



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

306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

Secretary-Treasurer
William M. Collins, Jr.
2973 Heatherbrae Drive
Poland, Ohio 44514
(216) 757-3463

2 MAR 83

DEAR CHUCK:

SENT YOUR ECHOES MONDAY
WE HAVE A DON MURPHY, 368TH:
23 DELORES AV
PERU, INDIANA
46970

RUSS STRONG, OUR EDITOR HAS
OUR HISTORY. YOU MAY CALL HIM
1-616 344 6466
CALL AFTER 7:00 PM.
AM SENDING HIM YOUR LETTER.
SEE YOU IN OMAHA.

MY BEST,
Bill Collins

3

Trained in 40 Reconnaissance Corp at Pecos
Texas and God Island N.M.

Murphy went to Presque Island we
were sent back to God Island and used
as replacements.

Can't remember pilots names
Navigator Bombardier and tail gunner
injured by flap but my name I
remember is Roy Wickland tail gunner
from the Chicago area.

I married a Bedford girl
after the war.

205 Shaffer Ave
Bellmawr NJ 08030
March 6 1983

Dear Mr. Stray:

Referring to the enclosed note I assume you are more or less the group statistician and I know you don't want your records faked up.

Mr. Collins must have misunderstood my letter. I trained stateside with 40 Provisional Grp? at Pyote Texas and Grand Island Neb. The pilot's name was Murphy but as I said in the letter he was grounded in Progress Isle on our way overseas and the rest of us were sent back to Grand Island and used as replacements on other crews that were short. I was trying to find the name of that pilot whose crew I joined and served in the 306 BG 368BS from Dec 43 to June 44.

The navigator, bombardier and tail gunner all received Purple Hearts. The only one's name I remember is the tail gunner Roy Wicklund ^{LUND} from the Chicago area.

Looking through all the back issues Mr. Collins sent me of Ekco the only name that was familiar was a Odlewlo was operations officer. Did you ever hear stories of him and the C.O. of 368BS I believe his name was Reagan celebrating in Tutan ~~after~~ after a mission.

About the only thing I have anymore is my Individual Flight Record of my overseas tour but I'm sure you have plenty of them but if you want them you can have them.

Charles E. Bradley S/Sgt 13, 1²⁶ 86, 928
Ball tower 368 Dec 3 to June 44.

NOTE



May 17 1943

Charles Bradley
205 Shaffer Av
Bellmawr, PA 08031

NJ

Get address straight, I'd be
mad if I didn't get my paper
now that I know it exists!

In April's issue you mentioned
the passing of a Reese Phillips 368
on Brunns' crew 1943-44. Do you
have any info on Brunns? I think
that's the crew I was on but I can't
be sure. Do you have his address?

Charles Bradley
205 SHAFFER AVE
BELLMAWR N.J. 08031

ADD

BRADLEY, CHARLES

~~February 2 1983~~

205 Shaffer Ave
Bellmawr Nj. 08031

Dear Mr. Greenwood: **BELLMAWR**

Andy Rooney gave me your name and address so if you can help me I would appreciate it.

I am trying to look up some of the old group I flew with in Europe during World War II, 306 Bomb Group out of Thurleigh England.

He gave me a name of a William Elliott in Margate Florida but it does not have an address.

Sincerely

Charles Bradley

PS. Ball turret Gunner 306 BB GRP,
DEC 43 to JUNE 44 368 D SGT/PM

SENT ECHO

Russ:

I thought you might like to read the bill they printed about the Halberstadt raid. I was on it and it was nothing heroic to me, just sheer terror.

Bratley

P.S. I was searching the newspaper morgue to see if they printed anything about Irving Berlin leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance at our induction to the Air Force at Independence Hall in Phila.



SAVORING MEMORIES of World War II, Charles E. Bradley gazes at the small remnant of the B-17 bomber in which he flew 30 missions over Europe. Bradley, 65, traveled from his home in Bellmawr, N.J., over the weekend to the Williamsport Area Community College's aviation building at the Williamsport-Lycoming County Airport to see what was left of the historic plane. Known as the Flying Fortress, the four-engine B-17 was the workhorse of the U.S. strategic bombing effort for most of the war, and is fondly remembered by those who flew on it for its ability to withstand fierce enemy fire, deliver its deadly five-ton payload and return them to their bases in England. Bradley said he was a belly-turret gunner on the Eager Beaver, namesake plane of the 368th Squadron, 306th Bombing Wing of the Army Air Corps' Eighth Air Force from

December 1943 to late 1944. The plane was one of the first to fly over Europe and the only one of the original 15-plane squadron to return home. The plane was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and was featured in the 1949 movie "Twelve O'clock High." The bomb insignia painted on the left nose section that hangs on the wall of the college aviation building denote the plane's 45 missions. The college's predecessor, Williamsport Technical Institute, acquired the plane in 1946 as a teaching tool, scrapping most of it when it became obsolete. Bradley is working with James Little, of Montoursville, another WWII bomber veteran and an instructor at the school, to see that the piece of the plane is turned over to an Air Force museum if the college no longer wants it.

