

A HISTORY OF THE 306th BOMBARDMENT GROUP - EIGHTH AIR FORCE
Russell A. Strong, 4900 Appleridge Ct., Dayton, Ohio 45424

I am endeavoring to put together a good history of the 306th Bombardment group, an idea which has been in my mind for some years. I am working diligently on the matter, collecting all kinds of data and working through the official history and records of the group. I served as a navigator with the 367th squadron from June through November, 1944, and currently am director of news and information services at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio. I solicit your assistance in my project.

I am interested in any special materials which you may have, such as good photographs of personnel, battle damage, plane insignia, etc. I am also interested in commendations (other than the usual Air Medal and DFC) you may have received, special stories which you may have in your possession, letters that are highly descriptive of combat action, or any other documents. I would appreciate receiving xeroxed copies. But, if you do not have such facilities readily available, I would appreciate the loan of materials which I might copy and return to you immediately. I am also interested in manuscripts of memoirs which you may have prepared, particularly if they were done within a couple of years of the events. Again, I would appreciate copies or the opportunity to copy them.

Name AL LA CHASSE
Address 1321 N. Howard St. Glendale, Calif. 91207
Telephone 213-2421320 Date August 18, 1975
Occupation Real Estate Broker Employer Self.
Address 419 E. Glenoaks Blvd. Telephone 213-2423101 or 213-2454123

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th: Civilian Military Training Camp 1938-39
Air Corps. Flying Cadet 1940. Class 401H
US Marine Corps. 1938-1941
Air Corps. Aviation Cadet 1941-42

After leaving the 306th:

Became Professional POW *Not by Choice*
USAAF Reserve. Dropped 1956

306th Record:

Arrival Date August 1942 Squadron or other unit 367th
MOS 1035 Observer-Bombardier Combat Status _____
Missions Completed 1/2 Combat Mission
Promotions Oldest 2nd Lt. USAAF until after War, automatic Pres Truman Promo.
Decorations AM olcs DFC olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM
PH 1 Battle Stars other _____
One Caterpillar Pin & 6 overseas strips, and many memories. .

(OVER)

Other personal data:

Description of Air Missions:

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

Dear Russ::

I would be happy to get a copy of each of the printed sources you mention in the letter. I have photo-copy or can get printed or buy them. Please arrange sending them if you can. Also, I would like any information that you have regarding my first & last mission.

I belong to service clubs, organizations & etc. for whom I make speeches in regard to my experiences. I go to schools-churches, clubs, military groups making pitches. Its a lot of fun. If I like the place that I get a good meal I leave the crowd hung in a parachute, stuck in a tunnel or high on "Kriegie" brew. What ever information you will send me can augment these stories. I can and do give & make credits for info.

513
671-6583 I have a POW list somewhere of Ex-POW's that were in the same outfits of the 306th. In fact you can get the latest up to date list from David Pollack of Pollack steel in Cincinnati, Ohio. He handles our reunions.

I will dig into the stuff I have and get it to you. I think I have the Sqd. picture of the original personnel standing and sitting on two B-17's.

Frank Yaussi of the 368th I think, lives here in Glendale. He was the lead Bombardier on the First over Germany in which Gen Armstrong got the credit, but Yaussi was the Bombardier 12 feet ahead of the General. Actually the first guy into Germany.

I am sending this to you now, but I will get whatever additional info. I can collect and move it on. . .

Aufwiedershen. . .

Enclosed is a 8th patch which I had made up for the POW Reunion. You might see if there is enough interest for the "MIGHTY EIGHTH" Reunion to have these made up again.

Add additional pages, if necessary

25 August 1975

Mr. Al LaChasse
1321 N. Howard St.
Glendale, Calif 91207

Dear Al:

Many thanks for your reply to my inquiries, and I look forward to receiving other materials from you. I'll probably copy them and return them as soon as possible.

Could you send me Frank Yaussi's address? My resources do not have it, and I would like to get to him.,

Recently spent a couple of days in Claremont, and I'm sorry I didn't have your address at the time so I could talk with you then. But I suspect I may be back in the area before too long and then I would like to get with you.

I keep learning new things every day, and find most of it fascinating. I've put in a couple of calls to Pollak, but haven't had an opportunity to talk with him yet. From what his secretary said, I assume I'll be able to get considerable information. Thanks for the tip.

Its those kinds of things that make the job interesting, and also get me the kinds of information I think I need.

I shall look foward to hearing from you in greater détail.

Oh, by the way, did you ever run into a Howard Dunham in camp? I knew him in Kalamazoo, Mich., after the war. He spent three years as a guest of the Germans, and had been a navigator. I hope to talk with him in a couple of weeks just to get some of the flavor of early missions and of camp life.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

4900 Appleridge Court, Dayton, Ohio 45424



419 GLENOAKS BLVD. at JACKSON • GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA 91207 • TELEPHONE (213) 242-3101
245-4123

Feb. 6, 1976

Hi Russell:

Have your letter in hand of January 22/ my birthday. It was a surprise to me reading the Gise report that you sent. Thanks. However, your second paragraph stung me, about we being close Buddies. I had never seen his briefing report so its contents were news to me. Gise and I may or maynot have been Buddies, but it was a rather large assumption for you or anyone else to say it.

