

306th Echoes

Change Service Requested

*****01044L FOR ADC 601
 S2 P34
 LTC RALPH E BORDNER
 131 E AUTUMN LN
 EAST PEORIA IL 61611-1942

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 34
 Charlotte, NC

Two Months at Thurleigh End in Stalag Luft III

By Warren (Pete) Edris

On 31 Dec 42 I was transferred to the 368th Squadron, 306th Bomb Group, from the 92nd Bomb Group at Bovington.

I was made an aircraft commander before I left the 92nd and my made-up crew was just as inexperienced as I was. I tell you, it was scary and depressing. I was leaving all my friends and classmates, heading out to a strange place in a strange left seat. It was a low point, but not nearly as low as it was going to get in just a few more months.

Luckily for everyone concerned, my squadron commander, Maj. Henry W. Terry, told me his procedure for a replacement crew was to give an experienced copilot (10 missions) my command, and I was to take his position as copilot for 10 missions. Then I would get my own crew. Good idea! The only thing wrong with this procedure was I was copilot for 1st Lt. Robert (Rip) Riordan. Well, that really scared the devil out of me because I had been reading in *Stars & Stripes* about his escapades, bringing back B-17s all shot up, engines out, stabilizers off, holes all over the place. Plus, I found out quickly that he was very gung ho for flying missions to completion—no abortions, period. He wouldn't even take the two days a month we got off to go to London. He might miss a mission.

First chance we got, we went out to the airplane, Wahoo III. I said, "what happened to Wahoo I?" I shouldn't have asked. He brought it back from Romilly-sur-Seine on two engines, all torn up. It never flew again. It was cannibalized and used for spare parts. When I got in the copilot seat I immediately noticed a big round hole, filed smooth, in the rudder pedal.

"What's that?"

"Oh, that's where a 20mm went through the pedal. Luckily the copilot had his foot up on the rudder bar at the time."

Hot dog! I wanted to go home. In retrospect, it was a good thing to be with him. He had crammed a lot of experience into a few minutes. We flew eight missions together, starting 13 Jan 43. We worked out a neat plan to fly the airplane in formation. If you remember, it handled like a truck at 25,000 feet, well, he handled the stick and rudder. I handled the throttles, prop pitch, cowl flaps, flaps, landing gear, and anything else I could get my hands on, in case of overrunning the formation when some slob leading up front changed his air speed one knot. Believe me, I used them all one day when we were flying in a position called "Filling in the Diamond." We flew directly behind the flight leader and a little bit below his prop wash. When the FWs came in at 12 o'clock, you flew prop wash. When they came in at 11, you flew echelon behind the #2 man. When they came in at 1 o'clock, you flew echelon on the #3 man. When the flak came up, we would drop back a few feet and do our own evasive action (for morale purposes only, of course).

We were in this position on the bomb run. We were to overrun the flight leader, coming right under his belly. I looked up through the little window in the roof and could see five 1,000 pound bombs through the open bomb bay doors, which were going to be released in about 30 seconds. Remember, you couldn't chop the throttles off; you had to pull them back slowly on account of the waste gates from the super-

turn to page 3

New 'ECHOES' Book Can Be Yours For a Check

We all know its tough to eat just one peanut!

Want to know something else? It's hard to pick up a copy of our new book, *306th Echoes 1975-2000*, and read just one story.

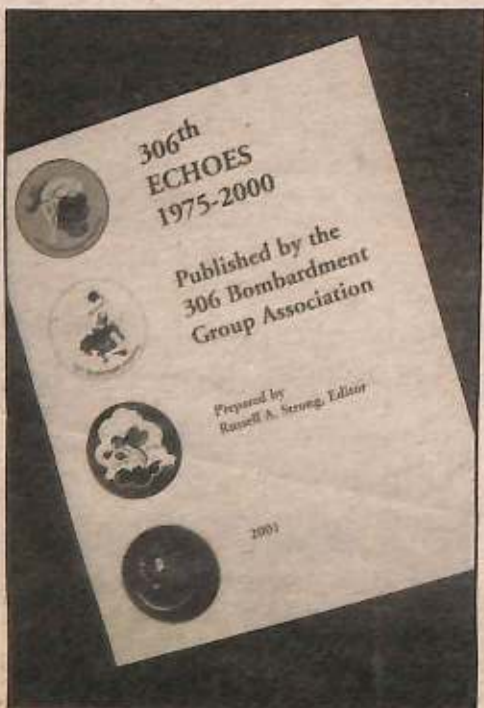
I know! You've read them all - right from the very first. But if you are like the editor you've forgotten some interesting tidbits, and he will guarantee that many of them are as interesting the umpteenth time as they were the first. The editor says that by the time an issue of *Echoes* has been published he has read many of the tales a half dozen times (and some his critics say "you still don't get some things spelled right.")

The new 800-page book first made an appearance at our Minneapolis reunion in September. Less than a month later one man who had ordered his copy early and had received it in the mail has already ordered two extra copies. Between the reunion and the mail order offer in *Echoes*, nearly half the copies are gone.

The new book has a beautiful four-color cover, and some of the pages you saw in "living color" in past issues of *Echoes* appear in the book as well by virtue of four-color copiers. These pictures give the book a considerable snap.

When ready for the post office the book weighs four pounds, nine ounces.

A critical factor you must be aware of is that only 500 copies were printed, and in all likelihood there will never be a second printing. One of the reasons for this is that the minimum order for the bindery is 500



President Burgess

Lowell Burgess Heads New '01-02 Officers

Unlike some meetings of the 306th in years past, not as much business came to the attention of the Board of Directors during its deliberations at the Minneapolis reunion.

One of the principal items of business was the usual election of officers. Lowell Burgess, a 369th pilot and longtime activist in the USAF reserve, moved up to the presidency. He has been a regular attendee at reunions for many years.

