



306th Echoes

Educating and Communicating



B-17 Flying Fortress

Memphis, Tennessee:

306th BGHA Joins 8th AFHS for 2020 Reunion

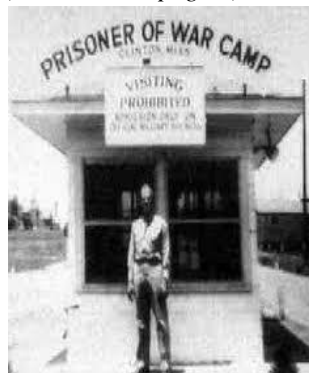


Memphis, Tennessee, is home to much of what we know as modern American music. It is a place of artistic convergence, where Elvis got his start and where Beale Street lights invite everyone to join in the conviviality.

Recognized as the birthplace of the blues, soul, and rock ‘n roll, Memphis is the site for the 2020 reunion. But it is not just the draw of music, culture, and food that will be the highlight of this year’s gathering.

History tells us that during World War II, Tennessee and its citizens contributed generously to the war effort. The War Department constructed large supply depots in Memphis for the Army and the Army Air Force. The Army Depot also served as a prisoner-of-war camp, housing 800 Axis prisoners.

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8th AFHS and 306th BGHA: A Short History



At its inception, the Eighth Air Force Historical Society became the central organization for individual State Chapters and Wings. Founded in 1975 by Lt. Col. John Woolnough, the mission statement focused on, as stated on the group’s website, “the preservation of the Mighty Eighth and the part it played in World War II. Over the years, the Society has become a strong organization with an emphasis on remembering and honoring our comrades who served with distinction: the men who flew, the many thousands of ground crews, and those who worked in the background.

These Veterans, born in the 1920s and before, were members of the greatest air armada of all time. They numbered 350,000 men and women, with over 54,000 killed in combat or taken prisoner.

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Leadership
306th Bomb Group Historical Association
2020 – 2021 Officers

PRESIDENT KEVIN CONANT
kevingconant@me.com

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PRENTICE
pren1616@yahoo.com

SECRETARY BARBARA NEAL
(For change of address, obituaries, correspondence)
PO BOX 682530; PARK CITY, UT 84068
Mountain Time cell 435-655-1500
barb306neal@gmail.com

TREASURER JENNIFER MINDALA
Checks payable to
"306th Bomb Group Historical Association"
3244 S. Lamar Street, Denver, CO 80227
Mountain Time phone 303-980-9400
jmindala306@gmail.com

ELECTED DIRECTORS (alphabetically)

BRUCE CHASE (exp. 2022)
Director of Membership

DEBORAH CONANT (exp. 2020)
SUE MOYER (exp. 2021)
CLAYTON SNYDER (exp. 2022)
STEVE SNYDER (exp. 2022)
WAYNE TOLMACHOFF (exp. 2020)

POSITION DIRECTORS

HISTORIAN – CLIFFORD DEETS
(Send memorabilia)
PO BOX 742; BREMERTON, WA 98337
Pacific Time cell 619-405-7132
cldeets@att.net

ECHOES EDITOR – NANCY HUEBOTTER
(For news magazine article suggestions and submissions)
508 LEE PLACE
PLACENTIA, CA 92870
Pacific Time cell 714-345-3923
nmhuebotter306@gmail.com

2020 REUNION CHAIRMAN – DEBORAH CONANT
Pacific Time cell 408-550-5253
debconant@me.com

PAST PRESIDENT – BILL FEESER
whf306@gmail.com

Webmaster

CHARLES NEAL
Use the "click here" feedback line at the bottom
of the www.306bg.us home page

306th Museum Thurleigh

JOHN WATSON-READ
UK Representative
spikeread@hotmail.com

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association was determined by the IRS to be a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) as a public charity, effective 24 July 2015.



A Message from
306th BGHA 2020-2022
President Kevin Conant

Greetings from quarantined California. Deb and I hope this finds you well and doing well during this nation-wide shelter in place order during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not since the era of WWII has the whole of America been affected in such a ubiquitous manner. This May was to be filled with commemorations of the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E Day), with fitting tributes of gleeful celebrations and solemn remembrances of the sacrifices made by so many. Affecting America and the United Kingdom with cancellations and schedule changes as the new norm, now with rumor of V-J Day being the next possible date of combined celebration.

A truly bright spot in all the heavy news of late is the story of WWII UK Army veteran Captain Tom Moore and of his desire to celebrate his 100th birthday in style with fitness and charity as his goal. Hoping to raise £1,000 (pounds UK) for a donation to the National Health Service in support of their fight against COVID-19, he set out to walk 100 laps around his garden in Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire, just 16 miles SW of Thurleigh. Finishing 100 laps for 100 years, for £1,000.00 was his quest. Capturing the hearts of millions, raising over \$42 million US, and singing a number one Billboard™ chart song of celebration, he's receiving hundreds of 100th Happy Birthday cards from his new fans from all over the world. Captain Moore, like so many of our beloved 306th vets, has stolen our hearts, truly reminding us once again why we are calling theirs "the greatest generation."



Tom Moore

May 8, 1945, just 11 short months after D-Day, Allies secured a full and complete surrender from the Nazis, bringing an end to the bloody campaign. My father-in-law Lt. Ray V. Hopper, a charter member of the 306th, then assigned to 8th AF Headquarters at Pine Tree in High Wycombe, wrote his young bride back in the states:

June 6, 1944, (D-Day), England

Beloved Norine,

Well this is it; the whole world has been waiting for this. I know many will find great joy in the liberation that's coming to their countries, but no one will find joy in the cost to bring liberation. Allies have gained the upper hand in the air, what's left of the Luftwaffe is fighting a decidedly losing battle. We've seen what the Wehrmacht has done in Italy, they're a strong force, but we finally have them retreating in Italy and soon they'll be running in France too. We can only pray our momentum will sweep them back to their fatherland and stop this madness.

Last night I was authorized to stay in the War Room, it was a hive of activity and only slowed a little when aircraft took off before dawn. I remained there until after daylight before heading to my room for a little shuteye. I was amazed how quiet the grounds were, it was deceptively normal here, while all hell was breaking loose on the landing beaches.

These last few days have been very trying, and I expect the same all week. Everyone here is wound tight, but thankfully it doesn't feel like the cards we've been stacking will all come tumbling down. We've steadily prepared for this day and as far as my contributions are concerned everything went off without a hitch.

Radio reports state, Allies suffered fewer losses than anticipated. I hope so, because that's all I could think of when I went to bed this morning. I pictured our boys shouldering their weapons and packs, climbing out of boats to face what? There I was comfortably in my bed, I wasn't worrying about moving forward, digging in, or whether I'd even live to see another sunrise.

Now to get down to a more pleasant subject, yes even in times like these. What I wouldn't do to have you in my arms. Thoughts of you and prayers to God are what carry me through these long days, Ray

PS: I am enclosing the message distributed from Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters today, I thought you'd like to see it.

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Our colleagues across the pond are encouraging all those taking part to undertake the 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2' at 3pm on the 8th of May, from the safety of their own home by standing up and raise a glass of refreshment of their choice and undertake the following 'Toast' – "**To those who gave so much, we thank you,**" using this unique opportunity to pay tribute to the many millions at home and abroad that gave so much to ensure we all enjoy and share the freedom we have today.

On March 15th we held a Board of Director's meeting via conference call, please see our Secretary's column for greater detail. Actions of note were the temporary closing of the 306th BG Museum UK in Thurleigh until the lifting of the shelter in place order in the UK. Sue Sharkey, daughter of 369th pilot Howard Sharkey, has agreed to serve as 306 FTG Committee Chairperson and Liaison Officer to the 306th Fighter Training Group (FTG) at the United States Air Force Academy in

Colorado Springs, CO. Sue and her husband David Jordan live in Castle Rock, CO, where Sue serves as a University of Colorado Regent. Steve Snyder and Nancy Huebotter have agreed to also serve on the committee with Sue. Our desire is to strengthen our bonds of affinity with the men and women of the 306 FTG, encouraging a richer relationship with their namesake members of our Association.

We are seeking a chairperson for the Webmaster Search Committee, providing leadership and guidance in their goal to retain a new 306bg.us webmaster. As well documented in prior communique's, our former Board President and volunteer webmaster Charles Neal, has made it clearly known that by the end of 2020, he would no longer maintain the role of webmaster. Charles, along with the assistance of countless volunteer hours of a handful of dedicated members, have created one of the most comprehensive bombardment group searchable archives, making it the envy of the 8th Air Force. The search committee consists of Charles Neal, Cliff Deets, Wayne Tolmachoff, Clayton Snyder, and Dennis Walden. We are deeply indebted to Charles gift of time, talent and treasure shepherding this website from inception to its mature and enviable state today, thank you Charles for your devotion.

I am also seeking to fill the position of Chaplain of our Association. That person would be responsible for the invocation and benediction of our meetings and meals, as well as attend to the well-being of our members and their families. The Chaplain would be an appointed position to the office of the Board President. Please contact me if you'd like to discuss your interest.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the status of our future public gatherings is up in the air as of this writing. However, if all goes as according to plan, we will be gathering together with the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association on October 21st - 25th in Memphis, TN in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society's annual reunion. We will enjoy our own hospitality room in addition to still commemorating our Folded Wings Ceremony, having our own guest speakers and group dinner, all the while enjoying the fellowship of other members of the 8th Air Force. More information shall be forthcoming with significantly greater detail soon. Until we can be together again, may you enjoy good

health. Deb and I truly look forward to the next time that we can be with you all. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns, as it is truly my honor to serve.

