

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

I am endeavoring to put together a good history of the 306th Bombardment group, an idea which has been in my mind for some years. I am working diligently on the matter, collecting all kinds of data and working through the official history and records of the group. I served as a navigator with the 367th squadron from June through November, 1944.

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

Name MAJ. GEN. ALBERT J. BOWLEY, USAF RET.  
Address 150 LAKE WINNEMISSETT DRIVE, DELAND, FLA. 32720  
Telephone 904-736-3424 Date SEPT 15, 1976  
Occupation ADMINISTRATION Employer STEINSON UNIVERSITY  
Address DELAND, FLA. Telephone 904-734-4121 EC 268 3/6

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th:

GRADUATE USMA CLASS OF JUNE 1943  
B-17 TRANSITION, HEWICKS FIELD, SEBRING, FLA.  
B-17 INSTRUCTOR PILOT, TAMPA, FLA. AND GULFPORT, MISS.

After leaving the 306th:

OCCUPATION DUTY, LECHFELD, GERMANY  
15 YEARS IN SAC at TUCSON, OMAHA, GUAM, RIVERSIDE, OSCODA (MICHIGAN)  
ATTENDED COMMAND & STAFF SCHOOL & AIR WAR COLLEGE & LIMESTONE (MAINE)  
2 1/2 YEARS ON JCS AND 20 MONTHS IN VIETNAM WITH MACV  
RETIRED FEB 1, 1993.

306th Record:

Arrival Date DEC 20, 1944 Squadron or other unit 369<sup>th</sup>  
MOS AIRCRAFT COMMANDER Combat Status COMBAT  
Missions Completed 22  
Promotions 1st Lt to CAPTAIN  
Decorations 1 AM 2 olcs 1 DFC olcs SS 2 DSM DSC MH SM  
PH Battle Stars THREE other

1 REGION OF MERT ~~+~~ 1 RVN ARMY DSM (SEE ATTACHED DIS.)  
1 AF COMMENDATION MEDAL 1 RVN ARMED FORCES DSM (OVER)

Other personal data:

Description of Air Missions:

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

SHOT DOWN OVER COLOGNE, GERMANY JAN. 10, 1945.

CRASH LANDED BEHIND FRIENDLY LINES NEAR LE GUESNOY, FRANCE. BOMBARDIER, (LAMBERT), RECEIVED PH AND SS FOR RELEASING BOMBS ON TARGET DESPITE SHRAPNEL WOUNDS IN LEG. FLIGHT ENGINEER, (KRUGER) ALSO RECEIVED PH. CREW WAS DESIGNATED SQUADRON AND GROUP LEAD.

STAYED WITH 306<sup>th</sup> AFTER WAR WITH CASEY SOWES

PROJECT AS OPS OFFICER, 367<sup>th</sup> BS, UNTIL GROUP INACTIVATED.

INITIAL CREW - AC BOWLE  
CP ZUKOWSKI  
N. PETIT  
B. LAMBERT  
FE KRUGER  
R. CAREY  
G. SLEPIKA  
G. WEBER  
G. WEAR.

14 June 1976

M/Gen. Albert J. Bowley  
150 Winnemissatt Drive  
Deland, Florida 32720

Dear Gen. Bowley:

The accompanying letter will alert you as to my project concerning the 306th.

I would also like to tell you that the 306th will have a reunion Oct. 15-17 in Dayton, at which we expect more than a hundred 306th veterans. The first reunion last year in Miami Beach attracted 45, and was the largest of any unit represented in the 819th.

Also, you might be interested in knowing that my latest count shows that the 306th produced eight general officers--Armstrong, Putnam, Cheney, Belser, Rader (Raper), JW Wilson and Del Wilson. In checking your note in the West Point directory, I would guess that you may have crossed paths with JW Wilson at some time or other--and probably gathered a few stories about him.

I shall look forward to hearing from you, and would appreciate learning the names and addresses of any 306th personnel you may know now. Do you know the whereabouts of any of your crew, or do you know what their hometowns may have been, or where any of them may have attended college? All of these clues will help us in locating them.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

4900 Appleridge Court  
Dayton, Ohio 45424

## BIOGRAPHY

MAJOR GENERAL ALBERT J. BOWLEY, USAF, RET.

