

306th Echoes

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Paul Reioux and Crew Make History

Two folded wings this month prompts a look
back at the Koblenz Mission on
28 December 1944

By Vernon L. Williams
Historian, 306th Bomb Group Project

Among our 306th Bomb Group obituaries this month are two pilots who sat side by side together on board the 423rd ship Choo-Z-Suzy—Paul Reioux and his co-pilot Bill Daniel. Bill Daniel died on July 10th this month, followed by Paul Reioux, just fifteen days later (see obituaries in this issue). Over sixty-five years ago, Reioux and Daniel taxied to the runway at Thurleigh for a mission to Koblenz. What began as a routine mission that morning and continued through the day with a successful bombing of the target, ended abruptly when the Choo-Z-Suzy caught fire and crashed into the English countryside, not far from their Thurleigh home base. Nine crew were aboard that afternoon and the story of the final chapter of the Choo-Z-Suzy is filled with drama and heroism that adds to the history of the 306th Bomb Group. For one crew member, December 28, 1944 would be his last. For the other eight men, the last moments of the mission would live on in their memories—always a reminder of how fate could turn at a moment's notice.

The mission began with an early morning wakeup call and breakfast with Reioux and his crew to briefing by 6:30 am. There would be two targets that day, Koblenz and Siegburg, as the 306th flew as part of the 40th Combat Wing bomber stream. This mission was in support of American troops under attack in the Battle of the Bulge. The Germans were moving supplies and equipment to their forces and the targets at the Siegburg airfield and the marshalling yards at Koblenz were designed to disrupt those communication lines.

The Reioux crew drew the low echelon heading to Koblenz. Loaded with eighteen 250-lb. general purpose bombs and two M-17 500-lb cluster incendiary bombs, the Choo-Z-Suzy had enough firepower to do significant damage to the marshalling yards at Koblenz. By 9:00 am the 306th crews were in their planes and engine startup began promptly at 9:12 am with the first aircraft lifting off at Thurleigh 25 minutes later. Soon the twenty-six 306th planes were taking off every 30 seconds. By the time Reioux pulled back on the yoke and the Choo-Z-Suzy lifted heavily into the air, it was 9:49 am. The mission had begun.

The bomber stream formed up without incident and proceeded to target according to plan. Shortly after reaching St. Albans, one aircraft turned back, reporting that their oxygen system was out. Later the spare aircraft in the low element turned back according to plan, leaving the rest of the formation to bomb either Siegburg or Koblenz. The bomber stream encountered no enemy aircraft enroute to target and friendly fighter support "appeared as briefed near Brussels, and was good until target, then scanty."

The lead and low squadrons executed their bombing run on Koblenz with the high squadron bombing Siegburg. After receiving word from the weather plane, Buckeye Red, indicating that the weather over the target was overcast, the bombing run proceeded on instruments. The mickey operators (radar) took over at the IP. The lead aircraft for the high squadron aborted between the IP and the target due to the failure of his Gee H equipment. The "VHF of the deputy lead was not functioning properly, and the high squadron dropped the bomb loads on the smoke bombs of the 40th "A" formation at 1310 1/2 hours, believing them to be from the lead group. The lead and low elements made their PFF runs on the marshalling yards at Koblenz, dropping at 1340 1/2 hours. All pictures show the target 10/10 with no ground detail. With their work done, the three elements turned toward home and retraced their route back to the channel and across on a course that led them north of London, over St. Albans, and on into Thurleigh. It was over the St. Albans area that tragedy struck.

Paul Reioux's crew in the waist area heard Jim Talley over the intercom say, "We have a fire in the nose." At the time the crew in the rear were gathered together with Colvin Sheom, the waist gunner, and the radio operator, Herman Kaye. Jack Persac had just come up from the ball turret, and John Perry joined them, crawling through the tunnel from the tail gun position. Persac said that "we usually remained at our stations until the aircraft crossed the channel and reached England, then we gathered in the waist area to wait for landing at Thurleigh." *Continued on page 5*



Paul Reioux, left, and Bill Daniel, right. Jack Persac Historical Collection



Paul Reioux Crew (in the States before transitioning to Thurleigh): First row, left to right: Jim Talley (navigator), Milton Olshewitz (bombardier), Bill Daniel (co-pilot), and Paul Reioux (pilot). Second row, left to right: John Furrer (tail gunner), Jack Persac (ball turret gunner), Irwin Trimble (waist gunner), Colvin Sheorn (waist gunner), Herman Kaye (radio), and John Price (top turret gunner/engineer). At Thurleigh changes were made in the crew and the following replacements joined Reioux and were on board the aircraft that fateful day on December 28, 1944. Irwin Trimble was dropped from the crew as Reioux pared down his crew to nine. He would fly with only a single waist gunner until the crash on 28 December 1944. John Furrer was replaced at Thurleigh by John Perry. With these two changes, the Reioux crew was set, and it was this revised crew who met with disaster over England that brisk December day in 1944. Photograph courtesy Jack Persac.

WATCH THE 306TH BG ARCHIVES BEGIN TO GROW ON THE WEB!!!

Notice from Dr. Vernon L. Williams

For three school years, student interns and I have been working on the 306th BG archives, busy scanning and digitizing the documents, photographs and other materials. While the work continues with the collection, we are now ready to begin coding the web pages and making many of these digital documents that have been completed available to you, your families, and scholars everywhere. During the last two weeks of August, I will begin uploading the first digital documents, starting first with a complete set of mission reports, photographs, missing air crew reports, and crew photographs.

Please be patient while this rather laborious process is completed and the first group of documents appear on your computer screen.

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A K-17 camera deployed at the waist gun position somewhere over occupied Europe. 306th BG Historical Collection.



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306th Echoes is published four times annually: January, April, July and October. *Echoes* is mailed free of charge to all known addresses of 306th personnel, 1942-1945. Contributions in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer.

2009-20010 Student Interns:

Kathryn Barnard (Judge Donald Ross Intern)
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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

To ALL, from 306th Secretary Barbara Neal: You'll see that sadly we know nothing about what some fellows did after Thurleigh. Please let me know a bit of what YOU (or your loved vet) have done since. AND regarding your mates back in England, if any of you can please share with me a copy of your group's photo OR at least give me names of all the fellows from your assignment who you can recall, that would help so much. (If you can also recall where any of them came from, that helps a lot.) I'll do my best to be sure we have info for each man, dead or alive, for our 306th Archives. Thanks for any help. (Call or write – my contact info is on page 2 of every Echoes.)

