



306th Echoes

Educating and Communicating



B-17 Flying Fortress

Savannah, Georgia

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum: Site of 2019 Reunion



The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association’s (BGHA) 2019 reunion in Savannah, Georgia, at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, brought together friends from far and wide. Several first-time attendees, 52 to be exact, boosted the attendance listing to 112. Among those attending included 13 of the "3rd-generation," grandchildren of the World War II generation, whose interest and enthusiasm were contagious. Two World War II veterans, Walt Olmsted, Jr. of the 306th, now 97 (accompanied by his son, Walt III) and Vince Stokosa [of Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association (SSMA)], represented the “Greatest Generation.” Walt Lubojacky, younger brother of Alfred Lubojacky who was killed in action; Roland DeLair, younger brother of Vernon DeLair, along with Roland’s wife Donna, and accompanied by their daughter and grandson, Treasia and Brady; Em Christianson and Doris Jenks, wives of deceased 306th Bomb Group veterans, were representative of the multiple generations who attended the reunion to share stories and to continue the mission of keeping this history alive. *(continued on page 3)*

Bill Houlihan, 306th Medic Passes Away

William “Bill” Houlihan passed away 24 July 2019 in Farmington, MI, after living an incredible



100 years. A long-standing member of the 306th BGHA, former President, Vice President, and Director of the organization, and a fixture at reunions in years past, Bill will be remembered for his diligent effort to keep

alive the memory of those who served in World War II. At 306th BGHA reunions, Bill shared both dramatic and humorous stories that stemmed from his experiences.

Thank you to Susan O’Konski for permission to reprint her website story, a fitting tribute that featured Bill Houlihan in March 2018

(<https://www.ww2history.org/2018/03/>).

(continued on page 15)

EDITION HIGHLIGHTS

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum: Site of 2019 Reunion.....	1
Bill Houlihan, 306th Medic Passes Away	1
From the President	2
2019 Reunion Photo Album.....	5
Folded Wings Tribute	13
In the Dark of the Night (Poem).....	13
From the Immediate Past President.....	14
306th Pays Tribute to <i>Nine-O-Nine</i>	16
Steve Snyder Delivers Presentation at USAF Academy.....	17
From the Secretary	18
French Legion of Honor Awarded	20
Your Dollars Sustain the 306 th BGHA Mission.....	21
Surprise Findings Add to Cole Crew Story	22
306 th Remembered at Greenham Common.....	23
Remembered “Over There” and “Here” – Part 3.....	25
The Evolving 306 th Bomber Crews	27
From the Editor	29
Thurleigh Museum Notes – Newsletters from England.....	30
In Memoriam	34
Thurleigh Red Cross Club Director Dies.....	37
Membership Registration Form.....	39
2020 Reunion: Save the Date.....	40

Leadership
306th Bomb Group Historical Association
2020 – 2021 Officers

PRESIDENT KEVIN CONANT
kevingconant@me.com

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PRENTICE
pren1616@yahoo.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. 2022)
Director of Membership

DEBORAH CONANT (exp. 2020)
SUE MOYER (exp. 2021)
CLAYTON SNYDER (exp. 2022)
STEVE SNYDER (exp. 2022)
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

2020 REUNION CHAIRMAN – TBD

PAST PRESIDENT – BILL FEESER
whf306@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
the306thbgaha.ukrep@yahoo.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 2020-2022
President Kevin Conant

**“The Past Gives Us Our Identity,
the Future Gives Us Our Purpose”**

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your new President of the 306th BGHA. I look forward to this servant leadership opportunity, furthering our mission of researching and educating the public, aspiring to be the focal point in facilitating communication and camaraderie of all persons interested in honoring the fine men of the 306th Bombardment Group.

Thank you, Bill Feeser, for your past two years of service as our President. I look forward to your continued mentorship and partnership as our Past President on the board, your experience and wisdom have been invaluable to me as Vice President. Also, thank you to our immediate Past President Steve Snyder for continuing to serve as a newly elected board member. Your passion for educating the public regarding the 306th is invaluable. Welcome, Mike Prentice, our new Vice President. Mike is the son of 306th Navigator John Prentice. Mike is the manager of our successful PX and has also been the President of the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association, and he is a docent at the Yankee Air Museum in Belleville, Michigan.

I also wish to welcome our newest board member, Clayton Snyder, grandson of 306th veteran Howard Snyder, pilot of the *Susan Ruth*, who, after being shot down, evaded capture in enemy territory until rejoining American forces and securing his freedom. You can read of this exciting and adventurous account of enemy evasion and resistance in *Shot Down* by Steve Snyder.

For those that may not know me well, I am the spouse of a 306th progeny Deborah Hopper Conant, whose father, Col. Ray V. Hopper, was a 306th HQ group Communications Officer. I knew my father-in-law for over 40 years. Deb, my wife of more than 30 decades, is also a board member and has been busy writing her father's and mother's story of their three-and-a-half-year World War II experience in

her book, *My North Star*. Beginning in 1978, I have had a professional history of public service as a firefighter in California, retiring as a Battalion Chief in San Jose. I now assist in curriculum development and professional certification at State Fire Training within the California Office of the State Fire Marshal. I have been a board member since September 2015 and your Vice President since October 2017.

As I consider the impending nature of change, experience has shown me that we can look at the future as either a threat or an opportunity. In the spirit of our heroic 306th vets, I chose to look at the future as an opportunity. Our organization has a rich history of inspired leadership, facing impossible odds, pioneering innovation to attain victory, and ensuring a brighter future. I am aware that during my tenure, we could potentially experience our first reunion without the attendance of 306th veterans.

Therefore, with their explicit encouragement, they have asked us to consider holding our future reunions in conjunction with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society to continue in our mission. That said, at this year's general membership meeting in Savannah, with the encouragement of our veterans and their surviving spouses, we have chosen to hold our next reunion in conjunction with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society's (8th AFHS) reunion in Memphis, TN, in 2020.

It was also decided by the membership to hold our 2021 reunion in Tucson, AZ, in conjunction with one or two other WWII Bomb Group organizations. We intend to explore the experience and the relationships we build with their members. In Tucson, both Southwest Airlines and Alaska Airlines serve the airport, and it is home of the Pima Air & Space Museum, one of the world's largest non-government funded aerospace museums, and home of the 390th Bombardment Group Memorial museum, where a restored B-17 and a full-scale control tower are housed inside their air-conditioned hanger. There is also much more in this vast 127-acre campus. The Museum also offers bus tours of the "Boneyard" of US aircraft not in service, which is adjacent to the Museum at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Davis-Monthan is an active US Air Force Base, host unit of which is the 355th Wing.

The past gives us our identity, and the future gives us our purpose. Both the membership and the

mission of the 306th is strong in honoring our vets, preserving their memories, and telling their story. The future holds much promise of opportunity. We have an incredible website that hosts one of the most extensive research archives publicly accessible. We consistently communicate with our members via email, social media, and our 306th *Echoes* magazine under the editorship of Nancy Huebotter, which is second to none. The opportunity to strengthen our bonds with the 306th Flying Training Group at the US Air Force Academy, where young airmen and airwomen desire to know the roots of their namesake group through a richer relationship with our members. We also have a re-invigorated and enthusiastic group of volunteers now operating the 306th Bombardment Group UK museum in Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, under the excellent leadership of Jeff Hawley and Clive Carroll.

Working with you in the execution of our mission is our goal. This association is under the ownership of its members. As your board, we endeavor to serve you in that capacity. We are as strong as the collective whole. In my having a rich history of public service and of non-profit organizational leadership, I encourage you to actively participate with us to make our association one that you are proud to call yourself a member.

We look forward to our next year together. May God bless you, and God bless America.

Your President,
Kevin Conant

Savannah, Georgia: Site of 2019 Reunion *(continued from page 1)*

The Hospitality room at the hotel was a place to investigate the various exhibits and memorabilia on display. Scheduling the reunion in Savannah allowed for the unique opportunity to enjoy the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler and to spend two discovery-filled days exploring the museum. On Thursday afternoon, the museum staff and The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Birthplace Chapter hosted the 306th BGHA's exploration of the museum and archives, giving some of those seeking more information on the veteran for whom they have a particular relationship the rare opportunity to do so.

Friday's memorable Folded Wing Ceremonies at the chapel situated in the memorial garden on the museum grounds was an emotional tribute. Two granddaughters of a founding 306th BGHA member, Ralph Bordner, sang, followed by Steve Snyder's presentation of a speech prepared by his son, Clayton Snyder. Many of the group participated in a candle lighting ceremony that was a shining tribute to the fallen 306th members. Immediately following the Folded Wings event, the group gathered to witness the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association lay a garland at the SSMA Memorial.

At the conclusion of the solemn tributes, the Museum and the 8th AFHA Birthplace Chapter provided docents to lead the group through the museum, highlighting the many exhibits, including an exclusive viewing of the B-17 on display, a privilege not allowed to every visitor. The Birthplace Chapter also provided a hospitality room at the museum, in which on display was an authentic 306th bomber jacket that was modeled by veteran Walt Olmstead. As a memento of the visit, the Birthplace Chapter provided each attendee a color print of a triangle H B-17 with a listing of each mission flown by the 306th.

Luncheon speakers Scott Loehner, Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum President and CEO, and Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price, Museum Director, highlighted the mission of the Mighty Eighth, including the vision for its future and the collection of 306th artifacts and documents archived within its walls.

Friday night's First Over Germany Dinner speaker, Steve Snyder, provided a slide presentation of his recent trip to England and Belgium, where he continued to research the story of the crew of the *Susan Ruth*.

At the annual 306th BGHA business meeting, held Saturday morning, plans for the location of the next two reunions were discussed. By popular acclamation, it was determined the 2020 reunion should be held in conjunction with that of the 8th Air Force Historical Society (www.8thafhs.org). The 8th Air Force Historical Society had previously announced their reunion would be held in Memphis, Tennessee, Wednesday, 21 October to Sunday, 25 October. Those of the 306th BGHA Board of Directors, who recently attended the October 2019 8th AFHS Reunion in St. Louis, Missouri, reported

the 8th had 40 World War II veterans in attendance this year.

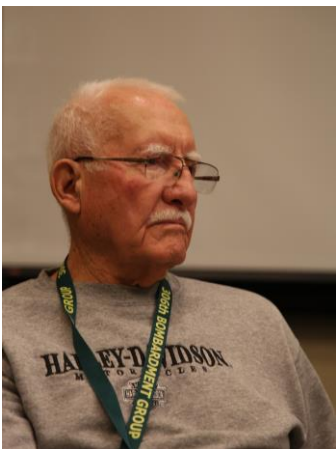
The 2021 reunion will be held in Tucson, Arizona, in conjunction with one or two other World War II Bomb Group organizations. Tucson is home to the Pima Air & Space Museum, one of the world's largest aircraft collections, including two hangars displaying World War II aircraft. Today the museum is home to what is considered 300 of the most important aircraft in the history of flight and more than 125,000 artifacts.

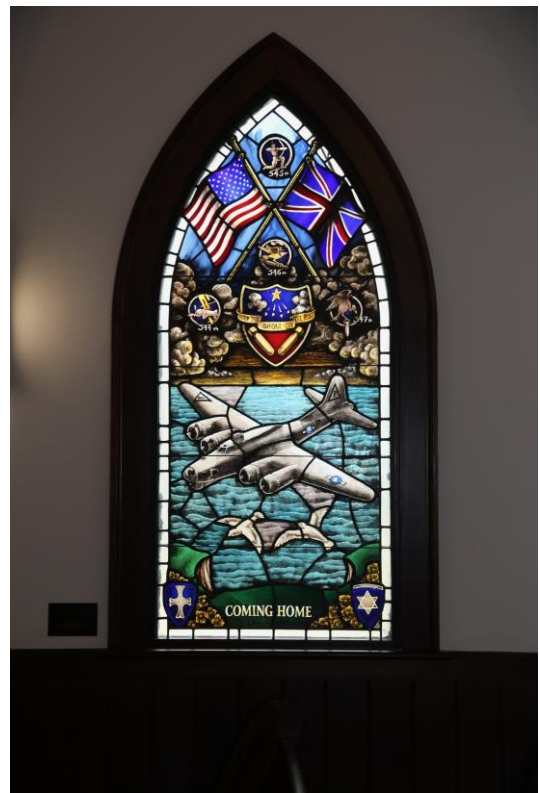
Roy Gottgens, who traveled from the Netherlands to attend the reunion, was instrumental in creating a memorial to the Vernon Cole crew, which was downed in the Second Schweinfurt mission on 14 October 1943. His Saturday morning presentation to the 306th relayed the story of the crew, the emplacement of the commemorative monument in Beek, Netherlands, and the recent gathering of the Cole crew families at the inauguration of the memorial. A number of the relatives of Cole crew members were in attendance at this year's 306th BGHA reunion.

