

file: Wm Eschenbach

2 October 1991

William Brendza
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Dear Bill:

I didn't mean to get into the matter of William Eschenbach quite so deeply, but I did--

I think he was flying on his second mission, and I have included data on both missions. I can't find any earlier mention of him or his crew. His pilot, Stetler, flew at least three other missions in November, but without any members of his own crew aboard.

This was pretty common then because there was a surfeit of crews and lots of enlisted crew members around waiting to fly. I checked all the November missions and could find no further mention of this crew.

I have included a copy of the orders assigning the crew to the 306th Bomb Group and the 423rd Squadron.

I have also included a copy of the Missing Air Crew report, which shows three crew members surviving--bombardier, navigator and engineer. All of these men were in front of the plane. Everyone in the back and the pilots died. Probably the three men got out early, although there were no reports of parachutes seen. They may have free fallen from the about the bombing altitude without opening their chutes until they got to lower levels. It was a lot easier breathing that way. In such a case, the other crews would not have seen them at all. Once the plane did a 360 out of formation it was really out of view of the remainder of the formation.

I have also included a page from the Squadron Diary which reports the crew as missing and names all of the men.

On the margin of the MAC report, the initials show six of the crew

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as Killed in Action. The other three are RMC or RTD, which means they got out of prison camp and returned to military control.

Sorry I can't give you anything more, but there isn't anything.

I am sure that you will find this interesting, and is probably more than anyone had received up til now.

Of the three survivors, none of them appear on our mailing list. And I have no more current information about any of them. If you have any clues as to where they came from or may have lived after the war, please let me know and I'll attempt to do some more tracking on them.

Good to talk with you,