



Echoes

First Over Germany



2023 Combined 8th AFHS and 306th BGHA Reunion Hailed as “Outstanding!”



For the first time since 1982, the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association (BGHA) combined with the Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society (AFHS) to honor and commemorate the men of the Eighth Air Force who served with distinction during World War II.

Apart from the two intervening COVID years, the 2023 reunion marked the 48th gathering of the 306th BGHA and the 9th reunion held in conjunction with the 8th AFHS.

An estimated 215 participants, representing 34 bomb groups and ancillary support organizations, attended the reunion at Ontario, California’s Doubletree Hotel and Convention Center. At registration of 45 members, the 306th BGHA represented the largest contingent in attendance, once again holding the distinction that 306th BGHA founders recognized in 1976.

(continued on page 11)

Reunion 2024 Plans Announced

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association will once again join with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society for the 2024 reunion. To recognize the 50th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion, the group will gather in New Orleans, making the Higgins Hotel, known as the official hotel of the National World War II Museum, reunion headquarters, September 25 thru 29, 2024. Undoubtedly, the opportunity to spend time at the National World War II Museum and its recently opened Liberation Pavilion, situated directly across the street from the hotel, will be the highlight of the reunion.

For those planning to attend and stay in the iconic Higgins Hotel, you are encouraged to make your reservations immediately.

Additional reunion information will be published as it becomes available in the 306th BGHA blog, emails, and the next issue of *Echoes*. ■

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SUE MOYER

MIKE PRENTICE (exp. 2024)

CLAYTON SNYDER

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of the www.306bg.us home page

306th Museum Thurleigh

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UK Representative
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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 2024-2026 President Steve Snyder

Greetings and best wishes for a wonderful 2024!

I am honored to be elected President of the 306th BGHA for the next two years. I have served on the Board of Directors for ten years and

served as President in 2016 and 2017.

I want to thank the outgoing President, Sue Sharkey, for her exemplary job, and I am happy Sue will remain on the Board as Vice President. I also want to thank outgoing Board Members Barbara Neal and Deborah Conant for their dedication as Board Members. Barbara served for many years as Secretary, and Deb was Reunion Chairman in 2019 and 2022.

Replacing Barb and Deb on the Board are Sue Moyer and Derrek Johnson. Sue, the 306th BGHA Facebook Administer, has previously served as a Board Member, and it is great to have her back. Derrek is Sue Sharkey's son and a 3rd generation member joining current 3rd generation Board Members Sally Smith, Mary Conway, and Clayton Snyder.

It is exciting to have so many 3rd generation members on the Board, and I hope their involvement will encourage more 3rd generation descendants to join the 306th BGHA, as we desperately need them to carry on the legacy of the 306th Bomb Group and the men who served to preserve the freedoms that we enjoy today.

However, the best means of encouraging the 3rd generation is for the 2nd generation members to educate their sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews about the 306th Bomb Group's history and the service and sacrifice of their veteran's involvement.

In closing, I would like to mention the 306th Bomb Group Reunions, which this year was held in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in Ontario, California. Forty-five 306th BGHA members attended and enjoyed mixing with members of numerous other bomb groups. In September 2024, we will again join the 8th AFHS for the Reunion, which will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, at the National World War II Museum's Art Deco Higgins Hotel. It will be spectacular and a Reunion you do not want to miss!

It is our duty to remember. ■



A Message from Sue Sharkey

Greetings to the 306th BGHA community! Serving the past two years as President of the 306th was an honor. I am particularly pleased that Steve Snyder is now the President, and I will continue to serve with him

as Vice President. It is my pleasure to continue advancing the history and legacy of the WWII heroes who sacrificed for freedom and democracy.

We have added new members to the board, adding the 3rd generation of our veterans, including my son Derrek Johnson. As time passes, the 306th must include the 3rd and now 4th generations in the organization.

My husband David and I are creating a scholarship at UCCS (The University of Colorado Colorado Springs) in my father's name. It will be with the HEROES Scholarship Program and named the Lt. Col. Howard C. Sharkey Scholarship fund. It is important to us to keep my father's legacy and service alive



by honoring him with a scholarship that will benefit active-duty Air Force and Space Force personnel. Along with the scholarship, there will be a bio and photos of my dad. He served 30 years in the Air Force. A significant part of his story was the beginning of his career as a B-17 bomber pilot with the 306th Bomb Group, 369th Squadron, which will be incorporated into the scholarship fund.

With gratitude to all that serve and have served,

Sue Sharkey

From the Editor



Remembering D-Day

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

**HONOR. EDUCATE.
INSPIRE. PRESERVE.**

Four words inscribed on the wall at the Palm Springs Air Museum should resonate with every member of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association. We must perpetuate the memory of those World War II servicemen who gave of their time and some their lives, including 26,000 from the 8th Air Force.

June 6, 2024, will mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day. As historic and impactful as that day was, it is rapidly becoming just another day on the calendar and, indeed, seldom marked with any reverence for what occurred on the beaches of Normandy.

GOOGLE June 6, 2024, and you will find it is "World Pest Day," "National Applesauce Cake Day," National Drive-In Movie Day," and "National Yo-Yo Day," among a host of other innocuous observances.

The American Battle Monuments Commission will mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day landings along the Normandy coast during World War II at the Normandy American Cemetery. The Commemorative Air Force will observe the anniversary by offering a Normandy tour and other aviation-related activities. But, a continued search for planned activities in the United States yields nothing. No specific celebrations have been scheduled. Many people will post the United States flag on their homes simply because of a notation on the calendar. But do they really know the reason why they are displaying the flag?

For vets who fought in that strategically planned and well-executed battle and for civilians living during that era, memories of what that date means are ingrained with unforgettable memories. For the rest of us, we can look at the legacy and rich history of events recorded in museums, memorials, books, movies, and even preserved by oral histories recorded by those vets.

According to Russell Strong in his book *First Over Germany*, in early June 1944, tension was mounting, and rumors of an invasion were increasing. Although not directly involved with Operation Overlord and the



It is time to renew your membership in the 306th BGHA for 2024. Form is available on page 23 of this issue of Echoes and on line at www.306bg.us.

Normandy invasion, the 306th Bomb Group's missions on that date and the following week were "in direct support of the tactical needs of the Americans, British, and Canadian Forces."

