

# **COMBAT CREWS**

**The 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment  
Group (H), 1942-1945**

**Compiled by Russell A. Strong**

Bob Schuberg  
(903) 299-1125

# COMBAT CREWS

**306<sup>TH</sup> Bombardment Group (H)  
United States 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. This  
included the 367<sup>th</sup>, 368<sup>th</sup>, 369<sup>th</sup>,  
and 423<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Squadrons.  
In combat, 1942-1945, with all  
missions flown from Thurleigh,  
Bedfordshire, England, while  
assigned to the 40<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing,  
First Air Division.**

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## APOLOGY

The editor expresses his regrets for any errors found in this publication. It has been his idea from the beginning, coming out of the series of crew pictures appearing in for about ten years in *306<sup>th</sup> Echoes*. This was followed by the present project which grew to become this book.

We surmise that no other WWII bomb group could duplicate this identified selection of pictures. We only regret that there are not more pictures, and apologize for not having included more listings of combat crews in the *306<sup>th</sup>*.

If you can provide more information on crews we have missed we will carry such items in *Echoes*. And we emphasize that we want to receive any corrections you can report.

## Books About the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group in Combat

### *First Over Germany, a Narrative History of the 306<sup>th</sup>*

By Russell A. Strong

A 325 page study of the Group from March 1942 until the end of combat in April 1945: 100 pictures, indexed, lists of staff and command officers for the group and its squadrons and a complete mission listing. Originally published in 1983. This is its fourth and final printing. Paperback.

### *Combat Diaries, 367<sup>th</sup>, 368<sup>th</sup>, 369<sup>th</sup>, 423<sup>rd</sup> Squadrons*

A daily accounting of combat activities, tallying losses, German opposition, a listing of first pilots flying that date, and miscellaneous activities.

### *306<sup>th</sup> Echoes Book.*

800 pages, covering issues from 1975 to 2000. Indexed.

### *Casey Jones Project*

A 60-page report on the post-combat aerial mapping of Europe and North Africa conducted over more than a year by crews and planes of the 306<sup>th</sup> and 305<sup>th</sup> Bomb Groups.

### *Current Directory*

Published annually for the current reunion, a listing of those persons on the mailing list for *306<sup>th</sup> Echoes*.

A price list and order form may be obtained from the Secretary, 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Assn, 5323 Cheval Place, Charlotte, NC 28205.

# Combat Crews of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force

This project began as a collection of crew pictures to be displayed at reunions for the enjoyment of those attending. After about a year of work it became evident that there were more pictures than anyone dreamed of finding, and ultimately it was decided to put them into a book format.

There are more than 300 combat crews shown, with almost all of them fully identified. As you work through them you will note that they were taken under all kinds of circumstances, ranging from studio portraits to the most informal you could imagine. Many of them were taken during crew training before leaving the States. Most men are in uniform, but there is one child to be found, along with a pilot's wife.

Considerable effort was made to identify everyone, but this proved impossible, hence you will see (unk) on occasion. But not only was this of flying crews, and there are a number of crew chiefs, mechanics and armorers shown, along with other non-fliers. As this was going to press we were still finding identifications and getting them into the mix.

Not only are pictures identified, but immediately following the picture section is a lengthy index of those in the pictures. You will quickly note that some appear more than once, and perhaps Robert P. Riordan holds the record for the most often seen by the camera. He was an original pilot and stayed with the 306<sup>th</sup> well over two years, and appears in five different pictures.

The collecting of crew pictures began early, not only by this editor but by several other people in the Group. An effort was made to access any collections that came to light. Also, for ten years we ran crew pictures in *306<sup>th</sup> Echoes*. This helped in collecting many more pictures. Those acquired ranged from 8x10 formal pictures to out-of-focus prints that might better have been discarded. If we had done that we would have missed the only existing picture of John Olson's 367<sup>th</sup> crew which was lost on the Group's first venture into combat 9 October 1942, while the very last picture found in an obscure corner of the editor's collection was of a crew which closed out its combat in April 1945. Also, the smallest usable picture was only one inch square. All pictures were copied on a Kodak Picture Maker, which permits a uniformity in the prints, as well as being able to crop them so that emphasis is on the men, not the planes.

## On using the book:

Pictures are basically random. As they were acquired over a long period, it seemed best to go that way and to not endeavor to sort alpha (by whom?), chronologically (of no real value), and as long as there is a key to finding everyone in the crew pictures through the following index, that seemed to work best.

Here is my system of abbreviations: The lead name on the top line is that of the First Pilot of the crew, and after his name appears the Squadron assignment. The other crew members are: CP -copilot, N- navigator, B-bombardier, e-engineer and top turret gunner, ro-radio operator, bt-ball turret gunner, wg-waist gunner (or lw-left waist, rw-right waist), tg -tail gunner, togg-an enlisted man who fired the nose guns, opened the bomb bay doors, and dropped the bombs when the lead ship in the formation dropped; cc-crew chief, mech-mechanic, arm-armor. The toggler was created to fill the shortage of bombardiers.

In the beginning crews had 9 men, and when fighter attacks increased crews came with 10 men. When our escorts took care of the Luftwaffe crews went back to 9 men, and ultimately 8, or sometimes 7. Crews also changed often, depending on who was able to fly on a given day. With fighters and flak to contend with, men were killed, many were wounded, a few refused to fly after an introduction to combat, and others were transferred. Completed tours sent people to new jobs or back to the States. All of these things impacted on who flew together every day. Then there were those who were promoted to new responsibilities or were picked to train and fly with lead crews.

Because combat crews were so fluid, we have also included several pages of crews without pictures, many of these formed on copilots who became first pilots, and we even had groups of pilots who were assigned to the 306<sup>th</sup> and after checking out for first pilot status picked up men for crew duty from a number of sources. A little known fact is that in late September 1944 we had so many enlisted crewmen on base that those who had flown 20 missions were offered a chance to go home—and they did!