# 96th Echoes

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The great arch, long emblematic of St. Louis and poised along the Mississippi River, was the setting for this unusual picture which includes three longtime 306th reunion attendees. Bill Houlihan, 367th medic, is at the left; William Landrum, 367th tail gunner and USAF retiree, is in the center, and Dr. Thurman Shuller, the Group Surgeon for the 306th as it entered combat, is at the right. Now a regular participant in our reunions, Susan Burgess is one of two personal aides accompanying Landrum. This unusual picture was snapped by a total stranger to whom Houlihan handed his camera while the quartet was waiting

### 367 Met in St. Louis for **Good Times**

Not everyone heard the siren's song, "Meet Me in St. Louis," but 367 persons were present for the closing banquet of the 18th annual 306th reunion held in St. Louis, and reports echoing throughout the baronial halls of the Henry VIII hotel indicated considerable satisfaction with the entire program.

As chairman, one always hopes that everyone will carry away with them favorable impressions of the host community, the hotel, the food, and a general air of bon homme. They did just that, and the banquet ending the three days featured some excellent music and entertainment.

There's nothing like the good music well played by an Air Force band to raise any spirits in need of lifting, and the performers in blue who came from Scott Air Force Base across the Mississippi River presented a cast of young American entertainers who had everyone cheering and stamping

Some remembered that Scott Mayed a role in the 306th's original movement to combat 57 years earlier, men two squadrons of our planes en toute from Wendover, Utah, to Westover Field in Massachusetts had an overnight at Scott.

Al Villagran had planned a varied and interesting program for the teunion participants, with an all day tour of St. Louis, showing off many of the civic buildings of the city, the fantastic mosaics of the Roman Catholic Basilica, and the transformed Union Station. Crowds went up into the now famous arch along the river, and got a unique overview of the pioneer trails into St. Louis from the east and the way west which eventually took the wagon trains as far as the Pacific

Another group got an appreciation of what one of the great American fortunes has done for the City and State of Missouri as they visthe Anheuser Busch breweries, the famed Beyo Restaurant, and then at Grant Park saw the great collection of wild animals gathered there over

# Old Friends Meet Once Again



Bob Seelos and Lee Kessler, 368th, date back to early 1942.



British friends.



Eddie Perin, prop shop, and Ray Yerak, tail gunner, 369th.



Russ Houghton, 368th, and Robbie Lanyon, 423W.



Jack Wood, the old 369th first sergeant.



Stephanie Rader and Janet Ross, husbands were both on the Group staff.



Bob Crane, 369th mechanic, and Herman Kaye, 423rd radio operator.



Sidney Shertzer. 369th, first reunion, POW on second mission; Jo and Fred Sherman, 369th pilot.



Crowd enjoying the levity of 'Nunsense III'.



Jim Wirth and Dennis Sharkey, 369th

We meet in San Diego in 2000. Details later.

#### St. Louis (cont. from pg. 1)

two generations.

There was also the afternoon/ evening trip to St. Charles, on the banks of the Missouri River, for a fine buffet dinner on a grounded paddle wheel ship, which was followed by a performance of a summer stock endeavor, "Nunsense III".

As the crowd dispersed on Sunday by planes and cars, they were beginning to think of another frontier, as the Group goes to San Diego for its next reunion.

Scrapbooks were not quite as common in the gathering place for everyone as they may have been in some years, but the conversations, Thurleigh in particular, of England in general, and of the missions flown all over Europe took care of the idle hours. We note that the groups are changing, and all were pleased to see men still arriving who were coming to their very first reunion.

It is to be hoped that the Pacific shores will attract many westerners to a place we have not visited before, even though California has the largest collection of 306th veterans of any state in the Union.

#### **Boring Made** President

In the course of association business at St. Louis, Wallace Boring, onetime 368th squadron bombardier, was elected as president for the next year, taking over from Albert Switzer. Frederick Hudson, a 369th navigator, was elected as vice president to serve into 2000.

Returned once again to their posts were Russell Strong, 367th, secretary, and Robert Houser, 368th, treasurer.

Elected to three-year terms as directors were Paul Reioux and Donald R. Ross. Carryovers on the board are Leland Kessler and Claiborne Wilson. Also serving on the board next year is Switzer as past president and chairman of the nominating committee for the 2000/2001 slate.

Continuing as our contact in England is Ralph Franklin, who was also in attendance.

Completing their terms as directors were Sheldon Beigel and Russ Houghton, each of whom had served for three years.



Wallace Boring, president; Frederick Hudson, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; Robert N. Houser, treasurer; Leland Kessler, Paul Reioux, Donald R. Ross, Claiborne Wilson, directors; Alfred J. Switzer, past president; John J. Endicott, 2000 reunion chairman; Ralph Franklin, British representative, National School Cottage, Keysoe, Beds., MK44 2HP, England; Telephone from U.S. 011-441234-708715.

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#### 1999 Registrants

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## A Chaplain Looks Back on the Men of the 306th

Of the several chaplains who served the men at Thurleigh, Adrian Poletti was by far the longest tenured of them, having come to Thurleigh at about the time troops first arrived. He evidently departed some time in 1945.

arrived in England 17 Aug 42, and shortly found myself at Poddington with the 15th Bomb Group. A few weeks later there was a call from Bomber Command that a new Group was due at Thurleigh, and, would I arrange for the Catholic services there? But where was Thurleigh? Getting a map, I finally located the place and Sunday morning set out to find it.

