Dr. Thurman Shuller’s Leadership Changes the Course of History

by Vernon L. Williams
Historian and Director
East Anglia Air War Archives

Author’s note: This article is drawn from my oral history interview of Dr. Shuller recorded in 2005 in San Antonio, personal papers and a diary Dr. Shuller provided to me in the years that followed the interview, and an article published by his hometown newspaper, The McAlester News, on November 11, 2012, shortly before his death.

Very few of the air crews who flew missions in the ETO and survived to go home knew the debt that they owed to Dr. Thurman Shuller, 306th Bomb Group Surgeon. In every bomb group stretching across East Anglia, air crews benefited from a courageous act by Shuller early in the air war. When the 306th Bomb Group arrived at Station 111 in 1942, air crews flew their missions until one of three things occurred: 1) they were killed in action, 2) they were shot down, captured and became POWs, or 3) the war ended. This stark reality sank in early on as the 306th crews faced a grim certainty—there was little chance that they would survive the war. But that would soon change with the arrival of Group Surgeon Shuller who acted quickly to meet the growing morale crisis.

This story begins long before World War II on a small farm near Ozark, Arkansas in late spring 1914 where the young Thurman attended New Hope, a rural elementary school and later went on to achieve his dream to attend medical school, graduating from the University of Arkansas School of Medicine at Little Rock in 1939. Shuller’s journey to meet his destiny in wartime England was about to begin, a journey that would save the lives of countless airmen in the Eighth Air Force.

In 1939 Shuller was commissioned as a first Lieutenant in the U.S. Medical Corps Reserve and served in a two-year medical internship at Charity Hospital in New Orleans. In July 1941 he was called to active duty and assigned as a general physician to the Air Corps gunnery School in Las Vegas, Nevada. Many years later Shuller explained that “with war raging in Europe, it seemed the practical thing to do was to spend one year of service in the Army.” Just six months later the attack on Pearl Harbor changed his one year stint in the Army to an extended enlistment that lasted for the duration of the war, “nearly five years.” At Las Vegas he received his first glimpse of not only the fundamentals of aerial gunnery, but acquired an up close and personal understanding of the rigors of gunnery at high altitude. He later would draw upon this experience in England as he dealt with the demands of military medicine in combat against the Axis powers in Europe—oxygen deprivation, new forms of frostbite and exposure suffered at extreme freezing temperatures, combat fatigue and wounds suffered far from Thurleigh at high altitude. All of that remained in the future as Shuller prepared for his role in the air war against Germany.

A doctor friend at Las Vegas advised Shuller to apply to the School of Aviation Medicine where he could qualify as a flight surgeon. “He was also advised to pay attention to the promptness, accuracy and appearance of all his reports”—a characteristic that became a part of his service in the 306th and a contributing reason for his rapid rise from Lieutenant to Lieutenant Colonel during the war. Shuller’s application was approved, and he attended the 12-week course at the School of Aviation Medicine at Randolph Field in San Antonio, Texas where he qualified as a flight surgeon. In April 1942 Shuller was promoted to captain and assigned to the 306th Bombardment Group as the 369th Bomb Squadron Flight Surgeon. Leaving the pleasant confines of San Antonio, Shuller entrained for Wendover, Utah where the 306th was engaged in training on the salt flats in the desert country of Utah.

At Wendover, Utah living and training conditions were very “primitive,” and the enlisted medical personnel who assembled there with the 306th had only a minimum level of training. The Group Flight Surgeon, along with Captain Shuller and the other flight surgeons in the four bomb squadrons, faced a difficult mission as they struggled to maintain day-to-day tasking initiatives that were designed to prepare the 306th, “in a medical sense, for combat.”

In July 1942 the Group Surgeon was transferred, and Dr. Shuller was named to take his place. Not long after assuming the command of the medical elements in the 306th, Shuller received promotion to major. He did not have long to get adjusted to his new duties and make final preparations for movement overseas. Two months later in September 1942, the Group departed Wendover for Thurleigh and the European Theater of Operations. For Shuller and his medical command, the war was about to begin.

SAVE-the-DATE
October 2-6, 2013
New Orleans Reunion

Embassy Suites Hotel
315 Julia Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Details will appear in the next issue of Echoes

Shuller continued on page 9
The secretary has learned of the following deaths:

- **Bartel, Wayne.** 368th waist-gunner (crews of Talmadge G McDonough and Robert C Sage), died 24 Jan 11 in OR at Los Angeles Co as a Private in the Air Corps. He was enlisted as a Private in the US Army in May 42, and later was assigned to a crew. Downed 26 Nov 43 (Bremen mission, his 18th combat mission) and captured by Germany at Stalag 329. He survived the war and was released all of our records to their new home where they now can be put to rest permanently and will be available to everyone worldwide. I started this project with the help of Doc. Williams and now, after five years, the paperwork is done. We arrived at the Museum on October 23rd and were met by a crew to help unload the boxes that were accepted by the Museum. Since World War II and all the years since, the papers have traveled across continents and oceans to finally arrive at their final destination. As the president, I signed released on behalf of their daughter who now resides in Traverse City (now in Traverse City, MI and wintered in Gulf Shores, AL. Active in many civic organizations, he served as VFW Post in Sturgeon Bay. In Nov 01, at 79, long-time bachelor Vernon married his life-long friend Betty; they enjoyed travel to visit their children in ND, IA, and Labrador, Canada. Survived by 5gc and 5ggc. Former resident of KS, died 28 Dec 11, in Houston, TX, at age 91. Their crew arrived at Thurleigh 4 Jun 44, and pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. Carruthers had long lived, at 91. Their crew arrived at Thurleigh 4 Jun 44, and pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. Carruthers was predeceased by his wife Nadine, in Jul 10 at 83. No further info.

