



306th patch

306th Echoes

Educating and Communicating



B-17 Flying Fortress

Destination: Savannah, Georgia

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum Here We Come!



Characterized as “One of the World’s Most Powerful Museum Experiences,” the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia, is the site of the 2019 reunion for the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association (BGHA) and the Second Schweinfurt Association (SSMA), 7 thru 10 November. During this time, reunion attendees will have an opportunity to spend two days exploring the museum’s 90,000 square foot facility.

Established in 1996, the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is the culmination of a 1983 vision of Major General Lewis Lyle, a B-17 pilot and veteran of over 70 missions. With a committee of like-minded individuals, Major Lyle envisioned a museum that would focus on the history of the Eighth Air Force in World War II, ensuring the stories of sacrifice, courage, character, and patriotism of the men and women who helped defeat Nazi aggression and the German Luftwaffe would be preserved. The only museum in the world dedicated solely to telling the stories of the Eighth

(continued on page 3)

Ralph Franklin, 306th Museum Curator Dies



Ralph Franklin, founder and curator of the 306th Bombardment Group Museum at Thurleigh, England, passed away 24 March 2019, at the age of 87. Following the 2015 death of his

wife, Daphne, his own health began to decline dramatically. By mid-2017, he could no longer be available to open the museum to Sunday visitors.

Ralph was the highly respected founder of the 306th Bomb Group Museum located on Thurleigh Airfield, Bedfordshire. By his account, Ralph was a small “lad in knee pants” during World War II and was an avid collector of “war souvenirs” from bullet cases to cigarette packets, a passion that remained with him throughout his life. Living in the village of Keysoe, the center of his attention was the 306th

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Leadership

306th Bomb Group Historical Association

2018 – 2019 Officers

PRESIDENT WILLIAM “BILL” FEESER
bfeeser@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT KEVIN CONANT
kevingconant@me.com

SECRETARY BARBARA NEAL
(For change of address; obituaries; correspondence)
PO BOX 682530; PARK CITY, UT 84068
Mountain Time cell 435-655-1500
barb306neal@gmail.com

TREASURER JENNIFER MINDALA
Checks payable to
“306th Bomb Group Historical Association”
3244 S. Lamar Street, Denver, CO 80227
Mountain Time phone 303-980-9400
jmindala306@gmail.com

ELECTED DIRECTORS (alphabetically)
BRUCE CHASE (exp. 2019)
Director of Membership

DEBORAH CONANT (exp. 2020)
GAILARD “RED” KETCHAM (exp. 2019)
SUE MOYER (exp. 2021)
WAYNE TOLMACHOFF (exp. 2020)

POSITION DIRECTORS
HISTORIAN – CLIFFORD DEETS
(Send memorabilia)
PO BOX 742; BREMERTON, WA 98337
Pacific Time cell 619-405-7132
cldeets@att.net

ECHOES EDITOR – NANCY HUEBOTTER
508 LEE PLACE
PLACENTIA, CA 92870
Pacific Time cell 714-345-3923
nmhuebotter306@gmail.com

2019 REUNION CHAIRMAN – DEBORAH CONANT
Pacific Time cell 408-550-5253
debconant@me.com

PAST PRESIDENT – STEVE SNYDER
Pacific Time cell 562-355-0461
palmsny@gmail.com

WEBMASTER – CHARLES NEAL
Use the “click here” feedback line at the bottom
of the www.306bg.us home page

306th Museum Thurleigh

JEFF HAWLEY
UK Representative
yankee2100@btinternet.com

CLIVE CARROLL
Assistant UK Representative
clivebobcarroll@yahoo.co.uk

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association was determined by the IRS to be a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) as a public charity, effective 24 July 2015.



A Message from 306th BGHA 2017-2019 President Bill Feeser

“Two Museums – Two Amazing Memories”

When visiting the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia, with friends back in 2008, I could not imagine that just eleven years later, as president of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association, I would be writing articles for the storied 306th *Echoes* newsletter. Back then, I only knew that my dad had served in the 367th Squadron of the 306th and enjoyed the hundreds of items he saved, including nearly all of the issues of *Stars and Stripes* and *Yank* magazines that he had read. I remember him saying to me on one occasion, “Bill, I really don’t know what to do with all these papers and magazines.” Today, I know so much more of his service in the Army Air Corps (AAC), having enjoyed friendships with some of the men who were his close friends. Recently, I made contact with a son and a daughter of the Armstrong crew he supported at Thurleigh on 27 January 1943.

Today, the collections he so wisely saved for 60 years in his duty trunk are archived among the thousands of treasures held at the Mighty Eighth Museum. Currently these periodicals are available at the Mighty Eighth Museum as well as on our own website (www.306bg.us) for detailed research and hold the stories and service adventures of those who fought for freedom in the European Theater of Operation (ETO). The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association will return to the museum, the site of our 2019 reunion scheduled for 7 thru 10 November in Savannah, Georgia. Visiting the museum will present a different experience now having enjoyed the deep friendships I have formed with the veterans and their families in the 306th. I plan to make some new wonderful memories when we are there. I do hope that you will find a way to be with us for this unique experience.

The news of the 24 March 2019 passing of our friend, Mr. Ralph Franklin, owner and curator of the 306th Museum at the air base in Thurleigh, England, has brought much sorrow to the 306th BGHA

Family. Other articles in this newsletter will give you more information on Ralph and his wife, Daphne, and their passion for preserving the memory of their service to the 306th. The 306th family deeply mourns his passing and extends sincere condolences to his family in this time of loss. Thankfully, we all have an opportunity to make a donation directly to England for the benefit of the Museum and in celebration of and thanks for Ralph's life and service through the PayPal account ralphmemorial306@gmail.com.

In 2015, a group of 306th veterans, their families, and friends visited the Museum at Thurleigh; my wife, Jackie, and I were honored to be among them. We were touched by the dedication that Museum Curators Ralph and Daphne Franklin gave through the years to preserve the items and records of service housed in the museum. The museum is one of the few remaining buildings on the original airfield, now the Bedford Autodrome. With the generosity of Jonathan Palmer, Chief Executive of the Bedford Autodrome, the building has not only been preserved, but it is used for keeping those 306th memories alive. In the past year, the museum, due to Ralph's declining health, has been closed. Now, a local group has been formed and with the support and cooperation of Ralph's family, the museum will be reopened seasonally for all to enjoy. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to all who are making this possible (additional details can be found in this newsletter and our secretary's monthly updates). Of particular note is the appointment of Mr. Jeff Hawley as our 306th BGHA UK Representative. Jeff is working closely with the reopening group and is keeping us up-to-date with the progress.

Hope to see you all in Savannah!

Your President,
Bill Feeser

Destination: Savannah, Georgia

(continued from page 1)

Air Force, it is a testimonial to that heroism. It is an unparalleled repository of an important collection that documents the service history and accounts of Americans who experienced the events of World War II. The variety and depth of the exhibits, along with the sheer magnitude of the items on display,

gives museum visitors a sense of how World War II affected those living during that era.

The modern, extensive museum facility educates visitors from the moment they enter the site via the use of exhibits, artifacts, archival materials, and stories. Central to the exhibit is the fully restored Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress, *City of Savannah*, with its fully-operational turrets and radios. The iconic bomber has a long history and is named after a brave crew and the city in which the Mighty Eighth Air Force originated. More than 60,000 hours of labor from a cadre of volunteers, museum interns, engineers, and designers ensured the aircraft was restored to its original combat configuration.



In May 2014, the 306th BGHA donated to the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center at the Mighty Eighth Museum, an historical collection that had been many year in the making. According to information available regarding the museum's research center, the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center is dedicated to promoting research on



Eighth Air Force history and to expanding its priceless collection of artifacts, manuscripts, photographs, rare books, original film footage, and oral histories. As part of the Research Center, the John H. Woolnough Library houses a collection of research material available to the public. Here the public has access to out-of-print and rare books, including all the published Eighth Army Air Force group histories and over one thousand personal accounts, most of which are unpublished and written by Eighth Army Air Force veterans.

Since a complete roster of World War II Eighth Air Force veterans has never existed, the research center is compiling its own list, known as the Veteran's Database. As an on-going project, the database documents a basic service history of participating individuals. Veterans and family members are encouraged to provide the information needed to expand the database.

Featured in the Research Center's Special Collections are personal diaries, correspondence, target and personal photographs, original flight logs, and technical manuals. All materials are carefully stored in a climate-controlled environment that actively protects and conserves the collection.

The oral history collection begun by Major Lyle continues to expand and has been described as the premier collection of oral histories of Eighth Air Force veterans.



The Research Center's artifact collection, with its thousands of three-dimensional objects, allows the researcher to see actual objects used by members of the Eighth Air Force during World War II. Highlights included in this collection range from personal gear to aircraft and weaponry, over 80 hand-painted leather bomber jackets, and prisoner-of-war material. Utilized for both exhibition and research purposes, these artifacts serve as visual reminders of historic events and personal sacrifice.

Researchers may contact the Research Center staff to learn if a specific material is included in the collection. Requests to see material from the special Collections or Artifact Collection will require completing the necessary paperwork and should be submitted a minimum of 7 days prior to visiting the museum. To access the collections, complete the Access Collections form available at <http://www.mightyeighth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Access-to-Collections-Form-2014.pdf>. A picture identification must be presented the day of the visit.



The Chapel of the Fallen Eagles, the site of the 306th BGHA Folded Wings ceremony, was built in 2002 to reflect a Gothic

English chapel. Most impressive features of the chapel include the stained glass windows, all of which have been provided by Eighth Air Force veteran groups or family members.

The Museum's Memorial Garden is dedicated to those who have served in the Eighth Air Force, and pays tribute to those who served in the Eighth Air Force during World War II and subsequent conflicts, and who are being remembered by families, friends, air crews, and others. Included in the Garden is a memorial to the 61 fatalities that included 38 five-year old children who perished on 23 August 1944, when a B-24 bomber crashed in a thunderstorm into Holy Trinity Church of England School in Freckleton, England.

The Museum uses 7,500 historical objects, 9,500 books, 25,000 original photographs, and 10,000 archival documents to honor the past and preserve the legacy and memories of those individuals who survived the worst possible circumstances. Over 26,000 Eighth Air Force personnel who died during World War II for our freedom and another 28,000 who relinquished their liberty as they became POWs are honored by an incomparable historical repository of Eighth Air Force treasures.

To be a part of the experience and to learn more about the 2019 reunion, turn to page 9. The reunion registration form is found on page 12 of this issue of *Echoes*. ■

Ralph Franklin (continued from page 1)

Bomb Group of the United States 8th Army Air Force, which was stationed at the neighboring Thurleigh Airfield from 1942 to 1945. He often visited the 306th personnel at the Thurleigh Airfield, the encounters of which left a long lasting and endearing impression on the young boy.

Immediately after the war when the Airfield became part of the primary flight-test research facility of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Ralph began a life-long career as an electrical maintenance

engineer assigned to Air Traffic Control. Thus, his association with the airfield continued, as did his association with the 306th through the personal relationships he developed with the many American veterans whom he hosted when they returned to visit the scene of their wartime exploits.

Later, when the airfield became a business park, Ralph was able to fulfill his dream when, through the generosity of the resident industrial organization “PalmerSport,” he was offered accommodation in an ex-wartime explosives building to house his growing collection of memorabilia and then go on to create the excellent World War II Museum, which it was to become.

Ralph became the 306th BG representative in England in 1991, and in early 2000, in conjunction with Dr. Jonathan Palmer, began work on establishing a museum at the airfield at Thurleigh to commemorate the 306th Bomb Group.

