



## Remembering our brothers who have passed from this life

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### **RANSOM, MATT WHITAKER III '42**

Army Sergeant Ransom was killed in action 12 October 1944 two miles west of the Royal Air Force Base at Lincolnshire, England. He was a member of the 728<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 452th Bombardment Group (H). Interred at the US Military Cemetery, Cambridge, England

From Roanoke Rapids, NC, Ransom attended Augusta for two years:

First year: Private "A" Company, Peep Football, Baseball, Track. Second year: Corporal "A" Company, Track Team.

("World War II KIA's" book, Alumni House)

Ed, this is data on Matt Ransom's death. Jerry came up with a phone number for the only remaining survivor of the crash - 2LT Sidney Solomon, the navigator. I called the number and Solomon answered the phone.

Very gracious fellow. 86 years old and very pretty sharp. He has a picture of the crew of Inside Curve which he is sending to me. He says that Little Miss America had a landing gear problem so they flew that October day in a different plane.

Solomon said he really does not know what happened to his B-17. They were at 14,000 feet and he saw another B-17 nearby which he reported to the pilot and copilot. Immediately after, the plane began to "shake and dance. I think we got

caught in the backwash from another plane - maybe the one I saw." They had a full bomb load and when the plane went into a spin, it just fell apart, he says. It broke at the turret gunner position with the tail (with Matt inside) spiraling away.

Solomon does not know how he got out of the plane but thinks he was blown out of the open end. He doesn't remember opening his chute and was told later by some English folk who saw him descend that the chute didn't open until 1,500 feet or less. "I do remember pulling the rip cord but I don't know how high I was," he said.

He also related that Matt was found far away from the main part of the crash and that the ball turret had rolled into some bushes where the gunner was not found for some time.

"Matt's wife was expecting a baby," said Solomon. I told him we were not sure if Matt was married but it would seem to confirm that Matt W. Ransom, IV of Roanoke Rapids might be his son. Since all of the phone numbers for Matt IV were no good (I tried 411 also), I sent him a letter today to the address you found, Jerry. Have no idea if I will hear back from him.

I told him that the military records show that Matt had two years of college. Solomon doesn't think that is correct and I am of the belief that Matt reported his two years at Augusta and someone gave him credit for two years of college.

Waist gunner Pat Powell's widow has a book about Matt's unit. Solomon is to call her and ask that she send me a copy. I have her phone number and I will call her tomorrow to see if Solomon reached her.

Solomon said that Matt was "really a fine young man. He did his job well and everyone in the crew really liked him." When Solomon came back from the war, he decided to visit the relatives of the fellows killed, "but I only made three visits. The mothers were hysterical and two of them denied that their son had died. They thought he was just missing." He did NOT visit Matt's family.