RECORD UPDATE

306th Bomb Group Association

(Please complete as much of this form as you wish, and return to Russ Strong at the reunion, or mail to Russ Strong, 5323 Cheval Place, Charlotte, NC 28205) Little Rock 1989

Date completed St-PT. 6,1990

LAST NAME: CUSTER FIRST NAME: ROBERT, J. JR

Street address: RTI- Box 45B

Telephone: (512 297 - 5304

City, state, zip:

RIVIERA, TEXAS, 78379
Wife's name:

Date of Birth: 9/1/1923

College(s) attended: TEXAS ANT LINIV Degree(s): B, S. Year(s): 1952

Last employment and job title:

PLANT PROCESS ENGINEER

Reunions attended: (by year or location)

Serial #: 1823/804 Squadron: 423

Specialty:

Date joined 306th: 4-/ /44 If combat, what crew: HAROLD L. MILLER AIRCRAFT # 42102503 13-176

Special duties or assignments w/306th:

Number of missions flown: 33 7 Date of last mission: 2-15-44

Date left 306th: 8 / /44 Highest rank/grade with 306th: 7/567

Other 8th AF units served with:

Top service assignments after 306th: Top TURRET 600

USAF retirement date:

Rank/grade:

Copies of old 306th orders, either from the Group or Station 111, or any of the squadrons or other units, will be welcomed by the secretary.

If you know of other 306th people who do not appear in the directory, please add their names and current or former addresses to this sheet so that we may search further for them.

WILLIAM CAIN - SILOAM SPENGS ARK. SIMMARSMALL - BOMB. DEAN SAUL - BEATRICE NEGRASKA JACKSONVILLE, FLA. DALE MAUGHAN - POCATTELLO, IDAHO

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Serial #: 18231804 Squadron: 423

Specialty:

Date joined 306th: 4-/ /44

If combat, what crew: HAROLD L. MILLER AIRCRAFT # 42102503 13-176

Special duties or assignments w/306th:

Number of missions flown: 3 3 2 Date of last mission: 8-15-44

Date left 306th: 8 / /44 Highest rank/grade with 306th: 7/567

Other 8th AF units served with:

Top service assignments after 306th: Top TURRUT GVN

USAF retirement date:

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Riviera, Tejas aug 8, 1989 Dear Mr. Strong you will find enclosed a couple of pictures for the 306 th Group. - 423 rd Sagdn. This picture was taken in May 1944 @ Hurleigh, Cengland. This was arrang # #42-102-503 The picture of the three are left to right. Robert M. FOMBY - COPILOT -ALABAMA HAROLD L MILLER- PILOT -FINDLAY, OHIO 904 JACKSONVILLE, FLA SAMUEL MARSHALL-BOYBARDIER-Picture was tohen by Edward J. Carey - nangator - career offices USAAL The crew puture reas fallows: KNEELING. LEF TO Right SAM MARSHALL - BOMB. EDWARD CAREY-NAV. HAROLD MILLER-PIL. Standing left to right 1. Paul GREEN - W. GUN - APPLETON WIS. 2. DEAN SAUL W.GUN. -BENTRICE , NEB. 400 X ASHER BROWN - R. Open -ELIZABETH, N.J. 4 Robert CUSTER- TEUNNER-ENGINEER- KINGSVILLE, TEXAS 6. Robert FOMBY -CO. PILOT. ALABAMA 7. JAMES SIYE- BALL GUNNER - DANIELSON, CONN. Idonot know who took the fictive In case I can't make the reunion, this well help anyway. Robert J. Custer, Dr

Riviera, Fefas July 8, 1989 Dear Mr Briscoe, Thanks a lot for all of everyones courtery. Since I have been in contact with the 306th + 423 Asgam, Thave been deluged with letters & phone calls. as it Stande right now, Thave located four of my old air crew members sam about to leaste some of my ground crew. Ina few days, I am going to unit Pussell strong & give him some more members of the 43 rd that are not listed in your directory. It is hard to believe after 45 years, I was able to talk to my oed 157567 Lea Van Duergen. He nasvery surprised to geta Phone call from me. I would like togo to Little Rock, but am on Faderal court Jury for six months. Maybe samething will work out by Jawwid binda check for 100 for my part, I would like to see cell of your guys again. If you are ever down this way, I like close to Kings Inn on the bay front, Look me up.

Phone: 512-297-5304 Robert J. Custos, Jr.

RT.1- Box 458

mind your not be changed & they could take it for whatever they through that it was north Three days later 5 HAEF + an artist resited us sprobel all the info. I believe that wanthe first fet in the world. That incident was a real shock to me at that time! Jam gaing to San antonio in Sypt & probably will stay with sume of my kin in that and I were much last to see Van Kleungen, Heyasalvaye govel to me. No I have to make any extra arrangements for the meeting? Jathfinder crewman on "Roundtrip Lichet He was attack to several groups + fler in our wing with the 305 th. Lit me has from your + hope that I set my book. Chrass a Friend Robert J. Custer, Jr. : Phone RT.1- BOY 45B 512-297-5304 iviera, Jyas 78379

12 May 1990

Dear Bob:

Interesting piece on the jet fighter.

Don't hold your breath waiting for the book. As you will note in Echoes, it will probably be July before they are ready, and will be mailed then as quickly as possible.

As to the reunion, you will need to register with the Association. There is a registration fee, which helps put the reunion together and makes it go. Of course, any of the meals you partake of will require some advance planning, as tickets will very likely be unavailable at the reunion.

Look forward to seeing you there.

