: "*It was dense fog. I could not see the wing tips of the plane. It was the only time I ever made an instrument takeoff. My copilot was looking down at the runway to make sure we were on it.*" The tower log continues:

*1118 Last ops a/c off. 423 B + M failed to takeoff.*

*1410 Yellow to div + ops.*

*1525 Diversion airdrome is Framlingham per 40<sup>th</sup> CBW.*

*We are to inform them of our weather and they will decide whether diversion is to be used or not.*

*1640 Red to Ops and Div*

There were 49 aircraft launched for the mission. In the afternoon weather at Thurleigh began to close back in and landing conditions were becoming marginal (yellow) which was reported to 1<sup>st</sup> Bomb Division. Then at 1640 the field was closed (Red) due to very low visibility. The last aircraft to land at Thurleigh that day was a P-51 that was looking for a clear field to land at, coming in at 1525. The next series of log entries were made by the Flying Control Officers as they received reports of 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group airplanes as they landed at various diversion fields and other airfields of opportunity, anywhere they could find a place with enough visibility to see the runways to land. The very last entry of the day reflects all 49 aircraft down safe at the numerous airfields they found for haven.

*2300 All a/c accounted for as follows:*

<i>Bury St. Edmunds</i>	<i>11 a/c</i>
<i>Debach</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Framlingham</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Cranfield</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Wattisham</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Wing</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Ridgwell</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Horham</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Great Ashfield</i>	<i><u>2</u></i>
	<i>49</i>

It had been a long day for both the men in the air and those back at Thurleigh. A few crews were able to return to Thurleigh by truck on Christmas day, but most were ordered to remain with their aircraft at the other airfields. Normally these aircraft would have been flown back that next day but the Christmas day tower log entry again tells the story:

*0750 Red to div and ops. Field fogged in and R/W and perimeter icy.*



As it turned out, almost all of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bomb Division airfields had experienced the same weather conditions on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and the various bomb group airplanes were scattered across England, overcrowding those other airfields that had remained clear of weather. There was no room at the inn, so to speak. Many of the aircrews slept on their planes those nights for lack of available bunks at the stations they had landed at. Walt Rozett and his crew landed at Bury St. Edmonds: *“There were only three fields open in all of England when we returned with hundreds planes trying to get into each field. We had to make a couple of approaches before we were able to land. Came close to hitting another plane on one approach... We did have to sleep in the plane that night. I kept an engine running most of the night because it was so cold. When we woke up in the morning there was an inch and half of frost on the wings. They were actually trying to get us bombed up for a mission on Christmas day but it just wasn't possible to handle that many planes.”*

Christmas day the 8<sup>th</sup> AAF flew another mission but many bomb groups, including the 306<sup>th</sup> could not participate for a lack of crews and planes. At those diversion airfields, the home bomb groups even tried to use the spare orphan airplanes and crews on that Christmas day mission.

- From the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Diary – *“Christmas for those crews was a relatively miserable affair. However most of the men were given good meals and as good quarters as could be expected. All extended their appreciation for what was done on their behalf.”*
- From the 367<sup>th</sup> Squadron Diary – *“Of our a/c, one landed at Debach, nine at Framlingham, two at Cranfield and one at Wing. The crews were brought back to Thurleigh the next day by truck. It was a rather sad Christmas for the men, but no one uttered a complaint.”*
- From the 368<sup>th</sup> Squadron Diary – *“Forty-nine planes landed at other bases where the crews were treated exceptionally well. Having all of these extra men on Christmas Day presented a great feeding problem, but all crews reported wonderful Christmas dinners.”*
- From the 369<sup>th</sup> Squadron Diary – *“Crews reported that care was as good as possible, but owing to crowded conditions due to large numbers of planes landing, some stations were unable to furnish beds and men slept in their planes.”*
- From the 306<sup>th</sup> Group diary for December 25<sup>th</sup> – *“Mission was scrubbed due to lack of crews and weather. Some men returned from diversion airfields on trucks sent out from the base. They received a Christmas meal at 2000 hours. The holiday was celebrated in typical style with the exception of the food. Sufficient portions of turkey, dressing, ice cream, cake, cigars, etc were served.*

*Everyone on the base had a stuffed stomach and the proper spirit prevailed during the day. Most operations were at a standstill because of poor weather but theoretically units were functioning as usual. Many expressed a desire and confidence that this conflict will be over before next Dec. 25.”*

- From the 423<sup>rd</sup> Squadron Diary for December 25<sup>th</sup> – *“The mission planned for today was scrubbed at take-off. Christmas 1944 was celebrated in the squadron by eating one of the largest and best meals of the year. Everything from ‘soup to nuts’ was served and eaten, and it was top quality and quantity. We sincerely wished that our combat crews, who had landed away on the 24<sup>th</sup>, could have enjoyed this delicious repast with their friends on their home base.”*

All 49 aircraft that landed away from Thurleigh were able to return over the next few days when the weather permitted, with all home to Station #111 by December 27<sup>th</sup>:

- Noted in the 423<sup>rd</sup> diary for the day: *“One of the coldest days of the year, but clear weather permitted all of the outstanding aircraft to return to base. The crews were cold, tired, dirty, and very much desired and needed baths, shaves, showers and changes of clothes.”*

The German advance had been slowed by Christmas and the tide of battle was turning in favor of the Allies. The 306<sup>th</sup> now had their airplanes and crews back and took to the air again on December 28<sup>th</sup> on a mission to Sieberg and Koblenz. Missions to Bingen and Mainz finished the year for the 306<sup>th</sup> and they would go on to fly another 15 missions in January 1945, primarily in tactical support of Allied ground troops, and always dependent on the weather of the day.

It was a difficult time for men of the 306<sup>th</sup>, the combat crews, ground crews and support personnel. Roger Freeman wrote: *“The winter weather of 1944-45 was exceptionally bad in England. The frequent rains of the autumn were followed by many days of persistent fog – some of the worst this century – which gave way to freezing conditions and several weeks of snow, thaw, and snow again during the New Year. The lot of the ground crews was miserable and the whole effort to sustain operations made exceedingly difficult.”* The Battle of the Bulge [16 Dec 1944 – 25 Jan 1945] marked the beginning of the end of World War II on the European continent, with the German surrender [7 May 1945] occurring just over three months later in May 1945. The indomitable spirit of the men of the 306<sup>th</sup> might be reflected in the last portion of the entry in the 423<sup>rd</sup> Squadron diary for Christmas day 1944:

*“In the afternoon the EM entertained the English children from the surrounding communities with a Christmas party. The children enjoyed a Donald Duck movie short, ate ice cream, saw Father Christmas, and received cookies, candies and other gifts.”*



# Obituaries

**Obituaries** – (Secretary's note: effective this issue, "Obituaries" will have mainly recent deaths for men related to – or crew mates of – people who the Secretary KNOWS are currently following *Echoes*. The column will also have obits for some "not recent" deaths of that category. At the bottom of the column will be listed other deaths found – with only names, brief Thurleigh affiliation, & dates of death; full *Echoes*-format obits for those others are being posted at our website, 306bg.org in a new section, which will eventually have all *Echoes* obits.)



**Baryla, E.J.** 367<sup>th</sup> waist gunner (Roland 'Ron' Lissner crew until reached Thurleigh), appears to be the USAAF veteran, Edward J Baryla, who died 30 Dec 01 at 76 in Cary, a McHenry Co, IL suburb of Chicago. With Lissner, he arrived 9 Dec 44, and apparently was immediately assigned to fly with other crew(s); he was not on any of Lissner's 15 flights before Lissner was interned (Sweden). Edward was predeceased in 94 by his wife, Mary Ann at 66; survived by 3c, 4gc; funeral from Thornridge Funeral Home in Orland Park, IL to St Thomas More Church Tridentine, with Mass; buried at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

**Benningfield, Wallace L**, 368<sup>th</sup> waist gunner (reported with J.Ray Coleman), died 10 May 09, at 85 in Jenkintown, PA, near Rockledge (Montgomery County) PA, where he'd long been on our *Echoes* list with wife Patricia, and where he was in 1940 Census in his parents' household. He reported with Coleman 18 Nov 43, but was not on board when the crew was downed 25 Feb 44. His initial enlistment was not located, however post-war he re-enlisted as a married man with civilian occupation experience as a farm hand on a general farm, in Denver in 18 Jun 46 "for the Hawaiian Department" as it shows in the online enlistment index. Secretary would welcome any further info.

**Berry, Leslie**, 423<sup>rd</sup> bombardier (Harold Brown crew), of Wooster, OH, died 22 Mar 13 at 97, at Smithville Western Care Center following a period of declining health. With Brown he reported 17 Jul 44; he completed his 35 mission tour 3 Jan 45. He attended Wooster Business College. In Nov 46 he married Geraldine 'Gerrie' who died in Oct 85. He later met Evelyn at a dance; they married in Jun 91. He worked at Bauer Ladder Co, Sheller Meats, and later retired from COFSCO Oil and Gas in Wooster. A member of the American Bowling Conference, he bowled for 66 years and in 09 joined the 100,000 Pin Club for National Tournament Bowling. He enjoyed golf and dancing; was member of VFW, American Legion, Elks, Moose, Eagles, and Central Christian Church. Predeceased by 2d and 2gc, he is survived by Evelyn, 4c, 1 s-in-law, 8gc; buried at Wooster Cemetery with memorials suggested to Hospice and Palliative Care of Greater Wayne Co, or Central Christian Church, both in Wooster.

**Blasky [earlier Blaskoski], Eugene Joseph**, 369<sup>th</sup> engineer top-turret gunner (Clayton Nattier crew), died in his long-time home of Duluth, MN, 26 Jan 05 at 83. Originally from WI, he enlisted in Chicago in May 42. With Nattier, he reported 21 Jul 44. Gene was not with Nattier when his crew was downed 13 Sep 44 (Merseberg), because Gene had been badly injured one night as a pedestrian returning to Thurleigh, when hit by a car due to the black-out conditions causing the driver to have no way of seeing him on the road; Gene was not able to resume flying, at least by mid-Sep when Nattier was downed. Nattier reported that he and Gene finally saw one another again in '01 at the 306<sup>th</sup> Minneapolis Reunion; they are pictured there together at the bottom of p.4 of Oct 01 *Echoes* (one of about 150 issues available online at 306bg.org under the *Echoes* tab). Post-war, Gene and his wife Kay moved to Duluth. He worked for International Correspondence School for 30 years, and was a member of St Michael's Church, where his Mass was conducted. Predeceased by Kay in 93, he is survived by 2d, 5gc; buried at Calvary Cemetery.

**Bowman, James E Sr**, 369<sup>th</sup> ball turret gunner (James L Cation crew), earlier of Fort Morgan, CO, died 30 May 2014 in Phoenix, AZ about a week following a stroke, at 93. He reported with Cation on 25 Oct 44; he flew 35 missions, with his first missions being in 'Flack Shack' with Cation. Later he flew about 10 to 15 missions in "Satan's Lady" including her 99<sup>th</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> missions, but not her 100<sup>th</sup> mission. He completed his tour 7 Apr 45. He and Dorothy Jean were married prior to his enlistment in the Air Corps, at which time he already had civilian experience as a skilled railroad brakeman. Post-war he had a life of railroad service, from Brakeman to Superintendent. Dorothy Jean, who received commendations and awards for many years of volunteer service to the American Red Cross of Tempe, predeceased him in Aug 07, at 81. One of his greatest joys, especially in his later years, was reading the "306<sup>th</sup> *Echoes*." In several recent years, he looked forward to coming to our Reunions and bringing family, only to back out closer to the event. He is survived by 6c, 13gc, 21gc.

**Brunemeier, 'Brunie' Faylon M**, 423<sup>rd</sup> bombardier (Curtis Oakes crew), born in IA of medical missionaries to China on home leave, and longtime resident of Redding, CA, died 28 Jun 14 following a long illness, at 89. With Oakes, he arrived 27 Mar 45, and would have continued serving in the Casey Jones Project mapping Europe and Northern Africa by aerial photos. Post-discharge in 46, he graduated from UC Santa Barbara and earned his medical degree from U of Chicago in 55. Interning at U of MN Hospitals, he met dietetic intern Dorothy, of Winnipeg; they married in Jul 56. After his 3 year residency in Ophthalmology at U of Chicago Clinics, they settled in Redding in 59, where he practiced until retiring in 96. His many interests included reading history, gardening, hunting, antique autos, and back-packing trips in the Trinity Alps in northern CA, which he continued until age 80. He held offices as president of Shasta Trinity

County Medical Society, Mercy Hospital Medical Staff, and the Redding Gun Club; he served on the Shasta Co Grand Jury, and the City of Redding Planning Commission, and was a regular writer of letters to the Editor of his local paper. He was member of St James Lutheran, the Horseless Carriage Club, and the NRA. In May 14, he valuably assisted our Association by making available for scanning for our 306<sup>th</sup> archives, the missing *Echoes* issues of May 04 and Jul 07, which are now posted at our website, 306bg.org. Memorial contributions were suggested to Good News Rescue Mission. Predeceased by 1s, he is survived by his wife of 58 years, Dorothy, 2c, his d-in-law, 7gc.

