



306th patch

# 306th Echoes

Educating and communicating



B-17 Flying Fortress

## Historic Wendover Army Air Base Site of 306<sup>th</sup> Crew Training 2015 Reunion to Visit Restored Site



Wendover Field was conceived during the late 1930s, and Congress appropriated funds in 1940 for the acquisition of land for bombing and gunnery ranges. Wendover was selected because of the Great Salt Lake desert with its shimmering salt flats and other vast, uninhabited terrain.

Wendover, Utah was a town of about 103 people, with railroad lines running between Salt Lake City and three West Coast cities. The Army Air Corps began building structures on September 20, 1940, in the area that would ultimately become Wendover Field.

This installation became a sub-post of Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City, on July 29, 1941, and additional land acquisitions brought the total area to just under 2 million acres. The total site was 18 to 36 miles wide and 86 miles long and given the distinction of being the largest bombing and gunnery range in the world.

The first unit to be assigned to the post was a detachment of one officer and ten enlisted men who arrived in August of 1941. They were joined by another 37 men and together they began setting up targets on the desert floor.

Construction continued from 1940 through the end of the war, but the most intense building period was completed in 1943. Projects include a pipeline, which ended the water shortage to the air field.

Wendover Army Air Base was activated on March 28, 1942 as a B-17 and B-24 heavy bombardment training base, and the first unit, the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group of four squadrons of B-17s, arrived in mid-April 1942.

Shortly after the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group was activated at the Army Air Base, Salt Lake City, they were sent 90 miles to the west to an auxiliary airfield at Wendover, Utah to commence their training in earnest. Office buildings and barracks were just starting to be constructed and the weather was less than hospitable. The little whistle-stop town of Wendover was only there because the trains crossing the desert needed fuel and water. The renowned Bonneville Salt Flats are immediately next to the town. The scene in 1942 is best described by the April 1942 entry in the 368<sup>th</sup> Squadron Diary: (See *WENDOVER* continued on page 10)

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

***From the Editor*****Pay It Forward**

One focal point of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association is the fostering of educational awareness of World War II, its veterans, and the role the 306<sup>th</sup> played in defending our country from the tyranny that threatened our existence.

For decades the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA has collected 306<sup>th</sup> BG-related historical photographs, oral histories, and other memorabilia, much of which is accessible on the organization's website, with more data frequently being added.

All too soon, second and third generations will not be able to have first-hand accounts from our vets. It is their stories that teach us, amuse us, and inspire us, and sometimes sadden us with the tales of lost lives, lost time, and lost innocence, all in the service of our country.

One veteran's grandson stated it so aptly when he said, "My children won't be able to interact with World War II veterans, so I have to tell them. It is up to me to learn [from these vets], honor them, remember them, and give them voice. Later in life, it will be my responsibility to share their principles, experiences, and memories with my children, grandchildren, and yes, even my great-grandchildren."

Honoring our World War II veterans' sacrifices is at the forefront of the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA mission. As our veterans' membership declines, the organization is transitioning to a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, organized and operated exclusively for the preservation of history and for education purposes. The organization's revenue is obtained from charitable donations. Your support of the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA will increase awareness of the self-sacrifice, can-do spirit, unity, and service to others exemplified by the air crews and their support teams. By honoring the legacy of these "ordinary heroes," you will be instrumental in ensuring their lives will forever inspire future generations.

*Nancy M. Huebotter,  
Echoes Editor*



## President's Column

By Charles Neal

As we know from history, including those of our WWII veterans, it is inspiring to witness what a few determined people can achieve. Russell

Strong, with the support of his wife June, made an enormous contribution to collecting and organizing information regarding the veterans of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. It is with sadness that I note the passing of June Strong on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

I hope those who have attended a 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association (BGHA) appreciate others, past and present, who have volunteered their time to offer the best reunions they could for our veteran heroes and their families and friends. In addition, there have been and continues to be many hours spent preserving and making documents, photographs, and other media available to current and future interested persons via the internet. Of course, we must not forget those who have contributed those items and other memorabilia, mostly veterans and their families.

I remind readers that it is easy for such treasured items in attics and basements to become lost forever unless someone takes the effort to preserve them. Unfortunately, many in the younger generations do not realize the value of such material until years after they disposed of them and wish they had not. I ask you to think about such things now – time grows short and too soon these will be all we have to keep alive the memories our WWII heroes and the lessons of that time. Contact our Secretary or Historian if you have items you feel you can contribute or loan for scanning and return.

I am indebted to several people who are currently volunteering many hours to our Association. Chief among them are our Historian, Cliff Deets; Nancy Huebotter our Editor of the *Echoes*; Thom Mindala this years' reunion chairman; and our current officers - especially our secretary Barbara Neal. Barbara, in addition to her almost full-time unpaid job as Secretary, has been the one arranging for the spring trip (June 12<sup>th</sup> – June 17<sup>th</sup>) to Thurleigh, UK. The trip was suggested at last September's reunion business meeting and

she has made it happen. I am sure you will hear all about it at next September's Reunion that Thom is planning and organizing so well. I am proud of the first edition of *Echoes* that Nancy produced as Editor before the end of last year. I must also mention Sue Moyer who runs the Facebook 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group page that contains much interesting material and shows the interest in the 306<sup>th</sup> among the social network community.

Serving as your webmaster, as well as President, has been quite a learning experience. There remains a daunting amount of work that can be done to expand and improve our website; however, I am thankful for those who have complimented the Association on what we are providing researchers. The biggest surprise has been the feedback the site (306bg.us) has generated, as well as the response to certain Facebook page posts. Most of the task of responding to inquiries has fallen upon our historian Cliff Deets. His dedication and research to various inquiries is remarkable – way beyond what the inquirers could have ever hoped for. For more on this, see the article about our website in this issue.

The reality is, we continue to evolve with increasing emphasis of the last two words of our organization's name: 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION. We intend to continue reunions knowing fewer WWII veterans will be able to attend; however, we can continue to preserve their memories and lessons for as long as some among us are motivated to do the work. I invite you to volunteer to help and we will strive to identify those who will consider serving on the Board. We are particularly in need of someone with accounting experience. Other positions do not require particular skills, just willingness and a modest amount of time. If you will consider joining a great group on the Board, contact me.

I hope many of you will join us in Salt Lake City for our upcoming reunion in September.







## Secretary's Column

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

It is sad to learn of the deteriorating health of Daphne Franklin, the dear little supportive wife of Ralph Franklin. Both of them have been friends to many of you dear vets and wives, attending with you more than two dozen 306<sup>th</sup> reunions, through the last 30 years.

Hopefully each of you reading this enjoyed that last double-issue of *Echoes* that was mailed in late December, and was posted to our website in early December – That was the first issue by our fine new Editor Nancy Huebotter. The process of changing over to Nancy for *Echoes* editing, has involved much behind-the-scenes work for me. *Echoes* is still printed at the same place, in San Diego, where the printer has a large enough plant to be able to print it more economically than any printer I could find locally.

However, *Echoes* is now mailed from here in Utah, not from Abilene as during the previous 7 years. Locating, and working with, a local mail-processor has been an eye-opening experience. The mail-processor is **REQUIRED** to run all the mailing addresses thru the NCOA – National Change of Address database, using her expensive annual subscription to NCOA. That database changes addresses per its records, AND indicates to the mail-processor the DATE that the Change was entered. (The earlier mail-processor in Texas just sent all the *Echoes* onward to the changed address, without sharing with us the DATE when the Change was entered, AND without sharing with us the NEW address.)

We send *Echoes* by First Class Mail. Only *Echoes* that were returned to the Abilene sender and that I was sometimes much later able to get, gave me clues which vets had either passed on, if they were stamped by the Post Office “Return to Sender; Deceased.” Or for those stamped “Return to Sender [with a new address],” I could try to verify if they had moved to Assisted Living, or to be with one of their “kids” and just forgot to alert me. When I can verify the vet is still at that “changed” address, I

also try to verify whether they are still able to enjoy *Echoes*.

From the local mail-processor, before the mail was put in envelopes and sent, I got a list of the NCOA changed addresses for nearly 100 vets or their wives. Some of the Changes had been entered YEARS earlier. For some of those Changes, I have been able to verify that the vets are still at the changed address and whether they are still able to enjoy *Echoes*.

PLEASE, vets and widows, IF YOU ENJOY *ECHOES* and want to continue to receive it, notify me of your changes of address.

Now that all the **Returns** come here **IMMEDIATELY**, I have been encountering surprising information that ALL of us need to know about First Class mail – info that is not widely known:

The US Postal Service will NOT hold your First Class mail for longer than 10 days – even if you are in the hospital or a rehab facility. They return it to the sender, stamped "**Return to Sender; Temporarily Away**" – UNLESS you enter either a Temporary Forward or a Permanent Change of Address. Some Post Offices will allow a Vacation Hold, of no more than 30 days; you must list a return date and personally appear with ID to collect the mail.

- If you enter a Temporary Forward at the Post Office, with an estimated end-date: Your First Class mail is forwarded for a **minimum** of 15 days and **maximum** of up to a 1 year IF you do first 6 months and then the one allowable 6-month extension. With the Temporary Forward, after one year your mail automatically goes back to your original address. IF you are not there to get it, it is returned to sender, stamped "**Return to Sender; Forwarding Expired**" or "**Return to Sender; Attempted; Not Known.**"

- If you enter an official, permanent Change of Address, submitting the Change of Address form online or to your Post Office, to have your address changed to elsewhere: the Post Office only forwards your First Class mail (no packages), and they will only forward mail for up to 1 year. Again, after 1 year, your First Class mail is returned to the sender, stamped "**Return to Sender; Forwarding Expired**" or "**Return to Sender; Attempted; Not Known.**"

**Possible work-arounds if you must go to Rehab for an undetermined period:**

(1) Someone of YOUR choosing, WHOM YOU TRUST, can quietly just remove your mail from your mailbox (at your residence or at your PO Box) for you AT LEAST weekly.

(2) OR you can contract with a legitimate mail-drop facility, such as some local firms that are often also authorized shipping locations for UPS, FedEx, or DHL; many of these little firms maintain at their street address, numerous individual "mailboxes" that people and firms can rent for a fee.

**In either case, someone must regularly remove the mail and either hold it, or get it to you, wherever you are.**

**All: PLEASE KNOW**, having been thru the deaths of our own parents, I can COMPLETELY empathize with the MANY responsibilities that we "kids in charge" face, in the midst of our grief, regarding our deceased parent. AND I know some of us, at the same time, are dealing with multiple other serious matters (whether involving our own "kids" and grandkids, or our own health, or whatever). I understand it can sometimes take up to a year to inform me of the parent's death. Maybe in extenuating circumstances, I can understand 18 months.

**Be assured** that *Echoes* issues (printed and mailed at considerable expense totaling roughly \$5 per mailed issue) continue to be mailed to all our vets and their widows who I can verify are those deserving recipients, without any subscription fee. Anyone – vet, widow, "kid," or other relative, who can afford to send ANY tax deductible amount – is GREATLY appreciated. EVERY donated dollar helps keep *Echoes* being printed and mailed. Donations in any amount should be payable to "306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association" and mailed to our Treasurer; her contact information is on page 2.



## June Strong, Long-Time Friend of 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, Dies at Age 89



June Strong died peacefully on January 13, 2015 at The Pines in Davidson, North Carolina. She was born in Ripley, Michigan on June 4, 1925, to Will and Ethel Collins Thomas, the third of four children.

When she was 7, her family moved from Ripley to Kalamazoo, Michigan where she met Russell Strong in her second grade class. They graduated from Kalamazoo Central High School in June, 1942. They had dated for several years, became engaged during the war, and married on August 17, 1946.

Because of Russell's career, the family moved often. They arrived in Davidson, NC, with five sons, on June 30, 1966. She and Russ were active leaders in the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group reunions for 25 years. Without Russell with the support of his wife June, the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association would not have prospered and collected much of the material found on the 306 BGHA website.

When Russell died in 2009, they had been married for 63 years.

June is survived by her five sons: Bill, Jon, David, Chris, and Tim.

Our condolences go out particularly to her children who also supported their parents and to the many other family members and friends who will miss her. Memorials may be made to Davidson United Methodist Church, PO Box 718, Davidson, NC, 28036, The Pines Resident Support Fund, 400 Avinger Lane, Davidson, NC 28036, or Hospice Lake Norman, 705 Griffith Street, Suite 203, Davidson, NC 28036



## Sacrifice Remembered, Symbol Restored

A museum honors the Eighth Air Force, which destroyed Nazi Germany's industrial might



Onlookers admire a newly restored B-17G Flying Fortress at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. (PHOTO: AP)  
By: Mark Yost, Wall Street Journal Contributor

The "Greatest Generation" is a common moniker given to the men and women who served in World War II. But after going through the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in this suburb of Savannah, it will be clear that the airmen of this highly distinguished unit earned some superlatives all their own.