Your President,
Kevin Conant

8th AFHS and 306th BGHA – A Short History (continued from page 1)

Their children and descendants, who are representatives of these Veterans, saw the need to keep the history and experiences of these warriors alive. Their goal is to preserve the legacy created by their relatives who went before them, not because of the vanity of their accomplishments, but rather for the preservation of Democracy and Civilization, for maintaining the values of honesty and patriotism exhibited by their generation.”

The first reunion was held in 1975, and, by all reports, the 45 veterans who attended, originating from coast-to-coast, declared it an unqualified success, and vowed to meet the following year.

Beginning in July 1976, men of the 306th recognized they were the largest contingent attending the reunion and moved for organizing a 306th Bomb Group Association. This decision did not come to fruition until 1982. After holding seven gatherings in conjunction with the Eighth Air Force Association, the 306th Bomb Group held its first individual reunion.

The site of the September 1983 reunion was Omaha, Nebraska. At the urging of the governor of Nebraska, the mayor of Omaha, the commanding general of the Strategic Air Command Center, and other dignitaries, the 306th determined it was an opportunity to host their own reunion.

The driving force for this move, aside from the invitations by several officials, was financial. Because the 306th was becoming the assemblage of note, the inadequate number of rooms available to house the visitors, and the lack of space to convene as a group was the impetus for becoming a separate group.

With a promise of 200 hotel rooms set aside for the 306th Bomb Group, meeting rooms for each of the four squadrons, a tour of the Strategic Air Command facilities at Offutt Field, and an appearance by General Curtis LeMay sealed the

assurance of a uniquely hosted reunion for the 306th. The goal of offering a “306th only” reunion was to keep costs to a minimum, thereby enhancing the prospect of an unprecedented attendance.



Gen. Curtis LeMay accepts a copy of "First Over Germany" from Russell Strong, while Judge Donald Ross looks on.

[The above photo is extracted from the October 1983 issue of Echoes.]

The ambitious intent of maintaining the reunion finances to a manageable amount, to remain revenue-neutral, has continued for all reunions to date.

Recognizing that it is becoming more difficult for our veterans and other senior members of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association (BGHA) to travel to reunion venues, but wanting to continue the spirit of the organization, the 306th BGHA Board of Directors, with input from members, decided the 2020 reunion would provide an opportunity to join together with others who are unwavering in their commitment to ensuring the World War II story is never forgotten. Although the 306th BGHA will remain its own entity, having our own reunion within the context of the larger 8th AFHS reunion, connecting with the 8th AFHS, and the bomb groups that comprise the organization, will result in an opportunity to engage veterans and their descendants with each other to celebrate the lives of our brave men, share memories of heroic moments as well as those of daily life, recount the tragedies of war, then recall times of much-needed comic relief.

This year marks the 47th consecutive year the men of the 306th Bomb Group have met to remember and to honor. ■

From the Editor



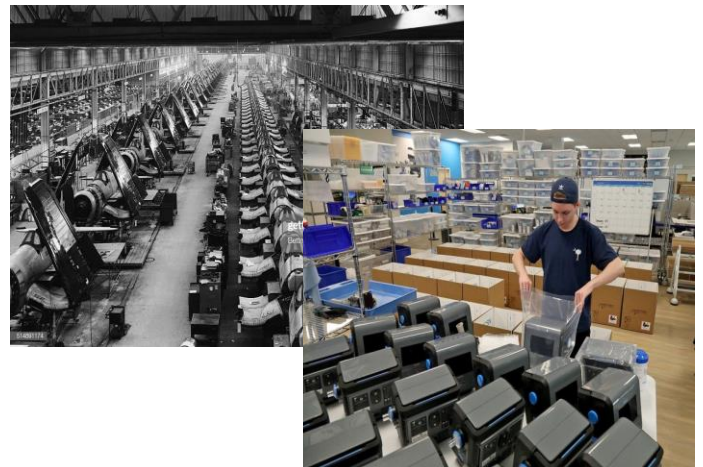
World War II and COVID-19: Drawing Some Parallels

by Nancy M. Huebotter
(Editor's contact information on page 2)

I imagine by now you are very tired of COVID-19 pandemic news, social distancing guidelines, and the financial impacts. When a series of eMails appeared in my inbox, they gave me an opportunity to draw parallels between our current situation and those experienced by men and women on the home front as well as our servicemen during the World War II years.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic feels unprecedented, it is not the first time that such forces have radically disrupted civilian life. When the German blitzkrieg was overwhelming Western Europe, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for the increase in warplane production. As a result of a disciplined program of allocating critical materials to contractors and supply chains, production was dramatically increased. Car manufacturers transitioned to making airplanes and tanks.

The immediate priority in combatting COVID-19, was the increase of personal protective equipment. The ease with which US factories modified their production to address the need, replicated the mobilization effort that occurred during World War II.



For the US in World War II, an enemy attacked, and a significant portion of the economy was redirected to a wartime effort. With COVID-19, a virus has attacked, and a substantial portion of the economy has been redirected to enforced leisure at home. Time at home is better than having to fight on the ground or in the skies over Europe, but in some ways, the effects are similar.

Throughout the war, the enemy was not faceless, unlike today, when we have been encouraged to become stalwart in our fight against an invisible enemy. Upon entering the military, today and in the 1940s, young men and women were expected to develop mental toughness and resiliency. The article I received noted that our military personnel “train for hard times and develop a mindset to push through all challenges to accomplish the mission.” Our World War II heroes did just that, and they did it with a fortitude that gave them the ability to continue to look at life with a certain amount of courage and sensibility. This quality is not unlike today’s ongoing war against COVID-19.

Those who fought in the war were directed to develop such critical skills as to accept what is in their control and let go of what is not. One cannot control the orders given; only the response to the situation can be managed.

Staying focused on the mission while remaining calm is paramount to developing coping strategies. Young men facing combat situations soon learned that being able to control their emotions and actions would be an asset in winning life’s most important battle. When we hear the stories of our veterans, we recognize these traits became part of their DNA. Now, we are called upon to demonstrate similar characteristics.

Throughout history, there are heroes and leaders we have come to admire. From World War II, we revere the fearlessness of Franklin Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower; within our own 306th Bomb Group family, Frank Armstrong, Charles Overacker, Jr., James Doolittle; and ultimately the veteran(s) with whom we most closely identify.

In comparison to these heroes, it can be challenging to align our leadership skills with those whose stories we know. But we can take lessons from them, focusing on their experiences and examples of leadership. As the eMail correspondence points out, Admiral William

Halsey, a Fleet Admiral in the United States Navy during World War II, has been quoted as saying, “There are no extraordinary men. . . just extraordinary circumstances that ordinary men are forced to deal with.”

As “leaders” within our environment, whether it be within our home, office, or community, we are only called upon to develop a leadership style or philosophy that exhibits behaviors and actions designed to help us in accepting what is in our control. Our mission is to stay safe and give purpose to what we do in maintaining the security of our lives and the lives of others.

In reflecting upon the rationing our Greatest Generation had to endure, it seems much more catastrophic than what many of us are having to experience today. Everyone was affected by the war. The federal government needed to control supply and demand, so rationing was introduced to avoid public anger with shortages and not to allow only the wealthy to purchase commodities. Fear generated the need for sacrifice. While industry and commerce were affected, individuals felt the effects more intensely. Supporting and maintaining supply levels for the troops abroad meant making daily adjustments at home.

With today’s growing unemployment due to business shutdowns, and the shortages of such luxuries as toilet paper and paper towels is not dissimilar to that which occurred in the war era. Food lines exist today, just as they did in the 1940s. Staggering numbers of citizen volunteers have come together to assist their neighbors and their communities, continuing that which found a basis for filling the need during the war. Stores have been forced to regulate the amount of commodities consumers could obtain. Life, during any conflict, whether it be World War II or the war against COVID-19, daily sacrifice exists. It is the American spirit that unites us in our efforts to do all we can to combat the enemy.

As we continue to persevere through our COVID-19 quarantine, we can take away many lessons that our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, and uncles realized.

Every era has opportunities and challenges. Some are unique, but many are surprisingly commonplace. Distilling the sense of shared sacrifice defines the effort. ■

Attention Journalist and Non-Journalists:

Do you have an article you would like to submit to *Echoes*? If the answer is YES, I am interested in hearing from you. Please submit all articles as a Word file attached to an eMail. Do not use .pdf or any other format when providing your document to me. Save all images as high-resolution photos attached to the eMail in .jpg format. Do not imbed the images in the text. Including notations in the Word submission draft where the image should be placed is suggested. Remember – submission does not guarantee publication. Due to size constraints of the magazine, the publication of non-solicited materials may be held for a future issue. The editor reserves the right to modify the article as appropriate.

If copyrighted materials are included, ensure permission for use has been obtained. Be sure to pass that information along when submitting the article.

