

Fort Worth, Texas
12 August, 1991

Mr. Paul D. Schlundt
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your letter concerning the re-union of the 63rd A.A.F. -F..T.D. It was great getting to talk to you and receiving the pertinent information.

After I retired I worked for J. C. Penny for a short time and then with a land development company during the time DFW airport was being built. I didn't really enjoy what I was doing so I decided to fully retire and do what I wanted to when I wanted to. This I fully enjoyed.

My wife's name is Ann and we have three children. Two girls and one boy. The youngest was born in 1950 so you can see we have been alone for some time. The picture of Ann and I was taken in 1989. We are still about the same except for a few more gray hairs.

I have fond memories of Douglas and my first introduction to the art of flying. My instructor was John Fraser. I can't remember the names of those who gave me my check rides.

One of my old classmates lives here in Ft. Worth.

Paul Surbaugh
7620 Westwind Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76179

I'm sure he will be glad to hear from you and get on the current mailing list. He was at Douglas and had Fraser as his instructor at the same time as me.

I have enclosed some copies of orders you may find useful. They are extra so you may do as you wish with them. I also included list of my assignments as general information. I did not have a copy of the orders that sent us from Maxwell to Douglas.

John Frasers four students at Douglas in 43-K were:

~~ARTHUR~~ Stokes
Paul Surbaugh
Dave Underwood
V. E. Trombly
~~TRAIL~~

Here is a brief re-cap of a highlight or two in my Air Force career;

When the war ended I was sent to Mac Dill to an officers pool and was assigned to various duties until I received orders to the 46th Recon. Sq. in Alaska. We flew classified missions over the arctic regions and did radar mapping of most of the areas. The missions were quite long, from 13 to 18 hours. We were flying the "dream boat" version of the B-29 like the one Col. Irving did to set distance records. After about a year of this, without Ann and our first child, I decided to get out under the "terminal leave promotion"

Reg. I stayed out approx. five years and worked as an industrial rep./superintendent for a manufacturing firm in Milwaukee. Was recalled during the last part of the Korçan operation back into B-29s.

Before the training at Randolph was completed the need for more crews minimal and I ended up in the air refueling business. I went from KB-29s to KC-135s as instructor, operations officer and staff officer at hq. 15th Air Force.

I went to Okinawa as permanent staff in support of the bombing of Viet Nam. The wing had KC-135s and refueling B-52s, F-4s F-105s and others as required. I never worked as hard or as long hours ever in my military career.

After two and a half years I was fortunate to know the right individuals and was assigned to the 9th Recon. Wg. at Beale AFB. This without a doubt was the best assignment of my career. The SR-71 mission had the highest priority available, the pick of personnel, and unlimited funds.

I didn't fly the SR-71 but was on the wing staff. I flew the simulator a number of times and became familiar with it's flight characteristics. I did fly the T-38, which was designated as chase plane for the SR. This was fun flying.

I retired in 1970 and settled in Ft. Worth. We enjoy it here but was disappointed that Carswell was on the "hit list".

Please excuse the messy typing job hodge podge response to your questions.

Thanks for keeping me up to date.

Best regards,

AIR FORCE CAREER ASSIGNMENTS OF

WILLIAM D. UNDERWOOD 43K

14077237/AO-818244/445-10-8549

DATE REPORTED	ASSIGNMENT	LOCATION
3 Sept. '42	Enlisted Reserve Corp.	Jacksonville, Fla.
11 Mar. '43	Aviation Cadet Appm't	Nashville, Tenn. Class. Ctr.
01 Apr. '43	Pilot Preflight School	Maxwell Fld., Ala. (43-K)
27 Jun. '43	Primary Flt. Tng. PT-17	Douglas Fld., Ga.
31 Aug. '43	Basic Flt. Tng. BT-13	Cochran Fld., Macon, Ga.
31 Oct. '43	Advanced Flt. Tng. AT-10	Moody Fld., Valdosta, Ga.
17 Dec. '43	B-17 Flt. Tng.	Hendricks Fld., Sebring Fla.
21 Feb. '44	Radar Flt. Instructor	Boca Raton Fld., Boca Raton, Fla.
30 Apr. '45	B-29 Pilot Tng.	Maxwell Fld., Montgomery, Ala.
27 Jul. '45	B-29 Combat Crew Tng.	Barksdale Fld., Shreveport, La.
04 Nov. '45	Officer Pool/Misc.	Mac Dill Fld., Tampa, Fla.
19 Dec. '46	46th Recon. Sq. (VLR)	Ladd Fld., Fairbanks, Alaska.
Oct. '47	Separated from active duty	Great Falls Fld., Great Falls, Mont.

