

PERSONNEL RECORD UPDATE

306th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Complete as much of this form as you wish, and return to Russell A. Strong, Secretary, 306th BG Association, 5323 Cheval Place, Charlotte, NC 28205.

Date completed 8/18/92

LAST NAME: ADAMS FIRST NAME: ALBERT MI: A TITLE: LTC

Street address: 60 WATER OAKWAY Telephone: (813) 785-1715

City, State, Zip: OLDSMAR FL 34677

Date of birth: 10/20/16

Wife's name: DOLORES

College(s) attended: PURDUE

Degree(s): ME Year(s): 4

Last employment & job title & retirement date:

CERTAINTEED CORP  
CHIEF ENGR 1983 MAY

Reunions attended: NONE

Serial #: 0742818

Squadron: 423RD

Specialty: PILOT

Date joined 306th: OCT 21, 43

If combat, what crew: FT 870-AJ-8

Special duties or assignments w/306th: C FLIGHT COMMANDER

Number of missions flown: 30

Date of last mission: 22 APRIL 44

Date left 306th: 26 APRIL 1944

Highest rank/grade w/306th: 1ST LT

Other 8th AF units served with:

Top service assignment after 306th: INSTRUCTOR

USAF retirement date: 20 NOV 46

Rank/grade: CAPT

Copies of old 306th orders, either from the Group or Station 111, or any of the squadrons or other units serving with the 306th, are sought by the secretary, as many of these do not appear in any collections of materials in Federal files:

If you know of others who served with the 306th who do not appear in the current directory, please add their names and current/WWII hometowns/or other addresses to the back of this sheet so that searches may be implemented to add them to our present 306th roster.

15 September 1992

Dear Al:

I am sorry that I missed you on your recent foray through North Carolina. We went to the reunion in England, and then took the following week's tour of France, including Paris and the invasion beaches.

Now we are home. And I do hope that you will try us again when going in one direction or the other. We are usually home, although our Charlotte friends may think differently. We have two sons living near us here, and also others in Rochester, NY, Columbus, OH, and Paw Paw, MI. So, we do have to travel a bit to keep track of eight grandchildren.

There is likely to be a visit to Florida for us this winter, as my wife's brother has a condo at Bellaire Beach, which isn't far from you. We also have a good friend from other days in Kalamazoo, MI, who lives in Oldsmar--Robert and Helen Wetnight. He was vp at Western Michigan University and retired a couple of years before I did.

I enjoyed all of the materials you sent along--and would like to use your story of what was going on in the front of the airplane, while the men were bailing out the back. I think it would be a good continuation of the whole tale and kind of bring everything together once again.

If you have no objections, I'll go ahead. And, that leads me to a crew picture--do you have one? If so, I'd like to borrow it.

Well, perhaps one of these days before too long we will be able to get together for a more personal visit about the 306th.

The reunion in England was fantastic, nearly 400 there, and everyone that I saw was having a grand time. Of course, one lady did fall and break her hip. That kind of spoiled it for her and her husband of a month. But, for almost everyone it was a great affair. More about it in the next two issues of Echoes.

All the best,

Dear Mr Strong:

8/23/92

Enclosed is the following information on the 6 March 1944 mission as you requested.

1. Pilots account of 6 March 1944 mission
2. Remarks on the July 1989 issue of Echoes page 7  
"Intercoms Left Much to Chance"
- 3 General Order 280 Part III pages 9 & 11
- 4 Two articles I received from Martin Cech on this mission that would be of interest

I have also included the following with this package

- 5 Comments on "First Over Germany"
- 6 Operational Sortie Records
- 7 306<sup>th</sup> Special order No 284
- 8 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron Order No 5
9. Personnel Record update

If there are any questions on any of the above items please call or write. I will be happy to answer them

Sincerely  
Al Adams

Copies to

William B Barnes Items 1 to 7

John K Hedberg "

Matthew E. Palencia "

Martin Cech Items 1 to 3 & 5 to 7

*Adams*

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
Office of the Commanding Officer  
United States Forces

(G-B-3)

AFO 634,  
21 October, 1943.

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 284 )

1. Pursuant to VCCO, this Hq, Sgt FRANK C. VILLER, 39165976, 369th Bomb Sq (H), 306th Bomb Gp (H), WFR o/a 21 October, 1943, to 12th RCD, AFO 635, to carry out instr of CO. TD approx 2 days. CTRS. FD will pay mont alms in lieu of rat and qrs, as prescribed in par C, Table II, AR 35-4520, at the rate of \$ 3.00 per day for one man for approx two days for rat, and at the rate of \$ 2.00 per day for one man for approx two days for qrs. TWA. TCNT. TDM. 91-5 P 432-02 A 212/40425.