30 TO TOLD HIM "ABOUT 2"
THOUGHT THIS MIGHT INTEREST YOU. I DID NOT
SEEK THE PUBLICITY.
C. Bradley

THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION



March 20, 1987

SGT Robert A. McClure
12095641
Plot D, Row 6, Grave 57
Ardennes American Cemetery
Neupre (Neuville-en-Condroz),
Belgium

Mr. Charles Bradley
205 Shaffer Avenue
Bellmawr, NJ 08031

Dear Mr. Bradley:

Thank you for your letter of February 7, 1987.

Information concerning the Ardennes American Cemetery where SGT McClure is interred may be found on the tabbed pages of the enclosed pamphlet.

A black and white photograph of SGT McClure's gravesite mounted on a color lithograph of the cemetery will be mailed to you within the next eight weeks. Enclosed with the lithograph will be a booklet describing the cemetery in detail.

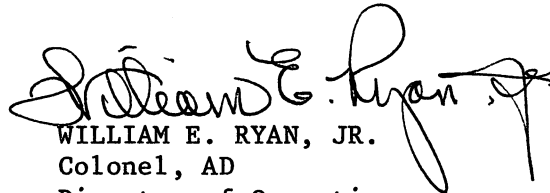
Arrangements for placement of floral decorations at the gravesite can be made through this Commission by use of the enclosed forms. Checks or money orders for floral decorations should be made payable to the ABMC Flower Fund. As a guide, the cost of a suitable spray in the area is \$20.00. Weather permitting, a color polaroid photograph of the decoration in place will be taken and forwarded to you.

Also enclosed is a roster of members of the 306th Bomb Group /H/ interred or memorialized in the American military cemeteries in Europe, which was received from our European Office.

The monument erected at Thurleigh, England by members of the 306th Bomb Group is included on this Commission's roster of private monuments. The photograph you provided will be retained in our files for future reference. As the responsibilities of this agency are limited to American military shrines located on foreign soil, we do not maintain a listing of unit monuments located within the United States. Therefore, your photo of the plaque located at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio is returned herewith. However, it is suggested that you contact LTC John H. Woolnaugh, USN, (Ret), Editor, 8th Air Force News, P.O. Box 4738, Hollywood, FL 30083 as our records indicate that the 306th Monument is not among those included on the roster of monuments maintained by that publication.

If we may be of any other service, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William E. Ryan, Jr.", with a large flourish extending to the right.

WILLIAM E. RYAN, JR.
Colonel, AD
Director of Operations
and Finance

Encls

May 20 1987

Puss:

Thanks for the copy of the letter, I am forwarding it to Mr. J. Little at the school to show you are working on it. He is really quite concerned.

I read an article in a magazine about the Confederate Air Force down in Texas, that said they have a collection of nose-art down there. We could put it there if nothing else shows up.

The main reason for this letter there is stuff I sent you concerning the American Battle ^{Camp}. If you read the enclosed letter the only picture they have of the Shurleigh monument is a lousy photograph my wife took when she was over there last year (Lissa Bedford). I was hoping you could send them a more appropriate one.
Spelled wrong

C. Bradley

P.S. No need to return letter.

When the salvage team arrived to begin the excavation, Colonel de Jong told them that the primary object in this case was to find and identify human remains, so great care and accuracy would be needed. After fifteen minutes' digging, pieces of metal were uncovered; then engine fragments, the dented propeller, 20-mm cartridges and armour plate. By now, it was clear that this was indeed an FW-190. As work went on, a plate bearing the aircraft's serial number 170009 was found; that was conclusive — this was Willius' aircraft. Then a shoe was unearthed and pieces of a jacket; finally, human bones came to light.

The remains of the pilot were removed to the German military cemetery at Ysselsteyn, where some 32,000 Germans killed in Holland during the Second World War are buried. The widow, Frau Willius Cools, was informed and soon after visited both the crash site where her husband died and the cemetery at Ysselsteyn, accompanied by her daughter. At last, after so many years, she was able to place flowers on her husband's grave.

The finding of other aircraft sometimes helped to piece together an otherwise broken story, even when the aircraft had disintegrated. This was the case with two B-17 Flying Fortresses of the Eighth Air Force, shot down on the same day, 11 January 1944. For two months bad weather had prevented high-level daylight precision bombing of vital targets by the Americans. Blind bombing of ports through cloud was no substitute for the accurate attacks on German aircraft factories and airfields which were necessary to cripple the Luftwaffe before the invasion planned for May. And on 11 January, the weather cleared. 633 heavy four-motor bombers took off in three separate formations and headed for Holland, escorted by eleven groups of Thunderbolts, two groups of Lightnings (P-38s), six groups of British Spitfires and one squadron of Mustangs (P-51s). Only the Mustangs, the new long-range American fighters, could go with the bombers all the way to the target; but there were only forty-nine of these new machines available. Things started to go wrong almost at once.