- **Crunich, Charles J.** 367th bombardier (crews of Talmadge G McDonough and Robert C Sage), died 24 Jan 11 in OR at Los Angeles Co as a Private in the Air Corps. He was enlisted as a Private in the US Army in May 42, and later was assigned to a crew. Downed 26 Nov 43 (Bremen mission, his 18th combat mission) and captured by Germany at Stalag 329. He survived the war and was released all of our records to their new home where they now can be put to rest permanently and will be available to everyone worldwide. I started this project with the help of Doc. Williams and now, after five years, the paperwork is done. We arrived at the Museum on October 23rd and were met by a crew to help unload the boxes that were accepted by the Museum. Since World War II and all the years since, the papers have traveled across continents and oceans to finally arrive at their final destination. As the president, I signed released on behalf of their daughter who now resides in Traverse City (now in Traverse City, MI and wintered in Gulf Shores, AL. Active in many civic organizations, he served as VFW Post in Sturgeon Bay. In Nov 01, at 79, long-time bachelor Vernon married his life-long friend Betty; they enjoyed travel to visit their children in ND, IA, and Labrador, Canada. Survived by 5gc and 5ggc. Former resident of KS, died 28 Dec 11, in Houston, TX, at age 91. Their crew arrived at Thurleigh 4 Jun 44, and pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. Carruthers had long lived, at 91. Their crew arrived at Thurleigh 4 Jun 44, and pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. Carruthers was predeceased by his wife Nadine, in Jul 10 at 83. No further info.

- **DeLaur, Vernon R.** 423rd engineer (George Broz crew), of Sturgeon Bay, Door Co, WI, died 14 Oct 12 at 90. He arrived at Thurleigh with Broz 7 Jun 44, flew 44 missions, and completed his tour 8 Jan 45. Post-war, he worked for Martin Tractor Co in Menomonee Falls, WI, then became a mechanic for Bud Freighthouse in Sheboygan, WI until retirement. He loved restoring antique cars and showing them in parades; telling his stories with friends and family; and attending 368th reunions with his brother and family all over the US. He was member of Sturgeon Bay Moravian Church; the Antique Power Association; WI antique tractor societies (for which he was treasurer); and a founding member of Door Co Threshermen; and life member of the VFW Post in Sturgeon Bay. In Nov 01, at 79, long-time bachelor Vernon married his life-long friend Betty; they enjoyed travel to visit their children in ND, IA, and Labrador, Canada. Survived by 5gc and 5ggc. Former resident of KS, died 28 Dec 11, in Houston, TX, at age 91. Their crew arrived at Thurleigh 4 Jun 44, and pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. Carruthers had long lived, at 91. Their crew arrived at Thurleigh 4 Jun 44, and pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. Carruthers was predeceased by his wife Nadine, in Jul 10 at 83. No further info.

- **Dodge, Robert L.** 368th pilot & assistant operations officer 368th Sq, died at 91 on 18 Nov 12 in San Diego, CA. With his crew, he arrived at Thurleigh 2 Mar 45, and completed 30 missions, departing in May 45. Post-war, he continued in the USAF Reserves, reaching the rank of Colonel, counseling high school applicants to the Air Force Academy. He served as a law enforcement officer with the San Diego Police Department, becoming a Police Sgt and San Diego Court Police Liaison. Graduated with a degree in 75 from the University of Blessed Virgin Mary. He served as a priest in the VFW Post in Decatur, IL. Served in World War II, and in the Korean War. Received the Bronze Star for valor in service in Korea in 1950. Survived by his wife, Margie; son John; daughter Alice; and three grandchildren. Donations were suggested to the Park-
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Part 3: Lt. Robert E. Woods’ War Diary


(The Diary pages can be enlarged for easier viewing at our website, 306bg.org under the Echoes tab.)

Photograph at left courtesy East Anglia Air War Project.