Leland Kessler, a 368th engineer and POW, became the vice president, and is expected to succeed to the presidency next year. Kessler had served a three-year term on the Board. Reelected to the secretary's office was Russell A. Strong, 367th navigator, and continuing as treasurer is Robert N. Houser, 368th navigator.

Hugh Phelan, 367th navigator and Little Rock reunion chairman in 1989, was elected to the Board of Directors for a three-year term. Continuing to serve on the Board are Donald Ross, 368 and Group, Fred Hudson, 369th navigator, and Fred Sherman, 369th pilot.

Also serving on the Board are Paul Reioux, 423rd pilot, and the immediate past president, and ex officio is Ralph Franklin, our British representative.

copies. We can't just pop out a hundred copies at a moment's notice.

Thus, it is likely to be that when those 500 copies disappear there will be no more. The price is \$55 postage paid, and we urge you to order early.

For those who missed the earlier announcement, this is a reprinting of all copies of *Echoes* produced over 25 years, and we have not yet seen a printing of any Bomb Group's newspapers in this format. At least one other may be in the works. Unfortunately, the original 306th book, *First Over Germany*, is out of print.

Far North Reunion a Big Success

It seemed a long way north to travel, but the weather treated us rather well, and men and guests of the 306th found themselves only battling rain on one day, while enjoying excellent food, good entertainment and great conversation at other times in the 27th annual reunion of these doughty veterans of WWII.

One of the questions frequently asked is "How many more?" If you were looking for an answer in the Thunderbird Hotel in the Greater Minneapolis area, you might well have found an enthusiastic affirmative answer.

Decorated with an Indian motif appropriate to the area, our visitors found much to look at throughout the hotel. While perhaps our daily hospitality arrangements were not quite what we would have liked, the rooms were good and the food, both banquet and breakfasts with a dinner or two thrown in and sometimes luncheons, proved to be tasty. We ate, we talked, we napped, we walked, we shopped, and as in every other year we enjoyed the fellowship faced with our recollections of Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, combat, WWII service, marriage and children.

We missed those who have been with us in other years and didn't appear for this one. We all knew that there were myriad causes for some not appearing, but there was always in the background the specter of illness in the home, of obligations to family that must be met.

There were two large gatherings of special note: the Thursday night dinner at The Log Theatre, west perhaps 20 miles of the hotel. Our buses got us there expeditiously and brought us home again, with most of us amused by the English farce which was enacted for our pleasure, "Run for Your Wife."

Friday was a free night on the schedule, an opportunity to explore other eating places. The Mall of America again attracted some people, but many seemed to choose once again the hotel fare for the evening, with large groups gathered around tables hastily pulled together.

Saturday night there were 230 of us in the principal ballroom of the hotel. There was dinner music and music for dancing later in the evening. We were much indebted to Brig. Gen. Dennis Schulstad (USAF ret.) for his assistance in putting the entire reunion together, and particularly for participating in our banquet. He is the son of the late Albert Schulstad, 369th navigator in the first half of 1943, and early on volunteered to assist in the planning of The event and securing cooperation from various people. Gen. Schulstad not only secured the speaker, Bryan Moon, but also introduced him to the audience.

Moon is a Britisher, now an American citizen, who spent a long career in marketing, principally as a vice president of Northwest Airlines. His particular interest now is leading expeditions to seek notable airplane wrecks and hopefully

turn to page 5

Obituaries

Vernon L. Biggs, 367th/368th bomb sight maintenance man, died 1 May 01 in Dayton, OH. An original with the Group, he attended AFCE school in England in 1943.

Clifford E. Duggan, 369th engineer, died 17 Sep 01 in Crown Point, IN. He joined the Group 25 Oct 44 and flew 35 missions, completing his tour 8 Apr 45. After service he became assistant business agent for the Brotherhood of Boilermakers, and leaves his wife, Betty, 4c, 9gc, 2ggc.

Irwin R. Efrid, 368th copilot (Floyd Field crew) and POW, died 18 Jul 01 in Fresno, CA, where he long been a prominent farmer. Efrid came to the 306th 23 Apr 43 and was MIA 21 May 43 on a mission to Wilhelmshaven. He also attended Fresno State University where he was a football player. He leaves 4s.

Floyd A. Evans, 369th bombardier (David Wheeler crew), died in 1998 in Seguin, TX, where he had lived for a number of years. He flew a combat tour and was the 71st officer to complete his missions, ending in Nov. 43. He had come to the Group 12 Apr 43, and was eventually squadron bombardier. Later he completed pilot training, and following combat he flew for Navion. He leaves his wife, Kirke, 4c, 8gc, 5ggc.

Robert J. Flood, 369th bombardier and POW (Alvin Schuering crew), died 25 Aug 01 in New York City. He had joined the Group 1 Dec 43, and was shot down on his 25th mission 29 Mar 44 on a mission to Brunswick, Germany. He was a writer by profession and was a frequent contributor to "Echoes." He and his wife had been in England earlier in the year when it was observed that his health was not good. He leaves his wife and children.

Raymond L. Goetz, 369th waist gunner (Jack R. Lewis crew), died 24 May 01 in Hollywood, FL. He was 90 years old, and leaves his wife Rita, 4c. He had arrived with the Group 24 Jul 44 and completed his tour in Jan 45.

Arthur J. Harnois, 369th a/c inspector and longtime line chief, died 24 Sep 01 in North Kingstown, RI, where he had lived for many years. He came to the 306th 3 Apr 42 with a large shipment of men just out of mechanics school. He leaves his wife, Margaret, 4c, 10gc.

Dewey O. Jones, 368th copilot (Robert Ehrler crew) and first pilot, died 1 Oct 99 in Mt. Vernon, IL. He was a USAFR retiree as a major, had arrived with the 306th 14 Apr 44 and completed combat 26 Jun 44.