Please send the Association details of deaths, or complete obituaries, if available, including city, state, and name of publication for any published obituary. Having the publication information in our 306th Archives will assist generations yet to come. Further, the secretary would be glad to receive and file **for future Echoes use**, any information important to include in future obits for anyone wishing to provide such advance information. Send all obituary-pertinent info to:

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The secretary has learned of the following deaths:

- **Bliss, Nathaniel L**, 369th pilot and co-pilot (Kurt A Ahlstrom crew when downed), died 13 Mar 09 in Seattle, WA, at 86. He arrived at Thurleigh 3 Apr 44 and was downed a week later, 11 Apr, on the mission to Stetten. First Over Germany covers that mission, and the miraculous survival of the entire crew though their B-17 exploded. He was POW at Stalag Luft 1 Barth-Vogelsang. No survivor info.
- **Bushell, Gerald F**, 423rd tail gunner (Edwin Schoenbachler crew, though not with that crew on 21 Nov 44 when Schoenbachler's crew was downed on the Merseberg mission), died in Nov 83 in Palatine, IL, at 58. His surviving widow, Loraine, died 29 May 2009, also in Palatine, IL.
- **Caldwell, Kendrick C**, 423rd Sq (engineer, Russell G Haring crew), died 20 Jan 09 in Waynesville, NC, at 88. His crew arrived at Thurleigh 27 Mar 45. Kendrick is buried at Garrett-Hillcrest Cemetery there. No survivor info.
- **Crooks, Robert Benjamin**, 423rd ball turret gunner (Robert N Horn crew), longtime Roanoke, VA resident, died 15 Feb 2008, at 88. He enlisted 9 Nov 40 at Richmond, VA. The crew arrived at Thurleigh 15 May 44; his pilot completed his tour 12 Aug 44. Crooks' USVA marker at Blue Ridge Memorial Gardens in Roanoke shows him as S/Sgt, US Army Air Forces in WW II. Crooks' wife, Nina Gray, preceded him in death in May 1996. Survived by at least 1s of Roanoke.
- **Daniel, Robert (Bill) W.**, 423th co-pilot, died 10 Jul 10 in San Luis Obispo, CA at 86. See cover story in this issue on his last mission from Thurleigh. After the war he graduated from the U of Kansas with a degree in Business Administration. Daniel recovered from polio in the early 1950s. He had a long career with Proctor-Silex in California. Daniel's wife, Patricia, preceded him in death in 2001. He is survived by 3c, 4gc, 6ggc.
- **Diffendaffer, Clifford A**, 423rd ball turret gunner (Joseph R Clark crew), died 11 Feb 2007 in Nampa, ID, at 81. He flew 35 missions from Thurleigh. Post-war he worked first as a watch repairman, and from Mar '51 for Idaho Power, retiring in '78 as System Project Specialist. His second wife, "BJ" Billie Joane, survived him only two months, to 17 Apr 07. They were survived by their 4c from his first marriage, and 7c from her first marriage, numerous gc and ggc.
- **Gassman, Lawrence W**, 367th pilot, died 6 Oct 09 at Lincoln, NE. He arrived Thurleigh 29 Jun 44 and completed his tour in Oct 44. He was preceded in death by his wife Isabelle on 4 Oct 08, and by 2s. Survived by 3d, 9gc, 3ggc.
- **Greene (formerly Greenberg), Irving I**, 369th navigator (Raymond Braun crew), died in Sarasota, FL, 13 Jun 10, at 86. He arrived at Thurleigh 17 Jul 44 and completed his tour in Dec 44, having flown his missions on Sleepy Time Gal. He and Vivian married in 45. Post-war he was Senior VP of Swank, Inc, from '52 to '90. He was active with the Anti-Defamation League in Boston and was an avid bridge player all his life. His wife, Vivian, died in Jun 03. He is survived by 2s.
- **Hingston, Thomas Harry**, 449th Sub Depot ground crew, of Lynn, MA, died 24 Oct 09 at 89. Post-war he spent over 32 years as a sheet metal worker and supervisor at the Boston Naval Shipyard. He was predeceased by 1d. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Ruby, 1s, 5gc.
- **Longworth, James F**, airplane crew chief (Sq & crew unknown), of Wapakoneta, OH, died 26 May 10, at 87. He served in the US Army Air Corps from 10 Oct 42 to 25 Apr 46. He retired in '88 as a toolmaker from Excello Textron in Lima, OH. He was a life member of the Wapakoneta VFW Post, with whom he served on the Honor Guard Funeral Detail. He was an avid golfer and pitched fast pitch softball. He was preceded in death by his wife of 36 years, Betty Louise, 29 May 91. He is survived by 5c and 1 step-c, 6gc, 6 step-gc, 4 step-ggc.
- **Ossusky, Herbert Raymond**, 369th navigator (Kurt A Ahlstrom crew when downed), died in Orlando, FL on 6 May 07, at 89. On the 11 Apr 44 mission to Stetten, he and the entire crew miraculously survived though their B-17 exploded. POW, held at Stalag Luft 1 Barth-Vogelsang. He retired from the USAF as Major, having served in Korea after WW II. They moved from NY to Orlando, FL in 1961 and sold real estate for 20 years. He was a life member of the American ex-POWs and the Military Officers of America Association. When he died, he was survived by Ann M. his wife of 61 years, 3d, 7gc, 5ggc.
- **Reioux, Paul Jerome**, 423 pilot, died 25 Jul 10 in Maui, HI at 89. He flew 29 missions. See cover story in this issue on his last mission from Thurleigh. After World War II he became an electronics engineer, retiring from Cubic Corporation in California. In 1986 he settled in Maui, HI where he lived until his death. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Aileen, 7c, 3 gc.
- **Sutton, Kenneth Edward**, 423 radio operator (Harold Fossum crew), of Maryville, TN, died 26 Apr 08, at 84. He enlisted 10 Dec 42; his crew arrived at Thurleigh 3 Apr 44. As a T/Sgt, he completed 35 missions. He was preceded in death by his wife of more than 63 years, Mildred, on 18 Feb 07, and by 1d. Survived by 1s. No further info.

Obituaries continued on page 3

President's Corner

Greetings,

As President, I am happy to use this interim report to you to tell you your 306th BGA continues to live as we slowly make contact with members of the extended families that comprise the whole 306th. Mrs. Em Christianson, the member of the Board of Directors who is the committee chairwoman of the project "Stay Connected" reports just about everyone of the many calls to you all, seemed happy to talk about their family members who were attached to the 306th. Em will be at the October reunion and will be happy to meet you and get to know you. Also, at the Oct. reunion, I will tell you at the General Meeting, the details of our joining the 8th Air Force Historical Society in the near future. The final details, whatever we do, is the work of our future leadership team.

About our present leadership, I would like the membership to know we have been without a Vice President for the past few months due to our very capable VP having to withdraw entirely from duties because of the health of her immediate family. Judy Hermley is a highly efficient person and is sorely missed and, speaking for the entire 306th family, wishing her God's wishes for health and happiness. Thank you Judy for all the assistance you so graciously provided the 306th these many years.

