



B-17 Flying Fortress

2022 Tucson Reunion Plans Set



Plans for the May 2022 reunion of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association in Tucson, Arizona, are now in their final stages. Those attending should plan to arrive on Wednesday, May 4th. Events begin the morning of Thursday the 5th. The base of operations will be The Embassy Suites Tucson East, a 30-minute drive from the Tucson International Airport.

Starting at 9:00 Thursday morning, two presentations are scheduled. During the opening event of the reunion, Sally Hanley, granddaughter of the association’s first president, Ralph Bordner, and 306th BGHA Treasurer, will discuss how to create a webpage to honor a particular veteran. The second presentation is hosted by 306th Historian Cliff Deets, who will explain the significance of the medals our veterans earned.

After a short break, the group will board buses to the Pima Air and Space Museum, where the focus will be on touring the museum and hangar maintained by the 390th group. During lunch, guest speaker Col. Richard Bushong, a



World War II veteran, will share accounts of his adventures during the war.

On Friday, May 6th, reunion attendees will visit the Pima Air and Space Museum, featuring approximately 400 historic aircraft, from a Wright Flyer to a 787 Dreamliner. Sitting on 80 acres, the museum opened its doors to the public in May 1976. Over the past forty years, the museum has grown immensely and today encompasses six indoor exhibit hangars (three of which are dedicated to World War II).

Comfortable walking shoes are recommended.



Boeing B-29

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Leadership
306th Bomb Group Historical Association
2022 – 2023 Officers

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Director of Membership

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BARBARA NEAL (exp. 2023)
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STEVE SNYDER (exp. 2022)

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306th Museum Thurleigh

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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 2022-2024
President Sue Sharkey

It is an honor to serve as your new 306th BGHA President. I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of our former Presidents, Kevin Conant, Bill Feeser, Steve Snyder, and so many others who have led this association into one of the most significant World War II bomb groups currently in existence. I'm looking forward to serving with our Officer Directors, Clayton Snyder as our Vice President and Interim Secretary, and Sally Hanley as our Treasurer. Additionally, I am looking forward to serving with the Board of Directors, Nancy Huebotter, Bruce Chase, Deb Conant, Barbara Neal, Cliff Deets, Mike Prentice, and Steve Snyder. I'd also like to thank Barb Neal for her service as Secretary and Jennifer Mindala as Treasurer.



My father, Howard Sharkey, served thirty years in the Air Force, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He began his career in February 1942. He left his home in Elkhart, Indiana, on 9 February for Kelly Field in Texas; from there, he went to Ontario, California, and numerous other locations for officer training and then pilot training. Jimmy Stewart was one of his flight instructors, which I always thought was pretty exciting. He received his pilot wings on his 22nd birthday, 26 November 1942. On 18 July 1943, my parent's first wedding anniversary, my dad left Dow Field in Bangor, Maine, for Thurleigh, England. He flew his first mission as a B-17 pilot on 8 December 1943. His last mission was on 20 March 1944. He returned home in April 1944 to my mom and his baby boy, John, who was born while he was stationed at Thurleigh.

After the war, my dad left the military to become a TWA pilot then returned to duty for the Berlin Airlift. He loved serving his country as an officer in

the U.S. Air Force and continued his service for thirty years.

My dad instilled in his family the love of our great country, recognizing that many Americans sacrificed greatly for our freedom. He taught us the lessons of patriotism, service, leadership, and, when necessary, sacrifice for the future of keeping the freedom for which many laid down their lives.

My mom and dad enjoyed attending the 306th bomb group reunions. My first recollection of their attendance at the reunions was in the early 1980s. My dad sadly passed away on 9 February 1990, ironically, 48 years from the day he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. My mom attended two more reunions after his passing, one of which I attended with her in 1998. She always looked forward to receiving her copy of the 306th *Echoes*. Mom was tremendously proud of my dad and his thirty years of service in the military. Dolores Sharkey was an incredible support to my dad and a proud military wife. She passed away in May 2016.

As the proud daughter of a great man and father, I am committed to honoring my dad in my lifetime in whatever manner I can. Serving as President of the 306th is a wonderful opportunity in which I can continue my commitment to his legacy and honor all of the great heroes of his time.

I want to share with you a bit of information about myself. I am married to my wonderful husband, David. We have three grown children, our two sons Derrek and Aaron, our daughter Jenna, and six grandchildren. We are blessed with our son-in-law Ben, daughter-in-law Laura, and with much joy, our family is looking forward to adding a daughter-in-law this summer, Karin, along with her three beautiful daughters. I currently serve as Vice Chair on the University of Colorado Board of Regents, an elected office. I have served on the board for eleven years and will enjoy my final year in 2022. I also serve on the Women's Foundation of Colorado and several advisory boards.

As we faced a devastating pandemic the last two years, we have been kept from coming together in fellowship at the 306th reunions. We have all faced many challenges during this time. We can only reflect on the significant sacrifices of the generation of Americans as they faced the challenges of a world war. The resolve of our great nation continues today, as it always has, and God willing,

will continue into the future. The history and stories of the 306th are an integral part of our country's freedom, a history I believe our association has a duty to keep alive. Keeping these records is the least we can do to honor those heroes who sacrificed on our behalf.

Happily, looking forward, we have a reunion in May. We will be coming together from 4 May thru 8th in Tucson, Arizona. I cannot wait to be there, and I am not only excited about the program the reunion committee has organized, but I am anxious to meet so many of you in-person. I want to express my appreciation to Deb Conant, Reunion Chair, along with the reunion committee. A great deal of time, thought, and planning has gone into this reunion. It will be a bit more special since the last time we joined together was in Savannah in November 2019. We will enjoy a tour of the 390th Bomb Group Museum and a visit to the PIMA Air Base Museum. Additionally, we will enjoy fellowship, organized dinners, informative speakers, displays of artifacts from the 306th bomb group, our special folded wings ceremony, and opportunities to learn much more about the history of the bombardment group.

This summer will be the 80th anniversary of the 306th Bomb Group's arrival in Thurleigh, England. As President of the association, I have formed an executive committee that includes Steve Snyder, Kevin Conant, Clayton Snyder, and Sally Hanley to plan a trip to Thurleigh to commemorate and honor the 306th Bomb Group's arrival and the subsequent missions flown over France and Germany, which give the Group the distinction of being "First Over Germany."

This association exists to serve and inform its membership, maintain and gather documentation of the individuals who served, and continue its research as we move forward. As President of the association, I am here as a temporary custodian, to honor the service of those who have served before me. After my two-year term, I am dedicated to leaving an association that will continue to grow and advance its purpose. With a grateful and humble heart, thank you for this opportunity.

Your 306th BGHA President,

Sue Sharkey

80TH Anniversary Commemorative Trip to Thurleigh, England Planned

To commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the 306th Bomb Group's arrival at Thurleigh, England, a trip has been planned for anyone who would like to go.

Hotel rooms have been reserved at the historic Bedford Swan Hotel for the nights of August 11, 12, 13, and 14, 2022. Activities have been planned for each day, including visits to the Cambridge American Cemetery, the Imperial War Museum Duxford, the 306th Bombardment Group Museum, and other World War II related sites in Bedfordshire.

For more information about the details of the trip and about reserving hotel rooms, contact Steve Snyder at palmsny@gmail.com who is coordinating the trip.



Introducing 306th BGHA 3rd Generation Board Members

Editor's Note: Third generation 306th Bomb Group Historical Association members are demonstrating their devotion to the veterans and the association, their ability to thrive on challenges, establish results-oriented characteristics, and share their creative input as they help usher in a new era to the Board of Directors. They certainly have the qualifications and talent to fulfill the positions to which they have been elected.



Clayton Snyder, 306th BGHA Vice President and Interim Secretary, grew up in Seal Beach, California, and has been very involved in the arts and athletics all of his life: singing, acting, and dancing as well as

playing soccer, basketball, and water polo. When he was 13, he landed the role of Ethan Craft on the Disney TV series *Lizzie McGuire*, which led to *The Lizzie McGuire* movie. For a time, Clayton balanced his acting career with participating in sports by playing club water polo. Later he turned his focus entirely to athletics and academics by earning a water polo scholarship to Pepperdine University, where he was team captain his junior and senior years. He majored in Film Studies.

Clayton played water polo professionally for club teams in Italy, Hungary, Montenegro and represented the USA at the World University Games in Shenzhen, China. In 2013, he returned to an acting career, appearing in various TV, film, streaming, and web projects. He now works full-time as a real estate agent living in North Hollywood, California, with his wife Allegra and their 18-year-old Siamese cat Groucho. In July, the Snyder family will be welcoming a 4th generation 306th BGHA member.

Lt. Howard John Snyder Jr., Clayton's grandfather, was the pilot of the B-17 *Susan Ruth*,

and was shot down 8 February 1944. He evaded capture, and after seven months listed as missing in action, Howard made it back home to his beloved wife Ruth, one-year-old daughter Susan, for whom his plane was named, and newborn baby Nancy. Their third child would be Steve Snyder, Clayton's father, who is an active member in the 306th and 8th Air Force community, and the author of *Shot Down: The true story of Howard Snyder and the crew of the B-17 Susan Ruth.*"

Clayton says he became vaguely aware that his father was involved in an association pertaining to the 306th Bomb Group and was a bit surprised when he discovered Steve had become president of the association (well, maybe not *that* surprised). Clayton says, "My father leans into duty and leadership, and I guess I don't fall too far from the tree." After attending reunions for a couple of years, Clayton was invited to join the 306th BGHA as a director and was later asked if he would be open to the idea of serving as vice president. Since then, he has been elected vice president and is serving as interim secretary. He is very invested in the health and future of the association.

It is easy to understand why Clayton has become involved in the 306th BGHA as a board member. He explained, "In writing his book, my father Steve developed the phrase, 'It is our duty to remember.' My grandfather did the hard work. He risked his life, so that future generations like mine could continue to enjoy the freedoms we have today. The least I could do was spend some time to remember the sacrifices he and so many others made. It puts our hardships into perspective."

Although it may not be an easy task to attract more 3rd generation members to the organization, Clayton seems to embrace the challenge. "I think getting myself and Sally Hanley, our new treasurer, involved was a great first step. Sally and I have already had a great conversation about our vision for the association. We are motivated to do what we can to see that the association does not fade with the passing of its veterans. This is a special community of people drawn together by a commonality. The original members were veterans and most of the current members are 2nd generation. Their memories of the war, and relationship with those who fought in the war, are exceptionally strong.

