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STEPHANE V. ABRAMOWITZ

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Interviewee (print)

and Stephane Abramowitz
Interviewer (print)

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602 OAKDALE DRIVE, GADSDEN

on the date(s) of Feb 13, 1996

for the oral history collection being compiled.

Howard L. Abney
Interviewee's Signature

Date Feb 6, 1996

Address 602 Oakdale Dr
Gadsden AL 35903

Phone (205) 546-9333

Ab [Signature]
Interviewer's Signature

Date Feb 6, 1996

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INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: HOWARD ABNEY M/F: M

Address: 602 OAKDALE DRIVE

Phone number(s): (205)-546-9333

Approximate age or date of birth: MAY 23, 1921

Mother's name: MYRTLE ROBERTS LUCIL

Father's name: JOHN WESTLEY ABNEY

Places lived and when: FYFFE, ALABAMA (10 years), GADSDEN 1945 - Now

Education: High school + 2 years college

Religion: Baptist

Business, political and social memberships (past and present): Democrat, Senior citizen at church, Five Diamond Club (Retire from same union)

Present occupation: Retired

Former occupations: Retail Sales & Management, ORECO.

Special Skills: Fishing - Reading - Travel

Major Accomplishments: 100 G Club (recognition of best sleeper) 70's

National Events in which interviewee has participated: WORLD WAR II in the air force sep 1942, oct 1945;

Local Events in which interviewee has participated: Nothing special.

National born U.S. citizen? Yes No Naturalized Citizen: Yes No

Country from which he/she emigrated: /

Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in the possession of the interviewee:

Individuals recommended by the interviewee who might be candidates for an oral history interview:

Additional information: Take care of international student newly arrived in Gadsden.

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COPY OF THE INTERVIEW

This is an history interview with Mr. Howard Abney conducted by Stephane Abramowitch on March 29 in Gadsden, Alabama. The subject of this interview is his life and World War II.

So, Mr. Howard where are you born ?

I was born in City Town, Georgia on may the 23, 1921. My parents were Wesley and Myrtle Abney who were both born in Cleveland county, Alabama. Their occupation in livelihood was farmers, and I don't remember too much about my childhood, that is for the first five years until I remember when we moved from Georgia to Gadsden, Alabama.

Why did you move to Gadsden for ?

My father decided he wanted to work in a steel plant in industrial work instead of farming. He decided that was a different life and he wanted to try some of it. And as to my childhood, like I just said, I think I kind of gave you a little knowledge of how early a person, some people can remembering. And the difference in Alabama at that time was quite different as it is now because we have so much more opportunities to do things. And the time like I said we came in Alabama was 1926 that was just before the great depression but yet it was still a hard time for the people, wages were low, housing was a little difficult to find, and what you could find was not of the best quality and so we just had to make do with what we had.

And how old were you when you came to Alabama ?

I was 5 years old.

So you didn't really see the difference between Cleveland and Alabama ?

well I don't know much about the Georgia area because at that time and that age all I can remember is that my parents were farmers, that was their occupation and farming is a hard life. It was so much different then because it was made manually with mules whereas today it is tractors.

So where did you go to school in Georgia ?

I did not go to school in Georgia, my first school was here in Alabama because 6 years of age is when we start going to school. My first school was Gadsden oak park elementary school in Alabama city. It was just a one through forth grade unit, and I was in school there until the middle of the fourth grade, we had what we called a high-low that was when I was promoted to the low fourth to the high fourth and we moved to a different part of Gadsden to an other school, and I was there in 1935 that is when I faced there in

the sixth grade, it was called bright elementary school I was there through the senior fourth to sixth grade.

And why did you quit school ?

I didn't, I was transferred again to an other school. I was transferred to an other section of town, we lived in the same area but we had to go to an other school which was in the seventh grade to Emma Thomson high school. So I was there only not for 6 month but for one semester. And in February 1935 my parents moved back to the country, back to the farm land up on sand mountain at near Sylvenia Alabama. So from there then I went to sylvan junior high school because it only went through the tenth grade. So from the tenth grade, then I transferred school again and went to Fourpain high school which I graduated in Fourpain high school in May of 1940. So I did get the complete education eventhough I had to go to different school because here at that time your school area only went to a certain point and we had to move to an other school because it only went so forth. So it is little different from what it is now you go to public school, some area you go from first grade to your senior year.