At the field no one knew where anything was, but we came to the NAAFI (British USO) and there found Chaplain Roy M. MacLeod, Group Protestant chaplain, who had the place already arranged for services and about 200 men waiting for mass. A few weeks after that I was assigned to the 306th, and the next three years were some of the happiest of my life. Working for and with the men of the 306th, 39th Service Group, 4th Station Complement Squadron, and associated units was not work or hardship but a pleasure.

There were always Protestant and Catholic chaplains at Thurleigh; the lewish men were sent to their own services in town, and only later began having services in the chapel on Saturday morning conducted by a vis-iting chaplain sent from one of the

higher headquarters.

Because of the cooperation and support of our C.O.s, I doubt any Group received better religious attention than ours. As the NAAFI was unsuitable for services, Chaplain MacLeod and I went to Col. Charles Overacker and asked for a building that could be fitted up for a perma-nent Post Chapel. He at once agreed and we were soon set up in a wing of what was later to become the Red Cross Aero Club. An altar was built, suitable benches installed, daily services inaugurated, until it was a fair approximation of what the men were used to back home. There we remained for about 10 months, when a larger place was required and we moved across the street with the help of Col. Claude Putnam. This was a large Nissen hut, built for a recreation hall, and accommodating up to 400.

Post utilities lent a hand by installing a raised platform for the altar, putting in a beautiful altar rail and making improvements until the place was more like a parish church than a chapel. Finally, a small steeple complete with bell was erected on the front, and here the Post Chapel remained until the 306th left

Thurleigh.

Many happy memories are associated with our Post Chapel. I recall our first High Mass overseas with Sgt. George Lehman at the organ, and the choir made up of Henry Praderio, John Arruda, Albert Cassidy, William McHale, Leo Sweeney and Vincent

The first Catholic mission for American troops in England was conducted in this chapel. Following the closing exercises a communion breakfast (arranged with the always gracious cooperation of Capt. Wendell Hull, group mess officer), was served to over 300 men. Seated at the head table was General Frank A. Armstrong, who received word of his promotion that day (14 Feb 43). He had promised to be present if it was possible, but when



Chaplain Poletti gives his blessing to this crew (which may have been Raymond Check's 423rd crew), and a six-month veteran of combat with the 423rd Squadron.

I heard the glad news of his promotion I honestly did not expect him. However, true to his word, Gen. Armstrong walked in just as we were

sitting down.

When the general rose to speak amidst a thunder of applause, he mod-estly began: "Men, you all know me so there is use pretending, but I honestly want to say that I was never mixed up with so much religion in my life," and he pointed to the 10 chaplains at the head table). He then seriously told the men that he admired them for making the mission every night of the last week and urged them to continue liv-ing up to their faith, for it would make them better men and better soldiers, and he would do anything he could to encourage them to this end. So enthusiastic and successful were the results of the mission that eventually every field in the First Wing followed suit, as well as many in the 2nd and 3rd. Once again, the 306th led the way.

The first Protestant revival for Americans in England was likewise held in the Post Chapel of the 306th. Arranged by Chaplain MacLeod, it was scheduled for Holy Week, 1943. The last evening, Chaplain Maurice Reynolds, chief of chaplains, 8th Air Force, delivered the closing address. Shortly after this, Chaplain MacLeod was promoted to a higher position and reluctantly left the 306th after having been with it since it was organized at Wendover. His place was taken by Chaplain Everett E. Denlinger on 1 Jul 43, who was with us until 18 Sep 43; and was followed in turn by Chaplain Ralph E. Simester. Chaplain Simester stayed with us until June 45 and endeared himself to all by his jovial disposition and his genuine desire to help everyone.

Also on the pleasant side of the ledger, are the many Chriztmas parties for evacuated children made possible by the generosity of the men of Thurleigh. Three parties were given that first Christmas 1942 and were such a success not only for the children, but also gratifying to the men who went along to help, that they increased each year. The second year six parties were conducted in Bedford, Kettering, and nearby areas. The third year there were eight Christmas parties entertaining over two thousand youngsters. It became necessary to announce at Sunday services that no more candy, crackers or gum was desired as there was more that sufficient voluntary contributions from the men's weekly PX rations; all of which speaks volumes for the charity and generosity of the Americans, and in particular, the men of Thurleigh.

These parties were not only the best way of solidifying Anglo-American relationships, but what they meant to the children can be gathered from a Kettering paper, headed: "Father Christmas Safe"; Sgt. Joseph Fiddes, 367th, played Santa Claus at the Christmas parties and some weeks afterward (22 Feb 44) failed to return from a mission over Germany. Hearing of it, the children immediately began praying for his safety and inquiring constantly for news. When word finally came through that he was a prisoner of war, they had a celebration as though their long lost brother had just

How easy it would be to go on and on recalling the many happy inci-dents that filled those three years: the missions on which no ships were lost (not even from the 367th!); the day of the 200th mission and party that followed; the three pilgrimages to Walsingham, the last from the whole First Division led by the 306th, on which occasion the first mass in 400 years was said on the original site; V-E Day and the grand party on the ballfield; the many nights I enjoyed bacon and eggs with Sgt. Sweeney and his gang in the EM Club; the numberless fine friendships with the men of the Group, etc. etc.

But, there is something more important. For us the fortunate ones who came back home, these are all pleasant memories but many of our companions did not come back. In the hundreds of missions flown by the 306th (341), 177 ships were lost, which means the approximately 1700 men went down. Final records showed that 42% were KIA and 50% became prisoners. The others were evadees

and internees.

The war is over~. England, Thurleigh already seem like a long time ago, and I wonder how often we give a thought to the hundreds of our Group, our buddies and friends, we left "over there." Personally, I never think of Thurleigh, and that is often, without thinking of two in particular, Capt. "Pappy" Check and Lt. Paul Becker, of the 367th. Both were killed on their last missions. Stars and Stripes described "Pappy" as the most popular man on the base, and no one would dispute that statement. He did not have to die to be a hero, for he was just that to his crew, the ground crew, and everyone who knew him. It was a late briefing and about eight when we came out, and the men stood in front of Headquarters (the briefing room was then directly behind Headquarters) waiting for the trucks. Five or six of us were talking with

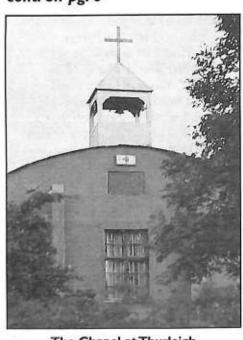
Check; several had wanted to go as his co-pilot and Lt Col James W. Wilson, his former 423rd commander, had won the honor.

There was a party scheduled for that night, and one of them said to Check, "Boy, will you celebrate tonight, bet we'll have to carry you home." I said, "Don't forget tomorrow is Sunday and Mass is as usual." Check just looked at me with his perpetual smile and said, "Don't worry, Father. I haven't missed one yet, and I'll be there tomorrow morning.

The ships took off and they came back, not one missing; not a flare was fired as they circled the field and everyone awaiting their return was in high spirits. The first one in, "Chennault's Pappy III", touched down, ran the length of the runway and turned off on the grass. I was with Capt. John Manning, 367th surgeon, standing in front of one of the ambulances and we watched, puzzled. Then two men dropped out of the nose and motioned to us. We drove over, and with electrifying finality, they said, "Check is dead." The news raced over the field, and a pall descended on Thurleigh. The day we lost 10 ships over Bremen did not affect the rest of the men nearly as much as this.

Check, who loved life so much, who was everybody's friend, "the finest pilot and the greatest guy on the field." He's dead? No, we didn't believe it. But a fighter coming out of the sun had caught them unawares and a bullet just nicked Check's head enough to be fatal. The straight-living, lovable Raymond J. Check was honored by more than men; he had run a long course in a short time, he was ready for a heavenly reward, and

cont. on pg. 8



The Chapel at Thurleigh



Phil Rueschoff, 367th radio operator, checks out of hotel.



Ladies of the 306th gather for b reakfast and a magic show at the reunion in the Henry VIII Hotel in St. Louis.



Three veterans of the Dale Briscoe 369th crew surround Hugh Phelan, 367th and chairman of the Little Rock reunion. Left to right: Briscoe, Phelan, John Hickey and Fred Sherman, who were Briscoe's bombardier and co-pilot, respectively.



Ready for dinner with their ladies are Robert Lavery, left and Robert Rockwell, right, both 367th. The ladies are Mary Catherine and Ruth, respectively.



An appreciative crowd applauded the St. Louis Strutters, an energetic group of senior women, who entertained following the dinner. Vernon Schimmel, in the left foreground, brought three daughters and a son to the banquet.



Art Franzino, foreground, and his wife, Rita, the crowd at the cloating theatre.

One group of reunion regulars, who stopped for refreshments during the Anheuser Busch tour were: Bill and Polly Feeser, Clements and Virginia Amundson, and Bill Houlihan. In the back right is Jean Feeley.

Reunion photography for this issue has been provided by Em Christianson, Bill Houlihan and Al Villagran.

# Rabbi Heaps Praise on WWII Veterans

By Rabbi Allan Schwartzman

Rabbi Schwartzman spent his WWII days as a crew chief on B-25 aircraft in the South Pacific area, and has been a regular attendee at the follow-on reunions of his Air Force unit. Following the war, like many others, he took advantage of the GI Bill to complete his education, and then entered his chosen field of endeavor in the synagogue. In retirement he lives in Sarasota, FL.

The following is his innovation at the 1977 reunion of men who served in the 5th and 13th Air Forces.

The American author, Studs Terkel, called World War II "The Good War." You and I who lived through so much of it can probably understand what he meant. It was a different kind of war. It was not fratricidal as was the Civil War. Most of us helieved that it was not imperialistic. Our enemies in Europe and in the Pacific were patently obscene, cruel and wicked. It was a war that most people on our side supported enthusiastically. If any war can be called "just", then surely the Second World War was just. And, it was "our" war! In a short period of time-rwo, three, tour maybe five years—we had the most tremendous experiences of all of

our lives: of fear, of jubilance, of misery, of hope, of comradeship. And those years of so long ago still remain with us as vivid memories. It was "our" war!

So many years have gone by. We are surely older and grayer; maybe even wiser. But the memories linger with us as they always will. The misery, the filth, the bugs, the mud, the mind-boggling heat, the torrential rains, the screaming jungle birds, the fitful sleep that was so often interrupted by air raids and crew wake-up calls—there were all part of "our" war in the Jungle Air Force.

