

February 20, 1998

Dear Wally,

Needless to say I was surprised and greatly pleased to hear from you through the aegis of your wife Lonaine. It started me thinking about the old days when we were young and invincible, so I dug out the pictures and memorabilia I have from the war years and this brought back more pleasant memories. I enclose a few pictures.

Wally, I have been lucky. The Lord has been good to me. Mary Ellen and I have been married for forty-seven years. We have six sons and two daughters scattered around the country, with thirteen grandchildren. Mary Ellen organized a reunion for the whole family at Disney World in Orlando, Florida two weeks ago. We had the whole bunch together, thirty people in all, for a great time.

After I got out of the Air Force, I attended Syracuse University for a year- couldn't stand it. I had to get out in the world and get going. I worked for a construction company for four months, then started my own business building houses. When my brothers finished their education they joined me in building houses for a few years, including a couple of Sub-divisions. We gradually worked into General Contracting, building shopping centers, warehouses, etc, eventually started to specialize in concrete construction for commercial and industrial clients. My oldest son, Emmett, III, runs the business with two of the others boys. I work when there is a lot of work or when I feel like it.

About twenty years ago Jay Kennedy started the practice of setting up a conference call at Christmas time for Mike Whalen, Morgan Sims and myself. He tried to locate you, but was unsuccessful, as you know.

Kennedy lived in Cincinnati. He and his wife Mary would get together with us every three years or so for a wedding in one family or the other. He was a partner in a meat processing plant, and retired about ten years ago. Sad to say he died about four years later.

Mike Whalen married a local Iowa girl, Mary Flo, graduated from Law School and moved to Billings, Montana where he practiced Law, and raised a large family. He is retired and a couple of his children have the Law practice. He bought his family's old home in Iowa and spends about half of his time in each state.

Sims is still in Hollis, Oklahoma, married to Bobby. They must be married 55 years. He used to run threshing crews all through the Midwest as well as his own farm. His health hasn't been

too good these last few years. He has heart trouble and has had parts of both legs amputated .

I have enclosed a few pictures and newspaper clippings I thought you might enjoy. I am very sorry it took so long to get this letter off - I would like to hear from you again.

We have two sons that live in Seattle and we get out there once a year. Perhaps the next time we come out to see them we could get together with you. We will have to see what develops.

Wally, I am really pleased to hear from you.

All the Best,



PS Two years ago we were at the 44th Group Reunion in St. Louis. I met up with Col. McAtee. He is in pretty good shape. All four Squadron Commanders were at the Reunion, Cameron, Lenhausen, McAtee, - I can't think of the other guys name.

I'm enclosing Mike and MG's address. I think that they would like to hear from you.

Michael Whalen
2312 Virginia Lane
Billings, Montana 59102

Morgan G. Sims
402 E. Vivian St.,
Hollis, Oklahoma 73550

WHALEN & WHALEN

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June 10, 1994

MICHAEL J. WHALEN
TIMOTHY J. WHALEN

PHONE 259-8793
(AREA CODE 406)

Mr. Emmett J. Burns
7953 Lewis Lane
Fayetteville, New York 13066

Dear Emmett:

First, I wish to thank you for the index sheet of your 201 file and the copies of the travel orders that you sent. It gives me a more specific record of where we were at at the various times after our crew was put together in Lincoln, Nebraska on April 29, 1944. It seems almost providential that we, at your invitation, were at your home on the evening of April 29, 1994.

When you called to Jerry and Michele's place in Truxton, New York the following day you inquired about two names listed on the original crew that you were unable to place:

First, Howard L. Buehler slept in a lower bunk immediately opposite of where I slept when we arrived at the barracks in Colorado Springs, Colorado. My memory is that he stated that he was from a dairy farm in Wisconsin or Nebraska. I would guess that he was as old, or possibly older, than Jay Kennedy. Sometime shortly after our arrival in Colorado Springs he received a letter from his wife. Upon reading it, he told me that she was pleading with him to seek assignments to some duty other than combat duty. He stated that they had five children and that there was some army regulation whereby, under such circumstances, he could apply for non-combat status. He sought consolation, and advice from me, as he was torn between the urging of his wife on one hand together with his responsibility to his children, and his fear of being accused of cowardice and shirking his duty on the other hand. I encouraged him to go ahead and apply for non-combat status under the circumstances. He obviously made such a decision and shortly thereafter was replaced upon our crew while we were still at Colorado Springs by Paul D. Caldwell, see Crew No. 5282 on Order

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dated 7 June 1944, transferring us to Mountain Home, Idaho.

Second, Erwin S. Selmanoff continued to be one of the original members of the crew at the time we arrived in Mountain Home, Idaho. He was in the same barracks I was in while we were in Mountain Home, Idaho. As I remember him, he was approximately 5'10", of slight build and with real black hair. Shortly after we arrived in Mountain Home he started going to see someone in the Flight Surgeons Office. I have a vague memory of him stating that he had been talking to a psychiatrist there and was seeking to be relieved from flight duty. In all events, after a few weeks he moved out and was replaced upon our crew by Wallace B. Truslow, see Crew No. 5282 on the Order dated 11 July 1944 transferring us from Mountain Home, Idaho to Topeka, Kansas.

Charlie Russell is a well known artist in this part of the country and was a rather prolific painter during his lifetime. He also had the habit of illustrating his correspondence and trying his hand at poetry from time to time. We have had at home here in Billings since the early 1950s a copy of the book, "Good Medicine". After we returned to Montana, and with the thought that you might be willing to look beyond the artistic accomplishments of the New Yorker, Frederic Remington, Mary Flo went out and found a copy of "Good Medicine" which is out of print, now rare and very difficult to locate. The same is being sent along in appreciation for the many kindnesses extended to us by Mary Ellen, yourself and your extended family over the years.

Placed a call to Morgan Sims on June 10, 1994 and talked to him on the phone along with his wife, Bobbie. Morgan's voice was strong, he sounded the same as he always has and appeared to be in good spirits. He advised that he had four by-passes during a heart operation in March and was still going through the recovery process. He stated that the surgery affected his ability to focus his eyes, is unable to read and drives but very little locally. I encouraged him all that I could and he generally seemed to be upbeat.

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Again, thanks for all of the kindnesses extended to
us by you, Mary Ellen and your family over the years.

Best always,

Mike

Enclosure



This picture was taken by the Public Relations Office of the 44th Bomb ^{Group}, at the base near Shipdham, Norfolk County, England at or about the time we started flying combat missions in the late summer of 1944.

Standing - left to right

Emmett J. Burns, Jr. - pilot
John S. Thompson - co-pilot
Harold M. Warner - navigator
Clifford D. Rice - bombardier

Seated - left to right

Donald J. Toy - waist & ball turret gunner
Michael J. Whalen - radio operator - top turret gunner
Wallace D. Truslow - nose turret gunner
John J. Kennedy - aerial engineer - top turret gunner
Paul D. Caldwell - waist gunner
Morgan G. Sims, Jr. - tail turret gunner

FIRST CLASS MAIL

EMMETT J. BURNS JR.
BURNS BROTHERS
CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION CORP.
200 BROOKLEA DR. - P.O. BOX 8
FAYETTEVILLE, NY 13066-0008

Mr. Wallace B. Truslow
3153 Winslow Way NW
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