Most people probably know the story of the Eighth Air Force from "Twelve O'Clock High," the film and TV series based on the unit's missions. But visitors will learn that the Eighth Bomber Command (redesignated the Eighth Air Force in February 1944) was activated at nearby Hunter Army Airfield in January 1942 and almost immediately departed for England. Its primary mission: bombing industrial targets inside Nazi Germany. At its peak in 1944, the Eighth had some 200,000 men and on any given day from its airfields in East Anglia, England, could launch 2,000 four-engine bombers and 1,000 escort fighters on a

single mission, making it the single-largest air armada in history. But those missions came with a heavy price: Some 47,000 men from the Eighth were either killed, captured or reported missing in action, accounting for half of all the U.S. Army Air Corps' casualties. One of the Eighth's units, the 100th Bombardment Group, earned the nickname "the Bloody Hundredth" for the casualties it suffered. In an October 1943 raid on Münster, Germany, for example, only one B-17 out of 13 made it back to the airfield at Thorpe Abbots.

Those are the facts and figures that are presented in the 90,000 square feet of space divided into a dozen galleries that include artwork, diaries, maps, photos and dioramas, as well as the usual artifacts. The most recent addition among the bomber jackets, caps, bullets, ball turrets and medals is a fully restored B-17G Flying Fortress, a gift from the National Air and Space Museum that was unveiled on January 28 and now sits in the

center of the museum's Combat Gallery. The project, which took six years, was important because some 4,700 B-17s were lost during the war. Afterward, most were destroyed and sold for scrap metal. Today, fewer than 50 B-17s remain, with only about a dozen restored to flying condition.



*B-17 flight formation over England with contrails*  
(Photo: National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force)

There is also “The Mission Experience,” where visitors are given an overview of the Eighth Air Force, attend a mock pre-raid planning meeting, and then go into a theater for a film that tries to give them a sense of what it was like to be at 32,000 feet, with temperatures well below zero, flying for hours on oxygen, constantly harassed by German fighter planes and flak, the English abbreviation for *Flugzeugabwehrkanone*, or “aircraft-defense gun.”

But where the museum excels is in telling the personal stories of the men and the missions of the Eighth Air Force. Among them, Robert Rosenthal, who a plaque tells us was the pilot of *Royal Flush*, that lone B-17 that returned from the raid on Münster. “With two engines out, a hole in the starboard wing, and three wounded crewmembers, Rosie maneuvered his stricken bomber like a fighter, which forced the attacking Germans to seek an easier target.”

In a small gallery honoring Medal of Honor winners is the story of First Lt. Donald J. Gott, whose plane was heavily damaged and caught fire during a raid over Saarbrücken in November 1944. “Antiaircraft fire had wounded the flight engineer’s leg and severed the radio operator’s arm causing him to lose consciousness,” his plaque reads.

Because the radio operator was unconscious, Gott refused to give the order to bail out. Instead, he

flew the plane on one engine to friendly territory. “He ordered his crew to bail out while he and his co-pilot, William Metzger, Jr., attempted to land the aircraft with the wounded radio operator aboard. At only 100 feet above the ground, the aircraft exploded . . . .”

The highly decorated unit’s most devastating day might have been October 14, 1943, known as Black Thursday, its second mission to take out the German ball-bearing plant at Schweinfurt. As one of the informative panels notes, the Allies did not have the air superiority they would enjoy some eight months later in Normandy for the D-Day landings. That morning 251 B-17s left England and by the time the sortie returned, 60 bombers had been lost. An additional 12 subsequently had to be scrapped, and 121 needed extensive repairs. Worse yet, 600 airmen were lost over enemy territory, and those planes that did make it back carried five dead and 43 wounded.

While much is made of the B-17—both here and in the history books—the museum also tells the story of the Second Air Division, a unit of the Eighth Air Force that included some 9,000 officers and 45,000 enlisted men who flew the slightly smaller B-24 Liberators on some 94,000 sorties during 400 missions from 1942 to 1945. And it has a section devoted to the VIII Fighter Command, the escort squadrons of P-38 Lightnings, P-47 Thunderbolts and, later in the war, P-51 Mustangs that tried to keep the German fighters from decimating the bombers before they could reach their targets.

The museum also doesn’t shirk from discussing the political feud between Eighth Air Force commanders and Sir Arthur “Bomber” Harris of RAF Bomber Command, who ridiculed U.S. daylight bombing tactics and greatly underestimated the accuracy of the American’s Norden bombsight. The men of the Eighth Air Force not only destroyed Germany’s industrial might, but also inflicted far fewer civilian casualties than did British nighttime raids.

*This article, which first appeared in the Wall Street Journal on 5 February 2015, and was posted to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force website, is reprinted with permission from the author. The 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA thanks Mr. Yost for allowing us to include the article in our newsletter, thus making it easily accessible to our veterans.*



## Thurleigh: 306 Vets and Families Scheduled to Make June Trip

**Thurleigh trip June 13-17, 2015** If any of you reading this want to join a group of 36 of us 306<sup>th</sup>-related folks on a 5-day tour that includes Thurleigh, England (near Bedford; north of London), contact the Secretary ASAP for further details beyond the below recap [see page 2 for contact information]. Spaces are currently available on our coach. Every traveler arranges his/her own air travel, including any further travel you may desire either before or after spending June 13-17 as part of our coach-driven group. Likely you can still book a room at the hotel where we will spend 4 nights in Cambridge, the Arundel House Hotel, though you can no longer book using our group-rate at the hotel. If you wish to check the hotel's website for prices and availability of a room, go to <http://www.arundelhousehotels.co.uk/cambridge>. All staying there get a full English breakfast each day. The hotel has a full restaurant and bar.

### Our itinerary includes:

➤ **Saturday, 13 June:** At 12:30pm local time, board our coach at the Crowne Plaza Heathrow Hotel, which is 2 miles from the Heathrow terminals. That hotel, in case you wish to be there the night before, can be booked either via [www.crowneplaza.com](http://www.crowneplaza.com) or by calling Crowne Plaza's US toll-free phone (877) 270-1393. Our coach will deliver us to the Arundel House Hotel in Cambridge by mid-afternoon. Free time Saturday for getting settled, and if you wish exploring a bit of Cambridge, said to be England's most beautiful city. Dinner will be on our own.



➤ **Sunday, 14 June:** Our coach will take us to Thurleigh. We'll visit Ralph Franklin's Thurleigh 306th Museum; have a group lunch together at the Jackal Pub in Thurleigh; stop by the Thurleigh Church, which served as a landmark for our WWII

crews returning to base; have a small ceremony and lay a wreath honoring all the 306th at the 306th Memorial back at the Thurleigh 306th Museum. Our coach will return us to our hotel; dinner on our own.



➤ **Monday, 15 June:** Our coach will take us to Duxford for the day, where the American Air Museum is part of the UK's Imperial War Museum [[www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-duxford](http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-duxford)]. See my column in the last Echoes, regarding their new B-17 exhibit. Two of our 306th WWII veterans traveling with our group will be interviewed for the exhibit during our trip. The American Air Museum staff is preparing a presentation for our group. While at Duxford, we can get lunch and visit other Museums in the complex. Our coach will return us to our hotel; dinner on our own.





➤ **Tuesday, 16 June:** Our coach will take us to Cambridge American Cemetery at nearby Madingley [www.abmc.gov/cemeteries-memorials/europe/cambridge-american-cemetery]. Among their 3,800+ burials, and names of 5,127 Missing in Action inscribed on their Tablets of the Missing, are 117 people from the 306th. While there, we can get guidance at their impressive new Visitors Center to any of those specific burials/missing tablets. We'll have a ceremony and lay a wreath honoring the 306th, at their 72-foot flagpole; their carillon will play Taps for us. If we are there long enough that any or all of us wish to get lunch, just 200 yards down from the Cemetery is a Garden Center, which has not only flowers etc. available for purchase, but also has a café serving hot meals, sandwiches, and snacks. At the conclusion of our visit, our coach will return us to our hotel prior to 3:00 pm. Tuesday night, we'll have a "Goodbye Dinner" at our hotel together (a fixed menu 3-course meal).



➤ **Wednesday, 17 June:** Our coach will return us to London's Heathrow airport, dropping us at whichever terminal travelers need to check in. Those heading into London for additional sight-seeing, can catch the Heathrow Express train to London's Paddington Station.

**Don't miss this opportunity!**  
**There is still time to make**  
**your plans!**

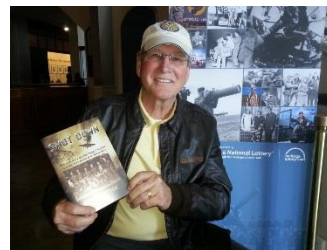
## Trivia from the Archives

(Items of interest gleaned from the 306<sup>th</sup> BG archives)

- An entry from the 18 December 1944 **306<sup>th</sup> Group Diary** reads "S/Sgt Maynard H. Smith, holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor, reduced to the grade of Private." The next day he was transferred out of the Group.
- From the Card File of 306th personnel, Captain Lloyd D. Barnes, 4th Station Complement Squadron, was assigned as the Group Veterinarian.
- A copilot in 1944/45 (to remain unnamed) was court martialed for trying to turn out the lights. On the back of the card from the Card File of 306th personnel, Russell Strong wrote: "Court martialed at Thurleigh for taking three shots at a light bulb in his barracks with a .45 cal. pistol. Cost \$25 per shot, and he missed on all three."
- From the book *First Over Germany*, twin brothers Ray Y. and Roy Y. Ward (ball turret and waist gunner) were both killed in action on a 29 April 1944 mission to Berlin. They were both crewmembers on the aircraft piloted by Lt. Warren Lutz, hit by flak going down "enveloped in flames." There were only two survivors.

## Shot Down Continues to Receive Recognition

Author Steve Snyder on Book Signing Tour



306<sup>th</sup> BGHA Vice President Steve Snyder's is receiving considerable notoriety following the publication of his book *Shot Down, -- The true story of pilot Howard Snyder and the*

*crew of the B-17 Susan Ruth*, which details the experiences of his father and the B-17 crew that were shot down on February 8th, 1944 over Belgium.

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>

**WENDOVOVER** (continued from page 1)

*Under pressure of the war, the squadron and its fellow squadrons of the 306<sup>th</sup>, the 367<sup>th</sup>, 369<sup>th</sup>, and 34<sup>th</sup>, were moved to Wendover, Utah, 120 miles from Salt Lake City, which would be their home until they were ready to leave for action. Here conditions were “rugged.” The former emergency landing field had just about been officially named as “air base,” and only a handful of buildings were completed. There was neither heat nor electricity and there was occasionally snow on the ground. The enlisted men lived in tents, while the officers slept in the only barracks, as many as six to a room meant for two. The enlisted men’s cook tent was such a shaky affair that it blew down three times in one day.*



*In the words of Sgt. Marshall E. Baker: “Pvt. John Doe, after a long and tiresome journey, the last part of which was across ‘No Man’s Land’ (the Great Salt Lake Desert), arrives at a railroad station at the west extremity of Utah, at perhaps 9 a.m. He glances curiously out of the window of the coach, and its not the rain that makes him wonder ‘What in hell have I done to deserve this?’ This is what is before his eyes: On the north side of the tracks the village of Wendover, or “Leftover” as it was later to be appropriately called by Bob Hope. Besides the RR station previously mentioned, there were a few scattered houses, a general ‘Jot-Em-Down’ store, a café, two filling stations, eight small trees and the famous State Line Hotel just across the line on the Nevada side, all under the shadow of the towering mountains in the background. Now Pvt. Doe, though half dazed, becomes brave enough to glance to the south. There is Wendover Field, which is mostly field. There is a radio tower, two runways, two B-18s, four barracks to the east of which are two rows of beautiful tents. Pvt. Doe has just come from Keesler Field, Shepard Field, Fort*

*Logan or some other well established camp and what he now sees makes a most unpleasant contrast. As the GI trucks roll him merrily down to headquarters, and later those beautiful tents, he has sort of lost feeling and thinks of what a lovely home he left behind.”*

Few buildings were completed and training facilities were scarce when the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group arrived. But by the end of 1942, three groups had completed training and a fourth group was still in training. Training included exercises in high-altitude formation flying, long-range navigation, target identification, and simulated combat missions. During 1943, thirteen additional bombardment groups were trained at the Utah range. At the end of the year, four groups were in training, and beginning in 1944, two groups departed, leaving two B-24 groups – the last of the Liberator groups to be trained at the desert range.

By the end of World War II, 21 bomb groups and over 1000 air crews completed training at Wendover airfield – enough to accommodate the entire Eighth Air Force. However, not all the crews went to support that organization. The crews have been recognized for their participation in the strategic bombing of Germany, flying in support of D-Day, and conducting combat operations around the world. Three groups had Medal of Honor recipients.



The 306<sup>th</sup>, noted as ‘First Over Germany,’ was also the first bombardment group to train at Wendover Army Air Base. In the latter part of the war, the 509<sup>th</sup> Composite Group would train here. This was a B-29 group under command of Colonel Paul Tibbets. Here they practiced loading atomic bombs into the *Enola Gay* and developed the evasive maneuvers they would use after dropping the bomb. The 368<sup>th</sup> Squadron Diary added a final



note about those early days at Wendover. It noted that the world's land speed record had been set at the Bonneville Salt Flats at 368 mph by a Mr. John Cobb.