Major General Albert J. Bowley, Director of Personnel, Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was born at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, December 4, 1921. After attending Millard's Preparatory School in Washington, D.C., he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

He graduated from West Point in June 1943 as a pilot and Second Lieutenant with a bachelor of science degree. He went to B-17 transition training in Florida and after several months of training at several locations in the United States, he was assigned as a B-17 instructor pilot, first at Tampa, Florida, and then at Gulfport, Mississippi.

After a year of instructor duty the general was assigned to the 306th Bombardment Group, Thurleigh, England, in December 1944 as a B-17 pilot. From December 1944 until May 1945, he flew 22 combat missions with the 306th Group, accumulating 187 hours of combat flying time in a B-17 aircraft.

From June 1945 until August 1946, he was assigned as Commander of a detachment of the 306th Bombardment Group which had a mission of photo-mapping the European area. He left the 306th Bombardment Group in August 1946 for an assignment as Squadron Operations Officer with the 305th Bombardment Group at Lechfield, Germany.

General Bowley left Germany in June 1947 for an assignment as aircraft commander and squadron operations officer with the 43rd Bombardment Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. In June 1952 he was transferred to the 303rd Bombardment Wing at Davis-Monthan with duty as Commander of the 358th Bombardment Squadron.

After some seven years at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, the general left to attend the Command and Staff School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. This was followed by a three year assignment at Headquarters, Strategic Air Command where the general was assigned as Chief of the Training Surveillance Branch, Training Division, Directorate of Operations.

He returned to Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, to attend the Air War College. Following completion of the Air War College in 1959 General Bowley moved to the 3rd Division, Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, as Director of Operations.

From August 1961 until January 1963, the general was stationed at March Air Force Base, California. While there he was assigned as Chief of the Control Division, Directorate of Operations, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force; Deputy Commander for Operations, 22nd Bombardment Wing; and Deputy Director, Directorate of Operations, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force.

In January 1963 General Bowley was assigned as Deputy Executive to the Vice Chief of Staff, Headquarters United States Air Force, Washington, D.C. In June 1963 he became Executive to the Vice Chief of Staff and remained in that position until August 1966, when he was assigned as Commander, 40th Air Division. He was reassigned to Loring Air Force Base, Maine, as 45th Air Division Commander in July 1967. On 1 November 1968 he was assigned to the Organization of the Joint Chief's of Staff as Chief, Strategic Plans and Policy Division, J-5. In June 1969 he moved up to the position of Deputy Director (Regional) of J-5. General Bowley's last duty assignment prior to coming to MACV was Deputy Director, J-5, JCS.

He was assigned as Deputy Chief of Staff, Headquarters Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, effective 1 February 1971. He was reassigned as Assistant Chief of Staff, J-1, Headquarters Military Assistance Command Vietnam effective 25 March 1972. On 15 May 1972 the organizational titles were changed and General Bowley became the Director of Personnel, MACV.

General Bowley departed HQ MACV on 9 September 1972 and was assigned as the Special Assistant to the Commander, Headquarters Command until his retirement 1 February 1973.

A. Personal Data:

1. Born - December 4, 1921, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Father - Freeman W. Bowley (deceased); Mother - Elizabeth W. (Carpenter) Bowley. (deceased)
2. Married - Marjorie R. (Marchand) Bowley.
3. Children - (2) Robin Mills (Clarke); Albert J., Jr.

B. Education:

1. Millard's Prep School, Washington, D.C. , 1940.
2. United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, Bachelor of Science Degree, 1943
3. Command and Staff School, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 1955
4. Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 1959

C. Decorations and Service Awards:

Distinguished Service Medal *w/1 oLC*  
Legion of Merit  
Distinguished Flying Cross  
Air Medal w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters  
Air Force Commendation Medal  
American Defense Service Medal  
American Campaign Medal  
European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal w/3 Service Stars  
WWII Victory Medal  
Army of Occupation Medal (Germany)  
National Defense Service Medal w/1 Service Star  
Vietnam Service Medal  
Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon w/5 Oak Leaf Clusters  
*RUW ARMY AND ARMED FORCES DSM'S.*

D. Effective Dates of Promotion:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Temporary</u>	<u>Permanent</u>
2nd Lt	June 1, 1943	June 1, 1943
1st Lt	Dec. 1, 1943	June 1, 1946
Captain	Mar 9, 1944	July 1, 1948
Major	Dec 14, 1950	Dec 14, 1950
Lt Colonel	Apr 15, 1953	July 1, 1959
Colonel	Apr 26, 1957	Sept 15, 1961
BGen	Sept 28, 1966	June 7, 1968
MGen	July 1, 1965	

Name:

A. JOHN BOWLEY

Cadet class:

STARTED PRIMARY WITH 42K

Place of graduation:

WEST POINT, N.Y.