Some of our bravest and best were cut down in those years--lost on missions over the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean, shot down by enemy action, or accidents, or mechanical failures of whatever name they give to such events. Others of our buddies succumbed to the dreadful diseases that afflicted so many of those islands. They were part of "our" war, and to this day we remember them for they were and still are part of us. We salute the brave, the courageous, the dedicated men of the 13th Air Force who did not return Stateside with us when "our" war was over. Their memories are with us now as we pause in solemn

prayer each in his own heart and in his own words.

During the past year, we old warriors of the 13th air Force Association
have suffered some grievous losses.
Our ranks are diminished. We will
miss them all. They added so much to
our reunions even as they shared their
duties in the Groups and Squadrons so
long ago. They were part of "our" war
--the last good war and we will miss
them. God bless their memories.

The years are going by too quickly. Those years of our youth in the South Pacific are very much still with us. Yet, for so many of the succeeding generations-our children and grandchildren-those years of struggle and eventual victory are only some fading photographs in albums and words written in books. If is for us who survived those battles from New Caledonia through the Philippines to continue to tell the story of "our" war. Thus we do memorialize those who perished in the struggle or who served with us and have now passed on. Let this be the highest purpose of the 13th Air Force Veterans Association. To this lofty aim, let us all pledge ourselves here and now. We did not fail our buddies in "our" war. Through it all, we stood side by side, each doing

his assigned task because we believed in our country and in eventual victory. We never thought of ourselves as heroes-only good Americans doing our job to help rid the world of the scourge of hate and bloodshed and evil that threatened all of us. It was "our" war on evil and we did our best to help eradicate it. And we did!

So many years have passed since those dark and dreary and dangerous times more than half a century ago. Make no mistake about it, the world is a better place because of what we did. Let us be sure of that. Of course, much more needs to be done, hopefully, through peaceful means. We too still have something to contribute. Our sacrifice then and our wisdom now can be an inspiration to those who follow. We owe no less to those whose memories we recall tonight.

May the God who guided and protected us so long ago be with us now and in the years ahead, filling our lives and those of our dear ones with faith and hope and confidence. May God enable us to continue to be a source of strength and inspiration for our beloved America. May God bless each of us now and always.

# Infantry and Weather Big **Problems**

All we seem to do is look back! So, its time to look once again at January 1945, as seen through the eyes of Capt. Herman B. Blumenthal, c.o. of the 4th Station Complement Squadron, in his monthly report:

The month of January, 1945, meant four big things to the 4th Station Complement Squadron. First of all, we were a month nearer home. Secondly, everyone started to think: Will my wings be changed for the crossed rifles of the Infantry? Other big considerations were fog, snow and burst pipes. Each of these four items contained a story that warrants preservation.

The Eastern front was aflame, people were looking at aircraft recognition books and studying the outlines of Stormoviks and other Russian planes. We expect to see them any

day (we hope).

The Infantry question has arisen from the program which is now in progress for taking men from the Communication Zone and converting them into front line doughboys. As we were given physical exams, and watched small groups leave, we could see the rise in morale all around us. The loudest gripers became strong, silent men, and one and all realized how fortunate we are to be where we are and doing what we are doing. Rumors flew thick and fast. People began running in and out of the orderly room wanting to know who was on the list for the Infantry. The 1st Sergeant's job was made a lot easier after this announcement. All the boys had a very strong desire to stay on the ball. A lot of people were sweating it

Now we come to the subject of tog and snow. The mess hall isn't the only place in England that you run into pea soup. Some of the fog is as thick as a GI's application for rotation to the States. The boys in the control tower really had their hands full. More than once they uttered a silent prayer when the aircraft were landing and taking off and the runway couldn't be seen from the tower. We all felt that our bombing and wiping out of a great percentage of the enemy's ability to wage war was beginning to pay off. In our small way we had contributed to past, present and future breakthroughs on all fronts. A tank destroyed on the battlefield had more glamour that one destroyed while it was being made, both however served the same pur-

Speaking of things that aren't glamorous, let's talk about latrines. Back home when it was cold the only things that used to bother us when they froze, were the family jalopy and the morning milk. But here we ran into something new. With a temperature around zero (we still haven't learned to say 32° of frost) pipes started bursting, latrines wouldn't flush and utilities had a hell of a job. Seems that over here burying the pipes deep in the ground and insulating them just isn't done. This explanation is very insufficient to a soldier who has the GI's, as he's usually in a hurry and doesn't like to go around testing pipes. Our utilities section is gradually bring-ing this under control. You can board up a lot of buildings but, like old man river, there are some things that keep on rolling along.

We had terrific snow storms this month. Our boys were up night after night clearing the runways, sanding roads, and many other winter jobs necessary to keep 'em flying. The word "flying" makes some of us wish we had our Flexible Flyer sleds.



George and Marie Kellogg at the near end of the table, and down the left side are Bill Edwards, and Ada Lee and Joe Broussard, all 367th.

Perhaps we're not as grown up as we think.

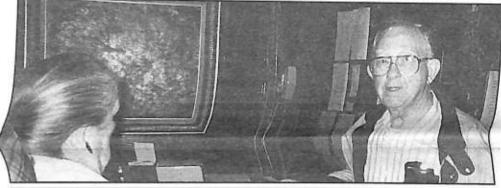
It's worthy of mention at this time that two of our men became proud fathers during the month. Pfc. Frank Grant was blessed with a son and Cpl. James Walker was blessed with a daughter.

