

306th Echoes



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The Bledsoe Preservation Award to be presented to Ralph and Daphne

The East Anglia Air War Project announced recently that the first two George Bledsoe Preservation Awards will be presented to Ralph and Daphne Franklin in May 2008. The Bledsoe Award is presented to those individuals who have made significant contributions to the preservation of WWII military aviation history. Three Bledsoe Awards are scheduled for presentation in 2008: one to a 381st veteran and two to the Franklins in the 306th Bomb Group Association.

The Franklins have won this prestigious award for their work in creating the 306th Bomb Group Memorial Museum at Thurleigh and their continuing efforts to expand the exhibition platform and bring ever increasing numbers of visitors to the museum. They have single-handedly created one of the finest WWII museums in England and have brought continuing distinction to the memory of the 306th Bomb Group and its service in wartime Britain. The two awards will be presented by Professor Vernon L. Williams at Thurleigh in May 2008 when the Goodbye Piccadilly Farewell Tour of the Mighty Eighth Air Force will spend the day with the Franklins in the Bedford area (see page three for more details about the tour). Please join the East Anglia Air War Project in congratulating Ralph and Daphne on a most extraordinary achievement.

The George Bledsoe Award is named in honor of George Bledsoe who devoted his lifetime to service to mankind, first as a B-24 Liberator pilot flying dangerous low level night missions with the Carpetbagger operations in England and Scotland during World War II. Later as a teacher to thousands of students, Bledsoe became a role model for living life with integrity and a commitment to excellence. His legacy and his memory continues to live on in the lives of his students where Bledsoe made a lasting impact.



Ralph and Daphne Franklin visiting the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB during the Dayton Reunion in October 2007. The familiar World War II control tower in the background brings memories of Thurleigh to mind.

2008 REUNION SAVE THE DATE

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Peabody Hotel  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
October 29-November 2, 2008

Jim Phelan, Reunion Chairman

See preliminary 2008  
reunion details on page 7  
and on the 306th website.



### Local Flier Lost In Fortress Raid

Emil O. Rasmussen Jr., lieutenant in the army air corps and copilot of a Flying Fortress, has been missing since the costly daylight raid over Schweinfurt, Germany, October 14, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Emil O. Rasmussen, 2417 NE 11th avenue, have been advised by the war department.

His parents also have received a letter from his former commanding officer, a captain with whom Rasmussen flew until two weeks before the Schweinfurt attack. This officer counseled the Rasmussens not to lose hope because parachutes were seen descending from their son's disabled plane. Rasmussen had participated in 20 operational flights over Europe. Rasmussen is 24, a graduate of Grant high school in 1936. He attended Oregon State college for two years. An excellent skier, he is widely known in Northwestern winter sports circles.

Receiving his commission in January, he flew to Africa, then to England and became a first lieutenant in August.

His twin brothers, Howard L. and Harold R., also are in the army.

## Visit the 306th Website

[www.306bg.org](http://www.306bg.org)

As this issue of *Echoes* goes to press, the first batch of 306th history content is being uploaded to the new 306th Bomb Group website. The interns are working on a variety of digitizing projects for the web and for the April and July issues of *Echoes*. Much needs to be done before the semester closes and the students return to their homes for the summer (see page three for more about the new 306th interns). So it is a busy place in the digital lab in the History Department these days.

For those of you who use the computer for email or for web surfing, you now have access to a new resource for viewing 306th BG historical materials and perhaps more importantly, you can now begin to contribute your own memorabilia, history, and photographs to the 306th Digital Project. You can send your materials to the 306th Digital Project at Abilene Christian University where the 306th interns will digitize them and add them to the 306th website. You can donate your materials to the 306th Historical Collection or you can request the return of your originals after they have been digitized. Mail your stories, scrapbook items, photographs, records or documents to: Dr. Vernon Williams at ACU Box 28203, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX 79699-8203.

For those of you who do not use the computer, go to your local library, ask a neighbor, or get your children or grandchildren to show you the website. You will be glad you did.

Click on the navigation buttons on the home page ([www.306bg.org](http://www.306bg.org)) to see all the new 306th items that are available and also to view what is under construction and scheduled to be digitalized soon. One of the first things you will notice is that both of the *Echoes* issues produced at ACU are up and available to view by anyone in the world. As each new issue is produced, it will first appear on the web while the hard-copy version is printed and mailed to the membership.

Scroll down the home page and click on the Photo Albums button. The first of a series of virtual photograph albums drawn from the 306th Historical Collection is up and ready for everyone to view. The photo albums to appear first include: 1) the Rose of York, 2) King George VI visits Thurleigh, 3) Thurleigh and the Bedford Red Cross, and 4) the 2007 Reunion Photograph Collection.

