

# 306th Echoes

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## Savannah History Unique in U.S.

On February 12, 1733, James Edward Oglethorpe and 114 colonists, having crossed the Atlantic from Gravesend, England, arrived at Yamacraw Bluff on the Savannah River to found America's thirteenth colony, Georgia. Their purpose was to increase imperial trade and to establish a protective buffer between Spanish Florida and the northern English colonies, especially South Carolina.

In 1733, Oglethorpe designed the basic layout for Savannah into tithings, ten lots per tithing and trust lots, held by trustees for public use. Thus, Savannah became "America's first planned city." This system of public squares, intended as central areas of fortification as well as social areas for the colonists, has been designated as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. Of the original 24 squares, all but 2 survive.

From the outset, Savannah was an important seaport, sending the products of its agriculture and trade with the Indians to England. Wet rice culture was prevalent at one time but abandoned because of the scourge of yellow fever which swept the city in 1820. By that time, cotton had become the dominant

export crop. For nearly a century, trading in the Cotton Exchange on Savannah's waterfront set world cotton prices.

Savannah saw military action during the Revolution when the city was taken by Colonial insurgents at the outset of the war. In 1778, the British recaptured Savannah. The following year the American army laid siege to Savannah in an unsuccessful effort to retake the city. Finally, in July 1782, Oglethorpe left Savannah to return to England.

Although Savannah was not captured until late in the Civil War, it suffered from the Union Navy's coastal blockade. Rather than risk total destruction, Savannahians surrendered their city to General Wm. T. Sherman on December 22, 1864. Sherman sent his famous Message to President Lincoln from the Green-Meldrim House where he made his headquarters: "I beg to present to you as a Christmas gift, the City of Savannah with 140 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition and also about 25,000 bales of cotton."

In the years after the Civil War Savannah's economy faltered. Cotton was no longer King. Many historic prospects were lost. The doorway of the

Gibbons house on West Broad Street was salvaged and found its way to New York to be installed as an entrance to the Early American wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Perhaps it was the National Park Services' restoration of nearby Fort Pulaski in the early 1900s which revived the old civic pride, dormant since Reconstruction (1865-1877). Whatever the cause, a few farsighted Savannahians felt that salvaging the remaining symbols of a bygone elegance was not a step backward, but rather the first real progress seen in Savannah during the century. Since that resurgence, Savannah's restoration efforts have continued to gain national attention and acclaim. Savannah now has one of the largest landmark historic districts in the United States.

Savannah has been dubbed "The most beautiful city in North America" by *LeMonde*, the leading newspaper in Paris, France; "One of the top ten walking cities in the U.S.," by *Walking Magazine* and "One of the top 10 U.S. Cities to Visit," *Conde Nast Traveler*. *Touring Historic Savannah* is a fascinating and enriching step back in time

adding to the city's beauty.

Currently there are tours, tours, tours: Walking, trolley, horse drawn carriage, motor coach and bus. Within easy walking distance of your hotel is multimillion dollar restoration of riverfront to preserve and stabilize the historic area. It borders a thriving river port, and imparts atmospheric old world charm. A nine block brick concourse is ideal for strolling and ship watching. More boutiques, galleries, artist's restaurants and pubs are housed in ton warehouses restored to rusticity.

The location and a nearly cast of characters are right here they were in the book and the "Midnight in the Garden of Evil," all of which is covered on the tours.

Fine dining abounds in historic haunted environs and appeals most demanding palates.

In the next issue of *Echoes* bring you more information on to do, see and eat!

-----1998 Registration List page 2

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## We Were Part of 'Great Moment In History'!

By Stephen Ambrose, Leading WWII Historian

**Nineteen forty-five was the worst year in human history. More people were killed violently, more houses burned, more buildings destroyed and more high explosives set off in 1945 than in any other year. Indeed, more people were killed in that year than in all the previous five years.**

**If we in America now look out on a much less bloody world, and a far more stable and prosperous one, it is largely owing to the extraordinary sacrifices of the generation of citizen soldiers who fought in World War II—and who led us into the peace that followed. Memorial Day might be a good time to remind ourselves of this debt.**

In the spring of 1945, in the deepest darkness of this catastrophe, the most terrifying sight to most civilians was a 12 man squad of armed teenage boys in uniform. Whether it was the Red Army in Leipzig, Warsaw or Dresden; or the Japanese in Manila, Seoul or Canton; or the Germans in Holland, these boys terrified because their presence meant rape, pillage, looting, senseless destruction, wanton murder. To a lesser degree, even Allied troops on foreign soils, like the French in Austria, could inspire a special kind of dread.

There was an exception. Everywhere in the world, whether in France, Belgium, the Philippines, Germany or Japan, the sight of a 12 man squad of GIs brought joy to people's hearts—because the sight of those American kids meant cigarettes, candy, rations and freedom. They had come not to conquer or terrorize but to liberate. It was a great moment in world history.

Those GIs, born between 1924 and 1927, saved Western civilization. Not alone, obviously, but they were the front-line infantry, the cutting edge. They had grown up in the Depression and their generation had paid a price. In World War II fully one third of American males who were called up for a physical exam before induction into the Armed Services were

judged unfit for even limited service duty because of their health—they had bad teeth or bad eyes, and were often malnourished. Many of those who passed the physical wished they hadn't, as they and their

buddies were thrown into the gigantic struggle. They prevailed and thereby saved us all. Yet they've never gotten their due.

### Beyond Military Victory

That generation's contribution to those of us who follow them encompassed much more than beating Hitler and Tojo. The GIs came home from the war sick unto death with war. They had seen more than enough blood, high explosives and destruction. They wanted to construct, to build, to save lives. They had also seen enough of totalitarianism. They wanted freedom.

So they went to college on the GI Bill of Rights, then went out to build modern America. They built the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Interstate Highway System, the modern corporation. They licked polio and other dread diseases, and made countless other revolutionary advances in medicine, education, public policy and more.

And they stood up to Stalin and his successors, through their support of the United Nations, the Department of Defense and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. They had the patience to hold firm through the Cold War, and they paid for it through their taxes.

The ex-GIs knew their leader, Dwight Eisenhower, was right when he said to a

group of congressmen complaining about the costs of defense: "This is going to take a long time. But if the Soviets want to keep up with us, they will have to sacrifice their people, and in so doing they will sow the seeds of their own destruction." The way to win the Cold War was not to destroy the Soviet Union with high explosives but to wait for the system to implode.

It was a splendid generation, those men and women who fought World War II and then led us through the next 40 years. They had unique opportunities and they measured up. They brought more freedom to more people around the world than any generation in history.

They did it, in part, because of what they had learned in war. The value of teamwork. The need for initiative and willingness to accept responsibility. The necessity for discipline. The benefits of deferred gratification. Most of all, a sense of national unity and shared experience.

The veterans were the objects of scorn for the sociologists, who called them the men in gray flannel suits, marching in lockstep, jumping to their feet when the CEO entered the room, hopelessly conformist. In fact, inventive, hard-working and capable of getting along and working together, whether as leaders or followers.

Most of all, they accepted responsibility. War thrusts it onto young men in a way nothing else can do. I know men who at the age of 18 commanded an infantry platoon—that's 40 armed men in a life or death situation, 24 hours a day, for weeks at a time. I know men who at 19 were pilots of B-17s—that's a million dollar airplane with a crew of 10. At age 20, Lt(jg) Tony Duke, USNR, commanded an LST. That's an ocean going vessel (Mr. Duke took his LST onto the Normandy beach on June 6, 1944). Today we wouldn't give

kids his age the keys to the family car.

### Lost Melting Pot

Now the survivors are old men, no longer leading the nation. Today the sense of national unity is missing. Perhaps the most important reason is a result of victory: There is no more draft. In World War II and the Cold War, teenage American boys got to know one another in the services. Willy-nilly, Uncle Sam threw them together. Today, few black kids from Harlem know any white kids from Montana; few white kids from Wisconsin know any black kids from Mississippi. The Armed Services were a melting pot, now gone.

