



306th Echoes

Educating and Communicating



B-17 Flying Fortress

2022 Reunion Plans Announced



Plans are being laid for the 2022 reunion scheduled for Thursday, 5 May, and concluding after breakfast on Sunday, 8 May. We will have the opportunity to participate in two museum tours: one at the 390th Museum and the second at the Pima Air and Space Museums. Both adventures will be meaningful and inspiring.



Our base of operations will be the Embassy Suites Tucson East, where we will again have access to many amenities, including complimentary full breakfasts and evening cocktail hours.

At the Embassy Suites Hotel, you will be able to visit our historical displays in the 306th Hospitality Room, learn interesting and often-times unique stories and anecdotal accounts of wartime situations during our Veterans Roundtable discussions, and have an opportunity to listen to interesting guest speakers. Friday and Saturday nights, you can enjoy seated dinners. Saturday night's dinner will be

followed by an added bit of entertainment: The Manhattan Dolls Trio, singing 1940s music.



Below is just a sampling of information about the sights in which we anticipate you will want to take part.

The 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association (BGHA) will be joined by the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association (SSMA) to honor our veterans and spouses. We also hope to make new connections with the 390th Bomb Group as we will hear remarks from a speaker and member of the 390th Bomb Group. The 390th Museum will be the site of our traditional *Folded Wings Ceremony*.

(continued on page 7)



General Membership Meeting
3 October 2021
See page 4 for details

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SUE MOYER (exp. 2021)
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306th Museum Thurleigh

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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 to all 306th Bomb
Group Historical Association
members, families, and friends,

If there were a sainthood provided to Editors, our very own Nancy Huebotter would receive such honor. The daughter of WWII-era parents, her father served in the 306th, and her mom passed away this past spring. She carries with the tardy inclusion of our Board member columns, mine the last to make the press, as we endeavor to navigate the waters of a post-COVID world. Dear Nancy, we are eternally grateful for your service, love, and devotion to your parents, and to all veterans and their memory, and to this great nation where you continue to serve in a civilian defense capacity. Thank you and God bless you for caring for your mother as a genuinely devoted daughter and friend, and as a trusted partner in our simple band of volunteers who serve the mission of our association.

This past year has not been without its share of loss of our dear veterans and/or their partners. COVID and time have extolled its price, and we venture to pursue the mission of our association [and I paraphrase] to research and educate the public concerning the history of the 306th Bombardment Group, US Eighth Air Force, and disseminate information regarding the group, veterans, and the life and times of the European bombing campaign and time prior to de-activation. We endeavor to provide a central point of contact to facilitate communication between individuals who served in the 306th Bomb Group during its existence and those interested in furthering the goals of the association. We provide continuing education and camaraderie within the membership by promoting association reunions and other events.

Now that it appears that we have turned the corner on the COVID-19 pandemic here in the United States, we can carefully begin to plan for our next reunion in May of 2022. Our reunion committee has been working feverishly in creating an experience that is sure to please those fortunate enough to attend in Tucson, AZ. Please read further to see the details of this exciting development.

It's also exciting to note that our friend Dr. Vernon L. Williams has produced another documentary film, *From Ozark to Fortress Europe*, which premiered 21 July 2021 via his website: www.oldsegundo.com.

This documentary film traces the story of Colonel Thurman Shuller that begins on a modest farm near Ozark, Arkansas, and leads the young Thurman on a journey to a future in medicine and war. Along the way, he rises in the ranks of Army Air Force medical leadership. He influences policies at Eighth Air Force headquarters involving aircrew survival, tour limits, and improving conditions arising out of the "Maximum Effort" missions. This is his story.

Thurman Shuller was born in 1914 on a farm near Ozark, Arkansas. Nothing in his growing-up years gave a clue to his future as a flight surgeon in World War II, one who would make a difference in the lives of thousands of men who crewed the heavy bombers over Nazi-occupied Europe. In those early days on the farm, young Thurman learned the value of hard work and acquired the discipline of meeting new challenges head-on. Surrounded by his parents and five older brothers, Thurman grew up in a family committed to a profound work ethic and to education that would lead each brother to significant achievement and success in life.



Our friends from across the pond have faithfully pursued their duties in joining to preserve the honor and memory of the 306th from East Anglia. Our friend and comrade John Watson-Read laid a wreath with love and care at this year's Memorial Day commemoration at the American Cemetery at Cambridge. [see photos.] We treasure the mutual love and

devotion our friends from the UK demonstrate in the care and attention they pay in continuing Ralph Franklin's vision of maintaining a museum commemorating the 306th at Thurleigh.



306th BGHA UK Representative John Watson-Read pauses in the chapel at the American Cemetery in Cambridge before laying the commemorative wreath at this year's Memorial Day event.

Our 306th BGHA UK museum volunteer Mark Fussell reports: *"We are only open for appointments via our Facebook page, and we will always accommodate 306th relatives and veterans, but the museum is closed for casual walk-ins. The next milestone in the UK is the 19th of July, so we will see then if we open fully."* [Editor's note: For additional news from the Thurleigh Museum personnel, see article on page 20.]



We hope to see you in May 2022 in Tucson, and until then, stay safe, stay well, and God bless you.

Kevin Conant
306th BGHA President



MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULED

You are cordially invited to attend the upcoming Zoom Online General Membership Meeting of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association (BGHA). Using the information provided below, please join this virtual meeting, at which time we will bring you up-to-date with association activities.

Date: 3 October 2021

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 PM Pacific Time
3:00 – 4:00 PM Mountain Time
4:00 – 5:00 PM Central Time
5:00 – 6:00 PM Eastern Time

Meeting ID: 369 418 7901
Passcode: Aspen

One tap mobile
+16699009128,,3694187901#,,,,*790850# US (San Jose)
+13462487799,,3694187901#,,,,*790850# US (Houston)

Dial by your location
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+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)



Meeting ID: 369 418 7901
Passcode: 790850
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3694187901>



Historical Fiction: An Aide to Understanding World War II

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

I am a confessed bibliophile or bookworm. As an individual who loves books and reads as much as possible, I am “hooked on books.” For those of you who have read my column in the past, I do like to share with you the book title with a short synopsis of books I have recently read and you might enjoy reading.

As I have pointed out in the past, my favorite genres include histories, biographies, and historical fiction. In this column, I will point you toward historical fiction.

Historical fiction with an underlying theme of World War II is having a resurgence, and publishers say they see special interest in books set during this period. Recently, as I took a stroll down the book aisle at Costco, I found a minimum of three books whose story is impacted by World War II. And a scan through Amazon will reveal several more enticing titles.

For those writers of historical fiction novels, a balance of research and creativity is essential. While it often includes real people and events, the genre offers a fiction writer many opportunities to tell a wholly unique story.

Historical novels expose the reader to people’s inner lives across time and place, and in doing so, illuminate history’s untold stories, allowing the reader to experience a more complex truth.

Who hasn’t contemplated what Grandma or Grandpa might have said about an event or a circumstance? Reading history allows us to understand what happened, but reading historical fiction will enable us to be moved by what happened. It allows readers to step inside the minds of those who have shaped the world we live in and to imagine the all-too-human side of history.