**Burgess, James**, 368<sup>th</sup> pilot, originally from CA, and long-time resident of greater Seattle, WA area, died 15 May 14 at 90. He reported 30 Dec 44 and departed 19 May 45 having flown 26 combat missions from 1 Feb to 19 Apr 45. Post-war, after a brief time in the Reserve, he was in active military service from May 46 until retiring 31 Dec 64 as Lt Col, Weather Officer 12th Weather Sq, MATS, Stewart AFB, NY; his overseas service included the Berlin airlift Jun 48 to May 49, in France '47-49; Germany '49-50; Hawaii '53-56 (including as pilot-meteorologist on 2 nuclear bomb tests on Eniwetok Atoll in 54 & 56, weather briefings & fallout forecasts for air crew & scientists); and Greenland '61-62. Post-military service, in '65-67 he was flight ops instructor for United Airlines, Denver; and '67-83 instructor pilot Boeing flight crew training Seattle, WA, on B-727, B-737, B-757, and B-767. His hobbies and interests were photography, music, travel, reading history, sailplaning, and "flying anything!" He'd intended to be at our '14 Reunion along with his ball-turret gunner, Loren Harter, who in Mar 12 he'd helped the Secretary re-locate. Survived by his wife Eva, 3c, 3gc.

**Chase, Carl R**, 367<sup>th</sup> radio operator (Joseph Couris crew), of New Albany, PA, 54, died 16 Apr 71 at Memorial Hospital in Towanda, after failing health for some time. With Couris, he reported 11 Jun 44; he completed his tour. He'd enlisted at Wilkes Barre in Aug 42 as Pvt, Air Corps. He was a member of St Paul's United Church of Christ in Overton, New Albany VFW Post 384, and Loyalsock Post 996, American Legion of Dushore. At his death, survived by his wife, Janice, 4c (including his son Bruce, who with his wife was at our 14 Reunion); buried at Bradford County Memorial Park, PA.

**Ciarlelli, John T**, 1208<sup>th</sup> QuarterMaster Co Pfc, died at the home of his son in Watertown, CT, 1 Apr 12 at 89. He was enlisted in Jan 43 in Hartford, CT; the Secretary failed to locate the date he reported at Thurleigh. Post-war he graduated in 50 from Palmer College of Chiropractic. He practiced at the John T Ciarlelli Chiropractic Clinic on Robbins St in Waterbury, CT. He was a long-time recipient of *Echoes*. By Mar 06 he and his wife Marion had moved to a retirement facility in Southbury, CT. She, remembered as a loving mother and grandmother, predeceased him in Mar 10, at Waterbury Hospital, at 80. Survived by 1s (who followed him in the practice); at least 1gc.

**Clark, Melvin E**, 423<sup>rd</sup> navigator (George Broz crew), of Denver, CO, died 16 Dec 03 at 84. He arrived 7 Jun 44 with Broz; departed 24 Sep 44 completing his tour. He continued in the service through Korea and Vietnam, retiring USAF, Lt Col, 1 Dec 64. Earned his BA at Sacramento State College in 52, MBA at U of IN 58. He and his wife Helen had 5c, 16gc when Mel sent an update to Russell Strong in Dec 94. At that time he listed his last employment as Director of Student Financial Aid at Univ of Denver. Buried at Ft Logan National Cemetery, Denver, CO.

**Cole, John R [Richard]**, 423<sup>rd</sup> tail-gunner (George C Broz crew), of Winnfield, Winn Parish, LA, died in hospital 22 Nov 96, at 79. With Broz, he reported 7 Jun 44, and completed his tour. He had enlisted 10 Jun 42 as a Pvt in the Air Corps at Barksdale Field, Shreveport, LA, as a married man with 4 years college and civilian work experience "Semiskilled occupations in production of bakery products." He earned his Bachelor's degree at Northwestern State U, and Master's at MS State U. He taught; was past president of Retired Teachers Association; past member of the LA Teachers Association; and member of First Christian Church. In 96, he was survived by his wife Helen, 1s, 3gc, 1ggs; buried at Garden of Memories, Winnfield, LA.

**Cranford, William 'Bill' H Jr**, 367<sup>th</sup> ball turret gunner (Roland 'Ron' A Lissner crew & others), of Woodworth, Rapides Parish, LA, died in hospital 17 Dec 00, at 76. He reported 9 Dec 44 with Lissner; most of his missions were with other crews. He was not with Lissner 3 Feb 45 (Berlin) when that crew was interned in Sweden. Cranford continued missions apparently to the end of the war, and may have continued flying in the Casey Jones mapping project. Post-war he married Eleanor, a graduate of Alexandria School of Business, whose hobbies included flower gardening, canning jellies, and reading. He was self-employed. They were members of the Baptist Temple Church. As a 50+ year mason, he was member of the Forest Hill Lodge. He was honored at WWII Memorial.com by Lissner. His wife of 53 years, Eleanor, survived him to Nov 07, at 81; they're buried at Alexandria Memorial Gardens in South Alexandria, LA, survived by 3c, 7gc, 4ggc as of '07. Memorials were suggested for him to the Rapides Cancer Center or the Lupus Foundation (both in Alexandria, LA), and for Eleanor, to the LA Baptist Children's Home in Monroe, LA.

**Cretekos, Steven G**, 367<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (Donald G Kingsley Jr crew) & pilot, of Wellsville, NY, died 4 Apr 09 in hospital at Sayre, PA at 85. He reported 5 Feb 45, and had 17 combat missions before continuing in the Casey Jones mapping project. He had enlisted at Atlantic City, NJ in Feb 43 as Pvt in the Air Corps. Post-war he married Kathryn in Oct 48, and was a restaurant manager, joining Texas Hot in Wellsville, where he worked 41 years, retiring in 08. He was a member of St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church of Jamestown, VFW, American Legion, and Wellsville Country Club, where he was an avid golfer. Survived by Kathryn, 3c, 3gd at his death, he was buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in Wellsville, NY. Memorial donations suggested to David A Howe Public Library, the Wellsville Volunteer Ambulance Corps, or Jones Memorial Hospital.



**Currier, Marvin G**, 369<sup>th</sup> tail gunner (David Wheeler & Keith Conley crews) & POW, long of Kalispell, MT, died there 16 Nov 08 at 89. He reported 12 Apr 43 with Wheeler. On his 6<sup>th</sup> mission, 29 Jul 43 (Kiel) with Conley, he survived their downing. He was POW at Stalag 17-B, and in the POW index, he was listed as a resident of MO. In his Dec 81 correspondence with Russell Strong, Currier said he was retired, but did not say from what career. He was apparently survived by his wife Genevieve, named on his Dec-92 correspondence with Strong. Secretary could not locate any further info.

**Davis, 'Red' LaRange S**, 369<sup>th</sup> radio operator (crew of Lowell Burgess), originally from Roosevelt, UT, died 12 Apr 08 in Tularosa, NM, at 87. He reported 12 Apr 44 with the crew and finished his tour in Jul. Post-war he married Lorraine 10 Jun 45 at Long Beach, CA. He was an international manager for International Corp [sic], and lived in LaHabra, CA for 50 years before they moved to NM. Lorraine survived him there to 27 Feb 12, at 88. Survived by 4c, 9gc, 17ggc, 1gggc, they are buried at Monte Vista Cemetery in Alamogordo, NM, with contributions suggested to the Alzheimers Association at her death.

**Drumm, William M [Montgomery]**, 368th crew chief, originally from PA and in recent years of Hartland, VT, died 23 Sep 14 at 92 in the VA Hospital in White River Junction, VT after a brief stay. Bill reported to the 306th on 3 Apr 42; at Thurleigh he was crew chief for "Li'l Butch" and other B-17s, until as M/Sgt he departed in Mar 44 for an essential role in 'Operation Frantic' which was supposed to facilitate our WWII shuttling of bombers the shorter distance to our ally Russia, in Ukraine, following bombing missions, rather than them always needing to return to England at the end of missions. 'Frantic' and Bill were discussed briefly in the Secretary's column of 306th *Echoes* 2013 'Winter' Issue #1. Post-war, thanks to the GI Bill, he earned a degree in Photographic Technology at Rochester Institute of Technology, and then had a career in Microphotography, as Photographic Engineer for Itek Corp, the company responsible for the development and implementation of photographic satellites for the USAF and the 'Corona' program which helped propel us ahead of the USSR. Later he generated high-resolution encoders. He retired from DRC in Wilmington, MA. He served as Boston chapter president of the Society for Imaging Science & Technology. He was active in his communities as a volunteer with hospice, Montshire Museum, the VA Hospital, and delivering Meals on Wheels. He participated at the Dartmouth Memory Café, and in Hartland was a reader in the elementary school and library. He was a member of Aging in Hartland; Friends of the Library; Nature Club; American Legion; and was a very active church member each place he lived. He met his wife Sarah 'Sue' when they sang in the church choir together; their marriage of 45 years was cut short by her death at 68 in early '92. He wrote an autobiographical booklet to pass on the family story to future generations. His memorial service was at First Congregational, UCC, Hartland and burial at Hartland Cemetery, with memorials suggested to Hartland Public Library. Survived by 2s & 2d, 9gc, 5ggc.

**Ellsworth, Ralph E**, 369<sup>th</sup> waist gunner (Gustave Holmstrom) & POW, long of Magnolia, IA, died 18 Sep 14, at 92. He reported 1 Oct 43 with William Hilton; was downed on his first mission, 14 Oct 43 on 'Picadilly Comando' with Holmstrom; was POW, at Maulhausen Concentration Camp in Germany and then Stalag 17B in Austria. After 11 months he was released in a prisoner swap, returning to the US in Sep 44. In Nov 44 he married Blythe. He farmed a few years until declining health caused him to leave the farm. He operated his own trucking business, retiring in 82. Blythe died in '00; he later married Vivian, who also predeceased him. He was an avid woodworker and gardener; member of American Legion, VFW, Disabled American Veterans, and American ex-POW Group. He attended Mondamin Baptist. For many years, thanks to a local teacher's urging, he met with her students, speaking in his gentle, soft-spoken way of his training, the Black Thursday mission, and his time as a POW. Spellbound students and their teacher learned, as she said, "far more than any history book could ever convey about what it means to serve one's country." Survived by 2c, 4gs, 7ggc, 2step-c, he is buried at Magnolia Cemetery, Magnolia, IA.

**Endrusick, Stanley A**, 369<sup>th</sup> radio operator (Andrew P Kata crew) & POW, of San Gabriel, CA (originally from PA), died 4 Dec 05 at 82. With Kata, he reported 27 Apr 44. From 8 Aug-44 (Caen mission) with Kata on 'Dam Yankee' Endrusick was POW at Stalag Luft 4. From this same flight, 3 more crew mates also became POW [Horace F Kepler; John J Lawlor; Basil F Lowry], while 6 fortunately landed on the British side of the line, and were returned to Thurleigh the next day [Kata; co-pilot George C Simons; navigator Raymond E Bloker Jr; toggler Philip Mundell; engineer Joseph Brown; & ball turret Cliff G Latta]. Post-war, in Philadelphia, PA Stan married Rose Marie. They relocated to San Gabriel, CA. He taught at John Muir High School in Pasadena for 35+ years. Predeceased in 96 by Rose Marie at 67, Stan was survived at his death by 2c, 1gs. Following his funeral mass, he was buried at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Rowland Heights, CA.

**Fieser, Michael William**, 423<sup>rd</sup> tail / waist gunner (Leland Love crew), a MO native, died 1 Jan 14 at General Baptist Nursing Home in Campbell, MO, at 91. With Love, he reported 19 Nov 43; he completed his tour, 27 missions. When he was enlisted at Jefferson Barracks, MO, he was single; post-war he married Helen 27 Oct 45 in St Louis, MO. Russell Strong's Card File noted he'd been a nylon extruder operator at Parker Hannifin, Inc. He retired from Uniroyal in Kennett. He was a member of St Teresa Catholic in Glennonville. Predeceased by 2s, he is survived by Helen, 7c, 1d-in-law, 24gc, 19ggc; buried at St Teresa's Cemetery; memorials were suggested to the Greater St. Louis Honor Flight, Inc, in Chesterfield.

**Griffin, William 'Mickey' F**, 367<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (Charles Wegener, on 'Umbriago'), pilot, and POW, died in his sleep 2 Jun 14, at home in Tucson, just weeks before his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday. With Wegener, he reported on 4 Jun 44, and on 12 Sep 44, on his 33<sup>rd</sup> mission (Ruhland), they were downed. Mickey was severely injured and was POW in hospital at Meiningen for 8 months. Post-war he became an architect and worked on many commercial and civic buildings in Tucson. Mickey, Charlotte, his wife of 22.5 years, and daughters recently enjoyed our Reunions in DC '10; San Diego '11; and Savannah '12. Survived by Charlotte; 2d; 1step-d; 6gc; 4ggc.