Today, this airfield is the most original remaining and operating World War II training airfield in the country. The ultimate objective of the Historic Wendover Airfield foundation is the renovation of multiple hangars, barracks, and support buildings, allowing visitors to “step back in time” and experience an original World War II training base. The Control Tower, originally built in 1942, has seen many generations of pilots, in war and peace time, use the airfield. The Norden bombsight storage vault that housed one of the most closely guarded secrets of World War II, the dining hall, barracks, navigational aids building, and the B-29 *Enola Gay* hangar are among the facilities visitors will be able to tour.



This year's reunion participants will be able to revisit their early training facilities or, for the younger generations, they will be able to experience the feelings and understand the circumstances of the World War II era participants.

The airfield restoration organization strives to maintain the maximum originality of the Wendover Air Base and recreate authentic exhibits and

displays in order to stimulate a living connection between the visitor and the past.

The Airfield seeks to preserve, share, and portray the sacrifice, unity, and ingenuity of the World War II crews through hands-on, interactive, and interpretive exhibits and displays, and through multimedia exhibits, hear of the personal experiences of those who trained at the Wendover Airfield.

The following bomb groups trained at Wendover Airfield. Archival information and artifacts pertaining to these squadrons and groups are being gathered by the Wendover Airfield restoration organization for the purpose of offering researchers and museum visitors the opportunity to discover the realities of World War II.

Bomb Group	Squadrons	Aircraft	Dates at Wendover
100 <sup>th</sup>	349 <sup>th</sup> , 350 <sup>th</sup> , 351 <sup>st</sup> , 418 <sup>th</sup>	B-17	Nov. '42 to Jan. '43
306 <sup>th</sup>	367 <sup>th</sup> , 368 <sup>th</sup> , 369 <sup>th</sup> , 423 <sup>rd</sup>	B-17	Apr. '42 to Aug. '42
308 <sup>th</sup>	373 <sup>rd</sup> , 374 <sup>th</sup> , 375 <sup>th</sup> , 425 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	Oct. '42 to Nov. '42
379 <sup>th</sup>	524 <sup>th</sup> , 525 <sup>th</sup> , 526 <sup>th</sup> , 527 <sup>th</sup>	B-17	Dec. '42 to Feb. '43
384 <sup>th</sup>	544 <sup>th</sup> , 545 <sup>th</sup> , 546 <sup>th</sup> , 547 <sup>th</sup>	B-17	Jan. '43 to Apr. '43
388 <sup>th</sup>	560 <sup>th</sup> , 561 <sup>st</sup> , 562 <sup>nd</sup> , 563 <sup>rd</sup>	B-17	Jan. '43 to Apr. '43
445 <sup>th</sup>	700 <sup>th</sup> , 701 <sup>st</sup> , 702 <sup>nd</sup> , 703 <sup>rd</sup>	B-24	June '43 to July '43
448 <sup>th</sup>	712 <sup>th</sup> , 713 <sup>th</sup> , 714 <sup>th</sup> , 715 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	July '43 to Sept. '43
451 <sup>st</sup>	724 <sup>th</sup> , 725 <sup>th</sup> , 726 <sup>th</sup> , 727 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	June '43 to Sept. '43
456 <sup>th</sup>	744 <sup>th</sup> , 745 <sup>th</sup> , 746 <sup>th</sup> , 747 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	June '43 to July '43
457 <sup>th</sup>	748 <sup>th</sup> , 749 <sup>th</sup> , 750 <sup>th</sup> , 751 <sup>st</sup>	B-17	Dec. '43 to Jan. '44
458 <sup>th</sup>	752 <sup>nd</sup> , 753 <sup>rd</sup> , 754 <sup>th</sup> , 755 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	July '43 to Sept. '43
461 <sup>st</sup>	764 <sup>th</sup> , 765 <sup>th</sup> , 766 <sup>th</sup> , 767 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	July '43 to Oct. '43
464 <sup>th</sup>	776 <sup>th</sup> , 777 <sup>th</sup> , 778 <sup>th</sup> , 779 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	July '43 to Aug. '43
467 <sup>th</sup>	788 <sup>th</sup> , 789 <sup>th</sup> , 790 <sup>th</sup> , 791 <sup>st</sup>	B-24	Aug. '43 to Sept. '43
489 <sup>th</sup>	844 <sup>th</sup> , 845 <sup>th</sup> , 846 <sup>th</sup> , 847 <sup>th</sup>	B-24	Oct. '43 to Apr. '44
490 <sup>th</sup>	848 <sup>th</sup> , 849 <sup>th</sup> , 850 <sup>th</sup> , 852 <sup>st</sup>	B-24	Oct. '43 to Dec. '43
494 <sup>th</sup>	864 <sup>th</sup> , 865 <sup>th</sup> , 866 <sup>th</sup> , 867 <sup>th</sup> , 373 <sup>rd</sup>	B-24	Dec. '43 to Apr. '44
509 <sup>th</sup> CG	383 <sup>rd</sup> , 329 <sup>th</sup>	B-29	Nov. '44 to May '45



**Obituaries** – *(Secretary's note: Obits are here for deaths of those who have family members – or crew mates / co-workers – who the Secretary KNOWS are currently following Echoes, and KNOWS cannot necessarily access the 306th website. Men are first; then family. At the bottom of the column, are other deaths of 306<sup>th</sup> men – with only names, brief Thurlough affiliation, and dates of death. Those others have a fuller obit posted at our website, 306bg.us in a new section, which will eventually have all Echoes obits.)*

**Ake, Nelson**, 367 crew chief, a native of northeast MA, died 15 Jan 15 at 94. He reported 3 Apr 42. He is shown in the 367<sup>th</sup> crew photo of Ben Peters. He was single when he enlisted at Harrisburg, PA, in Oct 41 as Pvt Air Corps. Post-war he was an engineer at ITT Semiconductors; he retired May 82. His wife of 62 years, Kathryn, predeceased him 23 Feb 13 at 92 after a brief illness, with memorials suggested to Kaplan Family Hospice House. Danvers. Survived by 5c, 3gc, 3ggc; buried MA National Cemetery in Bourne.

**Cappellett, Arthur 'Art' P**, 423<sup>rd</sup> waist gunner (Robert Davenport crew), of Vestal, NY, died 9 Feb 12 at 85. With Davenport, he reported 4 Apr 45; he was wounded 20 Apr 45. Post-war he returned to IBM, until he went to work for JC Rose Construction; he later became a co-owner (Rose & Cappellett Paving & Construction Co), serving local businesses and residents for several years. In the early '70s, he and wife Beth became owners of The Outpost, a popular country western bar and dance hall, which they operated successfully for 10 years. After selling it, he worked for an old friend, managing his mobile concrete business until retiring in 92. Beth predeceased him after 55 years of marriage in 03. Survived by 2s, 4gc, 5ggc; funeral Mass was at Our Lady of Sorrows, Vestal; Calvary Cemetery, Johnson City, NY; memorials to Vestal EMS or Our Lady of Sorrows.

**Carrazzone, Gennaro 'Gerry' M**, 369<sup>th</sup> pilot, of Cary, NC and earlier of Lagrangeville, NY, died 27 Jul 13 at 90. He reported 17 Jul 44 and flew his 35<sup>th</sup> mission 24 Dec 44. When he joined the Air Corps in 43 he was attending the U of AL. Post-war he continued in the AF Reserve, retiring as major in '64. In '50 he earned his BS at Saint Louis U. He spent 35 years with IBM in management, starting the manufacturing plant in Poughkeepsie, NY; then joined the IBM Work Trade Corp spending 4 years in Manufacturing Headquarters in Paris, France; retired as Director of the World Trade Distribution Center. Survived by wife, Gesine, 1d, 2gs. Memorials to Hospice of Wake County, Raleigh, NC.

**Cooper, Melvin D**, 369<sup>th</sup> bombardier (Edgar Smith crew), originally from Kansas City, MO and long-time resident of Lenexa, KS, died 11 Jun 14, at 90. He reported 10 Feb 45, and flew 19 missions by the end of combat; he continued in the Casey Jones Project of mapping Europe and Northern Africa. He was enlisted in Feb 43 and graduated from Bombardier School in 44. He married Delka in 55. Post-war he was an accountant for Folger's Coffee and later Procter & Gamble until retiring in 87. He enjoyed baseball, crossword puzzles, family, and traveling, abroad as well as in the US. Survived by his wife Delka, 2c, 4gd, 3ggc; Walnut Grove Cemetery, Boonville, MO; memorials to American Cancer Society.

**Damico, Albert G Jr**, Group and 367 PFF navigator, originally from Chicago and long of San Antonio, TX, died 6 May 13, at 90. He reported 1 Aug 44, and served as Group PFF navigator 15 to 29 Oct-44. During his 30 missions, did 19 group leads; 3 division leads; 2 8<sup>th</sup> AF leads; he also performed bombardier duties on 22 missions. Post-Thurlough he also served in the Korean War. He graduated with a BS in Mechanical Engineering from U of IL. His career in the space industry included at the Jet Propulsion Lab where he worked on the Moon Surveyor Lander project, in a preparation program for the Apollo Mission in the mid 60's; designed Surface Sampler Arm for apparatus that collected moon soil and rock samples. He met Colette while touring Europe; after a 4-year courtship she left her home of Dublin, Ireland for the US. He enjoyed many activities in his community; chess, golf, and varied collections. The Apr 85 Echoes, p.1 has his article seeking info from 306<sup>th</sup> men re PFF radar equipment from all aspects, for a book he was then writing, on Pathfinder. Survived by his wife of 52 years, Colette, 4c; buried at Ft Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, TX; memorials to the Animal Defense League.

**Demorest, 'Hal' Harold L**, 423<sup>rd</sup> ball turret gunner (John J Endicott crew), originally from Shortville, NY, and later of Hemet, CA, died 24 Dec 13, at 91. He reported 2 Apr 45 and continued in the Casey Jones Project for photo mapping of Europe and Northern Africa. Post-war he worked for Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach, CA; he later was a machinist for the family business before retirement. He loved travel in the US and Vancouver, Canada, enjoying camping with family and friends. In Echoes Jan-91, p.2, he's pictured with 4 crew mates at the San Antonio reunion. In later years he enjoyed cards, solitaire, jigsaw puzzles, watching golf, and old movies. Predeceased by 1s, survived by his wife Nina, 2c, 2gd.

**Gardner, Hardie M**, 368<sup>th</sup> engineer top turret gunner (John Coyne crew), native of Bryan Co, GA (Savannah area), died 27 Nov 13 at 91, at Savannah Square. He reported 29 Aug 44, and ended a 35-mission tour 10 Jan 45. Pre-enlisting in Jul 42 in the Air Corps, he had one year at U of GA; he had earlier, in Washington DC, spent a summer as a congressional page. Post-war he lived in Ft Lauderdale 3 years installing pools. Upon returning to Bryan Co, he built several pools. For 30 years he served as Magistrate Judge and notary. He owned and operated Gardner's Grocery in Blycton for 35+ years. Predeceased in 11 by his wife of 67 years, Grace, at 85; survived by 2c, 2gc, 1 st-gd; Olive Branch Cemetery, Blycton, GA.

**Hauck, George C**, 367<sup>th</sup> radar navigator and POW, earlier of Union, NJ, and long of Punta Gorda, FL, died 1 Mar 14, at 93. He reported 5 Nov 44; on his first mission (Merseberg) 21 Nov 44 he was downed (with Edwin Schoenbachler crew); POW at Stalag I, Barth. A Presbyterian, he was passionate in his 20 years of ministry to those incarcerated in Charlotte County Prison [Punta Gorda area]. He was a 65-yr member and Past Commander of American Legion Post 35 in Union, NJ; member of American Ex-Prisoners of War, NJ Steamfitters and Plumbers Local 322, and Punta Gorda Elks. Survived by Adelaide 'Rosebud,' his wife of 71 years, 2d, 2gc, 2ggc.

**Hickman, William 'Red' 'Lou' L**, 369<sup>th</sup> radio operator (Harlin Laughlin crew), of Lake Dale, IN, died 13 Jan 14, at 91. With the crew he reported 21 Aug 44 and completed his 30-mission tour 6 Apr 45. In Feb 43, he'd married Irene 10 days before reporting for active duty. Post-war he earned an engineering degree in '55. He designed and built their dream home in the 60s; worked many years at Chicago Conditionaire, retiring in the early 90s; and they wintered at their South Padre, TX condo until she could no longer travel. He had an active life in politics; was a lifelong animal lover; member of Youche Country Club; and member of American Legion Post #101. Predeceased by Irene in Oct 03 at 79, 1d, 1ggs; survived by 2d, 8gc, 11ggc; buried at Lowell [IN] Memorial Cemetery; memorials suggested to Lymphoma Society.