From Oct. '47 until 3 Jan. '53 I was employed as an industrial plant superintendent. Milwaukee, Wis.

03 Jan. '53	90th. Bomb. Wg. (SAC) B-29s.	Forbes AFB, Topeka, Kans.
02 Apr. '53	B-29 Combat Crew Tng.	Randolph AFB, San Antonio, Texas.
28 Jul. '53	27th. Air Refueling Sq. KB-29s	Hargstrom AFB, Austin, Texas.
06 Feb. '58	KC-135 Crew Tng.	Castle AFB, Atwater, Calif.
03 Apr. '58	6th. AREFS, 6th. B.W.	Walker AFB, Roswell, N. Mex.
09 Feb. '61	Headquarters 15th Air Force	March, AFB, Riverside, Calif.
05 Mar. '65	4152nd. Strat. Wg. KC-135s	Kadena AFB, Okinawa.
15 Sep. '67	9th. Recon. Wg. SR-71s	Beale AFB, Marysville, Calif.
01 Jun. '70	Retired from the Air Force	Beale AFB, Marysville, Calif.
To Present	Fully retired status	Fort Worth, Texas.

BIOGRAPHY
of
WILLIAM D. "DAVE" UNDERWOOD

43K

While employed by the Civil Service as an aircraft metalsmith instructor at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville Florida, I answered the call of Uncle Sam to enter the Aviation Cadet program. I took and passed the exams and was sworn in as a private in the Enlisted Reserve Corp on 3 Sept, 1942 subject to call to active duty at any time.

I received my Cadet appointment and reported to the Cadet Classification Center in Nashville, Tenn. on the 11th. of March, 1943. Over a period of about three weeks while living in a tar-paper barracks with pot bellied coal burning stoves, and taking numerous tests, both mental and physical, I was classified as a pilot. To me, achieving this instead of navigator or bombardier was a milestone. I still recall the disappointment of the many cadets that failed to make the pilot rating.

On 1 April, 1943 I reported, with a train load of other "zombies", to Pilot Preflight School at Maxwell Field, Alabama in the class of 43-K. It was here we were to learn the true meaning of the "class" system.

For a period of about seven weeks we underwent intensive training, both academic and physical, not to mention the many parades, drills, and inspections. While there, then President Franklin D. Roosevelt, reviewed the entire cadet force while we stood shoulder to shoulder on both sides of the street along his motor route from the main gate to his exit. Also I remember Major Al Williams, an old time flyer and stunt pilot, putting on a daring air show in his special acrobatic aircraft.

It was a happy day when we left Maxwell and reported to Primary Flight Training at Douglas Georgia as a student in the 63rd. AAF-FTD. John Fraser was my flight instructor, and I shall never forget the first inverted flight indoctrination. Hanging upside down from the open cockpit of the PT-17 with nothing between me and mother earth had my heart pounding as never before.

How I survived the "washing machine" as we called the wash-out program, I'll never know. I guess John Fraser was a very forgiving instructor.

I arrived at Cochran Field, Macon, Georgia on the 31st. of Aug., 1943 for my basic training in the Vultee Vibrator, BT-13.

It was here I experienced the shock of losing a cadet buddy when H. A. Spangler crashed and was killed while performing solo night landings, on 5 Sept.

Then on to Advanced Flt. Ing. in the AT-10 at Moody Field, Valdosta, Georgia, on the 31st. of Oct., 1943. The AT-10 was a twin-engine airplane which prepared us for multi-engine bombers.

