



Echoes

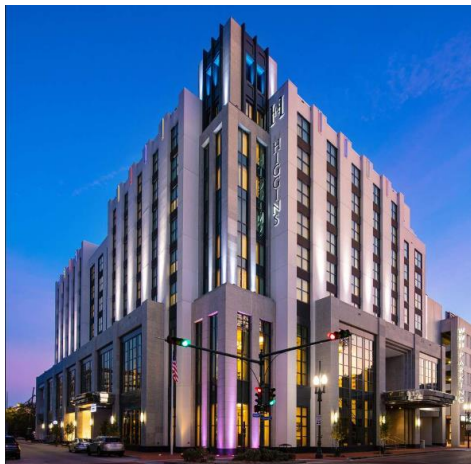
First Over Germany



2024 Eighth Air Force Historical Society and
306th Bomb Group Historical Association

New Orleans: Site of Annual Reunion

Plans for the 2024 combined Eighth Air Force Historical Society and the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association reunion have been announced and widely publicized. It is expected to be among the most highly attended gatherings of 8th Air Force veterans and their descendants in recent history.



The Higgins Hotel is the heart of the reunion rendezvous, a venue steeped in history and named after the illustrious Andrew Jackson Higgins. Situated just across the street from the National World War II Museum, this iconic hotel is a testament to the rich history of World War II. Andrew Higgins, a visionary businessman and boat builder, founded the renowned New Orleans-based Higgins Industries.

The Higgins boat, a shallow-draft craft designed by Higgins, was a game-changer in World War II. Originally designed as the Eureka boat, it was modified to become the LCVP (Landing Craft,

Vehicle, Personnel), but the name “Higgins Boat” is what gained widespread recognition. This versatile craft could transport 36 combat-ready infantrymen, a jeep and 12 troops, or 8100 pounds of cargo, all while floating in just 3 feet of water.

In the early hours of June 6, 1944, more than 135,000 Allied troops stormed the beaches of Normandy. This staggering logistical feat could not have succeeded without the efforts of Andrew Higgins and his boat-building industry. Dwight Eisenhower said, “If Higgins had not designed and built those LCVPs, we never could have landed over an open beach. The whole strategy of the war would have been different.” Adolph Hitler dubbed Higgins as the “New Noah.”



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of the www.306bg.us home page

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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 President Steve Snyder

Steven Spielberg’s and Tom Hanks’s highly anticipated “Master of the

Air” miniseries has finally aired on Apple TV+. In my opinion, they did an excellent job portraying what 8th Air Force airmen had to endure while flying combat missions during the air war over Europe. The episodes educate viewers about the chaos and terror that the combat crews experienced battling anoxia, frostbite, German fighters, and deadly flak on mission after mission.

As hoped, the “Master of the Air” miniseries has sparked a surge of interest in the 8th Air Force. We’re thrilled to welcome many new 306th BGHA members and express our gratitude to past members for renewing their memberships. Moreover, the anticipation for the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in New Orleans this coming September, which is expected to be more than twice the size of last year’s Ontario, California event, is exciting.

At its peak, the 8th Air Force had about 40 bomb groups stationed in England. At last year’s reunion, in which the 306th BGHA had by far the most attendees, and I fully anticipate that we will again in 2024.

Here in the U.S., the 306th BGHA’s mission is to remember and honor the men who served at Thurleigh in the 306th Bomb Group. In the U.K., the 306th Bombardment Group Museum shares the same mission. To ensure the Museum can continue its invaluable work, we have decided to hold an annual fund-raising drive, coinciding with the anniversary date of the Museum’s opening on July 27, 2002. We have been working closely with the Museum to design memorial plaques that members can purchase to honor their 306th veteran, a testament to your involvement and value in preserving our history. Look for more details as they become available.

Hope to see many of you in New Orleans! ■

306th BGHA Launches Museum Fundraiser and Memorial Plaque Opportunity



To mark the twenty-second anniversary of the July 27th opening of the 306th Museum at the Thurleigh Airfield, the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association Board of Directors has unanimously voted to make an annual contribution to the Museum. In addition, a fundraiser will commence each year on July 27th and last one month. Anyone wishing to donate to the fundraiser can send a check to Sally Smith, 306th BGHA Treasurer, at PO Box 17163, Boulder, CO 80308. Make check payable to 306th BGHA; on the memo line, include the notation, "Museum Fundraiser." A donation can also be made through the PayPal account available via the 306th Bomb Group website (www.306bg.us) or Zeffy (<https://www.zeffy.com>). If donating using PayPal or Zeffy, please send an email to Sally (sally306bg@gmail.com) or state in the payment memo that you intend for your donation to go toward the Museum Fundraiser.

When Thurleigh Museum curators learned of the fundraising campaign, they were overwhelmed with gratitude. Mark Fussel, Museum Director wrote:

This is fantastic news! We can't thank you enough, as with rising costs and the upkeep of the Museum, this is 10,000% needed. Please reassure everyone that the funds will be used to continue the work we are doing. They will also allow us to update displays and keep the Museum fresh each season.

Former Museum Director John Watson-Read wrote:

How wonderful! I am absolutely delighted at this news, and certainly, it has come as a total surprise. I speak for all of us here who give our time, dedication, and love to what we do. We are all determined to keep the memories alive for those who fought for the future of the generations to come. At such a dreadful cost, the lives lost, the lives spent by surviving airmen and their families, many of whose lives would bear many horrors and pains to contend with throughout. It is our pleasure to honor and gratitude to strive to ensure the continuance here, by others to follow us in years to come. Many, many thanks to you all! I sign off with our loving regards to you all "Over There."

The Thurleigh Museum began as a long-held dream by Ralph Franklin, a soft-spoken gentleman whose dedication to the 306th Bomb Group stationed at the Thurleigh Airfield from 1942 to 1945 was unwavering. As a young boy living near the airfield, Ralph was familiar with the site and its inhabitants. His relationship with the 306th Bomb Group personnel left a lasting impression on the young boy. He became an avid collector of "war souvenirs," including cigarette packets and bullet casings. This practice continued throughout his life; thus, his collection of wartime artifacts continued to grow, forcing the question, "What can I do with all this stuff?"

Ralph's prayers were answered when the airfield became a business park, and owner Dr. Jonathan Palmer sought out Ralph, asking for information regarding the World War II activities that had occurred at the site. Out of this interest, Palmer offered Ralph a building, one of the few remaining World War II vintage buildings at the airfield that once stored small arms ammunition. The three-room building was renovated by a crew hired by Palmer, who had it rewired, upgraded, and painted inside and out before Ralph moved his collection to the building. Eventually, the building was transformed into a place where 306th memorabilia could be displayed and made available for visitors to view. Through the efforts of Ralph and his wife, Daphne, now bearing the title of "Museum Curators," much of the space within the building became designated "scenes" that displayed artifacts to re-create activities and atmosphere of the airfield and surrounding areas during the war years, as well as honor all those that lost their lives. To facilitate displaying the items, one of the Franklin's sons, who worked for a display company, used his talents and skills to build the cabinets.



