

PERSONNEL RECORD UPDATE

306th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Complete as much of this form as you wish, and return to Russell A. Strong, Secretary, 306th BG Association, 5323 Cheval Place, Charlotte, NC 28205.

Date completed _____

LAST NAME: OWENS FIRST NAME: William MI: Howard TITLE:

Street address: 704 WESTWOOD DR. Telephone: ()

City, State, Zip: TULLAHOMA, TN, 37388 zip + 4: -

Date of birth: 29 May 21

Wife's name: AILEEN OWENS

College(s) attended: TENN. TECH. UNIV. Degree(s): B.S. Year(s):

Last employment & job title & retirement date:

PAN-AM WORLD SERVICES, METALLURGIST - OCT. 1983

Reunions attended: NONE

Serial #: 0-794042 Squadron: 369th/367th Specialty: Navigator

Date joined 306th: 17 January 43 If combat, what crew: B-17, BANSHIEK

Special duties or assignments w/306th:

Number of missions flown: Date of last mission: 17 Apr 43
(w. Wm Casey)

Date left 306th: 17 ^{Apr} ~~Feb~~ 43 Highest rank/grade w/306th: 2Lt

Other 8th AF units served with: POW-Stalag Luft III

Top service assignment after 306th:

SEPARATION
USAF retirement date: 24 JAN. 1946 Rank/grade: CAPT.

Copies of old 306th orders, either from the Group or Station 111, or any of the squadrons or other units serving with the 306th, are sought by the secretary, as many of these do not appear in any collections of materials in Federal files:

If you know of others who served with the 306th who do not appear in the current directory, please add their names and current/WWII hometowns/or other addresses to the back of this sheet so that searches may be implemented to add them to our present 306th roster.

A HISTORY OF THE 306th BOMBARDMENT GROUP - EIGHTH AIR FORCE
Russell A. Strong, Rt. 1, Scotch Meadows Dr. Laurinburg, NC 28352

Name William H. Owens
Address 704 Westwood dr.
Telephone 45-5-0183 Date Nov. 7, 1977
Occupation Metallurgist Employer ARO, Inc.
Address Arnold AF Sta. Tenn Telephone 45-5-2611 Ext. 459

Service Record: Serial No(s) 0-794042

Before joining the 306th:

Finished Navigator training at Monroe, La.

After leaving the 306th:

306th Record:

Arrival Date Jan. 19, 43 Squadron or other unit 369th then to 367th

MOS _____ Combat Status _____

Missions Completed 15

Promotions to 1st Lt.

Decorations AM olcs DFC olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM

PH Battle Stars _____ other _____

(OVER)

Other personal data:

Description of Air Missions:

(What were the highlights of your combat career? What was your role? What heroics did you witness? What events were there of which you have special knowledge?)

One event stands out above the routine operations of flying over, dropping bombs and returning with the usual AA and fighter attacks,

We returned from a mission late on Apr. 16, 1943 and found some new aircrews in our barracks who had just left the States two days before. Lt. Kemp (pilot) and Lt. McCracken (bombardier) are two names from one of the crews. Lt. McCracken was assigned to our crew for the next days mission. He was barely the 5 ft. 4 in. limit if that. He had been dining with his parents just 3 days previously in the States. During the Apr. 17, 1943 mission to the Focke-Wulf plant near Bremen he was wounded with 20mm fragments in the neck as well as other places and carried on with his duties.

Much later during the war, at Moosburg, where many POW's were congregated, the 14th Armored Div. liberated our camp. In the tank that knocked down the gates was a Captain of considerable size who wished to know if any one knew his brother, Lt. McCracken. I volunteered the information that I did and went to locate him. The larger brother presented Lt. McCracken one crate of eggs and one crate of oranges. So far as I know Lt. McCracken kept one of each and gave all the rest to fellow POW's. You would have to be hungry for
Add additional pages, if necessary 2 years to fully appreciate this.

Name William H. Owens Address 704 Westwood Dr., Tullahoma, Tenn.
Telephone 455-0183

MISSING AIRCRAFT REPORT

Pilot Capt. Bill Casey Plane # and Name Banshee
Mission Date Apr. 17, 1943 Target FW Plant, Bremen, Ger.
Cause of loss: AA fire _____ Fighter attack Other, explain _____

No papers were returned to the States with my property.