The greatest gift the World War II Generation gave us was hope. In 1945, the 19th century idea of progress in human affairs was gone. In a world where the most common emotion was fear; the most common feeling was hunger; a world that had just witnessed the first use of atomic bombs; a world in which communism was on the march; a world in which the chief legacy of scientific and technological revolution of the 20th century seemed to be the ability to destroy everything; a world in which the politicians seemed helpless to stop the drift toward World War III—in such a world it was impossible to believe in progress.

Today, communism has joined Naziism in the ash can of history. Today, it is democracy that is on the march. Today, it is again possible to believe in progress. That is the unique contribution of the Americans who fought in World War II and prevailed, then managed to avoid World War III while again prevailing.

As one veteran put it at the end of an interview, "I feel I did my part in helping turn the 20th Century from a century of darkness into a century of light."





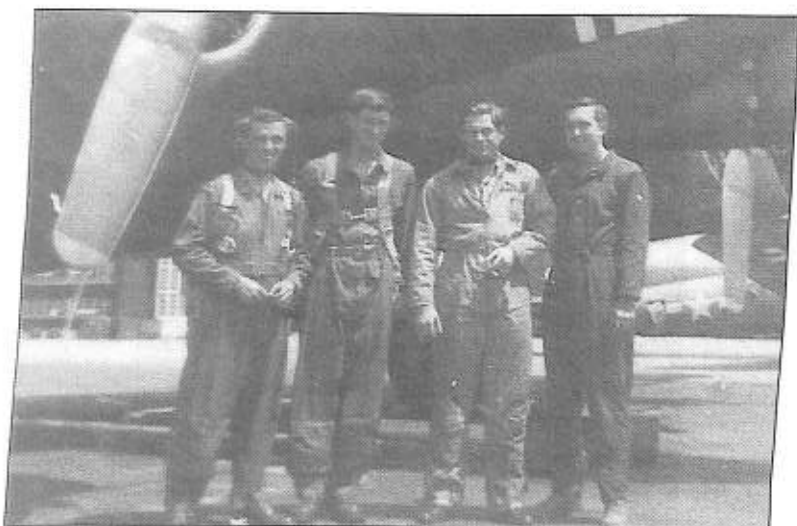
367th. Front: George Hargis tg, Rudolph Babel CP, Tom Chandler ro. Back: Thomas Dunford wg, Paul Bailey P. Leroy Hollenberg eng.

# Echoes

...of the past



369th. Front: Joseph L. Murphy P. Frank W. Hunt CP, Herman J Meyer N, Arnold J Parnes B. Back: Maurice E. Lavoie eng, William A. Cousins tg, Edwin H. Reese ro, Donald F. Bohrer wg, John H. Jenkins wg and Clifford Dodson bt.



367th: Howard Balcom P. Carroll Q Hills CP, Norman Strand N, Paul Kelly B.



368th. Front: Leon A. Risk P. George Reynell CP, Joe Hoffman eng, Frank Seaford N. Back row: Max Houston ro, Richard Cooper wg, William Carrasco tg, George Johnson B and Rocco Russo bt.



369th. Front: Clyde M. Bennett eng, John P. Morrison wg, Robert L. Stevenson ro. Back: Charles R. Tipton bt, Fred Zdobylak tg, Doyle Dagger P. Shedrick Jones B, Ralph Oliver CP (& Squadron CO).



369th. Front: Richard S. Wong P. Walter P. McBroom CP, John Rodgers N, Frank Garcia B. Back: Robert A. McClure bt, Armand A. Cournoyer wg, Robert E. Sykes wg Gene H Paige ro, Bertram J. Bergman eng and Walter E Kells tg.



Robert W. Seelos, president; Joseph R. Hathaway, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; Robert N. Houser, treasurer; Sheldon Beigel, John K. Hickey, Russell Houghton and Wallace Peckham, directors; M/Gen. James S. Cheney, past president; D. Luke Jacobs, 1997 reunion chairman. Ralph Franklin, Keysoe, Bedfordshire, England, is our British representative. (Mill Hill, Keysoe, Beds MK44 2HP, England). Telephone from US: 011-44-1234-708715, in England 1234-708715.

306th Echoes is published four times annually: January, April, July and October, and is mailed free of charge to all known addresses of 306th personnel, 1942-45. Contributions in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer.

**SECRETARY/EDITOR:**  
Handles all changes of address, editorial comments and records:  
Russell A. Strong, 5323 Cheval Pl., Charlotte, NC 28205. Phone 704/568-3803.

**TREASURER:**  
Send money to:  
Robert N. Houser, P.O. Box 13362, Des Moines, IA 50310, 515/279/4498.

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association is a Federally tax-exempt organization and as a veteran's group is classified as 501 (c) (19).

### 1998 Savannah Registrations

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### Memorials

Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Langley, in memory of Leif H. Hansen, 369th.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Danz, in memory of Leif H. Hansen, 369th.

Mrs. Anne Yoder, in memory of Raymond J. Yoder.

Gifts may be made in memory of 306th veterans or family, by sending your check, so designated to the 306th Memorial Fund, to the Association treasurer. All gifts made during the preceding quarter will be listed in Echoes. Expenditures of those funds is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

### 306th MAIL ORDER MEMORABILIA

Send this form and check to 306th Bomb Group Association to:  
Jack Frost, PO Box 13362, Des Moines, IA 50310.

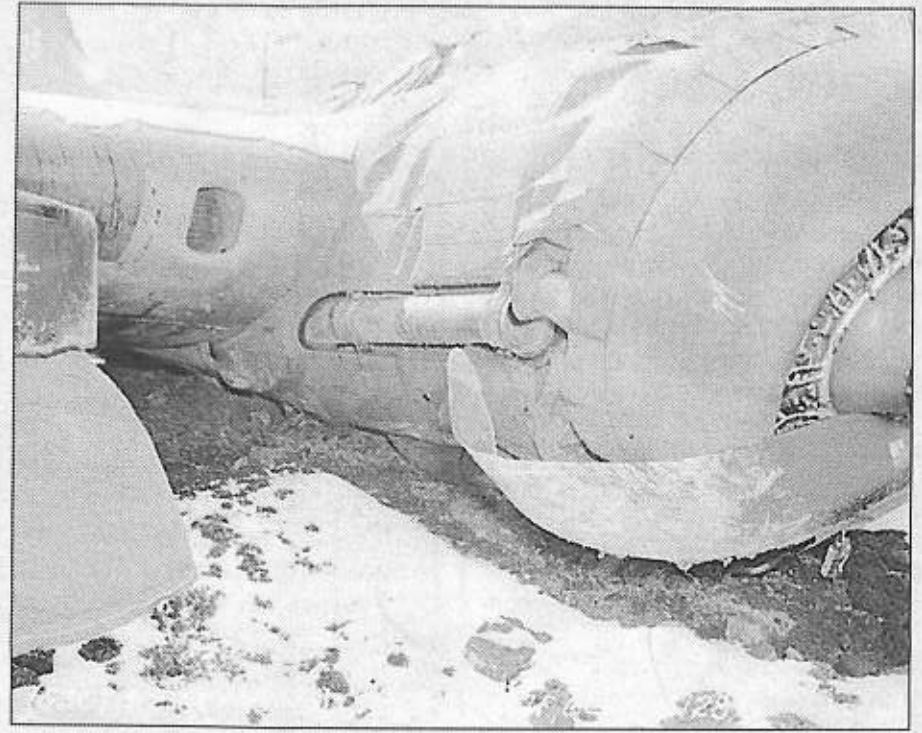
|   |          |         |
|---|----------|---------|
| Squadron Golf Shirts                              |          |         |
| Embroidered B-17, Squadron, Group (circle size)   |          |         |
| 367th red   | M, L, XL | \$20.00 |
| 368th white                                       | M, L, XL | \$20.00 |
| 369th green                                       | M, L, XL | \$20.00 |
| 423rd blue  | M, L, XL | \$20.00 |
| 306 Cap, Grey, Embr. 306 BG & B-17                |          |         |
| B-17 Gold Color Pin, Lapel or Hat                 |          |         |
| 306th Patch 2-1/4 in. without First over Germany  |          |         |
| 306th Patch 3 in. with First over Germany         |          |         |
| 306th Patch 5 in. Group Logo                      |          |         |
| 367th Patch 5 in. in Full Color                   |          |         |
| 368th Patch 5 in. in Full Color                   |          |         |
| 369th Patch 5 in. in Full Color                   |          |         |
| 423rd Patch 5 in. in Full Color                   |          |         |
| 306th Tie Navy, B-17, 306 B G, Thurleigh, England |          |         |
| 306th Decal with First over Germany               |          |         |
| 306th "Black Thursday" Photo in Full Color        |          |         |
| 306th Cloisonne Logo Key Chain                    |          |         |
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Some of the crew wander around the Iceland crash site for Thomas Witt's plane, waiting for rescue efforts to get them out of the bleak landscape. The general battering and wrinkled skin show the effects of impact of the airplane with the frozen landscape of Iceland.



## An Exciting Way to Prepare for Combat

*In among the papers of Thomas F. Witt, 367th pilot, provided to the editor by his widow, Barbara, is a fascinating account of Witt's crew and its aircraft trying to reach England out of Goose Bay, Labrador, in one long jump. Following is Witt's report completed 22 Apr 43:*

"I certify that we, ship 42-3128 and crew, took off from Goose Bay at 0458 GMT on a duly authorized mission in accordance with Par. 1, Operation Order #4, North Atlantic Wing, date 13 Apr 1943, circled the field once in order to pick up the other ship that was to fly with our element. We climbed to 9000 feet in order to get above the existing overcast and light snow. We flew on course of 100° for approximately four hours during which time our navigator, Lt. Carl A. Alexander, was able to take celestial shots and check our course. At the end of this time we started to run into rhime ice and heavy overcast. This condition existed for approximately the next six hours. During this time we lost contact with the other ship in our element.

We made several attempts to climb through the overcast after daybreak to enable the navigator to take shots on the sun. The maximum altitude attained was 19,500 feet and still no sun. We held the altitude for one hour. Since we were not yet in the clear and for the sake of conserving fuel we started to descend at the rate of 500 feet per minute with engines cut back. We broke out in the clear at 2500 feet where we were between the overcast and a layer of broken clouds through which we could see water under us. This lower layer was at 1600 feet.

During all this time we had no radio contact at all. Our efforts were in vain because of severe static from the weather. Even the shielded antenna proved of no advantage. But upon breaking out we picked up one station on 320 KC. This station came in clear and strong. The identification letters were ST. We had not been briefed on this station, and unable to find it in our pilots' guide, we therefore distrusted this station. (We found out later from authorities at Reykjavik that this station was Stornoway, Scotland.)

Our ETA had given out and was overdue, there was no land in sight, we could not pick up the station at Reykjavik. So I gave orders to the radio operator to try to get QDMs, this was about 1400 GMT. After several minutes the radio man succeeded in getting a bearing. We challenged this QDM and got a satisfactory answer. We followed these QDM bearings for about an hour, after which, for no apparent reason, we were no longer able to get an answer and became duly suspicious.

Our radioman continued to send, with no results. Our fuel was running very low and the situation became serious as we were still unable to pick up any station on our radio.

The warning lights came on for #1 gas tank, #2 followed shortly. It was at this time I gave orders to the bombardier, Lt. Walter Morey, to supervise the throwing overboard of all loose, heavy articles, plus getting rid of all classified matter to prepare for a water landing. This order was carried out in full when our radio man again gained contact receiving this message with a bearing (Col. Carter says fly 347°, you are 150 miles south of island,) in the clear.

With load decreased, we were able to maintain 150 MPH air speed with 1500 RPM and 27 inches of mercury.

By this time we had three warning light on. We continued to fly the headings given for approximately 30 minutes when we sighted land.

We had no idea where we were. We circled a small village which turned out to be Grindavik, Iceland. Ceiling was 1500 feet and visibility two miles. We looked for a place to land, no field was sighted. We circled inland and found what appeared to be a dry lake which was the only place that even appeared to be a fair place to land. The terrain was very rocky and rough elsewhere.

We dragged this area, made a circle, I warned the crew to stand by for a crash landing; dropped flaps and came in. I cut the master switch just before making contact. The landing was tail first and comparatively smooth until we hit a pile of rocks that gave us rather a terrific jolt.

Before the dust settled the crew was on the ground clear of the plane. Upon finding that no one was injured, I gave orders to burn our Standard Operating Instructions and cyco cards and other classified matters we had left.

We stood by to set the plane on fire in case we found we had landed in enemy territory, but at this time two P-38s and two P-39s came over, then we knew we were on friendly territory. We realized they were looking for us.

From a general visual check up, I found these damages existed:

1. All props severely bent
2. #2, #3 and #4 engines badly damaged.

3. Flaps demolished.
4. Nose section smashed.
5. Entire under side of fuselage wrecked.
6. Ball turret demolished.
7. Tail gunner's position practically broken from fuselage.
8. Bomb bay racks and walkway twisted.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, I certify that these events were caused by the negligence of no individual or individuals concerned.

Thomas F. Witt 1st Lt., A.C.

### WITT'S CREW

Thomas F. Witt, P. d 29 Oct 95, SS; Douglas H. White, CP, KIA 14 Oct 43; Norman H. Simpson, N, MIA 22 Jun 43 POW, living; Walter Z. Morey, B tour, 15 Dec 43, living; Joseph C. Bocelli, ro, MIA 14 Oct 43, POW, living; Charles E. Vondrachek, eng, tour 4 Jan 44, DSC, living; Francis W. Pulliam, bt, KIA 14 Oct 43; George Toney, wg, KIA 14 Oct 43; William R. Earnest, wg, KIA 14 Oct 43; Walter D. Sherrill, tg, KIA 14 Oct 43.

(NB: Men KIA 14 Oct 43 were flying on the Schweinturt raid of that date on Douglas White's crew. The sole survivor from that plane was Bocelli.)

## Obituaries

Lucien Bedard, an original member of the Group and a POW from 19 Dec 42 (w. Lewis McKesson), died 1 Mar 98 in Fall River, MA. His 306th assignment was with the 367th, and he retired USAF after 22 years of active duty. He leaves his wife, Blanche, 4c, 3gc, 1ggc.

Ralph D. Brown, 369th Ops and intelligence clerk, died 10 Apr 98 in Dearborn, MI. He worked in various repair facilities as a mechanic. After 40 years as a maintenance supervisor for United Airlines in Detroit, he retired in '80. He leaves his wife, Eileen, a war bride, 3c, 5gc.

Marion H. Evans, 368th assistant crew chief, has died at Spanaway, WA. He was one of at least four 306th ground personnel who were sent to Russia in Feb 44 to service USAAF planes involved in shuttle bombing missions to Russia.

LTC John Gassler, a 368th pilot from 3 Nov 43 to 21 Mar 44, died in Mar 98 in Deland, FL, after an extended illness. He was a USAF retiree in Sep 68, and leaves his wife, Patricia, 3s, 7gc, 2ggc.

Leif Henry Hansen, a longtime 369th intelligence clerk, died 17 Jun 98 in Arlington, VA, where he had lived since the death of his wife, Anne, 10 Sep 97. He had left the 306th in Sep 45 and for many years was employed by Martin Marietta Corp., retiring in Jun 81. He attended many reunions, including the '97 event in Orlando. He leaves 2d, 2gc.

Kenneth Herbster, a ground officer who managed to fly five missions (for his Air Medal) in his first two months at Thurleigh, died 21 Oct 97 in Spencer, IA. He was a longtime businessman there, operating a retail electrical business. While serving as commander of the 9th district, American Legion, he built its members to more than 14,000, the largest in the state. In '72 he was named Spencer's "Citizen of the Year." He leaves his wife, Vivian.

Taylor L. Leedy, 423rd copilot and pilot (Robert K. Welter crew,) died 22 Apr 98 in Corvallis, OR. After completing 30 missions 6 Jun 44, he flew Cycle Relay. Leedy had had two and one-half years in service before WWII and was stationed at Hickam Field, Hawaii, on 7 Dec 41. He later completed pilot training and arrived with the 306th 28 Nov 43. His wife, Lucille, died a year earlier.

Glen R. Wyly, 369th mechanic and engineer, died 10 Jul 97 in San Lorenzo, CA. He was a mechanic with the original Group, switched to combat as an engineer, and became the 8th EM to complete 25 missions. He was also with the 305BG in England. He retired as a driver and for-man for Vogel Van Lines. He leaves his wife, Maxine.

### 306th Family

Doris Hedin, widow of Harold A. Hedin, 369th mechanic, died 21 May 98 in St. Cloud, MN. She was a war bride.

Bettie Ranck, wife of Roy C. Ranck, 423rd pilot, died 8 Sep 97 in Kansas City, MO.



# B-17 F Flies Again, Last of Model Line

As the last flyable Seattle-built B-17 F was readied for its first flight on the soggy Renton Airport tarmac 9 May, the restoration crew chief, Pat Coluccio could finally pause a split second for recollection with his son, Greg. A simple, "We did it!" passed from father to son.

Between the dream of rebuilding to completion of 100,000 hours of work by an army of dedicated volunteers had taken seven years. And on that afternoon B-17F "Boeing Bee" took off for its birthplace at Boeing Field in Seattle.

"The flight was just perfect," later reported pilot Buzz Nelson, who is 767 chief pilot for Boeing Flight Test. Nelson's father, Richard, was a design project engineer during production of the B-17 F. The son later said, "It has been a privilege just to be a part of this airplane."

Its interior is like a walk back through time. The WWII bomb has been completely restored to the day it rolled out of Seattle's Plant II 13 Feb 1943. About 90 percent of the 55-year-old airplane's system are functional, including the radio room, top and ball turret gun turrets and all manually controlled weapon systems.

This plane, and a number of 306th aircraft, came out of this same Boeing production block, which ran from 42-29467 through 42-31031.

At least four aircraft with numbers running 42-29739 through 42-29793 were with the 306th. Two of them, 42-29744 "Battling B" 367th, and 42-29777, "Peck's Bad Boy," a 423rd plane, went down 15 May and 28 July, respectively. Peck had flown his craft for seven missions when it went down, and Frank Clemons was the only pilot recorded for "Battling B."

42-29793, an unnamed 368 plane was most often flown by Oleron Linn, four times by George Paris, and also by Pervis Youree, Joe Belser, Dub Jones and Martin Newstreet.

42-29739 came from the 95th Group to the 369th, and was gone 10 Sep to the 91st Group, without a mission being recorded. And 793 was also sent to the 91st on 10 Sep.

Volunteers literally searched the world for parts to help bring the "Boeing Bee" back to life. The plane is now a part of the collection of the Museum of Flight, which was delighted to claim a Boeing built plane back in its collection.

Boeing built 6,981 B17s in Seattle for the war effort. A total of 12,731 of the bombers were built by Boeing, Douglas, Lockheed and Vega. At the peak of production Plant II was churning out 16 B-17s every 24 hours.

Less than a dozen Flying Fortresses built between 1935 and 1945 remain in flying condition today, the "Boeing Bee" being the only one of its ilk. It will go through a series of flight tests before being displayed permanently at the Museum of Flight.

# Bypass Surgery Slows Strong

Not to dwell on personal matters at any great length, but a few days after seeing that the April issue of Echoes was in the mail, Russ Strong, your editor, was hospitalized, and within a short time "enjoyed" four coronary bypasses. This happened on 8 May 1988. On the following Friday he returned home for rest and recuperation.

While he recovered quite rapidly he found it much more difficult to carry on the work of the 306th than he had anticipated. His typing was atrocious for about three weeks. He does appreciate the good wishes he has received from 306th men, and is looking forward to the Savannah reunion in December

| Serial No           | 1943    |            |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 1944            |                   |                                     |                       |                                    |
|---------------------|---------|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
|                     | Jan     | Feb        | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan             | Feb               | Mar                                 |                       |                                    |
| <b>B-17F Boeing</b> |         |            |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       |                                    |
| 42-29477            | N R     | 27 Feb 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 303BG           | 25 Sep 43         |                                     |                       |                                    |
| 42-29498            | N R     | 2 Mar 43   |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 303BG           | 25 Sep 43         |                                     |                       |                                    |
| 42-29524            | N R     | 2 Mar 43   |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | AFSC for Repair | 21 May then 303BG |                                     |                       |                                    |
| 42-29554            | New Rpt | 25 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 384BG           | 22 Aug 43         |                                     |                       |                                    |
| 42-29620            |         |            |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 303BG           | 17 Apr 43         | MIA                                 | 1 May 43              |                                    |
| 42-29625            | New Rpt | 16 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 17 Apr 43             |                                    |
| 42-29629            | New Rpt | 12 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 303BG           | 25 Sep 43         |                                     |                       |                                    |
| 42-29631            | New Rpt | 25 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 17 Apr 43             |                                    |
| 42-29643            | New Rpt | 13 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 17 Apr 43             |                                    |
| 42-29649            | New Rpt | 29 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | Sal due to Battle Dam after Op Miss | 1 May 43. (2 May 43)  |                                    |
| 42-29658            | New Rpt | 16 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 17 Apr 43             |                                    |
| 42-29660            | New Rpt | 22 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 5 Apr 43              |                                    |
| 42-29666            | New Rpt | 25 Mar 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 21 May 43 (Ditched)   |                                    |
| 42-29677            | New Rpt | 20 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 15 May 43             |                                    |
| 42-29739            |         |            |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 95BG - AFSC     | 4 Aug 43          |                                     |                       | 91BG 11 Sep 43                     |
| 42-29741            |         |            |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     | 303BG           | 17 Apr 43         |                                     |                       | 91BG 11 Sep 43                     |
| 42-29744            | New Rpt | 20 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 15 May 43             |                                    |
| 42-29777            | New Rpt | 19 May 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 28 July 43            |                                    |
| 42-29779            | New Rpt | 4 June 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 28 July 43            |                                    |
| 42-29786            | New Rpt | 20 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | Crashed                             | 20 May 43 (21 May 43) |                                    |
| 42-29793            | New Rpt | 20 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | 91BG 11 Sep 43                     |
| 42-29794            | New Rpt | 19 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | 91BG 11 Sep 43                     |
| 42-29795            | New Rpt | 20 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | Date out unknown then to 303BG      | 25 Sep 43             |                                    |
| 42-29806            | New Rpt | 19 May 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | MIA                                 | 21 May 43             |                                    |
| 42-29809            | New Rpt | 20 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | 384BG 4 Sep 43                     |
| 42-29815            | New Rpt | 20 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | 91BG 14 Sep 43                     |
| 42-29823            | New Rpt | 19 Apr 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | 303BG 26 Sep 43                    |
| 42-29824            |         |            |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   | Date in Unknown                     |                       | AFSC for Rep 30 July 43 then 379BG |
| 42-29894            | New Rpt | 18 May 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | 303BG 25 Sep 43                    |
| 42-29900            | New Rpt | 23 May 43  |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | MIA 26 July 43                     |
| 42-29930            | New Rpt | 17 June 43 |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                   |                                     |                       | 303BG 25 Sep 43                    |

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# Map Trips Provide Little Excitement

By David H. Weed

The "306th Echoes" for January 1992 (vol.17, no. 1) lists this plane as being at the Istres base in France, but with the 368th Squadron. This moves me to send the following correction. It is quite possible that this should be called an "addition" rather than a "correction," since it may have been assigned to the 368th when Andy Vangalis recorded it.