Actually the whole Gise report sounded vague and unlike what I would consider ~~to be~~ his interpretation to be. My recollection is different.

Yes Wissenbach did have a brother and I think he flew with Mckee. Yes "Honest John" Mckee lives in Burbank. Have seen him several times this year.

You had asked me in Miami to try and locate "Wings" Kimball. He~~s~~ was not at any of the addresses or phone numbers you supplied. Enclosed are copies of his original mailer to me. Maybe it will help.

I have written Gise (I used to call him Jimmie). When I hear from him, I'll shoot you another missle..

Tally-Ho.....

W. Sachon
If you have a new address or phone # for Gise. Send it to me already I've already tried phoning him NG

13 February 1976

Dear Al:

Please forgive my attempt at humor, which evidently went awry.

I had gathered in our conversation at Miami Beach that perhaps you and Gise were not the closest of friends, and when I read the report and saw that it was at such variance with the story you told, that it seemed to amplify this aspect of it.

Sorry about that, and I'll guard myself a little more carefully in the future.

I have contacted the one Wissenback, not the one on your crew, but hope to hear from him soon. They were twin brothers, originally from Klamath Falls, Ore.

If you see McKee, prod him into answering my letter to him.

I am having good success in assembling much data, but still have a long way to go.

Kimball is not listed in the current Dayton telephone directory, but I'll make some further effort to run him down.

I do not have any further information on Gise, other than his WW II address. Will keep you posted when I find something.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

4900 Appleridge Court Dayton, Ohio 45424

18 January 1977

Mr. Al LaChasse
419 E. Glenoaks
Glendale, CA 91207

Dear Al:

How are things in sunny California? Even North Carolina is cold this winter, but not as bad as my former residence in Dayton, Ohio.

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed piece, which came at the end of a letter from John Ryan, as it refers to your crew on the flight over.

My question is: Does it reflect reasonably well what went on in your flight across, as you remember it? It makes a good story if it is an accurate recollection.

Have you ever gotten any track of Bill Gise? I haven't uncovered anything on him.

In case you don't have it, Erwin Wissenback's address is 1219 Dewey Dr., College Place, Washington 99324.

Sorry I missed the Dayton meeting, but it couldn't be helped. I have St. Louis firmly scheduled, however.

I have been sending out a Missin Air Crew questionnaire to a lot of fellows, and enclose a copy, although I think I know your story pretty well. Thought you might like to see it.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

Rt. 1, Scotch Meadows Dr. Laurinburg, NC 28352



RED CARPET REALTORS

From the desk of

Dear Bill & Russ:

E-losed are a couple of recent checks for decals I sell now and then. It will help with postage.

See you at Phoenix.

"Honest John" McKee, an original pilot ³⁶⁷ and 1st 306th "Evadee" from Germany will come with me.

Jelly Ho  -

From my original War-log

WORLD'S ALLIANCE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
ALLIANCE UNIVERSELLE DES UNIONS CHRETIENNES DE JEUNES GENS
WELTBUND DER CHRISTLICHEN VEREINE JUNGER MANNER

WAR PRISONERS AID
AIDE AUX PRISONNIERS
DE GUERRE
KRIEGSGEFANGENENHILFE

GENEVE (Suisse)
CENTRE INTERNATIONAL
37, Quai Wilson

Adresse Telegraph: FLEMGO-GENEVE
Compte de Cheques postaux: 1 331

July 7, 1943

Dear Friend,

As its title-page indicates, this "War-time Log" is part of a special remembrance from the folks at home. The other articles in the packet are more or less perishable, but this is intended to be kept as a permanent souvenir of the present unpleasantness.

Hi:

Russ

I skipped sending you a holiday greeting as I was waiting to receive the enclosed calender.

I've been insured with the United States Auto Association almost since the end of WWII. USAA is operated by retired military persons, some dating back to WWI. USAA produces a yearly calender.

Last summer I received a letter from USAA's P.R. section asking for a resume of my WWII experiences and my post-war life generally. After several months of phone interviews and collecting of documents, I was asked to sign some releases for USAA to be able to use the collected materials & information.

PRESTO!! I became January in their USAA 1986 calender

I know that this memp seems to be a shot at selling insurance. This is not true of course but several military friends of mine have made application as USAA rates are competitive and their service is tops in America according to consumers guide. I do not sell insurance.

I have finally received more copies of the enclosed calender. The first few I sent to my old "Club 42" and "Skunk Hollow" room-mates.

