

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, and currently am director of news and information services at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio. I solicit your assistance in my project.

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 Bennie L. Jefferies
Address Rt. 2 Belle Plaine, Kansas 67013
Telephone 316-867-2227 Date 9-4-75
Occupation Farming + Salvage Employer Self
Address _____ Telephone Business 316-326-5414

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th: Began military in Oct. 1942
Had the usual basic training and air crew training that took me from Florida to Washington and points between

After leaving the 306th: Had R + R. at St. Santa Ana Calif. - Victoria Tex. to Independence Ks. and discharge

306th Record: approx.

Arrival Date 12-1-43 Squadron or other unit 368th
MOS 611 Combat Status _____
Missions Completed 31
Promotions Staff Sergeant
Decorations AM 3 olcs DFC 1 olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM
 PH Battle Stars 3 other _____

(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?)

25 Feb 44
We were the only crew to come back from a mission to Augsburg, Germany (in our squadron).

On another mission of deep penetration we were forced out of formation due to A-A fire hitting one engine. We saw another group getting shot up by enemy fighters. The pilot told us to hang on we were going down for ~~cloud~~ cloud cover and head for home. All went well until the ~~cloud~~ cloud cover broke up over the Zider Zee. We only up about 2000 ft. Enemy A-A sighted in on us. Their first hit but not much damage, the second took 11 feet of the right wing and knocked out the right outboard engine. I feel that our ball turret gunner saved us. They never got off the third shot. As the ball gunner fired at them I could see them running for shelter. It was all the pilot & Co-pilot both could do hold the plane in the air, but we did manage to limp back to our home base. It certainly felt good to be back on the ground.

I do have a picture of this plane but isn't too good.

I am not sure what you want
in regard to the question
Combat status. - I was a
tail gunner. if that will help
you.

I have about 25 issues
of the Yank magazine or
paper. They are not in the
good of condition now, but
would be glad to share them,
of course I would want them
back after your research.

Dear Russell:

In regards to the
chewed up wing. This
happened on 6 march 1944
we were on our way to
Berlin.

The plane was the
Vapor Trail. I notice in
the last issue of the 306.
Echoes all you had was just
the name. It was in the
368th Sqn. Last 3 it was
363 It was a G model
The pilot was Philip Field
He may have more info.
I think the plane went
down in Channel, but I
am not sure.

Address

Philip Field

918 N 291 Highway

Independence, Missouri

64050

Russ

I hope I have helped some. I feel that maybe Field might have more info. than I. I do know that still has his Log book.

Bennie



Bennie Jefferies
Rt 2 Box 103
Belle Plaine, Ks
67013

Dear Bill:

I failed to get Gus Strongs new address while at the reunion, thought maybe you would send it to me. I have come up with another picture that he maybe able to use.

I give Gus some money, but am sending this \$10⁰⁰ now to help out on the postage or however you see fit to use it.

Hope you and yours have a good holiday season.

Sincerely

Bennie Jeffers
Rt 2 Box 103
Belle Plaine, Ks
67013

Dear Bill:

I have the name and address of a man that was in the 306th - 368 Sqd. He was ground personell, he took care of flying equipment. I have talked to him. I got the idea that he felt like he didn't belong because he didn't fly.

Maybe you can get to him.

NOT ON VISIT

Les Augustin

232 S. Bleckley Dr.

Wichita, Ks.

Funds for "Echoes"

I will have some cash for you in Colo. Spers.

Bennie Jeffries
Rt 2

Belle Plaine, Ke

67013

12-8-92

Dear Russell

I note in the Oct. 92 Echoes your request for crew pictures. I realize this is not a very good picture but is all I have. I would like it back or an improved copy if possible.

This was March 6 1944 - the story you describe at the bottom of page 223 in your book 1st over Germany.

My wife and I had 50th anniversary on Oct. 25 92. My oldest son's father-in-law is a sorta poet & story teller, they got together and made this tape I am sending along. It was played with about 60 or 70 people at our party. I didn't know anything about it - was a complete surprise there was a lot of tears and not all mine.

I am aware that was aimed at me, but I am sure there are a lot of people can relate.