Because the 3rd generation is one relationship removed from the actual veterans, I do think it can be more challenging to get new members to commit emotionally to the association. However, I think that's just it! The strength of the association hangs upon the relationships of its members. So really emphasizing the reunions, getting extended family members to attend, and thinking of creative ways to keep the membership engaged will be key."

When asked what his vision might be for the future of the 306th BGHA, Clayton did not hesitate when he responded, "It will take a special guard of 3rd generation members to fill the roles of those who have come before us. The Officer, Elected, and Position Directors have put in countless hours of work, effort, and heart. We'll do our best. For starters, I think giving the association a fresh face will do wonders. Our generation responds to visual content. Updating some of our assets like the website, and perhaps creating video content to update members on news and upcoming events will not only serve to be more appealing to the third generation, but it will also be a way for the membership to see more faces, thus continuing to strengthen the familiarity and relationships in the association. That strength is what the future of the 306th BGHA depends upon." ■



Sally Hanley, 306th BGHA Treasurer, was born and raised in Pennsylvania and studied engineering at Penn State and University of Michigan. She has worked at NASA and as a civilian for the Air Force, but is currently an aerospace engineer for Ball Aerospace. She lives in

Lyons, Colorado, with her husband, Matt, and their two cats and six chickens.

Her grandfather, Colonel Ralph Bordner, was a bombardier and navigator in the 368th Bomb Squadron who flew 30 missions from July 1944 to February 1945. After the war, he served as Deputy Commander of the Peoria Air National Guard, retiring as Colonel on 24 March 1978.

Sally's grandparents, Ralph and Nell Bordner, were regular attendees at the 306th reunions for many years. Grandpa Bordner served as the first President of the 306th BGHA. Listening to his stories about his time in the service and hearing about their trips back to England, Sally was inspired to study abroad in college. Through the reunions, her grandparents became friends with Ralph and Daphne Franklin, the original curators of the Thurleigh Museum. Although other family members would accompany her grandparents to the 306th reunions, Sally regrets she did not attend at least one reunion with them before they passed away. In honor of her grandfather, Sally has built a website (<https://pishkinn.wixsite.com/ralph-bordner/>) and credits much of the contents to information she found while researching data stored on the 306th BGHA website.

When asked why she decided to become a 306th BGHA Board Member, Sally responded, "I attended my first 306th reunion in 2019 in Savannah with my mother, Lillian Smith; sister, Marjorie Smith; and aunt, Jo Ann Oetzel. I felt inspired by the history and the connections. After the reunion, I became interested in starting an Instagram account in an effort to reach more 306th members and friends, and where I enjoy posting some of our history (@306bg). Earlier this year, Sue Fox Moyer [a former 306th Board Member and original coordinator of the 306th BGHA Facebook page] reached out to see if I'd be interested in joining the board. I am excited to share my skills and capabilities and help preserve the history and contributions of our veterans."

Sally's personal goal within the realm of the 306th BGHA is to reach out to new members through different social media channels, such as Instagram, YouTube, or perhaps a podcast. Although the website has a fantastic wealth of information, she believes a fresh look could help bring in more members and attract younger members. She also suggested we investigate participating in World War II history-related events, airshows, or events similar to the 1940s Ball in Denver. Reaching out directly to those we know might be interested in World War II organizations, especially the 306th Bomb Group, is another suggestion on this young lady's list of ideas.

As the membership of the 306th BGHA shifts away from veterans and toward second-and third-generation members, Sally contends that our mission will be one of preserving and sharing the history of the group – not only the sacrifices made by the men of the 306th Bomb Group during the war, but also our decades of 306th BGHA reunions, research, memorials, connections, and memories. The association can rely on the wonderful work done over the years as a foundation to continue educating others and honoring sacrifices made by the 306th Bomb Group. She stated, “I feel inspired to continue telling the stories of our veterans because it is our duty to remember what they’ve done.” ■



From the Secretary
by Barbara Neal

Evolution of 306th BGHA

As I look back for my final Secretary column, I assure you that all on the board are thrilled to currently have two 3rd-generation Board members to help the 306th BGHA move into the future. At our Savannah 2019 annual meeting, Clayton Snyder (grandson of 369th pilot Howard John Snyder) was elected to the board; in October 2021, he was elected to a two-year term as Vice President. Also, at that 2021 Zoom annual meeting, Sally Hanley, granddaughter of Ralph E. Bordner, 368th bombardier-navigator, was elected to the Board. That same month Sally was confirmed by the board when she accepted serving the current two-year term as Treasurer to fill the shoes of Jennifer Mindala, who wished to retire from the board.

Originally the 306th BGHA was, by IRS designation, a nonprofit Veterans organization [501(c)(19)]; all members were World War II-era veterans (our 1st generation); only they voted at reunions’ annual meetings. Before the association held elections, 306th publications from the mid-1970s listed Russell A. Strong as Editor, and William “Bill” M. Collins, Jr, as “Contact Man” in the search for 306th veterans. In March 1979, when the 306th BGHA Articles of Incorporation were filed in North Carolina, the three initial directors

listed on that filing were the above-mentioned Ralph Bordner, Strong, and Collins. In 2015, we changed to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit “charitable organization” by IRS designation, based on our application attesting that the 306th BGHA is organized and operated exclusively to further educational purposes (rather than other allowable purposes).

More opportunities are available for interested members to participate – including more of the 3rd-generation. Our current bylaws have no specific number of directors required. Bylaws now call for four **Officer** directors (President; Vice President; Secretary; Treasurer); **Elected** directors of unspecified number; and **Position** directors (appointed positions for *Echoes* Editor, Historian, Reunion Chairperson for the upcoming reunion if that person is not already a director; and Past President by normal progression).

Now that I am in my mid-70s, I expressed in October 2021, a desire to no longer have the responsibility of writing minutes. After 12 years of writing them as the association’s third secretary, the board confirmed that someone else would be selected for the office of Secretary. In the meantime, effective 1 January 2022, Clayton Snyder is serving as Vice President and Interim Secretary until a new Secretary is selected. The board further confirmed I will serve the remainder of my most recently elected two-year term (until our annual meeting in 2023) as an elected director.

The first-ever election of officers for the 306th BGHA was at the September 1983 Omaha annual meeting, which was also the first exclusively-306th reunion versus earlier reunions with the 8th Air Force. The first 306th BGHA officers elected were, of course, all veterans: President Ralph Bordner; Vice President John L. Ryan; Secretary Russell A. Strong; and Treasurer William M. Collins, Jr.

It was 23 years later at the 2006 annual meeting, coincidentally in Omaha, when the first two 2nd-generation members were elected to the Board: Susan O’Konski and James Phelan.

Strong continued until October 2007, serving as Secretary and Editor of *Echoes* and as Historian. All of us of the 306th BGHA, both now and in the future, have benefited from his decades of work! On the front page of the July 2007 *Echoes*, Strong (at age 83) announced that issue was his “valedictory

as editor.” That article’s wording prompted a letter to members from Immediate Past President Herman Kaye, assuring all that the 306th BGHA was not disbanding and would continue hosting reunions.

Just two months later, the first 2nd-generation members were among officers elected at the September 2007 Dayton annual meeting: veteran AJ “Joe” Conroy was elected President; 2nd-generation Susan O’Konski was elected Vice President; then-Past President Albert N. McMahan was elected the association’s second Secretary succeeding Strong; and one more of the 2nd-generation joined the board, with Joel LaBo’s election as Treasurer.

At that 2007 meeting, Dr. Vernon L. Williams (2nd-generation) offered an agreement adopted by the attending 306th veterans to keep the association going despite the adamant voices of several vets who felt that the association should cease before the veterans were incapable of handling its responsibilities. More detail of the Agreement appears in the October 2007 *Echoes* issue. The result was a partnership between the 306th BGHA and Dr. Williams’ East Anglia Air War Project [EAAWP] in the Abilene Christian University History Department. An outgrowth of this relationship was digitization and preservation of the 306th historical records before they would be returned to the 306th or retired to the Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force at Pooler, GA per 306th directives, making them available for research for all as digital material at a 306th website. Dr. Williams volunteered to serve as Editor of *Echoes*, publishing it in print for interested members and making it available online as public access. The collaboration involved ACU History students in all aspects of *Echoes*, the website, and planning and staffing the reunions.

As 2nd-generation members took over such responsibilities, in October 2013, Dr. Vernon Williams was given the 306th BGHA’s highest award, the Thurman Shuller Award “For years of service to the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association as historian, reunion chairman, *Echoes* Editor, webmaster, board member, presenter and teacher during a critical time in its history and for outstanding achievement in the preservation and dissemination of the Group’s role in the air war against Axis forces during World War II and inspiring and training future historians as well as

306th supporters on the lessons of this time in history.”

McMahan had served as Secretary for two years, until 2009 when he recruited me as the association’s third Secretary, telling me that at 87, he could not handle the position’s responsibilities any longer. These 12 years have covered a significant shift from earlier when dedicated World War II 306th veterans had managed everything about the association, into recent years when more and more 2nd-generation members have taken on responsibilities.

