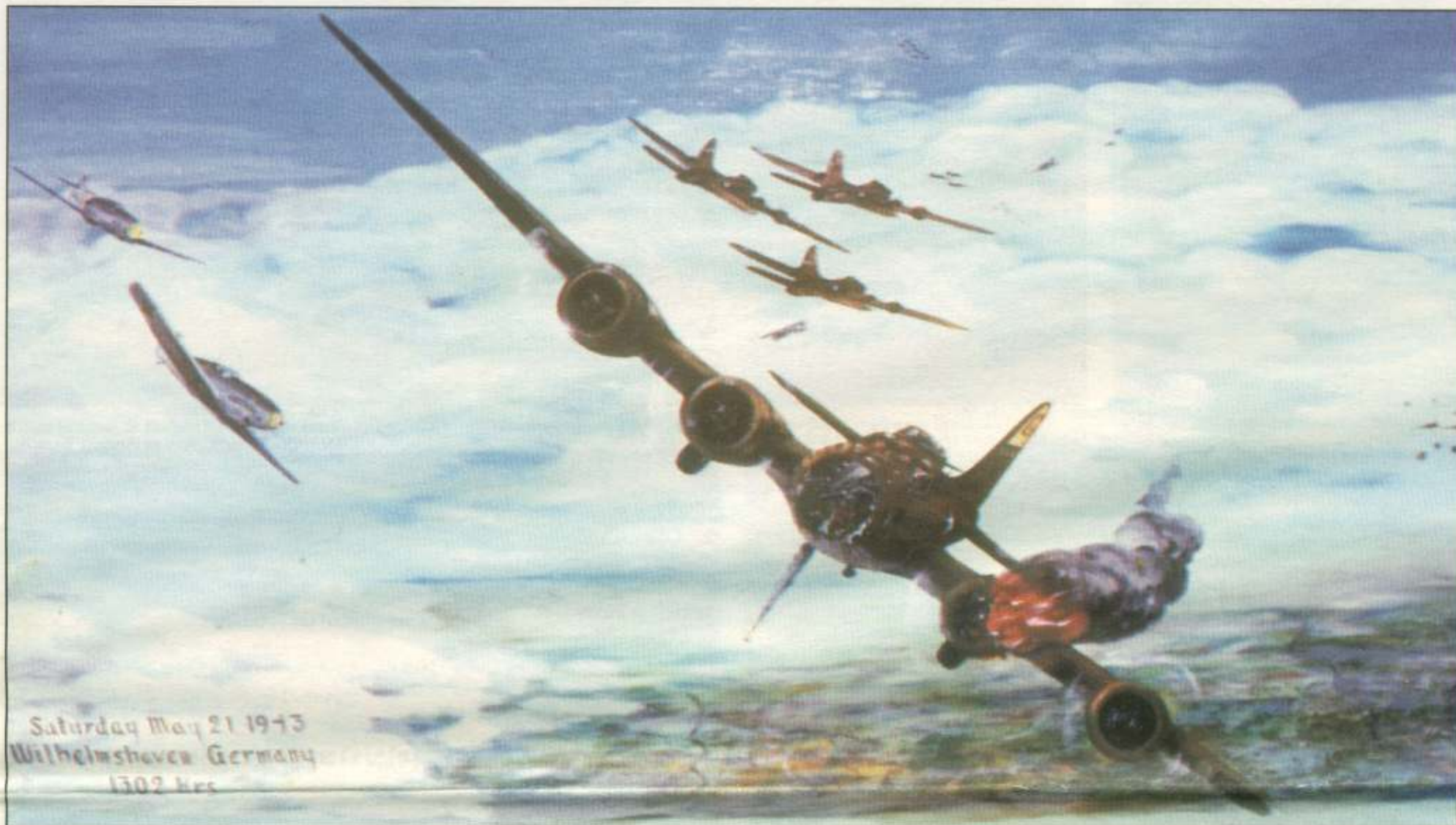


# 306<sup>th</sup> Echoes

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## In Memory of Leland Kessler-

He was our leader, our comrade in arms, a painter, a son, a husband, a father, a grandfather, and a friend to every 306th man whose path he ever crossed.

It is difficult to pay tribute to someone like Lee, he meant so much to so many.

It somehow seems appropriate to pay tribute to him through one of his paintings shown above. He was a warrior, an engineer on this B-17, and once he was home and free he began to paint those scenes he knew so well. This has been used several times, but it always seems to evoke a central segment of his life, and it is only one of the many ways in which we will always remember Lee. May God bless and protect him as Lee goes unto the great beyond.

## Hopkins New President

The death of President Leland Kessler last year, and the inability of Immediate Past President Lowell Burgess to serve as chairman of the nominating committee threw the Association into a stew unlike any situation we had faced in a quarter century. Anthony J. Conroy, our vice president, easily assumed the presidency and carried through his reunion duties with aplomb.

The new nominating committee submitted a slate, which was supported by the membership, including Royce Hopkins, president

Albert McMahan, vice president

Russell Strong, secretary

Robert Houser, treasurer

Directors: William Houlihan \ Hugh

Phelan William Carnicom Dr Herman Kaye

Past President: Anthony Conroy

British Rep: Ralph Franklin

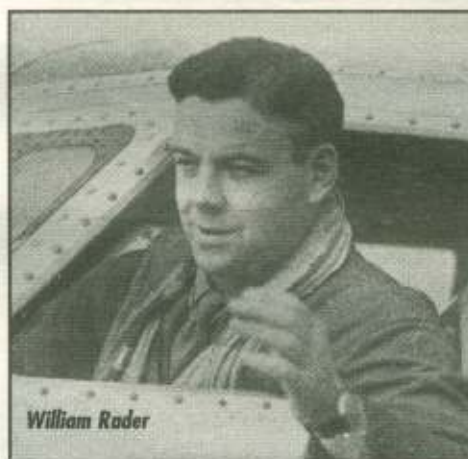
## Don't know where; Don't know when!

We don't mean to be flippant, BUT, those two lines above typify our position regarding the 2004 reunion for the 306th.

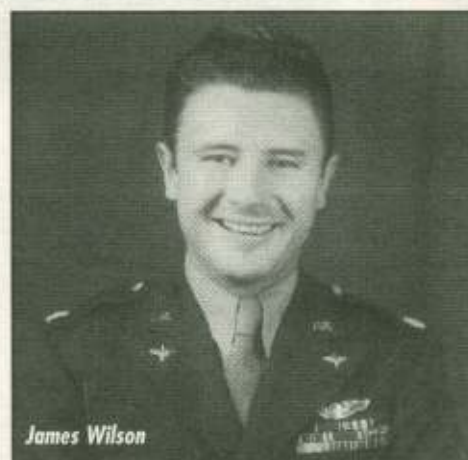
We will be a bit west of the Mississippi River, at least the officers and directors got that far in discussions in Savannah. Half a dozen places have been mentioned, and as soon as this issue of *Echoes* has moved off to the printer, the secretary will gather information.