I go to reunions of the —>

Stalag Luft III, 306 Bomb-
Drs, 8th Air Force Assoc. in
California as well as national.
Also, the local (MOWW) Military
order of World Wars - Pasadena
Chapter.

Its always good to see the 306th
group guys. They all seem to
be handling their health very
well - thats good!!

Enclosed I am sending a
California lottery card.
Scrape off the coins. If you
have a winner send it back
and I'll collect it. If it wins
big, then arrange to set
up a fund to help some
guys come to the reunions
or maybe set up a educational
something. Hope and pray
for a big winner!!!
Happy Everything
OJ

10 March 1986

Dear Al:

Got the calendar today! Its great, and I plan to reprint the page in the next issue of Echoes, with suitable explanation.

But the Lottery ticket! Next time send me a good one! You aren't any better at them than I am at the Michigan Lotto numbers. Last Saturday's didn't have a number out of the six I picked!, But this week is 6 Million, so maybe I'd better try again.

All the best.

(12) (10) JH

Dear Sir - January 10, 1943

I am writing in an effort to secure information concerning how I may become a member of the Caterpillar Club. I was forced to bail out after being shot up on a mission over enemy territory.

Having jumped out at a high altitude, I had quite a lapse of time to enjoy one of the greatest thrills of my life. In view of the fact that I saved my life in an Army parachute, I think I am qualified for entrance into the Caterpillars and to receive the coveted club pin. I would appreciate an acknowledgement to this letter. However if I am qualified, send my club card, pin, and particulars to my home address as follows:

To Mr A.H. LeChasse - 751 W. Patterson St - Glendale, California, U.S.A. If any expenses occur I will pay them as soon as possible

Thanking you very much
I am 2nd Lt. Albert H. LeChasse
U.S.A.A.F Serial No. O-726044

1945

Mit Luft Post Nach England
Kriegsgefangenenpost

EXAMINER 3, 121

Mr. Leslie L. Irvin
Honorable Sec. Caterpillar Club.

PRÜFT
40

Empfangsort: Ichfield Way
Straße: Letchworth
Kreis: Herts
Land: England
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

Deutschland (Germany)

Lager-Bezeichnung: M-Stamm-lager Luft 3

Gefangenennummer: 995

Vor- und Zuname: 2nd Lt. Albert W. Kay Chasse USAF

Absenders:

Card 10.5.43

P.C.90

OPENED BY

AL LA CHASSE
1321 N. HOWARD ST.
GLENDALE, CAL.
91207



**Stalag Luft III
40th Reunion
Denver, Colorado**

May 2 - 4, 1985

Sun. Feb 15/87



Hi Russ —

The 4 - 4X6 colored shots are from my MCA-provided, "War-Log" There are about 60 shots of varying pictures, photos, samples and various cartoons. I only have them in color. Let me know if useful. The "SNOOZY II" shots I think were taken by Norman Bates and sent to his mother — who passed them on to my folks. They are blow-up of originals.

I sure enjoyed your article of Bob Heelo's story. He tells me he has had a number of phone calls and letters. The whole issue was

great

Let me hear from you —
I'll try to get a shot of the War-Log cover to tie-in Pic's.

Al



306 BOMB GROUP (H)



8th AIR FORCE

SERVED JULY 1942 TO MAY 1945, WENDOVER, UTAH. THURLEIGH BASE, BEDFORD, ENGLAND

Dear Van Den Brouke

Surprize!!! Happy Holidays...

At the urging of Irvin Wissenback, Dave Dynan, Dick Schrupp and Bob Weinberg, all good friends or comrades of mine, I have decided to write you regarding your communications to me. When WWII ended in Europe I came home, left the military service and started private life. Almost immediatley I began to get letters, telegraphs and phone calls regarding information of my war experiences. These messages came ^{FROM} English Dominion people, European and African persons all wanting help of some sort for writings regarding POW life and such. I cooperated with most of these folks and traded letters with them but never heard any information of what they did with the material. I finally gave up answering messages of this type.

You must know it is no secret that underground organizations during the war had to make hard decisions to determine how to get the best job done, to hurt the enemy the most, and at the least harm to the Allies. When I was interrogated at Dulag Luft by the German Officers, they told me I was sacrificed because the underground failed. At Stalag Luft III, POW camp there were always conversations about crew members who got back while crewmates were captured. Thats War. I'm glad to be alive.

Now I am willing and prepared to answer questions for you to help in the history of your area and Air Forces in Europe. I was in England in 1982 for a reunion at my combat base at Thurleigh. Had I known of you at that time, I could have visited you then. Perhaps an opportunity will come along making a visit possible. You did not identify yourself in the picture you sent. Which one?

Happy Everything!!

A. W. LA CHASSE

Nov. 30, 1987



Former Prisoners of War
of
Stalag Luft III



I have a friend and neighbor here in Glendale who was a POW at the same camp with me, and, we were in the same bomb group as originals of the 306th.