Now the 306th BGHA has begun to grow in 3rd-generation members, which is essential for the association to continue our mission of honoring the legacy of our World War II veterans and educating younger and ongoing generations about that legacy. ■

**WANTED:
Items for
Annual Silent Auction***

Do you have –

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

If you have any items relative to the mission of our veterans that you would like to donate for our Annual Silent Auction, please notify

Linda Herman

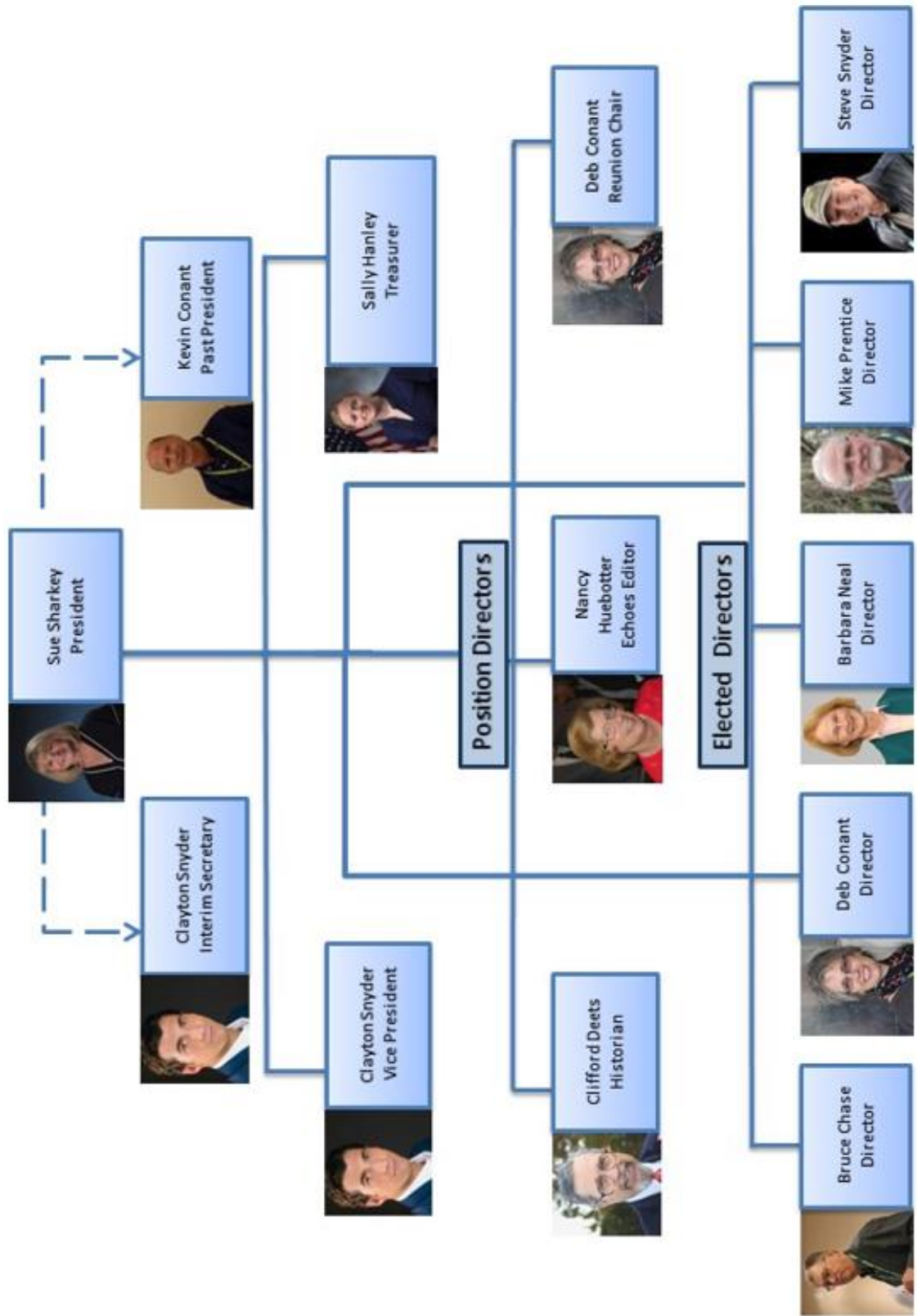
dlhermann@cox.net

(619) 987-9576

Provide her with a description of the item and a suggested minimum bid. All items will be displayed in the hospitality room where reunion attendees will have the opportunity to review the items and place their bids.

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

*Silent Auction is an event held as part of the Reunion activities.



**306th Bomb Group Board of Directors
2022 - 2023**

Donation Update:

Your Dollars Sustain the 306th BGHA Mission

Because the 306th BGHA does not charge membership dues, we depend on your tax-deductible donations to support the continuing education mission of our organization. Donations may be made online at www.306bg.us or mailed to the Treasurer at the address below. Many thanks to those of you who made a donation during 2021. As of December 31, a total of \$9,654.85 was received from 90 supporters of the association.

Memorial Donations

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:
Sally Hanley, 306th BGHA Treasurer
PO Box 2547
Lyons, CO 80540

Name

By initialing here (_____), I confirm this current contact information should be used for my FREE Membership registration/renewal for 2022, indicating my continuing interest in the 306th BGHA.

Address

eMail:

Telephone Number(s): _____

Date

This donation is being made in memory of:

Name: _____ **Relationship to 306th** _____



From the Editor

**Echoes
Readership
Survey Launched**

by Nancy M. Huebotter
(Editor's contact information
on page 2)

It is so inspirational to note the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association Board of Directors is now enriched with the participation of two third-generation members: Clayton Snyder, Vice President/Interim Secretary, and Sally Hanley, Treasurer. Their presence will truly reinvigorate the organization's focus and bring a reassurance that "It is our duty to remember."

When I took on the job of *Echoes* Editor in 2014, I considered it an honor coupled with some very serious responsibilities. My obligation is, and always has been, to you, the reader. Now that the younger generations are becoming more active in the organization, I decided I would take this opportunity to take a step back and evaluate the contents of the publication to determine if it is meeting the needs of second, third, and possibly fourth generation 306th BGHA members.

To ensure *Echoes* is addressing your expectations, I have included in this issue a short survey to which I hope you will respond. For those of you reading online, please click the following link to complete the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KHCWP6K>

For those of you reading a copy of *Echoes* mailed to you, I hope you will take the time to answer a few questions then mail your reply to

Nancy M. Huebotter
Echoes Editor
508 Lee Place
Placentia, CA 92870

To remain anonymous, do not include your return address on the envelope.

Your feedback is important to me, and your input will impact the future issues of *Echoes*. Thank you for your time and participation in the survey. ■



Echoes Survey

Unless you choose to add your name and contact information at the end of this survey, all responses are anonymous.

1. Do you regularly read all the articles included in the 306th BGHA publication, *Echoes*?
 - Yes
 - Sometimes
 - No

2. What is your level of interest in the association's news magazine?
 - Veteran
 - Second Generation
 - Third Generation
 - Fourth Generation
 - World War II History Buff
 - Author/Writer
 - Researcher

3. How important to you is the news magazine published by the association?
 - Very Important
 - Somewhat Important
 - Not Very Important
 - Undecided

Please tell us how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the following:

4. How satisfied are you with the layout of the news magazine?
 - Very Satisfied
 - Somewhat Satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Undecided

5. How satisfied are you with the quality of the writing?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Undecided

6. How satisfied are you with the overall content?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Undecided

7. Are the subjects of the articles of interest to you?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Not at all
- Undecided

8. How satisfied are you with your ability to submit information or articles for inclusion in the news magazine?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Undecided

9. Would you be willing to submit articles to the news magazine? If the answer is YES, please include your name and contact information at the bottom of this survey.

- Yes
- No

10. Do you feel the news magazine effectively provides information important to the overall needs of the members?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

11. What information or subjects would you like to see included in the news magazine in the future?
(Please add comments on a separate sheet of paper)

12. What, if any, sections do you think should be removed from the news magazine?
(Please add comments on a separate sheet of paper)

13. Do the issues of *Echoes* meet your expectations?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Not at all
- Undecided

14. Overall, how satisfied are you with the news magazine?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Undecided

Please add any additional comments you may have on a separate sheet of paper.

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey. Your responses will be very helpful.

All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, mercy, duty, hope.
Sir Winston Churchill

Attention Journalists and Non-Journalists:

Do you have an article you would like to submit to *Echoes*? If the answer is YES, I am interested in hearing from you. Please submit all articles as a Word file attached to an eMail. Do not use .pdf or any other format when providing your word document to me. Save all images as high-resolution photos attached to the eMail in .jpg format. Do not embed the images in the text. Including notations in the Word submission draft where the image should be placed is suggested. Remember – submission does not guarantee publication. Due to size constraints of the magazine, the publication of non-solicited materials may be held for a future issue. The editor reserves the right to modify the article as appropriate.

If copyrighted materials are included, ensure permission for use has been obtained. Be sure to pass that information along when submitting the article.

Articles relative to World War II, the 306th Bomb Group, and individual veterans are acceptable subjects. The focus should be on raising awareness and enhancing the education of second, third, fourth generations and beyond.

Send your articles to:

nmhuebotter306@gmail.com.

***Echoes* Article Due Date for Winter/Spring Issue 20 May 2022**



Faces of Margraten: Honoring American Soldiers in the Netherlands

The Faces of Margraten is an incredible undertaking by the people of the town of Margraten to put faces to the names of those buried in the American War Cemetery or immortalized on the Walls of the Missing.



The end of the war in the Netherlands came closer when US soldiers crossed the border near the town of Mesch on 12 September 1944, which became the first town to be liberated. However, it would take until 5 May 1945 before the Americans fully liberated the country. And that liberation came at a heavy price for those who fought for it. That is why the people of the Netherlands say thank you to the American liberators who have been buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial in the town of Margraten.

The American War Cemetery in Margraten is the only American cemetery in the Netherlands. The site lies on the Cologne-Boulogne highway, which the Romans constructed as part of their long-distance road network. In September 1944, German troops used the highway for their own withdrawals from the country they had occupied for more than four years.

Plotted out in a prime agriculture area, the first ground was broken with labor provided by the African American 96th Quartermaster Corps. The first 300 dead were buried by Thanksgiving 1944; the first was interred on 10 November 1944, the last on 30 March 1946. By the Spring of 1945, due to the accelerated number of those to be buried, it became necessary for the US Military to request assistance from the people of Margraten. The

response from the village initiated a relationship that has continued to this day.

Since 1945, the graves of the soldiers buried here have been adopted by grateful citizens.

The cemetery was ceremonially opened on Memorial Day 1946.



There are 8301 tombstones and 1722 names listed on the Wall of the Missing. There are 179 Jewish soldiers whose grave markers are the form of a Jewish star. Six Medal of Honor recipients and four women are buried in these hallowed grounds. Forty brothers are buried next to each other or mentioned on the Wall of the Missing.

In 2014, the Faces of Margraten project began as an effort to gather photographs of each soldier buried or memorialized to display on Memorial Day. Those who orchestrated the project wanted to put a face to the name and decorate the graves. With the support of the grave's adopters, the soldiers' relatives, and others assisting in the quest to locate photographs of each individual, the Margraten Foundation of the United Adopters of American War Graves has been able to collect those photos.