The museum officially opened on 8 July 2002, with a wide collection of displays and memorabilia, with Ralph and Daphne as the only curators the museum has had. Ralph also contributed regular “Museum Notes” articles to *Echoes* from 2007 through the Summer/Fall 2016 issue, keeping us all abreast of happenings at the museum. A collage of photos of the Franklins at past reunions can be seen on page 32 of the Winter/Spring 2014 issue available online at the 306th BG website www.306bg.us and selecting the *Echoes* tab.

At the 2012 reunion in Savannah, Georgia, Ralph and Daphne were presented with the Thurman Shuller Award, the 306th BGHA’s highest award, recognizing their achievements and their lifetime dedication to the 306th Bombardment Group.

Ralph and Daphne, together attended every 306th Bomb Group Historical Association reunion thru 2013. Due to Daphne’s illness, they were unable to attend the 2014 reunion; due to her death, Ralph did not attend the 2015 reunion. In 2016, accompanied by his grandson, Ralph attended his final reunion.

Ralph’s dedication to his “hobby” has been remarkable, as has his lasting contribution to posterity. Together he and Daphne tended the collection. Now his two sons, together with a group of Ralph’s friends have come together to ensure the museum and its contents will be available to visitors

and will continue to remain a lasting contribution to posterity.

Both Ralph and Daphne will be sorely missed, true friends whose devotion to the 306th BGHA is immeasurable.

We wish to send our heartfelt sympathy to Ralph’s family and friends at this sad time, and as the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association, we will continue to promote the work that Ralph built with the 306th Bombardment Group Museum.

Ralph’s funeral was held Friday, 12 April at St. Mary’s Church Keysoe, just 300 yards from his cottage in which he and Daphne called home for many years.

Thurleigh Museum donations in memory of Ralph can be made directly to England. The family set up a PayPal account for that purpose: ralphmemorial306@gmail.com. ■

From the Editor



Remembering Ralph Franklin

by Nancy M. Huebotter

(Editor’s contact information on page 2)

I did not really know Ralph Franklin well. Initially introduced to him and his wife, Daphne, at the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association Reunion in Washington, D.C. in October 2010, I knew him to be that very gracious, quiet Englishman that served as curator of some museum in England. Back then, I was so naïve and so uneducated regarding the bomb group and the historical organization. After all, I had only found its existence two weeks prior to the reunion while doing a GOOGLE search on my father and his World War II experience.

After my entrée into the group, I became more involved, and each year, at the reunions, Ralph and Daphne’s attendance was greatly anticipated by so many people. Moreover, Ralph always seemed to have never met a stranger; he greeted everyone with an open heart and a friendly smile.

Yet, I certainly did not believe he knew my name; I was just a face he recognized as part of the group. However, that perception changed in 2015 when a group of 306th BGHAers travelled to England. When the motor coach arrived at the museum, Ralph was there to greet us, and as I

exited the vehicle, Ralph gave me a hug and said, "Oh Nancy, you came!"

The museum and its fabulous contents documenting the 306th's time at Thurleigh is beyond words. The site effused history and emotion. The experience was somewhat overwhelming – almost too much to take in.

At some point during our time at the museum and unknown to me, I had cut my hand. Ralph noticed my wound and was quick to offer medical attention. In fact, he noted, he was sure there was a rusty needle some place in the museum collection that he could use if I needed stitches. However, the application of a "plastic," (the English term for bandage or Band-Aid as I was to discover) was all that was warranted.

Ralph, with his love for the museum and dedication to all that it represented, is monumental. His extraordinary desire to ensure that "we never forget" the men of the 306th is unparalleled in the annals of history. It is a legacy he leaves to all those who come after, seeking the stories of the men who called the Thurleigh Airbase their home from 1942 to December 1945.

Thank you, Ralph! Your sharing and caring will continue so that second, third, and fourth generations and beyond can recognize some elements of the cost of freedom. ■

From the Secretary



by Barbara Neal
(Secretary's contact information
on page 2)

GRAVE MARKERS: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ("USVA") will provide a

headstone for veterans at no charge to the applicant. The website that I often use for locating graves via the USVA, <https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/> has tabs at its left side where one can get information for both "Burial and Memorial Benefits" and "Headstones, Markers and Medallions." For those 110 veterans of the 306th Bomb Group that may still be living, or for family members of our valued veterans, please take note of the availability of these government-furnished headstones or markers. Arrangements for setting a government-furnished headstone or marker in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all placement costs are at private expense. Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. Bronze niche markers are also available to mark memorial sites of cremated remains. However, the officials in charge of the private cemetery where it will be placed must approve of the style chosen.

THANKS to all who make tax-deductible donations either by check payable to the "306th Bomb Group Historical Association" mailed to our Treasurer (see page 2 for address), or by using the yellow Donate button at our home-page, www.306bg.us from anywhere. We mail, with no request for a donation, printed *Echoes* issues to our valued WWII-generation members (223 of that generation as of today). I especially thank five very special donors of that WWII-generation, and the nine donors among the 145 *Echoes* mail-recipients who are younger than our esteemed WWII-generation.

TREASURER'S UPDATE: As of 1 April 2019, year-to-date donations total \$2382 from 39 donors, compared to the same date in 2018 of \$2286 from 31 donors. Secretary's observation: that amount from all donors so far in 2019 approximately covers only the annual printing and rising postage for *Echoes* issues for our remaining veterans who I think may still be living and widows who have

Attention Journalist and Non-Journalists:

Do you have an article you would like to submit to *Echoes*? Articles must be submitted in WORD format (.doc or .docx) as an attachment to an eMail. Save all images (photos or graphics) as .jpg or .png files and submit as an eMail attachment. Do not imbed photos in the WORD document. Do not send the document as a .pdf or as a link to another source. For additional information, refer to the Summer/Fall 2018 Editor's column. Submit your articles to:

nmhuebotter306@gmail.com

***Echoes* Article Due Date
for Summer/Fall 2019 Issue
19 November 2019**

shown continued interest in Echoes. This year's donations total to date is thus a prime example of why I remind all – donations are essential if we are to continue to print and mail our *Echoes* newsletter and to continue to improve our website. Those of you 136 *Echoes*-mail-recipients who are younger than our veterans and their widows, and who have for many years received Echoes by mail, and who have never been in touch with me to show any interest in continuing to receive mailed issues, need to be fully aware of all this and respond accordingly.

DULAG WETZLAR, or Dulag Luft Wetzlar: German researcher Dr. Susanne Meinl recently alerted me of plans for a 2021 exhibition. Wetzlar was the initial POW processing and interrogation camp for many airmen as of March 1944. A collection of 173 POW photos found by historian and family genealogist Kurt Spence in 2007 while researching his family at our National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), was later shared with Dr. Meinl. Through her research, she has been able to identify some of those POW photos as apparently having been taken at Dulag Luft Wetzlar. Dr. Meinl advises that the story of the 173 POW photos found at NARA in 2007 will be in the Dulag Wetzlar 2021 exhibition. Sometime this year there will be a "Call for Objects" to be shown in the exhibition. She is working on a concept to make the exhibition, by its structure and language, interesting for Anglo-American visitors. She also plans a special program for foreign visitors and would especially welcome 306th BGHA participants.

FOUR 306th BG airmen had photos included in that collection of 173 POW photos; all were downed 14 February 1945, and all were in the 369th Squadron of the 306th BG:

- STANDLEE, James F. Jr: flight engineer top turret gunner with pilot Boylston B. Lewis (with my uncle)
- HANSON, Raymond C: ball turret gunner with pilot Jack S. Henley
- WHITAKER, Herbert A: togglier that day (typically as tail gunner) with pilot Henley
- PIEPENBRINK, Frederick: tail gunner that day with Henley (on a crew unfamiliar to him)

To access air crew photos, go to www.306bg.us, click on the Education and Research tab, then the Photo Albums from World War II link, followed by the Air Crew Photos link.

WETZLAR-related requests of *Echoes* readers: If anyone has a photo of the Jack S. Henley crew, or a photo of Hanson or Whitaker, please contact me (see contact information on page 2). Further, I welcome hearing from ANY relative or friend of Hanson, Whitaker, and/or Piepenbrink: review of available information in 306th material here, indicates it is unlikely any of the three were ever in touch with the 306th BGHA.

REUNION DEADLINE NEW THIS YEAR: Send your Reunion Registration Form for our 7 thru 10 November reunion to our Treasurer as soon as possible. By doing so, you will aid in planning reunion activities. A new deadline this year for submitting Reunion Registration forms is **four weeks in advance**, which is no later than 10 October. Our Treasurer will make 306th refunds promptly when events occur causing a change in plans, if refund requests are submitted in a timely manner. At the top of the Reunion Registration Form is the toll-free number for making your hotel reservation. That form can be found in this issue and at the "Reunions & trips" tab at our website, www.306bg.us.

OBERPFAFFENHOFEN book update: Dutch author John Meurs is alive and well in Switzerland, though the US publisher he used for his first two books has passed on. John is seeking a new publisher for his third book on the 8th Air Force airmen downed in the 24 April 1944 Oberpfaffenhofen mission (ten crews of which were of the 306th BG; a number of those associated with the 306th have submitted helpful information about those crewmen). In addition, Mr. Meurs has begun researching and writing a fourth book on the 8th AF airmen downed in the 24 June 1944 Bremen mission. I will keep you posted when he alerts us regarding a new publisher.

PLEASE notify me as soon as possible when email or mailing addresses information changes, and/or when your veteran passes on. ■

Donation Update:

Your Dollars Sustain the 306th BGHA Mission

The 306th BGHA does not charge membership dues. Because of this, your tax-deductible donations are needed to support the continuing education mission of our organization. Donations may be made online at 306bg.us or by mailing to the Treasurer using the address on the form below. Many thanks to those of you who have submitted donations thus far in 2019. As of 1 April 2019, a total of \$2382 has been received from 39 donors. Remember, the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association was determined by the IRS to be a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) as a public charity, effective 24 July 2015.

All donations are extremely important to the continuing education mission of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and are greatly appreciated!

DONATION FOR THE 306TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Make checks payable to:
306th Bomb Group Historical Association

Send to:
Jennifer Mindala, Treasurer
3244 S. Lamar St.
Denver, CO 80227-5426

Name

Address

Telephone Number: _____ **eMail:** _____

If you would like to register as a member of the 306th BGHA or renew your 2019 membership with this current information, please initial here. _____

Date



Please Donate! Please Donate!

NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF THE
MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE



2019 Reunion Plans Announced

Plans are being finalized for the 2019 reunion scheduled for Thursday, 7 November and concluding following breakfast on Sunday 10 November. We will be focusing our time at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. Our base of operation will be the Embassy Suites Savannah Airport (Pooler, GA) where there are many amenities, including free guest parking, free shuttles from and to the airport and the ever-popular complimentary full breakfast and cocktail hour.

The 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association (BGHA) will be joined by the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association (SSMA) to honor our veterans and their spouses. We will enjoy the benefit of the museum research center, which will be open to us on Thursday and Friday and for the opportunity to fellowship together at the museum.

Additionally, the members of the Birthplace Chapter, Eighth Air Force Historical Society, are hosting a hospitality area for our group, providing refreshments and a gathering place for resting, listening to, and sharing stories with our friends, all in the comfort of the Museum.

At the Embassy Suites Hotel, we will enjoy our acclaimed Veterans Roundtable discussions, have an opportunity to listen to interesting guest speakers, partake in two banquet dinners, and visit our historical displays in the 306th Hospitality Room.

