

10 June 1946

Dear Chris,

Received your letter a few days ago and still try to give you all of the information that is available.

Enclosed is a copy of the official statement made by the pilot of the other plane. It's against all army regulations for me to send you this, so please keep it under your hat.

There are a few points you might not understand so I'll try to explain them-first-ditching is landing a plane in water, rather than bailing out in a parachute. Camel Control is a radar station that is used to keep the position of all airplanes in this area. By climbing to 9000 ft. over the spot of the ditching camel control was able to get the exact spot and direct rescue plane in their search. Since this ditching was only 50 miles out of Ashiya, the search was started a half hour later and continued until dark, that was Wednesday. The search was carried on from daylight until dark Thursday, Friday, and Saturday by a large number of Navy ships as well as the airplanes. I hope the information I have passed on to you will ease your imagination. Although it is unpleasant and sad I'm sure you will take it "standing up" that's the way Bob would want it I'm sure.

I imagine right now life does seem worthless without Bob but if you will stop and think, everything happens for the best, although we can't see it right now. I know the baby will not take Bob's place but she is a part of him and that's a lot more than some of our boys have left behind.

Again I offer my deepest sympathy to you and the baby and if there is any other information I can give you just drop me a line.

Sincerely,

Joe Laughridge

At 1655 Island time, on 15 May 1945, I was flying at 2000 feet with an indicated airspeed of 235, on a course of 230°. Lt. Lorang was flying to my left and rear. Lt. Lorang called and said, "We are ditching". I asked what was wrong. He replied, "the fuel pressure is out on both engines". I told him to check fuel selector valves and booster pumps. He replied, "Roger". A few seconds later Lt. Lorang repeated "We are ditching". I started a turn to the right, at 90°, I saw Lt. Lorang's plane hit the water. The plane did not float, it skidded to a stop and sank immediately. I circled over the spot, then started a climbing spiral calling Camel Control to get a fix on me. At approximately 3000 feet I saw a sea marker. We spiraled around the sea marker until it was lost. At 9000 feet Camel Control answered. I circled at 9000 feet while Camel plotted my position. Camel instructed me to go back and investigate the condition of the crew. I circled for about 10 minutes at 500 feet with nil sightings and my electrical system started burning. I immediately turned off all electrical equipment and returned to Ashiya Air Field.