When the Museum opened in 2002, many airmen and their families started to donate items of interest. The memorabilia now include personal letters, photos, and belongings from those who were stationed there. Thousands of artifacts that help tell the story of the bomb group and the men and women connected to the 306th Bomb Group are available for visitors to see.

Among the first items donated to the Museum was a .50 caliber waist gun from a 306th plane piloted by Louis Matichka. The plane went into the waters of the Baltic off the coast of Sweden. Years later, Swiss divers found the machine gun and, in 2007, shipped it to the Thurleigh Museum.



A Norden Bombsight, once in the possession of George Kerr, a 369th bombardier, was shipped to the Museum after George determined that having it displayed for all to see was a better option than storing it in his home.

Another significant item on display is the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to Harrison “Snuffy” Smith for the heroism he demonstrated in 1943 on his first combat mission to France. His actions

showed gallantry in action, undaunted bravery, and loyalty to his aircraft and fellow crew members without regard for his safety. He was the first enlisted airman to be awarded the Medal of Honor. However, Snuffy was conspicuously absent at the awards ceremony, only to be found administering his assigned KP duties.

Following Ralph Franklin’s death in March 2019, sons Ray and Graham did an excellent job organizing many items donated to the Museum but not put on display. However, they determined that the role of a “museum curator” would need to fall under someone other than the Franklin family members. Seven Museum enthusiasts sought to preserve the future of the exhibits and the facility in which they are housed. To date, volunteers have ensured the Museum remains open and the collection available to visitors as a repository for invaluable World War II artifacts, particularly those items of interest relative to the 306th Bomb Group.

With the Museum’s auspicious history, it is little wonder that preserving the artifacts and stories of the 306th Bomb Group in Thurleigh, England, is vitally important. Through the continuing generosity of Palmer Sport and the hard-working Museum volunteers, a remarkable future for the Museum seems possible. Each year, a steady stream of visitors spend time at the Museum, examining the displays and gleaning a part of history that previously may have been unknown to them. To ensure the Museum’s continued mission of preserving the memory of the brave young men of the 306th Bomb Group who fought and died to protect freedom in the air war over Europe, your generous donations must bolster the Museum’s finances. As we continue to fulfill the Museum’s mission, the Museum’s volunteer board of directors relies heavily on the generosity of donors like you. Your contribution would be an asset to the organization.

In addition to the annual fundraiser, the 306th BGHA, in partnership with the Museum, has designed memorial plaques to honor veterans who served at Thurleigh. If you donate \$25 (US) or more, a plaque will be placed at the Museum in honor of the donor’s veteran. Please refer to the form on the following page for more information regarding the ordering process. All request forms shall be sent to Mark Fussell at Fuss306thbg@outlook.com. If you have any questions you are asked to contact Mark at the email address provided. Once you have agreed upon the plaque design, you will be invoiced for your order. ■

306th Bombardment Memorial Plaques (\$25.00)

Order Form:

Plaque Type (check one) <i>See sample below.</i>	Garden		Wall Mount	
---	--------	--	------------	--

Which Squadron Patch? This will be shown on the plaque alongside the Triangle H.

367 th		368 th		369 th		423 rd	
-------------------	--	-------------------	--	-------------------	--	-------------------	--

Aircraft Type and Serial Number

Aircraft Type and Serial Number to allow aircraft artwork creation. Check box if no aircraft image included.

B-17F		B-17G		Tail Letter	
-------	--	-------	--	-------------	--

Serial Number		Plane Name	
---------------	--	------------	--

Memorial Wording

Use these lines to enter your desired tribute wording.

Fin Color (Top Color + Yellow) Refer to sample below. Check box if no fin color to be included.

Red 367 th		White 368 th		Green 369 th		Blue 423 rd	
--------------------------	--	----------------------------	--	----------------------------	--	---------------------------	--

Other Wording/Motto Check box if no additional wording to be included

--

Extra Voluntary Donation

\$	
----	--

Email Address

--

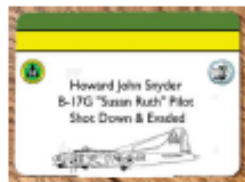
This allows the 306th Bombardment Group Museum to invoice you directly for the Memorial Plaque and any Voluntary Donation.

Please email your form to Fuss306thbg@outlook.com

If you have any questions or need our assistance, please contact us using this email address.

You will not be invoiced until you are happy with the final design.

If ordering multiple plaques, use separate order form for each.



Example: Wall Plaque



Example: Garden Plaque



From the Secretary

By Mary Conway
(Secretary's contact information on page 2)

I hope you are enjoying your summer! We are currently in the process of overhauling our email system to make it more effective and organized. The process involves compiling and cleansing all emails from multiple records and creating templates and tools. We intend to use this overhaul to address the requests for more frequent email communications from the organization. As a result, you will begin to receive more emails from us as we continue to develop this system. These emails will include updates on new blog publications, information about the reunion, and additional details about Board initiatives. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or suggestions!

Please remember to send in your membership renewal for the current year. The renewal form is on page 23 of this issue of *Echoes* and is on the 306th website (www.306bg.us) under "Membership info." Additionally, if you have any changes to your contact information (especially email), please inform the Secretary and Membership Chairman. ■

Thurleigh Museum Announces Hours of Operation

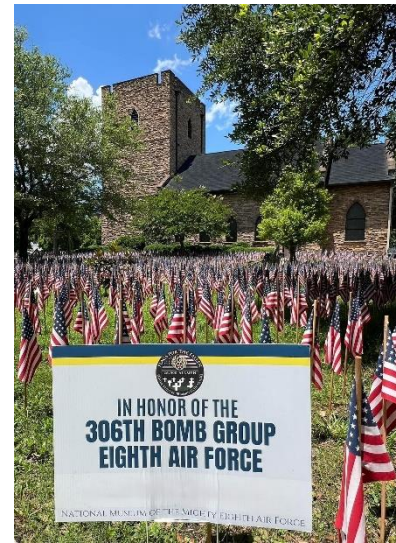
For anyone possibly planning a trip to England and anticipating a visit to the 306th Bombardment Museum in Thurleigh, the site is open thru the end of October. Hours of operation are 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM. Admission is free. Appointments outside of operating hours can be requested via the Facebook page. ■



Memorial Day: US and UK

The Mighty Eighth Air Force's annual "Flags of the Fallen" Memorial Day event honors and remembers 26,000 brave young American aircrew men who never returned home from their services in the Eighth Army Air Force during World War II. The flags are displayed in the Memorial Garden of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, Georgia. Each flag represents an individual who gave their most precious gift, "All their tomorrows," and is a visual reminder of the true cost of freedom.