I see, so know we are going to talk especially about the main topic of this interview which is the war. World war II. When did you first hear about the world war II ?

December the 7th 1941 on the radio news that japan bombed Pearl harbor.

Before 1941, Did you know anything about Nazis?

No, I was too busy trying to find a job.

In 1941 did you feel concerned about it?

Yes, It was kindly odd because it was such a shock, really hard to explain since it was so long ago. It was a resentment because we thought we were friends to the Japanese. At that time I did not have an idea of what I was going to do until later on in the year I volunteered in the air force.

Why did you want to join the army?

I knew, I was going have to go because of the draft

Did really want to go?

At that time yes because I knew later on I would have to go. I joined in 1942.

What was your active duty ?

Well, to start with I had to go over here to Anniston to fort Mac Lellan to be sworn in as we call it to become a member of the armed forces. Then we were sent to fort Mac Pherson in Atlanta Georgia for a testing assignment. So we stayed there for two weeks running through all the tests, getting out equipment and everything. And from there after the testing I was sent to the Air force, assigned to the air force which was my first love. Because at that time, pilot of the air force were kind of looked up to as a prestige, didn't have the hard life that the marines in the army had, so we thought. But when you get in the military, you gonna find it right as far as your likes and dislikes are about the same thing. Because you don't hear about the bad things, you always here the good things.

Then, what happened ?

from there then I entered the air force to Belaxi Mississippi to be an air plane mechanic, as my first assignment.

Did you know at that time that you were training for the real war and not just for basic training ?

I was just training at that time.

But did you know you were going to war ?

Oh, year ! I knew I would be into combat but I had went ahead with my training as a air plane mechanic I would have been overseas but I would not have been in the combat party because I volunteered to be an aerial gunner on a plane , I didn't know what kind of plane, I just wanted to be an aerial gunner. So then after I volunteered I was sent to Texas to start training to be an aerial gunner. It was a plimetac plane that we used, we called it the AT 6 which was a training plane for aerial gunners. I was a tail gunner then on a B 17 when I was assigned to duty. That was the plane we used for training , I was up here behind the pilot.

Did you remember the first time you flew ?

Oh, year ! very much so. I don't remember the date. It was in the lighter part of 1942, we start training on the AT 6 on October 1942 and we spent 6 weeks in it. Then I was transferred to Salt lake city to the armament school where we learned how to repair 50 caliber machine guns. An aerial gunner had to take that procedure. From Salt lake city we were sent to our individual training basis to start our training flight. We went through 3 phases of training and in different places.

So how long did you train before you were operational ?

It was 6 weeks and then 4 weeks in salt lake city and then we were assigned to Arizona for our first flight training in a B 17. But I don't remember the exact date. But I do remember from the time I was inducted in the army, at the end of 3 month I had already

been promoted from a private to a staff sergeant that was because of the schooling. That was exceptional, I am not that smart but it is just the way it worked out

When did you really move to Europe ?

We went in June 1943. Of course we were flight training there for few months before we even started in action combat. Because you have to get yourself orientated to the conditions and everything. So we had instructors to flight with us for the first few weeks we were over there. And then we went to actual combat.

Where you based in England ?

I was based at Morworth, close from London , a little way to the coast.

How did you feel when you moved at that time, were you scared ?

No, I was rather excited

Did you not feel fear?

No at that time, only when we started are bombing missions.

Where did you Bomb?

In little town in France, called Poix, It was occupied by Nazis. France was occupied the German soldiers. It was on February 10th, 1943. I have a book here to show the area we bombed. That was our first mission we called it a "milk run" because it was knew and there would not be any enemy fighter planes because there was nothing there just the town, that was are orientation flight over France into combat it was a 3 hour flight. So it was our first time over the enemy territory, if you cross the English channel you will be considered on the enemy territory , that is the dividing line for enemy and France territory.

So, you did not meet the German Air Force?

Not on that road. Then four days later to Villa-Coublay that was a little further down . That was a 5 hour flight that is when we did see German fighters, and aircraft fighters. That one make you feel kind of funny. A little fear because it was the first time in the aircraft and the enemy aircraft, very close from Paris, but we made by. We lost one engine it was hit by enemy aircraft fighters, it was smoking all the way back. That is what gave us the fear more then anything else that our plane would not hold it, but it did. We did drop some bombs

How did you feel dropping bombs on people?

