

March 23, 2004

Dear Lillian,

Received your letter about 2 weeks ago and Im finally getting around to answering it. Im just lazy.

Im glad the colonoscopy went well and the same for cardiac rehab.

The stress test Jackie and I took was o.k. but Jackie has a problem. The cat scan showed plaque around her heart and arteries in her neck and we both have heart murmurs. The Dr. said it was nothing to worry about. Jackie has to take lipitor and asperine every day and stay on a fat free diet. I take zocor and I used to take plavix also, I stopped the plavix ever since the surgery last summer. Plavix is a blood thinner and I lost a lot of blood befor and during surgery and needed a transfusion.

I received the birthday card on the sixteenth. Thank you and thank Bob for me.

The return address label on the envelope showing a picture of a B25 attack bomber reminded me of an experience I had in the South Pacific. I will go back to the beginning when I was stationed at Mitchell Field. I was sent to Roosevelt aviation school which was right next to Mitchell field. I learned every thing about airplanes, from hydraulics to aerodynamics. I graduated as an airplane and engine mechanic and was promoted to Sgt.

After a 30 day furlough I was ordered to return to my outfit which was stationed in the British West Indies at the time. I flew from N.Y. to Miami Florida and from there on a Navy flying boat to St. Lucia in the B.W.I.s. It was on that Island when we received word of the attack on Pearl Harbor. I was sent back to States for more training, this time to learn how to fire guns and shoot straight. After another furlough, I was sent over seas again. This time to the Canal Zone in Panama. After several months in Panama we boarded a troop ship and headed for the South Pacific.

I don't remember the first island I went to, but I do remember what happened there. This is where the B25 comes in.

The ^{PLANES}~~planes~~ we serviced there were mainly B25,s. One day my crew and I changed engines on a B25 named The Coral Queen. When ever we made engine changes, it was my job to check them out on the ground. I taxied the plane to an abutment and with the wheels chocked, I would slowly advance the throttles to full throttle and keep them there for 2 minutes and observe all the gauges to make sure every thing was working properly. The noise was deafening. I had head phones on but it did not help. The planes at that time were not pressurized or soundproofed like they are today.

That was the beginning of my hearing loss. It would take about a half hour before I could hear normally again after each engine check. I don't know how Irving stood that noise for hours at a time. I only had 2 engines roaring in my ears, Irving had 4 on a B17.

After I had checked out the Coral Queen, the Captain who was the pilot of that ~~plane~~ wanted to check it out in flight and wanted me to come along as engineer observer, something I done many times. This time the Capt. brought along a new pilot as his co pilot. There was just the three of us and we took off and everything was perfect. The Capt. let the new pilot get the feel of flying the plane. We flew about 5 or 6 thousand feet over the water for about 30 minutes and then we headed back. The Capt. decided to land the plane. The landing field were just metal grill plates embedded in the ground. The runway had a lot of pebbles and small stones that could cause damage to the flaps when landing. The pilots had standing orders to retract flaps as soon as the wheels touched ground. The flaps and landing gear levers are located on the floor between the pilot and co pilots seat. The landing gear lever is painted red and the flap lever is painted yellow. As soon as our wheels touched the ground, the pilot tells the co pilot to retract the flaps. This 90 day wonder without looking , reaches down and retracts the landing gear. We were coming in at over 100 mph when the plane drops down on its belly and skids down the runway about a couple thousand yards. I thought it never stop, the left wing