Col. H. Rex Jones 423rd ordnance officer, station courts and boards officer, and Group ordnance officer from 19 Dec 44 until his departure from the Group in Oct 45, died 13 Aug 01 in Ft. Collins, CO. He was a graduate of Ulowa, with an MA from UColo. He later served as an assistant Army attache in Bern, Switzerland, and was an Army retiree in Jul 73. He leaves his wife, Doris, 2c, 5gc.

Lester M. Kramer, 423rd copilot and pilot, died in Apr 2000. He was a USAF retiree. He came to the 306th 23 May 43 (Martin Andrews crew), and was MIA 26 Jul 43 on a mission to Hannover (w. Norman Armbrust). He spent nearly two years in Stalag Luft III.

Willard N Lockyear, 423rd pilot and POW, died 18 Jun 99 in Edmund, OK. He came to the Group in Jun 43. He came to the Group in Jun 43 and was shot down 14 Oct 43 at Schweinfurt on his 17th mission. After the war he spent two years Kansas City U, and for 35 years was an accountant and sales coordinator for Western States Stone Co., retiring in 1987.

Talmadge G. McDonough, 367th pilot, died 16 Aug 01 in Cedar City, UT. He and his wife, Yvonne, were married 3 Jan 45 on his return from England. Late in his combat career he flew as copilot on Perry Raster's 367th lead crew usually in the "Rose of York". He and his father owned a sheet metal shop. He is survived by his wife, 5c, 19gc, 9ggc.

Clarence R. McMahon, 368th mechanic and prop shot worker, died 19 Aug 01 at Marathon, FL. He had joined the 306th 6 Sep 42 and was discharged 21 Sep 45.

Gail P. Mason, a 369th ball turret gunner (Richard Buttorff crew), died 11 Jul 01 in Fresno, CA, where he spent 31 years as a supervisor for County Protective Services. He graduated from Fresno St U, and leaves 1d, 2gd. He joined the 306th 12 Apr 44 and flew 31 missions.

Harold L. Miller, 423rd pilot died 28 Jun 01 in Winter Haven, FL. His home-

town had been Findlay, OH. He brought his crew to Thurleigh 28 Apr 44 and completed his combat tour at the end of July. He leaves his wife, Jean.

Freeman R. Mitchell, 367th ball turret and tail gunner, joined the Group 22 Sep 44 with the George Hatch crew. He was with the Group until Jan 45.

Walter D. Morris, 367th navigator and POW (Louis Matichka crew), died 14 Oct 98 in Western New York State. He came to the Group 5 Apr 44 and was MIA 8 May 44 on a mission to Berlin.

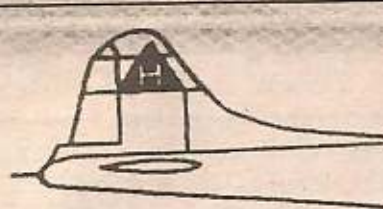
August D. Reed, 423rd gunner (Robert Davenport crew), died 16 Sep 01 in Beaverton, OR, where he had been a graphic artist until retiring in 1985. He arrived with the Group 4 Apr 45, and may not have flown any combat missions. Reed leaves his wife, Phyllis, 5c, 7gc, 1ggc.

Norman H. Simpson, 367th navigator and POW, He came to the John H. Winchell crew 23 Apr 43 and was MIA 22 Jun 43 with the J. W. Johnson crew.

William O. Slenker, 369th ball turret gunner (Howard Snyder crew), died 9 Jul 01 in Naples, FL. He had retired in 1981 as a sales rep. Slenker came to the Group 1 Oct 43 and was still with Snyder when they were shot down 8 Feb 44 on a mission to Frankfurt, Germany. He leaves his wife, Jeanne, 2s, 4gc.

Robert E. Stevenson, 368th navigator, died 12 Aug 01 in Princeville, HI, after

turn to page 3



Lowell Burgess, president; Leland Kessler, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; Robert N. Houser, treasurer; Frederick Hudson, Hugh Phelan, Donald R. Ross, Frederick P. Sherman, directors; Paul Reieux, past president. Ralph Franklin, British representative, National School Cottage, Keysoe, Beds., MK44 2HP, England; Telephone from U.S. 011-44-1234-708715.

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.
Russell.a.strong306@worldnet.att.net

TREASURER:

Send money to:
Robert N. Houser, 2412 48th St.,
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).

Items of all kinds for the Thurleigh Library can be mailed to the address shown below:

HQ, 3rd Air Force
Historian's Office
APO 09459

Moving South and East in 2002

Covington, KY, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati will be our goal in late September when the 306th next gathers for a reunion. Never heard of Covington? It had a wild reputation in the days of prohibition and honky tonks. And we may show you an evening eatery which pictures how life may once have been "on the far side."

Be that as it may, the 306th will have the 2002 event 24-28 Sept at the Radisson Riverfront hotel in downtown Covington, a headquarters close to shopping, eating, and a host of entertainment venues. We hope you will like it there, being that it is quite different from some we have visited in the recent past. Rooms looking out on the river scene will make you think you are almost in downtown Cincy, and for those driving it will be an easy 10-minute trip to Ohio.

Access by air is easy, as it is close to the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Airport, and hotel vans will carry you to and fro. It is also not a bad trip to the USAF Museum on the northeast side of Dayton. Much has happened there since we last went into that region 20 years ago.

Why are we going there? Because of its proximity to a lot of interesting places; because the Northern Kentucky Tourist and Convention Bureau will provide us with plenty of assistance in planning, executing and supporting our effort. Based on the number attending, they will even provide a bit of a stipend for us, which will help keep our treasury in good shape.

We think now that we would like to get our program rolling Thursday morning just because of activities which are available to us. So, keep that in your thinking as you plan for your travel to and from, and we will present registration forms in the January issue, and at least a skeleton of the program.

And that brings to mind a complaint from the Thunderbird Hotel, which we vacated on 9 Sept: This hotel is round, so all rooms are quite close to the elevators, and the main floor is rather compactly arranged. There won't be those long hikes from your room to the front desk of the hotel and then out to the hospitality rooms and then back to the main lobby for lunch, etc.

Also, June and I have found some interesting stops around Southern Ohio and Northern Kentucky that you may want to try if you are driving in. We travel through the area often. In our treks from home in Charlotte, NC, to visit grandchildren in Columbus, OH, and SW Michigan.

Plan now for at least one more 306th gathering, because we are looking forward to 10—well, make it at least 5—before we call it quits.

Memorials

In memory of Joe Borzym 369th, by Don R. Borzym
In memory of Maurice E. Christianson 368th, by Em Christianson
In memory of Kenneth Fultz 423rd, by Marianne Fultz
In honor of Mabel Guilfoyle 423rd wife, by Daryl and Helen Phillips
In memory of Willie Hawthorne 423rd, by William Carnicom
In memory of H. Rex Jones; 423rd & Gp, by Donald R. Ross
In memory of Rudolph Horst 369th, by Doug Horst
In memory of Jack Kalb 367th, by Adolph Visconti
In memory of Werner Kennedy 367th, by Esther V. Kennedy
In memory of John W. Olson 367th, by William J. Flynn
In memory of Waverly C. Ormond 368th, by Kathy A. Ormond
In memory of Jack Samway 368th, by Vivian B. Samway
In memory of Harry Tzipowitz 369th, by B. W. Caseday
In memory of Harry Tzipowitz 369th, by Jack & Patricia Wood

Memorial gifts to the 306th Association are deductible on your Federal income taxes. These gifts are used for special projects, as determined by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting.

306th Echoes 1975-2000

Available in September, you will be able to have your own copy of 25 years of 306th Echoes, all reproduced in a book, including all pictures and the color pictures as well.

The cost for each of the new books is \$55, including postage and handling. Produced as a paperback, with a heavy, varnished cover, the final size is 8 3/8 x 10 3/4 inches. To make sure that you receive one of the 500 copies, place your order today.

I enclose \$ _____ for _____ copies of 306th Echoes, The Book.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Make your checks out to the 306th Bomb Group Association. Send this coupon and your check to:

Russell A. Strong
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, NC 28205

Melton's 306th Plane, Down Off Ireland in 1942 Brought to Light by Five Irish Divers

Bill Melton got his aircraft almost to Ireland in September 1942, en route to combat. The last week in October 2001 all of this again came to light when it was reported that an Irish team divers had once again found the plane off Magilligan's Point.

Both Lee Kessler and Russ Strong were involved with phone conversations with divers and with a staff writer for the Dublin edition of the London Sunday Times, resulting in the story at right.

This is a copyrighted piece picked up off the Internet which we have inserted at



the last minute into this issue of Echoes. We apologize to the newspaper for "borrowing" their story without permission, but it is also our story, and we wanted to bring it to all of our readers as quickly as possible.

The accompanying pictures are from the dive team, one being of artifacts from Melton's plane, and the other of the dive team: left to right: Seamus Carey, diving officer; Seamus McLaughlin, club member; Robert Smith, equipment officer; Dermot Keenan, coxswain, and Danny Keenan, training officer.

By Ruth O'Callaghan

AN American war veteran plans to return to Ireland to retrieve a pair of Ray-Ban sunglasses and a crate of bourbon lost when his B-17 bomber crash-landed in Donegal during the second world war.

The 79-year-old former soldier was tracked down by a local sub-aqua club that discovered the wreckage buried in the mouth of Lough Foyle. The military issue Ray-Ban sunglasses, preserved inside a metal case, were discovered along with a shaver, a soapbox and a gas mask.

Lee Kessler is thought to be the plane's last living crew member. "When I first heard they had found the plane, I was stunned," he said last week.

"I had no idea anybody would ever find it - it was a total shock. Knowing I may be the only one left from the crew, I would love to be there when somebody brings it up. That would be tremendous."

Kessler was a 22-year-old top turret gunner on board the B17 when it crashed off the Donegal coast in 1942. The bomber was on a 13-hour flight from Newfoundland to Bedfordshire when it came down. It stayed afloat long enough for the crew of nine to escape unharmed, before sinking without trace.

"Something like that you never forget," Kessler said. "At daybreak the third engine was overheating and that was when we knew we weren't going to make it. We were all very frightened, with two engines out, flying over the ocean, not knowing if we would be found."

"When we reached Ireland we ditched in the Irish Sea. I didn't have any idea where we were. After about an hour in the water we were picked up by an Irish minesweeper and brought to Derry."

"They fed us and gave us some jackets and flew us to Prestwick in Scotland to join the rest of the crew."

Apart from Kessler, William Melton, the plane's captain, and Alex Kramarinko, his co-pilot, lived through the war. The

other crash survivors later died in combat, according to the 306th Bomb Group Association which keeps in contact with B-17 veterans.

Kessler was shot down over Germany in May 1943 and was a prisoner of war for two years. Melton has not been in contact with the war veteran association for almost 20 years.

Kessler also recalled that a crate of bourbon had been on board the plane and wondered whether it would be still drinkable.

"The sunglasses could be mine, after all these years I don't know," he said. "The army issued sunglasses - I would have had a pair myself somewhere in that plane. It's just amazing that somebody found them."

Danny Keenan and Seamus Carey of the Inishowen subaqua club discovered the plane last August half-hidden in a mussel bed. "The water was so clear that I could see the outline of the plane," said Keenan.

"To find a wreck is something, but to find a B-17 bomber, the biggest bomber in the war, was just unbelievable."

Keenan's son Dermot, 15, found the sunglasses on the second dive: "He tapped me on the shoulder and I saw he had a glasses case in his hand."

"When he opened it up there was a perfect pair of sunglasses."