Describe conditions in the plane as completely as you can:

Tail gunner, ball-turret gunner, waist gunners and radio operator were killed and gradually the plane was riddled by first FW-190's and Me-109's and as altitude was lost the night fighters finished the job. Last engine was running away and Casey turned back towards land. Chutes were to be opened immediately so that the approx. 130mph N.W. wind at 23,000ft. would blow us back over land. I shot close to 10,000 rounds of .50 caliber thru the two machine guns. Hundreds of Me-109's and FW-190's initiated the attacks. Some 20mm shells exploded in the nose hitting Lt. McCracken and me.

How and where did you leave plane?

Bailed out over water near western end of Frisian Islands. Landed barely on the landward side of dike some distance from Emden. Strong NW wind saved us.

What happened when you got on the ground?

Luftwaffe AA gun crew caught chute and spilled air from it immediately upon hitting ground. Took me to a farm where others were being collected.

Did you meet any of your crew mates?

Yes

How were you treated, if captured?

Little medication for wounds.

Any additional details, reminiscences, letters, or documents of these events would be appreciated. If you do send such materials, I will copy them and put them back in the mail to you within 24 hours.

Round Trip to Wilhelmshaven, As Seen from Nose of a Fort

(Continued from page 1)

be seen swinging open, and not far above us the yawning bomb bay of a Fort revealed more bombs, hanging by some mechanical hairpin, waiting for the bombardier to push the tiny button that sends them to the target.

Lt. Owens was having trouble with his oxygen and Lt. Phillips' fingers were nearly frozen. I was healthy but helpless. Finally the valve of the navigator's air intake froze completely and the next thing his head had dropped to the top of his caliber .50, and his face was an unlovely greyish purple. Both of them had work to do in the nose. I was strictly cargo. The oxygen on my side was okay. We fitted the mask to Lt. Owens' face, revived him and I started back for the pilot's cockpit.

By the time I struggled back without oxygen, with a backload of equipment that would make Santa Claus look sick, I was almost out. Lt. Casey almost yawned at what I was sure was a major crisis in my life.

He fixed me up with oxygen and the remainder of my brief first glimpse at the war was from the pit behind the pilot.

As we started the bombing run I was up in the nose of the ship, standing over the way of the navigator and bombardier. I had a camera, and that was probably the greatest underestimation, or something or other, of the Germans anyone ever made. I definitely did not feel like taking pictures. I made an effort once or twice and I got a couple of pictures of a small bunch of six little ships down on the water, but it's elementary that you have to be able to hold a camera still to take pictures.

We were well into the run and the flak was puffing to the right and left. The boys said it was not nearly as intensive as over St. Nazaire, but there was more of it, spread out in different places, they

Fighter planes were always there while we were making our run. They come in so fast it's hard to tell where they're coming from, but frequently you could see a vapor trail start to form, like a

cloud standing on end. You knew that was a fighter starting a run.

As the bombardier crouched low over his sight, I was just in back of him, trying to take a picture of the bombs falling from the plane ahead. They dropped theirs, and I guess we must have the next second, but I couldn't feel it.

Behind the tail gunner, T/Sgt. Parley D. Small, of Packwood, Iowa, reported that he had seen a Liberator go down with one engine flaming. Although on fire he said it was under control for a crash landing. Small himself picked off one German plane as it tried to tie a stream of machine-gun bullets on our tail. He described the end of another German fighter.

Jerry Stopped Cold

"It looked like a piece of cardboard that had been thrown out of a plane," he said. "It came up under the belly of a B24 and someone let him have it right on the nose. He stopped dead and fell away. The plane didn't seem to be burning. It must have killed the pilot."

As Nazi planes kept nipping at the formation, far away from the coast of Germany, they probably picked us up from the French coast. It is improbable USAAF bombers that far, even though many of them seemed to be twin-engined

Almost half way home, three Ju88s could be seen diving at a B24 that had fallen out of formation and was in distress.

After 20 minutes without sign of Jerry things began to look more pleasant.

Song of Triumph

Lt. Casey and the crew began to sing over the intercom. Casey had the bends and was squirming in his seat—but smiling and singing. Next to him, Lt. Ross had to do most of the flying on the way home. Finally England was sighted and we believe me, whatever you think, it is one of the most beautiful little islands in all the world.

As Lt. Casey says, "I'm an Irishman, southern Ireland, but that is still the best looking damned little island I ever saw."

After a roof-lifting "buzz" (hedge-hopping) over the field, not orthodox, Lt. Casey brought the ship in smoothly.

Looking over the Banshee, we found that it had been hit in about ten places. The biggest hole was a gaping wound in her metal near the tail gunner. The chip of flak tore a hole through an English penny that Sgt. Small had left on the floor behind him.