**Reeder, William 'Bill' D [Dean]**, 368<sup>th</sup> pilot, born in Nashville, TN, died 31 Oct 13, near 92, while living at Hermitage, TN. He reported 10 Nov 43; completed his tour (28 missions) 4 May 44; flew Cycle Relay out of Thurleigh May thru Jul 44; departed 29 Jul 44. He continued in the service as a communications officer; and loved traveling the world with his family. He had been stationed in 39 locations by the time he retired 1 Oct 72 as Col, Staff CINCPAC Hawaii. He'd entered military service after high school, in 40, spending his first night on the floor of a hanger at Berry Field, now Nashville Int'l Airport. He met his wife at the USO club in Douglas, GA, the town where she was working; Winifred graduated U of GA in social work. They married in 29 Apr 43 in Blytheville, AR where he was in Cadet Pilot Class 43-D, just before he headed to England on the Queen Mary with 17,000 other GIs. After retiring in 72, they moved to Clarksville, TN, where for the next 35 years he was very active in Madison Street Methodist and civic groups, serving on many committees and boards. He enjoyed golf with Winifred and being grandpa and great-grandpa. Survived by his wife of 70 years, Winifred, 4c, 5gc, 6ggc; memorials to the McKendree Village Chapel Fund, c/o Dept. of Pastoral Care, McKendree Village, Hermitage, TN.

**Robertson, Robert L**, 423<sup>rd</sup> gunner, of Denver, CO, died 3 Oct 13, at 88. He reported on 28 Nov 44, though not with the Thomas Hedley crew as indicated in Strong's Card File, according to Jack Anderson, who arrived in the crew and was on it through the end of the war. Post-war in Aug 46, in Essex Co, NJ, he was re-enlisted for the Hawaiian Dept from ranks of Enlisted Men Reserves. No further info. Anyone having further info is requested to contact the Secretary; contact info on p.2.

**Roth, Howard G**, 423<sup>rd</sup> co-pilot and pilot, of Lockport, NY, died 7 Dec 14, at 91. He reported 26 Jul 44 (Wendell Larson crew); became 1<sup>st</sup> pilot 22 Sep 44; departed 19 Feb 45 having completed his 35-mission tour. Post-combat, in Jun 45, he married his fiancée, Erna Fae; they'd met during his primary flight training in Cape Girardeau, MO. He became an instructor on C-46 aircraft in St Joseph, MO, and when that was phased out, flew in the Air Transport Command, St Joseph to Denver to Ogden, UT, to Sacramento – "very boring." He then established HGR Developers, and went into building home subdivisions. He was a 30-year member of the Chamber of Commerce. In recent years he shared with the secretary his homepage at [www.stargeezer.net/b17new/Dadshome.htm](http://www.stargeezer.net/b17new/Dadshome.htm). Predeceased by Erna Fae in Dec 85, from an apparent heart attack at 58, and by 1d; survived by 2s, 4gc, 1ggc, and his dear friend and companion, Mary Bennet; many of us have enjoyed time at reunions with Howard and Mary at our reunions from 08 through 12.

**Taylor, John 'Jack' F**, 423<sup>rd</sup> navigator (Daniel Gates crew) and POW, of Speigletown, NY, died 17 May 12, after a brief illness, at 92. He reported 28 Jul 44; on his 12<sup>th</sup> mission, 'Belle of the Blue' was downed; he was POW from 12 Sep 44 (Ruhland mission) at Stalag Luft I. In 43 he married Mildred. Post-war he was in the electrical contracting business for many years before retiring from IBEW Local 438 in Troy, in 75. A loving father and grandfather, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, and camping in the Adirondacks; reading and oil painting; he always had a dog at his side. For many years he served on the District Volunteer Fire Co, and was a member of the Veterans of Lansingburgh, Disabled American Veterans, and Military Order of the Purple Heart. Mildred predeceased him in May 11; survived by 4c, 4gc, 2ggc; funeral Mass at St Augustine's Church, Lansingburgh; burial at Gerald BH Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, Schuylerville.

**Teelon, Lynn H**, 368<sup>th</sup> waist and ball turret gunner (Leland Deck crew), and airplane and engine mechanic, of Bainbridge, NY, died 24 Jul 14, at the NY State Veterans' Home in Oxford, at 91. He reported 28 May 44, and was honorably discharged Nov 45. Before he was enlisted in Feb 43, he worked for Bendix-Scintilla. Post-war he attended the Veterans Vocational School at Troy for automobile mechanics. He owned and operated an excavating and construction company in Bainbridge, was a long-time logger, farmer, and house builder. In Dec 51, he married Thelma, who predeceased him in Oct 94. In Jul 09, he married Melvina. He loved animals, gardening, bluegrass, and old country music. Survived by Melvina, 4d, 4gc; memorials to Delaware Valley Humane Society.

**Waldrop, Robert**, 367<sup>th</sup> waist gunner (Henry Ware crew) and POW, originally of Ft Wayne, IN and later Dataw Island, SC, died 4 Feb 15, at 92 of a heart attack and stroke at Beaufort Memorial Hospital, Beaufort, SC. He reported 27 Nov 43; POW from 4 Feb 44 (Frankfurt mission) at Stalag Luft 4. Post-war he married Helen. He returned briefly to General Electric, but preferring to be outside after his POW time, he became a police officer with the Ft Wayne Police Dept, retiring as a Captain in 68. He was then named to head the Security Department at a large Magnavox defense-related manufacturing plant in Ft Wayne. He was a member of the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS, American Ex-POW organization, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, and was a Past Commander of the IN State POW organization. In 94, IN's then-Governor Evan Bayh presented him with the Sagamore of the Wabash Award, the highest award presented to IN citizens for outstanding service to the state. In retirement, he moved to SC, where he and his daughter both volunteered for years at the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> AF Museum near Savannah. As a volunteer docent, he stationed himself at the POW display to talk with visitors, answering their questions and helping them understand the tremendous sacrifice of WWII airmen. He attended the recent ceremony for the formal dedication of the Museum's now-restored B-17 [see article in this issue]. Predeceased by his wife of 52 years, Helen Jean; survived by 1d, 1gd, 2ggc; graveside services at National Cemetery, Beaufort, SC; memorials to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

**Wenger, Neil 'Ken' Kenneth**, 423 waist gunner (Fred Engstrom crew), of Ann Arbor, MI, died at home thanks to his son and daughter-in-law caretakers moving in the help him, on 27 Oct 14, at 90. He reported 10 Feb 45, and likely continued through the Casey Jones Project post-combat. While in England, he met Beatrice, of Nottingham, on a blind date. They continued to date whenever he could get a 3-day pass. After his discharge in May 46, they married in Sep, and settled in Ann Arbor. Ken worked as a highly-skilled auto mechanic, and could make or fix anything requiring skills of mechanic, plumber, electrician, or builder, helping neighbors and friends in need. Predeceased by Bea after 63+ years of marriage in Apr 10, and by 1s and 1ggs; survived by 2c, 5gc, 8ggc; Washtenong Memorial Park.

#### FAMILY

**Brage, Doris**, widow of Marciel W, died 23 Feb 14, in Lodi, CA at 87. Her husband was 368<sup>th</sup> navigator on William D Reeder's crew; he died 5 Oct 85 (obit in Jul 93 Echoes). They married 3 Jun 54. No further info.

**Crouch, Reba C**, widow of James W, died 18 Apr 14 at 93. Her husband was 367 co-pilot, George Buckey crew, and POW; he died 7 Dec-95; obit in May-99 Echoes. She excelled in business school and was hired by Port Arthur Abstract, where she met James, just home from the war when he registered his lot deed. They married 16 Nov 46; built Crouch Insurance Agency where she kept the books and did the payroll; raised 3 sons; and traveled the world. They'd been married 48 years when he died. She was a member of First Baptist, and a



volunteer for the Museum of the Gulf Coast. Also predeceased by 1s, survived by 2s, 7gc, 1ggs; buried at Greenlawn Memorial Park, Groves, TX.

**Dostie, Lydia**, wife of Edward J, died 4 Oct 2014 in Englewood, NJ at 83. Her surviving husband was 423<sup>rd</sup> engineer (William Marcotte crew) and POW. They married in 68 in NY. When she retired from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, in Kittery, ME, they retired to FL. She served many years as the adjutant and treasure for the POW's of Stalag 17B chapter, and was member of the American Legion, Elks and Moose clubs. She enjoyed golf, swimming, and travel, with New England in the fall being her favorite. In addition to Edward, survived by 2c, 3 st-c. 2gc; Riverside Cemetery in Newmarket, NH.

**McKillop, Marge**, widow of William 'Bill' R, died 12 Oct 15 in Wheeling, WV. Her husband Bill had died 25 Sep 05; he was 369<sup>th</sup> togglier waist gunner on the crew of Wallace 'Wally' or 'Jack' Young; his obit was in Nov 05 Echoes. Thanks to Elizabeth Stephens, widow of Bill's crew-mate George, Secretary learned of Marge's death. Marge was a devoted AF wife, who made their home at various duty posts in Europe and in the US. Survived by 4c, 9gc, 4ggc. Burial in the Ascension Lutheran Church Columbarium, Shelby, NC.

**WEBSITE OBITS:** *Full obits can be found in the Obituaries section of our website, 306bg.us for these men who have no Echoes-following relative or crew mate / co-worker known to the Secretary as of 20 Feb 15. Anyone without web-access can contact the Secretary for full version of the obit [contact info on p.2]:*

**Augustin, Lester C**, 368<sup>th</sup> drying room, died 26 Dec 13 at 93.

**Baltunas, Anthony P**, 423<sup>rd</sup> navigator and Swiss internee, of Chicago, IL, died 12 Jul 14 at 96.

**Cannon, Charles 'Cannon' N [Nelbert]**, 423 pilot, originally of Camden, AR, and later of Armstrong, IL, died 17 Jul 14 in Paxton, IL at 93.

**Cargill, William D**, 368<sup>th</sup> bombardier, briefly an Original with 306<sup>th</sup> and then went overseas in another BG (not identified in Russell Strong's Card File), died 29 Jan 14 in San Antonio, at 95.

**Clarke, Alexander J**, 367<sup>th</sup> bombardier (Henry Hanson crew), earlier of Dallas, TX, and in recent years of Tampa, FL, died 24 Dec 14, at 93.

**Clemence, George J**, 423<sup>rd</sup> bomb-sight mechanic, originally of Sedgwick Co, KS, and more recently of Sarasota, FL, died 7 Sep 13, at 90.

**Cota, Raymond A**, 4<sup>th</sup> Station Complement Sq, of Merrimack, NH, died 3 Aug 14 near his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

**Cullen, William L [Lawrence]**, 368 navigator (John Curtis crew), originally of MA, and for his last 13 years of Cary, NC, died 30 May 14 at 90.

**Graves, Robert L**, 423<sup>rd</sup> Original Cpl ground crew and crash crew, of Madison, WI, died in hospice care 17 Feb 13, at 89.

**Hackworth, Richard 'Dick' G [Gordon]**, 368<sup>th</sup> radio operator gunner (James M Ferguson crew) and POW, died 15 Apr 81.

**Hernandez, Henry**, 367 gunner (Roy Hoffman) d.20 Dec 06 [month was inadvertently left out from last Echoes issue].

**Hess, Joseph N**, 367 pilot, of Des Moines, IA, died in Dec 83 at age 66.

**Hutchinson, Howard 'Hutch' E [Edward]**, 423<sup>rd</sup> pilot, originally from MO and resident from '57 to '09 of Columbia, Tuolumne Co, CA, died at home in Lancaster, CA, 16 Dec 13, at 94.

**Joslin, Lawrence G**, 367<sup>th</sup> waist gunner (Gordon L Donkin crew), originally from NY, died in southern CA on 15 Dec 61, at 42.

**Killinger, Frank H**, 368th ball turret gunner (William Ruffin crew), of Bremerton, WA, died 11 Jul 14 at 89.

**Nester, William E**, 423<sup>rd</sup> pilot, of Daytona Beach, FL, died 20 Feb 14, at 93.

**Northcott, Lynn W**, 368<sup>th</sup> tail gunner, of Benton, KY, died 5 Sep 14, at 91.

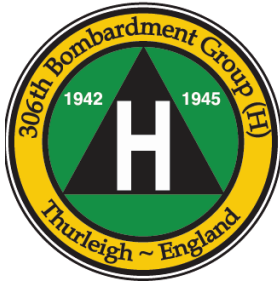
**Palumbo, Vincent 'Red' J**, 369<sup>th</sup> bombardier (Kurt Ahlstrom crew) and Squadron bombardier, life-long resident of Medfield, MA, and Sun City Center, FL, died 29 Mar 12 after a brief illness, at 93.

**Sage, Robert C**, 367th pilot (after initially co-pilot, Talmadge McDonough crew), originally from Philadelphia, PA, died 20 Feb 2002 in Whitehall, MT at 80.

**Schaefer, William H**, 369<sup>th</sup> co-pilot (Cecil McKinney crew), of LaGrange and Burr Ridge, IL, died 7 Dec 10, at 89.

**Weiler, Gerald A [Albert]**, 367 navigator (Gordon Donkin crew), of Waterloo, IN, died 17 Aug 70, at 49.

## A Lesson in 306<sup>th</sup> BG Aircraft Markings: The Triangle H



The “Triangle H” logo that appeared on the tail and wings of their aircraft has come to symbolize the 306th Bombardment Group. But what did this logo represent and what was the meaning behind the other emblems and paint schemes seen on 306th airplanes over the course of the war?

