

A HISTORY OF THE 306th BOMBARDMENT GROUP - EIGHTH AIR FORCE
Russell A. Strong

Name C. Gordon Bowers
Address 2824 Garnet Road Baltimore, Md 21234
Home Phone (301) 665-8666 Date _____
Occupation Designer-Sales Employer Lucas Design Group
Address Baltimore, Md Bus. Phone 799-7700 (301)
Serial No(s) 0-673468

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th:

Basic tactical training in USA, Graduated Aerial Navigation School, Hondo Texas, trained in Boise, Idaho, Walla Walla Washington

After leaving the 306th:

Interned in neutral Switzerland from September 6, 1943 to March 1945 - worked in American Legation, Berne, Switzerland intelligence division until March 1945 repatriation - reassigned to USA, Houston Texas (long range night-time bombardment duty) - released from active duty - ~~at~~ Billeting Officer, Langley Field, Va. 1945-

306th Record

Arrival date at Thurligh May 1943

Squadron or other unit(s) 423rd

MOS # _____ Specialty Navigator

Missions Completed (and date of last) 13th was on Sept 6, 1943

Promotions Received in Switzerland retroactive to Sept. 1943 to 1st Lt.

Decorations 1AM 2olcs DFC olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM PH Battle Stars

Army Commendation Medal (Swiss duty) -

(On unusual DFCs, and Silver Stars and above would like to see a copy of the citation)

Other personal data: Graduate, Johns Hopkins University, class 1949 (GI. Bill participant) - Married, 3 girls (one Teaching, one Nursing, one Housewife) - one boy in Engineering with Dattimore Rapid Transit Subway System - enjoy Golf, Swimming, College Alumni activities, Class Agent etc - enjoy my work -

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?)

Always flew as combat Navigator, with original U.S. Crew and make up (after arriving at Thule) Unknowingly, I was involved in the "early" daylight "precision" bombardment of Nazi Germany. What was to me a routine mission was, in reality, a heavy casualty loss day for our Group as well as the Eighth Air Force - Other than the day we were forced into neutral Switzerland on a mission to ~~Sittgen~~, and the days' events, a "long" daylight mission to Aroga, Norway is memorable - I'm afraid the details, now after 36 busy years, are obscure. Regretfully, those days, as a young (20 year old) Air Force Lieutenant - a 90 day wonder - have passed from my mind as easily as yesterday's newspapers -

Sorry - I cannot contribute more to your anthology. -

CB

Name C. Gordon Boneas Address 2824 Gaenel Rd
(301)
Telephone 665-8666

MISSING AIRCRAFT REPORT

Pilot Martin (NMI) Anderson Plane # and Name B-17 G "Special Delivery"
Mission Date Sept. 6, 1943 Target Stuttgart
Cause of loss: AA fire Fighter attack Other, explain _____

Describe conditions in the plane as completely as you can:

Before arriving at I.P. we encountered heavy AA fire and fighter attacks during which we experienced mechanical damage to oil lines (?) - loss of altitude & speed caused us to leave formation in Southern Germany. Anderson, the pilot & captain, asked for a heading to Switzerland - not having detail maps beyond the target area, I relied on the "silk" escape maps and we turned away from the main formation toward the German-Swiss border - searching Switzerland we finally force landed at Ticino near the Italian-Swiss border.

How and where did you leave plane?

Upon landing we were "captured" by Swiss military personnel. Interrogated many times and housed by the local police.

What happened when you got on the ground?

Did you meet any of your crew mates?

yes, we remained together

How were you treated, if ^{interned} captured?

very cordially, although with military efficiency as combatants.

* I have many scenic and personal photographs taken during my internment with the SMSS,

Any additional details, reminiscences, letters, or documents of these events would be appreciated. If you do send such materials, I will copy them and put them back in the mail to you within 24 hours.

from the desk of

C. GORDON BOWERS

11/25/88

Ross -

Trust the enclosed update
is helpful, though sketchy -
Bill Carlyle gave it to me
at our American Legion
meeting this past week -

Best wishes for the
upcoming holidays -

Regards

Gordon Bowers.

RECORD UPDATE

306th Bomb Group Association

(Please complete as much of this form as you wish, and give)
(to Russ Strong at the Las Vegas reunion, or mail to his ad-
(dress: 5323 cheval Pl., Charlotte, NC 28205)

Date completed 11/25/88

LAST NAME: BOWERS FIRST NAME: CHARLES G. Title:

Street address: 2824 GARNET ROAD Telephone: (301) 665-8666

City, state, zip: BALTIMORE, M.D. - 21234

Date of birth: 3-31-21 Wife's name: CONSTANCE

College(s) attended: JOHNS HOPKINS UNV. Degree(s): BA Year(s): 1949

Last employment & job title: OFFICE FURNITURE - SALES
SR. ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Year joined 306th Association: UNCERTAIN - @ 1984

Reunions attended: (by year or location) - WASHINGTON, DC.

Serial #: 0673468 Sqdn: 423 RD Speciality: NAVIGATOR

Date joined 306th: MAY 1943 If combat, what crew? ANDREWS (MARTIN) -

Special duties or assignments w/306th: —

If commissioned w/306th, date & speciality: —

Date departed: SEPT. 6, 1943 Highest rank/grade w/306th: 1ST LT.

