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Subseries: World War II Correspondence

OA/ID Number: 25833
Folder ID Number: 25833-009

Folder Title:
Correspondence - Family of Ted White

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	35	1	1	2

R. R. 10 WHITE BEAR LAKE
MINNESOTA

Dear Prescott -

Please be
entirely assured that no
one will see George's letter
but Ted and me. I know

PHOTOCOPY
GB HANDWRITING

exactly how you
feel - and you
are so good to
share it with
us. Thank you
for your trust
and help.

Always sincerely
Anne White

Oct. 18 - 1944.

October 13, 1944.

Dear Ann:

I have delayed in writing you for a few days because I wanted to get as much information as possible regarding your son, whom my boy refers to as Ted in his letters. Incidentally, my boy, whose name is George, but whom we call Poppy, has mentioned Ted in several letters during the past six months.. I think the two boys became very good friends on the "San Jacinto."

Donald K. Walker, who wrote the attached letters, is one of my business associates who went into the Navy and, being in the Personnel Department down there, I asked him to check up on the White case. The attached letter indicates that the Navy's file does not disclose any details.

However, we received this week a letter from Pop in which he describes the flight which ended so unhappily. Ted went on that flight. He was, as you know, gunnery officer on the ship but he was anxious to make a flight, so Pop invited him to go with him. Perhaps he had been on other missions. I don't know. At any rate, they went out and apparently were attacking when the ship was struck by anti-aircraft fire from a ground battery on an island. Pop knew that the ship was hit hard. He saw that both of his wings were on fire and his cabin suddenly filled with smoke. He gave the order to abandon ship immediately over the inter-com. He spoke to Com. Melville, squadron leader, over his radio and told him that he was going to abandon ship, then veered over to the left to give White and Delaney a chance to bail out; Delaney being the tail gunner who had been on every mission with Pop for months. As I understand it, the pilot's cabin is walled off so he can't see the two men in back of him - one in the middle and the other at the tail of the plane. Then he swung right and bailed out himself. He was hit on the head by the tail of the plane, which gave him quite a gash but he came to in time to pull his chute open and landed in the water with terrific force, down very deeply. He remembered his instructions to get out of his chute, which he did under water.

When he came to the surface he could not see anybody. He looked for his men and looked for the plane. Shortly, however, Com. Melville came back and circled around over him, and while circling pointed out Pop's chute which had drifted on - away over the water. Pop swam to his chute and unfastened the emergency raft attached thereto, pressed the button and the raft inflated itself. He scrambled in. Melville evidently saw that Pop was bleeding badly, so he dropped a first-aid kit, which floated and Pop picked it up, and gave himself apparently a quick first-aid. In the meantime he could see no trace of his plane or the other men. Fearful that the Japs would come out to get him from the shore he then paddled out to sea with his little paddle just as hard as he could. Two hours later an American submarine surfaced near him and picked him up.

Pop's letter says that Com. Melville saw only one chute open. Evidently, he was watching, because Pop had told him he had ordered "abandon ship".

It, therefore, must be that Melville reported White and Delaney as

missing when he got back to the "San Jacinto". Pop was on the submarine for nearly a month and we finally got a cable from him which we presume must have come from Pearl Harbor.

I have not actually seen Pop's letters which were written on the submarine, describing this whole affair, but when I do I will make excerpts from them and send them to you. Dottie has only sketched them to me to give the high points which I have put into this letter. The fact is, however, that Pop is very much afraid the other two boys are lost and he does not actually know what happened to them. His first letter written on the submarine is the most pathetic thing because it was almost entirely devoted to his regret about White and Delaney. They were both such wonderful fellows, he said, and he just couldn't bear to think about them being lost. by telephone

It may be that you have already heard from somebody with more details about this incident. I hope so. I have hesitated to write myself for fear my letter might dispel the hope which I know must be lingering still in your heart. Perhaps information which Pop gives is not conclusive and we will still hope and pray that such is the case. However, after several days of thinking it over, I have concluded that I had best write you, for had the tables been reversed I would have wanted you to write me.