It is hoped to see many of you at the October reunion in Washington, D.C. Please consider making your reservations with the forms and data supplied in this copy of the Echoes. Hope to see you in October.

Shel Beigel
 President



Obituaries continued from page 2

- **Wade, Robert C**, 423 (unknown assignment), is dead. Sadly 12 men of this exact name are in the WW II Enlistment records, none of whom enlisted from IL, where Mrs. Robert C Wade, his widow (below) died in the Chicago area. This is an example of how knowing where he was from, before WW II, would help now. His name is not indexed in any of the 306th material seen to date. We only know that he died sometime before 2006, since Carmela was listed by then as a widow. Possibly he is the Robert C Wade buried in Burr Oak Cemetery in Alsip, Cook County, IL, who died 10 Jun 1995, but since no year of birth is available for that buried man, it is unknown whether he was born before or after WW II.
- **White, Loyd Parks**, 369 engineer (Clifford Tinkham crew), died at Farmville, VA on 5 Aug 08, at 84. His crew arrived at Thurleigh 24 Dec 44, and pilot Tinkham departed 27 Apr 45, having completed his tour. S/Sgt white was quite an aviation enthusiast. Post-war he graduated from Emporia State College and taught at Randolph Henry High. He was the owner and operator of the Floor Shop in Farmville before retiring in 92. He was a member of the Lions Club, American Legion, and charter member of Heritage Baptist Church, where he served as Deacon. At his death he was survived by his wife of almost exactly 64 years, Mattiemarie, 2c, 5gc, 2 step-gc, 4ggc, 5 step-ggc
- **Woodruff, Elwood "Woody" M**, 369th navigator, (Don Snook crew), lifelong resident of Hillsboro, IL, died 14 Apr 2010, at 89. His crew arrived at Thurleigh 27 Feb 45. He worked 44 years at Eagle Pitcher Company, retiring as maintenance superintendent. He was a member of the VFW Post at Taylor Springs and St. Agnes Catholic Church in Hillsboro. His wife of 68 years, Lorraine, preceded him in death on 27 Oct 09. She had worked at the ASCS office in Hillsboro in the 1950s and was an administrative assistant to the first five administrators of Hillsboro Area Hospital until her retirement in 1987. They are survived by 1d, 2gd, 2ggc.
- **Woods, Robert E**, 369 pilot (& co-pilot, Loren E Hubbell crew) died at home in Titusville, FL, on 14 Mar 2010, at 88. He arrived at Thurleigh 13 Dec 44 and completed 35. He continued with the Air Force, completing numerous missions as a rescue pilot in Korea, and C124 flights into Vietnam. He retired at Hunter AFB in Savannah, GA, as MATS Wing Safety Officer. In 66 he moved to Titusville and worked for NASA Safety during the Apollo and Shuttle programs. While at NASA he contributed to the Space Center Newspaper with a cartoon called "Dot 'n Dash." For his entire life he was an active member of Church of Christ, serving as song leader, teacher, preacher, deacon, and elder. His first wife of 50 years, Love, died in 1992. He is survived by his wife of 18 years, Pat, his 5c, 8gc, 2ggc.

306th Family:

- **Barberis, Grace**, died 12 Jun 10 at her home in Bridport, VT, at 77. She was widow of Daniel J (423 navigator, Jim Leach crew; Dan died 24 Nov 05). She was a graduate of VT College Montpelier, and catalog assistant at Middlebury College Library, retiring in 91 after 38 years. She served on many Republican committees; was a Justice of the Peace in Middlebury; and was listed in Who's Who in American Politics. She served on Addison County Cancer Association, American Red Cross, and Porter Hospital Women's Auxiliary; was a director of Middlebury Land Trust; and co-chaired the home and garden show for the county Chamber of Commerce. She volunteered at three museums, and was a life member of four Granges. She was a member of the Congregational Church, where she was in the Women's Fellowship, served as secretary and deaconess, and worked at church bazaars, dinners, and luncheons. She was a member of Middlebury Community Chorus and enjoyed traveling. Survivors include 2 step-s, 2 step-gc.
- **Bergener, "Nan" Nannie Catherine**, died 23 May 10 in Gilbert, AZ, at 84. She was widow of Wilford N (367th pilot who died 29 Oct 99). In 44 she met the love of her life, Wilf, at a USO Dance in Ontario, CA, and married him. After the war, during his career as United Airlines operations manager, she managed operations at home while they reared 3c and saw them all graduate from college. When he retired they moved the family to UT, his home, and eventually settled in Salt Lake City. In 95, they moved to Gilbert, AZ, where he died after 55 years of marriage. Survived by 3c, 6gc, 12ggc.
- **Blakemore, Helen C**, died 9 Jul 08 in Wichita, KS, at 76. She was widow of Glenn A (367th engineer, Clarence Fischer crew, and POW from Lorient mission 6 Mar 43 "Sweet Pea" downing with Capt John L Ryan; he was held at Stalag Luft 4 Gross-Tychow, formerly Heydekrug, Pomerania, Prussia, & moved to Wobbelin Bei Ludwigslust, & to Usedom Bei Savenmunde). Buried at IOOF Cemetery in Tonkawa, OK with Glenn, who died 30 Oct 97. Survived by 1s, 3gc.
- **Bradbury, "Peg" Margaret**, died 2 Apr 08 at University Hospital in Salt Lake City, UT, at 83. She was wife of "Brad" Albert E Bradbury (4th Station Complement). She first married in 50, and had 3c by Jim Fitzpatrick, who died in 67. A born saleswoman, Peg spread her talents in several careers including when the ski resort began at Park City she and her brother opened "The Bucket" bar on Main Street; later as a real estate agent and broker; first development director of a private school in the area; and as a travel agent. In 86 she married Brad, the flyfishing, art-loving owner and president of the First National Bank of Evanston, WY. They traveled the world and built warm friendships in Salt Lake, Evanston, and Rancho Mirage, CA. They shared a passion for games of gin, and she was an avid news consumer, a fervent Democrat, and a member of the Roman Catholic Church. She served on boards and as volunteer for several organizations, including the Catholic Women's League, the Salt Lake Art Center, and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts. She was preceded in death by 1gd; survived by her husband Brad, 3c, 7gc, Brad's 2d, 6gc, 3ggc.
- **Brizzi, Madalyn Harriet**, died 9 Feb 09 at 83 at their home at The Villages in San Jose, CA. She was wife of Carl A (368th ball turret gunner, John Coyne crew). She received her BA from Bob Jones U, Master's degree from San Jose State U, and her Administrative Credential from San Francisco State U. She was a dedicated educator for 37 years, teaching preschool through college, with 26 of those years spent as teacher or administrator in eight elementary schools for San Jose Unified Schools. Moving to Jonesboro, AR in 72, she taught the teacher education program at AR State U for six years. On their return to southern CA in 78, she finished her career teaching gifted students in El Toro. Following retirement, they returned to San Jose, where she enjoyed her family, arts & crafts, flower arranging, decorating, singing in The Chapel choir, and life in general at The Villages, where she helped found the Convalescent Hospital Ministry. She is survived by Carl, 4 step-c, 9gc, 2ggc.
- **Garrison, "Hattie" Harriett Jane**, died 6 Jun 08 in Tucson, AZ, at 79 after a lengthy battle with cancer. She was wife of "Jerry" Gerald T (368th toggler, James S Lett crew on "Begin the Beguine"). She was an original member of the Sweet Adelines Womens Barbershop, singing under noted Bert Mustin and Art Pepin, leaders of the male Barbershop singers in Tucson. She was a longtime employee of Southern AZ Bank and Trust, and First Interstate Bank, retiring as Operations Officer. She met the love of her life in 47 and she and Jerry married 6 Feb 48. Jerry, Chief Master Sgt USAF and Hattie traveled to his different assignments in the US, South and Central America, and London, England where he retired after a full USAF career. Survived by her husband of 60 years, Jerry, 3c, 6gc, 2ggc.
- **Houser, Doris**, died 4 Nov 09 in Des Moines, IA, at 88. She was widow of Robert N (368th navigator, Henry Dryar crew, and longtime treasurer of our 306th BG association). Bob died Mar 07.
- **Lewis, Marjorie H**, died at her home in Baton Rouge, LA on 20 Jul 08, at 88 after a long battle with heart disease. She was widow of "BB" Boylston Brooks Lewis, Jr (369th pilot, POW 14 Feb 45 when downed in the Dresden mission, held at Stalag Luft 3 Sagan-Silesia Bavaria & moved to Nuremberg-Langwasser). She was preceded in death by her husband soon after WW II, from bulbar polio on 17 Sep 48. She was also predeceased by 1d. She was a nurse in WW II and continued her education throughout her life with degrees in nursing from Charity Hospital School of Nursing in Shreveport, Loyola U in Chicago, NE Louisiana U (now U of LA Monroe), and LSU. She was an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which she served in many ways through the years. She is survived by 3c, 16gc, 25ggc. She is buried with her husband at Arlington National Cemetery (Section 11, Site 373 SH), where it is hoped family members will be able to visit their grave in Oct and attend our 306th Reunion in DC.
- **Morabith, Frances**, died 5 Jul 06 in Strongsville, OH, at 82. She was wife of Paul A (368th tail gunner, crew of "Chris" Maurice E Christianson). She is survived by Paul, 3c from her earlier marriage, 8gc, 4ggc.
- **Schafer, Wanelda A**, a native of ND, died 16 Aug 09 at her home in The Dalles, OR, at 86. She was wife of Earle W (423rd pilot). She and Earle married at Twenty-Nine Palms AFB on 27 Nov 43, and they moved every ten weeks across the country until she returned home to ND when shipped out (he arrived at Thurleigh in Dec 44). A gifted homemaker, during his career in school administration, she fixed up houses in four states before they built their own home in the Flathead Lake, MT area, where they lived for 22 years. She was a talented artist, having won more than 200 ribbons at county fairs. They have both been very active in their church. She is survived by Earle, 3c, 6gc, 3ggc.
- **Schultz, Arlene E**, died 12 Mar 10 in Waunakee, WI, at 87. She was widow of Wilmer G (423rd pilot; he died 8 Sep 89). They married 6 Sep 43. She was a lifelong member of Zion Evangelical Lutheran; her flowers and lawn were her pride and joy. She was predeceased by 1s and 1gs, and is survived by 3c, 8gc, 4ggc.
- **Shuller, Joanna**, died 22 Jun 10 at their home in McAlester, OK, at 91. She was wife of Dr. Thurman Shuller (306th Group Surgeon). She graduated from Arkansas State Teachers College (now U of Central AR at Conway) with a major in chemistry, and for three years taught science in AR high schools. During WW II, she was a chemist in an ammunition manufacturing plant at Jacksonville, AR. After it closed she was with the US Public Health Service in Wynn, AR. After the first two years of marriage, when she and Thurman lived in New Orleans for his residency, they made their permanent move to McAlester in 48 where he practiced pediatrics and she was a homemaker with four young children. When their youngest was in junior high, she got an additional degree in library science from U of OK and served as a school librarian until retirement age. In retirement she served the Pittsburg County Genealogical and Historical Society, for which she was one of the organizers 30 years ago, and served many years as the original librarian and organizer of their extensive material, as well as regularly helping visitors doing personal research. She was active in her Methodist church as children's Sunday school teacher and youth counselor; with both Girl and Boy Scout organizations as den/troupe leader and summer camp counselor; and as a 50-year member of the CD chapter of PEO, an international women's philanthropic educational organization. She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Thurman, 4c, 2gc, 3ggc.
- **Smith, Vivian G**, died 12 Oct 08 in Lowville, NY, at 95. She was wife of Charles O "Ollie" (367th pilot). They met in 41 when Ollie was stationed at Pine Camp (now Ft Drum) and married two years later when he got his wings. She was a school librarian for 27 years, and very active in their community. They loved to dance, and traveled all over by car, motor home, plane, and ship. She was predeceased by 1gc. In addition to her husband of 65 years, Ollie, she left 3c, 4gc, 3ggc.
- **Steiger, Ada**, died 23 Feb 10 in Upland, CA, at 83. She was widow of Clifford (423rd pilot). She was very active with her church, and crocheted many gifts for our military men and women and their babies, as well as many families in need. She was preceded in death by her first husband, Robert Parsell in 86, by her second husband, Clifford in 04, and by 2c. She is survived by 4gc, 1ggc, and 3gc Cliff's who adopted her as their grandmother.

Obituaries continued on page 4

General Purpose/High Explosive Bombs

The standard bombs used by the 8th Bomber Command from September 1942 were the five General Purpose types: the M30 100lb, M31 300lb, M43 500lb, M44 1000lb and M34 2000lb. Generally, 500lb, 1000lb, and 2000lb bombs were carried for industrial targets and the others for airfields. The 8th Air Force used 1000lb and 2000lb bombs for attacks on submarine pens, but these had little effect on the vast concrete fortifications that sheltered the U-boats. Most of the damage was done to the surrounding port area.



369th BS armorers taking a break at the bomb dump and gathered around a 2000 lb bomb.