The next section scheduled to appear will be the mission reports. Keep checking back on the website to see what is currently available. We are starting with 1942 and will digitize the earliest materials first.



The citizens of Schweinfurt, Germany and American 8th Air Force veterans have erected this monument to German civilians who died on the ground and to American air crews who lost their lives in the air above Schweinfurt. This moving tribute is located in the center of Schweinfurt. See Target Schweinfurt on page 4.

Photograph by Vernon L. Williams



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**306th Echoes** is published four times annually: January, April, July and October. *Echoes* is mailed free of charge to all known addresses of 306th personnel, 1942-1945. Contributions in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer.

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Handles all changes of address, current records, obituaries, and correspondence.  
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 Bryan Harrell (Michael Roskovitch Intern)  
 Katie Ritter (Thurman Schuller Intern)  
 Courtney Ketchersid (Peg Haapa Intern)  
 Jacob Peterson (Judge Donald Ross Intern)

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

Support the 306th BG Association

## President's Corner

Happy New Year!



It has been a very productive few months for the 306th. All of the 306 historical records were transferred to Dr. Williams at Abilene Christian University where they are being digitalized. As the work is completed, the original records will be forwarded to the Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia. We are updating our membership list (see below). Dr. Williams and students published their first issue of *Echoes* and posted it on our web site: [www.306bg.org](http://www.306bg.org).

Planning continues for next reunion on Oct. 29- November 2 in Little Rock Arkansas. See the preliminary program on page 7 and marvel at the exciting plans underway for the reunion. At our next annual meeting the Board of Directors will propose charging membership dues rather than relying solely on contributions (see more about this on page 5 in this issue).

The 306th depends on volunteers to achieve its goals. I especially want to acknowledge the contributions of Judy and Bernie Hermley (updated our membership lists), Marty Lenaghan (safely transferred our records from Kalamazoo to Abilene), Joel La Bo (prepared financial records), Jim Phelan (reunion planning), Albert McMahan (assumed the duties of secretary and acts as liaison between the 306<sup>th</sup> BGA and the 306<sup>th</sup> BG Historical Project in Abilene), and Dr. Williams and student interns (published *Echoes*, scanned records, and worked on our new website).

**THE 306TH NEEDS YOUR HELP** As mentioned in the October issue, in order to manage our mailing expenses, we must maintain a current membership list. We rely on vets and their families to keep us up to date. Please fill out the form on page 3 and mail to Judy Hermley as soon as possible. **If you wish to continue to receiving the *Echoes*, we need to hear from you by this April 1st.** Thank you for your cooperation.

As the new year is upon us, I wish you and your families the best for 2008.

Joe Conroy  
 President

## Obituaries

Please send the Association details of deaths or complete obituaries if you have them. Please send obituary information to the secretary:

Albert McMahan  
 272 N. Peachtree St.  
 Norcross, GA 30071  
 anmcmahan@bellsouth.net

#### Notices Received:

Eugene J. Blaskowski, 369<sup>th</sup>, died 3 May 2005  
 Nathaniel J. Combs, 423<sup>rd</sup>, died 7 January 2006  
 Horace J. Corigliano, 369<sup>th</sup>, died 2007  
 Roy E. Connally, 367<sup>th</sup>, died November 2007  
 Vernon T. Crowton, 369<sup>th</sup>, died 16 January 2007  
 Stephen J. Femino, 368<sup>th</sup>, died 2 July 2004  
 Ed Hennessy, 369<sup>th</sup>, died 2 February 2008  
 Jack R. Martin, 423<sup>rd</sup>, died 21 July 2007  
 Alden D. Maynes, 368<sup>th</sup>, died 21 May 2005  
 Denis McCarthy, 368<sup>th</sup>, died 28 December 2007  
 Frederick J. McGovern, 367<sup>th</sup>, died 25 July 2005  
 Gerald F. McGrath, 367<sup>th</sup>, died 25 October 2006  
 William J. Pitblado, 367<sup>th</sup>, died 25 January 2007,  
 and his wife Bonnie, died 5 October 2005  
 Robert A. Price, 367<sup>th</sup>, died 25 January 2007  
 Meyer Satinsky, 449<sup>th</sup>, died 11 January 2006  
 William F. Smatlak, 368<sup>th</sup>, died 1 June 2007  
 Harold J. Vensel, 423<sup>rd</sup>, died March 2007  
 William H. Wear, 367<sup>th</sup>, died 28 December 2006  
 George C. Wollensslegel, 204<sup>th</sup>, died April 2003