The Saturday evening banquet confirmed that we all choose to come together to celebrate and honor our World War II veterans and the sacrifices they made for our country. Debbie Conant, Reunion Chair, commented, "I find it much more personal than that: my father, Col. Ray Hopper, devoted three years of his life to preserving the freedoms that we enjoy." Her insight recalled for her something Ernie Pyle observed when looking at an invasion: one front is really dozens of little invasions taking place simultaneously with wave after wave to ensure success. Being with the troops he related, "War to an individual is hardly ever bigger than 100 yards on each side of him." Debbie concluded, "I guess everything in life is about perspective; World War II is personal to each of us, even though many of us were not even born when it occurred. But our fathers, husbands, brothers, and relatives live on in us and the stories we share. It is our duty never to forget." ■

2019 Reunion Photo Album

















2019 Reunion Attendees



Pictured (left to right) Dean Sergeant (Hospitality Room), with 2020-2021 Board Members Bruce Chase (Membership), Bill Feeser (Past President), Barbara Neal (Secretary), Steve Snyder (Director), Sue Moyer (Director), Cliff Deets (Historian), Debbie Conant (Director) Mike Prentice (Vice President), Kevin Conant (President). Not pictured: Nancy Huebotter (Echoes Editor), Jennifer Mindala (Treasurer), and Clayton Snyder (Director) Wayne Tolmachoff (Director).

[Editor's Note: The following is the tribute written by Clayton Snyder in anticipation of the 306th BGHA and SSMA Folded Wings ceremony. Although Clayton was unable to attend the reunion, his prepared speech was shared by his father, Steve Snyder.]

Folded Wings Tribute

We've all heard the phrase "Freedom isn't free." I think a few people truly understand what this means. The more I learn about that cost and what it means, the more I realize I can't comprehend it. I have yet to lose a close loved-one in war, and I have not served myself. War and Death are distant to me. No number of books, movies, videos, or pictures will fully convey the horror, the tragedy, the weight, or the pain of that cost.

We are gathered here to remember a group of men who served in the 306th Bomb Group. Men who mean something special to us. They're our family. They're our blood. Fathers, grandfathers, uncles, cousins. They are a part of our story. They fought so that we could be here today, enjoying the freedoms we have.

These men served for something greater than themselves. They understood life was so precious that they were willing to risk their own to protect it. Not just life. A way of life. Despite different races, colors, religions, socio-economic status, they came together as one. Their willingness to sacrifice teaches us the tenants of what it means to be real life heroes. Stand up to the bully. Look out for your neighbor. Speak up for those who aren't being heard. Do the right thing. The Superheroes of fiction were inspired by these very real men.

How can we repay a debt that's impossible to repay? If they were still with us today, what would they ask of us? I believe by being members of this Historical Association and attending this Reunion, the greatest tribute we can give is continual remembrance and continual gratitude.

The funny thing about gratitude: the more you know about a good deed, the more your gratitude deepens. So, the more we know about these men, the missions that they flew, the events of devastation and jubilee, their faithful families back home, the more we can say "thank you," with newfound weight and sincerity.

Every year that passes, there are fewer and fewer World War II veterans still with us. There is only a small group of men of the 306th still with us. Soon, we'll depend entirely upon articles, archives, documentaries, and associations like ours to continue telling the true stories of what happened. Who fought? For what? Where? And why?

The truth of history matters, and it matters that we learn from it, or we doom ourselves to repeat it. Up to now, this responsibility has been shouldered by the immediate family members of those who served. However, if the younger generations do not take an interest, it will all be lost. The history and memory of the men who served in the 306th Bomb Group depend on my generation's enthusiasm to learn. I assure you that I, along with hopefully other younger members of this association, will carry on the memories of our loved ones who fought for our freedoms.

It is our duty to learn.

It is our duty to remember. ■

In the Dark of the Night

It starts before dawn!

In fact it's still night

C'mon airmen, get out of the sack

They want you at briefing to plan the attack

The Colonel will tell us what we'll soon face

How in the world did we get caught in this race

Now we are headed out to the plane

This predawn take-off is really insane

Down the runway there's four engines roaring

With a heavy bomb load that keeps us from soaring

Finally we scratch up into the air

And find hundreds of others are already there

Where is our leader firing flares of green/red?

At last we do find him flying way up ahead

Night is still with us, but dawn's growing near

Is the flash off on our left the one we should fear?

Two aircraft collide—and started a dive

Twenty airmen went down, will any survive?

Comes The Dawn

Now we are ready, our group is together

We head for the coast in much too clear weather

The enemy can see us from miles away

They will send up their fighters to join in the fray

We're crossing the coast and here comes the flak
We see it exploding in the front, side and back
A piece just hit us, thank God it was spent
It poked a hole through the plane with malicious intent

Here comes the enemy, at 12 o'clock high
Will they attack us right now, or perhaps just fly by?

It looks like they passed us and went to the rear
And probably will hit another group near

They're passing again and this time to the right
I really can't stand any more of this fright

Maybe if everyone started to pray
Perhaps we can make this nightmare go "way?"

Morning Glory

The group up ahead is under the gun
The fighters attacked them coming out of the sun

Our bombers are falling right out of the sky
The survivors will jump but others will die

The enemy is taking a big beating too
We saw six of their fighters fall out of the blue

We are nearing the target amidst all the flak
We fly straight and true as if on a track

The bomb bay is open, the bombs are away
We fervently hope we hit our target today

Amidst the flak we turn the group 'round
And finally were heading homeward bound

The ball gunner tells us we've got trouble galore
He spotted oil leaks on engine two and four

We took some flak hits in a vulnerable spot
Oil pressure is dropping, those engines are shot

After All

We'll feather the props and drop from formation
We need plenty of luck to get back to our station

Maybe the enemy is too busy to see
That a straggler alone is trying to flee

The Channel's ahead, it looks like we're set
At the rate we are going we won't even get wet

The air war we fight is so very strange
We never see our enemy at real close range

We drop our bombs and do our tricks
And hope that the target is cement and bricks

England's below us, this trip's almost over
We just flew over the white cliffs of Dover

Alfred David Benjamin
544th Bombardment Squadron, 1944

Bill Feeser: Immediate Past President

Gavel Passed and a Few Memories Shared



A few years ago, I reconnected with the 306th BGHA by attending a reunion in Colorado Springs. While there, I observed an issue with an audiovisual presentation and offered my assistance since I had had some experience with similar equipment. Little could I have imagined that a few years later, I would be privileged to honor my father's (SSGT William H. Feeser) memory and active membership in the association by serving as its President. Following the presidency of Steve Snyder was no small challenge with the bar set so high. But with a board of extraordinarily talented and dedicated folks, we not only were able to care for the organization but weathered some difficult challenges along the way.

As pictured, I have now passed the gavel to a gifted leader and great friend, Kevin Conant. To say we are in good hands is an understatement. I have been grateful for his partnership as he served as Vice-President and welcomed his leadership as our President moving forward.

Our recent Reunion 2019 in Savannah was just amazing. Again, we were blessed to have a capable leader Deb Conant and her team who organized not only the logistics of a hotel, meals, and transportation but also our meaningful times together - we all made lasting memories. This year it was a joy to meet so many new families and friends of the 306th attending for the first time. Many new friendships were made, and I look forward to our next gathering.

The welcoming address by Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum President and CEO, Scott Loehr, was heartwarming, and our experience there was captivating. This was my second visit to the museum, but it felt like the first visit since there have been so many wonderful new exhibits added and upgrades made to the presentations.

Finally, I am grateful that I can continue to serve on the board as Immediate Past President, helping in a small way to continue to promote sharing the stories of the brave men and women who served our nation faithfully and honorably those many years ago.



Immediate Past President

William Houlihan (continued from page 1)

William F. Houlihan was born on 11 December 1918, in Boston, Massachusetts. After working as a merchant marine in 1938, he moved to Detroit, Michigan, and worked for Ford Motor Company.

After the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941, Bill tried to enlist in the United States (US) Navy and the US Marine Corps. Due to an ear issue, he was not selected. Bill decided to go back to Detroit and wait for what he knew was inevitable. On 14 February 1942, Valentine's Day, he received his military draft notice.

After being trained as a US Army Air Force medic, Bill was sent to Wendover, Utah, and became a member of the newly formed B-17 Flying Fortress 306th Bombardment Group (BG) training there. Arriving at Wendover on 6 June 1942, Private First Class (Pfc) William Houlihan was assigned to the medical component of the 367th Bomb Squadron (BS) of the 306th BG.

Personnel of the 306th BG began troop movement to the US east coast from Wendover in late August of 1942. Traveling by train, ship, and air, the 306th BG would travel 4,000 miles to their assigned base at Thurleigh, which was five miles (8.0 kilometers) north of Bedford, Bedfordshire, England.

Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Bill Houlihan (who was nicknamed "Houlie") crossed the Atlantic Ocean on the *Queen Elizabeth* (a troop ship during WWII)

and was in one of the first 306th BG units to reach their destination of Thurleigh in September 1942.

SSgt Houlihan and the 306th BG medical units manned the dispensary and hospital on Thurleigh. But the focus was on the flight line as B-17s returned from a mission. Ambulances and medical personnel were at the airfield as the planes came into view and landed. Personnel on the ground counted the aircraft as they were sighted. Ground maintenance crews were there waiting to see if the B-17s they repaired and maintained came back. Friends of crew members flying that day watched to see if their buddies were returning. And the British living in the area surrounding the airfield would look to the sky and wonder if they would again see an American they had befriended as they observed the aircraft returning in formation or straggling back to Thurleigh.



When possible, men were given some free time in the form of a day off, a pass, or leave. Time off was a great morale booster among the troops.

SSgt Houlihan's day off was Monday. He tells the story of one day riding along to Belfast, Ireland, on a B-17 doing a "whiskey run" for an upcoming party on Thurleigh. 367th BS pilot Capt. George R. Buckey was flying that day, and Bill's friend TSgt Harry Brown was the radio operator. Once in Belfast, Bill and Harry decided to take a tour of Old Bushmills Distillery while the B-17 was being loaded. Capt. Buckey told them to be back at the airfield by 5 pm because he wanted to take off in daylight.

Bill says that at the end of every whiskey production line at Old Bushmills Distillery, he and Harry were offered a sample of that whiskey. According to Bill, they were "well-sampled" when

they noticed it was already 5 pm. Hurrying back to the Belfast airfield, they found Capt. Buckey standing on the wing of the B-17 directing expletives their way. Although threatened with court-martial, the warning never went beyond that. Instead, Bill continued to serve until the war's end.

But there were some happy moments during the war. Bill was the best man at four weddings when American servicemen married English girls.



World War II ended officially in Europe on 8 May 1945. The US War Shipping Administration in a plan called Operation Magic Carpet (October 1945 – September 1946) returned eight million Americans to the US from the European, Pacific, and Asian Theaters. Bill returned to the US on the ship Queen Mary.

During World War II, SSgt Houlihan “Houlie” saw and experienced many things. He had saved lives as a medic, lost friends in the war, and made many of what would become lifelong friendships. And Bill was one of the men who got to go home.

Discharged from the US military in 1945, Bill went back to work with Ford Motor Company. Bill would continue his education using the GI Bill, earning his bachelor's degree, then a master's degree in business. He served in various defense industry positions, and eventually retired from the US defense industry.

On Saint Patrick's Day in 1946, he met his future wife, Ruth Jones, who predeceased him. They were married for 67 years.