Articles relative to World War II, the 306th Bomb Group, and individual veterans are acceptable subjects. The focus should be on raising awareness and enhancing the education of second, third, fourth generations and beyond.

Send your articles to:

nmhuebotter306@gmail.com.

Echoes Article Due Date for Summer/Fall Issue 19 November 2020



2020 Reunion in Memphis, Tennessee

(continued from page 1)



Aside from the depot facilities, the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) established numerous airfields in Tennessee for training pilots and aircrews of USAAF fighters and bombers. Most of these airfields were under the command of the Third Air Force or the Army Air Force Training Command (AAFTC). Present-day Memphis International Airport and Memphis Air National Guard Base were the sites of the Air Transport Command, Memphis AAF, 4th Ferrying Group, and the 346th Army Air Force Base Unit.

Historical research tells us, the 3800-acre Naval Air Station (NAS) Memphis, located in Millington, was the country's largest inland naval base. A part of the Civil War-era Navy Yard became the site of the most immense shipbuilding facility in Memphis history. The Pidgeon-Thomas Iron Co., an old, well-established Memphis firm, handled a \$20 million contract to produce assault vehicles for the Navy. The firm produced 193 LCTs (landing craft, tank), designed to beach themselves to release their lethal cargo. The firm became one of four LCT shipyards to be awarded further Navy contracts in 1944 to ensure that an adequate supply of landing craft would be available in 1945, if needed.



Two days after Pearl Harbor, a train called the *Defense Special* arrived in Memphis from Little Rock. One of three such trains dispatched by the Office of Production Management, the eight-car, red, white, and blue train carried exhibits from

major manufacturers seeking subcontractors for numerous military items. Some 1,200 persons representing approximately 750 Memphis-area businesses toured the exhibits, which included ordnance parts, gas masks, skis, radios, clothing, shoes, tents, aircraft parts, small tools, and many other items. The display achieved immediate results – the Navy placed an order with Memphis bag manufacturers for 975,000 sandbags. The Lewis Supply Company made arrangements with Westinghouse to produce gears requiring precision lathe work

Established Memphis firms experienced some problems in converting to war production. The Ford Motor Company's plant closed for retooling in February 1942, laying off 1,100 workers "indefinitely." A plant spokesman denied that Ford would be assembling jeeps and insisted that no orders for reopening had been received. However, by early 1943, nearly 100 Memphis manufacturing firms held war contracts.



The two most significant Memphis war production concerns were Fisher and Ford plants. The Ford facility reopened within two months of its closure, but not to produce jeeps. Instead, the Ford facility produced over thirty-five precision-machined parts for Pratt & Whitney aircraft engines.



New businesses poured into Memphis, but most of these establishments only existed in Memphis for

the war's duration, closing soon after V-J Day. A notable exception, known as Memphis War Industries, survived the war. The firm manufactured a variety of items during the war, ranging from gun turret rings to aircraft gears to frozen food equipment. This last item proved to be the company's key to the future. Following the war, the company changed its name to the Frozen Food Locker Construction Co., Inc., manufacturing large walk-in freezer units.

Industrial expansion in Memphis was accompanied by significant development in military facilities. In a major reorganization, the War Department divided the United States into four areas, each with a field army. This resulted in the Second Army headquarters moving from Chicago to Memphis in late 1940. The mobilization of the National Guard and the introduction of the Selective Service enormously swelled the ranks of the army in that year. The Second Army's mission was to bring its designated National Guard units up to Regular Army training standards and to take raw selectees from individual basic training through large-scale (corps and army level) tactical exercises.

In addition to recognizing Memphis' contribution to the World War II effort, reunion attendees will be immersed in the sights and sounds of this historic city. Thursday's bus tour of the city will include such locations as:

- The Lorraine Motel, a property that catered to black clientele in a segregated city, is etched in the minds of Americans as the site of the Martin Luther King, Jr., assassination.



- The Peabody Hotel, famous for its Peabody Duck March, where, each day at 11:00 am, the Peabody Ducks are escorted from their penthouse home, on the rooftop, to the lobby via elevator. The ducks, accompanied by the *King Cotton March* by John Philip Sousa, then

proceed across a red carpet to the hotel fountain. They are ceremoniously led back to their penthouse residence at 5:00 pm.



- Victorian Village
- Orpheum Theater
- St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital
- Redbird Stadium
- Historic Cotton Row
- and more

Those enjoying this excursion will have time to explore the pedestrian areas of downtown Memphis, Beale Street, and taste the local cuisine.



On Saturday, a visit to Graceland is on the agenda. As each guest arrives at Graceland, they will be handed a pair of gold Elvis-style sunglasses to keep as souvenirs. Visitors will then have the opportunity to explore the personal side of Elvis Presley with an interactive iPad tour of Graceland Mansion. One of the first historic homes in the US to offer such an experience, the tour is “hosted” by John Stamos. It features commentary and stories by Elvis and his daughter, Lisa Marie. The entire tour features a multimedia experience of the music landmark. The Graceland Mansion Tour includes the living room; his parents’ bedroom; the kitchen; TV room; pool room; the famous Jungle Room with its green shagged carpets, Polynesian feel, and exotically carved wood; his father Vernon’s office from which he managed all of Elvis’ personal finances and the management and staffing on the

grounds of Graceland; the newly-enhanced Trophy Building, the Racquetball Building – newly-restored to how it looked in 1977, and Meditation Garden where Elvis and members of his family have been laid to rest.

No tour will be completed without a walk among some of Elvis’ favorite automobiles, including his iconic Pink Cadillac.



His personal airplanes, including a 1958 Convair 880 he named *Lisa Marie* after his daughter, as well as his smaller Lockheed Jet Star, that was primarily used for taking Elvis’ manager and his staff from city to city on his concert tours.

Woven into the reunion itinerary will be opportunities to visit the various hospitality rooms sponsored by attending bomb groups; dwell in the presence of those who lived the World War II experience, and are anxious to share their stories; examine artifacts from that period in history we should never forget. The 306th BGHA will remember those who have died over the past year with the traditional Folded Wings tribute. Featured guest speakers are scheduled during the event that will share information stemming from the World War II era. Dinners slated for each evening (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) will provide another setting for socializing and celebrating the spirit and connection we have to the heroic veterans of the Eighth Air Force.

To be a part of the experience, and to learn more about the 2020 reunion, turn to page 16; a schedule of events is found on page 18. The reunion registration form is found on page 19 in this issue of *Echoes* and at the 306th BGHA website at <http://www.306bg.us/reunions.htm> (click on the link to access 2020 reunion information). ■

75th V-E Day Anniversary Celebrations Cancelled by COVID-19 Pandemic

“This is a solemn but glorious hour. My only wish is that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day.” With these words, President Harry S Truman announced to the American public at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, 8 May 1945, in a radio broadcast that the World War II Allies had formally accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany’s armed forces. Truman went on to say, this victory “is sober and subdued by the supreme consciousness of the terrible price we have paid to rid the world of Hitler and his evil band. Let us not forget, my fellow Americans, the sorrow and heartbreak which today abide in the homes of so many of our neighbors – neighbors whose most priceless possession has been rendered as a sacrifice to redeem our liberty.”

especially in Great Britain and North America. In Britain, it was announced 8 May would be a national holiday. More than one million people celebrated in the streets throughout Great Britain to mark the end of the European part of the war.

In London, throngs of citizens gathered in Trafalgar Square then paraded toward Buckingham Palace, where King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, accompanied by Prime Minister Winston Churchill made an appearance on the palace balcony to greet the cheering crowds. Churchill was quoted as saying that the German surrender was “the signal for the greatest outburst of joy in the history of mankind.”



St. Paul’s Cathedral held ten back-to-back services, each one attended by thousands of people, anxious to give thanks for peace. Everywhere there was dancing, singing, and the consumption of libations. The joy of the day broke down the usual social conventions.

After years of war-time restrictions and dangers, including rationing, blackouts, and bombing raids, the populace was eager to let loose finally and enjoy themselves. Even Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret were allowed to wander incognito among the crowds and take part in the celebrations.



At the 306th Bombardment Group airbase in Thurleigh, the last bombing mission was flown on 19 April 1945. The belief that the end of the war was upon them, the crews began to recognize



The announcement that the war had ended in Europe was broadcast to the British people via radio in the late evening of 7 May when the BBC interrupted its regularly scheduled programming with the news flash. Victory in Europe or V-E Day was officially proclaimed by the leaders of the Big Three in Washington, London, and Moscow. Celebrations erupted throughout the western world,

personnel changes began to occur, and the exodus of crewmen to stateside assignments commenced. What had been home to the bomb group for thirty months was now being transformed into a peacetime operation. By 8 May and the announcement of V-E Day, the men were ready to celebrate.

However, they initially approached the idea of an end to the war with cautious optimism. In the past, a declaration of peace had been rumored, only to be retracted, giving the men a rollercoaster of emotions. In his book, *First Over Germany*, Russell Strong describes the reaction as one of “not quite as much levity as one might have imagined earlier.” Strong continues to report on the results of the V-E Day base activities:

The men were restricted to base, as was the case throughout the United Kingdom. According to the 367th Squadron diary, “a brown haze” settled over the field, only to be lifted after supper when kegs of beer were rolled out on the baseball diamond, the post band provided music, and a large bonfire was lit. The officers were celebrating at the “B” mess across the road from the diamond, where the Scotch whiskey was unlimited for the night; they came to watch the bonfire.