All the best,

Riviera, Tepas Mon. Sept 10, 1990 7PM Near Russel, I was very clated to receive my book from you. I appreciate your efforts, accuracy + dedication to a hard tough jot I don't see how gunded it That takes a lot of personverance & hardwork, I found out a lat of things that were blank to me. I had told Les Van Deurzen that I would make that reunion & after a lot of difficulties I got there. I had not seen any body since 1944. I dedn't know any of those fellows bent I met a bunch, Like I Jaid, I made a promise to him & I carry cut my promises. I want to congratulate all of the Staff, chairmen, directors & everyone that made this possible, I yas very tised as Shad been norhing that day new long to hard & rode a bus up there & gota little rest It was a good deal for me. Heft Thursday night after a long hal day & returned & got back home @ 5 sons Fri;

The high lights of this event to me were to be able to talk to all of those old fliers Briscoe, Haulthan Riordan & Ben Del Mar Wilson. I talled a long time to him about a lot of things. The events were very tender for me as I conversed with all those guys. Kusul, Jam not a drinker nor much of a party man 4 I felt out of place of those expenses up there is ne pretty hard to about In any respect, I would try it again I was not disappointed 41 had a good time, old Lev is in pretty bad Shape I so orippled & hardicappel. He ared h hen I walked up to him & Jahnest did also, It seems I met the Same fellows ford or six times. you are doing a wonderful fat for us & I know what's left of my crew appreciate everything. Rapert J. Custo Jr.
RT, 1-BOX 45 B Riviera, Ispas 78379

Riviera, Jepas april 27,1990 8PM Dear Kersul, I received my 306 Echos in todays mail + am reading it thoroughly. I recognize a name now + then. I san across your article about your re-issue of your Book " First over Germany. I have that I can get one for my family. I am in Contact with Keger Freeman I he is preparing a new Book on the 8th. "The Might Ceight was thoroughly read bquite accurate. I just finished a little to a Col halgang D. Col. German ais force about Minich & that are during May 1944. Istil think that I was the first man in the 8AF to encounter a German jet arrengt over Munich. It came three us so dam fast that I could not track it with a turney gum. I sanit popor a distance of about 500 ft. I reported this to congroup at Thurleigh + they said we needed a rest, Trong response was that I was rational, know what I Saw had no propeller & that my

Riviera, Jepas Oct 4, 1990 THURS 6PM Doar Russell I received the Photo taken by you of Leo Van Kluerzon & myself. Thurba whole bunch, I never knew your took it & it has really a surprise to me. I hated to lear of the news about Gen Centro Le May, He was a trush disciplinarian for sure. He left a real spot in aerial warfare I can assure photosof me that I thought that you might like to have. Journal find a list of sorties that I was on These were taken off of a Imall spirol notebook of mine that I found in my files 2 as far as I can remember, they are correct in nearly all cases & in order. I was lucky to find that Pluff It was an accident as I was hunting some old photos. of my old ship that later became his & he didn't have one

He is coming to visit me shortly as S.A. is about 185 miles north of here. also have a received a letter from General Sel Mar Wilson & was I ever elated ceves that, He impressed me very much & I had a long conversation with him in S.A. It is after all a small world & 45 years late meeting this man, I neverdid think it would huppen to me. Jaday, I received a little from Cyril pretty bad shape & hus or couple of bad heart attacks 4 strokes. His typewilter letter was very coherant + presist He is a very devoted man to the SMAF \$ 306 B. G. Jam going to unto him long At + Send him my wishes for recowny talo a petuvalor. He might appreciat that. It is Still hothere 95° 1= today & day we need sain badly. Ill close for now. again, Thanks for all your courtisis to me, as Eines -Robert J. Cerston, Jr.

CUSTER, RODORY. TT. GUNNER US. 1823 1804 423 26 gdn 306 BG A.C. # 42-102-503 SORTIES OVER EUROPE TAKEN FROM MY OLD NOTE BOOK, This might help someone. 1. BERLIN, GERMANY 23. Ebelsbach Ger. - abandond 24. Hamburg Geo 2. Special Target Trance 25: ST. LO 3. Especial Junet France 26 ST. LO 4. Rennes, France weather Ship 5. Illiers - L'evegne Fr. 27, Munich Bu 6. Lille - Vendeville, tr. 28. merkwellow, tr 7. Etampes, trance 29. anklam, Ger. 8. Nantes Fra. 30. Stendal, Ger. aborted Engine trans6 31, 5% Joures Fr #9, 15T DIV, Tele 41997 32. Chairmon, fr. 10. Berlin Ger 10. Berlin Ber (8/15/44) 34. Trankfurt -12. Bremen, S. Eschborn, Syr. 13. Jojany 71. 14. Fron 7/2 to abandonel 15. No Ball-Trance - ? Targets or locations 17. Leipzig, Fer. 19. Banchemane, Fri 20. Minuch 200 21. Peeremende J. 22. Marburg Tr.

Kiviera, Tefas Man July 16, 1990 Das Dale Briscon, \$5 for the 30% to Directory & appreciate the hard to obtain it. Jam going to sent in my reunion money shortly for registration. Il stay with same relatives while there, This will be a long awaited meeting after 46 years. Loo Van Duergen was my frist 3st at Thurleigh in early 1944 I hope a hurricane does not work against me. The last meeting in Little Nort caught me on Federal Jung Service, I recognized and know a whole beauth from the 423 rd Sydn 4 Mt Highest Hegards Robert J. Custer Jr RT.1- BOX 45B Kiviera Jejus 78379 phone 512-297-5304

Riviera, Deja Mac 17, 1990 Wear Keisel Strong, year will find enclosed several pages of black verse poetry 2 that may be interesting. I am a personal friend of Mr. Harrel. I have his permission to send it to your. He told me that there is a copy of it in the SAAFHS files. He toed me you could put it in the "Eches" if you wish. He is a DVM down here is just Plain old vanilla to every body & is an el from the 91 BG, 305 BG, +457 B.G. He has on one of those Radas type averagt & was alo the tail gunner on " Doesn't Trip Fishet" a 13-17 attack! to tho 91 "B.6. Custis

- He has seen the Fortress ripped and torn by fighter fire and flak.
 He has seen her lose two engines and somehow come limping back.
- He has seen the leaking petrol as it spewed across her wing, and a Messerschmitt fall flaming as he framed it in his ring.
- He has seen the dead and dying; the frozen and the burned; felt the agony of shrapnel for the Purple Heart he earned. He has stitched his name on Messerschmitts with armour piercing steel; sent a Focke-Wulf to Valhalla on a mission over Kiel.
- He has held his head defiantly upright and open eyed, when the heavy flak was bursting all around;
 Though the Fortress bucked and wallowed from the fury of the blasts, and others spun in flames toward the ground.

To those valiant crews of the B-17 Flying Fortresses, and especially to that rare breed of soldier, the flying sergeants who manned her Browning machine guns.