2. Pursuant to VCCO, this Hq, the fol named O, 423rd Bomb Sq (H), 306th Bomb Gp (H), WFR o/a 22 Oct, 1943, to Amer Red Cross Club at Bournemouth, rptg on ar threat to Director for further instr. TD approx 7 days. CTRS. A per diem of \$ 6.00 is auth while traveling and a flat per diem of \$ 2.00 per day is auth while at TD sta. TWA. TCNT. TDM. 91-5 P 432-02 A 0425-24:  
1st Lt CHARLES E. MUMGER 0-734119 1st Lt HENRY J. ENGEL 0-742987

3. Pursuant to VCCO, this Hq, the fol named Etl, 423rd Bomb Sq (H), 306th Bomb Gp (H), WFR o/a 22 Oct, 1943, to Amer Red Cross Club at Bournemouth, rptg on ar threat to Director, for further instr. TD approx 7 days. CTRS. FD will pay mont alms in lieu of rat, as prescribed in par C, Table I, AR 35-4520, at the rate of \$ 3.00 per day for two men for approx seven days for rat. TWA. TCNT. TDM. 7-61 P 411-07 A 0502-24:  
T/Sgt HERBERT W. HINKES 18104941 S/Sgt LESTER L. PARKS 35369301

4. In comp with par 1, SO 120, Hq, 18th Weather Sq, AFO 633, dd 16 Oct, 1943, 2nd Lt JOHN J. CULLEN, 0-861799, is reld fr attach and dy with Hq, 306th Bomb Gp (H), and further attach with 490th Air Base Hq & Air Base Sqdn, off this date, and will rpt to CO thereof for dy. Perm C of sta. WFR and/or WFGI w/o delay to jn. TWA. TCNT. TDM. 91-5 P 431-02 A 212/40425.

5. In comp with par 6, SO 35, Hq, 1st Bomb Div, AFO 634, dd 20 Oct, 1943, 1st Lt ROBERT L. WHITNEY, 0-443363, is reld fr dy and asgmt with 369th Bomb Sq (H), and is reasgd to Hq, 40th Combat Bomb Wg (H), off this date, and will rpt to CO thereof for dy. No C of sta.

6. In comp with par 15, SO 35, Hq, 1st Bomb Div, AFO 634, dd 20 Oct, 1943, Sgt WILLIAM L. HAYES, 14092268, 369th Bomb Sq (H), 306th Bomb Gp (H), WFR No 1 Red Sch, RAF Sta Cranwell, 27 Oct, 1943, to rpt Etl sd to Condt TD stu 2 wks maint of V.H.F. Equip. Rat and qrs will be furn at sch. Etl will take adv TX rat, fatigue clo, notebooks, pencils, and cys of these O. TWA. CCNT. TDM. 91-5 P 432-02 A 212/40425. CTRS.

7. Having rptd to this sta, in comp with par 6, SO 34, Hq, 1st Bomb Div, AFO 634, dd 19 Oct, 1943, and placed on DS for a period of 3 wks, Wfc GEORGE H. CULLISON, 37493528, is further attach to 423rd Bomb Sq (H), 306th Bomb Gp (H), for rat and qrs.

8. PAC in AR 605-115, the fol named O, AC, are hereby granted leaves of absence, for number of days indicated, off o/a dates indicated:

	<u>NO. OF DAYS</u>	<u>EFF DATE</u>
Capt PERCY A. VINCENT, 0-433064	Three days	23 Oct, 1943.
2nd Lt TRYGVE C. OLSON, 0-745160	Two days	21 Oct, 1943.

R E S T R I C T E D

SO 284, Hq, 306th Bomb Gp (H), 21 Oct, 1943. Cont'd.

9. Having rptd to this sta, in comp with VCCO, Hq, 2900 CCRG Gp (Bomb) (Prov) APO 634, 21 Oct, 1943, and asgd to 306th Bomb Gp (H), the fol named O and EM, are further asgd to orgns indicated, eff this date, and will rpt to CO thereof for dy:

358th Bomb Sq (H) - 306th Bomb Gp (H)

2nd Lt JOHN H. KELLY	0-799411 (P)	2nd Lt CHARLES H. BAYLESS	0-673944 (CP)
2nd Lt MICHAEL KALISH	0-685635 (N)	2nd Lt TED J. BOSWELL	0-679353 (B)
Sgt George W. Wallace	3824594 (E)	S/Sgt Earnest C. Smartt	34395927 (R)
S/Sgt Carl E. Hudson	1876696 (AE)	Sgt Alfred H. Pectz	11101194 (G)
Sgt William C. Vought	13092751 (G)	Sgt William C. Christian	17060591 (G)

359th Bomb Sq (H) - 306th Bomb Gp (H)

2nd Lt HOWARD J. SNYDER	0-427421 (P)	2nd Lt GEORGE J. BINE	0-748164 (CP)
2nd Lt ROBERT J. BENNINGER	0-685469 (N)	2nd Lt RICHARD L. DANIELS	0-679378 (B)
S/Sgt Roy K. Holbert	34056012 (E)	S/Sgt Ross L. Kahler	33324107 (R)
S/Sgt Joseph J. Mucial	15025549 (AE)	Sgt John Pindroch	15329492 (AR)
Sgt Louis J. Colwart	10151729 (G)	S/Sgt William O. Slenker	16101156 (G)

423rd Bomb Sq (H) - 306th Bomb Gp (H)