Looking back on this month, the weather was terrible, the accomplishments great, and victory was getting closer and closer.

#### **Five Pairs** and a Quartet

Joe and Pat Hathaway, 423rd





Janet and Grover Goode, 368th





Janice and Don Ross, 368th & GP

Bill Carlile, GP, and Bob Starzynski,



Nelson & Kathryn Ake, Polly & Bill Feeser, 367th



#### **Obituaries**

Alfred L. Bishop, 423rd armorer, died 27 May 64 in Corpus Christi, TX, of a heart attack shortly after completing 20 years on active duty with the USAF. He left his wife, Yukiko, 3c.

Glen A. Blakemore, 367th engineer (w.Clarence Fischer) and POW 6 Mar 43 (w. John Ryan), died 3 Nov 97 in Tonkawa, OK. Ryan's plane went down on a raid to St. Nazaire and Blakemore evaded capture for 11 months. He had arrived with the Group 15 Feb 43. He leaves his wife, Helen, Is, 3gc.

Billy S. Brown, 369th radio operator (Keith Conley crew) and 58th EM to complete a combat tour, died 2 May 99 in Woodland Hills, CA. He arrived with the Group 12 Mar 43 and left 14 Aug 43.

William D. Cardle, 368th assistant crew chief, died 18 Sep 99 in San Jose, CA. He leaves 3c, 5gc.

Flake B. Coulter, 423rd gunner (Robert Horn crew), died 17 Feb 99 in Woodleaf, NC. He joined the Group 15 May 44 and completed combat 8 Aug 44. He later was an instructor in the Armament School at Denver, CO. Coulter was a farmer after service. He leaves his wife, Sarah.

Roger H. Curtis, 368th copilot (Wilfred Forsyth crew), died in early 99 in Swartz Creek, MI.

Arnold H. Eberly, a KP and armorer, and one half of a pair of twin brothers at Thurleigh, died in Jan 99 in Richmond, VA.

Howard C. Granger, 368th waist gunner (Charles W. Smith crew), died 7 Modefield, CO. He arrived with the 306th in Nov 43 and finished his combat tour 6 Jun 44. He reentered service in 1952 and worked in electronics until retirement in 1972. During that period he was in Newfoundland, Korea, London, and Frankfurt, Germany. He leaves his wife, Joyce, 4c, 10gc, 4ggc.

Col. Harold C. Greene, 369th radio operator and the 6th EM to complete a 306th combat tour, died 13 Sep 76 in McLean, VA. He was commissioned shortly after leaving the 306th in Jun 43 and became a communications officer, retiring in 66 from the USAF. He left his wife and 4c.

Theodore A. (Terry) Harkin, 369th gunner, died 30 Jul 99 in Hudson, FL. He completed his combat tour in Jun 44. For some years he lived and worked in England before returning to the U. S. He leaves his wife, 3c, 3gc.

John F. Huistra, 423rd bombardier (Ralph Clark crew), and POW 29 Mar 44 at Brunswick, Germany (Nelson Hardin crew), died 2 Aug 99 in Allendale, MI, after suffering a massive stroke. He had retired as a district director with the Michigan Employment Security Commission. He leaves his second wife, Phyllis, Is, 4gc, 4ggc.

Lawrence A. Jagnow, 369th radio operator (Gennaro Carrazzone crew), died 29 May 99 in Seminole, FL. He came to the Group 17 Jul 44 and completed 35 missions 8 Mar 45. He was a manufacturer's representative, and leaves his wife, Elizabeth.

Leo H. Lipman, 368th orderly, died in Dec 97 in Everettt, WA. He leaves his wife. Daphne, whom he married at Thurleugh in 45.

 $\frac{X_1/I_{min} R}{A_{oc}k}$ , 423rd armament  $\frac{X_1/I_{min} R}{A_{$ 



H. Kenneth McCaleb

#### **VA** Benefit

In 1990, surviving spouses who remarried were no longer eligible for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). As of Oct 1, 1998, the Veterans Benefits Act permits restoration of DIC payments to a surviving spouse if the remarriage is terminated through death, divorce or annulment.

This is an important resource for veterans' surviving spouses who often have limited means of support. We are concerned that Veterans' Affairs (VA) may not be able to reach all of these spouses, and we hope that this will let them know they may once again be entitled to this benefit. Those who think they are eligible should contact their local VA Regional Office or call VA toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Togo D. West, Jr. Secretary of Veterans Affairs

William A. Niblett, Jr., with the 4th Station Complement Squadron, died earlier this year in Delmar, DE. He spent 46 years with the Callaway Typewriter Co., in Salisbury, MD, retiring as president in Aug. 86.

John B. Prescott, 423rd bombardier (Donald Cheney crew), died 5 Sep 99 in Scottedale, AZ. He flew 20 missions after arriving with the Group 13 Feb 43. Prescott leaves his wife, Jane, 3c, 7gc, lggc.

John E. Price, 423rd gunner (Paul Reioux crew), died 17 Oct 98 in Hudson, NC. Arriving with the Group 1 Sep 44, he completed his tour in Mar 45. He was one of his crew to bail out 28 Dec 44 when their returning A/C caught fire over England. He leaves his wife, Juanita.