**Grunski, Robert W**, 367<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (Walter Brasch crew) & pilot, originally of Neenah, WI, and long-time resident of Hewitt, TX, died 11 Jun 14 at 90. He reported 26 Dec 44, and departed 8 Jun 45, completing 29 missions. Post-war he graduated U of WI, with a BS in Correctional Administration. In college, he met fellow student and future bride Lolly; they married in 48. Until 55 Bob worked at the MD State Penitentiary and next as a civilian at an AF Correctional Facility in TX, until working for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, with assignments in Lewisburg, PA; Chillicothe, OH; Leavenworth, KS; Springfield, MO; Milan, MI; Petersburg, VA; Seagoville, TX; and retired in Dec 77 from Montgomery, AL as Federal Prison Camp Superintendent, Maxwell AFB. In retirement he was actively involved as a volunteer with the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Caritas, and other family outreach organizations, as well working at a youth facility as a counselor. He and Lolly co-directed Children's Church and Jr High leadership in various churches. They loved Israel and visited there 13 times as volunteers, Bob in library work and teaching English as a volunteer in Ashdod High School, and Lolly putting on puppet shows. Predeceased by 2s, Bob is survived by Lolly, 2s, 5gc, 2ggc. Memorials suggested to American Friends of Magen David Adom [Israel's national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance, & blood bank service] or Wycliffe Bible Translators.

**Haring, Russell G**, 423<sup>rd</sup> pilot, originally of Clinton, IA, died in Tonganoxie, KS, where he'd long lived, 27 May 14 at 90. He reported 27 Mar 45, flew 11 combat missions, and continued flying photographic missions in the Casey Jones Project until departing in Apr 46. His Oct 43 marriage to Ruth ended after 53 years when she died in 96. He also served in the Korean War, both in combat and non-combat roles. Post-military, he was a general superintendent in the commercial construction industry, in charge of several large projects, including the Hallmark Distribution Center in Liberty, MO, several large schools, and the KCK [Kansas City KS] Public Library. At 50 he retired from construction to pursue his first love, farming, and continued to actively farm well into his 80's. Until his death he advised and assisted the family with farming. In his free time he enjoyed playing poker with his buddies. Survived by 3d, 9gc, 14ggc; buried in Hubbel Hill Cemetery; memorials suggested to the National WWII Memorial or Lawrence [KS] Memorial Hospital Palliative Care.

**Hopper, Ray V**, (Gp; communications officer) of Los Altos, CA, died 14 Feb 06, at 88. He reported 15 Mar 42, initially as Captain, later Major and Lt Col. He was transferred to VIII BC [8<sup>th</sup> AF Bomb Command?] 29 Dec 43, Exec Offr to Director of Communications 8AF. Pre-war he earned his BS in Mining Engineering at UC Berkeley in '39, and married Norine in Apr 42 before heading to England. Post-war he remained active in the Reserves, retiring Feb 68. His career as electrical engineer with Pacific Telephone (including as District Manager) and AT&T spanned 35 years, in which he was recognized for his project management skills. His interest in technology prompted him to build his own hi-fi system, telescope, and flintlock musket among other projects. He was an active member of Foothills Congregational Church. Survived by Norine, who died at 89 in Jan '10; 4c (including Deb, who was at our '14 CO Springs Reunion); 5gc, at least 1ggc. Buried at Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, CA.

**Kohler, Richard L**, 368<sup>th</sup> radio operator (crews of Leland Hendershot & Carl N Grending) & lead radio operator, a native of York County, PA, died there 30 Jun 14 at 90. He reported 31 Oct 43 with Hendershot; he completed his 30 missions 11 Jun 44. He participated in the first 2 raids on Berlin and the Normandy invasion, for participation in which he later received the French Golden Jubilee Medal. He departed in Oct; he and Frances married on 22 Oct. He was a sales engineer at York Corrugating Co in York, retiring after 40 years in 85. He was member of the American Legion and life member of VFW. He served 20 years on the board for West York Area School District, as President for 13 of those years, and 6 years on the board of Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12, including 5 as president. Survived by his wife of 69+ years, Frances, 3s, 4gc; buried at Dallastown Union Cemetery; memorials suggested to St Stephen's United Church of Christ in York.

**Lussier, Ernest R T**, 369<sup>th</sup> waist gunner (Clayton Nattier crew), of MA, died 31 Mar 99 at 79. With Nattier, he reported 21 Jul 44. When he was enlisted at Boston in Sep 42, he was married with one year of college and civilian occupation of "Salesmen, insurance." He was not listed in any 306<sup>th</sup> Directories. USVA shows Sgt Lussier is buried at Colebrook Cemetery in Whitman, MA. No further info.

**Macy, William H Sr**, 423<sup>rd</sup> co-pilot (George Broz) & pilot, of Cumberland, MD, died 13 Jul 07 at the Goodwill Mennonite Home in Grantsville, MD, at 85. He reported with Broz 7 Jun 44; he completed his tour, departing 18 Nov 44, and left the AF 15 Sep 45. Post-war he earned his Bachelor's at Davidson College in 47, and was President of Macy Insurance Agency, Cumberland, MD until retirement. In retirement he lived for some time in Gainesville, FL. Predeceased by his wife Lois; survived by 2s, 4gc, 2ggc in 07.

**McCormack, Miles C**, 368<sup>th</sup> pilot & co-pilot (Roy C Ranck) & POW, long-time resident of Grand Junction, CO, died 12 Apr 14, at 93. He reported 15 Sep 43; on 9 Oct, his 2<sup>nd</sup> mission, as co-pilot for Ranck (mission to Gdynia harbor in Poland; in the same B-17 with navigator Carl Groesbeck) they were downed over Denmark, as covered in *Echoes* Jan-09, p.8 article re Thurleigh. POW at Stalag 3 for 2 years, and ended up as so many POWs did, at Stalag 7A after their forced march. He'd been a linotype operator in DC when he enlisted in the Air Corps in Dec 41. Post-war he married Marie. He was reassigned to Anchorage, AK during the Korean War until his discharge in Aug 53. They later moved to Lakewood, CO. His career in construction included a contract on a dam high in the CO mountains, and a contract at the AF Academy. In 87, he retired and they relocated to Grand Junction, where he was a loyal member of the Commemorative AF. Marie predeceased him in Jun 02, at 80. In Sep 10 he emailed his appreciation for all we're doing, saying he'd hoped to come to our '10 Reunion in DC, but couldn't after all due to problems with his knees. Survived by 4c; buried at the Veteran's Cemetery in Grand Junction, CO.



**Morton, Frederick C**, 368<sup>th</sup> Sq communications (per Russell Strong's Card File), originally from Manasquan, NJ, died 26 Jan 84 in Public Landing, MD at 63. He arrived in Sep 42; an inner ear problem cut short his flying; he departed in May/Jun 45. Pre-war he was a police officer in Manasquan. In Nov 46, he married Anna Mae Clark, a war widow, becoming father to Steve Clark, who greatly appreciates learning more thanks to our Association and the 306<sup>th</sup> Museum at Thurleigh. They moved to Avon, where Morton worked for NJ Bell until he retired in 77 after 30 years of service. A real family man, he also enjoyed hunting and golfing from his early teens. He was a member of Trinity United Methodist in Newark, MD. Pre-deceased by 1d in 81, at his death survived by Anna Mae, Steve, 5gc.

**Noyes, Harvey L [LaVerne] Jr**, 369<sup>th</sup> engineer top turret gunner on 'Wahoo' (David W Wheeler), originally from Rouseville, PA, who lived in retirement in Longboat Key, FL, died at Freedom Village, Bradenton, FL, 8 Sep 14 at 94. He reported with Wheeler 12 Apr 43; flew 25 missions, including 24 Jul (Heroya) about which Russell Strong devoted several paragraphs in *First Over Germany* to their B-17's plight, when they fortunately made it back. He was the 124<sup>th</sup> enlisted man to complete a tour, and continued serving a total of 4 years in service. His 37-year career was in management with General American Transportation Corporation (now GATX, maker of rail tank cars & other railcars), traveling extensively from his base in OH. He was a 73-year Mason; a Shriner; a Presbyterian deacon and elder; member of Kiwanis. He enjoyed golfing, tennis, fishing; and his grandsons. Survived by wife of 64 years, Lorena, 1d, 3gs, 2ggd.

**Reber, Marlen E**, 368<sup>th</sup> Original pilot, long-time resident of Punta Gorda, FL, died 29 Jul 12, at 94. His 'Eager Beaver' was the 8<sup>th</sup> AF's first aircraft to complete 25 missions without an abort. As Captain, he was the 19<sup>th</sup> officer to complete a tour (25 missions), with the 29 Jun 43 Paris mission. In Sep, as Maj, he left for 1<sup>st</sup> BD 8AF HQ. He continued in the USAF, serving in Korea and Vietnam. During his service, he earned his MBA at George Washington Univ in 58. In 68, after 27 years of service, he retired as a full Colonel, Director Base Facilities at Wright-Patterson AFB. He then became the City Safety Service Director of Troy, OH. He and Virginia retired to Punta Gorda in 80, joining the Isles Yacht Club and Burnt Store Country Club. He loved to golf and boat. Survived by his wife of 70 years, Virginia, 4s, 6gc, 6ggc. Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic; buried at Royal Palm Memorial Gardens, Punta Gorda.

**Redd, Clifford A**, 367<sup>th</sup> waist-gunner (Milton Adam crew), who was born in OH, and long had lived in Avon, MA, died 16 Oct 11 at 87. He reported 7 Jun 44 and completed 13 missions, departing 30 Sep 44. Post-war, he was a baker for Continental Bakery in Natick 38 years, retiring as Head Baker. He enjoyed fishing and hunting. After his funeral mass, buried at St Michael Cemetery, Avon; survived by his wife Joann, 4c, 7gc, 6ggc, with memorials suggested to the American Diabetes Association.

**Ritter, Robert G**, 369 pilot & POW, originally of Rochester, NY, died in Conroe, TX 22 Mar 11, at 87. He reported 1 Sep 44; when his plane was downed 14 Oct 44 (Cologne mission), 3 crew members were killed in the attack; Ritter and other crew members were POW. When he enlisted in Feb 43 in Atlantic City, NJ as a Pvt, Air Corps, he was single with a high school education and civilian occupation classified "Clerks, general." His name was not found in 306<sup>th</sup> Directories. Survived by his wife of 67 years, Virginia, 3c, 5gc, 2ggc; buried at Houston National Cemetery, Houston, TX.

**Rollo, William**, 369<sup>th</sup> toggler on 'Flak Shack' (Don Snook crew), died at Hart Comfort House in Wellsville, NY, on 22 Sep 14, at 87, following a brief illness. With Snook, he reported 27 Feb 45, and completed 25 missions. Originally from Buffalo, NY, he made his home in Friendship, NY upon return from service. In Feb 51 he married Mary in SD; they lived in Friendship and Cuba Lake many years. In 58 he founded Mite-E-Lite Mfg Co, continuing as president of Mite-E-Lite Division when the company was purchased by McCulloch Corp. In 76, retiring from McCulloch, he became VP general manager of Briggs & Stratton automotive lock division. In 87, he retired and was director and executive board member of Trico Company of Buffalo. He was on the board of directors of First Union Trust Co. Bank of Wellsville, a life member of the Presbyterian Church, a director of the Presbyterian Homes of Western NY, and a member of American Legion. In 90 he was a founder of the ROMEOS [Retired Old Men Eating Out] Club of Olean, meeting weekly. Meanwhile Mary was the founder of the Friendship Register Newspaper. They loved traveling and attended a number of reunions. From 01 to 13, they lived in Sarasota, FL, returning to Cuba, NY, where Mary died 25 Sep 13 at 88 following a lengthy illness. In 04 Bill established Walter Taber Memorial Trust for the benefit of the Friendship community, giving generously in memory of their children (two who died in infancy; one son died in 01 at 48). Bill enjoyed bike riding, sailing, listening to jazz, and socializing. No surviving descendants. Buried at Maple Grove Cemetery, in Friendship; memorials suggested to the Walter Taber Memorial, Friendship American Legion Post 1168, Depot Street, Friendship, NY 14739.

**Search, Robert W [Walter]**, 367<sup>th</sup> radio operator (George L Hatch & others), of New York City, died 15 Feb 12 at 87. With Hatch, he reported 22 Sep 44; flew most of his missions before Hatch departed in Jan 45; completed his 30 missions in Mar. Post-war he earned a degree in engineering physics at NYU, and served as a Lt in Korea. After his service, his career was an engineer with Sperry. Living in NYC he enjoyed ballet, symphony, theater, museums, and extensive travel, viewing vacations as learning experiences. Predeceased by a son at 17 in an accident, he's survived by his wife of 28 years, Sheila, and 1d.