In my own family, my grandmother, who was divorced from my grandfather in 1942, never told

Grandpa that my father had been shot down over Germany, had been captured, and was listed as a Prisoner of War (POW). I can read the history of the time, read about the prison camps, and read about what was happening in the United States. I can even read personal accounts from men who had faced similar circumstances as my father. But that does not answer the questions: “Why Grandma? What was your motivation? What emotions were in play when you made the decision not to share the information?” Everything I learn from my reading can give some credence to the idea that Grandma was in denial or that she wanted to protect family members from the frightening truth or for any other myriad of reasons.

Historical fiction helps us, as readers, learn the truth about actual life events. It introduces us to people with differing points of view, shows how they did or did not work through those differences, and the consequences of those decisions. It reveals the complexities of life. It enables past events to come alive in a more attractive and personal way. And finally, it encourages empathy.

Authors of historical fiction are committed to building their story on a firm foundation of factual, credible evidence. Failure to do so, in all likelihood, leaves us with a book that does not merit our attention. An author’s passion for the subject and dedication to research and accuracy of the story only serves to draw us in. Information in historical fiction must be correct and verifiable. Emphasis should be placed on the need for authenticity in setting, plot, characters, dialogue, and conflict. If any one of these critical elements fails to uphold the story, then the story will fail to impact the reader.

An essential element of historical fiction is that it is set in the past and pays attention to the manners, social conditions, and other details of the depicted period. Authors also frequently choose to explore notable historical figures in these settings, allowing readers to better understand how these individuals might have responded to their environments.

How many of you remember sitting in history classes, compelled to memorize names, dates, and places? Today's students are not that much different than you or me. We all want to understand why it is crucial to know or understand this data and why it is relevant. Teachers and parents can encourage putting history into perspective for

students at all levels in their education by encouraging them to read historical fiction. It provides a solid and valuable means of learning history by, simply stated, making history matter, bringing dates, people, and facts to life, and giving young students food for thought and multiple perspectives on people and events. From a curriculum rich in literature, the student is encouraged to discern fact from fantasy, and quite possibly, the information learned while reading historical fiction books can create a context for reading today's news.

Let me share with you only one book I recently read. Entitled *The Last Bookshop in London, A Novel of World War II* by Madeline Martin, this story is inspired by the true World War II history of a few bookshops to survive the Blitz. The novel's premise centers on a young woman who, in August 1939, moves to London, but bunkers and blackout curtains are not what she expected. Grace landed a job at a dusty old bookshop, again, not what she anticipated. Through blackouts and air raids as the Blitz intensifies, Grace discovers the power of storytelling to unite her community in ways she never dreamed – a force that triumphs over even the darkest nights of the war. She volunteers as an air raid warden. The description of those duties provides an element that gives a glimpse into the horrors of war and the damages and deaths Londoners suffered by the relentless nightly bombings by the Germans. A devastating attack leaves the libraries and shops of London's literary center in ruins.

Miraculously, Grace's bookshop survives the firestorm. Through blackouts and air raids, Grace continues running the shop, discovering a newfound comfort in the power of words and storytelling that unites her community in ways she never imagined – a force that triumphs over even the darkest nights of war-torn London.

I challenge you to expand your reading library to include works of historical fiction, which undoubtedly will supplement what authors have already contributed to your reading of narrative history. The richness of such works will undoubtedly add to your understanding of the past. Blending stories into a study of time gone by turns the past into a dynamic history. ■

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 embed 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 7 January 2022



2022 Reunion Plans

(continued from page 1)

A full day at the Pima Air and Space Museum, which boasts a variety of planes and displays to capture our interest, will no doubt be a highlight of the trip. This museum is a must-see; it encompasses six indoor exhibit hangars (three dedicated to WWII).



The 390th Bomb Group Museum

Based in Parham, England, the 390th Bombardment Group (H) flew 301 combat missions against German military targets. It played an essential role in many missions now recognized as key to winning WWII, such as D-Day, Schweinfurt, and the raid on Berlin. During the attack on Munster on 10 October 1943, they helped battle the greatest concentration of enemy fighters ever encountered on an 8th Air Force mission. The men of the 390th shot down sixty-two German planes while losing eight of their own eighteen aircraft that day. It also participated in lesser-known humanitarian missions in which the B-17 was utilized to drop supplies and food



Lunch time guest speaker Col. Richard Bushong, pilot of *Belle O' the Brawl*, a 390th Bombardment Group plane, will share the story of his final mission to Augsburg, Germany.

The 390th Bomb Group Museum has comprehensive and compelling exhibits that provide insight into the B-17's important role in the Allied

Victory in Europe. Their collections span the 390th Bomb Group operations spectrum and include over 80,000 documents, photographs, and artifacts.



Sea Planes and Amphibians — Many early aircraft were designed to take off and land on water. This feature allowed areas with access to coasts and rivers to receive air service without the need for expensive airports. Seaplanes and amphibians remain vital in many areas of the world today where the infrastructure does not support conventional land-based aircraft. In this exhibit, you will see aircraft and artifacts related to the history of seaplanes from the 1920s to the present.

Aerial Reconnaissance — The first military use for an aircraft was reconnaissance, and it has remained a vital role for both military and civil aviation today. This exhibit displays cameras, equipment, and aircraft used in aerial reconnaissance dating from World War II to the SR-71.

Submarine Hunting — Aircraft is one of the deadliest enemies faced by submarines. This exhibit displays the weapons, sensors, and aircraft used to hunt and kill submarines from World War II to the present.

Arizona Aviation — This exhibit, installed to celebrate the Centennial of the State of Arizona, displays artifacts from a century of aviation in the state.

Aircraft Carriers — Centered around the museum's Grumman F-14 Tomcat, you will see examples of some of the tools and equipment used on the flight deck of a modern aircraft carrier and view a video taken aboard the USS *Kitty Hawk* in 1980 featuring the very same F-14.

Air War in Southeast Asia — Artifacts, audio recordings, videos, and the iconic Huey helicopter illustrate the airpower used during the Vietnam War.

Great Paper Airplane Project — On 21 March 2012, the Pima Air & Space Museum flew the world’s largest paper airplane, named Arturo’s Desert Eagle. This exhibit details the first Great Paper Airplane Fly-off, its winner, the design and production team, and the plane’s flight through artifacts, photos, and a documentary video. The project lives on via the annual Great Paper Airplane Fly-off. Visit greatpaperairplane.org for more information.

Women in Flight – The Joyce M. Corrigan Women in Flight Gallery examines women’s contributions in many aspects of aviation including, military, commercial, and civil aviation, through artifacts, videos, and photographs. Artifacts include extensive collections of military and commercial airline uniforms worn by women from around the world. The museum’s Beech Bonanza and Lear 23, formerly owned and flown by women, highlight the exhibit and provide a central focus around which the rest of the exhibition is placed.

Reunion Registration Form

The 2022 Reunion registration form will be posted on the 306th BGHA website (www.306bg.us) at a later date. Information regarding its availability will be publicized in the Secretary’s monthly eMail.

Hotel Reservations



Due to the limited number of rooms available, you are encouraged to make your hotel reservations as soon as possible.