Patrick McCormick, spokesman for the diving club, said he hoped to collect enough funds to raise the wreck for display in the local maritime museum.

"It's the dream of any diving club anywhere in the world to find a virgin wreck. Nobody has seen or been near this for 59 years, and now we have found her," he said. American planes are the property of the US government, but the defense department said it would not object to the club keeping the plane for the museum.



Obituaries, from page 2

being critically ill for an extended period. He came to the Group 9 May 44 without a crew, finished a tour and departed 6 Sep 44. From 1970 until 1988 he directed the Satellite office of the Office of Naval Research at La Jolla, CA. For his work there he won the Government's Meritorious Civilian Service Award. In 1989 he was appointed to the honorary position of secretary general, International Association for the Physical Sciences of the Oceans, and during the eight years he

served he brought together two international assemblies of oceanographers, at Vienna in 1991 and in 1985 at Honolulu. He also worked closely with the astronaut program. He leaves his wife, Jeanie, 2s, lgd.

306th Family

Evelyn Mitchell, widow of Ralph N. Mitchell, 369th radio operator, has died at Shrewsbury, MA. He had died 23 Aug 82.

306th PUBLICATIONS

Published materials now available from the Group will help you follow the 306th through the combat period 1942-45:

Combat Diaries of the 306th Squadrons

Day by day diaries kept by intelligence officers, of the Squadrons' combat activities. More than 150 pages, also including plane and personnel rosters. Plastic bound

306th Echoes, on microfiche

Now available from 1976-1991, with xxx page index covering these years. Can be reviewed at any library.

306th Echoes, on microfilm

Now available from 1976-1994, with a 41-page index covering those years. Can be viewed at any library.

Men of the 306th, on microfilm

A roll of 16mm film duplicates the 306th card file of nearly 9,000 men, including data extracted from various 306th records, and personal data on some of the men. 1995 edition.

Mission Reports

Copies of official reports on each mission you flew, including intelligence summaries, track charts, formations and crew interrogation reports. Data for some missions may be missing from the files. Three missions for \$5.

ORDER FORM

367th Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
368th Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
369th Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
423rd Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
306th ECHOES' Microfiche: 1985-1994	\$15.00	_____
1992-1994	\$5.00	_____
Men of the 306th	\$20.00	_____
Casey Jones Project	\$10.00	_____

Make check payable to: 306th Bomb Group Association (prices quoted include postage and packaging charge)

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Send to: Secretary, 306th BGA, 5323 Cheval Pl., Charlotte, NC 28205

Thurleigh, from page 1

chargers would slam shut, and you could overspeed your engines. Well, off came the throttles, cowl flaps open, props in flat pitch. Still over shooting. Down came the flaps, down came the gear. Uh, oh. We've stopped. Up comes the gear, flaps up, close the cowl flaps, advance the throttles, prop pitch back to normal - busier than the proverbial one-armed paperhanger. I wasn't scared. I was working too hard!

My fateful day was rapidly approaching. 6 Mar 43, we had a mission to Lorient, France— sub pens, I believe. We barely made it back to Exeter in southern England - I mean the whole group. We were all running out of gas. That's another story.

We spent the night in Exeter. Accommodations were so bad I couldn't sleep. The next day, 7 Mar, we flew home to Thurleigh.

The navigator, bombardier and I went into Bedford to the Key Club and had a party, and we got in our barracks about midnight. There was a mission the next morning and I wasn't supposed to go because one of the rank was checking "Rip" out to lead. Well, I didn't want to get behind on missions, so I told operations I'd go along as an extra gunner in the nose. I was qualified as a gunner.

"No," they said. "Some 'gravel agitator' was picking his own five missions (milk

runs) to get an Air Medal." He was flying as an extra gunner. He was not qualified as a gunner nor was he qualified on high altitude oxygen use.

At three in the morning (three hours' sleep), Rip awakened me and said, "Come on down to the briefing anyway. I said, "No @#%&*(). If I can't go the way I was trained, I am not going." He talked me into it. I got dressed.

The mission was the marshalling yards at Rennes, France. What was I doing at this briefing? I wasn't going. When the briefing was over, someone called my name, and asked if I wanted to fly with a crew in another squadron whose copilot was sick. Didn't have to go! Well, I violated the first rule you learn in the service, "Don't volunteer for anything." I volunteered. A little side note of history here. Our squadron, the 369th, went from 8 Mar 43 through 47 missions without a loss. Incredible! Me and my big mouth!!

I met Rip in the locker room getting dressed for the mission. I remember telling him I had a funny feeling that I wasn't coming back on this one. Strange!

I was with Lt. Otto Buddenbaum and his crew, and we took off at dawn. Going across the Channel, we discovered #2 and



An Indian Greeted Us At Hotel in Minneapolis



Col. Jay P. Keepman, 369B, Alfred Johansen, 369, and Col. Lowell Burgess, 369.



Col. and Mrs. Fred Sherman, 369, and their daughter, Dennie Sue Sherman-Hall.



Royce and Mollie Hopkins, 367.



Robert and Ruth Rockwell, 367.



Victor and Ann Marie Rose, 369.



Vern Schimmel, 423, and daughters, Mollie, Kris and Laura.



Mrs. George (Foncynne) Mapes, 367, Tom Costlow, 367, and daughter, Cassie.



Gene Blaskoski came to his first reunion and met his pilot from 1944, Clayton Nattier, 369.

England in '02?

Because of interest shown by a number of people during the '01 reunion in Minneapolis, arrangements are being looked into for one more 306th-sponsored trip in England sometime in May or June 2002. A detailed announcement and registration materials will appear in the January issue of *Echoes*, after further consideration by the officers and directors.

Reunion, from page 1

bring back much information and artifacts. Because all of us became Jimmy Doolittle fans when he led the now famous initial bombing raid over Japan flying B-25 bombers, Moon took us back to those days and the crashes of five of the planes on Chinese hillsides. He was able to visit three of the five sites personally, and showed many slides of the incredibly rough country through which he and his cohorts traveled in their quest.