On 22 February 2021, the Faces of Margraten project acquired its 8000th photo of a World War II soldier. The photo was that of Lloyd George Hume from San Bernardino, California, who died at age 24 when the bomber in which he was flying was struck by enemy fire and plunged into the North Sea. His body was never found.

The Fields of Honor Foundation organizes the biennial Faces of Margraten tribute at the cemetery in close cooperation with the American Battle

Monuments Commission. Every two years, volunteers visit the cemetery to decorate the graves and names on the Walls of the Missing with the soldier's photos, giving a face to the names. The ceremony happens during the first week in May, when the Netherlands observes its own Memorial Day.

During the Faces of Margraten, photos are placed directly next to the headstone or wall. Visitors are able to walk through the cemetery to see the faces of the men and women who gave their lives in the fight to liberate the Netherlands.

With the acquisition of the 8000th photo, approximately 1900 photos remain to be located. Perhaps you can assist in the quest for those missing photos. For anyone interested in aiding in this search, here is where you can begin your research.



The Faces of Margraten Foundation advises that any research starts with some basic information, including a soldier's name, hometown, and relatives' names. Knowing this information allows the researcher to narrow the search and provides a good start. Additional information on possible relatives may be found by searching telephone listings or obituaries.

Local newspapers and libraries are good resources and frequently have valuable information in their archives. Local newspapers should not be overlooked. Consult the Reference Librarian. They can often point you toward pertinent holdings.

The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War posts in cities adjacent to where the veteran lived can also provide some assistance. Another place to search could be the veterans' association of a unit where you may obtain some basic information on a soldier.

If you have a personal photo of any soldier who may have been buried or memorialized at the Margraten cemetery, the cemetery would like to hear from you. Information will also be stored in the Fields of Honor Database. In this database, data can be found about soldiers who have been buried or memorialized in the American War Cemeteries in Belgium, France, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Only submit pictures that are in your personal possession or for which you have acquired permission to submit to the project.

Photos and other information can be directly submitted by sending an email to infor@degezichtenvanmargraten.nl. If you prefer to send a copy of the photo through regular mail, use the address Fields of Honor Foundation, Coehoornsingel 26-17, 9711 BS Groningen, The Netherlands.

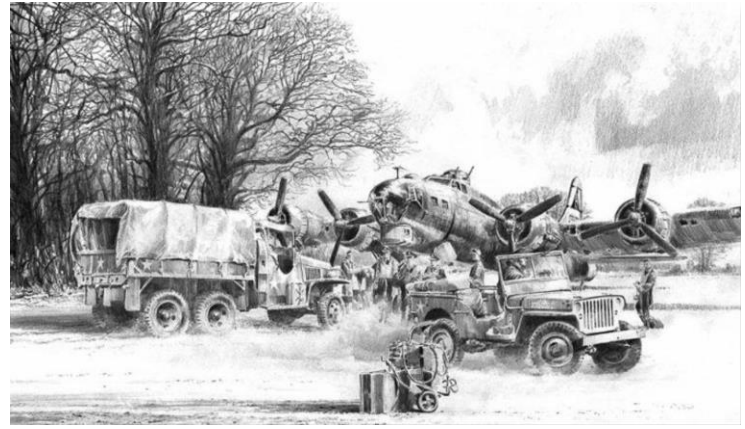
Suppose you are not sure whether you have a relative who has been buried in the Margraten Cemetery. In that case, you can search the burial listings for this cemetery and others on the website of the American Battle Monuments Commission (www.abmc.gov).

To review a list of the still missing faces, go to https://www.fieldsofhonor-database.com/Faces_to_Find_Margraten.xls. ■

Robert Taylor Aviation Art Depicts Thurleigh Scenes

Robert Taylor, a life-long resident of Bath, England, is regarded as the world's premier painter of aviation subjects. It has been noted that Taylor has the capability of capturing realistic scenes. The aircraft that are the subject of his paintings are "battle-scarred, worse for wear, with dings along the fuselage, chips and dents along the leading edges of the wings, oil stains trailing from engine cowlings, and paintwork faded with dust and grime."

The artwork depicted here portrays a damaged B-17 returning to base.



Skipper – Home At Last

"This is a brief moment of calm as B-17 *Skipper* of the 367th Squadron, 306th Bomb Group returns to base at Thurleigh in East Anglia after another grueling daytime mission over occupied Europe, January 1945. One of the longest serving Flying Fortresses of the war, *Skipper* completed over 100 combat missions despite suffering from battle damage in late 1944.

This graphite edition acts as a lasting tribute to the brave aircrew of the USAAF who flew the mighty B-17s in combat during World War II."



Skipper Comes Home

"Taylor depicts the B-17 Flying Fortress on a cold afternoon in late January 1945. This painting portrays the stark contrast between the peaceful English countryside of the 1940s and the harsh reality of the mighty war machines of the day."

Anyone interested in obtaining copies of these or any other art pieces by Robert Taylor are encouraged to contact a dealer at www.aces-high.com. ■

2022 Tucson Reunion *(cont)*

The First Over Germany Dinner is scheduled for Friday night in the hotel's Mission I & II rooms. Dress will be business casual. Immediately following dinner, Steve Snyder, Past President and current 306th Board Member, will present the documentary he and his son Clayton produced, detailing the journeys of the crew of the *Susan Ruth* after their B-17 was shot down. As part of Steve's remarks, he will include a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Where the SHOT DOWN Story Happened and Where History Took Place," in which he reveals some greater depth to the story. Although significant detail is frequently unavailable for the numerous crews shot down during the war, information revealed by this story will certainly shed light on the experience of many of our veterans.

The annual 306th BGHA Business Meeting is scheduled for Saturday morning at 10:00. This 60- to 90-minute meeting will provide a "state of our organization" and discuss plans for the 306th BGHA.

The traditional 306th Folded Wings ceremony will be held immediately following the business meeting. This thoughtful ceremony will honor those veterans lost since the 2019 reunion.

Additional features of the reunion will include the Veterans Round Table and the Silent Auction. The auction is a collaborative event in which members donate books, memorabilia, or items of interest to our 306th membership. Proceeds from the sale of these items provide financial assistance to various educational and historical activities, including maintenance of the 306th BGHA website and publication of the *Echoes*.

Visitors to the hospitality room will have an opportunity to view an impressive collection of personal and group artifacts on display. These exhibits depict the stories of many of our crews and their missions, including the Second Schweinfurt (Black Thursday) mission of 14 October 1943. The Hospitality Room will have historical experts available to help answer many research questions.

Saturday afternoon, the group will gather for the annual photo session.

Saturday evening will feature the 306th BGHA and SSMA Banquet in the hotel's Mission I & II rooms. Dress will be business casual. After dinner,

entertainment will be provided by The Manhattan Dolls Trio, followed by award recognition presentations.



The Embassy Suites Tucson East, located at 6555 East Speedway Boulevard, Tucson, AZ 85710, will be the hub of reunion activities. Amenities include complimentary daily breakfast with made-to-order omelets and eggs, a cocktail hour, complimentary evening reception with an assortment of beverages and snacks. To secure our group rate, please call 520-721-7100, or use the online booking link (<https://group.embassysuites.com/306thBombGroupMilitaryReunion>) to secure a room in the 306th block. The group rate is extended to two days before and after our event, giving you an opportunity to enjoy the Tucson area at your leisure.

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

The University of Arizona and downtown Tucson are 6 miles west of this all-suite hotel. The hotel itself features an outdoor pool surrounded by a picturesque tropical courtyard, on-site dining, and suites with two flat-screen TVs. A private bedroom and separate living room are offered in every newly renovated all-suite Embassy Suites by Hilton Tucson East. Coffee facilities, a microwave and fridge, and a safe large enough to secure a 15" laptop are provided. Free Wi-Fi and in-room movies are also included. Guests can use the state-of-the-art fitness center and the business center for free. Laundry facilities are available. Tucson International Airport is a 30-minute drive from this hotel. Sabino Canyon tours are 7.2 miles away, and Reid Park Zoo is 15 minutes away by car. ■

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

Embassy Suites Tucson East – 6555 E. Speedway Blvd. Tucson, AZ 85710

Check-in Wednesday May 4, 2022 – Check-out Sunday May 8, 2022

306th Bomb Group Reunion Room Rates: \$139.00 (pre-tax) single or double (\$15 ea. Additional person) for room block hotel reservations <https://group.embassysuites.com/306thBombGroupMilitaryReunion>

DEADLINE FOR REUNION REGISTRATION AND HOTEL RESERVATION – Friday March 25, 2022

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

Mandatory Registration Fee for all others..... x \$60.00 = \$_____

Pima Air Museum & 390th Bomb Group Museum Fee..... x \$27.00 = \$_____

Thursday, 5 May – 390th Bomb Group Museum 11:30 am to 4:00 pm

Morning, Guest speakers at hotel

Afternoon, Museum- Box lunch, Guest speaker during lunch, Museum tour

(Fee includes bus, lunch)..... x \$35.50= \$_____

Friday, 6 May – Pima Air Force Museum – 10:00 am to 2:30 pm

Morning, museum tour and lunch on own

Afternoon, Explore Museum on own - (includes bus fee) x \$18.00= \$_____

First Over Germany Plated Dinner 6:30 pm

Dinner Choice: Chicken Piccata____, Roast Pork Loin____, x \$51.00= \$_____

Saturday, 9 May

General Business Meeting - Presentations – Folded Wings Ceremony - Veterans Roundtable

306th BGHA & SSMA Plated Dinner – 6:30 pm

Dinner Choice: Southwest Salmon____, Grilled Flank Steak____, x \$56.00= \$_____

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

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

Due by March 25, 2022:

Please make check payable to: **306th Bomb Group Historical Association** – [Memo: 2022 Reunion]

Mail to: **Treasurer Sally Hanley, P.O. Box 2547, Lyons, CO. 80540**

Attendees will have the opportunity to network with World War II friends and enjoy exhibits and archived 306th World War II memorabilia displayed in the Hospitality Room

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

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

Squadron: _____ WWII Duty: _____

LIST ALL ATTENDEES IN YOUR GROUP (Please PRINT clearly)

Name of Attendee	Relationship to Veteran	1 st Reunion?	Arrival Date

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

Anona Moeser and the American Red Cross Clubs in WW2 Bedford, England

by English historian, Stuart Antrobus

From September 1942, Bedfordshire, England, felt the impact of the presence of hastily-built airfields in the north of the county and a sudden influx of United States Army Air Force personnel. Thurleigh, Tempsford, Twinwood Farm, Podington, and Little Staughton were new stations, created with long runways, especially for the use of the Royal Air Force and USAAF.