At the completion of training and on the 5th of Dec., 1943 I was commissioned a 2nd. Lt. in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

I was assigned to multi-engine bombers and reported to Sebring Florida, Hendricks Field, for B-17 flight training, 17 Dec., 1943.

At the completion of B-17 training, unlike most of the pilots who went on to combat, I was assigned to a classified project and reported to Boca Raton Field, Florida. We were required to complete a special Radar course which qualified us to perform airborne Radar bombing missions which trained navigators in the art of night and all-weather Radar bombing.

I flew both B-17s and H-24s that had been modified to accommodate seven or eight students on each mission.

After being told by the commander that we would be there for quite some time, Ann and I decided to get married. We were married in the base chapel at Boca Raton on the 4th. of Sept., 1944 and enjoyed a most wonderful time taking advantage of the Boca Raton Club facilities which served as our officers club.

It didn't take long for the training flights to become boring and I volunteered for B-29 training so I could get to combat.

On 30 April, 1945 I once again reported to Maxwell Field, this time for B-29 flight training. After completing this course I reported to Barksdale Field, Shreveport, La. for Combat Cre Training, but combat was not in the cards as the war ended and we became surplus.

I was then assigned to Mac Dill AFB, Florida where I continued to fly The B-29 in various squadrons until my assignment to the 46th VLR Recon. Sq. at Ladd Field, Fairbanks, Alaska. I arrived there on the 19th of Dec., 1946 without Ann as there was no housing available. I spent a year flying 18 to 20 hour missions over the ice caps and surrounding regions on classified projects assigned directly out of Washington, D.C.

During my tour our first child was born and I decided that being with the family was more important and I separated from the Air Force on the 16th. of Oct., 1947.

I spent the next five years in the industrial manufacturing field as a technical representative and later on as a plant superintendent before being recalled to active duty as a B-29 pilot on 3 Jan., 1953. During the B-29 Combat Crew Training at Randolph AFB, San Antonio, Tx. The war with Korea started winding down and no more bomber crews were needed, so once again my combat plans were terminated.

From July, 1953 to February 1958 I flew B-29 Tanker aircraft in support of the Fighter Wings at Bergstrom AFB, Austin, Texas. Our squadron was converted from B-29s to KC-135s and after training in the KC-135s at Castle AFB, Calif. I was assigned to the 6th. Air Refueling Sq. at Walker AFB, Roswell, N. Mex. Getting to fly multi-engine jet aircraft after so many years in the old recipis was icing on the cake. At Walker I served as Aircraft Commander, Instructor Pilot, and Operations Officer until being assigned to 15th Air Force Headquarters, March AFB, Riverside, Calif., on 9 Feb., 1961.

I spent four years at 15th. Air force Hqs. performed staff work, conducting inspections of various units, and overseeing special projects assigned by SAC Hqs. Here I flew the T-33 and later on the T-39 as in instructor and instrument check pilot, as an extra duty. I was promoted to Major during this tour.

On the 5th of March, 1965 I arrived on the island of Okinawa as an operations officer in the 4152nd Strategic Wing, Kadena AFB. We were a KC-135 Wing which flew air refueling missions in support of fighter and bomber missions in Viet Nam. I was promoted to Lt. Col. during this tour.

After two and a half years when my tour was up I was fortunate to be assigned to the 9th. Recon. Wing, Beale AFB, Marysville, Calif. I arrived on the 15th of Sept., 1967

As a staff officer in the 9th. I spent the most enjoyable days of my career working with some of the best people in the Air Force. The SR-71, known as the "Blackbird" performed highly classified missions all over the world, and still holds records for speed and climb after many many years.

On 1 June, 1970 I retired from the Air Force in the rank of Colonel and after a year of travel settled in Fort Worth, Texas.

I worked at a couple of jobs after retirement for a short time but got little satisfaction from them so decided to fully retire and devote my time to the game of golf and home maintenance.

I am happy, content, healthy and looking forward to the next re-union.



WILLIAM D. UNDERWOOD

D.O.B. 22 Oct., 1921
Born Chickasha, Oklahoma.

WILLIAM AND ANN UNDERWOOD
IN 1989

