

Name: *W. CURTIS MELTON*

Cadet class: *41A*

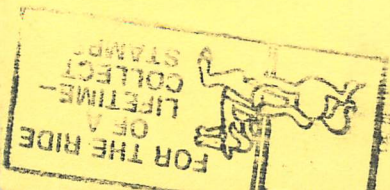
Place of graduation: *Kelly Field*

Number of combat missions: *35*

Wife's first name: *MARCIA*

Other 306th men whom I know graduated with me:

There were none.



Russell A. Strong, Secretary
306th BG Association
2041 Hillisdale
Kalamazoo, MI 49007



Dear Bill:

In some research on early 306th aircraft, I am hopeful you can remember some things about 41-24516.

Did the plane have a name? I so, what? *MELTING POT*
English pilot, Russian copilot, Irish Nav., Jewish Bombardier
Who was the ground crew chief for it?

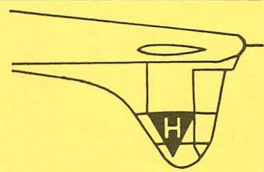
Don't remember

All the best, - *account in book on loss of aircraft incorrect. One engine on fire at Westover-Replead. Other three caught on fire going over. We did not run out of gas. The aircraft does not use more fuel on 3 engines - only if you maintain speed. Went into water when 3rd engine quit. Aircraft sank - we were picked up in small boats - 3 miles from intended airport in Northern Ireland. I was a Capt. then.*



W. C. Melton
350 Mt. Alto
Rome, GA 30161

**306th Bombardment
Group Association**



RUSSELL A. STRONG
2041 Hillisdale
Kalamazoo, MI 49007



41-24516

*Lee Kessler says that he has been told that the
aircraft had experimental turbo flame suppressors.
Engines overheated.
See you in Washington.
Regards.*

W. C. Melton

12 Dec. '91

Dear Russ,

Glad you wrote me on Dec. 8. I had been intending to send a few comments to you.

My B-17 was called Melting Pot - named partially for me and partly because of crew makeup. Co-pilot, Kramarentko, was Russian (father in KGB, mother Chicago); bombardier, Levy, Jewish; Grimes, navigator, Irish; Uppa furret, Kessler, German; several anglo-saxons.

Lee Kessler did the artwork. He probably can help you. Rest are dead.

Re your First over Germany some comments:
Very good book! Thank you for doing it.
Page 11 - I was one of 7 original officers in Gp. Second as S1, S4, and flying 100 hrs mo.

Page 26. Someone gave you some bad advice. We reduced power on engines which reduced speed, but we never had a fuel problem. Finally lost 3 engines all due to overheating. Landed 3 miles from nearest airport in Northern Ireland. Capt. Bob Stevens, (368 Sq. Engineering officer), after retirement, sought reason for engine failures. (we had lost #1 Engine at Westover, same problem, and that ^{replacement} engine was only good one across Atlantic. Stevens reported experimental flame suppressors were installed. Mine, Leahy's (exploded over Atlantic) and another which mechanics at Westover didn't understand and removed suppressors.

For your records, I finished 35 missions with the 305 Gp.

Merry Christmas.

Curt MeHon

8 December 1991

Mr. Wil~~son~~ Melton
350 Mt. Alto
Roma, GA 30161

Dear Curtis:

Was your first B-17, 41-24516, named "Melting Pot", or
"Melton Pot"?

This question has been raised by two men who are working
on what they think will be the definitive book on all
B-17s.

Also, do you have in your possession or know the wherea=
abouts of any picture of the nose art? Or, did none ever
get painted on it before you left the States?

Hope all is well with you, and that you and yours have a
good Holiday season.

Sincerely yours,

W. CURTIS & JO MELTON
102 SADDLE MOUNTAIN ROAD
ROME, GEORGIA 30161

Dec. 19, 2001

Russell A Strong
5223 Cheval PL.
Charlotte, NC. 28205

Dear Russ,

Thank you for forwarding my letter to
Lee Kessler. I have received a nice letter
from him.

One of my sons has demonstrated a strong
interest in the finding of my(?) airplane to the
extent that he would like to accompany me
(and Lee) to the raising ceremonies in England -
if such occurs. He has requested a copy
of the 306th Echoes containing the aircraft
finding. Could you please send me two copies ^{m/26/01}.

I just sent a small contribution to Hooser.
How are we doing? I could send more.

Thank you & best regards.

Curt Melton

Telephone 706-234-3178

Mr. Russell A. Strong
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, N.C. 28205

December 1, 2001

Dear Russ:

I was surprised to see the article in the October issue of the 306th Bomb Group News, that my aircraft has been found. It must be mine because I still have the keys.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the news of my being missing for 20 years was greatly exaggerated. I am a regular recipient and avid reader of your group news – to which I infrequently contribute money.

Now that Lee Kessler has been reduced to a co-survivor, I claim half the bourbon aboard. (As I remember, neither of us bought it). It is right that his dedication to the association should be rewarded by his impending ascension to the helm and I will yield my half case of booze to him if it is to be shared by the group as a salute to those not among us – perhaps during the 2002 English trip.

Aboard the British minesweeper that picked us up, there was a RAF officer assigned to spot the downed aircraft. Had he not been so busy telling me about his experiences in Malta, he might have done so and the aircraft could have been recovered quickly.


It is interesting to note that a shore observer reported that the last person aboard (me) took all of 11 seconds to get out. I also was threatened with a dunking because I was the only one who didn't get wet – and cold.

Without an airplane, our crew members were reassigned. Seven were killed in combat, two were POWs and, by pure luck, I did 35 missions unscathed.

On a personal note, I am widowed but happily remarried and living comfortably in Rome, Georgia. I hope that it will be possible to attend our next reunion.

Thank you for your long-term dedication and super job in keeping us together.

Cordially,


Curt Melton
(Rarely called Bill)

PS Please send a copy of this letter to Lee. I don't have his address.

W. CURTIS & JO MELTON
102 SADDLE MOUNTAIN ROAD
ROME, GEORGIA 30161