You can make your hotel room arrangements directly with the Embassy Suites Tucson East, 6555 E Speedway Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85710. or by accessing the following link:

<https://group.embassysuites.com/306thBombGroupMilitaryReunion>

Or you may call 520-721-7100 to use the block of rooms reserved for the 306th Bomb Group Military Reunion.

Hotel Amenities include:

- Complimentary daily restaurant breakfast with made-to-order omelets and eggs for hotel guests
- Complimentary evening reception with an assortment of beverages and snacks for hotel guests
- Complimentary parking
- Complimentary Wi-Fi in guestrooms and meeting space

Hotel Features include:

- Freshly renovated, all-suite property with an on-site restaurant, business center, fitness center, and an oversized pool perfect for swimming laps, or a picturesque courtyard in which to relax after a day of meetings
- On-site restaurant and bar open for meals, snacks or nightcap and Room Service
- State-of-the-art Fitness Center
- On-site laundry facility
- Refrigerators, microwaves, and safes large enough for a 15” laptop in every guestroom

Rooms for our event have been secured at \$139.00 per night for two queen beds or one king.

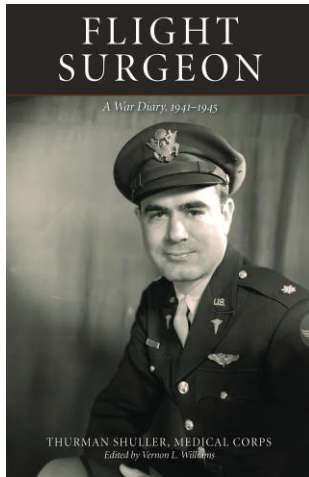
- 12.05% room tax and \$4.00 occupancy tax are not included
- Room rate is for single or double occupancy. There will be an additional \$15.00 per person charge for a third or fourth person in the room

If all rooms are booked when you contact the hotel to make your reservations, you may use your AAA membership benefits. Your cost increases by only \$10.00 per night.

We have had a long separation, and I’m sure we are all ready to celebrate and take pleasure in visiting with each other once again. The 306th Board of Directors and I look forward to seeing you.

Debbie Hopper Conant
2022 Reunion Chairperson

306th's Flight Surgeon's War Diary Published

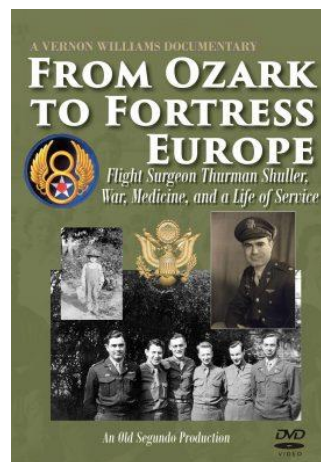


Colonel Thurman Shuller's war diary traces his story from Las Vegas Army Airfield in the summer of 1941 to the desperate days of the air war in Europe. The group surgeon character in the motion picture *Twelve O'Clock High* was based on Shuller during his time as Group Surgeon of the famed 306th Bomb Group at Thurleigh, England,

where he struggled with finding medical solutions for high altitude frostbite, oxygen deprivation, combat fatigue, and a growing crisis of hopelessness among the air crews. Shuller campaigned for setting the maximum number of missions for air crews to fly in a combat tour and argued for the elimination of "Maximum Effort" missions that forced them back to base from furloughs and passes.

Shuller's diary brings his wartime experience back to life. His descriptions of the journey across the North Atlantic in the nose of a B-17 Flying Fortress are vivid and personal. His accounts about life among the British during the war bring a fresh look at the air war as it emerged from the pleasant meadowlands of East Anglia.

Edited by Dr. Vernon Williams at the request of the Shuller family, the diary was a privately written journal. Dr. Shuller recognized the value of his frank and private discussions with himself, and according to information disclosed in the preface of the book, "sometimes his candid and forthright notations about specific people and events could be hurtful to those individuals or their families. He wanted to wait until all the principals were no longer living. His careful and deliberate protection of them was a reflection of his character and the kindness that dominated his life." The Shuller family was committed to ensuring the diary was preserved and available for future generations to read.



career, is comprised of an oral history interview conducted in 2005, and later annotated by additional communications. The documentary highlights Shuller's quest to find medical solutions for high



altitude frostbite, oxygen deprivation, combat fatigue, and a campaign for setting the maximum number of missions for air crews.

Vernon Williams, a friend and ardent supporter of the 306th BGHA, is a military historian and director of the East Anglia War Project. William's writing and documentary

films record the stories of ordinary people who did extraordinary things in American military history. Williams edited the Shuller war diary, bringing the surgeon's journey to life as part of a much larger story of the war.

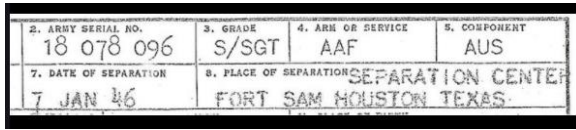
Flight Surgeon: A War Diary, 1941-1945 is available from www.amazon.com.

The book, along with the film entitled, *From Ozark to Fortress Europe* can be ordered from Old Segundo Productions at www.oldsegundo.com/product/flight-surgeon/.

Royalties for the book are being donated to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force (www.mightyeighth.org).



Taking the Mystery Out of Military Service Numbers



Initially, when beginning a search for information on a World War II veteran, the researcher may encounter what is known as a Military Serial Number or a Service Number. The United States Army used these numbers from 1918 until 1969.

Before this time, the Army relied on muster rolls to index enlisted service members. At the same time, officers were usually listed on early rolls maintained by the United States War Department. When the US Army began issuing numbers, one of the primary goals was to avoid intermixing records of people with the same surname and given name.

Analysis of the number itself can yield information about the person. All branches of the Service used a military serial number as the identifying number for military personnel. Today, the military uses the person’s Social Security number as the identifying number.

For this article, the focus will be on deciphering Army and Army Air Forces military service numbers.

Historically, Service Numbers were first created in 1918, when the United States Army was becoming involved in World War I, and there was a need for a record-keeping system to keep track of the millions of soldiers joining the ranks of the Army.

In 1940, when it was apparent the United States would be involved in yet another major conflict, a significant expansion of the service number system was necessary. The original concept was to continue with the already established service number system; however, the Army elected to develop a new numbering scheme, which would start with 10 000 000 and extended to 19 999 999. A subset of this series was reserved solely for those who had enlisted from recruiting stations outside of the 48 contiguous states. The first number after the first digit (referred to as the “10” digit) would indicate the geographical region from which a

person had enlisted. The remaining numbers were an identification number for the soldier.

It is important to note that service numbers beginning with 8 000 000 were reserved for female Army personnel; 9 000 000 numbers were never used.

Knowing the history behind a serial number can be of great importance when determining when a veteran entered the Service. Service Commands, which consisted of regions and several states, issued numbers to enlisted personnel. A serial number can also be a clue as to the year a person entered the Service. Men who joined the Army of the United States have eight-digit numbers beginning with “1,” the second indicating the Service Command. Deciphering service numbers for men who enlisted in the Army in the United States became relatively easy. This explanation should give some guidance on how the service numbers were issued.