The General Purpose (GP) bombs used in the early missions were fitted with quarter second delay tail fuses with an extra tenth of a second fuse in the nose. In a report, in December 1942, after the raid on Lille, it was calculated that 30% of the bombs dropped had failed to explode because the arming mechanisms had frozen up after being exposed the damp conditions on the airfields overnight. Standard Operating Procedure was soon changed so that fuses were installed just before take off. Eventually, to avoid accidents in landing, fuses were to be inserted only when the bombs were securely fixed into the aircraft.

In 1943, a new set of GP bombs were produced: the M57 250lb, M64 500lb, M65 1000lb and M66 2000lb. These accounted for most of the bombs dropped in the final year of the war. In January 1945, experts recommended 250lb GP bombs to be used against synthetic oil plants, ammunition dumps and oil storage facilities. The 100lb bomb was recommended for attacking railway yards and runways.

Incendiary Bombs

Originally, the only incendiary bombs available were the British 250lb and 500lb models filled with a rubber/gasoline mix, but in November 1942 the American M50A1 41lb magnesium bomb was added to the arsenal. It was packed in 100lb clusters which had a tendency to open prematurely, disperse too widely and cause damage to other planes in the formation. In January 1944, the US 8th Air Force used the 500lb M17 cluster which had better ballistics and a prime cord release that could be set to give correct disbursement. This became the most favored and effective incendiary bomb among the bomber groups.

High explosive and incendiary bombs fell through the air in varying trajectories and thus an accurate attack with a mixed load was very difficult to aim. For this reason, time lag tables were used to indicate the release interval times of the different types of bomb. Eventually, factors such as wind speed and altitude were also taken into account.

Reioux continued from page 1

They heard nothing more for a few minutes until the bulkhead door leading to the bomb bay suddenly burst open as John Price, the engineer, kicked it open from the other side. With him came lots of black smoke so the men moved quickly to get their chutes on and get ready to bail out.

"When I climb aboard the plane at the beginning of each mission," Persac explained, "I always put my parachute there in the waist area and depend on Sheom to make sure it stayed there. There was no room in the ball turret for my chute, so I had to leave it up above when I moved into my battle station in the turret below." So as soon as Price came through the bomb bay door, Persac made ready to jump. Co-pilot Bill Daniel soon followed Price into the waist area.

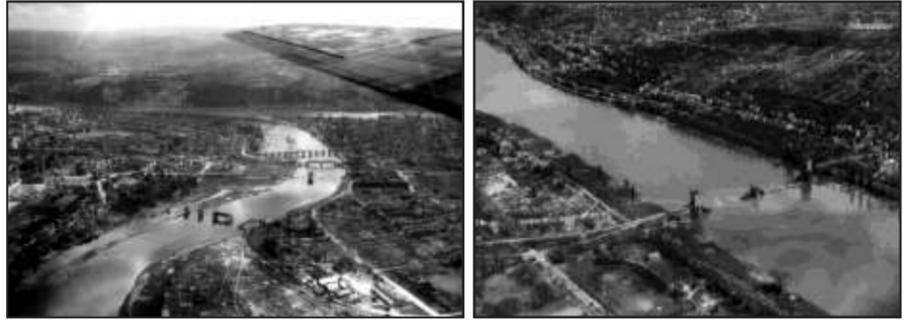


Jack Persac, Reioux crew, posing at his battle station—the ball turret, at Dyerburg, Tennessee during operational training, summer 1944. Jack Persac Historical Collection

Daniel later told authorities that "the Navigator riding in the bombardiers seat reported a small fire, the next instant it was flaming in the astro dome, another second it was back in the cockpit. I started out of the right seat and decided the best way out was through the waist. I went through the bomb bay and yelled at the crew to bail out, they bailed out and I followed."

Meanwhile in the nose, Jim Talley watched the fire spread rapidly. "I always kept my parachute up next to the drift meter. I grabbed it and it was smoldering and on fire." Using his hands, he patted the fire out and attached the chute to his parachute harness. He exited the plane below the flight deck and hoped the chute would work. The plane was at about 8,000 feet when the crew jumped, and Talley remembered that he fell about 5,000 feet and had to dig into his chute and pull out the silk and cords. Eventually the chute opened and he floated down to the ground, landing "in the front yard of the Ovaltine plant. The British civilians who rushed up to me thought that I was a German paratrooper. I had to use some good old American four letter words to convince them that I was an American."

Still in the Choo-Z-Suzy, bombardier Milton Olshewitz always changed out of his flight clothes as soon as the plane cleared the channel and at the time of the fire, was dressed in his uniform without his parachute harness. By the time he reacted to the fire, it was spreading rapidly and his gear and parachute were on fire. Standing near



Strike photographs showing Koblenz following the attack on the afternoon of 28 December 1944. 306th Bomb Group Historical Collection.

him, Talley saw Olshewitz just as the fire was spreading and never knew that the bombardier did not have a parachute. Olshewitz, the only married man on the crew, jumped without a parachute and fell "like a bullet." He was the only man on the crew to die that day.

Paul Reioux, at the controls through all of this, knew that he had to maintain level flight or his crew would be trapped as the plane fell out of control. The fire spread to the flight deck within a few minutes and Reioux suffered terrible burns on his hands and face. Still, he remained in the left seat until everyone was out. He eventually stumbled down to the exit and bailed out. At this point all nine men have left the aircraft and some of the crew have already reached the ground.

2nd Lieutenant Leslie H. Harshell, the officer-of-the-day at nearby #1402 Army Air Force Base Unit, received a call about the crash. This is his account of what happened next:

"At 1610 hours I received a call to report to flying control regarding a plane crash. At flying control I was advised by a flying control officer that a plane had crashed in the Abbots Langley vicinity and that crew members were scattered thru the Kings Langley section around the Ovaltine plant.

Accompanied by the Corporal-of-the-Guard and two MP's, I proceeded to the Ovaltine plant where I found five crew members. Lt. Talley, the navigator, was burned about the face and hands and had been given first aid. One of the EM (enlisted men) of the crew had a sprained ankle, others were all right. A British ambulance was standing by and at my request, removed the injured navigator and EM to Bovingdon Airdrome SSQ for treatment. Then we proceeded to #157 Tom Lane, Abbots Langley to investigate the report of a body. Upon our arrival we found that a crew member had fallen, without parachute, into the garden behind this home at about 1540 hours and died within 20 minutes. The body had been removed by the Watford Borough Ambulance to the Peace Memorial Hospital in Watford. We then returned to the Ovaltine Plant in Kings Langley where we found another British ambulance which had brought in two more men, the co-pilot, Lt. Daniel with neck burns and another EM. This ambulance removed Lt. Daniel and the remaining four EM to Bovingdon Airdrome SSQ. The crew members sent to Bovingdon SSQ were: Lt. Talley, navigator; Lt. Daniel, co-pilot; S/Sgt. Persac, S/Sgt. Sheorn, S/Sgt. Perry, T/Sgt. Kaye, and S/Sgt. Price.