T. J. Trimley copyrights a lot is works but this is not and we are free to use it any way

The 13 refers to my 13th mission. This was true some of the others but not sure how many.

You can keep the tape + the typed copy, but I do want the picture back.

In the directory you have phone # 316-488-3906 this is my son's # - how in the world that I have no idea. my # is 316-867-2227

Hope you can use some of this stuff.

Sincerely
Bernie Jefferies
Rt 2 Box 103
Bella Plaine, Ks 67013

Picture L to R

- 1 T/Sgt. Roy Nupen. Radio
- 2 1st Lt. B.C. Gustafson Bomb
- 3 S/Sgt. Bennie Jefferies - T. Gun.
- 4 S/Sgt. Sid. Salupsky R. waist
- 5 S/Sgt. Karl Madsen L. "
- 6 S/Sgt Raymond Kristoff - Ball
- 7* 1st Lt C.D. ?? SWAN Co. P. ~~P. 111~~
- 8 1st Lt. Philip Field Pilot
- 9 1st Lt. Charles Leake Nav.
- 10 T/Sgt James Brownell T. turret.

#7 I am sorry I cannot identify this man, he was with us as a spare co pilot

MAIL FILE: JUNE.MST / Last Update: 17

=====

Record: 859

TWILA JEFFERIES
R 2 BOX 103
BELLE PLAINE, KS 67013

Last Name: Jefferies
First Name: Bennie L
Name Display: Bennie L Jefferies
Company:
Address 1: Rt 2, Box 103
Address 2:
City: Belle Plaine
State: KS

Zip Code: 67013-9515

Phone: (316)867-2227

Fax: ()-

Country Code:

Title Code:

Gender Code:

Selection Code: 368

Memo 1:

Memo 2:

Memo 3:

Memo 4:

Date Entered:

Date Updated: 17 DEC 92

Followup date:

HICHTA, KS
P.M.
67013
269

*Thanks for information
on march - 6 - 1994
Co Pilot
B.J.*



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



1-16-93

Dear Russell

Sorry, I was late mailing your card back with my wife's name. I was pretty busy - with the holidays and then I had some pretty serious water problems. This is not the part of the country to have water problems this time of year.

I sure thank you for the picture - I think it turned out good - and again thanks for the I.D. on the co pilot

Here is your card with my wife's name in case you didn't get the other one

Bessie Jaffar

9-6-93

Dear Russell,

I told you in the earlier letter that we had been in Salt Lake City in June - the reason was for the publication of a book on the Jefferies family history - it goes back in the 1600's to England. It is a big book as you can see on the picture page is 633. This book will be read by 1000's of people. I thought you would like to know that you and your book got credit in the Jefferies book.

Hope the reunion goes good.