Reveille, drill, and organized sports were dropped for the morning of the 9th, and that afternoon the base restriction was lifted. Most of the men headed for Bedford and, “what they saw amazed every man,” says the 367th diary.

*The English had dragged every “bloody” light bulb in town and strung it up outdoors. The streets were filled with a blaze of lights that hurt your eyes. The people, old and young, filled the streets and danced and sang **Roll Me Over and Do It Again** at the top of their lungs. There had been great fear for the conduct of the Yanks, but the spectacle of the staid and reserved English letting their hair down as it had never been down before so startled the Yanks that they were left without a leg to stand on.*

For once, the British “out-hollered” and “out drank” the Americans.

In the United States, Truman, who was celebrating his 61st birthday, was still mourning the loss of Roosevelt. Despite the jubilant celebrations, flags remained at half-staff in Roosevelt’s honor.

The cities of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami erupted in celebration chaos, and the

revelry was not unlike that which was occurring in Britain. Now that the end of the war was inevitable, it seemed the world released a sigh of relief to be rid of the pain and horrors.

In both Britain and the United States, patriotic red, white, and blue bunting festooned homes and businesses. Vendors hastily produced commemorative items. Parades and other various events were organized to mark the occasion.

It should be noted, in Britain, the end of fighting did not mean an end to the impact of the war on their lives. Although many things began to return to normal, it took time to rebuild the country, and shortages were still felt. The massive cost of the war resulted in post-war austerity and far-reaching political effects.

The 75th anniversary of V-E Day, 8 May 2020, marks a very pivotal occasion.



However, what was to be a momentous occasion had to be scaled back due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The citizens of Great Britain were reminded that when the guns fell silent at the end of the war in Europe, years of carnage and destruction were momentarily forgotten in favor of millions of people taking to the streets and pubs to celebrate peace, to mourn their loved ones, and to hope for the future.

The 75th anniversary was intended to provide the British citizenry, their nation, and their friends around the world with an opportunity to reflect on the enormous sacrifice, courage, and determination of people from all walks of life who saw their country through the dark and terrifying period of World War II.

The Coronavirus lockdown had a very disappointing impact on this year’s celebrations. The Queen led celebrations with a televised speech. A mass toast to the people who fought in the war on the cliffs at Dover occurred, but people had to take part from their homes.

Street parties were abolished.

A veterans' procession was canceled.

Pipers, who played the traditional "Reveille" to commemorate those who died in the war, were allowed to play, as long as they kept to social distancing rules.

In announcing the modified plans to the once elaborate commemoration, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden announced, "We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the greatest generation that served in combat and on the home front during the Second World War.

Whilst we now need to celebrate VE 75 in our homes and on our doorsteps, rather than in parades and street parties, I know the nation will come together to mark this historic occasion. In these difficult times, acts of remembrance are even more poignant, and I am sure that millions will want to join me to remember and give thanks to those who gave so much to secure peace, freedom, and prosperity in Europe."

The British were told that strict social distancing measures and the COVID-19 crisis should not stop people from marking the anniversary of the end of the war in Europe.

Although the public mood is low, it was suggested that the country could draw a lot of strength from remembering what the Greatest Generation had to overcome. The younger generation could learn from those who lived through World War II.

In addition, the British were urged to commemorate V-E Day during the coronavirus lockdown by placing a specially designed figure of a World War II soldier in their window.



Made of a shatter-resistant acrylic, and known as the "Tommy Initiative," it is thought the public, when reflecting on the symbolism of the

soldier, will contemplate the commitment of the previous generations by glancing at the "Tommy" and think: "Yes, they did a good job all those years ago." The soldier figures have been made by injured veterans in the Royal British Legion Industries social enterprise factory. More than 2,000 of the figures have been sold. All money raised from the

campaign will go toward the charity's work to provide employment, training, and support to veterans and their families.

In commemoration of V-E Day, the Imperial War Museum retrieved from their archives first-hand testimonies from the summer of 1945. These recordings came from a broad spectrum of individuals, including civilians and prisoners of war, and were broadcast from locations throughout the United Kingdom, such as schools, universities, supermarkets, and historic landmarks.

Diane Lees, Director General of the IWM said, "Voices of War takes inspiration from huge crowds who stopped and listened together 75 years ago, in public spaces across the world, to the declaration of victory in Europe. . . We want to recreate that moment, using our fascinating sound archive to share the stories and memories of those who lived through the conflicting jubilation, hope, sadness, and fear that was felt during the summer of 1945." ■

YouTube Video Commemorating V-E Day Broadcast from Bedfordshire

Every May, hundreds of people from across Bedfordshire join HM Lord-Lieutenant Helen Nellis to celebrate the work of the voluntary organizations in the county.

This year, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Lord-Lieutenant broadcast an online service commemorating the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.

This virtual service served as an opportunity to remember all those who gave so much in World War II to secure peace. The service included previously unseen video footage of the 306th Bomber Command Group, which was based at Thurleigh between 1942-45. Incorporated into the video is a tribute from 306th BGHA President Kevin Conant and wife, Deborah Conant, who said, "Our hearts are bonded in love and affection for our common alliance of freedom and liberty for all of humanity."

Those who wish to view the video can go to <https://youtu.be/Urdq3JM2E0U>.





From the Secretary

by Barbara Neal

(Secretary's contact information on page 2)

LEMONADE: How is YOUR lemonade recipe going? I hope that to the extent possible, you are trying to make lemonade from the current lemons. Just as our

WWII generation that grew up during the Great Depression had to make adjustments during those years – whether in the military or on the home-front – NOW in 2020 all across this country AND all around the world, we must make adjustments in our own lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. As this is written in mid-April, we have no way of knowing what our “new-now” will look like, in the period after case numbers subside and before a vaccine will be available. In the meantime, stay safe and take care.

TRUST is so important – trust in our abilities to rise to the occasion as best we are capable; and critically, trust that we can depend on others to do the right thing: our immediate community's churches; senior centers and care facilities; in-home care-providers; groceries, bakeries, libraries, hardware stores, small proprietors who are now restricted to only-take-out meals; essential workers in the postal service; in our town, county, and state in so many venues including (but certainly not limited to) health and sanitation to keep our communities functioning as well as is possible.

EMPATHY and APPRECIATION are likewise important – especially for those who never expected to be thrust so firmly into the essential front-line functions that keep our lives going during the pandemic: medical, fire, emergency response, and law enforcement personnel; faith community personnel doing their best to serve us even remotely; truck drivers delivering goods to our groceries, pharmacies, etc.; those working in grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, and more (including those who re-stock the shelves constantly); those willing to pick up and deliver local items for those who cannot get out; postal workers; transportation providers; veterinarians and

their employees who care for our pets; those who keep us abreast of our local news; and on and on.

CENSUS 2020 is one way each of us can help to keep all running better throughout the next ten years when much will be allocated based on Census count. I know that some of you, like we, were not reached by the initial big Census push, which lacked any focus to reach residents who DO NOT get mail delivered at a street address. These individuals were intended to be contacted later by door-to-door Census workers – now in a pandemic not best to count upon. Be assured, you can help your county and your state by proactively getting your household count in. It is not too late even when this issue of *Echoes* goes out. You can complete the census over the phone with a Census Questionnaire Representative at this toll-free number: **1-844-330-2020**. Or if you have internet connectivity, you can do your household's questionnaire online, at **2020census.gov** by entering your physical address. PLEASE make sure you are counted; it makes a big difference for your county and your state.

306th FACEBOOK: If you now have the time and desire to be in touch with our 306th Facebook site, here is the location where you can arrange to join the 306th Facebook conversations and include photos at this official Facebook page of our 306th Bomb Group - First over Germany (private group):

www.facebook.com/groups/297834980301279/

REUNION 2020 Our reunion of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association (BGHA) and the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association (SSMA), this year in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society (8thafhs.org) reunion, is still planned for Memphis, TN, from Wednesday, Oct 21st to Sunday, Oct 25th. One change to the schedule, as initially published by the 8th AFHS, is that the Liberty Foundation announced the suspension of their 2020 tour with B-17 “Ye Olde Pub.” That B-17 tour was to have been on Friday. Be assured, our 306th BGHA Board of Directors will ensure that our reunion activities will include: our Hospitality area; our annual Folded Wings memorial of those whose passing we've learned of since the 2019 Folded Wings memorial (held last year in the Chapel on the grounds of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force near

Savannah); our annual General Business Meeting; and our dinner in the time-slot for “Rendezvous Dinners.”

