

306th Echoes

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The First Full Year of Work on the 306th BGA Project Completed

By **Vernon L. Williams**
Director, East Anglia Air War Archives
Abilene Christian University

April and May marked the end of the first full year of work on the preservation of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Collection. We began our work after the 2007 reunion in October that year and spent the first few months getting the Collection to Abilene and organizing the student interns into an efficient work schedule. In October 2007 our first issue of Echoes appeared, and during the spring semester in 2008, Echoes began to appear as quarterly publications of the Association and the East Anglia Air War Project in Abilene. During the spring 2008, scanning continued in the lab at ACU, and interns produced the first large grouping of digital copies of the 306th historical materials. That first spring also premiered the appearance of the 306th website and what promises to be one of the most comprehensive research sites for World War II anywhere. Already the site is growing, with much more to come.

The 2008-2009 academic year picked up where our first partial year left off—intensive scanning of 306th documents, web building, writing articles and publishing Echoes, and a busy time at the Little Rock reunion with exhibits, workshops, and oral history interviews. We concluded the busy year with four of our six 306th student interns graduating with bachelor degrees in May. This was most unusual, having so many of our project interns graduating and leaving at one time. This is the reason why the April issue of Echoes is late this spring. We will make some adjustments next spring and change our January and April Echoes production schedules so that all work on those issues are completed earlier in the semester. We

Outward Bound

By Muriel Bates

Editor's Note: Muriel Bates Foose wrote the poem below as she walked to work at a nearby war plant in Bedfordshire where she made resisters for radio equipment during the war. Later she married 306th BG veteran William Foose and immigrated to the United States where she raised her family and enjoyed a full life. She died in 2008, but her poignant words of those long ago days in wartime England will live forever.

The dawn came stealing through the night
Thro' a sky floodlit with bright moonlight
And with the dawn came the murmuring sound
Of heavy bombers on the landing ground

Their engines throbbing thro' the cold crisp air
As I stood listening and waiting there
And then they came—and with eager eyes
I saw them loom into the skies

On they came with a deafening roar
Ten-twenty-thirty-more and more
Their bodies glistening as they passed me by
And circled in the cloudless sky

Then— with formation quite complete
The silver wing tipped gleaming fleet
Swept on their voyage, I know not where
And left me standing lonely there
Till all was hushed—and ne'er a sound
Of, those gallant men who were outward bound

will continue to work on the digitalization project right up to the end of the semester. We anticipate that the July 2009 Echoes will appear on time this summer, probably published online in late July with the printed issues mailed to all 306th families 4 or 5 days later. Thanks to everyone for your patience and your contributions to Echoes over the last two school years. I encourage everyone in the 306th to submit stories, photographs, and ideas for stories. Send them to: Dr. Vernon L. Williams, ACU Box 28203, Abilene, TX 79699.

We have found that the digitalization project would be greatly enhanced and would accelerate our work if the East Anglia Air War Project could purchase at least one duplex scanner. The appropriate make and model has been identified and the cost is about \$600. A donation in that amount would be a tax deductible gift, if any individual in the 306th would like to help in this very specific way. The duplex scanner would make a real difference in our preservation work, particularly in the 306th BG Digitization Project and the Eighth Air Force preservation work in general. If interested, please call Dr. Williams at 325-280-3399.

We are making great plans for the Ft. Worth reunion in October. Please see the details and registration forms, etc. on page 7 of this issue of Echoes. Notice that some adjustments to the original schedule have been made, and that the schedule and program published in this issue is the final and most current schedule. Please discard the schedule published in the printed version of the January issue. It is no longer accurate. Our student interns for next year will be assisting in organizing many of the events for the reunion. Take a look at the schedule on the right side of page 7, and you can see that we have some very special plans for you in Ft. Worth. There will be some surprises, too. So please take time today to send in your registration to Joel Labo, using the form on page 7. You can book your hotel room by using the toll free number listed in the reservations box located at the bottom of page 7. See you in Ft. Worth.

Rita Beigel Makes a Difference

This beautiful, patriotic quilt at left is a wall hanging designed and quilted by Mrs. Rita Beigel, wife of Vice President Sheldon Beigel. The quilt will be auctioned to the highest bidder during the 2009 reunion in Ft. Worth, Texas to raise funds for the 306th Bomb Group Association.

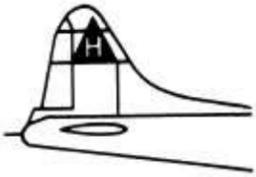
The quilt was created in approximately 40 to 50 hours and was completed in February 2009. Rita, of Reno, Nevada, is 75 years old and has been a quilter for most of her adult life.

Make plans to submit a bid at Ft. Worth and make this wall hanging a part of your home, a fitting reminder of the extraordinary contribution the 306th Bomb Group made in securing the victory in World War II.





Above: Members of the 306th Bomb Group lounge around after a busy day. Many of you remember the living conditions at Thurleigh and the other accommodations scattered around the base. The winter of 1944 was one of the coldest on record in Europe and at Thurleigh, the only protection against the bitter, wet cold was the coal stove—never adequate in those dark and dreary days in Bedfordshire.



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The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association is a Federally tax-exempt organization and as a veteran's group is classified as 501 © (19).

Obituaries

Please send the Association details of deaths or complete obituaries if you have them. Please send obituary information to the secretary:

Albert McMahan
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Obituaries Received:

- **Howard Balcom**, 367th pilot, died 18 Sep 08 in Natick, MA. He served in the Pacific with the 7th Air Force, as a flight engineer, completed pilot training, joined the Group 1 Sep 44 and completed 30 missions in Mar 45. He retired from New England Telephone with 36 years service. He leaves his wife Jean, 2c, 1gc.
- **Zane Beal**, 369th gunner, died 16 Oct 08 in Wichita, KS. He completed 31 missions. Postwar he farmed and worked at Boeing for 30 years. He leaves his wife Olive, 1c, 4gc, 14ggc.
- **COL Dale Briscoe**, 369th pilot, died 15 Feb 09 in Pittsboro, NC. He came to the 306th 15 Jan 43, completed 25 missions in late August 43, and in Dec 44 returned to England as a P-51 pilot in the First Scouting Force. He graduated from U. Maryland. Briscoe retired as a colonel in 1970 after assignments at numbered Air Forces Hqs and Hq USAF, Pentagon. In 1986 he retired as Executive VP and CEO of USAA Life Insurance. His wife Beti preceded him in death by 3 months. He leaves 2d, 4c, 6gc.
- **George Dufau**, 367th ball turret gunner and internee (Irwin Schwedock crew), died 30 Dec 03 in Hamersville, OH. On the 24 Apr 44 mission to Oberpfaffenhofen his plane was shot out of formation, went to Switzerland and the crew was interned. The mission cost the Group 10 planes and crews. He retired from Allis-Chalmers in 1981. He left his wife Fannie.
- **William Eubank**, 367th navigator (Earl Tunnell crew), died 22 Sep 02 in Dacula, GA. He retired from pipeline construction in 1981. He left 2c, 1gc, 1ggc.
- **Thomas Grimes**, 368th bombardier, died 10 Mar 99 in Santa Maria, CA. His crew joined the Group 27 Mar 45 just before the war ended. He worked in insurance, financial and estate planning. He left his wife Dorothy, 3c, 6gc, 5ggc.
- **Donald Haagenon**, 367th bombardier (Roland Lissner crew), died 3 Dec 01 in Minneapolis, MN. On the 3 Mar 45 mission to Berlin his plane suffered flak damage, landed in Sweden and the crew was interned. After the war he was in the banking industry. He left his wife Margaret, 2c, 8gc, 2ggc.
- **Walter Hagemier**, 369th radio operator, died 10 Feb 03 in Bloomington, IN. After some missions with the 306th he was transferred to the 482nd Pathfinder Group where he completed his tour. Postwar he was in construction. He leaves his British war bride Gwen, 2c, 3gc, 6ggc.
- **Raymond Hanska**, 449th Sub Depot mechanic, died 10 Feb 00 in Oklahoma City, OK. He was a farmer all his life. He left his wife Geraldine, 4c, 6gc, 6ggc.
- **COL Nelson Hardin**, 423rd pilot, died 3 Jan 08 in San Antonio, TX. On the 29 Mar 44 mission to Brunswick, Germany he was shot down and a POW. He retired from the Air Force with 27 years service in 1969. He leaves his wife Dolores, 2c, 2gc.
- **James Haywood**, 368th tail gunner (Robert W. Smith crew), died 8 Jul 02 in Dublin, GA. He joined the Group at Wendover and completed a 25 mission tour in Apr 43. He retired from the AF as a SMSgt with 23 years service and worked at Warner-Robbins for several years. He left 4c, 2gc.
- **Oliver Hess**, 368th tail gunner (Gordon Dobbs crew), died 15 July 03 in Washington, WV. He completed a 25 mission tour. Post war he worked as a millwright. He leaves his wife Louise, 4c, 8gc, 8ggc.
- **Frederick Hocker**, 369th navigator, died 27 Nov 08 in Venice, FL. He joined the Group 4 Apr 45, completed 6 missions and mapped parts of Africa in the Casey Jones project. Post war he was a farmer. He leaves 4c, 16gc, 1ggc.
- **Royce Hopkins**, 367th pilot, died at home 6 Feb 09 in Brookshire, TX. He joined the Group 13 Dec 44 and flew 26 combat missions. His business life includes senior positions in EIM Controls, Texas Steel, and Davis-Walker Corp retiring as Group Vice President in 1981. He leaves his wife Mollie, 3c, 2gc.
- **Robert Horste**, 368th ball turret/tail gunner (Walter Sumner crew), died 13 Aug 08 at home in Belleville, MI. He joined the Group 16 Feb 45 and completed 24 missions. He retired as a self-employed mechanical engineer in 1998. He leaves his wife Florence, 2c, 3gc.
- **Max Houston**, 368th navigator, died 27 Nov 00 in Deerfield, MI. He completed 25 combat missions. He was in the banking and hotel business and retired twice; in 1988 and 1995. He left his wife Betty, 7c, 14gc, 7ggc.
- **William Hovekamp**, 367th tail gunner (Kelly Ross crew), died 23 Mar 07 in Louisville, KY. His plane was shot down 5 Apr 43 and he became a POW. He retired from servicing vending machines. He leaves his wife Rose, 3c, 8gc, 4ggc.
- **William Huddleston**, 367th waist gunner and POW (Carey Oliver crew), died 30 Apr 98 in Grand Prairie, TX. Fighters downed his plane on the 22 Feb 44 mission to Bernberg, Germany. After the war he worked in construction. He left his wife Grace, 3c, 2gc, 5ggc.
- **David Insardi**, 369th navigator (Clifford Baxter crew), died 26 Jun 96 in NYC. He joined the Group 12 Apr 44 and completed a 31 mission tour in Jul 44. He retired from the NYC fire department in 1962 and Pan Am as a parts clerk in 1978. He left 5c, 2gc.
- **Lloyd Jefferson**, 423rd bombardier (Eugene Smith crew), died 21 Mar 03 in Richmond, VA. He completed a 30 mission tour in 1945. He retired in 1983 after 44 years in banking. He left his wife Marjorie, 2c, 2gc.
- **H. Fay Jenack**, 369th bombardier (Paul Jorgensen crew), died 16 Feb 95 in Potsdam, NY. He joined the Group 20 Feb 44 and completed his combat tour in Jun. After 42 years with a utility company he retired. He left 3c, 7gc.
- **Alfred Johansen**, 369th pilot, died 25 May 07 in Doylestown, PA. Flying "Steady Hedy" the crew completed 35 missions in December 44. After the war he earned an industrial engineering degree from Lehigh U. and retired from a manufacturing plant in 1984. He leaves his wife Elaine, 2c, 2gc.

President's Corner



Seasons Of Change

As I write this on the first day of spring a metamorphosis is occurring in Kentucky. Trees are producing a colorful array of blossoms and spring flowers are bursting with blooms. Amid these symbols of renewal, hope and change, there is a mood of happiness. Then I recall that within the last ten months my pilot, C. Dale Briscoe, and co-pilot, Fred P. Sherman, have gone to that great landing field in the sky. Their demise is a touching loss to the surviving members of our B-17 crew and to their families and friends in the 306th Bomb Group. As gallant warriors and true heroes, may they rest in peace—their missions successfully completed.