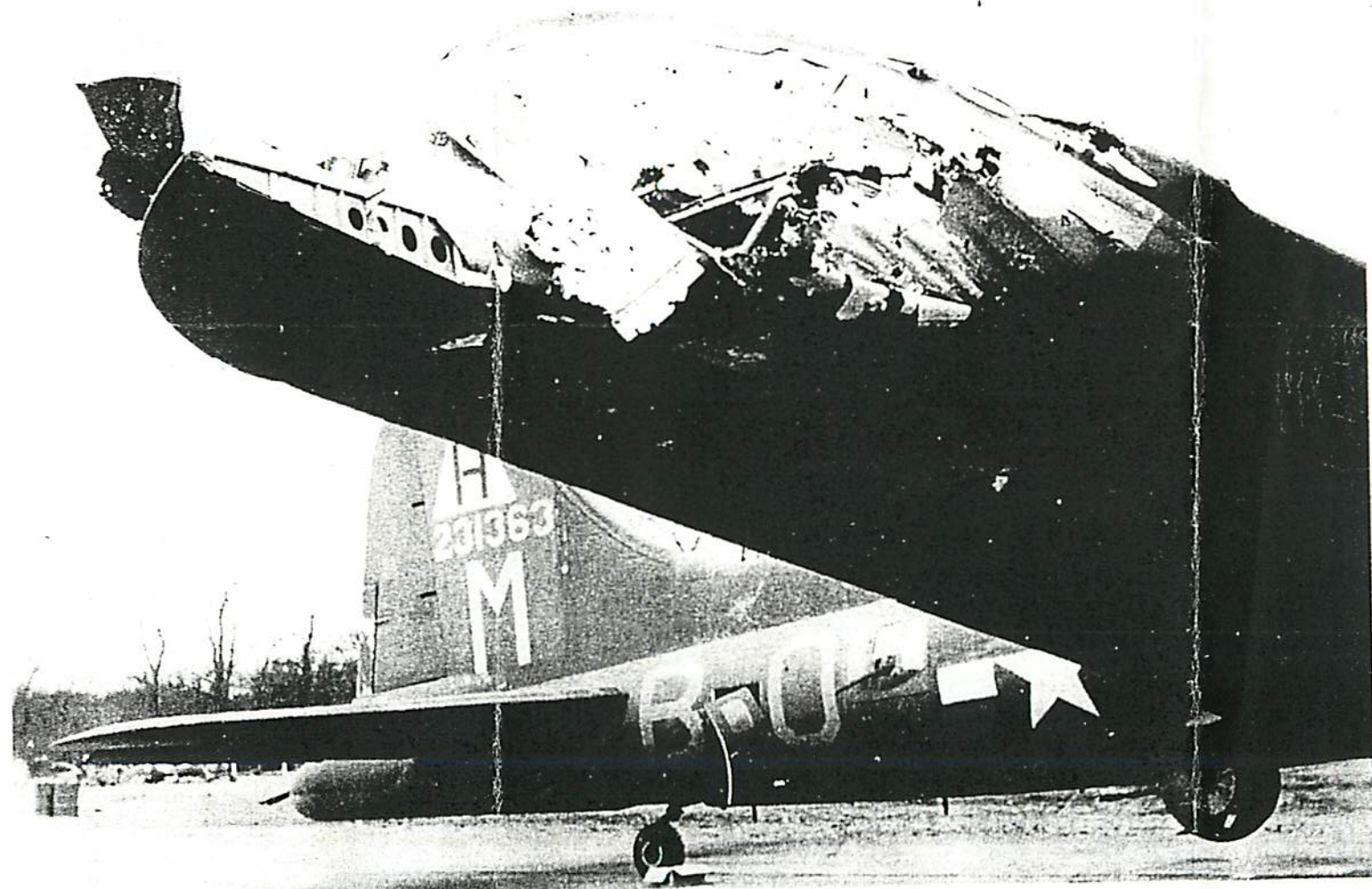
Sincerely

Bennie

IV. WORLD WAR II

The following is an excerpt from Russell A. Strong's *FIRST OVER GERMANY, A HISTORY OF THE 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP*, and recounts an experience in late winter, 1944, of the B-17 "Vapor Trail." Bennie Lee Jefferies, great-grandson of Amor, served as the tail-gunner on that plane:

On the way to the target 1st Lt. Philip Field's 306th aircraft ran into trouble in the Dummer Lake area, a region always regarded by crews with considerable trepidation. Gunners were often given an extra alert when they approached this area. Flak knocked out the number 2 engine and Field was forced to abort as he could not continue the climb to bombing altitude on three engines. The pilots turned the plane around, salvoed their bombs and headed for cloud cover at 4,000 feet. Unfortunately, the cloud cover ran out as they reached the Zuider Zee. They tried to leave the continent between two small islands among the Frisians at the north end of the Zuider Zee and were at 3,000 feet when a flak battery to the right of the plane opened up. The first shot went through the emblem on the right wing and another exploded in the wing tip, damaging twelve feet of the leading edge. By the time Field and his copilot had the plane under control again it was down to 900 feet, and the navigator ordered the gunners, "Shoot em!" All responded and the ball turret gunner used up 1100 rounds of ammunition as he sprayed a crisscross pattern over the gun emplacement that had bothered them. This action gave "Vapor Trail" just enough time to get beyond the effective range of the guns and the crew returned to Thurleigh.



The right wing of the "Vapor Trail."

12-18-93

Dear Russell

For the directory update. I think I told you earlier about the phone # mix up, in case I didn't my # 316-867-2227 and wife's first name is Twila - for over 51 years now. Everything else in the 92 directory is correct.

