

Tom McVey
513-377-0472
SAILRCAMP@GMAIL.COM

Dear Wendy,

I READ YOUR NOTES ABOUT YOUR DAD ON THE
302ND WEBSITE. I KNEW "BILL GARNES" WAS THE
BAG PIPE PLAYER. I CAN REMEMBER BILL PLAYING
THE PIPE'S FROM TIME TO TIME. THE LAST TIME WAS
IN 1982.

AFTER READING ABOUT YOUR DAD, I SENT A LETTER
TO BILL GARNES. HE SENT BACK TO ME A SHORT
STORY HE HEARD. MAYBE YOUR DAD TOLD YOU ABOUT
THE BROKEN WINDSCREEN.

BILL, WILL BE SENDING SOME BAG PIPE INFO
TO ME IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I HOPE THAT
THIS HELPS TO BRING BACK SOME PLEASANT
MEMORIES OF YOUR FATHER.

BILL'S ADDRESS
BILL GARNES
181 GARNES RD
CHILLICOTHE, OH 45601
740-775-5099

Tom McVey
JAN, 10 2013

181 Garnes Rd

Chillicothe, OH

45601-8823

9 Jan 13

Dear Tom,

Sure! I certainly remember
crewing with you. Also Rip.

The following tale I heard
second hand:

It was at night. Chuck Blevins
flying ~~right~~^{left} seat, Rip ~~left~~^{right}. An
object exploded through the windscreen,
somehow without breakage; leaving Chuck
a bloody mess; hurtling on into the
cargo compartment. An awed Holloway
recanted, "The thing had four."

I plan on sharing with both you
and Rip's dghts a little more of
how I learned the pipes, along
with some technical descriptions of the
instrument.

Sincerely,

Bill Garnes

To: Jim Garnes

12/29/2012

From: Tom McVey

Hello, I served in the 355th TAS as a Loadmaster from 1974 to 1982. I am not sure you will recall me. I was a young college student going to OSU. I recall that you were also in the 355th. I remember when the squadron was stationed in an older run down building that was an unsightly green color. As I remember, just inside the main entrance and off to the right was the navigation area. There was a helium tank we would use to inflate balloons that were used on the drop zone to gage the winds. The navigators and loadmasters would drive out to the DZ and set up the letter A with battery powered lights for the night drops and wait for the flights to arrive.

During the drops, we were not allowed to be on the DZ, as one never knew what kind of load would come out of the aircraft. Sometimes it was just a 20 pound, Tactical Training Bundle (TTB) then, other times it would be a 500 pound Container Deliver System (CDS) load. I know I was surprised a few times when the aircrew said it was going to be a TTB and a 500 pound load came down on the DZ.



Music for marching and ceremonial effects were provided by two sources at the 90th TAG inactivation ceremonies June 6th. The Wright-Patterson band was the main unit shown here but Lt. Col. James Garnes, a 355th TAS navigator of long standing, played a big part with his special bag pipe rendition. Shown here he passes the band as he rendered a solo of "Auld Lang Syne" at the ceremonies. (Photo by TSgt. Doug Moore)

I do remember going on a trip with you to Miami Florida and we stayed off base. The crew got together for drinks and dinner. We went to a fancy Japanese restaurant and when the menu came out. You looked it over and decided that it was too rich for your blood. You then marched out. Do you recall that? I also remember that upon occasion you would play the bag pipes. That sure was a pleasant memory for me and the guys in the squadron.

I am writing you this letter because; I saw a note on the Final Flyover from the daughter of Rip Collins. She wanted to know your name so, I wanted to see if it was ok to share your address and phone number with her. It seems she had some fond memories of you playing the bag pipes just like I did.

Did you fly with Rip Collins? His picture and obituary are on the next page.

Would you give me a phone call at 513-377-0472?

Tom McVey
Loadmaster 355th

Hi, I am Rip Collins' daughter.



Dad broke his left hip in May and took three months to rehabilitate due to losing three days per week to dialysis. Dad had been on dialysis since last summer. His pre-op chest x-ray showed shadows in his right lung. Doctors decided to pursue this later and get him through his broken hip.

In October, Dad had a PET scan to determine the extent of the lesions in his lungs. He had smoked for 60+ years and quit smoking about 10 years ago. He did, in fact, have cancer. Dad and I spoke about what to do next. He said he would not have chemo or radiation, but would like an idea of how long he had left. My step-sis and my daughter Heather, who is a college student in northern Kentucky, took Dad and my step-mom, Annabelle, to the oncologist. The doctor told Dad he wasn't going to even do a needle biopsy as he could collapse Dad's lung and cause even more problems for him. He said he would go out on a limb and tell Dad he had probably two good years left before the lesions would cause him any problems. Daddy and Annabelle left the doctors office very happy. The very next day, Daddy had a really rough dialysis and lost consciousness. He was brought back around, but then said, "No more needles." Even though I had not wanted him to start dialysis in the first place, I did call him (I live 5 hours away) and make sure he understood what stopping the dialysis would mean. Dad was sure he still had one good kidney, which he did not. Since his aneurysm in 1994, his memory was not so good. He had lost the function of one kidney following the aneurysm, and the last one quit functioning last year. He said if that was true as I reminded him, he'd just have to die on his own terms then. Daddy died three weeks to the day of his final dialysis with my daughter, Heather, holding his hand and me touching his arm. The hospice chaplain was there with us and was reciting the 23rd Psalm. Dad stopped breathing when the chaplain said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death."

Daddy loved the military and loved to fly. He didn't care much for his final aircraft, the C-123, but he loved the C-119 and his time at Clinton County AFB, OH. Daddy was a veteran of WWII in the Army, Army Air Corps, Air Force, and Air Force Reserves. He flew C-46, C-47, C-119, and C-123 aircraft in his career and was stationed in TX, OH, ND NC, England, France, and the Canal Zone.

Daddy was pre-deceased by his wife, Helen Hamilton Collins; and a son, William B. Collins, III. He leaves his second wife, Annabelle Collins; a daughter, Lt Col Wendy S. Collins, USAF Nurse Corps (Ret); a step-daughter, Pamela Sigler and her husband, David; and four grandchildren, Heather Hamilton Collins, Hallie Olivia Collins, and Daniel and Camille Sigler.

Lt Col William B. "Rip" Collins, Jr 21 Feb 22 - 20 Nov 08

If anyone has an anecdote about my Daddy, I would appreciate hearing from them. My address is: 2002 Larkspur Drive, Murray, KY 42071

Also, if anyone knows the name of the fellow who used to play the bagpipes while walking around the Clinton County AFB flight line in the evenings, please let me know. I have fond memories of listening to those bagpipes when I was a "wee little lassie".