He was shot down near you area. His name is Bob Seelos. He was invited by the people in this area to come back there for a reunion. His host was:

J.L. VERHAGEN
Ph. WILLEMSTRAAT 13
4671 EX DINTELBOORD
NETHERLANDS, EUROPE.

You might want to look him up as he is doing the same kind of historics as you.

If you have some way that I can know to reach the Luftwaffe pilot who shot our B-17 Fortress down, I would be grateful to know.

Thanks you.



Former Prisoners of War
of
Stalag Luft III

Dear Sir:

Jan. 16, '88

I am dashng off a quick note to tell you that I might have an opportunity to come to England in March of this year.

If this does occur I may be able to jump over to Belgium for a visit.

I have not heard from you since before the holidays.

If this information is of interest to you please send me a note.

I am enclosing a picture taken last April to celebrate our P.O.W. Camp liberation by Gen. Patton. The cake has a Donald Duck behind prison bars with me in the 1st of 3 grand sons.
Happy Everything
AOL.

DOMINIQUE VAN DEN BROUCKE

7770 HERSEAUX, LE 29/01/1988.

RUE LOUIS GASSONVILLE, 118

7770 HERSEAUX / BELGIQUE - EUROPE

☎ 066 / 34 29 78

Mr. A W La Chasse,
1321, Howard St,
GLENDALE CA 91207.
U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

As my birthday falls on 17 January, you offered me a very nice present with your letter. Thank you to have accepted to contact me concerning the project I hope to realize about the story of your plane fallen on 9 October 1942 some 10 kilometres from my house.

Mr. Dynam surely told you about the serious way on which I am working to succeed. Geographically I am well situated to write a full and detailed history. My book will have two parts, the first of them will be about your plane. Mr. Strong explained me the events of 9 October in order for me to present it to the reader. After that I will tell chronologically all what occurred in the plane thanks to the testimonies of Mr. Gise & Mr. Wissenback. I hope I can rely on your story as well to be as full as possible. Thereafter I will write about the last moments in the plane and details about your downfall by chute. Mr. Wissenback gave me a lot of details about that, while Mr. Gise does not remember many things. You could reinforce Mr. Gise's testimony with yours. After that I will write about what happened to you personally, in the village where you landed. Here I rely on all possible details that you can remember. My book is just a regional one so that I devote much importance to all details.

About Messrs. Gise & Wissenback, I could find all the places where they had been helped before crossing the Belgian French border. I interviewed many ancient resisters and will fulfill their assertions by the testimony of your two companions. It will be a very precise story, notwithstanding the important number of years gone by.

Then I would like to retell your adventure from the moment you were captured until the one you were set free and I will also write about how Mr.Gise & Mr.Wissenback could join England. I am doing a search to locate the families of Olsen, Gates, Nicholson and Wilder (for Kaylor: see Dave Dynan) in order to commemorate their souvenir. Besides several documents, pictures and photographs will illustrate the whole. I would also like to have some pictures of yourself at the time or documents such as newspaper cuttings about yourself or your mission on 9 October 1942. Did you also keep the telegramme reporting your being missing. I will wait to receive your letter before precisising the other things I need.

Concerning the German pilot that shot down your plane, I hope to locate him this year. If there is no result, it will always be possible to mention his testimony in another book; in a special chapter where other testimonies could appear with documents about your plane. As you can notice I am determined to do my best on the affair. Beside I am doing many other searches and I am in touch with more than 50 ancient flyers who are of interest for my area. I am doing all this during my leisure time and totally free. After more than 40 years I could renew links of friendship between some of your compatriots and French or Belgian resisters. I must admit that the books I am going to publish will never bring up enough to refund all my expenses for my hobby.

I hope to get permission to erect a stone commemorating the place where your aircraft crashed. I am busy with a search on the spot to find some small pieces of your plane. I will send a part of them to Mr.Dave Dynan. We are really lucky for the conservation because they stayed more than 40 years in ash and earth from the railway nearby. I enclose a sample specially well kept.

As far as Mr.J.L.Verhagen is concerned, I must precise that the Dutch border lies at 150 km from the place where your plane crashed. I have never heard about your friend Mr.Seelos in my area, so I presume he must have fallen much more northwards in Mr.Verhagen's area.

As soon as my book is published I will send you a copy with all documents, pictures, etc... that you will ask me; I hope I could convince you of my good intentions.

Yours faithfully,

Van den Broeke
VAN DEN BROECKE O.

DOMINIQUE VAN DEN BROUCKE

7770 HERSEAUX, LE

RUE LOUIS DASSONVILLE, 118

7770 HERSEAUX / BELGIQUE - EUROPE

☎ 066 / 34 29 78

Dear Sir,

You are welcome in Belgium.