The 11 000 000 through 19 999 999 series were issued to enlisted personnel who had enlisted within the contiguous United States and the Alaskan territory. The second number was determined by what group of states from which the individual was recruited. The next group of numbers were identifying numbers for the service member. For each geographical area, a range of 999,999 service identification numbers were available. The geographic codes were as follows:

11	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
12	Delaware, New Jersey, New York
13	Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia
14	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
15	Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia
16	Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin
17	Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming
18	Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma Texas
19	Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

Those drafted by the Army were issued service numbers in the 30 million range. Service numbers ranged from 30 000 000 to 39 999 999. Once again, as with the enlisted services members, the first two numbers correspond to a geographical area from where a person had been drafted, and the last six digits were a personal identifier. The geographic codes were as follows:

30	This code was reserved for those who had been drafted from outside the United States (i.e., Panama and Puerto Rico)
31	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
32	Delaware, New Jersey, New York
33	Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia
34	Alabama, Florida, Georgia Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
35	Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia
36	Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin
37	Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming
38	Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
39	Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

During World War II, the Army used prefixes to designate service members further:

O	Used by Regular Army officer
T	Used by flight officers appointed from an enlisted status
W	Used by Regular Army Warrant Officers

Army and Army Air Corp Officers

20,000 – 99,999	1935 – 1964
100,000 – 124,000	1921 – 1941
125,000 – 499,000	1921 – 1941
500,000 – 799,999	1942 – 1954
800,000 – 999,999	1921 – 1969
1,000,000 – 2,999,999	1942 - 1954

Army and Army Air Corp Enlisted

10,000,000 – 10,999,999	1940 – 1969
11,000,000 – 11,142,500	1940 – 1945
11,142,501 – 11,188,000	1946 – 1948
12,000,000 – 12,242,000	1940 – 1945
12,242,001 – 12,321,000	1946 – 1948
13,000,000 – 13,197,500	1940 – 1945
14,000,000 – 14,204,500	1940 – 1945
14,204,501 – 14,300,770	1946 – 1948
15,000,000 – 15,201,000	1940 – 1945
15,201,000 – 15,280,500	1946 – 1948
16,000,000 – 16,201,500	1940 – 1945
16,201,501 – 16,307,000	1946 – 1948
17,000,000 – 17,183,500	1940 – 1945
17,183,501 – 17,254,500	1946 – 1948
18,000,000 – 18,247,100	1940 – 1945
18,247,101 - 18,360,800	1946
19,000,000 – 19,235,500	1940 – 1945
19,235,501 – 19,324,485	1946 – 1948
11,000000 – 19,999,999	1940 – 1969
30,000,000 – 39,999,999	1940 – 1946
40,000,000 – 46,999,999	1943 – 1946
90,000,000 – 99,999,999	1940 - 1945

Referring to the tables provided, here are examples for determining the place and time the individual became a military member.

Examples:

16113858 – Regular Army enlistee who entered the Service from Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin. The serial number was issued between 1940 and 1945.

O-759675 – Officer who entered the Service between 1942 and 1954.

36172689 – Regular Army draftee who entered the Service through the Selective Service System from Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin. The serial number was issued between 1940 and 1946.

Some of the more famous veterans of the United States Army have held the following service numbers.

O-1	John J. Pershing	Army officer numbers were issued by seniority and entry date into the Army officer corps. Pershing was issued the first officer number.
O-57	Douglas MacArthur	During World War II were assigned service numbers based on when they joined the officer corps.
O-2605	George S. Patton	
O-3822	Dwight Eisenhower	
O-565390	Clark Gable	
32 694 076	Burt Lancaster	Drafted by Selective Service between 1940 and 1946 from Delaware, New Jersey, or New York
33 455 116	William Windom	Drafted by Selective Service between 1940 and 1946 from Maryland, Pennsylvania, or Virginia
35 756 363	Don Knotts	Drafted by Selective Service between 1940 and 1946 from Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, or West Virginia

To the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association families who may be commencing a research project, there are three primary resources for finding the service number: Enlistment Records, Discharge Papers, and Dog Tags (usually the third line on the tag). A secondary resource, and certainly one that should not be overlooked, is the Russell Strong Card File, located on the 306th BGHA website (www.306bg.us). ■



From the Secretary

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

Evolution of 306th Reunions in 45 Years, 1975 through 2019

Now in my mid-70s, after 17 years of knowledge relative to the 306th BGHA, 12 years of which has been as volunteer Secretary, I should share some accumulated historical knowledge – both that gained in-person in those years, and from an extensive recent review of decades of coverage of today's topic in the 306th *Echoes*.

Reunions of WWII's 306th men began before the formal creation of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association on 23 May 1979, when Articles of Incorporation were filed in North Carolina by Ralph Bordner, Russell Strong, and William Collins. Bordner served as the association's first President; Strong as its first Secretary, Historian, and Editor; and Collins as its first Treasurer (for nine years, per his February 1992 obituary submitted to the 8th AFHS, and found on page 3 of his 306th Correspondence File at our website).

- 1975 – 1982: WWII veterans of the 306th BG were 45 of the roughly 600 men at the first-ever reunion in October 1975, in Miami, FL, of what became the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Collins was Chairman of the contingent of 306th men present, per the box at the lower left of the front page of the November 2005 issue of 306th *Echoes*, reprinted here, which lists 31 years. Those 8th attendees planned for a September 1976 trip to England and a Dayton, OH reunion in October 1976. The Correspondence File for Collins at our website, www.306bg.us, has four 1-page mimeographed newsletters (precursors to the 306th *Echoes*) that he created and sent in 1975-1976 to 306BG men, reporting on the planned 8th reunions and 306BG attendees. The 306th *Echoes* (first issue dated August 1976) facilitated 306th BG men registering for those 8th reunions each autumn through 1982. In 1979, in plans for the 1979 Phoenix, AZ, 8th reunion, it

noted that the 306th would have its own dinner for the first time. Through the years of meeting with the 8th through 1982, *Echoes* listed the names of 306th attendees. Noting the growing attendance, in the reprinted box of 1975-2005 reunions, one realizes those published attendee-lists grew in length. The January 1982 issue was the first to include squadron photos of men, as well as more banquet photos from the St. Paul 1981 reunion.