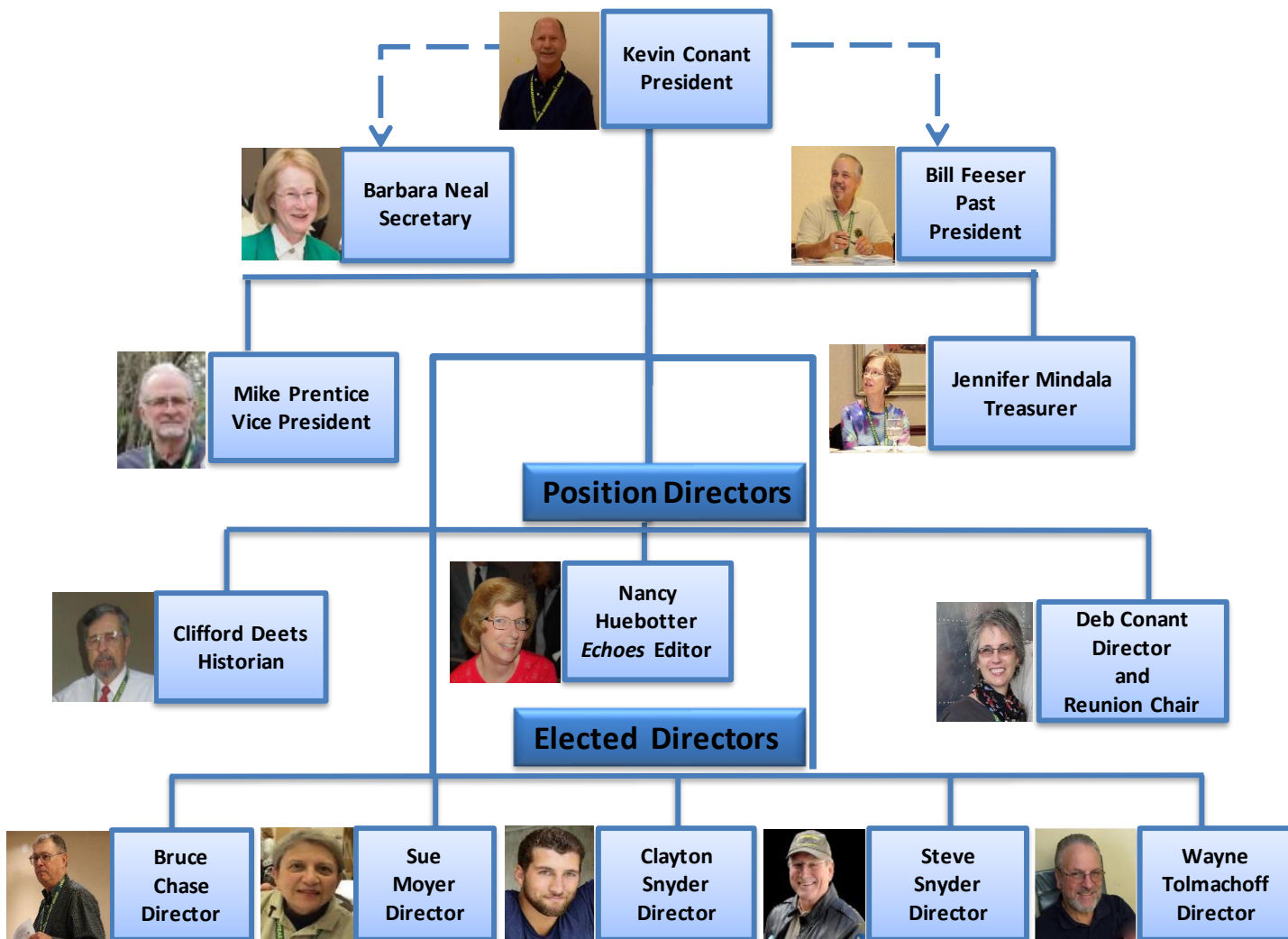
STAY IN TOUCH with your friends, including your 306th friends.

Call or write to check on those who mean a lot to you; it means a lot to them, to know you care enough to check. As your volunteer Secretary, I’ve sent monthly group-update emails of matters pertinent to the 306th; currently, those are sent to around 500 email addresses. More recently, I began sending additional, occasional emails – only for those email recipients who want them, re “306th Care Updates.” Those of us 64 on the “Care Update” list (including our volunteer Board of 13) appreciate getting news, especially of our remaining dozens of valued WWII generation vets and their

wives/widows, and our fellow “aging baby-boomers” (some of whom are also passing on). If you want to be added to those receiving Care Update emails, let me know; you **MUST** be a current Member who has done our **FREE** Membership for 2020. And if you have pertinent updates for me to share, please let me know whether, by email, a phone call, a text to my cell phone, or a scribbled note in the mail, using my contact info on page 2 of *Echoes*, and at the Leadership tab from our www.306bg.us home-page.

ALERT me please to changes in contact information for you and your WWII generation members. As the Queen reminded Brits in April, echoing Vera Lynn’s WWII song, stay safe and take care until “We’ll meet again.” ■

306th BGHA Board of Directors – 2020 / 2021



Donation Update:

Your Dollars Sustain the 306th BGHA Mission

Because the 306th BGHA does not charge membership dues, your tax-deductible donations are needed to support the continuing education mission of our organization. Donations may be made online at www.306bg.us or by mailing to the Treasurer at the address on the form below. Many thanks to those of you who have donated so far in 2020. As of April 15, a total of \$2746 has been received from 43 different donors.

Memorial Donations

Thus far in 2020, 4 donations in memory of 306th veterans and members of our 306th family have been received totaling \$222. Please consider this very meaningful way of honoring the memory of a veteran or other person who has been part of the 306th family by noting it on the memo line of your check or as a notation when using PayPal.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of March 27, 2020

Included in this legislation were provisions that may change your charitable donations this year, even if you take the standard deduction. The CARES Act allows for up to \$300 per taxpayer (\$600 for a married couple) in an above-the-line deduction for charitable gifts made in 2020 and claimed on taxes in 2021. If you itemize deductions, the CARES Act increases the existing cap on charitable cash contributions, raising it from 60% of adjusted gross income to 100% in 2020. Please talk with your tax accountant to learn more.

All donations are extremely important to the continuing education mission of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and are greatly appreciated!

**DONATION FOR THE
306TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

Make checks payable to:
306th Bomb Group Historical Association

Send to:
Jennifer Mindala, Treasurer
3244 S. Lamar St.
Denver, CO 80227-5426

Name

By initialing here (_____), I confirm this current contact information should be used for my FREE 2020 Membership registration/renewal.

Address

eMail:

Telephone Number(s): _____

This donation is being made in memory of:

Name: _____ **Relationship to 306th** _____

Date



46th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Holiday Inn Memphis Airport & Conference Center

October 21-25, 2020

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

STOP!

◇ RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM FIRST!

The reunion hotel has a liberal cancellation policy—in the event you are unable to attend the reunion, you will be able to cancel your reservation without penalty within 48 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room reservation, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available at the reunion hotel. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that our vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee.

Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.

◇ COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out the registration form completely.

- ⇒ Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag—and for any others registering with you. The principle attendee **MUST** be a current member of the Society to register for the reunion. You may **JOIN** and/or **RENEW** directly on the registration form. If you are a WWII veteran, and/or affiliated with a bomb or fighter group, please indicate which group.
- ⇒ ALL lunches and dinner meals are priced separately—Breakfast buffet is complimentary beginning Thursday, Oct 21st—Sunday, Oct 25th. Be sure and select your entrée if you plan on attending the Saturday evening gala.
- ⇒ There are three [3] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information [here in this issue] on each tour and then make your selection on the form.

◇ MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Once you have completed your registration form, please total up the amount owed and include a check, money order, or complete the credit card information on the form, payable to the 8th AFHS and mail to:

8th AFHS
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769

Or you may **SCAN** your registration form [*if paying by credit card*] and **EMAIL** to:
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL registration forms **MUST** be received by **September 25, 2020** in order to guarantee your place. If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact:

Debra Kujawa
Managing Director
8th AFHS
912-748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL reunion information and forms are available on our website: 8thAFHS.org



46th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION
Holiday Inn Memphis Airport & Conference Center
October 21-25, 2020

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION
(800) 465-4329 or (901) 332-1130 Front Desk
or ONLINE registration on our website: 8thafhs.org
(Reference 'AFH' for group rate)

Location

The Holiday Inn Memphis Airport & Conference Center is located at 2240 Democrat Road, Memphis, TN 38132. It features the 'Corridor Restaurant', a full service bar, and a sundry shop for snacks and necessities. We are located just two [2] miles from Elvis Presley's iconic Graceland, seven [7] miles from the North Mississippi Shopping District, 6.5 miles to Downtown Memphis famous Beale St., and twelve [12] miles from West Memphis Arkansas's Southland Gaming and Dog Racing. We are a short drive from the Cooper Young and Overton Square nightlife district and fine restaurants. The Staxx Museum, National Civil Rights Museum, Orpheum Theatre, and Bass Pro's Pyramid, are all within an 8 mile drive. The Memphis Zoo is just 10 minutes away, the Brooks Art Museum and Botanical Gardens are all a 'must see' during your visit to Memphis!

Shuttle Service

For those of you flying into Memphis, there is complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport to the hotel. After you collect your bags, go to Pole 16 just outside—the shuttle runs every half hour. You are welcome to call the hotel directly regarding the shuttle: (901) 332-1130.

