



Willingboro, NJ
Dear Bud:

Back in 1988 I came across Bert Lange's name in the Torretta Flyer and recall that he wrote the reports that won the Unit Citations. I thought I was the only one who would remember being in S-2. He was a squadron S-2 (intelligence) I wrote him a note to thank him and received the attached letter in return. I think it is a classic. He was unforgettable.

Best Wishes
John Morgan 484th BG

6 February 88
Dear John Morgan,

No, you're wrong. I didn't simply throw your thoughtful and gracious card into the All American file. On the contrary, I kept telling myself that I had to reply, that I had to say thanks for your thanks. But this is a crazy business I'm in, the craziest of all the businesses I've been in since we last met. And it seems that every time I'm about to indulge me, that's the time another client comes through the door. Not necessarily a buyer, you understand, but a body and they always interrupt.

Your voice out of the blue was a delight. And I must tell you that it was another incredible underlining of that tour of duty. To explain, Grant Hansen, the engineering officer I lived with in that tufa stone hut, persuaded me to join that reunioning crowd, and further talked me into going to the reunion in San Antonio in '86. A ball! The first night the 484th had its own banquet. During that meal at least 20 men came to thank me for their decorations; one man insisted he had to thank me because I'd saved his life?

Must confess that after a while I couldn't quite decide whether I was nuts or might even deserve the kudos. So I approached the speaker's dais and told General (we both remember him as Colonel) Keese what had been happening. He said, in effect, isn't it a great thing to finally learn that you actually did a good job. And then insisted that I say hello to Colonel Busch there with his wife. When I said hello and told him who I was she said, I've always wanted to meet you, etc. etc.

In retrospect there was no doubt in my mind that evening was the single most exhilarating experience of my life. Your note was another so welcome reminder of that experience. Thank you and do excuse my unconscionable delay in responding.

The Best
Bert Lange

Ardsley, New York
Dear Bud,

The Torretta Flyer No 27 - Winter Spring 1995 was great as usual. It prompts me to comment on Ray Lee Jr.'s letter on page 36, as it relates to the fatal landing accident on Friday, October 13, 1944. I was co-pilot on Billie B Neel's crew and had been on final approach behind Lt. Cooker when the bomb dropped out and exploded. I kept a diary during my 35 missions and am enclosing a copy of the pages of that days terrible events, from takeoff to landing. I would like to explain that we asked Lt. Cooker why he kept opening his bomb bay doors, closing them and repeating it. He told us that a bomb had hung up over Vienna, and they were trying anything possible to get rid of it over the Adriatic. We radioed him to make as smooth a landing as possible if they could not drop it. When they landed after all attempts failed, you know the result. While my pilot blamed himself (the advice to land with it) he cannot be faulted. Many successful landings were made with bombs on board. I should tell you that my diary was turned in on my return to the States and I received it in the mail several months after WW II ended

Sincerely,
Arthur J. Scholl 825 Sq

P.S. Rosemary and I had a great time at the cruise reunion. Unless health prevents it, we will attend in Dayton.

The Diary
Friday - OCT. 13, 1944

This is Friday, Oct. 13, 1944. This morning we went to Vienna. Our trouble began before we took off, the bombsight was out of order and number 3 prop governor required changing. We got off late. We were scheduled to fly Charlie 11 position but flew all positions and ended up in Charlie 12. Lt. Cooker was supposed to fly Charlie 22 lead. The mission was uneventful except for a terrible formation and many abortions.

The weather was bad and we missed the IP. However, the target was clear and we hit it good. The flak was terrible - heavy, intense and very accurate. I saw three planes go down. One exploded in mid-air. The gunners and other crew members saw many others go down. Some chutes were seen. We followed Lt. Cooker all the way back in a 7 ship formation. There were planes all over the sky- B-24s and B-17s. I listened to the radio most of the way back and plenty of ships were in trouble. One B-17 had 2 engines feathered and the crew bailed out. I saw a few P-51s on the way back. We got to the Italian coast and heard that Lt. Cooker had a bomb hung up in the bomb bay which they could not remove. Bill suggested he land with it.

We peeled off over the field and followed Cooker in. He got on the ground all right and then the ship exploded. The bomb did it. The tail section came off first and the rest of the plane rolled along the runway and then turned off and went upside down. It was a terrible sight. We pulled up and went around. Bill blamed the accident on himself, but it wasn't his fault. We landed OK on the uncompleted East runway. I've just come back and from the stories I hear 9 men are alive. Lt. Cooker is reported to have a broken leg and severe shock. One man was killed. It's a miracle they all weren't killed.