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association continues to support this annual event.



In England at the Cambridge American Cemetery, Memorial Day services were held to remember those 306th Bomb Group personnel whose names appear on the Wall of the Missing or are laid to rest in the cemetery grounds. To honor those individuals, representatives from the 306th Bomb Group Museum laid a wreath at the Wall of the Missing and in the Memorial Chapel. Pictured (left to right): Peter Worby, Garth Tree, Lisa Worby, Mark Fussell, John Watson-Read, Philip Darrington, and Kevin Briggshaw. ■



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 have donated to date in 2023. As of 2 May 2024, the association has received a total of \$4,498.16 from 52 supporters.

The 306th BGHA can also now receive donations through Zeffy (<https://www.zeffy.com>), a zero-fee fundraising software platform for nonprofits. You can donate to the 306th BGHA via Zeffy by visiting our website (<https://www.306bg.us/>) and clicking on the "Donate" button.

Zeffy is a fundraising platform exclusively for nonprofit organizations that allows donors to share one-time and recurring donations with zero fees. Zeffy is solely supported by any additional amount donors are willing to contribute on top of their donation to the specified organization.

We also still welcome donations through PayPal or check!

Memorial Donations

Please consider this significant way of honoring the memory of a veteran or other person who has been part of the 306th family by noting "306th Memorial Fund" along with the veterans name you are honoring on the memo line of your check or as a notation when using PayPal. For additional information regarding memorial donations, see page 22 of this issue of *Echoes*.

All donations are extremely important to the continuing education mission of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association. Although donations are optional, they are greatly appreciated!

**DONATION FOR THE
306TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

Make checks payable to:

306th Bomb Group Historical Association

Send to:

Sally Smith, 306th BGHA Treasurer

PO Box 17163

Boulder, CO 80308

Name _____

By initialing here (_____), I hereby confirm this current contact information should be used for my FREE membership registration/renewal for 2024, indicating my continuing interest in the 306th BGHA.

Address: _____

eMail: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

This donation is being made in memory of:

Name: _____ Relationship to 306th: _____

Date: _____

(continued from page 1)

The success of the boats ensured Higgins Industries would be a major employer during the war. A small workforce of 75 workers in 1938 grew to over 20,000 in 1943. The Higgins workforce was the first in New Orleans to be racially integrated. Employees included undrafted white males, women, African Americans, older adults, and people with disabilities, all of whom were paid equal wages according to their job rating. They responded by shattering production records, turning out nearly 24,000 boats by the war's end.

A reproduction of the Higgins craft is on display in the National World War II Museum's Louisiana Memorial Pavilion.

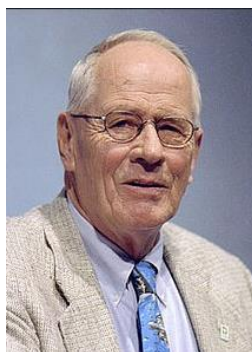
The National World War II Museum will be the central point for this year's reunion activities. The agenda promises four days of unlimited visits to the Museum, a treasure trove of historical artifacts and exhibits. With so much to explore within the Museum's expansive six-acre campus, it will be a challenge not to be captivated by everything it offers. Pre-plan your visit to maximize your time by consulting the Museum's website

www.nationalww2museum.org.

Do not miss the opportunity to visit the Solomon Victory Theater, where you can embark on a 4-D journey through the war that changed the world. Equally compelling is the Priddy Family Foundation Freedom Theater, which offers a multimedia experience focused on the significance of the Allied victory and subsequent generations' responsibility to defend democracy, protect freedom, and advance human rights.



In the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, do not miss the opportunity to use an interactive dog tag to follow the story of a World War II serviceman at kiosks throughout the Museum.



Dr Stephen Ambrose

The National World War II Museum was born from an idea Dr. Stephen Ambrose, a long-time professor of history at the University of New Orleans, shared with his friend and colleague Dr. Gordon "Nick" Mueller. Ambrose had been contemplating the establishment of a museum for some time. He was a prolific writer who had amassed World War II artifacts while writing **Band of Brothers**, **The Wild Blue**, and **D-Day**. He believed these items should be on display so the public could, as the Museum's mission now states, *"experience the war that changed the world – why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today – so all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn."*

The year was 1990, and plans for opening the Museum began germinating. Ambrose and museum co-founder Mueller spearheaded the facility's establishment, with Ambrose contributing his vast collection and \$500,000 to the effort and launching fundraising campaigns.

Originally designated as the National D-Day Museum, it opened its doors on June 6, 2000, the 56th anniversary of the Normandy invasion. In 2003, the US Congress expanded the Museum's scope and mission and renamed it the National World War II Museum.

Over the years, the Museum has continued to grow. Thanks in part to the Boeing Company, several aircraft are on display, including the B-17E dubbed *My Gal Sal*. This aircraft is notably known for its pilot being forced to make a belly landing in Greenland due to inclement weather during a ferry flight to England.



The only damage to the plane was bent propeller blades. The crew was rescued nine days after the mishap, but the aircraft was abandoned and not seen

again until 1964 when a US Air Force reconnaissance aircraft located the damaged plane. Eventually, *My Gal Sal* was recovered and returned to the United States. Shortly thereafter, a gentleman named Mr. Robert Ready purchased the plane. He and a host of volunteers in a Blue Ash Airport hangar near Cincinnati, Ohio, aspired to open a museum where *My Gal Sal* would be the centerpiece of what Mr. Ready had designated as the Ultimate Sacrifice Museum. However, those plans were dashed when the Blue Ash City Council decided to convert the airport into a municipal park.

In 2007, when National World War II Museum officials announced a multi-million-dollar expansion program funded partly by the Boeing Company, Boeing stated it wanted one of its planes to be the focal point of what would become known as the Freedom Pavilion. When Mr. Ready learned of this, he decided to donate *My Gal Sal* to the Museum. Today, the plane is suspended from the ceiling, 80 feet above the ground floor of the Boeing Freedom Pavilion. A catwalk allows visitors to see the historic craft from above and below.



The first scheduled reunion excursion begins on Thursday. Reunion participants will board the *Steamboat Natchez* for a Southern-style luncheon as they cruise the Mississippi River aboard the only surviving authentic steamboat in New Orleans. The riverboat captain will provide guests with a narrated history of the area while the musical sounds of a Dixieland band lend to the ambiance of the excursion.



Thursday evening's dinner speaker is Stephen J. Watson, President and CEO of the National World War II Museum. Mr. Watson has worked with the Museum in various positions since 2002, and in 2017, he took on the leadership role he holds today. Recognizing the bond between

the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and the National World War II Museum, both organizations have been working toward enhancing the collaborative partnership that has existed for nearly a quarter century. Mr. Watson's comprehensive strategy to expand the Museum's education and outreach programs parallels the 8th AFHS's mission.