The roar of American bomber planes heading for Germany on high-precision daylight bombing raids soon became a familiar sound. Some Bedfordians counted the American planes going over in formation from Thurleigh and Twinwood and many hours later counted them when they came back, “and we could see the damage to wings, and that they had tails missing, and my father would say, ‘I don’t know if they’re going to make it when they come down to land,’” recalled one local woman who was a child then.

To provide rest and recreation for servicemen away from their airfields, when on furlough, an American Red Cross [ARC] Service Club was created at 17-23 Bromham Road, Bedford, in the showroom of the former Kenning’s Garage, close to the corner with Union Street. It was for enlisted men and was open day and night. There were also premises on the top two floors of Longhurst and Skinner’s furniture store on the corner of Midland Road with River Street (now Wetherspoon’s ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’ pub).



The American Red Cross Club in Bromham Road, July 1944.

Anona Moeser, [1] Recreation Director, who came over to Bedford as an American Red Cross employee, was the determined and energetic manager of these clubs, but local women were employed both as paid workers and volunteers. Everywhere she went, Anona always wore her American Red Cross hat so that people would recognise her, and she was famous for snapping her fingers to make everyone jump to it when she wanted something done in a hurry. In her enthusiasm to make the club in Bromham Road home for American servicemen, she decided to hang a Stars and Stripes flag outside. No sooner than it was up than a local policeman knocked on the door and told her to take it down. “We haven’t been taken over by Americans yet,” he said.

Once the club premises had been cleaned up and finished, Anona advertised in the *Bedfordshire Times* for ‘dancing girls’ to visit the club to partner ‘her boys’ at the dances. Bedford’s mayor at the time, Alderman Calvin, severely criticised Anona for her bad taste in trying to encourage women of ‘ill-repute’ into the club. However, Lady Bowes-Lyon, who happened to be part of the volunteer kitchen crew at the club, told her sister-in-law, her Majesty herself, about all the fuss. The Queen then visited the questionable club and decided that the dancing girls request was well justified. From then on, the Mayor of Bedford was most helpful!



Queen Elizabeth, with Anona Mueser behind her, during the July 23, 1944 visit to the ARC Club in Bromham Road, Bedford.

Photo courtesy of Stuart Antrobus

Anona also set up overnight dormitory accommodations not far from the railway station in Ashburnham Road and another in Chaucer Road for

worse-for-wear GIs who, after a night out in Bedford, were not in a fit state to make it back to base.

After the war, Anona told a poignant story of when “a young flyer, due to fly out on a mission the next day, asked me for a loan of five pounds so he could go out on the town with his buddies that evening. He was so persuasive, and I had such a strange feeling about this boy that, against my better judgment and firm principles, I finally agreed and handed him the money. He left a small, green marble with me as security on the loan, explaining that he had nothing else of any value in his possession. The next day he went down in his B-17, and the little green marble was left at the back of my desk drawer for the next few months. It was only when I was clearing my desk, ready for the move to Cherbourg, that a friend told me that the ‘marble’ was actually a rare piece of jade and was quite valuable. So I had it made up into a ring, and I have worn it ever since in memory of that young boy and the thousands like him who lived for the day, for there might well not be another one for them.”

The American Red Cross Officers’ Club and Hostel, also created by Anona Moeser, was a large collection of huts, comfortably furnished, on the corner of Goldington Road and Kimbolton Road (then St Peter’s Tennis Club grounds; now St Peter’s Street surface car park). The facilities at the Officers Club included sleeping accommodation for several hundred, a restaurant, a lounge with a radio, a library, a recreation hall, and other amenities. It even had a tailoress and a barber. These Red Cross servicemen’s clubs in Bedford provided work for large numbers of Bedfordians, especially women. There was also an ARC Lounge and Canteen at 70b High Street (at the time of the 1943 information pamphlet for US armed forces in Bedford, this lounge and canteen was designated for officers only).

It was the fond memories of the ‘American invasion’ of WW2 Bedford, which inspired the late Ralph Franklin, a local “boy,” to set up the 306th Bombardment Group Museum on the former airfield at Thurleigh and open it to the public in 2002.

Fifty years after the end of the war, in 1995,^[2] Thurleigh airfield became a focus for veterans to return and relive some of their wartime memories of when they were young and renew

acquaintances with local English folk who remembered them from their youth. Now it is the elderly children and grandchildren of those veterans who find their way back to Bedford in the 21st century. ■

© Stuart Antrobus. September 2021.

This article is an extract from Chapter 13, “Airfields and Americans” as part of Stuart’s well-illustrated, large-format paperback *Life in Bedford During the Second World War* (published in August 2021 by Bedford Local History Society, BAALHS). ISBN 978-1-7399201-0-4.

Notes:

[1] Anona A. Moeser (Jan 19, 1907 – May 1, 2002) died aged 95. For her Obituary, see the Wisconsin Obituary and Death Notice archive:

https://www.genlookups.com/wi/webbbs_config.pl/noframes/read/5

[2] In 1995, Anona Moeser was honoured by NBC-TV at the 50th anniversary of VE Day in Cambridge, England.

Queen Elizabeth (consort of King George VI) was the mother of Princess Elizabeth, later (1952) to become Queen Elizabeth II, Britain’s longest service queen. As a teenage Princess Elizabeth, she and her mother and her father, King George VI, visited the American base at Thurleigh airfield to christen one of their B-17 Flying Fortress planes *Rose of York* in her honour (calling it *Princess Elizabeth* would have attracted particular German efforts to destroy it). For further information, regarding this event, refer to

<https://www.thisdayinaviation.com/tag/raf-thurleigh/>



*Rainbow at Thurleigh Museum
(courtesy of John Watson-Read)*

Goxhill to Thurleigh (or not!)

By Mike Potter

This kind of event probably happened almost daily in the UK during the war. The Brits built 590 airfields between 1935 and 1945. At the peak, one of these small city-sized airfields was being delivered to the Air Ministry every three days.

The logistics were mind-numbing, and more than a third of the entire workforce in England was involved at some point in these labors.

As you all know, when you stuff a total of 720 airfields into a space roughly the same size as the state of North Carolina, things get crowded pretty quickly. Nowhere were things more crowded than “East Anglia,” where the majority of airfields were built anywhere there was flat ground with good drainage. Of course, the whole Cambridge/Bedford/Thurleigh area was right in that mix.

The flyers in the RAF got used to this pretty quickly, but the kids coming over during the “Friendly Invasion” were, as the Brits liked to say, “gobsmacked” by the night and day difference between flying in the US vs. England.

In the US, pilots trained in the middle of nowhere, and they could fly almost every day in Texas, Florida, or California. They could fly for quite a while in any direction by following the railroad or a major highway with little to distract

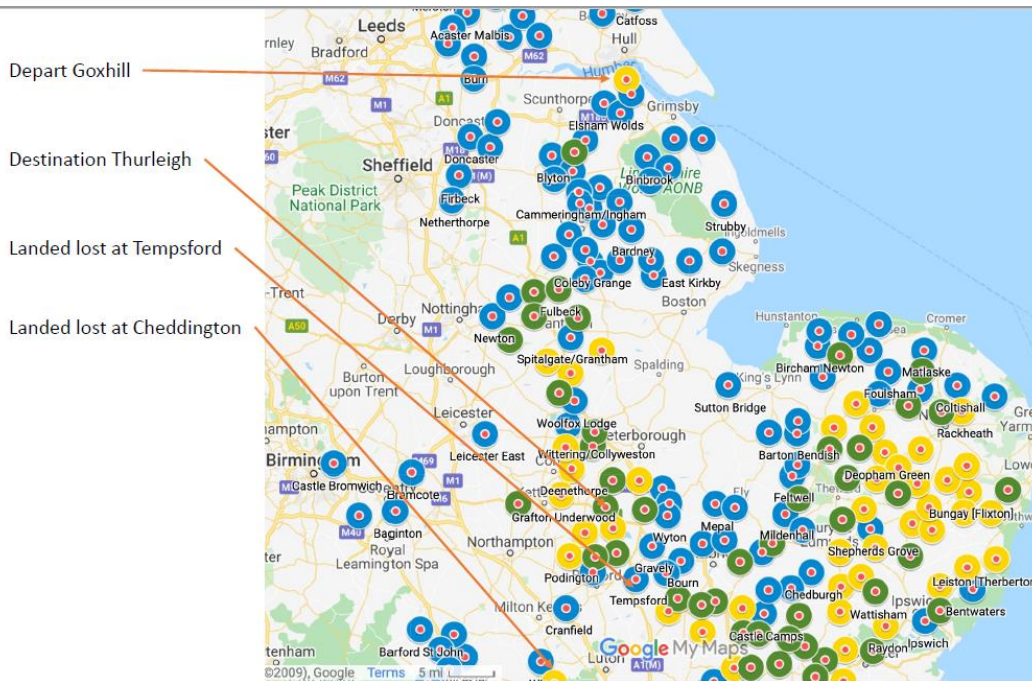
them. In England, hundreds of airfields looked pretty much alike, and each airfield had a town right outside its fences. On the rare clear day from 5,000 feet, a pilot could probably see at least a dozen or two airfields around him.

This training mission was given to three pilots flying in formation to take their P-47 Thunderbolts from USAAF Goxhill to USAAF Thurleigh in 1944 when the Air War over Europe was finally in full swing. If the pilots flew very slowly, the mission would take 20 minutes, but they never got there. Three times they landed at nearby (and not so nearby) airfields, not only hopelessly lost but nearly out of fuel. Controllers all over the sector were burning up the phone lines trying to figure out where the “lost boys” might have gone down.

In the end, they refueled one last time and found their way home to Goxhill. No doubt they gave thanks in that effort for Goxhill being on the banks of a VERY large river (the Humber) right next to one of the VERY largest towns in England (the City of Hull) just minutes from the coastline of the REALLY BIG English Channel. Pretty hard to miss that one.

When situations like this occur, pilots give each other unrelenting grief. Undoubtedly those three guys didn’t live this mission down quickly or quietly.