Some of these crew members told me that they were returning home to AAF Station #111 from a completed mission in B-17 2107055 when, at about seven to eight thousand feet, fire suddenly broke out in the nose of the ship and rapidly spread thru out the ship. The pilot ordered the crew to bail out. Nine men were aboard and all bailed out. Eight chutes opened and these men floated down. One man was reported to have dropped like a bullet sans chute.

After taking care of the needs of the crew, the MP's and I departed for the scene of the crash. We found the wreckage strewn thru a wood in Bucknalls Lane in Bucknalls Garston. Captain Robbins, the Air Inspector accompanied by photographers, MP officer, ordnance men, and others were already present. We posted a guard over the wreckage and returned to the Ovaltine Plant in Kings Langley to see if any other reports had come in. Then we drove to the Peace Memorial Hospital in Watford where we were advised that the pilot, Lt. Reioux, had been brought in there with face and hand burns and after first aid was given, he was removed to the 7th General U.S. Hospital. The body of the bombardier, 2nd Lt. Milton J. Olshewitz, O-718066, was in the morgue and Captain Robbins and I established identification thru AGO card on the body. We left the casualty ward and morgue about 1930 hours and returned to base.

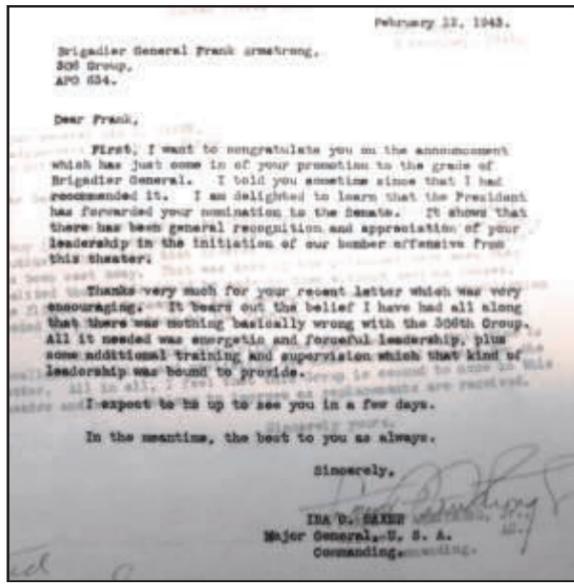
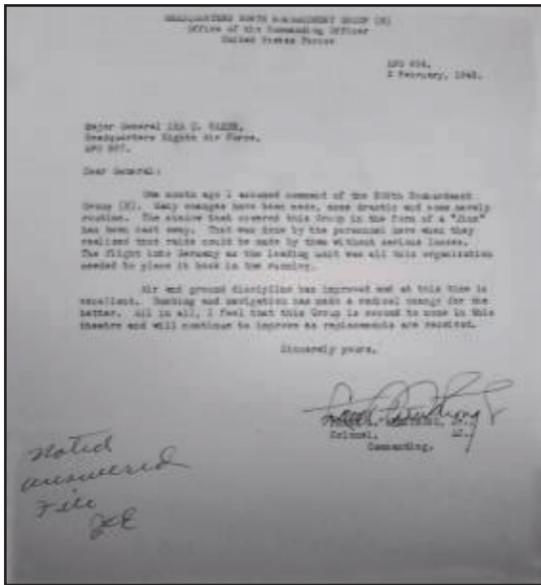
The crashed plane was from AAF Station #111, 423rd Squadron, 306th Bomb Group. Operations officer at that station was advised in detail by Capt. Robbins by 2100 hours."

Most of the crew stayed in the hospital one night and a truck from Thurleigh picked them up the next day for the return to base. Reioux and Talley remained in the hospital for about six weeks, recovering from serious burns. Neither flew again with the 306th. Talley recently said of Reioux, "He was the real hero in all that happened and never really was recognized for what he did for his crew." Many years later Talley and others in the crew successfully petitioned for the the DFC on Reioux's behalf. "He got it, but what he did was worth much more than that."

What caused the fire? What really happened that day in the nose of the Choo-Z-Suzy? Initial reports concluded that the cause of the fire was undetermined. When questioned by investigators in early January 1945, Bill Daniel stated that "the fire started in the nose at an altitude of approximately 8,000 ft, cause either a short in a heated muff (glove) or electrical fire of some sort and an oxygen leak."

On 14 January 1945 Group Engineering Officer, J. W. Venable, Jr. submitted an unsatisfactory report on the accident: "The only plausible deduction as to cause of fire is, that either the bombardier or navigator placed or dropped a muff hand, electrically heated (supplied from British sources) on the oxygen line which runs around the base of the shin turret. The heat from Hand Muff evidently ignited the oxygen in line running to shin turret, causing the fire in subject aircraft." With the aircraft completely destroyed, no compelling evidence survived to support Venable's conclusion, and he sent forward no recommendations to higher authorities.





Around the eighth air force

Special Dispatch to the 306th Echoes

Vernon L. Williams
Historian
Acting Reporter At-Large

Greetings from Abilene, TX! Here is a brief update of upcoming events and items related to the Eighth Air Force that hopefully will be of interest to you.

The Museum of the Air Force recently updated the status of the ongoing restoration work on the *Memphis Belle*, first reported in this column in the April 2010 issue of *Echoes*:

Dayton, Ohio. The sheet metal repairs to the aft fuselage and the sheet metal around the tail gun position have been completed. The radial engines are still being restored and built up, and restoration of the wheels, brake, and left inboard wing is in progress. The ball-turret is being assembled and nearing completion. The left inboard wing has been completed and the trailing edge of the right inboard wing is being installed. The landing gear has been installed in both inboard wings. Restoration has started on the right and left outboard wings. Sheet metal repairs and cleanup have been done as needed. A fixture has been fabricated for the horizontal stabilizer so the skin can be removed to gain access to corrosion. The forward fuselage is being stripped of miscellaneous interior items, and plastic media blasting has been completed, and structural repairs are now being done. Items that are missing are being fabricated with the help of Boeing blue-prints. The missing glycol heater and duct work has been fabricated and installed. Miscellaneous panels and pieces are also being stripped for restoration.

Note: The original Memphis Belle was on static display in Memphis, Tenn., until October 2005. At that time, it was transported to the museum where it is now undergoing restoration. The B-17 with "Memphis Belle" markings seen at many air shows is not the original aircraft.