Bill is survived by his two children, Patrick (Susan Beusching) and Cynthia (Joel LaBo) Houlihan and four grandchildren: Liam and Ryan Houlihan and Caitlin and Connor LaBo. ■

306th Pays Tribute to *Nine-O-Nine*



Nine-O-Nine was a Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress heavy bomber of the 323rd Bomb Squadron, 91st Bomb Group that completed 140 combat missions during World War II, striking strategic targets across Germany and occupied Europe. Part of the legendary Eight Air Force, the aircraft's name came from its serial number, the last three digits of which were 909. Although the rigors of war failed to halt the aircraft, the original *Nine-O-Nine* succumbed to the scrap heap following its return to the United States.

However, this was not the end of the celebrated craft. A B-17, built too late for combat, began a historic story of its own. Converted to a search and rescue craft, this B-17 retired from the US Military service in April 1952. It was given the name *Miss Yucca* and was parked on a nuclear test range in Nevada, where it served as a nuclear test target. It was subjected to the effects of three nuclear explosions. After a 13 year “cool down,” and extensive restoration, the bomber spent the next 20 years dropping its payload of water and borate on forest fires.

In 1986, the Collins Foundation purchased the aircraft, restored the aircraft to its original wartime configuration, and named it the *Nine-O-Nine* in honor of the original B-17. For the next 30 years, the aircraft appeared at airshows throughout the United States, functioning as a living history exhibit.

On the morning of October 2, 2019, the iconic craft crashed at Bradley International Airport in Connecticut, while attempting to return shortly after take-off. The aircraft was destroyed in the crash, and seven of the thirteen people on board were killed.

The 306th BGHA pays homage to the *Nine-O-Nine*, its namesake, its crews, and those who lost their lives on the final flight. ■

Steve Snyder Delivers Presentation at USAF Academy

On August 6th, 2019, 306th BGHA Past President and award-winning author, Steve Snyder, gave PowerPoint presentations at the US Air Force Academy to the 306th Flying Training Group, which carries on the legacy of the 306th Bomb Group. At the invitation of its Commanding Officer, Colonel Joel DeBoer, Steve made one presentation in the morning to the incoming cadets and another in the afternoon to the officers and enlisted personnel. The presentations centered on the story of his book *Shot Down*, the 306th Bomb Group, the B-17 Flying Fortress, and what flying combat was like during the air war over Europe. In between presentations, Steve was able to sit in on a briefing to the cadre by the Academy Superintendent, Lieutenant General Jay B. Silveria, which he found to be informative and provided him a glimpse into the operation of today's Air Force.



Author Steve Snyder is pictured with 306th FTG Commander Col. Joel DeBoer.

The 306th Flying Training Group (306 FTG) is a unit of the United States Air Force, assigned to Air Education and Training Command (AETC), and is the airmanship training unit of the Air Force Academy. The designation "306th" was deliberately selected to connect the training mission of the 306th FTG with its relationship to the book and movie *Twelve O'Clock High* based on a true story about the 306th Bomb Group during World War II.

Their mission is
"Airmanship...Leadership...Excellence."



306th FTG Officers and Enlisted Personnel.

The 306th Flying Training Group provides management and oversight of Academy airmanship programs involving 2,500 cadets annually and of the US Air Force Initial Flight Training (IFT) program involving approximately 2,200 undergraduate flight training candidates annually. The group ensures powered flight, soaring and parachuting courses contribute measurably to the leadership and character development of cadets. Additionally, the group ensures quality initial flight training and identifies those officers with the ability to succeed in follow-on undergraduate flight training. The group consists of the following squadrons:

- 1st Flying Training Squadron - Conducts flight training for all United States Air Force (USAF) Pilot, Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Pilot, and Combat Systems Officer (CSO) trainees
- 94th Flying Training Squadron - Conducts glider training
- 98th Flying Training Squadron "Wings of Blue" - Conducts freefall parachute training
- 306th Operations Support Squadron - Airfield and Airspace Management of the USAF Academy Airfield and Bullseye Auxiliary Airfield
- 557th Flying Training Squadron - Conducts flying training (powered)



From the Secretary



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

Our 306th BGHA is moving onward through time, just as is each of us. Years ago, in my 50s, when I attended my first two reunions (2005 in San Antonio and 2007 in Dayton), I was fascinated by meeting the attending veterans and learning more about their WWII experiences. It helped me better understand so many aspects of what my family's 306th member experienced. Because I appreciated what I could learn from them, I was dismayed that some of the WWII veterans (then in their 80s and older, men who had for 30 years exclusively grown and "run" the Association), were strongly opposed to the Association potentially continuing after the last of them is deceased.

Thankfully, there were other WWII veterans also among the attendees who were willing, and even eager, to have the "2nd generation" take up the mantle of responsibility so that their legacy would not die with them. In September 2007, the initial two non-WWII-generation volunteers were elected to the Board: Susan O'Konski (US Air Force Colonel, Retired, and niece of 368th navigator Adrian O'Konski, who died at age 75 in 1993) as Vice President; and Joel LaBo (son-in-law of Bill Houlihan; Bill's obituary is in this issue) as Treasurer. That same Fall, *Echoes* saw its first non-WWII-generation Editor, thanks to an agreement between the Board and volunteer Dr. Vernon Williams (History Professor at Abilene Christian University; his uncle, who was in the 381st Bomb Group, was downed in August 1944). Vernon was also the first non-WWII-vet to serve as the Association's volunteer Historian, Reunion Chairman, and Webmaster.

In the 12 years since, the 306th Board has gradually evolved with more 2nd generation Board members becoming involved, and fewer WWII generation members being available due to health situations, potentially making them unable to serve a 3-year term on the Board. Our November 2019 reunion was the end of the 3-year term held by Gailard "Red" Ketcham. Poignant as that was, it was also the reunion when we Board members, and

attendees were pleased to elect the first 3rd generation volunteer to the Board: Clayton Snyder (grandson of 369th pilot Howard Snyder, who died in 2007; and son of our past president Steve Snyder). Join us as the 306th BGHA continues steadily moving onward through time by carrying the legacy of our esteemed WWII veterans forward.

REUNIONS: At our recent Annual Meeting in Savannah, it was decided that for the next two years, we will try two different approaches to our yearly reunion, to see which way may be the best "fit" for us. In recent years the 306th BGHA reunion has been held in affiliation with the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association (SSMA).

2020: Our reunion will be in Memphis, TN, in conjunction with the reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society (www.8thafhs.org). Those of our Board who attended the 8th AFHS Reunion in October 2019 in Missouri, reported that 40 WWII veterans were present. The 8th AFHS announced their 2020 reunion would be held in Memphis, 21 to 25 October.

2021: We will try yet another way: holding our reunion along with one or two other Bomb Groups who have still been having their own reunions. The Board and general membership decided that Tucson, AZ, should be the location of the reunion. It was highly recommended by some of our Board who have been there and enjoyed its Pima Air & Space Museum (one of the world's largest non-government funded aerospace museums), as well as the US aircraft "Boneyard," and an active Air Force Base. Both Southwest Airlines and Alaska Air are among the airlines serving the Tucson airport.

2019: We had a great reunion in Savannah in November. Though we missed some long-time regular attendees who were unable to be with us due to health, we all enjoyed meeting first time 306th BGHA reunion attendees. Among the 112 attendees, it was especially nice to meet family members of the crew who served with WWII veteran Walt Olmsted, Jr. I am so glad they came and were able to meet him. Even now at 97, Walt's amazingly clear wartime recollections that he shared were both fascinating and captivating. It was a pleasure to meet Roy Gottgens, who traveled with a friend from the Netherlands, to give us an excellent presentation on the memorial to the Vernon Cole crew, downed in the Second

Schweinfurt mission of 14 October 1943 near Beek, in the Netherlands. His presence with us was a magnet that brought family members of the Cole crew. In the Summer-Fall 2017 *Echoes*, on pages 22-25, is good coverage about that memorial placed that October. At our website, www.306bg.us under the Education/Research tab, in the section for “Histories of crews” is Gottgens’ 28-page article about the crew, “Thunder in Heaven.”

WEBSITE: While locating Roy’s article at our website so I could direct you to it, I was reminded to mention this: MUCH has now been indexed at our website by some great volunteers, enabling all who visit to find things pertinent about individual veterans by using “Search options” at our Home page. More help is still needed to index all the names in such things as Roy’s article. In Savannah, our Webmaster gave an interactive presentation following our Saturday night Banquet, demonstrating how easily one can SEARCH and get direct links to all the documents indexed to date for any veteran.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS: The 306th BGHA has wholeheartedly adopted the suggestion of Em Christianson (whose husband “Chris” was a 368th pilot; Em is a decades-long reunion attendee; both she and Chris, before his death, served on our 306th Board). Em suggested that we remind all that we welcome memorial donations in memory of any specific veteran or other individual and that we report a tally of memorial donations.

I was touched that our 306th BGHA was recently suggested for memorials by the family in the St. Louis, MO, funeral home obituary for their mother, Marilyn Kelly, who died at age 95 in November 2019. Marilyn was the wife of Gene M. Kelly, 368th radio and radar operator on Henry Dryar’s crew. He flew 28 missions from June to September 1944 and died at the age of 72 in 1997. Marilyn and many family members were with us at our New Orleans 2013 reunion.

THURLEIGH 306th MUSEUM in England: The Museum had a successful OPEN season for visitors on Sundays from the beginning of May through October 2019. Our website’s Museum tab has information about how to reach Clive Carroll, who lives quite nearby the museum and is happy to welcome anyone to the museum, off-season, if special arrangement are made in advance. He is our

volunteer 306th UK Assistant Representative and a most-active member of the UK 306th Museum committee. Also at our website’s Museum tab, you will find a link to that 306th UK group’s Facebook page; links to the short newsletters they have produced to date; earlier information about the museum with photos of some of its items; and audio recordings of Ralph Franklin speaking about artifacts found in the museum, as well as his many related recollections.

NETHERLANDS DEDICATION 2 MAY, 2020 – HELP REQUEST: For those that may be related to the 423rd Jeffries crew members, please know that in the Netherlands, scheduled for 2 May 2020, is the unveiling of a monument to honor the Virgil Jeffries crew of the B-17 *Las Vegas Avenger* downed 26 November 1943. The unveiling will be held in conjunction with the 75th anniversary in May of the Netherlands’ liberation by the Allies. A committee in Sint Nicolaasga, the village very close to the site of the crash, plans to have the commemoration near the crash site. The committee intends to supply information to the population of the village regarding what happened at that time. School children will be provided specific details that will teach them about what it means to be in war, give them background concerning the crash itself, and share with them the fate of the crew.

Jaap Halma’s May 2013 compilation regarding “Las Vegas Avenger 42-30603” [in our website’s Education/Research section, under Histories of planes, crews & individuals] lists all Jeffries crew members who were involved. The Dutch researchers are still missing family members of the following crew members. Unfortunately, I do not have in my records any people known to be related to, or who have listed as their “Veteran of Interest” these crew members:

- Thomas R. McGalliard, copilot, whose death is in 306th online obits, as mentioned on p.11, Summer-Fall 2014 *Echoes*
- James S. Porter Jr, top turret gunner, whose death was listed in the January 1978 *Echoes*
- William L. (Luther) Threath Jr, waist gunner, whose death was listed in the July 1977 *Echoes*

- Richard G. Mowrer, radio operator, KIA 26 November 1943
- Henry A. Steelsmith, tail gunner, KIA 26 November 1943
- Arthur A. Adrian, ball turret gunner, KIA 26 November 1943

If anyone can help locate family members of the crew, and/or would like details about the planned events of 2 May near Sint Nicolaasga, please contact the Secretary to be put in direct contact with the Netherlands researchers.

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

French Legion of Honor Awarded to 306th Veteran Claiborne Wilson



The Consulate General of France in Atlanta decorated World War II veteran Claiborne W. Wilson of Stanford, North Carolina, with the Legion of Honor, France's highest merit, on Friday, October 11, 2019.

The Legion of Honor, established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, is bestowed upon French citizens as well as foreign nationals who have served France or the ideals it upholds, including individuals who have contributed to the country professionally, as well as veterans such as the

American who risked their lives during World War II fighting on French soil.

President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron designates the recipients of the Legion of Honor. Mr. Wilson was decorated by the Consul General of France in Atlanta, Vincent Hommeril.