**Showers, Charles 'Charlie' E Jr**, 4th Sta Comp Sq & 449<sup>th</sup> SubDepot T/Sgt truckmaster, of Hamburg, PA, died 20 Sep 13 at 96. He was a life-long self-employed auto mechanic, owning and operating Showers Garage. He was a member of St John's Evangelical Lutheran; of Union Fire Co of Hamburg; the Reading Hunting Camp, Lycoming County; and an honorary member of the NRA. He was an avid hunter and enjoyed fishing. He was predeceased by his wife, Ruth, in Nov 99 at 78; survived by 1s. Buried at St John's Cemetery, Hamburg; memorial contributions suggested to National Multiple Sclerosis Society, or National Parkinson Foundation.

**Simpkins, Martin**, Group Weather Office, of Lynbrook, NY, died 19 Jul 12, at 93. He reported 19 Aug 43. He was predeceased by his wife Bea in Aug 01, at 79; survived by 2d, 2gd. Burial at New Montefiore Cemetery, Farmingdale, NY with donations suggested to the Southern Poverty Law Center, in Montgomery, AL.

**Thousand, Keith C**, 367<sup>th</sup> (unknown duties), died 4 Jun 14 at 96 in Hazel Park, MI, where he lived since infancy. From Russell Strong's Card File, we know he was S/Sgt with the MOS of aerial gunner, and in Mar 44 the MOS of airplane armorer / gunner, however no arrival info, crew, or other war-time info is listed. From the '40 Census, we know he was age 22, a truck driver for a rubber company, and the eldest of 4 single sons in the parents' household in Hazel Park. Post-war he was a barber for many years in the Hazel Park area. He was predeceased by his British wife Edna in Apr 87, at 65. Survived by 3c, 11gc, 12ggc, 2gggc.

**Uhlhorn, William 'Bill' B [Burns]**, 423<sup>rd</sup> bombardier (George C Broz crew) and POW, originally from Oak Park, IL and long-time resident of Dickinson, TX (SE of Houston), died 12 Feb 04 at 82. With Broz, he reported 7 Jun 44. On 15 Jun 44 (Nantes) with pilot Wilbur B O'Brien and co-pilot George C Price, Uhlhorn survived the downing to become POW at Stalag 3. He enlisted 21 Nov 42 at Chicago, IL as Pvt in Air Corps; he was married, and had civilian occupation experience in "Skilled photographic process occupations." At 65 he married Harriet, who predeceased him in Dec 96, at 70. His memorial service was held in Dickinson, TX; no info found re post-war work or survivors.

**Vick, Vernon A**, 367<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (John Gooch crew) & pilot, long of the area west of Columbus, OH, died 24 Feb 13 in Madison County Hospital, London, OH, at 91. He reported with Gooch 10 Feb 45; he continued flying in the Casey Jones Project until his departure 7 Oct 45. He had 2 yrs college prior to the war and was enlisted at Columbus in Jan 43. A graduate of the Ohio State U in 48, his career in aviation included instruction at Don Scott Field, OSU charter work, and his own Aerial Agricultural business; he also farmed in Madison Co. Survived by his wife, Ann M H, 2s; memorials suggested to the Mechanicsburg Public Library, in Mechanicsburg, OH.

**Winward, John M [Mead]**, 423<sup>rd</sup> pilot, who was born in UT in 16, died 12 Feb 99, one month short of 93, per the Social Security Death Index, which listed no last residence location of record. He reported 4 Jun 44 and departed 1 Oct 44 to the 27<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Gp, having flown 35 missions. When he had enlisted at Salt Lake City, UT on 5 Jun 42 as Pvt in Air Corps, he was married with 4 years of college and civilian occupation of "Chemists, assayers, and metallurgists." Post-war, he was listed in our 306<sup>th</sup> Directories of 88-96 in Ridgecrest, CA, near Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in southern CA; in 99 Directories his name had only a PO Box in Wrightwood, CA. Apparently survived by at least 1s who is also a pilot; no further info located.

**Wood, Paul R**, 367<sup>th</sup> / 423<sup>rd</sup> tail gunner (various crews Sep 43 to Oct 44), originally from Madisonville, KY and long-time resident of Tucson, died there 24 Aug 14, at 92. After the other 9 men on his initial crew at Thurlough were killed within the first few weeks or months there, he served as a floating gunner, flying every mission asked of him. He knew he flew at least one mission with 367<sup>th</sup> pilot Arthur Mack, who reported in mid-Nov 43, since he had a photo taken with Mack. Post-war he had a break in service before re-enlisting; he served a total of 23 years in the AF, including a year in Vietnam on ground crew, before retiring in 72. He managed a warehouse for a moving company in Tucson before retiring. He loved to drive and see new places. Survived by his wife Elizabeth, who he met in 58; 2s, 3gc, 8ggc.

## **FAMILY**

**Brown, Virginia**, who survived ten months after the death of husband Richard L (369th Edgar Smith crew radio operator; obit in our last issue), died 3 Nov 14 in Billings, MT, at 87, after a few months of lung disease. She was from southern CA. While working as secretary at Chemical & Geological Labs in Casper, WY, she met Richard. They married in 48, and raised their family in Billings, delighting in trips for camping, scuba, and 306th and family reunions. Most recently they came to Savannah '12 and San Diego '11 with son Robert and daughter Patty O'Connell. Survived by 4c, 11gc, 1ggd; buried at Yellowstone National Cemetery; memorials to Billings Area Catholic Education Trust.

**Jones, Dorris**, wife of 423rd Original pilot Ralph W Jones, died 20 Oct 2014 in Floresville, TX, at 93. Just weeks earlier, Dorris, Ralph, and many of their family members enjoyed our 306th Reunion in Colorado Springs while also having their own family reunion; they appear in each of the reunion's large groups pictured in this issue. Born in CA, Dorris graduated from La Sierra College (then part of Loma Linda) in Riverside, CA, and worked as an RN for many years. She and Ralph married 12 Aug 45 in Los Angeles. She was selected "Military Wife of the Year" in 74. They relocated in 12 from CA to Floresville, TX, near San Antonio, where they were members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Survived by Ralph, 2d, 3 foster d, 4gc, 5ggc; burial at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio; memorials suggested to Loma Linda University School of Nursing, in memory of Dorris Hulme Jones, Class of 1944.

Full obits can be found in the Obituaries section of our website, 306bg.org for these men who have no *Echoes*-following relative known to the Secretary as of 11 Nov 2014:

**Black, Ocel Roy**, 368 crew chief, d.21 Jan 07.  
**Buford, Forest 'Brad' B**, 367 gunner (Louis Matichka) & Internee, d.16 May 08.  
**Clocks, Duane Brown**, 368 pilot, d.31 Mar 14.  
**Compton, Henry B**, 367 gunner (Clarence Eugene Fischer) & POW, d.10 Jul 58.  
**Cunningham Jack R**, 369 radio oper (William S Tarr) & POW, d.13 Nov 09.  
**Dowden, Leland A**, 369 bombardier (George C Bettinger) & POW, d. 20 Sep 04.  
**Eastham, 'Fran' Francis L**, 367 radio oper (Clarence Eugene Hopkins, Raymond P, 423 engineer (Wallace W 'Winston' Wood) d.29 Feb 04.  
**Hovey, Eugene C**, 423 radio oper (Wallace W 'Winston' Wood) d.8 Aug 99.  
**John, Manfred L**, 369 radio oper (Ralph Peters) d.2 Nov 76.  
**Koch, Warren C B**, 423 pilot, d.6 Nov 05.  
**Lewis, Urban J**, 423 gunner (Earle Schafer) d.17 Nov 02.  
**Lindsay, Raymond W**, 423 gunner (Donald Cheney) d.6 Apr 10.  
**Littlefield, George S**, 367 gunner (Donald Schaefer & others) d.31 Mar 07.  
**Lockhart, Denison 'Bud' C Jr**, 368 gunner (James Law) d.14 Nov 07.  
**Lynch, William H**, 423 gunner (Ellis Porter & others) d.26 Sep 10.  
**Mayer, Edward J Jr**, 369 gunner (Ralph Peters & others) d.19 Oct 03.  
**McGalliard, Thomas R**, 423 co-pilot (James Sylvester & Virgil Jeffries) & POW, d.26 Sep 08.  
**McManimon, Robert C**, Gp & 367<sup>th</sup> (unclear duties) d.13 Aug 09.  
**McNamara, Daniel F**, 369 gunner (Richard Lambert) & POW, d.21 Feb 00.  
**Melton, William Curtis Jr**, 368 pilot, d.13 Jun 08.  
**Meyer, Clayton R**, 423 navigator (Earle Schafer) d.31 Mar 98.  
**Michael, 'Bud' Darwin R**, 423 Original radio oper Direct Finding station, d. 18 Sep 09.  
**Morrison, Kenneth D**, 423 engineer (Earle Schafer) d.22 Jan 88.  
**O'Brien, Wilbur B**, 423 pilot & POW, d.23 Oct 82.  
**Overstreet, Raymond 'Bernard' B**, 367 pilot, d.10 Jul 05.  
**Pawelke, Richard F**, 367 co-pilot & pilot, d.6 Oct 04.  
**Perry, John 'Jack' W**, 423 gunner (John Winward & Paul Reioux) d.15 Apr 01.  
**Pertuit, Henry J Jr**, 367 engineer (Aloys Fuessel) d.3 Sep 74.  
**Plym, Donald O**, 423 & 876 Chemical Co automotive equipment operator, d.27 Jun 09.  
**Riley, Zenas C**, 367 gunner (Aloys Fuessel) d.6 Feb 75.  
**Roehl, Joseph E**, 423<sup>rd</sup> Pfc, d.6 Aug 05.  
**Sanders, Lee**, 369 Original gunner & POW (Clarence Eugene Fischer) d.20 Dec 08.  
**Soriano, Nicholas 'Nick' A**, 4 Sta Complet switchboard oper & communications, d.25 Apr 09.  
**Stiles, Porter H**, 367 bombardier (Aloys Fuessel) d.in 73.  
**Stoll, Robert V Sr**, 367 co-pilot (Aloys Fuessel) d.1 Jan 98.  
**Sweet, Floyd 'Ernie' E**, 368 radio oper (James Law) d.15 Nov 97.  
**Yashack, Allen 'Dick' R**, 367 gunner (Donald Schaefer & others) d.17 Oct 08.

Fischer) & POW, d.26 Dec 98.

**Eldredge, Don H**, 367 co-pilot (Ralph Gaston) & POW, d.12 May 08.

**Eldredge, Richard D**, 368 bombardier (Charles Trigg), d.11 Nov 09.

**Eyler, Carl G**, 367 navigator (Aloys Fuessel) d.4 Mar 89.

**Fuessel, Aloys W [William] Jr**, 367 pilot, d.8 Jul 81.

**Gerald, Robert S**, 368 co-pilot & pilot, d.17 Oct 01.

**Gregory, Edward S**, 367 crew chief 'Rose of York' d.9 Sep 06.

**Hadix, Jacob 'Jake' R**, 367 gunner (Aloys Fuessel) & earlier chauffeur, d.9 May 84.

**Hernandez, Henry**, 367 gunner (Roy Hoffman) d.20 06.

## Lt. Robert E. Woods' War Diary: The Missing Page

*(Editor's note: Part 1 of Lt. Woods' diary (pages 1-32), appeared in the Spring 2012 issue of Echoes; Part 2 (pages 32-67) were in the Summer 2012 issue; Part 3 (pages 68 – conclusion) were in the Fall 2012 issue. However, in the Spring 2012 issue, page 64 was inadvertently omitted. Thanks to one of our readers who alerted us to the missing page of this fascinating read, leaving the story of the April 10, 1945 mission incomplete, we contacted Lt. Woods widow, who was able to provide a copy of the missing page. The diary pages can be enlarged for easier viewing at our website, 306bg.org under the Echoes tab.)*

HAD BEEN.  
 NO. ONE ENGINE'S MANIFOLD PRESSURE READ BETWEEN 15" and 30" - THE NEEDLE WAS GOING CRAZY. I KNEW OUR SUPER-CHARGER WAS HIT ON IT - TO SAY THE LEAST.  
 I HAD RIGGED UP THE WALK AROUND BOTTLE NOW, and MY VISION WAS CLEARING UP. OXYGEN IS A WONDERFUL THING.  
 THE CREW WAS ALERTED TO PREPARE TO ABANDON SHIP. THEN, AS IN ANSWER TO A PRAYER, NO. ONE ENGINE'S MANIFOLD PRESSURE STEADIED ITSELF AT 28" - WE WERE DOWN TO 9000 FT NOW. LARRY HAD GIVEN US A COURSE HOME, and WITH TWO FAIRLY GOOD ENGINES, NO. ONE and NO. FOUR, WE STRUCK OUT FOR FRIENDLY LINES, 90 MILES AWAY.  
 WE COULDN'T HOLD OUR ALTITUDE, THOUGH WE WERE

64



# 306th Bomb Group Historical Association Unravels Puzzle Family of Dr. Charles P. McKim Discovers 306<sup>th</sup> Connection

Story by Julie McKim, Daughter

This is a story of appreciations and serendipity. Who can say how some things run together?

There's a small thread leading back to years before my birth that now goes forward much enriched and expanded. Only through surprising and seemingly random events am I able to write this story. It centers of course through WWII.