Other 8thAF units served with: —

Top service assignments after 306th: BILLING OFFICER
LANGLEY FIELD, VIRGINIA.

USAF retirement date: SEPT. 1945 Rank/grade: 1ST LT.

Most memorable experience w/306th: (use back of sheet, too)

BEING SHOT DOWN ON 13TH MISSION NEAR STUTTGART
- LANDING IN SWITZERLAND, 9/16/43 - INTERVIEWED UNTIL
MARCH 1945 -

December 11, 1999

Mr Russell A Strong
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, N.C. 28205

Dear Sir :-

Please excuse this handwritten informal inquiry regarding the 306th's status with the ~~8th~~ Air Force Historical Society Magazine.

I am a very inactive member of the Society (been to only 2 annual reunions) - however, in their publication there seems to be an almost complete avoidance of any coverage of the 306th's activities!

Even obituaries (which, I realize, are volunteered) go by the board - I called their Public Relations man and got no satisfactory reply -

Is the 306th on their list ??, for some "minor" reason -

By the way, I was on Lt. Andrews' crew, 423rd Squadron, as a Navigator - shot down Sept 6, 1943 (interned in Switzerland til March 1945) - Is there any

internee group within the 306th organization ??

I receive the Echoes on a regular basis and only see or read about a few 4-23 rd members with whom I am at all familiar - I'm sure this is due to my short stay at Thurleigh (May -> Sept. 1943) - going down on my 13th mission -

There are a few 8th Air Force men in my local American Legion Post #183, Baltimore, but no 306th flying personnel -

Sorry to write you at this holiday season, but an immediate reply isn't necessary -

Awaiting your reply,

I am -

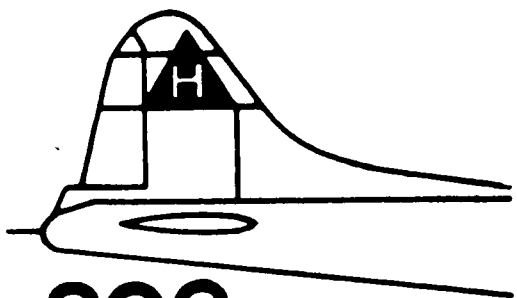
C. Gordon Bowers
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Phone:

410-665-8666

21234

P.S. "First Over Germany" was great - full of old my book shelf open - just to reminisce -



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

306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

Secretary/Historian

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18 December 1999

Author
First Over Germany

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

Editor
306th Echoes (quarterly)
306th Directory (biennial)
306th Squadron Diaries
367, 368, 369, 423

Dear Gordon:

Serious differences between the 306th Association and the 8th AF Historical Society came to the fore in 1982 at the Cincinnati reunion.

The 8th AF was run by a cabal of five men, who put it on, took the profits, and ran it for their own enhancement. When we tried to negotiate with them for some meeting space at several reunions we were fended off and told to go find our own space and not bother them.

From the inception of the Association the 306th each year the 306th had the biggest membership, and always had the largest registration at the reunion. We were doing a lot for them, and there was no reciprocity. During the Cincinnati reunion we coopted some space in the hotel dining room to discuss the situation. In the course of that meeting, Don Ross told the group that if they wanted to hold a 306th reunion only, and would meet in Omaha, he would chair the reunion.

We went to Omaha, about 250 strong, had the best time any of us had had at a reunion, and then decided to hold our own in the future. This infuriated the gang of 5, who weren't getting so much money out of us, and I am sure they got kickbacks from hotels, restaurants, etc. We figure they took out about \$25,000 each on the reunions.

The more we went on our own the more we liked it, that is for the majority of us attending. And we had that bond of all having served at Thurleigh that wasn't felt in the 8th events.

Six or eight years ago Jim Hill, the editor of 8th AF News, lit in to me because our reunion was at the same time the 8th had its affair. He didn't seem to be aware that we had set a date and place and the 8th had already announced a different date and place. Something happened, and the 8th had to make a serious change in its plans, conflicting with our event. It didn't bother us, but it sure bothered Hill and his cohorts. I straightened him out on the facts and he was a bit frosty after that.

I think something over 100 of the 306th hold life memberships in the 8th, including myself.

The 8th has undergone a number of changes, and revolts from the floor have at least twice thrown out the leadership, and brought in a new Group.

I was considered for the editorship of the 8th AF News on its last change of editors, and came in second. But, I really didn't want it, and as it worked out it was best I missed the opportunity. (In 10 mos last years I was in the hospital four times, beginning with four heart bypasses!) It really took me about a year to get over it, which I didn't really expect, but at the end of the period I realized that I began to feel much better.

I feed the 8th some things now and then, and the editor is on our mailing list, but there isn't much that appears about the 306th.

WE may make a decision to back track a bit on our reunions when we can no longer really go at them ourselves, but to date we seem to be doing pretty well. We might be in better shape if you had been able to show up, but we are glad you are still among us. Currently we have more than 275 genuine 306th men on our mailing list, and are not losing them as fast as I feared we might.

Nice to hear from you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'L. Bowers', written in black ink.