Aug 1992

Letter to my Sons

For a long time, all three of you have been on my case to write about some of my experiences during big WW-II, so here goes

A month ago, I received a letter from a pilot, Gus Wendt; I had flown with during my early missions as break-in co-pilot. The Wing I was assigned to had a rule that you had to fly 5 missions as co-pilot to learn how they wanted you to fly formation, assembly, grouping, bomb run and a dozen other things. On our third or fourth mission, we had a pretty tough time of it after taking a hit on the wing. We lost an engine, had a small fire, and also lost all of our hydraulic pressure. We barely got home and used chutes strapped to the waist gun's braces to stop the plane after we had cranked the gear down.

After I was shot down, I had not heard of Gus again until after the war ended when he showed up at the Reserve Training Sqd. at Hamilton Field, Calif. where I was Operations officer. We then lost track of each other for all of these 46 years until I received his letter. Anyway, he somehow found out where we live and sent me a short letter saying he had found the address and phone number of four of the crew in my plane when we were shot down. All of these years I have wondered how many survived and what happened to them.

Since receiving his letter, I have talked to three of them and truly enjoyed the news etc, etc.. One of them asked if I would write my version of the event for a book they are trying to put together. Whether it ever comes about or not, who can tell.

I finished the letter last week and decided to send each of my boys a copy to fulfill part of my long ago promise.

What a wierd addition to this letter. Two packages just came in the mail. They are from one of my crew that was with me when we were shot down. The guy was the Navigator, Bill Crim, who was my closest friend of the crew. I am enclosing a copy of some notes he had written as part of his story.

Hope you all enjoy sharing some of my past life during a critical and most memorable time.

Love