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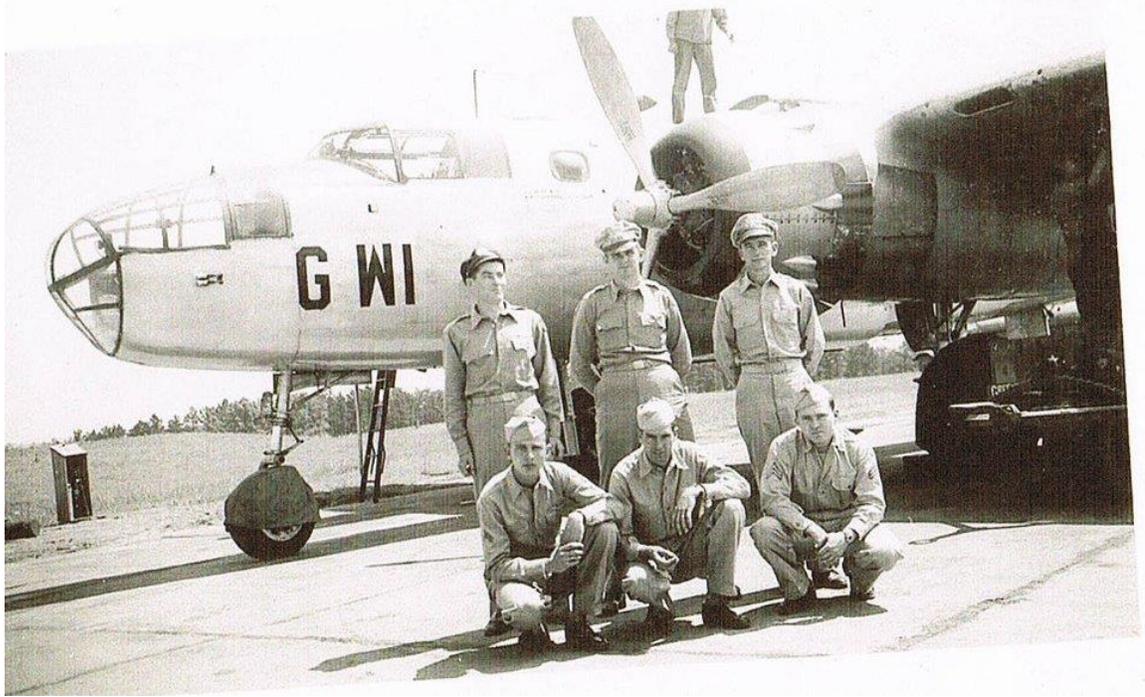
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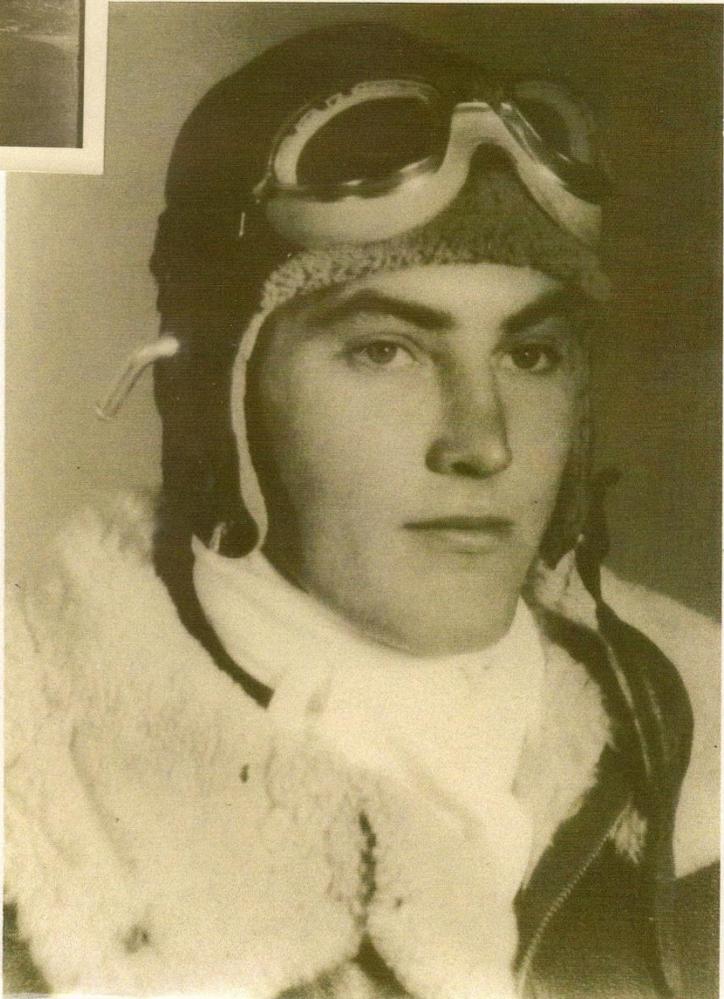
At 1655 Island time, on 18 May 1946, I was flying at 2000 feet with an indicated airspeed of 235, on a course of 230°. Lt. Lorang was flying to my left and rear. Lt. Lorang called and said, "We are ditching". I asked what was wrong. He replied, "The fuel pressure is out on both engines". I told him to check fuel selector valves and booster pumps. He replied, "Roger". A few seconds later Lt. Lorang repeated "We are ditching". I started a turn to the right, at 90°, I saw Lt. Lorang's plane hit the water. The plane did not float, it skidded to a stop and sank immediately. I circled over the spot, then started a climbing spiral calling Camel Control to get a fix on me. At approximately 3000 feet I saw a sea marker. We spiraled around the sea marker until it was lost. At 9000 feet ~~////~~ Camel Control answered. I circled at 9000 feet while Camel plotted my position. Camel instructed me to go back and investigate the condition of the crew. I circled for about 10 minutes at 500 feet with nil sightings and my electrical system started burning. I immediately turned off all electrical equipment and returned to Ashiya Air Field.



Bob Lorang, back left



Bob Lorang,  
son of Henry



Jack  
miner in  
has 1000  
wheat in Washington

**GENESSEE ARMY  
FLYER MISSING**

MOSCOW, Idaho, May 24.—A war department telegram today stated that Lt. Robert Lorang, 23, son of Henry Lorang of Genesee, has been missing in the Pacific area since May 16.

Lt. Lorang, who served with the air corps in the Pacific three years during the war, was with a bombardment group sent on a mission May 16 from which he failed to return. He had participated in five wartime missions over Japan as a flight officer.

Dr. R. M. Berry, superintendent of city schools, today announced appointment of Jay Thompson as principal of Whitworth junior high school, effective in September.

Thompson, athletic coach here three years, is being replaced by Lyle Smith, returned from military service. Thompson succeeds Milford A. Peterson, who resigned to enter business. Thompson is canceling a contract to coach at Filer next year.

Bear Tracks, high school annual, was distributed today, dedicated to 26 former students killed during the war. Editors are Philip Schnell and Stanley Tanner, with Dwight Call business manager, Walter Welti advertising manager.

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