Walter R. Siner, 369th pilot, has died. He came to the USAAF from the RCAF, and joined the 369th as pilot 14 Feb 44. Siner served in the 306th at least into Dec 44. He leaves his wife, Linda.

John W. Tomke, 369th tail gunner (Robert Ritter crew), died 3 Jun 99 in Battle Creek, IA. He had retired 1 Oct 86 as vice president, Ida County State Bank, IA. Tomke completed nine missions and became a POW 15 Oct 44 at Cologne (w. Ritter). He attended Loras College for three years and leaves his wife, Joan.

George K. Wolchesky, 423rd clerk, died 17 Aug 99 in Hazelton, PA. He had come to the Group 3 Apr 42 at Wendover, UT, and stayed for three and one-half years. He leaves his wife.

#### 306th Family

Dorothy Breslin, wife of William Breslin, 368th pilot, died in Sep in Ormond Beach, FL, after a long illness. She also leaves 6c, 11gc.

Annie Corderman, second wife of <u>Delmar Corderman</u>, 368th crew chief, died 24 Dec 98 in Sac City, IA.

Lucy Percic, widow of Henry Percic, 367th, died recently.

Betty Robison, wife of <u>Brice Robison</u>, 423rd tail gunner, died 9 Aug 99 in Lansing, MI

## Peace Study Funded by McCaleb

Kenneth McCaleb was one of the one-hundred men of the 306th who were shot down on the infamous mission to Schweinfurt, Germany, on 14 Oct 44. He was a survivor, and spent 19 months in Stalag Luft III.

His experiences, and the accumulated wisdom he has gained since that time more than 55 years ago, have now coalesced into a gift from he and his wife, Margaret, to the student newspaper at Missouri Southern College. Both of the McCalebs graduated from what was then Joplin Junior College.

This gift of \$150,000 in stock was made for the establishment of the McCaleb Initiative for Peace.

"The purpose of this Initiative is to examine the causes of war and to discuss ways by which war can be prevented," says the document prepared by the Missouri Southern Foundation.

It is hoped that "over the lifetime of this Initiative" that the students will "research war and peace, visit sites of former wars, and perhaps even sites of present wars. They will visit monuments to past victories and defeats and will visit with survivors of war, and they will write their observations. These student reporters, most of whom will be at the age of McCaleb when he was shot down, will compile memories of veterans of battles, of prisoner-of-war camps, of concentration camps, of resettlement camps, of refugee centers and of those who worked and officiated at these centers. They will deal in their reporting with the devastation wreaked by war. They will visit institutes where the study of war and the promotion of peace are principal concerns, and they will report their findings."

McCaleb's combat career had come to an end on 14 Oct along with other 367th members as the Group lost 10 planes. McCaleb was on Richard Butler's crew, all of whom survived. But others from the same officer barracks at Thurleigh were not as fortunate, one being beheaded upon capture and another having been shot in his parachute by an enemy fighter pilot. Another officer crew of four men was hanged at Bremen a week later.

The booklet illuminating McCaleb's approach to peace says "it is a search for peace, for understanding the causes of war, and for taking some direct actions." And the book's opening statement concludes "Peace, after all, is the grandest of all international studies."

If you are interested in discussing the matter further with the McCaleb's, they have made their home for some years at 809 Brickell, Huntsville, AL 35805.

Des Moines, IA 50310



# Widow Tells of her Life and Loss

Kenneth Streun joined the ranks of 369th pilots on 11 Dec 44, bringing his crew to Thurleigh for the late stages of the war. As was typical of this time period, Streun underwent a thorough indoctrination into the vagaries and fortunes of war as a copilot for several missions.

When he left Oklahoma for pilot training, crew training, and the long flight to England, he left behind a young bride.

In the course of his early mission history he crossed cockpits with Robert Stewart, a legendary 369th pilot of the period. And these two men and their crew went down in the water on the return from a mission to Kassel, Germany, 1 Jan 45.

Now Streun's visage is immortalized on the cover of a 322-page book entitled, "Once There Was a Man." That man was the light of the young bride's life and he has remained illuminated there today by Lucille Streun in her paean to his memory.

Cille Fletcher, who became the young bride, tells her life's story in this book, as well as tracing the life of "Ted" Streun. It is an interesting look at life through her eyes.

Ted Streun's widow never contemplated remarriage, explaining late in the book, "She never again felt completely at home anywhere...There was a huge emptiness nothing could fill. She seldom felt a part of life again except on the fringes of the lives of a few people, but mostly through her work and studies.

"Never able to rebuild her personal life, eventually she became most comfortable alone."

There may	be	no	dues,	BUT
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It does take money to keep the 306th Association flying. Those who are able are asked to make an annual contribution to keep everything running smoothly. No one is dropped from the mailing list for non-payment! Your gift is tax deductible.

riease a	ccept my gift to the 306th BG Assoc	iation. \$	
NAME			
STREET AN	ND NO.		
CITY, STATI	E & ZIP		
TELEPHON	E NO.	306TH UNIT	
Send to:	Robert N. Houser, Treasurer		
	306th Bomb Group Association P.O. Box 13362	-	DATE

# Casey Jones Book Ready for Purchase

Project 'Casey Jones', 1945-46, a 61-page booklet authored by Robert 1. Boyd at the time he was chief historian for Strategic Air Command, was never circulated widely.

But as there are a number of men in the 306th who served with the great European and North African mapping project, we have available a few copies of the book which will cost

you \$10 each.