To capture the essence and significance of the date and the impact the invasion had on Europe and the war's course, gather the family, especially the high school students and young adults, to watch the movie



classic, *Longest Day*. Rated as one of the best movies to supplement classes in United States history, the film will help students more thoroughly comprehend the important strategic military and moral victory resulting from the events of D-Day. To facilitate more discussions relative to D-Day and to

encourage students to invest time in learning about Operation: Overlord, D-Day, and its implications, as a preamble to viewing the film, parents should discuss with the students the family's experience with World War II. A website entitled "teachwithmovies" (<https://teachwithmovies.org/the-longest-day/>) helps facilitate such discussions. The website suggests that following the film viewing, several questions might be addressed:

1. If the invasion had failed, what do you believe might have been the outcome of the war?
2. The film emphasizes communication problems that existed during World War II. How might things have been different if the communication tools we have today had been available in 1944?
3. Where would we be without the sacrifices of the men who served in the armed services during World War II?
4. Discuss such attributes as courage and trustworthiness as demonstrated by the men characterized in the film.

So, on June 6, when you post the flag on your home, spend time with the younger generation in your family, teaching them the magnitude and consequences of this date in history and how the outcome of that war continues to shape the world we know today. ■

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 imbed the images in the text. Including notations in the Word submission draft where the image should be placed is suggested. Remember – submission does not guarantee publication. Due to size constraints of the magazine, the publication of non-solicited materials may be held for a future issue.

The editor reserves the right to modify the article as appropriate.

To avoid copyright infringement, any copyrighted materials, including reprints of articles previously appearing in other publications, will not be included in *Echoes* without the expressed written consent from the author and/or editor of the original publication. This information must be included with the article submitted to the *Echoes* editor for consideration.

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

3 May 2024

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 2023. As of 31 December 2023, the association has received a total of \$7,324.27 from 52 supporters.

The 306th BGHA can also now receive donations through Zeffy (<https://www.zeffy.com>), a zero-fee fundraising software platform for nonprofits. You can donate to the 306th BGHA via Zeffy by visiting our website (<https://www.306bg.us/>) and clicking on the "Donate" button.

Zeffy is a fundraising platform exclusively for nonprofit organizations that allows donors to share one-time and recurring donations with zero fees. Zeffy is solely supported by any additional amount donors are willing to contribute on top of their donation to the specified organization.

We also still welcome donations through PayPal or check!

Memorial Donations

Please consider this significant way of honoring the memory of a veteran or other person who has been part of the 306th family by noting "306th Memorial Fund" along with the veterans name you are honoring on the memo line of your check or as a notation when using PayPal. For additional information regarding memorial donations, see page 22 of this issue of *Echoes*.

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 Smith, 306th BGHA Treasurer

PO Box 17163

Boulder, CO 80308

Name

By initialing here (_____), I hereby confirm this current contact information should be used for my FREE membership registration/renewal for 2024, indicating my continuing interest in the 306th BGHA.

Address:

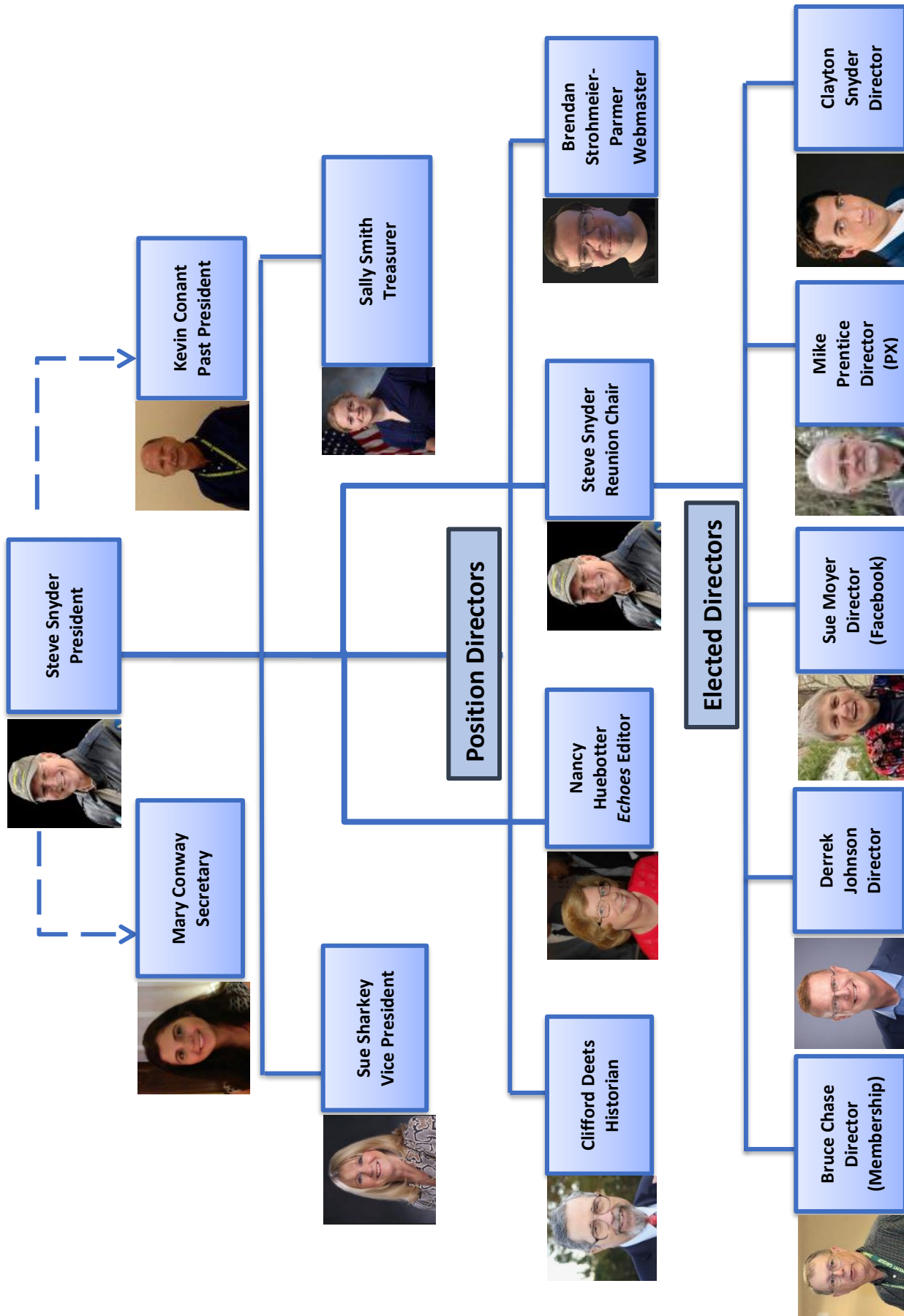
eMail:

Telephone Number(s): _____

This donation is being made in memory of:

Name: _____ Relationship to 306th: _____

Date: _____



306th Bomb Group Board of Directors 2024 - 2025

George Roberts Honored During Veterans Day Celebration



George Roberts, was a radio operator aboard the B-17 *Cavalier*, the only Flying Fortress to return from the Schweinfurt, Germany mission, most famously known as Black Thursday, a fierce aerial contest in which the 306th bomb group lost ten planes. On D-Day, he flew, once again, in the radio operator seat, this time aboard the *Rose of York* as they flew in the lead position to support beach landings.

