

MARCH, 6 1980

Dear Russ,

I recently received and read with great interest the Jan. 1980 issue of the 306<sup>th</sup> ECHOES. I must congratulate you on this issue it was certainly the greatest one that was ever put out.

of particular interest to me was the fact that you are in the process of writing a new history of the 306<sup>th</sup> (I was never fortunate <sup>enough</sup> to see or read the old one) as a consequence I do not ~~know~~ have any idea what is known about the real early days of the 306<sup>th</sup>. Since I am one of the very first people assigned to the group I am wondering if I could be of any help in your effort? I am sure you have plenty of records. But do you really have the early "people picture"? Some of these things are still very clear in my mind while others have faded away.

For instance its exactly 38 years ago this week that we arrived at Salt City Air Base to start to form the 306<sup>th</sup> & 305<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gps. By we I mean a very small group of men, all enlisted, straight from the basic training center of Jefferson Barracks, MO. As far as I know each of us had some small skill from civilian life and they needed leaders to get these new units started. It was my misfortune or fortune which ever way you want to look at it of knowing how to type quite well also knew Morse code and was some what of a ham radio operator. At any rate the powers to be didn't think I had to go to Tech School, of course that was great with me since ever since the balloon went up on Dec 7<sup>th</sup> I wanted to get in on the real war. I had just passed my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and had talked my high school principal into letting me join up since I had enough credits to do so any way. We were in Jefferson Barracks from Jan 13<sup>th</sup> until

the end of Feb when we left for Salt Lake. a few days after our arrival a group of officers arrived and they were to be our bosses. A few days later I was in a complete "Tiz" here I was just turned 18<sup>400</sup> and a very green AVT. with 6 weeks in the Air Corps and I had been appointed the "Acting First Sgt" of the Hq + Hq Sq. of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gr. I was absolutely in awe of these officers since they were all ~~of the~~ pilots. Did I mention I was straight off the farm in Wisconsin? My C.O. was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Polonski, I often wonder what happened to him after they did away with the Hq + Hq Sq. There were several other officers I remember well, both groups were in the same building. There was Lt. Col. Lemay and Overaker, then there was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jimmy Wilson, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Delmer Wilson, et. et. I do remember that every day more people came in and I sure did learn how to make out a morning report in a hurry. I soon had talked Lt. Polonski into also letting me be his Radio operator and we started flying back & forth in B-18's between Salt Lake City and Wendover Field because we would soon be moving to Wendover for some real training. When we got to Wendover we had a tent city, a mess tent and one big 2 story barracks which became the group Hqs for both groups. I was still the Acting 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. also had got on regular flying status but my little old world crashed in on me, Curtis Lemay told me to make up my mind be a Radio operator or Group Sgt. Maj. or usual I made the wrong ~~thru~~ decision. I went to the Group Radio School run by Lt. Ray Hooper later Major - Group Comm. officer. The fellow who took my place in the Group Hqs, Cobb I think his name was, a year later he was a Captain I was a 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt or maybe 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. But we were then getting our B-17's in and who wanted to do any thing but fly. Well that all changed a few weeks later, but that's another story. There were so many great stories, practice bombing missions, practice gunnery, not too good according to Lt-Capt-Major Oliver which ever month we are talking about. Then of course the State-Line Hotel, who could forget that, leaves in to Salt Lake City, 129 miles away. Bob Hope and Bing Crosby coming out to Wendover. The first B-17 lost out in the wilds of the great Salt Lake Desert and all of us going out to find it. That sort of made us realize that

this was serious business we were in. Then in late July or early August someone decided we were ready to go over seas. I got the word some way that they wanted about 20 men to go with the freight train with all our big equipment from Wendover to Byrd Field, Richmond, Va. So of course I volunteered. That journey again was a story in itself. I remember in Kansas City, Mo rail-road yard some rail-road detective thought one of our guys was a hobo on one of the flat-cars and took a shot at him from an over-head bridge. I guess he didn't know we were all armed with .45 Thompson Sub-machine guns and just itching for an excuse to pull the trigger.