John K. Hickey
President



Save the Date May 30-June 7, 2010

"I'll Be Seeing You" *A Tour of the Airfields of the Mighty Eighth*

Dr. Vernon L. Williams and the East Anglia Air War Project will be leading a tour of World War II England next summer. Williams has spent the last decade working on Eighth Air Force film projects in East Anglia and brings much to this tour. Follow in his footsteps, along the back roads of England and discover the people who lived near their "Yanks" during the war and encounter the airfields that remain scattered across the landscape of rural England. There is much left of the "community" that developed between the Brits and the Yanks so long ago. Soon to be the subject of the first book to come out of Williams' decade-long research, join him in retracing the story of the 306th and many other bomb groups who flew their missions from these small villages and towns scattered across East Anglia and the Midlands.

All proceeds from the tour will benefit the East Anglia Air War Project and Williams' efforts to preserve the history of the men of the Eighth Air Force and their contribution to the victory won over the skies of Europe. The East Anglia Project is the driving force behind the preservation of the 306th archives and the work of 306th student interns at Abilene Christian University. This tour will help fund their work.

Thurleigh will certainly be one of the many site visits along the air war trail next summer. Make plans to fit this tour into your schedule for the coming year. Pricing and itinerary details will be available in late July.



This B-17F, with engines roaring, is ready for a mission against a target on the mainland. Soon the sun will be up, and the formation will be heading into harm's way.

Visit the 306th Website

www.306bg.org

- **William Ransdell**, 369th navigator (Robert Stewart crew), died 22 Dec 02 in St Joseph, MO. He completed 35 missions in 1945. He retired two times: in 1982 from the IRS and 1992 from St Joseph Power and Light. He left his wife Myrna, 1c.
- **William Reel**, 367th radio operator, died 29 Jul 97 in Augusta, GA. He was a member of the Group May 43-Oct45. He owned/operated an accounting/insurance business, and had more than 50 years of public service: mayor of Edgefield, SC, in the South Carolina House of Representatives and Senate, and retired from the SC National Guard as a BG. He never married.
- **Robert Roach**, 369th engineer (Raymond Birdwell crew), died 21 Jun 01 in Pittsburg, PA. His crew joined the Group 17 July 44 and completed a 35 mission tour in Apr 45. He drove a bus and worked in construction. He left his wife Dorothy, 5c, 3gc.
- **Eli Rogers**, 423rd engineer and POW (Edwin Pipp crew), died 18 Nov 06 in Williamston, NC. His plane was shot down 1 May 43, his 13th mission. After the war he worked as a plumber. He left his wife Elinore, 2c, 3gc, 6ggc.
- **LTC Rudolph Skalak**, Group's first and only photographic officer, died at home 26 Jan 09 in Wofford Height, CA. He earned a BS from Columbia in 1937 and a Masters in 1950. Skalak retired from the Air Force in 1966 and the State of California as a rehab counselor in 1973. He leaves his wife Marilyn, 2c, 5gc, 4ggc.
- **Paul Smith**, 368th pilot, died 16 Jan 09 in Spokane, WA. He arrived at Group 16 Feb 45, completed 19 missions and participated in the Casey Jones Project. Postwar he was self-employed in the trucking and machinery business. Smith leaves his wife Frances, 8c, 11gc.
- **Kenneth Starks**, 367th pilot, died 5 Jan 09 in Augusta, GA. He arrived at Group 9 Apr 45, flew 4 missions and participated in the Casey Jones project. He graduated from Purdue U. and retired in 1981 from Westinghouse Electric. He left his wife Esther, 3c, 7gc.
- **Jesse Watts**, 367th waist gunner (Louis Matichka crew), died 2 Feb 82 in Maplewood, MN. On the 8 May 44 mission to Berlin his plane ditched off coast of Sweden and his crew was interned. He was a real estate assessor. He leaves his wife Lucille, 1c, 1gc.
- **CMSGT Jack Wood**, 369th First Sergeant, died 16 February 09 in Arkadelphia, AR. From April 1942 - July 1945 he served as the 369th's only First Sergeant. He retired from the Air Force in 1967 with 27 years service. After retirement he worked as a sales consultant for 20 years. He leaves his English bride wife Patricia, 3c, 6gc, 13ggc.
- **306th Family**
- **Terry Potter**, widow of MSGT Frank B. Potter, Jr., head of the oxygen shop at Thurleigh, died 22 Dec 08 in the Woodlands, TX, She was a member of the Royal Air Force in WW II.