This will be synthesized, packed off to the aforementioned body, and after one or two selection rounds, we hope we will have a reasonable solution. Results will be in the April issue of *Echoes*.

At this point you can be sure of two things; It will be west, and it will be in September.



William Rader



James Wilson

## Deaths Noted: Wm S Rader, JW Wilson

Since the last issue of *Echoes* the deaths of two early leaders of the 306th have been noted. They were William R. Rader (nee Raper) and James W. Wilson. Both were in the original Group and both became commanders of other groups in the Eighth during combat. Gen. Wilson died 5 Oct 2001 in Palm Desert, CA, and Gen. Rader died 5 Nov 2003 in Alexandria, VA.

The two men held key jobs in the 306th, commanding squadrons, and later were deputy commanders of the Group. Their long careers carried them into key jobs, with Rader retiring as a Brigadier General and Wilson, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., ended his long career as a lieutenant general.

Wilson was a 1940 graduate of West Point, and entered active service immediately to begin pilot training. He joined the fledgling 306th at Salt Lake City, then went to Wendover, UT, where crew training began. On Special Order #1, 1942, for the new bomb group Wilson was assigned as commanding officer of the 34th Bombardment Squadron, which was later renumbered to the 423rd.

His other posts with the 306th included: Group Operations Officer 19 Feb 43, Deputy Group Commander. He left the 22 Jun 43, moving to the First Combat Bomb Wing.

But one of those stellar points in life came to Wilson when he returned to the 306th to fly with Capt. Raymond Check when "Pappy" was to fly his 25th and final mission. The mission was to bomb the Airfield at Tricqueville, France. "Check's plane was hit by 20mm cannon fire in the cockpit ... Check was dead ... flames were dancing through the cockpit area, severely burning Lt. Col. Wilson's hands and face." In fact, his hands were burned to the wheel, as he was flying the plane from the left seat.

Rader got to Wendover 18 Jun 42. He had been commissioned out of cadet training as a second lieutenant 11 Jul 41, and was promoted to 1st Lt 26 Mar 42, rising to captain 3 Mar 43. Two days later he

## Obituaries

Col. Hollis H. Baker, 423rd bombardier (Wallace Wood crew,) died 12 Jan 04 in Lompoc, CA, where he had lived for a number of years. Cancer was a contributing cause of his death. He was a graduate of Omaha U, and earned a Master's at Chapman College. He was special assistant to the CG, Strategic Air Command for Joint Strategic Target Planning at the time of retirement in 1969. He then spent nine years with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. in Anchorage, AK. He leaves his wife, Esther, 1c, 1gc.

turn to page 2

turn to page 2



## Deaths Noted: Wm S Rader, JW Wilson

continued from page 1

became commander of the 367th Squadron. (Harry Holt, the original 367th CO was replaced 4 Mar 42 by John L. Ryan, who ended up that day as an evadec in France.)

Starting out with the 368th Squadron, he flew regularly and by 12 Jun 43 was receiving the third oak leaf cluster to his Air Medal, indicating that he had flown 20 missions by that time. Five and a half months as squadron commander came to an end 18 Aug 43 when he became deputy group commander for Col. George L. Robinson. Rader's promotion to lieutenant colonel followed 2 Nov 43. He received two oak leaf clusters to his Distinguished Flying Cross and also earned a Silver Star medal.

Shortly after Robinson departed for the States, Rader left the 306th, and on 30 Oct 44 was named commanding officer of the 303rd Bomb Group. While the 306th and the 303rd had come to England within a week of each other, the 306th was ready for combat 9 Oct 42, and the 303rd didn't fly its first until 17 Nov 42, and on that date the 306th was flying its sixth.

On 13 Jan 45 Raper became a colonel, staying with the 303rd until 19 Apr 45.

During his WWII combat days there was recorded for him a total of 72 missions. He told this writer that he often filled in at any crew spot where there was a sudden vacancy and and probably flew close to a hundred missions in B-17s.

On his last big venture as commander of the 367th, Major Raper led his Squadron and the 306th on the first of two memorable raids to Schweinfurt, Germany, to do serious damage to the ball bearing industry. On a day when the 8th lost 60 planes, he led the group through flak and fighters unscathed. On the following day he left the 367th to become deputy group commander. Like all the major leaders of the 306th he continued to fly his quota of combat missions as the Group leader.

Following WWII, Rader became air operations officer at Eniwetok; then back to the Pentagon; west again to Vandenberg AFB where he became inspector general for Air Research and Development Command. By 1959 he was division commander for the 13th Strategic Missile Division. In SAC he spent more than 10,000 hours as airborne flag officer of the nuclear command post. Back to Vandenberg.

In 1965 he named deputy commander of SAC's 1st Strategic Aerospace Division, and retired there in 1968.

Survivors include his wife, Stephanie, to whom he had been married for 57 years. She had retired from USAF as a major.

Wilson recovered from his injuries incurred June 43 and was back on duty in October. In August 44 he returned to England as commander of the 92nd Bomb Group, remaining until 4 Aug 45. Then he began a series of active duty assignments until his appointment as inspector general of SAC, and an extended tour there, as deputy commander of the 15th Air Force and commander of the 13th Air Force lasted until he retired in 1970.



**Royce Hopkins**, president; **Albert McMahan**, vice president; **Russell A. Strong**, secretary; **Robert N. Houser**, treasurer; **William F. Houlihan**, **Hugh E. Phelan**, **William Carnicom**, **Dr. Herman Kaye**, directors; **Anthony Conroy**, past president. **Ralph Franklin**, British representative, National School Cottage, Keysoe, Beds., MK44 2HP, England; Telephone from U.S. 011-44-1234-708715.

306Museum@nscmh.fscmh.c.uk

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**, 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).

## Obituaries

continued from page 1

**Horace Best**, 4th Station Complement Squadron medic, died 3 Nov 03 in Pico Rivera, CA. Before retirement he had been a journeyman carpenter and construction supervisor. He leaves his wife, Rose, 2, 2gc.

**Clarence W. Hoheisel**, 367th medical technician, died 24 Feb 03 in Brainerd, MN. He was a farmer after WWII. He leaves his wife, Catherine, 3c, 7gc, 1ggc.