Mr. Wilson, now 101 years of age, entered the US Army Air Corps on January 7, 1942. He received B-17 bomber flight training as a ball turret gunner before deployment overseas to the Thurleigh Air Base in England. In October 1942, he had his first combat mission with the 306th Bomb Group. In February 1943, his B-17 was attacked by German fighter aircraft. He and two other crew members managed to parachute out of the burning aircraft. Mr. Wilson evaded the Germans for several days before being taken in by several French families who helped him connect with the French underground. After several close calls and unsuccessful attempts to cross over into Spain, he finally reached Gibraltar and was sent back to the Thurleigh Air Base. After returning to the United States, Mr. Wilson was assigned to intelligence at the Pentagon and provided survival training to crews heading into combat. ■

The above article is extracted from a press release provided by the Consulate General's Office in Atlanta. The 306th BGHA wishes to thank Chuck Daniel, Clay Wilson's nephew, for providing the above information and the accompanying photos.

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 November 24, a total of \$9440 has been received from 95 different donors in the following categories:

Mailed directly to the Treasurer (or received at the Reunion)	\$6226 - 54 donors
Received via the Membership Director	\$545 - 7 donors
PayPal donations on the 306 th website	\$2652 - 36 donors
AmazonSmile donations	\$17 – unknown number of donors

Please Consider Making a Memorial Donation

Included in the above were donations designated specifically as being in memory of a veteran, all veterans of the 306th, or the spouse of a veteran. They totaled \$395 and represent donations from 4 donors. Please consider this very meaningful way of honoring the memory of a veteran or other person who has been part of the 306th family by noting it on the memo line of your check or as a notation when using PayPal.

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: _____

This donation is being made in memory of:

Name: _____ Relationship to 306th _____

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

Surprise Findings Add to Cole Crew Story

By Linda Folk Linton

During this past Spring [2019], two war relic findings from the Cole Crew crash on 14 October 1943, near Beek, Netherlands, were miraculously discovered. With these findings, Roy Gottgens, the man responsible for building the Cole Crew Memorial and writing a book about this crew, was able to add new details to their story.

In April, Roy received a phone call from Ben Schoutrop, a resident of the village of Bunde, Netherlands. Ben's mother had recently passed away, and while cleaning out her attic, a little brown book with the title "Parachute Log Record" was found.

This discovery reminded Ben of the parachute his late father, Miel, had given to him some years ago. Ben still kept it perfectly folded in its original bag. His father told him he had witnessed a B-17 take a hit and catch fire in October of 1943.

As a 19-year-old boy, Miel watched the aircraft, with dense smoke trails, lose altitude. He got on his bike and rode in the direction of Beek and noticed dots in the air. They were crew members that had jumped from the burning B-17. Miel came across one crew member that had landed in a field south of Geleen. They shook hands, and the man introduced himself as an American. Miel tried to explain to the airman how to get away, and the airman gave him his parachute. Miel carefully concealed it in a haystack, retrieving it that evening and taking it home to his parents. They became very upset because it was risky to keep things hidden from the Germans; however, Miel did not take heed of their warning.

The discovery of the Log Record prompted Ben to search the internet for more information. By coincidence, he came across the chronicle Roy had written about the Cole Crew. When he read it, he got chills realizing how much of this story coincided with that recounted by his father.

Ben and Roy were able to verify the parachute did indeed belong to a member of the Cole Crew. Even more fascinating, their research showed to which crew member it belonged. Three of the crew died due to explosions inside the aircraft. The pilot came down in a tree and died. Three crew members drifted in the direction Eisdan, Belgium, and were

captured. Two of the remaining three were taken prisoner in Beek. Only one was able to avoid apprehension, and that was the 23-year-old tail gunner, Sgt. Irving Mills. He suffered severe burns and was hidden in a barn near Beek, but was later taken captive by the Germans.

It is unique for a parachute of this quality to show up intact, together with its logbook, after this many years.

The second surprise was the finding of several forgotten notebooks that detailed all the important events that took place in Beek during World War II. Unfortunately, the writer of these notebooks is unknown. To possibly resolve this mystery, the local Historical Association of Beek has begun an investigation.

These detailed notes confirmed that most of the things Roy had previously discovered about the Cole Crew crash, but the writer provided more information by describing where the parts of the bomber came down. Significant pieces of the plane hit the ground very close to the "Old Pastorie" Visitor Center, making the monument to the Cole Crew even closer to the actual crash site.

The diary also details the landings of two crew members, Sgt. Adrien H. Wright and Lt. Robert E. Partridge. One airman landed in a field behind a military police barrack in Beek, and the other landed in a farm field at the edge of town. Both locations were close to the main road between Geleen and Beek and only a mile from the crash site. The police and Germans were at both sites very quickly, and the local people had no time to ask for names.

Both of these findings provided new details about the crash and supported information already known about that fateful day. Roy was able to add these two pieces of information to his book *Thunder in Heaven* before the printer published it in June of this year. ■



Roy Gottgens with Cole Crew descendants.

306th Remembered at Greenham Common

Prof. Andy Kempe
Director, Greenham Control Tower

Newbury is a pleasant market town (pop. 41,000) in the county of Royal Berkshire. It is approximately 50 miles to the west of London and sits between two areas designated to be of outstanding natural beauty. The town is famous for several different reasons. In 1643 it was the site of a significant battle in the English Civil War. It has one of Britain's biggest racecourses and was home to Richard Adams, whose book about an intrepid group of rabbits, *Watership Down*, is set there (maybe you remember the film and Art Garfunkel's hit from it, *Bright Eyes*). Newbury is also the home town of Kate Middleton, wife of Prince William. Highclere Castle, the real *Downton Abbey*, is just five miles to the south. It is also home to Greenham Common, once a major USAF base.

In the 1980s, Greenham Common frequently appeared on the British national news owing to the siting of Tomahawk cruise missiles there and the protests that this precipitated. While many townsfolk clearly remember the presence of both those serving in the USAF servicemen and those who protested against their presence, fewer people know much about the critical role Greenham Common played in World War II.

Greenham Common was just one of a number of bases in the area. Others include Membury and Ramsbury, while villages such as Aldbourne will be familiar to devotees of the tv series *Band of Brothers*. On June 5th, 1944, General Eisenhower drove from Allied Naval HQ Southwick House in Portsmouth to Greenham, an event recreated by enthusiastic re-enactors to mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day. That evening he delivered the famous speech in which he told the men, "The eyes of the world are upon you." Just before midnight, he watched 81 C-47 Dakota aircraft take off at 11-second intervals to carry 1,430 paratroopers to France. Glider-borne troops followed soon after. In September of that year, 145 C-47 Skytrain aircraft towed Horsa gliders to Holland as part of Operation Market Garden. Although Greenham Common was never attacked

in the war, there was a loss of life there. On December 12th, 1944, a Horsa glider crashed during a training exercise. The 31 soldiers and two pilots on board were killed. Just three days later, two squadrons of B-17 Flying Fortress bombers were diverted to Greenham following a raid over Germany because of bad weather. The lead aircraft of both squadrons collided, and 16 of the 18 crew members were killed. Princess Anne unveiled a striking memorial to the fallen in 2012. The memorial was initially situated in the business park, which now stands where there were once hangars, workshops and living quarters. In the spring of 2019, a decision was made to relocate the memorial to the grounds of the recently restored control tower. On September 18th, 75 years after the launch of Operation Market Garden, a ceremony was held to re-dedicate the memorial in honor of the men of the 306th Bombardment Group and 17th Airborne Division. The ceremony was organized by the Newbury branch of the Royal British Legion. Representatives of the US Embassy were among the 200 guests attending the ceremony.



Princess Anne placed a poppy wreath at the memorial during the dedication ceremony.

The following week, there were two evenings of poetry and music from WW2 entitled *The Perspex Lens*. The poems chosen were written exclusively by airmen. One of them, Herbert Corby, wrote of those commemorated:

*Their lives are ended, but dreams are not yet lost
if you remember in your laugh and song
these boys who do not sing and laughed not long.*

Since their initial unveiling in 2012, a service has been held at noon on December 12th each year at the memorial. This year the service will be held at the splendid new site and will doubtless prove a very special occasion as it marks the 75th anniversary of the tragedy it commemorates.



Silhouettes of C-47s and Horsa gliders now fly in formation across the ceiling of the café while the memorial outside gives the site an added poignancy. Beyond the grounds of the tower itself, all that remains of what was once one of the longest military runways in Europe sits at the very center of the common. The 1952 Cold War control tower is now a visitor center comprising a dog-friendly café, two exhibition suites, and the glass cupola, which provides magnificent views over the two square miles of the common and the beautiful downland beyond including Watership Down (yes, it really exists!)

An attractive, illustrated timeline on the ground floor provides an overview of events on the common from ancient times through to the building of the airbase in 1941 and up to its current status as a site of particular scientific interest. Panels in the first-floor exhibition room document the part played by Greenham Common in WW2 and the Cold War. Contextual information on the nature of the Cold War and the proliferation of nuclear weapons segues neatly into the personal testimonies of USAF servicemen based there during the 1980s and some of the women who camped in protest outside its gates. A second room on this floor houses temporary displays which have, to date, included exhibitions on the natural environment of the common, photographs capturing the conditions experienced by the peace women, art inspired by the common and a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

The philosopher George Santayana famously said, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” The control tower at Greenham Common was erected for one purpose; however, the directors and volunteers who give freely of their time, energy, and expertise to running it are determined to have it serve a greater one. The objective is to inform the young and remind the older visitors what happened on this spot of ground, to celebrate, commemorate and indeed enjoy what the memorial honors. The common and adjacent woods are lovely places to walk. The tower is now embarking on the next phase of its development, which is to extend the collection of oral histories and artifacts linked directly to the tower. We always appreciate hearing from anyone who has had a connection to the tower, a story to tell, or something

lying in a cupboard or drawer that they think may be of interest to our visitors.

Greenham Control Tower is open on Thursday and Friday mornings 10.30 – 13.30 and 9.30 – 16.00 on Saturdays and Sundays. There is no entrance fee to this small but intriguing attraction, although donations boxes are housed in prominent positions. The building is wheelchair accessible, and there are restroom facilities that are wheelchair friendly. As a Grade 2 listed military building, we are unable to install elevator access to the exhibition rooms or observation deck. However, there is an interactive screen in the cafe that offers fascinating pictures from the tower's history and a 360-degree view from the Observation Deck.

The tower is just to the south of Newbury town center off the A339. ■

www.greenhamtower.org.uk

Email: info@greenhamtower.org.uk

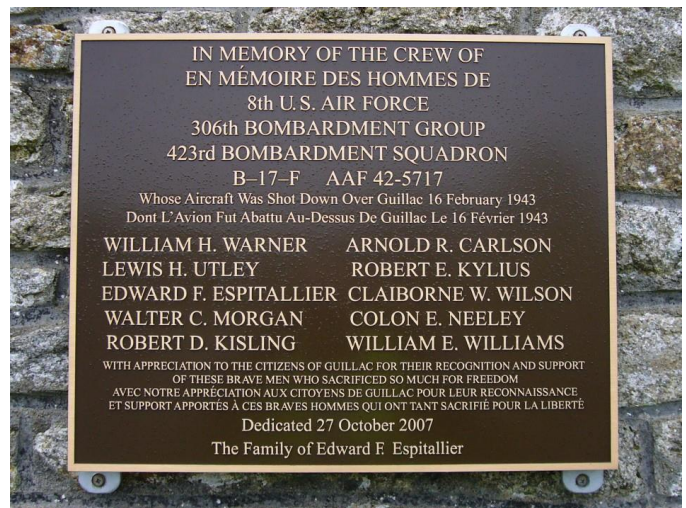
Follow us on Facebook:

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/GreenhamControlTower/>

Remembered “Over There” and “Here” — Part 3

Articles in the Winter/Spring 2016 *Echoes* (page 22), and the Summer/Fall 2017 issue (page 28) reported on numerous memorials to 306th Bomb Group men and aircraft found “Over There” in Europe. Since those articles, we have been made aware of more monuments that have been erected overseas, as well as one unique memorial here in the United States in Baltimore.

Guillac, France – In 2007, two plaques were dedicated in Guillac, France, to the crew of 423rd Bomb Squadron aircraft 42-5717, piloted by William Warner. The plane was shot down 16 February 1943 on a mission targeting St. Nazaire submarine pens. The citizens of Guillac dedicated one plaque, and a second plaque was dedicated by the family of Edward F. Espitallier, who survived the downing of the aircraft with two others. The other seven men that were killed in action: William H. Warner; Lewis H. Uteley; Walter C. Morgan; Robert D. Kisling; Arnold R. Carlson; Colon Neeley; and William E. Williams.