Lt. Robert E. Woods’ diary continued on page 5
Williams to Speak at British University

Dr. Vernon L. Williams will be speaking about his research and work on World War II England at the University of Exeter on April 21st this spring. His topic, "Glenn Miller, the Jitterbug, and the Big Band Invasion of Britain in World War II," is drawn from a chapter in a book he is currently writing on the social history of the air war. The book will appear sometime late this year or early in 2014 and is tentatively titled, A Time for War, A Time for Community: The Anglo-American Cultural Exchange in World War England, 1942-1945. The book will be the first in a series of books on the air war in the European Theater of Operations and will be based on hundreds of interviews recorded in England and across the United States during the past twelve years. "While the next several books to emerge from the East Anglia Air War Project will deal with logistics, missions, and combat topics," explained Williams, "this first book sets the story of the air war in rural England where the Yanks and the British families forged new relationships that has lasted well beyond the war and into the 21st century."
Obituaries continued from page 2

Real Estate school & opened a company doing residential real estate; he also got his real estate instructors license and taught for it. During these last 30 years in realty, he also served on various military, civic, and charitable foundations. Survived by his wife, Kim, his son, Bob, 3c, and now 3gs. Private burial to be at Bay Pines National Cemetery.

FAMILY:

Beck, Barbara, wife of Robert H (423 waist gunner, Harold Brown crew), died in their longtime hometown of Randallstown, MD, 9 Nov 02, a few days short of 76. They married in 57. She had taken care of her sister, who preceded her in death. Survived by Bob, 3c, and now 3gs. Burial at Holy Family Cemetery, Randallstown, MD.

Ketcham, Phyllis Jean, wife of Galillard “Red” (369 ball-turret gunner & Casey Jones Project, crew of Donovan Holve), died 24 Feb 12 at Bethany Village in Centerville, OH at 91. Jean is survived by her husband of 61 years, Galillard; 1d, step-ge; and ggc. Burial at Crooksville Cemetery, Crooksville, OH.

Latscha, Mary Jayne, widow of Walter V (367 navigator, crew of Bert Wingstrom & with Warren George when downed on 17 Apr 43 Bremen mission, POW) Stalag 3; he died 22 May 85), of TYler, TX died 17 Sep 10, at 93, survived at least by one son. No further info.

Staxford, Virginia E. (367 tail-gunner, initially on crew of Charles T Sutton, and then a roving gunner), died 4 Sep 12 at 90. She worked as a bookkeeper during WWII, and later with her husband in his meat-packing busi- ness in Layton, UT. They were married for 57 years. Rear Gunner & daughter Cheri were with us in Savannah, Oct 12; he & son Terry were with us in Ft Worth, Oct 09, for Roy’s 1st reunion.

Stelzer, Frances B, widow of James V (368 engineer, & POW Stalag 17-B; he died 4 Oco 07), died 24 Sep 09 at 89 in Plano, TX. Survived by 2c, 5gc, 7ggc. No further info.

Tanella, Florence M, wife of Stephen F (367 bombardier, Perry Raster crew, & Sq bomber), died 26 Jul 06 in Bonney Lake, WA; they had been married long, at 86. She was apparently survived by family members including Stephen, who would be 95 this year. Her mail has been returned and phone disconnected. The last Boyd Beach facility where Secretary traced her says he’s no longer there and they can give no further info. Secretary would appreciate any further info from our readers; see Secretary’s contact info, p.2 of each issue.

Obituaries Not Recent; Not Previously Published

(Arranged by Date of Death)

Fatica, Charles ‘Chuck’ A, 423rd radio operator (Harold Brown crew), a life-long resident of Cleveland, OH, died there 30 May 10, at 86. Brown’s crew ar- rived at Thurleigh 17 Jul 44, coming from the Duxford Base. Post-War, Charles “No Leak” was President of Plumbers Union UA Local 55 in Cleveland, and member of Holy Rosary Church. He enjoyed his career, his extended family, traveling, hearing, and fishing. His friends and relatives noted he lived his life to the fullest, with gusto, and enjoyed every day. They have fond memories of his homemade wine, jars of his “canned” fava beans, his wisdom, sense of humor, and infectious smile, as well as his stories of WWII, including “un sticking” one of the bombs in the bomb bay. He was predeceased by his wife Jean “Jeanie” Grace in Dec 90 at 81; they were married for 65; they are buried together at Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, with no immediate family members listed as survivors.

Kimsey, Taylor Eugene ‘Gene’, 423rd waist-gunner (Harold Brown crew), of Greeneville, SC, died 15 Mar 10 just days short of 86. Reported to Thurleigh 17 Jul 44 and was there at least through Mar 45. Post-war he retired as a Supervisor from Norfolk Southern Railways after 38 years. He was a member of Brushy Creek Baptist Church in Easley, SC. Survived by Eloise, his wife of 54 years. Buried at Green Lawn Cemetery, Roswell, GA. The Secretary appreciates Eloise Kimsey’s inquiries regarding her husband’s crew members, which led to several obits in this issue.

Bailey, Walter S, 368th tail-gunner (George DeVack crew) and mechanic tech supply, died 20 Jun 08 at 89 in Ellicott City, MD, where they had lived for several years with a daughter. Single when he enlisted in Mar 42 in NYC, he worked ex- tensively stateside as a mechanic on plane engines, before arriving at Thurleigh 3 Apr 04. While in England, he met and married ‘Gwen’ Wiley, his war bride. They had a daughter and a son; however in lists of pilots, navigators, and bombardiers in Echoes in 88, 89, 91-93, 95, 1996, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017-2018. Details will appear in the “Not Recent obituaries continued on page 8” section.