In the fall of 1942, when the 306th first arrived in England, there were few markings on the airplanes. They sported an olive green painted fuselage with splotches of a different color green for camouflage, and a light blue-gray underbelly. There was the obvious concern that the Luftwaffe would return to the skies over England, not as part of another Blitz, but to target Army Air Force airfields and the heavy bombers parked on the hardstands. As will be seen, this did not come to pass.

The only emblems adorning these early warplanes was the white star in a circle of blue located on the wings and just forward of the waist gun ports on either side of the fuselage (symbolizing it as a USAAF airplane), and the bright yellow numbers on each side of the vertical stabilizer, or tail, which was an abbreviated Army serial number for that aircraft. Although the official serial number might be 42-29477, it was customary to drop the first number 4 and the dash, which with the 2 represented the year, 1942, when the aircraft was ordered, and thus 229477 is what appeared on the tail. This was the one constant marking on the planes for the duration of the war.

Of course the aircrews quickly named some of their planes with appropriate nose art being painted on the outside of the bombardier/navigator’s compartment. Many of those paintings were rather risqué in nature. Popular belief is that virtually every one of the B-17s of the 8th AAF had names and nose art. To the contrary, of the 522 airplanes that Russell Strong was able to identify as having

served with the 306th, only 130, or 25 percent, were “named” aircraft.

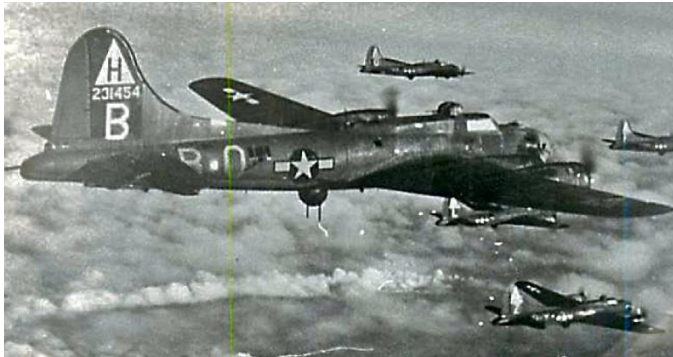


42-29477 “Joan of Arc” a B-17F displays the WW of the 369<sup>th</sup> and the call letter “H” on either side of the gun ports in the spring of 1943. The serial number is abbreviated on the tail to 229477. This plane was transferred to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BG, Hell’s Angels, in late September 1943 and was shot down over Schweinfurt on Black Thursday, 14 October ’43.

The first bombing mission flown by VIII Bomber Command on 17 August 1942, was comprised of two squadron formations of six planes each, flying a couple of miles apart. Take off and formation rendezvous was relatively simple in the uncluttered skies over East Anglia. By late 1942 and early 1943, bombardment group formations consisted of three squadrons of six planes, eighteen total, tightly formed, with other bombardment group formations combining in proximity to form a combat bombardment wing (CBW). The olive drab aircraft were now identified by two large letters signifying the parent squadron located just forward of the star in front of the waist gun ports: GY for the 367th; BO for the 368th; WW for the 369th; and RD for the 423rd. Another large single call-letter located just aft of the gun ports identified that individual aircraft within the squadron.

By the summer of 1943, the 8th Air Force had grown to multiple bombardment groups that were organized in three bombardment divisions (1st, 2nd and 3rd Bomb Divisions) with multiple Combat Bombardment Wings in each division. Each CBW consisted of three bombardment group formations that would join together in a larger combined formation for a mission. A better marking system was now needed to allow the airplanes in the crowded skies to rendezvous and form up with their correct group and combat wings, particularly on those days when they had to fly through the overcast English skies to find their formation. Certainly the bomber formations needed their

fighter escorts to be able to quickly find and identify them, conserving the fighter's fuel to escort the bombers further into enemy skies.



42-31454 "Saint Anthony" is a B-17G in formation some time after June '43. The white triangle H appears on the tail above the serial and the individual aircraft call letter "B" has moved to the tail below the serial. The squadron call letters, BO for the 368<sup>th</sup>, remain on the fuselage aft of the gun port and the "star and bar" is the new national insignia.

Beginning in June 1943, 1st Bombardment Division airplanes were identified by a large white triangle painted on the tail over the serial number and on the wings with a black letter in the middle to further identify the bombardment group: an H in the triangle for the 306th; B in the triangle for the 92nd; G for the 305th (these three groups constituted the 40th CBW), etc. The single call-letter moved from behind the gun ports to the tail under the serial number, and the squadron identification letters disappeared.

Between June and September 1943 the national insignia, the star in a blue circle, would also change. First the circle sprouted a white "bar" on each side of the blue circle, the whole insignia then bordered by a thin red line. By September, it would morph into what became known as the star and bar, the star in the blue circle with a white bar on each side but now bordered by a thin blue line.

The 2nd Bomb Division consisted of B-24 groups at this stage of the war and were identified by a letter in a circle on the vertical stabilizers, circle H the marker for the 446th Bomb Group. Third Bomb Division, B-17 groups, used a square or box with a letter in the center. A square H identified the "Bloody 100th" Bomb Group.

As the war progressed into 1944 and with the advent of P-51s and P-47s with drop tanks, the 8th Air Force came to dominate the Luftwaffe and controlled the skies over Europe. It became apparent there was no longer a threat to the bomber

bases in England resulting in changes to the paint scheme of the aircraft arriving from the States. Boeing and the other companies building the B-17s and B-24s stopped painting them, leaving the skins polished aluminum or natural metal finish (NMF), as it was called. The resulting savings in many pounds of weight from the lack of paint allowed the planes to fly farther and faster on the same tank of gas or carry a greater bomb load to a target.

To accommodate the new paint scheme (lack thereof), the triangle H on 306th BG aircraft vertical stabilizers and wings became a black triangle with a light gray or white letter H. The 40th CBW ordered all three of its bomb groups to add a broad horizontal colored stripe toward the top of the tailfin to help identify the aircraft as belonging to the 40th CBW, with a yellow stripe identifying the 306th, a red stripe for the 92nd, and a green stripe for the 305th. Then, the 306th added a color scheme painted above the yellow stripe to identify each plane to its respective squadron: red for the 367th; white for the 368th; blue for the 369th, and green for the 423rd.



44-6515 shows the red tipped tail (367<sup>th</sup> Squadron) over the broad yellow stripe signifying a 40<sup>th</sup> CBW aircraft. The black triangle H is above the aircraft serial and the large "O" below the serial is the 367<sup>th</sup> call letter for this airplane.

All lettering on the aluminum skin of the plane was now painted black. The B-17s that remained that were still painted olive drab had the 40th CBW yellow stripe and the top color for the squadron added to the tail. On the new natural metal finish planes, the polished aluminum would reflect the glare of the sun off the fuselage just in front of the cockpit and off the insides of the engine cowlings, blinding the pilots. Patches of flat olive green paint were added to these areas to solve the problem. The evolution of the paint and insignia adorning the aircraft of the 306th/Triangle H was now complete.



## 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and SSMA Reunion

September 17 - 20, 2015: Doubletree Hotel, 110 W. 600 South, Salt Lake City, Utah – Phone: 801-359-7800

### 2015 REUNION PLANS ARE TAKING SHAPE!

I'm so excited to inform you that plans are coming together nicely for our 2015 reunion scheduled to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, which will officially run from Thursday September 17th through Sunday the 20th at the downtown Doubletree Hotel. Once again we will be joined this year by our friends from the SSMA (Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association). Much advance planning has already taken place to ensure we have the best possible conference and that all of our attendees have a great time. Our emphasis, as always, will be to honor and learn from our veteran heroes and their spouses through the various activities that we hold. In addition to the many displays we expect to share, the panel discussions and roundtables with our vets, we will again be taking a couple of group tours while in Salt Lake City. First, we will make a trip to Wendover Field, the first operational training base for the 306th Bomb Group. We also plan to visit nearby Hill Air Force Base for a tour of its impressive aeronautical museum where we plan to hold our annual Folded Wings Ceremony for those veterans who have left us. In addition, for those who are interested, we will be offering an optional visit to nearby Temple Square on Thursday night where you can both tour the Temple Square grounds and observe a Mormon Tabernacle Choir rehearsal session. See below for more details about these visits and tours. While there are still many details to work out, we are quite sure that this year's reunion is shaping up to be yet another memorable event.

#### Wendover Field & Museum

How exciting it will be to actually stand in this place of special historical significance to the 306th Bomb Group. Some of our veteran members actually had the opportunity to spend some time here during their training before their deployment to the war itself. It will be interesting to hear their memories and perspective. We will travel to Wendover Field (approx. 120 miles) by bus and it's a 2 hour trip each way, so we are providing movies to watch along the way (rumor has it they will be Twelve O'clock High and Memphis Belle) and a sack or buffet style lunch will be served at the base for all who go. While at Wendover, we will have an opportunity to see the small museum that has pictures and static displays of the old training base that Curtis LeMay once called "the most God forsaken place I've ever been." Of interest also is that Wendover played a prominent role as well in the atomic bomb project as a training site, and we will have an opportunity to see an impressive display of the events surrounding it.

#### Hill Air Force Base Aeronautical Museum

Named for a pilot (Major Ployer Peter Hill) who died while testing one of the early prototype models of the B-17, Hill Air Force Base is now a major United States Air Force installation and host to the 75th Air Combat and 388th Fighter Wings. Hill AF Base also serves as a logistics operational base for our Minuteman III missile force and is the home of the 388's F-16C fighter aircraft. Once again, we will go by bus on the short 30 mile trip to the base. The Hill AF Aeronautical Museum has one of the few refurbished B-17s that hangs in their base museum along with many other venerable United States Air Force planes (Stearman, P-40, P-51, F-105, F-4, B-29, and B-1 just to name a few). During our tour of the museum, we will be using their facility to conduct our annual Folded Wings Ceremony in honor of those 306th and SSMA veterans who have passed on during the last year.

#### Visit to Temple Square

The Mormon Temple Square is one of the truly impressive scenic locations in all of America's cities, and one worth seeing. We are planning an optional visit to the square on Thursday night when the Mormon Tabernacle Choir opens its doors to visitors during an evening rehearsal session. We will not only get to experience one of the country's most talented musical groups, but our attendance will be recognized during their break. The

rehearsal takes place between 8pm and 9pm. Best of all, there is no fee for entry to the plaza grounds or the performance.

Transportation to Temple Square is available by walking the 5 blocks for those who are able, the light rail commuter train (TRAX) whose station is located a block from the hotel, a free shuttle ride to and from by the hotel upon request (be sure you have the hotel phone number for the ride back), or by car pooling with fellow reunion participants.

Here's a suggestion... take the shuttle, the train, or a car downtown with some friends (new or old) for dinner at one of the many restaurants available, visit Temple Square and hear the Choir, then return to the hotel... all for the cost of dinner.

### **306th BG and SSMA Veteran Panel Discussions**

As we have done for the past several years, we will select 2 or 3 veterans who will share with us their experiences during what we call Panel Discussions, after which the rest of us get to ask questions and hear from the panelists what things were like in the air over Nazi held Europe and on the ground at their training and theater bases. These panel discussions are always some of the most interesting and exciting events at our annual reunions. You will want to arrive early to get a good seat.

### **Open Veteran Roundtables**

This year we will be hosting for the first time some "semi-formal" evening round tables in the Hospitality Room with veterans where they will simply make themselves available to share their unique stories and hear some of yours before we all turn in for a decent night's sleep.

### **SSMA (Second Schweinfurt Mission Association) Presentation**

Once again this year, we will be privileged to have present the men and their relatives who actually flew on or supported the Oct. 14, 1943 second mission over Schweinfurt (often referred to as Black Thursday), one of the most heavily defended and dangerous places to fly a mission in all of Germany.

### **Displays and Activities**

Also back by popular demand will be the many personal and group displays that so eloquently portray the individual histories of those who heroically served in both the 306th Bomb Group and flew on the mission over Schweinfurt. We hope to once again have available a flight simulator where you can try your hand at actually flying a B-17 as well as a laptop where you can get some helpful hints for surfing our newly updated website (thanks, Charles) and the internet for the research you may be doing.

### **Social Hour**

Again by popular demand, we will be scheduling what we call "social hours" each day where we can just spend some peaceful time associating with old and new friends. It may be over coffee, over a drink, or at a table in the hospitality room; but wherever they may be, do not let these opportunities slip by to simply relax and have some quiet conversations.

### **Annual 306th Business Meeting**

As always, we will conduct a short 60 to 90 minute business meeting Saturday morning where we will update where we are as an organization, select a new board of directors, and decide on the city location for next year's reunion. The business meeting is open to all reunion attendees (including SSMA members), so come and put in your two cents worth.

