

6/19/90

HOLMES "BUD" SOUTHER 1915

DEAR PAUL,

THANKS FOR THE INVITATION TO Jekyll Island in October. WE HAVE DECIDED, IF ALL IS WELL, WE WILL SEE YOU THERE. I'AM SENDING AN APOLLO FIRST DAY COVER FOR YOUR COLLECTION, DON'T OPEN, THERE IS BLANK PAPER INSIDE. YOU WANTED A BIOGRAPHY, HOPE THIS WILL DO.

HOLMES AUSTIN "Bud" SOUTHER 18 AUG 23 -

ENLISTED IN Army Air Corp, 17 SEPT 42 and called to ACTIVE DUTY at THE RECEPTION CENTER, Nashville, TENN in MAR 43, CLASSIFIED AS PILOT. PRE-FLIGHT, APR-MAY 43, MAXWELL FLD, ALA. PRIMARY, JUNE-JULY 43, Douglas, GA. PI-17's BASIC, Aug-Sept 43, Cochran FLD, MACON, GA. BT-13's BT-15's ADVANCED, OCTOBER-NOV 43 Moody FLD, Valdosta, GA. AT-10's-AT-9's COMMISSIONED 2ND LT, 5 DEC 43. IN JANUARY '44 WAS ASSIGNED HENDRICKS FLD, JEBRING, FLA FOR B-17 TRANSITION. WENT THRU PLANT PARK, TAMPA REPLACEMENT DEPOT AND ON TO MacDILL FLD FOR COMBAT CREW TRAINING, APR-MAY-JUNE 43. JULY 43 WENT TO HUNTER FLD, SPANNAH, GA PICKED UP A BRAND NEW B-17G AND DEPARTED FOR 15 AF, ITALY VIA Bangor, Goose Bay, Lagos Atolls, Meroukech, Struers and TUNIS. ON LANDING IN ITALY THE FIRST THING TO HAPPEN, THEY TOOK my AIRPLANE. MY CREW WAS ASSIGNED

483rd BG, 840 BS AT JAN SPURRO. I FLEW 50 MISSIONS,
258 COMBAT HOURS. ON MY FIRST MISSION 18 JULY 43
WE LOST 14 OF 26 B-17'S, AN ESTIMATED 200 M⁶ AOS + 109'S
HIT US, OF WHICH WE GOT 53 DESTROYED, 8 DAMAGED AND
5 PROBABLE. THE PILOT I WAS WITH LIVES HERE IN FLORIDA,
IN MY HOMETOWN. I WENT TO PLOESTI, BRUX, VIENNA,
BLECKHAMMER, TOUTON, INNSBRUCK, MUNICH AND OTHER
"MILK RUNS" TO FILL THE LIST. FINISHED UP ON 18 DEC 44.
LOST MY NAVIGATOR KIA OVER MUNICH, BOMBARDIER WAS
SMASHED IN A CRASH WITH ANOTHER CREW. BALL
TURRET FROZE HIS FEET, CO-PILOT CHECKED OUT AS PILOT
AND WAS SHOT DOWN MIA. WAIST GUNNER WAS KIA
FLYING WITH ANOTHER CREW. CAME HOME BY BOAT
JANUARY 45, BY BOAT TO BOSTON, R/R IN MIAMI BEACH
AND ASSIGNED AS INSTRUCTOR BACK AT HENDRICKS FLD
B-17'S MOVED UP TO AVON PARK, COMBAT CREW TRAINING,
AND WHEN WAR IN EUROPE WAS OVER, WENT TO DREW FLD,
IN TAMPA TO DE-ACTIVATE RETURNING AIR GROUPS.
ALSO FLEW MANY B-17'S TO THE ARIZONA GRAVEYARDS.
GOT ASSIGNED AS STAFF PILOT TO 3AF HQ, PLAYING
CO-PILOT AND GOFER FOR BRASS GOING AROUND CLOSING
UP THE TRAINING BASES. FLEW B-26'S "LOCKHEED", B-25'S, B-17'S

C-45's-C-47's, Moved to Langley from MacDill with the Tactical Air Command (old 3AF), In Oct '46 decided to leave military service, stayed out 59 days and re-enlisted as M/SGT spent next 5 years enlisted, Three years in Japan as radar operator (GCA) and Two back at MacDill.

Recalled to commissioned status Aug '51, Went to FAA Air Traffic Control School, Will Rogers OKLA. Was assigned Thule AFB Greenland Aug '52 where we flew C-47's with ski's, Made all those green spots, Goose, Gander, Frobisher Bay, BW1, BW8 and Iceland. Was assigned Tyndall AFB Fla in '53 as Flight Facilities Off, flew C-45's, C-47's, C-54's and checked out in the T-33. Nov '55 assigned to SAC to be KC-97 Tanker Pilot. Again I traveled a lot TDY, Japan, Hawaii, Greenland, Lake, England, Spain and Turkey. From Forbes AFB Kan at Topeka was transferred to Otis AFB, Mass. I retired in grade of Major 30 Jun 64. Florida is my home state so come down here. I have lived in this house 26 years. Part of that time '67-73 I worked at Cape Kennedy on the Apollo Project. Then spent 5 yrs in college

STUDING electrical & electronic engineering.

I decided to hang it up for good and spend my time on the beach, fishing and working on my house and lawn. In all I got a little over 6000 hours and haven't missed not flying the last 26 yrs.

Paul, I hope you can read this, and have tried to keep it short.

Will see you soon,

Sincerely,

Bud 43-K

704-777-2263

P.S. Unable to locate R.D. Smith, 45C This area has exploded in population and growth.

Melbourne went from 8000 in 1960 to 60,000 in 1990,