#### Obituaries Received:

- **Nanthiel J. Combs**, 423rd ground crew, died 7 January 2006. He leaves his wife Norma, 9c, 12gc.
- **SSgt. Vincent Fredrick**, 369th engineer gunner, (Lester Kearney's crew) died 30 November 2007 in Parma, OH, where he had lived for 55 years. He was past president and owner of a mechanical/electrical engineering firm. Fredrick completed a 35-mission tour. In 2005 he published his memories of his missions, "Satan's Lady". He left 3c, 7gc, 1ggc.
- **Arthur F. Glynn**, 369th copilot (Alfred Johansen's crew) and later pilot of his own crew joined the 306th in June 1944 and flew 35 missions over Germany. He died 26 March 1962 in Buenos Aires, Argentina where he was a Parker Pen official. His body was returned to Janesville, WI for burial. Glynn was survived by his wife Catherine, 1d, and 1s.
- **Harley C. Hutsell**, 368<sup>th</sup> pilot, died 12 August 2005 in Edmond, OK. He completed his 34 mission tour in October 1944. In 1988, he retired as executive vice president of a regional OK coffee company. He leaves his wife, Nelda, 3s, 3d, 13gc, 1ggc.
- **Alfred P. Johansen**, 369<sup>th</sup> pilot of the famous "Steady Hedy" that flew 139 missions died 25 May 2007. His first mission was 13 July 1944 and he completed his 35th mission 26 November 1944.
- **Gerald F. McGrath**, 367<sup>th</sup> bomb sight mechanic, died 25 October 2006 in Cedar Rapids, IA. He managed A&P grocery stores and was city assessor of Cedar Rapids. He leaves his wife Mary, 2s, 7gc, 9ggc.
- **LtCol Archie L. Nesbitt**, 367<sup>th</sup> pilot died 18 August in Overland Park, KA. He leaves his wife, Nadyne, 4s, 4gc, 2ggc, 4 step sons, 7gc, 4ggc.
- **Wallace T. Peckham**, 369<sup>th</sup> copilot (Edgar Smith crew) died 8 November 2006. He completed 27 missions. He owned and operated Peckham Insurance Agency of Augusta, KA for 57 years before retiring to Houston. Peckham's wife Georgia died 27 February 2007. They leave 3c, 4gc, 4ggc.
- **William F. Smatlak**, 368<sup>th</sup> togglier, died 1 Jun 2007 in Brightwaters, NY. He completed 35 missions. William retired from Grumman Aerospace Corp. with 49 years service. He is survived by 1s, 1d.
- **John W. Stright**, 369th waist gunner (Harvey Ryder crew), died 5 August 2005 in Murrysville, PA. He went to Robert Morris Business School, Pittsburgh and worked in banks for 35 years retiring as a tax officer. He leaves his wife, Marjorie, 3c.
- **Colin L. Valentine**, 368<sup>th</sup> copilot for six missions over Germany and pilot on the Casey Jones Project, died 3 August 2007 in Maryville, TN. He was a graduate of the Univ. of Tennessee and an Alcoa employee for 37 years. He leaves his wife Adrienne, 1s, 2gc.



The 306th Interns, front row, left to right: Bryan Harrell, Erin Shilcutt, Lindsay Klar. Back row, left to right: Luke Truxal, Courtney Ketchersid, Katie Ritter, and Jacob Peterson.  
Photograph by Vernon L. Williams

## The Interns

The 306th BG interns are working actively for the Association now that the spring semester has been in earnest. Each intern has been assigned an internship named for a 306th or Red Cross veteran (see October 2007 *Echoes* for details).

- Luke Truxal (Russell Strong Intern)
- Erin Shilcutt (Leland Kessler Intern)
- Lindsay Klar (Maynard H. Smith Intern)
- Bryan Harrell (Michael Roskovitch Intern)
- Katie Ritter (Thurman Schuller Intern)
- Courtney Ketchersid (Peg Haapa Intern)
- Jacob Peterson (Judge Donald Ross Intern)

Luke Truxal serves as the overall manager of the 306th Project and oversees lab operations. He also writes and produces content for *Echoes* and the 306th website. Erin Shilcutt is director of photographic services for all 306th operations. Lindsay Klar and Courtney Ketchersid writes for *Echoes* and works on the digital project. Bryan Harrell focuses on the digital project with expertise in video and digital production. Katie Ritter is working in a variety of assignments for *Echoes* and the web. Jacob Peterson is the assistant webmaster and is responsible for building web content and organizing the 306th website.

The interns are now working on the April and July issues of *Echoes* and growing the website as fast as they can get items digitized. See page 7 for other reunion plans for interns at Little Rock.

## Goodbye Piccadilly Tour still has five places left—now more affordable. . . .

Professor Vernon Williams is donating his services to lead a tour to World War II England benefiting the East Anglia Air War Project in Abilene. The East Anglia Project hosts the new 306th BG Historical Project and is responsible for many of the services provided free to the 306th Bomb Group Association. Fundraisers such as the *Goodbye Piccadilly Tour* make it possible for students and faculty to have the equipment and resources to produce the *Echoes* that you are reading now, the new 306th website, and to digitize the historical records of the 306th Bomb Group's service in World War II.