Flying straight and level into the very teeth of Hell that was the Luftwaffe fighter defense, and the massive concentrations of heavy anti-aircraft fire, they carried their message of defiance to the enemy in their bomb bays. Though their losses were appalling, they never turned back. Instead, they came again and again and again, until at last the tide of battle turned, and Allied fighters and bombers ruled the skies. Only then was an Allied invasion across the English Channel possible.

To those Fortress gunners who met the full fury of the mighty Luftwaffe in those cold and bloody skies over enemy held Europe in 1943/44 the following is dedicated. May their courage and loyalty never be forgotten, and may their sacrifices for our country never have been in vain.

WHEN EXPENDABLE

When your dreams of home are shattered by a harsh and strident voice; when the bare and glaring light bulb smites your eyes. When the time is oh-three hundred, and the temperature is five, and an orderly now bids you to arise.

When you flip your Zippo into life and light a cigarette, and grope beneath your cot to find your boots.

When you drag your body cursing from the blankets of your sack, and you tremble as the cold gnaws at its roots.

When you stumble in the darkness on the frozen muddy path, and your messkit clatters in your cold numbed hand. When the trudging friend beside you curses with each steaming breath, expounding on the wonders of this land.

When you stand in line awaiting what the messhall has in store, and you know it's powdered eggs and marmalade.

When your lower lip is blistered by the steaming metal cup, as the poison they call coffee is conveyed.

When you stand in line again to wash your messkit free of grease, and you dip it in each can of soapy swill.

When you pray the dreaded "G.I. Shits" will never strike again, and you know within your heart they damn well will.

When you sit in the crowded briefing room with all the crews around, and tobacco smoke hangs heavy over head.

When you look from face to youthful face and know beyond a doubt, that before this day is done, some will be dead.

When the shade that hides the briefing map at long last is raised, and the scarlet ribbon shows where we must go.
When stifled groans and muttered oaths give way to deathly quiet, then we're told the things that we already know.

We are told of friendly escort to within the coast of France, and from that point we will be on our own.

We are told the Jerry fighters will be waiting: A fact most painfully already known.

We are told that we must strike at Oschersleben. Deep in Germany the crimson ribbon ends.

While parallel the red route lies a blue one; our homeward course to England, back to friends.

We must bomb the Focke-Wulf ractories where those dreaded fighters breed. We must crush the nest that spawns them ere they rise.

We must blast and burn those factories and, regardless of the cost, we must meet their wrath in battle in the skies.

They say we are expendable, and that of course is true. The price for victory is death and pain.

A fearsome task must now be done, and we must go and do. We must prevail, for if we fail, we must go back again.

When you've braved the buffeting propwash from the Cyclones mighty blasts, and you've checked the bomb bays cargo once again.

When you've checked your Brownings ammo, and your oxygen and mask,

and made sure your inter-com works when plugged in.

- When you shiver in your sheepskins and you cup your Zippo close, and you light another Players Navy Cut.
- When you peer into the darkness for the towers coming flare, and the icy hand of dread grips at your guts.
- When the Fortress roars and trembles as she strains against the brakes, and then thunders down the runway and lifts off.
- When the landing gear is safely up and checked as locked in place, and the mighty Flying Fortress with her bomb load soars aloft.
- When you grasp a gunners shoulder and you shake it with a grin, and he answers with a gloved thumbs-up salute.
- When you know from past experience that these men with whom you fly, are the bravest when the guns begin to shoot.
- When you crawl around the tail wheel well, past stabilizer plane, and you kneel behind your Browning Siamese Twins;
- You're a lone and lonely warrior in an aircraft manned by ten, and you'll fight a lonely battle when that hell on high begins.
- When you feed the belted ammo into place, and you charge each "Fifty" with a forceful yank.
- When you check each detail over for the hundredth time today.

 If they fail, you've only got yourself to thank.
- When you fire a short burst from each gun to make sure all is right, and you know your chest pack 'chute is there nearby.
- When your eyes must never cease their scanning vigil, for the enemy who strikes at you on high.
- He will dive from high above you, or beneath your belly climb, ar he'll strike you at the level 'long your flanks.
- He will queue up out ahead of you and come at you head-on, and do his damndest to set ablaze your tanks.
- Or they may bore right in on you, attacking from the rear; their cannons winking straight into your eyes.
- And every time you meet them with your armour piercing steel, and at almost every pass, some soldier dies.
- There are no fox holes in the sky. No jungle growth in which to lie. No hedge or wall to crouch behind. No cover here of any kind.
- With only cold thin air between, here soldiers fight and die. No rock. No ridge. No forest green. No fox holes in the sky.
- When Messerschmitt and sleek Focke-Wulf come plunging from the blue, or hang beneath your belly pumping cannon shells at you.
- When the Junkers and the Two-Tens send their rockets crashing in, and you see a Fort exploding, and another in a spin.
- You must watch for him in sunlight. You must watch for him in cloud. You must watch the contrails that your bombers leave.
- For another will come hidden by the misty vapor trail, while you watch the pretty patterns that they weave.
- When the Fortress there beside you rips asunder in the air, and falls earthward in a boiling mass of flame.
- When another slides beneath you with her left wing torn away, and you swing your guns still firing as you aim.

- When a One-O-Nine comes firing, and pulls up a fraction soon, and you catch him in your ringsight as he stalls.

 When you see the pieces flying from his fuselage and cowl, and your Brownings keep on firing as he falls.
- When you see him plunging earthward, ever faster in a spin, and you feel a fierce elation in your heart.

 When you earnestly salute him for the soldier he has been, as one airman to another, though apart.
- When a man who bunked right next to you, who shared your smokes and beer, lies dying 'neath his Browning in the waist.

 When a cannon shell has ripped him, and he bleeds to death inside, and there's no way you can help him in your haste.
- When a shot of icy morphine is the only thing you have, and you pray to God that it will ease his pain.

 When you tuck a blanket 'round him, place a 'chute pack 'neath his head, and crawl sobbing to your Fifties once again.
- When you're locked into the bomb run, and the fighters pull away, and the Eighty-Eights take over from the ground.