Map of their wanderings shows just how “lost” these pilots were. ■



Training flight of three P-47s from Goxhill never found their intended destination and returned to Goxhill in 1944. The sheer congestion of hundreds of similar-looking airfields made navigation hard even in clear weather. The controller at Thurleigh, their destination, spent 30 minutes making phone calls all over the sector before finding out they “would not be coming to Thurleigh.” Goxhill to Thurleigh was only a 20-minute flight at cruise speed.

Man's Best Friend Has a Place at Thurleigh

Editor's Note:

During World War II, airmen, soldiers, sailors, and Marines would rescue animals found in bombed-out buildings, homes, abandoned towns, and along the docks. Befriended dogs became companions, mascots, and buddies to those willing to deliver them from an uncertain plight. And indeed, those who offered friendship to the forsaken canine understood how a dog's companionship could make life a little better.

Rescued dogs were the lucky ones.

In Briton, in the summer of 1939, just before the outbreak of war, the National Air Raid Precautions Animal Committee (NARPAC) drafted advice to all animal owners. The notice, which was printed in pamphlets and newspapers, and announced on the BBC, stated, "If at all possible, send or take your household animals into the country in advance of an emergency. If you cannot place them in the care of neighbors, it really is kindest to have them destroyed."

People panicked, and animal clinics were overwhelmed with pet owners bringing their beloved pets to the facilities to be euthanized. Many individuals cited multiple reasons for this uneasy decision: going off to war, bombed and no place to live, food shortage, and rationing were the primary reasons offered. Some believed it was inappropriate to have the "luxury" of owning a pet during wartime.

To hopefully offset this tragedy, several organizations intervened. A call went out to homes in the country, asking the residents to consider housing these relinquished animals. One rescue home managed to care for and feed more than 145,000 dogs during the war.

In World War II, many US military units adopted animal mascots, strays whose civilian owners had been killed or displaced by war. These dogs were certainly not a "government issue," but in their way, performed a vital service. They made life a little more bearable.

Military photographs show that individual soldiers also had their own pets. A few men smuggled them from the United States, but soldiers'

pets were often local animals left homeless by the war. For the adopted dog, being in a soldier's care meant survival; for the soldier, a pet meant comfort and companionship while facing the brutality of war. Photographs of their friendships worked their way back home. Military press officers fed these snapshots to state-wide newspapers as a way of boosting morale on the home front. This photographic practice became known as "buddy photography."

Dogs that inhabited bases like Thurleigh became identified for their affiliation with one individual or an entire crew. It was a very fortunate dog who found a new home at Station 111.

One intrepid hound originated in the United States and accompanied his owner, Sgt. Harold Rogers, through training, then to his overseas assignment at Thurleigh. "Mister," as the dog was named, had a specially designed oxygen mask he wore during high altitude flying and flew several combat missions. (See articles in July 1983 and April 1990 editions of Echoes.)

Then there was Boike, another canine who joined the crew stateside. He became crew mascot of "Weary Bones" at Grand Island, NE, and had a uniquely devised parachute. His singularly contrived rigging even allowed him to make a successful "jump." (See January 1990 edition of Echoes.)

To add to the archive of stories about the mutts and pups that took up residence in the barracks and other buildings at Thurleigh, here is an account that came to light during a search of the digital archives by Historian Cliff Deets.

The Dogs of War (and the occasional goat)

Throughout history, man's best friend has been a faithful companion in times of war. Sometimes the dogs of war were kept as "pets" (General Patton's bull terrier Willie) but more often they were simply strays that wandered on to a base, were adopted by the troops, and became mascots more than pets. Of course, this was the case with the 306th Bombardment Group, with numerous dogs and sometimes a wandering goat or two becoming an integral part of the squadrons and ground units at Thurleigh.



M/Sgt. Joe Gabrish (368th) and friends

Often these mascots would achieve a degree of notoriety. See the accompanying article, written back during the war, about Mac. Then there was Boike, brought over to Thurleigh with the Walter Keilt crew from Nebraska. The 368th crew, wanting to make Boike a full member of their crew, made a parachute for the dog and had him “bail out” over the air field while testing engines on their aircraft (see the full story on our website in the front-page article of the January 1990 issue of *Echoes*).

So, as you can see in the following collection of photos from our digital archives, the dogs of war were well represented at Thurleigh. And it seems the number of stray goats that roamed through the grounds of AAF Station 111 at Thurleigh wanted to get in on the “mascot” action as well.



Dr. Thurman Shuller and friend



Maj. John Stanko (369th) and friend



Sgt. Jack Lazar (369th) and friend



Sgt. Sidney Christopher (39th Service Group) and friend



Lt. George Hayes (423rd) and Drake, who was often harassed by Mac. Read the next article, "Mac the Dog."

Mac the Dog

*transcribed from the original article
in the 306th digital archives
by Historian Cliff Deets*

Mac is a mongrel. But for men of this heavy bombardment group, he is more than just a dog, he is an institution. No gathering is quite complete without the appearance of this wild haired, wild-eyed little dog.

He is almost completely black with a little streak of white on his chest. His hair is one of the first things a stranger might notice when he is introduced to Mac. It has a very definite part down the middle of his back and stands up at odd angles all along his spine. Under his chin there is created the appearance of the young high school lad who is badly in need of a shave. His tail is likewise black and the hair maintains a beautiful curl.

The next noticeable characteristic is his eyes. They possess a very wild look which helps create the illusion of his being slightly mad.

His overall appearance is of something a little out of this world. His front legs are too short which gives a definite forward tilt to the body which in turn creates a high curve in his spine.

Once upon a time Mac was purchased as a full bred cocker spaniel by Major Walter H. Coons, former group bombardier. But most people had an indication of there being something amiss by the two guineas price on his head. Most animals of his breed cost considerably more.

In a short time, the Major realized his mistake and immediately sold the dog for its original

purchase price to Captain Roeber of the communications department. Although the Captain owns the dog, he is rarely able to keep possession.

Mac picks his companions very carefully. Currently he has teamed with Lt. Glen L. Feltz of the Clay Pigeon squadron. He is in constant touch with Lt. Feltz, trailing him over the entire base. But when night time comes, his closest companion is the warmest stove he can find.

There is a great question as to the mental capabilities of the dog but most have finally arrived at the conclusion that the dog is slowly going crazy. He isn't mad because he is as gentle as ever, he is just losing certain faculties which sane dogs have.

Mac is quite eccentric in most of his habits. He can be a terrific warrior when aroused but he usually confines such activities to play. Very often he is a bit rough for the other dogs. Drake is an old companion but as his ears are terribly long, he is at a great disadvantage. Mac grabs hold of his ears and proceeds to tug him about the barracks.

Fire in a stove delights Mac but as soon as it leaves its confines, he goes wild and tries his best to put it out. He blows on it and jumps on it with his front paws. One day recently his fur caught fire and he took time out to extinguish that fire and then went back to the fire on the floor.

Water creates the same reaction with the pup that fire does. His reflection is almost too much for him and he tries to break it up.

Some time ago Mac was termed as being "rock happy." He would chase rocks all over although he proved to be a poor retriever. He likewise will not return sticks. Many fliers get to be known a "flak-happy" and Mac also has the symptoms.

He has a distinct aversion to limeys. He puts up a terrific fuss and has been known to attempt to chew a leg off. He is a GI dog. On the post he much prefers officers to enlisted men.

The other day he had an interesting experience in a jeep. Unlike many dogs he dislikes the vehicles for a mode of transportation and much prefers his own legs. Some fellows picked him up and gave him a ride to where he seemed to be going. As the jeep gathered speed Mac jumped out, rolled over several times and ran on along the way he had been going. ■



Thurleigh Museum Notes

Editor's Note: The following are England based newsletters, September thru December, published by Thurleigh Museum volunteer Mark Fussell.

Newsletter 12 – September 2021

Welcome all to the 306th Museum Newsletter here at Thurleigh.

There has been a significant gap since my last communication, and for that, I apologise, but I am glad to report that during this time, the museum has been very busy.

Museum Visits

Volunteers from the surrounding American Airbases joined John and myself in the upkeep and maintenance of the museum. The volunteers participated in cutting the grass, painting, and putting together a memorial bench. They expressed their wish to continue visiting and helping out when we require.



We also had Kymbrook and Thurleigh schools come up to the museum as they are studying this term World War II. Kymbrook will be looking at the Pathfinders and Thurleigh are researching co-pilot Leo R Kisamore whose medals were found at the school. The museum has agreed to display their presentations on Leo.

Both Schools had a great day, listening to John and myself and completing the museum quiz, which all participated in with eagerness, and I think we all learned something new.

It was also very heartening to receive thank you letters from the children.



Birthday for Thurleigh Station 111

The 306th was assigned to the Eighth Air Force in September 1942 and was known as Station 111. Therefore, this means September 2021 we are looking at 79 years of a presence at the airfield. It also means in September 2022, we will be celebrating 80 years, so if you have any suggestions of how we can celebrate and honour the personnel of the 306th, then please let us know.

First mission – 9th October 1942 – Locomotive Works - Lille

It was not long after arriving in Thurleigh that the 306th was sent on its first mission, 24 B17s took off from Thurleigh between 07:32-08:14 and arrived over the target at 09:30 – 09:48. All of the squadrons took part and the 306th suffered their first loss when Captain Olson's plane was seen to lag behind with the number 1 engine on fire. It was immediately attacked by 6-8 enemy planes, which took out engine number 2, it was shortly after this the plane lost height and descended in a slow spiral and then in a vertical descent. Witnesses saw one parachute before the plane hit the ground.

It was also witnessed that while the stricken plane was heading to earth and the top turret gunner was aware of his fate, he was seen to be firing at enemy planes of which one was hit and shot down, T/Sgt Erwin C. Wissenback was credited with destroying the enemy plane.

The museum is there to always honour those that finished their missions and that survived the war, but also to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. The museum is where they can still speak and tell their stories for generations to come.

Scale (ish) Model

One of the next projects at the Museum is to recreate the Airfield in 3D. If anyone has a good detailed layout of the Airfield we can use, or how to obtain one, please get in touch.

The mystery of the SAA (Small Arms building) and its official number continue to bemuse. We have, as in the previous newsletters, showing it as "Building 185" and in other layouts it shows as "Building 156," so if anyone can help, please contact us.

We at the museum wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you again.

