

A HISTORY OF THE 306th BOMBARDMENT GROUP - EIGHTH AIR FORCE
Russell A. Strong, 4900 Appleridge Ct., Dayton, Ohio 45424

I am endeavoring to put together a good history of the 306th Bombardment group, an idea which has been in my mind for some years. I am working diligently on the matter, collecting all kinds of data and working through the official history and records of the group. I served as a navigator with the 367th squadron from June through November, 1944, and currently am director of news and information services at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio. I solicit your assistance in my project.

I am interested in any special materials which you may have, such as good photographs of personnel, battle damage, plane insignia, etc. I am also interested in commendations (other than the usual Air Medal and DFC) you may have received, special stories which you may have in your possession, letters that are highly descriptive of combat action, or any other documents. I would appreciate receiving xeroxed copies. But, if you do not have such facilities readily available, I would appreciate the loan of materials which I might copy and return to you immediately. I am also interested in manuscripts of memoirs which you may have prepared, particularly if they were done within a couple of years of the events. Again, I would appreciate copies or the opportunity to copy them.

Name Joseph J. Musial
Address 1920 SW 33 Ave.
Telephone 448-6393 Date 10-28-75
Occupation Criminologist Employer Retired (City of Miami P.D.)
Address _____ Telephone _____

Service Record:

Before joining the 306th:
13th Air Force in South Pacific
Pearl Harbor, Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal,

After leaving the 306th:
Shot down Feb. 8, 1944 Frankfurt, lost leg, was
P.O.W. until exchanged March 1945

306th Record:

Arrival Date Oct. 1943 Squadron or other unit 369
MOS 737 Combat Status Engineer (Top Turbine)
Missions Completed Completed Tour in Pacific, 70+ (Shot down on 8th in England)
Promotions T/Sgt
Decorations AM olcs DFC olcs SS DSM DSC MH SM
 PH Battle Stars 5 + Presidential Citation other _____

Other personal data:

Howard Snyders, Address
825 Arcadia Ave.
Arcadia, Calif. 91006

Description of Air Missions:

(What were the highlights of your combat career? What was your role? What heroics did you witness? What events were there of which you have special knowledge?)

Joe Musial

21 October 1975

Dear Joe,

I have just begun to review the tapes I made in Miami Beach, and despite all of the noise when I was talking with you everything came through beautifully.

One thing I wanted to get from you, and couldn't that evening, was Howard Snyder's address. I would be most appreciative if you would forward it to me so that I could contact him.

I am also enclosing one of my biographical forms which I would appreciate having you complete and return to me.

It was nice to get acquainted with you and I look forward to seeing you again.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

4900 Appleridge Court
Dayton, Ohio 45424

Interview with Joe Musial, October 1975, at Miami Beach, FL.

Lost a leg over Frankfurt, 8 Feb 44.

We got worked over pretty good.

They killed two men in the plane, radio operator and ball turret.

The rest of us bailed out o.k./

I HAD THE radio operator by the chute, dragging him out. The next thing I knew I was back by the tail wheel wondering how I'd gotten there.

A 20 mm hit me over the ankle and chopped it off just you had hit it with an ax.

Eight

Five of us bailed out o.k. Three of them got with the underground and were later killed. They were John Pindroch, Robert Benninger and George Eike. And killed April 23.

A French farmer got to me and we took a shroud line from my chute and made a tourniquet. Within a few minutes the Germans were there. Got crippled over the target. Straggling. FWS in a climbing head on attack. Five of them, None of them missed.

The German commandant responsible for the three deaths was tried and hanged. Eight men in a stack. They were ordered out. One may have made a break, but Germans machine gunned them all.

Roy Holbert on same crew. Didn't see him for six months, and when he did, Holbert's hair had turned white.

At Hickam field when the war started. Left Guadalcanal July 12, and was in England Oct. 8.