Poole, Georgia. The Mighty Eighth Museum is currently working to compile a list of all those who served in the 8th Air Force in World War II. The Museum has provided both an online submission form and a pdf version that can be printed out and filled in manually. Families can submit the form for deceased veterans and living veterans are urged to act today and send in your service information. The web address for the form is:

http://www.mightyeighth.org/veteran_db.htm

To contact the museum for more information about the Veterans Database Project or to request a form in the mail, write or call:

P.O. Box 1992
 Pooler, GA 31322
 Savannah, GA 31402
 Phone: (912) 748 - 8888, Ext. 108
 FAX (912) 748-0209



Former Russell Strong Intern in Washington, D.C. Researching the 8th Air Force



Luke Truxal, the first Russell Strong Intern for the 306th Bomb Group Association, is continuing his education at the University of North Texas working on a Masters degree in military history. He served the Association for two years and was an important part of the East Anglia Air War Project during the four years that he studied at Abilene Christian University. Truxal graduated with a Bachelors degree in history in 2009. He wrote a number of significant articles for *Echoes* in 2008 and 2009. In early July Truxal wrote Dr. Vernon Williams about his research in Washington, D.C. this summer and attached two letters he found there that related to the 306th BG (see above).

"Dr. Williams, I was in Washington recently this summer and was at the Library of Congress to look at General Eaker's papers. I have been going through the collection of documents that I photographed while there. I found some items on the 306th from Eaker. These two letters are between General Frank Armstrong and Eaker after Armstrong had taken command of the 306th," wrote Truxal.

Members of the 306th Bomb Group Association should feel proud of the valuable historical experience that the Association has provided to Luke and to all the young interns. Many of them have already moved on to graduate school, and I feel sure that some of our interns will soon take their place as scholars and historians in universities across our nation. They will be the next generation of authors who will write the new military history, and it is important that they worked in the 306th archives during the early phase of their education. They carry with them the knowledge of the men of the 306th BG and the part that they played in securing the victory in Europe for our nation. And while these interns contributed greatly to our cause of preserving the history of the 306th BG, they, in turn, received unprecedented training and understanding that continues to provide the foundation for their advanced studies. So the lesson of our work here at ACU is that the 306th lives on and their memory will never die.



306th Bomb Group Historical Association			
Profit & Loss by Class			
April 2009 through March 2010			
	General Operations	Reunion	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
306th Programs			
Books	400.00	0.00	400.00
Reunion Fees	0.00	9,995.00	9,995.00
Total 306th Programs	400.00	9,995.00	10,395.00
Donations to 306th			
Donations - Individual	5,230.00	824.00	6,054.00
Total Donations to 306th	5,230.00	824.00	6,054.00
Interest Earned	31.96	0.00	31.96
Total Income	5,961.96	10,819.00	16,780.96
Expenses			
Awards and Grants			
Russell Strong Scholarship	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
Total Awards and Grants	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
Operations			
Lodging & Food	0.00	9,156.57	9,156.57
Office Supplies	0.00	146.56	146.56
Postage, Mailing Service	1,333.33	76.12	1,409.45
Printing Echoes	3,056.44	0.00	3,056.44
Transportation	0.00	986.00	986.00
Total Operations	4,389.77	10,365.25	14,755.02
Total Expense	6,889.77	10,365.25	17,255.02
Net Ordinary Income	-1,227.81	453.75	-774.06
Net Income	-1,227.81	453.75	-774.06

Registration Form

306th Bomb Group Association Reunion
 Hyatt Regency Crystal City — Arlington, Virginia
 6-10 October 2010

Registration fee (per person)..... x \$35.00 = \$_____

Friday, 8 October

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

Air and Space Museum Tour (9:30 am-3 pm)..... x \$35.00 = \$_____

First Over Germany Dinner (7 pm)..... x \$45.00 = \$_____

Saturday, 9 October

World War II Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, x \$32.00 = \$_____ and Air Force Memorial Tour - (1:30am-5:00 pm)

Banquet (7 pm)..... x \$49.00 = \$_____

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 Hyatt Regency Crystal City direct to make reservations:
 1-888-421-1442 or 1-402-592-6464
 Ask for 306th Bomb Group reunion rates:**

\$99.00 (plus tax) Single or Double Rooms—All One Price

*Deadline for registration and hotel reservations is 15 September 2010.
 Please help your 306th Bomb Group reunion planning,
 register and make hotel reservations early. Do it today!*

Reunion Schedule At Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, 6 October

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Tidewater Foyer (2 - 6 pm)
- Sign up for Oral History interviews (2 - 5pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits Setup Tidewater 1 and 2 (2 - 5 pm; 7 - 10 pm)
- Dinner on your own (hotel restaurants and other food venues close by)

Thursday, 7 October

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Tidewater Foyer (8 am – 6 pm)
- Board Meeting Arlington Room (10 am)
- Sign up for Oral History interviews (8 am-6pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits Tidewater 1 and 2 (8 am - 5 pm; 7 - 10 pm)
- Thurleigh at War film (10 am)
- 306th BG Web Demonstration - What's new on the 306th BG web and how to do research from your computer - Dr. Williams (2-3 pm)
- World War II Air War Gear Demonstration (3:30-5:30 pm)
- Dinner on your own (hotel restaurants and other food venues close by)

Friday, 8 October

- Ladies Breakfast - Arlington Room (7:30-9am)
- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Tidewater Foyer (8am-5pm)
- Oral History interviews (9am-5pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits- Tidewater 1 and 2 (8am-5pm; 7-10 pm)
- Thurleigh at War film (10 am)
- Air & Space Museum Tour (9:30am-3pm)
- Second Generation meeting - (4 pm)
- First Over Germany Dinner, Regency AB (Cash Bar 6-7pm, Dinner 7-9pm)

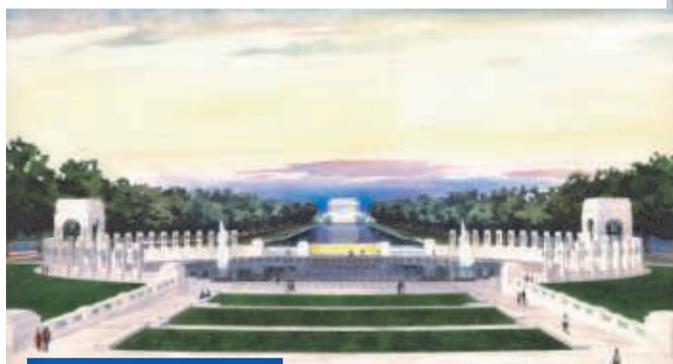
Saturday, 9 October

- Arrival - Pick up registration packets - Tidewater Foyer (8am-5pm)
- Memorial Service—Tribute to the Fallen and Folded Wings Memorial, Regency AB (8:00-9:30 am)
- Business Meeting, Regency AB (10-11:45 am)
- Oral History interviews (11:30 am-5pm)
- Hospitality Room and Exhibits Tidewater 1 and 2 (1-5pm)
- World War II Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, and Air Force Memorial Tour - (1:30 pm-5:00 pm)
- Thurleigh at War film (3 pm)
- Cash bar (6 pm – 9 pm)
- Veterans-only Group Photograph Regency AB(6:45 pm)
- Widows Group & Next Generation Photograph Regency AB(6:50 pm)
- Banquet, Regency AB (7 pm) (Special Program Planned)