Ultimately, George completed 31 missions.

For Veterans Day 2023, the Vital Care Group of Gulfport, Mississippi, a group whose goal is to locate all living veterans residing on the Gulf Coast, presented George with a Certificate of Appreciation that reads:

We pay special tribute to you for your military services to America for advancing the universal hope of freedom and liberty for all.

At 102+ years of age, George is a spirited centenarian who resides in a care facility where he continues to embrace the “Live for today” attitude. He has shared his World War II experiences with students and service organizations. Through his long-time association with the 306th Historical Bomb Group Association and the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association, George has been a mentor and advisor to both organizations. ■

3rd Generation Introducing Board Member Derrek Johnson



I was born in Colorado Springs, CO, and raised in Colorado until high school.

Moving to Gig Harbor, WA, for six years, including my first two years of college at Western Washington University, was a fantastic adventure during my later teenage years. My family relocated to Colorado in 1993, and I finished my bachelor’s degree in history and Secondary Education at the University of Northern Colorado. After graduation, I spent multiple years substitute teaching and working with elementary kids at a local elementary school in Parker, Colorado. My only year of full-time teaching occurred in Windsor, which catalyzed me to change my career field.

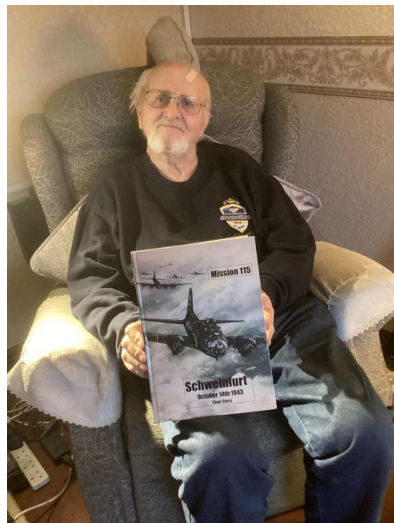
A “temporary” move to Boise, ID, for a job in sales occurred and was only meant to last six months to a year. Over 23 years later, I am still living in the area I had no knowledge of back in 2000 and have no desire to move away. I am married to my wonderful wife Karin, have two sons from my first marriage, and am a proud stepdad to three daughters. Recreation in Idaho is out of this world and includes a lot of golf, volleyball, camping, hunting, and any activity that gives us an excuse to get into the outdoors. Karin has brought the joy of more travel into our lives and makes sure to search out unique places to eat a variety of food anywhere we go. I am a people leader at Blue Cross of Idaho and love working for a company that is passionate about serving our community.

My interest in the 306th Bomb Group began as a young child traveling to different reunions across the United States with my grandfather, Lt. Col. Howard Sharkey. Grandpa was a pilot in the 369th and was based in Thurleigh, England, from 1943 to 1944. As my role model and childhood hero, I have grown up interested in and proud of the service my grandpa and all service members experienced during the Second World War, and it is the main reason I graduated with a history degree.

As a 3rd generation member of the 306th, I hope to be part of the growth of increasing participation and keeping the history of these fantastic service members alive. On a visit to Thurleigh last year for the 80th-

anniversary celebration of the beginning of the involvement of the 306th, it was amazing to see the gratitude of the citizens and how they were keeping history alive. While visiting with the locals, I witnessed their appreciation and enthusiasm for the sacrifice of all involved. I compared this to how our children and citizens are barely being educated regarding the impact of World War II. This further illustrates the tremendous need to capture the stories of the 306th so future generations will understand the severity and implications of the international struggle. Utilizing social media and centralizing family stories can continue to grow the knowledge already available on our great website and other resources. I look forward to serving this group and being an asset moving forward. ■

Buettner-Banks Publishes Schweinfurt Book



Author John David Buettner-Banks proudly displays his book said to be a definitive account of Mission 115.

John David Buettner-Banks has been writing and publishing books since 2018, but his most current release will interest World War II 8th Air Force descendants and researchers.

The book was independently published on 9 November 2023.

Mission 115 Schweinfurt October 14th, 1943 is one book that should be in the library of those interested in the “true account of what those boys endured” during the mission to Schweinfurt, Germany, otherwise known as “Black Thursday.”

Previous missions to the area had decimated the American 8th Air Force. As the B-17s prepared to

attack Schweinfurt on 14 October, Allied fighters could not escort the bomber force to the most significant target and back. This book is about that mission.

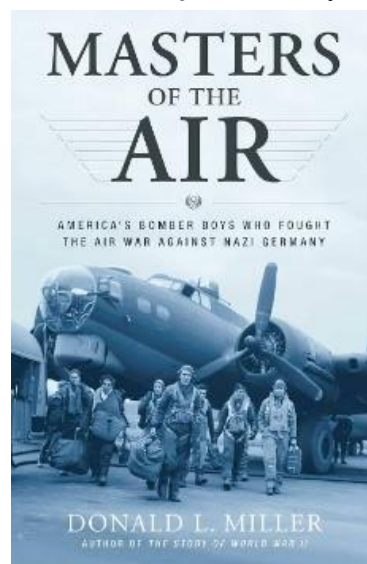
This book is unique because it identifies every B-17 involved and is a compilation of the names of the 3000+ men who took part in the ill-fated mission. Understanding the complexities of writing such a book and ensuring the details are correct, Mr. Buettner-Banks sought to verify and validate each entry in the book as a declaration of respect to the young men of the 8th Air Force for what they endured.

The artwork on the book’s cover is an original painting by Suffolk artist Matthew Emney.

The book is available through Amazon or by contacting Mr. Buettner-Banks at jdbtc@icloud.com. It should be noted that Mr. Buettner-Banks is a disabled writer suffering from the effects of Motor Neurone Disease. A percentage of the sales of each book will go to help people with this incurable disease. ■

Masters of the Air Set to Premiere

Masters of the Air, by best-selling author,



historian, and National Museum of the Mighty Eight air force Emeritus Trustee, Donald L. Miller, Ph.D., is the deeply personal story of the American bomber boys in World War II who brought the war to Hitler’s doorstep.

The 9-part streaming television miniseries for Apple TV+, produced by Steven Spielberg, Tom

Hanks, and Gary Goetzman, premieres on January 26, 2024. The final episode is scheduled for March 15, 2024.

Masters of the Air focuses on United States Army Air forces air crews of the Eighth Air Force and specifically the 100th Bombardment Group, the courageous but unlucky heroes dubbed the “Bloody Hundredth.”