Burnette, Martin, 423rd radio operator (William H Baker crew), seems to be the man of that name originally from Macon, GA, who died 15 Mar 08 in Satellite Beach, FL. The Baker crew is listed as having been on 368, however in lists of pilots, navigators, and bombardiers in Echoes in 88-89, those men for this crew are listed as 423rd; however, their earlier Thurleigh 2 Mar 45 was the only no departure shown. Crew photo has Martin’s surname without initial ‘J’ which may well be a typographical omission. Martin Burnette, Major, USAF, retired, served 20 years in USAF retiring in 63, in tours of duty in WWII and Ko- rea. He then worked for NASA retiring in 89 after 25 years. He was member of Holy Apostles Episcopal Church. Sons of the American Revolution, American Legion, VFW, then-TROA which is now the Military Officers Assoc of America, Bavia Shrine, and was a 60-year Mason. Survived as of Mar 08 by Joyce, his wife of 57 years. 2c, 5gc, and a ggc due Apr 08. No further info.

Powers, Robert E, 369th pilot & co-pilot, originally of Hailey, ID, died in Lou- sville, KY on 83rd & 7 Jun 04. After high school in 38, he worked in the family in mining prior to enlisting 2 Aug 43 as a Pvt in the Air Corps in Fresno, CA. He attended OCS, was commissioned, and trained as a B-17 pilot. Arrived Thrur- leigh 20 Dec 44 as a co-pilot. Three weeks later, 10 Jan, his pilot, Henry W Pearce (who survived) was hit by a fire helmet, considering it a detriment in handling the plane) was hit in the head by a large piece of flak over the target. Powers took the controls, successfully landing the crippled plane in friendly territory in France, saving the crew, and got immediate medical attention for Pearce (who died in days). In May 45 completed his tour. In Oct 45 in ID, he married Marjo- rie, who after high school had worked at Sun Valley, ID (a naval hospital during the war) and had acted in extra roles in several popular movies filmed there, before supporting the war effort working in a ammunitions factory in Salt Lake City. He left the service in 46. They later moved to Pocatello, where he attended ID State Univ. Retired in 85 after 34 years at Garrett Freightliners. He was an avid hunter and fisherman. Meanwhile Marge in 70 began working at ID State Univ; she retired in 90 as secretary to director of admissions. Both were lifelong members of the Catholic Church who sacrificed to put all their children through ID State Univ. In Jan 04 they moved to CO, to live with a daughter as his health was failing. He was survived until Jan 08 by Marge, who died at 84 following a courageous battle with cancer. Survived by 3c (including son Tom, with us in Savannah for his first 306th reunion), 2c, 2gc.

Castner, Donald F, 423rd gunnery instructor & aerial photographer (Casey Jones Project), longtime resident of FL and originally of Swansea, PA, died 19 Sep 04 at 78. Enlistment records show he joined the Air Corps in May 44 in PA. After serving at Thurleigh and in the Casey Jones Project of aerial mapping of Europe, he was stationed stateside until discharged in 46. He earned his architec- ture degree in 51 at Carnegie Mellon Univ in Philadelphia, PA. He later moved to FL.加入我们吧！Richard married Dora, and they had one daughter and met, and married Joni. After retiring and spending several years with family in Madison, in northern FL, they moved to Tallahassee in about 86. Don was a Roman Catholic, and he and Dora, nature, a gifted scholar, and a humble man, who never welcomed recognition. He is survived by Joni, 4c (including son who attended his first reunion in Oct 12 in Savannah), 5gc.

Lauer, Frederick B, 367th tail-gunner (crews of Talmadge G McDonough, & Robert C Sage) died 22 Feb 04 at 87. Thanks to his surviving crew members, we learned Fred was from NJ, and that after the war he was a policeman, in Trenton. Fred and his wife Betty attended some 306th Reunions. She preceded him in death in Feb 02 at 86. Survived by no c, 1 niece, they are buried at B/G William C Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Wrightstown, NJ. No further info.

McCaleb, Harold ‘Kenneth’ 367th navigator & POW (crews of James G Parks, & Richard Butler when downed), originally from Joplin, MO, died at 82 after a brief illness, 8 Oct 02 in Huntsville, AL, where they had long lived. Downed on 14 Oct 43, his 19 mission; held at Stalag Luft 3. Post-war in 98, Kenneth and Margaret founded the McCaleb Initiative for Peace at their pre-war college (now MO Southern State Univ) in Joplin. She preceded him in death in Nov 93; his obit was in our Apr ’11 issue), died 28 Mar 11 in Cin- cinnati, OH at 91. Jean is survived by her husband of 61 years, Gailard; 1d, 6gc, 3gs. Buried at Holy Family Cemetery, Ran- dalsville, MD.