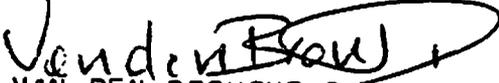
Could you ring my English friend up (Mr.CULL.732.843710) to tell him the date of your visit to Belgium and how long your stay will be.

I need all the details quite soon because I must have time to prepare your visit.

Let me also tell you that I cannot receive you between 1 and 10 March because of professional duties.

In fact, this applies to all months of the year; the first ten days of every month are fully occupied with my job, but I have got all the other afternoons and evenings off. (Then I only work in the morning).

See you quite soon.


VAN DEN BROUCKE D.

P.S. Do you know a former airman who bailed out of his plane on 6th December 1942, on his flight to LILLE ?
His name: WEBBER.



Former Prisoners of War
of
Stalag Luft III

Dear Russ:

The "Echoes" are louder, larger and better this year. Good job.

I have some photos of pictures in the YMCA "War-Log" I legged across Germany from Stalag Luft III to Stalag VII Moosburg in the Winter of 1945.

I am trying to get the story and pictures ready for publication.

In the process of testing color, size + etc. I have many extra photos of certain pages. The enclosed photo is one of the favorites. I am asking that in the next edition of "Echoes" you publish the picture — which I will send to anyone who contacts me. Its post-card size color
as yours 3 1/2" X 5" OVER →

For Free Copies send a SASE
to : Al LaChance
1321 Howard St
Glendale Ca 91207

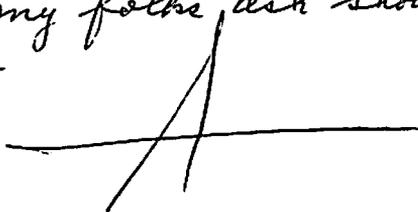
See you at Las Vegas in the
fall.

If we get along with a representative
sample of the book - I'll bring it
along.

also, I'll bring the original "Eber-Forg"
which I've only seen 4 of since
the war.

Thanks Al

ES - This particular cartoon was drawn
on the message side of one of three
cards we could send a month. The card
went to my folks, as shown on August
17, 1942





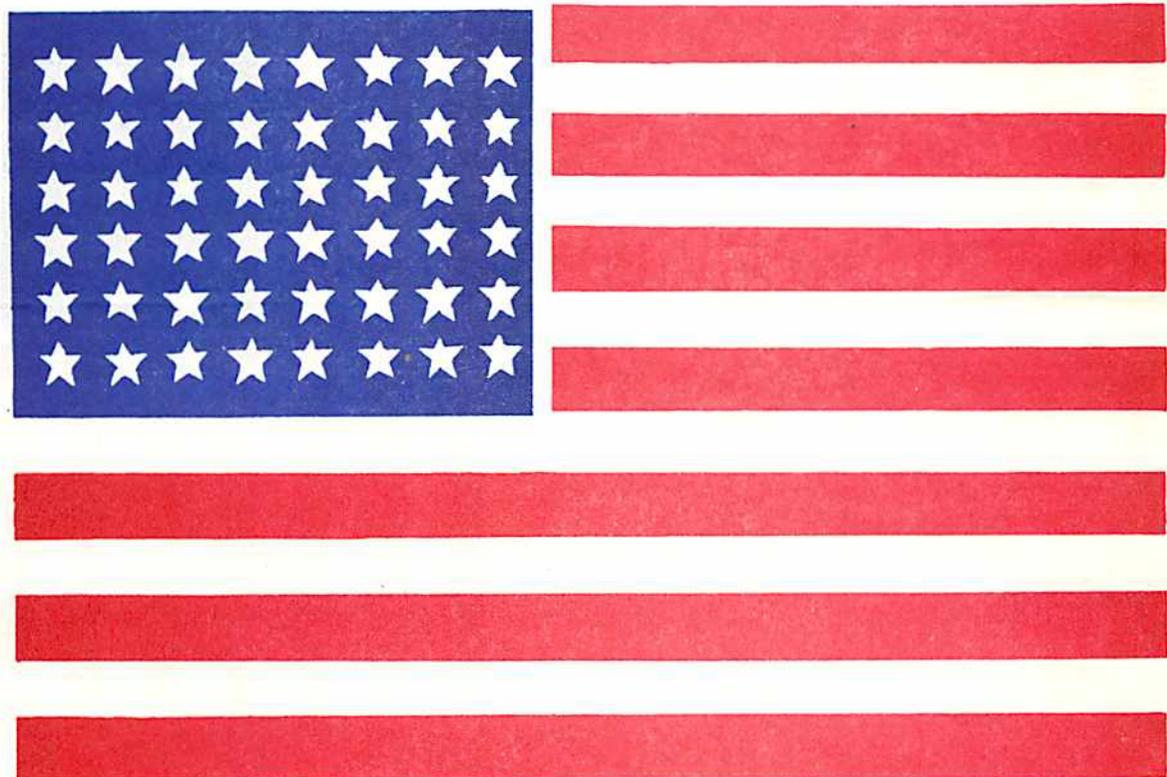
Former Prisoners of War of Stalag Luft III

Attached is a copy of a rare unpublicized so-called Surrender Sheet worn by American military people during WWII. These sheets are 4-folded into a celluloid pocket with white yarn attached to be worn around the neck...displayed.