My dad went to the war from Eastern Oregon in 1942 and eventually was assigned to the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group at Thurleigh Air Field. He came home in 1945. I'm among the first baby boomers. Two years ago on Memorial Day the first random event of my story occurred. My brothers, Robert and John, and I live in different cities but we were together that day. John presented photos he'd found on-line of our dad with the 457th BG. But wait, Robert and I had documentation of his assignment to the 306th. Hmmm, a puzzle.

Despite limited experience in computer research, I engaged the mystery. Several hours in the websites of the 457th and 306th Historical Associations gave me too much material and many more questions. And so comes another leap -- I decided to try a personal contact with the 306<sup>th</sup> Historical Association's secretary, Barbara Neal. Hurrah! Applause is due here. What a glorious reply I received!

"Yes, indeed," she said, "Dr. McKim was in the 306th, then later transferred to the 457th. You might check out the ECHO's newsletter July 2008 for an article on the medical teams. There are photos of your dad." Wow! --- AND THEN she said, "That's Bill Houlihan with him in one photo. He's one of our favorite vets. He comes to reunions regularly. He's 95 and darn sharp. He'd love to hear from you."



I needed reassurance before calling him and Barbara gave me that. So I called Bill and John called him and Robert called him. No surprise to many of you, Bill was very gracious and

generous with his time and stories. And he sent along pages of information to each of us. Many emails were shared.

In August 2013, Robert and his wife and my husband and I went on a tour to Ireland and Scotland, our home ground. Of course, we extended our time to go to Bedford and Thurleigh. Ralph and Daphne Franklin toured us through the museum. We shared a picnic snack and spent a lovely afternoon together. You might know what an amazing experience that is.



Picking up the thread again, with a wild idea to meet Bill, I tried an email to another Houlihan on the list of addresses. Lucky strike! It was Bill's daughter, Cindy. And yes, it would be possible to come to Detroit to meet Bill. More email exchanges nailed down a date that fit between the Irish dancing competitions of Bill's grandchildren, Connor and Caitlin. In early May, my brothers and I had an amazing visit with Bill, and with Cindy and her family. More stories and an incredible amount of information from Bill's memory and 306th materials, all this freely shared --- and more kindnesses and generosity from Cindy and her family.

We spent an afternoon at Willow Run Airport and the Yankee Air Museum where we saw the progression of airplanes from early B-17s to Huey helicopters. AND THEN - another piece of serendipity-- On hearing that our fathers were in WWII, the clerk suggested we go to the old runway down the road where a B-17 was being flown for training. Why not?





## President's Column

The room was alive, filled with energy and eyes were sparkling from the faces of our veterans. Young faces of Air Force Cadets were showing rapt attention while family members of our veterans were smiling and enjoying the scene. Our Colorado Springs reunion was indeed special for the 23 WWII veterans and all who were fortunate to have attended.

You may not be aware that the cadets have very little free time and choosing to come and spend an evening with us was a significant decision. Unlike other military services with long histories, the Air Force and Air Force Academy did not come into existence until after WWII. Our veterans represent the history and heritage of their chosen careers for those young cadets. We received great feedback from them including from one who said it was the best use of his free time since he came to the Academy! Barbara and I sponsored a cadet we have known as the son of our pastor. Upon our return, our pastor told us the son called the next day and in relating his experience to his parent (and a grandparent who was visiting) he became emotional and cried. The experience was part of the cadets' education they will likely never forget.

Education has always been one of the purposes of our association and it is becoming more prominent as our WWII heroes leave us and can no longer pass the lessons of the responsibilities of citizenship, duty, courage, and sacrifice to family, friends and others in person. The last issue of *Echoes* highlighted the efforts to preserve and make available many of the physical records that help preserve the memories and educate succeeding generations of our beloved veterans. Our reunions and increasingly our website are important ways to preserve memories, educate people, and assist researchers. The website contains thousands of records, photographs, diaries and other material including videos, recordings and reference books – and it is growing with material we already have, that continues to be added and, with your help, we can add material that may be buried in your closets or those of your loved ones.

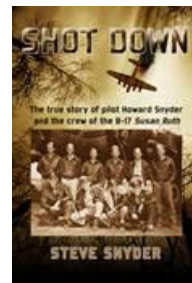
I am writing this article on Veterans Day and I know many of you will have attended events, visited or called veterans, or at least thought about and perhaps offered a little prayer in thanks and remembrance. I hope that some of you will accept the challenge to do more. Make recordings of your beloved veteran telling

his stories. Look in those closets and storage places and consider helping us document and preserve the material and memories therein. If you could have seen the faces of the young cadets, you would know and feel how important they may be.

On this day, I also am grateful for those who help our Association's efforts to conduct our reunions, produce our *Echoes* publication, and the other tasks that go along with honoring, preserving, and educating others regarding the men and heritage of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. You too can help: maybe you can contribute time, maybe memorabilia, or perhaps a cash contribution to help defray costs (mainly printing and mailing the *Echoes*).

Did you know that 8 of our 9 non-World War II vet board members, and many of those regularly attending our reunions, do not have a surviving World War II veteran relative? We have formed wonderful friendships and feel we owe it to the "greatest generation" to carry on. Consider joining us in Salt Lake City September 17-20 next year.

Charles Neal  
President



**Congratulations, Steve Snyder, our new VP.** In Colorado Springs many appreciated seeing Steve's well-researched book on the 8 February 1944 downing over Belgium of the crew of his father (who died Apr '07), 369<sup>th</sup> pilot Howard J Snyder, Jr: "*Shot Down -- The true story of pilot Howard Snyder and the crew of the B-17*

*Susan Ruth.*" Winner of three prestigious awards, **2014 Southern California Book Festival - Honorable Mention General Non-Fiction, 2014 USA Best Book Awards - Finalist History: General, and 2014 USA Best Book Awards - Finalist History: Military**, the book is available by contacting Steve Snyder, 601 Sea Breeze Drive; SEAL BEACH, CA 90740; phone (562) 355-0461 for questions. Website:

<http://SteveSnyderAuthor.com>





## Secretary's Column

By Barbara Neal  
(Secretary's contact information on page 2)

Among the roughly 160 folks who attended at least one event at our Sept '14 Colorado Springs Reunion, interest was high for a **trip in '15 to Thurleigh and nearby parts of England**. At least 40 people want to determine how the trip, expected to be planned by Dr. Vernon Williams, may fit into our calendars and travel plans. **If you are interested in learning more about such a trip in '15, please contact me (see p.2) ASAP so we know of your interest.** I'm sure we'll visit the **306<sup>th</sup> Museum at Thurleigh**. Another place I want to be sure to visit is Duxford, where the Brits have several **Imperial War Museums**, including the **American Museum**. There, the 306<sup>th</sup> will soon be represented. Earlier in '14, **Hardin 'Field' McChesney** of Bowling Green, KY (radio operator on a 369<sup>th</sup> crew that reported 11 Dec 44), shared with me a letter he got in May from John Delaney, the Museum's Collections Manager. Delaney said the American Museum is updating their B-17 exhibit to share the stories of specific veterans who served in the various B-17 crew positions. They wanted to interview McChesney, since they had acquired his original WWII radio headset worn before their B-17 was downed in the 14 Feb '45 Dresden mission. Radio operator McChesney, pilot BB Lewis Jr (who died Sep '48), and all crew members (except my uncle, Alfred Lubojacky) survived to become POWs. The Museum traced the headset to Field due to his initials "HFM" marked on the leather of the headset. Field has no internet access, so I relayed for him to Delaney in Britain, digital copies of the crew photo and – as a way of introducing his story – the April 2000 interview of Field conducted by the son and son-in-law of the crew's armorer, Frank McDonough (who died Sep '86). The McDonough / Barkowsky family members were glad to learn their interview helped introduce Field and the crew's story to the Museum. In mid-Oct '14, the Museum sent personnel to Kentucky to do an oral history interview of Field at his home. In coming months, his interview and interviews of men who held other B-17 positions will be edited at the Museum for future visitors to see and hear these men in the updated B-17 exhibit. Perhaps by a '15 visit to Duxford that exhibit may be complete. This serves as a good reminder that each person – a veteran, family or friend – must never underestimate what part you play to help educate younger generations for many years to come, and to keep our veterans' stories of WWII alive.

**Memorial plaque to be placed in France:** In early Oct '14 we were emailed by a passionate researcher in France.

For 7 years, he'd gathered info re a WWII B-17 that crashed at Fouchy (postal code 67220) in the valley where he lives. He explained he wants to identify the crew and honor their courage. He'd searched newspaper articles; met with eyewitnesses; and searched the crash site for fragments. He located and excavated the plane's original Boeing data plate for a B-17G with Serial #9340. He learned that manufacturer's serial number "9340" corresponds with B17 having Serial # USSAF "43-38362" assigned to the 306<sup>th</sup> BG. From the website of Prisoners of War Stalag Luft 1 (merkki.com) he found info that matched info he'd gathered: the bomb-bay was empty; no bodies were found, indicating the crew had time to bail out; and that the B-17 crashed between 26 Nov 44 and the beginning of '45. He sought MACR [Missing Air Crew Report] 11342, and any further available info. By email, I confirmed for him that MACR 11342 indeed pertains to 306<sup>th</sup> aircraft serial 43-38362, dated 9 Dec 44, and pointed him to locating it as a PDF at our website, 306bg.org, by going to Archives / Missing Air Crew Reports / 1944 / and the date. From that 4-page report, I was able to tell him the following info about the crew, listed below. **If ANYone reading this is related to any of these men, PLEASE contact me (see pg.2) since this Frenchman plans to place a memorial plaque to this crew, as best I understand either later this year or next year. We have NO known family members for any of the crew who we know to be receiving Echoes.** My extended family had the good fortune of learning of a similarly passionate Czech researcher in late '04, and attending the placing of a memorial plaque to my uncle's crew in May '05. That very moving occasion at the tiny village where their empty B-17 crashed after all had parachuted, included speeches by a diplomat from the American Embassy in Prague and a current Czech General; current Czech military guards and military band; and literally hundreds of Czechs still profoundly grateful for the role our 306<sup>th</sup> men played in saving their country in WWII. Please see photos and my article in *Echoes* July '05 issue, V.30 #3, at 306bg.org under the *Echoes* tab. The crew members of the 9 Dec 44 crash to be memorialized by the Frenchman who emailed us, and info I currently know re each (alphabetically):

- **Abdelnour, Samuel E** - ball turret gunner; d.21 Jun-83; obit in *Echoes* Jan-94: "*Samuel E Abdelnour, 369th ball turret gunner (Raymond Braun crew) and POW 9 Dec 44 at Stuttgart (w Robert H Brown) died 21 Jun 83 in Albany, NY.*"

- **Bollard, Joseph W** - tail gunner; no obit yet in 306<sup>th</sup> *Echoes*; he is not on our mail list.

- **Brown, Robert H** - pilot - no obit yet in 306<sup>th</sup> *Echoes*; he is not on our mail list.

- **Fann, Jerrold J** - engineer top-turret gunner; d.Feb-94; obit in *Echoes* Jan-95: "*Jerold J Fann, 369th engineer and POW, died Feb 94 in Oklahoma City, OK. He arrived with the Robert Brown crew and was with them when shot down 9 Dec 44.*"

- **Giglio, William P** - co-pilot; d.3 Feb-91; obit in *Echoes* Apr-91: "*Giglio, William F, 369th co-pilot (Robert H Brown crew), died 3 Feb 91 in Letterman Army Medical Center, San Francisco, while undergoing surgery for an abdominal aneurysm. Giglio was on his last mission 9 Dec 44 when the plane went down on a mission to Stuttgart. He had a piece of flak enter his leg at the knee and continue up into his thigh, causing such damage that his leg had to be amputated. Since release from service he had made his home in San Francisco. A graduate of Rutgers University, he worked for the Department of the Army for 30 years, retiring as comptroller at Ft Mason, CA. He leaves his wife, Elizabeth.*"

- **Hovey, Ernest P** - waist gunner; d.30 Sep-12; *Echoes* obit in issue #3&4 of '13: "*Hovey, Ernest P, 369th waist-gunner & POW (Harold Brown crew), of Mesa, AZ, died 30 Sep 12, at 89. He reported 17 Jul 44 with Brown; the crew was downed 9 Dec 44 (Stuttgart); Hovey was held POW at Dulag 12. Post-war he continued in the USAF at least through Korea. Survived by his wife of at least 68 years, Mary Louise, and at least 3gc, 3ggc. M/Sgt Hovey is buried at Prescott National Cemetery, Prescott, AZ, where his son and fellow USAF M/Sgt was buried following his Aug 11 death at 66.*"

I tried to reach his widow in the summer of '13 in Mesa, AZ, but was never able to reach her or anyone at the phone we earlier had. (An internet search shows that the Mesa address earlier shown on a returned *Echoes* by US Postal Service, has no current residents; we have no way of knowing if his widow is still living, or a current location of for her or any of their descendants may now be.)