 When black puffs of smoke surround you; when the shrapnel crashes in.

 Like a hail storm on a tin roof it resounds.
- When your stabilizer's shredded, and your wings are ripped and torn, and bright sunlight and cold air come rushing in.
 When the Fortress bucks and wallows from the fury of the blasts, and you see another, blazing in a spin.
- When you know the men inside are trapped within that furnace blast, and you pray God grant them mercy, quick and clean;
 From twenty seven hundred eighty blazing gallons of, 'hundred octane aviation gasoline.
- When the sky becomes a hell of smoke and fire and crashing sound, and you know no living thing can there survive.

 When a wingman breaks formation with his cockpit wreathed in flame, and then falls away beneath you in a dive.
- When you curse and pray within a breath for God to save you now, and you flinch with each explosion of the flak.

 When you haar the grinding clatter as its shrapnel rips your hull, and you rage because you cannot fight it back.
- When at last you feel the Fortress lift, unburdoned of her load, and you hear the bombardier call "Bombs Away".

 When you see the bombs of others dropping earthward all around, and you know that half your journey's made today.
- When you leave the pall of darkness of the monstrous flak barrage, and your aching eyes keep searching in the sun.

 When tiny dots at three o'clock come plunging in an arc, and you know the homeward gauntlet you must run.
- When you see a Fortress lagging back at five o'clock and low, and you see her feathered props are standing still.

 When you see the One-O-Nines above, now queueing up in line; then come diving, cannons blazing, for the kill.
- When a shadow drops before you, blotting out the sun and sky, and so close you see the rivets in his wing.

 when you fire your guns unaiming as he flits before your eyes, and is gone before you frame him in your ring.

- a drifting through your ringsight, 3 and you squeeze. when you see his engine smoking, and his cockpit fill with flame, and your guns keep firing, firing, all the same.
- When another rolls beneath you and fires, hanging by his prop, into the belly of a Fortress on your right.

 When he's just beyond your field of fire, your guns will swing no more, and you cannot get the bastard in your sight.
- When you pray their turret gunner, rolling in his ball below, will frame him in his sights and feed him lead.

 When you see the ball unmoving, with its Brownings still and quiet, and you know the man inside it must be dead.
- When the empty brass piles deep around your Fifties in the tail, and the ammo in your boxes has run low.

 When the enemy keeps coming like an endless storm of hail, you must meet them with your gunfire, even so.
- When first one gun, then the other, fires its final vital round, and their handles lie there quietly in your hands. When you gamb an 02 bottle and crawl panting to the waist, seeking food to meet their ravenous demands.
- When you drag the steel linked ammo from its heavy wooden box, and you start to crawl back tailward once again.

 When a buddy at a waist gun slaps your back and signs "Thumbs-Up", and you know behind his mask there is a grin.
- When your frozen fingers fumble as you feed the ammo in, and a One-O-Nine comes slashing through from five.

 When you charge your guns and hunt him, and you know that you're too late.

 He has fired and slipped beneath you in a dive.
- When it's sixty plus sub-zero and there's ice upon your mask, yet your woolen undershirt is soggy wet.
 When you pull your mask aside and spit, it crackles on the floor, but your clothes are sodden through with combat sweat.
- When you see a Fortress lagging with her engines belching flame, and the bodies of her crew come tumbling out. When the blast rips her asunder in a roiling ball of fire, and only smoking bits of debris mark her route.
- When the white 'chutes start to open in the leaden sky below, and your straining eyes account for only five.
 You recall those boys at breakfast, just a few short hours ago, and you wonder which of them remain alive.
- When a "jasta" of One-Ninetys forms their "Wheel of Death" ahead, and come rolling through your group from dead head-on.
 When your field of fire is rearward, and you cannot see them come, and you rage in helpless fury, all alone.
- When their cannon shells are bursting with a blinding brilliant light, and a Focke-Wulf rams a Fortress head to head and.

 When your window panes are shattered, and there's blood in both your eyes, and you thank Almighty God that you're not dead.

- When the Junkers trail behind you formed in echelons of three, out beyond your faithful Browning Fifties range.
- When they blast you with their rockets 'til your squadron's almost gone; then come charging with their cannons all aflame.
- When one launches all his rockets, then comes boring in on you; his cannons winking death straight at your eyes.
- When he overflows your ringsight, and you hold your triggers down, and he falls, a blazing meteor from the skies.
- When the ice forms thick and heavy out along your Fortress wings, and she handles slow and sluggish in the sky.
- When the Messerschmitts keep coming, and your ammo's almost gone, and you know that any moment you may die.
- When a fleur-de-lis of contrails marks the sky at nine o'clock; then another and another high at three.
- When a score of friendly Thunderbolts go streaking over head, and the sky around you suddenly is free.
- When the "Jugs" cavort like puppies, tracing patterns over head, and tthey fly defensive cover all around.
- When spry Spitfires then take over as you cross the channel coast, and you leave behind that enemy held ground.
- When you never cease your vigil, though your "Little Friends" are near, and you never stop your searching of the sky.
- Lest a jasta that's returning from a raid on Englands shores, catch you napping and pounce on you from on high.
- When a crippled Fortress ditches 'midst the monstrous swells below, and you see a bobbing dinghy there balloon.
- When a man can live but minutes in that wild and freezing sea, and you pray that Air-Sea Rescue finds them soon.
- When you've let down over channel, and you've taken off your mask, and you know the cliffs of Dover lie ahead.
- When you think of mild and bitters in "The Rose And Crown" tonight, and give thanks to God Almighty you're not dead.
- When you count the planes around you, and you know how few are left, and how ripped and torn are those that still can fly.
- When you see the red flares streaking signals "Wounded Men Aboard," for the ambulances that are standing by.
- When your wheels touch on the tarmac with a squeeling puff of smoke, and you taxi to the hardstand down the line.
- When you stand again on Gods good earth and gaze into the sky, and a silent prayer of thanks goes through your mind.
- When you slide your faithful Brownings out and slip each in its case,
- and you gather up your gear and start to leave. When you think of comrades lost today, and raids still to be flown, and you know a Fortress gunner cannot grieve.
- When you turn to catch the lorry that's interrogation bound, and
- you note her scars of battle as you do. When you place a gloved hand gently on the Fortress battered hull. She's a lady, Queen of Battle, through and through.

as to how the battle went, and when, and where.
When you've told them of the losses, and the fighters, and the flak, and of how the bomb strike looked to you from there.