Well, we were not bombing the people, we were bombing factories. That was an German airfield. We had six missions in July and there were five in August until was wounded and put out of action. That was on the first time that Norway was bombed that was on July 24, 1943. Flying time was seven hours and 45 min. That was a Ball Bearing plant. The longest flight I was on was Frankfort, German it was a six hour flight into Germany. I have a newspaper clip with the missions with different ones and different places. (Shows me newspapers and a map) All the missions were successful. This is one were we lost 25 people. This last one is the last one I made which was on August 19, 1943. Were the bombers attacked German airfield in Poland, all was down by daylight It was loaded by German fighters.

That was the scariest one you ever did ?

I guess it was not more scary than others, but that was the one I was wounded. At the ankle I was wounded and the hip all on the same side. Here is some of the awards, not awards but achievements that I had. On my mission to Eindhoven on July 26, I destroyed one German fighter plane. On August 12, 1943 we burnt this place in Germany, there was an other German aircraft Fightwolf 190. And then on August 17 when we bombed Swanford, a German plane ME 110. And on my last mission, I am credited with destroying an other fightwolf 190. So I destroyed 4 planes.

What was the raid on Paris for ?

I don't remember, probably one of the airfield. When we bombed Swanford, Cassalandre, Albertville and the Norway area it was industrial plants that made airplanes, parts and raw materials, tanks and trucks. For so many missions I was awarded the Air Medal. Then was an other Air Medal, but it was one oak leave cluster. I have the Air Medal with the 4 oak leaves clusters, then the fourth one that I had for destroying this plane is an other 4 leaves cluster. For my wounds then I was awarded to receive the Purple Heart. That is one of the things for the bombing personnel that are wounded in the combat area, they receive the Purple Heart as a recognition.

Your last mission was in 1943, what happened next ?

I was assigned to return duty. I was assigned to carrying, on the base that I was on, the flying personnel up to the operation unit for their briefings to go on an other mission. When they returned then I would pick them up and carry them back to the area where we lived. That was my assignment then in Europe. Then I was assigned as a teacher, instructing recognition of the aircraft, that sound like an easy job but it is not as easy as it sounds. Because you are dealing with those who has just come over we were calling them "Raw recruits". They had flight training but they do not know anything about how to identify an enemy target so that was my job to identify and pulled out the identifying part to know when to shoot and when not to shoot because if you don't know you all the

aircraft you can possibly shoot one of your own. And from that then I was assigned to other duties, I was sent to an other base. I was sent to Ireland in my last 10 months and served in overseas combat to set up and operate a flexible gunnery school. (Give technical details about machine gun). After set up that school up and operated it, they decided it was time for me to go home it was in October 1944. I came back to the state and had 4 weeks to get everything in order, that was during this 4 weeks that I got married. I was sent and took my bride with me to Miami, Florida for a 2 week reassignment. Then I was transferred back out West, she returned home to her job.

You met Virginia before the War ?

Oh, yes ! years before the war, she was waiting for me to come back. So I was sent back to Lorado, Texas and was instructing still in gunnery, going to school to learn things myself about different area in the tourets operation. I learned to operate the lower and upper tourets of a B 17. I did that until I was sent back to Arizona for few month and went back to Lorado, Texas and then I was sent to Montgomery, Alabama to be discharged in October 14, 1945. Since that time, I went to work with Economy hours stores and I worked with that company then until 1961, it was bought by Mac Cormick Corporation under the supervision of Oklahoma tire supply Company. So I worked with the Oklahoma tire supply Company for 32 years and 7 months, no 22 years and 7 months.

Do you think that the war changed your life, how ?

Year, may be but I don't know in what respect.

You don't know what changed exactly ?

No, I don't know exactly. Well, it probably did, it gave me a better insight , is to how control of my own emotions like others that have been through the same situation I have been. I was having to survive myself and look at my owns to help others if they needed help.

When you came back, were you feeling different, in what way ?

I thinks so because after you have been spending years in one environment and come back to another, that's when you are going to feel a little different. But as to what the difference would be , it would be kind hard to say. Because your outlook would be different. Because you got to look to the future, at what I am going to do how I am going to accomplish what I want to do, things like that.

Did you kill someone or have you seen someone got killed ?

