

12 April 1986

Samuel L. Sox Jr.

Dear Sam,

I have been working on this for some time, but never seem to get time to finish it. I found your call on my answering machine, and decided to give it another go. We were in West Virginia taking Stella's Mother to the doctor when you called. She has dizzy spells, which the doctor attributed to hardening of the arteries. Nothing can be done he said. Terrible for someone who drives 25 miles each way to church, and for shopping. Dangerous for her, and for other drivers.

Sorry I could not make it for the interview. I'm sure we can get together at some future date. If you come to Dayton, you can get Bill Kohlhas and I together.

Let me go down some of the areas you wanted to cover. Some of the following material comes from letters I wrote my Father. He saved them all. You must consider I saw the Major only in the line of duty.

Enlisted were not allowed to go on leave with Officers, or enter Officers clubs. The crap games were not matters I witnessed, or even knew about for the most part. His diary or fellow officers could provide much better information regarding this aspect of his life. Also, after all successful missions, there were big crowds around the Major, while I was tearing off the cowling looking for damage, and preparing to change all 24 spark plugs in preparation for the next days mission.

Initial thoughts about reporting to Bodney.

First, let me put things in perspective. I went to England with the 17th Service Squadron in March/April 1943. After a short stay at Shrewsbury, during which I worked on Sp. fires, I was sent to Burtonwood Air Base. There I attended a Crew Chief course on P-47s. The course was taught by RAF enlisted personnel. Rather ironic. We did not have any planes to work on, only pictures.

While I was at Burtonwood, the 17th SS moved to Bodney. I arrived at Bodney at the end of June, or the beginning of July 1943. The area the 17th SS was assigned was north of the field and had no running water, 8 seater outhouse toilets, and the electricity was by generator, which was cut off at 8PM each night. To take a shower, you had to walk a couple of miles to the southeast side of the field. The shower had no hot water, no lights, and the concrete floor had evidently never hardened. You always found cement on the bottom of your feet after a shower.

The 17th SS was to operate the hangar. Since there were no planes on the field when we arrived, and no planes in the hangar, the Commanding Officer, a gray haired former infantry Major, way out of his element in the Army Air Force, volunteered our services to dig ditches and other menial tasks.

Fortunately, about that time, the control tower requested 3 men to assist with transient aircraft which might land on Bodney. I was assigned to head that group. Why I was chosen I'll never know. The other 2 guys were far older than I. One was a former professional football player, college graduate. The other was a fine fellow 10 years my senior. We were all PFC's or Corporals, I believe. I have lots of good stories about happenings while assigned that duty, but I have not included them as they don't pertain to Major Preddy, who is the subject of this.

Bodney was not an airfield as I had imagined one. No concrete runways and only one hangar, which was out of view from the airfield. It was just a big field with a road around the perimeter. The middle of the field was the highest point on the field. A plane could land at one end of the field and