Upscale Amenities

Enjoy complimentary wireless High Speed Internet in all public areas, plus signature amenities you'll only find at Holiday Inn. Wake up energized after a restful night's sleep in any of our recently refurbished rooms. Stay connected in our lobby's business center. Stay fit with a visit to our well-equipped fitness center. **Parking is always complimentary.**

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Group Name: AFH 8th Air Force Historical Society
Reunion Dates: October 21-25, 2020
Rate: \$110+8.5%+\$2.00 Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.
Cut off Date: 9/15/2020
Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

ScootAround: (888) 441-7575 or ScootAround.com

HOSPITALITY SUITES

Once again this year, the 8th AFHS is pleased to announce that we are again offering HOSPITALITY SUITES to groups at NO CHARGE. The number of suites is limited, so we ask that you reserve your suite as soon as possible. Suites are located in close proximity to one another and most are large enough for two or more groups to share space.

In order to guarantee your suite, please call or email ASAP:

Debra Kujawa
Managing Director
912-748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org



46th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Holiday Inn Memphis Airport Reunion, Memphis, TN

October 21-25, 2020

Wednesday, October 21

1:00pm — 6:00pm

Reunion Registration open

306th BGHA/SSMA Hospitality Room Setup

6:00pm — 7:00pm

Complimentary Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own 8th AFHS

7:00pm — 9:00pm

Board Meeting

7:00pm — until?

Bomb Group Hospitality Suites open throughout reunion

Thursday, October 22

7:30am — 8:30am

Complimentary Breakfast

8:00am — 12:00pm

Reunion Registration open

9:15am — 1:30pm

Historic Memphis (City Tour)*

1:00pm — 6:00pm

Reunion Registration open

1:30pm — 3:00pm

306th BGHA Board Meeting

2:00pm — 3:00pm

Curator's Corner

3:15pm — 5:00pm

"Honoring the Memories"— Speaker pending

6:00pm — 9:00pm

Cash Bar Open

7:00pm — 9:00pm

Buffet dinner and program: **"Legacy of the 8th"**— 8th AF Commanding General

Friday, October 23

7:30am — 8:30am

Complimentary Breakfast

8:00am — 12:00pm

Reunion Registration open

8:00am — 9:15am

Bomb Group Meeting

9:30am — 12:30pm

"Ye Olde Pub — 817" (Olive Branch Airport)*

306th BGHA Folded Wings Ceremony

1:00pm — 6:00pm

Reunion Registration open

1:45pm — 3:00pm

"Downed Behind Enemy Lines—Escape & Evasion"— Lynn David

3:15pm — 4:30pm

Q & A WWII Vets

6:00pm — 9:00pm

Cash Bar Open

7:00pm — 8:15pm

306th BGHA/SSMA Rendezvous Dinner — Hospitality Room

8:15pm — 9:00pm

306th BGHA/SSMA Guest Speaker #1 — Hospitality Room

7:00pm — 8:15pm

306th BGHA/SSMA Guest Speaker #2 — Hospitality Room

Saturday, October 24

7:30am — 8:30am

Complimentary Breakfast

8:00am — 12:00pm

Reunion Registration open

8:45am — 10:15am

306th BGHA General Membership Meeting

12:00pm — 4:00pm

8th AFHS Board Meeting

12:00pm — 4:00pm

"Graceland Tour"*

1:00pm — 6:00pm

Reunion Registration open

6:00pm — 9:00pm

Cash Bar Open

7:00pm — 10:00pm

Gala Dinner and Program

Sunday, October 25

7:30am — 8:30am

Complimentary Breakfast

***It is important that you be in the bus boarding area at least ten [10] minutes prior to the scheduled departure times.**

All tours require a minimum of 45 participants, unless otherwise stated.

Driver and Staff gratuities ARE included in the tour prices.



REGISTRATION FORM
46th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION
 Holiday Inn Memphis Airport, Memphis, TN
 October 21-25, 2020

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS September 30, 2020	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
<u>DUES</u>			
The principal attendee <i>MUST</i> be a member of the 8th AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are NOT a CURRENT member, please pay your yearly dues here:	\$ 40	#	\$
<u>REGISTRATION FEE</u>			
Registration fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel:	\$ 30	#	\$
<u>BOX LUNCHES</u>			
Box lunches will be available from the hotel to attendees on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. You MUST PREORDER THEM HERE! Please indicate # of each kind of sandwich per day: HAM or TURKEY Thurs: Ham ___ or Turkey ___ Fri: Ham ___ or Turkey ___ Sat: Ham ___ or Turkey ___	\$ 18	#	\$
<u>DINNERS</u>			
Thursday, Oct 22 — EVENING DINNER BUFFET Memphis Style favorites	\$ 27	#	\$
Friday, Oct 23—RENDEZVOUS DINNER Chicken Marsala	\$ 29	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 24—GALA BANQUET (Please select ONE entrée)			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce	\$ 34	#	\$
Pan Seared Salmon with White Wine Beurre Blanc	\$ 34	#	\$
Vegetarian plate(s) Please indicate [X]: Thurs ___ # ___ Fri ___ # ___ Sat ___ # ___	\$ 29	#	\$
<u>TOUR OPTIONS:</u>			
Thursday, Oct 22: Historic Memphis Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 46	#	\$
Friday, Oct 23: Tour of “Ye Olde Pub” B17—Lunch on your own	\$ 26	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 24: Graceland Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 98	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

Please PRINT. If registering a WWII veteran here, please list their name first.

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): _____

WWII Veteran ___ BG/FG Affiliation (for Rendezvous Dinner seating): _____ POW: ___ (Korea, Vietnam, etc.): _____

SPOUSE or PERSON attending: _____

ADDITIONAL GUESTS: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PH #: _____ EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PH #: _____

PLEASE INDICATE ANY PHYSICAL OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: _____

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD —M/C; VISA; or AmEx (a 3% convenience fee will be added):

CARD #: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ *Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.*

MAIL completed form with check or credit card info to: 8th AFHS ~ 68 Kimberlys Way ~ Jasper, GA 30143-4769

IF paying by credit card, you may SCAN and email form to: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

A Penny's Contribution to the War Effort

It may be only a penny; it is the least valuable standard of financial exchange used in the United States. Still, it had a significant impact on World War II materiel.

Nicknamed the wartime cent, the steel war penny, and the steelie, the 1943 penny was a response to the wartime need of copper for use in ammunition and other military equipment during World War II.

According to an article written on the history of the 1943 steel cent, from 1909 to 1942, the Lincoln head penny was composed of 95% copper and 5% tin and zinc. However, prior to the United States' entry into the war, rumors abounded regarding the status of the penny and the nickel. The 75% copper content of the nickel made its alloy subject to modification. Copper was in high demand by defense contractors in the manufacturing process of various supplies and equipment that would be necessary if the United States went to war.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Treasury Department began investigating various methods of limiting dependence and meet conservation goals on copper usage.

Experiments were conducted using various metal compositions, fibers, plastics, and even glass. The initial outcome from the analysis was published in late January 1942, when the Treasury ordered the removal of all but a trace of tin from the penny. It was estimated that this small change would save 100,000 pounds of tin from the pennies minted in 1942. As experiments continued, various fabrication methods and designs were proposed since actual Lincoln cent dies could not leave government custody. As experiments continued, production of bronze cents (copper + tin and zinc), was cut back drastically in July 1942 and totally ceased in December.

Despite this alteration of the coin's metal composition, demands for resources for the production of equipment needed for war were increasing. A campaign was launched to encourage the public to turn in their pennies and nickels, but shortages continued. Silver dollars were melted down. By the end of 1942, Public law 77-815 was enacted, which called for the authorization of metal

substitutes for the penny and nickel. The nickel had already undergone a metallic content change to include more silver in the chemical make-up of the coin. On 18 December 1942, Congress gave the Mint authorization to change the composition of the one-cent coin for three years.



Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, ordered that all pennies minted commencing 1 January 1943, should be comprised of low-carbon steel coated with zinc. This alloy composition caused the new coins to

be magnetic and lighter than the Lincoln head penny designed by Victor D. Brenner that had been in use since 1909.

The composition of the unconventional penny was 99% steel with a thin layer of zinc, which was supposed to prevent rust. The coins were struck at all three mints: Denver, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. It took some time to produce sufficient planchets, a plain metal prepared disk shape blank in which the coin image is struck or pressed. Production finally commenced on 23 February 1943 at the Philadelphia Mint; Denver and San Francisco Mints began production the following month.

Problems began to arise from the new coinage once released for widespread public usage. The unfamiliar minted coins were often mistaken as dimes.

Magnets, which were placed in vending machines to rule out the acceptance of steel slugs, now began picking up the legitimate steel coin. Because the rate of exchange for a penny was significantly higher than it is today, this generated a considerable outcry from the masses. Complaints poured into the Treasury Department regardless of their assurance the coin, after being in circulation for a while, would take on a character of its own, giving it a distinct appearance. As the 1943 steel pennies circulated, the zinc coating started to turn dark gray, almost black. If it was in circulation long enough, the zinc coating completely wore off, and the steel beneath would start to show. When exposed to moisture, the penny would begin to corrode and rust.



Hatred for the 1943 steel cent was so rampant, the Treasury Department was forced to develop a different process for minting the penny. This time the chemical composition included combining salvaged brass shell casings augmented with pure copper to produce an alloy close to the 1941-1942 penny's composition. In the fall of 1943, the Treasury announced that no steel cents would be minted after 31 December 1943.

By the end of 1943, the Mint facilities had produced 1,093,838,670 of the one-cent coins.

