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received will be communicated to you immediately stop should news of him reach you from any other source please inform this department stop letter

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The Officers Mess. R.a. F. Station. 23.11.41. Mauston. Kent Dear Mr M Lean. Mour letter was handed tome on my return to Mauston this wearing, with a footnote that To Sibson have britten toyou, but I feel you would wish me to drop you a line and I hasten to do so. Charlie is my friend - Though many years his sluor in age, having three sons of my own, we paired together in June at It Eval. He would come to

me with all his questions for dis Cussion and advise, and When he failed to return I realised acutely what our friendship had meanh Foryears I have been Councited with the Doub movement and the welfare of young men, and I think th was own early talks together on the simple Hever present Jogs or lige that brought his together. We used to goend howrs he each others Company to work out the Times Crossword. I wish I Could have jumped into the train L'one to se you ke cause I fund, in have to put outo

3.



paper my feelings at this moment. but one thing to certain An that I shall not five up hope for at least two mouths. Charlie was the navyalir of an aircraft Captained by our Highh Commander, and there loss not a steadier or more Escherienced filsh in the Aquadron Two planes were air borne on the night of The 15/11/41 @ 10 pm to attack a ship traveling along the north wash of France. The one plane returned having Hen husucusspul, and reported that there was no gun fire of any discription, though they Kept a good look out for

Charlies machine. His position bould be approximately halfa will from the French Coach and of trouble had come to them the pilot has experienced enough to make a good landing hi the dark. They are equipped with dings, and all the aids possible, and as the French the plate beach type I am full of hope Two months ago we losh a fighter pilot from this station on a similar night of the German radio gave his Tramé as Sage two days ago. so you much not love faish. Recause a fighter to a far harder Gragh to land in The "ark.



I would like to mention that we sent out Admirally opered boals throughout the night, and planes nesch morning at dewn he our effects to track the missing arrivage When anything of this nature happens mr mc Lean, the Air Ministry organise a Committa of Adjustment and all Kito are imported & inventor; taken. If there is anything you would like me to do for you please write and I will do everything in my power to help you In your anscitte awaiting news, you have

me dupest Lupathe and I pray For that own prayers be answered. Mowro sincerely John A. Fouls. Intellique officer 217. Aquadron. W+. 4/12/41 W 23 12 41 Luas Day

trendeau led! For Lean

From the very

bottom of my heart I affect to

You t your wife my deaped

Sy upsatly, for I Brown that you

must be going therough the Same

agonizing Time that I how bear

young through here.

I am so glad you whole to

we, for I men who were on

the other men who were on

the place with my son. I

shall, of course, keep your

letter with your address Vil. 900 without saying that if we should lear anything at all, I should al ouce commencate with you For myself, I have not very much hope. The night was very dark, & Chère was agale blowing - there must have been a rough sea, too rough, I am apaid for them to have made a safe landing rich. I have been told that, with to unpact, they would almo certains Sel Concussion, & that it uld all be over before they owen autting about it: Please God it way have been So. of our sous had lived in megal have bee inton to Singapore of augustiene. would rather have things as they

are than think of my son as perhaps or German hands. In the dankest of all solvows there is always the feeling that things might have been even worse. Our dear boys have given their lives in all probability for their country, o all their country stands for put now. Suice we must all die Some day, Chère are worse wars of duning than that: God grant that we may be worther of the great Scerifice our brave boys are unaking for us. The fature is owns in which to struce, or

ig we strive worthily, we shall not meet them again Town very success Trangerel. a Halley 22/6/42

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 3434

Any communications on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:—

THE SECRETARY,

and the following number quoted:-

P363851/41/P.4.Cas.(B).



AIR MINISTRY, LONDON, W.C.2.

January 1942.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to a letter from this Department dated 21st November 1941, and to inform you with regret that no news has been received of your son, Pilot Officer Charles McLean, since he was reported missing on 15th November 1941.

The aircraft was airborne at base at 10.00 p.m. on the 15th November to carry out a "shipping sweep" in the Channel. Since that time nothing further has been heard of the aircraft or of any member of the crew.

I am to add an expression of the Department's sincere sympathy with you in your great anxiety and to assure you that any further news will be immediately passed to you.

I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

8.4-Clarks

for Director of Personal Services.

D. A. McLean, Esq.,
Elwinside,
Linlithgow,
Scotland.



21 January 1987

Dear Effie MacLean,

I am grateful for your kind letter you sent to me C/- Granada Publishing Ltd.

The Christmas Dinner Menu for 1940 at Prestwick raised memories and a laugh. Your brother's inscription 'Per Ardua ad Disaster' was prophetic and no mistake. You state that Charles was lost on 15th November 1941, and I was shot down after a Berlin raid on September 7th 1941. Stanley Gunnis whom I do remember, and brother Richard, sad to say, also 'bought it'. Memories are there still.

Whilst in the plastic surgery hospital at East Grinstead following my POW years, I met a former fellow of our group at Prestick and was shocked to learn that of the forty trainees, almost 80% had gone under. It was tough going flying against the Hun in those initial years of World War 11. It was a similar story when I joined 15 Squadron (Stirling bombers). Most of the chaps flying operationally were wiped out and the average survival rate was about nine sorties, if one was lucky. I can only count my lucky stars at being alive to-day and reaching three-score years and ten. I had a remarkable escape when the Stirling hit the ground at about 160mph and badly shot up.

I well recall Charles who was very good at mathematics, whilst in that direction I was not too bright. We were close friends and he took it upon himself to tutor me as to what we might expect in a stiff examination. If one failed it was immediate relegation to ground crew or at best an air gunner. Thanks to Charles I made it. We enjoyed some splendid friendship; he had an unfailing sense of good humour and full of confience that dear old Britain would win through, no matter what the trials and disasters ahead.

The book, 'Boldness Be My Friend', first published 1953 has recently been revised, expanded and updated. For the first time the full story. A great deal of important material could not be released under the Official Secrets Act. Thirty years later, however, I was able to give names, details and facts, hitherto unpublished. Granada published the new version, in hardcover in 1984, followed by a paperback version by Panther Books (Granada). It has now been published in the USA, Greece, and will appear in Holland. I think you will find this later narration enlightening, perhaps uplifting, and I only wish Charles and the other grand fellows were alive to-day to read it.

Thank you for the Press photograph which I shall value; faces of those bygone years are still familiar in my mind. I must say I am grateful to fate for many things, particularly being able to see after eye failure. I underwent two lens implant operations last year and eyesight has been reasonably restored. After all, writing and reading, my eyes are my tools of trade... and you may imagine how thrilled I was to be able to read that Christmas Dinner Menu and study the faces of Stanley Gunnis and brothers. It was thoughtful and kind of you to send the enclosures.

It only remains for me to thank you again for seeking me out. May I wish you all that is good and kind for the future.

Sincerely yours,
Richard B. Pape.