The weather over England worsened, and the bombers took a long time getting off and forming up; as a result the fighters were forced to use up some of their precious fuel to no purpose. Then the weather over Germany worsened, and the Americans ordered back the second and third bomber formations as they were crossing the German frontier, leaving only the first formation of 238 heavies

GREAT MYSTERIES OF AVIATION

Alexander McKee

Russ: Here's another tale
of that 11 Jan 1944 raid
Might interest you. Other story
is from Air Force spoken here
you probably read.
The "Eager Beaver" success
is supposed to be going to
Barksdale the end of this
month
Brodley
SD

STEIN AND DAY/Publishers/New York

HALBERTAT JAN 11 1944

This target area lay on the direct air route to Berlin, from which it was less than a hundred miles distant. As the bombers' course was frantically plotted in the German operations rooms, for a long time it seemed they were headed straight for the capital. Without more ado the fighter Gruppen were scrambled.

The Americans, however, had already begun to experience difficulties. Though visibility over the target was good, England had been wrapped in cloud, and the process of take-off and forming up had cost the bombers valuable time. Now, as they flew on, the weather became still worse, and General Doolittle decided to recall the second and third formations in mid-flight. A contributory factor in this decision was, no doubt, the violent Messerschmitt and Focke-Wulf attacks to which his force had already been subjected after only reaching the Dutch-German frontier. For at this stage the Americans did not yet possess enough long-range fighters to escort all the bombers all the way.

On turning back over western Germany the Fortresses and Liberators of the second and third waves consequently dropped their bombs on alternative targets or simply in the open country, and made off home. That left only the first formation—consisting of 238 bombers out of the original 663—to push on to the target. But on this day there was only a single fighter group—forty-nine Mustangs—to escort them there and back. The appearance of these over central Germany, hitherto far beyond the range of Allied fighters, must have come as quite a shock to the German fighter command. For the first time its Me 109s and Fw 190s, whose orders were to go strictly for the bombers, were confronted over their own country by equal, or even superior, opponents. But there were only forty-nine of them, and they could not be everywhere at once. Furthermore, their rendezvous with the bombers had been premature, and their fuel was getting low. These factors, together with skilful control of the German fighters by their ground stations, permitted the latter to pierce the screen and once again assault the bombers.

Three German fighter divisions were involved: No. 1, centred at Döberitz near Berlin and commanded by Colonel

Hajo Herrmann, inventor of the "Wilde Sau" night-fighting tactics; No. 2, centred at Stade on the Elbe and commanded by Major-General Ibel, who had for long been *Kommandore* of JG 27; No. 3, centred at Deelen in Holland and commanded by the veteran Colonel Walter Grabmann of twin-engined fighter fame, who had once flown the unequal Me 110 against Spitfires over Britain. Together, the three of them today had 207 single- and twin-engined fighters to launch against the enemy bomber stream.

And today, once more, the bloody scenes of the summer and autumn of 1943 were re-enacted. Despite their efforts, the bombers failed to ward off the attacks. Their crews even reported a seeming improvement in German tactics, and stated that their enemy was better armed than previously. Whenever they closed into compact formation to produce an impenetrable screen of fire, the German twin-engined fighters would fire their rockets into the box from a safe distance, and score every time. If, on the other hand, the bombers loosened their formation, down came the Me 109s and Fw 190s on their now more vulnerable opponents.

174 bombers were billed to attack the AGO works in Aschersleben, one of the Fw 190 production centres; but before they reached this target thirty-four of them, or twenty per cent, had already been shot down. The total loss suffered by the Eighth Air Force, on this first 1944 attempt to knock out the centres of German fighter production, was sixty heavy bombers, plus five fighters. On their side, the Americans claimed to have shot down 152 German fighters. The actual figure—as can be read in the war diary of I Fighter Air Corps—was thirty-nine.

So far there could be no more convincing evidence of the fact that the German fighter arm, far from being knocked out, had utilised the winter respite to gather greater strength than it possessed before. Yet any thoughts of ultimate success were an illusion. The appearance of the Mustang, with its incredible radius of action, caused the men responsible for German fighter operations and fighter production—above all *General der Jagdflieger* Adolf Galland and

Russ: This article is from a book called "The Luftwaffe
War Diaries" written by Cajus Bekker in 1964. It's
their version of the Halberstadt raid, I thought you
might like to add it to your collection.

Bradley