

June 20, 2007

Dear Mr. Batten,

Thank you for your recent letter. Sadly, I must inform you that my husband, Fred Taucher, died last Oct. 6, and I have no information regarding your brother.

When I was writing my husband's obituary, I went through papers and orders sent to Fred from Willard Strain, 1508 Dug Gap Road, Dalton, Ga. 30720-5009. I think Mr. Strain was a pilot in another plane in the same air group. In one of his letters, he states that he had become aware of the existence of a 307th Bomb Group Assn., Inc. which he subsequently joined. He urged Fred to join (he didn't) and said he had a list of all the members who did. I enclose a picture and a copy of an article that appeared in one of the association's quarterly newsletters that W. S. sent to Fred. The article is from the diary of Vernon Mnak who is from my husband's hometown, Rock Springs, Wyo. The last I heard he was living in Pinedale, Wyo.

Fred, in the past, mentioned some of his crew members. He especially liked Lt. Traendly and was close to Lt. Wahlen. The incident in the book "The Long Rangers" differs from what I was told when I first met Fred at the University of Wyoming. He and a friend of his, Don Shillings (his dad was the Indian agent at Ft. Washakie near Lander, Wyo.) told me that Shillings was a crew member in the rescue Catalina and that Fred was the last person located. After bailing out of the disabled plane, Fred had landed some distance from the rest of the crew, the search was going to be abandoned, but it was he, Shillings, who insisted they keep looking, and because of his efforts, Fred's life was saved. Shillings was a smart aleck, and I never knew whether the story was factual or a good war story told to impress me. Regardless, it became part of family lore, and the excerpt from Mnak's diary seems to confirm his story. I don't know Shillings address but the U. of Wyo. Alumni office might have it.

We use to exchange Christmas cards with Erwin Eckstein. I think Willard Strain still does. I have never met W. S. but he seems like a good Guy, enthusiastic and interesting, and might be helpful assisting you in the information you seek.

Sorry, I can't be of more help, but I wish you the best in your endeavor.

Sincerely,

*Margaret Taucher*  
Margaret Taucher