2nd Lt WILLIAM B. BARNES	0-655707 (N)	2nd Lt HERBERT A. ADAMS	0-742818 (P)
2nd Lt JOSEPH B. MARIAS III	0-743205 (CP)	2nd Lt ARNOLD J. DUGNI	0-679359 (B)
S/Sgt Lloyd B. Keene	36227704 (E)	S/Sgt Matthew E. Palenica	35319409 (R)
S/Sgt Cleo C. White	15017498 (AE)	Sgt Lawrence R. Stevenson	39388964 (G)
Sgt John K. Hedberg	16015447 (G)	Sgt Hugo Cappellari	12155785 (G)

10. Pursuant to VCCO, this Hq, Sgt MURRAY B. JENKINS, 31066522, 309th Bomb Sq (H), 306th Bomb Gp (H), WER a/a 21 October, 1943 to CO, Hq, 8th AF, APO 633, to carry out inst. of CO. EL approx 1 day, GERS. FO will pay mont alws in lieu of rat and qrs, as prescribed in par C, Table II, AR 35-4520, at the rate of \$ 3.00 per day for one man for approx one day for rat, and at the rate of \$ 2.00 per day for one man for approx: one day for qrs. T.M. TCNT. TDM. 91-5 P 432-02 A 212/40425.

By order of Colonel ROBINSON:

D. R. COLEMAN,  
Lt. Col., A.C.,  
Executive.

OFFICIAL:

*Paul J. Bullie*  
PAUL J. BULLIE,  
1st Lt., A.C.,  
Assistant Adjutant.

R E S T R I C T E D

60 Water Oaks Way  
Oldemar, DL, 34677  
3/11/92

Dear Mr. Strong:

Sorry for the delay in sending the documents from my 201 file and the details of the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1944 mission. However, a short time after your phone call I was scheduled for my annual physical. From there on and many tests the doctors determined I had prostate cancer that suprised me. Time just slipped by as I inquired and weighed all the alternatives in what would be the best approach to prevent its spread. Finally decided to have it removed surgically. I am now recovering from this radical surgery with the doctors orders not to lift over 5 lbs for a period of 6 weeks. This incident generated an avalanch of medical insurance reports which I finished this week. Also during this period the wife and I were scheduled to visit our daughter and her husband to see our new grandson.

With all the above activity, I have fallen behind with all my chores around the house. I still have to catch up with the landscaping before summer rolls around and also

answer all the correspondence we received while away from home. I certainly need to start on my income tax before time runs out. So if you will bear with me, I'll get to your request shortly.

Sincerely  
Al Adams

P.S. Enclosed is a check for \$38<sup>00</sup> and a order form for your book "Trust Over Germany"

Thanks  
a<sup>3</sup>

Jan 20, 1993

Dear Russell:

Enclosed is the picture of the crew members taken a short time before we flew to Prestwick Scotland via Gander Newfoundland. Note that everyone signed the front of the picture. There should be no question of the individual crew members.

L. B. Keene does not appear on the photo since he joined us after the picture was taken.

Since some of the names are a little difficult to read, here is the line up from left to right.

Back Line Standing

William Cleo Herb Hugo Lawrence John K  
Eben White Edenholm Cappelli Stevenson Hedberg

Front Line Kneeling

al Joe Bill Arnold  
Adams Mathis Barner Bugni

As to the material I recently sent to you, you certainly have my permission to use it as you see fit.

If you are ever in our neck of the woods, give me a call so we can get together for a visit and recount our 306<sup>th</sup> experience.

Note, however we will be away on a trip from Mar 28 to April 12

As Always  
Al Adams



GEORGE B. WEST, O-802893, First Lieutenant, Army Air Forces, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement, while piloting his Flying Fortress on numerous bombing missions deep into Germany, Lieutenant West's courage and devotion to duty have been a constant example for his fellow flyers. On the mission dispatched 25 February 1944, one engine of his aircraft became disabled shortly after crossing the enemy coast, but in spite of this, he continued on to the target and successfully bombed it. Again on 2 March 1944, two engines of Lieutenant West's plane cut out as he approached the target. Unable to maintain his position in the formation, he followed his group over the target and made an excellent bombing run later flying his crippled bomber back to England unescorted. Shortly after taking off on 6 March 1944, the oxygen system in the left rear of the plane became inoperative. Determined to complete the mission, Lieutenant West kept his crew off of oxygen as long as possible and then re-positioned his crew, making it possible to continue on to the target. The courage, tenacity of purpose and devotion to duty displayed by Lieutenant West under adverse conditions have won for him the admiration of all members of his organization. Entered military service from Texas.

III. Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, and pursuant to authority contained in Restricted TT Message #2139, Hq USSAFE, 11 January 1944, an OAK LEAF CLUSTER is awarded to the following-named Officers and Enlisted Men in addition to the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS previously awarded:

ALBERT A. ADAMS, O-742818, First Lieutenant, Army Air Forces, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement, while serving as Pilot of a B-17 airplane on a bombing mission over Germany, 6 March 1944. During the return journey and while still over enemy territory, one engine of his plane failed. Lieutenant Adams was unable to remain with the formation and proceeded alone. Within a short time enemy fighters attacked, but were eluded before serious damage was sustained. Later, enemy fighters pressed a vicious attack, knocking out one engine, disabling the tail guns and damaging the whole tail assembly. Lieutenant Adams put his plane into such a steep dive to evade the fighters, that four members of the crew, thinking the plane doomed, bailed out. Crossing the enemy coast at an extremely low altitude and with only two engines operating, he flew his battered plane back to England and accomplished a safe landing. The courage and skilful airmanship displayed by Lieutenant Adams reflect highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered military service from Illinois.