With the exception of one frozen finger—Lt. Phillips—the Banshee had had what the crew called "a quiet trip."

I don't want to go on a noisy one.

Wilhelmshaven and got some back in return.

I watched the show from the nose of the Flying Fortress "Banshee," piloted by Lt. Bull Casey. I was too busy trying to get some pictures for Stars and Stripes and didn't notice until we got home that there were 10 hits on the "Banshee."

The boys in the crew said it was a "quiet trip." Let's hope I don't make any really noisy ones. The excitement started short-

ly after we left the English coast. Navigator Lt. William Dweiss of Tullahoma, Tenn., pointed out the first German fighter I have seen in action. He hailed the enemy fighter with a sweeping gesture that knocked me almost into the lap of Bombardier Lt. Malcolm A. Phillips Jr. of Coffeyville, Kan.

LET GO BURST

The consensus of the crew was that the German ship was a Messerschmitt 109. It whipped down out of the clouds on our left and let go a burst.

For the next three and a half hours, until we were half way home, there was no lack of enemy fighters trying to knock us down. There were Messerschmitt 109's, Junkers 88's. But we saw no Focke-Wulf 190's, which are the best German planes to battle the heavily gunned Fortresses.

This strengthens the contention of our airmen that the enemy is running short of fighting planes—at least of the better types.

From his vantage point in the pilot's cabin, Co-Pilot Lt. Kelly G. Ross, sent a message over the intercommunication system to Top Turret Gunner Tch. Sgt. Wilson C. Elliott of Detroit.

SHELLS FILLED SKIES

"Here comes one at 2 o'clock, Elliott," he warned. "Get the so-

quicker than you would think we were over Germany and the deadly black puffs of anti-aircraft shells filled the skies.

Lt. Phillips was leaning far forward in the ship's nose, between his guns and bombsight, when suddenly the whole forward end of the Fortress shuddered with a crash.

Phillips, set back on his heels, quickly covered his face with his hands as splinters of lexiglass formed a coating on his helmet. Fortunately he was unhurt. He opened his eyes and quickly recovered from the shock.

Later examination disclosed a small hole in the nose of the plane, no larger than a man's fist. But the fragment of flak certainly shook us up.

CREW UNIMPRESSED

At the start of the bombing run I was in the bomber's nose, trying for some pictures. As we got well into the run, the flak was bursting on all sides of us.

The crew seemed unimpressed. They said it was much worse at St. Nazaire. There was more flak over Wilhelmshaven, they explained, but it was spread out. At St. Nazaire the German anti-aircraft gunners concentrated their fire.

Fighters were swarming around above, below and on both sides of the "Banshee." The bombardier crouched low over his sights. I watched bombs falling from the ship ahead. I couldn't feel a thing when our bomb load was loosed.

Tail Gunner Sgt. Parley D. Small of Packwood, Iowa, said he saw one of our bombers go down with one engine flaming. But he thought the ship was under control for a crash landing.

Small got one enemy fighter that tried to put a stream of incendiaries into our rear.

MILITARY RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE


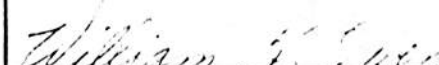
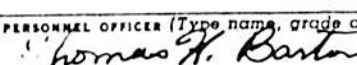
1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL OWENS William H			2. ARMY SERIAL NUMBER 0 794 012		3. AUS. GRADE 1st Lt	4. ARM OR SERVICE AC	5. COMPONENT Res
6. ORGANIZATION 369 B. Sq, (H) 306 Bomb Gp (H) 8 AF England			7. DATE OF RELIEF FROM ACTIVE DUTY 24 Jan 46		8. PLACE OF SEPARATION SAD AAFPDC San Antonio Tex		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES 208 S. Anderson St. Tullahoma, Tenn. Coffee Co				10. DATE OF BIRTH 29 May 21		11. PLACE OF BIRTH Tullahoma, Tenn.	
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE BOUGHT Same as 9				13. COLOR EYES Blue	14. COLOR HAIR Brown	15. HEIGHT 5'7-3/4"	16. WEIGHT 168 LBS.
17. NO. OF DEPENDENTS 1	18. RACE X WHITE	19. MARITAL STATUS X MARRIED	20. U.S. CITIZEN X YES	21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. Student 00.999			

