

Palatine, Ill.,
8-10-79.

Russell A. Strong,
Rte. 1, Turnpike Rd.,
Laurinburg, NC 28352

Dear Russ:

Just received the July '79 issue of the 306th Echoes, and I'd like to congratulate and thank you and Bill Collins for all the wonderful work you have performed in behalf of the 306th BG. Even to the extent of enclosing a contribution toward meeting the expenses of the Echoes.

I can add some information to the names of the 306th planes. "The Devil's Workshop" was my original ship, delivered to us at Westover Field. Sometime in either November or December of 1942, I was confined in the Base Hospital with 'flu for a couple of days, and Jim Johnston and his crew "borrowed" our ship for a mission. They were shot down over France, and I understand that Jim and most of the crew were killed, although a few men became POW's. I was given a new plane immediately, and we named it "Piccadilly Commando". It was shot up on a mission to France about the middle of April, 1943, and we had to leave it at a RAF station near the channel. I never flew it again, as I returned to the U.S. a few weeks later, but I have the feeling I later heard Air Depot personnel picked it up, and after repairs, it was again in service at Thurleigh,

"Terry and the Pirates" was the original plane of Henry "Tiger" Terry, who arrived in England as a Captain and a Flight Commander in either the 367th or 368th. In Nov. or Dec. of '42, he replaced Ralph Oliver as the Squadron Commander of the 369th.

"Banshee" was Wild Bill Casey's first ship in the 369th. I don't know if he ever had a replacement plane, but Bill was shot down and made a POW on the first Bremen raid in April of 1943. That was the darkest day up to that time for the 306th, as I believe we lost 10 of the 16 planes we sent.

I don't recall Mack Mackay as being the Squadron Commander of the 423rd, but as a Flight Commander who returned to the States in Dec. of '42 or Jan. of '43, to become an instructor at the newly opening AF Tactical Training School at Orlando, Fla. Lewis P. Johnson, who was the pilot on Snuffy Smith's memorable mission, was Mackay's copilot, until he was later made a first pilot.

Incidentally, I think it was after Bill Casey's loss on the Bremen mission, that the 369th began a string of missions without a loss, that lasted for months, although that was hearsay.

Hope to see you in Phoenix, but I'm not too optimistic about being able to make it. Best wishes with your good work.

Very truly yours,

Jack
John M. Howard,
369th Sqdn.

Enc.