Got hit in back of flak vest first, gave him a good thumping. And coming down in the chute, his back was hurting more than his leg. "I didn't realize my leg was gone when I left the ship. I thought it was just broken. When I was hanging in my chute coming down, I evidently passed out from lack of oxygen. I felt around my back and couldn't find any blood. But my foot felt cold, and when I looked down it was gone. Put pressure behind my knee.

Musial

Treated by a nurse at a French hospital, who tied off arteries, and prepared him for travel the next day to an GAF hospital in Brussels. There he received excellent treatment, and remained for four months, until he was ready to go to a prison camp.

At itnerrogation, once he was out of hospital, as Germans supposedly quizzed him, they were giving him all kinds of information that he didnot know about his crew.

Met Roy Holbert when Holbert was transferred from a prison camp that was in the way of the Russians, to the one on the Baltic where Musial had been sent.

War memories

Fighting distant, but real for Flying Fortress vet

JOHN DOUSSARD

Miami News Reporter

Get the side hatch open and the air would do the rest. At 30,000 feet it was so thin, so cold, maybe 55 degrees below, that it was instant healing. Open the hatch like the training manual said, everything by the numbers, and there would be no more blood, no more dying.

"I stuck my leg out into the air and the blood froze. Just like they taught us to do."

You couldn't even tell right away that the shell had blown away everything below the knee. There was no pain, really, nothing like what Joe Musial felt in his back.

The B-17 Flying Fortress had been over Frankfurt when the left wing took a hit, a burst that nearly flipped the

plane on its belly. The ball turret gunner, a kid named Louis Cowart from Louisiana, could see holes you could crawl through. Musial started the pump, transferring gas out of the left wing and into the right. They had enough height to make it home, and the holes didn't mean much. "Forts" had come back with tails missing, wing tips shot off, enough damage to blow the average plane out of the sky.

But over France, the Messerschmitts caught up with them. "Here they come!" yelled the navigator, Bob Benninger, and suddenly they were on top of them.

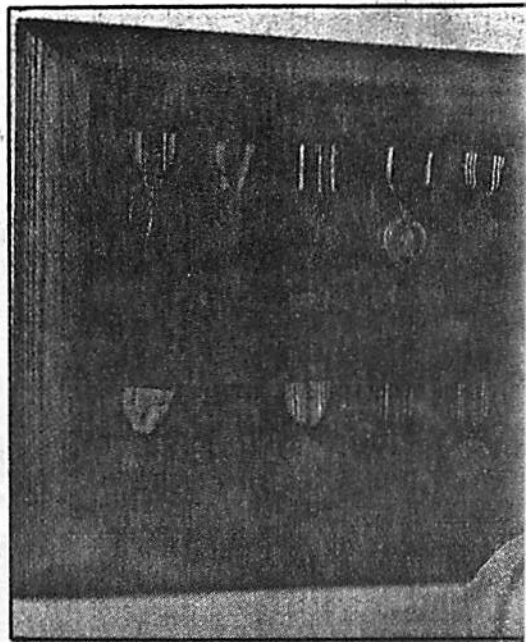
"Hell, I don't know how many there were," Musial says. "All I know is that none of them missed us."

They got the radio man and Cowart on the first pass. "I tried to get the radio man out, but you could see his intestines

hanging all over. He was practically blown apart."

Musial began dragging the body back to the side escape hatch when a 20mm shell blew his leg off. Another deflected off his flak jacket, knocking him forward like a rag doll. When his head cleared, it wasn't his leg that hurt, it was his back. It felt like someone had hit him with a baseball bat. He was sitting in all this blood, his blood, his leg a tangled mess. Just blow the hatch and stick it outside.

Musial: "One of the waist gunners, John Pindroch from Cleveland, he didn't even have his chute on. We all wore a harness, but laid the chutes next to us. The damn plane was on fire and starting to go and Johnny was so petrified he



Please see VETERAN, 3A

Joe Musial displays his medals from

VETERAN, from 1A

couldn't move. I threw shell casings at him to get him to react."