**William M. Howard**, 369th engineer and POW (Eldin Ralston crew), died in 1975 in Salisbury, NC. A graduate from U of NC as a pharmacist, he owned drugstores in Winston-Salem, Mocksville and Salisbury. He was MIA on 16 Aug 44 on a mission to Bohlen, Germany. He leaves his wife, 5c.

**Robert T. Kreamelmeyer**, 423rd turret specialist, died 16 Apr 2002 in Evergreen, CO, 14 months after suffering considerable brain damage in a fall on ice. He joined the Group 21 Dec 42 and was transferred out 4 Oct 43. For some years he was owner/manager of the San Juan Inn inn Montrose Co. He leaves 2c, 4gc.

**Gerald J Kruse (Kruszyski)**, 423rd radio operator (Mack McKay crew), died recently in Redding, CA. He had joined the Group 23 Jun 42, departing in Spring 43 to attend a radio instructors' school.

**Pinson O. Luthi**, 369th ball turret gunner (Raymond Birdwell crew), died Jul 83 in Athens, GA. He was in sales work after service, and left his wife, Veronica, 4c, and later 9gc, 5ggc.

**Anthony J. Mariani**, 423rd waist gunner (Ragnar L Carlson crew), died 26 Nov 2003 in Eastchester NY, where he had been a restaurant manager. He joined the 306th 28 Nov 43 and was MIA 22 Mar 44 (w. Carlson) on a Berlin mission. Some violent evasive action after being hit hard by flak caused five members of the crew to bail out near Osnabruck, Germany, while the remaining five crew members flew on back, making a one-engine landing on the English coast. He had been born in Italy, coming to the US at six months. He leaves his wife, Mary, 4c, 7gc.

**William F. McMullen**, 1208th QM Company, died 2 Nov 03 in Houston, TX. He had joined the Group 18 Oct 43 and departed 15 Feb 46. Postwar he retired from Walker Mfg Co., and after 1987 was employed by Carb-A-Tron Tool Co. He leaves 2d, 4gc.

**Clifford O. Rasmussen**, 368th tail gunner (Clarence Halliday crew), died 7 Sep 2003 in St. Peters, MN, his home for some years. Although in poor health, he was a regular reunion attendee. After leaving service he worked for the Mankato Corp. He leaves 1 s.

**Ernest B. Rauenhorst**, 367th cook and later in radio maintenance, died 18 Nov 03 in Washington Court House, OH. He had joined the Group in Jul 42 and departed in Sep 45. He left his wife, Annie.

**Fred Richman**, 369th Tech Supply clerk, died 22 Oct 03 in the Bronx, New York. He came to the Group in Sep 42 and served until Apr 45. He leaves his wife, Lillian.

**Clyde "Gene" Siler**, D/F Station radio mechanic, is deceased. With the original group, he transferred to Sta 594, USSTAD, 18 Mar 44. He leaves his wife, Marie, 3c, 4gc.

**Edward H. Small**, 368th engineer (Robert Miller crew), died 17 Apr 03 in Verona, PA. He came to the Group early and about completed his tour when his crew was shot down over Bremen, 17 Apr 43. he spent two years as a POW, and leaves his wife, Adeline.

**Arthur F. Titus**, 367th navigator



Just arrived and a bit tired! Jack Spaulding, the middle man in the picture is shown with his combat crew at Thurleigh arriving for combat. Taken in Sept '42, you see them as they unloaded their plane. Pictured are: Edward Nork ro, Dale Davis bt, Louis Morgan tg, Thomas Gilliland eng, Spaulding, James Jones CP, Gordon Grant B, Leon Williams wg, and Wallace Kirkpatrick N. Also having accompanied this crew, unseen in photo, was Watts Humphrey, Group Intelligence Officer.

(Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister crew), died 30 Jun 03 in Panama City, FL, where he had been a businessman for many years. He came to the 306th 4 May 43 and was the 69th officer to complete a combat tour. For 42 years he was the owner of Moon Jewelry in Panama City, retiring in 1985. He leaves 2c, 7gc, 1ggc.

**Marvin D. Traver**, 423rd copilot (Edwin Schoenbachler crew), died 1 Dec 03 in Pismo Beach, CA. He joined the 306th 5 Jul 44 and was MIA 21 Nov 44 at Mersberg, Germany, (w Schoenbachler). A graduate of U-Denver, he became a chief medical technologist. A widower, he leaves 1 d.

**Richard P. Williams**, 423rd navigator (Richard Nickelhoff crew), died 30 Nov 03 in Towson, MD, of Alzheimer's Disease.

He was a sales engineer for both Alpha Portland Cement and Lehigh Portland Cement. He was a graduate in civil engineering from U-Illinois, and leaves his wife, Peggy, 5s, 4d, 1gc.

### The 306th Family

**Dorothy Krajcik**, wife of **August Krajcik**, 368th gunner (w. John Regan), died 24 Nov 2003 in Columbia, SC.

**Jennie A. Mills**, wife of **Clyde Mills**, 423rd mechanic, died 24 Mar 03 in Castleton, VT. She is Survived by 2s, 5gc, 9ggc.

**Helen I. Vangalis**, wife of **Andy Vangalis**, 368th mechanic, died of heart failure in Las Cruces, NM, 29 Aug 03.. They had been married 55 years. She leaves 4c, 4gc

## 306th MAIL ORDER MEMORABILIA

Send this form and check to 306th Bomb Group Association to: Marty Lenaghan, PO Box 918, Brunswick, OH 44212

### Squadron Golf Shirts

Embroidered with B-17, squadron # and group #

Circle size in listing below:

___ 367th red	M, L, XL	\$22.00	
___ 368th white	M, L, XL	\$22.00	
___ 369th green	M, L, XL	\$22.00	
___ 423rd blue	M, L, XL	\$22.00	

### Group Golf Shirts

Embroidered with 306th logo on left pocket

___ Putty color	S, M, L, XL	\$22.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
___ Birch color	S, M, L, XL	\$22.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00
___ Grey color	S, M, L, XL	\$22.00	2X, 3X add \$5.00

### Caps

___ Grey baseball, embroidered with First over Germany, B-17, 306th Bomb Group	\$12.00
___ Royal Blue, w/scrambled eggs on brim and 306th logo	\$17.00
___ Grey summer mesh, embroidered with B-17, Squadron# and group#	
___ 367th	\$12.00
___ 368th	\$12.00
___ 369th	\$12.00
___ 423rd	\$12.00

### Patches

___ 306th Patch 3 inch, with First Over Germany	\$6.00
___ 306th 2 inch without First Over Germany	\$6.00
___ 306th 5 inch Group logo	\$6.00
___ 367th 5 inch in full color	\$6.00
___ 368th 5 inch in full color	\$6.00
___ 369th 5 inch in full color	\$6.00
___ 423rd 5 inch in full color	\$6.00

___ B-17 Gold pin for lapel or hat	\$6.00
___ 306th decal w/First over Germany	\$.50
Total	_____

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## What Do You Have for Our 306 Museum?