I don't know if I killed anybody , I was shooting at the airplane, so whether I killed a pilot or not I don't know. But I had one of my crew member that was killed on one of our

missions, he was below me in the balltrip and I knew something happened so when we got him up he was dead. I didn't see him killed but he was.

So basically what are your worse and your best souvenir ?

Unfortunately, I didn't collected souvenirs. I enjoyed my time in service. I would my worse time was when I was wounded and I went to the hospital. If we were not on duty we could go on 2 or 3 day pass, so I spent a lot of my time just sightseer. Because when I was in Europe, I was in England, Scotland and whales. And I was stationed in Ireland to set up the gunnery school. I have been to those 4 countries in Europe during my overseas time. So got to see a lot of things that I enjoyed seeing. Some of the things you don't like to see is the town that have been bombed.

So, for you war was a good experience ?

I would like to go back but I would so different now cause I remembered as being destroyed. In 1984, I was back to Frankfort Germany there were no signs of the war at all. So I don't think I would enjoy going back in England.

But do you feel right about the war, going in a country that is not yours and fight for it ?

You will have to put it like this; we were fighting for freedom. Germans were fighting for power and conquest. And we were fighting for freedom, to enjoy the free life that Americans have always known, not to be under somebody's thumb under pressure and doing what they wanted us to do. So instead of having an agreement between us and our government we can do this we can't do that, we had interference. Just like the freedom of religion, see we are free to worship as we see fit and under control of another communists or nazis, they had to do strictly as the dictator says, they had no choice. So that is why we were fighting, for freedom of choice and that is why we still fight for.

After the war, you came back here and had a job. Did you feel that things had changed in Alabama when you came back ?

Yes, it has changed some because the growth, town had grown, people had changed from one area to the country to the others. We had new people coming in the city, people living the city for various reasons. Small industries were here for the economy and everything so it made a great change.

Did you have an easy time getting a job ?

It was fairly easy because I was in the second group to be discharged before the end of the war was declared. At that time there were still jobs available but you didn't have a great variety of jobs, you had to pick what you think you would like best, that is what I did. I was working at the Economy hours store which was a whole in auto supply store, we

were selling auto parts and accessories and also appliances, washers, radio, television and so forth.

So how was your life , were you happy in Alabama ?

I was happy because most of my life since I am 5 up to present time has been spent in Alabama. I like Alabama, that is why I stayed. Well part is because Virginia was always teaching school and we got married. And then I settled here, I got a job here. So instead of going back to school and get a college degree I continued to work because at that time with the position I had I was making more money without a college degree than she was making with the BS degree. Everybody want to make as much money as they can. So I stayed with what I had. I was going to major in business education but the company that I worked for would not grant me a leave of absence. I would have had to just quit period, be without a job. Because I was more benefit to the company as I was than with a college degree, I learned the business by round up. I worked for the Oklahoma tire Company for 37 years and 7 months all total. I started out as a bookkeeper, and credit manager then I went out on the sale floor as a salesman. Then when the Oklahoma tire supply Company bought us in 1961, a couple of years later then I was promoted to assistant manager and I remained an assistant manager till I retired although I was offered a store, to be manager of it but again I was looking at the monetary, I could make more money as an assistant manager than I could have been a manager because in sales you work on the salary with the commission so I made my own salary.

How was the economy, good...?

during the time I was working yes. Of course we had a little few spells. But it was still good. People had money to spend and they spent it. That was the whole thing. From the time I went out of service and the time I retired, we had a good prosperous time. Eventhough my company when bankrupt, but that was not because of the economy. That's a whole different story. That was when I had been retired 5 years when the company went down. It was an enjoyable life, I have enjoyed it, I had offers for other jobs, more money but the working conditions where not to my liking. That is why I kept that job. And my family was happy so why mess up a good thing.

To conclude this interview, I am going to ask you one more question; if you had to remember something about the war what would it be ? If you had something to say to your grand-child, what would you say about the war ?

I would tell them to don't go in thinking it is the end of the world, it is not. It is an opportunity, to see things and do things that you wouldn't have done otherwise.

But things have changed...