This activity was designed to identify US American troops when they met their Russian allied troops at the ELB River in Germany. The content of the messages on the sheet are a self explained and interesting..... curiosity.

After liberation from Stalag Luft III, POW camp, I returned to my US Air Corps base at Thurleigh, Bedford England. It was here that I picked up some Wartime mementoes which included this sheet, which was also carried by U.S. Air Crews at the time of the ELB River meeting. The original sheet I have is printed on linen-cloth paper.

Al Jackson

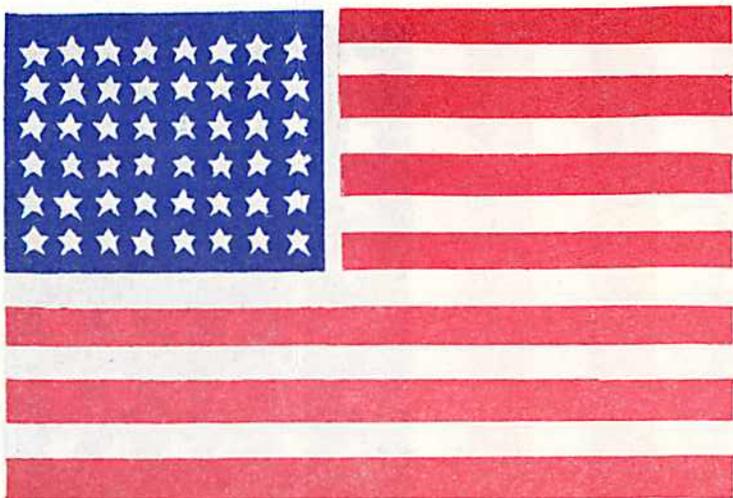


Я американец

“Ya Amerikánets” *(Pronounced as spelt)*

Пожалуйста сообщите
сведения обо мне в
Американскую Военную
Миссию в Москве

Please
communicate
my particulars
to American
Military Mission
Moscow



Я американец

“Ya Amerikánets” (Pronounced as spelt)

Пожалуйста сообщите
сведения обо мне в
Американскую Военную
Миссию в Москве

Please
communicate
my particulars
to American
Military
Mission
Moscow.

INSTRUCTIONS

- (1) Learn by heart the Russian phrase “Ya Amerikánets” (means “I am American” and is pronounced as spelt).
- (2) Carry this folder and contents in left breast pocket.
- (3) If you have time before contact with Russian troops, take out the folder and attach it (flag side outwards) to front of pocket.
- (4) When spotted by Russian troops put up your hands holding the flag in one of them and call out the phrase “Ya Amerikánets.”
- (5) If you are spotted before taking action as at para 3 do **NOT** attempt to extract folder or flag. Put up your hands and call out phrase “Ya Amerikánets.” The folder will be found when you are searched.
- (6) You must understand that these recognition aids **CANNOT** be accepted by Soviet troops as proof of bona fides as they may be copied by the enemy. They should however protect you until you are cross questioned by competent officers.



Former Prisoners of War
of
Stalag Luft III

Dear Russ:

Enclosed are pictures from our 306th reunion. Most were taken inside the Thunderbird hanger. About the time that we were leaving the hanger - one of the 60 million dollar pilots spotted my camera and said please don't take any pictures in here. I found out later that the guards were taking cameras as we came in - but I never knew that! You now own some rare photos.

While talking with you at the reunion you spoke of material for an upcoming Echo's edition

featuring some P.O.W. material or something similar.

Let me know what would ~~help~~.

I am going through a lot of folders of "just stuff" from the little war.

I have lots of books, pictures, documents and just stuff so

Happy Thanksgiving!

Al LaChane

17 March 1992

Dear Al:

Thanks for the "goodies" which arrived in yesterday's mail.

I have already called the Glendale paper about the picture, but have not heard back from the photographer, Raymond Watt. Perhaps you can intervene in helping speed along a copy of the picture so that I can use the story and picture in Echoes.

But, I did a dirty thing, I went back and reread the 9 Oct 42 events as detailed in JG 26, and there are some serious discrepancies. I may choose to overlook them.

would

It would appear that your plane was shot down by Prits Priller, a ranking German ace of JG 26; Stamburger was credited with another plane, and in all the Luftwaffe shot down four American planes that day.

Roger Freeman's Mighty Eighth War Diary also records four American bombers down on that mission.

I have enclosed a copy of the two pages out of JG 26 which detail that actions of the German fighters on this mission.