- **Anthony Johnson**, 368th armorer, died 31 Jul 98 in Binghamton, NY. After the war he worked for Endicott-Johnson for 46 years. He left his wife Elaine, 1c, 1gc.
- **Stanley Josell**, 449th Sub Depot, died 21 Dec 99 in Boynton Beach, FL. He earned education degrees from Brooklyn College and NYU and retired as an elementary school principal in 1986. He left his wife Ray, 2c, 4gc.
- **Chester Lantz**, 367th ball turret gunner (Harold Barrett crew), died 5 Nov 01 in Topeka, KS. He completed 25 missions. He retired in 1984 after 37 years as a mortician. He left his wife Darleen, 4c, 8gc, 3ggc.
- **Raymond Litka**, 368th waist gunner (Lester Evans crew), died 24 Sep 02 in Sioux Falls, SD. His crew joined the Group 27 Dec 44 and completed a 35 mission tour in April 45. He was a tractor and combine mechanic. He left 4c, 3gc.
- **Henry Lynch**, 423rd bombardier (Wesley Courson crew), died 9 Mar 97 in Sacramento, CA. On the 26 Jul 43 mission to Hanover, Germany, his plane was shot down and he became a POW. He was a rancher and insurance agent. He left 3c, 6gc.
- **George Mapes**, 367th pilot, died 13 Jan 01 in Meadows Place, TX. He completed a 35 mission tour in Aug 44. He retired from Brown & Root in 1984 as an instruments & control engineer He left his wife Foncyne, 4c, 2gc.
- **Louis Marchese**, 369th engineer (Ned Erne crew), died 4 Jan 03 in Milwaukee, WI. His crew joined the Group 25 Oct 44 and completed a 35 mission tour in Apr 45. He retired from his family excavating business in 1988. He left his wife Theresa, 1d.
- **Lawrence Marks**, 368th pilot, died 15 Feb 05 in Oshkosh, WI. He completed 5 missions before war's end and participated in the Casey Jones Project. Postwar he worked for Kimberly-Clark until he retired in 1980 and then had a flying school until 2000. He retired as a LTC from the Air Corps Reserve in 1974. He left his wife Carolyn, 4c, 4gc 2ggc.
- **Kenneth McBride**, 423rd gunner, died 15 Mar 03 in Farmington, NM. He completed a combat tour. Postwar he was an oil field production engineer and retired in 1985. He left his wife Anne, 3c, 13gc, 13ggc.
- **William McHale**, 449th Sub Depot clerk, died 18 Aug 02 in Reading, PA. After 36 years with Travelers Insurance he retired. He left his wife Jean, 4c, 5gc.
- **Reed Miller**, 423rd gunner/toggler (John Chalfant crew), died 27 Nov 01 in Reading, PA. He completed 25 missions that included a North Sea ditching and rescue. He was a retired welder and left his wife Janet, 4c, 12gc, 8ggc, 1gggc.
- **Julius Minnucci**, 368th tail gunner (Leon Dorich crew), died 4 Feb 02 in Quakertown, PA. He joined the Group 4 Feb 45, completed 19 missions and participated in the Casey Jones Project. He owned a printing company and retired in 1970. He left 1c, 2gc, 4ggc.
- **Robert Monaghan**, 367th bombardier (Edward Magner crew), died 24 August 1999 in Scranton, PA. He was shot down on his 13th mission and was a POW. Following the war he operated a Chevrolet garage and was an auditor until his retirement in 1981. Surviving are 3c, 9gc, 2ggc.
- **Asa Nickell**, 368th armorer, died 28 Aug 89 in Lexington, KY. He retired as a Chevrolet District Manager in 1975. He left 4c, 3gc.
- **Harvey Nielsen**, 369th copilot and POW (Alvin Schuering crew), died on 27 Feb 01. He arrived at Group 1 Dec 43 and was shot down 29 Mar 44 on his 25th mission. Nielsen retired from Union Oil in 1960. He left his wife Joyce, 6c, 12gc, 4ggc.
- **George Olson**, 368th tail gunner, died 24 Feb 85 in Minneapolis, MN. He completed 35 missions. He was plant manager of a nuts and bolts factory. He left his wife Corinne, 5c, 6gc.
- **LTC Paul Paulsen**, 368th pilot, died 18 Nov 04 in Carmichael, CA. Between Sep 43-May 44 he completed 30 missions, including Pathfinder. He was recalled for Korea and retired as LTC in 1968. He left 3c, 4gc.
- **Dale Poehlman**, 368th tail gunner (James Lett Crew), died 25 Dec 03 in Wayne, NE. His crew joined the Group 9 Apr 45 and completed a few missions. Postwar he was a State of Nebraska Roads and Bridges engineer. He left his wife Frances, 6c, 9gc.
- **Joseph Pryga**, 369th communications officer, died 18 Sep 96 in Salinas, CA. He remained in the service, retired as a LTC and was a RCA technical representative. He left his wife Irmgard, 1c.
- **Albert Pugh**, 449th Sub Depot turret repair, died 20 Apr 08 in Sublimity, OR. He retired from the Oregon Highway Department in 1989. He leaves 3c, 2gc.

Last Flight: The Lubojacky Family Journey

by Rebecca Fletcher
Michael Roskovitch Intern
Abilene Christian University

On the morning of February 14, 1945, air crews assembled for an early-morning briefing for a mission to Dresden, Germany. With the war just months away from victory in Europe, the crews anticipated little resistance from the Luftwaffe. Over the past few months, American fighters accompanying the bomber stream on missions deep into Germany had destroyed much of the once invincible German Air Force. Take off proved to be routine and the formation formed up and set course for Dresden. Several hours later the formation made the bomb run but “the low squadron did not drop on its first run over the target and turned to make another pass.” At this point three Focke-Wulf 190s attacked the formation as the planes prepared to make a second attempt on the bomb run. In the ensuing fight, Capt. Boylston B. Lewis’ aircraft suffered fatal damage. The fighters had battered the plane “hard, severing the control cables, setting the number 4 engine on fire and starting a blaze in the waist of the plane.” Although most of the crew bailed out over Czechoslovakia, the ball turret gunner, Sgt. Alfred “Buddy” Lubojacky, had been wounded, but no one could account for him later. The other crew never saw him again. The events of February 14th set in motion 56 years of searching for answers by the Lubojacky family.

Though their story may not necessarily have the happy ending found in a Hollywood movie, the Lubojacky family recently brought the epic tale to a close after decades of searching for what had happened to Lubojacky. The Army never recovered the body or

what happened to him was a complicated one that required many different connections. In the end, it would be the Germans, oddly enough, who would give the family the final answer they had been looking for.

To understand the relief that the family felt from finally knowing their Uncle Buddy’s fate, one must first understand journey they followed during the long and difficult 56-year long ordeal. There were many difficult years for Lubojacky’s family after that Valentine’s Day in 1945. The family had plenty of reason to hope that their son might still be alive, whether he had amnesia or some other ailment, Buddy’s parents never gave up hope that he might return someday. Barbara Neal has provided the 306th Bomb Group Association with ample amounts of resources including family letters and Western Union telegrams sent during and after the war. The Western Union telegrams demonstrate how trying the times were for the family in the face of the uncertainty of what happened to Buddy. In the beginning, the telegrams were mainly letters of encouragement from one nervous family member to another, while they all awaited the end of the war when their boys would be returned home. However, as the other crew members began returning home one by one, the messages from his crew became a sort of defense for why he should still be alive, claiming that “Al was the second or first one out” or declarations that Al may have been wounded, but that they, “remembered Al smiling as if to say everything was ok.” What could the family do but gain strength from the encouragements they re-

ceived. Podzimek informed Neal that the family had been invited to attend the opening of a monument in Hridelec, memorializing the nine members of the B-17 that had been shot down on that very spot. Neal was overwhelmed with excitement at having finally made this connection with Podzimek, realizing she was in a position to learn more than she had ever been able to acquire before, including what happened to Buddy.

Podzimek sent Neal a copy of a German police document he had found earlier that documented the discovery of Alfred Lubojacky’s body on February 15, 1945. His parachute was only partially opened and he had a gunshot wound to the leg. His burial place is still a mystery, however. With that, the family finally received the answer they had been for so long to hear. Buddy had died during the parachute jump, and the family was finally at peace knowing that there was nothing more to be done.