It is more technical now than it was then. The skills are different, but still they have an opportunity to do things, to learn things that they might not get outside it. Of course I

would not advice everybody to go in, because it is not for everybody. Of course I am too old, but I don't think I would want to go back. When I was discharged they tried to get me in to study , but I had been in for 37 months and I was ready to go home. I wanted to try different lifestyle for a while. But now a lot of people make a career being in service.

Yes, but they don't all fight in a war...

Not all of them. It was dangerous, what I did was dangerous, I volunteered for it. They did not assigned anyone to be an aerial gunner, you volunteered. What I was looking at at that time was that the pay scale was \$ 50 a month regardless of your rank. I was looking at this 50 % flying pay to be on a aircraft combat. As a staff sergeant I was making \$ 96 a month, that was the base pay plus 50 % more added to that. That is what I was looking for.

But you take the risk of being killed...

Yes, but that's beside the point. You don't think about things like that, you don't think about being killed. I went in like I told my friend and Virginia before I left, I said: " I will be back". I don't why I decided I won't be dead. I was sure I was coming back. That was the attitude I had, I had an other job for me to do.

Thank you very much for everything you told me and sharing this with me....

END

APPENDIX A

(Sortie list + map of US bombings)

ABNEY, HOWARD L., S/Sgt.

Tail Gunner

INDIVIDUAL SORTIE RECORD
(PAGE-11)

21
613
27

	DATE	TARGET	TIME	WOUNDS	PLANE DESTROYED
1	7.10.43	Poix	3:00 3:00 5:00		
2	.7.14.43	Villacoublay	8:00		
3	7.24.43	Heroya, Norway	7:45 15:45		
4	7.25.43	Hamburg	6:10 21:55		
5	7.26.43	Hamburg	6:55 28:10		1 Me 109
	7.30.43	Kassel	5:50 34:00		
	8.12.43	Gelsenkirchen	5:00 39:00		1 Me 190
3	8.15.43	Abbeville	4:15 43:15		
9	8.16.43	Paris	4:40 47:55		
10	8.17.43	Schweinfurt	6:00 53:55		1 Me 190
11	8.19.43	Gilse-Rijen	3:50 57:45		1 Me 190
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LA PALLICE

NANTES

ST. NAZAIRE

LORIENT

BREST

RENNES

LE MANS

BILLANCOURT

VILLACOUBLAY

ROMILLY

LE BOURGET

PARIS

POISSY

POIX

AMENS

ABBEVILLE

BRYAS

TITTE

MERVILLE

COYSTRAI

GHEENT

YPRES

WATTEN

ST. OMER

MAZINGARBE

MEVULTE

ROUEN

GRAND QUEVILLY

CONCHES

BEAUMONT LE ROGER

CAEN

TRICQUEVILLE

LE HAVRE

CHERBOURG

DUNKIRK

ZEBRUGGE

FLUSHING

SCHIPOL

IMMUIDEN

UTRECHT

ROTTERDAM

WOENS DRESHT

ANTWERP

HULS

BON

HUM

HAMIM

WILHELMSDIEN

VEGESA

HEILIGOLAND

CUXHAA

400 MILES

500 MILES

300 MILES

APPENDIX B

(Article about Howard)

Abney Shoots Down Four German Planes

AN EIGHTH AAF COMPOSITE STATION, England—Staff Sergeant Howard L. Abney, 23, of Fyffe, Alabama, who has been credited with shooting down four German planes, two FW 190's, a ME 109 and an ME 110, has been assigned as gunnery instructor at this Combat Crew Replacement Center.

The sergeant, who was a tail gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress, is well qualified to teach the hundreds of aerial gunners in the latest technique of Nazi fighting methods. For destroying the German planes, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and he also holds the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. While taking part in the bombing of an airfield in Holland, he was wounded in the right hip and ankle in a desperate encounter with German fighters. Upon his recovery he was awarded the Purple Heart.

He took part on missions to Hamburg, Gelsenkirchen, Schweinfurt and numerous others. Most of the time he flew in the "tail-end" Charlie position—that is in the last plane in the formation. The position is precarious because it is usually the plane the fighters try to dive out of the formation.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Abney, Route 2, Fyffe, Alabama, he was a farmer in civilian life. He has been in the Army 20 months and in the European Theater of Operations one year.