All the best,



Former Prisoners of War
of
Stalag Luft III

AL LA CIASSE
1321 HOWARD ST.
GLENDALE, CA. 91207

OCT. 09/42 TO APRIL 29/45

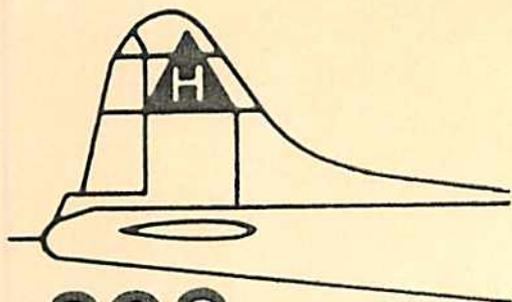
Dear Russ:

Dodo made me clean out
my "Ready Room" and I've
found a lot of "stuff" might
be of interest about the
1st plane & crew lost.

Sure hope to see you
at one of the 1997 Meetings

As Always

— Al —



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

306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

Secretary/Historian

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

11 April 1992

Author

First Over Germany
Command and Staff
Officers, 8th Air
Force, 1942-45

Editor

306th Echoes
306th Directory

To: Al LaChasse
Bill Seelos

Thanks for the note, Al.

There was supposed to be in each issue of the January Echoes a copy of our trip proposal. I hope you overlooked it and that we didn't miss a lot of people.

Another copy is with this letter, and I look forward to seeing you guys get with us on this trip. Note that the April Echoes has an up-to-date list of those participating, and we have added some more names since that paper went to press. You ought to be receiving your copies in the mail shortly.

I read JG 26 at Bill's insistence, and found the WWII phase of the book quite interesting. They seemed to operate with many of the same problems that beset the 8th. In fact, some experts think that the Luftwaffe pilot training, at least until well into the war, paralleled the American and RAF training in most respects.

If we missed you the first time around, my apologies and the back of me hand to the mailer for his ineptness.

All the best,

Aug 1996

Retired real estate agent dies

World War II prisoner inspired 'Great Escape'

By Mary Schubert
Daily News Staff Writer

American troops liberated LaChasse and the others held captive at Stalag Luft III on April 29, 1945 — nine days before V-E Day.

"General Patton's 3rd Army came in and just crushed all the German resistance and freed all the prisoners of war," Dean LaChasse said.

LaChasse was discharged from the Army Air Corps two months later, when he crossed paths with his future wife. "She was an airline stewardess, and he met her on the plane coming back to California," Dean LaChasse said. The couple was married in 1947 on a radio show, he said.

LaChasse owned Time Realty, which later became LaChasse Realty, and later in his career went to work for Red Carpet Realty. He served as president of the Glendale Board of Realtors in 1964 and stayed active in military organizations.

"He loved going to prisoner-of-war reunion meetings and B-17 crew meetings," Dean LaChasse said.

In fact, the B-17 bomber crashed on a family farm in Belgium.

"There's still a scar on the farm field where nothing will grow there since the crash," Dean LaChasse said.

LaChasse is survived by his wife, Dorothy; four grandchildren; and four sons: Scott of Newhall, Bill of Tujunga; Dean of Glendale, and Gary of Gardnerville, Nev.

Funeral services and interment will take place at Forest Lawn Memorial-Park, Hollywood Hills.

GLENDAL — Funeral services will be held today for Albert LaChasse, longtime Glendale resident and former World War II prisoner whose attempts to escape from a German camp inspired a Hollywood film.

LaChasse, a retired real estate agent and former president of the Glendale Board of Realtors, died of a heart attack recently while vacationing in Hawaii. He was 77.

LaChasse, a 44-year Glendale resident, was one of the first American troops taken prisoner during World War II and later was awarded the Purple Heart.

LaChasse's B-17 bomber was shot down by a German fighter plane on Oct. 9, 1942, over France. He was captured by the enemy when he parachuted out of the crippled bomber, said Fred Beaton, general manager of KIEV-AM. Beaton's daughter is married to one of LaChasse's sons.