Year	Place	#s	Chairman
1975	Miami Beach	45	Bill Collins
1976	England, Dayton	100	Bill Collins
1977	St. Louis	87	Bill Collins
1978	Washington	95	Bill Collins
1979	Phoenix	150	Bill Collins
1980	Orlando	275	Bill Collins
1981	St. Paul	136	Bill Collins
1982	Cincinnati	150	Bill Collins
1983	Omaha	400	Donald Ross
1984	Fort Worth	522	Reginald Robinson
1985	Colorado Springs	428	Eduardo Montoya
1986	Dayton, OH	550	John Grimm
1987	Washington	725	William Rader
1988	Las Vegas	828	Edward Hennessy
1989	Little Rock	470	Hugh Phelan
1990	San Antonio	436	Dale Briscoe
1991	Pittsburgh	436	James Macry
1992	Thurleigh/London	400	Donald Ross
1993	Seattle	575	Warren Wilson
1994	Des Moines	450	Robert Houser
1995	Knoxville, TN	400+	Wallace Boring
1996	Las Vegas, NV	540	Edward Hennessy
1997	Orlando, FL	367	Luke Jacobs
1998	Savannah, GA	425	Clayton Ridge
1999	St. Louis, MO	367	Alfred Villagran
2000	San Diego, CA	309	John Endicott
2001	Minneapolis, MN	230	Russell Strong
2002	Covington, KY	200	John Hickey
2003	Savannah, GA	140	Marty Lenaghan
2004	Oklahoma City, OK	115	Alfred McMahan
2005	San Antonio, TX	155	Alfred McMahan

- 1983 – 2013: By 1983, the number of 306th attendees had grown so large that the 306th BGHA began having reunions of its own. *Echoes'* lists of attendees' names became quite lengthy, with "registered to date" lists appearing in pre-reunion issues. Some, but not all, post-reunion lists were published. The Omaha 2006 reunion was the last one having any Reunion attendee list.
- 2014 – 2019: In 2014, the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association (SSMA) formally began meeting with the 306th BGHA, and that has continued through our most recent reunion in 2019, pre-COVID-19.

- Attendance numbers 2006 – 2019 (including WWII veterans of SSMA) are recapped below, with locations, using my best efforts from recent reviews of available material, including Treasurer Joel LaBo's computerized lists of reunion registrations; my own scribbled notations while I was at reunions beginning in 2005; photos in *Echoes* with names in captions; and prepared anticipated-attendees lists distributed to attendees on-site to aid as people meet one another. Please recognize that each of those efforts has complications with additional on-site registrants; additional family members present for some events; brief drop-by visits in the reunion Hospitality Room; last-minute cancellations caused by accidents and ailments; human-error; some failures to correctly match names with faces (both in *Echoes* and in notations); and more.
- Beyond 2019: Many will recall approval at the 2019 reunion of trying two different methods for 306th reunions: we had planned to try having our meeting along with that of the 8th AFHS in 2020 in Memphis, TN, to see how that might suit us. However, of course, COVID-19 caused the

cancellation of that in-person reunion. Our then-plan for 2021 was to try a different method: to have our reunion with another Group (or potentially more than one other Group), again to give our members the chance to see how that might suit us. The evolution continues, so stay tuned. ■

Reunion Year	Total Attendance	Total Number of Vets in Attendance	Reunion Location
2006	101	38	Omaha, NB
2007	132	48	Dayton, OH
2008	113	31	Little Rock, AR
2009	73	22	Fort Worth, TX
2010	126	33	Washington, DC
2011	88	25	San Diego, CA
2012	149	24	Savannah, GA
2013	101	12	New Orleans, LA
2014	161	24	Colorado Springs, CO
2015	97	14	Salt Lake City, UT
2016	118	12	Dayton, OH
2017	86	8	Indianapolis, IN
2018	101	6	Santa Ana, CA
2019	113	2	Savannah, GA



Now that's a lot of brass!

Donation Update:

Your Dollars Sustain the 306th BGHA Mission

Because the 306th BGHA does not charge membership dues, we depend on your tax -deductible donations to support the continuing education mission of our organization. Donations may be made online at www.306bg.us or mailed to the Treasurer at the address below. Many thanks to those of you who have given thus far in 2021. As of April 28, a total of \$6386 has been received from 69 donors.

Memorial Donations

Of the above, 5 donations were given in memory of 306th veterans and members of our 306th family totaling \$375. 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.

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 Membership registration/renewal for 2021, indicating my continuing interest in the 306th BGHA.

Address

eMail:

Telephone Number(s): _____

Date

This donation is being made in memory of:

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

From the Webmaster:



306th BGHA Webmaster, Charles Neal, Retires



by *Cliff Deets*

(Contact information
on page 2)

Charles Neal, our 306th
BGHA Webmaster since
2014, retired at the

beginning of this year.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to him for building the best bomb group website found anywhere on the internet.

Having been passed the basic structure of the website from Dr. Vernon Williams, through many, many long hours and hard work, Charles built and expanded the site, honing his programming skills and adding numerous features that include a tremendous search function that will link you to all of the documents and photos on the website where your veteran appears by name.

The 306th BGHA is still searching for a replacement webmaster with the skills to continue expanding and maintaining the website.

In the interim, Cliff Deets has volunteered to be the “**Web Coordinator**” until a permanent webmaster is found. Charles has taught Cliff how to maintain the site in its current configuration and how to upload regularly recurring files such as this and future issues of issues of *Echoes*, veteran’s photos to the Hero’s Photo Gallery, past board and general membership meeting minutes, as well as continuing to upload the indexing of past issues of I currently being done by another intrepid volunteer, Pat DiGeorge.

Cliff emphasizes that he is a “techno dinosaur” with absolutely no computer programming skills. However, as long as it does not mean adding a new feature to the website, he believes he can successfully upload files to existing categories, such as under **Education/Research** and then the **Archives** link. He encourages anyone to send any files or information to him that he “might (?)” be able to be uploaded. Cliff particularly wants to

continue to receive photographs of our veterans for posting in the Hero’s Photo Gallery. Currently, there are over 1100 photos of veterans posted on the website. If your veteran is not there, please send a .jpg format photo as an attachment to an email to cldeets@att.net.

Researching Your Veteran on the 306th Website “The Rest of the Story”

Most of you reading this article are already familiar with researching your veteran using the **Search Options** function/link on the homepage of our website at www.306bg.us.

When you enter your veteran’s name, the search results will give you links to those documents (Mission Reports, Special Orders, 306th Bomb Group War diaries, Daily Bulletins, Missing Air Crew Reports, Awards, and Medals, etc.) listing your veteran by name. The search will also point to additional links, such as aircrew and Hero’s Photo Gallery, where your veteran may be pictured.

As Paul Harvey would say, now for “the rest of the story.”

The oft-asked question, what did you do in the War Daddy? The individual documents and photos you find resulting from using the Search Options link will yield basic information for a specific day during the War but will not fill blanks in between. So here are some tips on completing the history and understanding more about your veteran’s time at Thurleigh.

First, determine when your veteran reported to the 306th and when he may have transferred out at the end of his tour (shot down/became a POW?). Because the individual squadron **Combat Diaries** are not indexed, the **Combat Diary** for his Squadron will not appear in the search results if he is listed there. To find out if he is listed in the squadron diary, click on **Education/Research** on the homepage and then select **Archives**. On the page that opens, scroll down, select **Squadron Diaries**, then click on the diary for the Squadron in which your veteran served. Most internet browsers will have a “Find” function where you can type in your veteran’s last name; it will highlight his name everywhere it appears in the diary.

Note that the squadron diaries very likely will not list your veteran’s name. Regardless, the diary is

the first step in completing your veteran's history with the 306th. Scroll down through the diary until you locate the month/date when your veteran reported.

Then read all the entries for the dates while he was assigned. Although the diary entries primarily concern combat missions, they also fill in some additional information for those missions. Often, there are other entries that address events such as Christmas parties, summaries of the month's activities, officer promotions, and more. That will broaden your understanding of your veteran's service and fill in some of the "rest of the story" for you.