In 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, the National World War II Museum was forced to close for several months. During that timeframe, under the leadership of Mr. Watson, the Museum was compelled to diversify its revenue sources, recognizing they could not be dependent upon the influx of visitors. This crisis also meant the museum team increased their focus on online and distance learning. They took the initiative to consider digitization of the collection and looked at the need for curriculum development, learning materials, and teacher training. So, when COVID-19 once again forced the closure of the Museum, the staff was prepared to provide online resources, podcasts, and links to digital collections.

Undoubtedly, Thursday night's presentation will focus on the steps being taken to reaffirm the connection between the Museum and the 8th AFHS and what is being discussed to propel that relationship into the future.



It would not be a trip to New Orleans without the opportunity to experience what this famed city offers. On Friday, reunion attendees will board a bus for a city tour to experience this three-century-old city's history, culture, and architecture. The luncheon stop will give them the opportunity to seek out the cuisine for which New Orleans is known. Heavily influenced by Creole and Cajun cuisine, it is said to be perhaps the most distinctively recognized regional cuisine in the United States. Popular dishes include Dirty Rice, Gumbo, Jambalaya, Muffuletta, Po' Boy sandwiches,

Red Rice and Beans, and Shrimp Creole. Save room for such dessert selections as Bananas Foster, a Beignet, or Pralines.

Also included in the guided tour is a visit to the famous and infamous gravesites of historical figures. Mark Twain referred to the rows and rows of above ground tombs as “cities of the dead,” a name that has stuck ever since. On this phase of the tour, cemetery visitors will learn from local guides and storytellers why the tombs are above ground and about the ghosts that haunt New Orleans cemeteries.



Saturday night's featured guest speaker is Major General Jason R. Armagost, Commander of the Eighth Air Force and Commander, Joint-Global Strike Operations Center (J-GSOC), Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, an assignment he has held since August 2023. According to an official Air Force

publication, “The Mighty Eighth” is responsible for the service's bomber force and airborne nuclear command and controls assets, encompassing approximately 24,000 Airmen across six installations and proudly operating over 150 aircraft. The J-GSOC serves as the central command and control node for all Air Force Global Strike Command operations, orchestrating warfighting and readiness activities for the Commander, Air Forces Strategic.” A United States Air Force Academy graduate, he was commissioned in 1992. Major General Armagost has logged over 2900 hours in multiple fighter aircraft, including Northrup Grumman's B-2A Stealth Bomber, Rockwell's B-1B Supersonic Heavy Bomber, Boeing's B-52 Stratofortress, General Dynamic's F-16 Fighting Falcon, and Northrop's T-38 Talon. His operational assignments supported contingency operations during multiple Middle East conflicts and, more recently, led the coordination of security assistance support efforts to the Ukrainian government.

As the reunion festivities draw to a close on Saturday evening and people prepare to return home, they are invited to mark their calendars for the next reunion, to be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, October 1 to 5, 2025. ■

Bomber Crew Protection: The Flak Helmet

A 1942 study revealed a harsh reality – relatively low-velocity projectiles such as deflected flak fragments or shattered pieces of aircraft structure caused a staggering 70% of bomber crew wounds. At the time, aircrews only wore fabric flight helmets, and with the increasing number of head wounds, it became painfully clear that more protection was desperately needed. The development of the M3 helmet was a crucial step in addressing this pressing issue.

Early bomber crews wore standard M1 infantry steel helmets directly over their flight helmets but found them uncomfortable since their earphones fit poorly under the steel helmet. Although relatively effective as protection against metal fragments, bumps, or flying debris, this was not an adequate solution to the problem. Furthermore, it was too bulky

for crew positions in gun turrets.

In January 1943, combat crews in the 306th Bomb Group based at Thurleigh modified the M1 helmets by hammering out the sides and cutting the liner to enable them to



be worn over their flying helmets and earphones. The modification gained acceptance by other bomb groups, was formally adopted as a standard issue in early 1944, and designated the M3.

The US Ordnance Department, in response to the needs of the bomber crews, produced the M3 Anti Flak Helmet. This new design, omitting the fiberboard liner and riveting the suspension band directly to the steel outer shell, was a game-changer. It was designed to fit properly over a flying helmet and its communication equipment, with the sides cut out and felt-lined, hinged ear flaps fitted, and a long leather chin strap with a quick release buckle. The comfort and functionality of this new helmet were a significant improvement, ensuring the safety and well-being of the bomber crews. ■

50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024

THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM*

Please note: Selecting this 'tour option' on the registration form is an individual membership in the National WWII Museum! This entitles you to unlimited admission to the Museum not only during the reunion, but through 12/31/2025! If you are already a member of the WWII Museum, you **MUST show your card for admission.*



Offering a compelling blend of sweeping narrative and poignant personal detail, The National WWII Museum features immersive exhibits, multimedia experiences, and an expansive collection of artifacts and first-person oral histories, taking visitors inside the story of *the war that changed the world*. Beyond the galleries, the Museum's online collections, virtual field trips, webinars, educational travel programs, and renowned International Conference on World War II offer patrons new

ways to connect to history and honor the generation that sacrificed so much to secure our freedom.

LOUISIANA MEMORIAL PAVILION



the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, *The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George R. Brown Salute to the Home Front* tells the story of the road to war and the Home Front, drawing on personal narratives and evocative artifacts to highlight facets of WWII-era American life through an experiential narrative.

Start your visit in the Museum's original pavilion, which features the Museum's original D-Day exhibit, the story of the war experienced on the Home Front, macro-artifacts, special temporary exhibits, and the *L.W. "Pete" Kent Train Car Experience*—the perfect place to begin your journey into the WWII story.

THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

Opened June 2017 in

CAMPAIGNS OF COURAGE: EUROPEAN AND PACIFIC THEATERS

Follow in the footsteps of the citizen soldier in 360-degree displays that take visitors through key settings in World War II. The galleries serve as an immersive timeline and provide a service-member's view of the war.

ROAD TO TOKYO

Road to Tokyo: Pacific Theater Galleries retraces the grueling



trail that led from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay by way of New Guinea and Southeast Asia, the Himalayas, Burma, the islands of the Pacific, China, India, and Alaska.

ROAD TO BERLIN

Road to Berlin brings to life the drama, sacrifices, personal stories, and strategies of America's campaign to defeat the Axis powers and preserve freedom.

US FREEDOM PAVILION: THE BOEING CENTER

Stand beside ground-level tanks and trucks to view WWII airplanes—or brave sky-high catwalks for an up-close look. Exhibits describe the history and production of war machines and honor service in every branch of the military.