By Ralph Franklin

It is with friendship and admiration for what you achieved in WWII as a bomb group that had concentrated our thoughts and minds to dedicate this past summer to the 306th Museum. I can assure you we have had a wonderful season.

We have opened every weekend and public holiday from 1 March to 31 October, plus pre-arranged coach tours during the week, as many as three groups some weeks. Although I retired some years ago, I feel I spend as much time on Thurleigh Airfield as I did when I officially worked there. This wonderful, nostalgic area of North Bedfordshire has been a home away from home since 1955 for me.

While we are only a small museum our fame is spreading. We have met visitors from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, also from Australia, France, New Zealand, Germany and Holland. We have had 79 visitors from the States since we opened.

This has included in recent times John McCabe (369th) and daughter, Sheldon and Rita Beigel (369th) Bob Mrazek, a friend of Andy Andrews (423rd) and Glenn and Beverly Wishon, daughter of LE Smith (423rd). Also, our long term friends, Rocky and Ruth Rockwell, spent three weekends at the Museum with us. Very early Phil Mitchell, a cousin of the late Col George L. Robinson. On Friday, 11 July, We entertained a 92nd Bomb Group party who stopped for lunch at a nearby cafe and spent the afternoon in our museum. Other major groups were Rolls Royce employees from Nottingham and the Berkshire Aviation Society.

In total, we had about 2000 visitors during last summer and about 3000 since the museum opened.

"There is one aspect of our displays that could be enhanced immensely," said Ralph, "and that would be an outpouring of actual WWII mementos of yours. We have a number of manikins in uniforms, but we would prefer that these pieces be replaced by some uniforms of yours. Certainly, some of these must be in good shape.

"If you have wartime clothing items whatsoever, and your families are not interested in them, can I ask that you consider giving them to the museum, which is now firmly established. The question is often asked, 'Were the pieces of clothing we show actually worn by 306th personnel?'" Ralph reports.

A late season visitor of some note was Magnus Andersson, the Swede who took the underwater photos of 42-38008, Lewis Matichka's plane which ditched off the south coast of Sweden 8 May '44. As Andersson has been down to the wreck numerous times, he told Ralph that he had found two intact .50 caliber machine guns, and that they think both guns will be brought to the surface. It is Andersson's intent to get one of those guns to the Thurleigh Museum, which would indeed be a unique piece of memorabilia.

While the Museum is closed there are still groups being scheduled in to bring more WWII devotees into the "306th Family" as visitors to Thurleigh. Plans are well underway to schedule other groups into "our" place after the March reopening.

## Plans Afoot to Mark 2nd Year of Museum at Thurleigh

Plans are now afoot to have a 2nd Birthday Party for the Thurleigh Airfield Museum. Dr. Jonathan Palmer, the power behind the revival of the area, and Ralph Franklin are working on the whole idea. But a date has yet to be set. We hope that we can announce such event in the next issue of Echoes, as well as making the date available through efforts of the officers and directors to reach at least a portion of our readership who may be more prone to participate than some others.



## German Pilot sees Plight of B-17; Turns for Home

By Arthur Gordon,  
8th AF Information Officer

The other night my wife and I attended a dinner in Savannah for veterans and friends of the 8th. Sitting beside us were Charles Brown, an 8th pilot, and Franz Stigler, a Luftwaffe ace.

On 20 Dec 43, on a raid over Bremen, Brown's B-17 was shot out of formation. Badly crippled, the aircraft plunged downward, with the tail gunner dead and four other crew members wounded. Brown was trying to bring his stricken plane home when German ace Stigler, in his ME-109, spotted it. The German closed in, but when he saw that the bomber was helpless, he elected not to shoot it down. He tried to persuade the American, by his gestures, to land the plane and surrender. But, Brown ignored the foe and kept flying toward England. With a shrug, Stigler

saluted the valiant American crew, and turned for home. Many years later, a grateful Brown located Stigler, now living in Canada, and the two became friends. Amazing to those around Brown and Stigler, here they were together. In my own days with the 8th, I wrote many stories about combat in the skies, and here on this evening in Savannah there was plenty to write about of courage and endurance. But I had never encountered an episode during the war in which the dominant element was compassion. The Americans did not want to publicize this story during the war. And that evening together, Stigler told us that he might have faced a firing squad if his Nazi superiors had learned what he had done.

In 1943, Franz Stigler's decision to spare his enemies' lives was a tiny pinpoint of light in the darkness of war. And today, after all these years, it is glowing still.

Taken from "Daily Guideposts 2002".  
Carmel, NY, pp. 378-9.

### 'Heroes Among Us' has Bob Houser in Type

*Heroes Among Us* is a 300-page book concerning a dozen people who proudly call themselves lowans, having lived much of their lives in that middle western state. They served their nation in WWII and then returned "home" to continue serving their state and their fellow citizens.

This book is of interest to men of the 306th because among the dozen cited is Robert N. Houser, who has been treasurer of the Association since 1 Apr 94. Like

## Renewal Gift

The \$10,000 gift received last year from Dr. Herman H. Kaye has been renewed for 2004, it is announced by Dr Kaye and Treasurer Houser. While this materially assists in our continued color printing for *Echoes*, this does not solve the other fiscal problems. Houser states that gifts received by the end of 2003 are aiding materially, but there is a continuing need for additional funds.

"Our life blood is wrapped up in those gifts that come from the membership, ranging from \$5 to \$500," says new president Royce Hopkins.

The only solution for the health of the 306th Association is for each of us to examine our resources, check the date of our latest gift, and make a serious effort to see that our balance continues to move along. This will assure the continued appearance of *Echoes* four times each year in your mail box, as well as answering your queries about records and other matters of concern to the entire membership.

We are now asking those who are "free loaders" for *Echoes* to make an annual contribution of \$20. Mail your check to the treasurer, whose address is listed on page 2 of this issue.