CHARLES C. BLISS, O-735030, Captain, Army Air Forces, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement, while piloting the leading aircraft of a Combat Wing on a bombing mission over Germany, 8 March 1944. The wing in which Captain Bliss was flying led the entire task force on this important mission deep into Germany. As the formation entered enemy territory, it was savagely attacked by a large number of hostile fighters. A vicious frontal assault knocked out two engines of Captain Bliss's aircraft. In spite of this, he maintained the lead position, but when his aircraft sustained further severe damage, he abandoned his position rather than jeopardize the unity of the formation. Diving for cloud cover, he eluded pursuing fighters and flew his plane back to England where he made a safe landing. The courage, flying skill and devotion to duty displayed by Captain Bliss reflect highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered military service from California.

8/24/92

Received from Martin Cech

Copy from "the Air Force Escape and Evasion Society Book"

Columbus, OH in August 1943. Combat crew training at Pyote, TX. Served with the 91st BG as a B-17 pilot at Bassingbourne, England



Shot down on 21st mission over Avord, France on April 28, 1944. Escaped and evaded through France and returned to England in July of 1944.

Returned to U.S. and served in various bases and positions until the Korean Conflict. Flew 56 missions as a B-29 aircraft commander.

Left the Air Force in 1956 to employment as an airline pilot. Then became a regional airline vice president and operations director.

Presently the president of a transportation management corporation specializing in municipal transit systems.

There are three children and seven grandchildren. He and his wife, Frances, reside in Poughkeepsie, NY.

**H. PHILLIP CAUSER**, was born April 11, 1916 in Weymouth, MA. S.E. Training Com. class 43C. Spent six months training Dutch pilots in Jackson, MS. Assigned to 356th FG, Martlesham Heath, England



Shot down by enemy ground fire strafing enemy airfield alone. Picked up and fought with the F.F.I. (Maquis) for 30 days plus, liberating towns, blowing bridges, and harassing the enemy in general. Picked up and flown out in R.A.F. Dakota in the middle of the night.

Stateside assignment Craig Field, Selma, AL, training the first group of officers from the French Military Academy. Attended A.F. School of Aeronautical Engineering at Chanute Field, Rantoul, IL.

As reserve, flew F-86s with 50th Fighter Interceptor. Otis A.F.B., MA.

Wrote book, *M.I.A. (Missing in Action)*. Founded Phillips Manufacturers, sold in 1980s. Now owner and president of New England Manufacturing Co. At 75, still flies his Grumman AAIA for business and pleasure.

**MARTIN CECH, T/Sgt.**, born Nov. 14, 1920 in Akron, OH. First enlisted in federal service on Dec. 15, 1937 at Fort Screven, GA and was assigned to Fort Moultrie, SC for processing and

subsequent assignment to Hawaii, where he received basic training and duty in field artillery. He returned to Fort Benning, GA in October of 1940, where he was discharged on Dec. 14, 1940. He reenlisted Jan. 7, 1942 at Fort Hayes, OH and was assigned to the Army Air Corps with duty in the chemical warfare branch.



In December of 1943, while assigned in England, he volunteered for and was assigned to B-17 gunnery duty. On March 6, 1944, after dropping bombs on Berlin, they headed for the coast and had engine trouble and left the formation. They were attacked by three or four 109s. Over Holland the intercom was knocked out, the waist door was blown off and Cech got a back full of shrapnel. He saw one of the crew members come running through the waist and motioned to bail out, so he did what he was told to do. The safety strap was still across the door opening and he lifted the strap and pushed himself out.

He landed in a fresh plowed field and hid in a small woods until dark. He could see Germans looking without luck. He slept in a haystack that night and got to a farmers house. The next morning and he got him in touch with the Underground. Worked actively with the underground until liberation by the Canadians in 1945. Sent to Belgium for interrogation and was then returned to U.S. to Camp Atterbury, IN. Discharged July 26, 1945.

Reenlisted July 30, 1948 at Cleveland Municipal Airport, OH. Served at several bases state-side and in England, Germany, Korea and Japan. Assigned to 6143D Air Base G. (PACAF) in San Francisco, CA in March of 1960 and remained until retirement (technical sergeant) Jan. 31, 1962 after 20 years of active federal service.

Worked 17 years for U.S. Postal Service, retiring in 1978. Married 1963 and divorced 1989. Five daughters and five grandchildren. Feels great and lives in Venice, CA.

**JOHN J. CHAPMAN**, was born Sept. 22, 1922 in New York City, NY. Inducted Oct. 24, 1942. Was in Infantry, Air Force, Transp. Corps.



Military locations were: Yaphank, NY; Nashville, TN; Miami Beach, FL; Santa Ana, CA;

Kirtland Field, NM; (bombardier training) Walla Walla, WA; Dalhart, TX; Tampa, FL; (overseas) Tunisia, N. Africa; Aerignola, Italy, Foggia (Lucera), Italy; Barksdale Field, LA; Sheppard Field, Wichita Falls, TX; Lakeland, FL; Midland, TX; Ft. Eustice, VA, 670th Med. Port, Manila, P. Is., then to States for separation.