### **Friday First Over Germany Dinner and Saturday Night Banquet**

First of all, please make note that we will not be serving dinner meals on Wednesday or Thursday evenings, and except for those who are participating on the Friday tour to Wendover we will not be organizing lunches for the group. We will be scheduling a "First Over Germany" Dinner Friday evening for those who sign up where we will share a meal along with some fun door prizes. The only presentation will be some group announcements

which we promise to keep very short. We will also hold a Banquet dinner on Saturday evening where we will again share a meal with some door prizes, then have a fun and informal recognition of some of our most esteemed members.

*As in the recent past, we will again ask that you download and fill out the Event Registration Form from our website or use the one in this Echoes newsletter. Return the registration form to Judith Hermley before August 7, 2015 if you plan to attend the Reunion. Likewise, we are once again asking that you make your own hotel room arrangements directly with the Doubletree Hotel. Below are some helpful hints how to do so.*

### **Hotel Reservations**

**Our reserved suites at the hotel (typical of most suites at the hotel) have a king bed with a queen pull-out sofa bed.** You can complete your room registration online by going to the Doubletree Hotel in Salt Lake City's website. The web address is: [www.saltlakecitysuites.doubletree.com](http://www.saltlakecitysuites.doubletree.com). We do recommend, however, that you make your hotel reservation by calling them directly at 801-359-7800. Tell them you are part of the 306th Bomb Group Reunion and get a special room rate (\$99 for single and double occupancy, \$114 triple occupancy, \$129 quad occupancy). Since ADA compliant (handicapped accessible) and rooms with 2 beds are at a premium, we recommend that you reserve your room(s) as soon as possible. Remember, to get the group rate on your room, be sure to tell them you are part of the 306th Bomb Group.

### **Doubletree Hotel Amenities**

- Check-in 3:00pm
- A free shuttle to and from the airport
- Free covered parking at the hotel
- Close proximity to SLC downtown locations (shopping, eating, and sightseeing)
- A free hot breakfast buffet
- Free WIFI connection for all guests
- A business center with internet access
- A full service restaurant and bar
- Spacious lounging areas to read and talk
- ADA compliant wheel chair accessible rooms for those who need them
- Refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker, and iron/ironing board, and hairdryer in rooms
- Elevators to upper floors
- Fitness center
- Indoor swimming pool
- Check-out 12:00pm

### **Miscellaneous Useful Information and Helpful Hints**

- The hotel has a free shuttle to and from the airport, so all you need to do when your plane arrives is find the airport transportation and hotel kiosk (near the baggage claim and airport exit door). You can use the phones at the direct-line hotel phone banks or use your cell phone to call the Doubletree for a shuttle pick-up (801-359-7800).
- It will be fall in the Rocky Mountains during the 3rd week of September and while the weather might be sunny and warm, it is just as likely to be cool, cold, rainy, or even snowy (remember the Air Force Academy!). So, come prepared with long sleeves and pants, and even a sweater, hat, or warm coat/jacket, just in case.
- For you "flatlanders," even though Salt Lake City is 1500 feet lower in altitude than Colorado Springs, it's still over 4300 feet in altitude in a very dry high desert climate. You will want to be sure to take your time, breathe deeply, and drink more water than you think you need. Here's a rule of thumb from us westerners: "If your urine is yellow when you go, you need to drink some more water."



- Fall tends to be the rainy season in Salt Lake City, so an umbrella or poncho might be a great addition to your suitcase, just in case.
- If you plan to be outdoors much at all (on the tours and such), sunscreen is always a good idea when in the high altitude sun of the west (assuming of course it's not cloudy and raining).
- Even though your group room rate should be set by your reservation, it's always a good idea to remind the desk clerk when you check in that you are part of the 306th and SSMA group so they can be sure to get the right charge on your bill. Also, make sure they don't charge you for WIFI.
- Don't forget! WWII veterans attend the conference free of any registration fee. They pay only for Friday and Saturday dinner meals they eat and the tours they go on.
- Remember: Children under 12 are not charged a registration fee and can attend the evening meals on Friday and Saturday at half price. Please note these on your registration forms.
- Bring your camera or smart phone ready to take as many pictures as possible. Seems like we never get enough of them for future *Echoes* editions.
- As a last resort, if you have questions or concerns, you need only go to the information desk in our Hospitality Room or flag down one of our board members.

**One last note.** It would help us immensely if those who can could get their registration with their meal and tour selections completed and forwarded to us as soon as possible (remember: these go to Judith Hermley using the address listed on your registration form). This will help us better plan our activities and events with the hotel and tour vendors we are working with. Should it become necessary for you to do so, we will be offering a full refund **IF NOTIFIED OF YOUR CANCELLATION** by August 15, 2015.

# SEE YOU ALL IN SALT LAKE CITY IN SEPTEMBER!

*Thom Mindala*  
2015 Reunion Chairperson



## Some Quick Instructions for Completing Your Registration Form:

1. Please write as clearly as you can.
2. Hotel information and rates are at the top of the registration form.
3. The first box on the right of the form is the number of participants in your group.
4. The second box on the right of the form is the amount due for the activity.
5. Please enter the information for all the event activities you plan to do.
6. Near the bottom of the page is a box to enter the total amount due.
7. Note the instruction on how to write your check and Judith Hermely's address where you are to send the check.
8. Please fill in the box for in whose honor (veteran) you are attending.
9. Fill in the names in the place provided at the bottom of the page of everyone in your group who is attending the reunion.
10. Please send a copy of your completed registration form to Judith Hermely along with your check.

**Event Registration Form**

**306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association and SSMA Reunion**

September 17 - 20, 2015: Doubletree Hotel, 110 W. 600 South, Salt Lake City, Utah

Group room rates (pre-tax): \$99.00 per night single or double occupancy / \$114, triple occupancy / \$129, quad occupancy

**Suites contain a King Bed and Queen Sleeper Sofa**

Contact Doubletree Hotel directly to register at 801-359-7800 or [www.saltlakecitysuites.doubletree.com](http://www.saltlakecitysuites.doubletree.com)

**DEADLINE FOR HOTEL RESERVATION IS AUGUST 7, 2015**

**306th or SSMA Veteran (No registration fee to be charged)** ..... # \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fee (All other participants – age 12 and older)** ..... \$40 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Wednesday, September 16:** Early arrival & check-in -- Afternoon Social Hour -- Evening Social Hour

**Thursday, September 17:** Arrival & check-in -- First Day Activities -- Optional Temple Square Tour

- Complimentary breakfast for hotel guests (6:30 – 9:30 am)
- Board of Directors meeting (9:00 am)
- Hospitality Room, Roundtables, and other sessions – free (7:00 am – 8:00 pm)
- We will be attending the Temple Square / Tabernacle Choir Rehearsal – free (Please circle ) ..... **Yes or No**

**Friday, September 18:** Day Two Activities -- Wendover Tour -- Evening Dinner -- Social Hour

- Wendover Field & Museum Tour (includes bus and lunch) ..... \$30 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- We will be attending the Friday evening First Over Germany Dinner..... \$45 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Children 12 or under)..... \$23 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, September 19:** Day Three Activities -- Hill Air Force Base Tour (Folded Wings Service and Museum Tour) -- Evening Banquet

- Annual Business Meeting – Open to all meeting attendees, including SSMA -- free
- Hill Air Force Base Aerospace Museum Tour ..... \$20 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes we will be attending the Saturday night Banquet ..... \$48 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Children 12 or under)..... \$24 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Sunday, September 20:** Morning social hour, check-out & So Long Until Next Year!

**TOTAL AMOUNT FOR ALL ATTENDEES ON THIS REGISTRATION FORM..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

(Please make all checks payable to: 306th Bomb Group Historical Association - 2015 Reunion on memo line

Mail to Judith Hermley; 5314 Bob Sikes Blvd.; Jay, Florida, 32565)

**Fees fully refundable if notified of cancellation by 15 August 2015.**

**306TH OR SSMA VETERAN YOU ARE ATTENDING IN HONOR OF:**

**His Group and Squadron (if known)** \_\_\_\_\_ **World War II Duty (if known)** \_\_\_\_\_

LIST OF ALL ATTENDEES IN YOUR GROUP (Please write clearly)			
Full Name	Relationship to Veteran	1st Reunion?	Arrival Date

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please note any special needs (wheel chair accessible room) and or requests (special dietary needs at meals), etc.

## Lt. Loy F. Peterson 369<sup>th</sup> Fightin, Bitin Pilot

### Wartime Diary (part 3) March 1944 to May 1944 and (part 4) May to June 1944

[Editor's Note: With this issue of *Echoes*, the final entries from the Wartime Diary of Lt. Loy F. Peterson have been published. He completed 32 missions from November 1943 to June 1944, attained the rank of Captain and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters and Battle Stars. Mr. Peterson died December 5, 1993.]



Loy Peterson Crew – Pictured left to right: (Front) Albert Picarello (Engineer), Paul Christenson (Radio Operator), Charles Foley (Tail Gunner), James Bentley (Waist Gunner). (Back) George Richardson (Ball Turret), Calvin Conrey (Navigator), Loy Peterson (Pilot), Malcolm Phillips (Bombardier), Charles Hayes (Tail Gunner).

March 29, 1944

The day which I have dreaded since the crew was formed back in Pyote finally arrived today. Tragedy found the crew of the *Lady* at last.

I didn't fly today – The Group went to Brunswick – deep in the heart of – Jerry Haywood, my old co-pilot, went out high spirited and confident because this was his last raid. Bill Daniels, my bombardier, flew with him as fate would have it. Little did I know as we waved them down the runway that I would not be seeing the boys again.

Was not able to get a coherent story from any of the returning crews, but evidently they had about a five minute fighter attack right after leaving the target, and one of Jerry's inboard engines was

knocked off, and he dove out of formation. From there, who knows??

Lt Schuering + his crew also went down at that time – he was on his last raid too, and all told, six men on those two crews went down on their last raid. What a bitter day for the Fitin', Bitin' Squadron.

Just can't seem to adjust myself to the loss of the two boys – it is something that seemed out of the question for Jerry – particularly on his last raid!

What in God's name can I write to their families??

April 10, 1944

Dear God, I only hope that we don't have to "sweat out" our last raid as long as we have on this 18<sup>th</sup> job. Finally completed it today after it was scrubbed twice on the ground and abandoned twice after take-off. If only the weather would permit such beautifully timed ~~red~~ rendezvous' on every raid. I flew with Lt. Col. Regan leading the Combat Wing – it was his last mission.

Target was the Brussels-Evere airdrome + everything was working out smoothly until our bombsight broke down on the bombing run. We had to make a 360° turn, (and sweated) and signal the Deputy Leader on our right wing to take over the lead for bombing. He took over immediately, but did not do it according to standard procedure, and almost scattered the Group all over the sky. Lt. Howard, his bombardier, did a beautiful job on such short notice – the target was absolutely put out of action. *Satan's Lady* took over the lead again + the return to base was uneventful.

A mob of officers swarmed the plane when we parked her, and proceeded to give Col. Regan the traditionally thorough painting plus a dunking in the nearest pool of water. And me without a camera!

Mission #29 for the *Lady*!

April

~~March~~ 11, 1944

Another black day for the Fightin' Bitin' boys, and two more of my close friends down over enemy territory.

My crew did not fly today – thank God! Capt. Opdyke led the Composite Group with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Group and the 305<sup>th</sup> Group furnishing the high and low Squadrons to the 369<sup>th</sup> Squadron's lead (those bastards wouldn't know good formation if they saw it). According to the reports gathered from



returning crews there was a gap in our fighter escort just after the target, and the bandits made two passes in waves of thirty ships – flying abreast. All Hell broke loose – Capt. Opdyke was evidently badly injured by a 20mm burst in the cockpit and Lt. Olson, his co-pilot was last seen fighting him off the controls as they dropped out of formation. Lt. Ahlstrom caught a blast in his wing tanks + exploded, Lt. Tarr got one engine + his nose section shot out - + ground looped the ship on a field just inside the coastline – no brakes either. As soon as we knew where he had landed I hopped into the *Lady* and screamed up there at 210 m.p.h. to pick up all the equipment and what was left of the crew. His bombardier (flying on his last raid) and his navigator were both killed when the nose section caught a blast and the entire interior of that part of the plane looked as tho' someone had gone hog wild with a can of red paint! Lt. Tarr was white and rather shaken up – this was the second bombardier that has been killed in combat with him.

Capt. Opdyke was in his next to last raid, and was the first Group leader to be shot down from our Group in the 19 months they have flown over here.

The really sad part of the story is the fact that both Capt. Opdyke + Lt. Olson were going to be fathers in the next two or three weeks. How will their wives stand such news?

April 20, 1944

But beautiful – give me eleven more like that in eleven more days! Well, I can dream can't I?

Flew *Satan's Lady* on her 30<sup>th</sup> raid leading the 306<sup>th</sup> "A" Force into France to bomb the highly secret and highly publicized military installations in the Calais area.

The shortest raid we have ever flown, and my first trip on which I saw not one burst of flak – although some came up behind us.

Felt particularly elated because Lt. Phillips, my bombardier, hit the target – where as the "B" Force dropped long, and the "C" Force brought their bombs back.