It also provided a nice tie in that Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle headed the 8th Air Force from January 1944 to the end of the war, even taking some its cadre to the Pacific in the late stages of the war. More than half of those who served in the 306th came under the direction of Gen. Doolittle

while in England, and he visited Thurleigh on at least one occasion.

Like all other reunions of the 306th this came to a slow finish late Saturday evening, and then came the Sunday morning hurried departures for air travel, the leisurely breakfasts for many driving home or taking later flights, and always those who had planned to stay another day or two.

Perhaps this is the place to mention the events of 11 Sep that have remained so prominent in our national conscience since then. Those flying away Sunday generally reached home without further inconvenience, but those who chose to leave later or dallied along the way were enveloped in the events and we haven't heard the stories.



Hugh and Evelyn Phelan, 367.



Nick and Gypsy Hoolko, 367, came ready to dance.



Harry Hoser, 369.



Joseph Hammer, 367.



Harry Brown and Larry Emeigh, 367.



Russ 'Hoot' Houghton, 368; Ralph Franklin, our British rep; Mrs. Philip (Robbie) Lanyon, 423W, and Danny Houghton, 368S.



Mrs. William (Dorothy) Cavaness, and her daughter, Jane Wirtz, 368 W&D.



Don Ross, 368 & GP, and Don Snook, 369.



Rex and Delsa Barber, 369.



Bill and Shirley Couture, 369, enjoyed their first reunion.



Margaret and Tony Santoro, 369.



Albert McMahan, 369, and Donald Ross, 368&Gp



Ralph Bordner, 368, and Dr. Thurman Shuller, GP



Doris and Robert Houser, 368



Mrs. M.E. (Em) Christianson, 368W



Ruth and Bill Houlihan, 367.



Beti and C. Dale Briscoe, 369.



Wilma and Jack Frost, 369



George and Marie Kellogg, 367.



John and Betty Hickey, 369.



Russ Strong, 367.



Cap Langley, 369, Janice Ross 368, Shirley Langley, 369.



Barry, Michelle, and Theresa Reloux, and Aileen and Paul Reiox, 423.

Thurleigh, from page 3

#3 engines were not producing enough power. It was difficult to stay in formation. And, guess what our position was? Last plane, last group, out of four groups. Purple Heart corner! We debated aborting, but decided against it.

As soon as we crossed the French coast, one FW 190 sneaked in on us from 6 o'clock, no less! Bam! Bam! three 20mm rounds with instant fusing hit us - one in each wing, severing the aileron cables, and one in the top turret. We immediately lost our position and protection from the formation and we were all alone. We used rudder to keep the ship right side up. When she would go into an uncontrolled bank, we would both push top rudder, which would slew the bottom wing forward, more lift, and up she'd come only to dip over to the other side. Buddenbaum told everyone to bail out. I ripped off my mask and hollered, "Let's see if we can turn it around and dive it for home." Well, about this time, most of the gunners were gone, and this FW began having a field day - another 6 o'clock high pass. The armor plate behind our seats saved us. It stopped the bullets, but the rest of the shrapnel came between the seats - down the aisle, so to speak, and blew out all our instruments and cut off the throttle handles. Our #3 engine was now burning like crazy - all flames, no smoke. It was a mess. The FW then came up and flew on our right wing for a few seconds. I guess he wanted to see what was holding us up. He was so close I could see his drooling fangs, his square, black goggles and swastika tattooed on his left cheek. Ha, ha! Just like the propaganda pictures!

I said to myself, it was time to go. I went out the nose hatch, counted to 10 and pulled the rip cord. I guess we were around 22,000 feet by then. I know it took about 30 minutes to come down. It was the only mission I forgot to leave my wallet in operations. So, on the way down I took it out and tore up the incriminating evidence, like old football stubs, licenses, etc. I saved Doris' picture and the nine pounds I had in my wallet.

The chute opened with such a jerk it sprained my back, and my left boot and shoe flew off, and my escape kit flew out of my leg pocket. I reached down and took my right boot off and put it on my left foot to keep it warm. I made a standing landing on my right foot. With no shoe on the left one, I figured I might break it. I was shaking so badly I had to sit down.

I landed in a farmer's front yard and my chute draped over an apple tree. The French farm people came running to help me. Believe it or not, I still had the rip cord. I had stuffed it in my pocket. Funny how you remember the little things. In the States, if you didn't bring back the rip cord, drinks are on you at the club, or so the story goes.

Well, anyway, the women got the chute disposed of quickly - all that silk! About this time someone hollered "Allemande." German, German! Well, my little crowd disappeared except for one chubby fellow who quickly put me in a pig sty with a bunch of pigs. A German truck full of soldiers came into the farm and looked around. When the coast was clear, the French farmers put me in a little abandoned chicken coop out in the field, gave me some wine and bread and hard-boiled eggs. I stayed there until dusk. I was then escorted to the farmhouse, which was full of peasants gawking, giggling and shaking my hand. I took off my flying clothes and put on a sweater and civilian pants and a pair of slippers, and was introduced to a Frenchman, Henri Du Fretay.

He was dressed in a business suit and came from St. Brieux, about 30 miles away.

Remember now - no sleep the night of the 6th, three hours on the 7th, and we walked most of the 30 miles the night of the 8th. I was tired to say the least, when we reached his apartment in St. Brieux just after dawn on 9 Mar. I slept all day, and that evening was taken across town to another family. Their names were Madame Dinton and Jeanne-Lou Dinton, her daughter. I stayed three days in her home, hidden in the attic.

The sweater the farmers gave me I found to be full of fleas, and I was bitten severely. Madame Dinton would come to my hiding place and massage my back, as it was hurting, especially after walking 30 miles that first night. She washed the sweater for me also.