GRADUATED 1 JUNE 1943 (43F NEAREST CLASS)

Number of combat missions:

22

Wife's first name:

MARJORIE

Other 306th men whom I know graduated with me:

5



**Russell A. Strong, Secretary  
306th Bomb Group Association  
5323 Cheval Place  
Charlotte, NC 28205**





HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

BY

A. JOHN BOWLEY, MAJ GEN USAF RET

IN DECEMBER 1944, MY B-17 CREW AND I WERE DEPLOYED TO ENGLAND ABOARD THE QUEEN ELIZABETH. UPON ARRIVAL WE WERE ASSIGNED TO THE 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP STATIONED AT THURLEIGH, A SMALL TOWN NEAR THE CITY OF BEDFORD IN THE MIDLANDS. UPON OUR ARRIVAL WE RECEIVED A BRIEFING FROM MAJOR TOM WITT, THE GROUP OPERATIONS OFFICER. AFTER THE BRIEFING MAJOR WITT ASKED ME IF I KNEW A BETTY BOWLEY WHO WAS ONE OF THE RED CROSS GIRLS ASSIGNED TO THE GROUP. I SAID "YES, SHE'S MY OLDER SISTER!" BY JOINING THE RED CROSS SHE HAD BEATEN ME AND MY BROTHER FREEMAN, ALSO A B-17 PILOT, TO ENGLAND. AS AN ASIDE SHE MARRIED CAPTAIN FRANK PHILLIPS, A SQUADON ENGINEERING OFFICER IN THE 306TH. MY BROTHER GAVE HER AWAY AND I WAS BEST MAN.

AFTER TWO WEEKS OF ORIENTATION AND PRACTICE FLIGHTS WITH THE 369TH "FIGHTIN BITIN" SQUADRON, I WAS AWAKENED EARLY IN THE MORNING OF JANUARY 10TH WHICH BY THE WAY WAS MY FIRST WEDDING ANNIVERSARY WITH THE GREETING FROM THE CQ "LIEUTENANT, SIR, YOU ARE FLYING THIS MORNING". AFTER A HURRIED BREAKFAST OF SPAM AND POWERED EGGS, I REPORTED TO THE GROUP BRIEFING ROOM WITH MY CREW. WHEN THE CURTAIN WAS PULLED BACK, THE MAP SHOWED THAT WE WERE ASSIGNED THE TARGET OF DESTROYING THE BRIDGE AT COLOGNE, GERMANY. A TARGET WELL DEFENDED BY GERMAN FLACK.

AFTER TAKEOFF WE ASSEMBLED THE FOUR SQUADRONS OF OUR GROUP AND JOINED THE OTHER GROUPS OF THE THIRD AIR DIVISION TO HEAD ACROSS THE CHANNEL TO OUR TARGET. THE MISSION WAS RELATIVELY QUIET UNTIL WE GOT TO THE IP FOR OUR BOMB RUN WHERE THE FLACK BECAME INTENSE. JUST BEFORE BOMBS AWAY WE WERE STRUCK BY FLACK SO SEVERELY THAT MY BOMBARDIER, CAPTAIN LAMBERT, WAS KNOCKED BACK INTO MY NAVIGATOR'S LAP FROM HIS POSITION IN THE NOSE. ALTHOUGH HE WAS WOUNDED SEVERELY IN ONE LEG, HE CRAWLED BACK TO HIS POSITION IN TIME TO SALVO OUR BOMB LOAD ALONG WITH THOSE FROM THE LEAD SHIP. SOON THEREAFTER WE WERE HIT AGAIN KNOCKING OUT TWO ENGINES AND OUR ENTIRE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM. LUCKILY WE HAD ONE ENGINE RUNNING ON EACH SIDE AND COULD CONTROL THEM AS THE THROTTLES WERE CONNECTED TO THE ENGINES BY CABLE.