Returned without a scratch – 3:45 minutes from the time we left our dispersal until I called "switches off"!

April 21, 1944

Mission abandoned after three hours of floundering around in lousy weather with clouds all the way from 3000 ft. up to 18,000 ft.

I was happy about the whole thing, because I was the only member of the crew flying – wasn't even in my own ship. Had to fly the Deputy Lead position. off the Colonel's wing.

Am not keen at all about going into battle in any ship other than the *Lady* or with any crew but my own boys.

April 22, 1944

Today *Satan's Lady* attained the peak of her career! Col. Robinson, the 306 Group Commanding Officer, flew with the crew today, and we led the entire  $\text{D}$  Division into Hamm, Germany. The *Lady* has moved from the second element all the way up to Division Lead in 31 raids. She is a proud, gallant ship, and the crew would not trade for the newest B-17 out of the factory.

Caught a little flak over the target, but Major Cheney, the Group Navigator, kept us absolutely clear of all flak areas, on the way in and out. Weather beautiful, fighter escort right on time, but we did not get back to base until after the sun had set. Raid #20 for yours truly.

April 24, 1944

Today was not only a black day for 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group – it was tragic for the Fitin' Bitin' Squadron. Target was a few miles outside of Munich and the Group evidently was jumped by a wave of fighters just before + just after the target.

We sat out by the runway "sweating out" the return of the planes as they dribbled in one by one. First two on the ground fired red – red flares – wounded aboard. Only two of our 6 planes returned, one of those with a badly wounded top turret gunner. 10 Planes out of the Group failed to return. Stoltz, the Group Leader was last seen heading for Switzerland with two engines out. Crews missing from 369<sup>th</sup> – Lt. Tarr, Lt. James, Lt. Biggs and Lt. Ramsey – which kind of knocks the Squadron on its ass.

**(Editor's note: This was the infamous Oberpfaffenhofen raid when eight 306<sup>th</sup> aircraft were shot down on this one mission.)**

Ma April 26, 1944

Number twenty one today, but when the orderly woke me up at 1:00 in the morning I was hot for calling the whole show off. Target was Brunswick, and I had to fly in a Pathfinder ship as Deputy

Combat Wing Leader – so *Satan's Lady* and the crew sat on the ground and sweated me out. Take-off before dawn to rendezvous above the overcast, and Lt. Schaffer crashed and burned on take-off killing all but the tail gunner.

Solid undercast over the entire continent + we bombed by Pathfinder procedure – I had to take over the lead on the bomb run, but all went smoothly. No fighter attacks encountered. My oxygen mask went bad on me, and I was only half conscious most of the time.

April 28, 1944

If I hadn't seen it I wouldn't believe it. A miracle of maintenance and repair considering that this is a combat zone overseas.

Yesterday Lt. Baxter returned from a raid in a brand new ship, but could not extend his left landing gear – so he was instructed by the tower to stay in the air until his excessive gasoline was used up + then crash land her.

So the poor crew had to circle the field for 4 ½ more hours while the word spread and crowd gathered – the field was cleared and he brought her in on the grass with the one wheel down + one up. A beautiful job of piloting, and he set her down like a crate of eggs – she slowly settled on the left wing, and ground-looped to a stop – nobody hurt and the plane did not catch fire.

Now, - 28 hours later that plane is in the air slow-timing her two new engines – a new wing installed and landing gear repaired – a plane everyone thought would be nothing but salvage.

May 4, 1944

Barely had warmed the old sack when they got me up this A.M. Scheduled to lead the 306<sup>th</sup> Group in the low position, 40<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing. Target guess what – “Big B” – Berlin!

Make rendezvous okay, but combat wing got split up in some bad weather on the way to the Coast. Finally found the lead Group again – after much sweating, started our climb across the channel into enemy territory. Just got inside Germany when all planes were recalled due to bad weather messing up too many of the combat wing rendezvous points. Credit was given for a raid – number twenty-two for me + 32 for the *Lady*.

May 7, 1944

Had to roll out again this morning after only 3 hours sleep – to find that they were determined to take another crack at “Big B” - leading Group – same set-up as last one.

Kind of a long, high trip for the tired *Lady* – and cold as hell! (-42° C) Bombed through the overcast at 25,000 feet, but the flak was there to greet us nonetheless – hot and heavy. By out guessing the square heads with my evasive action got the boys out of the flak area with but a few minor scratches. Returned to base without the loss of a ship – fighter escort beautifully synchronized – no enemy planes seen or encountered. Landed to find that Conrey had made captaincy – good show! Number 23 for me – no 33 for the *Lady*.

May 8, 1944

My aching ass!

This is getting damn old! Awakened at 1230 midnite – roll out of the sack to find that our target is – Berlin! Before we ever went out to our planes I said that the Group was pushing its luck to go to that damn place 2 days in succession – and I'm here to say that we just pushed our luck right over the cliff. We lost five ships today – two of them from 369<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

I was leading a composite Group composed of two 306<sup>th</sup> Squadrons and one Squadron from the 92<sup>nd</sup> Group, and in the past it has always meant trouble when we flew such a combination. Those 92<sup>nd</sup> boys wouldn't know good formation flying if they saw it – or am I repeating myself?

Just before we reached the target two ships in the low Squadron came together with one ship in the lead Sqdn. and all went down in a tangled mess – no chutes observed. Lt. Lambert's and Lt. Schlect's crews from 369<sup>th</sup> went down. What a miserable way to get it!

*Little Pump*, the crew's good luck charm was working like mad today – a combat wing just ahead of us caught a fight and two 17s were seen going down in flames before our fighter escort jumped in and broke it up. Flak over target – lost a ship there – where it went??? I would say a highly unsuccessful day! Bombed thru overcast – results unobserved.

Number 24 for yours truly – 34 for the *Lady*.

**(Editor's note: There were only four survivors from the three planes that collided.)**

May 12, 1944

NUMBER 25!

Today I would have been finished if some general hadn't whipped up the bright idea of raising the quota to thirty raids! C'est le guerre!

Meeting of the four o'clock Breakfast Club again this morning – target was something new for the books – a huge synthetic gasoline plant at Merseberg, Germany a few miles southwest of Berlin. Poor *Satan's Lady* is developing negative dihedral in her wings from taking off with 2800 gallons of gas all the time.

Led the Group in the high position again today – thick haze at the rendezvous point, but everyone got assembled without too much trouble.

Heavy flak at the target, but I laid the whole Group over on their wing-tips, and with continued evasive action managed to get the Hell out of there without any serious damage. Everyone practically kissed me when we got back to base. Phillips did a beautiful job of pin-pointing the bombs on the target.

The Lord was watching over us again – we didn't meet any fighters, but we could hear someone catching a battle over the radio.

It is a very satisfactory feeling to lead a successful raid like that and have every plane return to base. Unfortunately, things don't always work out as beautifully as this one.

The *Lady* chalks up her 35<sup>th</sup> raid today, and is still purring contently. She has delivered more than 175,000 pounds of grief to Hitler's Europe.

May 20, 1944

Up long before dawn again this morning to find I was leading the combat Wing with Major Flannagan. And believe it or not, the gas load was only 2100 gals. today instead of the usual 2800 gallons that we have had for the past 4 raids!

Target for today was an airfield on the ~~out~~ edge of Paris, and the bombing was one of the best jobs the team of *Satan's Lady* will ever do – a perfect bomb pattern thanks to the 306<sup>th</sup> formation flying, and squarely on the briefed point of impact. Group Intelligence terms the results Excellent, and everyone is highly pleased. (But wait until we miss one) Moderate flak over target ~~over target~~, but I managed to turn out of it. Saw the Eiffel Tower in all its sad glory, and now we can say that we have bombed the capitals of Germany, France, and Belgium.

Group returned to base 100%, but all due credit must be given to our fighter escort which was ample and right on time at all points.

All in all the most satisfactory raid the crew has flown so far and results really make getting up at 0300 A.M. quite worthwhile.

A neighboring Group had some ~~tragic~~ luck on take-off though. We had to make our take-off on instruments this morning due to a low fog and haze up to 10,000 ft. Three B-17s at this other base crashed on take-off and exploded all over Hell! They were loaded with 1,000 pound bombs, and the damn things continued to explode at intervals for hours afterwards.

Number 37 for the *Lady* – she sneaked one in on us the other day.

**(Editor's Note: The three aircraft referred to crashing nearby were from the 92<sup>nd</sup> BG and they collided on the runway. Heavy ground mist creating poor visibility on many of the airfields resulted in a total of eight B-17s and three B-24s crashing or exploding on take-off or crash landing, with another two aircraft colliding after rendezvous. This was a loss of 11 aircraft to accidents on this one mission.)**

May 23, 1944

Today I aged 15 years! Due to being grounded they sent my entire crew and "*Satan's Lady*" on a raid with another lead pilot. I sat on the damn ground and sweated them out – I don't know which is worse – "sweating it out" or actually flying the blasted raid.

Everybody returned in good shape tho' and the *Lady* chalked up her 38<sup>th</sup> raid. Afraid her age is beginning to creep up on her – Tip and I estimate that there must be at least 150 metal and fabric patches on + in her. The crew still wouldn't trade her for the newest damned ship off the line – scars and all.

**(Editor's note: "Tip" is most probably M/Sgt Tzipowitz, *Satan's Lady's* ground crew chief.)**

May 24, 1944

Today the crew and the *Lady* were paid a very high compliment – if you want to call it that.

We were nominated from this base along with two other crews from other bases as the crew and ship to go on detached service for a couple weeks –



assignment: to fly General Spaatz!! Where or when I do not know because higher Command chose one of the other crews to do the job.

None of us were particularly disappointed – the deal of flying the *Lady* home means more to us, but at any rate we were chosen from this base against some few other candidates.

May 25, 1944

Just barely got my sack warm this morning when that horrible voice cracked into my dreams. Target for today – the railway marshalling yards at Thionville in northeastern France. Took Off at 5:30 A.M. – just the crack of dawn. Flew *Satan's Lady* on her 39<sup>th</sup> raid leading the High Group. Bombing was visual, and Capt. Phillips really laid those eggs in the pickle barrel – in fact, the whole combat wing did a beautiful job.

Fighter escort was marvelous altho' the wing behind us caught a fight.

Lead navigator also really on the ball – all the way in and back out without a single burst of flak. Really rare!

Another highly satisfactory raid, and well worth getting up in the middle of the night.

May 27, 1944

Banker's hours this morning – briefing was not held until 0900 hours. Target was just on the Coast of France, but I can not say more due to the fact that it was experimental bombing. I led the Combat Wing so naturally could not fly in my own ship with the boys – and the crew was screwed royally. One of those raids where I came back feeling elated to be back, but highly browned off at the general set-up. Being a Wing leader may be quite a high position, but it does not have many compensations.

Raid number 28, still two more to sweat out! Capt. Jorgenson of our Squadron finished his tour today!!!

Not a very satisfactory day –

May 31, 1944

The crew did not fly today – aside from dropping 10 practice bombs, but *Satan's Lady* led the Division on her 40<sup>th</sup> raid. Those dirty square headed flak gunners put a big hole right through one of the bombs painted on her nose, and almost hit the navigator! That makes about 151 patches on the old gal now – but she is still the Queen!

I told the Colonel today that I did not want any part of leading the combat wing – in the first place I cannot fly with my own crew, and in the second place I do not have enough rank to back me up. I think he is unhappy with us –

June 2, 1944

Had to “sweat it out” again today, we sent Hayes, Picarillo and Foley on a short raid today with another crew in order to catch them up with all of my crew. Everything worked out fine though, and it brings all of us up to a total of 28 raids with the exception of Capt. Conrey who is still 2 behind us. It will really be an unusual day if all of the crew can finish up at the same time – and God, will I be drunk out that night!

So far, we have all been most fortunate, and it seems almost asking too to have this deal of flying the *Lady* home work out. It is what we have all been working towards, though.

Group went out on 2 raids today – all planes returned safely to Base.



*The veteran 306BG Satan's Lady headed the First Air Division's assault.*

June 3, 1944

Scheduled last night to lead the Combat Wing with Major Flannagan and my own crew + ship, but scratched off this morning because weather was still bad over the continent. Capt. Phillips, my bombardier, cannot go on a raid unless the target is visual so that means we are going to have to sit around on these last two raids waiting for Mother Nature to make up her mind about the weather. Such is the price of having a good combat team –

Heard a rebroadcast tonite of the one that CBS commentator Edward R. Murrow made from one of our planes yesterday on the raid over the French Coast. He was talking directly from the plane via London to radio audiences in the U. S. He made some very favorable comments on the Group's formation + crew air discipline. That plane was a

new B-17G from the Eager Beaver (368<sup>th</sup>) Squadron – the name of the plane – *Report to the Nation*.

Capt. Van Norman, our Public Relations Officer is really getting on the inside track on his publicity work. Hope he does as well on our deal to fly *Satan's Lady* home. He is also working on a little scheme to get Princess Elizabeth here on the Base to Christen the ship which has been named after her.