With the hatch open, the thin, cold air was no longer a friend. In a few minutes it would rob them both of consciousness, leaving them to lay down to sleep in a dying plane. The short, stocky Musial grabbed Pindroch, clamped his chute on the harness and threw the waist gunner out the door. Then Musial jumped.

"I knew I was out of the plane because it was all just so damn peaceful suddenly. I pulled the rip cord, and all I could think of was my back. Then my foot began to feel cold."

★ ★ ★

The stories come cushioned in laughter now. Just one more old man's war stories, distant and vague, memories imagined in black and white. How do you explain something so intimate to a stranger? How do you capture horror and hate?

And yet on Memorial Day we try, a day to share as much as honor the past, to remember men who weren't heroes when they left, just citizens bound by duty. It is a remembering that is without ending, without a final chapter, added to again only last week when 37 men on an obscure Navy frigate died in a place few of us probably could find on a map.

It was simpler when Joe Musial answered his call, or so it seems after all the years. His war began with sides clearly drawn.

"I was at Hickam Field on Pearl Harbor, back in the barracks taking a shower on Dec. 7, 1941," Musial says. "Hickam was one of the most modern and beautiful airfields in the world, brand new. We called our barracks the Hickam Hilton because it was so nice. I was on the second floor thinking, 'Man, they sure are shooting those coastal guns close today.' Then I heard the planes."

"I came out with just a towel wrapped around me and here comes a plane right down the street. I could look into the pilots face. Then I saw the rising sun on the tail."

He was 21, a kid from Plymouth, Pennsylvania, just two miles

down river from Wilkes-Barre. His daddy was a paraplegic, his mom dead. Young Joe could live with his sister or join the Army.

By October 1941 he was crew chief on a B-17 at Pearl. Two months later he was at war.

He was at Midway, Coral Sea and Guadalcanal. He flew 72 missions back in the days when Americans were so hopelessly undermanned that almost no one was ever rotated home. Finally, in '43, a flight surgeon said Musial had seen enough and he was sent back home. He was a sergeant in Amarillo, Texas, making sure oil changes were made on time. His war was over temporarily.

In those days, you had to be back from the war six months before reassignment to another combat zone. After a few months on an island in the South Pacific, he was in the English rain and cold nursing his malaria and waiting to take on Hitler.

★ ★ ★

In Europe, the 8th Air Force required a man to fly 25 missions. They got that number by calculating the odds you had of making it back alive. For missions over Germany, about one in five didn't make it. That meant, to them, you flew the first 20 with the odds in your favor. They kicked in five more for good measure.

"I could count on one hand the number of guys who made all 25," Musial says.

The flight surgeon didn't want him flying, not with the malaria he'd brought with him and the strep throat and pneumonia he'd picked up in England. But Musial wanted his 25.

He trapped out on No. 6.

"I landed in a French farm. A farmer found me and we cut the parachute shrouds and made a tourniquet for my leg. The Germans came a few minutes later."

"They were just old men and kids by that time, the Old Home Guard. They put me in the back seat of something like a Volkswagen — no back seat, really, just straw on the floor. A young German soldier sat next to me. I was having one helluva time with what was left of my leg, hanging to

hold it out of the dirt, and this young soldier just reached over and took this piece of meat and laid it across his lap.

"We had been told how horrible the Germans were, but human nature is pretty much the same."

He ended up in Brussels, in Luftwaffe Hospital No. 8. Bill Slenker, the tall gunner, landed on a farm where a widow and her daughter hid him for eight months until the Allies came. The others weren't so lucky. Johnny Pindroch was killed in April. He and the co-pilot and navigator were all hiding in a Belgian shack, kept alive by the underground. There were eight fliers hiding altogether, and when the Germans found them they machine-gunned them on the spot.

Musial spent four months in the hospital, then 21 days in solitary while German intelligence questioned him. "It was all like a third-rate movie. They told us in England what it would be like if we were interrogated, that they'd tell us they were going to shoot us if we didn't cooperate because no one knew we were prisoners anyway. You just didn't tell them anything and hoped the training people knew what they were talking about."