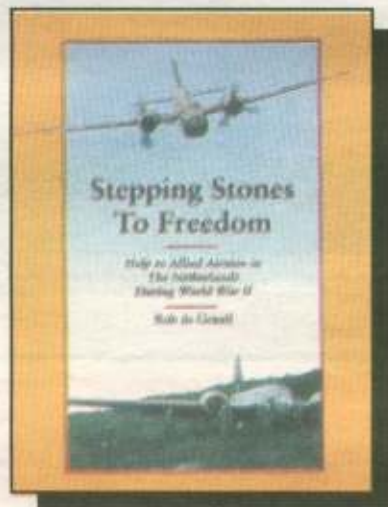
many others he enlisted in the USAAF when the WWII Draft got too close.

Bob and his wife, Doris, were married in Feb 44, and he left soon for combat, joining the 306th at Thurleigh. After flying much of his tour, Bob transferred to Air Transport Command. His travels took him all over, even getting to New York on one occasion and where Doris was able to see him. Bob became an actuary by training, then went into insurance and retired as CEO of The Principal Co, in Des Moines, IA.

The interviews done for this book also often included spouses, and Doris Houser's interjections during this experience appear in italics. It is often said that the woman gets in the last word, and the Houser chapter ends with Doris' comments on a segment of our 1992 reunion at Thurleigh:

*For me one of the neatest moments was not photographed (in September 1992). The 306th Group and their wives were on the buses when we began to hear the sound of a B-17 being flown over the field at Thurleigh. The buses stopped and the guys all got off and stood there looking up at the plane. That was something to see, because you could tell by their expressions that they thought the B-17 was one of the most wonderful things in the world.*

### Stepping Stones, A New Book from Holland



This is a careful and interesting study of the impact of the air war over Europe from the view of the Dutch people, and concerns those people who became helpers for the air crews of Britain and the Commonwealth and then of the Americans. Much mention is made of the U.S. loss of 43,687.

There are many interesting details about Americans in The Netherlands and how they fared. But it will take a dedicated student to work through this entire manuscript. From my reading of the book, while not in depth, gave me the feeling of the dedication of the Dutch in their efforts to save airmen who fought the Reich. Numbers were killed, and not as many Americans got out of Holland during the war as one might assume.

*Stepping Stones* was originally published in 1995 in Dutch. It was an immediate "hit", and money was gathered to have it translated into English, and then given to members of the Air Force Escape and Evasion Society.

## 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

### 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

306th ECHOES' Book	\$55.00	_____
2004 Directory	\$10.00	_____
367th Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
368th Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
369th Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
423rd Combat Diary	\$20.00	_____
Casey Jones Project	\$10.00	_____
Men of the 306th (16mm film)	\$20.00	_____

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

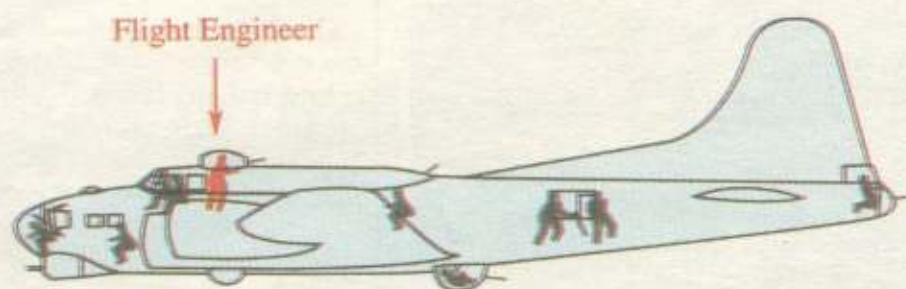
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner



The flight engineer position between the pilots allowed him to monitor the aircraft's engine instruments.

The flight engineer was specially trained to have a wide knowledge of the bomber and its equipment. He was capable of servicing the aircraft if it landed away from its home base and he could perform most jobs handled by the

ground crew. Along with his ability to maintain the airframe and engines, the engineer was also an armorer with a detailed knowledge of the aircraft's guns and bomb racks. He had a working knowledge of all the aircraft systems

This unique feature was made possible by the Arizona Wing of the Commemorative Air Force



The top turret scanning the 6 o'clock position.

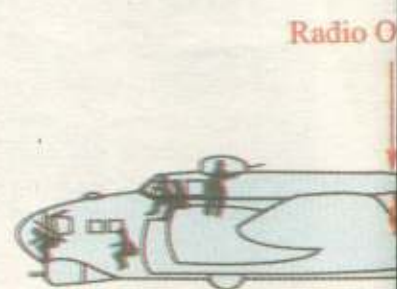
and was a key figure in any emergency situation.

The flight engineer's primary job was manning the B-17's top turret in combat. His view from the top turret covered a 360 degree radius over the aircraft. The turret, positioned just aft of the pilot and co-pilot on the flight deck, gave him easy access to monitor the airplane's systems. The early electric upper turret was particularly cramped with little head room but it later incorporated a higher dome with better visibility. The turret was controlled by two cycle-like hand grips. The left had the gun trigger and a safety lever. The right handle worked the range finder to the sight. Pulling the handles up elevated the guns and pushing them down brought them down. Pressure to the left or right rotated the turret in that direction. An interrupter stopped firing the gun if it was aimed in the propeller arc or at the tail.

At engine start and runup the flight engineer stood behind the pilots checking the fuel and engine gauges. During take-off he called off the airspeed so the pilot could concentrate on keeping the airplane straight down the runway. Once the airplane was airborne he would keep watch on the engine performance and the fuel consumption throughout the flight.



The top turret protected the upper portion of the Flying Fortress.



The radio operator handled the communications while

The radio operator was isolated from the rest of the crew in the midsection of the bomber. He had a restricted view and usually had to sit at his receiver and sweat out the battle that raged outside. Yet he was a key member of the team, handling the communications equipment which frequently proved a life saver for the crew. One of the first jobs the radio operator did when entering his position was to tune in his equipment and make sure the frequencies were correct. The signal was strong at base, but the further away the mission ranged, the weaker the signal grew. All coded transmissions were sent or received by Morse code so even though the signal might be weak and contain static, the message could be understood. Each mission had a primary and secondary target; if the lead pilot decided the primary was a bad risk due to weather or adverse conditions he could elect to attack the secondary target. It was the duty of the radio operator to inform headquarters in a coded message which target was bombed and the bombing results. This information often affected the planning of the next day's mission.

## 65 Years of Government Service Compilation

By Clifford Steiger

My first mission was to Berlin, followed by trips to Hamburg and others. My seventh mission was to Geissen, Germany. On a formation change I was involved in a mid air collision with our flying spare, who didn't know about the formation and didn't get out of the way. We lost our elevator, rudder and our tail gunner. The bent vertical put us in a one turn spin. After recovering we had lost about a mile of altitude. There was no way I could get back into formation, so I salvaged the bombs and headed out of Germany.

