

Charles R. Abel
3701 Hastings Dr.
El Paso, Texas 79903-1321
June 21, 1989

Mr. Paul D. Schlusht
3749 N. Winfield Ave.
Indianapolis, Indiana 46322-1953

JUL 03 1989

Phone 1-515-566-4613

Dear Paul:

Your very informative letter arrived yesterday. To say that I was astonished is putting it far too mildly. I calculate that it was 47 years ago almost to the day when I said goodbye to Douglas, Georgia and a possible career as an Army Air Corps pilot. Unfortunately, I seem to have lost my pilot's log book so I can not recall who my flight instructor was. I do recall that I had logged almost exactly 8 hours solo in the PT-17's that the 63rd AAFPTD was equipped with. The reason I gave it up was because I kept getting airsick whenever I was flying with my instructor. I think now that it was over 90% psychological, in other words, I was subconsciously just scared, but they didn't have all the "shrinks" in those days that they have now. There is no way to predict what would have occurred if I had stayed with the Air Corps: one of my West Point classmates (Barker) was the first guy in the class to be killed (he was killed while still a cadet at Stewart Field near West Point) and another classmate (Martin) was the first guy in the class to become a full colonel and, so far as I know, is still alive. I might mention that for years I had migraine headaches which were never diagnosed as such by the Army doctors ("take a couple of aspirins and go back to duty"). Finally in 1952 in Albuquerque I decided to get a civilian doctor to check me out and in about 3 minutes he had the right answer. I've never had a real, honest-to-God migraine since then. I also had suffered from attacks of nausea and vomiting for no apparent reason. Finally in 1986 my doctor here in El Paso diagnosed me as having a hiatal hernia. If I had gotten the correct diagnosis back in the 1940's I might today be either dead or a retired Air Force person.

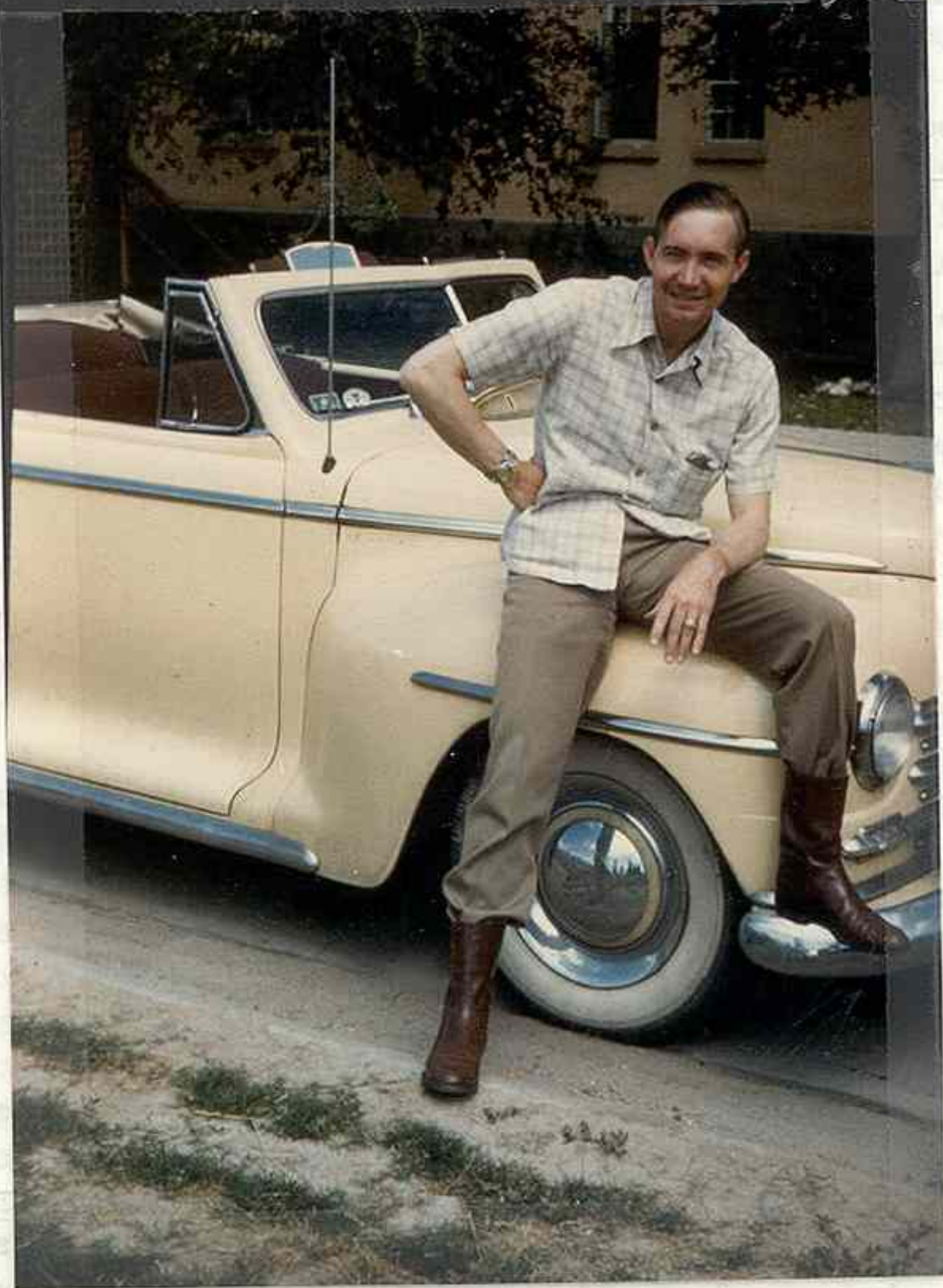
I can recall only a few of the West Point group that were at Douglas, and none of the regular air cadets. I gather that those of us at Douglas in 1942 were the only West Point cadets who took Primary training there. The founding of the Air Force Academy eliminated the need for Military Academy personnel to take pre-graduation training in flying. I know there were a considerable number of West Pointers who flew in the Korean War and in Vietnam, but I don't know where they learned to fly.

So far as my own career history is concerned, it is very unexciting: I was graduated from West Point in June 1943 (originally the class scheduled to graduate in 1944) and assigned to Anti-aircraft Artillery. Went to the Philippines in 1945 and came back to the States in 1947. (Was married the first time in 1944 and divorced in 1947.) Married again to an Army Nurse (Madge Vivian Trambley) in 1949. Still married and have 4 children and 2 grandchildren. Was assigned to Ft. Bliss, Texas in 1948. Took Officer Guided Missile Course No. 6 in 1949-50 and Artillery Officer Advanced Course in 1953-54. Was an instructor in AAA tactics at Ft. Bliss 1954-58. Left military service in 1958 and went to work at White Sands Missile Range in 1958. Was a Captain at the time I left military. Retired from White Sands Missile Range in 1973. Worked for the El Paso School System from 1973 to 1977, then went to work at the Library of University of Texas at El Paso till 1985 when I retired again. Am currently not working and have no plans to work again.

Well, that's not very exciting. If I can do anything to help you get additional info let me know. I'm supposed to go to a reunion of the arty bn I was in in the P.I. in Sept. Only trouble is I got hepatitis and left after only a few weeks so I hardly knew anybody in the bn. Will close here. Best wishes

P.S. I see Bill Tomlinson once in a while. He never graduated as a pilot either.

Charles R. Abel



CHARLES R. ABEL
FORT BLISS, TEXAS 1948