He was shipped to a prison camp near the Baltic Sea, 40 men to a boxcar, no food, no water, no place to sit. In February 1945, the Swiss doctors put him on a train home, a repatriated soldier with no leg, a danger to no one. He had 13 months of back pay waiting — \$2,000.

★ ★ ★

Joe Musial doesn't celebrate Memorial Day. "I've only been to two reunions. The first one I walked in and said, 'I don't remember a damn one of you guys. I used to fly with a bunch of kids. All I see here are a bunch of old men.'"

The war left him with a row of medals and a plastic leg and more memories than he needed. He ran the Miami Police crime lab for 28 years, and joined groups that push legislation to help combat veterans.

Local News

Sunday, May 29, 1988

The Miami Herald

Section B

Charles
Whited



War heroes share bond of survival

In memoriam, 1988:

It was war on a scale that words cannot describe. An entire generation, born since then, has nothing with which to compare it. How can you grasp the enormity of a world engulfed, vast cities bombed to rubble, armadas of warplanes sweeping over Europe and the Pacific, raining bombs, and deaths in the tens of millions?

They brought Joe Musial, now a retired Miami police criminal identification officer, back to the Belgian village of Macquenoise this month. They brought him and former pilot Howard Snyder back as heroes, to honor them with speeches and a torchlight parade. The emotional impact was stunning.

And Musial, 70, a man of quiet depths, walked over the ground where he had almost died. And he thought back 44 years to Feb. 8, 1944, the day of smoke and fire. That's when the German fighter planes blasted his B-17 bomber and they went spiraling down, with Joe's left leg blown off and two crewmen dead and people bailing out. He told me, Saturday, what he thought about as he walked that ground two weeks ago, an old man remembering:

The B-17 was in a descending spiral when I jumped. I blacked out momentarily, then came to and pulled my rip cord. The plane hit and broke up. My pilot, Snyder, came down in the woods, hung up in the trees. Three Belgians came and cut him free. I landed with my mangled leg ..."

He fought free of his parachute. A Belgian emerged from the woods and beckoned him to follow. German troops were searching for the fliers. The Belgians faced death for helping Americans. The man saw Joe's leg, knew he couldn't walk, started to leave, changed his mind. He put a tourniquet on Joe to stop the bleeding and stayed with him until the Germans arrived. They took him to a village where surgeons removed what was left of the leg.

Joe Musial was a prisoner of war.

The B-17's 10-member crew met differing fates. Gunner Louis Colwart and radioman Ross Kahler died in the plane. Three crewmen, copilot George Eike, navigator Robert Benninger and waist gunner John Pindoch, were captured and executed by the German SS along with five other downed American fliers. Musial was one of five survivors.

For the people of the rural province of Labotte Duhainaut, the crash of the great bomber was one of two critically memorable events of the war. The other event occurred Sept. 2, 1944, when a U.S. liberating force arrived, their vehicles emblazoned with white stars. A final German barrage killed 12 of those Americans.

Today, a Belgian memorial foundation headed by Dr. Paul Delahaye has bought that property and put up a monument and 12 gravestones. Dr. Delahaye was a child at the time. He wanted to preserve those memories for his own children, so they would know what the Americans did.

"I owe these people my life," Joe Musial tells you this Memorial Day weekend. "They risked their lives for us."

Few men I've met saw more combat. Early in the war, Musial survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and flew 72 missions on B-17s in the Pacific. Then he volunteered for more combat in Europe. The bomber streams flew high over Germany, dropping their deadly cargos, plowing through swarms of fighter planes and the ugly black blossoms of bursting flak. Struck bombers heeled over, plunging to their doom. Thousands of airmen died.

Later, Musial survived yet another bitter chapter of war. His memories of a year as a POW include a 21-day torment in solitary confinement. It never leaves you. There are perhaps 100 ex-POWs in South Florida, and he is commander of their Gold Coast Chapter. Those men will gather next Saturday, at 10 a.m. at VFW Post 1608, 2750 SW 16th St. Many carry deep psychological scars.