The extra gasoline I used to keep the airplane flying ran out near Y-70 (an American controlled check point in France). I called on the radio and told them our plight. They dispatched an ambulance to pick us up after bailing out. We made it okay except for scratches, and I had broken my ear drums.

(If you want more details, the January 1990 issue of *306th Echoes* carried lengthy statements by both pilots involved.)

My last mission was to Dresden 17 Apr 45. The Germans surrendered shortly after that and we celebrated. After VE Day I was transferred to the 813th Air Engineering Squadron. When the 306th ran short of pilots I was transferred back to my squadron to fly Casey Jones missions. About this time I accepted a commission in the Air Force Reserves.

In Oct 45 I was sent to Snetterton Heath to pick up a B-17 to fly home. It had three good engines and one bad one. After nursing it to Africa, we crossed the Atlantic to Brazil, then to Palm Beach, FL, via Guiana and Puerto Rico.

I went back to the Post Office 1 Jan 46, but that didn't have much appeal after the excitement of Air Force duty, so I began to look around at what else I might do. The Atomic Energy

Commission was hiring inspectors to relieve the Army for security at Los Alamos, NM. I applied, was given an abbreviated FBI course and was sent to Los Alamos. When North Korea invaded South Korea in 1951, I was recalled to active with the Air Force as a security officer, non-flying. I kept applying for flying status, and while at Williams AFB was given a check ride. The report on that was to the effect that I should be returned to flying status. Then I was sent to pilot instructor school at Craig AFB, AL, and would undergo jet upgrading at Williams. Then I was put to work teaching cadets how to fly jet fighters. I did this at Greenville AFB, MS, and Waco, TX and got off active duty again in 1954, returning to Los Alamos.

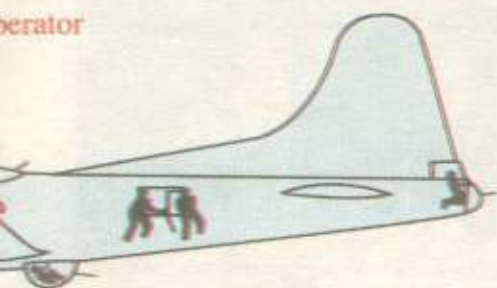
In Jan 55, among other things I delivered atomic weapons to AFBs. During this time I was flying as a Fighter pilot for the New Mexico ANG. About this time they exploded a hydrogen bomb at

Eniwetok, and President Eisenhower refused to turn them over to the military because they were too powerful (equivalent to 15 million tons of TNT). That's a Big Bang! Eisenhower was afraid that some rogue commander would hold the world hostage. Accordingly, these weapons must stay in the custody of civilians.

My next AEC assignment was aboard the USS Bennington, an aircraft carrier. In my custody were two thermonuclear bombs. I made a Far East cruise on the Big B, visiting Japan, Hong Kong, The Philippines, and Hawaii. In 1956 I was relieved of my assignment and reassigned to Castle AFB, CA, in charge of the thermo nukes. Later that same year, President Eisenhower relented, and turned the nukes over to military. I was offered a couple of positions, applied for security officer post at Edwards AFB, CA, and took at the GS-9 level. After being promoted to GS-11, and in 1960



# Radio Operator



h frequently proved to be a life saver for the crew.

While the aircraft was en route the radio operator listened for any messages that might be sent from headquarters, such as a decision to abort the mission. Another function of the radio operator was to receive a radio fix for the navigator. The radio operator would hold his Morse key down and transmit a solid signal for approximately one minute. This signal was received at widely spaced installations with highly sensitive radio compasses. This signal was then read and a line projected on a map from various installations that would intersect to indicate the aircraft's position. The same procedure could be used should a B-17 be forced to ditch at sea. If the plane was within friendly territory and went down, a distress signal was transmitted by holding the Morse key down and sending out this constant signal. The aircraft's position was then given to air-sea rescue and the signal assisted in saving many crews.

The radio compartment was located between two bulkheads on the B-17: one directly behind the bomb bay and the other just forward of the ball turret. The



The radio room suffered flak damage on this B-17.

radio operator sat facing forward on the left hand side of the aircraft with a work table in front of him. The liaison radio receiver and transmitting key were located on the radio operator's table, while the liaison radio transmitter was mounted to the bulkhead directly behind him. These sets were used for long range communication in Morse code and were known as wireless telegraphy or W/T. On the right-hand side of the rear bulkhead were five transmitter tuning units.

Located on the forward right side of the aircraft were two transmitters and three receivers for the command radio. Known as R/T (radio telephone), its purpose was as a short-range vocal communication with nearby air or ground stations. The pilots used the command radio by use of their controls mounted in the cockpit overhead. The radio operator was also trained as a gunner and manned a flexible .50 caliber machine gun out the top of his compartment. On early B-17's the hatch was removed so the gun could be maneuvered. This let in the cold slipstream and made the radio operator's duties very uncomfortable. Later B-17's had an enclosed covering with the gun attached to a special swivel socket so the top hatch did not have to be removed. Under the floor of the radio room compartment was a large camera used to take photos of the bomb run. The radio operator activated the camera during the bomb run to take photos of the target area.

The radio operator was also trained as the first aid man of the crew. Other emergency equipment and tools were located in the radio room, considered to be the safest place in the aircraft during ditching or crash landing. In the event of such an emergency all crew members, except the pilots, would come to the radio room and sit with their backs toward the forward bulkhead.



## Right Men in Right Jobs Moves Maintenance Along

By Bill Cavaness

To provide a better operational (OR) rate for the Group, mechanics and specialists were drawn from each squadron. The specialists were assigned to the Sub-Depot shops, i.e. propellor, communications, sheet metal. The general mechanics were formed into crews. This provided the Group a faster turn around of damaged aircraft.

Each flight line crew chief was given a form with a silhouette of the aircraft. All damage to the aircraft was indicated on this form. The Group pool supervisors would then collect the forms and set priorities to determine which aircraft needed the most immediate attention.

The aircraft were then placed in one of three hangars. An aircraft that required a longer repair time went into the middle hangar. Those aircraft requiring fewer hours went into a hangar on the end. As soon as repairs to one aircraft were finished, it was moved onto the flight line and another was brought into the hangar.

Aircraft that required extensive repair were left until the next operation. This method gave the 306 the highest OR rating in the ETO.

There was one drawback. The system worked so well that the Group lost several engineering officers to other groups where they installed similar systems.

These maintenance crews became very efficient in fixed and moveable surfaces along with fuel cell repair. The engine change, build-up crews - one crew per position - had two to three engines ready at all times. With engines ready for change, this reduced the down time to four hours.