Aircraft of the 306th Bombardment Group

Editor's Note: Very seldom, when a person hears the sound of an airplane engine, they do not at least glance skyward. Planespotting is a hobby consisting of observing and tracking aircraft, and whether an aircraft enthusiast or not, we rarely resist the urge to see that aircraft. Cliff Deets, 306th BGHA Historian, and Steward Lanham of England have redefined "planespotting." Cliff and Steward have developed an inventory of photos and other documentation pertinent to B-17s assigned to the 306th Bomb Group. That collection is available on the 306th BGHA website.

A listing of all 306th Bomb Group planes, by serial number, that served with the 306th from Wendover in 1942 to the final days of the Casey Jones Project in December 1946 is finally posted on our website. With a tremendous amount of assistance from a gentleman in England, 306th BGHA historian Cliff Deets believes the aircraft inventories that are now posted on the website are at least "95% complete/accurate, allowing that there may be an odd plane out there that was missed when researching and compiling this list."

When the 306th BGHA was founded in the 1970s, Russell Strong, Ralph Bordner, and others started soliciting and collecting the names and serial numbers of 306th BG aircraft (along with photos) from 306th Vets and other sources. If you review all the archived *Echoes* issues on the website, you can see some of the results of their efforts. Numerous lists were compiled in many different formats over the years but were not necessarily accurate.

AIRPLANES OF THE 306th
A Request for Data

We are endeavoring to bring together a great deal of information about the airplanes which the 306th crews flew in during World War II. In 1979 a list of named planes was carried in *Echoes*. A number of additions have been made to the list, and other new data has been found. But there is still a need for more input from everyone involved. Please complete all data that you can on this coupon, use other paper for additional planes with which you may have had contact, and add any anecdotes about these planes that you may wish.

Name of plane ZAMRO Plane # 299365

Model: F Squadron Assignment 369 Tail Letter AZ

Crew Chief(s) E.C. ELVIE DEAL

Pilot(s) assigned more or less permanently LOWELL W BURGESS

If you have a good picture of this plane, would you copy it, or loan it to be copied? PERMANENTLY

Return this coupon to: Russell A. Strong
2041 Hillside
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

A sample of Russell Strong's early efforts to collect information on 306th aircraft

As often as not, many listings had conflicting names and serial numbers for the planes. In 2014, when Cliff Deets assumed duties as a volunteer historian, he began attempting to distill these various, often confusing, lists into a single accurate inventory of 306th aircraft. Other website projects, namely indexing mission reports and other documents, would interfere with this ongoing effort. Then, in 2021, Mr. Stewart Lanham of Bournemouth, United Kingdom, contacted Cliff by email. In Stewart's own words:



"To explain my interest in the 306BG, for some time, I have been researching US military aircraft history for the benefit of Joe Baugher's US Serials website (www.joebaugher.com) to add some meat to the bare bones entries. The B-17 has been a part-time project for more than five years..."

Since that first email, Stewart and Cliff have exchanged hundreds of emails, reviewing each aircraft's serial number and name against various sources, including 306th BGHA archives, Dave Osborne's Fortress Log, from the internet, and numerous other resources. The resulting inventories recently posted on our website lists 520 aircraft by serial number. Additionally, of those 520 aircraft, the 306th archives hold photos of more than 180 of these planes. The serial numbers of those aircraft with photos have been hyperlinked (serial shown in blue) so that photos of that aircraft will open by clicking on the blue hyperlinked serial number.

Where do you find the aircraft inventory on the website? Here is how:

1. On the homepage, open the Education & Research icon
2. On the next page, select and open the Archives icon
3. On the following page, select Aircraft Records
4. The Aircraft Records page that opens will explain the four selections on this page:
 - a) **Aircraft Inventory sorted by full Serial Number** (first selection) - Note this "sort" provides a sequential listing of the aircraft in the order that the Army Air Force purchased the aircraft during WWII. Again, click on the blue hyperlinked serial number to view the photo of that plane held in our archives.

b) **Aircraft Inventory sorted by last three digits of Serial Number** (second selection) –

For those that have regularly researched mission reports and other documents on our website, you know that the WWII clerks, more often than not, filled out and recorded the aircraft participating on a mission by simply listing the last three digits of the entire serial on the Interrogation Forms, formation diagrams, etc. For example, 42-29477 'Joan of Arc' would be identified in the mission report and on the Interrogation Form simply as 477. This three-digit "sort" should aid the researcher in quickly identifying the aircraft from the mission report, which is easier than remembering the entire six to eight-digit full serial while doing your research.

c) **Official Monthly Status Reports, May 1943 to July 1945** (third selection)– This selection is explained on the aircraft records page. Posting the "Official" 306th BG monthly inventories from WWII is still a work in progress.

d) **Aircraft nose art** (fourth selection) – This section was first posted in 2015 and needs reviewing and updating based on errors found during the development of the complete serial number inventory (some wrong serial numbers were mistakenly linked to incorrect nose art).

If there is more than one photo of a particular aircraft in our archives, those pictures are included in the collection. A wide variety of photos comprise the collection, from the majesty of planes in flight, dropping bombs, taking off or landing, taxiing on the runway or parked on the hard stand, crash landed or with battle damage, on fire, or just a shot of the vertical stabilizer/tail number pictured, etc. And, of course, nose art photos appear for some of the planes. Some B-17G models that participated in the Casey Jones Project show the nose section where the chin turret has been removed and replaced with a section of sheet metal to cover the opening. Then, there are several color photos.

Open the Aircraft Records section, open one of the two inventories, then surf through the photos and enjoy. Although our historian is reasonably sure that the planes listed in the inventory are complete and identified correctly, if you find errors, please let him know (cldeets@att.net). Also, if you know of other aircraft that flew with the 306th that are not listed, submit them and photos that may be hidden in your Veteran's memorabilia box.

A few photos in the 306th aircraft inventories are included with this article as samples of what can be found in our archives.■



Joan of Arc, 42-29477 in flight. This aircraft was listed in mission reports by the last three digits of the serial number 477 on the vertical stabilizer.



One of the more celebrated 306th/423rd squadron aircraft, Meat Hound, 42-29524, with multiple photos of this plane posted on the website.



Lassie Come Home – One of several color photos in the collection.

From the Secretary

By Mary Conway
(Secretary's contact information on page 2)



The recent reunion in Ontario, California was a joy to attend. The dedication and love felt for remembering and honoring the brave men and women of the 8th Air Force was immediately evident. As my first reunion in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Association, I wasn't sure how it would feel. Any doubts on my part were immediately assuaged, though, as I sat by the pool 10 minutes after arriving at the hotel when I found myself in conversation with two women from other Bomb Groups. We bonded as we shared stories about our family members and their unique contributions to our history. The opportunities for conversation and connection during tours, dinners, and in the numerous hospitality rooms for all the different Bomb Groups made this reunion feel like a large family reunion. I got the opportunity to talk about my grandfather and hear similar stories from so many new and old friends. It was a wonderful experience, and I look forward to New Orleans next year.