Well anyway there was Byrd Fld for a week, you made hills, my first experience with "Chiggers" from laying in the long grass. Then up to Ft. Dix for a few days, getting on the Queen Elizabeth with 22,000 plus other guys, the first experience of British nations. Landing at Greenock Scotland, those frightened Scotchesses serving us tea & lemonade on the train and the long ride to Bedford and the trucks to Thurleigh.

At any rate I was with the 306<sup>th</sup> from the 15<sup>th</sup> week of March 1942 until Feb 1945. If there is any thing I can help you with let me know.

Maybe you remember most or all of this Rus, if you do please excuse the rambling scribble. I never have been to one of our re-unions. Being a re-tired M/Sgt. on disability, a working wife and a teen age daughter still in high school just doesn't encourage one to make too many long trips. Still I'm hoping to make the one in ~~Orlando~~ Orlando later this year. If not I'll look forward to your new book.

Best of Luck.

Bill Johnson

34 PLANTATION RD. RT. 3

Myrtle Beach, S.C. 29577

JAN. 25, 78

Dear Bill;

Thanks for VOL 2, NO. 1 Jan-78 copy of "306<sup>th</sup> ECHOES"  
received today. Please change my address

from: W.F. Johnson  
14211 CHELMSFORD Rd.  
ROCKVILLE, Md. 20853

To:  
34 PLANTATION ROAD  
MYRTLE BEACH, RT. 1  
S.C. 29577



WM M. COLLINS Jr.  
2973 HEATHERBRAE DRIVE  
POLAND, OHIO 44514

Mail this card to all the people, businesses and publications who send you mail.

For publications, tape an old address label over name and old address sections and complete new address.

<b>Your Name</b>	Print or Type—Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial WILLIAM F. JOHNSON			
<b>Old Address</b>	No. and Street P.O. BOX 14278	Apt./Suite No.	PO Box	R.D. No.
	City and State SURFSIDE BEACH, S.C.	ZIP Code 29577		
<b>New Address</b>	No. and Street 2 BLUE RIDGE TRAIL BOX 75-330	Apt./Suite No.	PO Box	R.D. No.
	City and State GARDEN CITY, S.C.	ZIP Code 29576-9775		
<b>Sign Here</b>	Signature William F. Johnson	Date new address in effect 2/1/87	Account No. (if any) 369th Spd.	

This was a strange one!  
When I left Thimbleth in  
FEB. 45, I went to Liverpool  
and several of us Air Corps  
types were detailed to escort  
a whole boat load of Army  
amputees back to the States. I  
couldn't believe it when I  
was introduced to the C.O. of  
Troop movement, Col. Bob Riordan.

We had known each other since  
early Wendeover days. In fact I  
had flown with him several  
times before his regular crew  
was set. Small world!

5 March 45

*m/Sgt. Johnson*

TRANSPORT MEMORANDUM)

NO ..... R-1)

VOYAGE NO. 18 -R

(All references in this memo refer  
to "Instructions for Returning Troops,  
published 22 Feb 45.)

1. APPOINTMENTS:

a) Lt. Col. Robert P. Riordan, Unit E 151-10, I having been appointed Commanding Officer, Troops in Transit, is hereby appointed Commanding Officer, Troops in Transit, for duty on this Transport, (see Paragraph 4).

b) Capt. Thomas Harvard, Jr., Unit E 151-10, is hereby appointed Adjutant, and

M/Sgt W. F. Johnson, Unit E 151-7, Troop Sergeant Major for Troops for Duty, and

- T/S Edward L. Irwin, Personnel of F-8
- T/S Raymond Beatty, " " E-8
- F/S John J. Hiltbrant, " " D-8
- T/S Russel M. Bricker, " " C-4

Above NCO's to act as First Sergeants of Compartments.

c) Major John L. Mundorff, Unit E 151-15, is hereby appointed Mess Officer with the following personnel as assistants:

<u>Capt. Fred Florence,</u>	<u>Unit E 151-7,</u>	<u>Assistant Mess Officer</u>
<u>T/Sgt James T. Carroll,</u>	<u>Unit E 151-1,</u>	<u>Mess Sergeant</u>
<u>T/Sgt Florence T. McCarthy,</u>	<u>Unit E 151-1,</u>	<u>Mess Sergeant</u>
<u>T/Sgt Warren D. Reed,</u>	<u>Unit E 151-1,</u>	<u>Mess Sergeant</u>