The tire change/general maintenance

crew maintained spare tire/wheel assemblies along with wing and tail jacks on a modified RAF bomb trailer for immediate response to blown tires during takeoffs and landings.

Tire assemblies were changed on the runway, with the aircraft ready to take off on a mission. The best time recorded was 18 minutes from engine shutdown to engine start.

If my memory serves me correctly, the original engineering officers had served together at different bases prior to their assignment to the 306th at Wendover, UT.

The task of my crew in the Group Maintenance Pool was to maintain main and tail spare wheel and tail assemblies with packed bearings at all times. This included all equipment needed to make changes as fast as possible, especially on mission days.

This required some creative thinking and extra equipment.

An RAF bomb trailer was appropriated and modified, including a wood floor. This was used to transport wheel/tire assemblies, wing jacks, tools and crews.

The first few tire changes were a learning experience. This wasn't like changing a tire on the family car.

Not only did we have to deal with the weight of the aircraft and the 56-inch tires, while aircraft were often on the runway and ready for takeoff. And, as often happened, there was a technical problem to deal with: how to break the bead from the wheel.

Pry bars, hammers, and even 6x6 trucks were used without much success. The welding shop provided a solution by designing and fabricating a "bead breaker".

Packing the wheel bearings was also a slow process. Eventually, to the delight of the crew, a pressure unit was built that made the process much quicker.

The crew also had to deal with a problem that involved a bit more muscle work - removing aircraft which had run off the taxiway and sunk in the royal mud. This called for some Yankee engineering.

At first we tried the winch on the towing tractors. But the tractors were not heavy enough to hold their ground when the winch was engaged. The solution wasn't very elaborate, though. Fully loaded fuel trucks were attached to the tow trucks with chains and became anchors. That gave us enough weight to use the winch to extract the aircraft.

It never hurt to have enough equipment and spare parts around, even the smallest and simplest parts had to be on the shelf. As an example, after a few hard landings the bolts in the knuckle joints of the landing gear required inspection. This was done by removing the bolts and having their image magnified. Instead of leaving the aircraft without wheels, extra bolts were always on hand to replace those being inspected.

## ed by 423rd's Clifford Steiger

was offered a post at Norton AFB, CA. There as a GS-12 he took the job as deputy commander of the Security Police Squadron. Meantime, I was promoted to major and lieutenant colonel in the USAF Reserve.

In 1970 Steiger retired as a civilian employee with 30 years of service, and on 30 Jun 77 retired with 29 Years commissioned service in the Air Force, and seven years in the Army Air Corps, six commissioned.

This year Steiger will celebrate his 88th birthday.

Editor's note: I'm not sure how Cliff reached the 65 figure for years in Federal service, but in a recent telephone conversation he opined that it might be closer to 75 years of Federal service. Note 2: Steiger's first wife, Iris, died after 52 years of marriage. He and Ada have been married 19 years. He has 2c, 1lgc, 17+ggc, 4 or 5gggc.



Cliff Steiger and his cockpit teammate on 306th bombing missions late in the war, Dane Roberts



# 306th Friends Came to Savannah



A partial crew for "Spare Parts": Back row: Vernon Larsen N, Wally Dryden tg, Joe Clark P, Arthur Hatten e, Bill Carnicom CR Wives were not identified.



Ralph Franklin, heads Thurleigh Museum



Pat Hathaway, Ann Stewart, Forrest Stewart, Joe Hathaway



Janet Goode, Albert McMahan, Grover Goode.



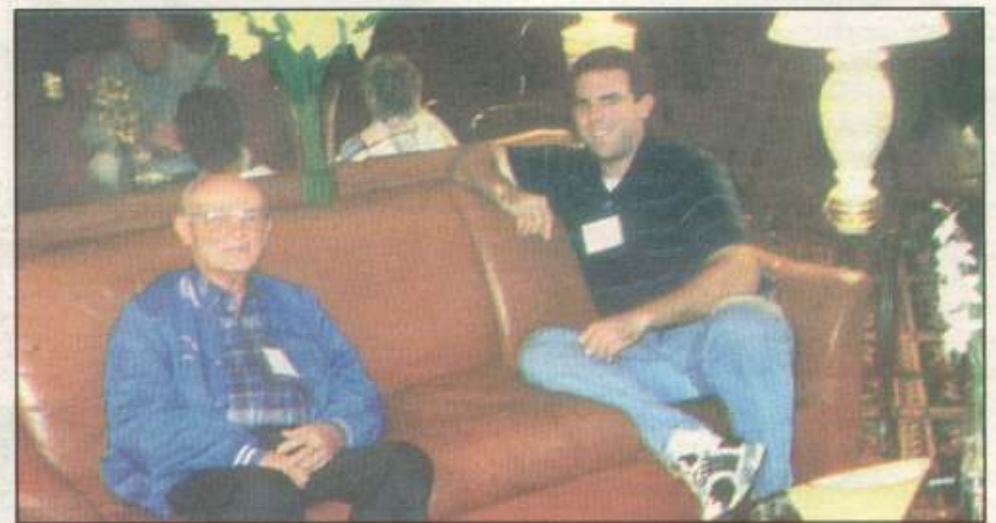
Janet Goode, unk, Rocky & Ruth Rockwell, unk, Robbie Lanyon, 423W, Grover Goode, Hoot Houghton.



????????????????????



Dr. Bill Costello, Ed Klutz 367S, Nora Dougherty Costello 367D, Gypsy & Nick Hoolko.



Clay Wilson and Scott Wilson 368GS (Don Ross' grandson)



Maggie Shuller Davis GpD, Molly Hopkins, Russ Strong, Bill Strong 367S, June Strong, Ralph Bordner



Marie Kellogg, Pam Kellogg Showalter 367D





Vernon Schimmel, Dr Thurman Shulter, Norma Roberts, Daphne Franklin, Cameron Martz 369GS, Ralph and Nell Bordner, June Strong and Maggie Shuller Davis GpD.