I am enclosing a check for the 368th Combat Diary.

At this time I am planning on going to the reunion in Des Moines. I have hopes of being able of making it. I am already trying to get Philip Field to go.

4-11-95

Dear Russell.

I don't know if you can help me or not. If not maybe you can tell who to contact. I would like to know or have a copy of the travel orders for myself when I left the 306th to come home. It was around the middle of October 1944. I don't have anything to back this up, but is something that could possibly help me with a V.A. claim.

I don't expect nor do I want you to spend a lot of time on this, but any help or pointing me in the right direction, I would be thankful for.

Sincerely

Bennie



Bennie L Jefferies
RR 2 Box 103
Belle Plaine KS 67013

19 April 1995

Dear Bennie:

In response to your note of 11 Apr 95, let me tell you that I do not have such orders in my possession as would show your date of shipment home, etc.

I did have quite a collection of them, and in the interest of space of storage, I shipped them off a couple of months ago to The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center. I don't show any note on my card that would indicate that I had picked up data on you from such a card. But, they may have collected other such orders and would be able to help you.

Write to Mary Beth Barnard, Archivist, Mighty Eighth, PO Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402.

Tell her that I suggested you write her, as she feels much indebted to me and the 306th for the collection of materials I have sent down there. Give her the best date possible on when you left the 306th to come home, and ask for a copy of the order, if they have it. It may well have come out of First Bomb Division.

If she can't help you, write the Adjutant General, United States Army, The Pentagon, Washington, DC, and see what he can do for you. That ZIP is 20314.

Good luck,

replied 12/22/96 12-16-96

Dear Russell

I trained and went to England with Philip Field. He finished his tour I think on June 20 1944.

If my life depended on it I could not tell you what pilots I flew with after that. What I am asking is if you have any data or info or where I could go for it. This would be the 368th Sqd. and the Group mission #'s are 185, 195, 197, 200, 203, 204, 209, 210, 211, 212, 214, & 215.

If you have this information there is no big rush. Enjoy your holiday seasons first, but I would sure like to have this if it is possible.

Thanks

Sincerely

Bennie

Karl Madsen thinks I may have flown 1 or 2 with Cloeys.



Bennie L. Jefferies
838 N. West Rd.
Belle Plaine, KS 67013-8217

1-10-97

Dear Russell


This article from the Guideposts magazine really upset me. These men were 8th A.F. I think that violin belongs in either Dayton or Savannah I don't have any clout, but I feel like you do or at least know somebody who might get this piece of 8th AF history where really belongs. I have reread this story, at first I assumed it was the 8th I guess it is possible to be the 15th. But either way I don't believe it belongs with a navy display

I am assuming that ^{you} still have the mission # that I want, but will repeat

Date	mission	Group #	368 th Sqn.
June 24	1944	185	
July 13		195	
17		197	
nothing 20		200	
24		203	
25		204	
Aug 5		209	
6		210	
7		211	
8		212	
12		214	
13		215	

23 Apr 97

Sincerely
Bennie



BENNIE JEFFERIES
838 N WEST RD
BELLE PLAINE, KS 67013

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
TWILA MARIE JEFFERIES**

SOLOISTS

Sharron Willey, Helen Norris, Crystal Shields,
Ashley Jefferies, Tom Norris, Alan Shields,
Wayne Harris

USHERS

Roger Brownlee
David Pierce

CASKET BEARERS

Burton Freeman
Jim Highfill
LeRoy Lewis
Clayton Jefferies
Bill Rotz
Mike Medlin

MEMORIAL FUND

Maude Carpenter Childrens Home

INTERMENT

White Chapel Memorial Gardens
Wichita, Kansas

BORN
October 22, 1922
Lucerne, Missouri

PASSED AWAY
March 27, 2004
Belle Plaine, Kansas

SERVICES
Church of Christ
Wellington, Kansas
March 31, 2004
1:00 P.M.

