

306th BGHA Commemorates “Friendly Invasion”

In mid-August a cadre of 306th veterans’ descendants gathered at the Swan Hotel in Bedford, England, to begin a pilgrimage to Thurleigh to commemorate the arrival of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) 80 years ago. A total of 21 soon-to-be travel mates comprised the group. The party included six third-generation individuals destined to keep the story of what happened in England and the skies over Germany something more than just a page in today’s high school history books.



The Bedford Swan is an 18th Century property “steeped in history and surrounded by character.”

This imposing building on the Embankment offers a picturesque setting overlooking the River Ouse. The river banks provide a recreation area for walkers and joggers, while the waterway is popular for canoeing and kayaking. The Ouse is well-populated with swans, but the occasional seal and otter have been known to put in an appearance.

The hotel’s decorous interior is distinguished by its fine old staircase, regal chandeliers, and classic library. During the late 1700s thru the mid-1800s, the Swan Hotel was at the hub of stagecoach routes to and from London, but its way station ended when the railway between Bedford and Bletchley opened.

The journey back in time began on Thursday evening when Stuart Antrobus hosted a walking tour of historic Bedford. Author of the book *Life in Bedford During the Second World War*, Antrobus captures the essence through illustrations and narrative of the town’s appearance and what the population was experiencing. Bedford was a bustling town, offering myriad activities for the young men stationed at nearby air bases.

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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 2022-2024
President Sue Sharkey

It is hard to believe that I am wrapping up my first year as President of the 306th BGHA. I am grateful for this opportunity and am certainly humbled to help guide the 306th into the future. I have been privileged to serve with a great board who are committed to the mission of the association.

In August we had quite a few individuals who traveled to Bedford, England, stayed at The Bedford Swan, and thought about our loved ones who had walked the hallways of this beautiful hotel. If only the walls could talk! We enjoyed visits to The Cambridge American Cemetery where we were given a fascinating tour by the Director of the Cemetery, Tracey Haylock. She shared with us stories of airmen from the 306th who are buried there. She brought life to this beautiful, but sober place. And heck, a visit to Cambridge would not have been complete without a visit to The Eagle Pub where good beer and camaraderie were enjoyed by all. We continued on for a visit to the Duxford War Museum, where the highlight for me was sitting in the cockpit of a B-17, thinking of my dad, Howard Sharkey.

Day three was a visit to Thurleigh where we were greeted by WWII jeeps and transport vehicles to drive us into the former airbase. What a joy to see upon our arrival a large group of residents from the nearby communities, including the Mayor of Bedford who joined us in the commemoration and wreath laying ceremony. The most significant reason for our travel abroad, to remember these great heroes on the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the 306th in England. We heard many stories and were greatly touched by the sincerity in the expressions of appreciation by the many Britons who came for the airmen who gave so much in the fight for freedom. I would like to thank John Watson-Read for his contribution as the 306th representative in England. He does a fantastic job, and we appreciate him so much. Of course, our visit included lunch at the local pub, The Falcon.

Day four, we gathered to worship at St Mary's Church in Bletsoe. The solemn service was followed by the dedication of the memorial for the airmen who served in the 306th who died in a fiery crash on what is now

the farm field of Mary Laws. Through Mary's efforts the funds were raised for the memorial. George Littlefield was the only survivor of this tragic crash. The family members of Floyd Henry, a crew member who perished in the crash, traveled with us and participated in the memorial service.

Words cannot capture the emotions and experience we shared. I am grateful for the profound sacrifices made by the men and women who served in this horrific war. Without them, freedom would have been lost across the world. The British people we met expressed their appreciation and assured us they will never forget the American soldier's sacrifice and service, as they continue to educate each generation that followed the war.

I am looking forward to the future as the 3rd generation, the grandchildren, of the airmen who served in the 306th step up to leadership roles. They bring great ideas to ensure the association will thrive.

With great appreciation, I would like to thank Steve Snyder for the tremendous effort in organizing our trip to Thurleigh. His connections with the people in England are incredible, Steve is a treasure to the 306th.

Sue Sharkey

From the Pages of History

8TH AIR FORCE HONORED

Cambridge Borough to Confer Its Freedom on U. S. Fliers

By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
LONDON, July 30—The Borough of Cambridge, in a ceremony unprecedented in the history of England, will confer its honorary freedom on the entire personnel of the United States Eighth Air Force next Thursday.

Maj. Gen. William E. Kepner will accept the honorary citizenship on behalf of nearly 30,000 men and women of the Eighth Air Force at a special meeting in the Cambridge Guild Hall. Except for the signing of the book, the ceremony will be open to the public.

The New York Times

Published: July 31, 1945
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8TH AIR FORCE HONORED

Cambridge Extends Freedom of Borough to Entire 300,000

By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
LONDON, Aug. 2—The entire personnel of the United States Eighth Air Force today received the honorary freedom of the Borough of Cambridge. The Eighth had been stationed in the Cambridge area for three years. This was the first time an entire force—the Eighth consists of nearly 300,000 men and women—has been so honored.

Large crowds gathered in the market square for the ceremony and an oak casket made from wood from the old Cambridge Guildhall and containing the Council's sealed resolution was presented to Maj. Gen. William E. Kepner.

Thanking Mayor George Wilding for the honor conferred on his command General Kepner said, "The friendships and co-operation established here must give courage to face the future. Together we must look ahead to the battle of the Pacific and the ultimate maintenance of peace in this world. Together we must go ahead, for there is no success in standing still."

The New York Times

Published: August 3, 1945
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306th BGHA Board Members Attend 1940s Ball



Pictured (left to right): Glenda Snyder, 306th President Sue Sharkey, and Treasurer Sally Hanley

On Saturday, June 18th, President Sue Sharkey with husband David Jordan, Treasurer Sally Hanley, and Director Steve Snyder and his wife Glenda represented the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association at the annual 1940's Ball held at the Boulder Municipal Airport in Boulder, Colorado.

First held in 2008, the World War II-era ball is an annual historical event that features swing music from the 1940s and impersonators of musicians and entertainers along with military vehicles and World War II vintage airplanes. The event is attended by thousands of people who dress up in 1940s attire and dance the night away.

The 306th BGHA had a booth where Sue, Sally, and Steve promoted the Association and handed out updated 306th BGHA brochures. Steve also sold copies of his book *Shot Down: The true story of pilot Howard Snyder and the crew of the B-17 Susan Ruth*. ■



Pictured (left to right): David Jordan, Steve Snyder, Sue Sharkey, and Sally Hanley

From the Editor

Thurleigh Trip Reflects on What Was and What is to Come

by Nancy M. Huebotter



(Editor's contact information on page 2)

As I reviewed, edited, and wrote the articles for this *Echoes* issue, it was easy to note the central theme is the journey we made to England to honor the men of the 306th Bomb Group.