Fischerhude, Germany – A “roll of honor” memorial for seven men of the crew of Lt. Lawrence Kooima, who were killed in action on 8 October 1943, was erected and dedicated at the crash site near Fischerhude, Germany, in September 2013. The photo of the plaque was sent to us by Al Claiborne, Professor Emeritus, Wake Forest University, which he discovered at the same time he was researching a 390th Bomb Group aircraft lost on the same mission to bomb Bremen, Germany. The 306th Veterans lost were: Lawrence W. Kooima; Frank H. Crawford; Donald W. Berkey; Charles A. Cressy; Stanley J. Couvillion; Alvis W. Tinsley; and Robert S. Weston.



Lille, France - On the third mission flown by the 306th (second to Lille, France), on 8 November 1942, the 369th aircraft of Captain Richard D. Adams was hit by flak and went down. Adams and four others survived (Adams evaded), but five of the crew were lost with the plane. A small memorial plaque remembering those five lost men: Peter Greyno; Anthony J. Lacek; Jim T. McCloy; John S. Saunders; and Frank M. Zeck was placed on a building at the sight of the crash near Lille.



St. Alphonsus Church, Baltimore, MD – Last year, Mr. Henry Gaddis contacted us regarding an article he was writing for the magazine **Vytis – The Knight** (official publication of the Knights of Lithuania), regarding an unusual memorial found in St. Alphonsus Catholic Church in Baltimore. The memorial is a collection of the “wings” of several 306th Veterans who gave them to Father Adrian Poletti upon completing their required combat missions. They eventually were mounted and came to reside in St. Alphonsus. Well before Mr. Gaddis’ article was published in the Fall 2017 issue of the magazine, 306th Veteran Bill Carlile had heard of the display, visited the Church, and relayed the story of the wings memorial to the 306th BGHA.



Father Adrian Poletti

Greenham, England – Debbie Henderson, niece of S/Sgt. Wayne F. Laubert, 368th bomb squadron, recently made us aware of a very impressive memorial first erected at Greenham Common in December 2012 by Princess Anne of the British Royal Family, and recently moved to a better location and rededicated 21 September 2018. The three-part memorial consists of three large vertical stones, one noting the sacrifices of all US Servicemen who gave their lives. Another that recognizes the 31 paratroopers from the 17th Airborne Division and two glider pilots from the 88th Troop Carrier Squadron who were killed during a training flight over Greenham Common 12 December 1944. The third stone honors the 16 men from the 306th who died in a mid-air collision over Greenham Common three days later, 15 December 1944. Only two men survived the crash. The two 306th Bomb Group aircraft [43-37633 from the 368th and 43-38019 “Milk Run Special” from the 423rd], collided in skunk weather while they were returning to base from a mission that targeted Kassel, Germany. Killed from the 368th were: Charles A. Crooks; J. P. Mockus; Elijah B. Slocum; Harold A. Polderman; Albert W. Seaberg; Wayne F. Laubert; Joseph M. Mandula; Lloyd Cain; and Richard W. Miller. Those men lost from the 423rd were: Edward S. Smolenski; Richard E. Gard; William R. Farrell; Robert K. Reis; Walter E. DeHoff; William J. Boyle; and Gail W. Pashon. ■

The Evolving 306th Bomber Crews

The B-17 bomber crew has long been portrayed as merely ten men manning each aircraft (officers: pilot; co-pilot; navigator; and bombardier; and enlisted men: engineer/top turret gunner; radio operator; ball turret gunner; left and right waist gunners; and tail gunner). But the number of men on the crew and the positions on the bomber evolved throughout the war. These ten crew positions were fairly standard from late 1942 through to about August 1944 on most B-17s. But?

Yes, the first few combat missions flown by the 306th did not have ten-man crews. “Interrogation Forms” from the first combat mission report for 9 October 1942 listed only one or no waist gunner and had the separate engineer and top turret gunner positions manned by two different men on some of the planes.

This crew configuration quickly changed as the ferocity of the German fighter attacks necessitated manning every gun on the aircraft, with the addition of a second waist gunner and the engineer taking over dual duties as a top turret gunner. Russell Strong wrote in his book, **First Over Germany**:

The first few missions of the 306th were generally flown with nine-man crews as it was believed that the waist gunner could adequately man the ‘outside’ gun, while the gun on the inside of the formation would not be used. But since formations were small, fighter attacks were often overwhelming, persisted for extended periods of time, and came from all directions; it did not take long to realize that all guns needed constant manning.

Another wrinkle in the early crew manning came with the advent of the “togglie” flying in the bombardier/nose gun position. Lt. Colonel Curtis Lemay, commander of the 305th Bomb Group (former executive officer for the 306th while it trained in Wendover, Utah), was experimenting in early 1943 with improved formations and methods that would significantly increase bombing accuracy. He started assigning “lead bombardiers” flying in the lead aircraft of the formation. These were the best bombardiers in the various groups and squadrons. When the lead bombardier/aircraft

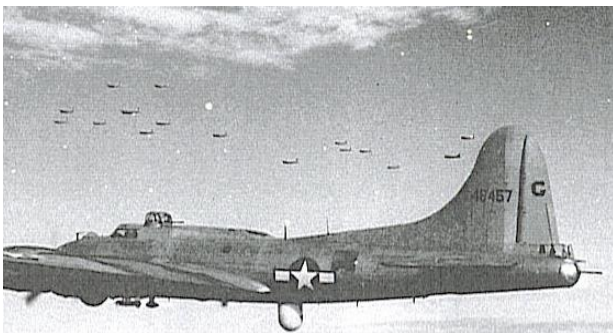
released bombs, the rest of the formation bombardiers, seeing the release of bombs, would then toggle their bomb load. Soon there were enlisted men, gunners, who would man the nose gun instead of an officer trained on the Norden Bomb Sight (an officer requiring secret clearances). These gunners were trained on how to arm the bombs and would toggle (thus the name togglie) the bombs when the lead aircraft dropped its bombs. These enlisted togglies were few and far between in 1943/44, but their numbers increased markedly through to the end of the war when there were numerous enlisted togglies found in the bomber formations.

As the war progressed into the spring of 1943, the size of formations grew to eighteen, then twenty-one, and eventually to thirty-six aircraft or more. The formation lead aircraft no longer had a trained enlisted gunner in the tail. He was replaced by an officer flying in the tail gunner position, generally a qualified pilot/co-pilot, who could monitor and report to the mission commander (flying as pilot or co-pilot in the lead plane) the progress of the formation rendezvous. He then kept the mission commander apprised of events occurring in the formation throughout the mission.

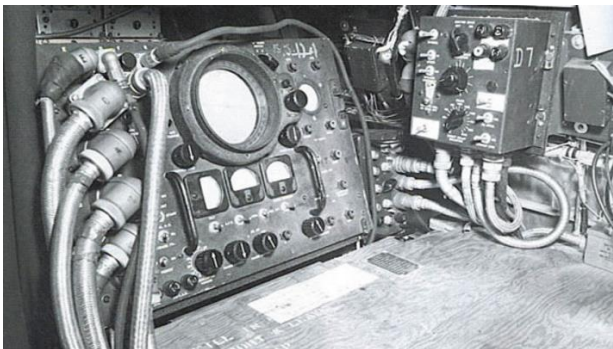
Another change to the manning of those lead aircraft came with the development of radar. As early as June 1943, missions were beginning to be flown with aircraft equipped with H2S or H2X radars for targeting through layers of weather/undercast that obscured the targets visually, rendering the Norden bombsight useless. Known as Pathfinders (PFF), also nicknamed “Mickey” ships, the ball turret was removed, and a radar dome was mounted in its place. Of course, there was no longer a ball turret gunner on these planes. Instead, there was a specially trained radar navigator assigned, with a radarscope and equipment mounted in the back of the radio room. He would “read” the radarscope and relay navigation and targeting information to **two** more navigators forward in the normal position in the nose compartment with the bombardier. As the war proceeded, the number of “Mickey” ships in the formation on any one mission would grow to as many as four, and the extra navigator forward was eventually eliminated.



367th Mickey Ship: 367th Pathfinder Aircraft 44-8676, note the white radar dome under the aircraft in place of the ball turret.



B-17 with the white H2X radar dome in the ball turret location. (photo courtesy of the 482nd Bomb Group, 482nd.org.)



The H2X radar scope and equipment mounted at the back of the radio operator's compartment, manned by specially trained radar navigators.

By the summer of 1944, after D-Day, the 8th Army Air Corps (AAF) and its groups of P-51 Mustang and P-46 fighters dominated the air space over continental Europe. In August, with very little German fighter opposition, some 306th Bomb Squadrons came full circle and began flying missions with only nine crewmen, eliminating one waist gunner. By the fall of that year, virtually all

306th B-17s on a combat mission (except PFF aircraft) were manned by only nine men.

In December 1944, there was another crew position that appeared on some aircraft labeled as “SJ” or “Jam” on the mission report Interrogation Forms. Research reveals this new crew position to be a “Spot Jammer” manned by specially trained enlisted men, most often waist gunners. These spot jammers would be found on several airplanes in each of the lead, high, and low squadron formations. As we were using radar to identify and bomb targets, the Luftwaffe flak batteries likewise were making use of this developing technology. They would use radar to “illuminate” the bomber formations to determine the altitude, and then set their projectile fuses to detonate at that altitude, thus increasing their accuracy over visual spotting or whenever the bomber formations were above the cloud cover.

The countermeasure was to deny the flak battery the ability to use radar for targeting the bombers. Again, at the aft end of the radio compartment on B-17s so equipped, were mounted special radios, manned by the spot jammer, one was a receiver only and the other a transmitter only. The spot jammer would continuously “dial/tune” through all the frequencies on the receiver until he detected the radar signal frequency being used by the flak batteries (think of scanning your car radio for the right station to listen to). Then the spot jammer would tune the transmitter radio to that frequency and blast the flak battery radars with a signal that would obscure the radarscopes of the flak batteries (think of driving under high power electrical transmission lines on the highway, and your radio becomes nothing but loud static until you clear from under the lines). This principle is called electronic countermeasures, and today’s Air Force and Navy continue to foil enemy radars with specially designed planes whose only mission is as a radar jamming aircraft.

In February 1945, many 306th aircraft began flying missions with only eight-man crews, eliminating both waist gunners. The last combat mission flown by the 306th was 19 April 1945. The last 306th Bomb Group aircraft lost in combat was a 369th plane, “Flack Shack” 43-37619, on 10 April 1945, piloted by Lt. Alan Babin. The crew bailed out behind friendly lines, all safe except for tail

gunner Sgt. Theodore Rickerl, who was the last 306th man killed in action.

Reviewing all of the combat mission reports for April 1945 reveals that every plane flying that month was crewed by only eight men (no waist gunners). The exceptions being nine-man crews on planes where there were spot jammers, radar navigators in lead aircraft, or where the occasional photographer or observer was along for the ride. There were thirty-nine aircraft that flew the next to last combat mission on 18 April 1945. Enlisted “togglers” with ranks from T/Sgt. down to Pvt. manned the nose guns and released bomb loads on twenty-seven of the thirty-nine planes. ■

From the Editor



Parents Should be Teachers Too!

by Nancy M. Huebotter

(Editor's contact information on page 2)

According to national statistics, the average age of today's teacher is 41, which makes them two and three generations removed from the veterans of World War II. Their students are four and five generations removed from the war effort. The US Department of Veterans Affairs statistics provides us with another daunting fact: nearly 350 veterans per day cease to live; less than 450,000 who served in World War II are alive today. In his book *Three Days at the Brink*, Bret Baier writes, “World War II still has an influence on our lives, although it is growing more distant. . . . History is a living thing.”

Stories of the impact the war years had on a whole generation are being lost to the annals of history.

Today's elementary and high school curriculum focuses on an educational approach known as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) or STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). Typically, these terms address education policy and curriculum choices in schools designed to improve competitiveness in science and technology development. It has implications for workforce development, national security concerns, and immigration policy. The creative teacher, when

developing his or her lesson plans, can encompass STEM/STEAM into a variety of activities that are cross-disciplinary and project-based.