National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

Starting at 2:00pm on Thursday, a shuttle will transport us to the wonderful National Museum of

Mighty Eighth Air Force, where we can witness unforgettable stories of bravery, experience a bomber mission briefing, and view the B-17 “City of Savannah” displayed inside the museum. You are encouraged to view the many personal treasured items donated from various World War II Eighth Air Force groups.

On Friday morning, plan to take the shuttle back to the museum to attend the 9:30am Folded Wings Ceremony in the museum chapel. The museum will then provide a two-hour VIP guided tour.



Scott Loehner

Immediately following our tour, we are invited to lunch at the museum while listening to our two featured guest speakers, Scott Loehner, Museum CEO, and Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price, Museum Archivist, and Vice President of The Eighth Air

Force Historical Society. Dr. Rogers-Price will also be providing an opportunity for us to ask questions about the Eighth Air Force Historical Association group reunions. This will help those attending get answers to their questions in making an informed decision on the question of “**holding our 306th reunions in conjunction with the 8th AFHS reunions beginning in 2020.**” After lunch, you are encouraged to further explore the many exhibits or continue any personal research projects until the 5:00pm museum closing time. A shuttle will be available for a return trip to the hotel for our social hour and First Over Germany Buffet dinner.

First Over Germany Dinner

Friday at 6:30pm at the Embassy Suites ballroom.
Dress: Business casual

Annual 306th BGHA Business Meeting

On Saturday at 10:00am, plan to attend the general business meeting. This 60 to 90-minute meeting will provide a “state of the organization,” elect a new board of directors, and discuss further plans relative to **holding our 306th reunions in conjunction with the 8th AFHS reunions beginning in 2020.** If you are unable to attend the reunion, please write or call 2019 Reunion Chair, Debbie Hopper Conant, prior to 1 November 2019 to share your thought with respect to your 2020

reunion preferences. She will record your comments and opinions for presentation at the Board of Directors Meeting and at the General Business Meeting. Your voice is necessary and important to us, so we wish to hear from you. You may call Deb at 408-550-5253, or write her at 3330 Leavesley Rd., Gilroy, CA 95020, or email her at debconant@me.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Guest Speakers

Saturday at 11:00am, plan to attend the SSMA Netherlands Memorial presentation with guest speaker Roy Gottgens from the Netherlands. Roy helped plan the memorial for the 306th BG/SSMA Cole crew, will share the story of the crew, and how the memorial brought the whole town together.

At 1:30pm, our second speaker, Thom Mindala, is presenting, "Publishing Your Own Story," in which he will share his experiences as well as his thoughts and suggestions for writing our own stories as a veteran or as a family member of a veteran to preserve memories that should never be lost to time.

Veterans Roundtables

Saturday at 2:30pm, we will be enjoying our highly-acclaimed Veterans Roundtable, a moderated discussion with our beloved vets. This popular event affords our panel of veterans an opportunity to share their experiences and answer questions. Come early and get a good seat; the veterans are sure to entertain us with anecdotes filled with heroism and grand humor. If you wish to have some of your own questions answered, consider joining the vets when they congregate during the social hour or in the hospitality room each evening following dinner. These intimate times are always warm and inspiring.

Silent Auction

Supporting our goal to generate funds to finance various educational and historical activities, including our website and publication of the *Echoes*, our silent auction is always a hit. Please consider collaborating in this opportunity by bringing and donating your books, memorabilia, or any item of interest to our 306th membership. Do not forget to look at all the wonderful items available so that you can take home a new treasure.

Displays and Activities

We have an impressive collection of personal and group artifacts that will be on display. Our displays depict the story of many of our crews and their missions, including The Second Schweinfurt (Black Thursday) mission of 14 October 1943. We are expecting a large contingent from the SSMA, so we may have additional artifacts to highlight this significant mission. As always, our Hospitality Room provides research experts to help answer many of your research questions.

Social Hours

Opportunities to socialize abound at our reunions. Coffee, tea, and cocktails provide many opportunities to spend time with old and new friends, where much learning and laughter occurs. Do not let those moments slip by! Each evening from 5:30-7:30pm, the hotel provides a hosted managers reception serving complimentary wine, beer, and cocktails.

In addition to our Hospitality Room at the hotel, one will be provided for us in the museum by the Birthplace Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

306th BGHA & SSMA Banquet

Saturday at 6:30pm, Embassy Suites Ballroom.
Dress: Business casual.

The day will conclude with our 306th BGHA & SSMA Banquet where we will enjoy the opportunity to support one another in our passion to preserve the experiences of this Greatest Generation. During the social hour, group photos will be taken. As part of the evening Banquet, our new board leadership will be introduced and the status of next year's reunion will be announced.

Embassy Suites Savannah Airport

Please consider joining us at the 2019 reunion in Savannah, we are sure to have a wonderful time exploring history and sharing in adventures. We will be staying at the Embassy Suites Savannah Airport where there are many wonderful amenities, including free guest parking, free shuttles from the airport, and the ever-popular complimentary full breakfast and cocktail hour. To secure our group rate call 1-800-362-2779, let them know you are part of the 306th Bomb Group Reunion. If you need

an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant room, let them know your needs and they will accommodate you with an ADA room or a queen room allowing you more room for access, (ADA rooms are very limited).

Hotel Amenities:

- Baggage Storage
- Check in at 4:00pm, check out at 12:00 noon
- Complimentary full breakfast and managers cocktail hour
- Complimentary high speed internet
- Complimentary Airport Shuttle arrives hourly at the airport. Call the hotel front desk at 912-330-8222 when you arrive.
- Local Area Transportation
- Flying Spoons Cafe
- Kitchenette in room
- Room Service
- Safety Deposit Box

Miscellaneous Information

- Even though the group rate should be set by your reservation, remind the desk clerk you are with the 306th Bomb Group when you check in. Review your fees when you check out.
- Event Fees: WWII veterans are not charged the reunion registration fee. All other fees for meals and tours do apply.
- Special banquet/dinner meal price for children 4-10 is \$28.00; children under 3 are free.
- Bring your camera or smart phone and share your photos with our Webmaster Charles Neal, and *Echoes* Editor, Nancy Huebotter.
- Have questions or concerns? Contact the information desk at our hospitality room or ask one of our board members.
- If you need to have a wheelchair available for your use, you will need to make arrangements with the hotel when making your reservations.

Registration Form

Please carefully select the events on your registration form so you will not miss all the opportunities of socializing with our veterans and others associated with the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association. Your meal Thursday night will be on your own so enjoy the occasion by spending time together, visiting with long-time

friends, making new friends, and renewing previous friendships.

Download and fill out the Event Registration form from our website (www.306bg.us) or use the copy included in this *Echoes* newsletter. Please submit your registration form with meals and tour selection as soon as possible for activity and event planning. Return form to Jennifer Mindala before 10 October 2019. Mailing instructions are included on the event registration form. Make your own hotel room arrangements directly with the Embassy Suites Savannah Airport, 1-800-362-2779, 306th BG Block of Rooms.

The 306th Board of Directors and I personally look forward to fun and camaraderie with you and our dear veterans at the next reunion.

Debbie Hopper Conant
2019 Reunion Chairperson

WANTED: Silent Auction Items

Do you have –

- ✓ Artifacts from World War II
- ✓ Personal items from 306th veterans
- ✓ Books about World War II
- ✓ Books about the 8th Air Force
- ✓ Books about the 306th Bomb Group
- ✓ Pictures
- ✓ Other Memorabilia

If you have any items relative to the mission of our veterans that you would like to donate for our Fifth Annual Silent Auction, please notify Sue Moyer (ssma42@gmail.com) with a description of the item and a suggested minimum bid.

All items will be displayed in the hospitality room where reunion attendees will have the opportunity to review the items and place their bids.

Winners will be announced at the Saturday night banquet and payment transactions (cash or check made payable to the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association) will occur at that time.

Proceeds from the Silent Auction will go to the support of the 306th BGHA.

2019 Registration Form – 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and SSMA Reunion

Embassy Suites Savannah Airport – 145 W. Mulberry Blvd. Savannah, Georgia

November 7 – Check-out November 10, 2019

DEADLINE FOR REUNION REGISTRATION AND HOTEL RESERVATION – THURSDAY OCTOBER 10, 2019

Must use Toll-free number for hotel reservations 1-800-362-2779

Request: **306th Bomb Group** reunion rates: \$139.00 (pre-tax) single or double (\$10 ea. Additional person)

Questions? Contact Debbie Hopper Conant, Reunion Chair, debconant@me.com, (408) 550-5253

No registration fee for WWII-era veterans of 306th or SSMA

Mandatory Registration Fee for all others _____ x \$50.00 = \$ _____

Thursday, 7 November - Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force - 1:00 to 5:00 pm

Explore Museum on own - Access to Research Center

(Fee includes: bus transportation and museum entrance) _____ x \$15.00 = \$ _____

Friday, 8 November - Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force - 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Morning: Folded Wings Ceremony - Tour - Lunch with Speaker, Mighty Eighth CEO Scott Loehr

Afternoon: Explore Museum on own - Access to Research Center

(Fee includes: bus transportation, museum entrance and lunch) _____ x \$32.00 = \$ _____

First Over Germany Dinner Buffet at Hotel - 6:30 pm

_____ x \$56.00 = \$ _____

Saturday, 9 November

General Business Meeting - Presentations - Veterans Roundtable

306th BGHA & SSMA Banquet at Hotel – 6:30 pm _____ x \$49.00 = \$ _____

Donation to the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association – THANK YOU! \$ _____

Total Amount payable to 306th Bomb Group Historical Association **TOTAL** \$ _____

BY 10 OCTOBER 2019: Please make check payable to:

306th Bomb Group Historical Association – *2019 Reunion* on memo line

Mail to: Treasurer Jennifer Mindala, 3244 S. Lamar St., Denver, CO 80227

EACH DAY all attendees will have the opportunity to network with World War II veterans and enjoy exhibits and archived 306th World War II memorabilia displayed in the Hospitality Room

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

306th OR SSMA VETERAN YOU ARE ATTENDING IN HONOR OF: _____

Squadron _____ WWII Duty _____

LIST ALL ATTENDEES IN YOUR GROUP (Please PRINT clearly)			
Name of Attendee	Relationship to Veteran	1 st Reunion?	Arrival Date

DEADLINE FOR REUNION REGISTRATION AND HOTEL RESERVATION – THURSDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2019

306th Bomb Group Shirt Interest Sought From Reunion Attendees

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association is conducting a market research analysis to determine the level of interest in 306th BGHA shirts for purchase at the reunion.

Here are the proposed options:

Core Performance Polo (Golf) Shirt

- 4.1 oz 100% Polyester Pique
- Moisture Wicking, Antimicrobial, and UV Protection
- Left Chest Embroidered Logo
- Sizes: SM, Med, Large, XL, 2XL
- Estimated Price:
 - SM – XL \$30
 - XXL – \$32



Cotton Blend T-Shirt

- Cotton blend fabric
- Image: B-17 front profile
- Text: *First Over Germany*
- Sizes: SM, Med, Large, XL, 2XL
- Estimated Price:
 - SM – XL - \$16
 - XXL - \$18



If you would commit to making a purchase at the upcoming reunion, please eMail your preferences to Mike Prentice at pren1616@yahoo.com. Level of interest will assist in determining size selection quantities and total number of shirts to be ordered. Sales will occur at the reunion only. No orders will be honored or filled via eMail requests. ■

306th Vets Celebrate 100th Birthday!



Several 306th BGHA veterans have recently acquired the title “centenarian.” These include Owen Hughes and Claiborne (“Clay”) Wilson, Bill Houlihan, and Carl Groesbeck.

Bill Houlihan celebrated his 11 December birthday.