However: 44-8578 was with the 369th at Thurligh in the summer of '45 when we were gearing up for the Casey Jones Project. It was assigned to our crew — or maybe we were assigned to it. We used it for our training in the mysteries and monotonies of aerial mapping, and we continued our close relationship into January of 1946.

On September 1, 1945 we flew to Istres, France, where we spent several days flying mapping runs. I recall flying lines over Sardinia and the Po River Valley of Italy. A highlight of one of those days was a flight over the harbor at Toulon, France where we could see a number of French Naval vessels upright on the floor of the harbor where they had indeed sunk by their own crews to avoid having to turn them over to the Vichy government early in the war.

About a week after our arrival in Istres we again loaded our personal gear and took 44-8578 south to join the 369th Detachment at Marrakech, Morocco. There we remained until early January of '46. From Marrakech we flew mapping lines along the Mediterranean Coast of Africa as far east as Tunis, and along the Atlantic Coast as far south as Spanish Morocco, including a few lines over the Canary Islands.

Side trips included an R & R flight to Tangier and at least one, possibly two, flights to Gibraltar. We also made one run back to Thurligh for mail and supplies.

This was, of course, not combat flying, but it did include a few "adventures" which helped to overcome the boredom. For a pilot, flying a straight line at 20,000 feet above the terrain wasn't very exciting. Impossible, perhaps, but not much of a thrill. So some rather mild events could classify as "adventures."

One day a couple of hours south of the Atlas Mountains we lost an engine, #2 I think. With oil bubbling out of a hole in the cowling, and only about 1/2 power available, we decided to feather it and go back to RAK (Marrakech). Three hours later we landed without incident — 3 engines provided plenty of power for a stripped-down Fort. But with the plane on auto-pilot I had forgotten that the two engines on the right wing were drawing down the fuel twice as fast as the one on the left. When, on the approach, I turned off the auto-pilot I had a very unbalanced plane and little time for retrimming.

The engine problem: evidently a valve spring had broken leaving an open valve on the top cylinder for the piston to hit. This threw the valve stem through the head and the cowling, and proceeded to grind up the valve inside the cylinder, damaging the head, the piston and the cylinder wall. No great damage, but "maintenance" found that parts were no longer available. There had to be engine parts by the ton somewhere in Europe, but not where they could be found. A complete engine, yes, but a few parts, no. So 44-8578 got a new engine instead of one new cylinder.

A couple of landings: One day we returned to RAK from a photo flight to find one of the French Air Force planes — an





# Now We Know Nine Men!

What are the odds on identifying nine men, who came together around one airplane in late January 1942?

We didn't rate our chances very high when the picture appeared in the April issue of *Echoes* showing the combat crew that led the first 8th AF raid on Germany proper. It was not difficult to make out the flight crew. These had been identified some years ago, and we even had a newspaper picture with some of the names on it.

Now, that was the back row, and the trouble didn't begin until we wondered who the men in the front row were. These were the mechanics, crew chiefs, a flight chief, and others for whom today few can place in their proper job positions. That is probably extraneous information, but after consultations between several 367th veterans and others, we think it is all nailed down tight now. And, frankly, the editor is surprised that the entire list ultimately developed.

M/Sgt. Larry Emeigh was the crew chief for this airplane, but he wasn't on duty this day, and S/Sgt. Bill Feezer, the assistant crew chief was in charge of preparing the plane for the long haul to Wilhelmshaven, and he is at the right end of the line.

M/Sgt. Thomas Kazberovich, a flight chief, was at the left end of the line, followed by M/Sgt. Roy I. Ploeger, Henry Terry's crew chief. Then there were Sgts. John R. Stone, Jackson VanDever and William Pangle.

The #6 man was M/Sgt. William A. Gilbertson, a crew chief, and Sgts. Joseph W. Broussard and Jesse R. Ellis.

You may be interested that the toughest names to come up with were William Pangle and Roy I. Ploeger. There was pretty quick agreement on the others. We can't name all of the men who participated in this memory game, but we are delighted that they were able to help out.



The 367th Pilots' Bike Brigade sweeps through North Bedfordshire in off moments from combat flying. This picture was taken in midsummer 1943, and included, left to right: Thomas Ledgerwood, Zias Davis, William Tackmier, John Fogarty, Francis Pierce, Robert McCallum and Laek Robinson. Well, Fogarty was a navigator, and Pierce was a bombardier.

# Reeves Recalls Long Trip Back

The 24th of Apr 44 was not a good day for the 306th. In fact, it was one of three mission dates in the Group's history when we lost 10 planes, our highest single mission total during the war. 24 Apr was at Oberpfaffenhofen, south near Munich. 17 Apr 43 at Bremen was a 10-plane day, as was 14 Oct 43 at Schweinfurt.

This Apr mission to Oberpfaffenhofen is one that Navigator Jim Reeves will never forget. It was the crew's first day over the Reich, Cecil C McKinney and his crew saw four planes out of their squadron go down almost immediately. McKinney's plane was among two still flying for the 369th.

Reeves tells that his plane had gotten along fairly well that day, until they turned around and headed for home. At that time a bullet hit their top turret gunner in the back of the head, and then proceeded to exit from the side of the head just above the right ear.

"Memories of this day, for me, are

unforgettable. When I looked back, I saw John W. Welch, our top turret gunner lying on the floor without an oxygen mask on. I pulled him back to the nose compartment where I held a mask in place most of the way home."

For four hours Reeves tended to Welch, whose helmet was filled with brains and blood. Repeatedly during the trip Reeves had to pull the oxygen mask away so that he could clear the vomit out of the mask, enabling Welch to breathe. Welch, then 22 years of age, proved to be tough. He was in terrible shape when they got him home, as was the aircraft. Welch spent many months in hospitals before making it back to the States. Once his wounds had begun to heal, he then spent months in therapy as they tried to deal with his memory loss.

Welch survived until 21 Jul 1971, when he died at Ft. Smith AR, leaving his wife and five children. He was employed by the Cement Asbestos Products Co.

# Mission Leaders Back in October

The editor regrets that he was unable to continue the mission leadership chart which began in the April issue of *Echoes*. It will be continued in the October issue.

While he had accumulated most of the raw data it is a considerable task to get all of the material assembled so that it can go to the printer properly. He anticipates that the remaining 241 missions will appear in two installments, and will include far more names than have appeared thus far.

We hope you will understand the delay.

# Mapping Flights (continued)

SBD, I think — down in the middle of the runway with a collapsed gear. The tower said they expected the runway to be tied up for another hour or so. We complained about the delay and were told our options were to hang around in the air 'til the plane could be moved, go somewhere else — Casablanca was an hour north — or use the taxi strip. The taxi strip was not all that much wider than the main gear and the large rocks off the paved strip made a mistake look grim, but it beat sitting upstairs watching the fuel needles, so we took it. For once, I made a good landing.

Another day we landed at RAK just as a sandstorm was moving onto the field. At RAK there were no turnoffs to the taxi strip except at the ends of the runway so we had to go to the far end of the runway into the storm to turn and head back down the 5000 feet of taxi trip to the parking ramp. I was a desert kid who had grown up with dust storms, but that one was the thickest I've ever experienced. In full daylight it became so dark that we could not see to taxi straight ahead. We cut the engines and stayed there, feeling the wind rock the plane, but seeing nothing, for about 20 minutes. The storm blew over us, the air

cleared, and we taxied on in to park.

Early in January of 1946 we were recalled to Giebelstadt and that flight was my last at the controls of 44-8578. In Germany our crew was broken up. Some headed home, others were assigned to other squadrons. I went by ground convoy back to Istres and then to Port Lyautey, Morocco with the 368th to finish my time.

My assumption is that 44-8578 was returned to Istres and the 368th, and that it was some time in '46 that Vangalis recorded its presence there.