The tour has been redesigned to allow for a more affordable trip to England for veterans and families who want to travel with Dr. Williams and visit the airfields up close and personal. You can choose from a two-option tour menu, one that would be a 6-Day Tour and another that would be a 10-Day Tour plan. The original four star hotels have been replaced with Holiday Inn and Ramada, the large tour buses have been replaced with a minibus, the London and Dover venues have been deleted (you can still do those in a pre-tour arrangement), and the tour now focuses on the original airfield schedule. For those electing to do the 10-Day Tour plan, the airfield itinerary segment is exactly the same as the old itinerary—with the London and Dover venues removed.

If you are a traveler or just want to be a part of the special tour opportunities at Thurleigh, Bedford, and across East Anglia in May, contact Dr. Williams (325-674-2150) or the tour company (toll free 1-800-533-9001) for details. At press time, the tour has five places left to fill. So if you are interested, act today.

*Goodbye Piccadilly* is no ordinary tour. For six years Professor Williams has been working his way across East Anglia, into the rural villages and towns where the Americans arrived long ago to mount an air campaign against the best that Hitler had to offer. And for a time, England became home for them. Over sixty years have passed and much has changed but British families have never forgotten their "Yanks" and continue to remember those days so long ago. This is certainly true of villages and towns near the old base at Thurleigh. The 306th BG is still very much on the minds of those who are old enough to remember.

Across East Anglia there are concrete runways, asphalt perimeter tracks, and scores of Nissen huts and buildings lingering on the landscape much like the ruins from other eras in human history. Soon these WWII airfields will disappear but the memory of the Yanks and those perilous times will never fade from the memories of the children of the war, now growing old themselves.

Tour participants will walk the ruins, see the wartime world of East Anglia, meet the British families up close and personal, enjoy special celebrations, take in the hospitality of village communities, remember those who never came home, and see for ourselves the continuing spirit of the British people. It will be an extraordinary adventure, no mere travel itinerary. This will be a journey that will change your life forever.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL 306TH BOMB GROUP MEMBERS

Continuing the directive of last year's Board requesting the status of all members, whether living or deceased, please fill out the form below for each 306<sup>th</sup> BG Association member in your family. The cost of sending *ECHOES* has continued to increase so we need to update our mailing lists.

Please fill out and sign the information sheet below. Send the completed sheet to Judy Hermley, indicating whether the member is alive or deceased. If we do not receive this information by 1 April 2008, we must reluctantly cease sending you the *ECHOES*.

Fill out the following information, sign and mail to:  
Judy Hermley – 5314 Bob Sikes Blvd., Jay, FL 32565

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (include area code) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am ALIVE and doing well. Please continue the *ECHOES*.

\_\_\_\_\_ This member was deceased on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Member or Survivor)

(If there are any changes in the future, please let Judy know)



Jimmy Stewart visits Tibenham one last time. After leaving the Thurleigh/Bedford area, the tour will visit all of Stewart's airfield assignments plus a lot more.

