

Mail Call

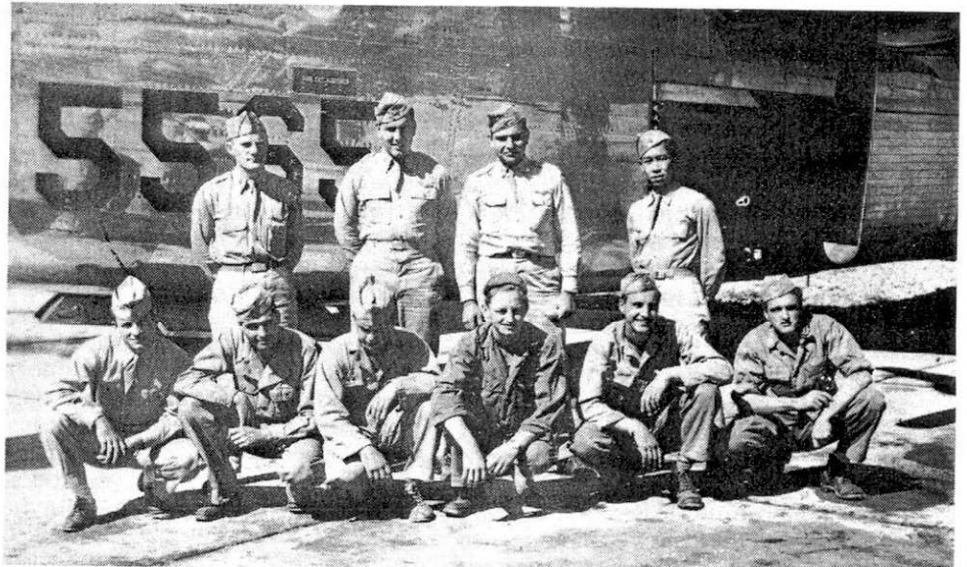
Dear Bud -

Re: Your letter dated 11/8/83: Requesting info on the "Little Mac" if I recall correctly, the incident took place late January or early February. We, (Richard Woidich, Harold Moynihan and myself) were standing outside the armourment shack, that was located just off of the field. We watched as Little Mac landed. The field was muddy. It was late afternoon. As the plane (ship) reached the 3/4 mark evidently the pilot applied pressure to the nose with the use of the controls. We noticed the tail higher than usual and the nose much lower than in a normal landing. Approximately just opposite ship 32 parking pad, which was near the runway end "Little Mac"'s nose wheel collapsed. It skidded forward - and plowing a short distance off the runway before it came to a stop. We immediately ran to the plane just before the props stopped spinning. Soon after, the emergency vehicles arrived. "Little Mac" was not returning from a sortie. It just returned from an engine check and had a skeleton crew. Pilot, co-pilot, engineer and radio operator. None were hurt. Little Mac lived to fly more sorties. We flew her after the crash and after the end of ETO campaign it was flown to Gioia, Italy, and then to Bradley Field, Conn. I do not recall the crews' names, but a short time later the radio operator, on returning from a sortie, bailed out over the field, his chute, stroud lines were entangled in his leg and he was headed earthbound, head first. Approx. 500 feet he was able to cut the entangled line and made a landing. Unfortunately, he did hit the earth hard enough to break his leg. If I recall correctly, we called him "Shorty." (The photo in the last Flyer may be one of us). You can check later with my photo.

Each Christmas, I flash back to Christmas Day 1944. We took off for a sortie - it was a big target. However, due to the snowstorm, we were forced to abort and return. We landed safely but others did not. There were mishaps. Only 1 ship made it to the target and dropped its bombs. They were not given credit. S/Sgt. Frank Korell of Bohemia, L.I. was its waist gunner.

Dear Bud -

Enclosed is a check for my 1984 dues. The News Bulletins are great and very informative. In News Bulletin #8, the picture of Plane #39 of 825th Sq., I am sure that picture was taken after it landed from a mission. There was about four inches of snow on the runway. It got caught in a light crosswind causing it to slide off the runway. The plane was towed back onto the runway with damage to one nose wheel door. The plane returned to service in 2 days. Also #14 of the 824th



Crew of Walter Bondarchuk 825th Sq. From left, top row: "Rush" Horton (B), Al Graff (C/P), Bert Johnson (P), Terry Lee (N). Bottom Row: Bob Lytle (Eng.), "Wild" Bill Harris (G), D.J. Lizette (R/O), Walter Bondarchuk (Ball/G), Richard Woidich (Nose/G), and Harold Moynihan (Tail/G). (Walter Bondarchuk photo 825th Sq.)

The last reunion was our first. Both my wife and I did enjoy it very much. For once, she was able to share my WWII experience. I wonder how many wives are unaware of the experiences of their husbands. Perhaps at the next reunion you could schedule a story teller to help enlighten our wives on the aircrewmens' experiences. We all enjoy telling about the fun we had, however, the fun was the time between missions. The time when we drank ourselves silly in the NCO Club, or our monthly ration - 6 beers, cigars, and a copy of Mediterranean Poop Sheet by Col. Scott or Elly Mae donuts (R.C. Girls). Not to mention unforgettable Rest on Capri (Easter Week 1945). Time flies by, but now and then, we do stop to remember. Silly incidents, like fools using 100 octane gas to heat our huts. Payday was a big day. Some, winner take all, others it was a trip to Cerignola or Foggia. Our sorties were something else. It wasn't fun. A job had to be done not by men but by kids. Our tail gunner was just 19. Kids, who were pilots were not 21. If you were 25, you were an old man. It was hard on the married crewmen. I was one of the lucky ones. As it was not until much later

that I met my wife and got married. War takes its toll. My electrical suit shorted and due to the extreme cold both of my hips were frostbitten. It worsened and years later, I received 2 hip transplants. So much for the past. Take care -
WALTER BONDARCHUCK 825TH. SQ.



Walter Bondarchuk 825th Sq.

Sq. had the same thing happen within a few days and ended up within 50 feet of the same spot. #14 sustained nosewheel damage and twisted nose and was taken to hack area and junked. These accidents happened in the winter of 44 & 45 because we had snow from mid-December till mid-January.

I enjoy the Bulletins very much and have made contact with Raymond (Pappy) Grenz from Sioux Falls, S.D. He was the generator and small engine man for the

824th Squadron.

I don't know if this information is much help. I know that they happened in the 1944-1945 winter because it was the only time we had snow. Also the crash on page 13 of Bulletin #9 was caused by a flat tire on landing. The plane ended up right where they built the second tower.

Again thanks for the good work and I hope some day to attend one of the reunions.

Sincerely, **DAVE MITCHELL 824TH SQ.**