Carl Groesbeck was honored by friends and family as they observed his 29 December birthday.



Contrails: Aviation and Weather Impacts During World War II

Today we look at the evening sky and comment on how beautiful the sunset may be: the sun reflecting on clouds and the contrails criss-crossing the upper atmosphere, brilliantly accenting the blueness of the sky. But during World War II, the contrail phenomenon was recognized for its impact on aviation and the execution of missions and bombing raids over Europe. Intrinsic to modern combat, they had important operational implications.

Contrails (short for condensation trails) are line-shaped clouds produced by aircraft engine exhaust or changes in air pressure, typically at aircraft cruise altitudes several miles above the earth's surface.

When the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) joined the allied air campaign in 1943, it led to a huge increase in the number of planes based in England. Civil aviation was rare in the 1940s, so the USAAF combat missions provided a strong contrast between areas with busy skies and areas with little or no flight activity.



Germans on the ground knew the Americans by the white trail of exhaust that tailed behind every plane flying at high altitude. The exhaust formed behind the aircraft would rapidly spread a band many times the width of the aircraft. From the ground, this trail appears to come to a point, sharply

defining the exact point of the aircraft. Although the plane itself may not be visible, every move it made was easily visible to the naked eye. An observer on the ground could accurately plot its course, which enabled anti-aircraft fire to launch an exacting barrage.

In addition, it has been determined that contrails had an effect on weather conditions over the combat area. The importance of weather conditions to the success of bombing missions meant that the Second World War prompted some of the most intensive weather observations ever undertaken.

Researcher Rob MacKenzie published an article in the *International Journal of Climatology* in which he writes, "Witnesses to the huge bombing formations [of World War II] recall that the sky was turned white by aircraft contrails. Utilizing civilian and military records from the Second World War helped assess the impact of modern aviation on the climate today. The investigative team used historical data to investigate the levels of Aircraft Induced Cloudiness (AIC) caused by the contrails of Allied bombers flying from England to targets in Europe. The team focused their research on the timeframe 1943 to 1945, after the USAAF joined the air campaign.

To distinguish the effect of aviation more clearly, the team focused on larger raids from the many flown between 1943 and 1945. They selected raids that involved over 1,000 aircraft and that were followed by raid-free days with similar weather that might be used for comparison. The resulting top 20 raids revealed 11 May 1944 as the best case study.

The team found that on the morning of the 11th, 1444 aircraft took off from airfields across south-east England into a clear sky with few clouds. However, the contrails from these aircraft significantly suppressed an increase in the morning temperature across those areas that were heavily overflown.

Although very technical in content, the article copyrighted by the Royal Meteorological Society, is replete with information that carefully details results from a seldom-studied scientific curiosity that became an important concern. For those wishing to read the article, go to

<https://rmets.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/joc.2392> ■

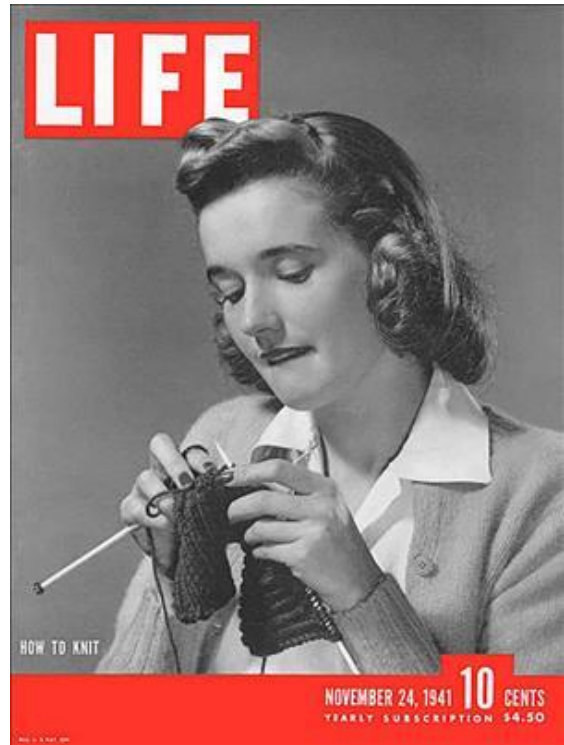
Knit One, Purl One

Knitting was more than a hobby during wartime – it was an act of patriotism. Women, children, and non-military men played important roles in the war by sacrificing through rationing of food and other material goods, working in industries that supported the war effort, taking over jobs for those who were fighting, and lending their time and talent to help those in need on the home front and abroad. For many Americans, the answer to the frequently posed question, “What can I do to help the war effort?” was answered by the one word, “Knit.”

Before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Americans had been knitting and preparing packages of food and clothing in a campaign known as “Bundles for Britain,” an organization founded by Natalie Wales Latham as a knitting circle in a store front in New York City. Knitted goods – tens of thousands of socks, gloves, hats, sweaters, and scarves – were made and shipped to Britain by the spring of 1941.



However, as the war intensified and American troop involvement became extensive, those at home picked up their needles to knit socks, mufflers, vests, and sweaters to keep American soldiers warm. In addition, knitting provided a therapeutic distraction for the knitter; it was a great way to relieve the anxiety of waiting for news from a loved one serving abroad.



The 24 November 1941 issue of *Life* magazine had a five-page cover story that urged women to help knit one million standard Army sweaters by Christmas to send to British allies.

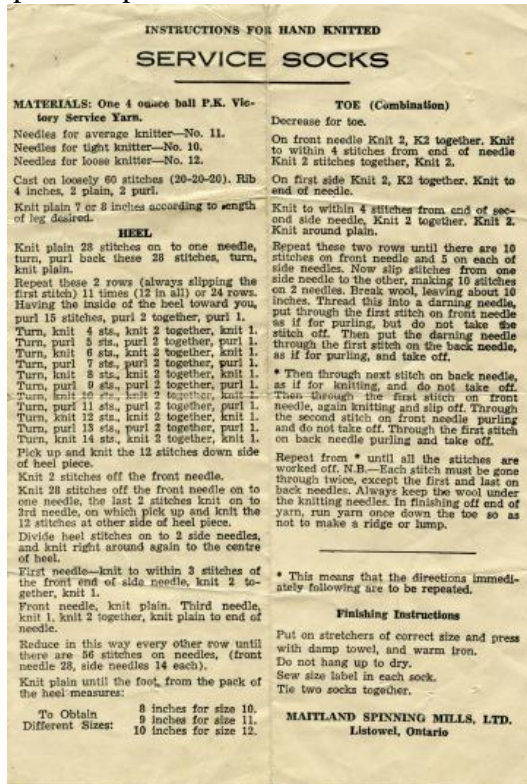
The need for socks was paramount since cold, wet, sore feet had a profound effect on our troops. Socks wore out much faster than sweaters and needed to be changed more frequently.

KNITTERS GET BUSY! WAR CHEST WANTS SOCKS

Appeal for 150,000 Pairs

K is for Knitters – We each must be one
N is for Needles – Whose work has begun
I is for Interest – Which makes us take part
T are the Troops – So dear to each heart
T are the “Trench Feet” – We won’t let them feel
E is the Effort – For War Chest Appeal
R is the Reason – We must write to each boy
S are the Socks – Which bring him such joy

Members of the air force needed extra layers for those long, cold bombing runs over Europe when temperatures inside the aircraft dropped below freezing. Balaclava helmets – a close fitting hood that was worn over the head and neck with an open face – was particularly useful to soldiers on cold nights since it could be worn under a helmet or rolled up as a cap.



Knitters also produced 15-20 foot stretch bandages. The bandages were knit with 100 percent cotton yarn in garter stitch on size 2 (2.75mm) needles. Garter stitch (all stitches knit, none purled) produces a stretchy fabric that lies flat on the edges. The finished bandages were sterilized and shipped to medical units worldwide.

Jacqueline Witkowski's article entitled, *Knit for Defense, Purl to Control*, cites a study by Cat Mazza in which Mazza declares with World War II and industrialization, the country relied very little on the participation of human knitters. The Second World War occurred at a time that witnessed widespread industrial production and mainstream availability of knitting and other textiles; thus, there "was far less need for homemade objects and many women knit because women had always knit in wartime." Therefore, there was a tension between the increased mechanization and the notions of handcraft signifying "home" and "being cared for" for soldiers during wartime. Knitting became "more a symbolic,

nostalgic custom and ritual than an actual material necessity." Because civilians and women in particular, had always contributed to the war effort by knitting helmet liners, socks, sweaters, and other accoutrements, which provided a semblance of the warm domesticity the soldiers were fighting to defend, in turn made women feel as though they were dutifully a part of the war effort.

Although the question of why garments should be knit by hand sometimes arose during the early months of the war, knitters countered with the fact that donated hand-knits cost the military nothing, were produced without expense and machine wear and tear, and that hand-knit socks outlasted machine-knit socks. Most importantly, the propaganda effect of hand knitting cannot be estimated in terms of hard cash, but it is considerable.

The American people all had stretches of downtime, regardless of their jobs as factory workers, teachers, office workers, nurses, or farmers. On the bus going to work, in the hours between shifts, in the evening listening to the war news on the radio, idle hands were turned to support the campaign of knitting for victory. Women knit everywhere: church, lectures, and concerts. Parish churches agreed knitting for refugees or service members during the sermon was okay, but knitting fashionable accessories was not. Emily Post, the preeminent authority on all things related to proper etiquette, cautioned that one should knit politely without distracting the speaker.



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was such a constant knitter that she seldom went anywhere without toting along one of her projects. Many photographs during the time show her with her knitting or carrying a knitting bag. She produced baby garments, sweaters, and “war work.” Her knitting was very utilitarian and was simply a useful domestic task that she did and probably enjoyed. Eleanor and her ubiquitous knitting appeared, at informal family gatherings, and after dinner parties, at political conventions, on trains, in airplanes, while sitting in the Executive section of the House Gallery watching House Floor proceedings, as well as while serving in the United Nations. Mrs. Roosevelt and her knitting were often included in political cartoons. She launched the Knit for Defense campaign during a tea held at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York in September 1941. In her syndicated news column entitled, “My Day,” for 1 October 1941, she writes: *Between 4:30 and 5:00 this afternoon, I am going to stop in at a meeting of the Defense Knitting for Citizens Committee for the Army and Navy. My friend, Mrs. June Hamilton Rhodes, seems to have organized nearly all the department stores and all the knitters in the whole city. I am sure that none of our boys will be without knitted woolen garments to meet the inclemency’s of the winter weather.*

Mrs. Rhodes is a dynamic person. If she has decided that we are going to knit, we are not only going to knit, but we shall produce garments which our boys can wear, for she will not tolerate waste and she will see that we are efficient!

In her autobiography, Mrs. Roosevelt mentions she spent every spare minute knitting for the war effort.



In the address before Congress on 18 June 1945, General Dwight Eisenhower alluded to knitting as only one of the many ways civilians on the home

front participated in the war effort, when he referred to it as “the friendly hand of this nation reaching across the sea to sustain its fighting men.”

Women’s labor of knitting during the war effort was experienced with unwavering enthusiasm. They participated in the military effort in a manner that is indeed historically unrecognized and unpaid.

The Red Cross was the designated clearinghouse for all knitting projects, and in January 1942, the War Production Board made it official. By doing so, the Red Cross was granted priority status for receiving wool yarn. While knitters could provide their own yarn, the Red Cross would supply free yarn to knitters and many took them up on the offer. This offer was not very conducive for yarn retailers who were in the business of selling yarn. Who can compete with free yarn? To ease the situation, Macy’s Department Store decided they would also provide free yarn. In addition, they sponsored special knitting contests, kept knitting instructors on staff to help customers with their work, and shipped completed garments to service men and refugees free of charge. The philosophy behind this move was that if someone was in the store for some free knitting instruction, the potential for making a purchase was likely.