The Lubojacky Family journey did not end there. They quickly made plans to attend the ceremony in May 2005. Neal wrote about the experience in the July 2005 issue of the 306th Echoes. She describes the family’s relief “to finally know what had happened to Al,” and tells of the family’s quick decision to be a part of the dedication ceremony in Hridelec. The number of those traveling with the Lubojacky family totaled 24 by the time they departed for Czechoslovakia. From Oklahoma to California, family members packed their bags for a trip of a lifetime. Albert’s youngest brother, Walt, spoke on behalf of the family to a crowd of 400 villagers, young and old, who turned up for the occasion. There were several other surprises for the family such as dinner with the mayor, and an unexpected gift from a woman who had been just a teenager when the wreckage of the B-17 was found. She gave the family a piece of parachute she found among the debris and had managed to hold onto through all the years.

The Lubojacky family journey from start to finish was an emotional one. Across the years there were many tears shed, from WWII to the ceremony in Hridelec in 2005 when Czechs and Americans together honored the men who fell from the sky on that fateful day. For the family, finding out what happened to Buddy did more than simply solving a mystery. The journey back to Czechoslovakia reconnected the family with their heritage. After many years of suffering from not knowing what had happened, the story of Alfred “Buddy” Lubojacky has been placed in the book of history. But questions still remain. What happened that fateful day after the crew bailed out? Why did Alfred’s parachute only partially open? Where is his body and what happened to it once he landed to earth? The wreckage of the aircraft has been found, but where is Lubojacky? He was just one of more than 26,000 missing airmen who remain missing today. Their names are chiseled into marble monuments to the missing at American military cemeteries scattered across Europe.



Above: The Kenneth Streun crew of the 369th Bomb Squadron. Front: Joseph Sicard B, Lewis Wilson N, Robert Whitelaw CP, Kenneth Streun P. Back: Alfred Lubojacky BT, Leon Nahimias TG, Frank McDonough WG, James Standlee E, Hardin McChesney RO.

determined what happened to him after the crew left the ship. What makes this story so interesting is that there was a certain amount of irony between the mission that day and Lubojacky’s family connections to Czechoslovakia. The Lubojacky clan immigrated to Texas just two generations before Alfred was born and for this reason, he had a few things to his advantage in running into trouble over his ancestral homeland. For one, he grew up hearing stories of the mother country and had an idea of what to expect from the people. And second, Al knew the Czech language and would have been able to communicate with those he came across and get help. After receiving no certain reports that Alfred had been killed and receiving news from other crewmembers that they were sure that he had bailed out alive, the family found it all but impossible not to hope that their son was still alive in Czechoslovakia and someday would make his way back to them in Texas.

In today’s technological world, genealogy has never been more accessible to family members seeking to understand better their histories. However, there are some things that take a little more investigation than simply typing in names into a computer program. For Barbara Neal, who grew up hearing stories about her Uncle Buddy and gazing at his handsome picture on the family piano, the process of finding out exactly

received. However, among these encouraging notes were a few that tested their resolve and made the wounds more tender and raw. One telegram sent from the postmaster wondered about the whereabouts of Albert as they had several letters that had been sent back to the post office. The official complained that he “has not done his part in helping us to keep track of him.” How was the family to respond to such telegrams in a time when they had no answer to give in return? The Lubojacky family held onto their hope into the late 1990s. Eventually Albert’s mother and father died, still convinced that he was still alive and a part of the family. Someday, they felt sure, he would one day be found.

Albert’s niece, Barbara Neal, whose genealogy hobby had long been a helpful tool to the family, was an active member of several historical societies such as the Czech Heritage Society of Texas and the Moravian Heritage Society, but it was the discovery of the Texas Czech Genealogical Society at her aunt’s funeral in 2002 that finally lead to the connection with the so called “Bombers’ Fan Historian.” Milos Podzimek would finally give the family the answers they had been looking for. Podzimek had actually been looking for the Lubojacky family for some time, but it would not be until Christmas Eve, 2004 when Neal and Podzimek were finally able to communicate through



Over Here: Cynthia Boyd and Her Journey as a British War Bride

by Jamalin Harp
Peg Happa Intern
Abilene Christian University

For the people of Britain, the Second World War was a time of rations, shortages, and air raids. For many of the young women the war represented another unique and indefinable thing: the opportunity to discover their future as hundreds of thousands of Yanks flooded into England. As the United States built bases for the air war and began staging for the invasion of Europe, many soldiers were quick to become a part of the British community where they met eligible young women and married them. Cynthia Trinder Boyd is one of these women who became a British war bride.

Cynthia Trinder was a teenager living in Birmingham when England entered the war with Germany in 1939. Her memory of the occasion mirrors those of many others during the time, including a street crowded with panicked people and a motorcar with a loudspeaker announcing that England had declared war. "Things moved rather slowly at first," Cynthia remembered, "but our lives were soon greatly altered."

Air raids became one of the unfortunate facts of life during the early days of the war. Ordinary life brought with it many close calls as the Germans instigated an intensive aerial attack on the British homeland. One particular evening, Cynthia went to the cinema with her boyfriend when the words "There Has Been an Air Raid Alert" flashed across the movie screen. The chandelier overhead began to sway, causing the two to think it best to leave the theater. They ran home, with him at one point pushing her under a hedge to take cover until it was safe to continue. Cynthia later heard that the cinema had received a direct hit – a chill-

days, but most of the Trinders' neighbors were determined to carry on despite the consequences.

Although the war had found its way to the British homeland, Cynthia remembers that her neighbors responded with a wave of patriotism. "Everybody always put up a flag," she said. Her memory is filled with people who were not afraid but were determined.

Like many other young women in Britain, Cynthia went to work during the war. Most of the men left their jobs and their homes to fight. Cynthia's own brothers served in the forces; one served in the submarines, one in the Territorial Army, and the last in the Veterinary Corps. With the absence of men in the work place, there came a great need for women to fill the void. "Every woman had to do something to release the men" Cynthia said describing the changing employment patterns. So desperate was the situation that the government instituted policies requiring that women, who met certain criteria, be employed in some manner beneficial to the war effort. Under the National Service Act, this initially included unmarried women from age twenty to thirty-one, but later married women were included as well. Such a shift was a great change for some women in Britain, where traditionally they worked at home and not for wages in an outside job. During a time of war, however, there were greater needs to be met.