Recently, one resource I have been re-exploring that I want to share with the group is the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project Collection - which a researcher can find through an easy Google search. Through quick filtering of their collection of personal narratives, I found over 2,000 veteran stories for the 8th Air Force Army Air Corp during WWII. Further filtering to just the 306th Bomb Group gave me 66 stories - many for people whom I remember dearly - including a 48-minute video interview with Walter Rozett, two separate interviews with Donald Snook, and an hour-long video with Dillon McDermott. Revisiting these stories has warmed my heart with old memories of special gatherings with dear friends. ■



Reunion participants visited the March Field Air Museum, the Planes of Fame Museum, and the Palm Springs Air Museum, all of which house extraordinary collections that even the most ardent aviation historian could learn something about. Guests of each museum had the opportunity to explore the insides of various aircraft. Many ancillary exhibits included a wealth of text information, showcases of era-related memorabilia, and hands-on education opportunities designed to enhance the visitors' experience. For some, traversing the inside of a B-17 was a reminder of the cramped space crew members endured for those long flights to and from mission locations.

Thursday night's dinner guest speaker, Greg Stathatos, owner of B-17 Archeology, shared with his audience the importance of "keeping it authentic" when restoring World War II aircraft and the tenaciousness often necessary when preserving the stories of our World War II veterans.

His passion is to ensure the plane restoration process encompasses the historical accuracy of the plane's markings, which validates the value of the plane's story and that of its crew.

Saturday night's Gala Dinner honored all veterans in attendance and notably recognized the presence of six World War II veterans.

Guest speaker Lt. Col. Nicholas "Wolf" Anderson, Commander, TES, heralded the recently unveiled B-21 stealth strategic bomber as the most advanced aircraft in the Air Force's warfighting arsenal. The bomber, developed for the United States Air Force by Northrop Grumman, bears the designation B-21, which recognizes it as the 21st century's first bomber. Named "Raider" in honor of the Doolittle Raiders, the bomber continues the legacy from World War II when 80 airmen led by Lt. Col. James "Jimmy" Doolittle set off on a mission that changed the course of the war. Lt. Col. Anderson noted the unrelenting innovative spirit is reflected in what has resulted in the advanced technology and limitless capabilities of a bomber with multi-functional open-architecture design. At the time of the reunion, the B-21 was scheduled to commence test flights in November.

Lt. Col. Anderson shared a short but impressive film segment from the Northrop Grumman unveiling ceremony, which showcased the bomber as a deterrent designed for the Air Force to meet its most complex missions and to secure a future that is critical to the United States and our allies. ■

2023 Reunion Photo Album



Sue Sharkey and Steve Snyder

306th BGHA Board of Directors Meeting: Left to right – Sally Smith, Treasurer; Sue Sharkey, President; Steve Snyder, Vice President; Cliff Deets, Historian; Bruce Chase, Membership; Nancy Huebotter, Echoes Editor; Mary Conway, Secretary; Debbie Conant, Director.







Sue Sharkey and Nancy Huebotter



Sally Smith, Mary Conway, Debbie Conant



306th BGHA Members



Candle Lighting Ceremony



Lt. Col. Nicholas "Wolf" Anderson, Commander, TES



B-21 Raider



World War II Veterans in attendance: (left to right) Henry Cervantes, Clarence Kooi, Don O'Reilly, Denny Thompson, Leland Spencer, and Laurence Stevens



Recognizing our military – THEN and NOW



*8th AFHS Board of Directors – Left to Right
Front Row – Eleese Faulkner, Anne Marek,
Debra Kujawa, Clare Vanderbeck
Back Row – Steve Snyder, Paul Tibbets IV,
Kevin Wilson, Mark Klingensmith*



Honoring all who served

Bombs Over the German Reich

By Steven R. Ranson



During the final year of World War II against Nazi aggression, Togglier Sheldon Beigel, or “Shel,” carried out thirty-two missions over hostile German territory in less than six months as a crew member aboard a B-17G.

The Reno resident died May 15, 2023, at 98.

Beigel’s memory of his time stationed in the quaint countryside of England from 1944-1945 was sharp. The New York City native remembered details of his military service overseas during World War II, explaining how his unit became the model for the 1949 movie, “Twelve O’clock High.” While the movie epitomized Hollywood, the B-17G heavy bombers, with their crews and 13 50-caliber machine guns, mirrored the real conflict of life and death.

“As a bombardier, I sat up front,” said the tech sergeant, who flew 32 combat missions for the 369th Bombardment Squadron, which was part of the 306th Bombardment Group based at Royal Air Force (RAF) Thurleigh 45 miles north of London.

Included in the 32 bombing runs were three special missions completed in early May before Germany surrendered. After completing a five-week bombardier school, Beigel.

I flew missions from December 1944 to May 7, 1945, one day before fighting officially ended in Europe. As a newly minted togglier who armed and dropped bombs, Shel often flew with 1st Lt. Robert H. Wood’s crew before the pilot left for the 364th Fighter Group, 1st Scouting Force.

In the B-17 configuration, a bombardier who sat in the front and a navigator squeezed inside a bubble under the pilot and co-pilot and served as the eyes for oncoming aircraft and for initiating crucial bomb drops over strategic targets. They both had access to mounted machine guns since they were flying in the G model. The space allowed little room for two grown men to squeeze into the tiny space for hours. Bombardiers struggled to keep their composure even with the impending threat of German planes flying toward them with machine guns engaged. Shel said the German planes would line up straight and head toward their B-17G Flying Fortress.

“We had puny 30-caliber machine guns with very little ammunition,” he said, describing what B-17s mounted to defend themselves. “The Germans came down straight to the aircraft they selected. Ammunition was very limited because of the weight.”

All guns were mounted and could either be used for

firing or removed for secure storage of service. The only machine gun capable of rotating 360 degrees was mounted in the belly turret position and could move 360 degrees. The top turret could spin 360 degrees, but it could not fire in the direction of the bomber’s tail.

Each bombing mission required meticulous planning and preparation. Before flying across over the North Sea into Germany, Shel said the crew rose in the middle of the night at 3 a.m. and once showered and dressed, they attended a briefing to review their charts and listen to intelligence reports, and once the briefing ended, the men headed toward the field to their bombers. Sometimes, Beigel said, they would chow down their breakfast either before or after the briefing.

Shel said the B-17s took off from Thurleigh shortly between 8 and 9 a.m. – sometimes much earlier – and returned during the early to late afternoon, depending on the distance of the mission and enemy resistance. Beigel’s decisions became a vital part of the crew’s mission: He was tasked with dropping bombs accurately on targets inside Germany. Many dangerous daylight bombing runs zeroed in on the factories – many of them manufacturing military hardware – and critical cities such as Limborg, Dresden, and the capital Berlin twice – once on February 3, 1945, and the second time more than two months later on April 23.