"These are men who understand each other," he tells you quietly. "They speak the same language."

And the Belgian who saved Joe Musial, who put the tourniquet on his leg and waited for the Germans to come ... What of him?

"Nobody ever knew his name."

In memoriam, 1988:

Some heroes were anonymous.

Secretary/Editor
Russell A. Strong
2041 Hillside
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

5-31-88

Dear Mr. Strong;

find

Enclosed please my amaturish attempt at telling the story of our last mission.

Please edit and correct for publication in the 306th Echoes as you see fit.

I'm sorry about the quality of the photos, but they are all I have.

You might give Snyder a call in Arizona, he may have some better photos?

All the best to you, I enjoy getting the Echoes, you do a great job.

Sincerely

Joe Trussell

There are many stories that can be told by bomber crews shot down on missions during world war 11. The following can be classified as typical.

On Feb. 8th, 1944 while returning from a bombing mission to Frankfurt, Germany. A B-17G bomber piloted by Lt. Howard Snyder. 369th Squadron, 306th Group based at Thurleigh, England. After sustaining considerable flak damage over the target, and with our bomb-bay doors stuck in the open position, creating a tremendous drag on the aircraft, making it practically impossible even at full power settings to keep up with our squadrons formation. Therefore, we were the primary target for the German fighters who shot us down on the French Belgian border near the village of Macquenoise, Belgium.

Our crew consisted of: Howard Snyder, Pilot. George Eike, Co-pilot. Robert Benninger, Navigator. Richard Daniels, Bombardier. Roy Kyle Holbert, Top Turret Gunner. Ross Kahler, Radioman. Louis Colwart, Belly Turret Gunner. Joseph Musial, Left Waist Gunner. John Pendroch, Right Waist Gunner. William Slenker, Tail Gunner.

The fighters shot out our manual controls, set our left inboard engine on fire, killed the Belly-Turret Gunner (Colwart) killed the Radioman (Kahler) Put a 20mm through the Bombardiers upper arm (Daniels) Shot off the Left Waist Gunners lower left leg (Musial) The Pilot (Snyder) and the Top Turret Gunner (Holbert) suffered burns and shrapnel wounds. The Tail Gunner (Slenker) also suffered shrapnel wounds. All of these wounds and damage was inflicted by the German fighters.

Realizing he had no manual controls, Snyder put the plane on auto-pilot and turned on the bail-out alarm. The auto-pilot held the plane in a tight descending spiral to the right which kept the flames from the burning engine away from the fuselage. With the exception of the two crewmen who were already dead, the rest of the crew bailed out. Because the plane remained in a tight spiral, we all landed in our chutes within a short distance of each other. Near the Belgian village of Macquenoise.

Due to the severity of their wounds, Daniels, Musial & Holbert. along with the two dead crewmen were captured almost immediately.

Snyder, Eike, Benninger, Pendroch & Slenker. Were hidden from the Germans fed and sheltered by Belgian patriots in three separate locations. Eike, Benninger & Pendroch were hidden in the Saint Remy woods with other American evadee's until April 22nd, 1944 On this date the woods were surrounded by 1500 German troops resulting in the capture of eight Americans and two Belgians, the two Belgians were sent to a concentration camp (Bushenwald) they have not been heard of since. On the 23rd. of April 1944 following torture and interrogation, the eight Americans were marched single file back to the woods, as they entered the woods they fanned out, two Germans and one American, then at an obviously pre-arranged signal each American was executed by shots in the back. This action was witnessed by Belgian patriots and eye witness accounts were given to Snyder & Musial on their recent visit to Belgium. Snyder was taken to Chimay and several other locations in Belgium, and for approx. seven months was able to evade capture while actively participating in attacks on German convoys etc with the underground (Macqui) until Sept. 1944 when American troops over-ran the area in which he was operating.