The newest B-17s left in the 8th at the end of hostilities in Europe were gathered by the 305th and 306th Bomb Groups, were stripped of their guns and armor plate and then became the camera platforms for this far-seeing project, the likes of which had never been undertaken before.

But like many such research efforts, it was nullified as soon as satellites came on the scene and took over the long range topographic mapping of the entire globe. While it may be only rumor, it is reported that not only have the planes and cameras disappeared, but the maps are no longer to be found even in the files of the Defense Mapping Agency.

Thus, a great mapping idea has gone into the dust bin of history.

For one of the copies of this publication, send the secretary a check for \$10, and you will get Boyd's book in

## Allen Shot by Germans

William D. Allen, 423rd navigator on Wilbur O'Brien's plane 15 Jun 44 on a mission to Nantes, France, bailed out of the stricken plane and landed safely near St. Herblein, France, Later, in trying to elude his German pursuers he was shot and killed.

The Missing Air Crew report for this crew makes no comment on Allen, while accounting for the other crew members, except for John Sutton, a waist gunner. Sutton was captured and was later returned to the US.

Recently the secretary was in receipt of a letter from Michel Lugez of St. Nazaire, France, inquiring about Allen and including a copy of the death certificare recorded in the townhall at St. Herblein on 16 June.



367th: Front: Donald Dorian wg, John Quinn ro, John E. Barnes eng, Harold Pease wg. Back David Farrell P.



367th: Front: Unknown, Joseph W. Lukens B, H. Kenneth McCaleb N. Back: Alexander Hayburn, James Harris.



368th: Front: not 306th; Don Dumenigo bt, Julius Minucci tg, Jack Shacklett g. Back: L. B. Dorich P, William Wilson CP, Murray Hepple N.

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#### 306ers at Mesa

The 306th was represented among the 300 people attending the '99 reunion of the Air Force Escape & Evasion Society in May at Mesa, AZ. They were: Howard and Ruth Snyder, Ed and Helen Sobie, and Robert and Louise Starzynski.

#### 367th EM in Jan '44

Pvt	18
Pfc	28
Cpl	84
Sgt	121
S/Sgt	89
T/Sgt	27
1st Sgt	1
1st MSgt	18
	386

#### Memorials

In memory of Howard Granger 368th, by his wife, Joyce.

In memory of Werner H Kennedy, by his wife, Esther.

In memory of Ray K. Schieb, Anne Lyles and Margueritte Thach, by Ruth

In memory of Joe Borzym and William Casey (Banshee crew), by Don R.

In memory of John B. Prescott, by his

In memory of Jack Kalb, Clay Ganes and Keith Jackson, by A1 Visconti.

In memory of J. Hurst Eberly and A. Hudgins Eberly, by Mrs. J. Hurst Eberly.

In memory of Edward Espitallier, by his wife, Mary.

In memory of Ray Yoder, by his wife,

In memory of Joe Bowles and Ray Schieb, by Billy Casseday.

In memory of Jack Samway, by his wife, Marie.

In memory of Ruby Horst, by Douglas F. Horst.

In memory of Clayton R. Meyer, by his wife, Marlene.

In memory of Freeling F. Haney Henry G. Nunnery, John W. Hall, Robert S. Snow, and Paul Martin, by the five surviving members of Martin's crew: Burns Roper, Arthur Trimble, George Bachmann, Frank Whitney and Andrew Stefano.

Gifts may be made in memory of 306th personnel or family by sending your check, so designated, to the 306th Memorial Fund, and posting it to the Association treasurer, whose address appears on page 2 of this paper. All gifts made during the preceding quarter will be noted in each issue of Echoes. Expenditure of these funds is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.



In 1943, Ben Pelzel, 368th medic, checks out directional signs as he tours the Bedford area on his bicycle. Such a scene was duplicated all over England by 306th men and hun-dreds of other 8th AF people who learned their way around the highways and byways of England.

#### Chaplain (cont. from pg.3)

so the Great Pilot had called him home. There was Mass as usual the next morning, and while Check wasn't there (at least visibly) it was said for him, and many of his squadron attended.

I remember Lt. Becker graphically too, because he used to wake me up for briefings and was always the first one in the chapel. He received Holy Communion before every mission and then would devotedly kneel before the Shrine of Our Lady in the Post Chapel and light a candle. Toward the end of the war, there began a custom of the men leaving their wings here when they finished their missions and went home. It was 3 Feb 45, the morning of a great American raid on Berlin, and was Becker's 35th and last

mission. He came to me before he left the Chapel and said, "Well, Father, this is, my last one; tonight you can pin my wings up there with the rest." Becker was flying as navigator in Vernor Daley's plane, "Rose of York,' a longtime lead ship for the squadron. And it was among the missing, going down in the North Sea en route home, reporting one engine out and another losing fuel. Daley's last message was that he thought they could make England.

These are but two out of the hundreds, but every one of us can recall these and many more incidents of a similar nature. This is what Victory cost. Because it is human to forget, a perpetual bequest of masses has been arranged at Holy Cross Monastery in Dunkirk, NY, in memory of all the men of the 306th who made the supreme sacrifice. Long after we for-

get, even when everyone forgets, masses and prayers will still be said for our comrades as long as the world goes on. I know that all men who contributed to this Memorial Fund will be glad to know that it went over the top and final arrangements were completed three years ago. May they all rest in peace!