In mid-August twenty-one people rendezvoused at The Bedford Swan Hotel in Bedford, England, to mark the 80th Anniversary of the United States Army Air Force personnel arriving at the airbase in Thurleigh to launch what would be a three-year campaign to build up strategic air forces in Great Britain. Their objective was to impede the onslaught of German aggression.

We attended a short but meaningful and emotional memorial tribute to the troops that called Thurleigh home for the three years the airfield operated under the jurisdiction of the Eighth Air Force. This observance was central to our visit to the 306th Bomb Group Museum.

As I sat contemplating the events that took place at this air base, I tried to imagine the thousands of individuals who ate, slept, worked, and flew missions from Thurleigh. In the distance, there was a raceway, the roar from the automobile engines providing a background to the events taking place on the quadrangle. Did that sound hint at what a robust airfield sounded like. . .the rumble of bomber engines certainly more amplified than the speedway reverberations we could hear?

It was gratifying, encouraging, and inspiring to note that six third-generation members participated in the trip to mark this exceptional commemoration. Their interest, enthusiasm, and respect for what their grandfathers experienced and endured are admirable, a testament to the future of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association.



Attention Journalists 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 word 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 Winter/Spring 2023

19 May 2023

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 donated to date in 2022. As of 9 November 2022, the association has received a total of \$7909.09 from 71 supporters.

Memorial Donations

All donations are extremely important to the continuing education mission of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association. Although donations are optional, they are greatly appreciated!

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

Make checks payable to:
306th Bomb Group Historical Association
Send to:
Sally Hanley, 306th BGHA Treasurer
PO Box 2547
Lyons, CO 80540

Name _____

By initialing here (_____), I confirm this current contact information should be used for my FREE Membership registration/renewal for 2023, indicating my continuing interest in the 306th BGHA.

Address _____

eMail: _____

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Date _____

This donation is being made in memory of:

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

80 Years Later

Bedford, England Remembers World War II GIs

By: *Stuart Antrobus*

On Thursday 11 August this year I had the pleasure of leading a guided walk for visiting Americans around Bedford, showing them the remaining sites of this 1940s furlough town for the 306th Bombardment Group (Thurleigh airfield) personnel and telling them about the warm relationship between the GIs and their English hosts. I thought that other Association members might like to know just a few of the sites to look for if they are able to make their own visit to Bedford, England, in the future; hence this brief article (which could be used with a map of Bedford town centre).



Association members assemble at the Swan Hotel, Bedford, on 11 August 2022, prior to a guided tour of WW2 town centre sites by local historian Stuart Antrobus

Steve Snyder, Past President, brought over a party of 21 306th BGHA members, 11-15 August, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the “friendly invasion” of American armed forces in England in 1942 during the Second World War. Some 26,000 GIs were based within a 12-mile radius of Bedford between 1942 and 1945.

Our first point of interest was the Corn Exchange in St Paul’s Square, which during World War II was an armed forces canteen and concert venue (and well as one of the resident BBC radio’s wartime music studios). A memorial plaque and sculpted bust on the building’s façade records the six-month presence in the town of American band leader Glenn

Miller, who was there to record morale-boosting radio concerts for the American Forces Network, as well as live concerts at surrounding USAAF airfields, including Thurleigh.



The 1994 bust of Major Glenn Miller, by the English sculptor Patricia Finch, on the façade of the Corn Exchange, Bedford.

As we walked around the town centre, via Harpur Square and left into Midland Road, I also touched on other major aspects of life in Bedford during World War II, such as the large evacuation of schoolchildren from London and other threatened areas in the south of England, to escape German bombing.

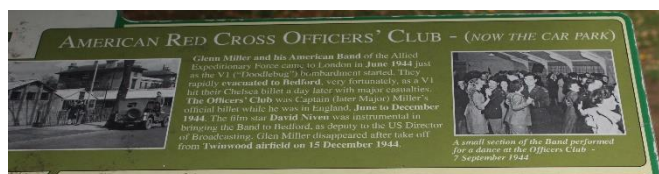
Our second point of interest was the three-story corner building on River Street (currently ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’ pub/restaurant/hotel), which was a furniture store during the war. On the top two floors, the American Red Cross created one of a number of social clubs in town where American servicemen could spend furloughs enjoying some rest and recreation. The club had a canteen and a dance floor for enlisted men, where they could invite local young women. [See my previous article on Anona Moeser and the American Red Cross Service Clubs in *Echoes*, Summer/Fall 2021, Vol.47, Issue 3 & 4, pp 18-19.]



The American Red Cross Enlisted Men’s Service Club occupied the top two floors of this River Street building in 1940s Bedford.

Back down Midland Road and Silver Street to then turn left onto the High Street. At 84a, just after the current Poppins restaurant is a blue commemorative plaque above a door, recording the upstairs site of the ‘Officers Key Club’ (3rd point of interest). For a subscription, members were given a key which gave access during World War II through this ground floor door to the private social club upstairs, open to any Allied forces officers, including Americans. Major Glenn Miller was said to have visited the club. [You can find out more about this in my previous Key Club article in *Echoes*, Summer/Fall 2020, Vol.46, Issues 3 & 4, pp 10-11].

On up the High Street, crossing the road from the right corner at the crossroads to the statue of the famous Protestant 17th century preacher and writer of ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’, John Bunyan, Bedford’s best-known son, then right up St Peter’s Street to the triangular car park site on the corner of Kimbolton Road and Goldington Road. It was here, at this 4th point of interest, that a major American Red Cross Officers Club was set up in extensive temporary huts in 1944. Here you will find a large interpretation board, which shows photos of the wartime club and one of the many dances held there during the war.



Interpretation board at the junction of Kimbolton Road and Goldington Road, Bedford, site of the American Red Cross Officers Club, 1944-45.

At the end of the war, to show Bedfordians’ appreciation of the war effort and the sacrifice of American servicemen locally, Bedford Borough Council awarded USAAF’s Major-General Howard McGrath Turner the status of Honorary Freeman of the town on 19 July 1945 and the Americans presented a silver rose bowl to the town, which is on display in the office of Bedford’s elected Mayor to record that momentous period in Bedford’s twentieth century history.