When you've told them of the parachutes you counted drifting down, and of those who had no chance to make it out. When you've told them of the bitter cold that freezes men to death, and you've told them of the rockets deadly route.

When you've had hot tea and brandy, and they're warming you inside, but the cup you hold now trembles in your hand.

Then you'll answer no more questions, and the questioners subside.

Only those who've lived through combat understand.

When you clean your Browning Fifties with a tender loving hand, and adjust them to perfection at the end.
When you know that they'll be ready when you call on them again, for a Fortress gunner has no better friend.

When you've stowed your flying suit and boots; your 'chute and your Mae West; and you're back inside your dingy Nissen hut. When you've finished off three fingers left of Johnnie Walker Black, and you've lit another Players Navy Cut.

When you've shaved in tepid water with a helmet for a bowl, and you've bathed from head to toe in what remains.

When you've opened up your B-4 bag and got your Class As out, for a two day pass awaits you for your pains.

When you shrug into your overcoat and give your shoes a lick, and jerk your cap down over your right ear.
When your buddy stands impatiently awaiting at the door, saying:
"Come on, boy. I'm starving for a beer".

When you wear those silver gunners wings so proudly on your chest, with a gold edged field of combat blue behind, You are one of the "Expendables", and different from the rest. You're a soldier of a rare and special kind.

When the patch upon your shoulder bears a star and winged eight, and you man the "Fifties" of a "Seventeen", You are proud to be "Expendable", and history will relate, you have fought the greatest air war ever seen.

Dr. C. H. Harrel Robstown, Texas Tail Gunner, B-17s lst Div. 8th A.F. 1943-444

DRICH HARREL DIVIM. ROBSTOWN, TEXAS

Riviera, Tepas Syst 9, 1991 MON. Dear Ressel Strong, First of all it is I has been very hot down 96 - 105° for weeks. Trept, 2 can't make that try to Pettsburg. It is too far for me togo. I just came back from Providence RI I went ones ball turnt gumer, Jim Style & returned by nay of Layton, which visited my old Pelot Horold meller 9 sponta day at the a.F. Museum in Layton, What a place to see. Twowldn't track that tipo for anything. It is a real tribute to the AF. yesterday, I had a surprise. Ed Jordan came to visit me down here. He is now recovering from double hip joint replacement & is during pretty well, I was very elated over his visit I be came as he promised last year in Son antonio. I was the frist man that he knew 4 he was the first man that I flow with 47 years ago! Kusul, I wonder if any UCR filmare available anywayere that are about the 306 198.5. Ineur have seen any but would like to Murchase Same, If you have any info

about film of the 306 please let me knew. The UCK film "Farget for Joday " + all the Fine young men" are very good account of the 8th refforts. Jam guing to close for now hoping your owin the best of health, brine all my burch in Pettsburg agreeting for me This month Lit me han from you Robert J. Custer Dr. 127, 1- BOX45 B Kirina, Tepas 78379 ph-1-512-297-5304

am 11 30 41

Riviera, Tepas Bri. oct 18 - 8 PM Dear Russel Strong, Thope the reunion was agood one for everybody, area the piloto that I flow with Kenneth Yass, was then Igot a letter from him today. The trop with him was in Paper Doll # 444 to Berlin after all the years, I found a side shot of my old creft Athought this might be interesting to someone. My crew were the first ares to fly this plane, Itgot shot down over Ruhland, Gromeny on 9/12/44 Ed Jordan, the cp. survivel + paid mea visit about 3 weeks ago, 47 years has slipped by! I know his crew once before raturning to the H.S. my pilot was Harold milles of Findly whio + I visited him in maying This your four of us are still known to be alive now. Jam OK + well & hope the same there for you. I approce at that 306 register. It has helped me relocate a lot of lot pals. Thanks for everything, Contine your goodwork Custo

nov.14, 1991 Dear Pussel Strong, Frank to Truck you personally bor all of your efforts regarding the 306 th B. S. There would be no history if it were not for you. I would not take anything for the 30 orgister. I have re-established contacts with all of my old pub thet are left. Talways anail the next issue of Cechois. I just received a letter from Roger Freeman yesterday. Maybe I'l get to see the museum in Savannah one of these days. Have a worderful Christmas + keep in touch.

Custis

Wishing you

a Christmas billed

with the warmth of caring,

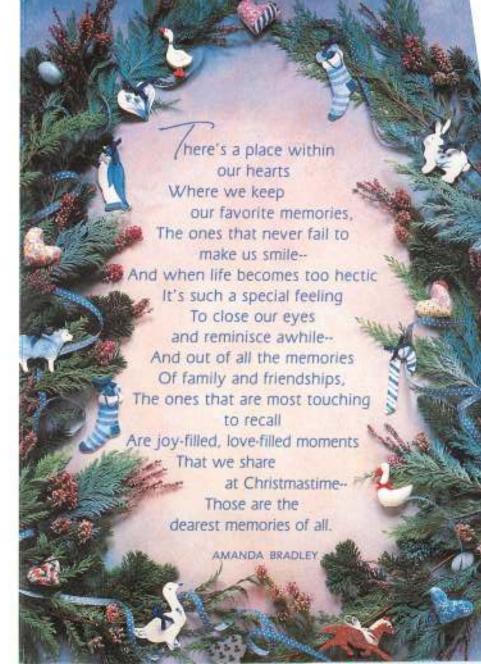
the joy of togetherness,

the love of briends and bamily,

and happy memories that linger

long after the season is gone.