- **Moore, James R** - bombardier nose-gunner; no obituary information received; he is not on our mail list.

- **Ohm, Raymond A** - radio operator; no obituary information received; he is not on our mail list.

- **Walden, James B** - navigator; d.13 Jan-08; obit in *Echoes* Jul-08: "*James Walden, 369th navigator (Robert Brown crew) died 13 Jan 08.*"

**Congrats, Ted Hood** (423<sup>rd</sup> engineer top-turret gunner on John Winward's 'Solid Sender' crew): On 6 Jun '14, the 70th anniversary of D-Day, Ted was presented the medal of Knight in the French Order of the Legion of Honor, at La Porte, TX near Houston. See the photo of Ted, Sallie (his wife of 72+ years), Sallie, their 3 sons, 1 daughter, and a great-granddaughter, gathered for the occasion.

Others of our vets are among the Americans who've applied for, and been awarded, the medal in the decade since France opened eligibility to **living US veterans who during 1944-45, fought on French territory, in French territorial waters, or in French territorial airspace.**

If that applies to YOU, check with any locally-listed Consulate of France in your phone book, **or** contact the **Embassy of France Defense Mission; 4101 Reservoir Rd NW; Washington, DC 20007** for current application requirements, which would include a copy of the Enlisted Record and Report of separation; a copy of the Honorable

Discharge; and a written account of your "campaigns, war deeds, and medals earned." Processing the application can take a year or more.



Barbara Neal  
Secretary

## 2015 Reunion Organizer Named

Mr. Thom Mindala, son-in-law of 306<sup>th</sup> vet, Clayton Nattier, has been named the 2015 Reunion Chairman. Now retired, Thom was responsible for the development and implementation of operational plans for nationwide training initiatives, a position he believes prepared him for the role of reunion organizer.

Activities planned for the reunion include a visit to Wendover Air Force Base, which will be familiar to many of our vets. A former USAF base, the site was a training base for B-17 and B-24 bomber crews during World War II.

Mark your calendar and prepare to attend the 2015 reunion in Salt Lake City, September 17 – 20.





## 2014 Colorado Springs Reunion – OUTSTANDING!



**Vets in attendance:** Seated: Ralph Jones [in background behind him, is his wife Dorris in wheelchair]; William Haase; Dillon McDermott; Joseph Leben; William Carlile; SSMA 94BG bombardier Jay Coberly; SSMA 94BG pilot James 'Pete' Mullinax; William Houlihan; Carl Groesbeck; Loren Harter; Nicholas Sawicke; Vernon Blucher. Standing: Walter Rozett; Edward Sandini; Fred Engstrom; Jack Anderson; Allan Lawson; Philip Mundell; James Wm Gerlach; Clayton Nattier; Gailard Ketcham; Roland 'Ron' Lissner; John J Gaydosh.



**Vets with spouses and widows:** Ralph & Dorris Jones; Roland 'Ron' & Bari Lissner; Fred & Tress Engstrom; Joseph & Maxene Leben; Emma Christianson; James Wm & Marian Gerlach; Joan Siedenbug; Elizabeth Huebotter; Loren Harter & his sister Shirley Chappell; Doris Jenks behind Margaret Jennings; Edward & Karen Sandini





**306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Veterans and U. S. Air Force Academy Cadets**

Twenty-three 306th BG World War II veterans, two of whom are members of the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association, as well as 140 family members and friends, attended the 2014 reunion in Colorado Springs. Thursday's tour of the Garden of the Gods and Friday's special Folded Wings Memorial Service at the Air Force Academy Chapel (see Chaplain Captain Michael Carey's message on page 23) followed by a tour of the Academy and a film depicting a cadet's first year were just a few of the highlights of this year's reunion events.

At the Friday night First Over Germany dinner, 46 Air Force

Academy cadets and 11 officers of the 306<sup>th</sup> Flying Tiger Training Group were seated with World War II vets. The interaction between vets and cadets evoked myriad conversation topics, each sharing military experiences. Lt. Col. "Goldie" Hawn provided a bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue Label Scotch. After adjourning to the hospitality room, the commemorative gift provided a special moment of enjoyment.

The Saturday night banquet's 16 cadet guests and Col. Steven Burgh, Commander of the 306<sup>th</sup> Flying Tiger Training Group were again seated with World War II veterans. Following the dinner, Col. Burgh presented U. S. Air Force Academy challenge coins to each veteran present.

This year, the Thurman Shuller Award, the Association's highest award, was presented to Bill Houlihan, recognizing his many years of service, both at Thurleigh as 367 Squadron NCO medic for the entire period of 306 BG presence in England during the war, and for 40 years to BGHA, as Past President, a long-time director, and board advisor.



**Second Generation**



**Third Generation**



*Walt Rozette toasts vets.*



*Bari, Ron, and Lance Lissner enjoy a sip of Johnnie Walker Blue*



# Hospitality Room



*Reunion photos courtesy of Jim Leary, Charles Neal, and Steve Snyder. More photos available on the website at [306bg.org](http://306bg.org).*



# US Air Force Academy





# Vet Round Tables



*Allen Lawson*



*Dillon McDermott*



*JJ Gaydosh*



*Clayton Nattier, Loren Harter, Fred Engstrom*



*James "Pete" Mullinax, Jay Coberly, Bill Houlihan*





# Our Nation's Future In Conversation with The Greatest Generation



## **Captain Michael J. Carey, USAF Chaplain Delivers Heart-Felt Message at Folded Wings Ceremony**

On behalf of the United States Air Force Academy Chaplain, Col Randall Kitchens, and our Cadet Wing Chaplain, Lt Col Matthew Franke, allow me to thank you for your sacrifice and dedication as we remember those who served with 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.

Activated as the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 1 March 1942 at the Salt Lake City Army Base, Utah. Assigned to the 8<sup>TH</sup> Air Force, the Group was declared combat ready on 28 September 1942. Combat missions over “Fortress Europe” began on 9 October and include the bombing of locomotive works, submarine pens, docks, railway marshalling yards, strategic targets in Bremen Germany and the ball bearing factories in Schweinfurt, to name only a few. Tactical and strategic missions were flown in support of D Day and combat missions continued until victory was declared in Europe. And all along, losses were suffered. Friends and fellow airmen laid down their lives for our nation, and for the cause of freedom. It was a Bombardment Group whose squadrons were an example of the caprice of war: the 367<sup>th</sup> sustained the heaviest losses in 8th Bomber Command and earned them the “Clay Pigeons” moniker; while the 369<sup>th</sup> squadron – the “Fitin’ Bitin’” - set the record for the most consecutive missions flown (42) without the loss on any aircraft in combat. (I can’t help but wonder if they didn’t feel more like the “Lucky Ducks.”) Certainly, heavy losses were sustained on many missions, indeed every loss is heavy for there is no light loss of life. Every airman is a friend, a brother. It is a brother’s love that moved airmen like Sargent Maynard Smith to fight multiple fires in his aircraft while continuing to engage the enemy with machine guns and rendering first aid to his wounded crew mates. Such courage that was recognized with the Medal of Honor.

The 306<sup>th</sup> was inactivated on Christmas Day, 1946, while stationed in Germany, its record stands as pioneering:

- 341 combat missions
- 9614 combat sorties

- 22574 tons of bombs delivered
- longest serving operational Bombardment Group in the 8<sup>TH</sup> Army Air Force
- stationed in England in one station longer than any other unit
- first man to complete 25 missions – T/Sgt Michael Roskovitch, 5 April 1943
- first Bombardment Group to reach 300 missions
- awarded 2 Distinguished Unit Commendations

Events from December 1942 to January 1943 would become the basis for the book and movie “12 O Clock High,” which is still used in Officer Training Commissioning Education for its lessons on leadership.

Reactivated in July 1947 in the newly established United States Air Force Strategic Command as a B-29 Super Fortress Bombardment Group (very heavy). Finally, and reactivated one more time in October 2004, the 306<sup>th</sup> continues today as the 306<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Group, United States Air Force Academy, providing training for USAFA cadets.

As I have read and reflected on the history of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, one word kept coming to mind: sacrifice.

One of the finest examples of sacrifice can be seen in the life of Moses. He grew up like a son of Pharaoh, a prince. As a boy, he enjoyed every pleasure of the palace. He had power, privilege, and possessions. Not only did he receive the best of what Egypt offered materially, he also received its intellectual benefits.

Yet Moses was willing to risk losing all of that to try to help his people. And he did lose all that Pharaoh’s house offered. He went from privilege to poverty, from the world’s capital to the wilderness, from adopted son to obscure shepherd.

When Moses fled Egypt, he probably thought he had risked and lost everything for nothing. For forty years he lived with the sacrifice he had made before learning how God intended to use him, and see God’s purpose in his life.

And so it is with the members of the 306<sup>th</sup>. Your sacrifice, and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, gave up the comforts of life at home and the rose to the



call to serve our nation and defend it in the 20<sup>th</sup> century's darkest chapter.

Your sacrifice will not be forgotten! I'd like to close with a fellow B-17 story that I think speaks to courage of your generation.

Elmer Bendiner describes a bombing run over the German city of Kassel: Our B-17 (THE TONDELAYO) was barraged by flak from Nazi anti-aircraft guns. That was not unusual, but on this particular occasion our gas tanks were hit. Later, as I reflected on the miracle of a twenty-millimeter shell piercing the fuel tank without touching off an explosion, our pilot, Bohn Fawkes, told me it was not quite that simple. On the morning following the raid, Bohn had gone down to ask our crew chief for that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck. The crew chief told Bohn that not just one shell but eleven had been found in the gas tanks--eleven unexploded shells where only one was sufficient to blast us out of the sky. It was as if the sea had been parted for us. Even after thirty-five years, so awesome an event leaves me shaken, especially after I heard the rest of the story from Bohn.

He was told that the shells had been sent to the armorers to be defused. The armorers told him that Intelligence had picked them up. They could not say why at the time, but Bohn eventually sought out the answer. Apparently when the armorers opened each of those shells, they found no explosive charge. They were clean as a whistle and just as harmless. Empty? Not all of them. One contained a carefully rolled piece of paper. On it was a scrawl in Czech. The Intelligence people scoured our base for a man who could read Czech. Eventually, they found one to decipher the note. It set us marveling. Translated, the note read: "This is all we can do for you now."

As I shared this with a friend, he asked me, "so what does that mean?" I think this story highlights several things: with humility, all of us who have been in combat zones, have to recognize that often our safety is not in our hands, there is that reminder in this story, but maybe the most profound message is this – and as you reflect on the days of your youth, spent in the 306<sup>th</sup> – know this...your efforts, your sacrifice, your cause, was a righteous cause...even slaves working in Nazi munitions plants stood by you and risked death to aid the cause that you shared, that humanity would prevail.

## The Tradition Continues . . . .



Colonel Steven C. Burgh, Commander of the 306th Flying Training Group, 12th Flying Training Wing, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado displays items presented to the Training Group from the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association.



# Wartime Diary

## (Part 2)

Lt. Loy F. Peterson  
369th Fightin, Bitin Pilot  
January to March 1944

January 4, 1944

Starting the New Year off with a bang – literally. The four o'clock Breakfast Club met this morning – target for today, industrial section of Kiel in northern Germany. Took off before dawn, flying on the right wing of lead ship as Deputy Group Leader. Captain Schoolfield 369<sup>th</sup> A Flight Leader led the Group – his 25<sup>th</sup> mission (fortunate fellow). Long haul over the North Sea and in over Denmark which is covered with snow. 10/10ths overcast so we bombed on the Pathfinder ship. Lots of flak, but otherwise uneventful. Group lost one ship – Lt. Tucker. 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive mission for Satan's Lady. #9 for the crew.

January 5, 44

Dear diary – today we “had it.”

Four o'clock Breakfast Club met again – target for today, the sub pens at Kiel, Germany. Marking the first time in the history of Eighth Air Force that the Forts have hit the same target on two consecutive days. I took off with the 369<sup>th</sup> boys one hour before dawn to rendezvous with another composite Group + fly as their high Squadron. They got all confused in the dark + and the composite Group never showed up. Damned if I was going to take the boys back home so I tacked on to a low Group which only had one squadron.

Visual bombing today + the boys really beat Hell out of the target. The lead Group almost screwed things up over the target, + were not in proper formation when fighters hit us 10 minutes later. They lined up at one o'clock high and came in right at our nose – 15 of them – faster than I can write this. One of the bastards started blinking his guns right in my face, so I bounced the ship down + he missed us. Some son of a square head popped a 20mm right into my wing by the #4 four engine nacelle, but God was with us + it missed our gas lines by two inches. Blew a hole about 5 inches in diameter + ripped all the outer skin off the wing for about two feet – exploding fragments peppered the radio compartment just missing Chris. Attack lasted about ten minutes and then those beautiful P-38's appeared + engaged the Hinies elsewhere. All I could hear over the interphone was Foley back in the tail yelling, “Holy Christ what a dog fight – watch out, rockets! Jeez, a rocket just hit a '17, and it exploded in a million pieces – Christ what a dog fight!”