For more on the Americans in the Bedford area during World War II, see Chapter 13 of my illustrated paperback, *Life in Bedford during the Second World War*, pp.38-42. [See *Echoes*, Winter/Spring 2022, Vol.48, Issue 1 & 2, p 26

details of the book.]

The lasting memorial to the 306th Bombardment Group’s wartime presence are the permanent World War II displays in the Museum at the former Thurleigh airfield, just north of Bedford. ■

(Refer to <https://www.306bg.co.uk>)



Stuart Antrobus is a Bedford local historian and a specialist in WW2 English social history. [For a brief biography, Google ‘Stuart Antrobus – Bedfordshire Women’s Land Army’]

Robert J. Vickers Celebrates 100th Birthday



Robert (Bob) Vickers celebrated his 100th birthday surrounded by his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. To read Bob’s story, go to the following links:

<https://fb.watch/fFvWqP6s2I/> VA video on Facebook

<https://youtu.be/i5FEaHcG9ro> VA video on You-Tube

<https://www.va.gov/columbia-missouri-health-care/stories/former-world-war-ii-pow-celebrates-100th-birthday/> Written article by the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Columbia, Missouri Health Care

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGshptwgnHQ>

Recorded by the Macon Historical Society

Anniversary of “Friendly Invasion”

(continued from page 1)

On Friday morning, it was a somber group that exited the bus at the Cambridge American Cemetery. This is the only military cemetery in the United Kingdom that commemorates American servicemen and civilian volunteers who died in World War II.



The cemetery contains the graves of 3811 American War dead; 5130 names are engraved on the Wall of the Missing, including the familiar names of Alton Glenn Miller, whose plane in which he was a passenger vanished over the English Channel; and Joseph P. Kennedy, a Navy bomber pilot who was killed in action. More than 120 members of the 306th Bomb Group are buried on these grounds. Tracey Haylock, a cemetery associate, guided the group through the memorial settings, stopping at the gravesites of 423rd squadron members Capt. Raymond Check, and Lt. Michael Roskovich.



The Visitors Center contains exhibits about some individuals interred or remembered at this memorial park.

The chapel is a testament to the naval and air forces, represented on a great wall map showing the air sorties from East Anglia and convoys crossing the North Atlantic. A stained-glass window displays seals from each of the United States.

Lunch was a visit to the historic Eagle Pub, recognized as the second oldest public house (i.e., pub) in Cambridge, England, and since World War II, has been referred to as the “RAF Bar.” The pub became a regular place for the men of the Bomber Commands in the area to meet, celebrate their good fortune, honor those who did not survive the day’s battle, fortify their courage for the days ahead, or simply just to escape the rigors of war and the constant angst brought on by stress, and fearing what the days ahead may hold in store.

On one particular night, a young man by the name of P. E. Turner put a chair on a table and then climbed up with a cigarette lighter in hand to emblazon the first inscription, his squadron number, on the bar’s ceiling. From that point forward, the pub’s walls and ceiling continued to record airmen’s history through the war’s end. The ceiling was adorned with squadron numbers, bombers’ names, personal names, and other embellishments.



In 1987, the bar’s owner decided it was time to refurbish the interior, paying particular attention to the fading and unsightly graffiti on the ceiling and walls and the need to eliminate its presence. Then, a former RAF Chief Technician, James Chainey, undertook the task of deciphering the words and numbers by painstakingly cleaning the ceiling and then laboriously recording every Royal Air Force (RAF) squadron names and numbers and names of several RAF aircraft and names or references to individual RAF personnel. Ultimately, due to the inch-by-inch ceiling cleaning, the hieroglyphics were preserved for all visitors to the RAF bar to study

and contemplate the lives of those who inscribed an etching on the ceiling. Today that document, along with scores of photographs, adorn nearly every inch of wall space, creating a museum that is a testament to air crews who toasted their courage in a small back room where airmen would congregate during long nights between deadly missions.

The connection to World War II is not The Eagle's only claim to fame.

On 28 February 1953, the pub, a popular lunch destination for Cambridge University staff and alumni, Francis Crick and James Watson, announced they had "discovered the secret of life" when their research uncovered DNA and its double helix structure. Both men were awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1962. An English Heritage blue plaque is mounted outside the pub, commemorating the event.



Next on the agenda was a trip to the Imperial War Museum. Duxford is Britain's most extensive aviation museum and houses many large exhibits, including nearly 200 aircraft and military vehicles. Of particular interest to the 306th Bomb Group was the historic displays telling the stories of those who lived, fought, and died in World War II.

This former RAF airfield, Duxford, played a prominent role during the Battle of Britain and was later used by the USAAF to support the daylight bombing of Germany. The extensive layout of the Museum's footprint encompasses historic buildings, with many of the hangars used in the Battle of Britain as well as structures built to house a particular exhibit. Numerous aircraft and other exhibits are displayed externally.

To traverse the 5900 feet (just slightly over a mile) of the Museum's site, measuring from one end to the other, without stopping to stroll around the substantial displays and exhibits, can be a daunting challenge. In the timeframe scheduled for the group to visit the Museum, a significant number of exhibitions and displays captured their attention.

However, the ultimate opportunity presented itself when 306th members were given the privilege of

climbing through the interior of B-17G *Sally B*, sitting in pilots' seats, crawling into the nose, looking through the Nordon Bombsight, and even sitting (well, actually kneeling) in the space occupied by the tail gunners. This Flying Fortress is the last remaining airworthy B-17 in England and is permanently based at Duxford.

Although known for her display at air shows and appearances coinciding with many historical commemorative events, *Sally B* evolved into a Hollywood star when she became a focal point for various scenes in the film *Memphis Belle*. The need to readily identify the Flying Fortress as the celebrated *Memphis Belle* and to replicate the authenticity of the aircraft, it was painted to bear the nose art of the actual *Memphis Belle*.

Half of the aircraft retains the *Memphis Belle* livery, while the other half has been restored to the *Sally B* insignia.



Saturday morning, and a short drive from The Swan Hotel, the tour group arrived at a prime location to exit the bus and transfer to World War II military vehicles, then convoy to the Thurleigh 306th Bombardment Group Museum. Military vehicle enthusiasts, historians, collectors, local citizens, and distinguished guests welcomed the return of the 306th Bomb Group, represented by descendants of crew members stationed at Thurleigh. The purpose of the day's activities was commemorating the 80th anniversary of the United States Army Air Forces' deployment to what had previously been an RAF airfield. The Thurleigh airfield, with its improved runways and hardstands, became home to approximately 3,000 personnel and was transformed into a small, independent, self-sufficient entity, including housing, gymnasium, cinema, chapel, library, and hospital. Airmen were deployed to Thurleigh in September 1942, and concluded their residency in December 1945. The Museum, a memorial dedicated to the personnel of the 306th Bomb Group, is an original

building formerly used as a Small Arms Ammunition Storage facility. Today it displays artifacts concentrating on the recreation of the airfield's activities and atmosphere during the war years. The exhibits are also designed to honor those from the 306th Bomb Group who lost their lives.



