

OSWIN H. ELKER

4/30/89
Rochester Mn.

Paul Schlundt

Dear Sir,

In response to your phone call I will try to give a brief sketch of my activities after leaving Douglas Ga.

My flight group included Chris Erneston of West Palm Beach Fla., E. W. Dyer, M. E. Eckert, myself and Carmel De Luca. The only one I'm still in contact with is Erneston.

Upon leaving Douglas I went to basic at Greenville Miss, where I was assigned to the flight of a 1st Lt Hulet who seemed to be in a constant state of agitation, especially during my vain attempts at flying straight and level while under the hood. At these times ~~it~~ he had no need of the intercom and could be plainly heard over the roar of the engine! At these times I was grateful for the "wing flaps" on the helmet that muffled his screams to some extent.

Lt Hulet was a drastic change from my primary instructor Caesar Miles who was a quiet spoken and calm individual.

At Greenville De Luca spun in on the approach. He survived, but required a steel plate in his skull and was no longer able to continue flying. I last heard from him in Covington La.

Upon surviving Lt Hulet I was sent to Selma Alabama for advanced. Regretably I cannot recall my instructor's name there. He was really a prince, which I appreciated very much. I took my transition to P-40s at Sarasota.

Was then sent to Karachi India (now Pakistan) for

Our combat training at Sandhi field just west of Karachi. Then assigned to 75th fighter squadron, 23rd sq, 14th air force at Hengyang China. At this time the Japanese launched a massive effort to take eastern China with a land army, so much of our flying consisted of strafing infantry, tanks, horse cavalry, and supply lines of trucks, trains and boats. It was during a low strafing run at a train that our flight got jumped and I got tattooed with 8 mm machine gun fire. I was able to bail out with only minor injuries and walked 200 miles back to base. This was in May of '44. I went right back to flying missions and in July, while strafing a Jap air field I was hit by ground fire. This time I came down in enemy territory, but evaded capture through the help of the Chinese guerrillas. The 14th AF had a policy that a downed pilot who escaped out of enemy territory with the aid of the Chinese could no longer fly over enemy territory. This was to prevent reprisal against the guerrillas should this pilot later be captured and made to talk. So my mission count was stopped at 77.

I was then assigned as test pilot at the Chinese operated repair station at Kunming for all the fighter planes in our theatre. I was then sent to Karachi India as instructor in combat tactics for new pilots on their way to China.

Upon returning to the states in Aug '45 I left the military with the rank of Captain. I went into heating and air conditioning in the construction industry.

I retired in 1981. My wife Edda and I live in Rochester Mn. We have no children. I enjoy hunting and fishing and we do some traveling. Our 75th fighter squadron has a reunion every year; we attend most of them. The activities of the 75th fighter squadron during the last months of '43 and on thru '44 & early '45

III We're related in a most interesting style in a Bantam book by Donald S. Lopez who was a member of our squadron during that period.

I am enclosing a picture of the members of my primary training flight at Douglas Georgia. This is the group that Caesar miles has been trying to forget these many years

Oswin (Mosse) Elker

P.S. Have a wonderful reunion. I would sure like to hear from Caesar miles.

O. E.