AMBASSADOR CARDS

PX 530 G

CVSTER- 423 RD. SQDN 300 B.6. 中华

TUP SUNNEY #42102503 Berlin, Germany 24 HAMBURG GER. 6:25 2:40 - abandoned 25. ST. LO 5:35 4.00 SPECIAL TARGET FR. 26 STLO 4:50 4:30 Special TARGET FR - WEATHER SHIP 4:05 Rennes, FR 6:25 27 MUNICH, GER 9:25 ILLIERS-L'EVEQUE FR 28 MECKWILLOWIE 8,05 6,20 LILLE-VENDENIlle, FX 29. ANKLAY, 659 10:00 5,00 ETAMPES - FR 30. STENDAL GER 9:30 5:45 NANTES-FR. 3/ST. LOUBES FR. 7:50 6:45 - ABORTED 32, CHAVMONTER 7:55 BERLIN ISTRONO DIV Tele LI-997 33 CHIVBES, BEL. 7:55 BERLIN GER 134. FRANKFIRI-ECHANEN-7:40 9:35 GHENT, BEL. 5:10 ROBERT C WILLIAMS BREMEN GER \$ 7:50 JUIGNY FR. 7:00 + LAON FR. LT. COL. - OP. DFF. A.C. 6:30 - ABANDONED 5:35 No BALL FR 4:55 6 NO BALL I'R 4.40 7 LEIPZIG GER 8 AMIENS, FR. 8:55 5:00 9. BAUCHEMINE, FR. 5.00 O, MLINICH, GER 9:20 1. PEENEMUNDEBER 9:50

2. MAR. BURGGER 8:45 3. EBLESBACH GERM. 8:35

Riviera, Lex. Sat. Jan 11, 1992 - 1014 low Russel Strong, Concluded is a list of sorties that Junes part of at that time. I found a torn up list & note auta copy by hand. They are probably wit important to anyone but it might help ken correlate your work. The anigurd copy of this hea unvived a couple of humicones & that is all the info I every body. Farm fine & the weather this date is body to the date Cepruse my stationary as this is all that I had on hand.

Our 1992 directory should come out in May, and we need your help!

The Postal Service has been good about sending us changed numbers, but we need more data from many of you.

We also need to have you check your listing in the 1990 directory and to let the editor know what you need changed.

If we don't hear from you we must assume that the data we have is correct as far as your directory entry is concerned.

Check the form below:

Name ROBERT J. CUSTER, JR.

Address RURAL ROUTE ONE BOX FORTY FIVE "B"

City, State and Zip Code RIVIERA, TEXAS 78379 -9723

Telephone #, with the correct area code 1-512-297-5304

Can you give us the four-number addition to your zip code? (Look on one of your utilty bills for this, if you can't remember it).

On that street address, please designate whether it is St., Ave., Blvd., Road, etc. Rural routes AND box numbers need to be spelled out. In the alpha listing of the Directory, be sure your unit designation is correct. That's the one that counts. (If you were placed in the wrong listing under organizations, don't worry about it. We plan to get it right this time.)

Other data we will store away for possible later use:

5323 Cheval Place

704/568-0153

Charlotte, NC 28205-4937

Wife's first name 4231	2059dN.
Your birthdate SEPT. / 1923	
Social Security # 456-28-856	8
Retirement date/place of employment/job title	PROCESS ENGINEER-
LA GLORIA CORP. FEB. I Send the above to Russell A. Strong	965 PROF, ENSI, TEXAS

Robert J Custer, Jr Rt 1, Box 45B Riviera, TX 78379-9723

1992 England Trip

Reunion Sets Big Schedule For Thurleigh and London

Fifty years ago next September, the 306th Bomb Group flew into history, with its arrival in England for combat duty with the U.S. 8th AF. That signal event in aviation lore will be recalled once again in August when the men of the 306th, their spouses families and friends will join in a reunion visit to Bedford, the old base at Thurleigh, Madingley cemetery at Cambridge, and to the venerable city of London.

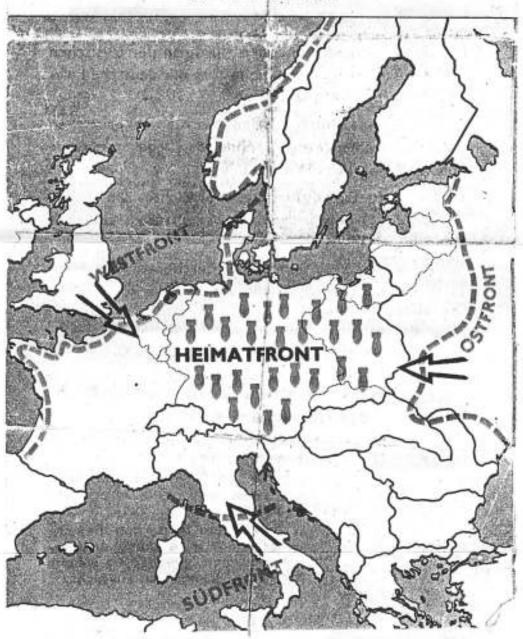
Specific details of the trip were included in the mailing of the October issue of **Echoes**, having been announced in detail earlier that month

Two options are being offered for those participating in the main trip: A. being to spend two nights in Bedford, at either the Swan or Moat House hotels, which lie across the Ouse River from each other at the bridge; or, #2. to spend four nights at Bedford and the remainder in London. Group A will go on to London after the visit to Duxford, a WWII airfield that served both the RAF and USAAF and which has been restored as a WWII field.

As an added fillip, the travel description includes two extended week-long trips following the activities in Bedford

Kiviera, Tejas. Dec 12, 1991 3PM THUR Dear Russel Strong, I received your past card in the mail today 4 am responding quitty. You will find 2-more copies (4x6) 4 also the negatives that the pecture were made from. There is no enlargement service down here but if recessary 2 can get ene made in Corpus Christi I received a christmas card from Florence + Leo Van Kluengen in Wisconsin, received a nue letter from Cyril normen in Central, & also a letter from Reger Freeman in lengtand. I have enjoyed your book + all of the others to the greatest extent. Cyril horman asked me if I knew a pilot Bat Morgan of the 423 rd I did not know this man. Jam enjoying my VCR Very much. I sure hope you can get one VCR film about the 306 & am looking foreward to your history book on the Squadron trips, Thave established many contacts again from the directory. It has been a blessing to me. you are doing a good fot, Have the best Christmosever Sincerely Robert Enster

VIERFRONTEN-KRIEG



WARUM?

Die alliierte Expeditionsarmee wurde an der britischen Küste zusammengezogen, ohne dass die deutsche Luftwaffe eingriff. Warum?

Viele Tausende allilerter Schiffe wurden in britischen Häfen zusammengezogen, ohne dass die deutsche Luftwaffe eingriff. Warum?

Die allierte Expeditionsarmee erreichte die Küste Frankreichs, ohne dass die deutsche Luftwaffe eingriff. Warum?

Die allilerte Expeditionsarmee durchbrach die erste Linie des Atlantik-Walls und schuf sich Brückenköpfe, ohne dass die deutsche Luftwaffe eingriff. Warum?

Montgomery und Rommel haben die Antwort erteilt.

Montgomery sagte:

"Züret muss die Luftschlacht gewonnen werden, dann erst beginnt die Land-oder Seeschlacht."

Rommel sagte:

"Über jedem deutschen Befestigungssystem wird Luftüberlegenheit bestehen, gleichgültig welche Stelle der Gegner sich aussucht."

Riviera, Tepas Tues. May 19,1992 8AM Dear Russel Strong, Conclosed you will find a copy of a leaflet taken from one of the original lights that naschopsed by my arrange #42-102-503 in 1944 over Germany the day that Hitlesnes almost assassinated by that Col Von Stantifording, I finally found the original a scidentize in hite searching for Farnething else. If you wash same more copies, Il be glad to send them to year for the 306 association or other organizations. I spe A mothers Day violing a pilot Col Burngardon of the CAF at the International around in Corpus Christiche hada visit of 8 hrs in that all crept a B+76, It was in real good shape he hada few team shed about several things, Honasin the 368 Th Sydn, I think, aryuny if was a very emotioned wish. Juan challenged to see if I could still into the front hatch from ground up of I had no trouble at all as there was a large crowd that

a pilot It. Juck Willette of "Chingy Suzey" in Lay fayett, La semetime this summer. con crews flow to gether in west. He later became an aviline pilot for american airline for about 25 years, I am DK + fine, hoping that you & your family are also, hear about to get drowned outwith all of this rain, Jamobant ready to start an ask, Litme hour From your of many thought you frequential

Riviera Jefas aug 16, 1993 Dear Russel Strong Couple of pictures & as I collect more Fel send them. Thanks a whole bunch for finding Sam Marshall in Sackrook fire, bester 49 years I have finally contacted from . This craft was piloted by Harold miller + Bot Fampy. Harold mille is listed as killed on page 165. This, perobothy results from the hack that a It. Satis was killed Ite priloted the same aircraft when it was short degree, milly is now ant all of your dedicated efforts custer

Rivièra, Fejas June 14-1994 TUES. Dear Kersel Strong, Concluded is a crew picture, your might have copy of it already. In the list of protable pilot in 1943 of the Cechoes, Rosest Family my co-pilot was a P-51 fighter pilot 490+ transferred into the 88 th BS. 399 to Sph at aron Purk, henere together as a crew in the lates part of 1943. The crept is B-176 "Belley the Blue"
#2102503, 423 Sigdn-306 B.S. Crew is as follows:
THURLEIGH ENG.
NOTE WIND SOCK. Paul Green - W.6 - Appleton, Wis. DEAN SAUL - W.S. RENTRICE, NEB, (CANT LOCATE HIM) ASHER BROWN - R.O. ELIZABETH, N. J. (deceased) KOBERT CUSTER-TITG - KINGSUILLE, TEX. DALE MAUGHAN-T.G. - LAYTON, UTAH (CANTLOCATE him) BOB FOMBY - C.P. MONTGONERY ALA - decrosed (0817413) JAMES SIYE. BT. - BROOKLYN, CONN. SAM MARSHALL -B. - JACKSONVILLE FLA. (YOW FOUND HIM)
ED (AREY - N. - ROCHESTER, N.Y. (Deceased)
HAROLD MILLER-P. - FINDLAY, OHID (A DAM GOOD PILOT.)

Rivira Jex. July 30, 1994 Near Kersal Strong. searching for Dole L. Maryhan, say toil Sunne, I have found out his fate through the efforts of alrefessor at Brigher State University Hale his ten year old san, & pilot were killed in a single engine aircreption a hunting trip in Mentana at 31,1963. Ituas a tragle ending to a rail good fellew. His younger brother who lives in Idaho Survived the ordeal, Jana nowin Contact with all of his family thats to your efforts I every body elses. They were very grateful for my Interest. Wishing the Fest to you & your family Sincerely Rolet J. Custer, Jr RTIL- BOX 45B Riviera, Jeps 78379-9723 April Coro

Riviera, Jefas May 21, 1993 2PM Dear Resel Strong

Just received the 306 Cechoes. I am
returning my present data I phone number

Jam skinchtery for a crew picture & will get

ene to your skinchen in a few days.

Juant to, express my appreciation of your

pathfulness to the 306, It takes a lot of

dedication of effort on your parts. I am

trying to figure out a hay to get to Seattle, hack

for the reunion. absoin to futur, Jamgaing

to get the film from the 306 the english

versuon in 1992. In the fact flow months, I

have intressed a lot of Uckfilm on the 306

operations of one in develop these film were

locumentaria. I remember is here there film were Locumentaria I romember when there film were made lest did not ever expect to witness them. one film I saw was the cone involving the King & I sween is her they visited thursleight. To as Leaning a machine gum barrel or Kamp 13 in only long bandles as the proaderate went, by about 50 ft. forem us. This Jaron cone of the few of ho saw the regal family in my underwear. I have really been teased botont that.
Russel, I think I sent a pictur of my crew system is terrible at best. Jan well, fine, busy a still alest my pilot Harold miller indervated last hederesday the is not doing to good. he are very close pole to this day & he chas me rook

Imet Welle Baumgasting a year ago in Corpus Christi when he towned this area with a B-17. Thouasin the 369 th Sydn + is still flying, I spent 8 hours with him & he wanted me to make a tour over the 4.5. for the Confederate air force. Incidentally that crost had new engines, new props, new tries, etc + u as, it seemed to me in bittle shape that same of the cresure flowing flow in. I have a list of every B-17 sevial number that Tever flow in, Ill sandyewa copy talso to Boing anery.

B-17 = 5, 13-17 F 5 + 13-1765 as a passing

Statement there was a 13-17 - (Kag & BOND LADY) Stalened therewas a 1571 - (mags power 2450 y)
Serial # 1 think was 2-102180, flower lings
ft, mitchell. This crew was shot clown and
trance * all ten men were executed by
the Germans. Atogaw frank array info on this,
They were fost in June 1944 around La Harrie
Trance, I have a picture of that craft
Samewhere in my passession.
Ill Close, as Farm in a hurry, Hope
Med 1 000, near this southing scratching. you can read this something scratching Keep up the good work, always q Friend Wobert J. Cerstie Jr PT, 1- Prof 45 B Diviera, Julys 18379-ph. 512-297-5720 9723

Kiviera, Jeps July 8, 1989

Dear Russell Strong,

I really appreciate all of your efforts &giving me all that information, data, & addresses. after all of these years, I contacted my pilot Harold milly . I mote him + got a long phone call from him. Likewise, I have had phone calls + letters to x from Leo Van Heurzen. I cannot express my feelings when I talked to those fellows. Though your directory, I found four of my old air crew tone ground

I have just set a check to Briscol in San antonio for my party and eagerly waiting the next issue of "Edwe. Give me same more information on your book, Id like to lung a copy of it. Fisted below is my yaist gunner. This address is current.

PAUL W. GREEN

2871 VANELLA AVE.

SAN AUGUSTINE, FLA

I would sure like to beable to contact It. Robert Fomby. He stayed in the air corp as a regular. Maybe you guys can help me with that.

fisted on the next sheet are three former members. of the 423 rd Sydn.

OLIVER NASBY. - HIS FATHER WAS PROSIDENT OF GEORGE HORMEL CORP MELVIN SHIPP - TEXAS- TEXARRANA ? LONGVIEW ? MAYNARD L SMITH - CTHIS MAN WAS AWARDED THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDIC OF HONOR) - FROM WEST VIRGINIA 1 think MINelli , NEW JERSEY LT. MITCHELL - PILOT - 423Nd AIRCRAFT --- 180 LT. NEIGHBORS - NAVIGNOR - 423Nd WILLIAM CAIN- 306 th GROUP. - 367,368, 369, SEDNS HOME TOWN- SILDAM SPRINGS, ARK. I have some more but have to do some research. Thanks for everything. I would like to go to Little Rock, but at present for 6 months 2 am on Federal Jury in the Federal Court in Corpus Christi. Maybe scenething willnow hant. That type of Jury is just about as tool as being in fail.

Robert J. Custer, Jr.
RT.1- PSUX 45B
Riviera, Jefas
78379
Phone- 512-297-5304











367th, 368th, 369th, 423rd Squadrons, and service organizations Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, England — September 1942-April 1945

306 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

Secretary/Historian

Russell A. Strong 5323 Cheval Place Charlotte, NC 28205 704/568-0153

16 July 1989

Author
First Over Germany
Command and Staff
Officers, 8th Air
Force, 1942-45
Editor
306th Echoes
306th Directory

Dear Robert:

In answer to your letter of 8 July, I appreciate the address which you sent me, and also the possible leads on others. We keep adding to our mailing list, still adding more than we are losing.

"First Over Germany" is presently out of print, but I am preparing the copy for a reissue of the book, which should take place some time in the fall.

Fomby retired from the USAF in 1967 as a lieutenant colonel. He is one of many retired officers whom we have not yet been able to locate, but we keep trying.

You listed Snuffy Smith among those whom you had known. Smith died several years ago in Florida. He had appeared at several reunions until illness forced him to cease traveling.

I hope you are enjoying Federal jury. That can be quite an ordeal.

"Echoes" will keep you posted on various activities.

All the best,

LWAYS FIRST	FIRST OVER GERMANY

Riviera, Ispas Feb 5, 1990 Mon. 6AM

Dear Russel Strong,

Jam writing so as to correct a mistake in the listing

of Paul W. Green of 2871 VANEIL AVE, SANAUGUSTINE, FLA. Paul was

on my air crew & was a number of the 423 rd.

him listed in the books as being in the 369 th guadran. You have

I have just received a copy of 306 Ectors renjoyed reading it. I plan to make the meeting in Septin Sin Centonio, however, I believe the only one that I know will be Leo Van Duergen. Canyu ay, I live 180 miles scenth & Jildrive up to the meetings & stay wick some of my forther up there.

Fast weed on NBC @ 8 Py they was a program "The Plat to Kill Hitler" This event took place on July 20, 1844 in hen a brief case bount exploded in his conference burker in the Berana cape. This was to a plot by a bunch of German officers to hill Hitle. This group was organized by a one eyed, one armed German Colonel Stanforbury. The story was very radistic of true in every detail. On that day, in the late evening of unusal flight. The wear of two other crews were ordered on a very the 8th, 15th, +l AF were on the ground. We were ordered for briefing of took off. These three crews knew a hat was happening of not very many people knew of what was taking Place

I do not know the names of the other two orens. he here alone over Germany at night with only 4 P-51' with us I third one Pelot was Col Zernke? anyway, we were loaded with bundles of proper ganda papers in an attempt to and this Afort of civil was in Denmary. This two events happened at the Same time. Care B-17 went to Berlin, one B-17 went to Hamburg, & my craft went to Rostock. We flew at the highest altitude of a 13-17's capability somewhere around 35,000 ft. Inas a very scard person. It still is very strong in my mereories. We dropped I think Cornillion papers to note a state of unrest of returned late at night at Thurling. The following day, the massive effort of the 8th 15th VRAF hit Munich, This was a large massive attack, I was on that one too. as a final statement, I have a Outpy of that pumplet sanswhere in my files. It is in Berman, I hope I can find it if found, Ill make some copies for the records. my old pilot, Harsed miller, of Findlay, ohio is vacationing in Unter Haven, Fla dis coming to see me for a visit in March. my last voit was in aug, 1944. Jam still searching formy new. Iwo are known deal, 2 are lost, 2 I raint outch upwith, & the remaining four have kept contact. yew might not be interested in the aforementioned naterial nevertheless strange events a situations occur in a man's life. Ithree hear from you Sincerely Robert J. Custer Jr 180x 45B iera, Julas 78379