Beigel said the key to flying to a target and returning to Thurleigh – whether skill or luck – depended on the missions and support. He said formations protected the B-17s flying into Germany.

“We had some distance between the airplanes,” he recalled. “We had to have the wingtips pretty tucked to each other with very little space.”

The bombers also flew over the enemy territory by carpet bombing their targets. Beigel and other crewmen who had as many as 10 missions in 10 days knew it was kill or be killed on each mission.

“The Nazis tried to kill me, and I did everything to where they couldn’t,” Beigel said. “I evidently succeeded in killing them because I am sitting here. The plane is a war machine, and if I weren’t flying, it would’ve been someone else.”

On each of his 32 missions, Beigel made split-second decisions on which targets to bomb and which not to bomb. He said the crew had only shot at their target most of the time.

During the 29th mission, though, Beigel’s crew faced a close call. Their B-17G crashed on a plowed field in occupied France after the Germans shot it down. In addition to Beigel, two pilots and a navigator suffered injuries. Shel relied on his childhood tracking skills.

Luckily for the crew, British — not German — soldiers arrived at their site, but they had to convince the Brits they were allies. Beigel relied on his wit by using his New York accent to call out American terms.



“We’re all Yanks — we’re all Yanks,” Sheldon hollered.

Convinced, the Brits rescued the crew, which quickly returned to Thurleigh.

Although he earned several medals during his military service, the crash always triggered his thoughts on one of his most prestigious awards. Beigel received the French Legion D’Honneur in 2015 from the French Consulate General in San Francisco. Established during Napoleon’s rule in 1802, the French

Legion D’Honneur is the country’s highest military or civil conduct award.

Even with the passing decades, the memories of more than 75 years ago remained vivid for Beigel, who admired the role the B-17 played in World War II. ■

Collings Foundation Grounds World War II Aircraft



In a November 30, 2023, press release from the Collings Foundation, the organization announced it had decided to ground its aircraft and put them on permanent display.

The October 2, 2019, crash of the B-17 Flying Fortress named *Nine-O-Nine* prompted speculation regarding the future of the Foundation’s “Wings of Freedom Tour” of World War II aircraft. The crash of the “Nine-O-Nine” led to numerous restrictions for a warbird passenger flight until the investigation was concluded. That fact-finding mission resulted in a ruling that stipulated the Foundation could no longer accept money from people who wanted to fly aboard

the World War II aircraft, effectively grounding its flying exhibition.



According to Meg Godlewski, an aviation journalist for *Flying Magazine* and author of an article published in the *Collings Foundation American Heritage Museum* newsletter, “We are moving forward on our long-term plans to bring the aircraft from a nationwide flying exhibition to permanent display here in Massachusetts.”

For decades, the Wings of Freedom tour brought World War II aircraft to thousands of aviation fans at airports across the country, offering rides for a price aboard the Boeing B-17G, B-25, B-24, and P-51D.

The end of the decades-long tour did not surprise many, who, after watching the high-profile deadly accidents of recent years, feared this would happen. However, Rob Collings, the president of the Foundation, noted that the Wings of Freedom Tour began originally in an effort to reach as many World War II veterans as possible. It did – but, as pointed out by Collings, there are very few World War II veterans left, and the focus of the organization has shifted to “acquire and restore the most historic types of aircraft and artifacts with the best provenance to allow a new generation to connect with the history.”

According to Collings, the American Heritage Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization located in Hudson, Massachusetts, and has “a collection of military vehicles spanning the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard and other nations with 50 aircraft and over 90 vehicles in addition to large artifacts such as the rebuilt Hanoi Hilton POW cell and a part of the Berlin Wall.” Allowing more school groups, more excellent education, and more

robust preservation of the legacy of the veterans meant a far more immersive, audio-visual-based museum, which the American Heritage Museum has delivered. "We have adapted our approach," he continued, "but we still remain committed to operating many of the vehicles and aircraft for the public at our events and with our outreach program."

The museum's expansion will add over 90,000 square feet of highly immersive museum space to display the most iconic aircraft from World War I and World War II. The ground vehicles, such as the tanks, will still be operated as part of the Living History weekends held in the summer.

Many in the warbird community predicted this outcome following the loss of the B-17 Nine-O-Nine that killed seven people and injured seven at Bradley International Airport (KBDL) in Connecticut. The accident happened during the Wings of Freedom Tour. For ten months out of the year, the tour traveled around the U.S. Many FBOs sponsored and hosted the tour, as it was great for business to have these iconic aircraft parked on the ramp.

People paid hundreds of dollars during the tour for a 20-minute airplane ride. A seat on the B-17 or B-24 ran \$425. A seat in the front compartment of the B-25 went for \$400, and one in the back for \$325. The back seat in the P-51D went for \$2,200 for 30 minutes. The organization is a 501(c)(3), so the money was considered a donation. During a stop, the B-17 routine flew two rides per hour with ten passengers onboard. In addition, PX sales at stops added up to millions of dollars annually.

That all ended on October 2, 2019. ■

Currently there are six B-17s listed as airworthy:

- ✈ **Aluminum Overcast** (Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Experimental Aircraft Association)
- ✈ **Champaign Lady** (Urbana, Ohio, Champaign Aviation Museum)
- ✈ **Sally B** (Duxford, Imperial War Museum)
- ✈ **Sentimental Journey** (Mesa, Arizona, Commemorative Air Force)
- ✈ **Yankee Lady** (Belleville, Michigan, Yankee Air Museum)
- ✈ **Ye Olde Pub** (Madras, Oregon, Erikson Aircraft Collection)

Manny Klette Defies the Odds

Twenty-seven-year-old Lt. Col. Immanuel 'Manny' Klette, son of a Lutheran minister who had emigrated from Germany before World War II, reported to the 306th Bomb Group/369th Bomb Squadron on March 12, 1943, when an American bomber crewman's life expectancy was fifteen missions. He flew missions to St. Nazaire, Vegesack, Schweinfurt on August 17, 1943, and Berlin on February 3, 1945.



On one mission, while climbing through clouds at near-stalling speed, Klette had to make a sharp turn to avoid another bomber. His plane went into a spin from which he recovered—the first B-17 pilot to pull out of a spin with a full bomb load. When he completed his 25-mission tour, Klette was confident he could survive another tour. His group commander approved only five additional missions.

On September 23, 1943, returning to Thurleigh from a mission to Nantes, France, in B-17 AC 42-3449, Klette came close to being his last. With the two right engines knocked out by flak, a perforated fuel tank that wouldn't seal, and a leg wound, he was forced, after a third engine quit, to crash land with one flat tire at night under instrument conditions in woods near RAF Wing, Bucks. All the crew survived, but Klette spent five months in hospitals with fractures of the pelvis and upper legs.



