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March 11, 1982

Mrs. Pam Murn
80 Church Street
Allentown, New Jersey 08501

Dear Pam:

I was delighted to receive your letter yet distressed to learn that Lt. Murn had passed away so long ago.

I will be more than happy to relay what information I have concerning my relationship with him and some of our experiences.

I first met Lt. Murn in August of 1943 when I transferred from C Company to Headquarters 1st Battalion. He, of course, was Platoon Leader of the Machine Gun Platoon and I was in the Intelligence Section. Later, however, I transferred to Company Headquarters where I saw Lt. Murn almost daily as he was coming into Headquarters for various official functions.

If I could characterize him it would to be that he was a strong disciplinarian when required and yet a cheerful, happy, gay, carefree individual when not involved with official functions. I recall very vividly the night before the unit was moving to England and he and several other officers and enlisted men had an all-night poker party. He was well respected not only by his officer peers but also by the enlisted men who served under him. I don't think that I ever heard any one of his men complain about any type of treatment they received while serving under him.

After arriving in England our Company was quartered in former Royal Stables. It was here that our training took place for the invasion. During this time I was exposed to Lt. Murn quite frequently and an incident I do recall was the time that my mother had shipped to me a bottle of ^{SCOTT'S} ~~SLITZ~~ beer. While sitting in the courtyard of the Stables, so all in the Company could see my good fortune, Lt. Murn came by and offered me \$50 for my bottle of beer. Naturally, I did not sell but I did give him a small sip.

When we were at the Marshalling area for our jump into France we all joked and kidded concerning our upcoming experience and used this time to try to forget about what we were to expect. Lt. Murn and other officers were frequent visitors in the enlisted mens' quarters during this period of time in order to allay any fears which the enlisted men might have about jumping in a foreign country, particular at night.

Lt. Murn was in the second plane in front of me in formation and after we hit the coast of France increasingly heavy artillery and machine gun fire from enemy forces caused the planes to split apart and go in many different directions. Thus, when I landed I was no where near Lt. Murn.

But I can tell you that probably the most excited I have ever been in my entire life before and since was an incident which occurred about five days after we landed in France. I had landed and could only find one other individual to get up with, whose name was Charlie Whickham of Rhinelander, Wisconsin. As I mentioned, the planes had spread apart and he and I were about 15 miles from where we were supposed to have landed. We stayed in a ditch for about three days while enemy forces were all around us. After the third day, using what French I know, we went to a farmhouse and introduced ourselves and were treated like long-lost sons. However, they felt that it would be best for us not to stay in the house so they hid us in a wheatfield adjacent to their home. We stayed there for two days and towards the latter part of the second day one of the Frenchmen came up to me running and yelling and handed me a note which said "These Frenchmen will lead you to Graignes. There are friendly forces here." Signed - "Murn 501".

If you can imagine being almost by yourself 3000 miles away from home in enemy territory and feeling absolutely hopeless you can realize what that note meant to me. Both Charlie and I jumped up and down with joy. We were lead by the French Underground to the small town of Graignes where we thought we were safe. However, it developed that this was just a small pocket of resistance consisting of about 200 allied groups. Included in this troupe were members of 101st Airborne Division, 82nd Airborne Division, 29th Infantry Division, 2 Australian fighter pilots who had been shot down, and several Russian laborers that had escaped from the Germans. Here we saw Lt. Murn everyday as he came by the lines to check positions and assure that the machine gun and placements were in the correct line of fire. Many of these days he would stop and chat and kid and try to keep our spirits up when we didn't really feel like spirits were too high. Unfortunately we began to patrol out and encountered the enemy and they decided an all-out push to get rid of us was in order. This they did with artillery and ~~mortars~~ *mortars* *nonna F.P.* which became so intense that the Commanding Officer told all of us to get out the best way we could. A whole group of us, to include Lt. Murn, took off through the swamps of water which was about chest high to try to get away from the enemy forces. I became separated from Lt. Murn and did not see him again until we returned to our Headquarters which was then on line near Carrantan, France.

After we returned to England to prepare for a jump in Holland, I saw Lt. Murn quite frequently and as I mentioned before he was always in the Headquarters where he was generally well liked and I certainly felt that he was one of the better officers of the Company.

Subsequent to that time I transferred to the Supply Section and did not have as much contact with Lt. Murn throughout Holland and the rest of the campaign.

However, tell Mike he can be proud of his dad. He was an excellent leader, fearless of none, and set an example for all of the enlisted men who served under him.

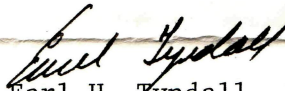
Pam, I might mention another name of a person who could probably tell you more about Lt. Murn than I can because he was Lt. Murn's Platoon Sergeant and, of course, was with him daily throughout the entire campaigns and training. His name is Fennel "Pop" Flemming. As I say Pop was a Platoon Sergeant of the Machine Gun Platoon and although he was only 27 he was the oldest person in the Company and got the nickname "Pop". Pop called me a little over two years and we talked over the phone for awhile but I haven't seen or heard from him since. I think, however, that you can contact him by writing him at Abbeville, South Carolina. This is a small town and Pop said everybody knew him and that any mail would get to him OK.

I might also mention, Pam, that Mike might like to become an Associate Member of the 101st Airborne Division Association. This is a very strong organization which was organized in 1945 in Austria and is still going strong today. They publish a very nice magazine bi-monthly and have a reunion once a year. The membership dues are only \$10.00 per year and the address is Secretary-Treasurer, 101st Airborne Association, P.O. Box 101AB, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49004. I have been a member since its inception and have cherished very much my association with this organization.

Another thing, Pam, that Mike might like to do is to order the book called Rendezvous With Destiny which is available from this ~~address~~ ^{SAH} address at a cost of \$8.50 plus \$1.32 postage.

Pam, I'm delighted to have taken a little time to try to help Mike fashion together a picture of his father. Having four boys I know how important this is to him. If there is anything I can do on your behalf please let me know as I am still vitally interested in all members of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Very cordially yours,



Earl H. Zyndall, Jr.
Associate Executive Director

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