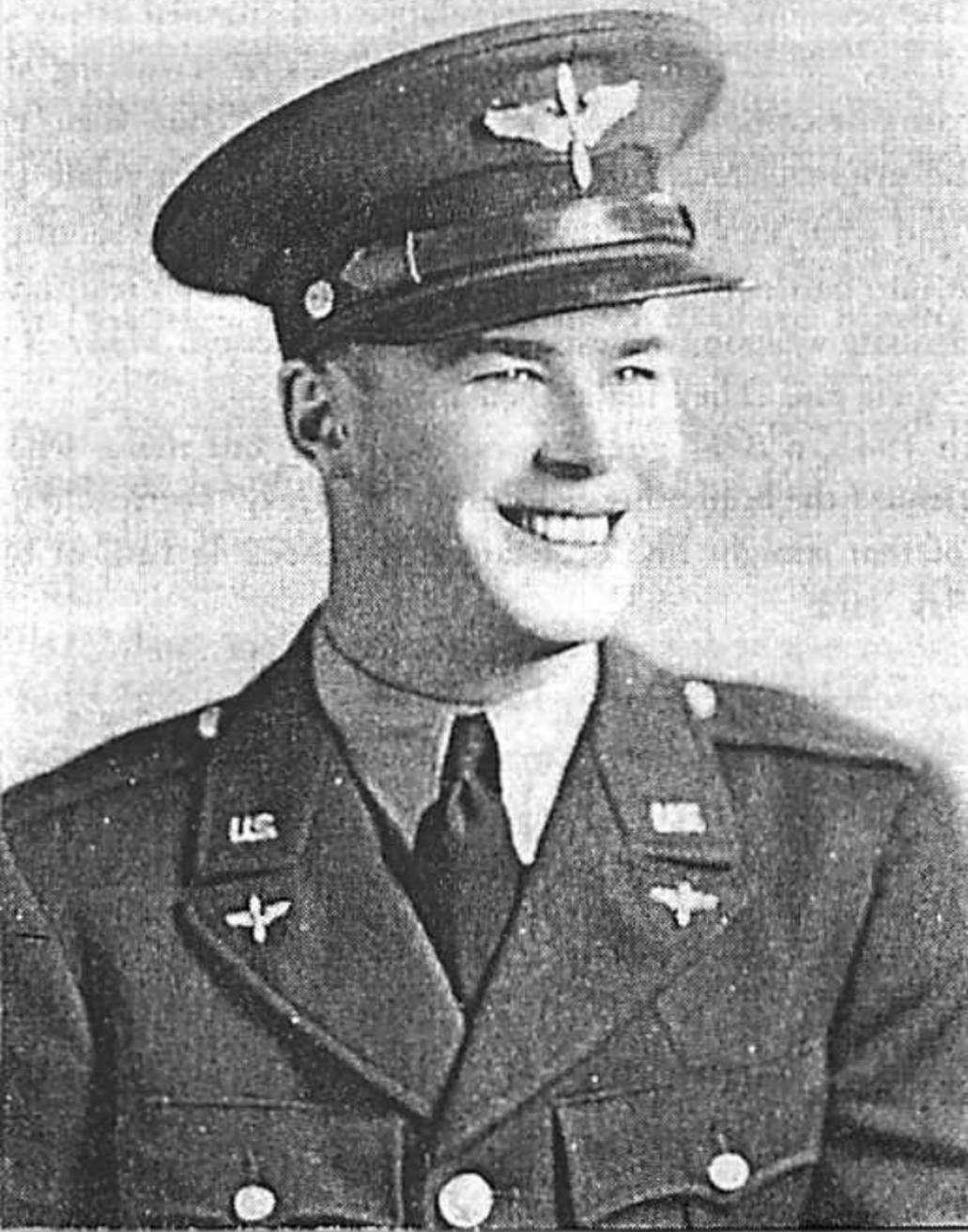
"There was a crew of nine, and six of them got killed that day, including the pilot and co-pilot," said another son, Dean LaChasse.

For the duration of the war, the Army Air Corps second lieutenant was held prisoner at Stalag Luft III in Sagen, Germany. He tried several times to escape by digging tunnels, making German uniforms and civilian clothing, cultivating "contacts" in the underground and forging documents.

Hollywood immortalized the American prisoners' tunneling efforts in the 1963 Steve McQueen film "The Great Escape," and LaChasse won a bit part in "Stalag 17," the 1953 World War II opus starring William Holden, Dean LaChasse said.



LACHASSE



6-A.

June 21, 2002

Mr. Russell Strong
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, North Carolina 28205

Dear Mr. Strong,

Per our phone conversation today, June 21st, here is a paperback copy of my book, *So Long Guys, Goodbye Is Forever*. You can read the synopsis, of course, on the back.

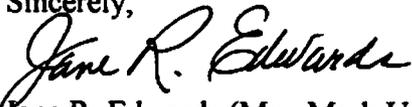
As I told you, Al and I worked on this more than twenty years ago. Now, it seems, the timing could not be better. After all, it is about man's courage. My personal thanks to you for your help in keeping these heroes of the American Eighth Air Force remembered.

For your information the book may be ordered (see back cover) via the Internet, www.Xlibris.com, or by phone 1-888-7XLIBRIS.

It would be great to meet you some time. I hope in the near future. Enjoy the book. And, please let me know how you liked it.

Hope your trip to England was pleasant.

Sincerely,



Jane R. Edwards (Mrs. Mark U. Edwards)
3145 Menlo Drive
Glendale, California 91208
818-249-2844 phone
818-249-8861--FAX

Jane R. Edwards



**So Long Guys,
Goodbye
Is Forever**

A Memoir of WWII

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