If you have some articles you wish to contribute to the newsletter or some donations to display in the

Museum or just need a chat then we are always available.

We are looking to make next season (2022) our best yet so please help us spread the word.

Newsletter 13 – November 2021

Welcome all to the 306th Museum Newsletter here at Thurleigh.

Museum Closed for the Winter

Sunday, 31st October was our last official opening day of the museum for public drop in, but we are open via appointments on the Facebook site all year round and this only due to the dedication of our Chairman John Watson-Read.

This last season was hampered again by COVID, so as we enter our 4th Season (Tax Years), we hope we can arrange more days with events, especially as the 306th will be celebrating 80 years since their arrival at Thurleigh, so we will keep you posted.

Archbury Jug

I was pleased to see in this month's *Flypast Magazine* (December 2021), an article referencing "Twelve O'Clock High" and the famous Toby Jug.

You can purchase your own Toby Jug, and inform your household on the next mission by turning it.

Our version of the Toby Jug is showing us permanently on a mission!

I have put the link in the covering email. It is a US based site, so be careful with customs and shipping charges if you live outside the US.

<https://archbury.net>



Bletsoe Memorial

John and I attended an exhibition at St Mary's Church, Bletsoe, on the 28 October. It was dedicated to the crew of Donald J. Schaefer who crashed in Bletsoe after take-off on the 26th April 1944. The exhibition was to raise funds to erect a memorial to the crew. I have posted on the covering

email links to the Facebook, BBC report and video about this great cause and the extensive research completed by Mary Laws, whose land the crash site is located in.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-58801504>

<https://www.facebook.com/donate/1334885410259810/>

The crew had a mix of experience and Technical Sgt Charles E Weller was flying his 25th mission he was 22 years old.

George S Littlefield who survived the crash was back as a Tail Gunner just four months later, and died on the 21 March 2007 at age 83, if you have any information on George then please let me know.

At 0540 aircraft 469 was taking off on runway 24 (Thurleigh), north east to south west. Sparks were seen coming from No.2 engine port side. The aircraft took off and started a gentle bank to port, which became steeper as the turn continued. The aircraft was last seen flying in a steep diving turn, and crashed about a mile from the airfield, killing everyone aboard except Sgt George S. Littlefield, the tail gunner.

Mission: Brunswick, Germany. (Nickel bombs leaflets) Time: 05.40 hours. Unit: 367th Bomb Squadron / 306th Bomb Group (H) Type: Boeing B-17G Serial No. 42-31469 Coded: GY- K Location: Near Bletsoe Castle, Bletsoe, Bedfordshire, England.

Pilot: 2/Lt. Donald J. Schaefer 0-754381 – Killed.

Co-Pilot: 2/Lt. Floyd B. Henry 0-814898 – Killed.

Navigator: 2/Lt. Willard A. Transeth 0-702985 – Killed.

Bombardier: 2/Lt. Roy A. McKinney 0-757006 – Killed.

Top Turret/Eng: T/Sgt. Charles E. Weller 15110110 – Killed.

Radio/Op: S/Sgt. Sheldon H. Kinberg 12181044 – Killed.

Ball Turret: Sgt. John C. Simons 33596385 – Killed.

Waist Gunner: T/Sgt. John W. Byrd 18170062 – Killed.

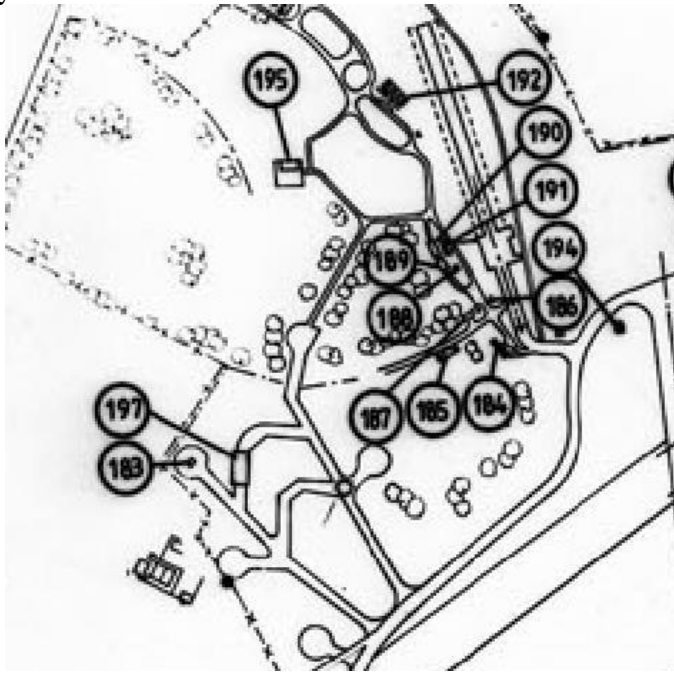
Waist Gunner: Sgt. Ronald M. Minter Jnr. 15196568 – Killed.

Tail Gunner: S/Sgt. George S. Littlefield – Survived.

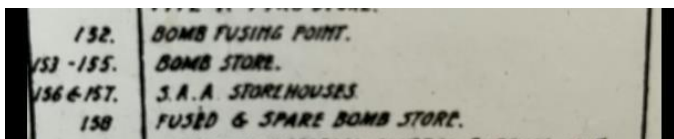
Museum Building Number (UPDATE)

Thanks to an email from Barry Tomlinson and some excellent detailed information on the layout and building numbers from RAE Bedford, we can

confirm the Museum number of “185” in the picture from the newsletter “June 2021” is from the RAE days.



This means from the Layouts we have at the Museum:



The layout I have of the 306th shows the building number as 156, so we should re-number the museum as 156.

I hope that makes sense and you all agree!!

Changes to the Website

Over the winter downtime, we are also updating and refreshing the website. This will mean the site will be down while the changes are happening.

If you have any suggestions to improve the website and information you would like to see or suggested links, then please let me know.

The new website along with the Facebook page will be our portal for you all and prospective visitors to keep updated on our events.



If you have some articles you wish to contribute to the newsletter or some donations to display in the museum or just need a chat then we are always available.

We are looking to make next season (2022) our best yet so please help us spread the word.

Newsletter 13 – December 2021

Welcome all to the 306th Museum Newsletter here at Thurleigh.

Christmas at the Museum



It is our pleasure every year to send a Christmas card to the surviving veterans of the 306th. This year’s card was from the Chapel of Remembrance situated in the museum. When you visit us, you can

use this room to sit down and take time to remember all those that, like so many during this time in history, came home under an American Flag. On the wall, you can see all the names listed we honour and remember.



Frank B Clemons is one of those names on the wall. Shot down 15 May 1943 in B-17 42-29744 *Battling Bee* on a mission to the submarine pens at Wilhelmshaven, Germany of which three aircraft were lost due to flak from the 306th Group. His plane crashed into North Sea

between Neuwerk Island and Cuxhaven, in shallow water. Pilot Lt. Clemons was the last to bail out. In 1949, per request of the family, his remains were transferred to his home state of Iowa and buried with military honours at Pleasant Valley Cemetery in May 1949.

Christmas Reading “Books about the 306th BG”

Over the years, I have purchased many books relating to the 306th BG. I have listed those books here. I would be interested if I have missed any or if some of them are new to you.

In no particular order (synopses are from the Internet):

Flight Surgeon: A War Diary, 1941-1945 by Thurman Shuller (author), Vernon L. Williams (editor)

Colonel Thurman Shuller's war diary traces his story from Las Vegas Army Airfield in the summer of 1941 to the desperate days of the air war in Europe. The group surgeon character in the motion picture *Twelve O'clock High* was based on Shuller during his time as Group Surgeon of the famed 306th Bomb Group at Thurlough, England, where he struggled with finding medical solutions for high altitude frostbite, oxygen deprivation, combat fatigue, and a growing crisis of hopelessness among the air crews. Shuller campaigned for setting a maximum number of tours for air crews and argued for the elimination of missions that forced them back to base from furloughs and passes. Shuller's diary brings his wartime experience back to life. His descriptions of the journey across the North Atlantic in the nose of a B-17 Flying Fortress are vivid and personal. His accounts about life among the British

during the war bring a fresh look at the air war as it emerged from the pleasant meadowlands of East Anglia.

First Over Germany: A History of the 306th Bombardment Group – by Russell A. Strong

This is a story of men and airplanes, of life and death in the skies over Nazi-occupied Europe between 1942 and 1945. The 306th Bombardment Group was one of the oldest bomb groups stationed in England and flew 341 missions to targets in France, Germany, Belgium and Holland

Patriots Will - by Jack Hubbard

This story describes a salt-of-the-earth member of the greatest generation, his exploits in World War II as an Army flyer in B-17s in the 8th Air Force, and his return to duty after the war ended. This tanker/turned MP/turned radio operator-gunner fought to join the 369th Bomb Squadron of the 306th Bomb Group and fly his 24 missions. His down-to-earth first-hand accounts of serving and living with men of the 369th give the reader a graphic feel of life in wartime England and in flak-laden German and French airspace.

Or Go Down in Flame: A Navigator's Death Over Schweinfurt – by W. R. Wood

W. Raymond Wood was just a child when his brother was lost in the Schweinfurt raid, and the minute details of this book are the result of his multi-year effort to illuminate “Black Thursday” as no writer has before. He not only reveals the experience of the American flyers in this famous battle, but that of the civilians on the ground and the enemy fighters who flew against the bomber stream, including the Me-110 pilot who in all probability destroyed his brother's plane with a rocket.

Inferno: The True Story of a B-17 Gunner's Heroism and the Bloodiest Military Campaign in Aviation History – by Joe Pappalardo

Smith is one of the most unlikely heroes of the war, where he served in B-17s during the early days of the bombing of France and Germany from England. From his juvenile delinquent past in Michigan, through the war and during the decades after, Smith's life seemed to be a series of very public missteps. The other airmen took to calling the 5-foot, 5-inch airman “Snuffy” after an unappealing movie character.

This is also the man who, on a tragically mishandled mission over France on May 1, 1943, single-handedly saved the crewmen in his stricken B-17. With every other gunner injured or bailed out, Smith stood alone in the fuselage of a shattered, nameless bomber and fought fires, treated wounded crew and fought off fighters. His ordeal is part of a forgotten mission that aircrews came to call the May Day Massacre. The skies over Europe in 1943 were a charnel house for U.S. pilots, who were being led by tacticians surprised by the brutal effectiveness of German defenses. By May 1943 the combat losses among bomb crews were a staggering 40 to 50 percent.