For example, one project discovered on the internet challenges students to uncover how World War II innovators used an “adopt, adapt, apply” technique to modify technologies for use during the war. The strategy is to help students understand how the American industry championed innovation and production during World War II to make equipment and materials that helped win the war in spite of tremendous challenges. The concept the students should gain is a recognition of how problem-solving was implemented during World War II, and what was learned about problem-solving techniques.

However, this curriculum, does not appear to focus on the personal aspects of the subject.

The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, offers resources on their website (<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/>) for use in the classroom to teach myriad aspects of World War II. Primary, source-driven lesson plans designed to make teaching and learning about World War II an interactive experience are readily available and very adaptable.

Additional source materials are available on the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association's website (<http://www.306bg.us/>).

It is crucial the descendants of our war heroes know and learn about experiences of their grandfathers, great-grandfathers, great-great-grandfathers, and other family members during what has been considered the most significant and deadliest war in history. There may be no way to ensure the educational system imparts such knowledge on the generations that follow second, third, fourth, fifth generations. A case must be made for carrying this legacy forward. Through the use of on-line programs, books, movies, oral histories, pictures, and more, parents can utilize various aspects of World War II to encompass tenants of STEM/STEAM, all the while turning research and analysis into a family project. With a parent's guiding hand, the learning event can become more meaningful as a step toward ensuring we never forget the price that was paid. ■

Thurleigh Museum Notes:

The following is a compilation of the 306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter (Nos. 3 thru 7), which is published by Mike Dobson, editor of the England-based newsletter. Newsletters are available on the 306th BGHA website at the following link:

<http://306bgus.apollohosting.com/museum%20v3.htm>

The third issue of the 306th Bombardment Group Museum newsletter, published in June 2019, reported the following:

306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter



We're Up and Running

Under its new management the Museum enjoyed a very successful first opening day on 5 May. Doors officially opened at 10.00hrs with first visitors arriving at 09.52!



There followed another 360 visitors before the final group departed in their family saloon.



Management Matters

It is now the long-term policy of the management group that all artefacts held within the Museum should become the property of the Museum. However, it is recognised that to achieve this will take time as, although records are sketchy, it is known that some artefacts are privately owned and were simply loaned to the Museum for exhibition purposes. To pursue this long-term objective therefore, the following procedure will be adopted to give opportunity to those who have loaned artefacts to the museum to review their situation in the light of these new proposals.

Firstly, claimants will have to satisfy the Museum management group of the validity of their claim. To initiate this, a claim form can be obtained from the Museum.

Claimants will then be given the following options:

- To remove the artefact from the Museum
- To gift the artefact to the Museum
- To loan the artefact to the Museum at the proven owner's risk.

Note: Artefacts will not be insured against loss or damage and while the Museum will take reasonable care and provide "lock-up" accommodation, it cannot accept any responsibility for their safety or security.

In the case of the latter two options, a written agreement between the Museum and the proven owner will be needed.

It is considered by the management group that this process should be time limited and it is proposed that from Sunday 3 May 2020, one year from now, all artefacts held by the Museum will be considered to be the property of the Museum.

It is hoped that this policy will not be regarded as too draconian or administrative overkill but it is strongly felt by the management group that a rationalisation of the present situation is necessary.

Finally – this Summer

Volunteers available, the intent is for the Museum to be open on from 10a.m. to 4p.m. on Sundays throughout the summer until the end of September. Also similarly on Bank holidays but if travelling long distances, checking beforehand with Clive on 01234 771984 or clivebobcarroll@yahoo.co.uk is recommended.

Stop the Presses

There are early thoughts of a special event in September so “watch this space!”

Mr. Dobson’s fourth issue of the 306th Bomb Group Museum Newsletter, published in July, reported the following:

As our readers will by now know, a group of seven enthusiasts got together to seek to preserve the Museum into the future following the death of Ralph, its founder. Surprisingly, or perhaps not, within that group we are fortunate to have all the expertise and skills necessary to successfully support the enterprise. An example is John Watson-Read, a horticulturalist, who lovingly tends the surrounding lawns and gardens and has created the “Triangle-H” motif and landscaped the “memorial corner.” Thanks John. By the way, John is also our “canteen manager”!



While we have not since attracted the 360 or so visitors that came to our opening day on 5 May, we have nevertheless had sufficient numbers to make our subsequent Sunday openings worthwhile. So far we have managed to staff these days from our small group of volunteers and it seems that the word is getting around, as a number of our visitors have made round trips in excess of 100 miles to be there!

When the 306th left Thurleigh in 1945 they were by no means the last of the United States Air Force to set foot on the airfield. After the cessation of hostilities, the airfield was converted to become the flight facility of the of a newly created research establishment which, together with the construction of a suite of very advanced Wind Tunnels at the neighbouring Twinwoods Farm Airfield - of Glenn Miller “fame”- became the Royal Aircraft Establishment Bedford. Associations with NASA Establishments and the USAF ensued and visitors from these service organisations were relatively frequent. With photographs provided by courtesy of the Bedford Aeronautical Heritage Group, two such “aircraft” visitors were a Lockheed Hercules on liaison duties and a Lockheed U-2 on military duties.





By way of a “tailpiece” to this Newsletter a Lockheed U-2 was “borrowed” from the USAF for research into the properties of the atmosphere at high altitudes and also in connection with investigations into the structure of thunderstorms!

The September issue provided the following account:

With the impending arrival of Autumn, we are pleased to report a very successful Summer for the Museum. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of a very small group of volunteers, we have managed to open on every Sunday throughout the season. The reward for this has been a steady flow of visitors, with some from Australia, California and Florida. Many memories have been evoked and new friendships forged. However, the season is not yet over as it is planned to continue Sunday openings until the last in October [27th].

A notable occasion was a visit from a sprightly Mrs. Holes [nee Trott] who served with the Women’s Land Army during the War. With support from a contingent of WLA re-enactors, we hope she enjoyed her day with us as much as we enjoyed hosting her.



Mrs. Holes and the Girls

An unwelcome visitor who leaves his mark in John’s beautifully tended lawn every week is Mr Mole. If he left a donation in the box rather than a pile of earth, we would be more tolerant!

November’s newsletter contained the following information:

On 7 November 2018 a group of “enthusiasts” got together to discuss the future of the Thurleigh Museum, recognising the ill-health and later passing of its founder, Ralph Franklin. Its objectives were to seek a future for the Museum and to consider prospects for its continuing availability to the general public. It is a pleasure to record one year on, that both objectives have been achieved. Due to the continuing generosity of Palmer Sport [Bedford] and the hard work of those enthusiasts, a reasonable future can be seen for the Museum and the success of our Sunday openings throughout the summer season has been rewarded by the number of visitors welcomed. As well as friends old and new from the United States, visitors have come from all over the UK, Australia and recently, Germany. A particular pleasure for us was to welcome Glenda and Steve Snyder to whom we owe the following “visit report”.

On August 25, my wife Glenda and I re-visited the 306th Bombardment Group Museum. Just like our first time in 2014, when Ralph and Daphne Franklin greeted us, we were given a warm welcome from volunteers Clive Carroll, John Watson-Reed, and Mike Dobson. when we arrived. I cannot thank them enough for all their dedication and hard work in re-opening and operating the Museum to preserve the memory of the brave young men of the 306th Bomb Group who fought and died to preserve freedom in the air war over Europe.



Clive Carroll, Mike Dobson, Steve Snyder, and John Watson-Reed

Glenda and I were delighted to see the museum and the grounds in such fine condition; better than

ever! We had a lovely day, and I had the pleasure of finally meeting many UK Facebook friends in person and signing copies of my book **Shot Down**, which is centered around the 306th Bomb Group. My father, Howard Snyder, was a pilot in the 369th Fightin' Bitin' Squadron. He and his crew arrived at Thurleigh on October 21, 1943 as one of the replacement crews after the disastrous Second Schweinfurt Raid.

Glenda and I took a break in the afternoon to have lunch at The Falcon at Bletsoe where my dad and the other officers of his crew had "a few drinks" the night before they were shot down over the French/Belgian border on February 8, 1944, returning from a bombing mission to Frankfurt, Germany

For anyone interested in the 306th Bomb Group and traveling to the UK, a visit to the 306th Bombardment Group Museum is a must! Glenda and I stayed in nearby Bedford at The Swan which I highly recommend. While we were in the UK, we also visited a number of other 8th Air Force bomb group memorials and museums in and around East Anglia. However, Glenda was a nervous wreck the entire time I was driving (744 miles) on the left side of the road trying to navigate all the roundabouts and the very narrow country roads.



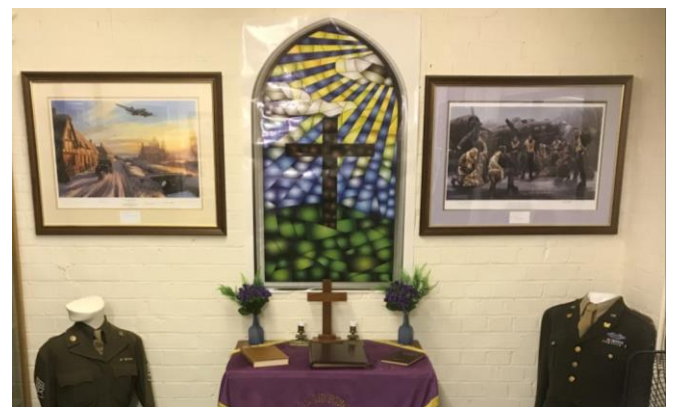
Steve and Glenda Snyder adorn the Memorial

Finally, before saying farewell to the Summer Season we must offer sincere thanks to Clive and John who have born the lion's share of visitor hosting. Without them we would not have fulfilled our ambitions! Our last day of opening for the year will be 27 October but given reasonable notice, we will try to accommodate any who may wish to visit over the winter.

In December, Mr. Dobson reported the following:

The first thing is to thank is to thank Ray Franklin [our founder's son] and his wife Val for their tremendous help in ensuring the future of the Museum. To labour the point no further, Ralph's huge collection of everything collectable was not entirely orderly and Ray and his brother, Graham, have done a sterling job in sorting the wheat from the chaff. We wish Ray and Val [and the dogs] a happy retirement in their new home in the West Country.

While on the "people" thing, it is a pleasure to welcome Mark Fussell to the Museum management group. Not only does he bring experience and an enthusiasm to look after our finances, but is accompanied his son Alex and friend Matt. These two lads are full of the 306th "spirit" and already, at their own initiative, have acquired and erected a "stained-glass" window in the Museum Chapel.



The Museum Chapel

Deviating from the Museum but hopefully of interest to our readers is the recent discovery of a Lockheed P38 "Lightning" aircraft below the sea bed off the coast of Harlech in North Wales. With nose art "Maid of Harlech" it is visible only when the conditions of sea and sand are right. The aircraft – I hesitate to call such a noble machine "a wreck" – has been given protected status by the Welsh authorities and, as I understand it, this was conferred on 11 November 2019, the 100th Anniversary of the first Great War Armistice Anniversary Day of 11 November 1919.



As a result of the success of our first Summer Season it had been decided that our Sunday opening will begin in March 2020 as opposed to this year when we opened in May.

While the Newsletter is not really the place for adverts, I thought perhaps readers may be interested in a book I have recently published, entitled:

***“Eighty Years of Thurleigh Airfield:
A Pictorial Record of the Airfield and its
Aircraft 1940 – 2020”***

This 80-page book [ISBN 978-0-954 1594-5-0] lists eighty-five different aircraft types which were resident or visited the Airfield over the period and includes a section, “US Army Air Force Occupation 1942-1945.” Price £10 [GBP] plus p&p. Orders to mike@mddobson.co.uk and payment by cheque or PayPal can be arranged. ■

In Memoriam

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

Anderson, Milo A, gunner (367th, Aloys Fuessel crew), died 16 Feb 2019 in North Muskegon, MI, age 94. He also flew combat mission from Italy with the 97th Bomb Group, 15th AAF credited with over 50 missions total. He was a carpenter after the war and worked as a cabinetmaker with the American Store Equipment Company. He is survived by sons Dale, Charles, Gale, and Wayne.