Again, using your veteran's reporting date, you might also review the **War Combat Diaries (306th War Diary)** in the **Archives** section to get a "Group perspective." Log entries address the combat missions, but also some entries chronicle the 39th Service Group's arrival at Thurleigh, or when the base at Thurleigh was officially turned over to the 306th becoming Army Air Force Station 111, or when the first Red Cross Aero Club opened at the station.

There are entries for missions that were scrubbed due to bad weather and other such info that can fill in "the rest of the story."

Ever wonder when the base was ordered to "black out" each day, if there were war bond drives or when subscriptions to *Stars and Stripes* were made available. Again, staying on the **Archives** page, scroll down and select **Miscellaneous**, then select **Daily Bulletins**. Some of these bulletins simply list the blackout times and the men assigned as OOD (Officer of the Day) or Officers in Charge Liberty Runs. Still, from time to time, they also announced times for church services, "relocation of the barbershop," lost and found items, and those war bond drives (select the August 1944 Daily Bulletins and scroll through day by day to follow the war bond drive and the expected prizes).

Toward the end of the World War II, liberty and entertainment on base and in Thurleigh and Bedford expanded, as did intramural squadron sports teams and competition. USO shows were popular, of course. Staying on the **Miscellaneous** page in the **Archives** section, you will find links/selections for **Telephone Directories**, **Special Service Bulletins**, and **Squadron Newsletters**.

The **Telephone Directories** have not been indexed yet; however, if you open the September 1943 directory, you may find many of the ground officers listed, such as the Ground Executive Officer (Lt. Col. D. R. Coleman) or the 306th Group Sergeant Major (M/Sgt. G. H. Lovelady).

Exploring the Aug/Sept/Oct 45 directory, you will see the 306th has been transferred to the 9th AAF and lists most all of the 306th staff officers assigned to headquarters at that time by name (look for our recently departed veteran, Bill Carlile, in this directory).

Again, staying on the **Miscellaneous** page, open **Special Service Bulletins** (sort of a weekly newspaper for the Group), and scroll through the various bulletins to see what the latest intramural squadron sports schedule and scores were; what movies were playing on base that week; what entertainment was available out in the town; schedules for religious services on the base; announcements for dances, bingo, and bridge parties, etc. See if you recognize the movie stars being featured in the films being shown (Esther Williams, Red Skelton, Bing Crosby, James Cagney, and more).

Still on the **Miscellaneous** page, learn more about early days at Wendover Army Airfield and latter days of World War II in Thurleigh by selecting **Squadron Newsletters**. The two 423rd Squadron Newsletters were "published" while in Wendover, bits and pieces about the old "swimming hole" and payday amongst other articles (note the newsletter staff included Michael "the Mad Russian" Roskovich, the first man in the 8th AAF to complete 25 combat missions). The 367th Squadron, appropriately named "Pigeon Poop" newsletters from 1945, includes various articles and several poems.

Hopefully, these other sources that describe life for the men of the 306th will give you a greater appreciation for your veteran's life while at Station 111, again filling in the "rest of the story," as Paul Harvey would say. Look for more website information in articles to come in future issues of *Echoes*. And remember, keep submitting those photos of your veterans to Cliff Deets at the email address cldeets@att.net for posting in our Hero's Gallery.

Combat Ends for Crouch in Mission to Antwerp

By: James W. Crouch

[Editor's Note: The following article is a reprint from the April 2001 edition of *Echoes* (Volume 26, No. 2).

James W. Crouch, Jr., was assigned to the 306th Bomb Group and reported to Thurleigh in December 1942. While waiting for a replacement crew and B-17 to arrive in England, the complement of officers was separated and assigned to various combat crews. Beginning in January 1943, Crouch flew as co-pilot with the 367th Squadron's Lieutenant Joseph Downing crew. When Downing's plane was shot down in February 1943, Crouch was not part of the crew.

Subsequently, he was assigned as co-pilot to Lieutenant Clarence Fischer's *L'il Abner* on raids to Vegesack, Rouen, and Paris. The officers for the 5 April 1943 Antwerp raid were hastily assembled, and included Clarence Fischer (pilot), James Crouch (co-pilot), Joe Consolmagno (navigator), and William A. Moses (bombardier). The target was the Erla Motor Works Plant, Mortsel, Antwerp, Belgium.

Crouch was the second of five children born to James Sr. and Mary (Maddy) Crouch in Port Arthur, Texas, on 6 February 1918; he died 7 December 1994 in Port Arthur on the 53rd anniversary of the United States entry into World War II.]

On the Antwerp raid, our 306h Bomb Group led with the 368th Squadron as leader, the 423rd on the right and high squadron, and our 367th to the left and low squadron. Capt. George Buckey was squadron leader with to wingmen. First Lieutenant William H. Parker led the blow flight, with First Lieutenant Kelly G. Ross on the left low position, and our crew with First Lieutenant Clarence Fischer in Purple Heart Corner on the right low position. All three aircraft in the low flight were to be wiped out that day in a span of about twenty minutes of intensive combat.

After crossing the Channel our Spitfire fighter cover left us and we could see German fighters high and in front of our group.

As the FWs [*Focke-Wulf-190s*] started their attack on us, I saw a Spitfire flying directly in front of our B-17. It would pull up when the German fighters came in on us, and then return directly in front of our plane. I first thought this must be the bravest fighter pilot in the world. Later I realized it was a captured English Spitfire flown by a German pilot to radio our exact altitude to anti-aircraft guns below. This lasted about two minutes and accomplished its purpose.

When we flew over Ghent, we were hit by flak. The shell exploded in our left inboard engine, setting the engine on fire, and the left lading wheel was hanging by one small landing gear strut. Head-on attacks by waves of German fighters destroyed our engine instruments and set fire to our outboard right engine. I was hit above and behind my left leg by shrapnel from a 20 mm shell.

I later saw a Spitfire on the ground at the German airfield where I was held prior to entering the hospital. First Lieutenant Robert W. Seelos, who piloted the fourth 306th plane to be lost that day, also saw the Spitfire at the airbase.

While head-on attacks resulted in some success for the Luftwaffe and predominated, considerable skill was required. Their maneuver started from high above the front of a bomber formation to attain maximum speed as they bore in. Some German pilots did a half roll to use their aircraft engine and armored belly for protection.

The nose of the B-17 was particularly vulnerable to head-on attacks when in formation. It was unable to take evasive action, especially during the bombing run when optimum accuracy required about a minute of straight and level flight.

Our B-17 was equipped with .50 caliber machine guns except for the nose, where a .30 caliber was provided in addition to a .50 on either side. It was considered useless by the men up front, who preferred to say with the .50s. One problem the .50 caliber side guns in the nose could not be fired straight ahead. This meager firepower did little to deter enemy frontal attacks.

The cruising air speed of the B-17 is 155 mph. I noticed that the formation was leaving us and descending from 26,000 feet. We were able to increase our air speed to 165 mph, but could not gain on the formation.

The lead plane in the formation was hit by a head-on attack. A 20mm shell exploded and tore into the leg of the group navigator, Lieutenant Robert Salitnik, who died from the wound a few days later, back in England. In the resulting confusion, the lead flight turned from the target descended and gained speed, leaving the rear of the lead group exposed to fighter attacks. The quick change of lower altitude and higher speed played hob with [*to do mischief or harm to; to cause a*

destructive commotion in] bombing accuracy, with disastrous results.