Missions with 301st BG, 32nd Sqdn. Rimini, Klagenfurt, Anzio, Rome, Toulon, Cassino, and shot down March 17, 1944 over Wiener Neustadt, Austria. Caught flak in the starboard engine, waist and tail. Left formation and pilot headed down for safety of clouds below as three Me109 fighters mauled them. Attack left them with two engines gone, three crew wounded and fire on the flight deck. Mortally wounded the *Queen* headed for the Adriatic and home. The third engine quit and the crew was forced to bail out over enemy territory.

That afternoon the 32nd Sqdn. of the 301st BG lost a B-17 and her combat crew.

Received Air Medal and Presidential Unit Citation. Discharged June 19, 1947.

Most memorable experiences: first combat mission and first parachute jump.

Married wife Garnett. No children. Retired in May 1985 from Sears Roebuck and Co. after 37 years service.

**WALTER E. CHAPMAN, SR.**, was born Feb. 16, 1921 in Lexington, KY. Entered service in July 1942, U.S.A.A.F. Aviation Cadet. Graduated class 43-10, Midland, TX as a bombardier, rank second lieutenant. Discharged in July 1945, with rank of first lieutenant.

Served overseas with 484th BG, 826th BS, 15th A.F. Credited with 24 combat missions on B-24 type aircraft from May 5, 1944 to June 13, 1944, when shot down by German Me109. Parachuted out of aircraft over Italy and with assistance of Italian and Yugoslavian partisans evaded capture until August of 1944. Two crewmen killed in action, four taken prisoner of war and Chapman, along with three other members of the crew evaded capture with help of Tito's Partisans.

Retired industrial engineer with 32 years of service with International Harvester Co.

**EVERETT L. CHILDS**, Lt. Col. (ret.) was born Oct. 26, 1918 in Manchester, IA. Joined U.S.A.A.F. April 7, 1941.



Received navigation training at Monroe, LA, class of 43-4. Assigned to 8th A.A.F., Grafton-Underwood, 384th BG, 547th Sqdn.

Shot down from B-17 on second Schwienfurt mission, Oct. 14, 1943, near Bar-le-Duc, France. Captured near Spanish border May 16, 1944. Escaped from train July 10, 1944, near Bar le Duc. Traveled through lines Aug. 20, 1944 at Orleans. Released from active duty June 3, 1946.

8/21/92

Received from Martin Cech

TARGET BERLIN

THE LONG WAY HOME

another B-24 straggler when the pair were attacked and hit by a couple of Me 109s. 'I got busy right away on the radio and called up our fighters: "Denver, Denver, I need help, I'm being hit!" Back came the reply in a Texas drawl "Don't get excited Sonny, Pappa's coming!" A pair of P-47s appeared and forced the Messerschmitts to break off their attack.' But the rescuers had come too late. 'My engineer called and said we were on fire in the left wing. Sure enough, smoke was coming from a hole you could walk through.' Cripe dived the Liberator in an attempt to blow out the flames but it was no good, the fire began eating its way towards the left outboard engine. Cripe ordered his crew to bail out, then followed: 'I forced my way through to the bomb bay, then stepped into 12,000 feet of space. The 170 mph slipstream hit me and I tumbled in midair but managed to pull the ripcord and the canopy opened with a thwack. Then silence. I was in thick overcast and did not see the plane crash. As I came out of the bottom of the overcast I could see only water beneath me: the Zuider Zee.'

From the German point of view, however, even a wounded bomber could sometimes present a dangerous adversary. Me 109 pilot Lieutenant Lothar Sachs, flying his first intercept mission by day, nearly came to grief trying to finish off one of the stragglers. Separated from his comrades after the high speed dive on the bombers, Sachs caught sight of a lone B-17 some way behind the formation and moved in to attack. In his inexperience the German pilot opened fire at too great a range and scored no hits. Then, before he could get into position for a second attack, the bomber vanished into a thin bank of cloud. Sachs went below the cloud and saw nothing, then climbed back through it and caught sight of the bomber again some distance to his left. He ran in to attack again and fired a second long burst but again did not see any hits. Now the bomber was in the clear on the far side of the cloud bank; but Sachs was out of ammunition.

The B-17 Sachs had attacked was piloted by Lieutenant A. Adams of the 306th Bomb Group; it had suffered flak damage over Berlin and the right outboard engine had been knocked out; the propeller had been damaged and would not feather, causing considerable drag which forced the bomber out of formation. On the return flight the B-17 had come under further attack from fighters; the intercom was shot out and the left outboard engine stopped and its propeller would not feather either - fortunately it balanced out the drag on the opposite wing. Sachs had no inkling of his opponent's problems but obviously the bomber was in trouble or it would not have become a straggler in the first place. Now it was firing red flares in an effort to summon help. The German pilot searched the sky for enemy fighters but there seemed none in the vicinity. The Americans had no way of knowing he was out of ammunition, perhaps he could bluff them into abandoning their machine? He pulled in behind the bomber for a dummy firing pass, then watched an escape hatch fall away and four of the crew leave by parachute. Congratulating himself on his first victory by day Sachs closed in to inspect his victim as it continued west. 'I flew past it very close, about 10 meters over the top. As I passed the nose I dropped my left wing to take a closer look - and found myself gazing into the faces of the two pilots and the top gunner who were staring back at me! I pulled my wing up and

tried to accelerate away but as I did so my Messerschmitt shuddered under the impact of bullet hits.'

