



Former Prisoner of War
at
Stalag Luft III

18 Feb '94

Dear Russ,

Received the Jan issue of the Echoes and was pleased to see my name. Warm memories coursed through my mind as I saw the names of those whom I knew and to see Gene Kinnear's who was my co-pilot.

The main reason I am writing is to provide possible additional info you may have on Art Berleffi.

I became acquainted with Art when we joined the 301st at Spokane in Feb '42. We were in the same SQ. I don't know what his flying class was, but I'm pretty sure Hank Terry would know for, if my memory serves me correctly he came into the 301st with Berleffi after a stint of

flying sub patrol missions in the Caribbean in B-17^s (Hank went into a different SQ in the 301st).

You may or may not know this but Terry, Berleffi, and ~~me~~ and our crews and another were detached from the 301st (along with 4 other crews from Mt Home Idaho) for the Battle of Midway. We got there a day late but stayed in Hawaii for a month. Then, of course, Terry, Berleffi, and I came into the 306th in Wendover in Jul '42.

I'm happy to be among the "686". I don't contribute each time but I do once or twice and here for some time.

Russ, you have been a loyal, serving, and conscientious hard-working member of the 306th. I heartily congratulate you and sincerely appreciate your dedication.

I enjoyed talking with you a few days ago.

Sincerely,
John Barrett

I.D. PAPERS AND DOG TAG AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR

1st Lt. John R. Barnett was the pilot of a B-17F in the 8th Air Force's 306th Bomb Group stationed in England. On Nov. 9th, 1942 Barnett's aircraft joined 47 others on a mission to bomb the German submarine pens on the French Coast at St. Nazaire. On his bomb run German Anti-Aircraft fire caused one of the planes engines to burst into flames. Barnett was able to drop his bombs on the target as his crew fought the fire. Seeing they would not make it back to England in the heavily damaged aircraft, Barnett banked the plane back towards the French Coast however the fire was getting worse and he had to give the order for the crew to bail out. Barnett was the last of the 10 crew to bail out and just as he was going out of the escape hatch the aircraft exploded and burst into flames. He remembers falling through the flames but his parachute opened and he landed in the sea close to a burning oil slick where his plane had crashed. The cold water eventually caused him to lose consciousness as hypothermia set in. He woke on the deck of a German Flack boat that had picked him up. Both the German crew and 3 of his crew members that had already been picked up were trying to revive him. The Flack boat brought him ashore and turned him over to a Luftwaffe unit which transported him to a P.O.W. Camp where he remained a Prisoner of War until his liberation on April 29th, 1945.

**DONATED BY LT. COL. JOHN R. BARNETT
OF LAKE SUZY**