### June 6, 1944                    “D-Day”!

What I have seen and heard today – the most momentous day in the annals of military history – can hardly be properly and adequately described in so many words. Today's undertaking is something which I will always be proud to have taken part in + not only did I see history in the making – the crew, *Satan's Lady* and myself helped make it.

When they got us out of the sack at midnite this morning or last nite – everyone could sense an electric air of tension and expectation. Briefing confirmed our hopes – this was the Day millions of people had been awaiting!

Take-off was 0430 hours – our Base was dispatching 54 planes in three waves –everything timed right to the minute. We bombed the beachhead at 0705 hours – exactly 20 minutes before the first wave of troops landed. Eighth Air Force put 1350 heavy bombers over the area within the period of 30 minutes – a masterpiece of planning and timing! Altogether there must have been close to 11,000 Allied planes in that area during the day – flying a total of 20,000 sorties. The Germans never knew the meaning of “airpower.” Couldn't see much of the operations below us due to clouds – the biggest disappointment of the day. No sign of the Luftwaffe.

Mission number 29, but it looks as though we shall have to continue flying regardless of specified tour. Number 41 for the *Lady*!

June 8, 1944                    MISSION NO. 30

Led the Combat Wing with Major Salada today in the *Lady* – her 42<sup>nd</sup> raid (a Squadron record) – target an airfield on the outskirts of Rennes, France. Weather double crossed us again, and altho' we made two runs on the target, a ground fog so obscured it that Capt. Phillips held his bombs – when bombing in France you have to be positive of accurate bombing or bring the bombs back. Which we did – hating to have to do it on our last (technically) raid.

Coming out, we flew directly over the beachhead operations and could see everything beautifully. The whole affair is so immense that I could not even comprehend it while looking at it. I won't even attempt to put on paper what I have seen today – it would not do it justice.

Capt. Van Norman, our Public Relations Officer, was on hand when we landed to take pictures of the crew. Six of us went over the top today – myself, Capt. Phillips, T/Sgt. Picarillo, T/Sgt. Christenson, S/Sgt. Richardson and S/Sgt. Hayes.

Under the present emergency we shall have to continue to fly raids – but we have been promised that none of them will be long hauls.

I would like to see my son before he graduates from High School!

June 12, 1944                    #31

Last night I didn't even go to bed – called up Group Operations about 2345 hours and found that breakfast was scheduled less than two hours away. Target for the raid was an airfield at Lille, France – leading the Combat Wing with Major Chalfant in the *Lady* – her 43<sup>rd</sup> raid! We dispatched 50 planes from this base today.

Caught flak from Antwerp and some mobile railway guns on the way to the target, and I have never felt so trapped in my life! I did everything but roll the entire Group over on its back but could not out guess those square-headed gunners – they kept right on plotting me and hammering the fire right into the formation. No planes lost out of my Group. Target was well plastered so I guess it was worth it?? Most serious damage to the *Lady* was an oxygen tank below the radio room blown out.

Capt. Van Norman, PRO from the Base flew with the crew today – and at this point he is well checked out on flak. Gave him a pretty good ride though.

About the worst flak I have met since our last visit to St. Omer rod and gun club. Don't know how much longer I can take it – feel thoroughly burned out, and we have stretched our luck to the breaking point.

June 13, 1944

Today should have been a great, unforgettable day! Capt. Phillips, Sgts. Picarillo, Christenson, Richardson and Hayes and myself were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross – which should have

meant that we were all finished with our combat tour. But we are not! Need I say more?

June 14, 1944

Major Flanagan flew the *Lady* leading the 40<sup>th</sup> "D" Combat Wing. Today she set the new record on this field for raids flown. 44, and at the same time her crew chief, M/Sgt. Tzipowitz, was informed that he is going to be awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious ~~achie~~ achievement!

**(Editor's note: Under M/Sgt Tzipowitz as crew chief, *Satan's Lady* would go on to complete over 110 combat missions.)**

June 15, 1944

MISSION #32

Had to roll out of bed again this morning before I had even fallen asleep. Target was a railroad bridge in Nantes, France – almost to the Bay of Biscay. Leading the entire First Division of 430 Fortresses with Lt. Col. MacDonald – *Satan's Lady's* 45<sup>th</sup> mission!

Take off before sun-up and we hit the target about 0800 hours – bombing results were fair, and those square-heads on the flak guns were tracking which engine they wanted to hit – we almost lost out #4 engine.

We flew almost two entire Combat Wings off the Base this morning + 8<sup>th</sup> AAF must have put up 1500 planes today. Lost one plane over the target.

At long last! Heard today that B-29 super Fortresses had bombed Japan from unknown bases! I hope we can annihilate the entire race of fanatic beasts!

June 16, 1944

Eight months ago today the crew arrived in the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and assigned to the Fitin' Bitin' Squadron. Eight months of watching of sweating – eight months of watching crews come and go as the 8<sup>th</sup> AAF grew to be an Army in itself – filled with the tragedy of seeing friends and buddies go down with their ships.

Capt. McKim, our Flight Surgeon called me in to tell me that he was grounding me from all further combat flying, so I guess that 32 raids will be my final total.

Flew down to tell Capt. Houser the wonderful news only to hear the tragic news that the best friend I'll ever have was killed in a mid-air collision five days ago. –And what was he flying, - a G- d-

B-26! Mere words cannot express my sorrow today – I know I could not feel any worse if he had been my own brother.

Am at a loss as to what I can say when I write to Bibby and Smokie, because this is one of the bitterest moments of my life. If there is a God, He must be calling for all good men first – leaving all the no-good bastards to haunt the Earth. Haywood, Pops, Opdyke, Olsen, Danny, - and now Glenn!

Going out and stay drunk for a few days –

June 18, 1944

Today the final word came down from Division Hdqtrs. on the present length of combat tour. All personnel who have completed 30 or more raids by midnite of June 20 are eligible for relief from duty – the standard tour of duty from that date forward to be 35 missions. On a pro rata basis that gives me two extra raids, and a total of 37 missions to my credit. Actually I flew two unnecessary raids, and Capt. McKim rescinded his recommendation grounding me since I am through anyway – for which I am duly thankful!

Now all we have to do is sweat out the word from higher H.Q. on flying the *Lady* + crew home.

June 26, 1944

No sale! The deal fell through' guess some timid soul was afraid of establishing a precedent. That means that if any of us get to go home it will be the officers as Group is not releasing enlisted men at this time unless they volunteer for a second tour and go home for a 30 day rest. What a screwing!

T/Sgt. Christenson and possibly S/Sgt. Foley will receive officer's commissions after some required training, and I believe I have the rest of the boys lined up with jobs calling for their talents so at least they won't be on permanent guard duty or K. P.

June 27, 1944

Today orders were published relieving Capt. Conrey, Capt. Phillips + myself of further duty in the E.T.O. + sending us home – so we can now start the wheels rolling.

Damned shame to have to break up as smooth a combat team as ours, but at least we can say we gave Group their money's worth out of us.

This is about the end of another chapter in my life – and also the end of this story.

**California Here I Come!!**



## The 306<sup>th</sup> Web Window to the World: [www.306bg.us](http://www.306bg.us)

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.



Have you visited the 306<sup>th</sup> website lately? Our website has grown, particularly in the past nine months. There have been a number of new items and features added. We have received feedback that shows people are interested in the material and are using the site. Feedback has included some gratifying positive comments such as:

*"I should also add that I am astonished at how the 306th BG association website has bloomed in the past year or two. Whoever is responsible for such advances in the amount of material now available and the business-like setup for researchers should be congratulated. I have some research projects going on some other WW2, outfits and the current 306th setup is nothing short of magnificent."*

As mentioned in the President's column, it is the contribution of Russell Strong's work and that of readers, mostly veterans and their families, which has allowed us to build what others tell us is the most comprehensive WWII Bomb Group site. If you have material to fill in gaps or add to the records of individual veterans or the life and times of the European bombing campaign, please contact our Historian Cliff Deets or secretary Barbara Neal (contact information is on page 2). Desired material includes stories by a veteran that you may have recorded. So many veterans would not talk about the war, making those who have recorded stories particularly valuable and they add such a personal touch that it would be special to many to hear accounts from veterans who lived the stories.

Here are some of the new items that are now posted online at [www.306bg.us](http://www.306bg.us):

- **Special Orders** – These special orders are how the 306<sup>th</sup>, AAF station 111, and subordinate commands received direction in all personnel matters at Thurleigh. If a man was promoted, an officer granted a few days leave, a new aircrew reported to the 306<sup>th</sup>, etc., there would be paragraphs included in these special orders with names of the men and appropriate orders issued. There are more than 770 of these special orders that are online. Virtually every man's name who served with the 306<sup>th</sup> BG can be found in these special orders, from Thurman Shuller to Bill Houlihan.
- **306<sup>th</sup> Veterans List of Names** and the **Russell Strong Card File** – Over the years many people have worked at finding and compiling all of our 306<sup>th</sup> Vets names, including Russell Strong and Barbara Neal, our current secretary. The latest compilation of known Veterans who served with the 306<sup>th</sup> and the supporting ground units at Thurleigh can be found at the web site tab history/research then under archives. The foundation of this list is over 8100 names that were collected by Russell Strong over his long service to the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA. He collected information on each man and then typed the collected data onto 3 by 5 inch index cards. Images of these cards are now posted on the web, also under the archives section.
- **Medals** – There were literally thousands of medals awarded to men of the 306<sup>th</sup>. The 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group was required to submit a war diary each month detailing what had transpired for

that month. Headquarters would attach a list of names of persons receiving medals for the month as part of the record. These monthly “medals” lists are now posted on the web site under the archives section.

- **Past Reunions** – Photographs of past reunions dating back to 2007 are now posted with more photos of other reunions to be added in the future.
- **Obituaries** – a tab with a listing of obituaries for our 306<sup>th</sup> Veterans has been added to the website.
- **Other items of interest** – Along with these new additions, last year all past issues of *Echoes* were posted online as well as *Stars and Stripes* and *Yank* magazine issues. Many other files have been edited and corrected. A number of mission reports have been made available to researchers. The web site is continuing to grow and become more useful to our members as well as the general public.

The person quoted above is one of almost two dozen who have made inquiries in the past several months that have been referred to Historian Cliff Deets. He and Secretary Barbara Neal have also put inquirers in touch with veterans who could help answer their questions. Most of these inquirers are descendants of 306<sup>th</sup> veterans and we hope some of them will become active in the Association. Others who have inquired include a gentleman researching a 306<sup>th</sup> airplane that crashed in his village in northern France, another gentleman from Ireland researching a 306<sup>th</sup> plane and crew that passed through Ireland during the war, and the producers of the PBS genealogy show “Finding Your Roots” wanting information on a 306<sup>th</sup> pilot who is the father of one of the celebrities (movie and TV star) they will be featuring on the show at a date and time to be announced.

Our Association members are having an impact educating us and others while honoring our current and departed WWII veterans. You are encouraged to visit the site. To see a summary of what has been added, click on the “What’s New” tab.

### DONATION FOR THE 306<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Address*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*City, State, Zip*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Telephone No.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*306<sup>th</sup> Unit*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*eMail Address*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

**Make checks payable to  
“306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association”**

**Send to:**

**Judith Hermley, Treasurer  
306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association  
5314 Bob Sikes Blvd.  
Jay, FL 32565**

*Thank you!*



## Museum Notes

*[Editor's Note: Typically, this column is written by Ralph Franklin, Museum Curator at Thurlough, England. However, due to the illness of Daphne Franklin, Ralph's attention has been divided between caring for his wife and maintaining the museum. The*

*306<sup>th</sup> BGHA family is keeping the Franklins in our thoughts and prayers.]*

## Silent Auction to be Held at SLC Reunion

This year, as part of a special attraction, several donated items will be used in a silent auction, all proceeds from which will go to the support of the 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA. These items include

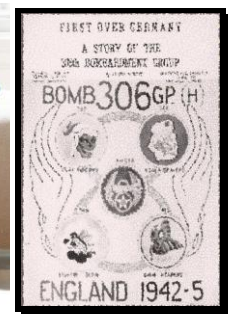
- Reproduction flight jacket
- Book – **First Over Germany: A Story of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group** by Arthur P. Bove
- Book – **First Over Germany: A History of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group** by Russell Strong
- Americana Afghan – Crocheted in 80 hours in 2015 by the *Echoes* Editor
- And more!

All items will be displayed in the hospitality room where reunion attendees will have the opportunity to review the items and make bids.

Anyone wishing to donate an item appropriate for

a 306<sup>th</sup> BGHA silent auction is asked to contact Sue Moyer ([ssma43@gmail.com](mailto:ssma43@gmail.com)) no later than midnight, Friday, 31 July 2015, with a description of the item and a suggested minimum bid.

Winners will be announced at the Saturday night banquet and payment transactions (cash or check made payable to the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Association) will occur at that time.



*Donated items: (Left to right, top to bottom) First Over Germany: A History of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group by Russell Strong, Reproduction Flight Jacket, Americana Afghan, First Over Germany: A Story of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group by Arthur P. Bove*

# See You in Salt Lake!

## 2015 Reunion

### 17 - 20 September

## Details Inside!