In that period of time, the copper released for the war effort equated to 3 cruisers, 2 destroyers, 1,243 flying fortresses, 120 field guns, and 120 howitzers – or enough for 1.25 million shells for the big field guns.*

From 1944 thru 1946, what became known as the shell-case cents, were produced. At the same time, it was announced there would be no recall of the steel penny.

After the war, the Treasury Department made a concerted effort to withdraw the steel penny from circulation. This operation was in force for the next 20 years.

Although not a publicized endeavor, coins were returned to the Treasury as a normal course of business. Efforts to quietly retire these steel pennies from circulation were futile, although no public admission was made until 1959. The decision stemmed from fear the coins would be hoarded, a supposition that has been realized. Mint records indicate approximately 930 million remain in circulation.

After 1946, the pre-war composition of the penny was resumed at 95% copper and 5% zinc and tin; this amalgam existed until 1962 when tin was removed from the metallic compound.

Although the Lincoln steel cent was issued for only one year at the height of World War II, it freed up precious copper for America's war effort. The efforts on the part of Americans is another example of dedication to aiding the Allies and winning the war. ■

* Statistics obtained from an article entitled, *The History of the 1943 Steel Cent*.

From the Webmaster:



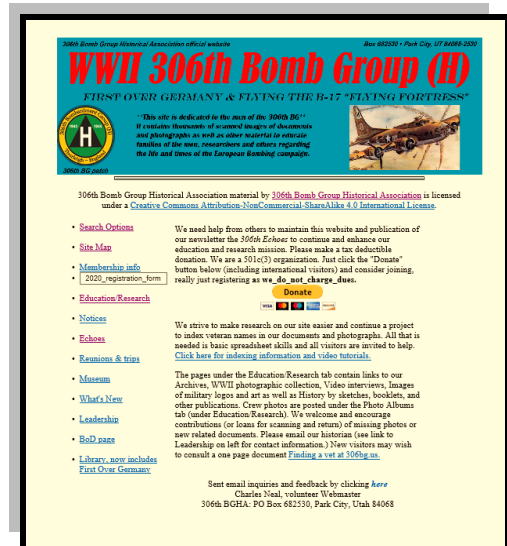
306th BGHA Website News

Charles Neal, Webmaster

The 306th BGHA website advances our education mission. It helps our 306th family and other researchers around the

world and is how the actions and voices of our veterans continue to be known and heard.

Exciting New Items Being Indexed: We have begun indexing over 1600 correspondence files. Many of these files are very interesting, especially when a vet writes of wartime experiences and mentions other vets. They can be compelling and of particularly significant interest to families of the referenced vet.



Thank You, Indexers: I thank everyone who has helped with indexing our collections. They have given thousands of hours of their time to honor 306th veterans. Consider becoming an indexer. In this time of social distancing, many of us have more time for such an activity. Our current indexers would welcome help as they consider the task we face. Today most people have adequate computer skills to do indexing. Click the link several lines beneath the donate button on our home page for information, instructions, and video tutorials. A special thanks to Cliff Deets, who has done approximately half of all indexing.

Indexing Progress (our database currently has approximately 125,000 indexing entries):

- Crew Photos – 100% complete
- Russell Strong index card file – 100% complete
- Correspondence files (correspondent-name only) – 100% complete

New –

- Vets mentioned within correspondence – 5% complete (estimate; unknown total number)
- Special Orders – (completed by Cliff Deets) 70% complete
- Videos of vets – 100% complete
- Alternate name file – over 1100 vets with the name spelled more than one way in WWII records
- Hero photo gallery (individual vets) – over 600 of an unknown number to be found
- Missing Air Crew Reports (completed by Pat DiGeorge) – 100% complete
- Daily Bulletins – 41% complete
- Histories (subject-vet name only) – 6% complete
- Recently identified vets (from indexing) – over 400 of an unknown number
- Obituaries – 600 of an unknown number

How Is Our Website Different? We have many thousands of original WWII items, and, as described above, we have made tremendous progress indexing and making pertinent documents findable, particularly for researchers looking for data regarding a veteran of interest.

Feedback & Response: We receive positive feedback from families and researchers around the world. Historian, Cliff Deets, and Secretary, Barbara Neal, have provided timely and individual help to many who have made inquiries via our website.

Got Stuff? We welcome documents, audio/video recordings, photos, individual histories, and other content pertinent to 306th vets and their activities, either donations or loans for scanning and return.

My Last Year: I have devoted countless volunteer hours designing and developing our website, creating databases, and touching every file and entry. I had no prior website experience and taught myself several coding languages in the process, writing over 500 scripts to create and provide the functionality of our website. I established policies and created the mechanisms and environment for our indexers. Given the described scope of the effort and that I am in my 70s, I must reduce my responsibilities and effort. I advised the board of directors in 2018 that this year would be my last. I started from scratch and hoped we could find another volunteer, but the hope is fading.

One option is to hire a contractor or a service, but funding is an issue.

By the end of the year, I expect we will have a very high percentage of our most essential items indexed and be a viable ‘near steady-state’ site. Hopefully, it will not be a static site as we post new editions of *Echoes*, and we occasionally receive missing WWII documents as well as more histories, photos, etc.

There remains more that could be done with our existing material. Without a significant financial gift or some other funding mechanism designated for the site, it may be necessary to seek another non-profit organization to adopt the site.

In **any** case, the Association needs to maintain a coordinator to handle web feedback and other non-technical aspects of the website. I will continue to work hard this year and am inspired by our volunteer indexers to make as much progress as possible; however, this will be my last year as your webmaster. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the website, you are encouraged to make them this year. ■

World War II Letters: From Love to “Dear John”



To the boys in the service during World War II, there was nothing more appreciated than a letter from home. Second only to food, letters were a lifeline to a type of normalcy that was desired once the war was over. It was a way to escape the rigors of the day and connect with loved ones – Mom, family, friends, that special someone. Letters quickly became the most important means of communication between families at home and their loved ones in the service overseas.

So many letters were written, the military post began having problems: military supply ships were swamped with bags of mail, taking up valuable cargo space for desperately needed war materials. To combat the lack of room for these morale-building letters, the V-mail system was developed by the American military postal exchange. For additional information regarding this cost- and space-saving process, refer to the Winter/Spring 2017 issue of *Echoes*.

It is the content of those letters that draw the focus of this article. Letters were a comfort, and mail was indispensable. It was a motivator for the troops. At roll call, they wanted their name announced over and over, signaling the number of letters they were receiving.



Letters from the World War II era, whether they be in family archives or housed in some museum

dedicated to the preservation of such artifacts, give profound insight into the mindset of the time. They are valuable resources that tell the story of the American experience during World War II in a very personal way. Each letter, whether it be from the home front or the battlefield, gives first-hand accounts of what life was like, what people thought about, what their concerns might be. These letters expressed hope and desires for the future.

In an article by Kim Guise, *Assistant Director for Curatorial Services* for the National World War II Museum, reports, “Correspondence offers the ideal expressions of the moment—the language of the time, jargon and military slang of World War II. They are time capsules in envelopes. Mail was an invaluable lifeline to those at home. The power that a simple letter had upon the morale of one in service is incomprehensible. In an age when immediate contact was impossible, waiting on the mail was a constant preoccupation. When one did not receive a letter, it was a constant source of worry. The mail itself is a very popular topic of correspondence, nearly every letter either promising to write soon or begging the recipient to write more often.



Letters offer the most intimate glimpses into personal relationships. Sometimes, it is not only what is on the page that is important; it is what the writer could not or did not want to convey that is truly meaningful. Often, letters exchanged during the war served to bring couples closer together. These letters can provide insight into their character as well as their relationship. When read today by a couples’ descendants, it is frequently possible to discern the romanticism penned in the lines of correspondence. Many wartime correspondents did not want to create anxiety for those back home or

for those serving. They tell of the everyday, they tell of ordinary meals eaten, letters received, and inquire about the health and safety of faraway loved ones. Rarely will they expose sentiments of fear, despair, or elements of danger. Only by reading between the lines can readers judge the true meaning or historical significance.”



It may seem ironic that some parents today worry about the underlying meaning behind acronyms they find their iPhone users are texting to their friends, but during World War II, some of those acronyms were a popular form of communicating. It is said that Winston Churchill received a World War I letter that said, “OMG” (Oh My God!). However, acronyms, in general, were popular forms of communication during World War II.

Many times, acronyms were used by couples trying to get their message across when the wartime mailing system did not allow for much space to communicate their intent. Because censors monitored the mail, ensuring there was no relaying of sensitive information, couples used romantic acronyms to be more discreet, knowing other people were reading their letters.

Although some acronyms were relatively mild, such as SWAK (Sealed With a Kiss) or SWALK (Sealed with a Loving Kiss), others were crude and sarcastic.

But not all letters were received with such exhilaration. One of the worst situations to happen to a young soldier was to be informed via letter that the relationship was ending. What became known as the “Dear John” letter would play upon the emotions since, being thousands of miles from home, there was nothing he could do about the situation. There is nothing more heart-wrenching than for a man to receive a “Dear John” letter from the woman he loves, the one woman in his life that,

when the war was over, he would return to, expecting to build a wonderful life together. Typically, the contents of the letter spoke of a need to end the relationship, and most of the time, infidelity was involved. The woman had often found another lover or wanted to proceed with her life for another reason. Absence did not make the heart grow fonder, but distance or lack of courage to confront the person face-to-face only exacerbated the situation.