Clifford and Brandy Deets work in the setup room on Wednesday and prepare the display banners Dr. Williams provided in Abilene and brought to Savannah.
More than 330 of our 306th-related people have let me know their email addresses. If you have access to email, and have not received my periodic emails but would like to do so, I’d appreciate you letting me know your email address. My contact information is page 2. Additionally, I’ll repeat here that the NEW and ACTIVE Facebook page for our organization is 306th Bomb Group - First Over Germany. As Sue Fox Moyer wrote in the cover article of our last issue of Echoes (“Summer 2012” or #3 of volume 37), “the 306th Facebook page is up and running again as a group page. As a group page your request to be a member either will be approved by an administrator, or current members may invite ‘friends’ already on Facebook.”

Below is the email recap I sent to our 330+ email-receiving 306th-related people, two weeks after our Savannah Reunion:

We had a great Reunion in Savannah with 150 people, including the below-listed vets; plus vet-generation widows, wives, and “significant-other” ladies; Ralph & Daphne Franklin from England; and many, many younger 306th-family members of both attending vets and of deceased vets — including some drop-ins, some of whom found us thanks to facebook.

2013 REUNION will be in New Orleans, giving the chance to tour the (new to most of us) World War II Museum, and where hopefully many can fly directly and avoid having to change planes. A Reunion Committee will plan that Reunion, relieving Dr Vernon Williams of that responsibility so he can better do so much else.

WEBSITE: If you haven’t done so recently, check the “what’s new” part of our website, 306bg.org, for a list of recently posted items Dr Williams has been able to begin posting now that the earlier 306th archived originals were successfully orga-nized and delivered (thanks to our wonderful longtime volunteer Marty Lenaghan) to the Mighty 8th Museum near Savannah. Digital copies are going not only there, but also to the 306th Museum at Thurliegh. Dr Williams will continue to accept and scan 306th memorabilia. Arrangements are in place for sharing newer scans with both the 306th Thurliegh Museum and the Mighty 8th Museum. And the Mighty 8th Museum will share digital scans of 306th-related material given directly to them, with us.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS after the election in Savannah are as follows, with staggered Director terms to provide continuity, and with relationships to 306th shown. To help all of us serve our 306th vets and family members — about 1,000 people — PLEASE DO NOT send ANY “Forward” emails to me or to ANY of these email addresses.

- President Robert ‘Rocky’ Rockwell (has no email; his duty is shown below)
- Vice President Charles Neal (email is charles306@earthlink.net; nephew of Alfred Lubojacky, dec’d 369 ball-turret gunner)
- Treasurer Judith Judy Hermley (new email is bjhermley@gmail.com; daughter of Joseph L. Brennan, dec’d 423 tail-turret gunner of George Berner & Barry Hill crews)
- Secretary Barbara Neal (new email for all 306th communications is barb306eneal@gmail.com; niece of Alfred Lubojacky, dec’d 369 ball-turret gunner)
- Past President Walt Rozett, in place of Don Snook due to health issues (term exp.’13; email iswrozett@urcad.org; his duty is shown below)
- Director Emma En’ Christineison (term exp.’13; no email; widow of 368 pilot ‘Chris’ Maurice Christineison)
- Director Allan Lawson (term exp.’14; email is lawson15@cox.net; his duty is shown below)
- Director Clifford Deets (term exp.’14; email is cldeets@att.net; nephew of John Deets, dec’d 369 gunner of Dale Briscoe crew)
- Director Nancy Huebottter (term exp.’15; email is nhuebottter@roadrunner.com; daughter of Richard Huebottter, dec’d 368 waist-gunner of Dean Allen crew ‘Hard to Get’; POW Stalag 4)
- Director Steve Snyder (term exp.’15; email is palmsny@gmail.com; son of Howard Snyder, dec’d 369 pilot of ‘Susan Ruth’ & evadee)

306th.VETS WITH US IN SAVANNAH, alphabetically (Please alert me of any errors in duty shown):

- Richard L. Brown, 369 radio operator of Edgar R Smith crew ‘Beautiful Take-off’
- William R Carlile Jr, Group flying control officer
- John J ‘JJ’ Gaydosh, 369 pilot of Deanna D
- Grover C Goode, 368 eng/hr-turret gunner of Wm Nash crew ‘Belle of the Brawl’
- William F ‘Mickey’ Griffin, 367 co-pilot of Charles Wegener crew ‘Umbrigio’; POW of Germany
- Carl A Groesbeck, 368 navigator of Roy Ranck crew; POW Stalag 7-A
- William F ‘Bill’ Hendolin, 367 med. NCO
- Lee T Jenks, 423 waist-gunner of Nelson Hardin crew ‘Wampus Cat’; POW in Holland & Germany
- Gailard ‘Red’ Ketcham, 369 ball-turret gunner of Donovan Holve crew & Cay-sey Jones Project
- Philip Mundell, 369 ball-turret gunner of Wm Hilton crew ‘Fightin Brit’ & Andrew Kata crew ‘Dam Yankee’
- Walter F Olmsted Jr, 369 gunner Sgt & gunner of Billy Cassiday crew ‘Dearly Beloved’
- Jack Persac Jr, 423 ball-turret gunner of Paul Reinosz crew ‘Choo Z Suzy’
- Robert G ‘Rocky’ Rockwell, 367 eng/hr-turret gunner of Wm Rutherford & Brad Butterfield crews; & sub-waist gunner of Leonard Page crew
- Howard Roth, 423 pilot of B-17 ’674’
- Walter P Rozett, 369 pilot & Casey Jones Project
- Edward J Sandini, 369 pilot
- Robert E ‘Bob’ Schuberg, at his 1st-ever Reunion; 368 tail-gunner, of Leon Dorich crew
- Roy L Stafford, 367 tail-gunner of Charles Sutton & various other crews
- Robert ‘Bob’ Starzynski, 367 tail-gunner of Virgil Dingman crew; evadee
- Robert Waldrop, 367 waist gunner & armorer of Henry Ware crew; POW Stalags 6 & 4; Waldrop missed our Sat evening vets photo, since he was with us Billy Fri, at Mighty 8th Museum.
ADD'L INFO re Robbins, Judson J. (367th waist gunner, Ralph Malson & Talmadge G. McDonald crews), originally of Trenton, NJ, died 7 Jan 42 in Hamilton, NJ, at 85. The crew arrived at Thurleigh 24 Feb 44; he logged 31 missions completed 24 July. He attended Mechanical Drawing Arts School in Trenton and lived in nearby Mercerville over 50 years. He retired in 83 after 40 years as a pattern maker with Pattern Machine and Foundry Corp of Trenton. He was a member of American Legion Post 31 of Hamilton. Survived by 3c (including son Barry and his wife Linda, who found our Oct 12 Reunion in Savannah), and now 7gc, 10ggc.