APPENDIX C

(Letter from military history writer to Howard)

Ivo M. de Jong
Engels Erf 5
3843 BD Harderwijk
The Netherlands

Mr. Howard L. Abney
602 Oakdale Drive
Gadsden, AL 35903-2926
United States of America

March 24, 1996

Dear Mr. Abney:

I was very happy this evening after my telephone call with your wife. I have been looking for you for quite some time and I am really happy I finally found you.

Please let me introduce myself to you and explain why I contacted you in such an unexpected way about events long ago. My name is Ivo Michel de Jong, 32 years old and serving as a Captain in the Royal Dutch Army until July 11, when I will be promoted to Major. For already many years I am an avid Eighth Air Force enthusiast and have been researching its May 28, 1944 mission for a number of years.

My interest in the Eighth Air Force and especially this day started when my father told me as a boy, how he had seen a Flying Fortress crashland close to him in 1944. After I started researching this event, the day appeared to be May 28, 1944. The Fort belonged to the 388th Bomb Group from Knet-tishall. After I was helped very much by surviving crewmembers of that ship, an enthusiasm developed in me, which hasn't subsided and even has become stronger. For several years I worked on the history of that one single mission and the finished manuscript is presently being reviewed by American publishers for possible publication.

Then I decided to take up another, somewhat smaller but no less interesting, research project: the mission of August 19, 1943. This mission had intrigued me for quite some time already, because it was supposed to be a short easy "milk run" to several German airfields in Holland, two days after the disastrous Schweinfurt/Regensburg mission, but turned out to be a rough fight with the German Luftwaffe. Five B-17's and one escorting P-47 were lost. Two B-17's of the 303rd Bomb Group from Molesworth were shot down, those piloted by Lts James S. Nix and Lauren H. Quillen. Other Bomb Groups losing Fortresses were the 305th, 381st and 388th.

After I had received the mission reports for the 303rd Bomb Group, as kept in the National Archives in Washington D.C., I came across the fact that you were the tail gunner aboard the B-17 "Black Diamond Express" of Lt John W. Hendry. This B-17 flew in the vulnerable number seven position in the Low Squadron of the Group formation. This put you in the thick of the fight with the Luftwaffe. You managed to destroy a Focke Wulf 190 south of Rotterdam. However, you were wounded during this fight too. Due to this fact Lt Hendry landed the B-17 on Framlingham, to get quick medical attention for you.

You will understand that your story of this mission is of

the greatest importance to me. I would therefore politely ask you to help me in my research and put down your memories of this mission and the ensuing days on paper for me. Please, be as extensive as you can. I really feel that your story is worth to be told.

My final goal with this research into the August 19, 1943 mission is to publish a book, with the entire history in it. Your help in this project is absolutely invaluable for me and will contribute to the historic value of the end result.

I do already have a crew picture of the original crew of Lt Hendry, with you kneeling second from right. If you have any other pictures of yourself, the crew or scenes on Molesworth, I would be very happy with them

I can copy the picture, or pictures, you might have and return them to you in good order. Any other material you still might have, such as telegrams or paper clippings are also of great value to me and I would appreciate a paper copy of these, if possible. I have copied this material from a lot of people very often, and this never caused a problem. If you rather copy the precious material yourself, I will be happy to reimburse your expenses.

Regarding the B-17's lost on the mission I can tell you that I have been quite successful in finding information. Of the crew of Lt Nix's B-17 that went down I am contact with the ball turret gunner, radio-operator and an eleventh crewmember, the assistant engineering officer of the 359th BS, who went along for the ride. In addition I am in good contact with the widow of the navigator, who deceased since the war. Last week I managed to trace one of the waist gunners of Lt Quillen's crew. He, one of four survivors, still has contact with two others!!

The B-17 of the 388th BG had only two survivors on its crew, I am in contact with the one now still living crewmember, the bombardier. The B-17 of the 305th BG also had only two survivors. I am in good contact with the family of the pilot, who was one of those two, but deceased since the war. I am also in contact with the widow of the sole Thunderbolt pilot that came down in Holland. He also deceased since the war.

Of the 381st BG I have not yet been able to trace one of the six survivors; but I hope that I will have the same success as with finally finding you!!

Let me tell you again how much I would appreciate your help in my research. This is not a commercial undertaking but an effort by an amateur historian to keep the memory of the gallant Eighth Air Force alive for years to come.

If there is anything I can do for you, here in the Netherlands, just let me know and I will do my very best.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Most sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. M. ...', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.