Wondering what to do next Sachs pulled to a respectful distance and watched the bomber descend gradually. Still he hoped it might go down and crash so he could claim it. But 50 feet above the Zuider Zee the B-17 leveled out; still it headed west and there was nothing the German pilot could do about it. Then Sachs noticed white smoke streaming from his left radiator: the glycol system had been hit! He looked into the cockpit and saw the needle of the engine temperature gauge starting to climb dangerously. Instinctively he throttled back, turned for one of the airfields in eastern Holland and kept a running tally of those fields within gliding distance suitable for a crash landing, should the need arise.

At the very rear of the bomber formations and their stragglers came B 17 'Little Willie' of the 388th Bomb Group. This was the bomber piloted by Bernie Dopko with badly damaged engines, returning from Berlin 50 feet above the ground at a speed of 115 mph. Remarkably, the crew made their flight across Germany with no molestation from fighters and very little from ground fire. The only serious trouble occurred immediately before the Dutch coast. 'We would have reached our Waterloo if the Germans had held their fire for another 30 seconds or so, as my line of flight would have put me directly over their battery of light flak about 8 feet off the ends of their barrels.' Dopko later commented. 'Their premature firing allowed me to bank sharply to the left taking advantage of some buildings I was able to put between me and the Germans.' Dopko picked another point to cross the coast and this time encountered no defenses.

While the mass of American bombers and fighters rumbled over the Dutch coast and out to sea, a lone aircraft was speeding eastwards to Berlin to complete the mission. This was Spitfire 'High Lady' of the US 7th Photo Group piloted by Major Walt Weitner. The Spitfire had been stripped of all armament and armor, part of the wing had been converted into a huge fuel tank and in the rear fuselage were two large aerial cameras with 36-in telephoto lenses. Weitner's orders were to take post-strike reconnaissance photographs of the target.

Flying at 39,000 feet with a ground speed of about 350 mph, Weitner's Spitfire left behind a long white condensation trail to point out its presence. 'The Germans must have known I was there but at first nobody paid me any attention. It was a big sky and all the other trails I could see were well away to the southeast of me,' Weitner recalled. 'Anybody coming up after me would have had to leave a trail too so I knew I would get plenty of warning.'

For the reconnaissance pilot survival depended upon avoiding enemy fighters and Weitner continually scanned the sky around his aircraft; from time to time he rolled on to one side to search below and also to check his navigation. Then during one such search he suddenly realized he was not alone. 'I saw three black forms, also trailing, following mine closely an uncomfortable 1,500 yards away, their altitude just below my own.' Weitner eased forwards his throttle selecting maximum power without resort to 'War Emergency'; the latter guzzled fuel he could not spare and he resolved to keep it up his sleeve in case

O-P-E-R-A-T-I-O-N-A-L S-O-R-T-I-E R-E-C-O-R-D-S

NAME ALBERT A. ADAMS SQUADRON 423rd Bombardment Squadron (H)

RANK 1st Lt. GROUP 306th Bombardment Group (H)

DUTY Pilot SERIAL NUMBER 0-742818

Date	Group Mission Number	Individ Mission Number	R-E-K-A-R-K-S	Time	Total Time
1943					
			PAGE 41 BOOK	BOOK SHOWS	
Nov. 3	82	1	176 WILHELMSHAVEN	5:45	
26	86	2	178 BREMEN	6:00	
DEC. 1	87	3	179 LEVERKUSEN SALINGEN	6:30	
11	89	4	181 EMDEN	6:00	
13	90	5	171 KIEL	7:35	
16	91	6	181 BREMEN	7:00	
22	93	7	180 OSNABRUCK	5:40	
1944					
JAN. 4	97	8	191 MUNSTER KIEL	5:00	
11	100	9	192 HALBERSTADT	8:30	
14	101	10	NO BALL # 72	4:20	
21	102	11	NO BALL	4:40	
29	103	12	175 FRANKFURT	7:10	
30	104	13	175 BRUNSWICK	6:50	
Feb. 3	105	14	200 WILHELMSHAVEN	6:55	
4	106	15	200 FRANKFURT	6:30	
6	108	16	NANCY	6:40	
20	111	17	215 LEIPZIG	8:15	
22	113	18	216 BERNBERG	8:45	
MAR. 3	118	19	N.Y. GERMANY	6:05	
4	-	-	ABANDONED -	3:15	
6	120	20	222 BERLIN	9:00	
15		23	VIII AF Memo #35-1		
22	126	24	225 BERLIN	9:05	
23	127	25	224 HAMM	6:30	
24	-	-	Weather Shkp	4:50	
26	129	26	226 NO BALL #A-9	3:30	
27	130	27	227 LaROCHELLE	6:20	
28	131	28	DIJON	6:30	
APR. 11	134	29	221 STETTIN	10:55	
22	138	30	HAMM	6:30	
				TOTAL	190:35

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

*Robert C. Williams*  
 ROBERT C. WILLIAMS,  
 Lt. Col., AC,  
 Operations Officer,  
 306th Bomb Gp (H).