The Clay Pigeons: A B-17 Pilot's Story of World War II – by E. Helene Sage

This book is centered around the author's father's World War II diary. Robert C. Sage was a B-17 pilot who flew twenty-nine missions out of Thurleigh, England, as a member of the 8th Air Force, 306th B.G., 367th B.S. ("The Clay Pigeons").

So Long Capt'n Jack and Peanut Butter & Jelly, Grandma Ellie – by Nathan Holland

England 1943. Young Oliver Jones is sent to the orphanage in Thurleigh, landing like a cheeky and much misunderstood bolt from heaven, little knowing the journey will change his life beyond all recognition. For alongside the eccentric inhabitants of the Bedfordshire village, weary and battered by the conflict but determined to see it through, the B-17s of the US Army are flying missions to the continent at the height of the battle for the skies over Europe.

One and One Half Missions: Maine to New York the Long Way – by Leland A. Dowden; edited by Maggie Dowden

An American B17 Bombardier chronicles his bombing flights over Poland and Germany.

Shot Down: The true story of pilot Howard Snyder and the crew of the B-17 Susan Ruth – by Steve Snyder

Winner of 20 national book awards, *Shot Down* is set within the framework of World War II in Europe and recounts the dramatic experiences of each member of a ten-man B-17 bomber crew after their plane, piloted by the author's father, was

knocked out of the sky by German fighters over the French/Belgian border on February 8, 1944.

Liberty Lady: A True Story of Love and Espionage in WWII Sweden – by Pat DiGeorge

This is the true story of a WWII bomber and its crew forced to land in neutral Sweden during the Eighth Air Force's first large-scale daylight bombing raid on Berlin. 1st Lt. Herman Allen was interned and began working for his country's espionage agency, the OSS, with instructions to befriend a businessman suspected of selling secrets to the Germans. Soon Herman fell in love with a beautiful Swedish-American secretary working for the OSS, their courtship unfolding amid the glamour and intrigue of wartime Stockholm. As Swedish newspapers trumpeted one of the biggest spy scandals of the war, two of the main protagonists walked down the aisle in a storybook wedding presided over by the nephew of the King of Sweden.



Raymond Franzino

First Lieutenant Lt Raymond Franzino, Co-Pilot/Pilot from the 369th Bomb Squadron, completed 35 missions between July 1944 and November 1944. During this time, he flew many different Flying Fortresses, his first mission on 42-102669 *DamYankee* and his last mission was on B-17 42-38148 *Mamu*.





The following information was sent to me by Stephen Franzino, about a mission over Munich, Germany on 16 July 1944 while flying B17 42-97185.

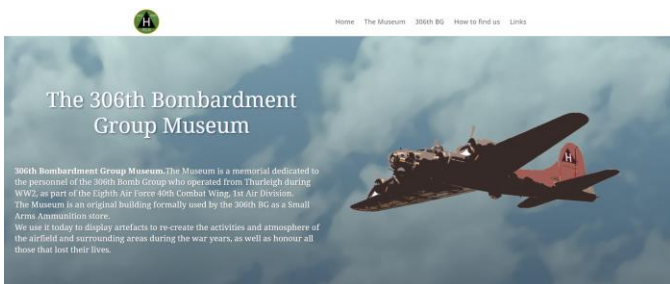
This is the actual picture of the P51.



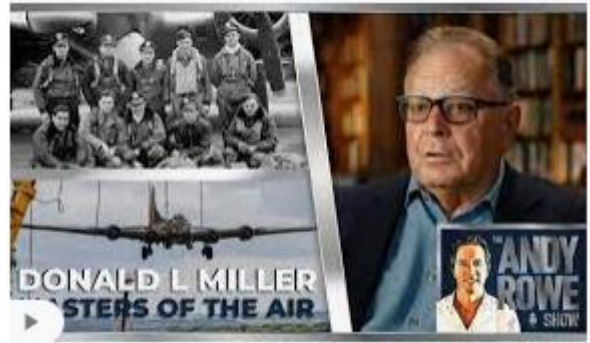
New Website

I would like to thank the great service from Synapticweb Web Agency. We both took a chance on each other, but the end result has exceeded my expectations. This now allows us to link the Facebook page and the Website, and to be able to reach a far greater audience than we could originally. ■

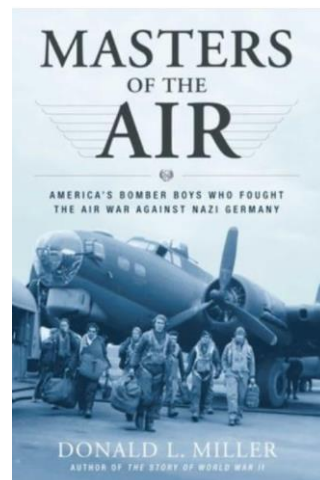
Echoes Editor Note: The new 306th Bombardment Group Museum website has gone live. Please visit it at <https://www.306bg.co.uk/>



Masters of the Air “Band of Brothers 3” Exclusive Interview With Its Author Donald L. Miller



Ahead of its release in 2022, “Masters of the Air,” author Donald L. Miller gives a behind the scene look at the “miniseries” in this youtube.com video. Based on the book, *Masters of the Air: America’s Bomber Boys Who Fought the Air War Against Nazi Germany*, this war epic tells the story of the actions of the men of the United States Eighth Air Force, who brought the war to Hitler’s doorstep by bombing Berlin, Hanover, Leipzig, and Dresden, destroying enemy targets like rail facilities and oil refineries while also being expected to engage in air-to-air fighter combat at 25,000 feet. The missions were highly dangerous and produced heroes. In this interview with Andy Rowe, Miller reveals details about what viewers can expect from the “Masters of the Air” miniseries. To watch the interview, go to <https://youtu.be/KsePDLVYL2w>. ■



In Memoriam

Obituaries – *Veteran death information should be submitted to the Clayton Snyder, Interim Secretary. Contact information is on page 2.*

Arnot, Philip H. Jr, pilot/copilot (367th Hubert Verdick crew), passed away 6 April 2021, age 96, in Lagunitas, CA. He completed his studies at the University of California after the war. He was a teacher, a mountaineer, adventurer, wilderness guide, photographer and author. He is survived by his three children, Bruce Arnot, Susan Arnot, and Cynthia Barber; and granddaughters Katherine Davis and Anne Marie Barber.

Bougher, Harold F, intelligence specialist (423rd), of Paso Robles, CA, died 4 August 2021, age 99. He was predeceased by his wife, Irene, his war bride of 75 years.

Gerlach, James W, ball turret gunner (368th Benjamin Olsen crew), 95, of Fort Smith, AR, passed away 21 July 2021. He retired as Transportation Manager at Salsbury Laboratories in Iowa. His wife of 75 years, Marian, passed away a month later, 20 August 2021. Survived by two children, Tracy Gerlach and Peggy Hadley; brother Virgil Gerlach; and five grandchildren.

Ketcham, Gailard “Red” ball turret gunner (369th Donovan Holve crew), passed away 15 August 2021, in Centerville, OH, at age 95. At the end of the war, he was recruited into an Army traveling variety/comedy troupe known as the **E-T-O-PEANS Stage Show**, touring England and Le Havre, France, for the entertainment of the troops. Back home, he worked for the Frigidaire Division of General Motors and was a volunteer with the Champaign Aviation Museum in Urbana, Ohio, helping to restore B-17 *Champaign Lady* for display. Active at almost all recent reunions, he proudly wore his original uniform from World War II, no alterations necessary! He is survived by daughter Joy Martinez, step-grandchildren Laura Edgington and Becky Ferrel; and two step-great-grandchildren.

Ross, Kenneth D, ball turret gunner (369th Robert Ritter crew) and **POW**, passed away 10 November 2018, at age 93, and is interred in Westchester County, NY. He was shot down on a 15 October 1944 mission to Cologne, held as a POW in both Stalag Luft I and IV, and was a recipient of the Purple Heart. He also served during the Korean War, then worked for the Port Authority of NY and NJ. After his wife, Marion, passed away, he attended the Holy Apostle Seminary in Cromwell, CT, and was ordained a priest, serving at parishes in Orlando, FL, and Yonkers, NY. Surviving are children Kenneth Jr, Susan Astarita, James Ross, and four grandchildren.

Obituaries: 306th Family

DeLair, Roland, brother of vet Vernon DeLair (423rd engineer, Broz crew) and long-time reunion attendee from Sturgeon Bay, WI, died 3 October 2021 at 84. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Donna; four daughters; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; 7 step-grandchildren; 7 step-great-grandchildren.

Martinez, Luis “Marty,” son-in-law of Red Ketcham, husband of Red Ketcham’s daughter Joy, passed away 25 April 2021.

Opdyke, Virginia, of McHenry, IL, wife of 369th pilot James Opdyke, mother of Jeannine “Joey” Freund, passed away 25 November 2021.





306th Bomb Group Historical Association Annual Membership Registration Form 2022 Calendar Year

Please print all information:

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I am a 306th WWII veteran. 306th Unit/Duty/Job Title: _____

Additional Information (such as POW; year born): _____

If you have an interest in a particular WWII 306th veteran, 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:

EFFECTIVE 2021: If you are NOT of the WWII generation AND you wish to receive copies of *Echoes* via US Mail, there is a \$20 per calendar year subscription fee to cover cost of printing and mailing. Membership registration remains free.

You can obtain a FREE electronic version of the 306th ECHOES, via our website at: www.306bg.us.

DO NOT SEND CASH

306th ECHOES Subscription: make check payable to: 306th Bomb Group Historical Association. Memo: Echoes 2022.

Mail your check (with or without this form) to:

SALLY HANLEY, 306th BGHA TREASURER
PO BOX 2547; LYONS, CO 80540

I want to make a donation to the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association:

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

Mail your completed Membership Registration form 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 your free membership each calendar year to confirm your continued interest in the 306th BGHA and that your contact eMail/US Mail information is current.

2022 REUNION Tucson, Arizona



4 May thru 8 May



Reunion details included in this issue of *Echoes*. Registration form available at 306th BGHA website (www.306bg.us) or on page 17.