Working women during the war drew on skills acquired previously in the jobs they obtained during the war. Typists, for example, might become wireless operators. Women soon found jobs in hospitals, factories, offices, and soup kitchens.



Above: Thomas and Cynthia Boyd (center) pictured with their wedding party.

worked on farms, cultivating crops and caring for livestock. Cynthia worked for a time at a hostel, where she cared for Irish women working in a munitions factory. She also worked at a solicitor's office for a time in Isham.

It was during her time in Isham that Cynthia, a young woman now upon the threshold of her twenties, encountered another aspect of the Second World War, one that would change her life significantly as well: the arrival of the Americans in England. One day she heard a great commotion outside, and glanced out the window where she saw cheerful men dressed in brown. She and her friends were soon captivated by these new arrivals to their country and became very fond of "ogling" at them.

This was a typical reaction shared by many of the young women throughout Britain. With British men already away serving in the war, there was a shortage of eligible bachelors that could be filled quite nicely by the incoming American GIs. These Yanks were, for the most part, sharply dressed and carried with them a certain amount of confidence. British women often found that American men paid them more attention than British men would, were quicker to give a compliment and endeavored to make a girl feel like the special recipient of his regard. Added to the romanticized picture many British women already had of American men, induced mostly by the media and films made in Hollywood, Americans became quite appealing.

Not only were the American men attractive, but they were also plentiful. Three million American GIs would serve in or at least pass through Britain during the war, the number of soldiers in the country fluctuating depending on the phase of the war. Jeanette Beville, another British War Bride, commented that "even if you weren't a very good looking woman you could get a man. We had so many darn men – it was fantastic!"

Unfortunately for Cynthia, one of the favorite activities for the American soldiers she encountered was to frequent pubs. Cynthia was not fond of visiting pubs, since her mother worked at one and saw them as a work place, not a place she

wanted to go to on her free time. It was, however, where she met her future husband, Thomas Edwin Boyd, an American from the 306th Bomb Group at Thurleigh. He and one of his good friends, Edward S. Gregory, came into her mother's pub one day, and for Cynthia the connection was instantaneous; she fell for him immediately. During passes to Bedford, usually about twice a week, Thomas visited Cynthia, and the two would enjoy strolls along the Ousz River in the center of Bedford.

Attending dances was another popular form of entertainment for young British women and for American GIs. Many communities across England entertained the Americans, for example by hosting a Red Cross dance, considered by many as a suitable way for women to do their part for the war. Dances and parties were popular venues where many British women met their American husbands. Jeanette Beville and Jean Mobley are just two who found American husbands that way. Cynthia and Thomas attended a dance only once and to Cynthia's great horror Thomas did not dance, so she danced with all of his friends instead.

After eleven months of dating amid the war that surrounded them, the two were married on July 4, 1944. Cynthia and Tom had a charming ceremony at the small, but beautiful All Saints Church in Bedford. Her mother did not mind that her daughter had married an American, but like many of the parents of war brides, she was distraught at the thought of her daughter leaving Britain for America. The following February Cynthia Boyd left her home for America, making the voyage across the sea to join her husband, who had traveled there the previous September, bringing with her their eleven month old son, Brett Michael Christopher Boyd.

Before she could leave for America, however, she negotiated through the legal process which was required for her to enter the United States. Prior boarding the ship and departing from Southampton, Cynthia was required to answer a series of questions asked by the German Prisoners of War, who were in charge of such matters.



Front: John Dougherty (N), John Acker (CP), Clyde Cospser (P). Back: Thomas Boyd (E), William Weber (WG), George Roberts (RO), Cecil Poff (TG), John Hill (BT), John Kelly (WG). George Roberts is the only surviving member of this crew today.

ing thought to someone who had been there just minutes earlier.

On another occasion, Cynthia joined her mother at The Embankment, the pub where her mother worked, and soon heard the German planes flying overhead. Cynthia glanced out the back window to see the garden in flames. Moments later an incendiary bomb came through the ceiling and crashed into the piano but failed to explode. Danger was all around in those

Others found themselves in such services as the Women's Royal Navy Service, the Auxiliary Territorial Service, and the Women's Auxiliary Air Force where they worked in military roles separate from the actual skirmishes.

Sylvia Weathered, another British war bride, served in the Army Territorial Service as an operator. Approximately eighty thousand women were employed in the Women's Land Army, where they

Boyd continued from Page 5



Above: Cynthia Trinder Boyd, wife of Thomas Edwin Boyd, a member of the 306th Bomb Group.

Acquiring permission to leave Britain and enter the United States could be an extremely tedious process for a war bride. Regulations had been adapted in September 1922 to no longer grant automatic citizenship for the wives of American citizens, meaning that the wives of servicemen had to obtain visas and go through the naturalization process like all other immigrants; the process to obtain a visa was lengthy and required that both the woman and her husband provide a number of specific documents. Following this, a war bride had to navigate her way through securing transportation to the States, another difficult process.

At the beginning of war, transportation was provided to the United States for the wives of officers and those enlisted men serving in the top three grades. Those married to men in the lower four grades were required to find their own means for traveling to the States, a venture that could be quite expensive with the financial burden often falling to the woman's family. Given the large amount of people petitioning for assistance for transportation – the estimated total of people falling under the category of “war bride” approached 115,000 – the US military changed its policy on transportation in 1944 to include aid for all wives of servicemen. The following year the War Brides Act was passed, which granted preferred immigration status to war brides.

Eventually Cynthia and her young son were able to board the SS *Zebulon Vance* for a voyage that proved to be quite unpleasant. It was a difficult time to cross the Atlantic, with the ocean being high and tumultuous. One could not venture out onto the decks without holding onto a rope, too dangerous for Cynthia and her small child. She does remember receiving a

bit of kindness from one of the German prisoners of war who crewed the ship. According to her, the Germans generally did not care for their British shipmates or passengers, but in this particular instance this man helped Cynthia to get the zipper on her bag of sewing things mended. It was a small thing, but the kindness continues to be remembered.