The new 306th PX  
is coming....

~~~~~  
Watch for it in
Echoes and on
the website.

www.306bg.org

Target Schweinfurt: Foes by Fate, Friends by Choice

By Vernon L. Williams
Abilene Christian University

The train slowed as it came into the station. Looking out the window, I could see people waiting on the platform and the signs hanging above their heads that simply said, Schweinfurt. It was a name that I had heard all my life growing up in an Air Force family and during the many oral interviews that I had conducted over the years. These were the tales of the raids over Schweinfurt and the tragedy that played out there in the skies overhead. I had heard no German stories. What was it like as the bombers reached the outskirts of Schweinfurt where everyone knew what was going to happen? What about the bombing and the death and destruction? What lingering memories remained of those days and how do the Germans remember those times and the men who fell from the sky? I had come to Schweinfurt for answers to these questions but the people and their answers surprised me.

I found people who loved and appreciated Americans, a wonderful thing in today's world. Georg and Ruth Shafer were young during those WWII days but they live with memories as vivid as if they were made just yesterday. Georg's father owned the largest ball bearing factory in Schweinfurt and Ruth's father was part of management. The Shafers are but two of the survivors of the Schweinfurt raids that I interviewed during my visit there. These German survivors and the American crewmen who flew Schweinfurt missions have joined together to form a lasting bond of friendship and peace.

In the early morning hours of 14 October 1943 men made their way through the darkness at Thurleigh, waking up crews while others prepared breakfast or readied the briefing for the crews who would fly the mission this morning. Six hundred fifty miles to the east, citizens in Schweinfurt were getting ready for another day of work. When the sun broke over the horizon, the prospect of a clear sky and good weather brought foreboding to everyone on the ground. They each knew what that could mean. In bad weather the bombers did not come but today the weather would be on the side of the Allies. The mission to Schweinfurt would be no ordinary mission. The mission to Schweinfurt would later become known as "Black Thursday" or the "Second Schweinfurt Mission" and after over a half century, 14 October is still the subject of intense conversation in Germany and the United States.

Back at Thurleigh the weather was not so good. Heavy cloud cover reached down to the ground with the visibility less than 1,000 yards on the runway. At 1025 hours eighteen aircraft took off. Major Robert C. Williams, Group Operations Officer, described what happened next: "The takeoff and join-up were accomplished under extremely adverse conditions. . . . The rendezvous with the lead Group was complicated by a lack of identifying flares from that Group [92nd BG], poor navigation in the attempt to follow the rendezvous line and climb path, and by the flak that there were too many Groups attempting to rendezvous in the same general area. The low group [305th BG] completely failed to make the rendezvous, which exposed the tactical formation to more than their share of attacks. A 360-degree turn at the enemy coast caused much difficulty in our formation, resulting in two abortions. The route over enemy territory was flown substantially as ordered, although small towns with flak batteries were not ordered. Opposition was extremely effective."

The mission was uneventful until the P-47 fighter escort turned back for refueling. "Between the Rhine and the target, the formation was attacked by 300 enemy aircraft, chiefly FW190s, ME110s, ME109s, JU88s, and a few DO217s." In the 306th formation, three aircraft aborted with fifteen continuing the mission. During the enemy attack



"BLACK THURSDAY," painted for the Boeing Company by Art Schultz. 300 B-17s attacked ballbearing plants at Schweinfurt, 14 October 1943. When fuel-short P-47 escorts broke away, hundreds of Focke-Wulfs and Messerschmitts attacked the bomber formations, shooting down 60. Captain Charles T. Schoolfield, leading the 306th bomb Group in this B-17F, completed the mission. Gunner T/Sgt. R.J. Conley lost a hand when struck by a 20mm shell, but subsequently shot down an attacker. See story on the second Schweinfurt mission on pages 4-5.
Photograph courtesy the Boeing Company

between the Rhine and Schweinfurt, ten aircraft were shot down, primarily with rockets. The air battle was intense and despite maintaining a tight formation on the approach to target, there were so many swarming attackers, the 306th gunners could not keep them at bay. As the formation approached Schweinfurt, the enemy fighters broke off. Only five aircraft reached the target area so these crews "attached themselves to the 92nd Group and bombed with them."

On the ground at Schweinfurt, everyone made for the air raid shelters. Dieter Schorn, son of the Lutheran minister, quickly left the parsonage near the church and joined his neighbors in the shelters. Elsewhere the gun positions made ready to defend the city. In just moments the center of the city was deserted and quiet, save for the blaring klaxtons announcing the approaching American bombers. Soon the sound of the approaching bombers could be heard and the bombing run began.

