



Note Ship 502 is a "Mickey" ship carrying a radar dome instead of a ball turret.

that he retire. He did and the last word was he was a fixed base operator of a small airport just outside Spokane, Washington. He may still be there.

In reference to page 22, the letter from Bob Myers, also from the 826 squadron, I know what he means about nuclear radiation. I have been giving blood and urine samples to the flight surgeon for 3 years, per request of the Defense Nuclear Agency, for five missions I flew during the USAF Nuclear tests near Johnson Island in 1962.

Hal Smith's article on page 24 reminds me of stories about Col Keese, Col Bush, and Col Dufour.

Col Keese:

On one mission, the crew and I were flying Able 13. We came off the target and started home when a P-51 appeared just outside my left wing. About the time I gave him a thumbs up I saw a streak of Cal 50 tracers about him. I yelled over the interphone, "Get off the guns, he's a "Little Friend". Just about then he pulled a split S and we lost sight of him, but not for long.

Two days later his entire squadron buzzed the camp, and I do mean buzz. They blew three tents down and you didn't dare stand in any open space. Just to the north of the

tent row and outhouse, was a flat field. They came in that way and had to pull up to get over the tents. They scared the hell out of the group headquarters staff. I remember Col Keese grounding the offending gunner as he had put almost 200 holes in the tail section of the P-51. He was royally chewed out for his poor marksmanship as he failed to shoot the bugger down. He was sent down to recognition school for two weeks.

Col Bush:

On our last mission, a no flak run on the Badia bridge in Northern Italy. We were leading the bomber stream in Able 11 with Col Bush as the command pilot, he gave me permission to buzz the strip (drag) in front of the tower. He let the rest of the group land and then we did it, South to North. I didn't use any turbo boost, but we were rolling, and I remember looking eyeball to eyeball with the guys in the tower. The waist gunner reported we were picking up dust from the prop tips. I pulled a chandelle off the strip, dropped the gear in a 45 degree bank, caught the flaps on the base leg, and touched down with one of my better landings. Col Bush was white and still shaking when he got off the airplane and shouted, "Captain you will never do that again to me." Incidentally the date of that

last mission was 23 April, 1945 for 5:30 hours flying time. Major William F Dowd, (Member 826 Sq) Air Corps Operations Officer signed the form 5.

Col Dufour:

The pilots in the 826th squadron were asked if anyone had ever flown a UC-78 (AT-17's in advanced) to report to Col Dufour. The mission was to fly an old AT-17 the service squadron had assembled from spare parts, (the left wheel had come off a Spitfire [I was told] causing the aircraft to taxi left wing low). I was to take a group photographer up to get shots of General Twining awarding the Presidential Unit Citation in the field south of group headquarters and west of the strip. The pilot made a big mistake, he didn't have the tanks dip sticked before takeoff. Upon getting airborne, dragging the gear and so forth, your pilot glanced at the fuel gages. They had two red lines crossed across the glass and were reading empty. Both engines were turning but I knew I had to get the mother back on the ground before they quit. But before I could land, I got chased out of the pattern by the whole group returning from a mission. We did get some pictures from a distance, but by the time the whole group had landed, the ceremony was over. I finally got clearance to land. It was a thrill to see that left wing drop. The aircraft was designed for crosswinds from the left. I taxied over to the service squadron area, shut down and proceeded to raise hell because the fuel gages didn't work. I was gently told that, "Oh! we know that Captain, that is why we filled the tanks before you left." I didn't get a chance to explain to Col Dufour what had happened, and for good reason, he never spoke to me again.

I think we were on the same mission that Hal Smith speaks of, line 11 from the bottom page 24. We were heading back from Budapest, we got caught over Yugoslavia near the coast by mobile flak. We had been letting down not expecting any action, and were at about 16,000 feet when all hell broke loose. It was the Gerries evacuating Albania that caught us. Recently I was asked how much time I spent in the service, so I told him 30 years, 9 months, 14 days, 7 hours, and 22 seconds.

The End