The government always referred to the knit goods as “comfort items,” but made it very clear that the servicemen’s necessities were provided, while the additional knit products were appreciated as a reminder that the folks back home were thinking of them.

To facilitate the use of the yarn, the Red Cross also supplied patterns for sweaters, vests, socks, mufflers, fingerless mittens, toe covers (for use with a cast), stump covers, and scarves, all to be knitted in olive drab or navy blue yarn.

Continental-style knitting, which was associated with Germany, fell out of favor in English-speaking countries during World War II, and people changed to the English knitting style. The difference is in which hand the yarn is held. The German style (or Continental) is held in the left hand and is said to be faster and more efficient. For the English method, the yarn is held in the right hand, signifying an act of patriotism. However, after the war, there was a resurgence in the Germany-style of knitting.

Knitting, however, was not always an altruistic endeavor. It became a topic of importance when it

was used in a covert manner to conceal codes. As a result, many nations refused to allow the exchange of knitting instructions between countries for a fear of steganography (concealed writing). But who would suspect knitting could be a suspicious activity – it was such a common sight . . . a bag of yarn and busy fingers.

Perhaps the most famous example of knitting being used to record information is in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* – Madame Defarge. Initially her act of knitting seems innocuous and inconsequential, but in reality, she sat by the guillotine, painstakingly recording in her woolen projects, all the names of the aristocrats who are enemies of the French Revolution and whom she plans to ensure are beheaded. She uses her own set of symbols and codes to disguise her sinister intentions.

Espionage in conjunction with knitting has non-fictional roots in the United Kingdom. In Britain the resistance recruited a team of elderly women whose homes overlooked railway yards. The ladies would let the Allies know how many trains were coming and going by using a simple code: knit one stitch for one type of train; purl one stitch for another; and drop a stitch for a third.

Strange though it may seem, it could be that Grandma was not just making a sweater. According to a book entitled, *A Guide to Codes and Signals*, printed in 1942, there is an historical relationship between espionage and knitting. Where there were knitters, there were often spies: a pair of eyes, watching between the clicking of knitting needles. In the article *The Wartime Spies Who Used Knitting as an Espionage Tool*, author Natalie Zarrelli explains: “When knitters used knitting to encode messages, the message was a form of steganography, a way to hide a message physically (which includes, for example, hiding Morse code somewhere on a postcard, or digitally disguising one image within another).

Knitted projects are binary in origin: they rely on only two digits, the 0 and the 1. Similar to the 0s and 1s found in computer coding, there are two basic stitches in knitting: a knit stitch, which is smooth and looks like a “v,” and a purl stitch, which looks like a horizontal line or a little bump. If the message must be low-tech, knitting is great for this; every knitted garment is made of different

combinations of knit and purl stitches. By making a specific combination of knits and purls in a predetermined pattern, spies could pass a custom piece of knit goods and read the secret message buried in the innocent warmth of a scarf or hat.

Just as in the computer coding system, with its repetition of 0s and 1s representing a letter, digit, or other character, different combinations of knit and purl stitches create classic patterns.

Morse code is also built out of two fundamental units: the dot and the dash, and is more economic in its portrayal of the encoded message than the literal binary conversion. Samuel Morse developed his code in the 1830s, a visible design that caught on due to its simplicity as well as its robustness. For knitters, that translated to dots represented by knit stitches and dashes represented by purl stitches. Combining Morse code and knitting resulted in ordinary people who discovered an unusual but extremely effective way to collect and pass along information.

Once thought to be an art relegated to the annals of history, knitting and crocheting has experienced a rejuvenation, thanks in part to yarn manufacturers who are constantly introducing new weights, fibers, and colors.

Since 2006, the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, has sponsored a grassroots initiative founded by Lauren Handley, the Museum's then assistant director for public programs. The effort entitled *Knit Your Bit*, has donated over 50,000 scarves to more than 1000 veteran's centers, hospitals, and service organizations across the country. The knitting popularity has once again encouraged volunteers to engage in the process of creating something useful. Luckily, the spirit of sharing continues as well. The program allows for connecting with veterans and showing our appreciation of their service to our country.



For more information regarding the National World War II Museum's *Knit Your Bit* effort, including suggested knitting and crocheting

patterns, go to the Museum's website at <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/programs/knit-your-bit>. ■

Are You a Code Breaker?



Using a binary code to hide a message in a knitted item was a frequent method for sharing information. If you found the following code in a knit or crochet garment (i.e., hat, blanket, sweater, scarf), could you translate it? Hint: Letters are separated by spaces and words by a slash (/).

The answer is found on page 30 of this issue of *Echoes*. ■

.. - / / --- ..- .-. /
 -.. ..- - -.--- / - --- /
 .-. . -- . -- -... . .-. .-.--

From the Webmaster

Major Milestone Achieved

by Charles Neal



We now have ALL our mission reports and missing air crew reports indexed! Thanks to all our volunteer indexers, particularly to Cliff Deets who personally indexed over one-half of the Mission Reports and Pat DiGeorge who indexed all the Missing Air Crew records. These parts of our indexing project have taken over two years, and I estimate our volunteers contributed 2500 hours. This does not include hours spent by Cliff Deets performing quality verifications on index submissions, nor my time as webmaster receiving, formatting, and uploaded index submissions. Our site is becoming more and more useful, and we have received thanks from individuals all over the world.

Mission reports	100%
Missing air crew records	100%
Russell Strong card file	100%
Special Orders	10% (one volunteer is indexing all of these)
Air crew photographs	18%
Obituaries	5%
Histories	5%
Videos of interview of veterans	100%
Correspondence with veterans:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From or regarding veteran, not to persons mentioned in the correspondence 	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vet Names mentioned in the correspondence indexing begins soon 	0%

The majority of the materials we have are scanned and indexed on our site. We owe a debt of gratitude to our founding 306th Bomb Group Secretary, Russell Strong, and special thanks to his survivors in the Strong family who gave us permission to post a digital scan of his book *First Over Germany*. You will sometimes see it referenced in our records as “FOG.” It is located under the “Library” tab on the home page.

Current Indexing Focus: Work continues indexing Air Crew Photos. Now when one does a “search all” or a “search crew photos by name” (under Search Options tab on home page) the search may provide a link to a crew photo in which he appears. This part of the project will go much faster as the volume of work is much smaller. Soon I will have prepared the process, templates, and training videos for indexing the content of correspondence files and history files. **The need for indexers continues.**

Please help us open our “Window to the World” (306bg.us) even wider! ■

306th Bomb Group Historical Association official website Box 682930 • Park City, UT 84068-2930

WWII 306th Bomb Group (H)

FIRST OVER GERMANY & FLYING THE B-17 “FLYING FORTRESS”

306th BG patch

“This site is dedicated to the men of the 306th BG” It contains thousands of scanned images of documents and photographs as well as other material to educate families of the men, researchers and others regarding the life and times of the European Bombing campaign.

[Editor's Note" The following article was submitted by John Hughel in honor of the 75th anniversary of Black Thursday, and is reproduced in its entirety. No modifications to the text have been made.]

Black Thursday:

The Second Schweinfurt Raid and the Legacy Beyond



PORTLAND, Oregon - The legacy of sending Oregon Airmen into battle dates back to early 1941 with the formation of the 123rd Observation Squadron as the nation prepared to enter World War II. Currently, the Oregon Air National Guard is uniquely entrusted by the U.S. Air Force with two vital F-15 Eagle Fighter Wings: the 142nd, charged with the aerospace control alert mission of the Pacific Northwest; and the 173rd, entrusted to prepare and train combat pilots as the only F-15 Eagle flight school in the nation.

Maintaining Air Superiority, both domestically and strategically in the broader global reach, is sacrosanct for the U.S. Air Force in safeguarding the nation. It has been earned and sharpened over time, yet in the skies over Europe during the late summer and early autumn of 1943, it was in serious jeopardy of failure over the Third Reich. It was in those tenuous days that the early history of American flying men was forged, ‘when the world hung in the hands of young men’ in their B-17 Flying Fortresses.

In reflecting back 75 years, to that pivotal second week of October 1943, a “most critical point” for the U.S. Air Forces during WWII, serious lessons was profoundly absorbed. In the culmination of seven days of intense Allied bombing in Germany,

on 14 October, more than 3,000 Airmen took part in Mission 115; the Second Raid over Schweinfurt. The intended mission was to destroy vital industrial manufacturing targets essential to keep the German war machine operational.

The Mighty Eighth Air Force

The Combined Bomber Offensive (CBO) by the Allied forces of the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada was intended to destroy and hinder the German manufacturing and aircraft production. The Operation Pointblank order of 14 June 1943, instructed the U.S. Eighth Air Force and Royal Air Force (RAF) Bomber Command to target specific factories, primarily to take place during daylight raids as a means to clear obstacles for the eventual invasion of Northwest Europe. On 17 August 1943, the Schweinfurt–Regensburg mission was the first major targeted attack aimed at demolishing the German military aircraft industry.

Preparation for these types operations routinely began in the early morning hours as Airmen were up hours before sunrise. Operational, intelligence, and weather conditions briefings normally were completed before 6:00am, to include a full breakfast meal for all crewmembers. When it came time to dress for the extremely high altitude conditions, the 10-member crews needed heavy flying gear and boots that went over their normal uniform. This included electrically heated suits, gloves and shoes, as well as oxygen bottles, earphones, and leather helmets for the crew to perform their aerial mission in temperatures often 30 degrees below zero. In case of emergency, each man carried individually fitted parachutes. Of note, the average age of a bomber crewmember of the Mighty Eighth was only about 22 years of age.

With the lead up to Mission 115, the U.S. 8th Air Force Bomber Command began a three-day engagement beginning on 8 October against multiple cities and targets over Germany. In total, nearly 1,000 heavy bombers were launched into combat, with 88 aircraft lost and nearly 900 men with them. Staggering, almost unprecedented numbers, yet commanders kept plans in check for the second shot at the Schweinfurt ball bearing factories.

For the second raid on Schweinfurt, the U.S. Army 8th Air Force assembled 1st Division Bomb Groups (BG) from the 91st, 92nd, 303rd, 305th, 306th,

351st, 379th, 381st, and 384th. The 3rd Division Groups included the 94th, 95th, 100th, 385th, 388th, and 390th. The B-17s would have P-47 Thunderbolt fighter escorts over the English Channel and into France. The remaining part of the mission would require steady formation, group integrity, and adequate ammunition to engage the Luftwaffe without fighter support.

The combined force of 291 B-17s took part in the mission: yet regrettably by day's end, over 600 Airmen were killed or captured, as 60 Flying Fortresses were lost during the single-day raid, forever marking the day's mission as "Black Thursday."

In his book titled, "Black Thursday," author Martin Caidin described the impact on U.S. Air Superiority due to the staggering losses of the raid. "The Strategic Bombing Survey reported that the consequences of our heavy losses of bombers in the second Schweinfurt raid were ominous. In one raid, the U.S. Eighth Air Force had temporarily lost its air superiority over all German targets."

Among the American units who paid the heaviest price was the 305th Bomb Group, losing over 130 men, 36 which were killed; and the 306th Bomb Group, stationed at Thurleigh Airdrome, losing 100 men, 35 died on the mission or of their wounds and 65 were captured to become Prisoners of War (POW). One of the 306th BG POWs was my uncle, 2nd Lt. Edward B. Hughel.