Despite the terrible losses on the approach to target, the remaining aircraft made good their bomb runs and "bombardiers reported a good concentration of bombs in the target area. Strike photographs show some direct hits on the aiming point." On the ground Shafer's ball bearing factory suffered significant damage and throughout the city, the bombs reigned down on the industrial targets and in the surrounding neighborhoods in the center city. The bombers turned homeward while the Germans below emerged to find their city on fire and debris everywhere. Dieter ran home to find the parsonage in ruins—so much so that it would not be rebuilt. Today there is an empty space where the home once stood. The nearby church suffered major damage but soon

continued on page 5



DONATIONS FOR THE 306TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Those who are able are asked to make an annual contribution to keep everything running smoothly in our Association. There are no dues—so your gift is needed to support the 306th operations. Your gift is tax deductible.

Name _____

Street and No. _____

City, State & Zip _____

Telephone No. _____ 306th Unit _____

Email Address _____

Send to:
Joel LaBo, Treasurer
306th Bomb Group Association
875 S. Worth
Birmingham, Michigan 48009

_____ Date

INTERROGATION FORM

SCHWEINFURT 10/14/43 309 1421 A/C Number 782 Letter n Date 10/14/43

Bomb Load 6 x 1000 H.E. Incend. Position in Formation

Time Took Off 10:15 Time Landed 17:55

1. WAS THIS TO BE A TARGET? Yes No

Friendly A/C in any kind of distress? (Give position, time, altitude, full details) See attached sheet

2. TARGET ATTACHED:

Primary Time: 1445

Alternate Height: 22500

Last Resort Heading: 45°

Duration Bomb Run: 40 sec

3. Number of BOMBS dropped on target: 6 Jettisoned: Returned: Abortive:

4. Observed RESULTS OF BOMBING: (For this plane or others)

Own Bombs: burst at 9200 feet

Other Bombing: light in town center - fires & large smoke col. at 2000 FEET in target area

5. Any Photographs taken? Yes No Any Micks: Yes No Number boxes dropped: Number boxes returned:

6. GROUND TARGETS ATTACHED BY GUNFIRE AND RESULTS:

7. ROUTE: (If different than ordered) (If ABORTIVE give time, place, height of turn; reason for returning early; and disposition of bombs) as briefed over Germany

8. WEATHER: (If it affected mission) clear over target

9. FLAK: Encountered on way out, at target and on way home.

Time	Place	Height of A/C	Type (light, heavy), intense, moderate or slight.	Color of bursts	Location of bursts in relation to A/C	accuracy

Intermittent shower-out route starting at Antwerp - slight not too acc. Target mod- black very acc. all right in the town

Crew observations about flak: 2 red bursts just at French coast

border in - fighters missed ground area behind

10. ONLY FLAK A/C: 250-300 plus (estimated total number of 2/4 seen) (Type)

14:30 just before taken - near Ludwigshafen (Location and range of flight)

The E/A shot rockets. The shooting machine gun to rear - most attacks came from direction of 4 & 8 o'clock - E/A cut up. Yellow solid black, silver, yellow & green, yellow nose (Color, markings, etc. of E/A)

normal massive action (Our defensive action)

CLAIMS	DESTROYED	REPAIRED	DAMAGED
	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

(Fill out immediately separate CLAIM form for each claim.)

11. FIGHTER SUPPORT: good going in, none seen coming out (would miss late coming out)

12. OBSERVATIONS: Give TIME, PLACE, HEIGHT (List any observations of military importance such as balloons, d. coys, dummies, camouflage, smoke screens, enemy signals; activity at airbases, ports, waterways, roads, railroad yards; concentrations of vehicles, troops, vessels; landmarks, new enemy installations, Ludwigshafen smoke screens, several unidentified)

13. OBSERVED - GIVE SUCH ACTION IN OUR OWN AIRCRAFT (If our A/C lost, state whether by E/A action, accident or undetermined cause) observed - very much action in our own aircraft in an effort to break through smoke screen

14. INJURIES TO CREW: (Give name, position in A/C, type of injury, how received, time and TIME) Hand blown off by 20mm - hit flak suit & exploded. R.J. Conley - waist-gunner & upper l.P.

15. DAMAGE TO A/C: (Specify) numerous flak hole, one brush by

16. TECHNICAL FAILURES: rockets

17. CREW COMMENTS: (any unusual incidents? any suggestions?) R.J. Conley - shot down fighter after hand blown off. Need fighter support against rocket ships.

S-2 OFFICER: R. Skalak TIME OF LISTED: _____

Above: The original interrogation forms used during debriefing of the Schoolfield crew soon after their return from Schweinfurt. Notice the detail regarding the flak during the flight into target and the comments about the harrowing combat with enemy aircraft on the approach to Schweinfurt. Almost as an afterthought, the debriefing officer wrote: "R.J. Conley—shot down fighter after hand blown off." Mission Reports, 14 October 1943, 306th BG Historical Collection

