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Dear Paul;

It is good of you to spend the time and effort to get together the story of flying school at Douglas. Winifred and I hope to join you for this celebration of life at Jekyll Island. We will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our marriage on Class 43D graduation day at Blytheville, Arkansas next April 29th. Our romance began at Douglas in October 1942 during my stay with the 63rd AAF-FTD as did our career together in the Air Force.

From Douglas I went on to Gunter for Basic and twin engine at Blytheville. Winifred joined me at graduation in Blytheville to go immediately to B17 checkout at Lockbourne AAB, Columbus, Ohio. Paul Bradnan of 43D at Douglas was a classmate there.

Becoming a B17 pilot we went on to Alexandria AAB (Now England AFB) in Louisiana in July 1943 to pick up a crew and enter "Phase Training" in preparation for combat. During this time Paul Bradnan and Doyle Bradford, another flight mate from Lockbourne ran together in a formation gunnery mission and were lost in the Gulf of Mexico.

In October Winifred went back home to Blakely, Georgia to await my return from combat duty in England while our crew went to Scott AFB to pick up a B17 for ferry to England. It was not to be so. Orders changed and we were rushed to New Jersey to board the Queen Mary with 17,000 other "souls" to sail to England to replace the casualties of Schweinfurt at the 306th Bomb Group, Thurleigh.

The air war on naval targets, the "Big Week in February" which "broke the back of the Luftwaffe", the campaign against German guided missile sites, the preparation for and support of "D-Day" occupied our time through July 1944. Twenty eight combat missions and 100 or so more combat time hours on "Cycle Relay" (weather scout, VHF communications relay and rescue missions) over the Channel and into the edge of enemy territory went by quickly, though at the time it seemed forever.

Back home with Winifred in September of '44 we finally honeymooned at the original R&R center at Miami Beach. Being somewhat "Elak happy" I declined an offer of B29 training to become a squadron commander in the Pacific. Instead I took Gen. Arnold's offer to train for a peacetime program to train technical officers for dual duty as pilots and technical officers. Due to my early radio operator experience I went into Comm. Officers' School at Chanute and on into Navaid's flight checking with the Airway and Air

Communications Service in Accra, Ghana flying the route from Roberts Field, Liberia to Karachi, India. When the Central African route closed out in July '45 I went on to Casablanca to command the 11th AACS Squadron and to fly the route from Casa to Karachi. It was pretty "plush" to have a B17, a B25 and a C47 to share between one other pilot and myself during those days. We ranged widely over a lot of interesting territory sampling many strange cultures.

In October '45 my first child, a daughter was born, the combat planes from Europe had passed through Africa enroute to USA and the Pacific, the USAAF had moved out of Iran to Saudi Arabia, I had enough "points" to go home so boarded a ship at Casa for New York in late January '46.

After the war life was good. Warner Robins, Georgia; MacDill AB, Tampa, Florida; West Palm Beach, Puerto Rico, Panama and Washington, D.C. took us to Korean War time. My WWII-combat time exempted me from crew duty in Korea but the building of SAC, the "A Bomb" tests in the Pacific, the NATO buildup, Air University and a dozen other special communications projects keep me running. Most of my flying was done in C-47's and C-54's during these days. A son and two more daughters filled out our family of four children.

In 1954 we went for 2 1/2 years at Guam where I flew C-47's around the Central and West Pacific. We were in San Bernardino, CA 1956-60 flying C-118's on various Air Force flying safety missions. Before going to take command of a large communications squadron in Greece and Turkey in 1960 I went by Randolph to become jet qualified in T-33's. In Greece we had a T-33 and a C-47 to fly. From Greece I then went on to another large squadron in England in 1962. At that time the Air Force put many of us who had become command pilots with scarce occupational specialties on "standby" for flying. We were still rated but not required to get in our monthly minimums. It was a bitter pill to swallow but economy prevailed.

I made Colonel on my next assignment at Hq Air Force Communications Service at Scott AFB, Ill. From there we went on to Langley AFB in 1967 for duty with Tactical Air Command communications.