Malone, James R. 423rd navigator (John M Winward crew), died in the Covington, KY area near Erlanger, KY where he had long lived, 30 Nov 01, at 77. Their crew arrived at Thurleigh 4 Jun 44, and pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. A crew mate he knew was involved in making beautifully carved wood working items, but Malone had not indicated whether that was commercially or as a hobby. Malone was predeceased by his wife Martha, who apparently died in Erlanger, KY, 14 May 98, at 74. Both are buried at St Marys Cemetery in nearby Fort Mitchell, Kenton Co, KY. No further info.

Carter, Lester F. 368th Sq gunner (apparently various crews), of Hardinsburg, Breckinridge Co, KY, died 24 Feb 96 at 76. A general farm hand when enlisted in Oct 43 at Louisville, T/Sgt Carter was at Thurleigh at least from Jan through Jul 44. Preceded in death by his wife Helen in Feb 89 at 70, and twin daughters in infancy of them are buried at Horsely Chapel United Methodist Church Cemetery. No further info.

McQuarrie, Willard Howard. 423 tail-gunner & POW (crews of Eugene F ‘Gene’ Bumpas initially & later Robert McCallum), died 5 Jun 84 at 62. As a MA resident, he was single when enlisted Aug 42 at Ft Devens, MA. He reported to Thurleigh 1 Aug 43 with Bumpas, and flew pilot Winward completed his tour 1 Oct 44. A crew mate he knew was involved in making beautifully carved wood working items, but Malone had not indicated whether that was commercially or as a hobby. Malone was predeceased by his wife Martha, who apparently died in Erlanger, KY, 14 May 98, at 74. Both are buried at St Marys Cemetery in nearby Fort Mitchell, Kenton Co, KY. No further info.

Manning, Paul V. 423rd bombardier & POW (crews of Eugene F ‘Gene’ Bumpas initially, and later Robert McCallum) died in the Boston, MA area 6 Aug 82, at 66. He reported to Thurleigh 1 Aug 43 with Bumpas’ crew on ‘Queen Jeannie.’ When McCallum died in their downing 14 Oct 43 (Schweinfurt), McQuarrie was one of 5 crew members surviving; POW at Stalag Luft 3. Post-war he was a fireman in Boston. No further info.

Bumpas, Eugene ‘Gene’ F. 423rd pilot, died 11 Feb 61 at 65. He reported to Thurleigh 1 Aug 43 with his crew on ‘Queen Jeannie.’ Bumpas survived the USAF through Korea, and on to retirement. Survived by his wife Martha, LtCol Bumpas was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Sadler, Austin H. 423 waist-gunner & POW (crew of Robert McCallum), original of Correctionville, IA, died 4 Dec 84 in the Boston, MA area 6 Aug 82, at 66. He reported to Thurleigh 1 Aug 43 with Bumpas’ crew on ‘Queen Jeannie.’ When McCallum died in their downing 14 Oct 43 (Schweinfurt), Manning was one of 5 crew members surviving; POW at Stalag Luft 3. Post-war he was a fireman in Boston. No further info.

Bumpas was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Donations for the 306th Bomb Group Association

Those who are able to 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: Judy Hermley, Treasurer 
306th Bomb Group Association 
5314 Bob Sikes Blvd 
Jay, FL 32565

Date __________________________

Lt. Robert E. Woods’ diary continued from page 5
The heroes of WWII are famous for being reluctant to even talk about their exploits during the war, so it is no surprise the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association has not been very active in giving out awards. However, at the last reunion/meeting in Savannah the board created an awards committee whose members are the Association officers and up to two other persons appointed by the President; they cannot receive an award while serving on the awards committee.