Thursday, September 26, 2024
 Busses Board at 10:30am
 Board "Natchez" at 11:00am
 Sailing: 11:30am – 1:30pm
 Arrive back at The Higgins at 2:15pm

New Orleans Steamboat Natchez Jazz Cruise & Lunch

includes an incredible southern-inspired buffet lunch, filled with New Orleans' favorites!

Friday, September 27, 2024
 Busses Board at 9:45am
 Arrive back at The Higgins at 2:15pm



Travel like the residents of New Orleans did decades ago when you step aboard the historic riverboat on this Mississippi River cruise. After you depart from the harbor, listen to entertaining commentary on the sights that pass by as you stroll the expansive deck, enjoy live jazz music in the main dining area, and check out the churning paddle wheel in action. Along with an exciting cruise on the "Mighty Mississipp" your experience

Guided New Orleans Sightseeing Tour

This four (4) hour city sightseeing tour covers 25 square miles of iconic neighborhoods through three (3) centuries with ample opportunities to experience the beauty and history of New Orleans. Includes stops at St. Louis Cemetery #3, City Park, and lunch (on your own) in the incomparable Garden District on Magazine Street.





REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024

STOP!

◊ RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM ***FIRST!***

The reunion hotel has a liberal cancellation policy—in the event you are unable to attend the reunion, you will be able to cancel your reservation without penalty within 72 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room reservation, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available at the reunion hotel.

Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.

◊ COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out the registration form completely.

- ⇒ Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag—and for up to 3 guests registering with you. ONE address per registration form, PLEASE! The principle attendee MUST be a current member of the Society to register for the reunion. You may JOIN and/or RENEW directly on the registration form. If you are a veteran, and/or affiliated with a bomb or fighter group, please indicate which group.
- ⇒ ALL meals are priced separately. *Please note: Breakfast is on your own!* Be sure and indicate if you need special meals such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, etc.
- ⇒ There are two [2] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information on each tour and then make your selection on the form. Tours have limited seating and are filled on a first come first available basis.
- ⇒ The National Museum of WWII is located directly across the street from The Higgins hotel. Admission/unlimited access to the museum is via a special membership purchased on the reunion registration form—unless you ALREADY HAVE a CURRENT MEMBERSHIP to the WWII MUSEUM. If you are a current member of the WWII Museum, you MUST PRESENT your MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP CARD for admission.

◊ MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Once you have completed your registration form, please total up the amount owed and include a check, money order, or credit card information on the form, payable to the 8th AFHS and mail to:

8th AFHS
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769

Or you may **SCAN** your registration form if paying by credit card
[a 3% convenience fee will be added]
and then

—> **EMAIL** to:
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL registration forms MUST be received by **August 23, 2024** in order to guarantee your place.
If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact:

Debra Kujawa
Managing Director
8th AFHS
912-748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL reunion information and forms are available on our website: www.8thAFHS.org



HOTEL(S) INFORMATION

50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024

Due to the OVERWHELMING response to this year's reunion in New Orleans, both The Higgins (reunion hotel) and the Hilton Garden Inn (our "overflow" hotel), filled rapidly. We have secured rooms at an additional hotel, only two (2) blocks from the National WWII Museum and The Higgins:

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

936 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA

Reservations:

504-962-0900 or (800) 439-4745

(Reference code: 'AFS' for group rate)

This property does NOT offer private parking.

THE HIGGINS
(REUNION HOTEL)
RESERVATIONS
(833) 357-1172

(Reference '928' for group rate)

Direct link to reservations:

<https://group.curiocollection.com/zq611f>

Or on our website:
www.8thafhs.org

—>OVERFLOW HOTEL<—
HILTON GARDEN INN
RESERVATION INFORMATION
(800) 774-1500

(Reference '91A' for group rate)

Direct link to reservations:

[Hilton Garden Inn reservations](#)

Or on our website: www.8thafhs.org

Location

As the official hotel of the National WWII Museum, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center's name reflects the contributions of the extraordinary entrepreneur, Andrew Higgins, who designed and built over 20,000 boats in New Orleans that were used in every major amphibious assault of World War II.

Conveniently located directly across the street from The National WWII Museum, 1000 Magazine St., New Orleans, LA 70130, the hotel offers 230 era-inspired guest rooms and specialty suites, premium amenities, full-service restaurant, lounge, and a rooftop bar, as well as a second-floor conference center with more than 18,000 square feet of meeting and event space.

**The Hilton Garden Inn is located 3 blocks from the Museum: 1001 South Peters St., New Orleans.*

Transportation to/from Airport & Parking

For those of you flying into New Orleans, you will need to either rent a car, use a cab or car service, or a ride-share such as Uber or Lyft. Self-parking is available at the Higgins. The rate is \$32 per day + 12.45% tax (per car/per day) when charged to a guest room account. Clearance is 7 ft. **Valet parking available at the Hilton Garden Inn @ \$45 per day. Additional parking options available. Call for more information.**

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Holiday Inn Express—See above [\$109++]

The Higgins—Call for availability [\$189++] (833) 357-1172

Hilton Garden Inn—Call for availability [\$189++] (800) 774-1500

Reunion Dates: September 25-29, 2024

Cut off Date: August 21, 2024

Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a 72 hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

ScoutAround: (888) 441-7575 or ScoutAround.com
Reserve chair rentals early!



REUNION SCHEDULE

50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024

Wednesday, September 25

8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration open
9:00am — 5:00pm *The National WWII Museum**
6:00pm — 7:00pm Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own
7:00pm — 9:00pm 8th AFHS Board Meeting
7:00pm — until Hospitality Suites remain open throughout reunion

Thursday, September 26

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**
8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration open TBD***
9:00am — 5:00pm *The National WWII Museum**
10:30am — 2:30pm *Lunch Cruise on Steamboat Natchez ~Live Jazz*
6:00pm — 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm Dinner and program: *Stephen J. Watson, President & CEO, The National WWII Museum*

Friday, September 27

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**
8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration TBD***
7:45am — 8:45am Group Meetings
9:00am — 5:00pm *The National WWII Museum**
10:00am — 2:00pm *City Tour of New Orleans (lunch on your own in the Garden District)*
6:00pm — 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, September 28

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**
8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration TBD***
8:45am — 10:15am General Membership Meeting
9:00am — 5:00pm *The National WWII Museum**
12:00pm — 4:00pm 8th AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm — 10:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm Gala Dinner and Program
Speaker~ *Major General Jason R. Armagost, Commander, Eighth Air Force, Barksdale AFB, LA*
Music and Entertainment ~ *The Victory Belles*

Sunday, September 29

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**

**The National WWII Museum is self-guided...your "ticket" is a one year membership for unlimited access!*

***Breakfast is NOT included in our reunion package...please check times with hotel.*

****TBD Registration may be closed during the time scheduled for certain tours and/or group meetings.*



REGISTRATION
50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION
The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA
September 25-29, 2024

