

A HISTORY OF THE 306th BOMBARDMENT GROUP - EIGHTH AIR FORCE

Russell A. Strong 2041 Hillside Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Name HECTOR A. CHAVEZ

Address 320 E. MILLAN ST.

Home Phone (714) 624-0143 Date 10-02-80

Occupation RETIRED (U.S. I<sup>NS</sup>) Employer -

Address - Bus. Phone -

Serial No(s) 39287690

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th:

INDUCTION MARCH 9, 1943. BASIC TRAINING AT FRESNO, CALIF. RADIO SCHOOL SIOUX FALLS, SO. DAKOTA. GUNNERY TRAINING KINGMAN, ARIZ. PHASE TRAINING AVON PARK FLORIDA, LEFT U.S. FOR ETO MAY 20, 1944.

After leaving the 306th:

SHOT DOWN SEPT. 12, 1944. PRISONER OF WAR IN GERMANY TO APRIL 26, 1945. FOLLOWING THAT DATE SPENT SEVERAL WEEKS AT R.A.M.P TENT CITY AT CAMP LUCKY STRIKE, THEN RETURNED TO U.S. FOR RRR & DISCHARGE ON NOV. 2, 1945.

306th Record

Arrival date at Thurleigh \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron or other unit(s) 367<sup>TH</sup> BOMB SQUADRON

MOS # 757 Specialty RADIO OPERATOR MECHANIC GUNNER

Missions Completed (and date of last) 22 (?) SHOT DOWN ON 23<sup>RD</sup>  
POSSIBLY SEPT. 11, 1944.

Promotions TO T/SGT.

Decorations AM 3 DFC olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM PH Battle Stars 2 ✓

(On unusual DFCs, and Silver Stars and above would like to see a copy of the citation)



Name HECTOR A. CHAVEZ Address 320 E. MILLAN ST., CHULA VISTA,  
Telephone CA 92010; (714) 426-0143

MISSING AIRCRAFT REPORT (YOU CAN KEEP ATTACHED COPIES)

Pilot 1ST LT. EARL R. BARR Plane # and Name -  
Mission Date SEPT. 12, 1944 Target (?) RUHLAND, GERMANY  
Cause of loss: AA fire  Fighter attack  Other, explain PLANE EXPLODED

Describe conditions in the plane as completely as you can:

SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF BERLIN WE WERE SUBJECTED TO AA FIRE & GERMAN FIGHTER ATTACK. TURBULENCE WAS STRONG AND I WAS HOLDING A STATK TUBE OVERHEAD TO KEEP BALANCE WHILE MANNING R. WAIST GUN. WAS HIT ON LEFT WRIST AND RIGHT ARM CAUSING ME TO FALL & SNAP INTERPHONE LINE, WHEN I GOT UP & ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATION, RIGHT WING WAS ON FIRE AND PILOT WAS ORDERING ALL TO BAIL OUT. I WAS DELAYED BECAUSE OF A USELESS LEFT HAND CAUSING PROBLEM OF HOOKING PARACHUTE PACK TO HARNESS, ABOUT READY TO PROCGED TO REAR OF PLANE'S ESCAPE HATCH, I NOTICED BALL TURRET REVOLVING & WAITED TO HELP GUNNER OUT IN CASE HE WAS WOUNDED, WITHOUT REALIZING I HAD ALREADY REMOVED OXYGEN MASK,

How and where did you leave plahe?

PLANE EXPLODED, BALL TURRET GUNNER AND I FOUND OURSELVES FALLING, SITTING ON PIECE OF WRECKAGE.

What happened when you got on the ground?

LANDED ABOUT 30' OFF GROUND ON TREE, FORREST KEEPER FOUND ME, CUT ME DOWN & TOOK ME TO POLICE STATION, Did you meet any of your crew mates?

NO. FEW OTHER U.S. AIRMEN AT POLICE STATION.

How were you treated, if captured?

TREATED WELL, FOOD RATIONS INSUFFICIENT BUT UNDERSTANDABLE SINCE GERMANS SHORT ALSO, TAKEN OUT OF STALAG LUFT 4 AND MARCHED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS FOR 80 DAYS BEFORE BEING LIBERATED B U.S. ARMY 104TH TIMBER WOLFS, ON APRIL 26, 1945.