Below: Charles Schoolfield with his original crew. On the Schweinfurt raid, he flew lead with some changes to crew personnel for the mission (see above for the Schweinfurt crew makeup). Front row, left to right: Joseph Stoner, eng; Bruce Hardy, bt; Bert Perlmutter, wg; Robert Conley, wg. Back row, l to r: Henry Sommers, tg; Robert Fallow, cp; Charles Schoolfield, p; John Mazanek, n; and Jack Kelly, b. Inset: Robert Conley, wg from an earlier crew photograph..



Schweinfurt as it appears today where little remains of the wartime damage. Both American and Schweinfurt survivors routinely gather together at reunions in the United States and in Schweinfurt to celebrate peace and a respect for one another.

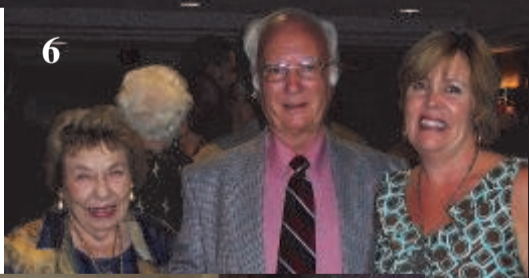
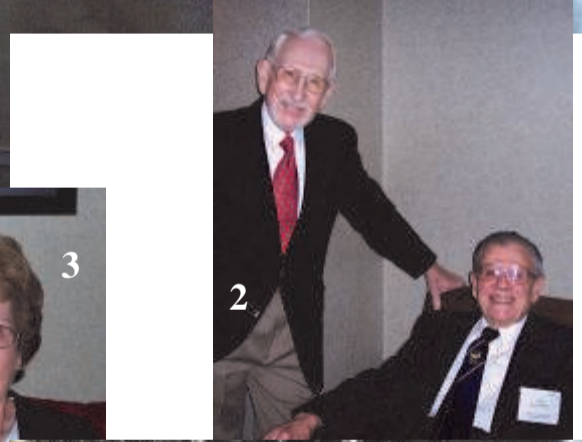
Board to Consider Dues at Little Rock Meeting

At the annual reunion meeting in Little Rock in October, officers and directors will consider a proposal to charge dues for membership in the Association. The Board is looking at ways to improve the financial stability of the Association and allow 306th operations to continue into the next decade. Directors suggest that with a modest amount set for membership dues, together with annual donations that have traditionally been received from the membership, the 306th BG Association will be better equipped to offer continued *Echoes* publication, reunion activities for veterans and their families, and preservation of the history of the bomb group.

Members who have comments or suggestions can send them to our secretary, Albert McMahan, 272 N. Peachtree St., Norcross, GA 30071. His email is ancmahan@bellsouth.net.



Here is the last batch of 2007 Dayton Reunion photographs. A great visit to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB to see the Memphis Belle undergoing renovation and many other things. Small groups on this page include the following: 1) Rocky & Ruth Rockwell 2) Albert McMahan & Tony Santoro 3) Melvin & Delka Cooper 4) Rocky Rockwell 5) 306th men lining up to tour inside the B-17 at the Air Force Museum at Dayton 6) Peg Haapa, Ralph Franklin, Karen Puleo 7) Dick Winters, Warren Cole, Frank Cole 8) Wayne Stellish 9) Pat & Joe Conroy, "Em" Christianson 10) Nancy Sealy, Hugh Phelan, Anne House, Caroline Poythress 11) Gypsy & Nicholas Hoolko.



Rocky Rockwell has big surprise for 2007 banquet crowd

Working under a cloak of secrecy, Rocky Rockwell planned to cap off his presidency of the 306th Bomb Group Association with a grand surprise at the annual reunion banquet held in October in Dayton, Ohio. On Saturday evening Rocky closed off the banquet room while he and a band of helpers set up the banner and arranged the surprise for the waiting diners. Everyone knew something was up but few knew about the photographic mural that waited for them inside. Rocky had spent months selecting the photographs, arranging the layout, and working with a graphics artist to get the mural just right.

When the doors opened everyone flooded into the room and were amazed at the sight that greeted them. The history of the 306th Bomb Group in pictures stretched across the wall for forty feet. What a grand gift to the 306th BG! For those of you who did not make it to Dayton, the mural is reproduced at right. Rocky sent the banner to Thurleigh where Ralph and Daphne are working it into the exhibition plan in the museum.



Top: Rocky Rockwell, president of the 306th BGA, 2006-2007; Bottom: Rocky during World War II; At Right: the commemorative banner unveiled at the 2007 Banquet at Dayton.

Preliminary plans for reunion at Little Rock October 29-November 1, 2008

Jim Phelan, 2008 Reunion Chairman and son of 306th veteran Hugh Phelan, reports on the progress in arranging one of the most exciting and interesting reunion to date. There will many touring and fellowship activities for everyone to enjoy in picturesque Little Rock and for the first time, a number of activities are being organized for 306th BG families—veterans and their second and third generations family members. So bring everyone to Little Rock. As you can see in the preliminary schedule below, Dr. Williams and the 306th BG interns will be teaching some great workshops for families who want to learn how to preserve family papers and photographs. The ACU team will also teach a workshop on how to do family oral history interviews. The workshops will be repeated several times during the reunion. A 306th Cinema room will show 306th films and oral history interviews non-stop during the reunion days—so stop in when you have an hour or so and enjoy. Here is the preliminary reunion schedule. Final schedules, registration forms and hotel reservation information will appear in the April and July issues of *Echoes*.

2008 Reunion at the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas

Tours being planned for Friday and Saturday:

- Little Rock Air Force Base with lunch
- Marlsgate, an old Southern Plantation with lunch
- Bath House Row and fall colors in Hot Springs National Park plus a visit to Garvan Gardens, a Botanical experience with lunch
- Clinton Presidential Library and Museum

Special workshops and activities being planned for Thursday, Friday and Saturday:

- Cinema Room for viewing WWII films and interviews
- How to Do Family History Oral Interviews Workshop
- How to Preserve Family Papers and Photographs Workshop
- Hospitality Room
- Oral History Interview Sign Up for Scheduling Your Interview During the Reunion

Wednesday, 29 October:

- Arrival and Registration at the Peabody

Thursday, 30 October:

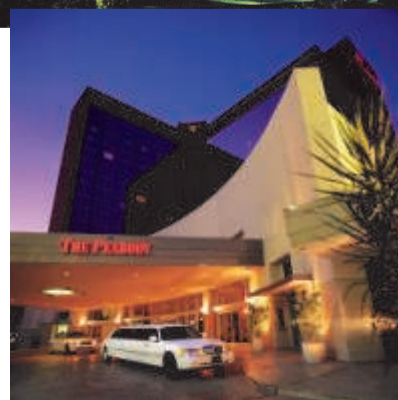
- Continue Arrival and Registration at the Peabody
- Workshops and Oral History Interview Sign up
- Hospitality Room, Cinema Room-WWII Films
- Next Generation Family Meeting & Get-Together
- Buffet Dinner—"Tastes of the South"

Friday, 31 October:

- Continue Arrival and Registration at the Peabody
- Tours
- Workshops and Oral History Interview Sign up
- Hospitality Room, Cinema Room-WWII Films

Saturday, 1 November:

- Memorial Service, Business Meeting
- Tours
- Workshops and Oral History Interview Sign up
- Hospitality Room, Cinema Room-WWII Films
- Banquet Dinner



Museum Notes

Thurleigh Airfield 306th Bomb Group Museum

Museum Exhibits Arrive from Unexpected Places

by Ralph Franklin
Keysoe, England

1944: On the 8th May 1944 2nd Lt. Louis Matichka of the 367th and his crew in B-17G 42-38008 lifted off from Thurleigh at 06.10 with 29 other ships from the group. They departed the English coast 08.45 arriving at the enemy coast 09.28 now at 22000 feet and headed for the target which was Berlin arriving 11.11, and bombs were dropped from 27000 feet.

After losing two engines, and low on fuel, Matichka headed north to Sweden for sanctuary, rather than the briefed route home, which if followed would have landed them in German territory and a POW camp. After breaking cloud at 100 feet over water, too low for the crew to bale out, they ditched in the Baltic Sea just off Vallo. The aircraft broke in two and quickly sank into 118 feet of water where it still lies today. Swedish fishing boats picked up the crew who remained interned in Sweden until the end of the war.

2004 Moving on 60 years, I received a call from Sweden, the caller was Magnus Anderson asking if he could make arrangements to visit our museum. I agreed to meet him at Cambridge and transport him to Thurleigh. During his extended visit I was both amazed and delighted when he informed me he was a diver and that he and his team had recovered items from Matichka's aircraft which he hoped we would accept as exhibits for the museum. We were quite overwhelmed. The big problem would be transporting them. This was overcome a few weeks later when a group of visitors arrived. On relating this story to them, one of the group informed me he was certain he would be able to help, as he had a great friend in Holland, Trevor Bateman who owned a transport business. I contacted Trevor who said he would be delighted to help. The next major hurdle to overcome was convincing the British Home Office the gun was no longer capable

of shooting anything or anyone again, this was finally achieved. Eventually I received an e-mail from Trevor, stating the shipment had been picked up in Sweden and should be arriving in the next week or so. We had been advised from Sweden that we would receive a call to confirm delivery date and time, this turned out to be 9th June 2005. The transport arrived at the airfield with a large heavy container expertly made for the purpose. With the help of on site staff and vehicle the treasure was soon at the museum. This was when the fun really began. Russ and June Strong were staying with us at this time, which was fortunate, as we had a three hour struggle to remove the items from the container. The struggle finally revealed a .50 calibre machine gun, from the left side waist position of the plane, a section of the pilot's instrument panel, and a pair of binoculars complete with case. The photograph shows these treasures quite well, as displayed on a base I constructed myself. This particular exhibit continues to be of great interest to our visitors.

Dec. 2007 I received a call from Sweden, yes it was Magnus, he was coming to London for a few days and would like to visit the museum. Again it was a question of transport, this time I agreed to meet him at Bedford train station. He arrived with his brother in law Olof, they each had their little sons with them, delightful little chaps. We had a wonderful day with them which included lunch at the Falcon Inn, a well known hostelry used by many of you during your relaxation time off base. Knowing this made the occasion even more interesting for our Swedish friends. Magnus informed us he now has a new boat, and hopes to renew his diving expeditions next year. Who



The Franklins hosted visitors from Sweden in December 2007. Magnus Anderson was responsible for the undersea excavation of the artifacts from aircraft 42-38008.

Top, left to right: Daphne Franklin, Ralph Franklin, Magnus Anderson and his son, Magnus's brother-in-law Olof Osterburg and his son.

Middle: Magnus, with a lovely smile, kneeling beside the display.

Bottom: A close shot of the items on the display base mentioned. This photograph was taken earlier in 2007.



knows, we may get more interesting treasures to add to our already varied collection? ✈