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS August 23, 2024 (NO refunds on cancellations past this date)	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
DUES: The principal attendee <i>MUST</i> be a CURRENT member of the 8th AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are NOT CURRENT , or a member, please pay your yearly dues here:	\$ 60	#	\$
REGISTRATION FEE (non-refundable): EVERY attendee MUST pay registration fee	\$ 45	#	\$
DINNERS			
Thursday, Sept 26: Dinner—Chef's delightful favorites welcoming you to the Big Easy!	\$ 82	#	\$
Friday, Sept 27: Rendezvous Dinners—Roasted Marinated Chicken & all the trimmings!	\$ 70	#	\$
Saturday, Sept 28: GALA Banquet—Surf & Turf buffet... <i>the best of both worlds!</i>	\$ 78	#	\$
Vegetarian [Vg], vegan [V], gluten free [GF], etc— Please indicate # of meal types each day: Thurs _____ (\$82) Fri _____ (\$70) Sat _____ (\$78)	---	---	\$
TOUR OPTIONS: <u>LUNCH INCLUDED</u> on Thursday			
NEW!!! UNLIMITED ADMISSION to National WWII Museum. This is a MEMBERSHIP* details in tour descriptions. If you are already a <u>current member of the WWII Museum</u> , you MUST SHOW YOUR CARD to ENTER! After each name on registration, <u>please enter</u> ✓ <u>if touring Museum.</u>	\$ 50	#	\$
Thursday, Sept 26: 10:45am-2:00pm ~ Fabulous River Cruise Includes Lunch & Live Jazz	\$ 92	#	\$
Friday, Sept 27: 10:00am-2:00pm ~ New Orleans & Garden District ~ LUNCH ON YOUR OWN!	\$ 48	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

Please PRINT. If registering a veteran, please list their name first.
MAXIMUM of FOUR [4] persons per ADDRESS per registration form!

MEMBER NAME: _____ BG/FG (for name tag & seating) _____

VETERAN? If yes—> WWII: _____ Post WWII: _____ (conflict or era): _____ (Branch of Service): _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PH #: _____ EMAIL: _____

Name #2: _____ WWII Museum: _____ Military service: _____

Name #3: _____ WWII Museum: _____ Military service: _____

Name #4: _____ WWII Museum: _____ Military service: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PH #: _____

PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WILL BE USING A WHEELCHAIR ON TOURS: _____ NEED HYDRAULIC LIFT?: _____

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD —M/C, VISA; or AmEx (a 3% convenience fee will be added):

CARD #: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.

MAIL completed form with check or credit card info to: 8th AFHS ~ 68 Kimberlys Way ~ Jasper, GA 30143-4769
 IF paying by credit card, you may SCAN and email form to: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org
 Questions? PLEASE CALL: (912) 748-8884

From the Editor



Homing Pigeons: **How They Helped the Allies Win the War**

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

Let's face it. Pigeons are probably not the most popular of birds. To most people, they are annoying. They thrive near human civilization, roosting on rooftops, building ledges, balconies, and windowsills. Hanging around parks where people feed them to pass the time of day further encourages these birds to stick around highly populated areas. Primarily city birds, they use the day to forage for food, feed their chicks, and deface statues. After all, they are known to poop every 15 minutes.

But there must have been a purpose for them being created. Right?

It wasn't until August 2022 when 21 members of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association traveled to England to mark the 80th anniversary of US Army Air Force personnel arriving in England. During that journey, we visited Bletchley Park, and among the exhibits was one dedicated to homing pigeons and their role in World War II. After viewing the exhibit, I had to rethink my attitude toward pigeons. I found a new respect for these intrepid birds, motivating me to do some research on what I now consider amazing creatures. A trip to my local library [Yes! I am an ardent user of the resources available there], where I was overwhelmed by the amount of material available on a subject that had been little known to me.

Although communication technology had vastly improved during the intervening years between World War I and World War II, homing pigeons played an integral role in supplemental and emergency communications. These homing pigeons transported messages back to their home coop behind the lines. When they landed, wires in the coop would sound a bell or buzzer to notify a soldier, who was part of the Signal Corp, alerting him a message had arrived. The soldier would go to the coop, remove the message, and then send it to its destination by telegraph, field phone, or personal messenger.

During World War II, thousands of pigeons risked their lives delivering messages. Some became well-known for their heroics and were awarded medals for their valor.



Recognizing the value of homing pigeons for the transmission of messages, the US Army Air Forces issued a technical manual (T.O. 01-1-120) dated 1 August 1943 entitled *Handling and Releasing Homing Pigeons from Aircraft in Flight* and was given a "restricted" security classification by the

US Army. The technical orders feature a description of the container used to house the homing pigeons aboard aircraft in flight, the proper handling and care of these birds, and the correct way to release a homing pigeon for its mission while the aircraft is in mid-air, on land after a forced landing, or at sea. On page 2 of the technical manual are instructions for preparing the message, including the size and thickness of the paper used, then how to fold and insert the message into the holder to be affixed to the pigeon.

Homing pigeons served the Army Air Forces capably and valiantly during World War II. They transmitted countless messages and contributed much to the Allied war effort. These message-carrying pigeons served bravely during wartime. Reading through the technical manual highlights contributions the pigeons made to the war effort, frequently under dangerous and harsh conditions.

The United States Army Signal Corps used homing pigeons as a communications method during the war, especially in places where it was difficult to string wires. Pigeons were considered an undetectable way of sending messages to field headquarters, and over 90% of messages sent via pigeons reached their destination.

Pigeons were standard on some American bombers. On B-17s, for example, bomber crews found that although they had to wear oxygen masks and heated suits at 20,000 feet, pigeons needed no special equipment. Even at 35,000 feet, with the temperature at 45 degrees below zero, the birds just sat there, eyes half shut, and feathers fluffed against the cold. Pigeon handlers learned the pigeons could be released from high altitudes at speeds of 375 miles per hour, using little more than what was simply an ordinary paper

grocery bag. When dropped into the slipstream, the bag would flutter open, and the bird would emerge, spread its wings, reach a comfortable altitude, and fly home.

These pigeons would transport messages in a tiny capsule fastened to one leg. Later in the war, handlers started attaching a larger capsule, the size of a cigar tube, to the pigeon's back. The dispatched pigeon could now carry a more significant load, perhaps including maps, photos, and detailed reports. Very few messages were coded; the pigeons were so dependable at reaching their destinations that there was no need to encrypt the communication.