In thinking of those days and our friends who didn't come back, may we also recall the prayer that was read over their grave:

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that whilst we lament the departure of our brother out of this life, we may bear in mind that we are most certainly to follow him. Give us grace to make ready for that last hour by a devout and holy life, and protect us against a sudden and unprovided death. Teach us how to watch and pray that when thy summons comes,

we may go forth to meet our Heavenly Father and enter with him into life everlasting. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Adrian M. Poletti was born in Weehawken, NJ, 8 Sep 07. He earned degrees in study with the Order of Passionist Monateries, including his AB, BA, and Doctor of Philosophy. At the time he wrote the above piece he was serving in Greenville, NC. He was 34 years of age when he came to the 306th at Thurleigh, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his faithful service to all men at Thurleigh. He died 24 Dec 80 in Baltimore, MD.

### Reioux Gets Belated DFC 54 Years Late

Instead of getting a Distinguished Flying Cross in January, 1945, Paul Reioux, received his under much different circumstances, and it did not happen until 11 Jun 99 under a brilliant blue sky in Hawaii, and with his wife and all of his children gathered around.

Paul would also probably agree that the presenter, Col. Ann Testa, was much prettier than another grizzled combat veteran giving it to him at Thurleigh.

It was all due to some very late work by James Talley of Knoxville, TN, now a retired banker, but Rejoux's navigator on the day in question that was recognized by this decoration.

The action cited was for 28 Dec 44, when on return from a successful bombing mission to the rail yards at Coblenz, Germany. Reioux's plane, 42-107055-M, crashed and burned after the crew had departed. Both Reioux and Talley, last out of the burning ship, spent some weeks in the 7th General Hospital, near where they landed, in recovery from their injuries.

Flying with Reioux that day were Robert Daniel, copilot; John B. Price, engineer; Herman H. Kaye, radio; Leon J. Persac, ball turret; Colvin W. Sheorn, waist, and John W. Perry, tail. Milton Olshewitz, bombardier, went out of the plane without his chute and was killed.

This was Reioux's 29th mission. The Reioux's have missed only one of our reunions, and were in St. Louis. Because they have lived on Maui since his retirement 13 years ago, our reunions have also become a focal point for one or more of their children as well. This gives both parents and children more time together, and next year will be even easier for the family with our gathering in San Diego.

#### Oh, The Places We've Been

We've gone South and North, East and West for the reunions of the 306th since that first gathering under the aegis of the 8th Air Force Association back in 1975. At that event in Miami Beach we had 35 members of the 306th on hand, and with a total registration for all the 8th of about 100.

For the next seven years we stayed with the 8th, meeting in England and Dayton 1976, St. Louis 1977, Washington 1978, Phoenix 1979, Orlando 1980, St Paul 1981 and lastly, in England an Cincinnati in 1982. Then, at the invitation of Judge



Front row: Michele Reioux, Paul and Aileen. Back row: Barry Reioux, James Reioux, George Reioux, Bill Finch and Theresa Reioux Finch.

## San Diego is 2000 Target

The Board of Directors issues a firm invitation to each of you on our mailing list to be with us for the millennial reunion, 2000, in San Diego, CA.

We don't yet have a date, but it will be in September/October. The chairman will be John J. Endicott, a resident of Escondido, and a 423rd pilot who flew his combat in Apr 1945.

It is hoped that with his direction and enthusiasm at the helm that we will attract a large representation of 306th Californians, many of whom may not have attended one of our joyous and adventurous reunions before.

While other groups have already closed up shop and held their last reunion, we feel that a considerable portion of the more than 2200 306th veterans on our mailing list are not yet ready to strike their tents.

Make your plans now to attend. If you are planning on flying be sure to get your air reservations taken care at least

Donald R. Ross, we went to Omaha in 1983 for our own 306th reunion. There was never any question again of meeting in conjunction with the 8th. We were bigger and happier on our own. After Omaha it was Fort Worth 1984, Colorado Springs 1985, Dayton 1986, Washington 1987, Las Vegas 1988, Little Rock 1989, San Antonio 1990, Pittsburgh 1991, Bedford and London 1992, Seattle 1993, Des Moines, 1994, Knoxville 1995, Las Vegas 1996, Orlando 1997, Savannah 1998 and St. Louis 1999.

two months in advance to get the best rates. There is excellent service into San Diego from all over the United States, so you should be able to get their with ease.

The January issue of Echoes will feature dates, the headquarters hotel and at least a taste of the program that 14, 16, 17 and 20, which we quote below: 14. If you forget a 'Relief Can', toll up a map and use the B-3 Drift Meter hole.

Someone issued on 15 Apr 44 "Hints

to a new Operational Navigator", was uncovered recently by Bob Stevenson,

368th navigator. He particularly liked

How to be a

**Navigator** 

16. When you are doing your work properly, you have not time to think of your 'Sugar' or to get nervous.

17. Armor plate should be secured in place on the floor of your compartment. Your 'steel helmet' should be worn unless you have a very thick head. Your 'Flak Suit' may be heavy, but remember it is the type of metal you take off with pulling a string.

 Combat flying places the greatest demand on the use of common sense known to mankind (New Proverb)

will be ready for you in the fall. You'll want to see the San Diego Zoo and/or its wild animal farm at the very least, Mexico lies only a very few miles to the south, and there is much more there to be enjoyed.

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