Lt. Wolfe on his fourth mission was on my right wing, and during the dog fight and attack he disappeared. Capt Elliot

crashed and burned on take-off. All together a bad day. Satan's Lady's 16<sup>th</sup> mission, but she'll be in the hospital for a couple weeks now. Little Pimp did a good job today.

**(Editor's note: a composite squadron is one made up of aircraft from different squadrons, or even different groups. Normally all the aircraft in a combat squadron formation are from the same organizational squadron (i.e. all from the 369<sup>th</sup> or all from the 423<sup>rd</sup>).**

January 11

Today the Eighth Air Force “had it.” Satan's Lady is still in the hangar getting her left wing patched up. My left ear is plugged + I haven't flown since the last Kiel fracas, so we did not go on the raid today. For which I am now duly thankful.

The target was somewhere in central Germany, and about an hour after the planes left the field closed in and it started snowing. A blind man could see that the boys would not be able to land at the base upon their return. Entire Group diverted to coastal fields, and about nightfall the reports started seeping in. My God, what reports! Only nine planes crossed the coast with the Colonel. Cassidy crash lands with crew + plane all shot up; Dowell has to do the same thing; - two planes land here, three there – scattered all over England. Kinsey lands his plane okay, but he'll never fly again. Tattershall flying old 993 on her 42<sup>nd</sup> raid disappeared over Germany – nobody even saw him go! All told, the squadron loses 4 Forts and one entire crew, plus a number of badly wounded men. The Group loses 6 forts and crews – and the final count isn't in yet on how many Forts are to be salvaged. 59 planes + crews down over Germany – a damn black day for the Eighth! Weather still stinking.

**(Editor's note: the target this day was Halberstadt, Germany. Lt. Kinsey was badly wounded in the leg when a 20mm shell hit the base of the pilot's window, ending his flying career. Having had the tail shot off, only the radio operator from Lt. Tattershall's plane survived. The following is quoted from Russell Strong's book, “First Over Germany”: “The group was up again on the 7<sup>th</sup> on a rather unspectacular mission, but really returned to the shooting war on 11 January. On this date Col. Robinson was the leader of the 40<sup>th</sup> CW; the 306<sup>th</sup> had as its primary target an aircraft component plant at Halberstadt, a new target for the group. Halberstadt quickly became one of the legendary missions in 306<sup>th</sup> history, ranking along with Bremen, Schweinfurt, and later targets at Oberpfaffenhafen and Ruhland as devastating days for the combat crews and returning aircraft.”)**

February 3, 1944

Weather clear as a bell this morning at the four o'clock breakfast club. Briefed target was Wilhelmshaven – our first raid over again. Double crossed; raining we took off – flying two groups off the field now, 306A and 306B and we got 41



bombers off the ground in 16 minutes and 45 seconds. Soon we got to about 18,000 feet started flying through haze and dense contrails, and we flew instrument formation (a neat trick) all the way up to 27,000. Lost the high squadron in the muck (leader aborted) and could not catch up with the rest of the Wing so lead Squadron of 7 ships and my low squadron of 7 ships flew to Germany and bombed all by our lonesomes. Thank God there was a solid undercast so the fighters couldn't reach us. Letting down over the North Sea we went into the soup at 26,000 feet and I lost sight of the lead and most of my squadron split up so I made an instrument let down for 24,000 feet. Waves 15 feet high on the Sea, but it still looked good after that snow and ice. Lt Wong on my left wing started falling back over the target – lost sight of him when we went into the storm + he + the ship have not been heard from since.

Satan's Lady completes her 18<sup>th</sup> mission + I finally get my 11<sup>th</sup> – altogether a very unsatisfactory mission.

February 4, 1944

Didn't get to go today – being held back for lead plane positions only (don't know as I like) 306A and 306B went to Frankfurt and Lt. Dowell flew Satan's Lady – Lt. Daniels, my boy, went along with him. It is hell having to stay on the ground + sweat out the return of my own ship. Stood by her dispersal area + fixed my binoculars on every plane as it peeled off – but no Lady. Talked to the other boys as they landed, and Lt. Dowell dropped out of formation at Frankfurt. I aged 5 years in the next hour + a half, but she finally limped in. All four engines burned up – not actually aflame, but beat up beyond further use. And they have never given me a moments trouble. Back to the hangar goes the Lady.

Damn these junior birdmen.

Lt. Berry – one of our test pilots – caught a flak burst on one engine and went down over Germany with one entire wing aflame, but the plane still under control when he went into the clouds. Good chance that they were all able to bail out in time. Two crews down in two days marks a pretty black period for the Squadron.

Nineteen raids for the Lady, but she will be laid up again for a few days.

February 5, 1944

Raid number twelve coming up – we almost flew banker's hours today. Didn't get us up until 0600 in the morning – briefed target a Luftwaffe air training center at Chateaudun southwest of Paris. Beautiful weather – for a change – and I led the fitin' bitin' boys in the low squadron, high group position. Went in at only 17,000 feet – target clear – and we made a beautiful job of precision bombing as the Knaben Norway raid. Some flak over the target + one plane caught it in the wing, but stayed with us.

A highly enjoyable and successful mission.

No. 13 next! (or rather 12B)

February 8, 1944

Over the hump! Just a shade more than halfway through now. Target for today – Frankfurt. A target that has earned a bad reputation lately. Have moved up another notch – Major Flannagan + I led the Group today. Weather over England beautiful for take-off + rendezvous, but as we came over the continent it became 8-10/10 undercast – definitely a Pathfinder job. Moderate accurate flak over the target. I collected a piece for a souvenir which came in the side of the ship 4 inches from my hip. Fighter attacks on the way out – Lt. Snyder, #7 man in our squadron was straggling + they got him. It is believed that all bailed out safely.

Satan's Lady still in the hangar getting her four new engines.

**(Editor's note: at this time 25 missions was still the requirement to complete a tour of combat, and Lt. Peterson had just passed the half way mark. However, later in his tour Jimmy Doolittle would increase the number of missions to complete a tour to 30, and then to 35 missions. Later in this diary, Lt. Peterson will make some snide remarks as he is extended for more missions)**

February 11, 1944

Group went again to Frankfurt today – that damnable target! Not sure of bombing results – worse luck. Lost one plane – Lt. DiBetta + his crew. A little fellow and I remember him way back in Pyote, Tex. He was one Group behind me, and how he used to love to play with Damit, my black cocker spaniel. He arrived over here later than I, but believe that today was his 20<sup>th</sup> raid.

Spent all day cruising around in the "Lady" getting her new set of engines worn in. What a ship – even at radically reduced power settings she sailed along at 100 m.p.h. I'll bet when these engines get broken in she'll do 230 m.p.h. at 2300 r.p.m. at 38 inches manifold pressure.

Going to try to give her an altitude check tomorrow.

February 22, 1944

Sent two Groups from the field today – target was "deep in the heart of" Bernberg, Germany – aircraft plant + field.

The Luftwaffe is still here – I kid you not! I didn't go today, but the boys tell me that they came in head on in waves – four + six abreast. 306<sup>th</sup> lost seven planes today – one entire squadron. We lost two crews – Lt. Quaintance and Lt. Horst, two damned good men to say nothing of the crews.

Lt. Opdyke flew the Lady on her 20<sup>th</sup> raid! She had to go to the hangar for a new wing panel + a lot of patching + then a jeep ran into her tail + tore up the left horizontal stabilizer.

February 24, 1944

Sat on the ground again today – Group went to Schweinfurt – that widow-making target that cost the Eighth AAF 60 planes on Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>.

Today the Group lost Lt. Page and Lt. Garnett – both of

them were leading the hi + low squadrons respectively. First time in many months that Squadron leaders have been shot down.

Luftwaffe is still putting up a desperate fight.

This party is getting rough, I'm going to get my pants and go home.

Spent the afternoon giving a new plane an altitude test hop at 25,000 ft. No heating system and I froze my ass.

February 25, 1944

Out again today – but not yours truly – I'm being saved for a more glorious fate, I guess. Group went so deep today that they could see the Alps. Augsburg, or something like there, just northwest of Munich. Goddam – is somebody trying to prove that these Fortresses can stay in the air indefinitely!

Group lost three planes – Lt. Coleman Lt. Gay and Lt. Bayless. Making a loss of 12 planes and crew in one week – what a way to make a living!

Lt. Opdyke flew the Lady again today - + the poor old gal came back shot full of holes again. Back in the hangar again for another wing panel, new Plexiglas nose and about two dozen patches. Her 21<sup>st</sup> raid.

February 28, 1944

Group wasn't alerted today until the middle of the morning – so everyone dashed madly in all directions getting bombs, gas + oxygen in the ships – also the little matter of getting the guns wiped off and installed in their receivers.

Target was a “quickie” in the Pas de Calais French Coast area, and we were briefed to bomb by individual squadrons. First time I have set up a bombing run with my bombardier since leaving the States. Due to overcast + haze we were not able to locate our briefed target, but finally (after 5 circles over the area) dropped on another little job – plastered completely.

Had a lot of trouble with snow storms over England on return, but we snaked our way around + through – a mere thousand feet off the ground.

Number 22 for the Lady, and number 14 for most of the crew.

--Just in passing--

War is certainly hard on equipment – they figure that the average life of a heavy bomber in this theater of operations is 18 missions. Satan's Lady now has completed 22 raids, + is now thoroughly battle scarred + patched, but she is still flying + good for a few more. The following list shows what the scars cost her:

- 4 new engines
- 1 propellor
- 2 superchargers
- 1 ball turret
- 1 new plexi-glass nose
- 2 new tires
- 1 horizontal stabilizer

- 2 elevators
- 4 new .50 caliber barrels
- 1 outer wing panel
- 3 new gas tanks
- 3 dozen odd patches

March 6, 1944

The Group finally went to Berlin today – after three scrubbed briefings and two abortive attempts last week.

A black day for the Eighth Air Force – 68 planes lost with but questionable bombing results. Maybe high Command figures the loss worth it – but I do not!

Group lost Lt. Smith and crew, and Lt. Adams got badly shot up coming home. One gunner killed – interphone went out, and four gunners bailed out when they lost contact with the pilot. He limped home with two engines, four officers, one ball turret gunner and one dead man.

March 8, 1944

My turn to lead the Group today – flew with Major Flannagan and the target for the entire Eighth Air Force was Berlin – the big city! The most beautifully coordinated fighter escort that we had ever seen – our Group was flying in excellent position. High Group, second Combat Wing of the second Division over the target so we got the fighter cover as they went in and came out. Must have been 800-1000 Allied fighters in the air over Germany plus another 700 heavy bombers over Berlin. All specified targets plastered since the weather was clear + unlimited over the city and most of the continent. Light accurate flak over target – few enemy fighters sighted on way out. Group returned to base without a single loss. A record day for the 8<sup>th</sup> A.A.F. 38 planes lost; 9 hours 40 minutes

**(Editor's note: actual numbers dispatched this day were 801 fighters and 730 heavy bombers)**

March 9, 1944

Just for the record – Eighth Air Force again blasted Berlin in daylight today. Solid undercast and bombing done by Pathfinder technique. Losses for the day – the astounding figure of 7 bombers and 1 fighter! From 68 to 7 in four days of bombing. What's up ?????

March 11, 1944

Group did fly today – but only on a practice mission. Heavy bombers did go into Germany though. Bombed Munster north of “Happy Valley,” and returned without the loss of a single heavy bomber!! Utterly amazing!!

I flew as Col. Robinson's co-pilot today – he is 306 Group Commanding officer – he wanted to drop some experimental bombs over the North Sea. We took the Lady and she purred like a kitten all the way. When we landed the Colonel paid all of us on the crew a very nice compliment. Said it was the



finest flying and maintained ship he had flown off the field.

Really makes all our efforts + attention to little things about the ship seem worth the while.

March 23, 1944

Cheers! They are going to let me lead the Low Squadron today – it is nice to get a mission occasionally. Target was an airfield outside of Munster, but when we got there the cloud cover made it impossible to bomb the briefed target. Wing Leader told us to pick a industrial target of opportunity – we saw a hole, and Eureka – by sheer blind luck managed to plaster a railway marshalling yard at Hamm that Bomber Command had been trying to destroy for a solid year – and it was done with only 2 groups of B-17's.

Returned without a scratch on the plane, although we encountered moderate flak. Absolutely perfect fighter escort synchronization. Number 26 for the Lady – number 16 for most of the crew.

March 26, 1944

Really don't know what to say at this writing. A more discouraging day I cannot remember since the crew started flying combat.

To begin at the beginning – rolled us out of bed at two thirty this morning for a seven o'clock take-off. I was to lead a composite Group in the low position. Mission scrubbed just as we climbed into the Lady. Went back to bed and managed to sneak in a couple hours shut-eye before being awakened for a quick briefing. Target was secret military installations at St. Omer just southeast of Calais. Bombing was done by squadrons, and we were prepared to see some flak over the target, but were stunned at the intensity and accuracy of fire which we encountered. I believe they were picking out which engine on the ships they wanted to hit.

