

March 14, 1994

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

Dear Paul:

Your recent telephone call was, to say the least, quite a surprise. I remember the field at Douglas quite well, but I honestly cannot remember any of my classmates by name. I do, however, remember my instructor, a Mr. Presley; I believe you said his first name was Rueben. I thought a lot of him, but saw him only twice after I left Douglas. I was one of three cadets who flew BT-13s to Douglas from Cochran Field for a one night stay. The other time was when he attended my graduation at Moody Field in Valdosta, Ga. on March 12, 1944.

From Valdosta, I was sent to Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama for transition training in B-24s. I then picked up my other nine crew members in Lincoln, Nebraska, and we went to Boise, Idaho for our combat training.

Fifty-six crews spent 26 days on a Liberty ship before arriving in Naples, Italy. Our first mission was on November 1, 1944, the first anniversary of the Fifteenth Air Force. We lost only one crew member, our bombardier, when he was flying as a radar operator with another crew. One gunner was grounded after five missions because of ear problems. Our tail gunner was the only one to receive a Purple Heart, and his wound was very minor.

Both our Navigator and I received the Distinguished Flying Cross; his for finding the island of Vis off the coast of Yugoslavia after ground radar gave us a heading that was 30 degrees off course; mine for a dead-stick landing there from 13,000 feet on a strip rated 500 feet too short for a B-24. WE WERE LUCKY! We waited there two days for gasoline to be flown in so we could return to base. Twenty six aircraft landed there the same day for lack of sufficient fuel to make it home.

We had many rough missions, but were fortunate enough to never come under fighter attack. The FLAK was bad enough; aileron cable shot out; lost one of our four bomb bay doors; flak holes you could put your hand through and one your head would fit through. Of the 27 missions we flew, four were single ship missions when the weather was too bad to put up a formation. Our final few missions in the spring of 1945 were mainly in support of ground troops. We were sitting on the end of the runway ready for take off when the tower called us back to the hardstand on May 8, 1945. It was over, this was VE Day.

On June 6, we began a 6-leg flight back to the USA, and after a

short leave, reported to Tampa, Florida to await reassignment to the Pacific area. Fortunately, VJ Day became a reality, and we were sent to Atlanta for processing back to civilian life. It was nine years after that before I became active in the reserves. On August 31, 1955, I found it necessary to eject from a T-33; the chute opening at an estimated 200 feet. This made me decide to forego further military flying.

On January 31, 1991, I retired after spending over 35 years with Terminix, the world's largest termite and pest control company. At that time, I was Director of Fleet Administration, with over 5,000 vehicles in over 200 locations around the country.

Early in 1992, I became involved in the hobby of radio-controlled model airplanes; only because my grandson built and gave me a model he built when Shirley and I visited State College, Pa. in the fall of 1991. Needless to say, I have become quite involved and am now the current Treasurer of the club. The first model I built after becoming a member of the Millington Barnstormers was a BT-13 which I flew while based at Cochran Field. Model flying and woodworking keep me busy and enjoying life. Its great!

Again, thanks for your phone call and letter. I look forward to being a part of the next reunion.

Cordially,



C. Lomax Springfield, Jr.
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