Remarks on the July 89 issue  
of Echoes Page 7  
"Intercoms Left Much to Chance"

In the July 1989 issue of Echoes which you sent a short time ago, one word that bothered Max Palenica in the article on page 7 and his letter of 2/9/92 I received is the word scared. Personally I do not have any quarrel with the word. I did not hear anyone use this word during the debriefing at the emergency air base on the coast. I believe the person who interrogated the crew had taken some license to embellish the account.

There is no question that the intercom was knocked out during the first enemy fighter attack. Therefore there could not have been any orders to bail out or a counter order to stay put, since St Mathis and I were busy trying to get the aircraft under control (see my attached account of the mission)

I can sympathise with Max on his being upset about the word scared. A person really does not have time to be scared in a life and death situation but acts instinctively for self preservation.

I strongly believe that the four crew members acted in accordance with the

Conditions at the moment in time and made a decision to bail out, based on the steep dive the plane was in, the damage to the back end of the plane and the injuries each member of the crew sustained.

This is not to say that a person may / or may not be scared before or after a particular incident but not at the time a particular incident is in progress. Actually a person in a rapidly developing situation such as the one we experienced would not have time to think of being scared. This is a very fine point and individuals can argue pro and con on this point.

I personally have been in several such situations and can appreciate how a person would think, feel and react. Therefore I would give them the benefit of any doubt and say that they were not scared during that particular period in time on 6 March 1944

July 1989 - Echoes

# Intercoms Left Much To Chance

One of the problems that recurred in the B-17 in the stress of combat was the breakdown in communication between the five men stationed ahead of the bomb bay and the five men whose duties placed them behind the bomb bay. This might be either because the intercom was inoperative, or the plane was damaged enough that it was impossible for anyone to pass through the bomb bay.

This was the situation that existed in 42-31025 on 6 March 44. Lt. Albert A. Adams' plane had been hit hard over Berlin, losing an engine over the target. Returning alone, four of the crew members bailed out over Germany and T/Sgt Lloyd B. Keene, was killed when the plane was attacked by ME-109s.

After the bailout, conditions improved and the plane flew on home, without the four men who jumped.

At the interrogation, the 423rd squadron history quotes: "Our intercom was out and four of the men were so scared they bailed out without getting an order."

Several months ago, Max Palenica was visiting John Hedberg, and for the first time saw this quotation in **First Over Germany**. After that he wrote the author in high dudgeon to protest and to report what actually happened that day behind the bomb bay. Here is Max's story:

"While we were warming up before takeoff, we were having a problem with one engine, but we took off anyway. Later we got hit by flak in the target area, and with a windmilling prop we started to lose altitude. Lt. Adams gave the bail out order twice, but Lt. Mathis (Joseph B. Mathis III, KIA 22 Oct 44) twice said

'No.'

"At this time, a shell burst in the radio room where I was, and I was wounded in the face, leg, hand and back. I staggered into the waist. The rear door was pushed out and one man was bailing out, the other waist gunner was getting ready to bail out. I looked at him and he was hurt across the head and had blood all over his face. He, too, jumped.

"Just before I was going to jump something hit me in the leg. I looked up and there I saw the tail gunner, John Hedberg, stuck in the tail. I got him out and saw that he was badly hit in the hand. I immediately put a tourniquet around his wrist to stop the bleeding. Two fingers were gone and he was in a daze. I asked him if he could pull his rip cord and he nodded that he could. I put his legs out the door and kicked him out.

"I feel that I probably saved his life. I followed him out the door."

Palenica completed his letter by asking if this sounded like panic in the rear of the plane?

Hedberg was treated in several German hospitals and then was repatriated on the S.S. Gripsholm.

In further explanation, at the time **First Over Germany** was being researched and written, neither Hedberg nor Palenica had been located.

## Comments on "Thrust over Germany"

I read your book "Thrust over Germany" and was able to identify the missions we participated in. See attached "Operational Sortie Record". I enjoyed the book very much. It refreshed my memory of that period in time.

What surprised me is the account of Lt Toombs and his crew on page 180 concerning the mission of 1 Dec 1943 to Severkhusen. This is exactly the damage we sustained to our plane from the friendly bombardment. My question is it possible that two planes on the same mission could sustain the exact same damage? I don't believe this could happen. However be as it may; here is a little more detail of our experience on this mission.

Immediately after the bombing Lt Mathis feathered the number 3 propeller. I moved out of formation, increased power to the other engines and flew alongside the squadron.

It was about 60 below zero at the altitude we were flying at. With the two holes in the right side of the nose, the temperature in the cockpit was the same. In the short period of time Lt Mathis and I made the above maneuvers



my fingers started to smart from the extreme cold. I generally flew with only my silk flying gloves and left my fleece lined gloves at the windshield above the instrument. Lt Mathis on the other hand kept his fleece lined gloves on. I motioned to Lt Mathis to take over, while I was putting on my fleece lined gloves. The inside of the gloves were so cold. I had to take them off and sit on both the gloves and my hands until they were sufficiently warm.

We did not experience any additional problems at the cruising altitude. However when we started letting down at ~~at~~ about 12,000 to 10,000 ft the windshield iced up making it impossible to see forward. Since we had battle damage we were allowed to land first.