42 KP's to be drawn from Air Corps, as designated by Adjutant, and to perform duties daily, as set out in Par. 4 (c)..

d) Capt. William J. Beall, Unit E 151-5, is hereby appointed Blackout Officer, with 3 Enlisted NCO assistants, to be designated by Adjutant from Casual Companies, and to perform duties as per instructions, Par. 4 (d).

e) Capt. Paul R. Massey, Unit E 151-6, is hereby appointed Police and Sanitation Officer, for the voyage, personnel for same to be drawn from Casual Companies designated by Adjutant, which duties are set out in Par. 4 (e). *1st Lt. W.C. Richardson, Assist. SAN. OFF.*

f) The following Officers are appointed Officers of the Day for the days following their names:

- 1st Lt. Stanley R. Chmura \_\_\_\_\_
- 1st Lt. Walter Dendor \_\_\_\_\_
- 1st Lt. Irving H. Appel \_\_\_\_\_
- 1st Lt. William H. Collins \_\_\_\_\_

1st Lt. Frederick L. Boatwright

1st Lt. John H. Benson

1st Lt. Paul L. Purvis

1st Lt. Ralph H. Hayden

g) The following Officers are appointed Casual Company Commanders for the voyage for the Personnel stated opposite their names, with duties as set out in Par. 4 (g).

<u>Name</u>	<u>For Personnel of:</u>
<u>Capt. Jack R. Lewis</u>	<u>D - 8</u>
<u>Capt. Joseph W. Navarre</u>	<u>E - 8</u>
<u>Capt. Steve C. Kiacz</u>	<u>F - 8</u>
<u>Capt. Robert I. Borchardt</u>	<u>C - 4</u>

Each of the above named Company Commanders will name two assistants for the voyage.

h) i. The following Officer is appointed Provost Marshal, with duties as stated in Par. 4 (I).

Major William C. Markley, Jr., Unit E 151-8

2. Personnel for Guard and Traffic Control ( 10 Posts for Guards) to be drawn from Air Corps.

i) Major James A. McGregor, Unit E 151-3, is hereby appointed Customs Inspections Officer for the voyage, with duties as set out in Par. 4 (j) of instructions.

j) Major Darrel S. Cramer, Unit E 151-12, is hereby appointed Censor and Security Officer for the voyage with duties as set out in Par. 4 (k) of instructions.

By command of Major General GRONINGER:

H. S. DUNCOMBE JR.,  
Colonel, T.C.  
Transprrt Commander

OFFICIAL:

LEE F. DAUGHERTY,  
Captain, T.C.  
Adjutant.

*neces neces necessary*

job description of  
a Comm. Chief Exec  
then.

LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL <b>JOHNSON WILLIAM F</b>	ARMY SERIAL NO. <b>16 048 382</b>	GRADE <b>M/Sgt</b>	DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE <b>13 Jan 1942</b>	SEX <b>M</b>	DATE OF BIRTH <b>19 Feb 1924</b>
PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES (Street and No.—City—County—State) <b>126 North Milwaukee St., Plymouth, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin</b>					

HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED <b>12</b>	LAST YEAR OF ATTENDANCE <b>1941</b>	HIGHEST DEGREE RECEIVED <b>--</b>	MAJOR COURSE OF STUDY <b>Academic</b>	NAME AND ADDRESS OF LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED <b>Oostburg, Wisconsin</b>
OTHER TRAINING OR SCHOOLING				
COURSE	NO. HRS.	COURSE	NO. HRS.	COURSE

SERVICE SCHOOL	COURSE	WKS. OR HRS.	RATING	ARMY SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM			
<b>Radio School</b>	<b>Radio Mechanics</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Comp</b>	INSTITUTION WHERE ENROLLED	CURRICULUM AND TERM (COURSE OF TRAINING PURSUED)	NO. OF WEEKS	GRADUATED YES NO

CIVILIAN OCCUPATIONS					
MAIN OCCUPATION (Title) <b>STUDENT</b>	JOB SUMMARY <b>Studied English, History, mathematics, Algebra, Geometry, General Science, Chemistry, Latin, Bookkeeping, typing.</b>		SECONDARY OCCUPATION (Title)	JOB SUMMARY	
NO. OF YEARS <b>4</b>	LAST DATE OF EMPLOYMENT <b>1941</b>	NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER <b>Oostburg High School, Oostburg, Wisconsin</b>	NO. OF YEARS	LAST DATE OF EMPLOYMENT	NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER

MILITARY SPECIALTIES									
ASSIGNMENTS									
YEARS	MONTHS	GRADE	PRINCIPAL DUTY	ARMY CODE NO.	YEARS	MONTHS	GRADE	PRINCIPAL DUTY	ARMY CODE NO.
--	3	Pvt	Air Corps Basic	521	1	6	M/Sgt	Communications Chief	542
--	3	Pvt	Student	629					
1	6	M/Sgt	Radio Mechanic	754					

SUMMARY OF MILITARY OCCUPATION AND CIVILIAN CONVERSIONS (Shown by title)

**COMMUNICATIONS CHIEF** : Supervised a communications section, directed telephone, telegraph, teletypewriter and radio operators in receipt and transmission of calls or messages. Supervised air-to-ground, ground-to-air radio and fixed airways communication system. Made first and second echelon repairs on radio equipment.

SUMMARY OF MILITARY OCCUPATION AND CIVILIAN CONVERSIONS (Shown by title)

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\* THIS INFORMATION BASED ON SOLDIER'S STATEMENT. (Indicate by \* any items not supported by military records)

DATE OF SEPARATION <b>22 Sept 1945</b>	SIGNATURE OF SOLDIER <i>William F Johnson</i>	SIGNATURE OF SEPARATION CLASSIFICATION OFFICER <i>Leo R Scheir</i> <b>LEO R SCHEIR, 1ST LT AC SEP CTR, CAMP MC COY, WISCONSIN</b>
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FEB. 14, 1988

Dear Russ;

Thanks for recent letter concerning the status of former M/SgTs of the 306<sup>th</sup> B.G.

I am looking forward to your up-coming article on the same subject.

I just wish I could help you some but about all I can tell you about is myself.

almost all of my old records were lost in a flood in the early 60's. I have been through the few remaining things since I got your letter. I've enclosed a few things, the pictures I would like back when you are finished with it the rest you <sup>can</sup> get rid of. I know it's not what you asked for but it's all I have. 

First correction we must make is that I was <sup>not</sup> "Bomb Sigt Chief". When I made T/Sgt. and then M/Sgt. I was Communications Chief. I replaced Jess Ralph when he was sent back to the states in the late spring of 1944. I had been M/Sgt. Ralph's assistant from Wendover April 42 until May 44 at Thunderbolt. Then I was Comm. Chief from June 44

~~until~~ I was sent back to <sup>2</sup> help from the new  
B-29 outfit in Feb. 45.

Sincerely

Bill Johnson

P.S. I sure have enjoyed your book,  
"FIRST over Germany". I've seen get it  
out and read certain parts that mean  
a lot to me.

**FORT STEWART**  
**HUNTER AAF**  
**GUEST LODGE**

11/1/92

Russ;

In reference to the July 92 issue of 306<sup>th</sup> Echoes, page 6, "369<sup>th</sup> Clay ISBELL' crew. The 5<sup>th</sup> man from the left was Sgt. Ray E. Buckminster, who was KIA, ST. NAZAIRE RAID on Nov. 23, 1942. 50 years ago THIS MONTH.

RAY WAS one of my Radio Mechanics. but when the Group went from 9 man to 10 man crews, RAY volunteered. He was the first of many of my best friends from Wendover who gave their life in those early days of '42' but the first was the hardest to accept.

Bill Johnson  
(over)

I sure do enjoy Echoes. I'm  
glad you all had a great time  
at the 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion. Wish I could  
have been there. I made The 40<sup>th</sup>  
in 1982 but just could make this  
one.

## ANNIVERSARY



Doris and Bill Johnson  
in 1944

### Johnson

Doris and Bill Johnson of 830 Blueridge Trail, Garden City Beach, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary March 11, 1994, in London, England, with a Mass at St. Joseph's at Highgate Hill, where they married March 11, 1944, during World War II.

The celebration was given by sister of Doris, Della Bishop of London. The couple will spend a week in Falmouth, England, where they spent their 1944 honeymoon and then a week at Thurleigh, England, where Bill was stationed with the 306th Bomb Group.