Arnold, Frank L, gunner/toggler (368th, Charles Trigg crew), POW, passed away in Midwest City, OK, 23 May 1995. With Woellner, his aircraft was shot down 29 Dec 44 on a mission to bomb Bingen. He became a Stalag Luft 3 POW.

Baldwin, Fred C, intelligence officer (423rd) of Shaker Heights, OH, died 21 Jul 1952, while on a golfing outing. He was a lawyer after the war. Baldwin’s grandson compiled his 500+ letters written home to his wife during the war, as a PDF for the 306th website.

Barnett, Aaron P, (40th CBW), age 85, passed away 27 Jan 2004 and is buried in Leavenworth National Cemetery, KS.

Barn, Gerald D, ball turret gunner (368th, Louis Cook crew), of Ord, NE, died in Valley County, NE, 10 Jul 2016, age 94. He was a member of the VFW and American Legion Post 38. At the time of his passing, surviving were three daughters, seven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

Chee, Hon T, navigator (368th), passed away in Honolulu, HI, on 28 Dec 2019 at age 97. He was a pharmacist after the war. He was also recalled to active duty during the Korean War, flying MATS missions on C-54 transports to Tokyo from Hawaii. He is survived by sons Darrick and Brandon.

Collins, Robert S, pilot (369th), passed away 22 Mar 2012, age 89, interred in Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery. He continued his service with the Air Force after WORLD WAR II, flying 43 combat missions in B-29s during the Korean War, and then flew with the Military Airlift Command during the Viet Nam War flying C-141s. He retired in the rank of Lt. Colonel.

David, Solomon D. Jr., copilot (369th, John A. Callahan crew), died 31 Oct 2012 in New Braunfels, TX, at age 87. He earned a degree in economics from the University of Texas. Following the war, he engaged in the real estate business. He received numerous honors in New Braunfels and was president of the Canyon Dam Area Chamber of Commerce, New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, New Braunfels Rotary, and the Wurstfest Association. At the time of his death, surviving were three sons.

Dinstbier, Edward W, teletype operator (423rd), of St. Johns, MI, died Jul 5, 2019, age 96. After the war he worked at Oldsmobile, retiring after 40 years. Surviving are sons Paul and Steve, daughters Sandie, Elaine, and Lissa, ten grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren.

Dusenbury, Herbert E, (367th), of Marengo, OH, passed away 17 Oct 2013. He was a lifelong cabinetmaker. At his passing surviving were children Peggy, Sharon, Francis, and Deborah, seven grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren.

Finley, Marcus M, ball turret gunner (368th, Walter Moroz crew), POW, of El Dorado, AR, died 2 Apr 2012. Shot down on 15 Oct 44 on a mission to Cologne, he spent the remaining eight months of the war as a POW. He worked for the Arkansas Louisiana Gas Company, rising to become a regional manager in three different districts. Surviving at his death were wife Margaret Jean, five children, Michael, David, John, Melissa, and Lucas, and three grandchildren.

Flattum, Fritz (449th Sub Depot) passed away 1 Oct 1987, interred in Oak Grove Cemetery, Portage, Wisconsin.

Flood, Harold R, mechanic (449th Sub Depot), of Quaker City, OH, died 6 Apr 2012 in Barnesville, OH. He was a member of the American Legion of Batesville OH, and was on the Guernsey County, OH school board. At the time of his passing, surviving were his wife, two children, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Frost, Jack C, gunner (369th Ray Schieb crew), died 8 Sep 2018, in Des Moines, IA, at age 92. He worked as an engineer for the Union Pacific RR and NW Bell Telephone after the war, and was a long-time Mason. Surviving is his wife, Wilma, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Gambaiana, Paul J, copilot (367th, Irwin Schwedock crew), **internee/prisoner**, passed away 26 Jul 2018, in Hawarden, IA, at age 96. On the 24 Apr 44 mission to bomb Oberpfaffenhofen, his plane force-landed in Switzerland where he was interned. Later, caught attempting to escape, he was imprisoned in the Swiss military prison Wauwilermoos. After the war, he graduated from the University of Northern Iowa and began a six-decade-long career as a teacher. Surviving is his wife, Dixie, their eight children, nineteen grandchildren, and twenty-one great-grandchildren.

Garrison, Calvin G, radio operator (368th, J. Ray Coleman crew), **POW**, of Roseville, MN, died 23 Sep 2015 at age 93. His plane was shot down on the 25 Feb 44 mission to bomb Augsburg, becoming a POW. He retired from the U. S. Postal Service and was a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers. At the time of his passing, he was survived by wife, Virginia, children Ray, Bonnie, and Robin, three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Garrison, Gerald T, gunner/toggler (368th, James Lett crew), 91, passed away 19 May 2017, in Tucson, AZ. He continued service in the Air Force, retiring as a Chief Master Sergeant. He then served with the University of Arizona Police as Assistant Chief of Police. Surviving is children Nancy, Tom, and Barbara, six grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren.

Gile, Franklyn D, pilot (423rd), died 5 Mar 2014, in Loma Linda, CA, at 93 years. He served in the Air Force Reserves, attaining the rank of Lt. Colonel. He went into banking after the war, retiring as a Bank Manager for Wells Fargo after 35 years of service. At the time of his passing, surviving were wife, Barbara, two sons, Jeff and Dennis, two grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Houlihan, William F, medic (367th) died 24 Jul 2019. See article on page 1.

Jarrow, Stanley L, engineering officer (367th, 352nd Service Sq), of Chicago IL, passed away in Aug 2018 at age 98. After the war, he owned and operated his own company, Jarrow Products Inc, manufacturing refrigerator door gaskets and plastic and rubber extrusions. At the time of his passing, surviving was daughter Ellen, two grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Jones, John Z, ball turret gunner (369th, Clarence Fisher crew), of Pima, AZ, passed away 6 May 2018. "Jack" received a degree in accounting from Arizona State College and then returned to the family ranch in Parker Canyon, AZ. Later, he became a grain broker. Surviving is his wife, Arlene, daughter Jackie, four grand-daughters, and three great-grandchildren.

Kane, Robert E, navigator (369th, John Callahan crew), of the Rochester, NY, area, passed away 24 Sep 2007. He graduated from Hobart College and received a Master's degree from the University of Rochester. He was co-founder and president of K & W Manufacturing Company. He was elected to the Irondequoit, NY, Town Board for sixteen years and served as Deputy Supervisor for four years. Surviving were his wife, Marylyn, son Douglas, daughters Barbara and Susan, and six grandchildren.

Koegel, Charles E, engineer/top turret gunner (368th, Padraic Evans crew), age 93, of Bergenfield, NJ, died 9 Mar 2015. After the war, he was a supervisor for Western Electric

for 42 years and a lifetime member of Elks Lodge 1506. His wife, Dorothy, predeceased him.

Korf, Glenn A, radio operator (368th, Woellner's crew after reporting with Robert Chrisjohn crew), **POW**, of Clio, OH, passed away 20 Jan 2009, Punta Gorda, FL. On the 29 Dec 1944 mission to bomb Bingen, his aircraft was shot down, becoming a POW. After WORLD WAR II, he owned and operated Glenn's Standard Service Station and the Gamble Hardware Store. He also worked at the Flint, V8 Engine Plant. Glenn was survived by his wife, Margarite, daughters Deborah, Rene, and Marcia, three stepsons, eleven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Larson, Gerald D, gunner (369th, Robert Grace crew), passed away 8 Jun 2017 in Villisca, IA, at age 94. After the war, he worked for a Chrysler/Dodge dealership and later for the Iowa Department of Transportation as a mechanic. He is survived by son Richard and daughter Sandy, two grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Lehnert, Franklin J, waist gunner (368th, Ben Olsen crew), **POW**, died 14 Nov 1999, and is interred in Sylvania, OH. On Woellner's aircraft, he was shot down on his very first combat mission, 29 Dec 1944 to bomb Bingen, becoming a POW. Post-war, he earned a degree in pharmacy and worked as a pharmacist. At the time of his passing, surviving was his wife, Phyllis.

Lemon, Charles R, navigator (368th, James Butler crew), of Roanoke, VA, passed away 11 May 2018, age 93. After the war, he graduated with a B.A from Washington & Lee University, and Yale with an M.A. in English. He worked for Virginia Plastics, growing and later splitting into Plastics One, Inc, where he was company president in 2002. He is survived by son, Christopher, daughter, Rebecca, and numerous grandchildren.

Lowe, Fred E, pilot (368th, Lawrence Marks crew) passed away 5 Jul 2019 in Winston-Salem, NC, age 94. He continued his service with the Air Force, retiring as a Lt. Colonel and then worked as a trucker for Pilot Freight Carriers. He is survived by his son, Scott A. Lowe.

Malin, Robert O, copilot (423rd, Warren George crew, after reported with Bert Wigginton crew), **POW**, died 13 Aug 2011, in Contra Costa County, CA, at age 89. His aircraft was shot down on 17 Apr 1943 when ten 306th planes were lost bombing Bremen. He was held as a POW in Stalag Luft 3. After the war, he flew Catalina "Flying Boats" in South America. Returning to the States, he graduated with a business degree from U.C. Berkeley. He then opened Oscar's Hot Dogs in Berkeley in 1950, successfully operating until May 2015 before it closed. Surviving at the time of his passing was wife, Evelyn, daughter Susan, son Scott, and three grandchildren.

Mallory, Chester A, copilot (367th, Arthur Dorsey crew), age 94, of Oakdale, CA, passed away 18 Oct 2016. He was employed by Vultee Aircraft before the war and graduated from Missoula Montana University. After the war, he went into the dairy and cattle business in Oakdale, CA, then started a real estate career, eventually owning two Century 21 offices in Modesto, CA. In 1963 he formed Oakdale Construction Company. He served on the city council and was Vice-Mayor of the city. He is survived by wife, Melba, two children, and three grandchildren.

May, Amos R, radio operator (367th, Fuhrmeister crew), POW, died 13 May 2013, interred in Grand Rapids, MI. With Richard Butler, his plane was shot down on the infamous Second Schweinfurt mission, becoming a POW in Stalag 17B. Post-war, he was a self-taught accountant for various firms, served as office manager for a Ford dealer for 18 years, and then for Michigan Marine Distributing Company for another 10. He then finished his working career as an investment broker. At the time of his passing, surviving was wife, Jean, son, Jerry, and a grandson.

McDermott, Dillon J, ball turret gunner (369th, John Gaydosh crew), of Pittsford, NY, passed away 14 Aug 2019 at age 96. An active member of the 306th BGHA, he was also active in numerous Veterans organizations, including the American Legion Doud Post, 40&8, the DAV, and he volunteered at the VA Medical Center. He is survived by his wife, Nancy, children Ann, John, Brian, Tom, Jean, Patty, and Peter, fourteen grandchildren, and one great-grandson.

McGuire, Arthur C, radio operator (423rd, Joseph Clark and Lawrence Marks crews), of Southampton, NJ, passed away 26 Oct 2019, at age 94. Surviving is his son, Curtis Crane.

McMullen, Donald E, (369th), of Franklin, formerly of Sandy Lake, PA, passed away 27 Dec 2017 in Pittsburgh, at 93. He worked for Westinghouse Electric, Sharon Transformer Division for 39 years, and then as a meat cutter for McKean's Golden Dawn of Sandy Lake. For another 20 years. He was a Mason, a member of Lodge 434. He is survived by daughter, Donna, sons Ronald and David, nine grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren.

Mook, Melvin E, engineer/top turret gunner (367th, Robert Verdick crew), long of Roseville, CA, died 8 Oct 2009, age 88.

Mullen, Francis E "Fritz," crew chief (367th), of Lisbon, OH, passed away 26 Jun 2018.

Mullins, Charles L, engineer/top turret gunner (369th, Clarence Fisher crew), a long-time resident of Tulsa, OK, died 24 Mar 2003, at age 80, and is interred in Arlington National Cemetery. He served in the Casey Jones project and was on the crew of the aircraft that brought Werner Von Braun out of Germany. He continued in the US Air Force, serving in the Korean conflict.

