

Minier, Illinois
July 8, 1992

Paul D. Schlundt
3149 N. Winfield Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46222-1953

Dear Paul,

I'm sorry I didn't get around to writing sooner. I just kept putting it off.

I was in Cadet Class 43-H through Maxwell Field, Douglas, Georgia; Gunter Field and George Field, Illinois. While at Douglas my instructor was P. T. Harris, his home was in Macon, Georgia, I believe. The only one I can remember that was with my instructor was Eugene Lamar.

After graduating from George, I went to Boise, Idaho to join Crew 25 - 753rd Squadron - 458th Bomb Group H (B-24 Liberators) as a co-pilot. After Boise we went to Wendover, Utah and then to Tonopaw, Nevada to complete stateside training. We were then sent via the southern route (Puerto Rico, British Guinea, Brazil, Dacar, Africa; Marakech, Africa; Scotland) to Horsham St. Faith, Norwich, England with the 96th Wing - 2nd Air Division - 8th AAF. I then flew 31 missions as co-pilot/pilot and instructor pilot (for new crews coming over).

After combat I was transferred to Southern England (Lynham) to haul gas from England to as near the front lines as we could find an air strip we could land on. We usually made two trips each day when the weather permitted. Occasionally we would get over there with the third load and stay the night (Paris, if it was possible). My crew stayed over the first time on either the third or fourth day after Paris was liberated. Once we stayed over at St. Trond, Belgium after delivering our load of gas. The next morning we went out to the base and everything was gone except our planes (2 crews stayed). We checked our planes out o.k. and took off for England and another load. When we got back we found out St. Trond had been recaptured by the Germans over night. They must have gone right on through and left us and our planes alone. After Lynham we went to Chipping Ongar still hauling cargo in B-24 bomb bay racks. We hauled everything from overshoes to groceries. From there we moved to Chartres, France doing much of the same thing, but we were not as rushed.

I spent Christmas and New Years 1944 on the Richardson coming home.

After rest leave and reassignment, I went to Waco, Texas #2 instructor school. From there to Sherman, Texas to instruct in a AT-6 WOW! (I got out of there as quick as I could.) I got lucky--

there was an opening in the ATC Ferry Command at Memphis, Tennessee for a B-24 pilot. I stayed there about 4 months. When I wasn't on a trip ferrying a plane, I was getting checked out in another plane such as C-45, B-25, C-47, and C-54. Then I was transferred to Wilmington, Delaware where they wanted me to haul passengers. I asked for a release from the service and got out as First Lieutenant 0811411.

After service I worked in a factory for a year and farmed for about 12 years. Now, after about 14 years with the state highway maintenance crew, I am retired; doing some gardening (and fishing as often as I can).

Our remaining bomber crew (25) still keeps in touch, and we have had several reunions. April, 1990, all eight of us met at Biloxi, Mississippi for a few days of memory testing.

I hope this helps you a bit.

Sincerely

John L. Luft

1st Lt. John L. Luft 0911411
Co-Pilot Crew 25
96th Wing, 2nd AD
8th AAF

P.S. I was awarded the Air Medal with 4 clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross.