

June 8, 1953

Dear Old Gang:

I have just retired from one job after 41 years and, like all old fire horses, still listen for the bell. So, while listening, I heard another bell. This time it was a civilian bell, i.e., Mr. L. D. Bell of the aircraft business that bears his name. He suggested that I go to work, and here I am, Executive Vice President of the Bell Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo, New York. It is a fine job and practically guaranteed to keep my blood pressure up about normal, at least for the time being. I like the idea of "wearing out" rather than to "rust out".

I am a firm believer that as long as you keep trying you continue to live and accomplish something. When you quit, you start to die. Even a good bomber airplane (brand new) needs continuous action and operation of some sort to avoid rusting to final complete deterioration and a mass of shapeless ruin.

Do you remember one of our B-24's made more than 130 flights without aborting a single time? It made this record (I believe a world record) because it was kept active by a crew that made it live. They furnished the life blood and the brains for a gallant old bomber that could only do its part if others also functioned as necessary. That was a proud ground crew, who could see each day something to be done so the bomber continued to keep going. I get a thrill when I remember that B-24. But I get a distinct lift in morale when I recall how faithful that ground crew was. I'll bet they are still faithful and conscientious to the present responsibilities wherever they are.

The Second Air Division Association, like its former B-24, needs people to make it live. It will exist and sparkle as a living unit only so much as its members provide plans, objectives and operating incentives. These, of course, have to be supported -- not by a few, but by all. We were all in the Second Air Division. It belonged to us in combat and we kept it going. It always did an outstanding job.

Now in peace we remember our associations of England. We would enjoy meeting our buddies and hashing over old times. We can best keep in contact if there is kept somewhere a list of addresses. This can and should be done by 2AD Association; that is, it can if all of us will devote a little time to write the president and officers, offering to help as much as we can. I know we want to do this and I think I know you well enough to promise that you will again come through. After all, there isn't much required, just really belong and help the officers we elected. Let's tune up the motors, run through the check list, get cleared by the missus and kids for a cross country mission to the next reunion, or better still, take them along. I'll be seeing you and Happy Landings.

Yours in comradeship, with admiration for the past and expectations for the future.

  
General Bill Kepner  
(Always on active duty with 2AD)

WEK:in