OFFICIATING
Mr. Paul Hendrickson
Mr. T. J. Finley

MUSIC SELECTIONS
"How Beautiful Heaven Must Be"
"Mansions Over The Hilltop"
"Beyond The Sunset"
"Just A Closer Walk With Thee"

*The Sheaf of Wheat...
Symbol of Christian Faith*

*The seeds of faith are sown in the human personality
and grow into the mature faith of the
Christian man or woman.*

*The sown seed must lose its life in order that
it may develop and grow and multiply.*

*So symbolically, a sheaf of wheat is used by
Christians to mark the passing of a fellow Christian.*

*Death is not the end
but the beginning of life eternal.*

*The mature grain in the sheaf is the direct symbol of the
Resurrection—the life beyond the grave,
the fulfillment of the promises
of Jesus Christ.*

In Remembrance

Frank Funeral Home

Trusted name since 1917

417 North Washington/Wellington, Kansas 67152/(620) 326-3441

1917

12-13-97

Dear Russell.

I have a question that I have wanted to ask you for some time I'll do it this way.

I remember a mission that we flew, I think it was an all out effort, it was so foggy at take off we couldn't see the end of the wings All tail gunners, including myself had to take off in the tail with an Aldis lamp and kept it flashing ever few seconds. I would like to know what mission that was. I have checked with Phil Field - he drew a blank He come Nov. 10th + stayed over night. Had a real nice visit

I thought maybe in all your research you might have an answer to my question. I kinda feel like it might have been during Big Week. Just a guess on my part.

*Wishing you every happiness
through this Holiday Season
and the coming year*

*All the best to you
and your's*

Sincerely



Bennie L. Jefferies
838 N. West Rd.
Belle Plaine, KS 67013

Bennie
negative copy
2/9/98



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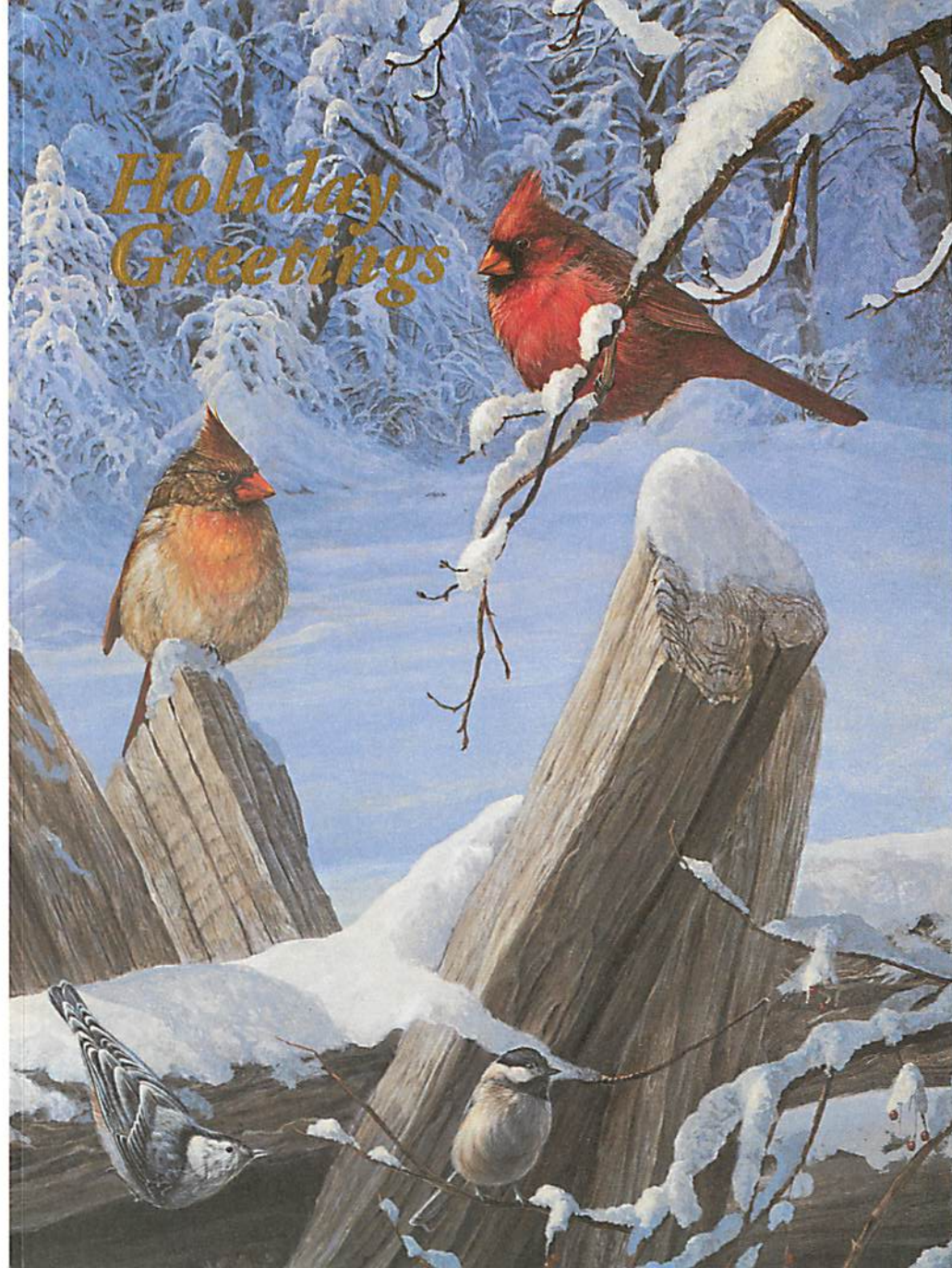
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Title: "Song of Winter"