We were pulling two burning engines, had fallen behind the formation and were strictly on our own, when we were hit from high on our right side by two German fighters. I could hear their shells bursting like hail on a tin roof. Our top turret gunner, Sergeant Walter R. Kuczynski, was blown from his turret into the lower catwalk passageway to the nose.

We ordered our crew to bail out. I went down into the cat walk and helped Sergeant Kuczynski snap his chest type parachute to the harness he was wearing. When he bailed out, the jolt of the chute opening almost broke his back.

I went out the nose escape hatch and my parachute descended at about the same rate as our B-17 as it flew in a large circle. I thought it was going to fly into me. It missed me [by] about 150 feet. The two engines were burning, the left wheel was hanging, the tip of the fuselage cover the bomb bay was completely torn off, and the large vertical part of the tail assembly had a gaping hole. I did not see our plane hit the ground. Three Belgians at Aartselaar later told me it finally tumbled over four times before it hit. There were two explosions, first the fuel tanks, and then the bombs.

I landed in a plowed field and did further damage to my wounded leg when I tried to hold it up upon hitting the ground. I ran into a barn and saw a young boy and an older woman. I asked them to help me find a doctor and the boy tried to stick me with a hay fork. I left the barn and ran toward a group of houses. Suddenly a very short man appeared running along beside me.

He spoke in English and said, "You may as well give up, you can't get away, too many people have seen you."

I asked him if he would help me and he refused. I told him to get away from me and he dropped back about 15 feet. I turned as if to chase him, then turned and ran behind some house that were facing the road.

I saw several nursery glass greenhouses for growing vegetables, and a house where there were two women, one inside a half door, the one outside the door. I asked them where I could find a doctor, and turned to see if anyone was following me.

When I turned back to the two women, they had disappeared into the house and the door was closed.

From there I went to the home of some more friendly Belgians who hid me under their house until dark. They brought a man who could speak English. He told me the Germans were searching every house for me, and I must leave or the Belgians could be killed.

After dare, I left their house and managed to mingle with a very vocal group of young men. We walked through a line of German soldiers to a main road. They turned right and I turned left. I was later told the Germans and their collaborators searched the village for 15 days looking for me.

I was wounded in my left leg by six pieces of shrapnel from the German 20mm shell that exploded behind our instrument panel. I could not stop the bleeding. My knee was injured and had locked. I spent the night in a wagon bed in a farm barn.

The next day I tried to find a doctor, with no success, and decided to find a farm house and ask for help. I spoke to no one, but could have reached out and touched at least 500 people. Many of them were German soldiers, guarding bridges over water or railroad tracks.

My luck ran out when a Belgian collaborator pointed me out to a German soldier guarding a railroad bridge I had already crossed. He saw the blood on my pant leg.

I was taken first to Fort Breendonk Concentration Camp, where non-cooperating Belgians were interned, then to a German air base where they tried to interrogate me, and finally to a hospital where surgery removed the shrapnel.

I was held in the same hospital as some prisoners from Fort Breendonk Concentration Camp and other airmen injured in the Antwerp raid. With me was Sergeant Magee from Lieutenant Seelos' crew. He had been hit in the eye by shrapnel. The eye was removed. Sergeant Douglas Bowles from Lieutenant Kelly Ross' crew has a piece of shrapnel at the base of his spine. It was not removed and he appeared to be in no pain.

The next evening, April 7, a German officer, with two armed soldiers, came into the hospital ward and told me there was a Belgian mob that wanted him to hand over the American officer. Nearly a thousand Belgian civilians had been killed

by the inaccurate bombing. He said he must turn me over to the mob. I reminded him that I had evaded capture and had talked to several friendly Belgians, but did not know their names.

I told him that anyone can win or lose a war, but if we won he would be hung for turning a wounded American officer over to a mob. He stared at me for a long time, and I returned his gaze without blinking. He turned around and left, and that was the last I was to see of him and his two soldiers. But I did not sleep well for many nights.

I was held in the hospital ward for about two weeks. Two German sergeants arrived to take me and Sergeant Bowles to Germany.

En route, we found ourselves in a large railroad station in Belgium, crowded with people in a hurry. I let the Germans get ahead of me and then tried to run through the crowd and escape. I did not realize how weak I was. I could not run. I hobbled about 30 yards when I heard the Germans calling to me.

I turned around to face them, and to my surprise they had not even drawn their pistols. They knew when to transfer prisoners – when they were not physically able to escape.

A month after arriving at Stalag Luft III, I was taken to the hospital and treated for blood poisoning in the wound. Due to a high fever and medication, I was unconscious for two days. The wound healed a month later.



James W. Crouch, Jr. and James Laine at Stalag Luft III.

I am glad to report that all officers and enlisted men on my crew survived the war in Europe and returned to their homes. Our ball turret gunner,

Sergeant Lee Sanders, evaded capture for two months before he and a group of airmen were caught in Paris. I had evaded capture for a day, and pilot Clarence Fischer had been free just long enough to acquire civilian clothes.

More About the Antwerp Raid



Bombs falling on the town of Morsel on 5 April 1943. The target was the Erla motor works, which had been taken over by the Germans to assist in the maintenance of their air force, the Luftwaffe.

At the time, the mission to Antwerp was a fairly typical raid for the 8th Air Force. Flying without close fighter support, the Flying Fortresses were expected to defend themselves against enemy fighters. On this occasion, because the target was just across the English Channel, there were RAF fighter support most of the way.

The 8th Air Force Historical Society archives has a full report on the raid. Brigadier General Frank A. Armstrong tagged along as an observer on the lead B-17 from 306th BG. The aircraft was damaged and several of the crew were wounded, but the aircraft managed to make it back to England. Armstrong later recounted the lead aircraft was attacked from head-on at least 25 times by the German fighters. This was the last combat mission Armstrong flew. His role as a senior officer flying on combat raids was the inspiration for one of the central figures in the movie *Twelve O'Clock High*. Although a fictional story, the film is regarded as one of the most realistic accounts of the air war in Europe. ■

Thurleigh Museum Notes:

The following is an England-based newsletter published by Thurleigh Museum volunteers. Newsletters are available on the 306th BGHA website at the following website address:

www.306bg.us

then click on the Museum link.

306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter No.11

June 2021

Welcome all to the 306th Museum Newsletter here at Thurleigh.

First thank you, for all your feedback to the previous newsletter, I will incorporate these into this and future editions.

Museum Visits

Since the last newsletter, we have had some visitors to the museum.

On Saturday the 5th of June, we welcomed visitors from the surrounding USAF bases and their families and we had very positive feedback from them all.



Memorial Plaques

We would like your feedback on our idea to add a Memorial wall outside of the museum, this will be a Brass Plate fixed to the wall, around the size of 20cm x 7.5cm (approx. 8" x 3"), the wording will be open, so you can honour the person you are commemorating. We have yet to work out a cost for this, so be interested on your thoughts if this is something we should pursue.