Slenker was taken to a farm house near Chimay where he was hidden until the Americans over-ran his location.

Daniels and Musial were taken by the Germans to a Luftwaffen hospital in Brussels, Belgium. then to prison camps in Germany until Feb. 11th 1945 when they were repatriated through Switzerland and returned to the states via the Swedish ship Gripsohlm. Holbert was taken directly to Germany where he remained a prisoner until liberated following V.E.Day.

Five of our crew survived the war. Daniels died a few years ago in Pasadena, Ca The five survivors were able to come home and lead productive lives, raising children and grand children only because of the gallant unselfish bravery of the Belgian patriots who gave them first aid and assistance at the risk of their lives.

Snyder & Musial were invited to participate in ceremonies May 14th & 15th 1988 at Monceau Imbrechies, Belgium.

A monument has been erected at this location in honor of the 12 Americans killed Sept. 2, 1944 during the liberation of Belgium.

A Belgian organization named, BELGO-AMERICAINE Liberators, headed by Dr. Paul Delahaye (veterinarian) 654 Route De Beauwelz Momignies, Belgium
Phone: 060/51.12.52

This same organization has purchased the property where our plane hit the ground with the bodies of Kahler & Colwart, at this spot they will erect a monument with the names of George Eike, Robert Benninger, Ross Kahler, Louis Colwart, & John Pendroch.

This monument will be dedicated with proper ceremony, Sept. 2nd, 1989
All the survivors of Snyders crew have been invited to participate.



Snyder & Musial standing in front of the spot where the bodies of Kahler & Colwart were found, a monument is to be erected at this location and will have the names of George Eike, Robert Benninger, Ross Kahler, Louis Colwart & John Pendroch

Dedication ceremonies will be held
Sept. 2nd, 1989

Survivors of crew have been invited to participate.

100%



Snyder and his wife Ruth with the widow of a Belgian patriot named Tilquin who took him from Macquenoise to Chimay on a tandem bike in order to get him away from the Germans who were searching the area around Macquenoise

Snyder presented a medal and citation to her on behalf of the Belgo-Americaine Fondation



Snyder standing in front of Belgian farm house where he was hidden for a short time after landing in the wooded area nearby



2 SEPTEMBRE 1944 11530
LES PREMIERS FRANÇAIS
DE LA LIBÉRATION
DE LA NORMANDE

Snyder & wife Ruth standing by monument
at Monceau Imbrechies, Belgium

Monument erected in memory of 12 American
soldiers killed at this spot Sept. 2nd, 1944

MAY 1988

MAY 1988



Snyder and Raymond Durvin one of three Belgian patriots who cut Snyder down from the tree he hung up in with his parachute.

The woods in the background is where Snyder landed

Family copes with loss of 3 in 5 months

FAMILY, FROM 1B

with drugs, relatives say. A story with too many funerals for his siblings to bear.

Brother Daniel Musial, 40, tried to commit suicide after Patrick Musial was killed. Brother Robert Musial, 45, suffered bouts of depression. Sister Kelly Des Rosier, 36, suffered from kidney stones.

Once, upon a time, life was sweeter. Des Rosier remembers summers past when they piled into the green, fin-tailed Plymouth and sailed off to Canada or North Carolina.

Four sweaty kids who fought over the hotel. Two cheerful parents who reigned them in. Then they were six. Now they are three.

"I saw the world through rose-colored glasses," said Des Rosier, who lives in San Antonio, Texas. "I never thought this could happen to us."

Patrick Musial graduated from Coral Gables High School full of promise. He wrote poetry. He loved history. He went to Miami-Dade Community College and then Tampa's University of South Florida.

But Musial never finished college. Instead, he got a job as a meter reader for the Metro-Dade Water and Sewer Authority. He was promoted to customer service representative, but never quite grew up, friends said.

He lived with his parents while friends found apartments, got married, had children.