The doctors said he would never fly again, or even walk normally. Klette disagreed. He asked for a ground assignment in the UK until he could return to operations. As a briefing officer in General Carl “Tooley” Spaatz’s United States Strategic Air Forces (USSTAF) headquarters, he made a thorough study of Eighth Air Force operational strengths and weaknesses, German targets, Luftwaffe tactics, and an analysis of when and how the Germans changed their flak dispositions.

Klette finally won his battle with the flight surgeons. On July 30, 1944, he was given command of the 324th Squadron, 91st Bomb Group at Bassingbourn, one of its radar-equipped Pathfinder squadrons. “I asked him to stay on the ground more,” said his commanding officer. But he continued to go. I got my dander up and ordered him only to go when his turn to lead came up. He still went. What the hell are you going to do with a man like that?”

During his subsequent 63 missions to most of the most demanding targets in Germany, Klette’s work at USSTAF led to tactical innovations that improved bombing accuracy and saved the lives of many crews that he led.

On November 21, 1944, Klette led the entire Eighth Air Force (1,291 bombers and 954 fighters) on a raid on oil refineries at Merseburg-Leuna, Germany’s most heavily defended target. In rapidly deteriorating weather, he made an on-the-spot decision to take the bombers down from 27,000 feet to visual bombing weather at 17,000, resulting in the war’s most destructive strike on the refineries. A recommendation that Klette be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for that mission was lost, not to surface until 37 years later, after his retirement.

On April 25, 1945, Lt. Col. Immanuel Klette landed his B-17 at the 91st Bomb Group,

Bassingbourn, at the end of a nine-hour mission to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. It was the last day of the strategic bombing campaign in Europe. Twelve days later, Germany surrendered unconditionally.

Klette did not know at the time that he had set a record for heavy bomber pilots unlikely ever to be equaled. He had flown 91 missions totaling 663 combat hours—20 more than his closest runner-up and 66 beyond the standard 25-mission tour. Thirteen of his early missions were penetrations of German airspace before there were long-range escort fighters, when, statistically, the chances of completing a combat tour were zero.

Klette flew a record 91 combat missions: the most of any pilot during World War II. Awards: Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross (3 OLC), Air Medal (14 OLC), Croix de Guerre, Purple Heart, American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory, European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign (8 x Battle Stars).

He later acquired a doctorate in International Relations from Georgetown University and held many Service posts, including Chief of NATO policy in Southern Europe in 1954. ■

Glenn Miller Remembered



December 15, 2023, marked the 79th year since the disappearance of trombonist and bandleader Glenn Miller, an event that remains somewhat clouded in mystery.

Glenn was born in Clarinda, Iowa, in 1904, but by 1916, the family had moved to Grant City, a rural town in the northwest corner of Missouri, where Glenn got a job at John Mosbarger’s cleaning parlor as a shoe shine boy. Mosbarger, the town band leader, recognized young Glenn’s interest in learning how to play the trombone and offered to give him lessons. An old instrument lying on a shelf in the cleaning parlor’s storeroom became Glenn’s, which he paid for with the money he earned milking cows.

Of that horn, Glenn said, “That old slip horn had one foot in trombone heaven, but oh boy, how I loved it. Slept with it right beside me every night and when I went to school, I hid it. God knows who would have stolen that thing. It was my first love.”

Glenn made his first appearance as a thirteen-year-old trombone player in a Grant City Sunday School orchestra, and later, he marched in step with the

town's band to the local depot when the National Guard went off to war in 1917.

In 1923, Miller entered the University of Colorado at Boulder, but after failing 3 of his 5 classes, he was forced to drop out. He spent most of his time away from school, attending auditions and performing at various events. Despite Glenn's lackluster academic achievements, The Glenn Miller Collections of the American Music Research Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder is the designated repository for Miller's legacy, encompassing thousands of artifacts.

Miller became an entertainment industry legend and an integral asset in the extraordinary alliance between the entertainment industry and government during World War II. He received the first posthumous honorary doctorate ever awarded by the University of Colorado Boulder.

Miller, was the biggest star on the American pop-music scene in the years immediately preceding World War II, but in 1942, at the age of 38, Miller set aside his brilliant career right at its peak and volunteered for the US military to serve his country as leader of the Glenn Miller United States Army Air Force Band.

After departing from RAF Twinwood Airfield in Bedfordshire, UK, a single-engine aircraft carrying trombonist and bandleader Glenn Miller went missing over the English Channel. Miller was traveling to France for a congratulatory performance for American troops in Paris.

General James Doolittle of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), hero of the daring "Doolittle Raid" on mainland Japan and later the unified commander of Allied air forces in Europe in World War II, offered the following high praise to one of his staff officers in 1944: "Next to a letter from home, Captain Miller, your organization is the greatest morale builder in the European Theater of Operations."

It would be difficult to overstate the magnitude of Glenn Miller's success in the years immediately preceding America's entry into World War II. Though he was a relatively unspectacular instrumentalist himself—he had played the trombone in various prominent orchestras but never distinguished himself as a performer – Miller, the bandleader, came to dominate the latter portion of the swing era on the strength of his disciplined arrangements and an innovation in orchestration that put the high-pitched clarinet on the melody line doubled by the saxophone section an octave below.

This trademark sound helped the Glenn Miller Orchestra earn an unprecedented string of popular hits from 1939 to 1942, including the iconic versions of numbers like "In the Mood" (1939), "Tuxedo Junction" (1939), and "Chattanooga Choo Choo" (1941), as well as Miller's self-penned signature tune, "Moonlight Serenade" (1939).

The Glenn Miller Orchestra played its last-ever concert under Miller's direction on September 27, 1942, in Passaic, New Jersey, and shortly after that, Miller entered the Army. After nearly two years spent stateside broadcasting a weekly radio program called, *I Sustain the Wings* out of New York City, Miller formed a new 50-piece USAAF dance band and departed for England in the summer of 1944, giving hundreds of performances to Allied troops over the next six months before embarking on Friday, December 15, 1944 on his ill-fated trip to France.



In fact, his first airfield concert was at the 306th Bomb Group at Thurleigh on July 14, 1944, where 3,500 men sat on the dirt floor, on the wings of planes, and on the lofty beams overhead, with

the opening song being "Moonlight Serenade." Miller and his USAAF Band often played at the Corn Exchange in Bedford. In an article that appears in the April 2011 issue of *Echoes*, Ralph Franklin, the original curator of the Thurleigh Museum, recalls the appearance of Glenn Miller's Army Air Forces Band at the Station 111 airfield.

The wreckage of Miller's plane was never found. His official military status remains Missing in Action, and his name appears on the "Tablets of the Missing" at the Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial run by the American Battle Monuments Commission in Cambridge, England.