A little interesting side note here. I had my Air Force ring - a gold ring - and Madame Dinton said I had to take it off because it would be too conspicuous. The Germans took all of the French rings and melted them down for their own war effort. So she took my ring and buried it in a tin can, along with my nine pounds, in her back yard. Well, in 1946, when I was back at Duke University, I wrote them, and was immediately sent my ring with an explanation why they couldn't send it to me before because nobody, all the military occupation forces apparently, felt like helping her. Anyway, I got my ring back and I still wear it today.

After three days, a former French pilot came for me, to be my guide out to the country again. His name is Eric Delval, and he brought two bicycles. We pedaled all day, passed many German soldiers along the way, and arrived at a Catholic parish in Lamballe, France. Luckily, we were only 100 yards from the house, when I got a flat tire on my bicycle. This was approximately 13 Mar. I stayed here for two weeks with a French priest named Monsieur L'abbe Corbel and his maid, Mary. He spoke a little English and my French was improving. We got along well. He even broke out a bottle of Cognac he was saving for the "Liberation." We finished it.

After two weeks at Lamballe another priest came and we bicycled to Dinan. This was about 27 Mar. Dinan is a fairly large city at the base of the Brittany Peninsula. I spent one night with a family, and it was there I was introduced to Dr. Jacques Coicou and a Spanish man, who was the janitor of the building where Jacques had his apartment in Paris. We left the next morning, 28 Mar, on a train to Paris, a 10 hour ride. Jacques had brought me travel papers from Paris, given to him by the Prefect of Police for Paris, Monsieur Bousiere. My papers said I was a Czech slave laborer named Dumbroski, that I was deaf and dumb, and that Jacques was taking me to Paris for an operation. I had to act like I was deaf and dumb for 10 hours on that train. It was like flying five missions all at once! We got to Paris in the evening and went by subway to his apartment at 1 Rue de Lord Byron, just off the Champs Elysees. I met Jacques' wife, Suzanne, and their maid. This was a five-story apartment building and they lived on the top floor.

I spent approximately six nervous weeks there. We were told back in England not to stay in any one place too long, so I kept needling Jacques to get me on my way. He kept saying he had to be very careful whom he contacted. I could appreciate that.

One day he told me he had found an American woman caught in Paris by the war, who was eight months pregnant. She was with the Underground and would be by to interview me. Her name was Madame Feldon. And I feel, in retrospect, she possibly was the one who informed on me. She came by, asked how long I had been in France. I said about nine weeks. She said

that was way too long. They would take me back out to the tip of the Brest Peninsula, and I would be flown back to England at night in a Lysander (a British high wing monoplane that can make short field landings and takeoffs); then she asked if I would like to take back some military information with me? "Sure," I said, "No papers, I'll memorize everything." She told me how the Germans were transporting submarines by railroad in pieces to the French coast ports of St. Nazaire and Lorient. She gave me bomb damage on the raid to Rennes 8 Mar. Boy, how this information, I was willingly collecting, came to haunt me in the next days.

She left, and two days later, 15 May, the Gestapo broke open the door of the apartment and arrested me, Jacques, Suzanne and the maid. We were all handcuffed, taken down the elevator to a waiting prison van, and then transported to La Fresnes Prison, just outside Paris.

Here I was put in solitary confinement for 77 days and told repeatedly that I was to be shot as a spy and saboteur! I was in civilian clothes, no dog tags (I never wore them), carrying in my head all kinds of enemy information fed to me by whom I thought was a German secret agent. I didn't have a leg to stand on. Being convinced I was to be shot, it was here I learned how fear can be a physical pain. I was fed a piece of bread a day with some watery soup, full of bugs and worms. This was bad! The 77 days with the Gestapo was worse than the two years with the Luftwaffe. The bed being infested, I was again attacked by fleas.

At one point I counted over 500 bites from my waist down. Knowing I was going to die, I started to pray. I felt like a hypocrite, "a drowning man clutching at a straw," so to speak. But I went ahead and prayed anyway.

One morning, after having beseeched the Lord twice a day for weeks and nothing seemed to be happening, I looked up at the ceiling and said, "If you don't get me out of here, to hell with you!" That afternoon they took me out of my cell for interrogation at Gestapo Headquarters in Paris. Interrogation was the beginning of my eventual release. The Luftwaffe, I found out later. See, they knew who I was. They didn't want me to know that they knew it - the better to sweat information from me. I told this part of my story to my minister of our community church in Syosset, NY 30 years ago. His remark was "You were in a state of Grace." You know, you can go through your whole life hearing words you don't know the meaning of, and the meaning of, and "Grace" was one of them. I didn't want to

show my ignorance, so I didn't ask what he meant. But as soon as I got home I looked it up. The religious definition says, "The unmerited divine assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification!" Of course, it could have been sheer coincidence, too. I choose to accept the first explanation.

At Gestapo headquarters, I was interrogated for four hours. Now I know all about the training we had back in the States, where they taught us to give our name, rank and serial number only and don't try to outsmart the interrogator. He's smarter than you are. Don't get cute. Just give your name, rank and serial number. But I wasn't being interrogated by the military. I was being interrogated as a spy and by the Gestapo. If I had given them my name, rank and serial number, I would have gone right back in the "hole." I gave this guy a story, which I had practiced in my cell for hours before. It was a story as near the truth as possible without giving away any names of persons or places. He accepted it. He was so dumb I thought it was a trap. He was not an experienced interrogator. He even gave me half of his sandwich and a cigarette. I remember in his room there was a full length mirror. I got a good look at myself, and I was a mess. I guess I lost about 30 pounds; long greasy hair, scraggly beard, etc.