I managed to keep my Squadron out of all flak by violent and continuous evasive maneuvering, but on the bomb run there was no way of avoiding it, and about 40 seconds before bomb release it started hitting us – three bursts at a time right under the ship. The whole plane jumped and shook continuously under the barrage. They knocked my second element leader out of formation – Lt. Price – he was last seen hitting the deck and heading home, but has not been heard from since. For a period of two minutes I had mentally accepted the fact that disaster had at last caught up with Satan's Lady + her crew. The second bombs away I made a diving turn to get the Hell out of there + didn't quit turning + diving until we had the North Sea under us. Counted noses + was amazed to find that no one was even scratched. The Lady was a sieve + gasoline was streaming from punctured tanks in the left wing. Why we didn't have a fire I'll never know. Returned to base with my two remaining wingmen to find chaos at its worst. Ships in all kinds of trouble – no brakes – wounded aboard. Three ships off the runway; one on its belly, one with a flat tire – one ground looped to avoid running off the end. I had just pulled off the runway after

landing + the ship behind me ran off the end, made a wide circle and crashed into a building.

By sheer luck it did not catch fire. One of my missing wingmen crashed landed on the coast with a dead bombardier – the other made it home. Another ship from the Group crash landed on the coast also. A supposed milk run that ended in disaster! Number 17 for the crew – number 27 for the Lady, but she won't fly again for a few days.

**(Editor's note: the target this day was what became known as a "Noball" target, one that was unnamed. These targets turned out to be German rocket (V-1 and V-2) launching sights. Russell Strong described this mission in his book "First Over Germany" as follows: *On a pleasant Sunday afternoon late in March, the 26<sup>th</sup>, the crews from Thurleigh joined with other groups for a "milk run" just over the English Channel to bomb a "Noball" target near St. Omer, France. This was one of those missions that men clamored to fly, as one would not be at altitude for very long and might be back in time both for a good meal at the combat mess and a date in Bedford that evening... The fates toyed with the 306<sup>th</sup> again. With twenty-nine planes strung out in five squadrons for bombing, the Luftwaffe flak gunners below had them in their sights for a considerable period of time and slammed them hard with their 88's. Twenty-six planes were hit, seventeen of them seriously. One plane went down, two crash landed at the base, a bombardier was killed and ten men were wounded.*)**

*To be continued.... Part 3 of Loy Peterson's War Diary will appear in the next issue of Echoes.*

## Cropping Assistance Needed

The Winter/Spring 2014 issue of *Echoes* detailed the preservation surge that took place in May 2014 at Abilene Christian College. Out of that effort came a need to help clean up data for posting on the 306<sup>th</sup> website. This task primarily involves cropping extra white space from photos. Anyone interested in helping should contact Charles Neal at [charles306@earthlink.net](mailto:charles306@earthlink.net).

## 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Approves Vision Statement

At the 13 September 2014 General Business Meeting, the 306 BGHA approved a vision statement, which reads: *"Our vision is to keep this organization going at least as long as we have 306<sup>th</sup> veterans who we can help by providing opportunities for camaraderie and staying in contact with others and the past."*



# **HEAR-YE! HEAR-YE! HEAR-YE!**

Let it be known that plans for the 2015 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association Reunion [SSMA] are well underway. Dates and location have been set.

## **September 17 thru 20, 2015!**

### **Come one - Come all!**

Prepare to arrive early on the 17th (Thursday) or on the 16th (Wednesday) if you want to help set up for 3 full days of fun, associations, and activities in honor and memory of our 306th Bomb Group and Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association Veterans.

### **Salt Lake City, Utah**

We will be staying in and holding our reunion at the recently remodeled downtown Doubletree Hotel - only 5 short blocks from downtown and Temple Square.  
(110 W. 600 South, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84101; 801-359-7800;  
free airport shuttle; free on-site parking)

### **Come Prepared!**

**Panel Discussions** where you get to hear the Vets speak for themselves

**Round Tables** where you get to hear the Veterans share their memories

**A tour to Wendover Field - the original home of the 306th**

**A visit to the outstanding museum at Hill Air Force Base**

**A visit to Temple Square and Mormon Tabernacle Choir Rehearsal**

**Social hours** where you can sit and meet new people

**First Over Germany Friday Dinner with Door Prizes**

**Saturday night Banquet with more Door Prizes and Fun**

**Annual 306th Bomb Group Association Business Meeting**

**Shopping and sightseeing opportunities in one of America's cleanest cities**

## **More information & Registration Form in the next Echoes!**

(Make your room reservation now by calling the hotel at 801-359-7800)



# Museum Notes

## Thurleigh Airfield 306th Bomb Group Museum



Dear Friends,

This is almost certainly one of the most upsetting letters I have had to write when I tell you we will be unable to join you for this year's reunion [2014] due to Daphne's ill health. Her medical people advise us not to travel the long distances, but suggest as her medications starts to kick in she might well be able to make it next year. This is something we really intend to do.

As many of you know, my interest in the 306th began in

1942 when they first arrived at Thurleigh. After the war I joined the Royal Air Force and trained on radar. I will say you need a certain amount of luck in your life, and my luck was in 1955 when I left the RAF and I was able to join the staff of the newly-built control tower on what was your old air field, known as the Royal Aircraft Establishment. This was to become the major Research Development Air Field in the United Kingdom. I spent 38 years working in the control tower and took early retirement when the air field closed down in 1993.

It was there in 1955 when I joined the control tower that about this time veterans from the 306th started their pilgrimage to their old wartime base. Unfortunately, they were not allowed on as by this time it had become a very high security base and they were not allowed to enter. Again, my luck was in. The local security officers learned of my interest and used to inform me I had visitors at the gate. I always used to find time to go and lead them. I then decided to try my luck again by contacting the Ministry of Defense themselves to ask if they would allow me to escort my visitors on the base. They agreed to this and provided me with a special permit allowing me to do this.

As you know, this still happens when it became the Bedford Autodrome. The new owner, Dr. Jonathan Palmer, called me by saying to give him a history of the base, particularly the war year. As you know, if I once start talking about the 306th I get lost in another world. I think he was impressed, because about a week later he called me back saying he was most impressed, and he would be delighted to make one of the main mobile two buildings available to me if I would be prepared to renovate and turn it into the museum as a tribute to the war years to the men who served there in the famous 306. I can say, here and now, we have no intention of closing the museum as we are very much aware of the important part it plays in reminding people of those dark days of the war years and of the many young men who came to Thurleigh never to return home.

We witness many emotions from our visitors. An example of that happened only last Saturday when we had a group in of motorcyclists visit us. During their tour I detected a sobbing sound. I discovered one of them, a very big man, was crying his eyes out.

This sort of thing happens frequently.

You all mean so much to us, we class you as our friends. As I said at the beginning, this is one heck of a disappointment, not being able to make it this year. But no one can take our memories away from us.

There is one person I must mention is Bill Carlile. This friendship is the result of many years due to our work at Thurleigh. We both worked in the control tower at the appropriate time. Another is Bill Houlihan, who eMails us almost daily, and his special medal is on display in the museum.

Things are still improving and we just completed a new section of the museum. We have been showing it off to a few people. There is nothing in it yet, but it is proving quite impressive to many of the visitors. The first item to come in is a World War II bomb trolley that used to be at Thurleigh during those dark days of the war. We have a couple of friends who have offered to refurbish it for us and it looks really first class now. You probably recall, we already have a 1000 pound bomb in there. If we can move it, we can lift it onto the bomb trolley, we intend on doing that. That will be one of the main features in the new room. We have a few first class uniforms, some of them from the family of Thurman Shuller, the ex-senior medical officer. His family came over and they brought his uniforms over for us. Reading the stories in *Echoes* we can complete another little story on a very nice and famous man at Thurleigh.

Just to show you what people think, we had a very nice vinyl floor laid in the building. The chap, we really did not know him, was just a carpet layer. He said do not expect an invoice. For what you and Daphne have done here, I am prepared to do the whole thing for free for you. Now if that isn't friendship and appreciation, I don't know what is.

Well, dear friends, I will say once more, it has upset us very much not being able to join you this year. But please be assured we will be thinking of you every day and wishing we were there.

I often claim I have almost spent a lifetime with the 306. I first met you when you first arrived at Station 111 and I have been in your company ever since. What great times we have had. My grateful thanks to you all.

Ralph Franklin  
306<sup>th</sup> Museum Thurleigh



## 306<sup>TH</sup> BGHA Website

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 our website changes from 306bg.org to 306bg.us

*(We anticipate operating both websites concurrently for a few months then redirecting traffic to our new site.)*

Our Association has been very fortunate that during the tenure of Dr. Vernon Williams as our volunteer Historian, Editor of *Echoes*, and Reunion Chairman he also supervised the creation of our website and served as Webmaster. We have benefited not only by his services but also by his affiliation with Abilene Christian University (ACU) and services the university provided to him as a professor, and the assistance of his history students and interns. (See last issue's article regarding the surge to complete digitizing of thousands of documents and images that are mostly uploaded to our website.) Dr. Williams and his wife have been donating the domain and hosting services expense. After seven years of volunteer service to the 306<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Williams needs to focus on his teaching, writing books, and other goals.

We are fortunate that four volunteers have accepted the challenge to perform the tasks Dr. Williams so graciously handled. Nancy Huebotter is our new *Echoes* Editor and this is her first issue. Cliff Deets is our new Historian and Thom Mindala is our Reunion Chairman for the upcoming 2015 Salt Lake City reunion. Thanks to all.

Charles Neal is our new Webmaster and he has been busy building a new website that will retain all the data on our current website that is on a hosting service that also contains other Dr. Williams' history material. The new domain *306bg.us* is not affiliated in any way with ACU and will contain only 306<sup>th</sup> material.

One of the goals of the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA has always been education. Our website, particularly with the addition of material from the surge (see article in the last issue of *Echoes*) and material uploaded in the past few months, has become a valuable resource for those wishing to learn more about the history of WWII European bombing, the lives of men serving during that period, and certain individuals. Thus, the new site has been reorganized to segregate Education/Research material that contains links to our Archives, WWII photographic collection, video interviews, images of military logos and art, as well as history by sketches, booklets, and other publications. We have over 15,000 files on our site and we have not yet uploaded everything we have

digitized.

We do get inquiries from those who visit our website and help them with information and even solve mysteries regarding their loved ones. See the article by Julie McKim on page 12. We regularly receive inquiries from those who visit our website (including some from Germany and France); our Secretary Barbara Neal and Historian Cliff Deets have been diligent in responding to such inquiries. Another example is an inquiry from a history researcher who noted that in our Summer 2012 *Echoes* article publishing Part 2 of 3, of Lt. Robert E. Woods' War Diary, a page was missing. This resulted in our Secretary following up with Mrs. Woods who supplied the missing page; it is printed in this issue on page 11. A grandson sought information about his grandfather and was thrilled to receive information and direction to his photo in our WWII photo archive.

None of this would have been possible without our WWII veterans and their families contributing (or loaning) photographs and records that we digitized and made available on our website. If you have material in your closets that you think is old and no one is interested in – think of the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA before you get rid of it! Contact our Secretary or Historian. They will promptly return anything loaned for scanning.

Another goal for our website is to enhance communication among those of us in the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA. It is a good way to quickly (and inexpensively) make information and material available. Many now save the Association the cost of printing and mailing the 306<sup>th</sup> *Echoes* by simply downloading the issue from our website. It is in 8 ½ X 11 inch format – easy to print at home if a hard copy is desired.

The website has many photos from our reunions at Colorado Springs (2014) and Washington DC (2010). By January many more photos from other reunions will be added.

You can help make our website even better by contributing photographs and records and by helping identify people in our photographic collection. We will add a function on the site to help you do that; however, in the meantime you can use the "feedback" link found at the bottom of the page of the major sections of the site or use the emails listed on the leadership page.

Happy browsing!




## Coming Soon – Updated 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA Website

306th Bomb Group Historical Association official website Box 682530 • Park City, UT 84068-2530

# WWII 306th Bomb Group (H)

**FIRST OVER GERMANY & FLYING THE B-17 “FLYING FORTRESS”**



306th BG patch

**\*\*This site is dedicated to the men of the 306th BG\*\***  
**It contains thousands of scanned images of documents and photographs as well as other material to educate families of the men, researchers and others regarding the life and times of the European Bombing campaign.**



- Recent and coming additions:
  - Education/Research section
    - Archives
      - Special Orders
  - Upcoming Reunion section
  - Past Reunions section with list of all reunions
    - 2014 Colorado Springs reunion photos
    - 2010 Washington DC reunion photos
  - Useful research links
  - And more

**Planning is underway! Join us for a trip to**

**Thurleigh**

and the

**American Air Museum**

**at nearby Duxford**

(one of the museums that is part of the UK's Imperial War Museum)

**Cambridge American Cemetery**

Dates and prices will soon be available. If **YOU** are interested, contact  
 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA Secretary Barbara Neal  
 (contact information on page 2)