Any additional details, reminiscences, letters, or documents of these events would be appreciated. If you do send such materials, I will copy them and put them back in the mail to you within 24 hours.

WAR DEPARTMENT

70

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AG 201 Chavez, Hector A.  
PC-N ETO196

29 September 1944

Mr. Jesus A. Chavez  
Post Office #659  
San Ysidro, California

Dear Mr. Chavez:

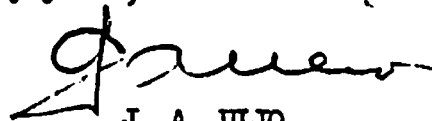
This letter is to confirm my recent telegram in which you were regretfully informed that your son, Technical Sergeant Hector A. Chavez, 39,287,690, Air Corps, has been reported missing in action over Germany since 12 September 1944.

I know that added distress is caused by failure to receive more information or details. Therefore, I wish to assure you that at any time additional information is received it will be transmitted to you without delay, and, if in the meantime no additional information is received, I will again communicate with you at the expiration of three months. Also, it is the policy of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces upon receipt of the "Missing Air Crew Report" to convey to you any details that might be contained in that report.

The term "missing in action" is used only to indicate that the whereabouts or status of an individual is not immediately known. It is not intended to convey the impression that the case is closed. I wish to emphasize that every effort is exerted continuously to clear up the status of our personnel. Under war conditions this is a difficult task as you must readily realize. Experience has shown that many persons reported missing in action are subsequently reported as prisoners of war, but as this information is furnished by countries with which we are at war, the War Department is helpless to expedite such reports. However, in order to relieve financial worry, Congress has enacted legislation which continues in force the pay, allowances and allotments to dependents of personnel being carried in a missing status.

Permit me to extend to you my heartfelt sympathy during this period of uncertainty.

Sincerely yours,



J. A. ULLO  
Major General,  
The Adjutant General.

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



ATTENTION: AFPPA-8

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON

AAF 201 - (8836) Chavez, Hector A.  
39287690

October 20, 1944.

Mr. Jesus A. Chavez,  
Post Office Box Number 659,  
San Ysidro, California.

Dear Mr. Chavez:

I am writing you with reference to your son, Technical Sergeant Hector A. Chavez, who was reported by The Adjutant General as missing in action over Germany since September 12th.

Further information has been received indicating that Sergeant Chavez was a crew member of a B-17 (Flying Fortress) bomber which departed from England on a bombardment mission to Ruhland, Germany, on September 12th. Full details are not available, but the report indicates that during this mission at about 11:30 a.m., near Berlin, Germany, our planes were subjected to enemy antiaircraft fire, and your son's bomber sustained damage, and fell to the earth. The report further indicates that three parachutes were observed to leave the disabled craft before it descended. The crew members of accompanying planes were unable to obtain any further details relative to the loss of Sergeant Chavez's aircraft, therefore the above constitutes all the information presently available.

Due to necessity for military security, it is regretted that the names of those who were in the plane and the names and addresses of their next of kin may not be furnished at the present time.

Please be assured that a continuing search by land, sea, and air is being made to discover the whereabouts of our missing personnel. As our armies advance over enemy occupied territory, special troops are assigned to this task, and all agencies of the government in every country are constantly sending in details which aid us in bringing additional information to you.

Very sincerely,

*E. A. Bradunas*

E. A. BRADUNAS,  
Major, A. G. D.,  
Chief, Notification Branch,  
Personal Affairs Division,  
Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Personnel.

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



ATTENTION: AFPPA-8

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON

(8836) Chavez, Hector A.  
39287690

December 20, 1944

Mr. Jesus A. Chavez,  
Post Office Box Number 659,  
San Ysidro, California.

Dear Mr. Chavez:

For reasons of military security it has been necessary to withhold the names of the air crew members who were serving with your son at the time he was reported missing.

Since it is now permissible to release this information, we are inclosing a complete list of names of the crew members.

The names and addresses of the next of kin of the men are also given in the belief that you may desire to correspond with them.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Clyde V. Finter".

CLYDE V. FINTER  
Colonel, Air Corps  
Chief, Personal Affairs Division  
Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Personnel

1 Incl  
List of crew members & names  
& addresses of next of kin

**1st Lt. Earl R. Barr**

Mrs. Esther H. Barr, (Mother)  
307 Elm Street,  
Martins Ferry, Ohio.