I was released from La Fresnes Prison about a week later, about 29 Jul, and put in the hands of the Luftwaffe. On to Frankfurt on the Main, Germany, where Dulag Luft was located. This was a transient camp where I stayed for five days. Here we were given a military interrogation. I didn't tell them anything either. Well, I'd been down for months so there was nothing I could tell them. Next was on to Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany, where I arrived around 5 Aug. I remained in this camp until 27 Jan 45, when we were force marched westward - 10,000 American and British flying officers. The Russians were 30 kilometers away. We marched about 80 kilometers in three days and nights in temperatures around 10 to 15 degrees F. It was on this march that both hands and feet were frostbitten. We were later put on boxcars and taken to South Germany, fifty men to a car. We were jammed together, many were sick, and they let us out once a day for water and to relieve ourselves. Those four days were awful. We ended up at Moosburg, Bavaria, where we were liberated 29 Apr by Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army, 14th Division. My stay in Stalag Luft III is another story entirely.

Like many others, Pete says, "I wouldn't take a million for the experience, but I wouldn't do it again for a million."

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: \$ _____

NAME _____

STREET AND NO. _____

CITY, STATE & ZIP _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____

306TH UNIT _____

Send to: Robert N. Houser, Treasurer
306th Bomb Group Association
2412 48th St.
Des Moines, IA 50310

DATE _____

1628TH Ordnance Company

The incoming new year, 1945, the third to be spent by the majority of the company's personnel was greeted with very little enthusiasm. The spirit of close cooperation still pervaded and all the men were held in its sway with total victory as their share of the Allies march toward that goal.

The new year brought with it an increase in work. Convoy upon convoy of trucks filed through the gates to the Bomb Dump. Armament, old and new, was inspected and repaired. Vehicles, self-propelled and trailers, needed more attention during the "cold snap," that had gripped this section of the country.

The inclement weather that had persisted through December, continued in January, and the 9th of the month saw the biggest snowfall of the winter season. The entire company was called out at 0100 hours 10 Jan, to clear the snow from the runways that were to be used later on in the day.

Snowplow and shovel, sand and salt, were put to good use. Unceasingly, the men toiled through the night under the guidance and supervision of Lt. John F. McDonnell, the Snow Removal officer. Although enough of the snow was cleared by 0700 hrs for the first plane to take off, a "skeleton" crew, manning four vehicles with snow plows mounted on them, continued the work of clearing all the runways and the perimeter track of snow. Lt. McDonnell stayed on with his boys during the entire operation.

On 12 Jan, a little excitement took place at the Bomb Dump. "Blackie", the pet of the entire section, had a litter of seven pups. The men really had a time of it trying to select appropriate names for the still sightless pups. At the time of this writing, mother and family are doing very well, if you please.

This spirit of excitement rose in volumes when word got around that day that the T/O & E was changed as noted in T/O & E 9-417 to four officers and 74 enlisted men, dated 28 Oct 44 and Par 1, 8th Air Force, dated 8 Jan 45.

To the relief of all concerned, more ratings were added. The EMs really started to "sweat it out." They didn't have to wait long as 1 of them received an increase stripes and pay four days later for on 16 Jan 45 the promotions were posted.

On 20 Jan the snow removal squad was called once again by Lt. McDonnell to clear the runways. Plows were remounted once again and the men were off to the field once again. They worked all the day and part of the next. Dame Nature aided them on the third day as it began to rain and overnight the snow was gone.

A longrumored byline of volunteers for the Infantry became a reality when a notice was posted on 3 Jan, that everyone was eligible to volunteer for that branch of service.

Four members of the Automotive section (Thomas J. Thompson, John S. Vinion, Lucia, and Angelo J. Lollo), plus Herbert E. Rigby of the Armament section submitted their names. Thompson was selected from the quintet. Joe Smith, member of the Bomb Dump, joined Thompson on 28 Jan, the date both were relieved from assignment in the company and were transferred in grade to the 12th Reinforcement Depot, APO 551. With the departure of the two EMs the company was left at four officers and 69 enlisted men.

On the following day, 29 Jan, T/5 Sermon Bunch reported to the hospital and from there was sent to Diddington Hospital where he was examined, and the diagnosis showed that his appendix had to be removed. This was done and the patient is convalescing at the Station Hospital at present.

Bunch's examination and operation really started something, as on 31 Jan the entire company was ordered to the Hospital where the men underwent physical checkups. Naturally, since no further information was forthcoming about why the physicals were being given, the rumors really began to circulate and the favorite one of all was that the physically fit men were to be put into the Infantry. Taunts and cat-calls, all in fun, met those who failed the physical examination, as they were labeled then "4-Fs."

Thus, the closing day of the months finds the boys with their pockets bulging with money after Pay Call, and with a fleeting thought of what was in store for them in the ensuing months: were they to continue working in the same capacity as in the past, or were they to be transferred to the realm of the "Foot Slogger?"



Daphne Franklin and John Hickey are both regular attendees at our reunions with their spouses.



Bill and Polly Feeser, 367th, come each year to meet with old friends of the '40s.



The giant Pacific Northwest totem pole dominates the courtyard of the Thunderbird Hotel.

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 with B-17, squadron # and group #

Circle size in listing below:

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

Group Golf Shirts

Embroidered with 306th logo on left pocket

Putty color	S, M, L, XL	\$20.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
Natural color	S, M, L, XL	\$20.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
Birch color	S, M, L, XL	\$20.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00

306th Hat

Royal Blue, w/scrambled eggs on brim and 306th logo \$15.00

369th Hat

Grey summer, embroidered w/369th BS, B-17, First Over Germany \$10.00

306th Patch 3 inch, w/First Over Germany \$5.00

306th Patch 2 in. without First Over Germany 5.00

306th Patch, w.Group logo, 5 in. 5.00

367th Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

368th Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

369th Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

423rd Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

B-17 Gold pin for lapel or hat 5.00

306th decal w/First over Germany .50

306th Coasters, metal, black & silver, set of 4 in container 4.00

Total _____

Up to 2 lbs. 3.50
Priority Mail 3.95

Grand Total _____

Ship to:
Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____