Doris and Bill Johnson

March 5, 2004

Dear Russ:

Please note my change of address. I was so looking forward to attending our reunion in Savannah, but the good Lord had other plans. My dear wife of 59 1/2 years had a stroke on Nov 8, 03, lingered in the hospital for 42 days and passed away on 20 Dec 03.

Doris (Paddy) and me were married in Sandau ~~to~~ <sup>at</sup> St. Joseph's at Highgate Hill on MAR. 11, 1944. She had been evacuated from London to Shrewsbury to look after the young children and knew many of the people in the 306<sup>th</sup> & the local AREA. Please accept this donation in her name. Sincerely

William F. JOHNSON (369<sup>th</sup>)

120 LAKES AT LITCHFIELD DR.

PAWLEY'S ISLAND, S.C. 29585

P.S. I would like one of those Folders in Bedford, WINDY AIRFIELD TRAIL



Apr. 19, 04

Dear Russ:

A short time ago I wrote you of my wife's passing. I believe I forgot to give you a count of the children. There were 3 daughters, 4 grand children, 3 great-grand children. We were married - 59 years

Bill Johnson

New Address is

120 LAKES AT WITCHFIELD DR.

APT. 303

PAWLEYS ISLAND, S.C. 29585

Phone 843-237-4393

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 11/30/93

LAST NAME: JOHNSON FIRST NAME: WILLIAM MI: F TITLE:

Street address:  WILLIAM F JOHNSON  
5642 CHERRYRIDGE DR  
City, State, Zi CAMARILLO CA 93012-5514

Telephone: (805) 482-9971  
zip + 4: -

Date of birth: 3/20/21

Wife's name:                     

College(s) attended:  
MUSKOGON COMMUNITY

Degree(s): Year(s): 2

Last employment & job title & retirement date:  
PAC FOUNDRIES - PT. HUBNEME CA.  
PLANT MANAGER - RETIRED - 4-1-92

Reunions attended:  
Ø

Serial #: 36378824 Squadron: Specialty: RADIO OP.

Date joined 306th: JULY 7 1943 If combat, what crew:

Special duties or assignments w/306th: RADIO OP. W/IF-VHF  
DIRECTION FINDING STATION

Number of missions flown: Date of last mission:

Date left 306th: NOV. 19 - 1945 Highest rank/grade w/306th:

Other 8th AF units served with: SGT  
4TH STATION COMPLEMENT

414TH AIR SERVICE GROUP  
Top service assignment after 306th:

USAF retirement date: Rank/grade:  
NOV. 29-1945 SGT

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.

Dec 12 - 1993

Russell N. Strong

Dear Sir:

I have a hard bound copy of First Over Germany which my wife gave to me for Xmas 1955. This is titled "First Over Germany; A story of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group copyright 1946 by Arthur P. Bove Putnam Connecticut & Newsfoto Publishing Co."

P.O. Box 1392 San Angelo Texas. England 1942-5 is on the bottom of page

Is this the same book you are advertising in the 306<sup>th</sup> Echoes?

I have just found out about the 8<sup>th</sup> Historical Society & also the 306<sup>th</sup> association which I have enrolled in both of them. Any answers you can send me would be appreciated

Thank you  
Bill Johnson



Mr. William Johnson  
5642 Cherry Ridge Dr.  
Camarillo, CA 93012

805-482-9971

**Russell Strong**

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**From:** "William Johnson" <wj306@msn.com>  
**To:** <Russell.a.strong306@worldnet.att.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 18, 2003 11:25 PM  
**Subject:** crew picture

dear Russ, I finally found my crew picture; we were a B-24 crew- Roy Hoffmann crew. Do you still want crew pictures? If so I will make a copy and send it to you. Will not attend reunion but will be looking for the Echoes story.

William [Bill] Johnson, 306th BG [H], 367th Sqdn - Gombardier

As a sidelight only Izzy Baron and myself are still living. My wife Kay died a year ago. Am also dealing with a Oregon newspaper which had a story of our crew making an emergency crash landing in a wheat field in eastern Oregon during RTU training.

Sincerely, Bill J                      wj306@msn.com

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