Over 250,000 pigeons saw active service in World War II and are credited with saving thousands of lives. An American bird, known as G. I. Joe, whose timely delivery of a crucial message, prevented a village from being bombed, thus helping save 100 British lives in Italy. For his heroics, the bird was

awarded the Dickin Medal, the highest British military award offered to animals. G.I. Joe's body was taxidermized and is on display at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

In the 1980s, the British news reported a gentleman, who, while renovating an abandoned house in the Surrey countryside, discovered in the chimney the skeletal remains of a homing pigeon. Attached to its leg was a small canister that contained a coded message that had been written during World War II. Cryptologists around the world have not yet been able to decipher the message.



As an avid reader, particularly of historical fiction, I discovered *The Long Flight Home* by Alan Hlad, a novel that I would label engaging, well-written, and educational. While the over-arching story is fictional, the novel is based on historical events, which the author ardently strived to weave into the story's timeline.

What makes the book unique is that it highlights little-known yet critical missions in which homing pigeons played an important role during the early war years. Within the story's context, we learn what it takes to raise and train homing pigeons, as well as their resilience and bravery. ■

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.

To avoid copyright infringement, any copyrighted materials, including reprints of articles previously appearing in other publications, will not be included in *Echoes* without the expressed written consent from the author and/or editor of the original publication. This information must be included with the article submitted to the *Echoes* editor for consideration.

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
Summer/Fall**

25 October 2024

Aluminum Overcast Now On Display

The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Museum at Wittman Airport in Oshkosh, WI, recently announced that the B-17 *Aluminum Overcast* has been moved to the Eagle Hangar for display. According to a news release from an EAA spokesperson, the museum will continue with plans to repair and restore the aircraft.

Initially known as B17G-105-VE, 44-85740, this Flying Fortress has a remarkable and unconventional history. Delivered to the US Army Air Corps in 1945, too late to serve in Europe, the plane never saw combat and was declared surplus. Despite this, it was not destined for the scrap heap. Instead, it was rescued and resold multiple times, finding new and unexpected uses. From aerial photography and mapping operations over the Middle East to transporting cattle in Florida and Puerto Rico, and later outfitted with spray bars beneath the wings so it could be used in pest control operations, the B-17 *Aluminum Overcast* has proven its versatility and resilience.

In 1978, a group of investors purchased the plane and sought to restore it to a near-wartime appearance. Veterans of the 398th Bomb Group, who helped restore the aircraft, named it *Aluminum Overcast*. It carries the colors of World War II's 398th Bomb Group, which flew hundreds of missions over Nazi-held territory. *Aluminum Overcast* commemorates another B-17 that was shot down over France in 1944.

Economic challenges, financing for further restoration, and additional plans forced the cancellation of those ideas. This decision ultimately led to the donation of the aircraft to the Experimental Aircraft Association Aviation Foundation, which operates under the B-17 Historical Society. In 1983, the plane was put on display, and then a 10-year extensive restoration commenced. In 1994, *Aluminum Overcast* initiated a national tour. Thousands have had the opportunity to view the plane at air shows, and some have gone airborne to experience the thrill of riding in an iconic World War II aircraft. However, due to structural damages suffered in 2021, the plane was grounded in Punta Gorda, Florida. In September 2022, the aircraft experienced additional damage from Hurricane Ian. Following that incident, the EAA decided to disassemble the B-17 and truck it back to

Oshkosh for the required work. It arrived back at its home base in February 2023.



Will *Aluminum Overcast* ever fly again? The goal is to return this vintage B-17 to flying conditions. Thus far, the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) has approved the proposed repairs. But only time will tell if this Flying Fortress will be declared airworthy. ■

UK Museum Debuts New Video



To kick-off the seasonal opening of the 306th Bombardment Group Museum in Thurleigh, England, Steve Snyder, President of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association, along with his son, Clayton, a member of the Board of Directors of the 306th BGHA, were asked to create an introductory video now uploaded to the museum's website. To view this video, go to <https://www.306bg.co.uk>. ■



Great Haseley Historical Group Dedicates Memorial to *Buttercup*

Over the years, *Echoes* has reported on the many memorials that are found in England and across the European continent, honoring 306th Bomb Group men and planes that crashed or were shot down during World War II. A new memorial has recently been added, erected, and dedicated to the crew of *Buttercup* serial 42-3142. The memorial service and dedication were held at the entrance to St. Peter's churchyard in Great Haseley, South Oxfordshire, England, on 12 November 2023, one day short of the 80th anniversary of the crash. The service was attended by fourteen relatives of the crew members who perished that day.



In mid-2022, the **Great Haseley History Group** became aware that a 368th Bomb Squadron aircraft, piloted by Lt. Floyd Scudder, had crashed on 13 November 1943, shortly after takeoff, during a severe storm near Great Haseley. Spearheaded by Mr. David Simcox of the history group and its members, the group began researching, collecting information on

the crew, and raising funds to erect an appropriate memorial. Every year, the citizens of the United Kingdom celebrate “Remembrance Day” on the Sunday nearest 11 November, the date of the armistice signing that ended World War II. In 2023, this Sunday fell on 12 November.

The ten 306th/368th crew members that were lost that 13 November day in 1943 are:

- Lt. Floyd Scudder, pilot
- Lt. Leland Hendershot, copilot
- Lt. Ewing Shields, navigator
- Lt. John Strauser, bombardier
- T/Sgt Harris Whitten, engineer
- T/Sgt Samuel Bearden, radio operator
- Sgt. Albert Tessier, ball turret gunner
- Sgt. Eustacio Gonzales, waist gunner
- S/Sgt. Albert Griepenstroh, waist gunner
- S/Sgt Charles Nicholson, tail gunner

The fourteen relatives that came from the States to attend the memorial service:



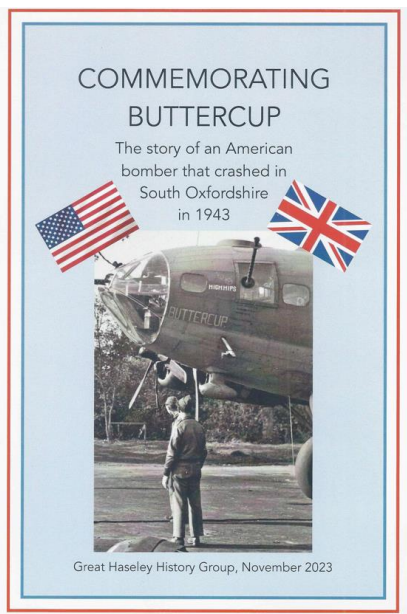
- Scudder family: Robert Scudder (103-year-old elder brother of pilot Floyd); John Floyd Scudder; Samuel Scudder; Brent Powellage; James Hwang, Irene Hwang; and Felix Hwang
- Shields family: David Messerlie; Carol Messerlie; John Shields Bertram; and Elizabeth Shields Bertram
- Tessier family: Jim Pugh and Robert Pugh
- Griepenstroh family: Dale Griepenstroh

Also attending the memorial service was Colonel William Smith (USAF) and a contingent from the 501st Combat Support Wing based at RAF Fairford, Senior Aircraftsman Plenger (RAF), members of the Great Haseley History Group, and numerous residents of Great Haseley and surrounding areas. The Reverend Simon Cronk conducted the service with a

flyby from a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter from the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. Robert Scudder was chosen to unveil the memorial and was presented with the American flag that draped the monument.