# STORIES WANTED!

If you flew missions in WWII, served with a bomb group or other organization, and have a story to tell, you may want to respond to Robin Neillands. Neillands is a recognized author on WWII, and this book will be on the Combined Bomber Offensive of which the 306th was a part.

Write, e-mail or fax to Rob Neillands, 5 Silbury Ct. Beckhampton, Marlborough, Wilshire, England SN8 1QJ. Tel: 44-1672 539656. Fax: 44-1672 539672, or e-mail robaneillands.demon.co.uk.

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# — 8th Bomber Command —

## A Tough Way To Run A Major Combat Unit

The ordeal of 8th Bomber Command last winter in Britain goes down in my book as one of the unsung sagas of this war. For a matter of six weeks the Joes of that heavy-bombing force took a dim view of a number of things, including survival. Temporarily orphaned, the 8th necessarily was being neglected in favor of the North African and Southwest Pacific theatres. There was, moreover, a villain in the piece—foul flying weather in the North Atlantic, which likewise headed off replacements.

To be bald about it, the 8th, as the raw English weather thawed out in February and March, faced extinction. There was no future to it, failing reinforcements, and the 8th sized up its situation in its own lingo as a sad sack. At the end of February it would have taken a very sharp B.T.O., big time operator from Bomber Command to convince the dwindling Joes in the Nissen huts that by August they would propound a riddle to Roosevelt and Churchill and by October stabbing as deeply into the wicked heart of Hitler of Festung Europa as Poland. Yet that was what happened when the 8th came back!

*Seldom has a fighting force experienced a more dramatic comeback. The 8th flickered dimly, recovered brilliantly in the space of four months. A year ago this month the Post published an article of mine entitled, "Can the Big Fellows Finish Germany?" Reciting the early, experimental successes of the 8th's Fortresses and Liberators over France and the Low Countries, the article assumed as did AF Headquarters in Washington, that the 8th would wax in numbers and and experience during the winter, becoming by spring the decisive striking force it now is.*

Scarcely anyone then anticipated the drain of other theatres, the frosty disappointments involved in ferrying

bombers across the Sub-Arctic in midwinter. On 9 Oct 42, two months after the AAF set up shop in England, the 8th packed 110 heavy bombers into a historic raid over Lille. By the following March it was hard put to collect 50 air-worthy Forts for a mission. Not until July would Gen. Ira Eaker, the 8th's solid rock commander, have 1000 bombers on deck in England.

There was an Alamo-like quality of doom to the 8th's plight during the bleak days. Although Bomber Command was dispersed throughout the Midlands, not penned in a 'dobe stronghold, there was the same sense of siege, of diminishing numbers, or reinforcements vainly awaited. In the 8th's case, a gallant remnant of bombers held on.

### Turning the Tide

Percentages were scribbled in officers' clubs, noncoms' recreation hunts, and percentages were discussed endlessly: On which date, given the current rate of losses, would that last Fort take off for the 8th's final swipe at Jerry? The answer usually came out the same. That would be on a day early in April. They began figuring the odds when total losses reached 49.5%, and after each mission the result was recalculated, but it changed little. Because losses held steady, fliers would cut as fine as that, and the living wonder is not that a microscopic few went flak-happy, being sent to flak homes for the cure, but that half didn't cut and run.

Before the Vegesack U-Boat Works mission, which on 18 March turned the tide, the fliers were fairly bitter, "bitter" being the 8th's generic term for anything from annoyance over a stand down to burning vengeance against the Axis. Even so, the jauntier men were making book over a pint of ale at the nearby pub on which Fort in their Group would throw

the last punch. Assuming that they were "fighting to the last B-17", they warmed themselves over their own conviction that they alone of Uncle Sam's overseas air power were playing the "big leagues", a piece of swank which given the Luftwaffe's ferocity and cunning, was not too wide of the mark.

By March that had become cold comfort. Yet they continued to make lowlevel attacks on neighboring pubs, the noncoms courted English daughters, sometimes for the fresh forage such attentions gained. This form of gallantry was known as "romancing the area girls for eggs". Between missions, men wrote new wills, perhaps changing beneficiaries, bequeathing flying jackets, books of verse, and even diaries to their mates, on the gamble that the mates would be luckier.

They bellyached about British beer, lack of leave time, powdered eggs and margarine, the English mud, the persistent rain, and the men at home who weren't filling up the pipeline with new Forts faster. Despite all of this talk and badinage, the 8th never turned back, never ran from the Luftwaffe, gave Goering's fighters merry hell whenever they met, and kept the Stars and Stripes flying over Europe in days as dark as the AAF is likely to see in this war. Slugging away at the U-Boat pens far down the coast of France, and along the North Sea coast of Germany, the 8th airmen working out tactical problems now standing the 8th in good stead. They vindicated the AAF's enthusiasm for daylight precision bombing against the RAF's cheerful skepticism and, above all, they fashioned an instrument which, collaboration with the RAF, may subdue the Nazi will to resist before ever we march an army into the Reich proper.

There were incidents among this large assemblage of very young men called upon to give their all for their country. Nerves became frayed and sometimes common sense went out the window. The harried navigator who sought release in sleep, only to find that this collided with the post-mission blackjack game and he shot out the lights in his abode. At the sound, a non-combat officer, recently arrived from the States dashed from his bed and out of the hut like a bat out of hell. The blackjack players took no note of the interruption, while the irate lieutenant then calmly blew out the barrel of his .45, shelved it, and was promptly snoring.

Empty places at the breakfast table, and empty beds in the barracks tore at the men, and squadron commanders and chaplains were busy trying to keep men in shape for combat. Medical officers were frequently called up to listen and to counsel men who were approaching their own personal breaking points. Some men ended up in a flak house for a few

days of leave, feminine Red Cross workers to talk with, and same extra rations of food before they had to return to the flying.

Notes and letters came back from German prison camps indicating that a fair percentage of Americans lived to perhaps fight another day later on. Miraculous escape stories circulated, and a lot of wishful thinking went in to assessing the date of pilots and tail gunners, navigators and radio operators. Later on statistics showed that if you had your chute on when your plane blew apart you had a 50-50 chance of survival.

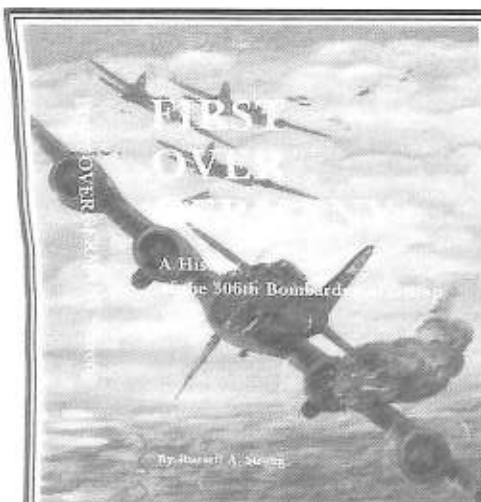
While the Germans were studying their British and American prisoners, trying to find ways of extracting military secrets from them, the Americans and British were studying their captors to learn how best to handle interrogations. A very special group of former combat fliers were those men who bailed out, hit the ground running and managed to escape capture by the Germans.

These men were invaluable sources of information about what life was like behind enemy lines, how one actually made one's way from a landing to evading capture by the Germans. Of course, how they were able to use the French to exploit their way through devious channels back to England, the rest to become prisoners of war. Another factor of reassurance was that the 8th, officers and men alike, sweated out their ordeal together. In the 8th, every situation is sweated out, not undergone, not experienced or endured.

The brigadier generals commanding the wings, the colonels commanding the groups accompanied the Forts more often on missions for morale purposes during the black weeks. These officers likewise passed more time in the field, dropping in on the dromes at all hours of day or night for a critique, a briefing, an inspection or just a meal and an evening of talk. On such errands Brig. Gen. Haywood S. (Possum) Hansell, Jr., who was then commanding the First Wing, traveled 18,000 miles by motorcar around England between January first, when he assumed the command, and June, when he relinquished it.

