

IRA C. EAKER
1625 EYE STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

331-1280

August 8, 1979

Dear Mrs. Kittle:

I was astonished when I learned from your telephone call yesterday that your father is being denied hospitalization by the Veterans Administration. He is one of the authentic heroes of the Eighth Air Force. The circumstances of his courageous deed, as I remember them, are essentially as follows:-

Staff Sergeant Floyd Logan Thompson, AF 18125666, was a waist gunner of the 95th Bombardment Group, Eighth Bomber Command, on a mission out of England against Nazi targets, flying at high altitude, when his plane was viciously attacked by enemy fighters. The pilot noted that the attacks were coming from below and the bottom turret gunner had ceased to fire. He sent the co-pilot aft, to investigate. It was found that the bottom turret gunner had been killed. His body was lifted from the turret and Sergeant Thompson volunteered to take his place. But, Thompson was a large, Oklahoma Indian, who could not get into the cramped quarters of the bottom turret without taking off his heavy flying gear and parachute. This he promptly did, and then crawled into the turret, where his machine gun effectively repelled the fighter attacks.

When the plane landed at its flying field in England, Thompson had to be lifted from the turret and hospitalized because of frost bitten feet. I, then the Eighth Bomber Commander, hearing of his heroic performance, visited him in the hospital. When I said to him, "You will soon be back with your people in Oklahoma, since we are flying you back to the States soon for further hospitalization (it was then thought it might be necessary to amputate his feet)."

To my surprise, Thompson said, "General, I don't want to go back. I came over here to do my part in this war; I don't shoot with my feet; I can still shoot down German fighters." Greatly admiring his spirit, I gave orders that every effort be made to return him to service and, if amputations were necessary, when he was released from the hospital he be assigned as gunnery instructor at our Gunnery School at Bovingdon, England.

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Sergeant Thompson was eventually released without amputation and returned to combat duty. On a later mission his plane was shot down and he became a prisoner of war.

Others still living who may confirm this incident and their addresses are as follows:

General John K. Gerhart
10 Cheyenne Mountain Boulevard
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906

Brig. General Harris B. Hull
5409 Duvall Drive
Washington, D. C. 20016

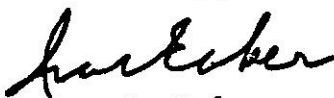
Colonel Beirne Lay, Jr.
361 North Bowling Green Way
Los Angeles, California 90049

You will note by the enclosed correspondence that I have written to these officers and also the Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, Lieutenant General Andrew P. Iosue.

Keep me advised of developments. I feel sure Senator Boren of Oklahoman will be interested in your father's case and I shall write to him if we need his assistance.

Please give your heroic father my warm regards,

Sincerely,



Ira C. Eaker
Lt. Gen., USAF (Ret.)

Mrs. Paulina Kittle
4873 Southeast 44th Street
Apt. 234
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73115