

Feb. 13, 1990

Dear Russell:

Thank you for asking me to read the stories you and Dan Barberis wrote about ditching in the North Sea, 21 May 1943.

To the best of my recollection the stories seem accurate with only two exceptions.

At the beginning of the story about medals won it states the raid was to Bremen. It should read to Wilhelmshaven.

Another paragraph states that Clarence W. Durham did not appear on any of the orders for medals. I believe you have in your possession a copy of General Order #74, 12 June 1943. You will find in Section IV at bottom of page 15 that Clarence W. Durham was awarded the DFC. The citation mentions the mission of 21 May 1943 and the forced landing of our airplane in the sea. Having previously been awarded the air medal with three oak leaf clusters, Sgt. Durham was given the DFC.

A couple of months after the ditching Sgt. Zygmund Warminski was severely injured (shot in right elbow) while flying as a waist gunner on Frank M. Heckstetter's crew. After months of hospital care Warminski was returned to

the States.

I completed my twenty-five missions on 2 Oct. 1943. After serving three months as a turret instructor with another Group I returned to the States on the same troop-ship with Warminski.

I like the pictures you intend to use, and have identified the crew members in the dinghy.

In the photograph of Col. Curtis LeMay congratulating Lt. Smith and crew I am pictured second from the left and am mistakenly identified as Clarence F. Buchanon instead of Bennett F. Buchanon.

I feel that we were extremely fortunate to be accidentally picked up by a British mine-sweeper 200 miles from England, for I believe that in May 1943 the Air-Sea Rescue <sup>only</sup> operated only in the English Channel and the Deep-Sea Rescue Service was not yet in operation.

On behalf of myself and all the crew I send my heartfelt thanks to you and Don for writing these stories.

Sincerely yours,  
Bennett F. Buchanon

RECORD UPDATE

306th Bomb Group Association

(Please complete as much of this form as you wish, and return to  
Russ Strong at the reunion, or mail to Russ Strong, 5323 Cheval  
Place, Charlotte, NC 28205) Little Rock 1989

Date completed Sept. 11, 1990

LAST NAME: Buchanan FIRST NAME: Bennett TITLE: Engineer

Street address: 10880 Flaxton St. Telephone: (213) 8383452

City, state, zip: Culver City, CA 90230

Date of Birth: Dec. 13, 1917 Wife's name: Marie

College(s) attended: Degree(s): Year(s):

Last employment and job title:

34 yrs. in Dairy Industry, Employee of Adair Milk Farms

Reunions attended: (by year or location)

Dayton, Los Vegas & San Antonio  
1986 - 1988 - 1990

Serial #: 34134270 Squadron: 423 Specialty: TURRETS Flight Engineer

Date joined 306th: April 1943 If combat, what crew: Robert H. Smith (5 missions)  
MARCH 1943 Frank M. Kaekstetter  
20 missions

Special duties or assignments w/306th: Flight Engineer

Number of missions flown: 25 Date of last mission: Oct. 2, 1943

Date left 306th: Oct. 4, 1943 Highest rank/grade with 306th: T/sgt.

Other 8th AF units served with:

Top service assignments after 306th: Turret Instructor

USAF retirement date: 9 Sept 45 Rank/grade: T/sgt.

Copies of old 306th orders, either from the Group or Station 111, or any of the squadrons or other units, will be welcomed by the secretary.

If you know of other 306th people who do not appear in the directory, please add their names and current or former addresses to this sheet so that we may search further for them.

Check the form below:

Name Bennett F. Buchanan - 423

Address 10880 Flaxton St.

City, State and Zip Code Culver City, CA 90230-5405

Telephone #, with the correct area code (310) 838-3452

Can you give us the four-number addition to your zip code? (Look on one of your utility bills for this, if you can't remember it).

On that street address, please designate whether it is St., Ave., Blvd., Road, etc. Rural routes AND box numbers need to be spelled out. In the alpha listing of the Directory, be sure your unit designation is correct. That's the one that counts. (If you were placed in the wrong listing under organizations, don't worry about it. We plan to get it right this time.)

Other data we will store away for possible later use:

Wife's first name Marie

Your birthdate 13 Dec. 1917

Social Security # 437-03-8070

Retirement date/place of employment/job title Dec 1979

Adohr Milk Farms for 34 yrs.

28 Aug. 1992

Dear Russell;

In answer to your call for more crew pictures; maybe you can use this 423<sup>rd</sup> picture of Frank M. Kackstetter's crew and ground mechanics. The picture was taken about the first of Sept. 1943.

Front row, l. to r.: Walter R. Wick, <sup>B</sup>  
<sup>Arthur S</sup> Morris, <sup>N</sup> Frank M. Kackstetter and <sup>Richard B.</sup> Thompson.

Middle row: Bennett F. Buchanan, Wayne  
J. Gray, Jack, Arthur R. Adison, Henry  
A. Steelsmith and <sup>R & J</sup> Amitty. Top row:

Jim, Dad Jack, Mac and Max. <sup>Bowles</sup>

Sincerely yours,  
Bennett Buchanan

22 Sept. 1992

Dear Russell:

You certainly may keep the Kackstetter crew picture for the files. And thanks for finding the first names of the navigator, copilot, radio operator and crew chief.

Sorry I cannot help more with identifying the ground crew.

Sincerely,  
Crawatt Buchanan