At the Saturday morning event, Bedford Mayor Dave Hodgson celebrated the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the 306th Bomb Group personnel. As part of the activities, Mayor Hodgson showcased a silver rose bowl presented initially to then Mayor of Bedford John Canvin by the United States American Air Force in 1945.

In an article published in the 16 August 2022 issue of the *Bedford Borough* news, Mayor Hodgson is quoted as saying, “At this poignant event, I was able to meet with a number of relatives of veterans and



thank them on behalf of the Borough for their father's and grandfather's service during World War II.”

Wreaths were laid at the monument, recognizing the abundance of

strength demonstrated by the men of the 306th. Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) UK Wing members displayed artifacts, uniforms, and equipment in use during World War II.

The 306th Bomb Group and the Thurleigh airfield played a pivotal role in the war effort.

From the first mission allowing the bomb group to claim the distinction of “First Over Germany” when the 306th took part in the first penetration into Germany by heavy bombers by attacking U-boat yards at Wilhelmshaven, followed by operating against strategic targets by striking the locomotive works at Lille, railroad yards at Rouen, submarine pens at Bordeaux, shipbuilding yards at Vegesck, ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt, oil plants at Merseburg, marshaling yards at Stuttgart, a significant factory at Hannover, a chemical plant at Ludwigshafen, aircraft factories at Leipzig and other objectives on the Continent, the Thurleigh base personnel served with distinction in helping to avert the onslaught of Nazi aggression. Recalling the role of the Eighth Air Force and the men of the 306th Bomb Group, event organizers John Watson-Read, Mark Fussel, and a key group of Thurleigh Museum volunteers hosted an event that marked this momentous anniversary honoring the men who operated from the Thurleigh air base and those who ultimately paid the greatest sacrifice. The emotions the occasion generated were a heartfelt reminder we should never forget.

The Falcon Pub at Bletsoe was the site for the day's lunch.



Once again, the 306th Bomb Group travelers were escorted via military vehicles to the pub, a mere 3.5 miles from the bomber base in Thurleigh.

Bombardment Group officers were frequent patrons of this traditional 17th-century coaching inn, where they were known to have lifted a pint or two of ale,

a necessary libation for troop morale and to find temporary solace from the rigors of battle.

It became clear that careful attention to name tags worn by visitors and museum personnel could yield unforeseen outcomes. For 306th BGHA board member and granddaughter of Ralph Bordner (a founding member and first president of the 306th Bomb Group Association), Sally Hanley, along with her brother, Pete Smith, were touring the remaining 368th squadron buildings when Lloyd Richards, an Englander on-site for the anniversary celebration, introduced himself to the pair. He shared with them that at a gathering in 1977, Ralph had given then 13-year-old Lloyd his boots. At the time, this was the



veteran Bordner's first major trip to England since the end of the war.

Although Lloyd quickly outgrew the boots (reportedly Bordner's feet were small), he kept them. Then, in 2021, Lloyd donated those service boots to the 306th Museum.

Due to a chance meeting, Sally and Pete have the story of how a piece of Bordner history came to be displayed at the 306th Museum.

Saturday afternoon meant visiting the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Keysoe. The small rural church itself dates back to the 12th Century, with additions being made in the 14th Century and towers and a spire being added during the 15th Century. St. Mary's has been in continuous use for worship since 1150.

But the tower and steeple are the most imposing features of the church and probably the most meaningful to the airborne crews of the 306th.

Tradition tells us the steeple was a guiding landmark that helped returning crews align themselves with the main runway at Thurleigh. With over 200 airfields in Britain occupied by the USAAF, it was easy for a crew to become lost or disoriented when returning to base.

Searching for the steeple and focusing on its welcoming appearance signaled relief to combat-fatigued crews.



In the small churchyard adjacent to the chapel, Ralph and Daphne Franklin are buried. Ralph is the founder of the 306th Bomb Group Museum, whose dedication to the collection and preservation of World War II "war



souvenirs" began when he was a boy and continued until his death at the age of 86. The 306th Bomb Group stationed at Thurleigh was the center of his attention, a group for which he held in high regard throughout his life. It was only

fitting the group should pause to pay their respects to a gentleman and his wife who sought to safeguard the history of what has become a lasting contribution to posterity.

It seemed appropriate that Sunday should be dedicated to memorializing a particular crew that was never formally recognized for their role in World War II.

On 26 April 1944, 2nd Lt. Donald J. Schaefer and his nine crew members departed the Thurleigh airfield on a mission to drop information leaflets over Brunswick, Germany.

Shortly after the Boeing B-17 took off, it experienced an engine fire. The airplane crashed about a mile from the airfield. Donald Schaefer, Floyd Henry, Willard Transeth, Roy McKinney, Charles Weller, Sheldon Kinberg, John Simons, John Byred, and Ron Minter were killed. Only George Littlefield, the tail gunner, survived. At the time of the crash, Littlefield was operating the Aldis lamp to warn other aircraft in the area of their position. Fortunately for Littlefield, this was the only part of the plane that was not consumed by the fire. He made a full recovery from his injuries. Littlefield died in 2007.

Mary Laws, who bought the field in 1993, became curious about the plot of land where her children discovered pieces of metal and then a live bullet. She had wondered about the indentation in the ground, but the findings caused her to investigate the historical record. She learned the site had been the scene of a horrific crash, and the crew, except one individual, had perished.

After conducting significant research relative to the event, Mary became determined to honor the crew. She was instrumental in raising funds necessary to create a lasting memorial to those who died and the single survivor of the crash. Over the past 30 years, Mary has continued to pick up small pieces of the plane, and she frequently contemplated the life and death of each member of the Donald Schaefer crew.

When Mary became aware that a small contingent of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association members were making a memorable trip to Thurleigh to take part in a ceremony denoting the 80th anniversary of the “friendly invasion” by the USAAF, and three members of the group were descendants of crew member Floyd Henry, she set into motion plans for the dedication and unveiling of the memorial.

After a short church service of remembrance at St. Mary’s Church in Bletsoe, the American travelers and Bletsoe villagers moved to the churchyard where George Curtin, Mary Devine, and Michael Collins honored their uncle by unveiling the commemorative memorial.



A short walk to the crash site followed the unveiling, where items recovered from the site, research materials collected and used to investigate the crash, and profiles of each crew member were displayed. A poppy cross was placed at the crash site, where another lasting tribute to the men had been erected. The very moving event was a fitting tribute to the crew and illustrated the great respect the people of Thurleigh and surrounding villages had for our heroes.



Sunday afternoon meant a visit to the Twinwood Museum, which, during the war, was a training base for the RAF. Initially, the RAF used the grassy field for its take-offs and landings, but by April 1942, the airfield included three concrete runways and several “temporary” buildings.

Known collectively as the Twinwood Airfield Museum, the location comprises six distinct display areas.

Perhaps the most popular of the collection of museums is the Glenn Miller Museum, housed in the Twinwood Airfield Control Tower, which has been restored and refurbished to its original condition and depicts how an operating control tower would appear.



Many famous entertainers of the era regularly used RAF Twinwood airfield to fly into and out of due to its proximity to Bedford. On 27 August 1944, Glenn Miller performed a special concert at Twinwood, the only outdoor concert performed at a British airbase. In December, it was from Twinwood that Miller boarded the plane that mysteriously disappeared, sparking a mystery that has fascinated theorists around the world ever since.

The Twinwood Aviation Museum houses an extensive collection of RAF and USAAF uniforms and equipment, along with artifacts recovered from German and Allied aircraft crash sites. Dioramas depicting British aviation units and life in Britain during the war are included as displays.

Exhibits feature walk-in reconstructions of wartime shops and houses illustrating personal aspects of the war, including glimpses into the horrors and hardships confronting the typical family.

The Motor Transport Section, which incorporated The Axis Museum, portrays a World War II workshop with offices. An eclectic selection of military vehicles from the war era is housed in this area of the museum complex.

The Axis section of the building contains a collection of displays, one of which is an assortment of German and Russian field guns. Another area of this exhibit highlights Winston Churchill and the British Royal Family and their place in the history of Britain and World War II.

The Fire Service Museum is Britain’s only wartime Fire Service Museum. Created as a 1940s wartime fire station, it is replete with an exhibition room, watch room, dormitory, mess room, appliance room containing vehicles, and a typical workshop to keep those vehicles in working order.

The final Museum in the Twinwood compound is a renovated building that resembles its original purpose as it would have appeared during the 1940s – an RAF airman’s billet. It is complete with beds, a coal stove, a kitchen, and other typical equipment found in an airman’s living quarters.



The Museum’s ever-expanding complex was created to immerse visitors in the unique atmosphere inside original wartime buildings, showcasing items typical of the World War II period.

Museum personnel regularly acquire additional artifacts in an effort to enlarge the collection. Many of these objects are lovingly and expertly restored to their original condition.

Monday morning, the 306th Bomb Group travelers bid the Swan Hotel a fond goodbye. They headed toward Bletchley Park, the last attraction on what has proved to be an itinerary that combined emotion and enlightenment.



Bletchley Park, or BP for those who worked there, was the top-secret home of World War II codebreakers. The initial goal of these codebreakers was to decipher German encrypted messages about military operations. The Enigma, as it was known, was a machine cipher device developed and used by the Germans to protect their military communications. This typewriter-like apparatus worked by mixing up the letters of the alphabet to encrypt messages. Using a set of rotors whose sequence (or wheel order) could be altered to scramble letters resulted in a nearly incomprehensible number of ways the scrambler could configure the mechanism.

However, the intrepid codebreakers at Bletchley Park were able to exploit a few weaknesses in the implementation of Enigma code, which allowed for the development of the Bombe machine.

The Bombe is an electro-mechanical piece of hardware used by Bletchley Park cryptologists to help decipher the German's Enigma machine-encrypted secret messages. While working at BP, Alan Turing, who is often considered the father of modern computer science, developed this forerunner of the computer and installed his invention at BP in March 1940. The task of this bulky apparatus was to discover the Enigma machines' daily settings (or machine keys).

Nearly 9,000 people worked tirelessly six days a week on constantly rotating shifts to penetrate the secret communications of the Axis powers. Women comprised three-fourths of those hired to work at the English country house that became the principal center of allied code-breaking. Initially, women who

were adept at solving crossword puzzles and could play chess were hired to perform administrative and clerical tasks. In contrast, men who fit the "professor-type" description were readily employed. But as the war progressed and men were called into military service, women with middle-class backgrounds who held degrees in mathematics, physics, and engineering were considered valuable assets as code-breaking employees. Women with backgrounds in languages, mainly French, German, and Italian, were preferred.

All staff members signed the Official Secrets Act to emphasize the importance of discretion and to ensure there was no disclosure of work being performed at Bletchley Park. For many, this secrecy oath was carried to their graves.

Experts suggest that work by Alan Turing and other agents of this intelligence project established at Bletchley Park shortened the war by as much as two years.



As the four and half-day tour of Bedford and nearby historical sites relative to our World War II veterans ended, it was easy to contemplate the effect such settings had on the men of the 306th. Despite the fact many of those gentlemen rarely spoke of that time period spent at these locales, it did not take much imagination to envision their experiences. Although uniquely personal, this tour's emotional impact on each participant held a commonality that resonated with everyone as an extraordinary experience. Honoring the men of the 306th at the 80th anniversary of the "friendly invasion" by American troops who crossed the Atlantic to take up residency in Thurleigh was a unique and unforgettable opportunity. By the end of the war, special British relationships between American servicemen and the average British citizens established during the three-year timeframe were not forgotten. The enduring friendship that ensued is still apparent more than eight decades later. ■

80th Anniversary of 306th Friendly Invasion Photo Album



*Bus Driver Extraordinaire
Noel*



Our carriage awaits...



Map of US military installation in the UK



*Tracey Haylock
Cambridge American Cemetery Administrator*



The Wall of the Missing



*Chapel ceiling design and
map showing air sorties from East Anglia*



*Cambridge American Cemetery
Chapel and Reflecting Pool*



The Eagle – RAF Bar



Writing on Ceiling and Wall at RAF Bar – The Eagle



Mark and Linda Ashton



Seated left to right: Ida Merritt, Mary Conway, Linda and Mark Ashton, Glenda Snyder, Derrek Johnson



Seated left to right: Sue Sharkey, Sally Hanley, Pete Smith



Overlooking display of flying aircraft



Ready to take flight



Sue Sharkey at the controls



Sitting in the Pilot's and Co-Pilots seats



B-17 Sally B



Boresighting



306th Bomb Group Travelers



306th Group Arrives at Thurleigh Museum



Sharing World War II artifacts



John Watson-Reed and Glenda Snyder



*Steve Snyder with Rich Franklin
(grandson of first Thurleigh Museum curator, Ralph Franklin)*



Clayton and Glenda Snyder with World War II Reenactors



Riding in style!