### To Be or Not to Be

On one of the dreariest days of the siege, late in February, General Eaker canvassed the future at bomber headquarters with several of his high-ranking subordinates. Present was Hansell. The situation could not have been ruggeder. Not only were no replacements arriving but there were shortages of Fortress parts with which to repair battle damage, and the ground crews were undermanned. Group commanders actually were raiding the kitchens, making gunners out of cooks and supply men. The end, as all knew,



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## 8th Bomber Command - Continued

was specifically in sight and the question was whether or not to ease off on the missions, conserving crews and planes to make the command last longer.

A blunt, leathery, craglike character in a plane, a tactical conference or a poker game, Eaker's mood was plenty grim, although he digressed to tell about a newly arrived junior officer who had lightly suggested he would like to take some poker lessons from the general. "I told him," said Eaker, "that I had studied under some of the soundest masters in America, but the tuition had been high, about a thousand dollars a lesson, and if he wanted to pay that much, I might be able to accommodate him." This day Eaker wasn't bluffing, nor was he disposed to pull the 8th's punches.

By way of reiteration, Hansell reminded them that before long the last Fortress in England would be taking off to make the 8th's last raid on Axis Europe-unless help came.

"Yes," snapped Eaker, "and I'll be on that plane. But until that happens, we'll be sending them over as often and as many as we can." Hansell and the others had no doubt the C. G. meant exactly what he said.

**Wray's Raggedy Irregulars**

The job of maintaining morale rested more immediately on the group commanders, among whom were Col. Curtis Le May, now a brigadier general, and Col. Stanley T. Wray. Le May habitually addressed his Joes as "gents" contrived various means of keeping their daubers up. Wray, a humorous Hoosier and a West Pointer, class of '32, called his group, the 91st, Wray's Raggedy Irregulars. It was Wray who first pointed out the fact which became indisputable in the 8th, that they were the big-leaguers of the AAF.

Colonel Wray instituted the Order of the Rigid Digit, which was solemnly bestowed, with a silver plaque and a silver miniature for the offender's blouse, whenever a pilot "goofed off" his plane. He took pains with the citations, which attested the culprit's "great disregard for his own personal safety and that of his passengers" and the skill shown in "wasting valuable Government property." The bill for silver medals rose with the spirits of the group, which, incidentally, stood high in bombing accuracy and defensive tactics. Le May's group was the 305th.

Even now, with the 8th regularly flying 300-plane missions, weather permitting, a hark back to the gallantry of that steadfast little air force, generals and Joes alike brings a lump to the throat. It is one thing to engage the enemy in hot blood, another to drag out a death watch for weeks, conscious that each hour ticks you nearer to a personal doom that can hardly be escaped. There was something pretty magnificent in the way the Joes ignored the empty places at the breakfast tables, never refusing battle. The Army Air Forces are too young to have accumulated

much in the way of tradition, but the 8th gave them tradition, in chunks last winter. While it was happening, the orphaned 8th's ordeal could not be described for security reasons. Only now that enough officers and men have returned and logged their experiences can the outline of their saga be inked in.

Normally, nothing could be less congruous than an air force and a fairy story, yet the 8th's swift improvement in fortune had a Cinderella quality to it. In the ashes early in March, by the eighteenth, the 8th could put seventy-three Fortresses and twenty-four Liberators in the air over Vegesack. By June 170 Fortresses smashed at a synthetic-rubber plant in Huis, Germany, while thirty-nine others paid a side call to Antwerp, and in July the 300-plane raids began. After the replacements began flowing, it had taken some time to condition the crews to combat.

In August, the 8th had grown potent enough, in league with the RAF bomber command, to lay a problem in the laps of the President and the Prime Minister when they met at Quebec to map the further strategy of the western democracies problem that continued to puzzle the top-drawer strategists for some time later. In effect, the 8th and the RAF, blotting out the enemy's vital points by day, mauling his industrial and harbor cities by night, riddled the strategists a riddle: *When is a mighty power, still uninvaded and defended within its fortress walls, no longer a mighty power? To the Allied air forces, the answer was clear: When the mighty power's will to fight is sapped and its capacity to supply its forces vitiated by air bombardment.*

Just when sea and land forces are to supplement the air arm in the battle of Germany naturally cannot be made public in advance. It may be soon, it may even be under way before you read this. It might not occur before next spring. So much depends upon the tempo of defeat inside Germany. To that defeat the 8th's winter siege contributed. It was then that the heavy-bombardment theoreticians of the AAF worked out, tested and confirmed the tactics necessary to effectuate their doctrine. The handful of bomber Joes sweating out the dark weeks of February and March did more than was apparent at the time toward shaping the 8th for its share in victory. They helped mature the plan for defeating Germany from the air which had been long incubating in the Army Air Forces' planning sections.

**Calling Their Shots**

The crux of precision bombing lies in target selection. It would not do to waste a mission on an aircraft factory or U-boat yard of secondary importance. The aim is to strike at something the loss of which will be virtually felt. This calls for exact knowledge of the enemy's industry, current information and the exercise of judgment. Out of target selections has grown its practitioners maintain, a new sci-

ence. It is enormously complicated. Scores of experts in the Air Forces and Brig. Gen. William J. Donovan's Office of Strategic Services economists, engineers and statisticians-toil incessantly to identify the pin points on the map which the bombers will later demolish.

The 8th, plowing around in half boots through the English mud, watching its effectiveness diminish, had less use for the new science last winter than now. Its resources then were being applied to the U-boat pens down the French coast, and, secondly, the 8th was solving another problem. Before reaching the target so scientifically chosen for them, the bombers must fight their way in. Choosing the U-boat pens required no closely calculated target selection and fighting the way in called for another type of experimentation, a form of trial and error.

**Into the U-Boat Lairs**

The hard, long-distance chore with the U-boat pens was not of the 8th's choosing. Theoretically, it did not fall within the boundaries of strategic air warfare, being over on the tactical side. Bombing the U-boat works themselves was more to the bomber command's strategic taste, yet, given the effective malevolence of the U-boat war in the Atlantic, the job had priority. It meant over-water journeys to St. Nazaire, to Lorient, to Brest and occasionally, a swing down across the Bay of Biscay to Bordeaux. The Luftwaffe fighters had a good run for their money on the way out and back; the flak was monstrous over these important U-boat harbors, it being commonly said by the bomber Joes that you could walk on the flak over St. Nazaire.

Yet the 8th came and went to the pens, systematically razing their shops, hoisting gear, stores, and so on, although unable to pierce the heavy concrete canopies over the pens themselves, and, in so doing, impaired the U-boat warfare to a degree greater than is commonly realized. By delaying the enemy submarines, damaging their supply and increasing the turnaround in port between cruises, they helped check the enormous winter's toll of Allied shipping and assisted in clearing the lanes for the transports to the Mediterranean. This job took oceanic navigation, without landmarks, and occasionally the bombers went astray. Once, returning from Bordeaux against an unpredicted head wind, they found themselves over the Brest peninsula, flying low into swarms of unanticipated Nazi fighters and abundant flak. Most of them fought their way home. It was always a fight, to and from. The problem of the heavy bombers over Europe is to keep ahead, tactically, of the Luftwaffe, which, in its turn, strives to keep ahead of the 8th. During the winter, weaknesses were disclosed in the Fortresses as the enemy ceaselessly probed for them.

General Hansell's first mission upon taking command of the First

Wing was over St. Nazaire. This was on January third. On this day the enemy demonstrated that it had solved a problem. The Fortresses then carried a .30 caliber machine gun in their noses, although the rest of their armament was .50's. The noses therefore, were vulnerable-a point apparent to the Luftwaffe pilots this day.

Hansell rode in the lead plane in the first squadron. The enemy, diving straight at the Fortresses' noses, destroyed the bombers on each side of the general, inflicted heavy losses elsewhere in the flight. Upon landing, Hansell took steps to increase the nose armament, substituting two .50's for the single gun.

A flurry of consultation and intensive study by mechanical experts brought the verdict that Hansell's wishes could not be carried out. Hansell had authority in his pocket to make the change, but it seemed impossible, short of redesigning the nose. The wing commander, who served an apprenticeship as a boiler-maker after graduating from Georgia Tech back in the early 1920's, would not however, be stumped. Substituting, as he says, "authority for technical judgment," he ordered the guns installed. They were, and they worked. The job was then to re-equip the noses of all Fortresses on hand and those arriving.

So it went. The 8th constantly experimented with formations, packing in the bombers at different angles in order to bring more fire power to bear against the interceptors. They tightened formations, close order being the secret of withstanding enemy opposition in the air. By that means the fire power of one bomber is multiplied by the number of planes in the formation.

The 8th experimented with altitude. Missions were charted to fly at various altitudes-as low as 7000 feet, as high as the normal bombing level, which was four miles up-and more. At this time the bomber Joes began regarding themselves as guinea pigs the 8th as the "guinea-pig air force." The guinea pigs grumbled at the failure of replacements to arrive, but not at their job, or even their fate. It was a hard winter; they took it, and as a result, the 8th knew, when replacements did flow in, which formations worked best under certain conditions and which altitudes gave the bomber an advantage, the enemy a disadvantage. The accumulated reports, charts and graphs paid off this summer and fall.

**Forrest Davis was the Washington editor for The Saturday Evening Post during 1943, at which time he penned this piece on 8th Bomber Command and its struggle to survive from March 1943 until some time in late Fall of that year. It appeared in the Post on 13 November 1943.**

# New Director At Savannah Museum

Barry Buxton on 15 Jul became executive director of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, Savannah. He takes over responsibility of overall operations of the Museum from Lt.Gen. E. G. Shuler, Jr., who continues as president and CEO. Gen. Shuler will concentrate on fund raising and wider exposure for the Museum.

Buxton is a graduate of Appalachian State University, where he also earned his master's degree. He received his doctorate from the University of Nebraska in 1976.

Since 1995 Buxton has been director of the Museum of Health and Medical Science in Houston, TX, and prior to that was executive director of the Health Adventure Museum from 1991 to 1995.

# Additional Obituaries

Gustave Siegfried Holmstrom, an original co-pilot and then a pilot and POW, died 22 May in Hemet, CA. A native of Brooklyn, NY, he was a co-pilot for John M. Howard and flew his first mission 7 Nov 42, the group's second foray into combat. He had his own crew at the second Schweinfurt raid 14 Oct 43 and was MIA on that day, winding up in prison camp. Holmstrom worked for 40 years with Rockwell International as an environmental monitor in Newberry Park, CA. He leaves his wife, Eva, 2c, lgs.

Thomas M. Hulings, came to the 306th 11 Oct 44 and 12 days later was named commander of the 368th Squadron. He was an original pilot with the 92nd Bomb Group, flying his first mission 9 Oct 42 along with the arrival of the 306th for combat. He completed a tour with the 92nd, where he had become well acquainted with Col. James S. Sutton, who was its first commander. Sutton was commander of the 306th when he brought Hulings in to head the 368th. Hulings flew a dozen or more missions with the 306th, and was transferred out of the Group 25 Sep 45. On 24 Oct 44, Hulings married his wife, Kitty Young, who was at that time the commander of the Women's Army Corps detachment at 8th AF headquarters. He had worked for Hercules Intl, for many years, and died 8 July 98 in Atlanta. He leaves his wife, 2c, 2gc.

# '98 In Savannah

Join the 306th — Dec 2 thru Dec 5

## Marriott Hotel

### Wednesday, 2 Dec

Noon to 6 REGISTRATION  
1:30 PM - Inspection Trip to Gulfstream Aviation  
Includes round trip by bus  
Dinner on your own

| Cost | No.   | Total |
|------|-------|-------|
| \$20 | _____ | _____ |

### Thursday, 3 Dec

9 to 5 Registration in Lobby  
12 to 6 Hospitality Rm open  
6 to 9 Dinner Cruise on the River  
Musical entertainment

|      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| \$25 | _____ | _____ |
| \$35 | _____ | _____ |

### Friday, 4 Dec

7:30 to 9:30 Continental Breakfast  
In the Atrium  
9:30 First buses leave for the MIGHTY 8th AF HERITAGE MUSEUM  
Bus, Lunch, Admission included  
Last bus leaves Museum at 5 PM  
Dinner on your own

|        |       |       |
|--------|-------|-------|
| \$8.95 | _____ | _____ |
| \$26   | _____ | _____ |

### Saturday, 5 Dec

Breakfast on your own  
Business meeting 9 to 11  
Continental Breakfast for Ladies  
6:00 to 7:00 Reception and Cash Bar  
7:00 to 11:00 Annual Reunion Banquet  
Entertainment

|         |       |       |
|---------|-------|-------|
| \$8.95  | _____ | _____ |
| \$37.50 | _____ | _____ |

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

Registrant \_\_\_\_\_ **306th Unit**  
Spouse or Friend \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Travel by auto, plane, other? \_\_\_\_\_  
Arrival day and time \_\_\_\_\_  
Will you need transportation from airport? \_\_\_\_\_  
Departure time on Sunday? \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with your check to:

Albert McMahan, Treasurer  
306th BG 1998 Reunion  
PO Box 783  
Norcross, GA 30091-0783  
Telephone (770)448-8513

## There may be no dues, BUT

It does take money to keep the 306th Association flying. Those who are able are asked to make an annual contribution to keep everything running smoothly. No one is dropped from the mailing list for non-payment! Your gift is tax deductible.

Please accept my gift to the 306th BG Association: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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STREET AND NO. \_\_\_\_\_

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TELEPHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ 306TH UNIT \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Robert N. Houser, Treasurer  
306th Bomb Group Association  
P.O. Box 13362  
Des Moines, IA 50310

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## SAVANNAH Marriott RIVERFRONT

100 General McIntosh Blvd.  
Savannah, GA 31401  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) Of Additional Person(s) Sharing Room \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_

Please Check the type of accommodations desired.  
**ACCOMMODATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY AT CHECK IN.**

| NO. OF ROOMS | TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION                        |             |
|--------------|--|-------------|
| _____        | <b>SINGLE:</b> One (1) Person                | <b>\$85</b> |
| _____        | <b>DOUBLE:</b> Two (2) Persons, One (1) Bed  | <b>\$85</b> |
| _____        | <b>DOUBLE:</b> Two (2) Persons, Two (2) Beds | <b>\$85</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |  | _____       |

For all reservations, please list each guest's name above. Suite rates are available upon request. Please contact the hotel directly at (912) 233-7722. **Reservations must be received by November 2, 1998.** After the above date, rooms will be confirmed on a space and rate available basis.

SMOKING

NON-SMOKING

- \* RIVERFRONT/RIVERVIEW ROOMS MAY BE AVAILABLE AT CHECK-IN FOR AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE.
- \* PARKING IS AVAILABLE AT AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE.
- \* CHECK-IN TIME AFTER 4:00 P.M.

Group/Organization **306th Bomb Group**

Date(s) Thursday-Sunday, December 3-6, 1998

Special Request \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DAY/DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TIME OF ARRIVAL \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTURE DAY/DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF ADULTS OVER 17 YEARS \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK-IN TIME AFTER 4:00 P.M.** Accommodations prior to that time will be handled on a space available basis. Luggage storage is available.

**CHECK-OUT TIME IS 11:00 A.M.** Reservations must be accompanied by a guarantee for first night's lodging via check or credit card.

Fill in American Express, Diners Club, Carte Blanche, VISA, MasterCard or Discover Card information below. You will be charged for the first night's lodging unless reservations are cancelled 24 hours prior to arrival.

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CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

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**Advance Deposit.** Please include one night's room plus 12% tax. Deposits are refundable if cancelled 24 hours prior to arrival.

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