Sunday, 10 October

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

**Dr. Vernon L. Williams
 Reunion Chairman
 vwilliams@acu.edu
 325-280-3399**



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Hyatt Regency Crystal City
 Please call the Hyatt direct to make hotel reservations
1-888-421-1442 or 1-402-592-6464
 Ask for 306th Bomb Group reunion rates:
\$99.00 Single or Double Rooms—All One Price

**FLY INTO REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT!
 THE HYATT REGENCY HAS A FREE AIRPORT
 SHUTTLE EVERY TWENTY MINUTES.**

Museum Notes

Thurleigh Airfield 306th Bomb Group Museum

Results Show It Is Worth All the Effort by Ralph Franklin Keysoe, England

The British saying "time flies when you are having fun" seems very appropriate at this time as it only seems a short while back when I was telling you about all of the heavy snow falls here at home and of course on the open spaces of the old airfield. Times have now changed completely as we are living through the driest period we have seen for many years. There are advantages as it means almost no mowing of the lawn, on the other hand it means I have to drive daily to the museum to water our flower containers. It is worth the trip as we get so many comments from our visitors how lovely they look. So much so that we had a request from the Palmer organization to borrow them for a special event they were holding.

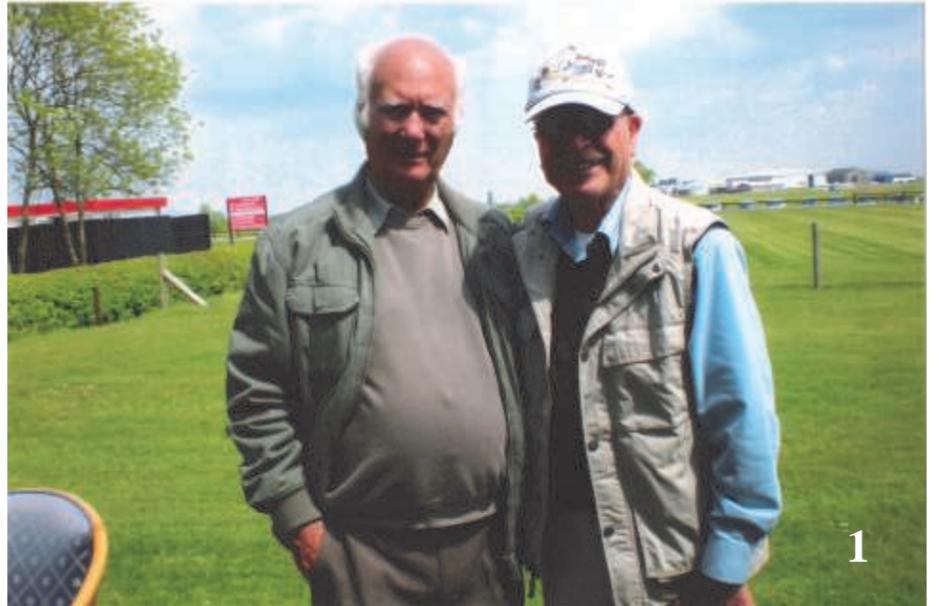
It is with a certain amount of pride that we are about to begin our ninth year of opening, and our visitors keep coming. In early May we were pleased to hear from Albert McMahon saying he was coming over with his son Hugh, and one of their major visits would be to Thurleigh and the museum. I arranged to meet them at the train station in Bedford and transport them to the old base. On arrival Daphne was waiting for us with a cup of tea. I could see from Albert's expressions and his comments that he was surprised as to what we had assembled in memory of the 306th. All too soon it was time to say our fond farewells, as we left them at the train station. Their next port of call would be Germany.

Four days later we had a call from the airfield saying a lady had arrived saying her name was Christine Pinince, and her father was a certain Maynard Smith who flew from the base during the war, and she along with her husband would love to visit the museum, she understood there was reference to her dad on display. This particular phone call did not arrive at the most opportune time as we had just returned home after conducting a similar tour for Walter Olmstead, a tail gunner with the Billy Casseday 369th crew. Walter's comments in our visitors book were 'thanks so much for your hospitality to an 88 year old tail gunner, everything is so authentic, and for spending your time for us all.' We quickly turned the car around and returned to the museum. Lunch would have to wait for a while.

Back to Christine, who became very emotional when she entered the museum, and even more so when she saw the special display dedicated to her dad. Being a professional photographer she had great fun taking many shots of our displays. By the time we arrived home in the evening our stomachs were suggesting they needed food.

As we have done for many years now, we purchased a wreath on behalf of the group to be placed by the wall of the missing as a symbol of remembrance at the annual Memorial Day Service ceremony at the American Cemetery, Maddingley near Cambridge. This is always a very moving occasion, and it gives me great pride to be part of it. In recent years I have had to do it alone as we have to consider the museum. It makes for an early start, following breakfast I drive Daphne to the museum, we open up and get things ready for another busy day. This year our eldest son Raymond arrived and I drove to Cambridge. Our system works.

To give you other examples of the diversity of the visitors we have, in the last couple of months we had the pleasure of meeting people from Canada, from Sydney Australia, Andrew Bush from Akron Ohio who is the grandson of Robert Lavery, a ball turret gunner on the 367th crew of William W Wood. Bill and Monica Prentice who came over from Adelaide South Australia. Bill's dad was a navigator with the 423rd crew of Eugene Bumpus. Yes, friends, we meet many nice people from around the world, and as long as the museum exists so will the stories of the exploits of the great 306th.



Whilst writing these notes I have had a number of rather pleasant interruptions from the British Embassy in Washington regarding a visit to our museum by the Governor of Virginia. These calls were becoming very interesting and indeed exciting for Daphne and I. Unfortunately we had yet another call a few days back from the Embassy saying that due to heavy workload on this particular trip to England, the Governor sends his apologies as he will not have time to make it during this trip, but hopes to in the future. Disappointed, yes but delighted to know that people in this position are interested in paying us a visit. We must be getting something right.



The pictures details:

1. Walter Olmsted and I enjoy the sunshine, Daphne is the photographer
2. I prepare to leave for Maddingley with the wreath.
3. Daphne and I with Christine in front of the Maynard Smith display
4. One of the many displays in the museum.