For the crewmembers aboard aircraft 42-30811, assigned to the 306th Bomb Group, 369th Bomb Squadron, they endured the first wave of attacks from Luftwaffe fighters as they entered Germany. The B-17, piloted by 1st Lt. Ralph Peters and co-pilot 2nd Lt. Hughel, came under heavy attack again prior to the targeted bombing run.

In his account of the Schweinfurt mission after the war, Lt. Hughel, flying his fifth combat mission, reported that, "We took rocket hits which resulted in damage to the left wing, severe enough to Salvo the bomb load in order to keep up with the formation." After taking more damage from FLAK on the bombing run, aircraft commander Peters gave "the bail out order," as all 10 crewmen aboard 42-30811 parachuted into enemy territory and all were captured almost immediately. Miraculously, all 10 men aboard the B-17 not only survived the

attack on their aircraft, but the parachute jump as well, and became POWs.

For most of the men, the frenzied transition from their trainee phase to combat bomber crewmembers had been a blur, having only recently completed their final B-17 training in Pendleton, Oregon, in late August 1943. Now as POWs, they had somehow beaten the long odds of survival, as less than 20 percent of Airmen outlived the destruction of their aircraft and the forced parachute jumps into hostile hands during these massive raids.

Throughout airfields in England that day, the sense of despair began to sink in as many damaged Flying Fortresses hobbled home, yet many others were long overdue, never to return.

As Caidin described in "Black Thursday," the scene at the Thurleigh Airdrome late that day was one of devastation. "The feeling of crushing disaster overwhelmed the men on the ground. The 306th Group has lost ten bombers - 100 men are never coming back. Fifteen four-engine B-17 bombers had gone on to raid - only five returned."

With the enormous "Black Thursday" losses at nearly 20 percent of the bomber aircraft, the U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) discontinued the deep strike CBO strategy into Germany until longer-range fighter escorts could be developed. It would be five months before the P-51 Mustang fighters would be ready to escort the B-17 and B-24 Liberators and the operations renewed in late February of 1944. As the P-38 and P-47s gave way to the Mustangs, other major changes within the USAAF leadership were also part of the CBO changes.

In early February of 1944, Maj. Gen. Jimmy Doolittle took command of the 8th Air Force, applying policy changes and requiring fighter escorts with bombers at all times. Doolittle, the well-known leader who led the first strike over Japan, on 18 April 1942, brought the experienced conviction the 8th Air Force badly needed after "Black Thursday" losses. By the spring of 1944, P-51s were clearing the skies of Luftwaffe fighters, thus allowing bomber combat formations back over targets vital to reestablishing air supremacy prior to the Operation Overlord (D-Day) landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944.

There had been meticulously analyzed and countless deliberations over the impact to the Third

Reich's war manufacturing by the 8th Air Force during the Mission 115 bombing campaign. It was widely known by both sides that the five-months bombing gap after "Black Thursday" offered Germany a break to move ball bearing factories to other parts of the country. The pause gave the German military time to move and decentralize production facilities. The advantage for the USAAF and the RAF allowed a needed replenished of aircraft, and ultimately rejuvenating air superiority to position the Allied Forces in advance of Operation Overlord, and eventually concluded the war in Europe by the late spring of 1945, culminating to "Victory in Europe" on 8 May 1945.

The Legacy Beyond "Black Thursday"

At the conclusion of WWII in Europe, when the guns, tanks, and planes finally drew quiet, the stark reality of the devastation immediately became clear. In the final weeks of the war, POW and concentration camps, as well as other forced labor facilities were uncovered and liberated by advancing Allied forces. This included the thousands of American and RAF air crew that had been shot down during the limitless air battles over Germany.

In the closing months of the war, with Allied advances from the west and east, many of these camps were forced to move in fear of the approaching armies. On 27 January 1945, Stalag Luft III, (near Sagan, Poland), had more than 11,000 POWs, primarily USAAF and RAF officers captured when their planes had been shot down. With the approaching Soviet Army less than 15 miles east from the camp, the entire POW population was evacuated and force-marched in sub-freezing temperatures. A majority of the POWs arrived at Bad Muskau for a brief rest after a 34-mile march, only forced to renew the march another 16 miles to Sprembreg, Germany.

In his book, *Kriegie*, author and Stalag Luft III POW, Kenneth Simmons, vividly describes the chaos and anxiety as reports of the advancing Soviet Army came into the camp. "We were briefed that the Russians are very near at hand, and the Germans are scared to death. They have been told that we are their only chance of survival and that we must be held as hostages."

After his capture on "Black Thursday," Lt. Hughel had been a prisoner at Stalag Luft III and

was one of the many thousands of U.S. Army Air Force POWs that had survived the long months in captivity and the undernourishment conditions in the camp. Now, facing the bitter cold conditions, he was among a group of prisoners at Stalag III (from the West and Central compounds) that were sent by train to Moosburg, on 31 January 1945, after five days of the march. The remaining POWs (North, South, and East compounds) had been diverted at Sprembreg to Stalag XIII-D in Nurnberg. By the time the main group of American prisoners from Stalag III finally arrived on 10 February at Stalag VII-A, it had taken 13 harrowing days, a nearly 500-mile excursion across Germany due to snowstorms, multiple forced delays and the time-consuming cattle train transfer process. Throughout the ordeal, men also risked being shot by German guards and S.S. officers if they fell out of the march or tried to escape at any point. Faith, determination, and camaraderie held the men together, pushing them past illness and exhaustion.

In *Kriegie*, Simmons described their arrival at Stalag Luft VII-A, "Over 3,000 men were sick with infected stomachs, dysentery, colds, and pneumonia. All of us were weakened from the effects of malnutrition and mental and physical exhaustion."

In the years after the war, Lt. Hughel attributed part of his survival during that harsh 50-mile forced march to a pair of shoes and other care package items from the American Red Cross at Stalag Luft III prior to evacuation. While most men were able to survive the march and arrive at Stalag Luft VII-A, others were not as lucky as the unforgiving freezing conditions took the lives of numerous POWs.

By mid-April 1945, the Stalag VII-A prison camp, built to hold 14,000 now had over 130,000 prisoners as barracks built to hold 100 men now held as many as 300, all confined in one building. Fortunately, on 29 April, the U.S. 14th Armored Division liberated the camp and Third U.S. Army commander, Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., personally greeting the men after one last confrontation in Moosburg. For the many thousands of men who had survived the horrors of combat, a forced winter march, and a horrendous lingering imprisonment while anticipating liberation, their war was finally over. Within days of the camp's liberation on 8

May 1945, the Allied forces accepted Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces.

As Lt. Edward Hughel, returned to the United States he was triumphantly welcomed home by his wife Vivian, his young son Craig, who was born during his captivity, as well as his parents, siblings and other family members and friends who had been awaited his homecoming after his 19 months as a POW. He was officially released from military duty in December 1945, returning to Anderson, Indiana, and like millions of other WWII veterans; began to rebuild their lives after securing the freedoms for which they sacrificed so much.

The gallant actions of these men resulted in 17 Medals of Honor being bestowed on Airmen of the U.S. Army Eighth Air Force during the course of the American air war over Europe from 1942-1945. However, the liberation of Europe came at a heavy price as these harrowing aviation battles caused more than 47,000 casualties and claimed the lives of more than 26,000 Airmen.

In later years, the heroic accounts of these men and battles were recounted in hundreds of books, films, and historical artifacts. Most notably, the 1949 film, *Twelve O'Clock High*, starring Gregory Peck, based on the novel by Beirne Lay and Sy Barlett, which chronicled the fictionalist "918th Bomb Group" based on the real 306th Bomb Group stationed at Thurleigh Airdrome. The hallowed second raid of over Schweinfurt was retold in the fictionalized "Hambrucken raid." It eventually won two Academy Awards and has been selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress for its "culturally, historically and aesthetically significance."

Not to be outdone on the silver screen, *The Great Escape*, released in 1963, based on Paul Brickhill's book of the same name (released in 1950), and starred an all-star cast, to include Steve McQueen and Richard Attenborough, which recounted the story of the 77 Allied POWs that escaped Stalag Luft III in March of 1944. It was nominated for one Academy Award and a Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture.

Air Superiority Today

The second raid on Schweinfurt so intensely described in, "Black Thursday," by author Martin

Caidin, was characterized as, "The most violent, savagely fought, and bloodiest of all the battles in the titanic aerial conflict waged in the high arena over Germany (during WWII)."

In the 75 years since Mission 115 on 14 October 1943, the U.S. Army Air Force became the fourth U.S. military branch on 18 September 1947, with the passing of the National Security Act of 1947. Today, air and space superiority remains a core posture for the U.S. Air Force and to provide further global vigilance, global reach, and global power.

In the height of WWII, more than 2.4 million men and women filled the ranks of the USAAF. Though the numbers are fewer today, to maintain a "No Fail Mission," the U.S. Air Force relies on nearly 320,000 active duty Airmen, 70,000 Reservists, 106,000 Air Guardsmen and more than 140,000 civil full-time employees.

The Oregon Air National Guard Airmen and their F-15 Eagles, who today guard the Pacific Northwest, honor and continue the U.S. Air Force legacy of valor, whether it is here on the home station's 24/7 alert mission, supporting global overseas contingency operations, or such recent deployments as supporting NATO partners back in the European theater during Operation Atlantic Resolve in 2015 and 2018.

Epilogue

The lasting lessons for the U.S. Air Force, from those horrific aerial battles over Germany, to conflicts over "MIG Alley" in Korea, Operation Desert Storm, and current operations today, echo the same challenge: maintaining Air Superiority in all or any combat condition and preparing the best-trained Airmen for that mission. Air Superiority is not an "American birthright" nor an entitlement. It has to be earned and maintained by every generation of Airmen and the need to improve constantly the aircraft to ensure lasting peace. To honor the past achievements and the Airmen of the U.S. Eighth Army Air Force, now 75 years later, is to preserve the security they achieved and the peace that has prevailed in Europe ever since.

Finally to remember the crewmembers who flew the harrowing missions and specifically, to the Ralph Peters' crew aboard 42-30811, who survived the second Schweinfurt raid, their capture and the hardships in POW camps: A salute to their courage and legacy. They included Lieutenants Ralph

Peters, pilot; Edward Hughel, co-pilot; Dan Peterson, navigator; James Vaughtner, bombardier; Staff Sergeants Raymond Grimm, flight engineer/top turret gunner, and Manford John, radio operator; and Sergeants Dick Kern, ball turret gunner, and Blair Steed, waist gunner; Sergeant Daniel Piedmont, waist gunner, and Pierre Noisat, Jr., tail gunner.

Their story was one of service and sacrifice. A reflection of the “Airmen’s Creed,” where each of us can be faithful to “A Proud Heritage, A Tradition of Honor, and a Legacy of Valor.” ■

Museum Update:

Press Release from England

*Editor’s Note: In mid-January, the 306th Thurleigh Museum interest group communicated the following to the 306th BGHA. In part, the press release from England included the following information. In order to maintain the integrity of the communication, some information contained herein is duplicated elsewhere in this issue of **Echoes**. Please refer to the 306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter, Number 1, April 2019, which is included here, thanks to Mr. Mike Dobson, editor of the England-based newsletter. That newsletter is expected to become a regular feature, reinstating the “Thurleigh Notes” column once submitted by Ralph Franklin.*

Thurleigh 306th Bomb Group Museum History:
The 306th Bomb Group of the United States Army Air Force was stationed at Thurleigh Airfield from the autumn of 1942 until the autumn of 1945. Its motto “First Over Germany” proclaims the fact that it led the first incursion by the USAAF into the German homeland, which took place with a raid on Wilhelmshaven on the 27 January 1943.