MILITARY HISTORY

SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA X	22. REGISTERED X YES	23. LOCAL S. S. BOARD NUMBER Unknown	24. COUNTY AND STATE Coffee, Tenn.	25. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY Monroe, La.		
26. DATE OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY 14 Nov 42		27. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. 1034 Navigator				
28. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS Air Offensive Europe						
29. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS Purple Heart; EAME Ribbon; Air Medal w/1 Oak Leaf Cluster						
30. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION Flak wounds right arm and shoulder on a mission over Germany 17 Apr 43.						
31. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED AAFFS			32. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN DATE OF DEPARTURE		DESTINATION	DATE OF ARRIVAL
			7 Dec 42		England	13 Dec 42
33. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION For the convenience of the Government RR1-5			21 May 45		USA	3 Jun 45
34. CURRENT TOUR OF ACTIVE DUTY						
CONTINENTAL SERVICE		FOREIGN SERVICE		EDUCATION (years)		
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	GRAMMAR SCHOOL
	8	10	2	6	4	8
						HIGH SCHOOL
						4
						COLLEGE
						2 1/2

INSURANCE NOTICE

<small>IMPORTANT IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THE INSURANCE WILL Lapse. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS DIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.</small>						
36. KIND OF INSURANCE X Nat. Serv. U.S. Govt. Corp.	37. HOW PAID X Allotment Direct to V.A.	38. Effective Date of Allotment Discontinuance 31 Jan 46	39. Date of Next Premium Due, one month after 36) 28 Feb 46	40. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH 6.50	41. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO 10,000*	

42. 	RIGHT THUMB PRINT	43. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives) Lapel button issued POW 25 months in Germany ERC 23 Mar 42 - 7 May 42 AC 8 May 42 - 13 Nov 42				
44. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER BEING SEPARATED 			45. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature)  THOMAS H BARTON Captain Air Corps			



Army of the United States

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that

WILLIAM H OWENS O 794 042 FIRST LIEUTENANT

369 BOMB SQUADRON (H) 306 BOMB GROUP (H)

*honorably served in active Federal Service
in the Army of the United States from*

14 NOVEMBER 1942

to

21 JANUARY 1946

Given at SAD AAF PERSONNEL DISTRIBUTION COLLEGE SAN ANTONIO TEXAS

on the

24th

day of

JANUARY

1946

[Signature]
O. E. CHN
Lt Col AC

Name:	Owens
Vorname:	William Howard
Dienstgrad:	2nd Lt.
Erk.-Marke:	1244 St. I. 3
Serv.-Nr.:	0-794042
Nationalität:	USA

Baracke:
Raum:

U.S. Mobile Station

Local Boy, War Prisoner, Wins Decorations

Lt. Billy Owens Receives Second Air Medal

Mrs. Claude Owens, of Tullahoma, has been notified by the War Department that her son, First Lieut. William H. Owens, of the Air Forces, and now a prisoner of the German government, had been awarded the air medal with oak leaf cluster, indicating a second award of the same decoration, by the commanding general of the eighth air force, for meritorious achievement. Lt. Owens was with a group of fighter planes that recently bombed Wilhelmshaven, and later was taken prisoner. The notation from the War Department stated that the decorations will be presented to Mrs. Owens in her son's absence.

How It Feels To Bomb Germany

Excerpts from story in Stars and Stripes, by staff writer, featuring recent bombing raid in which a Tullahoma boy figured:

From the nose of Lt. Bill Casey's Banshee, I saw American Fortresses and Liberators drop a load of destruction on Wilhelmshaven today. We flew to Germany in the last group of a Fortress formation and our Banshee was in the trailing squadron. Soon after dawn the bombers thundered down the runway. Like a pick-up football team on Saturday morning, we grew in strength as we flew until all England seemed to be covered with bombers. Everything was quiet, almost monotonous, for an hour after we left the English coast. Then the trouble began. Peeling out of the sun came shining silver German fighter planes. My first glimpse of a German fighter came when our navigator, 2nd Lt. William H. Owens, of Tullahoma, Tenn., nearly knocked me into the lap of 2nd Lt. Malcomb Phillips, the bombardier. Owens swung around at what appeared to be an Me-109 as it whipped down through the clouds on our left. From that time until three hours later, when we were half way home, no one had to look far to see a German fighter. They were all over, and they were all kinds of planes. Lt. Owens was having trouble with his oxygen and Lt. Phillips' fingers were nearly frozen. I was healthy but helpless. Finally the valve of Owens' air intake froze completely and the next thing his head had dropped to the top of his 50-caliber and his face was an unlovely greyish purple. We fitted the mask to Owens' face and revived him. Nazi planes kept nipping at our formation. Almost half way home three Ju-88's could be seen diving at a B-24 that had fallen out of formation and was in distress. After 20 minutes without sign of a thing things began to look more pleasant. Looking over our Banshee we found that it had been hit in about ten places. With the exception of one frozen finger—Lt. Phillip's—the Banshee had had what the crew called a "quiet trip." I don't want to go on a noisy one.

Nazis Chased from Brest Skies

Some Bomber Crews Made Two Raids In Two Days

By Andrew A. Rooney

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

American air crews who had to fight their way home from Wilhelmshaven through swarms of Nazi fighter planes found the skies over Brest, German U-boat base in France, strangely free of Luftwaffe opposition.

The raids Friday (on Wilhelmshaven) and Saturday (on Brest) provided the second instance in which some Eighth Air Force combat units have raided enemy territory on successive days. The last time was on Dunkirk and St. Nazaire.

Crews of the Fortresses and Liberators who struck at Brest in daylight Saturday reported seeing "no more than five Huns at one time." Credit for the opportunity to make deadly bombing runs with no appreciable opposition other than flak was given to the escorting squadrons of RAF and Allied Spitfires who, in relays, covered the entire mission.

Closest Call

The crew of 1st Lt. William Casey, of Red Bank, N.J., had the closest call of the Brest raid. Flying in the Fortress Little Audrey, because their own ship, Banshee, had been damaged over Wilhelmshaven, they ran into trouble ten minutes from the objective.

No. 4 engine started spouting oil and smoking.

"We were in the lead formation," T/Sgt. Wilson C. Elliott, of Detroit, said. "The engine was smoking, but Lt. Casey didn't feather the prop because the minute you do that German fighters know you are in trouble and start concentrating on you."

T/Sgt. Parley D. Small, veteran tail gunner from Packwood, Iowa, said that the whole crew thought they were done for.

"Our formation passed us and we were left alone until the next group came over. They passed us. We were going pretty slow with only three engines."

Wouldn't Turn Back

"Lt. Casey wouldn't turn back with a load of bombs so close to the target—not Casey," Sgt. Elliott said. "Finally, after our run on the target, the last group in the formation came along and slowed down to protect us on the trip home."

"The Spitfires came along about then and we began to feel a lot better," Elliott concluded.

Last night Lt. Casey took time off to visit the field where the protecting bombers were stationed just to thank them personally for himself and his crew.

Six members of the crew, known as the "One a Minute Men," ever since one raid on which they are credited with having shot down seven planes, are: 2nd Lt. William H. Owens, Tullahoma, Tenn.,

N.Y. Times Reporter Missing From Raid

Robert P. Post, 32-year-old correspondent for the New York Times and a member of the paper's London staff, is officially reported missing in action from the U.S. air raid on Wilhelmshaven Friday.

Post was one of a group of American correspondents who went as observers on the daylight raid.

Airmen in his formation, who saw Post's plane shot down by enemy fighters, said that some of the crew parachuted to earth.

A Harvard graduate, Post covered the White House for the Times before coming to the London Bureau in 1938. His wife, who lives in London, is the former Miss Margaret Lapsley, of Brooklyn, Conn.

navigator; T/Sgt. Thurman H. Ray, Loveland, Col., ball turret; Sgt. Reginald G. Harris, Houston, Tex., waist gunner; S/Sgt. Joseph R. Borzym, Chicago, waist gunner; S/Sgt. Morris J. Gecowets, Mark Center, Ohio, radio operator.

1st Lt. William Wilton Biggs, of Onyka, Miss., a Fortress navigator, commented on the absence of enemy fighters.

"There was nothing to it," he reported. "I didn't see a single fighter plane either on the way in or on the way out from the target. We had an uninterrupted run."

Not all the ships were unscratched. 1st Lt. Craig Harwood, of Highwood, Ill., pilot of the Fortress Tally-Ho, in the lead formation, said his plane caught flak in the wings and stabilizer.

Banshee Pressed On To Target Despite Dead Engine

~~RESTRICTED~~

Symbols: AUS—Army of the United States.
DP—By direction of the President.
AD—Active Duty.
AAF—Army-Air Forces.
Special Orders)
No. 262)

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, 29 OCT 45

EXTRACT

Par. 15. Announcement is made of the temp promotion of the following named officers to the grades indicated in the AUS with rank
of date of this order:

1ST LT TO CAPT

WILLIAM HOWARD OWENS 0794042 AC

By order of the Secretary of War:

Edward F. Stevens
Major General
Acting The Adjutant General
The Adjutant General.

G. C. MARSHALL,
Chief of Staff.