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Addressed to:
Mrs. P. C. Christensen
Route 4, Box 106
Huron, S. Dak.

Letter:

28 June 1945

Dear Mrs. Christensen,

I received your letter of 4th June some time ago. Was glad to hear from you again. I'm certainly glad your son, Clarence, is getting to come back out of the service. He has been over there a long time. Forty months overseas is too long.

Yes I know all of the fellows names on the pictures. I'll name them as you requested in the form of a list so you can refer to it. On the group pictures I'll name them left to right and front row first. I'll put the list on a separate sheet of paper and go ahead here and make some comments about them.

Van Laecken was an observer and flew with Kirwin. He was a quiet kid and very good natured. He and Raymond chummed together quite a lot. He joined the squadron at the same time we did. He came home before I did and is stationed now at Fresno, California.

Ted (Thaddeus) Kulpinski is a Polish boy. He is an observer and flew with Stirnus some. He joined the squadron in England. Used to be in Royal Air Force and came to our squadron when he transferred to U.S. Air Force. He came home ahead of me and is now an instructor here at Boca Raton. His home is in Pennsylvania.

Stirnus is a pilot. He and Kulpinski flew together and came home together. Stirnus is now stationed at Fresno, Cal. His home is in California. He was our operations officer for a while.

Katzberg was our flight surgeon or squadron doctor. He is still with the squadron.

Perkins joined our squadron in Africa. He is an observer. He flew with Capt. Nelson. Perkins and Raymond chummed around together for some time too. Perkins is a very small fellow and always in a jolly mood. He is still with the squadron as far as I know.

Draper is an observer and flew with Larsen. He was in the same group with Raymond and I when we joined the squadron. I think he came home recently but I haven't heard from him.

Kirwin is a pilot. He is an original member of the squadron and as far as I know, is still with it. He and Joe Leonard were always together. Kirwin got married to a nurse while we were in Africa. I'm sure Raymond has mentioned him to you.

Larsen is a pilot and an original member. He later became commanding officer of the squadron, while we were in Corsica. I think he is home now.

Ray Hall was in mine and Raymond's class here at Boca Raton and went to gunnery school with us. You can find his picture in the gunnery school book perhaps. He came home just after i did and was an instructor here at Boca Raton until he was discharged recently. His

home is in New York City.

Cordell was with the squadron when we joined it. He was Major Ehlinger's observer. He and I came home together and are together here. We live in the same cabin. He is now supervisor of the night fighter course here and I am assistant supervisor. His home is in Alabama.

Potter was also an observer with the squadron when we joined it here in Florida. He came home for thirty days leave then went back to the squadron in France about the time I came home. He and his pilot, Jack Lee, were lost shortly after that.

Groom is a pilot. He is very sour faced and grouchy by nature but as good-hearted as can be. His nickname is "Grumpy." He came home about a year ago and is now in Fresno, California. He was an original pilot with the sqdn.

Hill was a replacement pilot that joined us in Africa. He came home some time ago and is in California now. His home is in Arizona.

All of these pictures were taken in Africa. Numbers 1 & 2 were just in front of our barracks at La Senia Airdrome, near Oran. The buildings in the background are more barracks just like ours was. The cement water tank they are sitting on is for fire protection. Numbers 5 & 6 are along the coastline of Africa about twenty or thirty miles from our field. We used to pass by there going to the beach. In No 6 you can see the water at the lower left corner and the road around the hill about half way up. In No. 3, Cordell and Van Laecken are wearing maye wests (life preservers) and paraschute [sic] harness. Joe Leonard is standing between them.

I am not on any of these pictures. And I don't have any of myself that is any good at all down here with me. I will have some snapshots made soon though and send you one of them. Raymond was well acquainted with all of the fellows on these pictures. I didn't have any of these so thank you for sending me a print of them. I am glad to get them.

Yes, I could probably get out of the army now if I wanted to. But I would just as soon stay in until the war is over. I can probably pass a little of my experience on to the students here who are training to go out and do the same job I did. I have something over a hundred points. But if I were out I wouldn't know how to act any more. And my health is pretty good so I should stay and let someone else out.

I was home on leave in May. I enjoyed it very much. I had almost three weeks with the folks.

I hope Mr. Christensen's health is better by now.

Sincerely,
Bill