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Thompson Document 03: Letter from Henrietta Thompson to Jack Belden

Henrietta Thompson

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25 April, 1972

Dear Mr. Belden,

On December 3 of last year I wrote you in care of Harper & Row telling you of a project upon which I had embarked and asking if it would be possible for me to have an appointment with you.

In case you never received the letter, I will outline what I am trying to do. As a result of reading Barbar Tuchman's book, "Stilwell and the American Experience in China" I decided to try to ascertain the whereabouts of the 104 people who walked out of Burma in 1942 with General Stilwell and began reading many more books about it. Among them of course was your "Retreat With Stilwell".

I hope to interview as many of the survivors of that event as possible and from their recollections develop an article or book based on what has become of them, how they view the event thirty years later, and what if any, the effect has been upon their lives.

Since writing to you in December, I have interviewed 15 and been in correspondence with a good many more; I have traced 50, living and dead and I have just returned from England where I saw 6 of the 7 FAU boys. The 7th is in Guatemala. I also met Paul Jones and Fred Eldridge and Carl Arnold as well, on the West coast; they are all anxious to learn about you, where you, what doing and they all spoke of you as "a hell of a nice fellow".

In the light of all this, and also because having seen so many people I am again reading your book (it is invaluable for dates and places outside of the fact that it's great reading) I am particularly anxious to get in touch with you myself. I am sure you will have light to shed upon the 54 that I have not been able to track down, but more than that, I want to hear your views as of now.

My husband and I are going to the Philippines about June 15th for three months and while there I hope to take a short trip to both Burma and Taipei; so I am hoping that I will be able to get in touch with you before we leave this country and that you will be willing to see me.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Henry S. Thompson