Ralph Franklin was a small boy at the time and like most of his generation, collected any “war souvenirs” he could lay his hands on and living close to Thurleigh, naturally took a great interest in the 306th. With the cessation of hostilities, his enthusiasm became a life-long interest and with a particular passion for the 306th, his collection of wartime artefacts continued to grow

In the early post-war years and employed as an electrical engineer by the Royal Aircraft Establishment, whose flight research facility was

based on the rebuilt Thurleigh Airfield, Ralph was able to carry this interest through to the eventual acquisition of the use of an ex-wartime “explosives store” building where he could accommodate his collection. Here he created and subsequently opened to the public a Museum, which has since prospered to become the excellent World War II Museum that it is today. While much credit for the Museum must lie with Ralph and his family, the continued support of Palmersport in the form of the free provision of the building and its services must be fully recognized and acknowledged.

Time goes by and sadly, with Ralph’s death in March of this year, Ralph’s family is no longer able to carry any further responsibility for the Museum. Although the family will to offer advice and help where they can, the family is not in a position to continue with the direct day-to-day management and organization of it. Hearing of this situation, which effectively had put the future of the Museum under threat, a number of people came forward from its many “friends.” A volunteer Management Group has been formed with the dual objectives of first, ensuring the continuing existence of the Museum, and second, seeking arrangements whereby it can continue to be accessible to the visiting public.

The purpose of this “press release” from England is not only to make those who know the Museum aware of the new situation but also to advertise more broadly its existence and generally “spread the word.”

With regard to the immediate future, of first concern is the opening of the Museum to visitors during the summer months of 2019; however, the details of this have yet to be worked out. When decided, its advertising will be through the medium of a “Museum Newsletter,” which will be sent to recipients of this information, the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association *Echoes* Editor, and others. It is anticipated the newsletter will be a vehicle for regularly featuring reports of future museum activities. [Note: Correspondence between Editor Dobson and Editor Huebotter determined that reprinting the England-based newsletter in **Echoes** would be a reflection of the partnership we wish to continue for years to come.]

Jeff Hawley, an American citizen who remained in England following a career in the USAF, has a

significant number of credentials. These include Founder in England of the 1st Air Division Headquarters Heritage Society; a UK Representative for the US-based 8th Air Force Historical Society; Chairman of the Airfield Research Group; and in recent years, he has facilitated the placing of the 306th BGHA's Memorial Day wreath at American Cemetery Cambridge. At the January 306th BGHA Board of Directors Meeting, Jeff was named as the UK Representative for the Association.

Kevin Conant, 306th BGHA Vice President spoke via telephone with Mr. Hawley in late December, and summarizes his conversation as follows:

- the vision is for the Museum to be open to the public one to two Sundays per month beginning this summer
- a new company to manage the Museum is to be registered with England's Company House
- a new Board of Trustees will be chosen for the new company
- a pool of local volunteers will staff the museum as docents
- a contingent from the Museum Board of Trustees visited the Museum and found that its WWII construction is sound, the contents are well protected, and there appears to be no damage from leaks or rodents
- a complete cataloging of Museum contents will occur; this inventory will assist in the process of obtaining insurance for the Museum's contents
- a 306th BGHA and 306 BG Museum reunion in 2020 is being considered ■



Ground Crews: The Unsung Heroes

Jobs in the Army Air Forces can be broadly described as two categories: air crew and ground crew. To define simply, the air crew, one would say, "They flew." They were the pilots, the navigators, the bombardiers, and the gunners. They flew in bombers, fighters, and transport aircraft. However, to define the ground crew, it is not quite that straight forward. These men performed such tasks as building, cooking, and cleaning. They washed laundry, fought fires, developed photographs, and drew maps. They built and maintained the airfield, guarded the bases, and drove trucks. They fulfilled administrative jobs by keeping the paperwork flowing and the supplies coming. Moreover, they performed a crucial role in ensuring the aircraft were in top condition by repairing and maintaining each one before and after each mission.

Roger Freeman's book, *The Mighty Eighth War Manual*, noted, "For every combatant in the 8th Air Force, there were 20 personnel in a supporting ground role."

According to the July 1991 issue of *Echoes*, a study of the personnel list of the 306th Bomb Group indicates there were 288 ground officers who served the Group, from its beginning in Wendover, Utah, and concluding at the end of combat in 1945. This same issue of *Echoes* contains a roster of men known to be assigned to the 306th and the duties to which they were assigned.



Every day was Monday for ground crew aircraft maintenance personnel. They had no set work hours, and sometimes would work through the night

in freezing cold, rainy weather, frantic to repair battered aircraft. They missed meals, had little time off, and were rewarded with burnt fingers from hot engines, all too often for very little recognition. They did not pack their duffle bags and return home after completing the requisite number of missions. No, for ground crews, they were there for the duration of the war. Instead, ground crews meticulously cared for the craft to which they were assigned, feeling personally accountable for its safe return, and went to great lengths to satisfy those who “borrowed” the plane for a few hours.



Hours prior to scheduled mission take off, aircraft maintenance personnel were awakened, and on the job, prepping planes for the day’s missions. The crew chief and assistant crew chief pre-flighted their planes, commencing with an inspection of the propellers to ensure proper circulation of oil. Each engine was then cranked up and the electrical and hydraulic systems were checked.

Ordnance personnel readied the required bomb load by transporting the payload to hardstands at each plane site, screwing fuses into the nose and tail of each bomb, attaching the fins, and hoisting the bombs into the bomb bay.



Machine guns, removed from the planes following each mission for cleaning, were returned to their emplacement along with belts of ammo. Men in the ammunition section spent 8 to 12 hours

a day linking bullets into belts and checking them for proper assembly.



Not to be overlooked as a ground crew member, are the chaplains who would give Conditional Absolution and Holy Communion to the Catholics; the Protestant chaplains would pray with the others.

Ground crews sought distractions while waiting for their aircraft to return from battle, but deep down, they sweated out missions, perhaps more than the air crews. As the air crews returned to base, it was the ground crew that was sitting there, scanning the skies, anxiously awaiting the return of the plane to which they were so devoted.



If an airplane aborted a mission, it typically was not because of ground crew error, but more likely, the mechanical stress placed on a plane engaged in combat flight.

For a personal account of a ground crew member’s experience, read Paul Tardiff’s article in the April 1985 issue of *Echoes*.

Although air crews and ground crews seldom mingled, it is said there was a special bond between crew chiefs and pilots. Rarely did men from the ground crew – mechanics, electricians, prop specialists, bomb loaders, sheet metal repairmen – receive commendations.

Air crews owed their lives to the ground crews, but probably never realized it until the war was over. ■

Trip to Thurleigh

by: Eric Owens Jakimier

I was fortunate to spend the beginning of the year in England and one of the things I accomplished was my long-desired visit to Thurleigh to visit the home of the 306th BG. A cousin, George W. Owens, had been a navigator in the 368th squadron in 42-5129, lost after an aborted raid on Hamm 4 March 1943.

While I knew the museum was no longer open, I still wanted to simply see and experience the former airfield so dedicated a day for the visit, not knowing how much I would be able to still see. Now with the news of the museum reopening I highly recommend others making the trek.

The first challenge is of course logistics. While it may be possible to go via public transportation, going by car is the only realistic way to go. Having driven some when I lived in England in the early 80s, I knew the adventure that was to come but truly, once out of central London and on the motorways it was a pretty straightforward hour and a half drive to Thurleigh. Just keep “your head on a swivel”!



The little village of Thurleigh is the quintessential English village, even now. Seeing the one pub in town (regrettably closed on a Monday) and the village church let me imagine George spending time there. There is a small memorial to the 306th near the church that is kept fresh, showing how strong an impact the 306th had on this village. The skies appropriately had a high overcast adding to the effect.

The airfield is north of the village and is now primarily a business park with the runways used as a sports car racing course. One runway is still operable but permission must be obtained to land there. The guard at the gate nicely explained that the museum was closed but let me in any way to explore. The building that holds the museum is still



in good shape and how nice it will be to have it open again.

After driving around the entire perimeter (on some very narrow roads!) there was no more to explore, the pub was closed, and it was not even midday yet. I pulled up Google

maps to see what else “aviation-y” might be near and I discovered the most amazing museum: the Shuttleworth Collection. Set on an airport with a grass runway just outside of Bedford it was only a short drive away and well worth it. One of the best aviation museums in the world especially for pre-WW2 aircraft. Picture Old Rhinebeck with more room and an exponentially bigger budget. They have airshows throughout the summer (some in the evening) and I cannot wait to attend one someday.

Another option would be to dash over to Duxford, about an hour drive, for the Imperial War Museum and equally wonderful American Air Museum in Britain as well as the nearby Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial, but I knew I was making Duxford a separate trip the following week!

Surprisingly I still had just enough time to visit the RAF Museum at Henley. Quite an extensive collection of aircraft as one would imagine and one that could be accessed by public transportation (museum is free, but one must pay to park).

Anyone considering a visit to England should absolutely make the jaunt to see the base at Thurleigh, especially with the reopening of the museum. I hope to revisit this summer to see it. ■

Thurleigh Museum Notes:

306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter Number 1, April 2019



Welcome to the first Newsletter from the Thurleigh Museum, now under its new management organisation.

Perhaps it is appropriate that the first item of this first issue should be to report on the funeral of the Museum's founder, Ralph Franklin, which took place in Keysoe Parish Church on 12 April 2019. Born in the Village, Ralph remained there throughout his life and its closeness to Thurleigh Airfield and the 306th Bomb Group was the stimulus for his wartime boyhood interests, which would stay with him throughout his life and culminate in the foundation of the excellent Museum we have today. At his funeral, he made his entrance to the Church, which was full to capacity with his many friends, to Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade" and following the Service, to Miller's "American Patrol." Buried in the Churchyard, he was laid to rest next to his wife Daphne, in a common grave, to the respectful silence of the assembled congregation.



During Ralph's illness, there was concern amongst his many friends, for the future of the Museum. This concern quickly matured into the calling of a meeting by Palmersport, the "landlord" of the Museum Building, in November 2018, from which two key features emerged. Firstly, the confirmation by Palmersport of a continuing free use of the Building and its general support for the Museum and secondly, that there were enough enthusiastic volunteers to form an effective management organisation. Since then a group of these volunteers [Committee] has met several times with the primary objectives of securing the future for the Museum and arranging for its continuing availability to the public during the summer season of 2019. Once obstacles such as Health and Safety and legality issues have been overcome, it is planned to open the Museum on Sundays throughout the summer from 10a.m. to 4p.m. **However, it is strongly recommended that visitors check beforehand.** This can be done by emailing Clive at clivebobcarroll@yahoo.co.uk or phoning him on either 07837 395652 or 01234 771984.

The first visitor day will be Sunday, 5 May 2019 when staff will be on hand to welcome guests, but beyond that, there will be no special events during the day. Later, as the Museum and Committee find their feet, special celebration days might be introduced. However, in certain circumstances, for example when visitors from the United States are expected, special arrangements can be made to open the Museum "on request." Every effort will be made to fulfil such requests, but it must be remembered that the whole enterprise relies on volunteers and their availability.

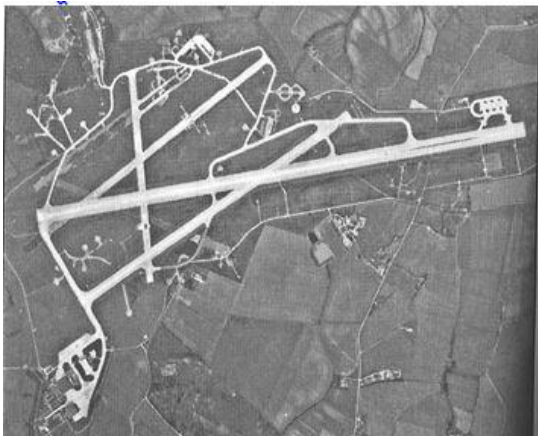
It is proposed that to keep interested people informed of Museum "happenings," Newsletters will be published from time to time and will be distributed solely via the Internet. The distribution of this first issue is limited to those whose email addresses we have. There are no doubt many others who would like to be kept informed so can we ask recipients to "spread the word" so that the distribution list can be expanded to all those interested. Anyone wishing to receive Newsletters will need, therefore, to provide an email address to the Editor mike@mddobson.co.uk. Any contributions of suitable article for publication in the Newsletter will always be welcomed and should be submitted to the same address.

Wishing all our readers well and looking forward to meeting many of them at the Museum on 5 May. This issue of the Newsletter concludes with two photographs

of the airfield that might be entitled “During and after the 306th.” On the top is the wartime airfield on which many B17s and P38s are parked; while on the bottom is the rebuilt flight research airfield of the Royal Aircraft Establishment.

The wartime technical area, just to the left-centre in the left photograph, was approximately, where the two main runways of the rebuilt airfield cross.

During the re-build, two of the original “T2” hangars were moved to the north side of the airfield and remain in use today as part of the Palmersport complex.



NEWS UPDATE!

Newsletter Number 2, May 2019

The re-opening of the Museum following the death of its founder, Ralph Franklin, seems to have gone down well amongst the many friends and our thanks go out to all those who have expressed appreciation of and support for the group of volunteers, which has picked up the management reins. The status of the Museum is now that it is a limited company:

“306th Bomb Group Museum Ltd”

Interestingly “officialdom” questioned the word “bomb” in the title but all was well when they realised we were not some kind of illicit munitions factory!

The race has been on to get things ready for our first public opening on Sunday 5 May and today, 3 May, the necessary insurances are finally in place so it’s now “all systems go!” The reason that this [one-page] Newsletter No.2 follows No.1 so quickly is to advertise our first public day. ■

In Memorial

Obituaries – Veteran death information should be submitted to the Secretary. Contact information is on page 2.

Baar (Goldbarst) **Lee Eli**, ball turret gunner (368th, Raymond Tripp crew), of Philadelphia, PA, passed away 14 March 2010 at age 89. He served as a salesman for McLean Trucking Company and Aristocrat Formal Wear. At the time of his passing, he was survived by daughters Karen and Madeline, and four grandchildren.

Beck, Robert H, gunner (423rd, Harold Brown crew), of Randallstown, MD, died 31 October 2018. After the war, he was a building supplies salesman. Surviving are sons Robert and Peter, daughter Toni, and three grandsons.

Brizzi, Carl A. Jr., ball turret gunner (423rd, John Coyne crew), of San Jose, CA, passed away 16 October 2016. He earned an accounting degree from the University of Nebraska in 1949, working for FMC Corporation for 30 years and was a Division Controller. At the time of his passing, he was survived by children Steve, Ken, Keith, and Carlene, nine grandchildren, and ten great grandchildren.

Brown, Marvin L, ball turret gunner (423rd, Lemon Eugene Smith crew), passed away in Kansas City, KS, 17 October 2018. Known as “Buckshot” or “Brownie,” Marvin worked as an electrician for many years before purchasing and operating the Blue Shoals Marina in Peel, AR. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, JoAnn, a daughter, three sons, seven grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

Burns, Clifton W, navigator (369th, Cecil McKinney crew), of Grayson, LA, passed away 2 September 2010, at age 90. Clifton was also a Korean War veteran and retired in the rank of Major. After retiring from the Air Force, he was an educator and was a principal at Caldwell Parish High School. At the time of his passing, surviving were son Don, daughter Anne, a grandson, and three great grandchildren.

Evans, Padraic B, pilot (368th), died in Kuanakakai, HI, on 21 August 2018. “Paddy” loved flying, sailing, and his beloved dogs. Surviving are children Dorcas, Patrick, Robert, and Maura, four grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

Ewell, Matson G, navigator (369th, Lloyd Johns crew), of Fairport, NY, passed away 8 March 2016, at age 93. He attended St. John’s College and taught mathematics at the Harley School, eventually moving up through various levels to become the Head of the Middle School, serving until 1980. At the time of his passing, he was survived by his wife of 67 years, Ruth, and two sons, Peter and Louis.

Fischmer, Arthur L, crew chief (423rd), of Greenberg, IN, died 5 September 2016 in Decatur County, IN. He was a lifetime member of the VFW and a Bronze Star recipient. At the time of his passing, he was survived by his wife of 68 years, Vivian, daughter Janet, two grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

Flannagan, Charles E, pilot (369th, James Johnson crew, 367th Sq CO), passed away on 29 April 2006, in Jasper, IN, at age 89. He attended Indiana University dental school and was a practicing dentist for over forty years. Dr. Flannagan was a member of the Knights of Columbus, American Legion, and the Indiana American Dental Association. At the time of his passing, surviving were his wife Delores, six children, Maura, Michael, Duane, Colleen, Phil, and Mark, nineteen grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Frost, Richard L, gunner (367th, Cecil Starks crew), of Plattsburg, NY, died 5 March 2017. He continued his career in the Air Force after the war, serving over thirty years. After he left the Air Force, he delivered milk for several years. At the time of his passing, he was survived by his son Gerald More, daughter Debra Jones, and stepsons Nick and Gaylord Guay.

Gregory, Edward A, armorer (368th), passed away 29 September 2009 in Ogallala, NE, at age 86. At the time of his passing, he was survived by sons Edward and David, daughters Sue, Pam and Shelly, ten grandchildren, and sixteen great grandchildren.

Holland, Richard R, waist gunner (367th, Cecil Kenneth Stark crew), age 93, of Bartlesville, OK, passed away 26 August 2018. He attended Mississippi State University, receiving a BS and MS in petroleum geology. He worked for several oil companies before joining Phillips Petroleum in 1956, retiring as a senior geophysicist in 1985. Surviving are Sybil, his wife of 72 years, daughter Donna, two grandsons, and three great grandsons.

Howard, Gilbert P, radio operator (367th, John Gooch crew), of Auroro, CO, died 27 June 2018. After WWII he remained in the Air Force Reserves and was recalled to duty during the Korean War. He received degrees from Drake University and from Colorado State College of Education, and in 1957 received a Masters in school administration. He taught high school and junior high for many years and then was an elementary school principal and served as Assistant Director of Public Schools in Aurora, CO, until his retirement in 1985. He is survived by his wife, Rosabelle, son Bruce, daughters Nancy and Trudy, five grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.

Limke, Edmund F, tail gunner (423rd, Douglas Schrack crew), passed away 2 December 2018, in Jay, OK, at 94. After the war, Edmund has a career as a glass glazer. He is survived by son Gregory, four grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Monser, George S, waist gunner (368th), of Peoria, IL, passed away 12 September 2005. He continued his service with the Air Force and Air Force Reserves, retiring as a major after 22 years. He was a member of the American Legion and served as finance officer and on the firing squad for Peoria Post 2. At the time of his passing, he was survived by daughters Diane and Carolyn, six grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

Nelson, Maynard E, waist gunner (369th and 367th, Richard O'Hara crew), of Lakota, ND, died 8 February 2017. He attended North Dakota Agricultural College and Perdue University, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from both institutions. He was a lifelong farmer. He was survived by four sons, a daughter, and four grandchildren.

Oliver, Charles D, pilot (423rd), age 88, of Welsh, LA, passed away 27 January 2011. He had an extended career as a pilot flying for Lyons Flying Service after the war. At the time of his passing, he was survived by his wife, Evaine, sons Jeffrey and Dana, daughter Mary Beth, five grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren.

Schell, Theodore W, (18th Weather Sq), passed away 1 March 2009, in Akron, PA. Following his military service during WWII, he graduated from Franklin & Marshall College in 1950 with a bachelor's degree in Geology, applying his skills in the supervision of the construction of major stretches of the Oklahoma and New Jersey turnpike systems. At the time of his passing, survivors included son Andrew, daughters Anita and Barbara, and six grandchildren.

Smith, Lemon Eugene "Gene," pilot (423rd), of Punsxutawney, PA, passed away 7 April 2019 at age 97. After the war he worked in his father's automotive shop and eventually owned and operated S & S Tire Company with his brother. Gene was a legislator and Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He was elected Mayor of Punsxutawney before being elected to the legislature in 1963. He is survived by daughter Luanne, son Sam, five grandchildren, and three great grandsons.

Wills, Henry L, pilot (423rd), 91, of Twin Falls, ID, died 14 April 2014. Henry, with his Father and brother Bob, founded Wills Motor Company in 1946 in Twin Falls, selling Nash automobiles and eventually Toyotas. He was a member of the Lions Club and the Elks, and was a State President and National Director for the Junior Chamber of Commerce. At the time of his passing, he was survived by sons Steve and Greg, daughter Kathy, eight grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren.

Winther, Robert K, ball turret gunner (368th), POW, passed away 13 July 1994 age 73, interred in Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, CA. With pilot Robert H. Farwell, his plane was shot down on a mission to bomb Ruhland, Germany, on 12 September 1944, becoming a POW for the duration.

306th Family:

Smith, Jean, wife of surviving 306th Veteran **Lemon Eugene "Gene" Smith** (423rd pilot), died 12 November 2018, in Punsxutawney, PA. She was a dedicated member of the First United Methodist Church. She is also survived by daughter Luanne, son Sam, five grandchildren, and three great grandsons.



Answer to Code Breaker Quiz

It is our duty to remember.



306th Bomb Group Historical Association Membership Registration Form 2019 Calendar Year

Print all information.

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I am the Veteran: 306th Unit: _____ Duty/Job Title: _____

Additional Information: _____

If you have an interest in a particular WWII 306th veteran, please complete the following:

Your relationship to a 306th Veteran: _____

Veteran's Name: _____ 306th Unit: _____

Duty/Job Title or Additional Information: _____

Are you?

- World War II History Buff Author/Writer Researcher Other

Additional Information: _____

IF YOU ARE NOT of the WWII generation AND you want US-MAIL copies of *Echoes*, we request you please consider a donation of a minimum of \$10/calendar year to cover cost of *Echoes* printing and mailing.

- Check: Payable to 306th Bomb Group Historical Association. If not mailing with this form, mail check to:

Jennifer Mindala, Treasurer
3244 S. Lamar Street
Denver, CO 80227-5426

- PayPal Donations can be made on-line at www.306bg.us using the yellow "Donate" button

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH

Membership Registration forms should be mailed (with or without a donation), to:

306th Bomb Group Historical Association
c/o Mr. Bruce Chase, Director of Membership
2324 Hatch Hill Road
New Albany, PA 18833-8887

Each member will be placed on our membership list for the current calendar year only. We ask that you renew (free) each calendar year to confirm your continued interest in the 306th BGHA, and your current contact information for email/mail.

A free electronic version of the 306th *Echoes*, or official publication, is available via www.306bg.us



**The 306th Bomb Group Historical
Association
and
Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association
2019 Reunion
Savannah, Georgia
7 thru 10 November
Home of the
Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum**

**Embassy Suites Savannah Airport
145 W. Mulberry Blvd.
Savannah, GA**

**See feature article on page 1 and registration form on page 12
for additional information.**

**Send in your registration form NOW.
Forms must be submitted by 10 October 2019.**