

3121 Brincrest Dr.
Farmers Branch,Tx. 75234
Feb.1,1992

Dale, appreciate your work, wish could send more,
plan send more when possible.

Located the navigator,Wm.E.Glass, because of your book,
He was originally from Tx.now lives in my old home state
of Minn.(after 43yrs] we switched state.

The pilot of our crew, David A. McNaught, still lives in
Oregon.

The tail gunner, Harold T.Eckenrode, lives in Pa.
We still haven't gotten a response from Wm.J.Burke in
Brocton,Mass.

Marlyn L.Watson,our Bom. use to live in Duluth,Minn, but
haven't been able to locate him,since we lost track of
each other.

Ted J.Hansen,our radio man, unable to locate.{Jersey
City,New Jersey] his original home

Jack Scherr Engineer, also unable to locate,lived in
Calif.

We were in the 423Sq shot down July 20,1944,we did
get together in France.

The co-pilot was a stranger to our crew that day,one
of the gunners was left behind because we flew a nine
man crew that day.

Thank you,

Michael G. Gesino Sr.

Wm.J.Burke 117 Florence St. Brocton,Mass. Asst.Eng.Gunner
Ted J.Hansen 33 Charles St. Jersey City,N.J. Radio
Wm.E.Glass 1039 Edison Dr. San Antonio,Tx Nav.{now Minn
David A.McNaught 2230 N.E.61 Ave Portland,Or.Pilot
Harold T.Eckenrode Ebensburg,Pa. Asst.radio Tail gunner
Jack Scherr California Engineer
Michael G.Gesino 309 4th Ave N.E. Mpls,Mn. Armor gunner
Marlyn L.Watson 318 No. 10th Ave.Duluth,Mn. Bombardier

Millard L.Bryant Rt 4 Box333 Roanoke,Va. gunner
Will A. McDonald KFD#1 North East,Penn.Co-pilot[grd.self]

PS: THESE WERE PRE SERVICE ADDRESS



50 years
ago...



Peril in German Skies

No celebration of the 50th Anniversary honoring the sacrifices made by the allied forces in Europe would be complete without mentioning the flight crews of the U.S. Army Air Corps and the role they played in protecting the world from the Axis powers during WW II.

One such soldier was Mike Gesino, Sr., belly gunner in a B-17 "Flying Fortress." Gesino entered the Army Air Corps in February of 1943, serving in the 8th Air Force, 206th Bomb Group. In June, he joined the countless thousands of U.S. Army Air Corps crews flying in support of allied troops fighting in the European theater. From a base located nearby Cambridge, England, he and his crew flew sorties across the English Channel concentrating on destroying enemy bridges and supply depots behind German lines. Later, while flying much longer bombing runs, Gesino's plane was shot down over Leipzig, Germany, on its seventh full mission. "The German fighters would pick out one of our planes in the group (which, at times, counted as many as 1,500 planes) and attack it," he recalled as if it were yesterday. "I saw it coming and called out at the nine o'clock level. The bursts from their planes got us on the third run." The blasts that destroyed most of one wing, also tore into Gesino's arm, hand and face. As a result, he eventually lost his right eye. As the ill-fated bomber dropped quickly, spinning toward the ground, radio operator Ted Hansen managed to get him into a parachute. As the crew bailed out, their silks were caught up in a southwestern breeze that kept them airborne until they reached the town of Zwickau, Germany, located near the Czechoslovakia border. His wife received word that he was missing in action. It would be six months before she learned that he was alive and had been taken prisoner. For four days, Gesino lay unconscious, the only American serviceman in a German military hospital. "It was quite an experience," he said. "It was a German doctor who took my eye out. The nurse there told me I was very fortunate to have that particular doctor; he was a real gentleman. She told me that had I arrived at the hospital two weeks earlier, I would have been at the mercy of a doctor who hated Americans. After his release from the hospital, Gesino spent a great deal of his time living on trains as a POW. During air raids, the German soldiers would run for cover, leaving him locked in a boxcar as American planes dropped bombs all around him. After a year of starvation, the war came to an end and the Russians, who controlled the area where Gesino was held prisoner, allowed him to be flown out to France. "To this day, I feel so fortunate to not have been among the 23,000 American prisoners who were taken by the Russians back to Russia and never heard from again," he said. When he arrived in France, Gesino was put on a diet of bolted chicken with no seasoning. "That's how bad our stomachs were," he recalled. "The whole time we were starving, all we thought about was food, we dreamed about it; you didn't even think about women!" During this period, Gesino's weight dropped from 187 to 130 pounds. Gesino was sent home in June of 1945. When he got to New Jersey, the first thing he did was call his wife, Phyllis, and tell her he was on his way home to her. "We were told not to go home without first letting them know we were coming," he said. "Eisenhower kept his promise; he gave us a train that had open track all the way from New Jersey to Chicago. From there, I sailed along on the Blackhawk up to Minneapolis." On June 16, 1945, he and Phyllis were reunited. Today, Gesino spends much of his time serving as Commander of the Dallas Metroplex Chapter for American Ex-Prisoners of War. Working with fellow POWs is a tradition he started in 1947 when he helped form the first POW chapter in Minneapolis. "One of the best therapies I could have in dealing with my experiences of the war has been the volunteer work I've been doing in the VA hospital and serving as Commander of the Dallas Metroplex POW Chapter." Gesino is quick to point out that none of it would have been remotely possible if it hadn't been for Phyllis, who he married 52 years ago. "I wouldn't trade her for the world. She's stuck with me every inch of the way!"



Dear Mrs. Bennett,

Please accept this check for \$10.00 for the 306th BG through your book I was able to locate the navigator from our crew after 43 years. We had suitel glasses I was from Mpls, Min. now living in Dal. W^m Glass was living in San Antonio now living in Bloomington, Minn. We were shot down on July 26, 1944 over Leipzig.

You have Dave McNaught our pilot listed & W^m Glass & W^m J. Burke, the problem is that I have been unable to contact Burke at the address you have, do you have a new address on him? I have not been able to locate Ted J. Hansen's old address was 33 Charles St Jersey City, New Jersey, he was our Radio man, & our Engineer Jack Scheer was California this all the addresses I had on him. Our tailgunner Harold T. Echenrode lives in Ebensburg, Pa. (his present address). Our bombardier Marilyn S. Watson (old address 318 No. 10th E Duluth, Minn. We only flew a nine man crew the day we were shot down, & the Co Pilot was a stranger. We all got out of POW camp together

Harold T. ECHENRODE new address
R.D 1 Box 26 GALLITZIN, PA. 16641

would appreciate any info. on the others.

306th Bg 423 Sqn.

Shaula Low,
Michael M. Gesino Sr
314 247-2925

Mr M G Gesino Sr
3121 Brincrest Dr
Farmers Branch TX
75234



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818
624-410x