Window in Chapel at 8th AF Museum



Dr Cindy Houlihan Labo 367D, Connor Labo 367GD



Sarah Ward 369ggd, Lisa Ward 369gd, Beti Briscoe (she's the great-grandmother)



George Kellogg and Vernon DeLair



Wallace Boring and Eduardo Montoya



Dr Pat Leary and Nena Brennan Leary 423D



Michele Reiox and J J Gaydosh



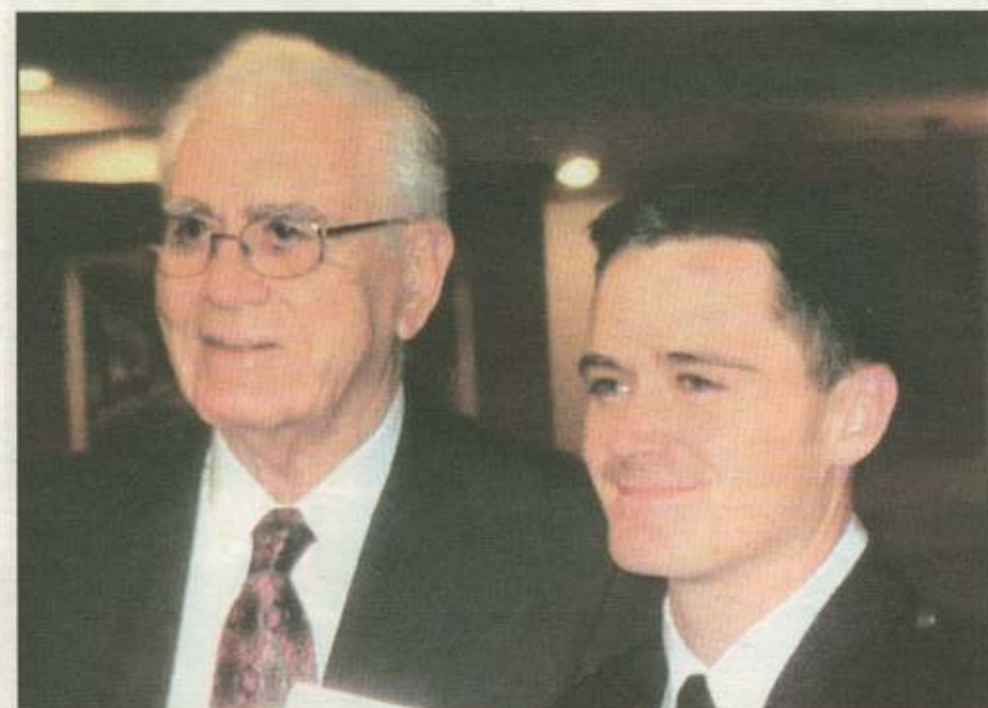
# Doc Shuller Becomes Center of Attention at Reunion



A special group of men got together at the Savannah reunion, special because they all had started their WWII experiences with the 306th at Wendover, UT. Two completed combat tours, one was an evadee, one worked at the base hospital, and all had a long relationship with Dr. Thurman Shuller, until greater responsibilities came his way. Left to right, they are Harry Alleman, 423rd engineer; Clay Wilson, 423rd engineer, MIA and an evadee; Dr. Shuller, Group flight surgeon for the first year and a half; Bill Houlihan, clerk in the base medical facilities and the one with the longest term of service with the 306th, and Gerald Rotter, a 369th lead Bombardier, who left the Group 5 Jun 43, the fourth officer to complete a combat tour.



Dr. Shuller with two of his children who came to be with him while they also learned a lot of history concerning WWII and the air war. They are Henry Shuller and his sister, Maggie Shuller Davis.



Dr. Shuller is shown here with Capt. Steven Ward, a current USAF flight surgeon, and who is the grandchild by marriage of C. Dale Briscoe, a onetime 369th pilot and a veteran of 30 years in the Air Force.

A limited number of folders, Bedford, WWII Airfield Trail, and produced by Bedford Tourist Information Center, remain following the 2003 reunion. If you would like a copy of this interesting map and description of the area, you can obtain them as long as they last from the 306th Secretary's Office.

## Bombing Slows French Trains

3 August 1943- The results at Rennes provide the most successful picture yet received in this war of a (railroad) yard neatly and completely put out of service. The effect of the (previous) Sotteville attack is probably hardly less serious.

In the view of this writer, who is familiar with the railway workings at the yards in Northern France these attacks will force the German High Command to realize for the first time the full effect of the power of the Allied Air forces to hamstring the railway network over a wide area. These two hours' work brought to a complete stop railway working on the main lines of Normandy and Brittany, which will take weeks, if not months, to repair fully. This factor is likely to alter the whole concept of the German ability to hold the Atlantic Coast against an Allied attack [invasion?] Similarly, its success should be fully understood by those responsible for Allied plans. The lesson to be learnt is that a skillful and heavy attack, if directed to the right points, can tie up a whole railway system for days and completely cut off an area.

This effect could not be repeated in the Ruhr, Northern Rhein or Belgian areas, where alternative routes are manifold, but in France or Italy, where the railway system is less dense, its possibility has been proved and clearly capable of repetition.

By these two attacks, the U.S. Army Air Corps has proved what has been maintained as impractical by many since 1939.

## Quality Training, Quality Student

By Milton Novinsky, Link trainer crew chief

About Oct 1944 a pilot I had not seen before came into my Link Trainer room for his one hour instruction. As was my custom, I always had a brief conversation to get to know one another and relax any tensions.

I looked at him and casually asked if he had received his absentee voting ballot yet? (It was Franklin Roosevelt's last hoorah.)

My student replied "I am too young to vote!"

I am still in shock at hearing that reply. A military man, old enough to fight for his country, but not old enough to vote?

He signed his name - Lt. Burns Roper

About 30 years ago, a marketing woman came to my office and asked to interview me for travel related purposes. When I glanced at her letter of introduction, Elmo Roper Organization, I said nothing and asked her to proceed. Upon conclusion of the question and answer routine she asked me to sign her interview. I signed as follows:

To Bud Roper, the youngest pilot I instructed in the 306th Bomb Group

S/Sgt Milton Novinsky, Link Trainer Crew Chief

However long it takes for a marketing person to present her summary of interviews to her office, several days passed.

Then one morning, my wife answered our business phone, she being unaware of my interview with the Elmo Roper Organization. Ruth turns to me and says that someone is on the phone and demands to speak to his Link Trainer Instructor.

Bud Roper asked me to come to New York City and to have drinks and dinner with him at the Wings Club to view a painting commissioned by Elmo Roper to commemorate Bud's B-17 near disaster when it lost power and almost crashed.

Bud Roper was a gentleman.

A BRIEF ADENDUM There must have been many of us at Thurligh in the fall of 1944 who were too young to vote. This editor is one of those who had to answer to the Squadron CO as to why he had not asked for absentee ballots. And like many, I had completed a 34-mission tour and was back in the States before I had my 21st birthday. (My five sons have trouble accepting the reality of my age in combat).

## Dues? No! Gifts? Yes!

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  
P.O. Box 13362  
Des Moines, IA 50310

DATE \_\_\_\_\_