The board also authorized the establishment of THE THURMAN SHULLER AWARD. This award was created as the highest award to be conferred by the Association, in honor of the widely recognized outstanding achievements of Dr. Thurman Shuller to the men of the 306th Bomb Group and his lifetime of achievement.

Persons selected for the Thurman Shuller Award must have made particularly notable and long term contributions to the 306th Bomb Group, the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and/or achievements in the preservation and dissemination of the 306th Bomb Group history. On October 24th, 2012 the committee conferred the first award to Dr. Thurman Shuller and the second to Ralph and Daphne Franklin.

The Franklins, who were at the reunion, were presented a handsome plaque at the banquet. As our British representatives for so many years and the creators of the 306th Bomb Group Museum in Thurleigh UK, which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary, the Franklins are universally respected here and in Britain for their labor of love. They have charmed and inspired 306th Association participants for decades.

As Dr. Shuller could not attend the reunion, plans were made for a surprise presentation to him on December 8th at his residence with three of his children attending. Sadly, the 98 year old died two weeks before the award could be presented to him. It was presented to all four of his children at his memorial service on Thursday November 29th. His memory and legacy will live on in the hearts of the many people he touched, and through the Thurman Shuller Award.

Charles Neal
Vice President & Chairman, 306th Awards Committee

Do you know this crew or anyone pictured in this photograph? Adrian O’Konski flew with the Sumner crew but on this occasion, he flew this mission with this unknown crew. The O’Konski family and the East Anglia Air War Archives would like to identify the men flying this day. O’Konski is pictured in the far back, standing, second from the right. Contact Dr. Williams (see contact information on page 2) if you can identify anyone else in this image or if you have an original print of this photograph.

Shuller continued from page 1

As the 306th arrived at Thurleigh, Shuller and the medical team found the base staffed with a few RAF personnel who would soon transfer Station 111 to the Americans. The medical facilities consisted of a station dispensary with a minimum of 28 beds and a mortuary.

The first combat mission took off on October 9, 1942, and the Group suffered its first loss. It soon got worse. By the early weeks of 1943, the 306th had lost almost 80% of its original combat crews and morale spiraled downward as the realization that the odds of surviving the war grew smaller and more apparent. Shuller quickly saw an increase in “flying fatigue” as the desperate combat situation began to impact the surviving crews. Something had to be done and in March 1943 Shuller acted.

In a report to the Group’s Commanding Officer, Colonel Claude E. Putnam, Jr., Shuller stated that there had to be a maximum numbers of missions set for air crews and that number should be 20. “Flies suffered unbearable casualties in personnel and planes, yet at the same time realizing their effort hadn’t done one thing to further the war effort.” Shuller knew the report had to be forwarded to the highest authority in the Eighth Air Force and that, of course, was Major General Ira Eaker. Such a demanding and corresponding argument from an officer who was very junior and far from the command echelon represented a serious threat to career and Shuller’s standing in Eaker’s command. But the Group Surgeon did not stop there.

Shuller argued that “the fliers were actually saying among themselves that the only apparent hope of survival in the theatre of war is either to become a prisoner of war or to get the jitters’ and be removed from combat.” He explained that even with a limit of 20 missions, few crews could actually survive such a number but that setting such a standard “would be an invaluable morale factor in giving these men at least a small hope for the future and a goal for which to survive.”

Shuller went further out on the limb and quoted General Eaker’s own words to give his arguments force. “Of this I am certain and you can count upon it,” Eaker earlier had said, “a combat crew must be told what their combat expectancy is. And they must be told that when they have completed that period, they will never again be required to man a combat crew station in an airplane on operations against the enemy.” Colonel Putnam endorsed the letter and sent it up to higher headquarters.

Three weeks later the reply came down from Eighth Air Force. Shuller remembered that “an order was written setting 25 as the number of missions required before relief from combat duty. The crews were jubilant because they now had hope that they had a chance of survival.”

Shuller’s audacious maneuver had succeeded. How many 8th Air Force crews who flew in the ETO after March 1943 were saved by this and other limits imposed? Of the tens of thousands of air crews who later flew their missions and went home—how many of them would have been lost on a 40th mission, or a 50th mission? No one will ever know, but judging by the losses suffered in the first months of combat, that number would have been high. Those men who have lived long and productive lives since the war—many of them owe their lives, their families and all the good things of life to a little known surgeon, a civilian at heart, who was a “jealous guardian of the rights and privileges of combat crew personnel—a man called Thurman Shuller.”
Savannah Reunion
October 24-28, 2012

Editor’s note: Special thanks to Charles Neal for all color reunion photographs in this issue.