Ships transporting British war brides were often crowded, with many women traveling with infants and children. There were many cases of sea-sickness and several grew ill after having consumed large amounts of lavish American food. Jeanette Beville, another British war bride traveling with her infant son, commented that it was the most miserable eight days of her life, a trip that she would never make again. The hope and thought of seeing their husbands upon arrival, as well as the thrill of entering a new and exciting country, helped carry them through the ordeal.

Following a strenuous two-week voyage, Cynthia arrived in New York, expecting to see Thomas, but discovered that he had been unable to make the trip to meet her due to an injured ankle. Left on her own in a strange new country, Cynthia traveled by train to Atlanta, marveling at the countryside as the train passed through the day and night. She discovered that America was in fact rather different than home; the landscape she saw out the train window was rather drab and sparse compared to mother England. The rice pudding that she ordered for herself and her son was something far different from what she knew in her home country. Eventually, she arrived at her new home and as she stepped onto the platform in Atlanta, she was greeted by her husband, who came running towards her.

Over the years, the Boyd family lived in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Baltimore. Though Cynthia had left England behind, she remained proud of her homeland, founding two chapters of the Daughters of the British Empire, the Charnwood Forest Chapter in Philadelphia and the Dorothy Macmillan Chapter in Pittsburgh. She and Thomas were married for almost sixty-four years, until his death early in 2008.

The story of the British war brides, their experiences in wartime England, and the relationships they developed with the Americans who came during the war provides a brief glimpse of wartime life for British families living in the villages and towns scattered among the numerous American bases throughout rural England.

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Photographs, Military Records, Letters Needed

The 306th Bomb Group Historical Collection still needs wartime materials. Russell Strong collected an extraordinary amount of 306th BG archival materials and memorabilia, but more is needed. Particularly urgent are crew pictures, many of the images in the Collection are Xerox copies or prints in poor condition. Look through your scrapbooks and personal collections and send what you can. Please include your instructions for return of originals or indicate your desire to donate the original to the 306th BG Historical Collection. All originals to be returned will be promptly mailed back to you as soon as the digital copies are made. Contact Dr. Vernon L. Williams, ACU Box 28203, Abilene, TX 79699 ~ Telephone (325) 280-3399.

Around the eighth air force

Special Dispatch to the 306th Echoes

Luke Truxal

Russell Strong Intern

Reporter At-Large

This is my first column about what's happening in the Eighth Air Force, which will contain news that should be of interest to all of you.

In January the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, in Savannah, Georgia, received its very own B-17 and is in the process of restoring the aircraft inside their Combat Gallery. An interesting exhibit for the children or grandchildren to visit is the B-17 Gunner Interactive Exhibit. This exhibit gives the visitor the opportunity to take the position of a waist gunner in a B-17 and experience a computer simulated mission. This exhibit also provides information on the men who defended B-17s from aerial attack in the skies over Europe.

The 40th Combat Wing is hosting a reunion tour from May 20-May 31. According to the 8th Air Force Historical Society the instructors from the USAF will be on hand to provide an audio-visual show on the training of USAF pilots. Simon Whitbread, Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, will be on hand to represent the Queen. This tour is open to members of the 306th, 305th, and 92nd Bomb Groups. This looks to a very exciting event that will provide the opportunity for veterans to return to the bases and airfields where they once lived. It has been over sixty years since these bases were occupied by the 40th Combat Wing but these bases and the men who once lived and died defending Europe from these bases still hold a special place in the heart of the British people who will be hosting members of the 40th Combat Wing.

The 8th Air Force Historical Society is holding a reunion in Cincinnati, Ohio lasting August 18 through August 23, 2009. This looks to be an exciting event that includes a lunch cruise on the Ohio River. Highlights also include a visit to the museum at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The museum includes around two hundred exhibits of aircraft. The Memphis Belle and Swooze are currently on display at the museum, where they are currently being restored. The reunion also includes a round table discussion that will focus on the experiences of airmen that were held as POWs in Germany.



Above: A photo of Bedford near Thurleigh. This was the home away from home for many who served with the 306th Bomb Group.

DONATIONS FOR THE 306TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Those who are able are asked to make an annual contribution to keep everything running smoothly in our Association. There are no dues—so your gift is needed to support the 306th operations. Your gift is tax-deductible.

Name

Street and No.

City, State & Zip

Telephone No.

306th Unit



Send to:

Joel LaBo, Treasurer
306th Bomb Group Association
875 S. Worth
Birmingham, Michigan 48009

Date

Registration Form

306th Bomb Group Association Reunion
 Dallas/Ft. Worth Marriott South Hotel — Ft. Worth, Texas
 8-12 October 2009

Registration fee (per person)..... x \$25.00 = \$_____

Friday, 9 October

Museum Tour - Texas Civil War Museum, Texas BBQ Lunch, x \$42.00 = \$_____ and C.R. Smith American Airlines Aviation Museum (9:30am-3pm)
 Prices include BBQ lunch.

Twelve O'Clock High Dinner - Trinity III (7 pm)..... x \$39.00 = \$_____

Saturday, 10 October

Ladies Breakfast - Trinity III (7:30-9am)..... x \$28.00 = \$_____

Ft. Worth Western Heritage Tour - Includes museums, cattle..... x \$29.00 = \$_____ drive recreation, lunch on your own in the heritage area, Billy Bobs, shopping (9:30am-3pm)

Banquet - Trinity III (7 pm)..... x \$41.00 = \$_____

Everything else on the schedule is free!

Total.....\$_____

Name _____

Address w/ City, State, Zip _____

Phone # (____) _____ E-Mail _____

Squadron _____ Assigned Duty _____

Please make checks payable to: 306th Bomb Group Association Reunion and mail to: Joel LaBo, 875 S. Worth, Birmingham, Michigan 48009

Please list the names and hometown for each person registered.

Is this your first reunion? _____ Veteran? _____ Family? _____

Please call the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott South direct to make reservations:

1-800-228-9290

Ask for 306th Bomb Group reunion rates:

Group Code is: bgabgaa

\$99.00 Single or Double Rooms—All One Price

Deadline for registration and hotel reservations is 17 September 2009.

Please help your 306th Bomb Group reunion planning, register and make hotel reservations early. Do it today!