Military vehicles chauffeuring 306th group members to Thurleigh Museum site



Mayor of Bedford, Dave Hodgson and Thurleigh Museum Docent John Watson-Read



Memorial honoring 8th Air Forces personnel who were stationed at Station 111, Thurleigh



Descendants of the men of the 306th Bomb Group



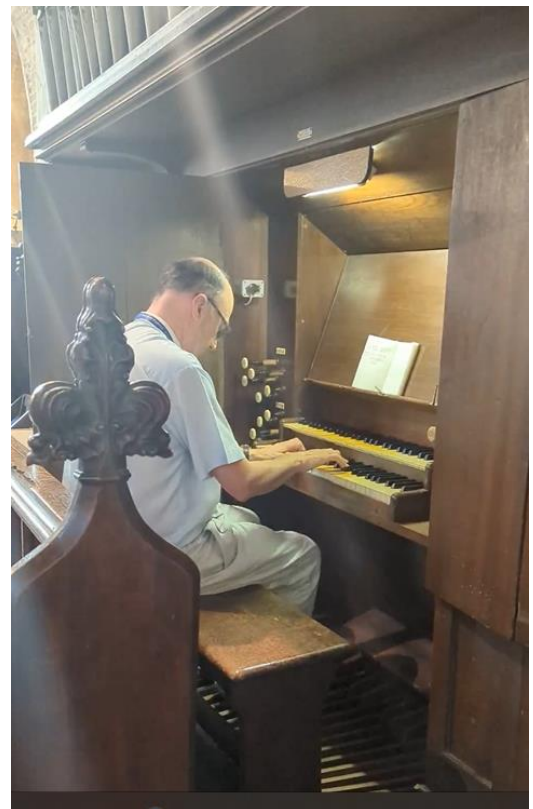
Steve and Clayton Snyder



Inside St. Mary Keysoe Church



Glenda, Steve, and Clayton Snyder



An organist's prelude



Getting ready to explore remaining 368th Squadron buildings



Gathering at St. Mary the Virgin Church in Bletsoe



Sounding the alarm



George Curtin, along with sister Marie Devine unveil memorial to Donald Schaefer crew.



Tour Guide gives background information regarding the code breaking activities at Bletchley Park



Inside the Control Room at Twin Wood



Left to right: Mary Conway; Sally Hanley; Rick and Vicki Jacobs; Clayton, Glenda, and Steve Snyder; Pete Smith; Ida Merritt; Nancy Huebotter; Linda and Mark Ashton

Photo credits for Thurleigh Trip: Sally Hanley, Mark Ashton, and Glenda, Steve, and Clayton Snyder

California Here We Come!

Eighth Air Force Historical Society and 306th BGHA Schedule Combined 2023 Reunion

It has been many years since the Eighth Air Force Historical Society held a reunion on the West Coast.

But the 2023 reunion will be in Southern California at the Doubletree by Hilton Ontario Airport on **October 18-22, 2023.**



All major airlines fly into the Ontario Airport, and Doubletree offers free shuttle service.

Planned tours will be one day to the Palm Springs Air Museum and another day to the Planes of Fame Museum and the Yanks Air Museum, both a short bus ride away in Chino, CA.



The Palm Springs Air Museum is a living history museum whose mission is to exhibit and educate visitors with respect to the role of World War II combat aircraft and the part the pilots and American citizens had in winning the war.



Planes of Fame Museum, Chino California



Yanks Air Museum, Chino California revives American aviation history by acquiring and restoring planes of fame.



Another day will feature an excursion to iconic Beverly Hills, the home to many celebrities, luxury hotels, and the Rodeo Drive shopping district.

Members of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association are reminded of a reunion in conjunction with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society's 2020 reunion that was scheduled to occur in Memphis, TN. Of course, that reunion was pre-empted by the worldwide implementation of pandemic mandated shutdowns and quarantines.

The 2023 reunion will allow us to hold our reunion in affiliation with the Eighth AFHS' annual reunion. We will enjoy our own hospitality room in addition to hosting our own Folded Wings Ceremony, inviting our own guest speakers, and planning our own group dinners, all the while networking with members of the Eighth AFHS and other bomb groups that make up the organization.

Reserve the dates in your calendars now! More information shall be forthcoming. Watch for details in future issues of *Echoes* and on the 306th BGHA website (www.306bg.us) as they become available. ■

Memorial Plaque Installed at Mighty 8th Air Force Museum

In the fall of 2021, members of the 306th BGHA Board of Directors agreed to pursue the possibility of having a 306th Bomb Group plaque placed in the Memorial Garden of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force located in Pooler, Georgia, just outside of Savannah. It is a beautiful garden that includes plaques and memorials to most of the bomb groups in the Mighty Eighth, as well as to specific crews and airmen. We thought it was time that the 306th had one as well.



When we contacted the Mighty Eighth Museum, we discovered only one space remained, so we reserved it. Then, a committee of the Board worked on developing a design to submit to the Museum. Several drafts went back and forth between the committee, the Mighty 8th Museum, and the monument company that manufactures the plaques and installs them.

Finally, almost a year later, the plaque, as depicted in the photo below, was installed on September 27th. We are proud that the 306th Bomb Group, “First Over Germany,” is now represented! Please visit the Museum, include a tour of the Memorial Gardens, and take the opportunity to pause at the 306th's commemorative plaque. ■



Website Undergoing Major Overhaul

Those of you who regularly visit the American Air Museum website will notice that the ability to conduct searches at this site has been disabled. Web application developers are currently implementing major improvements.

As part of upgrading the site's design, structure, and function, software engineers are striving to ensure the website remains a valuable and relevant resource for those who utilize the database of materials.

In addition, since the website launch in 2014, significant advancements have been developed relative to technology updates and security protocols. Because the archive contains a vast amount of data, website programmers have exerted every effort to guarantee that material has been preserved.

When the website went offline, contributions to the database and any search functions were disabled. Therefore, changes or additions to records already in the database were put on hold, and such modifications were not accepted.

The new website was scheduled to launch in November 2022; researchers are encouraged to revisit the site.