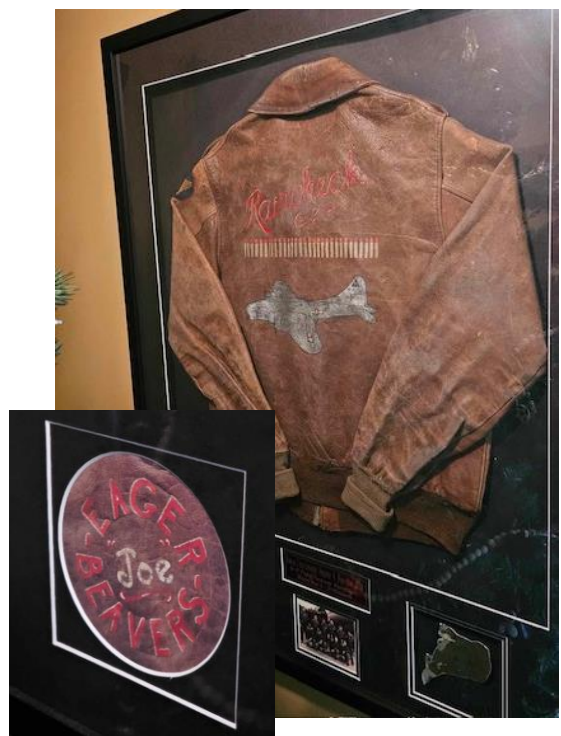
The history group published a 35-page memorial booklet with details of the crash, photos of the lost crew members and their stories, and photos of the service and distributed it to those in attendance. David Simcox was very considerate and mailed a copy to our 306th BGHA volunteer historian for our archives. Some of the booklet's photos are included in this article.



One note: The events of that 1943 mission to bomb Bremen, Germany, are chronicled on page 177 of Russell Strong's book *First Over Germany*. ■

Random Meeting Connects Descendants of 368th Squadron Members

A random service call to a gentleman needing internet cable assistance resulted in a World War II connection and, more importantly, a 306th Bomb Group connection. The customer showed the service technician his father's flight jacket, carefully framed, and hung on a wall, visible to anyone entering the house. The technician immediately recognized the squadron patch for the 368th Squadron, Eager Beavers; after all, that was the squadron in which his great-grandfather flew. What followed was a sharing of information. The technician? Dustin Smith, the great-grandson of co-pilot and 2nd Lieutenant Charles Rapp of *Hard to Get*. The customer? Gary Bischof, the son of navigator and 2nd Lieutenant Joseph A. Bischof of *Raincheck*. An initial search of mission records found the two crews flew at least three combat missions together, the last dated 28 June 1944 where they flew in tight formation with one another. The result of this chance meeting? Joseph's descendants have now connected with the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and are 306th Bomb Group – First Over Germany Facebook members. ■



In Memoriam

Obituaries – Veteran death information should be submitted to Barbara Neal, P.O. Box 682530, Park City, UT 84068, barb306neal@gmail.com, cell (435) 655-1500.

Young, John, tail gunner (367th, Joseph Hahn crew) passed away December 19, 2023, at age 100. After the war he worked as a supervisor for Southern California Gas Company.

306th Family:

Ortt, Robert L, longtime friend, companion, and escort to **William Carlile**, tower officer, 4th Station Complement Squadron, died August 30, 2023, in Baltimore. MD. Bob escorted Bill to multiple 306th BG reunions until Bill passed away in December, 2020. Bob served as Baltimore police officer, and after his retirement, he started his own security company.



Smith, Darren, 56, flying mechanic on board *Sally B*, the only flying B-17 in the United Kingdom, and a great friend of the 306th Museum, passed away unexpectedly at his home on 25 April 2024. As a long-standing B-17 *Sally B* ground crew member, Darren was part of a dedicated team that played a pivotal role in keeping the Flying Fortress airborne. Darren and his son, Callum, could often be seen at the 306th Bomb Group Museum.



Given In Memory Of...



2023

George S. Monser, 368th Waist Gunner
by Carolyn Kraft

Casey Kenneth Oliver, 367th Pilot – KIA
22 February 1944
by Kenneth Oliver

Myron Leroy Sorden, 367th Navigator – POW
by Susan Sorden

2024

Howard J. Snyder, Jr., 369th Pilot
by Clayton Snyder

Leonard P. Blatnica, 368th Bombardier
by Len Blatnica

Dudley H. Fay, Jr., 369th Navigator
by Jamie Jarboe

Ralph E. Bordner, 368th Bombardier/Navigator
by Lillian Smith

Kenneth A. Wait, 368th Pilot
by Carol Sewell

Philip Mundell, 369th Ball Turret Gunner/Toggler
by Martin Mundell

Bernard Weinstein, 369th Navigator – KIA
13 September 1944
by David Schwartz

*Gifts may be made in memory of 306th veterans or family by sending a check payable to the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association with the designation "306th Memorial Fund" on the memo line of the check. Send the check to Sally Hanley, Treasurer, PO 17163, Boulder, CO 80308. All gifts made will be recognized in the twice-yearly publication of **Echoes**. Expenditure of these funds is at the direction of the Board of Directors.*



306th Bomb Group Historical Association Membership Registration Form 2024 Calendar Year

Print all information.

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Are YOU the 306th World War II veteran? _____ IF yes: Duty/Job Title: _____

Additional Information (such as POW; year born) _____

If you have an interest in a particular World War II 306th veteran, please complete the following about him:

I am not related to him _____. **OR:** This 306th World War II 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 World War II generation AND you wish to receive copies of *Echoes* via US Mail, there is a \$20 per calendar year charge to cover cost of printing and mailing. Membership registration remains free.

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

- Check: Payable to 306th Bomb Group Historical Association; on memo line write "2024 Echoes." Please mail (with or without this form) your check to:

Sally Smith, Treasurer
PO Box 17163, Boulder, CO 80308

- PayPal or Zeffy 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 to:

Mr. Bruce Chase
306th BGHA Director of Membership
2324 Hatch Hill Road, New Albany, PA 18833-8887

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

**Colorado Springs, Colorado
Site of the 2025
Eighth Air Force Historical Society
and
306th Bomb Group Historical Association
Reunion
October 1-5, 2025**



Reunion details to be published in *Echoes*
and on the 306th BGHA website (www.306bg.us)
as they become available.