Reunion Schedule At Ft. Worth

Thursday, 8 October

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Foyer to Trinity III (2 - 6 pm)
- Board Meeting (2-4 pm) Little Bear Board Room
- Oral History interviews (2-5pm)
- Dinner on your own (Rivercity Grille in hotel and other restaurants close by)

Friday, 9 October

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Foyer to Trinity III (8am-5pm)
- Oral History interviews (9am-5pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits- Trinity III (8am-5pm; 7-10 pm)
- Cinema Room WWII Movies - Trinity I (9 am - 3 pm)
- Museum Tour - Texas Civil War Museum, Texas BBQ Lunch, and C.R. Smith American Airlines Aviation Museum (9:30am-3pm)
- Second Generation meeting - Trinity I (4 pm)
- 306th BG Web Demonstration - What's new on the 306th BG web and how to do research from your computer - Dr. Williams - Trinity I (5-5:45 pm)
- Twelve O'Clock High Dinner - Trinity III (Cash Bar 6-7pm, Dinner 7-9pm)

Saturday, 10 October

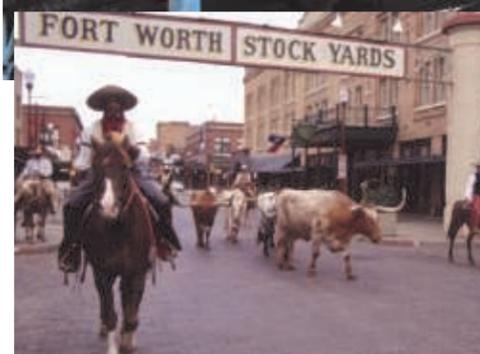
- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Foyer to Trinity III (8am-5pm)
- Ladies Breakfast - Trinity III (7:30-9am)
- Business Meeting - Trinity III (9:15 am)
- Oral History interviews (11:30 am-5pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits- Trinity III (1-5pm; 7-10 pm)
- Cinema Room WWII Movies - Trinity I (9 am - 3 pm)
- Ft. Worth Western Heritage Tour - (11:15am-4:30 pm) includes museums, cattle drive recreation, lunch on your own, Billy Bobs, shopping.
- Cash bar - Trinity III (6 pm – 9 pm)
- Veterans-only Group Photograph-Trinity III (6:45 pm)
- Widows Group & Next Generation Photograph Trinity III (6:50 pm)
- Banquet - Trinity III (7 pm)

Sunday, 11 October

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Foyer to Trinity III (8am-5pm)
- Memorial Service, Trinity III –Tribute to the Fallen and Folded Wings Memorial (9:00-10:30 am)
- Oral History interviews (1-5pm)
- Lunch on your own.
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits- Trinity III (1:30 -5pm)
- *Echoes* - Meet with your new *Echoes* staff. Question and Answer (2:00 pm)
- An Evening at Thurleigh—
 - ◆ A Thurleigh Museum Video Presentation by Ralph Franklin
 - ◆ Thurleigh at War– New film premiere and presentation by Dr. Vernon L. Williams – Trinity I (7:00-9pm)

Monday, 12 October

- Farewells
- Check out
- Travel Home — See you next year!



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott South

Please call the Marriott direct to make hotel reservations

1-800-228-9290

Ask for 306th Bomb Group reunion rates:

Group Code is: bgabgaa

\$99.00 Single or Double Rooms—All One Price

Dr. Vernon L. Williams

Reunion Chairman

vwilliams@acu.edu

325-280-3399

Museum Notes

Thurleigh Airfield 306th Bomb Group Museum

We Have Had a Hard Winter

by Ralph Franklin
Keysoe, England

The most sustained spell of winter weather for many years hit this area with one snowfall following another, it was a continuing pattern of clearing the driveway and waiting for the next snowfall.

Needless to say when we managed to get to the airfield a vast expanse of frozen waste greeted us, greet is probably not an appropriate term to use. The only other human we saw was the security officer at the gatehouse, and he was not very happy with his lot at that time. The only consolation he had was that it was not his week for night duty. We were advised to take extra care and proceeded on our journey around the site to the museum.

Knowing what to expect following our experiences at home, we had taken our snow clearing shovels, and brushes etc; with us. We certainly needed them. One item I hadn't thought of was my camera, always the same when you need it. On this occasion I had no intention of travelling

home and back to collect it to record the sight that awaited us. We had obviously had a broad selection of visitors, none of them human. Animals of different types seemed to have taken the opportunity to leave their normal homes in, we assume Galsey Wood, and head for our establishment. It was a wonderful sight to see the footprints in the snow of such a variety of creatures, we believe the largest ones to be that of a badger. I suppose it was an opportunity missed, but I didn't feel like standing in what appeared to be a snow-covered wasteland with a strong icy wind blowing.

We dug a pathway through the snow, tentatively opened the door wondering if the strong winds had forced the snow into the building, much to our relief all was well apart from the temperature. We always turn the thermostats down during a closed period to save on electricity.

Work was to be done in preparation for our new season opening. As it was impossible to carry on with exterior work we attacked the interior with vigor, dusting, polishing, touching up paintwork, cleaning floors, all part of the joy of managing a successful museum. There comes a time when enough is enough for one day, as you will see from the photograph above, our immediate thought was the bar, this of course is another of our displays.

It was wonderful to see Robert Mitchum, and even more exciting when Glenn Miller trudged in from the hanger just down the road, the venue for his concert on Friday, 14 July 1944, the first base concert in the United Kingdom, and yet another first for the 306th and Station 111.

We made our way home to our snow-covered garden, not knowing at that time this was only the introduction to what was to be the hardest winter for 18 years. Once the weather improved a few weeks later we were back at our second home to attend to the outdoor work, painting the doors, applying protective stain to the outdoor furniture, and replacing the windsock which had been ripped apart by strong winds. We do have fun!!!



To remind us of better times to follow during the summer months, I am including a photograph taken last summer of the visit of the Bromham Cub Scouts (see below left). We had a lovely evening with them, one of the events being a competition to see who could fly the longest distance with their little hand launched gliders, this was the largest squadron takeoff from Thurleigh for many years. To add to their collection, their Leader had a special badge (lower right) made for all those who came to visit that very special evening.



made for all those who came to visit that very special evening.

We are now looking forward to a glorious summer with many visitors. Arrangements are progressing well with the 40th Combat Wing Reunion, at this time it is all looking good. I am planning to report on the event in our next issue of "Echoes".