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8-11-93

Dear Russell

I note in the last Echoes you are wanting information on 306th members.

My son took my wife & I to Salt Lake City in June. He spent about a bit of time in the Mormon library - it is a remarkable thing anyway I had him try to find Roy W. Nypen 37461630 - 55# 504 143276 - he was our radio op. (Field crew). I didn't have his military # with me at the time. Back home I went to Wichita VA and they confirmed the numbers and that he had died in Nov of 1978 Cypress, Cal. - Salt Lake give his birth date as July 18 1922.

Here are some others that you
don't have.

S/sgt. Hurl W. Millikin 36 41 7580

his mother Marguerite - Oscoda Mich.
He was our original Ball T. op.

He flew 10 missions + was wounded +
never flew after that.

T/sgt. James G. Brownell 32 38 4230

his mother Ida - 614 Madison

Syracuse N.Y. - Top T.

S/sgt. Sidney M. ~~Saly~~ Salupsky

32 44 1402 mother Rebecca

140 Vermilyea NY NY - waist g.

I think somebody told me
he had changed his name, but
not sure about that.

1st Lt Guillermo A Perez 0751030

108 Morelos St.

Chihuahua, Chihuahua Mexico

He flew as co pilot for awhile
after our co pilot was transferred to
another crew. That Clarence Crowl.

I have seen Crowl's name in
the directory and you have the
rest of us

Philip Field

Burton Gustafson

Charles W. Leuke (Killed)

Raymond Kristoff

Karl Madson &

myself Bennie Jefferies

I would like to go to Seattle
but just can't afford it. But
anyone going by car Salt Lake
City would be a worthwhile
stop to see the mormon library +
~~also~~ also just north of the
city is Hill AFB with a
air museum that is real nice
They have a B-17 and P 51
inside a nice hangar with
a lot of other planes both
inside and outside

Hope this is some help
to you

Bennie Jeffers

3-17-07

Dear Russell

I don't know if you wish to add any more stuff to your collection or not. I really tried to avoid doing this, but I have known Sherry Kline for a long time and she kept after me so I finally agreed. The picture, I am holding one of the silk maps. I also have a P.B. 17 autopilot. would you give to the 8th museum or sent to our museum at Thurlough? My 2 boys are going to want to keep some of my things but I know they don't want to keep it all.

They ~~not~~ made a DVD of the Program I can send you a copy of that later if you want it.

Bennie



Bennie L. Jefferies
838 N West Rd.
Belle Plaine, KS 67013-8217

3-17-09

reply
to
June 07

12-10-88

Dear Russ.

In reading the last issue of the Echoes I see you are wanting information on navigators. If you have not already received it I have considerable information on Charles W. Leake. He was on our crew. He died with another crew replacing their navigator who was sick.

I can get this together & have it copied & send you if you need it.

Bennie Joffries
Rt 2 Box 103
Bella Plaine, Ks
67013