

September 23, 1992.

Mr. Paul D. Schlundt
3149 N. Winfield Ave.
Indianapolis, IN

Dear Paul,

I'm sorry it has taken me so long to answer your nice letter of April 15th. I was not sure at the time if Miriam and I could make the reunion in Jekyll Island, but we have decided that we would like to come on the Friday and Saturday. You asked for a biography, so as brief as I can I will try.

I had the distinction of being the last Cadet in Class of 43-H to Solo at 13 hours. Instructor Sager had put me up for a Civilian Check ride because I could not land. Stanley Beach took me up for a Check ride and I was ready to kiss Pilot training Goodbye and pack for Biloxi. Mr. Beach asked me to do a power off stall which I had never been shown so he showed me how, after several of these he told me to bring it in and level off about three feet above the ground and pull a power off stall, I did and made a perfect landing, after several of these we taxied up to the line, he got out and told me to take it around myself and he kept waving me on until I had done about five landings. I was given to a different instructor, Raymond Rumpier, and you talk about a mean little guy, he was one, but he taught me to fly.

From Douglas Georgia, I moved to Gunter Field, Alabama for Basic in BT-13s. On my first solo flight, I took off without checking the elevator trim tab which had been rolled back 20 degrees from a previous flight and about 150 feet above the ground I stalled and immediately went over on the left wing and then straight into the ground, cart wheeled over the left wing and came upon the gear, I had cut the switches when I realised my attempt to break the stall didn't work so there was no fire. I was out of the plane in seconds, dropped my parachute and started running. The ambulance was there quickly and picked me up, I had a bad head wound and I had bitten thru my lip. After 3 weeks in the Hospital and a three week leave I came back to Gunter fully expecting to wash out, but nobody knew who I was, everybody had moved out and 43-J was there. Even the original instructors had gone, they did find my records and an account of the accident. The base doctor gave me a checkup and the base shrink asked a lot of questions and they passed me for flying. Needless to say I was scared, especially since the class was into night take offs and landings at an auxiliary field, when they told me to night solo I told them I just couldn't do it. A Major Christmas came over and stepped up on the wing and talked to me and said that he would stop all the other traffic and talk me around the pattern. I gave it a try and got back my confidence. Major Christmas stayed on the ground after the others had all gone back to Gunter and gave me all 15 landings and take-offs to finish the night flying requirements, the last one he got

in with me and flew back to Gunter. I never had any more trouble after that.

I moved to twin engine advanced in AT-10s at George Field, Lawrenceville, Illinois. I got my Wings and 2nd Lt's. Commission there with the Class of '33 and of course all new Buddies. A lot of us got assigned to Troop Carrier Command and were sent to Bergstrom Field in Austin, Texas where we trained in C-47s. We moved from there to Lawson Field, Georgia where we dropped paratroopers, then on to Grenada, Mississippi then on to Alliance, Nebraska where we were formed into crews and did glider tow and snatching, for two months. We were sent to Baer Field in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where we were processed and were ready to go to CBI, which we had figured out because of the Chinese Flag on the back of our A2 jackets. I went into town on my own one night to a local Bar, when I turned to look at the guy sitting next to me at the Bar it was no one else but Raymond Rumpier my old primary instructor, needless to say the two of us had quite a reunion, he was so proud to see my wings and my gold bar, he gave me a lot of good advice about flying which I remembered thru my career. When I arrived back at the Post they were paging me on the loud speaker system to report to Headquarters. When I reported they told me to reprocess, that my orders had been changed and I was not to go with the rest of my crew. I received a train ticket to Morrison Fld. W. Palm Beach, Fl. and told to report there. When I arrived, there was one plane and crew waiting without a first pilot, he had come down with appendicitis. We left the next day via of the Southern Route to England.

We arrived in England at the end of October 1944 after quite an exciting trip down to Puerto Rico, Belem, Brazil, Natal Brazil, Ascension Island, Roberts Field Liberia, Dakar, Marrakech, Morocco where we got lost over the Sahara Desert but found our way after going out to sea and around the Atlas Mts. and then homing in on the Radio Compass, and on to England the same night after refueling.

We were assigned to the 316th Troop Carrier Group, 36th Squadron in Cottesmore, England near Nottingham. When I went in to meet the Commanding Officer I was pleasantly surprised to see that it was Lt. Colonel Graham Wright who had gone thru as a student Officer, then a Major, and who was in my instructors class when I went back and joined 43-J after my accident at Gunter Field. It seemed that as soon as he had gotten his wings he got shipped quickly overseas and because of his rank was appointed to Squadron Commander when the Previous Commander had been killed in a crash. We had a nice reunion and I flew as his co-pilot for two months until he was transferred and I made first pilot again.

We made a parachute drop on the Reine and towed gliders in at Bastogne during the battle of the Bulge, we also had many supply missions to Gen. Patton's 3rd Army that was moving so fast. He was our favorite because he saved us from several para drops because he took the drop zones before we could get loaded and going.

I met my future wife, Miriam, in Nottingham, she was an entertainer in VES (Voluntary Entertainment Service) similar to our USO. We were married on May 9, 1945. VE Day + 1, the first Peace time wedding in England. I shipped out a few days later to Puerto Rico where we flew the Green Project for seven months, flying veterans to Miami from Natal Brazil where they were brought by C-54s.

I received my discharge after the Green Project was over and my wife

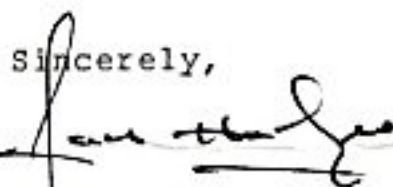
arrived 10 months after we had been married.

I went into business with my father in Arlington, Va. Remodeling and Home Improvement until 1982 when I sold the business and in 1986 moved to Florida. I now have a License as a Stock Broker and do private investing for a few clients.

Miriam and I are looking forward to the Reunion and to meeting you again and some of the other fellows that were there at the same time. I do remember you, I have a copy of th 63rd AAFTD booklet that I got when leaving Douglas, Ga., which I will bring along to Jekyll Island

I hope I haven't bored you with all this, but you did ask for a biography, this is the first time I have ever written it down.

Sincerely,



Jack H. Hodges



JACK & MIRIAM HODGES