Galsey Wood - from Ammunition Dump to Nature Reserve

by: Mike Dobson

When the 306th Bomb Group of the United States 8th Army Air Force moved into Thurleigh Airfield in the autumn of 1942, an existing and useful attribute was Galsey Wood. Military doctrine is always to keep weaponry hidden from prying eyes and in those days, the most likely prying eyes were from aerial reconnaissance. Situated on the north-western boundary of the Airfield, outside of the perimeter track and well away from the domestic areas, the Wood provided an ideal location for the storage of weapons, and it was there that explosives and ammunition were kept. An exception was that of the larger bombs which, because of the need for access by heavy vehicles, were stored on concreted surfaces adjacent to the Wood and covered by camouflage netting structures.



The Camouflaged Thurleigh Bomb Store, 1943

One of the original brick-built buildings used for the storage of explosives now houses the 306th Bomb Group Museum.



*Handover of "Building 185"
for the Museum, circa 2000*

When in 1946 the Airfield was rebuilt to provide the flight research facility for the Royal Aircraft Establishment, part of Galsey Wood was removed, a new roadway was laid and the building, which is now the Museum, was exposed. From that day to this, the Wood has not been used except that of its return to Nature, and, as such, it is now preserved for that purpose.

Providing a picturesque backdrop to the Museum, Galsey Wood remains a natural area, which in May each year abounds with spring flowers - bluebells, primroses and cowslips. However, in 2021, access was denied for other reasons!



Galsey Wood in 2021 with an original 1940s hardstanding.

Bomb Trolley

To make a feature of the original Bomb Trolley we have outside of the Museum we are looking for Replica WW2 500lb/1000lb Bombs.

If you have any suggestions on how we can recreate these then please contact us.

We at the Museum wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you again.

If you have some article's you wish to contribute to the newsletter or some Donations to display in the Museum or even if you have the layout of "Building 185" then please contact us. ■

Mark Fussell



In Memoriam

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

Banas, Charles J, pilot (369th, Lowell Burgess crew), passed away January 23, 2021 in Evanston, IL at age 98. After the war he attended both Purdue and the University of Illinois, then working for IBM and Honeywell. Later, he started two of his own companies, a water heater company and a construction company. He is survived by children Paul, Ardel, and Mark, and by three grandchildren.

Carlile, William R, control tower officer (4th Station Comp. Sq.), died on 6 December 2020 in Baltimore, MD, age 100. Bill would continue his service with the Air Force after the War, serving in the Korean War, and attaining the rank of Lt. Colonel at retirement. He was an active member of the 306th BGHA, designing the current 306th logo as well as different hats, and was a regular attendee and story teller at 306th reunions. He served a three-year term on the 306th Board of Directors from 1991 to 1993. He is survived by cousins Robert and Richard Miller, and loyal friend Bob Ortt.

Couris, Joseph, pilot (367th), age 99, passed away in Manchester, NH, February 4, 2021. A proud pilot of the famous ‘Rose of York,’ he worked for IBM for thirty years after the war, retiring in 1982. Surviving are his three sons, Geoffrey, Michael, and Matthew, and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Field, Philip J, pilot (368th), of Mount Vernon, MO, died January 25, 2021 at age 104. He attended both Wheaton College in Illinois and Park College in Missouri. After the war he worked for and retired from Bendix Corporation. Surviving is his daughter, Barbara Whisler, daughter in law Louise Field, four grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren, and one great-great granddaughter.

Lawson, Allan A, pilot (369th, John Gaydosh crew), passed away on February 5, 2021, in Vancouver, WA, at age 95. He was a 306th BGHA Board Member 2011 to 2013. A frequent reunion attendee, he relayed the unique experience he had at the end of the war in a roundtable video, where circumstances found him attending the Nuremberg Trials with Herman Goering, Joseph Goebbels, and other Nazi war criminals in the courtroom. He is survived by wife Cynthia, and three children including daughter Debbie, and son Doug.

Nattier, Clayton A, pilot (369th), POW, died 5 February 2021 in Wheat Ridge, CO at age 98. Clayton was shot down on 13 September 1944 on a mission targeting Merseburg, becoming a POW in Stalag Luft I. After the war, he continued his education at Kansas State University, graduating with a BS in Chemical Engineering. He worked for a number of oil exploration companies, including starting his own firm, Hydrocarbon Engineering Inc., and finished his career with the consulting firm, Keplinger & Associates as Engineering Group Leader. He also served the Mile High Chapters of the

8th Air Force Historical Society (board member) and the American Ex-Prisoners of War (Chapter Commander). Surviving are daughters, Jan Nattier and **Jennifer Mindala (306th BGHA Treasurer)**, and son, Joseph Nattier, four grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren.

Pedevillano, John R, bombardier (369th, Carroll Biggs crew), POW, of Silver Springs, MD, passed away 2 December 2020. His aircraft was shot down on a mission to bomb Oberpfaffenhofen, 24 April 1944 and he was interned at Stalag Luft III. Wounded in action, he was awarded the Purple Heart. After the war, he graduated with a BS in business from the University of Maryland then worked as a Project Manager in the Aerospace Division of Westinghouse. Surviving are daughters Barbara, Mary, and Anne, five grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Solano, Patrick J, engineer (369th, Edward Sandini crew), died 23 January 2021, in Pittston, PA, at age 95. After the war, he served in the Pennsylvania State Government in various capacities including Deputy Secretary of the Department of Environmental Resources and Acting Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. At his death, he was praised by former Pennsylvania Governors Tom Ridge and Tom Corbett for his service to the state. He is survived by his wife, Marie, daughters Mary Pat, Catherine, Anita, Rita, Liz, and Anne, eleven grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

306th Family:

Huebotter, Elizabeth C, wife of 368th gunner **Richard C. Huebotter**, mother of 306th BGHA *Echoes* Editor **Nancy Huebotter**, passed away March 13, 2021, in Placentia, CA, at age 93. Actively attending recent 306th BGHA reunions, she was a volunteer at St. Jude’s Medical Center in Fullerton, CA, for 50 years. Surviving are daughters Nancy and Connie, and grandchildren Geoffrey and Tori.





Annual Membership Registration Form

306th Bomb Group Historical Association

2021 Calendar Year

Please print all information:

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I am a 306th WWII veteran. 306th Unit/Duty/Job Title: _____

Additional Information (such as POW; year born): _____

If you have an interest in a particular WWII 306th veteran, 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: _____

To receive a US MAIL copy of the 306th ECHOES, our official publication, select one of the following options:

I AM A WWII 306th Veteran or Spouse.....No Charge

I am not a WWII 306th Veteran or spouse\$20.00

You can obtain a FREE electronic version of the 306th ECHOES, via our website at: www.306bg.us (self-service).

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I want to make a donation to the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association:

You can mail a check to the above address or use *PayPal*TM on-line at www.306bg.us using the yellow "Donate" button.

Mail your completed Membership Registration form 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 your free membership every calendar year to confirm your continued interest in the 306th BGHA.

2022 REUNION

Tucson, Arizona



Pima Air & Space Museum

and the

Historic "Boneyard"



Watch the 306th BGHA website (www.306bg.us) and the secretary's monthly eMail for additional information as it becomes available.