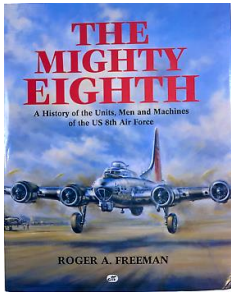
Registered users of the site will be able to contribute information following the release of the upgraded research capabilities.

American Air Museum website personnel remind those who are registered contributors to the site are asked to agree to a set of terms and conditions. Those agreements stipulate the Imperial War Museum has the right to make contributions available to other websites owned or operated by the IWM. In addition, in keeping with the format of information submitted to the site, the IWM can change or modify the configuration of the materials submitted. The content of that information remains the property of the contributor, the contributor will be given credit for the submission, and a source attribution will be included with the display of information.

For those of you who have not visited the resource capabilities of the American Air Museum, you are missing out on the opportunity to gain information on the veteran of interest or possibly learn much more about crew members or the bomber on which they flew. ■

Visit <https://www.americanairmuseum.com>

Roger A. Freeman: Noted Military Aviation Historian



World War II researchers, particularly those focusing on Eighth Air Force and aviation history, have undoubtedly become acquainted with some of the Roger Freeman books that address American and British aviation history from that period.

Freeman was 14 years old when the “friendly invasion” began. Growing up on the family farm in Dedham, Essex, it was a prime location to observe the multitudes of aircraft flying across East Anglia. When bombers from the US Eighth Air Force began arriving at Boxted airbase, less than two miles from the farm, Freeman was captivated and made the most of every opportunity to examine the aircraft. Not satisfied to concentrate on the operations of the nearest airfield, Freeman took bicycle rides to see many other bases in the area, traveling over 100 miles to glimpse the airfields and planes along his route.

In a matter of months, the East Anglia countryside had been transformed into numerous airfields across the region, with hundreds of concrete runways to accommodate the hundreds of aircraft that would be taking off and landing at the military installations. The realization of this enormity of the missions occurred when Freeman witnessed the formations of more than 1000 planes carrying 10,000 crew members operating from 60 airfields in the East Anglia area of England. Ultimately set Freeman on a course of writing a book about the US Eighth Air Force.

After the war, Freeman wrote for several agricultural publications, but continued to work toward his goal of writing an historical account of what he had seen. He began collecting materials for his planned book, including official documents sourced from the United States as well as personal accounts and photos from veterans.

In 1970, just as the book was being prepared for its first print run in the United States, the publishers balked at the length of the book’s title. Freeman was granted 60 minutes to formulate a new title, something more “pithy” and less “prosaic” than the original title. Under pressure, it was then that

Freeman struck upon the title *The Mighty Eighth*. Now, over 50 years later, the Eighth Air Force’s commonly accepted and widely used moniker remains the Mighty Eighth.

Since that first publication, Freeman has produced more than 60 books, most of them about World War II American and British aviation.

Freeman and his authoritative books led him to be in great demand as a lecturer in both the United States and England. His work encouraged veterans to emerge from obscurity and organize into national associations.

He was appointed historian and symposium moderator at 20 annual meetings of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

His networking led him to meet many distinguished airmen, including the commanding generals of the wartime Eighth Air Force, including Generals Ira Eaker and Jimmy Doolittle.

His expertise led him to contribute to television documentaries. In the United States, at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia, the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center is dedicated to promoting research on Eighth Air Force history. The ever-expanding collection contains books significant to the history of the Eighth Air Force, as well as manuscripts, photographs, works of art, oral history interviews, and personal accounts.

In England, Freeman was an advisor in developing the American Air Museum at the Imperial War Museum’s site at Duxford airfield.

The Roger A. Freeman collection of photographs, which consists of approximately 15,000 prints and slides, was acquired by the American Air Museum in 2012. In 2014 the Imperial War Museum began to make available these images at the crowd-sourced American Air Museum website.

Roger Freeman died in October 2005 at the age of 77. His considerable collection of evidence is in constant use as research materials. The information he gathered for the authoring of *The Mighty Eighth* collection is considered the definitive work, the “bible” of the Eighth Air Force. It has been said that Freeman’s writing is simply an extension of his enthusiasm for the memory of a unique period of history. ■



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How to use AmazonSmile using the Amazon app on your mobile phone:

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3. Tap on Settings and then select "AmazonSmile"
4. Select your charity and then follow the on-screen instructions to turn ON AmazonSmile in the mobile app
5. Once AmazonSmile has been activated in your app, future eligible app purchases will generate a donation for the charity you have selected.

OR

Simply type the URL below into your browser:
https://smile.amazon.com/?ref_=smi_se_dshb_bk_smi

POW Recipes

A Flavor for the Hungry

Betty Crocker would never consider them "award-winning recipes." Still, Prisoners of War who had to do as much as possible with limited ingredients exercised their culinary creativity just to stay alive.

As the war dragged on, the food shortage situation became desperate. Red Cross packages, which were theoretically provided to the POWs each week, became an irregular practice in the POW camps. The deplorable German-supplied rations, already lacking in nourishment, were repeatedly reduced. But even when Red Cross packages arrived at a steady rate and were supplemented by German provisions, the food furnished to the POWs was inferior in both quantity and quality.

Meals were monotonous. However, the POWs were somehow able to apply their adroit cooking skills to whatever kind and amount of food was available and often concocted all sorts of gastronomic wonders, turning the blasé into something that was at least edible. A POW's desire for something sweet was usually satisfied by becoming creative with available foodstuffs.

Two recipes recorded in a War Prisoners Aid, a type of blue book in which POWs wrote and drew, provide insight into the insatiable need to quell that desire.

COOKIES*

Premixed Cereal
Margarine
Peanut Butter
Fry in butter
Spread with Pineapple frosting

CAKE*

1 lb Prunes	Filling: 1 cup Coffee
1 lb Raisins	4 oz Milk
8 oz Biscuits	8 oz Chocolate
½ loaf Jerry Bread	4 oz Butter
2 oz Chocolate	Pineapple Jam
8 oz Sugar	Margarine

[*Editor's Note: No further instructions provided.]

For 2022 to date, AmazonSmile donations to the 306th Bomb Group have totaled \$125 through purchases made by our benevolent members and friends.

What the end of the carnage of World War II meant to those who remember it, can never be forgotten, but to all those who don't, its meaning can never be fully understood.

(Calvin Coolidge)

In Memoriam

Obituaries – Veteran death information should be submitted to Barbara Neal, P.O. Box 682530, Park City, UT 84068, barb306neal@gmail.com, cell (435) 655-1500.

