

21 May 1995

Dear Russ,

Thought you'd find my letter of 5/19 of interest. I sent this also to the Air Force Mag. I could have said (after losses - 306<sup>th</sup> BG and 368<sup>th</sup> Squadron). The mission where I lost 60 men was the one to Bremen 7 17 April. I had just taken command of the 368<sup>th</sup> and lost 6 or 7 airplanes. The 368<sup>th</sup> was flying "Purple Heart Corner" in the group formation. What a welcome!

Hope all is well.

Sorry we can't make the reunion.

Warm regards,

John Regan

Col. John M. Regan, USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
(415) 343-8216

P.S. We had lost 113 A/C  
in combat while I was  
with the 306<sup>th</sup> - that's 1130 men.

### Defense 5/19/95

Editor, The Times:

It seems like V-E Day was just yesterday. I remember having had mixed emotions then. Elation that the war in Europe was over, mixed with sad feelings for the many close friends either killed or shot down in aerial combat. I had been a pilot of a B-17 flying fortress bomber flying from England against German targets in Europe (1942-1944). In the bomb group to which I was assigned, we lost over 1,000 men to enemy action including 60 in one day from a squadron I commanded. I had learned to hate and fear war — a feeling that was later reinforced while serving in the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts. I also learned the need to be militarily strong.

Nowadays we hear a chorus of voices calling for cuts in the U.S. defense budget — a budget that has been in decline for over 10 consecutive years. Those calling for cuts generally say that since the end of the Cold War there is no pressing need for a strong military. I would point out to these people that the world is still fraught with many dangers and potential threats to our way of life. There is rampant nationalism, resurgent communism, fanatical religious activity and other movements that demand we stay strong.

We cannot afford to forget the most expensive lesson in history — WWII. This event cost over 50 million lives, a trillion and a half dollars, and untold misery. The lesson was the failure of world leaders of that time to recognize the true threat to peace that Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany represented — that failure led to the devastating world war. We were fortunate in that period there was time to build up our decimated military forces and needed equipment to eventually help to win that conflict. Time is a luxury we most likely would not enjoy in a future conflict.

We must stay vigilant and strong and show the world that we are prepared to use any needed force to retain our way of life.

It has been said that when the Roman legions were strong and the Roman Empire mighty, they adhered to the maxim: "Si vis pacem para bellum" (To assure peace prepare for war).

When they ignored this axiom, the Roman Empire collapsed. It must not happen to us.

John M. Regan  
Col. U.S.A.F. (Ret.)  
San Mateo

At breakfast with Col. John Regan 1 Dec 79 at San Mateo, CA.

Kangaroo courts were held for those aborting missions. Entire crew would be tried, and if convicted would have to wear ~~gxxxkxxx~~ oxygen masks around for entire day.

368th policy was to fly new first pilots as copilots for first five missions, and then to give them their old crews back.





2 Sept. 1980

Dear Russ,

Your letter of 28 August regarding a mid-air collision on 27 Dec. 43. I do not remember this and think I would had it happened. There may be some confusion -

On 1 March 1943 I led 50 B-17's on a practice mission - On return to Thurleigh and in the traffic pattern for landing another B-17 came down on top of mine (Picture of my aircraft "Bodacious Cutter" was in the July 80 [Vol. 5 #3] Echoes) As you can note my #1 prop was torn off and #2 stopped. I landed safely at an RAAF Base near Thurleigh and the other aircraft, who caught on fire briefly, belly landed safely at Chelveston. The only person hurt was my bombardier, Kosokowski who had superficial cuts on his head from shattered glass as a prop of the other plane took off part of the nose of mine. I can't recall the name of the other pilot or the crew members. The accident happened as the lead pilot in the top squadron of my formation (name I can't recall) lost sight of me and flew what he thought was straight ahead - he actually was flying across my formation and his #6 aircraft hit mine - as you know he should have turned right until he could  
(over)



see me and then resume position. We  
were all lucky. There was no disciplinary  
action taken. Hope this is helpful.

I would like to get together for  
breakfast or at any time. Call when you are  
in California.

Sincerely,

John Regan

Col John M. Regan USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue ave.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402



1924 - 2005

Passed away peacefully at home on July 1st at the age of 80.

Dearly beloved wife of John M. Regan; loving mother of Guillemette, Georgine, Patrick, Antoinette, Kevin and Sean; loving grandmother of April, Kyle, Melody, Erin, Brendan, Christopher, Colleen and Livia; loving sister of Aymar and Huguette of France.

Christille was born in France near the city of Limoges. After studying law for a few years, Christille worked for the French Embassy in Yugoslavia where she met her husband-to-be, John in 1952. John and Christille were married in Versailles, France in 1954 and Christille became an Air Force wife and a busy mother of six. The family often moved with the Military between Europe and the U.S. until the family settled in California in 1969 when John retired from the U.S. Air Force.

Christille was a creative, multi-talented person with many interests, an avid reader and crossword puzzle fan. She loved to play bridge with her many friends and was devoted to her family.

A Mass of Celebration will be held Wed, July 6, 10:30am at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, 2700 Dover Ave, Fairfield, CA. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Assn. Arrangements under the direction of Fairfield Funeral Home 707-425-1041

Christille

San Francisco

Conversation with John Regan, one of original group,  
later Sqdn commander, at San Mateo, Cal. 14 July 1975

Just after becoming C.O. of 368th, lost 6 of 7 crews on one raid.

Overacker and Holt couldn't divorce themselves from people. Overacker reacted pretty badly to losing a crew on the first raid.

More luck than skill in survival.

Many felt if they completed five missions, survival chances went up 50 per cent.

Had a navigator report in at 10:30 at night, and was shot down on mission next morning. Must have been shortest combat career in group.

J. W. Wilson was a tough man.

Lost #2 over St. Nazaire, hedgehopped all the way home with a wingman. Saw shells fired at them from Normandy coast and saw shells land in water. Had to pull up to get across English coast.

Lt. Co. at 23, Col. at 31. Served 30 years.



ALUMNI COUNCIL

April 28, 1975

Mr. Russell A. Strong, Director  
News and Information Services  
Wright State University  
Dayton, OH 45431

Dear Mr. Strong:

We have forwarded your letter regarding Mr. John M. Regan to him, as it is our policy not to give out information regarding alumni to anyone outside the Santa Clara "family."

I am sure you will hear from him soon.

Sincerely,

Doris Uhlendorf  
Secretary to the Executive Director

cc - Mr. John M. Regan



# PENINSULA HUMANE SOCIETY

1225 COYOTE POINT DRIVE SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA 94401  
(415) 344-7643



April 29, 1975

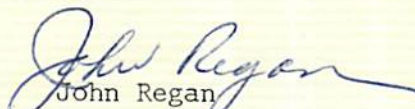
Mr. Russell A. Strong  
Director  
Wright State University  
Dayton, Ohio 45431

Dear Mr. Strong,

Your letter of April 18, 1975 addressed to Santa Clara University was forwarded to me by the Alumni Association.

I have listed my address below and would be happy to help you in your research.

Sincerely,

  
John Regan  
General Manager

JR/mo

Home address: 334 W. Bellevue Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94402

GENERAL MANAGER

JOHN M. REGAN

DIRECTORS

LOUIS R. GOLDSMITH  
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CHARLES E. SMITH, D.V.M.  
MRS. WILLIAM A. SWINERTON



12 May 1975

Col. John Regan  
334 W. Bellevue Avenue  
San Mateo, Calif. 94402

Dear Col. Regan:

It was very nice of you to reply to my inquiry.

Noting that many bomb groups have had decent histories published, and that considerable note is made of other groups in various books, I have always felt that the 306th did not receive justice.

With this in mind, and with considerable encouragement from Royal Frey of the Air Force Museum, I have begun work on a history. I hope that I can complete it at some time and perhaps get it published.

At the present time I am working through the microfilms of the official records of the group, and beginning to get a feel for the long history of the outfit and to put names together. (I served as a navigator with the 367th squadron from June to November of 1944.) Today I came across the page in the official history marking your departure and thought you might be interested in having it.

I am advised by others, and know it well myself, that the first place to start is with the ranking officers because of their age and the fact that some key figures are already dead. I have enclosed also a list of men whom I'd like to contact and would appreciate your going through it and letting me know of the whereabouts of any of them.

I'd also like to ask if you've ever written any of your recollections down, and if you have, if you would loan me a copy?

And another immediate concern of mine is to get a better grasp of the command problems that existed in the first year, and to learn something of the personalities involved. What are some of your recollections in this regard?

Since moving to Dayton I've only located one former member of the group, Seymour Rambo, an attorney, who held a variety of ground jobs at Thurleigh.

I am planning on being in California for a brief time this summer and hope to be able to see you and several other people then.

Sincerely yours,  
Russell A. Strong

h 4900 Appleridge Ct.  
Dayton, Ohio 45424  
h 513/233-8735 o 513/873-3232

### FROM THE COCKPIT

"Milk-run" my foot. This was supposed to be a relatively easy mission but, wow! it sure wasn't. The last German fighter pretty nearly rammed us head on and one of his 20mm cannon shells exploded in the nose of our B-17, hitting a can of 50 caliber ammo and blowing it up. The resulting explosion and shrapnel shattered the leg of our navigator, "Salty" Salitronik, slightly wounding me, knocked out the oxygen system in the cockpit and set part of our hydraulic system on fire. Some "milk-run."

This was my 18th mission. On all previous combat sorties I had been pilot or aircraft commander for the squadron or the group. But today our airplane was leading the 8th Air Force and I was flying as co-pilot for Lt. Col. Jim Wilson, one of the most experienced and best pilots in our group and the 8th A.F. Our crew was experienced and sharp. Brig. Gen. Frank Armstrong, our former C.O., stood in the cockpit as an observer.

The flight had been routine until we crossed the Belgium Coast toward the target. Then all hell broke loose. This was somewhat surprising. I had thought this mission might be a little easier than most, as we would only be over enemy occupied territory a short time and not over their homeland. But, one thing I had learned from experience is that there were many ways to get clobbered flying combat - I had seen this only too often. One could never assume that a mission could be just routine. Therefore, as always I was apprehensive and this time it proved to be right.

The first waves of German fighters attacked us as we crossed



the coast of Belgium and continued to press their attack until we hit the English Channel on our way back home. Since we were leading the raid our formation took the brunt of these assaults. I was so damn busy helping to fly that I only vaguely saw and absorbed what was going on around us. I do recall seeing one B-17 go down just after we crossed the coast and others later.

When we were hit I realized quickly that our oxygen system had been knocked out so I grabbed an emergency bottle to share with Gen. Armstrong (we took turns using it). Gen. Armstrong showed great courage as he went into the nose of the airplane to assure that the badly wounded "Salty" was getting oxygen and to tear open his pant leg and pour sulfa disinfectant on his wounds. With limited oxygen this took guts. On one of his many trips into the nose I glanced behind me and saw that our hydraulic lines were burning. I struggled out of my seat and with our flight engineer, John Crowther, we fought the fire with our hands until it went out. I was lucky I didn't pass out from the lack of oxygen but managed to get to my emergency source to keep me going. I got back to my seat just in time to grab Gen. Armstrong by his grey hair and give him some oxygen before he passed out. It was hectic.

Under these difficult circumstances we dropped our bombs and headed home. In spite of his pain and severe wounds "Salty" propped himself up and gave us headings to fly to our base.

As we left the Belgium Coast and crossed the English Channel, RAF Spitfires joined us as escort to England. Only then did the German fighters break off their attacks.

We limped back to Thurleigh. Wilson, who had done a superb job of flying, brought us down with no further serious complications. On final we had fired a red flare showing we had wounded aboard and were met by a medical crew and ambulance. "Salty," who had lost a lot of blood, was given 4 pints of plasma right on the spot before he was taken to the 8th A.F. hospital at Paddington. I was treated at the base clinic and released little worse for wear. Tired - yes, shaken - yes, and damn glad it was over.

I visited "Salty" at the hospital several times and watched his condition improve markedly. I thought he had it made. However, on my last visit with him on 15 April, I found him delirious and in great pain. I talked with the head nurse who advised me that they were going to take a cast of his damaged leg that night and treat him further. When it was removed they found that gas gangrene had set in and had spread through his body. He died on 16 April. With his passing our group had lost a great navigator, a swell guy and a natural leader. I had lost a good friend.

For a so-called "milk-run" my 18th combat sortie had been some mission.



## I SURVIVED A MID-AIR COLLISION

by John M. Regan

© 1997

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Have you ever experienced the devastating emotion of total helplessness - an inability to alter your circumstances? This is a possibility that all face, particularly aviators - as a pilot, I once <sup>nearly</sup> faced this. Regardless of training, experience and know-how, there may come a time when circumstances beyond a pilots control, make an aircraft unflyable. It could be a sudden incident, such as a massive explosion that destroys the aircraft or its essential controls; a less rapid but still deadly one, like an uncontrollable fire or mechanical failure. A violent mid-air collision of aircraft generally results in fatalities - more often than not, total. Infrequently, some or all people involved survive. I am one of the fortunate.

The year was 1943 - the place was England. My heart pounded rapidly, my nerves jangled and I broke out in a cold sweat, standing there staring at the damaged airplane that I had just crash-landed after a violent mid-air collision. The fact that I was unhurt and was able to stand and look at the wreckage of my 10 man, 4 engine B-17 Flying Fortress bomber was evidence of just how fortunate I was. The immensity of this luck had not yet fully sunk in - it would.

No one on my crew or that of the other B-17 that had slammed into mine had been seriously hurt - 20 fortunate men. We were blest that the B-17 is such a solid, tough, forgiving airplane. That this is true was proved many times during the war.

1943 is many years ago, but I still relive the horror of this event as the memories are indelible in my mind. At times of other mid-air collisions, or reported near misses of aircraft, my thoughts instinctively go back to the helpless sensation caused by the shattering impact of the other airplane hitting mine. This sensation was forcefully and dramatically brought to mind at the time of the 1997 tragedy in Israel which took the lives of 73 people - a mid-air collision of two military helicopters.

As I recall my mid-air collision, it was only a few minutes until I was safely on the ground, but at the time it seemed like an eternity. On that memorable day, as a 22 year old captain, I was leading a formation of 18 B-17 bombers. We had just completed a training mission on which practice bombs had been dropped on a simulated Nazi target. It had been a welcome relief from the actual combat missions we had been flying, and a wonderful change from facing enemy fighters and anti-aircraft fire - no pressure, no problems, just a routine flight! This was to change. We were flying at about 1500 feet over our home base in England, preparatory to landing. The crew members were not in their usual combat positions; they were not strapped tightly in their parachutes, and were lounging comfortably, completely relaxed, as in a few minutes they would be on the ground.

I was flying totally at ease, casually looking out the left window of the cockpit watching the lower squadron turn for their landing approach; all was normal. Suddenly the airplane to my immediate left made a violent unexpected turn and dove away from me. Before I had time to question this unorthodox maneuver, my airplane received a tremendous jolt and I could hear a sickening tearing and ripping of metal. My heart leaped and my nerves tensed as I knew we had collided with something.

My reaction was "Oh God! This can't happen to me." Instinctively, I reached for the emergency bell to alert the crew for possible bail-out, and as I did so, I saw another B-17 pass closely over mine, its underside on fire; a fire that must have been caused by a collision with my aircraft. I struggled to tighten my parachute. At this point, I didn't know the extent of the damage, whether the airplane was flyable or if we could even bail out if necessary. Our navigator who had been in the nose of the airplane, poked his head up through an opening in the cockpit floor and shouted "Christ, what happened?" He was bleeding profusely, as the impact of the crash had shattered the plexiglass nose, and fragments of it had blown into his face, causing innumerable small, but not serious cuts.

There was a somewhat controlled chaos on the airplane. My initial shock passed, and in its place was a degree of unhurried professionalism that had been drilled into us by countless hours of emergency practice.



I worked the controls, and it became apparent that, at least for the moment, the danger of having an uncontrollable airplane had passed. I settled back in my seat, and with my co-pilot began to assess the damage. Looking out the left window, I could see that the propellers on the two engines on that side were gone, knocked off by the impact, and that the left wing was badly damaged. I could also feel the wind rushing into the cockpit from the shattered nose. A quick check of the instruments and a visual inspection showed that the impact had not caused a fire - something dreaded by all flyers, as they are so difficult to control and so unpredictable. I found that the damage to the airplane had been pretty much confined to the left side and to the nose, and that I still had two undamaged, operating engines on the right. Having determined this, I rang the emergency bell again to indicate stand-by for crash landing, and began a visual look for an airfield. If I could not find one easier to reach than my home base, over which I was, I would have to nurse the airplane through a landing turn, and preferred not to. The immediate concern was to get the airplane on the ground as rapidly as possible, as I could not be certain how long it would remain flyable. Fortunately, England has many airfields, and I found a British Royal Air Force Base directly in front of me. It was some distance off, but its major runway was straight ahead, and beckoned warmly. This meant that I would only have to maneuver a little, which would be all to the good.

My co-pilot and I nursed the damaged airplane toward the inviting runway, gingerly using the power from the two engines on the right side. This power was used sparingly and only when absolutely necessary: it was difficult to maintain a direction straight ahead, as the airplane wanted to go left, lacking any power on that side to counteract the thrust from the right engines. Events were taking place so fast that most of our actions were purely reflexive, resulting from many hours of flying the B-17, and constant practice of emergency conditions.

I did not call for extension of the landing gear until I was certain that I could make the airfield ahead. As we came closer to the welcoming runway, I signaled my co-pilot to lower the gear, and prayed silently that it would work properly. He pushed the gear handle down, and after a few breathless seconds, there was the welcome clang indicating that the gear had lowered, and a green light jumped to life in the cockpit, meaning that it was fully down and locked in position - Whew! The lowered gear made the airplane more difficult to control, but

we didn't have far to go to be safely on the ground.

The boundaries of the airfield passed rapidly under us and the runway loomed dead ahead. The airplane hit the ground just short of the runway and rolled on to it - (Thank God the landing gear had functioned normally!). After a short roll, I managed to bring it to a full halt, quickly turned off all switches and rapidly jumped out, putting some distance between me and the damaged airplane. When I finally stopped running and looked back, I found the rest of my crew, who had preceded me, doing the same. We were speechless and just stood there, staring, fascinated. We were all so very fortunate, as that day we had come very close to death.

As it turned out, the other B-17 that had slammed into me had crash landed, with its gear up, at still another airfield. The fire started on its underside had gone out but the gear could not be lowered having been damaged by the collision. No one on the aircraft had been injured.

The unfortunate and almost fatal accident had been caused by a lead pilot in yet another B-17 in our formation who had not correctly followed set procedures. Having lost sight of my lead airplane, he flew what he thought was straight ahead instead of slowing down and turning to the right until he could again see me. His errant course brought his flight of six airplanes over mine and a pilot busily flying formation, and following his lead, inadvertently slammed his aircraft into mine.

As I recall the horror of this event, I pray that no one has to go through such an ordeal. I have happily noted that strong measures to increase flight safety have recently been taken. By the year 2000 it is projected that the airlines will carry many more passengers than they do now. The many airplanes flown by the airlines in the next century, will have to compete for airspace with innumerable general aviation and military aircraft. The airspace around most air terminals is crowded now.

I silently pray that passengers and air crews never have to face the horror of a serious aircraft accident of any kind. While it may be impossible to assure that flying is completely safe, all steps should be taken to ensure the utmost safety.

Flight safety must be given priority.

Interview with  
JOHN M. REGAN  
at San Mateo, CA, 12 June 1979

On Mar 1 '43 led 50 planes on a practice mission in which there was a mid-air collision. Kosakowski was in the nose and came out bloody. Top Squadron leader came across Regan, and his #1 and #2 props cut into the belly of the lead plane, and the ball turret stuck in the wing of Regan's plane. Regan landed at a nearby closed RAF field, while other plane bellied in at Chelveston. Also cleaned off the top turret.

Graduated from flying school 15 Mar 42, and was copilot on a B-18 on 20 Mar 42. Became an instructor pilot with seven hours in a B-17. Had flown four times in a B-17. Took first ride as a copilot on a B-17E 27 April 42.

In July went to blind landing instrument school in Spokane.

17 Nov 42. Brought damaged plane home from St. Nazaire. Hit on the way in and prop on #2 was windmilling. On the way out came across the Brest Peninsula at 500 feet, with two planes with him. There were no fighter attacks and no flak. Coastal guns fired at the planes.

He climbed to 1000 feet over the channel and jettisoned bombs. Then landed at a fighter base. Later took off on three engines for Thurleigh.

5 Apr 43 Same shell the hit Salitnik in the leg also hit Regan. Gen. Frank Armstrong was flying in the plane as an observer, and he took over the care of Salitnik in the nose, putting sulfa on the wound. Salitnik still managed to navigate plane home, although his leg was shattered.

In early stages the American fighters would rock wings for identification. Germans caught on and began rocking their wings too.

JOHN M. REGAN

15 April 1985

Dear Russ,

It was good to hear from you. I'm sorry that your new work keeps you so busy that you don't get out this way. Would love to see you so if you do get out here stop by.

I've sent my registration money in but it is very possible that I may cancel because we will go to Europe this year. This priority trip will be to attend a celebration of wife's sister's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary - so far exact date? -

I'm a little confused as to exactly what is going on in Seattle this year. It would be kind of fun to go but is it worth it? I would think that you could probably get a lot of interest in your excellent book "Kist Over Germany".

If all goes well I do plan to be in Colorado Springs for the reunion. See you there.

Warm regards,

John Regan



JOHN M. REGAN

29 April, 1997

Russ Strong

Dear Russ,

I believe you are aware that Gerald  
Aster has written a book on the King's  
air force. I've enclosed a flyer about it.  
As you can note it will be published  
on 10 June. I spoke with and corresponded  
with him quite often. I also answered  
many questions and sent him pictures.  
He thought highly of you and your book,  
"First over Germany". I'm sure he will  
have a lot about our group - I  
hope it is complementary.

I exchange "prop" with Ed Hennessy  
quite often. I sent him a copy of an article  
I wrote on the mid-air collision I had  
on 1 March 1943. We sent it to the S.F.  
Chronicle and will send you one later.

Hope all is well. Give our best to  
June.

Going to France (French family reunion)  
in late July, early August. <sup>my wife</sup>

OVER

Best regards,  
John Regan

P.S. I really enjoyed reading the little paper  
book book, "a Gift of Wings," by Richard Bach  
the author of "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" —  
I'm sure you would like it.

JWZ

1 August '92

Dear Russ,

Reference the Echoes Vol. 17, NO. 3  
July 1992 - Picture, P. 7.

The "Sno 7 Fury" was my air-  
craft picked up at Westover Fed.  
Mars. 8/15/42 - #124493.

I can't identify the people  
in the picture. It may be  
"Slim" Boring 3<sup>rd</sup> from right and  
"Gus" Krajcik NO. 1 left ???

We have a daughter working  
for Boring, who lives in Seattle, so  
The '93 Reunion sounds interesting.

Warm regards,

John Legon



From the desk of...



COL. JOHN M. REGAN

8/12/01

Dear Russ,

Your quite amazing  
already, we of the 306th  
owe you so much for  
all you do but now  
you are even turning  
our reunion. Thank you  
as much as I would  
like, I'm not going to  
be able to attend. The  
least I can do is send  
a contribution to our association  
if some money I would  
have spent. I hope it  
won't be the last, because  
I keep saying - at least  
one more time.

(over)





It's fine - just older.  
We finally decided to sell  
our house, (to allow our  
tax deduction), to help our  
kids. We are in a nice,  
friendly Continuing Care Ret.  
Community for Ret. Military.  
Close to Travis A.F.B. at Fair-  
field Co. A nice big 2 bedroom  
home with all the amenities.

It's sure ~~to~~ "Slim" bring  
Gus Krajcik and others of the  
368<sup>th</sup> will be there. Give all  
my best.

Again thank you and  
hope some day to see you  
again.

Warm regards,

John Regan

Over best to June.

JOHN M. REGAN

Russell Strong

17 Aug. 1982

Dear Russ,

It was good to hear from you and to receive my second copy of your excellent book.

I wrote Gen. Dougherty and recommended the book and sent my first copy to a personal friend - George Galding - who is an aviator writer and an award winner for writing excellence. He writes for the local papers. I'll keep you posted as to what he writes about it. I also gave a pitch about it at the last local AFA council meeting.

Hope you'll come to the West Coast again and drop by.

Sincerely,  
John Regan

JOHN M. REGAN

2 August 1982

Russell a Strong

Dear Russ,

Congratulations. I think "First Over Germany" is excellent. It is thorough and shows painstaking work. You are a superb writer and your style is easy reading and good.

Of particular interest to me is the many stories of people shot down. It had proved two things to me - how lousy my memory is, and how damn lucky I am to be alive. - It sure was tough.

I've enclosed a check for 20<sup>00</sup> for another book. I noticed the brief review in the Air Force magazine. I'm going to push sales of it in the Chapter I'm a council member of - Tennessee come Rock Chapter. I suggest you send a copy to AFA Executive Director Reuss

(over)

Dougherty (Gen. USAF Ret.) He is a personal friend - Get him to endorse it as showing what <sup>put</sup> <sup>with</sup> USAF did/and went through in WWII. Also, if you haven't, you might try the libraries and the various cities (including newspapers) that are the homes of people mentioned in the book.

Again - Congratulations. I think it's great.

Hope to see you again. I always enjoy your visits.

Warm regards,

John Regan



28 August 1980

Dear John:

Here is that fellow who asks the strange questions again:

On 27 Dec 43, a practice mission was flown and two planes collided. One plane crash landed, the other crew bailed out, and the plane was shot down over the Channel by Spitfires.

There is a vague mention of the event in the Group diary, and the only Squadron diary that mentions it is the 368th, hence, I have jumped to the conclusion that it must have been two 368th planes.

If that is a valid assumption, by any chance can you remember who the pilots were? Would any disciplinary action have been taken for such a happenstance?

I will be arriving in the San Francisco area about 10 Oct. Dave Wheeler may take me in tow. But, if he doesn't I'll be around and get in touch. I need to come down that way to see several people.

If I am not otherwise occupied, I wondered if we might not just extend an invitation to some Bay area men to get together for breakfast or lunch on that Saturday some place. Think there might be any interest?

Sincerelyyours,

Russell A. Strong

P.S. I've enclosed \$10.00 for - more issues of "Echoes"  
I didn't cut the slip out of the paper as I want the picture -

JOHN M. REGAN

Aug 30, 1982

Wm. M. Collins Jr.

Dear Bill,

It was good, as always, to receive my copy of "Echoes". Keep up the good work.

I was proud to see the picture of my staff and officer air crew members on the 6<sup>th</sup> page. I have the one taken that same day of my staff and ground crew personnel in my album. Would you please send me the original picture - I will have it reproduced and send the original back to you. Incidentally that's me in the middle, bottom row.

Give my best to Russ when you see him.

Sincerely,

John Regan

Cpl. John M. Regan, USAF (Ret)  
334 W. Bellmore Ave.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402

JOHN M. REGAN

3/August 1987

Dear Russ,

Hope all is well. I'm sorry that I will not be at the reunion this year. I will try, and hope to be, in Las Vegas in '88. - This is pretty close to home.

Reference our conversation about John Grey who claims to be working on a computer game. I have no facts but don't trust him. - My personal view, I think he probably has a scam going (a real con artist). He appeals to old retired Colonels (or senior officers) to give him data which he doesn't really need or intend to use. He gets them involved, appealing to them by saying that they will get publicity from it - I assume he figures that this is the clincher, that all old timers would love publicity (not me). Eventually after the men are hooked he probably would ask for money (even as high as 1000.00 dollars) to keep his idea going. The last time he called me I told  
(over)

him, bluntly, that I was <sup>not</sup> interested.  
He dropped me like a "hot potato".

I don't know if you are sick of  
Oliver Stone's expertise(?) on political  
matters as I am - I've enclosed a copy  
of a letter that shows my views.

Give my best to everyone.

Warm regards,

John Regan

Col. John M. Regan, USAF (Ret.)

334 W. Bellevue Ave.

San Mateo, CA. 94402



5 August 1982

Dear John:

Many thanks for your nice comments on the book, and your interesting observations on the fate on individuals.

As your suggestion, I have sent Russ Dougherty a copy of the book. If he reads it and drops a word here and there it might be quite beneficial. The paragraph in Air Force magazine has already produced a number of sales.

I am only now getting to work on the library promotion angle and will be working on that in the next couple of months. I've been to Europe for 2½ weeks this summer (Italy, mainly), came home for a week and went off to a week's institute. Next week is vacation and then we are going to spend a week in North Carolina with four of our sons.

There are just not enough hours in the day to get everything done that I would like to do.

Book sales are going well, and it is almost paid for. But, it is very strange as to the numbers of 306th men who have not ordered copies, like Overacker, two Wilsons, Robinson, etc. I refuse to give them to them as they can better afford to buy it than I can to give them one. JW does not surprise me, but Del does. But, as time goes by they may get the idea.

Hope to get to California in the fall or winter, but as yet have not put any plans in motion.

Why don't you also write Dougherty, suggesting that he push the book?

Sincerely yours,



9 August 1982

Dear John:

As I working on some interior painting today, and having time to think, I cam up with the idea that perhaps you could review First Over Germany for one of the San Francisco papers. This would get some attention, and might be the source of some greater sales. It would also tend to scare some more 306th people in the San Francisco Bay area out of the woodwork..

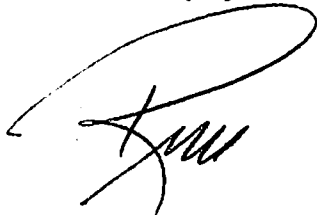
It might even get Bill VanNorman to ante up for a copy. He was the group PR man and I worked for him for about six weeks. But on several occasions when I've been in the SF area he has always found an excuse so as to not talk to me.

Always thought he was a funny duck at Thurleigh.

Other than that sales continue at a steady pace, nothing to set the world on fire but enough to keep me optimistic that I'll get the printer's bill paid shortly. Then its on to the big profits!

I'll appreciate any efforts you can muster.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John', written in a cursive style. The signature is located below the typed text 'Sincerely yours,'.

16 August 1979

Col. John M. Regan  
334 W. Bellevue Av  
San Mateo, CA 94402

Dear John:

As you know, I have been out of town, and had been back in the house on a short time when you called. I read to you from the Group diary on the 27 Jan 43 mission to Wilhelmshaven.

I had been down to the Air University, and had found there the Squadron diaries, complete. After talking with you, I got out the 368th piece, and perhaps you would like to see what that says, as it sheds a bit more light on your place:

"WILHELMSHAVEN RAID - Invading German territory for the first time in our history, our Group headed by Col. Armstrong, led the field in over the Frisian Islands, found a heavy overcast over the target, and swung Northeast to Wilhelmshaven where a brace of naval docks could be seen through heavy clouds and smoke. Capt. McKay and Lts. Buddenbaum and Reber got their bombs away for the Jerries, who appeared to be caught entirely off base by our appearance. Flak knocked some holes in our ships and damaged Capt. McKay's controls, but fighters were few and shy. All came back safely, including Capt Regan who was forced back early, and found a crowd of beaming generals and inquisitive reporters ready to take them on."

The grammar is a little faulty, but you get the idea. At some later time I may find what happened to you, but engineering and operations reports at that time weren't nearly as good as they were a year later.

But, perhaps this will enable you to remember what happened to your plane that day.

Sincerely yours,

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29 Dec. 1979

Russell A. Strong

Dear Russ,

Having lost your new address I hope this reaches you. - I take this opportunity to hope that your holidays are wonderful and that 1980 will be a great year for you. - I really enjoyed your last visit and hope you can visit again.

I'm trying to obtain a good picture of a B-17 - either alone or in combat, 6 1/2 inches by 4 1/2 inches or thereabouts. It should be glossy as it is for a newspaper - a couple of pictures is preferable and a negative would be great. Can you help me? or suggest where I might get one.

Our holidays have been great as all 6 kids were home. We are both "pooped" today but it is quiet as they all have headed various directions.

Hope to see you soon.  
Warm regards,

John Regan

334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402



Mr. Russell A. Strong -

7 Feb 1980

Dear Russ,

Congratulations - The latest Echoes is great. I also wish I had been able to attend the reunions and hear your talks - I'm certain they were very good and well received.

In going through my files I came across the B-17 picture enclosed which belongs to you. Sorry it was not with the others returned.

As you know I didn't actually drop bombs on Wilhelmshaven on 27 Jan. 1943. You asked why I came back early - I was leading a low flight and before we crossed the coast of Germany one of the 50 caliber guns on a ship, in front fired and coaxial shells hit the Plexiglass nose of my B-17 knocking part of it out. - We aborted as it was a choice of going in and having the navigator and bombardier freeze to death or going home. - I choose the latter. -- It's funny how we remember things - Slim Boring recalls we went in and dropped bombs from 35,000 feet - Hell! I don't remember ever being above 29,000 feet -

But Craig and I agree on the general outline mentioned above which is probably close to the facts. -- The Examiner wanted me to write on the bombing but since I didn't actually bomb I refused.

I hope your book is going well and that you will come and visit again.

Sincerely,  
John Regan

Dear Russ,

you've gotten pretty fancy with the added color to Echoes. Enjoyed the many pictures of the reunion in England. It must have been great.

We will be in Seattle as we have a daughter who's a project engineer at Boeing (if she doesn't lose her job).

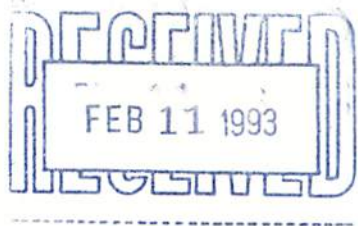
It seems that the fighter jacks - aces and other firsts - always get played up in magazines like "Service", "TRSA" etc. and seldom, if ever, bomber exploits. I noted no mention of the historic milestone of 27 January - First. Why don't you inquire -

Hope all is well.

See you in Seattle.

Warm regards,

John Regan





16 February 1990

Dear Russ,  
Happy St. Patrick's Day -

I've called Mrs. Condon many, many times and get an answering machine, always explaining purpose and giving my number - no response - either traveling, in hospital or ??? -

Will keep trying.

Warm regards,  
John Regan

2/18/88

Dear Russ

Thank for the call. I  
am saddened by Mannys  
death but not surprised.

He was a great American.

It was good to see out  
be with you and Nancy.

See you in Vegas (God  
willing).

Warm regards,

John Rega

JOHN M. REGAN

19 Feb. 1997

Dear Russ,

Reference your letter 11 Feb.

Thank you for all your research. I can only surmise that over the years I have embellished what was, or must have been, a mission where I did lead a formation of some kind. I think looking at the time I was a Lt. Col. makes sense. I have gone back and looked again at my log book, (which is far from complete). There is an entry on <sup>(maybe 42nd)</sup> 1 Mar. 43, (I was a Captain), where I ~~was~~ landed at Poddington (where in Hants is that?) and lead the 101<sup>st</sup> Combat Wing - AC number 124467 - Target not given. As to PFF, this again an embellishment over the years - Well again thank you. I'm just going to have to forget it.

Hope all is well and that the trip to Europe turns out to be great.

My best to Gene.

Sincerely,  
John Regan

2/22/99

Dear Russ,

Hope this finds you well.  
Enjoyed the pictures and news  
about the reunion - wish  
we could have made it. You  
and June look well. Called  
"Slim", Boring to congratulate him.

We enclosed a check for  
\$38.00 for a copy of your great  
book, "First over Germany."  
Would you please send it  
to my son at:

Sean Regan  
700 1/2 Whiting ave.  
Jova City, IA 52245

My best to June.

Warm regards,  
John Regan

25 February 1985

Dear JohnE

I usually let my correspondence mellow a bit before replying, but I cleaned up my desk yesterday and am now trying to keep it that way--and I will for about a week.

Visits to much of anywhere, other than North Carolina, are almost non-existent for me now. I changed jobs about a year ago, from alumni to director of research for the fund raisers at Western Michigan University, and it cut my travel to about zero. The only stuff I do now is back and forth to North Carolina to see the grandchildren.

My last trip west was a year ago last December, and it appears unlikely that I will be back again right away. I also lost my foreign travel, but really could not complain, as I had had four free trips to Europe with my wife included in four years. One can hardly beat that.

Enjoyed your letter to the editor. That was much better than many I read.

I surely do hope you make it to Colorado Springs. I fear that you would be mobbed by my former 368th members, but it would do wonders for your ego. You'd probably just float home. Many asked about you at Fort Worth.

The weather has calmed down a bit here and much of the snow has melted, which is making life a bit more bearable. February was a pretty tough month around here. And an ice storm in January really did a tremendous amount of damage around my house, including about half a dozen appliances that were ruined by a power surge.

Good to hear from you, and when next I do visit California I'll be sure to let you know so we can get together.

Sincerely yours,



JOHN M. REGAN

22 Feb. 1985

Dear Russ,

I hope you will be visiting this area again as I always enjoyed your visits. I just finished again looking at the excellent Dec. 84 issue of "Echoes" - the pictures of the reunion are great. It must have really been fun.

Eddie Montoya called and we talked about the next get together. I hope to finally make one. It seems I'm always making excuses. This time I have a daughter getting married on 11 May - a family reunion at Tahoe on 1 June - and we are going to Europe for my wife's sister's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (probably August or September).

I've enclosed a brief letter that was in the SF Chronicle regarding our friend Stockman. George Paris saw it and wrote me a short note. Hope we can get together.

Come visit.

Let me know if I can help in any way.

Warm regards,  
John Regan

10 January 1980

Dear John:

Here are some pictures of B-17s from the 306th. I hope that at least one of them will serve the purpose for you. Of course, I would like the prints returned when you are through with them.

The photo, with three planes on the ground facing left, are original planes. I know the middle one was Bill Warner's plane, so guess they must have all been from the 423rd.

We packed a van the day after Christmas and unloaded the day before New Years, so our holidays were busy and a bit frustrating. But, we are in and getting settled. In fact, I'll have my materials out in a day or so so that I can get back to writing. I'm about to begin on John Ryan's big day in March 1943.

Note my new address above.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong



Mr. Russel a. Long

25 Jan. 1980

Dear Russ,

Thank you for sending me the pictures of the B-17's. They arrived a little late for my article which was published in the San Francisco Examiner - Copy enclosed. I have had the one of "Satan's Lady" reproduced and will use it. It is quite a coincidence - I knew the name "Satan Lady" struck a bell in me and noted the B-17 behind me in the picture you sent when I finished my last mission was "Satan's Lady" - How about that?

Hope all is well - that you like your new job and that the book is progressing.

Come and visit again. I really enjoyed it.

Sincerely,  
John Regan

Cpl. John M. Regan, USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402

30 January 1986

Col. John M. Regan  
334 W. Bellevue Av  
San Mateo, CA 94402

Dear John:

Its been along time since I've had a good occasion to write to you. I think its a good occasion, but you may think differently!

I have been working on a piece for the April issue of Echoes on the 5 April 43 raid to Antwerp, using considerable material from some Belgian sources including a series of pictures showing where our planes went down, and even a translation of the German account of its fighter activity that day.

Now, can I persuade you to write me a couple of pages double spaced on the view from the cockpit that day? I think it would add considerably to the piece. I am also trying to get Bob Seelos to finish yup his promised story on his return to the area a year ago, and once again meeting the woman who tried to help him escape that day.

Give it a little thought, and see if you can come up with something that will appropriate and interesting about all that went on in the plane. You certainly had a hair-raising trip. In the piece I put together I did not use material out of First Over Germany, but only referenced it as an additional source of data about the day.

We missed you at Colorado Springs, as another excellent reunion went down the pipes. Many of those 368th men present couldn't understand how you chose France over the opportunity to be with them, but they hope to see you at some future event.

Sorry that I don't get that way anymore, but a change in jobs ties me to a desk and I do very little traveling, except to see the grandchildren and go to 306th reunions. But retirement isn't too far off, and then I hope to make the West Coast one of my targets.

We tried to put together a travel group for May to France, as you know, but too many airport assaults, etc., put an end to that kind of thinking.

Look forward to hearing from you, and all the best to you,



Russell A. Strong

10 June 1977

Dear Russ:

Just a short note and a couple  
of pictures and an article you may find  
interesting.

I have found, as I'm sure you have,  
that there is a big nostalgia trip for our  
young people (up and through elementary school)  
on WWII - particularly flying. I lecture  
in College and speak quite often on WWII  
and my flying experiences. It has become  
an interesting subject - particularly for the young.

The pictures were made in late  
1942 when King George VI visited our base  
at Thurleigh - I had the honor of introducing  
him to part of my crew. He had congratulated  
me as I had just brought a damaged  
A/C home from St. Nazaire (we sledge-hopped  
from St. Nazaire home across occupied France)  
"Pop" in the back of pictures - you may keep-

Some facts on the 306<sup>th</sup> - You may  
have these already -

1. Gen. Curtis LeMay was the first group  
Executive Officer as a Lt. Col. at Wendover, Utah  
in early 1942.
2. The movie "12 O'Clock High" with (see)



Gregory Peck, was made about the 306<sup>th</sup> - General Savage in the movie and series was Gen. Frank Armstrong in real life.

3. The 368<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 306 B.G.(H) led the first U.S. bombing mission against Germany proper - Gen Armstrong was lead pilot.

4. The 368<sup>th</sup> Sqd. was the first U.S. outfit to drop 1000 tons of bombs on German targets

5. The 306<sup>th</sup> participated in the first U.S. bombing of Berlin.

There were many other highlights for the 306<sup>th</sup>,

you show as the Sqd. insignia for the 368<sup>th</sup> Eager Beavers - Thor with a ball and Chain - I question this - Originally it was Thor which we even used for a Xmas card in 1942 but I believe it was changed later to two beavers in a pond (faces with teeth gleaming) You might want to check this out.

I have no special orders.

Sincerely,

John Ryan



JOHN M. REGAN

18 June 1984

Dear Russ,

Really! someday I will make a reunion. The one this year in Dallas will, I'm sure, be great and I'd love to go but I have a son getting married on 22 Sept so will again have to postpone my attendance.

I thought the recent NBC-TV documentary on the 8th was terrific. It brought back many memories. A copy of a letter I wrote regarding this is enclosed.

"Slim" Boriny sent me a video tape of the visit to Thurleigh - I really enjoyed it.

Again, I think your book is great and read it often. Keep up the good work.

Warm regards,  
John Regan

Col. John M. Regan, USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402

## 8th Air Force

6/13/84

Editor, The Times:

Bob Foster of The Times had an excellent article about the NBC-TV documentary of June 2 about the 8th Air Force. In this he stated that "60 bombers were lost on the Schweinfurt raid, each with 12 men aboard." The crew of a bomber was 10 men and not 12.

The documentary had many exciting film clips of actual combat and for me, and certainly for other veterans of the 8th Air Force, it was filled with nostalgia, and vividly brought back the horrors of war.

As a pilot/squadron commander of a B-17 Flying Fortress unit, I question a statement from this documentary. The commentator said that the worst enemy of the bombers was flak, as one could not shoot back at it. Those of us who flew early in the



25 June 1980

Mr. Russell A. Strong

Dear Russ,

It was good to see my article in the April 306<sup>th</sup> Echoes - Phoenix. I would appreciate a couple of more copies - Please send COD.

I'm glad to hear that the book is going well. I certainly want to get a copy and will help in any way I can.

I have written "Gus" Krajcik to try and get the names and home towns of my crew as I've written an article about a mid-air I had over Thurleigh.

Hope you will come out my way again for a visit.

Warm regards,

John Regan

Col. John M. Regan USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402

<sup>14</sup>  
~~13~~ March 1986

Dear Russ,

Good to hear from you. I do plan to be at the reunion in Dayton this year. It will be great to renew old times with so many friends.

I've attached some "poop" regarding the mission on 5 April 43. It's awfully wordy and probably too d... long, so cut it wherever you want. Hope you can use it.

As I look back on that mission and the days at Thurleigh, I sense that it was all a part of life that I more or less blotted from my memory - except bits and pieces... It's like a dream, often a nightmare, something I don't want to recall too vividly. We were all so young: I was 22 to 24 during my tour. We all had to have an attitude that it can't happen to me, and to just not give a damn. If we didn't we wouldn't have retained our senses. One thing for sure we learned: there is no glamour in war; the only place where this is made so is in "Hollywood".

Hope to see you in Dayton. Let's stay in touch.

Warm regards,

John Regan  
Capt. USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402

P.S. I didn't count the words but the articles should be about 750 words -  
Hack it if you have to.  
Hope to see you soon.  
John



JOHN M. REGAN

2 March 1994

Russell Strong

Dear Russ,

Hope all is well.

There was an article "The Wings of War" in the March 1994 National Geographic magazine that discussed B-17's of the 8th in WWII. They mentioned Manny Klette but nothing about him so I wrote them a letter (copy enclosed). I found the article to be so-so, and felt old Klette should have been written up.

Manage to stay healthy and busy. Doubt I will be getting to reunions. Leave it to you younger fuzp.

My best.

Warm regards  
John Regan

R Colonel John M. Regan  
334 W Bellevue Ave  
San Mateo, CA 94402-1104

JOHN M. REGAN

20 May 1986

Dear Russ,

It was good to see my article in the April "Echoes". It could have been better but can only blame myself.

I still plan to make the reunion. It's going to be touch and go again. This time it's health (or just plain age?). I have a very rare disease called "Relapsing Polychondritis" - only 350 known cases. I have had it since January - some days good, others so-so. It may be under control. I hope so.

I've enclosed check (20<sup>00</sup>) for another copy of "First ---". My sister misplaced my original. I'd appreciate a note on the inside as you had on the other one.

Hope to see you soon and that all is well.

Warm regards,  
John Regan



JOHN M. REGAN

31 July 1992

Russell Strong

Near Russ,

The mission to Lille France, of 9 October 1942, is not one I'm likely to forget. Other missions I flew, with some exception, have dimmed in my memory but Lille was my first combat and therefore is a vivid recollection.

I've attached a couple of comments on this that might be of interest.

Sorry I will miss the trip to England.

Hope all is well.

Cpl. John M. Regan, USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402-1104

Warm regards,  
John Regan  
Ho (415) 343-8216

## Mission to Lille, France 9 October 1942

Two memories of this mission stand out in my mind.

### First:

As I neared the coast of enemy occupied France on this first combat mission I felt a little like I used to before the opening kickoff of a football game. I was excited, thrilled, a little nervous and frankly elated. I could hardly wait as this was what I had been trained for - I was ready. I maintained this feeling of elation until we approached our target. I could then see black puffs of smoke in the sky from anti-aircraft shells and German fighter aircraft. Suddenly it dawned on me that those German anti-aircraft gunners and those SOBs flying the fighters were serious and really meant to shoot us down. Right then and there I lost all my elation and so-called fascination for combat. I learned that day that actual conflict is hell and only glamourized by the media.

### Second:

After dropping bombs on our target and turning toward home base, I suddenly lost all power in my number 2 engine. I could not maintain formation and lagged behind the group - what a lonesome and frightening feeling. Several yellow nosed Focke Wulf fighters (Goering's favorite "Abbeville Kids") flew alongside me out of range of our 50 caliber machine guns. One after another they would peel off and attack. Fortunately I was able to maneuver so that they had to fly through the prop wash from our group which was ahead of me - this threw off the accuracy of their shots. Finally, after several attacks, and for an unknown reason, they left me alone. At this time the Germans had not yet seen many B-17's and were not certain of the best way to attack this aircraft. Had this happened to me later in the air war when the Germans had honed their skills against the B-17, I probably wouldn't be writing this. I was damn lucky and made it back to home base with only minor damage and a feathered propeller.

1 Nov. 1980

Russ Long

Dear Russ,

I'm sorry that I couldn't join you, and the many others at the reunion in Orlando. I'm sure it was great but it couldn't have been further away. Sometimes I will as I've heard they are really fun.

The latest Echoes - Vol 5 #4, Oct. 80. I was glad to see the excellent article on "Manny" Klette. He is a great American, a great guy and deserves all the credit that is showered on him.

As to the lead article about Armstrong. As you know I was an original pilot of the 306<sup>th</sup> and Squadron Cdr. I was there when Armstrong joined the group and left. I was on the mentioned Wilhelmshaven raid (although it aborted early). Kilcoyne is correct in the daylight bombing aspects of his article - we down near went to night bombing; even put dampers on our engine exhausts and guns to make them less visible at night - but debuk. I don't know that it played any part in Armstrong's coming to our group and doubt that the Bermer raid did. Without mentioning other names Armstrong came to our group to shape it up. We had been flying a unique formation that debuk took and

(2)

had many other problems that needed correcting. He did what was required. I have always felt, and feel that I'm correct, that the original movie "12 O'Clock High" with Gregory Peck was about the 306<sup>th</sup> with the General Savage of the movie portraying Armstrong.

I understand you were out here recently. I hope that if you come again you will drop by.

Sincerely,  
John Regan

Col J. M. Regan USAF (Ret)  
334 W. Bellevue ave.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402



← my logo

20 December 1980

Col. John M. Regan  
334 W. Bellevue Av  
San Mateo, CA 94402

Dear John:

Sorry not to have answered your letter earlier, but I plead too much traveling, and even working on the book, besides all those things my wife wants done, and my job.

But, the book is pretty well done. I've written 23 chapters and have begun the rewrite now. John Ryan will get the first chapter for review within 10 days. He is going to work on the whole thing for me, having had considerable experience in manuscript editing.

I've also had opening talks with a publisher, and things look promising there.

Now, if I'd just stay home more I'd get the thing done. I do expect that this phase will take about three months, maybe four.

Yes, I got to California in late October. I was in SF for a couple of days. Dave Wheeler took me up to Marysville to see the U-2 and SR-71. Then I went up to Santa Rosa to see an old friend from navigation days, and I had my University president and his wife in tow, also. I got into SF late Friday night, and was out Sunday morning for an alumni meeting that night in LA. Then on to San Diego, Dallas and Houston, I was gone for 10 days and felt a bit road weary by the time I got home. But it was fun, and I saw a number of 306th people along the way.

My first stop was in Denver and I had lunch with Chip Overacker there. We had a great three-hour chat, and I think he felt much better about everything after talking with me. Ryan has been to see him since then. Chip's 80th birthday is 22 Feb, and we are



Regan - 2

going to urge everyone in the January ECHOES to send him a birthday card. He lives at 421 Dexter, Denver, CO 80220. He was in good spirits and appears to be in good health. I had occasion to talk with him a couple of weeks ago, and he is much interested now in the 306th.

Thanks for your comments on Echoes. I have seen Manny Klette twice and feel the same way you do about him. Had dinner with he and his wife the last time I was in Washington. He has certainly had an interesting career along the way.

Jack Lambert showed up at the Orlando reunion and enjoyed himself immensely. Robbie was there, along with Maj. Gen. Jim Cheney, John McKee, and many, many more you would have recalled. Again, the 306th was the champion in attendance. Wild Bill Casey was there, looking well, but with a tragically alcoholic wife in tow. Thurman Shuller, I think, helped to control the situation a bit.

Had a long talk with Charlie Duy the other day by phone. I had hoped to stop and see him, but was unable to get there because of time. He has just retired, at 75, and says he feels great.

Guess I'd better get off to bed soon.

Sincerely yours,

22 NOV. 1996

Dear Russ,

It was great to see you and June at our reunion in Las Vegas. We had a fun time, and like so many others, enjoyed seeing old friends and reliving our hectic days at Phurligh. It's also sad to see our numbers getting smaller and the memories of others who used to be with us. We are damn lucky.

I've reread your book, checked my old flight log and can't find any record of an event I recall vividly - at least I'm sure in my own mind. It's not in your book because I wasn't flying with the 306<sup>th</sup> and also not in my log because I didn't put it there. Maybe you can put some light on it -

As I recall the event - I went to another base to fly in a special B-17 (a PFF??) to be leader of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Divisions ~~on~~ for a ~~target~~ target in the Munich area - Well over France, and at a point we were to climb from 15,000 feet to a bomb altitude of 25,000 feet, we could not top the clouds, although we went higher (I don't remember the exact altitude) - anyway I gave the message to abandon the mission and returned. (over)



When we got to our departure Base in England we were met by several General Officers who were there - They wanted to know what in h... had happened. I explained and they said I had better be right as the 2nd Division (B-24's) had gone in ~~in~~ under the clouds, decks - as I recall they ~~had~~ had run into trouble, lost 4 airplanes, and had not been able to hit the Target because of bad weather - In other words I had been lucky. - My question - Do you know anything about this? My memories are quite vivid. It is hard to think that it could be a figment of my imagination.

Again - it was good to see you and Jane again. Orlando and Savannah are a long way and health is a big factor - Time will tell.

Any help you might be able to give me would be appreciated.

Warm regards,  
John Regan



Colonel John M. Regan  
334 W. Bellevue Av.  
San Mateo, CA 94402-1104

\* HAPPY THANKSGIVING \*



JOHN M. REGAN

14 October 1987

Russ Strong

Dear Russ,

I'm sure the reunion in Wash. D.C. was fun. I'm sorry that health kept me from going that far. The good Lord allowing I hope to be in Las Vegas in '88.

I hope "Manny" ~~Kellett~~ Kletter gave you my regards. I was able to get to Cheyenne and saw him there. I hope his health improves but it doesn't look good.

I'm sure you see the Air Force magazine and probably note the monthly articles "Valor" by John L. Frisbee. They are interesting but mostly on fighter pilots. Bomber crew members never seem to get the credits deserved. An article about "Manny" and his many, many accomplishments/records etc. would certainly seem appropriate and timely. If you agree (over)

you might send Frisbee a copy of  
the excellent article you had on him in  
the "Echoes" and suggest an interview  
and article.

Hope to see you.

Warm regards,  
John Ryan

Cof John M. Ryan, USAF (Ret.)  
337 W Bellevue ave.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402



JOHN M. REGAN

24 Oct. 1982

Russell Strong

Dear Russ,

Thank you for the picture of my Sgt. Officers. As to identity - what a joke. I can remember some names but a... few. It reminds me of the old saying "I always forget three things - Names, faces and lets see - the third thing I just can't remember".

I'm sorry I missed the reunion in England. It must have been great. The attached copy of the Rooney article was in the local S.M. Times on 14 Oct. Good, although he had the raid in February - as to the ball turret gunner in the plastic bubble - It makes a nice story but ??? I sure can't recall it.

Hope you will visit this way again.

334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402

Sincerely,  
John Regan



Dear Piers,

Glad to hear from you,

enclosed the picture I mentioned.

I can only name a few people.

That's me, the first officer from left,  
with Ted Jankowski, (my then co-

pilot) - I'm really not sure who's  
next, then Roy Knudson (gunner), and

"Sue" Krajcik, gunner. On my ~~original~~  
crew I also had "Slim" Boring as

navigator and Joe Kosakowski as  
bombardier. Stembowski as engineer

also comes to mind, but he  
may be from "Bill" Seelos crew ???

We've been O.K. - simply getting

older, like all of us.  
Give my best to Gene.  
I will not be at the  
Reunion this year. Savannah is  
just too far. Come out to ~~San~~  
San Diego - or the west coast  
some time.

My best,

Warm regards,

John Regan

Thanks again "Piers" - We are damn  
lucky to have someone like you  
around.

John

Dear Russ,

Hope you and your family  
have a good 1971.

Your note - I certainly have  
no objection to your use of  
my letter re the M.E. -  
appears we may soon do  
more than just threaten. It  
may make the radicals and  
extremists in the work think  
twice before acting up.

Warm regards,  
John Regan

10 September 1989

Dear John:

Its always good to hear from you.

And I am sorry that you will be unable to attend the reunion in Little Rock. It appears that attendance will be abit over 500, down some from Las Vegas, but that was to be expected.

Perhaps you can make next year's soiree at San Antonio. Dale Briscoe says his committee has already gotten its teeth into the affair, and that Del Wilson is back in good health and set to head up the event. Dale will do the work, however!

As to the p&cture, an interesting painting. But you misread the tale markings. The H you see on the distant plane is the plane's letter. Above it is a U in the black triangle. Thus, it is a 457th plane, and the blue slash is for the 94th CBW.

We leave a week from today for Little Rock, so I am in the midst of getting everything ready to go.

All the best,



5 Sept. 1979

Russell a. Strong

Dear Russ,

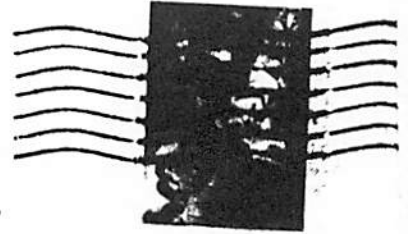
Wish to talk to you another night. Wish I could have been more helpful but the old memory ain't what it used to be - besides, it was all so long ago.

You surprised h... out of me with news re Janowski. I've enclosed copy of a card I received in 1977. What is the latest? If he's a ghost it confirms what we all know about an after-life.

I enjoyed your visit and hope you'll come again

Sincerely,  
John Regan

Mrs. J. J. Kowalski  
76 Fairmount Ave  
Somerville, N.J.



Postage 13c

Mr. John Regan  
334 W. Bellevue Ave  
San Mateo  
Ca. 94402

May all the joys of the  
Christmas Season  
be yours today and always

I regret to tell you that Ted  
passed away. Hope that  
the year of 1977 will be  
a prosperous one for you.

9/5/89

Dear Russ,

Sorry I won't be with you in Little Rock. I have few.

Photo is of a big painting that was shown at the Burlingame (CA) city library. Artist a Mr. Reynolds. Spoke with him. He was not in 306<sup>th</sup> and painted from a picture he had seen.

Hope to see you soon.

Warm regards,

John Regan

Russell A. Strong

3 Oct. 1978

Dear Russ,

Your letter of 29 Sept. 1978 asking questions about Don Wadley's crew that was involved in a mid-air collision over Germany on 3 Nov 43 with total loss of aircraft. I <sup>remember</sup> ~~remember~~ the situation well.

I had many Polish people in my Squadron (368<sup>th</sup>) - my own crew included Kosikowski, bombardier - Stankowski, engineer and Jankowski Co-pilot (as I ~~used~~ <sup>used</sup> to say - all Irish crew) I don't know what happened to the first two but know that Jen is deceased. Anyway - because I had so many Polish people and many spoke the language the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force and RAF assigned to my Squadron a senior RAF Polish Officer to fly one mission in a B-17. It seems this man had requested permission for one B-17 mission as he thought it was such a great airplane. He had thousands of hours flying time in many different types of aircraft - was the commander of an RAF all Polish Group, and a wonderful person. He stayed with my outfit for about 2 weeks - flew several practice missions and as he was inexperienced I sent <sup>him</sup> as a co-pilot on the 3 Nov. mission. Unfortunately the B-17 he was in collided with another one over the target with no known survivors. It



(2)  
was a sad situation. I will recall the  
members of his outfit coming to pick up  
his gear - They were all very sad because  
he was liked and respected. - Riperussions?  
no - Just one of the many unfortunate in-  
cidents of war.

Nice to hear from you.

Warm regards,

John Regan

John M. Regan Col USAF (Ret.)  
334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402

"The EAGER BEAVERS"

5 Feb. 1997

Dear Russ,

Good to talk with you this evening. I would like to join the group going to England but, no. Also I hope to make Orlando but, again, maybe ???

As to my question - I had intended to write an article on what I recall as one of the toughest decisions I had to make as a young officer. But hell be damned if I can recall dates or details of the mission, or other facts about it - It may just be a figment of my imagination but it sure is vivid. What I remember - - -

One day I was scheduled to lead the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Wings on a raid in the Munich area. I flew in the right seat of a PFF aircraft (since we had none) with a special crew at another Base. We had been at about 15,000 feet and were well over France when we were to climb to 25,000 feet, our bombing altitude. There was a cloud formation ahead of us. We went to 27,000 and could not top it - We even climbed higher with no luck. Finally, I gave the command to abandon mission - I can recall the other wing commander calling back for confirmation (which I gave).

When we landed in ~~England~~ England, (not at our Base), we were met by some General from 8<sup>th</sup> AF Hqs. who wanted to know what in h... had happened. I explained - they  
(over)

said I had better be right as the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Division, (B-24s), had gone in under the cloud  
deck. Luck for me the B-24s could not  
find the target, because of poor visibility,  
and lost 4 aircraft - you need a date  
would be helpful. The only thing I can  
find in my log book, as possible, ~~was~~ is  
early March 1943 - Poddington A/C #  
12446, 7 (note in log leading 101<sup>st</sup> Combat Wing -  
another <sup>was</sup> early March 1944 (more likely as I was  
then a Lt. Col. -

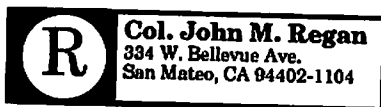
This sure isn't much but if you can  
give me a clue I sure would appreciate it.  
Give my best to Jane.

Sincerely,

John Regan

I hope you can read this <sup>thing</sup> ~~copy~~  
as I get older it just gets worse.

Again thank you.  
If I ever write anything on this I  
will send you a copy



11 Feb 97

Dear John:

I have gone through the 368th Squadron Diary, and then have reviewed Roger Freeman's book, The Mighty 8th, and cannot put a finger on the mission you describe.

It had to be in 1944, because you were too junior to have had such an assignment in 1943.

I concentrated on the period from your promotion to lieutenant colonel, 16 Jan 44, to the end of your combat career, 23 Apr 44. Then, I took the item of four B-24s being lost, and could not find a mission in that period in which the 24s lost just four a/c.

The other clue to 1944 was the use of PFF aircraft, which had not happened in early '43.

Unless you have some miraculous experience of total recall, I'm afraid that experience will remain shrouded in mystery.

All the best,



JOHN M. REGAN

*Mailed 2/28/94*

Forum  
National Geographic

February 26, 1994

The article "The wings of War", March 1994,  
pictures Marvin D. Ford, who was unfortunately killed in 1945  
on a bombing mission of Berlin in WW II. Ford was a replacement  
for <sup>^</sup>Manly Klette, who was on an excused absence.

Klette, who was fortunate he was not on that Berlin  
mission, went on to complete 91 (ninety-One) bomber missions  
against Germany, more than any person in the 8th Air Force.  
Klette, now deceased, was a good friend and comrade pilot, and  
a hero of the war, whose aerial exploits are legendary. We pilots  
who completed a tour <sup>and</sup> ~~a~~ came home were simply damned lucky. ~~to~~

*John M. Regan*  
John M. Regan  
Col. USAF (Ret.)  
San Mateo, CA.

*1. Was corrected, where shown, ~~in~~  
before mailed.*

- 2. Should have been -  
changed where underlined  
in red to -*
  - a. fellow - instead of comrade*
  - b. crewman - instead of  
pilots*

Col. J.M. Regan, USAF (Rwt.)  
334 W. Bellevue Ave.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402  
(415) 343-8216

# **Personal views**

Editor, The Times: 7/13/87

Another Bay Area paper carried an article, "A Personal View," by Academy Award-winning writer-director Oliver Stone ("Salvador" and "Platoon"). I am not an Academy Award winner. However, like Stone, I volunteered for and served in Vietnam ('65-'66). I also hold the Purple Heart and several decorations higher than Stone's Bronze Star. I am a veteran of World War II ('42-'44) and Korea ('50-'51).

Personal views (Stone's or mine) do not make somebody an authority on any subject. His views appear to be based essentially on a narrow/restrictive combat experience in Vietnam, influenced by the unfortunate no-win political policy of our government and by an obvious left-wing philosophy.

Stone sees our involvement in Central America as leading to another Vietnam. I hope he is wrong, but my reasons are different. The real lesson of Vietnam is that our abandonment of South Vietnam (often called troop withdrawal) led to a communist victory there as well as in Laos and Cambodia. Thousands have attempted to escape the communist tyranny in those countries. We do not want another Vietnam in Central America, which we would certainly have if we were to abandon those seeking freedom from Marxists in Nicaragua and elsewhere, as we did the South Vietnamese.

Like Stone, I believe in negotiation and feel that every effort should be made to do so. But, unlike Stone, I recognize from working personally with communists that they don't think like we do. I'm not a Utopian who believes that negotiations alone can solve all problems. Would one say Chamberlain's negotiations with Hitler were successful?

**JOHN M. REGAN**  
Col., USAF (Ret.)  
San Mateo



TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH

*Wrote advance*

*Published Aug 1970*

# Ex-8th Air Force Pilot To Retire From Service

The "General Savages" and "Colonel Gallaghers" of World War II are shedding their wings. The exploits of these fictional heroes of the popular movie and television series "Twelve O'clock High" are based in fact on the real life aviators of the famous Eighth Air Force. Now the real life aviators who remain, approach retirement.

One of the last will join the ranks of the retired on August 31. A man who flew a B-17 on the first mission against Germany proper in 1942 will shed his wings after a distinguished career spanning 30 years.

Col. John M. Regan, executive officer for the Western Air Force Reserve Region at Hamilton Air Force Base, flew his first combat mission in October 1942. On eight occasions he brought home battle-damaged aircraft. His crew claimed the destruction of more than 20 German fighters. Colonel Regan recalls his closest brush with death:

"The plane's hydraulic system was destroyed and the oxygen system knocked out. Flak had killed my navigator and wounded me but we managed to make it home."

As a 24-year-old lieutenant colonel, Regan served as commander of the 1st and 3rd Bomb Divisions of the Eighth Air Force on raids against German targets, having as many as 600 B-17s under his command.

For six years after World War II, Colonel Regan held various command and staff positions in the United States. In 1950-51 he was a member of a team sent to Korea by the chief of staff to evaluate air operations. While there he flew combat missions on the B-26 and B-24.

On a concurrent overseas tour, Colonel Regan joined the Military Assistance and Advisory Group in Yugoslavia. It was during this three-year tour that he met a charming French girl who was working there in the French mission. Christille and Colonel Regan were married in May 1954 and now have six children.

Returning to the states, Colonel Regan served with the Air Staff and Joint Staff, attended the Air War College and held a command position at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk.

From 1961 to 1969 Colonel Regan was again overseas. He was base commander at Camp Guynemer, France, and U. S. commander at Macan Isle, Republic of the Philippines, and Udorn RTAFB, Thailand.

Colonel Regan went from the Pacific back to Europe in 1966. He was chief of the air force Liaison Office in the embassy in Paris. During this time he became deeply involved in the withdrawal of Air Force personnel from France and the negotiations on the sale of property and turning the bases over to the French government.

With the NATO withdrawal from France completed, Colonel Regan went to headquarters of the U. S. European Command in Stuttgart, Germany where he was deputy director of the Military Assistance Directorate. He came to Hamilton in 1969.

With six children, Colonel Regan has a natural interest in youth activities. He developed this interest far beyond the confines of his own family, however. He served as president of the American Youth Association in Stuttgart. This association planned and directed varied activities for 800 American children in Germany. At Hamilton, he is on the board of governors of the Hamilton Voodoos swimming team.

When Colonel Regan retires he will indeed shed his aviator's wings but perhaps he will replace them with the water variety. He's an ardent water enthusiast.

Just as the television series "Twelve O'clock High" is now on reruns, the memories of an outstanding and dedicated military career will be re-run many times in the mind of Colonel Regan.

*inspired by me & my children*



REGAN, John M. =0442233

1st Lt. pilot 368th 7/29/42  
Plane badly damaged over St. Nazaire 11/17/42  
Romilly-sur-Seine 12/12  
AM 12/23/42  
AM olc 2/22/43 *olc 3/2/43*  
Major 5/20/43  
Led raid to LaRoche 12/5/43  
Lt. Col. 1/16/44  
Led group to Berlin 3/4/44 (recalled)  
Led wing to Lechfield 3/18/44  
Led group to Brussels 4/10/44 (Last mission)

*DFC 4/6/43*

*PA 4/5/43*