Riverboat Cruise

Boar’s Head Dinner

Families Gather to Celebrate and Remember Their 306th Veteran’s Service to Our Nation
Veterans’ wives, widows, and significant others: Front row, left to right: Virginia Brown, Marilynn M Kelly, Elizabeth Huebottor, Peg Albertson, Dorothy ‘Dottie’ Leasman, Emma ‘Em’ Christianson, Mary Bennet, Louise Starzynski. Back row, left to right: Doris Jenks, Bernardine Persac, Janet Goode, Cynthia Lawson, Karen Sandini.
2012 Was a Very Good Year
A Report from Thurleigh to the Savannah Reunion

By Ralph Franklin
Keysoe, England

The famous wartime song, “We’ll Meet Again,” is very appropriate for this occasion and comes to mind each year as Daphne and I prepare for our trip across the pond to join you all for yet another meeting of a wonderful group of friends. This year being our 23rd consecutive time, and with the years, the reunions seem to be more meaningful to us. Of course some who were with us in San Diego are not with us on this occasion, and at this point I would like to take this opportunity to wish Don Snook a speedy recovery from his health problems.

As most of you are aware on the 8th of July this year, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the opening of our Museum. Now some of you may say what was all the fuss about for just 10 years? For Daphne and I, it really meant a great deal. You know, friends, when the ribbon was first cut way back in 2002 and our displays were declared open, the first thing that went through my mind was will it all be a one-year wonder and once the local community had paid us a visit, that would be it. How wrong I was. Over the years we have had visitors from many different parts of the world.

After many months of hard work and preparation, our big day arrived. Unfortunately we awoke to an overcast wet morning, but the show must go on. We arrived at the airfield very early to be greeted by a smiling security guard informing us that our visitors were already arriving, and arrive they certainly did. So much so that by the end of the day, the final count revealed we had around 700. We were overwhelmed with the support that we received from the owners of military vehicles and in spite of the dismal weather, we finally had a most amazing array of 50 vehicles. There was an impressive line of 20 jeeps in assorted livery, an Austin K2 ambulance, and an articulated Chevrolet truck, complete with a Wright Cyclone 14R2600/20 engine, propeller blades and ammunition boxes, a GMC truck and a 1939 Austin staff car. In addition, the civilian vehicles included a 1933 Lanchester, a 1949 MGTC, an Austin 7 and a Bedford truck.

We were also well supported by American volunteers from RAF Molesworth who supervised the parking with the panache that only Americans can achieve. It made such an impressive welcome to all our visitors. They were backed up by the Air Training Corps Cadets from the local Oakley Squadron. One of the many impressive displays was by the Northamptonshire Home Guard who set up an amazing display outside the Museum entrance. Captain Gary Powers, accompanied by his wife, joined the Chaplain from the Salvation Army for the rededication of the Group Memorial at its new site next to the Museum. By the way friends, we have received many comments saying how nice the stone looks in its new position. The Bedford branch of the Royal British Legion paraded their colors and contributed to the ceremony. Music for the occasion was provided by the Bombardiers. At the appropriate time, they played both the American and British national anthems. We provided wreaths for both Daphne and I and Barbara and Charles Neal to place at the Memorial. Wreaths were also laid by Captain Powers and a member of the British Legion.

As the day progressed, the 16-piece Mainline Big Band were playing in our large marquee, complete with a dance floor. Everyone was entertained either by listening or dancing to their rich sound. So in keeping with Thurleigh in the 1940s and as the Band took their well deserved breaks, a lovely singer Luna Nightingale, in period dress, serenaded everyone as she moved through the crowds. Visitors were invited to dress in 40s style clothing, they really rose to the occasion, we had the usual array of military personnel but also some very attractive civilian ladies and their handsome partners who did the whole event credit. We had booked both the B-17 Sally B and a Spitfire from the Battle of Britain Memorial, unfortunately both were unable to attend due to low clouds. Our visitors were very understanding and it didn’t spoil a great day. They simply didn’t get the icing on the cake. However, the East Anglian Air Ambulance was able to land and was duly surrounded by a selection of Jeeps and other military vehicles.

So many people visited the Museum on the day and said that they must return when it is less crowded. My friends, I can assure you they have, we have had another very good season. Daphne and I are so happy to know that as the years go by we are still able to tell so many of the story of Station 111 and the many exploits of what we believe to be the greatest Group in the 8th Air Force, the wonderful 306th Bomb Group.

Talking to visitors, we were delighted to learn that Vernon, Charles and Barbara were going to be with us for the day. I mention these in particular as they have been so helpful to me in recent times, but Barbara please be careful as some of your emails are so lengthy that you will end up with repetitive strain injury. If that happens I feel we will all be in deep trouble.

As with the vast amount of airfields constructed in the UK (638) during World War 2, Thurleigh is not the easiest to get to if you do not have your own transport. So can I remind you once again to contact me prior to coming over so arrangements can be made for me to meet you, preferably at the Bedford Train Station, and drive you out to the Airfield. I am more than happy to do this, all part of the service, and of course, this avoids the problem of hiring a cab which is very expensive.

Daphne and I are regularly asked how can you spend so much time involved in the Museum. The simple answer is it’s a labour of love. We are totally dedicated to the cause of presenting all who visit the wonderful history of a wonderful Bomb Group and the 8,000 plus young men who served at Station 111. We really do love our very long association with the Group, and to all of you here today a big thank you.

Once again in the words of the song, “we’ll meet again, don’t know where, don’t know when, but I know we’ll meet again some sunny day.” Thank you for your continued friendship, see you next year.