Nelson, Wilbur A, radio operator (367th, Gassman crew), passed away 26 Feb 2015, age 93, in Evansville, MN. He briefly worked for 3-M after the war and then purchased and operated Johnson Brothers Store and later the Schwantz Store in Evansville. He served as Evansville Mayor and was a member of the Masonic Lodge. At his passing, surviving was wife, Florence, son Scott, daughter Deb, four grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Noack, John P, pilot (369th), POW, Purple Heart, passed away 3 Dec 2019, in Henrico, VA, at age 100. He was a pilot on the infamous Black Thursday mission, Second Schweinfurt. He was later shot down on 11 Dec 1943 on a mission to bomb Emden, becoming a POW. After the war, he married his wife Harriett, graduated from the University of Texas, and had a career as an accountant with Reynolds Metals Company of Virginia. He is survived by his son, John, grandson David, and great-grandson, David Jr.

Overn, Thomas C, ball turret gunner (369th, Kenneth Dowell crew), of the Los Angeles, CA, area, died 9 Jul 2011 at age 87. He also flew combat missions with the 305th Bomb Group and the 457th Bomb Group.

Pearson, Wayne C, tail gunner (368th, Alfred Sykes crew), 92, died 8 Jun 2018, in Crystal Falls, MI. He worked for Western Electric as a dispatcher in the Milwaukee area, and on a power line repair team. He was a member of the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Assoc). He is survived by his wife, Evelyn, children Dale, Gene, and Diane, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Pengra, William J, pilot (369th, Clarence Fisher crew), passed away 21 Jun 2019, in Bend, OR, at age 95. He was a first pilot during the Casey Jones Project. He was a graduate of the University of Oregon. He worked as an accountant and then opened his own insurance company in The Dalles, OR. Later, he moved to Bend and was an accounting manager for various firms there. Surviving are four children, Bob, Cathie, Joanie, and Steve, three grandchildren, and two great-grandsons.

Perry, James F. Jr., radio mechanic (368th), age 95, of Jackson, MS, died 4 Feb 2015. Before the war, he attended Mississippi State University. He retired from AT&T as an electrical engineer. At the time of his passing, surviving were daughters Janet and Lisa, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Persac, Leon J. Jr, ball turret gunner (423rd, Paul Reieux crew), 93, of Baton Rouge LA, passed away 19 Sep 2019. He was a graduate of LSU and, in 1954, founded Persac Insurance Agency, retiring fifty years later. Jack and his wife attended numerous reunions. He served as a Director from 2006 to 2009. Surviving are wife Bernadine, daughter Adrienne, sons Jack III, Bill, David and Thomas, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Pollard, Theodore E, navigator (368th, Carl Hathaway crew), POW, died 10 Oct 2013 in Amarillo, TX, at age 90. Shot down with Woellner on the 29 Dec 1944 raid to bomb Bingen, becoming a POW in Stalag Luft 1. He earned a B.S. Degree from the University of Colorado. As a structural engineer, he opened T. E. Pollard and Associates with his wife, Timmye, in Amarillo, retiring in 2003. Surviving at the time of his death were his children, Wayne, Martha, Richard, and Evelyn, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Richardson, Cecil A, ball turret gunner (369th, Clayton Nattier crew), POW, died 30 Sep 2009 in Haysville, KS. His aircraft was shot down 13 Sep 1944 on the mission to bomb Merseberg and became a POW at Stalag Luft 4. At his passing, surviving were two sons, a daughter, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Saenz, Bernardo C, (982nd MP Company), of Brazos County, TX, passed away 4 Jan 1993 at age 74.

Schneider, Richard G, engineer/top turret gunner (367th, Fred Mitchell crew), of Sioux Falls SD, passed away 6 Mar 2013 at age 89. After the war, he attended Concordia College in St. Paul. He commenced a career as an x-ray and medical equipment salesman. At the time of his passing, he was survived by his son, Gregg, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Tryloff, Warren F, bombardier (423rd), POW, of Lansing MI, died 17 Aug 2017 at age 95, in Evanston, IL.

With Farwell, he was shot down 12 Sep 1944 on his very first mission, becoming a POW. He attended Michigan State University, studying business. He joined the Michigan State Medical Society and became its long-time Executive Director from 1970 until his retirement in 1984. Surviving at the time of his death were daughters Robin, Molly, and Margaret, and four granddaughters.

Uhor, Joseph P, gunner (423rd, Raymond Check crew), died 2 Feb 2009, age 90, in Brooke County, WV. After World War II, he was employed for 46 years at Follansbee Steel.

Urdahl, Donald W, radio operator (386th, Charles Niblack crew), long of Redwood Valley, CA, age 95, passed away 1 Jun 2016 in Willits, CA. He worked briefly at Lockheed Aircraft before the war. Wounded on the 3 Feb 44 mission to bomb Wilhelmshaven, he was awarded the Purple Heart. He was a master carpenter and was governor of Moose Lodge 1992 and a member of VFW Post 1924. At the time of his death, surviving were son, Gary, and daughter, Donna, eight grandchildren, and fifteen great-grandchildren.

Valdespino, Jose M, ball turret gunner (367th, William Allen crew), died 24 Dec 2016 at age 94. A native of San Antonio, he is interred there at Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery. He earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Trinity College. He became an educator, teaching math for 34 years at Highland High School and also worked as a real estate broker. He was a member of the DAV and VFW Post 76. At the time of his passing, surviving were his wife, Gloria, children Robert, Vincent, Edward, Anne, Adrienne, Valerie, Martin, Lorraine, Marcus, twenty grandchildren, and fourteen great-grandchildren.

Walley, Oren L, engineer/top turret gunner (423rd, Robert Horn crew), died in Richton, MS, 26 Jan 2010, age 87. He continued his service with the U. S. Air Force after WORLD WAR II, retiring in 1960. He worked as an electronics technician and was a 60-year member of the Masonic Lodge. At his passing, survivors included wife, Mary Frances, daughter Cindy, stepson Bob, step-daughter Janice, eleven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Wehrman, Bernard K, gunner (423rd, Kenyon Devaney crew), age 91, of Maple Grove, MN, died 14 Apr 2017. He held a degree from Iowa State in Landscape Architecture. He served for over forty years as a landscape consultant and part-owner of the firm Nichols, Nason, Law, and Wehrman. At the time of his death, he was survived by wife, Jean, children, Sheri and Bill, and three grandchildren.

Welch, James G, (18th Weather Squadron), of Salem, OR, passed away 5 Jul 2018. After World War II, he graduated from the University of Oregon. He became a journalist, eventually becoming the managing editor at the Salem *Capital Journal* newspaper.

Wilk, Leon T, technician (4th Station Complement Squadron), passed away on 4 Jul 2000, Lake County, IN, at 74.

Williamson, Harold L. Jr., engineer/top turret gunner (423rd, Henry Wills crew), 93, passed away 5 Mar 2018, in Rockaway Township, NJ. He owned and operated Williamson ESSO Service Station and later worked for Hewlett-Packard. He is survived by children, Linda, Cheryl, and Ronald, and three grandchildren.

306th Family:

Goode, Janet, of Beckley, WV, wife of **Grover Goode**, 368th engineer, and active member of the 306th BGHA., passed away 2 Sep 2019. She is survived by her daughters Deborah (Tony) Allen and Jana (Harry) Church, five grandchildren, and one step-grandson. She met her great-grandchild two days before her death.

Haapa, Peg, Director of Red Cross Club (AAF Station 111, Thurleigh), passed away 8 Nov 2018. See page 37 article.

Leary, James J, grandson of **Joseph Brennan**, 423rd, of Denver CO, son of Nena Leary, passed away 12 Oct 2019. Jim was active in the 306th BGHA, attending numerous reunions, photographer for many of them, and always helping with setting up and breaking down the hospitality room.



Peg Haapa:

Thurleigh Red Cross Club Director Dies

Once referred to as the Red Cross Cannonball, Peg Haapa was an enthusiastic supporter of the 306th Bomb Group, attending many reunions throughout the years. But when she failed to notice an announcement of a 1981 reunion at Thurleigh, she mused in a letter to the treasurer and “contact

man,” Mr. William M. Collins, Jr., “How could you have a reunion without the Red Cross Girl? Who’s going to bring the donuts?”

Born Mary “Peg” Pergande on 11 June 1917 in Warren, OH, she passed away in Windsor, CA, on 8 November 2019, leaving a past



punctuated with engaging, amusing, and captivating anecdotes.

Peg committed to a life-long journalism career when she majored in the subject at Ohio Wesleyan University. Following graduation, she took a job on

the writing staff of the *Columbus Citizen*, where she met Arvo “Hop” Haapa, the man who would become her husband.

According to the October 2007 issue of *Echoes*, in early 1943, after training for work with the American Red Cross (ARC), Peg, along with other Red Cross girls and thousands of GIs, boarded the *Acquatainia* bound for Scotland. Boasting of joining the war effort ahead of her husband-to-be, she blew him a kiss and said, “I’m off to fight the war. Wait for me, dear.” She reported to the 381st Bomb Group located at Ridgewell near Cambridge.



In September 1943, Peg transferred to Thurleigh to be the director of the large ARC Club on the base, arriving just prior to the Schweinfurt raid, and departing just before Christmas 1944.

While at Thurleigh, Peg married Lt. Arvo Haapa, who arrived overseas six months after she did. Apparently not wanting to wait until they returned home, Haapa enlisted in the Army and located his sweetheart on the other side of the world. Permission to marry took two months and 19 sets of papers, three of which signed by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, several additional challenges, and a honeymoon interrupted by a bombing raid.

Peg recalled that while at Thurleigh, there was an incident with a goat that took up residence at the base. In correspondence with Russell Strong, she dispelled any myths about the event. “It is true about [a goat named] Banana. I was on the base at the time that the guard challenged him with, ‘Who goes there?’ The goat didn’t even say ‘N’yaaa,’ so the guard shot him. It is NOT true, however, that goat was served that week for the honor crew dinner at the Red Cross Club. It was rabbit. (A little tough, though, as I recall.)

One account that seems to be lost from the annals of history is a story Peg entitled, “I Showed the Queen to the Latrine.”

At the end of 1944, Peg transferred to the continent and worked at Red Cross facilities in France and Belgium. When the war ended, she was working at a club in Epinal, France, and at a redeployment depot where soldiers from German prison camps were re-outfitted and given new papers. As the war ended, Peg went to Germany and

established a Red Cross Club in Berchtesgaden, the site of Hitler’s Eagle Nest.

When Peg and Arvo returned to the United States following the war, they reinstated their journalism skills, eventually establishing themselves in Newport Beach, CA. In 1948 they founded the *Newport Beach Ensign*, which came to be known as “the official newspaper of the city of Newport Beach.” The Haapas labored to make the paper as good as it could be. Initially, the subscriber base was small, the papers hand-delivered, and eventually, daughters Karin and Bonnie did some of the typesetting duties. As the readership grew, the Haapas were able to employ staff to deliver the papers. However, they continued to hand-deliver the paper to their most famous subscriber – John Wayne.



Peg is said to have been very community-focused and social, caring genuinely about the people of Orange County, and ensuring her neighbors were kept up-to-date on Newport Beach news. She wrote many of the articles published in the newspaper, but is rumored to have had a habit of playfully leaving a row of commas at the bottom of her copy with a loving note to her husband, directing him to place them in the text properly.

After 30 years of “round-the-clock toil,” Peg and Arvo retired. Arvo died in 1984.

Peg Haapa is survived by her daughters, Karen Puleo of Windsor, CA, and Bonnie Denmark of Brewster, NY, as well as six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



306th Bomb Group Historical Association Membership Registration Form 2020 Calendar Year

Print all information.

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ eMail: _____

Are **YOU** the 306th WWII Veteran? _____ If **YES**: Duty/Job Title: _____

Additional information (such as POW? Year born?) _____

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

I am not related to him. _____ **OR**: This 306th WWII Veteran is my (relationship): _____

Veteran's Name: _____ 306th Unit: _____

Duty/Job Title or Additional Information: _____

I am a 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 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; on memo line write "2020 Echoes."
Please mail (with or without this form) your check to:

Jennifer Mindala, 306th BGHA Treasurer
3244 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 Rd, 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 to ensure your email/mail and other contact information is current.

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



2020 Reunion

**306th Bomb Group Historical Association
and
Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association**

**In conjunction with
Eighth Air Force Historical Society**

Memphis, Tennessee

21 thru 25 October

**Watch for more details in the Secretary's monthly eMails
and the next issue of *Echoes***