Imagine a lonely soldier, far away from home, living with perilous circumstances, receiving that long-awaited letter, only to be greeted with the words “Dear John” (or whatever his name happened to be) and no endearments. It was not unusual for him to know what lay ahead, and that he had been jilted in favor of someone else.

There is some speculation over how the “Dear John” letters came to be labeled as such. Many people believe that is because “John” was the most common man’s name in the United States during the 1940s. No matter how the “Dear John” letter originated or got its name, it is one of the saddest things to be passed down from that time period.

While in a prison camp, Richard Huebotter never received any letters from home. Instead, it became a practice of other prisoners to share those letters that did find their way to the addressee. Many of these were “Dear John” letters, all of which reflected on the heartlessness of the writer penned to those living as POWs. To fill his time, Sgt. Huebotter copied some of the missives in a “blue book” found in care packages provided by the Red Cross or the YMCA.

- ✍ *Darling, you were reported missing in action for a month, so I got married.*
- ✍ *Darling, I just had a baby, but don't worry. The American officer is paying all the expenses and sending you cigarettes.*
- ✍ *I find it hard to live on your \$200 allotment.*
- ✍ *Dear John, When and if you get back, I'd like a divorce. I am living with a cadet in Santa Ana, and I'd like to marry him. He is a wonderful fellow, and I know you would like him.*
- ✍ *Consider our engagement off. I'd rather go out with a 1944 hero than a 1943 coward.*



Thurleigh Museum Notes:

The following is a compilation of the 306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter (No. 8 and a newsflash), which is published by Mike Dobson, editor of the England-based newsletter. Newsletters are available on the 306th BGHA website at the following link:

<http://306bgus.apollohosting.com/museum%20v3.htm>

306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter No.8 March 2020



“We will remember them”

Finally, for this somewhat brief Newsletter, I have to report the passing of two “Sheilas.” Firstly, Sheila Pope, a lifelong supporter of the Museum with a particular involvement in the “Wedding” section of the display, and secondly, my own dear wife who recently succumbed to the dreaded cancer. They will both live long in our thoughts.

Mike Dobson
14 March 2020



The Stars & Stripes was first formally raised over Thurleigh Airfield on 9 December 1942



Newsflash 16 March 2020

Friends, as with many organizations around the world, we at the Museum feel that it is our social responsibility to not open the Museum to the public until such a time in the future when any risk to health from coronavirus has vanished. A painful decision but absolutely the right one! Watch this space for any future changes of policy.

In Memoriam

Obituaries – Veteran death information should be submitted to the Secretary. Contact information is on page 2.

Bartz, Frederick C. (1208th Quartermaster Company), of Waupaca, WI, passed away 4 January 2020, at age 97. He worked for, and retired from, Kimberly-Clark after the war. In retirement he volunteered with the Waupaca Food Bank and was a member of the DAV and 8th AFHS. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, sons David and Steven, daughters Carol and Sara, four grandchildren and several great grandchildren.

Edwards, William R., asstant crew chief (367th), died 10 January 2020 in West Melbourne, FL, at the age of 100. Bill was a Mason, and after the War he worked for, and retired from, RCA. Surviving are stepsons Bruce Swango (wife Barbara), and David Swango (wife Sharon).

Gaydosh, John J., pilot (369th), of the greater Cleveland, OH, area, died 1 April 2020, at age 95. He attended Indiana State, Penn State, Miami of Ohio, and Kent State, earning a BA and a Master's in Education. He served many years as a high school principal and later worked as an Outpatient Counselor for the Cleveland Clinic. An active member of the 306th BGHA, he served three years on the board of directors. Surviving are daughter Carol Conway, son James J. Gaydosh, granddaughters Mary and Sarah, grandson John.

Groesbeck, Carl A., navigator (368th, Miles McCormack crew), POW, passed away in Wheaton, IL, 30 March 2020, recently celebrating his 101st birthday. His plane was shot down on 9 October 1943 targeting Gdynia, Poland, with Roy Ranck piloting and McCormack flying copilot, Carl having flown only two missions. He became a POW in Stalag Luft III. The Gdynia mission was one of the subject targets in the WWII USAAF film/documentary titled "Target for Today." After the War, he continued to serve, for a period as an instructor at O'Hare Field, eventually promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel. He later was Director of Marketing for Peoples Gas/Energy. He is survived by sons Carl, Chris and Jonathan, daughters Laura and Delia, and ten grandchildren.

Littlejohn, Rogers D., pilot (369th), of Lynden, WA, died 11 January 2011, age 97. He was first a pilot with the RCAF, then an RAF fighter pilot before joining the 306th, was reassigned from the 306th to the 415th Night Fighter Squadron, and went on to fly combat missions over North Africa and Sicily. He retired from the Air Force as a Lt. Colonel but would go back on active duty for the Korean War, flying F-82 Twin Mustang fighters (a twin fuselage version of the P-51) with the 52nd All Weather Fighter Group. He worked for New York Life Insurance and would later work as the Safety and Training Officer for the City of Madison, WI. At the time of his passing, surviving were wife, Susan, and son, Jeff Littlejohn.

Lockard, John M., pilot (423rd, Harold Fossum crew), passed away 14 October 2019, in Campbelltown, PA, at age 96. He was a computer systems analyst with Kayser-Roth Corp. after the War. He is survived by daughters Sandra, Sharon, half-sister Armyllis, five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

McChesney, Hardin Field, radio operator (369th, Kenneth Streun and Boylston Lewis crews), POW, age 98, passed away in Bowling Green, KY, 2 December 2019. He and pilot Boylston Lewis' aircraft was shot down on 14 February 1945 with "Field" becoming a POW in Stalag III. His original radio headset now resides in the American Air Museum, at Duxford, England. After the War he worked for various Governors of Kentucky, directing publicity for the state and eventually becoming the Chief Administrative Assistant to Governor Breathitt. He then worked for the aborted presidential campaign of Lyndon Johnson, staying on in Washington D.C. and joining the Veteran's Administration, holding numerous high-ranking positions including Assistant Director of Public Information and senior assistant to the Chief of Benefits Director. He is survived by half-siblings Rev. David McChesney, Susan Jensen, and Maria Kindell, and three generations of nieces and nephews.



306th Family:

Albertson, Peg, wife of 369th crew chief **Walter "Joe" Albertson**, WWII "Land Girl," passed away in January 2020 in Witchford, Ely, Cambridgeshire, England. War bride of Joe, Peg was an active member of the 306th BGHA, contributing many photos and film negatives to the Association's archives. Her wedding dress is on display at the **306th Museum** at Thurleigh

Foxworthy, John B., nephew of 367th togglier, Bertram Wilkins, friend and supporter of Ralph Franklin and the 306th Museum at Thurleigh, of Hondo, TX, passed away 28 October 2019. In addition to support of the 306th BGHA, he served with the Department of Defense and the Air Force in cyber intelligence and reconnaissance at Lackland AFB, San Antonio.

Pope, Sheila, of Keysoe, England (neighboring Thurleigh), passed away 29 February 2020. Longtime English associate of the **306th Museum** at Thurleigh and the 306th BGHA, she assisted the Franklins in creating the wedding display at the museum, coordinated the Keysoe part of the 306th reunion in England in 1992.



306th Bomb Group Historical Association Membership Registration Form 2020 Calendar Year

Print all information.

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ eMail: _____

Are **YOU** the 306th WWII Veteran? _____ If **YES**: Duty/Job Title: _____

Additional information (such as POW? Year born?) _____

If you have an interest in a particular WWII 306th Veteran, please complete the following about him:

I am not related to him. _____ **OR**: This 306th WWII Veteran is my (relationship): _____

Veteran's Name: _____ 306th Unit: _____

Duty/Job Title or Additional Information: _____

I am a World War II History Buff Author/Writer Researcher Other

Additional Information: _____

IF YOU ARE NOT of the WWII generation AND you want US MAIL copies of *ECHOES*, we request you consider a donation of a minimum of \$10/calendar year to cover cost of *ECHOES* printing and mailing.

Check: Payable to 306th Bomb Group Historical Association; on memo line write "2020 Echoes."
Please mail (with or without this form) your check to:

Jennifer Mindala, 306th BGHA Treasurer
3244 Lamar Street, Denver, CO 80227-5426

PayPal Donations can be made on-line at www.306bg.us using the yellow "Donate" button

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH

Membership Registration forms should be mailed (with or without a donation) to:

306th Bomb Group Historical Association
c/o Mr. Bruce Chase, Director of Membership
2324 Hatch Hill Rd, New Albany, PA 18833-8887

Each member will be placed on our membership list for the current calendar year only. We ask that you renew (free) each calendar year to confirm your continued interest in the 306th BGHA, and to ensure your email/mail and other contact information is current.

A free electronic version of the 306th *ECHOES*, our official publication, is available via www.306bg.us.



2020 Reunion

**306th Bomb Group Historical Association
and
Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association**

**In conjunction with
Eighth Air Force Historical Society**

Memphis, Tennessee

21 thru 25 October

See pages 16 thru 19 for detailed information!