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Dear Martha,

I've got another dandy excuse for not writing sooner. Our B-24 crew navigator, Ted Kendall (nee Kasczerski) has a daughter who lives in Ventura, CA, about 20 miles from us. I think I mentioned that Ted now lives in Brazil. Anyway, whenever he's in the States and visits his daughter he calls us to try to arrange a visit. This occurred the week of March 14. Ted called three or four times, but we never could plan a lunch or dinner when both of us were free, so we conducted our bull-sessions and reminiscences by phone, and by now he's back in Brazil, so I don't have any more stories about your brother to add to the collection.

In the last letter, I asked if you had a copy of the picture of me and Bill and other crew members, and the pregnant prostitute, on the street in Naples. I still haven't found my copy of the picture, but the fact that Bill as an officer, was with us enlisted men says as much about him as any words can do. Even though the old Army Air Corps was much more relaxed about officers and enlisted personnel "fraternizing", and especially true among air crew members, Bill was still the friendliest of all our officers toward the rest of the crew. Of course, there was also an age and experience gap. All of us enlisted men were 18 when we trained and barely 19 when we went into combat (except for the radio operator, "old man Friedman"), while the officers ranged from about 21 – 22 (pilot and Bill) to 24 (navigator), with some college, and Kendall had a bachelor's degree. We youngsters were barely out of high school and were awed by the older, collegiate officers, who, in their turn must have been snickering about our naivete and not very interested in our chit-chat.

So, having said all that, Bill made the biggest effort of all the officers to bridge the gap and kid with us and listen to our problems (which must have seemed "juvenile", even though combat tends to make one "grow up" pretty fast). Bill was never condescending or holier-than-thou, he just sort of looked after us much like an older brother would.

I don't recall any particular conversations I had with Bill. Personal matters, such as family, wives, girlfriends, financial problems, and the like, were pretty much

“off limits” among all of us, and, after all, we had known each other for less than 6 months so confidences were not the order of the day. For example, waist gunner Papparatto from Chicago wrote to his girlfriend two or three times a week and married her when he got home, and I didn’t even know her name ‘til after they were married. So, the bottom line is that Bill was one of the good guys who was friendly even when issuing orders to us, and available to us if we needed assistance or advice. I never saw him become angry or lose his temper, and certainly I liked him better than any other officer I served under. I can’t add much to that, except that we remained good friends right up to his death.

The rest of the missions we flew were, of course, scary but pretty routine so I needn’t describe any of them in detail. We were fortunate in being selected to ferry a B-24 home rather than come by ship, so we were among the first combat veterans to arrive in the States from Europe, but the war was still going on with Japan so we didn’t get any “heroes’ welcome”, just a couple weeks R&R, and then retrain on B-29s to go over there – but the **Bomb** was dropped, so I got out of the Army as quick as I could and started college at Berkeley.

With affection, and keep in touch,

Bruce