Approaching the landing I rubbed about a 2" hole in the windshield ice, opened my side window and flew the plane in at 150 mph and made a successful landing.

I'm sure the other crew members can verify our experience on this mission.

Albert A. Adams

## Pilots Account of 6 March 1944 Mission

The enclosed General Order Number 280 Part III pages 9 & 11 and your book "Thrust over Germany" page 223 describe the 6 March 1944 mission over Germany fairly accurately with some exceptions. On page 11 of General Order 280 the account of S/Sgt Stevenson's action is the most accurate.

Apparently the crew and I did not elaborate or supply adequate details of the mission during the debriefing session when we landed at the emergency air base on the coast at dusk.

As per your request earlier this year here is my account of the mission in approximately its chronological order.

The flight to the target area was uneventful. Over the target we encountered a moderate amount of flak. As we turned off the target the right outboard engine failed. Both Lt. Mathis and I tried to feather the propeller without success. Looking out the window we both noticed that an oil slick started appearing on the top of the wing indicating that flak may have damaged the engine preventing feathering the propeller. Although I increased the power on the

other engines we could not keep up with the squadron and gradually fell behind.

About the time the squadron was almost out of sight we were attacked by ME109's. The enemy fighters came in at 6 o'clock and 10 o'clock high causing extensive damage, although evasive action was taken to shorten the attack. The enemy fighter attack knocked out the left outboard engine, killing T/Sgt Keene, disabling the tail guns, the ball turret, the gyro compass, radio, intercom system, damaging the fuel transfer lines and the flight controls.

Because of the second engine failure and the damaged flight controls, the control column was forced back, pinning both St. Mathis and me in our seats. The force on the control column was so great that physically I could not move it forward. The plane lost forward speed nosed up and stalled, falling off to the right into a steep dive.

From the time we were attacked by the enemy fighters at 20,000 ft until the time we pulled out at about 5000 ft both

It Mathis and I were busy trying to regain control of the plane. While Lt Mathis was trying to feather the left outboard engine which was not successful; I was occupied trying to pull the plane out of the steep dive. At about 9 to 10,000 ft altitude the plane had gained enough speed that we were able using our knees to force the control column forward and gradually regain level flight at about 5000 ft altitude. Then by using the trim tabs it was not necessary to exert as much effort to maintain level flight. To barely maintain a flying speed of 115 mph because of the two windmilling propellers, it was necessary to boost engine power to almost takeoff RPM.

All the above action happened in just a few minutes (3 to 4) during which time the radio operator, 2 waist gunners and the tail gunner bailed out.

We were not aware of all the damage that we had sustained until sometime later during our flight at 115 mph to England, both at the 5000 ft altitude and at the tree top level.

A short time after the plane was under

Control, Lt Bugni came up to the cockpit and reported that T/Sgt Keene had been killed. Sgt Stevenson, after working his way out of the disabled ball turret came forward and reported that four members of the crew in the back of the plane had bailed out and someone was wounded because there was blood splattered in the waist gun area.

While flying in a cloud bank, at the 5000 ft altitude, that we encountered, the plane had a tendency to turn to the right. Looking out the side window, I could see the right wing start to lift up appreciably, hoping that it would not break off and then we heard a sharp bang like a cannon going off. The crankshaft on the engine had sheared off because the engine had seized as a result of the oil leak that developed over the target. A short time later while still in the cloud bank the left outboard engine started to seize because of the oil leak caused by the enemy fighter attack causing the crankshaft to shear in the same manner as the right outboard engine. With both propellers

now windmilling freely the drag on the plane was somewhat reduced.

Because the two inboard engines were being operated at near takeoff RPM to maintain the 115 mph speed, the fuel in the two tanks was getting rather low. When Lt North started to transfer fuel between tanks we found that there was a fuel leak in the transfer lines indicated by the strong odor of gasoline. After a few minutes the transfer operation was discontinued. As we exited the cloud bank we spotted enemy aircraft and decided to head for the deck. Flying at tree top level, the enemy aircraft gave up the chase.

As we settled down flying at tree top level, I had Lt Barber check our heading and found that the gyro compass did not correspond with the magnetic compass. With the heading he advised, we crossed the coast in the vicinity over the Zuider Zee where the German anti-aircraft batteries were located. As we headed out over the north sea, the shore batteries peppered our tail with flak but did not do any more serious damage

A short time later, after we were out of range of the German shore batteries, two RAF fighters appeared. Since our radio was out, we shot up our flairs and wagged our wings to indicate we were friendly. They acknowledged and pointed us toward the cliffs of Dover. The cliffs were considerably higher than the altitude we were flying at over the north sea. By increasing power slightly and putting down about ten degrees of flaps I started a gradual climb. We were about 150 to 200 ft above ground level when we crossed cliffs. The air field was just ahead of us, a short distance; Lowering the landing gear, with Sgt Stevenson manually checking that the landing gear was down and locked, we made a successful landing. Because of our low airspeed of 115 mph we landed at this base at dusk and were debriefed. A short time later a 306th B-17 picked us up and were flown to our home base, Thurleigh. It certainly was a long day for us.

Albert A. Adams