*flack w/ Leo K Reinhardt*

WE HEADED WEST TOWARD THE CHANNEL LOSING ALTITUDE QUICKLY BUT HAD A TOUGH DECISION TO MAKE. SHOULD WE ATTEMPT TO FLY ACROSS THE CHANNEL ON TWO ENGINES NOT KNOWING HOW MUCH LONGER THEY WOULD KEEP RUNNING FROM A MECHANICAL OR FUEL ASPECT. AFTER THE NAVIGATOR, CAPTAIN PETTIT, DETERMINED WE WERE ACROSS ENEMY LINES, WE DECIDED TO CRASH LAND IN AN OPEN FIELD SOMEWHERE ALONG THE FRENCH BELGIUM BORDER. LATER IT WAS DETERMINED WE LANDED NEAR THE LITTLE FRENCH TOWN OF LE QUESNOY.

WE DID MAKE A SUCCESSFUL WHEELS UP LANDING ON A SNOW COVER PASTURE ENDING UP FAIRLY CLOSE TO A FARM HOUSE. AFTER EVACUATING THE AIRCRAFT A WOMAN CAME RUNNING OUT OF THE FARM HOUSE IN A COMPLETE STATE OF FRENZY. WHEN SHE FINALLY REALIZED THAT SHE WOULDN'T BE BLOWN UP AND THAT WE WERE AMERICANS AND THEREFORE FRIENDS, SHE INVITED US INTO THE HOUSE OUT OF THE COLD. BY USE OF MY SMALL KNOWLEDGE OF FRENCH I TOLD HER THAT OUR BADLY WOUNDED CREW MEMBER NEEDED MEDICAL ATTENTION. SHE THEN MADE A PHONE CALL TO A NEARBY CATHOLIC HOSPITAL WHO SENT AN AMBULANCE OUT. I WENT WITH MY BOMBARDIER TO THE HOSPITAL AND ABOUT THE TIME THEY WERE TO OPERATE ON HIM THE MILITARY POLICE ARRIVED TO TAKE HIM TO A MILITARY HOSPITAL. I WAS THEN TOLD THAT THE REST OF MY CREW HAD BEEN TAKEN TO A FRENCH CHATEAU THAT HAD BEEN COMANDEERED BY A P-38 OUTFIT.

WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE CHATEAU, I WAS GREETED BY THE SQUADRON COMMANDER WHO ASSURED ME THAT MY CREW HAD BEEN FED AND WERE PRESENTLY BEDDED DOWN IN THE ATTIC OF THE CHATEAU. HE THEN SAID HE WANTED TO SHOW ME SOMETHING SPECIAL. HE OPENED THE DOOR TO A LARGE PARLOR AND I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES. THERE SINGING AT THE PIANO WAS MARLENE DIETRICH! HE INVITED ME IN BUT I TOLD HIM I WAS COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED AND WHAT I NEEDED MOST WAS A BED TO SLEEP IN.

ON MY FIRST WEDDING ANNIVERSARY I FLEW MY FIRST COMBAT MISSION, WAS SHOT DOWN, CRASHED LANDED SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE AND SAW MARLENE DIETRICH SINGING AT THE PIANO. IN THE MEANTIME BACK IN THE STATES MY WIFE HAD RECEIVED HER ANNIVERSARY PRESENTS OF A DOZEN RED ROSES AND A WHITMAN SAMPLER THAT I HAD ORDERED FOR HER BEFORE I LEFT. SHE WAS HOPING THAT I ALSO WAS HAVING A PLEASANT FIRST ANNIVERSARY - LITTLE DID SHE KNOW!!!

AS A SEQUEL WE WERE TRANSPORTED BY A SIXBY TO AN AIRFIELD WHERE THEY SALVAGED DOWNED B-17'S AND PUT THEM IN FLYING <sup>T</sup>CONDITION TO BE FLOWN BACK TO ENGLAND. THEY WERE HAPPY TO SEE US AS THEY HAD A B-17 THAT WOULD BE READY THE NEXT DAY FOR A FLIGHT TO THE 8TH AIR FORCE DEPOT AT ALCONBEKKY. WE SAFELY FLEW IT BACK THE NEXT DAY AND WERE TRANSPORTED BACK TO OUR HOME BASE AT THURLEIGH.

AFTER A DAY OF DEBRIEFING AND REST, I WAS AWAKENED THE MORNING OF THE 14TH BY THE CQ SAYING I WAS FLYING AGAIN. AT THE BRIEFING I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT BUT WE WERE GOING BACK TO COLOGNE AGAIN. SEEMS WE MISSED THE BRIDGE ON OUR FIRST TRY. HAPPY TO SAY THE FLACK MISSED ON THIS MISSION AND WE RETURNED TO ENGLAND UNHARMED.