I feel very sad indeed, Ann, to write such a letter for I know what the feelings of yourself and your husband must be. Your son was such a wonderful lad and I am so glad that my boy knew him. His letters spoke so highly of him. previous to this disaster; and also, of course, his letters written on the submarine, are just heart-breaking. Our boy is a very sensitive, gentle fellow, and I am fearful that this incident will have hurt him very deeply.

This is the third plane that Pop lost. In June he was picked up off the Ocean by an American destroyer. I wish they would send him home now. If he does come home I will let you know because perhaps you or your husband would want to see him. I know he would want to see you.

I will write you later on enclosing exact excerpts from his letters.

I can't possibly tell you how unhappy Dorothy and I are about Ted and how deeply we feel for you and your husband.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Edwin White,
767 Goodridge Ave.,
St. Paul, Minn.

PHOTOCOPY
GB HANDWRITING

Dear Prescott,

We were so glad to receive your letter. We have hesitated to write you as we did not want to alarm you. We heard on September 12th that Gardner was missing and on September 27th we had a letter from Forest Danish giving us very little hope. Gardner often spoke of George and said that he was a fine boy. When he comes home he sure to let us know and Ted (my husband) and I will come East to see him.

George is a fine pilot and did everything he could to save his men. But the odds were against him.

Isn't it strange that our two boys should meet on a Carrier in the Pacific and be in this tragedy together.

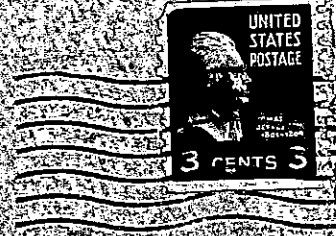
I don't have to tell you that we are broken hearted, but ~~are~~ doing our best to carry on as Gardner would expect us to do.

Thank you so much for telling us the truth - I know it was hard for you and I can't

told you how deeply I feel for
George. I hope he realizes as
time goes on that it was
Gardner's choice - and it was
like him to make such a
choice - whatever he did - he
went the whole way and a
little more besides.

Always sincerely
Anne White

October 18 - 1944.



Mr. Prescott S. Bush
59 Wall Street
New York 5
New York

PHOTOCOPY
GB HANDWRITING

EDWIN WHITE
ENDICOTT BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MINN.
Zone 1
October 20, 1944

*Check
send copy
to [unclear]*

Dear Pres:

In view of your long acquaintance with Anne, the friendship of our sons, and our connection with New Haven, I know you will excuse the informality, though I have met you only once and then for just a few minutes.

I want to say with great emphasis that Anne and I are deeply grateful to you and your wife and to Pop. The letters you have sent us are a tremendous help to us. They are frank and clear, sympathetic and understanding, and we will always be grateful for them. We appreciate more than we can express your feelings and your son's feelings. It is clear beyond question from letters from Forrest Daniels, a young flier from St. Paul named Grant, and from the Squadron Commander Melvin that Pop did everything in his power to take care of the two men who were lost. Our hearts ache for Pop but he should have no regrets except for the loss of two friends and fellow heroes and I am sure that you have reassured him in every possible way. Needless to say, I will write to him and will tell him how grateful we are for his efforts in behalf of these two boys, unquestionably at the risk of his own life. It seems to me that it would improve the morale if all naval fliers knew that when three, or even two, of their 'planes had been shot down, they would be granted leave or assigned to other duties. We hope and pray that your boy will be returned safe and sound before too long. In the meantime, we understand the load you are all carrying.

It would indeed be ungrateful of us to fail to treat Pop's intimate, beautiful letter in the strictest confidence. We appreciate your sending it to us and the least we can do will be to keep it to ourselves. No one but Anne and I will see it. We feel, as you state you would under similar circumstances, that we must know all the facts and the letters you have sent us, while very sad, contain the information which, if it had to be, we were so anxious to receive.

Our letter from Forrest Daniels, dated September 6, received September 27, states, "I know you will agree with me that in no way was the pilot to blame for what happened, and that he, himself, got out is something to be really grateful for in this tragedy."

We will be most anxious to see you and Mrs. Bush and Pop and I can only repeat, we can never thank you enough for the information you have given us and for your sympathetic understanding.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

*Ed White
'06*

EW:HA

Mr. Prescott S. Bush
59 Wall Street
New York, N. Y.