Alongside the disappearance of Amelia Earhart, the disappearance of the plane on which Miller was a passenger remains one of the greatest mysteries in aviation history. There have been numerous theories about what happened and several unsuccessful efforts to find the aircraft have been initiated ever since.

The Twinwood Museums in Bedford, England, has a Glenn Miller Exhibit in the original RAF control tower. It was one of the stops on the 5-day tour that 21 members of the 306th BGHA took in August 2022. ■

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.

Beigel, Sheldon, togglier (369th, James Cation crew), passed away in Reno, NV, 15 May 2023 at age 98. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Case Western Reserve of Cleveland, OH. He owned Shelbe Company/Staken Corporation for over 45 years, specializing in chemical cleaning agents for the aircraft and nuclear industries. He is survived by wife, Nancy, and son Ken. (We thank Nevada News Group's LVN Editor Emeritus Steve Ranson, Veterans/military news, for alerting us.)

Jackson, Carmen J. C., ball turret gunner (368th, Harold Altshuler crew) of Enid, KS, passed away 18 October 2023. He was 97 at his passing. After the War, he continued his service with the U.S. Air Force, then after his retirement served in the National Guard for another 33 years. He was a U.S. Postal Service worker and was a life member of the VFW, the National Guard Association, and was a member of the Lion's Club. Surviving is his daughter, Gayle Kelso, three grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Engstrom, Edward ("Fred"), pilot (423rd), late of Mount Holly, NC, passed away Dec 29, 2023. In addition to flying his 25 combat missions, Fred volunteered for and served during the top-secret post-war Casey Jones Project. Initially unable to pass the eye exam to qualify for pilot training, he ate lots of carrots and then passed the test on the second try. After the war, he served and retired from the Air Force Reserve, earning a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Attending his last reunion in Tucson in 2022, he was accompanied by his daughter Dana, son Craig, and several of his grandchildren.

Manrow, Jack F., pilot (369th, William Canell crew), died in Fort Lauderdale, FL, December 24, 2018. He studied engineering at Indiana Tech before the war and then completed his Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering in 1948. He was employed by Bendix Aircraft Corporation and then became a Safety Engineer with Michigan Liability Company. He later would work for Mackay Industrial Sales and then took over operations at Manrow Sheet Metal and Roofing, his Father's company. In 1961, he was hired by Prudential Insurance as a safety engineer. He was a Mason and a member of several professional safety organizations. He is survived by his daughter, Deborah, grandsons Christopher and Ryan, and two great-grandchildren.

Martin, James E., pilot (368th), died in Cleveland Heights, OH, December 15, 2023, at the age of 101. After graduating from Hagerstown Business College, Hagerstown, PA, in 1939, he started working for the Pangborn Corporation. Jim joined the Army Air Corps in 1942 and trained as a B-17 pilot. He reported to Thurleigh September 12, 1944 and completed 44 missions. He was awarded the Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross. Not wanting to leave his crew, Jim stayed for a second tour. When he returned home after the war, he enrolled in the University of

Notre Dame and graduated with a Mechanical Engineering degree. He re-joined Pangborn Corporation as a salesman and was sent to Cleveland, Ohio, where he met Marilyn Barrett. They married in 1953. He remained with Pangborn until retiring at the age of 91. He was the father of 4 children, 8 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren.

Sandini, Edward J., pilot (369th), passed away 17 September 2023 at age 98 in Philadelphia, PA. He continued his service with the Air Force until retirement as a Lt. Colonel, serving in both the Korean War and Viet Nam. He attended Penn State University, receiving a Mechanical Engineering degree. He then worked for the state of Oklahoma in employment services. Surviving is his wife, Karen, and their blended four children and their spouses, 15 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Sigafus, Allen, engineer (368th, Robert Chrisjohn crew), of Mankato, MN, age 98, died June 16, 2023. After the War, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin. He worked initially as a Social Worker, and progressed to Director of County Welfare. During his 31 years in Mankato, MN service with the county government, his encouragement over ten years resulted in the creation of the Human Services Department, integrating all social services. After he retired, he volunteered at a local nursing home as well as in Legislative Affairs for AARP. He is survived by daughters Katy and Christine, sons Bob, Paul, and Phil, their spouses, nine stepchildren with six spouses; 26 grandchildren, and 33 great-grandchildren.

306th Family:

Prentice, Josh, son of **Michael Prentice** (306th BGHA board member) and grandson of 423rd navigator **Albert John Prentice**, of Hazel Park, MI, passed away November 13, 2023. Surviving is his wife, Emily, his parents Mike and Kathi, and brother Bryan.



Given In Memory Of...



*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 17163, Boulder, CO 80308. 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 Membership Registration Form 2024 Calendar Year

Print all information.

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Are YOU the 306th WWII veteran? _____ IF yes: Duty/Job Title: _____

Additional Information (such as POW; year born) _____

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

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

Veteran's Name: _____ 306th Unit: _____

Duty/Job Title or Additional Information: _____

I am a:

- World War II History Buff Author/Writer Researcher Other

Additional Information: _____

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

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

- Check: Payable to 306th Bomb Group Historical Association; on memo line write "2024 Echoes." Please mail (with or without this form) your check to:

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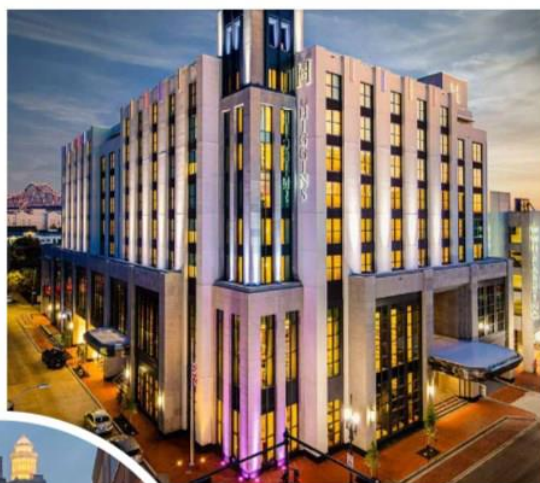
Each member will be placed on our membership list for the current calendar year only. We ask that you renew your free membership each calendar year to confirm your continued interest in the 306th BGHA and your email/US Mail contact information is current.



50th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion

NEW ORLEANS

September 25-29, 2024
Higgins Hotel, the official hotel of
The National WWII Museum



Join us September 25-29, 2024
in New Orleans, a city rich in history and
home to the many iconic places that
make this city a popular destination.

The highlight of the 50th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion will undoubtedly be the National WWII Museum! —located directly across the street from The Higgins, our reunion hotel.

The Museum tells the powerful story of the American experience in the War that changed the world—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

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Online reservation link: <https://group.curiocollection.com/zg61jf> or call the Higgins: (833) 357-1172. Reference group code: 928. See you all in the “Big Easy” in September!