**2nd Lt. Robert E. Reid**

Mrs. Margaret Reid, (Mother)  
184 Grand Avenue,  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

**2nd Lt. Mathew A. Myerson**

Mr. Mike Myerson, (Father)  
437 Kingston Avenue,  
Brooklyn, New York.

**2nd Lt. Garland A. Montague**

Mrs. Lillian C. Montague, (Mother)  
Route Number Five,  
Raleigh, North Carolina.

**T/Sgt. William J. Bauer**

Mrs. Darleen A. Bauer, (Wife)  
Box 126,  
Granger, Washington.

**T/Sgt. Hector A. Chavez**

Mr. Jesus A. Chavez, (Father)  
Post Office Box Number 659,  
San Ysidro, California.

**S/Sgt. Nicholas Neolke**

Mr. Thomas B. Neolke, (Father)  
149 Bank Street,  
Newark, New Jersey.

**S/Sgt. Alfred R. Capen**

Mr. Ralph A. Capen, (Father)  
62 South Hall,  
Manchester, New Hampshire.

**S/Sgt. Wilbur A. Whitaker**

Mrs. Gladys Whitaker, (Mother)  
2415 Silver Street,  
Anderson, Indiana.



HEADQUARTERS ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
Office of The Provost Marshal General  
Washington 25, D. C.

26 January 1945

RE: T/Sgt. Hector A. Chavez,  
United States - Prisoner of War #52727,  
Stalag Luft 4 - Germany,  
Via: New York, New York.

Mr. Jesus A. Chavez,  
Post Office Box 659,  
San Ysidro, California.

Dear Mr. Chavez:

The Provost Marshal General has directed me to inform you of the transfer of the above-named prisoner of war to the camp indicated.

You may communicate with him by following the inclosed mailing instructions.

Further information will be forwarded as soon as it is received.

Sincerely yours,

*Howard F. Bresee*

Howard F. Bresee,  
Colonel, C.M.P.,  
Assistant Director, Prisoners of War Division.

1 Incl.  
Mailing Circular.

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

# WESTERN UNION

1204

SYMBOLS

- DL - Day Letter
- NL - Night Letter
- LC - Deferred Cable
- NLT - Cable Night Letter
- Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS  
PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

2 BY AY 23GOVT

WASHINGTON D C 258AM MAY 20 1945

JESUS A CHAVEZ

POSTOFFICE BOX NO 659 SAN YSIDRO CALIF

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON  
T/SG CHAVEZ HECTOR A RETURNED TO MILITARY CONTROL 26 APRIL 45

J A UL10 THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

231P

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE





306th PRISONER OF WAR QUESTIONNAIRE  
Prepared by Russell A. Strong

This questionnaire is being sent to you because it would be impossible for me to visit all of the 306th ex-prisoners of war and to interview them. As a result of reading a recent book, For You the War is Over, a study of prisoners of Germany in WW II, I would like to write a series of articles for Echoes on the experiences of 306th men who ended up "in the bag". To make this possible your help is very much needed. If you need extra pages to explain any of your answers, please feel free to do so.

Your dedicated help in this project will make it really work!

Sincerely yours  
*Russell A. Strong*

Name HECTOR A. CHAVEZ

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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MIA Date \_\_\_\_\_ Target \_\_\_\_\_

Pilot \_\_\_\_\_ Plane name \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Place of landing \_\_\_\_\_

Date of capture \_\_\_\_\_

Captured by:  Civilians  Police  Wehrmacht  Luftwaffe

Others, explain

\*\*\*\*\*

Were you wounded in the plane? If so, describe

Were you injured in landing? If so, describe

DECEASED

Discuss prison camp food as to availability, variety, quantity and quality:

By whom was food generally prepared?

Did you receive Red Cross parcels? How frequently?

How frequently did you receive mail?

Were you ever jailed while in prison camp? What for? How long? Under what conditions were you confined?

Were you repatriated prior to April 1945?

Dates:                      Route:                      Aboard SS Gripsholm?

By April 1945 what was your general physical condition?

Were you hospitalized while in prison? Was there a doctor available?

How much weight did you lose as a prisoner?

How long after you were freed did it take to regain your normal weight?

Did you require medical treatment after being freed to correct problems incurred on your last mission or in prison camp? Describe: