

306th Echoes

LTC RALPH E BORDNER
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EAST PEORIA, IL 61611



306th Bombardment Group Association

Omaha Chosen for 1983 Reunion of 306th

110 Gather at Cincinnati for 8th Reunion

In all likelihood, the 306th Bomb Group fell from its perch atop the attendance roster of the 8th AF reunions in Cincinnati in early October, although we won't know for sure until the final tallies are in.

One hundred and 10 former 306 men registered for the meetings, and the total of 306th representatives on hand, when spouses were counted, must have pushed the total to about 150. Last year we registered 136 306th men.

This year's total was reduced by the many men who were in England and would have been at Cincinnati had they not been lured away by the festivities across the pond.

Meetings were held in the Cincinnati Civic Center, with men staying in a variety of hotels in the downtown area.

The 306th shared a large room with five other bomb groups, but managed to cordon off a fair share of the tables because of the numbers involved. On Friday afternoon a large group was able to meet there and to make a decision to hold a 306th reunion next year in Omaha. The 8th Air Force reunion will be held three weeks later in Houston.

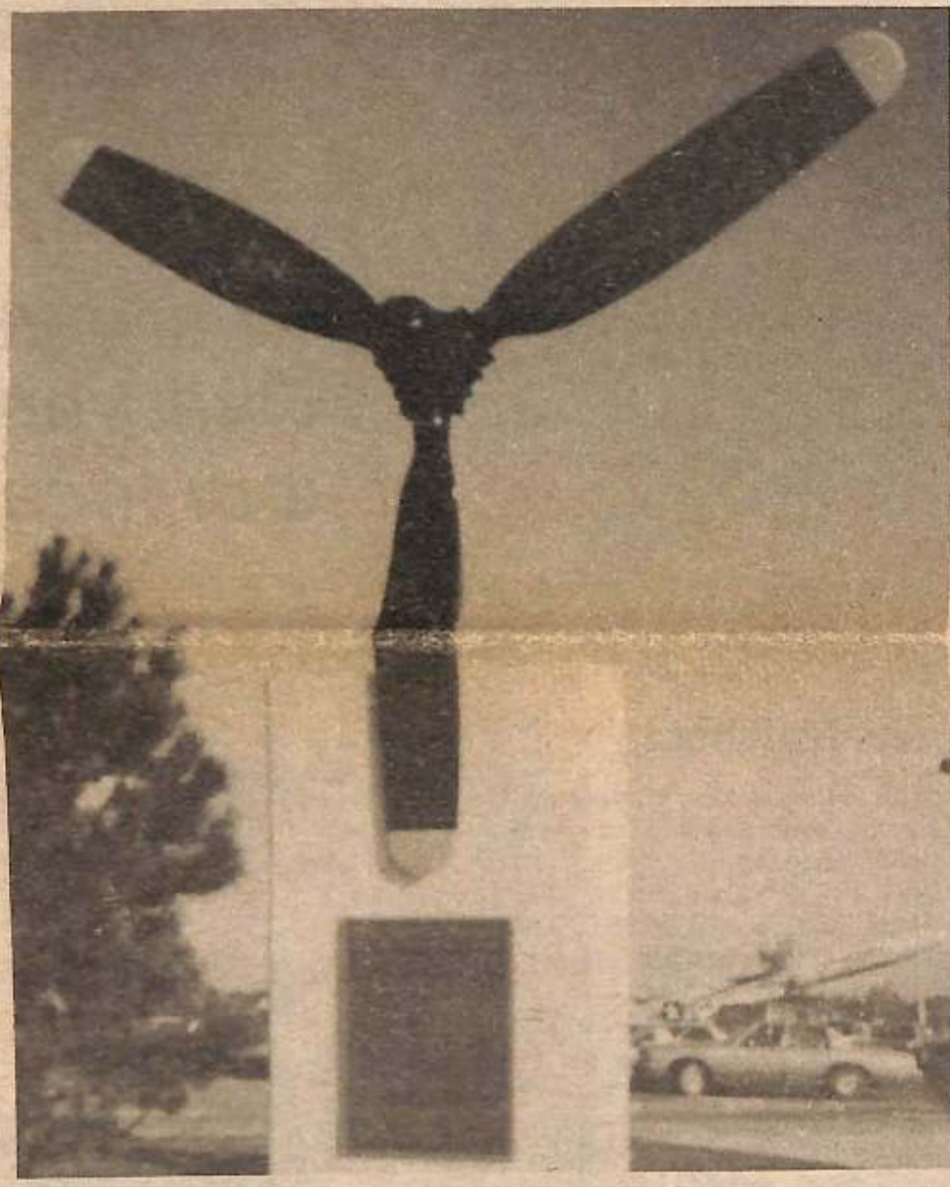
At Cincinnati

Attending the Cincinnati reunion were:

- 367—Raymond Allen, Richard Argo, George Bachmann, John Biggins, John Bloom, John Corcoran, John Dexter, William Feeser,

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At press time the editor was still waiting for photos and copy on the dedication of the 306th memorial at Thurligh to arrive. A full accounting of this momentous event will be featured in the January issue.



The drapes come off the new 8th Air Force monument at the USAF Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH Oct. 9. A triangular shaft is topped by a three-bladed propeller. Brass plates on the pedestal outline the story of the Eighth. More pictures inside.

Sept. 21-23 Set, Plan Day at SAC

Omaha, Nebraska, and the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command will be the target of the 306th Bomb Group for its 1983 reunion, it was voted at the Cincinnati meeting.

Donald Ross, last 306th group bombardier and now a Federal District Judge in Omaha, brought a fistful of invitations from the governor of Nebraska, the mayor of Omaha, the commanding general of the Strategic Air Command, and other dignitaries asking the 306th to meet in Omaha.

After consideration of the invitations and the program planned by SAC for a full day at Offutt AFB, the group voted to "go it alone" with a 306th reunion Sept. 21, 22 and 23 in Omaha.

Some unhappiness was expressed by 306ers at Cincinnati, and has also appeared in other years, at the costs, numbers of people, inadequate housing, and lack of space to convene in that has been a part of the 8th AF reunion. Obviously, some men will opt to go to both reunions or to the 8th only, but it appeared that a large majority of the men at Cincinnati will plan to attend the Omaha reunion.

While plans have not been firm-ed up yet, it appears that the event will open on Thursday afternoon in Omaha, probably with a dinner that evening. A more formal program for this event will be announced later.

Most of Friday will be spent at Offutt, with a wide range of lectures, movies and other events being planned by the staff there. The day will culminate in a dinner at the officers' club for the entire group of 306th people.

Saturday will see other events in the Omaha area for reunioners, with the event drawing to a close

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Reunion (From page 1)

William Futchik, Clay Ganes, John Grimm, James Harris, William Houlihan, Keith Jackson, Norman Johnson, Gus Lamb, Robert Lavery, Ed Leahy, Donald Marsh, Vincent McCarthy, John McKee, Joseph Miller, Toode Motley, Ed Ronczy, Jack Schmidt, Robert Schultz, Russell Strong, Joe Stroyoff, Leslie Turner and Patrick Walsh.

368—Ralph Bordner, Joe Gabrish, Calvin Garrison, John Gaydosh, Joe Hardesty, James Haywood, Joe Hoffman, Russ Houghton, Thomas Hulings, Irv Karpman, Leland Kessler, Walter Latsche, Wilbert Leopold, Bernard Peizel, Carl Pugh, Marlen Reber, Donald Ross, Allen Smith, Milton Swanson and Andy Vangalis.

369—Lowell Burgess, William Collins, Wayne Commons, Wilson Elliott, Charles Fatigati, Clarence Fischer, Lawrence Foster, Forest Goodwill, Paul James, John Z. Jones, Wm. R. L. Jones, William Morris, Charles Mullins, Trygve Olsen, Earl Schwab, Don Sebastian, Robert Spry, J. C. Thorn, Leslie Yearous and Ray Yerak.

423—Marvin Barker, Robert Becker, Leslie Berry, Warren Borges, Harold Brown, Charles Fatica, John Ferrari, William Guilfoyle, Howard Hutchinson, George Johnson, Gene Kimsey, Henderson Knight, William Martin, John Murphy, Aram Nahabedian, William Perry, Daryl Phillips, Paul Rejoux, Charles Schwach, Ed Schoenbachler and Leo Van Deurzen.

Group—Dr. Albert Erb, Dr. Thurman Shuller, Bob Tramontin and Don Upchurch.

Others—Catherine Brennan, Len Hadkiss, Ruth Passoni, Art Paul and Gene Sebech.

Collins to 8th AFHS

Wm. M. Collins, Jr., contact man for the 306th, has been elected to a new term as a director of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. He had previously been on the board, and after a lapse of a year or two will now begin a four-year term. Warren Borges, 423rd, is immediate past president of the Society.



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Each issue is prepared and printed at Kalamazoo, MI, and editorial contributions are welcomed and should be sent to the editor. Mailing is from Poland, OH, and new addresses, changes and deletions should be sent to the contact man.

A Day After Schweinfurt

Charles M. Bayless, on the official records, and Max Bayless as a PGA golf pro at Beacon Rock Golf Course, North Bonneville, WA, has related some of his experiences:

Our crew joined the 306th in October 1943 and I was shot down Feb. 25, 1944, on my fifteenth mission (Augsburg) with a pickup crew.

We joined the group on the eve of the Schweinfurt mission. The night we arrived the barracks were so crowded we had to sleep in double bunks on hard pads. Next day, because of the losses, we had private rooms if we so desired. Needless to say, this somewhat dampened our "desire" to get at those Nazis.

C.J. Crowl, who was prominently featured in the Florida reunion, was my copilot on my last mission and we spent the remainder of the war at Stalag Luft #1 at Barth, Germany.

Only two officers finished 25 missions while I was active with the 368th: Captain (George) Paris and Captain (Joseph) Belser. One of these gentlemen buzzed the control tower upon completion of his 25th and took a few feet off the flagpole, as I recall.

I'm sure Col. Robinson will never forget the mission to Brunswick in January 1944. He was wing leader and we were to entice the German fighters up at which time our new secret weapon, the P-51, was going to knock them out of the sky. Due to weather the 51s never got off the ground, but we didn't get the

The Mail Bag:

My name is Rick Walters and I am employed as a letter carrier. My father, Eugene D. Walters, who lives at 127 Carol Drive, Terre Haute, Ind. 47805, served in the 306th—423rd squadron. My father was a waist gunner and was overseas from June 1943 to September 1944. He flew his first mission July 17, 1943, and was wounded February 11, 1944, on the raid to Saarbrücken. The pilots of his aircraft were Lt. Bartlett, Lt. Munger and Capt. Reece.

A patron on my route, David Howe, receives your 306th Echoes newspaper. Mr. Howe gave me your last issue of the Echoes and I gave it to my father. He really enjoyed your paper. Enclosed is also a check for the book, *First Over Germany*, which I am buying for my father.

Richard D. Walters

ED: We receive new names for the 306th mailing list in many mysterious ways. Eugene Walters has been added to our regular list.

306th Caps for Sale

Blue 306th caps are for sale at \$10 each post paid. They are adjustable to any size, and were a hit both in St. Paul and Cincinnati. The emblem on the front of the cap features the Triangle H. Order yours today from Bill Collins.

message and continued the target. The weather was good over the target and we had good bombing results. However, we really got the GAF up.

When we departed Thurlough we were in the second element, but by the time we left the target we were on Col. Robinson's right wing. We saw so many 109s and 190s that day that I fully understand what Custer thought at the Little Big Horn.

If a group of P-47s hadn't shown up none of us would have made it back. As it was, we landed at the first English base we saw and there I learned how much smarter the English were than we when I was awakened the next morning by a comely A.T.S. girl with "Your breakfast is ready, Sir."

Memories, memories, some good, some bad. On the day I was shot down, with death so near, my thoughts were of those back at the base and the hope that they would know—we had done our very best.

This esprit de corps, I think, was typical of the members of the 306th. We were certain we belonged to the very best, and death was preferable to second class performance.

A Christmas Gift Idea for Children, Friends, or your local library



Order your copy today of

FIRST OVER GERMANY, A History of the 306th Bomb Group

To: Russell A. Strong
2041 Hillsdale
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Please accept my order for _____ copies of First Over Germany at \$20 each, a total of \$ _____.

name _____

mailing address _____

Make check payable to Russell A. Strong

Sept. 21-23 Set (From page 1)

with dinner. Those who need to get on the road for home will be able to leave easily then, and be back at their desks Monday morning.

Ross and a committee of Nebraska people, and others, are working on details and more will be announced in the January issue of Echoes.

It is expected that reservation forms will be available by April, and again published in July.

One aim of the committee is to present a good reunion at a modest cost so that few will be priced out of the market. It is hoped to be able to provide a choice of accommodations that will offer prices to fit every pocketbook.

The principal goal of the committee is to present a high quality, interesting reunion to the largest group of 306th veterans yet assembled since the close of World War II.

LeMay's Book Comments on Wendover Base

In the very early days of the 306th at Wendover, Utah, Lt. Col. Curtis LeMay was assigned as the deputy c.o. He wasn't there for long, but he had some definite opinions of the place, as indicated in his book, "Mission With LeMay." The book was written in collaboration with MacKinlay Kantor, a writer of note who learned to appreciate LeMay while writing about the 305th during 1943. Below we quote some extracts from the book, pages 209-11.

Wendover was a beaut. Eventually they developed a big modern plant, but you should have seen it in the first days of 1942

...Looked like Wendover, Utah, was going to be a bad word for all of us. It's out there on the west side of what is known as the Great Salt Lake Desert, smack on the Bonneville salt flats where all that fancy high speed automobile activity has taken place through the years. Good place to land and take off; that was about all you could say for it. In fact you just looked, and you wanted to take off right away.

There was a rudimentary runway, but no hangers, no barracks. Everybody was in tents at the start. No adjacent civilian residential areas; hell, maybe Salt Lake City was as close as anything, and that was a hundred and thirty miles away. We straddled the state line.

There was a fantastic establishment right on that State line. It was a combination filling-station-gambling-casino-restaurant-bus-stop-and-small-hotel. They called it the State Line Hotel, because half of it was in Utah and half in Nevada. How original can you get.

Here was this 306th Bomb Group being put together. Once more it was the Boy Scouts attempting to build a fire without matches, or the put-upon Israelites in the Bible trying to make bricks without trying to make bricks without straw.

A whole mess of recruits would come in at one time; untrained, not properly officered ... there'd be a mob arriving, and perhaps they'd have a corporal in command, some frantic character who'd just gotten out of Sheppard Field or was shaken loose from some technical training plan.

What a sorry lot of personnel. Hadn't been paid, didn't have any clothes—half their baggage gone one way and half the other. That was really a mess, trying to get them sorted out. Very few of them had any records along with them. It had been only a few months since they were lolling on the home farm tractor seat. What do I mean, months? Weeks, in many cases.

...Weeks since they'd been stacking groceries in cartons at the A & P; weeks since they'd been running job-presses in the back room of a printing establishment, or slinging the chocolate malts at Walgreen's. It was a case of going down the line and picking out the

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Dayton Dedication Oct. 9



Most of the crowd at the memorial dedication made it inside the tent, as a Fall rain soaked the late arrivals.



Strong to 8th AFMMF

Russell A. Strong, editor of **Echoes**, has been elected to a four-year term as a director of the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation, Inc.

This foundation provides research grants and considers proposals for programs involving the 8th AF. It is also the sponsor of the

symposium series being held each year prior to the 8th AF reunion.

Strong currently is working on a project supported by the Foundation to compile a biographical directory of command and staff officers of the 8th AF. The project is scheduled for completion in 1983 and includes more than 50 members of the 306th in its listing.



Gen. Herres addresses the throng at the dedication.



Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Bordner stand at the left, while Wilson Elliott is under the "D" of media.

THE GANG IN CINCY

Cincinnati's Convention Center was the appointed meeting place for the eighth annual reunion of the 306th Bomb Group. More than 110 men gathered there, and a large complement of wives was on hand. Meetings were held there on Thursday and Friday, with the scene shifting to Dayton on Saturday for the dedication of the new 8th AF memorial pylon. Lt. Gen. Robert Herres, commanding general of the 8th Air Force at reunion time, was among the guests at Cincinnati. (Photos by Bill Collins, Jack Grimm, Russ Strong and the USAF.)



Lt. Harold Brown brought his young crew to the 423rd on 17 July 1944. Thirty-eight years later the nine surviving crewmen reunited at Cincinnati. The only one missing was Tony Thomas, engineer, who was killed in an auto accident shortly after returning from combat. Front row, left to right, are: Harold Brown, pilot; Daryl Phillips, co-pilot; William Guilfoyle, navigator; and Leslie Berry, bombardier. Standing, Charles Fatica, radio; Marvin Barker, ball turret; Robert Beck, waist; John Ferrari, tail; and Gene Kimsey, waist.



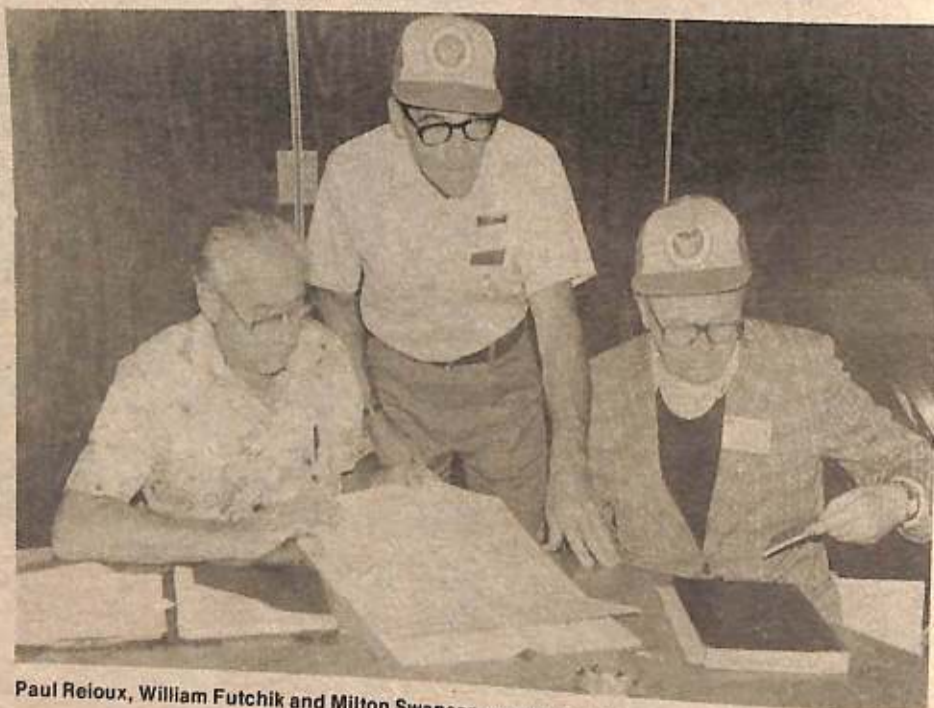
Joe Gabrish, Don Upchurch, and Joe Miller discuss events.



Bill Collins, Don Ross and Ralph Bordner during the general meeting of the 306th



Lt. Gen. and Mrs. Robert Herres chat with Mr. and Mrs. Russell Strong before the Friday night dinner. Gen. Herres commanded the 8th AF at reunion time.



Paul Reloux, William Futchik and Milton Swanson examine a printout of 306th members.



John Corcoran, left, listens to Jack Schmidt, center, explain the situation.



Bob Spry and Gus Krajcik.



That's Trygve Olsen, right, during the 306th meeting.



Lt. Gen. Robert Herres signs the 306th registration list.



Robert Lavery and John Bloom.



oman, Lee Kessler and Gus Krajcik at dinner.



John Corcoran reads Echoes, while Russ Strong waits for a book customer to make up his mind.

The Great War On Ground In Fine Detail

Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-45. By Russell F. Weigley. Indiana University Press, 1981.

If you are really into the ground campaigns of France and Germany then this could be must reading.

Weigley has put together an extremely thorough book about Eisenhower's drive into Germany as acted out through his various subordinate commanders. It is a book that requires ready reference to maps, as well as using those accompanying the text.

If your like is for fluffy, casual stories then this is not for you. This is the solid meat of military history, well larded with references to the official communiques and a thorough understanding of all of the accounts of the various battles.

Because of the breadth of the frontal assault against the Nazi armies it is almost mind-boggling at times to try to keep on track with the narrative in the book. It, too, must have been at times that same way for those in the midst of the action and those trying to control armies across the face of Europe.

Weigley's book is to be highly recommended for those with the time and the motivation to read about the combat actions and the command and staff decisions of 40 years ago. His summations on the personalities involved make the whole thing worthwhile.

Aussie Likes 'First' Story

"Let me thank you for the very fine book, and the gracious inscription. The book is really excellent, combining the necessary detail with the human side of the story, a rare achievement in this kind of book.

"The stories of escape and evasion are fascinating, and I've never seen this kind of coverage of this aspect before. Your book is also about the most forthright I have read.

"While such books are necessarily labors of love, the research effort has really paid off. In so many ways this history of the 306th could not have been written until well after the war, yet it has not lost the immediacy of the story.

"You have every reason to be proud of what you've achieved, and I'm delighted to have *First Over Germany* on my bookshelf."

Editor's Note: This letter is from Steve Bridesall, an Australian, who has written extensively on World War II, publishing among others *The Log of the Liberator*, a very complete history of the B-24 in WW II combat.



Wendover, Utah, in July, 1942.

Newly-Found

- Allen, John J. 7 Knowles, Rt. 2, Russell, IA 50328 369.
 Allen, Raymond D., 1745 Hunt Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010 367.
 Anderson, Paul H., 7103 N. Via de Amigos, Scottsdale, AZ 85258 368.
 Biegel, Sheldon, PO Box 321, Encino, CA 91316 369.
 Bone, Charles W., 606 Meadow Green Ct., Albuquerque, NM 87123.
 Bourne, Oscar B., Farrell Ranch, Rt. 1, Box 724, Meridian, TX 76665.
 Bright, George M., 199 Rosemont Dr., Coraopolis, PA 15108 423.
 Burgess, Lowell, 3510 Elizabeth Rd., Lebanon, IN 46052 369.
 Cain, William R., 275 Josselyn Ln., Woodside, CA 94062 GP.
 Childers, Marshall D., Rt. 1, Box 10, Amity, MO 64422 367.
 Cota, Raymond R., Pearson Rd., Merrimack, NH 03054 4th.
 Craig, Allan R., 8605 Dangerfield Rd., Clinton, MO 20735 FR.
 Day, Charles C., 4039 Withrop, South Bend, IN 46624 367.
 Dexter, John H., PO Box 580, Magnolia, AR 71753 367.
 Dunlea, Dennis, 6545 S. Knox Ave., Chicago, IL 60629 982.
 Edward, Robert L., 4201 Cathedral NW, 624E, Washington, DC 20016 368.
 Elbert, Ralph R., 400 Idaho St., #160, Waterloo, IA 50703 368.
 Ferrari, John J., 50 Sunrise Cir., Wallingford, CT 06492 423.
 Fowler, Joseph C., 8527 Mobud, Houston, TX 77036 367.
 Gilmore, Marvin F., Jr., 8733 Dumfries Cove, Germantown, TN 38138 369.
 Glasscock, Lemuel A., 6•4316 Pulaski, Birmingham, AL 35217 367.
 Halverson, Luverne W., Rt. 1, Truman, MN 56088 423.
 Higham, Ernest, 4666 Cappington St., Enon, OH 45323 368.
 Homesley, Dr. Joseph, 2132 Myers, Oroville, CA 95965 368.
 Laughlin, LTC. Harlan L., 4502 Deepwood Dr., Austin, TX 78731 369.
 Marshall, Royce L., 15 Cottage Pl., Old Saybrook, CT 06475.
 McKee, John R., 4115 Hood Ave., Burbank, CA 91505 367.
 Miller, Joseph, 2926 Erie, Cincinnati, OH 45208 367.
 Miller, Reed T., 25 Forsyth Park, Lock Haven, PA 17745 423.
 Mitchell, Elwood, Bridgeton, IN 47836.
 Mitchelson, Virgil, 506 N. Cottage, Taylorville, IL 62568.
 Northway, M. J., Patton's Lake Resort, Rt. 3, Box 226, Hot Springs, AR 71901 367.
 O'Brien, John J., 5 Toronto Rd., Patterson, NY 12563 423.
 Phillips, Reese E., 198 Royal Rd., Beech Grove, IN 46107 368.
 Verdick, Hubert A., Rt. 3, Box 224, Sequim, WA 98382 367.
 Wagoner, Lawrence E., 512 Jefferson, Lawrenceville, IL 62439 368.
 Whitney, Frank G., 515 White Oak Dr., Severna Park, MD 21146 367.
 Yearous, Leslie, Rt. 1, Fayette, IA 52142 368.
 Zarcoff, Samuel, 1241 S. Hayworth Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90035 18WX.

Gifts Aid 'Brit' Display

Gordon and Connie Richards report several gifts following the recent appeal in *Echoes* for items to flesh out their 306th display.

Henry C. West, Jr. 423rd radio operator from Munroe, LA, contributed one hack watch. C.E. Fisher, 369th pilot from Mansfield, MO., gave them his old pilot's brief case. Robert Starzynski, 367th tail gunner, took them a shirt, some pictures and other memorabilia when he visited them this past spring.

The Richards also report that when they put up their display west of Bedford at RAF Chicksands that they were visited by Raymond R. Cota, a driver for the 4th Station Complement Squadron.

The Growing 306th

More than 1600 306th people are now on our mailing list, and despite deaths and deletions, we continue to grow. One interesting source of new names has been *First Over Germany*, as a number of book orders have come in from 306th veterans who learned of the book through *Air Force* magazine or other such sources.

We continue to urge everyone to search out your own crew, or the team you worked with around the base, or the men you lived with. Your help in this regard can bring a smile to a 306th veteran who didn't know an organization existed.

Again, send new names and address to Bill Collins.

Lemay

(From page 3)

most intelligent-looking guys. "O.K., you're a sergeant ... You're a corporal ..." And getting a little organization in there and getting them paid, and trying to dig up some clothes. And here we were, with no airplanes or equipment yet, trying to requisition for the the equipment we *hoped* to get. Trying to build the tarpaper shacks we were supposed to move into...

Everything seemed ephemeral. There was no time-honored tradition. No framework had been set up. It seemed like this whole enterprise would evaporate, diffuse into space any moment. Or worse than that: descend into a dragged out incompetent future, wherein the group never became effective, never had any equipment, was unable to achieve any training, and never got on combat status, wherein the 306th Bomb Group was a drag on the military economy, and a blight on everyone's spirits, including the spirits of its own personnel.

This was long before the war itself gave birth to the now time-honored jest about *Me got no mamma, no papa, no Uncle Sam, no flight pay, no PX*. But that was the way we felt. Enlisted personnel considered that they had been weighed in the balance and found wanting; they had been sent out to the salt flats permanently, just because the Army wanted to get rid of them and couldn't contrive any less painful way. We people in the echelons of command had much the same idea. Where had we sinned along the line? Must have sinned somewhere. Otherwise we wouldn't have been given a job like this, nor under such conditions.

DECEASED

Barker, Alvin L., one of the first pilots assigned to the 367th at Wendover, 1 Feb. 78.

Danziger, Dan., 449th subdepot, recently in W. Covina, CA.

Hull, Wendell L., Group mess officer, 17 Aug. 82 in Olney, IL.

Lingle, Howard A., 423rd gunner (1944), recently in Supply, NC.

McKinney, Cecil C., 369th pilot (1944), 24 April 45 in a B-29 training crash in Gulf of Mexico.

Vincent, Percy, 367th and 423rd armament and chemical officer, 1947 in Santa Barbara, CA.

Williams, E. A. (Bill), flying control chief clerk, 24 Jan. 82 in Chandler, OK.

Welch, John W., Jr., 369th engineer (McKinney's crew), shortly after war wounds received in combat.

40 YEARS Ago—The First Raids of 8th Flown—Columnist Reminisces

Bob Quincy is a sports reporter for the Charlotte NC *Observer*, where he has been after taking a flling at sports information for the University of North Carolina. He flew a

tour as a co-pilot with the 457th Bomb Group in late 1944 and early 1945. He writes WW II pieces occasionally, and this was published by the *Observer* last August.

By **BOB QUINCY**

Charlotte Observer Staff Writer

Forty years ago August 17, a dozen B17s of the 8th Air Force's 97th bomb group launched a new dramatic and dangerous approach to air warfare against populous areas — the daylight bombing mission.

The brash attack, which would be the first of the heavy bomber one of the Allies' most important weapons against Hitler's Germany.

The British, who had endured German night bombing for several years, had retaliated with their own night attacks — made possible, in part, by an advanced British radar system and by a tactical use of flares.

But the British attacks, while daring, were less than devastating to the German war effort. The British planes flew at 13,000 to 15,000 feet, easily within the reach of German fighters, so they were forced to dart erratically through the skies to avoid being shot down. The British used saturation bombing, dropping a large load of explosives in the general area of a target in the belief that some of the bombs would hit and destroy it.

The Trial Of The Flying Fortress

U.S. strategists felt a more accurate approach was needed. They were considering pinpoint bombing from high altitudes by daylight.

The risks were obvious, Bomber exhausts created contrails that could be seen for miles. Bombers in a blue sky would offer prime targets for German fighters and anti-aircraft guns. The British considered daylight bombing unworkable.

But American strategists believed the B17 Flying Fortresses, flying in massive formations, had sufficient speed, altitude and combined firepower to evade Luftwaffe attacks and hit their targets.

The bombers, with 10-man crews, had gun turrets in the tail, top and belly, with other firing stations at open side hatches. Each gunner was armed with two .50-calibre machine guns capable of firing 500 rounds a minute. Equipped with the top-secret Norden bombsight, the planes could fly five miles yet zero in precisely on key targets — transportation networks, hydro-electric dams, factories and fuel supplies. Some bombers would be lost, to be sure, but back home, American industry could gear up to provide a steady supply of planes to replace the losses.

In an Aug. 16, 1942, article, Peter Mansfield, air correspondent for the London Sunday Times, dismissed the feasibility of daylight missions and suggested a more limited roll for the big U.S. bombers. "These Americans have fine flying machines, but they are not suitable for bombing in Europe," he wrote. He suggested that the B17 and B24 heavy bombers would be more useful in patrolling for submarines and disabled ships in the Atlantic.

U.S. strategists rejected that view, however. Even as Mansfield's critique was rolling off the presses, Americans were preparing for their first daytime sortie. The target: railroad yards at Rouen/Sotteville, France, then held by the Germans. Gen. Ira Eaker was riding the lead ship of the second squadron, a B17 named "Yankee Doodle Dandy." Maj. Paul Tibbetts flew the top lead. (Col. Frank Armstrong, later 306th commander, led this first raid.)

The initial strike was completed without loss of men or planes. The Americans had successfully begun a major wartime gamble.

Gen. Eaker's 12-plane mission was the first step in the 8th Air Force's long-range goal. By the winter of 1944, the 8th was putting 1,000 bombers in the air, and as the Americans flew back, British Lancaster bombers were going out.

Luftwaffe generals knew they must thwart the new strategy before American industry could fill the air with heavy bombers. In the early months, U.S. bomber crews learned to expect attacks almost as soon as they reached the English Channel.

Spitfires flew cover for the big bombers, but those early Allied fighters had limited range. When the fighters had to return to England, the agile, powerful German FW190s and ME109s would pounce upon the lumbering heavies. Flying a bomber in 1942 was about as safe as walking into a minefield.

I'll never forget the routine.

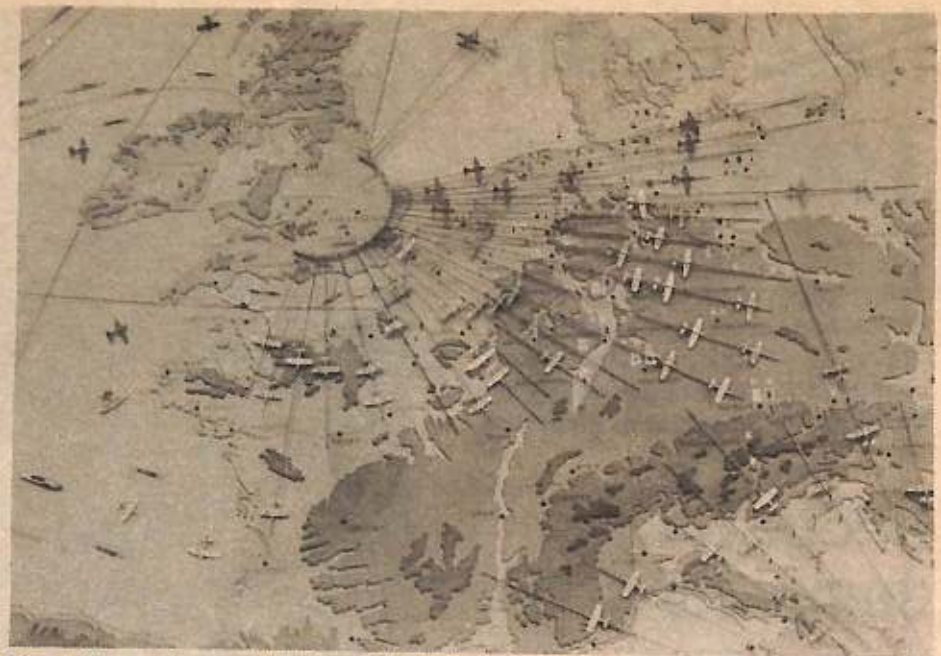
The morning of every mission, you had a sixth sense that an orderly was crouching in the darkness ready to tap you on the shoulder.

Time to go, Lieutenant. Briefing's at 0500 hours (5 a.m.). All up now. You awake?

"Up, yeah. Oh, Lord, I'm dead." The reaction was standard.

Slipping into uniforms quickly, the pilots, navigators, gunners and bombardiers left their Nissen huts and crammed inside waiting trucks. The vehicles, puffing white exhaust fumes, first stopped at the mess hall.

Cautiously, the breakfast party ate a yellow offering called "square eggs," so named because the pre-cooked contents were packaged in square boxes. The powdered eggs were unlovingly scrambled, then made partially



One of the great maps in the chapel at Madingly Cemetery, Cambridge, graphically tells the story of the extent of the 8th AF's reach into continental Europe.

edible by squirting catsup streams between the lumps.

There was toast, jelly and a lagoon-black coffee strong enough to embalm sea turtles.

No Applause For Berlin

Later, in the equipment room, crews piled on more garments — fur-lined flying suits, boots and gloves. At 25,000 feet, temperatures would skid 55 or more degrees below zero, a coldness impossible to describe.

Briefings were quick and thorough. A familiar screen concealed a large rectangular surprise — a bright map of the British Isles, the continent and the unknown target. When the covering was elevated, heavy red twine indicated the flight route. Anti-aircraft zones were stamped with red cellophane. The bomb drop was a focal point.

A weather expert discussed fronts and icing conditions.

To fans of war movies, the scene would look reasonably familiar — with one exception. In the movies, actors cheered when they learned the target was menacing. At actual gatherings, a loud groan usually erupted when odds seemed poor. Targets in Munich and Berlin were never applauded.

On a platform, the group leader would frown and deliver a terse rebuke: "You know why you're here, so quit griping. Keep a tight formation. Flak (anti-aircraft fire) will be heavy. Good luck."

On the ramps before taxiing, the crews checked the dozen and a half 250-pound explosives secured in the bomb bay. Or occasionally the load was fire bombs, or even leaflets. Oxygen equipment, used at 10,000 feet and beyond, was tried — good for hangovers. The bombers had been pre-flighted, their engines warmed.

Destination: somewhere on the continent.

Winds were unruly in late September 1944, as my crew and I landed at the airport in Valley, Wales. The 8th was making deep strikes into Germany by that time, proof that the tenacity of the 1942 and 1943 pioneers had overcome the heavy odds.

In February 1944, Allied air forces in overwhelming strength had bombed German aircraft factories. Gen. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, commander of the U.S. Army Air Forces, said those five days "changed the history of the air war." In August, Allied bombers had closed down the rich oil fields in Ploesti, Rumania, that had helped fuel the German war effort.

Hitler's Secret Weapon

Insiders realized it was only a matter of time until Germany fell, but the Germans were rocket-bombing London and, despite a dwindling fuel supply, were continuing to launch a depleted fighter force. And everywhere there was talk that Hitler in desperation would soon unleash an awesome secret weapon.

From Wales, we were assigned to the 457th bomb group at Glatton, England. On arrival, I sensed a gloomy base. During a recent mission to Politz, group commander Col. James R. Luper and his crew had been shot down with five other craft, while 38 of 48 planes had been damaged.

"It's the secret weapon," said a grizzled sergeant. "The Germans have some kind of new anti-aircraft."

His fear was unwarranted. That day, the Germans had simply been extremely accurate. But apprehension about a deadly secret weapon would not go away.

As the war progressed, the odds for completing a tour became more favorable. I flew 30 missions. German fighters still climbed to challenge, but they weren't beside you each trip. A bomber reserve had been stock-piled, so my squadron was assigned different planes each mission.

As we approached the target, we released chaff (tin foil) from the bomb bay to misdirect anti-aircraft fire (flak). The chaff, as it fluttered down, was supposed to disrupt German radar. Sometimes it did.

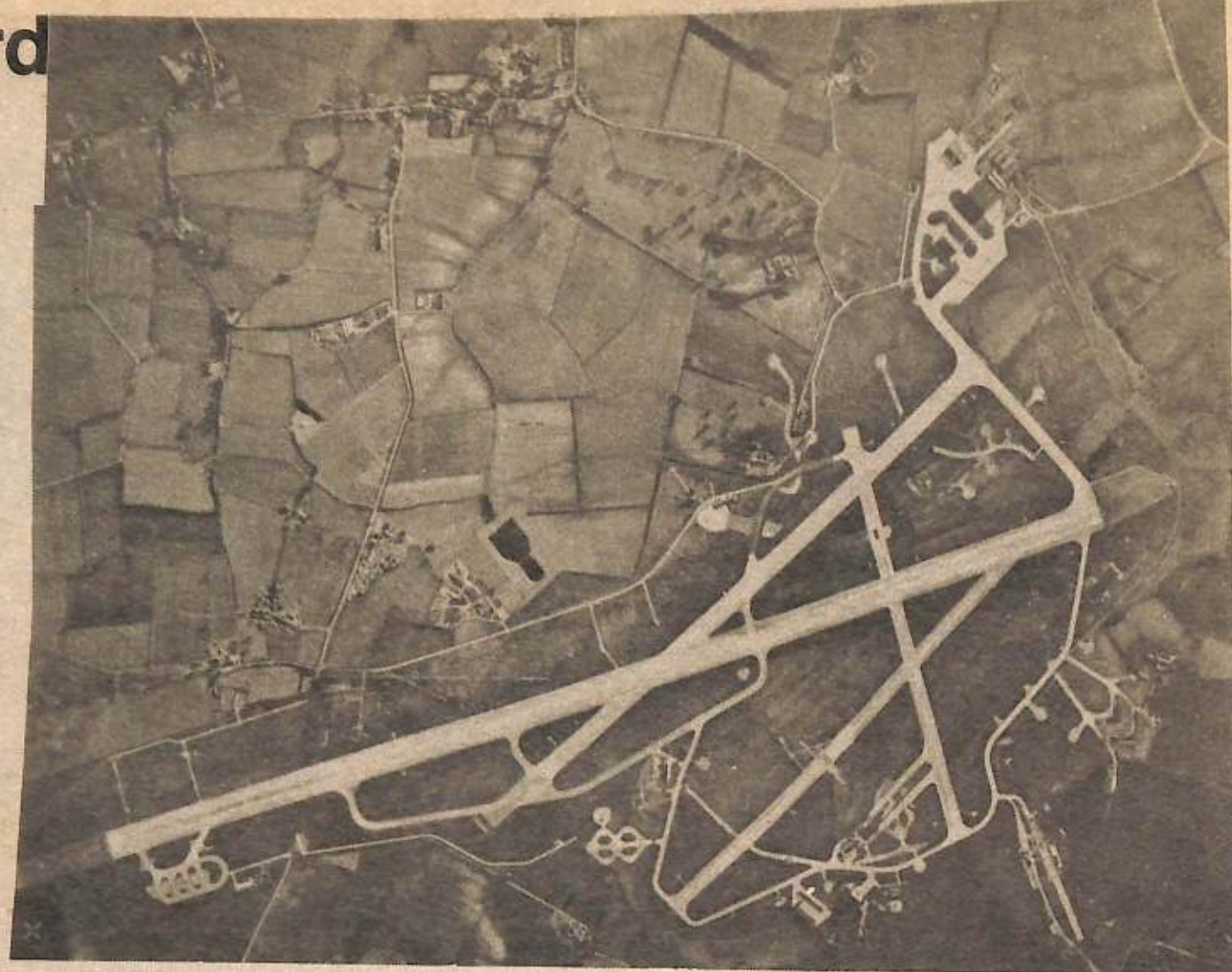
Generally, the war had swung our way. But everyone wasn't lucky.

Rumors swirled that German anti-aircraft decimated Luper's crew with Hitler's secret weapon, one that would discourage future bombing.

But there was no secret weapon. Daylight bombing, which some said would never work, continued. The devastation it imposed was a key to Germany's surrender in May 1945.

RAE Bedford Today

This is the RAE Bedford as it looks today, with its 10,000-foot runway. Installation of this new facility has brought about a considerable change in the landscape, with most buildings of the 40s long since razed.



Hedge New 306th CO

The 306th Strategic Wing, lineal descent of the 306th Bomb Group and stationed at RAF Mildenhall, underwent a change of command 2 June. Col. Richard Giordano, commander since 24 August 1979, was transferred back to the States. In his place now is Col. Richard W. Hedge.

Col. Hedge was commissioned out of Indiana University, and has more than 8,000 hours in RC/EC/KC-135 aircraft. He previously had been vice commander, 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.

Thurleigh in 1945

Angled at the same position to give one the chance for comparison, Thurleigh of 1945 was quite a different airfield. While the runways have changed, many of the hardstands are still visible.



Changes of Address

We will always have problems in locating new persons and keeping track of those who have been on our mailing list. When you move, please send a change of address card to Bill Collins to insure that we don't lose you.

Below are listed some of the men whom we have lost in the last six months. We have made a serious attempt to locate them, but to no avail. The names are shown with their last address. If you can bring any of them into the light again, please contact Collins with better information.

Spivey on Tape

The oral history recounting of some of Delmar Spivey's experiences as a German prisoner of war are available. This taped interview, now typed out, covers in particular events as the prisoners left Stalag Luft 3. If you are interested in reading this, Russell Strong has a copy for loan. Address him at 2041 Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

Ringvall Aids Writer

Neal Ringvall, 367th Navigator for McNeil's crew in mid-1944, has served as the "technical" expert for a new novel, "In Search of Eagles" is a B-17 tale set at Bassingbourn and written under the pseudonym of Christopher Stone. Vincent Lupiano, the author in real life, interviewed Ringvall on several occasions to get a feel for combat.

Help Find These Lost

We have lost a goodly number of people from our mailing list and have been unable to trace them by telephone. If you have knowledge or can assist in any way in finding those listed below, please contact Bill Collins. Their last known address is shown.

Paul D. Calahan, Bay Shore, 87 S. Saxon Ave., Long Island, NY.
Bennie E. Campbell, 808 Lyndale St., Kingsville, TX.
Robert J. Custer, 1130 E. Haisache, Kingsville, TX.
Charles DePew, Paris, AR.
Virgil W. Dingman, 9117 James Pl., NE, Albuquerque, NM.
James B. Early, Rt. 4, Box 183, Peru, IN.
David E. Fiske, Box 63, Swanton, VT.
William F. Gravins, 1633 NE 3 Ct., Ft. Lauderdale, FL.
Thomas B. Helms, 537 Hutchinson St., Rock Hill, SC.
John R. Kalb, 1845 Everett Ave., Des Plaines, MI.
Gordon M. Insley, 12880 Archdale, Detroit, MI.
James E. Martin, 2836 Scarborough, Cleveland Heights, OH.
Mervin A. Narum, Walker, MN.
Ray W. Ryther, 2200 NW 46th St., Gainesville, FL.
Arthur O. Schultz, Rt. 2, Box 2, Faribault, MN.
Floyd J. Scott, 128071 Lone Star Rd., Augurn, CA.
Robert E. Stevenson, 1415 W. North St., Anaheim, CA.
Sterling T. Strange, Jr., E-102, 318 NW 69th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

More Issues of 'Echoes'

Here's my help for future issues of Echoes!

I enclose \$_____ to support the production and mailing of the 306th Echoes. I also want to support continuing reunion activities for those who once served.

Name _____

Address _____

Mail to: Wm. M. Collins, Jr.
2973 Heatherbrae Drive
Poland, OH 44514

Drinks, Anyone?

Did your squadron at Thurleigh ever have a favorite drink? If so, send the recipe to Don Berliner, 1202 S. Washington St., Apt 227,

Alexandria, VA 22314. An aviation writer, Berliner is working on a book of such traditional drinks for military flying units.