My final assignment during 1969-72 in the Air Force was a job as operations officer in communications on the joint staff of Admiral McCain, Commander in Chief, Pacific in Hawaii. It was a nice way to finish off 32 years of service in the Air Force even though it was during the hectic final days of the Vietnam War. My children were grown. A daughter was nurse in the AF, married to an Air Force Captain. A son was flying reconnaissance from Thailand over Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. A daughter was in the Philippines with her husband who flew C-130 shuttles in Vietnam.

Our youngest daughter was in college at Virginia Polytechnic.

Retiring from the USAF after 32 years to live here in Clarksville I have sold real estate, managed a couple of farms, volunteered for several church and civic duties, traveled and enjoyed my grandchildren. Don't know how it could be much better. My health is good, my false hip is holding up, I'm way too fat and Winifred still loves me.

A couple of notes to update your data about "what happened to so and so?" as we discussed on 30 August.

George Pierpont was best man at my wedding on 29 April 1943 in Blytheville. He was Cadet First Sergeant and I was Sergeant in our flight so we developed a close friendship. George went on to instruct in multiengineed somewhere then went into the early days of the B29 program. Somewhere about 1953 his father in Salem, Virginia told me that George had been flying a B29 across Africa to India when it blew up killing all aboard. From his conversation I surmised that the engine cooling problems of the early 29's caused an engine fire and the ensuing tragedy. He had received only limited information from the Air Force.

Paul Bradnan and I went on to Lockbourne in April 1943 to enter the B17 first pilot program. We were good buddies in a car pool with another pilot named Doyle Bradford. The three of us went on to Alexandria AAB, La. for "Phase Training" with our new crews. Our wives decided to join us (against orders). Paul and Doyle ran into one another in B17s in formation on a gunnery mission over the Gulf of Mexico about August or September of 1943. Their two planes and their entire crews were lost in the Gulf.

As to completing rosters and such data I have little to offer but memories. My personal 201 file from those days was lost in a wet footlocker on a rainy ramp in England in 1964. I have a copy of the 63rd AAFFTD yearbook for Class 43C/D with pictures of all the personnel there at the time. I believe you said you have a copy of the same thing. Enclosed is a copy of the 43D Graduation Program from Blytheville, 29 April 1943. You will be able to correlate who graduated from Douglas with those two documents but it won't lead far in the direction of finding where they are now.

To the best of my memory my original instructor at Douglas was Mr. Puryear. R. W. Post, H. Putek, F. H. Rawson, W. S. Reed and myself were his students in Class 43D. Post was my room mate in barracks, sleeping in the bunk above me. When he spun in coming out of a simulated forced landing approach out in the country killing Mr. Puryear and himself, our Flight was assigned to Mr. Reed as instructor. I am hazy about how we ended up. It seems George Pierpont, Fred Rawson, Stan Reed, Robeson and I were Mr. Reed's students after the crash but I'm not sure.

There have been so many persons and places that I have not done a very good job of keeping touch with people. My old 306th Bomb Group has a historian who has a large computerized list. They have a reunion somewhere annually; Thurleigh, England 1992. My old AACS gang have a reunion somewhere annually; Corpus Christi Sept. 1992. The Tennessee 8AF Historical Society has quarterly get togethers; Chattanooga Sept. 1992. My original unit of enlistment, 105th Observation Squadron, Tennessee National Guard has annual dinners in Nashville on 16 September, the day we were called to active duty in 1940. So far the 105th is the only reunion attended with any regularity since we were "hometown boys" who stayed together for a year in 1940-41 in Columbia, S. C.

Winifred and I will plan to come to Jekyll Island with you for this will celebrate the beginning of our romance fifty years ago. We look forward to helping to dedicate the marker at the field in Douglas and to seeing the Stapleton House where we courted.

Enclosed is my registration slip and check for \$100 for the reunion. We will contact Holiday Inn directly for reservations. We won't come in until Tuesday night and will plan to leave Sunday morning. Also enclosed is a copy of a recent picture of Winifred and myself, as you requested.

Thanks very much for your "labor of love." We look forward to being with you at Jekyll Island.