Anderson, Jack L, tail gunner (423rd, Thomas Hedley crew), late of Tucson, AZ, died early in 2022 at age 97. After the War, he attended college in Oklahoma City, and then was a high school teacher in Anaheim, CA, before retiring to Tucson, AZ. His wife, Wanda, also passed away earlier this year. Survivors include daughter Samantha and son Ty.

Hughes, Owens, 449th Sub Depot, 10th Air Support Group, died June 17, 2022 in Tracy City, TN, at age 103. During the War, he was at Thurleigh supplying parts to support air operations and was the artist who painted the nose art on numerous 306th BG aircraft. After the War, he was a long-time resident of Newark, NY where he continued as an artist with Bloomer Brothers (Fold-Pak). In retirement, he continued painting artwork for others, and is noted for painting the nose art on the still flying, restored B-29, “Doc” (from Snow White and the Seven Dwarves).

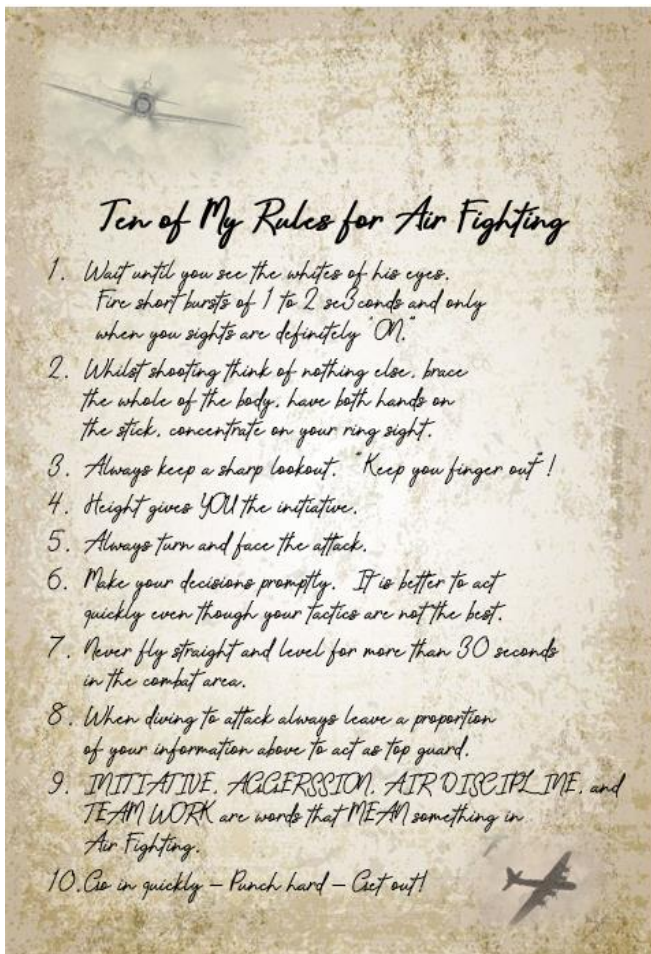
McMahon, Thomas D, tail gunner (369th, James Johnston crew), POW, passed away 14 February 2021 in Shelter Cove, CA. He was shot down with the Johnston crew on the 13 Jan 43 mission targeting Lille, Fr, becoming a POW at Stalag 17B. Post War, he joined the FDNY and attended New York Law School. Then moving to California and having received several teaching credentials, he taught elementary students as well as Marine Corps enlistees and was an avid surfer. At his passing, surviving was wife Kathryn, and children Benson, Molly, James, Thomas, Stephen, Joseph, Cecelia, and Annette, twenty-one grandchildren, and thirty-six great grandchildren.

306th Family:

Jennings, Margaret, wife of 368th armorer Horace G. Jennings, of Dallas, TX, died October 6, 2019. With her husband “Graford” she attended numerous reunions and she and her husband are featured in the video “Thurleigh Memories” by Dr. Vernon Williams.

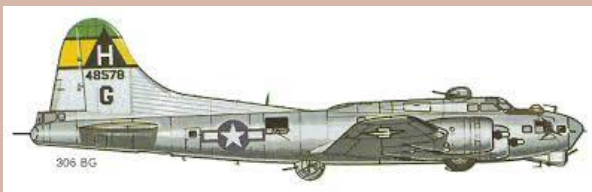
Lissner, Bari, wife of 367th pilot Roland Lissner, passed away 27 March 2022. With her husband “Ron” they were active members of the 306th BGHA, attending numerous reunions together.

Starzynski, Louise, of Chicago, wife of 367th gunner and evadee, Robert Starzynski, passed away July 10 2022. Surviving are daughters Kathy, Barbara, and son Bill.



Posted on a wall at Twin Wood Museum

Given In Memory Of...



Donald Castner, 423rd Gunnery Sgt. Instructor and Aerial Photographer during Casey Jones Project, by Colin, Aymie, and Quinn Castner.

William J. Flynn, 369th Navigator, by Patti and Mike Fleenor

Richard C. Huebotter, 368th Waist Gunner, by Nancy M Huebotter

Gifts may be made in memory of 306th veterans or family by sending a check payable to the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association with the designation “306th Memorial Fund” on the memo line of the check. Send the check to Sally Hanley, Treasurer, PO Box 2547, Lyons, CO 80540. All gifts made will be recognized in the twice-yearly publication of *Echoes*. Expenditure of these funds is at the direction of the Board of Directors.



306th Bomb Group Historical Association Annual Membership Registration Form 2023 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:

EFFECTIVE 2021: If you are NOT of the WWII generation AND you wish to receive copies of *Echoes* via US Mail, there is a \$20 per calendar year subscription fee to cover cost of printing and mailing. Membership registration remains free.

You can obtain a FREE electronic version of the 306th *ECHOES*, via our website at: www.306bg.us.

DO NOT SEND CASH

306th *ECHOES* Subscription: make check payable to: 306th Bomb Group Historical Association. Memo: *Echoes* 2023.

Mail your check (with or without this form) to:

SALLY HANLEY, 306th BGHA TREASURER PO BOX 2547; LYONS, CO 80540

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

*PayPal*TM donations can be made 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 each calendar year to confirm your continued interest in the 306th BGHA and that your contact eMail/US Mail information is current.

Ontario, California

Site of the

Eighth Air Force Historical Society

and

306th Bomb Group Historical Association

Reunion



October 18 – 22, 2023

Reunion details to be published in *Echoes* and on the 306th BGHA website (www.306bg.us) as they become available.