"He was a lonely guy even though he had friends," said Larry DeBarge, who grew up with Musial



Patrick Musial

'I think his father cast an awful big shadow. Those were big shoes to follow in and he always felt he didn't measure up to the Musial name.'

LARRY DeBARGE,
friend and co-worker of Patrick Musial

and worked with him at the water authority. "I think his father cast an awful big shadow. Those were big shoes to follow in and he always felt he didn't measure up to the Musial name."

His father, Joe, was a World War II bomber pilot who flew more than 70 missions before being shot down in Belgium. He joined the Miami Police Department in 1946.

In the 1960s, he received national recognition for developing a system of videotaping suspects. The tapes helped crime victims identify their attackers because they could see suspects move and hear them speak.

Patrick Musial started taking cocaine about 10 years ago, relatives and friends say. The white powder seemed to free him from loneliness, from the inferiority he felt when comparing his father's accomplishments with his own.

But the drug turned on him. It infiltrated his job, his home. He became its prisoner. He skipped work for days, DeBarge said, returning with embarrassed apolo-

gies.

It got worse when his parents died. His mother, Eleanore, would pick out his clothes when he went shopping. They used to eat lunch together in the Morrison's Cafeteria at International Mall. During the holidays, Musial would drive her around town to see the prettiest Christmas lights.

On weekends, Musial would go fishing with his father. They'd take their red boat to Biscayne Bay and catch snapper.

"When they died, he just felt like a really lost soul. He felt like he had lost his life," said longtime friend Susan Haller.

Alone for the first time in his life, Musial enrolled in a drug treatment center for a month, Des Rosier said.

It didn't help, she said. He went back to drugs, until his sister had him committed to Charter Hospital of Miami for drug rehabilitation.

He got out in June and moved into a tiny one-bedroom apartment at 28 Antilla Ave.

DeBarge: "I used to tell him, 'Pat,

you're going to end up dead, in an institution or in jail. If you don't straighten up, that's what's going to happen.' And sure enough, that's what happened."

Musial was last seen riding a green bicycle to get some beer, friends say. He never came back. A day later, friend Tracy Williams found Musial's apartment door open. Nothing unusual. Musial had lost the key.

Then he noticed a pile of sheets. "I was shaking pretty bad," Williams said. "I put my hand on his knee. I was saying, 'Pat, Pat, wake up, wake up.'"

Homicide detective James McDermott suspects the murder may be drug-related. Police called Des Rosier, who was visiting relatives in Bradenton. She headed to Miami, but her van broke down as she drove through the Everglades.

She cried in a restaurant parking lot, waiting for someone to tow her van. She cried for her family that had fallen apart.

She wrote a letter to her brother: "For the rest of my life on earth my one wish will be that I could have healed the wounds of your soul and heart."

Des Rosier still keeps the letter. She also keeps the photographs of happier times — among them a black-and-white family portrait with Winnie the dog, run over by a car days after Patrick was murdered.

"I know they're all together somewhere," she said. "Even Winnie."

Anyone with information about Musial's murder can call Crime Stoppers at 471-TIPS.

Death stalks troubled family

Parents die, son murdered in 5-month span

By **RACHELL L. SWARNS**
Herald Staff Writer

Patrick Musial lived in a private prison built with bricks of loneliness and cocaine. He died, hogtied and strangled, in his Coral Gables apartment.

The July 5 murder is still unsolved.

The man who would have fought hardest to solve it is dead. Joe Musial, 71, caught killers for a living. He was a retired policeman who once headed the Miami Police Department's crime identification bureau. He was Patrick Musial's father.

Joe Musial died March 15. His 71-year-old wife died four days later. Both had heart problems. Their 38-year-old son was murdered four months later. Metro-Dade homicide detectives are still searching for his killer.

It's a murder mystery starring a lonely man who eased his solitude



ONCE THERE WERE SIX: An old photo of the Musial family shows (from left, seated) Danny, Kelly, mother Eleanore, Patrick, and (back row, standing) father Joe and Robert.

PLEASE SEE FAMILY, 4B